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Selected Poems of Lord Byron

Including Don Juan and Other Poems

*With an Introduction, Bibliography and Glossary
by Dr Paul Wright, Trinity College, Carmarthen.*

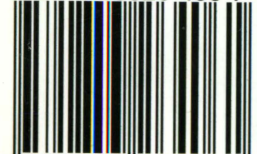
'I mean to show things really as they are, not as they ought to be'. wrote Byron (1788-1824) in his comic masterpiece *Don Juan*, which follows the adventures of the hero across the Europe and near East which Byron knew so well, touching on the major political, cultural and social concerns of the day.

This selection includes all of that poem, and selections from a wide range of Byron's work, including lyrics, the *Tales*, extracts from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and the satirical poems *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* and *A Vision of Judgement*. Paul Wright's detailed introductions place Byron's colourful life and work within their broader social and political contexts, and demonstrate that Byron both fostered and critiqued the notorious 'Byronic myth' of heroic adventure, political action and sexual scandal.

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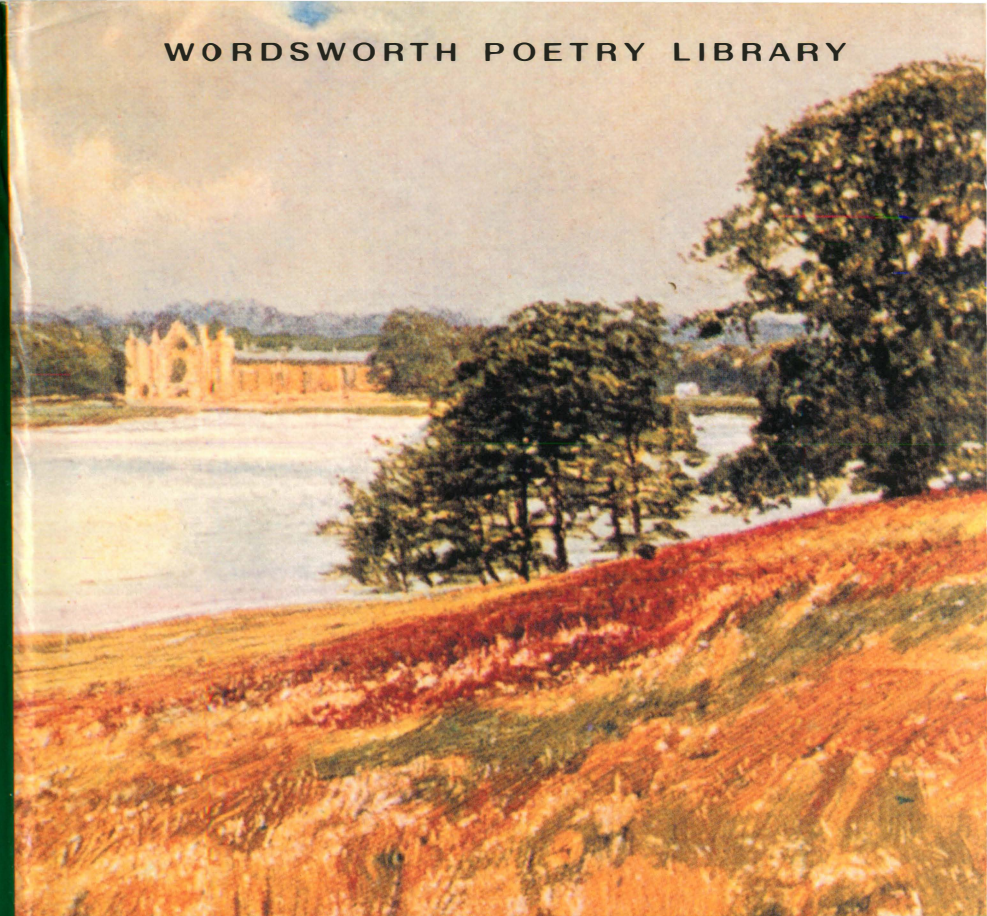
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Selected Poems of
Lord Byron

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Selected Poems of Lord Byron

Including Don Juan and Other Poems

*If I should meet thee
After long years,
How should I greet thee?
With silence and tears.*

Selected Poems of Lord Byron

*including Don Juan &
other poems*



*Introductions, Bibliography,
Notes and Glossary by*

PAUL WRIGHT



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Contents

General Introduction	vii
CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE & DON JUAN	
Introduction to <i>Childe Harold's Pilgrimage</i> and <i>Don Juan</i>	3
<i>Childe Harold's Pilgrimage</i> – extracts	9
Notes to extracts from <i>Childe Harold's Pilgrimage</i>	47
<i>Don Juan</i> – the complete text	51
Notes to <i>Don Juan</i>	557
TALES	
Introduction to the Tales	597
<i>The Giaour</i>	601
Notes to <i>The Gaiour</i>	637
<i>The Corsair</i>	639
Notes to <i>The Corsair</i>	689
SATIRES	
Introduction to the Satires	693
<i>English Bards and Scotch Reviewers</i>	697
Notes to <i>English Bards and Scotch Reviewers</i>	729
<i>The Vision of Judgement</i>	735
Notes to <i>The Vision of Judgment</i>	763
LYRICS AND SHORTER POEMS	
Introduction to the Lyrics and Shorter Poems	767
To Caroline (1)	771
To Caroline (2)	772

To Caroline (3)	773
Lachin Y Gair	774
Darkness	775
To Thyrza	778
The Cornelian	780
When We Two Parted	781
Written After Swimming from Sestos to Abydos	782
On this Day I Complete my Thirty Sixth Year	783
Notes to the Lyrics and Shorter Poems	785
Glossary	787
Index of first lines	807

General Introduction

The appearance of the anti-hero of a scandalous novel published in 1816 is described thus:

It was one of those faces which, having once beheld, we never often times forget. It seemed as if the soul of passion had been stained and printed on every feature. The eye beamed into life as it threw up its dark ardent gaze, with a look of ready inspiration, while the proud curl of the upper lip expressed haughtiness and bitter contempt; yet, even mixed with these fierce characteristic feelings, an air of melancholy and dejection shaded and softened every harsh expression. Such a countenance spoke to the heart.

The novel is *Glenarvon*.^{*} Its eponymous central character, who turns out tellingly to have at least two identities, is both a seducer murderer and political radical. Its author was Lady Caroline Lamb, wife of the man who was to become Lord Melbourne, and one of Queen Victoria's prime pinisters. She was also for a time one of Byron's many lovers.

That Byron should have enjoyed such an affair reveals something of his celebrity status at the time: as the enigmatically attractive twenty-eight-year-old author of bestselling poetry he occupied a position not dissimilar to that of a modern pop star. Yet, the very grounds of this celebrity, rooted in sexual scandal and gossip, explain his uneasy relationship with what would become Victorian respectability. The portrait itself is a picture of Byron as he was perceived by his

* Lamb, 2: 31–2. For full details of this and all other references turn to the Bibliography at the end of this Introduction. Byron's *Letters and Journals* will be cited by volume and page number; McGann's edition of the poetry as CPW; quotations from poems by initials, canto, verse and line number where appropriate; critical and other material will be given by surname, if necessary date and volume, and page number, in parenthesis after the quotation.

contemporaries; it is a picture he did much to cultivate. Indeed, it still haunts our own understanding of Romanticism, the European movement around the turn of the nineteenth century which Byron perhaps more than any other single individual came to epitomise. In its concentration on 'passion', 'feeling' and 'inspiration' it captures the Romantic insistence on subjective engagement with the world; yet in its 'melancholy and dejection' it highlights the possibility, always present within Romanticism, that such engagement might fail, on a political as well as a personal level. Most of all, it suggests that the Romantic embodies this dilemma directly for his audience with 'a countenance' that speaks 'to the heart', whilst, paradoxically, cultivating 'haughtiness and bitter contempt' for that very audience.

As Frances Wilson reminds us such a picture is 'not Byron himself . . . but his myth' (Wilson, 1999, p. 9). This myth is very powerful. It is, as Byron himself recognised, to some extent the subject matter of the poems, from the self-conscious early lyrics, to the loosely biographical travels of Childe Harold and Don Juan, to the personally motivated satire of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* and *The Vision of Judgement*. It resonates throughout the nineteenth century in, for example, the figure of the vampire first written about by Byron's own doctor, Polidori, made famous by Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and still with us in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. And it can be traced in the sexually charged anti-hero found as much in pop-culture figures, such as James Dean, Mick Jagger and Kurt Cobain, as in the brooding protagonists of the nineteenth-century novel, like Heathcliff and Mr Rochester. However, as always, the man and the work are rather different.

George Gordon Byron was born in London in 1788 the year before the French Revolution, the date from which the Romantic period itself is often said to have started. His mother, Catherine, was a Scottish heiress, and he spent the first ten years of his life in Aberdeen, roaming the very countryside that was to become representatively Romantic in the works of Walter Scott and others. Throughout his life he would enjoy the kind of distance from an essentially English metropolitan establishment granted him in these early years, whilst, echoing the Glenarvon paradox, seeking to be at its very centre. He felt further marginalised by an accident of birth that left him with a club, or deformed, foot and a constant need to prove himself in physical activity, notably boxing and swimming; a need explored in

many of his poetic inventions. He was also imbued with a kind of Presbyterian morality, a sense of being tormented by remorse, a '[w]oe without name, or hope, or end' (G 1276), which might be said to be characteristic of both the man and the myth.

In a sequence of events worthy of one of his own tales, Byron's initial prospects were compromised in that his father Captain John ('Mad Jack') Byron, who had only married his mother for her fortune, abandoned her as soon as he had spent it. He died in France in 1791. Three years later Byron's cousin, the heir to the title of Byron, was killed by a canon ball, and in 1798 the incumbent fifth Lord Byron (the 'wicked lord') died, unexpectedly leaving Byron the title, the crumbling gothic seat of Newstead Abbey in Nottinghamshire, and many debts. The house provides something of a model for Norman Abbey in the English cantos of *Don Juan*, which explore Byron's own ambivalence at becoming part of a landed English aristocracy.

Fittingly, in 1801 aged thirteen, Byron went to the public school Harrow, and began the 'deliberate self-fashioning' (Elledge, p. 1) that would transform him into the society figure by developing an interest in the theatre and in public speaking. His chosen texts for speech days, the villainous Zanga the Moor from Edward Young's *Revenge* (1721) and Lear on the heath, for example, suggest an interest in the persona fully captured in Caroline Lamb's portrait. As if living up to the rôle of the sneering medieval lord, he would go on to keep a bear in his rooms at Cambridge. Yet, he could be equally critical of the need to hark back to some imagined feudal past, so much a part of Romanticism. The bear episode alone might also be said to epitomise the playfulness, the wilful challenge of the conventions of utilitarian and bourgeois values from which many nineteenth-century norms were derived, which characterises so much of Byron's writing. He famously dismissed these values, which he saw as essentially hypocritical, in a letter written in 1821: 'The truth is that in these days the grand *primum mobile* [prime mover] of England is *cant*; cant political, cant poetical, cant religious, cant moral' (5:542).

Byron began writing seriously whilst at Cambridge in 1805 – though, unlike many of his contemporaries, he often felt that writing could never really be the serious undertaking of a gentleman and a man of action *manqué*: 'Who would write who had anything better to do?' (4:62) he once only half jokingly asked. His first efforts were privately circulated. He published *Hours of Idleness* in 1807. Negative critical

response to this – an early indication, for him at least, of ‘cant poetical’ – in the powerful journal *The Edinburgh Review* occasioned his first sustained satire *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* in 1809, which was his first popular success going through four editions. It is considered at greater length, along with some of Byron’s other satirical work, later in this volume.

Soon after the publication of *English Bards*, Byron turned twenty-one and took his seat in the House of Lords. Much has been written about Byron’s politics.* Here, it can only be noted that he lived through the period of revolutionary hope suggested by the French Revolution; the Napoleonic Wars, and the oppressive regimes established throughout Europe after the Congress of Vienna (1815); and the stirrings of popular rebellion in the 1820s, not least in Greece, whose rule by Turkey was tacitly accepted by the European powers. Many of these events are touched on directly in his long narrative poems, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* and *Don Juan*, which, again, are considered at greater length later. Indeed, much of his poetry can be seen as Jerome McGann sees *The Corsair* (1814), as ‘partly a symbolic formation of the political situation of the day, as Byron saw it, with its contest between the equivocal forces of revolt and the established powers of the old and corrupt order’ (CPW 3, p. 445). Byron could certainly take part in this contest on what might be seen as the liberal side. His major speeches as an actual politician took the side of what might be seen as ‘the forces of revolt’: he spoke in support of oppressed workers, at a time when they had no political power, and against anti-Catholic discrimination. He could look hopefully towards the end of what he called ‘the King-times’ (5:173). Yet, again remembering the complexities of Glenarvon – the political activist and self-serving cynic – he could also declare: ‘Born an aristocrat . . . with the greater part of my property in [government] funds, what have I to gain by a revolution?’ (6:338). To some extent, of course, whilst holding it up as some kind of ideal, or at least the best of possible worlds (see DJ 10), Byron simply got bored with the British parliamentary system as he did with much else.

As befitting a ‘born’ aristocrat, shortly after entering the Lords for

* For competing views of Byron’s politics compare Kelsall, who argues that Byron was to some extent a disillusioned liberal, with Foot, who sees him as retaining strong connections to causes of political reform throughout his life.

the first time, Byron left England to go on the then customary Grand Tour. Between 1809 and 1811 he took in Spain, Malta, Greece and Turkey. He travelled, as the privileged classes had done in the eighteenth century, as part of an education. He also travelled as a Romantic, enjoying in particular what he imagined was the simple life of the Noble Savage – what he called the ‘brute’ (3:97) – and the solitary wanderer communing with nature and the exotic. Something of this is captured, for example, in his description of Venice:

Venice pleases me as much as I expected – and I expected much – it is one of those places which I know before I see them – and has always haunted me the most – after the East – I like the gloomy gaiety of the gondolas – and the silence of the canals . . . [5:132]

Like all educated travellers he knew what to expect as his reading had equipped him with certain assumptions about the culture centres of Europe and beyond. As a brooding Romantic he could also enjoy ‘the silence of the canals’, as he could the decay of many of these sites and the exotic appeal of ‘the East’ beyond. Yet his dual perspective allowed him to ironise both of these positions, particularly in his narrative voice. Indeed, it is irony more than anything – what Lillian Furst calls ‘the tension between spontaneity and self-consciousness’ (Furst, p. 9) – which might be said to characterise the Byronic voice.

His travels provided Byron with much of the raw material for *Childe Harold*, the first two cantos of which were published on his return to England in 1811. It was this poem and the verse tales, *The Giaour* (1813), *The Corsair* (1814) and others, which secured Byron’s fame. It is in his popularity as much as his personality that Byron can be seen as anticipating the modern pop star: for the rest of his life he remained not only a bestseller, when narrative verse in particular was a form of popular entertainment, but regularly outsold the combined efforts of the next half dozen poets, both alive and dead (Harvey, p. 115). Such fame, of course, gave him entry to the kind of social world that he criticised, and yet to which he was very much drawn, not least for the sexual opportunities offered. For four years he was at the centre of social, theatrical and literary circles in fashionable London.

In 1815 Byron married Anne Isabella Milbanke who moved in these fashionable circles. Capturing his ambivalence towards the fragile respectability that she came to represent, he called her ‘that virtuous monster’ (5:140). She bore him a daughter who was to inherit her

interest in maths; but the marriage foundered on rumours of Byron's infidelities, his bisexuality, and a possible incestuous affair with his half-sister Augusta Leigh – many rumours, again as if playing up to the Glenarvon role, encouraged by Byron himself. These rumours fuelled a public scandal, an example of the kind of cant Byron sought to target; and he was forced, like one of his heroes, to flee England, never to return, in April 1816.

He took to travelling around Europe once more, and it was again as an outsider that Byron could write. In Switzerland he met Shelley – 'the best and least selfish man I ever knew' (9:189) – and his circle; he had an affair and a child with Shelley's sister-in-law, Claire Clairmont; and he continued to write material which was still popularly received at home. When the Shelleys returned to England in 1817, Byron took responsibility for his daughter and moved to Venice. Italy proved more of a home. Byron had always been influenced by its literature, from the classical works he studied as a schoolboy, to Dante and Pulci. Under this influence, he began *Don Juan* and produced many dramatic works. Politically, Italy's emerging, if ultimately unsuccessful, freedom movement against the rule of the Austrians received his support. Encapsulating his own peculiar sense of how freedom was bound up with a sense of nationhood derived from cultural traditions, sustained not least in poetry, he wrote:

It is no great matter, supposing that Italy could be liberated, who or what is sacrificed. It is a grand object – the very *poetry* of politics. Only think a free Italy! [8:47]

He was also attracted by the more relaxed attitude to sexual relations. In Venice, and later Ravenna, he began a lasting relationship with the married Teresa, Countess of Guiccioli.

From Italy too he kept up a quarrel with the prevailing poets of the day, which had begun in *English Bards*. It is yet another paradox that despite being in many ways typically Romantic, Byron himself valued the neo-classical poetry of the eighteenth century and particularly Pope above so much of that produced by his contemporaries (5:256). This dislike was fuelled by the belief that key Romantic figures, Wordsworth and the Poet Laureate, Southey – 'the vainest and most intolerant of men' (9:62) – had rejected the once radical position which Byron believed he shared with them. It culminated in the writing of the satirical *A Vision of Judgement* (1822).

The failure of the Italian freedom movement led Byron to turn his attention to Greece's struggle for independence. Greece had always represented for him the most extreme case of an oppressed nation, and, perhaps more importantly, a people who had lost contact with their own cultural heritage, represented for Byron in the very neo-classical values he sought to defend. As always, he expressed an ambivalence towards the Greeks and his own political idealism (for example, 11:32, 83, 54–55, and not least in passages in Cantos Two and Three of DJ); but, equally, he worked tirelessly for the cause. In July 1823 he armed a ship and sailed for Greece. Such was his fame that there were rumours that he might even be made king of a free Greece. However, in Missolonghi in April 1824, preparing his troops for an attack on the Turks, Byron died, not in an heroic action, but from rheumatic fever caught in a downpour. This was the kind of irony that would not be lost on him.

Considering mortality in *Don Juan*, Byron wrote:

. . . and so our life exhales,
A little breath, love, wine, ambition, fame,
Fighting, devotion, dust – perhaps a name. [DJ 2:4]

He might also have been amused that it took another hundred and fifty years after the life, which reflected many of these priorities, 'exhale[d]' for him to be accepted by the establishment. He was granted a plaque in Westminster Abbey in 1968. The establishment of his day refused to bury him there. Despite this rejection, something that he felt coloured his colourful life, he could not be denied a name. The fame he sought is secured in part by the Byron myth, but ultimately by the poetry.

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- Many general Romantic links and links specific to Byron can be found on 'The Voice of the Shuttle' web pages: <http://vos.ucsb.edu>
- Discussion groups and other information on Byron and Romanticism in general can be found at 'Romantic Circles': www.rc.umd.edu

CHILDE HAROLD'S
PILGRIMAGE (*extracts*)
and
DON JUAN

Introduction to *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* & *Don Juan*

'I awoke one morning and found myself famous'.* So Byron claimed on the publication of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812–16). Like *Don Juan*, it is a long narrative poem concerning the travels of a young man across the Europe that Byron had travelled through – Spain, the Mediterranean, Greece and Italy. Although Byron claimed that it was 'original' (2:77), it owes something to Walter Scott's popular verse tales, like *Marmion* (1808), and something to eighteenth-century travel poetry and fiction.

A 'childe' is a medieval young man of privileged birth; his 'pilgrimage', the point of departure for which is included here, suggests a romantic or even religious quest. Yet, our hero is departing rather more in the way of the Grand Tourist that Byron had just been, or even as a modern tourist, simply 'for change of scene' (CHP 1:6). It is this tension between high cultural values and expectations – not least ~~the~~ expectations that might be harboured by a Romantic traveller or poet – and the more mundane and harsh, yet exciting, realities of life which the poem, particularly in its early cantos, seeks to explore. An example is included here in the 'Bull-fight' (CHP 1:72–82). This characteristic tension is achieved partly by the use of a narrator who vacillates 'between sympathy and disapproval' (Cronin, p. 18) for Harold, and later for his own attitudes to the modern European cultural high spots, and for people with particular claims on Romantic ideas. Examples of this given here are: the narrator's views of Venice (CHP 4:1–7) and Rome (CHP 4:78–98), and his attitude towards Rousseau (CHP 3:76–81) – the founder of the kind of Romantic primitivism and emotional investment in personal relationship with landscape of which Byron and his narrator could be so sceptical. Playful tension is also achieved in the poem by the knowing use form.[†]

Childe Harold is written in Spenserian stanzas: nine lines of rhyming

* Reported by Moore, 1:15

† For a discussion of the importance of form to Byron and Romanticism in general, see Curran.

verse, used by the Elizabethan poet Edmund Spenser for his *The Faerie Queene* (1590). Spenser himself had developed his stanza from Italian models. Spenser's poem is, amongst other things, a genuine quest-romance narrative, and a complex allegory; its structure was taken up in the eighteenth century in poems like Thomson's *The Castle of Indolence* (1741) and Beattie's *The Minstrel* (1771), to which Byron is particularly indebted. These poems continue the ideas of narrative quest, romance and allegory. From the opening of Canto One, with its overt medievalisms, to the repeated ways in which the narrative loses sight of its alleged hero and eventually abandons him altogether, to the refusal to find fixed meaning in many of the experiences recorded, Byron deliberately undermines the readerly expectations suggested by the quest romance.

The hero was originally to be called 'Childe Burun', an older form of the name Byron; and it is tempting to see the poem as to some extent autobiographical. This could be done either in terms of Harold, or the narrator. The shift in focus across the poem as a whole can be explained, at least in part, by the fact that Cantos Three and Four were written after Byron's flight from England. Byron himself denied any easy identification (2:66); and, although McGann sees him as 'an ego-projection' (McGann, p. 69), it might make more sense, again, to think in terms of playfulness or irony. It is true to say that Byron 'personalis[es] the topographical poem' (CPW, p. 271), particularly from Canto Three on; and that, in Venice for example, 'the speaker is as much an object of attention as the scene which he surveys' (Rutherford, 1961, p. 98). This concentration on subjective experience might make the poem Romantic in the Wordsworthian sense.* Yet, at the very moment of capturing the 'meaning' of Venice – its place in history, its cultural significance, underpinned by the imaginative power of the speaker – the narrator bursts his own romantic bubble. Just as he does earlier to both the reader's and Harold's expectations of Spenserian quest, in the midst of Venice, just as in Greece, or at the poem's conclusion, the narrator reminds us that all this is the stuff of 'overweening fantasies unsound' (CHP 4:7).

Don Juan (1819–24), which is included here in its entirety, might equally be said to be concerned with the power of 'overweening fantasy'. Like *Childe Harold* it concerns the many travels and adventures, particularly sexual, of the eponymous hero; Rutherford rightly calls it 'a large, loose, baggy monster' (Rutherford, 1961, p. 141); and it, again, explores the tensions between Juan's, and perhaps the reader's, romantic

* For discussion of the relationship between Byron and Wordsworth, see McGann, pp. 32–5, Martin, pp. 70, 79 and Cooke, p. 47ff.

expectations – in all senses of the word – and the views of the more cynical narrator. For example, in Canto Two, the theme of forbidden romantic love itself is given a grotesquely comic context when the genuinely touching love letter written by Julia is snatched from Juan to make lots to see who will be eaten by the starving shipwrecked crew:

At length the lots were torn up, and prepared,
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. [2:75]

On completing Canto One in 1819, Byron wrote, if anything understating his intent:

It . . . is meant to be a little quietly facetious upon everything. But I doubt whether it is not . . . too free for these modest days . . . if it don't take it will be discontinued. [4:260]

Luckily for us it did 'take' and it was continued. Yet, Byron's observation captures the tone of the poem well, and particularly the sense of it both sitting uncomfortably with, and also exposing by its very popularity, the hypocrisy or cant of the superficially 'modest days' and social values of Regency England. As Peter Graham suggests: '*Don Juan*, in spite, and because of, its whole exploration of Europe . . . is always about England – and never more so than at its most exotic' (Graham, p. 4). Thus, Spanish bedrooms, fantasy islands, imperial brothels and Turkish harems, which all await Juan – whose very name the rhyme insists is to be pronounced in the English manner – as they do the prudish but prurient reader, can be seen as comments on English hypocritical practice. As if to hammer home the point, the concluding cantos of the poem, as Byron left it when he died (DJ 10–17), are set in the very milieu of county-house politics and sexual dalliance which he was forced to abandon.

Of course, however his name is pronounced, Don Juan is himself an exotic, Spanish hero. Like *Childe Harold*, his adventures here are, in part, a response to the vogue for domesticated adventure narratives. Juan owes much, for example to novels like Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749), with its playful narrator and tales of sexual adventure. More directly it is cashing in on the craze for Juan stories which swept London following a performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (the Italian form of the name) in 1817. Don Juan has many incarnations;* he could be, like Glenarvon

* For a discussion of the nature of the Don Juan myth, particularly in Byron's hands, see Haslett.

and certainly like the Byron of gossip from 1816, a serial sexual opportunist and religious sceptic. For the apparently 'modest times' of early nineteenth-century England, he could represent something of a demon, but an attractive one none the less. Reflecting on the contemporary popularity of theatrical versions of the story, Coleridge wrote:

There is no danger (thinks the spectator or reader) of my becoming such a monster of iniquity as Don Juan! I never shall be an atheist! I shall never disallow all distinction between right and wrong! I have not the least inclination to be so outrageous . . . in my love affairs! But to possess such a power . . . [Coleridge p. 216]

Of course, such a 'power' was assumed to be possessed by Byron, and to be endorsed in his poem. Wordsworth wrote: 'I am persuaded that Don Juan will do more harm to the English character than anything of our time' (Rutherford, 1970, p. 159). What greater incentive could there be for wanting to read it then or now?

Such a view of Juan, and indeed of Byron, is an understandable response to a poem that is about sexual, amongst other kinds, of adventure. It forms part of a larger debate amongst Romantic poets as to the nature of love, and the tensions between its physical and spiritual or idealist varieties, which Byron enters, again, at the start of the poem. Marilyn Butler suggests provocatively that Byron deliberately 'substituted a sexual ethic for Wordsworth's solemn aestheticism' (Butler, p. 140). Indeed, much of the poem is about what might be called the joy of sex, but also its humour and perils. Byron's narrator engages directly with the idealism that he sees as endemic in much Romanticism: 'I mean to show things really as they are/ Not as they ought to be.' (DJ 12:40).

For Byron, interestingly, 'things as they are' includes both a celebration of the kind of 'power', to use Coleridge's term, suggested specifically by the Don Juan, if not the Byron, myth, and the claims made on behalf of love more generally. But it also includes a debunking of such 'power', just as earlier in *Childe Harold* he plays with the possibilities of the narrative-quest hero. At a structural level this is done by a rewriting, an inversion of the Don Juan dynamic. As Caroline Franklin notes: 'Women in *Don Juan* are constantly presented as creatures of appetite and will, from the time that Julia seduces the sixteen-year-old son of her friend' (Franklin, p. 126), in Canto One. To Julia can be added the Sultana, Gulbayez (DJ 5–6), Catherine the Great (DJ 9–10), the Duchess of Fitz-Faulke (DJ 15), and even, in slightly different ways, Haidée (DJ 2) and Aurora Raby (DJ 15).

Such a presentation might be explained autobiographically. Of

his own Jaun-ish reputation Byron complained, as often only half jokingly: 'I should like to know *who* has been carried off – except poor dear *me* – I have been more ravished myself than anybody since the Trojan war' (6:237). The connection between epic war and amorous adventure is not a coincidence. Throughout the poem, and particularly in the Siege cantos (DJ 7–8), sexual activity is equated with power politics and military aggression. And this aggression is as likely to be exhibited by a woman as a man. Byron's point, contrary to the assumptions which underpin the Juan myth and his own treatment, is to suggest that (sexual) behaviour is culturally determined rather than biologically given.* Thus, the Sultana can appear playfully, and perhaps titillatingly, masculine – 'a poniard deck'd her girdle' (DJ 5:111) – at the same time that Don Juan appears in the female 'garb' of a harem slave (DJ 5:127).

In *Don Juan*, though, Byron doesn't only play ironically with gender assumptions and current sexual politics, and indeed politics. He sees these as just part of what he identifies as the 'cant' (5:542) of his time. His chosen verse form here, the heavily rhymed *ottava rima*, particularly its concluding couplet, which is often used almost like the punch line of a joke, aids him in his mission to expose hypocrisy. To give one example, from the very beginning of the poem he seeks to question the very notion of the hero. In the opening of Canto One, he lists, comically, the names of many contemporary leaders and public figures, but goes on to observe:

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. [1:5]

Here he attacks what he sees at the decline in poetic ambition in relation to public themes. But most importantly he mocks the contemporary claim to the hero status, enjoyed by figures such as Nelson, in the comparison with the hero of the Trojan War, Agamemnon. This attack is underpinned not least by the use of outrageous multi-syllabic rhyme

* Such a view makes him an unlikely bedfellow with much twentieth-century feminist thought; but it was also an idea being explored by his contemporary Mary Wollstonecraft.

and near rhyme: Agamemnon/ same none/ condemn none/ new one/ Don Juan. In a sense the progress of the rhymes from Agamemnon to Don Juan marks how far the hero has fallen.

Yet, just as he seeks to explode myths of all kinds, so, as a Romantic despite himself, he is also drawn to them. Thus, in the case of gender identity Juan is drawn to the slave girl Dudù (DJ 6) and, finally, to Aurora Raby, who do much to restore more orthodox expectations about relations between the sexes. Indeed, the power of love in a more general sense is never quite banished from the poem.

The most famous example of this ambivalence can be found in Canto Three. Briefly, Juan awakes to find himself washed ashore on a desert island, which he shares with the beautiful and powerful Haidée. This is the stuff of male (adolescent) dreams. It is also a kind of Rosseauesque fantasy but with all mod cons. The optimism of the young couple is allied to a greater political optimism: the lovers hold a feast at which a poet sings an inspirational song about the possible liberation of Greece. This suggests almost a kind of Shelleyan view of the power of love to affect political change (see Shelley's *Essay on Love*, 1815). Yet, for Byron any such hope is immediately undermined by context: his revolutionary poet is simply a money-making opportunist, 'a sad trimmer' (DJ 3:82); and, in a wonderfully ironic reworking of the story of Odysseus, the imagined Grecian hero of the song is displaced by the return of Lombro, Haidée's father. He is a mercenary, materialistic patriarch who soon puts an end to love's young dream. Yet, of course, in the sense that the episode exists, not least in the narrator's memory, since Haidée is often recalled (for example, DJ 15:58), and in the fact that the 'Isles of Greece' lyric is often separated from its context, the optimism remains 'present' – at least for some readers. In a similar way, the apparently very odd digression into the story of the Rousseauesque Daniel Boone, in the midst of the description of a bloody battle (DJ 8:61–7), and at least the first appearance of the ghost of Norman Abbey (DJ 16:20–5) are not really undercut by dismissive irony.

It is, perhaps, this irony which marks both *Don Juan* and *Childe Harold* more than anything else; it is this which makes them Byronic. Byron wanted his long poem, his masterpiece, to be like life: '[I]t may be profligate – but is it not *life* – is it not the thing? – Could any man have written it – who has not lived in the world?' (6:231) he wrote. Like *Childe Harold*, if it is like life, it a harsh, yet endlessly comic and complex life; a life which still has a place, however limited, for ideals; a life that we, perhaps, recognise today.

Extracts from
CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

The notes for this section are on pages 47–50

Canto One

1

Oh, thou! in Hellas¹ deem'd of heav'nly birth,
Muse! form'd or fabled at the minstrel's will!
Since sham'd full oft by later lyres on earth,
Mine dares not call thee from thy sacred hill:
Yet there I've wander'd by thy vaunted rill;
Yes! sigh'd 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.

2

Whilome² in Albion's isle there dwelt a youth, 10
Who ne in virtue's ways did take delight;
But spent his days in riot most uncouth,
And vex'd 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.

3

Childe Harold was he hight:³ – but whence his name 20
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 losel⁴ soils a name for aye,
However mighty in the olden time;
Nor all that heralds rake from coffin'd clay,
Nor florid prose, nor honied lies of rhyme
Can blazon evil deeds, or consecrate a crime.

4

Childe Harold bask'd him in the noon-tide sun,
 Disporting there like any other fly;
 Nor deem'd before his little day was done 30
 One blast might chill him into misery.
 But long ere scarce a third of his pass'd by,
 Worse than adversity the Childe befell;
 He felt the fullness of satiety:
 Then loath'd he in his native land to dwell,
 Which seem'd to him more lone than Eremite's⁵ sad cell.

5

For he through Sin's long labyrinth had run,
 Nor made atonement when he did amiss,
 Had sigh'd to many though he lov'd but one,
 And that lov'd one, alas! could ne'er be his. 40
 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 spoil'd her goodly lands to gild his waste,
 Nor calm domestic peace had ever deign'd to taste.

6

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 congeal'd the drop within his ee:⁶
 Apart he stalk'd in joyless reverie, 50
 And from his native land resolv'd to go,
 And visit scorching climes beyond the sea;
 With pleasure drugg'd he almost long'd for woe,
 And e'en for change of scene would seek the shades below.

7

The Childe departed from his father's hall:
 It was a vast and venerable pile;
 So old, it seem'd only not to fall,
 Yet strength was pillar'd in each massy aisle.
 Monastic dome! condemn'd to uses vile!
 Where Superstition once had made her den 60
 Now Paphian⁷ 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.

8

Yet oft-times 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 lurk'd below:
 But this none knew, nor haply car'd to know;
 For his was not that open, artless soul
 That feels relief by bidding sorrow flow, 70
 Nor sought he friend to counsel or condole,
 Whate'er his grief mote be, which he could not control.

9

And none did love him – though to hall and bower
 He gather'd revellers from far and near,
 He knew them flatt'ers of the festal hour;
 The heartless parasites of present cheer.
 Yea! none did love him – not his lemans⁸ dear –
 But pomp and power alone are woman's care,
 And where these are light Eros finds a feere;⁹
 Maidens, like moths, are ever caught by glare, 80
 And Mammon wins his way where Seraphs might despair.

10

Childe Harold had a mother – not forgot,
 Though parting from that mother he did shun;
 A sister whom he lov'd, 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 doat upon
 A few dear objects, will in sadness feel
 Such partings break the heart they fondly hope to heal. 90

11

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 brimm'd 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.¹⁰

12

The sails were fill'd, and fair the light winds blew, 100
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.

13

But when the sun was sinking in the sea
He seiz'd his harp, which he at times could string, 110
And strike, albeit with untaught melody,
When deem'd he no strange ear was listening:
And now his fingers o'er it he did fling,
And tun'd 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 pour'd his last 'Good night'.

* * *

72

The lists are op'd, the spacious area clear'd, 720
 Thousands on thousands pil'd are seated round;
 Long ere the first loud trumpeter's note is heard,
 Ne vacant space for lated wight is found:
 Here dons, grandees, but chiefly dames abound,
 Skill'd in the ogle of a roguish eye,
 Yet ever well inclin'd to heal the wound;
 None through their cold disdain are doom'd to die,
 As moon-struck bards complain, by Love's sad archery.¹¹

73

Hush'd is the din of tongues – on gallant steeds,
 With milk-white crest, gold spur, and light-pois'd lance,
 Four cavaliers prepare for venturous deeds, 730
 And lowly bending to the lists advance;
 Rich are their scarfs, their chargers featly prance:
 If in the dangerous game they shine today,
 The crowds 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.

74

In costly sheen and gaudy cloak array'd,
 But all afoot, the light-limb'd Matadore
 Stands in the centre, eager to invade 740
 The lord of lowing herds; but not before
 The ground, with cautious tread, is travers'd 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 condemn'd for him to bear and bleed.

75

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, 750
 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.

76

Sudden he stops; his eye is fix'd: 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-tim'd croupe¹² the nimble coursers veer; 760
 On foams the bull, but not unscath'd 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.

77

Again he comes; nor dart nor lance avail,
 Nor the wild plunging of the tortur'd horse;
 Though man and man's avenging arms assail,
 Vain are his weapons, vainer is his force.
 One gallant steed is stretch'd a mangled corse;
 Another, hideous sight! unseam'd appears, 770
 His gory chest unveils life's panting source,
 Tho' death-struck still his feeble frame he rears,
 Staggering, but stemming all, his lord unharm'd he bears.

78

Foil'd, bleeding, breathless, furious to the last,
 Full in the centre stands the bull at bay,
 Mid wounds, and clinging darts, and lances brast,¹³
 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 – 780
 Vain rage! the mantle quits the conynge¹⁴ hand,
 Wraps his fierce eye – 'tis past – he sinks upon the sand!

79

Where his vast neck just mingles with the spine,
 Sheath'd 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 pil'd – sweet sight for vulgar eyes –
 Four steeds that spurn the rein, as swift as shy, 790
 Hurl the dark bulk along, scarce seen in dashing by.

80

Such the ungentle sport that oft invites
The Spanish maid, and cheers the Spanish swain.
Nurtur'd in blood betimes, his heart delights
In vengeance, gloating on another's pain.
What private feuds the troubled village stain!
Though now one phalanx'd host should meet the foe,
Enough, alas! in humble homes remain,
To mediate 'gainst friends the secret blow,
For some slight cause of wrath, whence life's warm
stream must flow. 800

81

But Jealousy has fled: his bars, his bolts,
His wither'd sentinel, Duenna sage!¹⁵
And all whereat the generous soul revolts,
Which the stern dotard deem'd he could encage,
Have pass'd to darkness with the vanish'd 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?

82

Oh! many a time, and oft, had Harold lov'd, 810
Or dream'd he lov'd, since Rapture is a dream;
But now his wayward bosom was unmov'd,
For not yet had he drunk of Lethe's stream;
And lately had he learn'd with truth to deem
Love has no gift so grateful as his wings:¹⁶
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.

Canto Two

10

Here let me sit upon this massy stone,
The marble column's yet unshaken base;
Here, son of Saturn!¹⁷ was thy fav'rite 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. 90

11

But who, of all the plunderers of yon fane¹⁸
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!¹⁹ 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.

12

But most the modern Pict's ignoble boast, 100
To rive²⁰ 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.

13

What! shall it e'er be said by British tongue,
Albion was happy in Athena's tears? 110
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 Eld²¹ forbore, and tyrants left to stand.

14

Where was thine Aegis, Pallas! that appall'd
Stern Alaric and Havoc²² on their way?
Where Peleus' son?²³ whom Hell in vain enthrall'd, 120
His shade from Hades upon that dread day,
Bursting to light in terrible array!
What? could not Pluto²⁴ 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.

15

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 130
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 abhorr'd!

16

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, 140
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.

17

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, 150
 The convoy spread like wild swans in their flight,
 The dullest sailor wearing bravely now,
 So gaily curl the waves before each dashing prow.

18

And oh, the little warlike world within!
 The well-reev'd guns,²⁵ 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 schoolboy Midshipman that, standing by, 160
 Strains his shrill pipe as good or ill betides,
 And well the docile crew that skilful urchin guides.

19

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,²⁶ 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 170
 From Law, however stern, which tends their strength to nerve.

20

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! 180

21

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's²⁷ restless hand
 Wakes the brisk harmony that sailors love;
 A circle there of merry listeners stand,
 Or to some well-known measure featly move,
 Thoughtless, as if on shore they still were free to rove.

22

Through Calpe's straits survey the steepy shore; 190
 Europe and Afric on each other gaze!
 Lands of the dark-ey'd Maid and dusky Moor
 Alike beheld beneath pale Hecate's blaze:²⁸
 How softly on the Spanish shore she plays,
 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.²⁹

23

'Tis night, when Meditation bids us feel
 We once have lov'd, though love is at an end: 200
 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?

24

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, 210
 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.

25

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; 220
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.

26

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! 230
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!

* * *

76

Hereditary bondsmen!³⁰ know ye not 720
 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 may lay your proud despoilers³¹ low,
 But not for you will Freedom's altars flame.
 Shades of the Helots!³² 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.

77

The city won for Allah from the Giaour,
 The Giaour from Othman's race again may wrest; 730
 And the Serai's impenetrable tower
 Receive the fiery Frank, her former guest;
 On Wahab's³³ 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

78

Yet mark their mirth – ere lenten days begin,
 That penance which their holy rites prepare
 To shrive from man his weight of mortal sin, 740
 By daily abstinence and nightly prayer;
 But ere his sackcloth garb Repentance wear,
 Some days of joyaunce are decreed to all,
 To take of pleasaunce each his secret share,
 In motley robe to dance at masking ball,
 And join the mimic train of merry Carnival.

79

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: 750
 (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.

Canto Three

Afin que cette application vous forçât à penser à autre chose. Il n'y a en vérité de remède que celui-là et le temps.

Lettre du Roi de Prusse à D'Alembert, 7 September 1776

1

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:³⁴ I depart,
Whither I know not; but the hour's gone by,
When Albion's lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye.

2

Once more upon the waters! yet once more! 10
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.

3

In my youth's summer I did sing of One,³⁵
The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind; 20
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.

4

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 30
 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.

5

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 40
 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.

6

'Tis to create, and in creating live
 A being more intense, that we endow
 With form our fancy, gaining as we give
 The life we imagine, even as I do now.
 What am I? Nothing; but not so art thou, 50
 Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,
 Invisible but gazing, as I glow
 Mix'd with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,
 And feeling still with thee in my crush'd feelings' dearth.

7

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 fantasy and flame:
 And thus, untaught in youth my heart to tame,
 My springs of life were poison'd. 'Tis too late! 60
 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.

8

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 soul and aspect as in age: years steal 70
 Fire from the mind as vigour from the limb;
 And life's enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim.

9

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, 80
 Entering with every step, he took, through many a scene.

10

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 land³⁶
 He found in wonder-works of God and Nature's hand. 90

11

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.

12

But soon he knew himself the most unfit 100
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.

13

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;
Where roll'd the ocean, thereon was his home; 110
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.

14

Like the Chaldean,³⁷ he could watch the stars,
Till he had peopled them with beings bright
As their own beams; and earth, and earth-born jars, 120
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,³⁸ envying it the light
To which it mounts as if to break the link
That keeps us from you heaven which woos us to its brink.

15

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: 130
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.

16

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, 140
 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.

17

Stop! – for thy tread is on an Empire's dust!³⁹
 An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!
 Is the spot mark'd with no colossal bust?
 Nor column trophied for triumphal show?
 None; but the moral's truth tells simpler so,
 As the ground was before, thus let it be; – 150
 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?

18

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'⁴⁰ here last the eagle flew,
 Then tore with bloody talon the rent plain,
 Pierced by the shaft of banded nations through; 160
 Ambition's life and labours all were vain;
 He wears the shattered links of the world's broken chain.

19

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 170
 And servile knees to thrones? No; *prove* before ye praise!

20

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 that most endears
 Glory, is when the myrtle wreathes a sword
 Such as Harmodius⁴¹ drew on Athens' tyrant lord. 180

21

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 sound⁴² strikes like a rising knell!

22

Did ye not hear it? – No; 'twas but the wind, 190
 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! and out – it is – the cannon's opening roar!

23

Within a windowed niche of that high hall
 Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain;⁴³ he did hear 200
 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 truly knew that 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.

24

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 210
 Blush'd 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 could guess
 If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
 Since upon nights so sweet such awful morn could rise?

25

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; 220
 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!'

26

And wild and high the 'Cameron's gathering'⁴⁴ rose!
 The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
 Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon⁴⁵ foes: –
 How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills, 230
 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 fame⁴⁶ rings in each clansman's ears!

27

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,⁴⁷
 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 240
 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.

28

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, 250
Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
Rider and horse, – friend, foe, – in one red burial blent!

29

Their praise is hymn'd by loftier harps than mine;
Yet one I would select from the 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, 260
They reach'd no nobler breast than thine, young, gallant Howard!⁴⁸

30

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. 270

31

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,⁴⁹ not Glory's, must awake
Those whom they thirst for; though the sound of Fame
May for a moment soothe, it cannot slake
The fever of vain longing, and the name
So honoured but assumes a stronger, bitterer claim.

32

They mourn, but smile at length; and, smiling, mourn: 280
 The tree will wither long before it fall;
 The hull drives on, though mast and sail be torn;
 The roof-tree sinks, but moulder on the hall
 In massy hoariness; the ruined wall
 Stands when its wind-worn battlements are gone;
 The bars survive the captive they enthrall;
 The day drags through though storms keep out the sun;
 And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on:⁵⁰

33

Even as a broken mirror, which the glass
 In every fragment multiplies; and makes 290
 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,
 Showing no visible sign, for such things are untold.

34

There is a very life in our despair,
 Vitality of poison, – a quick root
 Which feeds these deadly branches; for it were 300
 As nothing did we die; but Life will suit
 Itself to Sorrow's most detested fruit,
 Like to the apples⁵¹ 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, – say, would he name threescore?

35

The Psalmist⁵² 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! 310
 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!'⁵³
 And this is much, and all which will not pass away.

36

There sunk the greatest,⁵⁴ 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, 320
 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 again the world, the Thunderer of the scene!

37

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 330
 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.

38

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, 340
 Look through thine own, nor curb the lust of war,
 Nor learn that tempted Fate will leave the loftiest star.

39

Yet well thy soul 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, 350
 He stood unbowed beneath the ills upon him piled.

40

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. 360

41

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 admiration thy best weapon shone;
 The part of Philip's son was thine, not then
 (Unless aside thy purple⁵⁵ had been thrown)
 Like stern Diogenes to mock at men;
 For sceptred cynics earth were far too wide a den.

42

But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell, 370
 And *there* hath 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.

43

This makes the madmen who have made men mad
 By their contagion; Conquerors and Kings, 380
 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 those 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:

44

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, 390
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.

45

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. 400
Though high *above* the sun of glory glow,
And far *beneath* the earth and 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.

* * *

76

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,⁵⁶ whose dust was once all fire,
 A native of the land where I respire 720
 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.

77

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 730
 How to make madness beautiful, and cast
 O'er erring deeds and thoughts, a heavenly hue
 Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they past
 The eyes, which o'er them shed tears feelingly and fast.

78

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 740
 In him existence, and o'erflowing teems
 Along his burning page, distempered though it seems.

79

This breathed itself to life in Julie,⁵⁷ *this*
 Invested her with all that's wild and sweet;
 This hallowed, too, the memorable kiss⁵⁸
 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, 750
 Than vulgar minds may be with all they seek possess.

80

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 frenzied, – wherefore, who may know?
Since cause might be which skill could never find;
But he was frenzied by disease or woe,
To that worst pitch of all, which wears a reasoning show. 760

81

For then he was inspired, and from him came,
As from the Pythian's mystic cave⁵⁹ of yore,
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 to too much wrath which follows o'ergrown fears?

Canto Four

1

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's⁶⁰ marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, thron'd on her hundred isles!

2

She looks a sea Cybele,⁶¹ fresh from ocean, 10
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 robed, and of her feast
Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dignity increas'd.

3

In Venice Tasso's⁶² echoes are no more, 20
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!

4

But unto us she hath a spell beyond
Her name in story, and her long array
Of might shadows, whose dim forms despond 30
Above the dogeless⁶³ city's vanish'd sway;
Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor,
And Pierre,⁶⁴ can not be swept or worn away –
The keystones of the arch! though all were o'er,
For us re-peopled were the solitary shore.

5

The beings of the mind are not of clay;
Essentially immortal, they create
And multiply in us a brighter ray
And more beloved existence: that which Fate 40
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.

6

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, may be, that which grows beneath mine eye:
Yet there are things whose strong reality 50
Outshines our fairyland; 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:

7

I saw or dreamed of such, – but let them go –
They came like truth, and disappeared 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; 60
Let these too go – for waking Reason deems
Such over-weening fantasies unsound,
And other voices speak, and other sights surround.

78

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! 700
 Whose agonies are evils of a day –
 A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

79

The Niobe⁶⁵ of nations! there she stands,
 Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;
 An empty urn within her withered hands,
 Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago;
 The Scipios' tomb⁶⁶ contains no ashes now;
 The very sepulchres lie tenantless
 Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,
 Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness? 710
 Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress!

80

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;⁶⁷ 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? 720

81

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

82

Alas! the lofty city! and alas! 730
 The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day
 When Brutus⁶⁸ made the dagger's edge surpass
 The conqueror's sword in bearing fame away!
 Alas, for Tully's⁶⁹ voice, and Virgil's lay,
 And Livy's pictur'd 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!

83

Oh thou, whose chariot roll'd on Fortune's wheel,
 Triumphant Sylla! Thou, who didst subdue 740
 Thy country's foes ere thou would 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 –

84

The dictatorial wreath, – couldst thou divine
 To what would one day dwindle that which made
 Thee more than mortal? and that so supine 750
 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!

85

Sylla was first of victors; but our own
 The sagest of usurpers, Cromwell; he
 Too swept off senates while he hewed the throne⁷⁰
 Down to a block – immortal rebel! See 760
 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.

86

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, 770
 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!

87

And thou, dread statue! yet existent in
 The austerest form of naked majesty,
 Thou who beheldest, 'mid the assassins' din,
 At thy bath'd base the bloody Caesar lie,
 Folding his robe in dying dignity,
 An offering to thine altar from the queen 780
 Of gods and men, great Nemesis!⁷¹ did he die,
 And thou, too, perish, Pompey? have ye been
 Victors of countless kings, or puppets of a scene?

88

And thou, the thunder-stricken nurse of Rome!
 She-wolf!⁷² whose brazen-imag'd 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, 790
 And thy limbs black with lightning – dost thou yet
 Guard thine immortal cubs, nor thy fond charge forget?

89

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,⁷³ who is not in the grave, 800
 But, vanquish'd by himself, to his own slaves a slave –

90

The fool of false dominion – and a kind
 Of bastard Caesar, 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 distaff⁷⁴ now he seem'd
 At Cleopatra's feet, – and now himself he beam'd, 810

91

And came – and saw – and conquer'd!⁷⁵ But the man
 Who would have tamed his eagles down to flee,⁷⁶
 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 fram'd;
 With but one weakest weakness – vanity,
 Coquettish in ambition – still he aim'd –
 At what? can he avouch – or answer what he claim'd?

92

And would be all or nothing – nor could wait 820
 For the sure grave to level him; few years
 Had fix'd him with the Caesars in his fate,
 On whom we tread: For *this* the conqueror rears
 The arch of triumph!⁷⁷ and for this the tears
 And blood of earth flow on as they have flowed,
 And universal deluge,⁷⁸ which appears
 Without an ark for wretched man's abode,
 And ebbs but to reflow! – Renew thy rainbow, God!

93

What from this barren being do we reap?
 Our senses narrow, and our reason frail, 830
 Life short, and truth a gem which loves the deep,
 And all things weigh'd in custom's falsest scale;
 Opinion an omnipotence,⁷⁹ – 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.

94

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,
 Rotting from sire to son, and age to age,
 Proud of their trampled nature, and so die, 840
 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.

95

I speak not of men's creeds – they rest between
 Man and his Maker – but of things allowed,
 Averr'd, and known, – and daily, hourly seen –
 The yoke that is upon us doubly bowed, 850
 And the intent of tyranny avowed,⁸⁰
 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.

96

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquered be,
 And Freedom find no champion and no child
 Such as Columbia⁸¹ saw arise when she
 Sprung forth a Pallas, armed and undefiled?
 Or must such minds be nourished in the wild, 860
 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?

97

But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime,
 And fatal have her Saturnalia⁸² been
 To Freedom's cause, in every age and clime;
 Because the deadly days which we have seen,
 And vile Ambition, that built up between
 Man and his hopes an adamantine wall, 870
 And the base pageant⁸³ 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.

98

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 880
 Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;⁸⁴
 So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring forth.

* * *

185

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 1660
 My midnight lamp – and what is writ,⁸⁵ 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.

Notes for Extracts from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*

Frequently occurring terms and names appear in the Glossary

Abbreviations:

LB Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads*

PL Milton's *Paradise Lost*

References to Byron's *Letter and Journals* appear in brackets in the form (1:1)

CANTO ONE

- 1 (p. 11) *Hellas* Greece
- 2 (p. 11) *Whilome* once upon a time. Throughout Canto One Byron uses deliberately archaic language ironically.
- 3 (p. 11) *hight* called
- 4 (p. 11) *lorel* worthless person. Possibly a reference to the 'wicked' 5th Lord Byron (1722–96).
- 5 (p. 12) *Eremite's* hermit's
- 6 (p. 12) *ee* eyes
- 7 (p. 12) *Superstition . . . Paphian* The hall, modelled on Newstead Abbey, changes from a site of Catholic worship to one interested in sexual intrigue. For Paphian, see Glossary.
- 8 (p. 13) *lemans* mistresses
- 9 (p. 13) *feere* mate
- 10 (p. 13) *central line* the Equator
- 11 (p. 15) *Love's sad archery* See Cupid in Glossary. The description of the bullfight uses puns conflating sexual and martial activity throughout.
- 12 (p. 15) *croupe* the hindquarters of the horse, here in the sense of a manoeuvre made by the rider
- 13 (p. 15) *brast* broken
- 14 (p. 15) *conynge* cunning
- 15 (p. 17) *sentinel, Duenna sage* a wise female chaperone
- 16 (p. 17) *wings* See Cupid in Glossary.

CANTO TWO

- 17 (p. 18) *son of Saturn* Jupiter. This is a description of the ruins of the temple to Jupiter in Athens.
- 18 (p. 18) *yon fane* the Parthenon

- 19 (p. 18) *dull spoiler* . . . *Caledonia* See Elgin in Glossary.
- 20 (p. 18) *rive* tear apart
- 21 (p. 19) *Eld* the mythic personification of antiquity
- 22 (p. 19) *Aegis* . . . *Havoc* Pallas' shield, Aegis, meaning protection, used figuratively against the Goth leader Alaric who attacked Rome, and more generally against Havoc – see Glossary.
- 23 (p. 19) *Peleus' son* Achilles the hero of the *Iliad*. He was dipped in the river Styx – see Stygian in Glossary – granting him invulnerability, except in the heel; subsequently injured in this one vulnerable spot, he died, but his ghost appeared to the Greeks after the taking of Troy.
- 24 (p. 19) *Pluto* Greek god of the underworld
- 25 (p. 20) *well-reeved* secured
- 26 (p. 20) *lone chieftain* the captain of the ship
- 27 (p. 21) *rude Arion's* simple singer after the mythical poet Arion who was saved from drowning by Dolphins
- 28 (p. 21) *Hecate's blaze* the light of the moon, after the goddess Hecate
- 29 (p. 21) *Mauritania's* . . . *down* the shore of North Africa
- 30 (p. 23) *bondsmen* Constantinople had been under Muslim rule since 1453.
- 31 (p. 23) *proud despoilers* the Turks who ruled over Greece
- 32 (p. 23) *Shades of the Helots* Modern Greeks are like ancient Spartan slaves.
- 33 (p. 23) *Wahab's rebel brood* a fundamentalist Muslim sect which sacked Mecca in 1803

CANTO THREE

- 34 (p. 24) *The winds lift up their voices* See Isaiah, 42:11.
- 35 (p. 24) *One* Childe Harold, referring back to earlier cantos of the poem
- 36 (p. 26) *strange land* See Exodus, 2:22.
- 37 (p. 27) *Chaldean* a Babylonian astronomer and mystic
- 38 (p. 27) *clay* . . . *spark immortal* the body and the soul
- 39 (p. 28) *Empire's dust* Napoleon's French Empire (1805–14) was defeated at Waterloo. Byron goes on to criticise the settlement reached at the Congress of Vienna (1815).
- 40 (p. 28) '*pride of place*' a term in falconry for the bird who flies highest
- 41 (p. 29) *the myrtle* . . . *Harmodius* In 514 BC Harmodius attacked the Tyrants of Athens with a sword hidden in myrtle; such a sword has become a symbol of liberty-seeking generally.
- 42 (p. 29) *deep sound* The sound of cannon fire disrupts a party on the night before the battle of Quatre-Bras.

- 43 (p. 29) *Brunswick's fated chieftain* Frederick Duke of Brunswick (1771–1815) was killed at the battle of Quatre-Bras. His father was killed in 1806 at Auerstadt.
- 44 (p. 30) '*Cameron's gathering*' the clan song of the Camerons, whose chief is the Lochiel
- 45 (p. 30) *Albyn's . . . Saxon* The Gaelic form for Scotland is Albyn; the Saxon foes are the English.
- 46 (p. 30) *Evan's, Donald's fame* the martial fame of Evan (1629–1719) and Donald (1695–1748) Cameron.
- 47 (p. 30) *Ardenne's . . . leaves* The forest of Ardennes is in Luxembourg. Byron's geography is confused here.
- 48 (p. 31) *Howard* Frederick Howard (1785–1815), Byron's cousin, who died at Waterloo. Byron had criticised his father in EBSR.
- 49 (p. 31) *Archangel's trump* trumpet which wakes the dead
- 50 (p. 32) *heart . . . live on* See John Donne's 'The Broken Heart', 24–32.
- 51 (p. 32) *the apples* The fabled apples on the shore of Lake Asphaltes appeared beautiful on the outside, but were ashes on the inside.
- 52 (p. 32) *The Psalmist* The Psalms (90:10) allow for three score years and ten, or seventy years.
- 53 (p. 32) '*Here . . . that day*' an echo of the St Crispin's day speech in *Henry V* 4, 3, 44ff
- 54 (p. 33) *the greatest* Napoleon – see Glossary. Like Milton's Satan in *PL*, Byron's Napoleon is driven by desire to aspire too high.
- 55 (p. 34) *purple* the colour worn by Roman emperors
- 56 (p. 36) *One* Rousseau – see Glossary.
- 57 (p. 36) *Julie* Rousseau's novel *Julie* (1761) details the love of the eponymous and idealised heroine for her tutor Saint-Preux.
- 58 (p. 36) *memorable kiss* In his *Confessions* (1770), the autobiographical nature of which clearly inspired Byron, Rousseau recalls his unrequited love for the Comtesse D'Houdetot.
- 59 (p. 37) *Pythian's mystic cave* the oracle of Delphi from where the future could be predicted. Rousseau is held, here, to have inspired the French Revolution (1789).

CANTO FOUR

- 60 (p. 38) *winged Lion* the Lion of St Mark's, a symbol of Venetian independence
- 61 (p. 38) *Cybele* Greco-Roman goddess, mother of the gods
- 62 (p. 38) *Tasso* Italian poet (1493–1569) born on the Bay of Naples
- 63 (p. 39) *dogeless* The Doges were the rulers of the Venetian republic up until the eighteenth century.
- 64 (p. 39) *Rialto . . . Pierre* The Rialto was the market-place of Venice. Shylock appears in *The Merchant of Venice* and the Moor is the title

- character of his *Othello*, both partially set in Venice. Pierre is the hero of Otway's *Venice Preserved* (1682).
- 65 (p. 40) *Niobe* a mythical figure who boasted of her number of offspring. Her children were killed by the gods because of her arrogance, and she was turned into a stone.
- 66 (p. 40) *Scipios' tomb* The Roman general Scipio's (185–129BC) tomb was discovered in 1780 and looted.
- 67 (p. 40) *Capitol* the seat of government
- 68 (p. 41) *Brutus . . . fame away* Marcus Junius Brutus (85–42BC), Roman politician who headed conspiracy against Julius Caesar and helped assassinate him
- 69 (p. 41) *Tully's* See Cicero in the Glossary.
- 70 (p. 41) *Cromwell . . . throne* Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658) brought about similar political reform or upheaval when he dissolved the Long Parliament and was involved in the execution of Charles I in 1653.
- 71 (p. 42) *Nemesis* Greek goddess of retribution
- 72 (p. 42) *She-wolf* Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome, was said to have been reared by a wolf. A statue of the wolf forms part of the Capitol.
- 73 (p. 42) *one vain man* Napoleon – see Glossary.
- 74 (p. 43) *Alcides with the distaff* a feminised Hercules
- 75 (p. 43) *And . . . conquer'd* Echoing Julius Caesar's 'I came, I saw, I conquered' (47BC)
- 76 (p. 43) *flee* in the sense of fly towards
- 77 (p. 43) *arch of triumph* The Arc de Triomphe was commissioned by Napoleon in 1806 to mark his victory at Austerlitz. It was completed in 1836.
- 78 (p. 43) *And universal deluge* the suffering of mankind is compared to the biblical flood
- 79 (p. 43) *Opinion an omnipotence* a quote from William Godwin's *Political Justice* (1793), 1,10
- 80 (p. 44) *tyranny avow'd* A reference to perceived oppressive regimes of the Holy Alliance, the group of European powers formed at the Congress of Vienna (1815) after the defeat of Napoleon.
- 81 (p. 44) *Columbia* A comparison is made with the American Revolution (1776).
- 82 (p. 44) *France . . . Saturnalia* a reference to the Terror that followed the French Revolution (1789). Saturnalia were extravagant, orgiastic pagan festivals.
- 83 (p. 44) *base pageant* Congress of Vienna (1815)
- 84 (p. 45) *North* suggests England as a possible site for the rebirth of liberty
- 85 (p. 45) *what is writ* See John, 19:22.

DON JUAN

Difficile est proprie communia dicere.¹

HORACE

Doest thou think because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale? Yes, by St Anne, and ginger shall be hot i' the mouth too!

SHAKESPEARE, *Twelfth Night*

Fragment

On the back of the poet's manuscript of Canto One

I would to heaven that I were so much clay,
As I am blood, bone, marrow, passion, feeling –
Because at least the past were pass'd 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!

Dedication

1

Bob Southey! You're a poet – poet Laureate,
And representative of all the race;
Although 'tis true 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;²

2

'Which pie 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.

3

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; 20
 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!³

4

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 dogstar rages; 30
 And he who understands it would be able
 To add a story to the Tower of Babel.

5

You, Gentlemen! by dint of long seclusion
 From better company have kept your own
 At Keswick, and through still continued 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. 40

6

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.⁴

7

Your bays may hide the baldness of your brows,
 Perhaps some virtuous blushes – let them go, 50
 To you I envy neither fruit nor boughs –
 And for the fame you would engross⁵ 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.

8

For me who, wandering with pedestrian Muses,
 Contend not with you on the winged steed,⁶
 I wish your fate may yield ye, when she chooses,
 The fame you envy, and the skill you need; 60
 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.

9

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 injured by his own assertion;
 And although here and there some glorious rarity
 Arise, like Titan⁷ from the sea's immersion, 70
 The major part of such appellants go
 To – God knows where – for no one else can know.

10

If, fallen in evil days on evil tongues,
 Milton appeal'd to the Avenger, Time,⁸
 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,⁹ 80
 But closed the tyrant-hater he begun.

11

Think'st thou, could he, the blind Old Man, arise
 Like Samuel¹⁰ 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?

12

Cold-blooded, smooth-faced, placid miscreant!
 Dabbling its sleek young hands in Erin's gore,¹¹ 90
 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,¹²
 And offer poison long already mix'd.

13

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: 100
 Not even a *sprightly* blunder's spark can blaze
 From that Ixion grindstone's¹³ ceaseless toil,
 That turns and turns, to give the world a notion
 Of endless torments, and perpetual motion.

14

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 confined,
 Conspiracy or Congress to be made –
 Cobbling at manacles for all mankind – 110
 A tinkering slavemaker, who mends old chains,
 With God and man's abhorrence for its gains.

15

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;
Eutropius¹⁴ of its many masters – blind
To worth as freedom, wisdom as to wit –
Fearless, because *no* feeling dwells in ice, 120
Its very courage stagnates to a vice.

16

Where shall I turn me not to *view* its bonds?
For I will never *feel* them – Italy!
Thy late reviving Roman soul desponds
Beneath the lie this state-thing breathed 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 Southey lives to sing them very ill.

17

Meantime, Sir Laureate, I proceed to dedicate
In honest, simple verse, this song to you; 130
And if in flattering strains I do not predicate,
'Tis that I still retain my 'buff and blue'.¹⁵
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?¹⁶

Venice, 16 September 1818

Canto One

1

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.

2

Vernon, the butcher Cumberland, Wolfe, Hawke,
Prince Ferdinand, Granby, Burgoyne, Keppel, Howe,¹⁷ 10
Evil and good, have had their tithe of talk,
And fill'd their sign-posts then, like Wellesley¹⁸ now;
Each in their turn like Banquo's monarchs stalk,
Followers of fame, 'nine farrow'¹⁹ of that sow:
France, too, had Buonaparté and Dumourier
Recorded in the Moniteur and Courier.

3

Barnave, Brissot, Condorcet, Mirabeau,
Petion, Cloutz, Danton, Marat, La Fayette,
Were French, and famous people, as we know;
And there were others, scarce forgotten yet, 20
Joubert, Hoche, Marceau, Lannes, Dessaix, Moreau,²⁰
With many of the military set,
Exceedingly remarkable at times,
But not at all adapted to my rhymes.

4

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, 30
Forgetting Duncan, Nelson, Howe, and Jervis.²¹

5

Brave men were living before Agamemnon²²
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. 40

6

Most epic poets plunge 'in medias res',²³
(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.

7

That is the usual method, but not mine –
My way is to begin with the beginning; 50
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.

8

In Seville was he born, a pleasant city,
Famous for oranges and women – he
Who has not seen it will be much to pity,
So says the proverb – and I quite agree; 60
Of all the Spanish towns is none more pretty,
Cadiz perhaps – but that you soon may see: –
Don Juan's parents lived beside the river,
A noble stream, and call'd the Guadalquivir.

9

His father's name was J6se – *Don*, of course,
 A true Hidalgo, free from every stain
 Of Moor or Hebrew blood, he traced his source
 Through the most Gothic gentlemen of Spain;
 A better cavalier ne'er mounted horse,
 Or, being mounted, e'er got down again, 70
 Than J6se, who begot our hero, who
 Begot – but that's to come – Well, to renew:

10

His mother was a learned lady,²⁴ famed
 For every branch of every science known –
 In every Christian language ever named,
 With virtues equall'd by her wit alone,
 She made the cleverest people quite ashamed,
 And even the good with inward envy groan,
 Finding themselves so very much exceeded
 In their own way by all the things that she did. 80

11

Her memory was a mine: she knew by heart
 All Calderon and greater part of Lop6,²⁵
 So that if any actor miss'd his part
 She could have served him for the prompter's copy;
 For her Feinagle's were an useless art,²⁶
 And he himself obliged to shut up shop – he
 Could never make a memory so fine as
 That which adorn'd the brain of Donna Inez.

12

Her favourite science was the mathematical,
 Her noblest virtue was her magnanimity, 90
 Her wit (she sometimes tried at wit) was Attic all,
 Her serious sayings darken'd to sublimity;
 In short, in all things she was fairly what I call
 A prodigy – her morning dress was dimity,
 Her evening silk, or, in the summer, muslin,
 And other stuffs, with which I won't stay puzzling.

13

She knew the Latin – that is, ‘the Lord’s prayer’,
And Greek – the alphabet – I’m nearly sure;
She read some French romances here and there,
Although her mode of speaking was not pure; 100
For native Spanish she had no great care,
At least her conversation was obscure;
Her thoughts were theorems, her words a problem,
As if she deem’d that mystery would ennoble ’em.

14

She liked the English and the Hebrew tongue,
And said there was analogy between ’em;
She proved it somehow out of sacred song,
But I must leave the proofs to those who’ve seen ’em,
But this I heard her say, and can’t be wrong,
And all may think which way their judgements lean ’em,
‘ ’Tis strange – the Hebrew noun which means “I am”, 111
The English always use to govern d—n.’²⁷

15

Some women use their tongues – she look’d a lecture,
Each eye a sermon, and her brow a homily,
An all-in-all-sufficient self-director,
Like the lamented late Sir Samuel Romilly,
The Law’s expounder, and the State’s corrector,
Whose suicide was almost an anomaly –
One sad example more, that ‘All is vanity’, –
(The jury brought their verdict in ‘Insanity’). 120

16

In short, she was a walking calculation,
Miss Edgeworth’s novels²⁸ stepping from their covers,
Or Mrs Trimmer’s books²⁹ on education,
Or ‘Coelebs’ Wife’³⁰ set out in search of lovers,
Morality’s prim personification,
In which not Envy’s self a flaw discovers,
To others’ share let ‘female errors fall’,³¹
For she had not even one – the worst of all.

17

Oh! she was perfect past all parallel –
 Of any modern female saint's comparison; 130
 So far beyond the cunning powers of hell,
 Her guardian angel had given up his garrison;
 Even her minutest motions went as well
 As those of the best time-piece made by Harrison:³²
 In virtues nothing earthly could surpass her,
 Save thine 'incomparable oil',³³ Macassar!

18

Perfect she was, but as perfection is
 Insipid in this naughty world of ours,
 Where our first parents never learn'd to kiss
 Till they were exiled from their earlier bowers, 140
 Where all was peace, and innocence, and bliss,
 (I wonder how they got through the twelve hours)
 Don José, like a lineal son³⁴ of Eve,
 Went plucking various fruit without her leave.

19

He was a mortal of the careless kind,
 With no great love for learning, or the learn'd,
 Who chose to go where'er he had a mind,
 And never dream'd his lady was concern'd;
 The world, as usual, wickedly inclined
 To see a kingdom or a house o'erturn'd, 150
 Whisper'd he had a mistress, some said two,
 But for domestic quarrels *one* will do.

20

Now Donna Inez had, with all her merit,
 A great opinion of her own good qualities;
 Neglect, indeed, requires a saint to bear it,
 And so, indeed, she was in her moralities;
 But then she had a devil of a spirit,
 And sometimes mix'd up fancies with realities,
 And let few opportunities escape
 Of getting her liege lord into a scrape. 160

21

This was an easy matter with a man
 Oft in the wrong, and never on his guard;
 And even the wisest, do the best they can,
 Have moments, hours, and days, so unprepared,
 That you might 'brain them with their lady's fan',³⁵
 And sometimes ladies hit exceeding hard,
 And fans turn into falchions³⁶ in fair hands,
 And why and wherefore no one understands.

22

'Tis pity learned virgins ever wed
 With persons of no sort of education, 170
 Or gentlemen, who, though well-born and -bred,
 Grow tired of scientific conversation:
 I don't choose to say much upon this head,
 I'm a plain man, and in a single station,
 But – Oh! ye lords of ladies intellectual,³⁷
 Inform us truly, have they not hen-peck'd you all?

23

Don José and his lady quarrell'd – why,
 Not any of the many could divine,
 Though several thousand people chose to try,
 'Twas surely no concern of theirs nor mine; 180
 I loathe that low vice curiosity,
 But if there's any thing in which I shine
 'Tis in arranging all my friends' affairs
 Not having, of my own, domestic cares.

24

And so I interfered, and with the best
 Intentions, but their treatment was not kind;
 I think the foolish people were possess'd,
 For neither of them could I ever find,
 Although their porter afterwards confess'd –
 But that's no matter, and the worst's behind, 190
 For little Juan o'er me threw, down stairs,
 A pail of housemaid's water unawares.

25

A little curly-headed, good-for-nothing,
 And mischief-making monkey from his birth;
 His parents ne'er agreed except in doting
 Upon the most unquiet imp on earth;
 Instead of quarrelling, had they been but both in
 Their senses, they'd have sent young master forth
 To school, or had him soundly whipp'd at home,
 To teach him manners for the time to come. 200

26

Don José and the Donna Inez led
 For some time an unhappy sort of life,
 Wishing each other, not divorced, but dead;
 They lived respectably as man and wife,
 Their conduct was exceedingly well-bred,
 And gave no outward signs of inward strife,
 Until at length the smother'd fire broke out,
 And put the business past all kind of doubt.

27

For Inez call'd some druggists and physicians,
 And tried to prove her loving lord was *mad*, 210
 But as he had some lucid intermissions,
 She next decided he was only *bad*;
 Yet when they ask'd her for her depositions,
 No sort of explanation could be had,
 Save that her duty both to man and God
 Required this conduct – which seem'd very odd.

28

She kept a journal, where his faults were noted,
 And open'd certain trunks of books and letters,
 All which might, if occasion served, be quoted;
 And then she had all Seville for abettors, 220
 Besides her good old grandmother (who doted);
 The hearers of her case became repeaters,
 Then advocates, inquisitors, and judges,
 Some for amusement, others for old grudges.

29

And then this best and meekest woman bore
 With such serenity her husband's woes,
 Just as the Spartan ladies did of yore,
 Who saw their spouses kill'd, and nobly chose
 Never to say a word about them more –
 Calmly she heard each calumny that rose, 230
 And saw *his* agonies with such sublimity,
 That all the world exclaim'd, 'What magnanimity!'

30

No doubt, this patience, when the world is damning us,
 Is philosophic in our former friends;
 'Tis also pleasant to be deem'd magnanimous,
 The more so in obtaining our own ends;
 And what the lawyers call a '*malus animus*',³⁸
 Conduct like this by no means comprehends:
 Revenge in person's certainly no virtue,
 But then 'tis not *my* fault, if *others* hurt you. 240

31

And if our quarrels should rip up old stories,
 And help them with a lie or two additional,
 I'm not to blame, as you well know, no more is
 Any one else – they were become traditional;
 Besides, their resurrection aids our glories
 By contrast, which is what we just were wishing all:
 And science profits by this resurrection –
 Dead scandals form good subjects for dissection.

32

Their friends had tried at reconciliation,
 Then their relations, who made matters worse; 250
 ('Twere hard to say upon a like occasion
 To whom it may be best to have recourse –
 I can't say much for friend or yet relation):
 The lawyers did their utmost for divorce,
 But scarce a fee was paid on either side
 Before, unluckily, Don José died.

33

He died: and most unluckily, because,
 According to all hints I could collect
 From counsel learned in those kinds of laws,
 (Although their talk's obscure and circumspect) 260
 His death contrived to spoil a charming cause;
 A thousand pities also with respect
 To public feeling, which on this occasion
 Was manifested in a great sensation.

34

But ah! he died; and buried with him lay
 The public feeling and the lawyers' fees:
 His house was sold, his servants sent away,
 A Jew took one of his two mistresses,
 A priest the other – at least so they say:
 I ask'd the doctors after his disease, 270
 He died of the slow fever call'd the tertian,
 And left his widow to her own aversion.

35

Yet José was an honourable man,
 That I must say, who knew him very well;
 Therefore his frailties I'll no further scan,
 Indeed there were not many more to tell;
 And if his passions now and then outran
 Discretion, and were not so peaceable
 As Numa's (who was also named Pompilius),³⁹
 He had been ill brought up, and was born bilious. 280

36

Whate'er might be his worthlessness or worth,
 Poor fellow! he had many things to wound him,
 Let's own, since it can do no good on earth;
 It was a trying moment that which found him
 Standing alone beside his desolate hearth,
 Where all his household gods lay shiver'd round him;
 No choice was left his feelings or his pride
 Save death or Doctors' Commons – so he died.

37

Dying intestate, Juan was sole heir
To a chancery suit, and messuages,⁴⁰ and lands, 290
Which, with a long minority and care,
Promised to turn out well in proper hands:
Inez became sole guardian, which was fair,
And answer'd but to nature's just demands;
An only son left with an only mother
Is brought up much more wisely than another.

38

Sagest of women, even of widows, she
Resolved that Juan should be quite a paragon,
And worthy of the noblest pedigree:
(His sire was of Castile, his dam from Arragon). 300
Then for accomplishments of chivalry,
In case our lord the king should go to war again,
He learn'd the arts of riding, fencing, gunnery,
And how to scale a fortress – or a nunnery.

39

But that which Donna Inez most desired,
And saw into herself each day before all
The learned tutors whom for him she hired,
Was, that his breeding should be strictly moral;
Much into all his studies she inquired,
And so they were submitted first to her, all, 310
Arts, sciences, no branch was made a mystery
To Juan's eyes, excepting natural history.

40

The languages, especially the dead,
The sciences, and most of all the abstruse,
The arts, at least all such as could be said
To be the most remote from common use,
In all these he was much and deeply read;
But not a page of any thing that's loose,
Or hints continuation of the species,
Was ever suffer'd, lest he should grow vicious. 320

41

His classic studies made a little puzzle,
 Because of filthy loves of gods and goddesses,
 Who in the earlier ages made a bustle,
 But never put on pantaloons or bodices;⁴¹
 His reverend tutors had at times a tussle,
 And for their Aeneids, Iliads, and Odysseys,⁴²
 Were forced to make an odd sort of apology,
 For Donna Inez dreaded the mythology.

42

Ovid's a rake, as half his verses show him,
 Anacreon's morals are a still worse sample, 330
 Catullus scarcely has a decent poem,
 I don't think Sappho's Ode a good example,
 Although Longinus⁴³ tells us there is no hymn
 Where the sublime soars forth on wings more ample;
 But Virgil's songs are pure, except that horrid one
 Beginning with 'Formosum Pastor Corydon'.⁴⁴

43

Lucretius' irreligion⁴⁵ is too strong
 For early stomachs, to prove wholesome food;
 I can't help thinking Juvenal⁴⁶ was wrong,
 Although no doubt his real intent was good, 340
 For speaking out so plainly in his song,
 So much indeed as to be downright rude;
 And then what proper person can be partial
 To all those nauseous epigrams of Martial?⁴⁷

44

Juan was taught from out the best edition,
 Expurgated by learned men, who place,
 Judiciously, from out the schoolboy's vision,
 The grosser parts; but fearful to deface
 Too much their modest bard by this omission,
 And pitying sore his mutilated case,
 They only add them all in an appendix, 350
 Which saves, in fact, the trouble of an index;

45

For there we have them all at one fell swoop,
Instead of being scatter'd through the pages;
They stand forth marshall'd in a handsome troop,
To meet the ingenuous youth of future ages,
Till some less rigid editor shall stoop
To call them back into their separate cages,
Instead of standing staring altogether,
Like garden gods – and not so decent either. 360

46

The Missal too (it was the family Missal)
Was ornamented in a sort of way
Which ancient mass-books often are, and this all
Kinds of grotesques illumined; and how they,
Who saw those figures on the margin kiss all,
Could turn their optics to the text and pray
Is more than I know – but Don Juan's mother
Kept this herself, and gave her son another.

47

Sermons he read, and lectures he endured,
And homilies, and lives of all the saints; 370
To Jerome and to Chrysostom⁴⁸ inured,
He did not take such studies for restraints;
But how faith is acquired, and then insured,
So well not one of the aforesaid paints
As Saint Augustine in his fine Confessions,
Which make the reader envy his transgressions.

48

This, too, was a seal'd book to little Juan –
I can't but say that his mamma was right,
If such an education was the true one.
She scarcely trusted him from out her sight; 380
Her maids were old, and if she took a new one
You might be sure she was a perfect fright,
She did this during even her husband's life –
I recommend as much to every wife.

49

Young Juan wax'd in goodliness and grace;
At six a charming child, and at eleven
With all the promise of as fine a face
As e'er to man's maturer growth was given:
He studied steadily, and grew apace,
And seem'd, at least, in the right road to heaven, 390
For half his days were pass'd at church, the other
Between his tutors, confessor, and mother.

50

At six, I said, he was a charming child,
At twelve he was a fine, but quiet boy;
Although in infancy a little wild,
They tamed him down amongst them; to destroy
His natural spirit not in vain they toil'd,
At least it seem'd so; and his mother's joy
Was to declare how sage, and still, and steady,
Her young philosopher was grown already. 400

51

I had my doubts, perhaps I have them still,
But what I say is neither here nor there:
I knew his father well, and have some skill
In character – but it would not be fair
From sire to son to augur good or ill:
He and his wife were an ill-sorted pair –
But scandal's my aversion – I protest
Against all evil speaking, even in jest.

52

For my part I say nothing – nothing – but
This I will say – my reasons are my own – 410
That if I had an only son to put
To school (as God be praised that I have none)
'Tis not with Donna Inez I would shut
Him up to learn his catechism alone,
No – no – I'd send him out betimes to college,
For there it was I pick'd up my own knowledge.

53

For there one learns – 'tis not for me to boast,
 Though I acquired – but I pass over *that*,
 As well as all the Greek I since have lost:
 I say that there's the place – but '*Verbum sat*', 420
 I think I pick'd up too, as well as most,
 Knowledge of matters – but no matter *what* –
 I never married – but, I think, I know
 That sons should not be educated so.

54

Young Juan now was sixteen years of age,
 Tall, handsome, slender, but well knit; he seem'd
 Active, though not so sprightly, as a page;
 And every body but his mother deem'd
 Him almost man; but she flew in a rage,
 And bit her lips (for else she might have scream'd), 430
 If any said so, for to be precocious
 Was in her eyes a thing the most atrocious.

55

Amongst her numerous acquaintance, all
 Selected for discretion and devotion,
 There was the Donna Julia, whom to call
 Pretty were but to give a feeble notion
 Of many charms in her as natural
 As sweetness to the flower, or salt to ocean,
 Her zone to Venus, or his bow to Cupid,
 (But this last simile is trite and stupid). 440

56

The darkness of her oriental eye
 Accorded with her Moorish origin;
 (Her blood was not all Spanish, by the by:
 In Spain, you know, this is a sort of sin).
 When proud Grenada fell, and, forced to fly,
 Boabdil⁴⁹ wept, of Donna Julia's kin
 Some went to Africa, some staid in Spain,
 Her great great grandmamma chose to remain.

57

She married (I forget the pedigree)
 With an Hidalgo, who transmitted down 450
 His blood less noble than such blood should be;
 At such alliances his sires would frown,
 In that point so precise in each degree
 That they bred *in and in*, as might be shown,
 Marrying their cousins – nay, their aunts, and nieces,
 Which always spoils the breed, if it increases.

58

This heathenish cross restored the breed again,
 Ruin'd its blood, but much improved its flesh;
 For, from a root the ugliest in Old Spain
 Sprung up a branch as beautiful as fresh; 460
 The sons no more were short, the daughters plain:
 But there's a rumour which I fain would hush,
 'Tis said that Donna Julia's grandmamma
 Produced her Don more heirs at love than law.⁵⁰

59

However this might be, the race went on
 Improving still through every generation,
 Until it centr'd in an only son,
 Who left an only daughter; my narration
 May have suggested that this single one
 Could be but Julia (whom on this occasion 470
 I shall have much to speak about), and she
 Was married, charming, chaste, and twenty-three.

60

Her eye (I'm very fond of handsome eyes)
 Was large and dark, suppressing half its fire
 Until she spoke, then through its soft disguise
 Flash'd an expression more of pride than ire,
 And love than either; and there would arise
 A something in them which was not desire,
 But would have been, perhaps, but for the soul
 Which struggled through and chasten'd down the whole. 480

61

Her glossy hair was cluster'd o'er a brow
 Bright with intelligence, and fair and smooth;
 Her eyebrow's shape was like the aerial bow,⁵¹
 Her cheek all purple with the beam of youth,
 Mounting, at times, to a transparent glow,
 As if her veins ran lightning; she, in sooth,
 Possess'd an air and grace by no means common:
 Her stature tall – I hate a dumpy woman.

62

Wedded she was some years, and to a man
 Of fifty, and such husbands are in plenty; 490
 And yet, I think, instead of such a ONE
 'Twere better to have TWO of five and twenty,
 Especially in countries near the sun:
 And now I think on't, 'mi vien in mente',⁵²
 Ladies even of the most uneasy virtue
 Prefer a spouse whose age is short of thirty.

63

'Tis a sad thing, I cannot choose but say,
 And all the fault of that indecent sun,
 Who cannot leave alone our helpless clay,
 But will keep baking, broiling, burning on; 500
 That howsoever people fast and pray
 The flesh is frail, and so the soul undone:
 What men call gallantry, and gods adultery,
 Is much more common where the climate's sultry.

64

Happy the nations of the moral north!
 Where all is virtue, and the winter season
 Sends sin, without a rag on, shivering forth;
 ('Twas snow that brought St Anthony to reason);⁵³
 Where juries cast up what a wife is worth
 By laying whate'er sum, in mulct,⁵⁴ they please on 510
 The lover, who must pay a handsome price,
 Because it is a marketable vice.

65

Alfonso was the name of Julia's lord,
 A man well looking for his years, and who
 Was neither much beloved, nor yet abhorr'd;
 They lived together as most people do,
 Suffering each other's foibles by accord,
 And not exactly either *one* or *two*;
 Yet he was jealous, though he did not show it,
 For jealousy dislikes the world to know it. 520

66

Julia was – yet I never could see why –
 With Donna Inez quite a favourite friend;
 Between their tastes there was small sympathy,
 For not a line had Julia ever penn'd:
 Some people whisper (but, no doubt, they lie,
 For malice still imputes some private end)
 That Inez had, ere Don Alfonso's marriage,
 Forgot with him her very prudent carriage;

67

And that still keeping up the old connection,
 Which time had lately render'd much more chaste, 530
 She took his lady also in affection,
 And certainly this course was much the best:
 She flatter'd Julia with her sage protection,
 And complimented Don Alfonso's taste;
 And if she could not (who can?) silence scandal,
 At least she left it a more slender handle.

68

I can't tell whether Julia saw the affair
 With other people's eyes, or if her own
 Discoveries made, but none could be aware
 Of this, at least no symptom e'er was shown; 540
 Perhaps she did not know, or did not care,
 Indifferent from the first, or callous grown:
 I'm really puzzled what to think or say,
 She kept her counsel in so close a way.

69

Juan she saw, and, as a pretty child,
 Caress'd him often, such a thing might be
 Quite innocently done, and harmless styled,
 When she had twenty years, and thirteen he;
 But I am not so sure I should have smiled
 When he was sixteen, Julia twenty-three, 550
 These few short years make wondrous alterations,
 Particularly amongst sun-burnt nations.

70

Whate'er the cause might be, they had become
 Changed; for the dame grew distant, the youth shy,
 Their looks cast down, their greetings almost dumb,
 And much embarrassment in either eye;
 There surely will be little doubt with some
 That Donna Julia knew the reason why,
 But as for Juan, he had no more notion
 Than he who never saw the sea of ocean. 560

71

Yet Julia's very coldness still was kind,
 And tremulously gentle her small hand
 Withdrew itself from his, but left behind
 A little pressure, thrilling, and so bland
 And slight, so very slight, that to the mind
 'Twas but a doubt; but ne'er magician's wand
 Wrought change with all Armida's fairy art⁵⁵
 Like what this light touch left on Juan's heart.

72

And if she met him, though she smiled no more,
 She look'd a sadness sweeter than her smile, 570
 As if her heart had deeper thoughts in store
 She must not own, but cherish'd more the while,
 For that compression in its burning core;
 Even innocence itself has many a wile,
 And will not dare to trust itself with truth,
 And love is taught hypocrisy from youth.

73

But passion most dissembles yet betrays
 Even by its darkness; as the blackest sky
 Foretells the heaviest tempest, it displays
 Its workings through the vainly guarded eye, 580
 And in whatever aspect it arrays
 Itself, 'tis still the same hypocrisy;
 Coldness or anger, even disdain or hate,
 Are masks it often wears, and still too late.

74

Then there were sighs, the deeper for suppression,
 And stolen glances, sweeter for the theft,
 And burning blushes, though for no transgression,
 Tremblings when met, and restlessness when left;
 All these are little preludes to possession,
 Of which young Passion cannot be bereft, 590
 And merely tend to show how greatly Love is
 Embarrass'd at first starting with a novice.

75

Poor Julia's heart was in an awkward state;
 She felt it going, and resolved to make
 The noblest efforts for herself and mate,
 For honour's, pride's, religion's, virtue's sake;
 Her resolutions were most truly great,
 And almost might have made a Tarquin quake;⁵⁶
 She pray'd the Virgin Mary for her grace,
 As being the best judge of a lady's case. 600

76

She vow'd she never would see Juan more,
 And next day paid a visit to his mother,
 And look'd extremely at the opening door,
 Which, by the Virgin's grace, let in another;
 Grateful she was, and yet a little sore –
 Again it opens, it can be no other,
 'Tis surely Juan now – No! I'm afraid
 That night the Virgin was no further pray'd.

77

She now determined that a virtuous woman
Should rather face and overcome temptation, 610
That flight was base and dastardly, and no man
Should ever give her heart the least sensation;
That is to say, a thought beyond the common
Preference, that we must feel upon occasion,
For people who are pleasanter than others,
But then they only seem so many brothers.

78

And even if by chance – and who can tell?
The devil's so very sly – she should discover
That all within was not so very well,
And, if still free, that such or such a lover 620
Might please perhaps, a virtuous wife can quell
Such thoughts, and be the better when they're over;
And if the man should ask, 'tis but denial:
I recommend young ladies to make trial.

79

And then there are such things as love divine,
Bright and immaculate, unmix'd and pure,
Such as the angels think so very fine,
And matrons, who would be no less secure,
Platonic, perfect, 'just such love as mine':
Thus Julia said – and thought so, to be sure, 630
And so I'd have her think, were I the man
On whom her reveries celestial ran.

80

Such love is innocent, and may exist
Between young persons without any danger,
A hand may first, and then a lip be kist;
For my part, to such doings I'm a stranger,
But *hear* these freedoms form the utmost list
Of all o'er which such love may be a ranger:
If people go beyond, 'tis quite a crime,
But not my fault – I tell them all in time. 640

81

Love, then, but love within its proper limits,
 Was Julia's innocent determination
 In young Don Juan's favour, and to him its
 Exertion might be useful on occasion;
 And, lighted at too pure a shrine to dim its
 Ethereal lustre, with what sweet persuasion
 He might be taught, by love and her together –
 I really don't know what, nor Julia either.

82

Fraught with this fine intention, and well fenced
 In mail⁵⁷ of proof – her purity of soul, 650
 She, for the future of her strength convinced,
 And that her honour was a rock, or mole,
 Exceeding sagely from that hour dispensed
 With any kind of troublesome control;
 But whether Julia to the task was equal
 Is that which must be mentioned in the sequel.

83

Her plan she deem'd both innocent and feasible,
 And, surely, with a stripling of sixteen
 Not scandal's fangs could fix on much that's seizable,
 Or if they did so, satisfied to mean 660
 Nothing but what was good, her breast was peaceable –
 A quiet conscience makes one so serene!
 Christians have burnt each other, quite persuaded
 That all the Apostles would have done as they did.

84

And if in the mean time her husband died,
 But heaven forbid that such a thought should cross
 Her brain, though in a dream! (and then she sigh'd)
 Never could she survive that common loss;
 But just suppose that moment should betide,
 I only say suppose it – *inter nos*⁵⁸ – 670
 (This should be *entre nous*, for Julia thought
 In French, but then the rhyme would go for nought).

85

I only say suppose this supposition:

Juan being then grown up to man's estate
Would fully suit a widow of condition,

Even seven years hence it would not be too late;
And in the interim (to pursue this vision)

The mischief, after all, could not be great,
For he would learn the rudiments of love,
I mean the seraph⁵⁹ way of those above.

680

86

So much for Julia. Now we'll turn to Juan,

Poor little fellow! he had no idea
Of his own case, and never hit the true one;

In feelings quick as Ovid's Miss Medea,
He puzzled over what he found a new one,

But not as yet imagined it could be a
Thing quite in course, and not at all alarming,
Which, with a little patience, might grow charming.

87

Silent and pensive, idle, restless, slow,

His home deserted for the lonely wood,
Tormented with a wound he could not know,

His, like all deep grief, plunged in solitude:
I'm fond myself of solitude or so,

But then, I beg it may be understood,
By solitude I mean a sultan's, not
A hermit's, with a haram for a grot.

690

88

'Oh Love! in such a wilderness as this,

Where transport and security entwine,
Here is the empire of thy perfect bliss,

And here thou art a god indeed divine.'

The bard I quote⁶⁰ from does not sing amiss,

With the exception of the second line,
For that same twining 'transport and security'
Are twisted to a phrase of some obscurity.

700

89

The poet meant, no doubt, and thus appeals
 To the good sense and senses of mankind,
 The very thing which every body feels,
 As all have found on trial, or may find,
 That no one likes to be disturb'd at meals
 Or love. – I won't say more about 'entwined' 710
 Or 'transport', as we knew all that before,
 But beg 'Security' will bolt the door.

90

Young Juan wander'd by the glassy brooks
 Thinking unutterable things; he threw
 Himself at length within the leafy nooks
 Where the wild branch of the cork forest grew;
 There poets find materials for their books,
 And every now and then we read them through,
 So that their plan and prosody are eligible,
 Unless, like Wordsworth, they prove unintelligible. 720

91

He, Juan, (and not Wordsworth) so pursued
 His self-communion with his own high soul,
 Until his mighty heart, in its great mood,
 Had mitigated part, though not the whole
 Of its disease; he did the best he could
 With things not very subject to control,
 And turn'd, without perceiving his condition,
 Like Coleridge, into a metaphysician.

92

He thought about himself, and the whole earth,
 Of man the wonderful, and of the stars, 730
 And how the deuce they ever could have birth;
 And then he thought of earthquakes, and of wars,
 How many miles the moon might have in girth,
 Of air-balloons, and of the many bars
 To perfect knowledge of the boundless skies;
 And then he thought of Donna Julia's eyes.

93

In thoughts like these true wisdom may discern
Longings sublime, and aspirations high,
Which some are born with, but the most part learn
To plague themselves withal, they know not why: 740
'Twas strange that one so young should thus concern
His brain about the action of the sky;
If you think 'twas philosophy that this did,
I can't help thinking puberty assisted.

94

He pored upon the leaves, and on the flowers,
And heard a voice in all the winds; and then
He thought of wood nymphs and immortal bowers,
And how the goddesses came down to men:
He miss'd the pathway, he forgot the hours,
And when he look'd upon his watch again, 750
He found how much old Time had been a winner –
He also found that he had lost his dinner.

95

Sometimes he turn'd to gaze upon his book,
Boscan, or Garcilasso;⁶¹ – by the wind
Even as the page is rustled while we look,
So by the poesy of his own mind
Over the mystic leaf his soul was shook,
As if 'twere one whereon magicians bind
Their spells, and give them to the passing gale,
According to some good old woman's tale. 760

96

Thus would he while his lonely hours away
Dissatisfied, nor knowing what he wanted;
Nor glowing reverie, nor poet's lay,
Could yield his spirit that for which it panted,
A bosom whereon he his head might lay,
And hear the heart beat with the love it granted,
With – several other things, which I forget,
Or which, at least, I need not mention yet.

97

Those lonely walks, and lengthening reveries,
 Could not escape the gentle Julia's eyes; 770
 She saw that Juan was not at his ease;
 But that which chiefly may, and must surprise,
 Is, that the Donna Inez did not tease
 Her only son with question or surmise;
 Whether it was she did not see, or would not,
 Or, like all very clever people, could not.

98

This may seem strange, but yet 'tis very common;
 For instance – gentlemen, whose ladies take
 Leave to o'erstep the written rights of woman,
 And break the – Which commandment is't they break?
 (I have forgot the number, and think no man 781
 Should rashly quote, for fear of a mistake)
 I say, when these same gentlemen are jealous,
 They make some blunder, which their ladies tell us.

99

A real husband always is suspicious,
 But still no less suspects in the wrong place,
 Jealous of some one who had no such wishes,
 Or pandering blindly to his own disgrace
 By harbouring some dear friend extremely vicious;
 The last indeed's infallibly the case: 790
 And when the spouse and friend are gone off wholly,
 He wonders at their vice, and not his folly.

100

Thus parents also are at times short-sighted;
 Though watchful as the lynx, they ne'er discover,
 The while the wicked world beholds delighted,
 Young Hopeful's mistress, or Miss Fanny's lover,⁶²
 Till some confounded escapade has blighted
 The plan of twenty years, and all is over;
 And then the mother cries, the father swears,
 And wonders why the devil he got heirs. 800

101

But Inez was so anxious, and so clear
Of sight, that I must think, on this occasion,
She had some other motive much more near
For leaving Juan to this new temptation;
But what that motive was, I shan't say here;
Perhaps to finish Juan's education,
Perhaps to open Don Alfonso's eyes,
In case he thought his wife too great a prize.

102

It was upon a day, a summer's day; –
Summer's indeed a very dangerous season, 810
And so is spring about the end of May;
The sun, no doubt, is the prevailing reason;
But whatsoe'er the cause is, one may say,
And stand convicted of more truth than treason,
That there are months which nature grows more merry in,
March has its hares, and May must have its heroine.

103

'Twas on a summer's day – the sixth of June: –
I like to be particular in dates,
Not only of the age, and year, but moon;
They are a sort of post-house, where the Fates 820
Change horses, making history change its tune,
Then spur away o'er empires and o'er states,
Leaving at last not much besides chronology,
Excepting the post-obits of theology.

104

'Twas on the sixth of June, about the hour
Of half-past six – perhaps still nearer seven,
When Julia sate within as pretty a bower
As e'er held houri in that heathenish heaven
Described by Mahomet, and Anacreon Moore,
To whom the lyre and laurels have been given, 830
With all the trophies of triumphant song –
He won them well, and may he wear them long!

105

She sate, but not alone; I know not well
 How this same interview had taken place,
 And even if I knew, I should not tell –
 People should hold their tongues in any case;
 No matter how or why the thing befell,
 But there were she and Juan, face to face –
 When two such faces are so, 'twould be wise,
 But very difficult, to shut their eyes. 840

106

How beautiful she look'd! her conscious heart
 Glow'd in her cheek, and yet she felt no wrong.
 Oh Love! how perfect is thy mystic art,
 Strengthening the weak, and trampling on the strong,
 How self-deceitful is the sagest part
 Of mortals whom thy lure hath led along –
 The precipice she stood on was immense,
 So was her creed in her own innocence.

107

She thought of her own strength, and Juan's youth,
 And of the folly of all prudish fears, 850
 Victorious virtue, and domestic truth,
 And then of Don Alfonso's fifty years;
 I wish these last had not occur'd, in sooth,
 Because that number rarely much endears,
 And through all climes, the snowy and the sunny,
 Sounds ill in love, whate'er it may in money.

108

When people say, 'I've told you *fifty* times,'
 They mean to scold, and very often do;
 When poets say, 'I've written *fifty* rhymes,'
 They make you dread that they'll recite them too; 860
 In gangs of *fifty*, thieves commit their crimes;
 At *fifty* love for love is rare, 'tis true,
 But then, no doubt, it equally as true is,
 A good deal may be bought for *fifty* Louis.⁶³

109

Julia had honour, virtue, truth, and love,
For Don Alfonso; and she inly swore,
By all the vows below to powers above,
She never would disgrace the ring she wore,
Nor leave a wish which wisdom might reprove;
And while she ponder'd this, besides much more, 870
One hand on Juan's carelessly was thrown,
Quite by mistake – she thought it was her own;

110

Unconsciously she lean'd upon the other,
Which play'd within the tangles of her hair;
And to contend with thoughts she could not smother,
She seem'd by the distraction of her air.
'Twas surely very wrong in Juan's mother
To leave together this imprudent pair,
She who for many years had watch'd her son so –
I'm very certain *mine* would not have done so. 880

111

The hand which still held Juan's, by degrees
Gently, but palpably confirm'd its grasp,
And if it said 'detain me, if you please';
Yet there's no doubt she only meant to clasp
His fingers with a pure Platonic squeeze;
She would have shrunk as from a toad, or asp,
Had she imagined such a thing could rouse
A feeling dangerous to a prudent spouse.

112

I cannot know what Juan thought of this,
But what he did, is much what you would do; 890
His young lip thank'd it with a grateful kiss,
And then, abash'd at its own joy, withdrew
In deep despair, lest he had done amiss,
Love is so very timid when 'tis new:
She blush'd, and frown'd not, but she strove to speak,
And held her tongue, her voice was grown so weak.

113

The sun set, and up rose the yellow moon:
 The devil's in the moon for mischief; they
 Who call'd her CHASTE,⁶⁴ methinks, began too soon
 Their nomenclature; there is not a day, 900
 The longest, not the twenty-first of June,
 Sees half the business in a wicked way
 On which three single hours of moonshine smile –
 And then she looks so modest all the while.

114

There is a dangerous silence in that hour,
 A stillness, which leaves room for the full soul
 To open all itself, without the power
 Of calling wholly back its self-control;
 The silver light which, hallowing tree and tower,
 Sheds beauty and deep softness o'er the whole, 910
 Breathes also to the heart, and o'er it throws
 A loving languor, which is not repose.

115

And Julia sate with Juan, half embraced
 And half retiring from the glowing arm,
 Which trembled like the bosom where 'twas placed;
 Yet still she must have thought there was no harm,
 Or else 'twere easy to withdraw her waist;
 But then the situation had its charm,
 And then – God knows what next – I can't go on;
 I'm almost sorry that I e'er begun. 920

116

Oh Plato! Plato! you have paved the way,
 With your confounded fantasies, to more
 Immoral conduct by the fancied sway
 Your system feigns o'er the controlless core
 Of human hearts, than all the long array
 Of poets and romancers: – You're a bore,
 A charlatan, a coxcomb – and have been,
 At best, no better than a go-between.

117

And Julia's voice was lost, except in sighs,
 Until too late for useful conversation; 930
 The tears were gushing from her gentle eyes,
 I wish, indeed, they had not had occasion,
 But who, alas! can love, and then be wise?
 Not that remorse did not oppose temptation,
 A little still she strove, and much repented,
 And whispering 'I will ne'er consent' – consented.

118

'Tis said that Xerxes offer'd reward
 To those who could invent him a new pleasure;
 Methinks, the requisition's rather hard,
 And must have cost his majesty a treasure: 940
 For my part, I'm a moderate-minded bard,
 Fond of a little love (which I call leisure);
 I care not for new pleasures, as the old
 Are quite enough for me, so they but hold.

119

Oh Pleasure! you're indeed a pleasant thing,
 Although one must be damn'd for you, no doubt;
 I make a resolution every spring
 Of reformation, ere the year run out,
 But, somehow, this my vestal vow takes wing,
 Yet still, I trust, it may be kept throughout: 950
 I'm very sorry, very much ashamed,
 And mean, next winter, to be quite reclaim'd.

120

Here my chaste Muse a liberty must take –
 Start not! still chaster reader – she'll be nice hence-
 Forward, and there is no great cause to quake;
 This liberty is a poetic licence,
 Which some irregularity may make
 In the design, and as I have a high sense
 Of Aristotle and the Rules, 'tis fit
 To beg his pardon when I err a bit. 960

121

This licence is to hope the reader will
 Suppose from June the sixth (the fatal day,
 Without those epoch my poetic skill
 For want of facts would all be thrown away),
 But keeping Julia and Don Juan still
 In sight, that several months have pass'd; we'll say
 'Twas in November, but I'm not so sure
 About the day – the era's more obscure.

122

We'll talk of that anon. – 'Tis sweet to hear
 At midnight on the blue and moonlit deep 970
 The song and oar of Adria's gondolier,⁶⁵
 By distance mellow'd, o'er the waters sweep;
 'Tis sweet to see the evening star appear;
 'Tis sweet to listen as the nightwinds creep
 From leaf to leaf; 'tis sweet to view on high
 The rainbow, based on ocean, span the sky.

123

'Tis sweet to hear the watchdog's honest bark
 Bay deep-mouth'd welcome as we draw near home;
 'Tis sweet to know there is an eye will mark
 Our coming, and look brighter when we come; 980
 'Tis sweet to be awaken'd by the lark,
 Or lull'd by falling waters; sweet the hum
 Of bees, the voice of girls, the song of birds,
 The lisp of children, and their earliest words.

124

Sweet is the vintage, when the showering grapes
 In Bacchanal profusion reel to earth
 Purple and gushing: sweet are our escapes
 From civic revelry to rural mirth;
 Sweet to the miser are his glittering heaps,
 Sweet to the father is his first-born's birth, 990
 Sweet is revenge – especially to women,
 Pillage to soldiers, prize-money to seamen.

125

Sweet is a legacy, and passing sweet
 The unexpected death of some old lady
 Or gentleman of seventy years complete,
 Who've made 'us youth'⁶⁶ wait too – too long already
 For an estate, or cash, or country-seat,
 Still breaking, but with stamina so steady,
 That all the Israelites⁶⁷ are fit to mob its
 Next owner for their double-damn'd post-obits. 1000

126

'Tis sweet to win, no matter how, one's laurels
 By blood or ink; 'tis sweet to put an end
 To strife; 'tis sometimes sweet to have our quarrels,
 Particularly with a tiresome friend;
 Sweet is old wine in bottles, ale in barrels;
 Dear is the helpless creature we defend
 Against the world; and dear the schoolboy spot
 We ne'er forget, though there we are forgot.

127

But sweeter still than this, than these, than all,
 Is first and passionate love – it stands alone, 1010
 Like Adam's recollection of his fall;
 The tree of knowledge has been pluck'd – all's known –
 And life yields nothing further to recall
 Worthy of this ambrosial⁶⁸ sin, so shown,
 No doubt in fable, as the unforgiven
 Fire which Prometheus filch'd for us from heaven.

128

Man's a strange animal, and makes strange use
 Of his own nature, and the various arts,
 And likes particularly to produce
 Some new experiment to show his parts; 1020
 This is the age of oddities let loose,
 Where different talents find their different marts;
 You'd best begin with truth, and when you've lost your
 Labour, there's a sure market for imposture.

129

What opposite discoveries we have seen!
 (Signs of true genius, and of empty pockets)
 One makes new noses, one a guillotine,
 One breaks your bones, one sets them in their sockets;
 But vaccination certainly has been
 A kind antithesis to Congreve's rockets,⁶⁹ 1030
 With which the doctor paid off an old pox
 By borrowing a new one from an ox.

130

Bread has been made (indifferent) from potatoes;
 And galvanism has set some corpses grinning,
 But has not answer'd like the apparatus
 Of the Humane Society's⁷⁰ beginning,
 By which men are unsuffocated gratis:
 What wondrous new machines have late been spinning!
 I said the small-pox has gone out of late,
 Perhaps it may be followed by the great.⁷¹ 1040

131

'Tis said the great came from America,
 Perhaps it may set out on its return;
 The population there so spreads, they say,
 'Tis grown high time to thin it in its turn,
 With war, or plague, or famine, any way,
 So that civilization they may learn,
 And which in ravage the more loathesome evil is,
 Their real lues, or our pseudo-syphilis.

132

This is the patent-age of new inventions
 For killing bodies, and for saving souls, 1050
 All propagated with the best intentions;
 Sir Humphrey Davy's lantern,⁷² by which coals
 Are safely mined for in the mode he mentions,
 Timbuctoo⁷³ travels, voyages to the Poles,
 Are ways to benefit mankind, as true,
 Perhaps, as shooting them at Waterloo.

133

Man's a phenomenon, one knows not what,
 And wonderful beyond all wondrous measure;
 'Tis pity though, in this sublime world, that
 Pleasure's a sin, and sometimes sin's a pleasure; 1060
 Few mortals know what end they would be at,
 But whether glory, power, or love, or treasure,
 The path is through perplexing ways, and when
 The goal is gain'd, we die, you know – and then –

134

What then? – I do not know, no more do you –
 And so good night. – Return we to our story:
 'Twas in November, when fine days are few,
 And the far mountains wax⁷⁴ a little hoary,
 And clap a white cape on their mantles blue;
 And the sea dashes round the promontory, 1070
 And the loud breaker boils against the rock,
 And sober suns must set at five o'clock.

135

'Twas, as the watchmen say, a cloudy night;
 No moon, no stars, the wind was low or loud
 By gusts, and many a sparkling hearth was bright
 With the piled wood, round which the family crowd;
 There's something cheerful in that sort of light,
 Even as a summer sky's without a cloud:
 I'm fond of fire, and crickets, and all that, 1080
 A lobster-salad, and champagne, and chat.

136

'Twas midnight – Donna Julia was in bed,
 Sleeping, most probably, – when at her door
 Arose a clatter might awake the dead,
 If they had never been awoke before,
 And that they have been so we all have read,
 And are to be so, at the least, once more –
 The door was fasten'd, but with voice and fist
 First knocks were heard, then 'Madam – Madam – hist!'

137

'For God's sake, Madam – Madam – here's my master,
 With more than half the city at his back – 1090
 Was ever heard of such a curst disaster!
 'Tis not my fault – I kept good watch – Alack!
 Do, pray undo the bolt a little faster –
 They're on the stair just now, and in a crack⁷⁵
 Will all be here; perhaps he yet may fly –
 Surely the window's not so very high!'

138

By this time Don Alfonso was arrived,
 With torches, friends, and servants in great number;
 The major part of them had long been wived,
 And therefore paused not to disturb the slumber 1100
 Of any wicked woman, who contrived
 By stealth her husband's temples to encumber:
 Examples of this kind are so contagious,
 Were *one* not punish'd, *all* would be outrageous.

139

I can't tell how, or why, or what suspicion
 Could enter into Don Alfonso's head;
 But for a cavalier of his condition
 It surely was exceedingly ill-bred,
 Without a word of previous admonition,
 To hold a levee round his lady's bed, 1110
 And summon lackeys, arm'd with fire and sword,
 To prove himself the thing he most abhorr'd.

140

Poor Donna Julia! starting as from sleep,
 (Mind – that I do not say – she had not slept)
 Began at once to scream, and yawn, and weep;
 Her maid Antonia, who was an adept,
 Contrived to fling the bed-clothes in a heap,
 As if she had just now from out them crept:
 I can't tell why she should take all this trouble
 To prove her mistress had been sleeping double. 1120

141

But Julia mistress, and Antonia maid,
 Appear'd like two poor harmless women, who
 Of goblins, but still more of men afraid,
 Had thought one man might be deterr'd by two,
 And therefore side by side were gently laid,
 Until the hours of absence should run through,
 And truant husband should return, and say,
 'My dear, I was the first who came away.'

142

Now Julia found at length a voice, and cried,
 'In heaven's name, Don Alfonso, what d'ye mean? 1130
 Has madness seized you? would that I had died
 Ere such a monster's victim I had been!
 What may this midnight violence betide,
 A sudden fit of drunkenness or spleen?
 Dare you suspect me, whom the thought would kill?
 Search, then, the room!' – Alfonso said, 'I will.'

143

He search'd, *they* search'd, and rummaged every where,
 Closet and clothes-press, chest and window-seat,
 And found much linen, lace, and several pair
 Of stockings, slippers, brushes, combs, complete, 1140
 With other articles of ladies fair,
 To keep them beautiful, or leave them neat:
 Arras they prick'd and curtains with their swords,
 And wounded several shutters, and some boards.

144

Under the bed they search'd, and there they found –
 No matter what – it was not that they sought;
 They open'd windows, gazing if the ground
 Had signs or footmarks, but the earth said nought;
 And then they stared each other's faces round:
 'Tis odd, not one of all these seekers thought, 1150
 And seems to me almost a sort of blunder,
 Of looking *in* the bed as well as under.

145

During this inquisition Julia's tongue
 Was not asleep – 'Yes, search and search,' she cried,
 'Insult on insult heap, and wrong on wrong!
 It was for this that I became a bride!
 For this in silence I have suffer'd long
 A husband like Alfonso at my side;
 But now I'll bear no more, nor here remain,
 If there be law, or lawyers, in all Spain. 1160

146

'Yes, Don Alfonso! husband now no more,
 If ever you indeed deserved the name,
 Is't worthy of your years? – you have threescore,
 Fifty, or sixty – it is all the same –
 Is't wise or fitting causeless to explore
 For facts against a virtuous woman's fame?
 Ungrateful, perjured, barbarous Don Alfonso,
 How dare you think your lady would go on so?

147

'Is it for this I have disdain'd to hold
 The common privileges of my sex? 1170
 That I have chosen a confessor so old
 And deaf, that any other it would vex,
 And never once he has had cause to scold,
 But found my very innocence perplex
 So much, he always doubted I was married –
 How sorry you will be when I've miscarried!

148

'Was it for this that no Cortejo⁷⁶ ere
 I yet have chosen from out the youth of Seville?
 Is it for this I scarce went any where,
 Except to bull-fights, mass, play, rout, and revel? 1180
 Is it for this, whate'er my suitors were,
 I favour'd none – nay, was almost uncivil?
 Is it for this that General Count O'Reilly,⁷⁷
 Who took Algiers, declares I used him vilely?

149

'Did not the Italian Musico Cazzani⁷⁸
 Sing at my heart six months at least in vain?
 Did not his countryman, Count Corniani,
 Call me the only virtuous wife in Spain?
 Were there not also Russians, English, many?
 The Count Strongstroganoff I put in pain, 1190
 And Lord Mount Coffeehouse, the Irish peer,
 Who kill'd himself for love (with wine) last year.

150

'Have I not had two bishops at my feet?
 The Duke of Ichar, and Don Fernan Nunez,
 And is it thus a faithful wife you treat?
 I wonder in what quarter now the moon is:⁷⁹
 I praise your vast forbearance not to beat
 Me also, since the time so opportune is –
 Oh, valiant man! with sword drawn and cock'd trigger,
 Now, tell me, don't you cut a pretty figure? 1200

151

'Was it for this you took your sudden journey,
 Under pretence of business indispensable
 With that sublime of rascals your attorney,
 Whom I see standing there, and looking sensible
 Of having play'd the fool? though both I spurn, he
 Deserves the worst, his conduct's less defensible,
 Because, no doubt, 'twas for his dirty fee,
 And not from any love to you nor me.

152

'If he comes here to take a deposition,
 By all means let the gentleman proceed; 1210
 You've made the apartment in a fit condition: –
 There's pen and ink for you, sir, when you need –
 Let every thing be noted with precision,
 I would not you for nothing should be fee'd –
 But, as my maid's undrest, pray turn your spies out.'
 'Oh!' sobb'd Antonia, 'I could tear their eyes out.'

153

'There is the closet, there the toilet, there
 The antechamber – search them under, over:
 There is the sofa, there the great armchair,
 The chimney – which would really hold a lover. 1220
 I wish to sleep, and beg you will take care
 And make no further noise, till you discover
 The secret cavern of this lurking treasure –
 And when 'tis found, let me, too, have that pleasure.

154

'And now, Hidalgo! now that you have thrown
 Doubt upon me, confusion over all,
 Pray have the courtesy to make it known
Who is the man you search for? how d'ye call
 Him? what's his lineage? let him but be shown –
 I hope he's young and handsome – is he tall? 1230
 Tell me – and be assured, that since you stain
 My honour thus, it shall not be in vain.

155

'At least, perhaps, he has not sixty years,
 At that age he would be too old for slaughter,
 Or for so young a husband's jealous fears –
 (Antonia! let me have a glass of water)
 I am ashamed of having shed these tears,
 They are unworthy of my father's daughter;
 My mother dream'd not in my natal hour
 That I should fall into a monster's power. 1240

156

'Perhaps 'tis of Antonia you are jealous,
 You saw that she was sleeping by my side
 When you broke in upon us with your fellows:
 Look where you please – we've nothing, sir, to hide;
 Only another time, I trust, you'll tell us,
 Or for the sake of decency abide
 A moment at the door, that we may be
 Drest to receive so much good company.

157

'And now, sir, I have done, and say no more;
 The little I have said may serve to show 1250
 The guileless heart in silence may grieve o'er
 The wrongs to whose exposure it is slow: –
 I leave you to your conscience as before,
 'Twill one day ask you *why* you used me so?
 God grant you feel not then the bitterest grief!
 Antonia! Where's my pocket-handkerchief?'

158

She ceased, and turn'd upon her pillow; pale
 She lay, her dark eyes flashing through their tears,
 Like skies that rain and lighten; as a veil,
 Waved and o'ershading her wan cheek, appears 1260
 Her streaming hair; the black curls strive, but fail,
 To hide the glossy shoulder, which uprears
 Its snow through all; – her soft lips lie apart,
 And louder than her breathing beats her heart.

159

The Senhor Don Alfonso stood confused;
 Antonia bustled round the ransack'd room,
 And, turning up her nose, with looks abused
 Her master, and his myrmidons, of whom
 Not one, except the attorney, was amused;
 He, like Achates,⁸⁰ faithful to the tomb, 1270
 So there were quarrels, cared not for the cause,
 Knowing they must be settled by the laws.

160

With prying snub-nose, and small eyes, he stood,
 Following Antonia's motions here and there,
 With much suspicion in his attitude;
 For reputations he had little care;
 So that a suit or action were made good,
 Small pity had he for the young and fair,
 And ne'er believed in negatives, till these
 Were proved by competent false witnesses. 1280

161

But Don Alfonso stood with downcast looks,
 And, truth to say, he made a foolish figure;
 When, after searching in five hundred nooks,
 And treating a young wife with so much rigour,
 He gain'd no point, except some self-rebukes,
 Added to those his lady with such vigour
 Had pour'd upon him for the last half-hour,
 Quick, thick, and heavy – as a thunder-shower.

162

At first he tried to hammer an excuse,
 To which the sole reply were tears, and sobs, 1290
 And indications of hysterics, whose
 Prologue is always certain throes, and throbs,
 Gasps, and whatever else the owners choose: –
 Alfonso saw his wife, and thought of Job's;
 He saw too, in perspective, her relations,
 And then he tried to muster all his patience.

163

He stood in act to speak, or rather stammer,
 But sage Antonia cut him short before
 The anvil of his speech received the hammer,
 With 'Pray sir, leave the room, and say no more, 1300
 Or madam dies.' – Alfonso mutter'd 'D—n her,'
 But nothing else, the time of words was o'er;
 He cast a rueful look or two, and did,
 He knew not wherefore, that which he was bid.

164

With him retired his '*posse comitatus*',⁸¹
 The attorney last, who linger'd near the door,
 Reluctantly, still tarrying there as late as
 Antonia let him – not a little sore
 At this most strange and unexplain'd '*hiatus*'
 In Don Alfonso's facts, which just now wore 1310
 An awkward look; as he revolved the case
 The door was fasten'd in his legal face.

165

No sooner was it bolted, than – Oh shame!
 Oh sin! Oh sorrow! and Oh womankind!
 How can you do such things and keep your fame,
 Unless this world, and t’other too, be blind?
 Nothing so dear as an unfilch’d good name!⁸²
 But to proceed – for there is more behind:
 With much heart-felt reluctance be it said,
 Young Juan slipp’d, half-smother’d, from the bed. 1320

166

He had been hid – I don’t pretend to say
 How, nor can I indeed describe the where –
 Young, slender, and pack’d easily, he lay,
 No doubt, in little compass, round or square;
 But pity him I neither must nor may
 His suffocation by that pretty pair;
 ’Twere better, sure, to die so, than be shut
 With maudlin Clarence in his Malmsey butt.⁸³

167

And, secondly, I pity not, because
 He had no business to commit a sin, 1330
 Forbid by heavenly, fined by human laws,
 At least ’twas rather early to begin;
 But at sixteen the conscience rarely gnaws
 So much as when we call our old debts in
 At sixty years, and draw the accompts of evil,
 And find a deuced balance with the devil.

168

Of his position I can give no notion:
 ’Tis written in the Hebrew Chronicle,⁸⁴
 How the physicians, leaving pill and potion,
 Prescribed, by way of blister, a young belle, 1340
 When old King David’s blood grew dull in motion,
 And that the medicine answer’d very well;
 Perhaps ’twas in a different way applied,
 For David lived, but Juan nearly died.

169

What's to be done? Alfonso will be back
 The moment he has sent his fools away.
 Antonia's skill was put upon the rack,
 But no device could be brought into play –
 And how to parry the renew'd attack?
 Besides, it wanted but few hours of day: 1350
 Antonia puzzled; Julia did not speak;
 But press'd her bloodless lip to Juan's cheek.

170

He turn'd his lip to hers, and with his hand
 Call'd back the tangles of her wandering hair;
 Even then their love they could not all command,
 And half forgot their danger and despair:
 Antonia's patience now was at a stand –
 'Come, come, 'tis no time now for fooling there,'
 She whisper'd, in great wrath – 'I must deposit
 This pretty gentleman within the closet: 1360

171

'Pray, keep your nonsense for some luckier night –
 Who can have put my master in this mood?
 What will become on't? – I'm in such a fright,
 The devil's in the urchin, and no good –
 Is this a time for giggling? this a plight?
 Why, don't you know that it may end in blood?
 You'll lose your life, and I shall lose my place,
 My mistress, all, for that half-girlish face.

172

'Had it but been for a stout cavalier
 Of twenty-five or thirty – (Come, make haste) 1370
 But for a child, what piece of work is here!
 I really, madam, wonder at your taste –
 (Come, sir, get in) – my master must be near.
 There, for the present, at the least he's fast,
 And, if we can but till the morning keep
 Our counsel – (Juan, mind, you must not sleep).'

173

Now, Don Alfonso entering, but alone,
Closed the oration of the trusty maid:
She loiter'd, and he told her to be gone,
An order somewhat sullenly obey'd; 1380
However, present remedy was none,
And no great good seem'd answer'd if she staid:
Regarding both with slow and sidelong view,
She snuff'd the candle, curtsied, and withdrew.

174

Alfonso paused a minute – then begun
Some strange excuses for his late proceeding;
He would not justify what he had done,
To say the best, it was extreme ill-breeding;
But there were ample reasons for it, none
Of which he specified in this his pleading: 1390
His speech was a fine sample, on the whole,
Of rhetoric, which the learn'd call 'rigmarole'.

175

Julia said nought; though all the while there rose
A ready answer, which at once enables
A matron, who her husband's foible knows,
By a few timely words to turn the tables,
Which if it does not silence still must pose,
Even if it should comprise a pack of fables;
'Tis to retort with firmness, and when he
Suspects with *one*, do you reproach with *three*. 1400

176

Julia, in fact, had tolerable grounds,
Alfonso's loves with Inez were well known;
But whether 'twas that one's own guilt confounds,
But that can't be, as has been often shown,
A lady with apologies abounds;
It might be that her silence sprang alone
From delicacy to Don Juan's ear,
To whom she knew his mother's fame was dear.

177

There might be one more motive, which makes two;
 Alfonso ne'er to Juan had alluded, 1410
 Mention'd his jealousy, but never who
 Had been the happy lover, he concluded,
 Conceal'd amongst his premises; 'tis true,
 His mind the more o'er this its mystery brooded;
 To speak of Inez now were, one may say,
 Like throwing Juan in Alfonso's way.

178

A hint, in tender cases, is enough;
 Silence is best, besides there is a *tact*
 (That modern phrase appears to me sad stuff,
 But it will serve to keep my verse compact) 1420
 Which keeps, when push'd by questions rather rough,
 A lady always distant from the fact –
 The charming creatures lie with such a grace,
 There's nothing so becoming to the face.

179

They blush, and we believe them; at least I
 Have always done so; 'tis of no great use,
 In any case, attempting a reply,
 For then their eloquence grows quite profuse;
 And when at length they're out of breath, they sigh,
 And cast their languid eyes down, and let loose 1430
 A tear or two, and then we make it up;
 And then – and then – and then – sit down and sup.

180

Alfonso closed his speech, and begg'd her pardon,
 Which Julia half withheld, and then half granted,
 And laid conditions, he thought, very hard on,
 Denying several little things he wanted:
 He stood like Adam lingering⁸⁵ near his garden,
 With useless penitence perplex'd and haunted,
 Beseeching she no further would refuse,
 When lo! he stumbled o'er a pair of shoes. 1440

181

A pair of shoes! – what then? not much, if they
 Are such a fit with lady's feet, but these
 (No one can tell how much I grieve to say)
 Were masculine; to see them, and to seize,
 Was but a moment's act. – Ah! Well-a-day!
 My teeth begin to chatter, my veins freeze –
 Alfonso first examined well their fashion,
 And then flew out into another passion.

182

He left the room for his relinquish'd sword,
 And Julia instant to the closet flew.
 'Fly, Juan, fly! for heaven's sake – not a word – 1450
 The door is open – you may yet slip through
 The passage you so often have explored –
 Here is the garden-key – Fly – fly – Adieu!
 Haste – haste! – I hear Alfonso's hurrying feet –
 Day has not broke – there's no one in the street.'

183

None can say that this was not good advice,
 The only mischief was, it came too late;
 Of all experience 'tis the usual price,
 A sort of income-tax⁸⁶ laid on by fate: 1460
 Juan had reach'd the room-door in a trice,
 And might have done so by the garden-gate,
 But met Alfonso in his dressing-gown,
 Who threaten'd death – so Juan knock'd him down.

184

Dire was the scuffle, and out went the light,
 Antonia cried out 'Rape!' and Julia 'Fire!'
 But not a servant stirr'd to aid the fight.
 Alfonso, pommell'd to his heart's desire,
 Swore lustily he'd be revenged this night;
 And Juan, too, blasphemed an octave higher, 1470
 His blood was up; though young, he was a Tartar,
 And not at all disposed to prove a martyr.

185

Alfonso's sword had dropp'd ere he could draw it,
 And they continued battling hand to hand,
 For Juan very luckily ne'er saw it;
 His temper not being under great command,
 If at that moment he had chanced to claw it,
 Alfonso's days had not been in the land
 Much longer. – Think of husbands', lovers' lives!
 And how ye may be doubly widows – wives! 1480

186

Alfonso grappled to detain the foe,
 And Juan throttled him to get away,
 And blood ('twas from the nose) began to flow;
 At last, as they more faintly wrestling lay,
 Juan contrived to give an awkward blow,
 And then his only garment quite gave way;
 He fled, like Joseph, leaving it;⁸⁷ but there,
 I doubt, all likeness ends between the pair.

187

Lights came at length, and men, and maids, who found
 An awkward spectacle their eyes before; 1490
 Antonia in hysterics, Julia swoon'd,
 Alfonso leaning, breathless, by the door;
 Some half-torn drapery scatter'd on the ground,
 Some blood, and several footsteps, but no more:
 Juan the gate gain'd, turn'd the key about,
 And liking not the inside, lock'd the out.

188

Here ends this canto. – Need I sing, or say,
 How Juan, naked, favour'd by the night,
 Who favours what she should not, found his way,
 And reach'd his home in an unseemly plight? 1500
 The pleasant scandal which arose next day,
 The nine days' wonder which was brought to light,
 And how Alfonso sued for a divorce,
 Were in the English newspapers, of course.

189

If you would like to see the whole proceedings,
 The depositions, and the cause at full,
 The names of all the witnesses, the pleadings
 Of counsel to nonsuit,⁸⁸ or to annul,
 There's more than one edition, and the readings
 Are various, but they none of them are dull, 1510
 The best is that in shorthand ta'en by Gurney,⁸⁹
 Who to Madrid on purpose made a journey.

190

But Donna Inez, to divert the train
 Of one of the most circulating scandals
 That had for centuries been known in Spain,
 Since Roderic's Goths, or older Genseric's Vandals,
 First vow'd (and never had she vow'd in vain)
 To Virgin Mary several pounds of candles;
 And then, by the advice of some old ladies,
 She sent her son to be embark'd at Cadiz. 1520

191

She had resolved that he should travel through
 All European climes, by land or sea,
 To mend his former morals, or get new,
 Especially in France and Italy,
 (At least this is the thing most people do).
 Julia was sent into a nunnery,
 And there, perhaps, her feelings may be better
 Shown in the following copy of her letter:

192

'They tell me 'tis decided; you depart:
 'Tis wise – 'tis well, but not the less a pain; 1530
 I have no further claim on your young heart,
 Mine was the victim, and would be again;
 To love too much has been the only art
 I used; – I write in haste, and if a stain
 Be on this sheet, 'tis not what it appears,
 My eyeballs burn and throb, but have no tears.

193

'I loved, I love you, for that love have lost
 State, station, heaven, mankind's, my own esteem,
 And yet can not regret what it hath cost,
 So dear is still the memory of that dream; 1540
 Yet, if I name my guilt, 'tis not to boast,
 None can deem harshlier of me than I deem:
 I trace this scrawl because I cannot rest –
 I've nothing to reproach, nor to request.

194

'Man's love is of his life a thing apart,
 'Tis woman's whole existence; man may range
 The court, camp, church, the vessel, and the mart,
 Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in exchange
 Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up his heart,
 And few there are whom these can not estrange; 1550
 Man has all these resources, we but one,
 To love again, and be again undone.

195

'My breast has been all weakness, is so yet;
 I struggle, but cannot collect my mind;
 My blood still rushes where my spirit's set,
 As roll the waves before the settled wind;
 My brain is feminine, nor can forget –
 To all, except your image, madly blind;
 As turns the needle trembling to the pole
 It ne'er can reach, so turns to you, my soul. 1560

196

'You will proceed in beauty, and in pride,
 Beloved and loving many; all is o'er
 For me on earth, except some years to hide
 My shame and sorrow deep in my heart's core;
 These I could bear, but cannot cast aside
 The passion which still rends it as before;
 And so farewell – forgive me, love me – No,
 That word is idle now – but let it go.

197

'I have no more to say, but linger still,
 And dare not set my seal upon this sheet, 1570
 And yet I may as well the task fulfil,
 My misery can scarce be more complete:
 I had not lived till now, could sorrow kill;
 Death flies the wretch who fain the blow would meet,
 And I must even survive this last adieu,
 And bear with life, to love and pray for you!'

198

This note was written upon gilt-edged paper
 With a neat crow-quill, rather hard, but new;
 Her small white fingers scarce could reach the taper,
 But trembled as magnetic needles do, 1580
 And yet she did not let one tear escape her;
 The seal a sunflower; '*Elle vous suit partout*',⁹⁰
 The motto, cut upon a white cornelian;
 The wax was superfine, its hue vermilion.

199

This was Don Juan's earliest scrape; but whether
 I shall proceed with his adventures is
 Dependent on the public altogether;
 We'll see, however, what they say to this,
 Their favour in an author's cap's a feather,
 And no great mischief's done by their caprice; 1590
 And if their approbation we experience,
 Perhaps they'll have some more about a year hence.

200

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 panorama view of hell's in training,
 After the style of Virgil and of Homer,
 So that my name of Epic's no misnomer. 1600

201

All these things will be specified in time,
 With strict regard to Aristotle's rules,
 The *Vade Mecum*⁹¹ 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.

202

There's only one slight difference between
 Me and my epic brethren gone before, 1610
 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.

203

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; 1620
 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.

204

If ever I should condescend to prose,
 I'll write poetical commandments,⁹² 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: 1630
 I'll call the work 'Longinus o'er a Bottle,
 Or, Every Poet his own Aristotle'.

205

Thou shalt believe in Milton, Dryden, Pope;
 Thou shalt not set up Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey;
 Because the first is crazed beyond all hope,
 The second drunk, the third so quaint and mouthey:
 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. 1640

206

Thou shalt not covet Mr Sotheby's Muse,
 His Pegasus, nor any thing that's his;
 Thou shalt not bear false witness like 'the Blues',
 (There's one,⁹³ 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!

207

If any person should presume to assert
 This story is not moral, first, I pray, 1650
 That they will not cry out before they're hurt,
 Then that they'll read it o'er again, and say,
 (But, doubtless, nobody will be so pert)
 That this is not a moral tale, though gay;
 Besides, in canto twelfth, I mean to show
 The very place where wicked people go.

208

If, after all, there should be some so blind
 To their own good this warning to despise,
 Led by some tortuosity of mind,
 Not to believe my verse and their own eyes, 1660
 And cry that they 'the moral cannot find',
 I tell him, if a clergyman, he lies;
 Should captains the remark or critics make,
 They also lie too – under a mistake.

209

The public approbation I expect,
 And beg they'll take my word about the moral,
 Which I with their amusement will connect,
 (So children cutting teeth receive a coral);⁹⁴
 Meantime, they'll doubtless please to recollect
 My epical pretensions to the laurel: 1670
 For fear some prudish readers should grow skittish,
 I've bribed my grandmother's review⁹⁵ – the British.

210

I sent it in a letter to the editor,
 Who thank'd me duly by return of post –
 I'm for a handsome article his creditor;
 Yet if my gentle Muse he please to roast,
 And break a promise after having made it her,
 Denying the receipt of what it cost,
 And smear his page with gall instead of honey,
 All I can say is – that he had the money. 1680

211

I think that with this holy new alliance⁹⁶
 I may ensure the public, and defy
 All other magazines of art or science,
 Daily, or monthly, or three monthly; I
 Have not essay'd to multiply their clients,
 Because they tell me 'twere in vain to try,
 And that the Edinburgh Review and Quarterly
 Treat a dissenting author very martyrly.

212

'*Non ego hoc ferrem calida juventa*
Consule Planco',⁹⁷ Horace said, and so 1690
 Say I; by which quotation there is meant a
 Hint that some six or seven good years ago
 (Long ere I dreamt of dating from the Brenta)⁹⁸
 I was most ready to return a blow,
 And would not brook at all this sort of thing
 In my hot youth – when George the Third was King.

213

But now at thirty years my hair is gray –
 (I wonder what it will be like at forty?
 I thought of a peruke⁹⁹ the other day)
 My heart is not much greener; and, in short, I 1700
 Have squander'd my whole summer while 'twas May,
 And feel no more the spirit to retort; I
 Have spent my life, both interest and principal,
 And deem not, what I deem'd, my soul invincible.

214

No more – no more – Oh! never more on me
 The freshness of the heart can fall like dew,
 Which out of all the lovely things we see
 Extracts emotions beautiful and new,
 Hived in our bosoms like the bag o' the bee:
 Think'st thou the honey with those objects grew? 1710
 Alas! 'twas not in them, but in thy power
 To double even the sweetness of a flower.

215

No more – no more – Oh! never more, my heart,
 Canst thou be my sole world, my universe!
 Once all in all, but now a thing apart,
 Thou canst not be my blessing or my curse:
 The illusion's gone for ever, and thou art
 Insensible, I trust, but none the worse,
 And in thy stead I've got a deal of judgement,
 Though heaven knows how it ever found a lodgement. 1720

216

My days of love are over, me no more
 The charms of maid, wife, and still less of widow,
 Can make the fool of which they made before,
 In short, I must not lead the life I did do;
 The credulous hope of mutual minds is o'er,
 The copious use of claret is forbid too,
 So for a good old-gentlemanly vice,
 I think I must take up with avarice.

217

Ambition was my idol, which was broken
 Before the shrines of Sorrow and of Pleasure; 1730
 And the two last have left me many a token
 O'er which reflection may be made at leisure:
 Now, like Friar Bacon's brazen head,¹⁰⁰ I've spoken,
 'Time is, Time was, Time's past', a chymic¹⁰¹ treasure
 Is glittering youth, which I have spent betimes –
 My heart in passion, and my head on rhymes.

218

What is the end of fame? 'tis but to fill
 A certain portion of uncertain paper:
 Some liken it to climbing up a hill,
 Whose summit, like all hills', is lost in vapour; 1740
 For this men write, speak, preach, and heroes kill,
 And bards burn what they call their 'midnight taper',
 To have, when the original is dust,
 A name, a wretched picture, and worse bust.

219

What are the hopes of man? old Egypt's King
 Cheops erected the first pyramid
 And largest, thinking it was just the thing
 To keep his memory whole, and mummy hid;
 But somebody or other rummaging,
 Burglariously broke his coffin's lid: 1750
 Let not a monument give you or me hopes,
 Since not a pinch of dust remains of Cheops.

220

But I being fond of true philosophy,
 Say very often to myself, 'Alas!
 All things that have been born were born to die,
 And flesh (which Death mows down to hay) is grass;
 You've pass'd your youth not so unpleasantly,
 And if you had it o'er again – 'twould pass –
 So thank your stars that matters are no worse,
 And read your Bible, sir, and mind your purse.' 1760

221

But for the present, gentle reader! and
 Still gentler purchaser! the bard – that's I –
 Must, with permission, shake you by the hand,
 And so your humble servant, and good bye!
 We meet again, if we should understand
 Each other; and if not, I shall not try
 Your patience further than by this short sample –
 'Twere well if others follow'd my example.

222

'Go, little book,¹⁰² from this my solitude!
 I cast thee on the waters, go thy ways! 1770
 And if, as I believe, thy vein be good,
 The world will find thee after many days.'
 When Southey's read, and Wordsworth understood,
 I can't help putting in my claim to praise –
 The four first rhymes are Southey's every line:
 For God's sake, reader! take them not for mine.

Canto Two

1

Oh ye! who teach the ingenuous youth of nations,
 Holland, France, England, Germany, or Spain,
 I pray ye flog them upon all occasions,
 It mends their morals, never mind the pain:
 The best of mothers and of educations
 In Juan's case were but employ'd in vain,
 Since in a way, that's rather of the oddest, he
 Became divested of his native modesty.

2

Had he but been placed at a public school,
 In the third form, or even in the fourth, 10
 His daily task had kept his fancy cool,
 At least, had he been nurtured in the north;
 Spain may prove an exception to the rule,
 But then exceptions always prove its worth –
 A lad of sixteen causing a divorce
 Puzzled his tutors very much, of course.

3

I can't say that it puzzles me at all,
 If all things be consider'd: first, there was
 His lady-mother, mathematical,
 A – never mind; his tutor, an old ass; 20
 A pretty woman – (that's quite natural,
 Or else the thing had hardly come to pass);
 A husband rather old, not much in unity
 With his young wife – a time, and opportunity.

4

Well – well, the world must turn upon its axis,
 And all mankind turn with it, heads or tails,
 And live and die, make love and pay our taxes,
 And as the veering wind shifts, shift our sails;
 The king commands us, and the doctor quacks us,
 The priest instructs, and so our life exhales, 30
 A little breath, love, wine, ambition, fame,
 Fighting, devotion, dust, – perhaps a name.

5

I said, that Juan had been sent to Cadiz –
 A pretty town, I recollect it well –
 'Tis there the mart of the colonial trade is,
 (Or was, before Peru learn'd to rebel)¹⁰³
 And such sweet girls – I mean, such graceful ladies,
 Their very walk would make your bosom swell;
 I can't describe it, though so much it strike,
 Nor liken it – I never saw the like: 40

6

An Arab horse, a stately stag, a barb
 New broke, a cameleopard,¹⁰⁴ a gazelle,
 No – none of these will do; – and then their garb!
 Their veil and petticoat – Alas! to dwell
 Upon such things would very near absorb
 A canto – then their feet and ankles – well,
 Thank heaven I've got no metaphor quite ready,
 (And so, my sober Muse – come, let's be steady –

7

Chaste Muse! – well, if you must, you must) – the veil
 Thrown back a moment with the glancing hand, 50
 While the o'erpowering eye, that turns you pale,
 Flashes into the heart: – All sunny land
 Of love! when I forget you, may I fail
 To – say my prayers – but never was there plann'd
 A dress through which the eyes give such a volley,
 Excepting the Venetian Fazzioli.¹⁰⁵

8

But to our tale: the Donna Inez sent
 Her son to Cadiz only to embark;
 To stay there had not answer'd her intent,
 But why? – we leave the reader in the dark – 60
 'Twas for a voyage that the young man was meant,
 As if a Spanish ship were Noah's ark,
 To wean him from the wickedness of earth,
 And send him like a dove of promise forth.

9

Don Juan bade his valet pack his things
 According to direction, then received
 A lecture and some money: for four springs
 He was to travel; and though Inez grieved,
 (As every kind of parting has its stings)
 She hoped he would improve – perhaps believed: 70
 A letter, too, she gave (he never read it)
 Of good advice – and two or three of credit.

10

In the mean time, to pass her hours away,
 Brave Inez now set up a Sunday school
 For naughty children, who would rather play
 (Like truant rogues) the devil, or the fool;
 Infants of three years old were taught that day,
 Dunces were whipt, or set upon a stool:
 The great success of Juan's education,
 Spurr'd her to teach another generation. 80

11

Juan embark'd – the ship got under way,
 The wind was fair, the water passing rough;
 A devil of a sea rolls in that bay,
 As I, who've cross'd it oft, know well enough;
 And, standing upon deck, the dashing spray
 Flies in one's face, and makes it weather-tough:
 And there he stood to take, and take again,
 His first – perhaps his last – farewell of Spain.

12

I can't but say it is an awkward sight
 To see one's native land receding through 90
 The growing waters; it unmans one quite,
 Especially when life is rather new:
 I recollect Great Britain's coast looks white,
 But almost every other country's blue,
 When gazing on them, mystified by distance,
 We enter on our nautical existence.

13

So Juan stood, bewilderd, on the deck:
 The wind sung, cordage strain'd, and sailors swore,
 And the ship creak'd, the town became a speck,
 From which away so fair and fast they bore. 100
 The best of remedies is a beef-steak
 Against sea-sickness; try it, sir, before
 You sneer, and I assure you this is true,
 For I have found it answer – so may you.

14

Don Juan stood, and, gazing from the stern,
 Beheld his native Spain receding far:
 First partings form a lesson hard to learn,
 Even nations feel this when they go to war;
 There is a sort of unexpressed concern,
 A kind of shock that sets one's heart ajar: 110
 At leaving even the most unpleasant people
 And places, one keeps looking at the steeple.

15

But Juan had got many things to leave,
 His mother, and a mistress, and no wife,
 So that he had much better cause to grieve
 Than many persons more advanced in life;
 And if we now and then a sigh must heave
 At quitting even those we quit in strife,
 No doubt we weep for those the heart endears –
 That is, till deeper griefs congeal our tears. 120

16

So Juan wept, as wept the captive Jews¹⁰⁶
 By Babel's waters, still remembering Sion:
 I'd weep, but mine is not a weeping Muse,
 And such light griefs are not a thing to die on;
 Young men should travel, if but to amuse
 Themselves; and the next time their servants tie on
 Behind their carriages their new portmanteau,
 Perhaps it may be lined with this my canto.

17

And Juan wept, and much he sigh'd and thought,
 While his salt tears dropp'd into the salt sea, 130
 'Sweets to the sweet';¹⁰⁷ (I like so much to quote;
 You must excuse this extract, 'tis where she,
 The Queen of Denmark, for Ophelia brought
 Flowers to the grave); and, sobbing often, he
 Reflected on his present situation,
 And seriously resolved on reformation.

18

'Farewell, my Spain! a long farewell!' he cried,
 'Perhaps I may revisit thee no more,
 But die, as many an exiled heart hath died,
 Of its own thirst to see again thy shore: 140
 Farewell, where Guadalquivir's waters glide!
 Farewell, my mother! and, since all is o'er,
 Farewell, too dearest Julia!' – (here he drew
 Her letter out again, and read it through).

19

'And oh! if e'er I should forget, I swear –
 But that's impossible, and cannot be –
 Sooner shall this blue ocean melt to air,
 Sooner shall earth resolve itself to sea,
 Than I resign thine image, Oh! my fair!
 Or think of any thing excepting thee; 150
 A mind diseased no remedy can physic –'
 (Here the ship gave a lurch, and he grew sea-sick.)

20

'Sooner shall heaven kiss earth' – (here he fell sicker)
 'Oh, Julia! what is every other woe? –
 (For God's sake let me have a glass of liquor,
 Pedro, Battista, help me down below).
 Julia, my love! – (you rascal, Pedro, quicker) –
 Oh Julia! – (this curst vessel pitches so) –
 Beloved Julia, hear me still beseeching!
 (Here he grew inarticulate with reaching.) 160

21

He felt that chilling heaviness of heart,
 Or rather stomach, which, alas! attends,
 Beyond the best apothecary's art,
 The loss of love, the treachery of friends,
 Or death of those we dote on, when a part
 Of us dies with them as each fond hope ends:
 No doubt he would have been much more pathetic,
 But the sea acted as a strong emetic.

22

Love's a capricious power; I've known it hold
 Out through a fever caused by its own heat, 170
 But be much puzzled by a cough and cold,
 And find a quinsy¹⁰⁸ very hard to treat;
 Against all noble maladies he's bold,
 But vulgar illnesses don't like to meet,
 Nor that a sneeze should interrupt his sigh,
 Nor inflammations redden his blind eye.

23

But worst of all is nausea, or a pain
 About the lower region of the bowels;
 Love, who heroically breathes a vein,
 Shrinks from the application of hot towels, 180
 And purgatives are dangerous to his reign,
 Sea-sickness death: his love was perfect, how else
 Could Juan's passion, while the billows roar,
 Resist his stomach, ne'er at sea before?

24

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 190
 Of his departure had been sent him by
 His Spanish friends for those in Italy.

25

His suite consisted of three servants and
 A tutor, the licentiate¹⁰⁹ 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 increased by every billow;
 And the waves oozing through the port-hole made
 His berth a little damp, and him afraid. 200

26

'Twas not without some reason, for the wind
 Increased 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.

27

At one o'clock the wind with sudden shift
 Threw the ship right into the trough of the sea, 210
 Which struck her aft, and made an awkward rift,
 Started the stern-post,¹¹⁰ 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.

28

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; 220
 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,

29

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 230
 By them per hour, and they had all been undone
 But for their maker, Mr Mann, of London.

30

As day advanced 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. 240

31

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 talk'd of by the divers
 And swimmers who may chance to be survivors.

32

Immediately the masts were cut away,
 Both mast and mizen; first the mizen went, 250
 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
 Eased her at last (although we never meant
 To part with all till every hope was blighted),
 And then with violence the old ship righted.

33

It may be easily supposed, 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; 260
 That even the able seaman, deeming his
 Days nearly o'er, might be disposed to riot,
 As upon such occasions tars will ask
 For grog,¹¹¹ and sometimes drink rum from the cask.

34

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 cured the qualms
 Of all the luckless landsmen's sea-sick maws:¹¹² 270
 Strange sounds of wailing, blasphemy, devotion,
 Clamour'd in chorus to the roaring ocean.

35

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. 280

36

'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 liked to anticipate the blow;
 And even Pedrillo, his most reverend tutor,
 Was for some rum a disappointed suitor.

37

The good old gentleman was quite aghast,
 And made a loud and pious lamentation; 290
 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,¹¹³
 To follow Juan's wake like Sancho Panca.¹¹⁴

38

But now there came a flash of hope once more;
 Day broke, and the wind lull'd: the masts were gone,
 The leak increased; shoals round her, but no shore,
 The vessel swam, yet still she held her own. 300
 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.¹¹⁵

39

Under the vessel's keel the sail was past,
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: 310
And though 'tis true that man can only die once,
'Tis not so pleasant in the Gulf of Lyons.

40

There winds and waves had hurl'd them, and from thence,
Without their will, they carried them away;
For they were forced 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. 320

41

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 used – nor sail nor shore appear'd in sight,
Nought but the heavy sea, and coming night.

42

Again the weather threaten'd, – again blew
A gale, and in the fore and after hold 330
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.

43

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 voyaged through many a stormy sea, 340
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.

44

The ship was evidently settling¹¹⁶ 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 look'd o'er the bow;
Some hoisted out the boats; and there was one 350
That begg'd Pedrillo for an absolution,
Who told him to be damn'd – in his confusion.

45

Some lash'd them in their hammocks, some put on
Their best clothes, as if going to a fair;
Some cursed 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. 360

46

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 damaged by the weather's stress:
Two casks of biscuit, and a keg of butter,
Were all that could be thrown into the cutter.

47

But in the long-boat they contrived to stow
 Some pounds of bread, though injured by the wet; 370
 Water, a twenty gallon cask or so;
 Six flasks of wine; and they contrived 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.

48

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, 380
 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 stored,
 To save one half the people then on board.

49

'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 masked but to assail;
 Thus to their hopeless eyes the night was shown
 And grimly darkled o'er their faces pale, 390
 And the dim desolate deep; twelve days had Fear
 Been their familiar, and now Death was here.

50

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. 400

51

At half-past eight o'clock, booms, hencoops, spars,¹¹⁷
 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.

52

Then rose from sea to sky the wild farewell,
 Then shriek'd the timid, and stood still the brave, 410
 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.

53

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 420
 Of billows; but at intervals there gush'd,
 Accompanied with a convulsive splash,
 A solitary shriek, the bubbling cry
 Of some strong swimmer in his agony.

54

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 – 430
 Nine in the cutter, thirty in the boat,
 Were counted in them when they got afloat.

55

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,¹¹⁸
 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. 440

56

Juan got into the long-boat, and there
 Contrived to help Pedrillo to a place;
 It seem'd as if they had exchanged 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 call'd shortly Tita)
 Was lost by getting at some aqua-vita.¹¹⁹

57

Pedro, his valet, too, he tried to save,
 But the same cause, conducive to his loss, 450
 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.

58

A small old spaniel, – which had been Don José's,
 His father's, whom he loved, as ye may think,
 For on such things the memory reposes
 With tenderness, – stood howling on the brink, 460
 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.

59

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;
 And Juan, trusting they might still get through, 470
 And deeming there were remedies for any ill,
 Thus re-embark'd his tutor and his spaniel.

60

'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 dared 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. 480

61

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 grieved for those who perish'd with the cutter,
 And also for the biscuit casks and butter.

62

The sun rose red and fiery, a sure sign
 Of the continuance of the gale: to run 490
 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
 Was served out to the people, who begun
 To faint, and damaged bread wet through the bags,
 And most of them had little clothes but rags.

63

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, 500
 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.

64

'Tis very certain the desire of life
 Prolongs it; this is obvious to physicians,
 When patients, neither plagued with friends nor wife,
 Survive through very desperate conditions,
 Because they still can hope, nor shines the knife
 Nor shears of Atropos¹²⁰ before their visions: 510
 Despair of all recovery spoils longevity,
 And makes men's miseries of alarming brevity.

65

'Tis said that persons living on annuities
 Are longer lived 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. 520

66

'Tis thus with people in an open boat,
 They live upon the love of life, and bear
 More than can be believed, 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.

67

But man is a carnivorous production,
 And must have meals, at least one meal a day; 530
 He cannot live, like woodcocks, upon suction,¹²¹
 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.

68

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, 540
 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.

69

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 hoped the wind would rise, these foolish men!
 And carry them to shore; these hopes were fine, 550
 But as they had but one oar, and that brittle,
 It would have been more wise to save their victual.

70

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. 560

71

On the sixth day they fed upon his hide,
 And Juan, who had still refused, because
 The creature was his father's dog that died,
 Now feeling all the vulture in his jaws,
 With some remorse received (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.

72

The seventh day, and no wind – the burning sun
 Blister'd and scorch'd, and, stagnant on the sea, 570
 They lay like carcasses; and hope was none,
 Save in the breeze that came not; savagely
 They glared 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.

73

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, 580
 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.

74

But ere they came to this, they that day shared
 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 prepared,
 But of materials that much shock the Muse – 590
 Having no paper, for the want of better,
 They took by force from Juan Julia's letter.

75

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,¹²² 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. 600

76

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.

77

The surgeon, as there was no other fee,
 Had his first choice of morsels for his pains; 610
 But being thirstiest at the moment, he
 Preferr'd a draught from the fast-flowing veins:
 Part was divided, part thrown in the sea,
 And such things as the entrails and the brains
 Regaled two sharks, who follow'd o'er the billow –
 The sailors ate the rest of poor Pedrillo.

78

The sailors ate him, all save three or four,
 Who were not quite so fond of animal food;
 To these were added Juan, who, before
 Refusing his own spaniel, hardly could 620
 Feel now his appetite increased 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.

79

'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, 630
Tearing and grinning, howling, screeching, swearing,
And, with hyaena laughter, died despairing.

80

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 perceived their woes;
But others ponder'd on a new dissection,
As if not warn'd sufficiently by those
Who had already perish'd, suffering madly,
For having used their appetites so sadly. 640

81

And next they thought upon the master's mate,
As fattest; but he saved himself, because,
Besides being much averse from such a fate,
There were some other reasons; the first was,
He had been rather indisposed of late,
And that which chiefly proved his saving clause,
Was a small present made to him at Cadiz,
By general subscription of the ladies.¹²³

82

Of poor Pedrillo something still remain'd,
But was used sparingly, – some were afraid, 650
And others still their appetites constrain'd,
Or but at times a little supper made;
All except Juan, who throughout abstain'd,
Chewing a piece of bamboo, and some lead:
At length they caught two boobies, and a noddy,¹²⁴
And then they left off eating the dead body.

83

And if Pedrillo's fate should shocking be,
 Remember Ugolino¹²⁵ condescends
 To eat the head of his arch-enemy
 The moment after he politely ends 660
 His tale; if foes be food in hell, at sea
 'Tis surely fair to dine upon our friends,
 When shipwreck's short allowance grows too scanty,
 Without being much more horrible than Dante.

84

And the same night there fell a shower of rain,
 For which their mouths gaped, like the cracks of earth
 When dried to summer dust; till taught by pain,
 Men really know not what good water's worth;
 If you had been in Turkey or in Spain,
 Or with a famish'd boat's-crew had your berth, 670
 Or in the desert heard the camel's bell,
 You'd wish yourself where Truth is – in a well.

85

It pour'd down torrents, but they were no richer
 Until they found a ragged piece of sheet,
 Which served them as a sort of spongy pitcher,
 And when they deem'd its moisture was complete,
 They wrung it out, and though a thirsty ditcher
 Might not have thought the scanty draught so sweet
 As a full pot of porter, to their thinking
 They ne'er till now had known the joys of drinking. 680

86

And their baked lips, with many a bloody crack,
 Suck'd in the moisture, which like nectar stream'd;
 Their throats were ovens, their swoln tongues were black,
 As the rich man's in hell, who vainly scream'd
 To beg the beggar,¹²⁶ who could not rain back
 A drop of dew, when every drop had seem'd
 To taste of heaven – If this be true, indeed,
 Some Christians have a comfortable creed.

87

There were two fathers in this ghastly crew,
 And with them their two sons, of whom the one 690
 Was more robust and hardy to the view,
 But he died early; and when he was gone,
 His nearest messmate told his sire, who threw
 One glance on him, and said, 'Heaven's will be done!
 I can do nothing,' and he saw him thrown
 Into the deep without a tear or groan.

88

The other father had a weaklier child,
 Of a soft cheek, and aspect delicate;
 But the boy bore up long, and with a mild
 And patient spirit held aloof his fate; 700
 Little he said, and now and then he smiled,
 As if to win a part from off the weight
 He saw increasing on his father's heart,
 With the deep deadly thought, that they must part.

89

And o'er him bent his sire, and never raised
 His eyes from off his face, but wiped the foam
 From his pale lips, and ever on him gazed,
 And when the wish'd-for shower at length was come,
 And the boy's eyes, which the dull film half glazed,
 Brighten'd, and for a moment seem'd to roam, 710
 He squeezed from out a rag some drops of rain
 Into his dying child's mouth – but in vain.

90

The boy expired – the father held the clay,
 And look'd upon it long, and when at last
 Death left no doubt, and the dead burthen lay
 Stiff on his heart, and pulse and hope were past,
 He watch'd it wistfully, until away
 'Twas borne by the rude wave wherein 'twas cast;
 Then he himself sunk down all dumb and shivering,
 And gave no sign of life, save his limbs quivering. 720

91

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 changed like to a bow that's bent, and then
 Forsook the dim eyes of these shipwreck'd men.

92

It changed, of course; a heavenly cameleon,
 The airy child of vapour and the sun, 730
 Brought forth in purple, cradled in vermilion,
 Baptized in molten gold, and swathed 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).¹²⁷

93

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 740
 Folks are discouraged; 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.

94

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 750
 It came and went, and flutter'd round them till
 Night fell: – this seem'd a better omen still.

95

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 chanced to fall,
They would have eat her, olive-branch¹²⁸ and all. 760

96

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 nor 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.

97

As morning broke the light wind died away,
 When he who had the watch sung out and swore, 770
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 shaped their course for shore,
For shore it was, and gradually grew
Distinct, and high, and palpable to view.

98

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; 780
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.

99

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
 Proved even still a more nutritious matter,
 Because it left encouragement behind: 790
 They thought that in such perils, more than chance
 Had sent them this for their deliverance.

100

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 tost,
 So changeable had been the winds that blew;
 Some thought it was Mount Aetna, some the highlands
 Of Candia, Cyprus, Rhodes, or other islands. 800

101

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 reduced 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.

102

Famine, despair, cold, thirst, and heat, had done
 Their work on them by turns, and thinn'd them to 810
 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.

103

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 waved in forest-tops, and smooth'd the air, 820
And fell upon their glazed 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.

104

The shore look'd wild, without a trace of man,
And girt by formidable waves; but they
Were made 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, 830
But finding no place for their landing better,
They ran the boat for shore, and overset her.

105

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. 840

106

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 arrived on shore but him.

107

Nor yet had he arrived but for the oar,
 Which, providentially for him, was wash'd 850
 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:

108

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: 860
 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 saved, perhaps, in vain.

109

With slow and staggering effort he arose,
 But sunk again upon his bleeding knee
 And quivering hand; and then he look'd for those
 Who long had been his mates upon the sea,
 But none of them appear'd to share his woes,
 Save one, a corpse from out the famish'd three, 870
 Who died two days before, and now had found
 An unknown barren beach for burial ground.

110

And as he gazed, his dizzy brain spun fast,
 And down he sunk; and as he sunk, the sand
 Swam round and round, and all his senses pass'd:
 He fell upon his side, and his stretch'd hand
 Droop'd dripping on the oar, (their jurymast)
 And, like a wither'd lily, on the land
 His slender frame and pallid aspect lay,
 As fair a thing as e'er was form'd of clay. 880

111

How long in his damp trance young Juan lay
 He knew not, for the earth was gone for him,
 And Time had nothing more of night nor day
 For his congealing blood, and senses dim;
 And how this heavy faintness pass'd away
 He knew not, till each painful pulse and limb,
 And tingling vein, seem'd throbbing back to life,
 For Death, though vanquish'd, still retired with strife.

112

His eyes he open'd, shut, again unclosed,
 For all was doubt and dizziness; methought 890
 He still was in the boat, and had but dozed,
 And felt again with his despair o'erwrought,
 And wish'd it death in which he had reposed,
 And then once more his feelings back were brought,
 And slowly by his swimming eyes was seen
 A lovely female face of seventeen.

113

'Twas bending close o'er his, and the small mouth
 Seem'd almost prying into his for breath;
 And chafing him, the soft warm hand of youth
 Recall'd his answering spirits back from death; 900
 And, bathing his chill temples, tried to soothe
 Each pulse to animation, till beneath
 Its gentle touch and trembling care, a sigh
 To these kind efforts made a low reply.

114

Then was the cordial pour'd, and mantle flung
 Around his scarce-clad limbs; and the fair arm
 Raised higher the faint head which o'er it hung;
 And her transparent cheek, all pure and warm,
 Pillow'd his death-like forehead; then she wrung
 His dewy curls, long drench'd by every storm; 910
 And watch'd with eagerness each throb that drew
 A sigh from his heaved bosom – and hers, too.

115

And lifting him with care into the cave,
 The gentle girl, and her attendant, – one
 Young, yet her elder, and of brow less grave,
 And more robust of figure, – then begun
 To kindle fire, and as the new flames gave
 Light to the rocks that roof'd them, which the sun
 Had never seen, the maid, or whatso'er
 She was, appear'd distinct, and tall, and fair. 920

116

Her brow was overhung with coins of gold,
 That sparkled o'er the auburn of her hair,
 Her clustering hair, whose longer locks were roll'd
 In braids behind, and though her stature were
 Even of the highest for a female mould,
 They nearly reach'd her heel; and in her air
 There was a something which bespoke command,
 As one who was a lady in the land.

117

Her hair, I said, was auburn; but her eyes
 Were black as death, their lashes the same hue, 930
 Of downcast length, in whose silk shadow lies
 Deepest attraction, for when to the view
 Forth from its raven fringe the full glance flies,
 Ne'er with such force the swiftest arrow flew;
 'Tis as the snake late coil'd, who pours his length,
 And hurls at once his venom and his strength.

118

Her brow was white and low, her cheek's pure dye
 Like twilight rosy still with the set sun;
 Short upper lip – sweet lips! that make us sigh
 Ever to have seen such; for she was one 940
 Fit for the model of a statuary,
 (A race of mere impostors, when all's done –
 I've seen much finer women, ripe and real,
 Than all the nonsense of their stone ideal).

119

I'll tell you why I say so, for 'tis just
 One should not rail without a decent cause:
 There was an Irish lady,¹²⁹ to whose bust
 I ne'er saw justice done, and yet she was
 A frequent model; and if e'er she must
 Yield to stern Time and Nature's wrinkling laws, 950
 They will destroy a face which mortal thought
 Ne'er compass'd, nor less mortal chisel wrought.

120

And such was she, the lady of the cave:
 Her dress was very different from the Spanish,
 Simpler, and yet of colours not so grave;
 For, as you know, the Spanish women banish
 Bright hues when out of doors, and yet, while wave
 Around them (what I hope will never vanish)
 The basquina and the mantilla,¹³⁰ they
 Seem at the same time mystical and gay. 960

121

But with our damsel this was not the case:
 Her dress was many-colour'd, finely spun;
 Her locks curl'd negligently round her face,
 But through them gold and gems profusely shone;
 Her girdle sparkled, and the richest lace
 Flow'd in her veil, and many a precious stone
 Flash'd on her little hand; but, what was shocking,
 Her small snow feet had slippers, but no stocking.

122

The other female's dress was not unlike,
 But of inferior materials; she 970
 Had not so many ornaments to strike,
 Her hair had silver only, bound to be
 Her dowry; and her veil, in form alike,
 Was coarser; and her air, though firm, less free;
 Her hair was thicker, but less long; her eyes
 As black, but quicker, and of smaller size.

123

And these two tended him, and cheer'd him both
 With food and raiment, and those soft attentions,
 Which are (as I must own) of female growth,
 And have ten thousand delicate inventions: 980
 They made a most superior mess of broth,
 A thing which poesy but seldom mentions,
 But the best dish that e'er was cook'd since Homer's
 Achilles order'd dinner¹³¹ for new comers.

124

I'll tell you who they were, this female pair,
 Lest they should seem princesses in disguise;
 Besides, I hate all mystery, and that air
 Of clap-trap, which your recent poets prize;
 And so, in short, the girls they really were
 They shall appear before your curious eyes, 990
 Mistress and maid; the first was only daughter
 Of an old man, who lived upon the water.

125

A fisherman he had been in his youth,
 And still a sort of fisherman was he;
 But other speculations were, in sooth,
 Added to his connection with the sea,
 Perhaps not so respectable, in truth:
 A little smuggling, and some piracy,
 Left him, at last, the sole of many masters
 Of an ill-gotten million of piastres.¹³² 1000

126

A fisher, therefore, was he – though of men,
 Like Peter the Apostle, – and he fish'd
 For wandering merchant vessels, now and then,
 And sometimes caught as many as he wish'd;
 The cargoes he confiscated, and gain
 He sought in the slave-market too, and dish'd
 Full many a morsel for that Turkish trade,
 By which, no doubt, a good deal may be made.

127

He was a Greek, and on his isle had built
 (One of the wild and smaller Cyclades) 1010
 A very handsome house from out his guilt,
 And there he lived exceedingly at ease;
 Heaven knows what cash he got, or blood he spilt,
 A sad old fellow was he, if you please,
 But this I know, it was a spacious building,
 Full of barbaric carving, paint, and gilding.

128

He had an only daughter, call'd Haidee,
 The greatest heiress of the Eastern Isles;
 Besides, so very beautiful was she,
 Her dowry was as nothing to her smiles: 1020
 Still in her teens, and like a lovely tree
 She grew to womanhood, and between whiles
 Rejected several suitors, just to learn
 How to accept a better in his turn.

129

And walking out upon the beach, below
 The cliff, towards sunset, on that day she found,
 Insensible, – not dead, but nearly so, –
 Don Juan, almost famish'd, and half drown'd;
 But being naked, she was shock'd, you know,
 Yet deem'd herself in common pity bound, 1030
 As far as in her lay, 'to take him in,
 A stranger'¹³³ dying, with so white a skin.

130

But taking him into her father's house
 Was not exactly the best way to save,
 But like conveying to the cat the mouse,
 Or people in a trance into their grave;
 Because the good old man had so much 'vous',¹³⁴
 Unlike the honest Arab thieves so brave,
 He would have hospitably cured the stranger,
 And sold him instantly when out of danger. 1040

131

And therefore, with her maid, she thought it best
 (A virgin always on her maid relies)
 To place him in the cave for present rest:
 And when, at last, he open'd his black eyes,
 Their charity increased about their guest;
 And their compassion grew to such a size,
 It open'd half the turnpike-gates to heaven –
 (St Paul¹³⁵ says 'tis the toll which must be given).

132

They made a fire, but such a fire as they
 Upon the moment could contrive with such 1050
 Materials as were cast up round the bay,
 Some broken planks, and oars, that to the touch
 Were nearly tinder, since so long they lay,
 A mast was almost crumbled to a crutch;
 But, by God's grace, here wrecks were in such plenty,
 That there was fuel to have furnish'd twenty.

133

He had a bed of furs, and a pelisse,
 For Haidee stripp'd her sables off to make
 His couch; and, that he might be more at ease,
 And warm, in case by chance he should awake, 1060
 They also gave a petticoat apiece,
 She and her maid, and promised by daybreak
 To pay him a fresh visit, with a dish
 For breakfast, of eggs, coffee, bread, and fish.

134

And thus they left him to his lone repose:
 Juan slept like a top, or like the dead,
 Who sleep at last, perhaps, (God only knows)
 Just for the present; and in his lull'd head
 Not even a vision of his former woes
 Throbb'd in accursed dreams, which sometimes spread
 Unwelcome visions of our former years, 1071
 Till the eye, cheated, opens thick with tears.

135

Young Juan slept all dreamless: – but the maid,
 Who smooth'd his pillow, as she left the den
 Look'd back upon him, and a moment staid,
 And turn'd, believing that he call'd again.
 He slumber'd; yet she thought, at least she said,
 (The heart will slip even as the tongue and pen)
 He had pronounced her name – but she forgot
 That at this moment Juan knew it not. 1080

136

And pensive to her father's house she went,
 Enjoining silence strict to Zoe, who
 Better than her knew what, in fact, she meant,
 She being wiser by a year or two:
 A year or two's an age when rightly spent,
 And Zoe spent hers, as most women do,
 In gaining all that useful sort of knowledge
 Which is acquired in nature's good old college.

137

The morn broke, and found Juan slumbering still
 Fast in his cave, and nothing clash'd upon 1090
 His rest; the rushing of the neighbouring rill,
 And the young beams of the excluded sun,
 Troubled him not, and he might sleep his fill;
 And need he had of slumber yet, for none
 Had suffer'd more – his hardships were comparative
 To those related in my grand-dad's *Narrative*.¹³⁶

138

Not so Haidee; she sadly toss'd and tumbled,
 And started from her sleep, and, turning o'er,
 Dream'd of a thousand wrecks, o'er which she stumbled,
 And handsome corpses strew'd upon the shore; 1100
 And woke her maid so early that she grumbled,
 And call'd her father's old slaves up, who swore
 In several oaths – Armenian, Turk, and Greek, –
 They knew not what to think of such a freak.

139

But up she got, and up she made them get,
 With some pretence about the sun, that makes
 Sweet skies just when he rises, or is set;
 And 'tis, no doubt, a sight to see when breaks
 Bright Phoebus, while the mountains still are wet
 With mist, and every bird with him awakes, 1110
 And night is flung off like a mourning suit
 Worn for a husband, or some other brute.

140

I say, the sun is a most glorious sight,
 I've seen him rise full oft, indeed of late
 I have sate up on purpose all the night,
 Which hastens, as physicians say, one's fate;
 And so all ye, who would be in the right
 In health and purse, begin your day to date
 From daybreak, and when coffin'd at fourscore,
 Engrave upon the plate, you rose at four. 1120

141

And Haidee met the morning face to face;
 Her own was freshest, though a feverish flush
 Had dyed it with the headlong blood, whose race
 From heart to cheek is curb'd into a blush,
 Like to a torrent which a mountain's base,
 That overpowers some alpine river's rush,
 Checks to a lake, whose waves in circles spread;
 Or the Red Sea – but the sea is not red.

142

And down the cliff the island virgin came,
 And near the cave her quick light footsteps drew, 1130
 While the sun smiled on her with his first flame,
 And young Aurora kiss'd her lips with dew,
 Taking her for sister; just the same
 Mistake you would have made on seeing the two,
 Although the mortal, quite as fresh and fair,
 Had all the advantage too of not being air.

143

And when into the cavern Haidee stepp'd
 All timidly, yet rapidly, she saw
 That like an infant Juan sweetly slept;
 And then she stopp'd, and stood as if in awe, 1140
 (For sleep is awful) and on tiptoe crept
 And wrapt him closer, lest the air, too raw,
 Should reach his blood, then o'er him still as death
 Bent, with hush'd lips, that drank his scarce-drawn breath.

144

And thus like to an angel o'er the dying
 Who die in righteousness, she lean'd; and there
 All tranquilly the shipwreck'd boy was lying,
 As o'er him lay the calm and stirless air:
 But Zoe the meantime some eggs was frying,
 Since, after all, no doubt the youthful pair 1150
 Must breakfast, and betimes – lest they should ask it,
 She drew out her provision from the basket.

145

She knew that the best feelings must have victual,
 And that a shipwreck'd youth would hungry be;
 Besides, being less in love, she yawn'd a little,
 And felt her veins chill'd by the neighbouring sea;
 And so, she cook'd their breakfast to a tittle;¹³⁷
 I can't say that she gave them any tea,
 But there were eggs, fruit, coffee, bread, fish, honey,
 With Scio wine, – and all for love, not money. 1160

146

And Zoe, when the eggs were ready, and
 The coffee made, would fain have waken'd Juan;
 But Haidee stopp'd her with her quick small hand,
 And without word, a sign her finger drew on
 Her lip, which Zoe needs must understand;
 And, the first breakfast spoilt, prepared a new one,
 Because her mistress would not let her break
 That sleep which seem'd as it would ne'er awake.

147

For still he lay, and on his thin worn cheek
 A purple hectic play'd like dying day 1170
 On the snow-tops of distant hills; the streak
 Of sufferance yet upon his forehead lay,
 Where the blue veins look'd shadowy, shrunk, and weak;
 And his black curls were dewy with the spray,
 Which weigh'd upon them yet, all damp and salt,
 Mix'd with the stony vapours of the vault.

148

And she bent o'er him, and he lay beneath,
 Hush'd as the babe upon its mother's breast,
 Droop'd as the willow when no winds can breathe,
 Lull'd like the depth of ocean when at rest, 1180
 Fair as the crowning rose of the whole wreath,
 Soft as the callow cygnet in its nest;
 In short, he was a very pretty fellow,
 Although his woes had turn'd him rather yellow.

149

He woke and gazed, and would have slept again,
 But the fair face which met his eyes forbade
 Those eyes to close, though weariness and pain
 Had further sleep a further pleasure made;
 For woman's face was never form'd in vain
 For Juan, so that even when he pray'd 1190
 He turn'd from grisly saints, and martyrs hairy,
 To the sweet portraits of the Virgin Mary.

150

And thus upon his elbow he arose,
 And look'd upon the lady, in whose cheek
 The pale contended with the purple rose,
 As with an effort she began to speak;
 Her eyes were eloquent, her words would pose,¹³⁸
 Although she told him, in good modern Greek,
 With an Ionian accent, low and sweet,
 That he was faint, and must not talk, but eat. 1200

151

Now Juan could not understand a word,
 Being no Grecian; but he had an ear,
 And her voice was the warble of a bird,
 So soft, so sweet, so delicately clear,
 That finer, simpler music ne'er was heard;
 The sort of sound we echo with a tear,
 Without knowing why – an overpowering tone,
 Whence Melody descends as from a throne.

152

And Juan gazed as one who is awoke
 By a distant organ, doubting if he be
 Not yet a dreamer, till the spell is broke 1210
 By the watchman, or some such reality,
 Or by one's early valet's cursed knock;
 At least it is a heavy sound to me,
 Who like a morning slumber – for the night
 Shows stars and women in a better light.

153

And Juan, too, was help'd out from his dream
 Or sleep, or whatsoe'er it was, by feeling
 A most prodigious appetite: the steam
 Of Zoe's cookery no doubt was stealing 1220
 Upon his senses, and the kindling beam
 Of the new fire, which Zoe kept up, kneeling,
 To stir her viands, made him quite awake
 And long for food, but chiefly a beef-steak.

154

But beef is rare within these oxless isles;
 Goat's flesh there is, no doubt, and kid, and mutton;
 And, when a holiday upon them smiles,
 A joint upon their barbarous spits they put on:
 But this occurs but seldom, between whiles,
 For some of these are rocks with scarce a hut on, 1230
 Others are fair and fertile, among which
 This, though not large, was one of the most rich.

155

I say that beef is rare, and can't help thinking
 That the old fable of the Minotaur –
 From which our modern morals, rightly shrinking,
 Condemn the royal lady's taste who wore
 A cow's shape for a mask – was only (sinking
 The allegory) a mere type, no more,
 That Pasiphae promoted breeding cattle,
 To make the Cretans bloodier in battle.¹³⁹ 1240

156

For we all know that English people are
 Fed upon beef – I won't say much of beer,
 Because 'tis liquor only, and being far
 From this my subject, has no business here;
 We know, too, they are very fond of war,
 A pleasure – like all pleasures – rather dear;
 So were the Cretans – from which I infer
 That beef and battles both were owing to her.

157

But to resume. The languid Juan raised
 His head upon his elbow, and he saw 1250
 A sight on which he had not lately gazed,
 As all his latter meals had been quite raw,
 Three or four things, for which the Lord he praised,
 And, feeling still the famish'd vulture gnaw,
 He fell upon whate'er was offer'd, like
 A priest, a shark, an alderman, or pike.

158

He ate, and he was well supplied; and she,
 Who watch'd him like a mother, would have fed
 Him past all bounds, because she smiled to see
 Such appetite in one she had deem'd dead: 1260
 But Zoe, being older than Haidee,
 Knew (by tradition, for she ne'er had read)
 That famish'd people must be slowly nurst,
 And fed by spoonfuls, else they always burst.

159

And so she took the liberty to state,

Rather by deeds than words, because the case
Was urgent, that the gentleman, whose fate

Had made her mistress quit her bed to trace
The sea-shore at this hour, must leave his plate,

Unless he wish'd to die upon the place – 1270
She snatch'd it, and refused another morsel,
Saying, he had gorged enough to make a horse ill.

160

Next they – he being naked, save a tatter'd

Pair of scarce decent trousers – went to work,
And in the fire his recent rags they scatter'd,

And dress'd him, for the present, like a Turk,
Or Greek – that is, although it not much matter'd,

Omitting turban, slippers, pistols, dirk, –
They furnish'd him, entire except some stitches,
With a clean shirt, and very spacious breeches. 1280

161

And then fair Haidee tried her tongue at speaking,

But not a word could Juan comprehend,

Although he listen'd so that the young Greek in

Her earnestness would ne'er have made an end;

And, as he interrupted not, went eking

Her speech out to her protégé and friend,

Till pausing at the last her breath to take,

She saw he did not understand Romaic.¹⁴⁰

162

And then she had recourse to nods, and signs,

And smiles, and sparkles of the speaking eye, 1290

And read (the only book she could) the lines

Of his fair face, and found, by sympathy,

The answer eloquent, where the soul shines

And darts in one quick glance a long reply;

And thus in every look she saw express

A world of words, and things at which she guess'd.

163

And now, by dint of fingers and of eyes,
 And words repeated after her, he took
 A lesson in her tongue; but by surmise,
 No doubt, less of her language than her look: 1300
 As he who studies fervently the skies
 Turns oftener to the stars than to his book,
 Thus Juan learn'd his alpha beta better
 From Haidee's glance than any graven letter.

164

'Tis pleasing to be school'd in a strange tongue
 By female lips and eyes – that is, I mean,
 When both the teacher and the taught are young,
 As was the case, at least, where I have been;
 They smile so when one's right, and when one's wrong
 They smile still more, and then there intervene 1310
 Pressure of hands, perhaps even a chaste kiss; –
 I learn'd the little that I know by this:

165

That is, some words of Spanish, Turk, and Greek,
 Italian not at all, having no teachers;
 Much English I cannot pretend to speak,
 Learning that language chiefly from its preachers,
 Barrow, South, Tillotson, whom every week
 I study, also Blair,¹⁴¹ the highest reachers
 Of eloquence in piety and prose –
 I hate your poets, so read none of those. 1320

166

As for the ladies, I have nought to say,
 A wanderer from the British world of fashion,
 Where I, like other 'dogs, have had my day',¹⁴²
 Like other men too, may have had my passion –
 But that, like other things, has pass'd away,
 And all her fools whom I *could* lay the lash on:
 Foes, friends, men, women, now are nought to me
 But dreams of what has been, no more to be.

167

Return we to Don Juan. He begun
 To hear new words, and to repeat them; but 1330
 Some feelings, universal as the sun,
 Were such as could not in his breast be shut
 More than within the bosom of a nun:
 He was in love, – as you would be, no doubt,
 With a young benefactress – so was she,
 Just in the way we very often see.

168

And every day by daybreak – rather early
 For Juan, who was somewhat fond of rest –
 She came into the cave, but it was merely
 To see her bird reposing in his nest; 1340
 And she would softly stir his locks so curly,
 Without disturbing her yet slumbering guest,
 Breathing all gently o'er his cheek and mouth,
 As o'er a bed of roses the sweet south.¹⁴³

169

And every morn his colour freshlier came,
 And every day help'd on his convalescence;
 'Twas well, because health in the human frame
 Is pleasant, besides being true love's essence,
 For health and idleness to passion's flame
 Are oil and gunpowder; and some good lessons 1350
 Are also learnt from Ceres and from Bacchus,
 Without whom Venus will not long attack us.

170

While Venus fills the heart (without heart really
 Love, though good always, is not quite so good)
 Ceres presents a plate of vermicelli, –
 For love must be sustain'd like flesh and blood, –
 While Bacchus pours out wine, or hands a jelly:
 Eggs, oysters too, are amatory food;
 But who is their purveyor from above
 Heaven knows, – it may be Neptune, Pan, or Jove. 1360

171

When Juan woke he found some good things ready,
 A bath, a breakfast, and the finest eyes
 That ever made a youthful heart less steady,
 Besides her maid's, as pretty for their size;
 But I have spoken of all this already –
 And repetition's tiresome and unwise, –
 Well – Juan, after bathing in the sea,
 Came always back to coffee and Haidee.

172

Both were so young, and one so innocent,
 That bathing pass'd for nothing; Juan seem'd 1370
 To her, as 'twere, the kind of being sent,
 Of whom these two years she had nightly dream'd,
 A something to be loved, a creature meant
 To be her happiness, and whom she deem'd
 To render happy; all who joy would win
 Must share it, – Happiness was born a twin.

173

It was such pleasure to behold him, such
 Enlargement of existence to partake
 Nature with him, to thrill beneath his touch,
 To watch him slumbering, and to see him wake: 1380
 To live with him for ever were too much;
 But then the thought of parting made her quake:
 He was her own, her ocean-treasure, cast
 Like a rich wreck – her first love, and her last.

174

And thus a moon roll'd on, and fair Haidee
 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 prows put out to sea,
 For certain merchantmen upon the look, 1390
 Not as of yore to carry off an Io,¹⁴⁴
 But three Ragusan¹⁴⁵ vessels, bound for Scio.

175

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 incumbrance of a brother,
The freest she that ever gazed on glass:
I speak of christian lands in this comparison,
Where wives, at least, are seldom kept in garrison. 1400

176

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.

177

It was a wild and breaker-beaten coast,
With cliffs above, and a broad sandy shore, 1410
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 ceased the haughty billow's roar,
Save on the dead long summer days, which make
The outstretch'd ocean glitter like a lake.

178

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! 1420
Few things surpass old wine; and they may preach
Who please, – the more because they preach in vain, –
Let us have wine and woman, mirth and laughter,
Sermons and soda water the day after.

179

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: 1430
 But to return, – Get very drunk; and when
 You wake with headache, you shall see what then.

180

Ring for your valet – bid him quickly bring
 Some hock¹⁴⁶ and soda-water, then you'll know
 A pleasure worthy Xerxes the great king;
 For not the blest sherbet, sublimed with¹⁴⁷ 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. 1440

181

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 untost,
 And all was stillness, save the sea-bird's cry,
 And dolphin's leap, and little billow[✶] crost
 By some low rock or shelve, that made it fret
 Against the boundary it scarcely wet.

182

And forth they wandered, her sire being gone,
 As I have said, upon an expedition; 1450
 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.

183

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 is bounded,
 Circling all nature, hush'd, and dim, and still, 1460
 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.

184

And thus they wander'd forth, and hand in hand,
 Over the shining pebbles and the shells,
 Glided 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, 1470
 They turn'd to rest; and, each clasp'd by an arm,
 Yielded to the deep twilight's purple charm.

185

They look'd up to the sky, whose floating glow
 Spread like a rosy ocean, vast and bright;
 They gazed 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; 1480

186

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.

187

By length I mean duration; theirs endured
 Heaven knows how long – no doubt they never reckon'd;
 And if they had, they could not have secured 1491
 The sum of their sensations to a second:
 They had not spoken; but they felt allured,
 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.

188

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 momentarily grew less, 1500
 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.

189

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 1510
 Of nature's oracle – first love, – that all
 Which Eve has left her daughters since her fall.

190

Haidee 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. 1520

191

She loved, and was beloved – she adored,
 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 restored,
 Again to be o'ercome, again to dash on;
 And, beating 'gainst *his* bosom, Haidee's heart
 Felt as if never more to beat apart.

192

Alas! they were so young, so beautiful,
 So lonely, loving, helpless, and the hour 1530
 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 prepared for people giving
 Pleasure or pain to one another living.

193

Alas! for Juan and Haidee! 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; 1540
 And Haidee, 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.

194

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; 1550
 And thus they form a group that's quite antique,
 Half naked, loving, natural, and Greek.

195

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. 1560

196

An infant when it gazes on a light,
 A child the moment when it drains the breast,
 A devotee when soars the Host¹⁴⁸ in sight,
 An Arab with a stranger for a guest,
 A sailor when the prize has struck in fight,
 A miser filling his most hoarded chest,
 Feel rapture; but not such true joy are reaping
 As they who watch o'er what they love while sleeping.

197

For there it lies so tranquil, so beloved,
 All that it hath of life with us is living; 1570
 So gentle, stirless, helpless, and unmoved,
 And all unconscious of the joy 'tis giving;
 All it hath felt, inflicted, pass'd, and proved,
 Hush'd into depths beyond the watcher's diving;
 There lies the thing we love with all its errors
 And all its charms, like death without its terrors.

198

The lady watch'd her lover – and that hour
 Of Love's, and Night's, and Ocean's solitude,
 O'erflow'd her soul with their united power;
 Amidst the barren sand and rocks so rude 1580
 She and her wave-worn love had made their bower,
 Where nought upon their passion could intrude,
 And all the stars that crowded the blue space
 Saw nothing happier than her glowing face.

199

Alas! the love of women! it is known
 To be a lovely and a fearful thing;
 For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,
 And if 'tis lost, life hath no more to bring
 To them but mockeries of the past alone,
 And their revenge is as the tiger's spring, 1590
 Deadly, and quick, and crushing; yet, as real
 Torture is theirs, what they inflict they feel.

200

They are right; for man, to man so oft unjust,
 Is always so to women; one sole bond
 Awaits them, treachery is all their trust;
 Taught to conceal, their bursting hearts despond
 Over their idol, till some wealthier lust
 Buys them in marriage – and what rests beyond?
 A thankless husband, next a faithless lover,
 Then dressing, nursing, praying, and all's over. 1600

201

Some take a lover, some take drams or prayers,
 Some mind their household, others dissipation,
 Some run away, and but exchange their cares,
 Losing the advantage of a virtuous station;
 Few changes e'er can better their affairs,
 Theirs being an unnatural situation,
 From the dull palace to the dirty hovel:
 Some play the devil, and then write a novel.¹⁴⁹

202

Haidee was Nature's bride, and knew not this;
 Haidee was Passion's child, born where the sun 1610
 Showers triple light, and scorches even the kiss
 Of his gazelle-eyed daughters; she was one
 Made but to love, to feel that she was his
 Who was her chosen: what was said or done
 Elsewhere was nothing – She had nought to fear,
 Hope, care, nor love beyond, her heart beat *here*.

203

And oh! that quickening of the heart, that beat!
 How much it costs us! yet each rising throb
 Is in its cause as its effect so sweet,
 That Wisdom, ever on the watch to rob 1620
 Joy of its alchemy, and to repeat
 Fine truths; even Conscience, too, has a tough job
 To make us understand each good old maxim,
 So good – I wonder Castlereagh don't tax 'em.

204

And now 'twas done – on the lone shore were plighted
 Their hearts; the stars, their nuptial torches, shed
 Beauty upon the beautiful they lighted:
 Ocean their witness, and the cave their bed,
 By their own feelings hallow'd and united,
 Their priest was Solitude, and they were wed: 1630
 And they were happy, for to their young eyes
 Each was an angel, and earth paradise.

205

Oh Love! of whom great Caesar was the suitor,
 Titus the master, Antony the slave,
 Horace, Catullus, scholars, Ovid tutor,
 Sappho¹⁵⁰ the sage blue-stocking, in whose grave
 All those may leap who rather would be neuter –
 (Leucadia's rock still overlooks the wave)
 Oh Love! thou art the very god of evil,
 For, after all, we cannot call thee devil. 1640

206

Thou mak'st the chaste connubial state precarious,
 And jestest with the brows of mightiest men:
 Caesar and Pompey, Mahomet, Belisarius,¹⁵¹
 Have much employ'd the muse of history's pen;
 Their lives and fortunes were extremely various,
 Such worthies Time will never see again;
 Yet to these four in three things the same luck holds,
 They all were heroes, conquerors, and cuckolds.

207

Thou mak'st philosophers; there's Epicurus
 And Aristippus,¹⁵² a material crew! 1650
 Who to immoral courses would allure us
 By theories quite practicable too;
 If only from the devil they would insure us,
 How pleasant were the maxim, (not quite new)
 'Eat, drink, and love, what can the rest avail us?'
 So said the royal sage Sardanapalus.¹⁵³

208

But Juan! had he quite forgotten Julia?
 And should he have forgotten her so soon?
 I can't but say it seems to me most truly a
 Perplexing question; but, no doubt, the moon 1660
 Does these things for us, and whenever newly a
 Strong palpitation rises, 'tis her boon,
 Else how the devil is it that fresh features
 Have such a charm for us poor human creatures?

209

I hate inconstancy – I loathe, detest,
 Abhor, condemn, abjure the mortal made
 Of such quicksilver clay that in his breast
 No permanent foundation can be laid;
 Love, constant love, has been my constant guest,
 And yet last night, being at a masquerade, 1670
 I saw the prettiest creature, fresh from Milan,
 Which gave me some sensations like a villain.

210

But soon Philosophy came to my aid,
 And whisper'd 'think of every sacred tie!'
 'I will, my dear Philosophy!' I said,
 'But then her teeth, and then, Oh heaven! her eye!
 I'll just inquire if she be wife or maid,
 Or neither – out of curiosity.'
 'Stop!' cried Philosophy, with air so Grecian,
 (Though she was masqued then as a fair Venetian). 1680

211

'Stop!' so I stopp'd. – But to return: that which
 Men call inconstancy is nothing more
 Than admiration due where nature's rich
 Profusion with young beauty covers o'er
 Some favour'd object; and as in the niche
 A lovely statue we almost adore,
 This sort of adoration of the real
 Is but a heightening of the 'beau ideal'.¹⁵⁴

212

'Tis the perception of the beautiful,
 A fine extension of the faculties, 1690
 Platonic, universal, wonderful,
 Drawn from the stars, and filter'd through the skies,
 Without which life would be extremely dull;
 In short, it is the use of our own eyes,
 With one or two small senses added, just
 To hint that flesh is form'd of fiery dust.

213

Yet 'tis a painful feeling, and unwilling,
 For surely if we always could perceive
 In the same object graces quite as killing
 As when she rose upon us like an Eve, 1700
 'Twould save us many a heart-ache, many a shilling,
 (For we must get them any how, or grieve)
 Whereas if one sole lady pleased for ever,
 How pleasant for the heart, as well as liver!

214

The heart is like the sky, a part of heaven,
 But changes night and day too, like the sky;
 Now o'er it clouds and thunder must be driven,
 And darkness and destruction as on high:
 But when it hath been scorch'd, and pierced, and riven,
 Its storms expire in water-drops; the eye 1710
 Pours forth at last the heart's-blood turn'd to tears,
 Which make the English climate of our years.

215

The liver is the lazaret¹⁵⁵ of bile,
 But very rarely executes its function,
 For the first passion stays there such a while,
 That all the rest creep in and form a junction,
 Like knots of vipers on a dunghill's soil,
 Rage, fear, hate, jealousy, revenge, compunction,
 So that all mischiefs spring up from this entrail,
 Like earthquakes from the hidden fire call'd 'central'.¹⁵⁶ 1720

216

In the mean time, without proceeding more
 In this anatomy, I've finish'd now
 Two hundred and odd stanzas as before,
 That being about the number I'll allow
 Each canto of the twelve, or twenty-four;
 And, laying down my pen, I make my bow,
 Leaving Don Juan and Haidee to plead
 For them and theirs with all who deign to read.

Canto Three

1

Hail, Muse! *et cetera*.¹⁵⁷ – 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.

2

Oh, Love!¹⁵⁸ what is it in this world of ours
 Which makes it fatal to be loved? Ah why 10
 With cypress branches¹⁵⁹ 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.

3

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, 20
 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.

4

I know not if the fault be men's or theirs;
 But one thing's pretty sure; a woman planted¹⁶⁰ –
 (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; 30
 Yet there are some, they say, who have had *none*,
 But those who have ne'er end with only *one*.

5

'Tis 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. 40

6

There's something of antipathy, as 'twere,
 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.¹⁶¹

7

Men grow ashamed of being so very fond,
 They sometimes also get a little tired 50
 (But that, of course, is rare), and then despond:
 The same things cannot always be admired,
 Yet 'tis 'so nominated in the bond',¹⁶²
 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.

8

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; 60
 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?

9

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; 70
 So leaving each their priest and prayer-book ready,
 They say no more of Death or of the Lady.

10

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. 80

11

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.

12

Haidée and Juan were not married, but
 The fault was theirs, not mine: it is not fair, 90
 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;
 'Tis dangerous to read of loves unlawful.

13

Yet they were happy, – happy in the illicit
 Indulgence of their innocent desires;
 But more imprudent grown with every visit,
 Haidée forgot the island was her sire's; 100
 When we have what we like, 'tis 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.

14

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 'tis nothing but taxation;
But he, more modest, took an humbler range
Of life, and in an honest vocation 110
Pursued o'er the high seas his watery journey,
And merely practised as a sea-attorney.

15

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. 120

16

Some he disposed of off Cape Matapan,¹⁶³
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.¹⁶⁴

17

The merchandise was served in the same way,
Pieced out for different marts in the Levant, 130
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,¹⁶⁵
All which selected from the spoil he gathers,
Robb'd for his daughter by the best of fathers.

18

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, 140
 Who dying on the coast of Ithaca,¹⁶⁶
 The peasants gave the poor dumb thing a pittance;
 These to secure in this strong blowing weather,
 He caged in one huge hamper altogether.

19

Then having settled his marine affairs,
 Dispatching 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, 150
 And rough with reefs which ran out many a mile,
 His port lay on the other side o' the isle.

20

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;¹⁶⁷
 So that all hands were busy beyond measure,
 In getting out goods, ballast, guns, and treasure. 160

21

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.

22

The approach of home to husbands and to sires,
 After long travelling by land or water, 170
 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.

23

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; 180
 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 Argus¹⁶⁸ bites him by – the breeches.

24

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; 190
 And that his sorrow may not be a dumb one,
 Write odes on the Inconstancy of Woman.

25

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. 200

26

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.

27

He saw his white walls shining in the sun,
 His garden trees all shadowy and green; 210
 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.

28

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! 220
 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.

29

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 230
 Perceived it was the Pyrrhic dance so martial,
 To which the Levantines are very partial.

30

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. 240

31

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 Chian¹⁶⁹ 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.

32

A band of children, round a snow-white ram,
There wreath his venerable horns with flowers; 250
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.

33

Their classical profiles, and glittering dresses,
Their large black eyes, and soft seraphic cheeks,
Crimson as cleft pomegranates, their long tresses,
The gesture which enchants, the eye that speaks, 260
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.

34

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, 270
 Of magic ladies who, by one sole act,
 Transform'd their lords to beasts,¹⁷⁰ (but that's a fact).

35

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. 280

36

Ah! what is man? what perils still environ
 The happiest mortals even after dinner –
 A day of gold from out an age of iron¹⁷¹
 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.

37

He – being a man who seldom used a word
 Too much, and wishing gladly to surprise 290
 (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.

38

He did not know (Alas! how men will lie)
 That a report (especially the Greeks)
 Avouch'd¹⁷² his death (such people never die),
 And put his house in mourning several weeks, 300
 But now their eyes and also lips were dry;
 The bloom too had return'd to Haidée's cheeks.
 Her tears too being return'd into their fount,
 She now kept house upon her own account.

39

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 Haidée did with his treasure; 310
 'Twas wonderful how things went on improving,
 While she had not one hour to spare from loving.

40

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. 320

41

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
 Gird¹⁷³ more deceit within a petticoat;
 Pity he loved adventurous life's variety,
 He was so great a loss to good society.

42

Advancing to the nearest dinner tray,
 Tapping the shoulder of the nighest guest, 330
 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,

43

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.'

44

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 350
 The name and quality of his new patron,
 Who seem'd to have turn'd Haidée into a matron.

45

'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.' 360

46

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 were eating up his mutton.

47

Now in a person used to much command –
 To bid men come, and go, and come again – 370
 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.

48

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; 380
 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*.

49

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 Haidée's sake, is more than I can say, 390
 But certainly to one deem'd dead returning,
 This revel seem'd a curious mode of mourning.

50

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. 400

51

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.

52

He enter'd in the house – his home no more,
 For without hearts there is no home; – and felt 410
 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.

53

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, 420
 Quick to perceive, and strong to bear, and meant
 For something better, if not wholly good;
 His country's wrongs¹⁷⁴ and his despair to save her
 Had stung him from a slave to an enslaver.

54

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, 430
 Had cost his enemies a long repentance,
 And made him a good friend, but bad acquaintance.

55

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;¹⁷⁵
 'Tis 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. 440

56

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.

57

But whatsoe'er he had of love reposed
 On that beloved daughter; she had been 450
 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 Cyclops¹⁷⁶ mad with blindness.

58

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; 460
 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.

59

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, 470
 They kindly leave us, though not quite alone,
 But in good company – the gout or stone.¹⁷⁷

60

Yet a fine family is a fine thing
 (Provided they don't come in after dinner);
 'Tis 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
 Shine like a guinea and seven shilling pieces. 480

61

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.

62

The dinner made about a hundred dishes;
 Lamb and pistachio nuts – in short, all meats, 490
 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.

63

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; 500
 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.

64

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, 510
 Soft Persian sentences, in lilac letters,
 From poets, or the moralists their betters.

65

These oriental writings on the wall,
 Quite common in those countries, are a kind
 Of monitors adapted to recall,
 Like skulls at Memphian banquets,¹⁷⁸ 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. 520

66

A beauty at the season's close grown hectic,
 A genius who has drunk himself to death,
 A rake turn'd methodistic or Eclectic¹⁷⁹ –
 (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.

67

Haidée and Juan carpeted their feet
 On crimson satin, border'd with pale blue; 530
 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.

68

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, 540
 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.

69

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 550
 With viands and sherbets in ice – and wine –
 Kept for all comers, at all hours to dine.

70

Of all the dresses I select Haidée'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. 560

71

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 loth to lose its hold,
 The purest ore enclosed the whitest skin
 That e'er by precious metal was held in.

72

Around, as princess of her father's land,
 A like gold bar above her instep¹⁸⁰ roll'd 570
 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.

73

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, 580
 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.

74

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; 590
 Her overpowering presence made you feel
 It would not be idolatry to kneel.

75

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. 600

76

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 Shakespeare also says 'tis very silly,
 'To gild refined gold, or paint the lily'.¹⁸¹

77

Juan had on a shawl of black and gold,
 But a white baracan, and so transparent 610
 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 aigrette¹⁸² with Haidée's hair in't
 Surmounted as its clasp – a glowing crescent,
 Whose rays shone ever trembling, but incessant.

78

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: 620
 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 psalm¹⁸³ says, ‘inditing a good matter.’

79

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, 630
 But now he sung the Sultan and the Pacha
 With truth like Southey and with verse like Crashaw.¹⁸⁴

80

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. 640

81

But he had genius, – when a turncoat has it
 The ‘Vates irritabilis’¹⁸⁵ 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.

82

Their poet, a sad trimmer,¹⁸⁶ but no less
 In company a very pleasant fellow, 650
 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.

83

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, 660
 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.

84

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; 670
 To 'do at Rome as Romans do', a piece
 Of conduct was which he observed in Greece.

85

Thus, usually, when he was ask'd to sing,
 He gave the different nations something national;
 'Twas all the same to him – 'God save the king,'
 Or '*Ça ira*',¹⁸⁷ 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? 680

86

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 Staël)¹⁸⁸
 In Italy, he'd ape the 'Trecentisti';¹⁸⁹
 In Greece, he'd sing some sort of hymn like this t'ye:

1

The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
 Where burning Sappho loved and sung, 690
 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.

2

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'.¹⁹⁰ 700

3

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 Persian's grave,
 I could not deem myself a slave.

4

A king¹⁹¹ 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! 710
 He counted them at break of day –
 And when the sun set where were they?

5

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?

6

'Tis something, in the dearth of fame,
 Though link'd among a fetter'd race, 720
 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.

7

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! 730

8

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!'
 'Tis but the living who are dumb.

9

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! 740
 Hark! rising to the ignoble call –
 How answers each bold bacchanal!

10

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 Cadmus¹⁹² gave –
 Think ye he meant them for a slave?

11

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
 We will not think of themes like these! 750
 It made Anacreon's song divine:
 He served – but served Polycrates¹⁹³ –
 A tyrant; but our masters then
 Were still, at least, our countrymen.

12

The tyrant of the Chersonese
 Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
 That tyrant was Miltiades!¹⁹⁴
 Oh! that the present hour would lend
 Another despot of the kind!
 Such chains as his were sure to bind. 760

13

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
 On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,¹⁹⁵
 Exists the remnant of a line
 Such as the Doric¹⁹⁶ mothers bore;
 And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
 The Heracleidan¹⁹⁷ blood might own.

14

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; 770
 But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
 Would break your shield, however broad.

15

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.

16

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
 Where nothing, save the waves and I, 780
 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!

87

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 790
 Of others' feeling; but they are such liars,
 And take all colours – like the hands of dyers.

88

But words are things, and a small drop of ink,
 Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces
 That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think;
 'Tis 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. 800

89

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.

90

And glory long has made the sages smile;
 'Tis something, nothing, words, illusion, wind – 810
 Depending more upon the historian's style
 Than on the name a person leaves behind:
 Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to Hoyle;¹⁹⁸
 The present century was growing blind
 To the great Marlborough's skill in giving knocks,
 Until his late Life by Archdeacon Coxe.¹⁹⁹

91

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; 820
 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.

92

All these are, *certes*, entertaining facts,
 Like Shakespeare'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;²⁰⁰ – but although truth exacts
 These amiable descriptions from the scribes, 830
 As most essential to their hero's story,
 They do not much contribute to his glory.

93

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
 Lent to the Morning Post its aristocracy;
 When he and Southey, following the same path,
 Espoused two partners (milliners of Bath.) 840

94

Such names at present cut a convict figure,
 The very Botany Bay²⁰¹ 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.

95

He there builds up a formidable dyke
 Between his own and others' intellect; 850
 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.

96

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; 860
 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.

97

I know that what our neighbours call 'longueurs',²⁰²
 (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 'twould not be hard to bring 870
 Some fine examples of the *épopée*,²⁰³
 To prove it grand ingredient is *ennui*.

98

We learn from Horace, Homer sometimes sleeps;²⁰⁴
 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. 880

99

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?²⁰⁵
 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?

100

'Pedlars', and 'boats', and 'waggoners'! Oh! ye shades
 Of Pope and Dryden, are we come to this? 890
 That trash of such sort not alone evades
 Contempt, but from the bathos' vast abyss
 Floats scumlike uppermost, and these Jack Cades²⁰⁶
 Of sense and song above your graves may hiss –
 The 'little boatman' and his 'Peter Bell'
 Can sneer at him who drew 'Achitophel'!

101

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; 900
 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!

102

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, 910
And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet the forest leaves seem'd stir'd with prayer.

103

Ave Maria! 'tis the hour of prayer!

Ave Maria! 'tis 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 'tis but a pictured image strike –

That painting is no idol, 'tis too like. 920

104

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.

105

Sweet hour of twilight! – in the solitude

Of the pine forest, and the silent shore 930

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,²⁰⁷

How have I loved the twilight hour and thee!

106

The shrill cicalas,²⁰⁸ 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; 940
 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.

107

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, 950
 Are gather'd round us by thy look of rest;
 Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's breast.

108

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! 960

109

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.

110

But I'm digressing; what on earth has Nero,
 Or any such like sovereign buffoons, 970
 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 Cantabs²⁰⁹ please
 To dub the last of honours in degrees).

111

I feel this tediousness will never do –
 'Tis being *too* epic, and I must cut down
 (In copying) this long canto into two;
 They'll never find it out, unless I own 980
 The fact, excepting some experienced few;
 And then as an improvement 'twill be shown:
 I'll prove that such the opinion of the critic is
 From Aristotle *passim*.²¹⁰ – See Ποιητικῆς.

Canto Four

1

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'd²¹¹ 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.

2

But Time, which brings all beings to their level,
 And sharp Adversity, will teach at last 10
 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.

3

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: 20
Now my sere fancy 'falls into the yellow
Leaf,²¹² and imagination droops her pinion,
And the sad truth which hovers o'er my desk
Turns what was once romantic to burlesque.

4

And if I laugh at any mortal thing,
'Tis that I may not weep; and if I weep,
'Tis 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: 30
Thetis baptized her mortal son in Styx;
A mortal mother would on Lethe fix.

5

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. 40

6

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.

7

How I have treated it, I do not know;
 Perhaps no better than they have treated me 50
 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.

8

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 60
 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.

9

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 70
 A long and snake-like life of dull decay
 Was not for them – they had too little clay.

10

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 – 80

11

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.

12

'Whom the gods love die young'²¹³ was said of yore,
 And many deaths do they escape by this: 90
 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 whom longest miss
 The old archer's shafts, perhaps the early grave
 Which men weep over may be meant to save.

13

Haidée 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: 100
 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.

14

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; 110
 Sweet playful phrases, which would seem absurd
 To those who have ceased to hear such, or ne'er heard:

15

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. 120

16

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 cloy,
 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.

17

Oh beautiful! and rare as beautiful!
 But theirs was love in which the mind delights 130
 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.

18

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? 140
 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.

19

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 Haidée's knowledge was by no means great,
 And Juan was a boy of saintly breeding; 150
 So that there was no reason for their loves
 More than for those of nightingales or doves.

20

They gazed upon the sunset; 'tis 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. 160

21

I know not why, but in that hour tonight,
 Even as they gazed, a sudden tremor came,
 And swept, as 'twere, across their heart's 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 Haidée's eye.

22

That large black prophet eye seem'd to dilate
 And follow far the disappearing sun, 170
 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.

23

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; 180
 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.'

24

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 'tis the best:
 Some people prefer wine – 'tis not amiss; 190
 I have tried both; so those who would a part take
 May choose between the headache and the heartache.

25

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. 200

26

Juan and Haidée 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.

27

Mix'd in each other's arms, and heart in heart,
 Why did they not then die? – they had lived too long 210
 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.

28

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: 220
 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.

29

Now pillow'd cheek to cheek, in loving sleep,
 Haidée 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 Haidée's sweet lips murmur'd like a brook 230
 A wordless music, and her face so fair
 Stirr'd with her dream as rose-leaves with the air;

30

Or as the stirring of a deep clear 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 'tis still to be)
 Senseless to feel, and with seal'd eyes to see. 240

31

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.

32

Anon – she was released, and then she stray'd
 O'er the sharp shingles with her bleeding feet, 250
 And stumbled almost every step she made;
 And something roll'd before her in a sheet,
 Which she must still pursue howe'er afraid;
 'Twas 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.

33

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; 260
 Her hair was dripping, and the very balls
 Of her black eyes seemed turn'd to tears, and mirk²¹⁴
 The sharp rocks look'd below each drop they caught,
 Which froze to marble as it fell, she thought.

34

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 270
 Rang in her sad ears like a mermaid's song,
 And that brief dream appear'd a life too long.

35

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?
 'Tis – 'tis her father's – fix'd upon the pair! 280

36

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 Haidée,
 It was a moment of that awful kind –
 I have seen such – but must not call to mind.

37

Up Juan sprung to Haidée's bitter shriek,
 And caught her falling, and from off the wall 290
 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.'

38

And Haidée clung around him; 'Juan, 'tis –
 'Tis Lambro – 'tis my father! Kneel with me –
 He will forgive us – yes – it must be – yes.
 Oh! dearest father, in this agony 300
 Of pleasure and of pain – even while I kiss
 Thy garment's hem²¹⁵ with transport, can it be
 That doubt should mingle with my filial joy?
 Deal with me as thou wilt, but spare this boy.'

39

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; 310
 In arms, at least, he stood, in act to spring
 On the first foe whom Lambro's call might bring.

40

'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
 'Twas fresh – for he had lately used the lock –
 And next proceeded quietly to cock. 320

41

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,²¹⁶ and less nice.

42

Lambro presented, and one instant more
 Had stopp'd this Canto, and Don Juan's breath, 330
 When Haidée 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.'

43

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 woo'd the blow; 340
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.

44

He gazed on her, and she on him; 'twas 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: 350
Her father's blood before her father's face
Boil'd up, and proved her truly of his race.

45

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. 360

46

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.

47

'Let him disarm; or, by my father's head,
 His own shall roll before you like a ball!' 370
 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.'

48

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 – 380
 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.

49

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 390
 From two smart sabre gashes, deep and red –
 One on the arm, the other on the head.

50

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,²¹⁷ placed in line;
 On board of one of these, and under hatches,
 They stow'd him, with strict orders to the watches. 400

51

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.

52

Here I must leave him, for I grow pathetic,
 Moved by the Chinese nymph²¹⁸ of tears, green tea! 410
 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:
 'Tis pity wine should be so deleterious,
 For tea and coffee leave us much more serious,

53

Unless when qualified with thee, Cogniac!
 Sweet Naïad of the Phlegethonic²¹⁹ rill!
 Ah! why the liver wilt thou thus attack,
 And make, like other nymphs, thy lovers ill? 420
 I would take refuge in weak punch, but *rack*²²⁰
 (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.

54

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 Haidée's bosom bounded!
 She was not one to weep, and rave, and chafe,
 And then give way, subdued because surrounded; 430
 Her mother was a Moorish maid, from Fez,
 Where all is Eden, or a wilderness.

55

There the large olive rains its amber store
 In marble founts; 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. 440

56

Afric is all the sun's, and as her earth
 Her human clay 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 Haidée's mother's dower;
 But her large dark eye show'd deep Passion's force,
 Though sleeping like a lion near a source.

57

Her daughter, temper'd with a milder ray,
 Like summer clouds all silvery, smooth, and fair, 450
 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 Numidian²²¹ veins,
 Even as the Simoom sweeps the blasted plains.

58

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; 460
 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.

59

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, 470
 But she defied all means they could employ,
 Like one life could not hold, nor death destroy.

60

Days lay she in that state unchanged, though chill
 With nothing livid,²²² 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. 480

61

The ruling passion,²²³ 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 Laocoön's all eternal throes,
 And ever-dying Gladiator's air,²²⁴
 Their energy like life forms all their fame,
 Yet looks not life, for they are still the same.

62

She woke at length, but not as sleepers wake,
 Rather the dead, for life seem'd something new, 490
 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.

63

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; 500
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.

64

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, 510
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.

65

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. 520

66

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.

67

Short solace, vain relief! – thought came too quick,
 And whirl'd her brain to madness; she arose 530
 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 close:
 Hers was a frenzy which disdain'd to rave,
 Even when they smote her, in the hope to save.

68

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; 540
 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.

69

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, 550
 Glazed o'er her eyes – the beautiful, the black –
 Oh! to possess such lustre – and then lack!

70

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. 560

71

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.

72

That isle is now all desolate and bare,
 Its dwellings down, its tenants past away; 570
 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.

73

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; 580
 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.

74

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, 590
 We'll put about, and try another tack
 With Juan, left half-kill'd some stanzas back.

75

Wounded and fetter'd, 'cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd',²²⁵
 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.²²⁶ 600

76

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 – (Bryant²²⁷ says the contrary):
 And further downward, tall and towering still, is
 The tumulus – of whom? Heaven knows; 't may be
 Patroclus,²²⁸ Ajax, or Protesilaus;
 All heroes who if living still would slay us.

77

High barrows, without marble, or a name,
 A vast, untill'd, and mountain-skirted plain, 610
 And Ida^{229a} in the distance, still the same,
 And old Scamander, (if 'tis he) remain;
 The situation seems still form'd for fame –
 A hundred thousand men might fight again
 With ease; but where I sought for Ilion's walls,
 The quiet sheep feeds, and the tortoise crawls;

78

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 620
 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.^{229b}

79

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 630
 No very satisfactory information
 About his past or present situation.

80

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. 640

81

By one of these, the buffo²³⁰ 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.

82

In a few words he told their hapless story,
 Saying, 'Our Machiavellian impresario, 650
 Making a signal off some promontory,
 Hail'd a strange brig; Corpo di Caio Mario!²³¹
 We were transferr'd on board her in a hurry,
 Without a single scudo of salario;²³²
 But if the Sultan has a taste for song,
 We will revive our fortunes before long.

83

'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, 660
 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.

84

'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 zecchini,
 But spends so fast, she has not now a paul;²³³ 670
 And then there's the Grottesca – such a dancer!
 Where men have souls or bodies she must answer.

85

'As for the figuranti,²³⁴ 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. 680

86

'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 'twould perplex
 To find three perfect pipes of the *third* sex.²³⁵

87

'The tenor's voice is spoilt by affectation,
 And for the bass, the beast can only bellow; 690
 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.

88

' 'Twould not become myself to dwell upon
 My own merits, and though young – I see, Sir – you
 Have got a travell'd air, which shows you one
 To whom the opera is by no means new: 700
 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.

89

'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; 710
 In lovers' parts his passion more to breathe,
 Having no heart to show, he shows his teeth.'

90

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. 720

91

They heard next day – that in the Dardanelles,²³⁶
 Waiting for his sublimity's firman,²³⁷
 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.

92

It seems when this allotment was made out,
 There chanced to be an odd male, and odd female, 730
 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.

93

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; 740
 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*²³⁸ – blackguards both.

94

Juan's companion was a Romagnole,²³⁹
 But bred within the March of old Ancona,²⁴⁰
 With eyes that look'd into the very soul
 (And other chief points of a 'bella donna'),²⁴¹
 Bright – and as black and burning as a coal;
 And through her clear brunette complexion shone a 750
 Great wish to please – a most attractive dower,
 Especially when added to the power.

95

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. 760

96

No matter: we should ne'er too much inquire,
 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:
 'Tis said no one in hand 'can hold a fire
 By thought of frosty Caucasus';²⁴² but few,
 I really think; yet Juan's then ordeal
 Was more triumphant, and not much less real.

97

Here I might enter on a chaste description,
 Having withstood temptation in my youth, 770
 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 is²⁴³
 To pass, than those two cantos into families.

98

'Tis all the same to me; I'm fond of yielding,
 And therefore leave them to the purer page
 Of Smollet, Prior, Ariosto, Fielding,²⁴⁴
 Who say strange things for so correct an age; 780
 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.

99

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; 790
 The grass upon my grave will grow as long,
 And sigh to midnight winds, but not to song.

100

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,
 'Tis 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, 'tis nothing but cold snow. 800

101

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 'twere identify their dust
 From out the wide destruction, which, entombing all,
 Leaves nothing till the coming of the just²⁴⁵ –
 Save change; I've stood upon Achilles' tomb,
 And heard Troy doubted; time will doubt of Rome.

102

The very generations of the dead
 Are swept away, and tomb inherits tomb, 810
 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.

103

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!²⁴⁶ 820
 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.

104

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, 830
 Will sink where lie the songs and wars of earth,
 Before Pelides'²⁴⁷ death, or Homer's birth.

105

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. 840

106

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.

107

If in the course of such a life as was
 At once adventurous and contemplative, 850
 Men who partake all passions as they pass,
 Acquire the deep and bitter power to give
 Their images again as in a glass,²⁴⁸
 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.

108

Oh! ye, who make the fortunes of all books!
 Benign ceruleans²⁴⁹ of the second sex!
 Who advertise new poems by your looks,
 Your 'imprimatur'²⁵⁰ will ye not annex? 860
 What, must I go to the oblivious cooks?²⁵¹
 Those Cornish plunderers of Parnassian wrecks?
 Ah! must I then the only minstrel be,
 Proscribed from tasting your Castalian tea!²⁵²

109

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;²⁵³
 Why then I'll swear, as poet Wordy swore,
 (Because the world won't read him, always snarling) 870
 That taste is gone, that fame is but a lottery,
 Drawn by the blue-coat misses of a coterie.

110

Oh! 'darkly, deeply, beautifully blue',²⁵⁴
 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 garters²⁵⁵ which serenely lie
 Round the Patrician left-legs, which adorn
 The festal midnight, and the levee morn. 880

111

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 know one woman of that purple school,
 The loveliest, chastest, best, but – quite a fool.

112

Humboldt, 'the first of travellers', but not
 The last, if late accounts be accurate, 890
 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!²⁵⁶

113

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; 900
 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.

114

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; 910
 But when the offer went beyond, they knew
 'Twas for the Sultan, and at once withdrew.

115

Twelve negresses from Nubia brought a price
Which the West Indian market scarce would bring;
Though Wilberforce, at last, has made it twice
What 'twas 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. 920

116

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:

117

All this must be reserved for further song;
Also our hero's lot, howe'er unpleasant, 930
(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 Duan.²⁵⁷

Canto Five

1

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.

2

I therefore do denounce all amorous writing,
 Except in such a way as not to attract; 10
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.

3

The European with the Asian shore
 Sprinkled with palaces; the ocean stream
Here and there studded with a seventy-four;²⁵⁸
 Sophia's cupola with golden gleam; 20
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.²⁵⁹

4

I have a passion for the name of 'Mary',²⁶⁰
 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: 30
But I grow sad – and let a tale grow cold,
Which must not be pathetically told.

5

The wind swept down the Euxine, and the wave
 Broke foaming o'er the blue Symplegades;²⁶¹
 'Tis a grand sight from off 'the Giant's Grave'²⁶²
 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. 40

6

'Twas a raw day of Autumn's bleak beginning,
 When nights are equal, but not so the days;
 The Parcae²⁶³ 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.

7

A crowd of shivering slaves of every nation,
 And age, and sex, were in the market ranged; 50
 Each bevy²⁶⁴ 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.

8

Juan was juvenile, and thus was full,
 As most at his age are, of hope, and health;
 Yet I must own, he look'd a little dull,
 And now and then a tear stole down by stealth; 60
 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,

9

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; 70
 And then, though pale, he was so very handsome;
 And then – they calculated on his ransom.

10

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 gray eye,
 Next Juan stood, till some might choose to buy. 80

11

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.

12

But seeing at his elbow a mere lad,
 Of a high spirit evidently, though 90
 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.

13

'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, 100
The only gentlemen seem I and you;
So let us be acquainted, as we ought:
If I could yield you and consolation,
'Twould give me pleasure. – Pray, what is your nation?'

14

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,²⁶⁵
But that's her way with all men till they're tried;
But never mind, – she'll turn, perhaps, next week; 110
She has served me also much the same as you,
Except that I have found it nothing new.'

15

'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 Suwarrow's bidding,
A town, was ta'en myself instead of Widin'. 120

16

'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, ' 'twere a tale distressing,
And long besides.' – 'Oh! if 'tis really so,
You're right on both accounts to hold your tongue;
A sad tale saddens doubly when 'tis long.

17

'But droop not: Fortune at your time of life,
 Although a female moderately fickle, 130
 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.'

18

' 'Tis 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 140
 A moment, and then dropp'd; 'but to resume,
 'Tis not my present lot, as I have said,
 Which I deplore so much; for I have borne
 Hardships which have the hardest overworn,

19

'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: 150
 I cried upon my first wife's dying day,
 And also when my second ran away:

20

'My third – ' – 'Your third!' quoth Juan, turning round;
 'You scarcely can be thirty: have you three?'
 'No – only two at present above ground:
 Surely 'tis 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.' 160

21

‘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 vanished. 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.’

22

‘ ’Tis true, it gets another bright and fresh,
 Or fresher, brighter; but the year gone through, 170
 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-twigs²⁶⁶ of our latter days,
 Where still we flutter on for pence or praise.’

23

‘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 180
 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.’

24

‘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; 190
 Meantime (yon old black eunuch seems to eye us)
 I wish to G – d that somebody would buy us!’

25

'But after all, what is our present state?
 'Tis 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 stoics – men without a heart.' 200

26

Just now a black old neutral personage
 Of the third sex stepped 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,²⁶⁷ broadcloth by a tailor,
 Fee by a counsel, felon by a jailor,

27

As is a slave by his intended bidder.
 'Tis pleasant purchasing our fellow creatures; 210
 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,²⁶⁸ according to their vices.

28

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! 220
 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.

29

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 paras²⁶⁹ jumbling,
 Until the sum was accurately scann'd, 230
 And then the merchant giving change, and signing
 Receipts in full, began to think of dining.

30

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. 240

31

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);

32

I think with Alexander, that the act
 Of eating, with another act or two, 250
 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?

33

The other evening ('twas 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, 260
 I heard a shot – 'twas 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.

34

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 add
 More circumstances? vain was every care; 270
 The man was gone: in some Italian quarrel
 Kill'd by five bullets from an old gun-barrel.

35

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 – 280

36

'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,²⁷⁰ 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.'

37

And they who waited once and worshipp'd – they
 With their rough faces throng'd about the bed 290
 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.

38

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 300
 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;

39

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? 310
 We, whose minds comprehend all things? No more;
 But let us to the story as before.

40

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. 320

41

Here their conductor tapping at the wicket²⁷¹
 Of a small iron door, 'twas 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 closing ere they came to land
 The eunuch made a sign to those on board,
 Who row'd off, leaving them without a word.

42

As they were plodding on their winding way
 Through orange bowers, and jasmine, and so forth: 330
 (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:)

43

As they were threading on their way, there came
 Into Don Juan's head a thought, which he
 Whisper'd to his companion: – 'twas the same
 Which might have then occur'd to you or me. 340
 '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 – 'twere easier done than said.'

44

'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 Bartholomew²⁷² we have saved our skin,
 Tomorrow'd see us in some other den,
 And worse off than we hitherto have been; 350
 Besides, I'm hungry, and just now would take,
 Like Esau, for my birthright²⁷³ a beef-steak.

45

'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:
 'Tis therefore better looking before leaping –
 And there, you see, this turn has brought us through.
 By Jove, a noble palace! – lighted too.' 360

46

It was indeed a wide extensive building
 Which open'd on their view, and o'er the front
 There seem'd to be besprent²⁷⁴ 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.

47

And nearer as they came, a genial savour
 Of certain stews, and roast-meats, and pilaus, 370
 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.'

48

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. 380
 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 ever dreams of being short. –

49

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, 390
 Than that all-softening, over-powering knell,
 The tocsin of the soul – the dinner bell.

50

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. 400

51

And giving up all notions of resistance,
 They follow'd close behind their sable guide,
 Who little thought that his own crack'd²⁷⁵ existence
 Was on the point of being set aside:
 He motion'd them to stop at some small distance,
 And knocking at the gate, 'twas open'd wide,
 And a magnificent large hall display'd
 The Asian pomp of Ottoman parade.

52

I won't describe; description is my forte,
 But every fool describes in these bright days 410
 His wond'rous journey to some foreign court,
 And spawns his quarto, and demands your praise –
 Death²⁷⁶ to his publisher, to him 'tis sport;
 While Nature, tortured twenty thousand ways,
 Resigns herself with exemplary patience
 To guide-books, rhymes, tours, sketches, illustrations.

53

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, 420
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.

54

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 any wise:
One or two stared the captives in the face,
Just as one views a horse to guess his price; 430
Some nodded to the negro from their station,
But no one troubled him with conversation.

55

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 noise that is. 440

56

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.

57

Two or three seem so little, *one* seems nothing:
 In deserts, forests, crowds, or by the shore, 450
 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.

58

A neat, snug study on a winter's night,
 A book, friend, single lady, or a glass
 Of claret, sandwich, and an appetite, 460
 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.

59

Alas! man makes that great which makes him little:
 I grant you in a church 'tis 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: 470
 Methinks the story of the tower of Babel
 Might teach them this much better than I'm able.

60

Babel was Nimrod's hunting-box, and then
 A town of gardens, walls, and wealth amazing,
 Where Nabuchadonosor,²⁷⁷ 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;
 'Twas famous, too, for Thisbe and for Pyramus,²⁷⁸
 And the calumniated Queen Semiramis. – 480

61

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 tale²⁷⁹ 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.

62

But to resume, – should there be (what may not
 Be in these days?) some infidels, who don't, 490
 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)²⁸⁰
 Believe the Jews, those unbelievers, who
 Must be believed, though they believe not you.

63

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; 500
 We know where things and men must end at best,
 A moral (like all morals) melancholy,
 And 'Et sepulchri immemor struis domos'²⁸¹
 Shows that we build when we should but entomb us.

64

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 510
 With furniture an exquisite apartment,
 Which puzzled nature much to know what art meant.

65

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 moveables were prodigally rich:
 Sofas 'twas 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. 520

66

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,

67

I wish to be perspicuous; and the black,
 I say, unlocking the recess, pull'd forth 530
 A quantity of clothes fit for the back
 Of any Mussulman, what'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.

68

The suit he thought most suitable to each
 Was, for the elder and the stouter, first
 A candiote cloak, which to the knee might reach,
 And trousers not so tight that they would burst, 540
 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.

69

While he was dressing, Baba, their black friend,
 Hinted the vast advantages which they
 Might probably obtain 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, 550
 ' 'Twould greatly tend to better their condition,
 If they would condescend to circumcision.²⁸²

70

'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 trifle, scarcely could express
 Sufficiently (he said) his approbation
 Of all the customs of this polish'd nation. 560

71

For his own share – he saw but small objection
 To so respectable an ancient rite;
 And, after swallowing down a slight reflection,
 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!

72

'Cut off a thousand heads, before – ' – 'Now, pray,'
 Replied the other, 'do not interrupt: 570
 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.'

73

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, 580
 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.'

74

'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 inquire
 The cause of this odd travesty?' - 'Forbear',
 Said Baba, 'to be curious; 'twill transpire, 590
 No doubt, in proper place, and time, and season:
 I have no authority to tell the reason.'

75

'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 too 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. 600

76

'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.

77

And then he swore; and, sighing, on he slipp'd
A pair of trousers of flesh-colour'd silk, 610
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) –

78

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: 620
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.

79

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 630
As suited the *ensemble* of his toilet,
While Baba made him comb his head and oil it.

80

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. 640

81

'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, 'tis a palace; where the truly wise
 Anticipate the Prophet's paradise.

82

'You fool! I tell you no one means you harm.'
 'So much the better,' Juan said, 'for them; 650
 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 every body's sake,
 That this disguise may lead to no mistake.'

83

'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, 660
 'Farewell!' they mutually exclaimed: '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.'

84

'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.' 670
 'Nay,' quoth the maid, 'the Sultan's self shan't carry me,
 Unless his highness promises to marry me.'

85

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. 680

86

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.²⁸³

87

This massy portal stood at the wide close
Of a huge hall, and on its either side 690
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 pyramidic pride:
The gate so splendid was in all its *features*,
You never thought about those little creatures,

88

Until you nearly trod on them, and then
You started back in horror to survey
The wond'rous hideousness of those small men,
Whose colour was not black, nor white, nor gray, 700
But an extraneous mixture,²⁸⁴ which no pen
Can trace, although perhaps the pencil may;
They were misshapen pigmies, deaf and dumb –
Monsters, who cost a no less monstrous sum.

89

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, 710
 To give some rebel Pacha a cravat;²⁸⁵
 For mutes are generally used for that.

90

They spoke by signs – that is, not spoke at all;
 And looking like two incubi,²⁸⁶ 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. 720

91

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,

92

' 'T would be convenient; for these mutes have eyes
 Like needles, which may pierce those petticoats; 730
 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 Marmora²⁸⁷ without boats,
 Stitch'd up in sacks – a mode of navigation
 A good deal practised here upon occasion.'

93

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 740
Could hardly carry any thing away,
Object on object flash'd so bright and fast;
A dazzling mass of gems, and gold, and glitter,
Magnificently mingled in a litter.

94

Wealth had done wonders – taste not much; such things
Occur in orient palaces, and even
In the more chasten'd 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; 750
Groups of bad statues, tables, chairs, and pictures,
On which I cannot pause to make my strictures.

95

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. 760

96

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.

97

Her presence was as lofty as her state;
 Her beauty of that overpowering kind, 770
 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.

98

This 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, 780
 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.²⁸⁸

99

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,' 790
 As far as outward show may correspond;
 I won't be bail for any thing beyond.

100

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.' 800

101

'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).'²⁸⁹
 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?

102

Baba, when all the damsels were withdrawn,
 Motion'd to Juan to approach, and then 810
 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.'

103

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 820
 Would Juan bend, though 'twere 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.

104

He stood like Atlas,²⁹⁰ 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; 830
 At length perceiving the '*foot*' could not stand,
 Baba proposed that he should kiss the hand.

105

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. 840

106

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,²⁹¹
 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.

107

The lady eyed him o'er and o'er, and bade
 Baba retire, which he obey'd in style, 850
 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.

108

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 clear cheek the blood was brought, 860
 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.

109

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,²⁹² 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; 870
 Yet, somehow, there was something somewhere wanting,
 As if she rather *order'd* than was *granting*. –

110

Something imperial, or imperious, threw
 A chain o'er all she did; that is, a chain
 Was thrown as 'twere 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 'tis in vain
 We would against them make the flesh obey –
 The spirit in the end will have its way. 880

111

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).

112

'To hear and to obey' had been from birth
 The law of all around her; to fulfil 890
 All fantasies 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'.²⁹³

113

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 'twas found straightway the bargain closed: 900
 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.

114

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: 910
 She had no prudence, but he had; and this
 Explains the garb which Juan took amiss.

115

His youth and features favour'd the disguise,
 And, should you ask how she, a sultan's bride,
 Could risk or compass²⁹⁴ such strange fantasies,
 This I must leave sultanas 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. 920

116

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.

117

And so it was, in proper time and place;
 But Juan, who had still his mind o'erflowing 930
 With Haidée'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.

118

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: 940
 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 'tis a relief, to us a torture.

119

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 'twas to bear
 Aught of a serious sorrowing kind, although
 There might arise some pouting petty care 950
 To cross her brow, she wonder'd how so near
 Her eyes another's eye could shed a tear.

120

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, whatsoever their nation,
 They naturally pour the 'wine and oil',²⁹⁵
 Samaritans in every situation;
 And thus Gulbeyaz, though she knew not why,
 Felt an odd glistening moisture in her eye. 960

121

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 reprov'd;
 And although sensitive to beauty, he
 Felt most indignant still at not being free.

122

Gulbeyaz, for the first time in her days,
 Was much embarrass'd, never having met 970
 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 tête-à-tête,
 To lose the hour would make her quite a martyr,
 And they had wasted now almost a quarter.

123

I also would suggest the fitting time,
 To gentlemen in any such like case,
 That is to say – in a meridian clime,²⁹⁶
 With us there is more law given to the chase, 980
 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.

124

Juan's was good; and might have been still better,
 But he had got Haidée 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, 990
 Began to blush up to the eyes, and then
 Grow deadly pale, and then blush back again.

125

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. 1000

126

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 I
 Serve a sultana's sensual fantasy.

127

'Thou ask'st, if I can love? be this the proof
 How much I *have* loved – that I love not *thee*! 1010
 In this vile garb, the distaff, web, and woof,²⁹⁷
 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.'

128

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. 1020
 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.

129

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; 1030
 She thought hers gave a double 'right divine',²⁹⁸
 And half of that opinion's also mine.

130

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-days²⁹⁹ 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. 1040

131

Suppose, but you already have supposed,
 The spouse of Potiphar, the Lady Booby,
 Phaedra,³⁰⁰ 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.

132

A tigress robb'd of young, a lioness,
 Or any interesting beast of prey, 1050
 Are similes at hand for the distress
 Of ladies who cannot 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?

133

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; 1060
And all who have seen a human nursery, saw
How mothers love their children's squalls and chucklings;
And this extreme effect (to tire no longer
Your patience) shows the cause must still be stronger.

134

If I said fire flash'd from Gulbeyaz' eyes,
'Twere 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: 1070
Even ye who know what a check'd woman is
(Enough, God knows!) would much fall short of this.

135

Her rage was but a minute's, and 'twas well –
A moment's more had slain her; but the while
It lasted 'twas 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. 1080

136

A vulgar tempest 'twere to a Typhoon
To match a common fury with her rage,
And yet she did not want to reach the moon,
Like moderate Hotspur³⁰¹ 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,³⁰²
And then her thirst of blood was quench'd in tears.

137

A storm it raged, and like the storm it pass'd,
 Pass'd without words – in fact she could not speak; 1090
 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.

138

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 pipkins³⁰³ are but fragile brothers, 1100
 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.

139

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 1110
 The lash to Baba: – but her grand resource
 Was to sit down again, and cry of course.

140

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 'tis 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. 1120

141

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.

142

As through his palms Bob Acres' valour oozed,³⁰⁴
 So Juan's virtue ebb'd, I know not how; 1130
 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.

143

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, 1140
 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.

144

'Bride of the Sun! and Sister of the Moon!'
 ('Twas 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: 1150
 The Sun himself has sent me like a ray
 To hint that he is coming up this way.'

145

'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!' 1160

146

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 emperor,
 She was of course the favourite of the four.

147

His highness was a man of solemn port,³⁰⁵
 Shawl'd to the nose, and bearded to the eyes, 1170
 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,³⁰⁶ the glory of their line.

148

He went to mosque in state, and said his prayers
 With more than 'Oriental scrupulosity',³⁰⁷
 He left to his vizier all state affairs,
 And show'd but little royal curiosity: 1180
 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.

149

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; 1190
 No scandals made the daily press a curse –
 Morals were better, and the fish no worse.

150

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 any where;
 His empire also was without a bound:
 'Tis true, a little troubled here and there,
 By rebel pachas, and encroaching giaours,
 But then they never came to 'the Seven Towers',³⁰⁸ 1200

151

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, yclept despatches, without risk or
 The singeing of a single inky whisker.

152

He had fifty daughters and four dozen sons,
 Of whom all such as came of age were stow'd, 1210
 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 this seems odd,
 'Tis true; the reason is, that the Bashaw
 Must make a present to his sire in law.

153

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; 1220
 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.

154

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: 1230
 To no men are such cordial greetings given
 As those whose wives have made them fit for heaven.³⁰⁹

155

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; 'tis pity
 That a mere christian should be half so pretty.' 1240

156

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.

157

The Turks do well to shut – at least, sometimes –
The women up – because in sad reality, 1250
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.

158

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; 1260
Spoilt, as a pipe of claret is when prick'd:³¹⁰
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?

159

Thus far our chronicle; and now we pause,
Though not for want of matter; but 'tis 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; 1270
Meanwhile, as Homer sometimes sleeps, perhaps
You'll pardon to my muse a few short naps.

Preface to Cantos Six, Seven and Eight

The details of the Siege of Ismail in two of the following Cantos (i.e. the 7th and 8th) are taken from a French work, entitled *Histoire de la Nouvelle Russie*. Some of the incidents attributed to Don Juan really occurred, particularly the circumstance of his saving the infant, which was the actual case of the late Duc de Richelieu, then a young volunteer in the Russian service, and afterwards the founder and benefactor of Odessa, where his name and memory can never cease to be regarded with reverence. In the course of these cantos, a stanza or two will be found relative to the late Marquis of Londonderry, but written some time before his decease. Had that person's Oligarchy died with him, they would have been suppressed; as it is, I am aware of nothing in the manner of his death or of his life to prevent the free expression of the opinions of all whom his whole existence was consumed in endeavouring to enslave. That he was an amiable man in *private* life, may or may not be true; but with this the Public have nothing to do; and as to lamenting his death, it will be time enough when Ireland has ceased to mourn for his birth. As a Minister, I, for one of millions, looked upon him as the most despotic in intention and the weakest in intellect that ever tyrannized over a country. It is the first time indeed since the Normans, that England has been insulted by a *Minister* (at least) who could not speak English, and that Parliament permitted itself to be dictated to in the language of Mrs Malaprop.

Of the manner of his death little need be said, except that if a poor radical, such as Waddington or Watson, had cut his throat, he would have been buried in a cross-road, with the usual appurtenances of the stake and mallet. But the Minister was an elegant Lunatic – a sentimental Suicide – he merely cut the ‘carotid artery’ (blessings on their learning) and lo! the Pageant, and the Abbey! and ‘the Syllables of Dolour yelled forth’ by the Newspapers – and the harangue of the Coroner in an eulogy over the bleeding body of the deceased – (an Anthony worthy of such a Caesar) – and the nauseous and atrocious cant of a degraded Crew of Conspirators against all that is sincere and honourable. In his death he was necessarily one of two things by the *law* – a felon or a madman – and in either case no great subject for panegyric. In his life he was – what all the world knows, and half of it will feel for years to come, unless his death prove a ‘moral lesson’ to the surviving Sejani of Europe. It may at least serve as some consolation to the Nations, that their Oppressors are not

happy, and in some instances judge so justly of their own actions as to anticipate the sentence of mankind. – Let us hear no more of this man; and let Ireland remove the Ashes of her Grattan from the Sanctuary of Westminster. Shall the Patriot of Humanity repose by the Werther of Politics!!!

With regard to the objections which have been made on another score to the already published Cantos of this poem, I shall content myself with two quotations from Voltaire: ‘La pudeur s’est en fuite des coeurs, et c’est réfugiée sur les lèvres’ . . . ‘Plus les moeurs sont dépravés, plus les expressions deviennent mesurées; on croit regagner en langage ce qu’on a perdu en vertu’.

This is the real fact, as applicable to the degraded and hypocritical mass which leavens the present English generation, and is the only answer they deserve. The hackneyed and lavished title of Blasphemer – which, with radical, liberal, jacobin, reformer, etc. are the changes which the hirelings are daily ringing in the ears of those who will listen – should be welcome to all who recollect on *whom* it was originally bestowed. Socrates and Jesus Christ were put to death publicly as *Blasphemers*, and so have been and may be many who dare to oppose the most notorious abuses of the name of God and the mind of man. But Persecution is not refutation, nor even triumph: the ‘wretched Infidel,’ as he is called, is probably happier in his prison than the proudest of his Assailants. With his opinions I have nothing to do – they may be right or wrong – but he has suffered for them, and that very Suffering for conscience-sake will make more proselytes to Deism than the example of heterodox Prelates to Christianity, suicide Statesmen to oppression, or over-pensioned Homicides to the impious Alliance which insults the world with the name of ‘Holy!’ I have no wish to trample on the dishonoured or the dead; but it would be well if the adherents to the Classes from whence those persons sprung should abate a little of the *Cant* which is the crying sin of this double-dealing and false-speaking time of selfish Spoilers, and – but enough for the present.

Canto Six

1

'There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which taken at the flood'³¹¹ – 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.

2

There is a tide in the affairs of women
'Which taken at the flood leads' – God knows where: 10
Those navigators must be able seamen
Whose charts lay down its current to a hair;
Not all the reveries of Jacob Behmen³¹²
With its strange whirls and eddies can compare: –
Men with their heads reflect on this and that –
But women with their hearts or heaven knows what!

3

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 20
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.

4

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 Anthony be well remembered yet,
'Tis not his conquests keep his name in fashion, 30
But Actium, lost for Cleopatra's eyes,
Outbalance all the Caesar's victories.³¹³

5

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 for ever. 40

6

'Twas the boy's 'mite,' and like the 'widow's' may
 Perhaps be weighed 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.

7

We left our hero and third heroine in
 A kind of state more awkward than uncommon, 50
 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.

8

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. 60
 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.

9

I am not, like Cassio, 'an arithmetician',
 But by 'the bookish theoretic' it appears,
 If 'tis summed up with feminine precision,
 That, adding to the account his Highness' years,
 The fair Sultana erred from inanition;
 For were the Sultan just to all his dears, 70
 She could but claim the fifteenth hundred part
 Of what should be monopoly – the heart.

10

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. 80

11

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.³¹⁴

12

Gulbeyaz was the fourth, and (as I said)
 The favourite; but what's favour amongst four? 90
 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'.³¹⁵

13

His Highness, the sublimest of mankind –
 So styled according to the usual forms
 Of every monarch, till they are consigned
 To those sad hungry jacobins the worms, 100
 Who on the very loftiest kings have dined, –
 His Highness gazed upon Gulbeyaz' charms,
 Expecting all the welcome of a lover,
 (A 'Highland welcome'³¹⁶ all the wide world over).

14

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,
 Trimmed either heads or hearts to decorate, 110
 Which form an ornament, but no more part
 Of heads, than their caresses of the heart.

15

A slight blush, a soft tremor, a calm kind
 Of gentle feminine delight, and shown
 More in the eyelids than the eyes, resigned
 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. 120

16

For over warmth, if false, is worse than truth;
 If true, 'tis 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 transferred to the first buyer
 At a sad discount: while your over chilly
 Women, on t'other hand, seem somewhat silly.

17

That is, we cannot pardon their bad taste,
 For so it seems to lovers swift or slow, 130
 Who fain would have a mutual flame confest,
 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'.³¹⁷

18

The 'tu' 's too much, – but let it stand – the verse
 Requires it, that's to say, the English rhyme,
 And not the pink³¹⁸ of old Hexameters;
 But, after all, there's neither tune nor time 140
 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.

19

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: 150
 And no one virtue yet, except Starvation,
 Could stop that worst of vices – Propagation.

20

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 clay mixture undergoes.
 Our least of sorrows are such as we weep;
 'Tis the vile daily drop on drop which wears
 The soul out (like the stone) with petty cares. 160

21

A scolding wife, a sullen son, a bill
 To pay, unpaid, protested, or discounted
 At a percentage; 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.

22

I'm a philosopher; confound them all!
 Bills, beasts, and men, and – no! *not* Womankind; 170
 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.

23

So now all things are d—n'd, one feels at ease,
 As after reading Athanasius' curse,³¹⁹
 Which doth your true believer so much please:
 I doubt if any now could make it worse 180
 O'er his worst enemy when at his knees,
 'Tis so sententious, positive, and terse,
 And decorates the book of Common Prayer
 As doth a Rainbow the just clearing air.

24

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 grey morning, and look vainly for
 Its twinkle through the lattice dusky quite, 190
 To toss, to tumble, doze, revive, and quake
 Lest their too lawful bed-fellow should wake.

25

These are beneath the canopy of heaven,
 Also beneath the canopy of beds
 Four-posted and silk curtained, which are given
 For rich men and their brides to lay their heads
 Upon, in sheets white as what bards call 'driven
 Snow.' Well! 'tis all hap-hazard when one weds.
 Gulbeyaz was an empress, but had been
 Perhaps as wretched if a *peasant's quean*. 200

26

Don Juan in his feminine disguise,
 With all the damsels in their long array,
 Had bowed themselves before the 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 birds for air.

27

I love the sex, and sometimes would reverse
 The tyrant's³²⁰ wish, 'that mankind only had 210
 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.

28

Oh enviable Briareus!³²¹ 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, 220
 Or travelling in Patagonian lands;
 So let us back to Lilliput,³²² and guide
 Our hero through the labyrinth of love
 In which we left him several lines above.

29

He went forth with the lovely Odalisques,³²³
At the given signal joined 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 230
In moral England, where the thing's a tax)
From ogling all their charms from breasts to backs.

30

Still he forgot not his disguise: – along
The galleries from room to room they walked,
A virgin-like and edifying throng,
By eunuchs flanked; while at their head there stalked
A dame who kept up discipline among
The female ranks, so that none stirred or talked
Without her sanction on their she-parades:
Her title was 'the Mother of the Maids.' 240

31

Whether she was a 'mother', I know not,
Or whether they were 'maids' who called 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:³²⁴
Her office was, to keep aloof or smother
All bad propensities in fifteen hundred
Young women, and correct them when they blundered.

32

A goodly sinecure, no doubt! but made
More easy by the absence of all men 250
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.

33

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 260
 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.

34

But when they reached their own apartments, there,
 Like birds, or boys, or bedlamites broke loose,
 Waves at spring-tide, or women any where
 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 270
 Established between them and bondage, they
 Began to sing, dance, chatter, smile and play.

35

Their talk of course ran most on the new comer,
 Her shape, her hair, her air, her every thing:
 Some thought her dress did not so much become her,
 Or wondered 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 wished that she had been so quite. 280

36

But no one doubted on the whole, that she
 Was what her dress bespoke, a damsel fair,
 And fresh, and 'beautiful exceedingly',³²⁵
 Who with the brightest Georgians might compare:
 They wondered 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.

37

But what was strangest in this virgin crew,
 Although her beauty was enough to vex, 290
 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.'

38

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, 300
 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:

39

But certain 'tis they all felt for their new
 Companion something newer still, as 'twere
 A sentimental friendship through and through,
 Extremely pure, which made them all concur
 In wishing her their sister, save a few
 Who wished they had a brother, just like her, 310
 Whom, if they were at home in sweet Circassia,
 They would prefer to Padisha or Pacha.

40

Of those who had most genius for this sort
 Of sentimental friendship, there were three,
 Lolah, Katinka, and Dudù; 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. 320

41

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 seemed made to tread,
 But rather skim the earth; while Dudù's form
 Looked more adapted to be put to bed,
 Being somewhat large and languishing and lazy,
 Yet of a beauty that would drive you crazy.

42

A kind of sleepy Venus seemed Dudù,
 Yet very fit to 'murder sleep'³²⁶ in those 330
 Who gazed upon her cheek's transcendent hue,
 Her Attic forehead, and her Phidian nose:
 Few angles were there in her form 'tis true,
 Thinner she might have been and yet scarce lose;
 Yet, after all, 'twould puzzle to say where
 It would not spoil some separate charm *to pare*.

43

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; 340
 She looked (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.

44

Lolah demanded the new damsel's name –
 'Juanna' – Well, a pretty name enough.
 Katinka asked 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, 350
 To poor Katinka: 'Spain's an island near
 Morocco, betwixt Egypt and Tangier.'

45

Dudù said nothing, but sat down beside
Juanna, playing with her veil or hair;
And looking at her steadfastly, she sighed,
As if she pitied her for being there,
A pretty stranger without friend or guide,
And all abashed too at the general stare
Which welcomes hapless strangers in all places,
With kind remarks upon their mien and faces. 360

46

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 tomorrow early
We will have all things settled for you fairly.'

47

Here Lolah interposed – 'Mamma, you know
You don't sleep soundly, and I cannot bear 370
That any body 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.'

48

'Besides, I hate to sleep alone,' quoth she.
The Matron frowned: 'Why so?' – 'For fear of ghosts,'
Replied Katinka; 'I am sure I see
A phantom upon each of the four posts; 380
And then I have the worst dreams that can be,
Of Guebres, Giaours, and Ginns,³²⁷ and Gouls in hosts'.
The Dame replied, 'Between your dreams and you
I fear Juanna's dreams would be but few.'

49

'You, Lolah, must continue still to lie
 Alone, for reasons which don't matter; you
 The same, Katinka, until by and bye;
 And I shall place Juanna with Dudù,
 Who's quiet, inoffensive, silent, shy,
 And will not toss and chatter the night through. 390
 What say you, child?' – Dudù said nothing, as
 Her talents were of the more silent class;

50

But she rose up, and kissed the Matron's brow
 Between the eyes, and Lolah on both cheeks,
 Katinka too; and with a gentle bow
 (Curtseys 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 Dudù, though they held their tongues
 from deference. 400

51

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;
 'Twas on the whole a nobly furnished hall,
 With all things ladies want, save one or two,
 And even those were nearer than they knew.

52

Dudù, as has been said, was a sweet creature,
 Not very dashing, but extremely winning, 410
 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.

53

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 420
 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.

54

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 turned of quick seventeen, 430
 That she was fair, or dark, or short, or tall;
 She never thought about herself at all.

55

And therefore was she kind and gentle as
 The age of Gold³²⁸ (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; 440

56

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.

57

'Tis time we should return to plain narration,
 And thus my narrative proceeds: – Dudù, 450
 With every kindness short of ostentation,
 Showed 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.

58

And next she gave her (I say *her*, because
 The Gender still was Epicene,³²⁹ at least
 In outward show, which is a saving clause)
 An outline of the Customs of the East, 460
 With all their chaste integrity of laws,
 By which the more a Harem is increased,
 The stricter doubtless grow the vestal duties
 Of any supernumerary beauties.

59

And then she gave Juanna a chaste kiss:
 Dudù was fond of kissing – which I'm sure
 That nobody can ever take amiss,
 Because 'tis pleasant, so that it be pure,
 And between females means no more than this –
 That they have nothing better near, or newer. 470
 'Kiss' rhymes to 'bliss' in fact as well as verse –
 I wish it never led to something worse.

60

In perfect Innocence she then unmade
 Her toilet, which cost little, for she was
 A Child of Nature, carelessly arrayed:
 If fond of a chance ogle at her glass,
 'Twas like the fawn which, in the lake displayed,
 Beholds her own shy, shadowy image pass,
 When first she starts, and then returns to peep,
 Admiring this new Native of the deep. 480

61

And one by one her articles of dress
 Were laid aside; but not before she offered
 Her aid to fair Juanna, whose excess
 Of Modesty declined the assistance proffer'd:
 Which past well off – as she could do no less;
 Though by this politesse she rather suffered,
 Pricking her fingers with those cursed pins,
 Which surely were invented for our sins, –

62

Making a woman like a porcupine,
 Not to be rashly touched. But still more dread, 490
 Oh ye! whose fate it is, as once 'twas 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.

63

But these are foolish things to all the wise,
 And I love Wisdom more than she loves me;
 My tendency is to philosophize
 On most things, from a tyrant to a tree; 500
 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.

64

There was deep silence in the chamber: dim
 And distant from each other burned the lights,
 And Slumber hovered o'er each lovely limb
 Of the fair occupants: if there be sprites,
 They should have walked there in their spriteliest trim,
 By way of change from their sepulchral sites, 510
 And shown themselves as Ghosts of better taste
 Than haunting some old Ruin or wild Waste.

65

Many and beautiful lay those around,
 Like flowers of different hue and clime 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 showed the pearls beneath. 520

66

One with her flushed cheek laid on her white arm,
 And raven ringlets gathered in dark crowd
 Above her brow, lay dreaming soft and warm;
 And smiling through her dream, as through a cloud
 The Moon breaks, half unveiled each further charm,
 As, slightly stirring in her snowy shroud,
 Her beauties seized the unconscious hour of night
 All bashfully to struggle into light.

67

This is no bull,³³⁰ although it sounds so; for
 'Twas night, but there were lamps, as hath been said. 530
 A third's all pallid aspect offered more
 The traits of sleeping Sorrow, and betrayed
 Through the heaved breast the dream of some far shore
 Beloved and deplored; while slowly strayed
 (As Night Dew, on a Cypress glittering, tinges
 The black bough) tear-drops through her eyes' dark fringes.

68

A fourth as marble, statue-like and still,
 Lay in a breathless, hushed, and stony sleep;
 White, cold and pure, as looks a frozen rill,
 Or the snow minaret on an Alpine steep, 540
 Or Lot's wife done in salt,³³¹ – or what you will; –
 My similes are gathered in a heap,
 So pick and choose – perhaps you'll be content
 With a carved lady on a monument.

69

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 550
Which lays both men and women on the shelf,
To meditate upon their sins and self.

70

But all this time how slept, or dreamed, Dudù?

With strict enquiry 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 hovered, or might seem to hover
To those who like their company, about
The apartment, on a sudden she screamed out: 560

71

And that so loudly, that upstart all

The Oda, in a general commotion:

Matrons 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 Dudù so turbulently wake.

72

But wide awake she was, and round her bed,

With floating draperies and with flying hair, 570

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,³³² – they sought her cause of care,
For she seemed agitated, flushed and frightened,
Her eye dilated and her colour heightened.

73

But what is 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. 580
 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 yawned a good deal with discreet surprise.

74

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.
 Dudù had never passed for wanting sense, 590
 But being ‘no orator as Brutus is’,³³³
 Could not at first expound what was amiss.

75

At length she said, that in a slumber sound
 She dreamed 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 crowned,
 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; 600

76

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; –

77

That on a sudden, when she least had hope,
 It fell down of its own accord, before 610
 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 woke with a great scream and start.

78

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. 620
 I've known some odd ones which seemed really planned
 Prophetically, or that which one deems
 'A strange coincidence,' to use a phrase
 By which such things are settled now-a-days.

79

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 ear.
 The matron too was wroth to leave her warm
 Bed for the dream she had been obliged to hear, 630
 And chafed at poor Dudù, who only sighed,
 And said, that she was sorry she had cried.

80

'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,
 Tomorrow, what his Highness's physician
 Will say to this hysteric of a vision. 640

81

'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, Dudù, 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.'

82

Lolah's eyes sparkled at the proposition;
 But poor Dudù, with large drops in her own, 650
 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.

83

She promised never more to have a dream,
 At least to dream so loudly as just now;
 She wondered at herself how she could scream –
 'Twas foolish, nervous, as she must allow, 660
 A fond hallucination, and a theme
 For laughter – but she felt her spirits low,
 And begged they would excuse her; she'd get over
 This weakness in a few hours, and recover.

84

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 670
 Apart from one who had no sin to show
 Save that of dreaming once 'mal-à-propos'.³³⁴

85

As thus Juanna spoke, Dudù turned 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 blushed, 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. 680

86

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.

87

With the first ray, or rather grey of morn,
Gulbeyaz rose from restlessness; and pale 690
As Passion rises, with its bosom worn,
Arrayed herself with mantle, gem, and veil.
The nightingale that sings with the deep thorn,
Which Fable places in her breast of wail,³³⁵
Is lighter far of heart and voice than those
Whose headlong passions form their proper woes.

88

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 700
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.

89

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: – 710
 So agitated was she with her error,
 She did not even look into the mirror.

90

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 abhorred;
 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.³³⁶ 720

91

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.

92

And now he rose; and after due ablutions
 Exacted by the customs of the East, 730
 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
 As greatest of all sovereigns and w—s.

93

But oh, thou grand legitimate Alexander!³³⁷
 Her son's son, let not this last phrase offend
 Thine ear, if it should reach, – and now rhymes wander
 Almost as far as Petersburg, and lend 740
 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, 'tis quite enough for me.

94

To call men love-begotten, or proclaim
 Their mothers as the antipodes of Timon,³³⁸
 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 750
 All generations, I should like to know
 What pedigree the best would have to show?

95

Had Catherine and the Sultan understood
 Their own true interests, which kings rarely know,
 Until 'tis 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:³³⁹
 She to dismiss her guards and he his harem,
 And for their other matters, meet and share 'em. 760

96

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.

97

Meantime Gulbeyaz, when her king was gone,
 Retired into her boudoir, a sweet place 770
 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 fettered flowers,
 Those captive soothers of a captive's hours.

98

Mother of pearl, and porphyry,³⁴⁰ and marble,
 Vied with each other on this costly spot;
 And singing birds without were heard to warble;
 And the stained glass which lighted this fair grot 780
 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.

99

And here she summoned Baba, and required
 Don Juan at his hands, and information
 Of what had past 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 790
 Kept up; and above all, the where and how
 He had passed the night, was what she wished to know.

100

Baba, with some embarrassment, replied
 To this long catechism of questions asked
 More easily than answered, – that he had tried
 His best to obey in what he had been tasked;
 But there seemed something that he wished to hide,
 Which hesitation more betrayed than masqued; –
 He scratched his ear, the infallible resource
 To which embarrassed people have recourse. 800

101

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.

102

When Baba saw these symptoms, which he knew
 To bode him no great good, he deprecated 810
 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 Dudù
 Juan was given in charge, as hath been stated;
 But not by Baba's fault, he said, and swore on
 The holy camel's³⁴¹ hump, besides the Koran.

103

The chief dame of the Oda, upon whom
 The discipline of the whole harem bore,
 As soon as they re-entered their own room,
 For Baba's function stopt short at the door, 820
 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.

104

He hoped, indeed he thought he could be sure
 Juan had not betrayed himself; in fact
 'Twas 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*,³⁴² 830
 And thrown into the sea. – Thus Baba spoke
 Of all save Dudù's dream, which was no joke.

105

This he discreetly kept in the back ground,
 And talked away, and might have talked till now,
 For any further answer that he found,
 So deep an anguish wrung Gulbeyaz' brow;
 Her cheek turned ashes, ears rung, brain whirled 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. 840

106

Although she was not of the fainting sort,
 Baba thought she would faint, but there he erred; –
 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*',³⁴³
 When things beyond the common have occurred; –
 Gulbeyaz proved in that brief agony
 What she could ne'er express – then how should I?

107

She stood a moment as a Pythoness³⁴⁴
 Stands on her tripod, agonized, and full 850
 Of Inspiration gathered from Distress,
 When all the heart-strings like wild horses pull
 The heart asunder; – then, as more or less
 Their speed abated or their strength grew dull,
 She sunk down on her seat by slow degrees,
 And bowed her throbbing head o'er trembling knees.

108

Her face declined and was unseen; her hair
 Fell in long tresses like the weeping willow,
 Sweeping the marble underneath the chair,
 Or rather sofa (for it was all pillow, 860
 A low, soft Ottoman) and black Despair
 Stirred up and down her bosom like a billow,
 Which rushes to some shore whose shingles check
 Its farther course, but must receive its wreck.

109

Her head hung down, and her long hair in stooping
 Concealed 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! 870
 Oh that my words were colours! but their tints
 May serve perhaps as outlines or slight hints.

110

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 cleared, but not her troubled eye;
 The Wind was down, but still the Sea ran high. 880

111

She stopt, and raised her head to speak – but paused,
 And then moved on again with rapid pace;
 Then slackened 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,³⁴⁵ who, chased
 By all the Demons of all Passions, showed
 Their work even by the way in which he trode.

112

Gulbeyaz stopped and beckoned Baba: – 'Slave!
 Bring the two slaves!' she said in a low tone, 890
 But one which Baba did not like to brave,
 And yet he shuddered, and seemed rather prone
 To prove reluctant, and begged leave to crave
 (Though he well knew the meaning) to be shown
 What slaves her Highness wished to indicate,
 For fear of any error, like the late.

113

‘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, 900
 Despite her injured love and fiery pride;
 And of this Baba willingly took note,
 And begged by every hair of Mahomet’s beard
 She would revoke the order he had heard.

114

‘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: 910
 I do not mean destruction and exposure
 In case of any premature disclosure;

115

‘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.’ 920

116

‘What dost thou know of love or feeling? – wretch!
 Begone!’ she cried, with kindling eyes – ‘And do
 My bidding!’ Baba vanished, for to stretch
 His own remonstrance further he well knew
 Might end in acting as his own ‘Jack Ketch’;³⁴⁶
 And though he wished extremely to get through
 This awkward business without harm to others,
 He still preferred his own neck to another’s.

117

Away he went then upon his commission,
 Growling and grumbling in good Turkish phrase 930
 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.

118

And then he called his Brethren to his aid,
 And sent one on a summons to the pair,
 That they must instantly be well arrayed,
 And above all be combed even to a hair, 940
 And brought before the Empress, who had made
 Enquiries after them with kindest care:
 At which Dudù looked strange, and Juan silly;
 But go they must at once, and will I – nill I.

119

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 950
 May settle; but far be't from me to anticipate
 In what way feminine Caprice may dissipate.

120

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. 960

Canto Seven

1

Oh 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 chained 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.

2

And such as they are, such my present tale is,
A nondescript and ever varying rhyme, 10
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*?³⁴⁷

3

They accuse me – *Me* – the present writer of
The present poem – of – I know not what, –
A tendency to under-rate and scoff 20
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 has been said in Dante's
Verse, and by Solomon and by Cervantes;

4

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, 30
Nor even Diogenes.³⁴⁸ – We live and die,
But which is best, you know no more than I.

5

Socrates said, our only knowledge was
 'To know that nothing could be known';³⁴⁹ 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'.³⁵⁰ 40

6

Ecclesiastes said, 'that all is vanity'³⁵¹ –
 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-confessed 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?

7

Dogs, or Men! (for I flatter you in saying
 That ye are dogs – your betters far) ye may 50
 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.

8

'Fierce loves and faithless wars'³⁵² – 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 60
 A town which did a famous siege endure,
 And was beleaguer'd both by land and water
 By Suvaroff, or anglicè Suwarrow,
 Who loved blood as an Alderman loves marrow.

9

The Fortress is called 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: 70
 It stands some eighty versts³⁵³ from the high sea,
 And measures round of toises thousands three.

10

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. 80

11

This circumstance may serve to give a notion
 Of the high talents of this new Vauban.³⁵⁴
 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 covered way was there,
 To hint at least 'Here is no thoroughfare'.

12

But a stone bastion, with a narrow gorge,³⁵⁵
 And walls as thick as most skulls born as yet; 90
 Two batteries, cap-à-pie, as our St George,
 Case-mated one, and t'other 'a barbette',³⁵⁶
 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.

13

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, 100
 When it grew rather late to set things right.
 But as the Danube could not well be waded,
 They looked upon the Muscovite flotilla,
 And only shouted, 'Allah!' and 'Bis Millah!'

14

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 110
 Than thousands of this new and polished nation,
 Whose names want nothing but – pronunciation.

15

Still I'll record a few, if but to increase
 Our euphony – there was Strongenoff, and Strokonoff,
 Meknop, Serge Low, Arsniew of modern Greece,
 And Tschitsshakoff, 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, 120

16

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, drawling³⁵⁷ against time,
 Ending in 'ischskin,' 'ousckin,' 'iffskchy,' 'ouski,'
 Of whom we can insert but Rousamouski.

17

Scherematoff and Chrematoff, Koklophti,
 Koclobski, Kourakin, and Mouskin Pouskin, 130
 All proper men of weapons, as e'er scoffed high
 Against a foe, or ran a sabre through skin:
 Little cared they for Mahomet or Mufti,³⁵⁸
 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.

18

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; 140
 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 called Thomson, and nineteen named Smith.

19

Jack Thomson and Bill Thomson; – all the rest
 Had been called 'Jemmy,' after the great bard;³⁵⁹
 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, 150
 Was *he*, since so renowned 'in country quarters
 At Halifax',³⁶⁰ but now he served the Tartars.

20

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. 160

21

I wonder (although Mars no doubt's a God I
 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 Shakespeare puts the same thought in
 The mouth of some one³⁶¹ in his plays so doting,
 Which many people pass for wits by quoting.

22

Then there were Frenchmen, gallant, young and gay:
 But I'm too great a patriot to record 170
 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 abhorred
 Who name the French in English, save to show
 How Peace should make John Bull the Frenchman's foe.

23

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, 180
 No matter what poor souls might be undone.
 The City's shape suggested this, 'tis true;
 Formed like an amphitheatre, each dwelling
 Presented a fine mark to throw a shell in.

24

The second object was to profit by
 The moment of the general consternation,
 To attack the Turk's flotilla, which lay nigh
 Extremely tranquil, anchored at its station:
 But a third motive was as probably
 To frighten them into capitulation; 190
 A fantasy which sometimes seizes warriors,
 Unless they are game as Bull-dogs and Fox-terriers.

25

A habit rather blameable, 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.' 200

26

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,³⁶²
 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.'

27

Whether it was their engineer's stupidity,
 Their haste, or waste, I neither know nor care, 210
 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 missed, or they were never missed,
 And added greatly to the missing list.

28

A sad miscalculation about distance
 Made all their naval matters incorrect;
 Three fireships lost their amiable existence
 Before they reached a spot to take effect: 220
 The match was lit too soon, and no assistance
 Could remedy this lubberly³⁶³ defect;
 They blew up in the middle of the river,
 While, though 'twas dawn, the Turks slept fast as ever.

29

At seven they rose, however, and surveyed
 The Russ flotilla getting under way;
 'Twas nine, when still advancing undismayed,
 Within a cable's length³⁶⁴ their vessels lay
 Off Ismail, and commenced a cannonade,
 Which was returned with interest, I may say, 230
 And by a fire of musketry and grape
 And shells and shot of every size and shape.

30

For six hours bore they without intermission
 The Turkish fire, and aided by their own
 Land batteries, worked 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. 240

31

The Moslem too had lost both ships and men;
 But when they saw the enemy retire,
 Their Delhis³⁶⁵ manned some boats, and sailed again
 And galled 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.

32

'If' (says the historian here) 'I could report
 All that the Russians did upon this day, 250
 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 distinguished strangers in that fray;
 The Prince de Ligne, and Langeron, and Damas,³⁶⁶
 Names great as any that the roll of Fame has.

33

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 260
 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.

34

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 extinguished sooner than she ought: 270
 Of all our modern battles, I will bet
 You can't repeat nine names from each Gazette.

35

In short, this last attack, though rich in glory,
 Show'd that *somewhere, somehow*, there was a fault,
 And Admiral Ribas³⁶⁷ (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. 280

36

There was a man, if that he was a man,
 Not that his manhood could be called 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.

37

This was Potemkin – a great thing in days
When homicide and harlotry made great; 290
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 fantasy proportionate
In the then Sovereign of the Russian people,
Who measured men as you would do a steeple.

38

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, 300
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 answered in due order.

39

But on the thirteenth, when already part
Of the troops were embarked, 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 dispatches couched in pithy phrase; 310
Announcing the appointment of that lover of
Battles, to the command, Field Marshal Souvaroff.

40

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.' 320

41

'Let there be light!³⁶⁸ said God, and there was light!
 'Let there be blood!' says man, and there's a sea!
 The fiat of this spoiled 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 ripened Eden's fruit,
 For war cuts up not only branch, but root.

42

Our friends the Turks, who with loud 'Allah's' now
 Began to signalise the Russ retreat, 330
 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 wished to save their bacon.³⁶⁹

43

For, on the sixteenth, at full gallop, drew
 In sight two horsemen, who were deemed Cossacques
 For some time, till they came in nearer view.
 They had but little baggage at their backs, 340
 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, Suwarrow and his guide.

44

'Great joy to London now!' says some great fool,
 When London had a grand illumination,³⁷⁰
 Which to that bottle-conjurer,³⁷¹ John Bull,
 Is of all dreams the first hallucination;
 So that the streets of coloured lamps are full,
 That Sage (*said* John) surrenders at discretion 350
 His purse, his soul, his sense, and even his nonsense,
 To gratify, like a huge moth, this *one* sense.

45

'Tis strange that he should further 'damn his eyes,'
 For they are damned; that once all famous oath
 Is to the devil now no further 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 stares him in the face, he won't examine,
 Or swears that Ceres hath begotten Famine. 360

46

But to the tale; – great joy unto the camp!
 To Russian, Tartar, English, French, Cossacque,
 O'er whom Suwarrow 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 from a dancing light,
 Which all who saw it followed, wrong or right.

47

But *certes* matters took a different face;
 There was enthusiasm and much applause, 370
 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, repaired flaws
 In former works, made new, prepared fascines,
 And all kinds of benevolent machines.

48

'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; 380
 Or as a little dog will lead the blind,
 Or a bell-wether³⁷² 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.

49

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; 390
 And why? because a little – odd – old man,
 Stript to his shirt, was come to lead the van.

50

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, attacked by water. 400

51

New batteries were erected, and was held
 A general council, in which Unanimity,
 That stranger to most councils, here prevailed,
 As sometimes happens in a great extremity;
 And every difficulty being dispelled,
 Glory began to dawn with due Sublimity,
 While Souvaroff, determined to obtain it,
 Was teaching his recruits to use the bayonet.

52

It is an actual fact, that he, Commander
 In Chief, in proper person deigned to drill 410
 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,³⁷³ and never take it ill;
 He showed them how to mount a ladder (which
 Was not like Jacob's)³⁷⁴ or to cross a ditch.

53

Also he dressed up, for the nonce,³⁷⁵ fascines
Like men with turbans, scimitars and dirks,
And made them charge with bayonet these machines
By way of lesson against actual Turks; 420
And when well practised in these mimic scenes,
He judged them proper to assail the works;
At which your wise men sneered in phrases witty:
He made no answer; but he took the city.

54

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, 430
For some were thinking of their home and friends,
And others of themselves and latter ends.

55

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;³⁷⁶ and when bent to storm
A fortress, Harlequin in uniform. 440

56

The day before the assault, while upon drill,
For this great Conqueror played 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.

57

Whereon immediately at his request

They brought him and his comrades to head-quarters; 450
Their dress was Moslem, but you might have guessed

That these were merely masquerading Tartars,
And that beneath each Turkish-fashioned vest

Lurked Christianity, who sometimes barter
Her inward grace for outward show, and makes
It difficult to shun some strange mistakes.

58

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, – 460
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, –

59

Suwarrow, when he saw this company

Of Cossacques and their prey, turned 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 past 470
This dialogue; for he who answered knew
To whom he spoke, and made his words but few.

60

‘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.’ 480

61

‘You served at Widin?’ – ‘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 followed?’ – ‘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.

62

‘Where will you serve?’ – ‘Where’er you please.’ – ‘I know
 You like to be the hope of the forlorn 490
 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.’

63

‘He shall if that he dare.’ Here Juan bowed
 Low as the compliment deserved. Suwarrow
 Continued: ‘Your old regiment’s allowed,
 By special providence, to lead tomorrow, 500
 Or it may be, tonight, the assault; I have vowed
 To several saints, that shortly plough or harrow
 Shall pass o’er what was Ismail, and its tusk³⁷⁷
 Be unimpeded by the proudest Mosque.

64

‘So now, my lads, for Glory!’ – Here he turned
 And drilled away in the most classic Russian,
 Until each high, heroic bosom burned
 For cash and conquest, as if from a cushion
 A preacher had held forth (who nobly spurned
 All earthly goods save tithes) and bade them push on 510
 To slay the Pagans, who resisted battering
 The armies of the Christian Empress Catherine.

65

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 allowed to die
 Among the foremost; but if you'd express
 Explicitly our several posts, my friend
 And self would know what duty to attend.' 520

66

'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 called 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.'

67

But here a sort of scene began to ensue;
 The ladies, – who by no means had been bred 530
 To be disposed of in a way so new,
 Although their harem 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,

68

O'er the promoted couple of brave men
 Who were thus honoured by the greatest Chief
 That ever peopled hell with heroes slain,
 Or plunged a province or a realm in grief. 540
 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.

69

Suwarrow, who had small regard for tears,
 And not much sympathy for blood, surveyed
 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 550
 Is butchery, sometimes a single sorrow
 Will touch even Heroes, and such was Suwarrow.

70

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.’ 560

71

‘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.

72

‘But these are but two Turkish ladies, who
 With their attendant aided our escape, 570
 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 step:
 I therefore, if you wish me to fight freely,
 Request that they may both be used genteelly.’

73

Meantime these two poor girls, with swimming eyes,
 Looked 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) 580
 To see an old man, rather wild than wise
 In aspect, plainly clad, besmeared with dust,
 Stript to his waistcoat, and *that not* too clean,
 More feared than all the Sultans ever seen.

74

For every thing seemed resting on his nod,
 As they could read in all eyes. Now to them
 Who were accustomed, 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)³⁷⁸ 590
 With all the Pomp of Power, it was a doubt
 How Power could condescend to do without.

75

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. 600

76

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.

77

Suwarrow, – who but saw things in the gross,
Being much too gross to see them in detail, 610
Who calculated life as so much dross,
And as the wind a widowed 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?

78

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; 620
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.

79

Oh, thou eternal Homer! who couldst charm
All ears, though long; all ages, though so short,
By merely wielding with poetic arm,
Arms to which men will never more resort,
Unless gun-powder should be found to harm
Much less than is the hope of every Court, 630
Which now is leagued young Freedom to annoy;
But they will not find Liberty a Troy: –

80

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; 640

81

If not in poetry, at least in fact,
 And fact is truth, the grand desideratum!³⁷⁹
 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 attacked,
 Great deeds are doing – how shall I relate 'em!
 Souls of immortal generals! Phoebus watches
 To colour up his rays from your despatches.

82

Oh, ye great bulletins of Bonaparte!³⁸⁰
 Oh, ye less grand long lists of killed and wounded! 650
 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.

83

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 compelled to rear, 660
 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.

84

Medals, ranks, ribbons, lace, embroidery, scarlet,
 Are things immortal to immortal man,
 As purple to the Babylonian harlot:³⁸¹
 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. 670
 But Glory's Glory; and if you would find
 What that is – ask the pig who sees the wind!³⁸²

85

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-major³⁸³ from a village steeple. 680

86

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 leaguered wall and bristling bank
Of the armed 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!

87

Here pause we for the present – as even then
That awful pause, dividing life from death, 690
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.

Canto Eight

1

Oh blood and thunder! and oh blood and wounds! –
 These are but vulgar oaths, as you may deem,
Too gentle reader! and most shocking sounds:
 And so they are; yet thus is Glory's dream
Unriddled, and as my true Muse expounds
 At present such things, since they are her theme,
So be they her inspirers! Call them Mars,
Bellona, what you will – they mean but wars.

2

All was prepared – the fire, the sword, the men
 To wield them in their terrible array. 10
The army, like a lion from his den,
 Marched forth with nerve and sinews bent to slay, –
A human Hydra,³⁸⁴ issuing from its fen
 To breathe destruction on its winding way,
Whose heads were heroes, which cut off in vain
Immediately in others grew again.

3

History can only take things in the gross;
 But could we know them in detail, perchance
In balancing the profit and the loss,
 War's merit it by no means might enhance, 20
To waste so much gold for a little dross,
 As hath been done, mere conquest to advance.
The drying up a single tear has more
Of honest fame, than shedding seas of gore.

4

And why? – because it brings self-approbation;
 Whereas the other, after all its glare,
Shouts, bridges, arches, pensions from a nation, –
 Which (it may be) has not much left to spare, –
A higher title, or a loftier station,
 Though they may make Corruption gape or stare, 30
Yet, in the end, except in freedom's battles,
Are nothing but a child of Murder's rattles.

5

And such they are – and such they will be found.
 Not so Leonidas and Washington,
 Whose every battle-field is holy ground,
 Which breathes of nations saved, not worlds undone.
 How sweetly on the ear such echoes sound!
 While the mere victor's may appal or stun
 The servile and the vain, such names will be
 A watchword till the future shall be free. 40

6

The night was dark, and the thick mist allowed
 Nought to be seen save the artillery's flame,
 Which arched the horizon like a fiery cloud,
 And in the Danube's waters shone the same –
 A mirrored Hell! The volleying roar, and loud
 Long booming of each peal on peal, o'ercame
 The ear far more than thunder; for Heaven's flashes
 Spare, or smite rarely – Man's make millions ashes!

7

The column ordered on the assault scarce passed
 Beyond the Russian batteries a few toises, 50
 When up the bristling Moslem rose at last,
 Answering the Christian thunders with like voices;
 Then one vast fire, air, earth and stream embraced,
 Which rocked as 'twere beneath the mighty noises;
 While the whole rampart blazed like Etna, when
 The restless Titan hiccups in his den.

8

And one enormous shout of 'Allah!' rose
 In the same moment, loud as even the roar
 Of War's most mortal engines, to their foes
 Hurling defiance: city, stream, and shore, 60
 Resounded 'Allah!' and the clouds which close
 With thick'ning canopy the conflict o'er
 Vibrate to the Eternal name. Hark! through
 All sounds it pierceth 'Allah! Allah! Hu!'

9

The columns were in movement one and all,
 But of the portion which attacked by water,
 Thicker than leaves the lives began to fall,
 Though led by Arseniew,³⁸⁵ that great son of Slaughter,
 As brave as ever faced both bomb and ball.
 'Carnage' (so Wordsworth tells you) 'is
 God's daughter'.³⁸⁶

If he speak truth, she is Christ's sister, and 71
 Just now behaved as in the Holy Land.

10

The Prince de Ligne was wounded in the knee:
 Count Chapeau-Bras too had a ball between
 His cap and head, which proves the head to be
 Aristocratic as was ever seen,
 Because it then received no injury
 More than the cap; in fact the ball could mean
 No harm unto a right legitimate head:
 'Ashes to ashes' – why not lead to lead? 80

11

Also the General Markow, Brigadier,
 Insisting on removal of *the Prince*
 Amidst some groaning thousands dying near, –
 All common fellows, who might writhe, and wince,
 And shriek for water into a deaf ear, –
 The General Markow, who could thus evince
 His sympathy for rank, by the same token,
 To teach him greater, had his own leg broken.

12

Three hundred cannon threw up their emetic,
 And thirty thousand muskets flung their pills 90
 Like hail, to make a bloody diuretic.³⁸⁷
 Mortality! thou hast thy monthly bills;
 Thy Plagues, thy Famines, thy Physicians, yet tick,
 Like the death-watch,³⁸⁸ within our ears the ills
 Past, present, and to come; but all may yield
 To the true portrait of one battle-field.

13

There the still varying pangs, which multiply
 Until their very number makes men hard
 By the infinities of agony,
 Which meet the gaze, whate'er it may regard – 100
 The groan, the roll in dust, the all-white eye
 Turned back within its socket, – these reward
 Your rank and file by thousands, while the rest
 May win perhaps a ribbon at the breast!

14

Yet I love Glory: – glory's a great thing; –
 Think what it is to be in your old age
 Maintained at the expense of your good king:
 A moderate pension shakes full many a sage,
 And heroes are but made for bards to sing,
 Which is still better; thus in verse to wage 110
 Your wars eternally, besides enjoying
 Half-pay for life, make mankind worth destroying.

15

The troops, already disembarked, pushed on
 To take a battery on the right; the others,
 Who landed lower down, their landing done,
 Had set to work as briskly as their brothers:
 Being grenadiers they mounted one by one,
 Cheerful as children climb the breasts of mothers,
 O'er the entrenchment and the palisade,
 Quite orderly, as if upon parade. 120

16

And this was admirable; for so hot
 The fire was, that were red Vesuvius³⁸⁹ loaded,
 Besides its lava, with all sorts of shot
 And shells or hells, it could not more have goaded.
 Of officers a third fell on the spot,
 A thing which victory by no means boded
 To gentlemen engaged in the assault:
 Hounds, when the huntsman tumbles, are at fault.

17

But here I leave the general concern,
 To track our hero on his path of fame: 130
 He must his laurels separately earn;
 For fifty thousand heroes, name by name,
 Though all deserving equally to turn
 A couplet, or an elegy to claim,
 Would form a lengthy lexicon of glory,
 And what is worse still, a much longer story:

18

And therefore we must give the greater number
 To the Gazette – which doubtless fairly dealt
 By the deceased, who lie in famous slumber
 In ditches, fields, or wheresoe'er they felt 140
 Their clay for the last time their souls encumber; –
 Thrice happy he whose name had been well spelt
 In the dispatch: I knew a man whose loss
 Was printed *Grove*, although his name was *Grose*.

19

Juan and Johnson joined a certain corps,
 And fought away with might and main, not knowing
 The way which they had never trod before,
 And still less guessing where they might be going;
 But on they marched, dead bodies trampling o'er,
 Firing and thrusting, slashing, sweating, glowing, 150
 But fighting thoughtlessly enough to win,
 To their *two* selves, *one* whole bright bulletin.

20

Thus on they wallowed in the bloody mire
 Of dead and dying thousands, – sometimes gaining
 A yard or two of ground, which brought them nigher
 To some odd angle for which all were straining;
 At other times, repulsed by the close fire,
 Which really poured as if all Hell were raining,
 Instead of Heaven, they stumbled backwards o'er
 A wounded comrade, sprawling in his gore. 160

21

Though 'twas Don Juan's first of fields, and though
 The nightly muster and the silent march
 In the chill dark, when courage does not glow
 So much as under a triumphal arch,
 Perhaps might make him shiver, yawn, or throw
 A glance on the dull clouds (as thick as starch,
 Which stiffened Heaven) as if he wished for day; –
 Yet for all this he did not run away.

22

Indeed he could not. But what if he had?
 There *have been* and *are* heroes who begun 170
 With something not much better or as bad:
 Frederick the Great from Molwitz deigned to run,³⁹⁰
 For the first and last time; for, like a pad,
 Or hawk, or bride, most mortals after one
 Warm bout are broken into their new tricks,
 And fight like fiends for pay or politics.

23

He was what Erin calls, in her sublime
 Old Erse or Irish, or it may be *Punic*; –
 (The Antiquarians who can settle Time,
 Which settles all things, Roman, Greek or Runic, 180
 Swear that Pat's language sprung from the same clime
 With Hannibal, and wears the Tyrian tunic
 Of Dido's alphabet; and this is rational
 As any other notion, and not national;)³⁹¹ –

24

But Juan was quite 'a broth of a boy',³⁹²
 A thing of impulse and a child of song;
 Now swimming in the sentiment of joy,
 Or the *sensation* (if that phrase seem wrong)
 And afterwards, if he must needs destroy,
 In such good company as always throng 190
 To battles, sieges, and that kind of pleasure,
 No less delighted to employ his leisure;

25

But always without malice; if he warr'd
 Or loved, it was with what we call 'the best
 Intentions,' which form all mankind's *trump card*,
 To be produced when brought up to the test.
 The statesman, hero, harlot, lawyer – ward
 Off each attack, when people are in quest
 Of their designs, by saying they *meant well*;
 'Tis pity 'that such meaning should pave Hell'.³⁹³ 200

26

I almost lately have begun to doubt
 Whether Hell's pavement – if it be *so paved* –
 Must not have latterly been quite worn out,
 Not by the numbers Good Intent hath saved,
 But by the mass who go below without
 Those ancient good intentions, which once shaved
 And smoothed the brimstone of that street of Hell
 Which bears the greatest likeness to Pall Mall.³⁹⁴

27

Juan, by some strange chance, which oft divides
 Warrior from warrior in their grim career, 210
 Like chastest wives from constant husbands' sides
 Just at the close of the first bridal year,
 By one of those odd turns of Fortune's tides,
 Was on a sudden rather puzzled here,
 When, after a good deal of heavy firing,
 He found himself alone, and friends retiring.

28

I don't know how the thing occurred – it might
 Be that the greater part were killed or wounded,
 And that the rest had faced unto the right
 About; a circumstance which has confounded 220
 Caesar himself, who in the very sight
 Of his whole army, which so much abounded
 In courage, was obliged to snatch a shield³⁹⁵
 And rally back his Romans to the field.

29

Juan, who had no shield to snatch, and was
 No Caesar, but a fine young lad, who fought
 He knew not why, arriving at this pass,
 Stopped for a minute, as perhaps he ought
 For a much longer time; then, like an ass –
 (Start not, kind reader, since great Homer thought 230
 This simile enough for Ajax, Juan
 Perhaps may find it better than a new one): –

30

Then, like an ass, he went upon his way,
 And, what was stranger, never looked behind;
 But seeing, flashing forward, like the day
 Over the hills, a fire enough to blind
 Those who dislike to look upon a fray,
 He stumbled on, to try if he could find
 A path, to add his own slight arm and forces
 To corps, the greater part of which were corses. 240

31

Perceiving then no more the commandant
 Of his own corps, nor even the corps, which had
 Quite disappeared – the Gods know how! (I can't
 Account for every thing which may look bad
 In history; but we at least may grant
 It was not marvellous that a mere lad,
 In search of glory, should look on before,
 Nor care a pinch of snuff about his corps): –

32

Perceiving nor commander nor commanded,
 And left at large, like a young heir, to make 250
 His way to – where he knew not – single handed;
 As travellers follow over bog and brake
 An 'Ignis fatuus'; or as sailors stranded
 Unto the nearest hut themselves betake;
 So Juan, following honour and his nose,
 Rushed where the thickest fire announced most foes.

33

He knew not where he was, nor greatly cared,
 For he was dizzy, busy, and his veins
 Filled as with lightning – for his Spirit shared
 The hour, as is the case with lively brains; 260
 And where the hottest fire was seen and heard,
 And the loud cannon pealed his hoarsest strains,
 He rushed, while Earth and Air were sadly shaken
 By thy humane discovery, Friar Bacon!

34

And as he rushed along, it came to pass he
 Fell in with what was late the second column,
 Under the orders of the General Lascy,
 But now reduced, as is a bulky volume
 Into an elegant extract (much less massy)
 Of heroism, and took his place with solemn 270
 Air 'midst the rest, who kept their valiant faces
 And levelled weapons still against the glacis.³⁹⁶

35

Just at this crisis up came Johnson too,
 Who had 'retreated', as the phrase is when
 Men run away much rather than go through
 Destruction's jaws into the devil's den;
 But Johnson was a clever fellow, who
 Knew when and how 'to cut and come again',
 And never ran away, except when running
 Was nothing but a valorous kind of cunning. 280

36

And so, when all his corps were dead or dying,
 Except Don Juan, a mere novice, whose
 More virgin valour never dreamt of flying,
 From ignorance of danger, which induces
 Its votaries, like Innocence relying
 On its own strength, with careless nerves and thews, –
 Johnson retired a little, just to rally
 Those who catch cold in 'shadows of Death's valley'.³⁹⁷

37

And there, a little sheltered from the shot
 Which rained from bastion, battery, parapet, 290
 Rampart, wall, casement, house – for there was not
 In this extensive city, sore beset
 By Christian soldiery, a single spot
 Which did not combat like the devil, as yet, –
 He found a number of Chasseurs,³⁹⁸ all scattered
 By the resistance of the chase they battered.

38

And these he called on; and, what's strange, they came
 Unto his call, unlike 'the Spirits from
 The vasty deep',³⁹⁹ to whom you may exclaim,
 Says Hotspur, long ere they will leave their home. 300
 Their reasons were uncertainty, or shame
 At shrinking from a bullet or a bomb,
 And that odd impulse, which in wars or creeds
 Makes men, like cattle, follow him who leads.

39

By Jove! he was a noble fellow, Johnson,
 And though his name, than Ajax or Achilles
 Sounds less harmonious, underneath the sun soon
 We shall not see his likeness: he could kill his
 Man quite as quietly as blows the Monsoon
 Her steady breath (which some months the same *still* is):
 Seldom he varied feature, hue, or muscle, 311
 And could be very busy without bustle;

40

And therefore, when he ran away, he did so
 Upon reflection, knowing that behind
 He would find others who would fain be rid so
 Of idle apprehensions, which like wind
 Trouble heroic stomachs. Though their lids so
 Oft are soon closed, all heroes are not blind,
 But when they light upon immediate death,
 Retire a little, merely to take breath. 320

41

But Johnson only ran off, to return
 With many other warriors, as we said,
 Unto that rather somewhat misty bourne,
 Which Hamlet tells us is a pass of dread.⁴⁰⁰
 To Jack howe'er this gave but slight concern:
 His soul (like Galvanism upon the dead)
 Acted upon the living as on wire,
 And led them back into the heaviest fire.

42

Egad! they found the second time what they
 The first time thought quite terrible enough 330
 To fly from, malgré⁴⁰¹ all which people say
 Of glory, and all that immortal stuff
 Which fills a regiment (besides their pay,
 That daily shilling which makes warriors tough) –
 They found on their return the self-same welcome,
 Which made some *think*, and others *know*, a *Hell* come.

43

They fell as thick as harvests beneath hail,
 Grass before scythes, or corn below the sickle,
 Proving that trite old truth, that life's as frail
 As any other boon for which men stickle.⁴⁰² 340
 The Turkish batteries thrashed them like a flail
 Or a good boxer, into a sad pickle
 Putting the very bravest, who were knocked
 Upon the head, before their guns were cocked.

44

The Turks behind the traverses and flanks
 Of the next bastion, fired away like devils,
 And swept, as gales sweep foam away, whole ranks:
 However, Heaven knows how, the Fate who levels
 Towns, nations, worlds, in her revolving pranks,
 So ordered it, amidst these sulphury revels, 350
 That Johnson and some few who had not scampered,
 Reached the interior talus⁴⁰³ of the rampart.

45

First one or two, then five, six, and a dozen
 Came mounting quickly up, for it was now
 All neck or nothing, as, like pitch or rosin,
 Flame was showered forth above as well's below,
 So that you scarce could say who best had chosen,
 The gentlemen that were the first to show
 Their martial faces on the parapet,
 Or those who thought it brave to wait as yet. 360

46

But those who scaled, found out that their advance
 Was favoured by an accident or blunder:
 The Greek or Turkish Cohorn's ignorance⁴⁰⁴
 Had palisado'd in a way you'd wonder
 To see in forts of Netherlands or France –
 (Though these to our Gibraltar must knock under)⁴⁰⁵ –
 Right in the middle of the parapet
 Just named, these palisades were primly set:

47

So that on either side some nine or ten
 Paces were left, whereon you could contrive 370
 To march; a great convenience to our men,
 At least to all those who were left alive,
 Who thus could form a line and fight again;
 And that which further aided them to strive
 Was, that they could kick down the palisades,
 Which scarcely rose much higher than grass blades.

48

Among the first, – I will not say the *first*,
 For such precedence upon such occasions
 Will oftentimes make deadly quarrels burst
 Out between friends as well as allied nations: 380
 The Briton must be bold who really durst
 Put to such trial John Bull's partial patience,
 As say that Wellington at Waterloo
 Was beaten, – though the Prussians say so too; –

49

And that if Blücher, Bulow, Gneisenau,⁴⁰⁶
 And God knows who besides in 'au' and 'ou',
 Had not come up in time to cast an awe
 Into the hearts of those who fought till now
 As tigers combat with an empty crow,⁴⁰⁷
 The Duke of Wellington had ceased to show 390
 His orders, also to receive his pensions,
 Which are the heaviest that our history mentions.

50

But never mind; – 'God save the king!' and kings!
 For if *he* don't, I doubt if *men* will longer –
 I think I hear a little bird, who sings
 The people by and by will be the stronger:
 The veriest jade will wince whose harness wrings⁴⁰⁸
 So much into the raw as quite to wrong her
 Beyond the rules of posting,⁴⁰⁹ – and the Mob
 At last fall sick of imitating Job: 400

51

At first it grumbles, then it swears, and then,
 Like David, flings smooth pebbles 'gainst a giant;⁴¹⁰
 At last it takes to weapons such as men
 Snatch when despair makes human hearts less pliant.
 Then comes 'the tug of war;' – 'twill come again,
 I rather doubt; and I would fain say 'fie on't,'
 If I had not perceived that Revolution
 Alone can save the Earth from Hell's pollution.

52

But to continue; – I say not *the* first,
 But of the first, our little friend Don Juan 410
 Walked o'er the walls of Ismail, as if nurst
 Amidst such scenes – though this was quite a new one
 To him, and I should hope to *most*. The thirst
 Of Glory, which so pierces through and through one,
 Pervaded him – although a generous creature,
 As warm in heart as feminine in feature.

53

And here he was – who upon woman’s breast,
 Even from a child, felt like a child; howe’er
 The man in all the rest might be confest,
 To him it was Elysium⁴¹¹ to be there; 420
 And he could even withstand that awkward test
 Which Rousseau points out to the dubious fair,
 ‘Observe your lover when he *leaves* your arms;’
 But Juan never left them, while they had charms,

54

Unless compelled by fate, or wave, or wind
 Or near relations, who are much the same.
 But *here* he was! – where each tie that can bind
 Humanity must yield to steel and flame:
 And *he* whose very body was all Mind,
 Flung here by Fate, or Circumstance, which tame 430
 The loftiest, hurried by the time and place,
 Dashed on like a spurred blood-horse⁴¹² in a race.

55

So was his blood stirred while he found resistance,
 As is the hunter’s at the five-bar gate,
 Or double post and rail, where the existence
 Of Britain’s youth depends upon their weight,
 The lightest being the safest: at a distance
 He hated cruelty, as all men hate
 Blood, until heated – and even there his own
 At times would curdle o’er some heavy groan. 440

56

The General Lascy, who had been hard press’d,
 Seeing arrive an aid so opportune
 As were some hundred youngsters all abreast,
 Who came as if just dropped down from the moon,
 To Juan, who was nearest him, addressed
 His thanks, and hopes to take the city soon,
 Not reckoning him to be a ‘base Bezonian’,
 (As Pistol calls it) but a young Livonian.⁴¹³

57

Juan, to whom he spoke in German, knew
 As much of German as of Sanscrit, and 450
 In answer made an inclination to
 The General who held him in command;
 For seeing one with ribbons, black and blue,
 Stars, medals, and a bloody sword in hand,
 Addressing him in tones which seemed to thank,
 He recognized an officer of rank.

58

Short speeches pass between two men who speak
 No common language; and besides, in time
 Of war and taking towns, when many a shriek
 Rings o'er the dialogue, and many a crime 460
 Is perpetrated ere a word can break
 Upon the ear, and sounds of horror chime
 In like church bells, with sigh, howl, groan, yell, prayer,
 There cannot be much conversation there.

59

And therefore all we have related in
 Two long octaves, passed in a little minute;
 But in the same small minute, every sin
 Contrived to get itself comprised within it.
 The very cannon, deafened by the din,
 Grew dumb, for you might almost hear a linnet, 470
 As soon as thunder, 'midst the general noise
 Of human Nature's agonizing voice!

60

The town was entered. Oh Eternity! –
 'God made the country, and man made the town',⁴¹⁴
 So Cowper says – and I begin to be
 Of his opinion, when I see cast down
 Rome, Babylon, Tyre, Carthage, Nineveh,⁴¹⁵
 All walls men know, and many never known;
 And pondering on the present and the past,
 To deem the woods shall be our home at last: – 480

61

Of all men, saving Sylla the Man-slayer,
 Who passes for in life and death most lucky,
 Of the great names which in our faces stare,
 The General Boon,⁴¹⁶ back-woodsman of Kentucky,
 Was happiest amongst mortals any where;
 For killing nothing but a bear or buck, he
 Enjoyed the lonely, vigorous, harmless days
 Of his old age in wilds of deepest maze.

62

Crime came not near him – she is not the child
 Of Solitude; health shrank not from him – for 490
 Her home is in the rarely-trodden wild,
 Where if men seek her not, and death be more
 Their choice than life, forgive them, as beguiled
 By habit to what their own hearts abhor –
 In cities caged. The present case in point I
 Cite is, that Boon lived hunting up to ninety;

63

And what's still stranger, left behind a name
 For which men vainly decimate the throng,
 Not only famous, but of that *good* fame,
 Without which Glory's but a tavern song – 500
 Simple, serene, the antipodes of shame,
 Which hate nor envy e'er could tinge with wrong;
 An active hermit, even in age the child
 Of Nature, or the Man of Ross⁴¹⁷ run wild.

64

'Tis true he shrank from men even of his nation,
 When they built up unto his darling trees, –
 He moved some hundred miles off, for a station
 Where there were fewer houses and more ease;
 The inconvenience of civilization
 Is, that you neither can be pleased nor please; 510
 But where he met the individual man,
 He showed himself as kind as mortal can.

65

He was not all alone: around him grew
 A sylvan⁴¹⁸ tribe of children of the chase,
 Whose young, unawakened world was ever new,
 Nor sword nor sorrow yet had left a trace
 On her unwrinkled brow, nor could you view
 A frown on Nature's or on human face; –
 The free-born forest found and kept them free,
 And fresh as is a torrent or a tree. 520

66

And tall and strong and swift of foot were they,
 Beyond the dwarfing city's pale abortions,
 Because their thoughts had never been the prey
 Of care or gain: the green woods were their portions;
 No sinking Spirits told them they grew grey,
 No Fashion made them apes of her distortions;
 Simple they were, not savage; and their rifles,
 Though very true, were not yet used for trifles.

67

Motion was in their days, Rest in their slumbers,
 And Cheerfulness the handmaid of their toil; 530
 Nor yet too many nor too few their numbers;
 Corruption could not make their hearts her soil;
 The Lust which stings, the Splendour which encumbers,
 With the free foresters divide no spoil;
 Serene, not sullen, were the solitudes
 Of this unsighing people of the woods.

68

So much for Nature: – by way of variety,
 Now back to thy great joys, Civilization!
 And the sweet consequence of large society,
 War, Pestilence, the despot's desolation, 540
 The kingly scourge, the Lust of Notoriety,
 The millions slain by soldiers for their ration,
 The scenes like Catherine's boudoir at three-score,
 With Ismail's storm to soften it the more.

69

The town was entered: first one column made
 Its sanguinary⁴¹⁹ way good – then another;
 The reeking bayonet and the flashing blade
 Clashed 'gainst the scimitar, and babe and mother
 With distant shrieks were heard Heaven to upbraid; –
 Still closer sulphury clouds began to smother 550
 The breath of Morn and Man, where foot by foot
 The maddened Turks their city still dispute.

70

Koutousow,⁴²⁰ he who afterwards beat back
 (With some assistance from the frost and snow)
 Napoleon on his bold and bloody track,
 It happened was himself beat back just now:
 He was a jolly fellow, and could crack
 His jest alike in face of friend or foe,
 Though life, and death, and victory were at stake,
 But here it seemed his jokes had ceased to take: 560

71

For having thrown himself into a ditch,
 Followed in haste by various grenadiers,
 Whose blood the puddle greatly did enrich,
 He climbed to where the parapet appears;
 But there his project reached its utmost pitch,
 ('Mongst other deaths the General Ribaupierre's
 Was much regretted) for the Moslem Men
 Threw them all down into the ditch again.

72

And had it not been for some stray troops, landing
 They knew not where, being carried by the stream 570
 To some spot, where they lost their understanding,
 And wandered up and down as in a dream,
 Until they reached, as daybreak was expanding,
 That which a portal to their eyes did seem, –
 The great and gay Koutousow might have lain
 Where three parts of his column yet remain.

73

And scrambling round the rampart, these same troops,
 After the taking of the 'Cavalier,'
 Just as Koutousow's most 'Forlorn' of 'Hopes'⁴²¹
 Took like cameleons some slight tinge of fear, 580
 Opened the gate called 'Kilia' to the groups
 Of baffled heroes, who stood shyly near,
 Sliding knee-deep in lately frozen mud,
 Now thawed into a marsh of human blood.

74

The Kozacks, or if so you please, Cossacques –
 (I don't much pique myself upon orthography,⁴²²
 So that I do not grossly err in facts,
 Statistics, tactics, politics and geography) –
 Having been used to serve on horses' backs,
 And no great diletanti in topography 590
 Of fortresses, but fighting where it pleases
 Their chiefs to order, – were all cut to pieces.

75

Their column, though the Turkish batteries thundered
 Upon them, ne'ertheless had reached the rampart,
 And naturally thought they could have plundered
 The city, without being further hamper'd;
 But as it happens to brave men, they blundered –
 The Turks at first pretended to have scampered,
 Only to draw them 'twixt two bastion corners,
 From whence they sallied on those Christian scorners. 600

76

Then being taken by the tail⁴²³ – a taking
 Fatal to bishops as to soldiers – these
 Cossacques were all cut off as day was breaking,
 And found their lives were let at a short lease –
 But perished without shivering or shaking,
 Leaving as ladders their heaped carcasses,
 O'er which Lieutenant Colonel Yesouskoi
 Marched with the brave battalion of Polouzki: –

77

This valiant man killed all the Turks he met,
 But could not eat them, being in his turn 610
 Slain by some Mussulmans, who would not yet,
 Without resistance, see their city burn.
 The walls were won, but 'twas an even bet
 Which of the armies would have cause to mourn:
 'Twas blow for blow, disputing inch by inch,
 For one would not retreat, nor t'other flinch.

78

Another column also suffered much: –
 And here we may remark with the Historian,
 You should but give few cartridges to such
 Troops as are meant to march with greatest glory on: 620
 When matters must be carried by the touch
 Of the bright bayonet, and they all should hurry on,
 They sometimes, with a hankering for existence,
 Keep merely firing at a foolish distance.

79

A junction of the General Meknop's men
 (Without the General, who had fallen some time
 Before, being badly seconded just then)
 Was made at length with those who dared to climb
 The death-disgorging rampart once again;
 And though the Turk's resistance was sublime, 630
 They took the bastion, which the Seraskier
 Defended at a price extremely dear.

80

Juan and Johnson, and some volunteers
 Among the foremost, offered him good quarter,
 A word which little suits with Seraskiers,
 Or at least suited not this valiant Tartar.
 He died, deserving well his country's tears,
 A savage sort of military martyr.
 An English naval officer, who wished
 To make him prisoner, was also dishd: 640

81

For all the answer to his proposition
 Was from a pistol-shot that laid him dead;
 On which the rest, without more intermission,
 Began to lay about with steel and lead –
 The pious metals most in requisition
 On such occasions: not a single head
 Was spared, – three thousand Moslems perished here,
 And sixteen bayonets pierced the Seraskier.

82

The city's taken – only part by part –
 And Death is drunk with gore: there's not a street 650
 Where fights not to the last some desperate heart
 For those for whom it soon shall cease to beat.
 Here War forgot his own destructive Art
 In more destroying Nature; and the heat
 Of Carnage, like the Nile's sun-sodden Slime,
 Engendered monstrous shapes of every Crime.

83

A Russian officer, in martial tread
 Over a heap of bodies, felt his heel
 Seized fast, as if 'twere by the serpent's head
 Whose fangs Eve taught her human seed to feel: 660
 In vain he kicked, and swore, and writhed, and bled,
 And howled for help as wolves do for a meal –
 The teeth still kept their gratifying hold,
 As do the subtle snakes described of old.

84

A dying Moslem, who had felt the foot
 Of a foe o'er him, snatched at it, and bit
 The very tendon, which is most acute –
 (That which some ancient Muse or modern Wit
 Named after thee, Achilles) and quite through 't
 He made the teeth meet, nor relinquish'd it 660
 Even with his life – for (but they lie) 'tis said
 To the live leg still clung the severed head.

85

However this may be, 'tis pretty sure
The Russian officer for life was lamed,
For the Turk's teeth stuck faster than a skewer,
And left him 'midst the invalid and maimed:
The regimental surgeon could not cure
His patient, and perhaps was to be blamed
More than the head of the inveterate foe,
Which was cut off, and scarce even then let go. 680

86

But then the fact's a fact – and 'tis the part
Of a true poet to escape from fiction
Whene'er he can; for there is little art
In leaving verse more free from the restriction
Of truth than prose, unless to suit the mart
For what is sometimes called poetic diction,
And that outrageous appetite for lies
Which Satan angles with, for souls, like flies.

87

The city's taken, but not rendered!⁴²⁴ – No!
There's not a Moslem that hath yielded sword: 690
The blood may gush out, as the Danube's flow
Rolls by the city wall; but deed nor word
Acknowledge aught of dread of death or foe:
In vain the yell of victory is roared
By the advancing Muscovite – the groan
Of the last foe is echoed by his own.

88

The bayonet pierces and the sabre cleaves,
And human lives are lavished every where,
As the year closing whirls the scarlet leaves
When the stripp'd forest bows to the bleak air, 700
And groans; and thus the peopled City grieves,
Shorn of its best and loveliest, and left bare;
But still it falls with vast and awful splinters,
As Oaks blown down with all their thousand winters.

89

It is an awful topic – but 'tis not
 My cue for any time to be terrific:⁴²⁵
 For chequered as is seen our human lot
 With good, and bad, and worse, alike prolific
 Of melancholy merriment, to quote
 Too much of one sort would be soporific; – 710
 Without, or with, offence to friends or foes,
 I sketch your world exactly as it goes.

90

And one good action in the midst of crimes
 Is 'quite refreshing,' in the affected phrase
 Of these ambrosial, Pharisaic⁴²⁶ times,
 With all their pretty milk-and-water ways,
 And may serve therefore to bedew these rhymes,
 A little scorched at present with the blaze
 Of conquest and its consequences, which
 Make Epic poesy so rare and rich. 720

91

Upon a taken bastion where there lay
 Thousands of slaughtered men, a yet warm group
 Of murdered women, who had found their way
 To this vain refuge, made the good heart droop
 And shudder: – while, as beautiful as May,
 A female child of ten years tried to stoop
 And hide her little palpitating breast
 Amidst the bodies lulled in bloody rest.

92

Two villainous Cossacques pursued the child
 With flashing eyes and weapons: matched with them 730
 The rudest brute that roams Siberia's wild
 Has feelings pure and polished as a gem, –
 The bear is civilized, the wolf is mild:
 And whom for this at last must we condemn?
 Their natures? or their sovereigns, who employ
 All arts to teach their subjects to destroy?

93

Their sabres glittered o'er her little head,
 Whence her fair hair rose twining with affright,
 Her hidden face was plunged amidst the dead:
 When Juan caught a glimpse of this sad sight, 740
 I shall not say exactly what he *said*,
 Because it might not solace 'ears polite';⁴²⁷
 But what he *did*, was to lay on their backs,
 The readiest way of reasoning with Cossacques.

94

One's hip he slashed, and split the other's shoulder,
 And drove them with their brutal yells to seek
 If there might be surgeons⁴²⁸ who could solder
 The wounds they richly merited, and shriek
 Their baffled rage and pain; while waxing colder
 As he turned o'er each pale and gory cheek, 750
 Don Juan raised his little captive from
 The heap a moment more had made her tomb.

95

And she was chill as they, and on her face
 A slender streak of blood announced how near
 Her fate had been to that of all her race;
 For the same blow which laid her Mother here,
 Had scarred her brow, and left its crimson trace
 As the last link with all she had held dear;
 But else unhurt, she opened her large eyes,
 And gazed on Juan with a wild surprise. 760

96

Just at this instant, while their eyes were fixed
 Upon each other, with dilated glance,
 In Juan's look, pain, pleasure, hope, fear, mixed
 With joy to save, and dread of some mischance
 Unto his protégée; while hers, transfixed
 With infant terrors, glared as from a trance,
 A pure, transparent, pale, yet radiant face,
 Like to a lighted alabaster vase; –

97

Up came John Johnson: (I will not say 'Jack,'
 For that were vulgar, cold, and common place 770
 On great occasions, such as an attack
 On cities, as hath been the present case:)
 Up Johnson came, with hundreds at his back,
 Exclaiming: – 'Juan! Juan! On, boy! brace
 Your arm, and I'll bet Moscow to a dollar
 That you and I will win St George's collar.'⁴²⁹

98

'The Seraskier is knocked upon the head,
 But the stone bastion still remains, wherein
 The old Pacha sits among some hundreds dead,
 Smoking his pipe quite calmly 'midst the din 780
 Of our artillery and his own: 'tis said
 Our killed, already piled up to the chin,
 Lie round the battery; but still it batters,
 And grape in volleys, like a vineyard, scatters.

99

'Then up with me!' – But Juan answered, 'Look
 Upon this child – I saved her – must not leave
 Her life to chance; but point me out some nook
 Of safety, where she less may shrink and grieve,
 And I am with you.' – Whereon Johnson took
 A glance around – and shrugged – and twitched
 his sleeve 790
 And black silk neckcloth – and replied, 'You're right;
 Poor thing! what's to be done? I'm puzzled quite.'

100

Said Juan – 'Whatsoever is to be
 Done, I'll not quit her till she seems secure
 Of present life a good deal more than we.' –
 Quoth Johnson – 'Neither will I quite ensure;
 But at the least *you* may die gloriously.' –
 Juan replied – 'At least I will endure
 Whate'er is to be borne – but not resign
 This child, who is parentless and therefore mine.' 800

101

Johnson said – ‘Juan, we’ve no time to lose;
 The child’s a pretty child – a very pretty –
 I never saw such eyes – and hark! now choose
 Between your fame and feelings, pride and pity; –
 Hark! how the roar increases! – no excuse
 Will serve when there is plunder in a city; –
 I should be loth to march without you, but,
 By God! we’ll be too late for the first cut.’

102

But Juan was immoveable; until
 Johnson, who really loved him in his way, 810
 Picked out amongst his followers with some skill
 Such as he thought the least given up to prey;
 And swearing if the infant came to ill
 That they should all be shot on the next day;
 But, if she were delivered safe and sound,
 They should at least have fifty roubles round;

103

And all allowances besides of plunder
 In fair proportion with their comrades; – then
 Juan consented to march on through thunder,
 Which thinned at every step their ranks of men: 820
 And yet the rest rushed eagerly – no wonder,
 For they were heated by the hope of gain,
 A thing which happens every where each day –
 No Hero trusteth wholly to half-pay.

104

And such is victory, and such is man!
 At least nine-tenths of what we call so; – God
 May have another name for half we scan
 As human beings, or his ways are odd.
 But to our subject: a brave Tartar Khan, –
 Or ‘Sultan’, as the author (to whose nod 830
 In prose I bend my humble verse) doth call
 This chieftain – somehow would not yield at all:

105

But flanked by *five* brave sons (such is Polygamy,
 That she spawns warriors by the score, where none
 Are prosecuted for that false crime bigamy)
 He never would believe the city won
 While courage clung but to a single twig. – Am I
 Describing Priam's, Peleus', or Jove's son?⁴³⁰
 Neither, – but a good, plain, old, temperate man, 840
 Who fought with his five children in the van.

106

To *take* him was the point. The truly brave,
 When they behold the brave oppressed with odds,
 Are touched with a desire to shield and save; –
 A mixture of wild beasts and demi-gods
 Are they – now furious as the sweeping wave,
 Now moved with pity: even as sometimes nods
 The rugged tree unto the summer wind,
 Compassion breathes along the savage mind.

107

But he would *not* be *taken*, and replied
 To all the propositions of surrender 850
 By mowing Christians down on every side,
 As obstinate as Swedish Charles⁴³¹ at Bender.
 His five brave boys no less the foe defied;
 Whereon the Russian pathos grew less tender,
 As being a virtue, like terrestrial patience,
 Apt to wear out on trifling provocations.

108

And spite of Johnson and of Juan, who
 Expended all their Eastern phraseology
 In begging him, for God's sake, just to show
 So much less fight as might form an apology 860
 For *them* in saving such a desperate foe –
 He hewed away, like doctors of theology
 When they dispute with sceptics; and with curses
 Struck at his friends, as babies beat their nurses.

109

Nay, he had wounded, though but slightly, both
 Juan and Johnson; whereupon they fell,
 The first with sighs, the second with an oath,
 Upon his angry Sultanship, pell-mell,
 And all around were grown exceeding wroth
 At such a pertinacious Infidel, 870
 And poured upon him and his sons like rain,
 Which they resisted like a sandy plain

110

That drinks and still is dry. At last they perished –
 His second son was levelled by a shot;
 His third was sabred; and the fourth, most cherished
 Of all the five, on bayonets met his lot;
 The fifth, who, by a Christian mother nourished,
 Had been neglected, ill-used, and what not,
 Because deformed, yet died all game and bottom,⁴³²
 To save a sire who blushed that he begot him. 880

111

The eldest was a true and tameless Tartar,
 As great a scormer of the Nazarene
 As ever Mahomet picked out for a martyr,
 Who only saw the black-eyed girls in green,⁴³³
 Who make the beds of those who won't take quarter
 On Earth, in Paradise; and when once seen,
 Those Houris, like all other pretty creatures,
 Do just whate'er they please, by dint of features.

112

And what they pleased to do with the young Khan
 In Heaven, I know not, nor pretend to guess; 890
 But doubtless they prefer a fine young man
 To tough old heroes, and can do no less;
 And that's the cause no doubt why, if we scan
 A field of battle's ghastly wilderness,
 For one rough, weather-beaten, veteran body,
 You'll find ten thousand handsome coxcombs bloody.

113

Your Houris also have a natural pleasure
 In lopping off your lately married men,
 Before the bridal Hours have danced their measure,
 And the sad, second moon grows dim again, 900
 Or dull Repentance hath had dreary leisure
 To wish him back a bachelor now and then.
 And thus your Houri (it may be) disputes
 Of these brief blossoms the immediate fruits.

114

Thus the young Khan, with Houris in his sight,
 Thought not upon the charms of four young brides,
 But bravely rushed on his first heavenly night.
 In short, howe'er *our* better Faith derides,
 These black-eyed virgins make the Moslems fight,
 As though there were one Heaven and none besides – 910
 Whereas, if all be true we hear of Heaven
 And Hell, there must at least be six or seven.

115

So fully flashed the phantom on his eyes,
 That when the very lance was in his heart,
 He shouted 'Allah!' and saw Paradise
 With all its veil of mystery drawn apart,
 And bright Eternity without disguise
 On his soul, like a ceaseless sunrise, dart; –
 With Prophets, Houris, Angels, Saints, descried
 In one voluptuous blaze, – and then he died: 920

116

But, with a heavenly rapture on his face.
 The good old Khan, who long had ceased to see
 Houris, or aught except his florid race
 Who grew like Cedars round him gloriously –
 When he beheld his latest hero grace
 The earth, which he became like a felled tree,
 Paused for a moment from the fight, and cast
 A glance on that slain son, his first and last.

117

The soldiers, who beheld him drop his point,
Stopped as if once more willing to concede 930
Quarter, in case he bade them not 'aroynt!⁴³⁴
As he before had done. He did not heed
Their pause nor signs: his heart was out of joint,
And shook (till now unshaken) like a reed,
As he looked down upon his children gone,
And felt – though done with life – he was alone.

118

But 'twas a transient tremor; – with a spring
Upon the Russian steel his breast he flung,
As carelessly as hurls the moth her wing
Against the light wherein she dies: he clung 940
Closer, that all the deadlier they might wring,
Unto the bayonets which had pierced his young;
And throwing back a dim look on his sons,
In one wide wound poured forth his soul at once.

119

'Tis strange enough – the rough, tough soldiers, who
Spared neither sex nor age in their career
Of carnage, when this old man was pierced through,
And lay before them with his children near,
Touched by the heroism of him they slew,
Were melted for a moment; though no tear 950
Flowed from their blood-shot eyes, all red with strife,
They honoured such determined scorn of life.

120

But the stone bastion still kept up its fire,
Where the chief Pacha calmly held his post:
Some twenty times he made the Russ retire,
And baffled the assaults of all their host;
At length he condescended to enquire
If yet the city's rest were won or lost;
And being told the latter, sent a bey⁴³⁵
To answer Ribas' summons to give way. 960

121

In the mean time, cross-legged, with great sang froid,
 Among the scorching ruins he sat smoking
 Tobacco on a little carpet; – Troy
 Saw nothing like the scene around; – yet looking
 With martial stoicism, nought seemed to annoy
 His stern philosophy; but gently stroking
 His beard, he puffed his pipe's ambrosial gales,
 As if he had three lives as well as tails.⁴³⁶

122

The town was taken – whether he might yield
 Himself or bastion, little mattered now; 970
 His stubborn valour was no future shield.
 Ismail's no more! The crescent's silver bow
 Sunk, and the crimson cross⁴³⁷ glared o'er the field,
 But red with no *redeeming* gore: the glow
 Of burning streets, like moonlight on the water,
 Was imaged back in blood, the sea of slaughter.

123

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; 980
 All that defies the worst which pen expresses;
 All by which Hell is peopled, or as sad
 As Hell – mere mortals who their power abuse, –
 Was here (as heretofore and since) let loose.

124

If here and there some transient trait of pity
 Was shown, and some more noble heart broke through
 Its bloody bond, and saved 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? 990
 Cockneys of London! Muscadins⁴³⁸ of Paris!
 Just ponder what a pious pastime war is:

125

Think how the joys of reading a Gazette
 Are purchased by all agonies and crimes:
 Or if these do not move you, don't forget
 Such doom may be your own in after times.
 Meantime the taxes, Castlereagh, and debt,
 Are hints as good as sermons, or as rhymes.
 Read your own hearts and Ireland's present story,⁴³⁹
 Then feed her famine fat with Wellesley's glory. 1000

126

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 George⁴⁴⁰ weighs
 twenty stone.

127

But let me put an end unto my theme:
 There was an end of Ismail – hapless town! 1010
 Far flashed 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 manned the wall,
 Some hundreds breathed – the rest were silent all!

128

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: 1020
 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.

129

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; 1030
 But all the ladies, save some twenty score,
 Were almost as much virgins as before.

130

Some odd mistakes too happened in the dark,
 Which showed a want of lanthorns, 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 deflowered by different Grenadiers. 1040

131

But on the whole their continence was great;
 So that some disappointment there ensued
 To those who had felt the inconvenient state
 Of ‘single blessedness’,⁴⁴¹ 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,⁴⁴²
 Without the expense and the suspense of bedding.

132

Some voices of the buxom middle-aged
 Were also heard to wonder in the din 1050
 (Windows of forty were these birds long caged)
 ‘Wherefore the ravishing did not begin!’
 But while the thirst for gore and plunder raged,
 There was small leisure for superfluous sin;
 But whether they escaped or no, lies hid
 In darkness – I can only hope they did.

133

Suwarrow now was conqueror – a match
 For Timour or for Zinghis⁴⁴³ in his trade.
 While mosques and streets, beneath his eyes, like thatch
 Blazed, and the cannon's roar was scarce allayed, 1060
 With bloody hands he wrote his first dispatch;
 And here exactly follows what he said: –
 'Glory to *God* and to the Empress!' (*Powers*
Eternal!! such names mingled!) 'Ismail's ours.'

134

Methinks these are the most tremendous words,
 Since 'Menè, Menè, Tekel', and 'Upharsin',⁴⁴⁴
 Which hands or pens have ever traced 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 1070
 The fate of Nations; – but this Russ so witty
 Could rhyme, like Nero, o'er a burning city.

135

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 truckle⁴⁴⁵ unto thrones; –
 But ye – our children's children! think how we
 Showed *what things were* before the world was free! 1080

136

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 remembered, still disdain you 'em
 More than you scorn the savages of yore,
 Who *painted* their *bare* limbs, but *not* with gore.

137

And when you hear historians talk of thrones,
 And those that sate upon them, let it be 1090
 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.

138

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, 1100
 And *Epic*, if plain truth should prove no bar;
 For I have drawn much less with a long bow⁴⁴⁶
 Than my forerunners. Carelessly I sing,
 But Phoebus lends me now and then a string,

139

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 bye may tell you, if at all:
 But now I choose to break off in the middle,
 Worn out with battering Ismail's stubborn wall, 1110
 While Juan is sent off with the dispatch,
 For which all Petersburg is on the watch.

140

This special honour was conferred, because
 He had behaved with courage and humanity; –
 Which *last*, men like, when they have time to pause
 From their ferocities produced by vanity.
 His little captive gained him some applause
 For saving her amidst the wild insanity
 Of Carnage, – and I think he was more glad in her
 Safety, than his new order of St Vladimir.⁴⁴⁷ 1120

141

The Moslem orphan went with her protector,
 For she was homeless, houseless, helpless; all
 Her friends, like the sad family of Hector,
 Had perished in the field or by the wall:
 Her very place of birth was but a spectre
 Of what it had been; there the Muezzin's⁴⁴⁸ call
 To prayer was heard no more! – And Juan wept,
 And made a vow to shield her, which he kept.

Canto Nine

1

Oh, Wellington! (or 'Vilainton'⁴⁴⁹ – for Fame
 Sounds the heroic syllables both ways;
 France could not even conquer your great name,
 But punned it down to this facetious phrase –
 Beating or beaten she will laugh the same) –
 You have obtained great pensions and much praise;
 Glory like yours should any dare gainsay,
 Humanity would rise, and thunder 'Nay!'⁴⁵⁰

2

I don't think that you used Kinnaird quite well
 In Marinè's affair⁴⁵¹ – in fact 'twas shabby, 10
 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;⁴⁵²
 But though your years as *man* tend fast to zero,
 In fact your Grace is still but a *young Hero*.

3

Though Britain owes (and pays you too) so much,
 Yet Europe doubtless owes you greatly more:
 You have repaired Legitimacy's crutch, –
 A prop not quite so certain as before: 20
 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).

4

You are 'the best of cut-throats':⁴⁵³ – do not start;
 The phrase is Shakespeare'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, 30
 And I shall be delighted to learn who,
 Save you and yours, have gained by Waterloo?

5

I am no flatterer – you've supped full of flattery:
 They say you like it too – 'tis 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;
 Called 'Saviour of the Nations' – not yet saved,
 And Europe's Liberator – still enslaved. 40

6

I've done. Now go and dine from off the plate
 Presented by the Prince of the Brazils,⁴⁵⁴
 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.

7

I don't mean to reflect – a man so great as
 You, my Lord Duke! is far above reflection. 50
 The high Roman fashion too of Cincinnatus,⁴⁵⁵
 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.

8

Great men have always scorned great recompenses:
 Epaminondas⁴⁵⁶ saved his Thebes, and died,
 Not leaving even his funeral expenses:
 George Washington had thanks and nought beside, 60
 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
 Renowned for ruining Great Britain gratis.

9

Never had mortal Man such opportunity,
 Except Napoleon, or abused it more:
 You might have freed fall'n 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? 70
 Go, hear it in your famished Country's cries!
 Behold the World! and curse your victories!

10

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. 80

11

Death laughs⁴⁵⁷ – 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 *threatened sting*
 Turns life to terror, even though in its sheath!
 Mark! how its lipless mouth grins without breath!

12

Mark! how it laughs and scorns at all you are!
 And yet *was* what you are: from *ear* to *ear* 90
 It *laughs not* – there is now no fleshy bar
 So called; 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.

13

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 100
 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?

14

'To be or not to be! that is the question',⁴⁵⁸
 Says Shakespeare, who just now is much in fashion
 I am neither Alexander nor Hephaestion,⁴⁵⁹
 Nor ever had for *abstract* fame much passion;
 But would much rather have a sound digestion,
 Than Buonaparte's cancer: – could I dash on 110
 Through fifty victories to shame or fame,
 Without a stomach – what were a good name?

15

'Oh dura ilia messorum!' – 'Oh
 Ye rigid guts of reapers!'⁴⁶⁰ – 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. 120

16

'To be or not to be?' – Ere I decide,
 I should be glad to know that which is *being*?
 'Tis 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.

17

'Que sçais-je?'⁴⁶¹ was the motto of Montaigne,
 As also of the first Academicians: 130
 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.

18

It is a pleasant voyage perhaps to float,
 Like Pyrrho,⁴⁶² on a sea of speculation;
 But what if carrying sail capsize the boat?
 Your wise men don't know much of navigation; 140
 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.

19

'But Heaven,' as Cassio says, 'is above all, –
 No more of this then, – let us pray!'⁴⁶³ 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',⁴⁶⁴ though how it gave 150
 Offence, we know not; probably it perched
 Upon the tree which Eve so fondly searched.

20

Oh, ye immortal Gods! what is Theogony?⁴⁶⁵
 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*⁴⁶⁶
 I comprehend, for without transformation
 Men become wolves on any slight occasion. 160

21

But I, the mildest, meekest of mankind,
 Like Moses, or Melancthon,⁴⁶⁷ who have ne'er
 Done any thing 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.

22

'Tis time we should proceed with our good poem,
 For I maintain that it is really good, 170
 Not only in the body, but the proem,⁴⁶⁸
 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.

23

Our Hero (and, I trust, kind reader! yours) –
 Was left upon his way to the chief City
 Of the immortal Peter's⁴⁶⁹ polished boors,
 Who still have shown themselves more brave than witty.
 I know its mighty Empire now allures 181
 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.

24

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 190
 To this my plain, sworn, downright detestation
 Of every despotism in every nation.

25

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*. 200

26

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.⁴⁷⁰
 He who has nought to gain can have small art: he
 Who neither wishes to be bound nor bind,
 May still expatiate freely, as will I,
 Nor give my voice to Slavery's Jackall cry.

27

That's an appropriate simile, *that Jackall*; –
 I've heard them in the Ephesian ruins howl 210
 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 Jackalls are less foul
 (As being the brave Lions' keen providers)
 Than human Insects, catering for Spiders.

28

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! 220
 The web of these Tarantulas each day
 Increases, till you shall make common cause:
 None, save the Spanish Fly and Attic Bee,⁴⁷¹
 As yet are strongly stinging to be free.

29

Don Juan, who had shone in the late slaughter,
 Was left upon his way with the dispatch,
 Where Blood was talked 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 looked on the match 230
 Between these nations as a main of cocks,⁴⁷²
 Wherein she liked her own to stand like rocks.

30

And there in a *kibitka* he rolled 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. 240

31

At every jolt – and they were many – still
 He turned his eyes upon his little charge,
 As if he wished 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.

32

At least he pays no rent, and has best right
 To be the first of what we used to call 250
 ‘Gentlemen Farmers’ – 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!

33

But Juan turned 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,⁴⁷³ that costive Sophy, 260
 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; –

34

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 decked
 With all the praises ever said or sung: 270
 Though hymned by every harp, unless within
 Your Heart joins Chorus, Fame is but a din.

35

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’⁴⁷⁴
 With clownish heel, your popular circulation
 Feeds you by printing half the realm’s Starvation; – 280

36

Oh, ye great Authors! – ‘Apropos des bottes’⁴⁷⁵ –
 I have forgotten what I meant to say,
 As sometimes have been greater Sages’ lots; –
 ’T was 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.

37

But let it go: – it will one day be found
 With other relics of ‘a former world’, 290
 When this world shall be *former*, underground,
 Thrown topsy-turvy, twisted, crisped, and curled,
 Baked, fried, or burnt, turned inside-out, or drowned,
 Like all the worlds before, which have been hurled
 First out of and then back again to Chaos,
 The superstratum which will overlay us.

38

So Cuvier says; – and then shall come again
 Unto the new Creation, rising out
 From our old crash, some mystic, ancient strain
 Of things destroyed and left in airy doubt: 300
 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.

39

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 310
 In size, from overworking the material –
 Men are but maggots of some huge Earth’s burial.)

40

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? 320

41

But I am apt to grow too metaphysical:
 'The time is out of joint',⁴⁷⁶ – 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.

42

So on I ramble, now and then narrating,
 Now pondering: – it is time we should narrate: 330
 I left Don Juan with his horses baiting⁴⁷⁷ –
 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 Petersburg; suppose
 That pleasant capital of painted Snows;

43

Suppose him in a handsome uniform;
 A scarlet coat, black facings, a long plume,
 Waving, like sails new shivered in a storm,
 Over a cocked hat in a crowded room, 340
 And brilliant breeches, bright as a Cairn Gorme,⁴⁷⁸
 Of yellow cassimere we may presume,
 White stockings drawn, uncurdled as new milk,
 O'er limbs whose symmetry set off the silk:

44

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 jailor) – 350
 Behold him placed as if upon a pillar! He
 Seems Love turned a Lieutenant of Artillery!

45

His Bandage slipped 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 cocked 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. 360

46

The courtiers stared, the ladies whispered, and
 The Empress smiled; the reigning favourite frowned –
 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 crowned:
 But they were mostly nervous six-foot fellows,
 All fit to make a Patagonian jealous.

47

Juan was none of these, but slight and slim,
 Blushing and beardless; and yet ne'ertheless 370
 There was a something in his turn of limb,
 And still more in his eye, which seemed to express
 That though he looked one of the Seraphim,
 There lurked a Man beneath the Spirit's dress.
 Besides, the Empress sometimes liked a boy,
 And had just buried the fair faced Lanskoï.

48

No wonder then that Yermoloff, or Momonoff,
 Or Scherbatoff,⁴⁷⁹ or any other *off*
 Or *on*, might dread her Majesty had room enough
 Within her bosom (which was not too tough) 380
 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.'

49

Oh, 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, 390
 Perhaps you may pick out some queer *no*-meaning,
 Of that weak wordy harvest the sole gleaning.

50

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. 400

51

An English lady asked 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, pressed to disclose them,
 Said – 'Lady, I beseech you to *suppose them.*'

52

And thus I supplicate your supposition,
 And mildest, Matron-like interpretation 410
 Of the Imperial Favourite's Condition.
 'Twas 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.

53

Juan, I said, was a most beauteous Boy,
 And had retained his boyish look beyond
 The usual hirsute seasons which destroy,
 With beards and whiskers and the like, the fond 420
*Parisian*⁴⁸⁰ aspect which upset old Troy
 And founded Doctors' Commons: – I have conned
 The history of divorces, which, though chequered,
 Calls Ilion's the first damages on record.

54

And Catherine, who loved all things (save her lord,
 Who was gone to his place) and passed for much,
 Admiring those (by dainty dames abhorred)
 Gigantic Gentlemen, yet had a touch
 Of Sentiment; and he She most adored
 Was the lamented Lanskoi, who was such 430
 A lover as had cost her many a tear,
 And yet but made a middling grenadier.

55

Oh, thou 'teterrima Causa' of all 'belli'⁴⁸¹ –
 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. 440

56

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!

57

Catherine, who was the grand Epitome
 Of that great Cause of war, or peace, or what 450
 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 dispatch, forgot to break the seal.

58

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 460
 The Court, that watched 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.

59

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.
 Those quenched a moment her Ambition's thirst –
 So Arab Deserts drink in Summer's rain: 470
 In vain! – As fall the dews on quenchless sands,
 Blood only serves to wash Ambition's hands!

60

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 called Sovereigns think it best
 To kill, and Generals turn it into jest. 480

61

The two first feelings ran their course complete,
 And lighted first her eye and then her mouth:
 The whole Court looked immediately most sweet,
 Like flowers well watered 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 dispatch,
 Glanced mildly, all the world was on the watch.

62

Though somewhat large, exuberant, and truculent,
 When *wroth*; while *pleased*, she was as fine a figure 490
 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.

63

With her the latter, though at times convenient,
 Was not so necessary; for they tell
 That she was handsome, and though fierce *looked* lenient,
 And always used her favourites too well. 500
 If once beyond her boudoir's precincts in ye went,
 Your 'Fortune' was in a fair way 'to swell
 A Man,' as Giles⁴⁸² says: for though she would widow all
 Nations, she liked Man as an individual.

64

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 510
 Or done, is light to what she'll say or do; –
 The oldest thing on record, and yet new!

65

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 hatch;
 And *thirdly*, he who brought you the dispatch! 520

66

Shakespeare talks of 'the herald Mercury
 New lighted on a Heaven-kissing hill';⁴⁸³
 And some such visions crossed her Majesty,
 While her young Herald knelt before her still.
 'Tis very true the hill seemed rather high
 For a Lieutenant to climb up; but skill
 Smooth'd even the Simplon's⁴⁸⁴ steep, and by God's
 blessing,
 With Youth and Health all kisses are 'heaven-kissing.'

67

Her Majesty looked down, the Youth looked up –
 And so they fell in love: – She with his face, 530
 His grace, his God-knows-what: for Cupid's cup
 With the first draught intoxicates apace,
 A quintessential laudanum or 'black drop',⁴⁸⁵
 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.

68

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, 540
 Or duchess, princess, Empress, ‘deigns to prove’,⁴⁸⁶
 (’Tis Pope’s phrase) a great longing, tho’ a rash one,
 For one especial person out of many,
 Makes us believe ourselves as good as any.

69

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, 550
 To make a twilight in, just as Sol’s heat is
 Quenched in the lap of the salt Sea, or Thetis.

70

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 looked 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,
 Seemed taking out the sting to leave the honey. 560

71

And when you add to this, her womanhood
 In its meridian, her blue eyes, or grey –
 (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) –

72

Her sweet smile, and her then majestic figure,
 Her plumpness, her imperial condescension, 570
 Her preference of a boy to men much bigger,
 (Fellows whom Messalina's self⁴⁸⁷ 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.

73

And that's enough, for love is vanity,
 Selfish in its beginning as its end,
 Except where 'tis a mere Insanity,
 A Maddening Spirit which would strive to blend 580
 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.

74

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 590
 The sound than sense) – besides all these pretences
 To Love, there are those things which Words name Senses; –

75

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! 600

76

The noblest kind of Love is Love Platonical,
 To end or to begin with; the next grand
 Is that which may be christened Love canonical,⁴⁸⁸
 Because the clergy take the thing in hand;⁴⁸⁹
 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 called *Marriage in Disguise*.

77

Well, we won't analyse – our story must
 Tell for itself: the Sovereign was smitten, 610
 Juan much flattered by her love, or lust; –
 I cannot stop to alter words once written,
 And the two are so mixed 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.

78

The whole Court melted into one wide whisper,
 And all lips were applied unto all ears!
 The elder ladies' wrinkles curled much crisper
 As they beheld; the younger cast some leers 620
 On one another, and each lovely lisper
 Smiled as she talked the matter o'er; but tears
 Of rivalship rose in each clouded eye
 Of all the standing army who stood by.

79

All the Ambassadors of all the Powers
 Inquired, 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 specie⁴⁹⁰ can, 630
 Upon his cabinet, besides the presents
 Of several ribbons and some thousand peasants.

80

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;⁴⁹¹ though perhaps 'tis better
 That one should die, than two drag on the fetter) – 640

81

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 favourite⁴⁹² to death,
 Her vile, ambiguous method of flirtation,
 And Stinginess, disgrace her Sex and Station.

82

But when the levee rose, and all was bustle
 In the dissolving Circle, all the nations' 650
 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.

83

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. 660
 Though modest, on his unembarrassed brow
 Nature had written 'gentleman'. He said
 Little, but to the purpose; and his manner
 Flung hovering Graces o'er him like a banner.

84

An order from her Majesty consigned
 Our young Lieutenant to the genial care
 Of those in office: all the World looked 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, 670
 Named from her mystic office 'l'Éprouveuse',⁴⁹³
 A term inexplicable to the Muse.

85

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. 680

Canto Ten

1

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 turned 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.

2

Man fell with apples, and with apples rose,
 If this be true; for we must deem the mode 10
 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 glowed
 With all kinds of mechanics, and full soon
 Steam-engines will conduct him to the Moon.

3

And wherefore this exordium?⁴⁹⁴ – Why, just now,
 In taking up this paltry sheet of paper,
 My bosom underwent a glorious glow,
 And my internal Spirit cut a caper: 20
 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.

4

In the Wind's Eye I have sailed, and sail; but for
 The stars, I own my telescope is dim;
 But at the least I have shunned 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, 30
 But *still* sea-worthy skiff; and she may float
 Where ships have foundered, as doth many a boat.

5

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. 40

6

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!'⁴⁹⁵
 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 dimmed eye's sphere, – but would much rather
 Sigh like his son, than cough like his grandfather?

7

But sighs subside, and tears (even widows') shrink,
 Like Arno⁴⁹⁶ in the summer, to a shallow, 50
 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.

8

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 60
 Of life reach 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! –

9

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, 70
 Must come? Much rather should he court the ray,
 To hoard up warmth against a wintry day.

10

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. 80

11

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.

12

Old enemies who have become new friends
 Should so continue – 'tis a point of honour; 90
 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.

13

This were the worst desertion: – renegadoes,
 Even shuffling Southey, that incarnate lie,
 Would scarcely join again the 'reformadoes',⁴⁹⁷
 Whom he forsook to fill the Laureate's sty: 100
 And honest men, from Iceland to Barbadoes,
 Whether in Caledon⁴⁹⁸ or Italy,
 Should not veer round with every breath, nor seize,
 To pain, the moment when you cease to please.

14

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, 110
 Dissecting the whole inside of a question,
 And with it all the process of digestion.

15

A legal broom's^{499a} 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. 120

16

And all our little feuds, at least all *mine*,
 Dear Jeffrey, 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.

17

And when I use the phrase of 'Auld Lang Syne!
 'Tis not addressed to you – the more's the pity 130
 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, –

18

As 'Auld Lang Syne' brings Scotland, one and all,
 Scotch plaids, Scotch snoods,^{499b} the blue hills, and
 clear streams,
 The Dee, the Don, Balgounie's brig's⁵⁰⁰ *black wall*,
 All my boy feelings, all my gentler dreams 140
 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'.

19

And though, as you remember, in a fit
 Of wrath and rhyme, when juvenile and curly,
 I railed at Scots to show my wrath and wit,
 Which must be owned was sensitive and surly,
 Yet 'tis in vain such sallies to permit,
 They cannot quench young feelings fresh and early: 150
 I 'scotched, not killed',⁵⁰¹ the Scotchman in my blood,
 And love the land of 'mountain and of flood'.⁵⁰²

20

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 called Eternity, to stare,
 And know no more of what is here than there: – 160

21

Don Juan grew a very polished 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
 Smoothed for a monarch's seat of honour: gay
 Damsels, and dances, revels, ready money,
 Made ice seem Paradise, and winter sunny.

22

The favour of the Empress was agreeable;
 And though the duty waxed a little hard, 170
 Young people at his time of life should be able
 To come off handsomely in that regard.
 He now was 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.

23

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 180
 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.

24

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. 190
 Sovereigns may sway materials, but not matter,
 And wrinkles (the d—d democrats) won't flatter.

25

And Death, the sovereign's Sovereign, though the great
 Gracchus of all mortality, who levels
 With his *Agrarian* laws,⁵⁰³ 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. 200

26

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 furry –
 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 harlot⁵⁰⁴ –
 And neutralize her outward show of Scarlet.

27

And this same state we won't describe: we could
 Perhaps from hearsay, or from recollection; 210
 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; –

28

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 220
 Of this odd labyrinth; or as the kelp⁵⁰⁵
 Holds by the rock; or as a lover's kiss
 Drains its first draught of lips: – but, as I said,
 I *won't* philosophize, and *will* be read.

29

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 showed,
 Like a race-horse; much to each dress he sported,
 Which set the beauty off in which he glowed, 230
 As purple clouds befringe the sun; but most
 He owed to an old woman and his post.

30

He wrote to Spain: – and all his near relations,
 Perceiving he was in a handsome way
 Of getting on himself, and finding stations
 For cousins also, answered 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. 240

35

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.⁵⁰⁸ 280

36

I can't complain, whose ancestors are there,
 Erneis, Radulphus⁵⁰⁹ – 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.

37

The gentle Juan flourished, though at times
 He felt like other plants called Sensitive, 290
 Which shrink from touch, as monarchs do from rhymes,
 Save such as Southey can afford to give.
 Perhaps he longed, in bitter frosts, for climes
 In which the Neva's ice⁵¹⁰ would cease to live
 Before May-day: perhaps, despite his duty,
 In royalty's vast arms he sighed for beauty:

38

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 withered form: 300
 Care, like a house-keeper, 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.

39

I don't know how it was, but he grew sick:
 The Empress was alarmed, and her physician
 (The same who physicked Peter⁵¹¹) found the tick
 Of his fierce pulse betoken a condition
 Which augured of the dead, however *quick*
 Itself, and showed a feverish disposition; 310
 At which the whole court was extremely troubled,
 The Sovereign shocked, and all his medicines doubled.

40

Low were the whispers, manifold the rumours:
 Some said he had been poisoned by Potemkin;
 Others talked 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.' 320

41

But here is one prescription out of many:
 'Sodae-Sulphat. 3. vi. 3. s. Mannae optim.
 Aq. fervent. F. 3. ifs. 3ij. tinct. Sennae
 Haustus.' (And here the surgeon came and cupped him)
 'R. Pulv. Com. gr. iii. Ipecacuanhae'
 (With more beside, if Juan had not stopped 'em.)
 'Bolus Potassae Sulphuret. sumendus,
 Et Haustus ter in die capiendus.'⁵¹²

42

This is the way physicians mend or end us,
 Secundum artem:⁵¹³ but although we sneer 330
 In health – when ill, we call them to attend us,
 Without the least propensity to jeer:
 While that 'hiatus maxime deflendus',⁵¹⁴
 To be filled up by spade or mattock,⁵¹⁵ 's near,
 Instead of gliding graciously down Lethe,
 We tease mild Baillie, or soft Abernethy.⁵¹⁶

43

Juan demurred at this first notice to
 Quit; and though Death had threatened an ejection,
 His youth and constitution bore him through,
 And sent the doctors in a new direction. 340
 But still his state was delicate: the hue
 Of health but flickered with a faint reflection
 Along his wasted cheek, and seemed to gravel
 The Faculty⁵¹⁷ – who said that he must travel.

44

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, 350
 She then resolved to send him on a mission,
 But in a style becoming his condition.

45

There was just then a kind of a discussion,
 A sort of treaty or negotiation
 Between the British cabinet and Russian,
 Maintained 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'.⁵¹⁸ 360

46

So Catherine, who had a handsome way
 Of fitting out her favourites, conferred
 This secret charge on Juan, to display
 At once her royal splendour, and reward
 His services. He kissed hands the next day,
 Received instruction how to play his card,
 Was laden with all kinds of gifts and honours,
 Which showed what great discernment was the donor's.

47

But she was lucky, and luck's all. Your Queens
 Are generally prosperous in reigning; 370
 Which puzzles us to know what Fortune means.
 But to continue: though her years were waning,
 Her climacteric teased⁵¹⁹ her like her teens;
 And though her dignity brooked no complaining,
 So much did Juan's setting off distress her,
 She could not find at first a fit successor.

48

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: – 380
 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.

49

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 Petersburg: the best
 Barouche,⁵²⁰ which had the glory to display once
 The fair Czarina's Autocratic crest, 390
 (When, a new Iphigene, she went to Tauris)⁵²¹
 Was given to her favourite, and now bore his.

50

A bull-dog, and a bull-finch, 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 displayed,
 Although he was not old, nor even a maid; – 400

51

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.

52

Poor little thing! She was as fair as docile,
 And with that gentle, serious character, 410
 As rare in living beings as a fossile
 Man, 'midst thy mouldy Mammoths, 'grand Cuvier!'
 Ill fitted with 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.

53

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 420
 Parental feelings, and the other class,
 Called brotherly affection could not move
 His bosom, – for he never had a sister:
 Ah! if he had, how much he would have missed her!

54

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 chastest that might be, 430
 There was the purest Platonism at bottom
 Of all his feelings – only he forgot 'em.

55

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. 440

56

'Twas strange enough she should retain the impression
 Thro' such a scene of change, and dread, and slaughter;
 But though three bishops told her the transgression,
 She showed 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.

57

In fact, the only Christian she could bear
 Was Juan, whom she seemed to have selected 450
 In place of what her home and friends once *were*.
 He *naturally* loved what he protected:
 And thus they formed 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.

58

They journeyed on through Poland and through Warsaw,
 Famous for mines of salt and yokes of iron:
 Through Courland also, which that famous farce saw 459
 Which gave her dukes the graceless name of 'Biron'.⁵²²
 'Tis the same landscape which the modern Mars⁵²³ saw
 Who marched to Moscow, led by Fame, the Syren!
 To lose by one month's frost some twenty years
 Of conquest, and his guard of grenadiers.

59

Let not this seem an anti-climax: – ‘Oh!
 My Guard! my Old Guard!’ exclaimed that God of Clay. –
 Think of the Thunderer’s falling down below
 Carotid-artery-cutting Castlereagh! –
 Alas! that glory should be chilled by snow!
 But should we wish to warm us on our way 470
 Through Poland, there is Kosciusko’s name⁵²⁴
 Might scatter fire through ice, like Hecla’s flame.

60

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.⁵²⁵
 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 postillions. 480

61

And thence through Berlin, Dresden, and the like,
 Until he reached the castellated Rhine: –
 Ye glorious Gothic scenes! how much ye strike
 All fantasies, 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.

62

But Juan posted on through Manheim, Bonn,
 Which Drachenfels frowns over like a spectre 490
 Of the good feudal times for ever 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,⁵²⁶
 The greatest number Flesh hath ever known.

63

From thence to Holland's Hague and Helvoetsluys,⁵²⁷
 That water land of Dutchmen and of ditches,
 Where juniper expresses its best juice,⁵²⁸
 The poor man's sparkling substitute for riches. 500
 Senates and sages have condemned 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.

64

Here he embarked, and with a flowing sail
 Went bounding for the island of the free,
 Towards which the impatient wind blew half a gale:
 High dashed the spray, the bows dipped in the sea,
 And sea-sick passengers turned somewhat pale;
 But Juan, seasoned as he well might be 510
 By former voyages, stood to watch the skiffs
 Which passed, or catch the first glimpse of the cliffs.

65

At length they rose, like a white wall along
 The blue sea's border; and 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,⁵²⁹ who sternly dealt
 Their goods and edicts out from pole to pole,
 And made the very billows pay them toll. 520

66

I have 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 mixed 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.

67

Alas! could She but fully, truly, know
 How her great name is now throughout abhorred; 530
 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; –

68

Would she be proud, or boast herself the free,
 Who is but first of slaves? The nations are
 In prison, – but the jailor, what is he?
 No less a victim to the bolt and bar. 540
 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.

69

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 mucks⁵³⁰ at every bell;
 Thy packets, all whose passengers are booties
 To those who upon land or water dwell; 550
 And last, not least, to strangers uninstructed,
 Thy long, long bills, whence nothing is deducted.

70

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*,⁵³¹ a smart, subtle Greek,
 Before him summed the awful scroll and read it):
 But doubtless as the air, though seldom sunny,
 Is free, the respiration's worth the money. 560

75

And being told it was 'God's house,' she said
 He was well lodged, but only wondered how
 He suffered 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. 600

76

On, on! 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.

77

And when I think upon a pot of beer –
 But I won't weep! – and so drive on, postillions! 610
 As the smart boys spurred 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'⁵³⁶ just at this juncture,
 And for their pains get only a fresh puncture.

78

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. 620
 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'⁵³⁷ – the toll!

79

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.⁵³⁸

They hate a murderer much less than a claimant

On that sweet ore which every body nurses: –

630

Kill a man's family, and he may brook it,

But keep your hands out of his breeches' pocket.

80

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!

640

81

The sun went down, the smoke rose up, as from

A half-unquenched volcano, o'er a space

Which well beseemed the 'Devil's drawing-room',⁵³⁹

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 butchered half the earth, and bullied t' other.

82

A mighty mass of brick, and smoke, and shipping,

Dirty and dusky, but as wide as eye

650

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!

83

But Juan saw not this: each wreath of smoke
 Appeared to him but as the magic vapour
 Of some alchymic furnace, from whence broke
 The wealth of worlds (a wealth of tax and paper): 660
 The gloomy clouds, which o'er it as a yoke
 Are bowed, and put the sun out like a taper,
 Were nothing but the natural atmosphere,
 Extremely wholesome, though but rarely clear.

84

He paused – and so will I; as doth a crew
 Before they give their broadside. By and bye,
 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, 670
 With a soft besom⁵⁴⁰ will I sweep your halls,
 And brush a web or two from off the walls.

85

Oh, Mrs Fry! Why go to Newgate? Why
 Preach to poor rogues? And wherefore not begin
 With C[ar]l[t]o[n], or with other houses? Try
 Your hand at hardened and imperial sin.
 To mend the people's an absurdity,
 A jargon, a mere philanthropic din,
 Unless you make their betters better: – Fie!
 I thought you had more religion, Mrs Fry. 680

86

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 W[i]ll[ia]m C[ur]t[i]s is a bore,
 Too dull even for the dullest of excesses –
 The witless Falstaff of a hoary Hal,⁵⁴¹
 A fool whose bells have ceased to ring at all; –

87

Tell them, though it may be perhaps too late
 On life's worn confine, jaded, bloated, sated, 690
 To set up vain pretences of being great,
 'Tis 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 bye I'll prattle
 Like Roland's horn in Roncesvalles' battle.⁵⁴²

Canto Eleven

1

When Bishop Berkeley⁵⁴³ 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,⁵⁴⁴ to find the World a spirit,
 And wear my head, denying that I wear it.

2

What a sublime discovery 'twas to make the
 Universe universal Egotism! 10
 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.

3

For ever and anon comes Indigestion,
 (Not the most 'dainty Ariel')⁵⁴⁵ and perplexes
 Our soarings with another sort of question:
 And that which after all my spirit vexes, 20
 Is, that I find no spot where man can rest eye on,
 Without confusion of the sorts and sexes,
 Of being, stars, and this unriddled wonder,
 The World, which at the worst's a glorious blunder –

4

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 30
Decide, and *every body one day* will
'Know very clearly – or at least lie still.

5

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. 40

6

The first attack at once proved 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 established the whole Trinity
On so uncontrovertible a level,
That I devoutly wished the three were four,
On purpose to believe so much the more.

7

To our theme: – The man who has stood on the Acropolis,
And looked down over Attica; or he 50
Who has sailed where picturesque Constantinople is,
Or seen Timbuctoo, or hath taken tea
In small-eyed 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?

8

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; 60
 While every thing 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: –

9

I say, Don Juan, wrapt in contemplation,
 Walked 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 70
 Racks, prisons, inquisitions; resurrection
 Awaits it, each new meeting or election.

10

'Here are chaste wives, pure lives; here 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!' 80

11

These freeborn sounds proceeded from four pads,
 In ambush laid, who had perceived him loiter
 Behind his carriage; and, like handy lads,
 Had seized 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
 Exposed to lose his life as well as breeches.

12

Juan, who did not understand a word
 Of English, save their shibboleth,⁵⁴⁶ 'God damn!' 90
 And even that he had so rarely heard,
 He sometimes thought 'twas only their 'Salām',
 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; –

13

Juan yet quickly understood their gesture,
 And being somewhat choleric⁵⁴⁷ and sudden,
 Drew forth a pocket-pistol from his vesture,
 And fired it into one assailant's pudding⁵⁴⁸ – 100
 Who fell, as rolls an ox o'er in his pasture,
 And roared out, as he writhed his native mud in,
 Unto his nearest follower or henchman,
 'Oh Jack! I'm floored by that 'ere bloody Frenchman!'

14

On which Jack and his train set off at speed,
 And Juan's suite, late scattered 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, 110
 Stood calling out for bandages and lint,
 And wished he had been less hasty with his flint.

15

'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.' 120

16

But ere they could perform this pious duty,
 The dying man cried, 'Hold! I've got my gruel!
 Oh! for a glass of *max*!⁵⁴⁹ 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.

17

The cravat stained with bloody drops fell down
 Before Don Juan's feet: he could not tell 130
 Exactly why it was before him thrown,
 Nor what the meaning of the man's farewell.
 Poor Tom was once a kiddy⁵⁵⁰ upon town,
 A thorough varmint, and a *real* swell,
 Full flash, all fancy, until fairly diddled,
 His pockets first, and then his body riddled.

18

Don Juan, having done the best he could
 In all the circumstances of the case,
 As soon as 'Crowner's quest'⁵⁵¹ allowed, pursued
 His travels to the capital apace; – 140
 Esteeming it a little hard he should
 In twelve hours' time, and very little space,
 Have been obliged to slay a freeborn native
 In self-defence: – this made him meditative.

19

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 Bow Street's ban)
 On the high toby-spice so flash the muzzle? 150
 Who on a lark, with black-eyed Sal (his blowing)
 So prime, so swell, so nutty,⁵⁵² and so knowing?

20

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; –

160

21

Through Groves, so called as being void of trees,
(Like *lucus* from *no* light); through prospects named
Mounts Pleasant, as containing nought to please,
Nor much to climb; through little boxes framed
Of bricks, to let the dust in at your ease,

With 'To be let', upon their doors proclaimed;
Through 'Rows' most modestly called 'Paradise',
Which Eve might quit without much sacrifice; –

22

Through coaches, drays, choked tumpikes, and a whirl

Of wheels, and roar of voices and confusion; 170
Here taverns wooing to a pint of 'purl',⁵⁵³

There mails fast flying off like a delusion;
There barber's blocks with periwigs in curl

In windows; here the lamplighter's infusion
Slowly distilled into the glimmering glass,
(For in those days we had not got to gas:) –

23

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. 180

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 crossed the bridge.

24

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 shrine⁵⁵⁴ where Fame is
 A spectral resident – whose pallid beam 190
 In shape of moonshine hovers o'er the pile –
 Make this a sacred part of Albion's Isle.

25

The Druid's groves are gone – so much the better:
 Stone-Henge 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. 200

26

The line of lights too up to Charing Cross,
 Pall Mall, and so forth, have a coruscation
 Like gold as in comparison to dross,
 Matched 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.⁵⁵⁵

27

A row of gentlemen along the streets
 Suspended, may illuminate mankind, 210
 As also bonfires made of country seats;⁵⁵⁶
 But the old way is best for the purblind:
 The other looks like phosphorus on sheets,
 A sort of Ignis-fatuus to the mind,
 Which, though 'tis certain to perplex and frighten,
 Must burn more mildly ere it can enlighten.

28

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, 220
 'Twere not for want of lamps to aid his dodging⁵⁵⁷ his
 Yet undiscovered treasure. What *I* can,
 I've done to find the same throughout life's journey,
 But see the world is only one attorney.

29

Over the stones still rattling up Pall Mall,
 Through crowds and carriages, but waxing thinner
 As thundered knockers broke the long-sealed spell
 Of doors 'gainst duns, and to an early dinner
 Admitted a small party as night fell, –
 Don Juan, our young diplomatic sinner, 230
 Pursued his path, and drove past some Hotels,
 St James's Palace, and St James's 'Hells'.⁵⁵⁸

30

They reached the hotel: forth streamed 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 carriage 240

31

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.⁵⁵⁹

32

Juan, whose was a delicate commission,
 Private, though publicly important, bore 250
 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 graced our shore,
 Young, handsome, and accomplished, who was said
 (In whispers) to have turned his Sovereign's head.

33

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 260
 Into the excursive, breaking the indentures⁵⁶⁰
 Of sober reason, wheresoe'er it moves,
 He found himself extremely in the fashion,
 Which serves our thinking people for a passion.

34

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 270
 In safety to the place for which you start,
 What matters if the road be head or heart?

35

Juan presented in the proper place,
 To proper placemen, every Russ credential;
 And was received with all the due grimace,
 By those who govern in the mood potential;⁵⁶¹
 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. 280

36

They erred, as aged men will do; but by
 And by we'll talk of that; and if we don't,
 'Twill be because our notion is not high
 Of politicians and their double front,⁵⁶²
 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.

37

And, after all, what is a lie? 'Tis but
 The truth in masquerade; and I defy 290
 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.

38

Praised be all liars and all lies! Who now
 Can tax my mild Muse with misanthropy?
 She rings the world's 'Te Deum',⁵⁶³ and her brow
 Blushes for those who will not: – but to sigh 300
 Is idle; let us like most others bow,
 Kiss hands, feet, any part of majesty,⁵⁶⁴
 After the good example of 'Green Erin',
 Whose Shamrock now seems rather worse for wearing.

39

Don Juan was presented, and his dress
 And mien excited general admiration –
 I don't know which was most admired or less:
 One monstrous diamond drew much observation,
 Which Catherine in a moment of 'ivresse'⁵⁶⁵
 (In love or brandy's fervent fermentation) 310
 Bestowed upon him, as the public learned;
 And, to say truth, it had been fairly earned.

40

Besides the Ministers and underlings,
 Who must be courteous to the accredited
 Diplomats 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. 320

41

And insolence no doubt is what they are
 Employed for, since it is their daily labour,
 In the dear offices of peace and 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.

42

But Juan was received with much 'empressement':⁵⁶⁶ –
 These phrases of refinement I must borrow 330
 From our next neighbour's 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)⁵⁶⁷ made even the tongue more free.

43

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 anent⁵⁶⁸
 This subject quote; as it would be schismatic . 341
 In politesse, and have a sound affronting in't: –
 But 'Damme's' quite ethereal, though too daring –
 Platonic blasphemy, the soul of swearing.

44

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 350
 On general topics: poems must confine
 Themselves to Unity, like this of mine.

45

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 received by persons of condition. 360

46

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 moment 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.

47

But Juan was a bachelor – of arts,
 And parts, and hearts: he danced and sung, and had 370
 An air as sentimental as Mozart's
 Softest of melodies; and could be sad
 Or cheerful, without any 'flaws or starts',⁵⁶⁹
 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.

48

Fair virgins blushed upon him; wedded dames
 Bloomed also in less transitory hues;
 For both commodities dwell by the Thames,
 The painting and the painted; youth, ceruse,⁵⁷⁰ 380
 Against his heart preferred their usual claims,
 Such as no gentleman can quite refuse;
 Daughters admired his dress, and pious mothers
 Enquired his income, and if he had brothers.

49

The milliners who furnish 'drapery Misses'⁵⁷¹
 Throughout the season, upon speculation
 Of payment ere the honeymoon's last kisses
 Have waned into a crescent's coruscation,
 Thought such an opportunity as this is,
 Of a rich foreigner's initiation, 390
 Not to be overlooked, – and gave such credit,
 That future bridegrooms swore, and sighed, and paid it.

50

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,
 Advanced in all their azure's highest hue:
 They talked bad French of Spanish, and upon its
 Late authors asked him for a hint or two;
 And which was softest, Russian or Castilian?
 And whether in his travels he saw Ilion? 400

51

Juan, who was a little superficial,
 And not in literature a great Drawcansir,⁵⁷²
 Examined 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.

52

However, he replied at hazard, with
A modest confidence and calm assurance, 410
Which lent his learned lucubrations pith,
And passed for arguments of good endurance.
That prodigy, Miss Araminta Smith,
(Who at sixteen translated 'Hercules Furens'⁵⁷³
Into as furious English) with her best look,
Set down his sayings in her common-place book.

53

Juan knew several languages – as well
He might – and brought them up with skill, in time
To save his fame with each accomplished belle,
Who still regretted that he did not rhyme. 420
There wanted but this requisite to swell
His qualittes (with them) into sublime:
Lady Fitz-Frisky, and Miss Maevia Mannish,
Both longed extremely to be sung in Spanish.

54

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; 430
Also the eighty 'greatest living poets',
As every paltry magazine can show *its*.

55

In twice five years the 'greatest living poet',
Like to the champion in the fisty ring,
Is called 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 reckoned, a considerable time,
The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme. 440

56

But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero
 My Leipsic, and my Mont Saint Jean seems 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 Southey for my turnkey Lowe.⁵⁷⁴

57

Sir Walter reigned before me; Moore and Campbell
 Before and after; but now grown more holy, 450
 The Muses upon Sion's hill must ramble,
 With poets almost clergymen, or wholly;
 And Pegasus hath a psalmodic amble
 Beneath the reverend Rowley Powley,⁵⁷⁵
 Who shoes the glorious animal with stilts,
 A modern Ancient Pistol – 'by these Hilts!'

58

Still he excels that artificial hard
 Labourer⁵⁷⁶ in the same vineyard, though the vine
 Yields him but vinegar for his reward, –
 That neutralized dull Dorus of the Nine; 460
 That swarthy Sporus, neither man nor bard;
 That ox of verse, who *ploughs* for every line: –
 Cambyses' roaring Romans beat at least
 The howling Hebrews⁵⁷⁷ of Cybele's priest. –

59

Then there's my gentle Euphues;⁵⁷⁸ 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; 470
 And that deep-mouthed Boeotian, 'Savage Landor',⁵⁷⁹
 Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's gander.

60

John Keats, who was killed off by one critique,
 Just as he really promised something great,
 If not intelligible, – without Greek
 Contrived to talk about the Gods of late,
 Much as they might have been supposed to speak.
 Poor fellow! His was an untoward fate: –
 'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery particle,
 Should let itself be snuffed out by an article.⁵⁸⁰

480

61

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 waxed but dirty.

62

This is the literary *lower* Empire,
 Where the praetorian bands⁵⁸¹ take up the matter; – 490
 A 'dreadful trade', like his who 'gathers samphire',⁵⁸²
 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,⁵⁸³
 And show them *what* an intellectual war is.

63

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; 500
 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 curtsey,
 And glides away, assured she never hurts ye.

64

My Juan, whom I left in deadly peril
 Amongst live poets and blue ladies, past
 With some small profit through that field so sterile.
 Being tired in time, and neither least nor last
 Left it before he had been treated very ill;
 And henceforth found himself more gaily classed 510
 Amongst the higher spirits of the day,
 The sun's true son, no vapour, but a ray.

65

His morns he passed 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 sophas 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. 520

66

His afternoons he passed in visits, luncheons,
 Lounging, and boxing; and the twilight hour
 In riding round those vegetable puncheons
 Called 'Parks', where there is neither fruit nor flower
 Enough to gratify a bee's slight munchings;
 But after all it is the only 'bower',⁵⁸⁴
 (In Moore's phrase) where the fashionable fair
 Can form a slight acquaintance with fresh air.

67

Then dress, then dinner, then awakes the world!
 Then glare the lamps, then whirl the wheels, then roar 530
 Through street and square fast flashing chariots, hurled
 Like harnessed meteors; then along the floor
 Chalk mimics⁵⁸⁵ painting; then festoons are twirled;
 Then roll the brazen thunders of the door,
 Which opens to the thousand happy few
 An earthly Paradise of 'Or Molu'.⁵⁸⁶

68

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. 540
 Saloon, room, hall o'erflow beyond their brink,
 And long the latest of arrivals halts,
 Midst royal dukes and dames condemned to climb,
 And gain an inch of staircase at a time.

69

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',⁵⁸⁷
 And let the Babel round run as it may,
 And look on as a mourner, or a scorner, 550
 Or an approver, or a mere spectator,
 Yawning a little as the night grows later.

70

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.⁵⁸⁸ 560

71

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.

72

But, if you can contrive, get next at supper;
 Or, if forestalled, get opposite and ogle: – 570
 Oh, ye ambrosial moments! always upper
 In mind, a sort of sentimental bogle,⁵⁸⁹
 Which sits for ever upon Memory's crupper,⁵⁹⁰
 The ghost of vanished pleasures once in vogue! Ill
 Can tender souls relate the rise and fall
 Of hopes and fears which shake a single ball.

73

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 580
 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.

74

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',⁵⁹¹ 590
 And ugliness, disease, as toil and trouble, –
 I wish they knew the life of a young noble.

75

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;⁵⁹²
 And having voted, dined, drank, gamed, and whored,
 The family vault receives another lord. 600

76

'Where is the world,'⁵⁹³ 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!
 Cracked, shivered, vanished, scarcely gazed 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.

77

Where is Napoleon the Grand? God knows:
 Where little Castlereagh? The devil can tell: 610
 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,⁵⁹⁴ whom the Isles loved well?
 Where are those martyred Saints the Five per Cents?⁵⁹⁵
 And where – oh where the devil are the Rents!

78

Where's Brummell?⁵⁹⁶ Dished. Where's Long Pole
 Wellesley?⁵⁹⁷ Diddled.
 Where's Whitbread?⁵⁹⁸ Romilly? Where's George
 the Third?
 Where is his will?⁵⁹⁹ (That's not so soon unriddled.)
 And where is 'Fum'⁶⁰⁰ the Fourth, our 'royal bird'? 620
 Gone down it seems to Scotland, to be fiddled
 Unto by Sawney's violin,⁶⁰¹ we have heard:
 'Caw me, caw thee'⁶⁰² – for six months hath been hatching
 This scene of royal itch and loyal scratching.

79

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 performed of late).
 Where are the Dublin shouts – and London hisses? 630
 Where are the Grenvilles?⁶⁰³ Turned as usual. Where
 My friends the Whigs? Exactly where they were.

80

Where are the Lady Carolines and Franceses?⁶⁰⁴
 Divorced 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 fantasies
 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. 640

81

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.

82

Talk not of seventy years as age! in seven
 I have seen more changes, down from monarchs to 650
 The humblest individual 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.

83

I have seen Napoleon, who seemed 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. 660
 But it is time that I should hoist my 'blue Peter',⁶⁰⁵
 And sail for a new theme: – I have seen – and shook
 To see it – the King hissed, and then cared;
 And don't pretend to settle which was best.

84

I have seen the landholders without a rap⁶⁰⁶ –
 I have seen Johanna Southcote – I have seen
 The House of Commons turned to a tax-trap –
 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 – 670
 I have seen some nations like o'erloaded asses
 Kick off their burthens – meaning the high classes.

85

I have seen small poets, and great prozers, and
 Interminable – *not eternal* – speakers –
 I have seen the Funds at war with house and land –
 I've seen the Country Gentlemen turn squeakers –
 I've seen the people ridden o'er like sand
 By slaves on horseback – I have seen malt liquors
 Exchanged for 'thin potations'⁶⁰⁷ by John Bull –
 I have seen John half detect himself a fool. – 680

86

But 'Carpe diem',⁶⁰⁸ Juan, 'Carpe, carpe!'
 Tomorrow sees another race as gay
 And transient, and devoured by the same harpy.
 'Life's a poor player', – then 'play out the play,
 Ye villains!'⁶⁰⁹ 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*.

87

But how shall I relate in other Cantos
 Of what befell our hero in the land, 690
 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;⁶¹⁰
 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.

88

What Juan saw and underwent, shall be
 My topic, with of course the due restriction
 Which is required by proper courtesy;
 And recollect the work is only fiction, 700
 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*.

89

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, – 710
 Or whether he was taken in for damages,
 For being too excursive in his homages, –

90

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,
 And would not change my free thoughts for a throne. 720

Canto Twelve

1

Of all the barbarous Middle Ages, that
Which is the most barbarous is the middle age
Of man; it is – I really scarce know what;
But when we hover between fool and sage,
And don't know justly what we would be at, –
A period something like a printed page,
Black letter upon foolscap, while our hair
Grows grizzled, and we are not what we were, –

2

Too old for youth, – too young, at thirty-five,
To herd with boys, or hoard with good threescore, – 10
I wonder people should be left alive;
But since they are, that epoch is a bore:
Love lingers still, although 'twere late to wive;
And as for other love, the illusion's o'er;
And money, that most pure imagination,
Gleams only through the dawn of its creation.

3

Oh Gold! Why call we misers miserable?
Theirs is the pleasure that can never pall;
Theirs is the best bower anchor,⁶¹¹ the chain cable
Which holds fast other pleasures great and small. 20
Ye who but see the saving man at table,
And scorn his temperate board, as none at all,
And wonder how the wealthy can be sparing,
Know not what visions spring from each cheese-paring.

4

Love or lust makes man sick, and wine much sicker;
Ambition rends, and gaming gains a loss;
But making money, slowly first, then quicker,
And adding still a little through each cross
(Which *will* come over things) beats love or liquor,
The gamester's counter, or the statesman's *dross*. 30
Oh Gold! I still prefer thee unto paper,
Which makes bank credit like a bark of vapour.

5

Who hold the balance of the world? Who reign
 O'er Congress, whether royalist or liberal?
 Who rouse the shirtless patriots of Spain?⁶¹²
 (That make old Europe's journals squeak and gibber all.)
 Who keep the world, both old and new, in pain
 Or pleasure? Who make politics run gibber all?
 The shade of Bonaparte's noble daring? –
 Jew Rothschild, and his fellow Christian Baring. 40

6

Those, and the truly liberal Lafitte,⁶¹³
 Are the true lords of Europe. Every loan
 Is not a merely speculative hit,
 But seats a nation or upsets a throne.
 Republics also get involved a bit;
 Columbia's stock hath holders not unknown
 On 'Change;⁶¹⁴ and even thy silver soil, Peru,
 Must get itself discounted by a Jew.

7

Why call the miser miserable? as
 I said before: the frugal life is his, 50
 Which in a saint or cynic ever was
 The theme of praise: a hermit would not miss
 Canonization for the self-same cause,
 And wherefore blame gaunt Wealth's austerities?
 Because, you'll say, nought calls for such a trial; –
 Then there's more merit in his self-denial.

8

He is your only poet; – passion, pure
 And sparkling on from heap to heap, displays
 Possess'd, the ore, of which *mere hopes* allure
 Nations athwart the deep: the golden rays 60
 Flash up in ingots from the mine obscure;
 On him the diamond pours its brilliant blaze,
 While the mild emerald's beam shades down the dyes
 Of other stones, to soothe the miser's eyes.

9

The lands on either side are his: the ship
 From Ceylon, Inde, or far Cathay,⁶¹⁵ unloads
 For him the fragrant produce of each trip;
 Beneath his cars of Ceres groan the roads,
 And the vine blushes like Aurora's lip;
 His very cellars might be kings' abodes; 70
 While he, despising every sensual call,
 Commands – the intellectual lord of all.

10

Perhaps he hath great projects in his mind,
 To build a college, or to found a race,
 A hospital, a church, – and leave behind
 Some dome surmounted by his meagre face:
 Perhaps he fain would liberate mankind
 Even with the very ore which makes them base:
 Perhaps he would be wealthiest of his nation,
 Or revel in the joys of calculation. 80

11

But whether all, or each, or none of these
 May be the hoarder's principle of action,
 The fool will call such mania a disease: –
 What is his *own*? – Go look at each transaction,
 Wars, revels, loves – do these bring men more ease
 Than the mere plodding through each 'vulgar fraction'?⁶¹⁶
 Or do they benefit mankind? Lean Miser!
 Let spendthrifts' heirs enquire of yours – who's wiser?

12

How beauteous are rouleaus!⁶¹⁷ how charming chests,
 Containing ingots, bags of dollars, coins 90
 (Not of old Victors, all whose heads and crests
 Weigh not the thin ore where their visage shines,
 But) of fine unclipt gold, where dully rests
 Some likeness, which the glittering cirque confines,
 Of modern, reigning, sterling, stupid stamp: –
 Yes! ready money is Aladdin's lamp.

13

'Love rules the camp, the court, the grove', – 'for Love
 Is Heaven, and Heaven is Love':⁶¹⁸ – so sings the bard;
 Which it were rather difficult to prove,
 (A thing with poetry in general hard). 100
 Perhaps there may be something in 'the grove',
 At least it rhymes to 'Love'; but I'm prepared
 To doubt (no less than Landlords of their rental)
 If 'courts' and 'camps' be quite so sentimental.

14

But if Love don't, *Cash* does, and *Cash* alone:
 Cash rules the grove, and fells it too besides;
 Without cash, camps were thin, and courts were none;
 Without cash, Malthus tells you, 'take no brides'.
 So *Cash* rules Love the ruler, on his own
 High ground, as Virgin Cynthia⁶¹⁹ sways the tides; 110
 And as for 'Heaven being Love', why not say honey
 Is wax? Heaven is not Love, 'tis Matrimony.

15

Is not all love prohibited whatever,
 Excepting marriage? which is love no doubt
 After a sort; but somehow people never
 With the same thought the two words have helped out:
 Love may exist *with* marriage, and *should* ever,
 And marriage also may exist without;
 But love *sans* banns is both a sin and shame,
 And ought to go by quite another name. 120

16

Now, if the 'court' and 'camp' and 'grove' be not
 Recruited all with constant married men,
 Who never coveted their neighbour's lot,
 I say *that* line's a lapsus⁶²⁰ of the pen; –
 Strange too in my 'buon camerado'⁶²¹ Scott,
 So celebrated for his morals, when
 My Jeffrey held him up as an example
 To me; – of which these morals are a sample.

17

Well, if I don't succeed, I *have* succeeded,
 And that's enough; succeeded in my youth, 130
 The only time when much success is needed:
 And my success produced what I in sooth
 Cared most about; it need not now be pleaded –
 Whate'er it was, 'twas mine: I've paid, in truth,
 Of late, the penalty of such success,
 But have not learned to wish it any less.

18

That suit in Chancery, – which some persons plead
 In an appeal to the unborn, whom they,
 In the faith of their procreative creed,
 Baptize Posterity, or future clay, – 140
 To me seems but a dubious kind of reed
 To lean on for support in any way;
 Since odds are that Posterity will know
 No more of them, than they of her, I trow.⁶²²

19

Why, I'm Posterity – and so are you;
 And whom do we remember? Not a hundred.
 Were every memory written down all true,
 The tenth or twentieth name would be but blundered:
 Even Plutarch's⁶²³ lives have but picked out a few,
 And 'gainst those few your annalists have thundered; 150
 And Mitford⁶²⁴ in the nineteenth century
 Gives, with Greek truth, the good old Greek the lie.

20

Good People all, of every degree,
 Ye gentle readers and ungentle writers,
 In this twelfth Canto 'tis my wish to be
 As serious as if I had for inditers
 Malthus and Wilberforce: – the last set free
 The Negroes, and is worth a million fighters;
 While Wellington has but enslaved the whites,
 And Malthus does the thing 'gainst which he writes. 160

21

I'm serious – so are all men upon paper;
 And why should I not form my speculation,
 And hold up to the sun my little taper?
 Mankind just now seem wrapt in meditation
 On constitutions and steam-boats of vapour;
 While sages write against all procreation,
 Unless a man can calculate his means
 Of feeding brats the moment his wife weans.

22

That's noble! That's romantic! For my part,
 I think that 'Philo-genitiveness'⁶²⁵ is – 170
 (Now here's a word quite after my own heart,
 Though there's a shorter a good deal than this,
 If that politeness set it not apart,
 But I'm resolved to say nought that's amiss) –
 I say methinks that 'Philo-genitiveness'
 Might meet from men a little more forgiveness.

23

And now to business. Oh, my gentle Juan!
 Thou art in London – in that pleasant place
 Where every kind of mischief's daily brewing
 Which can await warm youth in its wild race. 180
 'Tis true that thy career is not a new one;
 Thou art no novice in the headlong chase
 Of early life; but this is a new land
 Which foreigners can never understand.

24

What with a small diversity of climate,
 Of hot or cold, mercurial or sedate,
 I could send forth my mandate like a primate
 Upon the rest of Europe's social state;
 But thou art the most difficult to rhyme at,
 Great Britain, which the Muse may penetrate: 190
 All countries have their 'Lions', but in thee
 There is but one superb menagerie.

25

But I am sick of politics. Begin,
 'Paulo Majora'.⁶²⁶ Juan, undecided
 Amongst the paths of being 'taken in',
 Above the ice had like a skater glided:
 When tired of play, he flirted without sin
 With some of those fair creatures who have prided
 Themselves on innocent tantalization,
 And hate all vice except its reputation. 200

26

But these are few, and in the end they make
 Some devilish escapade or stir, which shows
 That even the purest people may mistake
 Their way through Virtue's primrose paths of snows;
 And then men stare, as if a new ass spake
 To Balaam, and from tongue to ear o'erflows
 Quick silver Small Talk, ending (if you note it)
 With the kind world's Amen! – 'Who would have thought it?'

27

The little Leila, with her orient eyes
 And taciturn Asiatic disposition, 210
 (Which saw all Western things with small surprise,
 To the surprise of people of condition,
 Who think that novelties are butterflies
 To be pursued as food for inanition)
 Her charming figure and romantic history
 Became a kind of fashionable mystery.

28

The women much divided – as is usual
 Amongst the sex in little things or great.
 Think not, fair creatures, that I mean to abuse you all –
 I have always liked you better than I state: 220
 Since I've grown moral, still I must accuse you all
 Of being apt to talk at a great rate;
 And now there was a general sensation
 Amongst you, about Leila's education.

29

In one point only were you settled – and
 You had reason; – 'twas that a young Child of Grace,
 As beautiful as her own native land,
 And far away, the last bud of her race,
 Howe'er our friend Don Juan might command
 Himself for five, four, three, or two years' space, 230
 Would be much better taught beneath the eye
 Of Peeresses whose follies had run dry.

30

So first there was a generous emulation,
 And then there was a general competition
 To undertake the orphan's education.
 As Juan was a person of condition,
 It had been an affront on this occasion
 To talk of a subscription or petition;
 But sixteen dowagers, ten unwed she sages,
 Whose tale belongs to Hallam's *Middle Ages*,⁶²⁷ 240

31

And one or two sad, separate wives, without
 A fruit to bloom upon their withering bough,
 Begged to bring *up* the little girl, and '*out*', –
 For that's the phrase that settles all things now,
 Meaning a virgin's first blush at a rout,
 And all her points as thorough-bred to show:
 And I assure you, that like virgin honey
 Tastes their first season (mostly if they have money).

32

How all the needy honourable misters,
 Each out-at-elbow peer, or desperate dandy 250
 The watchful mothers and the careful sisters
 (Who, by the by, when clever, are more handy
 At making matches, where ' 'tis gold that glisters',
 Than their *he* relatives) like flies o'er candy
 Buzz round '*the Fortune*' with their busy battery,
 To turn her head with waltzing and with flattery!

33

Each aunt, each cousin hath her speculation;
 Nay, married dames will now and then discover
 Such pure disinterestedness of passion,
 I've known them court an heiress for their lover. 260
 'Tantaene!'⁶²⁸ Such the virtues of high station!
 Even in the hopeful Isle, whose outlet's Dover:
 While the poor rich wretch, object of these cares,
 Has cause to wish her sire had had male heirs.

34

Some are soon bagged, but some reject three dozen.
 'Tis fine to see them scattering refusals
 And wild dismay o'er every angry cousin
 (Friends of the party) who begin accusals,
 Such as – 'Unless Miss (Blank) meant to have chosen
 Poor Frederick, why did she accord perusals 270
 To his billets? Why waltz with him? Why, I pray,
 Look yes last night and yet say *no* today?

35

'Why? – Why? – Besides, Fred really was *attached*;
 'Twas not her fortune – he has enough without:
 The time will come she'll wish that she had snatched
 So good an opportunity, no doubt: –
 But the old marchioness some plan has hatched,
 As I'll tell Aurea at tomorrow's rout:
 And after all poor Frederick may do better –
 Pray did you see her answer to his letter?' 280

36

Smart uniforms and sparkling coronets
 Are spurned in turn, until her turn arrives,
 After male loss of time, and hearts, and bets
 Upon the sweepstakes for substantial wives:
 And when at last the pretty creature gets
 Some gentleman who fights, or writes, or drives,
 It soothes the awkward squad of the rejected,
 To find how very badly she selected.

37

For sometimes they accept some long pursuer,
 Worn out with importunity; or fall 290
 (But here perhaps the instances are fewer)
 To the lot of him who scarce pursued at all.
 A hazy widower turned of forty's sure
 (If 'tis not vain examples to recall)
 To draw a high prize: now, howe'er he got her, I
 See nought more strange in this than t'other lottery.

38

I, for my part – (one 'modern instance' more,
 'True 'tis a pity, pity 'tis, 'tis true')⁶²⁹
 Was chosen from out an amatory score,
 Albeit my years were less discreet than few; 300
 But though I also had reformed before
 Those became one who soon were to be two,
 I'll not gainsay the generous public's voice,
 That the young lady made a monstrous choice.

39

Oh pardon my digression – or at least
 Peruse! 'Tis always with a moral end
 That I dissert, like Grace before a feast:
 For like an aged aunt, or tiresome friend,
 A rigid guardian, or a zealous priest,
 My Muse by exhortation means to mend 310
 All people, at all times and in most places;
 Which puts my Pegasus to these grave paces.

40

But now I'm going to be immoral; now
 I mean to show things really as they are,
 Not as they ought to be: for I avow,
 That till we see what's what in fact, we're far
 From much improvement with that virtuous plough
 Which skims the surface, leaving scarce a scar
 Upon the black loam⁶³⁰ long manured by Vice,
 Only to keep its corn at the old price. 320

41

But first of little Leila we'll dispose;
 For like a day-dawn she was young and pure,
 Or, like the old comparison of snows,
 Which are more pure than pleasant to be sure.
 Like many people every body knows,
 Don Juan was delighted to secure
 A goodly guardian for his infant charge,
 Who might not profit much by being at large.

42

Besides, he had found out that he was no tutor:
 (I wish that others would find out the same) 330
 And rather wished in such things to stand neuter,
 For silly wards will bring their guardians blame:
 So when he saw each ancient dame a suitor
 To make his little wild Asiatic tame,
 Consulting 'the Society for Vice
 Suppression', Lady Pinchbeck⁶³¹ was his choice.

43

Olden she was – but had been very young;
 Virtuous she was – and had been, I believe:
 Although the world has such an evil tongue
 That – but my chaster ear will not receive 340
 An echo of a syllable that's wrong:
 In fact, there's nothing makes me so much grieve
 As that abominable tittle tattle,
 Which is the cud eschewed by human cattle.

44

Moreover I've remarked (and I was once
 A slight observer in a modest way)
 And so may every one except a dunce,
 That ladies in their youth a little gay,
 Besides their knowledge of the world, and sense
 Of the sad consequence of going astray, 350
 Are wiser in their warnings 'gainst the woe
 Which the mere passionless can never know.

45

While the harsh Prude indemnifies her virtue
 By railing at the unknown and envied passion,
 Seeking far less to save you than to hurt you,
 Or what's still worse, to put you out of fashion, –
 The kinder veteran with calm words will court you,
 Entreating you to pause before you dash on;
 Expounding and illustrating the riddle
 Of Epic Love's beginning, end, and middle. 360

46

Now whether it be thus, or that they are stricter,
 As better knowing why they should be so,
 I think you'll find from many a family picture,
 That daughters of such mothers as may know
 The world by experience rather than by lecture,
 Turn out much better for the Smithfield Show⁶³²
 Of vestals brought into the marriage mart,
 Than those bred up by prudes without a heart.

47

I said that Lady Pinchbeck had been talked about –
 As who has not, if female, young, and pretty? 370
 But now no more the ghost of Scandal stalked about;
 She merely was deemed amiable and witty,
 And several of her best bon-mots were hawked about;
 Then she was given to charity and pity,
 And passed (at least the latter years of life)
 For being a most exemplary wife.

48

High in high circles, gentle in her own,
 She was the mild reprover of the young
 Whenever – which means every day – they'd shown
 And awkward inclination to go wrong. 380
 The quantity of good she did's unknown,
 Or at the least would lengthen out my song: –
 In brief, the little orphan of the East
 Had raised an interest in her which increased.

49

Juan too was a sort of favourite with her,
 Because she thought him a good heart at bottom,
 A little spoiled, but not so altogether;
 Which was a wonder, if you think who got him,
 And how he had been tossed, he scarce knew whither:
 Though this might ruin others, it did *not* him, 390
 At least entirely, for he had seen too many
 Changes in youth, to be surprised at any.

50

And these vicissitudes tell best in youth;
 For when they happen at a riper age,
 People are apt to blame the Fates, forsooth,
 And wonder Providence is not more sage.
 Adversity is the first path to truth:
 He who hath proved war, storm, or woman's rage,
 Whether his winters be eighteen or eighty,
 Hath won the experience which is deemed so weighty. 400

51

How far it profits is another matter. –
 Our hero gladly saw his little charge
 Safe with a lady, whose last grown-up daughter
 Being long married, and thus set at large,
 Had left all the accomplishments she taught her
 To be transmitted, like the Lord Mayor's barge,⁶³³
 To the next comer; or – as it will tell
 More Muse-like – say like Cytherea's shell.⁶³⁴

52

I call such things transmission; for there is
 A floating balance of accomplishment 410
 Which forms a pedigree from Miss to Miss,
 According as their minds or backs are bent.
 Some waltz; some draw; some fathom the abyss
 Of metaphysics; others are content
 With music; the most moderate shine as wits,
 While others have a genius turned for fits.

53

But whether fits, or wits, or harpsichords,
 Theology, Fine Arts, or finer stays
 May be the baits for gentlemen or lords,
 With regular descent, in these our days 420
 The last year to the new transfers its hoards;
 New vestals claim men's eyes with the same praise
 Of 'elegant' *et cetera*, in fresh batches –
 All matchless creatures and yet bent on matches.

54

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,⁶³⁵ trying just a string or two 430
 Upon my lyre, or making the pegs sure;
 And when so, you shall have the overture.

55

My Muses do not care a pinch of rosin⁶³⁶
 About what's called 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 foundered,
 I think to canter gently through a hundred. 440

56

Don Juan saw that microcosm on stilts,
 Yclept the Great World; for it is the least,
 Although the highest: but as swords have hilts
 By which their power of mischief is increased,
 When man in battle or in quarrel tilts,
 Thus the low world, north, south, or west, or east,
 Must still obey the high – which is their handle,
 Their moon, their sun, their gas, their farthing candle.

57

He had many friends who had many wives, and was
 Well looked upon by both, to that extent 450
 Of friendship which you may accept or pass,
 It does nor good nor harm; being merely meant
 To keep the wheels going of the higher class,
 And draw them nightly when a ticket's sent:
 And what with masquerades, and fêtes, and balls,
 For the first season such a life scarce palls.

58

A young unmarried man, with a good name
 And fortune, has an awkward part to play;
 For good society is but a game,
 'The royal game of Goose',⁶³⁷ as I may say, 460
 Where every body has some separate aim,
 An end to answer, or a plan to lay –
 The single ladies wishing to be double,
 The married ones to save the virgins trouble.

59

I don't mean this as general, but particular
 Examples may be found of such pursuits:
 Though several also keep their perpendicular
 Like poplars, with good principles for roots;
 Yet many have a method more *reticular*⁶³⁸ –
 'Fishers for men',⁶³⁹ like Sirens with soft lutes: 470
 For talk six times with the same single lady,
 And you may get the wedding dresses ready.

60

Perhaps you'll have a letter from the mother,
 To say her daughter's feelings are trepann'd;⁶⁴⁰
 Perhaps you'll have a visit from the brother,
 All strut and stays and whiskers, to demand
 What 'your intentions are'? – One way or other
 It seems the virgin's heart expects your hand;
 And between pity for her case and yours,
 You'll add to Matrimony's list of cures. 480

61

I've known a dozen weddings made even *thus*,
 And some of them high names: I have also known
 Young men who – though they hated to discuss
 Pretensions which they never dreamed to have shown –
 Yet neither frightened by a female fuss,
 Nor by mustachios moved, were let alone,
 And lived, as did the broken-hearted fair,
 In happier plight than if they formed a pair.

62

There's also nightly, to the uninitiated,
 A peril – not indeed like love or marriage, 490
 But not the less for this to be depreciated:
 It is – I meant and mean not to disparage
 The show of virtue even in the vitiated –
 It adds an outward grace unto their carriage –
 But to denounce the amphibious sort of harlot,
 'Couleur de rose',⁶⁴¹ who's neither white nor scarlet.

63

Such is your cold coquette, who can't say 'No,'
 And won't say 'Yes,' and keeps you on and off-ing,
 On a lee shore, till it begins to blow –
 Then sees your heart wrecked with an inward scoffing. 500
 This works a world of sentimental woe,
 And sends new Werthers yearly to their coffin;
 But yet is merely innocent flirtation,
 Not quite adultery, but adulteration.

64

'Ye Gods, I grow a talker!' Let us prate.
 The next of perils, though I place it *sternest*,
 Is when, without regard to 'Church or State',
 A wife makes or takes love in upright earnest.
 Abroad, such things decide few women's fate –
 (Such, early traveller! is the truth thou learnest) – 510
 But in Old England when a young bride errs,
 Poor thing! Eve's was a trifling case to hers.

65

For 'tis a low, newspaper, humdrum, law-suit
 Country, where a young couple of the same ages
 Can't form a friendship but the world o'erawes it.
 Then there's the vulgar trick of those d—d damages!
 A verdict – grievous foe to those who cause it! –
 Forms a sad climax to romantic homages;
 Besides those soothing speeches of the pleaders,
 And evidences which regale all readers! 520

66

But they who blunder thus are raw beginners;
 A little genial sprinkling of hypocrisy
 Has saved the fame of thousand splendid sinners,
 The loveliest oligarchs of our gynocracy;
 You may see such at all the balls and dinners,
 Among the proudest of our aristocracy,
 So gentle, charming, charitable, chaste –
 And all by having *tact* as well as taste.

67

Juan, who did not stand in the predicament
 Of a mere novice, had one safeguard more; 530
 For he was sick – no, 'twas not the word *sick* I meant –
 But he had seen so much good love before,
 That he was not in heart so very weak; – I meant
 But thus much, and no sneer against the shore
 Of white cliffs, white necks, blue eyes, bluer stockings,
 Tithes, taxes, duns, and doors with double knockings.⁶⁴²

68

But coming young from lands and scenes romantic,
 Where lives not law-suits must be risked for Passion,
 And Passion's self must have a spice of frantic,
 Into a country where 'tis half a fashion, 540
 Seemed to him half commercial, half pedantic,
 Howe'er he might esteem this moral nation;
 Besides (alas! his taste – forgive and pity!)
 At first he did not think the women pretty.

69

I say at *first* – for he found out at *last*,
 But by degrees, that they were fairer far
 Than the more glowing dames whose lot is cast
 Beneath the influence of the Eastern star.
 A further proof we should not judge in haste;
 Yet inexperience could not be his bar 550
 To taste: – the truth is, if men would confess,
 That novelties *please* less than they *impress*.

70

Though travelled, I have never had the luck to
 Trace up those shuffling negroes, Nile or Niger,
 To that impracticable place Timbuctoo,
 Where Geography finds no one to oblige her
 With such a chart as may be safely stuck to –
 For Europe ploughs in Afric like '*bos piger*',⁶⁴³
 But if I *had been* at Timbuctoo, there
 No doubt I should be told that black is fair. 560

71

It is. I will not swear that black is white;
 But I suspect in fact that white is black,
 And the whole matter rests upon eye-sight.
 Ask a blind man, the best judge. You'll attack
 Perhaps this new position – but I'm right;
 Or if I'm wrong, I'll not be ta'en aback: –
 He hath no morn nor night, but all is dark
 Within; and what sees't thou? A dubious spark.

72

But I'm relapsing into metaphysics,
 That labyrinth, whose clue is of the same 570
 Construction as your cures for hectic phthisis,
 Those bright moths fluttering round a dying flame:
 And this reflection brings me to plain physics,
 And to the beauties of a foreign dame,
 Compared with those of our pure pearls of price,
 Those Polar summers, *all* sun, and some ice.

73

Or say they are like virtuous mermaids, whose
 Beginnings are fair faces, ends mere fishes; –
 Not that there's not a quantity of those
 Who have a due respect for their own wishes. 580
 Like Russians rushing from hot baths to snows
 Are they, at bottom virtuous even when vicious:
 They warm into a scrape, but keep of course,
 As a reserve, a plunge into remorse.

74

But this has nought to do with their outsides.
 I said that Juan did not think them pretty
 At the first blush; for a fair Briton hides
 Half her attractions – probably from pity –
 And rather calmly into the heart glides,
 Than storms it as a foe would take a city; 590
 But once there (if you doubt this, prithee try)
 She keeps it for you like a true ally.

75

She cannot step as does an Arab barb,
 Or Andalusian⁶⁴⁴ girl from mass returning,
 Nor wear as gracefully as Gauls her garb,
 Nor in her eye Ausonia's glance is burning;
 Her voice, though sweet, is not so fit to warb-
 le those bravuras (which I still am learning
 To like, though I have been seven years in Italy,
 And have, or had, an ear that served me prettily); – 600

76

She cannot do these things, nor one or two .
 Others, in that off-hand and dashing style
 Which takes so much – to give the devil his due, –
 Nor is she quite so ready with her smile,
 Nor settles all things in one interview,
 (A thing approved as saving time and toil); –
 But though the soil may give you time and trouble,
 Well cultivated, it will render double.

77

And if in fact she takes to a '*grande passion*',
 It is a very serious thing indeed: 610
 Nine times in ten 'tis but caprice or fashion,
 Coquetry, or a wish to take the lead,
 The pride of a mere child with a new sash on,
 Or wish to make a rival's bosom bleed;
 But the tenth instance will be a Tornado,
 For there's no saying what they will or may do.

78

The reason's obvious: if there's an *éclat*,
 They lose their caste at once, as do the *Parias*;⁶⁴⁵
 And when the delicacies of the law
 Have filled their papers with their comments various, 620
 Society, that china without flaw,
 (The hypocrite!) will banish them like Marius,
 To sit amidst the ruins of their guilt:
 For Fame's a Carthage⁶⁴⁶ not so soon rebuilt.

79

Perhaps this is as it should be; – it is
 A comment on the Gospel's 'Sin no more,
 And be thy sins forgiven'.⁶⁴⁷ – but upon this
 I leave the saints to settle their own score.
 Abroad, though doubtless they do much amiss,
 An erring woman finds an opener door 630
 For her return to Virtue – as they call
 That Lady who should be at home to all.

80

For me, I leave the matter where I find it,
 Knowing that such uneasy Virtue leads
 People some ten times less in fact to mind it,
 And care but for discoveries and not deeds.
 And as for Chastity, you'll never bind it
 By all the laws the strictest lawyer pleads,
 But aggravate the crime you have not prevented,
 By rendering desperate those who had else repented. 640

81

But Juan was no casuist, nor had pondered
 Upon the moral lessons of mankind:
 Besides, he had not seen of several hundred
 A lady altogether to his mind.
 A little '*blasé*' – 'tis not to be wondered
 At, that his heart had got a tougher rind:
 And though not vainer from his past success,
 No doubt his sensibilities were less.

82

He also had been busy seeing sights –
 The Parliament and all the other houses; 650
 Had sate beneath the gallery at nights,
 To hear debates whose thunder *roused* (not *rouses*)
 The world to gaze upon those northern lights
 Which flashed as far⁶⁴⁸ as where the musk-bull browses:
 He had also stood at times behind the throne –
 But Grey was not arrived, and Chatham⁶⁴⁹ gone.

83

He saw however at the closing session,
 That noble sight, when *really* free the nation,
 A king in constitutional possession
 Of such a throne as is the proudest station, 660
 Though despots know it not – till the progression
 Of freedom shall complete their education.
 'Tis not mere splendour, makes the show august
 To eye or heart – it is the people's trust.

84

There too he saw (whate'er he may be now)
 A Prince,⁶⁵⁰ the prince of princes, at the time
 With fascination in his very bow,
 And full of promise, as the spring of prime.
 Though royalty was written on his brow,
 He had *then* the grace too, rare in every clime, 670
 Of being, without alloy of fop or beau,
 A finished gentleman from top to toe.

85

And Juan was received, as hath been said,
 Into the best society: and there
 Occurred what often happens, I'm afraid,
 However disciplined and *debonnaire*: –
 The talent, and good humour he displayed,
 Besides the marked distinction of his air,
 Exposed him, as was natural, to temptation,
 Even though himself avoided the occasion. 680

86

But what, and where, with whom, and when, and why,
 Is not to be put hastily together;
 And as my object is morality
 (Whatever people say) I don't know whether
 I'll leave a single reader's eyelid dry,
 But harrow up his feelings till they wither,
 And hew out a huge monument of pathos,
 As Philip's son proposed to do with Athos.⁶⁵¹

87

Here the twelfth Canto of our introduction
 Ends. When the body of the book's begun, 690
 You'll find it of a different construction
 From what some people say 'twill be when done:
 The plan at present's simply in concoction.
 I can't oblige you, reader! to read on;
 That's your affair, not mine: a real spirit
 Should neither court neglect nor dread to bear it.

88

And if my thunderbolt not always rattles,
 Remember, reader! you have had before
 The worst of tempests and the best of battles
 That e'er were brewed from elements or gore, 700
 Besides the most sublime of – Heaven knows what else –
 An usurer⁶⁵² could scarce expect much more –
 But my best Canto, save one on astronomy,
 Will turn upon 'political economy',⁶⁵³

89

That is your present theme for popularity:

Now that the public hedge hath scarce a stake,
It grows an act of patriotic charity

To show the people the best way to break.⁶⁵⁴

My *plan* (but I, if but for singularity,

Reserve it) will be very sure to take.

710

Mean time read all the National Debt-sinkers,

And tell me what you think of your great thinkers.

Canto Thirteen

1

I now mean to be serious; – it is time,

Since laughter now-a-days is deemed too serious.

A jest at Vice by Virtue's called 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.

2

The Lady Adeline Amundeville –

('Tis an old Norman name, and to be found

10

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.

3

I'll not gainsay⁶⁵⁵ them; it is not my cue;

I 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:

20

'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.

4

And after that serene and somewhat dull
 Epoch, that awkward corner turned 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; 30
 Also because the figure and the face
 Hint, that 'tis time to give the younger place.

5

I know that some would fain postpone this era,
 Reluctant as all placemen to resign
 Their post; but theirs is merely a chimera,⁶⁵⁶
 For they have passed 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. 40

6

And is there not Religion, and Reform,
 Peace, War, the taxes, and what's called 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.

7

Rough Johnson, the great moralist, professed,
 Right honestly, 'he liked an honest hater' – 50
 The only truth that yet has been confest
 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;⁶⁵⁷

8

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. 60
 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.

9

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:⁶⁵⁸ 'tis his virtue makes him mad!
 But his adventures form a sorry sight; – 70
 A sorrier still is the great moral taught
 By that real Epic unto all who have thought.

10

Redressing injury, revenging wrong,
 To aid the damsel and destroy the caitiff;⁶⁵⁹
 Opposing singly the united strong,
 From foreign yoke to free the hapless 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? 80

11

Cervantes smiled Spain's Chivalry away;
 A single laugh demolished 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.

12

I'm 'at my old lunes'⁶⁶⁰ – digression, and forget
 The Lady Adeline Amundeville; 90
 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.

13

I tell the tale as it is told, nor dare
 To venture a solution: '*Davus sum!*'⁶⁶¹
 And now I will proceed upon the pair.
 Sweet Adeline, amidst the gay world's hum, 100
 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 reckoned,
 And since that time there has not been a second.

14

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 110
 Nought against either, and both seemed secure –
 She in her virtue, he in his hauteur.

15

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 formed a basis of esteem, which ends
 In making men what Courtesy calls friends. 120

16

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, disdain to be guided,
 Because its own good pleasure hath decided.

17

His friendships therefore, and no less aversions,
 Though oft well founded, which confirmed but more 130
 His prepossessions, like the laws of Persians
 And Medes,⁶⁶² 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 mere ague still
 Of Men's regard, the fever or the chill.

18

'Tis not in mortals to command success;
 But *do you more*, Sempronius – *don't* deserve it';⁶⁶³
 And take my word, you won't have any less:
 Be wary, watch the time, and always serve it; 140
 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.

19

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, 150
 Which mortals generously would divide,
 By bidding others carry while they ride.

20

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.⁶⁶⁴ 160

21

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.

22

He liked the gentle Spaniard for his gravity;
 He almost honoured him for his docility, 170
 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.

23

And then he talked 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. 180
 Of coursers also spake they: Henry rid
 Well, like most Englishmen, and loved the races;
 And Juan, like a true-born Andalusian,
 Could back⁶⁶⁵ a horse, as despots ride a Russian.

24

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.⁶⁶⁶
Upon his talent Henry had no doubts,
His manner showed him sprung from a high mother; 190
And all men like to show their hospitality
To him whose breeding marches with his quality.

25

At Blank-Blank Square; – for we will break no squares⁶⁶⁷
By naming streets: since men are so censorious,
And apt to sow an author's wheat with tares,⁶⁶⁸
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. 200

26

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.

27

'Tis true, I might have chosen Piccadilly,⁶⁶⁹
A place where peccadillos are unknown; 210
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:
Such are – but I have lost the London Chart.

28

At Henry's mansion then, in Blank-Blank Square,
 Was Juan a *recherché*, welcome guest,
 As many other noble scions⁶⁷⁰ were;
 And some who had but talent for their crest; 220
 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.

29

And since 'there's safety in a multitude
 Of counsellors',⁶⁷¹ as Solomon has said,
 Or some one for him, in some sage, grave mood; –
 Indeed we see the daily proof displayed
 In Senates, at the Bar, in wordy feud,
 Where'er collective wisdom can parade, 230
 Which is the only cause that we can guess
 Of Britain's present wealth and happiness; –

30

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 shock some's
 Self-love, there's safety in a crowd of coxcombs. 240

31

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 disdained to wear it:
 Secure of admiration, its impression
 Was faint, as of an everyday possession.

32

To all she was polite without parade;
 To some she showed attention of that kind 250
 Which flatters, but is flattery conveyed
 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 passed for meritorious,
 Just to console sad Glory for being glorious;

33

Which is in all respects, save now and then,
 A dull and desolate appendage. Gaze
 Upon the Shades of those distinguished men,
 Who were or are the puppet-shows of praise, 260
 The praise of persecution. Gaze again
 On the most favoured; and amidst the blaze
 Of sunset halos o'er the laurel-browed,
 What can ye recognize? – A gilded cloud.

34

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 mandarin⁶⁷² finds nothing fine, –
 At least his manner suffers not to guess 270
 That any thing he views can greatly please.
 Perhaps we have borrowed this from the Chinese –

35

Perhaps from Horace: his '*Nil admirari*'⁶⁷³
 Was what he called the 'Art of Happiness;'
 An art on which the artists greatly vary,
 And have not yet attained to much success.
 However, 'tis expedient to be wary:
 Indifference *certainly* don't produce distress;
 And rash Enthusiasm in good society
 Were nothing but a moral Inebriety. 280

36

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 stirred up till its smoke quite smothers.

37

I'll have another figure in a trice: –
 What say you to bottle of champagne? 290
 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:

38

'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, 300
 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.

39

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 ascertained the Pole
 (Though Parry's efforts⁶⁷⁴ look a lucky presage)
 Thus gentlemen may run upon a shoal; 310
 For if the Pole's not open, but all frost,
 (A chance still) 'tis a voyage or vessel lost.

40

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*'⁶⁷⁵ of all things human,
 Must be declined, while life's thin thread's spun out
 Between the gaping heir and gnawing gout. 320

41

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,⁶⁷⁶ but leaves behind
 As many doubts as any other doctrine
 Has ever puzzled Faith withal, or yoked her in.

42

The English winter – ending in July,
 To recommence in August – now was done. 330
 'Tis the postillion'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 promising that said son at college
 Has not contracted much more debt than knowledge.

43

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 aver⁶⁷⁷ 340
 My Muse a glass of weatherology;
 For parliament is our barometer:
 Let radicals its other acts attack,
 Its sessions form our only almanack.⁶⁷⁸

44

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 Row⁶⁷⁹
 Sleeps from the chivalry of this bright age; 350
 And tradesmen, with long bills and longer faces,
 Sigh – as the postboys fasten on the traces.

45

They and their bills, 'Arcadians both', are left
 To the Greek kalends⁶⁸⁰ 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, –
 Hawked about at a discount, small or large; –
 Also the solace of an overcharge. 360

46

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 wheels⁶⁸¹ may hiss hence,
 The ostler⁶⁸² pleads for a small reminiscence.

47

'Tis granted; and the valet mounts the dickey⁶⁸³ –
 That gentleman of lords and gentlemen; 370
 Also my lady's gentlewoman, tricky,
 Tricked out, but modest more than poet's pen
 Can paint, '*Cosi Viaggino i Ricchi*'!⁶⁸⁴
 (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?)

48

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, 380
 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.

49

I've done with my tirade. The world was gone;
 The twice two thousand, for whom earth was made,
 Were vanished 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. 390
 Let none accuse Old England's hospitality –
 Its quantity is but condensed to quality.

50

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. 400

51

A paragraph in every paper told
 Of their departure: such is modern fame:
 'Tis pity that it takes no further 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, today,
 Lord H. Amundeville and Lady A.

52

‘We understand the splendid host intends
 To entertain, this autumn, a select 410
 And numerous party of his noble friends;
 ’Midst whom we have heard, from sources quite correct,
 The Duke of D – the shooting season spends,
 With many more by rank and fashion decked;
 Also a foreigner of high condition,
 The Envoy of the secret Russian Mission.’

53

And thus we see – who doubts the *Morning Post*?
 (Whose articles are like the ‘Thirty Nine’,⁶⁸⁵
 Which those most swear to who believe them most) –
 Our gay Russ Spaniard was ordained to shine, 420
 Decked by the rays reflected from his host,
 With those who, Pope says, ‘greatly daring dine’.⁶⁸⁶
 ’Tis odd, but true, – last war the News abounded
 More with these dinners than the killed or wounded; –

54

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; 430
 Whose loss in the late action we regret:
 The vacancies are filled up – see Gazette.’

55

To Norman Abbey whirled the noble pair, –
 An old, old monastery once, and now
 Still older mansion, of a rich and rare
 Mixed Gothic, such as Artists all allow
 Few specimens yet left us can compare
 Withal: it lies perhaps a little low,
 Because the monks preferred a hill behind,
 To shelter their devotion from the wind. 440

56

It stood embosom'd in a happy valley,
 Crown'd by high woodlands, where the Druid oak
 Stood like Caractacus⁶⁸⁷ in act to rally
 His host, with broad arms 'gainst the thunder-stroke;
 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 murmured like a bird.

57

Before the mansion lay a lucid lake,
 Broad as transparent, deep, and freshly fed 450
 By a river, which its soften'd way did take
 In currents through the calmer water spread
 Around: the wild fowl 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.

58

Its outlet dash'd into a steep cascade,
 Sparkling with foam, until again subsiding
 Its shriller echoes – like an infant made
 Quiet – sank into softer ripples, gliding 460
 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.

59

A glorious remnant of the Gothic pile,
 (While yet the church was Rome's) stood half apart
 In a grand Arch, which once screened many an aisle.
 These last had disappear'd – a loss to Art:
 The first yet frowned superbly o'er the soil,
 And kindled feelings in the roughest heart, 470
 Which mourn'd the power of time's or tempest's march,
 In gazing on that venerable Arch.

60

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,⁶⁸⁸ who fought in vain
 For those who knew not to resign or reign. 480

61

But in a higher niche, alone, but crown'd
 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.

62

A mighty window, hollow in the centre,
 Shorn of its glass of thousand colourings, 490
 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.

63

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 500
 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 harmonized by the old choral wall:

64

Others, that some original shape, or form
 Shaped by decay perchance, hath given the power
 (Though less than that of Memnon's statue,⁶⁸⁹ warm
 In Egypt's rays, to harp at a fixed hour)
 To this grey ruin, with a voice to charm.
 Sad, but serene, it sweeps o'er tree or tower: 510
 The cause I know not, nor can solve; but such
 The fact: – I've heard it, – once perhaps too much.

65

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. 520

66

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.

67

Huge halls, long galleries, spacious chambers, join'd
 By no quite lawful marriage of the Arts, 530
 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.

68

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, 540
 With fair long locks, had also kept their station:
 And Countesses mature in robes and pearls:
 Also some beauties of Sir Peter Lely,⁶⁹⁰
 Whose drapery hints we may admire them freely.

69

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, 550
 As hinting more (unless our judgments warp us)
 Of the 'Star Chamber' than of 'Habeas Corpus'.⁶⁹¹

70

Generals, some all in armour, of the old
 And iron time, ere Lead had ta'en the lead;
 Others in wigs of Marlborough's⁶⁹² martial fold,
 Huger than twelve of our degenerate breed:
 Lordlings with staves of white, or keys of gold:⁶⁹³
 Nimrods, whose canvas scarce contain'd the steed;
 And here and there some stern high Patriot stood,
 Who could not get the place for which he sued. 560

71

But ever and anon, to soothe your vision,
 Fatigued with these hereditary glories,
 There rose a Carlo Dolce⁶⁹⁴ 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.

72

Here sweetly spread a landscape of Lorraine;
 There Rembrandt made his darkness equal light, 570
 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-mouthed goblet makes me feel quite Danish
 Or Dutch with thirst – What ho! a flask of Rhenish.⁶⁹⁵

73

Oh, reader! If that thou canst read, – and know,
 'Tis not enough to spell, or even to read,
 To constitute a reader; there must go 580
 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.

74

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',⁶⁹⁶ is clear; 590
 But a mere modern must be moderate –
 I spare you then the furniture and plate.

75

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, nutbrown Partridges! Ah, brilliant Pheasants!
 And ah, ye Poachers! – 'Tis no sport for peasants. 600

76

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.

77

Then, if she hath not that serene decline,
 Which makes the Southern Autumn's day appear 610
 As if 'twould 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 gained in yellow.

78

And for the effeminate *villeggiatura* –
 Rife with more horns than hounds – she hath the chase,
 So animated that it might allure a
 Saint from his beads to join the jocund race; 620
 Even Nimrod's self might leave the plains of Dura,
 And wear the Melton jacket⁶⁹⁷ for a space: –
 If she hath no wild boars, she hath a tame
 Preserve of Bores, who ought to be made game.

79

The noble guests, assembled at the Abbey,
 Consisted of – we give the sex the *pas*⁶⁹⁸ –
 The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke; the Countess Crabbe;
 The ladies Scilly, Busey; – Miss Eclat,
 Miss Bombazeen, Miss Mackstay, Miss O'Tabby,
 And Mrs Rabbi, the rich banker's squaw; 630
 Also the Honourable Mrs Sleep,
 Who look'd a white lamb, yet was a black sheep:

80

With other Countesses of Blank – but rank;
 At once the ‘lie’⁶⁹⁹ and the ‘*élite*’ of crowds;
 Who pass like water filtered in a tank,
 All purged and pious from their native clouds;
 Or paper turned to money by the Bank:
 No matter how or why, the passport shrouds
 The ‘*passée*’ and the passed; for good society
 Is no less famed for tolerance than piety: 640

81

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!’⁷⁰⁰ or each Medea has her Jason;
 Or (to the point with Horace and with Pulci)
 ‘*Omne tulit punctum, quae miscuit utile dulci*’.⁷⁰¹

82

I can’t exactly trace their rule of right,
 Which hath a little leaning to a lottery. 650
 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*⁷⁰² of the spheres,
 Escaping with a few slight, scarless sneers.

83

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.⁷⁰³ 660
 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.⁷⁰⁴

84

There was Parolles⁷⁰⁵ 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. 670
 There was Lord Pyrrho too, the great freethinker;
 And Sir John Pottledeep, the mighty drinker.

85

There was the Duke of Dash, who was a – duke,
 'Ay, every inch⁷⁰⁶ a' duke; there were twelve peers⁷⁰⁷
 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. 680

86

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.

87

There was Dick Dubious the metaphysician,
 Who loved philosophy and a good dinner; 690
 Angle, the *soi-disant* mathematician;
 Sir Henry Silvercup, the great race-winner.
 There was the Reverend Rodomont Precisian,⁷⁰⁸
 Who did not hate so much the sin as sinner;
 And Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet,
 Good at all things, but better at a bet.

88

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. 700

There was the waggish Welch Judge, Jefferies Hardsman,
 In his grave office so completely skill'd,
 That when a culprit came for condemnation,
 He had his Judge's joke for consolation.

89

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, 710

Alighting rarely: – were she but a hornet,
 Perhaps there might be vices which would mourn it.

90

I had forgotten – but must not forget –
 An Orator,⁷⁰⁹ 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 this *début*, which made a strong impression,
 And rank'd with what is every day display'd –
 'The best first speech that ever yet was made.' 720

91

Proud of his 'Hear him!' 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.

92

There also were two wits by acclamation,
 Longbow from Ireland, Strongbow⁷¹⁰ from the Tweed, 730
 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.

93

Strongbow was like a new-tuned harpsichord;
 But Longbow wild as an Aeolian harp,⁷¹¹
 With which the winds of heaven can claim accord,
 And made a music, whether flat or sharp. 740
 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.

94

If all these seem an heterogeneous mass
 To be assembled at a country seat,
 Yet think, a specimen of every class
 Is better than an humdrum tête-à-tête.
 The days of Comedy are gone, alas!
 When Congreve's fool could vie with Molière's⁷¹² *bête*:
 Society is smooth'd to that excess, 751
 That manners hardly differ more than dress.

95

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*. 760

96

But from being farmers, we turn gleaners, gleaning
 The scanty but right-well thrashed ears of truth;
 And, gentle reader! when you gather meaning,
 You may be Boaz, and I – modest Ruth.⁷¹³
 Further I'd quote, but Scripture intervening,
 Forbids. A great impression in my youth
 Was made by Mrs Adams,⁷¹⁴ where she cries
 'That Scriptures out of church are blasphemies'.

97

But what we can we glean in this vile age
 Of chaff, although our gleanings be not grist. 770
 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!'⁷¹⁵ – What unexpected woes
 Await those who have studied their *bon mots*!

98

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*, 780
 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.

99

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 ragoûts or roasts,
 Albeit all human history attests, 890
 That happiness for Man – the hungry sinner! –
 Since Eve ate apples, much depends on dinner.

100

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! 800

101

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.

102

The elderly walked through the library,
 And tumbled books, or criticized the pictures, 810
 Or sauntered 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.

103

But none were 'gêné':⁷¹⁶ 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 820
 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.

104

The ladies – some rouged, some a little pale –
 Met the morn as they might. If fine, they rode,
 Or walked; if foul, they read, or told a tale,
 Sung, or rehearsed the last dance from abroad;
 Discussed the fashion which might next prevail,
 And settled bonnets by the newest code, 830
 Or cramm'd twelve sheets into one little letter,
 To make each correspondent a new debtor.⁷¹⁷

105

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:⁷¹⁸ – you had better
 Take care what you reply to such a letter. 840

106

Then there were billiards; cards too, but *no* dice; –
 Save in the Clubs no man of honour plays; –
 Boats when 'twas water, skating when 'twas ice,
 And the hard frost destroy'd the scenting days:
 And angling too, that solitary vice,
 Whatever Isaac Walton⁷¹⁹ sings or says:
 The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb, in his gullet
 Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it.

107

With evening came the banquet and the wine;
 The *conversazione*;⁷²⁰ the duet, 850
 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.

108

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; 860
 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.

109

The politicians, in a nook apart,
 Discuss'd the world, and settled all the spheres;
 The wits watched every loop-hole 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 870
 Before they find an hour to introduce it,
 And then, even *then*, some bore may make them lose it.

110

But all was gentle and aristocratic
 In this our party; polish'd, smooth and cold,
 As Phidias 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,⁷²¹
 But gentlemen in stays, as stiff as stones. 880

111

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 colours soon!
 Good hours of fair cheeks are the fairest tinters,
 And lower the price of rouge – at least some winters.

Canto Fourteen

1

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.

2

But System doth reverse the Titan's breakfast,
And eats her parents, albeit the digestion 10
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?

3

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. 20
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.

4

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) 30
Lets out impatiently his rushing breath,
Less from disgust of life than dread of death.

5

'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. 40

6

'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.

7

But what's this to the purpose? you will say.
 Gent. Reader, nothing; a mere speculation, 50
 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.

8

You know or don't know, that great Bacon saith,
 'Fling up a straw, 'twill show the way the wind blows';⁷²²
 And such a straw, borne on by human breath,
 Is Poesy, according as the mind glows; 60
 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.

9

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: 70
 For I was rather famous in my time,
 Until I fairly knock'd it up with rhyme.

10

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. 80

11

But 'why then publish'?⁷²³ – 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.

12

I think that were I *certain* of success,
 I hardly could compose another line: 90
 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.

13

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 – 100
 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.

14

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; 110
 And though these lines should only line portmanteaus,
 Trade will be all the better for these Cantos.

15

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. 120

16

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.

17

Sometimes indeed, like soldiers off parade,
 They break their ranks and gladly leave the drill; 130
 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*.

18

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; 140
 Sad rakes to sadder husbands chastely taming;
 There's little left but to be bored or bore.
 Witness those '*ci-devant jeunes hommes*'⁷²⁴ who stem
 The stream, nor leave the world which leaveth them.

19

'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; 150
 And that their books have but one style in common –
 My lady's prattle, filter'd through her woman.

20

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 inditers⁷²⁵
 Of what they deem themselves most consequential –
 The *real* portrait of the highest tribe?
 'Tis that, in fact, there's little to describe. 160

21

'*Haud ignara loquor*': these are *Nugae*, '*quarum Pars parva fui*'⁷²⁶ 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*'⁷²⁷ –
 Which means that vulgar people must not share it.

22

And therefore what I throw off is ideal –
 Lower'd, leaven'd, like a history of freemasons; 170
 Which bears the same relation to the real,
 As Captain Parry's voyage may do to Jason's.
 The grand arcanum's⁷²⁸ not for men to see all;
 My music has some mystic diapasons;⁷²⁹
 And there is much which could not be appreciated
 In any manner by the uninitiated.

23

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. 180
 Poor Thing of Usages! Coerced, compell'd,
 Victim when wrong, and martyr of't when right,
 Condemn'd to child-bed, as men for their sins
 Have shaving too entailed upon their chins, –

24

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. 190
 Their love, their virtue, beauty, education,
 But form good housekeepers to breed a nation.

25

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 school-boy or a queen? 200

26

'Petticoat Influence'⁷³⁰ 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.

27

Much I respect, and much I have adored,
 In my young days, that chaste and goodly veil, 210
 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?

28

And when upon a silent, sullen day,
 With a Sirocco, for example, blowing,
 Then even the sea looks dim with all its spray
 And sulkily the river's ripple's flowing, 220
 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.

29

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, 230
 Are there oft dull and dreary as a *dun* –
 Whether a sky's or tradesman's, is all one.

30

And 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. 240

31

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 coxcomby of certain *She* Men.

32

A fox-hunt to a foreigner is strange;
 'Tis also subject to the double danger 250
 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.

33

And now in this new field, with some applause,
 He clear'd hedge, ditch, and double post, and rail,
 And never *craned*,⁷³¹ and made but few '*faux pas*',
 And only fretted when the scent 'gan fail. 260
 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.

34

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 Nestors⁷³² of the sporting generation
 Swore praises, and recall'd their former fires; 270
 The Huntsman's self relented to a grin,
 And rated him almost a whipper-in.⁷³³

35

Such were his trophies; – not of spear and shield,
 But leaps, and bursts, and sometimes fox's brushes;
 Yet I must own, – although in this I yield
 To patriot sympathy a Briton's blushes, –
 He thought at heart like courtly Chesterfield,⁷³⁴
 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*?' 280

36

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.

37

But, light and airy, stood on the alert,
 And shone in the best part of dialogue, 290
 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.

38

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 – 300
 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.

39

Chaste were his steps, each kept within due bound,
 And elegance was sprinkled o'er his figure;
 Like swift Camilla,⁷³⁵ 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. 310
 Such classic *pas – sans* flaws – set off our hero,
 He glanced like a personified Bolero;

40

Or, like a flying Hour before Aurora,
 In Guido's famous fresco,⁷³⁶ 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 colour
 Of bards and prozers, words are void of colour. 320

41

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 'agaçerie'.⁷³⁷

42

She was a fine and somewhat full-blown blonde,
 Desirable, distinguish'd, celebrated 330
 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 set⁷³⁸
 At Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

43

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. 340
 Woe to the man who ventures a rebuke!
 'Twill but precipitate a situation
 Extremely disagreeable, but common
 To calculators when they count on woman.

44

The circle smil'd, 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; 350
 And several pitied with sincere regret
 Poor Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

45

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 gaities, none had a right to stare:
 Theirs was that best of unions, past all doubt,
 Which never meets and therefore can't fall out. 360

46

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,
 Looked grave and pale to see her friend's fragility,
 For which most friends reserve their sensibility.

47

There's nought in this bad world like sympathy:
 'Tis so becoming to the soul and face; 370
 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!'

48

Oh, 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. 380
 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.

49

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: 390
'Twill teach discernment to the sensitive,
And not to pour their ocean in a sieve.

50

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*',⁷³⁹
With a long memorandum of old stories. 400

51

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.

52

These forty days' advantage of her years –
And hers were those which can face calculation, 410
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,⁷⁴⁰ whose leap,
In female dates, strikes Time all of a heap.

53

This may be fixed 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. 420
 Oh, 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.

54

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 430
 By this time; – but strike six from seven-and-twenty,
 And you will find her sum of years in plenty.

55

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 hecatomb⁷⁴¹ of suitors with devotion,
 She had consented to create again
 That Adam, called 'the Happiest of Men'. 440

56

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.

57

Fondly the wheeling fire-flies flew around her,
 Those little glitterers of the London night; 450
 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 wished, she acted right;
 And whether coldness, pride, or virtue, dignify
 A Woman, so she's good, what does it signify?

58

I hate a motive like a lingering bottle,
 Which with the landlord makes too long a stand,
 Leaving all claretless the unmoistened throttle,⁷⁴²
 Especially with politics on hand; 460
 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'.⁷⁴³

59

'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,
 I reckon not if an acorn gave it birth.
 To trace all actions to their secret springs
 Would make indeed some melancholy mirth; 470
 But this is not at present my concern,
 And I refer you to wise Oxenstiern.⁷⁴⁴

60

With the kind view of saving an *éclat*,
 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); – 480

61

The Lady Adeline resolved to take
 Such measures as she thought might best impede
 The further 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.

62

It was not that she fear'd the very worst:
 His Grace was an enduring, married man, 490
 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,⁷⁴⁵
 And next a quarrel (as he seemed to fret)
 With Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

63

Her Grace too pass'd for being an intrigante,
 And somewhat *méchante*⁷⁴⁶ in her amorous sphere;
 One of those pretty, precious plagues, which haunt
 A lover with caprices soft and dear, 500
 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:

64

The sort of thing to turn a young man's head,
 Or make a Werther 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. 510
 'Tis best to pause, and think, ere you rush on,
 If that a '*bonne fortune*'⁷⁴⁷ be really '*bonne*'.

65

And first, in the o'erflowing of her heart,
 Which really knew or thought it knew no guile,
 She called 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. 520

66

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 sorts 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.'

67

And, therefore, doubtless to approve the truth
 Of the last axiom, he advised his spouse 530
 To leave the parties to themselves, forsooth,
 At least as far as *bienséance*⁷⁴⁸ 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 dispatches:

68

And being of the Council called 'the Privy',⁷⁴⁹
 Lord Henry walk'd into his Cabinet,
 To furnish matter for some future Livy
 To tell how he reduced the nation's debt; 540
 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.

69

But ere he went, he added a slight hint,
 Another gentle common-place or two,
 Such as are coined 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, 550
 Retired; and, as he went out, calmly kissed her,
 Less like a young wife than an aged sister.

70

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 chamberlain⁷⁵⁰ –
 And such I mean to make him when I reign. 560

71

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.⁷⁵¹

72

Still there was something wanting, as I've said –
 That undefinable '*Fe ne sais quoi*,⁷⁵² 570
 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;⁷⁵³ –
 But thus it is some women will betray us.

73

There is an awkward thing which much perplexes,
 Unless like wise Tiresias⁷⁵⁴ we had proved
 By turns the difference of the several sexes:
 Neither can show quite *how* they would be loved. 580
 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.

74

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; 590
 And when they have made the shore through ev'ry shock,
 'Tis odd, or odds, it may turn out a rock.

75

There is a flower called 'Love in Idleness',
 For which see Shakespeare's ever blooming 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, '*Voilà la Pervenche!*'⁷⁵⁵ 600

76

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.

77

'*Beatus ille procul!*' from '*negotiis*',
 Saith Horace; the great little poet's wrong; 610
 His other maxim, '*Noscitur a sociis*',⁷⁵⁶
 Is much more to the purpose of his song;
 Though even that were sometimes too ferocious,
 Unless good company he kept too long;
 But, in his teeth, whate'er their state or station,
 Thrice happy they who *have* an occupation!

78

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: 620
 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.

79

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 cloyed;
 And hence arise the woes of sentiment, 630
 Blue devils, and Blue-stockings, and Romances
 Reduced to practice and perform'd like dances.

80

I do declare, upon an affidavit,⁷⁵⁷
 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. 640

81

'An oyster may be cross'd in Love,⁷⁵⁸ – and why?
 Because he mopeth idly in his shell,
 And heaves a lonely subterraqueous sigh,
 Much as a monk may do within his cell:
 And *à 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.

82

Oh, Wilberforce! thou man of black renown,
 Whose merit none enough can sing or say, 650
 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.

83

Shut up the bald-coot bully Alexander;
 Ship off the Holy Three⁷⁵⁹ to Senegal;
 Teach them that 'sauce for goose is sauce for gander',⁷⁶⁰
 And ask them how *they* like to be in thrall? 660
 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,⁷⁶¹
 Or else 'twill cost us all another million.

84

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; 670
 But till that point *d'appui*⁷⁶² is found, alas!
 Like Archimedes,⁷⁶³ I leave earth as 'twas.

85

Our gentle Adeline had one defect –

Her heart was vacant, though a splendid mansions;

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 staunch one;

But when the latter works its own undoing,

Its inner crash is like an Earthquake's ruin.

680

86

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.

87

There was no great disparity of years,

Though much in temper; but they never clash'd:

690

They moved like stars united in their spheres,

Or like the Rhone by Lemman's⁷⁶⁴ 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.

88

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:

700

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.

89

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: – 710
 And 'twill perplex the casuists in morality
 To fix the due bounds of this dangerous quality.

90

Had Bonaparte 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. 720

91

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.

92

She was, or thought she was, his friend – and this
 Without the farce of friendship, or romance 730
 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.

93

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. 740
 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.

94

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? 750
 Methinks Love's very title says enough:
 How should 'the *tender* Passion' e'er be *tough*?

95

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.⁷⁶⁵
 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. 760

96

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.

97

Whether Don Juan and chaste Adeline
 Grew friends in this or any other sense, 770
 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 atrocious⁷⁶⁶ reader in *suspense*;
 The surest way for ladies and for books
 To bait their tender or their tenter hooks.⁷⁶⁷

98

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,' 780
 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.

99

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. 790
 It is not clear that Adeline and Juan
 Will fall; but if they do, 'twill be their ruin.

100

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, milliards⁷⁶⁸ –
 It all sprung from a harmless game at billiards. 800

101

'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.

102

What 'Antres vast and deserts idle'⁷⁶⁹ 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 Anthropophagi⁷⁷⁰ in 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.

810

Canto Fifteen

1

Ah! – What should follow slips from my reflection:
 Whatever follows ne'ertheless may be
 As apropos 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.

2

But, more or less, the whole's a syncopé
 Or a singultus⁷⁷¹ – 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.

10

3

But all are better than the sigh suppress,
 Corroding in the cavern of the heart,
 Making the countenance a masque of rest,
 And turning human nature to an art. 20
 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.

4

Ah! who can tell? Or rather, who can not
 Remember, without telling, passion's errors?
 The drainer of oblivion, even the sot,⁷⁷²
 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; 30
 The ruby glass that shakes within his hand,
 Leaves a sad sediment of Time's worst sand.

5

And as for Love – Oh, 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. 40

6

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.

7

But Adeline was of the purest vintage,
 The unmingled essence of the grape; and yet 50
 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 everybody solvent.⁷⁷³

8

Oh, Death! thou dunnest 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:⁷⁷⁴ 60
 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.⁷⁷⁵

9

Whate'er thou takest, spare awhile 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!⁷⁷⁶ with whole nations for your booty,
 You should be civil in a modest way: 70
 Suppress then some slight feminine diseases,
 And take as many heroes as Heaven pleases.

10

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. 80

11

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,⁷⁷⁷
 The art of living in all climes with ease.

12

His manner was perhaps the more seductive,
 Because he ne'er seem'd anxious to seduce; 90
 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.

13

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: 100
 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.

14

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, 110
 Like Virtue; and the absence of pretension
 Will go much further than there's need to mention.

15

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. 120

16

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 canvass up – and 'verbum sat.'
 If once their fantasies be brought to bear
 Upon an object, whether sad or playful,
 They can transfigure brighter than a Raphael.⁷⁷⁸

17

Adeline, no deep judge of character,
 Was apt to add a colouring from her own. 130
 '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.

18

Was it not so, great Locke? and greater Bacon?
 Great Socrates? And thou⁷⁷⁹ Diviner still,
 Whose lot it is by man to be mistaken,
 And thy pure creed made sanction of all ill? 140
 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.

19

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, 150
 I rattle on exactly as I'd talk
 With any body in a ride or walk.

20

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 'Improvisatore'.⁷⁸⁰ 160

21

'Omnia vult *belle* Matho dicere – dic aliquando
 Et *bene*, dic *neutrum*, dic aliquando *male*.'⁷⁸¹
 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.

22

A modest hope – but modesty's my forte,
 And pride my feeble:⁷⁸² – let us ramble on. 170
 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'd 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.

23

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',⁷⁸³ 180
 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.

24

I think I should have made a decent spouse,
 If I had never proved the soft condition,⁷⁸⁴
 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,⁷⁸⁵ 190
 Nor worn the motley mantle of a poet,
 If some one had not told me to forego it.

25

But 'laissez aller'⁷⁸⁶ – knights and dames I sing,
 Such as the times may furnish. 'Tis a flight
 Which seems at first to need no lofty wing,
 Plumed by Longinus or the Stagyrite.⁷⁸⁷
 The difficulty lies in colouring
 (Keeping the due proportions still in sight)
 With Nature manners which are artificial,
 And rend'ring general that which is especial. 200

26

The difference is, that in the days of old
 Men made the manners; manners now make men –
 Pinned 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.

27

We'll do our best to make the best on't – March!
March, my Muse! If you cannot fly, yet flutter; 210
And when you may not be sublime, be arch,
Or starch, as are the edicts statesmen utter.
We surely shall find something worth research:
Columbus found a new world in a cutter,
Or brigantine, or pink,⁷⁸⁸ of no great tonnage,
While yet America was in her non-age.⁷⁸⁹

28

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, 220
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.

29

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 230
For morals, marriage; and this question carried,
She seriously advised him to get married.

30

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. 240

31

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 pelf⁷⁹⁰)
 Than match-making in general: 'tis no sin
Certes, but a preventative, and therefore
 That is, no doubt, the only reason wherefore.

32

But never yet (except of course a miss
 Unwed, or mistress never to be wed, 250
 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 melodramas or pantomimes.

33

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 260
 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.

34

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; 270
 A second for her excellent connections;
 A third, because there can be no objections.

35

When Rapp the Harmonist embargoed marriage⁷⁹¹
 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 have got the preacher at a dead lock.⁷⁹² 280

36

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.

37

But Rapp is the reverse of zealous matrons,
 Who favour, *malgré* Malthus, generation – 290
 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,⁷⁹³
 That sad result of passions and potatoes –
 Two weeds which pose our economic Catos.

38

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: 300
 'Tis not my purpose on his views to dwell,
 Nor canvass what 'so eminent a hand'⁷⁹⁴ meant;
 But *certes* it conducts to lives ascetic,
 Or turning marriage into arithmetic.

39

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 310
 Of marriage – (which might form a painter's fame,
 Like Holbein's 'Dance of Death'⁷⁹⁵ – but 'tis the same); –

40

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 deemed his merits something more than common:
 All these were unobjectionable matches,
 And might go on, if well wound up, like watches. 320

41

There was Miss Millpond,⁷⁹⁶ 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.

42

And then there was the Miss Audacia Shoestring,
 A dashing demoiselle of good estate, 330
 Whose heart was fix'd upon a star or blue string;⁷⁹⁷
 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.

43

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, – 340
 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;

44

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, 350
 To feel, in friendless palaces, a home
 Is wanting, and our best ties in the tomb?

45

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. 360

46

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.

47

She gazed upon a world she scarcely knew
 As seeking not to know it; silent, lone, 370
 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!

48

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; 380
 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.

49

And this omission, like that of the bust
 Of Brutus⁷⁹⁸ 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, 390
 She marvell'd 'what he saw in such a baby
 As that prim, silent, cold Aurora Raby?'

50

Juan rejoined – '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. 400

51

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?

52

Why Adeline had this slight prejudice –
 For prejudice it was – against a creature 410
 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.

53

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, 420
 And womankind too, if we so may say,
 Than finding thus their genius stand rebuked,
 Like 'Anthony's by Caesar',⁷⁹⁹ by the few
 Who look upon them as they ought to do.

54

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 'Igles Fatui' of mankind. 430
 It was not – but 'tis easier far, alas!
 To say what it was not, than what it was.

55

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. 440

56

The dashing and proud air of Adeline
 Imposed not upon her: she saw her blaze
 Much as she would have seen a glowworm shine,
 Then turn'd unto the stars for loftier rays.
 Juan was something she could not divine,
 Being no Sibyl⁸⁰⁰ in the new world's ways;
 Yet she was nothing dazzled by the meteor,
 Because she did not pin her faith on feature.

57

His fame too, – for he had that kind of fame
 Which sometimes plays the deuce⁸⁰¹ with womankind,
 A heterogeneous mass of glorious blame, 451
 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.

58

Juan knew nought of such a character –
 High, yet resembling not his lost Haidée;
 Yet each was radiant in her proper sphere:
 The Island girl, bred up by the lone sea, 460
 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.

63

There was a goodly 'soupe à la *bonne femme*',
 Though God knows whence it came from; there was too
 A turbot for relief of those who cram,
 Relieved with *dindon à la Périgieux*; 500
 There also was – the sinner that I am!
 How shall I get this gourmand stanza through? –
 Soupe à la Beauveau, whose relief was Dory,
 Relieved itself by pork, for greater glory.

64

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',⁸⁰⁵ I must confess
 Her stomach's not her peccant part: this tale 510
 However doth require some slight refection,
 Just to relieve her spirits from dejection.

65

Fowls à la Condé, 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;⁸⁰⁶
 And then there was Champagne with foaming whirls,
 As white as Cleopatra's melted pearls.⁸⁰⁷ 520

66

Then there was God knows what 'à 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 piddle⁸⁰⁸ with at hand,
 Gently to lull down the subsiding soul;
 While great Lucullus⁸⁰⁹ *Rôle triumphal* muffles –
 (*There's Fame*) – young Partridge fillets, deck'd with truffles.

67

What are the *fillets* on the victor's brow
 To these? They are rags or dust. Where is the arch 530
 Which nodded to the nation's spoils below?
 Where the triumphal chariots' haughty march?
 Gone to where victories must like dinners go.
 Further I shall not follow the research:
 But oh! ye modern heroes with your cartridges,
 When will your names lend lustre even to partridges?

68

Those truffles too are no bad accessories,
 Follow'd by 'petits puits d'amour'⁸¹⁰ – a dish
 Of which perhaps the cookery rather varies,
 So every one may dress it to his wish, 540
 According to the best of dictionaries,
 Which encyclopedise both flesh and fish;
 But even *sans* 'confitures', it no less true is,
 There's pretty picking in those 'petits puits'.

69

The mind is lost in mighty contemplation
 Of intellect expended 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, 550
 As form a science and a nomenclature
 From out the commonest demands of nature?

70

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 springald⁸¹¹
 Can't like ripe age in gourmandise excel,
 But thinks less of good eating than the whisper
 (When seated next him) of some pretty lipser. 560

71

Alas! I must leave undescribed the gibier,
 The salmi, the consommé, the purée,
 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 'bécasse',⁸¹²

72

And fruits, and ice, and all that art refines
 From nature for the service of the goût, – 570
Taste or the *gout*,⁸¹³ – 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.

73

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: 580
 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.

74

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 'à l'Espagnole' –
 No damsel, but a dish, as hath been said; 590
 But so far like a lady, that 'twas drest
 Superbly, and contained a world of zest,

75

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, 600
With two transcendent eyes seemed to look through him.

76

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 hears so loudly though it rings.
'Tis wonderful how oft the sex have heard
Long dialogues which pass'd without a word!

77

Aurora sate with that indifference
Which piques a preux Chevalier – as it ought: 610
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.

78

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. 620
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,

79

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've 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: 630
 For all men prophesy what is or was,
 And hate those who won't let them come to pass.

80

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. 640

81

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.

82

But Juan had a sort of winning way,
 A proud humility, if such there be, 650
 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.

83

Aurora, who in her indifference
 Confounded him in common with the crowd
 Of flutterers, though she deem'd he had more sense
 Than whispering foplings, or than wittlings⁸¹⁴ loud, – 660
 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.

84

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.*⁸¹⁵ 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, 670
 And always have done, somehow these good looks
 Make more impression than the best of books.

85

Aurora, who look'd more on books than faces,
 Was very young, although so very sage,
 Admiring more Minerva than the Graces,⁸¹⁶
 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. 680

86

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 fantasies 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'.⁸¹⁷

87

Also observe, that like the great Lord Coke,
 (See Littleton)⁸¹⁸ when'er I have expressed 690
 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?

88

If people contradict themselves, can I
 Help contradicting them, and every body,
 Even my veracious self? – But that's a lie;
 I never did so, never will – how should I? 700
 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.

89

Apologue,⁸¹⁹ fable, poesy, and parable,
 Are false, but may be 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? 710
 Philosophy? No; she too much rejects.
 Religion? Yes; but which of all her sects?

90

Some millions must be wrong, that's pretty clear:
 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. 720

91

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,⁸²⁰
 For I was bred a moderate Presbyterian.

92

But though I am a temperate Theologian,
 And also meek as a Metaphysician, 730
 Impartial between Tyrian and Trojan,
 As Eldon on a lunatic⁸²¹ 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.

93

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; 740
 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.

94

And now I will give up all argument;
 And positively henceforth no temptation
 Shall 'fool me to the top up of my bent';⁸²² –
 Yes, I'll begin a thorough reformation.
 Indeed I never knew what people meant
 By deeming that my Muse's conversation 750
 Was dangerous; – I think she is as harmless
 As some who labour more and yet may charm less.

95

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: – 760
 For certain reasons, my belief is serious.

96

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 I shall not recall,
 Because I'd rather it should be forgot,
 'Shadows the soul of Richard'⁸²³ may appal.
 In short, upon that subject I've some qualms very
 Like those of the Philosopher of Malmsbury.⁸²⁴

97

The night (I sing by night – sometimes an owl,

And now and then a nightingale) – is dim, 770
 And the loud shriek of sage Minerva's fowl⁸²⁵
 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:

98

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, 780
 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.

99

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, 790
 Lash'd from the foam of ages; while the graves
 Of Empires heave but like some passing waves.

Canto Sixteen

1

The antique Persians taught three useful things,
 To draw the bow, to ride, and speak the truth.
 This was the mode of Cyrus,⁸²⁶ 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 bow⁸²⁷ better now than ever.

2

The cause of this effect, or this defect, –
 'For this effect defective comes by cause',⁸²⁸ – 10
 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.

3

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, 20
 'Tis true there be some bitters with the sweets,
 Yet mixed so slightly that you can't complain,
 But wonder they so few are, since my tale is
 'De rebus cunctis et quibusdam aliis',⁸²⁹

4

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? 30
 'Tis time to strike such puny doubters dumb as
 The sceptics who would not believe Columbus.

5

Some people would impose now with authority,
 Turpin's or Monmouth Geoffry's Chronicle;⁸³⁰
 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*'.⁸³¹ 40

6

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.

7

I merely mean to say what Johnson said,
 That in the course of some six thousand years, 50
 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.

8

The dinner and the soirée too were done,
 The supper too discussed, the dames admired,
 The banqueteers had dropped off one by one –
 The song was silent, and the dance expired: 60
 The last thin petticoats were vanished, gone
 Like fleecy clouds into the sky retired,
 And nothing brighter gleamed through the saloon
 Than dying tapers – and the peeping moon.

9

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; 70
 Or like a billow left by storms behind,
 Without the animation of the wind;

10

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 vest⁸³²
 Dyed purple, none at present can tell how,
 If from a shell-fish or from cochineal.
 So perish every tyrant's robe piece-meal! 80

11

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,⁸³³ but less clear than amber.
 Titus exclaimed, 'I've lost a day!' Of all
 The nights and days most people can remember,
 (I have had of both, some not to be disdained)
 I wish they'd state how many they have gained.

12

And Juan, on retiring for the night,
 Felt restless, and perplexed, and compromised; 90
 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 sighed.

13

He sighed; – the next resource is the full moon,
 Where all sighs are deposited; and now
 It happened luckily, the chaste orb shone
 As clear as such a climate will allow; 100
 And Juan's mind was in the proper tone
 To hail her with the apostrophe – 'Oh, Thou!'
 Of amatory egotism the *Tuism*,⁸³⁴
 Which further to explain would be a truism.

14

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; 110
 The ocean's tides and mortal's brains she sways,
 And also hearts, if there be truth in lays.

15

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 flashed and after darkened in the shade. 120

16

Upon his table or his toilet, – *which*
 Of these is not exactly ascertained –
 (I state this, for I am cautious to a pitch
 Of nicety, where a fact is to be gained)
 A lamp burned high, while he leant from a niche,
 Where many a gothic ornament remained,
 In chiselled stone and painted glass, and all
 That time has left our fathers of their Hall.

17

Then, as the night was clear though cold, he threw
 His chamber door wide open – and went forth 130
 Into a gallery, of a sombre hue,
 Long, furnished 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.

18

The frowns of the grim knights 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 urn⁸³⁵ 140
 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.

19

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 spars⁸³⁶ within some dusky cave,
 But death is imaged in their shadowy beams 150
 A picture is the past; even ere its frame
 Be gilt, who sate hath ceased to be the same.

20

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.⁸³⁷ 160

21

It was no mouse, but lo! a monk,⁸³⁸ arrayed
 In cowl and beads and dusky garb, appeared,
 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,⁸³⁹
 But slowly; and as he passed Juan by,
 Glanced, without pausing, on him a bright eye.

22

Juan was petrified; he had heard a hint
 Of such a spirit in these halls of old, 170
 But thought, like most men, there was nothing in 't
 Beyond the rumour which such spots unfold,
 Coined from surviving superstition's mint,
 Which passes ghosts in currency like gold,
 But rarely seen, like gold compared with paper.⁸⁴⁰
 And *did* he see this? or was it a vapour?

23

Once, twice, thrice passed, repassed – 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 180
 As stands a statue, stood: he felt his hair
 Twine like a knot of snakes around his face;
 He taxed his tongue for words, which were not granted,
 To ask the reverend person what he wanted.

24

The third time, after a still longer pause,
The shadow passed 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 190
Might come or go; but Juan could not state
Through which the spectre seemed to evaporate.

25

He stood – how long he knew not, but it seemed
An age, – expectant, powerless, with his eyes
Strained on the spot where first the figure gleamed;
Then by degrees recalled his energies,
And would have passed the whole off as a dream,
But could not wake; he was, he did surmise,
Waking already, and returned at length
Back to his chamber, shorn of half his strength. 200

26

All there was as he left it: still his taper
Burnt, and not *blue*,⁸⁴¹ as modest tapers use,
Receiving sprites with sympathetic vapour;
He rubbed 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’.⁸⁴²

27

This savoured of this world; but his hand shook –
He shut his door, and after having read 210
A paragraph, I think about Horne Tooke,⁸⁴³
Undrest, and rather slowly went to bed.
There couched all snugly on his pillow’s nook,
With what he had seen his fantasy he fed,
And though it was no opiate, slumber crept
Upon him by degrees, and so he slept.

28

He woke betimes; and, as may be supposed,
Pondered upon his visitant or vision,
And whether it ought not to be disclosed,
At risk of being quizzed for superstition. 220
The more he thought, the more his mind was posed;
In the mean time, his valet, whose precision
Was great, because his master brooked no less,
Knocked to inform him it was time to dress.

29

He dressed; 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 curbed to their usual cut, 230
His very neckcloth's Gordian knot was tied
Almost an hair's breadth too much on one side.

30

And when he walked down into the saloon,
He sate him pensive o'er a dish of tea,
Which he perhaps had not discovered soon,
Had it not happened scalding hot to be,
Which made him have recourse unto his spoon;
So much distrait he was, that all could see
That something was the matter – Adeline
The first – but *what* she could not well divine. 240

31

She looked, and saw him pale, and turned as pale
Herself; then hastily looked down, and muttered
Something, but what's not stated in my tale.
Lord Henry said, his muffin was ill buttered;
The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke played with her veil,
And looked at Juan hard, but nothing uttered.
Aurora Raby, with her large dark eyes,
Surveyed him with a kind of calm surprise.

32

But seeing him all cold and silent still,
 And every body wondering more or less, 250
 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.'

33

'Quite well; yes; no.' – These answers were mysterious,
 And yet his looks appeared to sanction both,
 However they might savour of delirious;
 Something like illness of a sudden growth 260
 Weighed on his spirit, though by no means serious.
 But for the rest, as he himself seemed loth
 To state the case, it might be ta'en for granted
 It was not the physician that he wanted.

34

Lord Henry, who had now discussed his chocolate,
 Also the muffin whereof he complained,
 Said, Juan had not got his usual look elate,
 At which he marvelled, since it had not rained;
 Then asked her Grace what news were of the Duke of late?
 Her Grace replied, his Grace was rather pained 270
 With some slight, light, hereditary twinges
 Of gout, which rusts aristocratic hinges.

35

Then Henry turned to Juan and addressed
 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. 280

36

‘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 the bye:
 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.

37

‘The last time was – ’ ‘I pray,’ said Adeline, –
 (Who watched the changes of Don Juan’s brow, 290
 And from its context thought she could divine
 Connections stronger than 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.’

38

‘Jest!’ quoth Milor,⁸⁴⁴ ‘Why, Adeline, you know
 That we ourselves – ’twas in the Honey Moon –
 Saw – ’ ‘Well, no matter, ’twas so long ago;
 But, come, I’ll set your story to a tune.’ 300
 Graceful as Dian when she draws her bow,
 She seized her harp, whose strings were kindled soon
 As touched, and plaintively began to play
 The air of ‘ ’Twas a Friar of Orders Grey.’

39

‘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 displayed
 By one *three* talents, for there were no less – 310
 The voice, the words, the harper’s skill, at once
 Could hardly be united by a dunce.

40

After some fascinating hesitation, –
 The charming of these charmers, who seem bound,
 I can't tell why, to this dissimulation, –
 Fair Adeline, with eyes fixed 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. 320

1

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 expelled the friars, one friar still
 Would not be driven away.

2

Though he came in his might, with King Henry's right,⁸⁴⁵
 To turn church lands to lay, 330
 With sword in hand, and torch to light
 Their walls, if they said nay,
 A monk remained, unchased, unchained,
 And he did not seem formed of clay,
 For he's seen in the porch, and he's seen in the church,
 Though he is not seen by day.

3

And whether for good, or whether for ill,
 It is not mine to say;
 But still to the house of Amundeville
 He abideth night and day. 340
 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.

4

When an heir is born, he is heard to mourn,
 And when aught is to befall
 That ancient line, in the pale moonshine
 He walks from hall to hall.
 His form you may trace, but not his face,
 'Tis shadowed by his cowl; 350
 But his eyes may be seen from the folds between,
 And they seem of a parted soul.

5

But beware! beware! of the Black Friar,
 He still retains his sway,
 For he is yet the church's heir
 Who ever 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. 360

6

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!⁸⁴⁶ fair or foul,
 And whatsoe'er may be his prayer,
 Let ours be for his soul.

41

The lady's voice ceased, and the thrilling wires⁸⁴⁷
 Died from the touch that kindled them to sound; 370
 And the pause followed, 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.

42

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, 380
 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.

43

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, 390
 For a spoilt carpet – but the 'Attic Bee'⁸⁴⁸
 Was much consoled by his own repatee.

44

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 displayed,
 And that it is so, every body knows,
 Who have heard Miss That or This, or Lady T'other,
 Show off – to please their company or mother. 400

45

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 michamas's'⁸⁴⁹ from Portingale,
 To soothe our ears, lest Italy should fail.

46

In Babylon's bravuras – as the home
 Heart-ballads of Green Erin or Grey Highlands, 410
 That bring Lochaber back⁸⁵⁰ to eyes that roam
 O'er far Atlantic continents or islands,
 The calentures⁸⁵¹ of music which o'ercome
 All mountaineers with dreams that they are high lands,
 No more to be beheld but in such visions, –
 Was Adeline well versed, as compositions.

47

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 every body ought. 420
 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.

48

Aurora – since we are touching upon taste,
 Which now-a-days is the thermometer
 By whose degrees all characters are classed –
 Was more Shakespearian, if I do not err.
 The worlds beyond this world's perplexing waste
 Had more of her existence, for in her 430
 There was a depth of feeling to embrace
 Thoughts, boundless, deep, but silent too as Space.

49

Not so her gracious, graceful, graceless Grace,
 The full grown Hebe⁸⁵² 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. 440

50

I have not heard she was at all poetic,
 Though once she was seen reading the 'Bath Guide',
 And 'Hayley's Triumphs',⁸⁵³ which she deemed 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 insured her praise
 Were sonnets to herself, or 'bouts rimés'.⁸⁵⁴

51

'Twere difficult to say what was the object
 Of Adeline, in bringing this same lay 450
 To bear on what appeared 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.

52

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: 460
 In which you cannot be too circumspect,
 Whether the mode be persiflage⁸⁵⁵ or piety,
 But wear the newest mantle of hypocrisy,
 On pain of much displeasing the gynocracy.

53

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 wished for a still more detailed narration 470
 Of this same mystic Friar's curious doings,
 About the present family's deaths and wooings.

54

Of these few could say more than has been said;
 They passed as such things do, for superstition
 With some, while others, who held more in dread
 The theme, half credited the strange tradition;
 And much was talked on all sides on that head;
 But Juan, when cross-questioned on the vision,
 Which some supposed (though he had not avowed it)
 Had stirred him, answered in a way to cloud it. 480

55

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,
 Matched for the spring, whom several went to see.

56

There was a picture dealer who had brought
 A special Titian, warranted original, 490
 So precious that it was not to be bought,
 Though princes the possessor were besieging all.
 The king himself had cheapened it, but thought
 The civil list⁸⁵⁶ (he deigns to accept, obliging all
 His subjects by his gracious acceptance)
 Too scanty, in these times of low taxation.

57

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, 500
 Rather than seller, had his wants been fewer,
 So much he deemed his patronage an honour,
 Had brought the capo d'opera,⁸⁵⁷ not for sale,
 But for his judgement, – never known to fail.

58

There was a modern Goth, I mean a Gothic
 Bricklayer of Babel, called 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 510
 New buildings of correctest conformation,
 And throw down old, which he called *restoration*.⁸⁵⁸

59

The cost would be a trifle – an ‘old song’
 Set to some thousands (‘tis the usual burthen
 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. 520

60

There were two lawyers busy on a mortgage
 Lord Henry wished to raise for a new purchase;
 Also a lawsuit upon tenures burgage,⁸⁵⁹
 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’;⁸⁶⁰
 There was a prize ox, a prize pig, and ploughman,
 For Henry was a sort of Sabine showman.

61

There were two poachers caught in a steel trap
 Ready for jail, their place of convalescence; 530
 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 fees⁸⁶¹ since)
 That scarlet cloak, alas! unclosed with rigour,
 Presents the problem of a double figure.

62

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, 540
 And merely state, though not for the consistory,⁸⁶²
 Lord Henry was a justice, and that Scout
 The constable, beneath a warrant's banner,
 Had bagged this poacher upon Nature's manor.

63

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 licence for the same;
 And of all things, excepting tithes and leases,
 Perhaps these are most difficult to tame: 550
 Preserving partridges and pretty wenches
 Are puzzles to the most precautious benches.

64

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. 560

65

Her black, bright, downcast, wet espiegle⁸⁶³ eye,
 Had gathered a large tear into its corner,
 Which the poor thing at times essayed to dry,
 For she was not a sentimental mourner,
 Parading all her sensibility,
 Nor insolent enough to scorn the scormer,
 But stood in trembling, patient tribulation,
 To be called up for her examination.

66

Of course these groups were scattered here and there,
 Not nigh the gay saloon of ladies gent. 570
 The lawyers in the study; and in air
 The prize pigs, ploughmen, poachers; the men sent
 From town, viz, architect and dealer, were
 Both busy (as a general in his tent
 Writing dispatches) in their several stations,
 Exulting in their brilliant lucubrations.

67

But this poor girl was left in the great hall,
 While Scout, the parish guardian of the frail,
 Discussed (he hated beer yclept the 'small')⁸⁶⁴
 A mighty mug of *moral* double ale: 580
 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.

68

You see here was enough of occupation
 For the Lord Henry, linked 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, 590
 Have 'public days,' when all men may carouse,
 Though not exactly what's called 'open house.'

69

But once a week or fortnight, *uninvited*
 (Thus we translate a *general invitation*)
 All country gentlemen, esquired or knighted,
 May drop in without cards,⁸⁶⁵ and take their station
 At the full board, and sit alike delighted
 With fashionable wines and conversation;
 And as the isthmus⁸⁶⁶ of the grand connection,
 Talk o'er themselves, the past and next election. 600

70

Lord Henry was a great electioneer,⁸⁶⁷
 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).

71

Courteous and cautious therefore in his county,
 He was all things to all men, and dispensed 610
 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.

72

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 compelled, 620
 Such was his Sovereign's pleasure (though unfit,
 He added modestly, when rebels railed)
 To hold some sinecures he wished abolished,
 But that with them all law would be demolished.

73

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; 630
 As for his place, he could but say this of it,
 That the fatigue was greater than the profit.

74

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 threatened the whole country with perdition?
 When demagogues would with a butcher's knife
 Cut through and (oh! damnable incision!)
 The Gordian or the *Geordi-an* knot, whose strings
 Have tied together Commons, Lords, and Kings. 640

75

Sooner 'come place into the civil list
 And champion him to the utmost'⁸⁶⁸ – he would keep it,
 Till duly disappointed or dismissed:
 Profit he cared 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.

76

He was an independent – aye, much more –
 Than those who were not paid for independence, 650
 As common soldiers, or a common — shore,⁸⁶⁹
 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.

77

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
 Of – or *upon* the hustings⁸⁷⁰ – some slight such 660
 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 –

78

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, 670
Great plenty, much formality, small cheer,
And every body out of their own sphere.

79

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 men and master too – their *places*. 680

80

There were some hunters bold, and coursers keen,
Whose hounds ne'er erred, nor greyhounds
deigned to lurch;
Some deadly shots too, Septembrizers,⁸⁷¹ 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.

81

There were some country wags too, – and, alas!
Some exiles from the town, who had been driven 690
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,⁸⁷²
The loudest wit I e'er was deafened with.

82

I knew him in his livelier London days,
 A brilliant diner out, though but a curate;
 And not a joke he cut but earned its praise,
 Until preferment, coming at a sure rate, 700
 (Oh, Providence! how wondrous are thy ways,
 Who would suppose thy gifts sometimes obdurate?)
 Gave him, to lay the devil⁸⁷³ who looks o'er Lincoln,
 A fat fen vicarage, and nought to think on.

83

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
 Imbided the gay *bon mot*, or happy hoax:
 The poor priest was reduced to common sense, 710
 Or to coarse efforts very loud and long,
 To hammer a coarse laugh from the thick throng.

84

There is a difference, says the song,⁸⁷⁴ '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. 720

85

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.

86

But 'en avant!¹⁸⁷⁵ The light loves languish o'er
 Long banquets and too many guests, although 730
 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.

87

Dully past o'er the dinner of the day;
 And Juan took his place, he knew not where,
 Confused, in the confusion, and distraight,
 And sitting as if nailed upon his chair; 740
 Though knives and forks clanged round as in a fray,
 He seemed unconscious of all passing there,
 Till some one, with a groan, exprest a wish
 (Unheeded twice) to have a fin of fish.

88

On which, at the *third* asking of the banns,
 He started; and perceiving smiles around
 Broadening to grins, he coloured 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, 750
 And with such hurry, that ere he could curb it,
 He had paid his neighbour's prayer with half a turbot.

89

This was no bad mistake, as it occurred,
 The supplicator being an amateur;
 But others, who were left with scarce a third,
 Were angry – as they well might, to be sure.
 They wondered 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. 760

90

They little knew, or might have sympathized,
 That he the night before had seen a ghost;
 A prologue which but slightly harmonized
 With the substantial company engrossed
 By Matter, and so much materialized,
 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.

91

But what confused him more than smile or stare
 From all the 'squires and 'squiresses around, 770
 Who wondered at the abstraction of his air,
 Especially as he had been renowned
 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) –

92

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 780
 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.

93

'Twas a mere quiet smile of contemplation,
 Indicative of some surprise and pity;
 And Juan grew carnation⁸⁷⁶ with vexation,
 Which was not very wise and still less witty,
 Since he had gained at least her observation,
 A most important outwork⁸⁷⁷ of the city – 790
 As Juan should have known, had not his senses
 By last night's ghost been driven from their defences.

94

But what was bad, she did not blush in turn,
 Nor seem embarrassed – 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 flushed – and always clear,
 As deep seas in a Sunny Atmosphere. 800

95

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)⁸⁷⁸
 At their lord's, son's, or similar connection's
 Safe conduct through the rocks of re-elections.

96

Though this was most expedient on the whole,
 And usual – Juan, when he cast a glance 810
 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*;

97

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 called mobility, 820
 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.

98

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, 830
 Of late years, to dispense with Cocker's rigours,⁸⁷⁹
 And grow quite figurative with their figures.

99

The poets of arithmetic are they
 Who, though they prove not two and two to be
 Five, as they would 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's⁸⁸⁰ unfathomable sea,
 That most unliquidating liquid, leaves
 The debt unsunk, yet sinks all it receives. 840

100

While Adeline dispensed her airs and graces,
 The fair Fitz-Fulke seemed 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.

101

However, the day closed, as days must close;
 The evening also waned – and coffee came. 850
 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 the dinner and their host,
 But with the Lady Adeline the most.

102

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. 860
 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!

103

Meanwhile sweet Adeline deserved their praises,
 By an impartial indemnification⁸⁸¹
 For all her past exertion and soft phrases,
 In a most edifying conversation,
 Which turned upon their late guests' miens and faces,
 And families, even to the last relation; 870
 Their hideous wives, their horrid selves and dresses,
 And truculent distortion of their tresses.

104

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',⁸⁸² so wont to damn,
 Her own but served to set off every joke,
 As music chimes in with a melodrame.
 How sweet the task to shield an absent friend!
 I ask but this of mine, to – *not* defend. 880

105

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.

106

'Tis true he saw Aurora look as though
 She approved his silence; she perhaps mistook 890
 Its motive for that charity we owe
 But seldom pay the absent, nor would look
 Further; it might or it 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.

107

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 gained esteem where it was worth the most. 900
 And certainly Aurora had renewed
 In him some feelings he had lately lost
 Or hardened; feelings which, perhaps ideal,
 Are so divine, that I must deem them real: –

108

The love of higher things and better days;
 The unbounded hope, and heavenly ignorance
 Of what is called 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 910
 The heart in an existence of its own,
 Of which another's bosom is the zone.

109

Who would not sigh Αἰαῖ τὰν Κυθραιαν!¹⁸⁸³
 That *hath* a memory, or that *had* a heart?
 Alas! *her* star must wane 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 played us many tricks,
 Still we respect thee, 'Alma Venus Genetrix'!¹⁸⁸⁴ 920

110

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, willows⁸⁸⁵
 Waved o'er his couch; he meditated, fond
 Of those sweet bitter thoughts which banish sleep,
 And make the worldling sneer, the youngling weep.

111

The night was as before: he was undrest,
 Saving his night gown, which is an undress; 930
 Completely 'sans culotte',⁸⁸⁶ 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.

112

And not in vain he listened – 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! 940
 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.

113

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 950
 The starry darkness round her like a girdle
 Spangled with gems – the monk made his blood curdle.

114

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 throbbed, alas!
 For immaterialism's a serious matter;
 So that even those whose faith is the most great
 In souls immortal, shun them tête-à-tête. 960

115

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:⁸⁸⁷
 His eyes were open, and (as was before
 Stated) his mouth. What opened next? – the door.

116

It opened with a most infernal creak,
 Like that of Hell. 'Lasciate ogni speranza
 Voi che entrate!'⁸⁸⁸ The hinge seemed to speak, 970
 Dreadful as Dante's Rima, or this stanza;
 Or – but all words upon such themes are weak;
 A single shade's sufficient to entrance a
 Hero – for what is substance to a Spirit?
 Or how is't *matter* trembles to come near it?

117

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, 980
 Which still in Juan's candlesticks burned high,
 For he had two, both tolerably bright,
 And in the door-way, darkening Darkness, stood
 The sable Friar in his solemn hood.

118

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 ghost⁸⁸⁹ began to awaken
 Within him, and to quell his corporal quaking – 990
 Hinting that soul and body on the whole
 Were odds against a disembodied soul.

119

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,⁸⁹⁰
 At whatsoever risk of being defeated:
 The ghost stopped, menaced, then retired, until
 He reached the ancient wall, then stood stone still. 1000

120

Juan put forth one arm – Eternal Powers!
 It touched no soul, nor body, but the wall,
 On which the moonbeams fell in silvery showers
 Chequered 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 non-entity
 Should cause more fear than a whole host's identity!

121

But still the shade remained; the blue eyes glared,
 And rather variably for stony death; 1010
 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.

122

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. 1020
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.

123

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! 1030
In full, voluptuous, but *not o'ergrown* bulk,
The phantom of her frolic Grace – Fitz-Fulke!

Notes to *Don Juan*

Frequently occurring terms and names appear in the Glossary

Abbreviations:

LB Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads*

PL Milton's *Paradise Lost*

References to Byron's *Letter and Journals* appear in brackets in the form (1:1)

EPIGRAPH

- 1 (p. 51) *Difficile . . . dicere* 'It is hard to write of common things', from Horace's *Ars Poetica*

DEDICATION

- 2 (p. 52) *pye* Byron's use of the familiar nursery rhyme also links Southey to Pye – see Glossary.
- 3 (p. 54) *dry Bob* a pun on Southey's lack of inspiration and Regency pun for sexual intercourse without ejaculation
- 4 (p. 54) *immortal hill* Parnasus – see Glossary.
- 5 (p. 55) *engross* monopolise
- 6 (p. 55) *winged steed* Pegasus – see Glossary.
- 7 (p. 55) *Arise like Titan* rise like the sun-god
- 8 (p. 55) *If . . . Time* echoing PL, 7, 25–6
- 9 (p. 55) *Sire . . . Son* Milton remained a staunch republican, unlike by implication many of Byron's fellow poets.
- 10 (p. 56) *Like Samuel* See I Samuel, 28:13–14.
- 11 (p. 56) *Erin's gore* Castlereaugh was involved in suppressing popular uprisings in Ireland (1797–1801).
- 12 (p. 56) *fetters by another fix'd* Castlereaugh condoned Austrian control of Italy.
- 13 (p. 56) *Ixion's grindstone* In Greek mythology Ixion was chained to a continually turning wheel in Hell.
- 14 (p. 57) *Eutropius* fourth/fifth-century eunuch and politician in the palace of Constantinople
- 15 (p. 57) '*buff and blue*' colours identified with the Whigs
- 16 (p. 57) *Ultra-Julian* after the Roman Emperor Julian (361–3) who rejected Christianity in favour of paganism, hence turncoat

CANTO ONE

- 17 (p. 58) *Vernon . . . Howe* a list of military heroes
- 18 (p. 58) *sign-posts . . . Wellesley* a reference to the fashion for naming streets after military heroes. Wellesley is the Duke of Wellington – see Glossary.
- 19 (p. 58) *'nine farrow'* See *Macbeth*, 4, 1, 65.
- 20 (p. 58) *Dumoirier . . . Morreau* a list of French revolutionary heroes celebrated in the French newspapers of the day, here used largely for comic effect
- 21 (p. 58) *Nelson . . . Jervis* a list of British naval heroes
- 22 (p. 59) *Agamemnon* leader of the Greek forces at Troy
- 23 (p. 59) *'in medias res'* Classical epics start in the middle of the action.
- 24 (p. 60) *learned Lady* Despite Byron's denials (4, 47), it is usually assumed that Donna Inez is modelled on his wife.
- 25 (p. 60) *Calderon . . . Lopé* seventeenth-century Spanish dramatists
- 26 (p. 60) *Fenagle's . . . art* a reference to a mnemonic or memory system popular at the time
- 27 (p. 61) *'I am . . . d—n'* The Hebrew word for God is thought to derive from the verb to be, thus the word might also appear before damn in the English expression God damn.
- 28 (p. 61) *Miss Edgeworth's novels* Maria Edgeworth (1767–1849) popular novelist
- 29 (p. 61) *Miss Trimmer's books* Sarah Trimmer (1741–1810) educationalist
- 30 (p. 61) *'Coelebs' Wife'* a novel by Hannah Moore (1809)
- 31 (p. 61) *'female errors fall'* from Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* (1711), 2, 17
- 32 (p. 62) *Harrison* John Harrison (1693–1776) clockmaker, who perfected a chronometer which could determine a ship's longitude
- 33 (p. 62) *'incomparable oil'* from a current advertisement for the hair oil Macassar
- 34 (p. 62) *lineal son* descended from
- 35 (p. 63) *'brain . . . fan'* from Shakespeare's *Henry V*, Pt 1, 2, 3, 26
- 36 (p. 63) *falchions* swords
- 37 (p. 63) *ladies intellectual* See Blues in the Glossary.
- 38 (p. 65) *'malus animus'* a bad heart
- 39 (p. 66) *Numa's . . . Pompilius* the mythical second king of Rome, famed for his peaceable reign
- 40 (p. 67) *messauges* houses with land
- 41 (p. 68) *bustle . . . bodices* contemporary clothing, comically imagined to be worn by gods and goddesses

- 42 (p. 68) *Aeneids* . . . *Odysseys* classical epic poetry
- 43 (p. 68) *Longinus* uses Sappho's amatory verse as an example
- 44 (p. 68) '*Formosum* . . . *Corydon*' the opening line of Virgil's *Alexis*, 'The shepherd Corydon burned for Alexis'
- 45 (p. 68) *Lucretius' irreligion* Lucretius (d. c.54BC) Roman poet, famous for his atheistic views
- 46 (p. 68) *Juvenal* second-century satirist of Roman life
- 47 (p. 68) *Martial* first-century Roman poet of witty but often coarse epigrams
- 48 (p. 69) *Jerome* . . . *Chrysostom* Jerome (c.340–420) and Chrysostom (c.370) earlier Christian writers
- 49 (p. 71) *Boabdil* Mohammed XI the last Muslim ruler of Granada
- 50 (p. 72) *heirs* . . . *law* children out of wedlock
- 51 (p. 73) *aerial bow* rainbow
- 52 (p. 73) '*mi vien in mente*' Latin, it comes to my mind
- 53 (p. 73) *St* . . . *reason* Byron confuses St Anthony with St Francis – see Glossary.
- 54 (p. 73) *mulct* penalty
- 55 (p. 75) *Armida's fairy art* Armida the sorceress in Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*
- 56 (p. 76) *Tarquin quake* a mythical Roman tyrant
- 57 (p. 78) *mail* armour
- 58 (p. 78) *inter nos* Latin, between us
- 59 (p. 79) *seraph* one of the orders of angels, hence pure love
- 60 (p. 79) *The bard I quote* from Campbell's *Gertrude of Wyoming*, 3, 1
- 61 (p. 81) *Boscan, or Garcilasso* sixteenth-century Spanish love poets
- 62 (p. 82) *Young Hopeful's* . . . *Miss Fanny's* stock characters from eighteenth-century drama
- 63 (p. 84) *Louis* an obsolete French coin worth about 20 Francs
- 64 (p. 86) *moon* . . . *CHASTE* See Diana in the Glossary.
- 65 (p. 88) *Adria's gondalier* Venice is on the Adriatic Sea.
- 66 (p. 89) '*us youth*' See Shakespeare's Falstaff, *Henry V*, Pt 1, 2, 2, 93.
- 67 (p. 89) *Israelites* potential heirs, after the Israelites the chosen people of God
- 68 (p. 89) *ambrosial* from ambrosia the food of the gods
- 69 (p. 90) *Congreve's rockets* early and largely ineffective military rockets invented by William Congreve (1772–1814)
- 70 (p. 90) *Humane Society* founded 1774 to prevent drowning
- 71 (p. 90) *great* great pox, syphilis or lues, popularly believed to have originated in America

- 72 (p. 90) *lantern* Humphry Davy invented the safety lamp in 1815.
- 73 (p. 90) *Timbuctoo* Timbuktu in West Africa
- 74 (p. 91) *wax grow*
- 75 (p. 92) *in a crack* in a moment
- 76 (p. 94) *Cortejo* Spanish, a young lover taken in marriage
- 77 (p. 94) *O'Reilly* Alexander O'Reilly led a failed Spanish expedition against Algiers in 1775.
- 78 (p. 95) *Cazzini* This and the following names are invented names for lovers. Cazzo means penis; many Irish peers were created following the union of England and Ireland in 1801.
- 79 (p. 95) *moon is* he must be mad
- 80 (p. 97) *Achates* A friend of Aeneas, the hero of the *Aeneid* who was famed for his fidelity.
- 81 (p. 98) '*posse comitatus*' the power of the country, his men
- 82 (p. 99) *unfilch'd good name* See *Othello*, 3, 3, 159–61.
- 83 (p. 99) *Clarence . . . butt* In *Richard III* Clarence is threatened with drowning in a barrel containing malmsey, a sweet wine.
- 84 (p. 99) *Hebrew Chronicle* See I Kings, 1:2–3.
- 85 (p. 102) *Adam lingering* See *PL*, 12, 636–9.
- 86 (p. 103) *income-tax* first introduced in Britain in 1799
- 87 (p. 104) *like Joseph leaving it* See the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife in Genesis, 39:7–18.
- 88 (p. 105) *nonsuit* legally to declare against the plaintiff due to lack of evidence
- 89 (p. 105) *Gurney* William Gurney (1777–1855), shorthand recorder of trials
- 90 (p. 107) '*Elle vous suit partout*' She follows you everywhere. Byron's own seal had this motto.
- 91 (p. 108) *Vade Mecum* handbook
- 92 (p. 108) *poetical commandments* the following is modelled on the Ten Commandments
- 93 (p. 109) *one* probably Byron's wife who moved in Bluestocking circles
- 94 (p. 110) *coral* a teething ring
- 95 (p. 110) *grandmother's review* the conservative periodical *The British Review*
- 96 (p. 110) *holy new alliance* a comic comparison between this pretend bribe and the actions of the powers, the Holy Alliance at the Congress of Vienna (1815)
- 97 (p. 110) '*Non . . . Planco*' 'I had not borne such an insult in my youth when Plancus was counsel', from *Odes*, 3, 14
- 98 (p. 110) *Brenta* an Italian river, hence Byron's move to Italy

- 99 (p. 111) *peruke* a wig
 100 (p. 112) *Frair . . . head* See Robert Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, 9, 59 ff.
 101 (p. 112) *chymic* Chyme is digested food.
 102 (p. 113) '*Go little book*' a traditional literary ending, here quoted from Southey's 'Epilogue to the Lay of the Laureate'

CANTO TWO

- 103 (p. 114) *Peru rebel* Peru gained independence from Spain in 1821.
 104 (p. 114) *cameleopard* giraffe
 105 (p. 115) *Fazzioli* veils
 106 (p. 117) *captive Jews* See Psalm, 137.
 107 (p. 117) '*Sweets to the Sweet*' from *Hamlet*, 5, 1, 126
 108 (p. 118) *quinsy* tonsillitis
 109 (p. 119) *licentiate* licensed to teach
 110 (p. 120) *Started the stern-post* loosened the beam which supported the rudder. This and the other descriptions of the actions of a ship in a storm are accurate, derived from Byron's experience and reading.
 111 (p. 121) *grog* rum
 112 (p. 121) *maws* mouths
 113 (p. 122) *Salamanca* university founded in the thirteenth century
 114 (p. 122) *Sancho Panca* Don Quixote's companion
 115 (p. 122) *thrumm'd a sail* made the damaged sails usable
 116 (p. 124) *settling* sinking
 117 (p. 126) *booms . . . spars* parts of the ship's rigging that would float
 118 (p. 127) *peck . . . coals* Catholic souls in Purgatory could enter Heaven if prayers and masses were said for them. A peck is a small amount.
 119 (p. 127) *aqua-vita* aqua vitae, alcohol
 120 (p. 129) *Atropos* one of the fates who was said to cut the thread of life
 121 (p. 130) *woodcocks . . . suction* Woodcocks feed by probing in the ground with their long beaks.
 122 (p. 132) *Promethean vulture* See Prometheus in the Glossary.
 123 (p. 133) *subscription . . . ladies* He was carrying a sexually transmitted disease.
 124 (p. 133) *boobies . . . noddy* small sea birds
 125 (p. 134) *Ugolino* a cannibal who appears in Dante's hell
 126 (p. 134) *rich . . . beggar* an allusion to the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man, Luke, 16:19-26
 127 (p. 136) *muffle* boxing glove

- 128 (p. 137) *dove . . . olive-branch* In the biblical story of Noah land is found when a dove returns with an olive branch, which also marks God's peace with Man.
- 129 (p. 143) *an Irish lady* probably Adele Forbes (1789–1858)
- 130 (p. 143) *basquinna . . . mantilla* an outer skirt and a small cloak
- 131 (p. 144) *Homer . . . dinner* See *Iliad*, 9,166–7.
- 132 (p. 144) *piastres* a Turkish coin
- 133 (p. 145) '*take . . . stranger*' from Matthew, 25:34–40
- 134 (p. 145) '*vous*' wit (Greek)
- 135 (p. 146) *St Paul says* See St Paul on charity, Colossians, 3:14.
- 136 (p. 147) *grand-dad's Narrative* *The Narrative of John Byron* (1768) which recounts sea voyages around Patagonia. Byron gained much information especially about shipwreck and storms at sea from this.
- 137 (p. 149) *to a tittle* thoroughly
- 138 (p. 150) *pose* here, to urge
- 139 (p. 152) *the Minotaur . . . in battle* To punish King Minos of Crete, Neptune caused a bull and his wife Pasiphae to be infatuated. Their offspring was the vicious Minotaur.
- 140 (p. 153) *Romaic* modern vernacular Greek
- 141 (p. 154) *Barrow . . . Blair* renowned English preachers
- 142 (p. 154) '*dogs . . . day*' See *Hamlet*, 5, 1, 209.
- 143 (p. 155) *sweet south* the south wind
- 144 (p. 156) *Io* a sea nymph
- 145 (p. 156) *Ragusan* from Dubrovnik
- 146 (p. 158) *hock* a German white wine
- 147 (p. 158) *sublimed with* cooled with snow
- 148 (p. 162) *the Host* the bread of Holy Communion
- 149 (p. 163) *Some . . . a novel* possibly a reference to *Glenarvon*. See General Introduction.
- 150 (p. 164) *Caesar . . . Sappho* historical and mythical lovers, or writers about love, often unhappy in love
- 151 (p. 164) *Mahomet, Belisarius* Rumours were spread that Mohammed's wife Ayesha had a affair; Belisarius was a Roman general whose wife had many affairs.
- 152 (p. 165) *Epicurus and Aristippus* third-century-BC philosophers, believed to endorse a life of pleasure above all else
- 153 (p. 165) *Sardanapalus* an Assyrian philosopher of uncertain date
- 154 (p. 166) '*beau ideal*' French, the beautiful ideal, derived from (neo)Platonic philosophy
- 155 (p. 167) *lazaret* a storeroom, a sickroom
- 156 (p. 167) *fire . . . 'central'* the belief, still current at the time, that all earthquakes are caused by one underground fire

CANTO THREE

- 157 (p. 167) *et cetera* For comic effect, Byron skimps the invocation to the muse common in epic poetry.
- 158 (p. 168) *Oh, Love!* Many of the reflections on love here owe their origins to Byron's reading of La Rochefoucauld's cynical *Reflections*.
- 159 (p. 168) *cypriss branches* symbolic of death and sorrow
- 160 (p. 168) *planted* abandoned
- 161 (p. 169) *uxorious* to be excessively fond of one's wife
- 162 (p. 169) 'so . . . bond' from *Merchant of Venice*, 4, 1, 254
- 163 (p. 171) *Matapan* Tainaron, in Greece
- 164 (p. 171) *Dey of Tripoli* the ruler of a part of North Africa, now in Libya
- 165 (p. 171) *Alicant* a port in southern Spain
- 166 (p. 172) *Ithaca* a Greek island in the Ionian Sea, famed as Odysseus' or Ulysses' home
- 167 (p. 172) *to hove . . . careen* repair and clean the ship
- 168 (p. 173) *Argus* Odysseus' or Ulysses' faithful dog
- 169 (p. 175) *Chian* of the Greek island Chia
- 170 (p. 176) *Transform'd . . . to beasts* In mythology the witch Circe transformed men into beasts.
- 171 (p. 176) *What . . . iron* See Samuel Butler's *Hudibras*, 1, 3, 1–2.
- 172 (p. 177) *Avouch'd* affirmed
- 173 (p. 177) *Gird* hide
- 174 (p. 180) *country's wrongs* Greece's political submission to Turkey
- 175 (p. 181) *Colchian days* Jason sailed to Colchis in search of the Golden Fleece – an allusion to Greece's heroic past.
- 176 (p. 181) *Cyclops* a one eyed giant blinded by Odysseus or Ulysses
- 177 (p. 182) *stone* gallstone
- 178 (p. 183) *skulls at Memphian banquets* Such reminders of mortality were reportedly common at Egyptian feasts. Memphis was the capital of Ancient Egypt.
- 179 (p. 184) *Eclectic* *The Eclectic Review* criticised Byron's immorality.
- 180 (p. 185) *gold . . . instep* a mark of status in Moorish cultures
- 181 (p. 186) 'To gild . . . lily' See *King John*, 4, 2, 11.
- 182 (p. 186) *aigrette* jewels made to look like a spray of feathers
- 183 (p. 187) *psalm* Psalm 45
- 184 (p. 187) *Crashaw* Richard Crashaw (1612–49) a poet whom Byron disliked
- 185 (p. 187) 'Vates irritabilis' the irritability allowed to genius
- 186 (p. 188) *trimmer* one who changes his mind. This like much of the description suggests a portrait of Southey.

- 187 (p. 188) '*Ça ira*' a French Revolutionary song
- 188 (p. 189) *says De Staël* The essayist Madame de Stael praised Goethe – see Glossary – as the embodiment of German literature in her *Of the Germans* (1807)
- 189 (p. 189) '*Trecentisti*' fourteenth-century Italian poets
- 190 (p. 189) '*Islands of the Blest*' In Greek mythology, Zeus, the king of the gods, gave Greece to his chosen people.
- 191 (p. 189) *A king* Xerxes – see Glossary.
- 192 (p. 191) *Cadmus* reputed to have introduced the Greek alphabet
- 193 (p. 191) *Polycrates* Ruler of Samos – see Glossary.
- 194 (p. 191) *Miltiades* See Marathon in the Glossary. Byron's examples of heroic military actions, especially against the Persians (or Turks), begin to shift to more dubious examples.
- 195 (p. 191) *Suli's . . . Parga's* of two towns in Greece and Albania admired by Byron
- 196 (p. 191) *Doric* Spartan – see Glossary.
- 197 (p. 191) *Heracleidan* descendants of Hercules, famed for his strength
- 198 (p. 193) *whist . . . Hoyle* after Edmund Hoyle's *Treatise on Whist* (1742), a card game
- 199 (p. 193) *Marlborough . . . Coxe* after *Memoirs of Marlborough* (1818–19), a military leader
- 200 (p. 193) *Titus . . . Cromwell's pranks* details from the lives of eminent figures available through biography
- 201 (p. 194) *Botany Bay* a penal colony established in Australia in 1787
- 202 (p. 194) '*longueurs*' tiredness, boredom
- 203 (p. 194) *épopée* epic poetry
- 204 (p. 195) '*Homer . . . sleeps*' See Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 359.
- 205 (p. 195) *Charles's Wain* the constellation The Plough
- 206 (p. 195) *Jack Cades* Jack Cade led an unsuccessful commoners' rebellion against Henry V in 1450.
- 207 (p. 196) *Ravenna's . . . me* Ravenna is the area in Italy in which Byron settled. The allusions are to Honorius the last Roman emperor in the West (d. 423); Honoria and her lover Onesti (or Theodore), who cures her of pride using a vision of vicious dogs, appear in poems by Boccaccio and Dryden.
- 208 (p. 197) *cicalas* cicadas, grasshoppers
- 209 (p. 198) '*wooden spoons*' . . . *Cantabs* Wooden spoons were traditionally given to the worst performing students at Cambridge.
- 210 (p. 198) *passim* from Aristotle's *Art of Poetry*, given here in Greek. See Glossary.

CANTO FOUR

- 211 (p. 198) *Lucifer hurl'd* See the early books of *PL* for Lucifer's or Satan's expulsion from Heaven, esp. 4, 39–41 for his pride.
- 212 (p. 199) '*falls . . . Leaf*' from *Macbeth*, 5, 3, 22–3
- 213 (p. 201) '*Whom . . . young*' by Solon, one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece
- 214 (p. 206) *mirk* murk, darkness
- 215 (p. 207) *garments hem* See Matthew, 14:36.
- 216 (p. 208) *Irish* here in the current colloquial sense of indifferent to danger
- 217 (p. 210) *galliot* small fast sailing ships
- 218 (p. 211) *Chinese nymph* a play on the fact that tea came from China; Bohea is a kind of tea
- 219 (p. 211) *Phlegethontic* of a fiery river of Hell
- 220 (p. 211) *rack* both strong alcoholic drink, and illness following heavy drinking
- 221 (p. 212) *Numidian* North African
- 222 (p. 213) *nothing livid* pale
- 223 (p. 213) *ruling passion* In the past it was commonly believed that each person was controlled by one dominant emotion.
- 224 (p. 213) *Venus . . . Gladiator's* statues of these figures
- 225 (p. 217) '*cabin'd . . . confin'd*' from *Macbeth*, 3,4,24
- 226 (p. 217) *Cape Sigaeum* the site of battles between the Greeks and the Trojans
- 227 (p. 217) *Byrant* Jacob Bryant a contemporary antiquarian who dismissed the story of Troy
- 228 (p. 217) *Patroclus* like the names which follow, a hero of the Trojan War
- 229a (p. 217) *Ida* a mountain associated with Venus
- 229b (p. 217) *devil . . . Phrygian* Having described the region which contained the traditional site of Troy, here Byron is making the point that it had been overrun by Turks.
- 230 (p. 218) *buffo* comic-opera singer
- 231 (p. 218) *Corpo . . . Mario* By the body of Gaius Marius! Marius was a first-century Roman general; it was an oath probably coined by Byron.
- 232 (p. 218) *scudo . . . salario* without any pay
- 233 (p. 219) *zecchini . . . paul* coins, worth about a pound and two pence respectively
- 234 (p. 219) *figuranti* ballet dancers
- 235 (p. 219) *pipes . . . sex castrati* voices

- 236 (p. 221) *Dardanelles* See Hellespont in the Glossary.
- 237 (p. 221) *firman* passport
- 238 (p. 221) '*Arcades ambo*', *id est* Arcadians both that is. Arcadia is paradise, here used ironically.
- 239 (p. 221) *Romagnole* from Romagna the Italian state of which Ravenna was the capital
- 240 (p. 221) *Ancona* a port on the Adriatic
- 241 (p. 221) '*bella donna*' beautiful lady
- 242 (p. 222) '*can . . . Caucasus*' from *Richard II*, 1, 3, 294–5
- 243 (p. 222) *needles* . . . is a play on Matthew, 19:24
- 244 (p. 222) *Smollet . . . Fielding* a list writers Byron felt were more indelicate, but less criticised, than he (4:260, 276, 278)
- 245 (p. 223) '*the . . . just*' from *Acts*, 7:52
- 246 (p. 224) *De Foix* died at the battle of Ravenna (1512)
- 247 (p. 224) *Pelides* See Achilles in the Glossary.
- 248 (p. 225) *glass* mirror
- 249 (p. 225) *ceruleans* See Blues in the Glossary. Cerulean is a blue colour.
- 250 (p. 225) '*imprimatur*' the right to print books, approval
- 251 (p. 225) *cooks* Byron feared that his poems would simply end up as lining for pie dishes.
- 252 (p. 225) *Castilian* the spring on Parnassus
- 253 (p. 225) *Yorick's starling* In Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* (1768) Yorick is imprisoned with a bird which he frees.
- 254 (p. 225) '*darkly . . . blue*' from Southey's *Madoc*, 1, 5, 97–104
- 255 (p. 225) *garters* an allusion to the Order of the Garter
- 256 (p. 226) *Humboldt . . . measure you!* The explorer Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) used but did not invent an instrument for measuring the blueness of the sky.
- 257 (p. 227) *Duan* a pun on the name Macpherson – see Glossary – gave to his cantos

CANTO FIVE

- 258 (p. 228) *seventy-four* a ship with seventy-four guns
- 259 (p. 228) *Mary Montague* Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762), poet and traveller
- 260 (p. 228) '*Mary*' many women in Byron's youth had the name, including his cousin and his nurse
- 261 (p. 229) *Symplegades* in mythology, two islands which closed together to crush ships

- 262 (p. 229) *'the Giant's Grave'* the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus reputedly the grave of Amycus, the king of Berbrycus
- 263 (p. 229) *Parcae* Fates – see Glossary.
- 264 (p. 229) *bevy* group
- 265 (p. 231) *freak* trick
- 266 (p. 233) *lime-twigs* branches were covered with the sticky substance lime to catch small birds
- 267 (p. 234) *blackleg* a dishonest gambler
- 268 (p. 234) *kicks* sixpences, thus all can be bought for a price
- 269 (p. 235) *sequins* . . . *paras* large and small value coins
- 270 (p. 236) *he said* See Matthew, 8:9.
- 271 (p. 238) *wicket* a grille
- 272 (p. 238) *Saint Bartholomew* the fate of being flayed alive and crucified
- 273 (p. 238) *Esau* . . . *birthright* Esau sold his birthright for pottage, see Genesis, 25:29–34.
- 274 (p. 239) *besprent* covered with. Here modern Turkish taste is contrasted to that of Ancient Greece.
- 275 (p. 240) *crack'd* in the sense of damaged. He is a eunuch.
- 276 (p. 240) *Death* financial ruin
- 277 (p. 242) *Nebuchadonosor* Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, whose dream of eating grass was interpreted by Daniel – see Daniel, 4:32–3.
- 278 (p. 242) *Thisbe* . . . *Pyramuis* lovers. See Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, 4, 54–8.
- 279 (p. 243) *Semiramis* . . . *tale* a Babylonian queen who reputedly fell in love with her own horse. A courier is a messenger, whilst a courser is a horse.
- 280 (p. 243) *Rich* . . . *memoirs* the representative of the East India company in Baghdad who wrote *Memoirs of Babylon* (1815)
- 281 (p. 243) *'Et . . . domos'* forgetful of the tomb you build palaces, from *Ode*, 2, 18–19
- 282 (p. 245) *circumcision* Muslim males are circumcised.
- 283 (p. 249) *line* . . . *Constantine* The Roman Empire moved its capital to Constantinople, after Constantine I in the fourth century. The city was taken by the Turks in 1453.
- 284 (p. 249) *extraneous mixture* unnaturally incompatible with their origins
- 285 (p. 250) *strings* . . . *cravat* to strangle with a bow string
- 286 (p. 250) *incubi* devils in human form who appeared to women
- 287 (p. 250) *Marmora* a small sea between Asia and Europe

- 288 (p. 252) *Ninon de l'Enclos* Ann de L'Enclos (1620–1705), French society lady who had lovers into her eighties
- 289 (p. 253) 'Nil . . . Creech' from Horace's *Epistle*, 1, 6, 1–2. Murray is Byron's publisher; and like Creech, a translator of Horace, Mr Murray (Lord Mansfield) is mentioned in the translation of the *Epistle* by Pope. The reference to Pope allows Byron to pun on the Pope.
- 290 (p. 253) *Atlas* in mythology held up the world
- 291 (p. 254) *brace* pair
- 292 (p. 255) *cherub* . . . *Eve* In depictions of the temptation of Eve the Devil is often presented as half serpent, half attractive cherub.
- 293 (p. 255) 'perpetual motion' the idea of a machine which would run without the input of any energy
- 294 (p. 256) *compass* contemplate
- 295 (p. 257) 'wine and oil' In the parable, the Good Samaritan treated the traveller's wounds with wine and oil – see Luke, 10:29–37.
- 296 (p. 258) *meridian clime* Southern country
- 297 (p. 259) *web and woof* material that has been woven
- 298 (p. 260) 'right divine' Traditionally monarchs were said to rule by Divine Right.
- 299 (p. 260) *dog-days* the hottest part of the year, the worst part of a life
- 300 (p. 260) *Potiphar* . . . *Phaedra* women in myth, history and fiction, who have their sexual advances rejected
- 301 (p. 261) *Hotspur* Henry Percy (1364–1403) appears in Shakespeare's history plays; the quote is from *Henry V*, Pt 1, 1, 3, 202.
- 302 (p. 261) *to* . . . *Lear's* Lear is a tragic king driven mad by his daughters; the quote is from *King Lear*, 4, 6, 189.
- 303 (p. 262) *pipkins* simple small bowls
- 304 (p. 263) *palms* . . . *oozed* Bob Acre says that he is losing his courage through the palms of his hands in Sheridan's play *The Rivals* (1775), 5, 3.
- 305 (p. 264) *port* bearing
- 306 (p. 264) *Knolles* . . . *Solyman* Richard Knolles, author of *The Generall Historie of the Turks* (1621); Sulieman the Magnificent (1494–1566), Turkish ruler who greatly expanded the Ottoman Empire, but was also known for his cultural activities
- 307 (p. 264) 'Oriental scupulosity' a phrase borrowed from Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets* (1781)
- 308 (p. 265) 'the Seven Towers' reputedly the prison in which Turkish rulers locked up political enemies

- 309 (p. 266) *fit for heaven* here in the sense of cheated on them. This episode as a whole makes reference to the plight of Queen Caroline, who was sued for divorce on the grounds of adultery by George IV in 1820.
- 310 (p. 267) *pipe . . . prick'd* a cask soured

CANTO SIX

- 311 (p. 270) '*There . . . flood*' from *Julius Caesar*, 4, 3, 216–9
- 312 (p. 270) *Behmen* or Bohme, seventeenth-century German mystic with a large following in England
- 313 (p. 270) *Anthony . . . victories* The Roman leader Anthony was defeated at the battle of Actium, distracted by his love for Cleopatra.
- 314 (p. 272) *Tigris* Indian river, thus women are jealous all over the world
- 315 (p. 272) '*Bed of Ware*' a famous bed, twelve feet square, originally kept in an inn in Ware, Hertfordshire
- 316 (p. 273) '*Highland welcome*' Scottish hospitality had been championed in Scott's novels.
- 317 (p. 274) '*Medio . . . ibis*' in the middle is the safest path, not Horace but from Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, 2, 136
- 318 (p. 274) *pink* excellent
- 319 (p. 275) *Athanasius's curse* the orthodox Christian creed
- 320 (p. 276) *tyrant* the first-century Roman Emperor, Caligula
- 321 (p. 276) *Briareus* a mythological giant with fifty hands and heads
- 322 (p. 276) *Lilliput* the land of small people in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726)
- 323 (p. 277) *Odaliques* harem slaves
- 324 (p. 277) *de Tott* Baron François de Tott's *Memoirs* (1786)
- 325 (p. 278) '*beautiful exceedingly*' from Coleridge's *Christabel*, 1, 68
- 326 (p. 280) '*murder sleep*' from *Macbeth*, 2, 2, 37
- 327 (p. 281) *Ginns* jinns
- 328 (p. 283) *Age of Gold* a mythical time of primitive perfection in the past, as opposed to the present or Age of Brass
- 329 (p. 284) *Epicene* common to both sexes
- 330 (p. 286) *bull* lie, trick
- 331 (p. 286) *Lot's . . . salt* Lot's wife is turned into a pillar of salt – see Genesis, 19.
- 332 (p. 287) *meteor . . . North Pole* the aurora borealis or Northern Lights
- 333 (p. 288) '*no . . . is*' from *Julius Caesar*, 3, 2, 216

- 334 (p. 290) '*mal-à-propos*' badly
 335 (p. 291) *nightingale* . . . *wail* In folklore the nightingale sang mournfully because of a thorn in its heart.
 336 (p. 292) *embargo* forbidden
 337 (p. 293) *Alexander* the Russian leader at the time of the Congress of Vienna who helped to restore the French Monarchy
 338 (p. 293) *Timon* a famous fifth-century-BC misanthrope
 339 (p. 293) *plenipo* plenipotentiary, an ambassador granted powers to act
 340 (p. 294) *porphyry* ornamental seaweed
 341 (p. 295) *holy camel* See *Koran*, 22, 36.
 342 (p. 295) *sack'd* put into a sack
 343 (p. 296) '*all amort*' lifeless, dejected
 344 (p. 296) *Pythoress* Pythia the priestess of Apollo
 345 (p. 297) *Sallust* . . . *Catiline* the first-century-BC historian who wrote about the Catiline war
 346 (p. 298) '*Jack Ketch*' an executioner

CANTO SEVEN

- 347 (p. 300) *What* . . . *show* See *As You Like It*, 2, 7, 137–42.
 348 (p. 300) *Dante* . . . *Diogenes* In this list Byron seeks to relate his views to a wide range of thinkers, to protect himself from the charge of being immoral.
 349 (p. 301) '*To* . . . *known*' Socrates reported in Plato's *Apology*
 350 (p. 301) *Newton* . . . *Truth* Newton's – see Glossary – humility reported in David Brewster's *Life of Isaac Newton* (1860)
 351 (p. 301) '*all is vanity*' Ecclesiastes, 1:2
 352 (p. 301) '*Fierce loves and faithless wars*' a slight misquote of the opening of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590), 1, 7
 353 (p. 302) *verst*s a Russian measure, each about two thirds of a mile
 354 (p. 302) *Vauban* (1633–1707) a French military engineer
 355 (p. 302) *bastion* . . . *gorge* a small projecting fortification, entered through the back from the main fortification
 356 (p. 302) *batteries* . . . *barbette* fortifications armed head to foot, like St George; one bomb proof, one with a gun platform
 357 (p. 303) *Londonderry, drawing* a dig at the speechmaking of Castleraeagh – see Glossary. Some of the Russian names given here are actual, others made up for rhyme.
 358 (p. 304) *Mufti* Muslim priest
 359 (p. 304) *bard* See Thomson in Glossary.

- 360 (p. 304) 'in . . . *Halifax*' from a song in George Colman the Younger's (1762–1836) play *Love Laughs at Locksmiths*
- 361 (p. 305) *some one* see *Hamlet*, 4, 4, 56–62
- 362 (p. 306) *Longman* . . . *Murray* publishers
- 363 (p. 306) *lubberly* lazily
- 364 (p. 307) *cable's length* a tenth of a nautical mile, about two hundred metres
- 365 (p. 307) *Delhis* Albanian cavalry
- 366 (p. 307) *Langeron* . . . *Damas* professional army officers of the day
- 367 (p. 308) *Ribas* (1737–97) commanded the Russian fleet at Ismail
- 368 (p. 310) 'Let . . . *light*' See Genesis, 1, 3; *fiat* (line 3) is a command.
- 369 (p. 310) *hogs* . . . *bacon* a joke on the fact that Muslims do not eat pork. To save your bacon is to save yourself.
- 370 (p. 310) *illumination* Gas lamps were introduced in London in 1812. It was customary to light these in celebration; Byron mocks such celebrations in the following stanzas, remarking on the state of England in the early 1820s.
- 371 (p. 310) *bottle-conjuror* juggler
- 372 (p. 311) *bell-wether* a castrated ram which leads the flock
- 373 (p. 312) *break* . . . *flame* train a soldier to face battle. In legend salamanders were said to endure fire.
- 374 (p. 312) *ladder* . . . *Jacob's* Jacob's ladder ascended to heaven.
- 375 (p. 313) *nonce* moment
- 376 (p. 313) *Momus* . . . *Harlequin* Momus, the Greek god of mockery, and Harlequin suggest the reputedly clownish nature of the general.
- 377 (p. 315) *tusk* ploughshare
- 378 (p. 318) *diadem* jewelled crown or headband
- 379 (p. 320) *desideratum* something desired
- 380 (p. 320) *Bonaparte* See Napoleon in the Glossary.
- 381 (p. 320) *purple* . . . *harlot* a symbol of degradation. See Revelation, 17: 1–5.
- 382 (p. 320) *pig* . . . *wind* Proverbially pigs were held to be able to predict the weather.
- 383 (p. 321) *bob-major* a loud peal of bells

CANTO EIGHT

- 384 (p. 322) *Hydra* a nine-headed serpent, whose heads could grow back, killed by Hercules
- 385 (p. 324) *Arseniew* a general involved in the siege, and in looting the city
- 386 (p. 324) 'Carnage . . . daughter' See Wordsworth's *Thanksgiving Ode*, which indicated for Byron the degree of Wordsworth's shift to a reactionary position on war.
- 387 (p. 324) *emetic* . . . *diuretic* strictly something which causes vomiting, and something which causes the discharge of urine. Medical terms are used for comic effect within the context of war here.
- 388 (p. 324) *death-watch* a beetle, the sound of which is supposed to predict death
- 389 (p. 325) *Vesuvius* a volcano
- 390 (p. 327) *Frederick* . . . *run* Frederick the Great of Prussia retreated from the battle of Molvitz (1741).
- 391 (p. 327) *Punic* . . . *national* Byron plays with the contemporary debate about the origins of the Irish language, and its possible affinity with classical languages.
- 392 (p. 327) 'broth of a boy' Irish colloquialism, a real boy (man)
- 393 (p. 328) *pave Hell* from the proverb, to pave hell with good intentions
- 394 (p. 328) *Pall Mall* at the time the centre of London social life
- 395 (p. 328) *snatch a shield* a reference to Caesar's heroic rallying of his troops in a battle against the Nervii
- 396 (p. 330) *glacis* the top of a fortified slope
- 397 (p. 330) 'shadows . . . valley' See *Psalms*, 23:4.
- 398 (p. 331) *Chasseurs* lightly armed, rapidly moving troops
- 399 (p. 331) 'the Spirits . . . deep' See *Henry V*, Pt 1, 3, 1, 53.
- 400 (p. 332) *misty* . . . *dread* See *Hamlet*, 3, 1, 78–80.
- 401 (p. 332) *malgré* despite
- 402 (p. 332) *stickle* contest
- 403 (p. 332) *talus* the side of a rampart
- 404 (p. 333) *Cohorn's ignorance* They were unaware of the grenade-throwing mortar invented by Menno von Coehoorn (1641–1704).
- 405 (p. 333) *knock under* give pride of place to
- 406 (p. 334) *Blücher* . . . *Gneisenau* Prussian generals, whom Byron sees as really responsible for the victory at Waterloo (1815)
- 407 (p. 334) *craw* stomach
- 408 (p. 334) *veriest* . . . *rings* See *Hamlet*, 3, 2, 245–6. A jade is a poor, or bad tempered, horse.

- 409 (p. 334) *rules of posting* rules for the care of post horses
- 410 (p. 334) *David . . . giant* the defeat of Goliath by David. See Samuel, 1:27.
- 411 (p. 335) *Elysium* heaven
- 412 (p. 335) *blood-horse* thoroughbred. The description that follows relies on racing language.
- 413 (p. 335) *Bezonian . . . Livonian* a bezonian is a raw recruit – see Pistol in *Henry V*, Pt 2, 4, 1, 143; Livonian from a Russian republic on the Baltic coast
- 414 (p. 336) ‘*God . . . town*’ from William Cowper’s poem *The Task* (1785), 1, 749
- 415 (p. 336) *Rome . . . Nineveh* towns from myth and history which were brought down
- 416 (p. 337) *General Boon* Daniel Boone (1734–1820) American frontiersman. Byron uses his primitive life as a contrast with the pursuit of military glory.
- 417 (p. 337) *Man of Ross* John Kyrle (1637–1724) retired to an estate in Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire and lived a simple life, giving most of his money to charity.
- 418 (p. 338) *sylvan* dwelling in the woods
- 419 (p. 339) *sanguinary* bloody
- 420 (p. 339) *Koutousow* Russian general, later involved in Napoleon’s defeat in Russia
- 421 (p. 340) ‘*Forlorn . . . Hopes*’ the first troops in an attack
- 422 (p. 340) *orthography* the study of spelling
- 423 (p. 340) *taken by the tail* a pun: both attacked from the rear, and to sodomise
- 424 (p. 343) *rendered* surrendered
- 425 (p. 344) *terrific* in the original sense of terrifying
- 426 (p. 344) *Pharisaic* hypocritical
- 427 (p. 345) ‘*ears polite*’ from Pope’s *Moral Essays*, *Epistle*, 4, 150
- 428 (p. 345) *chirurgeons* surgeons
- 429 (p. 346) *St George’s collar* an invented military honour, after St George, the patron saint of England
- 430 (p. 348) *Priam’s . . . son* the heroes Hector, Achilles and Hercules
- 431 (p. 348) *Swedish Charles* Charles XII refused to surrender to the Turks at the Battle of Bender (1709).
- 432 (p. 349) *bottom* here, colloquialism for staying power
- 433 (p. 349) *black-eyed girls in green* See *houris* in the Glossary.
- 434 (p. 351) ‘*aroynt!*’ stand off, begone, a Shakespearean word
- 435 (p. 351) *bey* a Turkish governor

- 436 (p. 352) *three . . . tails* an indication of his rank
- 437 (p. 352) *crescent's . . . cross* the Islamic and the Christian symbols
- 438 (p. 352) *Muscadins* young frivolous men
- 439 (p. 353) *Ireland's . . . story* In 1822, with the failure of the potato crop, Ireland suffered a famine.
- 440 (p. 353) *Great George* George IV, whose extreme weight was a matter of public comment
- 441 (p. 354) *'single blessedness'* virginity, from *Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1, 1, 78
- 442 (p. 354) *Sabine wedding* Roman soldiers raped the Sabine women c.290BC.
- 443 (p. 355) *Timour . . . Zinghis* Genghis Khan (1162–1227) and his descendent Timour (c.1336–1405), Mongol military leaders and conquerors
- 444 (p. 355) *'Menè . . . Upharsin'* This was the phrase written at Belshazzar's feast – see Glossary.
- 445 (p. 355) *truckle* bow down
- 446 (p. 356) *drawn . . . bow* to exaggerate
- 447 (p. 356) *St Vladimir* a military decoration introduced by Catherine the Great, after the saint who introduced Christianity to Russia
- 448 (p. 357) *Muezzin's* Muslim cleric who makes the call to prayer

CANTO NINE

- 449 (p. 357) *Vilainton* a rendering of Wellington in French satirical song
- 450 (p. 357) *'Nay'* pun: both 'no' and the French general Michel Ney (1769–1815), a hero of the Napoleonic campaigns
- 451 (p. 357) *Kinnaird . . . affair* Lord Charles Kinnaird (1780–1826) became an enemy of Wellington's after his trust was betrayed over a possible assassination attempt on the Duke in 1818.
- 452 (p. 357) *tabby* a gossip
- 453 (p. 358) *'the best of cut-throats'* from *Macbeth*, 3, 4, 17
- 454 (p. 358) *plate . . . Brazils* John IV of Portugal spent the Napoleonic period in Brazil. He presented Wellington with a silver platter.
- 455 (p. 358) *Cincinnatus* a Roman model of integrity
- 456 (p. 359) *Epaminondas* fourth-century-BC statesman renowned for his honesty, died in poverty
- 457 (p. 359) *Death laughs* For this and much of the following language, see Talbot's speech in *Henry V*, Pt 1, 4, 7, 18.
- 458 (p. 360) *'To . . . question'* from *Hamlet*, 3, 1, 56

- 459 (p. 360) *Hephaestion* Alexander's companion
- 460 (p. 360) 'Oh . . . reapers' freely translated from Horace's *Epode*, 3, 4
- 461 (p. 361) 'Que sçais-je?' What do I know? Montaigne (1533–92), essayist and sceptical philosopher
- 462 (p. 361) *Pyrrro* third-century-BC complete sceptic who doubted everything
- 463 (p. 361) 'But . . . pray!' See *Othello*, 2, 3, 103–13.
- 464 (p. 361) 'The . . . providence' See *Hamlet*, 5, 2, 218–9; the phrase also has biblical origins.
- 465 (p. 362) *Theogony* the (study of the) genealogy of the gods
- 466 (p. 362) *Lykanthropy* having the condition of a werewolf
- 467 (p. 362) *Melancthon* Philip Schwartzerd (1497–1560), a humanist, renowned, like Moses, for his compassion
- 468 (p. 362) *proem* introduction
- 469 (p. 362) *immortal Peter's* Peter I founded St Petersburg, the then Russian capital, in 1703.
- 470 (p. 363) *sail before the wind* change opinion opportunistically
- 471 (p. 364) *Spanish Fly and Attic Bee* Agitators for freedom in Spain and Greece. Spanish Fly is an aphrodisiac; and for Attica, see Glossary.
- 472 (p. 364) *main of cocks* a cockfight, and also a sexual pun
- 473 (p. 365) *Nadir Shah* Persian ruler (1688–1747), who partly due to illnesses became increasingly dictatorial and was assassinated
- 474 (p. 365) 'Courtier's kibes' from *Hamlet*, 5, 1, 150. Kibes are chilblains.
- 475 (p. 366) 'Apropos . . . bottles' in relation to nothing in particular
- 476 (p. 367) 'The time . . . joint' See *Hamlet*, 1, 5, 89.
- 477 (p. 367) *baiting* feeding
- 478 (p. 367) *a Cairn Gorme* topaz, a semi-precious stone, from the Scottish mountain of the same name
- 479 (p. 369) *Lanskoi . . . Scherbatoff* the names of some of Catherine's lovers, some fanciful, some actual
- 480 (p. 370) *Parisian* like Paris, whose elopement with Helen caused the Trojan War
- 481 (p. 370) 'tetterima . . . belli' the most terrible cause of war, from Horace's *Satire*, 1, 3, 87. The following discussion of women indulges in sexual puns.
- 482 (p. 372) *Giles* Giles Overreach in Massinger's play *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1633)
- 483 (p. 373) 'the herald . . . hill' from *Hamlet*, 3, 4, 58–9. *Mercury* is the messenger of the gods.

- 484 (p. 373) *Smooth'd . . . Simplon's* A road was completed through the Alpine Simplon Pass in 1806.
- 485 (p. 373) '*black drop*' an opium drink
- 486 (p. 374) '*deigns to prove*' from Pope's 'Eloisa to Aberlard' (1719), 87
- 487 (p. 375) *Messalina's self* the profligate wife of the Roman emperor Claudius
- 488 (p. 376) *canonical* relating to the Church
- 489 (p. 376) *the thing in hand* a typical sexual pun
- 490 (p. 376) *specie* species, objects
- 491 (p. 377) *Clytemnestra* wife of Agamemnon, mythical adulteress and murderer
- 492 (p. 377) *Elizabeth . . . favourite* Elizabeth I, renowned for her meanness, had her favourite Essex executed in 1601.
- 493 (p. 378) *Protassof . . . 'l'Éprouveuse'* Russian Royal (b.1744). *Éprouveuse* means someone who is distressed.

CANTO TEN

- 494 (p. 379) *exordium* introduction
- 495 (p. 379) '*Oh . . . rest!*' See Psalms 55:6.
- 496 (p. 380) *Arno* Byron's palace overlooked the Arno in Pisa.
- 497 (p. 381) '*reformadoes*' reformers
- 498 (p. 381) *Caledon* a town in Canada
- 499a (p. 382) *legal broom's* pun on Brougham. See Glossary.
- 499b (p. 382) *snoods* hoods
- 500 (p. 382) *brig's* bridge's
- 501 (p. 383) '*scotched not killed*' from *Macbeth*, 3, 2, 13
- 502 (p. 383) '*mountain . . . flood*' from Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), 6, 2, 19–20
- 503 (p. 384) *Gracchus . . . laws* second-century-BC Roman tribune who attempted to redistribute land more fairly
- 504 (p. 384) '*purple and fine linen*' . . . *harlot* The quotation is from Luke, 16:9; the Harlot of Babylon wears purple and scarlet in Revelation, 17:4. Both are symbols of materialistic corruption.
- 505 (p. 385) *kelp* seaweed
- 506 (p. 386) *Greek worship* Orthodox Christianity
- 507 (p. 386) *forty-parson-power* a pun on horse-power
- 508 (p. 387) *knight's fees* It was popularly believed that William the Conqueror was accompanied by 60,000 knights at the Battle of Hastings (1066), all of whom were rewarded with the confiscated lands of defeated English knights.

- 509 (p. 387) *Radulphus* Byron's ancestors were believed to have come over with the Conquest. The amount of property he imagines is an exaggeration.
- 510 (p. 387) *Neva's ice* The River Neva flows through St Petersburg.
- 511 (p. 388) *physick'd Peter* Catherine was alleged to have poisoned her husband Peter III in 1763.
- 512 (p. 388) *'Sodae . . . capiendus'* a prescription, probably for a purgative
- 513 (p. 388) *Secundum artem* Latin, in accordance with medical science
- 514 (p. 388) *'hiatus . . . deflendus'* the great lamented gap, the grave
- 515 (p. 388) *mattock* shovel
- 516 (p. 388) *Baillie . . . Abermethy* contemporary surgeons
- 517 (p. 389) *to gravel the Faculty* baffle the doctors
- 518 (p. 389) *Thetis . . . 'uti posseditis'* Britain's absolute rights to the sea. For Thetis, see Glossary.
- 519 (p. 390) *climacteric teased* menopause troubled
- 520 (p. 390) *Barouche* a four-wheeled covered carriage
- 521 (p. 390) *Iphigene . . . Tauris* In mythology, Iphigenia was saved from sacrifice by being transported to Tauris; Catherine visited its modern equivalent, the Crimea, in 1787.
- 522 (p. 392) *Courland . . . 'Biron'* This region in Poland was the birthplace of Biron (c.1690), who came to exemplify the corrupt nature of Russian politics. The name, of course, sounds the same as Byron.
- 523 (p. 392) *modern Mars* Napoleon – see Glossary.
- 524 (p. 393) *Kosciusko's name* Tadeusz Kosciusko (1746–1817), Polish leader who led an uprising against Russia (1791–4)
- 525 (p. 393) *Professor Kant* Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), pre-eminent philosopher of the time
- 526 (p. 393) *eleven . . . bone* the bones of the Martyred Virgins taken from a Roman cemetery discovered in Cologne in the twelfth century
- 527 (p. 394) *Helvoetsluys* a city port near Rotterdam
- 528 (p. 394) *juniper . . . juice* gin, the popularity of which amongst the poor led to prohibiting legislation in the nineteenth century
- 529 (p. 394) *haughty shopkeepers* Napoleon is said to have dismissed the English as a nation of shopkeepers.
- 530 (p. 395) *mucks* amuck
- 531 (p. 395) *Maggior Duomo* major-domo, chief steward
- 532 (p. 396) *'Hundsfo't . . . Verflucter'* German expletives, scoundrel and curses
- 533 (p. 396) *Black . . . stone* Edward, the Black Prince (1330–76), and Thomas à Beckett, Archbishop of Canterbury (d.1170), are both commemorated in Canterbury Cathedral.

- 534 (p. 396) *Bedral* beadle, an officer of the Church
- 535 (p. 396) *Cressys* after the Battle of Crecy (1346), a famous English victory
- 536 (p. 397) '*kick against the pricks*' colloquialism, to put up resistance
- 537 (p. 397) '*Surgit . . . aliquid*' rises a drop of bitterness, from Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*, 4,1334
- 538 (p. 398) *Machiavel . . . curses* In *The Prince* (1532), Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) warns rulers against taking the property of others (Chapter 27).
- 539 (p. 398) '*Devil's drawing-room*' an allusion to the popular belief that volcanoes originated in Hell. Byron here draws attention to the polluted state of London.
- 540 (p. 399) *besom* a broom, a pun on Brougham. See Glossary.
- 541 (p. 399) *Curtis . . . Hal* Sir William Curtis, City MP from 1790–1818, was the self-made favourite of George IV, ridiculed for his lack of learning; in particular he was mocked for wearing a kilt. Here he is compared to Shakespeare's Falstaff.
- 542 (p. 400) *Roland's . . . battle* The hero Roländ was killed at the Battle of Roncesvalles (773), reputedly whilst calling for help on his horn.

CANTO ELEVEN

- 543 (p. 400) *Bishop Berkeley* George Berkeley (1685–1753), Bishop of Cloyne, whose Idealist philosophy was popularly believed to disprove the external reality of the material world
- 544 (p. 400) *adamant* a hard substance
- 545 (p. 400) '*dainty Ariel*' the spirit in Shakespeare's *Tempest*
- 546 (p. 403) *shibboleth* a peculiarity of speech
- 547 (p. 403) *choleric* passionate, angry
- 548 (p. 403) *pudding* stomach
- 549 (p. 404) *max* slang for gin
- 550 (p. 404) *kiddy* a lowly thief
- 551 (p. 404) '*Crowner's quest*' coroner's inquest. See *Hamlet*, 5, 1, 21.
- 552 (p. 404) *Booze . . . nutty* capturing contemporary slang: *ken* a den of thieves; *spellken* a theatre; *queer a flat* to confuse an idiot; *high-toby-spice* highway robbery; *flash the muzzle* to swagger; *his blowing* his prostitute; *nutty* strongly inclined.
- 553 (p. 405) '*purl*' an alcoholic drink made from malt
- 554 (p. 406) *yon shrine* Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey
- 555 (p. 406) *lantern . . . turn* a allusion to the habit of hanging opponents from lamp-posts in the French Revolution

- 556 (p. 406) *bonfires . . . seats* an allusion to the unrest during the Industrial Revolution
- 557 (p. 407) *dodging* search
- 558 (p. 407) 'Hells' gambling houses
- 559 (p. 407) *square . . . brass* become Ambassadors
- 560 (p. 408) *indentures* agreement, contract
- 561 (p. 408) *mood potential* appear to have, rather than actually having, power – a pun on a grammatical term
- 562 (p. 409) *double front* hypocrisy
- 563 (p. 409) 'Te Deum' the hymn of praise to God
- 564 (p. 409) *Kiss . . . majesty* George IV was greeted enthusiastically on his trip to Ireland in 1820.
- 565 (p. 409) 'ivresse' intoxication (French)
- 566 (p. 410) 'empressment' attention (French)
- 567 (p. 410) *Billingsgate* the London fish market, famous for its swearing
- 568 (p. 410) *anent* Scottish, concerning, relating to
- 569 (p. 411) 'flaws or starts' from *Macbeth*, 3, 4, 63–5
- 570 (p. 412) *ceruse* (those wearing) makeup
- 571 (p. 412) 'drapery Misses' women provided with clothing, etc., on credit on the promise of a good marriage
- 572 (p. 412) *Drawcansir* after the braggart in George Villiers' play *The Rehearsal* (1671)
- 573 (p. 413) 'Hercules Furens' a tragedy by the first-century Roman poet Seneca. Byron makes up the name of this Bluestocking translator, and those that follow, punning on the claims to learning and the supposedly masculine nature of the Blues.
- 574 (p. 414) *Napoleon . . . Lowe* Here Byron compares his poetry with Napoleon's military campaigns, his ultimate defeat at the hands of the Holy Alliance, and his exile on St Helena under the governorship of Hudson Lowe.
- 575 (p. 414) *Rowley Powley* George Croly (1780–1860), poet, imitator of Byron; here compared to the blustering Pistol of *Henry V*, Pt 2
- 576 (p. 414) *artificial . . . Labourer* Henry Hart Millman (1791–1868), poet and critic. He is compared to a series of mythical and historical eunuchs.
- 577 (p. 414) *Cambyses' . . . Hebrews* a mocking comparison of the biblical poems produced by the two poets above
- 578 (p. 414) *Euphues* Bryan Waller Procter (Barry Cornwall, 1787–1874), poet, imitator of Byron
- 579 (p. 414) *Landor* Walter Savage Landor (1775–1864), poet, friend of Southey's

- 580 (p. 415) *John Keats . . . article* John Keats (1795–1821), poet, popularly believed to have been killed by hostile criticism
- 581 (p. 415) *praetorian bands* The Roman Guard sold the Empire at public auction in AD 193; here a reference to literary critics.
- 582 (p. 415) *'dreadful . . . samphire'* collecting an aromatic plant which grows on dangerous rocks. See *King Lear*, 4, 6, 15–16.
- 583 (p. 415) *Janizaries* literally, members of the Turkish army
- 584 (p. 416) *'bower'* See Moore's poem 'Come to me, Love'.
- 585 (p. 416) *chalk mimics* In the Regency period it was common for floors to be decorated with elaborate chalk drawings on special occasions.
- 586 (p. 416) *'Or Molu'* ormolu, gilded-bronze decorated furniture
- 587 (p. 417) *'Jack Horner'* in the nursery rhyme, sat in the corner
- 588 (p. 417) *quadrille* a formal eighteenth-century dance
- 589 (p. 418) *bogle* goblin
- 590 (p. 418) *crupper* rump
- 591 (p. 418) *'rack and manger'* rack and ruin, waste and destruction
- 592 (p. 418) *senates . . . crew* Such nobles vote indiscriminately, for either side, on political questions.
- 593 (p. 419) *'Where . . . world'* See Edward Young's poem *Resignation* (1762).
- 594 (p. 419) *Grattan . . . Daughter* public figures all recently dead: Henry Grattan, politician (d.1821), Richard Curren, politician (d.1817), both supporters of the Irish cause; Richard Brinsley Sheridan – see Glossary; Queen Caroline (d. 1821); Princess Charlotte died in childbirth, 1817.
- 595 (p. 419) *Five per Cents* Government bonds
- 596 (p. 419) *Brumel* Beau Brummel, Regency society figure, was forced to retire to Calais in 1816 to escape debts.
- 597 (p. 419) *Wellesley* William Wellesley (1788–1857), notorious high liver
- 598 (p. 419) *Whitbread* Samuel Whitbread, politician, supporter of Queen Caroline, committed suicide in 1815.
- 599 (p. 419) *his will* There was a scandal over the status of George III's will following his death in 1820.
- 600 (p. 419) *'Fum'* George IV
- 601 (p. 419) *Sawney's violin* an attack on the perceived servility of the Scots to the king. Sawney is Sandy, a Scotsman.
- 602 (p. 419) *'caw . . . thee'* a form of the saying, you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours

- 603 (p. 419) *Grenvilles* a contemporary political family, renowned for changing its opinions
- 604 (p. 420) *Lady Carolines and Franceses* Byron had affairs with Caroline Lamb and Frances Webster.
- 605 (p. 420) '*blue Peter*' the flag hoisted to indicate immediate sailing
- 606 (p. 421) *rap* a worthless or counterfeit coin. The following descriptions refer to the economic turmoil that followed the Napoleonic Wars.
- 607 (p. 421) '*thin potations*' weakened whisky, made to avoid malt tax
- 608 (p. 421) '*Carpe diem*' Latin tag, Seize the day.
- 609 (p. 421) '*Life's . . . villains*' from *Macbeth*, 5, 5, 24 and *Henry V*, Pt 1, 2, 4, 539
- 610 (p. 421) *Atalantis* a reference to Mrs Manley's satirical novel *The New Atalantis* (1709)

CANTO TWELVE

- 611 (p. 423) *bower anchor* the anchor in the bow of a ship
- 612 (p. 424) *shirtless patriots of Spain* those who took part in the Spanish Revolution, 1820–3
- 613 (p. 424) *Rothschild . . . Baring . . . Lafitte* famous bankers
- 614 (p. 424) '*Change*' the Stock Exchange
- 615 (p. 425) *Ceylon . . . Inde . . . Cathay* Sri Lanka, India, China
- 616 (p. 425) '*vulgar fraction*' a pun on the mathematical term for common fractions
- 617 (p. 425) *rouleaus* gold coins rolled up in paper
- 618 (p. 426) '*Love . . . Love*' See Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), 3, 2, 5–7.
- 619 (p. 426) *Cynthia* See Diana in the Glossary.
- 620 (p. 426) *lapsus* lapse
- 621 (p. 426) '*buon comerado*' good friend
- 622 (p. 427) *trow* believe
- 623 (p. 427) *Plutarch's Lives* biographies of Roman figures produced by Plutarch in the second century BC
- 624 (p. 427) *Mitford* William Mitford's *History of Greece* (1829), which in Byron's opinion praised tyrants
- 625 (p. 428) '*philo-genitiveness*' love of one's children

- 626 (p. 429) '*Paulo Majora*' more important matters
- 627 (p. 430) '*Hallam's Middle Ages*' See Hallam in the Glossary.
- 628 (p. 431) '*Tantaene!*' an allusion to '*Tantaene animus coelestibus irae*' ('Can so fierce a resentment dwell in heavenly breasts') from Virgil's *Aeneid*, I, 2, 1, 240–1
- 629 (p. 432) '*True . . . true*' see *Hamlet*, 2, 2, 97–8. This example of the marriage market is clearly based on Byron's own experience.
- 630 (p. 432) *loam* fertile soil
- 631 (p. 433) *Lady Pinchbeck* A pinchbeck is someone of bad taste, a sham. She is probably based on Lady Melbourne, Byron's confidante, Caroline Lamb's mother-in-law, to whom he confided in letters between 1812–15.
- 632 (p. 434) *Smithfield Show* a famous cattle market
- 633 (p. 435) *Lord's Mayor's barge* From the middle of the eighteenth century, each new holder of the post of Lord Mayor of London had use of a barge for official duties.
- 634 (p. 435) *Cytherea's shell* See Venus in the Glossary.
- 635 (p. 436) *Preludios* preludes
- 636 (p. 436) *rosin* used on the pegs of the lyre in tuning
- 637 (p. 437) '*The . . . Goose*' a popular board game
- 638 (p. 437) *perpendicular . . . reticular* (morally) upright, as opposed to those who are net-like, interested in catching partners
- 639 (p. 437) '*Fishers for men*' See Matthew, 4:19, and Mark, 1:17.
- 640 (p. 437) *trepann'd* snared or trapped
- 641 (p. 438) '*Couleur de rose*' pink, figuratively here in the sense of being neither white (pure) nor scarlet (sexually active)
- 642 (p. 439) *doors with double knockings* secret ways of entering houses
- 643 (p. 440) '*bos piger*' a lazy ox (Latin), a simile reflecting limited European knowledge of Africa
- 644 (p. 441) *Andalusian* a region of Spain
- 645 (p. 442) *éclat . . . Parias* if there is a scandal they lose their place in society, like Pariahs, the lower caste in Indian society
- 646 (p. 442) *Marius . . . Carthage* a Roman politician, exiled to Carthage in Africa, who compared the state of the city to his own position
- 647 (p. 442) '*Sin . . . forgiven*' a conflation of biblical passages: John, 8:3–11 and Luke, 7:47–8
- 648 (p. 443) *as far* the impact of parliamentary debate reached as far as the Arctic Circle
- 649 (p. 443) *Grey . . . Chatham* Charles, Earl Grey (1764–1845), Foreign Secretary, 1806; for Chatham, see Pitt in the Glossary

- 650 (p. 443) *Prince* the Prince of Wales, later Prince Regent then George IV (1820)
- 651 (p. 444) *Athos* The mountain of Athos was reputedly to be turned into a giant statue of Alexander.
- 652 (p. 444) *usurer* money lender
- 653 (p. 444) '*Political Economy*' the study of the production and distribution of wealth. The study of economics was a burgeoning science at the turn of the nineteenth century.
- 654 (p. 445) *public hedge . . . break* Ordinary people find it hard to make profitable investments, and it becomes a duty to make them bankrupt. Break might also mean to cause the market to crash.

CANTO THIRTEEN

- 655 (p. 445) *gainsay* to contradict
- 656 (p. 446) *chimera* here in the sense of a delusion
- 657 (p. 446) *Mephistopheles* the Devil in Goethe's *Faust* (1808)
- 658 (p. 447) *guerdon* reward
- 659 (p. 447) *caitiff* a despicable person
- 660 (p. 448) '*at my old lunes*' distracted by my obsessions – *Merry Wives of Windsor*, 4, 2, 19–23
- 661 (p. 448) *Oedipus . . . Sphinx . . . 'Davus sum'* In mythology, Oedipus solved the riddle of the Sphinx; the slave Davus, on being asked a difficult question, responded: 'I am Davus not Oedipus'.
- 662 (p. 449) *laws . . . Medes* laws that do not change. See Daniel, 6:8.
- 663 (p. 449) '*'Tis . . . deserve it*' from Joseph Addison's *Cato* (1713), 1, 2
- 664 (p. 450) *house up later* Debates in the Houses of Parliament would often go on into the early hours of the morning.
- 665 (p. 450) *back* here in the sense of ride
- 666 (p. 451) *freemasonry . . . brother* Juan is accepted anywhere like a highly ranking Freemason.
- 667 (p. 451) *break no squares* a colloquialism meaning to violate, allowing the pun on 'square'
- 668 (p. 451) *wheat with tares* after Matthew, 8:24–30. Tares are weeds.
- 669 (p. 451) *Piccadilly* a square in London renowned for its sexual intrigue at the time. Byron lived there in 1815–16.
- 670 (p. 452) *scions* descendants of a noble house, children (of nobility)
- 671 (p. 452) '*there's . . . counsellors*' See Proverbs, 9:14.
- 672 (p. 453) *mandarin* a Chinese court official or aristocrat, famed for inscrutability

- 673 (p. 453) '*Nil admirari*' 'not to admire [is all the art I know]', from Horace, *Epistle I*, 6, 1
- 674 (p. 454) *North-West-Paasage . . . Parry's efforts* See Parry in Glossary.
- 675 (p. 455) '*Fuimus*' we have been (Latin), hence the past
- 676 (p. 455) *Persian . . . principles* See Manichean in the Glossary.
- 677 (p. 455) *aver* declare to be true
- 678 (p. 455) *almanack* almanac, a (predictive) list of events in a year, including the weather
- 679 (p. 456) *Rotten Row* a road in Hyde Park in London, used for exercising horses
- 680 (p. 456) *Greek kalends* proverbially never. The Roman kalends were the first day of each month; the Greeks did not use the term.
- 681 (p. 456) *water'd wheels* Wooden carriage wheels were soaked in water to condition them.
- 682 (p. 456) *ostler* one who attends horses at an inn
- 683 (p. 456) *dickey* the seat at the back of a carriage
- 684 (p. 456) '*Cosi Viaggino i Ricchi*' 'So the rich travel' (Italian)
- 685 (p. 458) '*Thirty Nine*' the thirty-nine articles of faith of the Church of England
- 686 (p. 458) '*greatly . . . dine*' See Pope's *Dunciad* (1728), 4, 318.
- 687 (p. 459) *Druid oak . . . Caractacus* one ancient tree remained on the Byron estate. Caractacus was the leader of the Ancient Britons who resisted Roman invasion in the first century.
- 688 (p. 460) *friars . . . cavaliers* references to the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII and to the English Civil War (1642–6), in which the Byrons were on the side of the king.
- 689 (p. 461) *Memnon's statue* A statue to the memory of King Memnon of Ethiopia was said to make music when struck by sunlight.
- 690 (p. 462) *Sir Peter Lely* (1616–80) portrait painter
- 691 (p. 462) '*Star . . . Corpus*' suggesting the closed secret use of legal power, rather than open legal processes represented by *habeas corpus* – see Glossary
- 692 (p. 462) *Marlborough's* John Churchill, the Duke of Marlborough (1650–1727), military leader
- 693 (p. 462) *staves . . . gold* marks of government office
- 694 (p. 462) *Dolce* There follows work by ten painters: Carlo Dolci (1616–86), a religious painter; Titian – see Glossary; Salvator Rosa (1615–73), battle and landscape painter; Francesco Albani (1578–1660), painter of mythical subject matter; Joseph Vernet (1712–89), painter of seascapes; Sagnolletto (1588–1652), painter of mythical and religious scenes; Claude Lorraine ((1600–82), landscapist;

Rembrandt (1600–69), character painter; Caravaggio (1565–1609), painter of religious scenes; Teniers (1610–90), painter of social scenes.

- 695 (p. 463) *Rhenish* German wine
- 696 (p. 463) 'Catalogue of Ships' Homer's lengthy description of the ships which attacked Troy in *Iliad*, 2
- 697 (p. 464) *Melton jacket* hunting jacket
- 698 (p. 464) *the sex the pas* Ladies first. The ladies who follow have comical invented names, and may in some cases be based on women Byron knew.
- 699 (p. 465) 'lie' probably lees or dregs
- 700 (p. 465) 'Aroint . . . Witch!' from *Macbeth*, 1, 3, 6
- 701 (p. 465) 'Omne . . . dulci' 'He wins greatest support who mixes profit with pleasure.'
- 702 (p. 465) *Siria* Sirius, the brightest star in the sky
- 703 (p. 465) *Brahmins of the ton* the smartest of the smart set, after the highest caste of Hindu society
- 704 (p. 465) *Irish absentees* Irish landowners living in England
- 705 (p. 466) *Parolles* the braggart in *All's Well that Ends Well*, possibly a thinly disguised Brougham – see Glossary. The other figures which follow may also have historical counterparts.
- 706 (p. 466) 'Ay . . . inch' from *King Lear*, 4, 6, 110
- 707 (p. 466) *twelve peers* In popular legend Charlemagne's court contained twelve knights.
- 708 (p. 466) *Rodomont Precisian* Rodomont is the boastful Saracen leader in Aristo's *Orlando Furioso*; a Precisian is a Puritan.
- 709 (p. 467) *An Orator* echoing Byron's own experience in the House of Lords. See General Introduction.
- 710 (p. 468) *Longbow . . . Strongbow* possibly John Philpot Curran (1750–1817) and Thomas Erskine (1750–1823)
- 711 (p. 468) *Aeolian harp* a harp played by the wind, a popular image for the imagination amongst the Romantics
- 712 (p. 468) *Congreve . . . Molière's* seventeenth/eighteenth-century dramatists who exposed human folly
- 713 (p. 469) *Boaz . . . Ruth* In the Bible Ruth the Moabite was taken from her homeland and married Boaz – see Ruth, 4; Byron uses the allusion comically to suggest the relationship between reader and author.
- 714 (p. 469) *Mrs Adams* A character in Henry Fielding's novel *Joseph Andrews* (1742) makes this claim – see Chapter 11.
- 715 (p. 469) 'List . . . ghost' from *Hamlet*, 1, 5, 4 and 22

- 716 (p. 470) 'gêné' constrained
 717 (p. 471) *letter . . . debtor* At the time the recipient paid for letters by weight.
 718 (p. 471) *whistle . . . Dolon* Ulysses tricked Dolon into revealing secrets about the Trojan fleet, though not with a whistle.
 719 (p. 471) *Isaak Walton* writer of *The Compleat Angler* (1653)
 720 (p. 471) *conversazione* meeting for conversation
 721 (p. 472) *Squire Westerns . . . Sophias . . . Tom Jones* Byron contrasts the spontaneity of the past as represented by characters in Fielding's novel *Tom Jones* (1749) with the artificial values of the day.

CANTO FOURTEEN

- 722 (p. 474) 'Fling . . . blows' See Francis Bacon *A Natural History* (1627), Century 9, no. 820.
 723 (p. 475) 'why . . . publish?' See Pope's *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot* (1735), 135–6.
 724 (p. 477) 'ci-devant . . . hommes' young men of yesterday, no longer in fashion
 725 (p. 477) *inditers* writers
 726 (p. 478) 'Haud . . . fui' 'I speak by no means ignorantly, these are trivialities in which I had no small part' – a conflation of two phrases from *Aeneid*, 2
 727 (p. 478) 'Vetabo . . . vulgarit' 'I shall forbid him who has revealed the secrets of Ceres', from Horace's *Ode III*, 2, 26
 728 (p. 478) *arcanum's* secret's
 729 (p. 478) *diapasons* harmonies
 730 (p. 479) 'Petticoat influence' a reference to the supposed invisible power of women
 731 (p. 481) *craned* looked over a hedge before jumping
 732 (p. 481) *Nestors* the aged wise, after the Greek leader Nestor
 733 (p. 481) *whipper-in* someone who controls the dogs during a hunt
 734 (p. 481) *Chesterfield* the Earl of Chesterfield (1694–1773), man of letters
 735 (p. 482) *Camilla* a servant of Diana's – see Glossary – identified with swiftness
 736 (p. 482) *Guido's famous fresco* Byron saw this fresco on his visit to Rome in 1817.
 737 (p. 483) 'tracasserie' . . . 'agaçerie' mischief and flirtatiousness
 738 (p. 483) *dead set* attempt to gain the affections of
 739 (p. 485) 'bonos mores' good conduct

- 740 (p. 485) *leap year* In a leap year women can traditionally propose to men.
- 741 (p. 486) *hecatomb* strictly a hundred oxen for sacrifice
- 742 (p. 487) *throttle* throat
- 743 (p. 487) 'content' the yes vote in the House of Lords
- 744 (p. 487) *Oxenstiern* Axel Oxenstierna (1583–1654) Swedish Chancellor, renowned for his wisdom
- 745 (p. 488) *her Grace's talisman* her (sexual) charm
- 746 (p. 488) *Intrigante . . . méchante* one who enjoys intrigue and mischief
- 747 (p. 488) 'bonne fortune' good fortune, here in the sense of success in love
- 748 (p. 489) *bienséance* propriety, decorum
- 749 (p. 489) 'the Privy' a group of political advisors to the monarch, also enables a joke of privy as toilet, in the modern sense, though 'cabinet' here probably means study
- 750 (p. 490) *star and string . . . chamberlain* an honoured chief officer in the household of the monarch
- 751 (p. 490) *perpendicular* uprightness, allows for a sexual pun
- 752 (p. 490) 'Je ne sais quoi' 'I don't know what'.
- 753 (p. 490) *Dardan boy . . . Menelaus* Paris seduced Helen away from King Menelaus, this caused the Trojan War.
- 754 (p. 491) *Tiresias* mythical figure who gained sexual insight by spending time as both a man and a woman
- 755 (p. 491) *a flower . . . Pervanche* the pansy, or the periwinkle. See *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 2, 1, 168.
- 756 (p. 492) 'Beatus . . . sociis' playful renderings of (Horatian) sayings: 'Happy is the man who is far from business cares', after *Epode* 2, 1; and 'a man is known by his company', not found in Horace
- 757 (p. 492) *affidavit* a sworn statement under oath
- 758 (p. 493) 'An . . . Love' from Sheridan's *The Critic* (1779), 3
- 759 (p. 493) *Alexander . . . Holy Three* the European rulers Byron identified with the current oppressive state of affairs: Alexander, Emperor of Russia, Francis I of Austria and Frederick William III of Prussia.
- 760 (p. 493) 'sauce . . . gander' proverb, what's right for one is right for another
- 761 (p. 493) *the Pavilion* the Brighton Pavilion on which George IV spent vast sums of money
- 762 (p. 493) *point d'appui* fulcrum

- 763 (p. 493) *Archimedes* The ancient Greek scientist-philosopher reputedly claimed that given somewhere to fix a point from, he could move the world.
- 764 (p. 494) *Leman's* another name for Lake Geneva into which the River Rhone flows
- 765 (p. 496) *Solomon a zany* King Solomon (d. c.930BC), a Jewish leader renowned for his wisdom, was distracted by a love affair with the Queen of Sheba. A zany is a fool.
- 766 (p. 497) *atrocious* here, from its original Latin sense, one who enjoys greatly
- 767 (p. 497) *tenter hooks* hold cloth in place, and also from the saying to be in suspense
- 768 (p. 497) *milliards* billions
- 769 (p. 498) '*Antres vast and deserts idle*' vast caves and useless deserts, from *Othello*, 1, 3, 140
- 770 (p. 498) *Anthrophagi* cannibals

CANTO FIFTEEN

- 771 (p. 498) *synocopé . . . singlatus* a swoon and a sob
- 772 (p. 499) *sot* drunkard
- 773 (p. 500) *everybody solvent* Everyone is solvent in the sense that they can return life to Nature, which gave them life in the first place, on death.
- 774 (p. 500) *by sap* by undermining
- 775 (p. 500) *Ransom* a pun on the name of Byron's banker and a ransom
- 776 (p. 500) *Gourmand* a glutton
- 777 (p. 501) *Alcibiades* fifth-century Greek military leader, renowned for his ability to adopt the mode of life of others
- 778 (p. 502) *transfigure . . . Raphael* The religious painter Raphael's (1483–1520) masterpiece is *The Transfiguration*.
- 779 (p. 502) *Locke . . . Bacon . . . Socrates . . . thou* great philosophical thinkers and reformers (see Glossary), amongst whom Byron includes Jesus
- 780 (p. 503) '*Improvvisatore*' Italian extemporising poets
- 781 (p. 503) '*Omnia . . . male*' 'You want all you say to be elegant, Matho – say something which is also good, something middling, something bad' – see Martial's *Epigrams* 2, 188–9.
- 782 (p. 503) *feeble* weakness
- 783 (p. 504) '*dogs . . . day*' See *Hamlet*, 5, 1, 209.

- 784 (p. 504) *proved the soft condition* tried out marriage
- 785 (p. 504) *Priscian* fifth-century Latin grammarian
- 786 (p. 504) '*laissez aller*' let it go, pass
- 787 (p. 504) *Stagyrite* See Aristotle in the Glossary.
- 788 (p. 505) *cutter . . . brigantine . . . pink* types of sailing ship
- 789 (p. 505) *non-age* infancy
- 790 (p. 506) *pelf* riches
- 791 (p. 507) *Rapp . . . marriage* George Rapp was the leader of the Harmonists, a German religious group that settled in Harmony, America in the early nineteenth century. They did not forbid marriage, but practised strict birth control.
- 792 (p. 507) *dead lock* stalemate
- 793 (p. 507) *emigration* The great emigrations, particularly to America, to escape poverty, particularly in the case of the Irish, began in 1819.
- 794 (p. 507) '*so . . . hand*' Pope's phrase for writers, taken from a letter to the essayist Steele, 29 November 1712
- 795 (p. 508) *Holbein's 'Dance of Death'* The popular religious subject of the Dance of Death, the ravages brought about by plague or disaster, was treated by Hans Holbein (1497–1543) in a series of engravings (1538) which were widely copied.
- 796 (p. 508) *Miss Millpond* Lady Byron, Anabella Millbanke
- 797 (p. 508) *star . . . string* someone with honours, an aristocrat
- 798 (p. 510) *bust of Brutus* At the funeral of Junia, the bust of her brother Brutus was not allowed in the procession because of his part in the assassination of Julius Caesar.
- 799 (p. 511) '*Anthony's by Caesar*' from *Macbeth*, 3, 1, 56. Anthony and Caesar were enemies.
- 800 (p. 512) *Sibyl* a prophetess
- 801 (p. 512) *plays the deuce* plays the devil, trifles with
- 802 (p. 513) '*I . . . warison*' from *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1815), note to 4,24. Scott uses the word, probably incorrectly, to mean assault.
- 803 (p. 513) *massy* heavy
- 804 (p. 513) *modern dinners* The menu which follows includes soup, turbot (a flat fish), turkey, more soup, John Dory – a smoked fish – cured salted ham, capons, partridge in cherry sauce; dishes cooked in a variety of German and Spanish ways; as well as a number of *entremets* or side dishes, *timbales* (small meat dishes), and *salpicons* or *patés*.
- 805 (p. 514) '*bonne vivante*' literally one who lives well, enjoys food
- 806 (p. 514) *benison* blessing

- 807 (p. 514) *Cleopatra's . . . pearls* Cleopatra is said to have dissolved one of the world's largest pearls in wine and drunk it.
- 808 (p. 514) *piddle* to eat unenthusiastically, to pick at
- 809 (p. 514) *Lucullus* reputedly brought cheery trees to England in the first century BC
- 810 (p. 515) '*petits puits d'amour*' cream puffs; their literal meaning – little wells of love – allows Byron to pun here. 'Confitures' are preserves or jams.
- 811 (p. 515) *springald* young man
- 812 (p. 516) *gibier . . . 'bécasse'* The foods described here are: game, game stew, fried cabbage and woodcock.
- 813 (p. 516) *gout* allows Byron to pun on *goût* (taste) and *gout* (an affliction thought to arise from over-indulgence)
- 814 (p. 519) *foplings . . . witlings* little foolish men
- 815 (p. 519) *Nem. con. . . . crim. con.* abbreviations for unanimously and criminal conversation, meaning adultery
- 816 (p. 519) *Minerva . . . Graces* wisdom over physical appearance, after the goddess of wisdom and the mythical figures who presided over occasions of sensual pleasure
- 817 (p. 519) '*sine qua*' *sine qua non*, essential
- 818 (p. 520) *Coke . . . Littleton* a reference to Coke's commentary (1628–44) on Thomas Littleton's *Tenures in Institutes of the Laws of England*, on English property law
- 819 (p. 520) *Apologue* a kind of (animal) fable
- 820 (p. 521) *Trojan . . . Tyrian* all will be treated equally. See Virgil's *Aeneid*, 1, 574.
- 821 (p. 521) *Eldon . . . lunatic* Lord Eldon, Lord Chancellor (1801–27), sat in judgement in the trial concerning the sanity of Lord Portsmouth (1822).
- 822 (p. 521) '*fool . . . bent*' 'fool me to the limit of my endurance', from *Hamlet* 3, 2, 408
- 823 (p. 522) '*Shadows . . . Richard*' See *Richard III*, 5, 3, 217–20.
- 824 (p. 522) *Philosopher of Malmsbury* Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) philosopher, who, despite his general scepticism, reputedly believed in ghosts
- 825 (p. 522) *Minerva's fowl* the owl, the bird associated with the goddess of wisdom

CANTO SIXTEEN

- 826 (p. 523) *Cyrus* sixth-century-BC Persian ruler and military leader
- 827 (p. 523) *Bows . . . bow* colloquialisms that mean to be hypocritical and to exaggerate
- 828 (p. 523) '*For . . . cause*' See *Hamlet*, 2, 2, 103.
- 829 (p. 523) '*De . . . aliis*' 'Concerning all things and some others.' The phrase is a conflation from the philosophical works of Thomas Aquinas (1224–74).
- 830 (p. 524) *Turpin's . . . Chronicle* Turpin (fl. 750), an archbishop and chronicler; and Geoffrey of Monmouth (c.1100–54), author of a history of Britain.
- 831 (p. 524) '*quia impossibile*' It was not Augustine but the theologian Tertullian (c.160–220) who insisted on the truth of the resurrection of Christ because it was impossible.
- 832 (p. 525) *Tyrian vest* The source of the purple dye named after the Tyrians was hotly disputed.
- 833 (p. 525) *Thoughts . . . yellow* jealous, or possible dejected thoughts
- 834 (p. 526) *Tuism* the opposite of egoism, selflessness
- 835 (p. 527) *from the urn* of the dead, from ashes of the dead kept in urns
- 836 (p. 527) *spars* sparkling crystalline minerals
- 837 (p. 528) *arras* (embroidered) screen
- 838 (p. 528) *a monk* There was reputedly such a ghost at Byron's family home, Newstead Abbey.
- 839 (p. 528) *sisters weird* the witches in *Macbeth*
- 840 (p. 528) *gold . . . paper* a reference to the widely held concern that paper money was not really backed up by sufficient real wealth, represented by gold
- 841 (p. 529) *blue* Tapers or candles were said to burn blue in the presence of a ghost or the Devil.
- 842 (p. 529) '*patent blacking*' an advertisement (possibly in verse) for a brand of shoe polish. Byron was wrongly accused of writing such an advertisement (5, 322).
- 843 (p. 529) *Horne Tooke* John Horne Tooke (1736–1812), political reformer
- 844 (p. 532) *Milor* a contraction of 'My Lord'
- 845 (p. 533) *King Henry's right* Henry VIII ordered the dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s.
- 846 (p. 534) *Grammercy . . . sain* God have mercy; bless
- 847 (p. 534) *wires* harp strings

- 848 (p. 535) *Plato's pride* . . . 'Attic Bee' Diogenes attacked Plato's pride; but his dismissal of material things was seen by Plato as its own kind of pride. And, as a child, Plato was reputedly stung on the mouth, which guaranteed his future eloquence.
- 849 (p. 535) 'Mama Mia's' . . . 'Amor Mio's' . . . 'Lasciami's' . . . 'Addio's' . . . 'Tu michamas's' (Italian) phrases from popular song; *Portingale* means from the Portuguese
- 850 (p. 536) *Babylon's* . . . *back* contrasting sophisticated metropolitan songs with the folk song of Ireland and Scotland. Lochaber is a mountainous region of Scotland.
- 851 (p. 536) *calentures* literally, fevers inducing hallucinations
- 852 (p. 536) *Hebe* after the goddess of youth and attendant to the gods
- 853 (p. 537) 'Bath Guide' . . . 'Haley's Triumphs' Christopher Anstey's *The New Bath Guide* (1766), William Haley's *The Triumphs of Temper* (1781): both light, sentimental literature
- 854 (p. 537) 'bouts rimés' rhyming exercises
- 855 (p. 537) *persiflage* flippant banter
- 856 (p. 538) *civil list* money granted by the state to the monarch, and other public figures
- 857 (p. 538) *capo d'opera* masterpiece
- 858 (p. 539) *restoration* both a general fad at the time, and also a specific reference to the substantial changes made to Newstead Abbey by Colonel Wildman, who bought it from Byron
- 859 (p. 539) *tenures burgage* rented property
- 860 (p. 539) 'Untying . . . churches' See *Macbeth*, 4, 1, 52–3.
- 861 (p. 539) *parish fees* money paid to support the destitute. In 1809 Byron fathered a child with a servant girl, Lucy, whom he subsequently supported.
- 862 (p. 540) *consistory* a Church council
- 863 (p. 540) *espigle* roughish
- 864 (p. 541) *beer 'small'* beer with a low alcohol content
- 865 (p. 541) *without cards* without a formal invitation
- 866 (p. 541) *isthmus* literally a small strip of land connecting two larger masses, thus here an indication of the relative importance of these guests
- 867 (p. 542) *electioneerer* Byron is writing at a time of no real democracy, when most constituencies or boroughs were effectively under the control of wealthy individuals.
- 868 (p. 543) 'come . . . utmost' See *Macbeth*, 3, 1, 70–1.
- 869 (p. 543) — *shore* a reference to Jane Shore, the mistress of King Edward IV, amongst others, and by extension the name for a whore

- 870 (p. 543) *hustings* the election platform, or more generally the process of electioneering
- 871 (p. 544) *Septembrizers* Byron compares hunters with those who took part in the revolutionary killings in France in 1792.
- 872 (p. 544) *Peter Pith* See Sydney Smith in the Glossary.
- 873 (p. 545) *devil* the famous imp on Lincoln Cathedral
- 874 (p. 545) *song* a popular eighteenth-century song on this theme. The allusion is to the plight of Queen Caroline in 1820.
- 875 (p. 546) *'en avant'* onward
- 876 (p. 547) *carnation* red
- 877 (p. 547) *outwork* an exterior part. Here winning in love is seen in terms of taking a city.
- 878 (p. 548) *sixth year is ending* At the time, Parliaments could run for a maximum term of seven years.
- 879 (p. 549) *Cocker's rigours* Edward Cocker's mathematical treatise *Arithmetic*, first published in 1677 was still in print at the time. His name became a byword for accuracy in figures.
- 880 (p. 549) *Sinking Fund* a costly and unsuccessful scheme to manage the National Debt begun in 1718 and terminated in 1823
- 881 (p. 550) *indemnification* compensation
- 882 (p. 550) *'faint praise'* See Pope's *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot* (1735), 201–2.
- 883 (p. 551) Αἰαῖ τὰν Κυθερειᾶν 'Woe for Cytherea [Aphrodite]', from third-century-BC poet Bion's *Lament for Adonis*, 28
- 884 (p. 551) *'Alma Venus Genetrix!'* Venus the Mother of all, after Lucretius *De Rerum Natura*, 1, 1–2
- 885 (p. 552) *willows* associated with bitterness
- 886 (p. 552) *'sans culotte'* without trousers
- 887 (p. 553) *tympanum* ear(drum)
- 888 (p. 553) *'Lasciate . . . entrate'* 'Abandon all hope, you who enter here', from Dante's *Inferno*, 3, 9
- 889 (p. 554) *internal ghost* in the sense of mind
- 890 (p. 554) *carte and tierce* fourth and third fencing positions

TALES

The notes for *The Giaour* are on pages 637–638 and
the notes for *The Corsiar* are on pages 689–690

Introduction to the Tales

If the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* made Byron famous, then the verse tales he wrote from 1813 certainly secured that fame: *The Corsair* (1814), for example, sold 10,000 copies on the day of its publication.* Byron regretted using the term 'tale', and certainly the term 'Oriental tale'; yet it is a label that has stuck, and to a great extent it explains their popularity and attraction, then as now.

Walter Scott's verse tales, for example *Marmion* (1808) and *Rokeby* (1813), concentrating on heroic adventure, often in a romanticised medieval past, were particularly popular. Byron, like everyone else at the turn of the nineteenth century, was also greatly interested in, and influenced by, the vogue for dark and brooding heroes, often with undisclosed secrets, that characterised much of the gothic fiction being produced by writers like Ann Radcliffe, 'Monk' Lewis and William Godwin.[†] It is partly from such material that *The Corsair* – the story of a freedom-fighting pirate caught in a love triangle – and *The Giaour* (1813) – the Christian 'infidel' (the meaning of the word *giaour*) who seeks to avenge the mysterious death of a harem girl – are formed. Yet, beyond literary influence and opportunism, the tales, and, particularly, *The Giaour*, have immediate origins in Byron's own exotic travels from 1809–11. Although the precise details remain obscure, and they might have as much to do with deliberate creation of the Byron myth, he does recount rescuing a girl from being drowned in a sack (see 3:102,200,230). He further reflects on the event in terms of the perceived differences between the (free) Christian world and the (barbarous, yet exotic) Muslim East.

Indeed, it is precisely this mixture of the autobiographical and the literary, and Byron's own keen awareness of the social, sexual, and not least commercial, possibilities opened up by exploiting the interplay between the two, which lead to, perhaps, his most significant creation: the Byronic hero. He can be clearly seen in these tales. Conrad, the hero

* See Harvey, pp. 110ff, for a discussion of the popularity of the Tales.

† For a good introduction to the nature, significance and impact of the gothic, see Botting.

of *The Corsair*, is typical: 'Lone, wild, and strange, he stood alike exempt/ From all affection and from all contempt' (C 1:11). The model for this kind of figure may ultimately be Milton's Satan in *Paradise Lost*; or, at least, that figure as (mis)read by the Romantics – see, for example, William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790), and Percy Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (1819). Rutherford argues that like Milton's Satan, the Byronic hero of the tales is 'bent on vengeance, whether on individuals or social groups, nations, or all mankind' (Rutherford, 1961, p. 42). The Giaour, who identifies himself with another archetypal outsider in the biblical Cain (G 1057), equally one of Byron's favourite figures, is driven by the need personally to avenge the, deliberately obscured, death of Leila; Conrad, by the plight of his 'nation' or 'social group'.

Yet crucially the Byronic hero retains feelings, and indeed is driven on to acts, of ultimately futile or self-defeating revenge by his very 'virtues' (C 1:10), which make him, paradoxically, compassionate, despite his sense of being apart from humanity. Conrad 'marvell'd how his heart could seem so soft' (C 1:16); and the Giaour is driven to action and near madness precisely by his capacity to feel (G 276). Indeed, Peter Wilson argues that the Giaour 'seeks to escape a condition of numbness . . . by courting an intense suffering' (Wilson, 1975, p. 120). Similar motives might be attributed to a Romanticised Satan; and they are clearly visible, alongside the curled lip of disdain, in Byron's own self-projections as Byronic hero. This odd mixture is apparent in the portrait of Glenarvon, discussed in the General Introduction; and it is evident in contemporaneous, and less charged, accounts of Byron himself. For example, his fellow traveller, John Galt, remarked in 1813:

His physiognomy was prepossessing and intelligent, but ever and anon his brow lowered and gathered; a habit, as I then thought, with a degree of affectation in it . . . but which afterwards I discovered was undoubtedly the occasional scowl of some unpleasant reminiscence . . . still the general cast of his features was impressed with elegance and character.
[Marchand, 1:194]

Although dismissed, 'affectation' is a key word here. There is a clear sense of the Byronic hero, in both fiction and life, as playing a role.* The role itself became, increasingly, identified with a Romantic sensibility, particularly by those who sought to mock it. It is no coincidence that in Jane Austen's *Persuasion* (1818) the brooding, yet sedentary Captain

* For a consideration of the many manifestations of that role from Byron himself up to the present, see the essays in Wilson, 1999.

Benwick's favourite reading is *The Giaour*. And, of course, in a sense, the pretensions of some aspects of the type are played with by Byron himself in the character of Childe Harold, and the undermining of any easy claims to heroism in *Don Juan*.

Whatever its significance, and the simple attractiveness of the adventure narrative, it would be wrong to see the tales simply as a celebration of the Byronic hero. In *The Giaour*, with its elusive, fragmentary, multi-voiced, narrative, it is arguable, that Byron is playing games with the reader's need to identify with the hero, an essential ingredient of any adventure narrative (see McGann, pp. 141–8). The poem is as much about those who witness the Giaour, as it is about him – indeed, he is a *giaour*, an infidel, because he is seen, partly, from a Muslim perspective. The desire for empathy, so crucial to, for example, Captain Benwick's identification with the hero, is further problematised by the way in which the narrative leads us to expect a traditional Scott-like hero, only to refuse to deliver key pieces of information. What is in the sack and how did it get there? In a similar manner, the gender expectations of the adventure narrative are subverted in *The Corsair*. It is Gulnare, the harem slave, and not Conrad, who exacts the ultimate revenge in killing the Pasha. She takes not only the 'sexual initiative' (Franklin, p. 56), as so many of the women do in *Don Juan*, but also the political action, of which Conrad is ultimately incapable.

Indeed, although the tales can be read in terms of both personal resonances for Byron, and his creation, and exploration of the claims of the (Byronic) hero, and simply as exploiting a contemporary fascination with 'the East' (5:129, 132), they might also be seen in this broader political context. Byron wrote, for example, that *The Corsair* came '*con amore*' (3:243), from his own amorous entanglements. Yet, it is also the story of an heroic islander's rebellion against a repressive regime. Conrad's very name is taken from Byron's reading about struggles against despotic rule in thirteenth-century Italy (CPW 3:445). Similarly, the Giaour's tale is set against the backdrop of Turkish, then Russian, rule of Albania. Thus, whatever else they are, the tales can finally be read as a manifestation of Byron's own shifting and perhaps naïve liberalism, which was discussed in the General Introduction: they anticipate the critique of militaristic imperialism, be it Christian or Muslim, echoed in the conservative forces Byron felt to be at work in England and which he targeted so energetically in *Don Juan*.

The Giaour

A Fragment of a Turkish Tale

One fatal remembrance – one sorrow that throws
Its bleak shade alike o'er our joys and our woes –
To which Life nothing darker nor brighter can bring,
For which joy hath no balm – and affliction no sting.

MOORE

TO

SAMUEL ROGERS, ESQ.

AS A SLIGHT BUT MOST SINCERE TOKEN OF ADMIRATION
OF HIS GENIUS; RESPECT FOR HIS CHARACTER,
AND GRATITUDE FOR HIS FRIENDSHIP; THIS PRODUCTION
IS INSCRIBED BY HIS OBLIGED AND AFFECTIONATE SERVANT, BYRON.

London, May 1813

ADVERTISEMENT

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 tomb¹ 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,²
 Make glad the heart that hails the sight, 10
 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 chrystal of the seas,
 Or sweep one blossom from the trees,
 How welcome is each gentle air,
 That wakes and wafts the odours there! 20
 For there – the Rose o'er crag or vale,
 Sultana of the Nightingale,³
 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, unchill'd by snows,
 Far from the winters of the west
 By every breeze and season blest,
 Returns the sweets by nature given 30
 In softest incense back to heaven;
 And grateful 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 for 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; 40
 Then stealing with the muffled oar,
 Far shaded by the rocky shore,

Rush the night-prowlers on the prey,
 And turn to groans his roundelay.⁴
 Strange – that where Nature lov'd to trace,
 As if for Gods, a dwelling-place,
 And every charm and grace hath mixed
 Within the paradise she fixed –
 There man, enamour'd of distress, 50
 Should mar it into wilderness,
 And trample, brute-like, o'er each flower
 That tasks not one laborious hour;⁵
 Nor claims the culture of his hand
 To bloom 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 rapine⁶ wildly reign, 60
 To darken o'er the fair domain.
 It is as though the fiends prevail'd
 Against the seraphs⁷ they assail'd,
 And fixed, on heavenly thrones, should dwell
 The freed inheritors of hell –
 So soft the scene, so form'd 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, 70
 The last of danger and distress;
 (Before Decay's effacing fingers
 Have swept the lines where beauty lingers)
 And mark'd 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, 80
 Where cold Obstruction's⁸ 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 seal'd
 The first – last look – by death reveal'd!
 Such is the aspect of this shore – 90
 'Tis 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! 100
 Spark of that flame – perchance of heavenly birth –
 Which gleams – but warms no more its cherish'd 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 not this Thermopylae?
 These waters blue that round you lave 110
 Oh servile offspring of the free –
 Pronounce what sea, what shore is this?
 The gulf, the rock of Salamis!
 These scenes – their story not 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, 120
 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 130
 Hath swept the column from their tomb,
 A mightier monument command,
 The mountains of their native land!
 There points thy Muse to stranger's eye,
 The graves of those that cannot die!
 'Twere 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,
 Yes! Self-abasement pav'd the way 140
 To villain-bonds and despot-sway.

What can he tell who treads thy shore?
 No legend of thine olden time,
 No theme on which the muse might soar,
 High as thine own in 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, 150
 Slaves – nay, the bondsmen of a slave,⁹
 And callous, save to crime;
 Stain'd 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 they waft
 Proverbial wiles, and ancient craft,
 In this the subtle Greek is found,
 For this, and this alone, renown'd. 160
 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 170
 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 cumber'd with his scaly spoil,
 Slowly, yet strongly, plies the oar,
 Till Port Leone's¹⁰ safer shore
 Receives him by the lovely light
 That best becomes an Eastern night.

Who thundering comes on blackest steed? 180
 With slacken'd bit and hoof of speed,
 Beneath the clattering iron's sound
 The cavern'd echoes wake around¹¹
 In lash for lash, and bound for bound;
 The foam that streaks the courser's side,
 Seems gather'd 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! 190
 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 scath'd by fiery passion's brunt,
 Though bent on earth thine evil eye
 As meteor-like thou glidest by,
 Right well I view, and deem thee one
 Whom Othman's sons should slay or shun.

On – on he hastened – and he drew 200

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 – 210
 The rock relieves him from mine eye –
 For well I ween unwelcome he
 Whose glance is fixed on those that flee;
 And not a star but 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 stood¹² – 220
 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 the far tophaike,¹³
 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 230
 Of foreign garb and fearful brow?
 And what are these to thine or thee,
 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 – 240

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 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 – 250
 Swift as the hurled on high jerreed,¹⁴
 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; 260
 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! 270
 Though in Time's record nearly nought,
 It was Eternity to Thought!¹⁵
 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 280

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 290
 Waves slowly widening o'er the wall;¹⁶
 The Bat builds in his Haram 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 – 300
 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 310
 That sound had harmonized his rest;
 And oft had Hassan's Youth along
 Its bank been sooth'd by Beauty's song;
 And softer seemed 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 320

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 close its clasp again.
 On desert sands 'twere joy to scan
 The rudest steps of fellow man,
 So here the very voice of Grief 330
 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's¹⁷ self will wait;
 Nor there will wandering Dervise stay, 340
 For Bounty cheers not his delay;
 Nor there will weary stranger halt
 To bless the sacred 'bread and salt'.¹⁸
 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, 350
 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:¹⁹
 'Ho! who art thou!' – 'this low salam
 Replies of Moslem faith I am.'
 'The burthen ye so gently bear, 360

Seems one that claims your utmost care,
 And, doubtless, holds some precious freight,
 My humble bark would gladly wait.'

'Thou speakest sooth, thy skiff unmoor,
 And waft us from the silent shore;
 Nay, leave the sail still furl'd, and ply
 The nearest oar that's scatter'd by,
 And midway to those rocks where sleep
 The channel'd waters dark and deep. –
 Rest from your task – so – bravely done, 370
 Our course has 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 watch'd it as it sank, methought
 Some motion from the current caught
 Bestirr'd it more, – 'twas but the beam
 That chequer'd o'er the living stream –
 I gaz'd, till vanishing from view,
 Like lessening pebble it withdrew; 380
 Still less and less, a speck of white
 That gemm'd the tide, then mock'd 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 queen²⁰ of eastern spring,
 O'er emerald meadows of Kashmeer
 Invites the young pursuer near, 390
 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, 400
 Woe waits the insect and the maid,
 A life of pain, the loss of peace,
 From infant's play, or man's caprice:
 The lovely toy so fiercely sought
 Has lost its charm by being caught,
 For every touch that wooed its stay
 Has brush'd the brightest hues away
 Till charm, and hue, and beauty gone,
 'Tis left to fly or fall alone.
 With wounded wing, or bleeding breast, 410
 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 420
 Except an erring sister's shame.

The Mind, that broods o'er guilty woes,
 Is like the Scorpion²¹ girt by fire,
 In circle narrowing as it glows
 The flames around their captive close,
 Till inly search'd by thousand throes,
 And maddening in her ire,
 One sad and sole relief she knows,
 The sting she nourish'd for her foes,
 Whose venom never yet was vain,
 Gives but one pang, and cures all pain, 430
 And darts into her desperate brain. –
 So do the dark in soul expire,
 Or live like Scorpion girt by fire;
 So writhes the mind Remorse hath riven,
 Unfit for earth, undoom'd for heaven,
 Darkness above, despair beneath,
 Around it flame, within it death! –

Black Hassan from the Haram flies,
 Nor bends on woman's form his eyes, 440
 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 proclaim'd the feast 450
 Of Bairam through the boundless East.
 'Twas then she went as to the bath,
 Which Hassan vainly search'd in wrath,
 But she was flown her master's rage
 In likeness of a Georgian page;
 And far beyond the Moslem's power
 Had wrong'd him with the faithless Giaour.
 Somewhat of this had Hassan deem'd,
 But still so fond, so fair she seem'd, 460
 Too well he trusted to the slave
 Whose treachery deserv'd a grave:
 And on that eve had gone to mosque,
 And thence to feast in his kiosk.
 Such is the tale his Nubians²² tell,
 Who did not watch their charge too well;
 But others say, that on that night,
 By pale Phingari's²³ trembling light,
 The Giaour upon his jet-black steed
 Was seen – but seen alone to speed 470
 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 beam'd forth in every spark

That darted from beneath the lid,
 Bright as the jewel of Giamschid.²⁴
 Yea, *Soul*, and should our prophet say 480
 That form was nought but breathing clay,
 By Alla! I would answer nay;
 Though on Al-Sirat's arch²⁵ 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? 490
 On her might Muftis²⁶ 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 500
 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!²⁷
 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; 510
 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 was 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, 520
 Each arm'd as best becomes a man
 With arquebuss²⁸ and ataghan;
 The chief before, as deck'd for war,
 Bears in his belt the scimitar
 Stain'd with the best of Arnaut blood,
 When in the pass the rebels stood,
 And few return'd to tell the tale
 Of what befell in Parne's vale.
 The pistols which his girdle bore
 Were those that once a pasha wore, 530
 Which still, though gemm'd and boss'd 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; 540
 Here may the loitering merchant Greek
 Find that repose 'twere vain to seek
 In cities lodg'd 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, 550
 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. 560
 Each side the midway path there lay
 Small broken crags of granite gray,
 By time or mountain lightning riven,
 From summits clad in mists of heaven;
 For where is he that hath beheld
 The peak of Liakura²⁹ unveil'd?

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':³⁰ 570
 The Chiaus³¹ 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 unsheath'd, and carbine bent,
 Some o'er their courser's harness leant, 580

Half shelter'd 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 590
 Have well secur'd the only way
 Could now avail the promis'd prey;
 Then curl'd 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 all his vassals to submit;
 But Hassan's frown and furious word
 Are dreaded more than hostile sword, 600
 Nor of his little band a man
 Resign'd carbine or ataghan –
 Nor raised the craven cry, Amaun!³²
 In fuller sight, more near and near,
 The lately ambush'd 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, 610
 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 array'd 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, 620
 In sable torrent wildly streaming;
 As the sea-tide's opposing motion
 In azure column proudly gleaming,
 Beats back the current many a rood,³³
 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, 630
 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 – 640
 Reverberate along that vale,
 More suited to the shepherd's 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, 650
 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 shiver'd to the hilt,
 Yet dripping with the blood he spilt;
 Yet strain'd within the sever'd hand
 Which quivers round that faithless brand;
 His turban far behind him roll'd,
 And cleft in twain its firmest fold; 660
 His flowing robe by falchion³⁴ torn,
 And crimson as those clouds of morn
 That streak'd with dusky red, portend
 The day shall have a stormy end;
 A stain on every bush that bore
 A fragment of his palampore,³⁵
 His breast with wounds unnumber'd riven,
 His back to earth, his face to heaven,
 Fall'n Hassan lies – his unclos'd eye
 Yet lowering on his enemy, 670
 As if the hour that seal'd his fate,
 Surviving left his quenchless hate;
 And o'er him bends that foe with brow
 As dark as this 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 call'd the Prophet, but his power
 Was vain against the vengeful Giaour: 680
 He call'd on Alla – but the word
 Arose unheeded or unheard.
 Thou Paynim fool! – could Leila's prayer
 Be pass'd, and thine accorded there?
 I watch'd my time, I leagu'd with these,
 The traitor in his turn to seize;
 My wrath is wreak'd, the deed is done,
 And now I go – but go alone.'

The browsing camels' bells are tinkling –
 His Mother looked from her lattice high, 690
 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? 700
 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; 710
 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 calpac³⁶ 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. 720
 Peace to the brave! whose blood is spilt –
 Woe to the Giaour! for his the guilt.'

A turban carv'd in coarsest stone,
 A pillar with rank weeds o'ergrown,
 Wheron 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 Osmanlie³⁷
 As e'er at Mecca bent the knee; 730
 As ever scorn'd forbidden wine,
 Or pray'd with face towards the shrine,
 In orisons resumed anew
 At solemn sound of 'Alla Hu!'
 Yet died he by a stranger's hand,
 And stranger in his native land³⁸ –
 Yet died he as in arms he stood,
 And unaveng'd, at least in blood.
 But him the maids of Paradise

Impatient to their halls invite, 740
 And the dark Heaven of Houri's 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'³⁹ throne; 750
 And fire unquench'd, 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 Vampire⁴⁰ 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; 760
 Yet loathe the banquet which perforce
 Must feed thy livid living corse;
 Thy victims ere they yet expire
 Shall know the daemon for their sire,
 As cursing thee, thou cursing them,
 Thy flowers are wither'd on the stem.
 But one that for thy crime must fall –
 The youngest – most below'd of all,
 Shall bless thee with a *father's* name –
 That word shall wrap thy heart in flame! 770
 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! 780
 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?⁴¹
 His features I have scann'd before
 In mine own land – 'tis many a year,
 Since, dashing by the lonely shore, 790
 I saw him urge as fleet a steed
 As ever serv'd a horseman's need.
 But once I saw that face – yet then

It was so mark'd 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 800
 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, 810
 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 820
 Should doom him there for aye to dwell.
 Much in his visions mutters he
 Of maiden 'whelmed⁴² beneath the sea;
 Of sabres clashing – foemen flying,
 Wrongs aveng'd – and Moslem dying.
 On cliff he hath been known to stand,
 And rave as to some bloody hand
 Fresh sever'd from its parent limb,
 Invisible to all but him,
 Which beckons onward to his grave, 830
 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 840
 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, 850
 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 deriv'd its birth. –
 But sadder still it were to trace
 What once were feelings in that face – 860
 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, 870
 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 cot⁴³ 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 – 880
 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; 890
 There will he pause till all is done –
 And hear the prayer – but utter none.
 See – by the half-illumin'd wall
 His hood fly back – his dark hair fall –
 That pale brow wildly wreathing round,
 As if the Gorgon⁴⁴ 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 – 900
 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 stoney air
 Of mixed defiance and despair!
 Saint Francis! keep him from the shrine!
 Else may we dread the wrath divine 910
 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 920
The wound that time can never heal.

The rugged metal of the mine
Must burn before its surface shine,
But plung’d within the furnace-flame,
It bends and melts – though still the same;
Then tempered to thy want, or will,
’T will 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! 930
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. 940
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! 950
It is as if the desert bird,⁴⁵

Whose beak unlocks her bosom’s stream

To still her famish'd nestlings' scream,
 Nor mourns a life to them transferr'd,
 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 unemploy'd – 960
 Who would be doom'd 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! 970

'Father! thy days have pass'd 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 uncontroll'd,
 Such as thy penitents unfold,
 Whose secret sins and sorrows rest 980
 Within thy pure and pitying breast.
 My days, though few, have pass'd below
 In much of joy, but more of woe;
 Yet still in hours of love or strife,
 I've 'scap'd the weariness of life;
 Now leagu'd with friends, now girt by foes,
 I loath'd 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 crawls⁴⁶ 990
 Most noxious o'er a dungeon's walls,
 Than pass my dull, unvarying days,

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 1040
 Was wormwood to his Paynim spleen,
 Ungrateful fool! since but for brands,
 Well wielded in some hardy hands;
 And wounds by Galileans⁴⁷ given,
 The surest pass to Turkish heav'n;
 For him his Houris still might wait
 Impatient at the prophet's gate.
 I lov'd her – love will find its way
 Through paths where wolves would fear to prey,⁴⁸
 And if it dares enough, 'twere hard 1050
 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 lov'd again.
 She died – I dare not tell thee how,
 But look – 'tis written on my brow!
 There read of Cain the curse⁴⁹ and crime,
 In characters unworn by time:
 Still, ere thou dost condemn me – pause – 1060
 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 deserv'd 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, 1070
 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 may'st hate.

His doom was seal'd – he knew it well,
Warn'd by the voice of stern Taheer,⁵⁰
Deep in whose darkly boding ear
The deathshot peal'd of murder near –

As filed the troop to where they fell!
He died too in the battle broil – 1080

A time that heeds nor pain nor toil –
One cry to Mahomet for aid,
One prayer to Alla – 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 search'd, but vainly search'd to find,
The workings of a wounded mind; 1090

Each feature of that sullen corse
Betrayed his rage, but no remorse.
Oh, what had Vengeance given to trace
Despair upon his dying face!
The late repentance of that hour,
When Penitence hath lost her power
To tear one terror from the grave –
And will not soothe, and can not save!

'The cold in clime are cold in blood,
Their love can scarce deserve the name; 1100

But mine was like the lava flood
That boils in Aetna's breast of flame.

I cannot prate in puling strain
Of ladye-love, and beauty's chain;
If changing cheek, and scorching vein –
Lips taught to writhe, but not complain –
If bursting heart, and madd'ning brain –
And daring deed, and vengeful steel –
And all that I have felt – and feel –

Betoken love – that love was mine, 1110
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 possest,
 And come what may, I *have been* blest;
 Shall I the doom I sought upbraid?
 No – reft of all – yet undismay'd
 But for the thought of Leila slain,
 Give me the pleasure with the pain,
 So would I live and love again. 1120
 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!⁵¹ 1130

'Yes, Love indeed is light from heaven –
 A spark of that immortal fire
 With angels shar'd – by Alla 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 form'd the whole –
 A Glory circling round the soul! 1140
 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 quench'd – 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, 1150
 No more with sorrow meekly cope –
 In frenzy 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 – 1160
 I read abhorrence on thy brow,
 And this too was I born to bear!
 'Tis true, that, like that bird of prey,
 With havoc have I mark'd 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, 1170
 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 betray'd.
 Such shame at least was never mine – 1180
 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 1190
 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, 1200
 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 can'st *thou* undo?
 Think me not thankless – but this grief
 Looks not to priesthood for relief.
 My soul's estate in secret guess –
 But would'st thou pity more – say less –
 When thou can'st bid my Leila live, 1210
 Then will I sue thee to forgive;
 Then plead my cause in that high place
 Where purchased masses⁵² 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 early days, and calmer hours,
 When heart with heart delights to blend,
 Where bloom my native valley's bowers – 1220
 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 smil'd – I then could smile –
 When Prudence would his voice assume, 1230
 And warn – I reck'd not what – the while –
 But now remembrance whispers o'er
 Those accents scarcely mark'd 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 1240
 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? 1250
 But bear this ring – his own of old –
 And tell him – what thou dost behold!
 The wither'd frame, the ruined mind,
 The wrack by passion left behind –
 A shrivelled scroll, a scatter'd leaf,
 Sear'd 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 watch'd, and wish'd to weep; 1260
 But could not, for my burning brow
 Throbb'd to the very brain as now.
 I wish'd but for a single tear,
 As something welcome, new, and dear;
 I wish'd 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. 1270
 'Twas then, I tell thee, father! then
 I saw her – yes – she liv'd again;
 And shining in her white symar,⁵³

As through yon pale grey cloud – the star
 Which now I gaze on, as on her
 Who look'd 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. 1280
 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! 1290
 And art thou, dearest, chang'd 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 wish'd 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 – 1300
 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 roll'd above
 The face I view, the form I love;
 They told me – 'twas a hideous tale!
 I'd tell it – but my tongue would fail –
 If true – and from thine ocean-cave 1310
 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, 1320
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 pilgrim's tread.'

He pass'd – nor of his name and race
Hath left a token or a trace, 1330
Save what the father must not say
Who shrived him on his dying day;
This broken tale was all we knew
Of her he lov'd, or him he slew.

Notes to *The Giaour*

- 1 (p. 601) *That tomb* of the Greek hero Themistocles, who fought against Xerxes – see Glossary – and is reputedly buried in Attica
- 2 (p. 602) *Colonna's height* See Sunium in Glossary.
- 3 (p. 602) *Rose . . . Nightingale* In Persian myth and story, the nightingale is attracted to the rose.
- 4 (p. 603) *roundelay* a song with a refrain or chorus
- 5 (p. 603) *flower . . . hour* See Matthew, 6.;:28. Tasks here means works.
- 6 (p. 603) *rapine* ravishment, plundering
- 7 (p. 603) *fiends . . . seraphs* an allusion to the war between the angels and the devils, or fallen angels. See PL, 5 and 6.
- 8 (p. 603) *cold Obstruction's* from *Measure for Measure*, 3, 1, 119
- 9 (p. 605) *bondsman of a slave* The Waiwode, or Turkish governor of Athens, was himself answerable to the Kislär Aga.
- 10 (p. 606) *Port Leone* the port of Piræus
- 11 (p. 606) *Beneath . . . around* See Scott's *Lady of the Lake* (1810), 1, 3, 2.
- 12 (p. 607) *A moment . . . stood* See Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1808), 1, 17, 1–3.
- 13 (p. 607) *tophaike* a musket
- 14 (p. 608) *jerreed* a kind of javelin
- 15 (p. 608) *Eternity to Thought* from Addison's story in the *Spectator*, 94, of the Sultan who put his head under water for a few seconds but thought that in that time he had lived for years
- 16 (p. 609) *The . . . wall* rendering of a well-known Persian couplet, possibly taken from Cantimir, p. 102. See Glossary.
- 17 (p. 610) *Fakir's* A fakir, here, is a religious beggar.
- 18 (p. 610) *'bread and salt'* Muslims observe a pledge of hospitality to strangers.
- 19 (p. 610) *Emir . . . green* Emirs were independent chiefs, said to be descended from Mohammed; the colour green marked their status.
- 20 (p. 611) *insect queen* the blue-winged butterfly of Kashmir
- 21 (p. 612) *Scorpion* It was popularly believed that the scorpion would kill itself with its own poison when under duress.
- 22 (p. 613) *Nubians* black slaves
- 23 (p. 613) *Phingari's* the moon's
- 24 (p. 614) *the jewel of Giamschid* a fabulous ruby belonging to the

- Sultan Jamshid. See William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786).
- 25 (p. 614) *Al-Sirat's arch* the bridge over which the Muslim enters Paradise
- 26 (p. 614) *Muftis* Muslim clerics
- 27 (p. 614) *Franguestan* See Circassia in the Glossary.
- 28 (p. 615) *arquebuss* a type of handgun
- 29 (p. 616) *Liakura* See Parnassus in the Glossary.
- 30 (p. 616) *prick . . . amain* spur on our horses
- 31 (p. 616) *Chiaus* sergeant
- 32 (p. 617) *Amaun!* Surrender! Pardon!
- 33 (p. 617) *rood* a variable measure of distance, usually a quarter of an acre
- 34 (p. 618) *falchion* a short curved broad sword
- 35 (p. 618) *palampore* an embroidered shawl
- 36 (p. 620) *calpac* the central part of the head-dress or turban
- 37 (p. 620) *Osmanlie* a Turk, strictly descended from Osman, founder of the Turkish Empire (1288–1326)
- 38 (p. 620) *stranger . . . land* See Exodus, 2:22.
- 39 (p. 620) *Monkir' . . . Eblis'* an inquisitor demon, and the devil. The Halls of Eblis figure at the end of William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786).
- 40 (p. 621) *Vampire* Like many travellers, Byron encountered vampire legends in Greece.
- 41 (p. 621) *Caloyer* a Greek monk
- 42 (p. 622) *whelm'd* submerged
- 43 (p. 624) *cot* cottage
- 44 (p. 624) *Gorgon* in mythology, a monstrous woman with serpents for hair, whose look could turn to stone
- 45 (p. 625) *desert bird* It was commonly believed that the pelican fed its young with its own blood.
- 46 (p. 626) *thing that crawls* See *Othello*, 3, 3, 270.
- 47 (p. 628) *Galileans* Christians, followers of Jesus of Galilee
- 48 (p. 628) *love . . . prey* See Pope's *Essay on Criticism* (1711), 625.
- 49 (p. 628) *Cain the curse* Cain was punished by God for killing his brother Abel – see Genesis, 4:15.
- 50 (p. 629) *stern Taheer* Byron's Albanian servant Tahiri was reputedly able to 'hear' the future.
- 51 (p. 630) *She . . . Memory* See Revelation, 2:28.
- 52 (p. 632) *purchased masses* Masses could be paid for as a means of acquiring forgiveness.
- 53 (p. 633) *symar* cymar, a loose robe, here used in the sense of a shroud

The Corsair

Canto One

nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria . . . ¹ DANTE

1

'O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,
Our thoughts as boundless, and our souls 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; 10
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 – 20
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 reck's 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. 30
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, 40
 And cry, Remembrance saddening o'er each brow,
 How had the brave who fell exulted *now!*'

2

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; 50
 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 eye 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. 60
 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; 70

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; 80
 To such, brief answer and contemptuous eye
 Convey reproof, nor further deign reply.

3

'A sail! – a 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 doubled² is the cape – our bay
 Receives that prow which proudly spurns the spray. 90
 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?

4

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 stern. 100
 'Tis mann'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!

5

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: 110
 '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!'

6

'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: 120
 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 beetles³ 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? 130
 In pensive posture leaning on the brand,
 Not of a resting-staff to that red hand?
 'Tis he – 'tis Conrad⁴ – 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.'

7

Him Juan sought, and told of their intent; –
 He spake not, but a sign exprest assent. 140
 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; 150
 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 tonight will share.'

'Tonight, Lord Conrad!'

'Ay! at set of sun:

The breeze will freshen when the day is done.
 My corslet,⁵ cloak – one hour and we are gone. 160
 Sling on thy bugle – see that free from rust
 My carbine-lock⁶ 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.'

8

They make obeisance, and retire in haste,
 Too soon to seek again the watery waste: 170
 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? 180
 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. 190
 Oh! if he knew the weight of splendid chains,
 How light the balance of his humbler pains!

9

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, 200
 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-burnt 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, 210
 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, 220
 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!

10

Slight are the outward signs of evil thought,
 Within – within – 't was there the spirit wrought!
 Love shows all changes – Hate, Ambition, Guile,
 Betray no further than the bitter smile; 230
 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, 240
 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 execrated⁷ years!
 Behold – but who hath seen, or e'er shall see,
 Man as himself – the secret spirit free?

11

Yet was not Conrad thus by Nature sent
 To lead the guilty – guilt's worse instrument – 250
 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. 260
 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. 270
 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! 280

12

None are all evil – quickening 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; 290
 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; 300
 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!

13

He paused a moment – till his hastening men
 Pass'd the first winding downward to the glen. 310
 '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 320
 As kindle high tonight (but blow, thou breeze!)
 To warm these slow avengers of the seas.
 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 't was my nobler hope
 To teach my few with numbers still to cope; 330
 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, nor yet too late.’ 340

14

Thus with himself communion held he, till
 He reach’d the summit of his tower-crown’d hill:
 There at the portal paused – for 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. 350

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; 360
 Then give me all I ever ask’d – a tear,⁸
 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 wouldst 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 unhush'd, although my lips were mute! 370
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. 380
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 't was noon – I hail'd and blest the mast
That met my sight – it near'd – Alas! it pass'd!
Another came – Oh God! 't was 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 390
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, 400
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: 410
 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 420
 The feast⁹ 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 Moslem¹⁰ when the cup appears: 430
 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 Olympia¹¹ loved and left of old. 440
 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 clear sky show’d Ariadne’s Isle,¹²
 Which I have pointed from these cliffs the while:
 And thus half sportive, half in fear, I said,

Lest time should raise that doubt to more than dread,
 Thus Conrad, too, will quit me for the main;
 And he deceived me – for he came again!’

‘Again, again – and oft again – my love! 450
 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, 460
 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. 470
 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, 480
 Kiss’d her cold forehead – turn’d – is Conrad gone?

15

‘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 – howe’er
 We promise, hope, believe, there breathes despair. 490
 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 frenzied 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: 500
 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!’

16

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: 510
 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: 520
 Again he hurries on – and as he hears
 The clang 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 seaboy 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. 530
 Fire in his glance, and wildness in his breast,
 He feels of all his former self possess;
 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; 540
 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: 550
 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.

17

Around him mustering ranged his ready guard,
 Before him Juan stands – 'Are all prepared?'

'They are – nay more – embark'd: the latest boat
 Waits but my chief – '

'My sword, and my capote.'¹³

Soon firmly girded on, and lightly slung,

His belt and cloak were o'er his shoulders flung: 560
 '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. 570
 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; 580
 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? 590
 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; 600

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 Two

Conosceste i dubbiosi desiri¹⁴

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 tonight:
 A feast for promised triumph yet to come,
 When he shall drag the fetter'd Rovers home;
 This hath he sworn by Alla 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, 10
 Though far the distant foe they thus despise;
 'Tis but to sail – no doubt tomorrow'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, 20
 Their arms are strong, yet merciful today,
 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 head¹⁵ must smile;

For Moslem mouths produce their choicest cheer,
And hoard their curses, till the coast is clear.

2

High in his hall reclines the turban'd Seyd;
Around – the bearded chiefs he came to lead. 30
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's¹⁶ dissolving cloud supply,
While dance the Almas¹⁷ 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: 40
Feast there who can – nor combat till they must,
And less to conquest than to Korans¹⁸ trust:
And yet the numbers crowded in his host
Might warrant more than even the Pacha's boast.

3

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,¹⁹ is here – himself would tell the rest.' 50
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; 60
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.

4

‘Whence com’st thou, Dervise?’

‘From the outlaw’s den,

A fugitive – ’

‘Thy capture where and when?’

‘From Scalanovo’s²⁰ port to Scio’s isle,

The Saick²¹ was bound; but Allah did not smile

Upon our course – the Moslem merchant’s gains

The Rovers won; our limbs have worn their chains. 70

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?’ 80

‘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, for 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; 90

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! 100

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.’
 ’T were 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.
 ’T was but a moment’s peevish hectic pass’d
 Along his cheek, and tranquillised as fast: 110
 He sate him down in silence, and his look
 Resumed the calmness which before forsook:
 The 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 repast.

‘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, 120
 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; 130
 Infringed our order’s rule, the Prophet’s rage
 To Mecca’s dome²² 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 140
 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 close but glittering casque, and sable plume,²³
 More glittering eye, and black brow’s sabler gloom,
 Glared on the Moslems’ eyes some Afrit sprite, 150
 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 clash, 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!²⁴ 160

He saw their terror – check’d the first despair
 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 baldric²⁵ 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 170
 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, 180
 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'er-flows!
 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, 190
 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?'

5

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 200
 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.' 210
 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.²⁶ 220
 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!

6

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 slower fled – then rallied – then withstood. 230
 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. 240
 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 outwearied rather than o'ercome, 250
 His last faint quittance rendering with his breath,
 Till the blade glimmers in the grasp of death!

7

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, 260
 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 than 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; 270
 If but to thank for, what my fear forgot,
 The life my loving lord remember'd not!'

8

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, 280
 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, 290
 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 300
 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 durance²⁷ led,
 In silence eyed him with a secret dread.

9

The Leech was sent – but not in mercy – there, 310
 To note how much the life yet left could bear;
 He found enough to load with heaviest chain,
 And promise feeling for the wretch of pain;
 Tomorrow – yea – tomorrow's evening sun
 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, 320
 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.

10

'T were 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, 330
 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!²⁸
 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, 340
 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, 350
 But now to stern reflection each a crime;
 The withering sense of evil unreveal'd,
 Not cankering less because the more conceal'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, 360
 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 halfway meets him should he menace near!

11

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, 370
 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, 380
 More need of rest to nerve me for the day!'

This said, with languor to his mat he crept,
 And, whatso'er his visions, quickly slept.
 'T was 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 stemm'd –
 Disguised, discover'd, conquering, ta'en, condemn'd –
 A chief on land, an outlaw on the deep – 390
 Destroying, saving, prison'd, and asleep!

12

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, 400
 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 dunnest 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, 410

She left his side – his signet-ring²⁹ 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. 420

13

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 – 't is 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: 430
 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.' 440
 '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 extremest 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, 450
 Till even the scaffold echoes with their jest!³⁰
 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.

14

'Corsair! thy doom is named – but I have power 460
 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 470
 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 480
 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.' 490

'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 visions – 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 500
 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. 510
 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 I ever 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. 520
 Or when reflection comes – and come it must –
 I fear that henceforth 't will but bring disgust;
 I am his slave – but, in despite of pride,
 'T were 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! 't is to break thy chain;
 Repay the life that to thy hand I owe; 530
 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:
 'T will cost me dear – but dread no death today!'

15

She press'd his fetter'd fingers to her heart,
 And bow'd her head, and turn'd her to depart,
 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, 540
 That starts at once – bright – pure – from Pity's mine,
 Already polish'd by the hand divine!

Oh! too convincing – dangerously 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. 550
 Yet be the soft triumvir's fault³¹ 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!

16

'T is morn, and o'er his alter'd features play
 The beams – without the hope of yesterday.
 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, 560
 Chill, wet, and misty round each stiffen'd limb,
 Refreshing earth – reviving all but him!

Canto Three

Come vedi – ancor non m'abbandona.³²

DANTE

1

Slow sinks, more lovely ere his race be run,
Along Morea's hills³³ 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 Aegina's rock and Idra's isle,³⁴
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. 10
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;
Till, 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 Wisest³⁵ look'd his last. 20
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 laud he seem'd to pour,
The land, where Phoebus never frown'd before;
But ere he sank below Cithaeron's³⁶ head,
The cup of woe was quaff'd – the spirit fled; 30
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 night³⁷ 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 moonbeams play,
 There the white column greets her grateful ray,
 And, bright around with quivering beams beset,
 Her emblem sparkles o'er the minaret: 40
 The groves of olive scatter'd dark and wide
 Where meek Cephisus³⁸ 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 Aegean, heard no more afar,
 Lulls his chafed breast from elemental war; 50
 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.

2

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 forget? 60
 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!

3

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: 80
 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: 90
 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.' 100
 'Tis more than nature's; like the burning might
 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 – ’t was in vain to strive – 110
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; 120
Then seek Anselmo’s cavern, to report
The tale too tedious – when the triumph short.

4

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. 130

5

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,³⁹
But inly views his victim as he bleeds. 140
‘Pacha! the day is thine; 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; 150
 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; 160
 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!* – and shall I then resign
 One day to him – the wretch already mine? 170
 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 – 180
 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! 190
 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 200
 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!

6

Meanwhile long, anxious, weary, still the same
 Roll'd day and night: his soul could terror tame –
 This fearful interval of doubt and dread, 210
 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;
 'T was worn – perhaps decay'd – yet silent bore
 That conflict, deadlier far than all before:
 The heat of fight, the hurry of the gale, 220
 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, 230
 And blot life's latest scene with calumny;⁴⁰
 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, 240
 And govern pangs surpassing mortal pain:
 And those sustain'd he – boots it well or ill?
 Since not to sink beneath, is something still!

7

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, 250
 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,
 A long known voice – alas! too vainly near!
 Loud sung the wind above; and, doubly loud,
 Shook o'er his turret cell the thunder-cloud;
 And flash'd the lightning by the latticed bar, 260

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 – ceased – he felt alone,
 As if some faithless friend had spurn'd his groan?

8

The midnight pass'd, and to the massy door 270
 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, 280
 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 290
 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, 300
 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 wouldst 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? 310
 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 – 320
 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. 330
 I was a slave unmurmuring; he hath said,
 But for his rescue I with thee had fled.
 'T was 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, 340
 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. 350
 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!'

'Gulnare – Gulnare – I never felt till now
 My abject fortune, wither'd fame so low:
 Seyd is mine enemy; had swept my band 360
 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, 370
 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, 380
 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.'

9

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, 390
 Since bar and bolt no more his steps preclude,
 He, fast as fetter'd limbs allow, pursued.
 'T was 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, 410
 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, for got –
 Her hurrying hand had left – 't was but a spot –

Its hue was all he saw, and scarce withstood –
Oh! slight but certain pledge of crime – 'tis blood!

10

He had seen battle – he had brooded lone
O'er promised pangs to sentenced guilt fore-shown;
He had been tempted, chasten'd, and the chain 420
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!

11

'Tis done – he nearly waked – but it is done. 430
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.'

12

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; 440
Once more his limbs are free as mountain wind!
But on his heavy heart such sadness sate,
As if they there transferr'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,⁴¹ obey'd,
Nor cared he now if rescued or betray'd;
Resistance were as useless as if Seyd 450
Yet lived to view the doom his ire decreed.

13

Embark'd, the sail unfurl'd, the light breeze blew –
 How much had Conrad's memory to review!
 Sunk he 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, 460
 His fleeting triumph and his failing hand;
 He thought on her afar, his lonely bride:
 He turn'd and saw – Gulnare, the homicide!

14

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? 470
 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.'

15

She wrongs his thoughts, they more himself upbraid
 Than her, though undesign'd, the wretch he made;
 But speechless all, deep, dark, and unexpressed,
 They bleed within that silent cell – his breast.
 Still onward, fair the breeze, nor rough the surge, 480
 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;⁴²
 A flash is seen – the ball beyond their bow

Booms harmless, hissing to the deep below.
 Uprose keen Conrad from his silent trance, 490
 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 hail,
 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, 500
 Their arms can scarce forbear 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!

16

These greetings o’er, the feelings that o’er-flow,
 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, 510
 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, 520
 Extreme in love or hate, in good or ill,
 The worst of crimes had left her woman still!

17

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!⁴³ 530
 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, 550
 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!

18

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 blaze their wonted stations round,
 The boats are darting o'er the curly bay,
 And sportive dolphins bend them through the spray; 560
 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?

19

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. 570
 'Tis strange – of yore its welcome never fail'd,
 Nor now, perchance, extinguish'd, only veil'd.
 With the first boat descends he for the shore,
 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. 580
 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 – 't is 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; 590
 He snatch'd the lamp – its light will answer all –
 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 foretold!

20

He turn'd not – spoke not – sunk not – fix'd his look,
 And set the anxious frame that lately shook: 600
 He gazed – how long we gaze despite of pain,
 And know, but dare not own, we gaze in vain!
 In life itself she was so still and fair,
 That death with gentler 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 a sleep,
 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 – 610
 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 a while;
 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; 620
 These – and the pale pure cheek, became the bier –
 But she is nothing – wherefore is he here?

21

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, 630
 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 that least befit who wear them most.

22

By those, that deepest feel, is ill exprest 640
 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, 650
 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 depart,
 In helpless – hopeless – brokenness of heart:
 The sun goes forth, but Conrad's day is dim;
 And the night cometh⁴⁴ – 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 660
 To blackest shade – nor will endure a guide!

23

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, 670
 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's 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!

24

'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; 680

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! 690
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.⁴⁵

Notes to *The Corsair*

THE CORSAIR – CANTO ONE

- 1 (p. 639) Epigraph: '*nessun ... miseria*' 'There is no greater sorrow than thinking back to happy times when one is miserable . . . ' from Dante's *Inferno*, 5, 121–3
- 2 (p. 641) *doubled* sailed around
- 3 (p. 642) *beetles* overhangs
- 4 (p. 642) *Conrad* The pirate chief's name matches that of a Ghibelline leader – see Guelph in the Glossary, and Byron's journal, November 1813–April 1814 (3, 204–58), where the political contexts of the poem are discussed.
- 5 (p. 643) *corslet* a protective body-covering, usually of leather
- 6 (p. 643) *carbine-lock* rifle firing mechanism
- 7 (p. 645) *execrated* cursed
- 8 (p. 648) *a tear* echoes Gray's Epitaph in *Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard* (1751)
- 9 (p. 650) *the feast* based on the food eaten in Eden by Adam and Eve in *PL*, 5, 321–48
- 10 (p. 650) *more than Moslem* Ironically, like strict Muslims, Conrad doesn't drink alcohol.
- 11 (p. 650) *Olympia* In Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, 10, Olympia is abandoned by her lover Bireno.
- 12 (p. 650) *Ariadne's Isle* In mythology, Ariadne was abandoned on the island of Naxos by her lover Theseus – see Glossary.
- 13 (p. 653) *capote* a long cloak

THE CORSAIR – CANTO TWO

- 14 (p. 655) Epigraph: '*Conosceste . . . desiri*' 'Experience those uncertain desires', from Dante's *Inferno* 5, 120
- 15 (p. 655) *wear a head* wear a turban
- 16 (p. 656) *chibouque* the long straight-stemmed smoking pipe
- 17 (p. 656) *Almas* dancing girls
- 18 (p. 656) *Korans* The Muslim holy book is the Koran.
- 19 (p. 656) *a captive . . . Escaped* Byron found an example of a spy entering enemy camps in escapades of the fifth-century-AD Roman emperor Majorian, who explored Carthage in disguise.

- 20 (p. 657) *Scalanovo's port* a port, on the coast of Asia Minor, twenty miles south of Smyrna
- 21 (p. 657) *Saick* a small boat
- 22 (p. 658) *Mecca's dome* Muslims are meant to make a pilgrimage to the Kaba or sacred shrine in the holy city of Mecca at least once in their lifetimes.
- 23 (p. 659) *casque . . . plume* helmet with a black feather
- 24 (p. 659) *Zatanai* Satan
- 25 (p. 659) *baldric* a broad belt
- 26 (p. 661) *gore imbrued* stained with blood
- 27 (p. 663) *durance* here meaning imprisonment
- 28 (p. 664) *writh* . . . *repent* See Edward Young's (1683–1765) poem *Night Thoughts* (1742), 3, 225.
- 29 (p. 666) *signet-ring* sign of the Pacha's authority
- 30 (p. 667) *scaffold . . . jest* Byron was familiar with the so-called gallows humour exhibited in history by people like Sir Thomas More (d. 1543), and from the many executions carried out during the French Revolution.
- 31 (p. 669) *triumvir's fault* Anthony gave Cleopatra much of the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire out of love for her.

THE CORSAIR – CANTO THREE

- 32 (p. 670) Epigraph: 'Come . . . *m'abbandona*' 'That [passion] as you see does not leave me now', from Dante's *Inferno*, 5, 105
- 33 (p. 670) *Morea's hills* the hills of Corsica
- 34 (p. 670) *Aegina's rock . . . Idra's isle* the Greek island Aegina, and Cyprus
- 35 (p. 670) *thy Wisest* See Socrates in the Glossary.
- 36 (p. 670) *Cithaeron* a Greek mountain, traditionally sacred to the Muses
- 37 (p. 671) *the queen of night* the moon. Her emblem, the crescent moon, is to be found on the top of minarets.
- 38 (p. 671) *Cephisus* an Athenian river
- 39 (p. 673) *his beads* the *comboloio* or Muslim prayer beads
- 40 (p. 676) *calumny* false accusation, slander
- 41 (p. 681) *beck* nod
- 42 (p. 682) *tier* row of guns
- 43 (p. 684) *Her . . . heaven* echoes Scott's *Marmion* (1808), 3, 17, 9–10
- 44 (p. 687) *And the night cometh* See John, 9:4.
- 45 (p. 688) *a thousand crimes* echoing the judgment on the Caliph at the end of William Beckford's gothic novel *Vathek* (1786)

SATIRES

The notes for *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* are on pages 729–733
The notes for *The Vision of Judgment* are on pages 763–764

Introduction to the Satires

Byron's respect for the technical skill of neo-classical or Augustan eighteenth-century poets and for their sense of the corrective social function of the poet made him unusual amongst the Romantics. Thus, he appreciated not only Alexander Pope's skill, but, unusually, his creativity:

I took [Thomas] Moore's poems & my own and others – and went over them side by side with Pope's – and I was really astonished . . . at the ineffable distance in point of sense – harmony – effect – and even *Imagination* – Passion – and invention – between the little Queen Anne's Man – & and us of the lower empire . . . [5:265]

The many differences between an Augustan and a Romantic view of poetry's function and importance are complex. What is attractive to Byron about Pope, Dryden and others is not only a question of technical mastery, which can be seen in his own accomplished use of a variety of forms; it is, also, the idea that the poet should both entertain and perform a useful corrective function. This idea is derived ultimately from the classical Roman poet Horace and his view that poetry should be 'dulce et utile' – enjoyable and useful; a dictum which Pope followed in his many satires (for example, *The Dunciad* (1728) and *The Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot* (1735)). Indeed, it might be said that if irony is Byron's habitual tone, then a kind of Horatian satire is his mode.

Much of *Don Juan* might be seen in this light: its attack on hypocritical sexual mores, and on militaristic ambition, and, particularly, in its exploration of English society in the latter cantos (for a greater discussion of the satirical vein that runs through Byron's work, see Beaty). His first sustained satire, and his first popular success, however, was *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), appropriately enough written in the heroic couplet used by Pope. Its immediate origins lie in the stinging attack on Byron's early collection *Hours of Idleness* (1807) in the magazine *The Edinburgh Review*, hence the second part of the title. Byron wrongly attributed the review to Francis Jeffrey, rather than to its actual author Henry Brougham, allowing him to pun characteristically on Jeffrey's name and that of the infamous 'hanging judge' Jeffreys of the seventeenth

century (EBSR 438–43). Yet, the satire moves far beyond this quarrel. Like Pope's *Dunciad* and even more his *Essay on Criticism* (1711), Byron's satire ranges widely. He criticises, perhaps surprisingly, the moral decline in his age; he compares that decline to high Augustan standards (EBSR 103–20), against which he measures the cultural activity of his day. In so doing, he knowingly uses the kind of neo-classical terminology – wit, sense, judgement, taste, reason – which much of Romanticism sought to banish, or at least redefine.* Although he praises some poets, like Scott and the now little known Bowles, his main targets are the major Romantic figures. He calls Wordsworth 'dull' and 'vulgar', and attacks the overly prolific Robert Southey as an '[i]llustrious conqueror of common sense' (EBSR 220).

Although Byron could praise Southey – 'he has passages equal to anything' (3:214) – he is a long-standing target. Byron's attack was based not only on a dislike of much of his poetry, but also on politics. Byron, as argued in my General Introduction, was, if complex, essentially a liberal; Southey had begun as a radical, but by 1813, when he became Poet Laureate, he was a fully-paid-up member of the Tory establishment. Just as it was for Pope in *The Dunciad*, for Byron the practice of poetry was inextricably linked to one's political position. This was equally clear to Southey, who as, in a sense, the poet of the establishment opposed Byron, the outsider. The opposition came to a head in 1821 when Southey published the ponderous and little read poem *The Vision of Judgement* on the death of George III. He took the opportunity to attack Byron's perceived moral relativism in the preface to the poem, labelling him as the head of 'the satanic school' (Southey, p. 769). Again, Byron responded both to the personal attack and to its wider implications by producing his own satire, *A Vision of Judgement* (1822).

The poem is written in the *ottava rima* used so expertly in *Don Juan*; but it is more relaxed, there are fewer insistent and comic rhymes, and it achieves a kind of Horatian conversational tone, which in itself does much to challenge the pomposity of Southey's original. More generally, the poem seeks 'to put Goerge's apotheosis in a whig [liberal] point of view' (8:232). In this way it is Southey, rather than radical opponents of the king, who finds himself condemned – not to Hell, where the devils flee to avoid his poetry, but to Lake Windermere where his own vision began (VOJ 104). Similarly, whilst ambivalent about their worth, Byron allows the radicals and revolutionaries that Southey attacked into Heaven.

* For a discussion of this, see Abrams.

The radical MP John Wilkes (1729–97) is called to judge but cannot condemn.

Malcolm Kelsall is right to claim that Byron is as uncomfortable with radicals as he is with reactionaries: '[t]his poet has no Utopian solution in his pocket for difficult times' (Kelsall, p. 143). Yet, what in the end makes his satire so powerful is precisely this refusal to think in terms of easy oppositions, as Southey does, and Pope refuses to do. In *English Bards* he can laugh at himself as much as at his enemies: 'Lords too are Bards: such things as times befall/ And 'tis some praise in Peers to write at all' (EBSR 719–20). In *A Vision* he shows an ability to look beyond obvious political point scoring. Wilkes is brought to sympathise with at least the person of George, if not the king as political figurehead, then: 'Bless me! is he blind?' (VOJ 68). Here, his Satan is a version of the Miltonic and, indeed, Byronic hero;* but, he is also witty and opportunistic (VOJ 39–50; 64). And, in a final masterful touch, he allows his George III to slip almost unnoticed into Heaven, suggesting a kind of tolerance, perhaps surprising in satire, but so characteristic of Byron.

* I discuss the nature of the Byronic hero, and its relationship to Milton as read by the Romantics, in the Introduction to the Tales.

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

Preface

All my friends, learned and unlearned, have urged me not to publish this Satire with my name. If I were to be 'turned from the career of my humour by quibbles quick, and paper bullets of the brain', I should have complied with their counsel. But I am not to be terrified by abuse, or bullied by reviewers, with or without arms. I can safely say that I have attacked none personally who did not commence on the offensive. An author's works are public property: he who purchases may judge, and publish his opinion if he pleases; and the authors I have endeavoured to commemorate may do by me as I have done by them. I dare say they will succeed better in condemning my scribblings than in mending their own. But my object is not to prove that I can write well, but, if possible, to make others write better.

As the poem has met with far more success than I expected, I have endeavoured in this edition to make some additions and alterations, to render it more worthy of public perusal.

In the first edition of this satire, published anonymously, fourteen lines on the subject of Bowles's Pope were written by, and inserted at the request of, an ingenious friend of mine,* who has now in the press a volume of poetry. In the present edition they are erased, and some of my own substituted in their stead; my only reason for this being that which I conceive would operate with any other person in the same manner – a determination not to publish with my name any production which was not entirely and exclusively my own composition.

* Mr Hobhouse

With regard to the real talents of many of the poetical persons whose performances are mentioned or alluded to in the following pages, it is presumed by the author that there can be little difference of opinion in the public at large; though, like other sectaries, each has his separate tabernacle of proselytes, by whom his abilities are overrated, his faults overlooked, and his metrical canons received without scruple and without consideration. But the unquestionable possession of considerable genius by several of the writers here censured renders their mental prostitution more to be regretted. Imbecility may be pitied, or, at worst, laughed at and forgotten: perverted powers demand the most decided reprehension. No one can wish more than the author that some known and able writer had undertaken their exposure; but Mr Gifford has devoted himself to Massinger, and, in the absence of the regular physician, a country practitioner may, in cases of absolute necessity, be allowed to prescribe his nostrum to prevent the extension of so deplorable an epidemic, provided there be no quackery in his treatment of the malady. A caustic is here offered; as it is to be feared nothing short of actual cautery can recover the numerous patients afflicted with the present prevalent and distressing *rabies* for rhyming. As to the Edinburgh Reviewers, it would indeed require an Hercules to crush the Hydra; but if the author succeeds in merely 'bruising one of the heads of the serpent', though his own hand should suffer in the encounter, he will be amply satisfied.

English Bards and Scottish Reviewers

Still must I hear? – shall hoarse Fitzgerald¹ 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.

Oh! nature's² 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! 10
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, 20
Our task complete, like Hamet's³ 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; 30
When knaves and fools combined o'er all prevail,
And weigh their justice in a golden scale;⁴
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. 40
 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. 50
 'T is 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: 60
 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: 70
 Fear not to lie, 'twill seem a sharper hit;
 Shrink not from blasphemy, 'twill pass for wit;

Care not for feeling – pass your proper jest,
And stand a critic, hated yet caress'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; 80
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 forbear?
But yet, so near all modern worthies run,
'Tis doubtful whom to seek, or whom to shun; 90
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 some 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:' – 100
Indeed! – 't is granted, faith! – but what care I?
Better to err with Pope, than shine with Pye.

Time was,⁵ ere yet in these degenerate days
Ignoble themes obtain'd mistaken praise,
When sense and wit with poesy allied,
No fabled 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; 110

A polish'd nation's praise aspired to claim,
 And raised 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's⁶ 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. 120
 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' devils⁷ 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';⁸ yet still from change to change we run: 130
 What varied wonders tempt us as they pass:
 The cow-pox, tractors, galvanism, and gas,⁹
 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,¹⁰
 And, hurling lawful genius from the throne,
 Erects a shrine and idol of its own; 140
 Some leaden calf – but whom it matters not,
 From soaring Southey down to grovelling Stott.¹¹

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, 150

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's¹² 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; 160
 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,¹³
 Now forging scrolls, now foremost in the fight,
 Not quite a felon, yet but half a knight,
 The gibbet or the field prepared to grace; 170
 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,¹⁴ not for fame:
 Still for stern Mammon may they toil in vain!
 And sadly gaze on gold they cannot gain! 180
 Such be their meed, such still the just reward
 Of prostituted muse and hireling bard!
 For this we spurn Apollo's venal son,¹⁵
 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 Maro¹⁶ sung, 190
 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 expired 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: 200
 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 placed in glory's niche;
 Her fetters burst, and just released from prison,
 A virgin phoenix from her ashes risen. 210
 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!¹⁷
 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! 220
 Now, last and greatest, Madoc spreads his sails,
 Cacique¹⁸ in Mexico, and prince in Wales;
 Tells us strange tales, as other travellers do,
 More old than Mandeville's,¹⁹ 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; 230
 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’;²⁰ 240
 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 tortured 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’;²¹
 A moon-struck, silly lad, who lost his way,
 And, like his bard, confounded night with day; 250
 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, 260
 Yet none in lofty numbers can surpass
 The bard who soars to elegise 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 wouldst make Parnassus a churchyard!
 Lo! wreaths of yew, not laurel, bind thy brow,

Thy muse a sprite, Apollo's sexton²² thou!
 Whether on ancient tombs thou tak'st thy stand,
 By gibb'ring spectres hail'd, thy kindred band; 270
 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',²³ and what not,
 To crown with honour thee and Walter Scott;
 Again all hail! if tales like thine may please,
 St Luke²⁴ alone can vanquish the disease; 280
 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. 290
 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'.²⁵

For thee, translator of the tinsel song,
 To whom such glittering ornaments belong,
 Hibernian Strangford!²⁶ 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, 300
 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 a 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; 310
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,^{27a} rise! bestow some meet reward
On dull devotion – Lo! the Sabbath bard, 320
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;^{27b}
And, undisturb'd by conscientious qualms,
Perverts the Prophets, and purloins the Psalms.

Hail, Sympathy!²⁸ 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. 330
And 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 wouldst but add a cap! 340
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 whining 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; 350
 'Awake a louder and a loftier strain',²⁹
 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. 360
 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 failing scan;
 The first of poets was, alas! but man. 370
 Rake from each ancient dunghill every pearl,
 Consult Lord Fanny, and confide in Curll,³⁰
 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.³¹
 Oh! hadst thou lived in that congenial time,
 To rave with Dennis, and with Ralph³² to rhyme; 380
 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 Bristowa's boast,
 Imports old stories from the Cambrian coast,
 And sends his goods to market – all alive!
 Lines forty thousand, cantos twenty-five? 390
 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 him 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! – Phoebus! what a name
 To fill the speaking trump of future fame! – 400
 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. 410

As Sisyphus against the infernal steep
 Rolls the huge rock whose motions ne'er may sleep,
 So up thy hill, ambrosial Richmond, heaves
 Dull Maurice³³ 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 Alcaeus³⁴ wanders down the vale;
 Though fair they rose, and might have bloom'd at last, 420
 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,³⁵ that still in darkness prow!;
 A coward brood, which mangle as they prey, 430
 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 judge³⁶ almost the same;
 In soul so like, so merciful, yet just, 440
 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 450
 Back to the sway they forfeited before,
 His scribbling toils some recompense may meet,
 And raise this Daniel to the judgment-seat?³⁷
 Let Jeffrey's 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, 460
 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, 470
 Low groan'd the startled whirlwinds of the north;³⁸
 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 Tolbooth³⁹ 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, 480
 The sixteenth story, where himself was born,
 His patrimonial garret, fell to 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 his 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 490
 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 Danae caught the golden shower,⁴⁰
 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, 500
 Boast of thy country, and Britannia's guide!
 For 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.⁴¹
 Herbert shall wield Thor's hammer, and sometimes, 510
 In gratitude, thou'lt praise his rugged rhymes.
 Smug Sidney too thy bitter page shall seek,
 And classic Hallam, much renown'd for Greek;
 Scott may perchance his name and influence lend,
 And paltry Pillans shall traduce his friend;
 While gay Thalia's⁴² 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 520
 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.⁴³
 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 wait a genuine Scot, 530
 In double portion swells thy glorious lot;
 For thee Edina culls her evening sweets,
 And showers their odours⁴⁴ 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 his lot,
 His hirelings mention'd, and himself forgot! 540

Holland, with Henry Petty⁴⁵ 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, 550
 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 the unusual grape,
 Some glowing thoughts should to the press escape,
 And tinge with red the female reader's cheek,
 My lady⁴⁶ 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! 560
 What precious scenes the wondering eyes invite!
 Puns, and a prince within a barrel pent,⁴⁷
 And Dibdin's⁴⁸ 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? – 570
 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 alarum bell! let folly quake!
 Oh, Sheridan! if aught can move thy pen, 580
 Let Comedy assume her throne again;

Abjure the mummery of the 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 Siddons⁴⁹ 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 590
 From Cherry, Skeffington, and Mother Goose?⁵⁰
 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 600
 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!⁵¹
 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, 610
 Or, kind to dulness, 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's⁵² 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, 620

To sanction Vice, and hunt Decorum down:
 Let wedded strumpets languish o'er Deshayes,⁵³
 And bless the promise which his form displays;
 While Gayton 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, 630
 Strain her fair neck, and charm the listening throng!
 Whet not your scythe, suppressors of our vice!
 Reforming saints! too delicately nice!
 By whose decrees, our sinful souls to save,
 No Sunday tankards foam, no barbers shave;
 And beer undrawn, and beards unmown, display
 Your holy reverence for the Sabbath-day.

Or hail at once the patron and the pile
 Of vice and folly, Greville and Argyle!⁵⁴
 Where yon proud palace, Fashion's hallow'd fane, 640
 Spreads wide her portals for the motley train,
 Behold the new Petronius⁵⁵ 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 – Comus⁵⁶ all allows; 650
 Champagne, 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 burletta⁵⁷ o'er,
 The audience take their turn upon the floor:
 Now round the room the circling dow'gers sweep, 660

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's⁵⁸ 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, 670
 Each swain may teach new systems, or be taught:
 There the blithe youngster, just return'd 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!⁵⁹
 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 Pagets⁶⁰ for your wife;
 Fit consummation of an earthly race 680
 Begun 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.⁶¹

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,⁶² 690
 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. 700
 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.⁶³

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? 710
 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 indite,
 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 Andrews⁶⁴ still his strength in couplets try,
 And live 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. 720
 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.⁶⁵
 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? 730
 What heterogeneous honours deck the peer!
 Lord, rhymester, petit-maitre,⁶⁶ and pamphleteer!
 So dull in youth, so drivelling in his age,
 His scenes alone had damn'd our sinking stage;
 But managers for once cried, 'Hold, enough!'⁶⁷
 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.⁶⁸

740

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 Mantle⁶⁹ prove a blanket too!
 One common Lethe waits each hapless bard,
 And, peace be with you! 'tis your best reward. 750
 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 prose⁷⁰ in masquerade,
 Whose strains, the faithful echoes of her mind,
 Leave wondering comprehension far behind.
 Though Crusca's bards⁷¹ no more our journals fill,
 Some stragglers skirmish round the columns still; 760
 Last of the howling host which once was Bell's,
 Matilda snivels yet, and Hafiz 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,⁷²
 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! 770
 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 Lofft⁷³ 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: 780
 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! 790
 Ye tuneful cobblers! still your notes prolong,
 Compose at once a slipper and a song;
 So shall the fair your handywork 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. 800
 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? 810
 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 't is 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.⁷⁴

'Why slumbers Gifford?' once was ask'd in vain;
 Why slumbers Gifford? let us ask again. 820
 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,⁷⁵
 Eternal beacons of consummate crime?
 Arouse thee, Gifford! be thy promise claim'd,
 Make bad men better, or at least ashamed. 830

Unhappy White!⁷⁶ 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,⁷⁷
 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.
 'T was thine own genius gave the final blow,
 And help'd to plant the wound that laid thee low: 840
 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; 850
 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 Shee⁷⁸ and Genius find a place,
 Whose pen and pencil yield an equal grace; 860
 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, 870
 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!⁷⁹ 't was 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. 880

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 Aonian⁸⁰ 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. 890

Let these, or such as these, with just applause,
 Restore the muse's violated laws;
 But not in flimsy Darwin's pompous chime,⁸¹
 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: 900
 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:⁸²
 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. 910

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; 920
 Let Moore still sigh; let Strangford steal from Moore,
 And swear that Camoëns 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. 930
 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? 940
 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? 950
 New eras spread their wings, new nations rise,
 And other victors fill the applauding skies;⁸³
 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 its 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. 960

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;⁸⁴
 Though printers condescend the press to soil
 With rhyme by Hoare, and 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; 970
 A foal well worthy of her ancient dam,
 Whose Helicon is duller than her Cam.

There Clarke,⁸⁵ still striving piteously 'to please',
 Forgetting doggrel 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. 980

Oh! dark asylum of a Vandal race!
 At once the boast of learning, and disgrace!
 So lost to Phoebus, that nor Hodgson's⁸⁶ verse
 Can make thee better, nor poor Hewson's worse.
 But where fair Isis⁸⁷ 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 Richards⁸⁸ wakes a genuine poet's fires,
 And modern Britons glory in their sires. 990

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, 1000
 'T is 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 shatter'd 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. 1010

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 Portland⁸⁹ 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: 1020
 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;⁹⁰
 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; 1030
 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;⁹¹
 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: 1040
 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 buckram⁹² shall have blows enough,

And feel they too are 'penetrable stuff':⁹³ 1050
 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; 1060
 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 poetaster⁹⁴ 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 incondite⁹⁵ 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.

Postscript to the Second Edition

I have been informed, since the present edition went to the press, that my trusty and well-beloved cousins, the Edinburgh Reviewers, are preparing a most vehement critique on my poor, gentle, *unresisting* Muse, whom they have already so be-devilled with their ungodly ribaldry:

Tantaene animis coelestibus irae!

I suppose I must say of Jeffrey as Sir Andrew Aguecheek saith, 'An I had known he was so cunning of fence, I had seen him damned ere I had fought him.' What a pity it is that I shall be beyond the Bosphorus before the next number has passed the Tweed! But I yet hope to light my pipe with it in Persia.

My northern friends have accused me, with justice, of personality towards their great literary anthropophagus, Jeffrey; but what else was to be done with him and his dirty pack, who feed by 'lying and slandering', and slake their thirst by 'evil speaking'? I have adduced facts already well

known, and of Jeffrey's mind I have stated my free opinion, nor has he thence sustained any injury; – what scavenger was ever soiled by being pelted with mud? It may be said that I quit England because I have censured there 'persons of honour and wit about town'; but I am coming back again, and their vengeance will keep hot till my return. Those who know me can testify that my motives for leaving England are very different from fears, literary or personal: those who do not, may one day be convinced. Since the publication of this thing, my name has not been concealed; I have been mostly in London, ready to answer for my transgressions, and in daily expectation of sundry cartels; but, alas! 'the age of chivalry is over,' or, in the vulgar tongue, there is no spirit nowadays.

There is a youth ycleped Hewson Clarke (subaudi *esquire*), a sizer of Emanuel College, and, I believe, a denizen of Berwick-upon-Tweed, whom I have introduced in these pages to much better company than he has been accustomed to meet; he is, notwithstanding, a very sad dog, and for no reason that I can discover, except a personal quarrel with a bear, kept by me at Cambridge to sit for a fellowship, and whom the jealousy of his Trinity contemporaries prevented from success, has been abusing me, and, what is worse, the defenceless innocent above mentioned, in 'The Satirist', for one year and some months. I am utterly unconscious of having given him any provocation; indeed, I am guiltless of having heard his name, till coupled with 'The Satirist'. He has therefore no reason to complain, and I dare say that, like Sir Fretful Plagiary, he is rather *pleased* than otherwise. I have now mentioned all who have done me the honour to notice me and mine, that is, my bear and my book, except the editor of 'The Satirist,' who, it seems, is a gentleman – God wot! I wish he could impart a little of his gentility to his subordinate scribblers. I hear that Mr. Jerningham is about to take up the cudgels for his Maecenas, Lord Carlisle. I hope not: he was one of the few, who, in the very short intercourse I had with him, treated me with kindness when a boy; and whatever he may say or do, 'pour on, I will endure.' I have nothing further to add, save a general note of thanksgiving to readers, purchasers, and publishers, and, in the words of Scott, I wish

'To all and each a fair good night,
And rosy dreams and slumbers light.'

Notes to the *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*

- 1 (p. 699) *Fitzgerald* William Fitzgerald (1759–1829), minor poet
- 2 (p. 699) *Oh! nature's* See Pope's *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot* (1735), 249.
- 3 (p. 699) *Hamet's* Cid Hamet Bengali promises his pen rest in the last chapter of *Don Quixote*.
- 4 (p. 699) *weigh . . . scale* See Pope's *Dunciad* (1728), 1, 52–3.
- 5 (p. 701) *Time was* echoes the opening of Pope's *Dunciad* and Juvenal's *Satires*, 6, 1–20
- 6 (p. 702) *Congreve's* dramatist William Congreve (1670–1729)
- 7 (p. 702) *printers' devils* printers' apprentices
- 8 (p. 702) *'Nought . . . new'* from Ecclesiastes, 1:9
- 9 (p. 702) *tractors . . . gas* a patent medical cure and the recently discovered painkiller, nitrous oxide
- 10 (p. 702) *knee to Baal* See *Dunciad*, 4, 93. Baal is a pagan god.
- 11 (p. 702) *Stott* See Haviz in Glossary.
- 12 (p. 703) *Gilpin Horner* the goblin in Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805)
- 13 (p. 703) *Marmion* the hero of Scott's poem of the same name (1808)
- 14 (p. 703) *lucre* a pejorative term for money
- 15 (p. 703) *Apollo's venal son* Scott's verse was commercially successful, ironically until he was eclipsed by Byron. The following quotation comes from *Marmion*, 4, 28.
- 16 (p. 704) *Maro* See Virgil in the Glossary.
- 17 (p. 704) *Tom Thumb* a dwarf from folklore
- 18 (p. 704) *Cacique* a chief
- 19 (p. 704) *Mandeville's* Bernard de Mandeville (1670–1733), satirical writer
- 20 (p. 705) *'to . . . double'* See 'The Tables Turned', in *LB* (1800).
- 21 (p. 705) *'an idiot boy'* See 'The Idiot Boy', in *LB* (1800).
- 22 (p. 706) *sexton* a gravedigger
- 23 (p. 706) *'wild yagers'* an allusion to Scott's poem 'The Wild Huntsman', a translation of the German 'Der Wilde Yager' by Brugger
- 24 (p. 706) *St Luke* was reputedly a doctor
- 25 (p. 706) *'mend . . . more'* See John, 15:14, also a pun on Moore.
- 26 (p. 706) *Strangford* Viscount Strangford, loose translator of *Poems of Camoëns* (1803) – see Glossary. His 'translations' were heavily influenced by the popularity of Scott.

- 27a (p. 707) *Moravians* a Protestant sect
- 27b (p. 707) *the Pentateuch* the first five books of the Old Testament
- 28 (p. 707) *Sympathy* an allusion to Samuel Pratt's poem *Sympathy* (1788), and the general cult of feeling amongst the (pre-)Romantics
- 29 (p. 708) 'Awake . . . strain' from Bowles's *Spirit of Discovery* (1805). Byron (wilfully) misreads a subsequent line of the poem when suggesting that the woods of Madeira are kissed.
- 30 (p. 708) *Lord Fanny . . . Curll* John, Lord Hervey (1696–1743), imitator of Horace, and Edmund Curll (1675–1747), bookseller attacked in *Dunciad* and *The Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, 149
- 31 (p. 708) *Mallet . . . for hire* Under the patronage of Lord Bolingbroke, David Mallet (1705–65) attacked Pope.
- 32 (p. 708) *Dennis . . . Ralph* John Dennis (1657–1734), critic, and James Ralph (1705–62) poet; the line echoes Pope's *Dunciad*, 1, 104.
- 33 (p. 709) *Maurice* Thomas Maurice (1754–1824), author of 'Richmond Hill' (1807)
- 34 (p. 709) *Alcaeus* a lyric poet c.600BC, used here for Montgomery – see Glossary.
- 35 (p. 710) *northern wolves* the *Edinburgh Review*. See Introduction to Satires.
- 36 (p. 710) *a judge* the infamous hanging judge, Judge Jeffreys (1648–89)
- 37 (p. 710) *raise . . . judgment-seat* See *Merchant of Venice*, 4, 1, 223.
- 38 (p. 711) *Low . . . north* See Isaiah, 21:1.
- 39 (p. 711) *Tolbooth* the main Edinburgh gaol
- 40 (p. 711) *Danae . . . shower* In mythology, Danae conceived Perseus when visited by Jupiter in the form of a golden shower.
- 41 (p. 712) *Aberdeen* See Glossary. He is followed by other critics including: William Herbert (1778–1847), also poet and translator of Icelandic verse; Sidney – see Smith in the Glossary; James Pillans (1778–1864).
- 42 (p. 712) *Thalia's* the muse of comic poetry; here for James Beresford who received a favourable review from George Lambe – see Glossary – in 1806
- 43 (p. 712) *bannocks . . . kail* oatmeal cakes and cabbage
- 44 (p. 712) *odours* smells but also opinions; 'sheets' similarly puns actual sheets and the pages of the review. See *Dunciad*, 3, 72.
- 45 (p. 713) *Henry Petty* Lord Holland's cousin – see Glossary.
- 46 (p. 713) *my lady* Elizabeth, Lady Holland (1770–1845) was reputed to read over the material for the *Edinburgh Review*. In his portrayal of

her as pure, Byron makes a reference to the rumour that the Hollands' first child was illegitimate.

- 47 (p. 713) *puns . . . pent* an allusion to Theodore Hook's play *Tekeli* (1806)
- 48 (p. 713) *Dibdin* Thomas Dibdin (1771–1841), dramatist. The following figures are also referred to: William Betty (1791–1874), 'The Young Roscius', was a popular child actor (1804–6); Frederick Reynolds (1764–1841), prolific dramatist; James Kennedy, author of *The World* (1808); Thomas Sheridan – see Glossary; George Colman (1762–1836), dramatist; Richard Cumberland (1732–1811), dramatist and man of letters.
- 49 (p. 714) *Garrick . . . Siddons* David Garrick (1717–79) and Sarah Siddons (1755–1831), great actors
- 50 (p. 714) *Cherry . . . Mother Goose* actor Andrew Cherry (1762–1812) and the popular pantomime
- 51 (p. 714) *venal few* Some members of a theatre audience were paid to applaud.
- 52 (p. 714) *Naldi's . . . Catalani's* Italian opera stars who appeared in London: Giuseppe Naldi (1770–1820) and Angelica Catalani (1785–1849), who appeared in trousers
- 53 (p. 715) *Deshayes* André des Hayes (fl. 1797–1811), dancer, choreographer at the King's Theatre. The other names mentioned here also worked there as singers or dancers.
- 54 (p. 715) *Greville and Argyle* The Argyle was a gambling establishment managed by Colonel Greville, and frequented by Byron (2:168–9).
- 55 (p. 715) *Petronius* a facilitator of pleasure, after Nero's steward
- 56 (p. 715) *Comus* the god of revelry
- 57 (p. 715) *burletta* comic opera
- 58 (p. 716) *Hibernia's* Ireland's
- 59 (p. 716) *Cuts . . . trick* references to card games, particularly Hazard
- 60 (p. 716) *two Pagets* two brothers of that name involved in recent elopement scandals
- 61 (p. 716) *Clodius . . . Falkland* Clodius, a first-century Roman, was renowned for his dissolute and scandalous life; Viscount Falkland (1768–1809) was a military man who died in a duel.
- 62 (p. 716) *Just . . . wrong* See Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 7, 20–1.
- 63 (p. 717) *though . . . apply* echoes Juvenal, 1, 147–71
- 64 (p. 717) *Miles Andrews* (d. 1814) minor, prolific dramatist
- 65 (p. 717) *Roscommon! Sheffield . . . Carlisle* literary peers: Earl of Roscommon (1633–85), John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham (1649–1721), Carlisle – see Glossary

- 66 (p. 717) *petit-maitre* literally little master, a fop
- 67 (p. 717) 'Hold, enough!' from *Macbeth*, 5, 8, 34
- 68 (p. 718) *doff . . . lines* See King John, 3, 1, 128–9.
- 69 (p. 718) *monodies on Fox* . . . Melville's *Mantle* poems in praise of contemporary politicians: Viscount Melville (1742–1811) and Charles Fox (d. 1807).
- 70 (p. 718) *Rosa's prose* the writing of Charlotte Dacre, contributor to the *Morning Post* and author of *Hours of Solitude* (1805)
- 71 (p. 718) *Crusca's bards* the Della-Cruscans, a school of poets, mocked by Gifford for their pretension, some of whom are detailed. Robert Merry (1755–98) was a prominent member of the group.
- 72 (p. 718) *awl* a tool for making holes. A reference to the fad for working-class poets, particularly Joseph Blackett. St Crispin is the patron saint of shoemakers.
- 73 (p. 718) *Capel Lofft* patron (1751–1824) of the labourer poet Robert Bloomfield (1766–1823). His brother was the lesser poet Nathan Bloomfield.
- 74 (p. 719) *Macneil* Hector Macneil (1746–1816), popular Scottish poet
- 75 (p. 720) *Shall peers . . . time* echoes Juvenal, 1, 49–50. Gifford had produced no major satire since 1795.
- 76 (p. 720) *White* Henry Kirke White (1785–1806), minor poet whose sudden death brought some popularity
- 77 (p. 720) *what . . . undone* from *Hamlet*, 3, 1, 158
- 78 (p. 721) *Shee* Sir Martin Shee (1770–1850), minor poet and artist. Poetry and painting are traditionally seen as the 'sister arts'.
- 79 (p. 721) *Wright* Thomas Rodwell Wright, Consul General to the Seven Isles, author of the poem 'Horae Ionica' (1809). His 'associate bards' are Robert Bland (1779–1825) and John Merivale (1779–1844), who translated Greek poetry.
- 80 (p. 721) *Aonion* after the part of Greece containing Mount Helicon. See Glossary.
- 81 (p. 721) *Darwin's chime* Erasmus Darwin (1731–1802) wrote scientific and nature poems.
- 82 (p. 722) *Lamb and Lloyd* Charles Lamb (1775–1834), poet, essayist; Charles Lloyd (1775–1839), poet. Both identified by Byron as followers of Southey.
- 83 (p. 723) *other . . . skies* See Virgil's *Georgics* 3, 8.
- 84 (p. 723) *Granta . . . Seaton's prize* Cambridge and an annual poetry prize there. Hoare and Hoyle were winners of the prize in the early nineteenth century. Hoyle is also a card game.

- 85 (p. 724) *Clarke* Hewson Clarke (1787–1832), poet, author of ‘The Art of Pleasing’, had attacked Byron in the *Satirist*.
- 86 (p. 724) *Hodgson* Francis Hodgson (1781–1852), poet and translator of Greek verse, a friend of Byron’s
- 87 (p. 724) *Isis* the river that flows through Oxford
- 88 (p. 724) *Richards* George Richards (1767–1837), poet, author of ‘Aboriginal Britons’ (1792)
- 89 (p. 725) *Canning . . . Portland* George Canning (1777–1827), politician, Foreign Secretary in Portland’s government, reviewer; William Cavendish, Duke of Portland (1738–1809), Prime Minister (1807–9)
- 90 (p. 725) *Carr* John Carr (1772–1832), travel writer
- 91 (p. 725) *Gell* William Gell (1777–1836), antiquarian, mapped the supposed area of Troy (1804)
- 92 (p. 725) *buckram* a coarse Scottish cloth
- 93 (p. 726) ‘*penetrable stuff*’ from *Hamlet*, 3, 4, 36
- 94 (p. 726) *poetaster* a bad poet
- 95 (p. 726) *incondite* poorly composed, irregular

The Vision of Judgement

1

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 era¹ 'eighty-eight'

The devils had ta'en a longer, stronger pull,
And 'a pull altogether',² as they say
At sea – which drew most souls another way.

2

The angels all were singing out of tune,

And hoarse with having little else to do, 10
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.

3

The guardian seraphs had retired on high,

Finding their charges past all care below;
Terrestrial business fill'd nought in the sky 20
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.

4

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 30
By the increased demand for his remarks:
Six angels and twelve saints were named his clerks.

5

This was a handsome board – at least for heaven;
 And yet they had even then enough to do,
 So many conquerors' 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. 40

6

This by the way; 'tis not mine to record
 What angels shrink from: even the very devil
 On this occasion his own work abhorr'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 reversion.)³

7

Let's skip a few short years of hollow peace,
 Which peopled earth no better, hell as wont, 50
 And heaven none – they form the tyrant's lease,
 With nothing but new names subscribed upon't;
 'T will one day finish: meantime they increase,
 'With seven heads and ten horns',⁴ and all in front,
 Like Saint John's foretold beast; but ours are born
 Less formidable in the head than horn.

8

In the first year of freedom's second dawn⁵
 Died George the Third; although no tyrant, one
 Who shielded tyrants, till each sense withdrawn
 Left him nor mental nor external sun: 60
 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.

9

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 – 70
 Bought also; and the torches, cloaks, and banners,
 Heralds, and relics of old Gothic manners,

10

Form'd a sepulchral melodrame. Of all
 The fools who flock'd to swell or see the show,
 Who cared about the corpse? The funeral
 Made the attraction, and the black the woe.
 There throb'd not there a thought which pierced the pall;
 And when the gorgeous coffin was laid low,
 It seem'd the mockery of hell to fold
 The rottenness of eighty years in gold. 80

11

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 unummied clay –
 Yet all his spices but prolong decay

12

He's dead – and upper earth with him has done;
 He's buried; save the undertaker's bill, 90
 Or lapidary scrawl, the world is gone
 For him, unless he left a German will:⁶
 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.

13

'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: 100
 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.

14

I know this is unpopular; I know
 'Tis blasphemous; I know one may be damn'd
 For hoping no one else may e'er be so;
 I know my catechism; I know we're cramm'd
 With the best doctrines till we quite o'erflow;
 I know that all save England's church have shamm'd, 110
 And that the other twice two hundred churches
 And synagogues have made a *damn'd* bad purchase.

15

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. 120

16

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!'

17

But ere he could return to his repose,
 A cherub flapp'd his right wing o'er his eyes – 130
 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?'

18

'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 140
 Him on his way; but does he wear his head?'
 Because the last we saw here had a tustle,
 And ne'er would have got into heaven's good graces,
 Had he not flung his head in all our faces.

19

'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,⁸ as I had once
 When I cut ears off, I had cut him down; 150
 But having but my *keys*, and not my brand,
 I only knock'd his head from out his hand.

20

'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 parvenu!⁹ The skin
 Of St Bartholomew,¹⁰ 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. 160

21

'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.'

22

The angel answer'd, 'Peter! do not pout:
 The king who comes has head and all entire, 170
 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.'

23

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, 180
 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.

24

But bringing up the rear of this bright host
 A Spirit¹¹ of a different aspect waved
 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 190
 Eternal wrath on his immortal face,
 And *where* he gazed a gloom pervaded space.

25

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 patter'd with his keys at a great rate,
 And sweated through his apostolic skin:
 Of course his perspiration was but ichor,¹²
 Or some such other spiritual liquor. 200

26

The very cherubs huddled all together,
 Like birds when soars the falcon; and they felt
 A tingling to the tip of every feather,
 And form'd a circle like Orion's belt¹³
 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).

27

As things were in this posture, the gate flew
 Asunder, and the flashing of its hinges 210
 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'.

28

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: 220
 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.

29

'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 230
 One's inner notions of immortal spirits;
 But let the connoisseurs explain *their* merits.

30

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). 240

31

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.

32

He and the sombre, silent Spirit met –
 They knew each other both for good and ill; 250
 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'¹⁴ the spheres.

33

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',¹⁵ like those of clay, 260
 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 't would take up hours.

34

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. 270
 'Tis every tittle true, beyond suspicion,
 And accurate as any other vision.

35

The spirits were in neutral space, before
 The gate of heaven; like eastern thresholds is
 The place¹⁶ 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. 280

36

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 rich¹⁷ civilian.

37

He merely bent his diabolic brow
 An instant; and then raising it, he stood 290
 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.'

38

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 canst claim him? Speak! and do thy will, 300
 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.'

39

'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 310
 Were of his weaknesses; yet on the throne
 He reign'd o'er millions to serve me alone.

40

'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, – 320

41

'And these but as a kind of quit-rent,¹⁸ 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.

42

'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, 331
 The world and he both wore a different form,
 And much 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.

43

'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 minion¹⁹ first he gave the helm; 340
 How grew upon his heart a thirst for gold,
 The beggar's vice, which can but overwhelm
 The meanest hearts; and for the rest, but glance
 Thine eye along America and France.

44

' 'T is 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 Caesar's school, 350
 Take the worst pupil; and produce a reign
 More drench'd with gore, more cumber'd with the slain.

45

'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; 360

46

'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.

47

'The New World shook him off;²⁰ the Old yet groans
 Beneath what he and his prepared, if not 370
 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 now forgot
 A lesson which shall be re-taught them, wake
 Upon the thrones of earth; but let them quake!

48

'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, 380
 Michael, but you, and you, Saint Peter! Cold
 Must be your souls, if you have not abhorr'd
 The foe to Catholic participation
 In all the license of a Christian nation.

49

‘True! he allow’d them to pray God; but as
 A consequence of prayer, refused the law²¹
 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: 390
 Ere heaven shall ope her portals to this Guelph,
 While I am guard, may I be damn’d myself!

50

‘Sooner will I with Cerberus exchange
 My office (and *his* is 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!’ 400

51

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:
 Even saints sometimes forget themselves in session.
 Have you got more to say?’ – ‘No.’ – ‘If you please,
 I’ll trouble you to call your witnesses.’

52

Then Satan turn’d and waved his swarthy hand,
 Which stirr’d with its electric qualities 410
 Clouds farther off than we can understand,
 Although we find him sometimes in our skies;
 Infernal thunder shook both sea and land
 In all the planets, and hell’s batteries
 Let off the artillery,²² which Milton mentions
 As one of Satan’s most sublime inventions.

53

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 420
 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.

54

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 'entré'
 Up the back stairs, or such free-masonry.
 I borrow my comparisons from clay,
 Being clay myself. Let not those spirits be 430
 Offended with such base low likenesses;
 We know their posts are nobler far than these.

55

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 travels²³ 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: 440

56

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.

57

Upon the verge of space, about the size
 Of half a crown,²⁴ a little speck appear'd 450
 (I've seen a something like it in the skies
 In the Aegean, 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; –

58

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; 460
 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.'

59

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 war, 470
 The voice of Jonathan²⁵ was heard to express,
 'Our president is going to war, I guess.'

60

Besides there were the Spaniard, Dutch, and Dane;
 In short, an universal shoal of shades,
 From Otaheite's isle²⁶ 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',²⁷ to
 Try if kings mayn't be damn'd like me or you. 480

61

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.

62

Then he address'd himself to Satan: 'Why –
 My good old friend, for such I deem you, though 490
 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 –

63

'Why, my dear Lucifer, would you abuse
 My call for witnesses? I did not mean
 That you should half of earth and hell produce;
 'T is even superfluous, since two honest, clean, 500
 True testimonies are enough: we lose
 Our time, nay, our eternity, between
 The accusation and defence: if we
 Hear both, 't will stretch our immortality.'

64

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 510
 Upon a point of form: you may dispose
 Of him; I've kings enough below, God knows!'

65

Thus spoke the Demon (late call'd 'multifaced'
 By multo-scribbling Southey). '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.' 520

66

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.

67

The spirit look'd around upon the crowds
 Assembled, and exclaim'd, 'My friends of all 530
 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?'

68

'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.' 540
 '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?'

69

‘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
 Gives license to the humblest beggar’s head
 To lift itself against the loftiest.’ – ‘Some,’
 Said Wilkes, ‘don’t wait to see them laid in lead, 550
 For such a liberty – and I, for one,
 Have told them what I thought beneath the sun.’

70

‘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. 560

71

‘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,²⁸ 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.’

72

‘Wilkes,’ said the Devil, ‘I understand all this;
 You turn’d to half a courtier ere you died, 570
 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; whatsoe’er betide,
 He won’t be sovereign more: you’ve lost your labour,
 For at the best he will but be your neighbour.

73

‘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, 580
 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*²⁹ – ’twas one of his own bills.

74

‘Call Junius!’ From the crowd a shadow stalk’d,
 And at the name 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, 590
 Like wind compress’d and pent within a bladder,
 Or like a human colic, which is sadder.

75

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 mark 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. 600

76

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:

77

Another, that he was a duke, or knight,
 An orator, a lawyer, or a priest, 610
 A nabob,³⁰ 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.

78

The moment that you had pronounced him *one*,
 Presto! his face changed, and he was another;
 And when that change was hardly well put on,
 It varied, till I don't think his own mother 620
 (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'.³¹

79

For sometimes he like Cerberus would seem –
 'Three gentlemen at once' (as sagely says
 Good Mrs Malaprop);³² 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: 630
 Now Burke, now Tooke,³³ he grew to people's fancies,
 And certes often like Sir Philip Francis.

80

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. 640

81

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,^{34a} will bother
 The world to say if *there* be mouth or author.

82

'And who and what art thou?' the Archangel said.
 'For *that* you may consult my title-page,' 650
 Replied this mighty shadow^{34b} 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:

83

'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 660
 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.

84

'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, 670
 And Franklin;³⁵ – but at this time there was heard
 A cry for room, though not a phantom stirr'd.

85

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. 680

86

'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 Skiddaw³⁶ (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.

87

'The former is the devil's scripture, and
 The latter yours, good Michael: so the affair 690
 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.'

88

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: 700
 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.

89

‘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?’ 710
 ‘Let’s hear,’ quoth Michael, ‘what he has to say:
 You know we’re bound to that in every way.’

90

Now the bard, glad to get an audience, which
 By no means often 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. 720

91

But ere the spavin’d dactyls³⁷ 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*³⁸ – you know the rest.’

92

A general bustle spread throughout the throng,
 Which seem’d to hold all verse in detestation; 730
 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!’

93

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, 740
 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.

94

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’s 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; 750
 But that, indeed, was hopeless as can be,
 Quite a poetic felony ‘*de se*’.³⁹

95

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 overcrow’d;
 And now the bard could plead his own bad cause,
 With all the attitudes of self-applause. 760

96

He said – (I only give the heads) – he said,
 He meant no harm in scribbling; ’twas his way
 Upon all topics; ’t was, 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’.

97

He had written praises of a regicide;
 He had written praises of all kings what ever; 770
 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.

98

He had sung against all battles, and again
 In their high praise and glory; he had call'd
 Reviewing 'the ungentle craft',⁴⁰ and then
 Become as base a critic as e'er crawl'd – 780
 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.

99

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 allures
 The pious purchaser; and there's no ground
 For fear, for I can choose my own reviewers: 790
 So let me have the proper documents,
 That I may add you to my other saints.'

100

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 was once, 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. 800

101

'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.⁴¹ When I thus see double,
 I save the Deity some worlds of trouble.'

102

He ceased, and drew forth an MS.; and no
 Persuasion on the part of devils, saints, 810
 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'.⁴²

103

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 – 820
 (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!

104

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 830
 Woven for the Laureate's final wreath, when'er
 Reform shall happen either here or there.

105

He first sank to the bottom – like his works,
But soon rose to the surface – like himself;
For all corrupted things are buoy'd like corks,
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'.⁴³

840

106

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.⁴⁴

Notes on *The Vision of Judgment*

- 1 (p. 735) *Gallic era* a reference to the events of the French Revolution
- 2 (p. 735) *'a pull altogether'* a nautical term for team work
- 3 (p. 736) *reversion* The Devil is owed the souls of both Wellington and Napoleon.
- 4 (p. 736) *'With . . . horns'* from Revelation, 13:1. St John the Divine, the supposed writer of the Book of Revelation, predicted the end of the world with the coming of the Beast.
- 5 (p. 736) *freedom's . . . dawn* the popular revolutions in Spain, Portugal and Greece (1820)
- 6 (p. 737) *German will* George II had hidden and ignored the will of George I
- 7 (p. 739) *his head* Louis XVI was guillotined in 1793.
- 8 (p. 739) *my sword* See Matthew, 26:51–2.
- 9 (p. 739) *parvenu* upstart, an allusion to the relative power of St Paul in the formation of the Christian Church compared to the original followers of Jesus, like Peter
- 10 (p. 739) *St Bartholomew* the Apostle, who became a martyr when flayed alive
- 11 (p. 740) *A Spirit* Much of the description of the Devil and other supernatural agents is derived from *PL*.
- 12 (p. 741) *ichor* usually the blood of gods, or mythical beings
- 13 (p. 741) *Orion's belt* a group of seven bright stars
- 14 (p. 742) *'champ clos'* the combat arena
- 15 (p. 743) *sons of God* See Job, 1:6. In the Book of Job, Satan is allowed to visit the Earth.
- 16 (p. 743) *eastern . . . place* Justice was traditionally administered in the gateways of cities in the Ottoman Empire.
- 17 (p. 743) *mushroom rich* an upstart, *nouveau riche*
- 18 (p. 745) *quit-rent* money in return for services
- 19 (p. 745) *a minion* See Bute in Glossary.
- 20 (p. 746) *New . . . off* an allusion to American independence gained from George III (1776)
- 21 (p. 747) *refused the law* Despite earlier efforts, resisted by George III, the Catholic Emancipation Act, which granted equality, with some restrictions, was not passed until 1829.

- 22 (p. 747) *the artillery* Satan and the fallen angels discover gunpowder and construct canons in their battle with Heaven – *PL*, 6, 501–20.
- 23 (p. 748) *ray . . . travels* Byron would have been familiar with speculations on the nature of light from the work of William Herschel (1738–1822) amongst others.
- 24 (p. 749) *half a crown* a pre-decimal coin worth two shillings and sixpence
- 25 (p. 749) *Jonathan* an American, especially a New Englander
- 26 (p. 749) *Otaheite's isle* Tahiti
- 27 (p. 749) '*subpoena*' a legal requirement to attend a court hearing
- 28 (p. 752) *Grafton* Augustus Henry Fitzroy (1735–1811), Prime Minister, 1766–70
- 29 (p. 753) *gagg'd* See Fox in the Glossary.
- 30 (p. 754) *nabob* an important person, whose wealth came from the East
- 31 (p. 754) '*Iron Mask*' an allusion to the legend that Louis XIV imprisoned a man, possibly his brother, in an iron mask in 1698
- 32 (p. 754) *Mrs Malaprop* See R. B. Sheridan's *The Rivals* (1775), 4, 2.
- 33 (p. 754) *Burke . . . Tooke* Edmund Burke (1729–97) and Tooke – see Glossary. Both political writers, at the time candidates for 'Janius', opposed George III's policy towards America.
- 34a (p. 755) *Niger's mouth* The location of the mouth of the river Niger was not mapped until 1834 by John and Richard Chandler.
- 34b (p. 755) *shadow* after the motto on the title page of Janius' *Letters* – 'Stat nominus umbra': 'The shadow of a name stands here.'
- 35 (p. 755) *Franklin* Benjamin Franklin (1706–90), politician, writer, inventor, supporter of French and American Revolutions
- 36 (p. 756) *Skiddaw* a mountain in the Lake District
- 37 (p. 757) *spavin'd dactyls* tortuous verse
- 38 (p. 757) *Non . . . homines* 'Neither gods nor men'; a Latin tag which continues 'tolerate bad poets'
- 39 (p. 758) '*de se*' in itself, legal term
- 40 (p. 759) '*the ungentle craft*' Southey attacked reviewers in his *Life of Henry Kirke White* (1808).
- 41 (p. 760) *King Alfonso* The thirteenth-century king is said to have offered to simplify Creation.
- 42 (p. 760) '*melodious twang*' a phrase used in Scott's *Antiquary* (1816)
- 43 (p. 761) '*devil . . . precision*' in Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1633), 1, 1
- 44 (p. 761) *hundredth psalm* a psalm of praise to God which includes the line 'Enter into His Gates with Thanksgiving'

LYRICS AND SHORTER POEMS

The notes for this section are on page 785

Introduction to the Lyrics and Shorter Poems

Byron's reputation rests on his tales, epic narrative adventures, and satires. However, the characteristic complexity of Byron's narratives, and his tendency to arrest the flow with pieces such as 'The Isles of Greece' (DJ 3:87) and Harold's 'Adieu' (CHP 1:13) and 'To Inez' (CHP 1:84), might equally suggest, as, for example, Brian Nellist does, that he is a poet of 'lyric modes'.*

Byron wrote short, often subjectively intense, poems, sometimes confessional (or apparently so), sometimes simply songlike, throughout his career. He was influenced initially by the Elizabethan tradition of song and lyric, and by his schoolboy translations of Catullus, Anacreon and other classical writers. Such poems were produced in the eighteenth century by poets like Gray, Akenside and Collins; and, more immediately, had achieved a level of popularity in the pseudonymous *The Poetical Works of the Late Thomas Little* (1801), by Thomas Moore, who would subsequently become Byron's friend and first biographer.

The fact that Moore's work was in some sense a knowing forgery gives us a way of understanding many of Byron's early lyrics. Those 'To Caroline' (1805–6), for example, appear to be heartfelt love lyrics, but they can be read as exercises expressing an emotional position rather than being in any sense Byron's own feelings.[†] They are also clearly exercises in metrical effect. Each lyric is different, but characteristically explores the possibility of rhythmic effect, as, for example, in the falling (dactylic) rhythm of 'When we two parted' (1815), which creates the necessary sense of melancholy. In both respects, they are valuable apprentice works for what is to come, but also interesting in their own right.

Using the image of the pagan priestess, Byron would famously claim: 'A man's poetry is a distinct faculty . . . and has no more to do with the every-day individual than the Inspiration with the Pythoness when removed from her tripod' (9:64). We should heed his warning when

* See Nellist, p. 49.

† For a discussion of the relationship between the 'I' and the poet in Romantic poetry, see Hartman.

considering his lyric verse. However, the most interesting pieces are, perhaps, as with so much of Byron, those which elide the confessional with the impersonal. Thus, for example, 'She Walks in Beauty' (1814) was part of the collection *Hebrew Melodies* (1815) commissioned as a group of songs on biblical subject matter to be set to music by Isaac Nathan. Yet, it is also a poem inspired by Byron's first meeting with an actual woman, Anne Wilmot (CPW 3:467). Similarly, 'Lachin Y Gair' from *Hours of Idleness* (1807) is both a version of the kind of romanticised encounter with the Celtic landscape made popular by James Macpherson in his 'Ossian' poems (1765) and also an equally romanticised recollection of Byron's own recent childhood.

'Darkness' (1816) is a very different poem, and though in no sense a lyric, it deserves its place here, on the grounds that it too is a short, intense negotiation of a literary form and personal experience. The poem imagines cosmic catastrophe, and envisages the rapid decay and eventual obliteration of civilisation. It can, therefore, be read partly in a literary tradition that dealt with the theme of millenarianism which grew apace alongside the general interest in gothic mystery from the 1790s (see Paley). The most famous use of the theme is, perhaps, Mary Shelley's slightly later novel, *The Last Man* (1828). Yet, 'Darkness' can also be read autobiographically. Byron, and many others, read the peculiar dark and cold climatic conditions of 1816 – the so-called 'year without a summer' – caused by the eruption of the Tambora volcano, in what is now Indonesia, in relation to the political 'darkness' which also settled on Europe after the Congress of Vienna in 1815 (5:86).

The sequence known as Thyrsa cycle (1811), represented here by 'Without a stone to mark', and the companion piece 'The Cornelian' (1806), derives immediately from Byron's relationship with a Cambridge choirboy, John Eddlestone, who gave Byron a cornelian (semi-precious stone) heart, before dying of consumption. Byron described him rather guardedly as offering 'a violent, though *pure* love and passion' (8:14); and altered the gender of the relevant pronouns in the poems to obscure their relationship. However, it is also fair to say that, like all good lyrics, in so doing he ensures that the poems become 'more generalized lament[s] for a series of lost loves and friends' (CPW 457); concentrated, if perhaps sentimental, expressions in which the reader can find their own emotional resonances, real or imagined. Similar resonances, of course, are at play in more straightforwardly autobiographical or confessional poems, like 'Written after swimming from Sestos to Abydos' (1810),* and the

* For the full story of this famous event, see Marchand 1, pp. 236–9.

piece which was Byron's last entry in his final journal, 'On This Day I Complete My Thirty Sixth Year' (1824). Both, in a sense, might be seen as two extreme manifestations of the Byronic hero,* and the latter as Byron's final word on the myth he created for himself. In the poem he is torn between an heroic military destiny and the pull of love – in his case, the attraction of yet another male youth. Again, the poem transcends its immediate context to become not only a typically Romantic but a general statement – perhaps one of the best – about the need to hang on to ideals with age:

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved
Since others it hath ceased to move;
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love. [ll. 1–4]

There is a clear awareness here of the fact that the very Romantic passions which 'move' one to love become absurd with age, and in a sense have nowhere to go when they cannot be reciprocated. Later in the poem the smouldering Byronic hero becomes an almost extinguished 'funeral pile' (l 12). Yet the poem ultimately records the fact that both personal and political fires, however rejected or muted, burn on still.

The final, unwitting, comment Byron's final poem makes about the nature of the hero, Byronic or otherwise, is perhaps best read in terms of the personal context that the lyric voice implies. In one final irony, which in a sense demonstrates the tension in the poem after the fact, Byron received not '[a] Soldier's Grave' (OTD 38), but a resting-place next to his grandfather, the 'wicked lord', in the Byron family vault at the wonderfully named Hucknall Torkard. More than anything, this bathetic fact might be said to exemplify Byron's own view that events often conspire against heroes and myths.

* I discuss the nature of the Byronic hero in the Introduction to the Tales.

To Caroline (1)

Think'st thou I saw thy beauteous eyes,
Suffused in tears, implore to stay;
And heard unmoved 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, 10
The tears that from my eyelids flow'd
Were lost in those which fell from thine.

Thou couldst not feel my burning cheek,
Thy gushing tears had quench'd its flame;
And as thy tongue essay'd to speak,
In signs alone it breathed 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. 20

Again, thou best beloved, adieu!
Ah! if thou canst, o'ercome regret;
Nor let thy mind past joys review, –
Our only hope is to forget!

To Caroline (2)

When I hear 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 sere;¹
That age will come on, when remembrance, deploring,
 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, 10
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 one day will 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. 20

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.

To Caroline (3)

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 tomorrow
But brings, with new torture, the curse of today.

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, 9
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 a 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. 20

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.

1805

Lachin y Gair

Away, ye gay landscapes, ye gardens of roses!
 In you let the minions of luxury rove;
 Restore me 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.²

Ah! there my young footsteps in infancy wander'd;
 My cap was the bonnet, my cloak was the plaid; 10
 On chieftains long perish'd my memory ponder'd,
 As daily I strode through the pine-cover'd 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 cheer'd 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, 20
 And rides on the wind, o'er his own Highland vale.
 Round Loch na Garr while the stormy mist gathers,
 Winter presides in his cold icy car:
 Clouds there encircle the forms of my fathers;³
 They dwell in the tempests of dark Loch na Garr.

'Ill-starr'd, though brave, did no visions foreboding
 Tell you that fate had forsaken your cause?"^a
 Ah! were you destined to die at Culloden,
 Victory crown'd not your fall with applause:
 Still were you happy in death's earthly slumber, 30
 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 roll'd on, Loch na Garr, since I left you,
 Years must elapse ere I tread you again:
 Nature of verdure and flow'rs 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 dark Loch na Garr. 40

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 moonless air;⁴
 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, 10
 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 20
 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 30
 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 – they were slain for food
 And War,⁵ which for a moment was no more,
 Did glut himself again: – a meal was bought
 With blood, and each sate sullenly apart 40
 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 corsè, and kept
 The birds and beasts and famish'd men at bay,
 Till hunger clung⁶ them, or the dropping dead 50
 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, 60
 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 died,
 Unknowing who he was upon whose brow
 Famine had written Fiend. The world was void,
 The populous and the powerful was a lump. 70

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, 80
And the clouds perish'd; Darkness had no need
Of aid from them – She was the Universe.⁷

Diodati, July, 1816

To Thyrsa

Without a stone to mark the spot,
 And say, what Truth might well have said,
 By all, save one, perchance forgot,
 Ah! wherefore art thou⁸ 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 – no'er again!

Could this have been – a word, a look,
 That softly said, 'We part in peace,' 10
 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 shalt 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, 20

Till all was past? But when no more
 'T was thine to reckon 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; 30
 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; 40

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, 50
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 thy love was such to me;
It fain would form my hope in heaven!

October 11, 1811

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; 10
 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 20
 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 Fortune⁹ 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; 30
 Her countless hoards would his have been,
 And none remain'd to give the rest.

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 – 10
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? 20
They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee too well: –
Long, long shall I 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, 30
How should I greet thee? –
With silence and tears.

Written after Swimming from Sestos to Abydos

If, in the month of dark December,
 Leander,¹⁰ 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, 10
 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;

'T were 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. 20

May 9, 1810

On this Day I Completed My Thirty-sixth Year

Missolonghi, January 22, 1824

'Tis time this 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; 10
 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. 20

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 30
 Indifferent should the smile or frown
 Of beauty be.

If thou regret'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.

40

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.

Notes to Lyrics and Shorter Poems

TO CAROLINE (2)

1 (p. 772) *fall . . . sere* age, decay

LACHIN Y GAIR

2 (p. 774) *Loch na Garr* Lochnagar, a mountain of the Cairngorms, over three and half thousand feet

3 (p. 774) *my fathers* Byron was descended on his mother's side from the Gordons who fought with Charles Stuart (1720–88) – Bonnie Prince Charlie – and were defeated at Culloden (1746).

DARKNESS

4 (p. 775) *bright sun . . . moonless air* See Revelation, 6:12. The description of the apocalypse throughout here makes use of Old Testament language, especially Jeremiah, 4.

5 (p. 776) *War* War is one of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse in the Book of Revelation. Byron's description echoes Milton's of Death in *PL*, 2, 665ff.

6 (p. 776) *clung* means shrivelled here

7 (p. 777) *She . . . Universe* echoes the last line of Pope's *Dunciad* (1728)

TO THYRZA

8 (p. 778) *thou* For the identity of the recipient of the Thyrza poems, see Introduction to Lyrics and Shorter poems.

THE CORNELIAN

9 (p. 780) *Fortune* a goddess, traditionally depicted as blind or blindfolded, carrying a horn of plenty

WRITTEN AFTER SWIMMING FROM SESTOS TO ABYDOS

10 (p. 782) *Leander* See Hellespont in Glossary.

GLOSSARY

Aberdeen George Hamilton Gordon, Lord Aberdeen, author of works on Grecian architecture (1812, 1822)

Achaia(n) (of) Greece

(A)etna a volcano on Sicily under which the mythical Enceladus was imprisoned

Afric Africa

afrit afreet, or Arabic demon

Ajax Greek hero of the Trojan War, said to be as stubborn as a donkey

alabaster (a) white (stone)

Albion poeticism for England

alderman proverbially corrupt or hypocritical local official, or churchman

Alexander the Great (355–323BC), greatest military leader and conqueror of the Ancient world; held to be a god by some, the son of the god Ammon; said to be disappointed that there was only one world to conquer; reminded of his own physicality when eating and sleeping

Alla(h) and *Bis Millah* Muslim names for God; *Alla Hu* the Muslim call to prayer

Ammon See Alexander.

Anacreon sixth-century Greek lyric poet. Thomas Moore translated some of his work.

anchorite hermit, ascetic

antipodes opposite

Apicius a first-century-BC Roman, renowned for his gluttony

Apollo see *Phoebus*

Argo The ship on which the mythical Jason and his crew sailed in search of the Golden Fleece

Ariosto Italian poet (1474–1533), author of *Orlando Furioso*

Aristotle philosopher, follower of Plato, who amongst much else, established rules for poetry and drama which included restricting the timescale of the action

Arnaut Albanian. Like much of the region, Albania was under Turkish rule at the time that Byron wrote.

arraign to accuse publicly, bring to account

Arthur's (Seat) (steep) the hill overlooking Edinburgh

ataghan yataghan, a long curved dagger used by Turks

Athena the goddess of wisdom, celebrated for her chastity, who sprang fully formed from the head of Jupiter; tutelary goddess of Athens

Attic(a) Grecian, classical, refined; an area of Greece famed for its honey

auger(y) (that which) predict(s) the future

Augustine St Augustine (354–430), Christian convert and apologist. His *Confessions* recorded his pre-Christian life and the temptations he faced.

Auld Lang Syne Scottish song of commemoration, literally long time since

Aurora goddess of the dawn, hence the dawn; *borealis* the Northern Lights

Ausonia a poeticism for Italy

Ave Maria a prayer to the Virgin Mary

Baalam's ass in the Bible given the ability to speak. See Numbers, 22: 1–34.

Babel from the biblical tower containing all the (fallen) languages of mankind, Genesis, 11:9, hence confusion or noise

Bacchanals(ante) drinking parties, or drinkers, after the Greek god of wine Bacchus

Bacon Francis Bacon (1561–1626), empirical philosopher and political thinker; or Roger Bacon (1214–94), philosopher, said to be the discoverer of gunpowder

Balshazzar a Babylonian king whose feast was interrupted by writing on the wall predicting his downfall and interpreted by the biblical Daniel

Banquo Macbeth saw the many descendants of his rival, Banquo, in a mirror – see *Macbeth*, 4, 1, 112–24.

baracan here a silk, but more usually a woollen garment

barb a North African breed of horse

bark a small sailing ship

Bashaw a form of Pasha

bays see laurels

beard the tearing of beards was held by Europeans at the time to be a sign of Muslim anger

Bedlam(ites) (inhabitants of) Bethlehem Hospital for lunatics

berry (*Mocha's berry*) coffee

bier the means of transporting a dead body to the grave; figuratively, the dead body

blent mixed

blue devils fits of depression

Blues In the second half of the eighteenth century, groups of largely aristocratic women known as Bluestockings formed cultural discussion groups.

- Boccaccio** Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–75), Italian writer whose most famous work is *The Decameron* (1351–3), a series of a hundred tales set against the backdrop of the Black Death.
- Boeotian** an Athenain epithet for the dull
- boots** colloquially in expressions, what is to be gained
- Bowles** William Lisle Bowles (1768–1850), poet, sonneteer, critic and editor of *Pope*; author of poems on Oxford and Ostende and of *The Spirit of Discovery by the Sea* (1805), amongst others. Byron was critical of his views on *Pope*.
- Bow-street** of the police, after one of the areas in which they were first established
- bowstrung** hanged by a bow string
- brand** sword
- Brougham** Henry Brougham (1778–1868), reviewer and lawyer
- bumper(s)** drinking glass(es)
- Burns** Robert Burns (1759–96), Romantic poet from humble Scottish background, reputed to have drunk himself to death
- Bute** James Stuart, Earl of Bute (1713–92); George III's first prime minister in 1762
- Caesar** Julius Caesar, first Roman emperor (102–44BC); writer of historical commentaries
- caique** a small boat
- Caledonia** Scotland
- Calmucks** nomadic Russian people of Mongol descent
- Calpe** Gibraltar
- Camoëns** Luis Vaz de Camoëns (1524–80), Portuguese lyric poet
- Campbell** Thomas Campbell (1777–1814), poet
- Candia(iote)** (from) Crete
- cannonade** cannon attack
- Cantimir** Demitru Cantimir, author of *History of the Ottoman Empire* (1756)
- car** carriage
- Carlisle** Frederick Howard, the Earl of Carlisle (1748–1825), translator, Byron's guardian
- Carlton (place)** Carlton House, the residence of the Prince Regent, later George IV
- Cassandra** prophetess who, amongst other things, foretold the fall of Troy
- Cassio** the villain in *Othello*, a moral schemer

- Castlereagh* Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh (1769–1822), politician; Foreign Secretary during the Congress of Vienna (1815); embodied for Byron the forces of oppression; mocked for his odd manner of speaking
- casuist* one who studies matters of conscience
- catechism* a series of questions, usually religious
- Catherine* Catherine II, the Great (1762–96), Empress of Russia, a legendary lover
- Cato* first-century-BC stoic philosopher; allowed his wife to marry his friend; renowned for his thriftiness
- Caucasus* a mountain range in south-eastern Europe
- cavalier* an armed platform
- centaur* a mythical creature, half man, half horse
- Cerebus* in mythology, the many-headed dog who guards the entrance to hell
- Ceres* the Roman goddess of agriculture, and the fruits of the earth
- certes* certainly
- Cervantes* Miguel de Cervantes (1547–1615), author of *Don Quixote*
- Chancery* the often complicated legal process of unpicking a will, or the court where this took place
- Charon* in mythology the boatman who transported the souls of the dead
- chemise* blouse, shirt
- Cicero* Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43BC), Roman statesman, lawyer, orator, author
- Circassia(n)* (of) a region in the western Caucasus
- clay* body, after the biblical account of the Creation
- Coleridge* S. T. Coleridge (1772–1834), poet, theorist and journalist; contributor to the *Morning Post*. His poems ‘Lines to a Young Lady’ and ‘To a Young Ass’ are satirised by Byron.
- Columbus* Christopher Columbus (1451–1506), explorer who reputedly discovered the Americas (1493)
- connubial* relating to marriage
- cornelian* a semi-precious stone usually white or bluish-white
- Coron* Corone, on the western shore of the Gulf of Kalamata in Greece
- Corsair* a (North African) pirate
- Cossacques* or *Kozacks* Cossacks, from south-eastern Russia, served as cavalry
- Cottle* Joseph Cottle (1770–1853), Bristol publisher and minor poet; published Wordsworth and Coleridge
- Cowper* William Cowper (1731–1800), poet
- coxcomb* fool

- Crabbe* George Crabbe (1754–1832), clergyman and social-realist poet
craven(s) coward(s)
- Cupid(on)* the god of love, traditionally depicted as a winged cherub carrying a bow; one who promotes the arts of love
- cupola* dome, or domed vault
- Cuvier* Georges Cuvier (1769–1832), early palaeontologist, argued that the world's civilisations had been destroyed several times before
- Cyclades* a group of islands in the Aegean
- dandy* an eighteenth-century man of fashion
- Dante* Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) was the outstanding (Italian) poet of the medieval world; his masterpiece is *The Divine Comedy*, in which the journey to Hell begins in an 'obscure wood'; his unrequited love for Beatrice forms the subject of much of his lyric poetry,
- Delos* the birthplace of Phoebus
- Delphi(an)* (of) the ancient Greek home of the nine muses, at the foot of Mount Parnassus
- Dervise* Dervish, a poor or ascetic Muslim
- Dian(a)* the goddess of the moon, traditionally identified with chastity; as Artemis, attended by a group of nymphs, and worshipped particularly by the Ephesians as a maternal figure
- dilettanti* someone who dabbles, but is not serious, usually in artistic pursuits
- dimity* here, a stout cotton fabric
- Diogenes* cynic philosopher (d. 324BC); admired by Alexander for his lack of interest in worldly achievements; popularly said to have looked for an honest man with a lantern in daylight
- dirk* a dagger
- dish'd* defeated
- distaff* female (side)
- distract* absent-minded
- Divan* an (Eastern) couch or a council of state, which originally would have taken place on such couches
- Doctors' Commons* the divorce courts
- dotage(ard)* (one who exhibits) weakness or fondness (of old age)
- dower* dowry
- dross* the waste material in extracting gold, more generally rubbish
- drouth* draught
- Dryden* John Dryden (1631–1700), poet and dramatist admired by Byron; author of the satirical poem *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681)
- dun* a debt collector

Dunedin Edinburgh

éclat scandal

Edina a personification of Edinburgh

eke likewise

Elgin Thomas Bruce, Earl of Elgin (1766–1841), diplomat, traveller; famously removed the Marbles from the Parthenon. Byron, like many Romantics, saw this as an act of cultural imperialism and vandalism.

ennui (extreme) boredom

Erin Ireland

essay try

Euxine the Black Sea

factitious artificial

Fancy poetic term for imagination

fascines bundles of sticks used to repair ramparts

Fate(s) the mythical force(s) that control(s) human lives

Fez a town in Morocco

first parents Adam and Eve

flotilla a fleet of ships

foolscap a kind of paper, with a fool's-cap watermark; a fool's cap

Fox Charles James Fox (1749–1806), politician, supporter of the Libel Act of 1792

Franks Western Europeans

Fry Elizabeth Fry (1789–1845), Quaker social reformer, particularly of prison conditions, especially in the women's prison at Newgate

galvanism early experiments into the nature of life using electricity, after Luigi Galvani (1737–99)

Gaul France

gazette an official newspaper containing dispatches, particular news of military honours and deaths

Georgians The women of Georgia were reputedly the most beautiful in the world.

Giaour or *Guebre* a Muslim Turkish term for infidel

Gifford William Gifford (1756–1826), journalist, satirist, reviewer, friend to Byron

girt to surround, bind

Goethe Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1739–1842), German novelist and poet

Gordian Knot a legendary knot, cut by Alexander, hence any difficult challenge

- Goth(ic)* any of the Northern-European Germanic peoples who sacked Rome in the fifth century; medieval architecture
- Grahame* James Grahame (1765–1811), poet of religious verse
- grape* grape shot, small metal balls, sometimes punned on the more usual meaning of grape
- gratis* (for) free
- Great World* the upper classes, fashionable society
- Grub-street* colloquialism for (commercially motivated) writers
- Guelph(f)* the German Royal House of Guelph, descended from a medieval Italian party who defeated the Ghibellines, who for Byron represented legitimate republican government, in the thirteenth century; representative of Hanoverian Georges, who were related to the Guelphs, and Regency society.
- gynocracy* government by women, the rule of women
- habeas corpus* literally, you have the body; the legal requirement by which a suspect had to be tried or released within a certain time; suspended in 1817
- hack(s)* horse(s)
- Hafiz* the pen-name of Thomas Stott, minor poet, contributor to the *Morning Post*
- Hallam* Henry Hallam (1777–1859), reviewer, historian, author of a *View of Europe during the Middle Ages* (1818)
- harpy* a rapacious mythic monster, half bird, half woman
- Havoc* the mythic personification of chaos and destruction
- Hayley* William Hayley wrote the poems *Triumphs of Temper* (1781) and *Triumphs of Music* (1804)
- Hecla* a volcano in Iceland
- hectic* flush(ed) or fever(ed)
- Hector* Priam's son, killed by Achilles in the Trojan War
- Helicon* a mountain and spring sacred to the Muses
- Hellespont* the narrow strip of water between Asia and Europe; in mythology, Leander drowned in it attempting to be with his love, Hero. Byron repeated the feat in 1810 in the company of Ekenhead, a marine.
- Hesperus* the evening star
- hexameters* and *octaves* eight-line (iambic pentametre) verses
- Hidalgo* a lowly ranking Spanish nobleman
- Hippocrene* in mythology, a stream which granted poetical inspiration
- hoar(y)* old
- Holland* Henry Fox, Lord Holland (1773–1841), central Whig figure, literary patron and translator

- Homer* the greatest of classical Greek epic poets, traditionally thought to have been blind, author of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*
- Horace* Latin poet (65–8BC), whose views on poetry were often endorsed by eighteenth-century neo-classicists
- houris* alluring female spirits in the Muslim Paradise
- household gods* the many pagan domestic gods
- Hymen* the Greek god of marriage, also the partial membrane over the virginal vagina
- Hymettus* a mountain in Attica
- ignis fatuus* willow-o'-the-wisp
- Illion* Troy or the area reputed to be the site of Troy
- inanity(ion)* exhaustion (from lack of food)
- Ionia* a region of Greece
- Ismail* a military town in Romania occupied by Russia in 1770, 1790, and 1812
- jacobins* French Revolutionaries and their sympathisers
- Janius* the anonymous author of a series of pamphlets against George III (1769–72), whose identity was much discussed; probably Philip Francis (1740–1812)
- Jeffrey* Francis Jeffrey (1773–1858), writer for the *Edinburgh Review* who criticised Byron, particularly for his attacks of Southey, but later wrote more sympathetic reviews; challenged to a duel by Scott in 1806, which was abandoned
- jeliks* Turkish vests
- Job* biblical character, synonymous with suffering; dismissed his wife as a foolish woman (Job, 2:9–10); his friends showed some concern for his sufferings (Job, 2:11–13)
- John Bull* the personification of England
- Johnson* Samuel Johnson (1709–84), pre-eminent literary figure and wit, biographer of Milton; his life and sayings are recorded in Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (1748)
- Jupiter or Jove* Roman king of the gods, often depicted astride an eagle carrying a thunderbolt
- jurymast* a temporary mast
- Kaff* see Caucasus
- kiosk* a Turkish summer-house
- Lamb(e)* William Lamb (1779–1848), Lord Melbourne, politician, prime minister; husband to Caroline; brother to George (1784–1834), minor dramatist and contributor to the *Edinburgh Review*

- laurels* Laurel wreaths were traditionally given to victors.
- lave* wash
- leaven* here in the sense of influence
- lee* the side of a boat protected from the wind
- Leech* doctor, after the common practice of blood-letting with leeches
- Leonidas* king of the Spartans, in 450BC resisted Persian invaders at Thermopylae
- Lethe* the river of forgetfulness in Hades, or Hell
- Levant(ine)* the Eastern Mediterranean and its inhabitants
- levee* a reception of visitors on rising from bed, particularly by a monarch
- Lewis* Matthew 'Monk' Lewis (1775–1818), gothic novelist and MP, author of *The Monk* (1795)
- lists* combat arena, bullfighting ring
- Little* See Thomas Moore.
- Livy* Titus Livius (59BC–AD17), Roman historian
- Locke* John Locke (1632–1704), pre-eminent empirical philosopher
- Longinus* a classical theorist of the sublime whose exact identity is unknown
- lucubrations* late night studies
- '*Lucus a non lucendo*' grove, said to be derived from the word for light; an example of the language for something being derived from its opposite, since a grove is a shady place
- Macpherson* James Macpherson (1736–96), poet, the producer of the 'Ossian' poems, acclaimed ancient Gaelic poems, believed by many at the time to be genuine
- main* the sea
- Mainote* (a boat) of the Maina, a celebrated pirate people
- Malthus* Thomas Malthus (1766–1834), population theorist who feared that population growth would outstrip food supply and advocated fewer marriages amongst the poor. He had three children, but opponents spread rumours that he had many.
- Mammon* classical god of wealth, hence the love of money
- Manichean* one who believes that the universe is controlled by equal forces of good and evil
- Marathon* a Greek settlement close to Athens, site of a famous Greek victory over the Persians in 490BC led by Miltiades
- Mars and Bellona* the Roman god and goddess of war
- Massinger* Philip Massinger (1583–1640), dramatist
- Medea* mythical figure who owned a chariot pulled by dragons and was driven mad by the gods; or the betrayed wife of Jason

meed reward, wages

meridian highest point (of the sun)

mien appearance, behaviour

Miller (author of) a collection of jokes first published 1739

Milton John Milton (1608–74), poet, scholar and supporter of the Parliamentary side in the English Civil War; writer of *Paradise Lost* (1667); he went blind in later life; of interest to Byron, in part, because of his troubled domestic life

Missal strictly, the book of service for mass; more generally any communication

mite Proverbially, a widow's mite is the small amount of money she has.

Mohomet Mohammed (c.570–632), founder of Islam

monde (beau, grand) fashionable society

Montgomery James Montgomery, Sheffield poet, author of 'The Lyre' (1806); like Byron attacked by the *Edinburgh Review*

Moore Thomas Moore (1779–1852), Irish poet; influence upon, and later friend of Byron; wrote early verse under the pen-name Little; translator of the classical poet Catallus

Murray John Murray (1778–1843), (Byron's) publisher

musicico musician

Mussulman Muslim

myrmidons originally the followers of Achilles at Troy, hence any troop

naiad water nymph

Napoleon Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821), Emperor of the French (1804–15); virtual master of most of Europe, although lost control of seas to England; invaded Russia (1812), suffered terrible losses; gradually overwhelmed by Allies in Europe; abdicated and exiled to Elba (1813); during the Hundred Days, re-entered Paris, but defeated at Waterloo (1815); abdicated and surrendered; exiled on St Helena. Also a coin worth about twenty francs.

natal birth

Nazarene(s) (followers of) Jesus

needle of a compass

Nero first-century Roman emperor who reputedly sang as he destroyed Rome in fire and himself

Nessus (garb) in mythology, (of) the poisoned shirt which killed Hercules

Newton Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727), pre-eminent scientist, discoverer of gravity

Nimrod military leader, after the ruler of Babel, reputedly a mighty hunter. See Genesis, 10:8–10.

Nine the nine Muses, or inspirational spirits, of classical mythology
nymphs female deities, the spirits of the fields, and of nature in general

ogle to look at

Olympus mountain in Greece, traditionally home of the gods

optics eyes

orison prayer

Orpheus son of the Muse Calliope, a poet and musician whose music charmed the natural world. He lost his wife Eurydice when, rescuing her from the Underworld, he turned his head to look back.

Othman seventh-century (Turkish) Muslim leader

Ottoman the Turkish Empire, or a piece of furniture common there

Otway Thomas Otway (1652–85), dramatist

out Society women traditionally 'came out' at balls marking their (sexual) maturity.

Ovid first-century-BC Roman poet, author of *Metamorphoses*

Pacha(sha) or *Padisha* a Turkish governor, or high-ranking military official

pad robber, highwayman

palisade (to construct) a fortified fence made with stakes

Pallas See Athena.

Pan the god of shepherds, and more generally a nature god and poet

Pantisocracy a utopian scheme dreamed up by the young Southey and Coleridge, which included unlikely marriage arrangements

Paphos(ian) (of) a city in Cyprus celebrated for amorous behaviour

paramour lover

Parne(assus) mountain in Ancient Greece, sacred to the Muses; home of the poets

Parry Sir William Parry conducted several expeditions in search of the North-West Passage, a sea route between the Atlantic and the Pacific, in the early nineteenth century; he anchored off Melville Island.

Patagonia(n) (held to be inhabited by) giants

patrician noble(man)

Paynim pagan

Pegasus the last of the winged horses, hence inspiration

pelisse a cloak

Petrarch Francesco Petrarch (1304–74), Italian poet, originator of the Petrarchan love sonnet, whose subject in his case was Laura

Phaeton Apollo's son, who drove and crashed his chariot; also a kind of carriage

- Phidian* after the fifth-century-BC sculptor Phidias
- Philip* King of Macedon, father of Alexander
- Phoebus* the sun god, hence the sun; as Phoebus Apollo, god of poetry
- phthisic(al)* (suffering from) a wasting disease, usually of the lungs
- pibroch* bagpipe (music)
- pike* a spear, or staff with a sharpened metal end
- pilau(s)* (spiced) Persian rice dishes
- Pindar* fifth-century-BC lyric poet, who also wrote verse in praise of chariot races
- pinion(s)* wing(s)
- Pitt* William Pitt (1708–88), Earl Chatham, prime minister of Britain in the middle of the eighteenth century
- placeman* political opportunist
- Platonic* Platonic love, from the thoughts of Plato, was idealised, non-physical love.
- Poesie* poetry
- Pompey* Roman general (106–48BC), member of the First Triumvirate, defeated by Julius Caesar
- poniard* a small dagger. Gulbayez's suggests a degree of gender inversion.
- Pope* Alexander Pope (1688–1744), poet, prime exponent of neo-classical values, championed by Byron
- portal* door
- pose* to perplex
- postilions* those who guide post-horses
- post-obits* after death, used in the sense of financial settlement as well as religious reckoning
- Potemkin* Gregory Potemkin (1736–91), Russian prince and military leader and favourite of Catherine II
- pox* Edward Jenner first vaccinated against smallpox in 1796 using a strain of cowpox
- preux Chevalier(s)* valiant knight(s) (used ironically)
- prize(s)* captured ship(s)
- Prometheus* In mythology, Prometheus stole fire from the gods to give to mankind and was punished for his actions by being chained to a rock for eternity and having his repeatedly regenerated liver eaten each day by vultures.
- prosody* verse (form)
- prove* test
- Psyche* a beautiful girl, seduced by Cupid and subsequently deified
- Pulci* Luigi Pulci (1432–84), Italian poet; influence on, and translated by Byron

puncheon a large cask or barrel

Pye Henry James Pye (1745–1813), poet laureate

Pygmalion In mythology, Pygmalion made himself a statue of a beautiful woman and brought it to life.

Pyrrhic dance an acrobatic dance originally performed by Spartan soldiers, but generally popular in Ancient Greece; a pyrrhic phalanx was a particularly close formation of troops

quean slut

Raucocanti a made-up name, literally bad singing

recks(ed) (does it) matter(ed)

recreant false, cowardly

renegado(s) renegade(s)

Rhamazan Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, and a time of fasting during daylight hours; ended by the three-day festival of Sheker-Bairam

rill stream

Rogers Samuel Rogers (1763–1855), poet

Romilly Sir Samuel Romilly, solicitor-general (1806–7), who acted for Lady Byron in her divorce proceedings and killed himself in 1818.

Rousseau Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78), a philosopher who championed feeling over reason, the primitive over the civilised, and individual freedom over state control. He disputed vehemently with many of the leading thinkers of his day.

rout a party

Rovers pirates

Sabine (farm) (showman) ideal (gentleman) farm(er), after Horace retired to a farm in the Sabine hills

St Francis the saint who, reputedly, avoided bodily temptation by rolling in snow

Salam salaam, a Muslim greeting

Salamis a Greek island, where the Greeks defeated the Persians (c.480BC)

Samian of the Greek island Samos

sang-froid self-possession, literally cold blood (French)

sans without (French)

Sappho Greek poetess born on Lesbos c.612BC; said to be a lesbian; threw herself from the Leucadian rocks because of unrequited love for a boatman

- Saturn* in mythology, deposed king of the gods; devoured many of his own children, whom his wife tried to protect by substituting stones; associated with contemplation and melancholy
- scimitars* curved swords, or the men armed with them
- Scio (Scian)* (of) Chios, an island in the Aegean, reputedly Homer's birthplace
- Scott* Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832), poet and novelist, whose verse tales inspired and influenced Byron
- sepulchral* tomb like
- serai(glio)* palace, harem, or more generally women's quarters
- seraphic* angelic
- Seraskier* the commander-in-chief of the Turkish army
- servente* the male lover of a married woman
- sherbet* a fruit-juice drink
- Sheridan* Richard Brinsley (1751–1816), dramatist, translator of the German play *Pizzaro* (1799); and his son, Thomas Sheridan (1775–1817), theatre manager, dramatist, author of *Caractacus* (1808), an adaptation of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Bonduca* (1619)
- Shooter's Hill* originally part of Kent, at the time an indication that London was near
- simoom* a hot, dry, often vicious desert wind
- sinecure* paid position that involved no real work, often awarded in return for political favours
- sirens* sea demons whose singing lured sailors to their deaths
- sirocco* a desert wind
- Sisyphus* in mythology, forced to roll a large stone up a hill for eternity
- Skeffinton* Lumley St George Skeffington (1768–1850), writer, popular dramatist
- smite* and *smote* strike, struck (down)
- Smith* Sydney Smith (1771–1845), churchman and wit; one of the founders of the *Edinburgh Review*; writing as Peter Plymley (1807), had argued for Catholic emancipation; given livings in York and Somerset, but was not as comfortable as Byron suggests
- Socrates* Greek philosopher (469–399BC), whose thoughts come down to us through Plato. Condemned to death for his beliefs, he drank the poison hemlock as the sun set.
- soi-disant* supposedly, self-proclaimed
- Sol* (god of) the sun
- Sophia* patron saint of Constantinople or Istanbul, the embodiment of wisdom
- Sotheby* William Sotheby (1757–1833), poet

- Southcote* Joanna Southcote (1750–1814), popular religious mystic, who claimed to be carrying a divine child, *Shiloh*. Her symptoms were dismissed as dropsy, an accumulation of fluid, by doctors.
- Southey* Robert Southey (1774–1843), poet. See Introduction to Satires for Byron's relationship with him; author of epic poems *Joan of Arc* (1795), *Thalaba* (1801), *Madoc* (1805), and ballads like 'The Old Woman of Berkeley'
- Spartans* the inhabitants of the Mediterranean city state Sparta, famous for their suicidal bravery against attack – see Leonidas; reputedly, carried on their shields when killed in battle
- Spheres* In Platonic tradition the earth was surrounded by spheres which carried the planets and the stars; these were held to make music which was audible to the inspired.
- Stamboul* Istanbul
- stays* corsets
- Stoic* strictly a follower of the philosopher Zeno, who taught a philosophy of detachment; more generally one who accepts all experience
- Stygian* of the River Styx which in mythology circled the Underworld
- sublime* heightened, transcendent
- Sunium* (now Sounion) the site of a ruined Greek temple visited by Byron in 1809
- Suvaroff* or *Suvarrow* Aleksandr Suvorov (1729–1800), Russian general
- Sybarite* an indulger in sensual pleasures
- Sylla* Sulla (138–78BC), Roman general and politician, dictator and political reformer of Rome (82–79BC)
- tars* sailors
- Tartar* (a nation) of violent or savage temper
- Telian* of Telos, the birthplace of Anacreon
- tertian* a form of malaria
- Thamis* the Thames
- Thermopylae* the site of a famous victory of the Spartan Greeks over the Persians (c.480BC)
- Theseus* in mythology, legendary hero and king of Athens
- Thetis* a sea nymph, Achilles' mother
- third sex* eunuch, possibly homosexual
- Thomson* James Thomson (1700–48), poet
- tithe(s)* money paid to the Church, traditionally ten per cent of one's income
- Titian* Vecellio Tiziano (1488–1576), character and Bible-scene painter

Titus first-century Roman emperor, who on assuming office became reputedly a model of virtue, renowned for his desire to do at least one good deed each day

tocsin alarm bell

toilet (getting) dress(ed), dressing table(s)

toises a French measure, each about two metres

ton fashionable society

Tooke John Horn Tooke (1736–1812), radical politician and journalist

Ulysses or *Odysseus* hero of the *Odyssey*

van vanguard, the head of (the battle)

vassal (subordinate) supporter

Venus the Roman goddess of love who emerged out of the sea on a sea shell, near the island of Cytheria

verbum sat a word to the wise, a common Latin tag

Vesper(s) evening prayer(s)

Vesta(l)(s) goddess of fire and purity, chaste, virgin(s)al

Vice The Society for the Suppression of Vice was founded in London in 1802.

villegatora Italian, one who takes trip to the country

vinous associated with wine, drunk

Virgil Publius Vergilius Maro (70–19BC), Roman poet, author of the *Aeneid*

vizier a minister in a Muslim state

Voltaire pen-name of François-Marie Arouet (1694–1778), philosopher, author, writer of *Candide* (1759); corresponded with Catherine the Great

votaries devoted servants

Washington George (1732–99), revolutionary leader and first President of America, renowned for his integrity

Wassail(er) drinking revels, drinkers

weal well being, commonwealth

ween think, believe

Wellington Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington (1769–1852), soldier, military leader, politician, led the British forces at Waterloo (1815)

Werther(s) after the eponymous hero of Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther* (1774), who died for love

whet sharpen

Widdin a town in Bulgaria

wight human being, creature

Wilberforce William Wilberforce (1759–1833), leader of the movement to abolish the slave trade

Wilkes John Wilkes (1725–97), politician, anti George III

Wordsworth William Wordsworth (1770–1850), poet, prime exponent of English Romanticism; writer of the long philosophical poem *The Excursion* (1814), *The Waggoner* (1819) and *Peter Bell* (1819), amongst others. He became Distributor of Stamps (i.e. an excise man) for Westmoreland in 1813; this marked for Byron and others his becoming part of the Establishment.

wormwood a bitter poison

wroth angry

Xerxes fifth-century-BC Persian ruler, famed for his enjoyment of pleasure

yclept called

Zephyr poeticism for wind

zone girdle or belt; Venus' made its wearer sexually attractive

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

- Ah! – What should follow slips from my reflection 498
Away, ye gay landscapes, ye gardens of roses! 774
Bob Southey! You're a poet – poet Laureate 53
Hail, Muse! *et cetera*. – We left Juan sleeping 167
Here let me sit upon this massy stone 18
I had a dream, which was not all a dream 775
I now mean to be serious; – it is time 445
I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs 38
I want a hero: an uncommon want 58
I would to heaven that I were so much clay 53
If from great Nature's or our own abyss 473
If, in the month of dark December 782
In Coron's bay floats many a galley light 655
Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child! 24
No breath of air to break the wave 601
No specious splendour of this stone 780
Nothing so difficult as a beginning 198
'O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea 639
Of all the barbarous Middle Ages, that 423
Oh blood and thunder! and oh blood and wounds! 322
Oh Love! O Glory! what are ye who fly 300
Oh, thou! in Hellas deem'd of heav'nly birth 11
Oh, Wellington! (or 'Vilainton' – for Fame 357
Oh ye! who teach the ingenuous youth of nations 113
Oh! When shall the grave hide for ever my sorrow? 773
Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate 735
Slow sinks, more lovely ere his race be run 670
Still must I hear? – shall hoarse Fitzgerald bawl 699
The antique Persians taught three useful things 523
'There is a tide in the affairs of men 270
Think'st thou I saw thy beauteous eyes 771
'Tis time this heart should be unmoved 783

When amatory poets sing their loves 228

When Bishop Berkeley said 'there was no matter' 400

When I hear you express an affection so warm 772

When Newton saw an apple fall, he found 378

When we two parted 781

Without a stone to mark the spot 778