

George Gordon Lord Byron

- 296 poems -

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George Gordon Lord Byron (22 January 1788 – 19 April 1824)

George Gordon Byron, 6th Baron Byron, later George Gordon Noel, 6th Baron Byron, FRS, commonly known simply as Lord Byron, was a British poet and a leading figure in the Romantic movement. Among Byron's best-known works are the brief poems *She Walks in Beauty*, *When We Two Parted*, and *So, we'll go no more a roving*, in addition to the narrative poems *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan*. He is regarded as one of the greatest British poets and remains widely read and influential.

Byron was celebrated in life for aristocratic excesses including huge debts, numerous love affairs, rumours of a scandalous incestuous liaison with his half-sister, and self-imposed exile. He was famously described by Lady Caroline Lamb as "mad, bad and dangerous to know". It has been speculated that he suffered from bipolar I disorder, or manic depression. He travelled to fight against the Ottoman Empire in the Greek War of Independence, for which Greeks revere him as a national hero. He died at 36 years old from a fever contracted while in Missolonghi in Greece.

Name

Byron's names were changed throughout his life. He was the son of Captain John "Mad Jack" Byron and his second wife, the former Catherine Gordon (d. 1811), a descendant of Cardinal Beaton and heiress of the Gight estate in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. Byron's father had previously seduced the married Marchioness of Caermarthen and, after she divorced her husband the Earl, had married her. His treatment of her was described as "brutal and vicious", and she died after having given birth to two daughters, only one of which survived: Byron's half-sister, Augusta.

Byron's paternal grandparents were Vice-Admiral The Hon. John "Foulweather Jack" Byron and Sophia Trevanion. Vice Admiral John Byron had circumnavigated the globe, and was the younger brother of the 5th Baron Byron, known as "the Wicked Lord".

He was christened "George Gordon Byron" at St Marylebone Parish Church after his maternal grandfather, George Gordon of Gight, a descendant of James I of Scotland, who had committed suicide in 1779.

In order to claim his second wife's estate in Scotland, Byron's father had taken the additional surname "Gordon", becoming "John Byron Gordon", and he was occasionally styled "John Byron Gordon of Gight". Byron himself used this surname for a time and was registered at school in Aberdeen as "George Byron Gordon". At the age of 10, he inherited the English Barony of Byron of Rochdale, becoming "Lord Byron", and eventually dropped the double

surname (though after this point his surname was secondary to his peerage).

When Byron's mother-in-law, Judith Noel died in 1822, her will required that he change his surname to "Noel" in order to inherit half her estate, and so he obtained a Royal Warrant allowing him to "take and use the surname of Noel only". The Royal Warrant also allowed him to "subscribe the said surname of Noel before all titles of honour", and from that point he signed himself "Noel Byron" (the usual signature of a peer being merely the peerage, in this case simply "Byron"). It is speculated that this was so that his initials would read "N.B." mimicking those of his hero, Napoleon Bonaparte. He was also sometimes referred to as "Lord Noel Byron", as if "Noel" were part of his title, and likewise his wife was sometimes called "Lady Noel Byron". Lady Byron eventually succeeded to the Barony of Wentworth, becoming "Lady Wentworth".

Early Life

John Byron married his second wife for the same reason he married his first: her fortune. Byron's mother had to sell her land and title to pay her new husband's debts, and in the space of two years the large estate, worth some £23,500, had been squandered, leaving the former heiress with an annual income in trust of only £150. In a move to avoid his creditors, Catherine accompanied her profligate husband to France in 1786, but returned to England at the end of 1787 in order to give birth to her son on English soil. He was born on 22 January in lodgings on Holles Street in London.

Catherine moved back to Aberdeenshire in 1790, where Byron spent his childhood. His father soon joined them in their lodgings in Queen Street, but the couple quickly separated. Catherine regularly experienced mood swings and bouts of melancholy, which could be partly explained by her husband's continuing to appear in order to borrow money from her. As a result, she fell even further into debt to support his demands. It was one of these importunate loans that allowed him to travel to Valenciennes, France, where he died in 1791.

When Byron's great-uncle, the "wicked" Lord Byron, died on 21 May 1798, the 10-year-old boy became the 6th Baron Byron of Rochdale and inherited the ancestral home, Newstead Abbey in Nottinghamshire. His mother proudly took him to England, but the Abbey was in an embarrassing state of disrepair and rather than live there, his mother decided to rent to Lord Grey de Ruthyn, among others, during his adolescence.

Described as "a woman without judgment or self-command", Catherine either spoiled and indulged her son or aggravated him with her capricious stubbornness. Her drinking disgusted him, and he often mocked her for being short and corpulent, which made it difficult for her to catch him to discipline him. She once retaliated and, in a fit of temper, referred to him as "a lame brat".

Birth Defect

From birth, Byron suffered from a deformity of his right foot. Generally referred to as a "clubfoot", some modern medical experts maintain that it was a consequence of infantile paralysis (poliomyelitis), and others that it was a dysplasia, a failure of the bones to form properly. Whatever the cause, he was afflicted with a limp that caused him lifelong psychological and physical misery, aggravated by painful and pointless "medical treatment" in his childhood and the nagging suspicion that with proper care it might have been cured. He was extremely self-conscious about this from a young age, nicknaming himself le diable boiteux (French for "the limping devil", after the nickname given to Asmodeus by Alain-René Lesage in his 1707 novel of the same name). Although he often wore specially made shoes in an attempt to hide the deformed foot, he refused to wear any type of brace that might improve the limp.

Scottish novelist John Galt felt his oversensitivity to the "innocent fault in his foot was unmanly and excessive" because the limp was "not greatly

conspicuous." He first met Byron on a voyage to Sardinia and didn't realise he had any deficiency for several days, and still could not tell at first if the lameness was a temporary injury or not. But by the time he met Byron he was an adult and had worked to develop "a mode of walking across a room by which it was scarcely at all perceptible". The motion of the ship at sea may also have helped to create a favourable first impression and hide any deficiencies in his gait, but Galt's biography is also described as being "rather well-meant than well-written", so Galt may be guilty of minimising a defect that was actually still noticeable.

'Anticipated life' and the poet's psyche

"I am such a strange mélangé of good and evil that it would be difficult to describe me."

As a boy, his character is described as a "mixture of affectionate sweetness and playfulness, by which it was impossible not to be attached", although he also exhibited "silent rages, moody sullenness and revenge" with a precocious bent for attachment and obsession. He described his first intense feelings at age eight for Mary Duff, his distant cousin:

"How very odd that I should have been so devotedly fond of that girl, at an age when I could neither feel passion, nor know the meaning of the word and the effect! My mother used always to rally me about this childish amour, and at last, many years after, when I was sixteen, she told me one day, 'O Byron, I have had a letter from Edinburgh, and your old sweetheart, Mary Duff, is married to Mr C***.' And what was my answer? I really cannot explain or account for my feelings at that moment, but they nearly threw me into convulsions...How the deuce did all this occur so early? Where could it originate? I certainly had no sexual ideas for years afterwards; and yet my misery, my love for that girl were so violent, that I sometimes doubt if I have ever been really attached since. Be that as it may, hearing of her marriage several years after was like a thunder-stroke - it nearly choked me—to the horror of my mother and the astonishment and almost incredulity of every body. And it is a phenomenon in my existence (for I was not eight years old) which has puzzled, and will puzzle me to the latest hour of it; and lately, I know not why, the recollection (not the attachment) has recurred as forcibly as ever...But, the more I reflect, the more I am bewildered to assign any cause for this precocity of affection."

Byron also became attached to Margaret Parker, another distant cousin,. While his recollection of his love for Mary Duff is that he was ignorant of adult sexuality during this time, and was bewildered as to the source of the intensity of his feelings, he would later confess that:

"My passions were developed very early – so early, that few would believe me – if I were to state the period – and the facts which accompanied it. Perhaps this was one of the reasons that caused the anticipated melancholy of my thoughts – having anticipated life."

This is the only reference Byron himself makes to the event, and he is ambiguous as to how old he was when it occurred. After his death, his lawyer wrote to a mutual friend telling him a "singular fact" about Byron's life which was "scarcely fit for narration". But he disclosed it nonetheless, thinking it might explain Byron's sexual "propensities":

"When nine years old at his mother's house a [F]ree Scotch girl [May, sometimes called Mary, Gray, one of his first caretakers] used to come to bed to him and play tricks with his person."

Gray later used these sexual intimacies as leverage to ensure his silence if he were tempted to disclose the "low company" she kept during drinking binges. She was later dismissed, supposedly for beating Byron when he was 11.

A few years later, while he was still a child, Lord Grey (unrelated to May Gray), a suitor of his mother's, also made sexual advances to him. Byron's personality has been characterised as exceptionally proud and sensitive, especially when it came to his deformity. And although Byron was a very self-centered individual, it is probable that like most children, he would have

been deeply disturbed by these sexual advances. His extreme reaction to seeing his mother flirting outrageously with Lord Grey after the incident suggests this; he did not tell her of Grey's conduct toward him, he simply refused to speak to him again and ignored his mother's commands to be reconciled.

Byron's proclivity for, and experimentation in, bisexuality may be a result of his being sexually imprinted by both genders at an early age. Leslie Marchand, one of Byron's biographers, controversially theorises that Lord Grey's advances prompted Byron's later sexual liaisons with young men at Harrow and Cambridge. Another biographer, Fiona MacCarthy, has posited that Byron's true sexual yearnings were for adolescent males.

While he desired to be seen as sophisticated, uncaring and invincible, he actually cared deeply what people thought of him. He believed his tendency to melancholy and depression was inherited, and he wrote in 1821, "I am not sure that long life is desirable for one of my temper & constitutional depression of Spirits." He later earned a reputation as being extravagant, courageous, unconventional, eccentric, flamboyant and controversial. He was independent and given to extremes of temper; on at least one trip, his travelling companions were so puzzled by his mood swings they thought he was mentally ill.

In spite of these difficulties and eccentricities, Byron was noted for the extreme loyalty he inspired among his friends.

Education and Early Loves

Byron received his early formal education at Aberdeen Grammar School, and in August 1799, entered the school of Dr. William Glennie, in Dulwich. Placed under the care of a Dr. Bailey, he was encouraged to exercise in moderation, but could not restrain himself from "violent" bouts in an attempt to overcompensate for his deformed foot. His mother interfered with his studies, often withdrawing him from school, with the result that he lacked discipline and his classical studies were neglected.

In 1801 he was sent to Harrow, where he remained until July 1805. An undistinguished student and an unskilled cricketeer, he did represent the school during the very first Eton v Harrow cricket match at Lord's in 1805.

His lack of moderation was not just restricted to physical exercise. Byron fell in love with Mary Chaworth, whom he met while at school, and she was the reason he refused to return to Harrow in September 1803. His mother wrote, "He has no indisposition that I know of but love, desperate love, the worst of all maladies in my opinion. In short, the boy is distractedly in love with Miss Chaworth." In Byron's later memoirs, "Mary Chaworth is portrayed as the first object of his adult sexual feelings."

Byron finally returned in January 1804, to a more settled period which saw the formation of a circle of emotional involvements with other Harrow boys, which he recalled with great vividness: "My School friendships were with me passions (for I was always violent)." The most enduring of those was with John FitzGibbon, 2nd Earl of Clare — four years Byron's junior — whom he was to meet unexpectedly many years later in Italy (1821). His nostalgic poems about his Harrow friendships, *Childish Recollections* (1806), express a prescient "consciousness of sexual differences that may in the end make England untenable to him".

"Ah! Sure some stronger impulse vibrates here,
Which whispers friendship will be doubly dear
To one, who thus for kindred hearts must roam,
And seek abroad, the love denied at home."

The following autumn he attended Trinity College, Cambridge., where he met and formed a close friendship with the younger John Edleston. About his "protégé" he wrote, "He has been my almost constant associate since October, 1805, when I entered Trinity College. His voice first attracted my

attention, his countenance fixed it, and his manners attached me to him for ever." In his memory Byron composed *Thyrza*, a series of elegies.

In later years he described the affair as "a violent, though pure love and passion." This statement, however, needs to be read in the context of hardening public attitudes toward homosexuality in England, and the severe sanctions (including public hanging) against convicted or even suspected offenders. The liaison, on the other hand, may well have been 'pure' out of respect for Edleston's innocence, in contrast to the (probably) more sexually overt relations experienced at Harrow School. Also while at Cambridge he formed lifelong friendships with men such as John Cam Hobhouse and Francis Hodgson, a Fellow at King's College, with whom he corresponded on literary and other matters until the end of his life.

Physical Appearance

Byron's adult height was about 5 feet 11 inches (1.80 m), his weight fluctuating between 9.5 stone (133 lb; 60 kg) and 14 stone (200 lb; 89 kg). He was renowned for his personal beauty, which he enhanced by wearing curl-papers in his hair at night. He was athletic, being a competent boxer and horse-rider and an excellent swimmer.

Byron and other writers, such as his friend Hobhouse, described his eating habits in detail. At the time he entered Cambridge, he went on a strict diet to control his weight. He also exercised a great deal, and at that time wore a great number of clothes to cause himself to perspire. For most of his life he was a vegetarian, and often lived for days on dry biscuits and white wine. Occasionally he would eat large helpings of meat and desserts, after which he would purge himself. Although he is described by Galt and others as having a predilection for "violent" exercise, Hobhouse makes the excuse that the pain in his deformed foot made physical activity difficult, and his weight problem was the result.

Early Career

While not at school or college, Byron lived with his mother at Burgage Manor in Southwell, Nottinghamshire, in some antagonism. While there, he cultivated friendships with Elizabeth Pigot and her brother, John, with whom he staged two plays for the entertainment of the community.

During this time, with the help of Elizabeth Pigot, who copied many of his rough drafts, he was encouraged to write his first volumes of poetry. *Fugitive Pieces* was printed by Ridge of Newark, which contained poems written when Byron was only 14. However, it was promptly recalled and burned on the advice of his friend, the Reverend Thomas Beecher, on account of its more amorous verses, particularly the poem *To Mary*.

Hours of Idleness, which collected many of the previous poems, along with more recent compositions, was the culminating book. The savage, anonymous criticism this received (now known to be the work of Henry Peter Brougham) in the *Edinburgh Review* prompted his first major satire, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809). It was put into the hands of his relation R.C. Dallas requesting him to "...get it published without his name" Dallas gives a large series of changes and alterations, as well as the reasoning for some of them. He also states that Byron had originally intended to prefix an argument to this poem, and Dallas quotes it. Although the work was published anonymously, by April, Dallas is writing that "you are already pretty generally known to be the author." The work so upset some of his critics they challenged Byron to a duel; over time, in subsequent editions, it became a mark of prestige to be the target of Byron's pen. After his return from his travels, he again entrusted Dallas as his literary agent to publish his poem *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, which Byron thought of little account. The first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* were published in 1812, and were received with acclaim. In his own words, "I awoke one morning and found myself famous". He followed up his success with the poem's last two cantos, as well as four equally celebrated Oriental Tales, *The Giaour*, *The Bride of Abydos*, *The Corsair*, and *Lara*, *A Tale*. About

the same time, he began his intimacy with his future biographer, Thomas Moore.

Personal life

First travels to the East

Byron racked up numerous debts as a young man, due to what his mother termed a "reckless disregard for money". She lived at Newstead during this time, in fear of her son's creditors.

He had planned to spend early 1808 cruising with his cousin George Bettesworth, who was captain of the 32-gun frigate HMS Tartar. Bettesworth's unfortunate death at the Battle of Alvøen in May 1808 made that impossible.

From 1809 to 1811, Byron went on the Grand Tour, then customary for a young nobleman. The Napoleonic Wars forced him to avoid most of Europe, and he instead turned to the Mediterranean. Correspondence among his circle of Cambridge friends also suggests that a key motive was the hope of homosexual experience, and other theories saying that he was worried about a possible dalliance with the married Mary Chaworth, his former love (the subject of his poem from this time, "To a Lady: On Being Asked My Reason for Quitting England in the Spring"). Attraction to the Levant was probably a motive in itself; he had read about the Ottoman and Persian lands as a child, was attracted to Islam (especially Sufi mysticism), and later wrote, "With these countries, and events connected with them, all my really poetical feelings begin and end." He travelled from England over Portugal, Spain and the Mediterranean to Albania and spent time at the court of Ali Pasha of Ioannina, and in Athens. For most of the trip, he had a travelling companion in his friend John Cam Hobhouse. Many of these letters are referred to with details in Recollections of the Life of Lord Byron.

Byron began his trip in Portugal from where he wrote a letter to his friend Mr. Hodgson in which he describes his mastery of the Portuguese language, consisting mainly of swearing and insults. Byron particularly enjoyed his stay in Sintra that is described in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage as "glorious Eden". From Lisbon he travelled overland to Seville, Jerez de la Frontera, Cadiz, Gibraltar and from there by sea on to Malta and Greece.

While in Athens, Byron met Nicolò Giraud, who became quite close and taught him Italian. It was also presumed that the two had an intimate relationship involving a sexual affair. Byron sent Giraud to school at a monastery in Malta and bequeathed him a sizeable sum of seven thousand pounds sterling. The will, however, was later cancelled. In 1810 in Athens Byron wrote Maid of Athens, ere we part for a 12-year-old girl, Teresa Makri [1798–1875], and reportedly offered £500 for her. The offer was not accepted.

Byron made his way to Smyrna where he and Hobhouse cadged a ride to Constantinople on HMS Salsette. While Salsette was anchored awaiting Ottoman permission to dock at the city, on 3 May 1810 Byron and Lieutenant Ekenhead, of Salsette's marines, swam the Hellespont. Byron commemorated this feat in the second canto of Don Juan. He returned to England from Malta in June 1813 aboard HMS Volage.

Affairs and Scandals

In 1812, Byron embarked on a well-publicised affair with the married Lady Caroline Lamb that shocked the British public. Byron eventually broke off the relationship and moved swiftly on to others (such as that with Lady Oxford), but Lamb never entirely recovered, pursuing him even after he tired of her. She was emotionally disturbed, and lost so much weight that Byron cruelly commented to her mother-in-law, his friend Lady Melbourne, that he was "haunted by a skeleton". She began to call on him at home, sometimes dressed in disguise as a page boy, at a time when such an act could ruin both of them socially. One day, during such a visit, she wrote on a book at

his desk, "Remember me!" As a retort, Byron wrote a poem entitled *Remember Thee! Remember Thee!* which concludes with the line "Thou false to him, thou fiend to me".

As a child, Byron had seen little of his half-sister Augusta Leigh; in adulthood, he formed a close relationship with her that has been interpreted by some as incestuous, and by others as innocent. Augusta (who was married) gave birth on 15 April 1814 to her third daughter, Elizabeth Medora Leigh.

Eventually Byron began to court Lady Caroline's cousin Anne Isabella Milbanke ("Annabella"), who refused his first proposal of marriage but later accepted him. Milbanke was a highly moral woman, intelligent and mathematically gifted; she was also an heiress. They married at Seaham Hall, County Durham, on 2 January 1815. The marriage proved unhappy. He treated her poorly. They had a daughter (Augusta Ada). On 16 January 1816, Lady Byron left him, taking Ada with her. On 21 April, Byron signed the Deed of Separation. Rumours of marital violence, adultery with actresses, incest with Augusta Leigh, and sodomy were circulated, assisted by a jealous Lady Caroline. In a letter, Augusta quoted him as saying: "Even to have such a thing said is utter destruction and ruin to a man from which he can never recover."

Later Years

After this break-up of his domestic life, Byron again left England, and, as it turned out, it was forever. He passed through Belgium and continued up the Rhine River. In the summer of 1816 he settled at the Villa Diodati by Lake Geneva, Switzerland, with his personal physician, the young, brilliant, and handsome John William Polidori. There Byron befriended the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Shelley's future wife Mary Godwin. He was also joined by Mary's stepsister, Claire Clairmont, with whom he had had an affair in London.

Kept indoors at the Villa Diodati by the "incessant rain" of "that wet, ungenial summer" over three days in June, the five turned to reading fantastical stories, including *Fantasmagoriana*, and then devising their own tales. Mary Shelley produced what would become *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus*, and Polidori was inspired by a fragmentary story of Byron's, "Fragment of a Novel", to produce *The Vampyre*, the progenitor of the romantic vampire genre. Byron's story fragment was published as a postscript to *Mazeppa*; he also wrote the third canto of *Childe Harold*. Byron wintered in Venice, pausing his travels when he fell in love with Marianna Segati, in whose Venice house he was lodging, and who was soon replaced by 22-year-old Margarita Cogni; both women were married. Cogni could not read or write, and she left her husband to move into Byron's Venice house. Their fighting often caused Byron to spend the night in his gondola; when he asked her to leave the house, she threw herself into the Venetian canal.

In 1817, he journeyed to Rome. On returning to Venice, he wrote the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*. About the same time, he sold Newstead and published *Manfred*, *Cain* and *The Deformed Transformed*. The first five cantos of *Don Juan* were written between 1818 and 1820, during which period he made the acquaintance of the young Countess Guiccioli, who found her first love in Byron, who in turn asked her to elope with him. It was about this time that he received a visit from Thomas Moore, to whom he confided his autobiography or "life and adventures", which Moore, Hobhouse, and Byron's publisher, John Murray, burned in 1824, a month after Byron's death.

Children

Byron had a child, The Hon. Augusta Ada Byron ("Ada", later Countess of Lovelace), in 1815 with Annabella Byron, Lady Byron (née Anne Isabella Milbanke, or "Annabella"), later Lady Wentworth. Ada Lovelace, notable in her own right, collaborated with Charles Babbage on the analytical engine, a predecessor to modern computers. She is recognised as the world's first programmer.

He also had an illegitimate child in 1817, Clara Allegra Byron, with Claire Clairmont, stepsister of Mary Shelley and stepdaughter of Political Justice and Caleb Williams writer, William Godwin.

Allegra is not entitled to the style "The Hon." as is usually given to the daughter of barons, since she was illegitimate. Born in Bath in 1817, Allegra lived with Byron for a few months in Venice; he refused to allow an Englishwoman caring for the girl to adopt her, and objected to her being raised in the Shelleys' household. He wished for her to be brought up Catholic and not marry an Englishman. He made arrangements for her to inherit 5,000 lira upon marriage, or when she reached the age of 21, provided she did not marry a native of Britain. However, the girl died aged five of a fever in Bagna Cavallo, Italy while Byron was in Pisa; he was deeply upset by the news. He had Allegra's body sent back to England to be buried at his old school, Harrow, because Protestants could not be buried in consecrated ground in Catholic countries. At one time he himself had wanted to be buried at Harrow. Byron was indifferent towards Allegra's mother, Claire Clairmont.

Although it cannot be proved, some attest that Augusta Leigh's child, Elizabeth Medora Leigh, was fathered by Byron.

It is thought that Lord Byron had a son by a maid he employed at Newstead named Lucy. A letter of his to John Hanson from Newstead Abbey, dated 17 January 1809, refers to the situation: "You will discharge my Cook, & Laundry Maid, the other two I shall retain to take care of the house, more especially as the youngest is pregnant (I need not tell you by whom) and I cannot have the girl on the parish." The letter may be found in many editions of Byron's letters, such as Marchand's 1982 *Byron's Letters and Journals*. The poem "To My Son" may be about this child; however, the dating gives difficulties; some editors attribute the poem to a date two years earlier than the letter.

Political Career

Byron first took his seat in the House of Lords 13 Mar 1809, but left London on 11 Jun 1809 for the Continent. A strong advocate of social reform, he received particular praise as one of the few Parliamentary defenders of the Luddites: specifically, he was against a death penalty for Luddite "frame breakers" in Nottinghamshire, who destroyed textile machines that were putting them out of work. His first speech before the Lords was loaded with sarcastic references to the "benefits" of automation, which he saw as producing inferior material as well as putting people out of work. He said later that he "spoke very violent sentences with a sort of modest impudence", and thought he came across as "a bit theatrical". The full text of the speech, which he had previously written out, were presented to Dallas in manuscript form and he quotes it in his work. In another Parliamentary speech he expressed opposition to the established religion because it was unfair to people of other faiths. These experiences inspired Byron to write political poems such as *Song for the Luddites* (1816) and *The Landlords' Interest*, Canto XIV of *The Age of Bronze*. Examples of poems in which he attacked his political opponents include *Wellington: The Best of the Cut-Throats* (1819); and *The Intellectual Eunuch Castlereagh* (1818).

Life Abroad

Reasons for His Departure

Ultimately, Byron resolved to escape the censure of British society (due to allegations of sodomy and incest) by living abroad, thereby freeing himself of the need to conceal his sexual interests (MacCarthy pp. 86, 314). Byron left England in 1816 and did not return for the last eight years of his life, even to bury his daughter.

The Armenians in Venice

In 1816, Byron visited Saint Lazarus Island in Venice, where he acquainted himself with Armenian culture with the help of the abbots belonging to the Mechitarist Order. With the help of Father H. Avgerian, he learned the Armenian language, and attended many seminars about language and history. He wrote English Grammar and Armenian (Qerakanutyun angghiakan yev hayeren) in 1817, and Armenian Grammar and English (Qerakanutyun hayeren yev angghiakan) in 1819, where he included quotations from classical and modern Armenian. Byron also participated in the compilation of the English Armenian dictionary (Barraran angghieren yev hayeren, 1821) and wrote the preface in which he explained the relationship of the Armenians with and the oppression of the Turkish "pashas" and the Persian satraps, and their struggle of liberation. His two main translations are the Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, two chapters of Movses Khorenatsi's History of Armenia and sections of Nerses of Lambron's Orations. His fascination was so great that he even considered a replacement of the Cain story of the Bible with that of the legend of Armenian patriarch Haik. He may be credited with the birth of Armenology and its propagation. His profound lyricism and ideological courage has inspired many Armenian poets, the likes of Ghevond Alishan, Smbat Shahaziz, Hovhannes Tumanyan, Ruben Vorberian and others.

In Italy and Greece

The Byron's cave in Portovenere, Italy, called in his honour, because in this place that drew inspiration and meditation for his literary works From 1821 to 1822, he finished Cantos 6–12 of Don Juan at Pisa, and in the same year he joined with [Leigh Hunt](http://www.poemhunter.com/james-henry-leigh-hunt/) and [Percy Bysshe Shelley](http://www.poemhunter.com/percy-bysshe-shelley/) in starting a short-lived newspaper, The Liberal, in the first number of which appeared The Vision of Judgment. For the first time since his arrival in Italy, Byron found himself tempted to give dinner parties; his guests included the Shelleys, Edward Ellerker Williams, Thomas Medwin, John Taaffe, and Edward John Trelawney; and "never," as Shelley said, "did he display himself to more advantage than on these occasions; being at once polite and cordial, full of social hilarity and the most perfect good humour; never diverging into ungraceful merriment, and yet keeping up the spirit of liveliness throughout the evening."

Shelley and Williams rented a house on the coast and had a schooner built. Byron decided to have his own yacht, and engaged Trelawny's friend, Captain Daniel Roberts (Royal Navy officer), to design and construct the boat. Named the Bolivar, it was later sold to Charles John Gardiner, 1st Earl of Blessington, and Marguerite, Countess of Blessington when Byron left for Greece in 1823. Byron attended the funeral of Shelley, which was orchestrated by Trelawny after Williams and Shelley drowned in a boating accident on 8 July 1822. His last Italian home was Genoa, where he was still accompanied by the Countess Guiccioli, and the Blessingtons; providing the material for Lady Blessington's work: Conversations with Lord Byron, an important text in the reception of Byron in the period immediately after his death.

Byron was living in Genoa, when in 1823, while growing bored with his life there, he accepted overtures for his support from representatives of the movement for Greek independence from the Ottoman Empire. With the assistance of his banker and Captain Roberts, Byron chartered the Brig Hercules to take him to Greece. On 16 July, Byron left Genoa arriving at Kefalonia in the Ionian Islands on 4 August. His voyage is covered in detail in Sailing with Byron from Genoa to Cephalonia. There is a mystical coincidence in Byron's chartering the Hercules. The vessel was launched only a few miles south of Seaham Hall, where in 1815 Byron married Annabella Milbanke. Between 1815 and 1823 the vessel was in service between England and Canada. Suddenly in 1823, the ship's Captain decided to sail to Genoa and offer the Hercules for charter.

After taking Byron to Greece, the ship returned to England, never again to

venture into the Mediterranean. "The Hercules was age 37 when on 21 September 1852, her life ended when she went aground near Hartlepool, only 25 miles south of Sunderland, where in 1815, her keel was laid; Byron's keel was laid nine months before his official birth date, 22 January 1788; therefore in ship-years, he was age 37, when he died in Missolonghi." Byron spent £4000 of his own money to refit the Greek fleet, then sailed for Missolonghi in western Greece, arriving on 29 December, to join Alexandros Mavrokordatos, a Greek politician with military power. During this time, Byron pursued his Greek page, Lukas Chalandritsanos, but the affections went unrequited. When the famous Danish sculptor Thorvaldsen heard about Byron's heroics in Greece, he voluntarily resculpted his earlier bust of Byron in Greek marble.

Death

Mavrokordatos and Byron planned to attack the Turkish-held fortress of Lepanto, at the mouth of the Gulf of Corinth. Byron employed a fire-master to prepare artillery and took part of the rebel army under his own command, despite his lack of military experience, but before the expedition could sail, on 15 February 1824, he fell ill, and the usual remedy of bloodletting weakened him further. He made a partial recovery, but in early April he caught a violent cold which therapeutic bleeding, insisted on by his doctors, aggravated. It is suspected this treatment, carried out with unsterilised medical instrumentation, may have caused him to develop sepsis. He developed a violent fever, and died on 19 April. His physician at the time, Dutch Julius van Millingen, was unable to prevent his death. It has been said that had Byron lived and gone on to defeat the Ottomans, he might have been declared King of Greece. However, contemporary scholars have found such an outcome unlikely.

Post mortem

Alfred, Lord Tennyson would later recall the shocked reaction in Britain when word was received of Byron's death. The Greeks mourned Lord Byron deeply, and he became a hero. The national poet of Greece, Dionysios Solomos, wrote a poem about the unexpected loss, named *To the Death of Lord Byron*. Βύρων ("Vyron"), the Greek form of "Byron", continues in popularity as a masculine name in Greece, and a suburb of Athens is called Vyronas in his honour.

Byron's body was embalmed, but the Greeks wanted some part of their hero to stay with them. According to some sources, his heart remained at Missolonghi. According to others, it was his lungs, which were placed in an urn that was later lost when the city was sacked. His other remains were sent to England for burial in Westminster Abbey, but the Abbey refused for reason of "questionable morality". Huge crowds viewed his body as he lay in state for two days in London. He is buried at the Church of St. Mary Magdalene in Hucknall, Nottinghamshire.

At her request, Ada Lovelace, the child he never knew, was buried next to him. In later years, the Abbey allowed a duplicate of a marble slab given by the King of Greece, which is laid directly above Byron's grave. Byron's friends raised the sum of 1,000 pounds to commission a statue of the writer; Thorvaldsen offered to sculpt it for that amount. However, for ten years after the statue was completed in 1834, most British institutions turned it down, and it remained in storage. The statue was refused by the British Museum, St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and the National Gallery. Trinity College, Cambridge, finally placed the statue of Byron in its library. In 1969, 145 years after Byron's death, a memorial to him was finally placed in Westminster Abbey. The memorial had been lobbied for since 1907; The New York Times wrote, "People are beginning to ask whether this ignoring of Byron is not a thing of which England should be ashamed ... a bust or a tablet might be put in the Poets' Corner and England be relieved of ingratitude toward one of her really great sons."

Robert Ripley had drawn a picture of Boatswain's grave with the caption "Lord Byron's dog has a magnificent tomb while Lord Byron himself has

"none". This came as a shock to the English, particularly schoolchildren, who, Ripley said, raised funds of their own accord to provide the poet with a suitable memorial.

On a very central area of Athens, Greece, outside the National Garden, is a statue depicting Greece in the form of a woman crowning Byron. The statue was made by the French Henri-Michel Chapu and Alexandre Falguière.

Upon his death, the barony passed to Byron's cousin George Anson Byron, a career naval officer.

Poetic Works

Byron wrote prolifically. In 1832 his publisher, John Murray, released the complete works in 14 duodecimo volumes, including a life by Thomas Moore. Subsequent editions were released in 17 volumes, first published a year later, in 1833.

Although Byron falls chronologically into the period most commonly associated with Romantic poetry, much of his work looks back to the satiric tradition of Alexander Pope and John Dryden.

Don Juan

Byron's magnum opus, *Don Juan*, a poem spanning 17 cantos, ranks as one of the most important long poems published in England since John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The masterpiece, often called the epic of its time, has roots deep in literary tradition and, although regarded by early Victorians as somewhat shocking, equally involves itself with its own contemporary world at all levels — social, political, literary and ideological.

Byron published the first two cantos anonymously in 1819 after disputes with his regular publisher over the shocking nature of the poetry; by this time, he had been a famous poet for seven years, and when he self-published the beginning cantos, they were well received in some quarters. It was then released volume by volume through his regular publishing house. By 1822, cautious acceptance by the public had turned to outrage, and Byron's publisher refused to continue to publish the works. In Canto III of *Don Juan*, Byron expresses his detestation for poets such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Byronic hero

The figure of the Byronic hero pervades much of his work, and Byron himself is considered to epitomise many of the characteristics of this literary figure. Scholars have traced the literary history of the Byronic hero from John Milton, and many authors and artists of the Romantic movement show Byron's influence during the 19th century and beyond, including Charlotte and Emily Brontë. The Byronic hero presents an idealised, but flawed character whose attributes include: great talent; great passion; a distaste for society and social institutions; a lack of respect for rank and privilege (although possessing both); being thwarted in love by social constraint or death; rebellion; exile; an unsavory secret past; arrogance; overconfidence or lack of foresight; and, ultimately, a self-destructive manner. Finally, Stendahl's hero Julien Sorel in *The Red and the Black* seems to have been inspired by *Don Juan*. In Canto XI when *Don Juan* shoots the armed English robber, the robber falls to the ground and mistakes *Don Juan* for a "bloody Frenchman".

Parthenon marbles

Byron was a bitter opponent of Lord Elgin's removal of the Parthenon marbles from Greece, and "reacted with fury" when Elgin's agent gave him a tour of the Parthenon, during which he saw the missing friezes and metopes. He penned a poem, *The Curse of Minerva*, to denounce Elgin's actions.

He enjoyed adventure, especially relating to the sea.

The first recorded notable example of open water swimming took place on 3 May 1810 when Lord Byron swam from Europe to Asia across the Hellespont Strait. This is often seen as the birth of the sport and pastime and to commemorate it, the event is recreated every year as an open water swimming event.

Celebrity

Byron is considered to be the first modern-style celebrity. His image as the personification of the Byronic hero fascinated the public, and his wife Annabella coined the term "Byromania" to refer to the commotion surrounding him. His self-awareness and personal promotion are seen as a beginning to what would become the modern rock star; he would instruct artists painting portraits of him not to paint him with pen or book in hand, but as a "man of action." While Byron first welcomed fame, he later turned from it by going into voluntary exile from Britain.

Fondness for animals

Byron had a great love of animals, most notably for a Newfoundland dog named Boatswain. When the animal contracted rabies, Byron nursed him, albeit unsuccessfully, without any thought or fear of becoming bitten and infected.

Although deep in debt at the time, Byron commissioned an impressive marble funerary monument for Boatswain at Newstead Abbey, larger than his own, and the only building work which he ever carried out on his estate. In his 1811 will, Byron requested that he be buried with him. The 26 verse poem, Epitaph to a Dog, has become one of his best-known works, but a draft of an 1830 letter by Hobhouse shows him to be the author, and that Byron decided to use Hobhouse's lengthy epitaph instead of his own, which read: "To mark a friend's remains these stones arise/I never knew but one—and here he lies."

Byron also kept a tame bear while he was a student at Trinity, out of resentment for rules forbidding pet dogs like his beloved Boatswain. There being no mention of bears in their statutes, the college authorities had no legal basis for complaining: Byron even suggested that he would apply for a college fellowship for the bear.

During his lifetime, in addition to numerous dogs and horses, Byron kept a fox, four monkeys, a parrot, five cats, an eagle, a crow, a crocodile, a falcon, five peacocks, two guinea hens, an Egyptian crane, a badger, three geese, a heron and a goat with a broken leg. Except for the horses, they all resided indoors at his homes in England, Switzerland, Italy and Greece.

Lasting Influence

The re-founding of the Byron Society in 1971 reflects the fascination that many people have for Byron and his work. This society has become very active, publishing an annual journal. Today 36 Byron Societies function throughout the world, and an International Conference takes place annually.

Byron exercised a marked influence on Continental literature and art, and his reputation as a poet is higher in many European countries than in Britain or America, although not as high as in his time, when he was widely thought to be the greatest poet in the world. Byron has inspired works by Franz Liszt, Hector Berlioz, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, and Giuseppe Verdi.

Depictions in Fiction and Film

Byron first appeared as a thinly disguised fictional character in his ex-love Lady Caroline Lamb's book *Glenarvon*, published in 1816. The archetypal vampire character, notably Bram Stoker's Dracula, is based on Byron. The gothic ideal of a decadent, pale and aristocratic individual who enamors himself to whomever he meets, but who is perceived to have a dark

and dangerous inner-self is a literary form derived from characterisations of Byron. The image of a vampire portrayed as an aristocrat was created by John Polidori, in "The Vampyre", during the summer of 1816 which he spent in the company of Byron. The titled Count Dracula is a reprise of this character.

Byron was the subject of a 1908 play *Byron* by Alicia Ramsey and its 1922 film adaptation *A Prince of Lovers* in which he was played by Howard Gaye.

Byron is the main character of the film *Byron* by the Greek film maker Nikos Koundouros.

Byron's spirit is one of the title characters of the *Ghosts of Albion* books by Amber Benson and Christopher Golden. John Crowley's book *Lord Byron's Novel: The Evening Land* (2005) involves the rediscovery of a lost manuscript by Lord Byron, as does Frederic Prokosch's *The Missolonghi Manuscript* (1968).

Byron appears as a character in Tim Powers's time travel/alternative history novels *The Stress of Her Regard* (1989) and *The Anubis Gates* (1983), Walter Jon Williams's fantasy novella *Wall, Stone Craft* (1994), and also in Susanna Clarke's alternative history *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* (2004).

Byron appears as an immortal, still living in modern times, in the television show *Highlander: The Series* in the fifth season episode *The Modern Prometheus*, living as a decadent rock star.

Tom Holland, in his 1995 novel *The Vampyre: Being the True Pilgrimage of George Gordon, Sixth Lord Byron*, romantically describes how Lord Byron became a vampire during his first visit to Greece — a fictional transformation that explains much of his subsequent behaviour towards family and friends, and finds support in quotes from Byron poems and the diaries of John Cam Hobhouse. It is written as though Byron is retelling part of his life to his great great-great-granddaughter. He describes travelling in Greece, Italy, Switzerland, meeting Percy Bysshe Shelley, Shelley's death, and many other events in life around that time. The Byron as vampire character returns in the 1996 sequel *Sutting with Panthers*.

Byron and Percy and Mary Shelley are portrayed in Roger Corman's final film *Frankenstein Unbound*, where the time traveller Dr. Buchanan (played by John Hurt) meets them as well as Victor von Frankenstein (played by Raúl Juliá).

The Black Drama by Manly Wade Wellman, originally published in *Weird Tales*, involves the rediscovery and production of a lost play by Byron (from which Polidori's *The Vampyre* was plagiarised) by a man who purports to be a descendant of the poet.

Tom Stoppard's play *Arcadia* revolves around a modern researcher's attempts to find out what made Byron leave the country, while Howard Brenton's play *Bloody Poetry* features Byron, in addition to Polidori, the Shelleys and Claire Clairmont.

Television portrayals include a major 2003 BBC drama on Byron's life, an appearance in the 2006 BBC drama, *Beau Brummell: This Charming Man*, and minor appearances in *Highlander: The Series* (as well as the Shelleys), *Blackadder the Third*, episode 60 (Darkling) of *Star Trek: Voyager*, and was also parodied in the animated sketch series, *Monkey Dust*.

He makes an appearance in the alternative history novel *The Difference Engine* by William Gibson and Bruce Sterling. In a Britain powered by the massive, steam-driven, mechanical computers invented by Charles Babbage, he is leader of the Industrial Radical Party, eventually becoming Prime Minister.

The events featuring the Shelleys' and Byron's relationship at the house beside Lake Geneva in 1816 have been fictionalised in film at least three

times.

A 1986 British production, Gothic, directed by Ken Russell, and starring Gabriel Byrne as Byron.

A 1988 Spanish production, Rowing with the wind aka (Remando al viento), starring Hugh Grant as Byron.

A 1988 U.S.A. production Haunted Summer. Adapted by Lewis John Carlino from the speculative novel by Anne Edwards, starring Philip Anglim as Lord Byron.

The brief prologue to Bride of Frankenstein includes Gavin Gordon as Byron, begging Mary Shelley to tell the rest of her Frankenstein story.

Novelist Benjamin Markovits produced a trilogy about the life of Byron. Imposture (2007) looked at the poet from the point of view of his friend and doctor, John Polidori. A Quiet Adjustment (2008), is an account of Byron's marriage that is more sympathetic to his wife, Annabella. Childish Loves(2011) is a reimagining of Byron's lost memoirs, dealing with questions about his childhood and sexual awakening.

Byron is portrayed as an immortal in the book, Divine Fire, by Melanie Jackson.

In the comic thriller, Edward Trecom's Nose by Giles Milton, several of Edward's ancestors are poisoned, along with Byron.

In The Grim Adventures of Billy & Mandy episode "Ecto Cooler" (2005), the episode opens with a quote from Don Juan. Byron's ghost appears to instruct Billy on how to be cool.

In the novel The History of Lucy's Love Life in Ten and a Half Chapters, Lucy Lyons uses a time machine to visit 1813 and meet her idol, Byron.

Byron is depicted in Tennessee William's play Camino Real.

Byron's life is the subject of the 2003 made for television movie Byron starring Jonny Lee Miller.

Byron is depicted as the villain/antagonist in the novel Jane Bites Back written by Michael Thomas Ford, published by Ballantine Books, 2010. A novel based on the premise that Jane Austen (and Lord Byron) are Vampires living in the modern day literary world.

The play A Year Without A Summer by Brad C. Hodson is about Byron, Polidori, the Shelleys, and Claire Clairmont and the famous summer of 1816 at the Villa Diodati. As opposed to other works dealing with the same period, the play is more a biopic dealing with Byron's divorce and exile from England, than with the Shelleys' lives.

Lawrence Durrell wrote a poem called Byron as a lyrical soliloquy; it was first published in 1944.

Susanna Roxman's Allegra in her 1996 collection Broken Angels (Dionysia Press, Edinburgh) is a poem about Byron's daughter by Claire Clairmont. In this text, Byron is referred to as "Papa".

Dan Chapman's 2010 vampire novella The Postmodern Malady of Dr. Peter Hudson begins at the time of Lord Byron's death and uses biographical information about him in the construction of its title character. It also directly quotes some of his work.

Stephanie Barron's series of Jane Austen Mysteries has Lord Byron a suspect of murder in the 2010 book, Jane and the Madness of Lord Byron.

He appears in a parallel story line in the novel The Fire by Katherine Neville.

Byron is also a minor character in the ninth novel of L.A. Meyer's Bloody Jack series *The Mark of the Golden Dragon*.

Musical settings of, or music inspired by, poems by Byron

- 1820 – William Crathern: *My Boat is On the Shore* (1820), a setting for voice and piano of words from the poem *To Thomas More* written by Byron in 1817
c. 1820–1860 – Carl Loewe: 24 songs
1833 – Gaetano Donizetti: *Parisina*, opera
1834 – Hector Berlioz: *Harold en Italie*, symphony in four movements for viola and orchestra
1835 – Gaetano Donizetti: *Marino Faliero*, opera
1844 – Hector Berlioz: *Le Corsaire* overture (possibly also inspired by James Fenimore Cooper's *Red Rover* as the original title is *Le Corsaire Rouge*)
1844 – Giuseppe Verdi: *I due Foscari*, opera in three acts
1848 – Giuseppe Verdi: *Il corsaro*, opera in three acts
1849 – Robert Schumann: Overture and incidental music to *Manfred*
1849–54 – Franz Liszt: *Tasso, Lamento e trionfo*, symphonic poem
1885 – Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky: *Manfred Symphony* in B minor, Op. 58
1896 – Hugo Wolf: *Vier Gedichte nach Heine, Shakespeare und Lord Byron* for voice and piano: 3. Sonne der Schlummerlosen 4. Keine gleicht von allen Schönen
1916 – Pietro Mascagni: *Parisina*, opera in four acts
1934 – Germaine Tailleferre: Two Poems of Lord Byron (1. Sometimes in moments... 2. 'Tis Done I heard it in my dreams... for Voice and Piano (Tailleferre's only setting of English language texts)
1942 – Arnold Schoenberg: *Ode to Napoleon* for reciter, string quartet and piano
mid 1970s: Arion Quinn: *She Walks in Beauty*
1984 – David Bowie: Music video for *Blue Jean* and short promotional video for *Blue Jean*, *Jazzin'* for *Blue Jean* features him playing a rock star named *Screaming Lord Byron* (cf. *Screaming Lord Sutch*). His attire for the rock star mimics that of Lord Byron's in the portrait by Thomas Phillips.
1997 – Solefald: *When the Moon is on the Wave*
2002 – Ariella Uliano: *So We'll Go No More A'Roving*
2002 – Warren Zevon: *Lord Byron's Luggage*
2004 – Leonard Cohen: *No More A-Roving*
2005 – Cockfighter (band): *Destruction*
2006 – Kris Delmhorst: *We'll Go No More A-Roving*
2006 – Cradle Of Filth: *The Byronic Man* featuring HIM's Ville Valo
2008 – ALPHA 60: *The rock, the vulture, and the chain*
2008 – Schiller (band) has a song called "Nacht" with Ben Becker on its album, *Sehnsucht* (Schiller album), which has video on YouTube. The lyrics are a shortened version of a poem in German called *Die Seele* that is attributed to Lord Byron. It appears to be a translation of the Byron poem, "When coldness wraps this suffering clay" from the collection, *Hebrew Melodies*. The Identity of the translator/author of *Die Seele* is unknown although the text may be from "Lord Byrons Werke In sechs Bänden" translated by Otto Gildemeister, 3rd Volume, Fifth Edition, Berlin 1903 (pages 134–135).
2011 – Agustí Charles: *Lord Byron. Un estiu sense estiu. Opera en dos actes* (*Lord Byron. A summer without a summer. Opera in two actes*). Libretto in Catalan by Marc Rosich, world premiere at Staatstheater Darmstadt, March 2011.
Perth rock band Eleventh He Reaches London are named in reference to the eleventh canto of *Don Juan*, in which *Don Juan* arrives in London. Their debut album, *The Good Fight for Harmony* also featured a track entitled "What Would *Don Juan* Do?"

Works:

- Hours of Idleness (1807)
English Bards and Scotch Reviewers (1809)
Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Cantos I & II (1812)
The Giaour (1813)
The Bride of Abydos (1813)

The Corsair (1814)
Lara, A Tale (1814)
Hebrew Melodies (1815)
The Siege of Corinth (1816)
Parisina (1816)
The Prisoner of Chillon (1816)
The Dream (1816)
Prometheus (1816)
Darkness (1816)
Manfred (1817) (text on Wikisource)
The Lament of Tasso (1817)
Beppo (1818)
Childe Harold's Pilgrimage (1818)
Don Juan (1819–1824; incomplete on Byron's death in 1824)
Mazeppa (1819)
The Prophecy of Dante (1819)
Marino Faliero (1820)
Sardanapalus (1821)
The Two Foscari (1821)
Cain (1821)
The Vision of Judgment (1821)
Heaven and Earth (1821)
Werner (1822)
The Age of Bronze (1823)
The Island (1823)
The Deformed Transformed (1824)

Poems

The First Kiss of Love (1806)
Thoughts Suggested by a College Examination (1806)
To a Beautiful Quaker (1807)
The Cornelian (1807)
Lines Addressed to a Young Lady (1807)
Lachin y Garr (1807)
Epitaph to a Dog (1808)
Maid of Athens, ere we part (1810)
She Walks in Beauty (1814)
My Soul is Dark (1815)
When We Two Parted (1817)
Love's Last Adieu
So, we'll go no more a roving (1830)

A Fragment: When, To Their Airy Hall

When, to their airy hall, my father's voice
Shall call my spirit, joyful in their choice;
When, poised upon the gale, my form shall ride,
Or, dark in mist, descend the mountains side;
Oh! may my shade behold no sculptured urns,
To mark the spot where earth to earth returns!
No lengthen'd scroll, no praise-encumber'd stone;
My epitaph shall be my name alone:
If that with honour fail to crown my clay,
Oh! may no other fame my deeds repay!
That, only that, shall single out the spot;
By that remember'd, or with that forgot.

George Gordon Lord Byron

A Riddle, On The Letter E

The beginning of eternity, the end of time and space,
The beginning of every end, and the end of every place.

George Gordon Lord Byron

A Sketch

Born in the garret, in the kitchen bred,
Promoted thence to deck her mistress' head;
Next for some gracious service unexpress'd,
And from its wages only to be guess'd-
Raised from the toilette to the table,- where
Her wondering betters wait behind her chair.
With eye unmoved, and forehead unabash'd,
She dines from off the plate she lately wash'd.
Quick with the tale, and ready with the lie,
The genial confidante, and general spy,
Who could, ye gods! her next employ-ment guess--
An only infants earliest governess!
She taught the child to read, and taught so well,
That she herself, by teaching, learn'd to spell.
An adept next in penmanship she grows;
As many a nameless slander deftly shows.
What she had made the pupil of her art,
None know--but that high Soul secured the heart,
And panted for the truth it could not hear,
With longing breast and undeluded ear.
Foil'd was perversion by that youthful mind,
Which Flattery fool'd not, Baseness could not blind,
Deceit infect not, near Contagion soil,
Indulgence weaken, nor Example spoil,
Nor master'd Science tempt her to look down
On humbler talents with a pitying frown,
Nor Genius swell, nor Beauty render vain,
Nor Envy ruffle o retaliate pain,
Nor Fortune change, Pride raise, nor Passion bow,
Nor virtue teach austerity-till now.
Serenely purest of her sex that live,
But wanting one sweet weakness--to for-give,
Too shock'd at faults her soul can never know,
She deems that all could be like her be-low:
Foe to all vice, yet hardly Virtue's friend,
For Virtue pardons those she would amend.

But to the theme, now laid aside too long,
The baleful burthen of this honest song,
Though all her former functions are no more,
She rules the circle which she served before.

If mothers--none know why--before her quake;
If daughters dread her for the mothers' sake;
If early habits--those false links, which bind
At times the loftiest to the meanest mind-
Have given her power too deeply to instil
The angry essence of her deadly will;
If like a snake she steal within your walls,
Till the black slime betray her as she crawls;
If like a viper to the heart she wind,
And leave the venom there she did not find;

What marvel that this hag of hatred works
Eternal evil latent as she lurks,
To make a Pandemonium where she dwells,
And reign the Hecate of domestic hells?
Skill'd by a touch to deepen scandal's tints
With all the kind mendacity of hints,
While mingling truth with falsehood, sneers with smiles,
A thread of candour with a web of wiles:
A plain blunt show of briefly--spoken seaming,
To hide her bloodless heart's soul--harden'd scheming;
A lip of lies; a face form'd to conceal,
And, without feeling, mock at all who feel:
With a vile mask the Gorgon would disown ,
A cheek of parchment, and an eye of stone.
Mark, how the channels of her yellow blood
Ooze to her skin, and stagnate there to mud,
Cased like the centipede in saffron mail,
Or darker greenness of the scorpion's scale--
(For drawn from reptiles only may we trace
Congenial colours in that soul or face)
Look on her features! and behold her mind
As in a mirror of itself defined:
Look on the picture! deem it not o'ercharged
There is no trait which might not be enlarged:
Yet true to 'Nature's journeymen,' who made
This monster when their mistress left off trade--
This female dog-star of her little sky,
Where all beneath her influence droop or die.

Oh! wretch without a tear-without a thought,
Save joy above the ruin thou hast wrought--
The time shall come, nor long remote, when thou
Shalt feel far more than thou inflictest now;
Feel for thy vile self-loving self in vain,
And turn thee howling in unpitied pain.
May the strong curse of crush'd affections light
Back on thy bosom with reflected blight!
And make thee in thy leprosy of mind
As loathsome to thyself as to mankind!
Till all thy self-thoughts curdle into hate,
Black--as thy will for others would create:
Till thy hard heart be calcined into dust,
And thy soul welter in its hideous crust.
Oh, may thy grave be sleepless as the bed,
The widow'd couch of fire, that thou hast spread!
Then, when thou fain wouldest weary Heaven with prayer,
Look on thine earthly victims--and despair!
Down to the dust!--and, as thou rot'st away,
Even worms shall perish on thy poisonous clay.
But for the love I bore, and still must bear,
To her thy malice from all ties would tear--
Thy name--thy human name--to every eye

The climax of all scorn should hang on high,
Exalted o'er thy less abhor'd compeers--
And festering in the infamy of years.

George Gordon Lord Byron

A Spirit Passed Before Me [From Job]

A spirit passed before me: I beheld
The face of immortality unveiled--
Deep sleep came down on every eye save mine--
And there it stood,--all formless--but divine:
Along my bones the creeping flesh did quake;
And as my damp hair stiffened, thus it spake:

'Is man more just than God? Is man more pure
Than He who deems even Seraphs insecure?
Creatures of clay--vain dwellers in the dust!
The moth survives you, and are ye more just?
Things of a day! you wither ere the night,
Heedless and blind to Wisdom's wasted light!'

George Gordon Lord Byron

A Very Mournful Ballad On The Siege And Conquest Of Alhama

Which, in the Arabic language, is to the following purport:

I

THE Moorish King rides up and down,
Through Granada's royal town;
From Elvira's gate to those
Of Bivarambla on he goes.
Woe is me, Alhama!

II

Letters to the monarch tell
How Alhama's city fell:
In the fire the scroll he threw,
And the messenger he slew.
Woe is me, Albamal

III

He quits his mule, and mounts his horse,
And through the street directs his course;
Through the street of Zacatin
To the Alhambra spurring in.
Woe is me, Alhama!

IV

When the Alhambra walls he gain'd,
On the moment he ordain'd
That the trumpet straight should sound
With the silver clarion round.
Woe is me, Alhamal

V

And when the hollow drums of war
Beat the loud alarm afar,
That the Moors of town and plain
Might answer to the martial strain.
Woe is me, Alhama!

VI

Then the Moors, by this aware,
That bloody Mars recall'd them there,
One by one, and two by two,
To a mighty squadron grew.
Woe is me, Alhama!

VII

Out then spake an aged Moor
In these words the king before,
'Wherefore call on us, oh King?
What may mean this gathering?'
Woe is me, Alhama!

VIII

'Friends! ye have, alas! to know
Of a most disastrous blow;
That the Christians, stern and bold,
Have obtain'd Albania's hold.'
Woe is me, Alhama!

IX

Out then spake old Alfaqui,
With his beard so white to see,
'Good King! thou art justly served,
Good King! this thou hast deserved.
Woe is me, Alhama!

X

'By thee were slain, in evil hour,
The Abencerrage, Granada's flower;
And strangers were received by thee
Of Cordova the Chivalry.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XI

'And for this, oh King! is sent
On thee a double chastisement:
Thee and thine, thy crown and realm,
One last wreck shall overwhelm.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XII

'He who holds no laws in awe,
He must perish by the law;
And Granada must be won,
And thyself with her undone.'
Woe is me, Alhama!

XIII

Fire Crashed from out the old Moor's eyes,
The Monarch's wrath began to rise,
Because he answer'd, and because
He spake exceeding well of laws.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XIV

'There is no law to say such things
As may disgust the ear of kings:
'Thus, snorting with his choler, said
The Moorish King, and doom'd him dead.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XV

Moor Alfaqui! Moor Alfaqui!
Though thy beard so hoary be,
The King hath sent to have thee seized,

For Alhama's loss displeased.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XVI

And to fix thy head upon
High Alhambra's loftiest stone;
That thus for thee should be the law,
And others tremble when they saw.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XVII

'Cavalier, and man of worth!
Let these words of mine go forth!
Let the Moorish Monarch know,
That to him I nothing owe.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XVIII

'But on my soul Alhama weighs,
And on my inmost spirit preys;
And if the King his land hath lost,
Yet others may have lost the most.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XIX

'Sires have lost their children, wives
Their lords, and valiant men their lives!
One what best his love might claim
Hath lost, another wealth, or fame.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XX

'I lost a damsel in that hour,
Of all the land the loveliest flower;
Doubloons a hundred I would pay,
And think her ransom cheap that day.'
Woe is me, Alhama!

XXI

And as these things the old Moor said,
They sever'd from the trunk his head;
And to the Alhambra's wall with speed
'Twas carried, as the King decreed.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XXII

And men and infants therein weep
Their loss, so heavy and so deep;
Granada's ladies, all she rears
Within her walls, burst into tears.
Woe is me, Alhama!

XXIII

And from the windows o'er the walls
The sable web of mourning falls;
The King weeps as a woman o'er
His loss, for it is much and sore.
Woe is me, Alhama!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Address, Spoken At The Opening Of Drury-Lane Theatre. Saturday, October 10, 1812

In one dread night our city saw, and sigh'd,
Bow'd to the dust, the Drama's tower of pride
In one short hour beheld the blazing fane,
Apollo sink, and Shakspeare cease to reign.

Ye who beheld, (oh! sight admired and mourn'd,
Whose radiance mock'd the ruin it adorn'd!)
Through clouds of fire the massy fragments riven,
Like Israel's pillar, chase the night from heaven;
Saw the long column of revolving flames
Shake its red shadow o'er the startled Thames, While thousands, throng'd around the
burning dome,
Shrank back appall'd, and trembled for their home,
As glared the volumed blaze, and ghastly shone
The skies, with lightnings awful as their own,
Till blackening ashes and the lonely wall
Usurp'd the Muse's realm, and mark'd her fall;
Say - shall this new, nor less aspiring pile,
Rear'd where once rose the mightiest in our isle,
Know the same favour which the former knew,
A shrine for Shakspeare--worthy him and you?

Yes--it shall be--the magic of that name
Defies the scythe of time, the torch of flame;
On the same spot still consecrates the scene,
And bids the Drama be where she hath been:
This fabric's birth attests the potent spell--
Indulge our honest pride, and say, How well!

As soars this fare to emulate the last,
Oh! might we draw our omens from the past,
Some hour propitious to our prayers may boast
Names such as hallow still the dome we lost.
On Drury first your Siddons' thrilling art
O'erwhelm'd the gentlest, storm'd the sternest heart.
On Drury, Garrick's latest laurels grew;
Here your last tears retiring Roscius drew,
Sigh'd his last thanks, and wept his last adieu:
But still for living wit the wreaths may bloom,
That only waste their odours o'er the tomb.
Such Drury claim'd and claims--nor you refuse
One tribute to revive his slumbering muse;
With garlands deck your own Menander's head,
Nor hoard your honours idly for the dead.
Dear are the days which made our annals bright,
Ere Garrick fled, or Brinsley ceased to write.
Heirs to their labours, like all high-born heirs,
Vain of our ancestry as they of theirs;
While thus Remembrance borrows Banquo's glass
To claim the sceptred shadows as they pass,
And we the mirror hold, where imaged shine
Immortal names, emblazon'd on our line,

Pause--ere their feebler offspring you condemn,
Reflect how hard the task to rival them!

Friends of the stage! to whom both Players and Plays
Must sue alike for pardon or for praise.
Whose judging voice and eye alone direct
The boundless power to cherish or reject;
If e'er frivolity has led to fame,
And made us blush that you forbore to blame;
If e'er the sinking stage could condescend
To soothe the sickly taste it dare not mend,
All past reproach may present scenes re-fute,
And censure, wisely loud, be justly mute!
Oh! since your fiat stamps the Drama's laws,
Forbear to mock us with misplaced applause;
So pride shall doubly nerve the actor's powers,
And reason's voice be echo'd back by ours!

This greeting o'er, the ancient rule obey'd
The Drama's homage by her herald paid,
Receive our welcome too, whose every tone
Springs from our hearts, and fair would win your own.
The curtain rises--may our stage unfold
Scenes not unworthy Drury's days of old!
Britons our judges, Nature for our guide,
Still may we please--long, long may you preside.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Adieu, Adieu! My Native Shore

Adieu, adieu! my native shore
Fades o'er the waters blue;
The night-winds sigh, the breakers roar,
And shrieks the wild sea-mew.
Yon sun that sets upon the sea
We follow in his flight;
Farewell awhile to him and thee,
My native Land-Good Night!
A few short hours, and he will rise
To give the morrow birth;
And I shall hail the main and skies,
But not my mother earth.
Deserted is my own good hall,
Its hearth is desolate;
Wild weeds are gathering on the wall;
My dog howls at the gate.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Adrian's Address To His Soul When Dying

Ah! gentle, fleeting, wav'ring sprite,
Friend and associate of this clay!
To what unknown region borne,
Wilt thou now wing thy distant flight?
No more with wonted humour gay,
But pallid, cheerless, and forlorn.

[Animula! vagula, blandula,
Hospes comesque corporis,
Quæ nunc abibis in loca--
Pallidula, rigida, nudula,
Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos?]

George Gordon Lord Byron

All Is Vanity, Saieth the Preacher

I.

Fame, wisdom, love, and power were mine,
And health and youth possess'd me;
My goblets blush'd from every vine,
And lovely forms caress'd me;
I sunn'd my heart in beauty's eyes,
And felt my soul grow tender:
All earth can give, or mortal prize,
Was mine of regal splendour.

II.

I strive to number o'er what days
Remembrance can discover,
Which all that life or earth displays
Would lure me to live over.
There rose no day, there roll'd no hour
Of pleasure unembitter'd;
And not a trapping deck'd my power
That gall'd not while it glitter'd.

III.

The serpent of the field, by art
And spells, is won from harming;
But that which coils around the heart,
Oh! who hath pwer of charming?
It will not list to wisdom's lore,
Nor music's voice can lure it;
But there it stings for evermore
The soul that must endure it.

George Gordon Lord Byron

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George Gordon Lord Byron

An Occasional Prologue, Delivered Previous To The Performance Of 'The Wheel Of Fortune' At A Private Theatre

Since the refinement of this polish'd age
Has swept irnmortal raillery from the stage;
Since taste has now expunged licentious wit,
Which stamp'd disgrace on all an author writ;
Since now to please with purer scenes we seek,
Nor dare to call the blush from Beauty's cheek;
Oh! let the modest Muse some pity claim,
And meet indulgence, though she find not fame.
Still, not for her alone we wish respect,
Others appear more conscious of defect;
To-night no veteran Roscii you behold,
In all the arts of scenic action old;
No Cooke, no Kemble, can salute you here,
No Siddons draw the sympathetic tear;
To-night you throng to witness the début
Of embryo actors, to the Drama new:
Here, then, our almost unfledged wings we try;
Clip not our pinions ere the birds can fly:
Failing in this our first attempt to soar,
Drooping, alas! we fall to rise no more.
Not one poor trembler only fear betrays
Who hopes, yet almost dreads, to meet your praise,
But all our dramatis personæ wait
In fond suspense this crisis of their fate.
No venal views our prossress can retard,
Your generous plaudits are our sole reward.
For these, each Hero all his power displays,
Each timid Heroine shrinks before your gaze.
Surely the last will some protection find;
None to the softer sex can prove unkind
While Youth and Beauty form the female shield,
The sternest censor to the fair must yield.
Yet, should our feeble efforts nought avail,
Should, after all, our best endeavours fail,
Still let some mercy in your bosoms live,
And, if you can't applaud, at le'st forgive.

George Gordon Lord Byron

And Wilt Thou Weep When I Am Low?

And wilt thou weep when I am low?
Sweet lady! speak those words again:
Yet if they grieve thee, say not so--
I would not give that bosom pain.

My heart is sad, my hopes are gone,
My blood runs coldly through my breast;
And when I perish, thou alone
Wilt sigh above my place of rest.

And yet, methinks, a gleam of peace
Doth through my cloud of anguish shine:
And for a while my sorrows cease,
To know thy heart hath felt for mine.

Oh lady! blessd be that tear--
It falls for one who cannot weep;
Such precious drops are doubly dear
To those whose eyes no tear may steep.

Sweet lady! once my heart was warm
With every feeling soft as thine;
But Beauty's self hath ceased to charm
A wretch created to repine.

Yet wilt thou weep when I am low?
Sweet lady! speak those words again:
Yet if they grieve thee, say not so--
I would not give that bosom pain.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Answer To A Beautiful Poem, Entitled 'The Common Lot'

MONTGOMERY! true, the common lot
Of mortals lies in Lethe's wave;
Yet some shall never be forgot,
Some shall exist beyond the grave.

'Unknown the region of his birth,'
The hero rolls the tide of war;
Yet not unknown his martial worth,
Which glares a meteor from afar.

His joy or grief; his weal or woe,
Perchance may 'scape the page of fame;
Yet nations now unborn will know
The record of his deathless name.

The patriot's and the poet's frame
Must share the common tomb of all:
Their glory will not sleep the same;
That will arise, though empires fail.

The lustre of a beauty's eye
Assumes the ghastly stare of death;
The fair, the brave, the good must die,
And sink the yawning grave beneath

Once more the speaking eye revive,
Still beaming through the lover's strain;
For Petrarch's Laura still survives:
She died, but ne'er will die again.

The rolling seasons pass away,
And Time, untiring, waves his wing;
Whilst honour's laurel ne'er decay,
But bloom in fresh, unfading spring.

All, all must sleep in grim repose,
Collected in the silent tomb;
The old and young, with friends and foes,
Fest'ring alike in shrouds, consume.

The mouldering marble lasts its day,
Yet falls at length an useless fane;
To ruin's ruthless fangs a prey,
The wrecks of pillar'd pride remain.

What, though the sculpture he destroy'd,
From dark oblivion meant to ward;
A bright renown shall he enjoy'd
By those whose virtues claim reward

Then do not say the common lot
Of all lies deep in Lethe's wave;

Some few who ne'er will be forgot
Shall burst the bondage of the grave.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Answer To Some Elegant Verses Sent By A Friend To The Author, Complaining That One Of His Descriptions Was Rather Too Warmly Drawn

'But if any old lady, knight, priest or physician
Should condemn me for printing a second edition;
If good Madam Squintum my work should abuse,
May I venture to give her a smack of my muse?'~New Bath Guide.

CANDOUR compels me, BECHER! to commend
The verse which blends the censor with the friend.
Your strong yet just reproof extorts applause
From me, the heedless and imprudent cause.
For this wild error which pervades my strain,
I sue for pardon, — must I sue In vain?
The wise sometlrnes ftom Wisdom's ways depart:
Can youth then hush the dlctates of the heart?
Precepts of prudence curb, but can't control
The fierce emotions of the flowing soul.
When Love's delirium haunts the glowing mind
Limping Decorum lingers far behind:
Vainly the dotard mends her prudish pace,
Outstript and vanquish'd In the mental chase.
The young, the old, have worn the chains of love;
Let those they ne'er confined my lay reprove:
Let those whose souls Conternn the pleasing power
Their censures on the hapless victim shower.
Oh! how I hate the nerveless, frigid song,
The ceaseless echo of the rhyming throng,
Whose labour'd lines In chilling numbers flow,
To paint a pang the author ne'er can know!
The artless Helicon I boast is youth;—
My lyre, the heart; my muse, the simple truth.
Far be 't from me the 'vlrgin's stand' to 'taint':
Seduction's dread is here no slight restraint.
The maid whose virgin breast is void of guile,
Whose wishes dimple in a modest smile,
Whose downcast eye disdains the wanton leer,
Firzn in her virtue's strength, yet not severe
She whom a conscious grace shall thus refine
Will ne'er be 'tainted' by a strain of mine.
But for the nymph whose premature desires
Torment her bosom with unholy fires,
No net to snare her willing heart is spread
Sho would have fallen, though she ne'er had read.
For me, I fain would please the chosen few,
Whose souls, to feeling and to nature true,
Will spare the childish verse, and not destroy
The light effusions of a heedless boy.
I seek not glory from the senseless crowd;
Of fancied laurels I shall ne'er he proud;
Their warrnest plaudits I would scarcely prize,
Their sneers or censures I alike despise.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Away, Away, Ye Notes Of Woe!

Away, away, ye notes of woe!
Be silent, thou once soothing strain,
Or I must flee from hence--for, oh!
I dare not trust those sounds again.
To me they speak of brighter days
But lull the chords, for now, alas!
I must not think, I may not gaze,
On what I am--on what I was.

The voice that made those sounds more sweet
Is hush'd, and all their charms are fled
And now their softest notes repeat
A dirge, an anthem o'er the dead!
Yes, Thyrza! yes, they breathe of thee,
Beloved dust! since dust thou art;
And all that once was harmony
Is worse than discord to my heart!

'Tis silent all!--but on my ear
The well remember'd echoes thrill;
I hear a voice I would not hear,
A voice that now might well be still:
Yet oft my doubting soul 'twill shake;
Even slumber owns its gentle tone,
Till consciousness will vainly wake
To listen, though the dream be flown.

Sweet Thyrza! waking as in sleep,
Thou art but now a lovely dream;
A star that trembled o'er the deep,
Then turn'd from earth its tender beam.
But he who through life's dreary way
Must pass, when heaven is veil'd in wrath,
Will long lament the vanish'd ray
That scatter'd gladness o'er his path.

December 6, 1811.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Beppo, A Venetian Story

I.

'Tis known, at least it should be, that throughout
All countries of the Catholic persuasion,
Some weeks before Shrove Tuesday comes about,
The People take their fill of recreation,
And buy repentance, ere they grow devout,
However high their rank, or low their station,
With fiddling, feasting, dancing, drinking, masking,
And other things which may be had for asking.

II.

The moment Night with dusky mantle covers
The skies (and the more duskily the better),
The Time--less liked by husbands than by lovers--
Begins, and Prudery flings aside her fetter,
And Gaiety on restless tiptoe hovers,
Giggling with all the Gallants who beset her;
And there are Songs and quavers, roaring, humming,
Guitars, and every other sort of strumming.

III.

And there are dresses, splendid but fantastical,
Masks of all times and nations, Turks and Jews,
And Harlequins and Clowns, with feats gymnastical,
Greeks, Romans, Yankee-doodles, and Hindoos;
All kinds of dress, except the ecclesiastical,
All people, as their fancies hit, may choose,
But no one in these parts may quiz the Clergy,--
Therefore take heed, ye Freethinkers! I charge ye.

IV.

You'd better walk about begirt with briars,
Instead of Coat and smallclothes, than put on
A single stitch reflecting upon Friars,
Although you swore it only was in fun;
They'd haul you o'er the coals, and stir the fires
Of Phlegethon with every mother's son,
Nor say one Mass to cool the Caldron's bubble
That boil'd your bones--unless you paid them double.

V.

But saving this, you may put on whate'er
You like by way of doublet, cape, or cloak,
Such as in Monmouth Street, or in Rag Fair,
Would rig you out in Seriousness or Joke;
And even in Italy such places are
With prettier name in softer accents spoke,
For, bating Covent Garden, I can hit on
No place that's called 'Piazza' in Great Britain.

VI.

This feast is named the Carnival, which being

Interpreted implies 'Farewell to Flesh':
So call'd, because the name and thing agreeing,
Through Lent they live on fish, both salt and fresh.
But why they usher Lent with so much glee in
Is more than I can tell, although I guess
'Tis as we take a glass with friends at parting
In the Stage-Coach or Packet, just at starting.

VII.

And thus they bid farewell to Carnal dishes,
And solid meats, and highly spiced ragouts,
To live for forty days on ill-dress'd fishes,
Because they have no sauces to their stews--
A thing which causes many 'poohs' and 'pishes,'
And several oaths (which would not suit the Muse)
From travellers accustom'd from a boy
To eat their Salmon, at the least, with Soy;

VIII.

And therefore humbly I would recommend
'The Curious in Fish-Sauce,' before they cross
The Sea, to bid their Cook, or wife, or friend,
Walk or ride to the Strand, and buy in gross
(Or if set out beforehand these may send
By any means least liable to loss)
Ketchup, Soy, Chili-Vinegar, and Harvey,
Or, by the Lord! a Lent will well nigh starve ye.

IX.

That is to say, if your Religion's Roman,
And you at Rome would do as Romans do,
According to the proverb,--although No man
If foreign is obliged to fast, and you--
If Protestant, or sickly--or a woman--
Would rather dine in sin on a ragout--
Dine and be d____d! I don't mean to be coarse,
But that's the penalty, to say no worse.

X.

Of all the places where the Carnival
Was most facetious in the days of yore,
For dance, and song, and serenade, and ball,
And Masque, and Mime, and Mystery, and more
Than I have time to tell now, or at all,
Venice the bell from every city bore,
And at the moment when I fix my story,
That Sea-born City was in all her Glory.

XI.

They've pretty faces yet, those same Venetians,
Black eyes, arch'd brows, and sweet expressions still,
Such as of old were copied from the Grecians,

In ancient Arts by Moderns mimick'd ill;
And like so many Venuses of Titian's
(The best's at Florence--see it, if ye will),
They look when leaning over the Balcony;
Or stepp'd from out a picture by Giorgione,--

XII.

Whose tints are Truth and Beauty at their best;
And when you to Manfrini's palace go,
That Picture (howsoever fine the rest)
Is loveliest to my mind of all the show;
It may perhaps be also to your Zest,
And that's the cause I rhyme upon it so:
'Tis but a portrait of his Son and Wife
And Self; but such a Woman! Love in life!

XIII.

Love in full life and length, not Love ideal,
No, nor ideal Beauty, that fine name,
But something better still, so very real,
That the sweet Model must have been the same;
A thing that you would purchase, beg, or steal,
Were't not impossible, besides a shame;
The face recalls some face, as 'twere with pain,
You once have seen, but ne'er will see again.

XIV.

One of those forms which flit by us, when we
Are young, and fix our eyes on every face;
And, oh! the Loveliness at times we see
In momentary gliding, the soft grace,
The Youth, the Bloom, the Beauty which agree
In many a nameless being we retrace,
Whose course and home we knew not, nor shall know,
Like the lost Pleiad seen no more below.

XV.

I said that like a picture by Giorgione
Venetian women were, and so they are,
Particularly seen from a balcony
(For Beauty's sometimes best set off afar)
And there, just like a heroine of Goldoni,
They peep from out the blind, or o'er the bar;
And truth to say they're mostly very pretty,
And rather like to show it, more's the Pity!

XVI.

For glances beget ogles, ogles sighs,
Sighs wishes, wishes words, and words a letter,
Which flies on wings of light-heel'd Mercuries,
Who do such things because they know no better;
And then, God knows! what Mischief may arise,

When Love links two young people in one fetter:
Vile assignations, and adulterous beds,
Elopements, broken vows, and hearts, and heads.

XVII.

Shakespeare described the Sex in Desdemona
As very fair, but yet suspect in fame,
And to this day from Venice to Verona
Such matters may be probably the same,
Except that since those times was never known a
Husband whom mere Suspicion could inflame
To suffocate a wife no more than twenty,
Because she had a 'Cavalier Servente.'

XVIII.

Their jealousy (if they are ever jealous)
Is of a fair complexion altogether,
Not like that sooty devil of Othello's,
Which smothers women in a bed of feather,
But worthier of these much more jolly fellows,
When weary of the matrimonial tether
His head for such a wife no mortal bothers,
But takes at once another, or another's.

XIX.

Didst ever see a Gondola? For fear
You should not, I'll describe it you exactly:
'Tis a long cover'd boat that's common here,
Carved at the prow, built lightly, but compactly,
Row'd by two rowers, each call'd 'Gondolier,'
It glides along the water looking blackly,
Just like a Coffin clapt in a Canoe,
Where none can make out what you say or do.

XX.

And up and down the long Canals they go,
And under the Rialto shoot along
By night and day, all paces, swift or slow,
And round the theatres, a sable throng,
They wait in their dusk livery of woe,--
But not to them do woeful things belong,
For sometimes they contain a deal of fun,
Like Mourning Coaches when the funeral's done.

XXI.

But to my story.--'Twas some years ago,
It may be thirty, forty, more or less,
The Carnival was at its height, and so
Were all kinds of Buffoonery and dress;
A Certain Lady went to see the show,
Her real name I know not, nor can guess,
And so we'll call her Laura, if you please,

Because it slips into my verse with ease.

XXII.

She was not old, nor young, nor at the years
Which certain people call a 'certain Age,'
Which yet the most uncertain age appears,
Because I never heard, nor could engage
A person yet by prayers, or bribes, or tears,
To name, define by speech, or write on page,
The period meant precisely by that word,--
Which surely is exceedingly absurd.

XXIII.

Laura was blooming still, had made the best
Of Time, and Time return'd the compliment,
And treated her genteelly, so that, 'drest,
She look'd extremely well where'er she went;
A pretty woman is a welcome guest,
And Laura's brow a frown had rarely bent;
Indeed, she shone all Smiles, and seem'd to flatter
Mankind with her black eyes for looking at her.

XXIV.

She was a married woman; 'tis convenient,
Because in Christian countries 'tis a rule
To view their little slips with eyes more lenient;
Whereas if single ladies play the fool
(Unless within the period interventient
A well-timed wedding makes the scandal cool),
I don't know how they ever can get over it,
Except they manage never to discover it.

XXV.

Her husband sail'd upon the Adriatic,
And made some voyages, too, in other seas,
And when he lay in Quarantine for Pratique
(A forty days' precaution 'gainst disease),
His wife would mount, at times, her highest attic,
For thence she could discern the ship with ease;
He was a Merchant trading to Aleppo,
His name Giuseppe--call'd more briefly, Beppo.

XXVI.

He was a man as dusky as a Spaniard,
Sunburnt with travel, yet a portly figure;
Though colour'd, as it were, within a tan-yard,
He was a person both of sense and vigour--
A better Seaman never yet did man yard;
And She, although her manners show'd no rigour,
Was deem'd a woman of the strictest principle,
So much as to be thought almost invincible.

XXVII.

But several years elapsed since they had met;
Some people thought the ship was lost, and some
That he had somehow blunder'd into debt,
And did not like the thought of steering home;
And there were several offer'd any bet,
Or that he would, or that he would not come,
For Most Men (till by losing render'd sager)
Will back their own opinions with a wager.

XXVIII.

'Tis said that their last parting was pathetic,
As partings often are, or ought to be,
And their presentiment was quite prophetic,
That they should never more each other see,
(A sort of morbid feeling, half poetic,
Which I have known occur in two or three)
When kneeling on the shore upon her sad knee
He left this Adriatic Ariadne.

XXIX.

And Laura waited long, and wept a little,
And thought of wearing weeds, as well she might;
She almost lost all appetite for victual,
And could not sleep with ease along at night;
She deem'd the window-frames and shutters brittle
Against a daring House-breaker or Sprite,
And so She thought it prudent to connect her.
With a Vice-husband, chiefly to protect her.

XXX.

She chose, (and what is there they will not choose,
If only you will but oppose their choice?)
Till Beppo should return from his long cruise,
And bid once more her faithful heart rejoice,
A Man some women like, and yet abuse--
A Coxcomb was he by the public voice;
A Count of wealth, they said, as well as quality,
And (in his pleasures) of great liberality.

XXXI.

And then he was A Count, and then he knew
Music, and dancing, fiddling, French and Tuscan;
The last not easy, be it known to you.
For few Italians speak the right Etruscan.
He was a Critic upon Operas, too,
And knew all niceties of the sock and buskin;
And no Venetian audience could endure a
Song, scene, or air, when he cried 'Seccatura!'

XXXII.

His 'Bravo' was decisive—for that sound

Hush'd 'Academie' sigh'd in silent awe;
The fiddlers trembled as he look'd around,
For fear of some false note's detected flaw;
The 'Prima Donna's' tuneful heart would bound,
Dreading the deep damnation of his 'Bah!'
Soprano, Bass, even the Contra-Alto,
Wish'd him five fathom under the Rialto.

XXXIII.

He patronised the Improvisatori,
Nay, could himself extemporise some stanzas;
Wrote rhymes, sang songs, could also tell a story,
Sold pictures, and was skilful in the dance as
Italians can be--though in this their glory
Must surely yield the palm to that which France has;
In short, he was a perfect Cavaliero,
And to his very Valet seem'd a Hero.

XXXIV.

Then he was faithful too, as well as amorous;
So that no sort of female could complain--
Although they're now and then a little clamourous,
He never put the pretty souls in pain;
His heart was one of those which most enamour us,
Wax to receive, and Marble to retain:
He was a lover of the good old School,
Who still become more constant as they cool.

XXXV.

No wonder such accomplishments should turn
A female head, however sage and steady--
With scarce a hope that Beppo could return,
In law he was almost as good as dead, he
Nor sent, nor wrote, nor show'd the least concern,
And she had waited several years already;
And really if a Man won't let us know
That he's alive, he's dead, or should be so.

XXXVI.

Besides, within the Alps, to every woman,
(Although, God knows! it is a grievous sin)
'Tis, I may say, permitted to have two men;
I can't tell who first brought the custom in,
But 'Cavalier Serventes' are quite common,
And no one notices nor cares a pin;
And we may call this (not to say the worst)
A Second Marriage which corrupts the First.

XXXVII.

The word was formerly a 'Cicisbeo,'
But that is now grown vulgar and indecent;
The Spaniards call the person a 'Cortejo,'

For the same Mode subsists in Spain, though recent;
In short, it reaches from the Po to Teio,
And may perhaps at last be o'er the Sea sent;
But Heaven preserve Old England from such courses!
Or what becomes of damage and divorces?

XXXVIII.

However, I still think, with all due deference
To the fair single part of the Creation,
That married ladies should preserve the preference
In tête-à-tête or general conversation--
And this I say without peculiar reference
To England, France, or any other nation--
Because they know the world, and are at ease,
And being natural, naturally please.

XXXIX.

'Tis true, your budding Miss is very charming,
But shy and awkward at first coming out,
So much alarm'd, that she is quite alarming,
All Giggle, Blush--half Pertness, and half-Pout--
And glancing at Mamma, for fear there's harm in
What you, she, it, or they, may be about;
The nursery still lisps out in all they utter--
Besides, they always smell of Bread and Butter.

XL.

But 'Cavalier Servente' is the phrase
Used in politest circles to express
This supernumerary slave, who stays
Close to the lady as a part of dress--
Her word the only law which he obeys.
His is no Sinecure, as you may guess;
Coach, Servants, Gondola, he goes to call,
And carries fan and tippet, gloves and shawl.

XLI.

With all its sinful doings, I must say,
That Italy's a pleasant place to me,
Who love to see the Sun shine every day,
And vines (not nail'd to walls) from tree to tree
Festoon'd, much like the back Scene of a play,
Or Melodrame, which people flock to see
When the first act is ended by a dance
In Vineyards copied from the South of France.

XLII.

I like on Autumn evenings to ride out,
Without being forced to bid my Groom be sure
My Cloak is round his middle strapp'd about,
Because the skies are not the most secure;
I know too that, if stopp'd upon my route

Where the green alleys windingly allure,
Reeling with grapes red waggons choke the way--
In England 'twould be dung, dust, or a dray.

XLIII.

I also like to dine on Becaficas,
To see the Sun set, sure he'll rise tomorrow,
Not through a misty morning twinkling weak as
A drunken man's dead eye in maudlin sorrow,
But with all Heaven t' himself; the Day will break as
Beauteous as cloudless, nor be forced to borrow
That sort of farthing candlelight which glimmers
Where reeking London's smoky Caldron simmers.

XLIV.

I love the language, that soft bastard Latin,
Which melts like kisses from a female mouth,
And sounds as if it should be writ on satin,
With syllables which breathe of the sweet South,
And gentle liquids gliding all so pat in
That not a single accent seems uncouth--
Like our harsh Northern whistling, grunting guttural,
Which we're obliged to hiss, and spit, and sputter all.

XLV.

I like the women too (Forgive my folly!)
From the rich peasant cheek of ruddy bronze,
And large black eyes that flash on you a volley
Of rays that say a thousand things at once,
To the high Dama's brow, more melancholy,
But clear, and with a wild and liquid Glance,
Heart on her lips, and Soul within her eyes,
Soft as her clime, and Sunny as her skies.

XLVI.

Eve of the land which still is Paradise!
Italian Beauty! didst thou not inspire
Raphael, who died in thy embrace, and vies
With all we know of Heaven, or can desire
In what he hath bequeath'd us?--in what guise,
Though flashing from the fervour of the Lyre,
Would Words describe thy past and present Glow,
While yet Canova can create below?

XLVII.

'England! with all thy faults I love thee still!'
I said at Calais, and have not forgot it;
I like to speak and lucubrate my fill;
I like the Government (but that is not it);
I like the freedom of the press and quill;
I like the Hapeas Corpus (when we've got it);
I like a parliamentary debate,

Particularly when 'tis not too late;

XLVIII.

I like the taxes, when they're not too many;
I like a sea-coal fire, when not too dear;
I like a beef-steak, too, as well as any;
Have no objection to a pot of beer;
I like the weather--when it is not rainy--
That is, I like two months of every Year;
And so God save the Regent, Church, and King!
Which means that I like all and every thing.

XLIX.

Our standing Army, and disbanded Seamen,
Poor's rate, Reform, my own, the nation's debt,
Our little Riots just to show we're free men,
Our trifling Bankruptcies in the Gazette,
Our cloudy Climate, and our chilly Women;
All these I can forgive, and those forget,
And greatly venerate our recent glories,
And wish they were not owing to the Tories.

L.

But to my tale of Laura--for I find
Digression is a sin, that by degrees
Becomes exceeding tedious to my mind,
And, therefore, may the reader too displease--
The gentle reader--who may wax unkind,
And caring little for the Author's ease,
Insist on knowing what he means, a hard
And hapless situation for a Bard.

LI.

Oh that I had the art of easy writing
What should be easy reading! could I scale
Parnassus, where the Muses sit inditing
Those pretty poems never known to fail!
How quickly would I print (the world delighting)
A Grecian, Syrian, or Assyrian tale;
And sell you, mix'd with Western sentimentalism,
Some samples of the finest Orientalism.

LII.

But I am but a nameless sort of person
(A broken Dandy lately on my travels)
And take for Rhyme, to hook my rambling Verse on,
The first that Walker's Lexicon unravels,
And when I can't find that, I put a worse on,
Not caring as I ought for Critics' cavils;
I've half a mind to tumble down to prose,
But Verse is more in fashion--so here goes!

LIII.

The Count and Laura made their new arrangement,
Which lasted, as Arrangements sometimes do,
For half a dozen years without estrangement;
They had their little differences, too;
Those jealous whiffs, which never any change meant;
In such affairs there probably are few
Who have not had this pouting sort of squabble,
From Sinners of high station to the Rabble.

LIV.

But, on the whole, they were a happy pair,
As happy as unlawful love could make them;
The Gentleman was fond, the Lady fair,
Their chains so slight 'twas not worth while to break them;
The World beheld them with indulgent air;
The Pious only wish'd 'the Devil take them!'
He took them not; he very often waits,
And leaves old Sinners to be young ones' baits.

LV.

But they were young; Oh! what without our youth
Would Love be! What would youth be without love!
Youth lends it joy, and sweetness, vigour, truth,
Heart, soul, and all that seems as from above;
But, languishing with years, it grows uncouth--
One of few things Experience don't improve,
Which is perhaps the reason why old fellows
Are always so preposterously jealous.

LVI.

It was the Carnival, as I have said
Some six and thirty stanzas back, and so
Laura the usual preparations made,
Which you do when your mind's made up to go
To-night to Mrs. Boehm's Masquerade,
Spectator, or Partaker in the show;
The only difference known between the cases
Is here, we have six weeks of 'varnish'd faces.'

LVII.

Laura, when dress'd, was (as I sang before)
A pretty woman as was ever seen,
Fresh as the Angel o'er a new Inn door,
Or frontispiece of a new Magazine,
With all the Fashions which the last month wore,
Colour'd, and silver paper leaved between
That and the title-page, for fear the Press
Should soil with parts of speech the parts of dress.

LVIII.

They went to the Ridotto;--'tis a hall

Where people dance, and sup, and dance again--
Its proper name perhaps were a masqued Ball,
But that's of no importance to my strain;
'Tis (on a smaller scale) like our Vauxhall,
Excepting that it can't be spoilt by Rain;
The company is 'mix'd' (the phrase I quote is
As much as saying they're below your Notice).

LIX.

For a 'mix'd company' implies that, save
Yourself and friends and half a hundred more
Whom you may bow to without looking grave,
The rest are but a vulgar set--the Bore
Of public places, where they basely brave
The fashionable stare of twenty score
Of well-bred persons call'd 'The World'--but I,
Although I know them, really don't know why.

LX.

This is the case in England, at least was
During the dynasty of Dandies, now
Perchance succeeded by some other class
Of imitated Imitators :-- how
Irreparably soon decline, alas!
The Demagogues of fashion; all below
Is frail; how easily the World is lost
By Love, or War, and now and then by Frost!

LXI.

Crush'd was Napoleon by the northern Thor,
Who knock'd his army down with icy hammer,
Stopp'd by the Elements, like a Whaler, or
A blundering Novice in his new French grammar;
Good cause had he to doubt the chance of War,
And as for Fortune--but I dare not d____n her,
Because, were I to ponder to Infinity,
The more I should believe in her Divinity.

LXII.

She rules the present, past, and all to be yet;
She gives us luck in lotteries, love, and marriage;
I cannot say that she's done much for me yet,
Not that I mean her bounties to disparage--
We've not yet closed accounts--and we shall see yet
How much she'll make amends for past miscarriage.
Meantime the Goddess I'll no more importune,
Unless to thank her when she's made my fortune.

LXIII.

To turn--and to return, the Devil take it!
This Story slips for ever through my fingers,
Because, just as the Stanza likes to make it,

It needs must be, and so it rather lingers:
This form of verse began, I can't well break it,
But must keep time and tune like public Singers;
But if I once get through my present measure,
I'll take another when I'm at leisure.

LXIV.

They went to the Ridotto ('tis a place
To which I mean to go myself to-morrow,
Just to divert my thoughts a little space,
Because I'm rather hippish, and may borrow
Some spirits, guessing at what kind of face
May lurk beneath each mask; and as my sorrow
Slackens its pace sometimes, I'll make or find
Something shall leave it half an hour behind).

LXV.

Now Laura moves along the joyous crowd--
Smiles in her eyes, and simpers on her lips--
To some she whispers, others speaks aloud;
To some she curtsies, and to some she dips,
Complains of warmth and, this complaint avow'd,
Her lover brings the Lemonade she sips;
She then surveys, condemns, but pities still
Her dearest friends for being dress'd so ill.

LXVI.

One has false curls, another too much paint,
A third--where did She buy that frightful turban?
A fourth's so pale she fears she's going to faint,
A fifth's look's vulgar, dowdyish, and suburban,
A sixth's white silk has got a yellow taint,
A seventh's thin Muslin surely will be her bane,
And lo! an eighth appears--'I'll see no more!'
For fear, like Banquo's kings, they reach a score.

LXVII.

Meantime, while she was thus at others gazing,
Others were leveling their looks at her;
She heard the Men's half-whisper'd mode of praising,
And, till 'twas done, determined not to stir;
The women only thought it quite amazing
That, at her time of Life, so many were
Admirers still--but Men are so debased,
Those brazen creatures always suit their taste.

LXVIII.

For my part now, I ne'er could understand
Why naughty Women--but I won't discuss
A thing which is a Scandal to the land;
I only don't see why it should be thus;
And if I were but in a gown and band--

Just to entitle me to make a fuss--
I'd preach on this till Wilberforce and Romilly
Should quote in their next speeches from my homily.

LXIX.

While Laura thus was seen, and seeing, smiling,
Talking, she knew not why, and cared not what,
So that her female friends, with envy broiling,
Beheld her airs and triumph, and all that,
And well-dress'd males still kept before her filing,
And passing bow'd and mingled with her chat;
More than the rest, one person seem'd to stare
With pertinacity that's rather rare.

LXX.

He was a Turk, the colour of mahogany;
And Laura saw him, and at first was glad,
Because the Turks so much admire Phylogyny,
Although their usage of their wives is sad;
'Tis said they use no better than a dog any
Poor woman, whom they purchase like a pad;
They have a number, though they ne'er exhibit 'em,
Four Wives by law, and Concubines 'ad libitum.'

LXXI.

They lock them up, and veil and guard them daily;
They scarcely can behold their male relations,
So that their moments do not pass so gaily
As is supposed the case with Northern nations;
Confinement, too, must make them look quite palely;
And as the Turks abhor long conversations,
Their days are either pass'd in doing nothing,
Or bathing, nursing, making love, and clothing.

LXXII.

They cannot read--and so don't lisp in Criticism;
Nor write--and so they don't affect the Muse;
Were never caught in epigram or witticism,
Have no romances, sermons, plays, reviews--
In harams Learning soon would make a pretty schism!
But luckily these beauties are no 'Blues';
No bustling Botherbys have they to show 'em
'That charming passage in the last new poem!'

LXXIII.

No solemn Antique gentleman of rhyme,
Who, having angled all his life for Fame
And getting but a nibble at a time,
Still fussily keeps fishing on, the same
Small 'Triton of the Minnows,' the sublime
Of mediocrity, the furious tame,
The echo's Echo, usher of the School

Of female Wits, boy bards--in short, a fool!

LXXIV.

A stalking Oracle of awful phrase,
The approving 'Good!' (By no means GOOD in law)
Humming like flies around the newest blaze,
The bluest of Bluebottles you e'er saw,
Teasing with blame, excruciating with praise,
Gorging the little fame he gets all raw,
Translating tongues he knows not even by letter,
And sweating plays so middling, bad were better.

LXXV.

One hates an Author that's all Author, fellows
In foolscap uniforms turn'd up with ink,
So very anxious, clever, fine, and jealous,
One don't know what to say to them, or think,
Unless to puff them with a pair of Bellows;
Of Coxcombry's worst Coxcombs e'en the pink
Are preferable to these shreds of paper,
These unquench'd snufflings of the midnight taper.

LXXVI.

Of these same we see several, and of others,
Men of the World, who know the world like men,
Scott, Rogers, Moore, and all the better brothers
Who think of something else besides the pen;
But for the Children of the 'Mighty Mother's'--
The would-be Wits, and can't-be Gentlemen--
I leave them to their daily 'Tea is ready,'
Smug Coterie, and Literary Lady.

LXXVII.

The poor dear Mussulwomen whom I mention
Have none of these instructive, pleasant people,
And One would seem to them a new Invention,
Unknown as bells within a Turkish steeple;
I think 'twould almost be worth while to pension
(Though best-sown projects very often reap ill)
A Missionary Author, just to preach
Our Christian usage of the parts of Speech.

LXXVIII.

No Chemistry for them unfolds her gases,
No Metaphysics are let loose in lectures,
No Circulating Library amasses
Religious novels, moral tales, and strictures
Upon the living manners, as they pass us;
No Exhibition glares with annual pictures;
They stare not on the Stars from out their Attics,
Nor deal (thank God for that!) in Mathematics.

LXXIX.

Why I thank God for that is no great matter;
I have my reasons, you no doubt suppose,
And as perhaps they would not highly flatter,
I'll keep them for my life (to come) in prose;
I fear I have a little turn for Satire,
And yet, methinks, the older that one grows
Inclines us more to laugh than scold, though Laughter
Leaves us no doubly serious shortly after.

LXXX.

Oh, mirth and innocence! Oh, milk and water!
Ye happy mixtures of more happy days!
In these sad centuries of sin and slaughter,
Abominable Man no more allays
His thirst with such pure beverage. No matter,
I love you both, and both shall have my praise;
Oh, for old Saturn's reign of sugar-candy!
Meantime I drink to your return in Brandy.

LXXXI.

Our Laura's Turk still kept his eyes upon her,
Less in the Mussulman than Christian way,
Which seems to say, 'Madam, I do you honour,
And while I please to stare, you'll please to stay!'
Could staring win a woman, this had won her,
But Laura could not thus be led astray;
She had stood fire too long and well, is boggle
Even at this Stranger's most outlandish Ogle.

LXXXII.

The Morning now was on the point of breaking,
A turn of time at which I would advise
Ladies who have been dancing, or partaking
In any other kind of Exercise,
To make their preparations for forsaking
The Ball-room ere the Sun begins to rise,
Because when once the lamps and candles fail,
His Blushes make them look a little pale.

LXXXIII.

I've seen some balls and revels in my time,
And stay'd them over for some silly reason;
And then I look'd (I hope it was no crime)
To see what lady best stood out the Season;
And though I've seen some thousands in their prime,
Lovely and pleasing, and who still may please on,
I never saw but One (the stars withdrawn)
Whose bloom could, after dancing, dare the dawn.

LXXXIV.

The name of this Aurora I'll not mention,

Although I might, for She was nought to me
More than that patent work of God's invention,
A charming woman, whom we like to see;
But writing names would merit reprehension,
Yet if you like to find out this fair She,
At the next London or Parisian ball
You still may mark her cheek, out-blooming all.

LXXXV.

Laura, who knew it would not do at all
To meet the daylight after seven hours' sitting
Among three thousand people at a ball,
To make her curtsy thought it right and fitting;
The Count was at her elbow with her shawl,
And they the room were on the point of quitting,
When lo! those cursed gondoliers had got
Just in the very place where they should not.

LXXXVI.

In this they're like our Coachmen, and the cause
Is much the same--the Crowd, and pulling, hauling--
With blasphemies enough to break their jaws--
They make a never-intermittent bawling.
At home, our Bow Street Gem'men keep the laws,
And here a Sentry stands within your calling;
But for all that, there is a deal of swearing,
And nauseous words past mentioning or bearing.

LXXXVII.

The Count and Laura found their boat at last,
And homeward floated o'er the silent tied,
Discussing all the dances gone and past;
The Dancers and their dresses, too, beside.
Some little Scandals eke; but all aghast
(As to their palace-stairs the rowers glide)
Sate Laura by the side of her Adorer,
When lo! the Mussulman was there before her!

LXXXVIII.

'Sir!' said the Count, with brow exceeding grave,
'Your unexpected presence here will make
It necessary for myself to crave
Its import--but perhaps 'tis a mistake.
I hope it is so, and at once to waive
All compliment--I hope so for your sake;
You understand my meaning, or you shall.'
'Sir' (quoth the Turk), "tis no mistake at all:

LXXXIX.

'That Lady is my Wife!' Much wonder paints
The Lady's changing cheek, as well it might,
But where an Englishwoman sometimes faints,

Italian females don't do so outright;
They only call a little on their Saints,
And then come to themselves, almost or quite,
Which saves much hartshorn, salts, and sprinkling faces,
And cutting stays, as usual in such cases.

XC.

She said—what could she say? why, not a word:
But the Count courteously invited in
The Stranger, much appeased by what he heard;
'Such things perhaps we'd best discuss within,'
Said he, 'don't let us make ourselves absurd
In public, by a Scene, nor raise a din,
For then the chief and only satisfaction
Will be much quizzing on the whole transaction.'

XCI.

They enter'd, and for coffee call'd; it came,
A beverage for Turks and Christians both,
Although the way they make it's not the same.
Now Laura, much recover'd, or less loth
To speak, cries 'Beppo! what's your Pagan name?
Bless me! your beard is of amazing growth!
And how came you to keep away so long?
Are you not sensible 'twas very wrong?

XCII.

'And are you really, truly, now a Turk?
With any other women did you wive?
Is't true they use their fingers for a fork?
Well, that's the prettiest Shawl--as I'm alive!
You'll give it me? They say you eat no pork.
And how so many years did you contrive
To--Bless me! did I ever? No, I never
Saw a man grown so yellow! How's your liver?

XCIII.

'Beppo! that beard of yours becomes you not;
It shall be shaved before you're a day older;
Why do you wear it? Oh! I had forgot--
Pray don't you think the weather here is colder?
How do I look? You shan't stir from this spot
In that queer dress, for fear that some beholder
Should find you out, and make the story known.
How short your hair is! Lord! how grey it's grown!'

XCIV.

What answer Beppo made to these demands
Is more than I know. He was cast away
About where Troy stood once, and Nothing stands;
Became a Slave of course, and for his pay
Had bread and bastinadoes, till some bands

Of pirates landing in a neighbouring bay,
He join'd the rogues and prosper'd, and became
A Renegado of indifferent fame.

XCV.

But he grew rich, and with his riches grew so
Keen the desire to see his home again,
He thought himself in duty bound to do so,
And not be always thieving on the Main;
Lonely he felt at times as Robin Crusoe,
And so he hired a vessel come from Spain,
Bound for Corfu: she was a fine polacca,
Mann'd with twelve hands, and laden with tobacco.

XCVI.

Himself, and much (Heaven knows how gotten!) Cash,
He then embark'd, with risk of life and limb,
And got clear off, although the attempt was rash.
He said that Providence protected him;
For my part, I say nothing--lest we clash
In our opinions--well, the Ship was trim,
Set sail, and kept her reckoning fairly on,
Except three days of calm when off Cape Bonn.

XCVII.

They reach'd the Island, he transferr'd his lading
And self and live stock to another bottom,
And pass'd for a true Turkey-Merchant, trading
With goods of various names--but I've forgot 'em.
However, he got off by this evading,
Or else the people would perhaps have shot him;
And thus at Venice landed to reclaim
His wife, religion, house, and Christian name.

XCVIII.

His Wife received, the Patriarch re-baptised him
(He made the Church a present, by the way);
He then threw off the Garments which disguised him
And borrow'd the Count's small clothes for a day:
His friends the more for his long absence prized him,
Finding he'd wherewithal to make them gay,
With dinners--where he oft became the laugh of them;
For stories--but I don't believe the half of them.

XCIX.

Whate'er his Youth had suffer'd, his old Age
With wealth and talking made him some amends;
Though Laura sometimes put him in a rage,
I've heard the Count and He were always friends.
My pen is at the bottom of a page,
Which being finish'd, here the story ends;
'Tis to be wish'd it had been sooner done,

But Stories somehow lengthen when begun.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Bowles And Campbell

To the tune of 'Why, how now, saucy jade?'

Why, how now, saucy Tom?
If you thus must ramble,
I will publish some
Remarks on Mister Campbell.

ANSWER

Why, how now, Billy Bowles?
Sure the priest is maudlin!
(To the public) How can you, d--n your souls!
Listen to his twaddling?

George Gordon Lord Byron

Bright Be The Place Of Thy Soul!

Bright be the place of thy soul!
No lovelier spirit than thine
E'er burst from its mortal control
In the orbs of the blessed to shine.

On earth thou wert all but divine,
As thy soul shall immortally be;
And our sorrow may cease to repine,
When we know that thy God is with thee.

Light be the turf of thy tomb!
May its verdure like emeralds be:
There should not be the shadow of gloom
In aught that reminds us of thee.

Young flowers and an evergreen tree
May spring from the spot of thy rest:
But nor cypress nor yew let us see;
For why should we mourn for the blest?

George Gordon Lord Byron

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage: A Romaunt. Canto I.

To Ianthe:

Not in those climes where I have late been straying,
Though Beauty long hath there been matchless deem'd;
Not in those visions to the heart displaying
Forms which it sighs but to have only dream'd,
Hath aught like thee in truth or fancy seem'd:
Nor, having seen thee, shall I vainly seek
To paint those charms which varied as they beam'd --
To such as see thee not my words were weak;
To those who gaze on thee what language could they speak?
Ah! may'st thou ever be what now thou art,
Nor unbeseem the promise of thy spring,
As fair in form, as warm yet pure in heart,
Love's image upon earth without his wing,
And guileless beyond Hope's imagining!
And surely she who now so fondly rears
Thy youth, in thee, thus hourly brightening,
Beholds the rainbow of her future years,
Before whose heavenly hues all sorrow disappears.

Young Peri of the West!-'tis well for me
My years already doubly number thine;
My loveless eye unmov'd may gaze on thee,
And safely view thy ripening beauties shine;
Happy, I ne'er shall see them in decline,
Happier, that while all younger hearts shall bleed,
Mine shall escape the doom thine eyes assign
To those whose admiration shall succeed,
But mixed with pangs to Love's even loveliest hours decreed.

Oh! let that eye, which, wild as the Gazelle's,
Now brightly bold or beautifully shy,
Wins as it wanders, dazzles where it dwells,
Glance o'er this page; nor to my verse deny
That smile for which my breast might vainly sigh,
Could I to thee be ever more than friend:
This much, dear maid, accord; nor question why
To one so young my strain I would commend,
But bid me with my wreath one matchless lily blend.

Such is thy name with this my verse entwin'd;
And long as kinder eyes a look shall cast
On Harold's page, Ianthe's here enshrin'd
Shall thus be first beheld, forgotten last:
My days once number'd, should this homage past
Attract thy fairy fingers near the lyre
Of him who hail'd thee, loveliest as thou wast,
Such is the most my memory may desire;
Though more than Hope can claim, could Friendship less require?

CANTO THE FIRST

I.

Oh, thou, in Hellas deemed of heavenly birth,
Muse, formed or fabled at the minstrel's will!
Since shamed full oft by later lyres on earth,
Mine dares not call thee from thy sacred hill:
Yet there I've wandered by thy vaunted rill;
Yes! sighed o'er Delphi's long-deserted shrine
Where, save that feeble fountain, all is still;
Nor mote my shell awake the weary Nine
To grace so plain a tale--this lowly lay of mine.

II.

Whilome in Albion's isle there dwelt a youth,
Who ne in virtue's ways did take delight;
But spent his days in riot most uncouth,
And vexed with mirth the drowsy ear of Night.
Ah, me! in sooth he was a shameless wight,
Sore given to revel and ungodly glee;
Few earthly things found favour in his sight
Save concubines and carnal companie,
And flaunting wassailers of high and low degree.

III.

Childe Harold was he hight: --but whence his name
And lineage long, it suits me not to say;
Suffice it, that perchance they were of fame,
And had been glorious in another day:
But one sad losel soils a name for aye,
However mighty in the olden time;
Nor all that heralds rake from coffined clay,
Nor florid prose, nor honeyed lines of rhyme,
Can blazon evil deeds, or consecrate a crime.

IV.

Childe Harold basked him in the noontide sun,
Disporting there like any other fly,
Nor deemed before his little day was done
One blast might chill him into misery.
But long ere scarce a third of his passed by,
Worse than adversity the Childe befell;
He felt the fulness of satiety:
Then loathed he in his native land to dwell,
Which seemed to him more lone than eremite's sad cell.

V.

For he through Sin's long labyrinth had run,
Nor made atonement when he did amiss,
Had sighed to many, though he loved but one,
And that loved one, alas, could ne'er be his.
Ah, happy she! to 'scape from him whose kiss
Had been pollution unto aught so chaste;

Who soon had left her charms for vulgar bliss,
And spoiled her goodly lands to gild his waste,
Nor calm domestic peace had ever deigned to taste.

VI.

And now Childe Harold was sore sick at heart,
And from his fellow bacchanals would flee;
'Tis said, at times the sullen tear would start,
But pride congealed the drop within his e'e:
Apart he stalked in joyless reverie,
And from his native land resolved to go,
And visit scorching climes beyond the sea;
With pleasure drugged, he almost longed for woe,
And e'en for change of scene would seek the shades below.

VII.

The Childe departed from his father's hall;
It was a vast and venerable pile;
So old, it seemed only not to fall,
Yet strength was pillared in each massy aisle.
Monastic dome! condemned to uses vile!
Where superstition once had made her den,
Now Paphian girls were known to sing and smile;
And monks might deem their time was come agen,
If ancient tales say true, nor wrong these holy men.

VIII.

Yet ofttimes in his maddest mirthful mood,
Strange pangs would flash along Childe Harold's brow,
As if the memory of some deadly feud
Or disappointed passion lurked below:
But this none knew, nor haply cared to know;
For his was not that open, artless soul
That feels relief by bidding sorrow flow;
Nor sought he friend to counsel or condole,
Whate'er this grief mote be, which he could not control.

IX.

And none did love him: though to hall and bower
He gathered revellers from far and near,
He knew them flatterers of the festal hour;
The heartless parasites of present cheer.
Yea, none did love him--not his lemans dear -
But pomp and power alone are woman's care,
And where these are light Eros finds a feere;
Maidens, like moths, are ever caught by glare,
And Mammon wins his way where seraphs might despair.

X.

Childe Harold had a mother--not forgot,
Though parting from that mother he did shun;
A sister whom he loved, but saw her not

Before his weary pilgrimage begun:
If friends he had, he bade adieu to none.
Yet deem not thence his breast a breast of steel;
Ye, who have known what 'tis to dote upon
A few dear objects, will in sadness feel
Such partings break the heart they fondly hope to heal.

XI.

His house, his home, his heritage, his lands,
The laughing dames in whom he did delight,
Whose large blue eyes, fair locks, and snowy hands,
Might shake the saintship of an anchorite,
And long had fed his youthful appetite;
His goblets brimmed with every costly wine,
And all that mote to luxury invite,
Without a sigh he left to cross the brine,
And traverse Paynim shores, and pass earth's central line.

XII.

The sails were filled, and fair the light winds blew
As glad to waft him from his native home;
And fast the white rocks faded from his view,
And soon were lost in circumambient foam;
And then, it may be, of his wish to roam
Repented he, but in his bosom slept
The silent thought, nor from his lips did come
One word of wail, whilst others sate and wept,
And to the reckless gales unmanly moaning kept.

XIII.

But when the sun was sinking in the sea,
He seized his harp, which he at times could string,
And strike, albeit with untaught melody,
When deemed he no strange ear was listening:
And now his fingers o'er it he did fling,
And tuned his farewell in the dim twilight,
While flew the vessel on her snowy wing,
And fleeting shores receded from his sight,
Thus to the elements he poured his last 'Good Night.'

Adieu, adieu! my native shore
Fades o'er the waters blue;
The night-winds sigh, the breakers roar,
And shrieks the wild sea-mew.
Yon sun that sets upon the sea
We follow in his flight;
Farewell awhile to him and thee,
My Native Land--Good Night!

A few short hours, and he will rise
To give the Morrow birth;
And I shall hail the main and skies,

But not my mother earth.
Deserted is my own good hall,
Its hearth is desolate;
Wild weeds are gathering on the wall,
My dog howls at the gate.

'Come hither, hither, my little page:
Why dost thou weep and wail?
Or dost thou dread the billow's rage,
Or tremble at the gale?
But dash the tear-drop from thine eye,
Our ship is swift and strong;
Our fleetest falcon scarce can fly
More merrily along.'

'Let winds be shrill, let waves roll high,
I fear not wave nor wind;
Yet marvel not, Sir Childe, that I
Am sorrowful in mind;
For I have from my father gone,
A mother whom I love,
And have no friend, save these alone,
But thee--and One above.

'My father blessed me fervently,
Yet did not much complain;
But sorely will my mother sigh
Till I come back again.' -
'Enough, enough, my little lad!
Such tears become thine eye;
If I thy guileless bosom had,
Mine own would not be dry.

'Come hither, hither, my staunch yeoman,
Why dost thou look so pale?
Or dost thou dread a French foeman,
Or shiver at the gale?' -
'Deem'st thou I tremble for my life?
Sir Childe, I'm not so weak;
But thinking on an absent wife
Will blanch a faithful cheek.

'My spouse and boys dwell near thy hall,
Along the bordering lake;
And when they on their father call,
What answer shall she make?' -
'Enough, enough, my yeoman good,
Thy grief let none gainsay;
But I, who am of lighter mood,
Will laugh to flee away.'

For who would trust the seeming sighs

Of wife or paramour?
Fresh feeres will dry the bright blue eyes
We late saw streaming o'er.
For pleasures past I do not grieve,
Nor perils gathering near;
My greatest grief is that I leave
No thing that claims a tear.

And now I'm in the world alone,
Upon the wide, wide sea;
But why should I for others groan,
When none will sigh for me?
Perchance my dog will whine in vain
Till fed by stranger hands;
But long ere I come back again
He'd tear me where he stands.

With thee, my bark, I'll swiftly go
Athwart the foaming brine;
Nor care what land thou bear'st me to,
So not again to mine.
Welcome, welcome, ye dark blue waves!
And when you fail my sight,
Welcome, ye deserts, and ye caves!
My Native Land--Good Night!

XIV.

On, on the vessel flies, the land is gone,
And winds are rude in Biscay's sleepless bay.
Four days are sped, but with the fifth, anon,
New shores descried make every bosom gay;
And Cintra's mountain greets them on their way,
And Tagus dashing onward to the deep,
His fabled golden tribute bent to pay;
And soon on board the Lusian pilots leap,
And steer 'twixt fertile shores where yet few rustics reap.

XV.

Oh, Christ! it is a goodly sight to see
What Heaven hath done for this delicious land!
What fruits of fragrance blush on every tree!
What goodly prospects o'er the hills expand!
But man would mar them with an impious hand:
And when the Almighty lifts his fiercest scourge
'Gainst those who most transgress his high command,
With treble vengeance will his hot shafts urge
Gaul's locust host, and earth from fellest foemen purge.

XVI.

What beauties doth Lisboa first unfold!
Her image floating on that noble tide,
Which poets vainly pave with sands of gold,

But now whereon a thousand keels did ride
Of mighty strength, since Albion was allied,
And to the Lusians did her aid afford
A nation swell'n with ignorance and pride,
Who lick, yet loathe, the hand that waves the sword.
To save them from the wrath of Gaul's unsparing lord.

XVII.

But whoso entereth within this town,
That, sheening far, celestial seems to be,
Disconsolate will wander up and down,
Mid many things unsightly to strange e'e;
For hut and palace show like filthily;
The dingy denizens are reared in dirt;
No personage of high or mean degree
Doth care for cleanliness of surtout or shirt,
Though shent with Egypt's plague, unkempt, unwashed, unhurt.

XVIII.

Poor, paltry slaves! yet born midst noblest scenes -
Why, Nature, waste thy wonders on such men?
Lo! Cintra's glorious Eden intervenes
In variegated maze of mount and glen.
Ah me! what hand can pencil guide, or pen,
To follow half on which the eye dilates
Through views more dazzling unto mortal ken
Than those whereof such things the bard relates,
Who to the awe-struck world unlocked Elysium's gates?

XIX.

The horrid crags, by toppling convent crowned,
The cork-trees hoar that clothe the shaggy steep,
The mountain moss by scorching skies imbrowned,
The sunken glen, whose sunless shrubs must weep,
The tender azure of the unruffled deep,
The orange tints that gild the greenest bough,
The torrents that from cliff to valley leap,
The vine on high, the willow branch below,
Mixed in one mighty scene, with varied beauty glow.

XX.

Then slowly climb the many-winding way,
And frequent turn to linger as you go,
From loftier rocks new loveliness survey,
And rest ye at 'Our Lady's House of Woe;'
Where frugal monks their little relics show,
And sundry legends to the stranger tell:
Here impious men have punished been; and lo,
Deep in yon cave Honorius long did dwell,
In hope to merit Heaven by making earth a Hell.

XXI.

And here and there, as up the crags you spring,
Mark many rude-carved crosses near the path;
Yet deem not these devotion's offering -
These are memorials frail of murderous wrath;
For wheresoe'er the shrieking victim hath
Poured forth his blood beneath the assassin's knife,
Some hand erects a cross of mouldering lath;
And grove and glen with thousand such are rife
Throughout this purple land, where law secures not life!

XXII.

On sloping mounds, or in the vale beneath,
Are domes where whilom kings did make repair;
But now the wild flowers round them only breathe:
Yet ruined splendour still is lingering there.
And yonder towers the prince's palace fair:
There thou, too, Vathek! England's wealthiest son,
Once formed thy Paradise, as not aware
When wanton Wealth her mightiest deeds hath done,
Meek Peace voluptuous lures was ever wont to shun.

XXIII.

Here didst thou dwell, here schemes of pleasure plan.
Beneath yon mountain's ever beauteous brow;
But now, as if a thing unblest by man,
Thy fairy dwelling is as lone as thou!
Here giant weeds a passage scarce allow
To halls deserted, portals gaping wide;
Fresh lessons to the thinking bosom, how
Vain are the pleaasances on earth supplied;
Swept into wrecks anon by Time's ungentle tide.

XXIV.

Behold the hall where chiefs were late convened!
Oh! dome displeasing unto British eye!
With diadem hight foolscap, lo! a fiend,
A little fiend that scoffs incessantly,
There sits in parchment robe arrayed, and by
His side is hung a seal and sable scroll,
Where blazoned glare names known to chivalry,
And sundry signatures adorn the roll,
Wherat the urchin points, and laughs with all his soul.

XXV.

Convention is the dwarfish demon styled
That foiled the knights in Marialva's dome:
Of brains (if brains they had) he them beguiled,
And turned a nation's shallow joy to gloom.
Here Folly dashed to earth the victor's plume,
And Policy regained what Arms had lost:
For chiefs like ours in vain may laurels bloom!
Woe to the conquering, not the conquered host,

Since baffled Triumph droops on Lusitania's coast.

XXVI.

And ever since that martial synod met,
Britannia sickens, Cintra, at thy name;
And folks in office at the mention fret,
And fain would blush, if blush they could, for shame.
How will posterity the deed proclaim!
Will not our own and fellow-nations sneer,
To view these champions cheated of their fame,
By foes in fight o'erthrown, yet victors here,
Where Scorn her finger points through many a coming year?

XXVII.

So deemed the Childe, as o'er the mountains he
Did take his way in solitary guise:
Sweet was the scene, yet soon he thought to flee,
More restless than the swallow in the skies:
Though here awhile he learned to moralise,
For Meditation fixed at times on him,
And conscious Reason whispered to despise
His early youth misspent in maddest whim;
But as he gazed on Truth, his aching eyes grew dim.

XXVIII.

To horse! to horse! he quits, for ever quits
A scene of peace, though soothing to his soul:
Again he rouses from his moping fits,
But seeks not now the harlot and the bowl.
Onward he flies, nor fixed as yet the goal
Where he shall rest him on his pilgrimage;
And o'er him many changing scenes must roll,
Ere toil his thirst for travel can assuage,
Or he shall calm his breast, or learn experience sage.

XXIX.

Yet Mafra shall one moment claim delay,
Where dwelt of yore the Lusians' luckless queen;
And church and court did mingle their array,
And mass and revel were alternate seen;
Lordlings and freres--ill-sorted fry, I ween!
But here the Babylonian whore had built
A dome, where flaunts she in such glorious sheen,
That men forget the blood which she hath spilt,
And bow the knee to Pomp that loves to garnish guilt.

XXX.

O'er vales that teem with fruits, romantic hills,
(Oh that such hills upheld a free-born race!)
Whereon to gaze the eye with joyance fills,
Childe Harold wends through many a pleasant place.
Though sluggards deem it but a foolish chase,

And marvel men should quit their easy chair,
The toilsome way, and long, long league to trace.
Oh, there is sweetness in the mountain air
And life, that bloated Ease can never hope to share.

XXXI.

More bleak to view the hills at length recede,
And, less luxuriant, smoother vales extend:
Immense horizon-bounded plains succeed!
Far as the eye discerns, withouten end,
Spain's realms appear, whereon her shepherds tend
Flocks, whose rich fleece right well the trader knows -
Now must the pastor's arm his lambs defend:
For Spain is compassed by unyielding foes,
And all must shield their all, or share Subjection's woes.

XXXII.

Where Lusitania and her Sister meet,
Deem ye what bounds the rival realms divide?
Or e'er the jealous queens of nations greet,
Doth Tayo interpose his mighty tide?
Or dark sierras rise in craggy pride?
Or fence of art, like China's vasty wall? -
Ne barrier wall, ne river deep and wide,
Ne horrid crags, nor mountains dark and tall
Rise like the rocks that part Hispania's land from Gaul

XXXIII.

But these between a silver streamlet glides,
And scarce a name distinguisheth the brook,
Though rival kingdoms press its verdant sides.
Here leans the idle shepherd on his crook,
And vacant on the rippling waves doth look,
That peaceful still 'twixt bitterest foemen flow:
For proud each peasant as the noblest duke:
Well doth the Spanish hind the difference know
'Twixt him and Lusian slave, the lowest of the low.

XXXIV.

But ere the mingling bounds have far been passed,
Dark Guadiana rolls his power along
In sullen billows, murmuring and vast,
So noted ancient roundelays among.
Whilome upon his banks did legions throng
Of Moor and Knight, in mailed splendour drest;
Here ceased the swift their race, here sunk the strong;
The Paynim turban and the Christian crest
Mixed on the bleeding stream, by floating hosts oppressed.

XXXV.

Oh, lovely Spain! renowned, romantic land!
Where is that standard which Pelagio bore,

When Cava's traitor-sire first called the band
That dyed thy mountain-streams with Gothic gore?
Where are those bloody banners which of yore
Waved o'er thy sons, victorious to the gale,
And drove at last the spoilers to their shore?
Red gleamed the cross, and waned the crescent pale,
While Afric's echoes thrilled with Moorish matrons' wail.

XXXVI.

Teems not each ditty with the glorious tale?
Ah! such, alas, the hero's amplest fate!
When granite moulders and when records fail,
A peasant's plaint prolongs his dubious date.
Pride! bend thine eye from heaven to thine estate,
See how the mighty shrink into a song!
Can volume, pillar, pile, preserve thee great?
Or must thou trust Tradition's simple tongue,
When Flattery sleeps with thee, and History does thee wrong?

XXXVII.

Awake, ye sons of Spain! awake! advance
Lo! Chivalry, your ancient goddess, cries,
But wields not, as of old, her thirsty lance,
Nor shakes her crimson plumage in the skies:
Now on the smoke of blazing bolts she flies,
And speaks in thunder through yon engine's roar!
In every peal she calls--'Awake! arise!'
Say, is her voice more feeble than of yore,
When her war-song was heard on Andalusia's shore?

XXXVIII.

Hark! heard you not those hoofs of dreadful note?
Sounds not the clang of conflict on the heath?
Saw ye not whom the reeking sabre smote;
Nor saved your brethren ere they sank beneath
Tyrants and tyrants' slaves?--the fires of death,
The bale-fires flash on high: --from rock to rock
Each volley tells that thousands cease to breathe:
Death rides upon the sulphury Siroc,
Red Battle stamps his foot, and nations feel the shock.

XXXIX.

Lo! where the Giant on the mountain stands,
His blood-red tresses deepening in the sun,
With death-shot glowing in his fiery hands,
And eye that scorcheth all it glares upon;
Restless it rolls, now fixed, and now anon
Flashing afar,--and at his iron feet
Destruction cowers, to mark what deeds are done;
For on this morn three potent nations meet,
To shed before his shrine the blood he deems most sweet.

XL.

By Heaven! it is a splendid sight to see
(For one who hath no friend, no brother there)
Their rival scarfs of mixed embroidery,
Their various arms that glitter in the air!
What gallant war-hounds rouse them from their lair,
And gnash their fangs, loud yelling for the prey!
All join the chase, but few the triumph share:
The Grave shall bear the chiefest prize away,
And Havoc scarce for joy can cumber their array.

XLI.

Three hosts combine to offer sacrifice;
Three tongues prefer strange orisons on high;
Three gaudy standards flout the pale blue skies.
The shouts are France, Spain, Albion, Victory!
The foe, the victim, and the fond ally
That fights for all, but ever fights in vain,
Are met--as if at home they could not die -
To feed the crow on Talavera's plain,
And fertilise the field that each pretends to gain.

XLII.

There shall they rot--Ambition's honoured fools!
Yes, Honour decks the turf that wraps their clay!
Vain Sophistry! in these behold the tools,
The broken tools, that tyrants cast away
By myriads, when they dare to pave their way
With human hearts--to what?--a dream alone.
Can despots compass aught that hails their sway?
Or call with truth one span of earth their own,
Save that wherein at last they crumble bone by bone?

XLIII.

O Albuera, glorious field of grief!
As o'er thy plain the Pilgrim pricked his steed,
Who could foresee thee, in a space so brief,
A scene where mingling foes should boast and bleed.
Peace to the perished! may the warrior's meed
And tears of triumph their reward prolong!
Till others fall where other chieftains lead,
Thy name shall circle round the gaping throng,
And shine in worthless lays, the theme of transient song.

XLIV.

Enough of Battle's minions! let them play
Their game of lives, and barter breath for fame:
Fame that will scarce reanimate their clay,
Though thousands fall to deck some single name.
In sooth, 'twere sad to thwart their noble aim
Who strike, blest hirelings! for their country's good,
And die, that living might have proved her shame;

Perished, perchance, in some domestic feud,
Or in a narrower sphere wild Rapine's path pursued.

XLV.

Full swiftly Harold wends his lonely way
Where proud Sevilla triumphs unsubdued:
Yet is she free--the spoiler's wished-for prey!
Soon, soon shall Conquest's fiery foot intrude,
Blackening her lovely domes with traces rude.
Inevitable hour! 'Gainst fate to strive
Where Desolation plants her famished brood
Is vain, or Ilion, Tyre, might yet survive,
And Virtue vanquish all, and Murder cease to thrive.

XLVI.

But all unconscious of the coming doom,
The feast, the song, the revel here abounds;
Strange modes of merriment the hours consume,
Nor bleed these patriots with their country's wounds;
Nor here War's clarion, but Love's rebeck sounds;
Here Folly still his votaries entralls,
And young-eyed Lewdness walks her midnight rounds:
Girt with the silent crimes of capitals,
Still to the last kind Vice clings to the tottering walls.

XLVII.

Not so the rustic: with his trembling mate
He lurks, nor casts his heavy eye afar,
Lest he should view his vineyard desolate,
Blasted below the dun hot breath of war.
No more beneath soft Eve's consenting star
Fandango twirls his jocund castanet:
Ah, monarchs! could ye taste the mirth ye mar,
Not in the toils of Glory would ye fret;
The hoarse dull drum would sleep, and Man be happy yet.

XLVIII.

How carols now the lusty muleteer?
Of love, romance, devotion is his lay,
As whilome he was wont the leagues to cheer,
His quick bells wildly jingling on the way?
No! as he speeds, he chants 'Viva el Rey!'
And checks his song to execrate Godoy,
The royal wittol Charles, and curse the day
When first Spain's queen beheld the black-eyed boy,
And gore-faced Treason sprung from her adulterate joy.

XLIX.

On yon long level plain, at distance crowned
With crags, whereon those Moorish turrets rest,
Wide scattered hoof-marks dint the wounded ground;
And, scathed by fire, the greensward's darkened vest

Tells that the foe was Andalusia's guest:
Here was the camp, the watch-flame, and the host,
Here the brave peasant stormed the dragon's nest;
Still does he mark it with triumphant boast,
And points to yonder cliffs, which oft were won and lost.

L.

And whomsoe'er along the path you meet
Bears in his cap the badge of crimson hue,
Which tells you whom to shun and whom to greet:
Woe to the man that walks in public view
Without of loyalty this token true:
Sharp is the knife, and sudden is the stroke;
And sorely would the Gallic foemen rue,
If subtle poniards, wrapt beneath the cloak,
Could blunt the sabre's edge, or clear the cannon's smoke.

LI.

At every turn Morena's dusky height
Sustains aloft the battery's iron load;
And, far as mortal eye can compass sight,
The mountain-howitzer, the broken road,
The bristling palisade, the fosse o'erflowed,
The stationed bands, the never-vacant watch,
The magazine in rocky durance stowed,
The holstered steed beneath the shed of thatch,
The ball-piled pyramid, the ever-blazing match,

LII.

Portend the deeds to come: --but he whose nod
Has tumbled feebler despots from their sway,
A moment pauseth ere he lifts the rod;
A little moment deigneth to delay:
Soon will his legions sweep through these the way;
The West must own the Scourger of the world.
Ah, Spain! how sad will be thy reckoning day,
When soars Gaul's Vulture, with his wings unfurled,
And thou shalt view thy sons in crowds to Hades hurled.

LIII.

And must they fall--the young, the proud, the brave -
To swell one bloated chief's unwholesome reign?
No step between submission and a grave?
The rise of rapine and the fall of Spain?
And doth the Power that man adores ordain
Their doom, nor heed the suppliant's appeal?
Is all that desperate Valour acts in vain?
And Counsel sage, and patriotic Zeal,
The veteran's skill, youth's fire, and manhood's heart of steel?

LIV.

Is it for this the Spanish maid, aroused,

Hangs on the willow her unstrung guitar,
And, all unsexed, the anlace hath espoused,
Sung the loud song, and dared the deed of war?
And she, whom once the semblance of a scar
Appalled, an owlet's larum chilled with dread,
Now views the column-scattering bayonet jar,
The falchion flash, and o'er the yet warm dead
Stalks with Minerva's step where Mars might quake to tread.

LV.

Ye who shall marvel when you hear her tale,
Oh! had you known her in her softer hour,
Marked her black eye that mocks her coal-black veil,
Heard her light, lively tones in lady's bower,
Seen her long locks that foil the painter's power,
Her fairy form, with more than female grace,
Scarce would you deem that Saragoza's tower
Beheld her smile in Danger's Gorgon face,
Thin the closed ranks, and lead in Glory's fearful chase.

LVI.

Her lover sinks--she sheds no ill-timed tear;
Her chief is slain--she fills his fatal post;
Her fellows flee--she checks their base career;
The foe retires--she heads the sallying host:
Who can appease like her a lover's ghost?
Who can avenge so well a leader's fall?
What maid retrieve when man's flushed hope is lost?
Who hang so fiercely on the flying Gaul,
Foiled by a woman's hand, before a battered wall?

LVII.

Yet are Spain's maids no race of Amazons,
But formed for all the witching arts of love:
Though thus in arms they emulate her sons,
And in the horrid phalanx dare to move,
'Tis but the tender fierceness of the dove,
Pecking the hand that hovers o'er her mate:
In softness as in firmness far above
Remoter females, famed for sickening prate;
Her mind is nobler sure, her charms perchance as great.

LVIII.

The seal Love's dimpling finger hath impressed
Denotes how soft that chin which bears his touch:
Her lips, whose kisses pout to leave their nest,
Bid man be valiant ere he merit such:
Her glance, how wildly beautiful! how much
Hath Phoebus wooed in vain to spoil her cheek
Which glows yet smoother from his amorous clutch!
Who round the North for paler dames would seek?
How poor their forms appear? how languid, wan, and weak!

LIX.

Match me, ye climes! which poets love to laud;
Match me, ye harems! of the land where now
I strike my strain, far distant, to applaud
Beauties that even a cynic must avow!
Match me those houris, whom ye scarce allow
To taste the gale lest Love should ride the wind,
With Spain's dark-glancing daughters--deign to know,
There your wise Prophet's paradise we find,
His black-eyed maids of Heaven, angelically kind.

LX.

O thou, Parnassus! whom I now survey,
Not in the frenzy of a dreamer's eye,
Not in the fabled landscape of a lay,
But soaring snow-clad through thy native sky,
In the wild pomp of mountain majesty!
What marvel if I thus essay to sing?
The humblest of thy pilgrims passing by
Would gladly woo thine echoes with his string,
Though from thy heights no more one muse will wave her wing.

LXI.

Oft have I dreamed of thee! whose glorious name
Who knows not, knows not man's divinest lore:
And now I view thee, 'tis, alas, with shame
That I in feeblest accents must adore.
When I recount thy worshippers of yore
I tremble, and can only bend the knee;
Nor raise my voice, nor vainly dare to soar,
But gaze beneath thy cloudy canopy
In silent joy to think at last I look on thee!

LXII.

Happier in this than mightiest bards have been,
Whose fate to distant homes confined their lot,
Shall I unmoved behold the hallowed scene,
Which others rave of, though they know it not?
Though here no more Apollo haunts his grot,
And thou, the Muses' seat, art now their grave,
Some gentle spirit still pervades the spot,
Sighs in the gale, keeps silence in the cave,
And glides with glassy foot o'er yon melodious wave.

LXIII.

Of thee hereafter.--Even amidst my strain
I turned aside to pay my homage here;
Forgot the land, the sons, the maids of Spain;
Her fate, to every free-born bosom dear;
And hailed thee, not perchance without a tear.
Now to my theme--but from thy holy haunt

Let me some remnant, some memorial bear;
Yield me one leaf of Daphne's deathless plant,
Nor let thy votary's hope be deemed an idle vaunt.

LXIV.

But ne'er didst thou, fair mount, when Greece was young,
See round thy giant base a brighter choir;
Nor e'er did Delphi, when her priestess sung
The Pythian hymn with more than mortal fire,
Behold a train more fitting to inspire
The song of love than Andalusia's maids,
Nurst in the glowing lap of soft desire:
Ah! that to these were given such peaceful shades
As Greece can still bestow, though Glory fly her glades.

LXV.

Fair is proud Seville; let her country boast
Her strength, her wealth, her site of ancient days,
But Cadiz, rising on the distant coast,
Calls forth a sweeter, though ignoble praise.
Ah, Vice! how soft are thy voluptuous ways!
While boyish blood is mantling, who can 'scape
The fascination of thy magic gaze?
A cherub-hydra round us dost thou gape,
And mould to every taste thy dear delusive shape.

LXVI.

When Paphos fell by Time--accursed Time!
The Queen who conquers all must yield to thee -
The Pleasures fled, but sought as warm a clime;
And Venus, constant to her native sea,
To nought else constant, hither deigned to flee,
And fixed her shrine within these walls of white;
Though not to one dome circumscribeth she
Her worship, but, devoted to her rite,
A thousand altars rise, for ever blazing bright.

LXVII.

From morn till night, from night till startled morn
Peeps blushing on the revel's laughing crew,
The song is heard, the rosy garland worn;
Devices quaint, and frolics ever new,
Tread on each other's kibes. A long adieu
He bids to sober joy that here sojourns:
Nought interrupts the riot, though in lieu
Of true devotion monkish incense burns,
And love and prayer unite, or rule the hour by turns.

LXVIII.

The sabbath comes, a day of blessed rest;
What hallows it upon this Christian shore?
Lo! it is sacred to a solemn feast:

Hark! heard you not the forest monarch's roar?
Crashing the lance, he snuffs the spouting gore
Of man and steed, o'erthrown beneath his horn:
The thronged arena shakes with shouts for more;
Yells the mad crowd o'er entrails freshly torn,
Nor shrinks the female eye, nor e'en affects to mourn.

LXIX.

The seventh day this; the jubilee of man.
London! right well thou know'st the day of prayer:
Then thy spruce citizen, washed artizan,
And smug apprentice gulp their weekly air:
Thy coach of hackney, whiskey, one-horse chair,
And humblest gig, through sundry suburbs whirl;
To Hampstead, Brentford, Harrow, make repair;
Till the tired jade the wheel forgets to hurl,
Provoking envious gibe from each pedestrian churl.

LXX.

Some o'er thy Thamis row the ribboned fair,
Others along the safer turnpike fly;
Some Richmond Hill ascend, some scud to Ware,
And many to the steep of Highgate hie.
Ask ye, Boeotian shades, the reason why?
'Tis to the worship of the solemn Horn,
Grasped in the holy hand of Mystery,
In whose dread name both men and maids are sworn,
And consecrate the oath with draught and dance till morn.

LXXI.

All have their fooleries; not alike are thine,
Fair Cadiz, rising o'er the dark blue sea!
Soon as the matin bell proclaimeth nine,
Thy saint adorers count the rosary:
Much is the Virgin teased to shrieve them free
(Well do I ween the only virgin there)
From crimes as numerous as her beadsmen be;
Then to the crowded circus forth they fare:
Young, old, high, low, at once the same diversion share.

LXXII.

The lists are oped, the spacious area cleared,
Thousands on thousands piled are seated round;
Long ere the first loud trumpet's note is heard,
No vacant space for lated wight is found:
Here dongs, grandes, but chiefly dames abound,
Skilled in the ogle of a roguish eye,
Yet ever well inclined to heal the wound;
None through their cold disdain are doomed to die,
As moon-struck bards complain, by Love's sad archery.

LXXIII.

Hushed is the din of tongues--on gallant steeds,
With milk-white crest, gold spur, and light-poised lance,
Four cavaliers prepare for venturous deeds,
And lowly bending to the lists advance;
Rich are their scarfs, their chargers feately prance:
If in the dangerous game they shine to-day,
The crowd's loud shout, and ladies' lovely glance,
Best prize of better acts, they bear away,
And all that kings or chiefs e'er gain their toils repay.

LXXIV.

In costly sheen and gaudy cloak arrayed,
But all afoot, the light-limbed matadore
Stands in the centre, eager to invade
The lord of lowing herds; but not before
The ground, with cautious tread, is traversed o'er,
Lest aught unseen should lurk to thwart his speed:
His arms a dart, he fights aloof, nor more
Can man achieve without the friendly steed -
Alas! too oft condemned for him to bear and bleed.

LXXV.

Thrice sounds the clarion; lo! the signal falls,
The den expands, and expectation mute
Gapes round the silent circle's peopled walls.
Bounds with one lashing spring the mighty brute,
And wildly staring, spurns, with sounding foot,
The sand, nor blindly rushes on his foe:
Here, there, he points his threatening front, to suit
His first attack, wide waving to and fro
His angry tail; red rolls his eye's dilated glow.

LXXVI.

Sudden he stops; his eye is fixed: away,
Away, thou heedless boy! prepare the spear;
Now is thy time to perish, or display
The skill that yet may check his mad career.
With well-timed croupe the nimble coursers veer;
On foams the bull, but not unscathed he goes;
Streams from his flank the crimson torrent clear:
He flies, he wheels, distracted with his throes:
Dart follows dart; lance, lance; loud bellowings speak his woes.

LXXVII.

Again he comes; nor dart nor lance avail,
Nor the wild plunging of the tortured horse;
Though man and man's avenging arms assail,
Vain are his weapons, vainer is his force.
One gallant steed is stretched a mangled corse;
Another, hideous sight! unseamed appears,
His gory chest unveils life's panting source;
Though death-struck, still his feeble frame he rears;

Staggering, but stemming all, his lord unharmed he bears.

LXXVIII.

Foiled, bleeding, breathless, furious to the last,
Full in the centre stands the bull at bay,
Mid wounds, and clinging darts, and lances brast,
And foes disabled in the brutal fray:
And now the matadores around him play,
Shake the red cloak, and poise the ready brand:
Once more through all he bursts his thundering way -
Vain rage! the mantle quits the conyng hand,
Wraps his fierce eye--'tis past--he sinks upon the sand.

LXXIX.

Where his vast neck just mingles with the spine,
Sheathed in his form the deadly weapon lies.
He stops--he starts--disdaining to decline:
Slowly he falls, amidst triumphant cries,
Without a groan, without a struggle dies.
The decorated car appears on high:
The corse is piled--sweet sight for vulgar eyes;
Four steeds that spurn the rein, as swift as shy,
Hurl the dark bull along, scarce seen in dashing by.

LXXX.

Such the ungentle sport that oft invites
The Spanish maid, and cheers the Spanish swain:
Nurtured in blood betimes, his heart delights
In vengeance, gloating on another's pain.
What private feuds the troubled village stain!
Though now one phalanx host should meet the foe,
Enough, alas, in humble homes remain,
To meditate 'gainst friends the secret blow,
For some slight cause of wrath, whence life's warm stream must flow.

LXXXI.

But Jealousy has fled: his bars, his bolts,
His withered sentinel, duenna sage!
And all whereat the generous soul revolts,
Which the stern dotard deemed he could encage,
Have passed to darkness with the vanished age.
Who late so free as Spanish girls were seen
(Ere War uprose in his volcanic rage),
With braided tresses bounding o'er the green,
While on the gay dance shone Night's lover-loving Queen?

LXXXII.

Oh! many a time and oft had Harold loved,
Or dreamed he loved, since rapture is a dream;
But now his wayward bosom was unmoved,
For not yet had he drunk of Lethe's stream:
And lately had he learned with truth to deem

Love has no gift so grateful as his wings:
How fair, how young, how soft soe'er he seem,
Full from the fount of joy's delicious springs
Some bitter o'er the flowers its bubbling venom flings.

LXXXIII.

Yet to the beauteous form he was not blind,
Though now it moved him as it moves the wise;
Not that Philosophy on such a mind
E'er deigned to bend her chastely-awful eyes:
But Passion raves itself to rest, or flies;
And Vice, that digs her own voluptuous tomb,
Had buried long his hopes, no more to rise:
Pleasure's palled victim! life-abhorring gloom
Wrote on his faded brow curst Cain's unresting doom.

LXXXIV.

Still he beheld, nor mingled with the throng;
But viewed them not with misanthropic hate;
Fain would he now have joined the dance, the song,
But who may smile that sinks beneath his fate?
Nought that he saw his sadness could abate:
Yet once he struggled 'gainst the demon's sway,
And as in Beauty's bower he pensive sate,
Poured forth this unpremeditated lay,
To charms as fair as those that soothed his happier day.

TO INEZ.

Nay, smile not at my sullen brow,
Alas! I cannot smile again:
Yet Heaven avert that ever thou
Shouldst weep, and haply weep in vain.

And dost thou ask what secret woe
I bear, corroding joy and youth?
And wilt thou vainly seek to know
A pang even thou must fail to soothe?

It is not love, it is not hate,
Nor low Ambition's honours lost,
That bids me loathe my present state,
And fly from all I prized the most:

It is that weariness which springs
From all I meet, or hear, or see:
To me no pleasure Beauty brings;
Thine eyes have scarce a charm for me.

It is that settled, ceaseless gloom
The fabled Hebrew wanderer bore,
That will not look beyond the tomb,

But cannot hope for rest before.

What exile from himself can flee?
To zones, though more and more remote,
Still, still pursues, where'er I be,
The blight of life--the demon Thought.

Yet others rapt in pleasure seem,
And taste of all that I forsake:
Oh! may they still of transport dream,
And ne'er, at least like me, awake!

Through many a clime 'tis mine to go,
With many a retrospection curst;
And all my solace is to know,
Whate'er betides, I've known the worst.

What is that worst? Nay, do not ask -
In pity from the search forbear:
Smile on--nor venture to unmask
Man's heart, and view the hell that's there.

LXXXV.

Adieu, fair Cadiz! yea, a long adieu!
Who may forget how well thy walls have stood?
When all were changing, thou alone wert true,
First to be free, and last to be subdued.
And if amidst a scene, a shock so rude,
Some native blood was seen thy streets to dye,
A traitor only fell beneath the feud:
Here all were noble, save nobility;
None hugged a conqueror's chain save fallen Chivalry!

LXXXVI.

Such be the sons of Spain, and strange her fate!
They fight for freedom, who were never free;
A kingless people for a nerveless state,
Her vassals combat when their chieftains flee,
True to the veriest slaves of Treachery;
Fond of a land which gave them nought but life,
Pride points the path that leads to liberty;
Back to the struggle, baffled in the strife,
War, war is still the cry, 'War even to the knife!'

LXXXVII.

Ye, who would more of Spain and Spaniards know,
Go, read whate'er is writ of bloodiest strife:
Whate'er keen Vengeance urged on foreign foe
Can act, is acting there against man's life:
From flashing scimitar to secret knife,
War mouldeth there each weapon to his need -
So may he guard the sister and the wife,

So may he make each curst oppressor bleed,
So may such foes deserve the most remorseless deed!

LXXXVIII.

Flows there a tear of pity for the dead?
Look o'er the ravage of the reeking plain:
Look on the hands with female slaughter red;
Then to the dogs resign the unburied slain,
Then to the vulture let each corse remain;
Albeit unworthy of the prey-bird's maw,
Let their bleached bones, and blood's unbleaching stain,
Long mark the battle-field with hideous awe:
Thus only may our sons conceive the scenes we saw!

LXXXIX.

Nor yet, alas, the dreadful work is done;
Fresh legions pour adown the Pyrenees:
It deepens still, the work is scarce begun,
Nor mortal eye the distant end foresees.
Fall'n nations gaze on Spain: if freed, she frees
More than her fell Pizarros once enchain'd.
Strange retribution! now Columbia's ease
Repairs the wrongs that Quito's sons sustained,
While o'er the parent clime prowls Murder unrestrained.

XC.

Not all the blood at Talavera shed,
Not all the marvels of Barossa's fight,
Not Albuera lavish of the dead,
Have won for Spain her well-asserted right.
When shall her Olive-Branch be free from blight?
When shall she breathe her from the blushing toil?
How many a doubtful day shall sink in night,
Ere the Frank robber turn him from his spoil,
And Freedom's stranger-tree grow native of the soil?

XCI.

And thou, my friend! since unavailing woe
Bursts from my heart, and mingleth with the strain -
Had the sword laid thee with the mighty low,
Pride might forbid e'en Friendship to complain:
But thus unlaurelled to descend in vain,
By all forgotten, save the lonely breast,
And mix unbleeding with the boasted slain,
While glory crowns so many a meaner crest!
What hadst thou done, to sink so peacefully to rest?

XCII.

Oh, known the earliest, and esteemed the most!
Dear to a heart where nought was left so dear!
Though to my hopeless days for ever lost,
In dreams deny me not to see thee here!

And Morn in secret shall renew the tear
Of Consciousness awaking to her woes,
And Fancy hover o'er thy bloodless bier,
Till my frail frame return to whence it rose,
And mourned and mourner lie united in repose.

XCIII.

Here is one fytte of Harold's pilgrimage.
Ye who of him may further seek to know,
Shall find some tidings in a future page,
If he that rhymeth now may scribble moe.
Is this too much? Stern critic, say not so:
Patience! and ye shall hear what he beheld
In other lands, where he was doomed to go:
Lands that contain the monuments of eld,
Ere Greece and Grecian arts by barbarous hands were quelled.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage: A Romaunt. Canto IV.

I.

I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
A palace and a prison on each hand:
I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
O'er the far times, when many a subject land
Look'd to the winged Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, thron'd on her hundred isles!

II.

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from ocean,
Rising with her tiara of proud towers
At airy distance, with majestic motion,
A ruler of the waters and their powers:
And such she was; her daughters had their dowers
From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East
Pour'd in her lap all gems in sparkling showers.
In purple was she rob'd, and of her feast
Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dignity increas'd.

III.

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,
And silent rows the songless gondolier;
Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
And music meets not always now the ear:
Those days are gone -- but Beauty still is here.
States fall, arts fade -- but Nature doth not die,
Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear,
The pleasant place of all festivity,
The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy!

IV.

But unto us she hath a spell beyond
Her name in story, and her long array
Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond
Above the dogeless city's vanish'd sway;
Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor,
And Pierre, cannot be swept or worn away --
The keystones of the arch! though all were o'er,
For us repeopl'd were the solitary shore.

V.

The beings of the mind are not of clay;
Essentially immortal, they create
And multiply in us a brighter ray
And more belov'd existence: that which Fate
Prohibits to dull life, in this our state
Of mortal bondage, by these spirits supplied,
First exiles, then replaces what we hate;

Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,
And with a fresher growth replenishing the void.

VI.

Such is the refuge of our youth and age,
The first from Hope, the last from Vacancy;
And this worn feeling peoples many a page,
And, maybe, that which grows beneath mine eye:
Yet there are things whose strong reality
Outshines our fairy-land; in shape and hues
More beautiful than our fantastic sky,
And the strange constellations which the Muse
O'er her wild universe is skilful to diffuse:

VII.

I saw or dream'd of such -- but let them go;
They came like truth -- and disappear'd like dreams;
And whatsoe'er they were -- are now but so:
I could replace them if I would; still teems
My mind with many a form which aptly seems
Such as I sought for, and at moments found;
Let these too go -- for waking Reason deems
Such overweening fantasies unsound,
And other voices speak, and other sights surround.

VIII.

I've taught me other tongues, and in strange eyes
Have made me not a stranger; to the mind
Which is itself, no changes bring surprise;
Nor is it harsh to make, nor hard to find
A country with -- ay, or without mankind;
Yet was I born where men are proud to be --
Not without cause; and should I leave behind
The inviolate island of the sage and free,
And seek me out a home by a remoter sea,

IX.

Perhaps I lov'd it well: and should I lay
My ashes in a soil which is not mine,
My spirit shall resume it -- if we may
Unbodied choose a sanctuary. I twine
My hopes of being remember'd in my line
With my land's language: if too fond and far
These aspirations in their scope incline,
If my fame should be, as my fortunes are,
Of hasty growth and blight, and dull Oblivion bar

X.

My name from out the temple where the dead
Are honour'd by the nations -- let it be --
And light the laurels on a loftier head!
And be the Spartan's epitaph on me --

'Sparta hath many a worthier son than he.'
Meantime I seek no sympathies, nor need;
The thorns which I have reap'd are of the tree
I planted: they have torn me, and I bleed:
I should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed.

XI.

The spouseless Adriatic mourns her lord;
And annual marriage now no more renew'd,
The Bucentaur lies rotting unrestored,
Neglected garment of her widowhood!
St. Mark yet sees his lion where he stood
Stand, but in mockery of his wither'd power,
Over he proud Place where an Emperor sued,
And monarchs gaz'd and envied in the hour
When Venice was a queen with an unequall'd dower.

XII.

The Suabian sued, and now the Austrian reigns --
An Emperor tramples where an Emperor knelt;
Kingdoms are shrunk to provinces, and chains
Clank over sceptred cities, nations melt
From power's high pinnacle, when they have felt
The sunshine for a while, and downward go
Like Lauwine loosen'd from the mountain's belt;
Oh for one hour of blind old Dandolo!
Th' octogenarian chief, Byzantium's conquering foe!

XIII.

Before St. Mark still glow his steeds of brass,
Their gilded collars glittering in the sun;
But is not Doria's menace come to pass?
Are they not bridled? -- Venice, lost and won,
Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,
Sinks, like a sea-weed, into whence she rose!
Better be whelm'd beneath the waves, and shun,
Even in destruction's depth, her foreign foes,
From whom submission wrings an infamous repose.

XIV.

In youth she was all glory, a new Tyre,
Her very by-word sprung from victory,
The 'Planter of the Lion,' which through fire
And blood she bore o'er subject earth and sea;
Though making many slaves, herself still free,
And Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite;
Witness Troy's rival, Candia! Vouch it, ye
Immortal waves that saw Lepanto's fight!
For ye are names no time nor tyranny can blight.

XV.

Statues of glass -- all shiver'd -- the long file

Of her dead Doges are declin'd to dust;
But where they dwelt, the vast and sumptuous pile
Bespeaks the pageant of their splendid trust;
Their sceptre broken, and their sword in rust,
Have yielded to the stranger: empty halls,
Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such as must
Too oft remind her who and what enthralls,
Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice' lovely walls.

XVI.

When Athens' armies fell at Syracuse,
And fetter'd thousands bore the yoke of war,
Redemption rose up in the Attic Muse,
Her voice their only ransom from afar:
See! as they chant the tragic hymn, the car
Of the o'er master'd victor stops, the reins
Fall from his hands -- his idle scimitar
Starts from its belt -- he rends his captive's chains,
And bids him thank the bard for freedom and his strains.

XVII.

Thus, Venice! if no stronger claim were thine,
Were all thy proud historic deeds forgot,
Thy choral memory of the Bard divine,
Thy love of Tasso, should have cut the knot
Which ties thee to thy tyrants; and thy lot
Is shameful to the nations -- most of all,
Albion, to thee: the Ocean queen should not
Abandon Ocean's children; in the fall
Of Venice think of thine, despite thy watery wall.

XVIII.

I loved her from my boyhood; she to me
Was as a fairy city of the heart,
Rising like water-columns from the sea,
Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the mart;
And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakespeare's art,
Had stamp'd her image in me, and even so,
Although I found her thus, we did not part;
Perchance even dearer in her day of woe,
Than when she was a boast, a marvel, and a show.

XIX.

I can repeople with the past -- and of
The present there is still for eye and thought,
And meditation chasten'd down, enough;
And more, it may be, than I hoped or sought;
And of the happiest moments which were wrought
Within the web of my existence, some
From thee, fair Venice! have their colours caught:
There are some feelings Time cannot benumb,
Nor Torture shake, or mine would now be cold and dumb.

XX.

But from their nature will the Tannen grow
Loftiest on loftiest and least shelter'd rocks,
Rooted in barrenness, where nought below
Of soil supports them 'gainst the Alpine shocks
Of eddying storms; yet springs the trunk, and mocks
The howling tempest, till its height and frame
Are worthy of the mountains from whose blocks
Of bleak, gray granite into life it came,
And grew a giant tree; -- the mind may grow the same.

XXI

Existence may be borne, and the deep root
Of life and sufferance make its firm abode
The bare and desolated bosoms: mute
The camel labours with the heaviest load,
And the wolf dies in silence, -- not bestow'd
In vain should such example be; if they,
Things of ignoble or of savage mood,
Endure and shrink not, we of nobler clay
May temper it to bear, -- it is but for a day.

XXII

All suffering doth destroy, or is destroy'd,
Even by the sufferer; and, in each event,
Ends: -- Some, with hope replenish'd and rebuoy'd,
Return to whence they came -- with like intent,
And weave their web again; some, bow'd and bent,
Wax gray and ghastly, withering ere their time,
And perish with the reed on which they leant;
Some seek devotion, toil, war, good or crime,
According as their souls were form'd to sink or climb.

XXIII

But ever and anon of griefs subdued
There comes a token like a scorpion's sting,
Scarce seen, but with fresh bitterness imbued;
And slight withal may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
Aside for ever: it may be a sound --
A tone of music -- summer's eve -- or spring --
A flower -- the wind -- the ocean -- which shall wound,
Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound;

XXIV

And how and why we know not, nor can trace
Home to its cloud this lightning of the mind,
But feel the shock renew'd, nor can efface
The blight and blackening which it leaves behind,
Which out of things familiar, undesign'd,
When least we deem of such, calls up to view

The spectres whom no exorcism can bind, --
The cold, the changed, perchance the dead -- anew,
The mourn'd, the loved, the lost -- too many! yet how few!

XXV

But my soul wanders: I demand it back
To meditate amongst decay, and stand
A ruin amidst ruins; there to track
Fall'n states and buried greatness, o'er a land
Which was the mightiest in its old command,
And is the loveliest, and must ever be
The master mould of Nature's heavenly hand;
Wherein were cast the heroic and the free,
The beautiful, the brave, the lords of earth and sea,

XXVI

The commonwealth of kings, the men of Rome!
And even since, and now, fair Italy!
Thou art the garden of the world, the home
Of all Art yields, and Nature can decree;
Even in thy desert, what is like to thee?
Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
More rich than other climes' fertility;
Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced
With an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced.

XXVII

The moon is up, and yet it is not night;
Sunset divides the sky with her; a sea
Of glory streams along the Alpine height
Of blue Friuli's mountains; Heaven is free
From clouds, but of all colours seems to be, --
Melted to one vast Iris of the West, --
Where the Day joins the past Eternity,
While, on the other hand, meek Dian's crest
Floats through the azure air -- an island of the blest!

XXVIII

A single star is at her side, and reigns
With her o'er half the lovely heaven; but still
Yon sunny sea heaves brightly, and remains
Roll'd o'er the peak of the far Rhætian hill,
As Day and Night contending were, until
Nature reclaim'd her order: -- gently flows
The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues instil
The odorous purple of a new-born rose,
Which streams upon her stream, and glass'd within it glows,

XXIX

Fill'd with the face of heaven, which, from afar,
Comes down upon the waters; all its hues,
From the rich sunset to the rising star,

Their magical variety diffuse:
And now they change; a paler shadow strews
Its mantle o'er the mountains; parting day
Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang imbues
With a new colour as it gasps away --
The last still loveliest, -- till -- 'tis gone -- and all is gray.

XXX

There is a tomb at Arqua; -- rear'd in air,
Pillar'd in their sarcophagus, repose
The bones of Laura's lover: here repair
Many familiar with his well-sung woes,
The pilgrims of his genius. He arose
To raise a language, and his land reclaim
From the dull yoke of her barbaric foes:
Watering the tree which bears his lady's name
With his melodious tears, he gave himself to fame.

XXXI

They keep his dust in Arqua, where he died;
The mountain-village where his latter days
Went down the vale of years; and 'tis their pride --
An honest pride -- and let it be their praise,
To offer to the passing stranger's gaze
His mansion and his sepulchre; both plain
And venerably simple, such as raise
A feeling more accordant with his train
Than if a pyramid form'd his monumental fane.

XXXII

And the soft quiet hamlet where he dwelt
Is one of that complexion which seems made
For those who their mortality have felt,
And sought a refuge from their hopes decay'd
In the deep umbrage of a green hill's shade,
Which shows a distant prospect far away
Of busy cities, now in vain display'd,
For they can lure no further; and the ray
Of a bright sun can make sufficient holiday,

XXXIII

Developing the mountains, leaves, and flowers,
And shining in the brawling brook, whereby,
Clear as its current, glide the sauntering hours
With a calm languor, which, though to the eye
Idlesse it seem, hath its mortality.
If from society we learn to live,
'Tis solitude should teach us how to die;
It hath no flatters; vanity can give
No hollow aid; alone -- man with his God must strive:

XXXIV

Or, it may be, with demons, who impair
The strength of better thoughts, and seek their prey
In melancholy bosoms, such as were
Of moody texture, from their earliest day,
And loved to dwell in darkness and dismay,
Deeming themselves predestined to a doom
Which is not of the pangs that pass away;
Making the sun like blood, the earth a tomb,
The tomb a hell, and hell itself a murkier gloom.

XXXV

Ferrara! in thy wide and grass-grown streets,
Whose symmetry was not for solitude,
There seems as 'twere a curse upon the seats
Of former sovereigns, and the antique brood
Of Este, which for many an age made good
Its strength within thy walls, ad was of yore
Patron or tyrant, as the changing mood
Of petty power impell'd, of those who wore
The wreath which Dante's brow alone had worn before.

XXXVI

And Tasso is their glory and their shame.
Hark to his strain! and then survey his cell!
And see how dearly earn'd Torquato's fame,
And where Alfonso bade his poet dwell:
The miserable despot could not quell
The insulted mind he sought to quench, and blend
With the surrounding maniacs, in the hell
Where he had plunged it. Glory without end
Scatter'd the clouds away; and on that name attend

XXXVII

The tears and praises of all time; while thine
Would rot in its oblivion -- in the sink
Of worthless dust, which from thy boasted line
Is shaken into nothing -- but the link
Thou formest in his fortunes bids us think
Of thy poor malice, naming thee with scorn:
Alfonso! how thy ducal pageants shrink
From thee! if in another station born,
Scarce fit to be the slave of him thou madest to mourn:

XXXVIII

Thou! form'd to eat, and be despised, and die,
Even as the beasts that perish, save that thou
Hadst a more splendid trough and wider sty:
He! with a glory round his furrow'd brow,
Which emanated then, and dazzles now,
In face of all his foes, the Cruscan quire,
And Boileau, whose rash envy could allow
No strain which shamed his country's creaking lyre,

That whetstone of the teeth -- monotony in wire!

XXXIX

Peace to Torquato's injured shade! twas his
In life and death to be the mark where Wrong
Aim'd with her poison'd arrows, but to miss.
O, victor unsurpass'd in modern song!
Each year brings forth its millions; but how long
The tide of generations shall roll on,
And not the whole combined and countless throng
Compose a mind like thine? though all in one
Condensed their scatter'd rays, they would not form a sun.

XL

Great as thou art, yet parallel'd by those,
Thy countrymen, before thee born to shine,
The Bards of Hell and Chivalry: first rose
The Tuscan father's Comedy Divine;
Then, not unequal to the Florentine,
The southern Scott, the minstrel who call'd forth
A new creation with his magic line,
And, like the Ariosto of the North,
Sang ladye-love and war, romance and knightly worth.

XLI

The lightning rent from Ariosto's bust
The iron crown of laurel's mimick'd leaves;
Nor was the ominous element unjust
For the true laurel-wreath which Glory weaves
Is of the tree no bolt of thunder cleaves,
And the false semblance but disgraced his brow;
Yet still, if fondly Superstition grieves,
Know, that the lightning sanctifies below
Whate'er it strikes; -- yon head is doubly sacred now.

XLII

Italia! oh Italia! thou who hast
The fatal gift of beauty, which became
A funeral dower of present woes and past,
On thy sweet brow is sorrow plough'd by shame,
And annals graved in characters of flame.
Oh, God! that thou wert in thy nakedness
Less lovely or more powerful, and couldst claim
Thy right, and awe the robbers back, who press
To shed thy blood, and drink the tears of thy distress;

XLIII

Then might'st thou more appal; or, less desired,
Be homely and be peaceful, undeplored
For thy destructive charms; then, still untired,
Would not be seen the armed torrents pour'd
Down the deep Alps; nor would the hostile horde

Of many-nation'd spoilers from the Po
Quaff blood and water; nor the stranger's sword
Be thy sad weapon of defence, and so,
Victor or vanquish'd, thou the slave of friend or foe.

XLIV

Wandering in youth, I traced the path of him,
The Roman friend of Rome's least-mortal mind,
The friend of Tully: as my bark did skim
The bright blue waters with a fanning wind,
Came Megara before me, and behind
Ægina lay, Piræus on the right,
And Corinth on the left; I lay reclined
Along the prow, and saw all these unite
In ruin, even as he had seen the desolate sight;

XLV

For Time hath not rebuilt them, but uprear'd
Barbaric dwellings on their shatter'd site,
Which only make more mourn'd and more endear'd
The few last rays of their far-scatter'd light,
And the crush'd relics of their vanish'd might.
The Roman saw these tombs in his own age,
These sepulchres of cities, which excite
Sad wonder, and his yet surviving page
The moral lesson bears, drawn from such pilgrimage.

XLVI

That page is now before me, and on mine
His country's ruin added to the mass
Of perish'd states he mourn'd in their decline,
And I in desolation: all that was
Of then destruction is; and now, alas!
Rome -- Rome imperial, bows her to the storm,
In the same dust and blackness, and we pass
The skeleton of her Titanic form,
Wrecks of another world, whose ashes still are warm.

XLVII

Yet, Italy! through every other land
Thy wrongs should ring, and shall, from side to side;
Mother of Arts! as once of arms; thy hand
Was then our guardian, and is still our guide;
Parent of our religion! whom the wide
Nations have knelt to for the keys of heaven!
Europe, repentent of her parricide,
Shall yet redeem thee, and, all backward driven,
Roll the barbarian tide, and sue to be forgiven.

XLVIII

But Arno wins us to the fair white walls,
Where the Etrurian Athens claims and keeps

A softer feeling for her fairy halls.
Girt by her theatre of hills, she reaps
Her corn, and wine, and oil, and Plenty leaps
To laughing life, with her redundant horn.
Along the banks where smiling Arno sweeps
Was modern Luxury of Commerce born,
And buried Learning rose, redeem'd to new morn.

XLIX

There, too, the Goddess loves in stone, and fills
The air around with beauty; we inhale
The ambrosial aspect, which, beheld, instils
Part of its immortality; the veil
Of heaven is half undrawn; within the pale
We stand, and in that form and face behold
What Mind can make, when Nature's self would fail;
And to the fond idolators of old
Envy the innate flash which such a soul could mould:

L

We gaze and turn away, and know not where,
Dazzled and drunk with beauty, till the heart
Reels with its fulness; there -- for ever there --
Chain'd to the chariot of triumphal Art,
We stand as captives, and would not depart.
Away! -- there needs no words nor terms precise,
The paltry jargon of the marble mart,
Where Pedantry gulls Folly -- we have eyes:
Blood, pulse, and breast confirm the Dardan Shepherd's prize.

LI

Appear'dst thou not to Paris in this guise?
Or to more deeply blest Anchises? or,
In all thy perfect Goddess-ship, when lies
Before thee thy own vanquish'd Lord of War?
And gazing in thy face as toward a star,
Laid on thy lap, his eyes to thee upturn,
Feeding on thy sweet cheek! while thy lips are
With lava kisses melting while they burn,
Shower'd on his eyelids, brow, and mouth, as from an urn?

LII

Glowing, and circumfused in speechless love
Their full divinity inadequate
That feeling to express, or to improve,
The gods become as mortals, and man's fate
Has moments like their brightest; but the weight
Of earth recoils upon us; -- let it go!
We can recall such visions, and create,
From what has been, or might be, things which grow
Into thy statue's form, and look like gods below.

LIII

I leave to learned fingers and wise hands,
The artist and his ape, to teach and tell
How well his connoisseurship understands
The graceful bend, and the voluptuous swell:
Let these describe the undescribable:
I would not their vile breath should crisp the stream
Wherein that image shall for ever dwell;
The unruffled mirror of the loveliest dream
That ever left the sky on the deep soul to beam.

LIV

In Santa Croce's holy precincts lie
Ashes which make it holier, dust which is
Even in itself an immortality,
Though there were nothing save the past, and this,
The particle of those sublimities
Which have relapsed to chaos: here repose
Angelo's, Alfieri's bones, and his,
The starry Galileo, with his woes;
Here Machiavelli's earth return'd to whence it rose.

LV

These are four minds, which, like the elements,
Might furnish forth creation: -- Italy!
Time, which hath wrong'd thee with ten thousand rents
Of thine imperal garment, shall deny,
And hath denied, to every other sky,
Spirits which soar from ruin: thy decay
Is still impregnate with divinity,
Which gilds it with revivifying ray;
Such as the great of yore, Canova is today.

LVI

But where repose the all Etruscan three --
Dante, and Petrarch, and, scarce less than they,
The Bard of Prose, creative spirit! he
Of the Hundred Tales of love -- where did they lay
Their bones, distinguish'd from our common clay
In death as life? Are they resolved to dust,
And have their country's marbles nought to say?
Could not her quarries furnish forth one bust?
Did they not to her breast their filial earth entrust?

LVII

Ungrateful Florence! Dante sleeps afar,
Like Scipio, buried by the upbraiding shore:
Thy factions, in their worse than civil war,
Proscribed the bard whose name forevermore
Their children's children would in vain adore
With the remorse of ages; and the crown
Which Petrarch's laureate brow supremely wore,

Upon a far and foreign soil had grown,
His life, his fame, his grave, though rifled -- not thine own.

LVIII

Boccaccio to his parent earth bequeath'd
His dust, -- and lies it not her great among,
With many a sweet and solemn requiem breathed
O'er him who form'd the Tuscan's siren tongue?
That music in itself, whose sounds are song,
The poetry of speech? No; -- even his tomb
Uptorn, must bear the hyæna bigot's wrong,
No more amidst the meaner dead find room,
Nor claim a passing sigh, because it told for whom!

LIX

And Santa Croce wants their mighty dust;
Yet for this want more noted, as of yore
The Cæsar's pageant, shorn of Brutus' bust,
Did but of Rome's best Son remind her more:
Happier Ravenna! on thy hoary shore,
Fortress of falling empire! honour'd sleeps
The immortal exile; -- Arqua, too her store
Of tuneful relics proudly claims and keeps,
While Florence vainly begs her banish'd dead and weeps.

LX

What is her pyramid of precious stones?
Of porphyry, jasper, agate, and all hues
Of gem and marble, to encrust the bones
Of merchant-dukes? the momentary dews
Which, sparkling to the twilight stars, infuse
Freshness in the green turf that wraps the dead,
Whose names are mausoleums of the Muse,
Are gently prest with far more reverent tread
Than ever paced the slab which paves the princely head.

LXI

There be more things to greet the heart and eyes
In Arno's dome of Art's most princely shrine,
Where Sculpture with her rainbow sister vies;
There be more marvels yet -- but not for mine;
For I have been accustom'd to entwine
My thoughts with Nature rather in the fields,
Than Art in galleries; though a work divine
Calls for my spirit's homage, yet it yields
Less than it feels, because the weapon which it wields

LXII

Is of another temper, and I roam
By Thrasimene's lake, in the defiles
Fatal to Roman rashness, more at home;
For there the Carthaginian's warlike wiles

Come back before me, as his skill beguiles
The host between the mountains the shore,
Where Courage falls in her despairing files,
And torrents swell'n to rivers with their gore,
Reek through the sultry plain, with legions scatter'd o'er,

LXIII

Like to a forest fell'd by mountain winds;
And such the storm of battle on this day,
And such the frenzy, whose convulsion blinds
To all save carnage, that, beneath the fray,
An earthquake reel'd unheededly away!
None felt stern Nature rocking at his feet,
And yawning forth a grave for those who lay
Upon their bucklers for a winding-sheet;
Such is the absorbing hate when warring nations meet!

LXIV

The Earth to them was as a rolling bark
Which bore them to Eternity; they saw
The Ocean round, but had not time to mark
The motions of their vessel; Nature's law,
In them suspended, reck'd not of the awe
Which reigns when mountains tremble, and the birds
Plunge in the clouds for refuge, and withdraw
From their down-toppling nests; and bellowing herds
Stumble o'er heaving plains, and man's dread hath no words.

LXV

Far other scene is Thrasimene now;
Her lake a sheet of silver, and her plain
Rent by no ravage save the gentle plough;
Her aged trees rise thick as once the slain
Lay where their roots are; but a brook hath ta'en --
A little rill of scanty stream and bed --
A name of blood from that day's sanguine rain;
And Sanguinetto tells ye where the dead
Made the earth wet, and turn'd the unwilling waters red.

LXVI

But thou, Clitumnus! in thy sweetest wave
Of the most living crystal that was e'er
The haunt of river nymph, to gaze and lave
Her limbs where nothing hid them, thou dost rear
Thy grassy banks whereon the milk-white steer
Grazes; the purest god of gentle waters!
And most serene of aspect, and most clear;
Surely that stream was unprofaned by slughters,
A mirror and a bath for Beauty's youngest daughters!

LXVII

And on thy happy shore a Temple still,

Of small and delicate proportion, keeps,
Upon a mild declivity of hill,
Its memory of thee; beneath it sweeps
Thy current's calmness; oft from out it leaps
The finny darter with the glittering scales,
Who dwells and revels in thy glassy deeps;
While, chance, some scatter'd waterlily sails
Down were the shallower wave still tells its bubbling tales.

LXVIII

Pass not unblest the Genius of the place!
If through the air a zephyr more serene
Win to the brow, 'tis his; and if ye trace
Along his margin a more eloquent green,
If on the heart the freshness of the scene
Sprinkle its coolness, and from the dry dust
Of weary life a moment lave it clean
With Nature's baptism, -- 'tis to him ye must
Pay orisons for this suspension of disgust.

LXIX

The roar of waters! -- from the headlong height
Velino cleaves the wave-worn precipice;
The fall of waters! rapid as the light
The flashing mass foams shaking the abyss;
The hell of waters! where they howl and hiss,
And boil in endless torture; while the sweat
Of their great agony, wrung out from this
Their Phlegethon, curls round the rocks of jet
That guard the gulf around, in pitiless horror set,

LXX

And mounts in spray the skies, and thence again
Returns in an unceasing shower, which round,
With its unemptied cloud of gentle rain,
Is an eternal April to the ground,
Making it all one emerald: -- how profound
The gulf! and how the giant element
From rock to rock leaps with delirious bound,
Crushing the cliffs, which, downward worn and rent
With his fierce footsteps, yields in chasms a fearful vent

LXXI

To the broad column which rolls on, and shows
More like the fountain of an infant sea
Torn from the womb of mountains by the throes
Of a new world, than only thus to be
Parent of rivers, which glow gushingly,
With many windings, through the vale: -- Look back!
Lo! where it comes like an eternity,
As if to sweep down all things in its track,
Charming the eye with dread, -- a matchless cataract,

LXXII

Horribly beautiful! but on the verge,
From side to side, beneath the glittering morn,
An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge,
Like Hope upon a death-bed, and, unworn
Its steady dyes, while all around is torn
By the distracted waters, bears serene
Its brilliant hues with all their beams unshorn:
Resembling, 'mid the torture of the scene,
Love watching Madness with unalterable mien.

LXXIII

Once more upon the woody Apennine,
The infant Alps, which -- had I not before
Gazed on their mightier parents, where the pine
Sits on more shaggy summits, and where roar
The thundering Lauwine -- might be worshipp'd more;
But I have seen the soaring Jungfrau rear
Her never-trodden snow, and seen the hoar
Glaciers of bleak Mont Blanc both far and near,
And in Chimari heard the thunder-hills of fear,

LXXIV

Th' Acroceraunian mountains of old name;
And on Parnassus seen the eagles fly
Like spirits of the spot, as 'twere for fame,
For still they soared unutterably high:
I've look'd on Ida with a Trojan's eye;
Athos, Olympus, Ætna, Atlas, made
These hills seem things of lesser dignity,
All, save the lone Soracte's height, display'd
Not now in snow, which asks the lyric Roman's aid

LXXV

For our remembrance, and from out the plain
Heaves like a long-swept wave about to break,
And on the curl hangs pausing: not in vain
May he, who will, his recollections rake,
And quote in classic raptures, and awake
The hills with Latian echoes; I abhor'd
Too much, to conquer for the poet's sake,
The drill'd dull lesson, forced down word by word
In my repugnant youth, with pleasure to record

LXXVI

Aught that recalls the daily drug which turn'd
My sickening memory; and, though Time hath taught
My mind to meditate what then it learn'd,
Yet such the fix'd inveteracy, wrought
By the impatience of my early thought,
That with the freshness wearing out before

My mind could relish what it might have sought,
If free to choose, I cannot now restore
Its health; but what it then detested, still abhor.

LXXVII

Then farewell, Horace; whom I hated so,
Not for thy faults, but mine; it is a curse
To understand, not feel thy lyric flow,
To comprehend, but never love thy verse:
Although no deeper Moralist rehearse
Our little life, nor Bard prescribe his art,
Nor livelier Satirist the conscience pierce,
Awakening without wounding the touch'd heart,
Yet fare thee well -- upon Soracte's ridge we part.

LXXVIII

Oh Rome! my country! city of the soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
Lone mother of dead empires! and control
In their shut breasts their petty misery.
What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, Ye!
Whose agonies are evils of day --
A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

LXXIX

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;
An empty urn within her wither'd hands,
Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago;
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;
The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,
Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress.

LXXX

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire,
Have dealt upon the seven-hill'd city's pride;
She saw her glories star by star expire,
And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride,
Where the car climb'd the Capitol; far and wide
Temple and tower went down, nor left a site:
Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say, 'here was, or is,' where all is doubly night?

LXXXI

The double night of ages, and of her,
Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt and wrap
All round us: we but feel our way to err:

The ocean hath his chart, and stars their map,
And Knowledge spreads them on her ample lap;
But Rome is as the desert, where we steer
Stumbling o'er recollections; now we clap
Our hands, and cry 'Eureka!' it is clear --
When but some false mirage or ruin rises near.

LXXXII

Alas! the lofty city! and alas!
The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day
When Brutus made the dagger's edge surpass
The conqueror's sword in bearing fame away!
Alas, for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,
And Livy's pictured page! -- but these shall be
Her resurrection; all beside -- decay.
Alas for Earth, for never shall we see
That brightness in her eye she bore when Rome was free!

LXXXIII

O thou, whose chariot roll'd on Fortune's wheel,
Triumphant Sylla! Thou, who didst subdue
Thy country's foes ere thou wouldest pause to feel
The wrath of thy own wrongs, or reap the due
Of hoarded vengeance till thine eagles flew
O'er prostrate Asia; -- thou, who with thy frown
Annihilated senates -- Roman, too.
With all thy vices, for thou didst lay down
With an atoning smile a more than earthly crown --

LXXXIV

The dictatorial wreath -- couldst thou divine
To what would one day dwindle that which made
Thee more than mortal? and that so supine
By aught than Romans Rome should thus be laid?
She who was named Eternal, and array'd
Her warriors but to conquer -- she who veil'd
Earth with her haughty shadow, and display'd,
Until the o'er-canopied horizon fail'd,
Her rushing wings -- Oh! she who was Almighty hail'd!

LXXXV

Sylla was first of victors; but our own,
The sagest of usurpers, Cromwell! -- he
Too swept off senates while he hew'd the throne
Down to a block -- immortal rebel! See
What crimes it costs to be a moment free,
And famous through all ages! but beneath
His fate the moral lurks of destiny;
His day of double victory and death
Beheld him win two realms, and, happier, yield his breath.

LXXXVI

The third of the same moon whose former course
Had all but crown'd him, on the selfsame day
Deposed him gently from his throne of force,
And laid him with the earth's preceding clay.
And show'd not Fortune thus how fame and sway,
And all we deem delightful, and consume
Our souls to compass through each arduous way,
Are in her eyes less happy than the tomb?
Were they but so in man's how different were his doom!

LXXXVII

And thou, dread statue! yet existent in
The austorest form of naked majesty,
Thou who beheldest, 'mid the assassins' din,
At thy bathed base the bloody Cæsar lie,
Folding his robe in dying dignity,
An offering to thine altar from the queen
Of gods and men, great Nemesis! did he die,
And thou, too, perish, Pompey? have ye been
Victors of countless kings, or puppets of a scene?

LXXXVIII

And thou, the thunder-stricken nurse of Rome!
She-wolf! whose brazen-imaged dugs impart
The milk of conquest yet within the dome
Where, as a monument of antique art,
Thou standest: -- Mother of the mighty heart,
Which the great founder suck'd from thy wild teat,
Scorch'd by the Roman Jove's ethereal dart,
And thy limbs black with lightning -- dost thou yet
Guard thine immoral cubs, nor thy fond charge forget?

LXXXIX

Thou dost; but all thy foster-babes are dead --
The men of iron: and the world hath rear'd
Cities from out their sepulchres: men bled
In imitation of the things they fear'd,
And fought and conquer'd, and the same course steer'd,
At apish distance; but as yet none have,
Nor could the same supremacy have near'd,
Save one vain man, who is not in the grave,
But, vanquish'd by himself, to his own slaves a slave --

XC

The fool of false dominion -- and a kind
Of bastard Cæsar, following him of old
With steps unequal; for the Roman's mind
Was modell'd in a less terrestrial mould,
With passions fiercer, yet a judgment cold,
And an immortal instinct which redeem'd
The frailties of a heart so soft, yet bold,
Alcides with the distaff now he seem'd

At Cleopatra's feet, -- and now himself he beam'd,

XCI

And came -- and saw -- and conquer'd ! But the man
Who would have tamed his eagles down to flee,
Like a train'd falcon, in the Gallic van,
Which he, in sooth, long led to victory
With a deaf heart, which never seem'd to be
A listener to itself, was strangely framed;
With but one weakest weakness -- vanity,
Coquettish in ambition, still he aim'd --
At what? can he avouch, or answer what he claim'd?

XCII

And would be all or nothing -- nor could wait
For the sure grave to level him; few years
Had fix'd him with the Cæsars in his fate,
On whom we tread; for this the conqueror rears
The arch of triumph and for this the tears
And blood of earth flow on as they have flow'd,
An universal deluge, which appears
Without an ark for wretched man's abode,
And ebbs but to reflow! Renew thy rainbow, God!

XCIII

What from this barren being do we reap?
Our senses narrow, and our reason frail,
Life short, and truth a gem which loves the deep,
And all things weigh'd in custom's falsest scale;
Opinion an omnipotence, -- whose veil
Mantles the earth with darkness, until right
And wrong are accidents, and men grow pale
Lest their own judgments should become too bright,
And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth have too much light.

XCIV

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,
Rotting from sire to son, and age to age,
Proud of their trampled nature, and so die,
Bequeathing their hereditary rage
To the new race of inborn slaves, who wage
War for their chains, and rather than be free,
Bleed gladiator-like, and still engage
Within the same arena where they see
Their fellows fall before, like leaves of the same tree.

XCV

I speak not of men's creeds -- they rest between
Man and his Maker -- but of things allow'd,
Averr'd, and known, and daily, hourly seen --
The yoke that is upon us doubly bow'd,
And the intent of tyranny avow'd,

The edict of Earth's rulers, who are grown
The apes of him who humbled once the proud,
And shook them from their slumbers on the throne:
Too glorious, were this all his mighty arm had done.

XCVI

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquer'd be,
And Freedom find no champion and no child
Such as Columbia saw arise when she
Sprung forth a Pallas, arm'd and undefiled?
Or must such minds be nourish'd in the wild,
Deep in the unpruned forest, 'midst the roar
Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled
On infant Washington? Has Earth no more
Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore?

XCVII

But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime,
And fatal have her Saturnalia been
To Freedom's cause, in every age an clime;
Because the deadly days which we have seen,
And vile Ambition, that built up between
Man and his hopes an adamantine wall,
And the base pageant last upon the scene,
Are grown the pretext for the eternal thrall
Which nips life's tree, and dooms man's worst -- his second fall.

XCVIII

Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn, but flying,
Streams like the thunder-storm against the wind;
Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,
The loudest still the tempest leaves behind;
Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,
Chopp'd by the axe, looks rough and little worth,
But the sap lasts, -- and still the seed we find
Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;
So shall a better spring less better fruit bring forth.

XCIX

There is a stern round tower of other days,
Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone,
Such as an army's baffled strength delays,
Standing with half its battlements alone,
And with two thousand years of ivy grown,
The garland of eternity, where wave
The green leaves over all by time o'er thrown; --
Where was this tower of strength? within its case
What treasure lay, so lock'd, so hid? -- A woman's grave.

C

But who was she, the lady of the dead,
Tomb'd in a palace? Was she chaste and fair?

Worthy a king's, or more -- a Roman's bed?
What race of chiefs and heroes did she bear?
What daughter of her beauties was she heir?
How lived, how loved, how died she? Was she not
So honoured -- and conspicuously there,
Where meaner relics must not dare to rot,
Placed to commemorate a more than mortal lot?

CI

Was she as those who love their lords, or they
Who love the lords of others? such have been
Even in the olden time, Rome's annals say.
Was she a matron of Cornelia's mien,
Or the light air of Egypt's graceful queen,
Profuse of joy -- or 'gainst it did she war
Inveterate in virtue? Did she lean
To the soft side of the heart, or wisely bar
Love from amongst her griefs? -- for such the affections are.

CII

Perchance she died in youth: it may be, bow'd
With woes far heavier than the ponderous tomb
That weigh'd upon her gentle dust, a cloud
Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom
In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom
Heaven gives its favourites -- early death; yet shed
A sunset charm around her, and illume
With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead,
Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-like red.

CIII

Perchance she died in age -- surviving all,
Charms, kindred, children -- with the silver gray
On her long tresses, which might yet recall,
It may be, still a something of the day
When they were braided, and her proud array
And lovely form were envied, praised, and eyed
By Rome -- But whither would Conjecture stray?
Thus much alone we know -- Metella died,
The wealthiest Roman's wife: Behold his love or pride!

CIV

I know not why -- but standing thus by thee
It seems as if I had thine inmate known,
Thou Tomb! and other days come back on me
With recollected music, though the tone
Is changed and solemn, like the cloudy groan
Of dying thunder on the distant wind;
Yet could I set me by this ivied stone
Till I had bodied forth the heated mind,
Forms from the floating wreck which Ruin leaves behind;

CV

And from the planks, far shatter'd o'er the rocks,
Built me a little bark of hope, once more
To battle with the ocean and the shocks
Of the loud breakers, and the ceaseless roar
Which rushes on the solitary shore
Where all lies founder'd that was ever dear:
But could I gather from the wave-worn store
Enough for my rude boat, where should I steer?
There woos no home, nor hope, nor life, save what is here.

CVI

Then let the winds howl on! their harmony
Shall henceforth be my music, and the night
The sound shall temper with the owlets' cry,
As I now hear them, in the fading light
Dim o'er the bird of darkness' native site,
Answering each other on the Palatine,
With their large eyes, all glistening gray and bright,
And sailing pinions. -- Upon such a shrine
What are our petty griefs? -- let me not number mine.

CVII

Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown,
Matted and mass'd together, hillocks heap'd
On what were chambers, arch crush'd, column strown
In fragments, choked up vaults, and frescos steep'd
In subterranean damps, where the owl peep'd,
Deeming it midnight: -- Temples, baths, or halls?
Pronounce who can; for all that Learning reap'd
From her research hath been, that these are walls --
Behold thee Imperial Mount! 'tis thus the mighty falls.

CVIII

There is the moral of all human tales;
'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past,
First Freedom, and then Glory -- when that fails,
Wealth, vice, corruption, -- barbarism at last.
And History, with all her volumes vast,
Hath but one page, -- 'tis better written here
Where gorgeous Tyranny hath thus amassed
All treasures, all delights, that eye or ear,
Heart, soul, could seek, tongue ask -- Away with words! draw near,

CIX

Admire, exult, despise, laugh, weep, -- for here
There is such matter for all feeling: -- Man!
Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear,
Ages and realms are crowded in this span,
This mountain, whose obliterated plan
The pyramid of empires pinnacled,
Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van

Till the sun's rays with added flame were fill'd!
Where are its golden roofs? where those who dared to build?

CX

Tully was not so eloquent as thou,
Thou nameless column with the buried base!
What are the laurels of the Cæsar's brow?
Crown me with ivy from his dwelling-place.
Whose arch or pillar meets me in the face,
Titus or Trajan's? No -- 'tis that of Time:
Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth displace
Scoffing; and apostolic statues climb
To crush the imperial urn, whose ashes slept sublime,

CXI

Buried in air, the deep blue sky of Rome,
And looking to the stars; they had contain'd
A spirit which with thee would find a home,
The last of those who o'er the whole earth reign'd,
The Roman globe, for after none sustain'd,
But yielded back his conquests: -- he was more
Than a mere Alexander, and unstain'd
With household blood and wine, serenely wore
His sovereign virtues -- still we Trajan's name adore.

CXII

Where is the rock of Triumph, the high place
Where Rome embraced her heroes? where the steep
Tarpeian? fittest goal of Treason's race,
The promontory whence the Traitor's Leap
Cured all ambition. Did the conquerors heap
Their spoils here? Yes; and in yon field below,
A thousand years of silenced faction sleep --
The Forum, where the immortal accents glow,
And still the eloquent air breathes -- burns with Cicero!

CXIII

The field of freedom, faction, fame, and blood:
Here a proud people's passions were exhaled,
From the first hour of empire in the bud
To that when further worlds to conquer fail'd;
But long before had Freedom's face been veil'd,
And Anarchy assumed her attributes;
Till every lawless soldier who assail'd
Trod on the trembling senate's slavish mutes,
Or raised the venal voice of baser prostitutes.

CXIV

Then turn we to her latest tribune's name,
From her ten thousand tyrants turn to thee,
Redeemer of dark centuries of shame --
The friend of Petrarch -- hope of Italy --

Rienzi! last of Romans! While the tree
Of freedom's wither'd trunk puts forth a leaf
Even for thy tomb a garland let it be --
The forum's champion, and the people's chief --
Her new-born Numa thou -- with reign, alas! too brief.

CXV

Egeria! sweet creation of some heart
Which found no mortal resting-place so fair
As thine ideal breast; whate'er thou art
Or wert, -- a young Aurora of the air,
The nympholepsy of some fond despair;
Or, it might be, a beauty of the earth,
Who found a more than common votary there
Too much adoring; whatsoe'er thy birth,
Thou wert a beautiful thought, and softly bodied forth.

CXVI

The mosses of thy fountain still are sprinkled
With thine Elysian water-drops; the face
Of thy cave-guarded spring with years un wrinkled,
Reflects the meek-eyed genius of the place,
Whose green, wild margin now no more erase
Art's works; nor must the delicate waters sleep,
Prison'd in marble -- bubbling from the base
Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap
The rill runs o'er -- and round -- fern, flowers, and ivy creep,

CXVII

Fantastically tangled: the green hills
Are clothed with early blossoms, through the grass
The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the bills
Of summer-birds sing welcome as ye pass;
Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their class,
Implore the pausing step, and with their dyes,
Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass;
The sweetness of the violet's deep blue eyes,
Kiss'd by the breath of heaven, seems colour'd by its skies.

CXVIII

Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted cover,
Egeria! thy all heavenly bosom beating
For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover;
The purple Midnight veil'd that mystic meeting
With her most starry canopy, and seating
Thyself by thine adorer, what befell?
This cave was surely shaped out for the greeting
Of an enamour'd Goddess, and the cell
Haunted by holy Love -- the earliest oracle!

CXIX

And didst thou not, thy breast to his replying,

Blend a celestial with a human heart;
And Love, which dies as it was born, in sighing,
Share with immortal transports? could thine art
Make them indeed immortal, and impart
The purity of heaven to earthly joys,
Expel the venom and not blunt the dart --
The dull satiety which all destroys --
And root from out the soul the deadly weed which cloys?

CXX

Alas! our young affections run to waste,
Or water but the desert; whence arise
But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,
Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes,
Flowers whose wild odours breathe but agonies,
And trees whose gums are poisons; such the plants
Which spring beneath her steps as Passion flies
O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly pants
For some celestial fruit forbidden to our wants.

CXXI

Oh, Love! no habitant of earth thou art --
An unseen seraph, we believe in thee, --
A faith whose martyrs are the broken heart, --
But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see
The naked eye, thy form, as it should be;
The mind hath made thee, as it peopled heaven,
Even with its own desiring phantasy,
And to a thought such shape and image given,
As haunts the unquench'd soul -- parch'd, wearied, wrung, and riven.

CXXII

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,
And fevers into false creation: -- where,
Where are the forms the sculptor's soul hath seiz'd?
In him alone. Can Nature show so fair?
Where are the charms and virtues which we dare
Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men,
The unreach'd Paradise of our despair,
Which o'er-informs the pencil and the pen,
And overpowers the page where it would bloom again?

CXXIII

Who loves, raves -- 'tis youth's frenzy -- but the cure
Is bitterer still, as charm by charm unwinds
Which robed our idols, and we see too sure
Nor worth nor beauty dwells from out the mind's
Ideal shape of such; yet still it binds
The fatal spell, and still it draws us on,
Reaping the whirlwind from the oftsown winds;
The stubborn heart, its alchemy begun,
Seems ever near the prize -- wealthiest when most undone.

CXXIV

We wither from our youth, we gasp away --
Sick -- sick; unfound the boon, unslaked the thirst,
Though to the last, in verge of our decay,
Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first --
But all too late, -- so are we doubly curst.
Love, fame, ambition, avarice -- 'tis the same,
Each idle, and all ill, and none the worst --
For we all are meteors with a different name,
And Death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame.

CXXV

Few -- none -- find what they love or could have loved,
Though accident, blind contact, and the strong
Necessity of loving, have removed
Antipathies -- but to recur, ere long,
Envenom'd with irrevocable wrong;
And Circumstance, that unspiritual god
And miscreator, makes and helps along
Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod,
Whose touch turns Hope to dust, -- the dust we all have trod.

CXXVI

Our life is a false nature: 'tis not in
The harmony of things, -- this hard decree,
This uneradicable taint of sin
This boundless upas, this all-blasting tree,
Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be
The skies which rain their plagues on men like dew --
Disease, death, bondage -- all the woes we see,
And worse, the woes we see not -- which throb through
The immedicable soul, with heart-aches ever new.

CXXVII

Yet let us ponder boldly -- 'tis a base
Abandonment of reason to resign
Our right of thought -- our last and only place
Of refuge; this, at least, shall still be mine:
Though from our birth the faculty divine
Is chain'd and tortured -- cabin'd, cribb'd, confined,
And bred in darkness, lest the truth should shine
Too brightly on the unprepared mind,
The beam pours in, for time and skill will couch the blind.

CXXVIII

Arches on arches! as it were that Rome,
Collecting the chief trophies of her line,
Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,
Her coliseum stands; the moonbeams shine
As 'twere its natural torches, for divine
Should be the light which streams here to illumine

This long-explored but still exhaustless mine
Of contemplation; and the azure gloom
Of an Italian night, where the deep skies assume

CXXIX

Hues which have words, and speak to ye of heaven,
Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,
And shadows forth its glory. There is given
Unto the things of earth, which Time hath bent
A spirit's feeling, and where he hath leant
His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a power
And magic in the ruin'd battlement,
For which the palace of the present hour
Must yield its pomp, and wait till ages are its dower.

CXXX

Oh Time! the beautifier of the dead,
Adorner of the ruin, comforter
And only healer when the heart hath bled;
Time! the corrector where our judgments err,
The test of truth, love, -- sole philosopher,
For all beside are sophists -- from thy thrift,
Which never loses though it doth defer --
Time, the avenger! unto thee I lift
My hands, and eyes, and heart, and crave of thee a gift:

CXXXI

Amidst this wreck, where thou hast made a shrine
And temple more divinely desolate,
Among thy mightier offerings here are mine,
Ruins of years, though few, yet full of fate:
If thou hast ever seen me too elate,
Hear me not; but if calmly I have borne
Good, and reserved my pride against the hate
Which shall not whelm me, let me not have worn
This iron in my soul in vain -- shall they not mourn?

CXXXII

And thou, who never yet of human wrong
Left the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis!
Here, where the ancient paid thee homage long --
Thou who didst call the Furies from the abyss,
And round Orestes bade them howl and hiss
For that unnatural retribution -- just,
Had it but been from hands less near -- in this
Thy former realm, I call thee from the dust!
Dost thou not hear my heart? -- Awake! thou shalt, and must.

CXXXIII

It is not that I may not have incur'd
For my ancestral faults or mine the wound
I bleed withal, and, had it been conferr'd

With a just weapon, it had flow'd unbound;
But now my blood shall not sink in the ground;
To thee I do devote it. -- thou shalt take
The vengeance, which shall yet be sought and found,
Which if I have not taken for the sake --
But let that pass -- I sleep, but thou shalt yet awake.

CXXXIV

And if my voice break forth, 'tis not that now
I shrink from what is suffer'd: let him speak
Who hath beheld decline upon my brow,
Or seen my mind's convulsion leave it weak;
But in this page a record will I seek.
Not in the air shall these my words disperse,
Though I be ashes; a far hour shall wreak
The deep prophetic fulness of this verse,
And pile on human heads the mountain of my curse!

CXXXV

That curse shall be Forgiveness. -- Have I not --
Hear me, my mother Earth! behold it, Heaven!
Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?
Have I not suffer'd things to be forgiven?
Have I not had my brain sear'd, my heart riven,
Hopes sapp'd, name blighted, Life's life lied away?
And only not to desperation driven,
Because not altogether of such clay
As rots into the souls of those whom I survey.

CXXXVI

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
Have I not seen what human things could do?
From the loud roar of foaming calumny
To the small whisper of the as paltry few,
And subtler venom of the reptile crew,
The Janus glance of whose significant eye,
Learning to lie with silence, would seem true,
And without utterance, save the shrug or sign,
Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.

CXXXVII

But I have lived, and have not lived in vain:
My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
And my frame perish even in conquering pain;
But there is that within me which shall tire
Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire;
Something unearthly, which they deem not of,
Like the remember'd tone of a mute lyre,
Shall on their soften'd spirits sink, and move
In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love.

CXXXVIII

The seal is set. -- Now welcome, thou dread power!
Nameless, yet thus omnipotent, which here
Walk'st in the shadow of the midnight hour
With a deep awe, yet all distinct from fear;
Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls rear
Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene
Derives from thee a sense so deep and clear
That we become a part of what has been,
And grow unto the spot, all-seeing but unseen.

CXXXIX

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
In murmur'd pity, or loud-roar'd applause,
As man was slaughter'd by his fellow-man.
And wherefore slaughter'd? wherefore, but because
Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
And the imperial pleasure. -- Wherefore not?
What matters where we fall to fill the maws
Of worms -- on battle-plains or listed spot?
Both are but theatres -- where the chief actors rot.

CXL

I see before me the Gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand -- his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his droop'd head sinks gradually low --
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
The arena swims around him -- he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who won.

CXLI

He heard it, but he heeded not -- his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away;
He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There where his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother -- he, their sire,
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday --
All this rush'd with his blood -- Shall he expire
And unavenged? Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!

CXLII

But here, where Murder breathed her bloody steam;
And here, where buzzing nations choked the ways,
And roar'd or murmur'd like a mountain stream
Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;
Here, where the Roman million's blame or praise
Was death or life, the playthings of a crowd,
My voice sounds much -- and fall the stars faint rays
On the arena void -- seats crush'd -- walls bow'd --

And galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely loud.

CXLIII

A ruin -- yet what a ruin! from its mass
Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been rear'd;
Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
And marvel where the spoil could have appear'd.
Hath it indeed been plunder'd, or but clear'd?
Alas! developed, opens the decay,
When the colossal fabric's form is near'd:
It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all -- years -- man -- have reft away.

CXLIV

But when the rising moon begins to climb
Its topmost arch, and gently pauses there;
When the stars twinkle through the loops of time,
And the low night-breeze waves along the air
The garland-forest, which the gray walls wear,
Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head;
When the light shines serene but doth not glare,
Then in this magic circle raise the dead:
Heroes have trod this spot -- 'tis on their dust ye tread.

CXLV

'While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
'When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;
'And when Rome falls -- the World.' From our own land
Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty wall
In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
Ancient; and these three mortal things are still
On their foundations, and unalter'd all;
Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill,
The World, the same wide den -- of thieves, or what ye will.

CXLVI

Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime --
Shrine of all saints and temple of all gods,
From Jove to Jesus -- spared and blest by time;
Looking tranquillity, while falls or nods
Arch, empire, each thing round thee, and man plods
His way through thorns to ashes -- glorious dome!
Shalt thou not last? Time's scythe and tyrants' rods
Shiver upon thee -- sanctuary and home
Of art and piety -- Pantheon! -- pride of Rome!

CXLVII

Relic of nobler days, and noblest arts!
Despoil'd yet perfect, with thy circle spreads
A holiness appealing to all hearts --
To art a model; and to him who treads
Rome for the sake of ages, Glory sheds

Her light through thy sole aperture; to those
Who worship, here are altars for their beads;
And they who feel for genius may repose
Their eyes on honour'd forms, whose busts around them close.

CXLVIII

There is a dungeon, in whose dim drear light
What do I gaze on? Nothing: Look again!
Two forms are slowly shadow'd on my sight --
Two insulated phantoms of the brain:
It is not so; I see them full and plain --
An old man, and a female young and fair,
Fresh as a nursing mother, in whose vein
The blood is nectar: -- but what doth she there,
With her unmantled neck, and bosom white and bare?

CXLIX

Full swells the deep pure fountain of young life,
Where on the heart and from the heart we took
Our first and sweetest nurture, when the wife,
Blest into mother, in the innocent look,
Or even the piping cry of lips that brook
No pain and small suspense, a joy perceives
Man knows not, when from out its cradled nook
She sees her little bud put forth its leaves --
What may the fruit be yet? I know not -- Cain was Eve's.

CL

But here youth offers to old age the food,
The milk of his own gift: it is her sire
To whom she renders back the debt of blood
Born with her birth. No; he shall not expire
While in those warm and lovely veins the fire
Of health and holy feeling can provide
Great Nature's Nile, whose deep stream rises higher
Than Egypt's river: from that gentle side
Drink, drink and live, old man! Heaven's realm holds no such tide.

CLI

The starry fable of the milky way
Has not thy story's purity; it is
A constellation of a sweeter ray,
And sacred Nature triumphs more in this
Reverse of her decree, than in the abyss
Where sparkle distant worlds: -- Oh, holiest nurse!
No drop of that clear stream its way shall miss
To thy sire's heart, replenishing its source
With life, as our freed souls rejoin the universe.

CLII

Turn to the mole which Hadrian rear'd on high,
Imperial mimic of old Egypt's piles,

Colossal copyist of deformity
Whose travell'd phantasy from the far Nile's
Enormous model, doom'd the artist's toils
To build for giants, and for his vain earth,
His shrunken ashes, raise this dome: How smiles
The gazer's eyes with philosophic mirth,
To view the huge design which sprung from such a birth!

CLIII

But lo! the dome -- the vast and wondrous dome,
To which Diana's marvel was a cell --
Christ's mighty shrine above his martyr's tomb!
I have beheld the Ephesian's miracle; --
Its columns strew the wilderness, and dwell
The hyæna and the jackal in their shade;
I have beheld Sophia's bright roofs swell
Their glittering mass i' the sun, and have survey'd
Its sanctuary the while the usurping Moslem pray'd;

CLIV

But thou, of temples old, or altars new,
Standest alone, with nothing like to thee --
Worthiest of God, the holy and the true.
Since Zion's desolation, when that He
Forsook his former city, what could be,
Of earthly structures, in his honour piled,
Of a sublimer aspect? Majesty,
Power, Glory, Strength, and Beauty all are aisled
In this eternal ark of worship undefiled.

CLV

Enter: its grandeur overwhelms thee not;
And why? It is not lessen'd; but thy mind,
Expanded by the genius of the spot,
Has grown colossal, and can only find
A fit abode wherein appear enshrined
Thy hopes of immortality; and thou
Shalt one day, if found worthy, so defined,
See thy God face to face, as thou dost now
His Holy of Holies, nor be blasted by his brow.

CLVI

Thou movest, but increasing with the advance,
Like climbing some great Alp, which still doth rise,
Deceived by its gigantic elegance;
Vastness which grows, but grows to harmonise --
All musical in its immensities;
Rich marbles, richer painting -- shrines where flame
The lamps of gold -- and haughty dome which view
In air with Earth's chief structures, though their frame
Sits on the firm-set ground, and this the clouds must claim.

CLVII

Thou seest not all; but piecemeal thou must break,
To separate contemplation, the great whole;
And as the ocean many bays will make
That ask the eye -- so here condense thy soul
To more immediate objects, and control
Thy thoughts until thy mind hath got by heart
Its eloquent proportions, and unroll
In mighty graduations, part by part,
The glory which at once upon thee did not dart,

CLVIII

Not by its fault -- but thine: Our outward sense
Is but of gradual grasp -- and as it is
That what we have of feeling most intense
Outstrips our faint expression; even so this
Outshining and o'erwhelming edifice
Fools our fond gaze, and greatest of the great
Defies at first our Nature's littleness,
Till growing with its growth, we thus dilate
Our spirits to the size of that they contemplate.

CLIX

Then pause, and be enlighten'd; there is more
In such a survey than the sating gaze
Of wonder pleased, or awe which would adore
The worship of the place, or the mere praise
Of art and its great masters, who could raise
What former time, nor skill, nor thought could plan;
The fountain of sublimity displays
Its depth, and thence may draw the mind of man
Its golden sands, and learn what great conceptions can.

CLX

Or, turning to the Vatican, go see
Laocoön's torture dignifying pain --
A father's love and mortal's agony
With an immortal's patience blending: -- Vain
The struggle vain, against the coiling strain
And gripe, and deepening of the dragon's grasp,
The old man's clench; the long unvenom'd chain
Rivets the living links, -- the enormous asp
Enforces pang on pang, and stifles gasp on gasp.

CLXI

Or view the Lord of the unerring bow,
The God of life, and poesy, and light --
The Sun in human limbs array'd, and brow
All radiant from his triumph in the fight;
The shaft hath just been shot -- the arrow bright
With an immortal's vengeance; in his eye
And nostril beautiful disdain, and might

And majesty, flash their full lightnings by,
Developing in that once glance the Deity.

CLXII

But in his delicate form -- a dream of Love,
Shaped by some solitary nymph, whose breast
Long'd for a deathless lover from above,
And madden'd in that vision -- are express
All that ideal beauty ever bless'd
The mind with in its most unearthly mood,
When each conception was a heavenly guest --
A ray of immortality -- and stood
Starlike, around, until they gather'd to a god!

CLXIII

And if it be Prometheus stole from Heaven
The fire which we endure, it was repaid
By him to whom the energy was given
Which this poetic marble hath array'd
With an eternal glory -- which, if made
By human hands, is not of human thought;
And Time himself hath hallow'd it, nor laid
One ringlet in the dust -- nor hath it caught
A tinge of years, but breathes the flame with which 'twas wrought.

CLXIV

But where is he, the Pilgrim of my song,
The being who upheld it through the past?
Methinks he cometh late and tarries long.
He is no more -- these breathings are his last;
His wanderings done, his visions ebbing fast,
And he himself as nothing: -- if he was
Aught but a phantasy, and could be class'd
With forms which live and suffer -- let that pass --
His shadow fades away into Destruction's mass,

CLXV

Which gathers shadow, substance, life, and all
That we inherit in its mortal shroud,
And spreads the dim and universal pall
Through which all things grow phantoms; and the cloud
Between us sinks and all which ever glow'd,
Till Glory's self is twilight, and displays
A melancholy halo scarce allow'd
To hover on the verge of darkness; rays
Sadder than saddest night, for they distract the gaze,

CLXVI

And send us prying into the abyss,
To gather what we shall be when the frame
Shall be resolved to something less than this
Its wretched essence; and to dream of fame,

And wipe the dust from off the idle name
We never more shall hear, -- but never more
Oh, happier thought! can we be made the same:
It is enough in sooth that once we bore
These fardels of the heart -- the heart whose sweat was gore.

CLXVII

Hark! forth from the abyss a voice proceeds,
A long low distant murmur of dread sound,
Such as arises when a nation bleeds
With some deep and immedicable wound;
Through storm and darkness yawns the rending ground,
The gulf is thick with phantoms, but the chief
Seems royal still, though with her head discrown'd,
And pale, but lovely, with maternal grief
She clasps a babe, to whom her breast yields no relief.

CLXVIII

Scion of chiefs and monarchs, where art thou?
Fond hope of many nations, art thou dead?
Could not the grave forget thee, and lay low
Some less majestic, less beloved head?
In the sad midnight, while thy heart still bled,
The mother of a moment, o'er thy boy,
Death hush'd that pang for ever: with thee fled
The present happiness and promised joy
Which fill'd the imperial isles so full it seem'd to cloy.

CLXIX

Peasants bring forth in safety. -- Can it be,
Oh thou that wert so happy, so adored!
Those who weep not for kings shall weep for thee,
And Freedom's heart, grown heavy, cease to hoard
Her many griefs for ONE; for she had pour'd
Her orisons for thee, and o'er thy head
Beheld her Iris. -- Thou, too, lonely lord,
And desolate consort -- vainly wert thou wed!
The husband of a year! the father of the dead!

CLXX

Of sackcloth was thy wedding garment made;
Thy bridal's fruit is ashes: in the dust
The fair-hair'd Daughter of the Isles is laid,
The love of millions! How we did intrust
Futurity to her! and, though it must
Darken above our bones, yet fondly deem'd
Our children should obey her child, and bless'd
Her and her hoped-for seed, whose promise seem'd
Like stars to shepherds' eyes: -- 'twas but a meteor beam'd.

CLXXI

Woe unto us, not her; for she sleeps well:

The fickle reek of popular breath, the tongue
Of hollow counsel, the false oracle,
Which from the birth of monarchy hath run
Its knell in princely ears, till the o'erstung
Nations have arm'd in madness, the strange fate
Which tumbles mightiest sovereigns, and hath flung
Against their blind omnipotence a weight
Within the opposing scale, which crushes soon or late, --

CLXXII

These might have been her destiny; but no,
Our hearts deny it: and so young, so fair,
Good without effort, great without a foe;
But now a bride and mother -- and now there!
How many ties did that stern moment tear!
From thy Sire's to his humblest subject's breast
Is link'd the electric chain of that despair,
Whose shock was as an earthquake's, and opprest
The land which loved thee so that none could love thee best.

CLXXIII

Lo, Nemi! navell'd in the woody hills
So far, that the uprooting wind which tears
The oak from his foundation, and which spills
The ocean o'er its boundary, and bears
Its foam against the skies, reluctant spares
The oval mirror of thy glassy lake;
And calm as cherish'd hate, its surface wears
A deep cold settled aspect nought can shake,
All coil'd into itself and round, as sleeps the snake.

CLXXIV

And near, Albano's scarce divided waves
Shine from a sister valley; -- and afar
The Tiber winds, and the broad ocean laves
The Latian coast where sprung the Epic war,
'Arms and the Man,' whose re-ascending star
Rose o'er an empire: -- but beneath thy right
Tully reposed from Rome; -- and where yon bar
Of girdling mountains intercepts the sight
The Sabine farm was till'd, the weary bard's delight.

CLXXV

But I forget. -- My Pilgrim's shrine is won,
And he and I must part, -- so let it be, --
His task and mine alike are nearly done;
Yet once more let us look upon the sea;
The midland ocean breaks on him and me,
And from the Alban Mount we now behold
Our friend of youth, that Ocean, which when we
Beheld it last by Calpe's rock unfold
Those waves, we follow'd on till the dark Euxine roll'd

CLXXVI

Upon the blue Symplegades: long years --
Long, though not very many -- since have done
Their work on both; some suffering and some tears
Have left us nearly where we had begun:
Yet not in vain our mortal race hath run;
We have had our reward, and it is here, --
That we can yet feel gladden'd by the sun,
And reap from earth, sea, joy almost as dear
As if there were no man to trouble what is clear.

CLXXVII

Oh! that the Desert were my dwelling-place,
With one fair Spirit for my minister,
That I might all forget the human race,
And, hating no one, love but only her!
Ye elements! -- in whose ennobling stir
I feel myself exalted -- Can ye not
Accord me such a being? Do I err
In deeming such inhabit many a spot?
Though with them to converse can rarely be our lot.

CLXXVIII

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar;
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.

CLXXIX

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean -- roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin -- his control
Stops with the shore; upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

CLXXX

His steps are not upon thy paths, -- thy fields
Are not a spoil for him -- thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him shivering in thy playful spray

And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth: -- there let him lay.

CLXXXI

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
Of rock-built cities. bidding nations quake,
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
The oak leviathons, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war --
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
Alike the Armada's pride or spoils of Trafalgar.

CLXXXII

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee --
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
Thy waters wash'd them power while they were free,
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts: -- not so thou; --
Unchangeable, save to thy wild waves' play,
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow:
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

CLXXXIII

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time, --
Calm or convulsed, in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving -- boundless, endless, and sublime,
The image of eternity, the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

CLXXXIV

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward: from a boy
I wanton'd with thy breakers -- they to me
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror -- 'twas a pleasing fear,
For I was as it were a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane -- as I do here.

CLXXXV

My task is done, my song hath ceased, my theme
Has died into an echo; it is fit
The spell should break of this protracted dream.

The torch shall be extinguish'd which hath lit
My midnight lamp -- and what is writ, is writ;
Would it were worthier! but I am not now
That which I have been -- and my visions flit
Less palpably before me -- and the glow
Which, in my spirit dwelt is fluttering, faint, and low.

CLXXXVI

Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been --
A sound which makes us linger; -- yet -- farewell!
Ye! who have traced the Pilgrim to the scene
Which is his last, if in your memories dwell
A thought which once was his, if on ye swell
A single recollection, not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon and scallop-shell;
Farewell! with him alone may rest the pain
If such there were -- with you, the moral of his strain.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage: A Romaunt. Canto II.

I.

Come, blue-eyed maid of heaven!-but thou, alas!
Didst never yet one mortal song inspire-
Goddess of Wisdom! here thy temple was,
And is, despite of war and wasting fire,
And years, that bade thy worship to expire:
But worse than steel, and flame, and ages slow,
Is the dread sceptre and dominion dire
Of men who never felt the sacred glow
That thoughts of thee and thine on polish'd breasts bestow.

II.

Ancient of days! august Athena! where,
Where are thy men of might? thy grand in soul?
Gone-glimmering through the dream of things that were:
First in the race that led to Glory's goal,
They won, and pass'd away-is this the whole?
A school-boy's tale, the wonder of an hour!
The warrior's weapon and the sophist's stole
Are sought in vain, and o'er each mouldering tower,
Dim with the mist of years, grey flits the shade of power.

III.

Son of the morning, rise! approach you here!
Come-but molest not yon defenceless urn:
Look on this spot-a nation's sepulchre!
Abode of gods, whose shrines no longer burn.
Even gods must yield-religions take their turn:
'Twas Jove's--2tis Mahomet's-and other creeds
Will rise with other years, till man shall learn
Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds;
Poor child of Doubt and Death, whose hope is built on reeds.

IV.

Bound to the earth, he lifts his eye to heaven-
Is't not enough, unhappy thing! to know
Thou art? Is this a boon so kindly given,
That being, thou wouldest be again, and go,
Thou know'st not, reck'st not to what region, so
On earth no more, but mingled with the skies?
Still wilt thou dream on future joy and woe?
Regard and weigh yon dust before it flies:
That little urn saith more than thousand homilies.

V.

Or burst the vanish'd Hero's lofty mound;
Far on the solitary shore he sleeps:
He fell, and falling nations mourn'd around;
But now not one of saddening thousands weeps,
Nor warlike-worshipper his vigil keeps
Where demi-gods appear'd, as records tell.
Remove yon skull from out the scatte?d heaps:

Is that a temple where a God may dwell?
Why ev'n the worm at last disdains her shatter'd cell!

VI.

Look on its broken arch, its ruin'd wall,
Its chambers desolate, and portals foul:
Yes, this was once Ambition's airy hall,
The dome of Thought, the palace of the Soul:
Behold through each lack-lustre, eyeless hole,
The gay recess of Wisdom and of Wit
And Passion's host, that never brook'd control:
Can all, saint, sage, or sophist ever writ,
People this lonely tower, this tenement refit?

VII.

Well didst thou speak, Athena's wisest son!
'All that we know is, nothing can be known.'
Why should we shrink from what we cannot shun?
Each has his pang, but feeble sufferers groan
With brain-born dreams of evil all their own.
Pursue what Chance or Fate proclaimeth best;
Peace waits us on the shores of Acheron:
There no forc'd banquet claims the sated guest,
But Silence spreads the couch of ever welcome rest.

VIII.

Yet if, as holiest men have deem'd, there be
A land of souls beyond that sable shore,
To shame the doctrine of the Sadducee
And sophists, madly vain of dubious lore;
How sweet it were in concert to adore
With those who made our mortal labours light!
To hear each voice we fear'd to hear no more!
Behold each mighty shade reveal'd to sight,
The Bactrian, Samian sage, and all who taught the right!

IX.

There, thou!-whose love and life together fled,
Have left me here to love and live in vain-
Twin'd with my heart, and can I deem thee dead,
When busy Memory flashes on my brain?
Well-I will dream that we may meet again,
And woo the vision to my vacant breast:
If aught of young Remembrance then remain,
Be as it may Futurity's behest,
For me 'twere bliss enough to know thy spirit blest!

X.

Here let me sit upon this massy stone,
The marble column's yet unshaken base;
Here, son of Saturn! was thy favrite throne:
Mightiest of many such! Hence let me trace

The latent grandeur of thy dwelling place.
It may not be: nor ev'n can Fancy's eye
Restore what Time hath labour'd to deface.
Yet these proud pillars claim no passing sigh,
Unmov'd the Moslem sits, the light Greek carols by.

XI.

But who, of all the plunderers of yon fane
On high, where Pallas linger'd, loth to flee
The latest relic of her ancient reign;
The last, the worst, dull spoiler, who was he?
Blush, Caledonia! such thy son could be!
England! I joy no child he was of thine:
Thy free-born men should spare what once was free
Yet they could violate each saddening shrine,
And bear these altars o'er the long-reluctant brine.

XII.

But most the modern Pict's ignoble boast,
To rive what Goth, and Turk, and Time hath spar'd:
Cold as the crags upon his native coast,
His mind as barren and his heart as hard,
Is he whose head conceiv'd, whose hand prepar'd,
Aught to displace Athena's poor remains:
Her sons too weak the sacred shrine to guard,
Yet felt some portion of their mother's pains,
And never knew, till then, the weight of Despot's chains.

XIII.

What! Shall it e'er be said by British tongue,
Albion was happy in Athena's tears?
Though in thy name the slaves her bosom wrung,
Tell not the deed to blushing Europe's ears;
The ocean queen, the free Britannia bears
The last poor plunder from a bleeding land:
Yes, she, whose gen'rous aid her name endears,
Tore down those remnants with a Harpy's hand,
Which envious Eld forbore, and tynrats left to stand.

XIV.

Where was thine Aegis, Pallas! that appall'd
Stern Alaric and Havoc on their way?
Where Peleus' son? whom Hell in vain entrall'd,
His shade from Hades upon that dread day,
Bursting to light in terrible array!
What? could not Pluto spare the chief once more,
To scare a second robber from his prey?
Idly he wander'd on the Stygian shore,
Nor now preserv'd the walls he lov'd to shield before.

XV.

Cold is the heart, fair Greece! that looks on thee,

Nor feels as lovers o'er the dust they lov'd;
Dull is the eye that will not weep to see
Thy walls defac'd, thy mouldering shrines remov'd
By British hands, which it had best behov'd
To guard those relics ne'er to be restor'd.
Curst be the hour when from their isle they rov'd,
And once again thy hapless bosom gor'd,
And snatch'd thy shrinking Gods to northern climes abhor'r'd!

XVI.

But where is Harold? shall I then forget
To urge the gloomy wanderer o'er the wave?
Little reck'd he of all that men regret;
No lov'd-one now in feign'd lament could rave;
No friend the parting hand extended gave,
Ere the cold stranger pass'd to other climes:
Hard is his heart whom charms may not enslave;
But Harold felt not as in other times,
And left without a sigh the land of war and crimes.

XVII.

He that has sail'd upon the dark blue sea,
Has view'd at times, I ween, a full fair sight;
When the fresh breeze is fair as breeze may be,
The white sail set, the gallant frigate tight;
Masts, spires, and strand retiring to the right,
The glorious main expanding o'er the bow,
The convoy spread like wild swans in their flight,
The dullest sailor wearing bravely now,
So gaily curl the waves before each dashing prow.

XVIII.

And oh, the little warlike world within!
The well-reev'd guns, the netted canopy,
The hoarse command, the busy humming din,
When, at a word, the tops are mann'd on high:
Hark to the Boatswain's call, the cheering cry!
While through the seaman's hand the tackle glides;
Or school-boy Midshipman that, standing by,
Strains his shrill pipe as good or ill betides,
And well the docile crew that skilful urchin guides.

XIX.

White is the glassy deck, without a stain,
Where on the watch the staid Lieutenant walks:
Look on that part which sacred doth remain
For the lone chieftain, who majestic stalks,
Silent and fear'd by all--not oft he talks
With aught beneath him, if he would preserve
That strict restraint, which broken, ever balks
Conquest and Fame: but Britons rarely swerve
From Law, however stern, which tends their strength to nerve.

XX.

Blow! swiftly blow, thou keel-compelling gale!
Till the broad sun withdraws his lessening ray;
Then must the pennant-bearer slacken sail,
That lagging barks may make their lazy way.
Ah! grievance sore, and listless dull delay,
To waste on sluggish hulks the sweetest breeze!
What leagues are lost before the dawn of day,
Thus loitering pensive on the willing seas,
The flapping sail haul'd down to halt for logs like these!

XXI.

The moon is up; by Heaven a lovely eve!
Long streams of light o'er dancing waves expand;
Now lads on shore may sigh, and maids believe:
Such be our fate when we return to land!
Meantime some rude Arion's restless hand
Wakes the brisk harmony that sailors love;
A circle there of merry listeners stand,
Or to some well-known measure feately move,
Thoughtless, as if on shore they still were free to rove.

XXII.

Through Calpe's straits survey the steepy shore;
Europe and Afric on each other gaze!
Lands of the dark-ey'd Maid and dusky Moor
Alike beheld beneath pale Hecate's blaze:
How softly on the Spanish shore she play,
Disclosing rock, and slope, and forest brown,
Distinct, though darkening with her waning phase;
But Mauritania's giant-shadows frown,
From mountain-cliff to coast descending sombre down.

XXIII.

'Tis night, when Meditation bids us feel
We once have lov'd, though love is at an end:
The heart, lone mourner of its baffled zeal,
Though friendless now, will dream it had a friend.
Who with the weight of years would wish to bend,
When Youth itself survives young Love and Joy?
Alas! when mingling souls forget to blend,
Death hath but little left him to destroy!
Ah! happy years! once more who would not be a boy?

XXIV.

Thus bending o'er the vessel's laving side,
To gaze on Dian's wave-reflected sphere;
The soul forgets her schemes of Hope and Pride,
And flies unconscious o'er each backward year.
None are so desolate but something dear,
Dearer than self, possesses or possess'd

A thought, and claims the homage of a tear;
A flashing pang! of which the weary breast
Would still, albeit in vain, the heavy heart divest.

XXV.

To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flook and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er, or rarely been;
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold;
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean;
This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores unroll'd.

XXVI.

But midst the crowd, the hum, the shock of men,
To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess,
And roam along, the world's tir'd denizen,
With none who bless us, none whom we can bless;
Minions of splendour shrinking from distress!
None that, with kindred consciousness endued,
If we were not, would seem to smile the less
Of all that flatter'd, follow'd, sought and sued;
This is to be alone; this, this is solitude!

XXVII.

More blest the life of godly Eremite,
Such as on lonely Athos may be seen,
Watching at Eve upon the giant height,
That looks o'er waves so blue, skies so serene,
That he who there at such an hour hath been
Will wistful linger on that hallow'd spot;
Then slowly tear him from the 'witching scene,
Sight forth one wish that such had been his lot,
Then turn to hate a world he had almost forgot.

XXVIII.

Pass we the long, unvarying course, the track
Oft trod, that never leaves a trace behind;
Pass we the calm, the gale, the change, the tack,
ANd each well known caprice of wave and wind;
Pass we the joys and sorrows sailors find,
Coop'd in their winged sea-girt citadel;
The foul, the fair, the contrary, the kind,
As breezes rise and fall and billows swell,
Till on some jocund morn--lo, land! and all is well.

XXIX.

But not in silence pass Calypso's isles,
The sister tenants of the middle deep;
There for the weary still a haven smiles,

Though the fair goddess long hath ceas'd to weep,
And o'er her cliffs a fruitless watch to keep
For him who dar'd prefer a mortal bride:
Here, too, his boy essay'd the dreadful leap
Stern Mentor urg'd from high to yonder tide;
While thus of both bereft, the nymph-queen doubly sigh'd.

XXX.

Her reign is past, her gentle glories gone:
But trust not this; too easy youth, beware!
A mortal sovereign holds her dangerous throne,
And thou may'st find a new Calypso there.
Sweet Florence! could another ever share
This wayward, loveless heart, it would be thine:
But check'd by every tie, I may not dare
To cast a worthless offering at thy shrine,
Nor ask so dear a breast to feel one pang for mine.

XXXI.

Thus Harold deem'd, as on that lady's eye
He look'd, and met its beam without a thought,
Save Admiration glancing harmless by:
Love kept aloof, albeit not far remote,
Who knew his votary often lost and caught,
But knew him as his worshipper no more,
And ne'er again the boy his bosom sought:
Since now he vainly urg'd him to adore,
Well deem'd the little God his ancient sway was o'er.

XXXII.

Fair Florence found, in sooth with some amaze,
One who, 'twas said, still sigh'd to all he saw,
Withstand, unmov'd, the lustre of her gaze,
Which others hail'd with real, or mimic awe,
Their hope, their doom, their punishment, their law;
All that gay Beauty from her bondsmen claims:
And much she marvell'd that a youth so raw
Nor felt, nor feign'd at least, the oft-told flames,
Which, though sometimes they frown, yet rarely anger dames.

XXXIII.

Little knew she that seeming marble-heart,
Now mask'd in silence or withheld by pride,
Was not unskilful in the spoiler's art,
And spread its snares licentious far and wide;
Nor from the base pursuit had turn'd aside,
As long as aught was worthy to pursue:
But Harold on such arts no more relied;
And had he doated on those eyes so blue,
Yet never would he join the lover's whining crew.

XXXIV.

Not much he kens, I ween, of woman's breast,
Who thinks that wanton thing is won by sighs;
Who careth she for hearts when once possess'd?
Do proper homage to thine idol's eyes;
But not too humbly, or she will despise
Thee and thy suit, though told in moving tropes:
Disguise ev'n tenderness, if thou art wise;
Brisk Confidence still best with woman copes;
Pique her and soothe in turn, soon Passion crowns thy hopes.

XXXV.

'Tis an old lesson; Time approves it true,
And those who know it best, deplore it most;
When all is won that all desire to woo,
The paltry prize is hardly worth the cost:
Youth wasted, minds degraded, honour lost,
These are thy fruits, successful Passion! these!
If, kindly cruel, early Hope is crost,
Still to the last it rankles, a disease,
Not to be cur'd when Love itself forgets to please.

XXXVI.

Away! nor let me loiter in my song,
For we have many a mountain-path to tread,
And many a varied shore to sail along,
By pensive Sadness, not by Fiction, led--
Climes, fair withal as every mortal head
Imagin'd in its little schemes of thought;
Or e'er in new Utopias were ared,
To teach man what he might be, or he ought;
If that corrupted thing could ever such be taught.

XXXVII.

Dear Nature is the kindest mother still,
Though alway changing, in her aspect mild;
From her bare bosom let me take my fill,
Her never-wean'd, though not her favour'd child.
Oh! she is fairest in her features wild,
Where nothing polish'd dares pollute her path:
To me by day or night she ever smil'd,
Though I have mark'd her when none other hath,
And sought her more and more, and lov'd her best in wrath.

XXXVIII.

Land of Albania! where Iskander rose,
Theme of the young, and beacon of the wise,
And he his name-sake, whose oft-baffled foes
Shrunk from his deeds of chivalrous emprise:
Land of Albania! let me bend mine eyes
On thee, thou rugged nurse of savage men!
The cross descends, thy minarets arise,
And the pale crescent sparkles in the glen,

Through many a cypress grove within each city's ken.

XXXIX.

Childe Harold sail'd, and pass'd the barren spot,
Where sad Penelope o'erlook'd the wave;
And onward view'd the mount, not yet forgot,
The lover's refuge, and the Lesbian's grave.
Dark Sappho! could not verse immortal save
That breast imbued with such immortal fire?
Could she not live who life eternal gave?
If life eternal may await the lyre,
That only Heaven to which Earth's children may aspire.

XL.

'Twas on a Grecian autumn's gentle eve
Childe Harold hail'd Leucadia's cape afar;
A spot he long'd to see, nor cared to leave:
Oft did he mark the scenes of vanish'd war,
Actium, Lepanto, fatal Trafalgar;
Mark them unmov'd, for he would not delight
(Born beneath some remote inglorious star)
In themes of bloody fray, or gallant fight,
But loath'd the bravo's trade, and laugh'd at martial wight.

XLI.

But when he saw the evening star above
Leucadia's far-projecting rock of woe,
And hail'd the last resort of fruitless love,
He felt, or deem'd he felt, no common glow:
And as the stately vessel glided slow
Beneath the shadow of that ancient mount,
He watch'd the billows' melancholy flow,
And, sunk albeit in thought as he was wont,
More placid seem'd his eye, and smooth his pallid front.

XLII.

Morn dawns; and with it stern Albania's hills,
Dark Suli's rocks, and Pindus' inland peak,
Rob'd half in mist, bedew'd with snowy rills,
Array'd in many a dun and purple streak,
Arise; and, as the clouds among the break,
Disclose the dwelling of the mountaineer:
Here roams the wolf, the eage whets his beak,
Birds, beasts of prey, and wilder men appear,
And gathering storms around convulse the closing year.

XLIII.

Now Harold felt himself at length alone,
And bade to Christian tongues a long adieu;
Now he adventur'd on a shore unknown,
Which all adm're, but many dread to view:
His breast was arm'd 'gainst fate, his wants were few;

Peril he sought not, but ne'er shrunk to meet,
The scene was savage, but the scene was new;
This made the ceaseless toil of travel sweet,
Beat back keen winter's blast, and welcom'd summer's heat.

XLIV.

Here the red cross, for still the cross is here,
Though sadly scoff'd at by the circumcis'd,
Forgets that pride to pamper'd Priesthood dear;
Churchman and votary alike despis'd.
Foul Superstition! howsoe'er disguis'd,
Idol, saint, virgin, prophet, crescent, cross,
For whatsoever symbol thou art priz'd,
Thou sacerdotal gain, but general loss!
Who from true worship's gold can separate thy dross?

XLV.

Ambracia's gulph behold, where once was lost
A world for woman, lovely, harmless thing!
In yonder rippling bay, their naval host
Did many a Roman chief and Asian king
To doubtful conflict, certain slaughter bring:
Look where the second Caesar's trophies rose!
Now, like the hands that rear'd them, withering:
Imperial Anarchs, doubling human woes!
GOD! was thy globe ordain'd for such to win and lose?

XLVI.

From the dark barriers of that rugged clime,
Ev'n to the centre of Illyria's vales,
Childe Harold pass'd o'er many a mount sublime,
Through lands scarce notic'd in historic tales;
Yet in fam'd Attica such lovely dales
Are rarely seen; nor can fair Tempe boast
A charm they know not; lov'd Parnassus fails,
Though classic ground and consecrated most,
To match some spots that lurk within this lowering coast.

XLVII.

He pass'd bleak Pindus, Acherusia's lake,
And left the primal city of the land,
And onwards did his further journey take
To greet Albania's chief, whose dread command
Is lawless law; for with a bloody hand
He sways a nation, turbulent and bold:
Yet here and there some daring mountain-band
Disdain his power, and from their rocky hold
Hurl their defiance far, nor yield, unless to gold.

XLVIII.

Monastic Zitza! from thy shady brow,
Thou small, but favour'd spot of holy ground!

Where'er we gaze, around, above, below,
What rainbow tints, what magic charms are found!
Rock, river, forest, mountain, all abound,
And bluest skies that harmonize the whole:
Beneath, the distant torrent's rushing sound
Tells where the volum'd cataract doth roll
Between those hanging rocks, that shock yet please the soul.

XLIX.

Amidst the grove that crowns yon tufted hill,
Which, were it not for many a mountain high
Rising in lofty ranks, and loftier still,
Might well itself be deem'd of dignity,
The convent's white walls glisten fair on high:
Here dwells the caloyer, nor rude is he,
Nor niggard of his cheer; the passer by
Is welcome still; nor heedless will he flee
From hence, if he delight kind Nature's sheen to see.

L.

Here in the sultriest season let him rest,
Fresh is the green beneath those aged trees;
Here winds of gentlest wing will fan his breast,
From heaven itself he may inhale the breeze:
The plain is far beneath--oh! let him seize
Pure pleasure while he can; the scorching ray
Here pierceth not, impregnate with disease:
Then let his length the loitering pilgrim lay,
And gaze, untir'd, the morn, the noon, the eve away.

LI.

Dusky and huge, enlarging on the sight,
Nature's volcanic amphitheatre,
Chimaera's alps extend from left to right:
Beneath, a living valley seems to stir;
Flocks play, trees wave, streams flow, the mountain-fir
Nodding above: behold black Acheron!
Once consecrated to the sepulchre.
Pluto! if this be hell I look upon,
Close sham'd Elysium's gates, my shade shall seek for none!

LII.

Ne city's towers pollute the lovely view;
Unseen is Yanina, though not remote,
Veil'd by the screen of hills: here men are few,
Scanty the hamlet, rare the lonely cot;
But, peering down each precipice, the goat
Browseth; and, pensive o'er his scattered flock,
The little shepherd in his white capote
Doth lean his boyish form along the rock,
Or in his cave awaits the tempest's short-liv'd shock.

LIII.

Oh! where, Dodona! is thine aged grove,
Prophetic fount, and oracle divine?
What valley echo'd the response of Jove?
What trace remaineth of the thunderer's shrine?
All, all forgotten--and shall man repine
That his frail bonds to fleeting life are broke?
Cease, fool! the fate of gods may well be thine:
Wouldst thou survive the marble or the oak?
When nations, tongues, and worlds must sink beneath the stroke!

LIV.

Epirus' bounds recede, and mountains fail;
Tir'd of up-gazing still, the wearied eye
Reposes gladly on as smooth a vale
As ever Spring yclad in grassy dye:
Ev'n on a plain no humble beauties lie,
Where some bold river breaks the long expanse,
And woods along the banks are waving high,
Whose shadows in the glassy waters dance,
Or with the moon-beam sleep in midnight's solemn trance.

LV.

The Sun had sunk behind vast Tomerit,
And Laos wide and fierce came roaring by;
The shades of wonted night were gathering yet,
When, down the steep banks winding warily,
Childe Harold saw, like meteors in the sky,
The glittering minarets of Tepalen,
Whose walls o'erlook the stream; and drawing nigh,
He heard the busy hum of warrior-men
Swelling the breeze that sigh'd along the lengthening glen.

LVI.

He pass'd the sacred Haram's silent tower,
And underneath the wide o'erarching gate
Survey'd the dwelling of this chief of power,
Where all around proclaim'd his high estate.
Amidst no common pomp the despot sate,
While busy preparation shook the court,
Slaves, eunuchs, soldiers, guests, and santons wait;
Within, a palace, and without, a fort;
Here men of every clime appear to make resort.

LVII.

Richly caparison'd, a ready row
Of armed horse, and many a warlike store
Circled the wide extending court below:
Above, strange groups adorn'd the corridore;
And oft-times through the Area's echoing door
Some high-capp'd Tartar spurr'd his steed away:
The Turk, the Greek, the Albanian, and the Moor,

Here mingled in their many-hued array,
While the deep war-drum's sound announc'd the close of day.

LVIII.

The wild Albanian kirtled to his knee,
With shawl-girt head and ornamented gun,
And gold-embroider'd garments, fair to see;
The crimson-scarfed men of Macedon;
The Delhi with his cap of terror on,
And crooked glaive; the lively, supple Greek;
And swarthy Nubia's mutilated son;
The bearded Turk that rarely deigns to speak,
Master of all around, too potent to be meek,

LIX.

Are mix'd conspicuous: some recline in groups,
Scanning the motley scene that varies round;
There some grave Moslem to devotion stoops,
And some that smoke, and some that play, are found;
Here the Albanian proudly treads the ground;
Half whispering there the Greek is heard to prate;
Hark! from the mosque the nightly solemn sound,
The Muezzin's call doth shake the minaret,
'There is no god but God!--to prayer--lo! God is great.'

LX.

Just at this season Ramazani's fast
Through the long day its penance did maintain:
But when the lingering twilight hour was past,
Revel and feast assum'd the rule again:
Now all was bustle, and the menial train
Prepar'd and spread the plenteous board within;
The vacant gallery now seem'd made in vain,
But from the chambers came the mingling din,
As page and slave anon were passing out and in.

LXI.

Here woman's voice is never heard: apart,
And scarce permitted, guarded, veil'd, to move,
She yields to one her person and her heart,
Tam'd to her cage, nor feels a wish to rove:
For, not unhappy in her master's love,
And joyful in a mother's gentlest cares,
Blest cares! all other feelings far above!
Herself more sweetly rears the babe she bears,
Who never quits the breast, no meaner passion shares.

LXII.

In marble-pav'd pavilion, where a spring
Of living water from the centre rose,
Whose bubbling did a genial freshness fling,
And soft voluptuous couches breath'd repose,

ALI reclin'd, a man of war and woes;
Yet in his lineaments ye cannot trace,
While Gentleness her milder radiance throws
Along that aged venerable face,
The deeds that lurk beneath, and stain him with disgrace.

LXIII.

It is not that yon hoary lengthening bear
Ill suits the passions which belong to youth;
Love conquers age--so Hafiz hath averr'd,
So sings the Teian, and he sings in sooth--
But crimes that scorn the tender voice of Ruth,
Beseeming all men ill, but most the man
In years, have marked him with a tyger's tooth;
Blood follows blood, and, through their mortal span,
In bloodier acts conclude those who with blood began.

LXIV.

'Mid many things most new to ear and eye
The pilgrim rested here his weary feet,
And gaz'd around on Moslem luxury,
Till quickly wearied with that spacious seat
Of Wealth and Wantonness, the choice retreat
Of sated Grandeur from the city's noise:
And were it humbler it in sooth were sweet;
But Peace abhorreth artificial joys,
And Pleasure, leagued with Pomp, the zest of both destroys.

LXV.

Fierce are Albania's children, yet they lack
Not virtues, were those virtues more mature.
Where is the foe that ever saw their back?
Who can so well the toil of war endure?
Their native fastnesses not more secure
Than they in doubtful time of troublous need:
Their wrath how deadly! but their friendship sure,
When Gratitude or Valour bids them bleed,
Unshaken rushing on where'er their chief may lead.

LXVI.

Childe Harold saw them in their chieftain's tower
Thronging to war in splendour and success;
And after view'd them, when, within their power,
Himself awhile the victim of distress;
That saddening hour when bad men hotlier press:
But these did shelter him beneath their roof,
When less barbarians would have cheered him less,
And fellow-countrymen have stood aloof--
In aught that tries the heart how few withstand the proof!

LXVII.

It chanc'd that adverse winds once drove his bark

Full on the coast of Suli's shaggy shore,
When all around was desolate and dark;
To land was perilous, to sojourn more;
Yet for awhile the mariners forbore,
Dubious to trust where treachery might lurk:
At length they ventur'd forth, though doubting sore
That those who loathe alike the Frank and Turk
Might once again renew their ancient butcher-work.

LXVIII.

Vain fear! the Suliotes stretch'd the welcome hand,
Led them o'er rocks and past the dangerous swamp,
Kinder than polish'd slaves though not so bland,
And pil'd the hearth, and wrung their garments damp,
And fill'd the bowl, and trimm'd the cheerful lamp,
And spread their fare; though homely, all they had:
Such conduct bears Philanthropy's rare stamp--
To rest the weary and to soothe the sad,
Doth lesson happier men, and shames at least the bad.

LXIX.

It came to pass, that when he did address
Himself to quit at length this mountain-land,
Combin'd marauders half-way barr'd egress,
And wasted far and near with glaive and brand;
And therefore did he take a trusty band
To traverse Acarnania's forest wide,
In war well season'd, and with labours tann'd,
Till he did greet white Achelous' tide,
And from his further bank Aetolia's wolds espied.

LXX.

Where lone Utraikey forms it circling cove,
And weary waves retires to gleam at rest,
How brown the foilage of the green hill's grove,
Nodding at midnight o'er the calm bay's breast,
As winds come lightly whispering from the west,
Kissing, not ruffling, the blue deep's serene:--
Here Harold was receiv'd a welcome guest;
Nor did he pass unmov'd the gentle scene,
For many a joy could he from Night's soft presence glean.

LXI.

On the smooth shore the night-fires brightly blaz'd,
The feast was done, the red wine circling fast,
And he that unawares had there ygaz'd
With gaping wonderment had star'd aghast;
For ere night's midmost, stillest hour was past
The native revels of the troop began;
Eack Palikar his sabre from him cast,
And bounding hand in hand, man link'd to man,
Yelling their uncouth dirge, long daunc'd the kirtled clan.

LXXII.

Childe Harold at a little distance stood
And view'd, but not displeas'd, the revelrie,
Nor hated harmless mirth, however rude:
In sooth, it was not vulgar sight to see
Their barbarous, yet their not indecent, glee,
And, as the flames along their faces gleam'd,
Their gestures nimble, dark eyes flashing free,
The long wild locks that to their girdles stream'd,
While thus in concert they this lay hang sang, half scream'd:

1

Tambourgi! Tambourgi! thy 'larum afar
Gives hope to the valiant, and promise of war:
All the sons of the mountains arise at the note,
Chimariot, Illyrian, and dark Suliote!

2

Oh! who is more brave than a dark Suliote,
In his snowy camese and his shaggy capote?
To the wolf and the vulture he leaves his wild flock,
And descends to the plain like the stream from the rock.

3

Shall the sons of Chimari, who never forgive
The fault of a friend, bid an enemy live?
Let those guns so unerring such vengeance forego?
What mark is so fair as the breast of a foe?

4

Macedonia sends forth her invincible race;
For a time they abandon the cave and the chase:
But those scarfs of blood-red shall be redder, before
The sabre is sheath'd and the battle is o'er.

5

Then the pirates of Parga that dwell by the waves,
And teach the pale Franks what it is to be slaves,
Shall leave on the beach the long gallery and oar,
And track to his covert the captive on sore.

6

I ask not the pleasures that riches supply,
My sabre shall win what the feeble must buy;
Shall win the young bride with her long flowing hair,
And many a maid from her mother shall tear.

7

I love the fair fave of the maid in her youth,
Her caresses shall lull me, her music shall sooth;
Let her bring from the chamber her many-ton'd lyre,

And sing us a song on the fall of her sire.

8

Remember the moment when Previsa fell,
The shrieks of the conquer'd, the conqueror's yell;
The roofs that we fir'd, and the plunder we shar'd,
The wealthy we slaughter'd, the lovely we spar'd.

9

I talk not of mercy, I talk not of fear;
He neither must know who would serve the Vizier:
Since the days of our prophet the Crescent ne'er saw
A chief ever glorious like Ali Pashaw.

10

Dark Muchtar his son to the Danube is sped,
Let the yellow-hair'd Giaours view his horse-tail with dread;
When he Delhis come dashing in blood o'er the banks,
How few shall escape from the Muscovite ranks!

11

Selictar! unsheathe then our chief's scimitar:
Tambourgi! thy 'larum gives promise of war.
Ye mountains, that see us descend to the shore,
Shall view us as victors, or view us no more!

LXXXIII.

Fair Greece! sad relic of departed worth!
Immortal, though no more! though fallen, great!
Who now shall lead thy scatter'd children forth,
And long accustom'd bondage uncreate?
Not such thy sons who whilome did await,
The hopeless warriors of a willing doom,
In bleak Thermopylae's sepulchral strait--
Oh! who that gallant spirit shall resume,
Lead from Eurotas' banks, and call thee from the tomb?

LXXXIV.

Spirit of freedom! when on Phyle's brow
Tho sat'st with Thrasylus and his train,
Couldst thou forebode the dismal hour which now
Dims the green beauties of thine Attic plain?
Not thirty tyrants now enforce the chain,
But every carle can lord it o'er thy land;
Nor rise thy sons, but idly rail in vain,
Trembling beneath the scourge of Turkish hand,
From birth till death enslav'd; in word, in deed unmann'd.

LXXXV.

In all save form alone, how chang'd! and who
That marks the fire still sparkling in each eye,
Who but would deem their bosom burn'd anew

With thy unquenched beam, lost Liberty!
And many dream withal the hour is nigh
That gives them back their fathers' heritage:
For foreign arms and aid they fondly sigh,
Nor solely dare encounter hostile rage,
Or tear their name defil'd from Slavery's mournful page.

LXXVI.

Hereditary bondsmen! know ye not
Who would be free themselves must strike the blow?
By their right arms the conquest must be wrought?
Will Gaul or Muscovite redress ye? no!
True, they lay your proud despoilers low,
But not for you will Freedom's altars flame.
Shades of the Helots! triumph o'er your foe!
Greece! change thy lords, thy state is still the same;
Thy glorious day is o'er, but not thine years of shame.

LXXVII.

The city won for Allah from the Giaour,
The Giaour from Othmna's race again may wrest;
And the Serai's impenetrable tower
Receive the fiery Frank, her former guest;
On Wahab's rebel brood who dared divest
The prophet's tomb of all its pious spoil,
May wind their path of blood along the West;
But ne'er will freedom seek this fated soil,
But slave succeed to slave through years of endless toil.

LXXVIII.

Yet mark their mirth--ere lenten days begin,
That penance which their holy rites prepare
To shrive from man his weight of mortal sin,
By daily abstinence and nightly prayer;
But ere his sackcloth garb Repentance wear,
Some days of joyaunce are decreed to all,
To take the pleasaunce each his secret share,
In motley robe to dance at masking ball,
And join the mimic train of merry Carnival.

LXXIX.

And whose more rife with merriment than thine,
Oh Stamboul! once the empress of their reign?
Though turbans now pollute Sophia's shrine,
And Greece her very altars eyes in vain:
(Alas! her woes will still pervade my strain!)
Gay were her minstrels once, for free her throng,
All felt the common joy they now must feign,
Nor oft I've seen such sight, nor heard such song,
As woo'd the eye, and thrill'd the Bosphorus along.

LXXX.

Loud was the lightsome tumult of the shore,
Oft Music chang'd but never ceas'd her tone,
And timely echo'd back the measur'd oar,
And rippling waters made a pleasant moan:
The Queen of tides on high consenting shone,
And when a transient breeze swept o'er the wave,
'Twas, as if darting from her heavenly throne,
A brighter glance her form reflected gave,
Till sparkling billows seem'd to light the banks they lave.

LXXXI.

Glanc'd many a light caique along the foam,
Danc'd on the shore the daughters of the land,
Ne thought had man or maid of rest or home,
While many a languid eye and thrilling hand
Exchang'd the look few bosoms may withstand,
Or gently prest, return'd the pressure still:
Oh Love! young Love! bound in thy rosy band,
Let sage or cynic prattle as he will,
These hours, and only these, redeem Life's years of ill!

LXXXII.

But, midst the throng in merry masquerade,
Lurk there no hearts that throb with secret pain,
Even through the closest searment half betrayed?
To such gentle murmurs of the main
Seem to re-echo all they mourn in vain;
To such the gladness of the gamesome crowd
Is source of wayward thought and stern disdain:
How do they loathe the laughter idly loud,
And long to change the robe of revel for the shroud!

LXXXIII.

This must he feel, the true-born son of Greece,
If Greece one true-born patriot still can boast:
Not such as prate of war, but skulk in peace,
The bondman's peace, who sighs for all he lost,
Yet with smooth smile his tyrant can accost,
And wield the slavish sickle, not the sword:
Ah! Greece! they love thee least who owe thee most;
Their birth, their blood, and taht sublime record
Of hero sires, who shame thy now degenerate horde!

LXXXIV.

When riseth Lacedemon's hardihood,
When Thebes Epaminondas rears again,
When Athens' children are with hearts endured,
When Grecian mothers shall give birth to men,
Then may'st thou be restored; but not till then.
A thousand years scarce serve to form a state;
An hour may lay it in the dust: and when
Can man its shatter'd splendour renovate,

Recal its virtues back, and vanquish Time and Fate?

LXXXV.

And yet how lovely in thine age of woe,
Land of lost gods and godlike men! art thou!
Thy vales of ever-green, thy hills of snow
Proclaim thee Nature's varied favourite now:
Thy fanes, thy temples to thy surface bow,
Commingling slowly with heroic earth,
Broke by the share of every rustic plough:
So perish monuments of mortal birth,
So perish all in turn, save well-recorded Worth;

LXXXVI.

Save where some solitary column mourns
Avove its prostrate brethren of the cave;
Save where Tritonia's airy shrine adorns
Colonna's cliff, and gleams along the wave;
Save o'er some warrior's half-forgotten grave,
Where the grey stones and unmolested grass
Ages, but not oblivion, feebly brave,
While strangers only not regardless pass,
Linger like me, perchance, to gaze, and sigh 'Alas!'

LXXXVII.

Yet are thy skies as blue, thy crags as wild;
Sweet are thy groves, and verdant are thy fields,
Thine olive ripe as when Minerva smil'd,
And still his honied wealth Hymettus yields,
There the blithe bee his fragrant fortress builds,
The freeborn wanderer of thy mountain-air;
Apollo still thy long, long summer gilds,
Still in his beam Mendeli's marbles glare;
Art, Glory, Freedom fail, but Nature still is fair.

LXXXVIII.

Where'er we tread 'tis haunted, holy ground;
No earth of thine is lost in vulgar mould,
But one vast realm of wonder spreads around,
And all the Muse's tales seem truly told,
Till the sense aches with gazing to behold
The scenes our earliest dreams have dwelt upon:
Each hill and dale, each deepening glen and wold
Defies the power which crush'd thy temples gone:
Age shakes Athena's tower, but spares gray Marathon.

LXXXIX.

The sun, the soil, but not the slave, the same;
Unchanged in all except its foreign lord--
Preserves alike its bounds and boundless fame
The Battle-field, where Persia's victim horde
First bowed beneath the brunt of Hella's sword,

As on the morn to distant Glory dear,
When Marathon became a magic word;
Which utter'd, to the hearer's eye appear
The camp, the host, the fight, the conqueror's career,

XC.

The flying Mede, his shaftless broken bow;
The fiery Grk, his red pursuing spear;
Mountains above, Earth's, Ocean's plain below;
Death in the front, Destruction in the rear!
Such was the scene--what now remaineth here?
What sacred trophy marks the hallow'd ground,
Recording Freedom's smile and Asia's tear?
The rifled urn, the violated mound,
The dust thy courser's hoof, rude stranger! spurns around.

XCI.

Yet to the remnants of thy splendour past
Shall pilgrims, pensive, but unwearyed, throng;
Long shall the voyager, with th' Ionian blast,
Hail the bright clime of battle and of song;
Long shall thine annals and immortal tongue
Fill with thy fame the youth of many a shore;
Boast of the aged! lesson of the young!
Which sages venerate and bards adore,
As pallas and the Muse unveil their awful lore.

XCII.

The parted bosom clings to wonted home,
If aught that's kindred cheer the welcome hearth;
He that is lonely hither let him roam,
ANd gaze complacent on congenial earth.
Greece is no lightsome land of social mirth;
But he whom Sadness sootheth may abide,
And scarce regret the region of his birth,
When wandering slow by Delphi's sacred side,
Or gazing o'er the plains where Greek and Persian died.

XCIII.

Let such approach this consecrated land,
And pass iin peace along the magic waste:
But spare its relics--let no busy hand
Deface the scenes, already how defac'd!
Not for such purpose were these altars plac'd:
Revere the remnants nations once rever'd:
So may our country's name be undisgrac'd,
So may'st thou prosper where thy youth was rear'd,
By every honest joy of love and life endear'd!

XCIV.

For thee, who thus in too protracted song
Hast sooth'd thine idlesse with inglorious lays,

Soon shall thy voice be lost amid the throng
Of louder minstrels in these later days:
To such resign the strife for fading bays--
Ill may such contest now the spirit move
Which heeds nor keen reproach nor partial praise;
Since cold each kinder heart that might approve,
And none are left to please when none are left to love.

XCV.

Thou too art gone, thou lov'd and lovely one!
Whom youth and youth's affection bound to me;
Who did for me what none beside have done,
Nor shrank from one albeit unworthy thee,
What is my being? thou hast ceas'd to be!
Nor staid to welcome here thy wanderer home,
Who mourns o'er hours which we no more shall see--
Would they had never been, or were to come!
Would he had ne'er return'd to find fresh cause to roam!

XCVI.

Oh! ever loving, lovely, and belov'd!
How selfish Sorrow ponders on the past,
And clings to thoughts now better far remov'd!
But Time shall tear thy shadow from me last.
All thou could'st have of mine, stern Death! thou hast;
The parent, friend, and now the more than friend:
Ne'er yet for one thine arrows flew so fast,
And grief with grief continuing still to blend,
Hath snatch'd the little joy that life had yet to lend.

XCVII.

Then must I plunge again into the crowd,
And follow all that peace disdains to seek?
Where Revel calls, and Laughter, vainly loud,
False to the heart, distorts the hollow cheek,
To leave the flagging spirit doubly weak;
Still o'er the features, which perforce they cheer,
To feign the pleasure or conceal the pique,
Smiles form the channel of a future tear,
Or raise the writhing lip with ill-dissembled sneer.

XCVIII.

What is the worst of woes that wait on age?
What stamps the wrinkle deeper on the brow?
To view each lov'd one blotted from life's page,
And be alone on earth, as I am now.
Before the Chastener humbly let me bow:
O'er hearts divided and o'er hopes destroy'd,
Roll on, vain days! full reckless may ye flow,
Since Time hath reft whate'er my soul enjoy'd,
And with the ills of Eld mine earlier years alloy'd.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage: A Romaunt. Canto III.

I.

Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child!
Ada! sole daughter of my house and heart?
When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smiled,
And then we parted,—not as now we part,
But with a hope.—
Awaking with a start,
The waters heave around me; and on high
The winds lift up their voices: I depart,
Whither I know not; but the hour's gone by,
When Albion's lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye.

II.

Once more upon the waters! yet once more!
And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
That knows his rider. Welcome, to their roar!
Swift be their guidance, wheresoe'er it lead!
Though the strain'd mast should quiver as a reed,
And the rent canvas fluttering strew the gale,
Still must I on; for I am as a weed,
Flung from the rock, on Ocean's foam, to sail
Where'er the surge may sweep, or tempest's breath prevail.

III.

In my youth's summer I did sing of One,
The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind;
Again I seize the theme then but begun,
And bear it with me, as the rushing wind
Bears the cloud onwards: in that Tale I find
The furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears,
Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track behind,
O'er which all heavily the journeying years
Plod the last sands of life,—where not a flower appears.

IV.

Since my young days of passion—joy, or pain,
Perchance my heart and harp have lost a string,
And both may jar: it may be, that in vain
I would essay as I have sung to sing.
Yet, though a dreary strain, to this I cling;
So that it wean me from the weary dream
Of selfish grief or gladness—so it fling
Forgetfulness around me—it shall seem
To me, though to none else, a not ungrateful theme.

V.

He, who grown aged in this world of woe,
In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of life,
So that no wonder waits him; nor below
Can love, or sorrow, fame, ambition, strife,
Cut to his heart again with the keen knife
Of silent, sharp endurance: he can tell

Why thought seeks refuge in lone caves, yet rife
With airy images, and shapes which dwell
Still unimpair'd, though old, in the soul's haunted cell.

VI.

'Tis to create, and in creating life
A being more intense, that we endow
With form our fancy, gaining as we give
The life we image, even as I do now.
What am I? Nothing; but not so art thou,
Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,
Invisible but gazing, as I grow
Mix'd with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,
And feeling still with thee in my crush'd feeling's dearth.

VII.

Yet must I think less wildly:--I have thought
Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,
A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame:
And thus, untaught in youth my heart to tame,
My springs of life were poison'd. 'Tis too late!
Yet am I chang'd; though still enough the same
In strength to bear what time can not abate,
And feed on bitter fruits without accusing Fate.

VIII.

Something too much of this:--but now 'tis past,
And the spell closes with its silent seal.
Long absent HAROLD re-appears at last;
He of the breast which fain no more would feel,
Wrung with the wounds which kill not, but ne'er heal;
Yet Time, who changes all, had altered him
In sould and aspect as in age: years steal
Fire from the mind as vigour from the limb;
And life's enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim.

IX.

His had been quaff'd too quickly, and he found
The dregs were wormwood; but he fill'd again,
And from a purer fount, on holier ground,
And deem'd its spring perpetual; but in vain!
Still round him clung invisibly a chain
Which gall'd for ever, fettering though unseen,
And heavy though it clank'd not; worn with pain,
Which pined although it spoke not, and grew keen,
Entering with every step, he took, through many a scene.

X.

Secure in guarded coldness, he had mix'd
Again in fancied safety with his kind,
And deem'd his spirit now so firmly fix'd

And sheath'd with an invulnerable mind,
That, if no joy, no sorrow lurk'd behind;
And he, as one, might midst the many stand
Unheeded, searching through the crowd to find
Fit speculation! such as in strange land
He found in wonder-works of God and Nature's hand.

XI.

But who can view the ripened rose, nor seek
To wear it? who can curiously behold
The smoothness and the sheen of beauty's cheek,
Nor feel the heart can never all grow old?
Who can contemplate Fame through clouds unfold
The star which rises o'er her steep, nor climb?
Harold, once more within the vortex, roll'd
On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,
Yet with a nobler aim than in his youth's fond prime.

XII.

But soon he knew himself the most unfit
Of men to herd with man; with whom he held
Little in common; untaught to submit
His thoughts to others, though his soul was quell'd
In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompell'd,
He would not yield dominion of his mind
To spirits against whom his own rebell'd;
Proud though in desolation; which could find
A life within itself, to breathe without mankind.

XIII.

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;
Where roll'd the ocean, theron was his home;
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,
He had the passion and the power to roam;
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,
Were unto him companionship; they spake
A mutual language, clearer than the tome
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake
For Nature's pages glass'd by sunbeams on the lake.

XIV.

Like the Chaldean, he could watch the stars,
Till he had peopled them with beings bright
As their own beams; and earth, and earth-born jars,
And human frailties, were forgotten quite:
Could he have kept his spirit to that flight
He had been happy; but this clay will sink
Its spark immortal, envying it the light
To which it mounts, as if to break the link
That keeps us from yon heaven which woos us to its brink.

XV.

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing
Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,
Droop'd as a wild-born falcon with clipt wing,
To whom the boundless air alone were home:
Then came his fit again, which to o'ercome,
As eagerly the barr'd-up bird will beat
His breast and beak against his wiry dome
Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the heat
Of his impeded soul would through his bosom eat.

XVI.

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,
With nought of hope left, but with less of gloom;
The very knowledge that he lived in vain,
That all was over on this side the tomb,
Had made Despair a smilingness assume,
Which, though 'twere wild,--as on the plundered wreck
When mariners would madly meet their doom
With draughts intemperate on the sinking deck,--
Did yet inspire a cheer, which he forbore to check.

XVII.

Stop!--for thy tread is on an Empire's dust!
An earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!
Is the spot mark'd with no colossal bust?
Nor column trophyed for triumphal show?
None; but the moral's truth tells simpler so,
As the ground was before, thus let it be;--
How that red rain hath made the harvest grow!
And is this all the world has gained by thee
Thou first and last of fields! king-making Victory?

XVIII.

And Harold stands upon this place of skulls,
The grave of France, the deadly Waterloo!
How in an hour the power which gave annuls
Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting too!
In 'pride of place' here last the eagle flew,
Then tore with bloody talon the rent plain,
Pierced by the shaft of banded nations through;
Ambition's life and labours all were vain;
He wears the shattered links of the world's broken chain.

XIX.

Fit retribution! Gaul may champ the bit
And foam in fetters;--but is Earth more free?
Did nations combat to make One submit;
Or league to teach all kings true sovereignty?
What! shall reviving Thralldom again be
The patched-up idol of enlightened days?
Shall we, who struck the Lion down, shall we
Pay the Wolf homage? proffering lowly gaze

And servile knees to thrones? No; prove before ye praise!

XX.

If not, o'er one fallen despot boast no more!
In vain fair cheeks were furrowed with hot tears
For Europe's flowers long rooted up before
The trampler of her vineyards; in vain years
Of death, depopulation, bondage, fears,
Have all been borne, and broken by the accord
Of roused-up millions: all tha tmost endears
Glory, is when the myrtle wreathes a sword
Such as Harmodius drew on Athen's tyrant lord.

XXI.

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage-bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

XXII.

Did ye not hear it?--No; 'twas but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony stret;
On with the dance! let joy e unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet--
But, hark!--that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! Arm! and out--it is--the cannon's opening roar!

XXIII.

Within a windowed niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain; he did hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;
And when they smiled because he deem'd it near,
His heart more turly knew hat peal too well
Which stretch'd his father on a bloody bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell:
He rush'd into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

XXIV.

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blush'd at the priase of their own loveliness;
And there were sudden partings, such as press

The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated; who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon nights so sweet such awful morn could rise?

XXV.

And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward in impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
While throng'd the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering, with white lips--'The foe! They come! they come!'

XXVI.

And wild and high the 'Cameron's gathering' rose!
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes:--
How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills
Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring which instils
The stirring memory of a thousand years,
And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ears!

XXVII.

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave,--alas!
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valour, rolling on the foe
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

XXVIII.

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms,--the day
Battle's magnificently-stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
The earth is covered thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
Rider and horse,--friend, foe,--in one red burial blent!

XXIX.

Their praise is hymn'd by loftier harps than mine;
Yet one I would select from that proud throng,

Partly because they blend me with his line,
And partly that I did his sire some wrong,
And partly that bright names will hallow song;
And his was of the bravest, and when shower'd
The death-bolts deadliest the thinn'd files along,
Even where the thickest of war's tempest lower'd,
They reach'd no nobler breast than thine, young, gallant Howard!

XXX.

There have been tears and breaking hearts for thee,
And mine were nothing, had I such to give;
But when I stood beneath the fresh green tree,
Which living waves where thou didst cease to live,
And saw around me the wide field revive
With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring
Come forth her work of gladness to contrive,
With all her reckless birds upon the wing,
I turn'd from all she brought to those she could not bring.

XXXI.

I turn'd to thee, to thousands, of whom each
And one as all a ghastly gap did make
In his own kind and kindred, whom to teach
Forgetfulness were mercy for their sake;
The Archangel's trump, not Glory's, must awake
Those whom they thirst for; though the sound of Fame
May for a moment sooth, it cannot slake
The fever of vain longing, and the name
So honoured but assumes a stronger, bitterer claim.

XXXII.

They mourn, but smile at length; and, smiling, mourn:
The tree will wither long before it fall;
The hull drives on, though mast and sail be torn;
The roof-tree sinks, but moulders on the hall
In massy hoariness; the ruined wall
Stands when its wind-worn battlements are gone;
The bars survive the captive they enthral;
The day drags through though storms keep out the sun;
And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on:

XXXIII.

Even as a broken mirror, which the glass
In every fragment multiplies; and makes
A thousand images of one that was,
The same, and still the more, the more it breaks;
And thus the heart will do which not forsakes,
Living in shattered guise, and still, and cold,
And bloodless, with its sleepless sorrow aches,
Yet withers on till all without is old,
Shewing no visible sign, for such things are untold.

XXXIV.

There is a very life in our despair,
Vitality of poison,—a quick root
Which feeds these deadly brances; for it were
As nothing did we die; but Life will suit
Itself to Sorrow's most detested fruit,
Like to the apples on the Dead Sea's shore,
All ashes to the taste: Did man compute
Existence by enjoyment, and count o'er
Such hours 'gainst years of life,—says, would he name three-score?

XXXV.

The Psalmist numbered out the years of man:
They are enough; and if thy tale be true,
Thou, who didst grudge him even that fleeting span,
More than enough, thou fatal Waterloo!
Millions of tongues record thee, and anew
Their children's lips shall echo them, and say—
'Here, where the sword united nations drew,
Our countrymen were warring on that day!'
And this is much, and all which will not pass away.

XXXVI.

There sunk the greatest, nor the worst of men,
Whose spirit antithetically mixt
One moment of the mightiest, and again
On little objects with like firmness fixt,
Extreme in all things! hadst thou been betwixt,
Thy throne had still been thine, or never been;
For daring made thy rise as fall: thou seek'st
Even now to re-assume the imperial mien,
And shake the world, the Thunderer of the scene!

XXXVII.

Conqueror and captive of the earth art thou!
She trembles at thee still, and thy wild name
Was ne'er more bruited in men's minds than now
That thou art nothing, save the jest of Fame,
Who wooed thee once, thy vassal, and became
The flatterer of thy fierceness, till thou wert
A god unto thyself; nor less the same
To the astounded kingdoms all inert,
Who deem'd thee for a time whate'er thou didst assert.

XXXVIII.

Oh, more or less than man—in high or low,
Battling with nations, flying from the field;
Now making monarchs' necks thy footstool, now
More than thy meanest soldier taught to yield;
An empire thou couldst crush, command, rebuild,
But govern not thy pettiest passion, nor,
However deeply in men's spirits skill'd,

Look through thine own, nor curb the lust of war,
Nor learn that tempted Fate will leave the loftiest star.

XXXIX.

Yet well thy soul'd hath brook'd the turning tide
With that untaught innate philosophy,
Which, be it wisdom, coldness, or deep pride,
Is gall and wormwood to an enemy.
When the whole host of hatred stood hard by,
To watch and mock thee shrinking, thou hast smiled
With a sedate and all-enduring eye;--
When Fortune fled her spoil'd and favourite child,
He stood unbowed beneath the ills upon him piled.

XL.

Sager than in thy fortunes; for in them
Ambition steel'd thee on too far to show
That just habitual scorn which could contemn
Men and their thoughts; 'twas wise to feel, not so
To wear it ever on thy lip and brow,
And spurn the instruments thou wert to use
Till they were turn'd unto thine overthrow:
'Tis but a worthless world to win or lose;
So hath it proved to thee, and all such lot who choose.

XLI.

If, like a tower upon a headlong rock,
Thou hadst been made to stand or fall alone,
Such scorn of man had help'd to brave the shock;
But men's thoughts were the steps which paved thy throne,
Their admiratio nthy best weapon sone;
The part of Philip's son was thine, not then
(Unless aside thy purple had been thrown)
Like stern Diogenes to mock at men;
For sceptred cynics earth were far too wide a den.

XLII.

But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,
And there had been thy bane; there is a fire
And motion of the soul which will not dwell
In its own narrow being, but aspire
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;
And, but once kindled, quenchless evermore,
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore.

XLIII.

This makes the madmen who have made men mad
By their contagion; Conquerors and Kings,
Founders of sects and systems, to whom add
Sophists, Bards, Statesmen, all unquiet things

Which stir too strongly the soul's secret springs,
And are themselves the fools to whose they fool;
Envied, yet how unenviable! what stings
Are theirs! One breast laid open were a school
Which would unteach mankind the lust to shine or rule:

XLIV.

Their breath is agitation, and their life
A storm whereon they ride, to sink at last,
And yet so nurs'd and bigotted to strife,
That should their days, surviving perils past,
Melt to calm twilight, they feel overcast
With sorrow and supineness, and so die;
Even as a flame unfed, which runs to waste
With its own flickering, or a sword laid by
Which eats into itself, and rusts ingloriously.

XLV.

He who ascends to mountain-tops, shall find
The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow;
He who surpasses or subdues mankind,
Must look down on the hate of those below.
Though high above the sun of glory glow,
And far beneath the earth and ocean ocean spread,
Round him are icy rocks, and loudly blow
Contending tempests on his naked head,
And thus reward the toils which to those summits led.

XLVI.

Away with these! true Wisdom's world will be
Within its own creation, or in thine,
Maternal Nature! for who teems like thee,
Thus on the banks of thy majestic Rhine?
There Harold gazes on a work divine,
A blending of all beauties; streams and dells,
Fruit, foliage, crag, wood, cornfield, mountain, vine,
And chiefless castles breathing stern farewells
From gray but leafy walls, where Ruin greenly dwells.

XLVII.

And there they stand, as stands a lofty mind,
Worn, but unstooping to the baser crowd,
All tenantless, save to the crannyng wind,
Or holding dark communion with the cloud.
There was a day when they were young and proud,
Banners on high, and battles pass'd below;
But they who fought are in a bloody shroud,
And those which waved are shredless dust ere now,
And the bleak battlements shall bear no future blow.

XLVIII.

Beneath these battlements, within those walls,

Power dwelt amidst her passions; in proud state
Each robber chief upheld his armed halls,
Doing his evil will, nor less elate
Than mightier heroes of a longer date.
What want these outlaws conquerors should have
But History's purchased page to call them great?
A wider space, an ornamented grave?
Their hopes were not less warm, their souls were full as brave.

XLIX.

In their baronial feuds and single fields,
What deed of prowess unrecorded died!
And Love, which lent a blazon to their shields,
With emblems well devised by amorous pride,
Through all the mail of iron hearts would glide;
But still their flame was fierceness, and drew on
Keen contest and destruction near allied,
And many a tower for some fair mischief won,
Saw the discoloured Rhine beneath its ruin run.

L.

But Thou, exulting and abounding river!
Making thy waves a blessing as they flow
Through banks whose beauty would endure for ever
Could man but leave thy bright creation so,
Nor its fair promise from the surface mow
With the sharp scythe of conflict,--then to see
Thy valley of sweet waters, were to know
Earth paved like Heaven; and to seem such to me
Even now what wants thy stream?--that it should Lethe be.

LI.

A thousand battles have assail'd thy banks,
But these and half their fame have pass'd away,
And Slaughter heap'd on high his weltering ranks;
Their very graves are gone, band what are they?
Thy tide wash'd down the blood of yesterday,
And all was stainless, and on thy clear stream
Glass'd with its dancing light the sunny ray;
But o'er the blackened memory's blighting dream
Thy waves would vainly roll, all sweeping as they seem.

LII.

Thus Harold inly said, and pass'd along,
Yet not insensibly to all which here
Awoke the jocund birds to early song
In glens which might have made even exile dear:
Though on his brow were graven lines austere,
And tranquil sternnes which had ta'en the place
Of feelings fierier far but less severe,
Joy was not always absent from his face,
But o'er it in such scenes would steal with transient trace.

LIII.

Nor was all love shut from him, though his days
Of passion had consumed themselves to dust.
It is in vain that we would coldly gaze
On such as smile upon us; the heart must
Leak kindly back to kindness, though disgust
Hath wean'd it from all worldlings: thus he felt,
For there was soft remembrance, and sweet trust
In one fond breast, to which his own would melt,
And in its tenderer hour on that his bosom dwelt.

LIV.

And he had learn'd to love,--I know not why,
For this in such as him seems strange of mood,--
The helpless looks of blooming infancy,
Even in its earliest nurture; what subdued,
To change like this, a mind so far imbued
With scorn of man, it little boots to know;
But thus it was; and though in solitude
Small power the nipp'd affections have to grow,
In him this glowed when all beside had ceased to glow.

LV.

And there was one soft breast, as hath been said,
Which unto his was bound by stronger ties
Than the church links withal; and, though unwed,
That love was pure, and, far above disguise,
Had stood the test of mortal enmities
Still undivided, and cemented more
By peril, dreaded most in female eyes;
But this was firm, and from a foreign shore
Well to that heart might his these absent greetings pour!

1

The castled crag of Drachenfels
Frowns o'er the wide and winding Rhine,
Whose breast of waters broadly swells
Between the banks which bear the vine,
And hills all rich with blossomed trees,
And fields which promise corn and wine,
And scattered cities crowning these,
Whose far white walls along them shine,
Have strewed a scene, which I should see
With double joy were thou with me!

2

And peasant girls, with deep blue eyes,
And hand which offer early flowers,
Walk smiling o'er this paradise
Above, the frequent feudal towers
Through green leaves lift their walls of grey,

And many a rock which steeply lours,
And noble arch in proud decay,
Look o'er this vale of vintage-bowers;
But one thing want these banks of Rhine,--
Thy gentle hand to clasp in mine!

3

I send the lilies given to me;
Though long before thy hand they touch,
I know that they must withered be,
But yet reject them not as such;
For I have cherish'd them as dear,
Because they yet may meet thine eye,
And guide thy sould to mine even here,
When thou behold'st them drooping night,
And knowst them gathered by the Rhine,
And offered from my heart to thine!

4

The river nobly foams and flows,
The charm of this enchanted ground,
And all its thousand turns disclose
Some fresher beauty varying round;
The haughtiest breast its wish might bound
Through life to dwell delighted here;
Nor could on earth a spot be found
To nature and to me so dear,
Could thy dear eyes in following mine
Still sweeten more these banks of Rhine!

LVI.

By Coblenz, on a rise of gentle ground,
There is a small and simply pyramid,
Crowning the summit of the verdant mound;
Beneath its base are heroes' ashes hid,
Our enemy's,--but let not that forbid
Honour to Marceau! o'er whose early tomb
Tears, big tears, gush'd from the rough soldier's lid,
Lamenting and yet envying such a doom,
Falling for France, whose rights he battled to resume.

LVII.

Brief, brave, and glorious was his young career,--
His mourners were two hosts, his friends and foes;
And fitly may the stranger lingering here
Pray for his gallant spirit's bright repose;
For he was Freedom's champion, one of those,
The few in number, who had not o'erstept
The charter to chastise which she bestows
On such as wield her weapons; he had kept
The whiteness of his soul, and thus men o'er him wept.

LVIII.

Here Ehrenbreitstein, with her shattered wall
Black with the miner's blast, upon her height
Yet shows of what she was, when shell and ball
Rebounding idly on her strength did light;
A tower of victory! from whence the flight
Of baffled foes was watch'd along the plain:
But Peace destroy'd what War could never blight,
And laid those proud roofs bare to Summer's rain--
On which the iron shower for years had pour'd in vain.

LIX.

Adieu to thee, fair Rhine! How long delighted
The stranger fain would linger on his way!
Thine is a scene alike where souls united
Or lonely Contemplation thus might stray;
And could the ceaseless vultures cease to prey
On self-condemning bosoms, it were here,
Where Nature, nor too sombre nor too gay,
Wild but not rude, awful yet not austere,
Is to the mellow Earth as Autumn to the year.

LX.

Adieu to thee again! a vain adieu!
There can be found no farewell to scene like thine;
The mind is coloured by thy every hue;
And if reluctantly the eyes resign
Their cherish'd gaze upon thee, lovely Rhine!
'Tis with the thankful glance of parting praise;
More mighty spots may rise--more glaring shine,
But none unite in one attaching maze
The brilliant, fair, and soft,--the glories of old days,

LXI.

The negligently grand, the fruitful bloom
Of coming ripeness, the white city's sheen,
The rolling stream, the precipice's gloom,
The forest's growth, and Gothic's walls between,
The wild rocks shaped as they had turrets been
In mockery of man's art; and these withal
A race of faces happy as the scene,
Whose fertile bounties extend to all,
Still springing o'er thy banks, though Empires near them fall.

LXII.

But these recede. Above me are the Alps,
The palaces of Nature, whose vast walls
Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps,
And throned Eternity in icy halls
Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls
The avalanche--the thunderbolt of snow!
All which expands the spirit, yet appals,

Gather around these summits, as to show
How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave vain man below.

LXIII.

But ere these matchless heights I dare to scan,
There is a spot should not be pass'd in vain,--
Morat! the proud, the patriot field! where man
May gaze on ghastly trophies of the slain,
Nor blush for those who conquered on that plain;
Here Burgundy bequeath'd his tombless host,
A bony heap, through ages to remain,
Themselves their monument;--the Stygian coast
Unsepulchred they roam'd, and shriek'd each wandering ghost.

LXIV.

While Waterloo with Cannae's carnage vies,
Morat and Marathon twin names shall stand;
They were true Glory's stainless victories,
Won by the unambitious heart and hand
Of a proud, brotherly, and civic band,
All unbought champions in no princely cause
Of vice-entail'd Corruption; they no land
Doom'd to bewail the blasphemy of laws
Making kings' rights divine, by some Draconic clause.

LXV.

By a lone wall a lonelier column rears
A gray and grief-worn aspect of old days,
'Tis the last remnant of the wreck of years,
And looks as with the wild-bewildered gaze
Of one to stone converted by amaze,
Yet still with consciousness; and there it stands
Making a marvel that it not decays,
When the coeval pride of human hands,
Levell'd Aventicum, hath strewed her subject lands.

LXVI.

And there--oh! sweet and sacred be the name!--
Julia--the daughter, the devoted--gave
Her youth to Heaven; her heart, beneath a claim
Nearest to Heaven's, broke o'er a father's grave.
Justice is sworn 'gainst tears, and hers would crave
The life she lived in; but the judge was just,
And then she died on him she could not save.
Their tomb was simple, and without a bust,
And held within their urn one mind, one heart, one dust.

LXVII.

But these are deeds which should not ass away,
And names that must not wither, though the earth
Forgets her empires with a just decay,
The enslavers and the enslaved, their death and birth;

The high, the mountain-majesty of worth
Should be, and shall, survivor of its woe,
And from its immortality look forth
In the sun's face, like yonder Alpine snow;
Imperishably pure beyond all things below.

LXVIII.

Lake Leman woos me with its crystal face,
The mirror where the stars and mountains view
The stillness of their aspect in each trace
Its clear depth yields of their far height and hue:
There is too much of man here, to look through
With a fit mindt he might which I behold;
But soon in me shall Loneliness renew
Thoughts hid, but not less cherish'd than of old,
Ere mingling with the herd had penn'd me in their fold.

LXIX.

To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind;
All are not fit with them to stire and toil,
Nor is it discontent to keep the mind
Deep in its fountain, lest it overvoil
In the hot throng, where we become the spoil
Of our infection, till too late and long
We may deplore and struggle with the coil,
In wretched interchange of wrong for wrong
'Midst a contentious world, striving where none are strong.

LXX.

There, in a moment, we may plunge our years
In fatal penitence, and in the blight
Of our own soul, turn all our blood to tears,
And colour things to come with hues of Night;
The race of life becomes a hopeless flight
To those that walk in darkness: on the sea,
The boldest steer but where their ports invite,
But there are wanderers o'er Eternity
Whose bark drives on and one, and anchored ne'er shall be.

LXXI.

Is it not better, then, to be alone,
And love Earth only for its earthly sake?
By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,
Or the pure bosom of its nursing lake,
Which feeds it as a mother who doth make
A fair but foward infant her own care,
Kissing its cries away as these awake;--
Is it not better thus our lives to wear,
Than join the crushing crowd, doom'd to inflict or bear?

LXXII.

I live not in myself, but I become

Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities torture: I can see
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
Class'd among creatures, when the soul can flee,
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain.

LXXXIII.

And thus I am absorb'd, and this is life:
I look upon the peopled desert past,
As on a place of agony and strife,
Where, for some sin, to Sorrow I was cast,
To act and suffer, but remount at last
With a fresh pinion; which I feel to spring,
Though young, yet waxing vigorous, as the blast
Which it would cope with, on delighted wing,
Spurning the clay-cold bonds with round our being cling.

LXXXIV.

And when, at length, the mind shall all be free
From what it hates in this degraded form,
Reft of its carnal life, save what shall be
Existent happier in the fly and worm,--
When elements to elements conform,
And dust is as it should be, shall I note
Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more warm?
The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each spot?
Of which, even now, I share at times the immortal lot?

LXXXV.

Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part
Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
Is not the love of these deep in my heart
With a pure passion? should I not contemn
All objects, if compared with these? and stem
A tide of suffering, rather than forego
Such feelings for the hard and worldly phlegm
Of those whose eyes are only turn'd below,
Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts which dare not glow?

LXXXVI.

But this is not my theme; and I return
To that which is immediate, and require
Those who find contemplation in the urn,
To look on One, whose dust was once all fire,
A native of the land where I respire
The clear air for a while--a passing guest,
Where he became a being,--whose desire
Was to be glorious; 'twas a foolish quest,
The which to gain and keep, he sacrificed all rest.

LXXVII.

Here the self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau,
The apostle of affliction, he who threw
Enchantment over passion, and from woe
Wrung overwhelming eloquence, first drew
The breath which made him wretched; yet he knew
How to make madness beautiful, and cast
O'er erring deeds and thoughts, a heavenly hue
Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they pass
The eyes, which o'er them shed tears feelingly and fast.

LXXVIII.

His love was passion's essence--as a tree
On fire by lightning; with ethereal flame
Kindled he was, and blasted; for to be
Thus, and enamoured, were in him the same.
But his was not the love of living dame,
Nor of the dead who rise upon our dreams
But of ideal beauty, which became
In him existence, and o'erflowering teems
Along his burning page, distempered though it seems

LXXIX.

This breathed itself to life in Júlie, this
Invested her with all that's wild and sweet;
This hallowed, too, the memorable kiss
Which every morn his fevered lip would greet,
From hers, who but with friendship his would meet;
But to that gentle touch, through brain and breast
Flash'd the thrill'd spirit's love-devouring heat;
In that absorbing sigh perchance more blest,
Than vulgar minds may be with all they seek possest.

LXXX.

His life was one long war with self-sought foes,
Or friends by him self-banish'd; for his mind
Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and chose
For its own cruel sacrifice, the kind,
'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange and blind.
But he was phrenzied,--wherefore, who may know?
Since cause might be which skill could never find;
But he was phrenzied by disease or woe,
To that worst pitch of all, which wears a reasoning show.

LXXXI.

For then he was inspired, and from him came,
As from the Pythian's mystic cave of your,
Those oracles which set the world in flame,
Nor ceased to burn till kingdoms were no more:
Did he not this for France? which lay before
Bowed to the inborn tyranny of years?

Broken and trembling, to the yoke she bore,
Till by the voice of him and his compeers,
Roused up too much wrath which follows o'ergrown fears?

LXXXII.

They made themselves a fearful monument!
The wreck of old opinions--things which grew
Breathed from the birth of time: the veil they rent,
And what behind it lay, all earth shall view.
But good with ill they also overthrew,
Leaving but ruins, wherewith to rebuild
Upon the same foundation, and renew
Dungeons and thrones, which the same hour re-fill'd,
As heretofore, because ambitio was self-will'd.

LXXXIII.

But this will not endure, nor be endured!
Mankind have felt their strength, and made it felt.
They might have used it better, but, allured
By their new vigour, sternly have they dealt
On one another; pity ceased to melt
With her once natural charities. But they,
Who in oppression's darkness caved had dwelt,
They were not eagles, nourish'd with the day;
What marvel then, at times, if they mistook their prey?

LXXXIV.

What deep wounds ever closed without a scar?
The heart's bleed longest, and but heal to wear
That which disfigures it; and they who war
With their own hopes, and have been vanquish'd, bear
Silence, but not submission: in his lair
Fix'd Passion holds his breath, until the hour
Which shall atone for years; none need despair:
It came, it cometh, and will come,--the power
To punish or forgive--in one we shall be slower.

LXXXV.

Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake,
With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing
Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.
This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
To waft me from distraction; once I loved
Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
Sounds sweet as if a sister's voice reproved,
That I with stern delights should e'er have been so moved.

LXXXVI.

It is the hush of night, and all between
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,
Mellowed and mingling, yet distinctly seen,

Save darken'd Jura, whose capt heights appear
Precipitously steep; and drawing near,
There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
Or chirps the grasshopped one good-night carol more;

LXXXVII.

He is an evening reveller, who makes
His life an infancy, and sings his fill;
At intervals, some bird from out the brakes,
Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
There seems a floating whisper on the hill,
But that is fancy, for the starlight dews
All silently their tears of love instil,
Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
Deep into Nature's breast the spirit of her hues.

LXXXVIII.

Ye stars! which are the poetry of heaven!
If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
Of men and empires,--'tis to be forgiven,
That in our aspirations to be great,
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
A beauty and a mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar,
That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves a star.

LXXXIX.

All heaven and earth are still--though not in sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep:--
All heaven and earth are still: From the high host
Of stars, to the lull'd lake and mountain-coast,
All is concentered in a life intense,
Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of beings, and a sense
Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

XC.

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude, where we are least alone;
A truth, which through our being then doth melt
And purifies from self: it is a tone,
The soul and source of music, which makes known
Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm,
Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
Binding all things with beauty;--'twould disarm
The spectre Death, had he substantial power to harm.

XCI.

Not vainly did the early Persian make
His altar the high places and the peak
Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take
A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek
The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak,
Upear'd of human hands. Come, and compare
Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or Greek,
With Nature's realms of worship, earth and air,
Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy prayer!

XCII.

The sky is changed!--and such a change! Oh night,
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

XCIII.

And this is in the night:--Most glorious night!
Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,--
A portion of the tempest and of thee!
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
And now again 'tis black,--and now, the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.

XCIV.

Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his way between
Heights which appear as lovers who have parted
In hate, whose mining depths so intervene,
That they can meet no more, though broken-hearted;
Though in their souls, which thus each other thwarted,
Love was the very root of the fond rage
Which blighted their life's bloom, and then departed:--
Itself expired, but leaving them an age
Of years all winters,--war within themselves to wage.

XCV.

Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath cleft his way,
The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en his stand:
For here, not one, but many, make their play,
And fling their thunder-bolts from hand to hand,
Flashinig and cast around: of all the band,
The brightest throught these parted hills hath fork'd
His lightnings,--as if he did understand,
That in such gaps as desolation work'd,

There the hot shaft should blast whatever therein lurk'd.

XCVI.

Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, lightnings! ye!
With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a soul
To make these felt and feeling, well may be
Things that have made me watchful; the far rool
Of your departing voices, is the knoll
Of what in me is sleepless,--if I rest.
But where of ye, oh tempests! is the goal?
Are ye like those within the human breast?
Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some high nest?

XCVII.

Could I embody and unbosom now
That which is most within me,--could I wreak
My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak,
All that I would have sought, and all I seek,
Bear, know, feel, and yet breath--into one word,
And that one word were Lightning, I would speak;
But as it is, I live and die unheard,
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.

XCVIII.

The morn is up again, the dewy morn,
With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom,
Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn,
And living as if earth contain'd no tomb,--
And glowing into day: we may resume
The march of our existence: and thus I,
Still on thy shores, fair Leman! may find room
And food for meditation, nor pass by
Much, that may give us pause, if pondered fittingly.

XCIX.

Clarens! sweet Clarens, birth-place of deep Love!
Thine air is the young breath of passionate thought;
Thy trees take root in Love; the snows above
The very Glaciers have his colours caught,
And sun-set into rose-hues sees them wrought
By rays which sleep there lovingly: the rocks,
The permanent crags, tell here of Love, who sought
In them a refuge from the worldly shocks,
Which stir and sting the soul with hope that woos, then mocks.

C.

Clarens! by heavenly feet thy paths are trod,--
Undying Love's who here ascends a throne
To which the steps are mountains; where the god
Is a pervading life and light,--so shown
Not on those summits solely, nor alone

In the still cave and forest: o'er the flower
His eye is sparkling, and his breath hath blown,
His soft and summer breath, whose tender power
Passes the strength of storms in their most desolate hour.

CI.

All things are here of him; from the black pines,
Which are his shade on high, and the loud roar
Of torrents, where he listeneth, to the vines
Which slope his green path downward to the shore,
Where the bowed waters meet him, and adore,
Kissing his feet with murmurs; and the wood,
The covert of old trees, with trunks all hoar,
But light leaves, young as joy, stands were it stood,
Offering to him, and his, a populous solitude,

CII.

A populous solitude of bees and birds,
And fairy form'd and many coloured things,
Who worship him with notes more sweet than words,
And innocently open their glad wings,
Fearless and full of life: the gush of springs,
And fall of lofty fountains, and the bend
Of stirring brances, and the bud which brings
The swiftest thought of beauty, here extend,
Mingling, and made by Love, unto one mighty end.

CIII.

He who hath loved not, here would learn that lore,
And make his heart a spirit; he who knows
That tender mystery, will love the more,
For this is Love's recess, where vain men's woes,
And the world's waste, have driven him far from those,
For 'tis his nature to advance or die;
He stands not still, but or decays, or grows
Into a boundless blessing, which may vie
With the immortal lights, in its eternity!

CIV.

'Twas not for fiction chose Rousseau this spot,
Peopling it with affections; but he found
It was the scene which passion must allot
To the mind's purified beings; 'twas the ground
Where early Love his Psyche's zone unbound,
And hallowed it with loveliness: 'tis ne,
And wonderful, and deep, and hath a sound,
And sense, and sight of sweetness; here the Rhone
Hath spread himself a couch, the Alps have rear'd a throne.

CV.

Lausanne! and Ferney! ye have been the abodes
Of names which unto you bequeath'd a name;

Mortals, who sought and found, by dangerous roads,
A path to perpetuity of fame:
They were gigantic minds, and their steep aim,
Was, Titan-like, on daring doubts to pile
Thoughts which should call down thunder, and the flame
Of Heaven, again assail'd, if Heaven the while
On man and man's research could deign to more than smile.

CVI.

The one was fire and fickleness, a child,
Most mutable in wishes, but in mind,
A wit as various,--gay, grave, sage, or wild,--
Historian, board, philosopher, combined;
He multiplied himself among mankind,
The Proteus of their talents: But his own
Breathed most in ridicult,--which, as the wind,
Blew where it listed, laying all things prine,--
Now to o'erthrow a fool, and now to shake a throne.

CVII.

The other, deep and slow, exhausting thought,
And hiving wisdom with each studious year,
In meditation dwelt, with learning wrought,
And shaped his weapon with an edge severe,
Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer;
The lord of irony,--that master-spell,
Which stung his foes to wrath, which grew from fear,
And doom'd him to the zealot's ready Hell,
Which answers to all doubts so eloquently well.

CVIII.

Yet, peace be with their ashes,--for by them,
If merited, the penalty is paid;
It is not ours to judge,--far less condemn;
The hour must come when such things shall be made
Known unto all,--or hope and dread allay'd
By slumber, on one pillow,--in the dust,
Which, thus much we are sure, must lie decay'd;
And when it shall revive, as is our trust,
'Twill be to be forgiven, or suffer what is just.

CIX.

But let me quit man's works, again to read
His Maker's, spread around me, and suspend
This page, which from my reveries I feed,
Until it seems prolonging without end.
The clouds above me to the white Alps tend,
And I must pierce them, and survey whate'er
May be permitted, as my steps I bend
To their most great and growing region, where
The earth to her embrace compels the powers of air.

CX.

Italia! too, Italia! looking on thee,
Full flashes on the soul the light of ages,
Since the fierce Carthaginian almost won thee,
TO the last halo of the chiefs and sages,
Who glorify thy consecrated pages;
Thou wert the throne and grave of empires; still,
The fount at which the panting mind assuages
Her thirst for knowledge, quaffing there her fill,
Flowers from the eternal source of Rome's imperial hill.

CXI.

Thus far I have proceeded in a theme
Renewed with no kind auspices:--to feel
We are not what we have been, and to deem
We are not what we should be,--and to steel
The heart against itself; and to conceal,
With a proud caution, love, or hate, or aught,--
Passion or feeling, purpose, grief or zeal,--
Which is the tyrant spirit of our thought,
Is a stern task of soul:--No matter,--it is taught.

CXII.

And for these words, thus woven into song,
It may be that they are a harmless wile,--
The colouring of the scenes which fleet along,
Which I would seize, in passing, to beguile
My breast, or that of others, for a while.
Fame is the thirst of youth,--but I am not
So young as to regard men's frown or smile,
As loss or guerdon of a glorious lot;
I stood and stand alone,--remembered or forgot.

CXIII.

I have not loved the world, nor the world me;
I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bow'd
To its idolatries a patient knee,--
Nor coin'd my cheek to smiles,--nor cried aloud
In worship of an echo; in the crowd
They could not deem me one of such; I stood
Among them, but not of them; in a shroud
Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still could,
Had I not filed my mind, which thus itself subdued.

CXIV.

I have not loved the world, nor the world me,--
But let us part fair foes; I do believe,
Though I have found them not, that there may be
Words which are things,--hopes which will not deceive,
And virtues which are merciful, nor weave
Snares for the failing: I would also deem
O'er others' griefs that some sincerely grieve;

That two, or one, are almost what the seem,--
That goodness is no name, and happiness no dream.

CXV.

My daughter! with thy name this song begun--
My daughter! with thy name thus much shall end--
I see thee not,--I hear thee not,--but none
Can be so wrapt in thee; thou art the friend
To whom the shadows of far years extend:
Albeit my brow thou never should'st behold,
My voice shall with thy future visions blend,
And reach into thy heart,--when mine is cold,--
A token and a tone, even from thy father's mould.

CXVI.

To aid thy mind's development,--to watch
Thy dawn of little joys,--to sit and see
Almost thy very growth,--to view thee catch
Knowledge of objects,--wonders yet to thee!
To hold thee lightly on a gentle knee,
And print on thy soft cheek a parent's kiss,--
This, it should seem, was not reserv'd for me;
Yet this was in my nature:--as it is,
I know not what is there, yet something like to this.

CXVII.

Yet, though dull Hate as duty should be taught,
I know that thou wilt love me; though my name
Should be shut from thee, as a spell still fraught
With desolation,--and a broken claim:
Though the grave closed between us,--'twere the same,
I know that thou wilt love me; thought to drain
My blood from out thy being, were an aim,
And an attainment,--all would be in vain,--
Still thou would'st love me, still that more than life retain.

CXVIII.

The child of love,--though born in bitterness,
And nurtured in convulsion,--of thy sire
These were the elements,--and thine no less.
As yet such are around thee,--but thy fire
Shall be more tempered, and thy hope far higher.
Sweet be thy cradled slumbers! O'er the sea,
And from the mountains where I now respire,
Fain would I waft such blessing upon thee,
As, with a sigh, I deem thou might'st have been to me!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Childish Recollections

'I cannot but remember such things were,
And were most dear to me.'

WHEN slow Disease, with all her host of pains,
Chills the warm, tide which flows along the veins
When Health, affrighted, spreads her rosy wing,
And flies with every changing gale of spring;
Not to the aching frame alone confined,
Unyielding pangs avail the drooping mind:
What grisly forms, the spectre-train of woe,
Bid shuddering Nature shrink beneath the blow
With Resignation wage relentless strife,
While Hope retires appall'd, and clings to life!
Yet less the pang when, through the tedious hour,
Remembrance sheds around her genial power,
Calls back the vanish'd days to rapture given,
When love was bliss, and Beauty form'd our heaven;
Or, dear to youth, portrays each childish scene,
Those fairy bowers, where all in turn have been.
As when through clouds that pour the summer storm
The orb of day unveils his distant form,
Gilds with faint beams the crystal dews of rain,
And dimly twinkles o'er the watery plain;
Thus, while the future dark and cheerless gleams
The sun of memory, glowing through my dreams
Though sunk' the radiance of his former blaze,
To scenes far distant points his paler rays;
Still rules my senses with unbounded sway,
The past confounding with the present day.

Oft does my heart indulge the rising thought,
Which still recurs, unlook'd for and Unsought
My soul to Fancy's fond suggestion yields,
And roams romantic o'er her airy fields.
Scenes of my youth, developed, crowd to view,
To which I long have bade a last adieu!
Seats of delight, inspiring youthful themes;
Friends lost to me for aye, except in dreams;
Some who in marble prematurely sleep.
Whose forms I now remember but to weep;
Some who yet urge the same scholastic course
Of early science, future fame the source;
Who, still contending in the studious race,
In quick rotation fill the senior place.
These with a thousand visions now unite,
To dazzle, though they please, my aching sight
Ida blest spot, where science holds her reign,
How joyous once I join'd thy youthful train!
Bright in idea gleams thy lofty spire,
Again I mingle with thy playful quire;
Our tricks of mischief, every childish game,
Unchanged by time or distance, seem the same.

Through winding paths along the glade, I trace
The social smile of every welcome face;
My wonted haunts, my scenes of joy and woe,
Each early boyish friend, or youthful foe,
Our feuds dissolved, but not my friendship past,-
I bless the former and forgive the last.
Hours of my youth! when, nurtured in my breast,
To love a stranger, friendship made me blest
Friendship, the dear peculiar bond of youth
When every artless bosom throbs with truth
Untaught my worldly wisdom how to feign,
And check each impulse with prudential rein;
When all we feel, our honest souls disclose
In love to friends, in open hate to foes;
No varnish'd tales the lips of youth repeat,
No dear-bought knowledge purchased by deceit,
Hypocrisy, the gift of lengthen'd years,
Matured by age, the garb of prudence wears.
When now the boy is ripen'd into man,
His careful sire chalks forth some wary plan;
Instructs his son from candour's path to shrink,
Smoothly to speak, and cauautiously to think;
Still to assent, and never to deny -
A patron's praise can well reward the lie:
And who, when Fortune's warning voice is heard,
Would lose his opening prospects for a word,
Although against that word his heart rebel,
And truth indignant all his bosom swell.

Away with themes like this! not mine the task
From flattering friends to tear the hateful mask;
Let keener bards delight in satire's sting;
My fancy soars not on Detraction's wing:
Once, and but once, she aim'd a deadly blow,
To hurl defiance on a secret foe;
But when that foe, from feeling or from shame,
The cause unknown, yet still to me the same,
Warn'd by some friendly hint, perchance, retired,
With this submission all her rage expired.
From dreaded pangs that feeble foe to save,
She hush'd her young resentment, and forgave;
Or, my muse a pedant's portrait drew,
POMPOSUS' virtues are but known to few:
I never fear'd the young usurper's nod,
And he who wields must sometimes feel the rod.
If since on Granta's failings, known to all
Who share the converse of a college hall,
She sometimes trifled in a lighter strain,
'Tis past, and thus she will not sin again;
Soon must her early song for ever cease,
And all may rsii when I shall rest in peace.

Here first remember'd be the joyous band,
Who hail'd me chief, obedient to command;
Who join'd with me in every boyish sport -
Their first adviser, and their last resort;
Nor shrunk beneath the upstart pedant's frown,
Or all the sable glories of his gown;
Who, thus transplanted from his father's school -
Unfit to govern, ignorant of rule -
Succeeded him, whom all unite to praise,
The dear preceptor of my early days!
PROBUS, the pride of science, and the boast,
To IDA now, alas! for ever lost,
With him, for years, we search'd the classic page,
And fear'd the master, though we loved the sage:
Retired at last' his small yet peacefull seat
From learning's labour is the blest retreat,
POMPOSUS fills his magisterial chair;
POMPOSUS governs, - but, my muse, forbear:
Contempt, in silence, be the pedant's lot;
His name and precepts be alike forgot;
No more his mention shall my verse degrade
To him my tribute is already paid.

High through those elms, with hoary branches crown'd,
Fair Ida's bower adorns the landscape round;
There Science, from her favour'd seat, surveys
The vale where rural Nature claims her praise;
To her awhile resigns her youthful train,
Who move in joy, and dance along the plain.
In scatter'd groups each favour'd haunt pursue,
Repeat old pastimes, and discover new;
Flush'd with his rays, beneath the noon-tide sun,
In rival bands, between the wickets run,
Drive o'er the sward the ball with active force,
Or chase with nimble feet its rapid course.
But these with slower steps direct their way,
Where Brent's cool waves in limpid currents stray;
While yonder few search out some green retreat
And arbours shade them from the summer heat:
Others, again, a pert and lively crew,
Some rough and thoughtless stranger placed in view,
With frolic quaint their antic jests expose,
And tease the grumbling rustic as he goes;
Nor rest with this, but many a passing fray
Tradition treasures for a future day:
'Twas here the gather'd swains for vengeance fought,
And here we earn'd the conquest dearly bought;
Here have we fled before superior might,
And here renew'd the wild tumultuous fight.'
While thus our souls with early passions swell
In lingering tones resounds the distant bell,
Th' allotted hour of daily sport is o'er,

And Learning beckons from her temple's door.
No splendid tablets grace her simple hall,
But ruder records fill the dusky wall;
There, deeply carved, behold! each tyro's name
Secures its owner's academic fame;
Here mingling view the names of sire and son -
The one long graved, the other just begun:
These shall survive alike when son and sire
Beneath one common stroke of fate expire;
Perhaps their last memorial these alone,
Denied in death a monumental stone,
Whilst to the gale in mournful cadence wave
The sighing weeds that hide their nameless grave.
And here my name, and many an early friend's,
Along the wall in lengthen'd line extends.
Though still our deeds amuse the youthful race,
Who tread our steps, and fill our former place,
Who young obey'd their lords in silent awe,
Whose nod commanded, and whose voice was law;
And now, in turn, possess the reins of power,
To rule, the little tyrants of an hour;
Though sometimes, with the tales of ancient day,
They pass the dreary winter's eve away --
'And thus our former rulers stemm'd the tide,
And thus they dealt the combat side by side;
Just in this place the mouldering walls they scaled,
Nor bolts nor bars against their strength avail'd;
Here PROBUS came, the rising fray to quell,
And here he falter'd forth his last farewell;
And here one night abroad they dared to roam,
While bold POMPOSUS bravely stay'd at home;'
While thus they speak, the hour must soon arrive,
When names of these, like ours, alone survive:
Yet a few years, one general wreck will whelm
The faint remembrance of our fairy realm.

Dear honest race! though now we meet no more,
One last long look on what we were before --
Our first kind greetings, and our last adieu -
Drew tears from eyes unused to weep with you.
Through splendid circles, fashion's gaudy world,
Where folly's glaring standard waves unfurl'd,
I plunged to drown in noise my fond regret,
And all I sought or hoped was to forget.
Vain wish! if chance some well-remember'd face,
Some old companion of my early race,
Advanced to claim his friend with honest joy,
My eyes, my heart, proclaim'd me still a boy;
The glittering scene, the fluttering groups around'
Were quite forgotten when my friend was found;
The smiles of beauty--(for, alas! I've known
What 'tis to bend before Love's mighty throne)--

The smiles of beauty, though those smiles were dear,
Could hardly charm me, when that friend was near;
My thoughts bewilder'd in the fond surprise,
The woods of IDA danced before my eyes;
I saw the sprightly wand'rers pour along,
I saw and join'd again the joyous throng;
Panting, again I traced her lofty grove,
And friendship's feelings triumph'd over love.
Yet why should I alone with such delight
Retrace the circuit of my former flight?
Is there no cause beyond the common claim
Endear'd to all in childhood's very name?
Ah! sure some stronger impulse vibrates here,
Which whispers friendship will be doubly dear
To one who thus for kindred hearts must roam,
And seek abroad the love denied at home.
Those hearts, dear IDA, have I found in thee--
A home, a world, a paradise to me.
Stern Death forbade my orphan youth to share
The tender guidance of a father's care.
Can rank, or e'en a guardian's name supply
The love which glistens in a father's eye?
For this can wealth or title's sound atone,
Made, by a parent's early loss, my own?
What brother springs a brother's love to seek?
What sister's gentle kiss has prest my cheek?
For me how dull the vacant moments rise,
To no fond bosom link'd by kindred ties!
Oft in the progress of some fleeting dream
Fraternal smiles collected round me seem;
While still the visions to my heart are prest,
The voice of love will murmur in my rest:
I hear-I wake-and in the sound rejoice;
I hear again,-but, ah! no brother's voice.
A hermit, 'midst of crowds, I fain must stray
Alone, though thousand pilgrims fill the way;
While these a thousand kindred wreaths entwine
I cannot call one single blossom mine:
What then remains? in solitude to groan,
To mix in friendship, or to sigh alone.
Thus must I cling to some endearing hand,
And none more dear than IDA'S social band.
Alonzo! best and dearest of my friends,
Thy name ennobles him who thus commends;
From this fond tribute thou canst gain no praise;
The praise as his who now that tribute pays.
Oh! in the promise of thy early youth,
If hope anticipate the words of truth,
Some loftier bard shall sing thy glorious name,
To build his own upon thy deathless fame.
Friend of my heart, and foremost of the list
Of those with whom I lived supremely blest,

Oft have we drain'd the font of ancient lore;
Though drinking deeply, thirsting still the more.
Yet, when confinement's lingering hour was done,
Our sports, our studies, and our souls were one:
Together we impell'd the flying ball;
Together waited in our tutor's hall;
Together join'd in cricket's manly toil,
Or shared the produce of the river's spoil;
Or, plunging from the green declining shore,
Our pliant limbs the buoyant billows bore;
In every element, unchanged, the same,
All, all that brothers should be, but the name.

Nor yet are you forgot, my jocund boy!
DAVUS, the harbinger of childish joy;
For ever foremost in the ranks of fun,
The laughing herald of the harmless pun;
Yet with a breast of such materials made--
Anxious to please, of pleasing half afraid;
Candid and liberal, with a heart of steel
In danger's path, though not untaught to feel.
Sill I remember, in the factious strife,
The rustic's musket aim'd against my life:
High pois'd in air the massy weapon hung,
A cry of horror burst from every tongue;
Whilst I, in combat with another foe,
Fought on, unconscious of th' impending blow;
Your arm, brave boy, arrested his career--
Forward you sprung, insensible to fear;
Disarm'd and baffled by your conquering hand,
Thc grovelling savage roll'd upon, the sand:
An act like this, can simple thanks repay?
Or all the labours of a grateful lay?
Oh no! whene'er my breast forgets the deed,
That instant, DAVUS, it deserves to bleed.

LYCUS! on me thy claims are justly great:
Thy milder virtues could my muse relate,
To thee alone, unrivall'd would belong.
The feeble efforts of my lengthen'd song.
Well canst thou boast, to lead in senates fit,
A Spartan firmness with Athenian wit:
Though yet in embryo these perfections shine,
Lycus! thy father's fame will soon be thine.
Where learning nurtures the superior mind,
What may we hope from genius thus re fined!
When time at length matures thy growing years,
How wilt thou tower above thy fellow peers!
Prudence and sense, a spirit bold and free,
With honour's soul, united beam in thee.

Shall fair EURYALUS pass by unsung?

From ancient lineage, not unworthy sprung:
What though one sad dissension bade us part?
That name is yet embalm'd within my heart;
Yet at the mention does that heart rebound,
And palpitate, responsive to the sound.
Envy dissolved our ties, and not our will:
We once were friends, --I'll think we are so still.
A form unmatch'd in nature's partial mould,
A heart untainted, we in thee behold:
Yet not the senate's thunder thou shalt wield,
Nor seek for glory in the tented field,
To minds of ruder texture these be given--
Thy soul shall nearer soar its native heaven.
Haply, in polish'd courts might be thy seat,
But that thy tongue could never forge deceit:
The courtier's supple bow and sneering smile,
The flow of compliment, the slippery wile,
Would make that breast with indignation burn,
And all the glittering snares to tempt thee spurn.
Domestic happiness will stamp thy fate;
Sacred to love, unclouded e'er by hate;
The world admire thee, and thy friends adore;
Ambition's slave alone would toil for more.

Now last, but nearest of the social band,
See honest, open, generous CLEON stand;
With scarce one speck to cloud the pleasing scene,
No vice degrades that purest soul serene.
On the same day our studious race begun,
On the same day our studious race was run;
Thus side by side we pass'd our first career,
Thus side by side we strove for many a year;
At last concluded our scholastic life,
We neither conquer'd in the classic strife:
As speakers each supports an equal name,
And crowds allow to both a partial fame:
To soothe a youthful rival's early pride,
Though Cleon's candour would the palm divide,
Yet candour's self compels me now to own
Justice awards it to my friend alone.

Oh! friends regretted, scenes for ever dear,
Remembrance hails you with her warmest tear!
Drooping, she bends o'er pensive Fancy's urn,
To trace the hours which never can return;
Yet with the retrospection loves to dwell,
And soothe the sorrows of her last farewell!
Yet greets the triumph of my boyish mind,
As infant laurels round my head were twined,
When PROBUS' praise repaid my lyric song,
Or placed me higher in the studious throng;
Or when my first harangue received applause,

His sage instruction the primeval cause,
What gratitude to him my soul posseat,
While hope of dawning honours fill'd my breast!
For all my humble fame, to him alone
The praise is due, who made that fame my own.
Oh! could I soar above these feeble lays,
These young effusions of my early days,
To him my muse her noblest strain would give:
The song might perish, but the theme might live.
Yet why for him the needless verse essay?
His honour'd name requires no vain display:
By every son of grateful IDA blest,
It finds an echo in each youthful breast;
A fame beyond the glories of the proud,
Or all the plaudits of the venal crowd.

IDA! not yet exhausted is the theme,
Nor closed the progress of my youthful dream.
How many a friend deserves the grateful strain!
What scenes of childhood still unsung remain!
Yet let me hush this echo of the past,
This parting song, the dearest and the last;
And brood in secret o'er those hours of joy,
To me a silent and a sweet employ,
While future hope and fear alike unknown,
I think with pleasure on the past alone;
Yes to the past alone my heart confine,
And chase the phantom of what once was mine.

IDA! still o'er thy hills in joy preside,
And proudly steer through time's eventful tide;
Still may thy blooming sons thy name revere,
Smile in thy bower, but quit thee with a tear,-
That tear, perhaps, the fondest which will flow,
O'er their last scene of happiness below.
Tell me, ye hoary few, who glide along,
The feeble veterans of some former throng,
Whose friends, like autumn leaves by tempests whirl'd,
Are swept for ever from this busy world;
Revolve the fleeting moments of your youth,
While Care has yet withheld her venom'd tooth;
Say if remembrance days like these endears
Beyond the rapture of succeeding years?
Say, can ambition's fever'd dream bestow
So sweet a balm to soothe your hours of woe?
Can treasures, hoarded for some thankless son,
Can royal smiles, or wreaths by slaughter won,
Can stars or ermine, man's maturer toys
(For glittering baubles are not left to boys),
Recall one scene so much beloved to view,
As those where Youth her garland twined for you?
Ah, no! amidst the gloomy calm of age

You turn with faltering hand life's varied page;
Peruse the record of your days on earth,
Unsullied only where it marks your birth;
Still lingering pause above each chequer'd leaf,
And blot with tears the sable lines of grief;
Where passion o'er the theme her mantle threw,
Or weeping Virtue sigh'd a faint adieu;
But bless the scroll which fairer words adorn,
Traced by the rosy finger of the morn;
When Friendship bow'd before the shrine of Truth,
And Love without his pinion, smiled on Youth.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Churchill's Grave: A Fact Literally Rendered

I stood beside the grave of him who blazed
The comet of a season, and I saw
The humblest of all sepulchres, and gazed
With not the less of sorrow and of awe
On that neglected turf and quiet stone,
With name no clearer than the names un-known,
Which lay unread around it; and I ask'd
The Gardener of that ground, why it might be
That for this plant strangers his memory task'd,
Through the thick deaths of half a cen-tury?
And thus he answered - ' Well, I do not know
Why frequent travellers turn to pilgrims so;
He died before my day of Sextonship,
And I had not the digging of this grave.'
And is this all? I thought - and do we rip
The veil of Immortality, and crave
I know not what of honour and of light
Through unborn ages, to endure this blight,
So soon, and so successless? As I said,
The Architect of all on which we tread,
For Earth is but a tombstone, did essay,
To extricate remembrance from the clay,
Whose minglings might confuse a Newton's thought,
Were it not that all life must end in one,
Of which we are but dreamers;- as he caught,
As 'twere the twilight of a former Sun,
Thus spoke he,- 'I believe the man of whom
You wot, who lies in this selected tomb,
Was a most famous writer in his day,
And therefore travellers step from out their way
To pay him honour,- and myself whate'er
Your honour pleases:' - then most pleased I shook
From out my pocket's avaricious nook
Some certain coins of silver, which as 'twere
Perforce I gave this man, though I could spare
So much but inconveniently:-Ye smile,
I see ye, ye profane ones! all the while,
Because my homely phrase the truth would tell.
You are the fools, not I - for I did dwell
With a deep thought, and with a soften'd eye,
On that Old Sexton's natural homily,
In which there was Obscurity and Fame --
The Glory and the Nothing of a Name.

Diodati, 1816.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Condolatory Address To Sarah, Countess Of Jersey, On The Prince Regent's Returning Her Picture To Mrs. Mee

When the vain triumph of the imperial lord,
Whom servile Rome obey'd, and yet abhor'r'd,
Gave to the vulgar gaze each glorious bust,
That left a likeness of the brave or just;
What most admired each scrutinising eye
Of all that deck'd that passing pageantry?
What spread from face to face that wondering air?
The thought of Brutus - for his was not there!
That absence proved his worth, - that absence fix'd
His memory on the longing mind, unmix'd;
And more decreed his glory to endure,
Than all a gold Colossus could secure.
If thus, fair Jersey, our desiring gaze
Search for thy form, in vain and mute amaze,
Amidst those pictured charms, whose loveliness,
Bright though they be, thine own had render'd less:
If he, that vain old man, whom truth admits
Heir of his father's crown, and of his wits,
If his corrupted eye, and wither'd heart,
Could with thy gentle image bear to part;
That tasteless shame be his, and ours the grief,
To gaze on Beauty's band without its chief:
Yet comfort still one selfish thought imparts,
We lose the 'portrait, but preserve our hearts.
What can his vaulted gallery now disclose?
A garden with all flowers--except the rose;--
A fount that only wants its living stream;
A night, with every star, save Dian's beam.
Lost to our eyes the present forms shall be,
That turn from tracing them to dream of thee;
And more on that recall'd resemblance pause,
Than all he shall not force on our applause.
Long may thy yet meridian lustre shine,
With all that Virtue asks of Homage thine:
The symmetry of youth, the grace of mien,
The eye that gladdens, and the brow serene;
The glossy darkness of that clustering hair,
Which shades, yet shows that forehead more than fair!
Each glance that wins us, and the life that throws
A spell which will not let our looks re-pose,
But turn to gaze again, and find anew
Some charm that well rewards another view.
These are not lessen'd, these are still as bright,
Albeit too dazzling for a dotard's sight;
And those must wait till ev'ry charm is gone,
To please the paltry heart that pleases none;-
That dull cold sensualist, whose sickly eye
In envious dimness pass'd thy portrait by;
Who rack'd his little spirit to combine
Its hate of Freedom's loveliness, and thine.

August 1814.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Damætas

In law an infant, and in years a boy,
In mind a slave to every vicious joy;
From every sense of shame and virtue wean'd;
In lies an adept, in deceit a fiend;
Versed in hypocrisy, while yet a child;
Fickle as wind, of inclinations wild;
Women his dupe, his heedless friend a tool;
Old in the world, though scarcely broke from school;
Damætas ran through all the maze of sin,
And found the goal when others just begin:
Even still conflicting passions shake his soul,
And bid him drain the dregs of pleasure's bowl;
But, pall'd with vice, he breaks his former chain,
And what was once his bliss appears his bane.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Darkness

I had a dream, which was not all a dream.
The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars
Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth
Swung blind and blackening in the moon-less air;
Morn came and went--and came, and brought no day,
And men forgot their passions in the dread
Of this their desolation; and all hearts
Were chill'd into a selfish prayer for light:
And they did live by watchfires--and the thrones,
The palaces of crowned kings--the huts,
The habitations of all things which dwell,
Were burnt for beacons; cities were consumed,
And men were gather'd round their blazing homes
To look once more into each other's face;
Happy were those who dwelt within the eye
Of the volcanos, and their mountain-torch:
A fearful hope was all the world contain'd;
Forests were set on fire--but hour by hour
They fell and faded--and the crackling trunks
Extinguish'd with a crash--and all was black.
The brows of men by the despairing light
Wore an unearthly aspect, as by fits
The flashes fell upon them; some lay down
And hid their eyes and wept; and some did rest
Their chins upon their clenched hands, and smiled;
And others hurried to and fro, and fed
Their funeral piles with fuel, and look'd up
With mad disquietude on the dull sky,
The pall of a past world; and then again
With curses cast them down upon the dust,
And gnash'd their teeth and howl'd: the wild birds shriek'd
And, terrified, did flutter on the ground,
And flap their useless wings; the wildest brutes
Came tame and tremulous; and vipers crawl'd
And twined themselves among the multitude,
Hissing, but stingless--were slain for food.
And War, which for a moment was no more,
Did glut himself again:--a meal was bought
With blood, and each sate sullenly apart
Gorging himself in gloom: no love was left;
All earth was but one thought--and that was death
Immediate and inglorious; and the pang
Of famine fed upon all entrails--men
Died, and their bones were tombless as their flesh;
The meagre by the meagre were devour'd,
Even dogs assail'd their masters, all save one,
And he was faithful to a Gorse, and kept
The birds and beasts and famish'd men at bay,
Till hunger clung them, or the dropping dead
Lured their lank jaws; himself sought out no food,
But with a piteous and perpetual moan,

And a quick desolate cry, licking the hand
Which answer'd not with a caress--he died.
The crowd was famish'd by degrees; but two
Of an enormous city did survive,
And they were enemies: they met beside
The dying embers of an altar-place
Where had been heap'd a mass of holy things
For an unholy usage; they raked up,
And shivering scraped with their cold skeleton hands
The feeble ashes, and their feeble breath
Blew for a little life, and made a flame
Which was a mockery; then they lifted up
Their eyes as it grew lighter, and beheld
Each other's aspects--saw, and shriek'd, and died--
Even of their mutual hideousness they
Unknowing who he was upon whose brow
Famine had written Fiend. The world was void,
The populous and the powerful was a lump,
Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless,
A lump of death--a chaos of hard clay.
The rivers, lakes, and ocean all stood still,
And nothing stirr'd within their silent depths;
Ships sailorless lay rotting on the sea,
And their masts fell down piecemeal: as they dropp'd
They slept on the abyss without a surge
The waves were dead; the tides were in their grave,
The moon, their mistress, had expired before;
The winds were wither'd in the stagnant air,
And the clouds perish'd; Darkness had no need
Of aid from them--She was the Universe.

Diodati, July 1816.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Dear Doctor, I have Read your Play

Dear Doctor, I have read your play,
Which is a good one in its way,
Purges the eyes, and moves the bowels,
And drenches handkerchiefs like towels
With tears that, in a flux of grief,
Afford hysterical relief
To shatter'd nerves and quicken'd pulses,
Which your catastrophe convulses.
I like your moral and machinery;
Your plot, too, has such scope for scenery!
Your dialogue is apt and smart;
The play's concoction full of art;
Your hero raves, your heroine cries,
All stab, and everybody dies;
In short, your tragedy would be
The very thing to hear and see;
And for a piece of publication,
If I decline on this occasion,
It is not that I am not sensible
To merits in themselves ostensible,
But--and I grieve to speak it--plays
Are drugs--mere drugs, Sir, nowadays.
I had a heavy loss by Manuel --
Too lucky if it prove not annual--
And Sotheby, with his damn'd Orestes
(Which, by the way, the old bore's best is),
Has lain so very long on hand
That I despair of all demand;
I've advertis'd--but see my books,
Or only watch my shopman's looks;
Still Ivan , Ina and such lumber
My back-shop glut, my shelves encumber.
There's Byron too, who once did better,
Has sent me--folded in a letter--
A sort of--it's no more a drama
Than Darnley , Ivan or Kehama :
So alter'd since last year his pen is,
I think he's lost his wits at Venice,
Or drain'd his brains away as stallion
To some dark-eyed and warm Italian;
In short, Sir, what with one and t'other,
I dare not venture on another.
I write in haste; excuse each blunder;
The coaches through the street so thunder!
My room's so full; we've Gifford here
Reading MSS with Hookham Frere,
Pronouncing on the nouns and particles
Of some of our forthcoming articles,
The Quarterly --ah, Sir, if you
Had but the genius to review!
A smart critique upon St. Helena,
Or if you only would but tell in a

Short compass what--but, to resume;
As I was saying, Sir, the room--
The room's so full of wits and bards,
Crabbes, Campbells, Crokers, Freres and Wards,
And others, neither bards nor wits--
My humble tenement admits
All persons in the dress of Gent.,
From Mr. Hammond to Dog Dent.
A party dines with me today,
All clever men who make their way:
Crabbe, Malcolm, Hamilton and Chantrey
Are all partakers of my pantry.
They're at this moment in discussion
On poor De Sta{:e}l's late dissolution.
Her book, they say, was in advance--
Pray Heaven she tell the truth of France!
'Tis said she certainly was married
To Rocca, and had twice miscarried,
No--not miscarried, I opine--
But brought to bed at forty nine.
Some say she died a Papist; some
Are of opinion that's a hum;
I don't know that--the fellow, Schlegel,
Was very likely to inveigle
A dying person in compunction
To try the extremity of unction.
But peace be with her! for a woman
Her talents surely were uncommon.
Her publisher (and public too)
The hour of her demise may rue,
For never more within his shop he--
Pray--was she not interr'd at Coppet?
Thus run our time and tongues away;
But, to return, Sir, to your play;
Sorry, Sir, but I cannot deal,
Unless 'twere acted by O'Neill.
My hands are full--my head so busy,
I'm almost dead--and always dizzy;
And so, with endless truth and hurry,
Dear Doctor, I am yours,

JOHN MURRAY

George Gordon Lord Byron

Don Juan: Canto the Eighth

The town was taken--whether he might yield
Himself or bastion, little matter'd now:
His stubborn valour was no future shield.
Ismail's no more! The Crescent's silver bow
Sunk, and the crimson Cross glar'd o'er the field,
But red with no redeeming gore: the glow
Of burning streets, like moonlight on the water,
Was imag'd back in blood, the sea of slaughter.

All that the mind would shrink from of excesses;
All that the body perpetrates of bad;
All that we read, hear, dream, of man's distresses;
All that the Devil would do if run stark mad;
All that defies the worst which pen expresses;
All by which Hell is peopl'd, or as sad
As Hell--mere mortals, who their power abuse--
Was here (as heretofore and since) let loose.

If here and there some transient trait of pity
Was shown, and some more noble heart broke through
Its bloody bond, and sav'd perhaps some pretty
Child, or an aged, helpless man or two--
What's this in one annihilated city,
Where thousand loves, and ties, and duties grew?
Cockneys of London! Muscadins of Paris!
Just ponder what a pious pastime war is.

Think how the joys of reading a Gazette
Are purchas'd by all agonies and crimes:
Or if these do not move you, don't forget
Such doom may be your own in aftertimes.
Meantime the taxes, Castlereagh, and debt,
Are hints as good as sermons, or as rhymes.
Read your own hearts and Ireland's present story,
Then feed her famine fat with Wellesley's glory.

But still there is unto a patriot nation,
Which loves so well its country and its King,
A subject of sublimest exultation--
Bear it, ye Muses, on your brightest wing!
Howe'er the mighty locust, Desolation,
Strip your green fields, and to your harvests cling,
Gaunt famine never shall approach the throne--
Though Ireland starve, great George weighs twenty stone.

But let me put an end unto my theme:
There was an end of Ismail--hapless town!
Far flash'd her burning towers o'er Danube's stream,
And redly ran his blushing waters down.
The horrid war-whoop and the shriller scream
Rose still; but fainter were the thunders grown:
Of forty thousand who had mann'd the wall,

Some hundreds breath'd--the rest were silent all!

In one thing ne'ertheless 'tis fit to praise
The Russian army upon this occasion,
A virtue much in fashion now-a-days,
And therefore worthy of commemoration:
The topic's tender, so shall be my phrase:
Perhaps the season's chill, and their long station
In Winter's depth, or want of rest and victual,
Had made them chaste--they ravish'd very little.

Much did they slay, more plunder, and no less
Might here and there occur some violation
In the other line; but not to such excess
As when the French, that dissipated nation,
Take towns by storm: no causes can I guess,
Except cold weather and commiseration;
But all the ladies, save some twenty score,
Were almost as much virgins as before.

Some odd mistakes, too, happen'd in the dark,
Which show'd a want of lanterns, or of taste--
Indeed the smoke was such they scarce could mark
Their friends from foes--besides such things from haste
Occur, though rarely, when there is a spark
Of light to save the venerably chaste:
But six old damsels, each of seventy years,
Were all deflower'd by different grenadiers.

But on the whole their continence was great;
So that some disappointment there ensu'd
To those who had felt the inconvenient state
Of "single blessedness," and thought it good
(Since it was not their fault, but only fate,
To bear these crosses) for each waning prude
To make a Roman sort of Sabine wedding,
Without the expense and the suspense of bedding.

Some voices of the buxom middle-ag'd
Were also heard to wonder in the din
(Widows of forty were these birds long cag'd)
"Wherefore the ravishing did not begin!"
But while the thirst for gore and plunder rag'd,
There was small leisure for superfluous sin;
But whether they escap'd or no, lies hid
In darkness--I can only hope they did.

Suwarro now was conqueror--a match
For Timour or for Zinghis in his trade.
While mosques and streets, beneath his eyes, like thatch
Blaz'd, and the cannon's roar was scarce allay'd,
With bloody hands he wrote his first despatch;

And here exactly follows what he said:
"Glory to God and to the Empress!" (Powers
Eternal!! such names mingled!) "Ismail's ours

Methinks these are the most tremendous words,
Since "MENE, MENE, TEKEL," and "UPHARSIN,"
Which hands or pens have ever trac'd of swords.

Heaven help me! I'm but little of a parson:
What Daniel read was short-hand of the Lord's,
Severe, sublime; the prophet wrote no farce on
The fate of nations; but this Russ so witty
Could rhyme, like Nero, o'er a burning city.

He wrote this Polar melody, and set it,
Duly accompanied by shrieks and groans,
Which few will sing, I trust, but none forget it--
For I will teach, if possible, the stones
To rise against Earth's tyrants. Never let it
Be said that we still truckle unto thrones;
But ye--our children's children! think how we
Show'd what things were before the World was free!

That hour is not for us, but 'tis for you:
And as, in the great joy of your millennium,
You hardly will believe such things were true
As now occur, I thought that I would pen you 'em;
But may their very memory perish too!
Yet if perchance remember'd, still disdain you 'em
More than you scorn the savages of yore,
Who painted their bare limbs, but not with gore.

And when you hear historians talk of thrones
And those that sate upon them, let it be
As we now gaze upon the mammoth's bones,
And wonder what old world such things could see,
Or hieroglyphics on Egyptian stones,
The pleasant riddles of futurity--
Guessing at what shall happily be hid,
As the real purpose of a pyramid.

Reader! I have kept my word--at least so far
As the first Canto promised. You have now
Had sketches of love, tempest, travel, war--
All very accurate, you must allow,
And Epic, if plain truth should prove no bar;
For I have drawn much less with a long bow
Than my forerunners. Carelessly I sing,
But Phoebus lends me now and then a string.

With which I still can harp, and carp, and fiddle.
What further hath befallen or may befall
The hero of this grand poetic riddle,

I by and by may tell you, if at all:
But now I choose to break off in the middle,
Worn out with battering Ismail's stubborn wall,
While Juan is sent off with the despatch,
For which all Petersburgh is on the watch.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Don Juan: Canto the Eleventh

I

When Bishop Berkeley said "there was no matter,"
And proved it--'twas no matter what he said:
They say his system 'tis in vain to batter,
Too subtle for the airiest human head;
And yet who can believe it! I would shatter
Gladly all matters down to stone or lead,
Or adamant, to find the World a spirit,
And wear my head, denying that I wear it.II
What a sublime discovery 'twas to make the
Universe universal egotism,
That all's ideal--all ourselves: I'll stake the
World (be it what you will) that that's no schism.
Oh Doubt!--if thou be'st Doubt, for which some take thee,
But which I doubt extremely--thou sole prism
Of the Truth's rays, spoil not my draught of spirit!
Heaven's brandy, though our brain can hardly bear it.III

For ever and anon comes Indigestion
(Not the most "dainty Ariel") and perplexes
Our soarings with another sort of question:
And that which after all my spirit vexes,
Is, that I find no spot where Man can rest eye on,
Without confusion of the sorts and sexes,
Of beings, stars, and this unriddled wonder,
The World, which at the worst's a glorious blunder--IV

If it be chance--or, if it be according
To the Old Text, still better: lest it should
Turn out so, we'll say nothing 'gainst the wording,
As several people think such hazards rude.
They're right; our days are too brief for affording
Space to dispute what no one ever could
Decide, and everybody one day will
Know very clearly--or at least lie still.V

And therefore will I leave off metaphysical
Discussion, which is neither here nor there:
If I agree that what is, is; then this I call
Being quite perspicuous and extremely fair.
The truth is, I've grown lately rather phthisical:
I don't know what the reason is--the air
Perhaps; but as I suffer from the shocks
Of illness, I grow much more orthodox.VI

The first attack at once prov'd the Divinity
(But that I never doubted, nor the Devil);
The next, the Virgin's mystical virginity;
The third, the usual Origin of Evil;
The fourth at once establish'd the whole Trinity
On so uncontrovertible a level,
That I devoutly wish'd the three were four--

On purpose to believe so much the more.VII

To our theme.--The man who has stood on the Acropolis,
And look'd down over Attica; or he
Who has sail'd where picturesque Constantinople is,
Or seen Timbuctoo, or hath taken tea
In small-ey'd China's crockery-ware metropolis,
Or sat amidst the bricks of Nineveh,
May not think much of London's first appearance--
But ask him what he thinks of it a year hence!VIII

Don Juan had got out on Shooter's Hill;
Sunset the time, the place the same declivity
Which looks along that vale of good and ill
Where London streets ferment in full activity,
While everything around was calm and still,
Except the creak of wheels, which on their pivot he
Heard, and that bee-like, bubbling, busy hum
Of cities, that boil over with their scum--IX

I say, Don Juan, wrapp'd in contemplation,
Walk'd on behind his carriage, o'er the summit,
And lost in wonder of so great a nation,
Gave way to't, since he could not overcome it.
"And here," he cried, "is Freedom's chosen station;
Here peals the People's voice nor can entomb it
Racks, prisons, inquisitions; resurrection
Awaits it, each new meeting or election.X

"Here are chaste wives, pure lives; her people pay
But what they please; and if that things be dear,
'Tis only that they love to throw away
Their cash, to show how much they have a-year.
Here laws are all inviolate; none lay
Traps for the traveller; every highway's clear;
Here"--he was interrupted by a knife,
With--"Damn your eyes! your money or your life!"XI

These free-born sounds proceeded from four pads
In ambush laid, who had perceiv'd him loiter
Behind his carriage; and, like handy lads,
Had seiz'd the lucky hour to reconnoitre,
In which the heedless gentleman who gads
Upon the road, unless he prove a fighter
May find himself within that isle of riches
Expos'd to lose his life as well as breeches.XII

Juan, who did not understand a word
Of English, save their shibboleth, "God damn!"
And even that he had so rarely heard,
He sometimes thought 'twas only their Salam,"
Or "God be with you!"--and 'tis not absurd

To think so, for half English as I am
(To my misfortune) never can I say
I heard them wish "God with you," save that way--XIII

Juan yet quickly understood their gesture,
And being somewhat choleric and sudden,
Drew forth a pocket pistol from his vesture,
And fired it into one assailant's pudding,
Who fell, as rolls an ox o'er in his pasture,
And roar'd out, as he writh'd his native mud in,
Unto his nearest follower or henchman,
"Oh Jack! I'm floor'd by that ere bloody Frenchman!"XIV

On which Jack and his train set off at speed,
And Juan's suite, late scatter'd at a distance,
Came up, all marvelling at such a deed,
And offering, as usual, late assistance.
Juan, who saw the moon's late minion bleed
As if his veins would pour out his existence,
Stood calling out for bandages and lint,
And wish'd he had been less hasty with his flint.XV

"Perhaps," thought he, "it is the country's wont
To welcome foreigners in this way: now
I recollect some innkeepers who don't
Differ, except in robbing with a bow,
In lieu of a bare blade and brazen front.
But what is to be done? I can't allow
The fellow to lie groaning on the road:
So take him up, I'll help you with the load."XVI

But ere they could perform this pious duty,
The dying man cried, "Hold! I've got my gruel!
Oh! for a glass of max ! We've miss'd our booty--
Let me die where I am!" And as the fuel
Of life shrunk in his heart, and thick and sooty
The drops fell from his death-wound, and he drew ill
His breath, he from his swelling throat untied
A kerchief, crying "Give Sal that!"--and died.XVII

The cravat stain'd with bloody drops fell down
Before Don Juan's feet: he could not tell
Exactly why it was before him thrown,
Nor what the meaning of the man's farewell.
Poor Tom was once a kiddy upon town,
A thorough varmint, and a real swell,
Full flash, all fancy, until fairly diddled,
His pockets first and then his body riddled.XVIII

Don Juan, having done the best he could
In all the circumstances of the case,
As soon as "Crown'r's 'quest" allow'd, pursu'd
His travels to the capital apace;
Esteeming it a little hard he should
In twelve hours' time, and very little space,
Have been oblig'd to slay a free-born native
In self-defence: this made him meditative.XIX

He from the world had cut off a great man,
Who in his time had made heroic bustle.
Who in a row like Tom could lead the van,
Booze in the ken, or at the spellken hustle?
Who queer a flat? Who (spite of Bowstreet's ban)
On the high toby-spice so flash the muzzle?
Who on a lark, with black-eyed Sal (his blowing),
So prime, so swell, so nutty, and so knowing?XX

But Tom's no more--and so no more of Tom.
Heroes must die; and by God's blessing 'tis
Not long before the most of them go home.
Hail! Thamis, hail! Upon thy verge it is
That Juan's chariot, rolling like a drum
In thunder, holds the way it can't well miss,
Through Kennington and all the other "tons,"
Which make us wish ourselves in town at once;XXI

Through Groves, so called as being void of trees,
(Like lucus from no light); through prospects nam'd
Mount Pleasant, as containing nought to please,
Nor much to climb; through little boxes fram'd
Of bricks, to let the dust in at your ease,
With "To be let," upon their doors proclaim'd;
Through "Rows" most modestly call'd "Paradise,"
Which Eve might quit without much sacrifice;XXII

Through coaches, drays, chok'd turnpikes, and a whirl
Of wheels, and roar of voices, and confusion;
Here taverns wooing to a pint of "purl,"
There mails fast flying off like a delusion;
There barbers' blocks with periwigs in curl
In windows; here the lamplighter's infusion
Slowly distill'd into the glimmering glass
(For in those days we had not got to gas);XXIII

Through this, and much, and more, is the approach
Of travellers to mighty Babylon:
Whether they come by horse, or chaise, or coach,
With slight exceptions, all the ways seem one.
I could say more, but do not choose to encroach
Upon the guide-book's privilege. The sun
Had set some time, and night was on the ridge
Of twilight, as the party cross'd the bridge.XXIV

That's rather fine, the gentle sound of Thamis--
Who vindicates a moment, too, his stream--
Though hardly heard through multifarious "damme's":
The lamps of Westminster's more regular gleam,
The breadth of pavement, and yon shrine where Fame is
A spectral resident--whose pallid beam
In shape of moonshine hovers o'er the pile--
Make this a sacred part of Albion's Isle.XXV

The Druid's groves are gone--so much the better:
Stonehenge is not--but what the devil is it?--
But Bedlam still exists with its sage fetter,
That madmen may not bite you on a visit;
The Bench too seats or suits full many a debtor;
The Mansion House too (though some people quiz it)
To me appears a stiff yet grand erection;
But then the Abbey's worth the whole collection.XXVI

The line of lights too, up to Charing Cross,
Pall Mall, and so forth, have a coruscation
Like gold as in comparison to dross,
Match'd with the Continent's illumination,
Whose cities Night by no means deigns to gloss.
The French were not yet a lamp-lighting nation,
And when they grew so--on their new-found lantern,
Instead of wicks, they made a wicked man turn.XXVII

A row of Gentlemen along the streets
Suspended may illuminate mankind,
As also bonfires made of country seats;
But the old way is best for the purblind:
The other looks like phosphorus on sheets,
A sort of [lang l]ignis fatuus[lang e] to the mind,
Which, though 'tis certain to perplex and frighten,
Must burn more mildly ere it can enlighten.XXVIII

But London's so well lit, that if Diogenes
Could recommence to hunt his honest man

And found him not amidst the various progenies
Of this enormous city's spreading spawn,
'Twere not for want of lamps to aid his dodging his
Yet undiscover'd treasure. What I can,
I've done to find the same throughout life's journey,
But see the World is only one attorney.XXIX

Over the stones still rattling, up Pall Mall,
Through crowds and carriages, but waxing thinner
As thunder'd knockers broke the long seal'd spell
Of doors 'gainst duns, and to an early dinner
Admitted a small party as night fell,
Don Juan, our young diplomatic sinner,
Pursu'd his path, and drove past some hotels,
St. James's Palace, and St. James's "Hells."XXX

They reach'd the hotel: forth stream'd from the front door
A tide of well-clad waiters, and around
The mob stood, and as usual several score
Of those pedestrian Paphians who abound
In decent London when the daylight's o'er;
Commodious but immoral, they are found
Useful, like Malthus, in promoting marriage:
But Juan now is stepping from his carriageXXXI

Into one of the sweetest of hotels,
Especially for foreigners--and mostly
For those whom favour or whom fortune swells,
And cannot find a bill's small items costly.
There many an envoy either dwelt or dwells
(The den of many a diplomatic lost lie),
Until to some conspicuous square they pass,
And blazon o'er the door their names in brass.XXII

Juan, whose was a delicate commission,
Private, though publicly important, bore
No title to point out with due precision
The exact affair on which he was sent o'er.
'Twas merely known, that on a secret mission
A foreigner of rank had grac'd our shore,
Young, handsome and accomplish'd, who was said
(In whispers) to have turn'd his Sovereign's head.XXIII

Some rumour also of some strange adventures
Had gone before him, and his wars and loves;
And as romantic heads are pretty painters,
And, above all, an Englishwoman's roves

Into the excursive, breaking the indentures
Of sober reason, wheresoe'er it moves,
He found himself extremely in the fashion,
Which serves our thinking people for a passion.XXXIV

I don't mean that they are passionless, but quite
The contrary; but then 'tis in the head;
Yet as the consequences are as bright
As if they acted with the heart instead,
What after all can signify the site
Of ladies' lucubrations? So they lead
In safety to the place for which you start,
What matters if the road be head or heart?XXXV

Juan presented in the proper place,
To proper placement, every Russ credential;
And was receiv'd with all the due grimace
By those who govern in the mood potential,
Who, seeing a handsome stripling with smooth face,
Thought (what in state affairs is most essential)
That they as easily might do the youngster,
As hawks may pounce upon a woodland songster.XXXVI

They err'd, as aged men will do; but by
And by we'll talk of that; and if we don't,
'T will be because our notion is not high
Of politicians and their double front,
Who live by lies, yet dare not boldly lie:
Now, what I love in women is, they won't
Or can't do otherwise than lie, but do it
So well, the very truth seems falsehood to it.XXXVII

And, after all, what is a lie? 'Tis but
The truth in masquerade; and I defy
Historians, heroes, lawyers, priests, to put
A fact without some leaven of a lie.
The very shadow of true Truth would shut
Up annals, revelations, poesy,
And prophecy--except it should be dated
Some years before the incidents related.XXXVIII

Prais'd be all liars and all lies! Who now
Can tax my mild Muse with misanthropy?
She rings the World's "Te Deum," and her brow
Blushes for those who will not: but to sigh
Is idle; let us like most others bow,
Kiss hands, feet, any part of Majesty,

After the good example of "Green Erin,"
Whose shamrock now seems rather worse for wearing.XXXIX

Don Juan was presented, and his dress
And mien excited general admiration;
I don't know which was more admir'd or less:
One monstrous diamond drew much observation,
Which Catherine in a moment of "ivresse"
(In love or brandy's fervent fermentation)
Bestow'd upon him, as the public learn'd;
And, to say truth, it had been fairly earn'd.XL

Besides the ministers and underlings,
Who must be courteous to the accredited
Diplomatists of rather wavering kings,
Until their royal riddle's fully read,
The very clerks--those somewhat dirty springs
Of Office, or the House of Office, fed
By foul corruption into streams--even they
Were hardly rude enough to earn their pay.XLI

And insolence no doubt is what they are
Employ'd for, since it is their daily labour,
In the dear offices of peace or war;
And should you doubt, pray ask of your next neighbour,
When for a passport, or some other bar
To freedom, he applied (a grief and a bore),
If he found not this spawn of tax-born riches,
Like lap-dogs, the least civil sons of b{-}{-}{-}{-}{-}s.XLII

But Juan was receiv'd with much "empressement" --
These phrases of refinement I must borrow
From our next neighbours' land, where, like a chessman,
There is a move set down for joy or sorrow,
Not only in mere talking, but the press. Man
In islands is, it seems, downright and thorough,
More than on continents--as if the sea
(See Billingsgate) made even the tongue more free.XLIII

And yet the British "Damme" 's rather Attic,
Your continental oaths are but incontinent,
And turn on things which no aristocratic
Spirit would name, and therefore even I won't anent
This subject quote; as it would be schismatic
In politesse, and have a sound affronting in 't;
But "Damme" 's quite ethereal, though too daring--
Platonic blasphemy, the soul of swearing.XLIV

For downright rudeness, ye may stay at home;
For true or false politeness (and scarce that
Now) you may cross the blue deep and white foam:
The first the emblem (rarely though) of what
You leave behind, the next of much you come
To meet. However, 'tis no time to chat
On general topics: poems must confine
Themselves to Unity, like this of mine.XLV

In the great world--which, being interpreted,
Meaneth the West or worst end of a city,
And about twice two thousand people bred
By no means to be very wise or witty,
But to sit up while others lie in bed,
And look down on the Universe with pity--
Juan, as an inveterate patrician,
Was well receiv'd by persons of condition.XLVI

He was a bachelor, which is a matter
Of import both to virgin and to bride,
The former's hymeneal hopes to flatter;
And (should she not hold fast by love or pride)
'Tis also of some momemt to the latter:
A rib's a thorn in a wed gallant's side,
Requires decorum, and is apt to double
The horrid sin--and what's still worse the trouble.XLVII

But Juan was a bachelor--of arts,
And parts, and hearts: he danc'd and sung, and had
An air as sentimental as Mozart's
Softest of melodies; and could be sad
Or cheerful, without any "flaws or starts,"
Just at the proper time; and though a lad,
Had seen the world--which is a curious sight,
And very much unlike what people write.XLVIII

Fair virgins blush'd upon him; wedded dames
Bloom'd also in less transitory hues;
For both commodities dwell by the Thames
The painting and the painted; Youth, Ceruse,
Against his heart preferr'd their usual claims,
Such as no gentleman can quite refuse;
Daughters admir'd his dress, and pious mothers
Inquir'd his income, and if he had brothers.XLIX

The milliners who furnish "drapery Misses"
Throughout the season, upon speculation
Of payment ere the Honeymoon's last kisses
Have wan'd into a crescent's coruscation,
Thought such an opportunity as this is,
Of a rich foreigner's initiation,
Not to be overlook'd--and gave such credit,
That future bridegrooms swore, and sigh'd, and paid it.L

The Blues, that tender tribe, who sigh o'er sonnets,
And with the pages of the last Review
Line the interior of their heads or bonnets,
Advanc'd in all their azure's highest hue:
They talk'd bad French or Spanish, and upon its
Late authors ask'd him for a hint or two;
And which was softest, Russian or Castilian?
And whether in his travels he saw Ilion?LI

Juan, who was a little superficial,
And not in literature a great Drawcansir,
Examin'd by this learned and especial
Jury of matrons, scarce knew what to answer:
His duties warlike, loving or official,
His steady application as a dancer,
Had kept him from the brink of Hippocrene,
Which now he found was blue instead of green.LII

However, he replied at hazard, with
A modest confidence and calm assurance,
Which lent his learned lucubrations pith,
And pass'd for arguments of good endurance.
That prodigy, Miss Araminta Smith
(Who at sixteen translated "Hercules Furens"
Into as furious English), with her best look,
Set down his sayings in her common-place book.LIII

Juan knew several languages--as well
He might--and brought them up with skill, in time
To save his fame with each accomplish'd belle,
Who still regretted that he did not rhyme.
There wanted but this requisite to swell
His qualities (with them) into sublime:
Lady Fitz-Frisky, and Miss M{ae}via Mannish,
Both long'd extremely to be sung in Spanish.LIV

However, he did pretty well, and was
Admitted as an aspirant to all

The coteries, and, as in Banquo's glass,
At great assemblies or in parties small,
He saw ten thousand living authors pass,
That being about their average numeral;
Also the eighty "greatest living poets,"
As every paltry magazine can show it's .LV

In twice five years the "greatest living poet,"
Like to the champion in the fisty ring,
Is call'd on to support his claim, or show it,
Although 'tis an imaginary thing,
Even I--albeit I'm sure I did not know it,
Nor sought of foolscap subjects to be king--
Was reckon'd, a considerable time,
The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme.LVI

But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero
My Leipsic, and my Mont Saint Jean seem Cain:
"La Belle Alliance" of dunces down at zero,
Now that the Lion's fall'n, may rise again,
But I will fall at least as fell my hero;
Nor reign at all, or as a monarch reign;
Or to some lonely isle of jailors go,
With turncoat Southee for my turnkey Lowe.LVII

Sir Walter reign'd before me; Moore and Campbell
Before and after; but now grown more holy,
The Muses upon Sion's hill must ramble
With poets almost clergymen, or wholly;
And Pegasus has a psalmodic amble
Beneath the very Reverend Rowley Powley,
Who shoes the glorious animal with stilts,
A modern Ancient Pistol--"by the hilts!"LVIII

Still he excels that artificial hard
Labourer in the same vineyard, though the vine
Yields him but vinegar for his reward--
That neutralis'd dull Dorus of the Nine;
That swarthy Sporus, neither man nor bard;
That ox of verse, who ploughs for every line:
Cambyses' roaring Romans beat at least
The howling Hebrews of Cybele's priest.LIX

Then there's my gentle Euphues, who, they say,
Sets up for being a sort of moral me ;
He'll find it rather difficult some day
To turn out both, or either, it may be.

Some persons think that Coleridge hath the sway;
And Wordsworth has supporters, two or three;
And that deep-mouth'd Boëtian "Savage Landor"
Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's gander.LX

John Keats, who was kill'd off by one critique,
Just as he really promis'd something great,
If not intelligible, without Greek
Contriv'd to talk about the gods of late,
Much as they might have been suppos'd to speak.
Poor fellow! His was an untoward fate;
'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle,
Should let itself be snuff'd out by an article.LXI

The list grows long of live and dead pretenders
To that which none will gain--or none will know
The conqueror at least; who, ere Time renders
His last award, will have the long grass grow
Above his burnt-out brain, and sapless cinders.
If I might augur, I should rate but low
Their chances; they're too numerous, like the thirty
Mock tyrants, when Rome's annals wax'd but dirty.LXII

This is the literary lower empire,
Where the pr{ae}torian bands take up the matter;
A "dreadful trade," like his who "gathers samphire,"
The insolent soldiery to soothe and flatter,
With the same feelings as you'd coax a vampire,
Now, were I once at home, and in good satire,
I'd try conclusions with those Janizaries,
And show them what an intellectual war is.LXIII

I think I know a trick or two, would turn
Their flanks; but it is hardly worth my while,
With such small gear to give myself concern:
Indeed I've not the necessary bile;
My natural temper's really aught but stern,
And even my Muse's worst reproof's a smile;
And then she drops a brief and modern curtsy,
And glides away, assur'd she never hurts ye.LXIV

My Juan, whom I left in deadly peril
Amongst live poets and blue ladies, pass'd
With some small profit through that field so sterile,
Being tir'd in time, and, neither least nor last,
Left it before he had been treated very ill;
And henceforth found himself more gaily class'd

Amongst the higher spirits of the day,
The sun's true son, no vapour, but a ray.LXV

His morns he pass'd in business--which dissected,
Was, like all business, a laborious nothing
That leads to lassitude, the most infected
And Centaur-Nessus garb of mortal clothing,
And on our sofas makes us lie dejected,
And talk in tender horrors of our loathing
All kinds of toil, save for our country's good--
Which grows no better, though 'tis time it should.LXVI

His afternoons he pass'd in visits, luncheons,
Lounging and boxing; and the twilight hour
In riding round those vegetable puncheons
Call'd "Parks," where there is neither fruit nor flower
Enough to gratify a bee's slight munchings;
But after all it is the only "bower"
(In Moore's phrase) where the fashionable fair
Can form a slight acquaintance with fresh air.LXVII

Then dress, then dinner, then awakes the world!
Then glare the lamps, then whirl the wheels, then roar
Through street and square fast flashing chariots hurl'd
Like harness'd meteors; then along the floor
Chalk mimics painting; then festoons are twirl'd;
Then roll the brazen thunders of the door,
Which opens to the thousand happy few
An earthly Paradise of "Or Molu."LXVIII

There stands the noble hostess, nor shall sink
With the three-thousandth curtsey; there the waltz,
The only dance which teaches girls to think,
Makes one in love even with its very faults.
Saloon, room, hall, o'erflow beyond their brink,
And long the latest of arrivals halts,
'Midst royal dukes and dames condemn'd to climb,
And gain an inch of staircase at a time.LXIX

Thrice happy he who, after a survey
Of the good company, can win a corner,
A door that's in or boudoir out of the way,
Where he may fix himself like small "Jack Horner,"
And let the Babel round run as it may,
And look on as a mourner, or a scioner,
Or an approver, or a mere spectator,
Yawning a little as the night grows later.LXX

But this won't do, save by and by; and he
Who, like Don Juan, takes an active share
Must steer with care through all that glittering sea
Of gems and plumes and pearls and silks, to where
He deems it is his proper place to be;
Dissolving in the waltz to some soft air,
Or prouder prancing with mercurial skill,
Where Science marshals forth her own quadrille.LXXI

Or, if he dance not, but hath higher views
Upon an heiress or his neighbour's bride,
Let him take care that that which he pursues
Is not at once too palpably descried.
Full many an eager gentleman oft rues
His haste; impatience is a blundering guide
Amongst a people famous for reflection,
Who like to play the fool with circumspection.LXXII

But, if you can contrive, get next at supper;
Or, if forestalled, get opposite and ogle:
Oh, ye ambrosial moments! always upper
In mind, a sort of sentimental bogle,
Which sits for ever upon Memory's crupper,
The ghost of vanish'd pleasures once in vogue! Ill
Can tender souls relate the rise and fall
Of hopes and fears which shake a single ball.LXXIII

But these precautionary hints can touch
Only the common run, who must pursue,
And watch and ward; whose plans a word too much
Or little overturns; and not the few
Or many (for the number's sometimes such)
Whom a good mien, especially if new,
Or fame, or name, for wit, war, sense or nonsense,
Permits whate'er they please, or did not long since.LXXIV

Our hero, as a hero young and handsome,
Noble, rich, celebrated, and a stranger,
Like other slaves of course must pay his ransom
Before he can escape from so much danger
As will environ a conspicuous man. Some
Talk about poetry, and "rack and manger,"
And ugliness, disease, as toil and trouble--
I wish they knew the life of a young noble.LXXV

They are young, but know not youth--it is anticipated;
 Handsome but wasted, rich without a sou;
Their vigour in a thousand arms is dissipated;
 Their cash comes from , their wealth goes to a Jew;
Both senates see their nightly votes participated
 Between the tyrant's and the tribunes' crew;
And having voted, din'd, drunk, gam'd and whor'd,
The family vault receives another lord.LXXVI

"Where is the World," cries Young, "at eighty ? Where
 The World in which a man was born?" Alas!
Where is the world of eight years past? 'Twas there --
 I look for it--'tis gone, a Globe of Glass!
Crack'd, shiver'd, vanish'd, scarcely gaz'd on, ere
 A silent change dissolves the glittering mass.
Statesmen, chiefs, orators, queens, patriots, kings,
And dandies--all are gone on the wind's wings.LXXVII

Where is Napoleon the Grand? God knows:
 Where little Castlereagh? The devil can tell:
Where Grattan, Curran, Sheridan, all those
 Who bound the Bar or Senate in their spell?
Where is the unhappy Queen, with all her woes?
 And where the Daughter, whom the Isles lov'd well?
Where are those martyr'd saints the Five per Cents?
And where--oh, where the devil are the Rents?LXXVIII

Where's Brummell? Dish'd. Where's Long Pole Wellesley? Diddled.
 Where's Whitbread? Romilly? Where's George the Third?
Where is his will? (That's not so soon unriddled.)
 And where is "Fum" the Fourth, our "royal bird"?
Gone down, it seems, to Scotland to be fiddled
 Unto by Sawney's violin, we have heard:
"Caw me, caw thee"--for six months hath been hatching
This scene of royal itch and loyal scratching.LXXIX

Where is Lord This? And where my Lady That?
 The Honourable Mistresses and Misses?
Some laid aside like an old Opera hat,
 Married, unmarried, and remarried (this is
An evolution oft perform'd of late).
 Where are the Dublin shouts--and London hisses?
Where are the Grenvilles? Turn'd as usual. Where
My friends the Whigs? Exactly where they were.LXXX

Where are the Lady Carolines and Franceses?
Divorc'd or doing thereanent. Ye annals

So brilliant, where the list of routs and dances is,
Thou Morning Post, sole record of the panels
Broken in carriages, and all the phantasies
Of fashion, say what streams now fill those channels?
Some die, some fly, some languish on the Continent,
Because the times have hardly left them one tenant.LXXXI

Some who once set their caps at cautious dukes,
Have taken up at length with younger brothers:
Some heiresses have bit at sharpers' hooks:
Some maids have been made wives, some merely mothers:
Others have lost their fresh and fairy looks:
In short, the list of alterations bothers.
There's little strange in this, but something strange is
The unusual quickness of these common changes.LXXXII

Talk not of seventy years as age! in seven
I have seen more changes, down from monarchs to
The humblest individuals under heaven,
Than might suffice a moderate century through.
I knew that nought was lasting, but now even
Change grows too changeable, without being new:
Nought's permanent among the human race,
Except the Whigs not getting into place.LXXXIII

I have seen Napoleon, who seem'd quite a Jupiter,
Shrink to a Saturn. I have seen a Duke
(No matter which) turn politician stupider,
If that can well be, than his wooden look.
But it is time that I should hoist my "blue Peter,"
And sail for a new theme: I have seen--and shook
To see it--the King hiss'd, and then caress'd;
But don't pretend to settle which was best.LXXXIV

I have seen the Landholders without a rap--
I have seen Joanna Southcote--I have seen
The House of Commons turn'd to a taxtrap--
I have seen that sad affair of the late Queen--
I have seen crowns worn instead of a fool's cap--
I have seen a Congress doing all that's mean--
I have seen some nations, like o'erloaded asses,
Kick off their burthens--meaning the high classes.LXXXV

I have seen small poets, and great prosers, and
Interminable-- not eternal --speakers--
I have seen the funds at war with house and land--
I have seen the country gentlemen turn squeakers--

I have seen the people ridden o'er like sand
By slaves on horseback--I have seen malt liquors
Exchang'd for "thin potations" by John Bull--
I have seen John half detect himself a fool.LXXXVI

But "carpe diem," Juan, "carpe, carpe!"
To-morrow sees another race as gay
And transient, and devour'd by the same harpy.
"Life's a poor player"--then "play out the play,
Ye villains!" and above all keep a sharp eye
Much less on what you do than what you say:
Be hypocritical, be cautious, be
Not what you seem , but always what you see .LXXXVII

But how shall I relate in other cantos
Of what befell our hero in the land,
Which 'tis the common cry and lie to vaunt as
A moral country? But I hold my hand--
For I disdain to write an Atalantis;
But 'tis as well at once to understand,
You are not a moral people, and you know it,
Without the aid of too sincere a poet.LXXXVIII

What Juan saw and underwent shall be
My topic, with of course the due restriction
Which is requir'd by proper courtesy;
And recollect the work is only fiction,
And that I sing of neither mine nor me,
Though every scribe, in some slight turn of diction,
Will hint allusions never meant . Ne'er doubt
This --when I speak, I don't hint , but speak out .LXXXIX

Whether he married with the third or fourth
Offspring of some sage husband-hunting countess,
Or whether with some virgin of more worth
(I mean in Fortune's matrimonial bounties),
He took to regularly peopling Earth,
Of which your lawful, awful wedlock fount is--
Or whether he was taken in for damages,
For being too excursive in his homages--XC

Is yet within the unread events of time.
Thus far, go forth, thou Lay, which I will back
Against the same given quantity of rhyme,
For being as much the subject of attack
As ever yet was any work sublime,
By those who love to say that white is black.

So much the better!--I may stand alone,
But would not change my free thoughts for a throne.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Don Juan: Canto The Fifteenth

Ah!--What should follow slips from my reflection;
Whatever follows ne'ertheless may be
As à-propos of hope or retrospection,
As though the lurking thought had follow'd free.
All present life is but an interjection,
An 'Oh!' or 'Ah!' of joy or misery,
Or a 'Ha! ha!' or 'Bah!'-- a yawn, or 'Pooh!'
Of which perhaps the latter is most true.

But, more or less, the whole's a syncope
Or a singultus - emblems of emotion,
The grand antithesis to great ennui,
Wherewith we break our bubbles on the ocean,--
That watery outline of eternity,
Or miniature at least, as is my notion,
Which ministers unto the soul's delight,
In seeing matters which are out of sight.

But all are better than the sigh supprest,
Corroding in the cavern of the heart,
Making the countenance a masque of rest,
And turning human nature to an art.
Few men dare show their thoughts of worst or best;
Dissimulation always sets apart
A corner for herself; and therefore fiction
Is that which passes with least contradiction.

Ah! who can tell? Or rather, who can not
Remember, without telling, passion's errors?
The drainer of oblivion, even the sot,
Hath got blue devils for his morning mirrors:
What though on Lethe's stream he seem to float,
He cannot sink his tremors or his terrors;
The ruby glass that shakes within his hand
Leaves a sad sediment of Time's worst sand.

And as for love--O love!--We will proceed.
The Lady Adeline Amundeville,
A pretty name as one would wish to read,
Must perch harmonious on my tuneful quill.
There's music in the sighing of a reed;
There's music in the gushing of a rill;
There's music in all things, if men had ears:
Their earth is but an echo of the spheres.

The Lady Adeline, right honourable;
And honour'd, ran a risk of growing less so;
For few of the soft sex are very stable
In their resolves--alas! that I should say so!
They differ as wine differs from its label,
When once decanted;--I presume to guess so,
But will not swear: yet both upon occasion,

Till old, may undergo adulteration.

But Adeline was of the purest vintage,
The unmixed essence of the grape; and yet
Bright as a new Napoleon from its mintage,
Or glorious as a diamond richly set;
A page where Time should hesitate to print age,
And for which Nature might forego her debt--
Sole creditor whose process doth involve in 't
The luck of finding every body solvent.

O Death! thou dunkest of all duns! thou daily
Knockest at doors, at first with modest tap,
Like a meek tradesman when, approaching palely,
Some splendid debtor he would take by sap:
But oft denied, as patience 'gins to fail, he
Advances with exasperated rap,
And (if let in) insists, in terms unhandsome,
On ready money, or 'a draft on Ransom.'

Whate'er thou takest, spare a while poor Beauty!
She is so rare, and thou hast so much prey.
What though she now and then may slip from duty,
The more's the reason why you ought to stay.
Gaunt Gourmand! with whole nations for your booty,
You should be civil in a modest way:
Suppress, then, some slight feminine diseases,
And take as many heroes as Heaven pleases.

Fair Adeline, the more ingenuous
Where she was interested (as was said),
Because she was not apt, like some of us,
To like too readily, or too high bred
To show it (points we need not now discuss)--
Would give up artlessly both heart and head
Unto such feelings as seem'd innocent,
For objects worthy of the sentiment.

Some parts of Juan's history, which Rumour,
That live gazette, had scatter'd to disfigure,
She had heard; but women hear with more good humour
Such aberrations than we men of rigour:
Besides, his conduct, since in England, grew more
Strict, and his mind assumed a manlier vigour;
Because he had, like Alcibiades,
The art of living in all climes with ease.

His manner was perhaps the more seductive,
Because he ne'er seem'd anxious to seduce;
Nothing affected, studied, or constructive
Of coxcombry or conquest: no abuse
Of his attractions marr'd the fair perspective,

To indicate a Cupidon broke loose,
And seem to say, 'Resist us if you can'--
Which makes a dandy while it spoils a man.

They are wrong--that's not the way to set about it;
As, if they told the truth, could well be shown.
But, right or wrong, Don Juan was without it;
In fact, his manner was his own alone;
Sincere he was--at least you could not doubt it,
In listening merely to his voice's tone.
The devil hath not in all his quiver's choice
An arrow for the heart like a sweet voice.

By nature soft, his whole address held off
Suspicion: though not timid, his regard
Was such as rather seem'd to keep aloof,
To shield himself than put you on your guard:
Perhaps 'twas hardly quite assured enough,
But modesty's at times its own reward,
Like virtue; and the absence of pretension
Will go much farther than there's need to mention.

Serene, accomplish'd, cheerful but not loud;
Insinuating without insinuation;
Observant of the foibles of the crowd,
Yet ne'er betraying this in conversation;
Proud with the proud, yet courteously proud,
So as to make them feel he knew his station
And theirs:--without a struggle for priority,
He neither brook'd nor claim'd superiority.

That is, with men: with women he was what
They pleased to make or take him for; and their
Imagination's quite enough for that:
So that the outline's tolerably fair,
They fill the canvas up - and 'verbum sat.'
If once their phantasies be brought to bear
Upon an object, whether sad or playful,
They can transfigure brighter than a Raphael.

Adeline, no deep judge of character,
Was apt to add a colouring from her own:
'Tis thus the good will amiably err,
And eke the wise, as has been often shown.
Experience is the chief philosopher,
But saddest when his science is well known:
And persecuted sages teach the schools
Their folly in forgetting there are fools.

Was it not so, great Locke? and greater Bacon?
Great Socrates? And thou, Diviner still,
Whose lot it is by man to be mistaken,

And thy pure creed made sanction of all ill?
Redeeming worlds to be by bigots shaken,
How was thy toil rewarded? We might fill
Volumes with similar sad illustrations,
But leave them to the conscience of the nations.

I perch upon an humbler promontory,
Amidst life's infinite variety:
With no great care for what is nicknamed glory,
But speculating as I cast mine eye
On what may suit or may not suit my story,
And never straining hard to versify,
I rattle on exactly as I'd talk
With any body in a ride or walk.

I don't know that there may be much ability
Shown in this sort of desultory rhyme;
But there's a conversational facility,
Which may round off an hour upon a time.
Of this I'm sure at least, there's no servility
In mine irregularity of chime,
Which rings what's uppermost of new or hoary,
Just as I feel the 'Improvvisatore.'

'Omnia vult belle Matho dicere - dic aliquando
Et bene, dic neutrum, dic aliquando male.'
The first is rather more than mortal can do;
The second may be sadly done or gaily;
The third is still more difficult to stand to;
The fourth we hear, and see, and say too, daily.
The whole together is what I could wish
To serve in this conundrum of a dish.

A modest hope--but modesty 's my forte,
And pride my feeble:--let us ramble on.
I meant to make this poem very short,
But now I can't tell where it may not run.
No doubt, if I had wish' to pay my court
To critics, or to hail the setting sun
Of tyranny of all kinds, my concision
Were more;--but I was born for opposition.

But then 'tis mostly on the weaker side;
So that I verily believe if they
Who now are basking in their full-blown pride
Were shaken down, and 'dogs had had their day,'
Though at the first I might perchance deride
Their tumble, I should turn the other way,
And wax an ultra-royalist in loyalty,
Because I hate even democratic royalty.

I think I should have made a decent spouse,

If I had never proved the soft condition;
I think I should have made monastic vows,
But for my own peculiar superstition:
'Gainst rhyme I never should have knock'd my brows,
Nor broken my own head, nor that of Priscian,
Nor worn the motley mantle of a poet,
If some one had not told me to forego it.

But 'laissez aller'--knights and dames I sing,
Such as the times may furnish. 'T is a flight
Which seems at first to need no lofty wing,
Plumed by Longinus or the Stagyrite:
The difficultly lies in colouring
(Keeping the due proportions still in sight)
With nature manners which are artificial,
And rend'ring general that which is especial.

The difference is, that in the days of old
Men made the manners; manners now make men--
Pinn'd like a flock, and fleeced too in their fold,
At least nine, and a ninth beside of ten.
Now this at all events must render cold
Your writers, who must either draw again
Days better drawn before, or else assume
The present, with their common-place costume.

We'll do our best to make the best on't:--March!
March, my Muse! If you cannot fly, yet flutter;
And when you may not be sublime, be arch,
Or starch, as are the edicts statesmen utter.
We surely may find something worth research:
Columbus found a new world in a cutter,
Or brigantine, or pink, of no great tonnage,
While yet America was in her non-age.

When Adeline, in all her growing sense
Of Juan's merits and his situation,
Felt on the whole an interest intense,--
Partly perhaps because a fresh sensation,
Or that he had an air of innocence,
Which is for innocence a sad temptation,--
As women hate half measures, on the whole,
She 'gan to ponder how to save his soul.

She had a good opinion of advice,
Like all who give and eke receive it gratis,
For which small thanks are still the market price,
Even where the article at highest rate is:
She thought upon the subject twice or thrice,
And morally decided, the best state is
For morals, marriage; and this question carried,
She seriously advised him to get married.

Juan replied, with all becoming deference,
He had a predilection for that tie;
But that, at present, with immediate reference
To his own circumstances, there might lie
Some difficulties, as in his own preference,
Or that of her to whom he might apply:
That still he'd wed with such or such a lady,
If that they were not married all already.

Next to the making matches for herself,
And daughters, brothers, sisters, kith or kin,
Arranging them like books on the same shelf,
There's nothing women love to dabble in
More (like a stock-holder in growing pelf)
Than match-making in general: 'tis no sin
Certes, but a preventative, and therefore
That is, no doubt, the only reason wherefore.

But never yet (except of course a miss
Unwed, or mistress never to be wed,
Or wed already, who object to this)
Was there chaste dame who had not in her head
Some drama of the marriage unities,
Observed as strictly both at board and bed
As those of Aristotle, though sometimes
They turn out melodrames or pantomimes.

They generally have some only son,
Some heir to a large property, some friend
Of an old family, some gay Sir John,
Or grave Lord George, with whom perhaps might end
A line, and leave posterity undone,
Unless a marriage was applied to mend
The prospect and their morals: and besides,
They have at hand a blooming glut of brides.

From these they will be careful to select,
For this an heiress, and for that a beauty;
For one a songstress who hath no defect,
For t'other one who promises much duty;
For this a lady no one can reject,
Whose sole accomplishments were quite a booty;
A second for her excellent connections;
A third, because there can be no objections.

When Rapp the Harmonist embargo'd marriage
In his harmonious settlement (which flourishes
Strangely enough as yet without miscarriage,
Because it breeds no more mouths than it nourishes,
Without those sad expenses which disparage
What Nature naturally most encourages)--

Why call'd he 'Harmony' a state sans wedlock?
Now here I've got the preacher at a dead lock.

Because he either meant to sneer at harmony
Or marriage, by divorcing them thus oddly.
But whether reverend Rapp learn'd this in Germany
Or no, 'tis said his sect is rich and godly,
Pious and pure, beyond what I can term any
Of ours, although they propagate more broadly.
My objection's to his title, not his ritual,
Although I wonder how it grew habitual.

But Rapp is the reverse of zealous matrons,
Who favour, malgre Malthus, generation -
Professors of that genial art, and patrons
Of all the modest part of propagation;
Which after all at such a desperate rate runs,
That half its produce tends to emigration,
That sad result of passions and potatoes -
Two weeds which pose our economic Catos.

Had Adeline read Malthus? I can't tell;
I wish she had: his book 's the eleventh commandment,
Which says, 'Thou shalt not marry,' unless well:
This he (as far as I can understand) meant.
'Tis not my purpose on his views to dwell
Nor canvass what so 'eminent a hand' meant;
But certes it conducts to lives ascetic,
Or turning marriage into arithmetic.

But Adeline, who probably presumed
That Juan had enough of maintenance,
Or separate maintenance, in case 'twas doom'd--
As on the whole it is an even chance
That bridegrooms, after they are fairly groom'd,
May retrograde a little in the dance
Of marriage (which might form a painter's fame,
Like Holbein's 'Dance of Death'--but 'tis the same);--

But Adeline determined Juan's wedding
In her own mind, and that 's enough for woman:
But then, with whom? There was the sage Miss Reading,
Miss Raw, Miss Flaw, Miss Showman, and Miss Knowman.
And the two fair co-heiresses Giltbedding.
She deem'd his merits something more than common:
All these were unobjectionable matches,
And might go on, if well wound up, like watches.

There was Miss Millpond, smooth as summer's sea,
That usual paragon, an only daughter,
Who seem'd the cream of equanimity
Till skimm'd - and then there was some milk and water,

With a slight shade of blue too, it might be,
Beneath the surface; but what did it matter?
Love's riotous, but marriage should have quiet,
And being consumptive, live on a milk diet.

And then there was the Miss Audacia Shoestring,
A dashing demoiselle of good estate,
Whose heart was fix'd upon a star or blue string;
But whether English dukes grew rare of late,
Or that she had not harp'd upon the true string,
By which such sirens can attract our great,
She took up with some foreign younger brother,
A Russ or Turk - the one's as good as t'other.

And then there was - but why should I go on,
Unless the ladies should go off? - there was
Indeed a certain fair and fairy one,
Of the best class, and better than her class, --
Aurora Raby, a young star who shone
O'er life, too sweet an image for such glass,
A lovely being, scarcely form'd or moulded,
A rose with all its sweetest leaves yet folded;

Rich, noble, but an orphan; left an only
Child to the care of guardians good and kind;
But still her aspect had an air so lonely!
Blood is not water; and where shall we find
Feelings of youth like those which overthrown lie
By death, when we are left, alas! behind,
To feel, in friendless palaces, a home
Is wanting, and our best ties in the tomb?

Early in years, and yet more infantine
In figure, she had something of sublime
In eyes which sadly shone, as seraphs' shine.
All youth - but with an aspect beyond time;
Radiant and grave - as pitying man's decline;
Mournful - but mournful of another's crime,
She look'd as if she sat by Eden's door.
And grieved for those who could return no more.

She was a Catholic, too, sincere, austere,
As far as her own gentle heart allow'd,
And deem'd that fallen worship far more dear
Perhaps because 'twas fallen: her sires were proud
Of deeds and days when they had fill'd the ear
Of nations, and had never bent or bow'd
To novel power; and as she was the last,
She held their old faith and old feelings fast.

She gazed upon a world she scarcely knew,
As seeking not to know it; silent, lone,

As grows a flower, thus quietly she grew,
And kept her heart serene within its zone.
There was awe in the homage which she drew;
Her spirit seem'd as seated on a throne
Apart from the surrounding world, and strong
In its own strength - most strange in one so young!

Now it so happen'd, in the catalogue
Of Adeline, Aurora was omitted,
Although her birth and wealth had given her vogue
Beyond the charmers we have already cited;
Her beauty also seem'd to form no clog
Against her being mention'd as well fitted,
By many virtues, to be worth the trouble
Of single gentlemen who would be double.

And this omission, like that of the bust
Of Brutus at the pageant of Tiberius,
Made Juan wonder, as no doubt he must.
This he express'd half smiling and half serious;
When Adeline replied with some disgust,
And with an air, to say the least, imperious,
She marvell'd 'what he saw in such a baby
As that prim, silent, cold Aurora Raby?'

Juan rejoin'd - 'She was a Catholic,
And therefore fittest, as of his persuasion;
Since he was sure his mother would fall sick,
And the Pope thunder excommunication,
If--' But here Adeline, who seem'd to pique
Herself extremely on the inoculation
Of others with her own opinions, stated--
As usual--the same reason which she late did.

And wherefore not? A reasonable reason,
If good, is none the worse for repetition;
If bad, the best way's certainly to tease on,
And amplify: you lose much by concision,
Whereas insisting in or out of season
Convinces all men, even a politician;
Or - what is just the same - it wearies out.
So the end's gain'd, what signifies the route?

Why Adeline had this slight prejudice -
For prejudice it was - against a creature
As pure as sanctity itself from vice,
With all the added charm of form and feature,
For me appears a question far too nice,
Since Adeline was liberal by nature;
But nature's nature, and has more caprices
Than I have time, or will, to take to pieces.

Perhaps she did not like the quiet way
With which Aurora on those baubles look'd,
Which charm most people in their earlier day:
For there are few things by mankind less brook'd,
And womankind too, if we so may say,
Than finding thus their genius stand rebuked,
Like 'Anthony's by Caesar,' by the few
Who look upon them as they ought to do.

It was not envy - Adeline had none;
Her place was far beyond it, and her mind.
It was not scorn - which could not light on one
Whose greatest fault was leaving few to find.
It was not jealousy, I think: but shun
Following the 'ignes fatui' of mankind.
It was not - but 'tis easier far, alas!
To say what it was not than what it was.

Little Aurora deem'd she was the theme
Of such discussion. She was there a guest;
A beauteous ripple of the brilliant stream
Of rank and youth, though purer than the rest,
Which flow'd on for a moment in the beam
Time sheds a moment o'er each sparkling crest.
Had she known this, she would have calmly smiled--
She had so much, or little, of the child.

The dashing and proud air of Adeline
Imposed not upon her: she saw her blaze
Much as she would have seen a glow -worm shine,
Then turn'd unto the stars for loftier rays.
Juan was something she could not divine,
Being no sibyl in the new world's ways;
Yet she was nothing dazzled by the meteor,
Because she did not pin her faith on feature.

His fame too,--for he had that kind of fame
Which sometimes plays the deuce with womankind,
A heterogeneous mass of glorious blame,
Half virtues and whole vices being combined;
Faults which attract because they are not tame;
Follies trick'd out so brightly that they blind:--
These seals upon her wax made no impression,
Such was her coldness or her self-possession.

Juan knew nought of such a character--
High, yet resembling not his lost Haidee;
Yet each was radiant in her proper sphere:
The island girl, bred up by the lone sea,
More warm, as lovely, and not less sincere,
Was Nature's all: Aurora could not be,
Nor would be thus:--the difference in them

Was such as lies between a flower and gem.

Having wound up with this sublime comparison,
Methinks we may proceed upon our narrative,
And, as my friend Scott says, 'I sound my warison;'
Scott, the superlative of my comparative--
Scott, who can paint your Christian knight or Saracen,
Serf, lord, man, with such skill as none would share it, if
There had not been one Shakspeare and Voltaire,
Of one or both of whom he seems the heir.

I say, in my slight way I may proceed
To play upon the surface of humanity.
I write the world, nor care if the world read,
At least for this I cannot spare its vanity.
My Muse hath bred, and still perhaps may breed
More foes by this same scroll: when I began it, I
Thought that it might turn out so - now I know it,
But still I am, or was, a pretty poet.

The conference or congress (for it ended
As congresses of late do) of the Lady
Adeline and Don Juan rather blended
Some acids with the sweets - for she was heady;
But, ere the matter could be marr'd or mended,
The silvery bell rang, not for 'dinner ready,
But for that hour, call'd half-hour, given to dress,
Though ladies' robes seem scant enough for less.

Great things were now to be achieved at table,
With massy plate for armour, knives and forks
For weapons; but what Muse since Homer's able
(His feasts are not the worst part of his works)
To draw up in array a single day-bill
Of modern dinners? where more mystery lurks,
In soups or sauces, or a sole ragout,

There was a goodly 'soupe a la bonne femme,'
Though God knows whence it came from; there was, too,
A turbot for relief of those who cram,
Relieved with 'dindon a la Parigeux;'
How shall I get this gourmand stanza through?--
'Soupe a la Beauveau,' whose relief was dory,
Relieved itself by pork, for greater glory.

But I must crowd all into one grand mess
Or mass; for should I stretch into detail,
My Muse would run much more into excess,
Than when some squeamish people deem her frail.
But though a 'bonne vivante,' I must confess
Her stomach's not her peccant part; this tale
However doth require some slight refection,

Just to relieve her spirits from dejection.

Fowls 'a la Conde,' slices eke of salmon,
With 'sauces Genevoises,' and haunch of venison;
Wines too, which might again have slain young Ammon--
A man like whom I hope we shan't see many soon;
They also set a glazed Westphalian ham on,
Whereon Apicius would bestow his benison;
And then there was champagne with foaming whirls,
As white as Cleopatra's melted pearls.

Then there was God knows what 'a l'Allemande,'
'A l'Espagnole,' 'timballe,' and 'salpicon'--
With things I can't withstand or understand,
Though swallow'd with much zest upon the whole;
And 'entremets' to piddle with at hand,
Gently to lull down the subsiding soul;
While great Lucullus' Robe triumphal muffles
(There's fame) young partridge fillets, deck'd with truffles.

What are the fillets on the victor's brow
To these? They are rags or dust. Where is the arch
Which nodded to the nation's spoils below?
Where the triumphal chariots' haughty march?
Gone to where victories must like dinners go.
Farther I shall not follow the research:
But oh! ye modern heroes with your cartridges,
When will your names lend lustre e'en to partridges?

Those truffles too are no bad accessaries,
Follow'd by 'petits puits d'amour'--a dish
Of which perhaps the cookery rather varies,
So every one may dress it to his wish,
According to the best of dictionaries,
Which encyclopedize both flesh and fish;
But even sans 'confitures,' it no less true is,
There's pretty picking in those 'petits puits.'

The mind is lost in mighty contemplation
Of intellect expanded on two courses;
And indigestion's grand multiplication
Requires arithmetic beyond my forces.
Who would suppose, from Adam's simple ration,
That cookery could have call'd forth such resources,
As form a science and a nomenclature
From out the commonest demands of nature?

The glasses jingled, and the palates tingled;
The diners of celebrity dined well;
The ladies with more moderation mingled
In the feast, pecking less than I can tell;
Also the younger men too: for a springald

Can't, like ripe age, in gormandize excel,
But thinks less of good eating than the whisper
(When seated next him) of some pretty lisper.

Alas! I must leave undescribed the gibier,
The salmi, the consomme, the puree,
All which I use to make my rhymes run glibber
Than could roast beef in our rough John Bull way:
I must not introduce even a spare rib here,
'Bubble and squeak' would spoil my liquid lay:
But I have dined, and must forego, Alas!
The chaste description even of a 'becasse;'

And fruits, and ice, and all that art refines
From nature for the service of the gout--
Taste or the gout,--pronounce it as inclines
Your stomach! Ere you dine, the French will do;
But after, there are sometimes certain signs
Which prove plain English truer of the two.
Hast ever had the gout? I have not had it--
But I may have, and you too, reader, dread it.

The simple olives, best allies of wine,
Must I pass over in my bill of fare?
I must, although a favourite 'plat' of mine
In Spain, and Lucca, Athens, every where:
On them and bread 'twas oft my luck to dine,
The grass my table-cloth, in open-air,
On Sunium or Hymettus, like Diogenes,
Of whom half my philosophy the progeny is.

Amidst this tumult of fish, flesh, and 'fowl,
And vegetables, all in masquerade,
The guests were placed according to their roll,
But various as the various meats display'd:
Don Juan sat next 'an l'Espagnole'--
No damsel, but a dish, as hath been said;
But so far like a lady, that 'twas drest
Superbly, and contain'd a world of zest.

By some odd chance too, he was placed between
Aurora and the Lady Adeline--
A situation difficult, I ween,
For man therein, with eyes and heart, to dine.
Also the conference which we have seen
Was not such as to encourage him to shine;
For Adeline, addressing few words to him,
With two transcendent eyes seem'd to look through him.

I sometimes almost think that eyes have ears:
This much is sure, that, out of earshot, things
Are somehow echoed to the pretty dears,

Of which I can't tell whence their knowledge springs.
Like that same mystic music of the spheres,
Which no one bears, so loudly though it rings,
'T is wonderful how oft the sex have heard
Long dialogues - which pass'd without a word!

Aurora sat with that indifference
Which piques a preux chevalier - as it ought:
Of all offences that's the worst offence,
Which seems to hint you are not worth a thought.
Now Juan, though no coxcomb in pretence,
Was not exactly pleased to be so caught;
Like a good ship entangled among ice,
And after so much excellent advice.

To his gay nothings, nothing was replied,
Or something which was nothing, as urbanity
Required. Aurora scarcely look'd aside,
Nor even smiled enough for any vanity.
The devil was in the girl! Could it be pride?
Or modesty, or absence, or inanity?
Heaven knows? But Adeline's malicious eyes
Sparkled with her successful prophecies,

And look'd as much as if to say, 'I said it;'
A kind of triumph I'll not recommend,
Because it sometimes, as I have seen or read it,
Both in the case of lover and of friend,
Will pique a gentleman, for his own credit,
To bring what was a jest to a serious end:
For all men prophesy what is or was,
And hate those who won't let them come to pass.

Juan was drawn thus into some attentions,
Slight but select, and just enough to express,
To females of perspicuous comprehensions,
That he would rather make them more than less.
Aurora at the last (so history mentions,
Though probably much less a fact than guess)
So far relax'd her thoughts from their sweet prison,
As once or twice to smile, if not to listen.

From answering she began to question; this
With her was rare: and Adeline, who as yet
Thought her predictions went not much amiss,
Began to dread she'd thaw to a coquette--
So very difficult, they say, it is
To keep extremes from meeting, when once set
In motion; but she here too much refined--
Aurora's spirit was not of that kind.

But Juan had a sort of winning way,

A proud humility, if such there be,
Which show'd such deference to what females say,
As if each charming word were a decree.
His tact, too, temper'd him from grave to gay,
And taught him when to be reserved or free:
He had the art of drawing people out,
Without their seeing what he was about.

Aurora, who in her indifference
Confounded him in common with the crowd
Of flatterers, though she deem'd he had more sense
Than whispering foplings, or than witlings loud--
Commenced (from such slight things will great commence)
To feel that flattery which attracts the proud
Rather by deference than compliment,
And wins even by a delicate dissent.

And then he had good looks;--that point was carried
Nem. con. amongst the women, which I grieve
To say leads oft to crim. con. with the married -
A case which to the juries we may leave,
Since with digressions we too long have tarried.
Now though we know of old that looks deceive,
And always have done, somehow these good looks
Make more impression than the best of books.

Aurora, who look'd more on books than faces,
Was very young, although so very sage,
Admiring more Minerva than the Graces,
Especially upon a printed page.
But Virtue's self, with all her tightest laces,
Has not the natural stays of strict old age;
And Socrates, that model of all duty,
Own'd to a penchant, though discreet, for beauty.

And girls of sixteen are thus far Socratic,
But innocently so, as Socrates;
And really, if the sage sublime and Attic
At seventy years had phantasies like these,
Which Plato in his dialogues dramatic
Has shown, I know not why they should displease
In virgins - always in a modest way,
Observe; for that with me's a 'sine qua.'

Also observe, that, like the great Lord Coke
(See Littleton), whene'er I have express'd
Opinions two, which at first sight may look
Twin opposites, the second is the best.
Perhaps I have a third, too, in a nook,
Or none at all - which seems a sorry jest:
But if a writer should be quite consistent,
How could he possibly show things existent?

If people contradict themselves, can
Help contradicting them, and every body,
Even my veracious self?- But that's a lie:
I never did so, never will--how should I?
He who doubts all things nothing can deny:
Truth's fountains may be clear--her streams are muddy,
And cut through such canals of contradiction,
That she must often navigate o'er fiction.

Apologue, fable, poesy, and parable,
Are false, but may he render'd also true,
By those who sow them in a land that's arable.
'Tis wonderful what fable will not do!
'Tis said it makes reality more bearable:
But what's reality? Who has its clue?
Philosophy? No: she too much rejects.
Religion? Yes; but which of all her sects?

Some millions must be wrong, that 's pretty dear;
Perhaps it may turn out that all were right.
God help us! Since we have need on our career
To keep our holy beacons always bright,
'Tis time that some new prophet should appear,
Or old indulge man with a second sight.
Opinions wear out in some thousand years,
Without a small refreshment from the spheres.

But here again, why will I thus entangle
Myself with metaphysics? None can hate
So much as I do any kind of wrangle;
And yet, such is my folly, or my fate,
I always knock my head against some angle
About the present, past, or future state.
Yet I wish well to Trojan and to Tyrian,
For I was bred a moderate Presbyterian.

But though I am a temperate theologian,
And also meek as a metaphysician,
Impartial between Tyrian and Trojan,
As Eldon on a lunatic commission--
In politics my duty is to show John
Bull something of the lower world's condition.
It makes my blood boil like the springs of Hecla,
To see men let these scoundrel sovereigns break law.

But politics, and policy, and piety,
Are topics which I sometimes introduce,
Not only for the sake of their variety,
But as subservient to a moral use;
Because my business is to dress society,
And stuff with sage that very verdant goose.

And now, that we may furnish with some matter all
Tastes, we are going to try the supernatural.

And now I will give up all argument;
And positively henceforth no temptation
Shall 'fool me to the top up of my bent':--
Yes, I'll begin a thorough reformation.
Indeed, I never knew what people meant
By deeming that my Muse's conversation
Was dangerous;--I think she is as harmless
As some who labour more and yet may charm less.

Grim reader! did you ever see a ghost?
No; but you have heard--I understand--be dumb!
And don't regret the time you may have lost,
For you have got that pleasure still to come:
And do not think I mean to sneer at most
Of these things, or by ridicule benumb
That source of the sublime and the mysterious:-
For certain reasons my belief is serious.

Serious? You laugh;--you may: that will I not;
My smiles must be sincere or not at all.
I say I do believe a haunted spot
Exists--and where? That shall I not recall,
Because I 'd rather it should be forgot,
'Shadows the soul of Richard' may appal.
In short, upon that subject I've some qualms very
Like those of the philosopher of Malmesbury.

The night (I sing by night - sometimes an owl,
And now and then a nightingale) is dim,
And the loud shriek of sage Minerva's fowl
Rattles around me her discordant hymn:
Old portraits from old walls upon me scowl -
I wish to heaven they would not look so grim;
The dying embers dwindle in the grate -
I think too that I have sate up too late:

And therefore, though 'tis by no means my way
To rhyme at noon - when I have other things
To think of, if I ever think - I say
I feel some chilly midnight shudderings,
And prudently postpone, until mid-day,
Treating a topic which, alas! but brings
Shadows;--but you must be in my condition
Before you learn to call this superstition.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Don Juan: Canto The Fifth

When amatory poets sing their loves
In liquid lines mellifluously bland,
And pair their rhymes as Venus yokes her doves,
They little think what mischief is in hand;
The greater their success the worse it proves,
As Ovid's verse may give to understand;
Even Petrarch's self, if judged with due severity,
Is the Platonic pimp of all posterity.

I therefore do denounce all amorous writing,
Except in such a way as not to attract;
Plain- simple- short, and by no means inviting,
But with a moral to each error tack'd,
Form'd rather for instructing than delighting,
And with all passions in their turn attack'd;
Now, if my Pegasus should not be shod ill,
This poem will become a moral model.

The European with the Asian shore
Sprinkled with palaces; the ocean stream
Here and there studded with a seventy-four;
Sophia's cupola with golden gleam;
The cypress groves; Olympus high and hoar;
The twelve isles, and the more than I could dream,
Far less describe, present the very view
Which charm'd the charming Mary Montagu.

I have a passion for the name of 'Mary,'
For once it was a magic sound to me;
And still it half calls up the realms of fairy,
Where I beheld what never was to be;
All feelings changed, but this was last to vary,
A spell from which even yet I am not quite free:
But I grow sad- and let a tale grow cold,
Which must not be pathetically told.

The wind swept down the Euxine, and the wave
Broke foaming o'er the blue Symplegades;
'T is a grand sight from off 'the Giant's Grave
To watch the progress of those rolling seas
Between the Bosphorus, as they lash and lave
Europe and Asia, you being quite at ease;
There 's not a sea the passenger e'er pukes in,
Turns up more dangerous breakers than the Euxine.

'T was a raw day of Autumn's bleak beginning,
When nights are equal, but not so the days;
The Parcae then cut short the further spinning
Of seamen's fates, and the loud tempests raise
The waters, and repentance for past sinning
In all, who o'er the great deep take their ways:
They vow to amend their lives, and yet they don't;

Because if drown'd, they can't- if spared, they won't.

A crowd of shivering slaves of every nation,
And age, and sex, were in the market ranged;
Each bevy with the merchant in his station:
Poor creatures! their good looks were sadly changed.
All save the blacks seem'd jaded with vexation,
From friends, and home, and freedom far estranged;
The negroes more philosophy display'd,-
Used to it, no doubt, as eels are to be flay'd.

Juan was juvenile, and thus was full,
As most at his age are, of hope and health;
Yet I must own he looked a little dull,
And now and then a tear stole down by stealth;
Perhaps his recent loss of blood might pull
His spirit down; and then the loss of wealth,
A mistress, and such comfortable quarters,
To be put up for auction amongst Tartars,

Were things to shake a stoic; ne'ertheless,
Upon the whole his carriage was serene:
His figure, and the splendour of his dress,
Of which some gilded remnants still were seen,
Drew all eyes on him, giving them to guess
He was above the vulgar by his mien;
And then, though pale, he was so very handsome;
And then- they calculated on his ransom.

Like a backgammon board the place was dotted
With whites and blacks, in groups on show for sale,
Though rather more irregularly spotted:
Some bought the jet, while others chose the pale.
It chanced amongst the other people lotted,
A man of thirty rather stout and hale,
With resolution in his dark grey eye,
Next Juan stood, till some might choose to buy.

He had an English look; that is, was square
In make, of a complexion white and ruddy,
Good teeth, with curling rather dark brown hair,
And, it might be from thought or toil or study,
An open brow a little mark'd with care:
One arm had on a bandage rather bloody;
And there he stood with such sang-froid, that greater
Could scarce be shown even by a mere spectator.

But seeing at his elbow a mere lad,
Of a high spirit evidently, though
At present weigh'd down by a doom which had
O'erthrown even men, he soon began to show
A kind of blunt compassion for the sad

Lot of so young a partner in the woe,
Which for himself he seem'd to deem no worse
Than any other scrape, a thing of course.

'My boy!' said he, 'amidst this motley crew
Of Georgians, Russians, Nubians, and what not,
All ragamuffins differing but in hue,
With whom it is our luck to cast our lot,
The only gentlemen seem I and you;
So let us be acquainted, as we ought:
If I could yield you any consolation,
'T would give me pleasure.- Pray, what is your nation?'

When Juan answer'd- 'Spanish!' he replied,
'I thought, in fact, you could not be a Greek;
Those servile dogs are not so proudly eyed:
Fortune has play'd you here a pretty freak,
But that 's her way with all men, till they 're tried;
But never mind,- she 'll turn, perhaps, next week;
She has served me also much the same as you,
Except that I have found it nothing new.'

'Pray, sir,' said Juan, 'if I may presume,
What brought you here?' - 'Oh! nothing very rare-
Six Tartars and a drag-chain.' - 'To this doom
But what conducted, if the question's fair,
Is that which I would learn.' - 'I served for some
Months with the Russian army here and there,
And taking lately, by Suwarow's bidding,
A town, was ta'en myself instead of Widdin.'

'Have you no friends?' - 'I had- but, by God's blessing,
Have not been troubled with them lately. Now
I have answer'd all your questions without pressing,
And you an equal courtesy should show.'
'Alas!' said Juan, "t were a tale distressing,
And long besides." - 'Oh! if 't is really so,
You 're right on both accounts to hold your tongue;
A sad tale saddens doubly, when 't is long.'

'But droop not: Fortune at your time of life,
Although a female moderately fickle,
Will hardly leave you (as she 's not your wife)
For any length of days in such a pickle.
To strive, too, with our fate were such a strife
As if the corn-sheaf should oppose the sickle:
Men are the sport of circumstances, when
The circumstances seem the sport of men.'

"T is not,' said Juan, 'for my present doom
I mourn, but for the past;- I loved a maid':-
He paused, and his dark eye grew full of gloom;

A single tear upon his eyelash staid
A moment, and then dropp'd; 'but to resume,
'T is not my present lot, as I have said,
Which I deplore so much; for I have borne
Hardships which have the hardiest overworn,

'On the rough deep. But this last blow-' and here
He stopp'd again, and turn'd away his face.
'Ay,' quoth his friend, 'I thought it would appear
That there had been a lady in the case;
And these are things which ask a tender tear,
Such as I, too, would shed if in your place:
I cried upon my first wife's dying day,
And also when my second ran away:

'My third--' 'Your third!' quoth Juan, turning round;
'You scarcely can be thirty: have you three?'
'No- only two at present above ground:
Surely 't is nothing wonderful to see
One person thrice in holy wedlock bound!'
'Well, then, your third,' said Juan; 'what did she?
She did not run away, too,- did she, sir?'
'No, faith.'- 'What then?'- 'I ran away from her.'

'You take things coolly, sir,' said Juan. 'Why,'
Replied the other, 'what can a man do?
There still are many rainbows in your sky,
But mine have vanish'd. All, when life is new,
Commence with feelings warm, and prospects high;
But time strips our illusions of their hue,
And one by one in turn, some grand mistake
Casts off its bright skin yearly like the snake.

"T is true, it gets another bright and fresh,
Or fresher, brighter; but the year gone through,
This skin must go the way, too, of all flesh,
Or sometimes only wear a week or two;-
Love 's the first net which spreads its deadly mesh;
Ambition, Avarice, Vengeance, Glory, glue
The glittering lime-twigs of our latter days,
Where still we flutter on for pence or praise.'

'All this is very fine, and may be true,'
Said Juan; 'but I really don't see how
It betters present times with me or you.'
'No?' quoth the other; 'yet you will allow
By setting things in their right point of view,
Knowledge, at least, is gain'd; for instance, now,
We know what slavery is, and our disasters
May teach us better to behave when masters.'

'Would we were masters now, if but to try

Their present lessons on our Pagan friends here,'
Said Juan,- swallowing a heart-burning sigh:
'Heaven help the scholar whom his fortune sends here!'
'Perhaps we shall be one day, by and by,'
Rejoin'd the other, when our bad luck mends here;
Meantime (yon old black eunuch seems to eye us)

'But after all, what is our present state?
'T is bad, and may be better- all men's lot:
Most men are slaves, none more so than the great,
To their own whims and passions, and what not;
Society itself, which should create
Kindness, destroys what little we had got:
To feel for none is the true social art
Of the world's stoicks- men without a heart.'

Just now a black old neutral personage
Of the third sex stept up, and peering over
The captives, seem'd to mark their looks and age,
And capabilities, as to discover
If they were fitted for the purposed cage:
No lady e'er is ogled by a lover,
Horse by a blackleg, broadcloth by a tailor,
Fee by a counsel, felon by a jailor,

As is a slave by his intended bidder.
'T is pleasant purchasing our fellow-creatures;
And all are to be sold, if you consider
Their passions, and are dext'rous; some by features
Are bought up, others by a warlike leader,
Some by a place- as tend their years or natures;
The most by ready cash- but all have prices,
From crowns to kicks, according to their vices.

The eunuch, having eyed them o'er with care,
Turn'd to the merchant, and begun to bid
First but for one, and after for the pair;
They haggled, wrangled, swore, too- so they did!
As though they were in a mere Christian fair
Cheapening an ox, an ass, a lamb, or kid;
So that their bargain sounded like a battle
For this superior yoke of human cattle.

At last they settled into simple grumbling,
And pulling out reluctant purses, and
Turning each piece of silver o'er, and tumbling
Some down, and weighing others in their hand,
And by mistake sequins with paras jumbling,
Until the sum was accurately scann'd,
And then the merchant giving change, and signing
Receipts in full, began to think of dining.

I wonder if his appetite was good?
Or, if it were, if also his digestion?
Methinks at meals some odd thoughts might intrude,
And conscience ask a curious sort of question,
About the right divine how far we should
Sell flesh and blood. When dinner has opprest one,
I think it is perhaps the gloomiest hour
Which turns up out of the sad twenty-four.

Voltaire says 'No:' he tells you that Candide
Found life most tolerable after meals;
He 's wrong- unless man were a pig, indeed,
Repletion rather adds to what he feels,
Unless he 's drunk, and then no doubt he 's freed
From his own brain's oppression while it reels.
Of food I think with Philip's son, or rather
Ammon's (ill pleased with one world and one father);

I think with Alexander, that the act
Of eating, with another act or two,
Makes us feel our mortality in fact
Redoubled; when a roast and a ragout,
And fish, and soup, by some side dishes back'd,
Can give us either pain or pleasure, who
Would pique himself on intellects, whose use
Depends so much upon the gastric juice?

The other evening ('t was on Friday last)-
This is a fact and no poetic fable-
Just as my great coat was about me cast,
My hat and gloves still lying on the table,
I heard a shot- 't was eight o'clock scarce past-
And, running out as fast as I was able,
I found the military commandant
Stretch'd in the street, and able scarce to pant.

Poor fellow! for some reason, surely bad,
They had slain him with five slugs; and left him there
To perish on the pavement: so I had
Him borne into the house and up the stair,
And stripp'd and look'd to- But why should I ad
More circumstances? vain was every care;
The man was gone: in some Italian quarrel
Kill'd by five bullets from an old gun-barrel.

I gazed upon him, for I knew him well;
And though I have seen many corpses, never
Saw one, whom such an accident befell,
So calm; though pierced through stomach, heart, and liver,
He seem'd to sleep,- for you could scarcely tell
(As he bled inwardly, no hideous river
Of gore divulged the cause) that he was dead:

So as I gazed on him, I thought or said-

'Can this be death? then what is life or death?
Speak!' but he spoke not: 'Wake!' but still he slept:-
'But yesterday and who had mightier breath?
A thousand warriors by his word were kept
In awe: he said, as the centurion saith,
'Go,' and he goeth; 'come,' and forth he stepp'd.
The trump and bugle till he spake were dumb-
And now nought left him but the muffled drum.'

And they who waited once and worshipp'd- they
With their rough faces throng'd about the bed
To gaze once more on the commanding clay
Which for the last, though not the first, time bled:
And such an end! that he who many a day
Had faced Napoleon's foes until they fled,-
The foremost in the charge or in the sally,
Should now be butcher'd in a civic alley.

The scars of his old wounds were near his new,
Those honourable scars which brought him fame;
And horrid was the contrast to the view-
But let me quit the theme; as such things claim
Perhaps even more attention than is due
From me: I gazed (as oft I have gazed the same)
To try if I could wrench aught out of death
Which should confirm, or shake, or make a faith;

But it was all a mystery. Here we are,
And there we go:- but where? five bits of lead,
Or three, or two, or one, send very far!
And is this blood, then, form'd but to be shed?
Can every element our elements mar?
And air- earth- water- fire live- and we dead?
We whose minds comprehend all things? No more;
But let us to the story as before.

The purchaser of Juan and acquaintance
Bore off his bargains to a gilded boat,
Embark'd himself and them, and off they went thence
As fast as oars could pull and water float;
They look'd like persons being led to sentence,
Wondering what next, till the caique was brought
Up in a little creek below a wall
O'ertopp'd with cypresses, dark-green and tall.

Here their conductor tapping at the wicket
Of a small iron door, 't was open'd, and
He led them onward, first through a low thicket
Flank'd by large groves, which tower'd on either hand:
They almost lost their way, and had to pick it-

For night was dosing ere they came to land.
The eunuch made a sign to those on board,
Who row'd off, leaving them without a word.

As they were plodding on their winding way
Through orange bowers, and jasmine, and so forth
(Of which I might have a good deal to say,
There being no such profusion in the North
Of oriental plants, 'et cetera,'
But that of late your scribblers think it worth
Their while to rear whole hotbeds in their works
Because one poet travell'd 'mongst the Turks)-

As they were threading on their way, there came
Into Don Juan's head a thought, which he
Whisper'd to his companion:- 't was the same
Which might have then occurr'd to you or me.
'Methinks,' said he, 'it would be no great shame
If we should strike a stroke to set us free;
Let 's knock that old black fellow on the head,
And march away- 't were easier done than said.'

'Yes,' said the other, 'and when done, what then?
How get out? how the devil got we in?
And when we once were fairly out, and when
From Saint Bartholomew we have saved our skin,
To-morrow 'd see us in some other den,
And worse off than we hitherto have been;
Besides, I 'm hungry, and just now would take,
Like Esau, for my birthright a beef-steak.

'We must be near some place of man's abode;-
For the old negro's confidence in creeping,
With his two captives, by so queer a road,
Shows that he thinks his friends have not been sleeping;
A single cry would bring them all abroad:
'T is therefore better looking before leaping-
And there, you see, this turn has brought us through,
By Jove, a noble palace!- lighted too.'

It was indeed a wide extensive building
Which open'd on their view, and o'er the front
There seem'd to be besprent a deal of gilding
And various hues, as is the Turkish wont,-
A gaudy taste; for they are little skill'd in
The arts of which these lands were once the font:
Each villa on the Bosphorus looks a screen
New painted, or a pretty opera-scene.

And nearer as they came, a genial savour
Of certain stews, and roast-meats, and pilaus,
Things which in hungry mortals' eyes find favour,

Made Juan in his harsh intentions pause,
And put himself upon his good behaviour:
His friend, too, adding a new saving clause,
Said, 'In Heaven's name let's get some supper now,
And then I'm with you, if you're for a row.'

Some talk of an appeal unto some passion,
Some to men's feelings, others to their reason;
The last of these was never much the fashion,
For reason thinks all reasoning out of season.
Some speakers whine, and others lay the lash on,
But more or less continue still to tease on,
With arguments according to their 'forte';
But no one dreams of ever being short.-

But I digress: of all appeals,- although
I grant the power of pathos, and of gold,
Of beauty, flattery, threats, a shilling,- no
Method's more sure at moments to take hold
Of the best feelings of mankind, which grow
More tender, as we every day behold,
Than that all-softening, overpowering knell,
The tocsin of the soul- the dinner-bell.

Turkey contains no bells, and yet men dine;
And Juan and his friend, albeit they heard
No Christian knoll to table, saw no line
Of lackeys usher to the feast prepared,
Yet smelt roast-meat, beheld a huge fire shine,
And cooks in motion with their clean arms bared,
And gazed around them to the left and right
With the prophetic eye of appetite.

And giving up all notions of resistance,
They follow'd close behind their sable guide,
Who little thought that his own crack'd existence
Was on the point of being set aside:
He motion'd them to stop at some small distance,
And knocking at the gate, 't was open'd wide,
And a magnificent large hall display'd
The Asian pomp of Ottoman parade.

I won't describe; description is my forte,
But every fool describes in these bright days
His wondrous journey to some foreign court,
And spawns his quarto, and demands your praise-
Death to his publisher, to him 't is sport;
While Nature, tortured twenty thousand ways,
Resigns herself with exemplary patience
To guide-books, rhymes, tours, sketches, illustrations.

Along this hall, and up and down, some, squatted

Upon their hams, were occupied at chess;
Others in monosyllable talk chatted,
And some seem'd much in love with their own dress.
And divers smoked superb pipes decorated
With amber mouths of greater price or less;
And several strutted, others slept, and some
Prepared for supper with a glass of rum.

As the black eunuch enter'd with his brace
Of purchased Infidels, some raised their eyes
A moment without slackening from their pace;
But those who sate ne'er stirr'd in anywise:
One or two stared the captives in the face,
Just as one views a horse to guess his price;
Some nodded to the negro from their station,
But no one troubled him with conversation.

He leads them through the hall, and, without stopping,
On through a farther range of goodly rooms,
Splendid but silent, save in one, where, dropping,
A marble fountain echoes through the glooms
Of night which robe the chamber, or where popping
Some female head most curiously presumes
To thrust its black eyes through the door or lattice,
As wondering what the devil a noise that is.

Some faint lamps gleaming from the lofty walls
Gave light enough to hint their farther way,
But not enough to show the imperial halls,
In all the flashing of their full array;
Perhaps there 's nothing- I 'll not say appals,
But saddens more by night as well as day,
Than an enormous room without a soul
To break the lifeless splendour of the whole.

Two or three seem so little, one seems nothing:
In deserts, forests, crowds, or by the shore,
There solitude, we know, has her full growth in
The spots which were her realms for evermore;
But in a mighty hall or gallery, both in
More modern buildings and those built of yore,
A kind of death comes o'er us all alone,
Seeing what 's meant for many with but one.

A neat, snug study on a winter's night,
A book, friend, single lady, or a glass
Of claret, sandwich, and an appetite,
Are things which make an English evening pass;
Though certes by no means so grand a sight
As is a theatre lit up by gas.
I pass my evenings in long galleries solely,
And that 's the reason I 'm so melancholy.

Alas! man makes that great which makes him little:
I grant you in a church 't is very well:
What speaks of Heaven should by no means be brittle,
But strong and lasting, till no tongue can tell
Their names who rear'd it; but huge houses fit ill-
And huge tombs worse- mankind, since Adam fell:
Methinks the story of the tower of Babel
Might teach them this much better than I 'm able.

Babel was Nimrod's hunting-box, and then
A town of gardens, walls, and wealth amazing,
Where Nabuchadonosor, king of men,
Reign'd, till one summer's day he took to grazing,
And Daniel tamed the lions in their den,
The people's awe and admiration raising;
'T was famous, too, for Thisbe and for Pyramus,
And the calumniated queen Semiramis.

That injured Queen by chroniclers so coarse
Has been accused (I doubt not by conspiracy)
Of an improper friendship for her horse
(Love, like religion, sometimes runs to heresy):
This monstrous tale had probably its source
(For such exaggerations here and there I see)
In writing 'Courser' by mistake for 'Courier':
I wish the case could come before a jury here.

But to resume,- should there be (what may not
Be in these days?) some infidels, who don't,
Because they can't find out the very spot
Of that same Babel, or because they won't
(Though Claudius Rich, Esquire, some bricks has got,
And written lately two memoirs upon't),
Believe the Jews, those unbelievers, who
Must be believed, though they believe not you,

Yet let them think that Horace has exprest
Shortly and sweetly the masonic folly
Of those, forgetting the great place of rest,
Who give themselves to architecture wholly;
We know where things and men must end at best:
A moral (like all morals) melancholy,
And 'Et sepulchri immemor struis domos'
Shows that we build when we should but entomb us.

At last they reach'd a quarter most retired,
Where echo woke as if from a long slumber;
Though full of all things which could be desired,
One wonder'd what to do with such a number
Of articles which nobody required;
Here wealth had done its utmost to encumber

With furniture an exquisite apartment,
Which puzzled Nature much to know what Art meant.

It seem'd, however, but to open on
A range or suite of further chambers, which
Might lead to heaven knows where; but in this one
The movables were prodigally rich:
Sofas 't was half a sin to sit upon,
So costly were they; carpets every stitch
Of workmanship so rare, they made you wish
You could glide o'er them like a golden fish.

The black, however, without hardly deigning
A glance at that which wrapt the slaves in wonder,
Trampled what they scarce trod for fear of staining,
As if the milky way their feet was under
With all its stars; and with a stretch attaining
A certain press or cupboard niched in yonder-
In that remote recess which you may see-
Or if you don't the fault is not in me,-

I wish to be perspicuous; and the black,
I say, unlocking the recess, pull'd forth
A quantity of clothes fit for the back
Of any Mussulman, whate'er his worth;
And of variety there was no lack-
And yet, though I have said there was no dearth,
He chose himself to point out what he thought
Most proper for the Christians he had bought.

The suit he thought most suitable to each
Was, for the elder and the stouter, first
A Candiot cloak, which to the knee might reach,
And trousers not so tight that they would burst,
But such as fit an Asiatic breech;
A shawl, whose folds in Cashmire had been nurst,
Slippers of saffron, dagger rich and handy;
In short, all things which form a Turkish Dandy.

While he was dressing, Baba, their black friend,
Hinted the vast advantages which they
Might probably attain both in the end,
If they would but pursue the proper way
Which fortune plainly seem'd to recommend;
And then he added, that he needs must say,
"T would greatly tend to better their condition,
If they would condescend to circumcision.

'For his own part, he really should rejoice
To see them true believers, but no less
Would leave his proposition to their choice.'
The other, thanking him for this excess

Of goodness, in thus leaving them a voice
In such a triflē, scarcely could express
'Sufficiently' (he said) 'his approbation
Of all the customs of this polish'd nation.

'For his own share- he saw but small objection
To so respectable an ancient rite;
And, after swallowing down a slight refection,
For which he own'd a present appetite,
He doubted not a few hours of reflection
Would reconcile him to the business quite.'
'Will it?' said Juan, sharply: 'Strike me dead,
But they as soon shall circumcise my head!

'Cut off a thousand heads, before--' 'Now, pray,'
Replied the other, 'do not interrupt:
You put me out in what I had to say.
Sir!- as I said, as soon as I have supt,
I shall perpend if your proposal may
Be such as I can properly accept;
Provided always your great goodness still
Remits the matter to our own free-will.'

Baba eyed Juan, and said, 'Be so good
As dress yourself-' and pointed out a suit
In which a Princess with great pleasure would
Array her limbs; but Juan standing mute,
As not being in a masquerading mood,
Gave it a slight kick with his Christian foot;
And when the old negro told him to 'Get ready,'
Replied, 'Old gentleman, I 'm not a lady.'

'What you may be, I neither know nor care,'
Said Baba; 'but pray do as I desire:
I have no more time nor many words to spare.'
'At least,' said Juan, 'sure I may enquire
The cause of this odd travesty?-' 'Forbear,'
Said Baba, 'to be curious; 't will transpire,
No doubt, in proper place, and time, and season:
I have no authority to tell the reason.'

'Then if I do,' said Juan, 'I 'll be--' 'Hold!'
Rejoin'd the negro, 'pray be not provoking;
This spirit 's well, but it may wax too bold,
And you will find us not top fond of joking.'
'What, sir!' said Juan, 'shall it e'er be told
That I unsex'd my dress?' But Baba, stroking
The things down, said, 'Incense me, and I call
Those who will leave you of no sex at all.

'I offer you a handsome suit of clothes:
A woman's, true; but then there is a cause

Why you should wear them.'- 'What, though my soul loathes
The effeminate garb?'- thus, after a short pause,
Sigh'd Juan, muttering also some slight oaths,
'What the devil shall I do with all this gauze?'
Thus he profanely term'd the finest lace
Which e'er set off a marriage-morning face.

And then he swore; and, sighing, on he slipp'd
A pair of trousers of flesh-colour'd silk;
Next with a virgin zone he was equipp'd,
Which girt a slight chemise as white as milk;
But tugging on his petticoat, he tripp'd,
Which- as we say- or, as the Scotch say, whilk
(The rhyme obliges me to this; sometimes
Monarchs are less imperative than rhymes)-

Whilk, which (or what you please), was owing to
His garment's novelty, and his being awkward:
And yet at last he managed to get through
His toilet, though no doubt a little backward:
The negro Baba help'd a little too,
When some untoward part of raiment stuck hard;
And, wrestling both his arms into a gown,
He paused, and took a survey up and down.

One difficulty still remain'd- his hair
Was hardly long enough; but Baba found
So many false long tresses all to spare,
That soon his head was most completely crown'd,
After the manner then in fashion there;
And this addition with such gems was bound
As suited the ensemble of his toilet,
While Baba made him comb his head and oil it.

And now being femininely all array'd,
With some small aid from scissors, paint, and tweezers,
He look'd in almost all respects a maid,
And Baba smilingly exclaim'd, 'You see, sirs,
A perfect transformation here display'd;
And now, then, you must come along with me, sirs,
That is- the Lady:' clapping his hands twice,
Four blacks were at his elbow in a trice.

'You, sir,' said Baba, nodding to the one,
'Will please to accompany those gentlemen
To supper; but you, worthy Christian nun,
Will follow me: no trifling, sir; for when
I say a thing, it must at once be done.
What fear you? think you this a lion's den?
Why, 't is a palace; where the truly wise
Anticipate the Prophet's paradise.

'You fool! I tell you no one means you harm.'
'So much the better,' Juan said, 'for them;
Else they shall feel the weight of this my arm,
Which is not quite so light as you may deem.
I yield thus far; but soon will break the charm
If any take me for that which I seem:
So that I trust for everybody's sake,
That this disguise may lead to no mistake.'

'Blockhead! come on, and see,' quoth Baba; while
Don Juan, turning to his comrade, who
Though somewhat grieved, could scarce forbear a smile
Upon the metamorphosis in view,-
'Farewell!' they mutually exclaim'd: 'this soil
Seems fertile in adventures strange and new;
One 's turn'd half Mussulman, and one a maid,
By this old black enchanter's unsought aid.'

'Farewell!' said Juan: 'should we meet no more,
I wish you a good appetite.'- 'Farewell!'
Replied the other; 'though it grieves me sore;
When we next meet we 'll have a tale to tell:
We needs must follow when Fate puts from shore.
Keep your good name; though Eve herself once fell.'
'Nay,' quoth the maid, 'the Sultan's self shan't carry me,
Unless his highness promises to marry me.

And thus they parted, each by separate doors;
Baba led Juan onward room by room
Through glittering galleries and o'er marble floors,
Till a gigantic portal through the gloom,
Haughty and huge, along the distance lowers;
And wafted far arose a rich perfume:
It seem'd as though they came upon a shrine,
For all was vast, still, fragrant, and divine.

The giant door was broad, and bright, and high,
Of gilded bronze, and carved in curious guise;
Warriors thereon were battling furiously;
Here stalks the victor, there the vanquish'd lies;
There captives led in triumph droop the eye,
And in perspective many a squadron flies:
It seems the work of times before the line
Of Rome transplanted fell with Constantine.

This massy portal stood at the wide close
Of a huge hall, and on its either side
Two little dwarfs, the least you could suppose,
Were sate, like ugly imps, as if allied
In mockery to the enormous gate which rose
O'er them in almost pyramidal pride:
The gate so splendid was in all its features,

You never thought about those little creatures,
Until you nearly trod on them, and then
You started back in horror to survey
The wondrous hideousness of those small men,
Whose colour was not black, nor white, nor grey,
But an extraneous mixture, which no pen
Can trace, although perhaps the pencil may;
They were mis-shapen pygmies, deaf and dumb-
Monsters, who cost a no less monstrous sum.

Their duty was- for they were strong, and though
They look'd so little, did strong things at times-
To ope this door, which they could really do,
The hinges being as smooth as Rogers' rhymes;
And now and then, with tough strings of the bow,
As is the custom of those Eastern climes,
To give some rebel Pacha a cravat;
For mutes are generally used for that.

They spoke by signs- that is, not spoke at all;
And looking like two incubi, they glared
As Baba with his fingers made them fall
To heaving back the portal folds: it scared
Juan a moment, as this pair so small
With shrinking serpent optics on him stared;
It was as if their little looks could poison
Or fascinate whome'er they fix'd their eyes on.

Before they enter'd, Baba paused to hint
To Juan some slight lessons as his guide:
'If you could just contrive,' he said, 'to stint
That somewhat manly majesty of stride,
'T would be as well, and (though there 's not much in 't)
To swing a little less from side to side,
Which has at times an aspect of the oddest;-
And also could you look a little modest,

"T would be convenient; for these mutes have eyes
Like needles, which may pierce those petticoats;
And if they should discover your disguise,
You know how near us the deep Bosphorus floats;
And you and I may chance, ere morning rise,
To find our way to Marmora without boats,
Stitch'd up in sacks- a mode of navigation
A good deal practised here upon occasion.'

With this encouragement, he led the way
Into a room still nobler than the last;
A rich confusion form'd a disarray
In such sort, that the eye along it cast
Could hardly carry anything away,

Object on object flash'd so bright and fast;
A dazzling mass of gems, and gold, and glitter,
Magnificently mingled in a litter.

Wealth had done wonders- taste not much; such things
Occur in Orient palaces, and even
In the more chaste domes of Western kings
(Of which I have also seen some six or seven),
Where I can't say or gold or diamond flings
Great lustre, there is much to be forgiven;
Groups of bad statues, tables, chairs, and pictures,
On which I cannot pause to make my strictures.

In this imperial hall, at distance lay
Under a canopy, and there reclined
Quite in a confidential queenly way,
A lady; Baba stopp'd, and kneeling sign'd
To Juan, who though not much used to pray,
Knelt down by instinct, wondering in his mind,
What all this meant: while Baba bow'd and bended
His head, until the ceremony ended.

The lady rising up with such an air
As Venus rose with from the wave, on them
Bent like an antelope a Paphian pair
Of eyes, which put out each surrounding gem;
And raising up an arm as moonlight fair,
She sign'd to Baba, who first kiss'd the hem
Of her deep purple robe, and speaking low,
Pointed to Juan who remain'd below.

Her presence was as lofty as her state;
Her beauty of that overpowering kind,
Whose force description only would abate:
I'd rather leave it much to your own mind,
Than lessen it by what I could relate
Of forms and features; it would strike you blind
Could I do justice to the full detail;
So, luckily for both, my phrases fail.

Thus much however I may add,- her years
Were ripe, they might make six-and-twenty springs;
But there are forms which Time to touch forbears,
And turns aside his scythe to vulgar things,
Such as was Mary's Queen of Scots; true- tears
And love destroy; and sapping sorrow wrings
Charms from the charmer, yet some never grow
Ugly; for instance- Ninon de l'Enclos.

She spake some words to her attendants, who
Composed a choir of girls, ten or a dozen,
And were all clad alike; like Juan, too,

Who wore their uniform, by Baba chosen;
They form'd a very nymph-like looking crew,
Which might have call'd Diana's chorus 'cousin,'
As far as outward show may correspond;
I won't be bail for anything beyond.

They bow'd obeisance and withdrew, retiring,
But not by the same door through which came in
Baba and Juan, which last stood admiring,
At some small distance, all he saw within
This strange saloon, much fitted for inspiring
Marvel and praise; for both or none things win;
And I must say, I ne'er could see the very
Great happiness of the 'Nil Admirari.'

'Not to admire is all the art I know
(Plain truth, dear Murray, needs few flowers of speech)
To make men happy, or to keep them so'
(So take it in the very words of Creech)-
Thus Horace wrote we all know long ago;
And thus Pope quotes the precept to re-teach
From his translation; but had none admired,
Would Pope have sung, or Horace been inspired?

Baba, when all the damsels were withdrawn,
Motion'd to Juan to approach, and then
A second time desired him to kneel down,
And kiss the lady's foot; which maxim when
He heard repeated, Juan with a frown
Drew himself up to his full height again,
And said, 'It grieved him, but he could not stoop
To any shoe, unless it shod the Pope.'

Baba, indignant at this ill-timed pride,
Made fierce remonstrances, and then a threat
He mutter'd (but the last was given aside)
About a bow-string- quite in vain; not yet
Would Juan bend, though 't were to Mahomet's bride:
There 's nothing in the world like etiquette
In kingly chambers or imperial halls,
As also at the race and county balls.

He stood like Atlas, with a world of words
About his ears, and nathless would not bend:
The blood of all his line 's Castilian lords
Boil'd in his veins, and rather than descend
To stain his pedigree a thousand swords
A thousand times of him had made an end;
At length perceiving the 'foot' could not stand,
Baba proposed that he should kiss the hand.

Here was an honourable compromise,

A half-way house of diplomatic rest,
Where they might meet in much more peaceful guise;
And Juan now his willingness exprest
To use all fit and proper courtesies,
Adding, that this was commonest and best,
For through the South the custom still commands
The gentleman to kiss the lady's hands.

And he advanced, though with but a bad grace,
Though on more thorough-bred or fairer fingers
No lips e'er left their transitory trace;
On such as these the lip too fondly lingers,
And for one kiss would fain imprint a brace,
As you will see, if she you love shall bring hers
In contact; and sometimes even a fair stranger's
An almost twelvemonth's constancy endangers.

The lady eyed him o'er and o'er, and bade
Baba retire, which he obey'd in style,
As if well used to the retreating trade;
And taking hints in good part all the while,
He whisper'd Juan not to be afraid,
And looking on him with a sort of smile,
Took leave, with such a face of satisfaction
As good men wear who have done a virtuous action.

When he was gone, there was a sudden change:
I know not what might be the lady's thought,
But o'er her bright brow flash'd a tumult strange,
And into her dear cheek the blood was brought,
Blood-red as sunset summer clouds which range
The verge of Heaven; and in her large eyes wrought,
A mixture of sensations might be scann'd,
Of half voluptuousness and half command.

Her form had all the softness of her sex,
Her features all the sweetness of the devil,
When he put on the cherub to perplex
Eve, and paved (God knows how) the road to evil;
The sun himself was scarce more free from specks
Than she from aught at which the eye could cavil;
Yet, somehow, there was something somewhere wanting,
As if she rather order'd than was granting.

Something imperial, or imperious, threw
A chain o'er all she did; that is, a chain
Was thrown as 't were about the neck of you,-
And rapture's self will seem almost a pain
With aught which looks like despotism in view:
Our souls at least are free, and 't is in vain
We would against them make the flesh obey-
The spirit in the end will have its way.

Her very smile was haughty, though so sweet;
Her very nod was not an inclination;
There was a self-will even in her small feet,
As though they were quite conscious of her station-
They trod as upon necks; and to complete
Her state (it is the custom of her nation),
A poniard deck'd her girdle, as the sign
She was a sultan's bride (thank Heaven, not mine!).

'To hear and to obey' had been from birth
The law of all around her; to fulfill
All phantasies which yielded joy or mirth,
Had been her slaves' chief pleasure, as her will;
Her blood was high, her beauty scarce of earth:
Judge, then, if her caprices e'er stood still;
Had she but been a Christian, I 've a notion
We should have found out the 'perpetual motion.'

Whate'er she saw and coveted was brought;
Whate'er she did not see, if she supposed
It might be seen, with diligence was sought,
And when 't was found straightway the bargain closed;
There was no end unto the things she bought,
Nor to the trouble which her fancies caused;
Yet even her tyranny had such a grace,
The women pardon'd all except her face.

Juan, the latest of her whims, had caught
Her eye in passing on his way to sale;
She order'd him directly to be bought,
And Baba, who had ne'er been known to fail
In any kind of mischief to be wrought,
At all such auctions knew how to prevail:
She had no prudence, but he had; and this
Explains the garb which Juan took amiss.

His youth and features favour'd the disguise,
And, should you ask how she, a sultan's bride,
Could risk or compass such strange phantasies,
This I must leave sultanases to decide:
Emperors are only husbands in wives' eyes,
And kings and consorts oft are mystified,
As we may ascertain with due precision,
Some by experience, others by tradition.

But to the main point, where we have been tending:-
She now conceived all difficulties past,
And deem'd herself extremely condescending
When, being made her property at last,
Without more preface, in her blue eyes blending
Passion and power, a glance on him she cast,

And merely saying, 'Christian, canst thou love?'
Conceived that phrase was quite enough to move

And so it was, in proper time and place;
But Juan, who had still his mind o'erflowing
With Haidee's isle and soft Ionian face,
Felt the warm blood, which in his face was glowing,
Rush back upon his heart, which fill'd apace,
And left his cheeks as pale as snowdrops blowing;
These words went through his soul like Arab-spears,
So that he spoke not, but burst into tears.

She was a good deal shock'd; not shock'd at tears,
For women shed and use them at their liking;
But there is something when man's eye appears
Wet, still more disagreeable and striking;
A woman's tear-drop melts, a man's half sears,
Like molten lead, as if you thrust a pike in
His heart to force it out, for (to be shorter)
To them 't is a relief, to us a torture.

And she would have consoled, but knew not how:
Having no equals, nothing which had e'er
Infected her with sympathy till now,
And never having dreamt what 't was to bear
Aught of a serious, sorrowing kind, although
There might arise some pouting petty care
To cross her brow, she wonder'd how so near
Her eyes another's eye could shed a tear.

But nature teaches more than power can spoil,
And, when a strong although a strange sensation
Moves- female hearts are such a genial soil
For kinder feelings, whatsoe'er their nation,
They naturally pour the 'wine and oil,'
Samaritans in every situation;
And thus Gulbeyaz, though she knew not why,
Felt an odd glistening moisture in her eye.

But tears must stop like all things else; and soon
Juan, who for an instant had been moved
To such a sorrow by the intrusive tone
Of one who dared to ask if 'he had loved,'
Call'd back the stoic to his eyes, which shone
Bright with the very weakness he reproved;
And although sensitive to beauty, he
Felt most indignant still at not being free.

Gulbeyaz, for the first time in her days,
Was much embarrass'd, never having met
In all her life with aught save prayers and praise;
And as she also risk'd her life to get

Him whom she meant to tutor in love's ways
Into a comfortable tete-a-tete,
To lose the hour would make her quite a martyr,
And they had wasted now almost a quarter.

I also would suggest the fitting time
To gentlemen in any such like case,
That is to say in a meridian clime-
With us there is more law given to the chase,
But here a small delay forms a great crime:
So recollect that the extremest grace
Is just two minutes for your declaration-
A moment more would hurt your reputation.

Juan's was good; and might have been still better,
But he had got Haidee into his head:
However strange, he could not yet forget her,
Which made him seem exceedingly ill-bred.
Gulbeyaz, who look'd on him as her debtor
For having had him to her palace led,
Began to blush up to the eyes, and then
Grow deadly pale, and then blush back again.

At length, in an imperial way, she laid
Her hand on his, and bending on him eyes
Which needed not an empire to persuade,
Look'd into his for love, where none replies:
Her brow grew black, but she would not upbraid,
That being the last thing a proud woman tries;
She rose, and pausing one chaste moment, threw
Herself upon his breast, and there she grew.

This was an awkward test, as Juan found,
But he was steel'd by sorrow, wrath, and pride:
With gentle force her white arms he unwound,
And seated her all drooping by his side,
Then rising haughtily he glanced around,
And looking coldly in her face, he cried,
'The prison'd eagle will not pair, nor
Serve a Sultana's sensual phantasy.

'Thou ask'st if I can love? be this the proof
How much I have loved- that I love not thee!
In this vile garb, the distaff, web, and woof,
Were fitter for me: Love is for the free!
I am not dazzled by this splendid roof,
Whate'er thy power, and great it seems to be;
Heads bow, knees bend, eyes watch around a throne,
And hands obey- our hearts are still our own.'

This was a truth to us extremely trite;
Not so to her, who ne'er had heard such things:

She deem'd her least command must yield delight,
Earth being only made for queens and kings.
If hearts lay on the left side or the right
She hardly knew, to such perfection brings
Legitimacy its born votaries, when
Aware of their due royal rights o'er men.

Besides, as has been said, she was so fair
As even in a much humbler lot had made
A kingdom or confusion anywhere,
And also, as may be presumed, she laid
Some stress on charms, which seldom are, if e'er,
By their possessors thrown into the shade:
She thought hers gave a double 'right divine';
And half of that opinion 's also mine.

Remember, or (if you can not) imagine,
Ye, who have kept your chastity when young,
While some more desperate dowager has been waging
Love with you, and been in the dog-days stung
By your refusal, recollect her raging!
Or recollect all that was said or sung
On such a subject; then suppose the face
Of a young downright beauty in this case.

Suppose,- but you already have supposed,
The spouse of Potiphar, the Lady Booby,
Phaedra, and all which story has disclosed
Of good examples; pity that so few by
Poets and private tutors are exposed,
To educate- ye youth of Europe- you by!
But when you have supposed the few we know,
You can't suppose Gulbeyaz' angry brow.

A tigress robb'd of young, a lioness,
Or any interesting beast of prey,
Are similes at hand for the distress
Of ladies who can not have their own way;
But though my turn will not be served with less,
These don't express one half what I should say:
For what is stealing young ones, few or many,
To cutting short their hopes of having any?

The love of offspring 's nature's general law,
From tigresses and cubs to ducks and ducklings;
There 's nothing whets the beak, or arms the claw
Like an invasion of their babes and sucklings;
And all who have seen a human nursery, saw
How mothers love their children's squalls and chucklings;
This strong extreme effect (to tire no longer
Your patience) shows the cause must still be stronger.

If I said fire flash'd from Gulbeyaz' eyes,
'T were nothing- for her eyes flash'd always fire;
Or said her cheeks assumed the deepest dyes,
I should but bring disgrace upon the dyer,
So supernatural was her passion's rise;
For ne'er till now she knew a check'd desire:
Even ye who know what a check'd woman is
(Enough, God knows!) would much fall short of this.

Her rage was but a minute's, and 't was well-
A moment's more had slain her; but the while
It lasted 't was like a short glimpse of hell:
Nought 's more sublime than energetic bile,
Though horrible to see yet grand to tell,
Like ocean warring 'gainst a rocky isle;
And the deep passions flashing through her form
Made her a beautiful embodied storm.

A vulgar tempest 't were to a typhoon
To match a common fury with her rage,
And yet she did not want to reach the moon,
Like moderate Hotspur on the immortal page;
Her anger pitch'd into a lower tune,
Perhaps the fault of her soft sex and age-
Her wish was but to 'kill, kill, kill,' like Lear's,
And then her thirst of blood was quench'd in tears.

A storm it raged, and like the storm it pass'd,
Pass'd without words- in fact she could not speak;
And then her sex's shame broke in at last,
A sentiment till then in her but weak,
But now it flow'd in natural and fast,
As water through an unexpected leak;
For she felt humbled- and humiliation
Is sometimes good for people in her station

It teaches them that they are flesh and blood,
It also gently hints to them that others,
Although of clay, are yet not quite of mud;
That urns and pipkins are but fragile brothers,
And works of the same pottery, bad or good,
Though not all born of the same sires and mothers:
It teaches- Heaven knows only what it teaches,
But sometimes it may mend, and often reaches.

Her first thought was to cut off Juan's head;
Her second, to cut only his- acquaintance;
Her third, to ask him where he had been bred;
Her fourth, to rally him into repentance;
Her fifth, to call her maids and go to bed;
Her sixth, to stab herself; her seventh, to sentence
The lash to Baba:- but her grand resource

Was to sit down again, and cry of course.

She thought to stab herself, but then she had
The dagger close at hand, which made it awkward;
For Eastern stays are little made to pad,
So that a poniard pierces if 't is stuck hard:
She thought of killing Juan- but, poor lad!
Though he deserved it well for being so backward,
The cutting off his head was not the art
Most likely to attain her aim- his heart.

Juan was moved; he had made up his mind
To be impaled, or quarter'd as a dish
For dogs, or to be slain with pangs refined,
Or thrown to lions, or made baits for fish,
And thus heroically stood resign'd,
Rather than sin- except to his own wish:
But all his great preparatives for dying
Dissolved like snow before a woman crying.

As through his palms Bob Acres' valour oozed,
So Juan's virtue ebb'd, I know not how;
And first he wonder'd why he had refused;
And then, if matters could be made up now;
And next his savage virtue he accused,
Just as a friar may accuse his vow,
Or as a dame repents her of her oath,
Which mostly ends in some small breach of both.

So he began to stammer some excuses;
But words are not enough in such a matter,
Although you borrow'd all that e'er the muses
Have sung, or even a Dandy's dandiest chatter,
Or all the figures Castlereagh abuses;
Just as a languid smile began to flatter
His peace was making, but before he ventured
Further, old Baba rather briskly enter'd.

'Bride of the Sun! and Sister of the Moon!'
('T was thus he spake) 'and Empress of the Earth!
Whose frown would put the spheres all out of tune,
Whose smile makes all the planets dance with mirth,
Your slave brings tidings- he hopes not too soon-
Which your sublime attention may be worth:
The Sun himself has sent me like a ray,
To hint that he is coming up this way.'

'Is it,' exclaim'd Gulbeyaz, 'as you say?
I wish to heaven he would not shine till morning!
But bid my women form the milky way.
Hence, my old comet! give the stars due warning-
And, Christian! mingle with them as you may,

And as you 'd have me pardon your past scorning-'
Here they were interrupted by a humming
Sound, and then by a cry, 'The Sultan 's coming!'

First came her damsels, a decorous file,
And then his Highness' eunuchs, black and white;
The train might reach a quarter of a mile:
His majesty was always so polite
As to announce his visits a long while
Before he came, especially at night;
For being the last wife of the Emperour,
She was of course the favorite of the four.

His Highness was a man of solemn port,
Shawl'd to the nose, and bearded to the eyes,
Snatch'd from a prison to preside at court,
His lately bowstrung brother caused his rise;
He was as good a sovereign of the sort
As any mention'd in the histories
Of Cantemir, or Knolles, where few shine
Save Solyman, the glory of their line.

He went to mosque in state, and said his prayers
With more than 'Oriental scrupulosity,'
He left to his vizier all state affairs,
And show'd but little royal curiosity:
I know not if he had domestic cares-
No process proved connubial animosity;
Four wives and twice five hundred maids, unseen,
Were ruled as calmly as a Christian queen.

If now and then there happen'd a slight slip,
Little was heard of criminal or crime;
The story scarcely pass'd a single lip-
The sack and sea had settled all in time,
From which the secret nobody could rip:
The Public knew no more than does this rhyme;
No scandals made the daily press a curse-
Morals were better, and the fish no worse.

He saw with his own eyes the moon was round,
Was also certain that the earth was square,
Because he had journey'd fifty miles, and found
No sign that it was circular anywhere;
His empire also was without a bound:
'T is true, a little troubled here and there,
By rebel pachas, and encroaching giaours,
But then they never came to 'the Seven Towers;'

Except in shape of envoys, who were sent
To lodge there when a war broke out, according
To the true law of nations, which ne'er meant

Those scoundrels, who have never had a sword in
Their dirty diplomatic hands, to vent
Their spleen in making strife, and safely wording
Their lies, yclep'd despatches, without risk or
The singeing of a single inky whisker.

He had fifty daughters and four dozen sons,
Of whom all such as came of age were stow'd,
The former in a palace, where like nuns
They lived till some Bashaw was sent abroad,
When she, whose turn it was, was wed at once,
Sometimes at six years old- though it seems odd,
'T is true; the reason is, that the Bashaw
Must make a present to his sire in law.

His sons were kept in prison, till they grew
Of years to fill a bowstring or the throne,
One or the other, but which of the two
Could yet be known unto the fates alone;
Meantime the education they went through
Was princely, as the proofs have always shown:
So that the heir apparent still was found
No less deserving to be hang'd than crown'd.

His majesty saluted his fourth spouse
With all the ceremonies of his rank,
Who clear'd her sparkling eyes and smooth'd her brows,
As suits a matron who has play'd a prank;
These must seem doubly mindful of their vows,
To save the credit of their breaking bank:
To no men are such cordial greetings given
As those whose wives have made them fit for heaven.

His Highness cast around his great black eyes,
And looking, as he always look'd, perceived
Juan amongst the damsels in disguise,
At which he seem'd no whit surprised nor grieved,
But just remark'd with air sedate and wise,
While still a fluttering sigh Gulbeyaz heaved,
'I see you 've bought another girl; 't is pity
That a mere Christian should be half so pretty.'

This compliment, which drew all eyes upon
The new-bought virgin, made her blush and shake.
Her comrades, also, thought themselves undone:
Oh! Mahomet! that his majesty should take
Such notice of a giaour, while scarce to one
Of them his lips imperial ever spake!
There was a general whisper, toss, and wriggle,
But etiquette forbade them all to giggle.

The Turks do well to shut- at least, sometimes-

The women up, because, in sad reality,
Their chastity in these unhappy climes
Is not a thing of that astringent quality
Which in the North prevents precocious crimes,
And makes our snow less pure than our morality;
The sun, which yearly melts the polar ice,
Has quite the contrary effect on vice.

Thus in the East they are extremely strict,
And Wedlock and a Padlock mean the same;
Excepting only when the former 's pick'd
It ne'er can be replaced in proper frame;
Spoilt, as a pipe of claret is when prick'd:
But then their own Polygamy 's to blame;
Why don't they knead two virtuous souls for life
Into that moral centaur, man and wife?

Thus far our chronicle; and now we pause,
Though not for want of matter; but 't is time
According to the ancient epic laws,
To slacken sail, and anchor with our rhyme.
Let this fifth canto meet with due applause,
The sixth shall have a touch of the sublime;
Meanwhile, as Homer sometimes sleeps, perhaps
You 'll pardon to my muse a few short naps.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Don Juan: Canto the First

I

I want a hero: an uncommon want,
When every year and month sends forth a new one,
Till, after cloying the gazettes with cant,
The age discovers he is not the true one;
Of such as these I should not care to vaunt,
I'll therefore take our ancient friend Don Juan,
We all have seen him, in the pantomime,
Sent to the Devil somewhat ere his time.II
Vernon, the butcher Cumberland, Wolfe, Hawke,
Prince Ferdinand, Granby, Burgoyne, Keppel, Howe,
Evil and good, have had their tithe of talk,
And filled their sign-posts then, like Wellesley now;
Each in their turn like Banquo's monarchs stalk,
Followers of fame, "nine farrow" of that sow:
France, too, had Buonaparté and Dumourier
Recorded in the Moniteur and Courier.III

Barnave, Brissot, Condorcet, Mirabeau,
Pétion, Clootz, Danton, Marat, La Fayette
Were French, and famous people, as we know;
And there were others, scarce forgotten yet,
Joubert, Hoche, Marceau, Lannes, Desaix, Moreau,
With many of the military set,
Exceedingly remarkable at times,
But not at all adapted to my rhymes.IV

Nelson was once Britannia's god of War,
And still should be so, but the tide is turn'd;
There's no more to be said of Trafalgar,
'Tis with our hero quietly inurn'd;
Because the army's grown more popular,
At which the naval people are concern'd;
Besides, the Prince is all for the land-service,
Forgetting Duncan, Nelson, Howe, and Jervis.V

Brave men were living before Agamemnon
And since, exceeding valorous and sage,
A good deal like him too, though quite the same none;
But then they shone not on the poet's page,
And so have been forgotten: I condemn none,
But can't find any in the present age
Fit for my poem (that is, for my new one);
So, as I said, I'll take my friend Don Juan.VI

Most epic poets plunge "in medias res"
(Horace makes this the heroic turnpike road),
And then your hero tells, whene'er you please,
What went before--by way of episode,
While seated after dinner at his ease,
Beside his mistress in some soft abode,
Palace, or garden, paradise, or cavern,

Which serves the happy couple for a tavern.VII

That is the usual method, but not mine--
 My way is to begin with the beginning;
The regularity of my design
 Forbids all wandering as the worst of sinning,
And therefore I shall open with a line
 (Although it cost me half an hour in spinning),
Narrating somewhat of Don Juan's father,
And also of his mother, if you'd rather....CC

My poem's epic, and is meant to be
Divided in twelve books; each book containing,
With love, and war, a heavy gale at sea,
 A list of ships, and captains, and kings reigning,
New characters; the episodes are three:
 A panoramic view of Hell's in training,
After the style of Virgil and of Homer,
So that my name of Epic's no misnomer.CCI

All these things will be specified in time,
 With strict regard to Aristotle's rules,
The Vade Mecum of the true sublime,
 Which makes so many poets, and some fools:
Prose poets like blank-verse, I'm fond of rhyme,
 Good workmen never quarrel with their tools;
I've got new mythological machinery,
And very handsome supernatural scenery.CCII

There's only one slight difference between
 Me and my epic brethren gone before,
And here the advantage is my own, I ween,
 (Not that I have not several merits more,
But this will more peculiarly be seen);
They so embellish, that 'tis quite a bore
Their labyrinth of fables to thread through,
Whereas this story's actually true.CCIII

If any person doubt it, I appeal
 To history, tradition, and to facts,
To newspapers, whose truth all know and feel,
 To plays in five, and operas in three acts;
All these confirm my statement a good deal,
But that which more completely faith exacts

Is, that myself, and several now in Seville,
Saw Juan's last elopement with the Devil.CCIV

If ever I should condescend to prose,
I'll write poetical commandments, which
Shall supersede beyond all doubt all those
That went before; in these I shall enrich
My text with many things that no one knows,
And carry precept to the highest pitch:
I'll call the work "Longinus o'er a Bottle,
Or, Every Poet his own Aristotle."CCV

Thou shalt believe in Milton, Dryden, Pope;
Thou shalt not set up Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey;
Because the first is craz'd beyond all hope,
The second drunk, the third so quaint and mouthy:
With Crabbe it may be difficult to cope,
And Campbell's Hippocrene is somewhat drouthy:
Thou shalt not steal from Samuel Rogers, nor
Commit--flirtation with the muse of Moore.CCVI

Thou shalt not covet Mr. Sotheby's Muse,
His Pegasus, nor anything that's his;
Thou shalt not bear false witness like "the Blues"
(There's one, at least, is very fond of this);
Thou shalt not write, in short, but what I choose:
This is true criticism, and you may kiss--
Exactly as you please, or not--the rod;
But if you don't, I'll lay it on, by G{-}d!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Don Juan: Canto The Fourteenth

If from great nature's or our own abyss
Of thought we could but snatch a certainty,
Perhaps mankind might find the path they miss--
But then 'twould spoil much good philosophy.
One system eats another up, and this
Much as old Saturn ate his progeny;
For when his pious consort gave him stones
In lieu of sons, of these he made no bones.

But System doth reverse the Titan's breakfast,
And eats her parents, albeit the digestion
Is difficult. Pray tell me, can you make fast,
After due search, your faith to any question?
Look back o'er ages, ere unto the stake fast
You bind yourself, and call some mode the best one.
Nothing more true than not to trust your senses;
And yet what are your other evidences?

For me, I know nought; nothing I deny,
Admit, reject, contemn; and what know you,
Except perhaps that you were born to die?
And both may after all turn out untrue.
An age may come, Font of Eternity,
When nothing shall be either old or new.
Death, so call'd, is a thing which makes men weep,
And yet a third of life is pass'd in sleep.

A sleep without dreams, after a rough day
Of toil, is what we covet most; and yet
How clay shrinks back from more quiescent clay!
The very Suicide that pays his debt
At once without instalments (an old way
Of paying debts, which creditors regret)
Lets out impatiently his rushing breath,
Less from disgust of life than dread of death.

'Tis round him, near him, here, there, every where;
And there's a courage which grows out of fear,
Perhaps of all most desperate, which will dare
The worst to know it:--when the mountains rear
Their peaks beneath your human foot, and there
You look down o'er the precipice, and drear
The gulf of rock yawns,--you can't gaze a minute
Without an awful wish to plunge within it.

'Tis true, you don't - but, pale and struck with terror,
Retire: but look into your past impression!
And you will find, though shuddering at the mirror
Of your own thoughts, in all their self--confession,
The lurking bias, be it truth or error,
To the unknown; a secret prepossession,
To plunge with all your fears - but where? You know not,

And that's the reason why you do - or do not.

But what's this to the purpose? you will say.
Gent. reader, nothing; a mere speculation,
For which my sole excuse is - 'tis my way;
Sometimes with and sometimes without occasion
I write what's uppermost, without delay:
This narrative is not meant for narration,
But a mere airy and fantastic basis,
To build up common things with common places.

You know, or don't know, that great Bacon saith,
'Fling up a straw, 'twill show the way the wind blows;'
And such a straw, borne on by human breath,
Is poesy, according as the mind glows;
A paper kite which flies 'twixt life and death,
A shadow which the onward soul behind throws:
And mine's a bubble, not blown up for praise,
But just to play with, as an infant plays.

The world is all before me - or behind;
For I have seen a portion of that same,
And quite enough for me to keep in mind;--
Of passions, too, I have proved enough to blame,
To the great pleasure of our friends, mankind,
Who like to mix some slight alloy with fame;
For I was rather famous in my time,
Until I fairly knock'd it up with rhyme.

I have brought this world about my ears, and eke
The other; that's to say, the clergy, who
Upon my head have bid their thunders break
In pious libels by no means a few.
And yet I can't help scribbling once a week,
Tiring old readers, nor discovering new.
In youth I wrote because my mind was full,
And now because I feel it growing dull.

But 'why then publish?' - There are no rewards
Of fame or profit when the world grows weary.
I ask in turn, --Why do you play at cards?
Why drink? Why read? - To make some hour less dreary.
It occupies me to turn back regards
On what I've seen or ponder'd, sad or cheery;
And what I write I cast upon the stream,
To swim or sink - I have had at least my dream.

I think that were I certain of success,
I hardly could compose another line:
So long I've battled either more or less,
That no defeat can drive me from the Nine.
This feeling 'tis not easy to express,

And yet 'tis not affected, I opine.
In play, there are two pleasures for your choosing -
The one is winning, and the other losing.

Besides, my Muse by no means deals in fiction:
She gathers a repertory of facts,
Of course with some reserve and slight restriction,
But mostly sings of human things and acts -
And that's one cause she meets with contradiction;
For too much truth, at first sight, ne'er attracts;
And were her object only what's call'd glory,
With more ease too she 'd tell a different story.

Love, war, a tempest - surely there 's variety;
Also a seasoning slight of lucubration;
A bird's-eye view, too, of that wild, Society;
A slight glance thrown on men of every station.
If you have nought else, here 's at least satiety
Both in performance and in preparation;
And though these lines should only line portmanteaus,
Trade will be all the better for these Cantos.

The portion of this world which I at present
Have taken up to fill the following sermon,
Is one of which there's no description recent.
The reason why is easy to determine:
Although it seems both prominent and pleasant,
There is a sameness in its gems and ermine,
A dull and family likeness through all ages,
Of no great promise for poetic pages.

With much to excite, there's little to exalt;
Nothing that speaks to all men and all times;
A sort of varnish over every fault;
A kind of common-place, even in their crimes;
Factitious passions, wit without much salt,
A want of that true nature which sublimes
Whate'er it shows with truth; a smooth monotony
Of character, in those at least who have got any.

Sometimes, indeed, like soldiers off parade,
They break their ranks and gladly leave the drill;
But then the roll-call draws them back afraid,
And they must be or seem what they were: still
Doubtless it is a brilliant masquerade;
But when of the first sight you have had your fill,
It palls - at least it did so upon me,
This paradise of pleasure and ennui.

When we have made our love, and gamed our gaming,
Drest, voted, shone, and, may be, something more;
With dandies dined; heard senators declaiming;

Seen beauties brought to market by the score,
Sad rakes to sadder husbands chastely taming;
There's little left but to be bored or bore.
Witness those 'ci-devant jeunes hommes' who stem
The stream, nor leave the world which leaveth them.

'Tis said - indeed a general complaint -
That no one has succeeded in describing
The monde, exactly as they ought to paint:
Some say, that authors only snatch, by bribing
The porter, some slight scandals strange and quaint,
To furnish matter for their moral gibing;
And that their books have but one style in common -
My lady's prattle, filter'd through her woman.

But this can't well be true, just now; for writers
Are grown of the beau monde a part potential:
I've seen them balance even the scale with fighters,
Especially when young, for that's essential.
Why do their sketches fail them as inditers
Of what they deem themselves most consequential,
The real portrait of the highest tribe?
'Tis that, in fact, there's little to describe.

'Haud ignara loquor;' these are Nugae, 'quarum
Pars parva fui,' but still art and part.
Now I could much more easily sketch a harem,
A battle, wreck, or history of the heart,
Than these things; and besides, I wish to spare 'em,
For reasons which I choose to keep apart.
'Vetabo Cereris sacrum qui vulgarit'-
Which means that vulgar people must not share it.

And therefore what I throw off is ideal -
Lower'd, leaven'd, like a history of freemasons;
Which bears the same relation to the real,
As Captain Parry's voyage may do to Jason's.
The grand arcanum's not for men to see all;
My music has some mystic diapasons;
And there is much which could not be appreciated
In any manner by the uninitiated.

Alas! worlds fall - and woman, since she fell'd
The world (as, since that history less polite
Than true, hath been a creed so strictly held)
Has not yet given up the practice quite.
Poor thing of usages! coerced, compell'd,
Victim when wrong, and martyr oft when right,
Condemn'd to child-bed, as men for their sins
Have shaving too entail'd upon their chins,--

A daily plague, which in the aggregate

May average on the whole with parturition.
But as to women, who can penetrate
The real sufferings of their she condition?
Man's very sympathy with their estate
Has much of selfishness, and more suspicion.
Their love, their virtue, beauty, education,
But form good housekeepers, to breed a nation.

All this were very well, and can't be better;
But even this is difficult, Heaven knows,
So many troubles from her birth beset her,
Such small distinction between friends and foes,
The gilding wears so soon from off her fetter,
That - but ask any woman if she'd choose
(Take her at thirty, that is) to have been
Female or male? a schoolboy or a queen?

'Petticoat influence' is a great reproach,
Which even those who obey would fain be thought
To fly from, as from hungry pikes a roach;
But since beneath it upon earth we are brought,
By various joltings of life's hackney coach,
I for one venerate a petticoat-
A garment of a mystical sublimity,
No matter whether russet, silk, or dimity.

Much I respect, and much I have adored,
In my young days, that chaste and goodly veil,
Which holds a treasure, like a miser's hoard,
And more attracts by all it doth conceal-
A golden scabbard on a Damasque sword,
A loving letter with a mystic seal,
A cure for grief - for what can ever rankle
Before a petticoat and peeping ankle?

And when upon a silent, sullen day,
With a sirocco, for example, blowing,
When even the sea looks dim with all its spray,
And sulkily the river's ripple's flowing,
And the sky shows that very ancient gray,
The sober, sad antithesis to glowing,--
'Tis pleasant, if then any thing is pleasant,
To catch a glimpse even of a pretty peasant.

We left our heroes and our heroines
In that fair clime which don't depend on climate,
Quite independent of the Zodiac's signs,
Though certainly more difficult to rhyme at,
Because the sun, and stars, and aught that shines,
Mountains, and all we can be most sublime at,
Are there oft dull and dreary as a dun -
Whether a sky's or tradesman's is all one.

An in-door life is less poetical;
And out of door hath showers, and mists, and sleet,
With which I could not brew a pastoral.
But be it as it may, a bard must meet
All difficulties, whether great or small,
To spoil his undertaking or complete,
And work away like spirit upon matter,
Embarrass'd somewhat both with fire and water.

Juan - in this respect, at least, like saints -
Was all things unto people of all sorts,
And lived contentedly, without complaints,
In camps, in ships, in cottages, or courts -
Born with that happy soul which seldom faints,
And mingling modestly in toils or sports.
He likewise could be most things to all women,
Without the coxcombry of certain she men.

A fox -hunt to a foreigner is strange;
'T is also subject to the double danger
Of tumbling first, and having in exchange
Some pleasant jesting at the awkward stranger:
But Juan had been early taught to range
The wilds, as doth an Arab turn'd avenger,
So that his horse, or charger, hunter, hack,
Knew that he had a rider on his back.

And now in this new field, with some applause,
He clear'd hedge, ditch, and double post, and rail,
And never craned, and made but few 'faux pas,'
And only fretted when the scent 'gan fail.
He broke, 'tis true, some statutes of the laws
Of hunting - for the sagest youth is frail;
Rode o'er the hounds, it may be, now and then,
And once o'er several country gentlemen.

But on the whole, to general admiration
He acquitted both himself and horse: the squires
Marvell'd at merit of another nation;
The boors cried 'Dang it? who'd have thought it?'--Sires,
The Nestors of the sporting generation,
Swore praises, and recall'd their former fires;
The huntsman's self relented to a grin,
And rated him almost a whipper-in.

Such were his trophies--not of spear and shield,
But leaps, and bursts, and sometimes foxes' brushes;
Yet I must own,--although in this I yield
To patriot sympathy a Briton's blushes,--
He thought at heart like courtly Chesterfield,
Who, after a long chase o'er hills, dales, bushes,

And what not, though he rode beyond all price,
Ask'd next day, 'If men ever hunted twice?'

He also had a quality uncommon
To early risers after a long chase,
Who wake in winter ere the cock can summon
December's drowsy day to his dull race,--
A quality agreeable to woman,
When her soft, liquid words run on apace,
Who likes a listener, whether saint or sinner,--
He did not fall asleep just after dinner;

But, light and airy, stood on the alert,
And shone in the best part of dialogue,
By humouring always what they might assert,
And listening to the topics most in vogue;
Now grave, now gay, but never dull or pert;
And smiling but in secret--cunning rogue!
He ne'er presumed to make an error clearer;--
In short, there never was a better hearer.

And then he danced;-- all foreigners excel
The serious Angles in the eloquence
Of pantomime;--he danced, I say, right well,
With emphasis, and also with good sense--
A thing in footing indispensable;
He danced without theatrical pretence,
Not like a ballet-master in the van
Of his drill'd nymphs, but like a gentleman.

Chaste were his steps, each kept within due bound,
And elegance was sprinkled o'er his figure;
Like swift Camilla, he scarce skimm'd the ground,
And rather held in than put forth his vigour;
And then he had an ear for music's sound,
Which might defy a crotchet critic's rigour.
Such classic pas--sans flaws--set off our hero,
He glanced like a personified Bolero;

Or, like a flying Hour before Aurora,
In Guido's famous fresco which alone
Is worth a tour to Rome, although no more a
Remnant were there of the old world's sole throne.
The 'tout ensemble' of his movements wore a
Grace of the soft ideal, seldom shown,
And ne'er to be described; for to the dolour
Of bards and prosers, words are void of colour.

No marvel then he was a favourite;
A full -grown Cupid, very much admired;
A little spoilt, but by no means so quite;
At least he kept his vanity retired.

Such was his tact, he could alike delight
The chaste, and those who are not so much inspired.
The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke, who loved 'tracasserie,'
Began to treat him with some small 'agacerie.'

She was a fine and somewhat full-blown blonde,
Desirable, distinguish'd, celebrated
For several winters in the grand, grand monde.
I'd rather not say what might be related
Of her exploits, for this were ticklish ground;
Besides there might be falsehood in what's stated:
Her late performance had been a dead set
At Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

This noble personage began to look
A little black upon this new flirtation;
But such small licences must lovers brook,
Mere freedoms of the female corporation.
Woe to the man who ventures a rebuke!
'Twill but precipitate a situation
Extremely disagreeable, but common
To calculators when they count on woman.

The circle smiled, then whisper'd, and then sneer'd;
The Misses bridled, and the matrons frown'd;
Some hoped things might not turn out as they fear'd;
Some would not deem such women could be found;
Some ne'er believed one half of what they heard;
Some look'd perplex'd, and others look'd profound;
And several pitied with sincere regret
Poor Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

But what is odd, none ever named the duke,
Who, one might think, was something in the affair;
True, he was absent, and, 'twas rumour'd, took
But small concern about the when, or where,
Or what his consort did: if he could brook
Her gaieties, none had a right to stare:
Theirs was that best of unions, past all doubt,
Which never meets, and therefore can't fall out.

But, oh! that I should ever pen so sad a line!
Fired with an abstract love of virtue, she,
My Dian of the Ephesians, Lady Adeline,
Began to think the duchess' conduct free;
Regretting much that she had chosen so bad a line,
And waxing chiller in her courtesy,
Look'd grave and pale to see her friend's fragility,
For which most friends reserve their sensibility.

There's nought in this bad world like sympathy:
'Tis so becoming to the soul and face,

Sets to soft music the harmonious sigh,
And robes sweet friendship in a Brussels lace.
Without a friend, what were humanity,
To hunt our errors up with a good grace?
Consoling us with - 'Would you had thought twice!
Ah, if you had but follow'd my advice!'

O job! you had two friends: one's quite enough,
Especially when we are ill at ease;
They are but bad pilots when the weather's rough,
Doctors less famous for their cures than fees.
Let no man grumble when his friends fall off,
As they will do like leaves at the first breeze:
When your affairs come round, one way or t'other,
Go to the coffee-house, and take another.

But this is not my maxim: had it been,
Some heart-aches had been spared me: yet I care not--
I would not be a tortoise in his screen
Of stubborn shell, which waves and weather wear not.
'Tis better on the whole to have felt and seen
That which humanity may bear, or bear not:
'Twill teach discernment to the sensitive,
And not to pour their ocean in a sieve.

Of all the horrid, hideous notes of woe,
Sadder than owl-songs or the midnight blast,
Is that portentous phrase, 'I told you so,'
Utter'd by friends, those prophets of the past,
Who, 'stead of saying what you now should do,
Own they foresaw that you would fall at last,
And solace your slight lapse 'gainst 'bonos mores,'
With a long memorandum of old stories.

The Lady Adeline's serene severity
Was not confined to feeling for her friend,
Whose fame she rather doubted with posterity,
Unless her habits should begin to mend:
But Juan also shared in her austerity,
But mix'd with pity, pure as e'er was penn'd:
His inexperience moved her gentle ruth,
And (as her junior by six weeks) his youth.

These forty days' advantage of her years--
And hers were those which can face calculation,
Boldly referring to the list of peers
And noble births, nor dread the enumeration--
Gave her a right to have maternal fears
For a young gentleman's fit education,
Though she was far from that leap year, whose leap,
In female dates, strikes Time all of a heap.

This may be fix'd at somewhere before thirty--
Say seven-and-twenty; for I never knew
The strictest in chronology and virtue
Advance beyond, while they could pass for new.
O Time! why dost not pause? Thy scythe, so dirty
With rust, should surely cease to hack and hew.
Reset it; shave more smoothly, also slower,
If but to keep thy credit as a mower.

But Adeline was far from that ripe age,
Whose ripeness is but bitter at the best:
'Twas rather her experience made her sage,
For she had seen the world and stood its test,
As I have said in--I forget what page;
My Muse despises reference, as you have guess'd
By this time;--but strike six from seven -and -twenty,
And you will find her sum of years in plenty.

At sixteen she came out; presented, vaunted,
She put all coronets into commotion:
At seventeen, too, the world was still enchanted
With the new Venus of their brilliant ocean:
At eighteen, though below her feet still panted
A hecatomb of suitors with devotion,
She had consented to create again
That Adam, call'd 'The happiest of men.'

Since then she had sparkled through three glowing winters,
Admired, adored; but also so correct,
That she had puzzled all the acutest hinters,
Without the apparel of being circumspect:
They could not even glean the slightest splinters
From off the marble, which had no defect.
She had also snatch'd a moment since her marriage
To bear a son and heir - and one miscarriage.

Fondly the wheeling fire-flies flew around her,
Those little glitterers of the London night;
But none of these possess'd a sting to wound her -
She was a pitch beyond a coxcomb's flight.
Perhaps she wish'd an aspirant profounder;
But whatsoe'er she wish'd, she acted right;
And whether coldness, pride, or virtue dignify
A woman, so she's good, what does it signify?

I hate a motive, like a lingering bottle
Which with the landlord makes too long a stand,
Leaving all-claretless the unmoisten'd throttle,
Especially with politics on hand;
I hate it, as I hate a drove of cattle,
Who whirl the dust as simooms whirl the sand;
I hate it, as I hate an argument,

A laureate's ode, or servile peer's 'content.'

'Tis sad to hack into the roots of things,
They are so much intertwined with the earth;
So that the branch a goodly verdure flings,
Ireck not if an acorn gave it birth.
To trace all actions to their secret springs
Would make indeed some melancholy mirth;
But this is not at present my concern,
And I refer you to wise Oxenstiern.

With the kind view of saving an eclat,
Both to the duchess and diplomatist,
The Lady Adeline, as soon's she saw
That Juan was unlikely to resist
(For foreigners don't know that a faux pas
In England ranks quite on a different list
From those of other lands unblest with juries,
Whose verdict for such sin a certain cure is);-

The Lady Adeline resolved to take
Such measures as she thought might best impede
The farther progress of this sad mistake.
She thought with some simplicity indeed;
But innocence is bold even at the stake,
And simple in the world, and doth not need
Nor use those palisades by dames erected,
Whose virtue lies in never being detected.

It was not that she fear'd the very worst:
His Grace was an enduring, married man,
And was not likely all at once to burst
Into a scene, and swell the clients' clan
Of Doctors' Commons: but she dreaded first
The magic of her Grace's talisman,
And next a quarrel (as he seem'd to fret)
With Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

Her Grace, too, pass'd for being an intrigante,
And somewhat mechante in her amorous sphere;
One of those pretty, precious plagues, which haunt
A lover with caprices soft and dear,
That like to make a quarrel, when they can't
Find one, each day of the delightful year;
Bewitching, torturing, as they freeze or glow,
And - what is worst of all - won't let you go:

The sort of thing to turn a young man's head,
Or make a Werter of him in the end.
No wonder then a purer soul should dread
This sort of chaste liaison for a friend;
It were much better to be wed or dead,

Than wear a heart a woman loves to rend.
'T is best to pause, and think, ere you rush on,
If that a 'bonne fortune' be really 'bonne.'

And first, in the o'erflowing of her heart,
Which really knew or thought it knew no guile,
She call'd her husband now and then apart,
And bade him counsel Juan. With a smile
Lord Henry heard her plans of artless art
To wean Don Juan from the siren's wile;
And answer'd, like a statesman or a prophet,
In such guise that she could make nothing of it.

Firstly, he said, 'he never interfered
In any body's business but the king's:'
Next, that 'he never judged from what appear'd,
Without strong reason, of those sort of things:'
Thirdly, that 'Juan had more brain than beard,
And was not to be held in leading strings;'
And fourthly, what need hardly be said twice,
'That good but rarely came from good advice.'

And, therefore, doubtless to approve the truth
Of the last axiom, he advised his spouse
To leave the parties to themselves, forsooth -
At least as far as bienseance allows:
That time would temper Juan's faults of youth;
That young men rarely made monastic vows;
That opposition only more attaches -
But here a messenger brought in despatches:

And being of the council call'd 'the Privy,'
Lord Henry walk'd into his cabinet,
To furnish matter for some future Livy
To tell how he reduced the nation's debt;
And if their full contents I do not give ye,
It is because I do not know them yet;
But I shall add them in a brief appendix,
To come between mine epic and its index.

But ere he went, he added a slight hint,
Another gentle common-place or two,
Such as are coin'd in conversation's mint,
And pass, for want of better, though not new:
Then broke his packet, to see what was in 't,
And having casually glanced it through,
Retired; and, as went out, calmly kiss'd her,
Less like a young wife than an aged sister.

He was a cold, good, honourable man,
Proud of his birth, and proud of every thing;
A goodly spirit for a state divan,

A figure fit to walk before a king;
Tall, stately, form'd to lead the courtly van
On birthdays, glorious with a star and string;
The very model of a chamberlain--
And such I mean to make him when I reign.

But there was something wanting on the whole--
I don't know what, and therefore cannot tell--
Which pretty women--the sweet souls!--call soul.
Certes it was not body; he was well
Proportion'd, as a poplar or a pole,
A handsome man, that human miracle;
And in each circumstance of love or war
Had still preserved his perpendicular.

Still there was something wanting, as I've said -
That undefinable 'Je ne scais quoi,'
Which, for what I know, may of yore have led
To Homer's Iliad, since it drew to Troy
The Greek Eve, Helen, from the Spartan's bed;
Though on the whole, no doubt, the Dardan boy
Was much inferior to King Menelaus:-
But thus it is some women will betray us.

There is an awkward thing which much perplexes,
Unless like wise Tiresias we had proved
By turns the difference of the several sexes;
Neither can show quite how they would be loved.
The sensual for a short time but connects us,
The sentimental boasts to be unmoved;
But both together form a kind of centaur,
Upon whose back 'tis better not to venture.

A something all-sufficient for the heart
Is that for which the sex are always seeking:
But how to fill up that same vacant part?
There lies the rub--and this they are but weak in.
Frail mariners afloat without a chart,
They run before the wind through high seas breaking;
And when they have made the shore through every shock,
'Tis odd, or odds, it may turn out a rock.

There is a flower call'd 'Love in Idleness,'
For which see Shakspeare's everblooming garden;-
I will not make his great description less,
And beg his British godship's humble pardon,
If in my extremity of rhyme's distress,
I touch a single leaf where he is warden;-
But though the flower is different, with the French
Or Swiss Rousseau, cry 'Voila la Pervenche!'

Eureka! I have found it! What I mean

To say is, not that love is idleness,
But that in love such idleness has been
An accessory, as I have cause to guess.
Hard labour's an indifferent go-between;
Your men of business are not apt to express
Much passion, since the merchant-ship, the Argo,
Convey'd Medea as her supercargo.

'Beatus ille procul!' from 'negotiis,'
Saith Horace; the great little poet's wrong;
His other maxim, 'Noscitur a sociis,'
Is much more to the purpose of his song;
Though even that were sometimes too ferocious,
Unless good company be kept too long;
But, in his teeth, whate'er their state or station,
Thrice happy they who have an occupation!

Adam exchanged his Paradise for ploughing,
Eve made up millinery with fig leaves -
The earliest knowledge from the tree so knowing,
As far as I know, that the church receives:
And since that time it need not cost much showing,
That many of the ills o'er which man grieves,
And still more women, spring from not employing
Some hours to make the remnant worth enjoying.

And hence high life is oft a dreary void,
A rack of pleasures, where we must invent
A something wherewithal to be annoy'd.
Bards may sing what they please about Content;
Contented, when translated, means but cloy'd;
And hence arise the woes of sentiment,
Blue devils, and blue -stockings, and romances
Reduced to practice, and perform'd like dances.

I do declare, upon an affidavit,
Romances I ne'er read like those I have seen;
Nor, if unto the world I ever gave it,
Would some believe that such a tale had been:
But such intent I never had, nor have it;
Some truths are better kept behind a screen,
Especially when they would look like lies;
I therefore deal in generalities.

'An oyster may be cross'd in love,'--and why?
Because he mopest idly in his shell,
And heaves a lonely subterraqueous sigh,
Much as a monk may do within his cell:
And a-propos of monks, their piety
With sloth hath found it difficult to dwell;
Those vegetables of the Catholic creed
Are apt exceedingly to run to seed.

O Wilberforce! thou man of black renown,
Whose merit none enough can sing or say,
Thou hast struck one immense Colossus down,
Thou moral Washington of Africa!
But there's another little thing, I own,
Which you should perpetrate some summer's day,
And set the other half of earth to rights;
You have freed the blacks - now pray shut up the whites.

Shut up the bald-coot bully Alexander!
Ship off the Holy Three to Senegal;
Teach them that 'sauce for goose is sauce for gander,'
And ask them how they like to be in thrall?
Shut up each high heroic salamander,
Who eats fire gratis (since the pay's but small);
Shut up - no, not the King, but the Pavilion,
Or else 'twill cost us all another million.

Shut up the world at large, let Bedlam out;
And you will be perhaps surprised to find
All things pursue exactly the same route,
As now with those of soi-disant sound mind.
This I could prove beyond a single doubt,
Were there a jot of sense among mankind;
But till that point d'appui is found, alas!
Like Archimedes, I leave earth as 'twas.

Our gentle Adeline had one defect--
Her heart was vacant, though a splendid mansion;
Her conduct had been perfectly correct,
As she had seen nought claiming its expansion.
A wavering spirit may be easier wreck'd,
Because 'tis frailer, doubtless, than a stanch one;
But when the latter works its own undoing,
Its inner crash is like an earthquake's ruin.

She loved her lord, or thought so; but that love
Cost her an effort, which is a sad toil,
The stone of Sisyphus, if once we move
Our feelings 'gainst the nature of the soil.
She had nothing to complain of, or reprove,
No bickerings, no connubial turmoil:
Their union was a model to behold,
Serene and noble,--conjugal, but cold.

There was no great disparity of years,
Though much in temper; but they never clash'd:
They moved like stars united in their spheres,
Or like the Rhone by Leman's waters wash'd,
Where mingled and yet separate appears
The river from the lake, all bluely dash'd

Through the serene and placid glassy deep,
Which fain would lull its river-child to sleep.

Now when she once had ta'en an interest
In any thing, however she might flatter
Herself that her intentions were the best,
Intense intentions are a dangerous matter:
Impressions were much stronger than she guess'd,
And gather'd as they run like growing water
Upon her mind; the more so, as her breast
Was not at first too readily impress'd.

But when it was, she had that lurking demon
Of double nature, and thus doubly named -
Firmness yclept in heroes, kings, and seamen,
That is, when they succeed; but greatly blamed
As obstinacy, both in men and women,
Whene'er their triumph pales, or star is tamed:-
And 'twill perplex the casuist in morality
To fix the due bounds of this dangerous quality.

Had Buonaparte won at Waterloo,
It had been firmness; now 'tis pertinacity:
Must the event decide between the two?
I leave it to your people of sagacity
To draw the line between the false and true,
If such can e'er be drawn by man's capacity:
My business is with Lady Adeline,
Who in her way too was a heroine.

She knew not her own heart; then how should I?
I think not she was then in love with Juan:
If so, she would have had the strength to fly
The wild sensation, unto her a new one:
She merely felt a common sympathy
(I will not say it was a false or true one)
In him, because she thought he was in danger,-
Her husband's friend, her own, young, and a stranger,

She was, or thought she was, his friend - and this
Without the farce of friendship, or romance
Of Platonism, which leads so oft amiss
Ladies who have studied friendship but in France,
Or Germany, where people purely kiss.
To thus much Adeline would not advance;
But of such friendship as man's may to man be
She was as capable as woman can be.

No doubt the secret influence of the sex
Will there, as also in the ties of blood,
An innocent predominance annex,
And tune the concord to a finer mood.

If free from passion, which all friendship checks,
And your true feelings fully understood,
No friend like to a woman earth discovers,
So that you have not been nor will be lovers.

Love bears within its breast the very germ
Of change; and how should this be otherwise?
That violent things more quickly find a term
Is shown through nature's whole analogies;
And how should the most fierce of all be firm?
Would you have endless lightning in the skies?
Methinks Love's very title says enough:
How should 'the tender passion' e'er be tough?

Alas! by all experience, seldom yet
(I merely quote what I have heard from many)
Had lovers not some reason to regret
The passion which made Solomon a zany.
I've also seen some wives (not to forget
The marriage state, the best or worst of any)
Who were the very paragons of wives,
Yet made the misery of at least two lives.

I've also seen some female friends ('tis odd,
But true--as, if expedient, I could prove)
That faithful were through thick and thin, abroad,
At home, far more than ever yet was Love--
Who did not quit me when Oppression trod
Upon me; whom no scandal could remove;
Who fought, and fight, in absence, too, my battles,
Despite the snake Society's loud rattles.

Whether Don Juan and chaste Adeline
Grew friends in this or any other sense,
Will be discuss'd hereafter, I opine:
At present I am glad of a pretence
To leave them hovering, as the effect is fine,
And keeps the atrocious reader in suspense;
The surest way for ladies and for books
To bait their tender, or their tenter, hooks.

Whether they rode, or walk'd, or studied Spanish
To read Don Quixote in the original,
A pleasure before which all others vanish;
Whether their talk was of the kind call'd 'small,'
Or serious, are the topics I must banish
To the next Canto; where perhaps I shall
Say something to the purpose, and display
Considerable talent in my way.

Above all, I beg all men to forbear
Anticipating aught about the matter:

They'll only make mistakes about the fair,
And Juan too, especially the latter.
And I shall take a much more serious air
Than I have yet done, in this epic satire.
It is not clear that Adeline and Juan
Will fall; but if they do, 'twill be their ruin.

But great things spring from little:- Would you think,
That in our youth, as dangerous a passion
As e'er brought man and woman to the brink
Of ruin, rose from such a slight occasion,
As few would ever dream could form the link
Of such a sentimental situation?
You'll never guess, I 'll bet you millions, milliards--
It all sprung from a harmless game at billiards.

'Tis strange,--but true; for truth is always strange;
Stranger than fiction; if it could be told,
How much would novels gain by the exchange!
How differently the world would men behold!
How oft would vice and virtue places change!
The new world would be nothing to the old,
If some Columbus of the moral seas
Would show mankind their souls' antipodes.

What 'antres vast and deserts idle' then
Would be discover'd in the human soul!
What icebergs in the hearts of mighty men,
With self-love in the centre as their pole!
What Anthropophagi are nine of ten
Of those who hold the kingdoms in control
Were things but only call'd by their right name,
Caesar himself would be ashamed of fame.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Don Juan: Canto The Fourth

Nothing so difficult as a beginning
In poesy, unless perhaps the end;
For oftentimes when Pegasus seems winning
The race, he sprains a wing, and down we tend,
Like Lucifer when hurl'd from heaven for sinning;
Our sin the same, and hard as his to mend,
Being pride, which leads the mind to soar too far,
Till our own weakness shows us what we are.

But Time, which brings all beings to their level,
And sharp Adversity, will teach at last
Man,- and, as we would hope,- perhaps the devil,
That neither of their intellects are vast:
While youth's hot wishes in our red veins revel,
We know not this- the blood flows on too fast;
But as the torrent widens towards the ocean,
We ponder deeply on each past emotion.

As boy, I thought myself a clever fellow,
And wish'd that others held the same opinion;
They took it up when my days grew more mellow,
And other minds acknowledged my dominion:
Now my sere fancy 'falls into the yellow
Leaf,' and Imagination droops her pinion,
And the sad truth which hovers o'er my desk
Turns what was once romantic to burlesque.

And if I laugh at any mortal thing,
'T is that I may not weep; and if I weep,
'T is that our nature cannot always bring
Itself to apathy, for we must steep
Our hearts first in the depths of Lethe's spring,
Ere what we least wish to behold will sleep:
Thetis baptized her mortal son in Styx;
A mortal mother would on Lethe fix.

Some have accused me of a strange design
Against the creed and morals of the land,
And trace it in this poem every line:
I don't pretend that I quite understand
My own meaning when I would be very fine;
But the fact is that I have nothing plann'd,
Unless it were to be a moment merry,
A novel word in my vocabulary.

To the kind reader of our sober clime
This way of writing will appear exotic;
Pulci was sire of the half-serious rhyme,
Who sang when chivalry was more Quixotic,
And revell'd in the fancies of the time,
True knights, chaste dames, huge giants, kings despotic:
But all these, save the last, being obsolete,

I chose a modern subject as more meet.

How I have treated it, I do not know;
Perhaps no better than they have treated me
Who have imputed such designs as show
Not what they saw, but what they wish'd to see:
But if it gives them pleasure, be it so;
This is a liberal age, and thoughts are free:
Meantime Apollo plucks me by the ear,
And tells me to resume my story here.

Young Juan and his lady-love were left
To their own hearts' most sweet society;
Even Time the pitiless in sorrow cleft
With his rude scythe such gentle bosoms; he
Sigh'd to behold them of their hours bereft,
Though foe to love; and yet they could not be
Meant to grow old, but die in happy spring,
Before one charm or hope had taken wing.

Their faces were not made for wrinkles, their
Pure blood to stagnate, their great hearts to fail;
The blank grey was not made to blast their hair,
But like the climes that know nor snow nor hail
They were all summer: lightning might assail
And shiver them to ashes, but to trail
A long and snake-like life of dull decay
Was not for them- they had too little day.

They were alone once more; for them to be
Thus was another Eden; they were never
Weary, unless when separate: the tree
Cut from its forest root of years- the river
Damm'd from its fountain- the child from the knee
And breast maternal wean'd at once for ever,-
Would wither less than these two torn apart;
Alas! there is no instinct like the heart-

The heart- which may be broken: happy they!
Thrice fortunate! who of that fragile mould,
The precious porcelain of human clay,
Break with the first fall: they can ne'er behold
The long year link'd with heavy day on day,
And all which must be borne, and never told;
While life's strange principle will often lie
Deepest in those who long the most to die.

'Whom the gods love die young,' was said of yore,
And many deaths do they escape by this:
The death of friends, and that which slays even more-
The death of friendship, love, youth, all that is,
Except mere breath; and since the silent shore

Awaits at last even those who longest miss
The old archer's shafts, perhaps the early grave
Which men weep over may be meant to save.

Haidee and Juan thought not of the dead-
The heavens, and earth, and air, seem'd made for them:
They found no fault with Time, save that he fled;
They saw not in themselves aught to condemn:
Each was the other's mirror, and but read
Joy sparkling in their dark eyes like a gem,
And knew such brightness was but the reflection
Of their exchanging glances of affection.

The gentle pressure, and the thrilling touch,
The least glance better understood than words,
Which still said all, and ne'er could say too much;
A language, too, but like to that of birds,
Known but to them, at least appearing such
As but to lovers a true sense affords;
Sweet playful phrases, which would seem absurd
To those who have ceased to hear such, or ne'er heard,-

All these were theirs, for they were children still,
And children still they should have ever been;
They were not made in the real world to fill
A busy character in the dull scene,
But like two beings born from out a rill,
A nymph and her beloved, all unseen
To pass their lives in fountains and on flowers,
And never know the weight of human hours.

Moons changing had roll'd on, and changeless found
Those their bright rise had lighted to such joys
As rarely they beheld throughout their round;
And these were not of the vain kind which cloys,
For theirs were buoyant spirits, never bound
By the mere senses; and that which destroys
Most love, possession, unto them appear'd
A thing which each endearment more endear'd.

Oh beautiful! and rare as beautiful
But theirs was love in which the mind delights
To lose itself when the old world grows dull,
And we are sick of its hack sounds and sights,
Intrigues, adventures of the common school,
Its petty passions, marriages, and flights,
Where Hymen's torch but brands one strumpet more,
Whose husband only knows her not a wh- re.

Hard words; harsh truth; a truth which many know.
Enough.- The faithful and the fairy pair,
Who never found a single hour too slow,

What was it made them thus exempt from care?
Young innate feelings all have felt below,
Which perish in the rest, but in them were
Inherent- what we mortals call romantic,
And always envy, though we deem it frantic.

This is in others a factitious state,
An opium dream of too much youth and reading,
But was in them their nature or their fate:
No novels e'er had set their young hearts bleeding,
For Haidee's knowledge was by no means great,
And Juan was a boy of saintly breeding;
So that there was no reason for their loves
More than for those of nightingales or doves.

They gazed upon the sunset; 't is an hour
Dear unto all, but dearest to their eyes,
For it had made them what they were: the power
Of love had first o'erwhelm'd them from such skies,
When happiness had been their only dower,
And twilight saw them link'd in passion's ties;
Charm'd with each other, all things charm'd that brought
The past still welcome as the present thought.

I know not why, but in that hour to-night,
Even as they gazed, a sudden tremor came,
And swept, as 't were, across their hearts' delight,
Like the wind o'er a harp-string, or a flame,
When one is shook in sound, and one in sight;
And thus some boding flash'd through either frame,
And call'd from Juan's breast a faint low sigh,
While one new tear arose in Haidee's eye.

That large black prophet eye seem'd to dilate
And follow far the disappearing sun,
As if their last day! of a happy date
With his broad, bright, and dropping orb were gone;
Juan gazed on her as to ask his fate-
He felt a grief, but knowing cause for none,
His glance inquired of hers for some excuse
For feelings causeless, or at least abstruse.

She turn'd to him, and smiled, but in that sort
Which makes not others smile; then turn'd aside:
Whatever feeling shook her, it seem'd short,
And master'd by her wisdom or her pride;
When Juan spoke, too- it might be in sport-
Of this their mutual feeling, she replied-
'If it should be so,- but- it cannot be-
Or I at least shall not survive to see.'

Juan would question further, but she press'd

His lip to hers, and silenced him with this,
And then dismiss'd the omen from her breast,
Defying augury with that fond kiss;
And no doubt of all methods 't is the best:
Some people prefer wine- 't is not amiss;
I have tried both; so those who would a part take
May choose between the headache and the heartache.

One of the two, according to your choice,
Woman or wine, you 'll have to undergo;
Both maladies are taxes on our joys:
But which to choose, I really hardly know;
And if I had to give a casting voice,
For both sides I could many reasons show,
And then decide, without great wrong to either,
It were much better to have both than neither.

Juan and Haidee gazed upon each other
With swimming looks of speechless tenderness,
Which mix'd all feelings, friend, child, lover, brother,
All that the best can mingle and express
When two pure hearts are pour'd in one another,
And love too much, and yet can not love less;
But almost sanctify the sweet excess
By the immortal wish and power to bless.

Mix'd in each other's arms, and heart in heart,
Why did they not then die?- they had lived too long
Should an hour come to bid them breathe apart;
Years could but bring them cruel things or wrong;
The world was not for them, nor the world's art
For beings passionate as Sappho's song;
Love was born with them, in them, so intense,
It was their very spirit- not a sense.

They should have lived together deep in woods,
Unseen as sings the nightingale; they were
Unfit to mix in these thick solitudes
Call'd social, haunts of Hate, and Vice, and Care:
How lonely every freeborn creature broods!
The sweetest song-birds nestle in a pair;
The eagle soars alone; the gull and crow
Flock o'er their carrion, just like men below.

Now pillow'd cheek to cheek, in loving sleep,
Haidee and Juan their siesta took,
A gentle slumber, but it was not deep,
For ever and anon a something shook
Juan, and shuddering o'er his frame would creep;
And Haidee's sweet lips murmur'd like a brook
A wordless music, and her face so fair
Stirr'd with her dream, as rose-leaves with the air.

Or as the stirring of a deep dear stream
Within an Alpine hollow, when the wind
Walks o'er it, was she shaken by the dream,
The mystical usurper of the mind-
O'erpowering us to be whate'er may seem
Good to the soul which we no more can bind;
Strange state of being! (for 't is still to be)
Senseless to feel, and with seal'd eyes to see.

She dream'd of being alone on the sea-shore,
Chain'd to a rock; she knew not how, but stir
She could not from the spot, and the loud roar
Grew, and each wave rose roughly, threatening her;
And o'er her upper lip they seem'd to pour,
Until she sobb'd for breath, and soon they were
Foaming o'er her lone head, so fierce and high-
Each broke to drown her, yet she could not die.

Anon- she was released, and then she stray'd
O'er the sharp shingles with her bleeding feet,
And stumbled almost every step she made;
And something roll'd before her in a sheet,
Which she must still pursue howe'er afraid:
'T was white and indistinct, nor stopp'd to meet
Her glance nor grasp, for still she gazed, and grasp'd,
And ran, but it escaped her as she clasp'd.

The dream changed:- in a cave she stood, its walls
Were hung with marble icicles, the work
Of ages on its water-fretted halls,
Where waves might wash, and seals might breed and lurk;
Her hair was dripping, and the very balls
Of her black eyes seem'd turn'd to tears, and mirk
The sharp rocks look'd below each drop they caught,
Which froze to marble as it fell,- she thought.

And wet, and cold, and lifeless at her feet,
Pale as the foam that froth'd on his dead brow,
Which she essay'd in vain to clear (how sweet
Were once her cares, how idle seem'd they now!),
Lay Juan, nor could aught renew the beat
Of his quench'd heart; and the sea dirges low
Rang in her sad ears like a mermaid's song,
And that brief dream appear'd a life too long.

And gazing on the dead, she thought his face
Faded, or alter'd into something new-
Like to her father's features, till each trace-
More like and like to Lambro's aspect grew-
With all his keen worn look and Grecian grace;
And starting, she awoke, and what to view?

Oh! Powers of Heaven! what dark eye meets she there?
'T is- 't is her father's- fix'd upon the pair!

Then shrieking, she arose, and shrieking fell,
With joy and sorrow, hope and fear, to see
Him whom she deem'd a habitant where dwell
The ocean-buried, risen from death, to be
Perchance the death of one she loved too well:
Dear as her father had been to Haidee,
It was a moment of that awful kind-
I have seen such- but must not call to mind.

Up Juan sprung to Haidee's bitter shriek,
And caught her falling, and from off the wall
Snatch'd down his sabre, in hot haste to wreak
Vengeance on him who was the cause of all:
Then Lambro, who till now forbore to speak,
Smiled scornfully, and said, 'Within my call,
A thousand scimitars await the word;
Put up, young man, put up your silly sword.'

And Haidee clung around him; 'Juan, 't is-
'T is Lambro- 't is my father! Kneel with me-
He will forgive us- yes- it must be- yes.
Oh! dearest father, in this agony
Of pleasure and of pain- even while I kiss
Thy garment's hem with transport, can it be
That doubt should mingle with my filial joy?
Deal with me as thou wilt, but spare this boy.'

High and inscrutable the old man stood,
Calm in his voice, and calm within his eye-
Not always signs with him of calmest mood:
He look'd upon her, but gave no reply;
Then turn'd to Juan, in whose cheek the blood
Oft came and went, as there resolved to die;
In arms, at least, he stood, in act to spring
On the first foe whom Lambro's call might bring.

'Young man, your sword;' so Lambro once more said:
Juan replied, 'Not while this arm is free.'
The old man's cheek grew pale, but not with dread,
And drawing from his belt a pistol, he
Replied, 'Your blood be then on your own head.'
Then look'd close at the flint, as if to see
'T was fresh- for he had lately used the lock-
And next proceeded quietly to cock.

It has a strange quick jar upon the ear,
That cocking of a pistol, when you know
A moment more will bring the sight to bear
Upon your person, twelve yards off, or so;

A gentlemanly distance, not too near,
If you have got a former friend for foe;
But after being fired at once or twice,
The ear becomes more Irish, and less nice.

Lambro presented, and one instant more
Had stopp'd this Canto, and Don Juan's breath,
When Haidee threw herself her boy before;
Stern as her sire: 'On me,' she cried, 'let death
Descend- the fault is mine; this fatal shore
He found- but sought not. I have pledged my faith;
I love him- I will die with him: I knew
Your nature's firmness- know your daughter's too.'

A minute past, and she had been all tears,
And tenderness, and infancy; but now
She stood as one who champion'd human fears-
Pale, statue-like, and stern, she wo'd the blow;
And tall beyond her sex, and their compeers,
She drew up to her height, as if to show
A fairer mark; and with a fix'd eye scann'd
Her father's face- but never stopp'd his hand.

He gazed on her, and she on him; 't was strange
How like they look'd! the expression was the same;
Serenely savage, with a little change
In the large dark eye's mutual-darted flame;
For she, too, was as one who could avenge,
If cause should be- a lioness, though tame.
Her father's blood before her father's face
Boil'd up, and proved her truly of his race.

I said they were alike, their features and
Their stature, differing but in sex and years;
Even to the delicacy of their hand
There was resemblance, such as true blood wears;
And now to see them, thus divided, stand
In fix'd ferocity, when joyous tears
And sweet sensations should have welcomed both,
Show what the passions are in their full growth.

The father paused a moment, then withdrew
His weapon, and replaced it; but stood still,
And looking on her, as to look her through,
'Not I,' he said, 'have sought this stranger's ill;
Not I have made this desolation: few
Would bear such outrage, and forbear to kill;
But I must do my duty- how thou hast
Done thine, the present vouches for the past.

'Let him disarm; or, by my father's head,
His own shall roll before you like a ball!'

He raised his whistle, as the word he said,
And blew; another answer'd to the call,
And rushing in disorderly, though led,
And arm'd from boot to turban, one and all,
Some twenty of his train came, rank on rank;
He gave the word, - 'Arrest or slay the Frank.'

Then, with a sudden movement, he withdrew
His daughter; while compress'd within his clasp,
'Twixt her and Juan interposed the crew;
In vain she struggled in her father's grasp-
His arms were like a serpent's coil: then flew
Upon their prey, as darts an angry asp,
The file of pirates; save the foremost, who
Had fallen, with his right shoulder half cut through.

The second had his cheek laid open; but
The third, a wary, cool old sworder, took
The blows upon his cutlass, and then put
His own well in; so well, ere you could look,
His man was floor'd, and helpless at his foot,
With the blood running like a little brook
From two smart sabre gashes, deep and red-
One on the arm, the other on the head.

And then they bound him where he fell, and bore
Juan from the apartment: with a sign
Old Lambro bade them take him to the shore,
Where lay some ships which were to sail at nine.
They laid him in a boat, and plied the oar
Until they reach'd some galliots, placed in line;
On board of one of these, and under hatches,
They stow'd him, with strict orders to the watches.

The world is full of strange vicissitudes,
And here was one exceedingly unpleasant:
A gentleman so rich in the world's goods,
Handsome and young, enjoying all the present,
Just at the very time when he least broods
On such a thing is suddenly to sea sent,
Wounded and chain'd, so that he cannot move,
And all because a lady fell in love.

Here I must leave him, for I grow pathetic,
Moved by the Chinese nymph of tears, green tea!
Than whom Cassandra was not more prophetic;
For if my pure libations exceed three,
I feel my heart become so sympathetic,
That I must have recourse to black Bohea:
'T is pity wine should be so deleterious,
For tea and coffee leave us much more serious,

Unless when qualified with thee, Cogniac!
Sweet Naiad of the Phlegethontic rill!
Ah! why the liver wilt thou thus attack,
And make, like other nymphs, thy lovers ill?
I would take refuge in weak punch, but rack
(In each sense of the word), whene'er I fill
My mild and midnight beakers to the brim,
Wakes me next morning with its synonym.

I leave Don Juan for the present, safe-
Not sound, poor fellow, but severely wounded;
Yet could his corporal pangs amount to half
Of those with which his Haidee's bosom bounded?
She was not one to weep, and rave, and chafe,
And then give way, subdued because surrounded;
Her mother was a Moorish maid, from Fez,
Where all is Eden, or a wilderness.

There the large olive rains its amber store
In marble fonts; there grain, and flower, and fruit,
Gush from the earth until the land runs o'er;
But there, too, many a poison-tree has root,
And midnight listens to the lion's roar,
And long, long deserts scorch the camel's foot,
Or heaving whelm the helpless caravan;
And as the soil is, so the heart of man.

Afric is all the sun's, and as her earth
Her human day is kindled; full of power
For good or evil, burning from its birth,
The Moorish blood partakes the planet's hour,
And like the soil beneath it will bring forth:
Beauty and love were Haidee's mother's dower;
But her large dark eye show'd deep Passion's force,
Though sleeping like a lion near a source.

Her daughter, temper'd with a milder ray,
Like summer clouds all silvery, smooth, and fair,
Till slowly charged with thunder they display
Terror to earth, and tempest to the air,
Had held till now her soft and milky way;
But overwrought with passion and despair,
The fire burst forth from her Numidian veins,
Even as the Simoom sweeps the blasted plains.

The last sight which she saw was Juan's gore,
And he himself o'ermaster'd and cut down;
His blood was running on the very floor
Where late he trod, her beautiful, her own;
Thus much she view'd an instant and no more,-
Her struggles ceased with one convulsive groan;
On her sire's arm, which until now scarce held

Her writhing, fell she like a cedar fell'd.

A vein had burst, and her sweet lips' pure dyes
Were dabbled with the deep blood which ran o'er;
And her head droop'd as when the lily lies
O'ercharged with rain: her summon'd handmaids bore
Their lady to her couch with gushing eyes;
Of herbs and cordials they produced their store,
But she defied all means they could employ,
Like one life could not hold, nor death destroy.

Days lay she in that state unchanged, though chill-
With nothing livid, still her lips were red;
She had no pulse, but death seem'd absent still;
No hideous sign proclaim'd her surely dead;
Corruption came not in each mind to kill
All hope; to look upon her sweet face bred
New thoughts of life, for it seem'd full of soul-
She had so much, earth could not claim the whole.

The ruling passion, such as marble shows
When exquisitely chisell'd, still lay there,
But fix'd as marble's unchanged aspect throws
O'er the fair Venus, but for ever fair;
O'er the Laocoon's all eternal throes,
And ever-dying Gladiator's air,
Their energy like life forms all their fame,
Yet looks not life, for they are still the same.

She woke at length, but not as sleepers wake,
Rather the dead, for life seem'd something new,
A strange sensation which she must partake
Perforce, since whatsoever met her view
Struck not on memory, though a heavy ache
Lay at her heart, whose earliest beat still true
Brought back the sense of pain without the cause,
For, for a while, the furies made a pause.

She look'd on many a face with vacant eye,
On many a token without knowing what;
She saw them watch her without asking why,
And reck'd not who around her pillow sat;
Not speechless, though she spoke not; not a sigh
Relieved her thoughts; dull silence and quick chat
Were tried in vain by those who served; she gave
No sign, save breath, of having left the grave.

Her handmaids tended, but she heeded not;
Her father watch'd, she turn'd her eyes away;
She recognized no being, and no spot,
However dear or cherish'd in their day;
They changed from room to room- but all forgot-

Gentle, but without memory she lay;
At length those eyes, which they would fain be weaning
Back to old thoughts, wax'd full of fearful meaning.

And then a slave bethought her of a harp;
The harper came, and tuned his instrument;
At the first notes, irregular and sharp,
On him her flashing eyes a moment bent,
Then to the wall she turn'd as if to warp
Her thoughts from sorrow through her heart re-sent;
And he begun a long low island song
Of ancient days, ere tyranny grew strong.

Anon her thin wan fingers beat the wall
In time to his old tune; he changed the theme,
And sung of love; the fierce name struck through all
Her recollection; on her flash'd the dream
Of what she was, and is, if ye could call
To be so being; in a gushing stream
The tears rush'd forth from her o'erclouded brain,
Like mountain mists at length dissolved in rain.

Short solace, vain relief!- thought came too quick,
And whirl'd her brain to madness; she arose
As one who ne'er had dwelt among the sick,
And flew at all she met, as on her foes;
But no one ever heard her speak or shriek,
Although her paroxysm drew towards its dose;-
Hers was a phrensy which disdain'd to rave,
Even when they smote her, in the hope to save.

Yet she betray'd at times a gleam of sense;
Nothing could make her meet her father's face,
Though on all other things with looks intense
She gazed, but none she ever could retrace;
Food she refused, and raiment; no pretence
Avail'd for either; neither change of place,
Nor time, nor skill, nor remedy, could give her
Senses to sleep- the power seem'd gone for ever.

Twelve days and nights she wither'd thus; at last,
Without a groan, or sigh, or glance, to show
A parting pang, the spirit from her past:
And they who watch'd her nearest could not know
The very instant, till the change that cast
Her sweet face into shadow, dull and slow,
Glazed o'er her eyes- the beautiful, the black-
Oh! to possess such lustre- and then lack!

She died, but not alone; she held within
A second principle of life, which might
Have dawn'd a fair and sinless child of sin;

But closed its little being without light,
And went down to the grave unborn, wherein
Blossom and bough lie wither'd with one blight;
In vain the dews of Heaven descend above
The bleeding flower and blasted fruit of love.

Thus lived- thus died she; never more on her
Shall sorrow light, or shame. She was not made
Through years or moons the inner weight to bear,
Which colder hearts endure till they are laid
By age in earth: her days and pleasures were
Brief, but delightful- such as had not staid
Long with her destiny; but she sleeps well
By the sea-shore, whereon she loved to dwell.

That isle is now all desolate and bare,
Its dwellings down, its tenants pass'd away;
None but her own and father's grave is there,
And nothing outward tells of human clay;
Ye could not know where lies a thing so fair,
No stone is there to show, no tongue to say
What was; no dirge, except the hollow sea's,
Mourns o'er the beauty of the Cyclades.

But many a Greek maid in a loving song
Sighs o'er her name; and many an islander
With her sire's story makes the night less long;
Valour was his, and beauty dwelt with her:
If she loved rashly, her life paid for wrong-
A heavy price must all pay who thus err,
In some shape; let none think to fly the danger,
For soon or late Love is his own avenger.

But let me change this theme which grows too sad,
And lay this sheet of sorrows on the shelf;
I don't much like describing people mad,
For fear of seeming rather touch'd myself-
Besides, I 've no more on this head to add;
And as my Muse is a capricious elf,
We 'll put about, and try another tack
With Juan, left half-kill'd some stanzas back.

Wounded and fetter'd, 'cabin'd, cribb'd, confined,'
Some days and nights elapsed before that he
Could altogether call the past to mind;
And when he did, he found himself at sea,
Sailing six knots an hour before the wind;
The shores of Ilion lay beneath their lee-
Another time he might have liked to see 'em,
But now was not much pleased with Cape Sigaeum.

There, on the green and village-cotted hill, is

(Flank'd by the Hellespont and by the sea)
Entomb'd the bravest of the brave, Achilles;
They say so (Bryant says the contrary):
And further downward, tall and towering still, is
The tumulus- of whom? Heaven knows! 't may be
Patroclus, Ajax, or Protesilaus-
All heroes, who if living still would slay us.

High barrows, without marble or a name,
A vast, untill'd, and mountain-skirted plain,
And Ida in the distance, still the same,
And old Scamander (if 't is he) remain;
The situation seems still form'd for fame-
A hundred thousand men might fight again
With case; but where I sought for Ilion's walls,
The quiet sheep feeds, and the tortoise crawls;

Troops of untended horses; here and there
Some little hamlets, with new names uncouth;
Some shepherds (unlike Paris) led to stare
A moment at the European youth
Whom to the spot their school-boy feelings bear;
A turk, with beads in hand and pipe in mouth,
Extremely taken with his own religion,
Are what I found there- but the devil a Phrygian.

Don Juan, here permitted to emerge
From his dull cabin, found himself a slave;
Forlorn, and gazing on the deep blue surge,
O'ershadow'd there by many a hero's grave;
Weak still with loss of blood, he scarce could urge
A few brief questions; and the answers gave
No very satisfactory information
About his past or present situation.

He saw some fellow captives, who appear'd
To be Italians, as they were in fact;
From them, at least, their destiny he heard,
Which was an odd one; a troop going to act
In Sicily (all singers, duly rear'd
In their vocation) had not been attack'd
In sailing from Livorno by the pirate,
But sold by the impresario at no high rate.

By one of these, the buffo of the party,
Juan was told about their curious case;
For although destined to the Turkish mart, he
Still kept his spirits up- at least his face;
The little fellow really look'd quite hearty,
And bore him with some gaiety and grace,
Showing a much more reconciled demeanour,
Than did the prima donna and the tenor.

In a few words he told their hapless story,
Saying, 'Our Machiavellian impresario,
Making a signal off some promontory,
Hail'd a strange brig- Corpo di Caio Mario!
We were transferr'd on board her in a hurry,
Without a Single scudo of salario;
But if the Sultan has a taste for song,
We will revive our fortunes before long.

'The prima donna, though a little old,
And haggard with a dissipated life,
And subject, when the house is thin, to cold,
Has some good notes; and then the tenor's wife,
With no great voice, is pleasing to behold;
Last carnival she made a deal of strife
By carrying off Count Cesare Cicogna
From an old Roman princess at Bologna.

'And then there are the dancers; there 's the Nini,
With more than one profession, gains by all;
Then there 's that laughing slut the Pelegrini,
She, too, was fortunate last carnival,
And made at least five hundred good zucchini,
But spends so fast, she has not now a paul;
And then there 's the Grotesca- such a dancer!
Where men have souls or bodies she must answer.

'As for the figuranti, they are like
The rest of all that tribe; with here and there
A pretty person, which perhaps may strike,
The rest are hardly fitted for a fair;
There 's one, though tall and stiffer than a pike,
Yet has a sentimental kind of air
Which might go far, but she don't dance with vigour;
The more 's the pity, with her face and figure.

'As for the men, they are a middling set;
The musico is but a crack'd old basin,
But being qualified in one way yet,
May the seraglio do to set his face in,
And as a servant some preferment get;
His singing I no further trust can place in:
From all the Pope makes yearly 't would perplex
To find three perfect pipes of the third sex.

'The tenor's voice is spoilt by affectation,
And for the bass, the beast can only bellow;
In fact, he had no singing education,
An ignorant, noteless, timeless, tuneless fellow;
But being the prima donna's near relation,
Who swore his voice was very rich and mellow,

They hired him, though to hear him you 'd believe
An ass was practising recitative.

"T would not become myself to dwell upon
My own merits, and though young- I see, Sir- you
Have got a travell'd air, which speaks you one
To whom the opera is by no means new:
You 've heard of Raucocanti?- I 'm the man;
The time may come when you may hear me too;
You was not last year at the fair of Lugo,
But next, when I 'm engaged to sing there- do go.

'Our baritone I almost had forgot,
A pretty lad, but bursting with conceit;
With graceful action, science not a jot,
A voice of no great compass, and not sweet,
He always is complaining of his lot,
Forsooth, scarce fit for ballads in the street;
In lovers' parts his passion more to breathe,
Having no heart to show, he shows his teeth.'

Here Raucocanti's eloquent recital
Was interrupted by the pirate crew,
Who came at stated moments to invite all
The captives back to their sad berths; each threw
A rueful glance upon the waves (which bright all
From the blue skies derived a double blue,
Dancing all free and happy in the sun),
And then went down the hatchway one by one.

They heard next day- that in the Dardanelles,
Waiting for his Sublimity's firman,
The most imperative of sovereign spells,
Which every body does without who can,
More to secure them in their naval cells,
Lady to lady, well as man to man,
Were to be chain'd and lotted out per couple,
For the slave market of Constantinople.

It seems when this allotment was made out,
There chanced to be an odd male, and odd female,
Who (after some discussion and some doubt,
If the soprano might be deem'd to be male,
They placed him o'er the women as a scout)
Were link'd together, and it happen'd the male
Was Juan,- who, an awkward thing at his age,
Pair'd off with a Bacchante blooming visage.

With Raucocanti lucklessly was chain'd
The tenor; these two hated with a hate
Found only on the stage, and each more pain'd
With this his tuneful neighbour than his fate;

Sad strife arose, for they were so cross-grain'd,
Instead of bearing up without debate,
That each pull'd different ways with many an oath,
'Arcades ambo,' id est- blackguards both.

Juan's companion was a Romagnole,
But bred within the March of old Ancona,
With eyes that look'd into the very soul
(And other chief points of a 'bella donna'),
Bright- and as black and burning as a coal;
And through her dear brunette complexion shone
Great wish to please- a most attractive dower,
Especially when added to the power.

But all that power was wasted upon him,
For sorrow o'er each sense held stern command;
Her eye might flash on his, but found it dim;
And though thus chain'd, as natural her hand
Touch'd his, nor that- nor any handsome limb
(And she had some not easy to withstand)
Could stir his pulse, or make his faith feel brittle;
Perhaps his recent wounds might help a little.

No matter; we should ne'er too much enquire,
But facts are facts: no knight could be more true,
And firmer faith no ladye-love desire;
We will omit the proofs, save one or two:
'T is said no one in hand 'can hold a fire
By thought of frosty Caucasus;' but few,
I really think; yet Juan's then ordeal
Was more triumphant, and not much less real.

Here I might enter on a chaste description,
Having withstood temptation in my youth,
But hear that several people take exception
At the first two books having too much truth;
Therefore I 'll make Don Juan leave the ship soon,
Because the publisher declares, in sooth,
Through needles' eyes it easier for the camel is
To pass, than those two cantos into families.

'T is all the same to me; I 'm fond of yielding,
And therefore leave them to the purer page
Of Smollett, Prior, Ariosto, Fielding,
Who say strange things for so correct an age;
I once had great alacrity in wielding
My pen, and liked poetic war to wage,
And recollect the time when all this cant
Would have provoked remarks which now it shan't.

As boys love rows, my boyhood liked a squabble;
But at this hour I wish to part in peace,

Leaving such to the literary rabble:
Whether my verse's fame be doom'd to cease
While the right hand which wrote it still is able,
Or of some centuries to take a lease,
The grass upon my grave will grow as long,
And sigh to midnight winds, but not to song.

Of poets who come down to us through distance
Of time and tongues, the foster-babes of Fame,
Life seems the smallest portion of existence;
Where twenty ages gather o'er a name,
'T is as a snowball which derives assistance
From every flake, and yet rolls on the same,
Even till an iceberg it may chance to grow;
But, after all, 't is nothing but cold snow.

And so great names are nothing more than nominal,
And love of glory 's but an airy lust,
Too often in its fury overcoming all
Who would as 't were identify their dust
From out the wide destruction, which, entombing all,
Leaves nothing till 'the coming of the just'-
Save change: I 've stood upon Achilles' tomb,
And heard Troy doubted; time will doubt of Rome.

The very generations of the dead
Are swept away, and tomb inherits tomb,
Until the memory of an age is fled,
And, buried, sinks beneath its offspring's doom:
Where are the epitaphs our fathers read?
Save a few glean'd from the sepulchral gloom
Which once-named myriads nameless lie beneath,
And lose their own in universal death.

I canter by the spot each afternoon
Where perish'd in his fame the hero-boy,
Who lived too long for men, but died too soon
For human vanity, the young De Foix!
A broken pillar, not uncouthly hewn,
But which neglect is hastening to destroy,
Records Ravenna's carnage on its face,
While weeds and ordure rankle round the base.

I pass each day where Dante's bones are laid:
A little cupola, more neat than solemn,
Protects his dust, but reverence here is paid
To the bard's tomb, and not the warrior's column.
The time must come, when both alike decay'd,
The chieftain's trophy, and the poet's volume,
Will sink where lie the songs and wars of earth,
Before Pelides' death, or Homer's birth.

With human blood that column was cemented,
With human filth that column is defiled,
As if the peasant's coarse contempt were vented
To show his loathing of the spot he soil'd:
Thus is the trophy used, and thus lamented
Should ever be those blood-hounds, from whose wild
Instinct of gore and glory earth has known
Those sufferings Dante saw in hell alone.

Yet there will still be bards: though fame is smoke,
Its fumes are frankincense to human thought;
And the unquiet feelings, which first woke
Song in the world, will seek what then they sought;
As on the beach the waves at last are broke,
Thus to their extreme verge the passions brought
Dash into poetry, which is but passion,
Or at least was so ere it grew a fashion.

If in the course of such a life as was
At once adventurous and contemplative,
Men, who partake all passions as they pass,
Acquire the deep and bitter power to give
Their images again as in a glass,
And in such colours that they seem to live;
You may do right forbidding them to show 'em,
But spoil (I think) a very pretty poem.

Oh! ye, who make the fortunes of all books!
Benign Ceruleans of the second sex!
Who advertise new poems by your looks,
Your 'imprimatur' will ye not annex?
What! must I go to the oblivious cooks,
Those Cornish plunderers of Parnassian wrecks?
Ah! must I then the only minstrel be,
Proscribed from tasting your Castalian tea!

What! can I prove 'a lion' then no more?
A ball-room bard, a foolscap, hot-press darling?
To bear the compliments of many a bore,
And sigh, 'I can't get out,' like Yorick's starling;
Why then I 'll swear, as poet Wordy swore
(Because the world won't read him, always snarling),
That taste is gone, that fame is but a lottery,
Drawn by the blue-coat misses of a coterie.

Oh! 'darkly, deeply, beautifully blue,'
As some one somewhere sings about the sky,
And I, ye learned ladies, say of you;
They say your stockings are so (Heaven knows why,
I have examined few pair of that hue);
Blue as the garters which serenely lie
Round the Patrician left-legs, which adorn

The festal midnight, and the levee morn.

Yet some of you are most seraphic creatures-
But times are alter'd since, a rhyming lover,
You read my stanzas, and I read your features:
And- but no matter, all those things are over;
Still I have no dislike to learned natures,
For sometimes such a world of virtues cover;
I knew one woman of that purple school,
The loveliest, chaste, best, but- quite a fool.

Humboldt, 'the first of travellers,' but not
The last, if late accounts be accurate,
Invented, by some name I have forgot,
As well as the sublime discovery's date,
An airy instrument, with which he sought
To ascertain the atmospheric state,
By measuring 'the intensity of blue:'
Oh, Lady Daphne! let me measure you!

But to the narrative:- The vessel bound
With slaves to sell off in the capital,
After the usual process, might be found
At anchor under the seraglio wall;
Her cargo, from the plague being safe and sound,
Were landed in the market, one and all,
And there with Georgians, Russians, and Circassians,
Bought up for different purposes and passions.

Some went off dearly; fifteen hundred dollars
For one Circassian, a sweet girl, were given,
Warranted virgin; beauty's brightest colours
Had deck'd her out in all the hues of heaven:
Her sale sent home some disappointed bawlers,
Who bade on till the hundreds reach'd eleven;
But when the offer went beyond, they knew
'T was for the Sultan, and at once withdrew.

Twelve negresses from Nubia brought a price
Which the West Indian market scarce would bring;
Though Wilberforce, at last, has made it twice
What 't was ere Abolition; and the thing
Need not seem very wonderful, for vice
Is always much more splendid than a king:
The virtues, even the most exalted, Charity,
Are saving- vice spares nothing for a rarity.

But for the destiny of this young troop,
How some were bought by pachas, some by Jews,
How some to burdens were obliged to stoop,
And others rose to the command of crews
As renegadoes; while in hapless group,

Hoping no very old vizier might choose,
The females stood, as one by one they pick'd 'em,
To make a mistress, or fourth wife, or victim:

All this must be reserved for further song;
Also our hero's lot, how'er unpleasant
(Because this Canto has become too long),
Must be postponed discreetly for the present;
I 'm sensible redundancy is wrong,
But could not for the muse of me put less in 't:
And now delay the progress of Don Juan,
Till what is call'd in Ossian the fifth Juan.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Don Juan: Canto The Ninth

Oh, Wellington! (or 'Villainton'--for Fame
Sounds the heroic syllables both ways;
France could not even conquer your great name,
But punn'd it down to this facetious phrase--
Beating or beaten she will laugh the same),
You have obtain'd great pensions and much praise:
Glory like yours should any dare gainsay,
Humanity would rise, and thunder 'Nay!'

I don't think that you used Kinnaird quite well
In Marinet's affair--in fact, 'twas shabby,
And like some other things won't do to tell
Upon your tomb in Westminster's old abbey.
Upon the rest 'tis not worth while to dwell,
Such tales being for the tea-hours of some tabby;
But though your years as man tend fast to zero,
In fact your grace is still but a young hero.

Though Britain owes (and pays you too) so much,
Yet Europe doubtless owes you greatly more:
You have repair'd Legitimacy's crutch,
A prop not quite so certain as before:
The Spanish, and the French, as well as Dutch,
Have seen, and felt, how strongly you restore;
And Waterloo has made the world your debtor
(I wish your bards would sing it rather better).

You are 'the best of cut-throats:'--do not start;
The phrase is Shakspeare's, and not misapplied:
War's a brain-spattering, windpipe-slitting art,
Unless her cause by right be sanctified.
If you have acted once a generous part,
The world, not the world's masters, will decide,
And I shall be delighted to learn who,
Save you and yours, have gain'd by Waterloo?

I am no flatterer- you 've supp'd full of flattery:
They say you like it too- 't is no great wonder.
He whose whole life has been assault and battery,
At last may get a little tired of thunder;
And swallowing eulogy much more than satire, he
May like being praised for every lucky blunder,
Call'd 'Saviour of the Nations'--not yet saved,
And 'Europe's Liberator'--still enslaved.

I've done. Now go and dine from off the plate
Presented by the Prince of the Brazils,
And send the sentinel before your gate
A slice or two from your luxurious meals:
He fought, but has not fed so well of late.
Some hunger, too, they say the people feels:--
There is no doubt that you deserve your ration,

But pray give back a little to the nation.

I don't mean to reflect--a man so great as
You, my lord duke! is far above reflection:
The high Roman fashion, too, of Cincinnatus,
With modern history has but small connection:
Though as an Irishman you love potatoes,
You need not take them under your direction;
And half a million for your Sabine farm
Is rather dear!--I'm sure I mean no harm.

Great men have always scorn'd great recompenses:
Epaminondas saved his Thebes, and died,
Not leaving even his funeral expenses:
George Washington had thanks and nought beside,
Except the all-cloudless glory (which few men's is
To free his country: Pitt too had his pride,
And as a high-soul'd minister of state is
Renown'd for ruining Great Britain gratis.

Never had mortal man such opportunity,
Except Napoleon, or abused it more:
You might have freed fallen Europe from the unity
Of tyrants, and been blest from shore to shore:
And now--what is your fame? Shall the Muse tune it ye?
Now--that the rabble's first vain shouts are o'er?
Go! hear it in your famish'd country's cries!
Behold the world! and curse your victories!

As these new cantos touch on warlike feats,
To you the unflattering Muse deigns to inscribe
Truths, that you will not read in the Gazettes,
But which 'tis time to teach the hireling tribe
Who fatten on their country's gore, and debts,
Must be recited, and- without a bribe.
You did great things; but not being great in mind,
Have left undone the greatest- and mankind.

Death laughs--Go ponder o'er the skeleton
With which men image out the unknown thing
That hides the past world, like to a set sun
Which still elsewhere may rouse a brighter spring--
Death laughs at all you weep for:--look upon
This hourly dread of all! whose threaten'd sting
Turns life to terror, even though in its sheath:
Mark how its lipless mouth grins without breath!

Mark how it laughs and scorns at all you are!
And yet was what you are: from ear to ear
It laughs not--there is now no fleshy bar
So call'd; the Antic long hath ceased to hear,
But still he smiles; and whether near or far,

He strips from man that mantle (far more dear
Than even the tailor's), his incarnate skin,
White, black, or copper--the dead bones will grin.

And thus Death laughs,--it is sad merriment,
But still it is so; and with such example
Why should not Life be equally content
With his superior, in a smile to trample
Upon the nothings which are daily spent
Like bubbles on an ocean much less ample
Than the eternal deluge, which devours
Suns as rays--worlds like atoms--years like hours?

'To be, or not to be? that is the question,'
Says Shakspeare, who just now is much in fashion.
I am neither Alexander nor Hephaestion,
Nor ever had for abstract fame much passion;
But would much rather have a sound digestion
Than Buonaparte's cancer: could I dash on
Through fifty victories to shame or fame-
Without a stomach what were a good name?

'O dura ilia messorum!'--'Oh
Ye rigid guts of reapers!' I translate
For the great benefit of those who know
What indigestion is--that inward fate
Which makes all Styx through one small liver flow.
A peasant's sweat is worth his lord's estate:
Let this one toil for bread- that rack for rent,
He who sleeps best may be the most content.

'To be, or not to be?'--Ere I decide,
I should be glad to know that which is being?
'T is true we speculate both far and wide,
And deem, because we see, we are all-seeing:
For my part, I 'll enlist on neither side,
Until I see both sides for once agreeing.
For me, I sometimes think that life is death,
Rather than life a mere affair of breath.

'Que scais-je?' was the motto of Montaigne,
As also of the first academicians:
That all is dubious which man may attain,
Was one of their most favourite positions.
There's no such thing as certainty, that's plain
As any of Mortality's conditions;
So little do we know what we're about in
This world, I doubt if doubt itself be doubting.

It is a pleasant voyage perhaps to float,
Like Pyrrho, on a sea of speculation;
But what if carrying sail capsize the boat?

Your wise men don't know much of navigation;
And swimming long in the abyss of thought
Is apt to tire: a calm and shallow station
Well nigh the shore, where one stoops down and gathers
Some pretty shell, is best for moderate bathers.

'But heaven,' as Cassio says, 'is above all--
No more of this, then,--let us pray!' We have
Souls to save, since Eve's slip and Adam's fall,
Which tumbled all mankind into the grave,
Besides fish, beasts, and birds. 'The sparrow's fall
Is special providence,' though how it gave
Offence, we know not; probably it perch'd
Upon the tree which Eve so fondly search'd.

Oh, ye immortal gods! what is theogony?
Oh, thou too, mortal man! what is philanthropy?
Oh, world! which was and is, what is cosmogony?
Some people have accused me of misanthropy;
And yet I know no more than the mahogany
That forms this desk, of what they mean; lykanthropy
I comprehend, for without transformation
Men become wolves on any slight occasion.

But I, the mildest, meekest of mankind,
Like Moses, or Melancthon, who have ne'er
Done anything exceedingly unkind,--
And (though I could not now and then forbear
Following the bent of body or of mind)
Have always had a tendency to spare,--
Why do they call me misanthrope? Because
They hate me, not I them.--and here we'll pause.

'Tis time we should proceed with our good poem,--
For I maintain that it is really good,
Not only in the body but the proem,
However little both are understood
Just now,--but by and by the Truth will show 'em
Herself in her sublimest attitude:
And till she doth, I fain must be content
To share her beauty and her banishment.

Our hero (and, I trust, kind reader, yours)
Was left upon his way to the chief city
Of the immortal Peter's polish'd boors
Who still have shown themselves more brave than witty.
I know its mighty empire now allures
Much flattery--even Voltaire's, and that's a pity.
For me, I deem an absolute autocrat
Not a barbarian, but much worse than that.

And I will war, at least in words (and--should

My chance so happen--deeds), with all who war
With Thought;--and of Thought's foes by far most rude,
Tyrants and sycophants have been and are.
I know not who may conquer: if I could
Have such a prescience, it should be no bar
To this my plain, sworn, downright detestation
Of every depotism in every nation.

It is not that I adulate the people:
Without me, there are demagogues enough,
And infidels, to pull down every steeple,
And set up in their stead some proper stuff.
Whether they may sow scepticism to reap hell,
As is the Christian dogma rather rough,
I do not know;--I wish men to be free
As much from mobs as kings- from you as me.

The consequence is, being of no party,
I shall offend all parties: never mind!
My words, at least, are more sincere and hearty
Than if I sought to sail before the wind.
He who has nought to gain can have small art: he
Who neither wishes to be bound nor bind,
May still expatriate freely, as will I,
Nor give my voice to slavery's jackal cry.

That's an appropriate simile, that jackal;--
I 've heard them in the Ephesian ruins howl
By night, as do that mercenary pack all,
Power's base purveyors, who for pickings prowl,
And scent the prey their masters would attack all.
However, the poor jackals are less foul
(As being the brave lions' keen providers)
Than human insects, catering for spiders.

Raise but an arm! 'twill brush their web away,
And without that, their poison and their claws
Are useless. Mind, good people! what I say
(Or rather peoples)--go on without pause!
The web of these tarantulas each day
Increases, till you shall make common cause:
None, save the Spanish fly and Attic bee,
As yet are strongly stinging to be free.

Don Juan, who had shone in the late slaughter,
Was left upon his way with the despatch,
Where blood was talk'd of as we would of water;
And carcasses that lay as thick as thatch
O'er silenced cities, merely served to flatter
Fair Catherine's pastime--who look'd on the match
Between these nations as a main of cocks,
Wherein she liked her own to stand like rocks.

And there in a kibitka he roll'd on
(A cursed sort of carriage without springs,
Which on rough roads leaves scarcely a whole bone),
Pondering on glory, chivalry, and kings,
And orders, and on all that he had done--
And wishing that post-horses had the wings
Of Pegasus, or at the least post-chaises
Had feathers, when a traveller on deep ways is.

At every jolt--and they were many--still
He turn'd his eyes upon his little charge,
As if he wish'd that she should fare less ill
Than he, in these sad highways left at large
To ruts, and flints, and lovely Nature's skill,
Who is no paviour, nor admits a barge
On her canals, where God takes sea and land,
Fishery and farm, both into his own hand.

At least he pays no rent, and has best right
To be the first of what we used to call
'Gentlemen farmer'--a race worn out quite,
Since lately there have been no rents at all,
And 'gentlemen' are in a piteous plight,
And 'farmers' can't raise Ceres from her fall:
She fell with Buonaparte--What strange thoughts
Arise, when we see emperors fall with oats!

But Juan turn'd his eyes on the sweet child
Whom he had saved from slaughter--what a trophy
Oh! ye who build up monuments, defiled
With gore, like Nadir Shah, that costive sophy,
Who, after leaving Hindostan a wild,
And scarce to the Mogul a cup of coffee
To soothe his woes withal, was slain, the sinner!
Because he could no more digest his dinner;--

Oh ye! or we! or he! or she! reflect,
That one life saved, especially if young
Or pretty, is a thing to recollect
Far sweeter than the greenest laurels sprung
From the manure of human clay, though deck'd
With all the praises ever said or sung:
Though hymn'd by every harp, unless within
Your heart joins chorus, Fame is but a din.

Oh! ye great authors luminous, voluminous!
Ye twice ten hundred thousand daily scribes!
Whose pamphlets, volumes, newspapers, illumine us!
Whether you're paid by government in bribes,
To prove the public debt is not consuming us--
Or, roughly treading on the 'courtier's kibes'

With clownish heel, your popular circulation
Feeds you by printing half the realm's starvation;--

Oh, ye great authors!--'Apropos des bottes,'--
I have forgotten what I meant to say,
As sometimes have been greater sages' lots;
'Twas something calculated to allay
All wrath in barracks, palaces, or cots:
Certes it would have been but thrown away,
And that's one comfort for my lost advice,
Although no doubt it was beyond all price.

But let it go:--it will one day be found
With other relics of 'a former world,'
When this world shall be former, underground,
Thrown topsy-turvy, twisted, crisp'd, and curl'd,
Baked, fried, or burnt, turn'd inside-out, or drown'd,
Like all the worlds before, which have been hurl'd
First out of, and then back again to chaos,
The superstratum which will overlay us.

So Cuvier says;--and then shall come again
Unto the new creation, rising out
From our old crash, some mystic, ancient strain
Of things destroy'd and left in airy doubt:
Like to the notions we now entertain
Of Titans, giants, fellows of about
Some hundred feet in height, not to say miles,
And mammoths, and your winged crocodiles.

Think if then George the Fourth should be dug up!
How the new worldlings of the then new East
Will wonder where such animals could sup!
(For they themselves will be but of the least:
Even worlds miscarry, when too oft they pup,
And every new creation hath decreased
In size, from overworking the material--
Men are but maggots of some huge Earth's burial.)

How will--to these young people, just thrust out
From some fresh Paradise, and set to plough,
And dig, and sweat, and turn themselves about,
And plant, and reap, and spin, and grind, and sow,
Till all the arts at length are brought about,
Especially of war and taxing,--how,
I say, will these great relics, when they see 'em,
Look like the monsters of a new museum?

But I am apt to grow too metaphysical:
'The time is out of joint,'--and so am I;
I quite forget this poem's merely quizzical,
And deviate into matters rather dry.

I ne'er decide what I shall say, and this I call
Much too poetical: men should know why
They write, and for what end; but, note or text,
I never know the word which will come next.

So on I ramble, now and then narrating,
Now pondering:--it is time we should narrate.
I left Don Juan with his horses baiting--
Now we 'll get o'er the ground at a great rate.
I shall not be particular in stating
His journey, we 've so many tours of late:
Suppose him then at Petersburgh; suppose
That pleasant capital of painted snows;

Suppose him in a handsome uniform,--
A scarlet coat, black facings, a long plume,
Waving, like sails new shiver'd in a storm,
Over a cock'd hat in a crowded room,
And brilliant breeches, bright as a Cairn Gorme,
Of yellow casimere we may presume,
White stocking drawn uncurdled as new milk
O'er limbs whose symmetry set off the silk;

Suppose him sword by side, and hat in hand,
Made up by youth, fame, and an army tailor--
That great enchanter, at whose rod's command
Beauty springs forth, and Nature's self turns paler,
Seeing how Art can make her work more grand
(When she don't pin men's limbs in like a gaoler),--
Behold him placed as if upon a pillar! He
Seems Love turn'd a lieutenant of artillery:--

His bandage slipp'd down into a cravat;
His wings subdued to epaulettes; his quiver
Shrunk to a scabbard, with his arrows at
His side as a small sword, but sharp as ever;
His bow converted into a cock'd hat;
But still so like, that Psyche were more clever
Than some wives (who make blunders no less stupid),
If she had not mistaken him for Cupid.

The courtiers stared, the ladies whisper'd, and
The empress smiled: the reigning favourite frown'd--
I quite forget which of them was in hand
Just then; as they are rather numerous found,
Who took by turns that difficult command
Since first her majesty was singly crown'd:
But they were mostly nervous six-foot fellows,
All fit to make a Patagonian jealous.

Juan was none of these, but slight and slim,
Blushing and beardless; and yet ne'ertheless

There was a something in his turn of limb,
And still more in his eye, which seem'd to express,
That though he look'd one of the seraphim,
There lurk'd a man beneath the spirit's dress.
Besides, the empress sometimes liked a boy,
And had just buried the fair-faced Lanskoi.

No wonder then that Yermoloff, or Momonoff,
Or Scherbatoff, or any other off
Or on, might dread her majesty had not room enough
Within her bosom (which was not too tough)
For a new flame; a thought to cast of gloom enough
Along the aspect, whether smooth or rough,
Of him who, in the language of his station,
Then held that 'high official situation.'

O, gentle ladies! should you seek to know
The import of this diplomatic phrase,
Bid Ireland's Londonderry's Marquess show
His parts of speech; and in the strange displays
Of that odd string of words, all in a row,
Which none divine, and every one obeys,
Perhaps you may pick out some queer no meaning,
Of that weak wordy harvest the sole gleaning.

I think I can explain myself without
That sad inexplicable beast of prey--
That Sphinx, whose words would ever be a doubt,
Did not his deeds unriddle them each day--
That monstrous hieroglyphic--that long spout
Of blood and water, leaden Castlereagh!
And here I must an anecdote relate,
But luckily of no great length or weight.

An English lady ask'd of an Italian,
What were the actual and official duties
Of the strange thing some women set a value on,
Which hovers oft about some married beauties,
Called 'Cavalier servente?'--a Pygmalion
Whose statues warm (I fear, alas! too true 'tis)
Beneath his art. The dame, press'd to disclose them,
Said--'Lady, I beseech you to suppose them.'

And thus I supplicate your supposition,
And mildest, matron-like interpretation,
Of the imperial favourite's condition.
'T was a high place, the highest in the nation
In fact, if not in rank; and the suspicion
Of any one's attaining to his station,
No doubt gave pain, where each new pair of shoulders,
If rather broad, made stocks rise and their holders.

Juan, I said, was a most beauteous boy,
And had retain'd his boyish look beyond
The usual hirsute seasons which destroy,
With beards and whiskers, and the like, the fond
Parisian aspect which upset old Troy
And founded Doctors' Commons:--I have conn'd
The history of divorces, which, though chequer'd,
Calls Ilion's the first damages on record.

And Catherine, who loved all things (save her lord,
Who was gone to his place), and pass'd for much
Admiring those (by dainty dames abhor'r'd)
Gigantic gentlemen, yet had a touch
Of sentiment; and he she most adored
Was the lamented Lanskoi, who was such
A lover as had cost her many a tear,
And yet but made a middling grenadier.

Oh thou 'teterrima causa' of all 'belli'--
Thou gate of life and death--thou nondescript!
Whence is our exit and our entrance,--well I
May pause in pondering how all souls are dipt
In thy perennial fountain:--how man fell I
Know not, since knowledge saw her branches stript
Of her first fruit; but how he falls and rises
Since, thou hast settled beyond all surmises.

Some call thee 'the worst cause of war,' but I
Maintain thou art the best: for after all
From thee we come, to thee we go, and why
To get at thee not batter down a wall,
Or waste a world? since no one can deny
Thou dost replenish worlds both great and small:
With, or without thee, all things at a stand
Are, or would be, thou sea of life's dry land!

Catherine, who was the grand epitome
Of that great cause of war, or peace, or what
You please (it causes all the things which be,
So you may take your choice of this or that)--
Catherine, I say, was very glad to see
The handsome herald, on whose plumage sat
Victory; and pausing as she saw him kneel
With his despatch, forgot to break the seal.

Then recollecting the whole empress, nor
forgetting quite the woman (which composed
At least three parts of this great whole), she tore
The letter open with an air which posed
The court, that watch'd each look her visage wore,
Until a royal smile at length disclosed
Fair weather for the day. Though rather spacious,

Her face was noble, her eyes fine, mouth gracious.

Great joy was hers, or rather joys: the first
Was a ta'en city, thirty thousand slain.
Glory and triumph o'er her aspect burst,
As an East Indian sunrise on the main.
These quench'd a moment her ambition's thirst--
So Arab deserts drink in summer's rain:
In vain!- As fall the dews on quenchless sands,
Blood only serves to wash Ambition's hands!

Her next amusement was more fanciful;
She smiled at mad Suwarrow's rhymes, who threw
Into a Russian couplet rather dull
The whole gazette of thousands whom he slew.
Her third was feminine enough to annul
The shudder which runs naturally through
Our veins, when things call'd sovereigns think it best
To kill, and generals turn it into jest.

The two first feelings ran their course complete,
And lighted first her eye, and then her mouth:
The whole court look'd immediately most sweet,
Like flowers well water'd after a long drouth.
But when on the lieutenant at her feet
Her majesty, who liked to gaze on youth
Almost as much as on a new despatch,
Glanced mildly, all the world was on the watch.

Though somewhat large, exuberant, and truculent,
When wroth- while pleased, she was as fine a figure
As those who like things rosy, ripe, and succulent,
Would wish to look on, while they are in vigour.
She could repay each amatory look you lent
With interest, and in turn was wont with rigour
To exact of Cupid's bills the full amount
At sight, nor would permit you to discount.

With her the latter, though at times convenient,
Was not so necessary; for they tell
That she was handsome, and though fierce look'd lenient,
And always used her favourites too well.
If once beyond her boudoir's precincts in ye went,
Your 'fortune' was in a fair way 'to swell'
A man' (as Giles says); for though she would widow all
Nations, she liked man as an individual.

What a strange thing is man? and what a stranger
Is woman! What a whirlwind is her head,
And what a whirlpool full of depth and danger
Is all the rest about her! Whether wed
Or widow, maid or mother, she can change her

Mind like the wind: whatever she has said
Or done, is light to what she'll say or do;--
The oldest thing on record, and yet new!

Oh Catherine! (for of all interjections,
To thee both oh! and ah! belong of right
In love and war) how odd are the connections
Of human thoughts, which jostle in their flight!
Just now yours were cut out in different sections:
First Ismail's capture caught your fancy quite;
Next of new knights, the fresh and glorious batch;
And thirdly he who brought you the despatch!

Shakspeare talks of 'the herald Mercury
New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;'
And some such visions cross'd her majesty,
While her young herald knelt before her still.
'Tis very true the hill seem'd rather high,
For a lieutenant to climb up; but skill
Smooth'd even the Simplon's steep, and by God's blessing
With youth and health all kisses are 'heaven-kissing.'

Her majesty look'd down, the youth look'd up--
And so they fell in love;--she with his face,
His grace, his God-knows-what: for Cupid's cup
With the first draught intoxicates apace,
A quintessential laudanum or 'black drop,'
Which makes one drunk at once, without the base
Expedient of full bumpers; for the eye
In love drinks all life's fountains (save tears) dry.

He, on the other hand, if not in love,
Fell into that no less imperious passion,
Self-love- which, when some sort of thing above
Ourselves, a singer, dancer, much in fashion,
Or duchess, princess, empress, 'deigns to prove'
('Tis Pope's phrase) a great longing, though a rash one,
For one especial person out of many,
Makes us believe ourselves as good as any.

Besides, he was of that delighted age
Which makes all female ages equal--when
We don't much care with whom we may engage,
As bold as Daniel in the lion's den,
So that we can our native sun assuage
In the next ocean, which may flow just then,
To make a twilight in, just as Sol's heat is
Quench'd in the lap of the salt sea, or Thetis.

And Catherine (we must say thus much for Catherine),
Though bold and bloody, was the kind of thing
Whose temporary passion was quite flattering,

Because each lover look'd a sort of king,
Made up upon an amatory pattern,
A royal husband in all save the ring--
Which, being the damn'dest part of matrimony,
Seem'd taking out the sting to leave the honey.

And when you add to this, her womanhood
In its meridian, her blue eyes or gray
(The last, if they have soul, are quite as good,
Or better, as the best examples say:
Napoleon's, Mary's (queen of Scotland), should
Lend to that colour a transcendent ray;
And Pallas also sanctions the same hue,
Too wise to look through optics black or blue)--

Her sweet smile, and her then majestic figure,
Her plumpness, her imperial condescension,
Her preference of a boy to men much bigger
(Fellows whom Messalina's self would pension),
Her prime of life, just now in juicy vigour,
With other extras, which we need not mention,--
All these, or any one of these, explain
Enough to make a stripling very vain.

And that's enough, for love is vanity,
Selfish in its beginning as its end,
Except where 't is a mere insanity,
A maddening spirit which would strive to blend
Itself with beauty's frail inanity,
On which the passion's self seems to depend:
And hence some heathenish philosophers
Make love the main spring of the universe.

Besides Platonic love, besides the love
Of God, the love of sentiment, the loving
Of faithful pairs (I needs must rhyme with dove,
That good old steam-boat which keeps verses moving
'Gainst reason--Reason ne'er was hand-and-glove
With rhyme, but always leant less to improving
The sound than sense)--beside all these pretences
To love, there are those things which words name senses;

Those movements, those improvements in our bodies
Which make all bodies anxious to get out
Of their own sand-pits, to mix with a goddess,
For such all women are at first no doubt.
How beautiful that moment! and how odd is
That fever which precedes the languid rout
Of our sensations! What a curious way
The whole thing is of clothing souls in clay!

The noblest kind of love is love Platonical,

To end or to begin with; the next grand
Is that which may be christen'd love canonical,
Because the clergy take the thing in hand;
The third sort to be noted in our chronicle
As flourishing in every Christian land,
Is when chaste matrons to their other ties
Add what may be call'd marriage in disguise.

Well, we won't analyse--our story must
Tell for itself: the sovereign was smitten,
Juan much flatter'd by her love, or lust;--
I cannot stop to alter words once written,
And the two are so mix'd with human dust,
That he who names one, both perchance may hit on:
But in such matters Russia's mighty empress
Behaved no better than a common sempstress.

The whole court melted into one wide whisper,
And all lips were applied unto all ears!
The elder ladies' wrinkles curl'd much crisper
As they beheld; the younger cast some leers
On one another, and each lovely lisper
Smiled as she talk'd the matter o'er; but tears
Of rivalry rose in each clouded eye
Of all the standing army who stood by.

All the ambassadors of all the powers
Enquired, Who was this very new young man,
Who promised to be great in some few hours?
Which is full soon--though life is but a span.
Already they beheld the silver showers
Of rubles rain, as fast as specie can,
Upon his cabinet, besides the presents
Of several ribands, and some thousand peasants.

Catherine was generous,--all such ladies are:
Love, that great opener of the heart and all
The ways that lead there, be they near or far,
Above, below, by turnpikes great or small,--
Love (though she had a cursed taste for war,
And was not the best wife, unless we call
Such Clytemnestra, though perhaps 't is better
That one should die, than two drag on the fetter)--

Love had made Catherine make each lover's fortune,
Unlike our own half-chaste Elizabeth,
Whose avarice all disbursements did importune,
If history, the grand liar, ever saith
The truth; and though grief her old age might shorten,
Because she put a favourite to death,
Her vile, ambiguous method of flirtation,
And stinginess, disgrace her sex and station.

But when the levee rose, and all was bustle
In the dissolving circle, all the nations'
Ambassadors began as 'twere to hustle
Round the young man with their congratulations.
Also the softer silks were heard to rustle
Of gentle dames, among whose recreations
It is to speculate on handsome faces,
Especially when such lead to high places.

Juan, who found himself, he knew not how,
A general object of attention, made
His answers with a very graceful bow,
As if born for the ministerial trade.
Though modest, on his unembarrass'd brow
Nature had written 'gentleman.' He said
Little, but to the purpose; and his manner
Flung hovering graces o'er him like a banner.

An order from her majesty consign'd
Our young lieutenant to the genial care
Of those in office: all the world look'd kind
(As it will look sometimes with the first stare,
Which youth would not act ill to keep in mind),
As also did Miss Protasoff then there,
Named from her mystic office 'l'Eprouveuse,'
A term inexplicable to the Muse.

With her then, as in humble duty bound,
Juan retired,--and so will I, until
My Pegasus shall tire of touching ground.
We have just lit on a 'heaven-kissing hill,'
So lofty that I feel my brain turn round,
And all my fancies whirling like a mill;
Which is a signal to my nerves and brain,
To take a quiet ride in some green Lane.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Don Juan: Canto the Second

XXIV

The ship, call'd the most holy "Trinidad,"
Was steering duly for the port Leghorn;
For there the Spanish family Moncada
Were settled long ere Juan's sire was born:
They were relations, and for them he had a
Letter of introduction, which the morn
Of his departure had been sent him by
His Spanish friends for those in Italy.XXV

His suite consisted of three servants and
A tutor, the licentiate Pedrillo,
Who several languages did understand,
But now lay sick and speechless on his pillow,
And, rocking in his hammock, long'd for land,
His headache being increas'd by every billow;
And the waves oozing through the port-hole made
His berth a little damp, and him afraid.XXVI

'Twas not without some reason, for the wind
Increas'd at night, until it blew a gale;
And though 'twas not much to a naval mind,
Some landsmen would have look'd a little pale,
For sailors are, in fact, a different kind:
At sunset they began to take in sail,
For the sky show'd it would come on to blow,
And carry away, perhaps, a mast or so.XXVII

At one o'clock the wind with sudden shift
Threw the ship right into the trough of the sea,
Which struck her aft, and made an awkward rift,
Started the stern-post, also shatter'd the
Whole of her stern-frame, and, ere she could lift
Herself from out her present jeopardy,
The rudder tore away: 'twas time to sound
The pumps, and there were four feet water found.XXVIII

One gang of people instantly was put
Upon the pumps, and the remainder set
To get up part of the cargo, and what not,
But they could not come at the leak as yet;
At last they did get at it really, but
Still their salvation was an even bet:
The water rush'd through in a way quite puzzling,
While they thrust sheets, shirts, jackets, bales of muslin,XXIX

Into the opening; but all such ingredients
Would have been vain, and they must have gone down,
Despite of all their efforts and expedients,
But for the pumps: I'm glad to make them known
To all the brother tars who may have need hence,
For fifty tons of water were upthrown
By them per hour, and they had all been undone,
But for the maker, Mr. Mann, of London.XXX

As day advanc'd the weather seem'd to abate,
And then the leak they reckon'd to reduce,
And keep the ship afloat, though three feet yet
Kept two hand- and one chain-pump still in use.
The wind blew fresh again: as it grew late
A squall came on, and while some guns broke loose,
A gust--which all descriptive power transcends--
Laid with one blast the ship on her beam ends.XXI

There she lay, motionless, and seem'd upset;
The water left the hold, and wash'd the decks,
And made a scene men do not soon forget;
For they remember battles, fires and wrecks,
Or any other thing that brings regret,
Or breaks their hopes, or hearts, or heads, or necks:
Thus drownings are much talked of by the divers
And swimmers who may chance to be survivors.XXII

Immediately the masts were cut away,
Both main and mizen; first the mizen went,
The mainmast follow'd: but the ship still lay
Like a mere log, and baffled our intent.
Foremast and bowsprit were cut down, and they
Eas'd her at last (although we never meant
To part with all till every hope was blighted),
And then with violence the old ship righted.XXIII

It may be easily suppos'd, while this
Was going on, some people were unquiet,
That passengers would find it much amiss
To lose their lives, as well as spoil their diet;
That even the able seaman, deeming his
Days nearly o'er, might be dispos'd to riot,
As upon such occasions tars will ask
For grog, and sometimes drink rum from the cask.XXIV

There's nought, no doubt, so much the spirit calms

As rum and true religion: thus it was,
Some plunder'd, some drank spirits, some sung psalms,
 The high wind made the treble, and as bass
The hoarse harsh waves kept time; fright cur'd the qualms
 Of all the luckless landsmen's sea-sick maws:
Strange sounds of wailing, blasphemy, devotion,
Clamour'd in chorus to the roaring ocean.XXXV

Perhaps more mischief had been done, but for
Our Juan, who, with sense beyond his years,
Got to the spirit-room, and stood before
 It with a pair of pistols; and their fears,
As if Death were more dreadful by his door
 Of fire than water, spite of oaths and tears,
Kept still aloof the crew, who, ere they sunk,
Thought it would be becoming to die drunk.XXXVI

"Give us more grog," they cried, "for it will be
 All one an hour hence." Juan answer'd, "No!
'Tis true that Death awaits both you and me,
 But let us die like men, not sink below
Like brutes"--and thus his dangerous post kept he,
 And none lik'd to anticipate the blow;
And even Pedrillo, his most reverend tutor,
Was for some rum a disappointed suitor.XXXVII

The good old gentleman was quite aghast,
 And made a loud and pious lamentation;
Repented all his sins, and made a last
 Irrevocable vow of reformation;
Nothing should tempt him more (this peril past)
 To quit his academic occupation,
In cloisters of the classic Salamanca,
To follow Juan's wake, like Sancho Panca.XXXVIII

But now there came a flash of hope once more;
 Day broke, and the wind lull'd: the masts were gone,
The leak increas'd; shoals round her, but no shore,
 The vessel swam, yet still she held her own.
They tried the pumps again, and though, before,
 Their desperate efforts seem'd all useless grown,
A glimpse of sunshine set some hands to bale--
The stronger pump'd, the weaker thrumm'd a sail.XXXIX

Under the vessel's keel the sail was pass'd,
 And for the moment it had some effect;
But with a leak, and not a stick of mast,

Nor rag of canvas, what could they expect?
But still 'tis best to struggle to the last,
'Tis never too late to be wholly wreck'd:
And though 'tis true that man can only die once,
'Tis not so pleasant in the Gulf of Lyons.XL

There winds and waves had hurl'd them, and from thence,
Without their will, they carried them away;
For they were forc'd with steering to dispense,
And never had as yet a quiet day
On which they might repose, or even commence
A jurymast or rudder, or could say
The ship would swim an hour, which, by good luck,
Still swam--though not exactly like a duck.XLI

The wind, in fact, perhaps was rather less,
But the ship labour'd so, they scarce could hope
To weather out much longer; the distress
Was also great with which they had to cope
For want of water, and their solid mess
Was scant enough: in vain the telescope
Was us'd--nor sail nor shore appear'd in sight,
Nought but the heavy sea, and coming night.XLII

Again the weather threaten'd, again blew
A gale, and in the fore and after-hold
Water appear'd; yet, though the people knew
All this, the most were patient, and some bold,
Until the chains and leathers were worn through
Of all our pumps--a wreck complete she roll'd,
At mercy of the waves, whose mercies are
Like human beings during civil war.XLIII

Then came the carpenter, at last, with tears
In his rough eyes, and told the captain he
Could do no more: he was a man in years,
And long had voyag'd through many a stormy sea,
And if he wept at length they were not fears
That made his eyelids as a woman's be,
But he, poor fellow, had a wife and children,
Two things for dying people quite bewildering.XLIV

The ship was evidently settling now
Fast by the head; and, all distinction gone,
Some went to prayers again, and made a vow
Of candles to their saints--but there were none
To pay them with; and some looked o'er the bow;

Some hoisted out the boats; and there was one
That begg'd Pedrillo for an absolution,
Who told him to be damn'd--in his confusion.XLV

Some lash'd them in their hammocks; some put on
Their best clothes, as if going to a fair;
Some curs'd the day on which they saw the sun,
And gnash'd their teeth, and, howling, tore their hair;
And others went on as they had begun,
Getting the boats out, being well aware
That a tight boat will live in a rough sea,
Unless with breakers close beneath her lee.XLVI

The worst of all was, that in their condition,
Having been several days in great distress,
'Twas difficult to get out such provision
As now might render their long suffering less:
Men, even when dying, dislike inanition;
Their stock was damag'd by the weather's stress:
Two casks of biscuit, and a keg of butter,
Were all that could be thrown into the cutter.XLVII

But in the long-boat they contriv'd to stow
Some pounds of bread, though injur'd by the wet;
Water, a twenty-gallon cask or so;
Six flasks of wine; and they contriv'd to get
A portion of their beef up from below,
And with a piece of pork, moreover, met,
But scarce enough to serve them for a luncheon--
Then there was rum, eight gallons in a puncheon.XLVIII

The other boats, the yawl and pinnace, had
Been stove in the beginning of the gale;
And the long-boat's condition was but bad,
As there were but two blankets for a sail,
And one oar for a mast, which a young lad
Threw in by good luck over the ship's rail;
And two boats could not hold, far less be stor'd,
To save one half the people then on board.XLIX

'Twas twilight, and the sunless day went down
Over the waste of waters; like a veil,
Which, if withdrawn, would but disclose the frown
Of one whose hate is mask'd but to assail.
Thus to their hopeless eyes the night was shown,
And grimly darkled o'er the faces pale,
And the dim desolate deep: twelve days had Fear

Been their familiar, and now Death was here.L

Some trial had been making at a raft,
With little hope in such a rolling sea,
A sort of thing at which one would have laugh'd,
If any laughter at such times could be,
Unless with people who too much have quaff'd,
And have a kind of wild and horrid glee,
Half epileptical, and half hysterical--
Their preservation would have been a miracle.LI

At half-past eight o'clock, booms, hencoops, spars,
And all things, for a chance, had been cast loose,
That still could keep afloat the struggling tars,
For yet they strove, although of no great use:
There was no light in heaven but a few stars,
The boats put off o'ercrowded with their crews;
She gave a heel, and then a lurch to port,
And, going down head foremost--sunk, in short.LII

Then rose from sea to sky the wild farewell,
Then shriek'd the timid, and stood still the brave,
Then some leap'd overboard with dreadful yell,
As eager to anticipate their grave;
And the sea yawn'd around her like a hell,
And down she suck'd with her the whirling wave,
Like one who grapples with his enemy,
And strives to strangle him before he die.LIII

And first one universal shriek there rush'd,
Louder than the loud ocean, like a crash
Of echoing thunder; and then all was hush'd,
Save the wild wind and the remorseless dash
Of billows; but at intervals there gush'd,
Accompanied by a convulsive splash,
A solitary shriek, the bubbling cry
Of some strong swimmer in his agony.LIV

The boats, as stated, had got off before,
And in them crowded several of the crew;
And yet their present hope was hardly more
Than what it had been, for so strong it blew
There was slight chance of reaching any shore;
And then they were too many, though so few--
Nine in the cutter, thirty in the boat,
Were counted in them when they got afloat.LV

All the rest perish'd; near two hundred souls
Had left their bodies; and what's worse, alas!
When over Catholics the ocean rolls,
They must wait several weeks before a mass
Takes off one peck of purgatorial coals,
Because, till people know what's come to pass,
They won't lay out their money on the dead--
It costs three francs for every mass that's said.LVI

Juan got into the long-boat, and there
Contriv'd to help Pedrillo to a place;
If seem'd as if they had exchang'd their care,
For Juan wore the magisterial face
Which courage gives, while poor Pedrillo's pair
Of eyes were crying for their owner's case:
Battista, though (a name called shortly Tita),
Was lost by getting at some aqua-vita.LVII

Pedro, his valet, too, he tried to save,
But the same cause, conducive to his loss,
Left him so drunk, he jump'd into the wave,
As o'er the cutter's edge he tried to cross,
And so he found a wine-and-watery grave;
They could not rescue him although so close,
Because the sea ran higher every minute,
And for the boat--the crew kept crowding in it.LVIII

A small old spaniel--which had been Don José's,
His father's, whom he lov'd, as ye may think,
For on such things the memory reposes
With tenderness--stood howling on the brink,
Knowing (dogs have such intellectual noses!),
No doubt, the vessel was about to sink;
And Juan caught him up, and ere he stepp'd
Off threw him in, then after him he leap'd.LIX

He also stuff'd his money where he could
About his person, and Pedrillo's too,
Who let him do, in fact, whate'er he would,
Not knowing what himself to say, or do,
As every rising wave his dread renew'd;
But Juan, trusting they might still get through,
And deeming there were remedies for any ill,
Thus re-embark'd his tutor and his spaniel.LX

'Twas a rough night, and blew so stiffly yet,

That the sail was becalm'd between the seas,
Though on the wave's high top too much to set,
They dar'd not take it in for all the breeze:
Each sea curl'd o'er the stern, and kept them wet,
And made them bale without a moment's ease,
So that themselves as well as hopes were damp'd,
And the poor little cutter quickly swamp'd.LXI

Nine souls more went in her: the long-boat still
Kept above water, with an oar for mast,
Two blankets stitch'd together, answering ill
Instead of sail, were to the oar made fast;
Though every wave roll'd menacing to fill,
And present peril all before surpass'd,
They grieve'd for those who perish'd with the cutter,
And also for the biscuit-casks and butter.LXII

The sun rose red and fiery, a sure sign
Of the continuance of the gale: to run
Before the sea until it should grow fine
Was all that for the present could be done:
A few tea-spoonfuls of their rum and wine
Were serv'd out to the people, who begun
To faint, and damag'd bread wet through the bags,
And most of them had little clothes but rags.LXIII

They counted thirty, crowded in a space
Which left scarce room for motion or exertion;
They did their best to modify their case,
One half sate up, though numb'd with the immersion,
While t'other half were laid down in their place,
At watch and watch; thus, shivering like the tertian
Ague in its cold fit, they fill'd their boat,
With nothing but the sky for a great coat.LXIV

'Tis very certain the desire of life
Prolongs it: this is obvious to physicians,
When patients, neither plagu'd with friends nor wife,
Survive through very desperate conditions,
Because they still can hope, nor shines the knife
Nor shears of Atropos before their visions:
Despair of all recovery spoils longevity,
And makes men's misery of alarming brevity.LXV

'Tis said that persons living on annuities
Are longer liv'd than others--God knows why,
Unless to plague the grantors--yet so true it is

That some, I really think, do never die:
Of any creditors the worst a Jew it is,
And that's their mode of furnishing supply:
In my young days they lent me cash that way,
Which I found very troublesome to pay.LXVI

'Tis thus with people in an open boat,
They live upon the love of life, and bear
More than can be believ'd, or even thought,
And stand like rocks the tempest's wear and tear;
And hardship still has been the sailor's lot,
Since Noah's ark went cruising here and there;
She had a curious crew as well as cargo,
Like the first old Greek privateer, the Argo.LXVII

But man is a carnivorous production,
And must have meals, at least one meal a day;
He cannot live, like woodcocks, upon suction,
But, like the shark and tiger, must have prey;
Although his anatomical construction
Bears vegetables in a grumbling way,
Your labouring people think, beyond all question,
Beef, veal and mutton better for digestion.LXVIII

And thus it was with this our hapless crew;
For on the third day there came on a calm,
And though at first their strength it might renew,
And lying on their weariness like balm,
Lull'd them like turtles sleeping on the blue
Of ocean, when they woke they felt a qualm,
And fell all ravenously on their provision,
Instead of hoarding it with due precision.LXIX

The consequence was easily foreseen--
They ate up all they had, and drank their wine,
In spite of all remonstrances, and then
On what, in fact, next day were they to dine?
They hop'd the wind would rise, these foolish men!
And carry them to shore; these hopes were fine,
But as they had but one oar, and that brittle,
It would have been more wise to save their victual.LXX

The fourth day came, but not a breath of air,
And Ocean slumber'd like an unwean'd child:
The fifth day, and their boat lay floating there,
The sea and sky were blue, and clear, and mild--
With their one oar (I wish they had had a pair)

What could they do? and Hunger's rage grew wild:
So Juan's spaniel, spite of his entreating,
Was kill'd, and portion'd out for present eating.LXXI

On the sixth day they fed upon his hide,
And Juan, who had still refus'd, because
The creature was his father's dog that died,
Now feeling all the vulture in his jaws,
With some remorse receiv'd (though first denied)
As a great favour one of the fore-paws,
Which he divided with Pedrillo, who
Devour'd it, longing for the other too.LXXII

The seventh day, and no wind--the burning sun
Blister'd and scorch'd, and, stagnant on the sea,
They lay like carcasses; and hope was none,
Save in the breeze that came not; savagely
They glar'd upon each other--all was done,
Water, and wine, and food--and you might see
The longings of the cannibal arise
(Although they spoke not) in their wolfish eyes.LXXIII

At length one whisper'd his companion, who
Whisper'd another, and thus it went round,
And then into a hoarser murmur grew,
An ominous, and wild, and desperate sound;
And when his comrade's thought each sufferer knew,
'Twas but his own, suppress'd till now, he found;
And out they spoke of lots for flesh and blood,
And who should die to be his fellow's food.LXXIV

But ere they came to this, they that day shar'd
Some leathern caps, and what remain'd of shoes;
And then they look'd around them, and despair'd,
And none to be the sacrifice would choose;
At length the lots were torn up, and prepar'd,
But of materials that must shock the Muse--
Having no paper, for the want of better,
They took by force from Juan Julia's letter.LXXV

The lots were made, and mark'd, and mix'd, and handed,
In silent horror, and their distribution
Lull'd even the savage hunger which demanded,
Like the Promethean vulture, this pollution;
None in particular had sought or plann'd it,
'Twas Nature gnaw'd them to this resolution,
By which none were permitted to be neuter--

And the lot fell on Juan's luckless tutor.LXXVI

He but requested to be bled to death:

The surgeon had his instruments, and bled
Pedrillo, and so gently ebb'd his breath,
You hardly could perceive when he was dead.

He died as born, a Catholic in faith,

Like most in the belief in which they're bred,
And first a little crucifix he kiss'd,
And then held out his jugular and wrist.LXXVII

The surgeon, as there was no other fee,

Had his first choice of morsels for his pains;
But being thirstiest at the moment, he
Preferr'd a draught from the fast-flowing vems:
Part was divided, part thrown in the sea,
And such things as the entrails and the brain;
Regal'd two sharks, who follow'd o'er the billow--
The sailors ate the rest of poor Pedrillo.LXXVIII

The sailors ate him, all save three or four,

Who were not quite so fond of animal food
To these was added Juan, who, before
Refusing his own spaniel, hardly could
Feel now his appetite increas'd much more;
'Twas not to be expected that he should,
Even in extremity of their disaster,
Dine with them on his pastor and his master.LXXIX

'Twas better that he did not; for, in fact,

The consequence was awful in the extreme;
For they, who were most ravenous in the act,
Went raging mad--Lord! how they did blaspheme!
And foam and roll, with strange convulsions rack'd,
Drinking salt-water like a mountain-stream,
Tearing, and grinning, howling, screeching, swearing,
And, with hyæna-laughter, died despairing.LXXX

Their numbers were much thinn'd by this infliction,

And all the rest were thin enough, Heaven knows;
And some of them had lost their recollection,
Happier than they who still perceiv'd their woes;
But others ponder'd on a new dissection,
As if not warn'd sufficiently by those
Who had already perish'd, suflering madly,
For having us'd their appetites so sadly.... XCI

Now overhead a rainbow, bursting through
The scattering clouds, shone, spanning the dark sea,
Resting its bright base on the quivering blue;
And all within its arch appear'd to be
Clearer than that without, and its wide hue
Wax'd broad and waving, like a banner free,
Then chang'd like to a bow that's bent, and then
Forsook the dim eyes of these shipwreck'd men.XCII

It chang'd, of course; a heavenly chameleon,
The airy child of vapour and the sun,
Brought forth in purple, cradled in vermillion,
Baptiz'd in molten gold, and swath'd in dun,
Glittering like crescents o'er a Turk's pavilion,
And blending every colour into one,
Just like a black eye in a recent scuffle
(For sometimes we must box without the muffle).XCIII

Our shipwreck'd seamen thought it a good omen--
It is as well to think so, now and then;
'Twas an old custom of the Greek and Roman,
And may become of great advantage when
Folks are discourag'd; and most surely no men
Had greater need to nerve themselves again
Than these, and so this rainbow look'd like hope--
Quite a celestial kaleidoscope.XCIV

About this time a beautiful white bird,
Webfooted, not unlike a dove in size
And plumage (probably it might have err'd
Upon its course), pass'd oft before their eyes,
And tried to perch, although it saw and heard
The men within the boat, and in this guise
It came and went, and flutter'd round them till
Night fell--this seem'd a better omen still.XCV

But in this case I also must remark,
'Twas well this bird of promise did not perch,
Because the tackle of our shatter'd bark
Was not so safe for roosting as a church;
And had it been the dove from Noah's ark,
Returning there from her successful search,
Which in their way that moment chanc'd to fall,
They would have eat her, olive-branch and all.XCVI

With twilight it again came on to blow,

But not with violence; the stars shone out,
The boat made way; yet now they were so low,
They knew not where or what they were about;
Some fancied they saw land, and some said "No!"
The frequent fog-banks gave them cause to doubt--
Some swore that they heard breakers, others guns,
And all mistook about the latter once.XCVII

As morning broke, the light wind died away,
When he who had the watch sung out and swore,
If 'twas not land that rose with the sun's ray,
He wish'd that land he never might see more;
And the rest rubb'd their eyes and saw a bay,
Or thought they saw, and shap'd their course for shore;
For shore it was, and gradually grew
Distinct, and high, and palpable to view.XCVIII

And then of these some part burst into tears,
And others, looking with a stupid stare,
Could not yet separate their hopes from fears,
And seem'd as if they had no further care;
While a few pray'd (the first time for some years)
And at the bottom of the boat three were
Asleep: they shook them by the hand and head,
And tried to awaken them, but found them dead.XCIX

The day before, fast sleeping on the water,
They found a turtle of the hawk's-bill kind,
And by good fortune, gliding softly, caught her,
Which yielded a day's life, and to their mind
Prov'd even still a more nutritious matter,
Because it left encouragement behind:
They thought that in such perils, more than chance
Had sent them this for their deliverance.C

The land appear'd a high and rocky coast,
And higher grew the mountains as they drew,
Set by a current, toward it: they were lost
In various conjectures, for none knew
To what part of the earth they had been toss'd,
So changeable had been the winds that blew;
Some thought it was Mount Ætna, some the highlands
Of Candia, Cyprus, Rhodes, or other islands.CI

Meantime the current, with a rising gale,
Still set them onwards to the welcome shore,
Like Charon's bark of spectres, dull and pale:

Their living freight was now reduc'd to four,
And three dead, whom their strength could not avail
To heave into the deep with those before,
Though the two sharks still follow'd them, and dash'd
The spray into their faces as they splash'd.CII

Famine, despair, cold, thirst and heat had done
Their work on them by turns, and thinn'd them to
Such things a mother had not known her son
Amidst the skeletons of that gaunt crew;
By night chill'd, by day scorch'd, thus one by one
They perish'd, until wither'd to these few,
But chiefly by a species of self-slaughter,
In washing down Pedrillo with salt water.CIII

As they drew nigh the land, which now was seen
Unequal in its aspect here and there,
They felt the freshness of its growing green,
That wav'd in forest-tops, and smooth'd the air,
And fell upon their glaz'd eyes like a screen
From glistening waves, and skies so hot and bare--
Lovely seem'd any object that should sweep
Away the vast, salt, dread, eternal Deep.CIV

The shore look'd wild, without a trace of man,
And girt by formidable waves; but they
Were mad for land, and thus their course they ran,
Though right ahead the roaring breakers lay:
A reef between them also now began
To show its boiling surf and bounding spray,
But finding no place for their landing better,
They ran the boat for shore, and overset her.CV

But in his native stream, the Guadalquivir,
Juan to lave his youthful limbs was wont;
And having learnt to swim in that sweet river,
Had often turn'd the art to some account:
A better swimmer you could scarce see ever,
He could, perhaps, have pass'd the Hellespont,
As once (a feat on which ourselves we prided)
Leander, Mr. Ekenhead, and I did.CVI

So here, though faint, emaciated and stark,
He buoy'd his boyish limbs, and strove to ply
With the quick wave, and gain, ere it was dark,
The beach which lay before him, high and dry:
The greatest danger here was from a shark,

That carried off his neighbour by the thigh;
As for the other two, they could not swim,
So nobody arriv'd on shore but him.CVII

Nor yet had he arriv'd but for the oar,
Which, providentially for him, was wash'd
Just as his feeble arms could strike no more,
And the hard wave o'erwhelm'd him as 'twas dash'd
Within his grasp; he clung to it, and sore
The waters beat while he thereto was lash'd;
At last, with swimming, wading, scrambling, he
Roll'd on the beach, half-senseless, from the sea:CVIII

There, breathless, with his digging nails he clung
Fast to the sand, lest the returning wave,
From whose reluctant roar his life he wrung,
Should suck him back to her insatiate grave:
And there he lay, full length, where he was flung,
Before the entrance of a cliff-worn cave,
With just enough of life to feel its pain,
And deem that it was sav'd, perhaps in vain....CLXXIV

And thus a moon roll'd on, and fair Haidée
Paid daily visits to her boy, and took
Such plentiful precautions, that still he
Remain'd unknown within his craggy nook;
At last her father's prow's put out to sea,
For certain merchantmen upon the look,
Not as of yore to carry off an Io,
But three Ragusan vessels, bound for Scio.CLXXV

Then came her freedom, for she had no mother,
So that, her father being at sea, she was
Free as a married woman, or such other
Female, as where she likes may freely pass,
Without even the encumbrance of a brother,
The freest she that ever gaz'd on glass:
I speak of Christian lands in this comparison,
Where wives, at least, are seldom kept in garrison.CLXXVI

Now she prolong'd her visits and her talk
(For they must talk), and he had learnt to say
So much as to propose to take a walk--
For little had he wander'd since the day

On which, like a young flower snapp'd from the stalk,
Drooping and dewy on the beach he lay--
And thus they walk'd out in the afternoon,
And saw the sun set opposite the moon. CLXXVII

It was a wild and breaker-beaten coast,
With cliffs above, and a broad sandy shore,
Guarded by shoals and rocks as by an host,
With here and there a creek, whose aspect wore
A better welcome to the tempest-tost;
And rarely ceas'd the haughty billow's roar,
Save on the dead long summer days, which make
The outstretch'd ocean glitter like a lake. CLXXVIII

And the small ripple spilt upon the beach
Scarcely o'erpass'd the cream of your champagne,
When o'er the brim the sparkling bumpers reach,
That spring-dew of the spirit! the heart's rain!
Few things surpass old wine; and they may preach
Who please--the more because they preach in vain,
Let us have wine and women, mirth and laughter,
Sermons and soda-water the day after. CLXXIX

Man, being reasonable, must get drunk;
The best of life is but intoxication:
Glory, the grape, love, gold, in these are sunk
The hopes of all men, and of every nation;
Without their sap, how branchless were the trunk
Of Life's strange tree, so fruitful on occasion:
But to return--get very drunk, and when
You wake with headache, you shall see what then. CLXXX

Ring for your valet--bid him quickly bring
Some hock and soda-water, then you'll know
A pleasure worthy Xerxes the great king;
For not the blest sherbet, sublim'd with snow,
Nor the first sparkle of the desert-spring,
Nor Burgundy in all its sunset glow,
After long travel, ennui, love, or slaughter,
Vie with that draught of hock and soda-water! CLXXXI

The coast--I think it was the coast that I

Was just describing--Yes, it was the coast--
Lay at this period quiet as the sky,
The sands untumbled, the blue waves untoss'd,
And all was stillness, save the sea-bird's cry,
And dolphin's leap, and the little billow cross'd
By some low rock or shelve, that made it fret
Against the boundary it scarcely wet.CLXXXII

And forth they wander'd, her sire being gone,
As I have said, upon an expedition;
And mother, brother, guardian, she had none,
Save Zoe, who, although with due precision
She waited on her lady with the sun,
Thought daily service was her only mission,
Bringing warm water, wreathing her long tresses,
And asking now and then for cast-off dresses.CLXXXIII

It was the cooling hour, just when the rounded
Red sun sinks down behind the azure hill,
Which then seems as if the whole earth it bounded,
Circling all Nature, hush'd, and dim, and still,
With the far mountain-crescent half surrounded
On one side, and the deep sea calm and chill
Upon the other, and the rosy sky
With one star sparkling through it like an eye.CLXXXIV

And thus they wander'd forth, and hand in hand,
Over the shining pebbles and the shells,
Glide along the smooth and harden'd sand,
And in the worn and wild receptacles
Work'd by the storms, yet work'd as it were plann'd
In hollow halls, with sparry roofs and cells,
They turn'd to rest; and, each clasp'd by an arm,
Yielded to the deep twilight's purple charm.CLXXXV

They look'd up to the sky, whose floating glow
Spread like a rosy ocean, vast and bright;
They gaz'd upon the glittering sea below,
Whence the broad moon rose circling into sight;
They heard the wave's splash, and the wind so low,
And saw each other's dark eyes darting light
Into each other--and, beholding this,
Their lips drew near, and clung into a kiss;CLXXXVI

A long, long kiss, a kiss of youth, and love,
And beauty, all concentrating like rays
Into one focus, kindled from above;
Such kisses as belong to early days,
Where heart, and soul, and sense, in concert move,
And the blood's lava, and the pulse a blaze,
Each kiss a heart-quake--for a kiss's strength,
I think, it must be reckon'd by its length.CLXXXVII

By length I mean duration; theirs endur'd
Heaven knows how long--no doubt they never reckon'd;
And if they had, they could not have secur'd
The sum of their sensations to a second:
They had not spoken, but they felt allur'd,
As if their souls and lips each other beckon'd,
Which, being join'd, like swarming bees they clung--
Their hearts the flowers from whence the honey sprung.CLXXXVIII

They were alone, but not alone as they
Who shut in chambers think it loneliness;
The silent ocean, and the starlight bay,
The twilight glow, which momently grew less,
The voiceless sands, and dropping caves, that lay
Around them, made them to each other press,
As if there were no life beneath the sky
Save theirs, and that their life could never die.CLXXXIX

They fear'd no eyes nor ears on that lone beach;
They felt no terrors from the night; they were
All in all to each other: though their speech
Was broken words, they thought a language there,
And all the burning tongues the passions teach
Found in one sigh the best interpreter
Of Nature's oracle--first love--that all
Which Eve has left her daughters since her fall.CXC

Haidée spoke not of scruples, ask'd no vows,
Nor offer'd any; she had never heard
Of plight and promises to be a spouse,
Or perils by a loving maid incur'd;
She was all which pure ignorance allows,
And flew to her young mate like a young bird;

And, never having dreamt of falsehood, she
Had not one word to say of constancy.CXCI

She lov'd, and was belovéd--she ador'd,
And she was worshipp'd; after Nature's fashion,
Their intense souls, into each other pour'd,
If souls could die, had perish'd in that passion,
But by degrees their senses were restor'd,
Again to be o'ercome, again to dash on;
And, beating 'gainst his bosom, Haidée's heart
Felt as if never more to beat apart.CXCII

Alas! they were so young, so beautiful,
So lonely, loving, helpless, and the hour
Was that in which the heart is always full,
And, having o'er itself no further power,
Prompts deeds Eternity can not annul,
But pays off moments in an endless shower
Of hell-fire--all prepar'd for people giving
Pleasure or pain to one another living.CXLIII

Alas! for Juan and Haidée! they were
So loving and so lovely--till then never,
Excepting our first parents, such a pair
Had run the risk of being damn'd for ever;
And Haidée, being devout as well as fair,
Had, doubtless, heard about the Stygian river,
And Hell and Purgatory--but forgot
Just in the very crisis she should not.CXCIV

They look upon each other, and their eyes
Gleam in the moonlight; and her white arm clasps
Round Juan's head, and his around her lies
Half buried in the tresses which it grasps;
She sits upon his knee, and drinks his sighs,
He hers, until they end in broken gasps;
And thus they form a group that's quite antique,
Half naked, loving, natural, and Greek.CXCV

And when those deep and burning moments pass'd,
And Juan sunk to sleep within her arms,
She slept not, but all tenderly, though fast,

Sustain'd his head upon her bosom's charms;
And now and then her eye to Heaven is cast,
 And then on the pale cheek her breast now warms,
Pillow'd on her o'erflowing heart, which pants
With all it granted, and with all it grants.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Don Juan: Canto The Seventeenth

The world is full of orphans: firstly, those
Who are so in the strict sense of the phrase
(But many a lonely tree the loftier grows
Than others crowded in the forest's maze);
The next are such as are not doomed to lose
Their tender parents in their budding days,
But merely their parental tenderness,
Which leaves them orphans of the heart no less.

The next are 'only children', as they are styled,
Who grow up children only, since the old saw
Pronounces that an 'only' 's a spoilt child.
But not to go too far, I hold it law
That where their education, harsh or mild,
'Transgresses the great bounds of love or awe,
The sufferers, be't in heart or intellect,
Whate'er the cause are orphans in effect.

But to return unto the stricter rule
(As far as words make rules), our common notion
Of orphans paints at once a parish school,
A half-starved babe, a wreck upon life's ocean,
A human (what the Italians nickname) 'mule',
A theme for pity or some worse emotion;
Yet, if examined, it might be admitted
The wealthiest orphans are to be more pitied.

Too soon they are parents to themselves; for what
Are tutors, guardians, and so forth, compared
With Nature's genial genitors, so that
A child of Chancery, that Star Chamber ward
(I'll take the likeness I can first come at),
Is like a duckling by Dame Partlett reared
And frights, especially if 'tis a daughter,
The old hen by running headlong to the water.

There is a commonplace book argument,
Which glibly glides from every vulgar tongue
When any dare a new light to present:
'If you are right, then everybody's wrong.'
Suppose the converse of this precedent
So often urged, so loudly and so long:
'If you are wrong, then everybody's right.'
Was ever everybody yet so quite?

Therefore I would solicit free discussion
Upon all points, no matter what or whose,
Because as ages upon ages push on,
The last is apt the former to accuse
Of pillowing its head on a pincushion,
Heedless of pricks because it was obtuse.
What was a paradox becomes a truth or

A something like it, as bear witness Luther.

The sacraments have been reduced to two
And witches unto none, though somewhat late
Since burning aged women (save a few,
Not witches, only bitches, who create
Mischief in families, as some know or knew,
Should still be singed, but slightly let me state)
Has been declared an act of inurbanity,
Malgé Sir Matthew Hale's great humanity.

Great Galileo was debarred the sun,
Because he fixed it, and to stop his talking
How earth could round the solar orbit run,
Found his own legs embargoed from mere walking.
The man was well nigh dead, ere men begun
To think his skull had not some need of caulking,
But now it seems he's right, his notion just,
No doubt a consolation to his dust.

Pythagoras, Locke, Socrates - but pages
Might be filled up, as vainly as before,
With the sad usage of all sorts of sages,
Who in his lifetime each was deemed a bore.
The loftiest minds outrun their tardy ages;
This they must bear with and perhaps much more.
The wise man's sure when he no more can share it, he
Will have a firm post~obit on posterity.

If such doom waits each intellectual giant,
We little people in our lesser way
To life's small rubs should surely be more pliant,
And so for one will I, as well I may.
Would that I were less bilious - but oh fie on't!
Just as I make my mind up everyday
To be a totus teres stoic, sage,
The wind shifts and I fly into a rage.

Temperate I am, yet never had a temper;
Modest I am, yet with some slight assurance;
Changeable too, yet somehow idem semper;
Patient, but not enamoured of endurance;
Cheerful, but sometimes rather apt to whimper;
Mild, but at times a sort of Hercules furens;
So that I almost think that the same skin
For one without has two or three within.

Our hero was in canto the sixteenth
Left in a tender moonlight situation,
Such as enables man to show his strength
Moral or physical On this occasion
Whether his virtue triumphed, or at length

His vice - for he was of a kindling nation -
Is more than I shall venture to describe,
Unless some beauty with a kiss should bribe.

I leave the thing a problem, like all things.
The morning came, and breakfast, tea and toast,
Of which most men partake, but no one sings.
The company, whose birth, wealth, worth have cost
My trembling lyre already several strings,
Assembled with our hostess and mine host.
The guests dropped in, the last but one, Her Grace,
The latest, Juan with his virgin face.

Which best is to encounter, ghost or none,
'Twere difficult to say, but Juan looked
As if he had combated with more than one,
Being wan and worn, with eyes that hardly brooked
The light that through the Gothic windows shone.
Her Grace too had a sort of air rebuked,
Seemed pale and shivered, as if she had kept
A vigil or dreamt rather more than slept.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Don Juan: Canto The Seventh

O Love! O Glory! what are ye who fly
Around us ever, rarely to alight?
There's not a meteor in the polar sky
Of such transcendent and more fleeting flight.
Chill, and chain'd to cold earth, we lift on high
Our eyes in search of either lovely light;
A thousand and a thousand colours they
Assume, then leave us on our freezing way.

And such as they are, such my present tale is,
A non-descript and ever-varying rhyme,
A versified Aurora Borealis,
Which flashes o'er a waste and icy clime.
When we know what all are, we must bewail us,
But ne'ertheless I hope it is no crime
To laugh at all things- for I wish to know
What, after all, are all things- but a show?

They accuse me--Me--the present writer of
The present poem--of--I know not what--
A tendency to under-rate and scoff
At human power and virtue, and all that;
And this they say in language rather rough.
Good God! I wonder what they would be at!
I say no more than hath been said in Dante's
Verse, and by Solomon and by Cervantes;

By Swift, by Machiavel, by Rochefoucault,
By Fenelon, by Luther, and by Plato;
By Tillotson, and Wesley, and Rousseau,
Who knew this life was not worth a potato.
'Tis not their fault, nor mine, if this be so--
For my part, I pretend not to be Cato,
Nor even Diogenes.--We live and die,
But which is best, you know no more than I.

Socrates said, our only knowledge was
'To know that nothing could be known;' a pleasant
Science enough, which levels to an ass
Each man of wisdom, future, past, or present.
Newton (that proverb of the mind), alas!
Declared, with all his grand discoveries recent,
That he himself felt only 'like a youth
Picking up shells by the great ocean--Truth.'

Ecclesiastes said, 'that all is vanity'--
Most modern preachers say the same, or show it
By their examples of true Christianity:
In short, all know, or very soon may know it;
And in this scene of all-confess'd inanity,
By saint, by sage, by preacher, and by poet,
Must I restrain me, through the fear of strife,

From holding up the nothingness of life?

Dogs, or men!--for I flatter you in saying
That ye are dogs--your betters far--ye may
Read, or read not, what I am now essaying
To show ye what ye are in every way.
As little as the moon stops for the baying
Of wolves, will the bright muse withdraw one ray
From out her skies- then howl your idle wrath!
While she still silvers o'er your gloomy path.

'Fierce loves and faithless wars'--I am not sure
If this be the right reading--'tis no matter;
The fact's about the same, I am secure;
I sing them both, and am about to batter
A town which did a famous siege endure,
And was beleaguer'd both by land and water
By Souvaroff, or Anglice Suwarrow,
Who loved blood as an alderman loves marrow.

The fortress is call'd Ismail, and is placed
Upon the Danube's left branch and left bank,
With buildings in the Oriental taste,
But still a fortress of the foremost rank,
Or was at least, unless 'tis since defaced,
Which with your conquerors is a common prank:
It stands some eighty versts from the high sea,
And measures round of toises thousands three.

Within the extent of this fortification
A borough is comprised along the height
Upon the left, which from its loftier station
Commands the city, and upon its site
A Greek had raised around this elevation
A quantity of palisades upright,
So placed as to impede the fire of those
Who held the place, and to assist the foe's.

This circumstance may serve to give a notion
Of the high talents of this new Vauban:
But the town ditch below was deep as ocean,
The rampart higher than you'd wish to hang:
But then there was a great want of precaution
(Prithee, excuse this engineering slang),
Nor work advanced, nor cover'd way was there,
To hint at least 'Here is no thoroughfare.'

But a stone bastion, with a narrow gorge,
And walls as thick as most skulls born as yet;
Two batteries, cap-a-pie, as our St. George,
Case-mated one, and t' other 'a barbette,'
Of Danube's bank took formidable charge;

While two and twenty cannon duly set
Rose over the town's right side, in bristling tier,
Forty feet high, upon a cavalier.

But from the river the town 's open quite,
Because the Turks could never be persuaded
A Russian vessel e'er would heave in sight;
And such their creed was, till they were invaded,
When it grew rather late to set things right.
But as the Danube could not well be waded,
They look'd upon the Muscovite flotilla,
And only shouted, 'Allah!' and 'Bis Millah!'

The Russians now were ready to attack:
But oh, ye goddesses of war and glory!
How shall I spell the name of each Cossacque
Who were immortal, could one tell their story?
Alas! what to their memory can lack?
Achilles' self was not more grim and gory
Than thousands of this new and polish'd nation,
Whose names want nothing but- pronunciation.

Still I 'll record a few, if but to increase
Our euphony: there was Strongenoff, and Strokonoff,
Meknop, Serge Lwow, Arsniew of modern Greece,
And Tschitshakoff, and Roguenoff, and Chokenoff,
And others of twelve consonants apiece;
And more might be found out, if I could poke enough
Into gazettes; but Fame (capricious strumpet),
It seems, has got an ear as well as trumpet,

And cannot tune those discords of narration,
Which may be names at Moscow, into rhyme;
Yet there were several worth commemoration,
As e'er was virgin of a nuptial chime;
Soft words, too, fitted for the peroration
Of Londonderry drawling against time,
Ending in 'ischskin,' 'ouskin,' 'iffskhy,' 'ouski:
Of whom we can insert but Rousamouski,

Scherematoft and Chrematoff, Koklophти,
Koclobski, Kourakin, and Mouskin Pouskin,
All proper men of weapons, as e'er scoff'd high
Against a foe, or ran a sabre through skin:
Little cared they for Mahomet or Mufti,
Unless to make their kettle-drums a new skin
Out of their hides, if parchment had grown dear,
And no more handy substitute been near.

Then there were foreigners of much renown,
Of various nations, and all volunteers;
Not fighting for their country or its crown,

But wishing to be one day brigadiers;
Also to have the sacking of a town,--
A pleasant thing to young men at their years.
'Mongst them were several Englishmen of pith,
Sixteen call'd Thomson, and nineteen named Smith.

Jack Thomson and Bill Thomson; all the rest
Had been call'd 'Jemmy,' after the great bard;
I don't know whether they had arms or crest,
But such a godfather's as good a card.
Three of the Smiths were Peters; but the best
Amongst them all, hard blows to inflict or ward,
Was he, since so renown'd 'in country quarters
At Halifax;' but now he served the Tartars.

The rest were jacks and Gills and Wills and Bills;
But when I've added that the elder jack Smith
Was born in Cumberland among the hills,
And that his father was an honest blacksmith,
I've said all I know of a name that fills
Three lines of the despatch in taking 'Schmacksmith,'
A village of Moldavia's waste, wherein
He fell, immortal in a bulletin.

I wonder (although Mars no doubt's a god
Praise) if a man's name in a bulletin
May make up for a bullet in his body?
I hope this little question is no sin,
Because, though I am but a simple noddy,
I think one Shakspeare puts the same thought in
The mouth of some one in his plays so doting,
Which many people pass for wits by quoting.

Then there were Frenchmen, gallant, young, and gay:
But I'm too great a patriot to record
Their Gallic names upon a glorious day;
I'd rather tell ten lies than say a word
Of truth;--such truths are treason; they betray
Their country; and as traitors are abhor'd
Who name the French in English, save to show
How Peace should make John Bull the Frenchman's foe.

The Russians, having built two batteries on
An isle near Ismail, had two ends in view;
The first was to bombard it, and knock down
The public buildings and the private too,
No matter what poor souls might be undone.
The city's shape suggested this, 't is true;
Form'd like an amphitheatre, each dwelling
Presented a fine mark to throw a shell in.

The second object was to profit by

The moment of the general consternation,
To attack the Turk's flotilla, which lay nigh
Extremely tranquil, anchor'd at its station:
But a third motive was as probably
To frighten them into capitulation;
A phantasy which sometimes seizes warriors,
Unless they are game as bull-dogs and fox-terriers.

A habit rather blamable, which is
That of despising those we combat with,
Common in many cases, was in this
The cause of killing Tchitchitzkoff and Smith;
One of the valorous 'Smiths' whom we shall miss
Out of those nineteen who late rhymed to 'pith:'
But 'tis a name so spread o'er 'Sir' and 'Madam,'
That one would think the first who bore it 'Adam.'

The Russian batteries were incomplete,
Because they were constructed in a hurry;
Thus the same cause which makes a verse want feet,
And throws a cloud o'er Longman and John Murray,
When the sale of new books is not so fleet
As they who print them think is necessary,
May likewise put off for a time what story
Sometimes calls 'murder,' and at others 'glory.'

Whether it was their engineer's stupidity,
Their haste, or waste, I neither know nor care,
Or some contractor's personal cupidity,
Saving his soul by cheating in the ware
Of homicide, but there was no solidity
In the new batteries erected there;
They either miss'd, or they were never miss'd,
And added greatly to the missing list.

A sad miscalculation about distance
Made all their naval matters incorrect;
Three fireships lost their amiable existence
Before they reach'd a spot to take effect:
The match was lit too soon, and no assistance
Could remedy this lubberly defect;
They blew up in the middle of the river,
While, though 't was dawn, the Turks slept fast as ever.

At seven they rose, however, and survey'd
The Russ flotilla getting under way;
'Twas nine, when still advancing undismay'd,
Within a cable's length their vessels lay
Off Ismail, and commenced a cannonade,
Which was return'd with interest, I may say,
And by a fire of musketry and grape,
And shells and shot of every size and shape.

For six hours bore they without intermission
The Turkish fire, and aided by their own
Land batteries, work'd their guns with great precision:
At length they found mere cannonade alone
By no means would produce the town's submission,
And made a signal to retreat at one.
One bark blew up, a second near the works
Running aground, was taken by the Turks.

The Moslem, too, had lost both ships and men;
But when they saw the enemy retire,
Their Delhis mann'd some boats, and sail'd again,
And gall'd the Russians with a heavy fire,
And tried to make a landing on the main;
But here the effect fell short of their desire:
Count Damas drove them back into the water
Pell-mell, and with a whole gazette of slaughter.

'If' (says the historian here) 'I could report
All that the Russians did upon this day,
I think that several volumes would fall short,
And I should still have many things to say;'
And so he says no more--but pays his court
To some distinguish'd strangers in that fray;
The Prince de Ligne, and Langeron, and Damas,
Names great as any that the roll of Fame has.

This being the case, may show us what Fame is:
For out of these three 'preux Chevaliers,' how
Many of common readers give a guess
That such existed? (and they may live now
For aught we know.) Renown 's all hit or miss;
There's fortune even in fame, we must allow.
'Tis true the Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne
Have half withdrawn from him oblivion's screen.

But here are men who fought in gallant actions
As gallantly as ever heroes fought,
But buried in the heap of such transactions
Their names are rarely found, nor often sought.
Thus even good fame may suffer sad contractions,
And is extinguish'd sooner than she ought:
Of all our modern battles, I will bet
You can't repeat nine names from each Gazette.

In short, this last attack, though rich in glory,
Show'd that somewhere, somehow, there was a fault,
And Admiral Ribas (known in Russian story)
Most strongly recommended an assault;
In which he was opposed by young and hoary,
Which made a long debate; but I must halt,

For if I wrote down every warrior's speech,
I doubt few readers e'er would mount the breach.

There was a man, if that he was a man,
Not that his manhood could be call'd in question,
For had he not been Hercules, his span
Had been as short in youth as indigestion
Made his last illness, when, all worn and wan,
He died beneath a tree, as much unblest on
The soil of the green province he had wasted,
As e'er was locust on the land it blasted.

This was Potemkin--a great thing in days
When homicide and harlotry made great;
If stars and titles could entail long praise,
His glory might half equal his estate.
This fellow, being six foot high, could raise
A kind of phantasy proportionate
In the then sovereign of the Russian people,
Who measured men as you would do a steeple.

While things were in abeyance, Ribas sent
A courier to the prince, and he succeeded
In ordering matters after his own bent;
I cannot tell the way in which he pleaded,
But shortly he had cause to be content.
In the mean time, the batteries proceeded,
And fourscore cannon on the Danube's border
Were briskly fired and answer'd in due order.

But on the thirteenth, when already part
Of the troops were embark'd, the siege to raise,
A courier on the spur inspired new heart
Into all panthers for newspaper praise,
As well as dilettanti in war's art,
By his despatches couch'd in pithy phrase;
Announcing the appointment of that lover of
Battles to the command, Field-Marshal Souvaroff.

The letter of the prince to the same marshal
Was worthy of a Spartan, had the cause
Been one to which a good heart could be partial--
Defence of freedom, country, or of laws;
But as it was mere lust of power to o'er-arch all
With its proud brow, it merits slight applause,
Save for its style, which said, all in a trice,
'You will take Ismail at whatever price.'

'Let there be light! said God, and there was light!'
'Let there be blood!' says man, and there's a seal
The fiat of this spoil'd child of the Night
(For Day ne'er saw his merits) could decree

More evil in an hour, than thirty bright
Summers could renovate, though they should be
Lovely as those which ripen'd Eden's fruit;
For war cuts up not only branch, but root.

Our friends the Turks, who with loud 'Allahs' now
Began to signalise the Russ retreat,
Were damnably mistaken; few are slow
In thinking that their enemy is beat
(Or beaten, if you insist on grammar, though
I never think about it in a heat),
But here I say the Turks were much mistaken,
Who hating hogs, yet wish'd to save their bacon.

For, on the sixteenth, at full gallop, drew
In sight two horsemen, who were deem'd Cossacques
For some time, till they came in nearer view.
They had but little baggage at their backs,
For there were but three shirts between the two;
But on they rode upon two Ukraine hacks,
Till, in approaching, were at length descried
In this plain pair, Suwarro and his guide.

'Great joy to London now!' says some great fool,
When London had a grand illumination,
Which to that bottle-conjurer, John Bull,
Is of all dreams the first hallucination;
So that the streets of colour'd lamps are full,
That Sage (said John) surrenders at discretion
His purse, his soul, his sense, and even his nonsense,
To gratify, like a huge moth, this one sense.

'T is strange that he should farther 'damn his eyes,'
For they are damn'd; that once all-famous oath
Is to the devil now no farther prize,
Since John has lately lost the use of both.
Debt he calls wealth, and taxes Paradise;
And Famine, with her gaunt and bony growth,
Which stare him in the face, he won't examine,
Or swears that Ceres hath begotten Famine.

But to the tale:--great joy unto the camp!
To Russian, Tartar, English, French, Cossacque,
O'er whom Suwarro shone like a gas lamp,
Presaging a most luminous attack;
Or like a wisp along the marsh so damp,
Which leads beholders on a boggy walk,
He flitted to and fro a dancing light,
Which all who saw it follow'd, wrong or right.

But certes matters took a different face;
There was enthusiasm and much applause,

The fleet and camp saluted with great grace,
And all presaged good fortune to their cause.
Within a cannon-shot length of the place
They drew, constructed ladders, repair'd flaws
In former works, made new, prepared fascines,
And all kinds of benevolent machines.

'Tis thus the spirit of a single mind
Makes that of multitudes take one direction,
As roll the waters to the breathing wind,
Or roams the herd beneath the bull's protection;
Or as a little dog will lead the blind,
Or a bell-wether form the flock's connection
By tinkling sounds, when they go forth to victual;
Such is the sway of your great men o'er little.

The whole camp rung with joy; you would have thought
That they were going to a marriage feast
(This metaphor, I think, holds good as aught,
Since there is discord after both at least):
There was not now a luggage boy but sought
Danger and spoil with ardour much increased;
And why? because a little--odd--old man,
Stript to his shirt, was come to lead the van.

But so it was; and every preparation
Was made with all alacrity: the first
Detachment of three columns took its station,
And waited but the signal's voice to burst
Upon the foe: the second's ordination
Was also in three columns, with a thirst
For glory gaping o'er a sea of slaughter:
The third, in columns two, attack'd by water.

New batteries were erected, and was held
A general council, in which unanimity,
That stranger to most councils, here prevail'd,
As sometimes happens in a great extremity;
And every difficulty being dispell'd,
Glory began to dawn with due sublimity,
While Souvaroff, determined to obtain it,
Was teaching his recruits to use the bayonet

It is an actual fact, that he, commander
In chief, in proper person deign'd to drill
The awkward squad, and could afford to squander
His time, a corporal's duty to fulfil:
Just as you 'd break a sucking salamander
To swallow flame, and never take it ill:
He show'd them how to mount a ladder (which
Was not like Jacob's) or to cross a ditch.

Also he dress'd up, for the nonce, fascines
Like men with turbans, scimitars, and dirks,
And made them charge with bayonet these machines,
By way of lesson against actual Turks:
And when well practised in these mimic scenes,
He judged them proper to assail the works;
At which your wise men sneer'd in phrases witty:
He made no answer; but he took the city.

Most things were in this posture on the eve
Of the assault, and all the camp was in
A stern repose; which you would scarce conceive;
Yet men resolved to dash through thick and thin
Are very silent when they once believe
That all is settled:--there was little din,
For some were thinking of their home and friends,
And others of themselves and latter ends.

Suwarrow chiefly was on the alert,
Surveying, drilling, ordering, jesting, pondering;
For the man was, we safely may assert,
A thing to wonder at beyond most wondering;
Hero, buffoon, half-demon, and half-dirt,
Praying, instructing, desolating, plundering;
Now Mars, now Momus; and when bent to storm
A fortress, Harlequin in uniform.

The day before the assault, while upon drill--
For this great conqueror play'd the corporal--
Some Cossacques, hovering like hawks round a hill,
Had met a party towards the twilight's fall,
One of whom spoke their tongue--or well or ill,
'Twas much that he was understood at all;
But whether from his voice, or speech, or manner,
They found that he had fought beneath their banner.

Whereon immediately at his request
They brought him and his comrades to head-quarters;
Their dress was Moslem, but you might have guess'd
That these were merely masquerading Tartars,
And that beneath each Turkish-fashion'd vest
Lurk'd Christianity; which sometimes barters
Her inward grace for outward show, and makes
It difficult to shun some strange mistakes.

Suwarrow, who was standing in his shirt
Before a company of Calmucks, drilling,
Exclaiming, fooling, swearing at the inert,
And lecturing on the noble art of killing,--
For deeming human clay but common dirt,
This great philosopher was thus instilling
His maxims, which to martial comprehension

Proved death in battle equal to a pension;--

Suwarrow, when he saw this company
Of Cossacques and their prey, turn'd round and cast
Upon them his slow brow and piercing eye:-
'Whence come ye?'--'From Constantinople last,
Captives just now escaped,' was the reply.
'What are ye?'--'What you see us.' Briefly pass'd
This dialogue; for he who answer'd knew
To whom he spoke, and made his words but few.

'Your names?'--'Mine's Johnson, and my comrade's Juan;
The other two are women, and the third
Is neither man nor woman.' The chief threw on
The party a slight glance, then said, 'I have heard
Your name before, the second is a new one:
To bring the other three here was absurd:
But let that pass:--I think I have heard your name
In the Nikolaiew regiment?'--'The same.'

'You served at Widdin?'--'Yes.'--'You led the attack?'
'I did.'--'What next?'--'I really hardly know.'
'You were the first i'the breach?'--'I was not slack
At least to follow those who might be so.'
'What follow'd?'--'A shot laid me on my back,
And I became a prisoner to the foe.'
'You shall have vengeance, for the town surrounded
Is twice as strong as that where you were wounded.

'Where will you serve?'--'Where'er you please.'--'I know
You like to be the hope of the forlorn,
And doubtless would be foremost on the foe
After the hardships you've already borne.
And this young fellow--say what can he do?
He with the beardless chin and garments torn?'
'Why, general, if he hath no greater fault
In war than love, he had better lead the assault.'

'He shall if that he dare.' Here Juan bow'd
Low as the compliment deserved. Suwarrow
Continued: 'Your old regiment's allow'd,
By special providence, to lead to-morrow,
Or it may be to-night, the assault: I have vow'd
To several saints, that shortly plough or harrow
Shall pass o'er what was Ismail, and its tusk
Be unimpeded by the proudest mosque.

'So now, my lads, for glory!'--Here he turn'd
And drill'd away in the most classic Russian,
Until each high, heroic bosom burn'd
For cash and conquest, as if from a cushion
A preacher had held forth (who nobly spurn'd

All earthly goods save tithes) and bade them push on
To slay the Pagans who resisted, battering
The armies of the Christian Empress Catherine.

Johnson, who knew by this long colloquy
Himself a favourite, ventured to address
Suwarrow, though engaged with accents high
In his resumed amusement. 'I confess
My debt in being thus allow'd to die
Among the foremost; but if you'd express
Explicitly our several posts, my friend
And self would know what duty to attend.'

'Right! I was busy, and forgot. Why, you
Will join your former regiment, which should be
Now under arms. Ho! Katskoff, take him to
(Here he call'd up a Polish orderly)
His post, I mean the regiment Nikolaiew:
The stranger stripling may remain with me;
He's a fine boy. The women may be sent
To the other baggage, or to the sick tent.'

But here a sort of scene began to ensue:
The ladies,--who by no means had been bred
To be disposed of in a way so new,
Although their haram education led
Doubtless to that of doctrines the most true,
Passive obedience,--now raised up the head,
With flashing eyes and starting tears, and flung
Their arms, as hens their wings about their young,

O'er the promoted couple of brave men
Who were thus honour'd by the greatest chief
That ever peopled hell with heroes slain,
Or plunged a province or a realm in grief.
Oh, foolish mortals! Always taught in vain!
Oh, glorious laurel! since for one sole leaf
Of thine imaginary deathless tree,
Of blood and tears must flow the unebbing sea.

Suwarrow, who had small regard for tears,
And not much sympathy for blood, survey'd
The women with their hair about their ears
And natural agonies, with a slight shade
Of feeling: for however habit sears
Men's hearts against whole millions, when their trade
Is butchery, sometimes a single sorrow
Will touch even heroes- and such was Suwarrow.

He said,--and in the kindest Calmuck tone,--
'Why, Johnson, what the devil do you mean
By bringing women here? They shall be shown

All the attention possible, and seen
In safety to the waggons, where alone
In fact they can be safe. You should have been
Aware this kind of baggage never thrives:
Save wed a year, I hate recruits with wives.'

'May it please your excellency,' thus replied
Our British friend, 'these are the wives of others,
And not our own. I am too qualified
By service with my military brothers
To break the rules by bringing one's own bride
Into a camp: I know that nought so bothers
The hearts of the heroic on a charge,
As leaving a small family at large.

'But these are but two Turkish ladies, who
With their attendant aided our escape,
And afterwards accompanied us through
A thousand perils in this dubious shape.
To me this kind of life is not so new;
To them, poor things, it is an awkward scrape.
I therefore, if you wish me to fight freely,
Request that they may both be used genteelly.'

Meantime these two poor girls, with swimming eyes,
Look'd on as if in doubt if they could trust
Their own protectors; nor was their surprise
Less than their grief (and truly not less just)
To see an old man, rather wild than wise
In aspect, plainly clad, besmear'd with dust,
Stript to his waistcoat, and that not too clean,
More fear'd than all the sultans ever seen.

For every thing seem'd resting on his nod,
As they could read in all eyes. Now to them,
Who were accustom'd, as a sort of god,
To see the sultan, rich in many a gem,
Like an imperial peacock stalk abroad
(That royal bird, whose tail's a diadem),
With all the pomp of power, it was a doubt
How power could condescend to do without.

John Johnson, seeing their extreme dismay,
Though little versed in feelings oriental,
Suggested some slight comfort in his way:
Don Juan, who was much more sentimental,
Swore they should see him by the dawn of day,
Or that the Russian army should repent all:
And, strange to say, they found some consolation
In this--for females like exaggeration.

And then with tears, and sighs, and some slight kisses,

They parted for the present--these to await,
According to the artillery's hits or misses,
What sages call Chance, Providence, or Fate
(Uncertainty is one of many blisses,
A mortgage on Humanity's estate)--
While their beloved friends began to arm,
To burn a town which never did them harm.

Suwarow,--who but saw things in the gross,
Being much too gross to see them in detail,
Who calculated life as so much dross,
And as the wind a widow'd nation's wail,
And cared as little for his army's loss
(So that their efforts should at length prevail)
As wife and friends did for the boils of job,--
What was't to him to hear two women sob?

Nothing.--The work of glory still went on
In preparations for a cannonade
As terrible as that of Ilion,
If Homer had found mortars ready made;
But now, instead of slaying Priam's son,
We only can but talk of escalade,
Bombs, drums, guns, bastions, batteries, bayonets, bullets,--
Hard words, which stick in the soft Muses' gullets.

Oh, thou eternal Homer! who couldst charm
All cars, though long; all ages, though so short,
By merely wielding with poetic arm
Arms to which men will never more resort,
Unless gunpowder should be found to harm
Much less than is the hope of every court,
Which now is leagued young Freedom to annoy;
But they will not find Liberty a Troy:--

Oh, thou eternal Homer! I have now
To paint a siege, wherein more men were slain,
With deadlier engines and a speedier blow,
Than in thy Greek gazette of that campaign;
And yet, like all men else, I must allow,
To vie with thee would be about as vain
As for a brook to cope with ocean's flood;
But still we moderns equal you in blood;

If not in poetry, at least in fact;
And fact is truth, the grand desideratum!
Of which, howe'er the Muse describes each act,
There should be ne'ertheless a slight substratum.
But now the town is going to be attack'd;
Great deeds are doing- how shall I relate 'em?
Souls of immortal generals! Phoebus watches
To colour up his rays from your despatches.

Oh, ye great bulletins of Bonaparte!
Oh, ye less grand long lists of kill'd and wounded!
Shade of Leonidas, who fought so hearty,
When my poor Greece was once, as now, surrounded!
Oh, Caesar's Commentaries! now impart, ye
Shadows of glory! (lest I be confounded)
A portion of your fading twilight hues,
So beautiful, so fleeting, to the Muse.

When I call 'fading' martial immortality,
I mean, that every age and every year,
And almost every day, in sad reality,
Some sucking hero is compell'd to rear,
Who, when we come to sum up the totality
Of deeds to human happiness most dear,
Turns out to be a butcher in great business,
Afflicting young folks with a sort of dizziness.

Medals, rank, ribands, lace, embroidery, scarlet,
Are things immortal to immortal man,
As purple to the Babylonian harlot:
An uniform to boys is like a fan
To women; there is scarce a crimson varlet
But deems himself the first in Glory's van.
But Glory's glory; and if you would find
What that is--ask the pig who sees the wind!

At least he feels it, and some say he sees,
Because he runs before it like a pig;
Or, if that simple sentence should displease,
Say, that he scuds before it like a brig,
A schooner, or--but it is time to ease
This Canto, ere my Muse perceives fatigue.
The next shall ring a peal to shake all people,
Like a bob-major from a village steeple.

Hark! through the silence of the cold, dull night,
The hum of armies gathering rank on rank!
Lo! dusky masses steal in dubious sight
Along the leaguer'd wall and bristling bank
Of the arm'd river, while with straggling light
The stars peep through the vapours dim and dank,
Which curl in curious wreaths:--how soon the smoke
Of Hell shall pall them in a deeper cloak!

Here pause we for the present--as even then
That awful pause, dividing life from death,
Struck for an instant on the hearts of men,
Thousands of whom were drawing their last breath!
A moment--and all will be life again!
The march! the charge! the shouts of either faith!

Hurra! and Allah! and- one moment more,
The death-cry drowning in the battle's roar.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Don Juan: Canto The Sixteenth

The antique Persians taught three useful things,
To draw the bow, to ride, and speak the truth.
This was the mode of Cyrus, best of kings--
A mode adopted since by modern youth.
Bows have they, generally with two strings;
Horses they ride without remorse or ruth;
At speaking truth perhaps they are less clever,
But draw the long bow better now than ever.

The cause of this effect, or this defect,--
'For this effect defective comes by cause,'--
Is what I have not leisure to inspect;
But this I must say in my own applause,
Of all the Muses that I recollect,
Whate'er may be her follies or her flaws
In some things, mine's beyond all contradiction
The most sincere that ever dealt in fiction.

And as she treats all things, and ne'er retreats
From any thing, this epic will contain
A wilderness of the most rare conceits,
Which you might elsewhere hope to find in vain.
'Tis true there be some bitters with the sweets,
Yet mix'd so slightly, that you can't complain,
But wonder they so few are, since my tale is
'De rebus cunctis et quibusdam aliis.'

But of all truths which she has told, the most
True is that which she is about to tell.
I said it was a story of a ghost--
What then? I only know it so befell.
Have you explored the limits of the coast,
Where all the dwellers of the earth must dwell?
'Tis time to strike such puny doubters dumb as
The sceptics who would not believe Columbus.

Some people would impose now with authority,
Turpin's or Monmouth Geoffry's Chronicle;
Men whose historical superiority
Is always greatest at a miracle.
But Saint Augustine has the great priority,
Who bids all men believe the impossible,
Because 'tis so. Who nibble, scribble, quibble, he
Quiets at once with 'quia impossibile.'

And therefore, mortals, cavil not at all;
Believe:--if 'tis improbable you must,
And if it is impossible, you shall:
'Tis always best to take things upon trust.
I do not speak profanely, to recall
Those holier mysteries which the wise and just
Receive as gospel, and which grow more rooted,

As all truths must, the more they are disputed:

I merely mean to say what Johnson said,
That in the course of some six thousand years,
All nations have believed that from the dead
A visitant at intervals appears;
And what is strangest upon this strange head,
Is, that whatever bar the reason rears
'Gainst such belief, there's something stronger still
In its behalf, let those deny who will.

The dinner and the soiree too were done,
The supper too discuss'd, the dames admired,
The banqueteers had dropp'd off one by one -
The song was silent, and the dance expired:
The last thin petticoats were vanish'd, gone
Like fleecy Clouds into the sky retired,
And nothing brighter gleam'd through the saloon
Than dying tapers - and the peeping moon.

The evaporation of a joyous day
Is like the last glass of champagne, without
The foam which made its virgin bumper gay;
Or like a system coupled with a doubt;
Or like a soda bottle when its spray
Has sparkled and let half its spirit out;
Or like a billow left by storms behind,
Without the animation of the wind;

Or like an opiate, which brings troubled rest,
Or none; or like--like nothing that I know
Except itself;--such is the human breast;
A thing, of which similitudes can show
No real likeness,--like the old Tyrian vest
Dyed purple, none at present can tell how,
If from a shell-fish or from cochineal.
So perish every tyrant's robe piece -meal!

But next to dressing for a rout or ball,
Undressing is a woe; our robe de chambre
May sit like that of Nessus, and recall
Thoughts quite as yellow, but less clear than amber.
Titus exclaim'd, 'I've lost a day!' Of all
The nights and days most people can remember
(I have had of both, some not to be disdain'd),
I wish they 'd state how many they have gain'd.

And Juan, on retiring for the night,
Felt restless, and perplex'd, and compromised:
He thought Aurora Raby's eyes more bright
Than Adeline (such is advice) advised;
If he had known exactly his own plight,

He probably would have philosophised:
A great resource to all, and ne'er denied
Till wanted; therefore Juan only sigh'd.

He sigh'd;--the next resource is the full moon,
Where all sighs are deposited; and now
It happen'd luckily, the chaste orb shone
As clear as such a climate will allow;
And Juan's mind was in the proper tone
To hail her with the apostrophe--'O thou!'
Of amatory egotism the Tuism,
Which further to explain would be a truism.

But lover, poet, or astronomer,
Shepherd, or swain, whoever may behold,
Feel some abstraction when they gaze on her:
Great thoughts we catch from thence (besides a cold
Sometimes, unless my feelings rather err);
Deep secrets to her rolling light are told;
The ocean's tides and mortals' brains she sways,
And also hearts, if there be truth in lays.

Juan felt somewhat pensive, and disposed
For contemplation rather than his pillow:
The Gothic chamber, where he was enclosed,
Let in the rippling sound of the lake's billow,
With all the mystery by midnight caused;
Below his window waved (of course) a willow;
And he stood gazing out on the cascade
That flash'd and after darken'd in the shade.

Upon his table or his toilet,--which
Of these is not exactly ascertain'd
(I state this, for I am cautious to a pitch
Of nicety, where a fact is to be gain'd),--
A lamp burn'd high, while he leant from a niche,
Where many a Gothic ornament remain'd,
In chisell'd stone and painted glass, and all
That time has left our fathers of their hall.

Then, as the night was clear though cold, he threw
His chamber door wide open - and went forth
Into a gallery, of a sombre hue,
Long, furnish'd with old pictures of great worth,
Of knights and dames heroic and chaste too,
As doubtless should be people of high birth.
But by dim lights the portraits of the dead
Have something ghastly, desolate, and dread.

The forms of the grim knight and pictured saint
Look living in the moon; and as you turn
Backward and forward to the echoes faint

Of your own footsteps - voices from the urn
Appear to wake, and shadows wild and quaint
Start from the frames which fence their aspects stern,
As if to ask how you can dare to keep
A vigil there, where all but death should sleep.

And the pale smile of beauties in the grave,
The charms of other days, in starlight gleams,
Glimmer on high; their buried locks still wave
Along the canvas; their eyes glance like dreams
On ours, or spars within some dusky cave,
But death is imaged in their shadowy beams.
A picture is the past; even ere its frame
Be gilt, who sate hath ceased to be the same.

As Juan mused on mutability,
Or on his mistress - terms synonymous -
No sound except the echo of his sigh
Or step ran sadly through that antique house;
When suddenly he heard, or thought so, nigh,
A supernatural agent - or a mouse,
Whose little nibbling rustle will embarrass
Most people as it plays along the arras.

It was no mouse, but lo! a monk, array'd
In cowl and beads and dusky garb, appear'd,
Now in the moonlight, and now lapsed in shade,
With steps that trod as heavy, yet unheard;
His garments only a slight murmur made;
He moved as shadowy as the sisters weird,
But slowly; and as he pass'd Juan by,
Glanced, without pausing, on him a bright eye.

Juan was petrified; he had heard a hint
Of such a spirit in these halls of old,
But thought, like most men, there was nothing in't
Beyond the rumour which such spots unfold,
Coin'd from surviving superstition's mint,
Which passes ghosts in currency like gold,
But rarely seen, like gold compared with paper.
And did he see this? or was it a vapour?

Once, twice, thrice pass'd, repass'd--the thing of air,
Or earth beneath, or heaven, or t'other place;
And Juan gazed upon it with a stare,
Yet could not speak or move; but, on its base
As stands a statue, stood: he felt his hair
Twine like a knot of snakes around his face;
He tax'd his tongue for words, which were not granted,
To ask the reverend person what he wanted.

The third time, after a still longer pause,

The shadow pass'd away--but where? the hall
Was long, and thus far there was no great cause
To think his vanishing unnatural:
Doors there were many, through which, by the laws
Of physics, bodies whether short or tall
Might come or go; but Juan could not state
Through which the spectre seem'd to evaporate.

He stood -- how long he knew not, but it seem'd
An age -- expectant, powerless, with his eyes
Strain'd on the spot where first the figure gleam'd;
Then by degrees recall'd his energies,
And would have pass'd the whole off as a dream,
But could not wake; he was, he did surmise,
Waking already, and return'd at length
Back to his chamber, shorn of half his strength.

All there was as he left it: still his taper
Burnt, and not blue, as modest tapers use,
Receiving sprites with sympathetic vapour;
He rubb'd his eyes, and they did not refuse
Their office; he took up an old newspaper;
The paper was right easy to peruse;
He read an article the king attacking,
And a long eulogy of 'patent blacking.'

This savour'd of this world; but his hand shook--
He shut his door, and after having read
A paragraph, I think about Horne Tooke,
Undrest, and rather slowly went to bed.
There, couch'd all snugly on his pillow's nook,
With what he had seen his phantasy he fed;
And though it was no opiate, slumber crept
Upon him by degrees, and so he slept.

He woke betimes; and, as may be supposed,
Ponder'd upon his visitant or vision,
And whether it ought not to be disclosed,
At risk of being quizz'd for superstition.
The more he thought, the more his mind was posed:
In the mean time, his valet, whose precision
Was great, because his master brook'd no less,
Knock'd to inform him it was time to dress.

He dress'd; and like young people he was wont
To take some trouble with his toilet, but
This morning rather spent less time upon't;
Aside his very mirror soon was put;
His curls fell negligently o'er his front,
His clothes were not curb'd to their usual cut,
His very neckcloth's Gordian knot was tied
Almost an hair's breadth too much on one side.

And when he walk'd down into the saloon,
He sate him pensive o'er a dish of tea,
Which he perhaps had not discover'd soon,
Had it not happen'd scalding hot to be,
Which made him have recourse unto his spoon;
So much distract he was, that all could see
That something was the matter -- Adeline
The first -- but what she could not well divine.

She look'd, and saw him pale, and turn'd as pale
Herself; then hastily look'd down, and mutter'd
Something, but what's not stated in my tale.
Lord Henry said his muffin was ill butter'd;
The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke play'd with her veil,
And look'd at Juan hard, but nothing utter'd.
Aurora Raby with her large dark eyes
Survey'd him with a kind of calm surprise.

But seeing him all cold and silent still,
And everybody wondering more or less,
Fair Adeline enquired, 'If he were ill?'
He started, and said, 'Yes--no--rather--yes.'
The family physician had great skill,
And being present, now began to express
His readiness to feel his pulse and tell
The cause, but Juan said, 'He was quite well.'

'Quite well; yes,--no.'--These answers were mysterious,
And yet his looks appear'd to sanction both,
However they might savour of delirious;
Something like illness of a sudden growth
Weigh'd on his spirit, though by no means serious:
But for the rest, as he himself seem'd loth
To state the case, it might be ta'en for granted
It was not the physician that he wanted.

Lord Henry, who had now discuss'd his chocolate,
Also the muffin whereof he complain'd,
Said, Juan had not got his usual look elate,
At which he marvell'd, since it had not rain'd;
Then ask'd her Grace what news were of the duke of late?
Her Grace replied, his Grace was rather pain'd
With some slight, light, hereditary twinges
Of gout, which rusts aristocratic hinges.

Then Henry turn'd to Juan, and address'd
A few words of condolence on his state:
'You look,' quoth he, 'as if you had had your rest
Broke in upon by the Black Friar of late.'
'What friar?' said Juan; and he did his best
To put the question with an air sedate,

Or careless; but the effort was not valid
To hinder him from growing still more pallid.

'Oh! have you never heard of the Black Friar?
The spirit of these walls?'--'In truth not I.'
'Why Fame--but Fame you know 's sometimes a liar--
Tells an odd story, of which by and by:
Whether with time the spectre has grown shyer,
Or that our sires had a more gifted eye
For such sights, though the tale is half believed,
The friar of late has not been oft perceived.

(Who watch'd the changes of Don Juan's brow,
And from its context thought she could divine
Connexions stronger then he chose to avow
With this same legend)--'if you but design
To jest, you'll choose some other theme just now,
Because the present tale has oft been told,
And is not much improved by growing old.'

'Jest!' quoth Milor; 'why, Adeline, you know
That we ourselves - 'twas in the honey-moon--
But, come, I'll set your story to a tune.'
Graceful as Dian, when she draws her bow,
She seized her harp, whose strings were kindled soon
As touch'd, and plaintively began to play
The air of "Twas a Friar of Orders Gray."

'But add the words,' cried Henry, 'which you made;
For Adeline is half a poetess,'
Turning round to the rest, he smiling said.
Of course the others could not but express
In courtesy their wish to see display'd
By one three talents, for there were no less--
The voice, the words, the harper's skill, at once
Could hardly be united by a dunce.

After some fascinating hesitation,--
The charming of these charmers, who seem bound,
I can't tell why, to this dissimulation,--
Fair Adeline, with eyes fix'd on the ground
At first, then kindling into animation,
Added her sweet voice to the lyric sound,
And sang with much simplicity,--a merit
Not the less precious, that we seldom hear it.

Beware! beware! of the Black Friar,
Who sitteth by Norman stone,
For he mutters his prayer in the midnight air,
And his mass of the days that are gone.
When the Lord of the Hill, Amundeville,
Made Norman Church his prey,

And expell'd the friars, one friar still
Would not be driven away.

Though he came in his might, with King Henry's right,
To turn church lands to lay,
With sword in hand, and torch to light
Their walls, if they said nay;
A monk remain'd, uncased, unchain'd,
And he did not seem form'd of clay,
For he's seen in the porch, and he's seen in the church,
Though he is not seen by day.

And whether for good, or whether for ill,
It is not mine to say;
But still with the house of Amundeville
He abideth night and day.
By the marriage-bed of their lords, 'tis said,
He flits on the bridal eve;
And 'tis held as faith, to their bed of death
He comes - but not to grieve.

When an heir is born, he's heard to mourn,
And when aught is to befall
That ancient line, in the 'we moonshine
He walks from hall to hall.
His form you may trace, but not his face,
'Tis shadow'd by his cowl;
But his eyes may be seen from the folds between,
And they seem of a parted soul.

But beware! beware! of the Black Friar,
He still retains his sway,
For he is yet the church's heir
Whoever may be the lay.
Amundeville is lord by day,
But the monk is lord by night;
Nor wine nor wassail could raise a vassal
To question that friar's right.

Say nought to him as he walks the hall,
And he'll say nought to you;
He sweeps along in his dusky pall,
As o'er the grass the dew.
Then grammercy! for the Black Friar;
Heaven sain him, fair or foul!
And whatsoe'er may be his prayer,
Let ours be for his soul.

The lady's voice ceased, and the thrilling wires
Died from the touch that kindled them to sound;
And the pause follow'd, which when song expires
Pervades a moment those who listen round;

And then of course the circle much admires,
Nor less applauds, as in politeness bound,
The tones, the feeling, and the execution,
To the performer's diffident confusion.

Fair Adeline, though in a careless way,
As if she rated such accomplishment
As the mere pastime of an idle day,
Pursued an instant for her own content,
Would now and then as 'twere without display,
Yet with display in fact, at times relent
To such performances with haughty smile,
To show she could, if it were worth her while.

Now this (but we will whisper it aside)
Was - pardon the pedantic illustration--
Trampling on Plato's pride with greater pride,
As did the Cynic on some like occasion;
Deeming the sage would be much mortified,
Or thrown into a philosophic passion,
For a spoil'd carpet - but the 'Attic Bee'
Was much consoled by his own repartee.

Thus Adeline would throw into the shade
(By doing easily, whene'er she chose,
What dilettanti do with vast parade)
Their sort of half profession; for it grows
To something like this when too oft display'd;
And that it is so everybody knows
Who have heard Miss That or This, or Lady T'other,
Show off - to please their company or mother.

Oh! the long evenings of duets and trios!
The admirations and the speculations;
The 'Mamma Mia's!' and the 'Amor Mio's!'
The 'Tanti palpiti's' on such occasions:
The 'Lasciami's,' and quavering 'Addio's!'
Amongst our own most musical of nations;
With 'Tu mi chamas's' from Portingale,
To soothe our ears, lest Italy should fail.

In Babylon's bravuras - as the home
Heart-ballads of Green Erin or Gray Highlands,
That bring Lochaber back to eyes that roam
O'er far Atlantic continents or islands,
The calentures of music which o'ercome
All mountaineers with dreams that they are nigh lands,
No more to be beheld but in such visions -
Was Adeline well versed, as compositions.

She also had a twilight tinge of 'Blue,'
Could write rhymes, and compose more than she wrote,

Made epigrams occasionally too
Upon her friends, as everybody ought.
But still from that sublimer azure hue,
So much the present dye, she was remote;
Was weak enough to deem Pope a great poet,
And what was worse, was not ashamed to show it.

Aurora - since we are touching upon taste,
Which now-a-days is the thermometer
By whose degrees all characters are class'd -
Was more Shakspearian, if I do not err.
The worlds beyond this world's perplexing waste
Had more of her existence, for in her
There was a depth of feeling to embrace
Thoughts, boundless, deep, but silent too as Space.

Not so her gracious, graceful, graceless Grace,
The full-grown Hebe of Fitz-Fulke, whose mind,
If she had any, was upon her face,
And that was of a fascinating kind.
A little turn for mischief you might trace
Also thereon,--but that's not much; we find
Few females without some such gentle leaven,
For fear we should suppose us quite in heaven.

I have not heard she was at all poetic,
Though once she was seen reading the 'Bath Guide,'
And 'Hayley's Triumphs,' which she deem'd pathetic,
Because she said her temper had been tried
So much, the bard had really been prophetic
Of what she had gone through with - since a bride.
But of all verse, what most ensured her praise
Were sonnets to herself, or 'bouts rimes.'

'Twere difficult to say what was the object
Of Adeline, in bringing this same lay
To bear on what appear'd to her the subject
Of Juan's nervous feelings on that day.
Perhaps she merely had the simple project
To laugh him out of his supposed dismay;
Perhaps she might wish to confirm him in it,
Though why I cannot say - at least this minute.

But so far the immediate effect
Was to restore him to his self -propriety,
A thing quite necessary to the elect,
Who wish to take the tone of their society:
In which you cannot be too circumspect,
Whether the mode be persiflage or piety,
But wear the newest mantle of hypocrisy,
On pain of much displeasing the gynocracy.

And therefore Juan now began to rally
His spirits, and without more explanation
To jest upon such themes in many a sally.
Her Grace, too, also seized the same occasion,
With various similar remarks to tally,
But wish'd for a still more detail'd narration
Of this same mystic friar's curious doings,
About the present family's deaths and wooings.

Of these few could say more than has been said;
They pass'd as such things do, for superstition
With some, while others, who had more in dread
The theme, half credited the strange tradition;
And much was talk'd on all sides on that head:
But Juan, when cross-question'd on the vision,
Which some supposed (though he had not avow'd it)
Had stirr'd him, answer'd in a way to cloud it.

And then, the mid-day having worn to one,
The company prepared to separate;
Some to their several pastimes, or to none,
Some wondering 'twas so early, some so late.
There was a goodly match too, to be run
Between some greyhounds on my lord's estate,
And a young race-horse of old pedigree
Match'd for the spring, whom several went to see.

There was a picture-dealer who had brought
A special Titian, warranted original,
So precious that it was not to be bought,
Though princes the possessor were besieging all.
The king himself had cheapen'd it, but thought
The civil list he deigns to accept (obliging all
His subjects by his gracious acceptance)
Too scanty, in these times of low taxation.

But as Lord Henry was a connoisseur,--
The friend of artists, if not arts,--the owner,
With motives the most classical and pure,
So that he would have been the very donor,
Rather than seller, had his wants been fewer,
So much he deem'd his patronage an honour,
Had brought the capo d'opera, not for sale,
But for his judgment - never known to fail.

There was a modern Goth, I mean a Gothic
Bricklayer of Babel, call'd an architect,
Brought to survey these grey walls, which though so thick,
Might have from time acquired some slight defect;
Who after rummaging the Abbey through thick
And thin, produced a plan whereby to erect
New buildings of correctest conformation,

And throw down old - which he call'd restoration.

The cost would be a trifle - an 'old song,'
Set to some thousands ('tis the usual burden
Of that same tune, when people hum it long)--
The price would speedily repay its worth in
An edifice no less sublime than strong,
By which Lord Henry's good taste would go forth in
Its glory, through all ages shining sunny,
For Gothic daring shown in English money.

There were two lawyers busy on a mortgage
Lord Henry wish'd to raise for a new purchase;
Also a lawsuit upon tenures burgage,
And one on tithes, which sure are Discord's torches,
Kindling Religion till she throws down her gage,
'Untying' squires 'to fight against the churches;'
There was a prize ox, a prize pig, and ploughman,
For Henry was a sort of Sabine showman.

There were two poachers caught in a steel trap,
Ready for gaol, their place of convalescence;
There was a country girl in a close cap
And scarlet cloak (I hate the sight to see, since--
Since--since--in youth, I had the sad mishap--
But luckily I have paid few parish fees since):
That scarlet cloak, alas! unclosed with rigour,
Presents the problem of a double figure.

A reel within a bottle is a mystery,
One can't tell how it e'er got in or out;
Therefore the present piece of natural history
I leave to those who are fond of solving doubt;
And merely state, though not for the consistory,
Lord Henry was a justice, and that Scout
The constable, beneath a warrant's banner,
Had bagg'd this poacher upon Nature's manor.

Now justices of peace must judge all pieces
Of mischief of all kinds, and keep the game
And morals of the country from caprices
Of those who have not a license for the same;
And of all things, excepting tithes and leases,
Perhaps these are most difficult to tame:
Preserving partridges and pretty wenches
Are puzzles to the most cautious benches.

The present culprit was extremely pale,
Pale as if painted so; her cheek being red
By nature, as in higher dames less hale
'Tis white, at least when they just rise from bed.
Perhaps she was ashamed of seeming frail,

Poor soul! for she was country born and bred,
And knew no better in her immorality
Than to wax white - for blushes are for quality.

Her black, bright, downcast, yet espiegle eye,
Had gather'd a large tear into its corner,
Which the poor thing at times essay'd to dry,
For she was not a sentimental mourner
Parading all her sensibility,
Nor insolent enough to scorn the scorner,
But stood in trembling, patient tribulation,
To be call'd up for her examination.

Of course these groups were scatter'd here and there,
Not nigh the gay saloon of ladies gent.
The lawyers in the study; and in air
The prize pig, ploughman, poachers; the men sent
From town, viz., architect and dealer, were
Both busy (as a general in his tent
Writing despatches) in their several stations,
Exulting in their brilliant lucubrations.

But this poor girl was left in the great hall,
While Scout, the parish guardian of the frail,
Discuss'd (he hated beer yclept the 'small')
A mighty mug of moral double ale.
She waited until justice could recall
Its kind attentions to their proper pale,
To name a thing in nomenclature rather
Perplexing for most virgins - a child's father.

You see here was enough of occupation
For the Lord Henry, link'd with dogs and horses.
There was much bustle too, and preparation
Below stairs on the score of second courses;
Because, as suits their rank and situation,
Those who in counties have great land resources
Have 'Public days,' when all men may carouse,
Though not exactly what's call'd 'open house.'

But once a week or fortnight, uninvited
(Thus we translate a general invitation),
All country gentlemen, esquired or knighted,
May drop in without cards, and take their station
At the full board, and sit alike delighted
With fashionable wines and conversation;
And, as the isthmus of the grand connection,
Talk o'er themselves the past and next election.

Lord Henry was a great electioneerer,
Burrowing for boroughs like a rat or rabbit;
But county contests cost him rather dearer,

Because the neighbouring Scotch Earl of Giftgabbit
Had English influence in the self-same sphere here;
His son, the Honourable Dick Dicedrabbit,
Was member for the 'other interest' (meaning
The same self-interest, with a different leaning).

Courteous and cautious therefore in his county,
He was all things to all men, and dispensed
To some civility, to others bounty,
And promises to all - which last commenced
To gather to a somewhat large amount, he
Not calculating how much they condensed;
But what with keeping some, and breaking others,
His word had the same value as another's.

A friend to freedom and freeholders--yet
No less a friend to government--he held,
That he exactly the just medium hit
'Twixt place and patriotism--albeit compell'd,
Such was his sovereign's pleasure (though unfit,
He added modestly, when rebels rail'd),
To hold some sinecures he wish'd abolish'd,
But that with them all law would be demolish'd.

He was 'free to confess' (whence comes this phrase?
Is't English? No--'tis only parliamentary)
That innovation's spirit now-a-days
Had made more progress than for the last century.
He would not tread a factious path to praise,
Though for the public weal disposed to venture high;
As for his place, he could but say this of it,
That the fatigue was greater than the profit.

Heaven, and his friends, knew that a private life
Had ever been his sole and whole ambition;
But could he quit his king in times of strife,
Which threaten'd the whole country with perdition?
When demagogues would with a butcher's knife
Cut through and through (oh! damnable incision!)
The Gordian or the Geordi-an knot, whose strings
Have tied together commons, lords, and kings.

Sooner 'come lace into the civil list
And champion him to the utmost'--he would keep it,
Till duly disappointed or dismiss'd:
Profit he care not for, let others reap it;
But should the day come when place ceased to exist,
The country would have far more cause to weep it:
For how could it go on? Explain who can!
He gloried in the name of Englishman.

He was as independent--ay, much more--

Than those who were not paid for independence,
As common soldiers, or a common--shore,
Have in their several arts or parts ascendance
O'er the irregulars in lust or gore,
Who do not give professional attendance.
Thus on the mob all statesmen are as eager
To prove their pride, as footmen to a beggar.

All this (save the last stanza) Henry said,
And thought. I say no more--I've said too much;
For all of us have either heard or read--
Off--or upon the hustings--some slight such
Hints from the independent heart or head
Of the official candidate. I'll touch
No more on this--the dinner-bell hath rung,
And grace is said; the grace I should have sung--

But I'm too late, and therefore must make play.
'Twas a great banquet, such as Albion old
Was wont to boast--as if a glutton's tray
Were something very glorious to behold.
But 'twas a public feast and public day,--
Quite full, right dull, guests hot, and dishes cold,
Great plenty, much formality, small cheer,
And every body out of their own sphere.

The squires familiarly formal, and
My lords and ladies proudly condescending;
The very servants puzzling how to hand
Their plates--without it might be too much bending
From their high places by the sideboard's stand--
Yet, like their masters, fearful of offending.
For any deviation from the graces
Might cost both man and master too--their places.

There were some hunters bold, and coursers keen,
Whose hounds ne'er err'd, nor greyhounds deign'd to lurch;
Some deadly shots too, Septembrizers, seen
Earliest to rise, and last to quit the search
Of the poor partridge through his stubble screen.
There were some massy members of the church,
Takers of tithes, and makers of good matches,
And several who sung fewer psalms than catches.

There were some country wags too - and, alas!
Some exiles from the town, who had been driven
To gaze, instead of pavement, upon grass,
And rise at nine in lieu of long eleven.
And lo! upon that day it came to pass,
I sate next that o'erwhelming son of heaven,
The very powerful parson, Peter Pith,
The loudest wit I e'er was deafen'd with.

I knew him in his livelier London days,
A brilliant diner out, though but a curate;
And not a joke he cut but earn'd its praise,
Until preferment, coming at a sure rate
(O Providence! how wondrous are thy ways!
Who would suppose thy gifts sometimes obdurate?),
Gave him, to lay the devil who looks o'er Lincoln,
A fat fen vicarage, and nought to think on.

His jokes were sermons, and his sermons jokes;
But both were thrown away amongst the fens;
For wit hath no great friend in aguish folks.
No longer ready ears and short-hand pens
Imbibed the gay bon-mot, or happy hoax:
The poor priest was reduced to common sense,
Or to coarse efforts very loud and long,
To hammer a horse laugh from the thick throng.

There is a difference, says the song, 'between
A beggar and a queen,' or was (of late
The latter worse used of the two we've seen--
But we'll say nothing of affairs of state);
A difference "twixt a bishop and a dean,"
A difference between crockery ware and plate,
As between English beef and Spartan broth--
And yet great heroes have been bred by both.

But of all nature's discrepancies, none
Upon the whole is greater than the difference
Beheld between the country and the town,
Of which the latter merits every preference
From those who have few resources of their own,
And only think, or act, or feel, with reference
To some small plan of interest or ambition--
Both which are limited to no condition.

But 'en avant!' The light loves languish o'er
Long banquets and too many guests, although
A slight repast makes people love much more,
Bacchus and Ceres being, as we know
Even from our grammar upwards, friends of yore
With vivifying Venus, who doth owe
To these the invention of champagne and truffles:
Temperance delights her, but long fasting ruffles.

Dully past o'er the dinner of the day;
And Juan took his place, he knew not where,
Confused, in the confusion, and distract,
And sitting as if nail'd upon his chair:
Though knives and forks clank'd round as in a fray,
He seem'd unconscious of all passing there,

Till some one, with a groan, exprest a wish
(Unheeded twice) to have a fin of fish.

On which, at the third asking of the bans,
He started; and perceiving smiles around
Broadening to grins, he colour'd more than once,
And hastily--as nothing can confound
A wise man more than laughter from a dunce--
Inflicted on the dish a deadly wound,
And with such hurry, that ere he could curb it
He had paid his neighbour's prayer with half a turbot.

This was no bad mistake, as it occurr'd,
The supplicator being an amateur;
But others, who were left with scarce a third,
Were angry--as they well might, to be sure.
They wonder'd how a young man so absurd
Lord Henry at his table should endure;
And this, and his not knowing how much oats
Had fallen last market, cost his host three votes.

They little knew, or might have sympathised,
That he the night before had seen a ghost,
A prologue which but slightly harmonised
With the substantial company engross'd
By matter, and so much materialised,
That one scarce knew at what to marvel most
Of two things--how (the question rather odd is)
Such bodies could have souls, or souls such bodies.

But what confused him more than smile or stare
From all the 'squires and 'squires around,
Who wonder'd at the abstraction of his air,
Especially as he had been renown'd
For some vivacity among the fair,
Even in the country circle's narrow bound
(For little things upon my lord's estate
Were good small talk for others still less great)--

Was, that he caught Aurora's eye on his,
And something like a smile upon her cheek.
Now this he really rather took amiss:
In those who rarely smile, their smiles bespeak
A strong external motive; and in this
Smile of Aurora's there was nought to pique
Or hope, or love, with any of the wiles
Which some pretend to trace in ladies' smiles.

'Twas a mere quiet smile of contemplation,
Indicative of some surprise and pity;
And Juan grew carnation with vexation,
Which was not very wise, and still less witty,

Since he had gain'd at least her observation,
A most important outwork of the city--
As Juan should have known, had not his senses
By last night's ghost been driven from their defences.

But what was bad, she did not blush in turn,
Nor seem embarrass'd--quite the contrary;
Her aspect was as usual, still--not stern--
And she withdrew, but cast not down, her eye,
Yet grew a little pale--with what? concern?
I know not; but her colour ne'er was high--
Though sometimes faintly flush'd--and always clear,
As deep seas in a sunny atmosphere.

But Adeline was occupied by fame
This day; and watching, witching, condescending
To the consumers of fish, fowl, and game,
And dignity with courtesy so blending,
As all must blend whose part it is to aim
(Especially as the sixth year is ending)
At their lord's, son's, or similar connection's
Safe conduct through the rocks of re-elections.

Though this was most expedient on the whole,
And usual--Juan, when he cast a glance
On Adeline while playing her grand role,
Which she went through as though it were a dance,
Betraying only now and then her soul
By a look scarce perceptibly askance
(Of weariness or scorn), began to feel
Some doubt how much of Adeline was real;

So well she acted all and every part
By turns--with that vivacious versatility,
Which many people take for want of heart.
They err--'tis merely what is call'd mobility,
A thing of temperament and not of art,
Though seeming so, from its supposed facility;
And false--though true; for surely they 're sincerest
Who are strongly acted on by what is nearest.

This makes your actors, artists, and romancers,
Heroes sometimes, though seldom--sages never;
But speakers, bards, diplomatists, and dancers,
Little that's great, but much of what is clever;
Most orators, but very few financiers,
Though all Exchequer chancellors endeavour,
Of late years, to dispense with Cocker's rigours,
And grow quite figurative with their figures.

The poets of arithmetic are they
Who, though they prove not two and two to be

Five, as they might do in a modest way,
Have plainly made it out that four are three,
Judging by what they take, and what they pay.
The Sinking Fund's unfathomable sea,
That most unliquidating liquid, leaves
The debt unsunk, yet sinks all it receives.

While Adeline dispensed her airs and graces,
The fair Fitz-Fulke seem'd very much at ease;
Though too well bred to quiz men to their faces,
Her laughing blue eyes with a glance could seize
The ridicules of people in all places -
That honey of your fashionable bees -
And store it up for mischievous enjoyment;
And this at present was her kind employment.

However, the day closed, as days must close;
The evening also waned - and coffee came.
Each carriage was announced, and ladies rose,
And curtsying off, as curtsies country dame,
Retired: with most unfashionable bows
Their docile esquires also did the same,
Delighted with their dinner and their host,
But with the Lady Adeline the most.

Some praised her beauty; others her great grace;
The warmth of her politeness, whose sincerity
Was obvious in each feature of her face,
Whose traits were radiant with the rays of verity.
Yes; she was truly worthy her high place!
No one could envy her deserved prosperity.
And then her dress - what beautiful simplicity
Draperied her form with curious felicity!

Meanwhile Sweet Adeline deserved their praises,
By an impartial indemnification
For all her past exertion and soft phrases,
In a most edifying conversation,
Which turn'd upon their late guests' miens and faces,
And families, even to the last relation;
Their hideous wives, their horrid selves and dresses,
And truculent distortion of their tresses.

True, she said little - 'twas the rest that broke
Forth into universal epigram;
But then 'twas to the purpose what she spoke:
Like Addison's 'faint praise,' so wont to damn,
Her own but served to set off every joke,
As music chimes in with a melodrama.
How sweet the task to shield an absent friend!
I ask but this of mine, to - not defend.

There were but two exceptions to this keen
Skirmish of wits o'er the departed; one
Aurora, with her pure and placid mien;
And Juan, too, in general behind none
In gay remark on what he had heard or seen,
Sate silent now, his usual spirits gone:
In vain he heard the others rail or rally,
He would not join them in a single sally.

'Tis true he saw Aurora look as though
She approved his silence; she perhaps mistook
Its motive for that charity we owe
But seldom pay the absent, nor would look
Farther - it might or might not be so.
But Juan, sitting silent in his nook,
Observing little in his reverie,
Yet saw this much, which he was glad to see.

The ghost at least had done him this much good,
In making him as silent as a ghost,
If in the circumstances which ensued
He gain'd esteem where it was worth the most.
And certainly Aurora had renew'd
In him some feelings he had lately lost,
Or harden'd; feelings which, perhaps ideal,
Are so divine, that I must deem them real:--

The love of higher things and better days;
The unbounded hope, and heavenly ignorance
Of what is call'd the world, and the world's ways;
The moments when we gather from a glance
More joy than from all future pride or praise,
Which kindle manhood, but can ne'er entrance
The heart in an existence of its own,
Of which another's bosom is the zone.

Who would not sigh Ai ai Tan Kuuerheian
That hath a memory, or that had a heart?
Alas! her star must fade like that of Dian:
Ray fades on ray, as years on years depart.
Anacreon only had the soul to tie an
Unwithering myrtle round the unblunted dart
Of Eros: but though thou hast play'd us many tricks,
Still we respect thee, 'Alma Venus Genetrix!'

And full of sentiments, sublime as billows
Heaving between this world and worlds beyond,
Don Juan, when the midnight hour of pillows
Arrived, retired to his; but to despond
Rather than rest. Instead of poppies, willows
Waved o'er his couch; he meditated, fond
Of those sweet bitter thoughts which banish sleep,

And make the worldling sneer, the youngling weep.

The night was as before: he was unrest,
Saving his night-gown, which is an undress;
Completely 'sans culotte,' and without vest;
In short, he hardly could be clothed with less:
But apprehensive of his spectral guest,
He sate with feelings awkward to express
(By those who have not had such visitations),
Expectant of the ghost's fresh operations.

And not in vain he listen'd;--Hush! what's that?
I see--I see--Ah, no!--'tis not--yet 'tis--
Ye powers! it is the-the-the-Pooh! the cat!
The devil may take that stealthy pace of his!
So like a spiritual pit-a-pat,
Or tiptoe of an amatory Miss,
Gliding the first time to a rendezvous,
And dreading the chaste echoes of her shoe.

Again--what is't? The wind? No, no--this time
It is the sable friar as before,
With awful footsteps regular as rhyme,
Or (as rhymes may be in these days) much more.
Again through shadows of the night sublime,
When deep sleep fell on men, and the world wore
The starry darkness round her like a girdle
Spangled with gems--the monk made his blood curdle.

A noise like to wet fingers drawn on glass,
Which sets the teeth on edge; and a slight clatter,
Like showers which on the midnight gusts will pass,
Sounding like very supernatural water,
Came over Juan's ear, which throb'd, alas!
For immaterialism's a serious matter;
So that even those whose faith is the most great
In souls immortal, shun them tete-a-tete.

Were his eyes open?--Yes! and his mouth too.
Surprise has this effect--to make one dumb,
Yet leave the gate which eloquence slips through
As wide as if a long speech were to come.
Nigh and more nigh the awful echoes drew,
Tremendous to a mortal tympanum:
His eyes were open, and (as was before
Stated) his mouth. What open'd next?--the door.

It open'd with a most infernal creak,
Like that of hell. 'Lasciate ogni speranza
Voi che entrate!' The hinge seem'd to speak,
Dreadful as Dante's rhima, or this stanza;
Or - but all words upon such themes are weak:

A single shade's sufficient to entrance
Hero - for what is substance to a spirit?
Or how is't matter trembles to come near it?

The door flew wide,--not swiftly, but, as fly
The sea -gulls, with a steady, sober flight,
And then swung back, nor close, but stood awry,
Half letting in long shadows on the light,
Which still in Juan's candlesticks burned high,
For he had two, both tolerably bright,
And in the doorway, darkening darkness, stood
The sable Friar in his solemn hood.

Between two worlds life hovers like a star,
'Twixt night and morn, upon the horizon's verge.
How little do we know that which we are!
How less what we may be! The eternal surge
Of time and tide rolls on, and bears afar
Our bubbles; as the old burst, new emerge,
Lash'd from the foam of ages; while the graves
Of empires heave but like some passing waves.

Don Juan shook, as erst he had been shaken
The night before, but being sick of shaking,
He first inclined to think he had been mistaken,
And then to be ashamed of such mistaking.
His own internal ghost began to awaken
Within him and to quell his corporal quaking,
Hinting that soul and body on the whole
Were odds against a disembodied soul.

And then his dread grew wrath, and his wrath fierce,
And he arose, advanced. The shade retreated,
But Juan, eager now the truth to pierce,
Followed, his veins no longer cold, but heated,
Resolved to thrust the mystery carte and tierce,
At whatsoever risk of being defeated.
The ghost stopped, menaced, then retired, until
He reached the ancient wall, then stood stone still.

Juan put forth one arm. Eternal powers!
It touched no soul nor body, but the wall,
On which the moonbeams fell in silvery showers
Checkered with all the tracery of the hall.
He shuddered, as no doubt the bravest cowers
When he can't tell what 'tis that doth appal.
How odd, a single hobgoblin's nonentity
Should cause more fear than a whole host's identity.

But still the shade remained, the blue eyes glared,
And rather variably for stony death.
Yet one thing rather good the grave had spared;

The ghost had a remarkably sweet breath.
A straggling curl showed he had been fair-haired.
A red lip with two rows of pearls beneath
Gleamed forth, as through the casement's ivy shroud
The moon peeped, just escaped from a grey cloud.

And Juan, puzzled but still curious, thrust
His other arm forth. Wonder upon wonder!
It pressed upon a hard but glowing bust,
Which beat as if there was a warm heart under.
He found, as people on most trials must,
That he had made at first a silly blunder
And that in his confusion he had caught
Only the wall, instead of what he sought

The ghost, if ghost it were, seemed a sweet soul
As ever lurked beneath a holy hood.
A dimpled chin, a neck of ivory stole
Forth into something much like flesh and blood.
Back fell the sable frock and dreary cowl
And they revealed, alas, that ere they should,
In full, voluptuous, but not o'ergrown bulk,
The phantom of her frolic Grace - Fita-Fulke!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Don Juan: Canto The Sixth

'There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which,--taken at the flood,'--you know the rest,
And most of us have found it now and then;
At least we think so, though but few have guess'd
The moment, till too late to come again.
But no doubt every thing is for the best-
Of which the surest sign is in the end:
When things are at the worst they sometimes mend.

There is a tide in the affairs of women
Which, taken at the flood, leads- God knows where:
Those navigators must be able seamen
Whose charts lay down its current to a hair;
Not all the reveries of Jacob Behmen
With its strange whirls and eddies can compare:
Men with their heads reflect on this and that-
But women with their hearts on heaven knows what!

And yet a headlong, headstrong, downright she,
Young, beautiful, and daring- who would risk
A throne, the world, the universe, to be
Beloved in her own way, and rather whisk
The stars from out the sky, than not be free
As are the billows when the breeze is brisk-
Though such a she 's a devil (if that there be one),
Yet she would make full many a Manichean.

Thrones, worlds, et cetera, are so oft upset
By commonest ambition, that when passion
O'erthrows the same, we readily forget,
Or at the least forgive, the loving rash one.
If Antony be well remember'd yet,
'T is not his conquests keep his name in fashion,
But Actium, lost for Cleopatra's eyes,
Outbalances all Caesar's victories.

He died at fifty for a queen of forty;
I wish their years had been fifteen and twenty,
For then wealth, kingdoms, worlds are but a sport- I
Remember when, though I had no great plenty
Of worlds to lose, yet still, to pay my court, I
Gave what I had- a heart: as the world went, I
Gave what was worth a world; for worlds could never
Restore me those pure feelings, gone forever.

'T was the boy's 'mite,' and, like the 'widow's,' may
Perhaps be weigh'd hereafter, if not now;
But whether such things do or do not weigh,
All who have loved, or love, will still allow
Life has nought like it. God is love, they say,
And Love 's a god, or was before the brow
Of earth was wrinkled by the sins and tears

Of- but Chronology best knows the years.

We left our hero and third heroine in
A kind of state more awkward than uncommon,
For gentlemen must sometimes risk their skin
For that sad tempter, a forbidden woman:
Sultans too much abhor this sort of sin,
And don't agree at all with the wise Roman,
Heroic, stoic Cato, the sententious,
Who lent his lady to his friend Hortensius.

I know Gulbeyaz was extremely wrong;
I own it, I deplore it, I condemn it;
But I detest all fiction even in song,
And so must tell the truth, howe'er you blame it.
Her reason being weak, her passions strong,
She thought that her lord's heart (even could she claim it)
Was scarce enough; for he had fifty-nine
Years, and a fifteen-hundredth concubine.

I am not, like Cassio, 'an arithmetician,'
But by 'the bookish theoric' it appears,
If 't is summ'd up with feminine precision,
That, adding to the account his Highness' years,
The fair Sultana err'd from inanition;
For, were the Sultan just to all his dears,
She could but claim the fifteen-hundredth part
Of what should be monopoly- the heart.

It is observed that ladies are litigious
Upon all legal objects of possession,
And not the least so when they are religious,
Which doubles what they think of the transgression:
With suits and prosecutions they besiege us,
As the tribunals show through many a session,
When they suspect that any one goes shares
In that to which the law makes them sole heirs.

Now, if this holds good in a Christian land,
The heathen also, though with lesser latitude,
Are apt to carry things with a high hand,
And take what kings call 'an imposing attitude,'
And for their rights connubial make a stand,
When their liege husbands treat them with ingratitude:
And as four wives must have quadruple claims,
The Tigris hath its jealousies like Thames.

Gulbeyaz was the fourth, and (as I said)
The favourite; but what 's favour amongst four?
Polygamy may well be held in dread,
Not only as a sin, but as a bore:
Most wise men, with one moderate woman wed,

Will scarcely find philosophy for more;
And all (except Mahometans) forbear
To make the nuptial couch a 'Bed of Ware.'

His Highness, the sublimest of mankind,-
So styled according to the usual forms
Of every monarch, till they are consign'd
To those sad hungry jacobins the worms,
Who on the very loftiest kings have dined,-
His Highness gazed upon Gulbeyaz' charms,
Expecting all the welcome of a lover
(A 'Highland welcome' all the wide world over).

Now here we should distinguish; for howe'er
Kisses, sweet words, embraces, and all that,
May look like what is- neither here nor there,
They are put on as easily as a hat,
Or rather bonnet, which the fair sex wear,
Trimm'd either heads or hearts to decorate,
Which form an ornament, but no more part
Of heads, than their caresses of the heart.

A slight blush, a soft tremor, a calm kind
Of gentle feminine delight, and shown
More in the eyelids than the eyes, resign'd
Rather to hide what pleases most unknown,
Are the best tokens (to a modest mind)
Of love, when seated on his loveliest throne,
A sincere woman's breast,- for over-warm
Or over-cold annihilates the charm.

For over-warmth, if false, is worse than truth;
If true, 't is no great lease of its own fire;
For no one, save in very early youth,
Would like (I think) to trust all to desire,
Which is but a precarious bond, in sooth,
And apt to be transferr'd to the first buyer
At a sad discount: while your over chilly
Women, on t' other hand, seem somewhat silly.

That is, we cannot pardon their bad taste,
For so it seems to lovers swift or slow,
Who fain would have a mutual flame confess'd,
And see a sentimental passion glow,
Even were St. Francis' paramour their guest,
In his monastic concubine of snow;-
In short, the maxim for the amorous tribe is
Horatian, 'Medio tu tutissimus ibis.'

The 'tu' 's too much,- but let it stand,- the verse
Requires it, that 's to say, the English rhyme,
And not the pink of old hexameters;

But, after all, there 's neither tune nor time
In the last line, which cannot well be worse,
And was thrust in to close the octave's chime:
I own no prosody can ever rate it
As a rule, but truth may, if you translate it.

If fair Gulbeyaz overdid her part,
I know not- it succeeded, and success
Is much in most things, not less in the heart
Than other articles of female dress.
Self-love in man, too, beats all female art;
They lie, we lie, all lie, but love no less;
And no one virtue yet, except starvation,
Could stop that worst of vices- propagation.

We leave this royal couple to repose:
A bed is not a throne, and they may sleep,
Whate'er their dreams be, if of joys or woes:
Yet disappointed joys are woes as deep
As any man's day mixture undergoes.
Our least of sorrows are such as we weep;
'T is the vile daily drop on drop which wears
The soul out (like the stone) with petty cares.

A scolding wife, a sullen son, a bill
To pay, unpaid, protested, or discounted
At a per-centage; a child cross, dog ill,
A favourite horse fallen lame just as he 's mounted,
A bad old woman making a worse will,
Which leaves you minus of the cash you counted
As certain;- these are paltry things, and yet
I 've rarely seen the man they did not fret.

I 'm a philosopher; confound them all!
Bills, beasts, and men, and- no! not womankind!
With one good hearty curse I vent my gall,
And then my stoicism leaves nought behind
Which it can either pain or evil call,
And I can give my whole soul up to mind;
Though what is soul or mind, their birth or growth,
Is more than I know- the deuce take them both!

As after reading Athanasius' curse,
Which doth your true believer so much please:
I doubt if any now could make it worse
O'er his worst enemy when at his knees,
'T is so sententious, positive, and terse,
And decorates the book of Common Prayer,
As doth a rainbow the just clearing air.

Gulbeyaz and her lord were sleeping, or
At least one of them!- Oh, the heavy night,

When wicked wives, who love some bachelor,
Lie down in dudgeon to sigh for the light
Of the gray morning, and look vainly for
Its twinkle through the lattice dusky quite-
To toss, to tumble, doze, revive, and quake
Lest their too lawful bed-fellow should wake!

These are beneath the canopy of heaven,
Also beneath the canopy of beds
Four-posted and silk curtain'd, which are given
For rich men and their brides to lay their heads
Upon, in sheets white as what bards call 'driven
Snow.' Well! 't is all hap-hazard when one weds.
Gulbeyaz was an empress, but had been
Perhaps as wretched if a peasant's quean.

Don Juan in his feminine disguise,
With all the damsels in their long array,
Had bow'd themselves before th' imperial eyes,
And at the usual signal ta'en their way
Back to their chambers, those long galleries
In the seraglio, where the ladies lay
Their delicate limbs; a thousand bosoms there
Beating for love, as the caged bird's for air.

I love the sex, and sometimes would reverse
The tyrant's wish, 'that mankind only had
One neck, which he with one fell stroke might pierce:'
My wish is quite as wide, but not so bad,
And much more tender on the whole than fierce;
It being (not now, but only while a lad)
That womankind had but one rosy mouth,
To kiss them all at once from North to South.

Oh, enviable Briareus! with thy hands
And heads, if thou hadst all things multiplied
In such proportion!- But my Muse withstands
The giant thought of being a Titan's bride,
Or travelling in Patagonian lands;
So let us back to Lilliput, and guide
Our hero through the labyrinth of love
In which we left him several lines above.

He went forth with the lovely Odalisques,
At the given signal join'd to their array;
And though he certainly ran many risks,
Yet he could not at times keep, by the way
(Although the consequences of such frisks
Are worse than the worst damages men pay
In moral England, where the thing 's a tax),
From ogling all their charms from breasts to backs.

Still he forgot not his disguise:- along
The galleries from room to room they walk'd,
A virgin-like and edifying throng,
By eunuchs flank'd; while at their head there stalk'd
A dame who kept up discipline among
The female ranks, so that none stirr'd or talk'd
Without her sanction on their she-parades:
Her title was 'the Mother of the Maids.'

Whether she was a 'mother,' I know not,
Or whether they were 'maids' who call'd her mother;
But this is her seraglio title, got
I know not how, but good as any other;
So Cantemir can tell you, or De Tott:
Her office was to keep aloof or smother
All bad propensities in fifteen hundred
Young women, and correct them when they blunder'd.

A goodly sinecure, no doubt! but made
More easy by the absence of all men-
Except his majesty, who, with her aid,
And guards, and bolts, and walls, and now and then
A slight example, just to cast a shade
Along the rest, contrived to keep this den
Of beauties cool as an Italian convent,
Where all the passions have, alas! but one vent.

And what is that? Devotion, doubtless- how
Could you ask such a question?- but we will
Continue. As I said, this goodly row
Of ladies of all countries at the will
Of one good man, with stately march and slow,
Like water-lilies floating down a rill-
Or rather lake, for rills do not run slowly-
Paced on most maiden-like and melancholy.

But when they reach'd their own apartments, there,
Like birds, or boys, or bedlamites broke loose,
Waves at spring-tide, or women anywhere
When freed from bonds (which are of no great use
After all), or like Irish at a fair,
Their guards being gone, and as it were a truce
Establish'd between them and bondage, they
Began to sing, dance, chatter, smile, and play.

Their talk, of course, ran most on the new comer;
Her shape, her hair, her air, her everything:
Some thought her dress did not so much become her,
Or wonder'd at her ears without a ring;
Some said her years were getting nigh their summer,
Others contended they were but in spring;
Some thought her rather masculine in height,

While others wish'd that she had been so quite.

But no one doubted on the whole, that she
Was what her dress bespoke, a damsel fair,
And fresh, and 'beautiful exceedingly,'
Who with the brightest Georgians might compare:
They wonder'd how Gulbeyaz, too, could be
So silly as to buy slaves who might share
(If that his Highness wearied of his bride)
Her throne and power, and every thing beside.

But what was strangest in this virgin crew,
Although her beauty was enough to vex,
After the first investigating view,
They all found out as few, or fewer, specks
In the fair form of their companion new,
Than is the custom of the gentle sex,
When they survey, with Christian eyes or Heathen,
In a new face 'the ugliest creature breathing.'

And yet they had their little jealousies,
Like all the rest; but upon this occasion,
Whether there are such things as sympathies
Without our knowledge or our approbation,
Although they could not see through his disguise,
All felt a soft kind of concatenation,
Like magnetism, or devilism, or what
You please- we will not quarrel about that:

But certain 't is they all felt for their new
Companion something newer still, as 't were
A sentimental friendship through and through,
Extremely pure, which made them all concur
In wishing her their sister, save a few
Who wish'd they had a brother just like her,
Whom, if they were at home in sweet Circassia,
They would prefer to Padisha or Pacha.

Of those who had most genius for this sort
Of sentimental friendship, there were three,
Lolah, Katinka, and Dudu; in short
(To save description), fair as fair can be
Were they, according to the best report,
Though differing in stature and degree,
And clime and time, and country and complexion;
They all alike admired their new connection.

Lolah was dusk as India and as warm;
Katinka was a Georgian, white and red,
With great blue eyes, a lovely hand and arm,
And feet so small they scarce seem'd made to tread,
But rather skim the earth; while Dudu's form

Look'd more adapted to be put to bed,
Being somewhat large, and languishing, and lazy,
Yet of a beauty that would drive you crazy.

A kind of sleepy Venus seem'd Dudu,
Yet very fit to 'murder sleep' in those
Who gazed upon her cheek's transcendent hue,
Her Attic forehead, and her Phidian nose:
Few angles were there in her form, 't is true,
Thinner she might have been, and yet scarce lose;
Yet, after all, 't would puzzle to say where
It would not spoil some separate charm to pare.

She was not violently lively, but
Stole on your spirit like a May-day breaking;
Her eyes were not too sparkling, yet, half-shut,
They put beholders in a tender taking;
She look'd (this simile 's quite new) just cut
From marble, like Pygmalion's statue waking,
The mortal and the marble still at strife,
And timidly expanding into life.

Lolah demanded the new damsel's name-
'Juanna.'- Well, a pretty name enough.
Katinka ask'd her also whence she came-
'From Spain.'- 'But where is Spain?' - 'Don't ask such stuff,
Nor show your Georgian ignorance- for shame!'
Said Lolah, with an accent rather rough,
To poor Katinka: 'Spain 's an island near
Morocco, betwixt Egypt and Tangier.'

Dudu said nothing, but sat down beside
Juanna, playing with her veil or hair;
And looking at her steadfastly, she sigh'd,
As if she pitied her for being there,
A pretty stranger without friend or guide,
And all abash'd, too, at the general stare
Which welcomes hapless strangers in all places,
With kind remarks upon their mien and faces.

But here the Mother of the Maids drew near,
With, 'Ladies, it is time to go to rest.
I 'm puzzled what to do with you, my dear,'
She added to Juanna, their new guest:
'Your coming has been unexpected here,
And every couch is occupied; you had best
Partake of mine; but by to-morrow early
We will have all things settled for you fairly.'

Here Lolah interposed- 'Mamma, you know
You don't sleep soundly, and I cannot bear
That anybody should disturb you so;

I 'll take Juanna; we 're a slenderer pair
Than you would make the half of;- don't say no;
And I of your young charge will take due care.'
But here Katinka interfered, and said,
'She also had compassion and a bed.

'Besides, I hate to sleep alone,' quoth she.
The matron frown'd: 'Why so?' - 'For fear of ghosts,'
Replied Katinka; 'I am sure I see
A phantom upon each of the four posts;
And then I have the worst dreams that can be,
Of Guebres, Giaours, and Ginns, and Gouls in hosts.'
The dame replied, 'Between your dreams and you,
I fear Juanna's dreams would be but few.

'You, Lolah, must continue still to lie
Alone, for reasons which don't matter; you
The same, Katinka, until by and by;
And I shall place Juanna with Dudu,
Who 's quiet, inoffensive, silent, shy,
And will not toss and chatter the night through.
What say you, child?' - Dudu said nothing, as
Her talents were of the more silent class;

But she rose up, and kiss'd the matron's brow
Between the eyes, and Lolah on both cheeks,
Katinka, too; and with a gentle bow
(Curt'sies are neither used by Turks nor Greeks)
She took Juanna by the hand to show
Their place of rest, and left to both their piques,
The others pouting at the matron's preference
Of Dudu, though they held their tongues from deference.

It was a spacious chamber (Oda is
The Turkish title), and ranged round the wall
Were couches, toilets- and much more than this
I might describe, as I have seen it all,
But it suffices- little was amiss;
'T was on the whole a nobly furnish'd hall,
With all things ladies want, save one or two,
And even those were nearer than they knew.

Dudu, as has been said, was a sweet creature,
Not very dashing, but extremely winning,
With the most regulated charms of feature,
Which painters cannot catch like faces sinning
Against proportion- the wild strokes of nature
Which they hit off at once in the beginning,
Full of expression, right or wrong, that strike,
And pleasing or unpleasing, still are like.

But she was a soft landscape of mild earth,

Where all was harmony, and calm, and quiet,
Luxuriant, budding; cheerful without mirth,
Which, if not happiness, is much more nigh it
Than are your mighty passions and so forth,
Which some call 'the sublime:' I wish they 'd try it:
I 've seen your stormy seas and stormy women,
And pity lovers rather more than seamen.

But she was pensive more than melancholy,
And serious more than pensive, and serene,
It may be, more than either- not unholy
Her thoughts, at least till now, appear to have been.
The strangest thing was, beauteous, she was wholly
Unconscious, albeit turn'd of quick seventeen,
That she was fair, or dark, or short, or tall;
She never thought about herself at all.

And therefore was she kind and gentle as
The Age of Gold (when gold was yet unknown,
By which its nomenclature came to pass;
Thus most appropriately has been shown
'Lucus a non lucendo,' not what was,
But what was not; a sort of style that 's grown
Extremely common in this age, whose metal
The devil may decompose, but never settle:

I think it may be of 'Corinthian Brass,'
Which was a mixture of all metals, but
The brazen uppermost). Kind reader! pass
This long parenthesis: I could not shut
It sooner for the soul of me, and class
My faults even with your own! which meaneth, Put
A kind construction upon them and me:
But that you won't- then don't- I am not less free.

'T is time we should return to plain narration,
And thus my narrative proceeds:- Dudu,
With every kindness short of ostentation,
Show'd Juan, or Juanna, through and through
This labyrinth of females, and each station
Described- what 's strange- in words extremely few:
I have but one simile, and that 's a blunder,
For wordless woman, which is silent thunder.

And next she gave her (I say her, because
The gender still was epicene, at least
In outward show, which is a saving clause)
An outline of the customs of the East,
With all their chaste integrity of laws,
By which the more a haram is increased,
The stricter doubtless grow the vestal duties
Of any supernumerary beauties.

And then she gave Juanna a chaste kiss:
Dudu was fond of kissing- which I 'm sure
That nobody can ever take amiss,
Because 't is pleasant, so that it be pure,
And between females means no more than this-
That they have nothing better near, or newer.
'Kiss' rhymes to 'bliss' in fact as well as verse-
I wish it never led to something worse.

In perfect innocence she then unmade
Her toilet, which cost little, for she was
A child of Nature, carelessly array'd:
If fond of a chance ogle at her glass,
'T was like the fawn, which, in the lake display'd,
Beholds her own shy, shadowy image pass,
When first she starts, and then returns to peep,
Admiring this new native of the deep.

And one by one her articles of dress
Were laid aside; but not before she offer'd
Her aid to fair Juanna, whose excess
Of modesty declined the assistance proffer'd:
Which pass'd well off- as she could do no less;
Though by this politesse she rather suffer'd,
Pricking her fingers with those cursed pins,
Which surely were invented for our sins,-

Making a woman like a porcupine,
Not to be rashly touch'd. But still more dread,
Oh ye! whose fate it is, as once 't was mine,
In early youth, to turn a lady's maid;-
I did my very boyish best to shine
In tricking her out for a masquerade;
The pins were placed sufficiently, but not
Stuck all exactly in the proper spot.

But these are foolish things to all the wise,
And I love wisdom more than she loves me;
My tendency is to philosophise
On most things, from a tyrant to a tree;
But still the spouseless virgin Knowledge flies.
What are we? and whence came we? what shall be
Our ultimate existence? what 's our present?
Are questions answerless, and yet incessant.

There was deep silence in the chamber: dim
And distant from each other burn'd the lights,
And slumber hover'd o'er each lovely limb
Of the fair occupants: if there be sprites,
They should have walk'd there in their sprightliest trim,
By way of change from their sepulchral sites,

And shown themselves as ghosts of better taste
Than haunting some old ruin or wild waste.

Many and beautiful lay those around,
Like flowers of different hue, and dime, and root,
In some exotic garden sometimes found,
With cost, and care, and warmth induced to shoot.
One with her auburn tresses lightly bound,
And fair brows gently drooping, as the fruit
Nods from the tree, was slumbering with soft breath,
And lips apart, which show'd the pearls beneath.

One with her flush'd cheek laid on her white arm,
And raven ringlets gather'd in dark crowd
Above her brow, lay dreaming soft and warm;
And smiling through her dream, as through a cloud
The moon breaks, half unveil'd each further charm,
As, slightly stirring in her snowy shroud,
Her beauties seized the unconscious hour of night
All bashfully to struggle into light.

This is no bull, although it sounds so; for
'T was night, but there were lamps, as hath been said.
A third's all pallid aspect offer'd more
The traits of sleeping sorrow, and betray'd
Through the heaved breast the dream of some far shore
Beloved and deplored; while slowly stray'd
(As night-dew, on a cypress glittering, tinges
The black bough) tear-drops through her eyes' dark fringes.

A fourth as marble, statue-like and still,
Lay in a breathless, hush'd, and stony sleep;
White, cold, and pure, as looks a frozen rill,
Or the snow minaret on an Alpine steep,
Or Lot's wife done in salt,- or what you will;--
My similes are gather'd in a heap,
So pick and choose- perhaps you 'll be content
With a carved lady on a monument.

And lo! a fifth appears;- and what is she?
A lady of a 'certain age,' which means
Certainly aged- what her years might be
I know not, never counting past their teens;
But there she slept, not quite so fair to see,
As ere that awful period intervenes
Which lays both men and women on the shelf,
To meditate upon their sins and self.

But all this time how slept, or dream'd, Dudu?
With strict inquiry I could ne'er discover,
And scorn to add a syllable untrue;
But ere the middle watch was hardly over,

Just when the fading lamps waned dim and blue,
And phantoms hover'd, or might seem to hover,
To those who like their company, about
The apartment, on a sudden she scream'd out:

And that so loudly, that upstarted all
The Oda, in a general commotion:
Matron and maids, and those whom you may call
Neither, came crowding like the waves of ocean,
One on the other, throughout the whole hall,
All trembling, wondering, without the least notion
More than I have myself of what could make
The calm Dudu so turbulently wake.

But wide awake she was, and round her bed,
With floating draperies and with flying hair,
With eager eyes, and light but hurried tread,
And bosoms, arms, and ankles glancing bare,
And bright as any meteor ever bred
By the North Pole,- they sought her cause of care,
For she seem'd agitated, flush'd, and frighten'd,
Her eye dilated and her colour heighten'd.

But what was strange- and a strong proof how great
A blessing is sound sleep- Juanna lay
As fast as ever husband by his mate
In holy matrimony snores away.
Not all the clamour broke her happy state
Of slumber, ere they shook her,- so they say
At least,- and then she, too, unclosed her eyes,
And yawn'd a good deal with discreet surprise.

And now commenced a strict investigation,
Which, as all spoke at once and more than once,
Conjecturing, wondering, asking a narration,
Alike might puzzle either wit or dunce
To answer in a very clear oration.
Dudu had never pass'd for wanting sense,
But, being 'no orator as Brutus is,'
Could not at first expound what was amiss.

At length she said, that in a slumber sound
She dream'd a dream, of walking in a wood-
A 'wood obscure,' like that where Dante found
Himself in at the age when all grow good;
Life's half-way house, where dames with virtue crown'd
Run much less risk of lovers turning rude;
And that this wood was full of pleasant fruits,
And trees of goodly growth and spreading roots;

And in the midst a golden apple grew,-
A most prodigious pippin,- but it hung

Rather too high and distant; that she threw
Her glances on it, and then, longing, flung
Stones and whatever she could pick up, to
Bring down the fruit, which still perversely clung
To its own bough, and dangled yet in sight,
But always at a most provoking height;-

That on a sudden, when she least had hope,
It fell down of its own accord before
Her feet; that her first movement was to stoop
And pick it up, and bite it to the core;
That just as her young lip began to ope
Upon the golden fruit the vision bore,
A bee flew out and stung her to the heart,
And so- she awoke with a great scream and start.

All this she told with some confusion and
Dismay, the usual consequence of dreams
Of the unpleasant kind, with none at hand
To expound their vain and visionary gleams.
I 've known some odd ones which seem'd really plann'd
Prophetically, or that which one deems
A 'strange coincidence,' to use a phrase
By which such things are settled now-a-days.

The damsels, who had thoughts of some great harm,
Began, as is the consequence of fear,
To scold a little at the false alarm
That broke for nothing on their sleeping car.
The matron, too, was wroth to leave her warm
Bed for the dream she had been obliged to hear,
And chafed at poor Dudu, who only sigh'd,
And said that she was sorry she had cried.

'I 've heard of stories of a cock and bull;
But visions of an apple and a bee,
To take us from our natural rest, and pull
The whole Oda from their beds at half-past three,
Would make us think the moon is at its full.
You surely are unwell, child! we must see,
To-morrow, what his Highness's physician
Will say to this hysterick of a vision.

'And poor Juanna, too- the child's first night
Within these walls to be broke in upon
With such a clamour! I had thought it right
That the young stranger should not lie alone,
And, as the quietest of all, she might
With you, Dudu, a good night's rest have known;
But now I must transfer her to the charge
Of Lolah- though her couch is not so large.'

Lolah's eyes sparkled at the proposition;
But poor Dudu, with large drops in her own,
Resulting from the scolding or the vision,
Implored that present pardon might be shown
For this first fault, and that on no condition
(She added in a soft and piteous tone)
Juanna should be taken from her, and
Her future dreams should all be kept in hand.

She promised never more to have a dream,
At least to dream so loudly as just now;
She wonder'd at herself how she could scream-
'T was foolish, nervous, as she must allow,
A fond hallucination, and a theme
For laughter- but she felt her spirits low,
And begg'd they would excuse her; she 'd get over
This weakness in a few hours, and recover.

And here Juanna kindly interposed,
And said she felt herself extremely well
Where she then was, as her sound sleep disclosed
When all around rang like a tocsin bell:
She did not find herself the least disposed
To quit her gentle partner, and to dwell
Apart from one who had no sin to show,
Save that of dreaming once 'mal-a-propos.'

As thus Juanna spoke, Dudu turn'd round
And hid her face within Juanna's breast:
Her neck alone was seen, but that was found
The colour of a budding rose's crest.
I can't tell why she blush'd, nor can expound
The mystery of this rupture of their rest;
All that I know is, that the facts I state
Are true as truth has ever been of late.

And so good night to them,- or, if you will,
Good morrow- for the cock had crown, and light
Began to clothe each Asiatic hill,
And the mosque crescent struggled into sight
Of the long caravan, which in the chill
Of dewy dawn wound slowly round each height
That stretches to the stony belt, which girds
Asia, where Kaff looks down upon the Kurds.

With the first ray, or rather grey of morn,
Gulbeyaz rose from restlessness; and pale
As passion rises, with its bosom worn,
Array'd herself with mantle, gem, and veil.
The nightingale that sings with the deep thorn,
Which fable places in her breast of wail,
Is lighter far of heart and voice than those

Whose headlong passions form their proper woes.

And that 's the moral of this composition,
If people would but see its real drift; -
But that they will not do without suspicion,
Because all gentle readers have the gift
Of closing 'gainst the light their orbs of vision;
While gentle writers also love to lift
Their voices 'gainst each other, which is natural,
The numbers are too great for them to flatter all.

Rose the sultana from a bed of splendour,
Softer than the soft Sybarite's, who cried
Aloud because his feelings were too tender
To brook a ruffled rose-leaf by his side, -
So beautiful that art could little mend her,
Though pale with conflicts between love and pride; -
So agitated was she with her error,
She did not even look into the mirror.

Also arose about the self-same time,
Perhaps a little later, her great lord,
Master of thirty kingdoms so sublime,
And of a wife by whom he was abhor'd;
A thing of much less import in that clime -
At least to those of incomes which afford
The filling up their whole connubial cargo -
Than where two wives are under an embargo.

He did not think much on the matter, nor
Indeed on any other: as a man
He liked to have a handsome paramour
At hand, as one may like to have a fan,
And therefore of Circassians had good store,
As an amusement after the Divan;
Though an unusual fit of love, or duty,
Had made him lately bask in his bride's beauty.

And now he rose; and after due ablutions
Exacted by the customs of the East,
And prayers and other pious evolutions,
He drank six cups of coffee at the least,
And then withdrew to hear about the Russians,
Whose victories had recently increased
In Catherine's reign, whom glory still adores,

But oh, thou grand legitimate Alexander!
Her son's son, let not this last phrase offend
Thine ear, if it should reach - and now rhymes wander
Almost as far as Petersburgh and lend
A dreadful impulse to each loud meander
Of murmuring Liberty's wide waves, which blend

Their roar even with the Baltic's- so you be
Your father's son, 't is quite enough for me.

To call men love-begotten or proclaim
Their mothers as the antipodes of Timon,
That hater of mankind, would be a shame,
A libel, or whate'er you please to rhyme on:
But people's ancestors are history's game;
And if one lady's slip could leave a crime on
All generations, I should like to know
What pedigree the best would have to show?

Had Catherine and the sultan understood
Their own true interests, which kings rarely know
Until 't is taught by lessons rather rude,
There was a way to end their strife, although
Perhaps precarious, had they but thought good,
Without the aid of prince or plenipo:
She to dismiss her guards and he his haram,
And for their other matters, meet and share 'em.

But as it was, his Highness had to hold
His daily council upon ways and means
How to encounter with this martial scold,
This modern Amazon and queen of queans;
And the perplexity could not be told
Of all the pillars of the state, which leans
Sometimes a little heavy on the backs
Of those who cannot lay on a new tax.

Meantime Gulbeyaz, when her king was gone,
Retired into her boudoir, a sweet place
For love or breakfast; private, pleasing, lone,
And rich with all contrivances which grace
Those gay recesses:- many a precious stone
Sparkled along its roof, and many a vase
Of porcelain held in the fetter'd flowers,
Those captive soothers of a captive's hours.

Mother of pearl, and porphyry, and marble,
Vied with each other on this costly spot;
And singing birds without were heard to warble;
And the stain'd glass which lighted this fair grot
Varied each ray;- but all descriptions garble
The true effect, and so we had better not
Be too minute; an outline is the best,-
A lively reader's fancy does the rest.

And here she summon'd Baba, and required
Don Juan at his hands, and information
Of what had pass'd since all the slaves retired,
And whether he had occupied their station;

If matters had been managed as desired,
And his disguise with due consideration
Kept up; and above all, the where and how
He had pass'd the night, was what she wish'd to know.

Baba, with some embarrassment, replied
To this long catechism of questions, ask'd
More easily than answer'd,- that he had tried
His best to obey in what he had been task'd;
But there seem'd something that he wish'd to hide,
Which hesitation more betray'd than mask'd;
He scratch'd his ear, the infallible resource
To which embarrass'd people have recourse.

Gulbeyaz was no model of true patience,
Nor much disposed to wait in word or deed;
She liked quick answers in all conversations;
And when she saw him stumbling like a steed
In his replies, she puzzled him for fresh ones;
And as his speech grew still more broken-kneed,
Her cheek began to flush, her eyes to sparkle,
And her proud brow's blue veins to swell and darkle.

When Baba saw these symptoms, which he knew
To bode him no great good, he deprecated
Her anger, and beseech'd she 'd hear him through-
He could not help the thing which he related:
Then out it came at length, that to Dudu
Juan was given in charge, as hath been stated;
But not by Baba's fault, he said, and swore on
The holy camel's hump, besides the Koran.

The chief dame of the Oda, upon whom
The discipline of the whole haram bore,
As soon as they re-enter'd their own room,
For Baba's function stopt short at the door,
Had settled all; nor could he then presume
(The aforesaid Baba) just then to do more,
Without exciting such suspicion as
Might make the matter still worse than it was.

He hoped, indeed he thought, he could be sure
Juan had not betray'd himself; in fact
'T was certain that his conduct had been pure,
Because a foolish or imprudent act
Would not alone have made him insecure,
But ended in his being found out and sack'd,
And thrown into the sea.- Thus Baba spoke
Of all save Dudu's dream, which was no joke.

This he discreetly kept in the background,
And talk'd away- and might have talk'd till now,

For any further answer that he found,
So deep an anguish wrung Gulbeyaz' brow:
Her cheek turn'd ashes, ears rung, brain whirl'd round,
As if she had received a sudden blow,
And the heart's dew of pain sprang fast and chilly
O'er her fair front, like Morning's on a lily.

Although she was not of the fainting sort,
Baba thought she would faint, but there he err'd-
It was but a convulsion, which though short
Can never be described; we all have heard,
And some of us have felt thus 'all amort,'
When things beyond the common have occur'd;-
Gulbeyaz proved in that brief agony
What she could ne'er express- then how should I?

She stood a moment as a Pythones
Stands on her tripod, agonised, and full
Of inspiration gather'd from distress,
When all the heart-strings like wild horses pull
The heart asunder;- then, as more or lees
Their speed abated or their strength grew dull,
She sunk down on her seat by slow degrees,
And bow'd her throbbing head o'er trembling knees.

Her face declined and was unseen; her hair
Fell in long tresses like the weeping willow,
Sweeping the marble underneath her chair,
Or rather sofa (for it was all pillow,
A low soft ottoman), and black despair
Stirr'd up and down her bosom like a billow,
Which rushes to some shore whose shingles check
Its farther course, but must receive its wreck.

Her head hung down, and her long hair in stooping
Conceal'd her features better than a veil;
And one hand o'er the ottoman lay drooping,
White, waxen, and as alabaster pale:
Would that I were a painter! to be grouping
All that a poet drags into detail
Oh that my words were colours! but their tints
May serve perhaps as outlines or slight hints.

Baba, who knew by experience when to talk
And when to hold his tongue, now held it till
This passion might blow o'er, nor dared to balk
Gulbeyaz' taciturn or speaking will.
At length she rose up, and began to walk
Slowly along the room, but silent still,
And her brow clear'd, but not her troubled eye;
The wind was down, but still the sea ran high.

She stopp'd, and raised her head to speak- but paused,
And then moved on again with rapid pace;
Then slacken'd it, which is the march most caused
By deep emotion:- you may sometimes trace
A feeling in each footstep, as disclosed
By Sallust in his Catiline, who, chased
By all the demons of all passions, show'd
Their work even by the way in which he trode.

Gulbeyaz stopp'd and beckon'd Baba:- 'Slave!
Bring the two slaves!' she said in a low tone,
But one which Baba did not like to brave,
And yet he shudder'd, and seem'd rather prone
To prove reluctant, and begg'd leave to crave
(Though he well knew the meaning) to be shown
What slaves her highness wish'd to indicate,
For fear of any error, like the late.

'The Georgian and her paramour,' replied
The imperial bride- and added, 'Let the boat
Be ready by the secret portal's side:
You know the rest.' The words stuck in her throat,
Despite her injured love and fiery pride;
And of this Baba willingly took note,
And begg'd by every hair of Mahomet's beard,
She would revoke the order he had heard.

'To hear is to obey,' he said; 'but still,
Sultana, think upon the consequence:
It is not that I shall not all fulfil
Your orders, even in their severest sense;
But such precipitation may end ill,
Even at your own imperative expense:
I do not mean destruction and exposure,
In case of any premature disclosure;

'But your own feelings. Even should all the rest
Be hidden by the rolling waves, which hide
Already many a once love-beaten breast
Deep in the caverns of the deadly tide-
You love this boyish, new, seraglio guest,
And if this violent remedy be tried-
Excuse my freedom, when I here assure you,
That killing him is not the way to cure you.'

'What dost thou know of love or feeling?- Wretch!
Begone!' she cried, with kindling eyes- 'and do
My bidding!' Baba vanish'd, for to stretch
His own remonstrance further he well knew
Might end in acting as his own 'Jack Ketch;'
And though he wish'd extremely to get through
This awkward business without harm to others,

He still preferr'd his own neck to another's.

Away he went then upon his commission,
Growling and grumbling in good Turkish phrase
Against all women of whate'er condition,
Especially sultanas and their ways;
Their obstinacy, pride, and indecision,
Their never knowing their own mind two days,
The trouble that they gave, their immorality,
Which made him daily bless his own neutrality.

And then he call'd his brethren to his aid,
And sent one on a summons to the pair,
That they must instantly be well array'd,
And above all be comb'd even to a hair,
And brought before the empress, who had made
Inquiries after them with kindest care:
At which Dudu look'd strange, and Juan silly;
But go they must at once, and will I- nill I.

And here I leave them at their preparation
For the imperial presence, wherein whether
Gulbeyaz show'd them both commiseration,
Or got rid of the parties altogether,
Like other angry ladies of her nation,-
Are things the turning of a hair or feather
May settle; but far be 't from me to anticipate
In what way feminine caprice may dissipate.

I leave them for the present with good wishes,
Though doubts of their well doing, to arrange
Another part of history; for the dishes
Of this our banquet we must sometimes change;
And trusting Juan may escape the fishes,
Although his situation now seems strange
And scarce secure, as such digressions are fair,
The Muse will take a little touch at warfare.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Don Juan: Canto The Tenth

When Newton saw an apple fall, he found
In that slight startle from his contemplation--
'Tis said (for I 'll not answer above ground
For any sage's creed or calculation)--
A mode of proving that the earth turn'd round
In a most natural whirl, called 'gravitation;'
And this is the sole mortal who could grapple,
Since Adam, with a fall or with an apple.

Man fell with apples, and with apples rose,
If this be true; for we must deem the mode
In which Sir Isaac Newton could disclose
Through the then unpaved stars the turnpike road,
A thing to counterbalance human woes:
For ever since immortal man hath glow'd
With all kinds of mechanics, and full soon
Steam-engines will conduct him to the moon.

And wherefore this exordium?--Why, just now,
In taking up this paltry sheet of paper,
My bosom underwent a glorious glow,
And my internal spirit cut a caper:
And though so much inferior, as I know,
To those who, by the dint of glass and vapour,
Discover stars and sail in the wind's eye,
I wish to do as much by poesy.

In the wind's eye I have sail'd, and sail; but for
The stars, I own my telescope is dim:
But at least I have shunn'd the common shore,
And leaving land far out of sight, would skim
The ocean of eternity: the roar
Of breakers has not daunted my slight, trim,
But still sea-worthy skiff; and she may float
Where ships have founder'd, as doth many a boat.

We left our hero, Juan, in the bloom
Of favouritism, but not yet in the blush;
And far be it from my Muses to presume
(For I have more than one Muse at a push)
To follow him beyond the drawing-room:
It is enough that Fortune found him flush
Of youth, and vigour, beauty, and those things
Which for an instant clip enjoyment's wings.

But soon they grow again and leave their nest.
'Oh!' saith the Psalmist, 'that I had a dove's
Pinions to flee away, and be at rest!'
And who that recollects young years and loves,--
Though hoary now, and with a withering breast,
And palsied fancy, which no longer roves
Beyond its dimm'd eye's sphere,--but would much rather

Sigh like his son, than cough like his grandfather?

But sighs subside, and tears (even widows') shrink,
Like Arno in the summer, to a shallow,
So narrow as to shame their wintry brink,
Which threatens inundations deep and yellow!
Such difference doth a few months make. You 'd think
Grief a rich field which never would lie fallow;
No more it doth, its ploughs but change their boys,
Who furrow some new soil to sow for joys.

But coughs will come when sighs depart--and now
And then before sighs cease; for oft the one
Will bring the other, ere the lake-like brow
Is ruffled by a wrinkle, or the sun
Of life reach'd ten o'clock: and while a glow,
Hectic and brief as summer's day nigh done,
O'erspreads the cheek which seems too pure for clay,
Thousands blaze, love, hope, die,--how happy they!

But Juan was not meant to die so soon.
We left him in the focus of such glory
As may be won by favour of the moon
Or ladies' fancies--rather transitory
Perhaps; but who would scorn the month of June,
Because December, with his breath so hoary,
Must come? Much rather should he court the ray,
To hoard up warmth against a wintry day.

Besides, he had some qualities which fix
Middle-aged ladies even more than young:
The former know what's what; while new-fledged chicks
Know little more of love than what is sung
In rhymes, or dreamt (for fancy will play tricks)
In visions of those skies from whence Love sprung.
Some reckon women by their suns or years,
I rather think the moon should date the dears.

And why? because she's changeable and chaste.
I know no other reason, whatsoe'er
Suspicious people, who find fault in haste,
May choose to tax me with; which is not fair,
Nor flattering to 'their temper or their taste,'
As my friend Jeffrey writes with such an air:
However, I forgive him, and I trust
He will forgive himself;--if not, I must.

Old enemies who have become new friends
Should so continue--'tis a point of honour;
And I know nothing which could make amends
For a return to hatred: I would shun her
Like garlic, howsoever she extends

Her hundred arms and legs, and fain outrun her.
Old flames, new wives, become our bitterest foes--
Converted foes should scorn to join with those.

This were the worst desertion:- renegadoes,
Even shuffling Southe, that incarnate lie,
Would scarcely join again the 'reformadoes,'
Whom he forsook to fill the laureate's sty:
And honest men from Iceland to Barbadoes,
Whether in Caledon or Italy,
Should not veer round with every breath, nor seize
To pain, the moment when you cease to please.

The lawyer and the critic but behold
The baser sides of literature and life,
And nought remains unseen, but much untold,
By those who scour those double vales of strife.
While common men grow ignorantly old,
The lawyer's brief is like the surgeon's knife,
Dissecting the whole inside of a question,
And with it all the process of digestion.

A legal broom's a moral chimney-sweeper,
And that's the reason he himself's so dirty;
The endless soot bestows a tint far deeper
Than can be hid by altering his shirt; he
Retains the sable stains of the dark creeper,
At least some twenty-nine do out of thirty,
In all their habits;--not so you, I own;
As Caesar wore his robe you wear your gown.

And all our little feuds, at least all mine,
Dear Jefferson, once my most redoubted foe
(As far as rhyme and criticism combine
To make such puppets of us things below),
Are over: Here's a health to 'Auld Lang Syne!'
I do not know you, and may never know
Your face--but you have acted on the whole
Most nobly, and I own it from my soul.

And when I use the phrase of 'Auld Lang Syne!'
'Tis not address'd to you--the more 's the pity
For me, for I would rather take my wine
With you, than aught (save Scott) in your proud city.
But somehow,--it may seem a schoolboy's whine,
And yet I seek not to be grand nor witty,
But I am half a Scot by birth, and bred
A whole one, and my heart flies to my head,--

As 'Auld Lang Syne' brings Scotland, one and all,
Scotch plaids, Scotch snoods, the blue hills, and clear streams,
The Dee, the Don, Balgounie's brig's black wall,

All my boy feelings, all my gentler dreams
Of what I then dreamt, clothed in their own pall,
Like Banquo's offspring;--floating past me seems
My childhood in this childishness of mine:
I care not--'tis a glimpse of 'Auld Lang Syne.'

And though, as you remember, in a fit
Of wrath and rhyme, when juvenile and curly,
I rail'd at Scots to show my wrath and wit,
Which must be own'd was sensitive and surly,
Yet 't is in vain such sallies to permit,
They cannot quench young feelings fresh and early:
I 'scotch'd not kill'd' the Scotchman in my blood,
And love the land of 'mountain and of flood.'

Don Juan, who was real, or ideal,--
For both are much the same, since what men think
Exists when the once thinkers are less real
Than what they thought, for mind can never sink,
And 'gainst the body makes a strong appeal;
And yet 'tis very puzzling on the brink
Of what is call'd eternity, to stare,
And know no more of what is here, than there;--

Don Juan grew a very polish'd Russian--
How we won't mention, why we need not say:
Few youthful minds can stand the strong concussion
Of any slight temptation in their way;
But his just now were spread as is a cushion
Smooth'd for a monarch's seat of honour; gay
Damsels, and dances, revels, ready money,
Made ice seem paradise, and winter sunny.

The favour of the empress was agreeable;
And though the duty wax'd a little hard,
Young people at his time of life should be able
To come off handsomely in that regard.
He was now growing up like a green tree, able
For love, war, or ambition, which reward
Their luckier votaries, till old age's tedium
Make some prefer the circulating medium.

About this time, as might have been anticipated,
Seduced by youth and dangerous examples,
Don Juan grew, I fear, a little dissipated;
Which is a sad thing, and not only tramples
On our fresh feelings, but- as being participated
With all kinds of incorrigible samples
Of frail humanity--must make us selfish,
And shut our souls up in us like a shell-fish.

This we pass over. We will also pass

The usual progress of intrigues between
Unequal matches, such as are, alas!
A young lieutenant's with a not old queen,
But one who is not so youthful as she was
In all the royalty of sweet seventeen.
Sovereigns may sway materials, but not matter,

And Death, the sovereign's sovereign, though the great
Gracchus of all mortality, who levels
With his Agrarian laws the high estate
Of him who feasts, and fights, and roars, and revels,
To one small grass-grown patch (which must await
Corruption for its crop) with the poor devils
Who never had a foot of land till now,--
Death's a reformer, all men must allow.

He lived (not Death, but Juan) in a hurry
Of waste, and haste, and glare, and gloss, and glitter,
In this gay clime of bear-skins black and fury-
Which (though I hate to say a thing that 's bitter)
Peep out sometimes, when things are in a flurry,
Through all the 'purple and fine linen,' fitter
For Babylon's than Russia's royal harlot--
And neutralize her outward show of scarlet.

And this same state we won't describe: we would
Perhaps from hearsay, or from recollection;
But getting nigh grim Dante's 'obscure wood,'
That horrid equinox, that hateful section
Of human years, that half-way house, that rude
Hut, whence wise travellers drive with circumspection
Life's sad post-horses o'er the dreary frontier
Of age, and looking back to youth, give one tear;--

I won't describe,--that is, if I can help
Description; and I won't reflect,--that is,
If I can stave off thought, which--as a whelp
Clings to its teat--sticks to me through the abyss
Of this odd labyrinth; or as the kelp
Holds by the rock; or as a lover's kiss
Drains its first draught of lips:--but, as I said,
I won't philosophise, and will be read.

Juan, instead of courting courts, was courted,--
A thing which happens rarely: this he owed
Much to his youth, and much to his reported
Valour; much also to the blood he show'd,
Like a race-horse; much to each dress he sported,
Which set the beauty off in which he glow'd,
As purple clouds befringe the sun; but most
He owed to an old woman and his post.

He wrote to Spain:--and all his near relations,
Perceiving fie was in a handsome way
Of getting on himself, and finding stations
For cousins also, answer'd the same day.
Several prepared themselves for emigrations;
And eating ices, were o'erheard to say,
That with the addition of a slight pelisse,
Madrid's and Moscow's climes were of a piece.

His mother, Donna Inez, finding, too,
That in the lieu of drawing on his banker,
Where his assets were waxing rather few,
He had brought his spending to a handsome anchor,--
Replied, 'that she was glad to see him through
Those pleasures after which wild youth will hanker;
As the sole sign of man's being in his senses
Is, learning to reduce his past expenses.

'She also recommended him to God,
And no less to God's Son, as well as Mother,
Warn'd him against Greek worship, which looks odd
In Catholic eyes; but told him, too, to smother
Outward dislike, which don't look well abroad;
Inform'd him that he had a little brother
Born in a second wedlock; and above
All, praised the empress's maternal love.

'She could not too much give her approbation
Unto an empress, who preferr'd young men
Whose age, and what was better still, whose nation
And climate, stopp'd all scandal (now and then):--
At home it might have given her some vexation;
But where thermometers sunk down to ten,
Or five, or one, or zero, she could never
Believe that virtue thaw'd before the river.'

Oh for a forty-parson power to chant
Thy praise, Hypocrisy! Oh for a hymn
Loud as the virtues thou dost loudly vaunt,
Not practise! Oh for trumps of cherubim!
Or the ear-trumpet of my good old aunt,
Who, though her spectacles at last grew dim,
Drew quiet consolation through its hint,
When she no more could read the pious print.

She was no hypocrite at least, poor soul,
But went to heaven in as sincere a way
As any body on the elected roll,
Which portions out upon the judgment day
Heaven's freeholds, in a sort of doomsday scroll,
Such as the conqueror William did repay
His knights with, lotting others' properties

Into some sixty thousand new knights' fees.

I can't complain, whose ancestors are there,
Erneis, Radulphus--eight-and-forty manors
(If that my memory doth not greatly err)
Were their reward for following Billy's banners:
And though I can't help thinking 'twas scarce fair
To strip the Saxons of their hydes, like tanners;
Yet as they founded churches with the produce,
You'll deem, no doubt, they put it to a good use.

The gentle Juan flourish'd, though at times
He felt like other plants called sensitive,
Which shrink from touch, as monarchs do from rhymes,
Save such as Southee can afford to give.
Perhaps he long'd in bitter frosts for climes
In which the Neva's ice would cease to live
Before May-day: perhaps, despite his duty,
In royalty's vast arms he sigh'd for beauty:

Perhaps--but, sans perhaps, we need not seek
For causes young or old: the canker-worm
Will feed upon the fairest, freshest cheek,
As well as further drain the wither'd form:
Care, like a housekeeper, brings every week
His bills in, and however we may storm,
They must be paid: though six days smoothly run,
The seventh will bring blue devils or a dun.

I don't know how it was, but he grew sick:
The empress was alarm'd, and her physician
(The same who physick'd Peter) found the tick
Of his fierce pulse betoken a condition
Which augur'd of the dead, however quick
Itself, and show'd a feverish disposition;
At which the whole court was extremely troubled,
The sovereign shock'd, and all his medicines doubled.

Low were the whispers, manifold the rumours:
Some said he had been poison'd by Potemkin;
Others talk'd learnedly of certain tumours,
Exhaustion, or disorders of the same kin;
Some said 'twas a concoction of the humours,
Which with the blood too readily will claim kin;
Others again were ready to maintain,
"Twas only the fatigue of last campaign.'

But here is one prescription out of many:
'Sodae sulphat. 3vj. 3fs. Mannae optim.
Aq. fervent. f. 3ifs. 3ij. tinct. Sennae
Haustus' (And here the surgeon came and cupp'd him)
'Rx Pulv Com gr. iij. Ipecacuanhae'

(With more beside if Juan had not stopp'd 'em).
'Bolus Potassae Sulphuret. sumendus,
Et haustus ter in die capiendus.'

This is the way physicians mend or end us,
Secundum artem: but although we sneer
In health--when ill, we call them to attend us,
Without the least propensity to jeer:
While that 'hiatus maxime deflendus'
To be fill'd up by spade or mattock's near,
Instead of gliding graciously down Lethe,
We tease mild Baillie, or soft Abernethy.

Juan demurr'd at this first notice to
Quit; and though death had threaten'd an ejection,
His youth and constitution bore him through,
And sent the doctors in a new direction.
But still his state was delicate: the hue
Of health but flicker'd with a faint reflection
Along his wasted cheek, and seem'd to gravel
The faculty--who said that he must travel.

The climate was too cold, they said, for him,
Meridian-born, to bloom in. This opinion
Made the chaste Catherine look a little grim,
Who did not like at first to lose her minion:
But when she saw his dazzling eye wax dim,
And drooping like an eagle's with clipt pinion,
She then resolved to send him on a mission,
But in a style becoming his condition.

There was just then a kind of a discussion,
A sort of treaty or negotiation
Between the British cabinet and Russian,
Maintain'd with all the due prevarication
With which great states such things are apt to push on;
Something about the Baltic's navigation,
Hides, train-oil, tallow, and the rights of Thetis,
Which Britons deem their 'uti possidetis.'

So Catherine, who had a handsome way
Of fitting out her favourites, conferr'd
This secret charge on Juan, to display
At once her royal splendour, and reward
His services. He kiss'd hands the next day,
Received instructions how to play his card,
Was laden with all kinds of gifts and honours,
Which show'd what great discernment was the donor's.

But she was lucky, and luck 's all. Your queens
Are generally prosperous in reigning;
Which puzzles us to know what Fortune means.

But to continue: though her years were waning
Her climacteric teased her like her teens;
And though her dignity brook'd no complaining,
So much did Juan's setting off distress her,
She could not find at first a fit successor.

But time, the comforter, will come at last;
And four-and-twenty hours, and twice that number
Of candidates requesting to be placed,
Made Catherine taste next night a quiet slumber:--
Not that she meant to fix again in haste,
Nor did she find the quantity encumber,
But always choosing with deliberation,
Kept the place open for their emulation.

While this high post of honour's in abeyance,
For one or two days, reader, we request
You'll mount with our young hero the conveyance
Which wafted him from Petersburgh: the best
Barouche, which had the glory to display once
The fair czarina's autocratic crest,
When, a new Iphigene, she went to Tauris,
Was given to her favourite, and now bore his.

A bull-dog, and a bullfinch, and an ermine,
All private favourites of Don Juan;--for
(Let deeper sages the true cause determine)
He had a kind of inclination, or
Weakness, for what most people deem mere vermin,
Live animals: an old maid of threescore
For cats and birds more penchant ne'er display'd,
Although he was not old, nor even a maid;--

The animals aforesaid occupied
Their station: there were valets, secretaries,
In other vehicles; but at his side
Sat little Leila, who survived the parries
He made 'gainst Cossacque sabres, in the wide
Slaughter of Ismail. Though my wild Muse varies
Her note, she don't forget the infant girl
Whom he preserved, a pure and living pearl

Poor little thing! She was as fair as docile,
And with that gentle, serious character,
As rare in living beings as a fossile
Man, 'midst thy mouldy mammoths, 'grand Cuvier!'
Ill fitted was her ignorance to jostle
With this o'erwhelming world, where all must err:
But she was yet but ten years old, and therefore
Was tranquil, though she knew not why or wherefore.

Don Juan loved her, and she loved him, as

Nor brother, father, sister, daughter love.
I cannot tell exactly what it was;
He was not yet quite old enough to prove
Parental feelings, and the other class,
Call'd brotherly affection, could not move
His bosom,--for he never had a sister:
Ah! if he had, how much he would have miss'd her!

And still less was it sensual; for besides
That he was not an ancient debauchee
(Who like sour fruit, to stir their veins' salt tides,
As acids rouse a dormant alkali),
Although ('twill happen as our planet guides)
His youth was not the chapest that might be,
There was the purest Platonism at bottom
Of all his feelings--only he forgot 'em.

Just now there was no peril of temptation;
He loved the infant orphan he had saved,
As patriots (now and then) may love a nation;
His pride, too, felt that she was not enslaved
Owing to him;--as also her salvation
Through his means and the church's might be paved.
But one thing's odd, which here must be inserted,
The little Turk refused to be converted.

'Twas strange enough she should retain the impression
Through such a scene of change, and dread, and slaughter;
But though three bishops told her the transgression,
She show'd a great dislike to holy water:
She also had no passion for confession;
Perhaps she had nothing to confess:--no matter,
Whate'er the cause, the church made little of it--
She still held out that Mahomet was a prophet.

In fact, the only Christian she could bear
Was Juan; whom she seem'd to have selected
In place of what her home and friends once were.
He naturally loved what he protected:
And thus they form'd a rather curious pair,
A guardian green in years, a ward connected
In neither clime, time, blood, with her defender;
And yet this want of ties made theirs more tender.

They journey'd on through Poland and through Warsaw,
Famous for mines of salt and yokes of iron:
Through Courland also, which that famous farce saw
Which gave her dukes the graceless name of 'Biron.'
'Tis the same landscape which the modern Mars saw,
Who march'd to Moscow, led by Fame, the siren!
To lose by one month's frost some twenty years
Of conquest, and his guard of grenadiers.

Let this not seem an anti-climax:--'Oh!
My guard! my old guard exclaim'd! exclaim'd that god of day.
Think of the Thunderer's falling down below
Carotid-artery-cutting Castlereagh!
Alas, that glory should be chill'd by snow!
But should we wish to warm us on our way
Through Poland, there is Kosciusko's name
Might scatter fire through ice, like Hecla's flame.

From Poland they came on through Prussia Proper,
And Konigsberg the capital, whose vaunt,
Besides some veins of iron, lead, or copper,
Has lately been the great Professor Kant.
Juan, who cared not a tobacco-stopper
About philosophy, pursued his jaunt
To Germany, whose somewhat tardy millions
Have princes who spur more than their postilions.

And thence through Berlin, Dresden, and the like,
Until he reach'd the castellated Rhine:--
Ye glorious Gothic scenes! how much ye strike
All phantasies, not even excepting mine;
A grey wall, a green ruin, rusty pike,
Make my soul pass the equinoctial line
Between the present and past worlds, and hover
Upon their airy confine, half-seas-over.

But Juan posted on through Manheim, Bonn,
Which Drachenfels frowns over like a spectre
Of the good feudal times forever gone,
On which I have not time just now to lecture.
From thence he was drawn onwards to Cologne,
A city which presents to the inspector
Eleven thousand maidenheads of bone,
The greatest number flesh hath ever known.

From thence to Holland's Hague and Helvoetsluys,
That water-land of Dutchmen and of ditches,
Where juniper expresses its best juice,
The poor man's sparkling substitute for riches.
Senates and sages have condemn'd its use--
But to deny the mob a cordial, which is
Too often all the clothing, meat, or fuel,
Good government has left them, seems but cruel.

Here he embark'd, and with a flowing sail
Went bounding for the island of the free,
Towards which the impatient wind blew half a gale;
High dash'd the spray, the bows dipp'd in the sea,
And sea-sick passengers turn'd somewhat pale;
But Juan, season'd, as he well might be,

By former voyages, stood to watch the skiffs
Which pass'd, or catch the first glimpse of the cliffs.

At length they rose, like a white wall along
The blue sea's border; and I Don Juan felt--
What even young strangers feel a little strong
At the first sight of Albion's chalky belt--
A kind of pride that he should be among
Those haughty shopkeepers, who sternly dealt
Their goods and edicts out from pole to pole,
And made the very billows pay them toll.

I've no great cause to love that spot of earth,
Which holds what might have been the noblest nation;
But though I owe it little but my birth,
I feel a mix'd regret and veneration
For its decaying fame and former worth.
Seven years (the usual term of transportation)
Of absence lay one's old resentments level,
When a man's country 's going to the devil.

Alas! could she but fully, truly, know
How her great name is now throughout abhor'd:
How eager all the earth is for the blow
Which shall lay bare her bosom to the sword;
How all the nations deem her their worst foe,
That worse than worst of foes, the once adored
False friend, who held out freedom to mankind,
And now would chain them, to the very mind:--

Would she be proud, or boast herself the free,
Who is but first of slaves? The nations are
In prison,--but the gaoler, what is he?
No less a victim to the bolt and bar.
Is the poor privilege to turn the key
Upon the captive, freedom? He's as far
From the enjoyment of the earth and air
Who watches o'er the chain, as they who wear.

Don Juan now saw Albion's earliest beauties,
Thy cliffs, dear Dover! harbour, and hotel;
Thy custom-house, with all its delicate duties;
Thy waiters running mucks at every bell;
Thy packets, all whose passengers are booties
To those who upon land or water dwell;
And last, not least, to strangers uninstructed,
Thy long, long bills, whence nothing is deducted.

Juan, though careless, young, and magnifique,
And rich in rubles, diamonds, cash, and credit,
Who did not limit much his bills per week,
Yet stared at this a little, though he paid it

(His Maggior Duomo, a smart, subtle Greek,
Before him summ'd the awful scroll and read it);
But doubtless as the air, though seldom sunny,
Is free, the respiration's worth the money.

On with the horses! Off to Canterbury!
Tramp, tramp o'er pebble, and splash, splash through puddle;
Hurrah! how swiftly speeds the post so merry!
Not like slow Germany, wherein they muddle
Along the road, as if they went to bury
Their fare; and also pause besides, to fuddle
With 'schnapps'--sad dogs! whom 'Hundsrot,' or 'Verfluchter,'
Affect no more than lightning a conductor.

Now there is nothing gives a man such spirits,
Leavening his blood as cayenne doth a curry,
As going at full speed--no matter where its
Direction be, so 'tis but in a hurry,
And merely for the sake of its own merits;
For the less cause there is for all this flurry,
The greater is the pleasure in arriving
At the great end of travel--which is driving.

They saw at Canterbury the cathedral;
Black Edward's helm, and Becket's bloody stone,
Were pointed out as usual by the bedral,
In the same quaint, uninterested tone:--
There's glory again for you, gentle reader! All
Ends in a rusty casque and dubious bone,
Half-solved into these sodas or magnesias;
Which form that bitter draught, the human species.

The effect on Juan was of course sublime:
He breathed a thousand Cressys, as he saw
That casque, which never stoop'd except to Time.
Even the bold Churchman's tomb excited awe,
Who died in the then great attempt to climb
O'er kings, who now at least must talk of law
Before they butcher. Little Leila gazed,
And ask'd why such a structure had been raised:

And being told it was 'God's house,' she said
He was well lodged, but only wonder'd how
He suffer'd Infidels in his homestead,
The cruel Nazarenes, who had laid low
His holy temples in the lands which bred
The True Believers:--and her infant brow
Was bent with grief that Mahomet should resign
A mosque so noble, flung like pearls to swine.

Oh! oh! through meadows managed like a garden,
A paradise of hops and high production;

For after years of travel by a bard in
Countries of greater heat, but lesser suction,
A green field is a sight which makes him pardon
The absence of that more sublime construction,
Which mixes up vines, olives, precipices,
Glaciers, volcanos, oranges, and ices.

And when I think upon a pot of beer--
But I won't weep!--and so drive on, postilions!
As the smart boys spurr'd fast in their career,
Juan admired these highways of free millions;
A country in all senses the most dear
To foreigner or native, save some silly ones,
Who 'kick against the pricks' just at this juncture,
And for their pains get only a fresh puncture.

What a delightful thing's a turnpike road!
So smooth, so level, such a mode of shaving
The earth, as scarce the eagle in the broad
Air can accomplish, with his wide wings waving.
Had such been cut in Phaeton's time, the god
Had told his son to satisfy his craving
With the York mail;--but onward as we roll,
'Surgit amari aliquid'--the toll

Alas, how deeply painful is all payment!
Take lives, take wives, take aught except men's purses:
As Machiavel shows those in purple raiment,
Such is the shortest way to general curses.
They hate a murderer much less than a claimant
On that sweet ore which every body nurses;--
Kill a man's family, and he may brook it,
But keep your hands out of his breeches' pocket.

So said the Florentine: ye monarchs, hearken
To your instructor. Juan now was borne,
Just as the day began to wane and darken,
O'er the high hill, which looks with pride or scorn
Toward the great city.--Ye who have a spark in
Your veins of Cockney spirit, smile or mourn
According as you take things well or ill;--
Bold Britons, we are now on Shooter's Hill!

The sun went down, the smoke rose up, as from
A half-unquench'd volcano, o'er a space
Which well beseem'd the 'Devil's drawing-room,'
As some have qualified that wondrous place:
But Juan felt, though not approaching home,
As one who, though he were not of the race,
Revered the soil, of those true sons the mother,
Who butcher'd half the earth, and bullied t'other.

A mighty mass of brick, and smoke, and shipping,
Dirty and dusky, but as wide as eye
Could reach, with here and there a sail just skipping
In sight, then lost amidst the forestry
Of masts; a wilderness of steeples peeping
On tiptoe through their sea-coal canopy;
A huge, dun cupola, like a foolscap crown
On a fool's head- and there is London Town!

But Juan saw not this: each wreath of smoke
Appear'd to him but as the magic vapour
Of some alchymic furnace, from whence broke
The wealth of worlds (a wealth of tax and paper):
The gloomy clouds, which o'er it as a yoke
Are bow'd, and put the sun out like a taper,
Were nothing but the natural atmosphere,
Extremely wholesome, though but rarely clear.

He paused--and so will I; as doth a crew
Before they give their broadside. By and by,
My gentle countrymen, we will renew
Our old acquaintance; and at least I 'll try
To tell you truths you will not take as true,
Because they are so;--a male Mrs. Fry,
With a soft besom will I sweep your halls,
And brush a web or two from off the walls.

Oh Mrs. Fry! Why go to Newgate? Why
Preach to poor rogues? And wherefore not begin
With Carlton, or with other houses? Try
Your head at harden'd and imperial sin.
To mend the people 's an absurdity,
A jargon, a mere philanthropic din,
Unless you make their betters better:--Fy!
I thought you had more religion, Mrs. Fry.

Teach them the decencies of good threescore;
Cure them of tours, hussar and highland dresses;
Tell them that youth once gone returns no more,
That hired huzzas redeem no land's distresses;
Tell them Sir William Curtis is a bore,
Too dull even for the dullest of excesses,
The witless Falstaff of a hoary Hal,
A fool whose bells have ceased to ring at all.

Tell them, though it may be perhaps too late,
On life's worn confine, jaded, bloated, sated,
To set up vain pretence of being great,
'T is not so to be good; and be it stated,
The worthiest kings have ever loved least state;
And tell them- But you won't, and I have prated
Just now enough; but by and by I'll prattle

Like Roland's horn in Roncesvalles' battle.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Don Juan: Canto The Third

Hail, Muse! et cetera.--We left Juan sleeping,
Pillow'd upon a fair and happy breast,
And watch'd by eyes that never yet knew weeping,
And loved by a young heart, too deeply blest
To feel the poison through her spirit creeping,
Or know who rested there, a foe to rest,
Had soil'd the current of her sinless years,
And turn'd her pure heart's purest blood to tears!

Oh, Love! what is it in this world of ours
Which makes it fatal to be loved? Ah, why
With cypress branches hast thou Wreathed thy bowers,
And made thy best interpreter a sigh?
As those who dote on odours pluck the flowers,
And place them on their breast- but place to die-
Thus the frail beings we would fondly cherish
Are laid within our bosoms but to perish.

In her first passion woman loves her lover,
In all the others all she loves is love,
Which grows a habit she can ne'er get over,
And fits her loosely- like an easy glove,
As you may find, whene'er you like to prove her:
One man alone at first her heart can move;
She then prefers him in the plural number,
Not finding that the additions much encumber.

I know not if the fault be men's or theirs;
But one thing 's pretty sure; a woman planted
(Unless at once she plunge for life in prayers)
After a decent time must be gallanted;
Although, no doubt, her first of love affairs
Is that to which her heart is wholly granted;
Yet there are some, they say, who have had none,
But those who have ne'er end with only one.

'T is melancholy, and a fearful sign
Of human frailty, folly, also crime,
That love and marriage rarely can combine,
Although they both are born in the same clime;
Marriage from love, like vinegar from wine-
A sad, sour, sober beverage- by time
Is sharpen'd from its high celestial flavour
Down to a very homely household savour.

There 's something of antipathy, as 't were,
Between their present and their future state;
A kind of flattery that 's hardly fair
Is used until the truth arrives too late-
Yet what can people do, except despair?
The same things change their names at such a rate;
For instance- passion in a lover 's glorious,

But in a husband is pronounced uxorious.

Men grow ashamed of being so very fond;
They sometimes also get a little tired
(But that, of course, is rare), and then despond:
The same things cannot always be admired,
Yet 't is 'so nominated in the bond,'
That both are tied till one shall have expired.
Sad thought! to lose the spouse that was adorning
Our days, and put one's servants into mourning.

There 's doubtless something in domestic doings
Which forms, in fact, true love's antithesis;
Romances paint at full length people's wooings,
But only give a bust of marriages;
For no one cares for matrimonial cooings,
There 's nothing wrong in a connubial kiss:
Think you, if Laura had been Petrarch's wife,
He would have written sonnets all his life?

All tragedies are finish'd by a death,
All comedies are ended by a marriage;
The future states of both are left to faith,
For authors fear description might disparage
The worlds to come of both, or fall beneath,
And then both worlds would punish their miscarriage;
So leaving each their priest and prayer-book ready,
They say no more of Death or of the Lady.

The only two that in my recollection
Have sung of heaven and hell, or marriage, are
Dante and Milton, and of both the affection
Was hapless in their nuptials, for some bar
Of fault or temper ruin'd the connection
(Such things, in fact, it don't ask much to mar):
But Dante's Beatrice and Milton's Eve
Were not drawn from their spouses, you conceive.

Some persons say that Dante meant theology
By Beatrice, and not a mistress- I,
Although my opinion may require apology,
Deem this a commentator's fantasy,
Unless indeed it was from his own knowledge he
Decided thus, and show'd good reason why;
I think that Dante's more abstruse ecstasies
Meant to personify the mathematics.

Haidee and Juan were not married, but
The fault was theirs, not mine; it is not fair,
Chaste reader, then, in any way to put
The blame on me, unless you wish they were;
Then if you 'd have them wedded, please to shut

The book which treats of this erroneous pair,
Before the consequences grow too awful;
'T is dangerous to read of loves unlawful.

Yet they were happy,- happy in the illicit
Indulgence of their innocent desires;
But more imprudent grown with every visit,
Haidee forgot the island was her sire's;
When we have what we like, 't is hard to miss it,
At least in the beginning, ere one tires;
Thus she came often, not a moment losing,
Whilst her piratical papa was cruising.

Let not his mode of raising cash seem strange,
Although he fleeced the flags of every nation,
For into a prime minister but change
His title, and 't is nothing but taxation;
But he, more modest, took an humbler range
Of life, and in an honester vocation
Pursued o'er the high seas his watery journey,
And merely practised as a sea-attorney.

The good old gentleman had been detain'd
By winds and waves, and some important captures;
And, in the hope of more, at sea remain'd,
Although a squall or two had damp'd his raptures,
By swamping one of the prizes; he had chain'd
His prisoners, dividing them like chapters
In number'd lots; they all had cuffs and collars,
And averaged each from ten to a hundred dollars.

Some he disposed of off Cape Matapan,
Among his friends the Mainots; some he sold
To his Tunis correspondents, save one man
Toss'd overboard unsaleable (being old);
The rest- save here and there some richer one,
Reserved for future ransom- in the hold
Were link'd alike, as for the common people he
Had a large order from the Dey of Tripoli.

The merchandise was served in the same way,
Pieced out for different marts in the Levant;
Except some certain portions of the prey,
Light classic articles of female want,
French stuffs, lace, tweezers, toothpicks, teapot, tray,
Guitars and castanets from Alicant,
All which selected from the spoil he gathers,
Robb'd for his daughter by the best of fathers.

A monkey, a Dutch mastiff, a mackaw,
Two parrots, with a Persian cat and kittens,
He chose from several animals he saw-

A terrier, too, which once had been a Briton's,
Who dying on the coast of Ithaca,
The peasants gave the poor dumb thing a pittance;
These to secure in this strong blowing weather,
He caged in one huge hamper altogether.

Then having settled his marine affairs,
Despatching single cruisers here and there,
His vessel having need of some repairs,
He shaped his course to where his daughter fair
Continued still her hospitable cares;
But that part of the coast being shoal and bare,
And rough with reefs which ran out many a mile,
His port lay on the other side o' the isle.

And there he went ashore without delay,
Having no custom-house nor quarantine
To ask him awkward questions on the way
About the time and place where he had been:
He left his ship to be hove down next day,
With orders to the people to careen;
So that all hands were busy beyond measure,
In getting out goods, ballast, guns, and treasure.

Arriving at the summit of a hill
Which overlook'd the white walls of his home,
He stopp'd.- What singular emotions fill
Their bosoms who have been induced to roam!
With fluttering doubts if all be well or ill-
With love for many, and with fears for some;
All feelings which o'erleap the years long lost,
And bring our hearts back to their starting-post.

The approach of home to husbands and to sires,
After long travelling by land or water,
Most naturally some small doubt inspires-
A female family 's a serious matter
(None trusts the sex more, or so much admires-
But they hate flattery, so I never flatter);
Wives in their husbands' absences grow subtler,
And daughters sometimes run off with the butler.

An honest gentleman at his return
May not have the good fortune of Ulysses;
Not all lone matrons for their husbands mourn,
Or show the same dislike to suitors' kisses;
The odds are that he finds a handsome urn
To his memory- and two or three young misses
Born to some friend, who holds his wife and riches,-
And that his Argus- bites him by the breeches.

If single, probably his plighted fair

Has in his absence wedded some rich miser;
But all the better, for the happy pair
May quarrel, and the lady growing wiser,
He may resume his amatory care
As cavalier servente, or despise her;
And that his sorrow may not be a dumb one,
Write odes on the Inconstancy of Woman.

And oh! ye gentlemen who have already
Some chaste liaison of the kind- I mean
An honest friendship with a married lady-
The only thing of this sort ever seen
To last- of all connections the most steady,
And the true Hymen (the first 's but a screen)-
Yet for all that keep not too long away,
I 've known the absent wrong'd four times a day.

Lambro, our sea-solicitor, who had
Much less experience of dry land than ocean,
On seeing his own chimney-smoke, felt glad;
But not knowing metaphysics, had no notion
Of the true reason of his not being sad,
Or that of any other strong emotion;
He loved his child, and would have wept the loss of her,
But knew the cause no more than a philosopher.

He saw his white walls shining in the sun,
His garden trees all shadowy and green;
He heard his rivulet's light bubbling run,
The distant dog-bark; and perceived between
The umbrage of the wood so cool and dun
The moving figures, and the sparkling sheen
Of arms (in the East all arm)- and various dyes
Of colour'd garbs, as bright as butterflies.

And as the spot where they appear he nears,
Surprised at these unwonted signs of idling,
He hears- alas! no music of the spheres,
But an unhallow'd, earthly sound of fiddling!
A melody which made him doubt his ears,
The cause being past his guessing or unriddling;
A pipe, too, and a drum, and shortly after,
A most unoriental roar of laughter.

And still more nearly to the place advancing,
Descending rather quickly the declivity,
Through the waved branches o'er the greensward glancing,
'Midst other indications of festivity,
Seeing a troop of his domestics dancing
Like dervises, who turn as on a pivot, he
Perceived it was the Pyrrhic dance so martial,
To which the Levantines are very partial.

And further on a group of Grecian girls,
The first and tallest her white kerchief waving,
Were strung together like a row of pearls,
Link'd hand in hand, and dancing; each too having
Down her white neck long floating auburn curls
(The least of which would set ten poets raving);
Their leader sang- and bounded to her song,
With choral step and voice, the virgin throng.

And here, assembled cross-legg'd round their trays,
Small social parties just begun to dine;
Pilaus and meats of all sorts met the gaze,
And flasks of Samian and of Chian wine,
And sherbet cooling in the porous vase;
Above them their dessert grew on its vine,
The orange and pomegranate nodding o'er
Dropp'd in their laps, scarce pluck'd, their mellow store.

A band of children, round a snow-white ram,
There wreathes his venerable horns with flowers;
While peaceful as if still an unwean'd lamb,
The patriarch of the flock all gently cowers
His sober head, majestically tame,
Or eats from out the palm, or playful lowers
His brow, as if in act to butt, and then
Yielding to their small hands, draws back again.

Their classical profiles, and glittering dresses,
Their large black eyes, and soft seraphic cheeks,
Crimson as cleft pomegranates, their long tresses,
The gesture which enchant's, the eye that speaks,
The innocence which happy childhood blesses,
Made quite a picture of these little Greeks;
So that the philosophical beholder
Sigh'd for their sakes- that they should e'er grow older.

Afar, a dwarf buffoon stood telling tales
To a sedate grey circle of old smokers,
Of secret treasures found in hidden vales,
Of wonderful replies from Arab jokers,
Of charms to make good gold and cure bad ails,
Of rocks bewitch'd that open to the knockers,
Of magic ladies who, by one sole act,
Transform'd their lords to beasts (but that 's a fact).

Here was no lack of innocent diversion
For the imagination or the senses,
Song, dance, wine, music, stories from the Persian,
All pretty pastimes in which no offence is;
But Lambro saw all these things with aversion,
Perceiving in his absence such expenses,

Dreading that climax of all human ills,
The inflammation of his weekly bills.

Ah! what is man? what perils still environ
The happiest mortals even after dinner-
A day of gold from out an age of iron
Is all that life allows the luckiest sinner;
Pleasure (whene'er she sings, at least) 's a siren,
That lures, to flay alive, the young beginner;
Lambro's reception at his people's banquet
Was such as fire accords to a wet blanket.

He- being a man who seldom used a word
Too much, and wishing gladly to surprise
(In general he surprised men with the sword)
His daughter- had not sent before to advise
Of his arrival, so that no one stirr'd;
And long he paused to re-assure his eyes
In fact much more astonish'd than delighted,
To find so much good company invited.

He did not know (alas! how men will lie)
That a report (especially the Greeks)
Avouch'd his death (such people never die),
And put his house in mourning several weeks,-
But now their eyes and also lips were dry;
The bloom, too, had return'd to Haidee's cheeks,
Her tears, too, being return'd into their fount,
She now kept house upon her own account.

Hence all this rice, meat, dancing, wine, and fiddling,
Which turn'd the isle into a place of pleasure;
The servants all were getting drunk or idling,
A life which made them happy beyond measure.
Her father's hospitality seem'd middling,
Compared with what Haidee did with his treasure;
'T was wonderful how things went on improving,
While she had not one hour to spare from loving.

Perhaps you think in stumbling on this feast
He flew into a passion, and in fact
There was no mighty reason to be pleased;
Perhaps you prophesy some sudden act,
The whip, the rack, or dungeon at the least,
To teach his people to be more exact,
And that, proceeding at a very high rate,
He show'd the royal penchants of a pirate.

You 're wrong.- He was the mildest manner'd man
That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat:
With such true breeding of a gentleman,
You never could divine his real thought;

No courtier could, and scarcely woman can
Gird more deceit within a petticoat;
Pity he loved adventurous life's variety,
He was so great a loss to good society.

Advancing to the nearest dinner tray,
Tapping the shoulder of the nighest guest,
With a peculiar smile, which, by the way,
Boded no good, whatever it express'd,
He ask'd the meaning of this holiday;
The vinous Greek to whom he had address'd
His question, much too merry to divine
The questioner, fill'd up a glass of wine,

And without turning his facetious head,
Over his shoulder, with a Bacchant air,
Presented the o'erflowing cup, and said,
'Talking 's dry work, I have no time to spare.'
A second hiccup'd, 'Our old master 's dead,
You 'd better ask our mistress who 's his heir.'
'Our mistress!' quoth a third: 'Our mistress!- pooh!-
You mean our master- not the old, but new.'

These rascals, being new comers, knew not whom
They thus address'd- and Lambro's visage fell-
And o'er his eye a momentary gloom
Pass'd, but he strove quite courteously to quell
The expression, and endeavouring to resume
His smile, requested one of them to tell
The name and quality of his new patron,
Who seem'd to have turn'd Haidee into a matron.

'I know not,' quoth the fellow, 'who or what
He is, nor whence he came- and little care;
But this I know, that this roast capon 's fat,
And that good wine ne'er wash'd down better fare;
And if you are not satisfied with that,
Direct your questions to my neighbour there;
He 'll answer all for better or for worse,
For none likes more to hear himself converse.'

I said that Lambro was a man of patience,
And certainly he show'd the best of breeding,
Which scarce even France, the paragon of nations,
E'er saw her most polite of sons exceeding;
He bore these sneers against his near relations,
His own anxiety, his heart, too, bleeding,
The insults, too, of every servile glutton,
Who all the time was eating up his mutton.

Now in a person used to much command-
To bid men come, and go, and come again-

To see his orders done, too, out of hand-
Whether the word was death, or but the chain-
It may seem strange to find his manners bland;
Yet such things are, which I can not explain,
Though doubtless he who can command himself
Is good to govern- almost as a Guelf.

Not that he was not sometimes rash or so,
But never in his real and serious mood;
Then calm, concentrated, and still, and slow,
He lay coil'd like the boa in the wood;
With him it never was a word and blow,
His angry word once o'er, he shed no blood,
But in his silence there was much to rue,
And his one blow left little work for two.

He ask'd no further questions, and proceeded
On to the house, but by a private way,
So that the few who met him hardly heeded,
So little they expected him that day;
If love paternal in his bosom pleaded
For Haidee's sake, is more than I can say,
But certainly to one deem'd dead, returning,
This revel seem'd a curious mode of mourning.

If all the dead could now return to life
(Which God forbid!) or some, or a great many,
For instance, if a husband or his wife
(Nuptial examples are as good as any),
No doubt whate'er might be their former strife,
The present weather would be much more rainy-
Tears shed into the grave of the connection
Would share most probably its resurrection.

He enter'd in the house no more his home,
A thing to human feelings the most trying,
And harder for the heart to overcome,
Perhaps, than even the mental pangs of dying;
To find our hearthstone turn'd into a tomb,
And round its once warm precincts palely lying
The ashes of our hopes, is a deep grief,
Beyond a single gentleman's belief.

He enter'd in the house- his home no more,
For without hearts there is no home; and felt
The solitude of passing his own door
Without a welcome; there he long had dwelt,
There his few peaceful days Time had swept o'er,
There his worn bosom and keen eye would melt
Over the innocence of that sweet child,
His only shrine of feelings undefiled.

He was a man of a strange temperament,
Of mild demeanour though of savage mood,
Moderate in all his habits, and content
With temperance in pleasure, as in food,
Quick to perceive, and strong to bear, and meant
For something better, if not wholly good;
His country's wrongs and his despair to save her
Had stung him from a slave to an enslaver.

The love of power, and rapid gain of gold,
The hardness by long habitude produced,
The dangerous life in which he had grown old,
The mercy he had granted oft abused,
The sights he was accustom'd to behold,
The wild seas, and wild men with whom he cruised,
Had cost his enemies a long repentance,
And made him a good friend, but bad acquaintance.

But something of the spirit of old Greece
Flash'd o'er his soul a few heroic rays,
Such as lit onward to the Golden Fleece
His predecessors in the Colchian days;
T is true he had no ardent love for peace-
Alas! his country show'd no path to praise:
Hate to the world and war with every nation
He waged, in vengeance of her degradation.

Still o'er his mind the influence of the clime
Shed its Ionian elegance, which show'd
Its power unconsciously full many a time,-
A taste seen in the choice of his abode,
A love of music and of scenes sublime,
A pleasure in the gentle stream that flow'd
Past him in crystal, and a joy in flowers,
Bedew'd his spirit in his calmer hours.

But whatsoe'er he had of love repos'd
On that beloved daughter; she had been
The only thing which kept his heart unclosed
Amidst the savage deeds he had done and seen;
A lonely pure affection unopposed:
There wanted but the loss of this to wean
His feelings from all milk of human kindness,
And turn him like the Cyclops mad with blindness.

The cubless tigress in her jungle raging
Is dreadful to the shepherd and the flock;
The ocean when its yeasty war is waging
Is awful to the vessel near the rock;
But violent things will sooner bear assuaging,
Their fury being spent by its own shock,
Than the stern, single, deep, and wordless ire

Of a strong human heart, and in a sire.

It is a hard although a common case
To find our children running restive- they
In whom our brightest days we would retrace,
Our little selves re-form'd in finer clay,
Just as old age is creeping on apace,
And clouds come o'er the sunset of our day,
They kindly leave us, though not quite alone,
But in good company- the gout or stone.

Yet a fine family is a fine thing
(Provided they don't come in after dinner);
'T is beautiful to see a matron bring
Her children up (if nursing them don't thin her);
Like cherubs round an altar-piece they cling
To the fire-side (a sight to touch a sinner).
A lady with her daughters or her nieces
Shines like a guinea and seven-shilling pieces.

Old Lambro pass'd unseen a private gate,
And stood within his hall at eventide;
Meantime the lady and her lover sate
At wassail in their beauty and their pride:
An ivory inlaid table spread with state
Before them, and fair slaves on every side;
Gems, gold, and silver, form'd the service mostly,
Mother of pearl and coral the less costly.

The dinner made about a hundred dishes;
Lamb and pistachio nuts- in short, all meats,
And saffron soups, and sweetbreads; and the fishes
Were of the finest that e'er flounced in nets,
Drest to a Sybarite's most pamper'd wishes;
The beverage was various sherbets
Of raisin, orange, and pomegranate juice,
Squeezed through the rind, which makes it best for use.

These were ranged round, each in its crystal ewer,
And fruits, and date-bread loaves closed the repast,
And Mocha's berry, from Arabia pure,
In small fine China cups, came in at last;
Gold cups of filigree made to secure
The hand from burning underneath them placed,
Cloves, cinnamon, and saffron too were boil'd
Up with the coffee, which (I think) they spoil'd.

The hangings of the room were tapestry, made
Of velvet panels, each of different hue,
And thick with damask flowers of silk inlaid;
And round them ran a yellow border too;
The upper border, richly wrought, display'd,

Embroider'd delicately o'er with blue,
Soft Persian sentences, in lilac letters,
From poets, or the moralists their betters.

These Oriental writings on the wall,
Quite common in those countries, are a kind
Of monitors adapted to recall,
Like skulls at Memphian banquets, to the mind
The words which shook Belshazzar in his hall,
And took his kingdom from him: You will find,
Though sages may pour out their wisdom's treasure,
There is no sterner moralist than Pleasure.

A beauty at the season's close grown hectic,
A genius who has drunk himself to death,
A rake turn'd methodistic, or Eclectic
(For that 's the name they like to pray beneath)-
But most, an alderman struck apoplectic,
Are things that really take away the breath,-
And show that late hours, wine, and love are able
To do not much less damage than the table.

Haidee and Juan carpeted their feet
On crimson satin, border'd with pale blue;
Their sofa occupied three parts complete
Of the apartment- and appear'd quite new;
The velvet cushions (for a throne more meet)
Were scarlet, from whose glowing centre grew
A sun emboss'd in gold, whose rays of tissue,
Meridian-like, were seen all light to issue.

Crystal and marble, plate and porcelain,
Had done their work of splendour; Indian mats
And Persian carpets, which the heart bled to stain,
Over the floors were spread; gazelles and cats,
And dwarfs and blacks, and such like things, that gain
Their bread as ministers and favourites (that 's
To say, by degradation) mingled there
As plentiful as in a court, or fair.

There was no want of lofty mirrors, and
The tables, most of ebony inlaid
With mother of pearl or ivory, stood at hand,
Or were of tortoise-shell or rare woods made,
Fretted with gold or silver:- by command,
The greater part of these were ready spread
With viands and sherbets in ice- and wine-
Kept for all comers at all hours to dine.

Of all the dresses I select Haidee's:
She wore two jelicks- one was of pale yellow;
Of azure, pink, and white was her chemise-

'Neath which her breast heaved like a little billow;
With buttons form'd of pearls as large as peas,
All gold and crimson shone her jelick's fellow,
And the striped white gauze baracan that bound her,
Like fleecy clouds about the moon, flow'd round her.

One large gold bracelet clasp'd each lovely arm,
Lockless- so pliable from the pure gold
That the hand stretch'd and shut it without harm,
The limb which it adorn'd its only mould;
So beautiful- its very shape would charm;
And, clinging as if loath to lose its hold,
The purest ore enclosed the whitest skin
That e'er by precious metal was held in.

Around, as princess of her father's land,
A like gold bar above her instep roll'd
Announced her rank; twelve rings were on her hand;
Her hair was starr'd with gems; her veil's fine fold
Below her breast was fasten'd with a band
Of lavish pearls, whose worth could scarce be told;
Her orange silk full Turkish trousers furl'd
About the prettiest ankle in the world.

Her hair's long auburn waves down to her heel
Flow'd like an Alpine torrent which the sun
Dyes with his morning light,- and would conceal
Her person if allow'd at large to run,
And still they seem resentfully to feel
The silken fillet's curb, and sought to shun
Their bonds whene'er some Zephyr caught began
To offer his young pinion as her fan.

Round her she made an atmosphere of life,
The very air seem'd lighter from her eyes,
They were so soft and beautiful, and rife
With all we can imagine of the skies,
And pure as Psyche ere she grew a wife-
Too pure even for the purest human ties;
Her overpowering presence made you feel
It would not be idolatry to kneel.

Her eyelashes, though dark as night, were tinged
(It is the country's custom), but in vain;
For those large black eyes were so blackly fringed,
The glossy rebels mock'd the jetty stain,
And in their native beauty stood avenged:
Her nails were touch'd with henna; but again
The power of art was turn'd to nothing, for
They could not look more rosy than before.

The henna should be deeply dyed to make

The skin relieved appear more fairly fair;
She had no need of this, day ne'er will break
On mountain tops more heavenly white than her:
The eye might doubt if it were well awake,
She was so like a vision; I might err,
But Shakspeare also says, 't is very silly
'To gild refined gold, or paint the lily'

Juan had on a shawl of black and gold,
But a white baracan, and so transparent
The sparkling gems beneath you might behold,
Like small stars through the milky way apparent;
His turban, furl'd in many a graceful fold,
An emerald aigrette with Haidee's hair in 't
Surmounted as its clasp- a glowing crescent,
Whose rays shone ever trembling, but incessant.

And now they were diverted by their suite,
Dwarfs, dancing girls, black eunuchs, and a poet,
Which made their new establishment complete;
The last was of great fame, and liked to show it:
His verses rarely wanted their due feet;
And for his theme- he seldom sung below it,
He being paid to satirize or flatter,
As the psalm says, 'inditing a good matter.'

He praised the present, and abused the past,
Reversing the good custom of old days,
An Eastern anti-jacobin at last
He turn'd, preferring pudding to no praise-
For some few years his lot had been o'ercast
By his seeming independent in his lays,
But now he sung the Sultan and the Pacha
With truth like Southey, and with verse like Crashaw.

He was a man who had seen many changes,
And always changed as true as any needle;
His polar star being one which rather ranges,
And not the fix'd- he knew the way to wheedle:
So vile he 'scaped the doom which oft avenges;
And being fluent (save indeed when fee'd ill),
He lied with such a fervour of intention-
There was no doubt he earn'd his laureate pension.

But he had genius,- when a turncoat has it,
The 'Vates irritabilis' takes care
That without notice few full moons shall pass it;
Even good men like to make the public stare:-
But to my subject- let me see- what was it?-
Oh!- the third canto- and the pretty pair-
Their loves, and feasts, and house, and dress, and mode
Of living in their insular abode.

Their poet, a sad trimmer, but no less
In company a very pleasant fellow,
Had been the favourite of full many a mess
Of men, and made them speeches when half mellow;
And though his meaning they could rarely guess,
Yet still they deign'd to hiccup or to bellow
The glorious meed of popular applause,
Of which the first ne'er knows the second cause.

But now being lifted into high society,
And having pick'd up several odds and ends
Of free thoughts in his travels for variety,
He deem'd, being in a lone isle, among friends,
That, without any danger of a riot, he
Might for long lying make himself amends;
And, singing as he sung in his warm youth,
Agree to a short armistice with truth.

He had travell'd 'mongst the Arabs, Turks, and Franks,
And knew the self-loves of the different nations;
And having lived with people of all ranks,
Had something ready upon most occasions-
Which got him a few presents and some thanks.
He varied with some skill his adulations;
To 'do at Rome as Romans do,' a piece
Of conduct was which he observed in Greece.

Thus, usually, when he was ask'd to sing,
He gave the different nations something national;
'T was all the same to him- 'God save the king,'
Or 'Ca ira,' according to the fashion all:
His muse made increment of any thing,
From the high lyric down to the low rational:
If Pindar sang horse-races, what should hinder
Himself from being as pliable as Pindar?

In France, for instance, he would write a chanson;
In England a six canto quarto tale;
In Spain, he'd make a ballad or romance on
The last war- much the same in Portugal;
In Germany, the Pegasus he 'd prance on
Would be old Goethe's (see what says De Stael);
In Italy he 'd ape the 'Trecentisti;'
In Greece, he sing some sort of hymn like this t' ye:

THE ISLES OF GREECE.

The isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,
Where Delos rose, and Phoebus sprung!

Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

The Scian and the Teian muse,
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse;
Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires' 'Islands of the Blest.'

The mountains look on Marathon-
And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations;- all were his!
He counted them at break of day-
And when the sun set where were they?

And where are they? and where art thou,
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now-
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

'T is something, in the dearth of fame,
Though link'd among a fetter'd race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush- for Greece a tear.

Must we but weep o'er days more blest?
Must we but blush?- Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylae!

What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no;- the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, 'Let one living head,
But one arise,- we come, we come!'
'T is but the living who are dumb.

In vain- in vain: strike other chords;
Fill high the cup with Samian wine!
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine!
Hark! rising to the ignoble call-
How answers each bold Bacchanal!

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet,
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus gave-
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's song divine:
He served- but served Polycrates-
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
Oh! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own.

Trust not for freedom to the Franks-
They have a king who buys and sells;
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells;
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade-
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;

There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine-
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

Thus sung, or would, or could, or should have sung,
The modern Greek, in tolerable verse;
If not like Orpheus quite, when Greece was young,
Yet in these times he might have done much worse:
His strain display'd some feeling- right or wrong;
And feeling, in a poet, is the source
Of others' feeling; but they are such liars,
And take all colours- like the hands of dyers.

But words are things, and a small drop of ink,
Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think;
'T is strange, the shortest letter which man uses
Instead of speech, may form a lasting link
Of ages; to what straits old Time reduces
Frail man, when paper- even a rag like this,
Survives himself, his tomb, and all that 's his.

And when his bones are dust, his grave a blank,
His station, generation, even his nation,
Become a thing, or nothing, save to rank
In chronological commemoration,
Some dull MS. oblivion long has sank,
Or graven stone found in a barrack's station
In digging the foundation of a closet,
May turn his name up, as a rare deposit.

And glory long has made the sages smile;
'T is something, nothing, words, illusion, wind-
Depending more upon the historian's style
Than on the name a person leaves behind:
Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to Hoyle:
The present century was growing blind
To the great Marlborough's skill in giving knocks,
Until his late life by Archdeacon Coxe.

Milton 's the prince of poets- so we say;
A little heavy, but no less divine:
An independent being in his day-
Learn'd, pious, temperate in love and wine;
But, his life falling into Johnson's way,
We 're told this great high priest of all the Nine
Was whipt at college- a harsh sire- odd spouse,
For the first Mrs. Milton left his house.

All these are, certes, entertaining facts,
Like Shakspeare's stealing deer, Lord Bacon's bribes;
Like Titus' youth, and Caesar's earliest acts;

Like Burns (whom Doctor Currie well describes);
Like Cromwell's pranks; - but although truth exacts
These amiable descriptions from the scribes,
As most essential to their hero's story,
They do not much contribute to his glory.

All are not moralists, like Southey, when
He prated to the world of 'Pantisocracy';
Or Wordsworth unexcised, unhired, who then
Season'd his pedlar poems with democracy;
Or Coleridge, long before his flighty pen
Let to the Morning Post its aristocracy;
When he and Southey, following the same path,
Espoused two partners (milliners of Bath).

Such names at present cut a convict figure,
The very Botany Bay in moral geography;
Their loyal treason, renegado rigour,
Are good manure for their more bare biography.
Wordsworth's last quarto, by the way, is bigger
Than any since the birthday of typography;
A drowsy frowzy poem, call'd the 'Excursion.'
Writ in a manner which is my aversion.

He there builds up a formidable dyke
Between his own and others' intellect;
But Wordsworth's poem, and his followers, like
Joanna Southcote's Shiloh, and her sect,
Are things which in this century don't strike
The public mind, - so few are the elect;
And the new births of both their stale virginities
Have proved but dropsies, taken for divinities.

But let me to my story: I must own,
If I have any fault, it is digression-
Leaving my people to proceed alone,
While I soliloquize beyond expression;
But these are my addresses from the throne,
Which put off business to the ensuing session:
Forgetting each omission is a loss to
The world, not quite so great as Ariosto.

I know that what our neighbours call 'longueurs'
(We 've not so good a word, but have the thing
In that complete perfection which ensures
An epic from Bob Southey every spring),
Form not the true temptation which allures
The reader; but 't would not be hard to bring
Some fine examples of the epopee,
To prove its grand ingredient is ennui.

We learn from Horace, 'Homer sometimes sleeps;'

We feel without him, Wordsworth sometimes wakes,-
To show with what complacency he creeps,
With his dear 'Waggoners,' around his lakes.
He wishes for 'a boat' to sail the deeps-
Of ocean?- No, of air; and then he makes
Another outcry for 'a little boat,'
And drivels seas to set it well afloat.

If he must fain sweep o'er the ethereal plain,
And Pegasus runs restive in his 'Waggon,'
Could he not beg the loan of Charles's Wain?
Or pray Medea for a single dragon?
Or if, too classic for his vulgar brain,
He fear'd his neck to venture such a nag on,
And he must needs mount nearer to the moon,
Could not the blockhead ask for a balloon?

'Pedlars,' and 'Boats,' and 'Waggons!' Oh! ye shades
Of Pope and Dryden, are we come to this?
That trash of such sort not alone evades
Contempt, but from the bathos' vast abyss
Floats scumlike uppermost, and these Jack Cades
Of sense and song above your graves may hiss-
The 'little boatman' and his 'Peter Bell'
Can sneer at him who drew 'Achitophel'!

T' our tale.- The feast was over, the slaves gone,
The dwarfs and dancing girls had all retired;
The Arab lore and poet's song were done,
And every sound of revelry expired;
The lady and her lover, left alone,
The rosy flood of twilight's sky admired;-
Ave Maria! o'er the earth and sea,
That heavenliest hour of Heaven is worthiest thee!

Ave Maria! blessed be the hour!
The time, the clime, the spot, where I so oft
Have felt that moment in its fullest power
Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and soft,
While swung the deep bell in the distant tower,
Or the faint dying day-hymn stole aloft,
And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet the forest leaves seem'd stirr'd with prayer.

Ave Maria! 't is the hour of prayer!
Ave Maria! 't is the hour of love!
Ave Maria! may our spirits dare
Look up to thine and to thy Son's above!
Ave Maria! oh that face so fair!
Those downcast eyes beneath the Almighty dove-
What though 't is but a pictured image?- strike-
That painting is no idol,- 't is too like.

Some kinder casuists are pleased to say,
In nameless print- that I have no devotion;
But set those persons down with me to pray,
And you shall see who has the properest notion
Of getting into heaven the shortest way;
My altars are the mountains and the ocean,
Earth, air, stars,- all that springs from the great Whole,
Who hath produced, and will receive the soul.

Sweet hour of twilight!- in the solitude
Of the pine forest, and the silent shore
Which bounds Ravenna's immemorial wood,
Rooted where once the Adrian wave flow'd o'er,
To where the last Caesarean fortress stood,
Evergreen forest! which Boccaccio's lore
And Dryden's lay made haunted ground to me,
How have I loved the twilight hour and thee!

The shrill cicadas, people of the pine,
Making their summer lives one ceaseless song,
Were the sole echoes, save my steed's and mine,
And vesper bell's that rose the boughs along;
The spectre huntsman of Onesti's line,
His hell-dogs, and their chase, and the fair throng
Which learn'd from this example not to fly
From a true lover,- shadow'd my mind's eye.

Oh, Hesperus! thou bringest all good things-
Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer,
To the young bird the parent's brooding wings,
The welcome stall to the o'erlabour'd steer;
Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone clings,
Whate'er our household gods protect of dear,
Are gather'd round us by thy look of rest;
Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's breast.

Soft hour! which wakes the wish and melts the heart
Of those who sail the seas, on the first day
When they from their sweet friends are torn apart;
Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way
As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
Seeming to weep the dying day's decay;
Is this a fancy which our reason scorns?
Ah! surely nothing dies but something mourns!

When Nero perish'd by the justest doom
Which ever the destroyer yet destroy'd,
Amidst the roar of liberated Rome,
Of nations freed, and the world overjoy'd,
Some hands unseen strew'd flowers upon his tomb:
Perhaps the weakness of a heart not void

Of feeling for some kindness done, when power
Had left the wretch an uncorrupted hour.

But I 'm digressing; what on earth has Nero,
Or any such like sovereign buffoons,
To do with the transactions of my hero,
More than such madmen's fellow man- the moon's?
Sure my invention must be down at zero,
And I grown one of many 'wooden spoons'
Of verse (the name with which we Cantabs please
To dub the last of honours in degrees).

I feel this tediousness will never do-
'T is being too epic, and I must cut down
(In copying) this long canto into two;
They 'll never find it out, unless I own
The fact, excepting some experienced few;
And then as an improvement 't will be shown:
I 'll prove that such the opinion of the critic is
From Aristotle passim.--See poietikes.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Don Juan: Canto The Thirteenth

I now mean to be serious;--it is time,
Since laughter now-a-days is deem'd too serious.
A jest at Vice by Virtue's call'd a crime,
And critically held as deleterious:
Besides, the sad's a source of the sublime,
Although when long a little apt to weary us;
And therefore shall my lay soar high and solemn,
As an old temple dwindled to a column.

The Lady Adeline Amundeville
('Tis an old Norman name, and to be found
In pedigrees, by those who wander still
Along the last fields of that Gothic ground)
Was high-born, wealthy by her father's will,
And beauteous, even where beauties most abound,
In Britain - which of course true patriots find
The goodliest soil of body and of mind.

I'll not gainsay them; it is not my cue;
I'll leave them to their taste, no doubt the best:
An eye's an eye, and whether black or blue,
Is no great matter, so 'tis in request,
'Tis nonsense to dispute about a hue -
The kindest may be taken as a test.
The fair sex should be always fair; and no man,
Till thirty, should perceive there 's a plain woman.

And after that serene and somewhat dull
Epoch, that awkward corner turn'd for days
More quiet, when our moon's no more at full,
We may presume to criticise or praise;
Because indifference begins to lull
Our passions, and we walk in wisdom's ways;
Also because the figure and the face
Hint, that 'tis time to give the younger place.

I know that some would fain postpone this era,
Reluctant as all placemen to resign
Their post; but theirs is merely a chimera,
For they have pass'd life's equinoctial line:
But then they have their claret and Madeira
To irrigate the dryness of decline;
And county meetings, and the parliament,
And debt, and what not, for their solace sent.

And is there not religion, and reform,
Peace, war, the taxes, and what's call'd the 'Nation'?
The struggle to be pilots in a storm?
The landed and the monied speculation?
The joys of mutual hate to keep them warm,
Instead of love, that mere hallucination?
Now hatred is by far the longest pleasure;

Men love in haste, but they detest at leisure.

Rough Johnson, the great moralist, profess'd,
Right honestly, 'he liked an honest hater!'-
The only truth that yet has been confess'd
Within these latest thousand years or later.
Perhaps the fine old fellow spoke in jest:-
For my part, I am but a mere spectator,
And gaze where'er the palace or the hovel is,
Much in the mode of Goethe's Mephistopheles;

But neither love nor hate in much excess;
Though 'twas not once so. If I sneer sometimes,
It is because I cannot well do less,
And now and then it also suits my rhymes.
I should be very willing to redress
Men's wrongs, and rather check than punish crimes,
Had not Cervantes, in that too true tale
Of Quixote, shown how all such efforts fail.

Of all tales 'tis the saddest - and more sad,
Because it makes us smile: his hero 's right,
And still pursues the right;- to curb the bad
His only object, and 'gainst odds to fight
His guerdon: 'tis his virtue makes him mad!
But his adventures form a sorry sight;
A sorrier still is the great moral taught
By that real epic unto all who have thought.

Redressing injury, revenging wrong,
To aid the damsel and destroy the caitiff;
Opposing singly the united strong,
From foreign yoke to free the helpless native:-
Alas! must noblest views, like an old song,
Be for mere fancy's sport a theme creative,
A jest, a riddle, Fame through thin and thick sought!
And Socrates himself but Wisdom's Quixote?

Cervantes smiled Spain's chivalry away;
A single laugh demolish'd the right arm
Of his own country;- seldom since that day
Has Spain had heroes. While Romance could charm,
The world gave ground before her bright array;
And therefore have his volumes done such harm,
That all their glory, as a composition,
Was dearly purchased by his land's perdition.

I'm 'at my old lunes'- digression, and forget
The Lady Adeline Amundeville;
The fair most fatal Juan ever met,
Although she was not evil nor meant ill;
But Destiny and Passion spread the net

(Fate is a good excuse for our own will),
And caught them;- what do they not catch, methinks?
But I 'm not OEdipus, and life's a Sphinx.

I tell the tale as it is told, nor dare
To venture a solution: 'Davus sum!'
And now I will proceed upon the pair.
Sweet Adeline, amidst the gay world's hum,
Was the Queen -Bee, the glass of all that 's fair;
Whose charms made all men speak, and women dumb.
The last's a miracle, and such was reckon'd,
And since that time there has not been a second.

Chaste was she, to detraction's desperation,
And wedded unto one she had loved well -
A man known in the councils of the nation,
Cool, and quite English, imperturbable,
Though apt to act with fire upon occasion,
Proud of himself and her: the world could tell
Nought against either, and both seem'd secure -
She in her virtue, he in his hauteur.

It chanced some diplomatical relations,
Arising out of business, often brought
Himself and Juan in their mutual stations
Into close contact. Though reserved, nor caught
By specious seeming, Juan's youth, and patience,
And talent, on his haughty spirit wrought,
And form'd a basis of esteem, which ends
In making men what courtesy calls friends.

And thus Lord Henry, who was cautious as
Reserve and pride could make him, and full slow
In judging men - when once his judgment was
Determined, right or wrong, on friend or foe,
Had all the pertinacity pride has,
Which knows no ebb to its imperious flow,
And loves or hates, disdaining to be guided,
Because its own good pleasure hath decided.

His friendships, therefore, and no less aversions,
Though oft well founded, which confirm'd but more
His prepossessions, like the laws of Persians
And Medes, would ne'er revoke what went before.
His feelings had not those strange fits, like tertians,
Of common likings, which make some deplore
What they should laugh at - the mereague still
Of men's regard, the fever or the chill.

"Tis not in mortals to command success:
But do you more, Sempronius - don't deserve it,'
And take my word, you won't have any less.

Be wary, watch the time, and always serve it;
Give gently way, when there's too great a press;
And for your conscience, only learn to nerve it,
For, like a racer, or a boxer training,
'Twill make, if proved, vast efforts without paining.

Lord Henry also liked to be superior,
As most men do, the little or the great;
The very lowest find out an inferior,
At least they think so, to exert their state
Upon: for there are very few things wearier
Than solitary Pride's oppressive weight,
Which mortals generously would divide,
By bidding others carry while they ride.

In birth, in rank, in fortune likewise equal,
O'er Juan he could no distinction claim;
In years he had the advantage of time's sequel;
And, as he thought, in country much the same -
Because bold Britons have a tongue and free quill,
At which all modern nations vainly aim;
And the Lord Henry was a great debater,
So that few members kept the house up later.

These were advantages: and then he thought -
It was his foible, but by no means sinister -
That few or none more than himself had caught
Court mysteries, having been himself a minister:
He liked to teach that which he had been taught,
And greatly shone whenever there had been a stir;
And reconciled all qualities which grace man,
Always a patriot, and sometimes a placeman.

He liked the gentle Spaniard for his gravity;
He almost honour'd him for his docility;
Because, though young, he acquiesced with suavity,
Or contradicted but with proud humility.
He knew the world, and would not see depravity
In faults which sometimes show the soil's fertility,
If that the weeds o'erlive not the first crop -
For then they are very difficult to stop.

And then he talk'd with him about Madrid,
Constantinople, and such distant places;
Where people always did as they were bid,
Or did what they should not with foreign graces.
Of coursers also spake they: Henry rid
Well, like most Englishmen, and loved the races;
And Juan, like a true-born Andalusian,
Could back a horse, as despots ride a Russian.

And thus acquaintance grew, at noble routs,

And diplomatic dinners, or at other -
For Juan stood well both with Ins and Outs,
As in freemasonry a higher brother.
Upon his talent Henry had no doubts;
His manner show'd him sprung from a high mother;
And all men like to show their hospitality
To him whose breeding matches with his quality.

At Blank-Blank Square;- for we will break no squares
By naming streets: since men are so censorious,
And apt to sow an author's wheat with tares,
Reaping allusions private and inglorious,
Where none were dreamt of, unto love's affairs,
Which were, or are, or are to be notorious,
That therefore do I previously declare,
Lord Henry's mansion was in Blank-Blank Square.

Also there bin another pious reason
For making squares and streets anonymous;
Which is, that there is scarce a single season
Which doth not shake some very splendid house
With some slight heart-quake of domestic treason -
A topic scandal doth delight to rouse:
Such I might stumble over unawares,
Unless I knew the very chastest squares.

'Tis true, I might have chosen Piccadilly,
A place where peccadillos are unknown;
But I have motives, whether wise or silly,
For letting that pure sanctuary alone.
Therefore I name not square, street, place, until I
Find one where nothing naughty can be shown,
A vestal shrine of innocence of heart:

At Henry's mansion then, in Blank-Blank Square,
Was Juan a recherche, welcome guest,
As many other noble scions were;
And some who had but talent for their crest;
Or wealth, which is a passport every where;
Or even mere fashion, which indeed's the best
Recommendation; and to be well drest
Will very often supersede the rest.

And since 'there's safety in a multitude
Of counsellors,' as Solomon has said,
Or some one for him, in some sage, grave mood;-
Indeed we see the daily proof display'd
In senates, at the bar, in wordy feud,
Where'er collective wisdom can parade,
Which is the only cause that we can guess
Of Britain's present wealth and happiness;-

But as 'there's safety' grafted in the number
'Of counsellors' for men, thus for the sex
A large acquaintance lets not Virtue slumber;
Or should it shake, the choice will more perplex -
Variety itself will more encumber.
'Midst many rocks we guard more against wrecks;
And thus with women: howsoe'er it shocks some's
Self-love, there's safety in a crowd of coxcombs.

But Adeline had not the least occasion
For such a shield, which leaves but little merit
To virtue proper, or good education.
Her chief resource was in her own high spirit,
Which judged mankind at their due estimation;
And for coquetry, she disdain'd to wear it:
Secure of admiration, its impression
Was faint, as of an every-day possession.

To all she was polite without parade;
To some she show'd attention of that kind
Which flatters, but is flattery convey'd
In such a sort as cannot leave behind
A trace unworthy either wife or maid;-
A gentle, genial courtesy of mind,
To those who were, or pass'd for meritorious,
Just to console sad glory for being glorious;

Which is in all respects, save now and then,
A dull and desolate appendage. Gaze
Upon the shades of those distinguish'd men
Who were or are the puppet-shows of praise,
The praise of persecution; gaze again
On the most favour'd; and amidst the blaze
Of sunset halos o'er the laurel-brow'd,
What can ye recognise?--a gilded cloud.

There also was of course in Adeline
That calm patrician polish in the address,
Which ne'er can pass the equinoctial line
Of any thing which nature would express;
Just as a mandarin finds nothing fine,-
At least his manner suffers not to guess
That any thing he views can greatly please.
Perhaps we have borrow'd this from the Chinese -

Perhaps from Horace: his 'Nil admirari'
Was what he call'd the 'Art of Happiness;'
An art on which the artists greatly vary,
And have not yet attain'd to much success.
However, 'tis expedient to be wary:
Indifference certes don't produce distress;
And rash enthusiasm in good society

Were nothing but a moral inebriety.

But Adeline was not indifferent: for
(Now for a common-place!) beneath the snow,
As a volcano holds the lava more
Within--et caetera. Shall I go on?--No!
I hate to hunt down a tired metaphor,
So let the often-used volcano go.
Poor thing! How frequently, by me and others,
It hath been stirr'd up till its smoke quite smothers!

I'll have another figure in a trice:-
What say you to a bottle of champagne?
Frozen into a very vinous ice,
Which leaves few drops of that immortal rain,
Yet in the very centre, past all price,
About a liquid glassful will remain;
And this is stronger than the strongest grape
Could e'er express in its expanded shape:

'Tis the whole spirit brought to a quintessence;
And thus the chilliest aspects may concentrate
A hidden nectar under a cold presence.
And such are many - though I only meant her
From whom I now deduce these moral lessons,
On which the Muse has always sought to enter.
And your cold people are beyond all price,
When once you have broken their confounded ice.

But after all they are a North-West Passage
Unto the glowing India of the soul;
And as the good ships sent upon that message
Have not exactly ascertain'd the Pole
(Though Parry's efforts look a lucky presage),
Thus gentlemen may run upon a shoal;
For if the Pole's not open, but all frost
(A chance still), 'tis a voyage or vessel lost.

And young beginners may as well commence
With quiet cruising o'er the ocean woman;
While those who are not beginners should have sense
Enough to make for port, ere time shall summon
With his grey signal-flag; and the past tense,
The dreary 'Fuimus' of all things human,
Must be declined, while life's thin thread's spun out
Between the gaping heir and gnawing gout.

But heaven must be diverted; its diversion
Is sometimes truculent - but never mind:
The world upon the whole is worth the assertion
(If but for comfort) that all things are kind:
And that same devilish doctrine of the Persian,

Of the two principles, but leaves behind
As many doubts as any other doctrine
Has ever puzzled Faith withal, or yoked her in.

The English winter - ending in July,
To recommence in August - now was done.
'Tis the postilion's paradise: wheels fly;
On roads, east, south, north, west, there is a run.
But for post-horses who finds sympathy?
Man's pity's for himself, or for his son,
Always premising that said son at college
Has not contracted much more debt than knowledge.

The London winter's ended in July -
Sometimes a little later. I don't err
In this: whatever other blunders lie
Upon my shoulders, here I must aver
My Muse a glass of weatherology;
For parliament is our barometer:
Let radicals its other acts attack,
Its sessions form our only almanack.

When its quicksilver's down at zero,--lo
Coach, chariot, luggage, baggage, equipage!
Wheels whirl from Carlton palace to Soho,
And happiest they who horses can engage;
The turnpikes glow with dust; and Rotten Row
Sleeps from the chivalry of this bright age;
And tradesmen, with long bills and longer faces,
Sigh - as the postboys fasten on the traces.

They and their bills, 'Arcadians both,' are left
To the Greek kalends of another session.
Alas! to them of ready cash bereft,
What hope remains? Of hope the full possession,
Or generous draft, conceded as a gift,
At a long date - till they can get a fresh one -
Hawk'd about at a discount, small or large;
Also the solace of an overcharge.

But these are trifles. Downward flies my lord,
Nodding beside my lady in his carriage.
Away! away! 'Fresh horses!' are the word,
And changed as quickly as hearts after marriage;
The obsequious landlord hath the change restored;
The postboys have no reason to disparage
Their fee; but ere the water'd wheels may hiss hence,
The ostler pleads too for a reminiscence.

'Tis granted; and the valet mounts the dickey -
That gentleman of lords and gentlemen;
Also my lady's gentlewoman, tricky,

Trick'd out, but modest more than poet's pen
Can paint,- 'Così viaggino i Ricchi!'
(Excuse a foreign slipslop now and then,
If but to show I've travell'd; and what's travel,
Unless it teaches one to quote and cavil?)

The London winter and the country summer
Were well nigh over. 'Tis perhaps a pity,
When nature wears the gown that doth become her,
To lose those best months in a sweaty city,
And wait until the nightingale grows dumber,
Listening debates not very wise or witty,
Ere patriots their true country can remember;-
But there 's no shooting (save grouse) till September.

I've done with my tirade. The world was gone;
The twice two thousand, for whom earth was made,
Were vanish'd to be what they call alone -
That is, with thirty servants for parade,
As many guests, or more; before whom groan
As many covers, duly, daily, laid.
Let none accuse Old England's hospitality -
Its quantity is but condensed to quality.

Lord Henry and the Lady Adeline
Departed like the rest of their compeers,
The peerage, to a mansion very fine;
The Gothic Babel of a thousand years.
None than themselves could boast a longer line,
Where time through heroes and through beauties steers;
And oaks as olden as their pedigree
Told of their sires, a tomb in every tree.

A paragraph in every paper told
Of their departure: such is modern fame:
'Tis pity that it takes no farther hold
Than an advertisement, or much the same;
When, ere the ink be dry, the sound grows cold.
The Morning Post was foremost to proclaim -
'Departure, for his country seat, to-day,
Lord H. Amundeville and Lady A.

'We understand the splendid host intends
To entertain, this autumn, a select
And numerous party of his noble friends;
'Midst whom we have heard, from sources quite correct,
With many more by rank and fashion deck'd;
Also a foreigner of high condition,
The envoy of the secret Russian mission.'

And thus we see - who doubts the Morning Post?
(Whose articles are like the 'Thirty -nine,'

Which those most swear to who believe them most)-
Our gay Russ Spaniard was ordain'd to shine,
Deck'd by the rays reflected from his host,
With those who, Pope says, 'greatly daring dine.'
'T is odd, but true,--last war the News abounded
More with these dinners than the kill'd or wounded;-

As thus: 'On Thursday there was a grand dinner;
Present, Lords A. B. C.'- Earls, dukes, by name
Announced with no less pomp than victory's winner:
Then underneath, and in the very same
Column; date, 'Falmouth. There has lately been here
The Slap-dash regiment, so well known to fame,
Whose loss in the late action we regret:
The vacancies are fill'd up - see Gazette.'

To Norman Abbey whirl'd the noble pair,-
An old, old monastery once, and now
Still older mansion; of a rich and rare
Mix'd Gothic, such as artists all allow
Few specimens yet left us can compare
Withal: it lies perhaps a little low,
Because the monks preferr'd a hill behind,
To shelter their devotion from the wind.

It stood embosom'd in a happy valley,
Crown'd by high woodlands, where the Druid oak
Stood like Caractacus in act to rally
His host, with broad arms 'gainst the thunderstroke;
And from beneath his boughs were seen to sally
The dappled foresters - as day awoke,
The branching stag swept down with all his herd,
To quaff a brook which murmur'd like a bird.

Before the mansion lay a lucid lake,
Broad as transparent, deep, and freshly fed
By a river, which its soften'd way did take
In currents through the calmer water spread
Around: the wildfowl nestled in the brake
And sedges, brooding in their liquid bed:
The woods sloped downwards to its brink, and stood
With their green faces fix'd upon the flood.

Its outlet dash'd into a deep cascade,
Sparkling with foam, until again subsiding,
Its shriller echoes - like an infant made
Quiet - sank into softer ripples, gliding
Into a rivulet; and thus allay'd,
Pursued its course, now gleaming, and now hiding
Its windings through the woods; now clear, now blue,
According as the skies their shadows threw.

A glorious remnant of the Gothic pile
(While yet the church was Rome's) stood half apart
In a grand arch, which once screen'd many an aisle.
These last had disappear'd - a loss to art:
The first yet frown'd superbly o'er the soil,
And kindled feelings in the roughest heart,
Which mourn'd the power of time's or tempest's march,
In gazing on that venerable arch.

Within a niche, nigh to its pinnacle,
Twelve saints had once stood sanctified in stone;
But these had fallen, not when the friars fell,
But in the war which struck Charles from his throne,
When each house was a fortalice, as tell
The annals of full many a line undone,-
The gallant cavaliers, who fought in vain
For those who knew not to resign or reign.

But in a higher niche, alone, but crowned,
The Virgin Mother of the God -born Child,
With her Son in her blessed arms, look'd round,
Spared by some chance when all beside was spoil'd;
She made the earth below seem holy ground.
This may be superstition, weak or wild,
But even the faintest relics of a shrine
Of any worship wake some thoughts divine.

A mighty window, hollow in the centre,
Shorn of its glass of thousand colourings,
Through which the deepen'd glories once could enter,
Streaming from off the sun like seraph's wings,
Now yawns all desolate: now loud, now fainter,
The gale sweeps through its fretwork, and oft sings
The owl his anthem, where the silenced quire
Lie with their hallelujahs quench'd like fire.

But in the noontide of the moon, and when
The wind is winged from one point of heaven,
There moans a strange unearthly sound, which then
Is musical - a dying accent driven
Through the huge arch, which soars and sinks again.
Some deem it but the distant echo given
Back to the night wind by the waterfall,
And harmonised by the old choral wall:

Others, that some original shape, or form
Shaped by decay perchance, hath given the power
(Though less than that of Memnon's statue, warm
In Egypt's rays, to harp at a fix'd hour)
To this grey ruin, with a voice to charm.
Sad, but serene, it sweeps o'er tree or tower;
The cause I know not, nor can solve; but such

The fact:- I 've heard it - once perhaps too much.

Amidst the court a Gothic fountain play'd,
Symmetrical, but deck'd with carvings quaint -
Strange faces, like to men in masquerade,
And here perhaps a monster, there a saint:
The spring gush'd through grim mouths of granite made,
And sparkled into basins, where it spent
Its little torrent in a thousand bubbles,
Like man's vain glory, and his vainer troubles.

The mansion's self was vast and venerable,
With more of the monastic than has been
Elsewhere preserved: the cloisters still were stable,
The cells, too, and refectory, I ween:
An exquisite small chapel had been able,
Still unimpair'd, to decorate the scene;
The rest had been reform'd, replaced, or sunk,
And spoke more of the baron than the monk.

Huge halls, long galleries, spacious chambers, join'd
By no quite lawful marriage of the arts,
Might shock a connoisseur; but when combined,
Form'd a whole which, irregular in parts,
Yet left a grand impression on the mind,
At least of those whose eyes are in their hearts:
We gaze upon a giant for his stature,
Nor judge at first if all be true to nature.

Steel barons, molten the next generation
To silken rows of gay and garter'd earls,
Glanced from the walls in goodly preservation;
And Lady Marys blooming into girls,
With fair long locks, had also kept their station;
And countesses mature in robes and pearls:
Also some beauties of Sir Peter Lely,
Whose drapery hints we may admire them freely.

Judges in very formidable ermine
Were there, with brows that did not much invite
The accused to think their lordships would determine
His cause by leaning much from might to right:
Bishops, who had not left a single sermon:
Attorneys -general, awful to the sight,
As hinting more (unless our judgments warp us)
Of the 'Star Chamber' than of 'Habeas Corpus.'

Generals, some all in armour, of the old
And iron time, ere lead had ta'en the lead;
Others in wigs of Marlborough's martial fold,
Huger than twelve of our degenerate breed:
Lordlings, with staves of white or keys of gold:

Nimrods, whose canvass scarce contain'd the steed;
And here and there some stern high patriot stood,
Who could not get the place for which he sued.

But ever and anon, to soothe your vision,
Fatigued with these hereditary glories,
There rose a Carlo Dolce or a Titian,
Or wilder group of savage Salvatore's;
Here danced Albano's boys, and here the sea shone
In Vernet's ocean lights; and there the stories
Of martyrs awed, as Spagnoletto tainted
His brush with all the blood of all the sainted.

Here sweetly spread a landscape of Lorraine;
There Rembrandt made his darkness equal light,
Or gloomy Caravaggio's gloomier stain
Bronzed o'er some lean and stoic anchorite:-
But, lo! a Teniers woos, and not in vain,
Your eyes to revel in a livelier sight:
His bell -mouth'd goblet makes me feel quite Danish
Or Dutch with thirst - What, ho! a flask of Rhenish.

O reader! if that thou canst read,- and know,
'T is not enough to spell, or even to read,
To constitute a reader; there must go
Virtues of which both you and I have need;-
Firstly, begin with the beginning (though
That clause is hard); and secondly, proceed;
Thirdly, commence not with the end - or, sinning
In this sort, end at least with the beginning.

But, reader, thou hast patient been of late,
While I, without remorse of rhyme, or fear,
Have built and laid out ground at such a rate,
Dan Phoebus takes me for an auctioneer.
That poets were so from their earliest date,
By Homer's 'Catalogue of ships' is clear;
But a mere modern must be moderate -
I spare you then the furniture and plate.

The mellow autumn came, and with it came
The promised party, to enjoy its sweets.
The corn is cut, the manor full of game;
The pointer ranges, and the sportsman beats
In russet jacket:- lynx -like is his aim;
Full grows his bag, and wonderful his feats.
Ah, nut -brown partridges! Ah, brilliant pheasants!
And ah, ye poachers!- 'T is no sport for peasants.

An English autumn, though it hath no vines,
Blushing with Bacchant coronals along
The paths, o'er which the far festoon entwines

The red grape in the sunny lands of song,
Hath yet a purchased choice of choicest wines;
The claret light, and the Madeira strong.
If Britain mourn her bleakness, we can tell her,
The very best of vineyards is the cellar.

Then, if she hath not that serene decline
Which makes the southern autumn's day appear
As if 't would to a second spring resign
The season, rather than to winter drear,
Of in -door comforts still she hath a mine,-
The sea -coal fires the 'earliest of the year;'
Without doors, too, she may compete in mellow,
As what is lost in green is gain'd in yellow.

And for the effeminate villeggiatura -
Rife with more horns than hounds - she hath the chase,
So animated that it might allure
Saint from his beads to join the jocund race;
Even Nimrod's self might leave the plains of Dura,
And wear the Melton jacket for a space:
If she hath no wild boars, she hath a tame
Preserve of bores, who ought to be made game.

The noble guests, assembled at the Abbey,
Consisted of - we give the sex the pas -
The Duchess of Fitz -Fulke; the Countess Crabby;
The Ladies Scilly, Busey;- Miss Eclat,
Miss Bombazeen, Miss Mackstay, Miss O'Tabby,
And Mrs. Rabbi, the rich banker's squaw;
Also the honourable Mrs. Sleep,
Who look'd a white lamb, yet was a black sheep:

With other Countesses of Blank - but rank;
At once the 'lie' and the 'elite' of crowds;
Who pass like water filter'd in a tank,
All purged and pious from their native clouds;
Or paper turn'd to money by the Bank:
No matter how or why, the passport shrouds
The 'passee' and the past; for good society
Is no less famed for tolerance than piety,-

That is, up to a certain point; which point
Forms the most difficult in punctuation.
Appearances appear to form the joint
On which it hinges in a higher station;
And so that no explosion cry 'Aroint
Thee, witch!' or each Medea has her Jason;
Or (to the point with Horace and with Pulci)
'Omne tulit punctum, quae miscuit utile dulci.'

I can't exactly trace their rule of right,

Which hath a little leaning to a lottery.
I 've seen a virtuous woman put down quite
By the mere combination of a coterie;
Also a so -so matron boldly fight
Her way back to the world by dint of plottery,
And shine the very Siria of the spheres,
Escaping with a few slight, scarless sneers.

I have seen more than I 'll say:- but we will see
How our villeggiatura will get on.
The party might consist of thirty -three
Of highest caste - the Brahmins of the ton.
I have named a few, not foremost in degree,
But ta'en at hazard as the rhyme may run.
By way of sprinkling, scatter'd amongst these,
There also were some Irish absentees.

There was Parolles, too, the legal bully,
Who limits all his battles to the bar
And senate: when invited elsewhere, truly,
He shows more appetite for words than war.
There was the young bard Rackrhyme, who had newly
Come out and glimmer'd as a six weeks' star.
There was Lord Pyrrho, too, the great freethinker;
And Sir John Pottledep, the mighty drinker.

There was the Duke of Dash, who was a - duke,
'Ay, every inch a' duke; there were twelve peers
Like Charlemagne's - and all such peers in look
And intellect, that neither eyes nor ears
For commoners had ever them mistook.
There were the six Miss Rawbolds - pretty dears!
All song and sentiment; whose hearts were set
Less on a convent than a coronet.

There were four Honourable Misters, whose
Honour was more before their names than after;
There was the preux Chevalier de la Ruse,
Whom France and Fortune lately deign'd to waft here,
Whose chiefly harmless talent was to amuse;
But the clubs found it rather serious laughter,
Because - such was his magic power to please -
The dice seem'd charm'd, too, with his repartees.

There was Dick Dubious, the metaphysician,
Who loved philosophy and a good dinner;
Angle, the soi -disant mathematician;
Sir Henry Silvercup, the great race -winner.
There was the Reverend Rodomont Precisian,
Who did not hate so much the sin as sinner;
And Lord Augustus Fitz -Plantagenet,
Good at all things, but better at a bet.

There was jack jargon, the gigantic guardsman;
And General Fireface, famous in the field,
A great tactician, and no less a swordsman,
Who ate, last war, more Yankees than he kill'd.
There was the waggish Welsh Judge, Jefferies Hardsman,
In his grave office so completely skill'd,
That when a culprit came far condemnation,
He had his judge's joke for consolation.

Good company 's a chess -board - there are kings,
Queens, bishops, knights, rooks, pawns; the world 's a game;
Save that the puppets pull at their own strings,
Methinks gay Punch hath something of the same.
My Muse, the butterfly hath but her wings,
Not stings, and flits through ether without aim,
Alighting rarely:- were she but a hornet,
Perhaps there might be vices which would mourn it.

I had forgotten - but must not forget -
An orator, the latest of the session,
Who had deliver'd well a very set
Smooth speech, his first and maidenly transgression
Upon debate: the papers echoed yet
With his debut, which made a strong impression,
And rank'd with what is every day display'd -
'The best first speech that ever yet was made.'

Proud of his 'Hear hims!' proud, too, of his vote
And lost virginity of oratory,
Proud of his learning (just enough to quote),
He revell'd in his Ciceronian glory:
With memory excellent to get by rote,
With wit to hatch a pun or tell a story,
Graced with some merit, and with more effrontery,
'His country's pride,' he came down to the country.

There also were two wits by acclamation,
Longbow from Ireland, Strongbow from the Tweed,
Both lawyers and both men of education;
But Strongbow's wit was of more polish'd breed:
Longbow was rich in an imagination
As beautiful and bounding as a steed,
But sometimes stumbling over a potato,-
While Strongbow's best things might have come from Cato.

Strongbow was like a new -tuned harpsichord;
But Longbow wild as an AEolian harp,
With which the winds of heaven can claim accord,
And make a music, whether flat or sharp.
Of Strongbow's talk you would not change a word:
At Longbow's phrases you might sometimes carp:

Both wits - one born so, and the other bred -
This by his heart, his rival by his head.

If all these seem a heterogeneous mas
To be assembled at a country seat,
Yet think, a specimen of every class
Is better than a humdrum tete -a -tete.
The days of Comedy are gone, alas!
When Congreve's fool could vie with Moliere's bete:
Society is smooth'd to that excess,
That manners hardly differ more than dress.

Our ridicules are kept in the back -ground -
Ridiculous enough, but also dull;
Professions, too, are no more to be found
Professional; and there is nought to cull
Of folly's fruit; for though your fools abound,
They're barren, and not worth the pains to pull.
Society is now one polish'd horde,
Form'd of two mighty tribes, the Bores and Bored.

But from being farmers, we turn gleaners, gleaning
The scanty but right -well thresh'd ears of truth;
And, gentle reader! when you gather meaning,
You may be Boaz, and I - modest Ruth.
Farther I 'd quote, but Scripture intervening
Forbids. it great impression in my youth
Was made by Mrs. Adams, where she cries,
'That Scriptures out of church are blasphemies.'

But what we can we glean in this vile age
Of chaff, although our gleanings be not grist.
I must not quite omit the talking sage,
Kit -Cat, the famous Conversationist,
Who, in his common -place book, had a page
Prepared each morn for evenings. 'List, oh, list!' -
'Alas, poor ghost!' - What unexpected woes
Await those who have studied their bon -mots!

Firstly, they must allure the conversation
By many windings to their clever clinch;
And secondly, must let slip no occasion,
Nor bate (abate) their hearers of an inch,
But take an ell - and make a great sensation,
If possible; and thirdly, never flinch
When some smart talker puts them to the test,
But seize the last word, which no doubt 's the best.

Lord Henry and his lady were the hosts;
The party we have touch'd on were the guests:
Their table was a board to tempt even ghosts
To pass the Styx for more substantial feasts.

I will not dwell upon ragouts or roasts,
Albeit all human history attests
That happiness for man - the hungry sinner!-
Since Eve ate apples, much depends on dinner.

Witness the lands which 'flow'd with milk and honey,'
Held out unto the hungry Israelites;
To this we have added since, the love of money,
The only sort of pleasure which requites.
Youth fades, and leaves our days no longer sunny;
We tire of mistresses and parasites;
But oh, ambrosial cash! Ah! who would lose thee?
When we no more can use, or even abuse thee!

The gentlemen got up betimes to shoot,
Or hunt: the young, because they liked the sport -
The first thing boys like after play and fruit;
The middle -aged to make the day more short;
For ennui is a growth of English root,
Though nameless in our language:- we retort
The fact for words, and let the French translate
That awful yawn which sleep can not abate.

The elderly walk'd through the library,
And tumbled books, or criticised the pictures,
Or saunter'd through the gardens piteously,
And made upon the hot -house several strictures,
Or rode a nag which trotted not too high,
Or on the morning papers read their lectures,
Or on the watch their longing eyes would fix,
Longing at sixty for the hour of six.

But none were 'gene:' the great hour of union
Was rung by dinner's knell; till then all were
Masters of their own time - or in communion,
Or solitary, as they chose to bear
The hours, which how to pass is but to few known.
Each rose up at his own, and had to spare
What time he chose for dress, and broke his fast
When, where, and how he chose for that repast.

The ladies - some rouged, some a little pale -
Met the morn as they might. If fine, they rode,
Or walk'd; if foul, they read, or told a tale,
Sung, or rehearsed the last dance from abroad;
Discuss'd the fashion which might next prevail,
And settled bonnets by the newest code,
Or cramm'd twelve sheets into one little letter,
To make each correspondent a new debtor.

For some had absent lovers, all had friends.
The earth has nothing like a she epistle,

And hardly heaven - because it never ends.
I love the mystery of a female missal,
Which, like a creed, ne'er says all it intends,
But full of cunning as Ulysses' whistle,
When he allured poor Dolon:- you had better
Take care what you reply to such a letter.

Then there were billiards; cards, too, but no dice;-
Save in the clubs no man of honour plays;-
Boats when 't was water, skating when 't was ice,
And the hard frost destroy'd the scenting days:
And angling, too, that solitary vice,
Whatever Izaak Walton sings or says;
The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb, in his gullet
Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it.

With evening came the banquet and the wine;
The conversazione; the duet,
Attuned by voices more or less divine
(My heart or head aches with the memory yet).
The four Miss Rawbolds in a glee would shine;
But the two youngest loved more to be set
Down to the harp - because to music's charms
They added graceful necks, white hands and arms.

Sometimes a dance (though rarely on field days,
For then the gentlemen were rather tired)
Display'd some sylph -like figures in its maze;
Then there was small -talk ready when required;
Flirtation - but decorous; the mere praise
Of charms that should or should not be admired.
The hunters fought their fox -hunt o'er again,
And then retreated soberly - at ten.

The politicians, in a nook apart,
Discuss'd the world, and settled all the spheres;
The wits watch'd every loophole for their art,
To introduce a bon -mot head and ears;
Small is the rest of those who would be smart,
A moment's good thing may have cost them years
Before they find an hour to introduce it;
And then, even then, some bore may make them lose it.

But all was gentle and aristocratic
In this our party; polish'd, smooth, and cold,
As Phidian forms cut out of marble Attic.
There now are no Squire Westerns as of old;
And our Sophias are not so emphatic,
But fair as then, or fairer to behold.
We have no accomplish'd blackguards, like Tom Jones,
But gentlemen in stays, as stiff as stones.

They separated at an early hour;
That is, ere midnight - which is London's noon:
But in the country ladies seek their bower
A little earlier than the waning moon.
Peace to the slumbers of each folded flower -
May the rose call back its true colour soon!
Good hours of fair cheeks are the fairest tinters,
And lower the price of rouge - at least some winters.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Don Juan: Canto the Twelfth

LIV

But now I will begin my poem. 'Tis
Perhaps a little strange, if not quite new,
That from the first of Cantos up to this
I've not begun what we have to go through.
These first twelve books are merely flourishes,
Preludios, trying just a string or two
Upon my lyre, or making the pegs sure;
And when so, you shall have the overture.LV

My Muses do not care a pinch of rosin
About what's call'd success, or not succeeding:
Such thoughts are quite below the strain they have chosen;
'Tis a "great moral lesson" they are reading.
I thought, at setting off, about two dozen
Cantos would do; but at Apollo's pleading
If that my Pegasus should not be founder'd,
I think to canter gently through a hundred.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Don Juan: Dedication

Difficile est proprie communia dicere

HOR. Epist. ad PisonI

Bob Southey! You're a poet--Poet-laureate,
And representative of all the race;
Although 'tis true that you turn'd out a Tory at
Last--yours has lately been a common case;
And now, my Epic Renegade! what are ye at?

With all the Lakers, in and out of place?

A nest of tuneful persons, to my eye
Like "four and twenty Blackbirds in a pye";II
"Which pye being open'd they began to sing"
(This old song and new simile holds good),
"A dainty dish to set before the King,"
Or Regent, who admires such kind of food;
And Coleridge, too, has lately taken wing,
But like a hawk encumber'd with his hood,
Explaining Metaphysics to the nation--
I wish he would explain his Explanation.III

You, Bob! are rather insolent, you know,
At being disappointed in your wish
To supersede all warblers here below,
And be the only Blackbird in the dish;
And then you overstrain yourself, or so,
And tumble downward like the flying fish
Gasping on deck, because you soar too high, Bob,
And fall, for lack of moisture quite a-dry, Bob!IV

And Wordsworth, in a rather long "Excursion"
(I think the quarto holds five hundred pages),
Has given a sample from the vasty version
Of his new system to perplex the sages;
'Tis poetry--at least by his assertion,
And may appear so when the dog-star rages--
And he who understands it would be able
To add a story to the Tower of Babel.V

You--Gentlemen! by dint of long seclusion
From better company, have kept your own
At Keswick, and, through still continu'd fusion
Of one another's minds, at last have grown
To deem as a most logical conclusion,
That Poesy has wreaths for you alone:
There is a narrowness in such a notion,
Which makes me wish you'd change your lakes for Ocean.VI

I would not imitate the petty thought,
Nor coin my self-love to so base a vice,
For all the glory your conversion brought,
Since gold alone should not have been its price.
You have your salary; was't for that you wrought?
And Wordsworth has his place in the Excise.

You're shabby fellows--true--but poets still,
And duly seated on the Immortal Hill.VII

Your bays may hide the baldness of your brows--
Perhaps some virtuous blushes--let them go--
To you I envy neither fruit nor boughs--
And for the fame you would engross below,
The field is universal, and allows
Scope to all such as feel the inherent glow:
Scott, Rogers, Campbell, Moore and Crabbe, will try
'Gainst you the question with posterity.VIII

For me, who, wandering with pedestrian Muses,
Contend not with you on the winged steed,
I wish your fate may yield ye, when she chooses,
The fame you envy, and the skill you need;
And, recollect, a poet nothing loses
In giving to his brethren their full meed
Of merit, and complaint of present days
Is not the certain path to future praise.IX

He that reserves his laurels for posterity
(Who does not often claim the bright reversion)
Has generally no great crop to spare it, he
Being only injur'd by his own assertion;
And although here and there some glorious rarity
Arise like Titan from the sea's immersion,
The major part of such appellants go
To--God knows where--for no one else can know.X

If, fallen in evil days on evil tongues,
Milton appeal'd to the Avenger, Time,
If Time, the Avenger, execrates his wrongs,
And makes the word "Miltonic" mean "sublime ,"
He deign'd not to belie his soul in songs,
Nor turn his very talent to a crime;
He did not loathe the Sire to laud the Son,
But clos'd the tyrant-hater he begun.XI

Think'st thou, could he--the blind Old Man--arise
Like Samuel from the grave, to freeze once more
The blood of monarchs with his prophecies
Or be alive again--again all hoar
With time and trials, and those helpless eyes,
And heartless daughters--worn--and pale--and poor;
Would he adore a sultan? he obey
The intellectual eunuch Castlereagh?XII

Cold-blooded, smooth-fac'd, placid miscreant!
Dabbling its sleek young hands in Erin's gore,
And thus for wider carnage taught to pant,
Transferr'd to gorge upon a sister shore,

The vulgarest tool that Tyranny could want,
With just enough of talent, and no more,
To lengthen fetters by another fix'd,
And offer poison long already mix'd.XIII

An orator of such set trash of phrase
Ineffably--legitimately vile,
That even its grossest flatterers dare not praise,
Nor foes--all nations--condescend to smile,
Not even a sprightly blunder's spark can blaze
From that Ixion grindstone's ceaseless toil,
That turns and turns to give the world a notion
Of endless torments and perpetual motion.XIV

A bungler even in its disgusting trade,
And botching, patching, leaving still behind
Something of which its masters are afraid,
States to be curb'd, and thoughts to be confin'd,
Conspiracy or Congress to be made--
Cobbling at manacles for all mankind--
A tinkering slave-maker, who mends old chains,
With God and Man's abhorrence for its gains.XV

If we may judge of matter by the mind,
Emasculated to the marrow It
Hath but two objects, how to serve, and bind,
Deeming the chain it wears even men may fit,
Eutropius of its many masters, blind
To worth as freedom, wisdom as to Wit,
Fearless--because no feeling dwells in ice,
Its very courage stagnates to a vice.XVI

Where shall I turn me not to view its bonds,
For I will never feel them?--Italy!
Thy late reviving Roman soul despends
Beneath the lie this State-thing breath'd o'er thee--
Thy clanking chain, and Erin's yet green wounds,
Have voices--tongues to cry aloud for me.
Europe has slaves--allies--kings--armies still,
And Southeby lives to sing them very ill.XVII

Meantime--Sir Laureate--I proceed to dedicate,
In honest simple verse, this song to you,
And, if in flattering strains I do not predicate,
'Tis that I still retain my "buff and blue";
My politics as yet are all to educate:
Apostasy's so fashionable, too,
To keep one creed's a task grown quite Herculean;

Is it not so, my Tory, ultra-Julian?

George Gordon Lord Byron

Elegiac Stanzas On The Death Of Sir Peter Parker, Bart.

There is a tear for all that die,
A mourner o'er the humblest grave;
But nations swell the funeral cry,
And Triumph weeps above the brave.

For them is Sorrow's purest sigh
O'er Ocean's heaving bosom sent:
In vain their bones unburied lie,
All earth becomes their monument!

A tomb is theirs on every page,
An epitaph on every tongue:
The present hours, the future age,
For them bewail, to them belong.

For them the voice of festal mirth
Grows hush'd, their name the only sound;
While deep Remembrance pours to Worth
The goblet's tributary round.

A theme to crowds that knew them not,
Lamented by admiring foes,
Who would not share their glorious lot?
Who would not die the death they chose?

And, gallant Parker! thus enshrined
Thy life, thy fall, thy fame shall be;
And early valour, glowing, find
A model in thy memory.

But there are breasts that bleed with thee
In woe, that glory cannot quell;
And shuddering hear of victory
Where one so dear, so dauntless, fell.

Where shall they turn to mourn thee less?
When cease to hear thy cherish'd name?
Time cannot teach forgetfulness
While Grief's full heart is fed by Fame.

Alas! for them, though not for thee,
They cannot choose but weep the more;
Deep for the dead the grief must be,
Who ne'er gave cause to mourn before.

October 1814.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Elegy On Newstead Abbey

'It is the voice of years that are gone!
they roll before me with all their deeds.'~OSSIAN

Newstead! fast-falling, once-resplendent dome!
Religion's shrine! repentant HENRY's pride!
Of warriors, monks, and dames the cloister'd tomb,
Whose pensive shades around thy ruins glide,
Hail to thy pile! more honour'd in thy fall
Than modern mansions in their pillar'd state;
Proudly majestic frowns thy vaulted hall,
Scowling defiance on the blasts of fate.

No mail-clad serfs, obedient to their lord,
In grim array the crimson cross demand;
Or gay assemble round the festive board
Their chief's retainers, an immortal band:

Else might inspiring Fancy's magic eye
Retrace their progress through the lapse of time,
Marking each ardent youth, ordain'd to die,
A votive pilgrim in Judea's clime.

But not from thee, dark pile! departs the chief;
His feudal realm in other regions lay:
In thee the wounded conscience courts relief,
Retiring from the garish blare of day.

Yes! in thy gloomy cells and shades profound
The monk abjured a world he ne'er could view;
Or blood-stain'd guilt repenting solace found,
Or innocence from stern oppression flew.

A monarch bade thee from that wild arise,
Where Sherwood's outlaws once were wont to prowl;
And Superstition's crimes, of various dyes,
Sought shelter in the priest's protecting cowl.

Where now the grass exhales a murky dew,
The humid pail of life-extinguish'd clay,
In sainted fame the sacred fathers grew,
Nor raised their pious voices but to pray.

Where now the bats their wavering wings extend
Soon as the gloaming spreads her waning shade,
The choir did oft their mingling vespers blend,
Or matin orisons to Mary pald.

Years roll on years; to ages, ages yield;
Abbots to abbots, in a line, succeed;
Religion's charter their protecting shield,
Till royal sacrilege their doom decreed,

One holy HENRY rear'd the Gothic walls,
And bade the pious inmates rest in peace
Another HENRY the kind gift recalls,
And bids devotion's hallow'd echos cease.

Vain is each threat or supplicating prayer;
He drives them exiles from their blest abode,
To roam a dreary world in deep despair —
No friend, no home, no refuge, but their God.

Hark how the hall, resounding to the strain
Shakes with the martial music's novel din!
The heralds of a warrior's haughty reign,
High crested banners wave thy wails within.

Of changing sentinels the distant hum,
The mirth of feasts, the clang of burnish'd arms,
The braying trumpet and the hoarser drum,
Unite in concert with increased alarms.

An abbey once, a regal fortress now,
Encircled by insulting rebel powers,
War's dread machines o'erhang thy threat'ning brow,
And dart destruction in sulphureous showers.

Ah vain defence! the hostile traitor's siege,
Though oft repulsed, by guile o'er-comes the brave;
His thronging foes oppress the faithful liege,
Rebellion's reeking standards o'er him wave.

Not unavenged the raging baron yields;
The blood of traitors smears the purple plain
Unconqu'r'd still, his falchion there he wields,
And days of glory yet for him remain.

Still in that hour the warrior wish'd to strew
Self-gather'd laurel on a self-sought grave;
But Charles' protecting genius hither flew,
The monarch's friend, the monarch's hope, to save.

Trembling, she snatch'd him from th' unequal strife,
In other fields the torrent to repel;
For nobler combats, here reserved his life,
To lead the hand where godlike FALKLAND fell
From thee, poor pile! to lawless plunder given,
While dying groans their painful requiem sound,
Far different incense now ascends to heaven,
Such victims wallow on the gory ground.

There many a pale and ruthless robber's corse,
Noisome and ghast, defiles thy sacred sod;
O'er mingling man, and horse commix'd with horse,

Corruption's heap, the savage spoilers trod.

Graves, long with rank and sighing weeds o'erspread,
Ransack'd, resign perforce their mortal mould:
From ruffian fangs escape not e'en the dead,
Raked from repose in search of buried gold.

Hush'd is the harp, unstrung the warlike lyre'
The minstrel's palsied hand declines in death;
No more he strikes the quivering chords with fire,
Or sings the glories of the martial wreath.

At length the sated murderers, gorged with prey,
Retire: the clamour of the fight is o'er;
Silence again resumes her awful sway,
And sable Horror guards the massy door.

Here Desolation holds her dreary court:
What satellites declare her dismal reign!
Shrieking their dirge, ill-omen'd birds resort,
To flit their vigils in the hoary fane.

Soon a new morn's restoring beams dispel
The clouds of anarchy from Britain's skies;
The fierce usurper seeks his native hell,
And Nature triumphs as the tyrant dies.

With storms she welcomes his expiring groans
Whirlwinds, responsive, greet his labouring breath;
Earth shudders as her caves receive his bones,
Loathing the offering of so dark a death.

The legal ruler now resumes the helm,
He guides through gentle seas the prow of state
Hope cheers, with wonted smiles, the peaceful realm,
And heals the bleeding wounds of wearied hate.

The gloomy tenants, Newstead! of thy cells,
Howling, resign their violated nest;
Again the master on his tenure dwells,
Enjoy'd, from absence, with enraptured zest.

Vassals, within thy hospitable pale,
Loudly carousing, bless their lord's return.
Culture again adorns the gladdening vale,
And matrons, once lamenting, cease to mourn.

A thousand songs on tuneful echo float,
Unwonted foliage mantles o'er the trees;
And hark! the horns proclaim a mellow note,
The hunters' cry hangs lengthening on the breeze.

Beneath their coursers' hoofs the valleys shake:
What fears, what anxious hopes attend the chase!
The dying stag seeks refuge in the lake;
Exulting shouts announce the finish'd race.

Ah happy days! too happy to endure!
Such simple sports our plain forefathers knew
No splendid vices glitter'd to allure;
Their joys were many, as their cares were few.

From these descending, sons to sires succeed
Time steals along, and Death uprears the dart;
Another chief impels the foaming steed,
Another crowd pursue the panting hart.

Newstead! what saddening change of scene is thine!
Thy yawning arch betokens slow decay;
The last and youngest of a noble line
Now holds thy mouldering turrets in his sway.

Deserted now, he scans thy gray worn towers;
Thy vaults, where dead of feudal ages sleep;
Thy cloisters, pervious to the wintry showers
These, these he views, and views them but to weep.

Yet are his tears no emblem of regret;
Cherish'd affection only bids them flow.
Pride, hope, and love forbid him to forget
But warm his bosom with irnpassion'd glow.

Yet he prefers thee to the gilded domes
Or gewgaw grottos of the vainly great,
Yet lingers 'mid thy damp and mossy tombs,
Nor breathes a murmur 'gainst the will of fate.

Haply thy sun, emerging, yet may shine,
Thee to irradiate with meridian ray;
Hours splendid as the past may still be thine,
And bless thy future as thy former day.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Endorsement To The Deed Of Separation In The April Of 1816

A year ago, you swore, fond she!
'To love, to honour,' and so forth:
Such was the vow you pledged to me,
And here's exactly what 'tis worth.

George Gordon Lord Byron

English Bards and Scotch Reviewers (excerpt)

Time was, ere yet in these degenerate days
Ignoble themes obtain'd mistaken praise,
When sense and wit with poesy allied,
No fabl'd graces, flourish'd side by side;
From the same fount their inspiration drew,
And, rear'd by taste, bloom'd fairer as they grew.
Then, in this happy isle, a Pope's pure strain
Sought the rapt soul to charm, nor sought in vain;
A polish'd nation's praise aspir'd to claim,
And rais'd the people's, as the poet's fame.
Like him great Dryden pour'd the tide of song,
In stream less smooth, indeed, yet doubly strong.
Then Congreve's scenes could cheer, or Otway's melt--
For nature then an English audience felt.
But why these names, or greater still, retrace,
When all to feebler bards resign their place?
Yet to such times our lingering looks are cast,
When taste and reason with those times are past.
Now look around, and turn each trifling page,
Survey the precious works that please the age;
This truth at least let satire's self allow,
No dearth of bards can be complain'd of now.
The loaded press beneath her labour groans,
And printers' devils shake their weary bones;
While Southey's epics cram the creaking shelves,
And Little's lyrics shine in hot-press'd twelves.
Thus saith the Preacher: "Nought beneath the sun
Is new"; yet still from change to change we run:
What varied wonders tempt us as they pass!
The cow-pox, tractors, galvanism and gas,
In turns appear, to make the vulgar stare,
Till the swoln bubble bursts--and all is air!
Nor less new schools of Poetry arise,
Where dull pretenders grapple for the prize:
O'er taste awhile these pseudo-bards prevail;
Each country book-club bows the knee to Baal,
And, hurling lawful genius from the throne,
Erects a shrine and idol of its own;
Some leaden calf--but whom it matters not,
From soaring Southey down to grovelling Stott.

Behold! in various throngs the scribbling crew,
For notice eager, pass in long review:
Each spurs his jaded Pegasus apace,
And rhyme and blank maintain an equal race;
Sonnets on sonnets crowd, and ode on ode;
And tales of terror jostle on the road;
Immeasurable measures move along;
For simpering folly loves a varied song,
To strange mysterious dulness still the friend,
Admires the strain she cannot comprehend.
Thus Lays of Minstrels--may they be the last!--

On half-strung harps whine mournful to the blast.
While mountain spirits prate to river sprites,
That dames may listen to the sound at nights;
And goblin brats, of Gilpin Horner's brood,
Decoy young border-nobles through the wood,
And skip at every step, Lord knows how high,
And frighten foolish babes, the Lord knows why;
While high-born ladies in their magic cell,
Forbidding knights to read who cannot spell,
Despatch a courier to a wizard's grave,
And fight with honest men to shield a knave.

Next view in state, proud prancing on his roan,
The golden-crested haughty Marmion,
Now forging scrolls, now foremost in the fight,
Not quite a felon, yet but half a knight,
The gibbet or the field prepar'd to grace;
A mighty mixture of the great and base.
And think'st thou, Scott! by vain conceit perchance,
On public taste to foist thy stale romance,
Though Murray with his Miller may combine
To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per line?
No! when the sons of song descend to trade,
Their bays are sear, their former laurels fade.
Let such forego the poet's sacred name,
Who rack their brains for lucre, not for fame:
Still for stern Mammon may they toil in vain!
And sadly gaze on gold they cannot gain!
Such be their meed, such still the just reward
Of prostituted muse and hireling bard!
For this we spurn Apollo's venal son,
And bid a long "good night to Marmion."

These are the themes that claim our plaudits now;
These are the bards to whom the muse must bow;
While Milton, Dryden, Pope, alike forgot,
Resign their hallow'd bays to Walter Scott.

The time has been, when yet the muse was young,
When Homer swept the lyre, and Maro sung,
An epic scarce ten centuries could claim,
While awe-struck nations hail'd the magic name;
The work of each immortal bard appears
The single wonder of a thousand years.
Empires have moulder'd from the face of earth,
Tongues have exirp'd with those who gave them birth,
Without the glory such a strain can give,
As even in ruin bids the language live.
Not so with us, though minor bards, content
On one great work a life of labour spent:
With eagle pinion soaring to the skies,
Behold the ballad-monger Southey rise!

To him let Camoëns, Milton, Tasso yield,
Whose annual strains, like armies, take the field.
First in the ranks see Joan of Arc advance,
The scourge of England and the boast of France!
Though burnt by wicked Bedford for a witch,
Behold her statue plac'd in glory's niche;
Her fetters burst, and just releas'd from prison,
A virgin phoenix from her ashes risen.
Next see tremendous Thalaba come on,
Arabia's monstrous, wild and wondrous son:
Domdaniel's dread destroyer, who o'erthrew
More mad magicians than the world e'er knew.
Immortal hero! all thy foes o'ercome,
For ever reign--the rival of Tom Thumb!
Since startled metre fled before thy face,
Well wert thou doom'd the last of all thy race!
Well might triumphant genii bear thee hence,
Illustrious conqueror of common sense!
Now, last and greatest, Madoc spreads his sails,
Cacique in Mexico, and prince in Wales;
Tells us strange tales, as other travellers do,
More old than Mandeville's, and not so true.
Oh Southey! Southey! cease thy varied song!
A bard may chant too often and too long:
As thou art strong in verse, in mercy, spare!
A fourth, alas! were more than we could bear.
But if, in spite of all the world can say,
Thou still wilt verseward plod thy weary way;
If still in Berkley ballads most uncivil,
Thou wilt devote old women to the devil,
The babe unborn thy dread intent may rue:
"God help thee," Southey, and thy readers too.

Next comes the dull disciple of thy school,
That mild apostate from poetic rule,
The simple Wordsworth, framer of a lay
As soft as evening in his favourite May,
Who warns his friend "to shake off toil and trouble,
And quit his books, for fear of growing double";
Who, both by precept and example, shows
That prose is verse, and verse is merely prose;
Convincing all, by demonstration plain,
Poetic souls delight in prose insane;
And Christmas stories tortur'd into rhyme
Contain the essence of the true sublime.
Thus, when he tells the tale of Betty Foy,
The idiot mother of "an idiot boy";
A moon-struck, silly lad, who lost his way,
And, like his bard, confounded night with day;
So close on each pathetic part he dwells,
And each adventure so sublimely tells,
That all who view the "idiot in his glory"

Conceive the bard the hero of the story.

Shall gentle Coleridge pass unnoticed here,
To turgid ode and tumid stanza dear?
Though themes of innocence amuse him best,
Yet still obscurity's a welcome guest.
If Inspiration should her aid refuse
To him who takes a pixy for a muse,
Yet none in lofty numbers can surpass
The bard who soars to elegize an ass.
So well the subject suits his noble mind,
He brays the laureat of the long-ear'd kind.

George Gordon Lord Byron

English Bards and Scotch Reviewers: A Satire

'I had rather be a kitten, and cry mew!
Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers'~Shakespeare

'Such shameless bards we have; and yet 'tis true,
There are as mad, abandon'd critics too,'~Pope.

Still must I hear? -- shall hoarse Fitzgerald bawl
His creaking couplets in a tavern hall,
And I not sing, lest, haply, Scotch reviews
Should dub me scribbler, and denounce my muse?
Prepare for rhyme -- I'll publish, right or wrong:
Fools are my theme, let satire be my song.

O nature's noblest gift -- my grey goose-quill!
Slave of my thoughts, obedient to my will,
Torn from thy parent bird to form a pen,
That mighty instrument of little men!
The pen! foredoom'd to aid the mental throes
Of brains that labour, big with verse or prose,
Though nymphs forsake, and critics may deride,
The lover's solace, and the author's pride.
What wits, what poets dost thou daily raise!
How frequent is thy use, how small thy praise!
Condemn'd at length to be forgotten quite,
With all the pages which 'twas thine to write.
But thou, at least, mine own especial pen!
Once laid aside, but now assumed again,
Our task complete, like Hamet's shall be free;
Though spurn'd by others, yet beloved by me:
Then let us soar today, no common theme,
No eastern vision, no distemper'd dream
Inspires -- our path, though full of thorns, is plain;
Smooth be the verse, and easy be the strain.

When Vice triumphant holds her sov'reign sway,
Obey'd by all who nought beside obey;
When Folly, frequent harbinger of crime,
Bedecks her cap with bells of every clime;
When knaves and fools combined o'er all prevail,
And weigh their justice in a golden scale;
E'en then the boldest start from public sneers,
Afraid of shame, unknown to other fears,
More darkly sin, by satire kept in awe,
And shrink from ridicule, though not from law.

Such is the force of wit! but not belong
To me the arrows of satiric song;
The royal vices of our age demand
A keener weapon, and a mightier hand.
Still there are follies, e'en for me to chase,
And yield at least amusement in the race:

Laugh when I laugh, I seek no other fame;
The cry is up, and scribblers are my game.
Speed, Pegasus! -- ye strains of great and small,
Ode, epic, elegy, have at you all!
I too can scrawl, and once upon a time
I pour'd along the town a flood of rhyme,
A schoolboy freak, unworthy praise or blame;
I printed -- older children do the same.
'Tis pleasant, sure, to see one's name in print;
A book's a book, although there's nothing in't.
Not that a title's sounding charm can save
Or scrawl or scribbler from an equal grave:
This Lambe must own, since his patrician name
Fail'd to preserve the spurious farce from shame.
No matter, George continues still to write,
Though now the name is veil'd from public sight.
Moved by the great example, I pursue
The self-same road, but make my own review:
Not seek great Jeffrey's, yet, like him, will be
Self-constituted judge of poesy.

A man must serve his time to every trade
Save censure -- critics all are ready made.
Take hackney'd jokes from Miller, got by rote,
With just enough of learning to misquote;
A mind well skill'd to find or forge a fault;
A turn for punning, call it Attic salt;
To Jeffrey go, be silent and discreet,
His pay is just ten sterling pounds per sheet:
Fear not to lie, 'twill seem a sharper hit;
Shrink not from blasphemy, 'twill pass for wit;
Care not for feeling -- pass you proper jest,
And stand a critic, hated yet carress'd.

And shall we own such judgment? no -- as soon
Seek roses in December -- ice in June;
Hope constancy in wind, or corn in chaff;
Believe a woman or an epitaph,
Or any other thing that's false, before
You trust in critics, who themselves are sore;
Or yield one single thought to be misled
By Jeffrey's heart, or Lambe's Boeotian head.
To these young tyrants, by themselves misplaced,
Combined usurpers on the throne of taste;
To these, when authors bend in humble awe,
And hail their voice as truth, their word as law --
While these are censors, 't would be sin to spare;
While such are critics, why should I forebear?
But yet, so near all modern worthies run,
'Tis doubtful whom to seek, or whom to shun:
Nor know we when to spare, or where to strike,
Our bards and censors are so much alike.

Then should you ask me, why I venture o'er
The path which Pope and Gifford trod before;
If not yet sicken'd, you can still proceed;
Go on; my rhyme will tell you as you read.
'But hold!' exclaims a friend, 'here's come neglect:
This -- that -- and t'other line seem incorrect.'
What then? the self-same blunder Pope has got,
And careless Dryden -- 'Ay, but Pye has not:' --
Indeed! -- 'tis granted, faith! -- but what care I?
Better to err with Pope, than shine with Pye.

Time was, ere yet in these degenerate days
Ignoble themes obtain'd mistaken praise,
When sense and wit with poesy allied,
No fabl'd graces, flourish'd side by side;
From the same fount their inspiration drew,
And, rear'd by taste, bloom'd fairer as they grew.
Then, in this happy isle, a Pope's pure strain
Sought the rapt soul to charm, nor sought in vain;
A polish'd nation's praise aspir'd to claim,
And rais'd the people's, as the poet's fame.
Like him great Dryden pour'd the tide of song,
In stream less smooth, indeed, yet doubly strong.
Then Congreve's scenes could cheer, or Otway's melt--
For nature then an English audience felt.
But why these names, or greater still, retrace,
When all to feebler bards resign their place?
Yet to such times our lingering looks are cast,
When taste and reason with those times are past.
Now look around, and turn each trifling page,
Survey the precious works that please the age;
This truth at least let satire's self allow,
No dearth of bards can be complain'd of now.
The loaded press beneath her labour groans,
And printers' devils shake their weary bones;
While Southeby's epics cram the creaking shelves,
And Little's lyrics shine in hot-press'd twelves.
Thus saith the Preacher: 'Nought beneath the sun
Is new'; yet still from change to change we run:
What varied wonders tempt us as they pass!
The cow-pox, tractors, galvanism and gas,
In turns appear, to make the vulgar stare,
Till the swell'n bubble bursts -- and all is air!
Nor less new schools of Poetry arise,
Where dull pretenders grapple for the prize:
O'er taste awhile these pseudo-bards prevail;
Each country book-club bows the knee to Baal,
And, hurling lawful genius from the throne,
Erects a shrine and idol of its own;
Some leaden calf -- but whom it matters not,
From soaring Southeby down to grovelling Stott.

Behold! in various throngs the scribbling crew,
For notice eager, pass in long review:
Each spurs his jaded Pegasus apace,
And rhyme and blank maintain an equal race;
Sonnets on sonnets crowd, and ode on ode;
And tales of terror jostle on the road;
Immeasurable measures move along;
For simpering folly loves a varied song,
To strange mysterious dullness still the friend,
Admires the strain she cannot comprehend.
Thus Lays of Minstrels -- may they be the last!--
On half-strung harps whine mournful to the blast.
While mountain spirits prate to river sprites,
That dames may listen to the sound at nights;
And goblin brats, of Gilpin Horner's brood,
Decoy young border-nobles through the wood,
And skip at every step, Lord knows how high,
And frighten foolish babes, the Lord knows why;
While highborn ladies in their magic cell,
Forbidding knights to read who cannot spell,
Despatch a courier to a wizard's grave,
And fight with honest men to shield a knave.

Next view in state, proud prancing on his roan,
The golden-crested haughty Marmion,
Now forging scrolls, now foremost in the fight,
Not quite a felon, yet but half a knight,
The gibbet or the field prepar'd to grace;
A mighty mixture of the great and base.
And think'st thou, Scott! by vain conceit perchance,
On public taste to foist thy stale romance,
Though Murray with his Miller may combine
To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per line?
No! when the sons of song descend to trade,
Their bays are sear, their former laurels fade.
Let such forego the poet's sacred name,
Who rack their brains for lucre, not for fame:
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The bard who soars to elegize an ass.
So well the subject suits his noble mind,
He brays the laureat of the long-ear'd kind.

Oh! wonder-working Lewis! monk, or bard,
Who fain wouldest make Parnassus a churchyard!
Lo! wreaths of yew, not laurel, bind thy brow,
Thy muse a sprite, Apollo's sexton thou!
Whether on ancient tombs thou tak'st thy stand,
By gibb'ring spectres hail'd, thy kindred band;
Or tracest chaste descriptions on thy page,
To please the females of our modest age;
All hail, M.P.! from whose infernal brain
Thin-sheeted phantoms glide, a grisly train;
At whose command 'grim women' throng in crowds,
And kings of fire, of water, and of clouds,
With 'small gray men,' 'wild yagers,' and what not,
To crown with honour thee and Walter Scott;
Again all hail! if tales like thine may please,
St. Luke alone can vanquish the disease;
Even Satan's self with thee might dread to dwell,
And in thy skull discern a deeper hell.

Who in soft guise, surrounded by a choir
Of virgins melting, not to Vesta's fire
With sparkling eyes, and cheek by passion flush'd,
Strikes his wild lyre, whilst listening dames are hush'd?
'Tis Little! young Catullus of his day,
As sweet, but as immoral, in his lay!
Grieved to condemn, the muse must still be just,
Nor spare melodious advocates of lust.

Pure is the flame which o'er her altar burns;
From grosser incense with disgust she turns;
Yet kind to youth, this expiation o'er,
She bids thee 'mend thy line and sin no more.'

For thee, translator of the tinsel song,
To whom such glittering ornaments belong,
Hiberian Strangford! with thine eyes of blue,
And boasted locks of red or auburn hue,
Whose plaintive strain each love-sick miss admires,
And o'er harmonious fustian half expires,
Learn, if thou canst, to yield thine author's sense,
Nor vend thy sonnets on a false pretence.
Think'st thou to gain thy verse a higher place,
By dressing Camoëns in suit of lace?
Mend, Strangford! mend thy morals and thy taste;
Be warm, but pure; be amorous, but be chaste;
Cease to deceive,: thy pilfer'd harp restore,
Nor teach the Lusian bard to copy Moore.

Behold! -- ye tarts! -- one moment spare the text --
Hayley's last work, and worst -- until his next;
Whether he spin poor couplets into plays,
Or damn the dead with purgatorial praise,
His style in youth or age is still the same,
For ever feeble and for ever tame.
Triumphant first see 'Temper's Triumphs' shine!
At least I'm sure they triumph'd over mine.
Of 'Music's Triumphs' all who read may swear
That luckless music never triumph'd there.

Moravians, arise! bestow some meet reward
On dull devotion -- Lo! the Sabbath bard,
Sepulchral Grahame, pours his notes sublime
In mangled prose, nor e'en aspires to rhyme;
Breaks into blank the Gospel of St. Luke,
And boldly pilfers from the Pentateuch;
And, undisturb'd by conscientious qualms,
Perverts the Prophets, and purloins the Psalms.

Hail, Sympathy! thy soft idea brings
A thousand visions of a thousand things,
And shows, still whimpering through three-score of years,
The maudlin prince of mournful sonneteers.
Art thou not their prince, harmonious Bowles!
Thou first, great oracle of tender souls?
Whether thou sing'st with equal ease, and grief,
The fall of empires, or a yellow leaf:
Whether thy muse most lamentably tells
What merry sounds proceed from Oxford bells,
Or, still in bells delighting, finds a friend
In every chime that jingled from Ostend:

Ah! how much juster were thy muse's hap
If to thy bells thou wouldest but add a cap!
Delightful Bowles! still blessing and still blest,
All love thy strain, but children like it best.
'Tis thine, with gentle Little's moral song,
To soothe the mania of the amorous throng!
With thee our nursery damsels shed their tears,
Ere miss as yet completes her infant years:
But in her teens thy winning powers are vain;
She quits poor Bowles for Little's purer strain.
Now to soft themes thou scornest to confine
The lofty numbers of a harp like thine:
'Awake a louder and a loftier strain,'
Such as none heard before, or will again!
Where all Discoveries jumbled from the flood,
Since first the leaky ark reposed in mud,
By more or less, are sung in every book,
From Captain Noah down to Captain Cook.
Nor this alone; but, pausing on the road,
The bard sighs forth a gentle episode;
And gravely tells -- attend, each beauteous miss! --
When first Madeira trembled to a kiss.
Bowles! in thy memory let this precept dwell,
Stick to thy sonnets, man! -- at least they sell.
But if some new-born whim, or larger bribe,
Prompt thy crude brain, and claim thee for a scribe;
If chance some bard, though once by dunces fear'd,
Now, prone in dust, can only be revered;
If Pope, whose fame and genius, from the first,
Have foil'd the best of critics, needs the worst,
Do thou essay: each fault, each falling scan;
The first of poets was, alas! but man.
Rake from each ancient dunghill every pearl,
Consult Lord Fanny, and confide in Curll;
Let all the scandals of a former age
Perch on thy pen, and flutter o'er thy page;
Affect a candour which thou canst not feel,
Clothe envy in the garb of honest zeal;
Write, as if St. John's soul could still inspire,
And do from hate what Mallet did for hire.
Oh! hadst thou lived in that congenial time,
To rave with Dennis, and with Ralph to rhyme;
Throng'd with the rest around his living head,
Not raised thy hoof against the lion dead;
A meet reward had crown'd thy glorious gains,
And link'd thee to the Dunciad for thy pains.

Another epic! Who inflicts again
More books of blank upon the sons of men?
Boeotian Cottle, rich Browntown's boast,
Imports old stories from the Cambrian coast,
And sends his goods to market -- all alive!

Lines forty thousand, cantos twenty-five!
Fresh fish from Helicon! who'll buy, who'll buy?
The precious bargain's cheap -- in faith, not I.
Your turtle-feeder's verse must needs be flat,
Though Bristol bloat them with the verdant fat;
If Commerce fills the purse, she clogs the brain
And Amos Cottle strikes the lyre in vain.
In him an author's luckless lot behold,
Condemn'd to make the books which once he sold.
Oh, Amos Cottle! -- Pheobus! what a name
To fill the speaking trump of future fame! --
Oh, Amos Cottle! for a moment think
What meagre profits spring from pen and ink!
When thus devoted to poetic dreams,
Who will peruse thy prostituted reams?
Oh! pen perverted! paper misapplied!
Had Cottle still adorn'd the counter's side,
Bent o'er the desk, or, born to useful toils,
Been taught to make the paper which he soils,
Plough'd, delved, or plied the oar with lusty limb,
He had not sung of Wales, nor I of him.

As Sisyphus against the infernal steep
Rolls the huge rock whose motions ne'er may sleep,
So up thy hill, ambrosial Richmond, heaves
Dull Maurice all his granite weight of leaves:
Smooth, solid monuments of mental pain!
The petrifications of a plodding brain,
That, ere they reach the top, fall lumbering back again.

With broken lyre, and cheek serenely pale,
Lo! sad Alcæus wanders down the vale;
Though fair they rose, and might have bloom'd at last,
His hopes have perish'd by the northern blast:
Nipp'd in the bud by Caledonian gales,
His blossoms wither as the blast prevails!
O'er his lost works let classic Sheffield weep;
May no rude hand disturb their early sleep!

Yet say! why should the bard at once resign
His claim to favour from the sacred Nine?
For ever startled by the mingled howl
Of northern wolves, that still in darkness prowl;
A coward brood, which mangle as they prey,
By hellish instinct, all that cross their way;
Aged or young, the living or the dead,
No mercy find -- these harpies must be fed.
Why do the injured unresisting yield
The calm possession of their native field?
Why tamely thus before their fangs retreat,
Nor hunt the blood-hounds back to Arthur's Seat?

Health to immortal Jeffrey! once, in name,
England could boast a judge almost the same;
In soul so like, so merciful, yet just,
Some think that Satan has resign'd his trust,
And given the spirit to the world again,
To sentence letters, as he sentenced men.
With hand less mighty, but with heart as black,
With voice as willing to decree the rack;
Bred in the courts betimes, though all that law
As yet hath taught him is to find a flaw;
Since well instructed in the patriot school
To rail at party, though a party tool,
Who knows, if chance his patrons should restore
Back to the sway they forfeited before,
His scribbling toils some recompense may meet,
And raise this Daniel to the judgment-seat?
Let Jeffreys' shade indulge the pious hope,
And greeting thus, present him with a rope:
'Heir to my virtues! man of equal mind!
Skill'd to condemn as to traduce mankind,
This cord receive, for thee reserved with care,
To wield in judgment, and at length to wear.'

Health to great Jeffrey! Heaven preserve his life,
To flourish on the fertile shores of Fife,
And guard it sacred in its future wars,
Since authors sometimes seek the field of Mars!
Can none remember that eventful day,
That ever-glorious, almost fatal fray,
When Little's leadless pistol met his eye,
And Bow-street myrmidons stood laughing by?
Oh, day disastrous! on her firm-set rock,
Dunedin's castle felt a secret shock;
Dark roll'd the sympathetic waves of Forth,
Low groan'd the startled whirlwinds of the north;
Tweed ruffled half his waves to form a tear,
The other half pursued its calm career;
Arthur's steep summit nodded to its base,
The surly Tolbooth scarcely kept her place.
The Tolbooth felt -- for marble sometimes can,
On such occasions feel as much as man --
The Tolbooth felt defrauded of his charms,
If Jeffrey died, except within her arms:
Nay last, not least on that portentous morn,
The sixteenth story, where himself was born,
His patrimonial garret, fell to the ground,
And pale Edina shudder'd at the sound:
Strew'd were the streets around with milk-white reams,
Flow'd all the Canongate with inky streams;
This of candour seem'd the sable dew,
That of his valour show'd the bloodless hue;
And all with justice deem'd the two combined

The mingled emblems of his mighty mind.
But Caledonia's goddess hover'd o'er
The field and saved him from the wrath of Moore;
From either pistol snatch'd the vengeful lead,
And straight restored it to her favourite's head:
That head, with greater than magnetic power,
Caught it, as Danaë caught the golden shower,
And, though the thickening dross will scarce refine,
Augments its ore, and is itself a mine.
'My son,' she cried, 'ne'er thirst for gore again,
Resign the pistol and resume the pen;
O'er politics and poesy preside,
Boast of thy country, and Britannia's guide!
For as long as Albion's heedless sons submit,
Or Scottish taste decides on English wit,
So long shall last thine unmolested reign,
Nor any dare to take thy name in vain.
Behold, a chosen band shall aid thy plan,
And own thee chieftain of the critic clan.
First in the oat-fed phalanx shall be seen
The travell'd thane, Athenian Aberdeen.
Herbert shall wield Thor's hammer, and sometimes,
In graditude, thou'l't praise his rugged rhymes.
Smug Sidney too thy bitter page shall seek,
And classic Hallam, much renown'd for Greek;
Scott must perchance his name and influence lend,
And paltry Pillans shall traduce his friend!
While gay Thalia's luckless votary, Lambe,
Damn'd like the devil, devil-like will damn.
Known be thy name, unbounded be thy sway!
Thy Holland's banquets shall each toil repay;
While grateful Britain yields the praise she owes
To Holland's hirelings and to learning's foes.
Yet mark one caution ere thy next Review
Spread its light wings of saffron and of blue,
Beware lest blundering Brougham destroy the sale,
Turn beef to bannocks, cauliflowers to kail.'
Thus having said, the kilted goddess kiss'd
Her son, and vanish'd in a Scottish mist

Then prosper, Jeffrey! pertest of the train
Whom Scotland pampers with her fiery grain!
Whatever blessing waits a genuine Scot,
In double portion swells thy glorious lot;
For thee Edina culls her evening sweets,
And showers their odours on thy candid sheets,
Whose hue and fragrance to thy work adhere --
This scents its pages, and that gilds its rear.
Lo! blushing Itch, coy nymph, enamour'd grown,
Forsakes the rest, and cleaves to thee alone;
And, too unjust to other Pictish men,
Enjoys thy person, and inspires thy pen!

Illustrious Holland! hard would be this lot,
His hirelings mention'd, and himself forgot!
Holland, with Henry Petty at his back,
The whipper-in and huntsman of the pack.
Blest be the banquets spread at Holland House,
Where Scotchmen feed, and critics may carouse!
Long, long beneath that hospitable roof
Shall Grub-street dine, while duns are kept aloof.
See honest Hallam lay aside his fork,
Resume his pen, review his Lordship's work,
And, grateful for the dainties on his plate,
Declare his landlord can at least translate!
Dunedin! view thy children with delight,
They write for food -- and feed because they write:
And lest, when heated with unusual grape,
Some glowing thoughts should to the press escape,
And tinge with red the female reader's cheek,
My lady skims the cream of each critique;
Breathes o'er the page her purity of soul,
Reforms each error, and refines the whole.

Now to the Drama turn -- Oh! motley sight!
What precious scenes the wondering eyes invite!
Puns, and a prince within a barrel pent,
And Dibdin's nonsense yield complete content.
Though now, thank Heaven! the Rosciomania's o'er,
And full-grown actors are endured once more:
Yet what avail their vain attempts to please,
While British critics suffer scenes like these;
While Reynolds vents his 'dammes!' 'poohs!' and 'zounds!'
And common-place and common sense confounds?
While Kenney's 'World' -- ah! where is Kenney's wit? --
Tires the sad gallery, lulls the listless pit;
And Beaumont's pilfer'd Caratach affords
A tragedy complete in all but words?
Who but must mourn, while these are all the rage,
The degradation of our vaunted stage!
Heavens! is all sense of shame and talent gone?
Have we no living bard of merit? -- none!
Awake, George Colman! Cumberland, awake!
Ring the alarm bell! let folly quake!
Oh Sheridan! if aught can move thy pen,
Let Comedy assume her throne again;
Abjure the mummery of German schools;
Leave new Pizarros to translating fools;
Give, as thy last memorial to the age,
One classic drama, and reform the stage.
Gods! o'er those boards shall Folly rear her head
Where Garrick trod and Siddons lives to tread?
On those shall Farce display Buffoon'ry's mask,
And Hook conceal his heroes in a cask?

Shall sapient managers new scenes produce
From Cherry, Skeffington, and Mother Goose?
While Shakespeare, Otway, Massinger, forgot,
On stalls must moulder, or in closets rot?
Lo! with what pomp the daily prints proclaim
The rival candidates for Attic fame!
In grim array though Lewis' spectres rise,
Still Skeffington and Goose divide the prize.
And sure great Skeffington must claim our praise,
For skirtless coats and skeletons of plays
Renown'd alike; whose genius ne'er confines
Her flight to garnish Greenwood's gay designs;
Nor sleeps with 'Sleeping Beauties,' but anon
In five facetious acts comes thundering on,
While poor John Bull, bewilder'd with the scene
Stares, wondering what the devil it can mean;
But as some hands applaud, a venal few!
Rather than sleep, why John applauds it too.

Such are we now. Ah! wherefore should we turn
To what our fathers were, unless to mourn?
Degenerate Britons! are ye dead to shame,
Or, kind to dullness, do you fear to blame?
Well may the nobles of our present race
Watch each distortion of a Naldi's face;
Well may they smile on Italy's buffoons,
And worship Catalani's pantaloons,
Since their own drama yields no fairer trace
Of wit than puns, of humour than grimace.

Then let Ausonia, skill'd in every art
To soften manners, but corrupt the heart,
Pour her exotic follies o'er the town,
To sanction Vice, and hunt Decorum down:
Let wedded strumpets languish o'er Deshayes,
And bless the promise which his form displays;
While Grayton bounds before th' enraptured looks
Of hoary marquises and stripling dukes;
Let high-born lechers eye the lively Présle
Twirl her light limbs, that spurn the needless veil;
Let Angiolini bare her breast of snow,
Wave the white arm, and point the pliant toe;
Collini trill her love-inspiring song,
Strain her fair neck, and charm the listening throng!
Whet not your scythe, suppressers of our vice!
Reforming saints! too delicately nice!
By whose decrees, our sinful souls to save,
No Sunday tankards foam, no barber's shave;
And beer undrawn, and beards unmown, display
You holy reverence for the Sabbath-day.

Or hail at once the patron and the pile

Of vice and folly, Greville and Argyle!
Where yon proud palace, Fashion's hallow'd fane,
Spreads wide her portals for the motley train,
Behold the new Petronius of the day,
Our arbiter of pleasure and of play!
There the hired eunuch, the Hesperian choir,
The melting lute, the soft lascivious lyre,
The song from Italy, the step from France,
The midnight orgy, and the mazy dance,
The smile of beauty, and the flush of wine,
For fops, fools, gamesters, knaves, and lords combine:
Each to his humour -- Comus all allows;
Champaign, dice, music or your neighbour's spouse.
Talk not to us, ye starving sons of trade!
Of piteous ruin, which ourselves have made;
In plenty's sunshine Fortune's minions bask,
Nor think of poverty, except 'en masque,'
When for the night some lately titled ass
Appears the beggar which his grandsire was.
The curtain dropp'd, the gay burletta o'er,
The audience take their turn upon the floor;
Now round the room the circling dow'gers sweep,
Now in loose waltz the thin-clad daughters leap;
The first in lengthen'd line majestic swim,
The last display the free unfetter'd limb!
Those for Hibernia's lusty sons repair
With art the charms which nature could not spare;
These after husbands wing their eager flight,
Nor leave much mystery for the nuptial night.

Oh! blest retreats of infamy and ease,
Where, all forgotten but the power to please,
Each maid may give a loose to genial thought,
Each swain may teach new systems, or be taught:
There the blithe youngster, just return's from Spain,
Cuts the light pack, or calls the rattling main;
The jovial caster's set, and seven's the nick,
Or -- done! -- a thousand on the coming trick!
If, mad with loss, existence 'gins to tire,
And all your hope or wish is to expire,
Here's Powell's pistol ready for your life,
And, kinder still, two Pagets for your wife;
Fit consummation of an earthly race
Begin in folly, ended in disgrace;
While none but menials o'er the bed of death,
Wash thy red wounds, or watch thy wavering breath;
Traduced by liars, and forgot by all,
The mangled victim of a drunken brawl,
To live, like Clodius, and like Falkland fall.

Truth! rouse some genuine bard, and guide his hand
To drive this pestilence from out the land.

E'en I -- least thinking of a thoughtless throng,
Just skill'd to know the right and choose the wrong,
Freed at that age when reason's shield is lost,
To fight my course through passion's countless host,
Whom every path of pleasure's flowery way
Has lured in turn, and all have led astray --
E'en I must raise my voice, e'en I must feel
Such scenes, such men, destroy the public weal:
Although some kind, censorious friend will say,
'What art thou better, meddling fool, than they?'
And every brother rake will smile to see
That miracle, a moralist in me.
No matter -- when some bard in virtue strong,
Gifford perchance, shall raise the chastening song,
Then sleep my pen for ever! and my voice
Be only heard to hail him, and rejoice;
Rejoice, and yield my feeble praise, though I
May feel the lash that Virtue must apply.

As for the smaller fry, who swarm in shoals,
From silly Hafiz up to simple Bowles,
Why should we call them from their dark abode,
In broad St. Giles's or in Tottenham-road?
Or (since some men of fashion nobly dare
To scrawl in verse) from Bond-street or the Square?
If things of ton their harmless lays indict,
Most wisely doom'd to shun the public sight,
What harm? in spite of every critic elf,
Sir T. may read his stanzas to himself;
Miles Andrews still his strength in couplets try,
And life in prologues, though his dramas die:
Lords too are bards, such things at times befall,
And 'tis some praise in peers to write at all.
Yet, did or taste or reason sway the times
Ah! who would take their titles with their rhymes?
Roscommon! Sheffield! with your spirits fled,
No future laurels deck a noble head;
No muse will cheer, with renovating smile
The paralytic puling of Carlisle.
The puny schoolboy and his early lay
Men pardon, if his follies pass away;
But who forgives the senior's ceaseless verse,
Whose hairs grow hoary as his rhymes grow worse?
What heterogeneous honours deck the peer!
Lord, rhymester, petit-maître, and pamphleteer!
So dull in youth, so drivelling in his age,
His scenes alone had damn'd our stage;
But managers for once cried, 'Hold, enough!'
Nor drugg'd their audience with the tragic stuff.
Yet at their judgment let his lordship laugh,
And case his volumes in congenial calf;
Yes! doff that covering, where morocco shines,

And hang a calf-skin on those recreant lines.

With you, ye Druids! rich in native lead,
Who daily scribble for your daily bread;
With you I war not: Gifford's heavy hand
Has crush'd, without remorse, your numerous band.
On 'all the talents' vent your venal spleen;
Want is your plea, let pity be your screen.
Let monodies on Fox regale your crew,
And Melville's Mantle prove a blanket too!
One common Lethe waits each hapless bard,
And, peace be with you! 'tis your best reward.
Such damning fame as Dunciads only give
Could bid your lines beyond a morning live;
But now at once your fleeting labours close,
With names of greater note in blest repose,
Far be 't from me unkindly to upbraid,
The lovely Rosa's prose in masquerade,
Whose strains, the faithful echoes of her mind,
Leave wondering comprehension far behind.
Though Crusca's bards no more our journals fill,
Some stragglers skirmish round the columns still;
Last of the howling host which once was Bell's,
Matilda snivels yet, and Hafix yells;
And Merry's metaphors appear anew,
Chain'd to the signature of O. P. Q.

When some brisk youth, the tenant of a stall,
Employs a pen less pointed than his awl,
Leaves his snug shop, forsakes his store of shoes,
St. Crispin quits, and cobbles for the muse,
Heavens! how the vulgar stare! how crowds applaud!
How ladies read, and literati laud!
If chance some wicked wag should pass his jest,
'Tis sheer ill-nature -- don't the world know best?
Genius must guide when wits admire the rhyme,
And Capel Lofft declares 'tis quite sublime.
Hear, then, ye happy sons of needless trade!
Swains! quit the plough, resign the useless spade!
Lo! Burns and Bloomfield, nay, a greater far,
Gifford was born beneath an adverse star,
Forsook the labours of a servile state,
Stemm'd the rude storm, and triumph'd over fate:
Then why no more? if Phoebus smiled on you,
Bloomfield! why not on brother Nathan too?
Him too the mania, not the muse, has seized;
Not inspiration, but a mind diseased:
And now no boor can seek his last abode,
No common be enclosed without an ode.
Oh! since increased refinement deigns to smile
On Britain's sons, and bless our genial isle,
Let poesy go forth, pervade the whole,

Alike the rustic, and mechanic soul!
Ye tuneful cobblers! still your notes prolong,
Compose at once a slipper and a song;
So shall the fair your handiwork peruse,
Your sonnets sure shall please -- perhaps your shoes.
May Moorland weavers boast Pindaric skill,
And tailors' lays be longer than their bill!
While punctual beaux reward the grateful notes,
And pay for poems -- when they pay for coats.

To the famed throng now paid the tribute due,
Neglected genius! let me turn to you,
Come forth, oh Campbell give thy talents scope;
Who dares aspire if thou must cease to hope?
And thou, melodious Rogers! rise at last,
Recall the pleasing memory of the past;
Arise! let blest remembrance still inspire,
And strike to wonted tones thy hallow'd lyre;
Restore Apollo to his vacant throne,
Assert thy country's honour and thine own.
What! must deserted Poesy still weep
Where her last hopes with pious Cowper sleep?
Unless, perchance, from his cold bier she turns,
To deck the turf that wraps her minstrel, Burns!
No! though contempt hath mark'd the spurious brood,
The race who rhyme from folly, or for food,
Yet still some genuine sons 'tis hers to boast,
Who, least affecting, still affect the most:
Feel as they write, and write but as they feel --
Bear witness Gifford, Sotheby, Macneil.

'Why slumbers Gifford?' once was ask'd in vain;
Why slumbers Gifford? let us ask again.
Are there no follies for his pen to purge?
Are there no fools whose backs demand the scourge?
Are there no sins for satire's bard to greet?
Stalks not gigantic Vice in every street?
Shall peers or princes tread pollution's path,
And 'scape alike the law's and muse's wrath?
Nor blaze with guilty glare through future time,
Eternal beacons of consummate crime?
Arouse thee, Gifford! be thy promise claim'd,
Make bad men better, or at least ashamed.

Unhappy White! while life was in its spring,
And thy young muse just waved her joyous wing,
The spoiler swept that soaring lyre away,
Which else had sounded an immortal lay.
Oh! what a noble heart was here undone,
When Science' self destroy'd her favourite son!
Yes, she too much indulged thy fond pursuit,
She sow'd the seeds, but death has reap'd the fruit.

'Twas thine own genius gave the final blow,
And help'd to plant the wound that laid thee low:
So the struck eagle, stretch'd upon the plain,
No more through rolling clouds to soar again,
View'd his own feather on the fatal dart,
And wing'd the shaft that quiver'd in his heart;
Keen were his pangs, but keener far to feel
He nursed the pinion which impell'd the steel;
While the same plumage that had warm'd his nest
Drank the last life-drop of his bleeding breast.

There be who say, in these enlighten'd days,
That splendid lies are all the poet's praise;
That strain'd invention, ever on the wing,
Alone impels the modern bard to sing:
'Tis true, that all who rhyme -- nay, all who write,
Shrink from that fatal word to genius -- trite;
Yet Truth sometimes will lend her noblest fires,
And decorate the verse herself inspires:
This fact in Virtue's name let Crabbe attest;
Though nature's sternest painter, yet the best.

And here let Shee and Genius find a place,
Whose pen and pencil yield an equal grace;
To guide whose hand the sister arts combine,
And trace the poet's or the painter's line;
Whose magic touch can bid the canvas glow,
Or pour the easy rhyme's harmonious flow;
While honours, doubly merited, attend
The poet's rival, but the painter's friend.

Blest is the man who dares approach the bower
Where dwelt the muses at their natal hour;
Whose steps have press'd, whose eye has mark'd afar,
The clime that nursed the sons of song and war,
The scenes which glory still must hover o'er,
Her place of birth, her own Achaian shore.
But doubly blest is he whose heart expands
With hallow'd feelings for those classic lands;
Who rends the veil of ages long gone by,
And views their remnants with a poet's eye!
Wright! 'twas thy happy lot at once to view
Those shores of glory, and to sing them too;
And sure no common muse inspired thy pen
To hail the land of gods and godlike men.

And you, associate bards! who snatch'd to light
Those gems too long withheld from modern sight;
Whose mingling taste combined to cull the wreath
Where Attic flowers Aonian odours breathe,
And all their renovated fragrance flung
To grace the beauties of your native tongue;

Now let those minds that nobly could transfuse
The glorious spirit of the Grecian muse,
Though soft the echo, scorn a borrow'd tone:
Resign Achaia's lyre, and strike your own.

Let these, or such as these with just applause,
Restore the muse's violated laws;
But not in flimsy Darwin's pompous chime,
That mighty master of unmeaning rhyme,
Whose gilded cymbals, more adorn'd than clear,
The eye delighted, but fatigued the ear;
In show the simple lyre could once surpass,
But now, worn down, appear in native brass;
While all his train of hovering sylphs around
Evaporate in similes and sound:
Him let them shun, with him let tinsel die:
False glare attracts, but more offends the eye.

Yet let them not to vulgar Wordsworth stoop,
The meanest object of the lowly group,
Whose verse, of all but childish prattle void,
Seems blessed harmony to Lamb and Lloyd:
Let them -- but hold, my muse, nor dare to teach
A strain far, far beyond thy humble reach:
The native genius with their being given
Will point the path, and peal their notes to heaven.

And thou, too, Scott! resign to minstrels rude
The wilder slogan of a border feud:
Let others spin their meagre lines for hire;
Enough for genius, if itself inspire!
Let Southey sing, although his teeming muse,
Prolific every spring, be too profuse;
Let simple Wordsworth chime his childish verse,
And brother Coleridge lull the babe at nurse;
Let spectre-mongering Lewis aim, at most,
To rouse the galleries, or to raise a ghost;
Let Moore still sigh; let Strangford steal from Moore,
And swear that Comoëns sang such notes of yore;
Let Hayley hobble on, Montgomery rave,
And godly Grahame chant a stupid stave:
Let sonneteering Bowles his strains refine,
And whine and whimper to the fourteenth line;
Let Stott, Carlisle, Matilda, and the rest
Of Grub Street, and of Grosvenor Place the best,
Scrawl on, till death release us from the strain,
Or Common Sense assert her rights again.
But thou, with powers that mock the aid of praise,
Shouldst leave to humbler bards ignoble lays:
Thy country's voice, the voice of all the nine,
Demand a hallow'd harp -- that harp is thine.
Say! will not Caledonia's annals yield

The glorious record of some nobler field,
Than the wild foray of a plundering clan,
Whose proudest deeds disgrace the name of man?
Or Marmion's acts of darkness, fitter food
For Sherwood's outlaw tales of Robin Hood?
Scotland! still proudly claim thy native bard,
And be thy praise his first, his best reward!
Yet not with thee alone his name should live,
But own the vast renown a world can give:
Be known, perchance, when Albion is no more,
And tell the tale of what she was before;
To future times her faded fame recall,
And save her glory, though his country fall.

Yet what avails the sanguine poet's hope,
To conquer ages, and with time to cope?
New eras spread their wings, new nations rise,
And other victors fill the applauding skies;
A few brief generations fleet along,
Whose sons forget the poet and his song:
E'en now, what once-loved minstrels scarce may claim
The transient mention of a dubious name!
When fame's loud trump hath blown it noblest blast,
Though long the sound, the echo sleeps at last;
And glory, like the phoenix midst her fires,
Exhales her odours, blazes, and expires.

Shall hoary Granta call her sable sons,
Expert in science, more expert at puns?
Shall these approach the muse? ah, no! she flies,
Even from the tempting ore of Seaton's prize:
Though printers condescend the press to soil
With rhyme by Hoare, the epic blank by Hoyle:
Not him whose page, if still upheld by whist,
Requires no sacred theme to bid us list.
Ye! who in Granta's honours would surpass,
Must mount her Pegasus, a full-grown ass;
A foal well worthy of her ancient dam,
Whose Helicon is duller than her Cam.

There Clarke, still striving piteously 'to please',
Forgetting doggerel leads not to degrees,
A would-be satirist, a hired buffoon,
A monthly scribbler of some low lampoon,
Condemn'd to drudge, the meanest of the mean,
And furbish falsehoods for a magazine,
Devotes to scandal his congenial mind;
Himself a living libel on mankind.

Oh! dark asylum of a Vandal race!
At once the boast of learning, and disgrace!
So lost to Phoebus, that nor Hodgson's verse

Can make thee better, nor poor Hewson's worse.
But where fair Isis rolls her purer wave,
The partial muse delighted loves to lave;
On her green banks a greener wreath she wove,
To crown the bards that haunt her classic grove:
Where Richards wakes a genuine poet's fires,
And modern Britons glory in their sires.

For me, who, thus unask'd, have dared to tell
My country what her sons should know too well,
Zeal for her honour bade me here engage
The host of idiots that infest her age;
No just applause her honour'd name shall lose,
As first in freedom, dearest to the muse.
Oh! would thy bards but emulate thy fame,
And rise more worthy, Albion, of thy name!
What Athens was in science, Rome in power,
What Tyre appear'd in her meridian hour,
'Tis thine at once, fair Albion! to have been --
Earth's chief dictatress, ocean's lovely queen:
But Rome decay'd, and Athens strew'd the plain,
And Tyre's proud piers lie shattered in the main;
Like these, thy strength may sink, in ruin hurl'd,
And Britain fall, the bulwark of the world.
But let me cease, and dread Cassandra's fate,
With warning ever scoff'd at, till too late;
To themes less lofty still my lay confine
And urge thy bards to gain a name like thine.

Then, hapless Britain! be thy rulers blest,
The senate's oracles, the people's jest!
Still hear thy motley orators dispense
The flowers of rhetoric, though not of sense,
While Canning's colleagues hate him for his wit,
And old dame Portland fills the place of Pitt.

Yet, once again, adieu! ere this the sail
That wafts me hence is shivering in the gale;
And Afric's coast and Calpe's adverse height,
And Stamboul's minarets must greet my sight:
Thence shall I stray through beauty's native clime,
Where Kaff is clad in rocks, and crown'd with snows sublime.
But should I back return, no tempting press
Shall drag my journal from the desk's recess;
Let coxcombs, printing as they come from far,
Snatch his own wreath of ridicule from Carr;
Let Aberdeen and Elgin still pursue
The shade of fame through regions of virtù;
Waste useless thousands on their Phidian freaks,
Misshapen monuments and maim'd antiques;
And make their grand saloons a general mart
For all the mutilated blocks of art;

Of Dardan tours let dilettanti tell,
I leave topography to rapid Gell;
And, quite content, no more shall interpose
To stun the public ear -- at least with prose.

Thus far I've held my undisturb'd career,
Prepared for rancour, steel'd 'gainst selfish fear;
This thing of rhyme I ne'er disdain'd to own -
Though not obtrusive, yet not quite unknown:
My voice was heard again, though not so loud,
My page, though nameless, never disavow'd;
And now at once I tear the veil away: --
Cheer on the pack! the quarry stands at bay,
Unscared by all the din of Melbourne House,
By Lambe's resentment, or by Holland's spouse,
By Jeffrey's harmless pistol, Hallam's rage,
Edina's brawny sons and brimstone page.
Our men in buckram shall have blows enough,
And feel they too are 'penetrable stuff':
And though I hope not hence unscathed to go,
Who conquers me shall find a stubborn foe.
The time hath been, when no harsh sound would fall
From lips that now may seem imbued with gall;
Nor fools nor follies tempt me to despise
The meanest thing that crawl'd beneath my eyes;
But now, so callous grown, so changed since youth,
I've learn'd to think, and sternly speak the truth;
Learn'd to deride the critic's starch decree,
And break him on the wheel he meant for me;
To spurn the rod a scribbler bids me kiss,
Nor care if courts and crowds applaud or hiss:
Nay more, though all my rival rhymesters frown,
I too can hunt a poetaster down;
And, arm'd in proof, the gauntlet cast at once
To Scotch marauder, and to southern dunce.
Thus much I've dared; if my incondite lay
Hath wrong'd these righteous times, let others say;
This, let the world, which knows not how to spare,
Yet rarely blames unjustly, now declare.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Epigram

In digging up your bones, Tom Paine,
Will. Cobbett has done well:
You visit him on earth again,
He'll visit you in hell.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Epigram On My Wedding- Day To Penelope

This day, of all our days, has done
The worst for me and you :-
'Tis just six years since we were one,
And five since we were two.

George Gordon Lord Byron

**Epigram, On The Braziers' Company Having Resolved To Present An Address
To Queen Caroline**

The braziers, it seems, are preparing to pass
An address, and present it themselves all in brass,--
A superfluous pageant-for, by the Lord Harry!
They'll find where they're going much more than they carry.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Epigram: From The French Of Rulhières

If, for silver or for gold,
You could melt ten thousand pimples
Into half a dozen dimples,
Then your face we might behold,
Looking, doubtless, much more snugly;
Yet even then 'twould be damned ugly.

August 12, 1819.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Epigram: The World Is A Bundle Of Hay

The world is a bundle of hay,
Mankind are the asses who pull;
Each tugs it a different way,
And the greatest of all is John Bull.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Epigrams

Oh, Castlereagh! thou art a patriot now;
Cato died for his country, so didst thou:
He perish'd rather than see Rome en-slaved,
Thou cutt' st thy throat that Britain may be saved!
So Castlereagh has cut his throat!--The worst
Of this is, - that his own was not the first.
So He has cut his throat at last!--He! Who?
The man who cut his country's long ago.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Epistle From Mr. Murray To Dr. Polidori

Dear Doctor, I have read your play,
Which is a good one in its way,-
Purges the eyes and moves the bowels,
And drenches handkerchiefs like towels
With tears, that, in a flux of grief,
Afford hysterical relief
To shatter'd nerves and quicken'd pulses,
Which your catastrophe convulses.

I like your moral and machinery;
Your plot, too, has such scope for scenery:
Your dialogue is apt and smart:
The play's concoction full of art;
Your hero raves, your heroine cries,
All stab, and everybody dies.
In short, your tragedy would be
The very thing to hear and see:
And for a piece of publication,
If I decline on this occasion,
It is not that I am not sensible
To merits in themselves ostensible,
But - and I grieve to speak it--plays
Are drugs - mere drugs, sir--now-a-days.
I had a heavy loss by 'Manual'--
Too lucky if it prove not annual,-
And Sotheby, with his 'Orestes,'
(Which, by the by, the author's best is),
Has lain so very long on hand,
That I despair of all demand.
I've advertised, but see my books,
Or only watch my shopman's looks;--
Still Ivan, Ina, and such lumber,
My back-shop glut, my shelves encumber.

There's Byron too, who once did better,
Has sent me, folded in a letter,
A sort of--it's no more a drama
Than Darnley, Ivan, or Kehama:
So alter'd since last year his pen is,
I think he's lost his wits at Venice.
In short, sir, what with one and t'other,
I dare not venture on another.
I write in haste; excuse each blunder;
The coaches through the street so thun-der!
My room's so full--we've Gifford here
Reading MS., with Hookham Frere
Pronouncing on the nouns and particles
Of some of our forthcoming Articles.

The Quarterly--Ah, sir, if you
Had but the genius to review!-
A smart critique upon St. Helena,

Or if you only would but tell in a
Short compass what--but to resume:
As I was saying, sir, the room--
The room's so full of wits and bards,
Crabbes, Campbells, Crokers, Freres, and Wards,
And others, neither bards nor wits:
My humble tenement admits
All persons in the dress of gent,
From Mr. Hammond to Dog Dent.

A party dines with me to-day,
All clever men, who make their way;
Crabbe, Malcolm, Hamilton, and Chantrey
Are all partakers of my pantry.
They're at this moment in discussion
On poor De Staël's late dissolution.
Her book, they say, was in advance--
Pray Heaven, she tell the truth of France!
Thus run our time and tongues away;
But, to return, sir, to your play:
Sorry, sir, but I cannot deal,
Unless 'twere acted by O'Neill;
My hands so full, my head so busy,
I'm almost dead, and always dizzy;
And so, with endless truth and hurry,
Dear Doctor, I am yours
JOHN MURRAY.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Epistle To A Friend, In Answer To Some Lines Exhorting The Author To Be Cheerful, And To Banish Care

'OH! banish care'--such ever be
The motto of thy revelry!
Perchance of mine, when wassail nights
Renew those riotous delights,
Wherewith the children of Despair
Lull the lone heart, and 'banish care.'
But not in morn's reflecting hour,
When present, past, and future lower,
When all I loved is changed or gone,
Mock with such taunts the woes of one,
Whose every thought--but let them pass--
Thou know'st I am not what I was.
But, above all, if thou wouldst hold
Place in a heart that ne'er was cold,
By all the powers that men revere,
By all unto thy bosom dear,
Thy joys below, thy hopes above,
Speak--speak of anything but love.

'Twere long to tell, and vain to hear,
The tale of one who scorns a tear;
And there is little in that tale
Which better bosoms would bewail.
But mine has suffer'd more than well
'Twould suit philosophy to tell.
I've seen my bride another's bride,--
Have seen her seated by his side,-
Have seen the infant, which she bore,
Wear the sweet smile the mother wore,
When she and I in youth have smiled,
As fond and faultless as her child;
Have seen her eyes, in cold disdain,
Ask if I felt no secret pain
And I have acted well my part,
And made my cheek belie my heart,
Return'd the freezing glance she gave:
Yet felt the while that woman's slave;--
Have kiss'd, as if without design,
The babe which ought to have been mine,
And show'd, alas! in each caress
Time had not made me love the less.

But let this pass--I'll whine no more,
Nor seek again an eastern shore;
The world befits a busy brain,--
I'll hie me to its haunts again.
But if, in some succeeding year,
When Britain's May is in the sere,'
Thou hear'st of one whose deepening crimes
Suit with the sablest of the times,
Of one, whom love nor pity sways,
Nor hope of fame, nor good men's praise;

One, who in stern ambition's pride,
Perchance not blood shall turn aside;
One rank'd in some recording page
With the worst anarchs of the age,
Him wile thou know--and knowing pause,
Nor with the effect forget the cause.

Newstead Abbey, Oct. 11, 1811.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Epistle To Augusta

I.

My sister! my sweet sister! if a name
Dearer and purer were, it should be thine;
Mountains and seas divide us, but I claim
No tears, but tenderness to answer mine:
Go where I will, to me thou art the same-
A loved regret which I would not resign,
There yet are two things in my des-tiny, -
A world to roam through, and a home with thee.

II.

The first were nothing-had I still the last,
It were the haven of my happiness;
But other claims and other ties thou hast,
And mine is not the wish to make them less.
A strange doom is thy father's son's, and past
Recalling, as it lies beyond redress;
Reversed for him our grandsire's fate of yore,
He had no rest at sea, nor I on shore.

III.

If my inheritance of storms hath been
In other elements, and on the rocks
Of perils, overlook'd or unforeseen,
I have sustain'd my share of worldly shocks,
The fault was mine; nor do I seek to screen
My errors with defensive paradox;
I have been cunning in mine overthrow,
The careful pilot of my proper woe.

IV.

Mine were my faults, and mine be their reward.
My whole life was a contest, since the day
That gave me being, gave me that which marr'd
The gift,- a fate, or will, that walk'd astray;
And I at times have found the struggle hard,
And thought of shaking off my bonds of clay:
But now I fain would for a time survive,
If but to see what next can well arrive.

V.

Kingdoms and empires in my little day
I have outlived, and yet I am not old;
And when I look on this, the petty spray
Of my own years of trouble, which have roll'd
Like a wild bay of breakers, melts away
Something-I know not what-does still uphold
A spirit of slight patience; not in vain,
Even for its own sake, do we purchase pain.

VI.

Perhaps the workings of defiance stir

Within me - or perhaps a cold despair,
Brought on when ills habitually recur,
Perhaps a kinder clime, or purer air,
(For even to this may change of soul refer,
And with light armour we may learn to bear,)
Have taught me a strange quiet, which was not
The chief companion of a calmer lot.

VII.

I feel almost at times as I have felt
In happy childhood; trees, and flowers, and brooks,
Which do remember me of where I dwelt
Ere my young mind was sacrificed to books,
Come as of yore upon me, and can melt
My heart with recognition of their looks;
And even at moments I could think I see
Some living thing to love-but none like thee.

VIII.

Here are the Alpine landscapes which create
A fund for contemplation;- to admire
Is a brief feeling of a trivial date;
But something worthier do such scenes inspire:
Here to be lonely is not desolate'
For much I view which I could most desire,
And, above all, a lake I can behold
Lovelier, not dearer, than our own of old.

IX.

Oh that thou wert but with me! - but I grow
The fool of my own wishes, and forget
The solitude which I have vaunted so
Has lost its praise in this but one regret;
There may be others which I less may show
I am not of the plaintive mood, and yet
I feel an ebb in my philosophy,
And the tide rising in my alter'd eye.

X.

I did remind thee of our own dear Lake,
By the old Hall which may be mine no more.
Leman's is fair; but think not I forsake
The sweet remembrance of a dearer shore:
Sad havoc Time must with my memory make,
Ere that or thou can fade these eyes before;
Though, like all things which I have loved they are
Resign'd For ever, or divided far.

XI.

The world is all before me; I but ask
Of Nature that with which she will comply
It is but in her summer's sun to bask,

To mingle with the quiet of her sky,
To see her gentle face without a mask,
And never gaze on it with apathy.
She was my early friend, and now shall be
My sister - till I look again on thee.

XII.

I can reduce all feelings but this one;
And that I would not; for at length I see
Such scenes as those wherein my life begun.
The earliest - even the only paths for me -
Had I but sooner learnt the crowd to shun,
I had been better than I now can be;
The passions which have torn me would have slept;
I had not suffer'd, and thou hadst not wept.

XIII.

With false Ambition what had I to do?
Little with Love, and least of all with Fame;
And yet they came unsought, and with me grew,
And made me all which they can make - a name.
Yet this was not the end I did pursue;
Surely I once beheld a nobler aim.
But all is over - I am one the more
To baffled millions which have gone before.

XIV.

And for the future, this world's future may
From me demand but little of my care;
I have outlived myself by many a day;
Having survived so many things that were;
My years have been no slumber, but the prey
Of ceaseless vigils; for I had the share
Of life which might have fill'd a century,
Before its fourth in time had pass'd me by.

XV.

And for the remnant which may be to come
I am content; and for the past I feel
Not thankless, -for within the crowded sum
Of struggles, happiness at times would steal,
And for the present, I would not benumb
My feelings further. - Nor shall I conceal
That with all this I still can look around,
And worship Nature with a thought profound.

XVI.

For thee, my own sweet sister, in thy heart
I know myself secure, as thou in mine;
We were and are - I am, even as thou art
Beings who ne'er each other can resign;
It is the same, together or apart,

From life's commencement to its slow decline
We are entwined-let death come slow or fast,
The tie which bound the first endures the last!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Epistle To Mr. Murray

My dear Mr. Murray,
You're in a damn'd hurry,
To set up this ultimate Canto;
But (if they don't rob us)
You'll see Mr. Hobhouse
Will bring it safe in his portmanteau.

For the Journal you hint of,
As ready to print off,
No doubt you do right to commend it;
But as yet I have writ off
The devil a bit of
Our 'Beppo':--when copied, I'll send it.

Then you've Sotheby's Tour,--
No great things, to be sure,--
You could hardly begin with a less work;
For the pompous rascallion,
Who don't speak Italian
Nor French, must have scribbled by guess work.

You can make any loss up
With 'Spence' and his gossip,
A work which must surely succeed;
Then Queen Mary's Epistle-craft,
With the new 'Fytte' of 'Whistlecraft,'
Must make people purchase and read.

Then you've General Gordon,
Who girded his sword on,
To serve with a Muscovite master
And help him to polish
A nation so owlish,
They thought shaving their beards a disaster.

For the man, 'poor and shrewd,'
With whom you'd conclude
A compact without more delay,
Perhaps some such pen is
Still extant in Venice;
But please, sir, to mention your pay.

Venice, January 8, 1818.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Epitaph

Posterity will ne'er survey
A nobler grave than this:
Here lie the bones of Castlereagh:
Stop, traveler--

George Gordon Lord Byron

Epitaph For Joseph Blackett, Late Poet And Shoemaker

Stranger! behold, interr'd together,
The souls of learning and of leather.
Poor Joe is gone, but left his all:
You'll find his relics in a stall.
His works were neat, and often found
Well stitch'd, and with morocco bound.
Tread lightly -- where the bard is laid
He cannot mend the shoe he made;
Yet is he happy in his hole,
With verse immortal as his sole.
But still to business he held fast,
And stuck to Phobus to the last.
Then who shall say so good a fellow
Was only 'leather and prunella?'
For character - he did not lack it
And if he did, 'twere shame to 'Black it.
Malta, May 16, 1811.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Epitaph For William Pitt

With death doom'd to grapple,
Beneath this cold slab, he
Who lied in the Chapel
Now lies in the Abbey.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Epitaph On A Beloved Friend

Oh, Friend! for ever loved, for ever dear!
What fruitless tears have bathed thy honour'd bier!
What sighs re'echo'd to thy parting breath,
Wilst thou wast struggling in the pangs of death!
Could tears retard the tyrant in his course;
Could sighs avert his dart's relentless force;
Could youth and virtue claim a short delay,
Or beauty charm the spectre from his prey;
Thou still hadst lived to bless my aching sight,
Thy comrade's honour and thy friends delight.
If yet thy gentle spirit hover nigh
The spot where now thy mouldering ashes lie,
Here wilt thou read, recorded on my heart,
A grief too deep to trust the sculptor's art.
No marble marks thy couch of lowly sleep,
But living statues there are seen to weep;
Affliction's semblance bands not o'er thy tomb,
Affliction's self deplores thy youthful doom.
What though thy sire lament his failing line,
A father's sorrows cannot equal mine!
Though none, like thee, his dying hour will cheer,
Yet other offspring soothe his anguish here:
But who with me shall hold thy former place?
Thine image what new friendship can efface?
Ah, none! - a father's tears will cease to flow,
Time will assuage an infant brother's woe;
To all, save one, is consolation known,
While solitary friendship sighs alone.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Epitaph On John Adams, Of Southwell - A Carrier, Who Died Of Drunkenness

JOHN ADAMS lies here, of the parish of Southwell,
A Carrier who carried his can to his mouth well:
He carried so much, and he carried so fast,
He could carry no more; so was carried at last;
For, the liquor he drank, being too much for one,
He could not carry off,--so he's now carri-on.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Euthanasia

When Time, or soon or late, shall bring
The dreamless sleep that lulls the dead,
Oblivion! may thy languid wing
Wave gently o'er my dying bed!

No band of friends or heirs be there,
To weep, or wish, the coming blow:
No maiden, with dishevelled hair,
To feel, or feign, decorous woe.

But silent let me sink to earth,
With no officious mourners near:
I would not mar one hour of mirth,
Nor startle friendship with a tear.

Yet Love, if Love in such an hour
Could nobly check its useless sighs,
Might then exert its latest power
In her who lives, and him who dies.

'Twere sweet, my Psyche! to the last
Thy features still serene to see:
Forgetful of its struggles past,
E'en Pain itself should smile on thee.

But vain the wish?for Beauty still
Will shrink, as shrinks the ebbing breath;
And women's tears, produced at will,
Deceive in life, unman in death.

Then lonely be my latest hour,
Without regret, without a groan;
For thousands Death hath ceas'd to lower,
And pain been transient or unknown.

'Ay, but to die, and go,' alas!
Where all have gone, and all must go!
To be the nothing that I was
Ere born to life and living woe!

Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
And know, whatever thou hast been,
'Tis something better not to be.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Fare Thee Well

Fare thee well! and if for ever,
Still for ever, fare thee well:
Even though unforgiving, never
'Gainst thee shall my heart rebel.

Would that breast were bared before thee
Where thy head so oft hath lain.
While that placid sleep came o'er thee
Which thou ne'er canst know again;

Would that breast, by thee glanced over,
Every inmost thought could show!
Then thou wouldst at last discover
'Twas not well to spurn it so.

Though the world for this commend thee--
Though it smile upon the blow,
Even its praises must offend thee,
Founded on another's woe:

Though my many faults defaced me,
Could no other arm be found,
Than the one which once embraced me,
To inflict a cureless wound?

Yet, oh yet, thyself deceive not;
Love may sink by slow decay,
But by sudden wrench, believe not
Hearts can thus be torn away:

Still thine own its life retaineth,
Still must mine, though bleeding, beat;
And the undying thought which paineth
Is - that we no more may meet.

These are words of deeper sorrow
Than the wail above the dead;
Both shall live, but every morrow
Wake us from a widow'd bed.

And when thou wouldst solace gather,
When our child's first accents flow,
Wilt thou teach her to say 'Father!'
Though his care she must forego?

When her little hands shall press thee,
When her lip to thine is press'd
Think of him whose prayer shall bless thee,
Think of him thy love had bless'd!

Should her lineaments resemble
Those thou never more may'st see,

Then thy heart will softly tremble
With a pulse yet true to me.

All my faults perchance thou knowest,
All my madness none can know;
All my hopes where'er thou goest,
Wither, yet with thee they go.

Every feeling hath been shaken;
Pride, which not a world could bow,
Bows to thee--by thee forsaken,
Even my soul forsakes me now:

But 'tis done--all words are idle--
Words from me are vainer still;
But the thoughts we cannot bridle
Force their way without the will.

Fare thee well! thus disunited,
Torn from every nearer tie
Sear'd in heart, and lone, and blighted,
More than this I scarce can die.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Farewell To Malta

Adieu, ye joys of La Valette!
Adieu, sirocco, sun, and sweat!
Adieu, thou palace rarely enter'd!
Adieu, ye mansions where I've ventured!
Adieu, ye cursed streets of stairs!
(How surely he who mounts you swears!)
Adieu, ye merchants often failing!
Adieu, thou mob for ever railing!
Adieu, ye packets without letters!
Adieu, ye fools who ape your betters!
Adieu, thou damned'st quarantine,
That gave me fever, and the spleen!
Adieu, that stage which makes us yawn, Sirs,
Adieu, his Excellency's dancers!
Adieu to Peter--whom no fault's in,
But could not teach a colonel waltzing;
Adieu, ye females fraught with graces!
Adieu, red coats, and redder faces!
Adieu, the supercilious air
Of all that strut 'en militaire'!
I go--but God knows when, or why,
To smoky towns and cloudy sky,
To things (the honest truth to say)
As bad--but in a different way.

Farewell to these, but not adieu,
Triumphant sons of truest blue!
While either Adriatic shore,
And fallen chiefs, and fleets no more,
And nightly smiles, and daily dinners,
Proclaim you war and woman's winners.
Pardon my Muse, who apt to prate is,
And take my rhyme--because 'tis 'gratis.'

And now I've got to Mrs. Fraser,
Perhaps you think I mean to praise her--
And were I vain enough to think
My praise was worth this drop of ink,
A line--or two--were no hard matter,
As here, indeed, I need not flatter:
But she must be content to shine
In better praises than in mine,
With lively air, and open heart,
And fashion's ease, without its art;
Her hours can gaily glide along,
Nor ask the aid of idle song.

And now, O Malta! since thou'st got us,
Thou little military hothouse!
I'll not offend with words uncivil,
And wish thee rudely at the Devil,
But only stare from out my casement,

And ask, for what is such a place meant?
Then, in my solitary nook,
Return to scribbling, or a book,
Or take my physic while I'm able
(Two spoonfuls hourly by the label),
Prefer my nightcap to my beaver,
And bless the gods I've got a fever.

May 26, 1811.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Farewell To The Muse

Thou Power! who hast ruled me through Infancy's days,
Young offspring of Fancy, 'tis time we should part;
Then rise on the gale this the last of my lays,
The coldest effusion which springs from my heart.

This bosom, responsive to rapture no more,
Shall hush thy wild notes, nor implore thee to sing;
The feelings of childhood, which taught thee to soar,
Are wafted far distant on Apathy's wing.

Though simple the themes of my rude flowing Lyre,
Yet even these themes are departed for ever;
No more beam the eyes which my dream could inspire,
My visions are flown, to return, alas, never!

When drain'd is the nectar which gladdens the bowl,
How vain is the effort delight to prolong!
When cold is the beauty which dwelt in my soul,
What magic of Fancy can lengthen my song?

Can the lips sing of Love in the desert alone,
Of kisses and smiles which they now must resign?
Or dwell with delight on the hours that are flown?
Ah, no! for those hours can no longer be mine.

Can they speak of the friends that I lived but to love?
Ah, surely Affection ennobles the strain!
But how can my numbers in sympathy move,
When I scarcely can hope to behold them again?

Can I sing of the deeds which my Fathers have done,
And raise my loud harp to the fame of my Sires?
For glories like theirs, oh, how faint is my tone!
For Heroes' exploits how unequal my fires!

Untouch'd, then, my Lyre shall reply to the blast--
'Tis hush'd; and my feeble endeavors are o'er;
And those who have heard it will pardon the past,
When they know that its murmurs shall vibrate no more.

And soon shall its wild erring notes be forgot,
Since early affection and love is o'er cast:
Oh! blest had my Fate been, and happy my lot,
Had the first strain of love been the dearest, the last.

Farewell, my young Muse! since we now can ne'er meet;
If our songs have been languid, they surely are few:
Let us hope that the present at least will be sweet--
The present--which seals our eternal Adieu.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Farewell! If Ever Fondest Prayer

Farewell! if ever fondest prayer
For other's weal avail'd on high,
Mine will not all be lost in air,
But waft thy name beyond the sky.
Twere vain to speak, to weep, to sigh:
Oh! more than tears of blood can tell,
When wrung from guilt's expiring eye,
Are in that word--Farewell!--Farewell!

These lips are mute, these eyes are dry;
But in my breast and in my brain,
Awake the pangs that pass not by,
The thought that ne'er shall sleep again.
My soul nor deigns nor dares complain
Though grief and passion there rebel;
I only know we loved in vain--
I only feel--Farewell!--Farewell!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Fill The Goblet Again: A Song

Fill the goblet again! for I never before
Felt the glow which now gladdens my heart to its core;
Let us drink!--who would not?--since, through life's varied round,
In the goblet alone no deception is found.

I have tried in its turn all that life can supply;
I have bask'd in the beam of a dark rolling eye;
I have loved!--who has not?--but what heart can declare
That pleasure existed while passion was there?

In the days of my youth, when the heart's in its spring,
And dreams that affection can never take wing,
I had friends!--who has not?--but what tongue will avow,
That friends, rosy wine! are so faithful as thou?

The heart of a mistress some boy may estrange,
Friendship shifts with the sunbeam--thou never canst change;
Thou grow'st old--who does not?--but on earth what appears,
Whose virtues, like thine, still increase with its years?

Yet if blest to the utmost that love can bestow,
Should a rival bow down to our idol below,
We aree jealous!--who is not?--thou hast no such alloy;
For the more that enjoy thee, the more we enjoy.

Then the season of youth and its vanities past,
For refuge we fly to the goblet at last;
There we find--do we not?--in the flow of the soul,
That truth, as of yore, is confined to the bowl.

When the box of Pandora was opened on earth,
And Misery's triumph commenced over Mirth,
Hope was left,--was she not?--but the goblet we kiss,
And care not for Hope, who are certain of bliss.

Long life to the grape! for when summer is flown,
The age of our nectar shall gladden our own:
We must die--who shall not?--May our sins be forgiven,
And Hebe shall never be idle in heaven.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Fragment Of An Epistle To Thomas Moore

'What say I?'--not a syllable further in prose;
I'm your man 'of all measures,' dear Tom,--so here goes!
Here goes, for a swim on the stream of old Time,
On those buoyant supporters, the blad-ders of rhyme.
If our weight breaks them down, and we sink in the flood,
We are smother'd, at least, in respectable mud,
Where the Divers of Bathos lie drown'd in a heap,
And Southey's last Pæan has pillow'd his sleep;
That Felo de se,' who, half drunk with his malmsey,
Walk'd out of his depth and was lost in a calm sea,
Singing 'Glory to God' in a spick and span stanza,
The like (since Tom Sternhold was choked) never man saw.

The papers have told you, no doubt, of the fusses,
The fetes, and the gapings to get at these Russes,--
Of his Majesty's suite, up from coach-man to Hetman,
And what dignity decks the flat face of the great man.
I saw him, last week, at two balls and a party,--
For a prince, his demeanour was rather too hearty.
You know we are used to quite different graces,

The Czar's look, I own, was much brighter and brisker,
But then he is sadly deficient in whisker;
And wore but a starless blue coat, and in kersey--
Mere breeches whisk'd round, in a waltz with the Jersey,
Who lovely as ever, seem'd just as delighted
With Majesty's presence as those she invited.

June 1814.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Francisca

Francisca walks in the shadow of night,
But it is not to gaze on the heavenly light -
But if she sits in her garden bower,
'Tis not for the sake of its blowing flower.
She listens - but not for the nightingale -
Though her ear expects as soft a tale.
There winds a step through the foliage thick,
And her cheek grows pale, and her heart beats quick.
There whispers a voice thro' the rustling leaves;
A moment more and they shall meet -
'Tis past - her lover's at her feet.

George Gordon Lord Byron

From Anacreon

I wish to tune my quivering lyre
To deed of fame and notes of fire;
To echo, from its rising swell,
How heroes fought and nations fell,
When Atreus' sons advanced to war,
Or Tyrian Cadmus roved afar;
But still, to martial strains unknown,
My lyre recurs to love alone.
Fired with the hope of future fame,
I seek some nobler hero's name;
The dying chords are strung anew,
To war, to war, my harp is due.
With glowing strings, the epic strain
To Jove's great son I raise again;
Alcides and his glorious deeds,
Beneath whose arm the Hydra bleeds.
All, all in vain; my wayward lyre
Wakes silver notes of soft desire.
Adieu, ye chiefs renown'd in arms!
Adieu the clang of war's alarms!
To other deeds my soul is strung,
And sweeter notes shall now be sung;
My harp shall all its powers reveal,
To tell the tale my heart must feel;
Love, Love alone, my lyre shall claim,
In songs of bliss and sighs of flame.

George Gordon Lord Byron

From Anacreon: 'Twas Now The Hour When Night Had Driven

'Twas now the hour when Night had driven
Her car half round yon sable heaven;
Boötes, only, seem'd to roll
His arctic charge around the pole;
While mortals, lost in gentle sleep,
Forgot to smile, or ceased to weep:
At this lone hour the Paphian boy,
Descending from the realms of joy,
Quick to my gate directs his course,
And knocks with all his little force.
My visions fled, alarm'd I rose,--
'What stranger breaks my blest repose?'
'Alas!' replies the wily child,
In faltering accents sweetly mild,
'A hapless infant here I roam,
Far from my dear maternal home.
Oh! shield me from the wintry blast!
The nightly storm is pouring fast.
No prowling robber lingers here.
A wandering baby who can fear?'
I heard his seeming artless tale,
I heard his sighs upon the gale:
My breast was never pity's foe,
But felt for all the baby's woe.
I drew the bar, and by the light
Young Love, the infant, met my sight;
His bow across his shoulders flung,
And thence his fatal quiver hung
(Ah! little did I think the dart
Would rankle soon within my heart).
With care I tend my weary guest,
His little fingers chill my breast;
His glossy curls, his azure wing,
Which droop with nightly showers, I wring;
His shivering limbs the embers warm;
And now reviving from the storm,
Scarce had he felt his wonted glow,
Than swift he seized his slender bow:-
'I fain would know, my gentle host,'
He cried, 'if this its strength has lost;
I fear, relax'd with midnight dews,
The strings their former aid refuse.'
With poison tipt, his arrow flies,
Deep in my tortured heart it lies:
Then loud the joyous urchin laugh'd:-
'My bow can still impel the shaft:
'Tis firmly fix'd, thy sighs reveal it;
Say, courteous host, canst thou not feel it?'

George Gordon Lord Byron

From The French

ÆGLE, beauty and poet, has two little crimes;
She makes her own face, and does not make her rhymes.

George Gordon Lord Byron

From The Last Hill That Looks On Thy Once Holy Dome

I.

From the last hill that looks on thy once holy dome,
I beheld thee, Oh Sion! when rendered to Rome:
'Twas thy last sun went down, and the flames of thy fall
Flash'd back on the last glance I gave to thy wall.

II.

I look'd for thy temple, I look'd for my home,
And forgot for a moment my bondage to come;
I beheld but the death-fire that fed on thy fane,
And the fast-fetter'd hands that made vengeance in vain.

III.

Oh many an eve, the high spot whence I gazed
Had reflected the last beam of day as it blazed;
While I stood on the height, and beheld the decline
Of the rays from the mountain that shone on thy shrine.

IV.

And now on that mountain I stood on that day,
But I marked not the twilight beam melting away;
Oh! would that the lightning had glared in its stead,
And the thunderbolt burst on the conqueror's head!

V.

But the Gods of the Pagan shall never profane
The shrine where Jehovah disdain'd not to reign;
And scattered and scorn'd as thy people may be,
Our worship, oh Father! is only for thee.

George Gordon Lord Byron

From The Portuguese, 'Tu Mi Chamas'

In moments to delight devoted,
'My life!' with tenderest tone you cry;
Dear words! on which my heart had doted,
If youth could neither fade nor die.

To death even hours like these must roll,
Ah! then repeat those accents never;
Or change 'my life!' into 'my soul!'
Which, like my love, exists for ever.

ANOTHER VERSION

You call me still your life.--Oh! change the word--
Life is as transient as the inconstant sigh:
Say rather I'm your soul; more just that name,
For, like the soul, my love can never die.

George Gordon Lord Byron

From The Prometheus Vinctus Of Aeschylus

Great Jove, to whose almighty throne
Both gods and mortals homage pay,
Ne'er may my soul thy power disown,
Thy dread behests ne'er disobey.
Oft shall the sacred victim fall
In sea-girt Ocean's mossy hall;
My voice shall raise no impious strain
'Gainst him who rules the sky and azure main.

How different now thy joyless fate,
Since first Hesione thy bride,
When placed aloft in godlike state,
The blushing beauty by the side,
Thou sat'st, while reverend Oceān smiled,
And mirthful strains the hours beguiled;
The Nymphs and Tritons dances around,
Nor yet thy doom was fix'd, nor Jove relentless frown'd.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Granta: A Medley

Oh! could Le Sage's demon's gift
Be realized at my desire,
This night my trembling form he'd lift
To place it on St. Mary's spire.

Then would, unroof'd, old Granta's halls
Pedantic inmates full display;
Fellows who dream on lawn or stalls'
The price of venal votes to pay.

Then would I view each rival wight,
Petty and Palreerston survey;
Who canvass there with all their might,
Against the next elective day.

Lo! candidates and voters lie
All lull'd in sleep, a goodly number;
A race renown'd for piety
Whose conscience won't disturb their slumber.

Lord H –, indeed, may not demur:
Fellows are sage, reflecting men:
They know preferment can occur
But very seldom, – now and then.

They know the Chancellor has got
Some pretty livings in disposal:
Each hopes that one may be his lot,
And therefore smiles on his proposal.

Now from the soporific scene
I'll turn mine eye, as night grows later,
To view, unheeded and unseen,
The studious sons of Alma Mater.

There, in apartments small and damp,
The candidate for college prizes
Sits poring by the midnight lamp;
Goes late to bed, yet early rises.

He surely well deserves to gain them,
With all the honours of his college,
Who, striving hardly to obtain them,
Thus seeks unprofitable knowledge:

Who sacrifices hours of rest
To scan precisely meres Attic;
Or agitates his anxious breast
In solving problems mathematic:

Who reads false quantities in Seale,
Or puzzles o'er the deep triangle;

Deprived of many a wholesome meal;
In barbarous Latin doom'd to wrangle:

Renouncing every pleasing page
From authors of historic use;
Preferring to the letter'd sage
The square of the hypothenuse.

Still, harmless are these occupations
That hurt none but the hapless student,
Compared with other recreations,
Which bring together the imprudent;

Whose daring revels shock the sight,
When vice and infamy combine,
When drunkenness and dice invite,
As every sense is steep'd in wine.

Not so the methodistic crew,
Who plans of reformation lay:
In humble attitude they sue,
And for the sins of others pray:

Forgetting that their pride of spirit
Their exultation in their trial
Detracts most largely from the merit
Of all their boasted self-denial.

'Tis morn:- from these I turn my sight.
What scene is this which meets the eye?
A numerous crowd, array'd in white,
Across the green in numbers fly.

Loud rings in air the chapel bell;
'Tis hush'd:-what sounds are these I hear?
The organ's soft celestial swell
Rolls deeply on the list'ning ear.

To this is join'd the sacred song,
The royal minstrel's hallow'd strain;
Though he who hears the music long
Will never wish to hear again.

.Our choir would be scarcely excused,
Even as a band of raw beginners;
All mercy now must be refused
To such a set of croaking sinners.

If David, when his toils were ended,
Had heard these blockheads sing before him,
To us his psalms had ne'er descended,-
In furious mood he would have tore 'em.

The luckless Israelites, when taken
By some inhuman tyrant's order,
Were ask'd to sing, by joy forsaken
On Babylonian river's border.

Oh! had they sung in notes like these,
Inspired by stratagem or fear,
They might have set their hearts at ease
The devil a soul had stay'd to hear.

But if I scribble longer now
The deuce a soul will stay to read;
My pen is blunt, my ink is low;
'Tis almost time to stop, indeed.

Therefore, farewell old Granta's spires!
No more like Cleofas, I fly;
No more thy theme my muse inspires;
The reader's tired, and so am I.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Herod's Lament For Mariamne

Oh, Mariamne! now for thee
The heart of which thou bled'st is bleeding;
Revenge is lost in agony,
And wild remorse to rage succeeding.
Oh, Mariamne! where art thou?
Thou canst not hear my bitter pleading:
Ah! could'st thou--thou would'st pardon now,
Though Heaven were to my prayer unheeding.

And is she dead?--and did they dare
Obey my frenzy's jealous raving?
My wrath but doom'd my own despair:
The sword that smote her's o'er me waving.--
But thou art cold, my murder'd love!
And this dark heart is vainly craving
For her who soars alone above,
And leaves my soul unworthy saving.

She's gone, who shared my diadem;
She sunk, with her my joys entombing;
I swept that flower from Judah's stem,
Whose leaves for me alone were blooming;
And mine's the guilt, and mine the hell,
This bosom's desolation dooming;
And I have earn'd those tortures well,
Which unconsumed are still consuming!

George Gordon Lord Byron

I Saw Thee Weep

I saw thee weep--the big bright tear
Came o'er that eye of blue;
And then methought it did appear
A violet dropping dew:
I saw thee smile--the sapphire's blaze
Beside thee ceased to shine;
It could not match the living rays
That filled that glance of thine.
As clouds from yonder sun receive
A deep and mellow dye,
Which scarce the shade of coming eve
Can banish from the sky,
Those smiles unto the moodiest mind
Their own pure joy impart;
Their sunshine leaves a glow behind
That lightens o'er the heart.

George Gordon Lord Byron

I Speak Not, I Trace Not, I Breathe Not Thy Name

I speak not, I trace not, I breathe not thy name;
There is grief in the sound, there is guilt in the fame;
But the tear that now burns on my cheek may impart
The deep thoughts that dwell in that silence of heart.
Too brief for our passion, too long for our peace,
Were those hours - can their joy or their bitterness cease?
We repent, we abjure, we will break from our chain, -
We will part, we will fly to - unite it again!
Oh! thine be the gladness, and mine be the guilt!
Forgive me, adored one! - forsake if thou wilt;
But the heart which is thine shall expire undebased,
And man shall not break it - whatever thou may'st.
And stern to the haughty, but humble to thee,
This soul in its bitterest blackness shall be;
And our days seem as swift, and our moments more sweet,
With thee at my side, than with worlds at our feet.
One sigh of thy sorrow, one look of thy love,
Shall turn me or fix, shall reward or reprove.
And the heartless may wonder at all I resign -
Thy lips shall reply, not to them, but to mine.

May, 1814.

George Gordon Lord Byron

I Would I Were a Careless Child

I would I were a careless child,
Still dwelling in my highland cave,
Or roaming through the dusky wild,
Or bounding o'er the dark blue wave;
The cumbrous pomp of Saxon pride
Accords not with the freeborn soul,
Which loves the mountain's craggy side,
And seeks the rocks where billows roll.

Fortune! take back these cultured lands,
Take back this name of splendid sound!
I hate the touch of servile hands,
I hate the slaves that cringe around.
Place me among the rocks I love,
Which sound to Ocean's wildest roar;
I ask but this -- again to rove
Through scenes my youth hath known before.

Few are my years, and yet I feel
The world was ne'er designed for me:
Ah! why do dark'ning shades conceal
The hour when man must cease to be?
Once I beheld a splendid dream,
A visionary scene of bliss:
Truth! -- wherefore did thy hated beam
Awake me to a world like this?

I loved -- but those I loved are gone;
Had friends -- my early friends are fled:
How cheerless feels the heart alone
When all its former hopes are dead!
Though gay companions o'er the bowl
Dispel awhile the sense of ill;
Though pleasure stirs the maddening soul,
The heart -- the heart -- is lonely still.

How dull! to hear the voice of those
Whom rank or chance, whom wealth or power,
Have made, though neither friends nor foes,
Associates of the festive hour.
Give me again a faithful few,
In years and feelings still the same,
And I will fly the midnight crew,
Where boist'rous joy is but a name.

And woman, lovely woman! thou,
My hope, my comforter, my all!
How cold must be my bosom now,
When e'en thy smiles begin to pall!
Without a sigh I would resign
This busy scene of splendid woe,
To make that calm contentment mine,

Which virtue knows, or seems to know.

Fain would I fly the haunts of men--
I seek to shun, not hate mankind;
My breast requires the sullen glen,
Whose gloom may suit a darken'd mind.
Oh! that to me the wings were given
Which bear the turtle to her nest!
Then would I cleave the vault of heaven,
To flee away and be at rest.

George Gordon Lord Byron

I would to heaven that I were so much clay

I would to heaven that I were so much clay,
As I am blood, bone, marrow, passion, feeling -
Because at least the past were passed away -
And for the future - (but I write this reeling,
Having got drunk exceedingly today,
So that I seem to stand upon the ceiling)
I say - the future is a serious matter -
And so - for God's sake - hock and soda water!

George Gordon Lord Byron

If Sometimes In The Haunts Of Men

If sometimes in the haunts of men
Thine image from my breast may fade,
The lonely hour presents again
The semblance of thy gentle shade:
And now that sad and silent hour
Thus much of thee can still restore,
And sorrow unobserved may pour
The plaint she dare not speak before.

Oh, pardon that in crowds awhile
I waste one thought I owe to thee,
And self-condemn'd, appear to smile,
Unfaithful to thy memory:
Nor deem that memory less dear,
That then I seem not to repine;
I would not fools should overhear
One sigh that should be wholly thine.

If not the goblet pass unquaff'd,
It is not drain'd to banish care;
The cup must hold a deadlier draught,
That brings a Lethe for despair.
And could Oblivion set my soul
From all her troubled visions free,
I'd dash to earth the sweetest bowl
That drown'd a single thought of thee.

For wert thou vanish'd from my mind,
Where could my vacant bosom turn?
And who would then remain behind
To honour thine abandon'd Um?
No, no - it is my sorrow's pride
That last dear duty to fulfil:
Though all the world forget beside,
'Tis meet that I remember still.

For well I know, that such had been
Thy gentle care for him, who now
Unmourn'd shall quit this mortal scene,
Where none regarded him, but thou:
And, oh! I feel in that was given
A blessing never meant for me;
Thou wert too like a dream of Heaven
For earthly Love to merit thee.

George Gordon Lord Byron

If That High World

If that high world, which lies beyond
Our own, surviving Love endears;
If there the cherish'd heart be fond,
The eye the same, except in tears -
How welcome those untrodden spheres!
How sweet this very your to die!
To soar from earth and find all fears
Lost in thy light - Eternity!

It must be so: 'tis not for self
That we so tremble on the brink;
And striving to o'erleap the gulf,
Yet cling to Being's severing link.
Oh! in that future let us think
To hold each heart the heart that shares;
With them the immortal waters drink,
And soul in soul grow deathless theirs

George Gordon Lord Byron

Imitated From Catullus: To Ellen

Oh! might I kiss those eyes of fire,
A million scarce would quench desire:
Still would I steep my lips in bliss,
And dwell an age on every kiss;
Nor then my soul should sated be,
Still would I kiss and cling to thee:
Nought should my kiss from thine dissever;
Still would we kiss, and kiss for ever,
E'en though the numbers did exceed
The yellow harvest's countless seed.
To part would be a vain endeavor:
Could I desist? -- ah! never -- never!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Imitation Of Tibullus

'Sulpicia ad Cerinthum.'--Lib. iv.

Cruel Cerinthus! does the fell disease
Which racks my breast your fickle bosom please?
Alas! I wish'd but to o'ercome the pain,
That I might live for love and you again;
But now I scarcely shall bewail my fate:
By death alone I can avoid your hate

George Gordon Lord Byron

Impromptu

Beneath Blessington's eyes
The reclaimed Paradise
Should be free as the former from evil;
But if the new Eve
For an Apple should grieve,
What mortal would not play the Devil.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Impromptu, In Reply To A Friend

When, from the heart where Sorrow sits,
Her dusky shadow mounts too high,
And o'er the changing aspect flits,
And clouds the brow, or fills the eye;
Heed not that gloom, which soon shall sink:
My thoughts their dungeon know too well;
Back to my breast the wanderers shrink,
And droop within their silent cell.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Impromptus

Strahan, Tonson, Lintot of the times,
Patron and publisher of rhymes,
For thee the bard up Pindus climbs,
 My Murray.

To thee, with hope and terror dumb,
The unfledged MS. authors come;
Thou printest all-and sellest some-
 My Murray.

Upon thy table's baize so green
The last new Quarterly is seen,-
But where is thy new Magazine,
 My Murray?

Along thy sprucest bookshelves shine
The works thou deemest most divine-
The "Art of Cookery," and mine,
 My Murray.

Tours, Travels, Essays, too, I wist,
And Sermons, to thy mill bring grist;
And then thou hast the "Navy List,"
 My Murray.

And Heaven forbid I should conclude
Without "the Board of Longitude,"
Although this narrow paper would,
 My Murray.

When a man hath no freedom to fight for at home,
 Let him combat for that of his neighbours;
Let him think of the glories of Greece and of Rome,
 And get knock'd on the head for his labours.

To do good to mankind is the chivalrous plan,
 And is always as nobly requited;
Then battle for freedom wherever you can,
 And, if not shot or hang'd, you'll get knighted.

George Gordon Lord Byron

In The Valley Of The Waters

In the valley of the waters we wept o'er the day
When the host of the stranger made Salem his prey,
And our heads on our bosoms all droopingly lay,
And our hearts were so full of the land far away.

The song they demanded in vain--it lay still
In our souls as the wind that died on the hill;
They called for the harp--but our blood they shall spill
Ere our right hand shall teach them one tone of our skill.

All stringlessly hung on the willow's sad tree,
As dead as her dead leaf those mute harps must be;
Our hands may be fetter'd--our tears still are free,
For our God and our glory--and, Sion!--Oh, thee.

George Gordon Lord Byron

In the valley of the waters we wept o'er the day

When some proud son of man returns to earth,
Unknown to glory, but upheld by birth,
The sculptor's art exhausts the pomp of woe,
And storied urns record who rest below:
When all is done, upon the tomb is seen,
Not what he was, but what he should have been:
But the poor dog, in life the firmest friend,
The first to welcome, foremost to defend,
Whose honest heart, is still his master's own,
Who labours, fights, lives, breathes for him alone,
Unhonour'd falls, unnoticed all his worth,
Denied in heaven the soul he held on earth,
While man, vain insect! hopes to be forgiven,
And claims himself a sole exclusive heaven.
Oh man! thou feeble tenant of an hour,
Debased by slavery, or corrupt by power,
Who knows thee well must quit thee with disgust,
Degraded mass of animated dust!
Thy love is lust, thy friendship all a cheat,
Thy smiles hypocrisy, thy words deceit!
By nature vile, ennobled but by name,
Each kindred brute might bid thee blush for shame.
Ye! who perchance behold this simple urn,
Pass on--it honours none you wish to mourn:
To mark a friend's remains these stones arise;
I never knew but one,--and here he lies.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Inscription On The Monument Of A Newfoundland Dog

When some proud son of man returns to earth,
Unknown to glory, but upheld by birth,
The sculptor's art exhausts the pomp of woe,
And storied urns record who rest below:
When all is done, upon the tomb is seen,
Not what he was, but what he should have been:
But the poor dog, in life the firmest friend,
The first to welcome, foremost to defend,
Whose honest heart, is still his master's own,
Who labours, fights, lives, breathes for him alone,
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Ye! who perchance behold this simple urn,
Pass on--it honours none you wish to mourn:
To mark a friend's remains these stones arise;
I never knew but one,--and here he lies.

George Gordon Lord Byron

It Is the Hour

It is the hour when from the boughs
The nightingale's high note is heard;
It is the hour -- when lover's vows
Seem sweet in every whisper'd word;
And gentle winds and waters near,
Make music to the lonely ear.
Each flower the dews have lightly wet,
And in the sky the stars are met,
And on the wave is deeper blue,
And on the leaf a browner hue,
And in the Heaven that clear obscure
So softly dark, and darkly pure,
That follows the decline of day
As twilight melts beneath the moon away.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Jeptha's Daughter

Since our Country, our God -- Oh, my Sire!
Demand that thy Daughter expire;
Since thy triumph was brought by thy vow--
Strike the bosom that's bared for thee now!

And the voice of my mourning is o'er,
And the mountains behold me no more:
If the hand that I love lay me low,
There cannot be pain in the blow!

And of this, oh, my Father! be sure--
That the blood of thy child is as pure
As the blessing I beg ere it flow,
And the last thought that soothes me below.

Though the virgins of Salem lament,
Be the judge and the hero unbent!
I have won the great battle for thee,
And my Father and Country are free!

When this blood of thy giving hath gush'd,
When the voice that thou lovest is hush'd,
Let my memory still be thy pride,
And forget not I smiled as I died!

George Gordon Lord Byron

John Keats

Who killed John Keats?
'I,' says the Quarterly,
So savage and Tartarly;
"Twas one of my feats.

Who shot the arrow?
'The poet-priest Milman
(So ready to kill man),
Or Southey or Barrow.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Lachin Y Gair

Away, ye gay landscapes, ye garden of roses!
In you let the minions of luxury rove;
Restore me to the rocks, where the snowflake reposes,
Though still they are sacred to freedom and love:
Yet, Caledonia, beloved are thy mountains,
Round their white summits though elements war;
Though cataracts foam 'stead of smooth-flowing fountains,
I sigh for the valley of dark Loch na Garr.

Ah! there my young footsteps in infancy wandered;
My cap was teh bonnet, my cloak was the plaid;
On chieftains long perished my memory pondered,
As daily I strode through the pine-covered glade;
I sought not my home till the day's dying glory
Gave place to the rays of the bright polar star;
For fancy was cheered by traditional story,
Disclosed by the natives of dark Loch na Garr.

"Shades of the dead! have I not heard your voices
Rise on the night-rolling breath of the gale?"
Surely the soul of the hero rejoices,
And rides on the wind, o'er his own Highland vale.
Rouch Loch na Garr while the stormy mist gathers,
Winter presides in his cold icy car:
Clouds there encircle the forms of my fathers;
They dwell in the tempests of dark Loch na Garr.

"Ill-starred, though brave, did no visions foreboding
Tell you that fate had forsaken your cause?"
Ah! were you destined to die at Culloden,
Victory crowned not your fall with applause:
Still were you happy in death's earthy slumber,
You rest with your clan in the caves of Braemar;
The pibroch resounds, to the piper's loud number,
Your deeds on the echoes of dark Loch na Garr.

Years have rolled on, Loch na Garr, since I left you,
Years must elapse ere I tread you again:
Nature of verdure and flowers has bereft you,
Yet still are you dearer than Albion's plain.
England! thy beauties are tame and domestic
To one who has roved o'er the mountains afar:
Oh for the crags that are wild and majestic!
The steep frowning glories of the dark Loch na Garr.

George Gordon Lord Byron

L'Amitté Est L'Amour

Why should my anxious breast repine.
Because my youth is fled?
Days of delight may still be mine;
Affection is not dead.
In tracing back the years of youth,
One firm record, one lasting truth,
Celestial consolation brings;
Bear it, ye breezes, to the seat,
Where first my heart responsive beat,-
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

Through few, but deeply chequer'd years,
What moments have been mine!
Now half obscured by clouds of tears,
Now bright in rays divine;
Howe'er my future doom be cast,
My soul, enraptured with the past,
To one idea fondly clings
Friendship! that thought is all thine own,
Worth worlds of bliss, that thought alone -
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

Where yonder yew-trees lightly wave
Their branches on the gale,
Unheeded heaves a simple grave,
Which tells the common tale;
Round this unconscious schoolboys stray,
Till the dull knell of childish play
From yonder studious mansion rings;
But here whene'er my footsteps move,
My silent tears too plainly prove
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

Oh, Love! before thy glowing shrine
My early vows were paid;
My hopes, my dreams, my heart was thine,
But these are now decay'd;
For thine are pinions like the wind,
No trace of thee remains behind,
Except, alas! thy Jealous stings.
Away, away! delusive power,
Thou shalt not haunt my coining hour;
Unless, indeed, without thy wings.

Seat of my youth! thy distant spire
Recalls each scene of joy;
My bosom glows with former fire,-
In mind again a boy.
Thy grove of elms thy verdant hill,
Thy every path delights me still,
Each flower a double fragrance flings;
Again, as once, in converse gay,

Each dear associate seems to say,
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

My Lycus! wherefore dost thou weep?
Thy falling tears restrain;
Affection for a time may sleep,
But, oh, 'twill wake again.
Think, think, my friend, when next we meet
Our long-wish'd interview, how sweet!
From this my hope of rapture springs;
While youthful hearts thus fondly swell,
Absence, my friend, can only tell
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

In one, and one alone deceived,
Did I my error mourn?
No — from oppressive bonds relieved,
I left the wretch to scorn.
I turn'd to those my childhood knew,
With feelings warm, with bosoms true,
Twined with my heart's according strings;
And till those vital chords shall break,
For none but these my breast shall wake
Friendship the power deprived of wings!

Ye few! my soul, my life is yours,
My memory and my hope;
Your worth a lasting love insures,
Unfetter'd in its scope;
From smooth deceit and terror sprung
With aspect fair and honey'd tongue,
Let Adulation wait on kings;
With joy elate, by snares beset,
We we, my friends, can ne'er forget
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

Fictions and dreams inspire the bard
Who rolls the epic song;
Friendship and truth be my reward -
To me no bays belong-
If laurell'd Fame but dwells with lies,
Me the enchantress ever flies,
Whose heart and not whose fancy sings;
Simple and young, I dare not feign;
Mine be the rude yet heartfelt strain,
'Friendship is Love without his wings!'

December 1806

George Gordon Lord Byron

Lara

LARA. [1]

CANTO THE FIRST.

I.

The Serfs are glad through Lara's wide domain, [2]
And slavery half forgets her feudal chain;
He, their unhoped, but unforgotten lord —
The long self-exiled chieftain is restored:
There be bright faces in the busy hall,
Bowls on the board, and banners on the wall;
Far chequering o'er the pictured window, plays
The unwonted fagots' hospitable blaze;
And gay retainers gather round the hearth,
With tongues all loudness, and with eyes all mirth.

II.

The chief of Lara is return'd again:
And why had Lara cross'd the bounding main?
Left by his sire, too young such loss to know,
Lord of himself; — that heritage of woe,
That fearful empire which the human breast
But holds to rob the heart within of rest! —
With none to check, and few to point in time
The thousand paths that slope the way to crime;
Then, when he most required commandment, then
Had Lara's daring boyhood govern'd men.
It skills not, boots not, step by step to trace
His youth through all the mazes of its race;
Short was the course his restlessness had run,
But long enough to leave him half undone.

III.

And Lara left in youth his fatherland;
But from the hour he waved his parting hand
Each trace wax'd fainter of his course, till all
Had nearly ceased his memory to recall.
His sire was dust, his vassals could declare,
'Twas all they knew, that Lara was not there;
Nor sent, nor came he, till conjecture grew
Cold in the many, anxious in the few.
His hall scarce echoes with his wonted name,
His portrait darkens in its fading frame,
Another chief consoled his destined bride,
The young forgot him, and the old had died;
"Yet doth he live!" exclaims the impatient heir,
And sighs for sables which he must not wear.
A hundred scutcheons deck with gloomy grace
The Laras' last and longest dwelling-place;

But one is absent from the mouldering file,
That now were welcome to that Gothic pile.

IV.

He comes at last in sudden loneliness,
And whence they know not, why they need not guess;
They more might marvel, when the greeting's o'er,
Not that he came, but came not long before:
No train is his beyond a single page,
Of foreign aspect, and of tender age.
Years had roll'd on, and fast they speed away
To those that wander as to those that stay;
But lack of tidings from another clime
Had lent a flagging wing to weary Time.
They see, they recognise, yet almost deem
The present dubious, or the past a dream.

He lives, nor yet is past his manhood's prime,
Though sear'd by toil, and something touch'd by time;
His faults, whate'er they were, if scarce forgot,
Might be untaught him by his varied lot;
Nor good nor ill of late were known, his name
Might yet uphold his patrimonial fame.
His soul in youth was haughty, but his sins
No more than pleasure from the stripling wins;
And such, if not yet harden'd in their course,
Might be redeem'd, nor ask a long remorse.

V.

And they indeed were changed — 'tis quickly seen,
Whate'er he be, 'twas not what he had been:
That brow in furrow'd lines had fix'd at last,
And spake of passions, but of passion past;
The pride, but not the fire, of early days,
Coldness of mien, and carelessness of praise;
A high demeanour, and a glance that took
Their thoughts from others by a single look;
And that sarcastic levity of tongue,
The stinging of a heart the world hath stung,
That darts in seeming playfulness around,
And makes those feel that will not own the wound:
All these seem'd his, and something more beneath
Than glance could well reveal, or accent breathe.
Ambition, glory, love, the common aim
That some can conquer, and that all would claim,
Within his breast appear'd no more to strive,
Yet seem'd as lately they had been alive;
And some deep feeling it were vain to trace
At moments lighten'd o'er his livid face.

VI.

Not much he loved long question of the past,
Nor told of wondrous wilds, and deserts vast,
In those far lands where he had wander'd lone,
And — as himself would have it seem — unknown:
Yet these in vain his eye could scarcely scan,
Nor glean experience from his fellow-man;
But what he had beheld he shunn'd to show,
As hardly worth a stranger's care to know;
If still more prying such inquiry grew,
His brow fell darker, and his words more few.

VII.

Not unrejoiced to see him once again,
Warm was his welcome to the haunts of men;
Born of high lineage, link'd in high command,
He mingled with the magnates of his land;
Join'd the carousals of the great and gay,
And saw them smile or sigh their hours away;
But still he only saw, and did not share
The common pleasure or the general care;
He did not follow what they all pursued,
With hope still baffled, still to be renew'd;
Nor shadowy honour, nor substantial gain,
Nor beauty's preference, and the rival's pain:
Around him some mysterious circle thrown
Repell'd approach, and showed him still alone;
Upon his eye sate something of reproof,
That kept at least frivolity aloof;
And things more timid that beheld him near,
In silence gazed, or whisper'd mutual fear;
And they the wiser, friendlier few confess'd
They deem'd him better than his air express'd.

VIII.

'Twas strange — in youth all action and all life,
Burning for pleasure, not averse from strife;
Woman — the field — the ocean — all that gave
Promise of gladness, peril of a grave,
In turn he tried — he ransack'd all below,
And found his recompence in joy or woe,
No tame, trite medium; for his feelings sought
In that intensesness an escape from thought:
The tempest of his heart in scorn had gazed
On that the feebler elements hath raised;
The rapture of his heart had look'd on high,
And ask'd if greater dwelt beyond the sky:
Chain'd to excess, the slave of each extreme,
How woke he from the wildness of that dream?

Alas! he told not — but he did awake
To curse the wither'd heart that would not break.

IX.

Books, for his volume heretofore was Man,
With eye more curious he appear'd to scan,
And oft, in sudden mood, for many a day
From all communion he would start away:
And then, his rarely call'd attendants said,
Through night's long hours would sound his hurried tread
O'er the dark gallery, where his fathers frown'd
In rude but antique portraiture around.
They heard, but whisper'd — "that must not be known —
The sound of words less earthly than his own.
Yes, they who chose might smile, but some had seen
They scarce knew what, but more than should have been.
Why gazed he so upon the ghastly head
Which hands profane had gather'd from the dead,
That still beside his open'd volume lay,
As if to startle all save him away?
Why slept he not when others were at rest?
Why heard no music, and received no guest?
All was not well, they deem'd — but where the wrong?
Some knew perchance — but 'twere a tale too long;
And such besides were too discreetly wise,
To more than hint their knowledge in surmise;
But if they would — they could" — around the board,
Thus Lara's vassals prattled of their lord.

X.

It was the night — and Lara's glassy stream
The stars are studding, each with imaged beam:
So calm, the waters scarcely seem to stray,
And yet they glide like happiness away;
Reflecting far and fairy-like from high
The immortal lights that live along the sky:
Its banks are fringed with many a goodly tree,
And flowers the fairest that may feast the bee;
Such in her chaplet infant Dian wove,
And Innocence would offer to her love.
These deck the shore; the waves their channel make
In windings bright and mazy like the snake.
All was so still, so soft in earth and air,
You scarce would start to meet a spirit there;
Secure that nought of evil could delight
To walk in such a scene, on such a night!
It was a moment only for the good:
So Lara deem'd, nor longer there he stood,
But turn'd in silence to his castle-gate;
Such scene his soul no more could contemplate.

Such scene reminded him of other days,
Of skies more cloudless, moons of purer blaze,
Of nights more soft and frequent, hearts that now —
No — no — the storm may beat upon his brow,
Unfelt — unsparing — but a night like this,
A night of beauty mock'd such breast as his.

XI.

He turn'd within his solitary hall,
And his high shadow shot along the wall;
There were the painted forms of other times,
'Twas all they left of virtues or of crimes,
Save vague tradition; and the gloomy vaults
That hid their dust, their foibles, and their faults;
And half a column of the pompous page,
That speeds the specious tale from age to age:
When history's pen its praise or blame supplies,
And lies like truth, and still most truly lies.
He wandering mused, and as the moonbeam shone
Through the dim lattice o'er the floor of stone,
And the high fretted roof, and saints, that there
O'er Gothic windows knelt in pictured prayer,
Reflected in fantastic figures grew,
Like life, but not like mortal life, to view;
His bristling locks of sable, brow of gloom,
And the wide waving of his shaken plume,
Glanced like a spectre's attributes, and gave
His aspect all that terror gives the grave.

XII.

'Twas midnight — all was slumber; the lone light
Dimm'd in the lamp, as loth to break the night.
Hark! there be murmurs heard in Lara's hall —
A sound — voice — a shriek — a fearful call!
A long, loud shriek — and silence — did they hear
That frantic echo burst the sleeping ear?
They heard and rose, and tremulously brave
Rush where the sound invoked their aid to save;
They come with half-lit tapers in their hands,
And snatch'd in startled haste unbelted brands.

XIII.

Cold as the marble where his length was laid,
Pale as the beam that o'er his features play'd,
Was Lara stretch'd; his half-drawn sabre near,
Dropp'd it should seem in more than nature's fear;
Yet he was firm, or had been firm till now,
And still defiance knit his gather'd brow;
Though mix'd with terror, senseless as he lay,

There lived upon his lip the wish to slay;
Some half-form'd threat in utterance there had died,
Some imprecation of despairing pride;
His eye was almost seal'd, but not forsook
Even in its trance the gladiator's look,
That oft awake his aspect could disclose,
And now was fix'd in horrible repose.
They raise him — bear him: hush! he breathes, he speaks!
The swarthy blush recolours in his cheeks,
His lip resumes its red, his eye, though dim,
Rolls wide and wild, each slowly quivering limb
Recalls its function, but his words are strung
In terms that seem not of his native tongue;
Distinct but strange, enough they understand
To deem them accents of another land,
And such they were, and meant to meet an ear
That hears him not — alas! that cannot hear!

XIV.

His page approach'd, and he alone appear'd
To know the import of the words they heard;
And by the changes of his cheek and brow
They were not such as Lara should avow,
Nor he interpret, yet with less surprise
Than those around their chieftain's state he eyes,
But Lara's prostrate form he bent beside,
And in that tongue which seem'd his own replied,
And Lara heeds those tones that gently seem
To soothe away the horrors of his dream;
If dream it were, that thus could overthrow
A breast that needed not ideal woe.

XV.

Whate'er his frenzy dream'd or eye beheld,
If yet remember'd ne'er to be reveal'd,
Rests at his heart: the custom'd morning came,
And breathed new vigour in his shaking frame;
And solace sought he none from priest nor leech,
And soon the same in movement and in speech
As heretofore he fill'd the passing hours,
Nor less he smiles, nor more his forehead lours
Than these were wont; and if the coming night
Appear'd less welcome now to Lara's sight,
He to his marvelling vassals shew'd it not,
Whose shuddering proved their fear was less forgot.
In trembling pairs (alone they dared not) crawl
The astonish'd slaves, and shun the fated hall;
The waving banner, and the clapping door;
The rustling tapestry, and the echoing floor;
The long dim shadows of surrounding trees,

The flapping bat, the night song of the breeze;
Aught they behold or hear their thought appals
As evening saddens o'er the dark gray walls.

XVI.

Vain thought! that hour of ne'er unravell'd gloom
Came not again, or Lara could assume
A seeming of forgetfulness that made
His vassals more amazed nor less afraid —
Had memory vanish'd then with sense restored?
Since word, nor look, nor gesture of their lord
Betray'd a feeling that recall'd to these
That fever'd moment of his mind's disease.
Was it a dream? was his the voice that spoke
Those strange wild accents; his the cry that broke
Their slumber? his the oppress'd o'er-labour'd heart
That ceased to beat, the look that made them start?
Could he who thus had suffer'd, so forget
When such as saw that suffering shudder yet?
Or did that silence prove his memory fix'd
Too deep for words, indelible, unmix'd
In that corroding secresy which gnaws
The heart to shew the effect, but not the cause?
Not so in him; his breast had buried both,
Nor common gazers could discern the growth
Of thoughts that mortal lips must leave half told;
They choke the feeble words that would unfold.

XVII.

In him inexplicably mix'd appear'd
Much to be loved and hated, sought and fear'd;
Opinion varying o'er his hidden lot,
In praise or railing ne'er his name forgot;
His silence form'd a theme for others' prate —
They guess'd — they gazed — they fain would know his fate.
What had he been? what was he, thus unknown,
Who walk'd their world, his lineage only known?
A hater of his kind? yet some would say,
With them he could seem gay amidst the gay;
But own'd that smile, if oft observed and near,
Waned in its mirth and wither'd to a sneer;
That smile might reach his lip, but pass'd not by,
None e'er could trace its laughter to his eye:
Yet there was softness too in his regard,
At times, a heart as not by nature hard,
But once perceived, his spirit seem'd to chide
Such weakness, as unworthy of its pride,
And steel'd itself, as scorning to redeem
One doubt from others' half withheld esteem;
In self-inflicted penance of a breast

Which tenderness might once have wrung from rest;
In vigilance of grief that would compel
The soul to hate for having loved too well.

XVIII.

There was in him a vital scorn of all:
As if the worst had fall'n which could befall,
He stood a stranger in this breathing world,
An erring spirit from another hurled;
A thing of dark imaginings, that shaped
By choice the perils he by chance escaped;
But 'scaped in vain, for in their memory yet
His mind would half exult and half regret:
With more capacity for love than earth
Bestows on most of mortal mould and birth,
His early dreams of good outstripp'd the truth,
And troubled manhood follow'd baffled youth;
With thought of years in phantom chase misspent,
And wasted powers for better purpose lent;
And fiery passions that had pour'd their wrath
In hurried desolation o'er his path,
And left the better feelings all at strife
In wild reflection o'er his stormy life;
But haughty still, and loth himself to blame,
He call'd on Nature's self to share the shame,
And charged all faults upon the fleshly form
She gave to clog the soul, and feast the worm;
'Till he at last confounded good and ill,
And half mistook for fate the acts of will:
Too high for common selfishness, he could
At times resign his own for others' good,
But not in pity, not because he ought,
But in some strange perversity of thought,
That sway'd him onward with a secret pride
To do what few or none would do beside;
And this same impulse would, in tempting time,
Mislead his spirit equally to crime;
So much he soar'd beyond, or sunk beneath
The men with whom he felt condemn'd to breathe,
And long'd by good or ill to separate
Himself from all who shared his mortal state;
His mind abhorring this had fix'd her throne
Far from the world, in regions of her own;
Thus coldly passing all that pass'd below,
His blood in temperate seeming now would flow:
Ah! happier if it ne'er with guilt had glow'd,
But ever in that icy smoothness flow'd:
'Tis true, with other men their path he walk'd,
And like the rest in seeming did and talk'd,
Nor outraged Reason's rules by flaw nor start,
His madness was not of the head, but heart;

And rarely wander'd in his speech, or drew
His thoughts so forth as to offend the view.

XIX.

With all that chilling mystery of mien,
And seeming gladness to remain unseen,
He had (if 'twere not nature's boon) an art
Of fixing memory on another's heart:
It was not love, perchance — nor hate — nor aught
That words can image to express the thought;
But they who saw him did not see in vain,
And once beheld, would ask of him again:
And those to whom he spake remember'd well,
And on the words, however light, would dwell.
None knew nor how, nor why, but he entwined
Himself perforce around the hearer's mind;
There he was stamp'd, in liking, or in hate,
If greeted once; however brief the date
That friendship, pity, or aversion knew,
Still there within the inmost thought he grew.
You could not penetrate his soul, but found
Despite your wonder, to your own he wound.
His presence haunted still; and from the breast
He forced an all-unwilling interest;
Vain was the struggle in that mental net,
His spirit seem'd to dare you to forget!

XX.

There is a festival, where knights and dames,
And aught that wealth or lofty lineage claims,
Appear — a high-born and a welcomed guest
To Otho's hall came Lara with the rest.
The long carousal shakes the illumined hall,
Well speeds alike the banquet and the ball;
And the gay dance of bounding Beauty's train
Links grace and harmony in happiest chain:
Blest are the early hearts and gentle hands
That mingle there in well according bands;
It is a sight the careful brow might smooth,
And make Age smile, and dream itself to youth,
And Youth forget such hour was pass'd on earth,
So springs the exulting bosom to that mirth!

XXI.

And Lara gazed on these sedately glad,
His brow belied him if his soul was sad,
And his glance follow'd fast each fluttering fair,
Whose steps of lightness woke no echo there:
He lean'd against the lofty pillar nigh

With folded arms and long attentive eye,
Nor mark'd a glance so sternly fix'd on his,
I'll brook'd high Lara scrutiny like this:
At length he caught it, 'tis a face unknown,
But seems as searching his, and his alone;
Prying and dark, a stranger's by his mien,
Who still till now had gazed on him unseen;
At length encountering meets the mutual gaze
Of keen inquiry, and of mute amaze;
On Lara's glance emotion gathering grew,
As if distrusting that the stranger threw;
Along the stranger's aspect fix'd and stern
Flash'd more than thence the vulgar eye could learn.

XXII.

"'Tis he!" the stranger cried, and those that heard
Re-echo'd fast and far the whisper'd word.
"'Tis he!" — "'Tis who?" they question far and near,
Till louder accents rang on Lara's ear;
So widely spread, few bosoms well could brook
The general marvel, or that single look;
But Lara stirr'd not, changed not, the surprise
That sprung at first to his arrested eyes
Seem'd now subsided, neither sunk nor raised
Glanced his eye round, though still the stranger gazed;
And drawing nigh, exclaim'd, with haughty sneer,
"'Tis he! — how came he thence? — what doth he here?"

XXIII.

It were too much for Lara to pass by
Such question, so repeated fierce and high;
With look collected, but with accent cold,
More mildly firm than petulantly bold,
He turn'd, and met the inquisitorial tone —
"My name is Lara! — when thine own is known,
Doubt not my fitting answer to requite
The unlook'd for courtesy of such a knight.
'Tis Lara! — further wouldest thou mark or ask?
I shun no question, and I wear no mask."
"Thou shunn'st no question! Ponder — is there none
Thy heart must answer, though thine ear would shun?
And deem'st thou me unknown too? Gaze again!
At least thy memory was not given in vain.
Oh! never canst thou cancel half her debt,
Eternity forbids thee to forget."
With slow and searching glance upon his face
Grew Lara's eyes, but nothing there could trace
They knew, or chose to know — with dubious look
He deign'd no answer, but his head he shook,
And half contemptuous turn'd to pass away;

But the stern stranger motion'd him to stay.
"A word! — I charge thee stay, and answer here
To one, who, wert thou noble, were thy peer,
But as thou wast and art — nay, frown not, lord,
If false, 'tis easy to disprove the word —
But as thou wast and art, on thee looks down,
Distrusts thy smiles, but shakes not at thy frown.
Art thou not he? whose deeds — "

"Whate'er I be,
Words wild as these, accusers like to thee,
I list no further; those with whom they weigh
May hear the rest, nor venture to gainsay
The wondrous tale no doubt thy tongue can tell,
Which thus begins courteously and well.
Let Otho cherish here his polish'd guest,
To him my thanks and thoughts shall be express'd."
And here their wondering host hath interposed —
"Whate'er there be between you undisclosed,
This is no time nor fitting place to mar
The mirthful meeting with a wordy war.
If thou, Sir Ezzelin, hast ought to show
Which it befits Count Lara's ear to know,
To-morrow, here, or elsewhere, as may best
Beseem your mutual judgment, speak the rest;
I pledge myself for thee, as not unknown,
Though, like Count Lara, now return'd alone
From other lands, almost a stranger grown;
And if from Lara's blood and gentle birth
I augur right of courage and of worth,
He will not that untainted line belie,
Nor aught that knighthood may accord deny."
"To-morrow be it," Ezzelin replied,
"And here our several worth and truth be tried:
I gage my life, my falchion to attest
My words, so may I mingle with the blest!"

What answers Lara? to its centre shrunk
His soul, in deep abstraction sudden sunk;
The words of many, and the eyes of all
That there were gather'd, seem'd on him to fall;
But his were silent, his appear'd to stray
In far forgetfulness away — away —
Alas! that heedlessness of all around
Bespoke remembrance only too profound.

XXIV.

"To-morrow! — ay, to-morrow!" — further word
Than those repeated none from Lara heard;
Upon his brow no outward passion spoke,
From his large eye no flashing anger broke;

Yet there was something fix'd in that low tone
Which shew'd resolve, determined, though unknown.
He seized his cloak — his head he slightly bow'd,
And passing Ezzelin he left the crowd;
And as he pass'd him, smiling met the frown
With which that chieftain's brow would bear him down:
It was nor smile of mirth, nor struggling pride
That curbs to scorn the wrath it cannot hide;
But that of one in his own heart secure
Of all that he would do, or could endure.
Could this mean peace? the calmness of the good?
Or guilt grown old in desperate hardihood?
Alas! too like in confidence are each
For man to trust to mortal look or speech;
From deeds, and deeds alone, may he discern
Truths which it wrings the unpractised heart to learn.

XXV.

And Lara call'd his page, and went his way —
Well could that stripling word or sign obey:
His only follower from those climes afar
Where the soul glows beneath a brighter star;
For Lara left the shore from whence he sprung,
In duty patient, and sedate though young;
Silent as him he served, his fate appears
Above his station, and beyond his years.
Though not unknown the tongue of Lara's land,
In such from him he rarely heard command;
But fleet his step, and clear his tones would come,
When Lara's lip breathed forth the words of home:
Those accents, as his native mountains dear,
Awake their absent echoes in his ear,
Friends', kindreds', parents', wonted voice recall,
Now lost, abjured, for one — his friend, his all:
For him earth now disclosed no other guide;
What marvel then he rarely left his side?

XXVI.

Light was his form, and darkly delicate
That brow whereon his native sun had sate,
But had not marr'd, though in his beams he grew,
The cheek where oft the unbidden blush shone through;
Yet not such blush as mounts when health would show
All the heart's hue in that delighted glow;
But 'twas a hectic tint of secret care
That for a burning moment fever'd there;
And the wild sparkle of his eye seem'd caught
From high, and lighten'd with electric thought,
Though its black orb those long low lashes' fringe
Had temper'd with a melancholy tinge;

Yet less of sorrow than of pride was there,
Or, if 'twere grief, a grief that none should share:
And pleased not him the sports that please his age,
The tricks of youth, the frolics of the page;
For hours on Lara he would fix his glance,
As all-forgotten in that watchful trance;
And from his chief withdrawn, he wander'd lone,
Brief were his answers, and his questions none;
His walk the wood, his sport some foreign book;
His resting-place the bank that curbs the brook;
He seem'd, like him he served, to live apart
From all that lures the eye, and fills the heart;
To know no brotherhood; and take from earth
No gift beyond that bitter boon — our birth.

XXVII.

If aught he loved, 'twas Lara; but was shown
His faith in reverence and in deeds alone;
In mute attention; and his care, which guess'd
Each wish, fulfill'd it ere the tongue express'd.
Still there was haughtiness in all he did,
A spirit deep that brook'd not to be chid;
His zeal, though more than that of servile hands,
In act alone obeys, his air commands;
As if 'twas Lara's less than his desire
That thus he served, but surely not for hire.
Slight were the tasks enjoin'd him by his lord,
To hold the stirrup, or to bear the sword;
To tune his lute, or, if he will'd it more,
On tomes of other times and tongues to pore;
But ne'er to mingle with the menial train,
To whom he shew'd not deference nor disdain,
But that well-worn reserve which proved he knew
No sympathy with that familiar crew:
His soul, whate'er his station or his stem,
Could bow to Lara, not descend to them.
Of higher birth he seem'd, and better days,
Nor mark of vulgar toil that hand betrays,
So femininely white it might bespeak
Another sex, when match'd with that smooth cheek,
But for his garb, and something in his gaze,
More wild and high than woman's eye betrays;
A latent fierceness that far more became
His fiery climate than his tender frame:
True, in his words it broke not from his breast,
But from his aspect might be more than guess'd.
Kaled his name, though rumour said he bore
Another ere he left his mountain shore;
For sometimes he would hear, however nigh,
That name repeated loud without reply,
As unfamiliar, or, if roused again,

Start to the sound, as but remember'd then;
Unless 'twas Lara's wonted voice that spake,
For then, ear, eyes, and heart would all awake.

XXVIII.

He had look'd down upon the festive hall,
And mark'd that sudden strife so mark'd of all;
And when the crowd around and near him told
Their wonder at the calmness of the bold,
Their marvel how the high-born Lara bore
Such insult from a stranger, doubly sore,
The colour of young Kaled went and came,
The lip of ashes, and the cheek of flame;
And o'er his brow the dampening heart-drops threw
The sickening iciness of that cold dew
That rises as the busy bosom sinks
With heavy thoughts from which reflection shrinks.
Yes — there be things which we must dream and dare
And execute ere thought be half aware:
Whate'er might Kaled's be, it was enow
To seal his lip, but agonise his brow.
He gazed on Ezzelin till Lara cast
That sidelong smile upon on the knight he pass'd;
When Kaled saw that smile his visage fell,
As if on something recognised right well;
His memory read in such a meaning more
Than Lara's aspect unto others wore.
Forward he sprung — a moment, both were gone,
And all within that hall seem'd left alone;
Each had so fix'd his eye on Lara's mien,
All had so mix'd their feelings with that scene,
That when his long dark shadow through the porch
No more relieves the glare of yon high torch,
Each pulse beats quicker, and all bosoms seem
To bound as doubting from too black a dream,
Such as we know is false, yet dread in sooth,
Because the worst is ever nearest truth.
And they are gone — but Ezzelin is there,
With thoughtful visage and imperious air;
But long remain'd not; ere an hour expired
He waved his hand to Otho, and retired.

XXIX.

The crowd are gone, the revellers at rest;
The courteous host, and all-approving guest,
Again to that accustom'd couch must creep
Where joy subsides, and sorrow sighs to sleep,
And man, o'erlabour'd with his being's strife,
Shrinks to that sweet forgetfulness of life:
There lie love's feverish hope, and cunning's guile,

Hate's working brain and lull'd ambition's wile;
O'er each vain eye oblivion's pinions wave,
And quench'd existence crouches in a grave.
What better name may slumber's bed become?
Night's sepulchre, the universal home,
Where weakness, strength, vice, virtue, sunk supine,
Alike in naked helplessness recline;
Glad for awhile to heave unconscious breath,
Yet wake to wrestle with the dread of death,
And shun, though day but dawn on ills increased,
That sleep, the loveliest, since it dreams the least.

CANTO THE SECOND.

I.

Night wanes — the vapours round the mountains curl'd,
Melt into morn, and Light awakes the world.
Man has another day to swell the past,
And lead him near to little, but his last;
But mighty Nature bounds as from her birth,
The sun is in the heavens, and life on earth;
Flowers in the valley, splendour in the beam,
Health on the gale, and freshness in the stream.
Immortal man! behold her glories shine,
And cry, exulting inly, "They are thine!"
Gaze on, while yet thy gladden'd eye may see,
A morrow comes when they are not for thee;
And grieve what may above thy senseless bier,
Nor earth nor sky will yield a single tear;
Nor cloud shall gather more, nor leaf shall fall,
Nor gale breathe forth one sigh for thee, for all;
But creeping things shall revel in their spoil,
And fit thy clay to fertilise the soil.

II.

'Tis morn — 'tis noon — assembled in the hall,
The gather'd chieftains come to Otho's call:
'Tis now the promised hour, that must proclaim
The life or death of Lara's future fame;
When Ezzelin his charge may here unfold,
And whatsoe'er the tale, it must be told.
His faith was pledged, and Lara's promise given,
To meet it in the eye of man and Heaven.
Why comes he not? Such truths to be divulged,
Methinks the accuser's rest is long indulged.

III.

The hour is past, and Lara too is there,
With self-confiding, coldly patient air;
Why comes not Ezzelin? The hour is past,
And murmurs rise, and Otho's brow's o'ercast,
"I know my friend! his faith I cannot fear,
If yet he be on earth, expect him here;
The roof that held him in the valley stands
Between my own and noble Lara's lands;
My halls from such a guest had honour gain'd,
Nor had Sir Ezzelin his host disdain'd,
But that some previous proof forbade his stay,
And urged him to prepare against to-day;
The word I pledge for his I pledge again,
Or will myself redeem his knighthood's stain."

He ceased — and Lara answer'd, "I am here
To lend at thy demand a listening ear,
To tales of evil from a stranger's tongue,
Whose words already might my heart have wrung,
But that I deem'd him scarcely less than mad,
Or, at the worst, a foe ignobly bad.
I know him not — but me it seems he knew
In lands where — but I must not trifle too:
Produce this babbler — or redeem the pledge;
Here in thy hold, and with thy falchion's edge."

Proud Otho on the instant, reddening, threw
His glove on earth, and forth his sabre flew.
"The last alternative befits me best,
And thus I answer for mine absent guest."

With cheek unchanging from its sallow gloom,
However near his own or other's tomb;
With hand, whose almost careless coolness spoke
Its grasp well-used to deal the sabre-stroke;
With eye, though calm, determined not to spare,
Did Lara too his willing weapon bare.
In vain the circling chieftains round them closed,
For Otho's frenzy would not be opposed;
And from his lip those words of insult fell —
His sword is good who can maintain them well.

IV.

Short was the conflict; furious, blindly rash,
Vain Otho gave his bosom to the gash:
He bled, and fell; but not with deadly wound,
Stretch'd by a dextrous sleight along the ground.
"Demand thy life!" He answer'd not: and then
From that red floor he ne'er had risen again,
For Lara's brow upon the moment grew
Almost to blackness in its demon hue;

And fiercer shook his angry falchion now
Than when his foe's was levell'd at his brow;
Then all was stern collectedness and art,
Now rose the unleaven'd hatred of his heart;
So little sparing to the foe he fell'd,
That when the approaching crowd his arm withheld
He almost turn'd the thirsty point on those
Who thus for mercy dared to interpose;
But to a moment's thought that purpose bent;
Yet look'd he on him still with eye intent,
As if he loathed the ineffectual strife
That left a foe, howe'er o'erthrown, with life;
As if to search how far the wound he gave
Had sent its victim onward to his grave.

V.

They raised the bleeding Otho, and the Leech
Forbade all present question, sign, and speech;
The others met within a neighbouring hall,
And he, incensed and heedless of them all,
The cause and conqueror in this sudden fray,
In haughty silence slowly strode away;
He back'd his steed, his homeward path he took,
Nor cast on Otho's tower a single look.

VI.

But where was he? that meteor of a night,
Who menaced but to disappear with light.
Where was this Ezzelin? who came and went
To leave no other trace of his intent.
He left the dome of Otho long ere morn,
In darkness, yet so well the path was worn
He could not miss it: near his dwelling lay;
But there he was not, and with coming day
Came fast inquiry, which unfolded nought
Except the absence of the chief it sought.
A chamber tenantless, a steed at rest,
His host alarm'd, his murmuring squires distress'd:
Their search extends along, around the path,
In dread to met the marks of prowlers' wrath:
But none are there, and not a brake hath borne
Nor gout of blood, nor shred of mantle torn;
Nor fall nor struggle hath defaced the grass,
Which still retains a mark where murder was;
Nor dabbling fingers left to tell the tale,
The bitter print of each convulsive nail,
When agonised hands that cease to guard,
Wound in that pang the smoothness of the sward.
Some such had been, if here a life was reft,
But these were not; and doubting hope is left;

And strange suspicion, whispering Lara's name,
Now daily mutters o'er his blacken'd fame;
Then sudden silent when his form appear'd,
Awaits the absence of the thing it fear'd;
Again its wonted wondering to renew,
And dye conjecture with a darker hue.

VII.

Days roll along, and Otho's wounds are heal'd,
But not his pride; and hate no more conceal'd:
He was a man of power, and Lara's foe,
The friend of all who sought to work him woe,
And from his country's justice now demands
Account of Ezzelin at Lara's hands.
Who else than Lara could have cause to fear
His presence? who had made him disappear,
If not the man on whom his menaced charge
Had sate too deeply were he left at large?
The general rumour ignorantly loud,
The mystery dearest to the curious crowd;
The seeming friendlessness of him who strove
To win no confidence, and wake no love;
The sweeping fierceness which his soul betray'd,
The skill with which he wielded his keen blade;
Where had his arm unwarlike caught that art?
Where had that fierceness grown upon his heart?
For it was not the blind capricious rage
A word can kindle and a word assuage;
But the deep working of a soul unmix'd
With aught of pity where its wrath had fix'd;
Such as long power and overgorged success
Concentrates into all that's merciless:
These, link'd with that desire which ever sways
Mankind, the rather to condemn than praise,
'Gainst Lara gathering raised at length a storm,
Such as himself might fear, and foes would form,
And he must answer for the absent head
Of one that haunts him still, alive or dead.

VIII.

Within that land was many a malcontent,
Who cursed the tyranny to which he bent;
That soil full many a wringing despot saw,
Who work'd his wantonness in form of law;
Long war without and frequent broil within
Had made a path for blood and giant sin,
That waited but a signal to begin
New havoc, such as civil discord blends,
Which knows no neuter, owns but foes or friends;
Fix'd in his feudal fortress each was lord,

In word and deed obey'd, in soul abhor'd.
Thus Lara had inherited his lands,
And with them pining hearts and sluggish hands;
But that long absence from his native clime
Had left him stainless of oppression's crime,
And now, diverted by his milder sway,
All dread by slow degrees had worn away;
The menials felt their usual awe alone,
But more for him than them that fear was grown;
They deem'd him now unhappy, though at first
Their evil judgment augur'd of the worst,
And each long restless night, and silent mood,
Was traced to sickness, fed by solitude:
And though his lonely habits threw of late
Gloom o'er his chamber, cheerful was his gate;
For thence the wretched ne'er unsoothed withdrew,
For them, at least, his soul compassion knew.
Cold to the great, contemptuous to the high,
The humble pass'd not his unheeding eye;
Much he would speak not, but beneath his roof
They found asylum oft, and ne'er reproof.
And they who watch'd might mark that, day by day,
Some new retainers gather'd to his sway;
But most of late, since Ezzelin was lost,
He play'd the courteous lord and bounteous host:
Perchance his strife with Otho made him dread
Some snare prepared for his obnoxious head;
Whate'er his view, his favour more obtains
With these, the people, than his fellow thanes.
If this were policy, so far 'twas sound,
The million judged but of him as they found;
From him by sterner chiefs to exile driven
They but required a shelter, and 'twas given.
By him no peasant mourn'd his rifled cot,
And scarce the serf could murmur o'er his lot;
With him old avarice found its hoard secure,
With him contempt forbore to mock the poor;
Youth present cheer and promised recompense
Detain'd, till all too late to part from thence:
To hate he offer'd, with the coming change,
The deep reversion of delay'd revenge;
To love, long baffled by the unequal match,
The well-won charms success was sure to snatch.
All now was ripe, he waits but to proclaim
That slavery nothing which was still a name.
The moment came, the hour when Otho thought
Secure at last the vengeance which he sought
His summons found the destined criminal
Begirt by thousands in his swarming hall,
Fresh from their feudal fetters newly riven,
Defying earth, and confident of heaven.
That morning he had freed the soil-bound slaves

Who dig no land for tyrants but their graves!
Such is their cry — some watchword for the fight
Must vindicate the wrong, and warp the right;
Religion — freedom — vengeance — what you will,
A word's enough to raise mankind to kill;
Some factious phrase by cunning caught and spread,
That guilt may reign, and wolves and worms be fed!

IX.

Throughout that clime the feudal chiefs had gain'd
Such sway, their infant monarch hardly reign'd;
Now was the hour for faction's rebel growth,
The serfs contemn'd the one, and hated both:
They waited but a leader, and they found
One to their cause inseparably bound;
By circumstance compell'd to plunge again,
In self-defence, amidst the strife of men.
Cut off by some mysterious fate from those
Whom birth and nature meant not for his foes,
Had Lara from that night, to him accurst,
Prepared to meet, but not alone, the worst:
Some reason urged, whate'er it was, to shun
Inquiry into deeds at distance done;
By mingling with his own the cause of all,
E'en if he fail'd, he still delay'd his fall.
The sullen calm that long his bosom kept,
The storm that once had spent itself and slept,
Roused by events that seem'd foredoom'd to urge
His gloomy fortunes to their utmost verge,
Burst forth, and made him all he once had been,
And is again; he only changed the scene.
Light care had he for life, and less for fame,
But not less fitted for the desperate game:
He deem'd himself mark'd out for others' hate,
And mock'd at ruin, so they shared his fate.
What cared he for the freedom of the crowd?
He raised the humble but to bend the proud.
He had hoped quiet in his sullen lair,
But man and destiny beset him there:
Inured to hunters, he was found at bay;
And they must kill, they cannot snare the prey.
Stern, unambitious, silent he had been
Henceforth a calm spectator of life's scene;
But dragg'd again upon the arena, stood
A leader not unequal to the feud;
In voice — mien — gesture — savage nature spoke,
And from his eye the gladiator broke.

X.

What boots the oft-repeated tale of strife,

The feast of vultures, and the waste of life?
The varying fortune of each separate field,
The fierce that vanquish, and the faint that yield?
The smoking ruin, and the crumbled wall?
In this the struggle was the same with all;
Save that distemper'd passions lent their force
In bitterness that banish'd all remorse.
None sued, for Mercy know her cry was vain,
The captive died upon the battle-slain:
In either cause, one rage alone possess'd
The empire of the alternate victor's breast;
And they that smote for freedom or for sway,
Deem'd few were slain, while more remain'd to slay.
It was too late to check the wasting brand,
And Desolation reap'd the famish'd land;
The torch was lighted, and the flame was spread,
And Carnage smiled upon her daily bread.

XI.

Fresh with the nerve the new-born impulse strung,
The first success to Lara's numbers clung:
But that vain victory hath ruin'd all;
They form no longer to their leader's call:
In blind confusion on the foe they press,
And think to snatch is to secure success.
The lust of booty, and the thirst of hate,
Lure on the broken brigands to their fate:
In vain he doth whate'er a chief may do,
To check the headlong fury of that crew,
In vain their stubborn ardour he would tame,
The hand that kindles cannot quench the flame.
The wary foe alone hath turn'd their mood,
And shewn their rashness to that erring brood:
The feign'd retreat, the nightly ambuscade,
The daily harass, and the fight delay'd,
The long privation of the hoped supply,
The tentless rest beneath the humid sky,
The stubborn wall that mocks the leaguer's art,
And palls the patience of his baffled heart,
Of these they had not deem'd: the battle-day
They could encounter as a veteran may;
But more preferr'd the fury of the strife,
And present death, to hourly suffering life:
And famine wrings, and fever sweeps away
His numbers melting fast from their array;
Intemperate triumph fades to discontent,
And Lara's soul alone seems still unbent:
But few remain to aid his voice and hand,
And thousands dwindled to a scanty band:
Desperate, though few, the last and best remain'd
To mourn the discipline they late disdain'd.

One hope survives, the frontier is not far,
And thence they may escape from native war;
And bear within them to the neighbouring state
An exile's sorrows, or an outlaw's hate:
Hard is the task their fatherland to quit,
But harder still to perish or submit.

XII.

It is resolved — they march — consenting Night
Guides with her star their dim and torchless flight;
Already they perceive its tranquil beam
Sleep on the surface of the barrier stream;
Already they descry — Is yon the bank?
Away! 'tis lined with many a hostile rank.
Return or fly! — What glitters in the rear?
'Tis Otho's banner — the pursuer's spear!
Are those the shepherds' fires upon the height?
Alas! they blaze too widely for the flight:
Cut off from hope, and compass'd in the toil,
Less blood, perchance, hath bought a richer spoil!

XIII.

A moment's pause — 'tis but to breathe their band
Or shall they onward press, or here withstand?
It matters little — if they charge the foes
Who by their border-stream their march oppose,
Some few, perchance, may break and pass the line,
However link'd to baffle such design.
"The charge be ours! to wait for their assault
Were fate well worthy of a coward's halt."
Forth flies each sabre, rein'd is every steed,
And the next word shall scarce outstrip the deed:
In the next tone of Lara's gathering breath
How many shall but hear the voice of death!

XIV.

His blade is bared — in him there is an air
As deep, but far too tranquil for despair;
A something of indifference more than then
Becomes the bravest, if they feel for men.
He turn'd his eye on Kaled, ever near,
And still too faithful to betray one fear;
Perchance 'twas but the moon's dim twilight threw
Along his aspect an unwonted hue
Of mournful paleness, whose deep tint express'd
The truth, and not the terror of his breast.
This Lara mark'd, and laid his hand on his:
It trembled not in such an hour as this;
His lip was silent, scarcely beat his heart,

His eye alone proclaim'd —
 "We will not part!
Thy band may perish, or thy friends may flee,
Farewell to life, but not adieu to thee!"

The word hath pass'd his lips, and onward driven,
Pours the link'd band through ranks asunder riven;
Well has each steed obey'd the armed heel,
And flash the scimitars, and rings the steel;
Outnumber'd, not outbraved, they still oppose
Despair to daring, and a front to foes;
And blood is mingled with the dashing stream,
Which runs all redly till the morning beam.

XV.

Commanding, aiding, animating all,
Where foe appear'd to press, or friend to fall,
Cheers Lara's voice, and waves or strikes his steel,
Inspiring hope himself had ceased to feel.
None fled, for well they knew that flight were vain,
But those that waver turn to smite again,
While yet they find the firmest of the foe
Recoil before their leader's look and blow;
Now girt with numbers, now almost alone,
He foils their ranks, or reunites his own;
Himself he spared not — once they seem'd to fly —
Now was the time, he waved his hand on high,
And shook — Why sudden droops that plumed crest?
The shaft is sped — the arrow's in his breast!
That fatal gesture left the unguarded side,
And Death hath stricken down yon arm of pride.
The word of triumph fainted from his tongue;
That hand, so raised, how droopingly it hung!
But yet the sword instinctively retains,
Though from its fellow shrink the falling reins;
These Kaled snatches: dizzy with the blow,
And senseless bending o'er his saddle-bow
Perceives not Lara that his anxious page
Beguiles his charger from the combat's rage:
Meantime his followers charge and charge again;
Too mix'd the slayers now to heed the slain!

XVI.

Day glimmers on the dying and the dead,
The cloven cuirass, and the helmless head;
The war-horse masterless is on the earth,
And that last gasp hath burst his bloody girth:
And near, yet quivering with what life remain'd,
The heel that urged him, and the hand that rein'd:
And some too near that rolling torrent lie,

Whose waters mock the lip of those that die;
That panting thirst which scorches in the breath
Of those that die the soldier's fiery death,
In vain impels the burning mouth to crave
One drop — the last — to cool it for the grave;
With feeble and convulsive effort swept
Their limbs along the crimson'd turf have crept:
The faint remains of life such struggles waste,
But yet they reach the stream, and bend to taste:
They feel its freshness, and almost partake —
Why pause? — No further thirst have they to slake —
It is unquench'd, and yet they feel it not —
It was an agony — but now forgot!

XVII.

Beneath a lime, remoter from the scene,
Where but for him that strife had never been,
A breathing but devoted warrior lay:
'Twas Lara bleeding fast from life away.
His follower once, and now his only guide,
Kneels Kaled watchful o'er his welling side,
And with his scarf would stanch the tides that rush
With each convulsion in a blacker gush;
And then, as his faint breathing waxes low,
In feebler, not less fatal tricklings flow:
He scarce can speak, but motions him 'tis vain,
And merely adds another throb to pain.
He clasps the hand that pang which would assuage,
And sadly smiles his thanks to that dark page,
Who nothing fears, nor feels, nor heeds, nor sees,
Save that damp brow which rests upon his knees;
Save that pale aspect, where the eye, though dim,
Held all the light that shone on earth for him.

XVIII.

The foe arrives, who long had search'd the field,
Their triumph nought till Lara too should yield;
They would remove him, but they see 'twere vain,
And he regards them with a calm disdain,
That rose to reconcile him with his fate,
And that escape to death from living hate:
And Otho comes, and leaping from his steed,
Looks on the bleeding foe that made him bleed,
And questions of his state; he answers not,
Scarce glances on him as on one forgot,
And turns to Kaled: — each remaining word,
They understood not, if distinctly heard;
His dying tones are in that other tongue,
To which some strange remembrance wildly clung.
They spake of other scenes, but what — is known

To Kaled, whom their meaning reach'd alone;
And he replied, though faintly, to their sound,
While gazed the rest in dumb amazement round:
They seem'd even then — that twain — unto the last
To half forget the present in the past;
To share between themselves some separate fate,
Whose darkness none beside should penetrate.

XIX.

Their words though faint were many — from the tone
Their import those who heard could judge alone;
From this, you might have deem'd young Kaled's death
More near than Lara's by his voice and breath,
So sad, so deep, and hesitating broke
The accents his scarce-moving pale lips spoke;
But Lara's voice, though low, at first was clear
And calm, till murmuring death gasp'd hoarsely near:
But from his visage little could we guess,
So unrepentant, dark, and passionless,
Save that when struggling nearer to his last,
Upon that page his eye was kindly cast;
And once, as Kaled's answering accents ceased,
Rose Lara's hand, and pointed to the East:
Whether (as then the breaking sun from high
Roll'd back the clouds) the morrow caught his eye,
Or that 'twas chance, or some remember'd scene
That raised his arm to point where such had been,
Scarce Kaled seem'd to know, but turn'd away,
As if his heart abhor'd that coming day,
And shrunk his glance before that morning light
To look on Lara's brow — where all grew night.
Yet sense seem'd left, though better were its loss;
For when one near display'd the absolving cross,
And proffer'd to his touch the holy bead,
Of which his parting soul might own the need,
He look'd upon it with an eye profane,
And smiled — Heaven pardon! if 'twere with disdain;
And Kaled, though he spoke not, nor withdrew
From Lara's face his fix'd despairing view,
With brow repulsive, and with gesture swift,
Flung back the hand which held the sacred gift,
As if such but disturb'd the expiring man,
Nor seem'd to know his life but then began,
The life immortal infinite, secure,
To all for whom that cross hath made it sure!

XX.

But gasping heaved the breath that Lara drew,
And dull the film along his dim eye grew;
His limbs stretch'd fluttering, and his head droop'd o'er

The weak yet still untiring knee that bore:
He press'd the hand he held upon his heart —
It beats no more, but Kaled will not part
With the cold grasp, but feels, and feels in vain,
For that faint throb which answers not again.
"It beats!" — Away, thou dreamer! he is gone —
It once was Lara which thou look'st upon.

XXI.

He gazed, as if not yet had pass'd away
The haughty spirit of that humble clay;
And those around have roused him from his trance,
But cannot tear from thence his fixed glance;
And when in raising him from where he bore
Within his arms the form that felt no more,
He saw the head his breast would still sustain,
Roll down like earth to earth upon the plain;
He did not dash himself thereby, nor tear
The glossy tendrils of his raven hair,
But strove to stand and gaze, but reel'd and fell,
Scarce breathing more than that he loved so well.
Than that he lov'd! Oh! never yet beneath
The breast of man such trusty love may breathe!
That trying moment hath at once reveal'd
The secret long and yet but half conceal'd;
In baring to revive that lifeless breast,
Its grief seem'd ended, but the sex confess'd;
And life return'd, and Kaled felt no shame —
What now to her was Womanhood or Fame?

XXII.

And Lara sleeps not where his fathers sleep,
But where he died his grave was dug as deep;
Nor is his mortal slumber less profound,
Though priest nor bless'd, nor marble deck'd the mound;
And he was mourn'd by one whose quiet grief,
Less loud, outlasts a people's for their chief.
Vain was all question ask'd her of the past,
And vain e'en menace — silent to the last;
She told nor whence nor why she left behind
Her all for one who seem'd but little kind.
Why did she love him? Curious fool! — be still —
Is human love the growth of human will?
To her he might be gentleness; the stern
Have deeper thoughts than your dull eyes discern,
And when they love, your smilers guess not how
Beats the strong heart, though less the lips avow.
They were not common links that form'd the chain
That bound to Lara Kaled's heart and brain;
But that wild tale she brook'd not to unfold,

And seal'd is now each lip that could have told.

XXIII.

They laid him in the earth, and on his breast,
Besides the wound that sent his soul to rest,
They found the scattered dints of many a scar
Which were not planted there in recent war:
Where'er had pass'd his summer years of life,
It seems they vanish'd in a land of strife;
But all unknown his glory or his guilt,
These only told that somewhere blood was spilt.
And Ezzelin, who might have spoke the past,
Return'd no more — that night appear'd his last.

XXIV.

Upon that night (a peasant's is the tale)
A Serf that cross'd the intervening vale,
When Cynthia's light almost gave way to morn,
And nearly veil'd in mist her waning horn;
A Serf, that rose betimes to thread the wood,
And hew the bough that bought his children's food,
Pass'd by the river that divides the plain
Of Otho's lands and Lara's broad domain:
He heard a tramp — a horse and horseman broke
From out the wood — before him was a cloak
Wrapt round some burthen at his saddle-bow,
Bent was his head, and hidden was his brow.
Roused by the sudden sight at such a time,
And some foreboding that it might be crime,
Himself unheeded watch'd the stranger's course,
Who reach'd the river, bounded from his horse,
And lifting thence the burthen which he bore,
Heaved up the bank, and dash'd it from the shore, [3]
Then paused, and look'd, and turn'd, and seem'd to watch,
And still another hurried glance would snatch,
And follow with his step the stream that flow'd,
As if even yet too much its surface show'd:
At once he started, stoop'd, around him strewn
The winter floods had scatter'd heaps of stone;
Of these the heaviest thence he gather'd there,
And slung them with a more than common care.
Meantime the Serf had crept to where unseen
Himself might safely mark what this might mean.
He caught a glimpse, as of a floating breast,
And something glitter'd starlike on the vest,
But ere he well could mark the buoyant trunk,
A massy fragment smote it, and it sunk:
It rose again, but indistinct to view,
And left the waters of a purple hue,
Then deeply disappear'd: the horseman gazed

Till ebb'd the latest eddy it had raised;
Then turning, vaulted on his pawing steed,
And instant spurr'd him into panting speed.
His face was mask'd — the features of the dead,
If dead it were, escaped the observer's dread;
But if in sooth a star its bosom bore,
Such is the badge that knighthood ever wore,
And such 'tis known Sir Ezzelin had worn
Upon the night that led to such a morn.
If thus he perish'd, Heaven receive his soul!
His undiscover'd limbs to ocean roll;
And charity upon the hope would dwell
It was not Lara's hand by which he fell.

XXV.

And Kaled — Lara — Ezzelin, are gone,
Alike without their monumental stone!
The first, all efforts vainly strove to wean
From lingering where her chieftain's blood had been.
Grief had so tamed a spirit once too proud,
Her tears were few, her wailing never loud;
But furious would you tear her from the spot
Where yet she scarce believed that he was not,
Her eye shot forth with all the living fire
That haunts the tigress in her whelpless ire;
But left to waste her weary moments there,
She talk'd all idly unto shapes of air,
Such as the busy brain of Sorrow paints,
And woos to listen to her fond complaints;
And she would sit beneath the very tree,
Where lay his drooping head upon her knee;
And in that posture where she saw him fall,
His words, his looks, his dying grasp recall;
And she had shorn, but saved her raven hair,
And oft would snatch it from her bosom there,
And fold and press it gently to the ground,
As if she stanch'd anew some phantom's wound.
Herself would question, and for him reply;
Then rising, start, and beckon him to fly
From some imagined spectre in pursuit;
Then seat her down upon some linden's root,
And hide her visage with her meagre hand,
Or trace strange characters along the sand. —
This could not last — she lies by him she loved;
Her tale untold — her truth too dearly proved.

Byron's Notes.

1. The reader of "Lara" may probably regard it as a sequel to a poem that recently appeared: whether the cast of the hero's character, the turn of his adventures, and the general outline and colouring of the story, may not encourage such a supposition, shall be left to his determination. [The poem is "The Corsair."]
2. The reader is advised that the name only of Lara being Spanish, and no circumstance of local or national description fixing the scene or hero of the poem to any country or age, the word "Serf," which could not be correctly applied to the lower classes in Spain, who were never vassals of the soil, has nevertheless been employed to designate the followers of our fictitious chieftain.
3. The event in this section was suggested by the description of the death, or rather burial, of the Duke of Gandia. The most interesting and particular account of it is given by Burchard, and is in substance as follows: — "On the eighth day of June, the Cardinal of Valenza and the Duke of Gandia, sons of the Pope, supped with their mother, Vanozza, near the church of S. Pietro ad vincula; several other persons being present at the entertainment. A late hour approaching, and the cardinal having reminded his brother, that it was time to return to the apostolic palace, they mounted their horses or mules, with only a few attendants, and proceeded together as far as the palace of Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, when the duke informed the cardinal that, before he returned home, he had to pay a visit of pleasure. Dismissing therefore all his attendants, excepting his staffiero, or footman, and a person in a mask, who had paid him a visit whilst at supper, and who, during the space of a month, or thereabouts, previous to this time, had called upon him almost daily at the apostolic palace, he took this person behind him on his mule, and proceeded to the street of the Jews, where he quitted his servant, directing him to remain there until a certain hour; when, if he did not return, he might repair to the palace. The duke then seated the person in the mask behind him, and rode, I know not whither; but in that night he was assassinated, and thrown into the river. The servant, after having been dismissed, was also assaulted and mortally wounded; and although he was attended with great care, yet such was his situation that he could give no intelligible account of what had befallen his master. In the morning, the duke not having returned to the palace, his servants began to be alarmed; and one of them informed the pontiff of the evening excursion of his sons, and that the duke had not yet made his appearance. This gave the pope no small anxiety; but he conjectured that the duke had been attracted by some courtesan to pass the night with her, and, not choosing to quit the house in open day, waited till the following evening to return home. When, however, the evening arrived, and he found himself disappointed in his expectations, he became deeply afflicted, and began to make inquiries from different persons, whom he ordered to attend him for that purpose. Amongst these was a man named Giorgio Schiavoni, who, having discharged some timber from a bark in the river, had remained on board the vessel to watch it; and being interrogated whether he had seen any one thrown into the river on the night preceding, he replied, that he saw two men on foot, who came down the street, and looked diligently about, to observe whether any person was passing. That seeing no one, they returned, and a short time later two others came, and looked around in the same manner as the former: no person still appearing, they gave a sign to their companions, when a man came, mounted on a white horse, having behind him a dead body, the head and arms of which hung on one side, and the feet on the other side of the horse; the two persons on foot supporting the body to prevent its falling. They thus proceeded towards that part where the filth of the city is usually discharged into the river, and turning the horse, with his tail towards the water, the two persons took the dead body by the arms and feet, and with all their strength flung it into the river. The

person on horseback then asked if they had thrown it in; to which they replied, 'Signor, si' (Yes, Sir). He then looked towards the river, and seeing a mantle floating in the stream, he inquired what it was that appeared black, to which they answered, it was a mantle; and one of them throw stones upon it, in consequence of which it sunk. The attendants of the pontiff then inquired from Giorgio why he had not revealed this to the governor of the city; to which he replied, that he had seen in his time a hundred dead bodies thrown into the river at the same place, without any inquiry being made respecting them; and that he had not, therefore, considered it as a matter of any importance. The fishermen and seamen were then collected. and ordered to search the river, where on the following evening, they found the body of the duke, with his habit entire, and thirty ducats in his purse. He was pierced with nine wounds, one of which was in his throat, the others in his hand, body, and limbs. No sooner was the pontiff informed of the death of his son, and that he had been thrown, like filth, into the river, than, giving way to his grief, he shut himself up in a chamber, and wept bitterly. The Cardinal of Segovia, and other attendants on the pope, went to the door, and after many hours spent in persuasions and exhortations, prevailed upon him to admit them. From the evening of Wednesday till the following Saturday the pope took no food; nor did he sleep from Thursday morning till the same hour on the ensuing day. At length, however, giving way to the entreaties of his attendants, he began to restrain his sorrow, and to consider the injury which his own health might sustain by the further indulgence of his grief." — Roscoe's *Leo the Tenth*, vol. i. p. 265.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Lara. A Tale

The Serfs are glad through Lara's wide domain,
And slavery half forgets her feudal chain;
He, their unhoped, but unforgotten lord--
The long self-exiled chieftain is restored:
There be bright faces in the busy hall,
Bowls on the board, and banners on the wall;
Far chequering o'er the pictured window, plays
The unwonted fagots' hospitable blaze;
And gay retainers gather round the hearth,
With tongues all loudness, and with eyes all mirth.

II.

The chief of Lara is return'd again:
And why had Lara cross'd the bounding main?
Left by his sire, too young such loss to know,
Lord of himself;--that heritage of woe,
That fearful empire which the human breast
But holds to rob the heart within of rest!--
With none to check, and few to point in time
The thousand paths that slope the way to crime;
Then, when he most required commandment, then
Had Lara's daring boyhood govern'd men.
It skills not, boots not, step by step to trace
His youth through all the mazes of its race;
Short was the course his restlessness had run,
But long enough to leave him half undone.

III.

And Lara left in youth his fatherland;
But from the hour he waved his parting hand
Each trace wax'd fainter of his course, till all
Had nearly ceased his memory to recall.
His sire was dust, his vassals could declare,
'Twas all they knew, that Lara was not there;
Nor sent, nor came he, till conjecture grew
Cold in the many, anxious in the few.
His hall scarce echoes with his wonted name,
His portrait darkens in its fading frame,
Another chief consoled his destined bride,
The young forgot him, and the old had died;
'Yet doth he live!' exclaims the impatient heir,
And sighs for sables which he must not wear.
A hundred scutcheons deck with gloomy grace
The Laras' last and longest dwelling-place;
But one is absent from the mouldering file,
That now were welcome to that Gothic pile.

IV.

He comes at last in sudden loneliness,
And whence they know not, why they need not guess;
They more might marvel, when the greeting's o'er,
Not that he came, but came not long before:

No train is his beyond a single page,
Of foreign aspect, and of tender age.
Years had roll'd on, and fast they speed away
To those that wander as to those that stay;
But lack of tidings from another clime
Had lent a flagging wing to weary Time.
They see, they recognise, yet almost deem
The present dubious, or the past a dream.

He lives, nor yet is past his manhood's prime,
Though sear'd by toil, and something touch'd by time;
His faults, whate'er they were, if scarce forgot,
Might be untaught him by his varied lot;
Nor good nor ill of late were known, his name
Might yet uphold his patrimonial fame.
His soul in youth was haughty, but his sins
No more than pleasure from the stripling wins;
And such, if not yet harden'd in their course,
Might be redeem'd, nor ask a long remorse.

V.

And they indeed were changed--'tis quickly seen,
Whate'er he be, 'twas not what he had been:
That brow in furrow'd lines had fix'd at last,
And spake of passions, but of passion past;
The pride, but not the fire, of early days,
Coldness of mien, and carelessness of praise;
A high demeanour, and a glance that took
Their thoughts from others by a single look;
And that sarcastic levity of tongue,
The stinging of a heart the world hath stung,
That darts in seeming playfulness around,
And makes those feel that will not own the wound:
All these seem'd his, and something more beneath
Than glance could well reveal, or accent breathe.
Ambition, glory, love, the common aim
That some can conquer, and that all would claim,
Within his breast appear'd no more to strive,
Yet seem'd as lately they had been alive;
And some deep feeling it were vain to trace
At moments lighten'd o'er his livid face.

VI.

Not much he loved long question of the past,
Nor told of wondrous wilds, and deserts vast,
In those far lands where he had wander'd lone,
And--as himself would have it seem--unknown:
Yet these in vain his eye could scarcely scan,
Nor glean experience from his fellow-man;
But what he had beheld he shunn'd to show,
As hardly worth a stranger's care to know;
If still more prying such inquiry grew,

His brow fell darker, and his words more few.

VII.

Not unrejoiced to see him once again,
Warm was his welcome to the haunts of men;
Born of high lineage, link'd in high command,
He mingled with the magnates of his land;
Join'd the carousals of the great and gay,
And saw them smile or sigh their hours away;
But still he only saw, and did not share
The common pleasure or the general care;
He did not follow what they all pursued,
With hope still baffled, still to be renew'd;
Nor shadowy honour, nor substantial gain,
Nor beauty's preference, and the rival's pain:
Around him some mysterious circle thrown
Repell'd approach, and showed him still alone;
Upon his eye sate something of reproof,
That kept at least frivolity aloof;
And things more timid that beheld him near,
In silence gazed, or whisper'd mutual fear;
And they the wiser, friendlier few confess'd
They deem'd him better than his air express'd.

VIII.

'Twas strange--in youth all action and all life,
Burning for pleasure, not averse from strife;
Woman--the field--the ocean--all that gave
Promise of gladness, peril of a grave,
In turn he tried--he ransack'd all below,
And found his recompence in joy or woe,
No tame, trite medium; for his feelings sought
In that intenseseness an escape from thought:
The tempest of his heart in scorn had gazed
On that the feebler elements hath raised;
The rapture of his heart had look'd on high,
And ask'd if greater dwelt beyond the sky:
Chain'd to excess, the slave of each extreme,
How woke he from the wildness of that dream?
Alas! he told not--but he did awake
To curse the wither'd heart that would not break.

IX.

Books, for his volume heretofore was Man,
With eye more curious he appear'd to scan,
And oft, in sudden mood, for many a day
From all communion he would start away:
And then, his rarely call'd attendants said,
Through night's long hours would sound his hurried tread
O'er the dark gallery, where his fathers frown'd
In rude but antique portraiture around.
They heard, but whisper'd--'that must not be known--

The sound of words less earthly than his own.
Yes, they who chose might smile, but some had seen
They scarce knew what, but more than should have been.
Why gazed he so upon the ghastly head
Which hands profane had gather'd from the dead,
That still beside his open'd volume lay,
As if to startle all save him away?
Why slept he not when others were at rest?
Why heard no music, and received no guest?
All was not well, they deem'd--but where the wrong?
Some knew perchance--but 'twere a tale too long;
And such besides were too discreetly wise,
To more than hint their knowledge in surmise;
But if they would--they could'--around the board,
Thus Lara's vassals prattled of their lord.

X.

It was the night--and Lara's glassy stream
The stars are studding, each with imaged beam:
So calm, the waters scarcely seem to stray,
And yet they glide like happiness away;
Reflecting far and fairy-like from high
The immortal lights that live along the sky:
Its banks are fringed with many a goodly tree,
And flowers the fairest that may feast the bee;
Such in her chaplet infant Dian wove,
And Innocence would offer to her love.
These deck the shore; the waves their channel make
In windings bright and mazy like the snake.
All was so still, so soft in earth and air,
You scarce would start to meet a spirit there;
Secure that nought of evil could delight
To walk in such a scene, on such a night!
It was a moment only for the good:
So Lara deem'd, nor longer there he stood,
But turn'd in silence to his castle-gate;
Such scene his soul no more could contemplate.
Such scene reminded him of other days,
Of skies more cloudless, moons of purer blaze,
Of nights more soft and frequent, hearts that now--
No — no — the storm may beat upon his brow,
Unfelt — unsparing — but a night like this,
A night of beauty mock'd such breast as his.

XI.

He turn'd within his solitary hall,
And his high shadow shot along the wall;
There were the painted forms of other times,
'Twas all they left of virtues or of crimes,
Save vague tradition; and the gloomy vaults
That hid their dust, their foibles, and their faults;
And half a column of the pompous page,

That speeds the specious tale from age to age:
When history's pen its praise or blame supplies,
And lies like truth, and still most truly lies.
He wandering mused, and as the moonbeam shone
Through the dim lattice o'er the floor of stone,
And the high fretted roof, and saints, that there
O'er Gothic windows knelt in pictured prayer,
Reflected in fantastic figures grew,
Like life, but not like mortal life, to view;
His bristling locks of sable, brow of gloom,
And the wide waving of his shaken plume,
Glanced like a spectre's attributes, and gave
His aspect all that terror gives the grave.

XII.

'Twas midnight — all was slumber; the lone light
Dimm'd in the lamp, as loth to break the night.
Hark! there be murmurs heard in Lara's hall--
A sound--voice--a shriek--a fearful call!
A long, loud shriek--and silence--did they hear
That frantic echo burst the sleeping ear?
They heard and rose, and tremulously brave
Rush where the sound invoked their aid to save;
They come with half-lit tapers in their hands,
And snatch'd in startled haste unbelted brands.

XIII.

Cold as the marble where his length was laid,
Pale as the beam that o'er his features play'd,
Was Lara stretch'd; his half-drawn sabre near,
Dropp'd it should seem in more than nature's fear;
Yet he was firm, or had been firm till now,
And still defiance knit his gather'd brow;
Though mix'd with terror, senseless as he lay,
There lived upon his lip the wish to slay;
Some half-form'd threat in utterance there had died,
Some imprecation of despairing pride;
His eye was almost seal'd, but not forsook
Even in its trance the gladiator's look,
That oft awake his aspect could disclose,
And now was fix'd in horrible repose.
They raise him — bear him: hush! he breathes, he speaks!
The swarthy blush recolours in his cheeks,
His lip resumes its red, his eye, though dim,
Rolls wide and wild, each slowly quivering limb
Recalls its function, but his words are strung
In terms that seem not of his native tongue;
Distinct but strange, enough they understand
To deem them accents of another land,
And such they were, and meant to meet an ear
That hears him not — alas! that cannot hear!

XIV.

His page approach'd, and he alone appear'd
To know the import of the words they heard;
And by the changes of his cheek and brow
They were not such as Lara should avow,
Nor he interpret, yet with less surprise
Than those around their chieftain's state he eyes,
But Lara's prostrate form he bent beside,
And in that tongue which seem'd his own replied,
And Lara heeds those tones that gently seem
To soothe away the horrors of his dream;
If dream it were, that thus could overthrow
A breast that needed not ideal woe.

XV.

Whate'er his frenzy dream'd or eye beheld,
If yet remember'd ne'er to be reveal'd,
Rests at his heart: the custom'd morning came,
And breathed new vigour in his shaking frame;
And solace sought he none from priest nor leech,
And soon the same in movement and in speech
As heretofore he fill'd the passing hours,
Nor less he smiles, nor more his forehead lours
Than these were wont; and if the coming night
Appear'd less welcome now to Lara's sight,
He to his marvelling vassals shew'd it not,
Whose shuddering proved their fear was less forgot.
In trembling pairs (alone they dared not) crawl
The astonish'd slaves, and shun the fated hall;
The waving banner, and the clapping door;
The rustling tapestry, and the echoing floor;
The long dim shadows of surrounding trees,
The flapping bat, the night song of the breeze;
Aught they behold or hear their thought appals
As evening saddens o'er the dark gray walls.

XVI.

Vain thought! that hour of ne'er unravell'd gloom
Came not again, or Lara could assume
A seeming of forgetfulness that made
His vassals more amazed nor less afraid--
Had memory vanish'd then with sense restored?
Since word, nor look, nor gesture of their lord
Betray'd a feeling that recall'd to these
That fever'd moment of his mind's disease.
Was it a dream? was his the voice that spoke
Those strange wild accents; his the cry that broke
Their slumber? his the oppress'd o'er-labour'd heart
That ceased to beat, the look that made them start?
Could he who thus had suffer'd, so forget
When such as saw that suffering shudder yet?
Or did that silence prove his memory fix'd

Too deep for words, indelible, unmix'd
In that corroding secresy which gnaws
The heart to shew the effect, but not the cause?
Not so in him; his breast had buried both,
Nor common gazers could discern the growth
Of thoughts that mortal lips must leave half told;
They choke the feeble words that would unfold.

XVII.

In him inexplicably mix'd appear'd
Much to be loved and hated, sought and fear'd;
Opinion varying o'er his hidden lot,
In praise or railing ne'er his name forgot;
His silence form'd a theme for others' prate--
They guess'd--they gazed--they fain would know his fate.
What had he been? what was he, thus unknown,
Who walk'd their world, his lineage only known?
A hater of his kind? yet some would say,
With them he could seem gay amidst the gay;
But own'd that smile, if oft observed and near,
Waned in its mirth and wither'd to a sneer;
That smile might reach his lip, but pass'd not by,
None e'er could trace its laughter to his eye:
Yet there was softness too in his regard,
At times, a heart as not by nature hard,
But once perceived, his spirit seem'd to chide
Such weakness, as unworthy of its pride,
And steel'd itself, as scorning to redeem
One doubt from others' half withheld esteem;
In self-inflicted penance of a breast
Which tenderness might once have wrung from rest;
In vigilance of grief that would compel
The soul to hate for having loved too well.

XVIII.

There was in him a vital scorn of all:
As if the worst had fall'n which could befall,
He stood a stranger in this breathing world,
An erring spirit from another hurled;
A thing of dark imaginings, that shaped
By choice the perils he by chance escaped;
But 'scaped in vain, for in their memory yet
His mind would half exult and half regret:
With more capacity for love than earth
Bestows on most of mortal mould and birth,
His early dreams of good outstripp'd the truth,
And troubled manhood follow'd baffled youth;
With thought of years in phantom chase misspent,
And wasted powers for better purpose lent;
And fiery passions that had pour'd their wrath
In hurried desolation o'er his path,
And left the better feelings all at strife

In wild reflection o'er his stormy life;
But haughty still, and loth himself to blame,
He call'd on Nature's self to share the shame,
And charged all faults upon the fleshly form
She gave to clog the soul, and feast the worm;
'Till he at last confounded good and ill,
And half mistook for fate the acts of will:
Too high for common selfishness, he could
At times resign his own for others' good,
But not in pity, not because he ought,
But in some strange perversity of thought,
That sway'd him onward with a secret pride
To do what few or none would do beside;
And this same impulse would, in tempting time,
Mislead his spirit equally to crime;
So much he soar'd beyond, or sunk beneath
The men with whom he felt condemn'd to breathe,
And long'd by good or ill to separate
Himself from all who shared his mortal state;
His mind abhorring this had fix'd her throne
Far from the world, in regions of her own;
Thus coldly passing all that pass'd below,
His blood in temperate seeming now would flow:
Ah! happier if it ne'er with guilt had glow'd,
But ever in that icy smoothness flow'd:
'Tis true, with other men their path he walk'd,
And like the rest in seeming did and talk'd,
Nor outraged Reason's rules by flaw nor start,
His madness was not of the head, but heart;
And rarely wander'd in his speech, or drew
His thoughts so forth as to offend the view.

XIX.

With all that chilling mystery of mien,
And seeming gladness to remain unseen,
He had (if 'twere not nature's boon) an art
Of fixing memory on another's heart:
It was not love, perchance — nor hate — nor aught
That words can image to express the thought;
But they who saw him did not see in vain,
And once beheld, would ask of him again:
And those to whom he spake remember'd well,
And on the words, however light, would dwell.
None knew nor how, nor why, but he entwined
Himself perforce around the hearer's mind;
There he was stamp'd, in liking, or in hate,
If greeted once; however brief the date
That friendship, pity, or aversion knew,
Still there within the inmost thought he grew.
You could not penetrate his soul, but found
Despite your wonder, to your own he wound.
His presence haunted still; and from the breast

He forced an all-unwilling interest;
Vain was the struggle in that mental net,
His spirit seem'd to dare you to forget!

XX.

There is a festival, where knights and dames,
And aught that wealth or lofty lineage claims,
Appear — a high-born and a welcomed guest
To Otho's hall came Lara with the rest.
The long carousal shakes the illumined hall,
Well speeds alike the banquet and the ball;
And the gay dance of bounding Beauty's train
Links grace and harmony in happiest chain:
Blest are the early hearts and gentle hands
That mingle there in well according bands;
It is a sight the careful brow might smooth,
And make Age smile, and dream itself to youth,
And Youth forget such hour was pass'd on earth,
So springs the exulting bosom to that mirth!

XXI.

And Lara gazed on these sedately glad,
His brow belied him if his soul was sad,
And his glance follow'd fast each fluttering fair,
Whose steps of lightness woke no echo there:
He lean'd against the lofty pillar nigh
With folded arms and long attentive eye,
Nor mark'd a glance so sternly fix'd on his,
Ill brook'd high Lara scrutiny like this:
At length he caught it, 'tis a face unknown,
But seems as searching his, and his alone;
Prying and dark, a stranger's by his mien,
Who still till now had gazed on him unseen;
At length encountering meets the mutual gaze
Of keen inquiry, and of mute amaze;
On Lara's glance emotion gathering grew,
As if distrusting that the stranger threw;
Along the stranger's aspect fix'd and stern
Flash'd more than thence the vulgar eye could learn.

XXII.

"Tis he!" the stranger cried, and those that heard
Re-echo'd fast and far the whisper'd word.
"Tis he!"--"Tis who?" they question far and near,
Till louder accents rang on Lara's ear;
So widely spread, few bosoms well could brook
The general marvel, or that single look;
But Lara stirr'd not, changed not, the surprise
That sprung at first to his arrested eyes
Seem'd now subsided, neither sunk nor raised
Glanced his eye round, though still the stranger gazed;
And drawing nigh, exclaim'd, with haughty sneer,

"Tis he!--how came he thence?--what doth he here?"

XXIII.

It were too much for Lara to pass by
Such question, so repeated fierce and high;
With look collected, but with accent cold,
More mildly firm than petulantly bold,
He turn'd, and met the inquisitorial tone--
'My name is Lara!--when thine own is known,
Doubt not my fitting answer to requite
The unlook'd for courtesy of such a knight.
'Tis Lara!--further wouldest thou mark or ask?
I shun no question, and I wear no mask.'
'Thou shunn'st no question! Ponder — is there none
Thy heart must answer, though thine ear would shun?
And deem'st thou me unknown too? Gaze again!
At least thy memory was not given in vain.
Oh! never canst thou cancel half her debt,
Eternity forbids thee to forget.'
With slow and searching glance upon his face
Grew Lara's eyes, but nothing there could trace
They knew, or chose to know--with dubious look
He deign'd no answer, but his head he shook,
And half contemptuous turn'd to pass away;
But the stern stranger motion'd him to stay.
'A word!--I charge thee stay, and answer here
To one, who, wert thou noble, were thy peer,
But as thou wast and art--nay, frown not, lord,
If false, 'tis easy to disprove the word--
But as thou wast and art, on thee looks down,
Distrusts thy smiles, but shakes not at thy frown.
Art thou not he? whose deeds--'

'Whate'er I be,
Words wild as these, accusers like to thee,
I list no further; those with whom they weigh
May hear the rest, nor venture to gainsay
The wondrous tale no doubt thy tongue can tell,
Which thus begins courteously and well.
Let Otho cherish here his polish'd guest,
To him my thanks and thoughts shall be express'd.'
And here their wondering host hath interposed--
'Whate'er there be between you undisclosed,
This is no time nor fitting place to mar
The mirthful meeting with a wordy war.
If thou, Sir Ezzelin, hast ought to show
Which it befits Count Lara's ear to know,
To-morrow, here, or elsewhere, as may best
Beseem your mutual judgment, speak the rest;
I pledge myself for thee, as not unknown,
Though, like Count Lara, now return'd alone
From other lands, almost a stranger grown;

And if from Lara's blood and gentle birth
I augur right of courage and of worth,
He will not that untainted line belie,
Nor aught that knighthood may accord deny.'
'To-morrow be it,' Ezzelin replied,
'And here our several worth and truth be tried:
I gage my life, my falchion to attest
My words, so may I mingle with the blest!'

What answers Lara? to its centre shrunk
His soul, in deep abstraction sudden sunk;
The words of many, and the eyes of all
That there were gather'd, seem'd on him to fall;
But his were silent, his appear'd to stray
In far forgetfulness away--away--
Alas! that heedlessness of all around
Bespoke remembrance only too profound.

XXIV.

'To-morrow!--ay, to-morrow!'--further word
Than those repeated none from Lara heard;
Upon his brow no outward passion spoke,
From his large eye no flashing anger broke;
Yet there was something fix'd in that low tone
Which shew'd resolve, determined, though unknown.
He seized his cloak--his head he slightly bow'd,
And passing Ezzelin he left the crowd;
And as he pass'd him, smiling met the frown
With which that chieftain's brow would bear him down:
It was nor smile of mirth, nor struggling pride
That curbs to scorn the wrath it cannot hide;
But that of one in his own heart secure
Of all that he would do, or could endure.
Could this mean peace? the calmness of the good?
Or guilt grown old in desperate hardihood?
Alas! too like in confidence are each
For man to trust to mortal look or speech;
From deeds, and deeds alone, may he discern
Truths which it wrings the unpractised heart to learn.

XXV.

And Lara call'd his page, and went his way--
Well could that stripling word or sign obey:
His only follower from those climes afar
Where the soul glows beneath a brighter star;
For Lara left the shore from whence he sprung,
In duty patient, and sedate though young;
Silent as him he served, his fate appears
Above his station, and beyond his years.
Though not unknown the tongue of Lara's land,
In such from him he rarely heard command;
But fleet his step, and clear his tones would come,

When Lara's lip breathed forth the words of home:
Those accents, as his native mountains dear,
Awake their absent echoes in his ear,
Friends', kindreds', parents', wonted voice recall,
Now lost, abjured, for one--his friend, his all:
For him earth now disclosed no other guide;
What marvel then he rarely left his side?

XXVI.

Light was his form, and darkly delicate
That brow whereon his native sun had sate,
But had not marr'd, though in his beams he grew,
The cheek where oft the unbidden blush shone through;
Yet not such blush as mounts when health would show
All the heart's hue in that delighted glow;
But 'twas a hectic tint of secret care
That for a burning moment fever'd there;
And the wild sparkle of his eye seem'd caught
From high, and lighten'd with electric thought,
Though its black orb those long low lashes' fringe
Had temper'd with a melancholy tinge;
Yet less of sorrow than of pride was there,
Or, if 'twere grief, a grief that none should share:
And pleased not him the sports that please his age,
The tricks of youth, the frolics of the page;
For hours on Lara he would fix his glance,
As all-forgotten in that watchful trance;
And from his chief withdrawn, he wander'd lone,
Brief were his answers, and his questions none;
His walk the wood, his sport some foreign book;
His resting-place the bank that curbs the brook;
He seem'd, like him he served, to live apart
From all that lures the eye, and fills the heart;
To know no brotherhood; and take from earth
No gift beyond that bitter boon--our birth.

XXVII.

If aught he loved, 'twas Lara; but was shown
His faith in reverence and in deeds alone;
In mute attention; and his care, which guess'd
Each wish, fulfill'd it ere the tongue express'd.
Still there was haughtiness in all he did,
A spirit deep that brook'd not to be chid;
His zeal, though more than that of servile hands,
In act alone obeys, his air commands;
As if 'twas Lara's less than
his
desire
That thus he served, but surely not for hire.
Slight were the tasks enjoin'd him by his lord,
To hold the stirrup, or to bear the sword;
To tune his lute, or, if he will'd it more,

On tomes of other times and tongues to pore;
But ne'er to mingle with the menial train,
To whom he shew'd not deference nor disdain,
But that well-worn reserve which proved he knew
No sympathy with that familiar crew:
His soul, whate'er his station or his stem,
Could bow to Lara, not descend to them.
Of higher birth he seem'd, and better days,
Nor mark of vulgar toil that hand betrays,
So femininely white it might bespeak
Another sex, when match'd with that smooth cheek,
But for his garb, and something in his gaze,
More wild and high than woman's eye betrays;
A latent fierceness that far more became
His fiery climate than his tender frame:
True, in his words it broke not from his breast,
But from his aspect might be more than guess'd.
Kaled his name, though rumour said he bore
Another ere he left his mountain shore;
For sometimes he would hear, however nigh,
That name repeated loud without reply,
As unfamiliar, or, if roused again,
Start to the sound, as but remember'd then;
Unless 'twas Lara's wonted voice that spake,
For then, ear, eyes, and heart would all awake.

XXVIII.

He had look'd down upon the festive hall,
And mark'd that sudden strife so mark'd of all;
And when the crowd around and near him told
Their wonder at the calmness of the bold,
Their marvel how the high-born Lara bore
Such insult from a stranger, doubly sore,
The colour of young Kaled went and came,
The lip of ashes, and the cheek of flame;
And o'er his brow the dampening heart-drops threw
The sickening iciness of that cold dew
That rises as the busy bosom sinks
With heavy thoughts from which reflection shrinks.
Yes — there be things which we must dream and dare
And execute ere thought be half aware:
Whate'er might Kaled's be, it was enow
To seal his lip, but agonise his brow.
He gazed on Ezzelin till Lara cast
That sidelong smile upon on the knight he pass'd;
When Kaled saw that smile his visage fell,
As if on something recognised right well;
His memory read in such a meaning more
Than Lara's aspect unto others wore.
Forward he sprung--a moment, both were gone,
And all within that hall seem'd left alone;
Each had so fix'd his eye on Lara's mien,

All had so mix'd their feelings with that scene,
That when his long dark shadow through the porch
No more relieves the glare of yon high torch,
Each pulse beats quicker, and all bosoms seem
To bound as doubting from too black a dream,
Such as we know is false, yet dread in sooth,
Because the worst is ever nearest truth.
And they are gone--but Ezzelin is there,
With thoughtful visage and imperious air;
But long remain'd not; ere an hour expired
He waved his hand to Otho, and retired.

XXIX.

The crowd are gone, the revellers at rest;
The courteous host, and all-approving guest,
Again to that accustom'd couch must creep
Where joy subsides, and sorrow sighs to sleep,
And man, o'erlabour'd with his being's strife,
Shrinks to that sweet forgetfulness of life:
There lie love's feverish hope, and cunning's guile,
Hate's working brain and lull'd ambition's wile;
O'er each vain eye oblivion's pinions wave,
And quench'd existence crouches in a grave.
What better name may slumber's bed become?
Night's sepulchre, the universal home,
Where weakness, strength, vice, virtue, sunk supine,
Alike in naked helplessness recline;
Glad for awhile to heave unconscious breath,
Yet wake to wrestle with the dread of death,
And shun, though day but dawn on ills increased,
That sleep, the loveliest, since it dreams the least.

CANTO THE SECOND.

I.

Night wanes--the vapours round the mountains curl'd,
Melt into morn, and Light awakes the world.
Man has another day to swell the past,
And lead him near to little, but his last;
But mighty Nature bounds as from her birth,
The sun is in the heavens, and life on earth;
Flowers in the valley, splendour in the beam,
Health on the gale, and freshness in the stream.
Immortal man! behold her glories shine,
And cry, exulting inly, 'They are thine!'
Gaze on, while yet thy gladden'd eye may see,
A morrow comes when they are not for thee;
And grieve what may above thy senseless bier,
Nor earth nor sky will yield a single tear;
Nor cloud shall gather more, nor leaf shall fall,
Nor gale breathe forth one sigh for thee, for all;
But creeping things shall revel in their spoil,

And fit thy clay to fertilise the soil.

II.

'Tis morn--'tis noon--assembled in the hall,
The gather'd chieftains come to Otho's call:
'Tis now the promised hour, that must proclaim
The life or death of Lara's future fame;
When Ezzelin his charge may here unfold,
And whatsoe'er the tale, it must be told.
His faith was pledged, and Lara's promise given,
To meet it in the eye of man and Heaven.
Why comes he not? Such truths to be divulged,
Methinks the accuser's rest is long indulged.

III.

The hour is past, and Lara too is there,
With self-confiding, coldly patient air;
Why comes not Ezzelin? The hour is past,
And murmurs rise, and Otho's brow's o'ercast,
'I know my friend! his faith I cannot fear,
If yet he be on earth, expect him here;
The roof that held him in the valley stands
Between my own and noble Lara's lands;
My halls from such a guest had honour gain'd,
Nor had Sir Ezzelin his host disdain'd,
But that some previous proof forbade his stay,
And urged him to prepare against to-day;
The word I pledge for his I pledge again,
Or will myself redeem his knighthood's stain.'

He ceased--and Lara answer'd, 'I am here
To lend at thy demand a listening ear,
To tales of evil from a stranger's tongue,
Whose words already might my heart have wrung,
But that I deem'd him scarcely less than mad,
Or, at the worst, a foe ignobly bad.
I know him not--but me it seems he knew
In lands where--but I must not trifle too:
Produce this babbler--or redeem the pledge;
Here in thy hold, and with thy falchion's edge.'

Proud Otho on the instant, reddening, threw
His glove on earth, and forth his sabre flew.
'The last alternative befits me best,
And thus I answer for mine absent guest.'

With cheek unchanging from its sallow gloom,
However near his own or other's tomb;
With hand, whose almost careless coolness spoke
Its grasp well-used to deal the sabre-stroke;
With eye, though calm, determined not to spare,
Did Lara too his willing weapon bare.

In vain the circling chieftains round them closed,
For Otho's frenzy would not be opposed;
And from his lip those words of insult fell--
His sword is good who can maintain them well.

IV.

Short was the conflict; furious, blindly rash,
Vain Otho gave his bosom to the gash:
He bled, and fell; but not with deadly wound,
Stretch'd by a dextrous sleight along the ground.
'Demand thy life!' He answer'd not: and then
From that red floor he ne'er had risen again,
For Lara's brow upon the moment grew
Almost to blackness in its demon hue;
And fiercer shook his angry falchion now
Than when his foe's was levell'd at his brow;
Then all was stern collectedness and art,
Now rose the unleaven'd hatred of his heart;
So little sparing to the foe he fell'd,
That when the approaching crowd his arm withheld
He almost turn'd the thirsty point on those
Who thus for mercy dared to interpose;
But to a moment's thought that purpose bent;
Yet look'd he on him still with eye intent,
As if he loathed the ineffectual strife
That left a foe, howe'er o'erthrown, with life;
As if to search how far the wound he gave
Had sent its victim onward to his grave.

V.

They raised the bleeding Otho, and the Leech
Forbade all present question, sign, and speech;
The others met within a neighbouring hall,
And he, incensed and heedless of them all,
The cause and conqueror in this sudden fray,
In haughty silence slowly strode away;
He back'd his steed, his homeward path he took,
Nor cast on Otho's tower a single look.

VI.

But where was he? that meteor of a night,
Who menaced but to disappear with light.
Where was this Ezzelin? who came and went
To leave no other trace of his intent.
He left the dome of Otho long ere morn,
In darkness, yet so well the path was worn
He could not miss it: near his dwelling lay;
But there he was not, and with coming day
Came fast inquiry, which unfolded nought
Except the absence of the chief it sought.
A chamber tenantless, a steed at rest,
His host alarm'd, his murmuring squires distress'd:

Their search extends along, around the path,
In dread to meet the marks of prowlers' wrath:
But none are there, and not a brake hath borne
Nor gout of blood, nor shred of mantle torn;
Nor fall nor struggle hath defaced the grass,
Which still retains a mark where murder was;
Nor dabbling fingers left to tell the tale,
The bitter print of each convulsive nail,
When agonised hands that cease to guard,
Wound in that pang the smoothness of the sward.
Some such had been, if here a life was reft,
But these were not; and doubting hope is left;
And strange suspicion, whispering Lara's name,
Now daily mutters o'er his blacken'd fame;
Then sudden silent when his form appear'd,
Awaits the absence of the thing it fear'd;
Again its wonted wondering to renew,
And dye conjecture with a darker hue.

VII.

Days roll along, and Otho's wounds are heal'd,
But not his pride; and hate no more conceal'd:
He was a man of power, and Lara's foe,
The friend of all who sought to work him woe,
And from his country's justice now demands
Account of Ezzelin at Lara's hands.
Who else than Lara could have cause to fear
His presence? who had made him disappear,
If not the man on whom his menaced charge
Had sate too deeply were he left at large?
The general rumour ignorantly loud,
The mystery dearest to the curious crowd;
The seeming friendlessness of him who strove
To win no confidence, and wake no love;
The sweeping fierceness which his soul betray'd,
The skill with which he wielded his keen blade;
Where had his arm unwarlike caught that art?
Where had that fierceness grown upon his heart?
For it was not the blind capricious rage
A word can kindle and a word assuage;
But the deep working of a soul unmix'd
With aught of pity where its wrath had fix'd;
Such as long power and overgorged success
Concentrates into all that's merciless:
These, link'd with that desire which ever sways
Mankind, the rather to condemn than praise,
'Gainst Lara gathering raised at length a storm,
Such as himself might fear, and foes would form,
And he must answer for the absent head
Of one that haunts him still, alive or dead.

VIII.

Within that land was many a malcontent,
Who cursed the tyranny to which he bent;
That soil full many a wringing despot saw,
Who work'd his wantonness in form of law;
Long war without and frequent broil within
Had made a path for blood and giant sin,
That waited but a signal to begin
New havoc, such as civil discord blends,
Which knows no neuter, owns but foes or friends;
Fix'd in his feudal fortress each was lord,
In word and deed obey'd, in soul abhor'd.
Thus Lara had inherited his lands,
And with them pining hearts and sluggish hands;
But that long absence from his native clime
Had left him stainless of oppression's crime,
And now, diverted by his milder sway,
All dread by slow degrees had worn away;
The menials felt their usual awe alone,
But more for him than them that fear was grown;
They deem'd him now unhappy, though at first
Their evil judgment augur'd of the worst,
And each long restless night, and silent mood,
Was traced to sickness, fed by solitude:
And though his lonely habits threw of late
Gloom o'er his chamber, cheerful was his gate;
For thence the wretched ne'er unsoothed withdrew,
For them, at least, his soul compassion knew.
Cold to the great, contemptuous to the high,
The humble pass'd not his unheeding eye;
Much he would speak not, but beneath his roof
They found asylum oft, and ne'er reproof.
And they who watch'd might mark that, day by day,
Some new retainers gather'd to his sway;
But most of late, since Ezzelin was lost,
He play'd the courteous lord and bounteous host:
Perchance his strife with Otho made him dread
Some snare prepared for his obnoxious head;
Whate'er his view, his favour more obtains
With these, the people, than his fellow thanes.
If this were policy, so far 'twas sound,
The million judged but of him as they found;
From him by sterner chiefs to exile driven
They but required a shelter, and 'twas given.
By him no peasant mourn'd his rifled cot,
And scarce the serf could murmur o'er his lot;
With him old avarice found its hoard secure,
With him contempt forbore to mock the poor;
Youth present cheer and promised recompense
Detain'd, till all too late to part from thence:
To hate he offer'd, with the coming change,
The deep reversion of delay'd revenge;
To love, long baffled by the unequal match,

The well-won charms success was sure to snatch.
All now was ripe, he waits but to proclaim
That slavery nothing which was still a name.
The moment came, the hour when Otho thought
Secure at last the vengeance which he sought
His summons found the destined criminal
Begirt by thousands in his swarming hall,
Fresh from their feudal fetters newly riven,
Defying earth, and confident of heaven.
That morning he had freed the soil-bound slaves
Who dig no land for tyrants but their graves!
Such is their cry--some watchword for the fight
Must vindicate the wrong, and warp the right;
Religion--freedom--vengeance--what you will,
A word's enough to raise mankind to kill;
Some factious phrase by cunning caught and spread,
That guilt may reign, and wolves and worms be fed!

IX.

Throughout that clime the feudal chiefs had gain'd
Such sway, their infant monarch hardly reign'd;
Now was the hour for faction's rebel growth,
The serfs contemn'd the one, and hated both:
They waited but a leader, and they found
One to their cause inseparably bound;
By circumstance compell'd to plunge again,
In self-defence, amidst the strife of men.
Cut off by some mysterious fate from those
Whom birth and nature meant not for his foes,
Had Lara from that night, to him accurst,
Prepared to meet, but not alone, the worst:
Some reason urged, whate'er it was, to shun
Inquiry into deeds at distance done;
By mingling with his own the cause of all,
E'en if he fail'd, he still delay'd his fall.
The sullen calm that long his bosom kept,
The storm that once had spent itself and slept,
Roused by events that seem'd foredoom'd to urge
His gloomy fortunes to their utmost verge,
Burst forth, and made him all he once had been,
And is again; he only changed the scene.
Light care had he for life, and less for fame,
But not less fitted for the desperate game:
He deem'd himself mark'd out for others' hate,
And mock'd at ruin, so they shared his fate.
What cared he for the freedom of the crowd?
He raised the humble but to bend the proud.
He had hoped quiet in his sullen lair,
But man and destiny beset him there:
Inured to hunters, he was found at bay;
And they must kill, they cannot snare the prey.
Stern, unambitious, silent he had been

Henceforth a calm spectator of life's scene;
But dragg'd again upon the arena, stood
A leader not unequal to the feud;
In voice--mien--gesture--savage nature spoke,
And from his eye the gladiator broke.

X.

What boots the oft-repeated tale of strife,
The feast of vultures, and the waste of life?
The varying fortune of each separate field,
The fierce that vanquish, and the faint that yield?
The smoking ruin, and the crumbled wall?
In this the struggle was the same with all;
Save that distemper'd passions lent their force
In bitterness that banish'd all remorse.
None sued, for Mercy know her cry was vain,
The captive died upon the battle-slain:
In either cause, one rage alone possess'd
The empire of the alternate victor's breast;
And they that smote for freedom or for sway,
Deem'd few were slain, while more remain'd to slay.
It was too late to check the wasting brand,
And Desolation reap'd the famish'd land;
The torch was lighted, and the flame was spread,
And Carnage smiled upon her daily bread.

XI.

Fresh with the nerve the new-born impulse strung,
The first success to Lara's numbers clung:
But that vain victory hath ruin'd all;
They form no longer to their leader's call:
In blind confusion on the foe they press,
And think to snatch is to secure success.
The lust of booty, and the thirst of hate,
Lure on the broken brigands to their fate:
In vain he doth whate'er a chief may do,
To check the headlong fury of that crew,
In vain their stubborn ardour he would tame,
The hand that kindles cannot quench the flame.
The wary foe alone hath turn'd their mood,
And shewn their rashness to that erring brood:
The feign'd retreat, the nightly ambuscade,
The daily harass, and the fight delay'd,
The long privation of the hoped supply,
The tentless rest beneath the humid sky,
The stubborn wall that mocks the leaguer's art,
And palls the patience of his baffled heart,
Of these they had not deem'd: the battle-day
They could encounter as a veteran may;
But more preferr'd the fury of the strife,
And present death, to hourly suffering life:
And famine wrings, and fever sweeps away

His numbers melting fast from their array;
Intemperate triumph fades to discontent,
And Lara's soul alone seems still unbent:
But few remain to aid his voice and hand,
And thousands dwindled to a scanty band:
Desperate, though few, the last and best remain'd
To mourn the discipline they late disdain'd.
One hope survives, the frontier is not far,
And thence they may escape from native war;
And bear within them to the neighbouring state
An exile's sorrows, or an outlaw's hate:
Hard is the task their fatherland to quit,
But harder still to perish or submit.

XII.

It is resolved--they march--consenting Night
Guides with her star their dim and torchless flight;
Already they perceive its tranquil beam
Sleep on the surface of the barrier stream;
Already they descry--Is yon the bank?
Away! 'tis lined with many a hostile rank.
Return or fly!--What glitters in the rear?
'Tis Otho's banner--the pursuer's spear!
Are those the shepherds' fires upon the height?
Alas! they blaze too widely for the flight:
Cut off from hope, and compass'd in the toil,
Less blood, perchance, hath bought a richer spoil!

XIII.

A moment's pause--'tis but to breathe their band
Or shall they onward press, or here withstand?
It matters little--if they charge the foes
Who by their border-stream their march oppose,
Some few, perchance, may break and pass the line,
However link'd to baffle such design.
'The charge be ours! to wait for their assault
Were fate well worthy of a coward's halt.'
Forth flies each sabre, rein'd is every steed,
And the next word shall scarce outstrip the deed:
In the next tone of Lara's gathering breath
How many shall but hear the voice of death!

XIV.

His blade is bared--in him there is an air
As deep, but far too tranquil for despair;
A something of indifference more than then
Becomes the bravest, if they feel for men.
He turn'd his eye on Kaled, ever near,
And still too faithful to betray one fear;
Perchance 'twas but the moon's dim twilight threw
Along his aspect an unwonted hue
Of mournful paleness, whose deep tint express'd

The truth, and not the terror of his breast.
This Lara mark'd, and laid his hand on his:
It trembled not in such an hour as this;
His lip was silent, scarcely beat his heart,
His eye alone proclaim'd--
'We will not part!
Thy band may perish, or thy friends may flee,
Farewell to life, but not adieu to thee!'

The word hath pass'd his lips, and onward driven,
Pours the link'd band through ranks asunder riven;
Well has each steed obey'd the armed heel,
And flash the scimitars, and rings the steel;
Outnumber'd, not outbraved, they still oppose
Despair to daring, and a front to foes;
And blood is mingled with the dashing stream,
Which runs all redly till the morning beam.

XV.

Commanding, aiding, animating all,
Where foe appear'd to press, or friend to fall,
Cheers Lara's voice, and waves or strikes his steel,
Inspiring hope himself had ceased to feel.
None fled, for well they knew that flight were vain,
But those that waver turn to smite again,
While yet they find the firmest of the foe
Recoil before their leader's look and blow;
Now girt with numbers, now almost alone,
He foils their ranks, or reunites his own;
Himself he spared not--once they seem'd to fly--
Now was the time, he waved his hand on high,
And shook--Why sudden droops that plumed crest?
The shaft is sped--the arrow's in his breast!
That fatal gesture left the unguarded side,
And Death hath stricken down yon arm of pride.
The word of triumph fainted from his tongue;
That hand, so raised, how droopingly it hung!
But yet the sword instinctively retains,
Though from its fellow shrink the falling reins;
These Kaled snatches: dizzy with the blow,
And senseless bending o'er his saddle-bow
Perceives not Lara that his anxious page
Beguiles his charger from the combat's rage:
Meantime his followers charge and charge again;
Too mix'd the slayers now to heed the slain!

XVI.

Day glimmers on the dying and the dead,
The cloven cuirass, and the helmless head;
The war-horse masterless is on the earth,
And that last gasp hath burst his bloody girth:
And near, yet quivering with what life remain'd,

The heel that urged him, and the hand that rein'd:
And some too near that rolling torrent lie,
Whose waters mock the lip of those that die;
That panting thirst which scorches in the breath
Of those that die the soldier's fiery death,
In vain impels the burning mouth to crave
One drop--the last--to cool it for the grave;
With feeble and convulsive effort swept
Their limbs along the crimson'd turf have crept:
The faint remains of life such struggles waste,
But yet they reach the stream, and bend to taste:
They feel its freshness, and almost partake--
Why pause?--No further thirst have they to slake--
It is unquench'd, and yet they feel it not--
It was an agony--but now forgot!

XVII.

Beneath a lime, remoter from the scene,
Where but for him that strife had never been,
A breathing but devoted warrior lay:
'Twas Lara bleeding fast from life away.
His follower once, and now his only guide,
Kneels Kaled watchful o'er his welling side,
And with his scarf would stanch the tides that rush
With each convulsion in a blacker gush;
And then, as his faint breathing waxes low,
In feebler, not less fatal tricklings flow:
He scarce can speak, but motions him 'tis vain,
And merely adds another throb to pain.
He clasps the hand that pang which would assuage,
And sadly smiles his thanks to that dark page,
Who nothing fears, nor feels, nor heeds, nor sees,
Save that damp brow which rests upon his knees;
Save that pale aspect, where the eye, though dim,
Held all the light that shone on earth for him.

XVIII.

The foe arrives, who long had search'd the field,
Their triumph nought till Lara too should yield;
They would remove him, but they see 'twere vain,
And he regards them with a calm disdain,
That rose to reconcile him with his fate,
And that escape to death from living hate:
And Otho comes, and leaping from his steed,
Looks on the bleeding foe that made him bleed,
And questions of his state; he answers not,
Scarce glances on him as on one forgot,
And turns to Kaled:--each remaining word,
They understood not, if distinctly heard;
His dying tones are in that other tongue,
To which some strange remembrance wildly clung.
They spake of other scenes, but what--is known

To Kaled, whom their meaning reach'd alone;
And he replied, though faintly, to their sound,
While gazed the rest in dumb amazement round:
They seem'd even then--that twain--unto the last
To half forget the present in the past;
To share between themselves some separate fate,
Whose darkness none beside should penetrate.

XIX.

Their words though faint were many — from the tone
Their import those who heard could judge alone;
From this, you might have deem'd young Kaled's death
More near than Lara's by his voice and breath,
So sad, so deep, and hesitating broke
The accents his scarce-moving pale lips spoke;
But Lara's voice, though low, at first was clear
And calm, till murmuring death gasp'd hoarsely near:
But from his visage little could we guess,
So unrepentant, dark, and passionless,
Save that when struggling nearer to his last,
Upon that page his eye was kindly cast;
And once, as Kaled's answering accents ceased,
Rose Lara's hand, and pointed to the East:
Whether (as then the breaking sun from high
Roll'd back the clouds) the morrow caught his eye,
Or that 'twas chance, or some remember'd scene
That raised his arm to point where such had been,
Scarce Kaled seem'd to know, but turn'd away,
As if his heart abhor'd that coming day,
And shrunk his glance before that morning light
To look on Lara's brow — where all grew night.
Yet sense seem'd left, though better were its loss;
For when one near display'd the absolving cross,
And proffer'd to his touch the holy bead,
Of which his parting soul might own the need,
He look'd upon it with an eye profane,
And smiled — Heaven pardon! if 'twere with disdain;
And Kaled, though he spoke not, nor withdrew
From Lara's face his fix'd despairing view,
With brow repulsive, and with gesture swift,
Flung back the hand which held the sacred gift,
As if such but disturb'd the expiring man,
Nor seem'd to know his life but then began,
The life immortal infinite, secure,
To all for whom that cross hath made it sure!

XX.

But gasping heaved the breath that Lara drew,
And dull the film along his dim eye grew;
His limbs stretch'd fluttering, and his head droop'd o'er
The weak yet still untiring knee that bore:
He press'd the hand he held upon his heart--

It beats no more, but Kaled will not part
With the cold grasp, but feels, and feels in vain,
For that faint throb which answers not again.
'It beats!' --Away, thou dreamer! he is gone--
It once was Lara which thou look'st upon.

XXI.

He gazed, as if not yet had pass'd away
The haughty spirit of that humble clay;
And those around have roused him from his trance,
But cannot tear from thence his fixed glance;
And when in raising him from where he bore
Within his arms the form that felt no more,
He saw the head his breast would still sustain,
Roll down like earth to earth upon the plain;
He did not dash himself thereby, nor tear
The glossy tendrils of his raven hair,
But strove to stand and gaze, but reel'd and fell,
Scarce breathing more than that he loved so well.
Than that he lov'd! Oh! never yet beneath
The breast of man such trusty love may breathe!
That trying moment hath at once reveal'd
The secret long and yet but half conceal'd;
In baring to revive that lifeless breast,
Its grief seem'd ended, but the sex confess'd;
And life return'd, and Kaled felt no shame--
What now to her was Womanhood or Fame?

XXII.

And Lara sleeps not where his fathers sleep,
But where he died his grave was dug as deep;
Nor is his mortal slumber less profound,
Though priest nor bless'd, nor marble deck'd the mound;
And he was mourn'd by one whose quiet grief,
Less loud, outlasts a people's for their chief.
Vain was all question ask'd her of the past,
And vain e'en menace — silent to the last;
She told nor whence nor why she left behind
Her all for one who seem'd but little kind.
Why did she love him? Curious fool!--be still--
Is human love the growth of human will?
To her he might be gentleness; the stern
Have deeper thoughts than your dull eyes discern,
And when they love, your smilers guess not how
Beats the strong heart, though less the lips avow.
They were not common links that form'd the chain
That bound to Lara Kaled's heart and brain;
But that wild tale she brook'd not to unfold,
And seal'd is now each lip that could have told.

XXIII.

They laid him in the earth, and on his breast,

Besides the wound that sent his soul to rest,
They found the scattered dints of many a scar
Which were not planted there in recent war:
Where'er had pass'd his summer years of life,
It seems they vanish'd in a land of strife;
But all unknown his glory or his guilt,
These only told that somewhere blood was spilt.
And Ezzelin, who might have spoke the past,
Return'd no more--that night appear'd his last.

XXIV.

Upon that night (a peasant's is the tale)
A Serf that cross'd the intervening vale,
When Cynthia's light almost gave way to morn,
And nearly veil'd in mist her waning horn;
A Serf, that rose betimes to thread the wood,
And hew the bough that bought his children's food,
Pass'd by the river that divides the plain
Of Otho's lands and Lara's broad domain:
He heard a tramp--a horse and horseman broke
From out the wood--before him was a cloak
Wrapt round some burthen at his saddle-bow,
Bent was his head, and hidden was his brow.
Roused by the sudden sight at such a time,
And some foreboding that it might be crime,
Himself unheeded watch'd the stranger's course,
Who reach'd the river, bounded from his horse,
And lifting thence the burthen which he bore,
Heaved up the bank, and dash'd it from the shore,
Then paused, and look'd, and turn'd, and seem'd to watch,
And still another hurried glance would snatch,
And follow with his step the stream that flow'd,
As if even yet too much its surface show'd:
At once he started, stoop'd, around him strewn
The winter floods had scatter'd heaps of stone;
Of these the heaviest thence he gather'd there,
And slung them with a more than common care.
Meantime the Serf had crept to where unseen
Himself might safely mark what this might mean.
He caught a glimpse, as of a floating breast,
And something glitter'd starlike on the vest,
But ere he well could mark the buoyant trunk,
A massy fragment smote it, and it sunk:
It rose again, but indistinct to view,
And left the waters of a purple hue,
Then deeply disappear'd: the horseman gazed
Till ebb'd the latest eddy it had raised;
Then turning, vaulted on his pawing steed,
And instant spurr'd him into panting speed.
His face was mask'd--the features of the dead,
If dead it were, escaped the observer's dread;
But if in sooth a star its bosom bore,

Such is the badge that knighthood ever wore,
And such 'tis known Sir Ezzelin had worn
Upon the night that led to such a morn.
If thus he perish'd, Heaven receive his soul!
His undiscover'd limbs to ocean roll;
And charity upon the hope would dwell
It was not Lara's hand by which he fell.

XXV.

And Kaled--Lara--Ezzelin, are gone,
Alike without their monumental stone!
The first, all efforts vainly strove to wean
From lingering where her chieftain's blood had been.
Grief had so tamed a spirit once too proud,
Her tears were few, her wailing never loud;
But furious would you tear her from the spot
Where yet she scarce believed that he was not,
Her eye shot forth with all the living fire
That haunts the tigress in her whelpless ire;
But left to waste her weary moments there,
She talk'd all idly unto shapes of air,
Such as the busy brain of Sorrow paints,
And woos to listen to her fond complaints;
And she would sit beneath the very tree,
Where lay his drooping head upon her knee;
And in that posture where she saw him fall,
His words, his looks, his dying grasp recall;
And she had shorn, but saved her raven hair,
And oft would snatch it from her bosom there,
And fold and press it gently to the ground,
As if she stanch'd anew some phantom's wound.
Herself would question, and for him reply;
Then rising, start, and beckon him to fly
From some imagined spectre in pursuit;
Then seat her down upon some linden's root,
And hide her visage with her meagre hand,
Or trace strange characters along the sand.--
This could not last--she lies by him she loved;
Her tale untold--her truth too dearly proved.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Lines Addressed To A Young Lady

Doubtless, sweet girl! the hissing lead,
Wafting destruction o'er thy charms,
And hurtling o'er thy lovely head,
Has fill'd that breast with fond alarms.

Surely some envious demon's force,
Vex'd to behold such beauty here,
Impell'd the bullet's viewless course,
Diverted from its first career.

Yes! in that nearly fatal hour
The ball obey'd some hell-born guide;
But Heaven, with interposing power,
In pity turn'd the death aside.

Yet, as perchance one trembling tear
Upon that thrilling bosom fell;
Which I, th' unconscious cause of fear,
Extracted fromn its glistening cell:

Say, what dire penance can atone
For such an outrage done to thee?
Arraign'd before thy beauty's throne,
What punishment wilt thou decree?

Might I perform the judge's part,
The sentence I should scarce deplore;
It only would restore a heart
Which but belong'd to thee before.

The least atonement I can make
Is to become no longer free;
Henceforth I breathe but for thy sake,
Thou shalt be all in all to me.

But thou, perhaps, may'st now reject
Such expiation of my guilt;
Come then, some other mode elect;
Let it be death, or what thou wilt.

Choose then, relentless! and I swear
Nought shall thy dread decree prevent;
Yet hold-one little word forbear!
Let it be aught but banishment.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Lines Addressed To The Rev. J. T. Becher, On His Advising The Author To Mix More With Society

Dear Becher, you tell me to mix with mankind;
I cannot deny such a precept is wise;
But retirement accords with the tone of my mind:
I will not descend to a world I despise.
Did the senate or camp my exertions require,
Ambition might prompt me, at once, to go forth
When infancy's years of probation expire,
Perchance I may strive to distinguish my birth

The fire in the cavern of Etna conceal'd
Still mantles unseen in its secret recess;
At length, in a volume terrific reveal'd,
No torrent can quench it, no bounds can repress.

Oh! thus, the desire in my bosom for fame
Bids me live but to hope for posterity's praise.
Could I soar with the phoenix on pinions of flame
With him I would wish to expire in the blaze.

For the life of a Fox, of a Chatham the death,
What censure, what danger, what woe would I brave!
Their lives did not end when they yielded their breath;
Their glory illurnines the gloom of their grave.

Yet why should I mingle in Fashion's full herd?
Why crouch to her leaders, or cringe to her rules?
Why bend to the proud, or applaud the absurd?
Why search for delight in the friendship of fools?

I have tasted the sweets and the bitters of love;
In friendship I early was taught to believe
My passion the matrons prudence reprove;
I have found that a friend may profess, yet deceive.

To me what is wealth? - it may pass in an hour,
If tyrants prevail, or if Fortune should frown:
To me what is title? - the phantom of power;
To me what is fashion? - I seek but renown.

Deceit is a stranger as yet to my soul:
I still am unpractised to varnish the truth:
Then why should I live in a hateful control?
Why waste upon folly the days of my youth?

George Gordon Lord Byron

Lines In The Travellers' Book At Orchomenus

In this book a traveller had written:-
'Fair Albion, smiling, sees her son depart
To trace the birth and nursery of art:
Noble his object, glorious is his aim;
He comes to Athens, and he writes his name.'

BENEATH WHICH LORD BYRON INSERTED THE FOLLOWING.

The modest bard, like many a bard unknown,
Rhymes on our names, but wisely hides his own;
But yet, whoe'er he be, to say no worse,
His name would bring more credit than his verse.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Lines Inscribed Upon A Cup Formed From A Skull

Start not—nor deem my spirit fled:
In me behold the only skull
From which, unlike a living head,
Whatever flows is never dull.

I lived, I loved, I quaffed like thee;
I died: let earth my bones resign:
Fill up—thou canst not injure me;
The worm hath fouler lips than thine.

Better to hold the sparkling grape
Than nurse the earthworm's slimy brood,
And circle in the goblet's shape
The drink of gods than reptile's food.

Where once my wit, perchance, hath shone,
In aid of others' let me shine;
And when, alas! our brains are gone,
What nobler substitute than wine?

Quaff while thou canst; another race,
When thou and thine like me are sped,
May rescue thee from earth's embrace,
And rhyme and revel with the dead.

Why not—since through life's little day
Our heads such sad effects produce?
Redeemed from worms and wasting clay,
This chance is theirs to be of use.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Lines On Hearing That Lady Byron Was Ill

And thou wert sad - yet I was not with thee;
And thou wert sick, and yet I was not near;
Methought that joy and health alone could be
Where I was not - and pain and sorrow here!
And is it thus?-it is as I foretold,
And shall be more so; for the mind recoils
Upon itself, and the wreck'd heart lies cold,
While heaviness collects the shatter'd spoils.
It is not in the storm nor in the strife
We feel benumb'd, and wish to be no more,
But in the after - silence on the shore.
When all is lost, except a little life.
I am too well avenged! - but 'twas my right ;
Whate'er my sins might be, thou wert not sent
To be the Nemesis who should requite -
Nor did Heaven choose so near an instrument.
Mercy is for the merciful! - thou
Hast been of such, 'twill be accorded now.
Thy nights are banish'd from the realms of sleep! -
Yes! they may flatter thee, but thou shalt feel
A hollow agony which will not heal,
For thou art pillow'd on a curse too deep;
Thou hast sown in my sorrow, and must reap
The bitter harvest in a woe as real!
I have had many foes, but none like thee;
For 'gainst the rest myself I could de-fend, And be avenged, or turn them into friend;
But thou in safe implacability
Hadst nought to dread - in thy own weakness shielded,
And in my love, which hath but too much yielded,
And spared, for thy sake, some I should not spare;
And thus upon the world - trust in thy truth,
And the wild fame of my ungovern'd youth -
On things that were not, and on things that are -
Even upon such a basis hast thou built
A monument, whose cement hath been guilt!
The moral Clytemnestra of thy lord,
And hew'd down, with an unsuspected sword,
Fame, peace, and hope - and all the better life,
Which, but for this cold treason of thy heart,
Might still have risen from out the grave of strife,
And found a nobler duty than to part.
But of thy virtues didst thou make a vice,
Trafficking with them in a purpose cold,
For present anger, and for future gold -
And buying others' grief at any price.
And thus once enter'd into crooked ways,
The earthly truth, which was thy proper praise,
Did not still walk beside thee - but at times,
And with a breast unknowing its own crimes,
Deceit, averments incompatible,
Equivocations, and the thoughts which dwell
In Janus-spirits - the significant eye

Which learns to lie with silence - the pre-text
Of prudence, with advantages annex'd -
The acquiescence in all things which tend,
No matter how, to the desired end
All found a place in thy philosophy.
The means were worthy, and the end is won
I would not do by thee as thou hast done!

September 1816.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Lines on Mr. Hodgson Written on Board the Lisbon Packet

Huzza! Hodgson, we are going,
Our embargo's off at last;
Favourable breezes blowing
Bend the canvass o'er the mast.
From aloft the signal's streaming,
Hark! the farewell gun is fir'd;
Women screeching, tars blaspheming,
Tell us that our time's expir'd.
Here's a rascal
Come to task all,
Prying from the custom-house;
Trunks unpacking
Cases cracking,
Not a corner for a mouse
'Scapes unsearch'd amid the racket,
Ere we sail on board the Packet.

Now our boatmen quit their mooring,
And all hands must ply the oar;
Baggage from the quay is lowering,
We're impatient--push from shore.
"Have a care! that case holds liquor--
Stop the boat--I'm sick--oh Lord!"
"Sick, ma'am, damme, you'll be sicker,
Ere you've been an hour on board."
Thus are screaming
Men and women,
Gommen, ladies, servants, Jacks;
Here entangling,
All are wrangling,
Stuck together close as wax.--
Such the genial noise and racket,
Ere we reach the Lisbon Packet.

Now we've reach'd her, lo! the captain,
Gallant Kidd, commands the crew;
Passengers their berths are clapt in,
Some to grumble, some to spew.
"Hey day! call you that a cabin?
Why 't is hardly three feet square;
Not enough to stow Queen Mab in--
Who the deuce can harbour there?"
"Who, sir? plenty--
Nobles twenty
Did at once my vessel fill."
"Did they? Jesus,
How you squeeze us!
Would to God they did so still:
Then I'd 'scape the heat and racket
Of the good ship, Lisbon Packet."

Fletcher! Murray! Bob! where are you?

Stretch'd along the deck like logs--
Bear a hand, you jolly tar, you!
 Here's a rope's end for the dogs.
Hobhouse muttering fearful curses,
 As the hatchway down he rolls,
Now his breakfast, now his verses,
 Vomits forth--and damns our souls.

 "Here's a stanza
 On Braganza--
Help!"--"A couplet?"--"No, a cup
 Of warm water--"
 "What's the matter?"
 "Zounds! my liver's coming up;
I shall not survive the racket
Of this brutal Lisbon Packet."

Now at length we're off for Turkey,
 Lord knows when we shall come back!
Breezes foul and tempests murky
 May unship us in a crack.
But, since life at most a jest is,
 As philosophers allow,
Still to laugh by far the best is,
 Then laugh on--as I do now.
 Laugh at all things,
 Great and small things,
Sick or well, at sea or shore;
 While we're quaffing,
 Let's have laughing--
Who the devil cares for more?--
Some good wine! and who would lack it,
Ev'n on board the Lisbon Packet?

George Gordon Lord Byron

Lines To A Lady Weeping

Weep, daughter of a royal line,
A Sire's disgrace, a realm's decay;
Ah! happy if each tear of thine
Could wash a father's fault away!

Weep--for thy tears are Virtue's tears-
Auspicious to these suffering isles;
And be each drop in future years
Repaid thee by thy people's smiles!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Lines Written Beneath A Picture

Dear object of defeated care!
Though now of Love and thee bereft,
To reconcile me with despair,
Thing image and any tears are left.

'Tis said with Sorrow Time can cope;
But this I feel can ne'er be true:
For by the death?blow of my Hope
My Memory immortal grew.

Athens, January 1811.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Lines Written Beneath An Elm In The Churchyard Of Harrow On The Hill, Sept. 2, 1807

Spot of my youth! whose hoary branches sigh,
Swept by the breeze that fans thy cloudless sky;
Where now alone I muse, who oft have trod,
With those I loved, thy soft and verdant sod;
With those who, scattered far, perchance deplore,
Like me, the happy scenes they knew before:
Oh! as I trace again thy winding hill,
Mine eyes admire, my heart adores thee still,
Thou drooping Elm! beneath whose boughs I lay,
And frequent mused the twilight hours away;
Where, as they once were wont, my limbs recline,
But ah! without the thoughts which then were mine.
How do thy branches, moaning to the blast,
Invite the bosom to recall the past,
And seem to whisper, as the gently swell,
'Take, while thou canst, a lingering, last farewell!'

When fate shall chill, at length, this fevered breast,
And calm its cares and passions into rest,
Oft have I thought, 'twould soothe my dying hour,—
If aught may soothe when life resigns her power,—
To know some humbler grave, some narrow cell,
Would hide my bosom where it loved to dwell.
With this fond dream, methinks, 'twere sweet to die—
And here it lingered, here my heart might lie;
Here might I sleep, where all my hopes arose,
Scene of my youth, and couch of my repose;
For ever stretched beneath this mantling shade,
Pressed by the turf where once my childhood played;
Wrapped by the soil that veils the spot I loved,
Mixed with the earth o'er which my footsteps moved;
Blest by the tongues that charmed my youthful ear,
Mourned by the few my soul acknowledged here;
Deplored by those in early days allied,
And unremembered by the world beside.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Lines Written In An Album, At Malta

As o'er the cold sepulchral stone
Some name arrests the passer-by;
Thus, when thou view'st this page alone,
May mine attract thy pensive eye!

And when by thee that name is read,
Perchance in some succeeding year,
Reflect on me as on the dead,
And think my heart is buried here.

September 14, 1809.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Lines Written On A Blank Leaf Of 'The Pleasures Of Memory'

Absent or present, still to thee,
My friend, what magic spells belong!
As all can tell, who share, like me,
In turn thy converse and thy song.

But when the dreaded hour shall come
By Friendship ever deem'd too nigh,
And 'MEMORY' o'er her Druid's tomb
Shall weep that aught of thee can die,

How fondly will she then repay
Thy homage offer'd at her shrine, to
And blend, while ages roll away,
Her name immortally with thine!

April 19, 1812

George Gordon Lord Byron

Lines, On Hearing That Lady Byron Was III

And thou wert sad—yet I was not with thee!
And thou wert sick, and yet I was not near;
Methought that joy and health alone could be
Where I was not—and pain and sorrow here.
And is it thus?—it is as I foretold,
And shall be more so; for the mind recoils
Upon itself, and the wrecked heart lies cold,
While heaviness collects the shattered spoils.
It is not in the storm nor in the strife
We feel benumbed, and wish to be no more,
But in the after-silence on the shore,
When all is lost, except a little life.

I am too well avenged!—but 'twas my right;
Whate'er my sins might be, thou wert not sent
To be the Nemesis who should requite—
Nor did heaven choose so near an instrument.
Mercy is for the merciful!—if thou
Hast been of such, 'twill be accorded now.
Thy nights are banished from the realms of sleep!—
Yes! they may flatter thee, but thou shalt feel
A hollow agony which will not heal,
For thou art pillow'd on a curse too deep;
Thou hast sown in my sorrow, and must reap
The bitter harvest in a woe as real!
I have had many foes, but none like thee;
For 'gainst the rest myself I could defend,
And be avenged, or turn them into friend;
But thou in safe implacability
Hadst nought to dread—in thy own weakness shielded,
And in my love which hath but too much yielded,
And spared, for thy sake, some I should not spare—
And thus upon the world—trust in thy truth—
And the wild fame of my ungoverned youth—
On things that were not, and on things that are—
Even upon such a basis hast thou built
A monument whose cement hath been guilt!
The moral Clytemnestra of thy lord,
And hewed down, with an unsuspected sword,
Fame, peace, and hope—and all the better life
Which, but for this cold treason of thy heart,
Might still have risen from out the grave of strife,
And found a nobler duty than to part.
But of thy virtues didst thou make a vice,
Trafficking with them in a purpose cold,
For present anger, and for future gold—
And buying other's grief at any price.
And thus once entered into crooked ways,
The early truth, which was thy proper praise,
Did not still walk beside thee—but at times,
And with a breast unknowing its own crimes,
Deceit, averments incompatible,

Equivocations, and the thoughts which dwell
In Janus-spirits—the significant eye
Which learns to lie with silence—the pretext
Of Prudence, with advantages annexed—
The acquiescence in all things which tend,
No matter how, to the desired end—
All found a place in thy philosophy.
The means were worthy, and the end is won—
I would not do by thee as thou hast done!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Lines: Written In 'Letters Of An Italian Nun And An English Gentleman'

'Away, away, your fleeting arts
May now betray some simpler hearts;
And you will smile at their believing,
And they shall weep at your deceiving.'

ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING, ADDRESSED TO MISS ---.

Dear, simple girl, those flattering arts,
From which thou'dst guard frail female hearts,
Exist but in imagination,--
Mere phantoms of thine own creation;
For he who views that witching grace,
That perfect form, that lovely face,
With eyes admiring, oh! believe me,
He never wishes to deceive thee:
Once in thy polish'd mirror glance,
Thou'l't there descry that elegance
Which from our sex demands such praises,
But envy in the other raises:
Then he who tells thee of thy beauty,
Believe me, only does his duty:
Ah! fly not from the candid youth;
It is not flattery,--'tis truth.

July 1804

George Gordon Lord Byron

Love's Last Adieu

The roses of Love glad the garden of life,
Though nurtur'd 'mid weeds dropping pestilent dew,
Till Time crops the leaves with unmerciful knife,
Or prunes them for ever, in Love's last adieu!

In vain, with endearments, we soothe the sad heart,
In vain do we vow for an age to be true;
The chance of an hour may command us to part,
Or Death disunite us, in Love's last adieu!

Still Hope, breathing peace, through the grief-swellen breast,
Will whisper, O Our meeting we yet may renew: O
With this dream of deceit, half our sorrow's represt,
Nor taste we the poison, of Love's last adieu!

Oh! mark you yon pair, in the sunshine of youth,
Love twin'd round their childhood his flow'rs as they grew;
They flourish awhile, in the season of truth,
Till chill'd by the winter of Love's last adieu!

Sweet lady! why thus doth a tear steal its way,
Down a cheek which outrivals thy bosom in hue?
Yet why do I ask?---to distraction a prey,
Thy reason has perish'd, with Love's last adieu!

Oh! who is yon Misanthrope, shunning mankind?
From cities to caves of the forest he flew:
There, raving, he howls his complaint to the wind;
The mountains reverberate Love's last adieu!

Now Hate rules a heart which in Love's easy chains,
Once Passion's tumultuous blandishments knew;
Despair now inflames the dark tide of his veins,
He ponders, in frenzy, on Love's last adieu!

How he envies the wretch, with a soul wrapt in steel!
His pleasures are scarce, yet his troubles are few,
Who laughs at the pang that he never can feel,
And dreads not the anguish of Love's last adieu!

Youth flies, life decays, even hope is o'er cast;
No more, with Love's former devotion, we sue:
He spreads his young wing, he retires with the blast;
The shroud of affection is Love's last adieu!

In this life of probation, for rapture divine,
Astrea declares that some penance is due;
From him, who has worshipp'd at Love's gentle shrine,
The atonement is ample, in Love's last adieu!

Who kneels to the God, on his altar of light
Must myrtle and cypress alternately strew:

His myrtle, an emblem of purest delight,
His cypress, the garland of Love's last adieu!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Maid Of Athens, Ere We Part

Maid of Athens, ere we part,
Give, oh give me back my heart!
Or, since that has left my breast,
Keep it now, and take the rest!
Hear my vow before I go,
Zoë mou, sas agapo!

By those tresses unconfined,
Wood by each Ægean wind;
By those lids whose jetty fringe
Kiss thy soft cheeks' blooming tinge;
By those wild eyes like the roe,
Zoë mou, sas agapo!

By that lip I long to taste;
By that zone encircled waist;
By all the token-flowers that tell
What words can never speak so well;
By love's alternate joy and woe.
Zoë mou, sas agapo!

Maid of Athens! I am gone:
Think of me, sweet! when alone.
Though I fly to Istambol,
Athens holds my heart and soul:
Can I cease to love thee? No!
Zoë mou, sas agapo!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Manfred (excerpt: Incantation)

When the moon is on the wave,
And the glow-worm in the grass,
And the meteor on the grave,
And the wisp on the morass;
When the falling stars are shooting,
And the answer'd owls are hooting,
And the silent leaves are still
In the shadow of the hill,
Shall my soul be upon thine,
With a power and with a sign.

Though thy slumber may be deep,
Yet thy spirit shall not sleep;
There are shades which will not vanish,
There are thoughts thou canst not banish;
By a power to thee unknown,
Thou canst never be alone;
Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
Thou art gather'd in a cloud;
And for ever shalt thou dwell
In the spirit of this spell.

Though thou seest me not pass by,
Thou shalt feel me with thine eye
As a thing that, though unseen,
Must be near thee, and hath been;
And when in that secret dread
Thou hast turn'd around thy head,
Thou shalt marvel I am not
As thy shadow on the spot,
And the power which thou dost feel
Shall be what thou must conceal.

And a magic voice and verse
Hath baptiz'd thee with a curse;
And a spirit of the air
Hath begirt thee with a snare;
In the wind there is a voice
Shall forbid thee to rejoice;
And to thee shall night deny
All the quiet of her sky;
And the day shall have a sun,
Which shall make thee wish it done.

From thy false tears I did distil
An essence which hath strength to kill;
From thy own heart I then did wring
The black blood in its blackest spring;
From thy own smile I snatch'd the snake,
For there it coil'd as in a brake;
From thy own lip I drew the charm
Which gave all these their chiefest harm;

In proving every poison known,
I found the strongest was thine own.

By thy cold breast and serpent smile,
By thy unfathom'd gulfs of guile,
By that most seeming virtuous eye,
By thy shut soul's hypocrisy;
By the perfection of thine art
Which pass'd for human thine own heart;
By thy delight in others' pain,
And by thy brotherhood of Cain,
I call upon thee! and compel
Thyself to be thy proper Hell!

And on thy head I pour the vial
Which doth devote thee to this trial;
Nor to slumber, nor to die,
Shall be in thy destiny;
Though thy death shall still seem near
To thy wish, but as a fear;
Lo! the spell now works around thee,
And the clankless chain hath bound thee;
O'er thy heart and brain together
Hath the word been pass'd--now wither!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Martial, Lib. I, Epig. I.

'Hic est, quem legis, ille, quern requiris, Tota notus in orbe Martialis,' &c.

He unto whom thou art so partial,
Oh, reader is the well-known Martial,
The Epigrammatist: while living,
Give him the fame thou wouldest be giving;
So shall he hear, and feel, and know it--
Post obits rarely reach a poet.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Mazeppa

'Twas after dread Pultowa's day,
When fortune left the royal Swede--
Around a slaughtered army lay,
No more to combat and to bleed.
The power and glory of the war,
Faithless as their vain votaries, men,
Had passed to the triumphant Czar,
And Moscow's walls were safe again--
Until a day more dark and drear,
And a more memorable year,
Should give to slaughter and to shame
A mightier host and haughtier name;
A greater wreck, a deeper fall,
A shock to one--a thunderbolt to all.

II.

Such was the hazard Of the die;
The wounded Charles was taught to fly
By day and night through field and flood,
Stained with his own and subjects' blood;
For thousands fell that flight to aid:
And not a voice was heard to upbraid
Ambition in his humbled hour,
When truth had nought to dread from power,
His horse was slain, and Gieta gave
His own--and died the Russians' slave.
This too sinks after many a league
Of well sustained, but vain fatigue;
And in the depth of forests darkling,
The watch-fires in the distance sparkling--
The beacons of surrounding foes--
A king must lay his limbs at length.
Are these the laurels and repose
For which the nations strain their strength?
They laid him by a savage tree,
In outworn nature's agony;
His wounds were stiff, his limbs were stark,
The heavy hour was chill and dark;
The fever in his blood forbade
A transient slumber's fitful aid:
And thus it was; but yet through all,
Kinglike the monarch bore his fall,
And made, in this extreme of ill,
His pangs the vassals of his will:
All silent and subdued were they,
As owe the nations round him lay.

III.

A band of chiefs!--alas! how few,
Since but the fleeting of a day
Had thinned it; but this wreck was true
And chivalrous: upon the clay

Each sate him down, all sad and mute,
Beside his monarch and his steed;
For danger levels man and brute,
And all are fellows in their need.
Among the rest, Mazeppa made
His pillow in an old oak's shade--
Himself as rough, and scarce less old,
The Ukraine's hetman, calm and bold:
But first, outspent with this long course,
The Cossack prince rubbed down his horse,
And made for him a leafy bed,
And smoothed his fetlocks and his mane,
And slacked his girth, and stripped his rein,
And joyed to see how well he fed;
For until now he had the dread
His wearied courser might refuse
To browse beneath the midnight dews:
But he was hardy as his lord,
And little cared for bed and board;
But spirited and docile too,
Whate'er was to be done, would do.
Shaggy and swift, and strong of limb,
All Tartar-like he carried him;
Obeyed his voice, and came to call,
And knew him in the midst of all.
Though thousands were around,--and night,
Without a star, pursued her flight,--
That steed from sunset until dawn
His chief would follow like a fawn.

IV.

This done, Mazeppa spread his cloak,
And laid his lance beneath his oak,
Felt if his arms in order good
The long day's march had well withstood--
If still the powder filled the pan,
And flints unloosened kept their lock--
His sabre's hilt and scabbard felt,
And whether they had chafed his belt;
And next the venerable man,
From out his haversack and can,
Prepared and spread his slender stock
And to the monarch and his men
The whole or portion offered then
With far less of inquietude
Than courtiers at a banquet would.
And Charles of this his slender share
With smiles partook a moment there,
To force of cheer a greater show,
And seem above both wounds and woe;--
And then he said -'Of all our band,
Though firm of heart and strong of hand,

In skirmish, march, or forage, none
Can less have said or more have done
Than thee, Mazeppa! On the earth
So fit a pair had never birth,
Since Alexander's days till now,
As thy Bucephalus and thou:
All Scythia's fame to thine should yield
For pricking on o'er flood and field.'

Mazeppa answered--'I'll betide
The school wherein I learned to ride!
Quoth Charles--'Old Hetman, wherefore so,
Since thou hast learned the art so well?
Mazeppa said--'Twere long to tell;
And we have many a league to go,
With every now and then a blow,
And ten to one at least the foe,
Before our steeds may graze at ease,
Beyond the swift Borysthenes:
And, sire, your limbs have need of rest,
And I will be the sentinel
Of this your troop.'--'But I request,'
Said Sweden's monarch, 'thou wilt tell
This tale of thine, and I may reap,
Perchance, from this the boon of sleep;
For at this moment from my eyes
The hope of present slumber flies.'

'Well, sire, with such a hope, I'll track
My seventy years of memory back:
I think 'twas in my twentieth spring,--
Ay, 'twas,--when Casimir was king--
John Casimir,--I was his page
Six summers, in my earlier age:
A learned monarch, faith! was he,
And most unlike your majesty:
He made no wars, and did not gain
New realms to lose them back again;
And (save debates in Warsaw's diet)
He reigned in most unseemly quiet;
Not that he had no cares to vex,
He loved the muses and the sex;
And sometimes these so foward are,
They made him wish himself at war;
But soon his wrath being o'er, he took
Another mistress--or new book;
And then he gave prodigious fetes--
All Warsaw gathered round his gates
To gaze upon his splendid court,
And dames, and chiefs, of princely port.
He was the Polish Solomon,
So sung his poets, all but one,
Who, being unpensioned, made a satire,
And boasted that he could not flatterI

It was a court of jousts and mimes,
Where every courtier tried at rhymes;
Even I for once produced some verses,
And signed my odes 'Despairing Thyrsis.'

There was a certain Palatine,
A Count of far and high descent,
Rich as a salt or silver mine;
And he was proud, ye may divine,
As if from heaven he had been sent:
He had such wealth in blood and ore
As few could match beneath the throne;
And he would gaze upon his store,
And o'er his pedigree would pore,
Until by some confusion led,
Which almost looked like want of head,
He thought their merits were his own.
His wife was not of his opinion;
His junior she by thirty years;
Grew daily tired of his dominion;
And, after wishes, hopes, and fears,
To virtue a few farewell tears,
A restless dream or two, some glances
At Warsaw's youth, some songs, and dances,
Awaited but the usual chances,
Those happy accidents which render
The coldest dames so very tender,
To deck her Count with titles given,
'Tis said, as passports into heaven;
But, strange to say, they rarely boast
Of these, who have deserved them most.

V.

'I was a goodly stripling then;
At seventy years I so may say,
That there were few, or boys or men,
Who, in my dawning time of day,
Of vassal or of knight's degree,
Could vie in vanities with me;
For I had strength, youth, gaiety,
A port, not like to this ye see,
But smooth, as all is rugged now;
For time, and care, and war, have ploughed
My very soul from out my brow;
And thus I should be disavowed
By all my kind and kin, could they
Compare my day and yesterday;
This change was wrought, too, long ere age
Had ta'en my features for his page:
With years, ye know, have not declined
My strength, my courage, or my mind,
Or at this hour I should not be
Telling old tales beneath a tree,

With starless skies my canopy.
But let me on: Theresa's form--
Methinks it glides before me now,
Between me and yon chestnut's bough,
The memory is so quick and warm;
And yet I find no words to tell
The shape of her I loved so well:
She had the Asiatic eye,
Such as our, Turkish neighbourhood,
Hath mingled with our Polish blood,
Dark as above us is the sky;
But through it stole a tender light,
Like the first moonrise of midnight;
Large, dark, and swimming in the stream,
Which seemed to melt to its own beam;
All love, half langour, and half fire,
Like saints that at the stake expire,
And lift their raptured looks on high,
As though it were a joy to die.
A brow like a midsummer lake,
Transparent with the sun therein,
When waves no murmur dare to make,
And heaven beholds her face within.
A cheek and lip--but why proceed?
I loved her then--I love her still;
And such as I am, love indeed
In fierce extremes--in good and ill.
But still we love even in our rage,
And haunted to our very age
With the vain shadow of the past,
As is Mazeppa to the last

VI.

'We met--we gazed--I saw, and sighed,
She did not speak, and yet replied;
There are ten thousand tones and signs
We hear and see, but none defines -
Involuntary sparks of thought,
Which strike from out the heart o'erwrought,
And form a strange intelligence,
Alike mysterious and intense,
Which link the burning chain that binds,
Without their will, young hearts and minds
Conveying, as the electric wire,
We know not how, the absorbing fire.
I saw, and sighed--in silence wept,
And still reluctant distance kept,
Until I was made known to her,
And we might then and there confer
Without suspicion--then, even then,
I longed, and was resolved to speak;
But on my lips they died again,

The accents tremulous and weak,
Until one hour.--There is a game,
A frivolous and foolish play,
Wherewith we while away the day;
It is--I have forgot the name--
And we to this, it seems, were set,
By some strange chance, which I forgot:
I reck'd not if I won or lost,
It was enough for me to be
So near to hear, and oh! to see
The being whom I loved the most.--
I watched her as a sentinel,
(May ours this dark night watch as well!)
Until I saw, and thus it was,
That she was pensive, nor perceived
Her occupation, nor was grieved
Nor glad to lose or gain; but still
Played on for hours, as if her win
Yet bound her to the place, though not
That hers might be the winning lot.
Then through my brain the thought did pass
Even as a flash of lightning there,
That there was something in her air
Which would not doom me to despair;
And on the thought my words broke forth,
All incoherent as they were--
Their eloquence was little worth,
But yet she listened--'tis enough--
Who listens once will listen twice;
Her heart, be sure, is not of ice,
And one refusal no rebuff.

VII.

I loved, and was beloved again--
They tell me, Sire, you never knew
Those gentle frailties; if 'tis true,
I shorten all my joy or pain;
To you 'twould seem absurd as vain
But all men are not born to reign,
Or o'er their passions, or as you
Thus o'er themselves and nations too.
I am--or rather was--a prince,
A chief of thousands, and could lead
Them on where each would foremost bleed;
But could not o'er myself evince
The like control--but to resume:
I loved, and was beloved again;
In sooth, it is a happy doom,
But yet where happiest ends in pain.--
We met in secret, and the hour
Which led me to that lady's bower
Was fiery expectation's dower.

My days and nights were nothing--all
Except that hour which doth recall
In the long lapse from youth to age
No other like itself--I'd give
The Ukraine back again to live
It o'er once more--and be a page,
The happy page, who was the lord
Of one soft heart, and his own sword,
And had no other gem nor wealth
Save nature's gift of youth and health.
We met in secret--doubly sweet,
Some say, they find it so to meet;
I know not that--I would have given
My life but to have called her mine
In the full view of earth and heaven;
For I did oft and long repine
That we could only meet by stealth.

VIII.

'For lovers there are many eyes,
And such there were on us; the devil
On such occasions should be civil--
The devil!--I'm loth to do him wrong,
It might be some untoward saint,
Who would not be at rest too long,
But to his pious bile gave vent--
But one fair night, some lurking spies
Surprised and seized us both.
The Count was something more than wroth--
I was unarmed; but if in steel,
All cap from head to heel,
What 'gainst their numbers could I do?
'Twas near his castle, far away
From city or from succour near,
And almost on the break of day;
I did not think to see another,
My moments seemed reduced to few;
And with one prayer to Mary Mother,
And, it may be, a saint or two,
As I resigned me to my fate,
They led me to the castle gate:
Teresa's doom I never knew,
Our lot was henceforth separate.
An angry man, ye may opine,
Was he, the proud Count Palatine;
And he had reason good to be,
But he was most enraged lest such
An accident should chance to touch
Upon his future pedigree;
Nor less amazed, that such a blot
His noble 'scutcheon should have got,
While he was highest of his line

Because unto himself he seemed
The first of men, nor less he deemed
In others' eyes, and most in mine.
'Sdeath! with a page--perchance a king
Had reconciled him to the thing;
But with a stripling of a page--
I felt--but cannot paint his rage.

IX.

"Bring forth the horse!"--the horse was brought;
In truth, he was a noble steed,
A Tartar of the Ukraine breed,
Who looked as though the speed of thought
Were in his limbs; but he was wild,
Wild as the wild deer, and untaught,
With spur and bridle undefiled--
'Twas but a day he had been caught;
And snorting, with erected mane,
And struggling fiercely, but in vain,
In the full foam of wrath and dread
To me the desert-born was led:
They bound me on, that menial throng,
Upon his back with many a thong;
They loosed him with a sudden lash--
Away!--away!--and on we dash!--
Torrents less rapid and less rash.

X.

'Away!--away!--my breath was gone--
I saw not where he hurried on:
'Twas scarcely yet the break of day,
And on he foamed--away!--away!--
The last of human sounds which rose,
As I was darted from my foes,
Was the wild shout of savage laughter,
Which on the wind came roaring after
A moment from that rabble rout:
With sudden wrath I wrenched my head,
And snapped the cord, which to the mane
Had bound my neck in lieu of rein,
And, writhing half my form about,
Howled back my curse; but 'midst the tread,
The thunder of my courser's speed,
Perchance they did not hear nor heed:
It vexes me--for I would fain
Have paid their insult back again.
I paid it well in after days:
There is not of that castle gate.
Its drawbridge and portcullis' weight,
Stone, bar, moat, bridge, or barrier left;
Nor of its fields a blade of grass,
Save what grows on a ridge of wall,

Where stood the hearth-stone of the hall;
And many a time ye there might pass,
Nor dream that e'er the fortress was.
I saw its turrets in a blaze,
Their crackling battlements all cleft,
And the hot lead pour down like rain
From off the scorched and blackening roof,
Whose thickness was not vengeance-proof.
They little thought that day of pain,
When launched, as on the lightning's flash,
They bade me to destruction dash,
That one day I should come again,
With twice five thousand horse, to thank
The Count for his uncourteous ride.
They played me then a bitter prank,
'When, with the wild horse for my guide,
The bound me to his foaming flank:
At length I played them one as frank--
For time at last sets all things even--
And if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power
Which could evade, if unforgiven,
The patient search and vigil long
Of him who treasures up a wrong.

XI.

'Away, away, my steed and I,
Upon the pinions of the wind.
All human dwellings left behind,
We sped like meteors through the sky,
When with its crackling sound the night
Is chequered with the northern light:
Town--village--none were on our track,
But a wild plain of far extent,
And bounded by a forest black;
And, save the scarce seen battlement
On distant heights of some strong hold,
Against the Tartars built of old,
No trace of man. The year before
A Turkish army had marched o'er;
And where the Spahi's hoof hath trod,
The verdure flies the bloody sod:--
The sky was dull, and dim, and grey,
And a low breeze crept moaning by--
I could have answered with a sigh--
But fast we fled, away, away--
And I could neither sigh nor pray--
And my cold sweat-drops fell like rain
Upon the courser's bristling mane;
But, snorting still with rage and fear,
He flew upon his far career:
At times I almost thought, indeed,

He must have slackened in his speed;
But no--my bound and slender frame
Was nothing to his angry might,
And merely like a spur became:
Each motion which I made to free
My swoln limbs from their agony
Increased his fury and affright:
I tried my voice,--'twas faint and low,
But yet he swerved as from a blow;
And, starting to each accent, sprang
As from a sudden trumpet's clang:
Meantime my cords were wet with gore,
Which, oozing through my limbs, ran o'er;
And in my tongue the thirst became
A something fierier far than flame.

XII.

'We neared the wild wood--'twas so wide,
I saw no bounds on either side;
'Twas studded with old sturdy trees,
That bent not to the roughest breeze
Which howls down from Siberia's waste,
And strips the forest in its haste,--
But these were few and far between,
Set thick with shrubs more young and green,
Luxuriant with their annual leaves,
Ere strown by those autumnal eves
That nip the forest's foliage dead,
Discoloured with a lifeless red,
Which stands thereon like stiffened gore
Upon the slain when battle's o'er,
And some long winter's night hath shed
Its frost o'er every tombless head,
So cold and stark, the raven's beak
May peck unpierced each frozen cheek:
'Twas a wild waste of underwood,
And here and there a chestnut stood,
The strong oak, and the hardy pine;
But far apart--and well it were,
Or else a different lot were mine--
The boughs gave way, and did not tear
My limbs; and I found strength to bear
My wounds, already scarred with cold--
My bonds forbade to loose my hold.
We rustled through the leaves like wind,
Left shrubs, and trees, and wolves behind;
By night I heard them on the track,
Their troop came hard upon our back,
With their long gallop, which can tire
The hound's deep hate, and hunter's fire:
Where'er we flew they followed on,
Nor left us with the morning sun;

Behind I saw them, scarce a rood,
At day-break winding through the wood,
And through the night had heard their feet
Their stealing, rustling step repeat.
Oh! how I wished for spear or sword,
At least to die amidst the horde,
And perish--if it must be so--
At bay, destroying many a foe
When first my courser's race begun,
I wished the goal already won;
But now I doubted strength and speed:
Vain doubt! his swift and savage breed
Had nerved him like the mountain-roe--
Nor faster falls the blinding snow
Which whelms the peasant near the door
Whose threshold he shall cross no more,
Bewildered with the dazzling blast,
Than through the forest-paths--he passed--
Untired, untamed, and worse than wild;
All furious as a favoured child
Balked of its wish; or fiercer still
A woman piqued--who has her will.

XIII.

'The wood was passed; 'twas more than noon,
But chill the air, although in June;
Or it might be my veins ran cold--
Prolonged endurance tames the bold;
And I was then not what I seem,
But headlong as a wintry stream,
And wore my feelings out before
I well could count their causes o'er:
And what with fury, fear, and wrath,
The tortures which beset my path,
Cold, hunger, sorrow, shame, distress,
Thus bound in nature's nakedness;
Sprung from a race whose rising blood
When stirred beyond its calmer mood,
And trodden hard upon, is like
The rattle-snake's, in act to strike--
What marvel if this worn-out trunk
Beneath its woes a moment sunk?
The earth gave way, the skies rolled round,
I seemed to sink upon the ground;
But erred, for I was fastly bound.
My heart turned sick, my brain grew sore,
And throbbed awhile, then beat no more:
The skies spun like a mighty wheel;
I saw the trees like drunkards reel,
And a slight flash sprang o'er my eyes,
Which saw no farther. He who dies
Can die no more than then I died;

O'ertortured by that ghastly ride.
I felt the blackness come and go,
And strove to wake; but could not make
My senses climb up from below:
I felt as on a plank at sea,
When all the waves that dash o'er thee,
At the same time upheave and whelm,
And hurl thee towards a desert realm.
My undulating life was as
The fancied lights that flitting pass
Our shut eyes in deep midnight, when
Fever begins upon the brain;
But soon it passed, with little pain,
But a confusion worse than such:
I own that I should deem it much,
Dying, to feel the same again;
And yet I do suppose we must
Feel far more ere we turn to dust:
No matter; I have bared my brow
Full in Death's face--before--and now.

XIV.

'My thoughts came back; where was I? Cold,
And numb, and giddy: pulse by pulse
Life reassumed its lingering hold,
And throb by throb--till grown a pang;
Which for a moment would convulse,
My blood reflowed, though thick and chill;
My ear with uncouth noises rang,
My heart began once more to thrill;
My sight returned, though dim; alas!
And thickened, as it were, with glass.
Methought the dash of waves was nigh.,
There was a gleam too of the sky
Studded with stars;--it is no dream;
The wild horse swims the wilder stream!
The bright broad river's gushing tide
Sweeps, winding onward, far and wide,
And we are half-way, struggling o'er
To yon unknown and silent shore.
The waters broke my hollow trance,
And with a temporary strength
My stiffened limbs were rebaptized.
My courser's broad breast proudly braves,
And dashes off the ascending waves,
And onward we advance
We reach the slippery shore at length,
A haven I but little prized,
For all behind was dark and drear
And all before was night and fear.
How many hours of night or day
In those suspended pangs I lay,

I could not tell; I scarcely knew
If this were human breath I drew.

XV.

'With glossy skin, and dripping mane,
And reeling limbs, and reeking flank,
The wild steed's sinewy nerves still strain
Up the repellent bank.
We gain the top. a boundless plain
Spreads through the shadow of the night,
And onward, onward, onward, seems,
Like precipices in our dreams,
To stretch beyond the sight;
And here and there a speck of white,
Or scattered spot of dusky green,
In masses broke into the light,
As rose the moon upon my right:
But nought distinctly seen
In the dim waste would indicate
The omen of a cottage gate;
No twinkling taper from afar
Stood like a hospitable star;'
Not even an ignis-fatuus rose
To make him merry with my woes:
That very cheat had cheered me then!
Although detected, welcome still,
Reminding me, through every ill,
Of the abodes of men.

XVI.

'Onward we went--but slack and slow
His savage force at length o'erspent,
The drooping courser, faint and low,
All feebly foaming went.
A sickly infant had had power
To guide him forward in that hour!
But, useless all to me,
His new-born tameness nought availed--
My limbs were bound; my force had failed,
Perchance, had they been free.
With feeble effort still I tried
To rend the bonds so starkly tied,
But still it was in vain;
My limbs were only wrung the more,
And soon the idle strife gave o'er,
Which but prolonged their pain:
The dizzy race seemed almost done,
Although no goal was nearly won.
Some streaks announced the coming sun--
How slow, alas! he came!
Methought that mist of dawning grey
Would never dapple into day;

How heavily it rolled away--
Before the eastern flame
Rose crimson, and deposed the stars,
And called the radiance from their cars,
And filled the earth, from his deep throne,
With lonely lustre, all his own.

XVII.

'Up rose the sun; the mists were curled
Back from the solitary world
Which lay around--behind--before;
What booted it to traverse o'er
Plain, forest, river? Man nor brute,
Nor dint of hoof, nor print of foot,
Lay in the wild luxuriant soil;
No sign of travel--none of toll;
The very air was mute:
And not an insect's shrill small horn,
Nor matin bird's new voice was borne
From herb nor thicket. Many a werst,
Panting as if his heart would burst,
The weary brute still staggered on;
And still we were--or seemed--alone:
At length, while reeling on our way,
Methought I heard a courser neigh,
From out yon tuft of blackening firs.
Is it the wind those branches stirs?
No, no! from out the forest prance
A trampling troop; I see them come I
In one vast squadron they advance!
I strove to cry--my lips were dumb.
The steeds rush on in plunging pride;
But where are they the reins to guide?
A thousand horse--and none to ride!
With flowing tail, and flying mane,
Wide nostrils never stretched by pain,
Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,
And feet that iron never shod,
And flanks unscarred by spur or rod,
A thousand horse, the wild, the free,
Like waves that follow o'er the sea,
Came thickly thundering on,
As if our faint approach to meet;
The sight re-nerved my courser's feet,
A moment staggering, feebly fleet,
A moment, with a faint low neigh,
He answered, and then fell!
With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,
And reeking limbs immoveable,
His first and last career is done!
On came the troop--they saw him stoop,
They saw me strangely bound along

His back with many a bloody thong.
They stop--they start--they snuff the air,
Gallop a moment here and there,
Approach, retire, wheel round and round,
Then plunging back with sudden bound,
Headed by one black mighty steed,
Who seemed the patriarch of his breed,
Without a single speck or hair
Of white upon his shaggy hide;
They snort--they foam--neigh--swerve aside,
And backward to the forest fly,
By instinct, from a human eye.
They left me there to my despair,
Linked to the dead and stiffening wretch,
Whose lifeless limbs beneath me stretch,
Relieved from that unwonted weight,
From whence I could not extricate
Nor him nor me--and there we lay
The dying on the dead!
I little deemed another day
Would see my houseless, helpless head.
And there from morn till twilight bound,
I felt the heavy hours toll round,
With just enough of life to see
My last of suns go down on me,
In hopeless certainty of mind,
That makes us feel at length resigned
To that which our foreboding years
Presents the worst and last of fears
Inevitable--even a boon,
Nor more unkind for coming soon,
Yet shunned and dreaded with such care,
As if it only were a snare
That prudence might escape:
At times both wished for and implored,
At times sought with self-pointed sword,
Yet still a dark and hideous close
To even intolerable woes,
And welcome in no shape.
And, strange to say, the sons of pleasure,
They who have revelled beyond measure
In beauty, wassail, wine, and treasure,
Die calm, or calmer, oft than he
Whose heritage was misery.
For he who hath in turn run through
All that was beautiful and new,
Hath nought to hope, and nought to leave;
And, save the future, (which is viewed
Not quite as men are base or good,
But as their nerves may be endued,)
With nought perhaps to grieve:
The wretch still hopes his woes must end,

And death, whom he should deem his friend,
Appears, to his distempered eyes,
Arrived to rob him of his prize,
The tree of his new Paradise.
Tomorrow would have given him all,
Repaid his pangs, repaired his fall;
Tomorrow would have been the first
Of days no more deplored or curst,
But bright, and long, and beckoning years,
Seen dazzling through the mist of tears,
Guerdon of many a painful hour;
Tomorrow would have given him power
To rule, to shine, to smite, to save--
And must it dawn upon his grave?

XVIII.

'The sun was sinking--still I lay
Chained to the chill and stiffening steed,
I thought to mingle there our clay;
And my dim eyes of death had need,
No hope arose of being freed.
I cast my last looks up the sky,
And there between me and the sun
I saw the expecting raven fly,
Who scarce would wait till both should die,
Ere his repast begun;
He flew, and perched, then flew once more,
And each time nearer than before;
I saw his wing through twilight flit,
And once so near me he alit
I could have smote, but lacked the strength;
But the slight motion of my hand,
And feeble scratching of the sand,
The exerted throat's faint struggling noise,
Which scarcely could be called a voice,
Together scared him off at length.
I know no more--my latest dream
Is something of a lovely star
Which fixed my dull eyes from afar,
And went and came with wandering beam,
And of the cold, dull, swimming, dense,
Sensation of recurring sense,
And then subsiding back to death,
And then again a little breath,
A little thrill, a short suspense,
An icy sickness curdling o'er
My heart, and sparks that crossed my brain
A gasp, a throb, a start of pain,
A sigh, and nothing more.

XIX.

'I woke--where was I?--Do I see

A human face look down on me?
And doth a roof above me close?
Do these limbs on a couch repose?
Is this a chamber where I lie
And is it mortal yon bright eye,
That watches me with gentle glance?
I closed my own again once more,
As doubtful that the former trance
Could not as yet be o'er.
A slender girl, long-haired, and tall,
Sate watching by the cottage wall.
The sparkle of her eye I caught
Even with my first return of thought;
For ever and anon she threw
A prying, pitying glance on me
With her black eyes so wild and free:
I gazed, and gazed, until I knew
No vision it could be,--
But that I lived, and was released
From adding to the vulture's feast:
And when the Cossack maid beheld
My heavy eyes at length unsealed,
She smiled--and I essayed to speak,
But failed--and she approached, and made
With lip and finger signs that said,
I must not strive as yet to break
The silence, till my strength should be
Enough to leave my accents free;
And then her hand on mine she laid,
And smoothed the pillow for my head,
And stole along on tiptoe tread,
And gently oped the door, and spake
In whispers--ne'er was voice so sweet!
Even music followed her light feet.
But those she called were not awake,
And she went forth; but, ere she passed,
Another look on me she cast,
Another sign she made, to say,
That I had nought to fear, that all
Were near, at my command or call,
And she would not delay
Her due return:--while she was gone,
Methought I felt too much alone.
'She came with mother and with sire--
What need of more?--I will not tire
With long recital of the rest,
Since I became the Cossack's guest.
They found me senseless on the plain.
They bore me to the nearest hut,
They brought me into life again
Me--one day o'er their realm to reign!
Thus the vain fool who strove to glut

His rage, refining on my pain,
Sent me forth to the wilderness,
Bound, naked, bleeding, and alone,
To pass the desert to a throne,--
What mortal his own doom may guess?
Let none despond, let none despair!
Tomorrow the Borysthenes
May see our coursers graze at ease
Upon his Turkish bank,--and never
Had I such welcome for a river
As I shall yield when safely there.
Comrades good night!--The Hetman threw
His length beneath the oak-tree shade,
With leafy couch already made,
A bed nor comfortless nor new
To him, who took his rest whene'er
The hour arrived, no matter where:
His eyes the hastening slumbers steep.
And if ye marvel Charles forgot
To thank his tale, he wondered not,--
The king had been an hour asleep.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Monody On The Death Of The Right Hon. R. B. Sheridan

When the last sunshine of expiring day
In summer's twilight weeps itself away,
Who hath not felt the softness of the hour
Sink on the heart, as dew along the flower?
With a pure feeling which absorbs and awes
While Nature makes that melancholy pause,
Her breathing moment on the bridge where Time
Of light and darkness forms an arch sublime,
Who hath not shared that calm, so still and deep,
The voiceless thought which would not speak but weep,
A holy concord, and a bright regret,
A glorious sympathy with suns that set?
'Tis not harsh sorrow, but a tenderer woe,
Nameless, but dear to gentle hearts below,
Felt without bitterness, but full and clear,
A sweet dejection, a transparent tear,
Unmix'd with worldly grief or selfish stain,
Shed without shame, and secret without pain.

Even as the tenderness that hour instils
When Summer's day declines along the hills.
So feels the fulness of our heart and eyes
When all of Genius which can perish dies.
A mighty Spirit is eclipsed - a Power
Hath pass'd from day to darkness - to whose hour
Of light no likeness is bequeath'd - no name,
Focus at once of all the rays of Fame!
The flash of Wit, the bright Intelligence,
The beam of Song, the blaze of Eloquence,
Set with their Sun, but still have left be-hind
The enduring produce of immortal Mind;
Fruits of a genial morn, and glorious noon,
A deathless part of him who died too soon.
But small that portion of the wondrous whole,
These sparkling segments of that circling soul,
Which all embraced, and lighten'd over all,
To cheer, to pierce, to please, or to appal.
From the charm'd council to the festive board,
Of human feelings the unbounded lord;
In whose acclaim the loftiest voices vied,
The praised, the proud, who made his praise their pride.
When the loud cry of trampled Hindostan
Arose to Heaven in her appeal from man,
His was the thunder, his the avenging rod,
The wrath - the delegated voice of God!
Which shook the nations through his lips, and blazed
Till vanquish'd senates trembled as they praised.

And here, oh! here, where yet all young and warm,
The gay creations of is spirit charm,
The matchless dialogue, the deathless wit,
Which knew not what it was to intermit;

The glowing portraits, fresh from life, that bring
Home to our hearts the truth from which they spring;
These wondrous beings of his fancy, wrought
To fulness by the fiat of his thought,
Here in their first abode you still may meet,
Bright with the hues of his Promethean heat;
A halo of the light of other days,
Which still the splendour of its orb betrays.

But should there be to whom the fatal blight
Of failing Wisdom yields a base delight,
Men who exult when minds of heavenly tone
Jar in the music which was born their own,
Still let them pause - ah! little do they know
That what to them seem'd Vice might be but Woo.
Hard is his fate on whom the public gaze
Is fix'd for ever to detract or praise;
Repose denies her requiem to his name,
And Folly loves the martyrdom of Fame.
The secret enemy whose sleepless eye
Stands sentinel, accuser, judge, and spy,
The foe, the fool, the jealous, and the vain,
The envious who but breathe in others' pain,
Behold the host! delighting to deprave,
Who track the steps of Glory to the grave,
Watch every fault that daring Genius owes
Half to the ardour which its birth bestows,
Distort the troth, accumulate the lie,
And pile the pyramid of Calumny!
These are his portion - but if join'd to these
Gaunt Poverty should league with deep Disease,
If the high Spirit must forget to soar,
And stoop to strive with Misery at the door,
To soothe Indignity - and face to face
Meet sordid Rage, and wrestle with Disgrace,
To find in Hope but the renew'd caress,
The serpent-fold of further Faithlessness:-
If such may be the ills which men assail,
What marvel if at last the mightiest fail?
Breasts to whom all the strength of feeling given
Bear hearts electric--charged with fire from Heaven,
Black with the rude collision inly torn,
By clouds surrounded, and on whirl-winds borne,
Driven o'er the lowering atmosphere that nurst
Thoughts which have turn'd to thunderscorch, and burst.

But far from us and from our mimic scene
Such things should be - if such have ever been
Ours be the gentler wish, the kinder task,
To give the tribute Glory need not ask,
To mourn the vanish'd beam, and add our mite
Of praise in payment of a long delight.

Ye Orators! whom yet our councils yield,
Mourn for the veteran Hero of your field!
The worthy rival of the wondrous Three!
Whose words were sparks of Immortality!
Ye Bards! to whom the Drama's muse is dear,
He was your Master-emulate him her!
Ye men of wit and social eloquence!
He was your brother - bear his ashes hence!
While Powers of mind almost of boundless range,
Complete in kind, as various in their change,
While Eloquence, Wit, Poesy, and Mirth,
That humbler Harmonist of care on Earth,
Survive within our souls - while lives our sense
Of pride in Merit's proud preeminence,
Long shall we seek his likeness, long in vain,
And turn to all of him which may remain,
Sighing that nature form'd but one such man,
And broke the die - in moulding Sheridan!

George Gordon Lord Byron

My Epitaph

Youth, Nature, and relenting Jove,
To keep my Lamp in strongly strove;
But Romanelli was so stout,
He beat all three, and blew it out.

Oct. 1810.

George Gordon Lord Byron

My Soul is Dark

My soul is dark - Oh! quickly string
The harp I yet can brook to hear;
And let thy gentle fingers fling
Its melting murmurs o'er mine ear.
If in this heart a hope be dear,
That sound shall charm it forth again:
If in these eyes there lurk a tear,
'Twill flow, and cease to burn my brain.

But bid the strain be wild and deep,
Nor let thy notes of joy be first:
I tell thee, minstrel, I must weep,
Or else this heavy heart will burst;
For it hath been by sorrow nursed,
And ached in sleepless silence, long;
And now 'tis doomed to know the worst,
And break at once - or yield to song.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Napoleon's Farewell (From The French)

I.

Farewell to the Land where the gloom of my Glory
Arose and o'ershadow'd the earth with her name--
She abandons me now--but the page of her story,
The brightest or blackest, is fill'd with my fame.
I have warr'd with a world which vanquish'd me only
When the meteor of conquest allured me too far;
I have coped with the nations which dread me thus lonely,
The last single Captive to millions in war.

II.

Farewell to thee, France! when thy diadem crown'd me,
I made thee the gem and the wonder of earth,
But thy weakness decrees I should leave as I found thee,
Decay'd in thy glory, and sunk in thy worth.
Oh! for the veteran hearts that were wasted
In strife with the storm, when their battles were won
Then the Eagle, whose gaze in that moment was lasted,
Had still soar'd with eyes fix'd on victory's sun!

III.

Farewell to thee, France!--but when Liberty rallies
Once more in thy regions, remember me then,
The violet still grows in the depth of thy valleys;
Though wither'd, thy tear will unfold it
Yet, yet, I may baffle the hosts that sur-round us,
And yet may thy heart leap awake to my voice
There are links which must break in the chain that has bound us,
Then turn thee and call on the Chief of thy choice!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Ode (From The French)

I.

We do not curse thee, Waterloo!
Though Freedom's blood thy plain bedew;
There 'twas shed, but is not sunk-
Rising from each gory trunk,
Like the water-spout from ocean,
With a strong and growing motion-
It soars, and mingles in the air,
With that of lost Labedoyère--
With that of him whose honour'd grave
Contains the 'bravest of the brave.
A crimson cloud it spreads and glows,
But shall return to whence it rose;
When 'tis full 'twill burst asunder-
Never yet was heard such thunder
As then shall shake the world with wonder
Never yet was seen such lightning
As o'er heaven shall then be bright'ning!
Like the Wormwood Star foretold
By the sainted Seer of old,
Show'ring down a fiery flood,
Turning rivers into blood.

II.

The Chief has fallen, but not by you,
Vanquishers of Waterloo!
When the soldier citizen
Sway'd not o'er his fellow-men--
Save in deeds that led them on
Where Glory smiled on Freedom's son-
Who, of all the despots banded,
With that youthful chief competed?
Who could boast o'er France defeated,
Till lone Tyranny commanded?
Till, goaded by ambition's sting,
The Hero sunk into the King?
Then he fell:-- so perish all,
Who would men by man enthrall!

III.

And thou, too, of the snow-white plume!
Whose realm refused thee ev'n a tomb;
Better hadst thou still been leading
France o'er hosts of hirelings bleeding,
Than sold thyself to death and shame
For a meanly royal name;
Such as he of Naples wears,
Who thy blood-bought title bears.
Little didst thou deem, when dashing
On thy war-horse through the ranks,
Like a stream which burst its banks,
While helmets cleft, and sabres clashing,

Shone and shiver'd fast around thee--
Of the fate at last which found thee:
Was that haughty plume laid low
By a slave's dishonest blow?
Once - as the moon sways o'er the tide;
It roll'd in air, the warrior's guide;
Through the smoke-created night
Of the black and sulphurous fight,
The soldier raised his seeking eye
To catch that crest's ascendancy,-
And, as it onward rolling rose
So moved his heart upon our foes.
There, where death's brief pang was quickest,
And the battle's wreck lay thickest,
Strew'd beneath the advancing banner
Of the eagles burning crest--
(There thunder-clouds to fan her,
Who could then her wing arrest--
Victory beaming from her breast?)
While the broken line enlarging
Fell, or fled along the plain;
There be sure was Murat charging!
There he ne'er shall charge again!

IV.

O'er glories gone the invaders march,
Weeps Triumph o'er each levell'd arch-
But let Freedom rejoice,
With her heart in her voice
But, her hand on her sword,
Doubly shall she be adored
France hath twice too well been taught
The 'moral lesson' dearly bought-
Her safety sits not on a throne,
With Capet or Napoleon!
But in equal rights and laws,
Hearts and hands in one great cause-
Freedom, such as God hath given
Unto all beneath his heaven,
With their breath, and from their birth,
Though guilt would sweep it from the earth;
With a fierce and lavish hand
Scattering nations' wealth like sand;
Pouring nations' blood like water,
In imperial seas of slaughter!

V.

But the heart and the mind,
And the voice of mankind,
Shall arise in communion---
And who shall resist that proud union?
The time is past when swords subdued-

Man may die - the soul's renew'd:
Even in this low world of care
Freedom ne'er shall want an heir;
Millions breathe but to inherit
Her for ever bounding spirit--
When once more her hosts assemble,
Tyrants shall believe and tremble-
Smile they at this idle threat?
Crimson tears will follow yet.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Ode On Venice

I.

Oh Venice! Venice! when thy marble walls
Are level with the waters, there shall be
A cry of nations o'er thy sunken halls,
A loud lament along the sweeping sea!
If I, a northern wanderer, weep for thee,

What should thy sons do?--anything but weep
And yet they only murmur in their sleep.
In contrast with their fathers--as the slime,
The dull green ooze of the receding deep,
Is with the dashing of the spring-tide foam
That drives the sailor shipless to his home,
Are they to those that were; and thus they creep,
Crouching and crab-like, through their sapping streets.
Oh! Agony--that centuries should reap
No mellower harvest! Thirteen hundred years
Of wealth and glory turn'd to dust and tears;
And every monument the stranger meets,
Church, palace, pillar, as a mourner greets;
And even the Lion all subdued appears,
And the harsh sound of the barbarian
With dull and daily dissonance, repeats
The echo of thy tyrant's voice along
The soft waves, once all musical to song,
That heaved beneath the moonlight with the throng
Of gondolas--and to the busy hum
Of cheerful creatures, whose most sinful deeds
Were but the overbeating of the heart,
And flow of too much happiness, which needs
The aid of age to turn its course apart
From the luxuriant and voluptuous flood
Of sweet sensations, battling with the blood.
But these are better than the gloomy errors,
The weeds of nations in their last decay,
When Vice walks forth with her unsoften'd terrors,
And Mirth is madness, and but smiles to slay;
And Hope is nothing but a false delay,
The sick man's lightning half an hour ere death,
When Faintness, the last mortal birth of Pain,
And apathy of limb, the dull beginning
Of the cold staggering race which Death is winning,
Steals vein by vein and pulse by pulse away;
Yet so relieving the o'er-tortured clay,
To him appears renewal of his breath,
And freedom the mere numbness of his chain;
And then he talks of life, and how again
He feels his spirit soaring--albeit weak,
And of the fresher air, which he would seek:
And as he whispers knows not that he gasps,
That his thin finger feels not what it clasps,
And so the film comes o'er him, and the dizzy

Chamber swims round and round, and shadows busy,
At which he vainly catches, flit and gleam,
Till the last rattle chokes the strangled scream,
And all is ice and blackness,--and the earth
That which it was the moment ere our birth.

II.

There is no hope for nations!--Search the page
Of many thousand years--the daily scene,
The flow and ebb of each recurring age,
The everlasting to be which hath been
Hath taught us nought, or little: still we lean
On things that rot beneath our weight, and wear
Our strength away in wrestling with the air:

For 'tis our nature strikes us down: the beasts
Slaughter'd in hourly hecatombs for feasts
Are of as high an order--they must go
Even where their driver goads them though to slaughter.
Ye men, who pour your blood for kings as water,
What have they given your children in return?
A heritage of servitude and woes,
A blindfold bondage, where your hire is blows.
What! do not yet the red-hot ploughshares burn,
O'er which you stumble in a false ordeal,
And deem this proof of loyalty the real;
Kissing the hand that guides you to your scars,
And glorying as you tread the glowing bars?
All that your sires have left you, all that Time
Bequeaths of free, and History of sublime,
Spring from a different theme! Ye see and read,
Admire and sigh, and then succumb and bleed!
Save the few spirits who, despite of all,
And worse than all, the sudden crimes engender'd
By the down-thundering of the prison-wall,
And thirst to swallow the sweet waters tender'd,
Gushing from Freedom's fountains, when the crowd,
Madden'd with centuries of drought, are loud,
And trample on each other to obtain
The cup which brings oblivion of a chain
Heavy and sore, in which long yoked they plough'd
The sand,--or if there sprung the yellow grain,
'Twos not for them, their necks were too much how'd,
And their dead palates chew'd the cud of pain:
Yes! the few spirits, who, despite of deeds
Which they abhor, confound not with the cause
Those momentary starts from Nature's laws,
Which, like the pestilence and earthquake, smite
But for a term, then pass, and leave the earth
With all her seasons to repair the blight
With a few summers, and again put forth
Cities and generations--fair, when free

For, Tyranny, there blooms no bud for thee!

III.

Glory and Empire! once upon these towers
With Freedom--godlike Triad! how ye sate!
The league of mightiest nations, in those hours
When Venice was an envy, might abate,
But did not quench her spirit, in her fate
All were enwrapp'd: the feasted monarchs knew
And loved their hostess, nor could learn to hate,
Although they humbled - with the kingly few
The many felt, for from all days and climes
She was the voyager's worship; even her crimes
Were of the softer order--born of Love,
She drank no blood, nor fatten'd on the dead,
But gladden'd where her harmless conquests spread;
For these restored the Cross, that from above
Hallow'd her sheltering banners, which incessant
Flew between earth and the unholy Crescent,
Which, if it waned and dwindled, Earth may thank
The city it has clothed in chains, which clank
Now, creaking in the ears of those who owe
The name of Freedom to her glorious struggles;
Yet she but shares with them a common woe,
And call'd the 'kingdom' of a conquering foe,
But knows what all--and, most of all, we know--
With what set gilded terms a tyrant juggles!
The name of Commonwealth is past and gone
O'er the three fractions of the groaning globe;
Venice is crush'd, and Holland deigns to own
A sceptre, and endures the purple robe;
If the free Switzer yet bestrides alone
His chainless mountains, 'tis but for a time,
For tyranny of late is cunning grown,
And in its own good season tramples down
The sparkles of our ashes. One great clime,
Whose vigorous offspring by dividing ocean
Are kept apart and nursed in the devotion
Of Freedom, which their fathers fought for, and
Bequeath'd--a heritage of heart and hand,
And proud distinction from each other land,
Whose sons must bow them at a monarch's motion,
As if his senseless sceptre were a wand
Full of the magic of exploded science--
Still one great clime, in full and free de-fiance,
Yet rears her crest, unconquer'd and sublime,
Above the far Atlantic! - She has taught
Her Esau--brethren that the haughty flag,
The floating fence of Albion's feebler crag,
May strike to those whose red right hands have bought
Rights cheaply earn'd with blood. Stilt, still, for ever,
Better, though each man's life--blood were a river,

That it should flow, and overflow, than creep
Through thousand lazy channels in our veins
Damm'd like the dull canal with locks and chains,
And moving, as a sick man in his sleep,
Three paces, and then faltering: better be
Where the extinguish'd Spartans still are free,
In their proud charnel of Thermopylae,
Than stagnate in our marsh,--or o'er the deep
Fly, and one current to the ocean add,
One spirit to the souls our fathers had,
One freeman more, America, to thee!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Ode To Napoleon Buonaparte

'Expend Annibalem:--quot libras in duce summo
Invenies?~JUVENAL., Sat. X.

I.

Tis done--but yesterday a King!
And arm'd with Kings to strive--
And now thou art a nameless thing:
So abject--yet alive!
Is this the man of thousand thrones,
Who strew'd our earth with hostile bones,
And can he thus survive?
Since he, miscall'd the Morning Star,
Nor man nor fiend bath fallen so far.

II.

Ill-minded man! why scourge thy kind
Who bow'd so low the knee?
By gazing on thyself grown blind,
Thou taught'st the rest to see.
With might unquestion'd,--power to save,--
Thine only gift hath been the grave
To those that worshipp'd thee;
Nor till thy fall could mortals guess
Ambition's less than littleness!

III.

Thanks for that lesson--It will teach
To after--warriors more
Than high Philosophy can preach,
And vainly preach 'd before.
That spell upon the minds of men
Breaks never to unite again,
That led them to adore
Those Pagod things of sabre sway
With fronts of brass, and feet of clay.

IV.

The triumph and the vanity,
The rapture of the strife--
The earthquake voice of Victory,
To thee the breath of life;
The sword, the sceptre, and that sway
Which man seem'd made but to obey,
Wherewith renown was rife--
All quell'd!--Dark Spirit! what must be
The madness of thy memory!

V.

The Desolator desolate!
The Victor overthrown!
The Arbiter of others' fate
A Suppliant for his own!

Is it some yet imperial hope
That with such change can calmly cope?
Or dread of death alone?
To die a prince--or live a slave--
Thy choice is most ignobly brave!

VI.

He who of old would rend the oak,
Dream'd not of the rebound:
Chain'd by the trunk he vainly broke--
Alone--how look'd he round?
Thou, in the sternness of thy strength,
An equal deed hath done at length,
And darker fate hast found:
He fell, the forest prowlers' prey;
But thou must eat thy heart away!

VII.

The Roman, when his burning heart
Was slaked with blood of Rome,
Threw down the dagger--dared depart,
In savage grandeur, home--
He dared depart in utter scorn
Of men that such a yoke had borne,
Yet left him such a doom!
His only glory was that hour
Of self-upheld abandon'd power.

VIII.

The Spaniard, when the lust of sway
Had lost its quickening spell,
Cast crowns for rosaries away,
An empire for a cell;
A strict accountant of his beads,
A subtle disputant on creeds,
His dotage trifled well:
Yet better had he neither known
A bigot's shrine, nor despot's throne.

IX.

But thou--from thy reluctant hand
The thunderbolt is wrung--
Too late thou leav'st the high command
To which thy weakness clung;
All Evil Spirit as thou art,
It is enough to grieve the heart
To see thine own unstrung;
To think that God's fair world hath been
The footstool of a thing so mean;

X.

And Earth hath spilt her blood for him,

Who thus can hoard his own!
And Monarchs bow'd the trembling limb,
And thank'd him for a throne!
Fair Freedom! we may hold thee dear,
When thus thy mightiest foes their fear
In humblest guise have shown.
Oh! ne'er may tyrant leave behind
A brighter name to lure mankind!

XI.

Thine evil deeds are writ in gore,
Nor written thus in vain--
Thy triumphs tell of fame no more,
Or deepen every stain:
If thou hadst died as honour dies,
Some new Napoleon might arise,
To shame the world again--
But who would soar the solar height,
To set in such a starless night?

XII.

Weigh'd in the balance, hero dust
Is vile as vulgar clay;
Thy scales, Mortality! are just
To all that pass away:
But yet methought the living great
Some higher sparks should animate,
To dazzle and dismay:
Nor deem'd Contempt could thus make mirth
Of these, the Conquerors of the earth.

XIII.

And she, proud Austria's mournful flower,
Thy still imperial bride;
How bears her breast the torturing hour?
Still clings she to thy side?
Must she too bend, must she too share
Thy late repentance, long despair,
Thou thronelss Homicide?
If still she loves thee, hoard that gem,--
'Tisworth thy vanish'd diadem!

XIV.

Then haste thee to thy sullen Isle,
And gaze upon the sea;
That element may meet thy smile--
It ne'er was ruled by thee!
Or trace with thine all idle hand
In loitering mood upon the sand
That Earth is now as free!
That Corinth's pedagogue hath now
Transferr'd his by-word to thy brow.

XV.

Thou Timour! in his captive's cage
What thoughts will there be thine,
While brooding in thy prison'd rage?
But one--'The world was mine!'
Unless, like he of Babylon,
All sense is with thy sceptre gone,
Life will not long confine
That spirit pour'd so widely forth-
So long obey'd--so little worth!

XVI.

Or, like the thief of fire from heaven,
Wilt thou withstand the shock?
And share with him the unforgiven,
His vulture and his rock!
Foredoom'd by God--by man accurst,
And that last act, though not thy worst,
The very Fiend's arch mock
He in his fall preserved his pride,
And, if a mortal, had as proudly died!

XVII.

There was a day--there was an hour,
While earth was Gaul's--Gaul thine--
When that immeasurable power
Unsated to resign
Had been an act of purer fame
Than gathers round Marengo's name,
And gilded thy decline,
Through the long twilight of all time,
Despite some passing clouds of crime.

XVIII.

But thou forsooth must be a king,
And don the purple vest,
As !f that foolish robe could wring
Remembrance from thy breast.
Where is that faded garment? where
The gewgaws thou Overt fond to wear,
The star, the string the crest?
Vain froward child of empire! say,
Are all thy playthings snatched away?

XIX.

Where may the wearied eye repose
When gazing on the Great;
Where neither guilty glory glows,
Nor despicable state?
Yes--one--the first--the last--the best--
The Cincinnatus of the West,

Whom envy dared not hate,
Bequeath'd the name of Washington,
To make man blush there was but one!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Oh! snatched away in beauty's bloom

Oh! snatched away in beauty's bloom,
On thee shall press no ponderous tomb;
But on thy turf shall roses rear
Their leaves, the earliest of ' the year;
And the wild cypress wave in tender gloom:

And oft by yon blue gushing stream
Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,
And feed deep thought with many a dream,
And lingering pause and lightly tread;
Fond wretch! as if her step disturbed the dead!

Away I we know that tears are vain,
That death nor heeds nor hears distress:
Will this unteach us to complain?
Or make one mourner weep the less?
And thou - who tell'st me to forget,
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Oh! Weep For Those

I.

Oh! Weep for those that wept by Babel's stream,
Whose shrines are desolate, whose land a dream,
Weep for the harp of Judah's broken shell--
Mourn--where their God that dwelt-the Godless dwell!

II.

And where shall Israel lave her bleeding feet?
And when shall Zion's songs again seem sweet?
And Judah's melody once more rejoice
The hearts that leap'd before its heavenly voice?

III.

Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast!
How shall ye flee away and be at rest!
The wild-dove hath her nest--the fox his cave--
Mankind their Country--Israel but the grave.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On A Change Of Masters At A Great Public School

WHERE are those honours, Ida! once yow own,
When Probus fill'd your magisterial throne?
As ancient Rome, fast falling to disgrace,
Hail'd a barbarian in her Cæsar's place,
So you, degenerate, share as hard a fate,
And seat Pomposus where your Probus sate.
Of narrow brain, yet of a narrower soul,
Pomposus holds you in his harsh control;
Pomposus, by no social virtue sway'd,
With florid jargon, and with vain parade;
With noisy nonsense, and new-fangled rules,
Such as were ne'er before enforced in schools
Mistaking pedantry for learning's laws,
He governs, sanction'd but by self applause;
With him the same dire fate attending Rome,
Ill-fated Ida! soon must stamp your doom;
Like her o'erthrown, for ever lost to fame,
No trace of science left you, but the name.

July 1805.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On A Cornelian Heart Which Was Broken

Ill-fated Heart! And can it be,
That thou should'st thus be rent in vain?
Have years of care for thine and thee
Alike been all employ'd in vain?

Yet precious seems each shatter'd part
And every fragment dearer grown
Since he who wears thee feels thou art
A fitter emblem of his own.

March 16, 1812

George Gordon Lord Byron

On A Distant View Of The Village And School Of The Harrow Hill

Oh! mihi præteritos referat si Jupiter annos.~Virgil

Ye scenes of my childhood, whose lov'd recollection
Embitters the present, compar'd with the past;
Where science first dawn'd on the powers of reflection,
And friendships were form'd, too romantic to last;

Where fancy, yet, joys to retrace the resemblance
Of comrades, in friendship and mischief allied;
How welcome to me your ne'er fading remembrance,
Which rests in the bosom, though hope is deny'd

Again I revisit the hills where we sported,
The streams where we swam, and the fields where we fought;
The school where, loud warn'd by the bell, we resorted,
To pore o'er the precepts by Pedagogues taught.

Again I behold where for hours I have ponder'd,
As reclining, at eve, on yon tombstone I lay;
Or round the steep brow of the churchyard I wander'd,
To catch the last gleam of the sun's setting ray.

I once more view the room, with spectators surrounded,
Where, as Zanga, I trod on Alonzo o'erthrown;
While, to swell my young pride, such applauses resounded,
I fancied that Mossop himself was outshone.

Or, as Lear, I pour'd forth the deep imprecation,
By my daughters, of kingdom and reason depriv'd;
Till, fir'd by loud plaudits and self-adulation,
I regarded myself as a Garrick reviv'd.

Ye dreams of my boyhood, how much I regret you!
Unfaded your memory dwells in my breast;
Though sad and deserted, I ne'er can forget you:
Your pleasures may still be in fancy possest.

To Ida full oft may remembrance restore me,
While Fate shall the shades of the future unroll!
Since Darkness o'ershadows the prospect before me,
More dear is the beam of the past to my soul!

But if, through the course of the years which await me,
Some new scene of pleasure should open to view,
I will say, while with rapture the thought shall elate me,
Oh! such were the days which my infancy knew.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On A Nun

Of two fair virgins, modest, though admired,
Heaven made us happy; and now, wretched sires,
Heaven for a nobler doom their worth desires,
And gazing upon either, both required.
Mine, while the torch of Hymen newly fired
Becomes extinguish'd, soon - too soon - expires:
But thine, within the closing grate re-tired,
Eternal captive, to her God aspires.
But thou at least from out the jealous door,
Which shuts between your never - meet-ing eyes,
May'st hear her sweet and pious voice once more:
I to the marble, where my daughter lies,
Rush, - the swoln flood of bitterness I pour,
And knock, and knock, and knock but none replies.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On Being Asked What Was The 'Origin Of Love'

The 'Origin of Love!'--Ah why
That cruel question ask of me,
When thou may'st read in many an eye
He starts to life on seeing thee?

And should'st thou seek his end to know:
My heart forebodes, my fears foresee
He'll linger long in silent woe;
But live--until I cease to be.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On Chillon

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty, thou art;
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned,
- To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom—
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor and altar, for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace,
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard.—May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On Finding A Fan

In one who felt as once he felt
This might, perhaps, have fann'd the flame;
But now his heart no more will melt,
Because that heart is not the same.

As when the ebbing flames are low,
The aid which once improved their light,
And bade them burn with fiercer glow,
Now quenches all their blaze in night.

Thus has it been with passion's fires-
As many a boy and girl remembers-
While every hope of love expires,
Extinguish'd with the dying embers.

The first, though not a spark survive,
Some careful hand may teach to barn;
The last, alas I can ne'er survive;
No touch can bid its warmth reform

Or, if it chance to wake again.
Not always doom 'd its heat to smother,
It sheds (so wayward fates ordain)
Its former warmth around another.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On Jordan's Banks

On Jordan's banks the Arab's camels stray,
On Sion's hill the False One's votaries pray,
The Baal-adorer bows on Sinai's steep -
Yet there - even there - Oh God! thy thunders sleep:

There - where thy finger scorch'd the tablet stone!
There - where thy shadow to thy people shone!
Thy glory shrouded in its garb of fire:
Thyself - none living see and not expire!

Oh! in the lightning let thy glance appear;
Sweep from his shiver'd hand the oppressor's spear!
How long by tyrants shall thy land be trod?
How long thy temple worshipless, Oh God?

George Gordon Lord Byron

On Leaving Newstead Abbey

'Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged days? Thou lookest from thy tower to-day; yet a few years, and the blast of the desert comes, it howls in thy empty court.' ~ Ossian

Through thy battlements, Newstead, the hollow winds whistle;
Thou, the hall of my fathers, art gone to decay;
In thy once smiling garden, the hemlock and thistle
Have choked up the rose which late bloom'd in the way.

Of the mail-cover'd Barons, who proudly to battle
Led their vassals from Europe to Palestine's plain,
The escutcheon and shield, which with every blast rattle,
Are the only sad vestiges now that remain.

No more doth old Robert, with harp-stringing numbers,
Raise a flame in the breast for the war-laurell'd wreath;
Near Askalon's towers, John of Horistan slumbers,
Unnerved is the hand of his minstrel by death.

Paul and Hubert, too, sleep in the valley of Cressy;
For the safety of Edward and England they fell:
My fathers! the tears of your country redress ye;
How you fought, how you died, still her annals can tell.

On Marston, with Rupert, 'gainst traitors contending,
Four brothers enrich'd with their blood the bleak field;
For the rights of a monarch their country defending,
Till death their attachment to royalty seal'd.

Shades of heroes, farewell! your descendant, departing
From the seat of his ancestors, bids you adieu!
Abroad, or at home, your remembrance imparting
New courage, he'll think upon glory and you.

Though a tear dim his eye at this sad separation,
'Tis nature, not fear, that excites his regret;
Far distant he goes, with the same emulation,
The fame of his fathers he ne'er can forget.

That fame, and that memory, still will he cherish;
He vows that he ne'er will disgrace your renown:
Like you will he live, or like you will he perish;
When decay'd, may he mingle his dust with your own!

George Gordon Lord Byron

On Lord Thurlow's Poems

When Thurlow this damn'd nonsense sent
(I hope I am not violent),
Nor men nor gods knew what he meant.

And since not even our Rogers' praise
To common sense his thoughts could raise--
Why would they let him print his lays'

To me, divine Apollo, grant--O!
Hermilda's first and second canto,
I'm fitting up a new portmanteau;

And thus to furnish decent lining,
My own and others' bays I'm twining,--
So, gentle Thurlow, throw me thine in.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On Moore's Last Operatic Farce, Or Farcical Opera

Good plays are scarce:
So Moore writes farce.
The poet's fame grows brittle--
We knew before
That Little's Moore,
But now 'tis Moore that's little.

September 14, 1811.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On My Thirty-Third Birthday, January 22, 1821

Through life's dull road, so dim and dirty,
I have dragg'd to three-and-thirty.
What have these years left to me?
Nothing--except thirty-three.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On My Wedding-Day

Here's a happy new year! but with reason
I beg you'll permit me to say
Wish me many returns of the season,
But as few as you please of the dy.

January 2, 1820.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On Napoleon's Escape From Elba

Once fairly set out on his party of pleasure,
Taking towns at his liking, and crowns at his leisure,
From Elba to Lyons and Paris he goes,
Making balls for the ladies, and bows to his foes.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On Parting

The kiss, dear maid! thy lip has left
Shall never part from mine,
Till happier hours restore the gift
Untainted back to thine.

Thy parting glance, which fondly beams,
An equal love may see:
The tear that from thine eyelid streams
Can weep no change in me.

I ask no pledge to make me blest
In gazing when alone;
Nor one memorial for a breast,
Whose thoughts are all thine own.

Nor need I write to tell the tale
My pen were doubly weak:
Oh! what can idle words avail,
Unless the heart could speak?

By day or night, in weal or woe,
That heart, no longer free,
Must bear the love it cannot show,
And silent ache for thee.

March 1811.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On Revisiting Harrow

Here once engaged the stranger's view
Young Friendship's record simply traced;
Few were her words; but yet, though few,
Resentment's hand the line defaced.

Deeply she cut--but not erased,
The characters were still so pain,
That Friendship once return'd, and gazed,--
Till Memory hail'd the words again.

Repentance placed them as before;
Forgiveness join'd her gentle name;
So fair the inscription seem'd once more,
That Friendship thought it still the same.

Thus might the Record now have been;
But, ah, in spite of Hopes endeavour,
Or Friendships tears, Pride rush'd between
And blotted out the line for ever.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On The Birth Of John William Rizzo Hoppner

His father's sense, his mother's grace,
In him I hope, will always fit so;
With--still to keep him in good case--
The health and appetite of Rizzo.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On The Bust Of Helen By Canova

In this beloved marble view,
Above the works and thoughts of man,
What Nature could, but would not, do,
And Beauty and Canova can!
Beyond imagination's power,
Beyond the Bard's defeated art,
With immortality her dower,
Behold the Helen of the heart!

George Gordon Lord Byron

On The Castle Of Chillon

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty, thou art;
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned,
- To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom—
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor and altar, for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace,
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard.—May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On The Day Of The Destruction Of Jerusalem By Titus

From the last hill that looks on thy once holy dome,
I beheld thee, oh Sion! when render'd to Rome:
'Twas thy last sun went down, and the flames of thy fall
Flash'd back on the last glance I gave to thy wall.

I look'd for thy temple, I look'd for my home,
And forgot for a moment my bondage to come;
I beheld but the death-fire that fed on thy fane,
And the fast-fetter'd hands that made vengeance in vain.

Oh many an eve, the high spot whence I gazed
Had reflected the last beam of day as it blazed;
While I stood on the height, and beheld the decline
Of the rays from the mountain that shone on thy shrine.

And now on that mountain I stood on that day,
But I mark'd not the twilight beam melting away;
Oh! would that the lightning had glared in its stead,
And the thunderbolt burst on the conqueror's head!

But the gods of the Pagan shall never profane
The shrine where Jehovah disdain'd not to reign;
And scatter'd and scorn'd as thy people may be,
Our worship, oh Father! is only for thee.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On The Death Of A Young Lady

Cousin to the Author, and very dear to him

Hush'd are the winds, and still the evening gloom,
Not e'en a zephyr wanders through the grove,
Whilst I return, to view my Margaret's tomb,
And scatter flowers on the dust I love.

Within this narrow cell reclines her clay,
That clay, where once such animation beam'd;
The King of Terrors seized her as his prey,
Not worth nor beauty have her life redeem'd.

Oh! could that King of Terrors pity feel,
Or heaven reverse the dread decree of fate,
Not here the mourner would his grief reveal,
Not here the muse her virtues would relate.

But wherefore weep? Her matchless spirit soars
Beyond where splendid shines the orb of day;
And weeping angels lead her to those bowers
Where endless pleasures virtuous deeds repay.

And shall presumptuous mortals Heaven arraign,
And, madly, godlike Providence accuse?
Ah! no, far fly from me attempts so vain;--
I'll ne'er submission to my God refuse.

Yet is remembrance of those virtues dear,
Yet fresh the memory of that beauteous face;
Still they call forth my warm affection's tear,
Still in my heart retain their wonted place.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On The Death Of Mr. Fox

The following iiliberall impromptu appeared in a morning papaer:

'Our nation's foes lament on Fox's death,
But bless the hour when PITT resign'd his breath:
These feelings wide, let sense and truth unclue,
We give the palm where Justice points its due.'

To which the author of these pieces sent the following reply :

Oh factious viper! whose envenom'd tooth
Would mangle still the dead, perverting truth;
What though our 'nation's foes' lament the fate
With generous' feeling, of the good and great'
Shall dastard tongues essay to blast the name
Of him whose meed exists in endless fame?
When PITT expired in plenitude of power,
Though Iliuccess obscured his dying hour,
Pity her dewy wings before him spread,
For noble spirits 'war not with the dead:'
His friends, in tears, a last sad requiem gave,
As all his errors slumber'd in the grave;
He sunk, an Atlas bending 'neath the weight
Of cares o'erwhelmlng our conflicting state:
When, lo! a Hercules in FOX appear'd
Who for a time the ruin'd fabric rear'd:
He, too, is fall'n, who Britain's loss supplied,
With him our fast reviving hopes have died;
Not one great people only raise his urn,
All Europe's far-extended regions mourn.
'These feelings wide, let sense and truth unclue,
To give the palm where Justice points its due;'
Yet let not cancer'd Calumny assail,
Or round our statesman wind her gloomy veil.
FOX o'er whose corse a mourning world must weep,
Whose dear remains in honour'd marble sleep;
For whom, at last, e'en hostile nations groan,
While friends and foes alike his talents own;
FOX shall in Britain's future annals shine,
Nor e'en to PITT the patriot's palm resign;
Which Envy, wearing Candour's sacred mask,
For PITT, and PITT alone, has dared to ask.

George Gordon Lord Byron

On The Star Of 'The Legion Of Honour' (From The French)

Star of the brave!--whose beam hath shed
Such glory o'er the quick and dead -
Thou radiant and adored deceit!
Which millions rush'd in arms to greet,
Wild meteor of immortal birth;
Why rise in Heaven to set on Earth?

Souls of slain heroes form'd thy rays;
Eternity flash'd through thy blaze;
The music of thy martial sphere
Was fame on high and honour here;
And thy light broke on human eyes,
Like a volcano of the skies.

Like lava roll'd thy stream of blood,
And swept down empires with its flood;
Earth rock'd beneath thee to her base,
As thou didst lighten through all space;
And the shorn Sun grew dim in air,
And set while thou wert dwelling there.

Before thee rose, and with thee grew,
A rainbow of the loveliest hue
Of three bright colours, each divine,
And fit for that celestial sign;
For Freedom's hand had blended them,
Like tints in an immortal gem.

One tint was of the sunbeam's dyes;
One, the blue depth of Seraph's eyes;
One the pure Spirit's veil of white
Had robed in radiance of its light:
The three so mingled did beseem
The texture of a heavenly dream.

Star of the brave! thy ray is pale,
And darkness must again prevail!
But, oh thou Rainbow of the free!
Our tears and blood must flow for thee.
When thy bright promise fades away,
Our life is but a load of clay.

And Freedom hallows with her tread
The silent cities of the dead;
For beautiful in death are they
Who proudly fall in her array;
And soon, oh Goddess! may we be
For evermore with them or thee!

George Gordon Lord Byron

On this Day I Complete my Thirty-Sixth Year

'Tis time the heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move:
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze--
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love, I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

But 'tis not thus--and 'tis not here--
Such thoughts should shake my soul nor now,
Where glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,
Glory and Greece, around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece--she is awake!)
Awake, my spirit! Think through whom
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood!--unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of beauty be.

If thou regrett'st thy youth, why live?
The land of honourable death
Is here:--up to the field, and give
Away thy breath!

Seek out--less often sought than found--
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest.

George Gordon Lord Byron

One Struggle More, And I Am Free

One struggle more, and I am free
From pangs that rend my heart in twain;
One last long sigh to love and thee,
Then back to busy life again.
It suits me well to mingle now
With things that never pleased before!
Though every joy is fled below,
What future grief can touch me more?

Then bring me wine, the banquet bring;
Man was not form'd to live alone:
I'll be that light, unmeaning thing
That smiles with all, and weeps with none.
It was not thus in days more dear,
It never would have been, but thou
Hast fled, and left me lonely here;
Thou'ret nothing--all are nothing now.

In vain my lyre would lightly breathe!
The smile that sorrow fain would wear
But mocks the woe that lurks beneath,
Like roses o'er a sepulchre.
Though gay companions o'er the bowl
Dispel awhile the sense of ill:
Though pleasure fires the maddening soul,
The heart,--the heart is lonely still!

On many a lone and lovely night
It sooth'd to gaze upon the sky;
For then I deem'd the heavenly light
Shone sweetly on thy pensive eye:
And oft I thought at Cynthia's noon,
When sailing o'er the Ægean wave,
'Now Thyrza gazes on that moon'-
Alas, it gleam'd upon her grave!

When stretch'd on fever's sleepless bed,
And sickness shrunk my throbbing veins,
'Tis comfort still,' I faintly said,
'That Thyrza cannot know my pains:'
Like freedom to the time-worn slave,
A boon 'tis idle then to give,
Relenting Nature vainly gave
My life, when Thyrza ceased to live!

My Thyrza's pledge in better days,
When love and life alike were new!
How different now thou meet'st my gaze!
How tinged by time with sorrow's hue!
The heart that gave itself with thee
Is silent--ah, were mine as still!
Though cold as e'en the dead can be,

It feels, it sickens with the chill.

Thou bitter pledge! thou mournful token!
Though painful, welcome to my breast!
Still, still preserve that love unbroken,
Or break the heart to which thou'rt press'd.
Time tempers love, but not removes,
More hallow'd when its hope is fled:
Oh! what are thousand living loves
To that which cannot quit the dead?

George Gordon Lord Byron

Oscar Of Alva: A Tale

How sweetly shines through azure skies,
The lamp of heaven on Lora's shore;
Where Alva's hoary turrets rise,
And hear the din of arms no more!

But often has yon rolling moon
On Alva's casques of silver play'd;
And view'd at midnight's silent noon,
Her chief's in gleaming mail array'd:

And on the crimson'd rocks beneath,
Which scowl o'er ocean's sullen flow,
Pale in the scatter'd runks of death,
She saw the gasping warrior low;

While many an eye which ne'er again
Could mark the rising orb of day,
Turn'd feebly from the gory plain,
Beheld in death her fading ray.

Once to those eyes the lamp of Love,
They blest her dear propitious light;
But now she glimmer'd from above,
A sad, funereal torch of night.

Faded is Alva's noble race,
And gray her towers are seen afar;
No more her heroes urge the chase,
Or roll the crimson tide of war.

But who was last of Alva's clan?
Why grows the moss on Alva's stone?
Her towers resound no steps of man,
They echo to the gale alone.

And when that gale is fierce and high,
A sound is heard in yonder hall;
It rises hoarsely through the sky,
And vibrates o'er the mould'ring wall.

Yes, when the eddying tempest sighs,
It shakes the shield of Oscar brave;
But there no more his banners rise,
No more his plumes of sable wave.

Fair shone the sun on Oscar's birth,
When Angus hail'd his eldest born
The vassals round their chieftain's hearth
 Crowd to applaud the happy morn.

They feast upon the mountain deer,
The pibroch raised its piercing note;

To gladden more their highland cheer,
The strains in martial numbers float:

And they who heard the war-notes wild
Hoped that one day the pibroch's strain
Should play before the hero's child
While he should lead the tartan train.

Another year is quickly past,
And Angus hails another son;
His natal day is like the last,
Nor soon the jocund feast was done.

Taught by their sire to bend the bow,
On Alva's dusky hills of wind,
The boys in childhood chased the roe,
And left their hounds in speed behind.

But ere their years of youth are o'er,
They mingle in the ranks of war;
They lightly wheel the bright claymore
And send the whistling arrow far.

Dark was the flow of Oscar's hair,
Wildly it stream'd along the gale;
But Allan's locks were bright and fair,
And pensive seem'd his cheek, and pale.

But Oscar own'd a hero's soul,
His dark eye shone through beams of truth;
Allan had early learn'd control,
And smooth his words had been from youth.

Both, both were brave; the Saxon spear
Was shiver'd oft beneath their steel;
And Oscar's bosom scorn'd to fear,
But Oscar's bosom knew to feel;

While Allan's soul belied his form,
Unworthy with such charms to dwell:
Keen as the lightning of the storm,
On foe, his deadly vengeance fell.

From high Southannon's distant tower
Arrived a young and noble dame;
With Kenneth's lands to form her dower,
Glenalvon's blue-eyed daughter came;

And Oscar claim'd the beauteous bride,
And Angus on his Oscar smiled:
It soothed the father's feudal pride
Thus to obtain Glenalvon's child.

Hark to the pibroch's pleasing note!
Hark to the swelling nuptial song!
In joyous strains the voices float,
And still the choral peal prolong.

See how the heroes' blood-red plumes
Assembled wave in Alva's hall;
Each youth his varied plaid assumes,
Attending on thir chieftain's call.

It is not war their aid demands,
The pibroch plays the song of peace;
To Oscar's nuptials throng the bands,
Nor yet the sounds of pleasure cease.

But where is Oscar? sure 'tis late:
Is this a bridegroom's ardent flame?
While thronging guests and ladies wait,
Nor Oscar nor his brother came.

At length young Allan join'd the bride;
'Why comes not Oscar?' Angus said:
Is he not here?' the youth replied;
'With me he roved not o'er the glade:

'Perchance, forgetful of the day,
'Tis his to chase the bounding roe;
Or ocean's waves prolong his stay;
Yet Oscar's bark is seldom slow.'

'Oh, no!' the anguish'd Sire rejoin'd,
'Nor chase nor wave, my boy delay;
Would he to Mora seem unkind?
Would aught to her impede his way?

'Oh, search, ye chiefs! oh, search around!
Allan, with these through Alva fly;
Till Oscar, till my son is found,
Haste, haste, nor dare attempt reply.'

All is confusion — through the vale
The name of Oscar hoarsely rings,
It rises on the murmuring gale,
Till night expands her dusky wings;

It breaks the stillness of the night,
But echoes through her shades in vain;
It sounds through morning's misty light,
But Oscar comes not o'er the plain.

Three days, three sleepless nights, the Chief

For Oscar search'd each mountain cave:
Then hope is lost; in boundless grief,
His locks in gray-torn ringlets wave.

'Oscar! my son! thou God of heaven,
Restore the prop of sinking age!
Or if that hope no more is given,
Yield his assassin to my rage.

'Yes, on some desert rocky shore
My Oscar's whiten'd bones must lie;
Then grant, thou God! I ask no more,
With him his frantic sire may die!

'Yet he may live, — away, despair!
Be calm, my soul! he yet may live;
T'arraign my fate, my voice forbear!
O God! my impious prayer forgive.

'What, if he live for me no more,
I sink forgotten in the dust,
The hope of Alva's age is o'er:
Alas! can pangs like these be just?'

Thus did the hapless parent mourn,
Till Time, which soothes severest woe,
Had bade serenity return
And made the tear-drop cease to flow.

For still some latent hope survived
That Oscar might once more appear;
His hope now droop'd and now revived,
Till Time had told a tedious year.

Days roll'd along, the orb of light
Again had run his destined race;
No Oscar bless'd his father's sight,
And sorrow left a fainter trace.

For youthful Allan still remain'd,
And now his father's only joy:
And Mora's heart was quickly gain'd,
For beauty crown'd the fair-hair'd boy.

She thought that Oscar low was laid,
And Allan's face was wondrous fair;
If Oscar lived, some other maid
Had clairn'd his faithless bosom's care.

And Angus said, if one year more
In fruitless hope was pass'd away,
His fondest scruples should be o'er,

And he would name their nuptial day.

Slow roll'd the moons, but blest at last
Arrived the dearly destined morn
The year of anxious trembling past,
What smiles the lovers' cheeks adorn!

Hark to the pibroch's pleasing note!
Hark to the swelling nuptial song!
In joyous strains the voices float,
And still the choral peal prolong.

Again the clan, in festive crowd,
Throng through the gate of Alva's hall;
The sounds of mirth re-echo loud,
And all their former joy recall.

But who is he, whose darken'd brow
Glooms in the midst of general mirth?
Before his eyes' far fiercer glow
The blue flames curdle o'er the hearth.

Dark is the robe which wraps his form,
And tall his plume of gory red;
His voice is like the rising storm,
But light and trackless is his tread.

'Tis noon of night, the pledge goes round,
The bridegroom's health is deeply quaff'd;
With shouts the vaulted roofs resound,
And all combine to hail the draught.

Sudden the stranger-chief arose,
And all the clamorous crowd are hush'd;
And Angus' cheek with wonder glows,
And Mora's tender bosom blush'd

'Old rnan!' he cried, 'this pledge is done;
Thou saw'st 'twas duly drank by me;
It hail'd the nuptials of thy son:
Now will I claim a pledge from thee.

'While all around is mirth and joy,
To bless thy Allan's happy lot,
Say, hadst thou ne'er another boy?
Say, why should Oscar be forgot?'

'Alas!' the hapless sire replied,
The big tear starting as he spoke
'When Oscar left my hail, or died,
This aged heart was almost broke,

'Thrice has the earth revolved her course
Since Oscar's form has bless'd my sight;
And Allan is my last resource,
Since martial Oscar's death or flight.'

'Tis well,' replied the stranger stern,
And fiercely flash'd his rolling eye;
'Thy Oscar's fate I fain would learn;
Perhaps the hero did not die.

'Perhaps, if those whom most he loved
Would call, thy Oscar might return;
Perchance the chief has only roved;
For him thy beltane yet may burn.

'Fill high the bowl the table round,
We will not climb the pledge by stealth;
With wine let every cup be crown'd
Pledge me departed Oscar's health.'

'With all my soul,' old Angus said,
And fill'd his goblet to the brim:
'Here's to my boy! alive or dead'
I ne'er shall find a son like him'

'Bravely. old man this health has sped;
But why does Allan trembling stand?
Come, drink remembrance of the dead,
And raise thy cup with firmer hand.'

The crimson glow of Allan's face
Was turn'd at once to ghastly hue;
The drops of death each other chase
Adown in agonizing dew.

Thrice did he raise the goblet high,
And thrice his lips refused to taste;
For thrice he caught the stranger's eye
On his with deadly fury placed.

'And is it thus a brother's hails
A brother's fond remembrance here?
If thus affection's strength prevails'
What might we not expect from fear?'

Roused by the sneer, he raised the bowl,
'Would Oscar now could share our mirth!'
Internal fear appall'd his soul;
He said and dash'd the cap to earth,

'Tis he! I hear my murderer's voice!'

Loud shrieks a darkly gleaming form.
'A murderer's voice!' the roof replies,
And deeply swells the bursting storm,

The tapers wink, the chieftains shrink,
The stranger's gone, — amidst the crew,
A form was seen in tartan green,
And tall the shade terrific grew.

His waist was bound with a broad belt round,
His plume of sable stream'd on high;
But his breast was bare, with the red wounds there,
And fix'd was the glare of his glassy eye.

And thrice he smiled, with his eyes so wild,
On Angus bending low the knee;
And thrice he frown'd on a chief on the ground
Whom shivering crowds with horror see

The bolts loud roll from pole to pole
The thunders through the welkin ring,
And the gleaming form, through the mist of the storm,
Was borne on high by the whirlwind's wing

Cold was the feast, the revel ceased.
Who lies upon the stony floor?
Oblivion press'd old Angus' breast,
At length his life-pulse throbs once more.

'Away, away! let the leech essay
To pour the light on Allan's eyes;'
His sand is done, — his race is run —
Oh! never more shall Allan rise!

But Oscar's breast is cold as clay,
His locks are lifted by the gale;
And Allan's barbed arrow lay
With him In dark Glentanar's vale.

And whence the dreadful stranger came,
Or who, no mortal wight can tell;
But no one doubts the form of flame,
For Alva's sons knew Oscar well.

Ambition nerved young Allan's hand,
Exulting demons wing'd his dart;
While Envy waved her burnng brand,
And pour'd her venom round his heart.

Swift is the shaft from Allan's bow;
Whose streaming life-blood stains his side?
Dark Oscar's sable crest is low,

The dart has drunk his vital tide.

And Mora's eyes could Allan move,
She bade his wounded pride rebel:
Alas! that eyes which beam'd with love
Should urge the soul to deeds of hell.

Lo! seest thou not a lonely tomb
Which rises o'er a warrior dead?
It glimmers through the twilight gloom;
Oh! that is Allan's nuptial bed.

Far distant far, the noble grave
Which held his clan's great ashes stood;
And o'er his corse no banners wave,
For they were stain'd with kindred blood.

What minstrel gray, what hoary bard,
Shall Allan's deeds on harp-strings raise?
The song is glory's chief reward,
But who can strike a murderer's praise?

Unstrung, untouch'd, th harp must stand,
No minstrel dare the theme awake;
Guilt would benumb his palsied hand,
His harp in shuddering chords would break.

No lyre of fame, no hallow'd verse,
Shall sound his glories high in air:
A dying father's bitter curse,
A brother's death-groan echoes there.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Parisina

It is the hour when from the boughs
The nightingale's high note is heard;
It is the hour when lovers' vows
Seem sweet in every whisper'd word:
And gentle winds, and waters near,
Make music to the lonely ear.
Each flower the dews have lightly wet,
And in the sky, the stars are met,
And on the wave is deeper blue,
And on the leaf a browner hue.
And in the heaven that clear obscure,
So softly dark, and darkly pure,
Which follows the decline of day,
As twilight melts beneath the moon away.

II.

But it is not to list to the waterfall
That Parisina leaves her hall,
And it is not to gaze on the heavenly light
That the lady walks in the shadow of night;
And if she sits in Este's bower,
'Tis not for the sake of its full-blown flower--
She listens--but not for the nightingale--
Though her ear expects as soft a tale.
There glides a step through the foliage thick,
And her cheek grows pale — and her heart beats quick.
There whispers a voice through the rustling leaves,
And her blush returns, and her bosom heaves!
A moment more--and they shall meet--
'Tis past--her lover's at her feet.

III.

And what unto them is the world beside,
With all its change of time and tide?
Its living things--its earth and sky--
Are nothing to their mind and eye.
And heedless as the dead are they
Of aught around, above, beneath;
As if all else had pass'd away,
They only for each other breathe;
Their very sighs are full of joy
So deep, that did it not decay,
That happy madness would destroy
The hearts which feel its fiery sway:
Of guilt, of peril, do they deem
In that tumultuous tender dream?
Who that have felt that passion's power,
Or paused, or fear'd, in such an hour?
Or thought how brief such moments last?
But yet--they are already past!
Alas! we must awake before
We know such vision comes no more.

IV.

With many a lingering look they leave
The spot of guilty gladness past;
And though they hope, and vow, they grieve,
As if that parting were the last,
The frequent sigh--the long embrace--
The lip that there would cling for ever,
While gleams on Parisina's face
The Heaven she fears will not forgive her,
As if each calmly conscious star
Beheld her frailty from afar--
The frequent sigh, the long embrace,
Yet binds them to their trysting-place,
But it must come, and they must part
In fearful heaviness of heart,
With all the deep and shuddering chill
Which follows fast the deeds of ill.

V.

And Hugo is gone to his lone bed,
To covet there another's bride;
But she must lay her conscious head
A husband's trusting heart beside.
But fever'd in her sleep she seems,
And red her cheek with troubled dreams,
And mutters she in her unrest
A name she dare not breathe by day,
And clasps her lord unto the breast
Which pants for one away:
And he to that embrace awakes,
And, happy in the thought, mistakes
That dreaming sigh, and warm caress,
For such as he was wont to bless;
And could in very fondness weep
O'er her who loves him even in sleep.

VI.

He clasp'd her sleeping to his heart,
And listen'd to each broken word:
He hears — Why doth Prince Azo start,
As if the Archangel's voice he heard?
And well he may--a deeper doom
Could scarcely thunder o'er his tomb,
When he shall wake to sleep no more,
And stand the eternal throne before.
And well he may--his earthly peace
Upon that sound is doom'd to cease.
That sleeping whisper of a name
Bespeaks her guilt and Azo's shame.
And whose that name? that o'er his pillow
Sounds fearful as the breaking billow,

Which rolls the plank upon the shore,
And dashes on the pointed rock
The wretch who sinks to rise no more--
So came upon his soul the shock.
And whose that name?--'tis Hugo's--his--
In sooth he had not deem'd of this!--
'Tis Hugo's--he, the child of one
He loved--his own all-evil son--
The offspring of his wayward youth,
When he betray'd Bianca's truth,
The maid whose folly could confide
In him who made her not his bride.

VII.

He pluck'd his poniard in its sheath,
But sheathed it ere the point was bare--
Howe'er unworthy now to breathe,
He could not slay a thing so fair--
At least, not smiling--sleeping--there--
Nay more:--he did not wake her then,
But gazed upon her with a glance,
Which, had she roused her from her trance,
Had frozen her sense to sleep again--
And o'er his brow the burning lamp
Gleam'd on the dew-drops big and damp,
She spake no more--but still she slumber'd--
While, in his thought, her days are number'd.

VIII.

And with the morn he sought, and found,
In many a tale from those around,
The proof of all he fear'd to know,
Their present guilt, his future woe;
The long-conniving damsels seek
To save themselves, and would transfer
The guilt--the shame--the doom--to her:
Concealment is no more--they speak
All circumstance which may compel
Full credence to the tale they tell:
And Azo's tortured heart and ear
Have nothing more to feel or fear.

IX.

He was not one who brook'd delay:
Within the chamber of his state,
The chief of Este's ancient sway
Upon his throne of judgment sate;
His nobles and his guards are there,--
Before him is the sinful pair;
Both young--and one how passing fair!
With swordless belt, and fetter'd hand,
O Christ! that thus a son should stand

Before a father's face!
Yet thus must Hugo meet his sire,
And hear the sentence of his ire,
The tale of his disgrace!
And yet he seems not overcome,
Although, as yet, his voice be dumb.

X.

And still, and pale, and silently
Did Parisina wait her doom;
How changed since last her speaking eye
Glanced gladness round the glittering room,
Where high-born men were proud to wait--
Where beauty watch'd to imitate
Her gentle voice--her lovely mien--
And gather from her air and gait
The graces of its queen:
Then--had her eye in sorrow wept,
A thousand warriors forth had leapt,
A thousand swords had sheathless shone,
And made her quarrel all their own.
Now--what is she? and what are they?
Can she command, or these obey?
All silent and unheeding now,
With downcast eyes and knitting brow,
And folded arms, and freezing air,
And lips that scarce their scorn forbear,
Her knights and dames, her court--is there.
And he, the chosen one, whose lance
Had yet been couch'd before her glance,
Who — were his arm a moment free--
Had died or gain'd her liberty;
The minion of his father's bride--
He, too, is fetter'd by her side:
Nor sees her swoln and full eye swim
Less for her own despair than him:
Those lids--o'er which the violet vein
Wandering, leaves a tender stain,
Shining through the smoothest white
That e'er did softest kiss invite--
Now seem'd with hot and livid glow
To press, not shade, the orbs below;
Which glance so heavily, and fill,
As tear on tear grows gathering still.

XI.

And he for her had also wept,
But for the eyes that on him gazed:
His sorrow, if he felt it, slept;
Stern and erect his brow was raised.
Whate'er the grief his soul avow'd,
He would not shrink before the crowd;

But yet he dared not look on her:
Remembrance of the hours that were--
His guilt--his love--his present state--
His father's wrath--all good men's hate--
His earthly, his eternal fate--
And hers--oh, hers! he dared not throw
One look upon that deathlike brow!
Else had his rising heart betray'd
Remorse for all the wreck it made.

XII.

And Azo spake:--'But yesterday
I glорied in a wife and son;
That dream this morning pass'd away:
Ere day declines, I shall have none.
My life must linger on alone;
Well--let that pass--there breathes not one
Who would not do as I have done:
Those ties are broken--not by me;
Let that too pass;--the doom's prepared!
Hugo, the priest awaits on thee,
And then--thy crime's reward!
Away! address thy prayers to Heaven,
Before its evening stars are met--
Learn if thou there canst be forgiven;
Its mercy may absolve thee yet.
But here, upon the earth beneath,
There is no spot where thou and I
Together, for an hour, could breathe:
Farewell! I will not see thee die--
But thou, frail thing! shalt view his head--
Away! I cannot speak the rest:
Go! woman of the wanton breast;
Not I, but thou, his blood dost shed:
Go! if that sight thou canst outlive,
And joy thee in the life I give.'

XIII.

And here stern Azo hid his face--
For on his brow the swelling vein
Throbb'd as if back upon his brain
The hot blood ebb'd and flow'd again;
And therefore bow'd he for a space,
And pass'd his shaking hand along
His eye, to veil it from the throng;
While Hugo raised his chained hands,
And for a brief delay demands
His father's ear: the silent sire
Forbids not what his words require.

'It is not that I dread the death--
For thou has seen me by thy side

All redly through the battle ride,
And that not once a useless brand
Thy slaves have wrested from my hand,
Hath shed more blood in cause of thine,
Than e'er can stain the axe of mine;
Thou gav'st, and may'st resume my breath,
A gift for which I think thee not;
Nor are my mother's wrongs forgot,
Her slighted love and ruin'd name,
Her offspring's heritage of shame;
But she is in the grave, where he,
Her son, thy rival, soon shall be.
Her broken heart--my sever'd head--
Shall witness for thee from the dead
How trusty and how tender were
Thy youthful love--paternal care.
'Tis true that I have done the wrong--
But wrong for wrong:--this deem'd thy bride,
The other victim of thy pride,
Thou know'st for me was destined long.
Thou saw'st, and covetedst her charms--
And with thy very crime--my birth,
Thou tauntedst me--as little worth!
A match ignoble for her arms,
Because, forsooth, I could not claim,
The lawful heirship of thy name,
Nor sit on Este's lineal throne;
Yet were a few short summers mine,
My name should more than Este's shine
With honours all my own.
I had a sword--and have a breast
That should have won as haught a crest
As ever waved along the line
Of all these sovereign sires of thine.
Not always knightly spurs are worn
The brightest by the better born;
And mine have lanced my courser's flank
Before proud chiefs of princely rank,
When charging to the cheering cry
Of 'Este and of Victory!'
I will not plead the cause of crime,
Nor sue thee to redeem from time
A few brief hours or days that must
At length roll o'er my reckless dust;--
Such maddening moments as my past,
They could not, and they did not, last.
Albeit my birth and name be base,
And thy nobility of race
Disdain'd to deck a thing like me--
Yet in my lineaments they trace
Some features of my father's face,
And in my spirit--all of thee.

From thee--this tamelessness of heart--
From thee--nay, wherefore dost thou start?--
From thee in all their vigour came
My arm of strength, my soul of flame--
Thou didst not give me life alone,
But all that made me more thine own.
See what thy guilty love hath done!
Repaid thee with too like a son!
I am no bastard in my soul,
For that, like thine, abhor'd control:
And for my breath, that hasty boon
Thou gav'st and wilt resume so soon,
I value it no more than thou,
When rose thy casque above thy brow,
And we, all side by side, have striven,
And o'er the dead our coursers driven:
The past is nothing--and at last
The future can but be the past;
Yet would I that I then had died;
For though thou work'dst my mother's ill,
And made thy own my destined bride,
I feel thou art my father still;
And, harsh as sounds thy hard decree,
'Tis not unjust, although from thee.
Begot in sin, to die in shame,
My life begun and ends the same:
As err'd the sire, so err'd the son,
And thou must punish both in one.
My crime seems worst to human view,
But God must judge between us too!'

XIV.

He ceased--and stood with folded arms,
On which the circling fetters sounded:
And not an ear but felt as wounded,
Of all the chiefs that there were rank'd,
When those dull chains in meeting clank'd:
Till Parisina's fatal charms
Again attracted every eye--
Would she thus hear him doom'd to die!
She stood, I said, all pale and still,
The living cause of Hugo's ill!
Her eyes unmoved, but full and wide,
Not once had turn'd to either side--
Nor once did those sweet eyelids close,
Or shade the glance o'er which they rose,
But round their orbs of deepest blue
The circling white dilated grew--
And there with glassy gaze she stood
As ice were in her curdled blood;
But every now and then a tear
So large and slowly gather'd slid

From the long dark fringe of that fair lid.
It was a thing to see, not hear!
And those who saw, it did surprise,
Such drops could fall from human eyes.
To speak she thought--the imperfect note
Was choked within her swelling throat,
Yet seem'd in that low hollow groan
Her whole heart gushing in the tone.
It ceased--again she thought to speak,
Then burst her voice in one long shriek,
And to the earth she fell like stone
Or statue from its base o'erthrown,
More like a thing that ne'er had life--
A monument of Azo's wife--
Than her, that living guilty thing,
Whose every passion was a sting,
Which urged to guilt, but could not bear
That guilt's detection and despair.
But yet she lived--and all too soon
Recover'd from that death-like swoon--
But scarce to reason--every sense
Had been o'erstrung by pangs intense;
And each frail fibre of her brain
(As bowstrings, when relax'd by rain,
The erring arrow launch aside)
Sent forth her thoughts all wild and wide--
The past a blank, the future black,
With glimpses of a dreary track,
Like lightning on the desert path,
When midnight storms are mustering wrath.
She fear'd--she felt that something ill
Lay on her soul, so deep and chill--
That there was sin and shame she knew;
That some one was to die--but who?
She had forgotten:--did she breathe?
Could this be still the earth beneath
The sky above, and men around;
Or were they fiends who now so frown'd
On one, before whose eyes each eye
Till then had smiled in sympathy?
All was confused and undefined
To her all-jarr'd and wandering mind;
A chaos of wild hopes and fears:
And now in laughter, now in tears,
But madly still in each extreme,
She strove with that convulsive dream;
For so it seem'd on her to break:
Oh! vainly must she strive to wake!

XV.

The Convent bells are ringing,
But mournfully and slow:

In the grey square turret swinging,
With a deep sound, to and fro.
Heavily to the heart they go!
Hark! the hymn is singing--
The song for the dead below,
Or the living who shortly shall be so!
For a departing being's soul
The death-hymn peals and the hollow bells knoll:
He is near his mortal goal;
Kneeling at the friar's knee;
Sad to hear--and piteous to see--
Kneeling on the bare cold ground,
With the block before and the guards around--
And the headsman with his bare arm ready,
That the blow may be both swift and steady,
Feels if the axe be sharp and true--
Since he set its edge anew:
While the crowd in a speechless circle gather
To see the Son fall by the doom of the Father.

XVI.

It is a lovely hour as yet
Before the summer sun shall set,
Which rose upon that heavy day,
And mock'd it with his steadiest ray;
And his evening beams are shed
Full on Hugo's fated head,
As his last confession pouring
To the monk, his doom deplored
In penitential holiness,
He bends to hear his accents bless
With absolution such as may
Wipe our mortal stains away.
That high sun on his head did glisten
As he there did bow and listen--
And the rings of chestnut hair
Curl'd half down his neck so bare;
But brighter still the beam was thrown
Upon the axe which near him shone
With a clear and ghastly glitter.--
Oh! that parting hour was bitter!
Even the stern stood chill'd with awe:
Dark the crime, and just the law--
Yet they shudder'd as they saw.

XVII.

The parting prayers are said and over
Of that false son--and daring lover!
His beads and sins are all recounted,
His hours to their last minute mounted--
His mantling cloak before was stripp'd,
His bright brown locks must now be clipp'd.

'Tis done--all closely are they shorn--
The vest which till this moment worn--
The scarf which Parisina gave--
Must not adorn him to the grave.
Even that must now be thrown aside,
And o'er his eyes the kerchief tied;
But no--that last indignity
Shall ne'er approach his haughty eye.
All feelings seemingly subdued,
In deep disdain were half renew'd,
When headsman's hands prepared to bind
Those eyes which would not brook such blind
As if they dared not look on death.
'No--yours my forfeit blood and breath--
These hands are chain'd--but let me die
At least with an unshackled eye--
Strike:--and as the word he said,
Upon the block he bow'd his head;
These the last accents Hugo spoke:
'Strike:--and flashing fell the stroke--
Roll'd the head--and, gushing, sunk
Back the stain'd and heaving trunk,
In the dust, which each deep vein
Slaked with its ensanguined rain;
His eyes and lips a moment quiver,
Convulsed and quick--then fix for ever.
He died, as erring man should die,
Without display, without parade;
Meekly had he bow'd and pray'd,
As not disdaining priestly aid,
Nor desperate of all hope on high.
And while before the prior kneeling,
His heart was wean'd from earthly feeling;
His wrathful sire--his paramour--
What were they in such an hour?
No more reproach--no more despair;
No thought but heaven--no word but prayer--
Save the few which from him broke,
When, bared to meet the headsman's stroke,
He claim'd to die with eyes unbound,
His sole adieu to those around.

XVIII.

Still as the lips that close in death,
Each gazer's bosom held his breath:
But yet, afar, from man to man,
A cold electric shiver ran,
As down the deadly blow descended
On him whose life and love thus ended;
And, with a hushing sound compress'd,
A sigh shrunk back on every breast;
But no more thrilling noise rose there,

Beyond the blow that to the block
Pierced through with forced and sullen shock,
Save one:--What cleaves the silent air
So madly shrill--so passing wild?
That, as a mother's o'er her child,
Done to death by sudden blow,
To the sky these accents go,
Like a soul's in endless woe.
Through Azo's palace-lattice driven,
That horrid voice ascends to heaven,
And every eye is turn'd thereon;
But sound and sight alike are gone.
It was a woman's shriek--and ne'er
In madlier accents rose despair;
And those who heard it, as it pass'd,
In mercy wish'd it were the last.

XIX.

Hugo is fallen; and from that hour,
No more in palace, hall, or bower,
Was Parisina heard or seen:
Her name--as if she ne'er had been--
Was banish'd from each lip and ear,
Like words of wantonness or fear;
And from Prince Azo's voice, by none
Was mention heard of wife or son;
No tomb--no memory had they;
Theirs was unconsecrated clay;
At least the knight's who died that day.
But Parisina's fate lies hid
Like dust beneath the coffin lid:
Whether in convent she abode,
And won to heaven her dreary road,
By blighted and remorseful years
Of scourge, and fast, and sleepless tears;
Or if she fell by bowl or steel,
For that dark love she dared to feel;
Or if upon the moment smote,
She died by tortures less remote;
Like him she saw upon the block,
With heart that shared the headsman's shock
In quicken'd brokenness that came,
In pity, o'er her shatter'd frame,
None knew--and none can ever know:
But whatso'er its end below,
Her life began and closed in woe!

XX.

And Azo found another bride,
And goodly sons grew by his side;
But none so lovely and so brave
As him who wither'd in the grave;

Or if they were--on his cold eye
Their growth but glanced unheeded by,
Or noticed with a smother'd sigh.
But never tear his cheek descended,
And never smile his brow unbended;
And o'er that fair broad brow were wrought
The intersected lines of thought;
Those furrows which the burning share
Of Sorrow ploughs untimely there;
Scars of the lacerating mind
Which the Soul's war doth leave behind.
He was past all mirth or woe:
Nothing more remain'd below
But sleepless nights and heavy days,
A mind all dead to scorn or praise,
A heart which shunn'd itself--and yet
That would not yield--nor could forget,
Which, when it least appear'd to melt,
Intently thought--intensely felt:
The deepest ice which ever froze
Can only o'er the surface close--
The living stream lies quick below,
And flows--and cannot cease to flow.
Still was his seal'd-up bosom haunted
By thoughts which Nature had implanted;
Too deeply rooted thence to vanish,
Howe'er our stifled fears we banish;
When, struggling as they rise to start,
We check those waters of the heart,
They are not dried--those tears unshed,
But flow back to the fountain head,
And resting in their spring more pure,
Forever in its depth endure,
Unseen, unwept, but uncongeal'd,
And cherish'd most where least reveal'd.
With inward starts of feeling left,
To throb o'er those of life bereft;
Without the power to fill again
The desert gap which made his pain;
Without the hope to meet them where
United souls shall gladness share,
With all the consciousness that he
Had only pass'd a just decree;
That they had wrought their doom of ill;
Yet Azo's age was wretched still.
The tainted branches of the tree,
If lopp'd with care, a strength may give,
By which the rest shall bloom and live
All greenly fresh and wildly free:
But if the lightning, in its wrath,
The waving boughs with fury scath,
The massy trunk the ruin feels,

And never more a leaf reveals.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Prometheus

Titan! to whose immortal eyes
The sufferings of mortality,
Seen in their sad reality,
Were not as things that gods despise;
What was thy pity's recompense?
A silent suffering, and intense;
The rock, the vulture, and the chain,
All that the proud can feel of pain,
The agony they do not show,
The suffocating sense of woe,
Which speaks but in its loneliness,
And then is jealous lest the sky
Should have a listener, nor will sigh
Until its voice is echoless.

Titan! to thee the strife was given
Between the suffering and the will,
Which torture where they cannot kill;
And the inexorable Heaven,
And the deaf tyranny of Fate,
The ruling principle of Hate,
Which for its pleasure doth create
The things it may annihilate,
Refus'd thee even the boon to die:
The wretched gift Eternity
Was thine--and thou hast borne it well.
All that the Thunderer wrung from thee
Was but the menace which flung back
On him the torments of thy rack;
The fate thou didst so well foresee,
But would not to appease him tell;
And in thy Silence was his Sentence,
And in his Soul a vain repentance,
And evil dread so ill dissembled,
That in his hand the lightnings trembled.

Thy Godlike crime was to be kind,
To render with thy precepts less
The sum of human wretchedness,
And strengthen Man with his own mind;
But baffled as thou wert from high,
Still in thy patient energy,
In the endurance, and repulse
Of thine impenetrable Spirit,
Which Earth and Heaven could not convulse,
A mighty lesson we inherit:
Thou art a symbol and a sign
To Mortals of their fate and force;
Like thee, Man is in part divine,
A troubled stream from a pure source;
And Man in portions can foresee
His own funereal destiny;

His wretchedness, and his resistance,
And his sad unallied existence:
To which his Spirit may oppose
Itself--and equal to all woes,
 And a firm will, and a deep sense,
Which even in torture can descry
 Its own concenter'd recompense,
Triumphant where it dares defy,
And making Death a Victory.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Remember Him, Whom Passion's Power

Remember him, whom Passion's power
Severely---deeply---vainly proved:
Remember thou that dangerous hour,
When neither fell, though both were loved.

That yielding breast, that melting eye,
Too much invited to be blessed:
That gentle prayer, that pleading sigh,
The wilder wish reproved, repressed.

Oh! let me feel that all I lost
But saved thee all that Conscience fears;
And blush for every pang it cost
To spare the vain remorse of years.

Yet think of this when many a tongue,
Whose busy accents whisper blame,
Would do the heart that loved thee wrong,
And brand a nearly blighted name.

Think that, whate'er to others, thou
Hast seen each selfish thought subdued:
I bless thy purer soul even now,
Even now, in midnight solitude.

Oh, God! that we had met in time,
Our hearts as fond, thy hand more free;
When thou hadst loved without a crime,
And I been less unworthy thee!

Far may thy days, as heretofore,
From this our gaudy world be past!
And that too bitter moment o'er,
Oh! may such trial be thy last.

This heart, alas! perverted long,
Itself destroyed might there destroy;
To meet thee in the glittering throng,
Would wake Presumption's hope of joy.

Then to the things whose bliss or woe,
Like mine, is wild and worthless all,
That world resign---such scenes forego,
Where those who feel must surely fail.

Thy youth, thy charms, thy tenderness---
Thy soul from long seclusion pure;
From what even here hath passed, may guess
What there thy bosom must endure.

Oh! pardon that imploring tear,
Since not by Virtue shed in vain,

My frenzy drew from eyes so dear;
For me they shall not weep again.

Though long and mournful must it be,
The thought that we no more may meet;
Yet I deserve the stern decree,
And almost deem the sentence sweet.

Still---had I loved thee less---my heart
Had then less sacrificed to thine;
It felt not half so much to part
As if its guilt had made thee mine.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Remember Thee! Remember Thee!

Remember thee! remember thee!
Till Lethe quench life's burning stream
Remorse and shame shall cling to thee,
And haunt thee like a feverish dream!

Remember thee! Aye, doubt it not.
Thy husband too shall think of thee:
By neither shalt thou be forgot,
Thou false to him, thou fiend to me!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Remembrance

'Tis done! - I saw it in my dreams;
No more with Hope the future beams;
My days of happiness are few:
Chill'd by misfortune's wintry blast,
My dawn of life is overcast;
Love Hope, and Joy, alike adieu!
Would I could add Remembrance too!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Remind Me Not, Remind Me Not

Remind me not, remind me not,
Of those beloved, those vanish'd hours,
When all my soul was given to thee;
Hours that may never be forgot,
Till Time unnerves our vital powers,
And thou and I shall cease to be.

Can I forget---canst thou forget,
When playing with thy golden hair,
How quick thy fluttering heart did move?
Oh! by my soul, I see thee yet,
With eyes so languid, breast so fair,
And lips, though silent, breathing love.

When thus reclining on my breast,
Those eyes threw back a glance so sweet,
As half reproach'd yet rais'd desire,
And still we near and nearer prest,
And still our glowing lips would meet,
As if in kisses to expire.

And then those pensive eyes would close,
And bid their lids each other seek,
Veiling the azure orbs below;
While their long lashes' darken'd gloss
Seem'd stealing o'er thy brilliant cheek,
Like raven's plumage smooth'd on snow.

I dreamt last night our love return'd,
And, sooth to say, that very dream
Was sweeter in its phantasy,
Than if for other hearts I burn'd,
For eyes that ne'er like thine could beam
In Rapture's wild reality.

Then tell me not, remind me not,
Of hours which, though for ever gone,
Can still a pleasing dream restore,
Till Thou and I shall be forgot,
And senseless, as the mouldering stone
Which tells that we shall be no more.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Reply To Some Verses Of J.M.B. Pigot, Esq. On The Cruelty Of His Mistress

Why, Pigot, complain of this damsel's disdain,
Why thus in despair do you fret?
For months you may try, yet, believe me, a sigh
Will never obtain a coquette.

Would you teach her to love? for a time seem to rove;
At first she may frown in a pet;
But leave her awhile, she shortly will smile,
And then you may kiss your coquette.

For such are the airs of these fanciful fairs,
They think all our homage a debt:
Yet a partial neglect soon takes an effect,
And humbles the proudest coquette.

Dissemble your pain, and lengthen your chain,
And seem her hauteur to regret;
If again you shall sigh, she no more will deny,
That yours is the rosy coquette.

If still, from false pride, your pangs she deride,
This whimsical virgin forget;
Some other adiaiire, who will melt with your fire,
And laugh at the little coquette.

For me I adore some twenty or more,
And love them most dearly but yet
Though my heart they enthrall, I'd abandon them all,
Did they act like your blooming coquette.

No longer repine, adopt this design,
And break through her slight-woven net;
Away with despair, no longer forbear
To fly from the captious coquette.

Then quit her, my friend your bosom defend,
Ere quite with her snares you're beset;
Lest your deep-wounded heart, when incensed by the smart,
Should lead you to curse the coquette.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Saul

Thou whose spell can raise the dead,
Bid the prophet's form appear.
'Samuel, raise thy buried head!
King, behold the phantom seer!'

Earth yawn'd; he stood the centre of a cloud:
Light changed its hue, retiring from his shroud.
Death stood all glassy in his fixed eye:
His hand was wither'd, and his veins were dry;
His foot, in bony whiteness, glitter'd there,
Shrunken and sinewless, and ghastly bare;
From lips that moved not and unbreathing frame,
Like cavern'd winds, the hollow accents came.
Saul saw, and fell to earth, as falls the oak,
At once, and blasted by the thunderstroke.

'Why is my sleep disquieted?
Who is he that calls the dead?
Is it thou, O King? Behold,
Bloodless are these limbs, and cold:
Such are mine; and such shall be
Thine to-morrow, when with me:
Ere the coming day is done,
Such shalt thou be, such thy son.
Fare thee well, bur for a day,
Then we mix our mouldering clay.
Thou, thy race, lie pale and low,
Pierced by shafts of many a bow;
And the falchion by thy side
To thy heart thy hand shall guide:
Crownless, breathless, headless fall,
Son and sire, the house of Saul!'

George Gordon Lord Byron

She Walks In Beauty

She walks in Beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which Heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

George Gordon Lord Byron

So We'll Go No More a-Roving

So we'll go no more a-roving
 So late into the night,
Though the heart still be as loving,
 And the moon still be as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,
 And the soul outwears the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
 And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,
 And the day returns too soon,
Yet we'll go no more a-roving
 By the light of the moon.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Solitude

To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been;
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a fold;
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean;
This is not solitude, 'tis but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores unrolled.

But midst the crowd, the hurry, the shock of men,
To hear, to see, to feel and to possess,
And roam alone, the world's tired denizen,
With none who bless us, none whom we can bless;
Minions of splendour shrinking from distress!
None that, with kindred consciousness endued,
If we were not, would seem to smile the less
Of all the flattered, followed, sought and sued;
This is to be alone; this, this is solitude!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Song For The Luddites

I.

As the Liberty lads o'er the sea
Bought their freedom, and cheaply, with blood,
So we, boys, we
Will die fighting, or live free,
And down with all kings but King Ludd!

II.

When the web that we weave is complete,
And the shuttle exchanged for the sword,
We will fling the winding sheet
O'er the despot at our feet,
And dye it deep in the gore he has pour'd.

III.

Though black as his heart its hue,
Since his veins are corrupted to mud,
Yet this is the dew
Which the tree shall renew
Of Liberty, planted by Ludd!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Song of Saul Before His Last Battle

Warriors and chiefs! should the shaft or the sword
Pierce me in leading the host of the Lord,
Heed not the corse, though a king's in your path:
Bury your steel in the bosoms of Gath!

Thou who art bearing my buckler and bow,
Should the soldiers of Saul look away from the foe,
Stretch me that moment in blood at thy feet!
Mine be the doom which they dared not to meet.

Farewell to others, but never we part,
Heir to my royalty, son of my heart!
Bright is the diadem, boundless the sway,
Or kingly the death, which awaits us to-day!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Sonnet - to Genevra

Thy cheek is pale with thought, but not from woe,
And yet so lovely, that if Mirth could flush
Its rose of whiteness with the brightest blush,
My heart would wish away that ruder glow:
And dazzle not thy deep-blue eyes---but, oh!
While gazing on them sterner eyes will gush,
And into mine my mother's weakness rush,
Soft as the last drops round Heaven's airy bow.
For, though thy long dark lashes low depending,
The soul of melancholy Gentleness
Gleams like a Seraph from the sky descending,
Above all pain, yet pitying all distress;
At once such majesty with sweetness blending,
I worship more, but cannot love thee less.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Sonnet To George The Fourth, On The Repeal Of Lord Edward Fitzgerald's Forfeiture

To be the father of the fatherless,
To stretch the hand from the throne's height, and raise
His offspring, who expired in other days
To make thy sire's sway by a kingdom less,--
This is to be a monarch, and repress
Envy into unutterable praise.
Dismiss thy guard, and trust thee to such traits,
For who would lift a hand, except to bless?
Were it not easy, sir, and is't not sweet
To make thyself beloved? and to be
Omnipotent by mercy's means? for thus
Thy sovereignty would grow but more complete:
A despot thou, and yet thy people free,
And by the heart, not hand, enslaving us.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Sonnet to Lake Leman

Rousseau -- Voltaire -- our Gibbon -- De Staël --
Leman! these names are worthy of thy shore,
Thy shore of names like these! wert thou no more,
Their memory thy remembrance would recall:
To them thy banks were lovely as to all,
But they have made them lovelier, for the lore
Of mighty minds doth hallow in the core
Of human hearts the ruin of a wall
Where dwelt the wise and wondrous; but by thee
How much more, Lake of Beauty! do we feel,
In sweetly gliding o'er thy crystal sea,
The wild glow of that not ungentle zeal,
Which of the heirs of immortality
Is proud, and makes the breath of glory real!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Sonnet, To Genevra

Thine eyes' blue tenderness, thy long fair hair,
And the wan lustre of thy features- caught
From contemplation-where serenely wrought,
Seems Sorrow's softness charm'd from its despair--
Have thrown such speaking sadness in thine air
That--but I know thy blessed bosom fraught
With mines of unalloy'd and stainless thought--
I should have deem'd thee doom'd to earthly care.
With such an aspect, by his colours blent,
When from his beauty-breathing pen-cil born
(Except that thou hast nothing to repent),
The Magdalen of Guido saw the morn--
Such seem'st thou--but how much more excellent!
With nought Remorse can claim--nor Virtue scorn.

December 17, 1813.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Sonnet, To The Same (Genevra)

Thy cheek is pale with thought, but not from woe,
And yet so lovely, that if Mirth could flush
Its rose of whiteness with the brightest blush,
My heart would wish away that ruder glow:
And dazzle not thy deep-blue eyes--but, oh!
While gazing on them sterner eyes will gush,
And into mine my mother's weakness rush,
Soft as the last drops round heaven's airy bow.
For, through thy long dark lashes low depending,
The soul of melancholy Gentleness
Gleams like a seraph from the sky de-scending,
Above all pain, yet pitying all distress;
At once such majesty with sweetness blending,
I worship more, but cannot love thee less.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Stanzas

Could Love for ever
Run like a river,
And Time's endeavour
Be tried in vain -
No other pleasure
With this could measure;
And like a treasure
We'd hug the chain.
But since our sighing
Ends not in dying,
And, form'd for flying,
Love plumes his wing;
Then for this reason
Let's love a season
But let that season be only Spring.

When lovers parted
Feel broken-hearted,
And, all hopes thwarted,
Expect to die;
A few years older,
Ah! how much colder
They might behold her
For whom they sigh!
When link'd together,
In every weather,
They pluck Love's feather
From out his wing-
He'll stay for ever,
But sadly shiver
Without his plumage, when past the Spring

Like chiefs of Faction,
His life is action--
A formal paction
That curbs his reign,
Obscures his glory,
Despot no more, he
Such territory
Quits with disdain.
Still, still advancing,
With banners glancing,
His power enhancing,
He must move on---
Repose but cloys him,
Retreat destroys him,
Love brooks not a degraded throne.

Wait not, fond lover!
Till years are over,
And then recover
As from a dream.

While each bewailing
The other's failing,
With wrath and railing,
All hideous seem--
While first decreasing,
Yet not quite ceasing,
Wait not till teasing
All passion blight:
If once diminish'd,
Love's reign is finish'd--
Then part in friendship-and hid good-night.

So shall Affection
To recollection
The dear connexion
Bring back with joy:
You had not waited
Till, tired or hated,
Your passions sated
Began to cloy.
Your last embraces
Leave no cold traces--
The same fond faces
As through the past:
And eyes, the mirrors
Of your sweet errors,
Reflect but rapture--not least though last.

True, separations
Ask more than patience;
What desperations
From such have risen!
But yet remaining,
What is't but chaining
Hearts which, once waning,
Beat 'gainst their prison?
Time can but cloy love
And use destroy love:
The winged boy, Love,
Is but for boys--
You'll find it torture,
Though sharper, shorter
To wean, and not wear out your joys.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Stanzas Composed During A Thunderstorm

Chill and mirk is the nightly blast,
Where Pindus' mountains rise,
And angry clouds are pouring fast
The vengeance of the skies.

Our guides are gone, our hope is lost,
And lightnings, as they play,
But show where rocks our path have crost,
Or gild the torrent's spray.

Is yon a cot I saw, though low?
When lightning broke the gloom---
How welcome were its shade!---ah, no!
'Tis but a Turkish tomb.

Through sounds of foaming waterfalls,
I hear a voice exclaim---
My way-worn countryman, who calls
On distant England's name.

A shot is fired---by foe or friend?
Another---'tis to tell
The mountain-peasants to descend,
And lead us where they dwell.

Oh! who in such a night will dare
To tempt the wilderness?
And who 'mid thunder-peals can hear
Our signal of distress?

And who that heard our shouts would rise
To try the dubious road?
Nor rather deem from nightly cries
That outlaws were abroad.

Clouds burst, skies flash, oh, dreadful hour!
More fiercely pours the storm!
Yet here one thought has still the power
To keep my bosom warm.

While wandering through each broken path,
O'er brake and craggy brow;
While elements exhaust their wrath,
Sweet Florence, where art thou?

Not on the sea, not on the sea---
Thy bark hath long been gone:
Oh, may the storm that pours on me,
Bow down my head alone!

Full swiftly blew the swift Siroc,
When last I pressed thy lip;

And long ere now, with foaming shock,
Impelled thy gallant ship.

Now thou art safe; nay, long ere now
Hast trod the shore of Spain;
'Twere hard if aught so fair as thou
Should linger on the main.

And since I now remember thee
In darkness and in dread,
As in those hours of revelry
Which Mirth and Music sped;

Do thou, amid the fair white walls,
If Cadiz yet be free,
At times from out her latticed halls
Look o'er the dark blue sea;

Then think upon Calypso's isles,
Endeared by days gone by;
To others give a thousand smiles,
To me a single sigh.

And when the admiring circle mark
The paleness of thy face,
A half-formed tear, a transient spark
Of melancholy grace,

Again thou'l smile, and blushing shun
Some coxcomb's raillery;
Nor own for once thou thought'st on one,
Who ever thinks on thee.

Though smile and sigh alike are vain,
When severed hearts repine
My spirit flies o'er Mount and Main
And mourns in search of thine.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Stanzas For Music: There Be None Of Beauty's Daughters

There be none of Beauty's daughters
With a magic like Thee;
And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me:
When, as if its sound were causing
The charméd ocean's pausing,
The waves lie still and gleaming,
And the lull'd winds seem dreaming:
And the midnight moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep,
Whose breast is gently heaving
As an infant's asleep:
So the spirit bows before thee
To listen and adore thee;
With a full but soft emotion,
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Stanzas For Music: There's Not A Joy The World Can Give

There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away
When the glow of early thought declines in feeling's dull decay;
'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the blush alone, which fades so fast,
But the tender bloom of heart is gone, ere youth itself be past.

Then the few whose spirits float above the wreck of happiness
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt, or ocean of excess:
The magnet of their course is gone, or only points in vain
The shore to which their shivered sail shall never stretch again.

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like death itself comes down;
It cannot feel for others' woes, it dare not dream its own;
That heavy chill has frozen o'er the fountain of our tears,
And though the eye may sparkle still, 'tis where the ice appears.

Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and mirth distract the breast,
Through midnight hours that yield no more their former hope of rest,
'Tis but as ivy-leaves around the ruined turret wreath—
All green and wildly fresh without, but worn and grey beneath.

Oh, could I feel as I have felt, or be what I have been,
Or weep as I could once have wept, o'er many a vanished scene;
As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all brackish though they be,
So, midst the withered waste of life, those tears would flow to me.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Stanzas For Music: They Say That Hope Is Happiness

They say that Hope is happiness;
But genuine Love must prize the past,
And Memory wakes the thoughts that bless:
They rose the first--they set the last;

And all that Memory loves the most
Was once our only Hope to be,
And all that Hope adored and lost
Hath melted into Memory.

Alas it is delusion all:
The future cheats us from afar,
Nor can we be what we recall,
Nor dare we think on what we are.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Stanzas To A Hindoo Air

Oh! my lonely--lonely--lonely--Pillow!
Where is my lover? where is my lover?
Is it his bark which my dreary dreams discover?
Far--far away! and alone along the billow?

Oh! my lonely-lonely-lonely-Pil-low!
Why must my head ache where his gentle brow lay?
How the long night flags lovelessly and slowly,
And my head droops over thee like the willow!

Oh! thou, my sad and solitary Pillow!
Send me kind dreams to keep my heart from breaking,
In return for the tears I shed upon thee waking;
Let me not die till he comes back o'er the billow.

Then if thou wilt--no more my lonely Pillow,
In one embrace let these arms again enfold him,
And then expire of the joy-but to behold him!
Oh! my lone bosom!-oh! my lonely Pillow!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Stanzas To A Lady, On Leaving England

'Tis done---and shivering in the gale
The bark unfurls her snowy sail;
And whistling o'er the bending mast,
Loud sings on high the fresh'ning blast;
And I must from this land be gone,
Because I cannot love but one.

But could I be what I have been,
And could I see what I have seen---
Could I repose upon the breast
Which once my warmest wishes blest---
I should not seek another zone,
Because I cannot love but one.

'Tis long since I beheld that eye
Which gave me bliss or misery;
And I have striven, but in vain,
Never to think of it again:
For though I fly from Albion,
I still can only love but one.

As some lone bird, without a mate,
My weary heart is desolate;
I look around, and cannot trace
One friendly smile or welcome face,
And ev'n in crowds am still alone,
Because I cannot love but one.

And I will cross the whitening foam,
And I will seek a foreign home;
Till I forget a false fair face,
I ne'er shall find a resting-place;
My own dark thoughts I cannot shun,
But ever love, and love but one.

The poorest, veriest wretch on earth
Still finds some hospitable hearth,
Where Friendship's or Love's softer glow
May smile in joy or soothe in woe;
But friend or leman I have none,'
Because I cannot love but one.

I go---but wheresoe'er I flee
There's not an eye will weep for me;
There's not a kind congenial heart,
Where I can claim the meanest part;
Nor thou, who hast my hopes undone,
Wilt sigh, although I love but one.

To think of every early scene,
Of what we are, and what we've been,
Would whelm some softer hearts with woe---

But mine, alas! has stood the blow;
Yet still beats on as it begun,
And never truly loves but one.

And who that dear lov'd one may be,
Is not for vulgar eyes to see;
And why that early love was cross'd,
Thou know'st the best, I feel the most;
But few that dwell beneath the sun
Have loved so long, and loved but one.

I've tried another's fetters too,
With charms perchance as fair to view;
And I would fain have loved as well,
But some unconquerable spell
Forbade my bleeding breast to own
A kindred care for aught but one.

'Twould soothe to take one lingering view,
And bless thee in my last adieu;
Yet wish I not those eyes to weep
For him that wanders o'er the deep;
His home, his hope, his youth are gone,
Yet still he loves, and loves but one.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Stanzas To A Lady, With The Poems Of Camoëns

This votive pledge of fond esteem,
Perhaps, dear girl! for me thou'lt prize;
It sings of Love's enchanting dream,
A theme we never can despise.

Who blames it but the envious fool,
The old and disappointed maid;
Or pupil of the prudish school,
In single sorrow doom'd to fade?

Then read, dear girl! with feeling read,
For thou wilt ne'er be one of those;
To thee in vain I shall not plead
In pity for the poet's woes.

He was in sooth a genuine bard;
His was no faint, fictitious flame.
Like his, may love be thy reward,
But not thy hapless fate the same.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Stanzas To Augusta

When all around grew drear and dark,
And reason half withheld her ray—
And hope but shed a dying spark
Which more misled my lonely way;

In that deep midnight of the mind,
And that internal strife of heart,
When dreading to be deemed too kind,
The weak despair—the cold depart;

When fortune changed—and love fled far,
And hatred's shafts flew thick and fast,
Thou wert the solitary star
Which rose, and set not to the last.

Oh, blest be thine unbroken light!
That watched me as a seraph's eye,
And stood between me and the night,
For ever shining sweetly nigh.

And when the cloud upon us came,
Which strove to blacken o'er thy ray—
Then purer spread its gentle flame,
And dashed the darkness all away.

Still may thy spirit dwell on mine,
And teach it what to brave or brook—
There's more in one soft word of thine
Than in the world's defied rebuke.

Thou stood'st as stands a lovely tree
That, still unbroke though gently bent,
Still waves with fond fidelity
Its boughs above a monument.

The winds might rend, the skies might pour,
But there thou wert—and still wouldest be
Devoted in the stormiest hour
To shed thy weeping leaves o'er me.

But thou and thine shall know no blight,
Whatever fate on me may fall;
For heaven in sunshine will requite
The kind—and thee the most of all.

Then let the ties of baffled love
Be broken—thine will never break;
Thy heart can feel—but will not move;
Thy soul, though soft, will never shake.

And these, when all was lost beside,
Were found, and still are fixed in thee;—

And bearing still a breast so tried,
Earth is no desert—e'en to me.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Stanzas To Augusta (II.)

I.

Though the day of my destiny's over,
And the star of my fate hath declined,
Thy soft heart refused to discover
The faults which so many could find;
Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted,
It shrunk not to share it with me,
And the love which my spirit hath painted
It never hath found but in thee.

II.

Then when nature around me is smiling,
The last smile which answers to mine,
I do not believe it beguiling,
Because it reminds me of thine;
And when winds are at war with the ocean.
As the breasts I believed in with me,
If their billows excite an emotion,
It is that they bear me from thee.

III.

Though the rock of my last hope is shiver'd,
And its fragments are sunk in the wave,
Though I feel that my soul is deliver'd
To pain - it shall not be its slave.
There is many a pang to pursue me:
They may crush, but they shall not contemn;
They may torture, but shall not subdue me
'Tis of thee that I think - not of them.

IV.

Though human, thou didst not deceive me,
Though woman, thou didst not forsake,
Though loved, thou forborest to grieve me,
Though slander'd, thou never couldst shake;
Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me,
Though parted, it was not to fly,
Though watchful, 'twas not to defame me,
Nor, mute, that the world might belie.

V.

Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,
Nor the war of the many with one;
If my soul was not fitted to prize it,
'Twas folly not sooner to shun:
And if dearly that error hath cost me,
And more than I once could foresee,
I have found that, whatever it lost me,
It could not deprive me of thee.

VI.

From the wreck of the past, which hath perish'd

Thus much I at least may recall
It hath taught me that what I most cherish'd
Deserved to be dearest of all:
In the desert a fountain is springing,
In the wide waste there still is a tree,
And a bird in the solitude singing,
Which speaks to my spirit of thee.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Stanzas To Jessy

There is a mystic thread of life
So dearly wreath'd with mine alone,
That Destiny's relentless knife
At once must sever both, or none.

There is a Form on which these eyes
Have fondly gazed with such delight---
By day, that Form their joy supplies,
And Dreams restore it, through the night.

There is a Voice whose tones inspire
Such softened feelings in my breast,
I would not hear a Seraph Choir,
Unless that voice could join the rest.

There is a Face whose Blushes tell
Affection's tale upon the cheek,
But pallid at our fond farewell,
Proclaims more love than words can speak.

There is a Lip, which mine has prest,
But none had ever prest before;
It vowed to make me sweetly blest,
That mine alone should press it more.

There is a Bosom all my own,
Has pillow'd oft this aching head,
A Mouth which smiles on me alone,
An Eye, whose tears with mine are shed.

There are two Hearts whose movements thrill,
In unison so closely sweet,
That Pulse to Pulse responsive still
They Both must heave, or cease to beat.

There are two Souls, whose equal flow
In gentle stream so calmly run,
That when they part---they part?---ah no!
They cannot part---those Souls are One.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Stanzas To The Po

River, that rollest by the ancient walls,
Where dwells the Lady of my love, when she
Walks by thy brink, and there perchance recalls
A faint and fleeting memory of me:

What if thy deep and ample stream should be
A mirror of my heart, where she may read
The thousand thoughts I now betray to thee,
Wild as thy wave, and headlong as thy speed!

What do I say---a mirror of my heart?
Are not thy waters sweeping, dark, and strong?
Such as my feelings were and are, thou art;
And such as thou art were my passions long.

Time may have somewhat tamed them,---not for ever
Thou overflow'st thy banks, and not for aye
Thy bosom overboils, congenial river!
Thy floods subside, and mine have sunk away:

But left long wrecks behind, and now again,
Borne in our old unchanged career, we move:
Thou tendest wildly onwards to the main,
And I---to loving one I should not love.

The current I behold will sweep beneath
Her native walls, and murmur at her feet;
Her eyes will look on thee, when she shall breathe
The twilight air, unharmed by summer's heat.

She will look on thee,---I have looked on thee,
Full of that thought: and, from that moment, ne'er
Thy waters could I dream of, name, or see,
Without the inseparable sigh for her!

Her bright eyes will be imaged in thy stream,---
Yes! they will meet the wave I gaze on now:
Mine cannot witness, even in a dream,
That happy wave repass me in its flow!

The wave that bears my tears returns no more:
Will she return by whom that wave shall sweep?---
Both tread thy banks, both wander on thy shore,
I by thy source, she by the dark-blue deep.

But that which keepeth us apart is not
Distance, nor depth of wave, nor space of earth,
But the distraction of a various lot,
As various as the climates of our birth.

A stranger loves the Lady of the land;
Born far beyond the mountains, but his blood

Is all meridian, as if never fanned
By the black wind that chills the polar flood.

My blood is all meridian; were it not
I had not left my clime, nor should I be,
In spite of tortures, ne'er to be forgot
A slave again of love,---at least of thee.

'Tis vain to struggle---let me perish young---
Live as I lived, and love as I have loved;
To dust if I return, from dust I sprung,
And then, at least, my heart can ne'er be moved.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Stanzas Written In Passing The Ambracian Gulf

Through cloudless skies, in silvery sheen,
Full beams the moon on Actium's coast:
And on these waves for Egypt's queen,
The ancient world was won and lost.

And now upon the scene I look,
The azure grave of many a Roman;
Where stem Ambition once forsook
His wavering crown to follow woman.

Florence! whom I will love as well
As ever yet was said or sung
(Since Orpheus sang his spouse from hell),
Whilst thou art fair and I am young;

Sweet Florence! those were pleasant times;
When worlds were staked for ladies'
Had bards as many realms as rhymes;
Thy charms might raise new Antonies.

Though Fate forbids such things to be
Yet, by thine eyes and ringlets curl'd!
I cannot lose a world for thee,
But would not lose thee for a world.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Stanzas Written On The Road Between Florence And Pisa

Oh, talk not to me of a name great in story;
The days of our youth are the days of our glory;
And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-twenty
Are worth all your laurels, though ever so plenty.

What are garlands and crowns to the brow that is wrinkled?
'Tis but as a dead flower with May-dew besprinkled:
Then away with all such from the head that is hoary!
What care I for the wreaths that can only give glory?

O Fame!—if I e'er took delight in thy praises,
'Twas less for the sake of thy high-sounding phrases,
Than to see the bright eyes of the dear one discover
She thought that I was not unworthy to love her.

There chiefly I sought thee, there only I found thee;
Her glance was the best of the rays that surround thee;
When it sparkled o'er aught that was bright in my story,
I knew it was love, and I felt it was glory.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Stanzas: When A Man Hath No Freedom

When a man hath no freedom to fight for at home,
Let him combat for that of his neighbours;
Let him think of the glories of Greece and of Rome,
And get knock'd on the head for his labours.
To do good to mankind is the chivalrous plan,
And, is always as nobly requited;
Then battle for freedom wherever you can,
And, if not shot or hang'd, you'll get knighted.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Substitute For An Epitaph

Kind Reader! take your choice to cry or laugh;
Here HAROLD lies, but where's his Epitaph?
If such you seek, try Westminster, and view
Ten thousand just as fit for him as you.

Athens

George Gordon Lord Byron

Sun of the Sleepless!

Sun of the sleepless! melancholy star!
Whose tearful beam glows tremulously far,
That show'st the darkness thou canst not dispel,
How like art thou to joy remember'd well!

So gleams the past, the light of other days,
Which shines, but warms not with its powerless rays;
A night-beam Sorrow watcheth to behold,
Distinct but distant -- clear -- but, oh how cold!

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Adieu

Written Under The Impression That The Author Would Soon Die.

Adieu, thou Hill! where early joy
Spread roses o'er my brow;
Where Science seeks each loitering boy
With knowledge to endow.
Adieu, my youthful friends or foes,
Partners of former bliss or woes;
No more through Ida's paths we stray;
Soon must I share the gloomy cell,
Whose ever‑slumbering inmates dwell
Unconscious of the day.

Adieu, ye hoary Regal Fanes,
Ye spires of Granta's vale,
Where Learning robed in sable reigns,
And Melancholy pale.
Ye comrades of the jovial hour,
Ye tenants of the classic bower,
On Cama's verdant margin placed,
Adieu! while memory still is mine,
For, offerings on Oblivion's shrine,
These scenes must be effaced.

Adieu, ye mountains of the clime
Where grew my youthful years;
Where Loch na Garr in snows sublime
His giant summit rears.
Why did my childhood wander forth
From you, ye regions of the North,
With sons of pride to roam?
Why did I quit my Highland cave,
Mar's dusky heath, and Dee's clear wave,
To seek a Sotheron home!

Hall of my Sires! a long farewell--
Yet why to thee adieu?
Thy vaults will echo back my knell,
Thy towers my tomb will view:
The faltering tongue which sung thy fall,
And former glories of thy Hall,
Forgets its wonted simple note--
But yet the Lyre retains the strings,
And sometimes, on Æolian wings,
In dying strains may float.

Fields which surround yon rustic cot,
While yet I linger here,
Adieu! you are not now forgot,
To retrospection dear.
Streamlet! along whose rippling surge

My youthful limbs were wont to urge,
At noontide heat, their pliant course;
Plunging with ardour from the shore,
Thy springs will lave these limbs no more,
Deprived of active force.

And shall I here forget the scene,
Still nearest to my breast?
Rocks rise and rivers roll between
The spot which passion blest;
Yet, Mary, all thy beauties seem
Fresh as in Love's bewitching dream,
To me in smiles display'd;
Till slow disease resigns his prey
To Death, the parent of decay,
Thine image cannot fade.

And thou, my Friend! whose gentle love
Yet thrills my bosom's chords,
How much thy friendship was above
Description's power of words!
Still near my breast thy gift I wear
Which sparkled once with Feeling's tear,
Of Love the pure, the sacred gem;
Our souls were equal, and our lot
In that dear moment quite forgot;
Let Pride alone condemn!

All, all is dark and cheerless now!
No smile of Love's deceit
Can warm my veins with wonted glow,
Can bid Life's pulses beat:
Not e'en the hope of future fame
Can wake my faint, exhausted frame,
Or crown with fancied wreaths my head.
Mine is a short inglorious race,--
To humble in the dust my face,
And mingle with the dead.

Oh Fame! thou goddess of my heart;
On him who gains thy praise,
Pointless must fall the Spectre's dart,
Consumed in Glory's blaze;
But me she beckons from the earth,
My name obscure, unmark'd my birth,
My life a short and vulgar dream:
Lost in the dull, ignoble crowd,
My hopes recline within a shroud,
My fate is Lathe's stream.
When I repose beneath the sod,
Unheeded in the clay,
Where once my playful footsteps trod,

Where now my head must lay,
The weed of Pity will be shed
In dew-drops o'er my narrow bed,
By nightly skies, and storms alone;
No mortal eye will deign to steep
With tears the dark sepulchral deep
Which hides a name unknown.
Forget this world, my restless sprite,
Turn, turn thy thoughts to Heaven:
There must thou soon direct thy flight,
If errors are forgiven.
To bigots and to sects unknown,
Bow down beneath the Almighty's Throne;
To Him address thy trembling prayer:
He, who is merciful and just,
Will not reject a child of dust,
Although his meanest care.

Father of Light! to Thee I call;
My soul is dark within:
Thou who canst mark the sparrow's fall,
Avert the death of sin.
Thou, who canst guide the wandering star,
Who calm'st the elemental war,
Whose mantle is yon boundless sky,
My thoughts, my words, my crimes forgive:
And, since I soon must cease to live,
Instruct me how to die.

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Bride of Abydos

"Had we never loved so kindly,
Had we never loved so blindly,
Never met or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted." — Burns

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD HOLLAND,
THIS TALE IS INSCRIBED,
WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF REGARD AND RESPECT,
BY HIS GRATEFULLY OBLIGED AND SINCERE FRIEND,

BYRON.

THE BRIDE OF ABYDOS

CANTO THE FIRST.

I.

Know ye the land where cypress and myrtle
Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime,
Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle,
Now melt into sorrow, now madden to crime?
Know ye the land of the cedar and vine,
Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine;
Where the light wings of Zephyr, oppress'd with perfume,
Wax faint o'er the gardens of Gúl in her bloom; [1]
Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit,
And the voice of the nightingale never is mute;
Where the tints of the earth, and the hues of the sky,
In colour though varied, in beauty may vie,
And the purple of Ocean is deepest in dye;
Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
And all, save the spirit of man, is divine?
'Tis the clime of the East; 'tis the land of the Sun —
Can he smile on such deeds as his children have done? [2]
Oh! wild as the accents of lovers' farewell
Are the hearts which they bear, and the tales which they tell.

II.

Begirt with many a gallant slave,
Apparell'd as becomes the brave,
Awaiting each his lord's behest
To guide his steps, or guard his rest,
Old Giaffir sate in his Divan:
Deep thought was in his aged eye;

And though the face of Mussulman
Not oft betrays to standers by
The mind within, well skill'd to hide
All but unconquerable pride,
His pensive cheek and pondering brow
Did more than he wont avow.

III.

"Let the chamber be clear'd." — The train disappear'd —
"Now call me the chief of the Haram guard."

With Giaffir is none but his only son,
And the Nubian awaiting the sire's award.
"Haroun — when all the crowd that wait
Are pass'd beyond the outer gate,
(Woe to the head whose eye beheld
My child Zuleika's face unveil'd!)
Hence, lead my daughter from her tower:
Her fate is fix'd this very hour:
Yet not to her repeat my thought;
By me alone be duty taught!"
"Pacha! to hear is to obey."

No more must slave to despot say —
Then to the tower had ta'en his way,
But here young Selim silence brake,
First lowly rendering reverence meet!
And downcast look'd, and gently spake,
Still standing at the Pacha's feet:
For son of Moslem must expire,
Ere dare to sit before his sire!

"Father! for fear that thou shouldst chide
My sister, or her sable guide,
Know — for the fault, if fault there be,
Was mine — then fall thy frowns on me —
So lovely the morning shone,
That — let the old and weary sleep —
I could not; and to view alone
The fairest scenes of land and deep,
With none to listen and reply
To thoughts with which my heart beat high
Were irksome — for whate'er my mood,
In sooth I love not solitude;
I on Zuleika's slumber broke,
And as thou knowest that for me
Soon turns the Haram's grating key,
Before the guardian slaves awoke
We to the cypress groves had flown,
And made earth, main, and heaven our own!
There linger'd we, beguil'd too long
With Mejnoun's tale, or Sadi's song, [3]
Till I, who heard the deep tambour [4]

Beat thy Divan's approaching hour,
To thee, and to my duty true,
Warn'd by the sound, to greet thee flew:
But there Zuleika wanders yet —
Nay, father, rage not — nor forget
That none can pierce that secret bower
But those who watch the women's tower."

IV.

"Son of a slave" — the Pacha said —
"From unbelieving mother bred,
Vain were a father's hope to see
Aught that beseems a man in thee.
Thou, when thine arm should bend the bow,
And hurl the dart, and curb the steed,
Thou, Greek in soul if not in creed,
Must pore where babbling waters flow,
And watch unfolding roses blow.
Would that yon orb, whose matin glow
Thy listless eyes so much admire,
Would lend thee something of his fire!
Thou, who wouldst see this battlement
By Christian cannon piecemeal rent;
Nay, tamely view old Stamboul's wall
Before the dogs of Moscow fall,
Nor strike one stroke for life or death
Against the curs of Nazareth!
Go — let thy less than woman's hand
Assume the distaff — not the brand.
But, Haroun! — to my daughter speed:
And hark — of thine own head take heed —
If thus Zuleika oft takes wing —
Thou see'st yon bow — it hath a string!"

V.

No sound from Selim's lip was heard,
At least that met old Giaffir's ear,
But every frown and every word
Pierced keener than a Christian's sword.
"Son of a slave! — reproach'd with fear!
Those gibes had cost another dear.
Son of a slave! and who my sire?"
Thus held his thoughts their dark career,
And glances ev'n of more than ire
Flash forth, then faintly disappear.
Old Giaffir gazed upon his son
And started; for within his eye
He read how much his wrath had done;
He saw rebellion there begun:
"Come hither, boy — what, no reply?

I mark thee — and I know thee too;
But there be deeds thou dar'st not do:
But if thy beard had manlier length,
And if thy hand had skill and strength,
I'd joy to see thee break a lance,
Albeit against my own perchance."

As sneeringly these accents fell,
On Selim's eye he fiercely gazed:
That eye return'd him glance for glance,
And proudly to his sire's was raised,
Till Giaffir's quail'd and shrunk askance —
And why — he felt, but durst not tell.
"Much I misdoubt this wayward boy
Will one day work me more annoy:
I never loved him from his birth,
And — but his arm is little worth,
And scarcely in the chase could cope
With timid fawn or antelope,
Far less would venture into strife
Where man contends for fame and life —
I would not trust that look or tone:
No — nor the blood so near my own.

That blood — he hath not heard — no more —
I'll watch him closer than before.
He is an Arab to my sight, [5]
Or Christian crouching in the fight —
But hark! — I hear Zuleika's voice;
Like Houris' hymn it meets mine ear:
She is the offspring of my choice;
Oh! more than ev'n her mother dear,
With all to hope, and nought to fear —
My Peri! — ever welcome here!
Sweet, as the desert fountain's wave,
To lips just cool'd in time to save —
Such to my longing sight art thou;
Nor can they waft to Mecca's shrine
More thanks for life, than I for thine,
Who blest thy birth, and bless thee now."

VI.

Fair, as the first that fell of womankind,
When on that dread yet lovely serpent smiling,
Whose image then was stamp'd upon her mind —
But once beguiled — and evermore beguiling;
Dazzling, as that, oh! too transcendent vision
To Sorrow's phantom-peopled slumber given,
When heart meets heart again in dreams Elysian,
And paints the lost on Earth revived in Heaven;
Soft, as the memory of buried love;

Pure as the prayer which Childhood wafts above,
Was she — the daughter of that rude old Chief,
Who met the maid with tears — but not of grief.

Who hath not proved how feebly words essay
To fix one spark of Beauty's heavenly ray?
Who doth not feel, until his failing sight
Faints into dimness with its own delight,
His changing cheek, his sinking heart confess
The might — the majesty of Loveliness?
Such was Zuleika — such around her shone
The nameless charms unmark'd by her alone;
The light of love, the purity of grace,
The mind, the Music breathing from her face, [6]
The heart whose softness harmonised the whole —
And, oh! that eye was in itself a Soul!

Her graceful arms in meekness bending
Across her gently-budding breast;
At one kind word those arms extending
To clasp the neck of him who blest
His child caressing and carest,
Zuleika came — Giaffir felt
His purpose half within him melt;
Not that against her fancied weal
His heart though stern could ever feel;
Affection chain'd her to that heart;
Ambition tore the links apart.

VII.

"Zuleika! child of gentleness!
How dear this very day must tell,
When I forget my own distress,
In losing what I love so well,
To bid thee with another dwell:
Another! and a braver man
Was never seen in battle's van.
We Moslems reck not much of blood;
But yet the line of Carasman [7]
Unchanged, unchangeable, hath stood
First of the bold Timariot bands
That won and well can keep their lands.
Enough that he who comes to woo
Is kinsman of the Bey Oglou:
His years need scarce a thought employ:
I would not have thee wed a boy.
And thou shalt have a noble dower:
And his and my united power
Will laugh to scorn the death-firman,
Which others tremble but to scan,
And teach the messenger what fate

The bearer of such boon may wait, [8]
And now thy know'st thy father's will;
All that thy sex hath need to know:
'Twas mine to teach obedience still —
The way to love, thy lord may show."

VIII.

In silence bow'd the virgin's head;
And if her eye was fill'd with tears
That stifled feeling dare not shed,
And changed her cheek to pale to red,
And red to pale, as through her ears
Those winged words like arrows sped,
What could such be but maiden fears?
So bright the tear in Beauty's eye,
Love half regrets to kiss it dry;
So sweet the blush of Bashfulness,
Even Pity scarce can wish it less!

Whate'er it was the sire forgot;
Or if remember'd, mark'd it not;
Thrice clapp'd his hands, and call'd his steed, [9]
Resign'd his gem-adorn'd chibouque, [10]
And mounting feately for the mead,
With Maugrabee [11] and Mamaluke,
His way amid his Delis took, [12]
To witness many an active deed
With sabre keen, or blunt jerreed.
The Kislar only and his Moors
Watch well the Haram's massy doors.

IX.

His head was leant upon his hand,
His eye look'd o'er the dark blue water
That swiftly glides and gently swells
Between the winding Dardanelles;
But yet he saw nor sea nor strand,
Nor even his Pacha's turban'd band
Mix in the game of mimic slaughter,
Careering cleave the folded felt [13]
With sabre stroke right sharply dealt;
Nor mark'd the javelin-darting crowd,
Nor heard their Ollahs wild and loud [14] —
He thought but of old Giaffir's daughter!

X.

No word from Selim's bosom broke;
One sigh Zuleika's thought bespoke:
Still gazed he through the lattice grate,

Pale, mute, and mournfully sedate.
To him Zuleika's eye was turn'd,
But little from his aspect learn'd;
Equal her grief, yet not the same:
Her heart confess'd a gentler flame:
But yet that heart, alarm'd, or weak,
She knew not why, forbade to speak.
Yet speak she must — but when essay?
"How strange he thus should turn away!
Not thus we e'er before have met;
Not thus shall be our parting yet."
Thrice paced she slowly through the room,
And watched his eye — it still was fix'd:
She snatch'd the urn wherein was mix'd
The Persian Atar-gúl's perfume, [15]
And sprinkled all its odours o'er
The pictured roof and marble floor: [16]
The drops, that through his glittering vest
The playful girl's appeal address'd,
Unheeded o'er his bosom flew,
As if that breast were marble too.
"What sullen yet? it must not be —
Oh! gentle Selim, this from thee!"
She saw in curious order set
The fairest flowers of Eastern land —
"He loved them once; may touch them yet
If offer'd by Zuleika's hand."
The childish thought was hardly breathed
Before the Rose was pluck'd and wreathed;
The next fond moment saw her seat
Her fairy form at Selim's feet:
"This rose to calm my brother's cares
A message from the Bulbul bears; [17]
It says to-night he will prolong
For Selim's ear his sweetest song;
And though his note is somewhat sad,
He'll try for once a strain more glad,
With some faint hope his alter'd lay
May sing these gloomy thoughts away.

XI.

"What! not receive my foolish flower?
Nay then I am indeed unblest:
On me can thus thy forehead lower?
And know'st thou not who loves thee best?
Oh, Selim dear! oh, more than dearest!
Say is it me thou hat'st or fearest?
Come, lay thy head upon my breast,
And I will kiss thee into rest,
Since words of mine, and songs must fail
Ev'n from my fabled nightingale.

I knew our sire at times was stern,
But this from thee had yet to learn:
Too well I know he loves thee not;
But is Zuleika's love forgot?
Ah! deem I right? the Pacha's plan —
This kinsman Bey of Carasman
Perhaps may prove some foe of thine:
If so, I swear by Mecca's shrine,
If shrines that ne'er approach allow
To woman's step admit her vow,
Without thy free consent, command,
The Sultan should not have my hand!
Think'st though that I could bear to part
With thee, and learn to halve my heart?
Ah! were I sever'd from thy side,
Where were thy friend — and who my guide?
Years have not seen, Time shall not see
The hour that tears my soul from thee:
Even Azrael, [18] from his deadly quiver
When flies that shaft, and fly it must,
That parts all else, shall doom for ever
Our hearts to undivided dust!"

XII.

He lived — he breathed — he moved — he felt;
He raised the maid from where she knelt;
His trance was gone — his keen eye shone
With thoughts that long in darkness dwelt;
With thoughts that burn — in rays that melt.
As the streams late conceal'd
By the fringe of its willows,
When it rushes reveal'd
In the light of its billows;
As the bolt bursts on high
From the black cloud that bound it,
Flash'd the soul of that eye
Through the long lashes round it.
A war-horse at the trumpet's sound,
A lion roused by heedless hound,
A tyrant waked to sudden strife
By graze of ill-directed knife,
Starts not to more convulsive life
Than he, who heard that vow, display'd,
And all, before repress'd, betray'd:

"Now thou art mine, for ever mine,
With life to keep, and scarce with life resign;
Now thou art mine, that sacred oath,
Though sworn by one, hath bound us both.
Yes, fondly, wisely hast thou done;
That vow hath saved more heads than one:

But brench not thou — thy simplest tress
Claims more from me than tenderness;
I would not wrong the slenderest hair
That clusters round thy forehead fair,
For all the treasures buried far
Within the caves of Istakar. [19]
This morning clouds upon me lower'd,
Reproaches on my head were shower'd,
And Giaffir almost call'd me coward!
Now I have motive to be brave;
The son of his neglected slave —
Nay, start not, 'twas the term he gave —
May shew, though little apt to vaunt,
A heart his words nor deeds can daunt.
His son, indeed! — yet, thanks to thee,
Perchance I am, at least shall be!
But let our plighted secret vow
Be only known to us as now.
I know the wretch who dares demand
From Giaffir thy reluctant hand;
More ill-got wealth, a meaner soul
Holds not a Musselim's control: [20]
Was he not bred in Egripo? [21]
A viler race let Israel show!
But let that pass — to none be told
Our oath; the rest let time unfold.
To me and mine leave Osman Bey;
I've partisans for peril's day:
Think not I am what I appear;
I've arms, and friends, and vengeance near."

XIII.

"Think not thou art what thou appearest!
My Selim, thou art sadly changed:
This morn I saw thee gentlest, dearest:
But now thou'rt from thyself estranged.
My love thou surely knew'st before,
It ne'er was less, nor can be more.
To see thee, hear thee, near thee stay,
And hate the night, I know not why,
Save that we meet not but by day;
With thee to live, with thee to die,
I dare not to my hope deny:
Thy cheek, thine eyes, thy lips to kiss,
Like this — and this — no more than this;
For, Allah! Sure thy lips are flame:
What fever in thy veins is flushing?
My own have nearly caught the same,
At least I feel my cheek too blushing.
To soothe thy sickness, watch thy health,
Partake, but never waste thy wealth,

Or stand with smiles unmurmuring by,
And lighten half thy poverty;
Do all but close thy dying eye,
For that I could not live to try;
To these alone my thoughts aspire:
More can I do? or thou require?
But, Selim, thou must answer why
We need so much of mystery?
The cause I cannot dream nor tell,
But be it, since thou say'st 'tis well;
Yet what thou mean'st by 'arms' and 'friends,'
Beyond my weaker sense extends.
I mean that Giaffir should have heard
The very vow I plighted thee;
His wrath would not revoke my word:
But surely he would leave me free.
Can this fond wish seem strange in me,
To be what I have ever been?
What other hath Zuleika seen
From simple childhood's earliest hour?
What other can she seek to see
Than thee, companion of her bower,
The partner of her infancy?
These cherish'd thoughts with life begun,
Say, why must I no more avow?
What change is wrought to make me shun
The truth; my pride, and thine till now?
To meet the gaze of stranger's eyes
Our law, our creed, our God denies,
Nor shall one wandering thought of mine
At such, our Prophet's will, repine:
No! happier made by that decree!
He left me all in leaving thee.
Deep were my anguish, thus compell'd
To wed with one I ne'er beheld:
This wherefore should I not reveal?
Why wilt thou urge me to conceal!
I know the Pacha's haughty mood
To thee hath never boded good:
And he so often storms at naught,
Allah! forbid that e'er he ought!
And why I know not, but within
My heart concealment weighs like sin.
If then such secresy be crime,
And such it feels while lurking here,
Oh, Selim! tell me yet in time,
Nor leave me thus to thoughts of fear.
Ah! yonder see the Tchocadar, [22]
My father leaves the mimic war:
I tremble now to meet his eye —
Say, Selim, canst thou tell me why?"

XIV.

"Zuleika — to thy tower's retreat
Betake thee — Giaffir I can greet:
And now with him I fain must prate
Of firmans, imposts, levies, state.
There's fearful news from Danube's banks,
Our Vizier nobly thins his ranks,
For which the Giaour may give him thanks!
Our sultan hath a shorter way
Such costly triumph to repay.
But, mark me, when the twilight drum
Hath warn'd the troops to food and sleep,
Unto thy cell will Selim come:
Then softly from the Haram creep
Where we may wander by the deep:
Our garden-battlements are steep;
Nor these will rash intruder climb
To list our words, or stint our time;
And if he doth, I want not steel
Which some have felt, and more may feel.
Then shalt thou learn of Selim more
Than thou hast heard or thought before:
Trust me, Zuleika — fear not me!
Thou know'st I hold a Haram key."

"Fear thee, my Selim! ne'er till now
Did word like this — "

"Delay not thou;
I keep the key — and Haroun's guard
Have some, and hope of more reward.
Tonight, Zuleika, thou shalt hear
My tale, my purpose, and my fear:
I am not, love! what I appear."

CANTO THE SECOND.

I.

The winds are high on Helle's wave,
As on that night of stormy water,
When Love, who sent, forgot to save
The young, the beautiful, the brave,
The lonely hope of Sestos' daughter.
Oh! when alone along the sky
Her turret-torch was blazing high,
Though rising gale, and breaking foam,
And shrieking sea-birds warn'd him home;
And clouds aloft and tides below,
With signs and sounds, forbade to go,

He could not see, he would not hear,
Or sound or sign foreboding fear;
His eye but saw the light of love,
The only star it hail'd above;
His ear but rang with Hero's song,
"Ye waves, divide not lovers long!" —
That tale is old, but love anew
May nerve young hearts to prove as true.

II.

The winds are high, and Helle's tide
Rolls darkly heaving to the main;
And Night's descending shadows hide
That field with blood bedew'd in vain,
The desert of old Priam's pride;
The tombs, sole relics of his reign,
All — save immortal dreams that could beguile
The blind old man of Scio's rocky isle!

III.

Oh! yet — for there my steps have been!
These feet have press'd the sacred shore,
These limbs that buoyant wave hath borne —
Minstrel! with thee to muse, to mourn,
To trace again those fields of yore,
Believing every hillock green
Contains no fabled hero's ashes,
And that around the undoubted scene
Thine own "broad Hellespont" still dashes, [23]
Be long my lot! and cold were he
Who there could gaze denying thee!

IV.

The night hath closed on Helle's stream,
Nor yet hath risen on Ida's hill
That moon, which shoon on his high theme:
No warrior chides her peaceful beam,
But conscious shepherds bless it still.
Their flocks are grazing on the mound
Of him who felt the Dardan's arrow;
That mighty heap of gather'd ground
Which Ammon's son ran proudly round, [24]
By nations raised, by monarchs crown'd,
Is now a lone and nameless barrow!
Within — thy dwelling-place how narrow?
Without — can only strangers breathe
The name of him that was beneath:
Dust long outlasts the storied stone;
But Thou — thy very dust is gone!

V.

Late, late to-night will Dian cheer
The swain, and chase the boatman's fear;
Till then — no beacon on the cliff
May shape the course of struggling skiff;
The scatter'd lights that skirt the bay,
All, one by one, have died away;
The only lamp of this lone hour
Is glimmering in Zuleika's tower.
Yes! there is light in that lone chamber,
And o'er her silken Ottoman
Are thrown the fragrant beads of amber,
O'er which her fairy fingers ran; [25]
Near these, with emerald rays beset,
(How could she thus that gem forget?)
Her mother's sainted amulet, [26]
Whereon engraved the Koorsee text,
Could smooth this life, and win the next;
And by her Comboloio lies [27]
A Koran of illumined dyes;
And many a bright emblazon'd rhyme
By Persian scribes redeem'd from time;
And o'er those scrolls, not oft so mute,
Reclines her now neglected lute;
And round her lamp of fretted gold
Bloom flowers in urns of China's mould;
The richest work of Iran's loom,
And Sheeraz' tribute of perfume;
All that can eye or sense delight
Are gather'd in that gorgeous room:
But yet it hath an air of gloom.
She, of this Peri cell the sprite,
What doth she hence, and on so rude a night?

VI.

Wrapt in the darkest sable vest,
Which none save noblest Moslems wear,
To guard from winds of heaven the breast
As heaven itself to Selim dear,
With cautious steps the thicket threading,
And starting oft, as through the glade
The gust its hollow moanings made;
Till on the smoother pathway treading,
More free her timid bosom beat,
The maid pursued her silent guide;
And though her terror urged retreat,
How could she quit her Selim's side?
How teach her tender lips to chide?

VII.

They reach'd at length a grotto, hewn
By nature, but enlarged by art,
Where oft her lute she wont to tune,
And oft her Koran conn'd apart:
And oft in youthful reverie
She dream'd what Paradise might be;
Where woman's parted soul shall go
Her Prophet had disdain'd to show;
But Selim's mansion was secure,
Nor deem'd she, could he long endure
His bower in other worlds of bliss,
Without her, most beloved in this!
Oh! who so dear with him could dwell?
What Houri soothe him half so well?

VIII.

Since last she visited the spot
Some change seem'd wrought within the grot;
It might be only that the night
Disguised things seen by better light:
That brazen lamp but dimly threw
A ray of no celestial hue:
But in a nook within the cell
Her eye on stranger objects fell.
There arms were piled, not such as wield
The turban'd Delis in the field;
But brands of foreign blade and hilt,
And one was red — perchance with guilt!
Ah! how without can blood be spilt?
A cup too on the board was set
That did not seem to hold sherbet.
What may this mean? she turn'd to see
Her Selim — "Oh! can this be he?"

IX.

His robe of pride was thrown aside,
His brow no high-crown'd turban bore
But in its stead a shawl of red,
Wreathed lightly round, his temples wore:
That dagger, on whose hilt the gem
Were worthy of a diadem,
No longer glitter'd at his waist,
Where pistols unadorn'd were braced;
And from his belt a sabre swung,
And from his shoulder loosely hung
The cloak of white, the thin capote
That decks the wandering Candiote:
Beneath — his golden plated vest

Clung like a cuirass to his breast
The greaves below his knee that wound
With silvery scales were sheathed and bound.
But were it not that high command
Spake in his eye, and tone, and hand,
All that a careless eye could see
In him was some young Galiongée. [28]

X.

"I said I was not what I seem'd;
And now thou see'st my words were true:
I have a tale thou hast not dream'd,
If sooth — its truth must others rue.
My story now 'twere vain to hide,
I must not see thee Osman's bride:
But had not thine own lips declared
How much of that young heart I shared,
I could not, must not, yet have shown
The darker secret of my own.
In this I speak not now of love;
That, let time, truth, and peril prove:
But first — oh! never wed another —
Zuleika! I am not thy brother!"

XI.

"Oh! not my brother! — yet unsay —
God! am I left alone on earth
To mourn — I dare not curse the day
That saw my solitary birth?
Oh! thou wilt love me now no more!
My sinking heart foreboded ill;
But know me all I was before,
Thy sister — friend — Zuleika still.
Thou ledd'st me hear perchance to kill;
If thou hast cause for vengeance see
My breast is offer'd — take thy fill!
Far better with the dead to be
Than live thus nothing now to thee;
Perhaps far worse, for now I know
Why Giaffir always seem'd thy foe;
And I, alas! am Giaffir's child,
From whom thou wert contemn'd, reviled.
If not thy sister — wouldest thou save
My life, oh! bid me be thy slave!"

XII.

"My slave, Zuleika! — nay, I'm thine;
But, gentle love, this transport calm,
Thy lot shall yet be link'd with mine;

I swear it by our Prophet's shrine,
And be that thought thy sorrow's balm.
So may the Koran verse display'd [29]
Upon its steel direct my blade,
In danger's hour to guard us both,
As I preserve that awful oath!
The name in which thy heart hath prided
Must change; but, my Zuleika, know,
That tie is widen'd, not divided,
Although thy Sire's my deadliest foe.
My father was to Giaffir all
That Selim late was deem'd to thee;
That brother wrought a brother's fall,
But spared, at least, my infancy;
And lull'd me with a vain deceit
That yet a like return may meet.
He rear'd me, not with tender help,
But like the nephew of a Cain; [30]
He watch'd me like a lion's whelp,
That gnaws and yet may break his chain.
My father's blood in every vein
Is boiling; but for thy dear sake
No present vengeance will I take;
Though here I must no more remain.
But first, beloved Zuleika! hear
How Giaffir wrought this deed of fear.

XIII.

"How first their strife to rancour grew,
If love or envy made them foes,
It matters little if I knew;
In fiery spirits, slights, though few
And thoughtless, will disturb repose.
In war Abdallah's arm was strong,
Remember'd yet in Bosniac song,
And Paswan's rebel hordes attest [31]
How little love they bore such guest:
His death is all I need relate,
The stern effect of Giaffir's hate;
And how my birth disclosed to me,
Whate'er beside it makes, hath made me free.

XIV.

"When Paswan, after years of strife,
At last for power, but first for life,
In Widdin's walls too proudly sate,
Our Pachas rallied round the state;
Nor last nor least in high command,
Each brother led a separate band;
They gave their horse-tails to the wind, [32]

And mustering in Sophia's plain
Their tents were pitch'd, their posts assign'd;
To one, alas! assign'd in vain!
What need of words? the deadly bowl,
By Giaffir's order drugg'd and given,
With venom subtle as his soul,
Dismiss'd Abdallah's hence to heaven.
Reclined and feverish in the bath,
He, when the hunter's sport was up,
But little deem'd a brother's wrath
To quench his thirst had such a cup:
The bowl a bribed attendant bore;
He drank one draught, and nor needed more! [33]
If thou my tale, Zuleika, doubt,
Call Haroun — he can tell it out.

XV.

"The deed once done, and Paswan's feud
In part suppress'd, though ne'er subdued,
Abdallah's Pachalic was gain'd: —
Thou know'st not what in our Divan
Can wealth procure for worse than man —
Abdallah's honours were obtain'd
By him a brother's murder stain'd;
'Tis true, the purchase nearly drain'd
His ill got treasure, soon replaced.
Wouldst question whence? Survey the waste,
And ask the squalid peasant how
His gains repay his broiling brow! —
Why me the stern usurper spared,
Why thus with me the palace shared,
I know not. Shame, regret, remorse,
And little fear from infant's force;
Besides, adoption of a son
Of him whom Heaven accorded none,
Or some unknown cabal, caprice,
Preserved me thus; but not in peace;
He cannot curb his haughty mood,
Nor I forgive a father's blood!

XVI.

"Within thy father's house are foes;
Not all who break his bread are true:
To these should I my birth disclose,
His days, his very hours, were few:
They only want a heart to lead,
A hand to point them to the deed.
But Haroun only knows — or knew —
This tale, whose close is almost nigh:
He in Abdallah's palace grew,

And held that post in his Serai
Which holds he here — he saw him die:
But what could single slavery do?
Avenge his lord? alas! too late;
Or save his son from such a fate?
He chose the last, and when elate
With foes subdued, or friends betray'd,
Proud Giaffir in high triumph sate,
He led me helpless to his gate,
And not in vain it seems essay'd
To save the life for which he pray'd.
The knowledge of my birth secured
From all and each, but most from me;
Thus Giaffir's safety was insured.
Removed he too from Roumelie
To this our Asiatic side,
Far from our seat by Danube's tide,
With none but Haroun, who retains
Such knowledge — and that Nubian feels
A tyrant's secrets are but chains,
From which the captive gladly steals,
And this and more to me reveals:
Such still to guilt just Allah sends —
Slaves, tools, accomplices — no friends!

XVII.

"All this, Zuleika, harshly sounds;
But harsher still my tale must be:
How'er my tongue thy softness wounds,
Yet I must prove all truth to thee.
I saw thee start this garb to see,
Yet is it one I oft have worn,
And long must wear: this Galiongée,
To whom thy plighted vow is sworn,
Is leader of those pirate hordes,
Whose laws and lives are on their swords;
To hear whose desolating tale
Would make thy waning cheek more pale:
Those arms thou see'st my band have brought,
The hands that wield are not remote;
This cup too for the rugged knaves
Is fill'd — once quaff'd, they ne'er repine:
Our Prophet might forgive the slaves;
They're only infidels in wine!

XVIII.

"What could I be? Proscribed at home,
And taunted to a wish to roam;
And listless left — for Giaffir's fear
Denied the courser and the spear —

Though oft — oh, Mohammed! how oft! —
In full Divan the despot scoff'd,
As if my weak unwilling hand
Refused the bridle or the brand:
He ever went to war alone,
And pent me here untried — unknown;
To Haroun's care with women left,
By hope unblest, of fame bereft.
While thou — whose softness long endear'd,
Though it unmann'd me, still had cheer'd —
To Brusa's walls for safety sent,
Awaited'st there the field's event.
Haroun, who saw my spirit pining
Beneath inaction's sluggish yoke,
His captive, though with dread, resigning,
My thraldom for a season broke,
On promise to return before
The day when Giaffir's charge was o'er.
'Tis vain — my tongue can not impart
My almost drunkenness of heart,
When first this liberated eye
Survey'd Earth, Ocean, Sun and Sky,
As if my spirit pierced them through,
And all their inmost wonders knew!
One word alone can paint to thee
That more than feeling — I was Free!
Ev'n for thy presence ceased to pine;
The World — nay — Heaven itself was mine!

XIX.

"The shallop of a trusty Moor
Convey'd me from this idle shore;
I long'd to see the isles that gem
Old Ocean's purple diadem:
I sought by turns, and saw them all: [34]
But when and where I join'd the crew,
With whom I'm pledged to rise or fall,
When all that we design to do
Is done, 'twill then be time more meet
To tell thee, when the tale's complete.

XX.

"'Tis true, they are a lawless brood,
But rough in form, nor mild in mood;
With them hath found — may find — a place:
But open speech, and ready hand,
Obedience to their chief's command;
A soul for every enterprise,
That never sees with terror's eyes;
Friendship for each, and faith to all,

And vengeance vow'd for those who fall,
Have made them fitting instruments
For more than ev'n my own intents.
And some — and I have studied all
Distinguish'd from the vulgar rank,
But chiefly to my council call
The wisdom of the cautious Frank —
And some to higher thoughts aspire,
The last of Lambro's patriots there [35]
Anticipated freedom share;
And oft around the cavern fire
On visionary schemes debate,
To snatch the Rayahs from their fate. [36]
So let them ease their hearts with prate
Of equal rights, which man ne'er knew;
I have a love of freedom too.
Ay! let me like the ocean-Patriarch roam, [37]
Or only known on land the Tartar's home! [38]
My tent on shore, my galley on the sea,
Are more than cities and Serais to me:
Borne by my steed, or wafted by my sail,
Across the desert, or before the gale,
Bound where thou wilt, my barb! or glide, my prow!
But be the star that guides the wanderer, Thou!
Thou, my Zuleika! share and bless my bark;
The Dove of peace and promise to mine ark!
Or, since that hope denied in worlds of strife,
Be thou the rainbow to the storms of life!
The evening beam that smiles the cloud away,
And tints to-morrow with prophetic ray!
Blest — as the Muezzin's strain from Mecca's wall
To pilgrims pure and prostrate at his call;
Soft — as the melody of youthful days,
That steals the trembling tear of speechless praise;
Dear — as his native song to exile's ears,
Shall sound each tone thy long-loved voice endears.
For thee in those bright isles is built a bower
Blooming as Aden in its earliest hour. [39]
A thousand swords, with Selim's heart and hand,
Wait — wave — defend — destroy — at thy command!
Girt by my band, Zuleika at my side,
The spoil of nations shall bedeck my bride.
The Haram's languid years of listless ease
Are well resign'd for cares — for joys like these:
Not blind to fate, I see, where'er I rove,
Unnumber'd perils — but one only love!
Yet well my toils shall that fond beast repay,
Though fortune frown or falser friends betray.
How dear the dream in darkest hours of ill,
Should all be changed, to find thee faithful still!
Be but thy soul, like Selim's, firmly shown;
To thee be Selim's tender as thine own;

To soothe each sorrow, share in each delight,
Blend every thought, do all — but disunite!
Once free, 'tis mine our horde again to guide;
Friends to each other, foes to aught beside:
Yet there we follow but the bent assign'd
By fatal Nature to man's warring kind:
Mark! where his carnage and his conquests cease!
He makes a solitude, and calls it — peace!
I like the rest must use my skill or strength,
But ask no land beyond my sabre's length:
Power sways but by division — her resource
The blest alternative of fraud or force!
Ours be the last; in time deceit may come
When cities cage us in a social home:
There ev'n thy soul might err — how oft the heart
Corruption shakes which peril could not part!
And woman, more than man, when death or woe,
Or even disgrace, would lay her lover low,
Sunk in the lap of luxury will shame —
Away suspicion! — not Zuleika's name!
But life is hazard at the best; and here
No more remains to win, and much to fear:
Yes, fear! — the doubt, the dread of losing thee,
By Osman's power, and Giaffir's stern decree.
That dread shall vanish with the favouring gale,
Which Love to-night hath promised to my sail:
No danger daunts the pair his smile hath blest,
Their steps till roving, but their hearts at rest.
With thee all toils are sweet, each clime hath charms;
Earth — sea alike — our world within our arms!
Ay — let the loud winds whistle o'er the deck,
So that those arms cling closer round my neck:
The deepest murmur of this lip shall be
No sigh for safety, but a prayer for thee!
The war of elements no fears impart
To Love, whose deadliest bane is human Art:
There lie the only rocks our course can check;
Here moments menace — there are years of wreck!
But hence ye thoughts that rise in Horror's shape!
This hour bestows, or ever bars escape.
Few words remain of mine my tale to close:
Of thine but one to waft us from our foes;
Yea — foes — to me will Giaffir's hate decline?
And is not Osman, who would part us, thine?

XXI.

"His head and faith from doubt and death
Return'd in time my guard to save;
Few heard, none told, that o'er the wave
From isle to isle I roved the while:
And since, though parted from my band

Too seldom now I leave the land,
No deed they've done, nor deed shall do,
Ere I have heard and doom'd it too:
I form the plan, decree the spoil,
'Tis fit I oftener share the toil.
But now too long I've held thine ear;
Time presses, floats my bark, and here
We leave behind but hate and fear.
To-morrow Osman with his train
Arrives — to-night must break thy chain:
And wouldest thou save that haughty Bey,
Perchance, his life who gave the thine,
With me this hour away — away!
But yet, though thou art plighted mine,
Wouldest thou recall thy willing vow,
Appall'd by truth imparted now,
Here rest I — not to see thee wed:
But be that peril on my head!"

XXII.

Zuleika, mute and motionless,
Stood like that statue of distress,
When, her last hope for ever gone,
The mother harden'd into stone;
All in the maid that eye could see
Was but a younger Niobè.
But ere her lip, or even her eye,
Essay'd to speak, or look reply,
Beneath the garden's wicket porch
Far flash'd on high a blazing torch!
Another — and another — and another —
"Oh! — no more — yet now my more than brother!"
Far, wide, through every thicket spread,
The fearful lights are gleaming red;
Nor these alone — for each right hand
Is ready with a sheathless brand.
They part, pursue, return, and wheel
With searching flambeau, shining steel;
And last of all, his sabre waving,
Stern Giaffir in his fury raving:
And now almost they touch the cave —
Oh! must that grot be Selim's grave?

XXIII.

Dauntless he stood — "'Tis come — soon past —
One kiss, Zuleika — 'tis my last:
But yet my band not far from shore
May hear this signal, see the flash;
Yet now too few — the attempt were rash:
No matter — yet one effort more."

Forth to the cavern mouth he stept;
His pistol's echo rang on high,
Zuleika started not nor wept,
Despair benumb'd her breast and eye! —
"They hear me not, or if they ply
Their oars, 'tis but to see me die;
That sound hath drawn my foes more nigh.
Then forth my father's scimitar,
Thou ne'er hast seen less equal war!
Farewell, Zuleika! — Sweet! retire:
Yet stay within — here linger safe,
At thee his rage will only chafe.
Stir not — lest even to thee perchance
Some erring blade or ball should glance.
Fear'st though for him? — may I expire
If in this strife I seek thy sire!
No — though by him that poison pour'd:
No — though again he call me coward!
But tamely shall I meet their steel?
No — as each crest save his may feel!"

XXIV.

One bound he made, and gain'd the sand:
Already at his feet hath sunk
The foremost of the prying band,
A gasping head, a quivering trunk:
Another falls — but round him close
A swarming circle of his foes;
From right to left his path he cleft,
And almost met the meeting wave:
His boat appears — not five oars' length —
His comrades strain with desperate strength —
Oh! are they yet in time to save?
His feet the foremost breakers lave;
His band are plunging in the bay,
Their sabres glitter through the spray;
We — wild — unwearied to the strand
They struggle — now they touch the land!
They come — 'tis but to add to slaughter —
His heart's best blood is on the water!

XXV.

Escaped from shot, unharmed by steel,
Or scarcely grazed its force to feel,
Had Selim won, betray'd, beset,
To where the strand and billows met:
There as his last step left the land,
And the last death-blow dealt his hand —
Ah! wherefore did he turn to look
For her his eye but sought in vain?

That pause, that fatal gaze he took,
Hath doom'd his death, or fix'd his chain.
Sad proof, in peril and in pain,
How late will Lover's hope remain!
His back was to the dashing spray;
Behind, but close, his comrades lay
When, at the instant, hiss'd the ball —
"So may the foes of Giaffir fall!"
Whose voice is heard? whose carbine rang?
Whose bullet through the night-air sang,
Too nearly, deadly aim'd to err?
'Tis thine — Abdallah's Murderer!
The father slowly rued thy hate,
The son hath found a quicker fate:
Fast from his breast the blood is bubbling,
The whiteness of the sea-foam troubling —
If aught his lips essay'd to groan,
The rushing billows choked the tone!

XXVI.

Morn slowly rolls the clouds away;
Few trophies of the fight are there:
The shouts that shook the midnight-bay
Are silent; but some signs of fray
That strand of strife may bear,
And fragments of each shiver'd brand;
Steps stamp'd; and dash'd into the sand
The print of many a struggling hand
May there be mark'd; nor far remote
A broken torch, an oarless boat;
And tangled on the weeds that heap
The beach where shelving to the deep
There lies a white capote!
'Tis rent in twain — one dark-red stain
The wave yet ripples o'er in vain:
But where is he who wore?
Ye! who would o'er his relics weep,
Go, seek them where the surges sweep
Their burthen round Sigæum's steep,
And cast on Lemnos' shore:
The sea-birds shriek above the prey,
O'er which their hungry beaks delay,
As shaken on his restless pillow,
His head heaves with the heaving billow;
That hand, whose motion is not life,
Yet feebly seems to menace strife,
Flung by the tossing tide on high,
Then levell'd with the wave —
What recks it, though that corse shall lie
Within a living grave?
The bird that tears that prostrate form

Hath only robb'd the meaner worm:
The only heart, the only eye
Had bled or wept to see him die,
Had seen those scatter'd limbs composed,
And mourn'd above his turban-stone, [40]
That heart hath burst — that eye was closed —
Yea — closed before his own!

XXVII.

By Helle's stream there is a voice of wail!
And woman's eye is wet — man's cheek is pale:
Zuleika! last of Giaffir's race,
Thy destined lord is come too late:
He sees not — ne'er shall see — thy face!
Can he not hear
The loud Wul-wulleh warn his distant ear? [41]
Thy handmaids weeping at the gate,
The Koran-chanters of the hymn of fate,
The silent slaves with folded arms that wait,
Sighs in the hall, and shrieks upon the gale,
Tell him thy tale!
Thou didst not view thy Selim fall!
That fearful moment when he left the cave
Thy heart grew chill:
He was thy hope — thy joy — thy love — thine all —
And that last thought on him thou couldst not save
Sufficed to kill;

Burst forth in one wild cry — and all was still.
Peace to thy broken heart, and virgin grave!
Ah! happy! but of life to lose the worst!
That grief — though deep — though fatal — was thy first!
Thrice happy! ne'er to feel nor fear the force
Of absence, shame, pride, hate, revenge, remorse!
And, oh! that pang where more than madness lies!
The worm that will not sleep — and never dies;
Thought of the gloomy day and ghastly night,
That dreads the darkness, and yet loathes the light,
That winds around, and tears the quivering heart!
Ah! wherefore not consume it — and depart!
Woe to thee, rash and unrelenting chief!
Vainly thou heap'st the dust upon thy head,
Vainly the sackcloth o'er thy limbs doth spread;
By that same hand Abdallah — Selim — bled.
Now let it tear thy beard in idle grief:
Thy pride of heart, thy bride for Osman's bed,
Thy Daughter's dead!
Hope of thine age, thy twilight's lonely beam,
The star hath set that shone on Helle's stream.
What quench'd its ray? — the blood that thou hast shed!
Hark! to the hurried question of Despair:

"Where is my child?" — an Echo answers — "Where?" [42]

XVIII.

Within the place of thousand tombs
That shine beneath, while dark above
The sad but living cypress glooms,
And withers not, though branch and leaf
Are stamp'd with an eternal grief,
Like early unrequited Love,
One spot exists, which ever blooms,
Ev'n in that deadly grove —
A single rose is shedding there
Its lonely lustre, meek and pale:
It looks as planted by Despair —
So white — so faint — the slightest gale
Might whirl the leaves on high;
And yet, though storms and blight assail,
And hands more rude than wintry sky
May wring it from the stem — in vain —
To-morrow sees it bloom again!
The stalk some spirit gently rears,
And waters with celestial tears;
For well may maids of Helle deem
That this can be no earthly flower,
Which mocks the tempest's withering hour,
And buds unshelter'd by a bower;
Nor droops, though spring refuse her shower,
Nor woos the summer beam:
To it the livelong night there sings
A bird unseen — but not remote:
Invisible his airy wings,
But soft as harp that Houri strings
His long entrancing note!
It were the Bulbul; but his throat,
Though mournful, pours not such a strain:
For they who listen cannot leave
The spot, but linger there and grieve,
As if they loved in vain!
And yet so sweet the tears they shed,
'Tis sorrow so unmix'd with dread,
They scarce can bear the morn to break
That melancholy spell,
And longer yet would weep and wake,
He sings so wild and well!
But when the day-blush bursts from high
Expires that magic melody.
And some have been who could believe,
(So fondly youthful dreams deceive,
Yet harsh be they that blame,) That note so piercing and profound
Will shape and syllable its sound

Into Zuleika's name. [43]
'Tis from her cypress' summit heard,
That melts in air the liquid word;
'Tis from her lowly virgin earth
That white rose takes its tender birth.
There late was laid a marble stone;
Eve saw it placed — the Morrow gone!
It was no mortal arm that bore
That deep fixed pillar to the shore;
For there, as Helle's legends tell,
Next morn 'twas found where Selim fell;
Lash'd by the tumbling tide, whose wave
Denied his bones a holier grave:
And there by night, reclined, 'tis said,
Is seen a ghastly turban'd head:
And hence extended by the billow,
'Tis named the "Pirate-phantom's pillow!"
Where first it lay that mourning flower
Hath flourish'd; flourisheth this hour,
Alone and dewy, coldly pure and pale;
As weeping Beauty's cheek at Sorrow's tale.

- (1) "Gúl," the rose.
- (2) "Souls made of fire, and children of the Sun,
With whom revenge is virtue." — YOUNG'S "REVENGE."
- (3) Mejnoun and Leila, the Romeo and Juliet of the East. Sadi, the moral set of Persia.
- (4) "Tambour," Turkish drum, which sounds at sunrise, none, and twilight.
- (5) The Turks abhor the Arabs (who return the compliment a hundred-fold) even more than they hate the Christians.
- (6) This expression has met with objections. I will not refer to "Him who hath not Music in his soul," but merely request the reader to recollect, for ten seconds, the features of the woman whom he believes to be the most beautiful; and if he then does not comprehend fully what is feebly expressed in the above line, I shall be sorry for us both. For an eloquent passage in the latest work of the first female writer of this, perhaps of any age, on the analogy (and the immediate comparison excited by that analogy) between "painting and music," see vol. iii. cap. 10, "De L'Allemagne." And is not this connexion still stronger with the original than the copy? with the colouring of Nature than of Art? After all, this is rather to be felt than described; still, I think there are some who will understand it, at least they would have done had they beheld the countenance whose speaking harmony suggested the idea; for this passage is not drawn from imagination but memory, that mirror which Affliction dashes to the earth, and looking down upon the fragments, only beholds the reflection multiplied.
- (7) Carasman Oglou, or Kara Osman Oglou, is the principle landholder in Turkey; he governs Magnesia. Those who, by a kind of feudal tenure, possess land on condition of service, are called Timariots; they serve as Spahis, according to the extent of territory,

and bring a certain number into the field, generally cavalry.

(8) When a Pacha is sufficiently strong to resist, the single messenger, who is always the first bearer of the order for his death, is strangled instead, and sometimes five or six, one after the other, on the same errand, by command of the refractory patient; if, on the contrary, he is weak or loyal, he bows, kisses the Sultan's respectable signature, and is bowstrung with great complacency. In 1810, several of "these presents" were exhibited in the niche of the Seraglio gate: among others, the head of the Pacha of Bagdad, a brave young man, cut off by treachery, after a desperate resistance.

(9) Clapping of the hands calls the servants. The Turks hate a superfluous expenditure of voice, and they have no bells.

(10) "Chibouque," the Turkish pipe, of which the amber mouth-piece, and sometimes the ball which contains the leaf, is adorned with precious stones, if in possession of the wealthier orders.

(11) "Maugrabee," Moorish mercenaries.

(12) "Delis," bravoes who form the forlorn-hope of the cavalry, and always begin the action.

(13) A twisted fold of felt is used for scimitar practice by the Turks, and few but Mussulman arms can cut through it at a single stroke: sometimes a tough turban is used for the same purpose. The jerreed is a game of blunt javelins, animated and graceful.

(14) "Ollahs," Alla il Allah, the "Leilles," as the Spanish poets call them; the sound is Ollah; a cry of which the Turks, for a silent people, are somewhat profuse, particularly during the jerreed, or in the chase, but mostly in battle. Their animation in the field, and gravity in the chamber, with their pipes and comboloios, form an amusing contrast.

(15) "Atar-gúl," ottar of roses. The Persian is the finest.

(16) The ceiling and wainscots, or rather walls, of the Mussulman apartments are generally painted, in great houses, with one eternal and highly-coloured view of Constantinople, wherein the principle feature is a noble contempt of perspective; below, arms, scimitars, &c., are generally fancifully and not inelegantly disposed.

(17) It has been much doubted whether the notes of this "Lover of the rose are sad or merry; and Mr Fox's remarks on the subject have provoked some learned controversy as to the opinions of the ancients on the subject. I dare not venture a conjecture on the point, though a little inclined to the "errare [m?]alleum," &c., if Mr Fox was mistaken.

[Transcriber's note: the print impression I am working from is poor and in places not entirely intelligible.]

(18) "Azrael," the angel of death.

(19) The treasures of the Pre-Adamite Sultans. See D'Herbelot, article Istakar.

(20) "Musselim," a governor, the next in rank after a Pacha; a Waywode is the third; and then come the Agas.

(21) "Egripo" — the Negropont. According to the proverb, the Turks of Egrip, the Jews of Salonica, and the Greeks of Athens are the worst of their respective races.

(22) "Tchocadar," one of the attendants who precedes a man of authority.

(23) The wrangling about this epithet, "the broad Hellespont," or the "boundless Hellespont," whether it means one or the other, or what it means at all, has been beyond all possibility of detail. I have even heard it disputed on the spot; and not foreseeing a speedy conclusion to the controversy, amused myself by swimming across it in the meantime, and probably may again, before the point is settled. Indeed, the question as to the truth of "the tale of Troy divine" still continues, much of it resting upon the word {άπειρος} [in Greek]: probably Homer had the same notion of distance that a coquette has of time, and when he talks of the boundless, means half a mile; as the latter, by a like figure, when she says eternal attachment, simply specifies three weeks.

(24) Before his Persian invasion, and crowned the altar with laurel, &c. He was afterwards imitated by Caracalla in his race. It is believed that the last also poisoned a friend, named Festus, for the sake of new Patroclan games. I have seen the sheep feeding on the tombs of Æsletes and Antilochos: the first is in the center of the plain.

(25) When rubbed, the amber is susceptible of a perfume, which is slight but not disagreeable.

(26) The belief in amulets engraved on gems, or enclosed in gold boxes, containing scraps from the Koran, worn round the neck, wrist, or arm, is still universal in the East. The Koorsee (throne) verse in the second chapter of the Koran describes the attributes of the Most High, and is engraved in this manner, and worn by the pious, as the most esteemed and sublime of all sentences.

(27) "Comboloio," a Turkish rosary. The MSS., particularly those of the Persians, are richly adorned and illuminated. The Greek females are kept in utter ignorance; but many of the Turkish girls are highly accomplished, though not actually qualified for a Christian coterie. Perhaps some of our own "blues" might not be the worse for bleaching.

(28) "Galiongée," or Galiongi, a sailor, that is, a Turkish sailor; the Greeks navigate, the Turks work the guns. Their dress is picturesque; and I have seen the Capitan Pacha more than once wearing it as a kind of incog. Their legs, however, are generally naked. The buskins described in the text as sheathed behind with silver are those of an Arnaut robber, who was my host (he had quitted the profession) at his Pyrgo, near Gastouni in the Morea; they were plated in scales one over the other, like the back of an armadillo.

(29) The characters on all Turkish scimitars contain sometimes the name of the place of their manufacture, but more generally a text from the Koran, in letters of gold. Amongst those in my possession is one with a blade of singular construction; it is very broad, and the edge notched into serpentine curves like the ripple of water, or the

wavering of flame. I asked the Armenian who sold it what possible use such a figure could add: he said, in Italian, that he did not know; but the Mussulmans had an idea that those of this form gave a severer wound; and liked it because it was "piu feroce." I did not much admire the reason, but bought it for its peculiarity.

(30) It is to be observed, that every allusion to anything or personage in the Old Testament, such as the Ark, or Cain, is equally the privilege of Mussulman and Jew: indeed, the former profess to be much better acquainted with the lives, true and fabulous, of the patriarchs, than is warranted by our own sacred writ; and not content with Adam, they have a biography of Pre-Adamites. Solomon is the monarch of all necromancy, and Moses a prophet inferior only to Christ and Mohammed. Zuleika is the Persian name of Potiphar's wife; and her amour with Joseph constitutes one of the finest poems in their language. It is, therefore, no violation of costume to put the names of Cain, or Noah, into the mouth of a Moslem.

(31) Paswan Oglou, the rebel of Widdin; who, for the last years of his life, set the whole power of the Porte at defiance.

(32) "Horse-tail," the standard of a Pacha.

(33) Giaffir, Pacha of Argyro Castro, or Scutari, I am not sure which, was actually taken off by the Albanian Ali, in the manner described in the text. Ali Pacha, while I was in the country, married the daughter of his victim, some years after the event had taken place at a bath in Sophia, or Adrianople. The poison was mixed in the cup of coffee, which is presented before the sherbet by the bath-keeper, after dressing.

(34) The Turkish notions of almost all islands are confined to the Archipelago, the sea alluded to.

(35) Lambro Canzani, a Greek, famous for his efforts in 1789-90, for the independence of his country. Abandoned by the Russians, he became a pirate, and the Archipelago was the scene of his enterprises. He is said to be still alive at St Petersburg. He and Riga are the two most celebrated of the Greek revolutionists.

(36) "Rayahs," all who pay the capitation tax, called the "Haratch."

(37) This first of voyages is one of the few with which the Mussulmans profess much acquaintance.

(38) The wandering life of the Arabs, Tartars, and Turkomans, will be found well detailed in any book of Eastern travels. That it possesses a charm peculiar to itself, cannot be denied. A young French renegado confessed to Chateaubriand, that he never found himself alone, galloping in the desert, without a sensation approaching to rapture, which was indescribable.

(39) "Jannat al Aden," the perpetual abode, the Mussulman paradise.

(40) A turban is carved in stone above the graves of men only.

(41) The death-song of the Turkish women. The "silent slaves" are the men, whose notions of decorum forbid complain in public.

(42) "I came to the place of my birth, and cried, 'The friends of my youth, where are they?' and an Echo answered, 'Where are they?'" — From an Arabic MS.

The above quotation (from which the idea in the text is taken) must be already familiar to every reader — it is given in the first annotation, p. 67, of "The Pleasures of Memory;" a poem so well known as to render a reference almost superfluous; but to whose pages all will be delighted to recur.

(43) "And airy tongues that syllable men's names." — MILTON.

For a belief that the souls of the dead inhabit the form of birds, we need not travel to the East. Lord Lyttleton's ghost story, the belief of the Duchess of Kendal, that George I. flew into her window in the shape of a raven (see Orford's "Reminiscences"), and many other instances, bring this superstition nearer home. The most singular was the whim of a Worcester lady, who, believing her daughter to exist in the shape of a singing bird, literally furnished her pew in the cathedral with cages full of the kind; and as she was rich, and a benefactress in beautifying the church, no objection was made to her harmless folly. For this anecdote, see Orford's "Letters."

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Chain I Gave: From The Turkish

The chain I gave was fair to view,
The lute I added sweet in sound;
The heart that offer'd both was true,
And ill deserved the fate it found.

These gifts were charm'd by secret spell,
Thy truth in absence to divine;
And they have done their duty well,
Alas! they could not teach the thine.

That chain was firm in every link,
But not to bear a stranger's touch;
That lute was sweet, till thou could'st think
In other hands its notes were such.

Let him who from thy neck unbound
The chain which shiver'd in his grasp,
Who saw that lute refuse to sound,
Restrung the chords, renew the clasp.

When thou wert changed, they alter'd too;
The chain is broke, the music mute.
'Tis past, to them and thee adieu
False heart, frail chain, and silent lute.

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Charity Ball

What matter the pangs of a husband and father,
If his sorrows in exile be great or be small,
So the Pharisee's glories around her she gather,
And the saint patronizes her 'charity ball!'

What matters--a heart which, though faulty, was feeling,
Be driven to excesses which once could appal--
That the sinner should suffer is only fair dealing,
As the saint keeps her charity back for 'the ball'!

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Conquest

The Son of Love and Lord of War I sing;
Him who bade England bow to Normandy
And left the name of conqueror more than king
To his unconquerable dynasty.
Not fann'd alone by Victory's fleeting wing,
He rear'd his bold and brilliant throne on high:
The Bastard kept, like lions, his prey fast,
And Britain's bravest victor was the last.

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Cornelian

No specious splendour of this stone
Endears it to my memory ever;
With lustre only once it shone,
And blushes modest as the giver.

Some, who can sneer at friendship's ties,
Have, for my weakness, oft reproved me;
Yet still the simple gift I prize,-
For I am sure the giver loved me.

He offer'd it with downcast look,
As fearful that I might refuse it;
I told him when the gift I took,
My only fear should be to lose it.

This pledge attentively I view'd,
And sparkling as I held it near,
Methought one drop the stone bedew'd,
And ever since I've loved a tear.

Still, to adorn his humble youth,
Nor wealth nor birth their treasures yield;
But he who seeks the flowers of truth,
Must quit the garden for the field.

'Tis not the plant uprear'd in sloth,
Which beauty shows, and sheds perfume;
The flowers which yield the most of both
In Nature's wild luxuriance bloom.

Had Fortune aided Nature's care,
For once forgetting to be blind,
His would have been an ample share,
If well proportion'd to his mind.

But had the goddess clearly seen,
His form had fix'd her fickle breast;
Her countless hoards would his have been,
And none remain'd to give the rest.

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Corsair

'O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,
Our thoughts as boundless, and our soul's as free
Far as the breeze can bear, the billows foam,
Survey our empire, and behold our home!
These are our realms, no limits to their sway-
Our flag the sceptre all who meet obey.
Ours the wild life in tumult still to range
From toil to rest, and joy in every change.
Oh, who can tell? not thou, luxurious slave!
Whose soul would sicken o'er the heaving wave;
Not thou, vain lord of wantonness and ease!
whom slumber soothes not - pleasure cannot please -
Oh, who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried,
And danced in triumph o'er the waters wide,
The exulting sense - the pulse's maddening play,
That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way?
That for itself can woo the approaching fight,
And turn what some deem danger to delight;
That seeks what cravens shun with more than zeal,
And where the feebler faint can only feel -
Feel - to the rising bosom's inmost core,
Its hope awaken and Its spirit soar?
No dread of death if with us die our foes -
Save that it seems even duller than repose:
Come when it will - we snatch the life of life -
When lost - what recks it but disease or strife?
Let him who crawls enamour'd of decay,
Cling to his couch, and sicken years away:
Heave his thick breath, and shake his palsied head;
Ours - the fresh turf; and not the feverish bed.
While gasp by gasp he falters forth his soul,
Ours with one pang - one bound - escapes control.
His corse may boast its urn and narrow cave,
And they who loath'd his life may gild his grave:
Ours are the tears, though few, sincerely shed,
When Ocean shrouds and sepulchres our dead.
For us, even banquets fond regret supply
In the red cup that crowns our memory;
And the brief epitaph in danger's day,
When those who win at length divide the prey,
And cry, Remembrance saddening o'er each brow,
How had the brave who fell exulted now!'

II.

Such were the notes that from the Pirate's isle
Around the kindling watch-fire rang the while:
Such were the sounds that thrill'd the rocks along,
And unto ears as rugged seem'd a song!
In scatter'd groups upon the golden sand,
They game-carouse-converse-or whet the brand:
Select the arms-to each his blade assign,
And careless eye the blood that dims its shine.

Repair the boat, replace the helm or oar,
While others straggling muse along the shore:
For the wild bird the busy springes set,
Or spread beneath the sun the dripping net:
Gaze where some distant sail a speck supplies
With all the 'thirsting eve of Enterprise:
Tell o'er the tales of many a night of toil,
And marvel where they next shall seize a spoil:
No matter where-- their chief's allotment this;
Theirs, to believe no prey nor plan amiss.
But who that CHIEF? his name on every shore
Is famed and fear'd - they ask and know no more.
With these he mingles not but to command;
Few are his words, but keen his eye and hand.
Ne'er seasons he with mirth their jovial mess
But they forgive his silence for success.
Ne'er for his lip the purpling cup they fill,
That goblet passes him untasted still -
And for his fare - the rudest of his crew
Would that, in turn, have pass'd untasted too;
Earth's coarsest bread, the garden's homeliest roots,
And scarce the summer luxury of fruits,
His short repast in humbleness supply
With all a hermit's board would scarce deny.
But while he shuns the grosser joys of sense,
His mind seems nourish'd by that abstinence.
'Steer to that shore! ' - they sail. 'Do this!' - 'tis done:
'Now form and follow me!' - the spoil is won.
Thus prompt his accents and his actions still,
And all obey and few inquire his will;
So To such, brief answer and contemptuous eye
Convey reproof, nor further deign reply.

III.

'A sail! - sail! ' -a promised prize to Hope!
Her nation - flag - how speaks the telescope?
No prize, alas! but yet a welcome sail:
The blood-red signal glitters in the gale.
Yes - she is ours - a home - returning bark -
Blow fair thou breeze! - she anchors ere the dark.
Already doubled is the cape - our bay
Receives that prow which proudly spurns the spray.
How gloriously her gallant course she goes!
Her white wings flying - never from her foes-
She walks the waters like a thing of life,
And seems to dare the elements to strife.
Who would not brave the battle-fire, the wreck,
To move the monarch of her peopled deck?

IV.

Hoarse o'er her side the rustling cable rings;
The sails are furl'd; and anchoring round she swings;

And gathering loiterers on the land discern
Her boat descending from the latticed stem.
'Tis man'd-the oars keep concert to the strand,
Till grates her keel upon the shallow sand.
Hail to the welcome shout! - the friendly speech!
When hand grasps hand uniting on the beach;
The smile, the question, and the quick reply,
And the heart's promise of festivity!

V.

The tidings spread, and gathering grows the crowd;
The hum of voices, and the laughter loud,
And woman's gentler anxious tone is heard -
Friends', husbands', lovers' names in each dear word:
'Oh! are they safe? we ask not of success -
But shall we see them? will their accents bless?
From where the battle roars, the billows chafe
They doubtless boldly did - but who are safe?
Here let them haste to gladden and surprise,
And kiss the doubt from these delighted eyes!'

VI.

'Where is our chief? for him we bear report -
And doubt that joy - which hails our coming short;
Yet thus sincere, 'tis cheering, though so brief;
But, Juan! instant guide us to our chief:
Our greeting paid, we'll feast on our return,
And all shall hear what each may wish to learn.'
Ascending slowly by the rock-hewn way,
To where his watch-tower beetles o'er the bay,
By bushy brake, and wild flowers blossoming,
And freshness breathing from each silver spring,
Whose scatter'd streams from granite basins burst,
Leap into life, and sparkling woo your thirst;
From crag to cliff they mount - Near yonder cave,
What lonely straggler looks along the wave?
In pensive posture leaning on the brand,
Not oft a resting-staff to that red hand?
'Tis he 'tis Conrad - here, as wont, alone;
On - Juan! - on - and make our purpose known.
The bark he views - and tell him we would greet
His ear with tidings he must quickly meet:
We dare not yet approach-thou know'st his mood
When strange or uninvited steps intrude.'

VII.

Him Juan sought, and told of their intent;-
He spake not, but a sign express'd assent.
These Juan calls - they come - to their salute
He bends him slightly, but his lips are mute.
'These letters, Chief, are from the Greek - the spy,
Who still proclaims our spoil or peril nigh:

Whate'er his tidings, we can well report,
Much that' - 'Peace, peace! ' - he cuts their prating short.
Wondering they turn, abash'd, while each to each
Conjecture whispers in his muttering speech:
They watch his glance with many a stealing look
To gather how that eye the tidings took;
But, this as if he guess'd, with head aside,
Perchance from some emotion, doubt, or pride,
He read the scroll - 'My tablets, Juan' hark -
Where is Gonsalvo?'
'In the anchor'd bark'
'There let him stay - to him this order bear -
Back to your duty - for my course prepare:
Myself this enterprise to-night will share.'

'To-night, Lord Conrad!'
'Ay! at set of sun:
The breeze will freshen when the day is done.
My corslet, cloak - one hour and we are gone.
Sling on thy bugle - see that free from rust
My carbine-lock springs worthy of my trust.
Be the edge sharpen'd of my boarding-brand,
And give its guard more room to fit my hand.
This let the armourer with speed dispose
Last time, it more fatigued my arm than foes:
Mark that the signal-gun be duly fired,
To tell us when the hour of stay's expired.'

VIII.

They make obeisance, and retire in haste,
Too soon to seek again the watery waste:
Yet they repine not - so that Conrad guides;
And who dare question aught that he decides?
That man of loneliness and mystery
Scarce seen to smile, and seldom heard to sigh;
Whose name appals the fiercest of his crew,
And tints each swarthy cheek with sallower hue;
Still sways their souls with that commanding art
That dazzles, leads, yet chills the vulgar heart.
What is that spell, that thus his lawless train
Confess and envy, yet oppose in vain?
What should it be, that thus their faith can bind?
The power of Thought - the magic of the Mind!
Link'd with success, assumed and kept with skill,
That moulds another's weakness to its will;
Wields with their hands, but, still to these unknown,
Makes even their mightiest deeds appear his own
Such hath it been shall be - beneath the sun
The many still must labour for the one!
'Tis Nature's doom - but let the wretch who toils
Accuse not, hate not him who wears the spoils.
Oh! if he knew the weight of splendid chains,

How light the balance of his humbler pains!

IX.

Unlike the heroes of each ancient race,
Demons in act, but Gods at least in face,
In Conrad's form seems little to admire,
Though his dark eyebrow shades a glance of fire:
Robust but not Herculean - to the sight
No giant frame sets forth his common height;
Yet, in the whole, who paused to look again,
Saw more than marks the crowd of vulgar men;
They gaze and marvel how - and still confess
That thus it is, but why they cannot guess.
Sun-bumt his cheek, his forehead high and pale
The sable curls in wild profusion veil;
And oft perforce his rising lip reveals
The haughtier thought it curbs, but scarce conceals
Though smooth his voice, and calm his general mien'
Still seems there something he would not have seen
His features' deepening lines and varying hue
At times attracted, yet perplex'd the view,
As if within that murkiness of mind
Work'd feelings fearful, and yet undefined
Such might it be - that none could truly tell -
Too close inquiry his stern glance would quell.
There breathe but few whose aspect might defy
The full encounter of his searching eye;
He had the skill, when Cunning's gaze would seek
To probe his heart and watch his changing cheek
At once the observer's purpose to espy,
And on himself roll back his scrutiny,
Lest he to Conrad rather should betray
Some secret thought, than drag that chief's to day.
There was a laughing Devil in his sneer,
That raised emotions both of rage and fear;
And where his frown of hatred darkly fell,
Hope withering fled, and Mercy sigh'd farewell!

X.

Slight are the outward signs of evil thought,
Within-within-'twas there the spirit wrought!
Love shows all changes-Hate, Ambition, Guile,
Betray no further than the bitter smile;
The lip's least curl, the lightest paleness thrown
Along the govern'd aspect, speak alone
Of deeper passions; and to judge their mien,
He, who would see, must be himself unseen.
Then-with the hurried tread, the upward eye,
The clenched hand, the pause of agony,
That listens, starting, lest the step too near
Approach intrusive on that mood of fear;
Then-with each feature working from the heart,

With feelings, loosed to strengthen-not depart,
That rise, convulse, contend-that freeze, or glow
Flush in the' cheek, or damp upon the brow;
Then, Stranger! if thou canst, and tremblest not
Behold his soul-the rest that soothes his lot!
Mark how that lone and blighted bosom sears
The scathing thought of execrated years!
Behold-but who hath seen, or e'er shall see,
Man as himself-the secret spirit free?

XI.

Yet was not Conrad thus by Nature sent
To lead the guilty-guilt's worse instrument-
His soul was changed, before his deeds had driven
Him forth to war with man and forfeit heaven
Warp'd by the world in Disappointment's school,
In words too wise, in conduct there a fool;
Too firm to yield, and far too proud to stoop,
Doom'd by his very virtues for a dupe,
He cursed those virtues as the cause of ill,
And not the traitors who betray'd him still;
Nor deem'd that gifts bestow'd on better men
Had left him joy, and means to give again
Fear'd, shunn'd, belied, ere youth had lost her force,
He hated man too much to feel remorse,
And thought the voice of wrath a sacred call,
To pay the injuries of some on all.
He knew himself a villain-but he deem'd
The rest no better than the thing he seem'd
And scorn'd the best as hypocrites who hid
Those deeds the bolder spirit plainly did.
He knew himself detested, but he knew
The hearts that loath'd him, crouch'd and dreaded too.
Lone, wild, and strange, he stood alike exempt
From all affection and from all contempt;
His name could sadden, and his acts surprise;
But they that fear'd him dared not to despise;
Man spurns the worm, but pauses ere he wake
The slumbering venom of the folded snake:
The first may turn, but not avenge the blow;
The last expires, but leaves no living foe;
Fast to the doom'd offender's form it clings,
And he may crush-not conquer-still it stings!

XII.

None are all evil-quicken round his heart
One softer feeling would not yet depart
Oft could he sneer at others as beguiled
By passions worthy of a fool or child;
Yet 'gainst that passion vainly still he strove,
And even in him it asks the name of Love!
Yes, it was love-unchangeable-unchanged,

Felt but for one from whom he never ranged;
Though fairest captives daily met his eye,
He shunn'd, nor sought, but coldly pass'd them by;
Though many a beauty droop'd in prison'd bower,
None ever sooth'd his most unguarded hour.
Yes-it was Love-if thoughts of tenderness
Tried in temptation, strengthen'd by distress
Unmoved by absence, firm in every clime,
And yet-oh more than all! untired by time;
Which nor defeated hope, nor baffled wile,
Could render sullen were she near to smile,
Nor rage could fire, nor sickness fret to vent
On her one murmur of his discontent;
Which still would meet with joy, with calmness part,
Lest that his look of grief should reach her heart;
Which nought removed, nor menaced to remove-
If there be love in mortals-this was love!
He was a villain-ay, reproaches shower
On him-but not the passion, nor its power,
Which only proved, all other virtues gone,
Not guilt itself could quench this loveliest one!

XIII.

He paused a moment-till his hastening men
Pass'd the first winding downward to the glen.
'Strange tidings!-many a peril have I pass'd
Nor know I why this next appears the last!
Yet so my heart forebodes, but must not fear
Nor shall my followers find me falter here.
'Tis rash to meet, but surer death to wait
Till here they hunt us to undoubted fate;
And, if my plan but hold, and Fortune smile,
We'll furnish mourners for our funeral pile.
Ay, let them slumber-peaceful be their dreams!
Morn ne'er awoke them with such brilliant beams
As kindle high to-flight (but blow, thou breeze!)
To warm these slow avengers of the sea
Now to Medora-Oh! my sinking heart,
Long may her own be lighter than thou art!
Yet was I brave-mean boast where all are brave!
Ev'n insects sting for aught they seek to save.
This common courage which with brutes we share
That owes its' deadliest efforts to despair,
Small merit claims-but 'twas my nobler hope
To teach my few with numbers still to cope;
Long have I led them-not to vainly bleed:
No medium now-we perish or succeed;
So let it be-it irks not me to die;
But thus to urge them whence they cannot fly.
My lot hath long had little of my care,
But chafes my pride thus baffled in the snare:
Is this my skill? my craft? to set at last

Hope, power, and life upon a single cast?
Oh' Fate!-accuse thy folly, not thy fate!
She may redeem thee still, not yet too late.'

XIV.

Thus with himself communion held he, till
He reach'd the summit of his tower-crown'd hill:
There at the portal paused—or wild and soft
He heard those accents never heard too oft
Through the high lattice far yet sweet they rung,
And these the notes his bird of beauty sung:

1.

'Deep in my soul that tender secret dwells,
Lonely and lost to light for evermore,
Save when to thine my heart responsive swells,
Then trembles into silence as before

2.

'There, in its centre' a sepulchral lamp
Burns the slow flame, eternal, but unseen;
Which not the darkness of despair can damp,
Though vain its ray as it had never been.

3.

'Remember me—Oh! pass not thou my grave
Without one thought whose relics there recline
The only pang my bosom dare not brave
Must be to find forgetfulness in thine.

4.

'My fondest, faintest, latest accents hear—
Grief for the dead not virtue can reprove;
Then give me all I ever ask'd—a tear,
The first-last-sole reward of so much love!'

He pass'd the portal, cross'd the corridor,
And reach'd the chamber as the strain gave o'er:
'My own Medora! sure thy song is sad—'
'In Conrad's absence wouldest thou have it glad?
Without thine ear to listen to my lay,
Still must my song my thoughts, my soul betray:
Still must each action to my bosom suit,
My heart unhus'h'd, although my lips were mute!
Oh! many a night on this lone couch reclined,
My dreaming fear with storms hath wing'd the wind,
And deem'd the breath that faintly fann'd thy sail
The murmuring prelude of the ruder gale;
Though soft, it seem'd the low prophetic dirge,
That mourn'd thee floating on the savage surge;
Still would I rise to rouse the beacon fire,
Lest spies less true should let the blaze expire;

And many a restless hour outwatch'd each star,
And morning came-and still thou wert afar.
Oh! how the chill blast on my bosom blew,
And day broke dreary on my troubled view,
And still I gazed and gazed-and not a prow
Was granted to my tears, my truth, my vow!
At length 'twas noon-I hail'd and blest the mast
That met my sight-it near'd-Alas! it pass'd!
Another came-Oh God! 'twas thine at last!
Would that those days were over! wilt thou ne'er,
My Conrad! learn the joys of peace to share?
Sure thou hast more than wealth, and many a home
As bright as this invites us not to roam:
Thou know'st it is not peril that I fear,
I only tremble when thou art not here;
Then not for mine, but that far dearer life,
Which flies from love and languishes for strife-
How strange that heart, to me so tender still,
Should war with nature and its better will!"

'Yea, strange indeed-that heart hath long been changed;
Worm-like 'twas trampled, adder-like avenged,
Without one hope on earth beyond thy love,
And scarce a glimpse of mercy from above.
Yet the same feeling which thou dost condemn,
My very love to thee is hate to them,
So closely mingling here, that disentwined,
I cease to love thee when I love mankind:
Yet dread not this - the proof of all the past
Assures the future that my love will last;
But - oh, Medora! nerve thy gentler heart;
This hour again-but not for long-we part.'

'This hour we part-my heart foreboded this:
Thus ever fade my fairy dreams of bliss.
This hour-it cannot be-this hour away!
Yon bark hath hardly anchor'd in the bay:
Her consort still is absent, and her crew
Have need of rest before they toil anew:
My love! thou mock'st my weakness; and wouldst steel
My breast before the time when it must feel;
But trifle now no more with my distress,
Such mirth hath less of play than bitterness.
Be silent, Conrad! -dearest! come and share
The feast these hands delighted to prepare;
Light toil! to cull and dress thy frugal fare!
See, I have pluck'd the fruit that promised best,
And where not sure, perplex'd, but pleased, I guess'd
At such as seem'd the fairest; thrice the hill
My steps have wound to try the coolest rill;
Yes! thy sherbet tonight will sweetly flow,
See how it sparkles in its vase of snow!

The grapes' gay juice thy bosom never cheers;
Thou more than Moslem when the cup appears:
Think not I mean to chide-for I rejoice
What others deem a penance is thy choice.
But come, the board is spread; our silver lamp
Is trimm'd, and heeds not the sirocco's damp:
Then shall my handmaids while the time along,
And join with me the dance, or wake the song;
Or my guitar, which still thou lov'st to hear'
Shall soothe or lull-or, should it vex thine ear
We'll turn the' tale, by Ariosto told,
Of fair Olympia loved and left of old.
Why, thou wert worse than he who broke his vow
To that lost damsel, shouldst thou leave me now;
Or even that traitor chief-I've seen thee smile,
When the dear sky show'd Ariadne's Isle,
Which I have pointed from these cliffs the while:
And thus half sportive, half in fear, I said,
Lest time should rake that doubt to more than dread,
Thus Conrad, too, win quit me for the main;
And he deceived me-for he came again!'

'Again, again-and oft again-my love!
If there be life below, and hope above,
He will return-but now, the moments bring
The time of parting with redoubled wing:
The why, the where - what boots it now to tell?
Since all must end in that wild word - farewell!
Yet would I fain-did time allow disclose-
Fear not-these are no formidable foes
And here shall watch a more than wonted guard,
For sudden siege and long defence prepared:
Nor be thou lonely, though thy lord 's away,
Our matrons and thy handmaids with thee stay;
And this thy comfort-that, when next we meet,
Security shall make repose more sweet.
List!-'tis the bugle! '-Juan shrilly blew-
'One kiss-one more-another-Oh! Adieu!'

She rose-she sprung-she clung to his embrace,
Till his heart heaved beneath her hidden face:
He dared not raise to his that deep-blue eye,
Which downcast droop'd in tearless agony.
Her long fair hair lay floating o'er his arms,
In all the wildness of dishevell'd charms;
Scarce beat that bosom where his image dwelt
So full-that feeling seem'd almost Unfelt!
Hark-peals the thunder of the signal-gun
It told 'twas sunset, and he cursed that sun.
Again-again-that form he madly press'd,
Which mutely clasp'd, imploringly caress'd!
And tottering to the couch his bride he bore,

One moment gazed, as if to gaze no more;
Felt that for him earth held but her alone,
Kiss'd her cold forehead-turn'd-is Conrad gone?

XV.

'And is he gone?' on sudden solitude
How oft that fearful question will intrude
'Twas but an instant past, and here he stood!
And now '-without the portal's porch she rush'd,
And then at length her tears in freedom gush'd;
Big, bright, and fast, unknown to her they fell;
But still her lips refused to send-'Farewell!'
For in that word-that fatal word-how'e'er
We promise, hope, believe, there breathes despair.
O'er every feature of that still, pale face,
Had sorrow fix'd what time can ne'er erase:
The tender blue of that large loving eye
Grew frozen with its gaze on vacancy,
Till-Oh? how far!-it caught a glimpse of him,
And then it flow'd, and phrensed seem'd to swim
Through those' long, dark, and glistening lashes dew'd
With drops of sadness oft to be renew'd.
'He's gone! '-against her heart that hand is driven,
Convulsed and quick-then gently raised to heaven:
She look'd and saw the heaving of the main;
The white sail set she dared not look again;
But turn'd with sickening soul within the gate
'It is no dream - and I am desolate!'

XVI.

From crag to crag descending, swiftly sped
Stern Conrad down, nor once he turn'd his head;
But shrunk whene'er the windings of his way
Forced on his eye what he would not survey,
His lone but lovely dwelling on the steep,
That hail'd him first when homeward from the deep
And she-the dim and melancholy star,
Whose ray of beauty reach'd him from afar
On her he must not gaze, he must not think,
There he might rest-but on Destruction's brink:
Yet once almost he stopp'd, and nearly gave
His fate to chance, his projects to the wave:
But no-it must not be-a worthy chief
May melt, but not betray to woman's grief.
He sees his bark, he notes how fair the wind,
And sternly gathers all his might of mind:
Again he hurries on-and as he hears
The dang of tumult vibrate on his ears,
The busy sounds, the bustle of the shore,
The shout, the signal, and the dashing oar;
As marks his eye the seafarer on the mast,
The anchors rise, the sails unfurling fast,

The waving kerchiefs of the crowd that urge
That mute adieu to those who stem the surge;
And more than all, his blood-red flag aloft,
He marvell'd how his heart could seem so soft.
Fire in his glance, and wildness in his breast
He feels of all his former self possesst;
He bounds - he flies-until his footsteps reach
The verge where ends the cliff, begins the beach,
There checks his speed; but pauses less to breathe
The breezy freshness of the deep beneath,
Than there his wonted statelier step renew;
Nor rush, disturb'd by haste, to vulgar view:
For well had Conrad learn'd to curb the crowd,
By arts that veil and oft preserve the proud;
His was the lofty port, the distant mien,
That seems to shun the sight-and awes if seen:
The solemn aspect, and the high-born eye,
That checks low mirth, but lacks not courtesy;
All these he wielded to command assent:
But where he wish'd to win, so well unbent
That kindness cancell'd fear in those who heard,
And others' gifts show'd mean beside his word,
When echo'd to the heart as from his own
His deep yet tender melody of tone:
But such was foreign to his wonted mood,
He cared not what he soften'd, but subdued:
The evil passions of his youth had made
Him value less who loved-than what obey'd.

XVII.

Around him mustering ranged his ready guard,
Before him Juan stands - 'Are all prepared?'
They are - nay more - embark'd: the boats
Waits but my Chief-'
My sword, and my capote.'
Soon firmly girded on, and lightly slung,
His belt and cloak were o'er his shoulders flung:
'Call Pedro here!' He comes - and Conrad bends,
With all the courtesy he deign'd his friends;
'Receive these tablets, and peruse with care,
Words of high trust and truth are graven there;
Double the guard, and when Anselmo's bark
Arrives, let him alike these orders mark:
In three days (serve the breeze) the sun shall shine
On our return - till then all peace be thine!'
This said, his brother Pirate's hand he wrung,
Then to his boat with haughty gesture sprung.
Flash'd the dipt oars, and sparkling with the stroke,
Around the waves' phosphoric brightness broke;
They gain the vessel - on the deck he stands, -
Shrieks the shrill whistle, ply the busy hands -
He marks how well the ship her helm obeys,

How gallant all her crew, and deigns to praise.
His eyes of pride to young Gonsalvo turn -
Why doth he start, and inly seem to mourn?
Alas! those eyes beheld his rocky tower
And live a moment o'er the parting hour;
She - his Medora - did she mark the prow?
Ah! never loved he half so much as now!
But much must yet be done ere dawn of day -
Again he mans himself and turns away;
Down to the cabin with Gonsalvo bends,
And there unfolds his plan, his means, and ends;
Before them burns the lamp, and spreads the chart,
And all that speaks and aids the naval art;
They to the midnight watch protract debate;
To anxious eyes what hour is ever late?
Meantime, the steady breeze serenely blew,
And fast and falcon-like the vessel flew;
Pass'd the high headlands of each clustering isle,
To gain their port - long - long ere morning smile:
And soon the night-glass through the narrow bay
Discovers where the Pacha's galleys lay.
Count they each sail, and mark how there supine
The lights in vain o'er heedless Moslem shine.
Secure, unnoted, Conrad's prow pass'd by,
And anchor'd where his ambush meant to lie;
Screen'd from espial by the jutting cape,
That rears on high its rude fantastic shape.
Then rose his band to duty - not from sleep -
Equipp'd for deeds alike on land or deep;
While lean'd their leader o'er the fretting flood,
And calmly talk'd-and yet he talk'd of blood!

CANTO THE SECOND

'Conoscestci dubiosi desiri?'~Dante

I.

IN Coron's bay floats many a galley light,
Through Coron's lattices the lamps are bright
For Seyd, the Pacha, makes a feast to-night:
A feast for promised triumph yet to come,
When he shall drag the fetter'd Rovers home;
This hath he sworn by Allah and his sword,
And faithful to his firman and his word,
His summon'd prows collect along the coast,
And great the gathering crews, and loud the boast;
Already shared the captives and the prize,
Though far the distant foe they thus despise
'Tis but to sail - no doubt to-morrow's Sun
Will see the Pirates bound, their haven won!
Meantime the watch may slumber, if they will,

Nor only wake to war, but dreaming kill.
Though all, who can, disperse on shore and seek
To flesh their glowing valour on the Greek;
How well such deed becomes the turban'd brave -
To bare the sabre's edge before a slave!
Infest his dwelling - but forbear to slay,
Their arms are strong, yet merciful to-day,
And do not deign to smite because they may!
Unless some gay caprice suggests the blow,
To keep in practice for the coming foe.
Revel and rout the evening hours beguile,
And they who wish to wear a head must smile
For Moslem mouths produce their choicest cheer,
And hoard their curses, till the coast is clear.

II.

High in his hall reclines the turban'd Seyd;
Around-the bearded chiefs he came to lead.
Removed the banquet, and the last pilaff -
Forbidden draughts, 'tis said, he dared to quaff,
Though to the rest the sober berry's juice
The slaves bear round for rigid Moslems' use;
The long chibouque's dissolving cloud supply,
While dance the Almas to wild minstrelsy.
The rising morn will view the chiefs embark;
But waves are somewhat treacherous in the dark:
And revellers may more securely sleep
On silken couch than o'er the rugged deep:
Feast there who can - nor combat till they must,
And less to conquest than to Korans trust:
And yet the numbers crowded in his host
Might warrant more than even the Pacha's boast.

III.

With cautious reverence from the outer gate
Slow stalks the slave, whose office there to wait,
Bows his bent head, his hand salutes the floor,
Ere yet his tongue the trusted tidings bore:
'A captive Dervise, from the Pirate's nest
Escaped, is here - himself would tell the rest.'
He took the sign from Seyd's assenting eye,
And led the holy man in silence nigh.
His arms were folded on his dark-green vest,
His step was feeble, and his look deprest;
Yet worn he seem'd of hardship more than years,
And pale his cheek with penance, not from fears.
Vow'd to his God - his sable locks he wore,
And these his lofty cap rose proudly o'er:
Around his form his loose long robe was thrown
And wrapt 'a breast bestow'd on heaven alone;
Submissive, yet with self-possession mann'd,
He calmly, met the curious eyes that scann'd;

And question of his coming fain would seek,
Before the Pacha's will allow'd to speak.

IV.

Whence com'st thou, Dervise?'

'From the outlaw's den,

A fugitive -'

'Thy capture where and when?'

From Scalanova's port to Scio's isle,

The Saick was bound; but Allah did not smile

Upon our course - the Moslem merchant's gains

The Rovers won; our limbs have worn their chains.

I had no death to fear, nor wealth to boast

Beyond the wandering freedom which I lost;

At length a fisher's humble boat by night

Afforded hope, and offer'd chance of flight;

I seized the hour, and find my safety here -

With thee - most mighty Pacha! who can fear?'

'How speed the outlaws? stand they well prepared,
Their plunder'd wealth, and robber's rock, to guard?

Dream they of this our preparation, doom'd

To view with fire their scorpion nest consumed?'

'Pacha! the fetter'd captive's mourning eye,
That weeps for flight, but ill can play the spy;

I only heard the reckless waters roar

Those waves that would not bear me from the shore;

I only mark'd the glorious sun and sky,

Too bright, too blue, or my captivity;

And felt that all which Freedom's bosom cheers

Must break my chain before it dried my tears.

This may'st thou judge, at least, from my escape,

They little deem of aught in peril's shape;

Else vainly had I pray'd or sought the chance

That leads me here - if eyed with vigilance

The careless guard that did not see me fly

May watch as idly when thy power is nigh.

Pacha! my limbs are faint - and nature craves

Food for my hunger, rest from tossing waves:

Permit my absence - peace be with thee! Peace

With all around! - now grant repose - release.'

'Stay, Dervise! I have more to question - stay,
I do command thee - sit - dost hear? - obey!

More I must ask, and food the slaves shall bring

Thou shalt not pine where all are banqueting:

The supper done - prepare thee to reply,

Clearly and full -I love not mystery.'

'Twere vain to guess what shook the pious man,

Who look'd not lovingly on that Divan;

Nor show'd high relish for the banquet prest,

And less respect for every fellow guest.
'Twas but a moment's peevish hectic pass'd
Along his cheek, and tranquillised as fast:
He sate him down in silence, and his look
Resumed the calmness which before forsook:
This feast was usher'd in, but sumptuous fare
He shunn'd as if some poison mingled there.
For one so long condemn'd to toil and fast,
Methinks he strangely spares the rich re-past.

'What ails thee, Dervise? eat - dost thou suppose
This feast a Christian's? or my friends thy foes?
Why dost thou shun the salt? that sacred pledge,
Which once partaken, blunts the sabre's edge,
Makes ev'n contending tribes in peace unite,
And hated hosts seem brethren to the sight!'

'Salt seasons dainties-and my food is still
The humblest root, my drink the simplest rill;
And my stern vow and order's laws oppose
To break or mingle bread with friends or foes;
It may seem strange - if there be aught to dread,
That peril rests upon my single head;
But for thy sway - nay more - thy Sultan's throne,
I taste nor bread nor banquet - save alone;
Infringed our order's rule, the Prophet's rage
To Mecca's dome might bar my pilgrimage.'

'Well - as thou wilt - ascetic as thou art -
One question answer; then in peace depart.
How many? - Ha! it cannot sure be day?
What star - what sun is bursting on the bay?
It shines a lake of fire! - away - away!
Ho! treachery! my guards! my scimitar!
The galleys feed the flames - and I afar!
Accursed Dervise! - these thy tidings - thou
Some villain spy-seize cleave him - slay him now!'

Up rose the Dervise with that burst of light,
Nor less his change of form appall'd the sight:
Up rose that Dervise - not in saintly garb,
But like a warrior bounding on his barb,
Dash'd his high cap, and tore his robe away -
Shone his mail'd breast, and flash'd his sabre's ray!
His dose but glittering casque, and sable plume,
More glittering eye, and black brow's sabler gloom,
Glared on the Moslems' eyes some Afrit sprite,
Whose demon death-blow left no hope for fight.
The wild confusion, and the swarthy glow
Of flames on high, and torches from below;
The shriek of terror, and the mingling yell -
For swords began to dash' and shouts to swell -

Flung o'er that spot of earth the air of hell!
Distracted, to and fro, the flying slaves
Behold but bloody shore and fiery waves;
Nought heeded they the Pacha's angry cry,
They seize that Dervise!-seize on Zatanai!
He saw their terror-check'd the first dispair
That urged him but to stand and perish there,
Since far too early and too well obey'd,
The flame was kindled ere the signal made;
He saw their terror - from his baldric drew
-His bugle-brief the blast-but shrilly blew;
'Tis answered-' Well ye speed, my gallant crew!
Why did I doubt their quickness of career?
And deem design had left me single here?'
Sweeps his long arm-that sabre's whirling sway
Sheds fast atonement for its first delay;
Completes his fury what their fear begun,
And makes the many basely quail to one.
The cloven turbans o'er the chamber spread,
And scarce an arm dare rise to guard its head:
Even Seyd, convulsed, o'erwhelm'd, with rage surprise,
Retreats before him, though he still defies.
No craven he - and yet he dreads the blow,
So much Confusion magnifies his foe!
His blazing galleys still distract his sight,
He tore his beard, and foaming fled the fight;
For now the pirates pass'd the Haram gate,
And burst within - and it were death to wait
Where wild Amazement shrieking - kneeling throws
The sword aside - in vain the blood o'erflows!
The Corsairs pouring, haste to where within
Invited Conrad's bugle, and the din
Of groaning victims, and wild cries for life,
Proclaim'd how well he did the work of strife.
They shout to find him grim and lonely there,
A glutted tiger mangling in his lair!
But short their greeting, shorter his reply
'Tis well but Seyd escapes, and he must die-
Much hath been done, but more remains to do -
Their galleys blaze - why not their city too?'

V.

Quick at the word they seized him each a torch'
And fire the dome from minaret to porch.
A stern delight was fix'd in Conrad's eye,
But sudden sunk - for on his ear the cry
Of women struck, and like a deadly knell
Knock'd at that heart unmoved by battle's yell.
'Oh! burst the Haram - wrong not on your lives
One female form remember - we have wives.
On them such outrage Vengeance will repay;
Man is our foe, and such 'tis ours to slay:

But still we spared - must spare the weaker prey.
Oh! I forgot - but Heaven will not forgive
If at my word the helpless cease to live;
Follow who will - I go - we yet have time
Our souls to lighten of at least a crime.'
He climbs the crackling stair, he bursts the door,
Nor feels his feet glow scorching with the floor;
His breath choked gasping with the volumed smoke,
But still from room to room his way he broke.
They search - they find - they save: with lusty arms
Each bears a prize of unregarded charms;
Calm their loud fears; sustain their sinking frames
With all the care defenceless beauty claims
So well could Conrad tame their fiercest mood,
And check the very hands with gore imbrued.
But who is she? whom Conrad's arms convey
From reeking pile and combat's wreck away -
Who but the love of him he dooms to bleed?
The Haram queen - but still the slave of Seyd!

VI.

Brief time had Conrad now to greet Gulnare,
Few words to re-assure the trembling fair
For in that pause compassion snatch'd from war,
The foe before retiring, fast and far,
With wonder saw their footsteps unpursued,
First slowlier fled - then rallied - then withstood.
This Seyd perceives, then first perceives how few?
Compared with his, the Corsair's roving crew,
And blushes o'er his error, as he eyes
The ruin wrought by panic and surprise.
Alla il Alla! Vengeance swells the cry -
Shame mounts to rage that must atone or die!
And flame for flame and blood for blood must tell,
The tide of triumph ebbs that flow'd too well -
When wrath returns to renovated strife,
And those who fought for conquest strike for life
Conrad beheld the danger - he beheld
His followers faint by freshening foes repell'd:
'One effort - one - to break the circling host!'
They form - unite - charge - waver - all is lost!
Within a narrower ring compress'd, beset,
Hopeless, not heartless, strive and struggle yet -
Ah! now they fight in firmest file no more,
Hemm'd in, cut off, cleft down, and trampled o'er,
But each strikes singly, silently, and home,
And sinks outworned rather than o'ercome,
His last faint quittance rendering with his breath,
Till the blade glimmers in the grasp of death!

VII.

But first, ere came the rallying host to blows,

And rank to rank, and hand to hand oppose,
Gulnare and all her Haram handmaids freed,
Safe in the dome of one who held their creed,
By Conrad's mandate safely were bestow'd
And dried those tears for life and fame that flow'd:
And when that dark-eyed lady, young Gulnare
Recall'd those thoughts late wandering in despair
Much did she marvel o'er the courtesy
That smooth'd his accents, soften'd in his eye:
'Twas strange—that robber thus with gore bedew'd
Seem'd gentler then than Seyd in fondest mood.
The Pacha woo'd as if he deem'd the slave
Must seem delighted with the heart he gave
The Corsair vow'd protection, soothed affright
As if his homage were a woman's right.
'The wish is wrong-nay, worse for female - vain:
Yet much I long to view that chief again;
If but to thank for, what my fear forgot,
The life my loving lord remember'd not!'

VIII.

And him she saw, where thickest carnage spread,
But gather'd breathing from the happier dead;
Far from his band, and battling with a host
That deem right dearly won the field he lost,
Fell'd - bleeding - baffled of the death he sought,
And snatch'd to expiate all the ills he wrought;
Preserved to linger and to live in vain,
While Vengeance ponder'd o'er new plans of pain,
And stanch'd the blood she saves to shed again -
But drop for drop, for Seyd's unglutted eye
Would doom him ever dying - ne'er to die!
Can this be he? triumphant late she saw
When his red hand's wild gesture waved a law!
'Tis he indeed - disarm'd but undeprest,
His sole regret the life he still possest;
His wounds too slight, though taken with that will,
Which would have kiss'd the hand that then could kill.
Oh were there none, of all the many given,
To send his soul - he scarcely ask'd to heaven?
Must he alone of all retain his breath,
Who more than all had striven and struck for death?
He deeply felt - what mortal hearts must feel,
When thus reversed on faithless fortune's wheel,
For crimes committed, and the victor's threat
Of lingering tortures to repay the debt -
He deeply, darkly felt; but evil pride
That led to perpetrate, now serves to hide.
Still in his stern and self-collected mien
A conqueror's more than captive's air is seen
Though faint with wasting toil and stiffening wound,
But few that saw - so calmly gazed around:

Though the far shouting of the distant crowd,
Their tremors o'er, rose insolently loud,
The better warriors who beheld him near,
Insulted not the foe who taught them fear;
And the grim guards that to his durance led,
In silence eyed him with a secret dread

IX.

The Leech was sent-but not in mercy - there,
To note how much the life yet left could bear;
He found enough to load with heaviest chain,
And promise feeling for the wrench of pain;
To-morrow - yea - tomorrow's evening gun
Will sinking see impalement's pangs begun'
And rising with the wonted blush of morn
Behold how well or ill those pangs are borne.
Of torments this the longest and the worst,
Which adds all other agony to thirst,
That day by day death still forbears to slake,
While famish'd vultures flit around the stake.
'Oh! Water - water! ' smiling Hate denies
The victim's prayer, for if he drinks he dies.
This was his doom; - the Leech, the guard were gone,
And left proud Conrad fetter'd and alone.

X.

'Twere vain to paint to what his feelings grew -
It even were doubtful if their victim knew.
There is a war, a chaos of the mind,
When all its elements convulsed, combined,
Lie dark and jarring with perturbed force,
And gnashing with impenitent Remorse -
That juggling fiend, who never spake before
But cries 'I warn'd thee!' when the deed is o'er.
Vain voice! the spirit burning but unbent
May writhe, rebel - the weak alone repent!
Even in that lonely hour when most it feels,
And, to itself; all, all that self reveals,-
No single passion, and no ruling thought
That leaves the rest, as once, unseen, unsought,
But the wild prospect when the soul reviews,
All rushing through their thousand avenues -
Ambition's dreams expiring, love's regret,
Endanger'd glory, life itself beset;
The joy untasted, the contempt or hate
'Gainst those who fain would triumph in our fate
The hopeless' past, the hasting future driven
Too quickly on to guess of hell or heaven;
Deeds, thoughts, and words, perhaps remember'd not
So keenly till that hour, but ne'er forgot;
Things light or lovely in their acted time,
But now to stern reflection each a crime;

The withering sense of evil unreveal'd,
Not cankering less because the more con ceal'd -
All, in a word, from which all eyes must start,
That opening sepulchre - the naked heart
Bares with its buried woes, till Pride awake,
To snatch the mirror from the soul-and break.
Ay, Pride can veil, and Courage brave it all -
All - all - before - beyond - the deadliest fall.
Each hath some fear, and he who least betrays,
The only hypocrite deserving praise:
Not the loud recreant wretch who boasts and flies;
But he who looks on death-and silent dies.
So steel'd by pondering o'er his far career,
He half-way meets him should he menace near!

XI.

In the high chamber of his highest tower
Sate Conrad, fetter'd in the Pacha's power.
His palace perish'd in the flame - this fort
Contain'd at once his captive and his court.
Not much could Conrad of his sentence blame,
His foe, if vanquish'd, had but shared the same:-
Alone he sate-in solitude had scann'd
His guilty bosom, but that breast he mann'd:
One thought alone he could not - dared not meet -
'Oh, how these tidings will Medora greet?'
Then - only then - his clanking hands he raised,
And strain'd with rage the chain on which he gazed
But soon he found, or feign'd, or dream'd relief,
And smiled in self-derision of his grief,
'And now come torture when it will - or may,
More need of rest to nerve me for the day!'
This said, with languor to his mat he crept,
And, whatsoe'er his visions, quickly slept

'Twas hardly midnight when that fray begun,
For Conrad's plans matured, at once were done:
And Havoc loathes so much the waste of time,
She scarce had left an uncommitted crime.
One hour beheld him since the tide he stumm'd -
Disguised, discover'd, conquering, ta'en, condemn'd -
A chief on land, an outlaw on the deep
Destroying, saving, prison'd, and asleep!

XII.

He slept in calmest seeming, for his breath
Was hush'd so deep - Ah! happy if in death!
He slept - Who o'er his placid slumber bends?
His foes are gone, and here he hath no friends;
Is it some seraph sent to grant him grace?
No, 'tis an earthly form with heavenly face!
Its white arm raised a lamp - yet gently hid,

Lest the ray flash abruptly on the lid
Of that closed eye, which opens but to pain,
And once unclosed - but once may close again
That form, with eye so dark, and cheek so fair,
And auburn waves of gemm'd and braided hair;
With shape of fairy lightness - naked foot,
That shines like snow, and falls on earth as mute -
Through guards and dunkest night how came it there?
Ah! rather ask what will not woman dare?
Whom youth and pity lead like thee, Gulnare!
She could not sleep - and while the Pacha's rest
In muttering dreams yet saw his pirate-guest
She left his side - his signet-ring she bore
Which oft in sport adorn'd her hand before -
And with it, scarcely question'd, won her way
Through drowsy guards that must that sign obey.
Worn out with toil, and tired with changing blows
Their eyes had' envied Conrad his repose;
And chill and nodding at the turret door,
They stretch their listless limbs, and watch no more;
Just raised their heads to hail the signet-ring,
Nor ask or what or who the sign may bring.

XIII.

She gazed in wonder, 'Can he calmly sleep,
While other eyes his fall or ravage weep?
And mine in restlessness are wandering here -
What sudden spell hath made this man so dear?
True-'tis to him my life, and more, I owe,
And me and mine he spared from worse than woe:
'Tis late to think - but soft, his slumber breaks -
How heavily he sighs! - he starts - awakes!'
He raised his head, and dazzled with the light,
His eye seem'd dubious if it saw aright:
He moved his hand - the grating of his chain
Too harshly told him that he lived again.
'What is that form? if not a shape of air,
Methinks, my jailor's face shows wondrous fair!'
'Pirate! thou know'st me not-but I am one,
Grateful for deeds thou hast too rarely done;
Look on me - and remember her, thy hand
Snatch'd from the flames, and thy more fearful band.
I come through darkness and I scarce know why -
Yet not to hurt - I would not see thee die'

'If so, kind lady! thine the only eye
That would not here in that gay hope delight:
Theirs is the chance - and let them use their right.
But still I thank their courtesy or thine,
That would confess me at so fair a shrine!'

Strange though it seem - yet with extrekest grief

Is link'd a mirth - it doth not bring relief -
That playfulness of Sorrow ne'er beguiles,
And smiles in bitterness - but still it smiles;
And sometimes with the wisest and the best,
Till even the scaffold echoes with their jest!
Yet not the joy to which it seems akin -
It may deceive all hearts, save that within.
Whate'er it was that flash'd on Conrad, now
A laughing wildness half unbent his brow
And these his accents had a sound of mirth,
As if the last he could enjoy on earth;
Yet 'gainst his nature - for through that short life,
Few thoughts had he to spare from gloom and strife.

XIV.

'Corsair! thy doom is named - but I have power
To soothe the Pacha in his weaker hour.
Thee would I spare - nay more - would save thee now,
But this - time - hope - nor even thy strength allow;
But all I can, I will: at least, delay
The sentence that remits thee scarce a day.
More now were ruin - even thyself were loth
The vain attempt should bring but doom to both.'

'Yes! loth indeed:- my soul is nerved to all,
Or fall'n too low to fear a further fall:
Tempt not thyself with peril - me with hope
Of flight from foes with whom I could not cope:
Unfit to vanquish, shall I meanly fly,
The one of all my band that would not die?
Yet there is one to whom my memory clings,
Till to these eyes her own wild softness springs.
My sole resources in the path I trod
Were these - my bark, my sword, my love, my God!
The last I left in youth! - he leaves me now -
And Man but works his will to lay me low.
I have no thought to mock his throne with prayer
Wrung from the coward crouching of despair;
It is enough - I breathe, and I can bear.
My sword is shaken from the worthless hand
That might have better kept so true a brand;
My bark is sunk or captive - but my love -
For her in sooth my voice would mount above:
Oh! she is all that still to earth can bind -
And this will break a heart so more than kind,
And blight a form - till thine appear'd, Gulnare!
Mine eye ne'er ask'd if others were as fair.'

'Thou lov'st another then? - but what to me
Is this - 'tis nothing - nothing e'er can be:
But yet - thou lov'st - and - Oh! I envy those
Whose hearts on hearts as faithful can repose,

Who never feel the void-the wandering thought
That sighs o'er vision~such as mine hath wrought.'

'Lady methought thy love was his, for whom
This arm redeem'd thee from a fiery tomb.

'My love stern Seyd's! Oh - No - No - not my love -
Yet much this heart, that strives no more, once strove
To meet his passion but it would not be.
I felt - I feel - love dwells with - with the free.
I am a slave, a favour'd slave at best,
To share his splendour, and seem very blest!
Oft must my soul the question undergo,
Of -' Dost thou love?' and burn to answer, 'No!'
Oh! hard it is that fondness to sustain,
And struggle not to feel averse in vain;
But harder still the heart's recoil to bear,
And hide from one - perhaps another there.
He takes the hand I give not, nor withhold -
Its pulse nor check'd, nor quicken'd-calmly cold:
And when resign'd, it drops a lifeless weight
From one I never loved enough to hate.
No warmth these lips return by his imprest,
And chill'd remembrance shudders o'er the rest.
Yes - had lever proved that passion's zeal,
The change to hatred were at least to feel:
But still he goes unmourn'd, returns unsought,
And oft when present - absent from my thought.
Or when reflection comes - and come it must -
I fear that henceforth 'twill but bring disgust;
I am his slave - but, in despite of pride,
'Twere worse than bondage to become his bride.
Oh! that this dotage of his breast would cease:
Or seek another and give mine release,
But yesterday - I could have said, to peace!
Yes, if unwonted fondness now I feign,
Remember captive! 'tis to break thy chain;
Repay the life that to thy hand I owe
To give thee back to all endear'd below,
Who share such love as I can never know.
Farewell, morn breaks, and I must now away:
'Twill cost me dear - but dread no death to-day!'

XV.

She press'd his fetter'd fingers to her heart,
And bow'd her head, and turn'd her to de part,
And noiseless as a lovely dream is gone.
And was she here? and is he now alone?
What gem hath dropp'd and sparkles o'er his chain?
The tear most sacred, shed for others' pain,
That starts at once - bright - pure - from Pity's mine
Already polish'd by the hand divine!

Oh! too convincing - deangerously dear -
In woman's eye the unanswerable tear
That weapon of her weakness she can wield,
To save, subdue at once her spear and shield:
Avoid it - Virtue ebbs and Wisdom errs,
Too fondly gazing on that grief of hers!
What lost a world, and bade a hero fly?
The timid tear in Cleopatra's eye.
Yet be the soft triumvir's fault forgiven;
By this - how many lose not earth - but heaven!
Consign their souls to man's eternal foe,
And seal their own to spare some wanton's woe!

XVI.

'Tis morn, and o'er his alter'd features play
The beams - without the hope of yester-day.
What shall he be ere night? perchance a thing
O'er which the raven flaps her funeral wing
By his closed eye unheeded and unfelt;
While sets that sun, and dews of evening melt,
Chin wet, and misty round each stiffen'd limb,
Refreshing earth - reviving all but him!

CANTO THE THIRD

'Come vedi - ancor non m'abbandona'~Dante

I.

Slow sinks, more lovely ere his race be run,
Along Morea's hills the setting sun;
Not, as in Northern climes, obscurely bright,
But one unclouded blaze of living light!
O'er the hush'd deep the yellow beam he throws,
Gilds the green wave, that trembles as it glows.
On old Ægina's rock and Idra's isle,
The god of gladness sheds his parting smile;
O'er his own regions lingering, loves to shine,
Though there his altars are no more divine.
Descending fast the mountain shadows kiss
Thy glorious gulf; unconquer'd Salamis!
Their azure arches through the long expanse
More deeply purpled meet his mellowing glance,
And tenderest tints, along their summits driven,
Mark his gay course, and own the hues of heaven;
Tm, darkly shaded from the land and deep,
Behind his Delphian cliff he sinks to sleep.

On such an eve, his palest beam he cast,
When - Athens! here thy Wisest look'd his last.
How watch'd thy better sons his farewell ray,
That closed their murder'd sage's latest day!
Not yet - not yet - Sol pauses on the hill -

The precious hour of parting lingers still;
But sad his light to agonising eyes,
And dark the mountain's once delightful dyes:
Gloom o'er the lovely land he seem'd to pour,
The land, where Phoebus never frown'd before;
But ere he sank below Cithæron's head,
The cup of woe was quaff'd - the spirit fled
The soul of him who scorn'd to fear or fly -
Who lived and died, as none can live or die!

But lo! from high Hymettus to the plain,
The queen of night asserts her silent reign.
No murky vapour, herald of the storm,
Hides her fair face, nor girds her glowing form:
With cornice glimmering as the moon-beams play,
There the white column greets her grateful ray,
And, bright around with quivering beams beset,
Her emblem sparkles o'er the minaret:
The groves of olive scatter'd dark and wide
Where meek Cephisus pours his scanty tide,
The cypress saddening by the sacred mosque,
The gleaming turret of the gay kiosk,
And, dun and sombre 'mid the holy calm,
Near Theseus' fane yon solitary palm,
All tinged with varied hues arrest the eye -
And dull were his that pass'd them heedless by.

Again the Ægean, heard no more afar,
Lulls his chafed breast from elemental war;
Again his waves in milder tints unfold
Their long array of sapphire and of gold,
Mix'd with the shades of many a distant isle,
That frown - where gentler ocean seems to smile.

II.

Not now my theme-why turn my thoughts to thee?
Oh! who can look along thy native sea.
Nor dwell upon thy name, whate'er the tale
So much its magic must o'er all prevail?
Who that beheld that Sun upon thee set,
Fair Athens! could thine evening face for get?
Not he - whose heart nor time nor distance frees,
Spell-bound within the clustering Cyclades!
Nor seems this homage foreign to its strain,
His Corsair's isle was once thine own domain -
Would that with freedom it were thine again!

III.

The Sun hath sunk - and, darker than the night,
Sinks with its beam upon the beacon height
Medora's heart - the third day's come and gone -
With it he comes not - sends not - faithless one!

The wind was fair though light; and storms were none. 70
Last eve Anselmo's bark return'd, and yet
His only tidings that they had not met!
Though wild, as now, far different were the tale
Had Conrad waited for that single sail.
The night-breeze freshens - she that day had pass'd
In watching all that Hope proclaim'd a mast;
Sadly she sate on high - Impatience bore
At last her footsteps to the midnight shore,
And there she wander'd, heedless of the spray
That dash'd her garments oft, and warn'd away:
She saw not, felt not this - nor dared depart,
Nor deem'd it cold - her chill was at her heart;
Till grew such certainty from that suspense
His very sight had shock'd from life or sense!

It came at last - a sad and shatter'd boat,
Whose inmates first beheld whom first they sought;
Some bleeding - all most wretched - these the few -
Scarce knew they how escaped - this all they knew.
In silence, darkling, each appear'd to wait
His fellow's mournful guess at Conrad's fate:
Something they would have said; but seem'd to fear
To trust their accents to Medora's ear.
She saw at once, yet sunk not - trembled not -
Beneath that grief, that loneliness of lot;
Within that meek fair form were feelings high,
That deem'd not, till they found, their energy
While yet was Hope they soften'd, flutter'd wept -
All lost - that softness died not - but it slept;
And o'er its slumber rose that Strength which said,
'With nothing left to love, there's nought to dread.'
'Tis more than nature's; like the burning 'night
Delirium gathers from the fever's height.

'Silent you stand - nor would I hear you tell
What - speak not - breathe not - for I know it well -
Yet would I ask - almost my lip denies
The -quick your answer - tell me where he lies.'

'Lady! we know not - scarce with life we fled
But here is one denies that he is dead:
He saw him bound: and bleeding - but alive.'

She heard no further - 'twas in vain to strive -
So throbb'd each vein - each thought - till then withstood;
Her own dark soul - these words at once subdued:
She totters - falls - and senseless had the wave
Perchance but snatched her from another grave,
But that with hands though rude, yet weeping eyes,
They yield such aid as Pity's haste supplies:
Dash o'er her deathlike cheek the ocean dew,

Raise, fan, sustain-till life returns anew;
Awake her handmaids, with the matrons leave
That fainting form o'er which they gaze and grieve;
Then seek Anselmo's cavern, to report
The tale too tedious - when the triumph short.

IV.

In that wild council words wax'd warm and strange
With thoughts of ransom, rescue, and revenge;
All, save repose or flight: still lingering there
Breathed Conrad's spirit, and forbade despair
Whate'er his fate - the breasts he form'd and led
Will save him living, or appease him dead
Woe to his foes! there yet survive a few
Whose deeds are daring, as their hearts are true.

V.

Within the Haram's Secret chamber sate
Stern Seyd, still pondering o'er his Captive's fate;
His thoughts on love and hate alternate dwell,
Now with Gulnare, and now in Conrad's cell;
Here at his feet the lovely slave reclined
Surveys his brow - would soothe his gloom of mind;
While many an anxious glance her large dark eye
Sends in its idle search for sympathy,
His only bends in seeming o'er his beads,
But inly views his victim as he bleeds.
'Pacha! the day is time; and on thy crest
Sits Triumph - Conrad taken - fall'n the rest!
His doom is fix'd - he dies; and well his fate
Was earn'd - yet much too worthless for thy hate:
Methinks, a short release, for ransom told
With all his treasure, not unwisely sold;
Report speaks largely of his pirate-hoard -
Would that of this my Pacha were the lord!
While baffled, weaken'd by this fatal fray -
Watch'd - follow'd - he were then an easier prey;
But once cut off - the remnant of his band
Embark their wealth, and seek a safer strand.'

'Gulnare! - if for each drop of blood a gem
Were offer'd rich as Stamboul's diadem;
If for each hair of his a massy mine
Of virgin ore should supplicating shine;
If all our Arab tales divulge or dream
Of wealth were here - that gold should not redeem!
It had not now redeem'd a single hour,
But that I know him fetter'd, in my power;
And, thirsting for revenge, I ponder still
On pangs that longest rack, and latest kill.'

'Nay, Seyd! I seek not to restrain thy rage,

Too justly moved for mercy to assuage;
My thoughts were only to secure for thee
His riches - thus released, he were not free:
Disabled, shorn of half his might and band,
His capture could but wait thy first command.'
His capture could! shall I then resign
One day to him - the wretch already mine?
Release my foe! - at whose remonstrance? - thine!
Fair suitor! - to thy virtuous gratitude,
That thus repays this Giaour's relenting mood,
Which thee and thine alone of all could spare,
No doubt - regardless if the prize were fair,
My thanks and praise alike are due - now hear!
I have a counsel for thy gentler ear:
I do mistrust thee, woman! and each word
Of thine stamps truth on all Suspicion heard.
Borne in his arms through fire from yon Serai -
Say, wert thou lingering there with him to fly?
Thou need'st not answer - thy confession speaks
Already reddening on thy guilty cheeks;
Then, lovely dame, bethink thee! and beware:
'Tis not his: life alone may claim such care!
Another word and - nay - I need no more.
Accursed was the moment when he bore
Thee from the flames, which better far - but no -
I then had mourn'd thee with a lover's woe -
Now 'tis thy lord that warns - deceitful thing!
Know'st thou that I can clip thy wanton wing?
In words alone I am not wont to chafe:
Look to thyself - nor deem thy falsehood safe!'

He rose - and slowly, sternly thence withdrew,
Rage in his eye and threats in his adieu:
Ah! little reck'd that chief of womanhood -
Which frowns ne'er quell'd, nor menaces subdued
And little deem'd he what thy heart, Gulnare!
When soft could feel, and when incensed could dare.
His doubts appear'd to wrong - nor yet she knew
How deep the root from whence compassion grew -
She was a slave - from such may captives claim
A fellow-feeling, differing but in name;
Still half unconscious - heedless of his wrath,
Again she ventured on the dangerous path,
Again his rage repell'd - until arose
That strife of thought, the source of woman's woes!

VI.

Meanwhile, long, anxious, weary, still the same
Roll'd day and night: his soul could terror tame -
This fearful interval of doubt and dread,
When every hour might doom him worse than dead,
When every step that echo'd by the gate,

Might entering lead where axe and stake await;
When every voice that grated on his ear
Might be the last that he could ever hear;
Could terror tame - that spirit stern and high
Had proved unwilling as unfit to die;
'Twas worn - perhaps decay'd - yet silent bore
That conflict, deadlier far than all before:
The heat of fight, the hurry of the gale,
Leave scarce one thought inert enough to quail;
But bound and fix'd in fetter'd solitude,
To pine, the prey of every changing mood;
To gaze on thine own heart; and meditate
Irrevocable faults, and coming fate -
Too late the last to shun - the first to mend -
To count the hours that struggle to thine end,
With not a friend to animate, and tell
To other ears that death became thee well;
Around thee foes to forge the ready lie,
And blot life's latest scene with calumny;
Before thee tortures, which the soul can dare,
Yet doubts how well the shrinking flesh may bear
But deeply feels' a single cry would shame -
To valour's praise thy last and dearest claim;
The life thou leav'st below, denied above
By kind monopolists of heavenly love;
And more than doubtful paradise - thy heaven
Of earthly hope - thy loved one from thee riven.
Such were the thoughts that outlaw must sustain,
And govern pangs surpassing mortal pain:
And those sustain'd he - boots it well or ill?
Since not to sink beneath, is something still!

VII.

The first day pass'd - he saw not her - Gulnare -
The second, third-and still she came not there;
But what her words avouch'd, her charms had done,
Or else he had not seen another sun.
The fourth day roll'd along, and with the night
Came storm and darkness in their mingling might.
Oh! how he listen'd to the rushing deep,
That ne'er till now so broke upon his sleep;
And his wild spirit wilder wishes sent,
Roused by the roar of his own element!
Oft had he ridden on that winged wave,
And loved its roughness for the speed it gave;
And now its dashing echo'd on his ear,
Along known voice - alas! too vainly near!
Loud sung the wind above; and, doubly
Shook o'er his turret cell the thunder-cloud;
And flash'd the lightning by the latticed bar,
To him more genial than the midnight star:
Close to the glimmering grate he dragg'd his chain

And hoped that peril might not prove in vain.
He raised his iron hand to Heaven, and pray'd
One pitying flash to mar the form it made:
His steel and impious prayer attract alike -
The storm roll'd onward, and disdain'd to strike;
Its peal wax'd fainter - eased - he felt alone,
As if some faithless friend had spurn'd his groan!

VIII.

The midnight pass'd, and to the massy door
A light step came - it paused - it moved once more;
Slow turns the grating bolt and sullen key:
'Tis as his heart foreboded - that fair she!
Whate'er her sins, to him a guardian saint,
And beauteous still as hermit's hope can paint;
Yet changed since last within that cell she came,
More pale her cheek, more tremulous her frame:
On him she cast her dark and hurried eye,
Which spoke before her accents - 'Thou must die!
Yes, thou must die - there is but one resource
The last - the worst - if torture were not worse.'

'Lady! I look to none; my lips proclaim
What last proclaim'd they - Conrad still the same:
Why shouldst thou seek an outlaw's life to spare,
And change the sentence I deserve to bear?
Well have I earn'd - nor here alone - the meed
of Seyd's revenge, by many a lawless deed.'

'Why should I seek? Because - Oh! didst thou not
Redeem my life from worse than slavery's lot?
Why should I seek? - hath misery made thee blind
To the fond workings of a woman's mind?
And must I say? - albeit my heart rebel
With all that woman feels, but should not tell -
Because, despite thy crimes, that heart is moved:
It fear'd thee, thank'd thee, pitied, madden'd, loved.
Reply not, tell not now thy tale again,
Thou lov'st another, and I love in vain:
Though fond as mine her bosom, form more fair,
I rush through peril which she would not dare.
If that thy heart to hers were truly dear,
Were I thine own thou wert not lonely here:
An outlaw's spouse and leave her lord to roam!
What hath such gentle dame to do with home?
But speak not now - o'er thine and o'er my head
Hangs the keen sabre by a single thread;
If thou hast courage still, and wouldest be free,
Receive this poniard - rise and follow me!'

Ay - in my chains! my steps will gently tread,
With these adornments, o'er each slumbering head!

Thou hast forgot - is this a garb for flight?
Or is that instrument more fit for fight?'

'Misdoubting Corsair! I have gain'd the guard,
Ripe for revolt, and greedy for reward.
A single word of mine removes that chain:
Without some aid how here could I remain?
Well, since we met, hath sped my busy time,
If in aught evil, for thy sake the crime:
The crime - 'tis none to punish those of Seyd.
That hated tyrant, Conrad - he must bleed!
I see thee shudder, but my soul is changed -
Wrong'd, spurn'd, reviled, and it shall be avenged -
Accused of what till now my heart ' disdain'd -
Too faithful, though to bitter bondage chain'd.
Yes, smile! - but he had little cause to sneer,
I was not treacherous then, nor thou too dear:
But he has said it - and the jealous well -
Those tyrants, teasing, tempting to rebel -
Deserve the fate their fretting lips foretell.
I never loved - he bought me - somewhat high -
Since with me came a heart he could not buy.
I was a slave unmurmuring; he hath said,
But for his rescue I with thee had fled.
'Twas false thou know'st - but let such augurs rue,
Their words are omens insult renders true.
Nor was thy respite granted to my prayer;
This fleeting grace was only to prepare
New torments for thy life, and my despair.
Mine too he threatens; but his dotage still
Would fain reserve me for his lordly will:
When wearier of these fleeting charms and me,
There yawns the sack, and yonder rolls the sea!
What, am I then a toy for dotard's play,
To wear but till the gilding frets away?
I saw thee - loved thee - owe thee all - would save,
If but to show how grateful is a slave.
But had he not thus menaced fame and life -
(And well he keeps his oaths pronounced in strife) -
I still had saved thee, but the Pacha spared.
Now I am all thine own, for all prepared:
Thou lov'st me not, nor know'st - or but the worst.
Alas! this love - that hatred - are the first -
Oh! couldst thou prove my truth, thou wouldst not start,
Nor fear the fire that lights an Eastern heart;
'Tis now the beacon of thy safety - now
It points within the port a Mainote prow:
But in one chamber, where our path must lead,
There sleeps - he must not wake - the oppressor Seyd!'

'Gulnar~Gulnare-I never felt till now
My abject fortune, wither'd fame so low:

Seyd is mine enemy; had swept my band
From earth with ruthless but with open hand,
And therefore came I, in my bark of war,
To smite the smiter with the scimitar;
Such is my weapon - not the secret knife;
Who spares a woman's seeks not slumber's life.
Thine saved I gladly, Lady - not for this;
Let me not deem that mercy shown amiss.
Now fare thee well - more peace be with thy breast!
Night wears apace, my last of earthly rest!"

'Rest! rest! by sunrise must thy sinews shake,
And thy limbs writhe around the ready stake.
I heard the order - saw - I will not see -
If thou wilt perish, I will fall with thee.
My life, my love, my hatred - all below
Are on this cast - Corsair! 'tis but a blow!
Without it flight were idle - how evade
His sure pursuit? - my wrongs too unrepaid,
My youth disgraced, the long, long wasted years,
One blow shall cancel with our future fears;
But since the dagger suits thee less than brand,
I'll try the firmness of a female hand.
The guards, are gain'd - one moment all were o'er -
Corsair! we meet in safety or no more;
If errs my feeble hand, the morning cloud
Will hover o'er thy scaffold, and my shroud

IX.

She turn'd, and vanish'd ere he could reply,
But his glance follow'd far with eager eye;
And gathering, as he could, the links that bound
His form, to curl their length, and curb their sound,
Since bar and bolt no more his steps preclude,
He, fast as fetter'd limbs allow, pursued.
'Twas dark and winding, and he knew not where
That passage led; nor lamp nor guard was there:
He sees a dusky glimmering-shall he seek
Or shun that ray so indistinct and weak?
Chance guides his steps - a freshness seems to bear
Full on his brow, as if from morning air;
He reach'd an open gallery - on his eye
Gleam'd the last star of night, the clearing sky:
Yet scarcely heeded these - another light
From a lone chamber struck upon his sight.
Towards it he moved; a scarcely closing door
Reveal'd the ray within, but nothing more.
With hasty step a figure outward pass'd,
Then paused, and turn'd - and paused - 'tis she at last!
No poniard in that hand, nor sign of ill -
'Thanks to that softening heart - she could not kill!'
Again he look'd, the wildness of her eye

Starts from the day abrupt and fearfully.
She stopp'd - threw back her dark far-floating hair,
That nearly veil'd her face and bosom fair,
As if she late had bent her leaning head
Above some object of her doubt or dread.
They meet - upon her brow - unknown, forgot -
Her hurrying hand had left - 'twas but a spot
Its hue was all he saw, and scarce withheld -
Oh! slight but certain pledge of crime - 'tis blood!

X.

He had seen battle - he had brooded lone
O'er promised pangs to sentenced guilt foreshown;
He had been tempted, chaste'n'd, and the chain
Yet on his arms might ever there remain:
But ne'er from strife, captivity, remorse -
From all his feelings in their inmost force -
So thrill'd, so shudder'd every creeping vein
As now they froze before that purple stain.
That spot of blood, that light but guilty streak,
Had banish'd all the beauty from her cheek!
Blood he had view'd, could view unmoved - but then
It flow'd in combat, or was shed by men!

XI.

'Tis done-he nearly waked - but it is done.
Corsair! he perish'd - thou art dearly won.
All words would now be vain - away - away!
Our bark is tossing - 'tis already day.
The few gain'd over, now are wholly mine
And these thy yet surviving band shall join:
Anon my voice shall vindicate my hand,
When once our sail forsakes this hated strand.'

XII.

She clapp'd her hands, and through the gallery pour,
Equipp'd for flight, her vassals - Greek and Moor;
Silent but quick they stoop, his chains unbind;
Once more his limbs are free as mountain wind!
But on his heavy heart such sadness sate,
As if they there transfer'd that iron weight.
No words are utter'd - at her sign, a door
Reveals the secret passage to the shore:
The city lies behind - they speed, they reach
The glad waves dancing on the yellow beach;
And Conrad following, at her beck, obey'd,
Nor cared he now if rescued or betray'd;
Resistance were as useless as if Seyd
Yet lived to view the doom his ire decreed.

XIII.

Embark'd, the sail unfurl'd, the light breeze blew -

How much had Conrad's memory to re-view!
Sunk be in contemplation, till the cape
Where last he anchor'd rear'd its giant shape.
Ah! since that fatal night, though brief the time,
Had swept an age of terror, grief, and crime.
As its far shadow frown'd above the mast,
He veil'd his face, and sorrow'd as he pass'd;
He thought of all - Gonsalvo and his band,
His fleeting triumph and his failing hand;
He thought on her afar, his lonely bride:
He turn'd and saw - Gulnare, the homicide!

XIV.

She watch'd his features till she could not bear
Their freezing aspect and averted air;
And that strange fierceness, foreign to her eye,
Fell quench'd in tears, too late to shed or dry.
She knelt beside him and his hand she press'd,
'Thou may'st forgive, though Allah's self detest;
But for that deed of darkness what wert thou?
Reproach me - but not yet - Oh! spare me now!
I am not what I seem - this fearful night
My brain bewilder'd - do not madden quite
If I had never loved though less my guilt,
Thou hadst not lived to - hate me - if thou wilt.'

XV.

She wrongs his thoughts, they more himself upbraid
Than her, though undesign'd the wretch be made;
But speechless all, deep, dark, and unexpress't,
They bleed within that silent cell - his breast
Still onward, fair the breeze, nor rough the surge,
The blue waves sport around the stern they urge;
Far on the horizon's verge appears a speck
A spot - a mast - a sail - an armed deck!
Their little bark her men of watch descry,
And ampler canvas woos the wind from high;
She bears her down majestically near,
Speed on her prow, and terror in her tier;
A flash is seen - the ball beyond their bow
Booms harmless, hissing to the deep below.
Uprose keen Conrad from his silent trance,
A long, long absent gladness in his glance;
'Tis mine-my blood-red flag! Again - again -
I am not all deserted on the main!
They own the signal, answer to the ball,
Hoist out the boat at once, and slacken sail.
'Tis Conrad! Conrad!' shouting from the deck,
Command nor duty could their transport check!
With light alacrity and gaze of pride,
They view him mount once more his vessel's side;
A smile relaxing in each rugged face,

Their arms can scarce for bear a rough embrace.
He, half forgetting danger and defeat,
Returns their greeting as a chief may greet,
Wrings with a cordial grasp Anselmo's hand,
And feels he yet can conquer and command!

XVI.

These greetings o'er, the feelings that o'erflow,
Yet grieve to win him back without a blow;
They sail'd prepared for vengeance - had they known
A woman's hand secured that deed her own,
She were their queen - less scrupulous are they
Than haughty Conrad how they win their way.
With many an asking smile, and wondering stare,
They whisper round, and gaze upon Gulnare;
And her - at once above - beneath her sex
Whom blood appall'd not, their regards perplex.
To Conrad turns her faint imploring eye,
She drops her veil, and stands in silence by;
Her arms are meekly folded on that breast,
Which - Conrad safe - to fate resign'd the rest.
Though worse than frenzy could that bosom fill,
Extreme in love or hate, in good or ill,
The worst of crimes had left her woman still!

XVII.

This Conrad mark'd, and felt - ah! could he less? -
Hate of that deed, but grief for her distress;
What she has done no tears can wash away,
And Heaven must punish on its angry day:
But - it was done: he knew, whate'er her guilt,
For him that poniard smote, that blood was spilt;
And he was free! and she for him had given
Her all on earth, and more than all in heaven!
And now he turn'd him to that dark-eyed slave
Whose brow was bow'd beneath the glance he gave,
Who now seem'd changed and humbled, faint and meek,
But varying oft the colour of her cheek
To deeper shades of paleness - all its red
That fearful spot which stain'd it from the dead!
He took that hand - it trembled - now too late -
So soft in love, so wildly nerved in hate;
He clasp'd that hand - it trembled - and his own
Had lost its firmness, and his voice its tone. 540
'Gulnare! ' -but she replied not - 'dear Gulnare!'
She raised her eye - her only answer there -
At once she sought and sunk in his embrace:
If he had driven her from that resting-place,
His had been more or less than mortal heart,
But - good or ill - it bade her not depart.
Perchance, but for the bodings of his breast,
His latest virtue then had join'd the rest.

Yet even Medora might forgive the kiss
That ask'd from form so fair no more than this,
The first, the last that Frailty stole from Faith -
To lips where Love had lavish'd all his breath
To lips - whose broken sighs such fragrance fling,
As he had fann'd them freshly with his wing!

XVIII.

They gain by twilight's hour their lonely isle
To them the very rocks appear to smile;
The haven hums with many a cheering sound,
The beacons him their wonted stations round,
The boats are darting o'er the curly bay,
And sportive dolphins bend them through the spray;
Even the hoarse sea-bird's shrill, discordant shriek
Greets like the welcome of his tuneless beak!
Beneath each lamp that through its lattice gleams,
Their fancy paints the friends that trim the beams
Oh! what can sanctify the joys of home,
Like Hope's gay glance from Ocean's troubled foam?

XIX.

The lights are high on beacon and from bower,
And 'midst them Conrad seeks Medora's tower:
He looks in vain - 'tis strange - and all remark,
Amid so many, hers alone is dark
'Tis strange of yore its welcome never fall'd,
Nor now, perchance, extinguish'd, only veil'd.
With the first boat descends he for the shore, 573
And looks impatient on the lingering oar.
Oh! for a wing beyond the falcon's flight,
To bear him like an arrow to that height!
With the first pause the resting rowers gave,
He waits not, looks not - leaps into the wave,
Strives through the surge, bestrides the beach, and high
Ascends the path familiar to his eye.

He reach'd his turret door - he paused - no sound
Broke from within; and all was night around
He knock'd, and loudly - footstep nor reply
Announced that any heard or deem'd him nigh;
He knock'd, but faintly - for his trembling hand
Refused to aid his heavy heart's demand.
The portal opens - tis a well-known face,
But not the form he panted to embrace.
Its lips are silent - twice his own essay'd,
And fail'd to frame the question they delay'd;
It quits his grasp expiring in the fall.
He would not wait for that reviving ray -
As soon could he have linger'd there for day;
But, glimmering through the dusky corridor,
Another chequers o'er the shadow'd floor.

His steps the chamber gain - his eyes behold
All that his heart believed not - yet fortold!

XX.

He turn'd not - spoke not - sunk not - fix'd his look,
And set the anxious frame that lately shook:
He gazed - how long we gaze despite of pain,
And know, but dare not own, we gaze in vain!
In life it self she was so still and fair,
That death with gender aspect wither'd there;
And the cold flowers her colder hand contain'd,
In that last grasp as tenderly were strain'd
As if she scarcely felt, but feign'd asleep,
And made it almost mockery yet to weep:
The long dark lashes fringed her lids of snow
And veil'd - thought shrinks from all that lurk'd below -
Oh! o'er the eye Death most exerts his might,
And hurls the spirit from her throne of light;
Sinks those blue orbs in that long last eclipse,
But spares, as yet, the charm around her lips -
Yet, yet they seem as they forbore to smile,
And wish'd repose, - but only for awhile;
But the white shroud, and each extended tress?
Long, fair-but spread in utter lifelessness,
Which, late the sport of every summer wind,
Escaped the baffled wreath that strove to bind;
These - and the pale pure cheek, became the bier -
But she is nothing -wherefore is he here?

XXI.

He ask'd no question-all were answer'd now
By the first glance on that still, marble brow.
It was enough - she died - what reck'd it how?
The love of youth, the hope of better years,
The source of softest wishes, tenderest fears,
The only living thing he could not hate,
Was reft at once - and he deserved his fate,
But did not feel it less;- the good explore,
For peace, those realms where guilt can never soar:
The proud, the wayward - who have fix'd below
Their joy, and find this earth enough for woe,
Lose in that one their all - perchance a mite -
But who in patience parts with all delight?
Full many a stoic eye and aspect stern
Mask hearts where grief hath little left to learn;
And many a withering thought lies hid, not lost
In smiles tha't least befit who wear them most.

XXII.

By those, that deepest feel, Is ill exprest
The indistinctness of the suffering breast;
Where thousand thoughts begin to end in one,

Which seeks from all the refuge found in none;
No words suffice the secret soul to show,
For Truth denies all eloquence to Woe.
On Conrad's stricken soul exhaustion prest,
And stupor almost lull'd it into rest;
So feeble now - his mother's softness crept
To those wild eyes, which like an infant's wept:
It was the very weakness of his brain,
Which thus confess'd without relieving pain.
None saw his trickling tears - perchance if seen,
That useless flood of grief had never been:
Nor long they flow'd - he dried them to
In helpless -hopeless - brokenness of heart:
The sun goes forth, but Conrad's day is dim;
And the night cometh - ne'er to pass from him.
There is no darkness like the cloud of mind,
On Grief's vain eye - the blindest of the blind!
Which may not - dare not see but turns aside
To blackest shade - nor will endure a guide!

XXIII.

His heart was form'd for softness - warp'd to wrong;
Betray'd too early, and beguiled too long;
Each feeling pure - as falls the dropping dew
Within the grot - like that had harden'd too;
Less clear perchance, its earthly trials pass'd,
But sunk, and chill'd, and petrified at last.
Yet tempests wear, and lightning cleaves the rock;
If such his heart, so shatter'd it the shock.
There grew one flower beneath its rugged brow,
Though dark the shade - it shelter'd - saved till now.
The thunder came - that bolt hath blasted both,
The Granite's firmness, and the Lily' growth:
The gentle plant hath left no leaf to tell
Its tale, but shrunk and wither'd where it fell
And of its cold protector, blacken round
But shiver'd fragments on the barren ground!

XXIV.

'Tis morn - to venture on his lonely hour
Few dare; though now Anselmo sought his tower.
He was not there, nor seen along the shore;
Ere night, alarm'd, their isle is traversed o'er:
Another morn - another bids them seek,
And shout his name till echo waxeth weak;
Mount: grotto, cavern, valley search'd in vain,
They find on shore a sea-boat's broken chain:
Their hope revives-they follow o'er the main.
'Tis idle all - moons roll on moons away,
And Conrad comes not, came not since that day:
Nor trace, nor tidings of his doom declare
Where lives his grief, or perish'd his despair!

Long mourn'd his band whom none could mourn beside;
And fair the monument they gave his bride:
For him they raise not the recording stone -
His death yet dubious, deeds too widely known;
He left a Corsair's name to other times,
Link'd with one virtue, and a thousand crimes.

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Dark, Blue Sea

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.-

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean-roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin-his control
Stops with the shore;-upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

His steps are not upon thy paths-thy fields
Are not a spoil for him-thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray,
And howling, to his gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth: there let him lay.

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war;
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
Alike the armada's pride, or spoils of Trafalgar.

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee-
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
Thy waters washed them power while they were free,
And many a tyrant since: their shores obey
The stranger, slave or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts:-not so thou,
Unchangeable, save to thy wild waves' play-
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow-
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time

Calm or convulsed-in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving; boundless, endless and sublime-
The image of eternity-the throne
Of the invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

And I have loved thee, ocean! And my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward: from a boy
I wanton'd with thy breakers-they to me
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror-'twas a pleasing fear,
For I was as it were a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane - as I do here.

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Destruction of Sennacherib

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail:
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Devil's Drive: An Unfinished Rhapsody

The Devil return'd to hell by two,
And he stay'd at home till five;
When he dined on some homicides done in ragoût,
And a rebel or so in an Irish stew,
And sausages made of a self-slain Jew--
And bethought himself what next to do,
'And' quoth he, 'I'll take a drive.
I walk'd in the morning, I'll ride to-night;
In darkness my children take most delight,
And I'll see how my favourites thrive,

'And what shall I ride in?' quoth Lucifer then--
'If I follow'd my taste, indeed,
I should mount in a waggon of wounded men,
And smile to see them bleed.
But these will be furnish'd again and again,
And at present my purpose is speed;
To see my manor as much as I may,
And watch that no souls shall be poach'd away.

'I have a state-coach at Carlton House,
A chariot in Seymour Place;
But they're lent to two friends, who make me amends,
By driving my favourite pace:
And they handle their reins with such a grace,
I have something for both at the end of their race.

'So now for the earth to take my chance:'
Then up to the earth sprang he;
And making a jump from Moscow to France,
He stepp'd across the sea,
And rested his hoof on a turnpike road,
No very great way from a bishop's abode.

But first as he flew, I forgot to say
That he hover'd a moment upon his way,
To look upon Leipsic plain;
And so sweet to his eye was its sulphury glare,
And so soft to his ear was the cry of despair,
That he perch'd on a mountain of slain;
And he gazed with delight from its grow-ing height,
Nor often on earth had he seen such a sight,
Nor his work done half as well:
For the field ran so red with the blood of the dead,
That it blush'd like the waves of hell!
Then loudly, and wildly, and long laugh'd he:
'Methinks they have here little need of me!'

But the softest note that soothed his ear
Was the sound of a widow sighing;
And the sweetest sight was the icy tear,
Which horror froze in the blue eye clear

Of a maid by her lover lying--
As round her fell her long fair hair
And she look'd to heaven with that frenzied air,
Which seem'd to ask if a God were there!
And, stretch'd by the wall of a ruin'd hut,
With its hollow cheek, and eyes half shut,
A child of famine dying:
And the carnage begun, when resistance is done,
And the fall of the vainly flying!

But the Devil has reach'd our, cliffs so white,
And what did he there, I pray?
If his eyes were good, he but saw by night
What we see every day:
But he made a tour, and kept a journal
Of all the wondrous sights nocturnal,
And he sold it in shares to the Men of the Row,
Who bid pretty well--but they cheated him, though!

The Devil first saw, as he thought, the Mail,
Its coachman and his coat
So instead of a pistol he cock'd his tail,
And seized him by the throat:
'Aha!' quoth he, 'what have we here?
'Tis a new barouche, and an ancient peer!'

So he sat him on his box again,
And bade him have no fear,
But be true to his club, and stanch to his rein,
His brothel, and his beer;
'Next to seeing a lord at the council board,
I would rather see him here.'

The Devil gat next to Westminster,
And he turn'd to 'the room' of the Commons;
But he heard, as he purposed to enter in there,
That 'the Lords' had received a sum-mons;
And he thought, as a 'quondam aristocrat,'
He might peep at the peers, though to hear them were flat;
And he walk'd up the house so like one of our own,
That they say that he stood pretty near the throne.

He saw the Lord Liverpool seemingly wise,
The Lord Westmoreland certainly silly,
And Johnny of Norfolk - a man of some size--
And Chatham, so like his friend Billy;
And he saw the tears in Lord Eldon's eyes,
Because the Catholics would not rise,
In spite of his prayers and his prophecies;
And he heard - which set Satan himself a staring--
A certain Chief Justice say something like swearing.
And the Devil was shock'd - and quoth he, 'I must go,

For I find we have much better manners below:
If thus he harangues when he passes my border,
I shall hint to friend Moloch to call him to order.'

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Dream

I

Our life is twofold; Sleep hath its own world,
A boundary between the things misnamed
Death and existence: Sleep hath its own world,
And a wide realm of wild reality,
And dreams in their development have breath,
And tears, and tortures, and the touch of joy;
They leave a weight upon our waking thoughts,
They take a weight from off waking toils,
They do divide our being; they become
A portion of ourselves as of our time,
And look like heralds of eternity;
They pass like spirits of the past -they speak
Like sibyls of the future; they have power -
The tyranny of pleasure and of pain;
They make us what we were not -what they will,
And shake us with the vision that's gone by,
The dread of vanished shadows -Are they so?
Is not the past all shadow? -What are they?
Creations of the mind? -The mind can make
Substances, and people planets of its own
With beings brighter than have been, and give
A breath to forms which can outlive all flesh.
I would recall a vision which I dreamed
Perchance in sleep -for in itself a thought,
A slumbering thought, is capable of years,
And curdles a long life into one hour.

II

I saw two beings in the hues of youth
Standing upon a hill, a gentle hill,
Green and of mild declivity, the last
As 'twere the cape of a long ridge of such,
Save that there was no sea to lave its base,
But a most living landscape, and the wave
Of woods and corn-fields, and the abodes of men
Scattered at intervals, and wreathing smoke
Arising from such rustic roofs: the hill
Was crowned with a peculiar diadem
Of trees, in circular array, so fixed,
Not by the sport of nature, but of man:
These two, a maiden and a youth, were there
Gazing -the one on all that was beneath
Fair as herself -but the boy gazed on her;
And both were young, and one was beautiful:
And both were young -yet not alike in youth.
As the sweet moon on the horizon's verge,
The maid was on the eve of womanhood;
The boy had fewer summers, but his heart
Had far outgrown his years, and to his eye

There was but one beloved face on earth,
And that was shining on him; he had looked
Upon it till it could not pass away;
He had no breath, no being, but in hers:
She was his voice; he did not speak to her,
But trembled on her words; she was his sight,
For his eye followed hers, and saw with hers,
Which coloured all his objects; -he had ceased
To live within himself: she was his life,
The ocean to the river of his thoughts,
Which terminated all; upon a tone,
A touch of hers, his blood would ebb and flow,
And his cheek change tempestuously -his heart
Unknowing of its cause of agony.
But she in these fond feelings had no share:
Her sighs were not for him; to her he was
Even as a brother -but no more; 'twas much,
For brotherless she was, save in the name
Her infant friendship had bestowed on him;
Herself the solitary scion left
Of a time-honoured race. -It was a name
Which pleased him, and yet pleased him not -and why?
Time taught him a deep answer -when she loved
Another; even now she loved another,
And on the summit of that hill she stood
Looking afar if yet her lover's steed
Kept pace with her expectancy, and flew.

III

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
There was an ancient mansion, and before
Its walls there was a steed caparisoned:
Within an antique Oratory stood
The Boy of whom I spake; -he was alone,
And pale, and pacing to and fro: anon
He sate him down, and seized a pen, and traced
Words which I could not guess of; then he leaned
His bowed head on his hands and shook, as 'twere
With a convulsion -then rose again,
And with his teeth and quivering hands did tear
What he had written, but he shed no tears.
And he did calm himself, and fix his brow
Into a kind of quiet: as he paused,
The Lady of his love re-entered there;
She was serene and smiling then, and yet
She knew she was by him beloved; she knew -
For quickly comes such knowledge -that his heart
Was darkened with her shadow, and she saw
That he was wretched, but she saw not all.
He rose, and with a cold and gentle grasp
He took her hand; a moment o'er his face

A tablet of unutterable thoughts
Was traced, and then it faded, as it came;
He dropped the hand he held, and with slow steps
Retired, but not as bidding her adieu,
For they did part with mutual smiles; he passed
From out the massy gate of that old Hall,
And mounting on his steed he went his way;
And ne'er repassed that hoary threshold more.

IV

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Boy was sprung to manhood: in the wilds
Of fiery climes he made himself a home,
And his Soul drank their sunbeams; he was girt
With strange and dusky aspects; he was not
Himself like what he had been; on the sea
And on the shore he was a wanderer;
There was a mass of many images
Crowded like waves upon me, but he was
A part of all; and in the last he lay
Reposing from the noontide sultriness,
Couched among fallen columns, in the shade
Of ruined walls that had survived the names
Of those who reared them; by his sleeping side
Stood camels grazing, and some goodly steeds
Were fastened near a fountain; and a man,
Glad in a flowing garb, did watch the while,
While many of his tribe slumbered around:
And they were canopied by the blue sky,
So cloudless, clear, and purely beautiful,
That God alone was to be seen in heaven.

V

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Lady of his love was wed with One
Who did not love her better: in her home,
A thousand leagues from his, -her native home,
She dwelt, begirt with growing Infancy,
Daughters and sons of Beauty, -but behold!
Upon her face there was a tint of grief,
The settled shadow of an inward strife,
And an unquiet drooping of the eye,
As if its lid were charged with unshed tears.
What could her grief be? -she had all she loved,
And he who had so loved her was not there
To trouble with bad hopes, or evil wish,
Or ill-repressed affliction, her pure thoughts.
What could her grief be? -she had loved him not,
Nor given him cause to deem himself beloved,
Nor could he be a part of that which preyed

Upon her mind -a spectre of the past.

VI

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Wanderer was returned. -I saw him stand
Before an altar -with a gentle bride;
Her face was fair, but was not that which made
The Starlight of his Boyhood; -as he stood
Even at the altar, o'er his brow there came
The selfsame aspect and the quivering shock
That in the antique Oratory shook
His bosom in its solitude; and then -
As in that hour -a moment o'er his face
The tablet of unutterable thoughts
Was traced -and then it faded as it came,
And he stood calm and quiet, and he spoke
The fitting vows, but heard not his own words,
And all things reeled around him; he could see
Not that which was, nor that which should have been -
But the old mansion, and the accustomed hall,
And the remembered chambers, and the place,
The day, the hour, the sunshine, and the shade,
All things pertaining to that place and hour,
And her who was his destiny, came back
And thrust themselves between him and the light;
What business had they there at such a time?

VII

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Lady of his love; -Oh! she was changed,
As by the sickness of the soul; her mind
Had wandered from its dwelling, and her eyes,
They had not their own lustre, but the look
Which is not of the earth; she was become
The queen of a fantastic realm; her thoughts
Were combinations of disjointed things;
And forms impalpable and unperceived
Of others' sight familiar were to hers.
And this the world calls frenzy; but the wise
Have a far deeper madness, and the glance
Of melancholy is a fearful gift;
What is it but the telescope of truth?
Which strips the distance of its fantasies,
And brings life near in utter nakedness,
Making the cold reality too real!

VIII

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream.
The Wanderer was alone as heretofore,

The beings which surrounded him were gone,
Or were at war with him; he was a mark
For blight and desolation, compassed round
With Hatred and Contention; Pain was mixed
In all which was served up to him, until,
Like to the Pontic monarch of old days,
He fed on poisons, and they had no power,
But were a kind of nutriment; he lived
Through that which had been death to many men,
And made him friends of mountains; with the stars
And the quick Spirit of the Universe
He held his dialogues: and they did teach
To him the magic of their mysteries;
To him the book of Night was opened wide,
And voices from the deep abyss revealed
A marvel and a secret. -Be it so.

IX

My dream is past; it had no further change.
It was of a strange order, that the doom
Of these two creatures should be thus traced out
Almost like a reality -the one
To end in madness -both in misery.

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Episode Of Nisus And Euryalus

A PARAPHRASE FROM THE ÆNEID, LIB. IX

Nisus, the guardian of the portal stood,
Eager to gild his arms with hostile blood
Well skill'd in fight the quivering lance to wield,
Or pour his arrow, through th' embattled field:
From Ida ton' he left his sylvan cave,
And sought a foreign home, a distant grave.
To watch the movements of the Daunian host,
With him Euraylius sustains the post;
No lovelier mien adorn'd the ranks of Troy,
And beardless bloom yet graced the gallant boy;
Though few the seasons of his youthful life,
As yet a novice in the martial strife,
'Twas his, with beauty, valour's gifts to share –
A soul heroic, as his form was fair:
These burn with one pure flame of generous love;
In peace, in war, united still they move
Friendship and glory form their joint reward;
And now combined they hold their nightly guard.

'What god,' exclaimed the first, 'instils this fire?
Or, in itself a god, what great desire?
My labouring soul, with anxious thought opress'd;
Abhors this station of inglorious rest;
The love of fame with this can ill accord
Be't mine to seek for glory with my sword.
Seest thou yon camp, with torches twinkling dim,
Where drunken slumbers wrap each lazy limb?
Where confidence and ease the watch disdain,
And drowsy Silence holds her sable reign?
Then hear my thought:-In deep and sullen grief
Our troops and leaders mourn their absent chief:
Now could the gifts and promised prize be thine
(The deed the danger, and the fame be mine),
Were this decreed, beneath yon rising mound,
Methinks, an easy path perchance were found;
Which past, I speed my way to Pallas' walls;
And lead Æneas from Evander's halls.'

With equal ardour fired, and warlike joy,
His glowing friend address'd the Dardan boy:-
'These deeds, my Nisus, shalt thou dare alone?
Must all the fame the peril, be thine own?
Am I by thee despised, and left afar,
As one unfit to share the toils of war?
Not thus his son the great Opheltes taught;
Not thus my sire in Argive combats fought;
Not thus, when Ilion fell by heavenly hate,
I track'd Æneas through the walks of fate:
Thou know'st my deeds, my breast devoid of fear,
And hostile life-drops dim my gory spear.

Here is a soul with hope immortal burns,
And life, ignoble life, for glory spurns.
Fame, fame fs cheaply earn'd by fleeting breath:
The price of honour is the sleep of death.'

Then Nisus:-'Calm thy bosom's fond alarms:
Thy heart beats fiercely to the din of arms.
More dear thy worth and valour than my own,
I swear by him who fills Olympus' throne!
So may I triumph, as I speak the truth,
And clasp again the comrade of my youth!
But should I fall,- and he who dares advance
Through hostile legions must abide by chance,-
If some Rutulian arm, with adverse blow,
Should lay the friend, who ever loved thee, low,
Live thou, such beauties I would fain preserve,
Thy budding years a lengthen'd term deserve.
When humbled in the dust, let some one be,
Whose gentle eyes will shed one tear for me;
Whose manly arm may snatch me back by force
Or wealth redeem from foes my captive corse;
Or, if my destiny these last deny,
If in the spoiler's power my ashes lie,
Thy pious care may raise a simple tomb,
To mark thy love, and signalize my doom
Why should thy doting wretched mother weep
Her only boy, reclined in endless sleep?
Who, for thy sake, the tempest's fury dared,
Who, for thy sake, war's deadly peril shared;
Who braved what woman ne'er braved before,
And left her native for the Latian shore.'

'In vain you damp the ardour of my soul,'
Replied Euryalus; 'it scorns control!
Hence, let us haste! '- their brother guards arose,
Roused by their call, nor court again repose;
The pair, bouyed up on Hope's exulting wing,
Their stations leave, and speed to seek the king.

Now o'er the earth a solemn stillness ran,
And lull'd alike the cares of brute and man;
Save where the Dardan leaders rughtly hold
Alternate converse, and their plans unfold.
On one great point the council are agreed,
An insttant message to their prince decreed;
Each lean'd upon the lance he well could wield,
And poised with easy arm his ancient shield;
When Nisus and his friend their leave request
To offer something to their high behest.
With anxious terrors, yet unawed by fear,
The faithful pair before the throne appear:
Iulus greets them; at his kind command,

The elder first address'd the hoary band.
'With patience' (thus Hyctacides hegan)
'Attend, nor judge from youth our humble plan.
Where yonder beacons half expiring beam,
Our slumbering foes of future conquest deam;
Nor heed that we a secret path have traced,
Between th'e ocean and the portal placed.
Beneath the covert of the blackening smoke,
Whose shade securely our design will cloak!
If you, ye chiefs, and fortune will allow,
We'll bend our course to yonder mountain's brow,
Where Pallas' walls at distance meet the sight,
Seen o'er the glade, when not obscured by night:
Then shall Æneas in his pride return,
When hostile matrons raise their offspring's urn;
And Latian spoils and purpled heaps of dead
Shall mark the havoc of our hero's tread.
Such is our purpose, not unknown the way;
Whore yonder torrent's devious waters stray,
Oft have we seen; when hunting by the stream,
The distant spires; above the valleys gleam.'

Mature in years, for sober wisdom famed,
Moved by the speech, Alethes here exclaim'd,—
'Ye parent gods! who rule the fate of Troy.
Still dwells the Dardan spirit in the boy;
When minds like these in striplings thus ye raise
Yours is the godlike act, be yours the praise;
In gallant youth, my fainting hopes revive,
And Ilion's wonted glories still survive.'
Then in his warm embrace the boys he press'd
And, quivering, strain'd them to his aged breast;
With tears the burning cheek of each bedew'd,
And, sobbing, thus his first discourse renew'd:
'What gift, my countrymen, what martial prize,
Can we bestow, which you may not despise?
Our deities the first best boon have given —
Internal virtues are the gift of Heaven.
What poor rewards can bless your deeds on earth,
Doubtless await such young, exalted worth.
Æneas and Ascanius shall combine
To yield applause far, far surpassing mine.'

Inlus then :-' By all the powers above!
By those Penates who my country love!
By hoary Vesta's sacred fane, I swear,
My hopes are all in you, ye generous pair!
Restore my father to my grateful sight,

Nisus! two silver goblets are thine own,
Saved from Arisba's stately domes o'erthrown!
My sire secured them on that fatal day,

Nor left such bowls an Argive robber's prey:
Two massy tripods, also, shall be thine:
Two talents polish'd from the glittering mine;
An ancient cup, which Tyrian Dido gave,
While yet our vessels press'd the Punic wave:
But when the hostile chiefs at length bow down,
When great Æneas wears Hesperia's crown,
The casque, the buckler, and the fiery steed
Which Turnus guides with more than mortal speed,
Are thine; no envious lot shall then be cast,
I pledge my word, irrevocably past:
Nay more, twelve slaves, and twice six captive dames,
To soothe thy softer hours with amorous flames,
And all the realms which now the Latins sway,
The labours of to-night shall well repay.
But thou, my generous youth, whose tender years
Are near my own, whose worth my heart reveres,
Henceforth affection, sweetly thus begun,
Shall join our bosoms and our souls in one;
Without thy aid, no glory shall be mine;
Without thy dear advice, no great design;
Alike through life esteem'd, thou godlike boy,
In war my bulwark, and in peace my joy.'

To him Euryalus:-'No day shall shame
The rising glories which from this I claim.
Fortune may favour, or the skies may frown,
But valour, spite of fate, obtains renown
Yet, ere from hence our eager steps depart,
One boon I beg, the nearest to my heart:
My mother, sprung from Priam's royal line,
Like thine ennobled, hardly less divine,
Nor Troy nor king Acestes' realms restrain
Her feeble age from dangers of the main:
Alone she came, all selfish fears above,
A bright example of maternal love.
Unknown the secret enterprise I brave,
Lest grief should bend my parent to the grave ;
From this alone no fond adieu I seek,
No fainting mother's lips have press'd my cheek;
By gloomy night and thy right hand I vow
Her parting tears would shake my purpose now:
Do thou, my prince, her failing age sustain,
In thee her much-loved child may live again;
Her dying hours with pious conduct bless,
Assist her wants, relieve her fond distress:
So dear a hope must all my soul inflame,
To rise in glory, or to fail in fame.'
Struck with a filial care so deeply felt,
In tears at once the Trojan warriors melt;
Faster than all, Iulus' eyes o'erflow!
Such love was his, and such had been his woe.

All thou hast ask'd, receive,' the prince replied;
'Nor this alone, but many a gift beside,
To cheer thy mother's years shall be my aim,
Creusa's style but; wanting to the dame.
Fortune an adverse wayward course may run,
But bless'd thy mother in so dear a son.
Now, by my life ! - my sire's most sacred oath —
To thee I pledge my full, my firmest troth,
All the rewards which once to thee were vow'd,
if thou shouldst fall, on her shall be bestow'd.'
Thus spoke the weeping prince, then forth to view
A gleaming falchion from the sheath he drew;
Lycaon's utmost skill had graced the steel,
For friends to envy and for foes to feel:
A tawny hide, the Moorish lion's spoil
Slain 'midst the forest, in the hunter's toil,
Mnestheus to guard the elder youth bestows,
And old Alethes' casque defends his brows.
Arm'd, thence they go, while all th' assembled train,
To aid their cause, implore the gods in vain.
More than a boy, in wisdom and in grace,
Iulus holds amidst the chiefs his place:
His prayer he sends ; but what can prayers avail,
Lost in the murmurs of the sighing gale?

The trench is pass'd, and, favour'd by the night,
Through sleeping foes they wheel their wary flight.
When shall the sleep of many a foe be o'er?
Alas! some slumber who shall wake no more!
Chariots and bridles, mix'd with arms, are seen;
And flowing flasks, and scatter'd troops between:
Bacchus and Mars to rule the camp combine;
A mingled chaos this of war and wine.
'Now,' cries the first; 'for deeds of blood prepare,
With me the conquest and the labour share:
Here lies our path; lest any hand arise,
Watch thou, while many a dreaming chieftain dies:
I'll carve our passage through the heedless foe
And clear thy road with many a deadly blow.'
His whispering accents then the youth repress'd,
And pierced proud Rhamnes through his panting breast:
Stretch'd at his ease, th' incautious king repos'd;
Debauch, and not fatigue, his eyes had closed:
To Turnus dear, a prophet and a prince,
His ornens more than augur's skill evince;
But he, who thus foretold the fate of all,
Could not avert his own untimely fall.
Next Remus' armour-bearer, hapless, fell,
And three unhappy slaves the carnage swell;
The charioteer along his courser's sides
Expires, the steel his sever'd neck divides ;
And, last, his lord is number'd with the dead:

Bounding convulsive, 'lies the gasping head;
From the swell'n veins the blackening torrents pour;
Stain'd is the couch and earth with clotting gore.
Young Lamyrus and Lamus next expire,
And gay Serranus, fill'd with youthful fire;
Half the long night in childish games was pass'd;
Lull'd by the potent grape, he slept at last:
Ah! happier far had he the morn survey'd,
And till Aurora's dawn his skill display'd.

In slaughter'd folds, the keepers lost; in sleep'
His hungry fangs a lion thus may steep;
'Mid the sad flock, at dead of night he prowls
With murd'er glutted, and in carnage rolls:
Insatiate still, through teeming herds he roams;
In seas of gore the lordly tyrant foams.

Nor less the other's deadly vengeance came;
But falls on feeble crowds without a name;
His wound unconscious Fadus scarce can feel,
Yet wakeful Rhasus sees the threatening steel;
His coward breast behind a jar he hides,
And vainly in the weak defence confides;
Full in his heart, the falchion search'd his veins;
The reeking weapon bears alternate stains;
Through wine and blood, commingling as they flow,
One feeble spirit seeks the shades below.
Now where Messapus dwelt they bend their way,
Whose fires emit; a faint and trembling ray;
There, unconfined, behold each grazing steed,
Unwatch'd, unheeded, on the herbage feed:
Brave Nisus here arrests his comrade's arm;
Too flush'd with carnage, and with conquest warm:
'Hence let us haste, the dangerous path is pass'd;
Full foes enough to-night have breathed their last:
Soon will the day those eastern clouds adorn;
Now let us speed, nor tempt the rising morn.
What silver arms, with various art emboss'd,
What bowls and mantles in confusion toss'd,
They leave regardless! yet one glittering prize
Attracts the younger hero's wandering eyes;
The gilded harness Rhamnes' coursers felt.
The gems which stud the monarch's golden belt:
This from the pallid corse was quickly torn'
Once by a line of former chieftains worn.
Th' exulting boy the studded girdle wears,
Messapus' helm his head in triumph bears;
Then from the tents their cautious steps they bend,
To seek the vale where safer paths extend.
Just at this hour, a band of Latian horse
To Turnus' camp pursue their destined course:
While the slow foot their tardy march delay,

The knights, impatient, spur along the way:
Three hundred mail-clad men, by Volscens led,
To Turnus with their master's promise sped:
Now they approach the trench, and view the walls,
When, on the left, a light reflection falls;
The plunder'd helmet, through the waning night,
Sheds forth a silver radlance, glancing bright.
Volscens with question loud the pair alarms:-
'Stand, stragglers! stand! why early thus in arms?
From whence! to whom?' - He meets with no nep!y;
Trusting the covert of the night, they fly:
The thicket's depth with hurried pace they tread,
While round the wood the hostile squadron spread.

With brakes entangled, scarce a path between,
Dreary and dark appears the sylvan scene :
Euryalus his heavy spoils impede,
The boughs and winding turns his steps mislead;
But Nisus scours along the forest's maze
To where Latinus' steeds in safety graze,
Then backward o'er the plain his eyes extend,
On every side they seek his absent friend,
'O God! my boy,' he cries, 'of me bereft,
In what impending perils art thou left!'
Listening he runs - above the waving trees,
Tumultuous voices swell the passing breeze;
The war-cry rises, thundering hoofs around
Wake the dark echoes of the trembling ground.
Again he turns, of footsteps hears the noise,
The sound elates, the sight his hope destroys :
The hapless boy a ruffian train surround,
While lengthening shades his weary way confound ;
Him with loud shouts the furious knights pursue,
Struggling in vain, a captive to the crew
What can his friend 'gainst thronging numbers dare?
Ah! must he rush his comrade's fate to share?
Wilat foree, what ald, what; stratagem essay,
Back to redeem the Latian spoiler's prey?
His life a votive ransom nob!y give,
Or die with him for whom he wish'd to live?
Poising with strength his lifted lance on high,
On Luna's orb he cast his frenzied eye:-
'Goddess serene, transcending every Star!
Queen of the sky, whose beams are seen afar!
By night heaven owns thy sway, by day the grove,
When, as chaste Dian, here thou deign'st to rove;
If e'er myself, or sire, have sought to grace
Thine altars with the produce of the chase,
Speed, speed my dart to pierce yon vaunting crowd,
To free my friend, and scatter far the proud.'
Thus having said, the hissing dart he flung;
T'hrough parted shades the hurtling weapon sung;

The thirsty point in Sulmo's entrails lay,
Transfix'd his heart, and stretch'd him on the clay:
He sobs, he dies,-the troop in wild amaze,
Unconscious whence the death, with horror gaze.
While pale they stare, through Tagus' temples riven,
A second shaft with equal force is driven:
Fierce Volscens rolls around his lowering eyes;
Veil'd by the night, secure the Trojan lies.
Burning with wrath, he view'd his soldiers fall.
'Thou youth accurst, thy life shall pay for all!'
Quick from the sheath his flaming glaive he drew,
And, raging, on the boy defenceless flew.
Nisus no more the blackening shade conceals,
Forth, forth he starts, and all his love reveals;
Aghast, confused, his fears to madness rise,
And pour these accents, shrieking as he flies:
'Me, me,-your vengeance hurl on me alone ;
Here sheathe the steel, my blood is all your own,
Ye starry spheres! thou conscious Heaven! attest!
He could not - durst not - lo! the guile confest!
All, all was mle,- his early fate suspend;
He only loved too well his hapless friend:
Spare, spare, ye chiefs! from him your rage remove;
His fault was friendship, all his crime was love.'
He pray'd in vain; the dark assassin's sword
Pierced the fair side, the snowy bosom gored
Lowly to 'earth inclines his plume-clad crest,
And sanguine torrents mantle o'er his breast:
As some young rose, whose blossom scents the air,
Languid in death, expires beneath the share;
Or crimson poppy, sinking with the shower,
Declining gently, falls a fading flower;
Thus, sweetly drooping, bends his lovely head,
And lingering beauty hovers round the dead.

But fiery Nisus stems the battle's tide,
Revenge his leader, and despair his guide;
Volscens he seeks amidst the gathering host,
Volscens' must soon appease his comrade's ghost;
Steel, flashing, pours on steel, foe crowds on foe;
Rage nerves his arm, fate gleams in every blow;
In vain beneath unburnt wounds he bleeds
Nor wounds', nor death, distracted Nisus heeds;
In viewless circles wheel'd, his falchion flies,
Nor quits the hero's grasp till Volscens dies;
Deep in his throat its end the weapon found,
The tyrant's soul fled groaning through the wound.
Thus Nisus all his fond affection proved -
Dying, revenged the fate of him he loved;
Then on his bosom sought his wonted place
And death was heavenly in his friend's embrace!

Celestial pair! if aught; my verse can claim
Wafted on Time's broad pinion, yours is fame!
Ages on ages shall your fate admire,
No future day shall see your names expire,
While stands the Capitol, immortal dome!
And vanquish'd millions hail their empress, Rome!

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Eve Of Waterloo

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her beauty and her chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men.
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

Did ye not hear it? - No; 'twas but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when youth and pleasure meet
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet.
But hark! - that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before;
Arm! arm! it is - it is - the cannon's opening roar!

Within a windowed niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain; he did hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with death's prophetic ear;
And when they smiled because he deemed it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too well
Which stretched his father on a bloody bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell;
He rushed into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which, but an hour ago,
Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness.
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated; who would guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise!

And there was mounting in hot haste; the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
And the deep thunder, peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,

Or whispering, with white lips - 'The foe! they come! they come!'

George Gordon Lord Byron

The First Kiss Of Love

Away with your fictions of flimsy romance;
Those tissues of falsehood which folly has wove!
Give me the mild beam of the soul-breathing glance,
Or the rapture which dwells on the first kiss of love.

Ye rhymers, whose bosoms with phantasy glow,
Whose pastoral passions are made for the grove;
From what blest inspiration your sonnets would flow,
Could you ever have tasted the first kiss of love!

If Apollo should e'er his assistance refuse,
Or the Nine be desposed from your service to rove,
Invoke them no more, bid adieu to the muse,
and try the effect of the first kiss of love.

I hate you, ye cold compositions of art!
Though prudes may condemn me, and bigots reprove,
I court the effusions that spring from the heart,
Which throbes with delight to the first kiss of love.

Your shepherds, your flocks, those fantastical themes,
Perhaps may amuse, yet they never can move:
Arcadia displays but a region of dreams:
What are visions like these to the first kiss of love?

Oh! cease to affirm that man, since his birth,
From Adam till now, has with wretchedness strove,
Some portion of paradise still is on earth,
And Eden revives in the first kiss of love.

When age chills the blood, when our pleasures are past-
For years fleet away with the wings of the dove-
The dearest remembrance will still be the last,
Our sweetest memorial the first kiss of love.

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Giaour

A Fragment of a Turkish Tale

The tale which these disjointed fragments present, is founded upon circumstances now less common in the East than formerly; either because the ladies are more circumspect than in the 'olden time', or because the Christians have better fortune, or less enterprise. The story, when entire, contained the adventures of a female slave, who was thrown, in the Mussulman manner, into the sea for infidelity, and avenged by a young Venetian, her lover, at the time the Seven Islands were possessed by the Republic of Venice, and soon after the Arnauts were beaten back from the Morea, which they had ravaged for some time subsequent to the Russian invasion. The desertion of the Mainotes on being refused the plunder of Misitra, led to the abandonment of that enterprise, and to the desolation of the Morea, during which the cruelty exercised on all sides was unparalleled even in the annals of the faithful.

No breath of air to break the wave
That rolls below the Athenian's grave,
That tomb which, gleaming o'er the cliff
First greets the homeward-veering skiff
High o'er the land he saved in vain;
When shall such Hero live again?

Fair clime! where every season smiles
Benignant o'er those blessed isles,
Which, seen from far Colonna's height,
Make glad the heart that hails the sight,
And lend to lonliness delight.
There mildly dimpling, Ocean's cheek
Reflects the tints of many a peak
Caught by the laughing tides that lave
These Edens of the Eastern wave:
And if at times a transient breeze
Break the blue crystal of the seas,
Or sweep one blossom from the trees,
How welcome is each gentle air
That waves and wafts the odours there!
For there the Rose, o'er crag or vale,
Sultana of the Nightingale,

The maid for whom his melody,
His thousand songs are heard on high,
Blooms blushing to her lover's tale:
His queen, the garden queen, his Rose,
Unbent by winds, unchilled by snows,
Far from winters of the west,
By every breeze and season blest,
Returns the sweets by Nature given
In soft incense back to Heaven;
And gratefu yields that smiling sky
Her fairest hue and fragrant sigh.
And many a summer flower is there,
And many a shade that Love might share,

And many a grotto, meant by rest,
That holds the pirate for a guest;
Whose bark in sheltering cove below
Lurks for the passing peaceful prow,
Till the gay mariner's guitar
Is heard, and seen the Evening Star;
Then stealing with the muffled oar,
Far shaded by the rocky shore,
Rush the night-prowlers on the prey,
And turns to groan his roundelay.
Strand--that where Nature loved to trace,
As if for Gods, a dwelling place,
And every charm and grace hath mixed
Within the Paradise she fixed,
There man, enarmoured of distress,
Should mark it into wilderness,
And trample, brute-like, o'er each flower
That tasks not one labourious hour;
Nor claims the culture of his hand
To blood along the fairy land,
But springs as to preclude his care,
And sweetly woos him--but to spare!
Strange--that where all is Peace beside,
There Passion riots in her pride,
And Lust and Rapine wildly reign
To darken o'er the fair domain.
It is as though the Fiends prevailed
Against the Seraphs they assailed,
And, fixed on heavenly thrones, should dwell
The freed inheritors of Hell;
So soft the scene, so formed for joy,
So curst the tyrants that destroy!

He who hath bent him o'er the dead
Ere the first day of Death is fled,
The first dark day of Nothingness,
The last of Danger and Distress,
(Before Decay's effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where Beauty lingers,)
And marked the mild angelic air,
The rapture of Repose that's there,
The fixed yet tender traits that streak
The languor of the placid cheek,
And--but for that sad shrouded eye,
That fires not, wins not, weeps not, now,
And but for that chill, changeless brow,

Where cold Obstruction's apathy
Appals the gazing mourner's heart,
As if to him it could impart
The doom he dreads, yet dwells upon;
Yes, but for these and these alone,

Some moments, aye, one treacherous hour,
He still might doubt the Tyrant's power;
So fair, so calm, so softly sealed,
The first, last look by Death revealed!
Such is the aspect of his shore;
'T is Greece, but living Greece no more!
So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,
We start, for Soul is wanting there.
Hers is the loveliness in death,
That parts not quite with parting breath;
But beauty with that fearful bloom,
That hue which haunts it to the tomb,
Expression's last receding ray,
A gilded Halo hovering round decay,
The farewell beam of Feeling past away!
Spark of that flame, perchance of heavenly birth,
Which gleams, but warms no more its cherished earth!

Clime of the unforgotten brave!
Whose land from plain to mountain-cave
Was Freedom's home or Glory's grave!
Shrine of the mighty! can it be,
That this is all remains of thee?
Approach, thou craven crouching slave:
Say, is this not Thermopylæ?
These waters blue that round you lave,--
Of servile offspring of the free--
Pronounce what sea, what shore is this?
The gulf, the rock of Salamis!
These scenes, their story yet unknown;
Arise, and make again your own;
Snatch from the ashes of your Sires
The embers of their former fires;
And he who in the strife expires
Will add to theirs a name of fear
That Tyranny shall quake to hear,
And leave his sons a hope, a fame,
They too will rather die than shame:
For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeathed by bleeding Sire to Son,
Though baffled oft is ever won.
Bear witness, Greece, thy living page!
Attest it many a deathless age!
While Kings, in dusty darkness hid,
Have left a nameless pyramid,
Thy Heroes, though the general doom
Hath swept the column from their tomb,
A mightier monument command,
The mountains of thy native land!
There points thy Muse to stranger's eye
The graves of those that cannot die!
'T were long to tell, and sad to trace,

Each step from Splendour to Disgrace;
Enough--no foreign foe could quell
Thy soul, till from itself it fell;
Yet! Self-abasement paved the way
To villain-bonds and despot sway.

What can he tell who tread thy shore?
 No legend of thine olden time,
No theme on which the Muse might soar
High as thine own days of yore,
 When man was worthy of thy clime.
The hearts within thy valleys bred,
The fiery souls that might have led
 Thy sons to deeds sublime,
Now crawl from cradle to the Grave,
Slaves--nay, the bondsmen of a Slave,
 And callous, save to crime.
Stained with each evil that pollutes
Mankind, where least above the brutes;
Without even savage virtue blest,
Without one free or valiant breast,
Still to the neighbouring ports tey waft
Proverbial wiles, and ancient craft;
In this subtle Greek is found,
For this, and this alown, renowned.
In vain might Liberty invoke
The spirit to its bondage broke
Or raise the neck that courts the yoke:
No more her sorrows I bewail,
Yet this will be a mournful tale,
And they who listen may believe,
Who heard it first had cause to grieve.

Far, dark, along the blue sea glancing,
The shadows of the rocks advancing
Start on the fisher's eye like boat
Of island-pirate or Mainote;
And fearful for his light caique,
He shuns the near but doubtful creek:
Though worn and weary with his toil,
And cumbered with his scaly spoil,
Slowly, yet strongly, plies the oar,
Till Port Leone's safer shore
Receives him by the lovely light
That best becomes an Eastern night.

... Who thundering comes on blackest steed,
With slackened bit and hoof of speed?
Beneath the clattering iron's sound
The caverned echoes wake around
In lash for lash, and bound for bound;

The foam that streaks the courser's side
Seems gathered from the ocean-tide:
Though weary waves are sunk to rest,
There's none within his rider's breast;
And though tomorrow's tempest lower,
'Tis calmer than thy heart, young Giaour!
I know thee not, I loathe thy race,
But in thy lineaments I trace
What time shall strengthen, not efface:
Though young and pale, that sallow front
Is scathed by fiery passion's brunt;
Though bent on earth thine evil eye,
As meteor-like thou glidest by,
Right well I view thee and deem thee one
Whom Othman's sons should slay or shun.

On - on he hastened, and he drew
My gaze of wonder as he flew:
Though like a demon of the night
He passed, and vanished from my sight,
His aspect and his air impressed
A troubled memory on my breast,
And long upon my startled ear
Rung his dark courser's hoofs of fear.
He spurs his steed; he nears the steep,
That, jutting, shadows o'er the deep;
He winds around; he hurries by;
The rock relieves him from mine eye;
For, well I ween, unwelcome he
Whose glance is fixed on those that flee;
And not a start that shines too bright
On him who takes such timeless flight.
He wound along; but ere he passed
One glance he snatched, as if his last,
A moment checked his wheeling steed,
A moment breathed him from his speed,
A moment on his stirrup stood -
Why looks he o'er the olive wood?
The crescent glimmers on the hill,
The mosque's high lamps are quivering still
Though too remote for sound to wake
In echoes of far tophaike,
The flashes of each joyous peal
Are seen to prove the Moslem's zeal,
Tonight, set Rhamazani's sun;
Tonight the Bairam feast's begun;
Tonight - but who and what art thou
Of foreign garb and fearful brow?
That thou should'st either pause or flee?

He stood - some dread was on his face,
Soon hatred settled in its place:
It rose not with the reddening flush
Of transient anger's hasty blush,
But pale as marble o'er the tomb,
Whose ghastly whiteness aids its gloom.
His brow was bent, his eye was glazed;
He raised his arm, and fiercely raised,
And sternly shook his hand on high,
As doubting to return or fly;
Impatient of his flight delayed,
Here loud his raven charger neighed -
Down glanced that hand and, and grasped his blade;
That sound had burst his waking dream,
As slumber starts at owlet's scream.
The spur hath lanced his courser's sides;
Away, away, for life he rides:
Swift as the hurled on high jerreed
Springs to the touch his startled steed;
The rock is doubled, and the shore
Shakes with the clattering tramp no more;
The crag is won, no more is seen
His Christian crest and haughty mien.
'Twas but an instant he restrained
That fiery barb so sternly reined;
'Twas but a moment that he stood,
Then sped as if by death pursued;
But in that instant O'er his soul
Winters of memory seemed to roll,
And gather in that drop of time
A life of pain, an age of crime.
O'er him who loves, or hates, or fears,
Such moment pours the grief of years:
What felt he then, at once opprest
By all that most distracts the breast?
That pause, which pondered o'er his fate,
Oh, who its dreary length shall date!
Though in time's record nearly nought,
It was eternity to thought!
For infinite as boundless space
The thought that conscience must embrace,
Which in itself can comprehend
Woe without name, or hope, or end.

The hour is past, the Giaour is gone;
And did he fly or fall alone?
Woe to that hour he came or went!
The curse for Hassan's sin was sent
To turn a palace to a tomb:
He came, he went, like the Simoom,
That harbinger of fate and gloom,

Beneath whose widely - wasting breath
The very cypress droops to death -
Dark tree, still sad when others' grief is fled,
The only constant mourner o'er the dead!

The steed is vanished from the stall;
No serf is seen in Hassan's hall;
The lonely spider's thin grey pall
Waves slowly widening o'er the wall;
The bat builds in his harem bower,
And in the fortress of his power
The owl usurps the beacon-tower;
The wild-dog howls o'er the fountain's brim,
With baffled thirst and famine, grim;
For the stream has shrunk from its marble bed,
Where the weeds and the desolate dust are spread.
'Twas sweet of yore to see it play
And chase the sultriness of day,
As springing high the silver dew
In whirls fantastically flew,
And flung luxurious coolness round
The air, and verdure o'er the ground.
'Twas sweet, when cloudless stars were bright,
To view the wave of watery light,
And hear its melody by night.
And oft had Hassan's childhood played
Around the verge of that cascade;
And oft upon his mother's breast
That sound had harmonized his rest;
And oft had Hassan's youth along
Its bank been soothed by beauty's song;
And softer seem'd each melting tone
Of music mingled with its own.
But ne'er shall Hassan's age repose
Along the brink at twilight's close:
The stream that filled that font is fled -
The blood that warmed his heart is shed!
And here no more shall human voice
Be heard to rage, regret, rejoice.
The last sad note that swelled the gale
Was woman's wildest funeral wail:
That quenched in silence all is still,
But the lattice that flaps when the wind is shrill:
Though raves the gust, and floods the rain,
No hand shall clasp its clasp again.
On desert sands 'twere joy to scan
The rudest steps of fellow man,
So here the very voice of grief
Might wake an echo like relief -
At least 'twould say, 'All are not gone;
There lingers life, though but in one' -

For many a gilded chamber's there,
Which solitude might well forbear;
Within that dome as yet decay
Hath slowly worked her cankering way -
But gloom is gathered o'er the gate,
Nor there the fakir's self will wait;
Nor there will wandering dervise stay,
For bounty cheers not his delay;
Nor there will weary stranger halt
To bless the sacred 'bread and salt'.
Alike must wealth and poverty
Pass heedless and unheeded by,
For courtesy and pity died
With Hassan on the mountain side.
His roof, that refuge unto men,
Is desolation's hungry den.
The guest flies the hall, and the vassal from labour,
Since his turban was cleft by the infidel's sabre!

I hear the sound of coming feet,
But not a voice mine ear to greet;
More near - each turban I can scan,
And silver-sheathed ataghan;
The foremost of the band is seen
An emir by his garb of green:
'Ho! Who art thou?' - 'This low salam
Replies of Moslem faith I am.'
'The burden ye so gently bear,
Seems one that claims your utmost care,
And, doubtless, holds some precious freight,
My humble bark would gladly wait.'

'Thou speakest sooth; they skiff unmoor,
And waft us from the silent shore;
Nay, leave the sail still furled, and ply
The nearest oar that's scattered by,
And midway to those rocks where sleep
The channeled waters dark and deep.
Rest from your task - so - bravely done,
Of course had been right swiftly run;
Yet 'tis the longest voyage, I trow,
That one of -

Sullen it plunged, and slowly sank,
The calm wave rippled to the bank;
I watched it as it sank, methought
Some motion from the current caught
Bestirred it more, - 'twas but the beam
That checkered o'er the living stream:

I gazed, till vanishing from view,
Like lessening pebble it withdrew;
Still less and less, a speck of white
That gemmed the tide, then mocked the sight;
And all its hidden secrets sleep,
Known but to Genii of the deep,
Which, trembling in their coral caves,
They dare not whisper to the waves.

As rising on its purple wing
The insect-queen of eastern spring,
O'er emerald meadows of Kashmeer
Invites the young pursuer near,
And leads him on from flower to flower
A weary chase and wasted hour,
Then leaves him, as it soars on high,
With panting heart and tearful eye:
So beauty lures the full-grown child,
With hue as bright, and wing as wild:
A chase of idle hopes and fears,
Begun in folly, closed in tears.
If won, to equal ills betrayed,
Woe waits the insect and the maid;
A life of pain, the loss of peace,
From infant's play and man's caprice:
The lovely toy so fiercely sought
Hath lost its charm by being caught,
For every touch that wooed its stay
Hath brushed its brightest hues away,
Till charm, and hue, and beauty gone,
'Tis left to fly or fall alone.
With wounded wing, or bleeding breast,
Ah! Where shall either victim rest?
Can this with faded pinion soar
From rose to tulip as before?
Or beauty, blighted in an hour,
Find joy within her broken bower?
No: gayer insects fluttering by
Ne'er droop the wing o'er those that die,
And lovelier things have mercy shown
To every failing but their own,
And every woe a tear can claim
Except an erring sister's shame.

The mind that broods o'er guilty woes,
Is like the scorpion girt by fire;
In circle narrowing as it glows,
The flames around their captive close,
Till inly searched by thousand throes,
And maddening in her ire,

One sad and sole relief she knows,
The sting she nourished for her foes,
Whose venom never yet was vain,
Gives but one pang, and cures all pain,
So do the dark in soul expire,
Or live like scorpion girt by fire;
So writhes the mind remorse hath riven,
Unfit for earth, undoomed for heaven,
Darkness above, despair beneath,
Around it flame, within it death!

Black Hassan from the harem flies,
Nor bends on woman's form his eyes;
The unwonted chase each hour employs,
Yet shares he not the hunter's joys.
Not thus was Hassan wont to fly
When Leila dwelt in his Serai.
Doth Leila there no longer dwell?
That tale can only Hassan tell:
Strange rumours in our city say
Upon that eve she fled away
When Rhamazan's last sun was set,
And flashing from each minaret
Millions of lamps proclaimed the feast
Of Bairam through the boundless East.
'Twas then she went as to the bath,
Which Hassan vainly searched in wrath;
For she was flown her master's rage
In likeness of a Georgian page,
And far beyond the Moslem's power
Had wronged him with the faithless Giaour.
Somewhat of this had Hassan deemed;
But still so fond, so fair she seemed,
Too well he trusted to the slave
Whose treachery deserved a grave:
And on that eve had gone to mosque,
And thence to feast in his kiosk.
Such is the tale his Nubians tell,
Who did not watch their charge too well;
But others say, that on that night,
By pale Phingari's trembling light,
The Giaour upon his jet-black steed
Was seen, but seen alone to speed
With bloody spur along the shore,
Nor maid nor page behind him bore.

Her eye's dark charm 'twere vain to tell,
But gaze on that of the gazelle,
It will assist thy fancy well;
As large, as languishingly dark,

But soul beamed forth in every spark
That darted from beneath the lid,
Bright as the jewel of Giamschild.
Yea, Soul, and should our prophet say
That form was nought but breathing clay,
By Allah! I would answer nay;
Though on Al-Sirat's arch I stood,
Which totters o'er the fiery flood,
With Paradise within my view,
And all his Houris beckoning through.
Oh! Who young Leila's glance could read
And keep that portion of his creed,
Which saith that woman is but dust,
A soulless toy for tyrant's lust?
On her might Muftis might gaze, and own
That through her eye the Immortal shone;
On her fair cheek's unfading hue
The young pomegranate's blossoms strew
Their bloom in blushes ever new;
Her hair in hyacinthine flow,
When left to roll its folds below,
As midst her handmaids in the hall
She stood superior to them all,
Hath swept the marble where her feet
Gleamed whiter than the mountain sleet
Ere from the cloud that gave it birth
It fell, and caught one stain of earth.
The cygnet nobly walks the water;
So moved on earth Circassia's daughter,
The loveliest bird of Franguestan!
As rears her crest the ruffled swan,
And spurns the wave with wings of pride,
When pass the steps of stranger man
Along the banks that bound her tide;
Thus rose fair Leila's whiter neck:-
Thus armed with beauty would she check
Intrusion's glance, till folly's gaze
Shrunk from the charms it meant to praise:
Thus high and graceful as her gait;
Her heart as tender to her mate;
Her mate - stern Hassan, who was he?
Alas! That name was not for thee!

Stern Hassan hath a journey ta'en
With twenty vassals in his train,
Each armed, as best becomes a man,
With arquebuss and ataghan;
The chief before, as decked for war,
Bears in his belt the scimitar
Stain'd with the best of Amaut blood
When in the pass the rebels stood,

And few returned to tell the tale
Of what befell in Parne's vale.
The pistols which his girdle bore
Were those that once a pasha wore,
Which still, though gemmed and bossed with gold,
Even robbers tremble to behold.
'Tis said he goes to woo a bride
More true than her who left his side;
The faithless slave that broke her bower,
And - worse than faithless - for a Giaour!

The sun's last rays are on the hill,
And sparkle in the fountain rill,
Whose welcome waters, cool and clear,
Draw blessings from the mountaineer:
Here may the loitering merchant Greek
Find that repose 'twere vain to seek
In cities lodged too near his lord,
And trembling for his secret hoard -
Here may he rest where none can see,
In crowds a slave, in deserts free;
And with forbidden wine may stain
The bowl a Moslem must not drain.

The foremost Tartar's in the gap,
Conspicuous by his yellow cap;
The rest in lengthening line the while
Wind slowly through the long defile:
Above, the mountain rears a peak,
Where vultures whet the thirsty beak,
And theirs may be a feast tonight,
Shall tempt them down ere morrow's light;
Beneath, a river's wintry stream
Has shrunk before the summer beam,
And left a channel bleak and bare,
Save shrubs that spring to perish there:
Each side the midway path there lay
Small broken crags of granite grey
By time, or mountain lightning, riven
From summits clad in mists of heaven;
For where is he that hath beheld
The peak of Liakura unveiled?

They reach the grove of pine at last:
'Bismillah! now the peril's past;
For yonder view the opening plain,
And there we'll prick our steeds amain.'
The Chiaus spake, and as he said,
A bullet whistled o'er his head;

The foremost Tartar bites the ground!
Scarce had they time to check the rein,
Swift from their steeds the riders bound;
But three shall never mount again:
Unseen the foes that gave the wound,
The dying ask revenge in vain.
With steel unsheathed, and carbine bent,
Some o'er their courser's harness leant,
Half sheltered by the steed;
Some fly behind the nearest rock,
And there await the coming shock,
Nor tamely stand to bleed
Beneath the shaft of foes unseen,
Who dare not quit their craggy screen.
Stern Hassan only from his horse
Disdains to light, and keeps his course,
Till fiery flashes in the van
Proclaim too sure the robber-clan
Have well secured the only way
Could now avail the promised prey;
Then curled his very beard with ire,
And glared his eye with fiercer fire:
'Though far and near the bullets hiss,
I've 'scaped a bloodier hour than this.'
And now the foe their covert quit,
And call his vassals to submit;
But Hassan's frown and furious word
Are dreaded more than hostile sword,
Nor of his little band a man
Resigned carbine or ataghan,
Nor raised the craven cry, Amaun!
In fuller sight, more near and near,
The lately ambushed foes appear,
And, issuing from the grove, advance
Some who on battle-charger prance.
Who leads them on with foreign brand,
Far flashing in his red right hand?
"Tis he! 'tis he! I know him now;
I know him by his pallid brow;
I know him by the evil eye
That aids his envious treachery;
I know him by his jet-black barb:
Though now arrayed in Arnaut garb
Apostate from his own vile faith,
It shall not save him from the death:
'Tis he! well met in any hour,
Lost Leila's love, accursed Giaour!

As rolls the river into ocean,
In sable torrent wildly streaming;
As the sea-tide's opposing motion,

In azure column Proudly gleaming
Beats back the current many a rood,
In curling foam and mingling flood,
While eddying whirl, and breaking wave,
Roused by the blast of winter, rave;
Through sparkling spray, in thundering clash,
The lightnings of the waters flash
In awful whiteness o'er the shore,
That shines and shakes beneath the roar;
Thus - as the stream, and Ocean greet,
With waves that madden as they meet -
Thus join the bands, whom mutual wrong,
And fate, and fury, drive along.
The bickering sabres' shivering jar;
 And pealing wide or ringing near
 Its echoes on the throbbing ear,
The deathshot hissing from afar;
The shock, the shout, the groan of war,
 Reverberate along that vale
 More suited to the shepherds tale:
Though few the numbers - theirs the strife
That neither spares nor speaks for life!
Ah! fondly youthful hearts can press,
To seize and share the dear caress;
But love itself could never pant
For all that beauty sighs to grant
With half the fervour hate bestows
Upon the last embrace of foes,
When grappling in the fight they fold
Those arms that ne'er shall lose their hold:
Friends meet to part; love laughs at faith;
True foes, once met, are joined till death!

With sabre shivered to the hilt,
Yet dripping with the blood he spilt;
Yet strained within the severed hand
Which quivers round that faithless brand;
His turban far behind him rolled,
And cleft in twain its firmest fold;
His flowing robe by falchion torn,
And crimson as those clouds of morn
That, streaked with dusky red, portend
The day shall have a stormy end;
A stain on every bush that bore
A fragment of his palampore
His breast with wounds unnumbered riven,
His back to earth, his face to heaven,
Fallen Hassan lies - his unclosed eye
Yet lowering on his enemy,
As if the hour that sealed his fate
Surviving left his quenchless hate;

And o'er him bends that foe with brow
As dark as his that bled below.

'Yes, Leila sleeps beneath the wave,
But his shall be a redder grave;
Her spirit pointed well the steel
Which taught that felon heart to feel.
He called the Prophet, but his power
Was vain against the vengeful Giaour:
He called on Allah - but the word.
Arose unheeded or unheard.
Thou Paynim fool! could Leila's prayer
Be passed, and thine accorded there?
I watched my time, I leagued with these,
The traitor in his turn to seize;
My wrath is wreaked, the deed is done,
And now I go - but go alone.'

The browsing camels' bells are tinkling:
His mother looked from her lattice high -
She saw the dews of eve besprinkling
The pasture green beneath her eye,
She saw the planets faintly twinkling:
"Tis twilight - sure his train is nigh.
She could not rest in the garden-bower,
But gazed through the grate of his steepest tower:
'Why comes he not? his steeds are fleet,
Nor shrink they from the summer heat;
Why sends not the bridegroom his promised gift?
Is his heart more cold, or his barb less swift?
Oh, false reproach! yon Tartar now
Has gained our nearest mountain's brow,
And warily the steep descends,
And now within the valley bends;
And he bears the gift at his saddle bow
How could I deem his courser slow?
Right well my largess shall repay
His welcome speed, and weary way.'
The Tartar lighted at the gate,
But scarce upheld his fainting weight!
His swarthy visage spake distress,
But this might be from weariness;
His garb with sanguine spots was dyed,
But these might be from his courser's side;
He drew the token from his vest -
Angel of Death! 'tis Hassan's cloven crest!
His calpac rent - his caftan red -
'Lady, a fearful bride thy son hath wed:
Me, not from mercy, did they spare,
But this empurpled pledge to bear.

Peace to the brave! whose blood is spilt:
Woe to the Giaour! for his the guilt.'

A turban carved in coarsest stone,
A pillar with rank weeds o'ergrown,
Whereon can now be scarcely read
The Koran verse that mourns the dead,
Point out the spot where Hassan fell
A victim in that lonely dell.
There sleeps as true an Osmanlie
As e'er at Mecca bent the knee;
As ever scorned forbidden wine,
Or prayed with face towards the shrine,
In orisons resumed anew
At solemn sound of 'Allah Hu!'
Yet died he by a stranger's hand,
And stranger in his native land;
Yet died he as in arms he stood,
And unavenged, at least in blood.
But him the maids of Paradise
Impatient to their halls invite,
And the dark Heaven of Houris' eyes
On him shall glance for ever bright;
They come - their kerchiefs green they wave,
And welcome with a kiss the brave!
Who falls in battle 'gainst a Giaour
Is worthiest an immortal bower.

But thou, false Infidel! shalt writhe
Beneath avenging Monkir's scythe;
And from its torment 'scape alone
To wander round lost Eblis' throne;
And fire unquenched, unquenchable,
Around, within, thy heart shall dwell;
Nor ear can hear nor tongue can tell
The tortures of that inward hell!
But first, on earth as vampire sent,
Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent:
Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
And suck the blood of all thy race;
There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
At midnight drain the stream of life;
Yet loathe the banquet which perforce
Must feed thy livid living corse:
Thy victims ere they yet expire
Shall know the demon for their sire,
As cursing thee, thou cursing them,
Thy flowers are withered on the stem.
But one that for thy crime must fall,
The youngest, most beloved of all,

Shall bless thee with a father's name -
That word shall wrap thy heart in flame!
Yet must thou end thy task, and mark
Her cheek's last tinge, her eye's last spark,
And the last glassy glance must view
Which freezes o'er its lifeless blue;
Then with unhallowed hand shalt tear
The tresses of her yellow hair,
Of which in life a lock when shorn
Affection's fondest pledge was worn,
But now is borne away by thee,
Memorial of thine agony!
Wet with thine own best blood shall drip
Thy gnashing tooth and haggard lip;
Then stalking to thy sullen grave,
Go - and with Gouls and Afrits rave;
Till these in horror shrink away
From spectre more accursed than they!

'How name ye yon lone Caloyer?
His features I have scanned before
In mine own land: 'tis many a year,
Since, dashing by the lonely shore,
I saw him urge as fleet a steed
As ever served a horseman's need.
But once I saw that face, yet then
It was so marked with inward pain,
I could not pass it by again;
It breathes the same dark spirit now,
As death were stamped upon his brow.

"Tis twice three years at summer tide
Since first among our freres he came;
And here it soothes him to abide
For some dark deed he will not name.
But never at our vesper prayer,
Nor e'er before confession chair
Kneels he, nor recks he when arise
Incense or anthem to the skies,
But broods within his cell alone,
His faith and race alike unknown.
The sea from Paynim land he crost,
And here ascended from the coast;
Yet seems he not of Othman race,
But only Christian in his face:
I'd judge him some stray renegade,
Repentant of the change he made,
Save that he shuns our holy shrine,
Nor tastes the sacred bread and wine.
Great largess to these walls he brought,

And thus our abbot's favour bought;
But were I prior, not a day
Should brook such stranger's further stay,
Or pent within our penance cell
Should doom him there for aye to dwell.
Much in his visions mutters he
Of maiden whelmed beneath the sea;
Of sabres clashing, foemen flying,
Wrongs avenged, and Moslem dying.
On cliff he hath been known to stand,
And rave as to some bloody hand
Fresh severed from its parent limb,
Invisible to all but him,
Which beckons onward to his grave,
And lures to leap into the wave.'

Dark and unearthly is the scowl
That glares beneath his dusky cowl:
The flash of that dilating eye
Reveals too much of times gone by;
Though varying, indistinct its hue,
Oft will his glance the gazer rue,
For in it lurks that nameless spell,
Which speaks, itself unspeakable,
A spirit yet unquelled and high,
That claims and keeps ascendancy;
And like the bird whose pinions quake,
But cannot fly the gazing snake,
Will others quail beneath his look,
Nor 'scape the glance they scarce can brook.
From him the half-affrighted friar
When met alone would fain retire,
As if that eye and bitter smile
Transferred to others fear and guile:
Not oft to smile descendeth he,
And when he doth 'tis sad to see
That he but mocks at misery.
How that pale lip will curl and quiver!
Then fix once more as if for ever;
As if his sorrow or disdain
Forbade him e'er to smile again.
Well were it so - such ghastly mirth
From joyaunce ne'er derived its birth.
But sadder still it were to trace
What once were feelings in that face:
Time hath not yet the features fixed,
But brighter traits with evil mixed;
And there are hues not always faded,
Which speak a mind not all degraded
Even by the crimes through which it waded:
The common crowd but see the gloom

Of wayward deeds, and fitting doom;
The close observer can espy
A noble soul, and lineage high:
Alas! though both bestowed in vain,
Which grief could change, and guilt could stain,
It was no vulgar tenement
To which such lofty gifts were lent,
And still with little less than dread
On such the sight is riveted.
The roofless cot, decayed and rent,
Will scarce delay the passer-by;
The tower by war or tempest bent,
While yet may frown one battlement,
Demands and daunts the stranger's eye;
Each ivied arch, and pillar lone,
Pleads haughtily for glories gone!

'His floating robe around him folding,
Slow sweeps he through the columned aisle;
With dread beheld, with gloom beholding
The rites that sanctify the pile.
But when the anthem shakes the choir,
And kneel the monks, his steps retire;
By yonder lone and wavering torch
His aspect glares within the porch;
There will he pause till all is done -
And hear the prayer, but utter none.
See - by the half-illumined wall
His hood fly back, his dark hair fall,
That pale brow wildly wreathing round,
As if the Gorgon there had bound
The sablest of the serpent-braid
That o'er her fearful forehead strayed:
For he declines the convent oath
And leaves those locks unhallowed growth,
But wears our garb in all beside;
And, not from piety but pride,
Gives wealth to walls that never heard
Of his one holy vow nor word.
Lo! - mark ye, as the harmony
Peals louder praises to the sky,
That livid cheek, that stony air
Of mixed defiance and despair!
Saint Francis, keep him from the shrine!
Else may we dread the wrath divine
Made manifest by awful sign.
If ever evil angel bore
The form of mortal, such he wore:
By all my hope of sins forgiven,
Such looks are not of earth nor heaven!'

To love the softest hearts are prone,
But such can ne'er be all his own;
Too timid in his woes to share,
Too meek to meet, or brave despair;
And sterner hearts alone may feel
The wound that time can never heal.
The rugged metal of the mine,
Must burn before its surface shine,
But plunged within the furnace-flame,
It bends and melts - though still the same;
Then tempered to thy want, or will,
'Twill serve thee to defend or kill;
A breast-plate for thine hour of need,
Or blade to bid thy foeman bleed;
But if a dagger's form it bear,
Let those who shape its edge, beware!
Thus passion's fire, and woman's art,
Can turn and tame the sterner heart;
From these its form and tone are ta'en,
And what they make it, must remain,
But break - before it bend again.

If solitude succeed to grief,
Release from pain is slight relief;
The vacant bosom's wilderness
Might thank the pang that made it less.
We loathe what none are left to share:
Even bliss - 'twere woe alone to bear;
The heart once left thus desolate
Must fly at last for ease - to hate.
It is as if the dead could feel
The icy worm around them steal,
And shudder, as the reptiles creep
To revel o'er their rotting sleep,
Without the power to scare away
The cold consumers of their clay I
It is as if the desert-bird,
Whose beak unlocks her bosom's stream
To still her famished nestlings' scream,
Nor mourns a life to them transferred,
Should rend her rash devoted breast,
And find them flown her empty nest.
The keenest pangs the wretched find
Are rapture to the dreary void,
The leafless desert of the mind,
The waste of feelings unemployed.
Who would be doomed to gaze upon
A sky without a cloud or sun?
Less hideous far the tempest's roar
Than ne'er to brave the billows more -

Thrown, when the war of winds is o'er,
A lonely wreck on fortune's shore,
'Mid sullen calm, and silent bay,
Unseen to drop by dull decay; -
Better to sink beneath the shock
Than moulder piecemeal on the rock!

'Father! thy days have passed in peace,
'Mid counted beads, and countless prayer;
To bid the sins of others cease
Thyself without a crime or care,
Save transient ills that all must bear,
Has been thy lot from youth to age;
And thou wilt bless thee from the rage
Of passions fierce and uncontrolled,
Such as thy penitents unfold,
Whose secret sins and sorrows rest
Within thy pure and pitying breast. My days, though few, have passed below
In much of joy, but more of woe;
Yet still in hours of love or strife,
I've 'scaped the weariness of life:
Now leagued with friends, now girt by foes,
I loathed the languor of repose.
Now nothing left to love or hate,
No more with hope or pride elate,
I'd rather be the thing that crawls
Most noxious o'er a dungeon's walls,
Than pass my dull, unvarying days,
Condemned to meditate and gaze.
Yet, lurks a wish within my breast
For rest - but not to feel 'tis rest
Soon shall my fate that wish fulfil;
And I shall sleep without the dream
Of what I was, and would be still,
Dark as to thee my deeds may seem:
My memory now is but the tomb
Of joys long dead; my hope, their doom:
Though better to have died with those
Than bear a life of lingering woes.
My spirit shrunk not to sustain
The searching throes of ceaseless pain;
Nor sought the self-accorded grave
Of ancient fool and modern knave:
Yet death I have not feared to meet;
And the field it had been sweet,
Had danger wooed me on to move
The slave of glory, not of love.
I've braved it - not for honour's boast;
I smile at laurels won or lost;
To such let others carve their way,
For high renown, or hireling pay:

But place again before my eyes
Aught that I deem a worthy prize
The maid I love, the man I hate,
And I will hunt the steps of fate,
To save or slay, as these require,
Through rending steel, and rolling fire:
Nor needest thou doubt this speech from one
Who would but do ~ what he hath done.
Death is but what the haughty brave,
The weak must bear, the wretch must crave;
Then let life go to him who gave:
I have not quailed to danger's brow
When high and happy - need I now?

'I loved her, Friar! nay, adored -
But these are words that all can use -
I proved it more in deed than word;
There's blood upon that dinted sword,
A stain its steel can never lose:
'Twas shed for her, who died for me,
It warmed the heart of one abhorred:
Nay, start not - no - nor bend thy knee,
Nor midst my sins such act record;
Thou wilt absolve me from the deed,
For he was hostile to thy creed!
The very name of Nazarene
Was wormwood to his Paynim spleen.
Ungrateful fool! since but for brands
Well wielded in some hardy hands,
And wounds by Galileans given -
The surest pass to Turkish heaven
For him his Houris still might wait
Impatient at the Prophet's gate.
I loved her - love will find its way
Through paths where wolves would fear to prey;
And if it dares enough, 'twere hard
If passion met not some reward -
No matter how, or where, or why,
I did not vainly seek, nor sigh:
Yet sometimes, with remorse, in vain
I wish she had not loved again.
She died - I dare not tell thee how;
But look - 'tis written on my brow!
There read of Cain the curse and crime,
In characters unworn by time:
Still, ere thou dost condemn me, pause;
Not mine the act, though I the cause.
Yet did he but what I had done
Had she been false to more than one.
Faithless to him, he gave the blow;
But true to me, I laid him low:

Howe'er deserved her doom might be,
Her treachery was truth to me;
To me she gave her heart, that all
Which tyranny can ne'er enthrall;
And I, alas! too late to save!
Yet all I then could give, I gave,
'Twas some relief, our foe a grave.
His death sits lightly; but her fate
Has made me - what thou well mayest hate.

 His doom was sealed - he knew it well
Warned by the voice of stern Taheer,
Deep in whose darkly boding ear
The deathshot pealed of murder near,
 As filed the troop to where they fell!
He died too in the battle broil,
A time that heeds nor pain nor toil;
One cry to Mahomet for aid,
One prayer to Allah all he made:
He knew and crossed me in the fray -
I gazed upon him where he lay,
And watched his spirit ebb away:
Though pierced like pard by hunters' steel,
He felt not half that now I feel.
I searched, but vainly searched, to find
The workings of a wounded mind;
Each feature of that sullen corse
Betrayed his rage, but no remorse.
Oh, what had vengeance given to trace
Despair upon his dying face I
The late repentance of that hour,
When penitence hath lost her power
To tear one terror from the grave,
And will not soothe, and cannot save.

'The cold in clime are cold in blood,
Their love can scarce deserve the name;
But mine was like a lava flood
 That boils in Etna's breast of flame.
I cannot prate in puling strain
Of ladye-love, and beauty's chain:
If changing cheek, and searching vein,
Lips taught to writhe, but not complain,
If bursting heart, and maddening brain,
And daring deed, and vengeful steel,
And all that I have felt, and feel,
Betoken love - that love was mine,
And shown by many a bitter sign.
'Tis true, I could not whine nor sigh,
I knew but to obtain or die.
I die - but first I have possessed,
And come what may, I have been blessed.

Shall I the doom I sought upbraid?
No - reft of all, yet undismayed
But for the thought of Leila slain,
Give me the pleasure with the pain,
So would I live and love again.
I grieve, but not, my holy guide!
For him who dies, but her who died:
She sleeps beneath the wandering wave
Ah! had she but an earthly grave,
This breaking heart and throbbing head
Should seek and share her narrow bed.
She was a form of life and light,
That, seen, became a part of sight;
And rose, where'er I turned mine eye,
The morning-star of memory!

'Yes, love indeed is light from heaven..
A spark of that immortal fire
With angels shared, by Allah given,
To lift from earth our low desire.
Devotion wafts the mind above,
But Heaven itself descends in love;
A feeling from the Godhead caught,
To wean from self each sordid thought;
A ray of him who formed the whole;
A glory circling round the soul !
I grant my love imperfect, all
That mortals by the name miscall;
Then deem it evil, what thou wilt;
But say, oh say, hers was not guilt !
She was my life's unerring light:
That quenched, what beam shall break my night?
Oh! would it shone to lead me still,
Although to death or deadliest ill!
Why marvel ye, if they who lose
 This present joy, this future hope,
 No more with sorrow meekly cope;
In phrensy then their fate accuse;
In madness do those fearful deeds
 That seem to add but guilt to woe?
Alas! the breast that inly bleeds
 Hath nought to dread from outward blow;
Who falls from all he knows of bliss,
Cares little into what abyss.
Fierce as the gloomy vulture's now
 To thee, old man, my deeds appear:
I read abhorrence on thy brow,
 And this too was I born to bear!
'Tis true, that, like that bird of prey,
With havock have I marked my way:
But this was taught me by the dove,

To die - and know no second love.
This lesson yet hath man to learn,
Taught by the thing he dares to spurn:
The bird that sings within the brake,
The swan that swims upon the lake,
One mate, and one alone, will take.
And let the fool still prone to range,
And sneer on all who cannot change,
Partake his jest with boasting boys;
I envy not his varied joys,
But deem such feeble, heartless man,
Less than yon solitary swan;
Far, far beneath the shallow maid
He left believing and betrayed.
Such shame at least was never mine -
Leila! each thought was only thine!
My good, my guilt, my weal, my woe,
My hope on high - my all below.
Earth holds no other like to thee,
Or, if it doth, in vain for me:
For worlds I dare not view the dame
Resembling thee, yet not the same.
The very crimes that mar my youth,
This bed of death - attest my truth!
'Tis all too late - thou wert, thou art
The cherished madness of my heart!

'And she was lost - and yet I breathed,
But not the breath of human life:
A serpent round my heart was wreathed,
And stung my every thought to strife.
Alike all time, abhorred all place,
Shuddering I shrunk from Nature's face,
Where every hue that charmed before
The blackness of my bosom wore.
The rest thou dost already know,
And all my sins, and half my woe.
But talk no more of penitence;
Thou see'st I soon shall part from hence:
And if thy holy tale were true,
The deed that's done canst thou undo?
Think me not thankless - but this grief
Looks not to priesthood for relief.
My soul's estate in secret guess:
But wouldst thou pity more, say less.
When thou canst bid my Leila live,
Then will I sue thee to forgive;
Then plead my cause in that high place
Where purchased masses proffer grace.
Go, when the hunter's hand hath wrung
From forest-cave her shrieking young,

And calm the lonely lioness:
But soothe not - mock not my distress!

'In earlier days, and calmer hours,
When heart with heart delights to blend,
Where bloom my native valley's bowers
I had - Ah! have I now? - a friend!
To him this pledge I charge thee send,
Memorial of a youthful vow;
I would remind him of my end:
Though souls absorbed like mine allow
Brief thought to distant friendship's claim,
Yet dear to him my blighted name.
'Tis strange - he prophesied my doom,
And I have smiled - I then could smile -
When prudence would his voice assume,
And warn - I recked not what - the while:
But now remembrance whispers o'er
Those accents scarcely marked before.
Say - that his bodings came to pass,
And he will start to hear their truth,
And wish his words had not been sooth:
Tell him, unheeding as I was,
Through many a busy bitter scene
Of all our golden youth had been,
In pain, my faltering tongue had tried
To bless his memory ere I died;
But Heaven in wrath would turn away,
If guilt should for the guiltless pray.
I do not ask him not to blame,
Too gentle he to wound my name;
And what have I to do with fame?
I do not ask him not to mourn,
Such cold request might sound like scorn;
And what than friendship's manly tear
May better grace a brother's bier?
But bear this ring, his own of old,
And tell him - what thou dost behold!
The withered frame, the ruined mind,
The wrack by passion left behind,
A shrivelled scroll, a scattered leaf,
Seared by the autumn blast of grief!

'Tell me no more of fancy's gleam,
No, father, no, 'twas not a dream;
Alas! the dreamer first must sleep.
I only watched, and wished to weep;
But could not, for my burning brow
Throbbed to the very brain as now:
I wished but for a single tear,
As something welcome, new, and dear-;

I wished it then, I wish it still;
Despair is stronger than my will.
Waste not thine orison, despair
Is mightier than thy pious prayer:
I would not if I might, be blest;
I want no paradise, but rest.
'Twas then, I tell thee, father! then
I saw her; yes, she lived again;
And shining in her white symar,
As through yon pale grey cloud the star
Which now I gaze on, as on her,
Who looked and looks far lovelier;
Dimly I view its trembling spark;
Tomorrow's night shall be more dark;
And I, before its rays appear,
That lifeless thing the living fear.
I wander, father! for my soul
Is fleeting towards the final goal.
I saw her, friar! and I rose
Forgetful of our former woes;
And rushing from my couch, I dart,
And clasp her to my desperate heart;
I clasp - what is it that I clasp?
No breathing form within my grasp,
No heart that beats reply to mine,
Yet, Leila! yet the form is thine!
And art thou, dearest, changed so much,
As meet my eye, yet mock my touch?
Ah! were thy beauties e'er so cold,
I care not; so my arms enfold
The all they ever wished to hold.
Alas! around a shadow prest,
They shrink upon my lonely breast;
Yet still 'tis there! In silence stands,
And beckons with beseeching hands!
With braided hair, and bright black eye -
I knew 'twas false - she could not die!
But he is dead! within the dell
I saw him buried where he fell;
He comes not, for he cannot break
From earth; why then art thou awake?
They told me wild waves rolled above
The face I view, the form I love;
They told me - 'twas a hideous tale I
I'd tell it, but my tongue would fail:
If true, and from thine ocean-cave
Thou com'st to claim a calmer grave;
Oh! pass thy dewy fingers o'er
This brow that then will burn no more;
Or place them on my hopeless heart:
But, shape or shade! whate'er thou art,
In mercy ne'er again depart!

Or farther with thee bear my soul
Than winds can waft or waters roll!

'Such is my name, and such my tale.
Confessor ! to thy secret ear
I breathe the sorrows I bewail,
And thank thee for the generous tear
This glazing eye could never shed.
Then lay me with the humblest dead,
And, save the cross above my head,
Be neither name nor emblem spread,
By prying stranger to be read,
Or stay the passing pilgrims tread.'

He passed - nor of his name and race
Hath left a token or a trace,
Save what the father must not say
Who shrived him on his dying day:
This broken tale was all we knew
Of her he loved, or him he slew.

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Giaour: A Fragment Of A Turkish Tale

No breath of air to break the wave
That rolls below the Athenian's grave,
That tomb which, gleaming o'er the cliff
First greets the homeward-veering skiff
High o'er the land he saved in vain;
When shall such Hero live again?

Fair clime! where every season smiles
Benignant o'er those blessed isles,
Which, seen from far Colonna's height,
Make glad the heart that hails the sight,
And lend to loneliness delight.
There mildly dimpling, Ocean's cheek
Reflects the tints of many a peak
Caught by the laughing tides that lave
These Edens of the Eastern wave:
And if at times a transient breeze
Break the blue crystal of the seas,
Or sweep one blossom from the trees,
How welcome is each gentle air
That waves and wafts the odours there!
For there the Rose, o'er crag or vale,
Sultana of the Nightingale,

The maid for whom his melody,
His thousand songs are heard on high,
Blooms blushing to her lover's tale:
His queen, the garden queen, his Rose,
Unbent by winds, unchilled by snows,
Far from winters of the west,
By every breeze and season blest,
Returns the sweets by Nature given
In soft incense back to Heaven;
And gratefully yields that smiling sky
Her fairest hue and fragrant sigh.
And many a summer flower is there,
And many a shade that Love might share,
And many a grotto, meant by rest,
That holds the pirate for a guest;
Whose bark in sheltering cove below
Lurks for the passing peaceful prow,
Till the gay mariner's guitar
Is heard, and seen the Evening Star;
Then stealing with the muffled oar,
Far shaded by the rocky shore,
Rush the night-prowlers on the prey,
And turns to groan his roundelay.
Strand—that where Nature loved to trace,
As if for Gods, a dwelling place,
And every charm and grace hath mixed
Within the Paradise she fixed,
There man, enarmoured of distress,

Shoul mar it into wilderness,
And trample, brute-like, o'er each flower
That tasks not one labourious hour;
Nor claims the culture of his hand
To blood along the fairy land,
But springs as to preclude his care,
And sweetly woos him-but to spare!
Strange-that where all is Peace beside,
There Passion riots in her pride,
And Lust and Rapine wildly reign
To darken o'er the fair domain.
It is as though the Fiends prevailed
Against the Seraphs they assailed,
And, fixed on heavenly thrones, should dwell
The freed inheritors of Hell;
So soft the scene, so formed for joy,
So curst the tyrants that destroy!

He who hath bent him o'er the dead
Ere the first day of Death is fled,
The first dark day of Nothingness,
The last of Danger and Distress,
(Before Decay's effacing fingers
Have swept the lines where Beauty lingers,)
And marked the mild angelic air,
The rapture of Repose that's there,
The fixed yet tender thraits that streak
The languor of the placid cheek,
And-but for that sad shrouded eye,
That fires not, wins not, weeps not, now,
And but for that chill, changeless brow,

Where cold Obstruction's apathy
Appals the gazing mourner's heart,
As if to him it could impart
The doom he dreads, yet dwells upon;
Yes, but for these and these alone,
Some moments, aye, one treacherous hour,
He still might doubt the Tyrant's power;
So fair, so calm, so softly sealed,
The first, last look by Death revealed!
Such is the aspect of his shore;
'T is Greece, but living Greece no more!
So coldly sweet, so deadly fair,
We start, for Soul is wanting there.
Hers is the loveliness in death,
That parts not quite with parting breath;
But beauty with that fearful bloom,
That hue which haunts it to the tomb,
Expression's last receding ray,
A gilded Halo hovering round decay,
The farewell beam of Feeling past away!

Spark of that flame, perchance of heavenly birth,
Which gleams, but warms no more its cherished earth!

Clime of the unforgotten brave!
Whose land from plain to mountain-cave
Was Freedom's home or Glory's grave!
Shrine of the mighty! can it be,
That this is all remains of thee?
Approach, thou craven crouching slave:
Say, is this not Thermopylæ?
These waters blue that round you lave,-
Of servile offspring of the free-
Pronounce what sea, what shore is this?
The gulf, the rock of Salamis!
These scenes, their story yet unknown;
Arise, and make again your own;
Snatch from the ashes of your Sires
The embers of their former fires;
And he who in the strife expires
Will add to theirs a name of fear
That Tyranny shall quake to hear,
And leave his sons a hope, a fame,
They too will rather die than shame:
For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeathed by bleeding Sire to Son,
Though baffled oft is ever won.
Bear witness, Greece, thy living page!
Attest it many a deathless age!
While Kings, in dusty darkness hid,
Have left a nameless pyramid,
Thy Heroes, though the general doom
Hath swept the column from their tomb,
A mightier monument command,
The mountains of thy native land!
There points thy Muse to stranger's eye
The graves of those that cannot die!
'T were long to tell, and sad to trace,
Each step from Splendour to Disgrace;
Enough-no foreign foe could quell
Thy soul, till from itself it fell;
Yet! Self-abasement paved the way
To villain-bonds and despot sway.

What can he tell who tread thy shore?
No legend of thine olden time,
No theme on which the Muse might soar
High as thine own days of yore,
When man was worthy of thy clime.
The hearts within thy valleys bred,
The fiery souls that might have led
Thy sons to deeds sublime,
Now crawl from cradle to the Grave,

Slaves-nay, the bondsmen of a Slave,
And callous, save to crime.
Stained with each evil that pollutes
Mankind, where least above the brutes;
Without even savage virtue blest,
Without one free or valiant breast,
Still to the neighbouring ports tey waft
Proverbial wiles, and ancient craft;
In this subtle Greek is found,
For this, and this alown, renowned.
In vain might Liberty invoke
The spirit to its bondage broke
Or raise the neck that courts the yoke:
No more her sorrows I bewail,
Yet this will be a mournful tale,
And they who listen may believe,
Who heard it first had cause to grieve.

Far, dark, along the blue sea glancing,
The shadows of the rocks advancing
Start on the fisher's eye like boat
Of island-pirate or Mainote;
And fearful for his light caïque,
He shuns the near but doubtful creek:
Though worn and weary with his toil,
And cumbered with his scaly spoil,
Slowly, yet strongly, plies the oar,
Till Port Leone's safer shore
Receives him by the lovely light
That best becomes an Eastern night.

... Who thundering comes on blackest steed,
With slackened bit and hoof of speed?
Beneath the clattering iron's sound
The caverned echoes wake around
In lash for lash, and bound for bound;
The foam that streaks the courser's side
Seems gathered from the ocean-tide:
Though weary waves are sunk to rest,
There's none within his rider's breast;
And though tomorrow's tempest lower,
'Tis calmer than thy heart, young Giaour!
I know thee not, I loathe thy race,
But in thy lineaments I trace
What time shall strengthen, not efface:
Though young and pale, that sallow front
Is scathed by fiery passion's brunt;
Though bent on earth thine evil eye,
As meteor-like thou glidest by,
Right well I view thee and deem thee one
Whom Othman's sons should slay or shun.

On - on he hastened, and he drew
My gaze of wonder as he flew:
Though like a demon of the night
He passed, and vanished from my sight,
His aspect and his air impressed
A troubled memory on my breast,
And long upon my startled ear
Rung his dark courser's hoofs of fear.
He spurs his steed; he nears the steep,
That, jutting, shadows o'er the deep;
He winds around; he hurries by;
The rock relieves him from mine eye;
For, well I ween, unwelcome he
Whose glance is fixed on those that flee;
And not a start that shines too bright
On him who takes such timeless flight.
He wound along; but ere he passed
One glance he snatched, as if his last,
A moment checked his wheeling steed,
A moment breathed him from his speed,
A moment on his stirrup stood -
Why looks he o'er the olive wood?
The crescent glimmers on the hill,
The mosque's high lamps are quivering still
Though too remote for sound to wake
In echoes of far tophaike,
The flashes of each joyous peal
Are seen to prove the Moslem's zeal,
Tonight, set Rhamazani's sun;
Tonight the Bairam feast's begun;
Tonight - but who and what art thou
Of foreign garb and fearful brow?
That thou should'st either pause or flee?

He stood - some dread was on his face,
Soon hatred settled in its place:
It rose not with the reddening flush
Of transient anger's hasty blush,
But pale as marble o'er the tomb,
Whose ghastly whiteness aids its gloom.
His brow was bent, his eye was glazed;
He raised his arm, and fiercely raised,
And sternly shook his hand on high,
As doubting to return or fly;
Impatient of his flight delayed,
Here loud his raven charger neighed -
Down glanced that hand and, and grasped his blade;
That sound had burst his waking dream,
As slumber starts at owlet's scream.
The spur hath lanced his courser's sides;
Away, away, for life he rides:
Swift as the hurled on high jerreed

Springs to the touch his startled steed;
The rock is doubled, and the shore
Shakes with the clattering tramp no more;
The crag is won, no more is seen
His Christian crest and haughty mien.
'Twas but an instant he restrained
That fiery barb so sternly reined;
'Twas but a moment that he stood,
Then sped as if by death pursued;
But in that instant O'er his soul
Winters of memory seemed to roll,
And gather in that drop of time
A life of pain, an age of crime.
O'er him who loves, or hates, or fears,
Such moment pours the grief of years:
What felt he then, at once opprest
By all that most distracts the breast?
That pause, which pondered o'er his fate,
Oh, who its dreary length shall date!
Though in time's record nearly nought,
It was eternity to thought!
For infinite as boundless space
The thought that conscience must embrace,
Which in itself can comprehend
Woe without name, or hope, or end.

The hour is past, the Giaour is gone;
And did he fly or fall alone?
Woe to that hour he came or went!
The curse for Hassan's sin was sent
To turn a palace to a tomb:
He came, he went, like the Simoom,
That harbinger of fate and gloom,
Beneath whose widely - wasting breath
The very cypress droops to death -
Dark tree, still sad when others' grief is fled,
The only constant mourner o'er the dead!

The steed is vanished from the stall;
No serf is seen in Hassan's hall;
The lonely spider's thin grey pall
Waves slowly widening o'er the wall;
The bat builds in his harem bower,
And in the fortress of his power
The owl usurps the beacon-tower;
The wild-dog howls o'er the fountain's brim,
With baffled thirst and famine, grim;
For the stream has shrunk from its marble bed,
Where the weeds and the desolate dust are spread.
'Twas sweet of yore to see it play
And chase the sultriness of day,
As springing high the silver dew

In whirls fantastically flew,
And flung luxurious coolness round
The air, and verdure o'er the ground.
'Twas sweet, when cloudless stars were bright,
To view the wave of watery light,
And hear its melody by night.
And oft had Hassan's childhood played
Around the verge of that cascade;
And oft upon his mother's breast
That sound had harmonized his rest;
And oft had Hassan's youth along
Its bank been soothed by beauty's song;
And softer seem'd each melting tone
Of music mingled with its own.
But ne'er shall Hassan's age repose
Along the brink at twilight's close:
The stream that filled that font is fled -
The blood that warmed his heart is shed!
And here no more shall human voice
Be heard to rage, regret, rejoice.
The last sad note that swelled the gale
Was woman's wildest funeral wail:
That quenched in silence all is still,
But the lattice that flaps when the wind is shrill:
Though raves the gust, and floods the rain,
No hand shall clasp its clasp again.
On desert sands 'twere joy to scan
The rudest steps of fellow man,
So here the very voice of grief
Might wake an echo like relief -
At least 'twould say, 'All are not gone;
There lingers life, though but in one' -
For many a gilded chamber's there,
Which solitude might well forbear;
Within that dome as yet decay
Hath slowly worked her cankering way -
But gloom is gathered o'er the gate,
Nor there the fakir's self will wait;
Nor there will wandering dervise stay,
For bounty cheers not his delay;
Nor there will weary stranger halt
To bless the sacred 'bread and salt'.
Alike must wealth and poverty
Pass heedless and unheeded by,
For courtesy and pity died
With Hassan on the mountain side.
His roof, that refuge unto men,
Is desolation's hungry den.
The guest flies the hall, and the vassal from labour,
Since his turban was cleft by the infidel's sabre!

I hear the sound of coming feet,

But not a voice mine ear to greet;
More near - each turban I can scan,
And silver-sheathed ataghan;
The foremost of the band is seen
An emir by his garb of green:
'Ho! Who art thou?' - 'This low salam
Replies of Moslem faith I am.'
'The burden ye so gently bear,
Seems one that claims your utmost care,
And, doubtless, holds some precious freight,
My humble bark would gladly wait.'

'Thou speakest sooth; they skiff unmoor,
And waft us from the silent shore;
Nay, leave the sail still furled, and ply
The nearest oar that's scattered by,
And midway to those rocks where sleep
The channeled waters dark and deep.
Rest from your task - so - bravely done,
Of course had been right swiftly run;
Yet 'tis the longest voyage, I trow,
That one of -

Sullen it plunged, and slowly sank,
The calm wave rippled to the bank;
I watched it as it sank, methought
Some motion from the current caught
Bestirred it more, - 'twas but the beam
That checkered o'er the living stream:
I gazed, till vanishing from view,
Like lessening pebble it withdrew;
Still less and less, a speck of white
That gemmed the tide, then mocked the sight;
And all its hidden secrets sleep,
Known but to Genii of the deep,
Which, trembling in their coral caves,
They dare not whisper to the waves.

As rising on its purple wing
The insect-queen of eastern spring,
O'er emerald meadows of Kashmeer
Invites the young pursuer near,
And leads him on from flower to flower
A weary chase and wasted hour,
Then leaves him, as it soars on high,
With panting heart and tearful eye:
So beauty lures the full-grown child,
With hue as bright, and wing as wild:
A chase of idle hopes and fears,
Begun in folly, closed in tears.
If won, to equal ills betrayed,
Woe waits the insect and the maid;

A life of pain, the loss of peace,
From infant's play and man's caprice:
The lovely toy so fiercely sought
Hath lost its charm by being caught,
For every touch that wooed its stay
Hath brushed its brightest hues away,
Till charm, and hue, and beauty gone,
'Tis left to fly or fall alone.
With wounded wing, or bleeding breast,
Ah! Where shall either victim rest?
Can this with faded pinion soar
From rose to tulip as before?
Or beauty, blighted in an hour,
Find joy within her broken bower?
No: gayer insects fluttering by
Ne'er droop the wing o'er those that die,
And lovelier things have mercy shown
To every failing but their own,
And every woe a tear can claim
Except an erring sister's shame.

The mind that broods o'er guilty woes,
Is like the scorpion girt by fire;
In circle narrowing as it glows,
The flames around their captive close,
Till inly searched by thousand throes,
And maddening in her ire,
One sad and sole relief she knows,
The sting she nourished for her foes,
Whose venom never yet was vain,
Gives but one pang, and cures all pain,
So do the dark in soul expire,
Or live like scorpion girt by fire;
So writhes the mind remorse hath riven,
Unfit for earth, undoomed for heaven,
Darkness above, despair beneath,
Around it flame, within it death!

Black Hassan from the harem flies,
Nor bends on woman's form his eyes;
The unwonted chase each hour employs,
Yet shares he not the hunter's joys.
Not thus was Hassan wont to fly
When Leila dwelt in his Serai.
Doth Leila there no longer dwell?
That tale can only Hassan tell:
Strange rumours in our city say
Upon that eve she fled away
When Rhamazan's last sun was set,
And flashing from each minaret
Millions of lamps proclaimed the feast
Of Bairam through the boundless East.

'Twas then she went as to the bath,
Which Hassan vainly searched in wrath;
For she was flown her master's rage
In likeness of a Georgian page,
And far beyond the Moslem's power
Had wronged him with the faithless Giaour.
Somewhat of this had Hassan deemed;
But still so fond, so fair she seemed,
Too well he trusted to the slave
Whose treachery deserved a grave:
And on that eve had gone to mosque,
And thence to feast in his kiosk.
Such is the tale his Nubians tell,
Who did not watch their charge too well;
But others say, that on that night,
By pale Phingari's trembling light,
The Giaour upon his jet-black steed
Was seen, but seen alone to speed
With bloody spur along the shore,
Nor maid nor page behind him bore.

Her eye's dark charm 'twere vain to tell,
But gaze on that of the gazelle,
It will assist thy fancy well;
As large, as languishingly dark,
But soul beamed forth in every spark
That darted from beneath the lid,
Bright as the jewel of Giamschid.
Yea, Soul, and should our prophet say
That form was nought but breathing clay,
By Allah! I would answer nay;
Though on Al-Sirat's arch I stood,
Which totters o'er the fiery flood,
With Paradise within my view,
And all his Houris beckoning through.
Oh! Who young Leila's glance could read
And keep that portion of his creed,
Which saith that woman is but dust,
A soulless toy for tyrant's lust?
On her might Muftis might gaze, and own
That through her eye the Immortal shone;
On her fair cheek's unfading hue
The young pomegranate's blossoms strew
Their bloom in blushes ever new;
Her hair in hyacinthine flow,
When left to roll its folds below,
As midst her handmaids in the hall
She stood superior to them all,
Hath swept the marble where her feet
Gleamed whiter than the mountain sleet
Ere from the cloud that gave it birth
It fell, and caught one stain of earth.

The cygnet nobly walks the water;
So moved on earth Circassia's daughter,
The loveliest bird of Franguestan!
As rears her crest the ruffled swan,
And spurns the wave with wings of pride,
When pass the steps of stranger man
Along the banks that bound her tide;
Thus rose fair Leila's whiter neck:-
Thus armed with beauty would she check
Intrusion's glance, till folly's gaze
Shrunk from the charms it meant to praise:
Thus high and graceful as her gait;
Her heart as tender to her mate;
Her mate - stern Hassan, who was he?
Alas! That name was not for thee!

Stern Hassan hath a journey ta'en
With twenty vassals in his train,
Each armed, as best becomes a man,
With arquebuss and ataghan;
The chief before, as decked for war,
Bears in his belt the scimitar
Stain'd with the best of Amaut blood
When in the pass the rebels stood,
And few returned to tell the tale
Of what befell in Parne's vale.
The pistols which his girdle bore
Were those that once a pasha wore,
Which still, though gemmed and bossed with gold,
Even robbers tremble to behold.
'Tis said he goes to woo a bride
More true than her who left his side;
The faithless slave that broke her bower,
And - worse than faithless - for a Giaour!

The sun's last rays are on the hill,
And sparkle in the fountain rill,
Whose welcome waters, cool and clear,
Draw blessings from the mountaineer:
Here may the loitering merchant Greek
Find that repose 'twere vain to seek
In cities lodged too near his lord,
And trembling for his secret hoard -
Here may he rest where none can see,
In crowds a slave, in deserts free;
And with forbidden wine may stain
The bowl a Moslem must not drain.

The foremost Tartar's in the gap,
Conspicuous by his yellow cap;
The rest in lengthening line the while
Wind slowly through the long defile:

Above, the mountain rears a peak,
Where vultures whet the thirsty beak,
And theirs may be a feast tonight,
Shall tempt them down ere morrow's light;
Beneath, a river's wintry stream
Has shrunk before the summer beam,
And left a channel bleak and bare,
Save shrubs that spring to perish there:
Each side the midway path there lay
Small broken crags of granite grey
By time, or mountain lightning, riven
From summits clad in mists of heaven;
For where is he that hath beheld
The peak of Liakura unveiled?

They reach the grove of pine at last:
'Bismillah! now the peril's past;
For yonder view the opening plain,
And there we'll prick our steeds amain.'
The Chiaus spake, and as he said,
A bullet whistled o'er his head;
The foremost Tartar bites the ground!
Scarce had they time to check the rein,
Swift from their steeds the riders bound;
But three shall never mount again:
Unseen the foes that gave the wound,
The dying ask revenge in vain.
With steel unsheathed, and carbine bent,
Some o'er their courser's harness leant,
Half sheltered by the steed;
Some fly behind the nearest rock,
And there await the coming shock,
Nor tamely stand to bleed
Beneath the shaft of foes unseen,
Who dare not quit their craggy screen.
Stern Hassan only from his horse
Disdains to light, and keeps his course,
Till fiery flashes in the van
Proclaim too sure the robber-clan
Have well secured the only way
Could now avail the promised prey;
Then curled his very beard with ire,
And glared his eye with fiercer fire:
'Though far and near the bullets hiss,
I've 'scaped a bloodier hour than this.'
And now the foe their covert quit,
And call his vassals to submit;
But Hassan's frown and furious word
Are dreaded more than hostile sword,
Nor of his little band a man
Resigned carbine or ataghan,
Nor raised the craven cry, Amaun!

In fuller sight, more near and near,
The lately ambushed foes appear,
And, issuing from the grove, advance
Some who on battle-charger prance.
Who leads them on with foreign brand,
Far flashing in his red right hand?
'Tis he! 'tis he! I know him now;
I know him by his pallid brow;
I know him by the evil eye
That aids his envious treachery;
I know him by his jet-black barb:
Though now arrayed in Arnaut garb
Apostate from his own vile faith,
It shall not save him from the death:
'Tis he! well met in any hour,
Lost Leila's love, accursed Giaour!

As rolls the river into ocean,
In sable torrent wildly streaming;
As the sea-tide's opposing motion,
In azure column Proudly gleaming
Beats back the current many a rood,
In curling foam and mingling flood,
While eddying whirl, and breaking wave,
Roused by the blast of winter, rave;
Through sparkling spray, in thundering clash,
The lightnings of the waters flash
In awful whiteness o'er the shore,
That shines and shakes beneath the roar;
Thus - as the stream, and Ocean greet,
With waves that madden as they meet -
Thus join the bands, whom mutual wrong,
And fate, and fury, drive along.
The bickering sabres' shivering jar;
And pealing wide or ringing near
Its echoes on the throbbing ear,
The deathshot hissing from afar;
The shock, the shout, the groan of war,
Reverberate along that vale
More suited to the shepherds tale:
Though few the numbers - theirs the strife
That neither spares nor speaks for life!
Ah! fondly youthful hearts can press,
To seize and share the dear caress;
But love itself could never pant
For all that beauty sighs to grant
With half the fervour hate bestows
Upon the last embrace of foes,
When grappling in the fight they fold
Those arms that ne'er shall lose their hold:
Friends meet to part; love laughs at faith;
True foes, once met, are joined till death!

With sabre shivered to the hilt,
Yet dripping with the blood he spilt;
Yet strained within the severed hand
Which quivers round that faithless brand;
His turban far behind him rolled,
And cleft in twain its firmest fold;
His flowing robe by falchion torn,
And crimson as those clouds of morn
That, streaked with dusky red, portend
The day shall have a stormy end;
A stain on every bush that bore
A fragment of his palampore
His breast with wounds unnumbered riven,
His back to earth, his face to heaven,
Fallen Hassan lies - his unclosed eye
Yet lowering on his enemy,
As if the hour that sealed his fate
Surviving left his quenchless hate;
And o'er him bends that foe with brow
As dark as his that bled below.

'Yes, Leila sleeps beneath the wave,
But his shall be a redder grave;
Her spirit pointed well the steel
Which taught that felon heart to feel.
He called the Prophet, but his power
Was vain against the vengeful Giaour:
He called on Allah - but the word.
Arose unheeded or unheard.
Thou Paynim fool! could Leila's prayer
Be passed, and thine accorded there?
I watched my time, I leagued with these,
The traitor in his turn to seize;
My wrath is wreaked, the deed is done,
And now I go - but go alone.'

The browsing camels' bells are tinkling:
His mother looked from her lattice high -
She saw the dews of eve besprinkling
The pasture green beneath her eye,
She saw the planets faintly twinkling:
"Tis twilight - sure his train is nigh."
She could not rest in the garden-bower,
But gazed through the grate of his steepest tower:
'Why comes he not? his steeds are fleet,
Nor shrink they from the summer heat;
Why sends not the bridegroom his promised gift?
Is his heart more cold, or his barb less swift?
Oh, false reproach! yon Tartar now
Has gained our nearest mountain's brow,
And warily the steep descends,

And now within the valley bends;
And he bears the gift at his saddle bow
How could I deem his courser slow?
Right well my largess shall repay
His welcome speed, and weary way.'
The Tartar lighted at the gate,
But scarce upheld his fainting weight!
His swarthy visage spake distress,
But this might be from weariness;
His garb with sanguine spots was dyed,
But these might be from his courser's side;
He drew the token from his vest -
Angel of Death! 'tis Hassan's cloven crest!
His calpac rent - his caftan red -
'Lady, a fearful bride thy son hath wed:
Me, not from mercy, did they spare,
But this empurpled pledge to bear.
Peace to the brave! whose blood is spilt:
Woe to the Giaour! for his the guilt.'

A turban carved in coarsest stone,
A pillar with rank weeds o'ergrown,
Whereon can now be scarcely read
The Koran verse that mourns the dead,
Point out the spot where Hassan fell
A victim in that lonely dell.
There sleeps as true an Osmanlie
As e'er at Mecca bent the knee;
As ever scorned forbidden wine,
Or prayed with face towards the shrine,
In orisons resumed anew
At solemn sound of 'Allah Hu!'
Yet died he by a stranger's hand,
And stranger in his native land;
Yet died he as in arms he stood,
And unavenged, at least in blood.
But him the maids of Paradise
Impatient to their halls invite,
And the dark Heaven of Houris' eyes
On him shall glance for ever bright;
They come - their kerchiefs green they wave,
And welcome with a kiss the brave!
Who falls in battle 'gainst a Giaour
Is worthiest an immortal bower.

But thou, false Infidel! shalt writhe
Beneath avenging Monkir's scythe;
And from its torment 'scape alone
To wander round lost Eblis' throne;
And fire unquenched, unquenchable,
Around, within, thy heart shall dwell;
Nor ear can hear nor tongue can tell

The tortures of that inward hell!
But first, on earth as vampire sent,
Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent:
Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
And suck the blood of all thy race;
There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
At midnight drain the stream of life;
Yet loathe the banquet which perforce
Must feed thy livid living corse:
Thy victims ere they yet expire
Shall know the demon for their sire,
As cursing thee, thou cursing them,
Thy flowers are withered on the stem.
But one that for thy crime must fall,
The youngest, most beloved of all,
Shall bless thee with a father's name -
That word shall wrap thy heart in flame!
Yet must thou end thy task, and mark
Her cheek's last tinge, her eye's last spark,
And the last glassy glance must view
Which freezes o'er its lifeless blue;
Then with unhallowed hand shalt tear
The tresses of her yellow hair,
Of which in life a lock when shorn
Affection's fondest pledge was worn,
But now is borne away by thee,
Memorial of thine agony!
Wet with thine own best blood shall drip
Thy gnashing tooth and haggard lip;
Then stalking to thy sullen grave,
Go - and with Gouls and Afrits rave;
Till these in horror shrink away
From spectre more accursed than they!

'How name ye yon lone Caloyer?
His features I have scanned before
In mine own land: 'tis many a year,
Since, dashing by the lonely shore,
I saw him urge as fleet a steed
As ever served a horseman's need.
But once I saw that face, yet then
It was so marked with inward pain,
I could not pass it by again;
It breathes the same dark spirit now,
As death were stamped upon his brow.

"Tis twice three years at summer tide
Since first among our freres he came;
And here it soothes him to abide
For some dark deed he will not name.
But never at our vesper prayer,
Nor e'er before confession chair

Kneels he, nor recks he when arise
Incense or anthem to the skies,
But broods within his cell alone,
His faith and race alike unknown.
The sea from Paynim land he crost,
And here ascended from the coast;
Yet seems he not of Othman race,
But only Christian in his face:
I'd judge him some stray renegade,
Repentant of the change he made,
Save that he shuns our holy shrine,
Nor tastes the sacred bread and wine.
Great largess to these walls he brought,
And thus our abbot's favour bought;
But were I prior, not a day
Should brook such stranger's further stay,
Or pent within our penance cell
Should doom him there for aye to dwell.
Much in his visions mutters he
Of maiden whelmed beneath the sea;
Of sabres clashing, foemen flying,
Wrongs avenged, and Moslem dying.
On cliff he hath been known to stand,
And rave as to some bloody hand
Fresh severed from its parent limb,
Invisible to all but him,
Which beckons onward to his grave,
And lures to leap into the wave.'

Dark and unearthly is the scowl
That glares beneath his dusky cowl:
The flash of that dilating eye
Reveals too much of times gone by;
Though varying, indistinct its hue,
Oft will his glance the gazer rue,
For in it lurks that nameless spell,
Which speaks, itself unspeakable,
A spirit yet unquelled and high,
That claims and keeps ascendancy;
And like the bird whose pinions quake,
But cannot fly the gazing snake,
Will others quail beneath his look,
Nor 'scape the glance they scarce can brook.
From him the half-affrighted friar
When met alone would fain retire,
As if that eye and bitter smile
Transferred to others fear and guile:
Not oft to smile descendeth he,
And when he doth 'tis sad to see
That he but mocks at misery.
How that pale lip will curl and quiver!
Then fix once more as if for ever;

As if his sorrow or disdain
Forbade him e'er to smile again.
Well were it so - such ghastly mirth
From joyaunce ne'er derived its birth.
But sadder still it were to trace
What once were feelings in that face:
Time hath not yet the features fixed,
But brighter traits with evil mixed;
And there are hues not always faded,
Which speak a mind not all degraded
Even by the crimes through which it waded:
The common crowd but see the gloom
Of wayward deeds, and fitting doom;
The close observer can espy
A noble soul, and lineage high:
Alas! though both bestowed in vain,
Which grief could change, and guilt could stain,
It was no vulgar tenement
To which such lofty gifts were lent,
And still with little less than dread
On such the sight is riveted.
The roofless cot, decayed and rent,
Will scarce delay the passer-by;
The tower by war or tempest bent,
While yet may frown one battlement,
Demands and daunts the stranger's eye;
Each ivied arch, and pillar lone,
Pleads haughtily for glories gone!

'His floating robe around him folding,
Slow sweeps he through the columned aisle;
With dread beheld, with gloom beholding
The rites that sanctify the pile.
But when the anthem shakes the choir,
And kneel the monks, his steps retire;
By yonder lone and wavering torch
His aspect glares within the porch;
There will he pause till all is done -
And hear the prayer, but utter none.
See - by the half-illumined wall
His hood fly back, his dark hair fall,
That pale brow wildly wreathing round,
As if the Gorgon there had bound
The sablest of the serpent-braid
That o'er her fearful forehead strayed:
For he declines the convent oath
And leaves those locks unhallowed growth,
But wears our garb in all beside;
And, not from piety but pride,
Gives wealth to walls that never heard
Of his one holy vow nor word.
Lo! - mark ye, as the harmony

Peals louder praises to the sky,
That livid cheek, that stony air
Of mixed defiance and despair!
Saint Francis, keep him from the shrine!
Else may we dread the wrath divine
Made manifest by awful sign.
If ever evil angel bore
The form of mortal, such he wore:
By all my hope of sins forgiven,
Such looks are not of earth nor heaven!"

To love the softest hearts are prone,
But such can ne'er be all his own;
Too timid in his woes to share,
Too meek to meet, or brave despair;
And sterner hearts alone may feel
The wound that time can never heal.
The rugged metal of the mine,
Must burn before its surface shine,
But plunged within the furnace-flame,
It bends and melts - though still the same;
Then tempered to thy want, or will,
'Twill serve thee to defend or kill;
A breast-plate for thine hour of need,
Or blade to bid thy foeman bleed;
But if a dagger's form it bear,
Let those who shape its edge, beware!
Thus passion's fire, and woman's art,
Can turn and tame the sterner heart;
From these its form and tone are ta'en,
And what they make it, must remain,
But break - before it bend again.

If solitude succeed to grief,
Release from pain is slight relief;
The vacant bosom's wilderness
Might thank the pang that made it less.
We loathe what none are left to share:
Even bliss - 'twere woe alone to bear;
The heart once left thus desolate
Must fly at last for ease - to hate.
It is as if the dead could feel
The icy worm around them steal,
And shudder, as the reptiles creep
To revel o'er their rotting sleep,
Without the power to scare away
The cold consumers of their clay I
It is as if the desert-bird,
Whose beak unlocks her bosom's stream
To still her famished nestlings' scream,
Nor mourns a life to them transferred,
Should rend her rash devoted breast,

And find them flown her empty nest.
The keenest pangs the wretched find
Are rapture to the dreary void,
The leafless desert of the mind,
The waste of feelings unemployed.
Who would be doomed to gaze upon
A sky without a cloud or sun?
Less hideous far the tempest's roar
Than ne'er to brave the billows more -
Thrown, when the war of winds is o'er,
A lonely wreck on fortune's shore,
'Mid sullen calm, and silent bay,
Unseen to drop by dull decay; -
Better to sink beneath the shock
Than moulder piecemeal on the rock!

'Father! thy days have passed in peace,
'Mid counted beads, and countless prayer;
To bid the sins of others cease
Thyself without a crime or care,
Save transient ills that all must bear,
Has been thy lot from youth to age;
And thou wilt bless thee from the rage
Of passions fierce and uncontrolled,
Such as thy penitents unfold,
Whose secret sins and sorrows rest
Within thy pure and pitying breast. My days, though few, have passed below
In much of joy, but more of woe;
Yet still in hours of love or strife,
I've 'scaped the weariness of life:
Now leagued with friends, now girt by foes,
I loathed the languor of repose.
Now nothing left to love or hate,
No more with hope or pride elate,
I'd rather be the thing that crawls
Most noxious o'er a dungeon's walls,
Than pass my dull, unvarying days,
Condemned to meditate and gaze.
Yet, lurks a wish within my breast
For rest - but not to feel 'tis rest
Soon shall my fate that wish fulfil;
And I shall sleep without the dream
Of what I was, and would be still,
Dark as to thee my deeds may seem:
My memory now is but the tomb
Of joys long dead; my hope, their doom:
Though better to have died with those
Than bear a life of lingering woes.
My spirit shrunk not to sustain
The searching throes of ceaseless pain;
Nor sought the self-accorded grave
Of ancient fool and modern knave:

Yet death I have not feared to meet;
And the field it had been sweet,
Had danger wooed me on to move
The slave of glory, not of love.
I've braved it - not for honour's boast;
I smile at laurels won or lost;
To such let others carve their way,
For high renown, or hireling pay:
But place again before my eyes
Aught that I deem a worthy prize
The maid I love, the man I hate,
And I will hunt the steps of fate,
To save or slay, as these require,
Through rending steel, and rolling fire:
Nor needest thou doubt this speech from one
Who would but do ~ what he hath done.
Death is but what the haughty brave,
The weak must bear, the wretch must crave;
Then let life go to him who gave:
I have not quailed to danger's brow
When high and happy - need I now?

'I loved her, Friar! nay, adored -
But these are words that all can use -
I proved it more in deed than word;
There's blood upon that dinted sword,
A stain its steel can never lose:
'Twas shed for her, who died for me,
It warmed the heart of one abhorred:
Nay, start not - no - nor bend thy knee,
Nor midst my sins such act record;
Thou wilt absolve me from the deed,
For he was hostile to thy creed!
The very name of Nazarene
Was wormwood to his Paynim spleen.
Ungrateful fool! since but for brands
Well wielded in some hardy hands,
And wounds by Galileans given -
The surest pass to Turkish heaven
For him his Houris still might wait
Impatient at the Prophet's gate.
I loved her - love will find its way
Through paths where wolves would fear to prey;
And if it dares enough, 'twere hard
If passion met not some reward -
No matter how, or where, or why,
I did not vainly seek, nor sigh:
Yet sometimes, with remorse, in vain
I wish she had not loved again.
She died - I dare not tell thee how;
But look - 'tis written on my brow!
There read of Cain the curse and crime,

In characters unworn by time:
Still, ere thou dost condemn me, pause;
Not mine the act, though I the cause.
Yet did he but what I had done
Had she been false to more than one.
Faithless to him, he gave the blow;
But true to me, I laid him low:
Howe'er deserved her doom might be,
Her treachery was truth to me;
To me she gave her heart, that all
Which tyranny can ne'er enthrall;
And I, alas! too late to save!
Yet all I then could give, I gave,
'Twas some relief, our foe a grave.
His death sits lightly; but her fate
Has made me - what thou well mayest hate.
His doom was sealed - he knew it well
Warned by the voice of stern Taheer,
Deep in whose darkly boding ear
The deathshot pealed of murder near,
As filed the troop to where they fell!
He died too in the battle broil,
A time that heeds nor pain nor toil;
One cry to Mahomet for aid,
One prayer to Allah all he made:
He knew and crossed me in the fray -
I gazed upon him where he lay,
And watched his spirit ebb away:
Though pierced like pard by hunters' steel,
He felt not half that now I feel.
I searched, but vainly searched, to find
The workings of a wounded mind;
Each feature of that sullen corse
Betrayed his rage, but no remorse.
Oh, what had vengeance given to trace
Despair upon his dying face I
The late repentance of that hour,
When penitence hath lost her power
To tear one terror from the grave,
And will not soothe, and cannot save.

'The cold in clime are cold in blood,
Their love can scarce deserve the name;
But mine was like a lava flood
That boils in Etna's breast of flame.
I cannot prate in puling strain
Of ladye-love, and beauty's chain:
If changing cheek, and searching vein,
Lips taught to writhe, but not complain,
If bursting heart, and maddening brain,
And daring deed, and vengeful steel,
And all that I have felt, and feel,

Betoken love - that love was mine,
And shown by many a bitter sign.
'Tis true, I could not whine nor sigh,
I knew but to obtain or die.
I die - but first I have possessed,
And come what may, I have been blessed.
Shall I the doom I sought upbraid?
No - reft of all, yet undismayed
But for the thought of Leila slain,
Give me the pleasure with the pain,
So would I live and love again.
I grieve, but not, my holy guide!
For him who dies, but her who died:
She sleeps beneath the wandering wave
Ah! had she but an earthly grave,
This breaking heart and throbbing head
Should seek and share her narrow bed.
She was a form of life and light,
That, seen, became a part of sight;
And rose, where'er I turned mine eye,
The morning-star of memory!

'Yes, love indeed is light from heaven..
A spark of that immortal fire
With angels shared, by Allah given,
To lift from earth our low desire.
Devotion wafts the mind above,
But Heaven itself descends in love;
A feeling from the Godhead caught,
To wean from self each sordid thought;
A ray of him who formed the whole;
A glory circling round the soul !
I grant my love imperfect, all
That mortals by the name miscall;
Then deem it evil, what thou wilt;
But say, oh say, hers was not guilt !
She was my life's unerring light:
That quenched, what beam shall break my night?
Oh! would it shone to lead me still,
Although to death or deadliest ill!
Why marvel ye, if they who lose
This present joy, this future hope,
No more with sorrow meekly cope;
In phrensy then their fate accuse;
In madness do those fearful deeds
That seem to add but guilt to woe?
Alas! the breast that only bleeds
Hath nought to dread from outward blow;
Who falls from all he knows of bliss,
Cares little into what abyss.
Fierce as the gloomy vulture's now
To thee, old man, my deeds appear:

I read abhorrence on thy brow,
And this too was I born to bear!
'Tis true, that, like that bird of prey,
With havock have I marked my way:
But this was taught me by the dove,
To die - and know no second love.
This lesson yet hath man to learn,
Taught by the thing he dares to spurn:
The bird that sings within the brake,
The swan that swims upon the lake,
One mate, and one alone, will take.
And let the fool still prone to range,
And sneer on all who cannot change,
Partake his jest with boasting boys;
I envy not his varied joys,
But deem such feeble, heartless man,
Less than yon solitary swan;
Far, far beneath the shallow maid
He left believing and betrayed.
Such shame at least was never mine -
Leila! each thought was only thine!
My good, my guilt, my weal, my woe,
My hope on high - my all below.
Earth holds no other like to thee,
Or, if it doth, in vain for me:
For worlds I dare not view the dame
Resembling thee, yet not the same.
The very crimes that mar my youth,
This bed of death - attest my truth!
'Tis all too late - thou wert, thou art
The cherished madness of my heart!

'And she was lost - and yet I breathed,
But not the breath of human life:
A serpent round my heart was wreathed,
And stung my every thought to strife.
Alike all time, abhorred all place,
Shuddering I shrunk from Nature's face,
Where every hue that charmed before
The blackness of my bosom wore.
The rest thou dost already know,
And all my sins, and half my woe.
But talk no more of penitence;
Thou see'st I soon shall part from hence:
And if thy holy tale were true,
The deed that's done canst thou undo?
Think me not thankless - but this grief
Looks not to priesthood for relief.
My soul's estate in secret guess:
But wouldest thou pity more, say less.
When thou canst bid my Leila live,
Then will I sue thee to forgive;

Then plead my cause in that high place
Where purchased masses proffer grace.
Go, when the hunter's hand hath wrung
From forest-cave her shrieking young,
And calm the lonely lioness:
But soothe not - mock not my distress!

'In earlier days, and calmer hours,
When heart with heart delights to blend,
Where bloom my native valley's bowers
I had - Ah! have I now? - a friend!
To him this pledge I charge thee send,
Memorial of a youthful vow;
I would remind him of my end:
Though souls absorbed like mine allow
Brief thought to distant friendship's claim,
Yet dear to him my blighted name.
'Tis strange - he prophesied my doom,
And I have smiled - I then could smile -
When prudence would his voice assume,
And warn - I recked not what - the while:
But now remembrance whispers o'er
Those accents scarcely marked before.
Say - that his bodings came to pass,
And he will start to hear their truth,
And wish his words had not been sooth:
Tell him, unheeding as I was,
Through many a busy bitter scene
Of all our golden youth had been,
In pain, my faltering tongue had tried
To bless his memory ere I died;
But Heaven in wrath would turn away,
If guilt should for the guiltless pray.
I do not ask him not to blame,
Too gentle he to wound my name;
And what have I to do with fame?
I do not ask him not to mourn,
Such cold request might sound like scorn;
And what than friendship's manly tear
May better grace a brother's bier?
But bear this ring, his own of old,
And tell him - what thou dost behold!
The withered frame, the ruined mind,
The wrack by passion left behind,
A shrivelled scroll, a scattered leaf,
Seared by the autumn blast of grief!

'Tell me no more of fancy's gleam,
No, father, no, 'twas not a dream;
Alas! the dreamer first must sleep.
I only watched, and wished to weep;
But could not, for my burning brow

Throbbed to the very brain as now:
I wished but for a single tear,
As something welcome, new, and dear-;
I wished it then, I wish it still;
Despair is stronger than my will.
Waste not thine orison, despair
Is mightier than thy pious prayer:
I would not if I might, be blest;
I want no paradise, but rest.
'Twas then, I tell thee, father! then
I saw her; yes, she lived again;
And shining in her white symar,
As through yon pale grey cloud the star
Which now I gaze on, as on her,
Who looked and looks far lovelier;
Dimly I view its trembling spark;
Tomorrow's night shall be more dark;
And I, before its rays appear,
That lifeless thing the living fear.
I wander, father! for my soul
Is fleeting towards the final goal.
I saw her, friar! and I rose
Forgetful of our former woes;
And rushing from my couch, I dart,
And clasp her to my desperate heart;
I clasp - what is it that I clasp?
No breathing form within my grasp,
No heart that beats reply to mine,
Yet, Leila! yet the form is thine!
And art thou, dearest, changed so much,
As meet my eye, yet mock my touch?
Ah! were thy beauties e'er so cold,
I care not; so my arms enfold
The all they ever wished to hold.
Alas! around a shadow prest,
They shrink upon my lonely breast;
Yet still 'tis there! In silence stands,
And beckons with beseeching hands!
With braided hair, and bright black eye -
I knew 'twas false - she could not die!
But he is dead! within the dell
I saw him buried where he fell;
He comes not, for he cannot break
From earth; why then art thou awake?
They told me wild waves rolled above
The face I view, the form I love;
They told me - 'twas a hideous tale I
I'd tell it, but my tongue would fail:
If true, and from thine ocean-cave
Thou com'st to claim a calmer grave;
Oh! pass thy dewy fingers o'er
This brow that then will burn no more;

Or place them on my hopeless heart:
But, shape or shade! whate'er thou art,
In mercy ne'er again depart!
Or farther with thee bear my soul
Than winds can waft or waters roll!

* * * * *

'Such is my name, and such my tale.
Confessor ! to thy secret ear
I breathe the sorrows I bewail,
And thank thee for the generous tear
This glazing eye could never shed.
Then lay me with the humblest dead,
And, save the cross above my head,
Be neither name nor emblem spread,
By prying stranger to be read,
Or stay the passing pilgrims tread.'
He passed - nor of his name and race
Hath left a token or a trace,
Save what the father must not say
Who shrived him on his dying day:
This broken tale was all we knew
Of her he loved, or him he slew.

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Harp The Monarch Minstrel Swept

The harp the monarch minstrel swept,
The King of men, the loved of Heaven,
Which Music hallow'd while she wept
O'er tones her heart of hearts had given,
Redoubled be her tears, its chords are riven!
It soften'd men of iron mould,
It gave them virtues not their own;
No ear so dull, no soul so cold,
That felt not, fired not to the tone,
Till David's lyre grew mightier than his throne!

It told the triumphs of our King,
It wafted glory to our God;
It made our gladden'd valleys ring,
The cedars bow, the mountains nod;
Its sound aspired to heaven and there abode!
Since then, though heard on earth no more,
Devotion and her daughter Love
Still bid the bursting spirit soar
To sounds that seem as from above,
In dreams that day's broad light can not remove.

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Irish Avatar

'And Ireland, like a bastinadoed elephant,
kneeling to receive the paltry rider.' ~Curran.

Ere the daughter of Brunswick is cold in her grave,
And her ashes still float to their home o'er the tide,
Lo! George the triumphant speeds over the wave,
To the long-cherish'd isle which he loved like his--bride!

True, the great of her bright and brief era are gone,
The rainbow-like epoch where Freedom could pause
For the few little years, out of centuries won,
Which betray'd not, or crush'd not, or wept not her cause.

True, the chains of the Catholic clank o'er his rags,
The castle still stands, and the senate's no more,
And the famine which dwelt on her freedomless crags
Is extending its steps to her desolate shore.

To her desolate shore--where the emigrant stands
For a moment to gaze ere he flies from his hearth;
Tears fall on his chain, though it drops from his hands,
For the dungeon he quits is the place of his birth.

But he comes! the Messiah of royalty comes!
Like a goodly Leviathan roll'd from the waves;
Then receive him as best such an advent becomes,
With a legion of cooks, and an army of slaves!

He comes in the promise and bloom of threescore,
To perform in the pageant the sovereign's part
But long live the shamrock, which shadows him o'er!
Could the green in his hat be transferr'd to his heart!

Could that long-wither'd spot but be ver-dant again,
And a new spring of noble affections arise
Then might freedom forgive thee this dance in thy chain,
And this shout of thy slavery which saddens the skies.

Is it madness or meanness which clings to thee now?
Were he God--as he is but the com-monest clay,
With scarce fewer wrinkles than sins on his brow
Such servile devotion might shame him away.

Ay, roar in his train! let thine orators lash
Their fanciful spirits to pamper his pride
Not thus did thy Grattan indignantly flash
His soul o'er the freedom implored and denied.

Ever glorious Grattan! the best of the good!
So simple in heart, so sublime in the rest!
With all which Demosthenes wanted endued,

And his rival or victor in all he possess'd.

Ere Tully arose in the zenith of Rome,
Though unequall'd, preceded, the task was begun--
But Grattan sprung up like a god from the tomb
Of ages, the first, last, the saviour, the one!

With the skill of an Orpheus to soften the brute;
With the fire of Prometheus to kindle mankind
Even Tyranny listening sate melted or mute,
And Corruption shrunk scorch'd from the glance of his mind.

But back to our theme! Back to despots and slaves!
Feasts furnish'd by Famine! Rejoicings by Pain!
True freedom but welcomes, while slavery still raves,
When a week's saturnalia hath loosen'd her chain.

Let the poor squalid splendour thy wreck can afford
(As the bankrupt's profusion his ruin would hide),
Gild over the palace, Lo! Erin, thy lord!
Kiss his foot with thy blessing, his bless-ings denied!

Or if freedom past hope be extorted at last,
If the idol of brass find his feet are of clay,
Must what terror or policy wring forth be class'd
With what monarchs ne'er give, but as wolves yield their prey?

Each brute hath its nature; a king's is to reign,
To reign! in that word see, ye ages, comprised
The cause of the curses all annals contain,
From Caesar the dreaded to George the despised!

Wear, Fingal, thy trapping! O'Connell, proclaim
His accomplishments! Hist!!! and thy country convince
Half an age's contempt was an error of fame,
And that 'Hal is the rascaliest, sweetest young prince!'

Will thy yard of blue riband, poor Fingal, recall
The fetters from millions of Catholic limbs?
Or, has it not bound thee the fastest of all
The slaves, who now hail their betrayer with hymns?

Ay! 'Build him a dwelling!' let each give his mite!
Till, like Babel, the new royal dome hath arisen!
Let thy beggars and helots their pittance unite -
And a palace bestow for a poor-house and prison!

Spread--spread, for Vitellius, the royal repast,
Till the gluttonous despot be stuff'd to the gorge!
And the roar of his drunkards proclaim him at last
The fourth of the fools and oppressors call'd 'George!'

Let the tables be loaded with feasts till they groan!
Till they groan like thy people, through ages of woe!
Let the wine flow around the old Bacchanal's throne,
Like their blood which has flow'd, and which yet has to flow.

But let not his name be thine idol alone--
On his right hand behold a Sejanus appears!
Thine own Castlereagh! let him still be thine own!
A wretch never named but with curses and jeers!

Till now, when the isle which should blush for his birth,
Deep, deep as the gore which he shed on her soil,
Seems proud of the reptile which crawl'd from her earth,
And for murder repays him with shouts and a smile.

Without one single ray of her genius, without
The fancy, the manhood, the fire of her race
The miscreant who well might plunge Erin in doubt
If she ever gave birth to a being so base.

If she did--let her long-boasted proverb be hush'd,
Which proclaims that from Erin no reptile can spring
See the cold-blooded serpent, with venom full flush'd,
Still warming its folds in the breast of a king!

Shout, drink, feast, and flatter! Oh! Erin, how low
Wert thou sunk by misfortune and tyranny, till
Thy welcome of tyrants hath plunged thee below
The depth of thy deep in a deeper gulf still!

My voice, though but humble, was raised for thy right,
My vote, as a freeman's, still voted thee free,
This hand, though but feeble, would arm in thy fight,
And this heart, though outworn, had a throb still for thee!

Yes, I loved thee and thine, though thou art not my land,
I have known noble hearts and great souls in thy sons,
And I wept with the world, o'er the patriot band
Who are gone, but I weep them no longer as once.

For happy are they now reposing afar,
Thy Grattan, thy Curran, thy Sheridan, all
Who, for years, were the chiefs in the eloquent war,
And redeem'd, if they have not retarded, thy fall.

Yes, happy are they in their cold English graves!
Their shades cannot start to thy shouts of today--
Nor the steps of enslavers and chain-kissing slaves
Be, stamp'd in the turf o'er their fetter-less clay.

Till now I had envied thy sons and their shore,
Though their virtues were hunted, their liberties fled

There was something so warm and sublime in the core
Of an Irishman's heart, that I envy--thy dead.

Or, if aught in my bosom can quench for an hour
My contempt for a nation so servile, though sore,
Which though trod like the worm will not turn upon power,
'Tis the glory of Grattan, and genius of Moore!

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Island: Canto I.

I.

The morning watch was come; the vessel lay
Her course, and gently made her liquid way;
The cloven billow flashed from off her prow
In furrows formed by that majestic plough;
The waters with their world were all before;
Behind, the South Sea's many an islet shore.
The quiet night, now dappling, 'gan to wane,
Dividing darkness from the dawning main;
The dolphins, not unconscious of the day,
Swam high, as eager of the coming ray;
The stars from broader beams began to creep,
And lift their shining eyelids from the deep;
The sail resumed its lately shadowed white,
And the wind fluttered with a freshening flight;
The purpling Ocean owns the coming Sun,
But ere he break- a deed is to be done.

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II.

The gallant Chief within his cabin slept,
Secure in those by whom the watch was kept:
His dreams were of Old England's welcome shore,
Of toils rewarded, and of dangers o'er;
His name was added to the glorious roll
Of those who search the storm-surrounded Pole.
The worst was over, and the rest seemed sure,
And why should not his slumber be secure?
Alas! his deck was trod by unwilling feet,
And wilder hands would hold the vessel's sheet;
Young hearts, which languished for some sunny isle,
Where summer years and summer women smile;
Men without country, who, too long estranged,
Had found no native home, or found it changed,
And, half uncivilised, preferred the cave
Of some soft savage to the uncertain wave-
The gushing fruits that nature gave untilled;
The wood without a path- but where they willed;
The field o'er which promiscuous Plenty poured
Her horn; the equal land without a lord;
The wish- which ages have not yet subdued
In man- to have no master save his mood
The earth, whose mine was on its face, unsold,
The glowing sun and produce all its gold;
The Freedom which can call each grot a home;
The general garden, where all steps may roam,
Where Nature owns a nation as her child,
Exulting in the enjoyment of the wild
Their shells, their fruits, the only wealth they know,
Their unexploring navy, the canoe
Their sport, the dashing breakers and the chase;
Their strangest sight, an European face
Such was the country which these strangers yearned

To see again- a sight they dearly earned.

III.

Awake, bold Bligh! the foe is at the gate!
Awake! awake!- Alas! it is too late!
Fiercely beside thy cot the mutineer
Stands, and proclaims the reign of rage and fear.
Thy limbs are bound, the bayonet at thy breast;
The hands, which trembled at thy voice, arrest;
Dragged o'er the deck, no more at thy command
The obedient helm shall veer, the sail expand;
That savage Spirit, which would lull by wrath
Its desperate escape from Duty's path,
Glares round thee, in the scarce believing eyes
Of those who fear the Chief they sacrifice:
For ne'er can Man his conscience all assuage,
Unless he drain the wine of Passion- Rage.

IV.

In vain, not silenced by the eye of Death,
Thou call'st the loyal with thy menaced breath
They come not; they are few, and, overawed,
Must acquiesce, while sterner hearts applaud.
In vain thou dost demand the cause: a curse
Is all the answer, with the threat of worse.
Full in thine eyes is waved the glittering blade,
Close to thy throat the pointed bayonet laid.
The levelled muskets circle round thy breast
In hands as steeled to do the deadly rest.
Thou dar'st them to their worst, exclaiming- 'Fire!'
But they who pitied not could yet admire;
Some lurking remnant of their former awe
Restrained them longer than their broken law;
They would not dip their souls at once in blood,
But left thee to the mercies of the flood.

V.

'Hoist out the boat!' was now the leader's cry;
And who dare answer 'No!' to Mutiny,
In the first dawning of the drunken hour,
The Saturnalia of unhop'd-for power?
The boat is lowered with all the haste of hate,
With its slight plank between thee and thy fate;
Her only cargo such a scant supply
As promises the death their hands deny;
And just enough of water and of bread
To keep, some days, the dying from the dead:
Some cordage, canvass, sails, and lines, and twine,
But treasures all to hermits of the brine,
Were added after, to the earnest prayer
Of those who saw no hope, save sea and air;
And last, that trembling vassal of the Pole-

The feeling compass- Navigation's soul.

VI.

And now the self-elected Chief finds time
To stun the first sensation of his crime,
And raise it in his followers- ' Ho! the bowl!'
Lest passion should return to reason's shoal.
'Brandy for heroes!' Burke could once exclaim-
No doubt a liquid path to Epic fame;
And such the new-born heroes found it here,
And drained the draught with an applauding cheer,
'Huzza! for Otaheite!' was the cry.
How strange such shouts from sons of Mutiny!
The gentle island, and the genial soil,
The friendly hearts, the feasts without a toil,
The courteous manners but from nature caught,
The wealth unhoarded, and the love unbought; sic
Could these have charms for rudest sea-boys, driven
Before the mast by every wind of heaven?
And now, even now prepared with others' woes
To earn mild Virtue's vain desire, repose?
Alas! such is our nature! all but aim
At the same end by pathways not the same;
Our means- our birth- our nation, and our name,
Our fortune- temper- even our outward frame,
Are far more potent o'er our yielding clay
Than aught we know beyond our little day.
Yet still there whispers the small voice within,
Heard through Gain's silence, and o'er Glory's din:
Whatever creed be taught, or land be trod,
Man's conscience is the Oracle of God.

VII.

The launch is crowded with the faithful few
Who wait their Chief, a melancholy crew:
But some remained reluctant on the deck
Of that proud vessel- now a moral wreck-
And viewed their Captain's fate with piteous eyes;
While others scoffed his augured miseries,
Sneered at the prospect of his pigmy sail,
And the slight bark so laden and so frail.
The tender nautilus, who steers his prow,
The sea-born sailor of his shell canoe,
The ocean Mab, the fairy of the sea,
Seems far less fragile, and, alas! more free.
He, when the lightning-winged Tornados sweep
The surge, is safe- his port is in the deep-
And triumphs o'er the armadas of Mankind,
Which shake the World, yet crumble in the wind.

VIII.

When all was now prepared, the vessel clear

Which hailed her master in the mutineer,
A seaman, less obdurate than his mates,
Showed the vain pity which but irritates;
Watched his late Chieftain with exploring eye,
And told, in signs, repentant sympathy;
Held the moist shaddock to his parchéd mouth,
Which felt Exhaustion's deep and bitter drouth.
But soon observed, this guardian was withdrawn,
Nor further Mercy clouds Rebellion's dawn.
Then forward stepped the bold and foward boy
His Chief had cherished only to destroy,
And, pointing to the helpless prow beneath,
Exclaimed, 'Depart at once! delay is death!'
Yet then, even then, his feelings ceased not all:
In that last moment could a word recall
Remorse for the black deed as yet half done,
And what he hid from many showed to one:
When Bligh in stern reproach demanded where
Was now his grateful sense of former care?
Where all his hopes to see his name aspire,
And blazon Britain's thousand glories higher?
His feverish lips thus broke their gloomy spell,
"Tis that! 'Tis that! I am in hell! in hell!"
No more he said; but urging to the bark
His Chief, commits him to his fragile ark;
These the sole accents from his tongue that fell,
But volumes lurked below his fierce farewell.

IX.

The arctic Sun rose broad above the wave;
The breeze now sank, now whispered from his cave;
As on the Aeolian harp, his fitful wings
Now swelled, now fluttered o'er his Ocean strings.
With slow, despairing oar, the abandoned skiff
Ploughs its drear progress to the scarce seen cliff,
Which lifts its peak a cloud above the main:
That boat and ship shall never meet again!

But 'tis not mine to tell their tale of grief,
Their constant peril, and their scant relief;
Their days of danger, and their nights of pain;
Their manly courage even when deemed in vain;
The sapping famine, rendering scarce a son
Known to his mother in the skeleton;
The ills that lessened still their little store,
And starved even Hunger till he wrung no more;
The varying frowns and favours of the deep,
That now almost ingulfs, then leaves to creep
With crazy oar and shattered strength along
The tide that yields reluctant to the strong;
The incessant fever of that arid thirst
Which welcomes, as a well, the clouds that burst

Above their naked bones, and feels delight
In the cold drenching of the stormy night,
And from the outspread canvass gladly wrings
A drop to moisten Life's all-gasping springs;
The savage foe escaped, to seek again
More hospitable shelter from the main;
The ghastly Spectres which were doomed at last
To tell as true a tale of dangers past,
As ever the dark annals of the deep
Disclosed for man to dread or woman weep.

X.

We leave them to their fate, but not unknown
Nor unredressed. Revenge may have her own:
Roused Discipline aloud proclaims their cause,
And injured Navies urge their broken laws.
Pursue we on his track the mutineer,
Whom distant vengeance had not taught to fear.
Wide o'er the wave-away! away! away!
Once more his eyes shall hail the welcome bay;
Once more the happy shores without a law
Receive the outlaws whom they lately saw;
Nature, and Nature's goddess-Woman-woos
To lands where, save their conscience, none accuse;
Where all partake the earth without dispute,
And bread itself is gathered as a fruit;
Where none contest the fields, the woods, the streams
The goldless Age, where Gold disturbs no dreams,
Inhabits or inhabited the shore,
Till Europe taught them better than before;
Bestowed her customs, and amended theirs,
But left her vices also to their heirs.
Away with this! behold them as they were,
Do good with Nature, or with Nature err.
'Huzza! for Otaheite!' was the cry,
As stately swept the gallant vessel by.
The breeze springs up; the lately flapping sail
Extends its arch before the growing gale;
In swifter ripples stream aside the seas,
Which her bold bow flings off with dashing ease.
Thus Argo ploughed the Euxine's virgin foam,
But those she wafted still looked back to home;
These spurn their country with their rebel bark,
And fly her as the raven fled the Ark;
And yet they seek to nestle with the dove,
And tame their fiery spirits down to Love.

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Island: Canto II.

I.

How pleasant were the songs of Toobonai,
When Summer's Sun went down the coral bay!
Come, let us to the islet's softest shade,
And hear the warbling birds I the damsels said:
The wood-dove from the forest depth shall coo,
Like voices of the Gods from Bolotoo;
We'll cull the flowers that grow above the dead,
For these most bloom where rests the warrior's head;
And we will sit in Twilight's face, and see
The sweet Moon glancing through the Tooa tree, to
The lofty accents of whose sighing bough
Shall sadly please us as we lean below;
Or climb the steep, and view the surf in vain
Wrestle with rocky giants o'er the main,
Which spurn in columns back the baffled spray.
How beautiful are these! how happy they,
Who, from the toil and tumult of their lives,
Steal to look down where nought but Ocean strives!
Even He too loves at times the blue lagoon,
And smooths his ruffled mane beneath the Moon.

II.

Yes-from the sepulchre we'll gather flowers,
Then feast like spirits in their promised bowers,
Then plunge and revel in the rolling surf
Then lay our limbs along the tender turf,
And, wet and shining from the sportive toil,
Anoint our bodies with the fragrant oil,
And plait our garlands gathered from the grave,
And wear the wreaths that sprung from out the brave.
But lo I night comes, the Mooa woos us back,
The sound of mats are heard along our track;
Anon the torchlight dance shall fling its sheen
In flashing mazes o'er the Marly's green;
And we too will be there; we too recall
The memory bright with many a festival,
Ere Fiji blew the shell of war, when foes
For the first time were wafted in canoes.
Alas! for them the flower of manhood bleeds;
Alas! for them our fields are rank with, weeds:
Forgotten is the rapture, or unknown,
Of wandering with the Moon and Love alone.
But be it so:-they taught us how to wield
The club, and rain our arrows o'er the field:
Now let them reap the harvest of their art!
But feast to-night! to-morrow we depart.
Strike up the dance! the Cava bowl fill high!
Drain every drop!-to-morrow we may die.
In summer garments be our limbs arrayed;
Around our waists the Tappa's white displayed;
Thick wreaths shall form our coronal, like Spring's,

And round our necks shall glance the Hooni strings;
So shall their brighter hues contrast the glow
Of the dusk bosoms that beat high below.

III.

But now the dance is o'er-yet stay awhile;
Ah, pause! nor yet put out the social smile.
To-morrow for the Mooa we depart,
But not to-night-to-night is for the heart.
Again bestow the wreaths we gently woo,
Ye young Enchantresses of gay Licoo
How lovely are your forms! how every sense
Bows to your beauties, softened, but intense,
Like to the flowers on Mataloco's steep,
Which fling their fragrance far athwart the deep!-
We too will see Licoo; but-oh! my heart!-
What do I say?- to-morrow we depart!

IV.

Thus rose a song-the harmony of times
Before the winds blew Europe o'er these climes.
True, they had vices-such are Nature's growth-
But only the barbarian's- we have both;
The sordor of civilisation, mixed
With all the savage which Man's fall hath fixed.
Who hath not seen Dissimulation's reign,
The prayers of Abel linked to deeds of Cain?
Who such would see may from his lattice view
The Old World more degraded than the New,-
Now new no more, save where Columbia rears
Twin giants, born by Freedom to her spheres,
Where Chimborazo, over air,- earth,- wave,-
Glares with his Titan eye, and sees no slave.

V.

Such was this ditty of Tradition's days,
Which to the dead a lingering fame conveys
In song, where Fame as yet hath left no sign
Beyond the sound whose charm is half divine;
Which leaves no record to the sceptic eye,
But yields young History all to Harmony;
A boy Achilles, with the Centaur's lyre
In hand, to teach him to surpass his sire.
For one long-cherished ballad's simple stave,
Rung from the rock, or mingled with the wave,
Or from the bubbling streamlet's grassy side,
Or gathering mountain echoes as they glide,
Hath greater power o'er each true heart and ear,
Than all the columns Conquest's minions rear;
Invites, when Hieroglyphics are a theme
For sages' labours, or the student's dream;
Attracts, when History's volumes are a toil,-

The first, the freshest bud of Feeling's soil.
Such was this rude rhyme- rhyme is of the rude-
But such inspired the Norseman's solitude,
Who came and conquered; such, wherever rise
Lands which no foes destroy or civilise,
Exist: and what can our accomplished art
Of verse do more than reach the awakened heart?

VI.

And sweetly now those untaught melodies
Broke the luxurious silence of the skies,
The sweet siesta of a summer day,
The tropic afternoon of Toobonai,
When every flower was bloom, and air was balm,
And the first breath began to stir the palm,
The first yet voiceless wind to urge the wave
All gently to refresh the thirsty cave,
Where sat the Songstress with the stranger boy,
Who taught her Passion's desolating joy,
Too powerful over every heart, but most
O'er those who know not how it may be lost;
O'er those who, burning in the new-born fire,
Like martyrs revel in their funeral pyre,
With such devotion to their ecstacy,
That Life knows no such rapture as to die:
And die they do; for earthly life has nought
Matched with that burst of Nature, even in thought;
And all our dreams of better life above
But close in one eternal gush of Love.

VII.

There sat the gentle savage of the wild,
In growth a woman, though in years a child,
As childhood dates within our colder clime,
Where nought is ripened rapidly save crime;
The infant of an infant world, as pure
From Nature-lovely, warm, and premature;
Dusky like night, but night with all her stars;
Or cavern sparkling with its native spars;
With eyes that were a language and a spell,
A form like Aphrodite's in her shell,
With all her loves around her on the deep,
Voluptuous as the first approach of sleep;
Yet full of life-for through her tropic cheek
The blush would make its way, and all but speak;
The sun-born blood suffused her neck, and threw
O'er her clear nut-brown skin a lucid hue,
Like coral reddening through the darkened wave,
Which draws the diver to the crimson cave.
Such was this daughter of the southern seas,
Herself a billow in her energies,
To bear the bark of others' happiness,

Nor feel a sorrow till their joy grew less:
Her wild and warm yet faithful bosom knew
No joy like what it gave; her hopes ne'er drew
Aught from Experience, that chill touchstone, whose
Sad proof reduces all things from their hues:
She feared no ill, because she knew it not,
Or what she knew was soon-too soon-forgot:
Her smiles and tears had passed, as light winds pass
O'er lakes to ruffle, not destroy, their glass,
Whose depths unsearched, and fountains from the hill,
Restore their surface, in itself so still,
Until the Earthquake tear the Naiad's cave,
Root up the spring, and trample on the wave,
And crush the living waters to a mass,
The amphibious desert of the dank morass!
And must their fate be hers? The eternal change
But grasps Humanity with quicker range;
And they who fall but fall as worlds will fall,
To rise, if just, a Spirit o'er them all.

VIII.

And who is he? the blue-eyed northern child
Of isles more known to man, but scarce less wild;
The fair-haired offspring of the Hebrides,
Where roars the Pentland with its whirling seas;
Rocked in his cradle by the roaring wind,
The tempest-born in body and in mind,
His young eyes opening on the ocean-foam,
Had from that moment deemed the deep his home,
The giant comrade of his pensive moods,
The sharer of his craggy solitudes,
The only Mentor of his youth, where'er
His bark was borne; the sport of wave and air;
A careless thing, who placed his choice in chance,
Nursed by the legends of his land's romance;
Eager to hope, but not less firm to bear,
Acquainted with all feelings save despair.
Placed in the Arab's clime he would have been
As bold a rover as the sands have seen,
And braved their thirst with as enduring lip
As Ishmael, wafted on his desert-ship;
Fixed upon Chili's shore, a proud cacique;
On Hellas' mountains, a rebellious Greek;
Born in a tent, perhaps a Tamerlane;
Bred to a throne, perhaps unfit to reign.
For the same soul that rends its path to sway,
If reared to such, can find no further prey
Beyond itself, and must retrace its way,
Plunging for pleasure into pain: the same
Spirit which made a Nero, Rome's worst shame,
A humbler state and discipline of heart,
Had formed his glorious namesake's counterpart;

But grant his vices, grant them all his own,
How small their theatre without a throne!

IX.

Thou smilest:-these comparisons seem high
To those who scan all things with dazzled eye;
Linked with the unknown name of one whose doom
Has nought to do with glory or with Rome,
With Chili, Hellas, or with Araby;
Thou smilest?-Smile; 'tis better thus than sigh;
Yet such he might have been; he was a man,
A soaring spirit, ever in the van,
A patriot hero or despotic chief,
To form a nation's glory or its grief,
Born under auspices which make us more
Or less than we delight to ponder o'er.
But these are visions; say, what was he here?
A blooming boy, a truant mutineer.
The fair-haired Torquil, free as Ocean's spray,
The husband of the bride of Toobonai.

X.

By Neuha's side he sate, and watched the waters,-
Neuha, the sun-flower of the island daughters,
Highborn, (a birth at which the herald smiles,
Without a scutcheon for these secret isles,)
Of a long race, the valiant and the free,
The naked knights of savage chivalry,
Whose grassy cairns ascend along the shore;
And thine-I've seen-Achilles! do no more.
She, when the thunder-bearing strangers came,
In vast canoes, begirt with bolts of flame,
Topped with tall trees, which, loftier than the palm,
Seemed rooted in the deep amidst its calm:
But when the winds awakened, shot forth wings
Broad as the cloud along the horizon flings,
And swayed the waves, like cities of the sea,
Making the very billows look less free;-
She, with her paddling oar and dancing prow,
Shot through the surf, like reindeer through the snow,
Swift-gliding o'er the breakers whitening edge,
Light as a Nereid in her ocean sledge,
And gazed and wondered at the giant hulk,
Which heaved from wave to wave its trampling bulk.
The anchor dropped; it lay along the deep,
Like a huge lion in the sun asleep,
While round it swarmed the Proas' flitting chain,
Like summer bees that hum around his mane.

XI.

The white man landed!-need the rest be told?
The New World stretched its dusk hand to the Old;

Each was to each a marvel, and the tie
Of wonder warmed to better sympathy.
Kind was the welcome of the sun-born sires,
And kinder still their daughters' gentler fires.
Their union grew: the children of the storm
Found beauty linked with many a dusky form;
While these in turn admired the paler glow,
Which seemed so white in climes that knew no snow.
The chace, the race, the liberty to roam,
The soil where every cottage showed a home;
The sea-spread net, the lightly launched canoe,
Which stemmed the studded archipelago,
O'er whose blue bosom rose the starry isles;
The healthy slumber, earned by sportive toils;
The palm, the loftiest Dryad of the woods,
Within whose bosom infant Bacchus broods,
While eagles scarce build higher than the crest
Which shadows o'er the vineyard in her breast;
The Cava feast, the Yam, the Cocoa's root,
Which bears at once the cup, and milk, and fruit;
The Bread-tree, which, without the ploughshare, yields
The unreaped harvest of unfurrowed fields,
And bakes its unadulterated loaves
Without a furnace in unpurchased groves,
And flings off famine from its fertile breast,
A priceless market for the gathering guest;—
These, with the luxuries of seas and woods,
The airy joys of social solitudes,
Tamed each rude Wanderer to the sympathies
Of those who were more happy, if less wise,
Did more than Europe's discipline had done,
And civilised Civilisation's son!

XII.

Of these, and there was many a willing pair,
Neuha and Torquil were not the least fair:
Both children of the isles, though distant far;
Both born beneath a sea-presiding star;
Both nourished amidst Nature's native scenes,
Loved to the last, whatever intervenes
Between us and our Childhood's sympathy,
Which still reverts to what first caught the eye.
He who first met the Highlands' swelling blue
Will love each peak that shows a kindred hue,
Hail in each crag a friend's familiar face,
And clasp the mountain in his Mind's embrace.
Long have I roamed through lands which are not mine,
Adored the Alp, and loved the Apennine,
Revered Parnassus, and beheld the steep
Jove's Ida and Olympus crown the deep:
But 'twas not all long ages' lore, nor all
Their nature held me in their thrilling thrall;

The infant rapture still survived the boy,
And Loch-na-gar with Ida looked o'er Troy,
Mixed Celtic memories with the Phrygian mount,
And Highland linns with Castalie's clear fount.
Forgive me, Homer's universal shade!
Forgive me, Phoebus! that my fancy strayed;
The North and Nature taught me to adore
Your scenes sublime, from those beloved before.

XIII.

The love which maketh all things fond and fair,
The youth which makes one rainbow of the air,
The dangers past, that make even Man enjoy
The pause in which he ceases to destroy,
The mutual beauty, which the sternest feel
Strike to their hearts like lightning to the steel,
United the half savage and the whole,
The maid and boy, in one absorbing soul.
No more the thundering memory of the fight
Wrapped his weaned bosom in its dark delight;
No more the irksome restlessness of Rest
Disturbed him like the eagle in her nest,
Whose whetted beak and far-pervading eye
Darts for a victim over all the sky:
His heart was tamed to that voluptuous state,
At once Elysian and effeminate,
Which leaves no laurels o'er the Hero's urn;
These wither when for aught save blood they burn;
Yet when their ashes in their nook are laid,
Doth not the myrtle leave as sweet a shade?
Had Caesar known but Cleopatra's kiss,
Rome had been free, the world had not been his.
And what have Caesar's deeds and Caesar's fame
Done for the earth? We feel them in our shame.
The gory sanction of his Glory stains
The rust which tyrants cherish on our chains.
Though Glory-Nature-Reason-Freedom, bid
Roused millions do what single Brutus did-
Sweep these mere mock-birds of the Despot's song
From the tall bough where they have perched so long,-
Still are we hawked at by such mousing owls,
And take for falcons those ignoble fowls,
When but a word of freedom would dispel
These bugbears, as their terrors show too well.

XIV.

Rapt in the fond forgetfulness of life,
Neuha, the South Sea girl, was all a wife,
With no distracting world to call her off
From Love; with no Society to scoff
At the new transient flame; no babbling crowd
Of coxcombry in admiration loud,

Or with adulterous whisper to alloy
Her duty, and her glory, and her joy:
With faith and feelings naked as her form,
She stood as stands a rainbow in a storm,
Changing its hues with bright variety,
But still expanding lovelier o'er the sky,
Howe'er its arch may swell, its colours move,
The cloud-compelling harbinger of Love.

XV.

Here, in this grotto of the wave-worn shore,
They passed the Tropic's red meridian o'er;
Nor long the hours-they never paused o'er time,
Unbroken by the clock's funereal chime,
Which deals the daily pittance of our span,
And points and mocks with iron laugh at man.
What deemed they of the future or the past?
The present, like a tyrant, held them fast:
Their hour-glass was the sea-sand, and the tide,
Like her smooth billow, saw their moments glide;
Their clock the Sun, in his unbounded tower;
They reckoned not, whose day was but an hour;
The nightingale, their only vesper-bell,
Sung sweetly to the rose the day's farewell;
The broad Sun set, but not with lingering sweep,
As in the North he mellows o'er the deep;
But fiery, full, and fierce, as if he left
The World for ever, earth of light bereft,
Plunged with red forehead down along the wave,
As dives a hero headlong to his grave.
Then rose they, looking first along the skies,
And then for light into each other's eyes,
Wondering that Summer showed so brief a sun,
And asking if indeed the day were done.

XVI.

And let not this seem strange: the devotee
Lives not in earth, but in his ecstasy;
Around him days and worlds are heedless driven,
His Soul is gone before his dust to Heaven.
Is Love less potent? No-his path is trod,
Alike uplifted gloriously to God;
Or linked to all we know of Heaven below,
The other better self, whose joy or woe
Is more than ours; the all-absorbing flame
Which, kindled by another, grows the same,
Wrapt in one blaze; the pure, yet funeral pile,
Where gentle hearts, like Bramins, sit and smile.
How often we forget all time, when lone,
Admiring Nature's universal throne,
Her woods-her wilds-her waters-the intense
Reply of hers to our intelligence!

Live not the Stars and Mountains? Are the Waves
Without a spirit? Are the dropping caves
Without a feeling in their silent tears?
No, no;-they woo and clasp us to their spheres,
Dissolve this clog and clod of clay before
Its hour, and merge our soul in the great shore.
Strip off this fond and false identity!-
Who thinks of self when gazing on the sky?
And who, though gazing lower, ever thought,
In the young moments ere the heart is taught
Time's lesson, of Man's baseness or his own?
All Nature is his realm; and Love his throne.

XVII.

Neuha arose, and Torquil: Twilight's hour
Came sad and softly to their rocky bower,
Which, kindling by degrees its dewy spars,
Echoed their dim light to the mustering stars.
Slowly the pair, partaking Nature's calm,
Sought out their cottage, built beneath the palm;
Now smiling and now silent, as the scene;
Lovely as Love-the Spirit!-when serene.
The Ocean scarce spoke louder with his swell,
Than breathes his mimic murmur in the shell,
As, far divided from his parent deep,
The sea-born infant cries, and will not sleep,
Raising his little plaint in vain, to rave
For the broad bosom of his nursing wave:
The woods drooped darkly, as inclined to rest,
The tropic bird wheeled rockward to his nest,
And the blue sky spread round them like a lake
Of peace, where Piety her thirst might slake.

XVIII.

But through the palm and plantain, hark, a Voice!
Not such as would have been a lover's choice,
In such an hour, to break the air so still;
No dying night-breeze, harping o'er the hill,
Striking the strings of nature, rock and tree,
Those best and earliest lyres of Harmony,
With Echo for their chorus; nor the alarm
Of the loud war-whoop to dispel the charm;
Nor the soliloquy of the hermit owl,
Exhaling all his solitary soul,
The dim though large-eyed winged anchorite,
Who peals his dreary Paeon o'er the night;
But a loud, long, and naval whistle, shrill
As ever started through a sea-bird's bill;
And then a pause, and then a hoarse 'Hillo!
Torquil, my boy I what cheer? Ho! brother, ho!'
'Who hails?' cried Torquil, following with his eye
The sound. 'Here's one,' was all the brief reply.

XIX.

But here the herald of the self-same mouth
Came breathing o'er the aromatic south,
Not like a 'bed of violets' on the gale,
But such as wafts its cloud o'er grog or ale,
Borne from a short frail pipe, which yet had blown
Its gentle odours over either zone,
And, puffed where'er winds rise or waters roll,
Had wafted smoke from Portsmouth to the Pole,
Opposed its vapour as the lightning dashed,
And reeked, 'midst mountain-billows, unabashed,
To AEolus a constant sacrifice,
Through every change of all the varying skies.
And what was he who bore it?-I may err,
But deem him sailor or philosopher.
Sublime Tobacco! which from East to West
Cheers the tar's labour or the Turkman's rest;
Which on the Moslem's ottoman divides
His hours, and rivals opium and his brides;
Magnificent in Stamboul, but less grand,
Though not less loved, in Wapping or the Strand;
Divine in hookas, glorious in a pipe,
When tipped with amber, mellow, rich, and ripe;
Like other charmers, wooing the caress,
More dazzlingly when daring in full dress;
Yet thy true lovers more admire by far
Thy naked beauties-Give me a cigar!

XX.

Through the approaching darkness of the wood
A human figure broke the solitude,
Fantastically, it may be, arrayed,
A seaman in a savage masquerade;
Such as appears to rise out from the deep,
When o'er the line the merry vessels sweep,
And the rough Saturnalia of the tar
Flock o'er the deck, in Neptune's borrowed car;
And, pleased, the God of Ocean sees his name
Revive once more, though but in mimic game
Of his true sons, who riot in the breeze
Undreamt of in his native Cyclades.
Still the old God delights, from out the main,
To snatch some glimpses of his ancient reign.
Our sailor's jacket, though in ragged trim,
His constant pipe, which never yet burned dim,
His foremast air, and somewhat rolling gait,
Like his dear vessel, spoke his former state;
But then a sort of kerchief round his head,
Not over tightly bound, nor nicely spread;
And, 'stead of trowsers (ah! too early torn!
For even the mildest woods will have their thorn)

A curious sort of somewhat scanty mat
Now served for inexpressibles and hat;
His naked feet and neck, and sunburnt face,
Perchance might suit alike with either race.
His arms were all his own, our Europe's growth,
Which two worlds bless for civilising both;
The musket swung behind his shoulders broad,
And somewhat stooped by his marine abode,
But brawny as the boar's; and hung beneath,
His cutlass drooped, unconscious of a sheath,
Or lost or worn away; his pistols were
Linked to his belt, a matrimonial pair-
(Let not this metaphor appear a scoff,
Though one missed fire, the other would go off);
These, with a bayonet, not so free from rust
As when the arm-chest held its brighter trust,
Completed his accoutrements, as Night
Surveyed him in his garb heteroclite.

XXI.

'What cheer, Ben Bunting?' cried (when in full view
Our new acquaintance) Torquil. 'Aught of new?'
'Ey, ey!' quoth Ben, 'not new, but news enow;
A strange sail in the offing.'-'Sail! and how?
What! could you make her out? It cannot be;
I've seen no rag of canvass on the sea.'
'Belike,' said Ben, 'you might not from the bay,
But from the bluff-head, where I watched to-day,
I saw her in the doldrums; for the wind
Was light and baffling.'-'When the Sun declined
Where lay she? had she anchored?'-'No, but still
She bore down on us, till the wind grew still.'
'Her flag?'-'I had no glass but fore and aft,
Egad! she seemed a wicked-looking craft.'
'Armed?'-'I expect so;-sent on the look-out:
'Tis time, belike, to put our helm about.'
'About?-Whate'er may have us now in chase,
We'll make no running fight, for that were base;
We will die at our quarters, like true men.'
'Ey, ey! for that 'tis all the same to Ben.'
'Does Christian know this?'-'Aye; he has piped all hands
To quarters. They are furbishing the stands
Of arms; and we have got some guns to bear,
And scaled them. You are wanted.'-'That's but fair;
And if it were not, mine is not the soul
To leave my comrades helpless on the shoal.
My Neuha! ah! and must my fate pursue
Not me alone, but one so sweet and true?
But whatsoe'er betide, ah, Neuha! now
Unman me not: the hour will not allow
A tear; I am thine whatever intervenes!'
'Right,' quoth Ben; 'that will do for the marines.'

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Island: Canto III.

I.

The fight was o'er; the flashing through the gloom,
Which robes the cannon as he wings a tomb,
Had ceased; and sulphury vapours upward driven
Had left the Earth, and but polluted Heaven:
The rattling roar which rung in every volley
Had left the echoes to their melancholy;
No more they shrieked their horror, boom for boom;
The strife was done, the vanquished had their doom;
The mutineers were crushed, dispersed, or ta'en,
Or lived to deem the happiest were the slain.
Few, few escaped, and these were hunted o'er
The isle they loved beyond their native shore.
No further home was theirs, it seemed, on earth,
Once renegades to that which gave them birth;
Tracked like wild beasts, like them they sought the wild,
As to a Mother's bosom flies the child;
But vainly wolves and lions seek their den,
And still more vainly men escape from men,

II.

Beneath a rock whose jutting base protrudes
Far over Ocean in its fiercest moods,
When scaling his enormous crag the wave
Is hurled down headlong, like the foremost brave,
And falls back on the foaming crowd behind,
Which fight beneath the banners of the wind,
But now at rest, a little remnant drew
Together, bleeding, thirsty, faint, and few;
But still their weapons in their hands, and still
With something of the pride of former will,
As men not all unused to meditate,
And strive much more than wonder at their fate.
Their present lot was what they had foreseen,
And dared as what was likely to have been;
Yet still the lingering hope, which deemed their lot
Not pardoned, but unsought for or forgot,
Or trusted that, if sought, their distant caves
Might still be missed amidst the world of waves,
Had weaned their thoughts in part from what they saw
And felt, the vengeance of their country's law.
Their sea-green isle, their guilt-won Paradise,
No more could shield their Virtue or their Vice:
Their better feelings, if such were, were thrown
Back on themselves, - their sins remained alone.
Proscribed even in their second country, they
Were lost; in vain the World before them lay;
All outlets seemed secured. Their new allies
Had fought and bled in mutual sacrifice;
But what availed the club and spear, and arm
Of Hercules, against the sulphury charm,
The magic of the thunder, which destroyed

The warrior ere his strength could be employed?
Dug, like a spreading pestilence, the grave
No less of human bravery than the brave!
Their own scant numbers acted all the few
Against the many oft will dare and do;
But though the choice seems native to die free,
Even Greece can boast but one Thermopylae,
Till now, when she has forged her broken chain
Back to a sword, and dies and lives again!

III.

Beside the jutting rock the few appeared,
Like the last remnant of the red-deer's herd;
Their eyes were feverish, and their aspect worn,
But still the hunter's blood was on their horn.
A little stream came tumbling from the height,
And straggling into ocean as it might,
Its bounding crystal frolicked in the ray,
And gushed from cliff to crag with saltless spray;
Close on the wild, wide ocean, yet as pure
And fresh as Innocettce, and more secure,
Its silver torrent glittered o'er the deep,
As the shy chamois' eye o'erlooks the steep,
While far below the vast and sullen swell
Of Ocean's alpine azure rose and fell.
To this young spring they rushed,-all feelings first
Absorbed in Passion's and in Nature's thirst,-
Drank as they do who drink their last, and threw
Their arms aside to revel in its dew;
Cooled their scorched throats, and washed the gory stains
From wounds whose only bandage might be chains;
Then, when their drought was quenched, looked sadly round,
As wondering how so many still were found
Alive and fetterless:-but silent all,
Each sought his fellow's eyes, as if to call
On him for language which his lips denied,
As though their voices with their cause had died.

IV.

Stern, and aloof a little from the rest,
Stood Christian, with his arms across his chest.
The ruddy, reckless, dauntless hue once spread
Along his cheek was livid now as lead;
His light-brown locks, so graceful in their flow,
Now rose like startled vipers o'er his brow.
Still as a statue, with his lips coinprest
To stifle even the breath within his breast,
Fast by the rock, all menacing, but mute,
He stood; and, save a slight beat of his foot,
Which deepened now and then the sandy dint
Beneath his heel, his form seemed turned to flint.
Some paces further Torquil leaned his head

Against a bank, and spoke not, but he bled,-
Not mortally:-his worst wound was within;
His brow was pale, his blue eyes sunken in, too
And blood-drops, sprinkled o'er his yellow hair,
Showed that his faintness came not from despair,
But Nature's ebb. Beside him was another,
Rough as a bear, but willing as a brother,-
Ben Bunting, who essayed to wash, and wipe,
And bind his wound-then calmly lit his pipe,
A trophy which survived a hundred fights,
A beacon which had cheered ten thousand nights.
The fourth and last of this deserted group
Walked up and down-at times would stand, then stoop
To pick a pebble up-then let it drop-
Then hurry as in haste-then quickly stop-
Then cast his eyes on his companions-then
Half whistle half a tune, and pause again-
And then his former movements would redouble,
With something between carelessness and trouble.
This is a long description, but applies
To scarce five minutes passed before the eyes;
But yet what minutes! Moments like to these
Rend men's lives into immortalities.

V.

At length Jack Skyscrape, a mercurial man,
Who fluttered over all things like a fan,
More brave than firm, and more disposed to dare
And die at once than wrestle with despair,
Exclaimed, 'G-d damn I'-those syllables intense,-
Nucleus of England's native eloquence,
As the Turk's 'Allah!' or the Roman's more
Pagan 'Proh Jupiter!' was wont of yore
To give their first impressions such a vent,
By way of echo to embarrassment.
Jack was embarrassed,-never hero more,
Till on the surf their skimming paddles play,
Buoyant as wings, and flitting through the spray;-
Now perching on the wave's high curl, and now
Dashed downward in the thundering foam below,
Which flings it broad and boiling sheet on sheet,
And slings its high flakes, shivered into sleet:
But floating still through surf and swell, drew nigh
The barks, like small birds through a lowering sky.
Their art seemed nature-such the skill to sweep
The wave of these born playmates of the deep.

VIII.

And who the first that, springing on the strand,
Leaped like a Nereid from her shell to land,
With dark but brilliant skin, and dewy eye
Shining with love, and, hope, and constancy?

Neuha-the fond, the faithful, the adored-
Her heart on Torquil's like a torrent poured;
And smiled, and wept, and near, and nearer clasped,
As if to be assured 'twas him she grasped;
Shuddered to see his yet warm wound, and then,
To find it trivial, smiled and wept again.
She was a warrior's daughter, and could bear
Such sights, and feel, and mourn, but not despair.
Her lover lived,-nor foes nor fears could blight
That full-blown moment in its all delight:
Joy trickled in her tears, joy filled the sob
That rocked her heart till almost HEARD to throb;
And Paradise was breathing in the sigh
Of Nature's child in Nature's ecstasy.

IX.

The sterner spirits who beheld that meeting
Were not unmoved; who are, when hearts are greeting?
Even Christian gazed upon the maid and boy
With tearless eye, but yet a gloomy joy
Mixed with those bitter thoughts the soul arrays
In hopeless visions of our better days,
When all 's gone-to the rainbow's latest ray.
'And but for me!' he said, and turned away;
Then gazed upon the pair, as in his den
A lion looks upon his cubs again;
And then relapsed into his sullen guise,
As heedless of his further destinies.

X.

But brief their time for good or evil thought;
The billows round the promontory brought
Theplash of hostile oars.-Alas! who made
That sound a dread? All around them seemed arrayed
Against them, save the bride of Toobonai
She, as she caught the first glimpse o'er the bay
Of the armed boats, which hurried to complete
The remnant's ruin with their flying feet,
Beckoned the natives round her to their prows,
Embarked their guests and launched their light canoes;
In one placed Christian and his comrades twain-
But she and Torquil must not part again.
She fixed him in her own.-Away! away!
They cleared the breakers, dart along the bay,
And towards a group of islets, such as bear
The sea-bird's nest and seal's surf-hollowed lair,
They skim the blue tops of the billows; fast
They flew, and fast their fierce pursuers chased.
They gain upon them-now they lose again,-
Again make way and menace o'er the main;
And now the two canoes in chase divide,
Arid follow different courses o'er the tide,

To baffle the pursuit.-Away! away!
As Life is on each paddle's flight to-day,
And more than Life or lives to Neuha: Love
Freights the frail bark and urges to the cove;
And now the refuge and the foe are nigh-
Yet, yet a moment! Fly, thou light ark, fly!

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Island: Canto IV.

I.

White as a white sail on a dusky sea,
When half the horizon's clouded and half free,
Fluttering between the dun wave and the sky,
Is Hope's last gleam in Man's extremity.
Her anchor parts; but still her snowy sail
Attracts our eye amidst the rudest gale:
Though every wave she climbs divides us more,
The heart still follows from the loneliest shore.

II.

Not distant from the isle of Toobonai,
A black rock rears its bosom o'er the spray,
The haunt of birds, a desert to mankind,
Where the rough seal reposes from the wind,
And sleeps unwieldy in his cavern dun,
Or gambols with huge frolic in the sun:
There shrilly to the passing oar is heard
The startled echo of the Ocean bird,
Who rears on its bare breast her callow brood,
The feathered fishers of the solitude.
A narrow segment of the yellow sand
On one side forms the outline of a strand;
Here the young turtle, crawling from his shell,
Steals to the deep wherein his parents dwell;
Chipped by the beam, a nursling of the day,
But hatched for ocean by the fostering ray;
The rest was one bleak precipice, as e'er
Gave mariners a shelter and despair;
A spot to make the saved regret the deck
Which late went down, and envy the lost wreck.
Such was the stern asylum Neuha chose
To shield her lover from his following foes;
But all its secret was not told; she knew
In this a treasure hidden from the view.

III.

Ere the canoes divided, near the spot,
The men that manned what held her Torquil's lot,
By her command removed, to strengthen more
The skiff which wafted Christian from the shore.
This he would have opposed; but with a smile
She pointed calmly to the craggy isle,
And bade him 'speed and prosper.' She would take
The rest upon herself for Torquil's sake.
They parted with this added aid; afar,
The Proa darted like a shooting star,
And gained on the pursuers, who now steered
Right on the rock which she and Torquil neared.
They pulled; her arm, though delicate, was free
And firm as ever grappled with the sea,
And yielded scarce to Torquil's manlier strength.

The prow now almost lay within its length
Of the crag's steep inexorable face,
With nought but soundless waters for its base;
Within a hundred boats' length was the foe,
And now what refuge but their frail canoe?
This Torquil asked with half upbraiding eye,
Which said-'Has Neuha brought me here to die?
Is this a place of safety, or a grave,
And yon huge rock the tombstone of the wave?'

IV.

They rested on their paddles, and uprose
Neuha, and pointing to the approaching foes,
Cried, 'Torquil, follow me, and fearless follow!'
Then plunged at once into the Ocean's hollow.
There was no time to pause-the foes were near-
Chains in his eye, and menace in his ear;
With vigour they pulled on, and as they came,
Hailed him to yield, and by his forfeit name.
Headlong he leapt-to him the swimmer's skill
Was native, and now all his hope from ill:
But how, or where? He dived, and rose no more;
The boat's crew looked amazed o'er sea and shore.
There was no landing on that precipice,
Steep, harsh, and slippery as a berg of ice.
They watched awhile to see him float again,
But not a trace rebubbled from the main:
The wave rolled on, no ripple on its face,
Since their first plunge recalled a single trace;
The little whirl which eddied, and slight foam,
That whitened o'er what seemed their latest home,
White as a sepulchre above the pair
Who left no marble (mournful as an heir)
The quiet Proa wavering o'er the tide
Was all that told of Torquil and his bride;
And but for this alone the whole might seem
The vanished phantom of a seaman's dream.
They paused and searched in vain, then pulled away;
Even Superstition now forbade their stay.
Some said he had not plunged into the wave,
But vanished like a corpse-light from a grave;
Others, that something supernatural
Glared in his figure, more than mortal tall;
While all agreed that in his cheek and eye
There was a dead hue of Eternity.
Still as their oars receded from the crag,
Round every weed a moment would they lag,
Expectant of some token of their prey;
But no-he had melted from them like the spray.

V.

And where was he the Pilgrim of the Deep,

Following the Nereid? Had they ceased to weep
For ever? or, received in coral caves,
Wrung life and pity from the softening waves?
Did they with Ocean's hidden sovereigns dwell,
And sound with Mermen the fantastic shell?
Did Neuha with the mermaids comb her hair
Flowing o'er ocean as it streamed in air?
Or had they perished, and in silence slept
Beneath the gulf wherein they boldly leapt?

VI.

Young Neuha plunged into the deep, and he
Followed: her track beneath her native sea
Was as a native's of the element,
So smoothly-bravely-brilliantly she went,
Leaving a streak of light behind her heel,
Which struck and flashed like an amphibious steel.
Closely, and scarcely less expert to trace
The depths where divers hold the pearl in chase,
Torquil, the nursling of the northern seas,
Pursued her liquid steps with heart and ease.
Deep-deeper for an instant Neuha led
The way-then upward soared-and as she spread
Her arms, and flung the foam from off her locks,
Laughed, and the sound was answered by the rocks.
They had gained a central realm of earth again,
But looked for tree, and field, and sky, in vain.
Around she pointed to a spacious cave,
Whose only portal was the keyless wave,
(A hollow archway by the sun unseen,
Save through the billows' glassy veil of green,
In some transparent ocean holiday,
When all the finny people are at play,)
Wiped with her hair the brine from Torquil's eyes,
And clapped her hands with joy at his surprise;
Led him to where the rock appeared to jut,
And form a something like a Triton's hut;
For all was darkness for a space, till day,
Through clefts above let in a sobered ray;
As in some old cathedral's glimmering aisle
The dusty monuments from light recoil,
Thus sadly in their refuge submarine
The vault drew half her shadow from the scene.

VII.

Forth from her bosom the young savage drew
A pine torch, strongly girded with gnatoo;
A plantain-leaf o'er all, the more to keep
Its latent sparkle from the sapping deep.
This mantle kept it dry; then from a nook
Of the same plantain-leaf a flint she took,
A few shrunk withered twigs, and from the blade

Of Torquil's knife struck fire, and thus arrayed
The grot with torchlight. Wide it was and high,
And showed a self-born Gothic canopy;
The arch upreared by Nature's architect,
The architrave some Earthquake might erect;
The buttress from some mountain's bosom hurled,
When the Poles crashed, and water was the world;
Or hardened from some earth-absorbing fire,
While yet the globe reeked from its funeral pyre;
The fretted pinnacle, the aisle, the nave,
Were there, all scooped by Darkness from her cave.
There, with a little tinge of phantasy,
Fantastic faces moped and mowed on high,
And then a mitre or a shrine would fix
The eye upon its seeming crucifix,
Thus Nature played with the stalactites
And built herself a Chapel of the Seas.

VIII.

And Neuha took her Torquil by the hand,
And waved along the vault her kindled brand,
And led him into each recess, and showed
The secret places of their new abode,
Nor these alone, for all had been prepared
Before, to soothe the lover's lot she shared:
The mat for rest; for dress the fresh gnatoo,
And sandal oil to fence against the dew;
For food the cocoa-nut, the yarn, the bread
Born of the fruit; for board the plantain spread
With its broad leaf, or turtle-shell which bore
A banquet in the flesh it covered o'er;
The gourd with water recent from the rill,
The ripe banana from the mellow hill;
A pine-torch pile to keep undying light,
And she herself, as beautiful as night,
To fling her shadowy spirit o'er the scene,
And make their subterranean world serene.
She had foreseen, since first the stranger's sail
Drew to their isle, that force or flight might fail,
And formed a refuge of the rocky den
For Torquil's safety from his countrymen.
Each dawn had wafted there her light canoe,
Laden with all the golden fruits that grew;
Each eve had seen her gliding through the hour
With all could cheer or deck their sparry bower;
And now she spread her little store with smiles,
The happiest daughter of the loving isles.

IX.

She, as he gazed with grateful wonder, pressed
Her sheltered love to her impassioned breast;
And suited to her soft caresses, told

An olden tale of Love,-for Love is old,
Old as eternity, but not outworn
With each new being born or to be born:
How a young Chief, a thousand moons ago,
Diving for turtle in the depths below,
Had risen, in tracking fast his ocean prey,
Into the cave which round and o'er them lay;
How, in some desperate feud of after-time,
He sheltered there a daughter of the clime,
A foe beloved, and offspring of a foe,
Saved by his tribe but for a captive's woe;
How, when the storm of war was stilled, he led
His island clan to where the waters spread
Their deep-green shadow o'er the rocky door,
Then dived-it seemed as if to rise no more:
His wondering mates, amazed within their bark,
Or deemed him mad, or prey to the blue shark;
Rowed round in sorrow the sea-girded rock,
Then paused upon their paddles from the shock;
When, fresh and springing from the deep, they saw
A Goddess rise-so deemed they in their awe;
And their companion, glorious by her side,
Proud and exulting in his Mermaid bride;
And how, when undeceived, the pair they bore
With sounding conchs and joyous shouts to shore;
How they had gladly lived and calmly died,-
And why not also Torquil and his bride?
Not mine to tell the rapturous caress
Which followed wildly in that wild recess
This tale; enough that all within that cave
Was love, though buried strong as in the grave,
Where Abelard, through twenty years of death,
When Eloisa's form was lowered beneath
Their nuptial vault, his arms outstretched, and pressed
The kindling ashes to his kindled breast.
The waves without sang round their couch, their roar
As much unheeded as if life were o'er;
Within, their hearts made all their harmony,
Love's broken murmur and more broken sigh.

X.

And they, the cause and sharers of the shock
Which left them exiles of the hollow rock,
Where were they? O'er the sea for life they plied,
To seek from Heaven the shelter men denied.
Another course had been their choice-but where?
The wave which bore them still their foes would bear,
Who, disappointed of their former chase,
In search of Christian now renewed their race.
Eager with anger, their strong arms made way,
Like vultures baffled of thir previous prey.
They gained upon them, all whose safety lay

In some bleak crag or deeply-hidden bay:
No further chance or choice remained; and right
For the first further rock which met their sight
They steered, to take their latest view of land,
And yield as victims, or die sword in hand;
Dismissed the natives and their shallop, who
Would still have battled for that scanty crew;
But Christian bade them seek their shore again,
Nor add a sacrifice which were in vain;
For what were simple bow and savage spear
Against the arms which must be wielded here?

XI.

They landed on a wild but narrow scene,
Where few but Nature's footsteps yet had been;
Prepared their arms, and with that gloomy eye,
Stern and sustained, of man's extremity,
When Hope is gone, nor Glory's self remains
To cheer resistance against death or chains,-
They stood, the three, as the three hundred stood
Who dyed Thermopylae with holy blood.
But, ah! how different! 'tis the cause makes all,
Degrades or hallows courage in its fall.
O'er them no fame, eternal and intense,
Blazed through the clouds of Death and beckoned hence;
No grateful country, smiling through her tears,
Begin the praises of a thousand years;
No nation's eyes would on their tomb be bent,
No heroes envy them their monument;
However boldly their warm blood was spilt,
Their Life was shame, their Epitaph was guilt.
And this they knew and felt, at least the one,
The leader of the band he had undone;
Who, born perchance for better things, had set
His life upon a cast which lingered yet:
But now the die was to be thrown, and all
The chances were in favour of his fall:
And such a fall! But still he faced the shock,
Obdurate as a portion of the rock
Whereon he stood, and fixed his levelled gun,
Dark as a sullen cloud before the sun.

XII.

The boat drew nigh, well armed, and firm the crew
To act whatever Duty bade them do
Careless of danger, as the onward wind
Is of the leaves it strews, nor looks behind.
And, yet, perhaps, they rather wished to go
Against a nation's than a native foe,
And felt that this poor victim of self-will,
Briton no more, had once been Britain's still.
They hailed him to surrender-no reply;

Their arms were poised, and glittered in the sky.
They hailed again-no answer; yet once more
They offered quarter louder than before.
The echoes only, from the rock's rebound,
Took their last farewell of the dying sound.
Then flashed the flint, and blazed the volleying flame,
And the smoke rose between them and their aim,
While the rock rattled with the bullets' knell,
Which pealed in vain, and flattened as they fell;
Then flew the only answer to be given
By those who had lost all hope in earth or heaven.
After the first fierce peal as they pulled nigher,
They heard the voice of Christian shout, 'Now, fire!'
And ere the word upon the echo died,
Two fell; the rest assailed the rock's rough side,
And, furious at the madness of their foes,
Disdained all further efforts, save to close.
But steep the crag, and all without a path,
Each step opposed a bastion to their wrath,
While, placed 'midst clefts the least accessible,
Which Christian's eye was trained to mark full well,
The three maintained a strife which must not yield,
In spots where eagles might have chosen to build.
Their every shot told; while the assailant fell,
Dashed on the shingles like the limpet shell;
But still enough survived, and mounted still,
Scattering their numbers here and there, until
Surrounded and commanded, though not nigh
Enough for seizure, near enough to die,
The desperate trio held aloof their fate
But by a thread, like sharks who have gorged the bait;
Yet to the very last they battled well,
And not a groan informed their foes who fell.
Christian died last-twice wounded; and once more
Mercy was offered when they saw his gore;
Too late for life, but not too late to die,
With, though a hostile band, to close his eye.
A limb was broken, and he drooped along
The crag, as doth a falcon reft of young.
The sound revived him, or appeared to wake
Some passion which a weakly gesture spake:
He beckoned to the foremost, who drew nigh,
But, as they neared, he reared his weapon high-
His last ball had been aimed, but from his breast
He tore the topmost button from his vest,
Down the tube dashed it-levelled-fired, and smiled
As his foe fell; then, like a serpent, coiled
His wounded, weary form, to where the steep
Looked desperate as himself along the deep;
Cast one glance back, and clenched his hand, and shook
His last rage 'gainst the earth which he forsook;
Then plunged: the rock below received like glass

His body crushed into one gory mass,
With scarce a shred to tell of human form,
Or fragment for the sea-bird or the worm;
A fair-haired scalp, besmeared with blood and weeds,
Yet reeked, the remnant of himself and deeds;
Some splinters of his weapons (to the last,
As long as hand could hold, he held them fast)
Yet glittered, but at distance-hurled away
To rust beneath the dew and dashing spray.
The rest was nothing-save a life mis-spent,
And soul-but who shall answer where it went?
'Tis ours to bear, not judge the dead; and they
Who doom to Hell, themselves are on the way,
Unless these bullies of eternal pains
Are pardoned their bad hearts for their worse brains.

XIII.

The deed was over! All were gone or ta'en,
The fugitive, the captive, or the slain.
Chained on the deck, where once, a gallant crew,
They stood with honour, were the wretched few
Survivors of the skirmish on the isle;
But the last rock left no surviving spoil.
Cold lay they where they fell, and weltering,
While o'er them flapped the sea-birds' dewy wing,
Now wheeling nearer from the neighbouring surge,
And screaming high their harsh and hungry dirge:
But calm and careless heaved the wave below,
Eternal with unsympathetic flow;
Far o'er its face the Dolphins sported on,
And sprung the flying fish against the sun,
Till its dried wing relapsed from its brief height,
To gather moisture for another flight.

XIV.

'Twas morn; and Neuha, who by dawn of day
Swam smoothly forth to catch the rising ray,
And watch if aught approached the amphibious lair
Where lay her lover, saw a sail in air:
It flapped, it filled, and to the growing gale
Bent its broad arch: her breath began to fail
With fluttering fear, her heart beat thick and high,
While yet a doubt sprung where its course might lie.
But no! it came not; fast and far away
The shadow lessened as it cleared the bay.
She gazed, and flung the sea-foam from her eyes,
To watch as for a rainbow in the skies.
On the horizon verged the distant deck,
Diminished, dwindled to a very speck-
Then vanished. All was Ocean, all was Joy!
Down plunged she through the cave to rouse her boy;
Told all she had seen, and all she hoped, and all

That happy love could augur or recall;
Sprung forth again, with Torquil following free
His bounding Nereid over the broad sea;
Swam round the rock, to where a shallow cleft
Hid the canoe that Neuha there had left
Drifting along the tide, without an oar,
That eve the strangers chased them from the shore;
But when these vanished, she pursued her prow,
Regained, and urged to where they found it now:
Nor ever did more love and joy embark,
Than now were wafted in that slender ark.

XV.

Again their own shore rises on the view,
No more polluted with a hostile hue;
No sullen ship lay bristling o'er the foam,
A floating dungeon:-all was Hope and Home!
A thousand Proas darted o'er the bay,
With sounding shells, and heralded their way;
The chiefs came down, around the people poured,
And welcomed Torquil as a son restored;
The women thronged, embracing and embraced
By Neuha, asking where they had been chased,
And how escaped? The tale was told; and then
One acclamation rent the sky again;
And from that hour a new tradition gave
Their sanctuary the name of 'Neuha's Cave.'
A hundred fires, far flickering from the height,
Blazed o'er the general revel of the night,
The feast in honour of the guest, returned
To Peace and Pleasure, perilously earned;
A night succeeded by such happy days
As only the yet infant world displays.

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Isles of Greece

The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,
Where Delos rose, and Phoebus
sprung!
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set...

The mountains look on Marathon--
And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dreamed that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persians' grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

A king sat on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations--all were his!
He counted them at break of day--
And when the sun set, where were they?

And where are they? And where art thou?
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now--
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
Though linked among a fettered race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush--for Greece a tear....

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade--
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning teardrop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
There, swanlike, let me sing and die:
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine--
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Lament Of Tasso

I.

Long years!--It tries the thrilling frame to bear
And eagle-spirit of a child of Song--
Long years of outrage, calumny, and wrong;
Imputed madness, prison'd solitude,
And the mind's canker in its savage mood,
When the impatient thirst of light and air
Parches the heart; and the abhorred grate,
Marring the sunbeams with its hideous shade,
Works through the throbbing eyeball to the brain,
With a hot sense of heaviness and pain;
And bare, at once, Captivity display'd
Stands scoffing through the never-open'd gate,
Which nothing through its bars admits, save day,
And tasteless food, which I have eat alone
Till its unsocial bitterness is gone;
And I can banquet like a beast of prey,
Sullen and lonely, crouching in the cave
Which is my lair, and--it may be--my grave.
All this hath somewhat worn me, and may wear,
But must be borne. I stoop not to despair;
For I have battled with mine agony,
And made me wings wherewith to overfly
The narrow circus of my dungeon wall,
And freed the Holy Sepulchre from thrall,
And revell'd among men and things divine,
And pour'd my spirit over Palestine,
In honour of the sacred war for Him,
The God who was on earth and is in heaven,
For He has strengthen'd me in heart and limb.
That through this sufferance I might be forgiven,
I have employ'd my penance to record
How Salem's shrine was won and how adored.

II.

But this is o'er--my pleasant task is done:--
My long-sustaining friend of many years!
If I do blot thy final page with tears,
Know, that my sorrows have wrung from me none.
But thou, my young creation! my soul's child!
Which ever playing round me came and smiled,
And woo'd me from myself with thy sweet sight,
Thou too art gone--and so is my delight:
And therefore do I weep and inly bleed
With this last bruise upon a broken reed.
Thou too art ended--what is left me now?
For I have anguish yet to bear--and how?
I know not that--but in the innate force
Of my own spirit shall be found resource.
I have not sunk, for I had no remorse,
Nor cause for such: they call'd me mad — and why?
O Leonora! wilt not thou reply?

I was indeed delirious in my heart
To lift my love so loft as thou art;
But still my frenzy was not of the mind;
I knew my fault, and feel my punishment
Not less because I suffer it unbent.
That thou wert beautiful, and I not blind,
Hath been the sin which shuts me from mankind;
But let them go, or torture as they will,
My heart can multiply thine image still;
Successful love may sate itself away,
The wretched are the faithful; 'tis their fate
To have all feeling save the one decay,
And every passion into one dilate,
As rapid rivers into ocean pour;
But ours is fathomless, and hath no shore.

III.

Above me, hark! the long and maniac cry
Of minds and bodies in captivity,
And hark! the lash and the increasing howl,
And the half-inarticulate blasphemy!
There be some here with worse than frenzy foul,
Some who do still goad on the o'erlabour'd mind,
And dim the little light that's left behind
With needless torture, as their tyrant will
Is wound up to the lust of doing ill:
With these and with their victims am I class'd,
'Mid sounds and sights like these long years have passed;
'Mid sounds and sights like these my life may close:
So let it be--for then I shall repose.

IV.

I have been patient, let me be so yet;
I had forgotten half I would forget,
But it revives--oh! I would it were my lot
To be forgetful as I am forgot!--
Feel I not wroth with those who bade me dwell
In this vast lazarus-house of many woes?
Where laughter is not mirth, nor thought the mind,
Nor words a language, nor even men mankind;
Where cries reply to curses, shrieks to blows,
And each is tortured in his separate hell--
For we are crowded in our solitudes--
Many, but each divided by the wall,
Which echoes Madness in her babbling moods;--
While all can hear, none heed his neighbour's call--
None! save that One, the veriest wretch of all,
Who was not made to be the mate of these,
Nor bound between Distraction and Disease.
Feel I not wroth with those who placed me here?
Who have debased me in the minds of men,
Debarring me the usage of my own,

Blighting my life in best of its career,
Branding my thoughts as things to shun and fear?
Would I not pay them back these pangs again,
And teach them inward Sorrow's stifled groan?
The struggle to be calm, and cold distress,
Which undermines our Stoical success?
No!--still too proud to be vindictive--I
Have pardon'd princes' insults, and would die.
Yes, Sister of my Sovereign! for thy sake
I weep all bitterness from out my breast,
It hath no business where thou art a guest;
Thy brother hates--but I can not detest;
Though pitiest not--but I can not forsake.

V.

Look on a love which knows not to despair,
But all unquench'd is still my better part,
Dwelling deep in my shut and silent heart,
As dwells the gather'd lightning in its cloud,
Encompass'd with its dark and rolling shroud,
Till struck--forth flies the all-ethereal dart!
And thus at the collision of thy name
The vivid thought still flashes through my frame,
And for a moment all things as they were
Flit by me;--they are gone--I am the same.
And yet my love without ambition grew;
I knew thy state, my station, and I knew
A Princess was no love-mate for a bard;
I told it not, I breathed it not, it was
Sufficient to itself, its own reward;
And if my eyes reveal'd it, they, alas!
Were punish'd by the silentness of thine,
And yet I did not venture to repine.
Thou wert to me a crystal-girded shrine
Worshipp'd at holy distance, and around
Hallow'd and meekly kiss'd the saintly ground;
Nor for thou wert a princess, but that Love
Had robed thee with a glory, and array'd
Thy lineaments in a beauty that dismay'd--
Oh! not dismay'd--but awed, like One above!
And in that sweet severity there was
A something which all softness did surpass--
I know not how--thy genius master'd mine--
My star stood still before thee:--if it were
Presumptuous thus to love without design,
That sad fatality hath cost me dear;
But thou art dearest still, and I should be
Fit for this cell, which wrongs me--but for thee.
The very love which lock'd me to my chain
Hath lighten'd half its weight; and for the rest,
Though heavy, lent me vigour to sustain,
And look to thee with undivided breast,

And foil the ingenuity of Pain.

VI.

It is no marvel--from my very birth
My soul was drunk with love--which did pervade
And mingle with whate'er I saw on earth;
Of objects all inanimate I made
Idols, and out of wild and lonely flowers,
And rocks, whereby they grew, a paradise,
Where I did lay me down within the shade
Of waving trees, and dream'd uncounted hours,
Though I was chid for wandering; and the Wise
Shook their white aged heads o'er me, and said
Of such materials wretched men were made,
And such a truant boy would end in woe.
And that the only lesson was a blow;
And then they smote me, and I did not weep,
But cursed them in my heart, and to my haunt
Return'd and wept alone, and dream'd again
The visions which arise without a sleep.
And with my years my soul began to pant
With feelings of strange tumult and soft pain;
And the whole heart exhaled into One Want,
But undefined and wandering, till the day
I found the thing I sought--and that was thee;
And then I lost my being all to be
Absorb'd in thine--the world was pass'd away--
Thou didst annihilate the earth to me!

VII.

I loved all Solitude--but little thought
To spend I know not what of life, remote
From all communion with existence, save
The maniac and his tyrant;--had I been
Their fellow, many years ere this had seen
My mind like theirs corrupted to its grave,
But who hath seen me writhe, or heard me rave?
Perchance in such a cell we suffer more
Than the wreck'd sailor on his desert shore:
The world is all before him--mine is here,
Scarce twice the space they must accord my bier.
What though he perish, he may lift his eye
And with a dying glance upbraid the sky--
I will not raise my own in such reproof,
Although 'tis clouded by my dungeon roof.

VIII.

Yet do I feel at times my mind decline,
But with a sense of its decay:--I see
Unwonted lights along my prison shine,
And a strange demon, who is vexing me
With pilfering pranks and petty pains, below

The feeling of the healthful and the free;
But much to One, who long hath suffer'd so,
Sickness of heart, and narrowness of place,
And all that must be borne, or can debase.
I thought my enemies had been but Man,
But spirits may be leagued with them--all Earth
Abandons--Heaven forgets me--in the dearth
Of such defence the Powers of Evil can,
It may be, tempt me further--and prevail
Against the outworn creature they assail.
Why in this furnace is my spirit proved
Like steel in tempering fire?--because I loved?
Because I loved what not to love, and see,
Was more or less than mortal, and than me.

IX.

I once was quick in feeling--that is o'er;--
My scars are callous, or I should have dash'd
My brain against these bars, as the sun flash'd
In mockery through them;--If I bear and bore
The much I have recounted, and the more
Which hath no words,--'tis that I would not die
And sanction with self-slaughter the dull lie
Which snared me here, and with the brand of shame
Stamp Madness deep into memory,
And woo Compassion to a blighted name,
Sealing the sentence which my foes proclaim.
No — it shall be immortal!--and I make
A future temple of my present cell,
Which nations yet shall visit for my sake.
While thou, Ferrara! when no longer dwell
The ducal chiefs within thee, shalt fall down,
And crumbling piecemeal view thy hearthless halls.
A poet's wreath shall be thine only crown--
A poet's dungeon thy most far renown,
While strangers wander o'er thy unpeopled walls!
And thou, Leonora!--thou--who wert ashamed
That such as I could love--who blush'd to hear
To less than monarchs that thou couldst be dear,
Go! tell thy brother, that my heart, untamed
By grief, years, weariness--and it may be
A taint of that he would impute to me,
From long infection of a den like this,
Where the mind rots congenial with the abyss--
Adores thee still;--and add--that when the towers
And battlements which guard his joyous hours
Of banquet, dance, and revel are forgot,
Or left intended in a dull repose,
This--this--shall be a consecrated spot!
But thou--when all that Birth and Beauty throws
Of magic round thee is extinct--shalt have
One half the laurel which o'ershades my grave.

No power in death can tear our names apart,
As none in life could rend thee from my heart.
Yes, Leonora! it shall be our fate
To be entwined for ever--but too late!

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Prayer Of Nature

Father of Light! great God of Heaven!
Hear'st thou the accents of despair?
Can guilt like man's be e'er forgiven?
Can vice atone for crimes by prayer?

Father of Light, on thee I call!
Thou seest my soul is dark within;
Thou who canst mark the sparrow's fall,
Avert from me the death of sin.

No shrine I seek, to sects unknown;
Oh, point to me the path of truth!
Thy dread omnipotence I own;
Spare, yet amend, the faults of youth.

Let bigots rear a gloomy fane,
Let superstition hail the pile,
Let priests, to spread their sable reign,
With tales of mystic rites beguile.

Shall man confine his Maker's sway
To Gothic domes of mouldering stone?
Thy temple is the face of the day;
Earth, ocean, heaven, thy boundless throne.

Shall man condemn his race to hell,
Unless they bend in pompous form?
Tell us that all, of one who fell,
Must perish in the mingling storm?

Shall each pretend to reach the skies,
Yet doom his brother to expire,
Whose soul a different hope supplies,
Or doctrines less severe inspire?

Shall these, by creeds they can't expound,
Prepare a fancied bliss or woe?
Shall reptiles, grovelling on the ground,
Their great Creator's purpose know?

Shall those, who live for self alone,
Whose years float on in a daily crime -
Shall they by Faith for guilt atone,
And live beyond the bounds of Time?

Father! no prophet's laws I seek,-
Thy laws in Nature's works appear;-
I own myself corrupt and weak,
Yet will I pray, for thou wilt hear!

Thou, who canst guide the wandering star
Through trackless realms of other's space;

Who calm'st the elemental war,
Whose hand from pole to pole I trace.

Thou, who in wisdom placed me here,
Who, when thou wilt, canst take me hence,
Ah! whilst I tread this earthly sphere,
Extend to me thy wide defence.

To Thee, my God, to thee I call!
Whatever weal or woe betide,
By thy command I rise or fall,
In thy protection I confide.

If, when this dust to dust's restored,
My soul shall float on airy wing,
How shall thy glorious name adored
Inspire her feeble voice to sing!

But, if this fleeting spirit share
With clay the gaves eternal bed,
While life yet throbs I raise my prayer,
Though doom'd no more to quit the dead.

To Thee I breathe my humble strain;
Grateful for all thy mercies past,
And hope, my God, to thee again
This erring life may fly at last.

December 29, 1806

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Prisoner of Chillon

My hair is grey, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears:
My limbs are bow'd, though not with toil,
But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are bann'd, and barr'd--forbidden fare;
But this was for my father's faith
I suffer'd chains and courted death;
That father perish'd at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling place;
We were seven--who now are one,
Six in youth, and one in age,
Finish'd as they had begun,
Proud of Persecution's rage;
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have seal'd,
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;--
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould,
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and grey,
Dim with a dull imprison'd ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp:
And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away,
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years--I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score
When my last brother droop'd and died,
And I lay living by his side.

They chain'd us each to a column stone,
And we were three--yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace,

We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight:
And thus together--yet apart,
Fetter'd in hand, but join'd in heart,
'Twas still some solace in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope, or legend old,
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
A grating sound, not full and free,
As they of yore were wont to be:
It might be fancy--but to me
They never sounded like our own.

I was the eldest of the three
And to uphold and cheer the rest
I ought to do--and did my best--
And each did well in his degree.
The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him, with eyes as blue as heaven--
For him my soul was sorely moved:
And truly might it be distress'd
To see such bird in such a nest;
For he was beautiful as day--
(When day was beautiful to me
As to young eagles, being free)--
A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun:
And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for nought but others' ills,
And then they flow'd like mountain rills,
Unless he could assuage the woe
Which he abhor'd to view below.

The other was as pure of mind,
But form'd to combat with his kind;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perish'd in the foremost rank
With joy:--but not in chains to pine:
His spirit wither'd with their clank,
I saw it silently decline--
And so perchance in sooth did mine:

But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had followed there the deer and wolf;
To him this dungeon was a gulf,
And fetter'd feet the worst of ills.

Lake Leman lies by Chillon's walls:
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
Which round about the wave intrails:
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made--and like a living grave
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay:
We heard it ripple night and day;
Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd;
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were high
And wanton in the happy sky;
And then the very rock hath rock'd,
And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food;
It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunter's fare,
And for the like had little care:
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captives' tears
Have moisten'd many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den;
But what were these to us or him?
These wasted not his heart or limb;
My brother's soul was of that mould
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side;
But why delay the truth?--he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand--nor dead,--
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died--and they unlock'd his chain,
And scoop'd for him a shallow grave

Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begg'd them, as a boon, to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine--it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,
That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer--
They coldly laugh'd--and laid him there:
The flat and turfless earth above
The being we so much did love;
His empty chain above it leant,
Such Murder's fitting monument!

But he, the favourite and the flower,
Most cherish'd since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face
The infant love of all his race
His martyr'd father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be
Less wretched now, and one day free;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired--
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was wither'd on the stalk away.
Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood:
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I've seen it on the breaking ocean
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread:
But these were horrors--this was woe
Unmix'd with such--but sure and slow:
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender--kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray;
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright;
And not a word of murmur--not
A groan o'er his untimely lot,--
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence--lost
In this last loss, of all the most;

And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting Nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less:
I listen'd, but I could not hear;
I call'd, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonishèd;
I call'd, and thought I heard a sound--
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rushed to him:--I found him not,
I only stirred in this black spot,
I only lived, I only drew
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
The last, the sole, the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race
Was broken in this fatal place.
One on the earth, and one beneath--
My brothers--both had ceased to breathe:
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive--
A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.

I know not why
I could not die,
I had no earthly hope--but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death.

What next befell me then and there
I know not well--I never knew--
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too:
I had no thought, no feeling--none--
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and grey;
It was not night--it was not day;
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness--without a place;
There were no stars, no earth, no time,
No check, no change, no good, no crime
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!
A light broke in upon my brain,--
It was the carol of a bird;

It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track;
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,
 And tamer than upon the tree;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
 And seemed to say them all for me!
I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
It seem'd like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
 Or broke its cage to perch on mine,
But knowing well captivity,
 Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
Or if it were, in wingèd guise,
A visitant from Paradise;
For--Heaven forgive that thought! the while
Which made me both to weep and smile--
I sometimes deem'd that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 'twas mortal well I knew,
For he would never thus have flown--
And left me twice so doubly lone,--
Lone as the corse within its shroud,
Lone as a solitary cloud,
 A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
 When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

A kind of change came in my fate,
My keepers grew compassionate;
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,

But so it was:--my broken chain
With links unfasten'd did remain,
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part;
And round the pillars one by one,
Returning where my walk begun,
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crush'd heart felt blind and sick.
I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all,
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me:
No child, no sire, no kin had I,
No partner in my misery;
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barr'd windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high,
The quiet of a loving eye.

I saw them--and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high--their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channell'd rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-wall'd distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down;
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,
The only one in view;
A small green isle, it seem'd no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing,
Of gentle breath and hue.
The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seem'd joyous each and all;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast

As then to me he seem'd to fly;
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled--and would fain
I had not left my recent chain;
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save,--
And yet my glance, too much opprest,
Had almost need of such a rest.

It might be months, or years, or days--
I kept no count, I took no note--
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
 And clear them of their dreary mote;
At last men came to set me free;
 I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where;
It was at length the same to me,
Fetter'd or fetterless to be,
 I learn'd to love despair.
And thus when they appear'd at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage--and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home:
With spiders I had friendship made
And watch'd them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill--yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learn'd to dwell;
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are:--even I
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Siege and Conquest of Alhama

The Moorish King rides up and down,
Through Granada's royal town;
From Elvira's gate to those
Of Bivarambla on he goes.

Woe is me, Alhama!

Letters to the monarch tell
How Alhama's city fell:
In the fire the scroll he threw,
And the messenger he slew.

Woe is me, Albamal

He quits his mule, and mounts his horse,
And through the street directs his course;
Through the street of Zacatin
To the Alhambra spurring in.

Woe is me, Alhama!

When the Alhambra walls he gain'd,
On the moment he ordain'd
That the trumpet straight should sound
With the silver clarion round.

Woe is me, Alhamal

And when the hollow drums of war
Beat the loud alarm afar,
That the Moors of town and plain
Might answer to the martial strain.

Woe is me, Alhama!

Then the Moors, by this aware,
That bloody Mars recall'd them there,
One by one, and two by two,
To a mighty squadron grew.

Woe is me, Alhama!

Out then spake an aged Moor
In these words the king before,
'Wherefore call on us, oh King?
What may mean this gathering?'

Woe is me, Alhama!

'Friends! ye have, alas! to know
Of a most disastrous blow;
That the Christians, stern and bold,
Have obtain'd Alhama's hold.'

Woe is me, Alhama!

Out then spake old Alfaqui,
With his beard so white to see,
'Good King! thou art justly served,
Good King! this thou hast deserved.

Woe is me, Alhama!

'By thee were slain, in evil hour,
The Abencerrage, Granada's flower;
And strangers were received by thee
Of Cordova the Chivalry.

Woe is me, Alhama!

'And for this, oh King! is sent
On thee a double chastisement:
Thee and thine, thy crown and realm,
One last wreck shall overwhelm.

Woe is me, Alhama!

'He who holds no laws in awe,
He must perish by the law;
And Granada must be won,
And thyself with her undone.'

Woe is me, Alhama!

Fire crashed from out the old Moor's eyes,
The Monarch's wrath began to rise,
Because he answer'd, and because
He spake exceeding well of laws.

Woe is me, Alhama!

'There is no law to say such things
As may disgust the ear of kings:
'Thus, snorting with his choler, said
The Moorish King, and doom'd him dead.

Woe is me, Alhama!

Moor Alfaqui! Moor Alfaqui!
Though thy beard so hoary be,
The King hath sent to have thee seized,
For Alhama's loss displeased.

Woe is me, Alhama!

And to fix thy head upon
High Alhambra's loftiest stone;
That thus for thee should be the law,
And others tremble when they saw.
Woe is me, Alhama!

'Cavalier, and man of worth!
Let these words of mine go forth!
Let the Moorish Monarch know,
That to him I nothing owe.
Woe is me, Alhama!

'But on my soul Alhama weighs,
And on my inmost spirit preys;

And if the King his land hath lost,
Yet others may have lost the most.
Woe is me, Alhama!

'Sires have lost their children, wives
Their lords, and valiant men their lives!
One what best his love might claim
Hath lost, another wealth, or fame.
Woe is me, Alhama!

'I lost a damsel in that hour,
Of all the land the loveliest flower;
Doubloons a hundred I would pay,
And think her ransom cheap that day.'
Woe is me, Alhama!

And as these things the old Moor said,
They sever'd from the trunk his head;
And to the Alhambra's wall with speed
'Twas carried, as the King decreed.
Woe is me, Alhama!

And men and infants therein weep
Their loss, so heavy and so deep;
Granada's ladies, all she rears
Within her walls, burst into tears.
Woe is me, Alhama!

And from the windows o'er the walls
The sable web of mourning falls;
The King weeps as a woman o'er
His loss, for it is much and sore.
Woe is me, Alhama!

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Siege of Corinth

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH.

TO

JOHN HOBHOUSE, ESQ.,

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED BY HIS FRIEND.

January 22, 1816.

ADVERTISEMENT

"The grand army of the Turks, (in 1715), under the Prime Vizier, to open to themselves a way into the heart of the Morea, and to form the siege of Napoli di Romania, the most considerable place in all that country, [1] thought it best in the first place to attack Corinth, upon which they made several storms. The garrison being weakened, and the governor seeing it was impossible to hold out against so mighty a force, thought it fit to beat a parley; but while they were treating about the articles, one of the magazines in the Turkish army, wherein they had six hundred barrels of powder, blew up by accident, whereby six or seven hundred men were killed; which so enraged the infidels, that they would not grant any capitulation, but stormed the place with so much fury, that they took it, and put most of the garrison, with Signior Minotti, the governor, to the sword. The rest, with Antonio Bembo, proveditor extraordinary, were made prisoners of war." — History of the Turks, vol. iii. p. 151.

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH.

I.

Many a vanish'd year and age,
And tempest's breath, and battle's rage,
Have swept o'er Corinth; yet she stands
A fortress form'd to Freedom's hands.
The whirlwind's wrath, the earthquake's shock
Have left untouched her hoary rock,
The keystone of a land, which still,
Though fall'n, looks proudly on that hill,
The landmark to the double tide
That purpling rolls on either side,
As if their waters chafed to meet,
Yet pause and crouch beneath her feet.
But could the blood before her shed
Since first Timoleon's brother bled,
Or baffled Persia's despot fled,
Arise from out the earth which drank
The stream of slaughter as it sank,
That sanguine ocean would o'erflow

Her isthmus idly spread below:
Or could the bones of all the slain,
Who perish'd there, be piled again,
That rival pyramid would rise
More mountain-like, through those clear skies
Than yon tower-capp'd Acropolis,
Which seems the very clouds to kiss.

II.

On dun Cithæron's ridge appears
The gleam of twice ten thousand spears,
And downward to the Isthmian plain,
From shore to shore of either main,
The tent is pitch'd, the crescent shines
Along the Moslem's leaguering lines;
And the dusk Spahi's bands advance
Beneath each bearded pacha's glance;
And far and wide as eye can reach
The turban'd cohorts throng the beach;
And there the Arab's camel kneels,
And there his steed the Tartar wheels;
The Turcoman hath left his herd, [2]
The sabre round his loins to gird;
And there the volleying thunders pour,
Till waves grow smoother to the roar.
The trench is dug, the cannon's breath
Wings the far hissing globe of death;
Fast whirl the fragments from the wall,
Which crumbles with the ponderous ball;
And from that wall the foe replies,
O'er dusty plain and smoky skies,
With fires that answer fast and well
The summons of the Infidel.

III.

But near and nearest to the wall
Of those who wish and work its fall,
With deeper skill in war's black art
Than Othman's sons, and high of heart
As any chief that ever stood
Triumphant in the fields of blood;
From post to post, and deed to deed,
Fast spurring on his reeking steed,
Where sallying ranks the trench assail,
And make the foremost Moslem quail;
Or where the battery, guarded well,
Remains as yet impregnable,
Alighting cheerly to inspire
The soldier slackening in his fire;
The first and freshest of the host

Which Stamboul's Sultan there can boast
To guide the follower o'er the field,
To point the tube, the lance to wield,
Or whirl around the bickering blade; —
Was Alp, the Adrian renegade!

IV.

From Venice — once a race of worth
His gentle sires — he drew his birth;
But late an exile from her shore,
Against his countrymen he bore
The arms they taught to bear; and now
The turban girt his shaven brow.
Through many a change had Corinth pass'd
With Greece to Venice' rule at last;
And here, before her walls, with those
To Greece and Venice equal foes,
He stood a foe, with all the zeal
Which young and fiery converts feel,
Within whose heated bosom throngs
The memory of a thousand wrongs.
To him had Venice ceased to be
Her ancient civic boast — "the Free;"
And in the palace of St Mark
Unnamed accusers in the dark
Within the "Lion's mouth" had placed
A charge against him uneffaced:
He fled in time, and saved his life,
To waste his future years in strife,
That taught his land how great her loss
In him who triumph'd o'er the Cross,
'Gainst which he rear'd the Crescent high,
And battled to avenge or die.

V.

Coumourgi — he whose closing scene [3]
Adorn'd the triumph of Eugene,
When on Carlowitz' bloody plain,
The last and mightiest of the slain,
He sank, regretting not to die,
But cursed the Christian's victory —
Coumourgi — can his glory cease,
That latest conqueror of Greece,
Till Christian hands to Greece restore
The freedom Venice gave of yore?
A hundred years have roll'd away
Since he refix'd the Moslem's sway,
And now he led the Mussulman,
And gave the guidance of the van
To Alp, who well repaid the trust

By cities levell'd with the dust;
And proved, by many a deed of death,
How firm his heart in novel faith.

VI.

The walls grew weak; and fast and hot
Against them pour'd the ceaseless shot,
With unabating fury sent,
From battery to battlement;
And thunder-like the pealing din
Rose from each heated culverin;
And here and there some crackling dome
Was fired before the exploding bomb;
And as the fabric sank beneath
The shattering shell's volcanic breath,
In red and wreathing columns flash'd
The flame as loud the ruin crash'd,
Or into countless meteors driven,
Its earth-stars melted into heaven;
Whose clouds that day grew doubly d[un?]
Impervious to the hidden sun,
With volumed smoke that slowly grew
To one wide sky of sulphurous hue.

VII.

But not for vengeance, long delay'd,
Alone, did Alp, the renegade,
The Moslem warriors sternly teach
His skill to pierce the promised breach:
Within those walls a maid was pent
His hope would win, without consent
Of that inexorable sire,
Whose heart refused him in its ire,
When Alp, beneath his Christian name,
Her virgin hand aspired to claim.
In happier mood, and earlier time,
While unimpeach'd for traitorous crime,
Gayest in gondola or hall,
He glitter'd through the Carnival;
And tuned the softest serenade
That e'er on Adria's waters play'd
At midnight to Italian maid.

VIII.

And many deem'd her heart was won;
For sought by numbers, given to none,
Had young Francesca's hand remain'd
Still by the church's bond unchain'd:
And when the Adriatic bore

Lanciotto to the Paynim shore,
Her wonted smiles were seen to fail,
And pensive wax'd the maid and pale;
More constant at confessional,
More rare at masque and festival;
Or seen at such with downcast eyes,
Which conquer'd hearts they ceased to prize!
With listless look she seems to gaze;
With humbler care her form arrays;
Her voice less lively in the song;
Her step, though light, less fleet among
The pairs, on whom the Morning's glance
Breaks, yet unsated with the dance.

IX.

Sent by the state to guard the land,
(Which, wrested from the Moslem's hand,
While Sobieski tamed his pride
By Buda's wall and Danube's side,
The chiefs of Venice wrung away
From Patra to Eubœa's bay,)
Minotti held in Corinth's towers
The Doge's delegated powers,
While yet the pitying eye of Peace
Smiled o'er her long-forgotten Greece:
And ere that faithless truce was broke
Which freed her from the unchristian yoke,
With him his gentle daughter came;
Nor there, since Menelaus' dame
Forsook her lord and land, to prove
What woes await on lawless love,
Had fairer form adorn'd the shore
Than she, the matchless stranger, bore.

X.

The wall is rent, the ruins yawn,
And, with to-morrow's earliest dawn,
O'er the disjointed mass shall vault
The foremost of the fierce assault.
The bands are rank'd; the chosen van
Of Tartar and of Mussulman,
The full of hope, misnamed "forlorn,"
Who hold the thought of death in scorn,
And win their way with falchion's force,
Or pave the path with many a corse,
O'er which the following brave may rise,
Their stepping-stone — the last who dies!

XI.

'Tis midnight: on the mountains brown
The cold, round moon shines deeply down:
Blue roll the waters, blue the sky
Spreads like an ocean hung on high,
Bespangled with those isles of light,
So wildly, spiritually bright;
Who ever gazed upon them shining,
And turn'd to earth without repining,
Nor wish'd for wings to flee away,
And mix with their eternal ray?
The waves on either shore lay there,
Calm, clear, and azure as the air;
And scarce their foam the pebbles shook,
But murmur'd meekly as the brook.
The winds were pillow'd on the waves;
The banners droop'd along their staves,
And, as they fell around them furling,
Above them shone the crescent curling;
And that deep silence was unbroke,
Save where the watch his signal spoke,
Save where the steed neigh'd oft and shrill,
And echo answer'd from the hill,
And the wide hum of that wild host,
Rustled like leaves from coast to coast,
As rose the Muezzin's voice in air
In midnight call to wonted prayer;
It rose, that chanted mournful strain,
Like some lone spirit's o'er the plain:
'Twas musical, but sadly sweet,
Such as when winds and harp-strings meet,
And take a long-unmeasured tone,
To mortal minstrelsy unknown.
It seem'd to those within the wall
A cry prophetic of their fall:
It struck even the besieger's ear
An undefined and sudden thrill,
Which makes the heart a moment still,
Then beat with quicker pulse, ashamed
Of that strange sense its silence framed:
Such as a sudden passing-bell
Wakes though but for a stranger's knell.

XII.

The tent of Alp was on the shore;
The sound was hush'd, the prayer was o'er;
The watch was set, the night-round made,
All mandates issued and obey'd:
'Tis but another anxious night,
His pains the morrow may requite
With all revenge and love can pay,

In guerdon for their long delay.
Few hours remain, and he hath need
Of rest, to nerve for many a deed
Of slaughter; but within his soul
The thoughts like troubled waters roll.
He stood alone among the host;
Not his the loud fanatic boast
To plant the Crescent o'er the Cross
Or risk a life with little loss,
Secure in Paradise to be
By Houris loved immortally:
Nor his, what burning patriots feel,
The stern exaltedness of zeal,
Profuse of blood, untired in toil,
When battling on the parent soil.
He stood alone — a renegade
Against the country he betray'd.
He stood alone amidst his band,
Without a trusted heart or hand:
They follow'd him, for he was brave,
And great the spoil he got and gave;
They crouch'd to him, for he had skill
To warp and wield the vulgar will:
But still his Christian origin
With them was little less than sin.
They envied even the faithless fame
He earn'd beneath a Moslem name:
Since he, their mightiest chief had been
In youth, a bitter Nazarene.
They did not know how pride can stoop,
When baffled feelings withering droop;
They did not know how hate can burn
In hearts once changed from soft to stern;
Nor all the false and fatal zeal
The convert of revenge can feel.
He ruled them — man may rule the worst
By ever daring to be first:
So lions o'er the jackal sway;
The jackal points, he fells the prey,
Then on the vulgar yelling press,
To gorge the relics of success.

XIII.

His head grows fever'd, and his pulse
The quick successive throbs convulse;
In vain from side to side he throws
His form, in courtship of repose;
Or if he dozed, a sound, a start
Awoke him with a sunken heart.
The turban on his hot brow press'd,
The mail weigh'd lead-like on his breast,

Though oft and long beneath its weight
Upon his eyes had slumber sate,
Without or couch or canopy,
Except a rougher field and sky
Than now might yield a warrior's bed,
Than now along the heaven was spread.
He could not rest, he could not stay
Within his tent to wait for day,
But walk'd him forth along the sand,
Where thousand sleepers strew'd the strand.
What pillow'd them? and why should he
More wakeful than the humblest be?
Since more their peril, worse their toil,
And yet they fearless dream of spoil;
While he alone, where thousands pass'd
A night of sleep, perchance their last,
In sickly vigil wander'd on,
And envied all he gazed upon.

XIV.

He felt his soul become more light
Beneath the freshness of the night.
Cool was the silent sky, though calm,
And bathed his brow with airy balm:
Behind, the camp — before him lay,
In many a winding creek and bay,
Lepanto's gulf; and on the brow
Of Delphi's hill, unshaken snow,
High and eternal, such as shone
Through thousand summers brightly gone.
Along the gulf, the mount, the clime;
It will not melt, like man, to time;
Tyrant and slave are swept away,
Less form'd to wear the before the ray;
But that white veil, the lightest, frailest,
Which on the mighty mount thou hailest,
Shines o'er its craggy battlement;
In form a peak, in height a cloud,
In texture like a hovering shroud,
Thus high by parting Freedom spread,
As from her fond abode she fled,
And linger'd on the spot, where long
Her prophet spirit spake in song.
Oh! still her step at moments falters
O'er wither'd fields, and ruined altars,
And fain would wake, in souls too broken,
By pointing to each glorious token.
But vain her voice, till better days
Dawn in those yet remember'd rays,
Which shone upon the Persian flying,
And saw the Spartan smile in dying.

XV.

Not mindless of these mighty times
Was Alp, despite his flight and crimes;
And through this night, as on he wander'd,
And o'er the past and present ponder'd,
And thought upon the glorious dead
Who there in better cause had bled,
He felt how faint and feebly dim
The fame that could accrue to him,
Who cheer'd the band, and waved the sword
A traitor in a turban'd horde;
And led them to the lawless siege,
Whose best success were sacrilege.
Not so had those his fancy number'd,
The chiefs whose dust around him slumber'd;
Their phalanx marshall'd on the plain,
Whose bulwarks were not then in vain.
They fell devoted, but undying;
The very gale their names seem'd sighing:
The waters murmur'd of their name;
The woods were peopled with their fame;
The silent pillar, lone and gray,
Claim'd kindred with their sacred clay;
Their spirits wrapt the dusky mountain,
Their memory sparkled o'er the mountain,
The meanest rill, the mightiest river,
Roll'd mingling with their fame for ever.
Despite of every yoke she bears,
That land is glory's still, and theirs!
When man would do a deed of worth
He points to Greece, and turns to tread,
So sanction'd, on the tyrant's head:
He looks to her, and rushes on
Where life is lost, or freedom won.

XVI.

Still by the shore Alp mutely mused,
And woo'd the freshness night diffused.
There shrinks no ebb in that tideless sea, [3]
Which changeless rolls eternally;
So that wildest of waves, in their angriest mood,
Scarce break on the bounds of the land for a rood;
And the powerless moon beholds them flow,
Heedless if she come or go:
Calm or high, in main or bay,
On their course she hath no sway.
The rock unworn its base doth bare,
And looks o'er the surf, but it comes not there;
And the fringe of the foam may be seen below,

On the line that it left long ages ago:
A smooth short space of yellow sand
Between it and the greener land.

He wander'd on, along the beach,
Till within the range of a carbine's reach
Of the leaguer'd wall; but they saw him not,
Or how could he 'scape from the hostile shot,
Did traitors lurk in the Christian's hold?
Were their hands grown stiff, or their hearts wax'd cold,
I know not, in sooth; but from yonder wall
There flash'd no fire, and there hiss'd no ball,
Though he stood beneath the bastion's frown,
That flank'd the sea-ward gate of the town;
Though he heard the sound, and could almost tell
The sullen words of the sentinel,
As his measured step on the stone below
Clank'd, as he paced it to and fro;
And he saw the lean dogs beneath the wall
Hold o'er the dead their carnival,
Gorging and growling o'er carcass and limb!
They were too busy to bark at him!
From a Tartar's skull they had stripp'd the flesh,
As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh;
And their white tusks crunch'd o'er the whiter skull, [4]
As it slipped through their jaws, when their edge grew dull,
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,
When they scarce could rise from the spot where they fed;
So well had they broken a lingering fast
With those who had fall'n for that night's repast.
And Alp knew, by the turbans that roll'd on the sand,
The foremost of these were the best of his band:
Crimson and green were the shawls of their wear,
And each scalp had a single long tuft of hair, [5]
All the rest was shaven and bare.
The scalps were in the wild-dog's maw,
The hair was tangled round his jaw.
But close by the shore, on the edge of the gulf,
There sat a vulture flapping a wolf,
Who had stolen from the hills, but kept away,
Scared by the dogs, from the human prey;
But he seized on his share of a steed that lay,
Pick'd by the birds, on the sands of the bay.

XVII.

Alp turn'd him from the sickening sight:
Never had shaken his nerves in fight;
Be he better could brook to behold the dying,
Deep in the tide of their warm blood lying,
Scorch'd with death-thirst, and writing in vain,
Than the perishing dead who are past all pain.

There is something of pride in the perilous hour,
Whate'er be the shape in which death may lour;
For Fame is there to say who bleeds,
And Honour's eye on daring deeds!
But when all is past, it is humbling to tread
O'er the weltering field of the tombless dead,
And see worms of the earth, and fowls of the air,
Beasts of the forest, all gathering there;
All regarding man as their prey,
All rejoicing in his decay.

XVIII.

There is a temple in ruin stands,
Fashion'd by long-forgotten hands;
Two or three columns, and many a stone,
Marble and granite, with grass o'ergrown!
Out upon Time! it will leave no more
Of the things to come than the things before!
But enough of the past for the future to grieve
O'er that which hath been, and o'er that which must be!
What we have seen, our sons shall see;
Remnants of things that have pass'd away,
Fragments of stone, rear'd by creatures of clay!

XIX.

He sate him down at a pillar's base,
And pass'd his hand athwart his face;
Like one in dreary musing mood,
Declining was his attitude;
His head was drooping on his breast,
Fever'd, throbbing, and opprest;
And o'er his brow, so downward bent,
Oft his beating fingers went,
Hurriedly, as you may see
Your own run over the ivory key,
Ere the measured tone is taken,
By the chords you would awaken.
There he sate all heavily,
As he heard the night-wind sigh.
Was it the wind, through some hollow stone, [6]
Sent that soft and tender moan?
He lifted his head, and he look'd on the sea,
But it was unrippled as glass may be;
He look'd on the long grass — it waved not a blade;
How was that gentle sound convey'd?
He look'd to the banners — each flag lay still,
So did the leaves on Cithæron's hill,
And he felt not a breath come over his cheek;
What did that sudden sound bespeak?
He turn'd to the left — is he sure of sight?

There sate a lady, youthful and bright!

XX.

He started up with more of fear
Than if an armed foe were near.
"God of my fathers! what is here?
Who art thou, and wherefore sent
So near a hostile armament?"
His trembling hands refused to sign
The cross he deem'd no more divine:
He had resumed it in that hour,
But conscience wrung away the power.
He gazed — he saw: he knew the face
Of beauty, and the form of grace;
It was Francesca by his side,
The maid who might have been his bride!

The rose was yet upon her cheek,
But mellow'd with a tenderer streak:
Where was the play of her soft lips fled?
Gone was the smile that enliven'd their red.
The ocean's calm within their view,
Beside her eye had less of blue;
But like that cold wave it stood still,
And its glance, though clear, was chill.
Around her form a thin robe twining,
Nought conceal'd her bosom shining;
Through the parting of her hair,
Floating darkly downward there,
Her rounded arm shew'd white and bare:
And ere yet she made reply,
Once she raised her hand on high;
It was so wan and transparent of hue,
You might have seen the moon shine through.

XXI.

"I come from my rest to him I love best,
That I may be happy, and he may be blest.
I have pass'd the guards, the gate, the wall;
Sought thee in safety through foes and all.
'Tis said the lion will turn and flee
From a maid in the pride of her purity;
And the Power on high, that can shield the good
Thus from the tyrant of the wood,
Hath extended its mercy to guard me as well
From the hands of the leaguering infidel.
I come — and if I come in vain,
Never, oh never, we meet again!
Thou hast done a fearful deed
In falling away from thy fathers' creed:

But dash that turban to earth, and sign
The sign of the cross, and for ever be mine;
Wring the black drop from thy heart,
And to-morrow unites us no more to part."

"And where should our bridal-couch be spread?
In the midst of the dying and the dead?
For to-morrow we give to the slaughter and flame
The sons and shrines of the Christian name.
None, save thou and thine, I've sworn,
Shall be left upon the morn:
But thee will I bear to a lovely spot,
Where our hands shall be join'd, and our sorrow forgot.
There thou yet shall be my bride,
When once again I've quell'd the pride
Of Venice: and her hated race
Have felt the arm they would debase
Scourge, with a whip of scorpions, those
Whom vice and envy made my foes."

Upon his hand she laid her own —
Light was the touch, but it thrill'd to the bone,
And shot a chillness to his heart,
Which fix'd him beyond the power to start.
Though slight was that grasp so mortal cold,
He could not lose him from its hold:
But never did clasp of one so dear
Strike on the pulse with such feeling of fear,
As those thin fingers, long and white,
Froze through his blood by their touch that night.
The feverish glow of his brow was gone,
And his heart sank so still that it felt like stone,
As he look'd on the face, and beheld its hue,
So deeply changed from what he knew:
Fair but faint — without the ray
Of mind, that made each feature play
Like sparkling waves on a sunny day;
And her motionless lips lay still as death,
And her words came forth without her breath,
And there rose not a heave o'er her bosom's swell,
And there seem'd not a pulse in her veins to dwell.
Though her eye shone out, yet the lids were fix'd,
And the glance that it gave was wild and unmix'd
With aught of change, as the eyes may seem
Of the restless who walk in a troubled dream:
Like the figures on arras, that gloomily glare,
Stirr'd by the breath of the wintry air,
So seen by the dying lamp's fitful light,
Lifeless, but life-like, and awful to sight;
As they seem, through the dimness, about to come down
From the shadowy wall where their images frown;
Fearfully flitting to and fro,

As the gusts on the tapestry come and go.
"If not for the love of me be given
Thus much, then, for the love of Heaven, —
Again I say — that turban tear
From off thy faithless brow, and swear
Thine injured country's sons to spare,
Or thou art lost; and never shalt see —
Not earth — that's past — but heaven or me.
If this thou dost accord, albeit
A heavy doom 'tis thine to me,
That doom shall half absolve thy sin,
And mercy's gate may receive within;
But pause one moment more, and take
The curse of Him thou didst forsake;
And look once more to heaven, and see
Its love for ever shut from thee.
There is a light cloud by the moon — [7]
'Tis passing, and will pass full soon —
If, by the time its vapoury sail
Hath ceased her shaded orb to veil,
Thy heart within thee is not changed,
Then God and man are both avenged;
Dark will thy doom be, darker still
Thine immortality of ill."

Alp look'd to heaven, and saw on high
The sign she spake of in the sky;
But his heart was swell'n, and turn'd aside,
By deep interminable pride.
This first false passion of his breast
Roll'd like a torrent o'er the rest.
He sue for mercy! He dismay'd
By wild words of a timid maid!
He, wrong'd by Venice, vow to save
Her sons, devoted to the grave!
No — though that cloud were thunder's worst,
And charged to crush him — let it burst!
He look'd upon it earnestly,
Without an accent of reply;
He watch'd it passing: it is flown:
Full on his eye the clear moon shone.
And thus he spake — "Whate'er my fate,
I am no changeling — 'tis too late:
The reed in storms may bow and quiver,
Then rise again; the tree must shiver.
What Venice made me, I must be,
Her foe in all, save love to thee:
But thou art safe: oh, fly with me!"
He turn'd, but she is gone!
Nothing is there but the column stone.
Hath she sunk in the earth, or melted in air?
He saw not — he knew not — but nothing is there.

XXII.

The night is past, and shines the sun
As if that morn were a jocund one.
Lightly and brightly breaks away
The Morning from her mantle gray,
And the Noon will look on a sultry day.
Hark to the trump, and the drum,
And the mournful sound of the barbarous horn,
And the flap of the banners, that flit as they're borne,
And the neigh of the steed, and the multitude's hum,
And the clash and the shout, "They come, they come!"
The horsetails are pluck'd from the ground, and the sword
From its sheath; and they form, and but wait for the word.
Tartar, and Spahi, and Turcoman,
Strike your tents, and throng to the van;
Mount ye, spur ye, skirt the plain,
That the fugitive may flee in vain,
When he breaks from the town; and none escape,
Aged or young in Christian shape;
While your fellows on foot, in a fiery mass,
Bloodstain the breach through which they pass.
The steeds are all bridled, and snort to the rein;
Curved is each neck, and flowing each main;
White is the foam of their champ on the bit:
The spears are uplifted; the matches are lit;
The cannon are pointed, and ready to roar,
And crush the wall they have crumbled before:
Forms in his phalanx each Janizar;
Alp at their head; his right arm is bare,
So is the blade of his scimitar;
The khan and the pachas are all at their post:
The vizier himself at the head of the host.
When the culverin's signal is fired, then on;
Leave not in Corinth a living one —
A priest at her altars, a chief in her halls,
A hearth in her mansions, a stone in her walls.
God and the prophet — Allah Hu!
Up to the skies with that wild halloo!

"There the breach lies for passage, the ladder to scale
And your hands on your sabres, and how should ye fail?
He who first downs with the red cross may crave
His heart's dearest wish; let him ask it, and have!"
Thus utter'd Coumourgi, the dauntless vizier;
The reply was the brandish of sabre and spear,
And the shout of fierce thousands in joyous ire: —
Silence — hark to the signal — fire!

XXIII.

As the wolves, that headlong go
On the stately buffalo,
Though with fiery eyes, and angry roar,
And hoofs that stamp, and horns that gore,
He tramples on earth, or tosses on high
The foremost, who rush on his strength but to die;
Thus against the wall they went,
Thus the first were backward bent;
Many a bosom, sheathed in brass,
Strew'd the earth like broken glass,
Shiver'd by the shot, that tore
The ground whereon they moved no more:
Even as they fell, in files they lay,
Like the mower's grass at the close of day,
When is work is done on the levell'd plain;
Such was the fall of the foremost slain.

XXIV.

As the spring-tides, with heavy splash,
From the cliffs invading dash
Huge fragments, sapp'd by the ceaseless flow,
Till white and thundering down they go,
Like the avalanche's snow
On the Alpine vales below;
Thus at length, outbreathed and worn,
Corinth's sons were downward borne
By the long and oft-renew'd
Charge of the Moslem multitude.
In firmness they stood, and in masses they fell,
Heap'd, by the host of the infidel,
Hand to hand, and foot to foot:
Nothing there, save death, was mute;
Stroke, and thrust, and flash, and cry
For quarter, or for victory,
Mingle there with the volleying thunder,
Which makes the distant cities wonder
How the sounding battle goes,
If with them, or for their foes;
If they must mourn, or may rejoice
In that annihilating voice,
Which pierces the deep hills through and through
With an echo dread and new:
You might have heard it, on that day,
O'er Salamis and Megara;
(We have heard the hearers say,)
Even unto Piræus' bay.

XXV.

From the point of encountering blades to the hilt,
Sabres and swords with blood were gilt:

But the rampart is won, and the spoil begun
And all but the after carnage done.
Shriller shrieks now mingling come
From within the plunder'd dome:
Hark to the haste of flying feet,
That splash in the blood of the slippery street;
But here and there, where 'vantage ground
Against the foe may still be found,
Desperate groups, of twelve or ten,
Make a pause, and turn again —
With banded backs against the wall,
Fiercely stand, or fighting fall.

There stood an old man — his hairs were white,
But his veteran arm was full of might:
So gallantly bore he the brunt of the fray,
The dead before him on that day,
In a semicircle lay;
Still he combated unwounded,
Though retreating, unsurrounded.
Many a scar of former fight
Lurk'd beneath his corslet bright;
But of every wound his body bore,
Each and all had been ta'en before:
Though aged, he was so iron of limb,
Few of our youth could cope with him;
And the foes, whom he singly kept at bay,
Outnumber'd his thin hairs of silver gray.
From right to left his sabre swept:
Many an Othman mother wept
Sons that were unborn, when dipp'd
His weapon first in Moslem gore,
Ere his years could count a score.
Of all he might have been the sire
Who fell that day beneath his ire:
For, sonless left long years ago,
His wrath made many a childless foe;
And since the day, when in the strait [8]
His only boy had met his fate,
His parent's iron hand did doom
More than a human hecatomb.
If shades by carnage be appeased,
Patroclus' spirit less was pleased
Than his, Minotti's son, who died
Where Asia's bounds and ours divide,
Buried he lay, where thousands before
For thousands of years were inhumed on the shore;
What of them is left, to tell
Where they lie, and how they fell?
Not a stone on their turf, nor a bone in their graves;
But they live in the verse that immortally saves.

XXVI.

Hark to the Allah shout! a band
Of the Mussulman bravest and best is at hand:
Their leader's nervous arm is bare,
Swifter to smite, and never to spare —
Unclothed to the shoulder it waves them on;
Thus in the fight is he ever known:
Others a gaudier garb may show,
To them the spoil of the greedy foe;
Many a hand's on a richer hilt,
But none on a steel more ruddily gilt;
Many a loftier turban may wear, —
Alp is but known by the white arm bare;
Look through the thick of the fight, 'tis there!
There is not a standard on the shore
So well advanced the ranks before;
There is not a banner in Moslem war
Will lure the Delis half so far;
It glances like a falling star!
Where'er that mighty arm is seen,
The bravest be, or late have been;
There the craven cries for quarter
Vainly to the vengeful Tartar;
Or the hero, silent lying,
Scorns to yield a groan in dying;
Mustering his last feeble blow
'Gainst the nearest levell'd foe,
Though faint beneath the mutual wound,
Grappling on the gory ground.

XXVII.

Still the old man stood erect,
And Alp's career a moment check'd.
"Yield thee, Minotti; quarter take,
For thine own, thy daughter's sake."

"Never, renegado, never!
Though the life of thy gift would last for ever."

"Francesca! — oh, my promised bride:
Must she too perish by thy pride?"

"She is safe." — "Where? where?" — "In heaven;
From whence thy traitor soul is driven —
Far from thee, and undefiled."
Grimly then Minotti smiled,
As he saw Alp staggering bow
Before his words, as with a blow.

"O God! when died she?" — "Yesternight —

Nor weep I for her spirit's flight:
None of my pure race shall be
Slaves to Mohammed and thee —
Come on!" That challenge is in vain —
Alp's already with the slain!

While Minotti's words were wreaking
More revenge in bitter speaking
Than his falchion's point had found,
Had the time allow'd to wound,
From within the neighbouring porch
Of a long-defended church,
Where the last and desperate few
Would the failing fight renew,
The sharp shot dash'd Alp to the ground;
Ere an eye could view the wound
That crash'd through the brain of the infidel,
Round he spun, and down he fell;
A flash like fire within his eyes
Blazed, as he bent no more to rise,
And then eternal darkness sunk
Through all the palpitating trunk;
Nought of life left, save a quivering
Where his limbs were slightly shivering:
They turn'd him on his back; his breast
And brow were stain'd with gore and dust,
And through his lips the life-blood oozed,
From its deep veins lately loosed;
But in his pulse there was no throb,
Nor on his lips one dying sob;
Sigh, nor word, nor struggling breath
Heralded his way to death:
Ere his very thought could pray,
Unanel'd he pass'd away,
Without a hope from mercy's aid, —
To the last — a Renegade.

XXVIII.

Fearfully the yell arose
Of his followers, and his foes;
These in joy, in fury those:
Then again in conflict mixing,
Clashing swords, and spears transfixing,
Interchanged the blow and thrust,
Hurling warriors in the dust.
Street by street, and foot by foot,
Still Minotti dares dispute
The latest portion of the land
Left beneath his high command;
With him, aiding heart and hand,
The remnant of his gallant band.

Still the church is tenable,
Whence issued the fated ball
That half avenged the city's fall,
When Alp, her fierce assailant, fell:
Thither bending sternly back,
They leave before a bloody track;
And, with their faces to the foe,
Dealing wounds with every blow,
The chief, and his retreating train,
Join to those within the fane;
There they yet may breathe awhile,
Shelter'd by the massy pile.

XXIX.

Brief breathing-time! the turban'd host,
With added ranks and raging boast,
Press onwards with such strength and heat,
Their numbers balk their own retreat;
For narrow the way that led to the spot
Where still the Christians yielded not;
And the foremost, if fearful, may vainly try
Through the massy column to turn and fly;
They perforce must do or die.
They die: but ere their eyes could close,
Avengers o'er their bodies rose;
Fresh and furious, fast they fill
The ranks unthinn'd, though slaughter'd still:
And faint the weary Christians wax
Before the still renew'd attacks:
And now the Othmans gain the gate;
Still resists its iron weight,
And still, all deadly aim'd and hot,
From every crevice comes the shot;
From every shatter'd window pour
The volleys of the sulphurous shower:
But the portal wavering grows and weak —
The iron yields, the hinges creak —
It bends — and falls — and all is o'er;
Lost Corinth may resist no more!

XXX.

Dark, sternly, and all alone,
Minotti stood o'er the altar stone:
Madonna's face upon him shone,
Painted in heavenly hues above,
With eyes of light and looks of love;
And placed upon that holy shrine
To fix our thoughts on things divine,
When pictured there we kneeling see
Her, and the boy-God on her knee,

Smiling sweetly on each prayer
To heaven, as if to waft it there.
Still she smiled; even now she smiles,
Though slaughter streams along her aisles:
Minotti lifted his aged eye,
And made the sign of a cross with a sigh,
Then seized a torch which blazed thereby;
And still he stood, while, with steel and flame,
Inward and onward the Mussulman came.

XXXI.

The vaults beneath the mosaic stone
Contain'd the dead of ages gone:
Their names were on the graven floor,
But now illegible with gore;
The carved crests, and curious hues
The varied marble's veins diffuse,
Were smear'd, and slippery — stain'd, and strown
With broken swords, and helms o'erthrown:
There were dead above, and the dead below
Lay cold in many a coffin'd row;
You might see them piled in sable state,
By a pale light through a gloomy grate:
But War had enter'd their dark caves,
And stored along the vaulted graves
Her sulphurous treasures, thickly spread
In masses by the fleshless dead:
Here, throughout the siege, had been
The Christians' chiefest magazine;
To these a late-form'd train now led,
Minotti's last and stern resource,
Against the foe's o'erwhelming force.

XXXII.

The foe came on, and few remain
To strive, and those must strive in vain:
For lack of further lives, to slake
The thirst of vengeance now awake,
With barbarous blows they gash the dead,
And lop the already lifeless head,
And fell the statues from their niche,
And spoil the shrine of offerings rich,
And from each other's rude hands wrest
The silver vessels saints had bless'd.
To the high altar on they go;
Oh, but it made a glorious show!
On its table still behold
The cup of consecrated gold;
Massy and deep, a glittering prize,
Brightly it sparkles to plunderers' eyes:

That morn it held the holy wine,
Converted by Christ to His blood so divine,
Which His worshippers drank at the break of day
To shrive their souls ere they join'd in the fray,
Still a few drops within it lay;
And round the sacred table glow
Twelve lofty lamps, in splendid row,
From the purest metal cast;
A spoil — the richest, and the last.

XXXIII.

So near they came, the nearest stretch'd
To grasp the spoil he almost reach'd
When old Minotti's hand
Touch'd with a torch the train —
'Tis fired!
Spire, vaults, and shrine, the spoil, the slain,
The turban'd victors, the Christian band,
All that of living or dead remain,
Hurl'd on high with the shiver'd fane,
In one wild roar expired!
The shatter'd town — the walls thrown down —
The waves a moment backward bent —
The hills that shake, although unrent,
As if an earthquake pass'd —
The thousand shapeless things all driven
In cloud and flame athwart the heaven,
By that tremendous blast —
Proclaim'd the desperate conflict o'er
On that too long afflicted shore!
Up to the sky like rockets go
All that mingled there below:
Many a tall and goodly man,
Scorch'd and shrivell'd to a span,
When he fell to earth again
Like a cinder strew'd the plain:
Down the ashes shower like rain;
Some fell in the gulf, which received the sprinkles
With a thousand circling wrinkles;
Some fell on the shore, but, far away,
Scatter'd o'er the isthmus lay;
Christian or Moslem, which be they?
Let their mothers see and say!
When in cradled rest they lay,
And each nursing mother smiled
On the sweet sleep of her child,
Little deem'd she such a day
Would rend those tender limbs away.
Not the matrons that them bore
Could discern their offspring more;
That one moment left no trace

More of human form or face
Save a scatter'd scalp or bone:
And down came blazing rafters, strown
Around, and many a falling stone,
Deeply dinted in the clay,
All blacken'd there and reeking lay.
All the living things that heard
That deadly earth-shock disappear'd.
The wild birds flew; the wild dogs fled,
And howling left the unburied dead;
The camels from their keepers broke;
The distant steer forsook the yoke —
The nearer steed plunged o'er the plain,
And burst his girth, and tore his rein;
The bull-frog's note, from out the marsh,
Deep-mouth'd arose, and doubly harsh;
The wolves yell'd on the cavern'd hill
Where echo roll'd in thunder still;
The jackal's troop, in gather'd cry, [8]
Bay'd from afar complainingly,
With mix'd and mournful sound,
Like crying babe, and beaten hound:
With sudden wing, and ruffled breast,
The eagle left his rocky nest,
And mounted nearer to the sun,
The clouds beneath him seem'd so dun
Their smoke assail'd his startled beak,
And made him higher soar and shriek —
Thus was Corinth lost and won!

(1) Napoli di Romania is not now the most considerable place in the Morea, but Tripolitza, where the Pacha resides, and maintains his government. Napoli is near Argos. I visited all three in 1810-11; and, in the course of journeying through the country from my first arrival in 1809, I crossed the Isthmus eight times in my way from Attica to the Morea, over the mountains, or in the other direction, when passing from the Gulf of Athens to that of Lepanto. Both the routes are picturesque and beautiful, though very different; that by sea has more sameness; but the voyage being always within sight of land, and often very near it, presents many attractive views of the islands Salamis, Ægina, Poro, &c. and the coast of the continent.

(2) of the Turcomans is wandering and patriarchal: they dwell in [sic. Transcriber's note: this is all that appears of Byron's note in the edition from which I am rendering this electronic text.]

(3) The reader need hardly be reminded that there are no perceptible tides in the Mediterranean.

(4) This spectacle I have seen, such as described, beneath the wall of the Seraglio at Constantinople, in the little cavities worn by the Bosphorus in the rock, a narrow terrace of which projects between the wall and the water. I think the fact is also mentioned in Hobhouse's Travels. The bodies were probably those of some refractory

Janizaries.

(5) This tuft, or long lock, is left from a superstition that Mohammed will draw them into paradise by it.

(6) I must here acknowledge a close, though unintentional, resemblance in these twelve lines to a passage in an unpublished poem of Mr Coleridge, called "Christabel." It was not till after these lines were written that I heard that wild and singularly original and beautiful poem recited: and the MS. of that production I never saw till very recently, by the kindness of Mr Coleridge himself, who, I hope, is convinced that I have not been a wilful plagiarist. The original idea undoubtedly pertains to Mr Coleridge, whose poem has been composed above fourteen years. Let me conclude by a hope that he will not longer delay the publication of a production, of which I can only add my mite of approbation to the applause of far more competent judges.

(7) I have been told that the idea expressed in this and the five following lines has been admired by those whose approbation is valuable. I am glad of it: but it is not original — at least not mine; it may be found much better expressed in pages 182-184 of the English version of "Vathek" (I forget the precise page of the French), a work to which I have before referred; and never recur to, or read, without a renewal of gratification.

(8) I believe I have taken a poetical license to transplant the jackal from Asia. In Greece I never saw nor heard these animals; but among the ruins of Ephesus I have heard them by hundreds. They haunt ruins, and follow armies.

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Spell Is Broke, The Charm Is Flown!

The spell is broke; the charm is flown!
Thus is it with life's fitful fever:
We madly smile when we should groan:
Delirium is our best deceiver.

Each lucid interval of thought
Recalls the woes of Nature's charter;
And he that acts as wise men ought,
But lives, as saints have died, a martyr.

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Tear

When Friendship or Love
Our sympathies move;
When Truth, in a glance, should appear,
The lips may beguile,
With a dimple or smile,
But the test of affection's a Tear:

Too oft is a smile
But the hypocrite's wile,
To mask detestation, or fear;
Give me the soft sigh,
Whilst the soultelling eye
Is dimm'd, for a time, with a Tear:

Mild Charity's glow,
To us mortals below,
Shows the soul from barbarity clear;
Compassion will melt,
Where this virtue is felt,
And its dew is diffused in a Tear:

The man, doom'd to sail
With the blast of the gale,
Through billows Atlantic to steer,
As he bends o'er the wave
Which may soon be his grave,
The green sparkles bright with a Tear;

The Soldier braves death
For a fanciful wreath
In Glory's romantic career;
But he raises the foe
When in battle laid low,
And bathes every wound with a Tear.

If, with high-bounding pride,
He return to his bride!
Renouncing the gore-crimson'd spear;
All his toils are repaid
When, embracing the maid,
From her eyelid he kisses the Tear.

Sweet scene of my youth!
Seat of Friendship and Truth,
Where Love chas'd each fast-fleeting year
Loth to leave thee, I mourn'd,
For a last look I turn'd,
But thy spire was scarce seen through a Tear:

Though my vows I can pour,
To my Mary no more,
My Mary, to Love once so dear,

In the shade of her bow'r,
I remember the hour,
She rewarded those vows with a Tear.

By another possest,
May she live ever blest!
Her name still my heart must revere:
With a sigh I resign,
What I once thought was mine,
And forgive her deceit with a Tear.

Ye friends of my heart,
Ere from you I depart,
This hope to my breast is most near:
If again we shall meet,
In this rural retreat,
May we meet, as we part, with a Tear.

When my soul wings her flight
To the regions of night,
And my corse shall recline on its bier;
As ye pass by the tomb,
Where my ashes consume,
Oh! moisten their dust with a Tear.

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Vision of Judgment

I

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate:
His keys were rusty, and the lock was dull,
So little trouble had been given of late;
Not that the place by any means was full,
But since the Gallic era 'eight-eight'
The devils had ta'en a longer, stronger pull,
And 'a pull altogether,' as they say
At sea — which drew most souls another way.

II

The angels all were singing out of tune,
And hoarse with having little else to do,
Excepting to wind up the sun and moon,
Or curb a runaway young star or two,
Or wild colt of a comet, which too soon
Broke out of bounds o'er th' ethereal blue,
Splitting some planet with its playful tail,
As boats are sometimes by a wanton whale.

III

The guardian seraphs had retired on high,
Finding their charges past all care below;
Terrestrial business fill'd nought in the sky
Save the recording angel's black bureau;
Who found, indeed, the facts to multiply
With such rapidity of vice and woe,
That he had stripp'd off both his wings in quills,
And yet was in arrear of human ills.

IV

His business so augmented of late years,
That he was forced, against his will no doubt,
(Just like those cherubs, earthly ministers,)
For some resource to turn himself about,
And claim the help of his celestial peers,
To aid him ere he should be quite worn out
By the increased demand for his remarks:
Six angels and twelve saints were named his clerks.

V

This was a handsome board — at least for heaven;
And yet they had even then enough to do,
So many conqueror's cars were daily driven,
So many kingdoms fitted up anew;
Each day too slew its thousands six or seven,
Till at the crowning carnage, Waterloo,

They threw their pens down in divine disgust —
The page was so besmear'd with blood and dust.

VI

This by the way: 'tis not mine to record
What angels shrink Wrom: ZAAFXISHJEXXIMQZUIVO
On this occasion his own work abhor'd,
So surfeited with the infernal revel:
Though he himself had sharpen'd every sword,
It almost quench'd his innate thirst of evil.
(Here Satan's sole good work deserves insertion —
'Tis, that he has both generals in reveration.)

VII

Let's skip a few short years of hollow peace,
Which peopled earth no better, hell as wont,
And heaven none — they form the tyrant's lease,
With nothing but new names subscribed upon't;
'Twill one day finish: meantime they increase,
'With seven heads and ten horns,' and all in front,
Like Saint John's foretold beast; but ours are born
Less formidable in the head than horn.

VIII

In the first year of freedom's second dawn
Died George the Third; although no tyrant, one
Who shielded tyrants, till each sense withdrawn
Left him nor mental nor external sun:
A better farmer ne'er brush'd dew from lawn,
A worse king never left a realm undone!
He died — but left his subjects still behind,
One half as mad — and t'other no less blind.

IX

He died! his death made no great stir on earth:
His burial made some pomp; there was profusion
Of velvet, gilding, brass, and no great dearth
Of aught but tears — save those shed by collusion.
For these things may be bought at their true worth;
Of elegy there was the due infusion —
Bought also; and the torches, cloaks, and banners,
Heralds, and relics of old Gothic manners,

X

Form'd a sepulchral melo-drame. Of all
The fools who flack's to swell or see the show,
Who cared about the corpse? The funeral

Made the attraction, and the black the woe.
There throbbed not there a thought which pierced the pall;
And when the gorgeous coffin was laid low,
It seamed the mockery of hell to fold
The rottenness of eighty years in gold.

XI

So mix his body with the dust! It might
Return to what it must far sooner, were
The natural compound left alone to fight
Its way back into earth, and fire, and air;
But the unnatural balsams merely blight
What nature made him at his birth, as bare
As the mere million's base unmarried clay —
Yet all his spices but prolong decay.

XII

He's dead — and upper earth with him has done;
He's buried; save the undertaker's bill,
Or lapidary scrawl, the world is gone
For him, unless he left a German will:
But where's the proctor who will ask his son?
In whom his qualities are reigning still,
Except that household virtue, most uncommon,
Of constancy to a bad, ugly woman.

XIII

'God save the king!' It is a large economy
In God to save the like; but if he will
Be saving, all the better; for not one am I
Of those who think damnation better still:
I hardly know too if not quite alone am I
In this small hope of bettering future ill
By circumscribing, with some slight restriction,
The eternity of hell's hot jurisdiction.

XIV

I know this is unpopular; I know
'Tis blasphemous; I know one may be damned
For hoping no one else may ever be so;
I know my catechism; I know we're caromed
With the best doctrines till we quite o'erflow;
I know that all save England's church have shamm'd,
And that the other twice two hundred churches
And synagogues have made a damn'd bad purchase.

XV

God help us all! God help me too! I am,
God knows, as helpless as the devil can wish,
And not a whit more difficult to damn,
Than is to bring to land a late-hook'd fish,
Or to the butcher to purvey the lamb;
Not that I'm fit for such a noble dish,
As one day will be that immortal fry
Of almost everybody born to die.

XVI

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate,
And nodded o'er his keys; when, lo! there came
A wondrous noise he had not heard of late —
A rushing sound of wind, and stream, and flame;
In short, a roar of things extremely great,
Which would have made aught save a saint exclaim;
But he, with first a start and then a wink,
Said, 'There's another star gone out, I think!'

XVII

But ere he could return to his repose,
A cherub flapp'd his right wing o'er his eyes —
At which St. Peter yawn'd, and rubb'd his nose:
'Saint porter,' said the angel, 'prithee rise!'
Waving a goodly wing, which glow'd, as glows
An earthly peacock's tail, with heavenly dyes;
To which the saint replied, 'Well, what's the matter?
'Is Lucifer come back with all this clatter?'

XVIII

'No,' quoth the cherub; 'George the Third is dead.'
'And who is George the Third?' replied the apostle;
'What George? what Third?' 'The king of England,' said
The angel. 'Well, he won't find kings to jostle
Him on his way; but does he wear his head?
Because the last we saw here had a tussle,
And ne'er would have got into heaven's good graces,
Had he not flung his head in all our faces.'

XIX

'He was, if I remember, king of France;
That head of his, which could not keep a crown
On earth, yet ventured in my face to advance
A claim to those of martyrs — like my own:
If I had had my sword, as I had once
When I cut ears off, I had cut him down;
But having but my keys, and not my brand,
I only knock'd his head from out his hand.'

XX

'And then he set up such a headless howl,
That all the saints came out and took him in;
And there he sits by St. Paul, cheek by jowl;
That fellow Paul—the parvenù! The skin
Of St. Bartholomew, which makes his cowl
In heaven, and upon earth redeem'd his sin,
So as to make a martyr, never sped
Better than did this weak and wooden head.

XXI

'But had it come up here upon its shoulders,
There would have been a different tale to tell;
The fellow-feeling in the saint's beholders
Seems to have acted on them like a spell,
And so this very foolish head heaven solders
Back on its trunk: it may be very well,
And seems the custom here to overthrow
Whatever has been wisely done below.'

XXII

The angel answer'd, 'Peter! do not pout:
The king who comes has head and all entire,
And never knew much what it was about —
He did as doth the puppet — by its wire,
And will be judged like all the rest, no doubt:
My business and your own is not to inquire
Into such matters, but to mind our cue —
Which is to act as we are bid to do.'

XXIII

While thus they spake, the angelic caravan,
Arriving like a rush of mighty wind,
Cleaving the fields of space, as doth the swan
Some silver stream (say Ganges, Nile, or Inde,
Or Thames, or Tweed), and 'midst them an old man
With an old soul, and both extremely blind,
Halted before the gate, and in his shroud
Seated their fellow traveller on a cloud.

XXIV

But bringing up the rear of this bright host
A Spirit of a different aspect waves
His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved;
His brow was like the deep when tempest-toss'd;

Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved
Eternal wrath on his immortal face,
And where he gazed a gloom pervaded space.

XXV

As he drew near, he gazed upon the gate
Ne'er to be enter'd more by him or Sin,
With such a glance of supernatural hate,
As made Saint Peter wish himself within;
He potter'd with his keys at a great rate,
And sweated through his apostolic skin:
Of course his perspiration was but ichor,
Or some such other spiritual liquor.

XXIV

The very cherubs huddled all together,
Like birds when soars the falcon; and they felt
A tingling to the top of every feather,
And form'd a circle like Orion's belt
Around their poor old charge; who scarce knew whither
His guards had led him, though they gently dealt
With royal manes (for by many stories,
And true, we learn the angels all are Tories.)

XXVII

As things were in this posture, the gate flew
Asunder, and the flashing of its hinges
Flung over space an universal hue
Of many-colour'd flame, until its tinges
Reach'd even our speck of earth, and made a new
Aurora borealis spread its fringes
O'er the North Pole; the same seen, when ice-bound,
By Captain Parry's crew, in 'Melville's Sound.'

XXVIII

And from the gate thrown open issued beaming
A beautiful and mighty Thing of Light,
Radiant with glory, like a banner streaming
Victorious from some world-o'erthrowing fight:
My poor comparisons must needs be teeming
With earthly likenesses, for here the night
Of clay obscures our best conceptions, saving
Johanna Southcote, or Bob Southey raving.

XXIX

'Twas the archangel Michael; all men know
The make of angels and archangels, since

There's scarce a scribbler has not one to show,
From the fiends' leader to the angels' prince;
There also are some altar-pieces, though
I really can't say that they much evince
One's inner notions of immortal spirits;
But let the connoisseurs explain their merits.

XXX

Michael flew forth in glory and in good;
A goodly work of him from whom all glory
And good arise; the portal past — he stood;
Before him the young cherubs and saints hoary —
(I say young, begging to be understood
By looks, not years; and should be very sorry
To state, they were not older than St. Peter,
But merely that they seem'd a little sweeter.

XXXI

The cherubs and the saints bow'd down before
That arch-angelic Hierarch, the first
Of essences angelical, who wore
The aspect of a god; but this ne'er nursed
Pride in his heavenly bosom, in whose core
No thought, save for his Master's service, durst
Intrude, however glorified and high;
He knew him but the viceroy of the sky.

XXXII

He and the sombre, silent Spirit met —
They knew each other both for good and ill;
Such was their power, that neither could forget
His former friend and future foe; but still
There was a high, immortal, proud regret
In either's eye, as if 'twere less their will
Than destiny to make the eternal years
Their date of war, and their 'champ clos' the spheres.

XXXIII

But here they were in neutral space: we know
From Job, that Satan hath the power to pay
A heavenly visit thrice a year or so;
And that the 'sons of God', like those of clay,
Must keep him company; and we might show
From the same book, in how polite a way
The dialogue is held between the Powers
Of Good and Evil — but 'twould take up hours.

XXXIV

And this is not a theologic tract,
To prove with Hebrew and with Arabic,
If Job be allegory or a fact,
But a true narrative; and thus I pick
From out the whole but such and such an act
As sets aside the slightest thought of trick.
'Tis every tittle true, beyond suspicion,
And accurate as any other vision.

XXXV

The spirits were in neutral space, before
The gates of heaven; like eastern thresholds is
The place where Death's grand cause is argued o'er,
And souls despatch'd to that world or to this;
And therefore Michael and the other wore
A civil aspect: though they did not kiss,
Yet still between his Darkness and his Brightness
There pass'd a mutual glance of great politeness.

XXXVI

The Archangel bow'd, not like a modern beau,
But with a graceful Oriental bend,
Pressing one radiant arm just where below
The heart in good men is supposed to tend;
He turn'd as to an equal, not too low,
But kindly; Satan met his ancient friend
With more hauteur, as might an old Castilian
Poor noble meet a mushroom rich civilian.

XXXVII

He merely bent his diabolic brow
An instant; and then raising it, he stood
In act to assert his right or wrong, and show
Cause why King George by no means could or should
Make out a case to be exempt from woe
Eternal, more than other kings, endued
With better sense and hearts, whom history mentions,
Who long have 'paved hell with their good intentions.'

XXXVIII

Michael began: 'What wouldst thou with this man,
Now dead, and brought before the Lord? What ill
Hath he wrought since his mortal race began,
That thou cans't claim him? Speak! and do thy will,
If it be just: if in this earthly span
He hath been greatly failing to fulfil
His duties as a king and mortal, say,

And he is thine; if not, let him have way.'

XXXIX

'Michael!' replied the Prince of Air, 'even here,
Before the Gate of him thou servest, must
I claim my subject: and will make appear
That as he was my worshipper in dust,
So shall he be in spirit, although dear
To thee and thine, because nor wine nor lust
Were of his weaknesses; yet on the throne
He reign'd o'er millions to serve me alone.

XL

'Look to our earth, or rather mine; it was,
Once, more thy master's: but I triumph not
In this poor planet's conquest; nor, alas!
Need he thou servest envy me my lot:
With all the myriads of bright worlds which pass
In worship round him, he may have forgot
Yon weak creation of such paltry things;
I think few worth damnation save their kings, —

XLI

'And these but as a kind of quit-rent, to
Assert my right as lord: and even had
I such an inclination, 'twere (as you
Well know) superfluous; they are grown so bad,
That hell has nothing better left to do
Than leave them to themselves: so much more mad
And evil by their own internal curse,
Heaven cannot make them better, nor I worse.

XLII

'Look to the earth, I said, and say again:
When this old, blind, mad, helpless, weak, poor worm
Began in youth's first bloom and flush to reign,
The world and he both wore a different form,
And must of earth and all the watery plain
Of ocean call'd him king: through many a storm
His isles had floated on the abyss of time;
For the rough virtues chose them for their clime.

XLIII

'He came to his sceptre young: he leaves it old:
Look to the state in which he found his realm,
And left it; and his annals too behold,
How to a minion first he gave the helm;

How grew upon his heart a thirst for gold,
The beggar's vice, which can but overwhelm
The meanest of hearts; and for the rest, but glance
Thine eye along America and France.

XLIV

'Tis true, he was a tool from first to last
(I have the workmen safe); but as a tool
So let him be consumed. From out the past
Of ages, since mankind have known the rule
Of monarchs — from the bloody rolls amass'd
Of sin and slaughter — from the Cæsar's school,
Take the worst pupil; and produce a reign
More drench'd with gore, more cumber'd with the slain.

XLV

'He ever warr'd with freedom and the free:
Nations as men, home subjects, foreign foes,
So that they utter'd the word "Liberty!"
Found George the Third their first opponent. Whose
History was ever stain'd as his will be
With national and individual woes?
I grant his household abstinence; I grant
His neutral virtues, which most monarchs want;

XLVI

'I know he was a constant consort; own
He was a decent sire, and middling lord.
All this is much, and most upon a throne;
As temperance, if at Apicius' board,
Is more than at an anchorite's supper shown.
I grant him all the kindest can accord;
And this was well for him, but not for those
Millions who found him what oppression chose.

XLVII

'The New World shook him off; the Old yet groans
Beneath what he and his prepared, if not
Completed: he leaves heirs on many thrones
To all his vices, without what begot
Compassion for him — his tame virtues; drones
Who sleep, or despots who have not forgot
A lesson which shall be re-taught them, wake
Upon the thrones of earth; but let them quake!

XLVIII

'Five millions of the primitive, who hold

The faith which makes ye great on earth, implored
A part of that vast all they held of old, —
Freedom to worship — not alone your Lord,
Michael, but you, and you, Saint Peter! Cold
Must be your souls, if you have not abhor'd
The foe to Catholic participation
In all the license of a Christian nation.

XLIX

'True! he allow'd them to pray God; but as
A consequence of prayer, refused the law
Which would have placed them upon the same base
With those who did not hold the saints in awe.'
But here Saint Peter started from his place,
And cried, 'You may the prisoner withdraw:
Ere heaven shall ope her portals to this Guelph,
While I am guard, may I be damn'd myself!

L

'Sooner will I with Cerberus exchange
My office (and his no sinecure)
Than see this royal Bedlam bigot range
The azure fields of heaven, of that be sure!'
'Saint!' replied Satan, 'you do well to avenge
The wrongs he made your satellites endure;
And if to this exchange you should be given,
I'll try to coax our Cerberus up to heaven!'

LI

Here Michael interposed: 'Good saint! and devil!
Pray, not so fast; you both outrun discretion.
Saint Peter! you were wont to be more civil!
Satan! excuse this warmth of his expression,
And condescension to the vulgar's level:
Event saints sometimes forget themselves in session.
Have you got more to say?' — 'No.' — If you please
I'll trouble you to call your witnesses.'

LII

Then Satan turn'd and waved his swarthy hand,
Which stirr'd with its electric qualities
Clouds farther off than we can understand,
Although we find him sometimes in our skies;
Infernall thunder shook both sea and land
In all the planets, and hell's batteries
Let off the artillery, which Milton mentions
As one of Satan's most sublime inventions.

LIII

This was a signal unto such damn'd souls
As have the privilege of their damnation
Extended far beyond the mere controls
 Of worlds past, present, or to come; no station
Is theirs particularly in the rolls
 Of hell assign'd; but where their inclination
Or business carries them in search of game,
They may range freely — being damn'd the same.

LIV

They're proud of this — as very well they may,
 It being a sort of knighthood, or gilt key
Stuck in their loins; or like to an 'entrée'
 Up the back stairs, or such free-masonry.
I borrow my comparisons from clay,
 Being clay myself. Let not those spirits be
Offended with such base low likenesses;
We know their posts are nobler far than these.

LV

When the great signal ran from heaven to hell —
 About ten million times the distance reckon'd
From our sun to its earth, as we can tell
 How much time it takes up, even to a second,
For every ray that travels to dispel
 The fogs of London, through which, dimly beacon'd,
The weathercocks are gilt some thrice a year,
If that the summer is not too severe;

LVI

I say that I can tell — 'twas half a minute;
 I know the solar beams take up more time
Ere, pack'd up for their journey, they begin it;
 But then their telegraph is less sublime,
And if they ran a race, they would not win it
 'Gainst Satan's couriers bound for their own clime.
The sun takes up some years for every ray
To reach its goal — the devil not half a day.

LVII

Upon the verge of space, about the size
 Of half-a-crown, a little speck appear'd
(I've seen a something like it in the skies
 In the Ægean, ere a squall); it near'd,
And growing bigger, took another guise;
 Like an aërial ship it tack'd, and steer'd,

Or was steer'd (I am doubtful of the grammar
Of the last phrase, which makes the stanza stammer; —

LVIII

But take your choice): and then it grew a cloud;
And so it was — a cloud of witnesses.
But such a cloud! No land e'er saw a crowd
Of locusts numerous as the heavens saw these;
They shadow'd with their myriads space; their loud
And varied cries were like those of wild geese
(If nations may be liken'd to a goose),
And realised the phrase of 'hell broke loose.'

LIX

Here crash'd a sturdy oath of stout John Bull,
Who damn'd away his eyes as heretofore:
There Paddy brogued, 'By Jasus!' — 'What's your wull?'
The temperate Scot exclaim'd: the French ghost swore
In certain terms I shan't translate in full,
As the first coachman will; and 'midst the roar,
The voice of Jonathan was heard to express,
'Our president is going to war, I guess.'

LX

Besides there were the Spaniard, Dutch, and Dane;
In short, an universal shoal of shades,
From Otaheite's isle to Salisbury Plain,
Of all climes and professions, years and trades,
Ready to swear against the good king's reign,
Bitter as clubs in cards are against spades:
All summon'd by this grand 'subpoena,' to
Try if kings mayn't be damn'd like me or you.

LXI

When Michael saw this host, he first grew pale,
As angels can; next, like Italian twilight,
He turn'd all colours — as a peacock's tail,
Or sunset streaming through a Gothic skylight
In some old abbey, or a trout not stale,
Or distant lightning on the horizon by night,
Or a fresh rainbow, or a grand review
Of thirty regiments in red, green, and blue.

LXII

Then he address'd himself to Satan: 'Why —
My good old friend, for such I deem you, though
Our different parties make us fight so shy,

I ne'er mistake you for a personal foe;
Our difference is political, and I
 Trust that, whatever may occur below,
You know my great respect for you; and this
 Makes me regret whate'er you do amiss —

LXIII

'Why, my dear Lucifer, would you abuse
 My call for witnesses? I did not mean
That you should half of earth and hell produce;
 'Tis even superfluous, since two honest, clean
True testimonies are enough: we lose
 Our time, nay, our eternity, between
The accusation and defence: if we
Hear both, 'twill stretch our immortality.'

LXIV

Satan replied, 'To me the matter is
 Indifferent, in a personal point of view;
I can have fifty better souls than this
 With far less trouble than we have gone through
Already; and I merely argued his
 Late majesty of Britain's case with you
Upon a point of form: you may dispose
Of him; I've kings enough below, God knows!'

LXV

Thus spoke the Demon (late call'd 'multifaced'
 By multo-scribbling Southe). 'Then we'll call
One or two persons of the myriads placed
 Around our congress, and dispense with all
The rest,' quoth Michael: 'Who may be so graced
 As to speak first? there's choice enough — who shall
It be?' Then Satan answer'd, 'There are many;
But you may choose Jack Wilkes as well as any.'

LXVI

A merry, cock-eyed, curious-looking sprite
 Upon the instant started from the throng,
Dress'd in a fashion now forgotten quite;
 For all the fashions of the flesh stick long
By people in the next world; where unite
 All the costumes since Adam's, right or wrong,
From Eve's fig-leaf down to the petticoat,
Almost as scanty, of days less remote.

LXVII

The spirit look'd around upon the crowds
Assembled, and exclaim'd, 'My friends of all
The spheres, we shall catch cold amongst these clouds;
So let's to business: why this general call?
If those are freeholders I see in shrouds,
And 'tis for an election that they bawl,
Behold a candidate with unturn'd coat!
Saint Peter, may I count upon your vote?'

LXVIII

'Sir,' replied Michael, 'you mistake; these things
Are of a former life, and what we do
Above is more august; to judge of kings
Is the tribunal met: so now you know.'
'Then I presume those gentlemen with wings,'
Said Wilkes, 'are cherubs; and that soul below
Looks much like George the Third, but to my mind
A good deal older — Bless me! is he blind?'

LXIX

'He is what you behold him, and his doom
Depends upon his deeds,' the Angel said;
'If you have aught to arraign in him, the tomb
Give licence to the humblest beggar's head
To lift itself against the loftiest.' — 'Some,'
Said Wilkes, 'don't wait to see them laid in lead,
For such a liberty — and I, for one,
Have told them what I thought beneath the sun.'

LXX

'Above the sun repeat, then, what thou hast
To urge against him,' said the Archangel. 'Why,'
Replied the spirit, 'since old scores are past,
Must I turn evidence? In faith, not I.
Besides, I beat him hollow at the last,
With all his Lords and Commons: in the sky
I don't like ripping up old stories, since
His conduct was but natural in a prince.

LXXI

'Foolish, no doubt, and wicked, to oppress
A poor unlucky devil without a shilling;
But then I blame the man himself much less
Than Bute and Grafton, and shall be unwilling
To see him punish'd here for their excess,
Since they were both damn'd long ago, and still in
Their place below: for me, I have forgiven,
And vote his "habeas corpus" into heaven.'

LXXII

'Wilkes,' said the Devil, 'I understand all this;
 You turn'd to half a courtier ere you died,
And seem to think it would not be amiss
 To grow a whole one on the other side
Of Charon's ferry; you forget that his
 Reign is concluded; whatso'er betide,
He won't be sovereign more: you've lost your labor,
For at the best he will be but your neighbour.

LXXIII

'However, I knew what to think of it,
 When I beheld you in your jesting way,
Flitting and whispering round about the spit
 Where Belial, upon duty for the day,
With Fox's lard was basting William Pitt,
 His pupil; I knew what to think, I say:
That fellow even in hell breeds farther ills;
I'll have him gagg'd — 'twas one of his own bills.

LXXIV

'Call Junius!' From the crowd a shadow stalk'd,
 And at the same there was a general squeeze,
So that the very ghosts no longer walk'd
 In comfort, at their own aerial ease,
But were all ramm'd, and jamm'd (but to be balk'd,
 As we shall see), and jostled hands and knees,
Like wind compress'd and pent within a bladder,
Or like a human colic, which is sadder.

LXXV

The shadow came — a tall, thin, grey-hair'd figure,
 That look'd as it had been a shade on earth;
Quick in its motions, with an air of vigour,
 But nought to mar its breeding or its birth;
Now it wax'd little, then again grew bigger,
 With now an air of gloom, or savage mirth;
But as you gazed upon its features, they
Changed every instant — to what, none could say.

LXXVI

The more intently the ghosts gazed, the less
 Could they distinguish whose the features were;
The Devil himself seem'd puzzled even to guess;
 They varied like a dream — now here, now there;
And several people swore from out the press

They knew him perfectly; and one could swear
He was his father: upon which another
Was sure he was his mother's cousin's brother:

LXXVII

Another, that he was a duke, or a knight,
An orator, a lawyer, or a priest,
A nabob, a man-midwife; but the wight
Mysterious changed his countenance at least
As oft as they their minds; though in full sight
He stood, the puzzle only was increased;
The man was a phantasmagoria in
Himself — he was so volatile and thin.

LXXVIII

The moment that you had pronounce him one,
Presto! his face change'd and he was another;
And when that change was hardly well put on,
It varied, till I don't think his own mother
(If that he had a mother) would her son
Have known, he shifted so from one to t'other;
Till guessing from a pleasure grew a task,
At this epistolary 'Iron Mask.'

LXXIX

For sometimes he like Cerberus would seem —
'Three gentlemen at once' (as sagely says
Good Mrs. Malaprop); then you might deem
That he was not even one; now many rays
Were flashing round him; and now a thick steam
Hid him from sight — like fogs on London days:
Now Burke, now Tooke he grew to people's fancies,
And certes often like Sir Philip Francis.

LXXX

I've an hypothesis — 'tis quite my own;
I never let it out till now, for fear
Of doing people harm about the throne,
And injuring some minister or peer,
On whom the stigma might perhaps be blown;
It is — my gentle public, lend thine ear!
'Tis, that what Junius we are wont to call
Was really, truly, nobody at all.

LXXXI

I don't see wherefore letters should not be
Written without hands, since we daily view

Them written without heads; and books, we see,
Are fill'd as well without the latter too:
And really till we fix on somebody
For certain sure to claim them as his due,
Their author, like the Niger's mouth, will bother
The world to say if there be mouth or author.

LXXXII

'And who and what art thou?' the Archangel said.
'For that you may consult my title-page,'
Replied this mighty shadow of a shade:
'If I have kept my secret half an age,
I scarce shall tell it now.' — 'Canst thou upbraid,'
Continued Michael, 'George Rex, or allege
Aught further?' Junius answer'd, 'You had better
First ask him for his answer to my letter:

LXXXIII

'My charges upon record will outlast
The brass of both his epitaph and tomb.'
'Repent'st thou not,' said Michael, 'of some past
Exaggeration? something which may doom
Thyself if false, as him if true? Thou wast
Too bitter — is it not so? — in thy gloom
Of passion?' — 'Passion!' cried the phantom dim,
'I loved my country, and I hated him.'

LXXXIV

'What I have written, I have written: let
The rest be on his head or mine!' So spoke
Old 'Nominis Umbra'; and while speaking yet,
Away he melted in celestial smoke.
Then Satan said to Michael, 'Don't forget
To call George Washington, and John Horne Tooke,
And Franklin;' — but at this time was heard
A cry for room, though not a phantom stirr'd.

LXXXV

At length with jostling, elbowing, and the aid
Of cherubim appointed to that post,
The devil Asmodeus to the circle made
His way, and look'd as if his journey cost
Some trouble. When his burden down he laid,
'What's this?' cried Michael; 'why, 'tis not a ghost?'
'I know it,' quoth the incubus; 'but he
Shall be one, if you leave the affair to me.'

LXXXVI

'Confound the renegado! I have sprain'd
 My left wing, he's so heavy; one would think
Some of his works about his neck were chain'd.
 But to the point; while hovering o'er the brink
Of Skiddaw (where as usual it still rain'd),
 I saw a taper, far below me, wink,
And stooping, caught this fellow at a libel —
No less on history than the Holy Bible.

LXXXVII

'The former is the devil's scripture, and
 The latter yours, good Michael: so the affair
Belongs to all of us, you understand.
 I snatch'd him up just as you see him there,
And brought him off for sentence out of hand:
 I've scarcely been ten minutes in the air —
At least a quarter it can hardly be:
I dare say that his wife is still at tea.'

LXXXVIII

Here Satan said, 'I know this man of old,
 And have expected him for some time here;
A sillier fellow you will scarce behold,
 Or more conceited in his petty sphere:
But surely it was not worth while to fold
 Such trash below your wing, Asmodeus dear:
We had the poor wretch safe (without being bored
With carriage) coming of his own accord.

LXXXIX

'But since he's here, let's see what he has done.'
 'Done!' cried Asmodeus, 'he anticipates
The very business you are now upon,
 And scribbles as if head clerk to the Fates,
Who knows to what his ribaldry may run,
 When such an ass as this, like Balaam's, prates?'
'Let's hear,' quoth Michael, 'what he has to say;
You know we're bound to that in every way.'

XC

Now the bard, glad to get an audience which
 By no means oft was his case below,
Began to cough, and hawk, and hem, and pitch
 His voice into that awful note of woe
To all unhappy hearers within reach
 Of poets when the tide of rhyme's in flow;
But stuck fast with his first hexameter,

Not one of all whose gouty feet would stir.

XCI

But ere the spavin'd dactyls could be spurr'd
 Into recitative, in great dismay
Both cherubim and seraphim were heard
 To murmur loudly through their long array:
And Michael rose ere he could get a word
 Of all his founder'd verses under way.
And cried, 'For God's sake stop, my friend! 'twere best —
Non Di, non homines — you know the rest.'

XCII

A general bustle spread throughout the throng.
 Which seem'd to hold all verse in detestation;
The angels had of course enough of song
 When upon service; and the generation
Of ghosts had heard too much in life, not long
 Before, to profit by a new occasion;
The monarch, mute till then, exclaim'd, 'What! What!
Pye come again? No more — no more of that!'

XCIII

The tumult grew; an universal cough
 Convulsed the skies, as during a debate
When Castlereagh has been up long enough
 (Before he was first minister of state,
I mean — the slaves hear now); some cried 'off, off!'
 As at a farce; till, grown quite desperate,
The bard Saint Peter pray'd to interpose
(Himself an author) only for his prose.

XCIV

The varlet was not an ill-favour'd knave;
 A good deal like a vulture in the face,
With a hook nose and a hawk'd eye, which gave
 A smart and sharper-looking sort of grace
To his whole aspect, which, though rather grave,
 Was by no means so ugly as his case;
But that, indeed, was hopeless as can be,
Quite a poetic felony, 'de se.'

XCV

Then Michael blew his trump, and still'd the noise
 With one still greater, as is yet the mode
On earth besides; except some grumbling voice,
 Which now and then will make a slight inroad

Upon decorous silence, few will twice
Lift up their lungs when fairly overcrown'd;
And now the bard could plead his own bad cause,
With all the attitudes of self-applause.

XCVI

He said — (I only give the heads) — he said,
He meant no harm in scribbling; 'twas his way
Upon all topics; 'twas, besides, his bread,
Of which he butter'd both sides; 'twould delay
Too long the assembly (he was pleased to dread),
And take up rather more time than a day,
To name his works — he would but cite a few —
'Wat Tyler' — 'Rhymes on Blenheim' — 'Waterloo.'

XCVII

He had written praises of a regicide:
He had written praises of all kings whatever;
He had written for republics far and wide;
And then against them bitterer than ever;
For pantisocracy he once had cried
Aloud, a scheme less moral than 'twas clever;
Then grew a hearty anti-Jacobin —
Had turn'd his coat — and would have turn'd his skin.

XCVIII

He had sung against all battles, and again
In their high praise and glory; he had call'd
Reviewing (1)'the ungentle craft,' and then
Become as base a critic as e'er crawl'd —
Fed, paid, and pamper'd by the very men
By whom his muse and morals had been maul'd:
He had written much blank verse, and blanker prose,
And more of both than anybody knows.

XCIX

He had written Wesley's life: — here turning round
To Satan, 'Sir, I'm ready to write yours,
In two octavo volumes, nicely bound,
With notes and preface, all that most allure
The pious purchaser; and there's no ground
For fear, for I can choose my own reviews:
So let me have the proper documents,
That I may add you to my other saints.'

C

Satan bow'd, and was silent. 'Well, if you,

With amiable modesty, decline
My offer, what says Michael? There are few
Whose memoirs could be render'd more divine.
Mine is a pen of all work; not so new
As it once was, but I would make you shine
Like your own trumpet. By the way, my own
Has more of brass in it, and is as well blown.

CI

'But talking about trumpets, here's my Vision!
Now you shall judge, all people; yes, you shall
Judge with my judgment, and by my decision
Be guided who shall enter heaven or fall.
I settle all these things by intuition,
Times present, past, to come, heaven, hell, and all,
Like King Alfonso(2). When I thus see double,
I save the Deity some worlds of trouble.'

CII

He ceased, and drew forth an MS.; and no
Persuasion on the part of devils, saints,
Or angels, now could stop the torrent; so
He read the first three lines of the contents;
But at the fourth, the whole spiritual show
Had vanish'd, with variety of scents,
Ambrosial and sulphureous, as they sprang,
Like lightning, off from his 'melodious twang.' (3)

CIII

Those grand heroics acted as a spell:
The angels stopp'd their ears and plied their pinions;
The devils ran howling, deafen'd, down to hell;
The ghosts fled, gibbering, for their own dominions —
(For 'tis not yet decided where they dwell,
And I leave every man to his opinions);
Michael took refuge in his trump — but, lo!
His teeth were set on edge, he could not blow!

CIV

Saint Peter, who has hitherto been known
For an impetuous saint, upraised his keys,
And at the fifth line knock'd the poet down;
Who fell like Phaeton, but more at ease,
Into his lake, for there he did not drown;
A different web being by the Destinies
Woven for the Laureate's final wreath, whene'er
Reform shall happen either here or there.

CV

He first sank to the bottom - like his works,
But soon rose to the surface — like himself;
For all corrupted things are bouy'd like corks,(4)
By their own rottenness, light as an elf,
Or wisp that flits o'er a morass: he lurks,
It may be, still, like dull books on a shelf,
In his own den, to scrawl some 'Life' or 'Vision,'
As Welborn says — 'the devil turn'd precisian.'

CVI

As for the rest, to come to the conclusion
Of this true dream, the telescope is gone
Which kept my optics free from all delusion,
And show'd me what I in my turn have shown;
All I saw farther, in the last confusion,
Was, that King George slipp'd into heaven for one;
And when the tumult dwindled to a calm,
I left him practising the hundredth psalm.

George Gordon Lord Byron

The Wild Gazelle

The wild gazelle on Judah's hills,
Exulting yet may bound,
And drink from all the living rills
That gush on holy ground:
Its airy step and glorious eye
May glance in tameless transport by.: -

A step as fleet, an eye more bright,
Hath Judah witness'd there;
And o'er her scenes of lost delight
Inhabitants more fair,
The cedars wave on Lebanon,
But Judah's statelier maids are gone!

More blest each palm that shades those plains
Than Israel's scatter'd race:
For, taking root, it there remains
In solitary grace:
It cannot quit the place of birth,
It will not live in other earth.

But we must wander witheringly,
In other lands to die;
And where our fathers' ashes be,
Our own may never lie:
Our temple hath not left a stone.
And Mockery sits on Salem's throne.

George Gordon Lord Byron

There Be None of Beauty's Daughters

There be none of Beauty's daughters
With a magic like Thee;
And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me:
When, as if its sound were causing
The charméd ocean's pausing,
The waves lie still and gleaming,
And the lull'd winds seem dreaming:
And the midnight moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep,
Whose breast is gently heaving
As an infant's asleep:
So the spirit bows before thee
To listen and adore thee;
With a full but soft emotion,
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

George Gordon Lord Byron

There Is Pleasure In The Pathless Woods

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal.

George Gordon Lord Byron

There Was A Time, I Need Not Name

There was a time, I need not name,
Since it will ne'er forgotten be,
When all our feelings were the same
As still my soul hath been to thee.

And from that hour when first thy tongue
Confess'd a love which equall'd mine,
Though many a grief my heart hath wrung,
Unknown, and thus unfehl, by thine,

None, none hath sunk so deep as this---
To think how all that love hath flown;
Transient as every faithless kiss,
But transient in thy breast alone.

And yet my heart some solace knew,
When late I heard thy lips declare,
In accents once imagined true,
Remembrance of the days that were.

Yes! my adored, yet most unkind!
Though thou wilt never love again,
To me 'tis doubly sweet to find
Remembrance of that love remain.

Yes! 'tis a glorious thought to me,
Nor longer shall my soul repine,
Whate'er thou art or e'er shalt be,
Thou hast been dearly, solely mine.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Thou Art Not False, But Thou Art Fickle

Thou art not false, but thou art fickle,
To those thyself so fondly sought;
The tears that thou hast forced to trickle
Are doubly bitter from that thought:
'Tis this which breaks the heart thou grievest
Too well thou lov'st - too soon thou leavest.

The wholly false the heart despises,
And spurns deceiver and deceit;
But she who not a thought disguises,
Whose love is as sincere as sweet,
When she can change who loved so truly,
It feels what mine has felt so newly.

To dream of joy and wake to sorrow
Is doom'd to all who love or live;
And if, when conscious on the morrow,
We scarce our fancy can forgive,
That cheated us in slumber only,
To leave the waking soul more lonely,

What must they feel whom no false vision,
But truest, tenderest passion warm'd?
Sincere, but swift in sad transition;
As if a dream alone had charm'd?
Ah! sure such grief is fancy's scheming,
And all thy change can be but dreaming!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Thoughts Suggested By A College Examination

High in the midst, surrounded by his peers,
MAGNUS his ample front sublime up rears:
Placed on his chair of state, he seems a god.
While Sophs and Freshmen tremble at his nod.
As all around sit wrapt in speechless gloom,
His voice in thunder shakes the sounding dome;
Denouncing dire reproach to luckless fools,
Unskill'd to plod in mathematic rules.

Happy the youth in Euclid's axiorn tried,
Though littie versed in any art beside;
Who, scarcely skill'd an English line tc pen,
Scans Attic metres with a critic's ken.
What, though he knows not how his fathers bled,
When civil discord piled the fields with dead,
When Edward bade his conquering bands advance
Or Henry trampled on the crest of France.
Though marvelling at the name of Magna Charta,
Yet well he recollects the laws of Sparta;
Can tell what edicts sage Lycurgus made,
While Blackstone's on the shelf neglected laid;
Of Grecian dramas vaunts the deathless fame,
Of Avon's bard remembering scarce the name.

Such is the youth whose scientific pate
Class-honours, medals, fellowships, await
Or even, perhaps, the declamation prize
If to such glorious height he lifts his eyes.
But lo! no common orator can hope
The envied silver cup within his scope.
Not that our heads much eloquence require,
Th' ATHENIAN'S glowing style, or Tully's fire.
A manner clear or warm is useless, since
We do not try by speaking to convince.
Be other orators of pleasing proud,--
We speak to please ourselves, not move the crowd:
Our gravity prefers the muttering tone,
A proper mixture of the squeak and groan:
No borrow'd grace of action must he seen;
The slightest motion would displease the Dean;
Whilst every staring graduate would prate
Against what he could never imitate.

The man who hopes t' obtain the promised cup
Must in one posture stand, and ne'er look up;
Nor stop, but rattle over every word --
No matter what, so it can not be heard.
Thus let him hurry on, nor think to rest:
Who speaks the fastest's sure to speak the best;
Who utters most within the shortest space
May safely hope to win the wordy race.

The sons of science these, who, thus repaid,
Linger in ease in Granta's sluggish shade;
Where on Cam's sedgy banks supine they lie,
Unknown, unhonour'd live, unwept-for die:
Dull as the pictures which adorn their halls,
They think all learning fix'd within their walls:
In manners rude, in foolish forms precise,
All modern arts affecting to despise;
Yet prizes Bentley's, Brunck's, or Porson's note,
More than the verse on which the critic wrote:
Vain as their honours, heavy as their ale,
Sad as their wit, and tedious as their tale;
To friendship dead, though not untaught to feel
When Self and Church demand a bigot zeal.
With eager haste they court the lord of power,
Whether 'tis Pitt or Petty rules the hour;
To him, with suppliant smiles, they bend the head,
While distant mitres to their eyes are spread.
But should a storm o'erwhelm him with disgrace,
They'd fly to seek the next who fill'd his place.
Such are the men who learning's treasures guard!
Such is their practice, such is their reward!
This much, at least, we may presume to say --
The premium can't exceed the price they pay.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Thy Days Are Done

Thy days are done, thy fame begun;
Thy country's strains record
The triumphs of her chosen Son,
The slaughter of his sword!
The deeds he did, the fields he won,
The freedom he restored!

Though thou art fall'n, while we are free
Thou shalt not taste of death!
The generous blood that flow'd from thee
Disdain'd to sink beneath:
Within our veins its currents be,
Thy spirit on our breath!

Thy name, our charging hosts along,
Shall be the battle-word!
Thy fall, the theme of choral song
From virgin voices pour'd!
To weep would do thy glory wrong:
Thou shalt not be deplored.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To-- : From The French

Must thou go, my glorious Chief,
Sever'd from thy faithful few?
Who can tell thy warrior's grief,
Maddening o'er that long adieu?
Woman's love, and friendship's zeal,
Dear as both have been to me-
What are they to all I feel,
With a soldier's faith for thee?

Idol of the soldier's soul!
First in fight, but mightiest now;
Many could a world control;
Thee alone no doom can bow.
By thy side for years I dared
Death; and envied those who fell,
When their dying shout was heard,
Blessing him they served so well.

Would that I were cold with those,
Since this hour I live to see;
When the doubts of coward foes
Scarce dare trust a man with thee,
Dreading each should set thee free!
Oh! although in dungeons pent,
All their chains were light to me,
Gazing on thy soul unbent.

Would the sycophants of him
Now so deaf to duty's prayer,
Were his borrow'd glories dim,
In his native darkness share?
Were that world this hour his own,
All thou calmly dost resign,
Could he purchase with that throne
Hearts like those which still are thine?

My chief, my king, my friend, adieu!
Never did I droop before;
Never to my sovereign sue,
As his foes I now implore:
All I ask is to divide
Every peril he must brave;
Sharing by the hero's side
His fall, his exile, and his grave.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To A Beautiful Quaker

Sweet girl! though only once we met,
That meeting I shall ne'er forget;
And though we ne'er may meet again,
Remembrance will thy form retain.
I would not say, 'I love,' but still
My senses struggle with my will:
In vain, to drive thee from my breast,
My thoughts are more and more represt;
In vain I check the rising sighs,
Another to the last replies:
Perhaps this is not love, but yet
Our meeting I can ne'er forget.

What though we never silence broke,
Our eyes a sweeter language spoke.
The tongue in flattering falsehood deals,
And tells a tale in never feels;
Deceit the guilty lips impart,
And hush the mandates of the heart;
But soul's interpreters, the eyes,
Spurn such restraint and scorn disguise.
As thus our glances oft conversed,
And all our bosoms felt, rehearsed,
No spirit, from within, reproved us,
Say rather, "twas the spirit moved us."
Though what they utter'd I repress,
Yet I conceive thou'l partly guess;
For as on thee my memory ponders,
Perchance to me thine also wanders.
This for myself, at least, I'll say,
Thy form appears through night, through day:
Awake, with it my fancy teems;
In sleep, it smiles in fleeting dreams;
The vision charms the hours away,
And bids me curse Aurora's ray
For breaking slumbers of delight
Which make me wish for endless night:
Since, oh! whate'er my future fate,
Shall joy or woe my steps await,
Tempted by love, by storms beset,
Thine image I can ne'er forget.

Alas! again no more we meet,
No more former looks repeat;
Then let me breathe this parting prayer,
The dictate of my bosom's care:
'May heaven so guard my lovely quaker,
That anguish never can o'ertake her;
That peace and virtue ne'er forsake her,
But bliss be aye her heart's partaker!
Oh, may the happy mortal, fated
To be by dearest ties related,

For her each hour new joys discover,
And lose the husband in the lover!
May that fair bosom never know
What 't is to feel the restless woe
Which stings the soul with vain regret,
Of him who never can forget!'

George Gordon Lord Byron

To A Lady

O! had my Fate been join'd with thine,
As once this pledge appear'd a token,
These follies had not, then, been mine,
For, then, my peace had not been broken.

To thee, these early faults I owe,
To thee, the wise and old reproving:
They know my sins, but do not know
'Twas thine to break the bonds of loving.

For once my soul, like thine, was pure,
And all its rising fires could smother;
But, now, thy vows no more endure,
Bestow'd by thee upon another.

Perhaps, his peace I could destroy,
And spoil the blisses that await him;
Yet let my Rival smile in joy,
For thy dear sake, I cannot hate him.

Ah! since thy angel form is gone,
My heart no more can rest with any;
But what it sought in thee alone,
Attempts, alas! to find in many.

Then, fare thee well, deceitful Maid!
'Twere vain and fruitless to regret thee;
Nor Hope, nor Memory yield their aid,
But Pride may teach me to forget thee.

Yet all this giddy waste of years,
This tiresome round of palling pleasures;
These varied loves, these matrons' fears,
These thoughtless strains to Passion's measures---

If thou wert mine, had all been hush'd:---
This cheek, now pale from early riot,
With Passion's hectic ne'er had flush'd,
But bloom'd in calm domestic quiet.

Yes, once the rural Scene was sweet,
For Nature seem'd to smile before thee;
And once my Breast abhor'd deceit,---
For then it beat but to adore thee.

But, now, I seek for other joys---
To think, would drive my soul to madness;
In thoughtless throngs, and empty noise,
I conquer half my Bosom's sadness.

Yet, even in these, a thought will steal,
In spite of every vain endeavor;

And fiends might pity what I feel---
To know that thou art lost for ever.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To A Lady, On Being Asked My Reasons For Quitting England In The Spring

When Man, expell'd from Eden's bowers,
A moment linger'd near the gate,
Each scene recall'd the vanish'd hours,
And bade him curse his future fate.

But, wandering on through distant climes,
He learnt to bear his load of grief;
Just gave a sigh to other times,
And found in busier scenes relief.

Thus, lady! will it be with me,
And I must view thy charms no more;
For, while I linger near to thee,
I sigh for ail I knew before.

In flight I shall be surely wise,
Escaping from temptation's snare;
I cannot view my paradise
Without the wish of dwelling there.

December 2, 1808

George Gordon Lord Byron

To A Lady, Who Presented The Author With The Velvet Band Which Bound Her Tresses

This Band, which bound thy yellow hair,
Is mine, sweet girl! Thy pledge of love;
It claims my warmest, dearest care,
Like relics left of saints above.

Oh! I will wear it next my heart;
'Twill blind my soul in bonds to thee;
From me again 't will ne'er depart,
But mingle in the grave with me.

The dew I gather from thy lip
Is not so dear to me as this;
That I but for a moment sip,
And banquet on a transient bliss:

This will recall each youthful scene,
E'en when our lives are on the wane;
The leaves of Love will still be green
When Memory bids them bud again.

Oh! little lock of golden hue,
In gently waving ringlet curl'd
By the dear head on which you grow,
I would not lose you for a world.

Not though a thousand more adorn
The polish'd brow where once you shone,
Like rays which gild a cloudless morn,
Beneath Columbia's fervid zone.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To A Lady, Who Presented To The Author A Lock Of Hair Braided With His Own, And Appointed A Night In December To Meet Him In The Garden

These locks, which fondly thus entwine,
In firmer chains our hearts confine
Than all th' unmeaning protestations
Which swell with nonsense love orations.
Our love is fix'd, I think we've proved it,
Nor time, nor place, nor art have moved it;
Then wherefore should we sigh and whine,
With groundless jealousy repine,
With silly whims and fancies frantic,
Merely to make our love romantic?
Why should you weep like Lydia Languish,
And fret with self-created anguish?
Or doom the lover you have chosen,
On winter to nights to sigh half frozen;
In leafless shades to sue for pardon,
Only because the scene's a garden?
For gardens seem, by one consent
(Since Shakespeare set the precedent,
Since Juliet first declared her passion),
To from the place of assignation.
Oh! would some modern muse inspire,
And seat her by a sea-coal fire;
Or had the bard at Christmas written,
And laid the scene of love in Britain,
He surely, in commiseration,
Had changed the place of declaration.
In Italy I've no objection,
Warm nights are proper for reflection;
But here our climate is so rigid,
That love itself is rather frigid:
Think on our chilly situation,
And curb this rage for imitation.
Then let us meet, as oft we've done,
Beneath the influence of the sun;
Or, if at midnight I must meet you,
Within your mansion let me greet you:
There we can love for hours together,
Much better, in such snowy weather,
Than placed in all th' Arcadian groves
That ever witness'd rural loves;
Then, if my passion fail to please,
Next night I'll be content to freeze;
No more I'll give a loose to laughter,
But curse my fate for ever after.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To A Vain Lady

Ah! heedless girl! why thus disclose
What ne'er was meant for other ears:
Why thus destroy thine own repose
And dig the source of future tears?

Oh, thou wilt weep, imprudent maid,
While lurking envious foes will smile,
For all the follies thou hast said
Of those who spoke but to beguile.

Vain girl! thy ling'ring woes are nigh,
If thou believ'st what striplings say:
Oh, from the deep temptation fly,
Nor fall the specious spoiler's prey.

Dost thou repeat, in childish boast,
The words man utters to deceive?
Thy peace, thy hope, thy all is lost,
If thou canst venture to believe.

While now amongst thy female peers
Thou tell'st again the soothing tale,
Canst thou not mark the rising sneers
Duplicity in vain would veil?

These tales in secret silence hush,
Nor make thyself the public gaze:
What modest maid without a blush
Recounts a flattering coxcomb's praise?

Will not the laughing boy despise
Her who relates each fond conceit -
Who, thinking Heaven is in her eyes,
Yet cannot see the slight deceit?

For she who takes a soft delight
These amorous nothings in revealing,
Must credit all we say or write,
While vanity prevents concealing.

Cease, if you prize your beauty's reign!
No jealousy bids me reprove:
One, who is thus from nature vain,
I pity, but I cannot love.

January 15, 1807.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To A Youthful Friend

Few years have pass'd since thou and I
Were firmest friends, at least in name,
And childhood's gay sincerity
Preserved our feelings long the same.

But now, like me, too well thou know'st
What trifles oft the heart recall;
And those who once have loved the most
Too soon forget they loved at all.

And such the change the heart displays,
So frail is early friendship's reign,
A month's brief lapse, perhaps a day's,
Will view thy mind estranged again.

If so, it never shall be mine
To mourn the loss of such a heart;
The fault was Nature's fault, not thine
Which made thee fickle as thou art.

As rolls the ocean's changing tide,
So human feelings ebb and flow;
And who would in a breast confide
Where stormy passions ever glow?

It boots not that, together bred,
Our childish days were days of joy:
My spring of life has quickly fled;
Thou, too, hast ceased to be a boy.

And when we bid adieu to youth,
Slaves to the specious world's control,
We sigh a long farewell to truth;
That world corrupts the noblest soul.

Ah, joyous season! when the mind
Dares all things boldly but to lie;
When thought ere spoke is unconfined,
And sparkles in the placid eye.

Not so in Man's maturer years,
When Man himself is but a tool;
When interest sways our hopes and fears,
And all must love and hate by rule.

With fools in kindred vice the same,
We learn at length our faults to blend;
And those, and those alone, may claim
The prostituted name of friend.

Such is the common lot of man:
Can we then 'scape from folly free?

Can we reverse the general plan,
Nor be what all in turn must be?

No; for myself, so dark my fate
Through every turn of life hath been;
Man and the world so much I hate,
I care not when I quit the scene.

But thou, with spirit frail and light,
Wilt shine awhile, and pass away;
As glow-worms sparkle through the night,
But dare not stand the test of day.

Alas! whenever folly calls
Where parasites and princes meet
(For cherish'd first in royal halls,
The welcome vices kindly greet),

Ev'n now thou'rt nightly seen to add
One insect to the fluttering crowd;
And still thy trifling heart is glad
To join the vain and court the proud.

There dost thou glide from fair to fair,
Still simpering on with eager haste,
As flies along the gay parterre
That taint the flowers they scarcely taste.

But say, what nymph will prize the flame
Which seems, as marshy vapours move,
To flit along from dame to dame,
An ignis‑fatuus gleam of love?

What friend for thee, howe'er inclined,
Will deign to own a kindred care?
Who will debase his manly mind,
For friendship every fool may share?

In time forbear; amidst the throng
No more so base a thing be seen;
No more so idly pass along;
Be something, anything, but--mean.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To An Oak At Newstead

Young Oak! when I planted thee deep in the ground,
I hoped that thy days would be longer than mine;
That thy dark‑waving branches would flourish around,
And ivy thy trunk with its mantle entwine.

Such, such was my hope, when in infancy's
On the land of my fathers I rear'd thee with pride;
They are past, and I water thy stem with my tears,
Thy decay not the weeds that surround thee can hide.

I left thee, my Oak, and, since that fatal hour,
A stranger has dwelt in the hall of my sire;
Till manhood shall crown me, not mine is the power,
But his, whose neglect may have bade thee expire.

Oh! hardy thou went--even now little care
Might revive thy young head, and thy wounds gently heal:
But thou went not fated affection to share--
For who could suppose that a stranger would feel!

Ah, droop not, my Oak! lift thy head for a while;
Ere twice round yon Glory this planet shall run,
The hand of thy Master will teach thee to smile,
When Infancy's years of probation are done.

Oh, live then, my Oak! tow'r aloft from the weeds,
That clog thy young growth, and assist thy decay,
For still in thy bosom are life's early seeds,
And still may thy branches their beauty display.

Oh! yet, if maturity's years may be thine,
Though I shall lie low in the cavern of death,
On thy leaves yet the day‑beam of ages may shine,
Uninjured by time, or the rude winter's breath.

For centuries still may thy boughs lightly wave
O'er the Gorse of thy lord in thy canopy laid;
While the branches thus gratefully shelter his grave,
The chief who survives may recline in thy shade.

And as he, with his boys, shall revisit this spot,
He will tell them is whispers more softly to tread.
Oh! surely, by these I shall ne'er be forgot;
Remembrance still hallows the dust of the dead.

And here, will they say, when in life's glowing prime,
Perhaps he has pour'd forth his young simple lay,
And here must he sleep, till the moments of time
Are lost in the hours of Eternity's day.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Anne

Oh, Anne, your offences to me have been grievous:
I thought from my wrath no atonement could save you:
But woman is made to command and deceive us —
I look'd in your face, and I almost forgave you.

I vow'd I could ne'er for a moment respect you,
Yet thought that a day's separation was long;
When we met, I determined again to suspect you
Your smile soon convinced me suspicion was wrong.

I swore, in a transport of young indignation,
With fervent contempt evermore to disdain you:
I saw you - my anger became admiration;
And now, all my wish, all my hope's to regain you.

With beauty like yours, oh, how vain the contention!
Thus lowly I sue for forgiveness before you;
At once to conclude such a fruitless dissension,
Be false, my sweet Anne, when I cease to adore you!

January 16, 1807.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Anne: Oh, Say Not, Sweet Anne

Oh, say not, sweet Anne, that the Fates have decreed
The heart which adores you should wish to dissever;
Such Fates were to me most unkind ones indeed,
To bear me from love and from beauty for ever.

Your frowns, lovely girl, are the Fates which alone
Could bid me from fond admiration refrain;
By these, every hope, every wish were o'erthrown,
Till smiles should restore me to rapture again.

As the ivy and oak, in the forest entwined,
The rage of the tempest united must weather;
My love and my life were by nature design'd
To flourish alike, or to perish together.

Then say not, sweet Anne, that the Fates have decreed
Your lover should bid you a lasting adieu;
Till Fate can ordain that his bosom shall bleed,
His soul, his existence, are centred in you.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Belshazzar

Belshazzar! from the banquet turn,
Nor in thy sensual fulness fall;
Behold! while yet before thee burn
The graven words, the glowing wall.
Many a despot men miscall
Crown'd and anointed from on high;
But thou, the weakest, worst of all-
Is it not written, thou must die?

Go! dash the roses from thy brow--
Grey hairs but poorly wreath with them;
Youth's garlands misbecome thee now,
More than thy very diadem,
Where thou hast tarnish'd every gem:
Then throw the worthless bauble by,
Which, worn by thee, ev'n slaves con-temn;
And learn like better men to die!

Oh! early in the balance weigh'd,
And ever light of word and worth,
Whose soul expired ere youth decay'd,
And left thee but a mass of earth.
To see thee moves the scorner's mirth:
But tears in Hope's averted eye
Lament that even thou hadst birth--
Unfit to govern, live, or die.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Caroline

Think'st thou I saw thy beauteous eyes,
Suffus'd in tears, implore to stay;
And heard unmov'd thy plenteous sighs,
Which said far more than words can say?

Though keen the grief thy tears exprest,
When love and hope lay both o'erthrown;
Yet still, my girl, this bleeding breast
Throbb'd, with deep sorrow, as thine own.

But, when our cheeks with anguish glow'd,
When thy sweet lips were join'd to mine;
The tears that from my eyelids flow'd
Were lost in those which fell from thine.

Thou could'st not feel my burning cheek,
Thy gushing tears had quench'd its flame,
And, as thy tongue essay'd to speak,
In sighs alone it breath'd my name.

And yet, my girl, we weep in vain,
In vain our fate in sighs deplore;
Remembrance only can remain,
But that, will make us weep the more.

Again, thou best belov'd, adieu!
Ah! if thou canst, o'ercome regret,
Nor let thy mind past joys review,
Our only hope is, to forget!

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Caroline: Oh When Shall The Grave Hide

Oh when shall the grave hide for ever my sorrow?
Oh when shall my soul wing her flight from this clay?
The present is hell, and the coming to-morrow
But brings, with new torture, the curse of to-day.

From my eye flows no tear, from my lips flow no curses
I blast not the fiends who have hurl'd me from bliss;
For poor is the soul which bewailing rehearses
Its querulous grief, when in anguish like this.

Was my eye, 'stead of tears, with red fury flakes bright'ning,
Would my lips breathe a flame which no stream could assuage
On our foes should my glance launch in vengeance its lightning,
With transport my tongue give loose to its rage.

But now tears and curses, alike unavailing,
Would add to the souls of our tyrants delight;
Could they view us our sad separation bewailing
Their merciless hearts would rejoice at the sight.

Yet still, though we bend with a feign'd resignation,
Life beams not for us with one ray that can cheer;
Love and hope upon earth bring no more consolation,
In the grave is our hope, for in life is our fear.

Oh! when, my adored, in the tomb will they place me,
Since, in life, love and friendship for ever are fled?
If again in the mansion of death I embrace thee,
Perhaps they will leave unmolested the dead.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Caroline: When I Hear That You Express An Affection So Warm

When I hear that you express an affection so warm,
Ne'er think, my beloved, that I do not believe;
For your lip would the soul of suspicion disarm,
And your eye beams a ray which can never deceive.

Yet, still, this fond bosom regrets, while adoring,
That love, like the leaf, must fall into the sear;
That age will come on, when remembrance, deplored,
Contemplates the scenes of her youth with a tear;

That the time must arrive, when, no longer retaining
Their auburn, those locks must wave thin to the breeze,
When a few silver hairs of those tresses remaining
Prove nature a prey to decay and disease.

'Tis this, my beloved, which spreads gloom o'er my features,
Though I ne'er shall presume to arraign the decree,
Which God has proclaim'd as the fate of his creatures,
In the death which will one day deprive you of me.

Mistake not, sweet sceptic, the cause of emotion,
No doubt can the mind of your lover invade;
He worships each look with such faithful devotion,
A smile can enchant, or a tear can dissuade.

But as death, my beloved, soon or late shall o'ertake us,
And our breasts, which alive with such sympathy glow,
Will sleep in the grave till the blast shall awake us,
When calling the dead, in earth's bosom laid low,-

Oh! then let us drain, while we may, draughts of pleasure,
Which from passion like ours may unceasingly flow;
Let us pass round the cup of love's bliss in full measure,
And quaff the contents as our nectar below.

1805

George Gordon Lord Byron

To D--

In thee I fondly hoped to clasp
A friend whom death alone could sever;
Till envy, with malignant grasp,
Detach'd thee from my breast for ever.

True, she has forced thee from my breast,
Yet in my heart thou keep'st thy seat;
There, there thine image still must rest,
Until that heart shall cease to beat.

And when the grave restored her dead,
When life again to dust is given,
On thy dear breast I'll lay my head--
Without thee where would be my heaven?

February 1803

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Dives. A Fragment

Unhappy Dives! in an evil hour
'Gainst Nature's voice seduced to deeds accurst!
Once Fortune's minion, now thou feel'st her power;
Wrath's vial on thy lofty head bath burst.
In Wit, in Genius, as in Wealth the first,
How wondrous bright thy blooming morn arose!
But thou went smitten with th' unhallow'd thirst
Of crime un-named, and thy sad noon must close
In scorn, and solitude unsought, the worst of woes.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To E---

Let Folly smile, to view the names
Of thee and me in friendship twined;
Yet Virtue will have greater claims
To love, than rank with vice combined.

And though unequal is thy fate,
Since title deck'd my higher claims
Yet envy not this gaudy state;
Thine is the pride of modest worth.

Our souls at least congenial meet,
Nor can thy lot my rank disgrace;
Our intercourse is not less sweet,
Since worth of rank supplies the place.

November 1802

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Edward Noel Long, Esq.

'Nil ego contulerim jucundo sanus amico.'~Horace.

Dear Long, in this sequester'd scene,
While all around in slumber lie,
The joyous days, which ours have been
Come rolling fresh on Fancy's eye;
Thus, if, amidst the gathering storm,
While clouds the darken'd noon deform,
Yon heaven assumes a varied glow,
I hail the sky's celestial bow,
Which spreads the sign of future peace,
And bids the war of tempests cease.
Ah! though the present brings but pain,
I think those days may come again;
Or if, in melancholy mood,
Some lurking envious fear intrude,
To check my bosom's fondest thought,
And interrupt the golden dream
I crush the fiend with malice fraught,
And, still, indulge my wonted theme.
Although we ne'er again can trace,
In Granta's vale, the pedant's lore,
Nor through the groves of Ida chace
Our raptured visions, as before;
Though Youth has flown on rosy pinion,
And Manhood claims his stern dominion,
Age will not every hope destroy,
But yields some hours of sober joy.
Yes, I will hope that Time's broad wing
Will shed around some dews of spring:
But, if his scythe must sweep the flowers
Which bloom among the fairy bowers,
Where smiling Youth delights to dwell,
And hearts with early rapture swell;
In frowning Age, with cold control,
Confines the current of the soul,
Congeals the tear of Pity's eye,
Or checks the sympathetic sigh,
Or hears, unmov'd, Misfortune's groan,
And bids me feel for self alone;
Oh! may my bosom never learn
To soothe its wonted heedless flow;
Still may I rove untutor'd, wild,
But ne'er forget another's woe.
Yes, as you knew me in the days
O'er which Remembrance yet delays
And even in age, at heart a child.

Though, now, on airy visions borne,
To you my soul is still the same.
Oft has it ben my fate to mourn,

And all my former joys are tame:
But, hence! ye hours of sabl hue!
Your frowns are gone, my sorrows o'er:
By every bliss my childhood knew,
I'll think upon your shade no more.
Thus, when the whirlwind's rage is past,
And caves their sullen roar enclose,
We heed no more the wintery blast,
When lull'd by zephyr to repose.

Full often has my infant Muse
Attun'd to love her languid lyre;
But, now, without a theme to choose,
The strains in stolen sighs expire.
My youthful nymphs, alas! are flown;
E — is a wife, and C — a mother,
And Carolina sighs alone,
And Mary's given to another;
And Cora's eye, which roll'd on me,
Can now no more my love recall -
In truth, dear LONG, 'twas time to flee -
For Cora's eye will shine on all.
And though the Sun, with genial rays,
His beams aike to all displays,
And every lady's eye's a sun,
These last should be confin'd to one.
The souls' meridian don't become her,
Whose sun desplays a general summer!
Thus faint is every former flame,
And Passion's self is now a name;
As, when the ebbing flames are low,
The aid which once improv'd their light,
And bade them burn with fiercer glow,
Now quenches all their sparks in night;
Thus has it been with Passion's fires,
As many a boy and girl remembers,
While all the force of love expires,
Extinguish'd with the dying embers.

But now, dear LONG, 'tis midnight's noon,
And clouds obscure the watery moon,
Whose beauties I shall not rehearse,
Describ'd in every stripling's verse;
For why should I the path go o'er
Which every bard has trod before?
Yet ere yon silver lamp of night
Has thrice perform'd her stated round,
Has thrice retraced her path of light,
And chased away the gloom profound,
I trust that we, my gentle Friend,
Shall see her rolling orbit wend,
Above the dear-loved peaceful seat,

Which once contain'd our youth's retreat;
And then, with those our childhood knew,
We'll mingle in the festive crew;
While many a tale of former day
Shall wing the laughing hours away;
And all the flow of souls shall pour
Tha sacred intellectual shower,
Nor cease, till Luna's waning horn
Scarce glimmers through the mist of Morn.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Eliza

Eliza, what fools are the Mussulman sect,
Who to woman deny the soul's future existence!
Could they see thee, Eliza, they'd own their defect,
And this doctrine would meet with a general resistance.

Had their prophet possess'd half an atom of sense,
He ne'er would have woman from paradise driven;
Instead of his houris, a flimsy pretence,
With woman alone he had peopled his heaven.

Yet still, to increase your calamities more,
Not Content with depriving your bodies of spirit,
He allots one poor husband to share amongst four!-
With souls you'd dispense; but this last, who could bear it?

His religion to please neither party is made;
On husbands 'tis hard, to the wives most uncivil;
Still I Can't contradict, what so oft has been said,
'Though women are angels, yet wedlock's the devil.'

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Emma

Since now the hour is come at last,
When you must quit your anxious lover;
Since now our dream of bliss is past,
One pang, my girl, and all is over.

Alas! that pang will be severe,
Which bids us part to meet no more;
Which tears me far from one so dear,
Departing for a distant shore.

Well! we have pass'd some happy hours,
And joy will mingle with our tears;
When thinking on these ancient towers,
We shelter of our infant years;

Where from this Gothic casement's height,
We view's the lake, the park, the dell,
And still, though tears obstruct our sight,
We lingering look a last farewell,

O'er fields through which we used to run,
And spend the hours in childish play;
O'er shades where, when our race was done,
Reposing on my breast you lay;

Whilst I, admiring, too remiss,
Forgot to scare the hovering flies,
Yet envied every fly the kiss
It dared to give your slumbering eyes:

See still the little painted bark,
In which I row'd you o'er the lake;
See there, high waving o'er the park,
The elm I clamber'd for your sake.

These times are past — our joys are gone,
You leave me, leave this happy vale;
These scenes I must retrace alone:
Without thee what will they avail?

Who can conceive, who has not proved,
The anguish of a last embrace?
When, torn from all you fondly loved,
You bid a long adieu to peace.

This is the deepest of our woes,
For this these tears our cheeks bedew;
This is of love the final close,
Oh, God! the fondest, last adieu!

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Florence

Oh Lady! when I left the shore,
The distant shore which gave me birth,
I hardly thought to grieve once more
To quit another spot on earth:

Yet here, amidst this barren isle,
Where panting Nature droops the head,
Where only thou art seen to smile,
I view my parting hour with dread.

Though far from Albin's craggy shore,
Divided by the dark?blue main;
A few, brief, rolling seasons o'er,
Perchance I view her cliffs again:

But wheresoe'er I now may roam,
Through scorching clime, and varied sea,
Though Time restore me to my home,
I ne'er shall bend mine eyes on thee:

On thee, in whom at once conspire
All charms which heedless hearts can move,
Whom but to see is to admire,
And, oh! forgive the word - to love.

Forgive the word, in one who ne'er
With such a word can more offend;
And since thy heart I cannot share,
Believe me, what I am, thy friend.

And who so cold as look on thee,
Thou lovely wand'rer, and be less?
Nor be, what man should ever be,
The friend of Beauty in distress?

Ah! who would think that form had past
Through Danger's most destructive path
Had braved the death?wing'd tempest's blast,
And 'scaped a tyrant's fiercer wrath?

Lady! when I shall view the walls
Where free Byzantium once arose,
And Stamboul's Oriental halls
The Turkish tyrants now enclose;

Though mightiest in the lists of fame,
That glorious city still shall be;
On me 'twill hold a dearer claim,
As spot of thy nativity:

And though I bid thee now farewell,
When I behold that wondrous scene,

Since where thou art I may not dwell,
'Twill soothe to be where thou hast been.

September 1809.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To George, Earl Delwarr

Oh! yes, I will own we were dear to each other;
The friendships of childhood, though fleeting are true;
The love which you felt was the love of a brother,
Nor less the affection I cherish'd for you.

But Friendship can vary her gentle dominion;
The attachment of years in a moment expires:
Like Love, too, she moves on a swift-waving pinion,
But glows not, like Love, with unquenchable fires.

Full oft have we wander'd through Ida together,
And blest were the scenes of our youth, I allow:
In the spring of our life, how serene is the weather!
But winter's rude tempests are gathering now.

No more with affection shall memory blending,
The wonted delights of our childhood retrace:
When pride steals the bosom, the heart is unbending,
And what would be Justice appears a disgrace.

However, dear George, for I still must esteem you;
The few whom I love I can never upbraid:
The chance which has lost may in future redeem you,
Repentance will cancel the vow you have made.

I will not complain, and though chill'd is affection,
With me no corroding resentment shall live:
My bosom is calm'd by the simple reflection,
That both may be wrong, and that both should forgive.

You knew that my soul, that my heart, my existence,
If danger demanded, were wholly your own.
You knew me unalter'd by years or by distance
Devoted to love and to friendship alone.

You knew - but away with the vain retropection!
The bond of affection no longer endures;
Too late you may droop o'er the fond recollection,
And sigh for the friend who was formerly yours.

For the present, we part,--I will hope not for ever;
For time and regret will restore you at last:
To forget our dimension we both should endeavour,
I ask no atonement, but days like the past.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Lesbia

Lesbia! since far from you I've ranged,
Our souls with fond affection glow not;
You say 'tis I, not you, have changed,
I'd tell you why,--but yet I know not.

Your polish'd brow no cares have crost;
And, Lesbia! we are not much older,
Since, trembling, first my heart I lost,
Or told my love, with hope grown bolder

Sixteen was then our utmost age,
Two years have lingering past away, love!
And now new thoughts our minds engage,
At least I feel disposed to stray, love!

'Tis I that am alone to blame,
I, that am guilty of love's treason;
Since your sweet breast is still the same,
Caprice must be my only reason.

I do not, love! suspect your truth,
With jealous doubt my bosom heaves not;
Warm was the passion of my youth,
One trace of dark deceit it leaves not.

No, no, my flame was not pretended,
For, Oh! I loved you most sincerely;
And--though our dream at last is ended--
My bosom still esteems you dearly.

No more we meet in yonder bowers;
Absence has made me prone to roving;
But older, firmer hearts than ours
Have found monotony in loving.

Your cheek's soft bloom is unimpeair'd,
New beauties still are daily bright'ning,
Your eye for conquest beams prepared,
The forge of love's resistless lightning.

Arm'd thus, to make their bosoms bleed,
Many will throng to sigh like me, love!
More constant they may prove, indeed;
Fonder, alas! they ne'er can be, love!

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Lord Thurlow

'I lay my branch of laurel down.
Then thus to form Apollo's crown.
Let every other bring his own.' ~Lord Thurlow's lines to Mr. Rogers

'I lay my branch of laurel down.'
Thou 'lay thy branch of laurel down!'
Why, what thou'st stole is not enow;
And, were it lawfully thine own,
Does Rogers want it most, or thou?
Keep to thyself thy wither'd bough,
Or send it back to Doctor Donne:
Were justice done to both, I trow,
He'd have but little, and thou--none.

'Then thus to form Apollo's crown.'
A crown! why, twist it how you will,
Thy chaplet must be foolscap still.
When next you visit Delphi's town,
Inquire amongst your fellow-lodgers,
They'll tell you Phoebus gave his crown,
Some years before your birth, to Rogers.

'Let every other bring his own.'

When coals to Newcastle are carried,
And owls sent to Athens, as wonders,
From his spouse when the R egent's un-married,
Or Liverpool weeps o'er his blunders;
When Tories and Whigs cease to quarrel,
When Castlereagh's wife has an heir,
Then Rogers shall ask us for laurel,
And thou shalt have plenty to spare.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To M

Oh! did those eyes, instead of fire,
With bright, but mild affection shine:
Though they might kindle less desire,
Love, more than mortal, would be thine.

For thou art form'd so heavenly fair,
Howe'er those orbs may wildly beam,
We must admire, but still despair;
That fatal glance forbids esteem.

When Nature stamp'd thy beauteous birth,
So much perfection in thee shone,
She fear'd that, too divine for earth,
The skies might claim thee for their own.

Therefore, to guard her dearest work,
Lest angels might dispute the prize,
She bade a secret lightning lurk,
Within those once celestial eyes.

These might the boldest Sylph appall,
When gleaming with meridian blaze;
Thy beauty must enrapture all;
But who can dare thine ardent gaze?

'Tis said that Berenice's hair,
In stars adorns the vault of heaven;
But they would ne'er permit thee there,
Who wouldest so far outshine the seven.

For did those eyes as planets roll,
Thy sister-lights would scarce appear:
E'en suns, which systems now control,
Would twinkle dimly through their sphere.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To M. S. G.

Whene'er I view those lips of thine,
Their hue invites my fervent kiss;
Yet, I forego that bliss divine,
Alas! it were---unhallow'd bliss.

Whene'er I dream of that pure breast,
How could I dwell upon its snows!
Yet, is the daring wish represt,
For that,---would banish its repose.

A glance from thy soul-searching eye
Can raise with hope, depress with fear;
Yet, I conceal my love,---and why?
I would not force a painful tear.

I ne'er have told my love, yet thou
Hast seen my ardent flame too well;
And shall I plead my passion now,
To make thy bosom's heaven a hell?

No! for thou never canst be mine,
United by the priest's decree:
By any ties but those divine,
Mine, my belov'd, thou ne'er shalt be.

Then let the secret fire consume,
Let it consume, thou shalt not know:
With joy I court a certain doom,
Rather than spread its guilty glow.

I will not ease my tortur'd heart,
By driving dove-ey'd peace from thine;
Rather than such a sting impart,
Each thought presumptuous I resign.

Yes! yield those lips, for which I'd brave
More than I here shall dare to tell;
Thy innocence and mine to save,---
I bid thee now a last farewell.

Yes! yield that breast, to seek despair
And hope no more thy soft embrace;
Which to obtain, my soul would dare,
All, all reproach, but thy disgrace.

At least from guilt shalt thou be free,
No matron shall thy shame reprove;
Though cureless pangs may prey on me,
No martyr shalt thou be to love.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To M. S. G. : When I Dream That You Love Me

When I dream that you love me, you'll surely forgive;
Extend not your anger to sleep;
For in visions alone your affection can live,--
I rise, and it leaves me to weep.

Then, Morpheus! envelope my faculties fast,
Shed o'er me your languor benign;
Should the dream of to-night but resemble the last,
What rapture celestial is mine!

They tell us that slumber, the sister of death,
Mortality's emblem is given;
To fate how I long to resign my frail breath,
If this be a foretaste of heaven!

Ah! frown not, sweet lady, unbend your soft brow,
Nor deem me to happy in this;
If I sin in my dream, I atone it for now,
Thus doom'd but to gaze upon bliss.

Though in visions, sweet lady, perhaps you may smile,
Oh, think not my penance deficient!
When dreams of your presence my slumbers beguile,
To awake will be torture sufficient.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Marion

Marion! why that pensive brow?
What disgust to life hast thou?
Change that discontented air;
Frowns become not one so fair.
'Tis not love disturbs thy rest,
Love's a stranger to thy breast;
He in dimpling smiles appears,
Or mourns in weedy timid tears'
Or bends the languid eyelid down,
But shuns the cold forbidding frown.
Then resume thy former fire
Some will love, and all admire;
While that icy aspect chills us,
Nought but cool indifference thrills us.
Wou'dst thou wandering hearts beguile,
Smile at least, or seem to smile.
Eyes like thine were never meant
To hide their orbs in dark restraint.
Spite of all thou fain wouldest say,
Still in truant beams they play.
Thy lips – but here my modest Muse
Her impulse chaste must needs refuse:
She blushes, curt'sies, frowns, – in short she
Dreads lest the subject should transport me;
And flying off in search of reason,
Brings prudence back in proper season.
All I shall therefore say (whate'er
I think, is neither here nor there)
Is, that such lips of looks endearing,
Were form'd for better things than sneering:
Of soothing compliments divested,
Advice at least's disinterested;
Such is my artless song to thee,
From all the flow of flattery free;
Counsel like mine is as a brother's,
My heart is given to some others;
That is to say, unskill'd to cozen
It shares itself among a dozen.

Marion, adieu! oh, pr'ythee slight not
This warning, though it may delight not;
And, lest my precepts be displeasing
To those who think remonstrance teasing:
At once I'll tell thee our opinion
Concerning woman's soft dominion:
Howe'er we gaze with admiration
On eyes of blue or lips carnation,
Howe'er the flowing locks attract us,
Howe'er those beauties may distract us,
Still fickle, we are prone to rove,
These cannot fix our souls to love;
It is not too severe a stricture

To say they form a pretty picture;
But wouldest thou see the secret chain
Which binds us in your humble train,
To hail you queens of all creation,
Know, in a word, 'tis ANIMATION.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Mary, On Receiving Her Picture

This faint resemblance of thy charms,
(Though strong as mortal art could give,)
My constant heart of fear disarms,
Revives my hopes, and bids me live.

Here, I can trace the locks of gold
Which round thy snowy forehead wave;
The cheeks which sprung from Beauty's mould,
The lips, which made me Beauty's slave.

Here I can trace---ah, no! that eye,
Whose azure floats in liquid fire,
Must all the painter's art defy,
And bid him from the task retire.

Here, I behold its beauteous hue;
But where's the beam so sweetly straying,
Which gave a lustre to its blue,
Like Luna o'er the ocean playing?

Sweet copy! far more dear to me,
Lifeless, unfeeling as thou art,
Than all the living forms could be,
Save her who plac'd thee next my heart.

She plac'd it, sad, with needless fear,
Lest time might shake my wavering soul,
Unconscious that her image there
Held every sense in fast control.

Thro' hours, thro' years, thro' time, 'twill cheer---
My hope, in gloomy moments, raise;
In life's last conflict 'twill appear,
And meet my fond, expiring gaze.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Mr. Murray

To hook the reader, you, John Murray,
Have publish'd 'Anjou's Margaret,
Which won't be sold off in a hurry
(At least, it has not been as yet);
And then, still further to bewilder em,
Without remorse, you set up 'Ilderim;'
So mind you don't get into debt,
Because as how, if you should fail,
These books would he but baddish bail.

And mind you do not let escape
These rhymes to Morning Post or Parry,
Which would be very treacherous--very,
And get me into such a scrape!
For, firstly, I should have to sally,
All in my little boat, against a Galley;
And, should I chance to slay the Assyrian wight,
Have next to combat with the female knight.

March 25, 1817.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Mr. Murray (For Oxford And For Waldegrave)

For Oxford and for Waldegrave
You give much more than me you gave;
Which is not fairly to behave,
My Murray.

Because if a live dog, 'tis said,
Be worth a lion fairly sped,
A live lord must be worth two dead,
My Murray.

And if, as the opinion goes,
Verse hath a better sale than prose--
Certes, I should have more than those,
My Murray.

But now this sheet is nearly cramm'd,
So, if you will, I shan't be shamm'd,
And if you won't, you may be damn'd,
My Murray.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Mr. Murray (Strahan, Tonson Lintot Of The Times)

Strahan, Tonson Lintot of the times,
Patron and publisher of rhymes,
For thee the bard up Pindus climbs,
My Murray.

To thee, with hope and terror dumb,
The unedged MS. authors come;
Thou printest all - and sellest some--
My Murray.

Upon thy table's baize so green
The last new Quarterly is seen,--
But where is thy new Magazine,
My Murray?

Along thy sprucest bookshelves shine
The works thou deemest most divine--
The 'Art of Cookery,' and mine,
My Murray.

Tours, Travels, Essays, too, I wist,
And Sermons, to thy mill bring grist;
And then thou hast the 'Navy List,'
My Murray.

And Heaven forbid I should conclude
Without 'the Board of Longitude,'
Although this narrow paper would,
My Murray.

Venice, March 25, 1818.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To My Son

Those flaxen locks, those eyes of blue
Bright as thy mother's in their hue;
Those rosy lips, whose dimples play
And smile to steal the heart away,
Recall a scene of former joy,
And touch thy fathers heart, my Boy!

And thou canst lisp a father's name--
Ah, William, were thine own the same,-
No self‑reproach--but, let me cease--
My care for thee shall purchase peace;
Thy mother's shade shall smile in joy,
And pardon all the past, my Boy!

Her lowly grave the turf has prest,
And thou hast known a stranger's breast;
Derision sneers upon thy birth,
And yields thee scarce a name on earth;
Yet shall not these one hops destroy,--
A Father's heart is throe, my Boy!

Why, let the world unfeeling frown,
Must I fond Nature's claim disown?
Ah, no--though moralists reprove,
I hail thee, dearest child of love,
Fair cherub, pledge of youth and joy--
A Father guards thy birth, my Boy!

Oh, 'twill be sweet in thee to trace,
Ere age has wrinkled o'er my face,
Ere half my glass of life is run,
At once a brother and a son;
And all my wane of years employ
In justice done to thee, my Boy!

Although so young thy heedless sire,
Youth will not damp parental fire;
And, wert thou still less dear to me,
While Helen's form revives in thee,
The breast which beat to former joy,
Will ne'er desert its pledge, my Boy!

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Romance

Parent of golden dreams, Romance!
Auspicious Queen of childish joys,
Who lead'st along, in airy dance,
Thy votive train of girls and boys;
At length, in spells no longer bound,
I break the fetters of my youth;
No more I tread thy mystic round,
But leave thy realms for those of Truth.

And yet 'tis hard to quit the dreams
Which haunt the unsuspecting soul,
Where every nymph a goddess seems,
Whose eyes through rays immortal roll;
While Fancy holds her boundless reign,
And all assume a varied hue;
When Virgins seem no longer vain,
And even Woman's smiles are true.

And must we own thee, but a name,
And from thy hall of clouds descend?
Nor find a Sylph in every dame,
A Pylades in every friend?
But leave, at once, thy realms of air i
To mingling bands of fairy elves;
Confess that woman's false as fair,
And friends have feeling for---themselves?

With shame, I own, I've felt thy sway;
Repentant, now thy reign is o'er;
No more thy precepts I obey,
No more on fancied pinions soar;
Fond fool! to love a sparkling eye,
And think that eye to truth was dear;
To trust a passing wanton's sigh,
And melt beneath a wanton's tear!

Romance! disgusted with deceit,
Far from thy motley court I fly,
Where Affectation holds her seat,
And sickly Sensibility;
Whose silly tears can never flow
For any pangs excepting thine;
Who turns aside from real woe,
To steep in dew thy gaudy shrine.

Now join with sable Sympathy,
With cypress crown'd, array'd in weeds,
Who heaves with thee her simple sigh,
Whose breast for every bosom bleeds;
And call thy sylvan female choir,
To mourn a Swain for ever gone,
Who once could glow with equal fire,

But bends not now before thy throne.

Ye genial Nymphs, whose ready tears
On all occasions swiftly flow;
Whose bosoms heave with fancied fears,
With fancied flames and phrenzy glow
Say, will you mourn my absent name,
Apostate from your gentle train
An infant Bard, at least, may claim
From you a sympathetic strain.

Adieu, fond race! a long adieu!
The hour of fate is hovering nigh;
E'en now the gulf appears in view,
Where unlamented you must lie:
Oblivion's blackening lake is seen,
Convuls'd by gales you cannot weather,
Where you, and eke your gentle queen,
Alas! must perish altogether.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To The Author Of A Sonnet, Beginning, '

Thy verse is 'sad' enough, no doubt:
A devilish deal more sad than witty!
Why we should weep I can't find out,
Unless for thee we weep in pity.

Yet there is one I pity more;
And much, alas! I think he needs it;
For he, I'm sure, will suffer sore,
Who, to his own misfortune, reads it.

Thy rhymes, without the aid of magic,
May once be read - but never after:
Yet their effect's by no means tragic,
Although by far too dull for laughter.

But would you make our bosoms bleed,
And of no common pang complain -
If you would make us weep indeed,
Tell us, you'll read them o'er again.

March 8, 1807

George Gordon Lord Byron

To The Countess Of Blessington

You have ask'd for a verse:--the request
In a rhymer 'twere strange to deny;
But my Hippocrene was but my breast,
And my feelings (its fountain) are dry.

Were I now as I was, I had sung
What Lawrence has painted so well;
But the strain would expire on my tongue,
And the theme is too soft for my shell.

I am ashes where once I was fire,
And the bard in my bosom is dead;
What I loved I now merely admire,
And my heart is as grey as my head.

My life is not dated by years--
There are moments which act as plough;
And there is not a furrow appears
But is deep in my soul as my brow.

Let the young and the brilliant aspire
To sing what I gaze on in vain;
For sorrow has torn from my lyre
The string which was worthy the strain.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To The Duke Of Dorset

Dorset! whose early steps with mine have stray'd,
Exploring every path of Ida's glade;
Whom still affection taught me to defend
And made me less a tyrant than a friend
Though the harsh custom of our youthful band
Bade thee obey, and gave me to command;
Thee, on whose head a few short years will shower
The gift of riches and the pride of power;
E'en now a name illustrious is thine own,
Renown'd in rank, nor far beneath the throne.
Yet, Dorset, let not this seduce thy soul
To shun fair science, or evade control,
Though passive tutors, fearful to dispraise
The titled child, whose future breath may raise,
View ducal errors with indulgent eyes,
And wink at faults they tremble to chastise
When youthful parasites, who bend the knee
To wealth, their golden idol, not to thee,--
And even in simple boyhood 's opening dawn
Some slaves are found to flatter and to fawn,--
When these declare, ' that pomp alone should wait
On one by birth predestined to be great;
That books were only meant for drudging fools,
That gallant spirits scorn the common rules;'
Believe them not;-- they point the path to shame,
And seek to blast the honours of thy name.
Turn to the few in Ida's early throng,
Whose souls disdain not to condemn the wrong;
Or if, amidst the comrades of thy youth,
None dare to raise the sterner voice of truth,
Ask thine own heart; 'twill bid thee, boy, forbear;
For well I know that virtue lingers there.
Yes! I have mark'd thee many a passing day,
But now new scenes invite me far away;
Yes! I have mark'd within that generous mind
A soul, if well matured, to bless mankind.
Ah! though myself by nature haughty, wild,
Whom Indiscretion hail'd her favourite child;
Though every error stamps me for her own,
And dooms my fall, I fain would fall alone;
Though my proud heart no precept now can tame,
I love the virtues which I cannot claim.
'Tis not enough, with other sons of power
To gleam tile lambent meteor of an hour;
To swell some peerage page in feeble pride,
With long-drawn names that grace no page beside;
Then share with titled crowds the common lot--
In life just gazed at, in the grave forgot;
While nought divides thee from the vulgar dead,
Except the dull cold stone that hides thy head,
The mouldering 'scutcheon, or the herald's roll,
That well-emblazon'd but neglected scroll,

Where lords, unhonour'd, in the tomb may find
One spot, to leave a worthless name behind.
There sleep, unnoticed as the gloomy vaults
That veil their dust, their follies, and their faults,
A race, with old armorial lists o'erspread,
In records destined never to be read.
Fain would I view thee, with prophetic eyes,
Exalted more among the good and wise,
A glorious and a long career pursue,
As first in rank, the first in talent too:
Spurn every vice, each little meanness shun;
Not Fortune's minion, but her noblest son.
Turn to the annals of a former day;
Bright are the deeds thine earlier sires play.
One, though a Courtier, lived a man of worth,
And call'd, proud boast! the British drama forth.
Another view, not less renown'd for wit;
Alike for Courts, and camps, or senates fit;
Bold in the field, and favour'd by the Nine;
In every splendid part ordain'd to shine;
Far, far distingish'd ish'd from the glittering throng,
The pride of princes, and the boast of song.
Such were thy fathers; thus preserve their name;
Not heir to titles only, but to fame.
The hour draws nigh, a few brief days will close,
To me, this little scene of joys and woes;
Each knell of Time now warns me to resign
Shades where Hope, Peace, and Friendship all were mine:
Hope, that could vary like the rainbow's hue,
And gild their pinions as the moments flew;
Peace, that reflection never frown'd away,
By dreams of ill to cloud some future day;
Friendship, whose truth let childhood only tell;
Alas! they love not long, who love so well.
To these adieu! nor let me linger o'er
Scenes hail'd, as exiles hall their native shore,
Receding, slowly through the dark-blue deep,
Beheld by eyes that mourn, yet cannot weep.
Dorset, farewell! I will not ask one part
Of sad remembrance in so young a heart;
The coming Morrow from thy youthful mind
Will sweep my name, nor leave a trace behind.
And yet, perhaps, in some maturer year,
Since chance has thrown us in the self same sphere,
Since the same senate, nay, the same debate,
May one day claim our suffrage for the state,
We hence may meet, and pass each other by
With faint regard, or cold and distant eye.
For me, in future, neither friend nor foe,
A stranger to thyself thy weal or woe,
With thee non more saain I hope to trace
The recollection of our early race;

No more, as once, in social hours rejoice,
Or hear, unless in crowds, thy well-known voice:
Still, if the wishes of a heart untaught
To veil those feelings which perchance it ought,
If these – but let me cease the lengthen'd strain,--
Oh! if these wishes arc not breathed in vain,
The guardian seraph who directs thy fate
Will leave thee glorious, as he found thee great.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To The Earl Of Clare

'Tu semper amoris
Sisd memor, etcari comitis ne abscedat imago'~Val Flac

Friend of my youth! when young we roved,
Like striplings mutually beloved,
With friendship's purest glow,
The bliss which wing'd those rosy hours
Was such as pleasure seldom showers
On mortals here below.

The recollection seems alone
Dearer than all the joys I've known,
When distant far from you:
Though pain, 'tis still a pleasing pain,
To trace those days and hours again,
And sigh again, adieu!

My pensive memory lingers o'er
Those scenes to be enjoy'd no more,
Those scenes regretted ever
The measure of our youth is full,
Life's evening dream is dark and dull,
And we rnay meet - ah! never!

As when one parent spring supplies
Two streams which from one fountain rise
Together join'd in 'vain;
How soon' diverging from their source,
Each murmuring, seeks another course,
Till mingled in the main!

Our vital streams of weal or woe,
Though near, alas! distinctly flow,
Nor mingle as before:
Now swift or slow, now black or clear,
Till death's unfathom'd gulf appear,
And both shall quit the shore.

Our souls, my friend! which once supplied
One wish, nor breathed a thought beside,
Now flow in different channels:
Disdaining humbler rural sports,
'Tis yours to mix in polish'd courts,
And shine in fashion's annals

; 'Tis mine to waste on love my time,
Or vent my reveries in rhyme,
Without the aid of reason;
For sense and reason (critics know it)
Have quitted every amorous poet,
Nor left a thought to seize on.

Poor LITTLE! sweet, melodious bard!
Of late esteem'd it monstrous hard
That he, who sang before all,-
He who the lore of love expanded,-
By dire reviewers should be branded
As void of wit and moral.

And yet, while Beauty's praise is thine,
Harmonious favourite of the nine,
Repine not at thy lot.
Thy soothing lays may still be read,
When Persecution's arm is dead,
And critics are forgot.

Still I must yield those worthies merit,
Who chasten, with unsparing spirit,
Bad rhymes, and those who write them;
And though myself may be the next
By criticism to be vexed,
I really will not fight them.

Perhaps they would do quite as well
To break the rudely sounding shell
Of such a young beginner:
He who offends at pert nineteen,
Ere thirty may become, I ween,
A very harden'd sinner.

Now, Clare, I must return to you;
And, sure, apologies are due:
Accept, then, my concession
In truth dear Clare, in fancy's flight
I soar along from left to right;
My muse admires digression

I think I said 'twould be your fate
To add one star to royal state;-
May regal smiles attend you!
And should a noble monarch reign,
You will not seek his smiles in vain,
If worth can recommend you.

Yet since in danger courts abound,
Where specious rivals glitter round,
From snares may saints preserve you;
And grant your love or friendship ne'er
From any claim a kindred care,
But those who best deserve you!

Not for a moment may you stray
From truth's secure, unerring way!

May no delights decoy!
O'er roses may your footsteps move,
Your smiles be ever smiles of love,
Your tears be tears of joy!

Oh! if you wish that happiness
Your coming days and years may bless,
And virtues crown your brow;
Be still as you were wont to be,
Spotless as you've been known to me,-
Be still as you are now.

And though some trifling share of praise,
To cheer my last declining days,
To me were doubly dear;
Whilst blessing your beloved name
I'd waive at once a poet's fame,
To prove a prophet here.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To The Sighing Strephon

Your pardon, my friend, if my rhymes did offend;
Your pardon, a thousand times o'er:
From friendship I strove your pangs to remove,
But, I swear, I will do so no more.

Since your beautiful maid your flame has repaid,
No more I your folly regret
She's now most divine, and I bow at the shrine
Of this quickly reformed coquette.

Yet still, I must own, I should never have known
From your verses what else she deserved;
Your pain seem'd so great, I pitied your fate,
As your fair was so devilish reserved.

Since the baim-br'eathing kiss of this magical miss
Can such wonderful transports produce;
Since the 'world you forget, when your lips once have met,'
My counsel will get but abuse. You Say,

'When I rove, I know nothing of love;'
'Tis true, 'I am given to range;
If I rightly remember, I've loved a good number,
Yet there's pleasure, at least, in a change

I will not advance, by the rules of romance,
To humour a whimsical fair;
Though a smile may delight, yet a frown won't affright,
Or drlve me to dreadful despair.

While my blood is thus warm I ne'er shall reform,
To mix in the Platonists' school;
Of this I am sure, was my passion so pure,
Thy mistress would think me a fool.

And if I should shun every woman for one,
Whose image must fill my whole breast--
Whom I must prefer, and sigh but for her--
What an insult 'twould be to the rest!

ow, Strephon, good bye, I cannot deny
Your passion appears most absurd;
Such love as you plead is pure love indeed,
For it only consists in the word.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Thomas Moore

My boat is on the shore,
And my bark is on the sea;
But, before I go, Tom Moore,
Here's a double health to thee!

Here's a sigh to those who love me,
And a smile to those who hate;
And, whatever sky's above me,
Here's a heart for every fate.

Though the ocean roar around me,
Yet it still shall bear me on;
Though a desert should surround me,
It hath springs that may be won.

Were't the last drop in the well,
As I gasp'd upon the brink,
Ere my fainting spirit fell,
'Tis to thee that I would drink.

With that water, as this wine,
The libation I would pour
Should be -peace with thine and mine,
And a health to thee, Tom Moore!

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Thomas Moore (My Boat Is On The Shore)

I.

My boat is on the shore,
And my bark is on the sea;
But before I go, Tom Moore,
Here's a double health to thee!

II.

Here's a sigh to those who love me,
And a smile to those who hate;
And, whatever sky's above me,
Here's a heart for every fate.

III.

Though the ocean roar around me,
Yet it still shall bear me on;
Though a desert should surround me,
It hath springs that may be won.

IV.

Were't the last drop in the well,
As I gasp'd upon the brink,
Ere my fainting spirit fell
'Tis to thee that I would drink.

V.

With that water, as this wine,
The libation I would pour
Should be - peace with thine and mine,
And a health to thee, Tom Moore.

July 1817.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Thomas Moore : Written The Evening Before His Visit To Mr. Leigh Hunt In Horsemonger Lane Gaol, May 19, 1813

Oh you, who in all names can tickle the town,
Anacreon, Tom Little, Tom Moore, or Tom Brown,
For hang me if I know of which you may most brag,
Your Quarto two-pounds, or your Two-penny Post Bag;

But now to my letter-to yours 'tis an answer--
To-morrow be with me, as soon as you can, sir,
All ready and dress'd for proceeding to sponge on
(According to compact) the wit in the dungeon--
Pray Phobus at length our political ma-lice
May not get us lodgings within the same palace!
I suppose that to-night you're engaged with some codgers,
And for Sotheby's Blues have deserted Sam Rogers;
And I, though with cold I have nearly my death got,
Must put on my breeches, and wait on the Heathcote;
But to-morrow, at four, we will both play the Scurra,
And you'll be Catullus, the Regent Mamurra.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Thyrza

Without a stone to mark the spot,
And say, what Truth might well have said,
By all, save one, perchance forgot,
Ah! wherefore art thou lowly laid?

By many a shore and many a sea
Divided, yet beloved in vain;
The past, the future fled to thee,
To bid us meet no ne'er again!

Could this have been--a word, a look,
That softly said, 'We part in peace,'
Had taught my bosom how to brook,
With fainter sighs, thy soul's release.

And didst thou not, since Death for thee
Prepared a light and pangless dart,
Once long for him thou ne'er shaft see,
Who held, and holds thee in his heart?

Oh! who like him had watch'd thee here?
Or sadly mark'd thy glazing eye,
In that dread hour ere death appear,
When silent sorrow fears to sigh,

Till all was past; But when no more
'Twas thine to reek of human woe,
Affection's heart-drops, gushing o'er,
Had flow'd as fast--as now they flow.

Shall they not flow, when many a day
In these, to me, deserted towers,
Ere call'd but for a time away,
Affection's mingling tears were ours?

Ours too the glance none saw beside;
The smile none else might understand;
The whisper'd thought of hearts allied,
The pressure of the thrilling hand;

The kiss, so guiltless and refined,
That Love each warmer wish forbore;
Those eyes proclaim'd so pure a mind,
Even Passion blush'd to plead for more.

The tone, that taught me to rejoice,
When prone, unlike thee, to repine;
The song, celestial from thy voice,
But sweet to me from none but thine;

The pledge we wore--I wear it still,
But where is thine?--Ah! where art thou?

Oft have I borne the weight of ill,
But never bent beneath till now!

Well hast thou left in life's best bloom
The cup of woe for me to drain.
If rest alone be in the tomb,
I would not wish thee here again.

But if in worlds more blest than this
Thy virtues seek a fitter sphere,
Impart some portion of thy bliss,
To wean me from mine anguish here.

Teach me--too early taught by thee!
To bear, forgiving and forgiven:
On earth by love was such to me--
It fain would form my hope in heaven!

October 11, 1811.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Thyrza: And Thou Art Dead, As Young And Fair

And thou art dead, as young and fair
As aught of mortal birth;
And form so soft, and charms so rare,
Too soon return'd to Earth!
Though Earth received them in her bed
And o'er the spot the crowd may tread
In carelessness or mirth,
There is an eye which could not brook
A moment on that grave to look.

I will not ask where thou liest low,
Nor gaze upon the spot;
There flowers or weeds at will may grow,
So I behold them not:
It is enough for me to prove
That what I loved, and long must love,
Like common earth can rot;
To me there needs no stone to tell,
'Tis Nothing that I loved so well.

Yet did I love thee to the last
As fervently as thou,
Who didst not change through all the past,
And cans't not alter now.
The love where Death has set his seal,
Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,
Nor falsehood disavow:
And, what were worse, thou canst not see
Or wrong, or change, or fault in me.

The better days of life were ours;
The worst can be but mine:
The sun that cheers, the storm that lowers,
Shall never more be thine.
The silence of that dreamless sleep
I envy now too much to weep;
Nor need I to repine,
That all those charms have pass'd away
I might have watch'd through long decay.

The flower in ripen'd bloom unmatch'd
Must fall the earliest prey;
Though by no hand untimely snatch'd,
The leaves must drop away:
And yet it were a greater grief
To watch it withering, leaf by leaf,
Than see it pluck'd to-day;
Since earthly eye but ill can bear
To trace the change to foul from fair.

I know not if I could have borne
To see thy beauties fade;

The night that followed such a morn
Had worn a deeper shade:
Thy day without a cloud hath passed
And thou wert lovely to the last;
Extinguish'd, not decay'd;
As stars that shoot along the sky
Shine brightest as they fall from high.

As once I wept, if I could weep,
My tears might well be shed,
To think I was not near to keep
One vigil o'er thy bed;
To gaze, how fondly! on thy face,
To fold thee in a faint embrace,
Uphold thy drooping head;
And show that love, however vain,
Nor thou nor I can feel again.

Yet how much less it were to gain,
Though thou hast left me free,
The loveliest things that still remain,
Than thus remember thee!
The all of thine that cannot die
Through dark and dread Eternity
Returns again to me,
And more thy buried love endears
Than aught except its living years.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Time

Time! on whose arbitrary wing
The varying hours must flag or fly,
Whose tardy winter, fleeting spring,
But drag or drive us on to die---
Hail thou! who on my birth bestowed
Those boons to all that know thee known;
Yet better I sustain thy load,
For now I bear the weight alone.
I would not one fond heart should share
The bitter moments thou hast given;
And pardon thee---since thou couldst spare
All that I loved, to peace or Heaven.
To them be joy or rest---on me
Thy future ills shall press in vain;
I nothing owe but years to thee,
A debt already paid in pain.
Yet even that pain was some relief;
It felt, but still forgot thy power:
The active agony of grief
Retards, but never counts the hour.
In joy I've sighed to think thy flight
Would soon subside from swift to slow;
Thy cloud could overcast the light,
But could not add a night to Woe;
For then, however drear and dark,
My soul was suited to thy sky;
One star alone shot forth a spark
To prove thee---not Eternity.
That beam hath sunk---and now thou art
A blank---a thing to count and curse
Through each dull tedious trifling part,
Which all regret, yet all rehearse.
One scene even thou canst not deform---
The limit of thy sloth or speed
When future wanderers bear the storm
Which we shall sleep too sound to heed.
And I can smile to think how weak
Thine efforts shortly shall be shown,
When all the vengeance thou canst wreak
Must fall upon---a nameless stone.

George Gordon Lord Byron

To Woman

Woman! experience might have told me,
That all must love thee who behold thee:
Surely experience might have taught
Thy firmest promises are nought:
But, placed in all thy charms before me,
All I forget, but to adore thee.
Oh memory! Thou choicest blessing
When join'd with hope, when still possessing;
But how much cursed by every lover
When hope is fled and passion's over.
Woman, that fair and fond deceiver,
How throbs the pulse when first we view
The eye that rolls in glossy blue,
Or sparkles black, or mildly throws
A beam from under hazel brows!
How quick we credit every oath,
And hear her plight the willing troth!
Fondly we hope't will last for aye,
When, lo! she changes in a day.
This record will for ever stand,
'Woman, thy vows are traced in sand.'

George Gordon Lord Byron

Translation From Catullus

AD LESBIAM

Equal to Jove that youth must be--
Greater than Jove he seems to me--
Who, free from Jealousy's alarms,
Securely views thy matchless charms.
That cheek, which ever dimpling glows,
That mouth, from whence such music flows,
To him, alike, are always known,
Reserved for him, and him alone.
Ah! Lesbia! though 'tis death to me,
I cannot choose but look on thee;
Whilst trembling with a thousand fears,
Parch'd to the throat my tongue adheres,
My pulse beats quick, my breath heaves short,
My limbs deny their slight support,
Cold dews my pallid face o'erspread,
With deadly langour droops my head,
My ears with tingling echoes ring,
And life itself is on the wing;
My eyes refuse the cheering light,
Their orbs are veil'd in starless night:
Such pangs my nature sinks beneath,
And feels a temporary death.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Translation From Horace

[Justum et tenacem propositi virum, &c.]

The man of firm and noble soul
No factious clamours can control;
No threat'ning tyrant's darkling brow
Can swerve him from his just intent:
Gales the warring waves which plough,
By Auster on the billows spent,
To curb the Adriatic main,
Would awe his fix'd, determined mind in vain.
Ay, and the red right arm of Jove,
Hurtling his lightnings from above,
With all his terrors, there unfurl'd,
He would unmoved, unawed, behold.
The flames of an expiring world,
Again in crashing chaos roll'd,
In vast promiscuous ruin hurl'd,
Might light his glorious funeral pile:
Still dauntless 'midst the wreck of earth he'd smile

George Gordon Lord Byron

Translation From The Medea Of Euripides

When fierce conflicting urge
The breast where love is wont to glow,
What mind can stem the stormy surge
Which rolls the tide of human woe?
The hope of praise, the dread of shame,
Can rouse the tortured breast no more;
The wild desire, the guilty flame,
Absorbs each wish it felt before.

But if affection gently thrills
The soul by purer dreams possest,
The pleasing balm of mortal ills
In love can soothe the aching breast:
If thus thou comest in disguise,
Fair Venus! from thy native heaven,
What heart unfeeling would despise
The sweetest boon the gods have given?

But never from thy golden bow
May I beneath the shaft expire!
Whose creeping venom, sure and slow,
Awakes an all-consuming fire:
Ye racking doubts! ye jealous fears!
With others wage internal war;
Repentance, source of future tears,
From me be ever distant far!

May no distracting thoughts destroy
The holy calm of sacred love!
May all the hours be wing'd with joy,
Which hover faithful hearts above!
Fair Venus, on thy myrtle shrine
May I with some fair lover sigh,
Whose heart may mingle pure with mine --
With me to live, with me to die!

My native soil! beloved before,
Now dearer as my peaceful home,
Ne'er may I quit thy rocky shore,
A hapless banish'd wretch to roam!
This very day, this very hour,
May I resign this fleeting breath;
Nor quit my silent humble bower,
A doom to me far worse than death.

Have I not heard the exile's sigh?
And seen the exile's silent tear,
Through distant climes condemn'd to fly,
A pensive, weary wanderer here?
Ah, hapless dame! no sire bewails,
No friend thy wretched fate deplores,
No kindred voice with rapture hails

Thy steps within a stranger's doors.

Perish the fiend whose iron heart,
To fair affection's truth unknown,
Bids her he fondly loved depart,
Unpitied, helpless, and alone;
Who ne'er unlocks with silver key
The milder treasures of his soul,--
May such a friend be far from me,
And ocean's storms between us roll!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Translation Of A Romaic Love Song

Ah! Love was never yet without
The pang, the agony, the doubt,
Which rends my heart with ceaseless sigh,
While day and night roll darkling by.

Without one friend to hear my woe,
I faint, I die beneath the blow.
That Love had arrows well I knew;
Alas! I find them poison'd too.

Birds, yet in freedom, shun the net
Which Love around your haunts hath set;
Or, circled by his fatal fire,
Your hearts shall burn, your hopes expire.

A bird of free and careless wing
Was I through many a smiling spring;
But caught within the subtle snare,
I burn, and feebly flutter there.

Who ne'er have loved, and loved in vain,
Can neither feel nor pity pain,
The cold repulse, the look askance,
The lightning of Love's angry glance.

In flattering dreams I deem'd thee mine;
Now hope, and he who hoped, decline'
Like melting wax, or withering flower,
I feel my passion, and thy power.

My light of life! ah, tell me why
That pouting lip, and alter'd eye?
My bird of love! my beauteous mate!
And art thou changed, and canst thou hate?

Mine eyes like wintry streams o'erflow:
What wretch with me would barter woe?
My bird! relent: one note could give
A charm to bid thy lover live.

My curdling blood, my madd'ning brain,
In silent anguish I sustain
And still thy heart, without partaking
One pang, exults - while mine is breaking.

Pour me the poison; fear not thou!
Thou canst not murder more than now:
I've lived to curse my natal day,
And Love, that thus can lingering slay.

My wounded soul, my bleeding breast,
Can patience preach thee into rest?

Alas! too late, I dearly know
That joy is harbinger of woe.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Translation Of The Epitaph On Virgil And Tibullus By Domitius Marsus

He who sublime in epic numbers roll'd,
And he who struck the softer lyre of love,
By Death's unequal hand alike controll'd,
Fit comrades in Elysian regions move!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Translation Of The Famous Greek War Song

Sons of the Greeks, arise!
The glorious hour's gone forth,
And, worthy of such ties,
Display who gave us birth.

CHORUS.
Sons of Greeks! let us go
In arms against the foe,
Till their hated blood shall flow
In a river past our feet.

Then manfully despising
The Turkish tyrant's yoke,
Let your country see you rising,
And all her chains are broke.
Brave shades of chiefs and sages,
Behold the coming strife!
Hellenes of past ages,
Oh, start again to life!
At the sound of my trumpet, breaking
Your sleep, oh, loin with me!
And the seven-hill'd city seeking,
Fight, conquer, till we're free.

Sons of Greeks, &c.

Sparta, Sparta, why in slumbers
Lethargic dolt thou lie?
Awake, and join thy numbers
With Athens, old ally!
Leonidas recalling,
That chief of ancient song,
Who saved ye once from falling,
The terrible! the strong!
Who made that bold diversion
In old Thermopylæ
And warring with the Persian
To keep his country free;
With his three hundred waging
The battle, long he stood,
And like a lion raging,
Expired in seas of blood.
Sons of Greeks, &c.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Translation Of The Nurse's Dole In The Medea Of Euripides

Oh how I wish that an embargo
Had kept in port the good ship Argo!
Who, still unlaunched from Grecian docks,
Had never pass'd the Azure rocks;
But now I fear her trip will be a
Damned business for my Miss Medea, &c. &c.

June 1810.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Translation Of The Romaic Song

I enter thy garden of roses,
Beloved and fair Haidée,
Each morning where Flora reposes,
For surely I see her in thee.
Oh, Lovely! thus low I implore thee,
Receive this fond truth from my tongue,
Which utters its song to adore thee,
Yet trembles for what it has sung;
As the branch, at the bidding of Nature,
Adds fragrance and fruit to the tree,
Through her eyes, through her every feature,
Shines the soul of the young Haidée.

But the loveliest garden grows hateful
When Love has abandon'd the bowers;
Bring me hemlock - since mine is un-grateful,
That herb is more fragrant than flowers.
The poison, when pour'd from the chalice,
Will deeply embitter the bowl;
But when drunk to escape from thy malice,
The draught shall be sweet to my soul.
Too cruel! in vain I implore thee
My heart from these horrors to save:
Will nought to my bosom restore thee?
Then open the gates of the grave.

As the chief who to combat advances
Secure of his conquest before,
Thus thou, with those eyes for thy lances,
Halt pierced through my heart to its core.
Ah, tell me, my soul! must I perish
By pangs which a smile would dispel?
Would the hope, which thou once bad'st me cherish,
For torture repay me too well?
Now sad is the garden of roses,
Beloved but false Haidée!
There Flora all wither'd reposes,
And mourns o'er thing absence with me.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Verses Found In A Summerhouse At Hales-Owen

When Dryden's fool, 'unknowing what he sought,'
His hours in whistling spent, 'for want of thought,'
This guiltless oaf his vacancy of sense
Supplied, and amply too, by innocence
Did modern swains, possess'd of Cymon's powers,
In Cymon's manner waste their leisure hours,
Th' offended guests would not, with blushing, see
These fair green walks disgraced by infamy.
Severe the fate of modern fools, alas!

When vice and folly mark them as they pass.
Like noxious reptiles o'er the whit'en'd wall,
The filth they leave still points out where they crawl.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Versicles

I Read the 'Christabel';
Very well:
I read the Missionary';
Pretty - very
I tried at Ilderim ;
Ahem!
I read a sheet of 'Marg'ret of Anjou';
Can you?
I turn'd a page of Scott's 'Waterloo';
Pooh! pooh!
I look'd at Wordsworth's milk-white
'Rylstone Doe';
Hillo!
&c. &c. &c.

March 1817.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Vision of Belshazzar

The King was on his throne,
The Satraps throng'd the hall:
A thousand bright lamps shone
O'er that high festival.
A thousand cups of gold,
In Judah deem'd divine--
Jehovah's vessels hold
The godless Heathen's wine!

In that same hour and hall,
The fingers of a hand
Came forth against the wall,
And wrote as if on sand:
The fingers of a man;--
A solitary hand
Along the letters ran,
And traced them like a wand.

The monarch saw, and shook,
And bade no more rejoice;
All bloodless wax'd his look
And tremulous his voice.
'Let the men of lore appear,
The wisest of the earth,
And expound the words of fear,
Which mar our royal mirth.'

Chaldea's seers are good,
But here they have no skill;
And the unknown letters stood
Untold and awful still.
And Babel's men of age
Are wise and deep in lore;
But now they were not sage,
They saw - but knew no more.

A captive in the land,
A stranger and a youth,
He heard the king's command,
He saw that writing's truth.
The lamps around were bright,
The prophecy in view;
He read it on that night, -
The morrow proved it true.

'Belshazzar's grave is made,
His kingdom pass'd away,
He, in the balance weigh'd,
Is light and worthless clay;
The shroud his robe of state,
His canopy the stone:
The Mede is at his gate!

The Persian on his throne!'

George Gordon Lord Byron

We Sate Down And Wept By The Waters

I.

We sate down and wept by the waters
Of Babel, and thought of the day
When our foe, in the hue of his slaughters,
Made Salem's high places his prey;
And ye, oh her desolate daughters!
Were scattered all weeping away.

II.

While sadly we gazed on the river
Which roll'd on in freedom below,
They demanded the song; but, oh never
That triumph the stranger shall know!
May this right hand be withered for ever,
Ere it string our high harp for the foe!

III.

On the willow that harp is suspended,
Oh Salem! its sound should be free;
And the hour when thy glories were ended
But left me that token of thee:
And ne'er shall its soft tones be blended
With the voice of the spoiler by me!

George Gordon Lord Byron

Well! Thou Art Happy

Well! thou art happy, and I feel
That I should thus be happy too;
For still my heart regards thy weal
Warmly, as it was wont to do.

Thy husband's blest — and 'twill impart
Some pangs to view his happier lot:
But let them pass — Oh! how my heart
Would hate him if he loved thee not!

When late I saw thy favourite child,
I thought my jealous heart would break;
But when the unconscious infant smiled,
I kiss'd it for its mother's sake.

I kiss'd it, — and repress'd my sighs
Its father in its face to see;
But then it had its mother's eyes,
And they were all to love and me.

Mary, adieu! I must away:
While thou art blest I'll not repine;
But near thee I can never stay;
My heart would soon again be thine.

I deem'd that time, I deem'd that pride,
Had quench'd at length my boyish flame;
Nor knew, till seated by thy side
My heart in all, — save hope,— the same.

Yet was I calm: I knew the time
My breast would thrill before thy look;
But now to tremble were a crime
We met, — and not a nerve was shook.

I saw thee gaze upon my face,
Yet meet with no confusion there:
One only feeling could'st thou trace;
The sullen calmness of despair.

Away! away! my early dream
Remembrance never must awake:
Oh! where is Lethe's fabled stream?
My foolish heart, be still, or break.

November 2, 1808

George Gordon Lord Byron

Were My Bosom As False as Thou Deem'st It To Be

Were my bosom as false as thou deem'st it to be,
I need not have wander'd from far Galilee;
It was but abjuring my creed to efface
The curse which, thou say'st, is the crime of my race.

If the bad never triumph, then God is with thee!
If the slave only sin, thou art spotless and free!
If the Exile on earth is an Outcast on high,
Live on in thy faith, but in mine I will die.

I have lost for that faith more than thou canst bestow,
As the God who permits thee to prosper doth know;
In his hand is my heart and my hope - and in thine
The land and the life which for him I resign.

George Gordon Lord Byron

When Coldness Wraps This Suffering Clay

When coldness wraps this suffering clay,
Ah! whither strays the immortal mind?
It cannot die, it cannot stay,
But leaves its darken'd dust behind.
Then, unembodied, doth it trace
By steps each planet's heavenly way?
Or fill at once the realms of space,
A thing of eyes, that all survey?

Eternal, boundless, undecay'd,
A thought unseen, but seeing all,
All, all in earth or skies display'd,
Shall it survey, shall it recall:
Each fainter trace that memory holds
So darkly of departed years,
In one broad glance the soul beholds,
And all, that was, at once appears.

Before Creation peopled earth,
Its eye shall roll through chaos back;
And where the farthest heaven had birth,
The spirit trace its rising track.
And where the future mars or makes,
Its glance dilate o'er all to be,
While sun is quench'd or system breaks,
Fix'd in its own eternity.

Above or Love, Hope, Hate, or Fear,
It lives all passionless and pure:
An age shall fleet like earthly year;
Its years as moments shall endure.
Away, away, without a wing,
O'er all, through all, its thought shall fly,
A nameless and eternal thing,
Forgetting what it was to die.

George Gordon Lord Byron

When I Roved A Young Highlander

When I roved a young Highlander o'er the dark heath,
And climb'd thy steep sumrnit, oh Morven of snow!
To gaze on the torrent that thunder'd beneath,
Or the mist of the tempest that gather'd below,
Untutor'd by science, a stranger to fear,
And rude as the rocks where my infancy grew,
No feeling, save one, to my bosom was dear
Need I say, my sweet Mary, 'twas centred in you?

Yet it could not be love, for I knew not the name,-
What passion can dwell in the heart of a child?
But still I pereceive an emotion the same
As I felt, when a boy, on the crag cover'd wild:
One image alone on my bosom impress'd
I loved my bleak regions, nor panted for new;
And few were my wants, for my wishes were bless'd;
And pure were my thoughts, for my soul was with you.

I arose with the dawn; with my dog as my guide,
From mountain to mountain I bounded along
I breasted the billows of Dee's rushing tide,
And heard at a distance the Highlander's song:
At eve, on my heath-cover'd couch of repose,
No dreams, save of Mary, were spread to my view;
And warm to the skies my devotions aoose,
For the first of my prayers was a blessing on you.

I left my bleak home, and my visions are gone;
The mountains are vanish'd, my youth is no more;
As the last of my race, I must wither alone,
And delight but in days I have witness'd before:
Ah! splendour has raised but embitter'd my lot;
More dear were the scenes which my infancy knew:
Though my hopes may have fail'd, yet they are not forgot;
Though cold is my heart, still it lingers with you.

When I see some dark hill point its crest to the sky,
I think of the rocks that o'ershadow Colbleen
When I see the soft blue of a love-speaking eye
I think of those eyes that endear'd the rude scene;
When, haply, some light-waving locks I behold,
That faintly resemble my Mary's in hue,
I think on the long, flowing ringlets of gold,
The locks that were sacred to beauty, and you.

Yet the day may arrive when the mountains once more
Shall rise to my sight In their mantles of snow:
But while these soar above me, unchanged as before
Will Mary be there to receive me? - ah, no!
Adieu, then, ye hills, where my childhood was bred!
Thou sweet flowing Dee, to thy waters adieu!
No home in the forest shall shelter my head,--

Ah! Mary, what home could be mine but with you?

George Gordon Lord Byron

When We Two Parted

When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss;
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on my brow--
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame;
I hear thy name spoken,
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o'er me--
Why wert thou so dear?
They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee so well--
Long, long I shall rue thee,
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met--
In silence I grieve,
That thy heart could forget,
Thy spirit deceive
If I should meet thee
After long years,
How should I greet thee?--
With silence and tears.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Windsor Poetics : Lines Composed On The Occasion Of His Royal Highness The Prince Regent Being Seen Standing Between The Coffins Of Henry VIII And Charles I, In The Royal Vault At Windsor

Famed for contemptuous breach of sacred ties,
By headless Charles see heartless Henry lies;
Between them stands another sceptred thing--
It moves, it reigns--in all but name, a king:

Charles to his people, Henry to his wife,
- In him the double tyrant starts to life:
Justice and death have mix'd their dust in vain,
Each royal vampire wakes to life again.
Ah, what can tombs avail!--since these disgorged
The blood and dust of both--to mould a George.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Written After Swimming from Sestos to Abydos

If, in the month of dark December,
Leander, who was nightly wont
(What maid will not the tale remember?)
To cross thy stream, broad Hellespont!

If, when the wintry tempest roar'd,
He sped to Hero, nothing loth,
And thus of old thy current pour'd,
Fair Venus! how I pity both!

For me, degenerate modern wretch,
Though in the genial month of May,
My dripping limbs I faintly stretch,
And think I've done a feat today.

But since he cross'd the rapid tide,
According to the doubtful story,
To woo, -- and -- Lord knows what beside,
And swam for Love, as I for Glory;

'Twere hard to say who fared the best:
Sad mortals! thus the gods still plague you!
He lost his labour, I my jest;
For he was drown'd, and I've the ague.

George Gordon Lord Byron

Written Shortly After The Marriage Of Miss Chaworth

Hills of Annesley, bleak and barren,
Where my thoughtless childhood stray'd,
How the northern tempests, warring,
Howl above thy tufted shade!

Now no more, the hours beguiling,
Former favourite haunts I see;
Now no more my Mary smiling
Makes ye seem a heaven to me.

George Gordon Lord Byron