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St. BARTHOLOMEW's EVE;

A Tale

OF

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

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IN TWO CANTOS.

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## ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S EVE.

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CANTO I.  
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THE Sun has risen o'er Belleville's lengthen'd height ;  
Thy spires, fair Paris, catch his early light—  
Mid Seine's blue waves his beams reflected play,  
And earth reviving greets the new-born day.—

Fast by the northern shore of that fair stream,  
Deck'd with new glories by the orient beam,  
Their height reliev'd against the brightening skies,  
The princely Louvre's palace piles arise ;  
Seat of the Royal Charles,\* whose powerful sway  
Extended Gallia's vine-clad hills obey,  
From Britain's seas, and Belgium's fruitful plain,  
To Rhone's broad current, and the inland main.

\* Charles the Ninth:

Lo ! where the river parts his silver tides  
And round yon isle in circling eddies glides,  
In solemn grandeur soaring from the plain,  
Stand the vast turrets of the Virgin's fane ;  
Majestic work, which ages toil'd to raise,  
The matchless monument of elder days.  
—Hark ! the slow summons from its echoing tower  
With sullen peal proclaims the matin hour ;  
Now through each massive aisle and long arcade  
The dark-stol'd fathers move in dull parade ;  
Count the slow bead, or kiss the sacred wood,  
Piously false, or credulously good.  
Its sacred notes the full-ton'd organ pours,  
Till the rapt soul on bolder pinions soars ;—  
Soft strains ascending from the swelling choir  
Float on the gale, and breathe seraphic fire ;  
While clouds of incense curling toward the sky  
Roll over head, a fragrant canopy.  
—High in the midst before yon taper'd shrine  
The crosier'd priest displays the mystic sign ;  
With reverend awe adoring myriads see,  
34 . Bow the meek head, and drop the humbled knee.

Amid that group, with heart full fraught with woe,  
Where some for worship bow'd, and some for show,  
Fair Florence knelt; Oh! little might he guess  
Who view'd that sylph-like form of loveliness,  
Who mark'd that blue eye fix'd as tho' in prayer,  
That thought of earth had dimm'd the lustre there!  
For such she was, as fancy loves to paint  
Some cloister'd vot'ress, or sequester'd saint,  
Gazing on night's pale queen, with raptur'd eye,  
And thoughts that mount toward their native sky.  
No purer form th' enamour'd artist chose  
When Grecian Venus from his chisel rose;  
No purer form, in angel robes of light,  
Seems to descend to suff'ring martyr's sight,  
With Heav'n's own joys, to chase his pains away  
And greet his entrance to the realms of day.

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Now all is hush'd—no more the organ's sound  
Thro' the arch'd nave re-echoing rolls around.  
The crowds disperse—but still that fair one knelt,  
As tho' she still on things celestial dwelt.  
Alike unheeded by her vacant eye  
The incense fail'd; the pageant flitted by;

Still as some form of monumental stone,  
 She saw not, mark'd not, there she knelt alone.  
 Then as awaken'd from a wildering dream  
 She seem'd to muse o'er some uncertain theme,  
 Gaz'd for a moment round, while short surprise  
 With beauteous wildness lit her azure eyes;  
 Then slowly sought her ag'd instructor's cell,  
 The secret sorrows of her heart to tell.

'Mid the recesses of that pillar'd wall  
 Stood reverend Clement's dark confessional.  
 Here Rapine's son with superstition pale  
 Oft thro' the grated lattice told his tale;  
 Here blood-stain'd Murder faulted, tho' secure  
 Of absolution from a faith impure.—

Mistaken worship! can the outward tear  
 Make clean the breast devoid of godly fear?  
 Shall pomp and splendour holy love supply,  
 The grateful heart, the meek submissive eye?  
 Mistaken worship! where the priestly plan  
 In servile bondage rules degraded man,



Proclaims on high in proud imperious tone  
Devotion springs from ignorance alone ;  
And dares prefer to sorrow for the past  
The scourge of penance or the groans of fast !  
—Where every crime a price appointed brings  
To sooth the churchman's pride, the sinner's stings,  
Where righteous grief and penitence are made  
An holy market and a pious trade !

The father view'd Count Albert's child advance,  
And scann'd her mien with scrutinizing glance ;  
“ Daughter,” he said—and as he spoke he tried  
T' unbend the stiffness of his cloister'd pride—  
“ Daughter, all hail ! the grief those sighs disclose,  
“ Say, from what cause unknown its torrent flows ;  
“ Whate'er it be, declare at once thy grief,  
“ When thine to ask 'tis mine to grant relief.”—

The maid was speechless—for his tone repress  
The dawning hope that warm'd her fluttering breast ;  
In seeming mockery of her birth and name  
The coldness of his condescension came.  
There was a time, she thought, no voice austere  
Fell chill and comfortless on Florence' ear ;



When kind prevention spar'd the suppliant's part,  
And bound with kind surprise the grateful heart.  
—Slowly she sunk and prostrate at his feet,  
Seem'd his compassion breathless to intreat:  
“Sure to a heart like thine,” the Sire rejoined,  
“Corroding guilt can never entrance find—  
“Sin stains the cheek with red—some latent woe  
“That paler hue and wilder aspect show.  
“And who so well can claim a right to share  
“Joy in thy joy and sorrow in thy care?  
“But speak, my child.”—The maid with frantic eye  
Gaz'd on his furrow'd face imploringly—  
Tears chok'd her voice—she clung with wild affright,  
And feebly breath'd the words—“To night, to night!”—

The Monk was vers'd his feelings to controul  
And hide the subtle workings of his soul;  
But when those words with fever'd accents came,  
Dark deadly fury fill'd his eye with flame;  
His pale and quivering lips refus'd to speak,  
And ebbing life-blood left his wither'd cheek.  
At length with vain endeavour to conceal  
The consciousness he seem'd ashamed to feel—  
“To night? what mean thy words?”

“ Oh! Father, well,

“ Too well thou know'st the secret I would tell;

“ But yesternight a strange and fearful chance

“ Disclos'd the woes that wait on fated France—

“ Told how to night the good, the great, the brave

“ Are doom'd by royal mandate to the grave;

“ How streams of blood thro' Paris' streets must flow,

“ And civil discord wave her torch of woe.—

“ Priests should have softer breasts—how many a sire

“ Must see his offspring, pierc'd with wounds, expire!

“ How many a wife in solitude must mourn,

“ And hope in vain a husband's glad return!

“ How many an orphan miss a father's care,

“ In life's first entrance sentenc'd to despair!

“ To aid the virtuous and sustain the weak,

“ Is what high Heaven inspires our souls to seek;”—

Replied the priest—“ The laws of God demand

“ The pitying heart, the charitable hand.

“ Our foes may injure us and be forgiven,

“ Vengeance awaits the enemies of Heaven.

“ What! when apostates, glorying in the name,

“ Trample each law that God or man can frame,

“ With impious mirth our mystic rites deride,  
“ And scorn the image of the crucified !  
“ When o’er their heads the hand of wrath impends,  
“ When the red thunderbolt in air descends,  
“ Wilt thou for these with tears of pity sue,  
“ Defrauding Justice of the vengeance due ?  
“ Unworthy daughter of a noble race,  
“ Shame to thy faith, thy name’s, thy Sire’s disgrace !  
“ Hence to thy chamber ! for each pitying thought  
“ By fervent prayer forgiveness must be sought,  
“ Sighs, heartfelt sighs, and penitence must pay,  
“ And tears must wash each sinful word away !”

“ Yet one—e’en tho’ the deed of blood be done—  
“ Is it too much to spare the life of one ?  
“ Oh ! let him live—but live—and he shall fly  
“ To barbarous climes ’neath some remoter sky—  
“ What tho’ he bless these tearful eyes no more,  
“ Yet shall he ever shun his native shore  
—“ But must he fly ?—Oh ! father, didst thou ne’er  
“ Feel the keen pangs that hearts united tear ?—  
“ Oh ! he was once to better prospects born,  
“ His King to serve, his country to adorn—

“ Sage in the senate, dreaded in the field,  
“ In peace her ornament, in war her shield !—  
“ Yes, Julian”—

“ Julian !” stern the Monk exclaim’d,  
“ Whom have those lips, rash girl, in madness nam’d !  
“ Julian, Montauban’s Son ? Is this thy plea ?  
“ Thy faith, thy country’s direst enemy ?  
“ No more !—in silence wait th’ approaching deed,  
“ Thy hopes are vain—the renegade must bleed !—  
“ ’Mid the dark morn, when from St. Germain’s tower  
“ The thrice repeated bell declares the hour,  
“ Each Christian champion knows th’ appointed sign,  
“ And owns the summons to the work divine.  
“ No mercy then our impious foes may know,  
“ ’Tis Justice calls, Religion strikes the blow.  
“ For, as of old, in Egypt’s palmy clime,  
“ In just atonement of a monarch’s crime,  
“ Unseen and shrouded in the dark’ning blast,  
“ Thro’ Memphis’ streets thy Angel, Vengeance, past ;  
“ Yet once again, a suffering church to aid,  
“ And heal the wounds by proud apostates made,  
“ All-righteous Heaven inspires our daring plan ;  
“ But delegates the work of wrath to man !



“ Woke from their dream of fancied joy and ease,  
“ Their minds what horror, what despair will seize,  
“ When the deep tolling of the midnight bell  
“ Sounds to their ears, their last, their funeral knell,  
“ When flickering torches scare the lowering shade,  
“ And Christ’s true soldiers wave the glittering blade !  
—“ Hence ! if to mortal man thou dar’st reveal  
“ The deed my words have warn’d thee to conceal,  
“ No more expect in earthly ills to share  
“ The fostering grace of Heaven’s paternal care ;  
“ For as the Saint on Malta’s rugged strand  
“ Shook the loath’d reptile from his sacred hand,  
“ The church forsakes thee, casts thee off with shame,  
“ And lasting infamy attends thy name.  
“ Sever’d from all by virtuous spirits priz’d,  
“ Barr’d from all rites, unpitied, and despis’d,  
“ Long may’st thou live to wait in fear thy doom,  
“ No hope on earth, no prospect in the tomb !”—

He ceas’d and rose—the maid with quivering thrill  
Before his fancied presence trembled still,—  
And breathless knelt, as if in dread to hear  
That fearful curse return upon her ear—

In silent agony she shrunk to feel  
How fierce his soul, how bigotted his zeal—  
For he had been to her from early youth  
From vice her guardian and her guide to truth;  
Her memory told her that he once was kind  
Ere the monk's cowl had chang'd his gentler mind;  
But now of late his holy call had thrown  
A haughty coldness o'er him not his own.  
Yet still she paid him reverence, tho' no more  
She told her bosom secrets as before.  
True he was stern, but they who knew him best,  
Said fast and penance steel'd that holy breast;  
She knew him harsh t' avenge Heaven's injured laws,  
But deem'd superior sanctity the cause;  
She knew him oft mysterious, wild, and strange,  
But hop'd that heavenly converse wrought the change.—

With brow of gloom that half his mind pourtray'd  
The musing Clement sought his convent's shade;  
Cursing the chance which told—what none should hear—  
The dark, dread secret to a woman's ear.  
What should he do?—say, did some fiend inspire  
The thought which thro' his bosom shot like fire?—



'Twas but a moment—no, it could not be—  
She who had smil'd on him from infancy,  
She who had found, when friendless and alone,  
In him a father, in his faith her own.—  
—It could not be—but Julian—he might bleed—  
And Heaven itself would sanctify the deed!  
“Yes! he shall fall! ere from his noontide height  
“The Sun declining seeks the shades of night,  
“Fit act of prologue to th' impending blow;  
“This day, this hour, Montauban's blood must flow!”

Fill'd with these thoughts, amid the cloister's gloom,  
He sought th' assembled votaries of Rome—

'Midst the pale towers in which his years were spent,  
Which once receiv'd him young and innocent,  
When first the venerable paths he trod,  
Shunning the world for converse with his God,  
—Ere zeal misguided and ambition blind  
Had marr'd the youthful promise of his mind,—  
A lonely chapel rose; the voice of prayer,  
Or anthem peal no longer sounded there;  
Yet, tho' forsaken, still might stranger deem  
That place well suited to celestial theme.

'Twixt tapering mullions there the noon-tide ray  
Thro' darken'd panes diffus'd a softer day;  
From time-worn walls each pillar seem'd to start,  
In rich luxuriance of Gothic art;  
While crumbling shafts with flowery chaplets crown'd  
In mournful grandeur strew'd the hallow'd ground.  
In this lone spot secure, no mortal ear  
Save Rome's true sons their dire debates might hear,  
The leaguers met, to chide the tardy Sun,  
And wish the work of massacre begun.—  
Different in temper, bigotry had join'd  
The haughty spirit and the crafty mind;  
There were who wish'd to sanctify the sword  
By the proud title, "Champions of the Lord;"  
And those whom hopes of plunder urg'd to rear  
The gainful fury of the sacred spear.  
—But now the portal's opening sound was heard,  
And Clement's form beneath its arch appear'd;  
All rose with one accord; the saintly man  
Cast one keen glance around and thus began:  
"Warriors of God; foredoom'd by Heaven's decree  
"To right its violated Majesty;  
"Well pleas'd I see your martial spirits pine  
"For full completion of the wrath divine;

“ Nor pine in vain ; the white-rob’d queen of night  
“ O’er the dread scene shall shed her fav’ring light ;  
“ Yet but few hours, the wish’d-for signal tolls—  
“ A peal of terror to apostate souls—  
“ Yet but few hours, the long, long gathering cloud,  
“ With wrath o’ercharg’d, in thunder speaks aloud.  
“ Then on, true servants of your Saviour’s will,  
“ His cause to aid, his mandates to fulfil ;  
“ To drown in blood their faith, their pow’r, their name,  
“ To whelm Heaven’s outcasts in eternal flame ;  
“ And gain for ever, by one glorious deed,  
“ The praise of those in God’s own cause who bleed.  
“ No tears this night your fury must assuage ;  
“ The cries of youth, the impotence of age  
“ Alike in vain must sue ; the hoary brow,  
“ The smile of infancy avails not now.  
“ One sweeping vengeance, deaf to every plea  
“ That sways the children of mortality,  
“ Our cause demands ; one great, one final blow  
“ Approv’d by powers above, and fear’d by fiends below !

“ Yet, ere the Sun shall gild the western skies,  
“ Must our primitia offering arise ;—  
“ Some luckless chance, I know not what, betray’d  
“ Last night our secret to a babbling maid ;

“ And, lest some fate unseen discover all,

“ This hour must Julian of Montauban fall !”—

He ceas'd ; when swift, by maddening zeal inspir'd,  
With hope of blood and hasten'd vengeance fir'd,  
Bertrand, a soul to every ill inclin'd,  
Of all that murderous crew the fiercest mind,  
With transport cried——“ To me alone be given  
“ The envied task to aid the will of Heaven——  
“ Be mine the deed, by one avenging blow,  
“ To lay this hour our first, great victim low.  
“ Farewell !—yet ere I part attend my vow ;  
“ If Heaven shall crown its votary's project now,  
“ My sword, yet reeking with the clotted gore  
“ Of him who soon shall injure us no more,  
“ With pious awe before yon hallow'd shrine,  
“ A grateful record of the aid divine,  
“ This hand shall consecrate ; there long to rest  
“ And Bertrand's zeal to latest times attest——  
“ Farewell !”—he said, and sheath'd the gleaming brand,  
And clench'd with fierce resolve his iron hand ;  
Then strode in haste, as tho' one moment's stay  
Were Heaven's imperious call to disobey ;



As though each breath the fated Julian drew  
With seven-fold fury fir'd his hate anew.

With looks of wonder, not unmix'd with awe,  
The silent band his steps departing saw.  
Now they behold him thro' the portal's gloom,  
His visage shaded by the sable plume;  
Now thro' the fretted cloisters, deep and dread,  
The vaulted roof returns his heavy tread.  
Faint and more faint the lessening echoes thrill,  
Then lost in distance, cease—and all is still.—

“ Now sainted brethren, till the fated hour,”  
Exclaim'd the priest, “ we meet again no more.  
“ Yet ere we part, with hearts from passions free,  
“ Before yon altar meekly bow the knee.  
“ To him who ever makes his church his care,  
“ To him whose cause ye serve address your prayer;  
“ His saving grace implore, your deeds to bless,  
“ And shield the vent'rous sons of righteousness.”  
—Then low before the shrine in concert bow'd  
The fierce, the wild, the crafty and the proud.  
Infatuate men! shall he who reigns above,  
Father of all, the God of peace and love,

Shall he be honour'd by the murderer's blade?  
Shall he accept the prayers in vengeance made?  
And thou, misguided Ruler of the land,  
Weak to comply, or cruel to command,  
Hop'st thou in peace to pass a length of days,  
Happy in virtue's love, and wisdom's praise?—  
Lo! tho' success thy scheme of blood may gain,  
Remorse and suff'ring follow in its train,  
The sleepless couch, the day of wild affright,  
And spectres flitting thro' the shades of night.

Meanwhile exhausted, feeble, trembling, slow,  
With terror pallid, stupefied with woe,  
The maid in secret mourn'd her hapless fate,  
Her Julian's peril, and the churchman's hate.  
Her shrinking spirit knew not how to bear  
The rankling dart of slow-consuming care;  
On her, a father's hope and only child,  
Prosperity's warm beams had ever smil'd;  
Prop of his age, his solace, and his pride,  
For her he liv'd, nor reck'd the world beside;  
But he alas! was dead; the burning tear  
Was scarcely dried she dropp'd upon his bier,



And Albert's dying accents had consign'd  
To Clement's care the maid he left behind.  
—She kneels in pray'r, and views with glist'ning eyes  
The emblem of th' atoning sacrifice,  
Her fluttering bosom holy soothings calm,  
And o'er her wounds distil celestial balm.

“ Angelic guardians, natives of the sky,  
“ Who, seeming distant, hover ever nigh,  
“ To aid the virtuous, cheer the sad, delight,—  
“ Too blest to feel our woes, too good to slight,  
“ With holy anger for what crime of France  
“ Relax you thus your wonted vigilance?  
“ And thou, blest Saint and Martyr to the faith,  
“ Scorn'd in thy life, victorious in thy death,  
“ Let not the carping world in mockery say  
“ This deed of massacre disgrac'd thy day.  
“ Forbid it, Heav'n!—Oh God! my heart is faint—  
“ Shall true religion mourn so foul a taint?—  
“ Shall persecution doom her foes to bleed?  
“ In God's own vineyard, Oh! how rank a weed!

Thus while the powers of prayer her tears controul  
To send for Julian struck her calmer soul—

She knew not why—or how she might prevent  
The sad conclusion, if for him she sent;  
It was a wild and desperate hope, which though  
It promis'd nothing cheer'd her depth of woe—  
Perhaps she wish'd to take one last farewell,  
One last sad parting ere that fire-bolt fell—  
Perhaps she hop'd her arms might guard his breast,  
Or she, at least, might sink with him to rest.

Swift went the bearer of the maid's desires,  
And now fear chills, now hope her bosom fires;  
In vain he speeds, in vain attempts to earn  
His lady's favour by his quick return;  
His swiftest course is slowness to her eye,  
He seems to loiter when he hopes to fly.  
Once more his foot resounds—she hears his tread  
With beating heart and cheek of livelier red;  
She starts!—no Julian's eye, with passion bright,  
In silence eloquent, transports her sight.  
Fear chains her tongue—the cause she dreads to hear  
When these glad words surprise her anxious ear:—  
—“ Few hours have past since Julian rais'd his shield,  
“ And pois'd his lance, and hurried to the field;

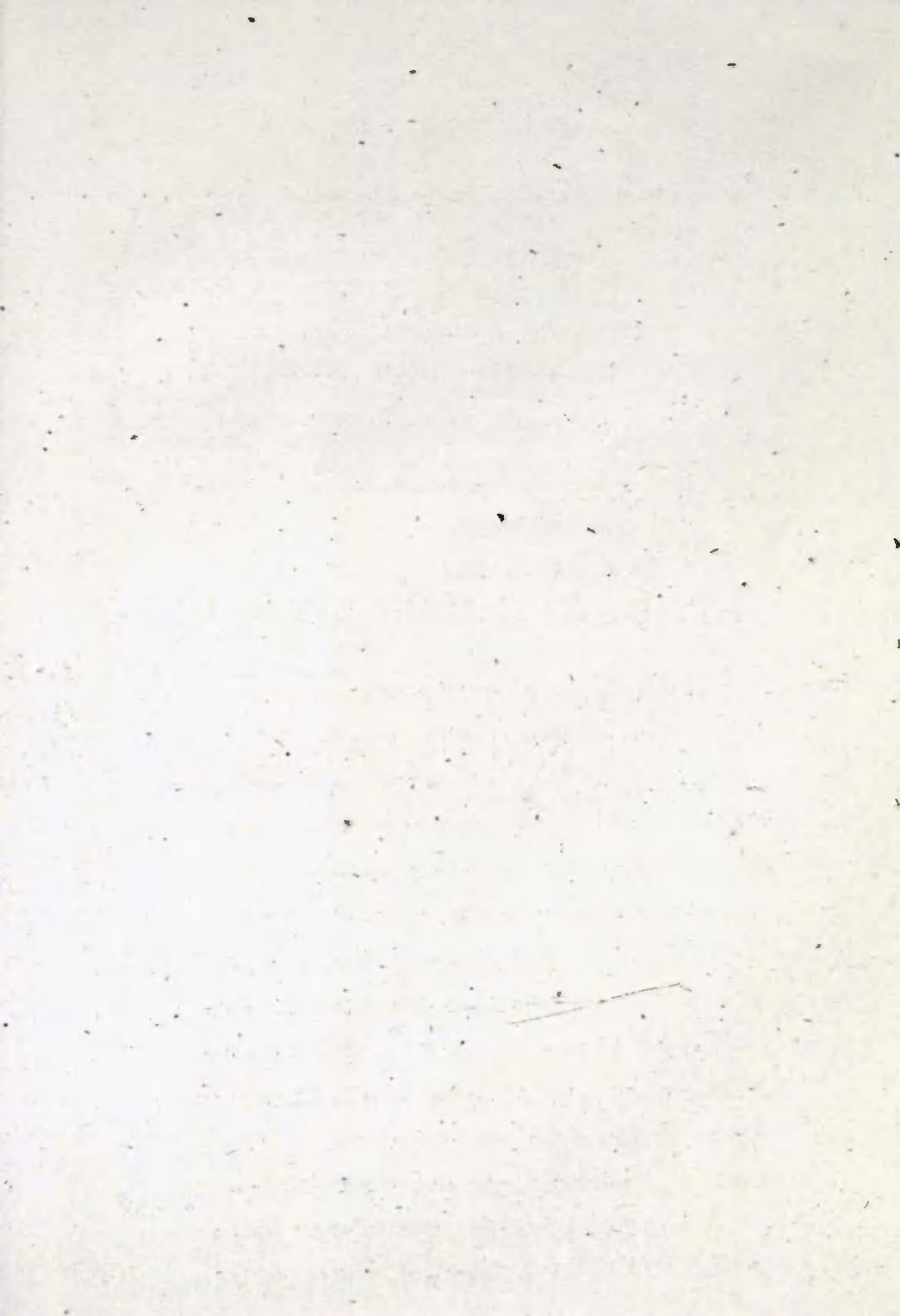
“ A sudden mandate came, which ill could spare  
“ Time for adieus or any softer care.  
“ Exploits of valour now his thoughts employ,  
“ He glows with chivalry and martial joy,  
“ Clasps thy white scarf across his ardent breast,  
“ And wears thy colour in his towering crest !”

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

# ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S EVE.



CANTO THE SECOND.





## ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S EVE.

~~~~~  
CANTO II.  
~~~~~

ILL-FATED France! still reckless of repose,  
Say, must again thy festering wounds uncloze?  
When white-rob'd Peace descending hastes to shed  
Her choicest blessings on thy war-worn head;  
Shall all those blessings be bestow'd in vain,  
And must the Seraph seek her skies again?  
Yes! all in vain through many a ling'ring year  
Thy children's fall hath claim'd thy pitying tear;  
In vain thy bravest strew'd Moncontour's shore,  
And Jarnac's plain was dyed with Condé's gore:  
Again by interest led, or fir'd by zeal,  
Lo! fell Ambition grasps his crimson'd steel,  
Insatiate Murder mounts his blood-stain'd car,  
To crown with perfidy the woes of war!—



Land of the chivalrous and mighty dead !  
Was it for this thy crested warriors bled ?  
Was it for this, when Yemen's locust horde  
O'er thy rich plains and winding valleys pour'd,  
Triumphant victor o'er unnumber'd foes,  
T' avenge thy wrongs Austrasian Charles arose ?  
Was it for this, on Gihon's sedgy side,  
Thy sainted Louis dar'd the Moslem's pride ?  
O'er Barca's deserts spread thy sceptre's fame,  
And wav'd 'neath Afric's skies thy oriflamme ?  
—In vain victorious o'er invading power,  
Mid thy clear sky no foreign tempests lower ;  
In vain the fav'ring heav'ns their frowns assuage,  
If thine own sons will bid the whirlwind rage !

But are there none, ere yet the blow descend,  
In mercy's cause their generous aid to lend ?  
Can superstitious awe the valiant bind,  
And zeal attune to blood the gentle mind ?  
Alas ! in vain is bleeding pity's prayer—  
All, all are steel'd—e'en Florence bids despair—  
Silence her faith, and tears her feelings show,  
She mourns, but thinks not to avert the blow ;  
And, as in Eastern tales, th' enchanter's skill  
Bows the bright spirit to his tyrant will,

So fancied crimes her timorous bosom fright,  
And each kind thought ideal duties blight.—

Sweet is the hour when o'er th' ethereal plain  
The star of eve extends her tranquil reign—  
When all the sweets the rival blossoms lend,  
In one soft mellow'd soothing fragrance blend;  
When now no more the rudeness of the breeze  
Shakes their green honours from the quiv'ring trees,  
But 'twixt the leaves in whispers loves to play,  
And sighs in sorrow for the close of day.—

There is in stillness oft a magic power  
To calm the breast when struggling passions lower;  
Touch'd by its influence, in the soul arise  
Diviner feelings, kindred with the skies.  
Through this the Arab's kindling thoughts expand,  
When circling skies on all sides kiss the sand;  
For this the hermit seeks the silent grove  
To court th' inspiring glow of heavenly love.  
—It is not solely in the freedom given,  
T' abstract our thoughts and fix the soul on heaven;  
There is a spirit singing aye in air,  
That lifts us high above each mortal care;

No mortal measure swells that silent sound,  
No mortal minstrel breathes such tones around;—  
—The angels' hymn—the melting harmony  
That guides the rolling bodies through the sky—  
And hence perchance the tales of saints who view'd  
And heard angelic choirs in solitude.  
By most unheard, because the busy din,  
Of Pleasure's courts the heedless many win;  
Alas! for man; he knows not of the bliss,  
The heav'n, attending such a life as this!

And Florence gazes on that heavenly sight,  
The silent beauty of approaching night;  
Amid her garden's shade her form reclin'd,  
Her tresses curling to the wanton wind—  
Where she in happier time, had rear'd each flow'r  
That glows in spring or scents th' autumnal hour;  
Train'd up the sides the thick'ning branches grew,  
Shade after shade, scarce pervious to the view;  
Above, the lattice clust'ring roses bound  
And clematis had wreath'd its circlets round.

Pensive she sits—and views the orb of day  
Mid clouds of radiance bend his western way—

On spire and turret rests his golden beam,  
And glows in ripples on the redden'd stream;  
Alas ! when next that lord of light shall rise,  
In glory bursting from the orient skies,  
Far different cause that lucid flood shall stain,  
Chok'd with the ghastly corpses of the slain ;  
One sheet of blood thy sanguin'd waves shall glide,  
And roll pollution to the ocean's tide !

There as she rests, her wand'ring thoughts employ  
The wild vicissitudes of grief and joy ;  
The thankful meaning of that heavenward eye  
Betrays the thought—"Montauban shall not die"—  
That quiv'ring lip and deep-drawn sigh disclose  
How numerous still, how resolute his foes !

"All-pitying heav'n, and is it thy decree,  
"Canst thou this scene of blood approving see ?  
"Shall man in arms against his brother rise  
"And dare to plead commission from the skies ?  
"It cannot be !"—"Who then," she heard exclaim  
A low deep voice, whose accents shook her frame—  
"Who then disputes in sacrilegious tone  
"The right of heav'n to vindicate its own ?"—



With dark'ning brow, that told of deeds of blood,  
His fix'd eye glaring on her Clement stood—  
So in the land where Niagara's roar  
Wakes the lone echoes of Ontario's shore,  
The venom'd monarch of the forest eyes  
The trembling prey, his helpless sacrifice.

“Lost, hapless girl!”—he cried, “thy tender youth  
“In vain I nurtur'd in the paths of truth—  
“Too long, in rev'rence to thy father's shade,  
“My pitying soul thy rightful doom delay'd—  
“But it must be—e'er yet yon planet pale,  
“Now rising beauteous from her cloudy veil,  
“Her beam renews, in dark sequester'd cell  
“A solitary vestal shalt thou dwell,  
“Or mid the choir the chant united raise  
“And tune thy wayward lips to notes of praise!”

She spoke not—for she read in that fix'd eye  
No ling'ring love, no beaming clemency—  
Prone at his feet she fell, his knees she press'd,  
And bid her silent anguish speak the rest—  
“And for thy Julian,” fury in his eyes  
The sire rejoin'd, “despair! this night he dies!”



“ No thought of him shall e'er again controul,  
“ Or wean from virtue's purer joys thy soul;  
“ Despis'd, unfriended, hopeless, unforgiven,  
“ He dies—so perish all the foes of heaven !”—

“ Hold ! all good pow'rs will shield my husband's life;  
“ Yes ! start not, tyrant ! Florence is—his wife !—  
“ Our fates are join'd, and let not priestly pride  
“ Annul the bonds which God hath ratified !  
“ My plighted vow is register'd on high,  
“ With him to prosper, or with him to die !”—

Mark ye the glimm'rings yonder chamber's light  
Flings o'er the bosom of the silent night ?  
Doth sleep no more the eyes of Florence seal,  
Shed balm around, and ev'ry suff'ring heal ?  
Oh ! while the span of one short day flits by,  
How many cares may cloud life's sun-bright sky !—  
Or is it hope, in airy falsehoods dress'd,  
Plays o'er her bosom and dissuades from rest ?  
The soothing hope, that treachery points her dart  
With vain despatch against Montauban's heart ?  
That soft glad thought her sinking bosom cheers,  
And calms the ling'ring conflict of her fears.—

Whose voice is that, so low, the breezes bear  
Through the still midnight of the startled air?  
Whose form is that the taper's rays illumine,  
So dimly shadow'd from encircling gloom?  
The glitt'ring morion and the sheathed blade,  
Signs of the warrior, gleam amid the shade.—  
He mounts—and now, as if by custom taught,  
The winding corridor his steps have sought—  
And Florence knows—see! see! the quick-drawn breath,  
The cold cheek sick'ning with the hues of death—  
The starting eye—the feeble tott'ring frame—  
The faint wild shriek with which she sounds his name—  
“Julian!”—“My wife, my dearest, then again  
“I see thee, love! and have not pray'd in vain!  
“Oh! kind, blest mandate! cares of diff'rent kind  
“I thought must wean all softness from my mind—  
“The tented field, the ranks with armour bright,  
“The distant skirmish, and the closing fight—  
“Kind mandate! yes, my Florence, didst thou mourn  
“My hasty flight, and sigh for my return?  
“The army's sudden call allow'd no stay—  
“The need were urgent, fatal were delay;  
“But now, beyond all hope, the royal word  
“Allows short respite to my thirsty sword!

“ Florence! that eye so wild?”—

“ Fly, Julian, fly!

“ Delay not, ask not—for a foe is nigh!—

“ Hark! heardst thou not that sound, that meaning sound,

“ Which fell so heavily and deadly round?

“ He comes! alas, that blade in murder died!

“ Craft veils his steps, and power hath arm'd his side!

“ Fir'd with abhorrence, yet enslav'd with awe,

“ I shrink from dwelling on the scenes I saw:

“ I dare not tell!—but fly—'tis I intreat—

“ Thy wife, thy lov'd one, prostrate at thy feet!”

“ Florence!”—he could not more—th' eventful whole  
In that short moment flash'd upon his soul—  
The army's call—the leader's urgent need—  
His flight o'ertaken by the warrior's steed—  
The signet to return—the pretext fair—  
The wily kindness of the stranger's air—  
The brook—the beetling rocks—the torrent's roar—  
The narrow plank that cross'd from shore to shore—  
Th' uplifted dagger, threat'ning treach'rous death—  
The mortal struggle o'er the gulf beneath—  
The bandit's corpse, which, hurrying down the flood,  
Ting'd the blue curling of the waves with blood—

His fears for Florence, which the traitor, fir'd  
With mad incautious fury, had inspir'd—  
And then his transport, when he saw her here,  
Burst on his sight, and chas'd away each fear—  
Sad wither'd hopes! and dreams of fancied rest!  
And false assurance of a flatt'ring breast!

But Florence, she the while, with trembling eye,  
Survey'd the keenness of his agony.  
The phrensy of her soul was o'er, the flow  
Of tears had lull'd th' intenseness of her woe—  
“ Oh! knew'st thou, Julian, half this bosom's strife,  
“ Clement hath conquer'd, and...thy life...thy life...  
“ 'Twas no kind mandate—'twas thy death decreed—  
“ Nor thou alone, but all thy sect must bleed—  
“ Too much I've said—each moment on its wings  
“ More certain death and nearer ruin brings!  
“ While yet escape is granted—fly, oh, fly!  
“ The very air doth breathe of treachery!  
“ —Thou wilt not—and thy Florence sues in vain—  
“ Too weak to act—too sensitive of pain!”—

“ Daughter of Albert,” said the youth, “ for thee  
“ Have heav'n and man for ever destin'd me—



“ And must I fly? and leave thee here alone,  
“ No friends to aid—midst enemies unknown—  
“ To crouch before a bigot’s despot sway,  
“ To waste in tears the long, slow, burden’d day,  
“ Thy free soul chain’d, compell’d to frame each thought,  
“ By the drear rules a Monk’s stern tongue hath taught;  
“ To shrink from sinful mem’ry’s busy powers,  
“ And find a prison in thine own proud towers?—  
“ Think on that hour, when to his fate resign’d,  
“ Our trembling hands thy dying father join’d—  
“ ’Twas twilight—we alone—‘ My friend,’ he said,  
“ ‘ To thee I leave this helpless orphan maid’——  
“ And shall priest, whom holy vestments shield,  
“ Cancel the bond a father’s lips have seal’d?  
“ No! fly with me, mid fav’ring shades—the while  
“ —Thy father’s ghost upon our flight will smile!”

Swift thro’ the garden’s shade, with falt’ring tread,  
His trembling bride the anxious Julian led;  
’Mid fleeting clouds the vestal lamp of night,  
Shed o’er their pallid forms a fitful light;  
Now, wrapt in darkest shades, their flight conceal’d,  
Then in her fullest blaze their forms reveal’d.  
He might have thought, who gaz’d on Florence then,  
No feeble daughter of the sons of men,

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But wand'ring spirit of the night was there—  
If wand'ring spirit own a form so fair !—

'Tis silence all—no undulating sound  
Disturbs the deep repose which reigns around,  
Save where, with graceful bend, those aspen trees  
Sigh to the murmurs of the southern breeze;  
Save where, reflecting yon pure planet's rays,  
In silver show'rs the rippling fountain plays.  
No thought of scenes like these, alas ! had power  
O'er the sad victims of that trying hour !  
In vain for them yon lucid orb on high  
Pour'd her full tide of glory from the sky;  
In vain for them shone heav'n's high vault serene,  
And mildest zephyrs fann'd the silver scene—  
—They mark'd them not—but shrunk at ev'ry sound  
Of their light footsteps on the echoing ground.

There is a calm which fav'ring skies dispense,  
Hush'd as the sleep of infant innocence—  
When nought disturbs that wild, that nameless thrill,  
The heart's mute language, when all else is still—  
When not a night-breath mars creation's rest,  
And nature's peace reflected warms the breast.—

Far other stillness o'er that tranquil plain  
In treach'rous beauty held her midnight reign—  
Soon low'ring tempests shall those skies deform,  
—'Tis but the calm that heralds in the storm!—  
And the storm comes—what awful sound of fear  
Peals its deep thunders on the startled ear!  
—The hour—the fated hour—yon echoing bell  
In notes discordant strikes a people's knell!  
The die is cast—no hope of mercy now  
'Th' assembl'd murd'rers eager swords allow—  
No chance hath flight—and what can force avail?  
Shall one the banded multitudes assail?—

Soon as she heard the dreaded signal made  
Her onward step the breathless Florence stayed—  
No feature mov'd—fix'd grew that ampler eye,  
As if it strain'd to gaze on vacancy—  
No flutt'ring tremor told her heart oppress—  
No half-heav'd sigh reliev'd her suff'ring breast—  
Pale, cold, and tearless, stood the conscious fair,  
The pow'rless, nerveless, statue of despair!

But hark! the volleys, thund'ring from afar,  
And nearer horrors of a midnight war;

The clash of arms, th' uplifted threat'ning hand;  
The victim shrinking from the murd'rer's brand;—  
The lucid waving of the torch's glow  
Denotes the acting of that scene of woe.—  
“Florence,” the youth exclaim'd, “for thee I fear,  
“Oh my vain folly which has led thee here!”—

He said—when issuing from the tangled shade  
The sudden glare a murd'rous band bewray'd.  
But who their leader? o'er whose locks of white  
The varying torches cast a deeper light—  
'Tis he—'tis Clement—dripping now with gore,  
'Mid their bright blades the cross profan'd he bore—  
Ill-minded man!—too well thy wiles succeed,  
Thy toils are laid—the helpless prey must bleed—  
Feast with victim's blood thy longing eyes,  
And glut thee with the murd'rous sacrifice!

Fir'd at the sight, upon his ready blade  
Th' impetuous youth his hand in vengeance laid;  
Deign'd not to wait until the nearer foe  
In clos'd attack anticipate his blow—  
But with one glance towards her he lov'd in vain,  
Sprung like the lion on the hunter train.

—Now sword meets sword with equal fury driven,  
The targe is broke—the crested helm is riv'n—  
The willing dagger leaves its idle sheath—  
The whizzing carbine wings the bolt of death.  
But though alone against a host the might  
Of Julian's arm maintains th' unequal fight.

Now prone on earth his first opponent lies,  
In death a second seals his swimming eyes—  
The right prevails—and now the ruffian band  
Shun the rous'd fury of his vengeful hand ;  
No more to trust the chance of fight presume,  
But seek the friendly covert of the gloom—  
Heedless what course they took, the victor's eye  
Turn'd towards his Florence' form instinctively—  
He saw her not—perchance the flitting light  
Mock'd the imperfect wand'ring of his sight—  
“ Florence !” he call'd—perchance the clamour round,  
With louder din his whisper'd accents drown'd.

There, where a ball had pierc'd her, Florence lay  
On earth's chill lap—her soul had past away !—  
O'er her pale cheek the moonbeam sought to dwell ;  
From her cold temple trickling life-drops fell ;




A lily blighted by the tempests' power,  
She lay, a drooping melancholy flow'r.

But where is Julian?—groan, nor tear, nor sigh,  
Told the full pressure of his agony—  
That fix'd, but mute despair—that more than grief—  
That burden'd heart, too full to seek relief,  
Denied him utterance.—Lo! once more around  
The rallying murd'ers press the nearer ground,  
And Clement leads them—more than mortal ire  
Lit in that glance the warrior's eye of fire,  
For one last blow he pois'd his thirsty sword,  
In one last effort all his fury pour'd—  
The steel descends; the miscreant shrinks in vain,  
His heaving limbs bestrew the gory plain—  
One phrensied look of rage and hate he cast,  
His lips essay'd to speak—and all was past.—

In closer combat round their sinking foe,  
With ceaseless rage the thick'ning bandits glow;  
Hemm'd in by numbers, vain the practis'd might,  
Which oft had turn'd the current of the fight—  
Each ready poignard drinks the victim's gore,  
The crimson torrent streams from ev'ry pore;



His blade drops useless from his palsied hand,  
He reels—he falls extended on the sand—  
Toward his dead Florence turns his wand'ring eyes,  
Half rears his feeble hand to heaven—and dies!





## NOTES.



### CANTO THE FIRST.

Note 1, page 5, line 1.

*The Sun has risen——*

I take this opportunity of introducing a short sketch of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. It may be thought by many an unnecessary task, and some will not fail to deem it as presuming, to suppose that our learned University is unacquainted with the full particulars. This I thought myself, when I published the first Canto; but an earnest and attentive canvassing of the opinions of those who have done me the honour to peruse my publication, has convinced me of my mistake; and since I have done my best to please, I hope I shall be pardoned if I be in error.—The year of our Lord 1572 will ever be branded with infamy and recollected with horror, as the date of this most barbarous and cold-blooded massacre. The queen mother, Catherine de' Medici, actuated by zeal or ambition, conceived this design so pleasing to the Court of Rome; and her weak and ill-fated Son, Charles the Ninth, was made the tool of her blood-thirsty intentions. The hour of twelve, according to Voltaire, of three, according to Sully, was the time appointed for the commencement of the assassination, and

the clock of the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois awakened the pious Catholics of Paris to deeds of treachery and murder. Coligny, Lord High Admiral of France, was one of the first that was martyred, 30,000 Huguenots shared his fate throughout the empire, and it was only a motive of policy that spared the Protestant King of Navarre, afterwards the famous Henry the Fourth, who had lately married the King's sister. Charles died, not long after, a victim to a most miserable disease; his dying moments were haunted with the visions of a distempered imagination or a guilty conscience, and he seemed to wish to atone for his conduct towards the Protestants by appointing his brother-in-law of Navarre his successor. The poetry of Voltaire, and the prose of Sully, exhibit two Frenchmen speaking in abhorrence of the deeds of their countrymen; and this single circumstance is perhaps more convincing, in respect to the atrocity of the massacre, than the most laboured declamation of the historian.

J. H. N.

Note 2, page 5, line 1.

*Belleville's lengthen'd height—*

The heights of Belleville are situated on the East of Paris. It was from this place that Sir Charles Stewart dated the despatches which announced the surrender of Paris to the allied forces.

J. W. B.

A. W. B.



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## CANTO THE SECOND.

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Note 1, page 27, line 9.

*In vain thy bravest strew'd Moncontour's shore,  
And Jarnac's plain was dyed with Condé's gore :*

In the long civil wars which preceded the massacre, Moncontour and Jarnac were the scenes of two most bloody battles between the Catholics and Protestants.—*Vide* Notes to *Henriade*. J.W.F.

Note 2, page 28, line 6.

——— *Austrasian Charles arose.*

Charles, surnamed Martel, or the hammer, who defeated the Arabian army near Tours, and drove them beyond the Pyrenees.—*Vide* Gibbon, vol. 10. p. 23.

J.H.N.

Note 3, page 28, line 8.

*Thy sainted Louis dar'd the Moslem's pride ?  
O'er Barca's deserts spread thy sceptre's fame,  
And wov'd 'neath Afric's skies thy oriflamme ?*

“ In complete armour, the oriflamme waving before him, Louis leaped foremost on the beach.” Gibbon.—For a fuller account of this hero, *Vide* that Historian. The oriflamme was the sacred standard of the French monarchy.

J.H.N.

J.H.N.



Note 4, page 29, line 15.

*Through this the Arab's kindling thoughts expand,  
When circling skies on all sides kiss the sand.*

“The wandering life of the Arabs, Tartars, and Turkomans, will be found well detailed in any book of Eastern travels. That it possesses a charm peculiar to itself, cannot be denied. A young French renegado confessed to Chateaubriand, that he never found himself alone, galloping in the desert, without a sensation approaching to rapture, which was indescribable.”—Notes to the Bride of Abydos.—It may be said, that, in the above instance, it was the sublimity of the waste, rather than the stillness of the solitude, that produced the rapturous feelings; perhaps it will be more just to pronounce them as proceeding from both together. Paley, in his Moral Philosophy, supposes that the happiness of the lower and sedentary orders of animals, as of oysters, periwinkles, &c. consists in perfect health; I should prefer to say, it consists in the silence they enjoy. And I am in part borne out by that author himself, who seems to be of opinion that happiness is independent of any particular outward gratification whatever, and a feeling of which we can give no account.

THE END.



# A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO HIS GRACE

THE DUKE OF NORFOLK

ON OCCASION OF

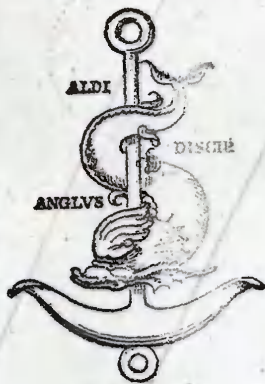
MR. GLADSTONE'S RECENT EXPOSTULATION

BY

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN D.D.

OF THE ORATORY

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# THE ARCHIVE

