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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Selected Poems of Lord Byron
including Don Juan & other poems

Introductions, Bibliography, Notes and Glossary by
PAUL WRIGHT

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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 role 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 Shelley’s 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 neoclassical 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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Websites

The Byron Society home page can be found at www.byronsociety.com

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 ‘personalises[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 Harolde, 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 Lombo, 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 Hellas\(^1\) 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
Whilome\(^2\) in Albion's isle there dwelt a youth,
Who ne in virtue's ways did take delight;
But spent his days in riot most uncouth,
And 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
And lineage long, it suits me not to say;
Suffice it, that perchance they were of fame,
And had been glorious in another day:
But one sad losel\(^4\) 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.
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
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's\textsuperscript{5} sad cell.

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.
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.

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:\textsuperscript{6}
Apart he stalk'd in joyless reverie,
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.

The Childe departed from his father's hall:
It was a vast and venerable pile;
So old, it seemed only not to fall,
Yet strength was pillar'd in each massy aisle.
Monastic dome! condemn'd to uses vile!
Where Superstition once had made her den
Now Paphian\textsuperscript{7} 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,
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’rers of the festal hour;
The heartless parasites of present cheer.
Yea! none did love him – not his lemans\(^8\) 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,
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.

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,
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,
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 trumpet’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.\(^\text{11}\)

73
Hush’d is the din of tongues – on gallant steeds, 730
With milk-white crest, gold spur, and light-pois’d lance,
Four cavaliers prepare for venturous deeds,
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, 740
But all afoot, the light-limb’d Matadore
Stands in the centre, eager to invade
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, 750
The den expands, and Expectation mute
Gapes round the silent Circle’s peopled walls.
Bounds with one lashing spring the mighty brute,
And, wildly staring, spurns, with sounding foot,
The sand, nor blindly rushes on his foe:
Here, there, he points his threatening front to suit
His first attack, wide waving to and fro
His angry tail; red rolls his eye’s dilated glow.
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 croupe\textsuperscript{12} the nimble coursers veer;
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.

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,
His gory chest unveils life's panting source,
Tho' death-struck still his feeble frame he rears,
Staggering, but stemming all, his lord unhar'm'd he bears.

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,\textsuperscript{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 —
Vain rage! the mantle quits the conynge\textsuperscript{14} hand,
Wraps his fierce eye — 'tis past — he sinks upon the sand!

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,
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,
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'rr 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.

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,
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?
Though in thy name the slaves her bosom wrung,
Tell not the deed to blushing Europe's ears;
The ocean queen, the free Britannia bears
The last poor plunder from a bleeding land:
Yes, she, whose gen'rous aid her name endears,
Tore down those remnants with a Harpy's hand,
Which envious Eld forbore, and tyrants left to stand.

14
Where was thine Aegis, Pallas! that appall'd
Stern Alaric and Havoc on their way?
Where Peleus' son? whom Hell in vain en thrall'd,
His shade from Hades upon that dread day,
Bursting to light in terrible array!
What? could not Pluto spare the chief once more,
To scare a second robber from his prey?
Idly he wander'd on the Stygian shore,
Nor now preserv'd the walls he lov'd to shield before.

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

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

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

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!
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's\textsuperscript{27} 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;
Europe and Afric on each other gaze!
Lands of the dark-ey'd Maid and dusky Moor
Alike beheld beneath pale Hecate's blaze:\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{29}

23
'Tis night, when Meditation bids us feel
We once have lov'd, though love is at an end:
The heart, lone mourner of its baffled zeal,
Though friendless now, will dream it had a friend.
Who with the weight of years would wish to bend,
When Youth itself survives young Love and Joy?
Alas! when mingling souls forget to blend,
Death hath but little left him to destroy!
Ah! happy years! once more who would not be a boy?

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

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

*   *   *

[End of extract]
76
Hereditary bondsmen!\(^{30}\) know ye not
Who would be free themselves must strike the blow?
By their right arms the conquest must be wrought?
Will Gaul or Muscovite redress ye? no!
True, they may lay your proud despoilers\(^{31}\) 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;
And the Serai's impenetrable tower
Receive the fiery Frank, her former guest;
On Wahab's\(^{33}\) 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,
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:
(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: 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!
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,
The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind;
Again I seize the theme then but begun,
And bear it with me, as the rushing wind
Bears the cloud onwards: in that Tale I find
The furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears,
Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track behind,
O'er which all heavily the journeying years
Plod the last sands of life, – where not a flower appears.
Since my young days of passion – joy, or pain,
Perchance my heart and harp have lost a string,
And both may jar: it may be, that in vain
I would essay as I have sung to sing.
Yet, though a dreary strain, to this I cling;
So that it wean me from the weary dream
Of selfish grief or gladness – so it fling
Forgetfulness around me – it shall seem
To me, though to none else, a not ungrateful theme.

He, who grown aged in this world of woe,
In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of life,
So that no wonder waits him; nor below
Can love, or sorrow, fame, ambition, strife,
Cut to his heart again with the keen knife
Of silent, sharp endurance: he can tell
Why thought seeks refuge in lone caves, yet rife
With airy images, and shapes which dwell
Still unimpair’d, though old, in the soul’s haunted cell.

'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,
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.

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!
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,
Wrenched 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
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,
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 land
He found in wonder-works of God and Nature's hand.

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

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 Thraldom again be
The patched-up idol of enlightened days?
Shall we, who struck the Lion down, shall we
Pay the Wolf homage? proffering lowly gaze
And servile knees to thrones? No; prove before ye praise!
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 Harmodius\(^41\) drew on Athens' tyrant lord.

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage-bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound\(^42\) strikes like a rising knell!

Did ye not hear it? - No; 'twas but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet –
But, hark! – that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! Arm! and out – it is – the cannon's opening roar!

Within a windowed niche of that high hall
Sat e Brunswick's fated chieftain;\(^43\) he did hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;
And when they smiled because he deem'd it near,
His heart more 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 hurring to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
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;
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’ rose!
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn’s hills
Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes: –
How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills
Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring which instils
The stirring memory of a thousand years,
And Evan’s, Donald’s fame rings in each clansman’s ears!

27
And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
Dewy with nature’s tear-drops, as they pass,
Grieving, if aught inanimate e’er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave, – alas!
Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
Of living valour, rolling on the foe
And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.
Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty’s circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms, – the day
Battle’s magnificently-stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o’er it, which when rent
The earth is covered thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
Rider and horse, – friend, foe, – in one red burial blent!

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,
They reach’d no nobler breast than thine, young, gallant Howard!

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.

I turn’d to thee, to thousands, of whom each
And one as all a ghastly gap did make
In his own kind and kindred, whom to teach
Forgetfulness were mercy for their sake;
The Archangel’s trump, not Glory’s, must awake
Those whom they thirst for; though the sound of Fame
May for a moment 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:
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 enthral;
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
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
As nothing did we die; but Life will suit
Itself to Sorrow's most detested fruit,
Like to the apples 51 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 Psalmist 52 numbered out the years of man:
They are enough; and if thy tale be true,
Thou, who didst grudge him even that fleeting span,
More than enough, thou fatal Waterloo!
Millions of tongues record thee, and anew
Their children's lips shall echo them, and say -
'Here, where the sword united nations drew,
Our countrymen were warring on that day!' 53
And this is much, and all which will not pass away.
36
There sunk the greatest, nor the worst of men,
Whose spirit antithetically mixt
One moment of the mightiest, and again
On little objects with like firmness fixt,
Extreme in all things! hadst thou been betwixt,
Thy throne had still been thine, or never been;
For daring made thy rise as fall: thou seek’st
Even now to re-assume the imperial mien,
And shake 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
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,
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,
He stood unbowed beneath the ills upon him piled.
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.

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.

But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,
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.

This makes the madmen who have made men mad
By their contagion; Conquerors and Kings,
Founders of sects and systems, to whom add
Sophists, Bards, Statesmen, all unquiet things
Which stir too strongly the soul's secret springs,
And are themselves the fools to 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:
Their breath is agitation, and their life
A storm whereon they ride, to sink at last,
And yet so nurs'd and bigotted to strife,
That should their days, surviving perils past,
Melt to calm twilight, they feel overcast
With sorrow and supineness, and so die;
Even as a flame unfed, which runs to waste
With its own flickering, or a sword laid by
Which eats into itself, and rusts ingloriously.

He who ascends to mountain-tops, shall find
The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow;
He who surpasses or subdues mankind,
Must look down on the hate of those below.
Though high above the sun of glory glow,
And far beneath the earth and ocean 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, whose dust was once all fire,
A native of the land where I respire
The clear air for a while – a passing guest,
Where he became a being, – whose desire
Was to be glorious; ’twas a foolish quest,
The which to gain and keep, he sacrificed all rest.

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

79
This breathed itself to life in Julie, this
Invested her with all that’s wild and sweet;
This hallowed, too, the memorable kiss
Which every morn his fevered lip would greet,
From hers, who but with friendship his would meet;
But to that gentle touch, through brain and breast
Flash’d the thrill’d spirit’s love-devouring heat;
In that absorbing sigh perchance more blest,
Than vulgar minds may be with all they seek possest.
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.

81
For then he was inspired, and from him came,
As from the Pythian's mystic cave 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's\textsuperscript{60} marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, thron'd on her hundred isles!

2
She looks a sea Cybele,\textsuperscript{61} fresh from ocean,
Rising with her tiara of proud towers
At airy distance, with majestic motion,
A ruler of the waters and their powers:
And such she was; – her daughters had their dowers
From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East
Pour'd in her lap all gems in sparkling showers.
In purple was she robed, and of her feast
Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dignity increas'd.

3
In Venice Tasso's\textsuperscript{62} echoes are no more,
And silent rows the songless gondolier;
Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
And music meets not always now the ear:
Those days are gone – but Beauty still is here.
States fall, arts fade – but Nature doth not die,
Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear,
The pleasant place of all festivity,
The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy!
But unto us she hath a spell beyond
Her name in story, and her long array
Of might shadows, whose dim forms despond
Above the dogeless\textsuperscript{63} city’s vanish’d sway;
Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor,
And Pierre,\textsuperscript{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.

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
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.

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
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:

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

79
The Niobe\textsuperscript{65} 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' tomb\textsuperscript{66} contains no ashes now;
The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,
Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress!

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;\textsuperscript{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?

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.
Alas! the lofty city! and alas!
The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day
When Brutus\(^68\) made the dagger’s edge surpass
The conqueror’s sword in bearing fame away!
Alas, for Tully’s\(^69\) 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!

Oh thou, whose chariot roll’d on Fortune’s wheel,
Triumphant Sylla! Thou, who didst subdue
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 –

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

Sylla was first of victors; but our own
The sagest of usurpers, Cromwell; he
Too swept off senates while he hewed the throne\(^70\)
Down to a block – immortal rebel! See
What crimes it costs to be a moment free
And famous through all ages! but beneath
His fate the moral lurks of destiny;
His day of double victory and death
Beheld him win two realms, and, happier, yield his breath.
The third of the same moon whose former course
Had all but crown’d him, on the selfsame day
Deposed him gently from his throne of force,
And laid him with the earth’s preceding clay.
And show’d not Fortune thus how fame and sway,
And all we deem delightful, and consume
Our souls to compass through each arduous way,
Are in her eyes less happy than the tomb?
Were they but so in man’s, how different were his doom!

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
Of gods and men, great Nemesis! did he die,
And thou, too, perish, Pompey? have ye been
Victors of countless kings, or puppets of a scene?

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

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

91

And came – and saw – and conquer’d! But the man
Who would have tamed his eagles down to flee,
Like a train’d falcon, in the Gallic van,
Which he, in sooth, long led to victory,
With a deaf heart which never seem’d to be
A listener to itself, was strangely fram’d;
With but one weakest weakness – vanity,
Coqettish 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
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! and for this the tears
And blood of earth flow on as they have flowed,
And universal deluge, 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,
Life short, and truth a gem which loves the deep,
And all things weigh’d in custom’s falsest scale;
Opinion an omnipotence, – whose veil
Mantles the earth with darkness, until right
And wrong are accidents, and men grow pale
Lest their own judgments should become too bright,
And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth have too much light.
And thus they plod in sluggish misery,
Rotting from sire to son, and age to age,
Proud of their trampled nature, and so die,
Bequeathing their hereditary rage
To the new race of inborn slaves, who wage
War for their chains, and rather than be free,
Bleed gladiator-like, and still engage
Within the same arena where they see
Their fellows fall before, like leaves of the same tree.

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

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

But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime,
And fatal have her Saturnalia 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,
And the base pageant last upon the scene,
Are grown the pretext for the eternal thrall
Which nips life's tree, and dooms man's worst – his second fall.
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
Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;  
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
My midnight lamp – and what 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)  *high*  called
4 (p. 11)  *losel*  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)  *conyng*  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) *bondsman*  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

The notes for this section are on pages 557–594
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.
You, Bob! are rather insolent, you know,
At being disappointed in your wish
To supersede all warblers here below,
And be the only Blackbird in the dish;
And then you overstrain yourself, or so,
And tumble downward like the flying fish
Gasping on deck, because you soar too high, Bob,
And fall, for lack of moisture, quite a-dry, Bob!  

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

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.

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.
Your bays may hide the baldness of your brows,
    Perhaps some virtuous blushes – let them go,
To you I envy neither fruit nor boughs –
    And for the fame you would engross\(^3\) 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.

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;
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.

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 Titan\(^7\) from the sea's immersion,
The major part of such appellants go
To – God knows where – for no one else can know.

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,\(^9\)
But closed the tyrant-hater he begun.
Think'st thou, could he, the blind Old Man, arise
Like Samuel\textsuperscript{10} 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?

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

An orator of such set trash of phrase
Ineffably, legitimately vile,
That even its grossest flatterers dare not praise,
Nor foes – all nations – condescend to smile:
Not even a \textit{sprightly} blunder’s spark can blaze
From that Ixion grindstone’s\textsuperscript{13} ceaseless toil,
That turns and turns, to give the world a notion
Of endless torments, and perpetual motion.

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 –
A tinkering slavemaker, who mends old chains,
With God and man’s abhorrence for its gains.
If we may judge of matter by the mind,
   Emasculated to the marrow, It
Hath but two objects – how to serve, and bind,
   Deeming the chain it wears even men may fit;
Eutropius\textsuperscript{14} of its many masters – blind
   To worth as freedom, wisdom as to wit –
Fearless, because no feeling dwells in ice,
Its very courage stagnates to a vice.

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.

Meantime, Sir Laureate, I proceed to dedicate
   In honest, simple verse, this song to you;
And if in flattering strains I do not predicate,
   ’Tis that I still retain my ‘buff and blue’.\textsuperscript{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?\textsuperscript{16}

\textit{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,
Evil and good, have had their tithe of talk,
    And fill’d their sign-posts then, like Wellesley now;
Each in their turn like Banquo’s monarchs stalk,
    Followers of fame, ’nine farrow’ of that sow:
France, too, had Buonaparté and Dumourier
Recorded in the Moniteur and Courier.

3

Barnave, Brissot, Condorcet, Mirabeau,
    Petion, Clootz, Danton, Marat, La Fayette,
Were French, and famous people, as we know;
    And there were others, scarce forgotten yet,
Joubert, Hoche, Marceau, Lannes, Dessaix, Moreau,
    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,
Forgetting Duncan, Nelson, Howe, and Jervis.
5
Brave men were living before Agamemnon\textsuperscript{22}
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.

6
Most epic poets plunge 'in medias res',\textsuperscript{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;
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;
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 Jóse – 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,
Than Jóse, 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.

11
Her memory was a mine: she knew by heart
    All Calderon and greater part of Lopé,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,
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.
Canto One

DON JUAN

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;  
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",  
The English always use to govern d—n.'

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').

16
In short, she was a walking calculation,  
Miss Edgeworth's novels stepping from their covers,  
Or Mrs Trimmer's books on education,  
Or 'Coelebs' Wife' 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',  
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;
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,
Where all was peace, and innocence, and bliss,
   (I wonder how they got through the twelve hours)
Don Jóse, like a lineal son 34 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,
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.
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';
   And sometimes ladies hit exceeding hard,
And fans turn into falchions in fair hands,
   And why and wherefore no one understands.

22
'Tis pity learned virgins ever wed
   With persons of no sort of education,
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,
   Inform us truly, have they not hen-peck'd you all?

23
Don Jóse 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;
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,
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.

26
Don Jóse 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,
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,
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.
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,
And saw his agonies with such sublimity,
That all the world exclaim’d, ‘What magnanimity!’

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’,
Conduct like this by no means comprehends:
Revenge in person’s certainly no virtue,
But then ’tis not my fault, if others hurt you.

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.

Their friends had tried at reconciliation,
Then their relations, who made matters worse;
(’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 Jóse 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)
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,
He died of the slow fever call'd the tertian,
And left his widow to her own aversion.

35
Yet Jóse 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),
He had been ill brought up, and was born bilious.

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, and lands,
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).
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,
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.
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;¹¹
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.

Ovid's a rake, as half his verses show him,
Anacreon's morals are a still worse sample,
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

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,
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

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,
Which saves, in fact, the trouble of an index;
Canto One

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.

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;
To Jerome and to Chrysostom 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;
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,
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.

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 –
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',
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),
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).

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,
   Boabdil\textsuperscript{49} wept, of Donna Julia's kin
Some went to Africa, some staid in Spain,
Her great great grandmamma chose to remain.
She married (I forget the pedigree)
   With an Hidalgo, who transmitted down
   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.

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;
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

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
I shall have much to speak about), and she
Was married, charming, chaste, and twenty-three.

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.
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;
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,
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
The lover, who must pay a handsome price,
Because it is a marketable vice.
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.

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;

And that still keeping up the old connection,
   Which time had lately render'd much more chaste,
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.

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;
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,
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.

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 art
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,
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.
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,
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.

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,
And merely tend to show how greatly Love is
Embarrass'd at first starting with a novice.

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.

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,
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
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, unmixed 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,
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.
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
    Etherial 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 mail\textsuperscript{57} of proof — her purity of soul,
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
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 — \textit{inter nos}\textsuperscript{58} —
(This should be \textit{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 seraph\textsuperscript{59} way of those above.

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.

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 quote\textsuperscript{60} 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.
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'

Or 'transport', as we knew all that before,
But beg 'Security' will bolt the door.

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.

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.

He thought about himself, and the whole earth,
Of man the wonderful, and of the stars,
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.
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:
'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.

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,
He found how much old Time had been a winner—
He also found that he had lost his dinner.

Sometimes he turn'd to gaze upon his book,
Boscan, or Garcilasso;—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.

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;
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
    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:
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.
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,
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
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,
With all the trophies of triumphant song –
He won them well, and may he wear them long!
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.

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.

She thought of her own strength, and Juan's youth,
And of the folly of all prudish fears,
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.

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;
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.
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,
One hand on Juan's carelessly was thrown,
Quite by mistake – she thought it was her own;

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.

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.

I cannot know what Juan thought of this,
But what he did, is much what you would do;
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,\textsuperscript{64} methinks, began too soon
Their nomenclature; there is not a day,
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,
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.

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.
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.

'Tis said that Xerxes offer'd reward  
   To those who could invent him a new pleasure; 940
Methinks, the requisition's rather hard,  
   And must have cost his majesty a treasure:  
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.

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.

Here my chaste Muse a liberty must take –  
   Start not! still chaster reader – she'll be nice hence- 960
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.
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
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;
'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,
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 Israelites\(^ {67}\) are fit to mob its
Next owner for their double-damn'd post-obits.

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,
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 ambrosial\(^ {68}\) 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;
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.
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,\(^69\)
With which the doctor paid off an old pox
By borrowing a new one from an ox.

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’s\(^70\) 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.\(^71\)

’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 loathsome evil is,
Their real lues, or our pseudo-syphilis.

This is the patent-age of new inventions
For killing bodies, and for saving souls,
All propagated with the best intentions;
Sir Humphrey Davy’s lantern,\(^72\) by which coals
Are safely mined for in the mode he mentions,
Timbuctoo\(^73\) travels, voyages to the Poles,
Are ways to benefit mankind, as true,
Perhaps, as shooting them at Waterloo.
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;
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 --

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 wax a little hoary,
And clap a white cape on their mantles blue;
And the sea dashes round the promontory,
And the loud breaker boils against the rock,
And sober suns must set at five o'clock.

'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,
A lobster-salad, and champagne, and chat.

'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!'
For God's sake, Madam – Madam – here's my master,
With more than half the city at his back –
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 crack
Will all be here; perhaps he yet may fly –
Surely the window's not so very high!

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
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.

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,
And summon lackeys, arm'd with fire and sword,
To prove himself the thing he most abhor'd.

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.
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?  
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,
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,
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.

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?
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 Cortejo\textsuperscript{76} 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?
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,\textsuperscript{77}
Who took Algiers, declares I used him vilely?
149
‘Did not the Italian Musico Cazzani? 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,
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:
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?

151
‘Was it for this you took your sudden journey,
Under pretence of business indispensible
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;
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.’
‘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.
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.

‘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?
Tell me – and be assured, that since you stain
My honour thus, it shall not be in vain.

‘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 –
(Anonia! 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.

‘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.
'And now, sir, I have done, and say no more; 
The little I have said may serve to show 
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?'

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 
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.

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, faithful to the tomb, 
So there were quarrels, cared not for the cause, 
Knowing they must be settled by the laws.

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.
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.

At first he tried to hammer an excuse,
To which the sole reply were tears, and sobs,
And indications of hysterics, whose
Prologue is always certain throes, and throbs,
Gasp, 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.

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,
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.

With him retired his 'posse comitatus',
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
An awkward look; as he revolved the case
The door was fasten'd in his legal face.
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!
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.

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.

And, secondly, I pity not, because
He had no business to commit a sin,
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 acounts of evil,
And find a deuced balance with the devil.

Of his position I can give no notion:
’Tis written in the Hebrew Chronicle,
How the physicians, leaving pill and potion,
Prescribed, by way of blister, a young belle,
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.
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:
Antonia puzzled; Julia did not speak;
But press'd her bloodless lip to Juan's cheek.

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:

'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.

'Had it but been for a stout cavalier
Of twenty-five or thirty – (Come, make haste)
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).'
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;
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.

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:
His speech was a fine sample, on the whole,
Of rhetoric, which the learn’d call ‘rigmarole’.

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.

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,
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)
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
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 lingering 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.
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.

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 –
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.'

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-tax\textsuperscript{66} laid on by fate:
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.

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,
His blood was up; though young, he was a Tartar,
And not at all disposed to prove a martyr.
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!

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; but there,
I doubt, all likeness ends between the pair.

Lights came at length, and men, and maids, who found
An awkward spectacle their eyes before;  
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.

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?

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, or to annul,
There's more than one edition, and the readings
Are various, but they none of them are dull,
The best is that in shorthand ta'en by Gurney,
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.

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;
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.
'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;
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.

'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;
Man has all these resources, we but one,
To love again, and be again undone.

'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.

'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,
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,
And yet she did not let one tear escape her;
The seal a sunflower; 'Elle vous suit partout',
The motto, cut upon a white carnelian;
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;
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.
201

All these things will be specified in time,
   With strict regard to Aristotle's rules,
The *Vade Mecum* of the true sublime,
   Which makes so many poets, and some fools;
Prose poets like blank-verse, I'm fond of rhyme,
   Good workmen never quarrel with their tools;
I've got new mythological machinery,
And very handsome supernatural scenery.

202

There's only one slight difference between
   Me and my epic brethren gone before,
And here the advantage is my own, I ween;
   (Not that I have not several merits more,
But this will more peculiarly be seen)
   They so embellish, that 'tis quite a bore
Their labyrinth of fables to thread through,
Whereas this story's actually true.

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;
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, which
Shall supersede beyond all doubt all those
   That went before; in these I shall enrich
My text with many things that no one knows,
   And carry precept to the highest pitch:
I'll call the work 'Longinus o'er a Bottle,
Or, Every Poet his own Aristotle'.
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.  

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, 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!

If any person should presume to assert  
This story is not moral, first, I pray,  
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.

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,  
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:
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.

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 Plano’,⁹⁷ Horace said, and so
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.
But now at thirty years my hair is gray—
(I wonder what it will be like at forty?
I thought of a peruke\textsuperscript{99} the other day)
My heart is not much greener; and, in short, I
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.

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?
Alas! 'twas not in them, but in thy power
To double even the sweetness of a flower.

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.

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.
Ambition was my idol, which was broken
Before the shrines of Sorrow and of Pleasure;
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, I’ve spoken,
‘Time is, Time was, Time’s past’, a chymic treasure
Is glittering youth, which I have spent betimes –
My heart in passion, and my head on rhymes.

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;
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.

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:
Let not a monument give you or me hopes,
Since not a pinch of dust remains of Cheops.

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.’
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, from this my solitude!
I cast thee on the waters, go thy ways!
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,
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;
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,
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:

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,
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 –
’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:
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.
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
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, bewildered, 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.
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 unexpress’d concern,
   A kind of shock that sets one’s heart ajar:
At leaving even the most unpleasant people
And places, one keeps looking at the steeple.
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.

So Juan wept, as wept the captive Jews
   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.

And Juan wept, and much he sigh’d and thought,
   While his salt tears dropp’d into the salt sea,
‘Sweets to the sweet’, (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.

‘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:
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).
'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;
A mind diseased no remedy can physic —'
(Here the ship gave a lurch, and he grew sea-sick.)

'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.)

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.

Love's a capricious power; I've known it hold
   Out through a fever caused by its own heat,
But be much puzzled by a cough and cold,
   And find a quinsy 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,
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 'Trinidada',
Was steering duly for the port Leghorn;
For there the Spanish family Moncada
Were settled long ere Juan's sire was born:
They were relations, and for them he had a
Letter of introduction, which the morn
Of his departure had been sent him by
His Spanish friends for those in Italy.

25
His suite consisted of three servants and
A tutor, the licentiate Pedrillo,
Who several languages did understand,
But now lay sick and speechless on his pillow,
And, rocking in his hammock, long'd for land,
His headache being increased by every billow;
And the waves oozing through the port-hole made
His berth a little damp, and him afraid.

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.
At one o’clock the wind with sudden shift
Threw the ship right into the trough of the sea,
Which struck her aft, and made an awkward rift,
Started the stern-post, also shatter’d the
Whole of her stern-frame, and ere she could lift
Herself from out her present jeopardy
The rudder tore away: ’twas time to sound
The pumps, and there were four feet water found.

One gang of people instantly was put
Upon the pumps, and the remainder set
To get up part of the cargo, and what not,
   But they could not come at the leak as yet;
At last they did get at it really, but
Still their salvation was an even bet:
The water rush’d through in a way quite puzzling,
While they thrust sheets, shirts, jackets, bales of muslin,

Into the opening; but all such ingredients
Would have been vain, and they must have gone down,
Despite of all their efforts and expedients,
   But for the pumps: I’m glad to make them known
To all the brother tars who may have need hence,
   For fifty tons of water were upthrown
By them per hour, and they had all been undone
But for their maker, Mr Mann, of London.

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.
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,
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;
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, 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:
Strange sounds of wailing, blasphemy, devotion,
Clamour'd in chorus to the roaring ocean.
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.

'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.

The good old gentleman was quite aghast,
    And made a loud and pious lamentation;
Repented all his sins, and made a last
    Irrevocable vow of reformation;
Nothing should tempt him more (this peril past)
    To quit his academic occupation,
In cloisters of the classic Salamanca,
    To follow Juan's wake like Sancho Panca.

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.
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.
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:
And though 'tis true that man can only die once,
   'Tis not so pleasant in the Gulf of Lyons.

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.

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.

Again the weather threaten'd, – again blew
   A gale, and in the fore and after hold
Water appear'd; yet, though the people knew
   All this, the most were patient, and some bold,
Until the chains and leathers were worn through
   Of all our pumps: – a wreck complete she roll'd,
At mercy of the waves, whose mercies are
Like human beings during civil war.
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,
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 bewilderling.

The ship was evidently settling now
   Fast by the head; and, all distinction gone,
Some went to prayers again, and made a vow
   Of candles to their saints – but there were none
To pay them with; and some look'd o'er the bow;
   Some hoisted out the boats; and there was one
That begg'd Pedrillo for an absolution,
Who told him to be damn'd – in his confusion.

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.

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.
But in the long-boat they contrived to stow
Some pounds of bread, though injured by the wet;
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.

The other boats, the yawl and pinnace, had
Been stove in the beginning of the gale;
And the long-boat’s condition was but bad,
As there were but two blankets for a sail,
And one oar for a mast, which a young lad
Threw in by good luck over the ship’s rail;
And two boats could not hold, far less be stored,
To save one half the people then on board.

’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,
And the dim desolate deep; twelve days had Fear
Been their familiar, and now Death was here.

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.
At half-past eight o'clock, booms, hencoops, spars,\textsuperscript{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'er crowded with their crews; She gave a heel, and then a lurch to port, And, going down head foremost – sunk, in short.

Then rose from sea to sky the wild farewell, Then shriek'd the timid, and stood still the brave, Then some leap'd overboard with dreadful yell, As eager to anticipate their grave; And the sea yawn'd around her like a hell, And down she suck'd with her the whirling wave, Like one who grapples with his enemy, And strives to strangle him before he die.

And first one universal shriek there rush'd, Louder than the loud ocean, like a crash Of echoing thunder; and then all was hush'd, Save the wild wind and the remorseless dash Of billows; but at intervals there gush'd, Accompanied with a convulsive splash, A solitary shriek, the bubbling cry Of some strong swimmer in his agony.

The boats, as stated, had got off before, And in them crowded several of the crew; And yet their present hope was hardly more Than what it had been, for so strong it blew There was slight chance of reaching any shore; And then they were too many, though so few – Nine in the cutter, thirty in the boat, Were counted in them when they got afloat.
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,\textsuperscript{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.

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.\textsuperscript{119}

Pedro, his valet, too, he tried to save,
But the same cause, conducive to his loss,
Left him so drunk, he jump’d into the wave
As o'er the cutter's edge he tried to cross,
And so he found a wine-and-watery grave;
They could not rescue him although so close,
Because the sea ran higher every minute,
And for the boat – the crew kept crowding in it.

A small old spaniel, – which had been Don Jóse’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,
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,
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.

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
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.
They counted thirty, crowded in a space
Which left scarce room for motion or exertion;
They did their best to modify their case,
One half sate up, though numb’d with the immersion,
While t’other half were laid down in their place,
At watch and watch; thus, shivering like the tertian
Ague in its cold fit, they fill’d their boat,
With nothing but the sky for a great coat.

'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 Atropos before their visions:
Despair of all recovery spoils longevity,
And makes men’s miseries of alarming brevity.

'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.

'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;
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,
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,
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.
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,
They lay like carcases; 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,
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 –
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, 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.

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;
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
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.
'Twas better that he did not; for, in fact,
The consequence was awful in the extreme,
For they, who were most ravenous in the act,
   Went raging mad – Lord! how they did blaspheme!
And foam and roll, with strange convulsions rack’d,
   Drinking salt-water like a mountain-stream,
Tearing and grinning, howling, screeching, swearing,
And, with hyaena laughter, died despairing.

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.

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.

Of poor Pedrillo something still remain’d,
   But was used sparingly, – some were afraid,
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,
And then they left off eating the dead body.
83
And if Pedrillo’s fate should shocking be,
   Remember Ugolino\textsuperscript{125} condescends
To eat the head of his arch-enemy
   The moment after he politely ends
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,
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.

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,\textsuperscript{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 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;
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,
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.
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,
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
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
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-branch\textsuperscript{128} 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,
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;
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.
The day before, fast sleeping on the water,
They found a turtle of the hawkg’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:
They thought that in such perils, more than chance
Had sent them this for their deliverance.

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.

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.

Famine, despair, cold, thirst, and heat, had done
Their work on them by turns, and thinn’d them to
Such things a mother had not known her son
Amidst the skeletons of that gaunt crew;
By night chill’d, by day scorch’d, thus one by one
They perish’d, until wither’d to these few,
But chiefly by a species of self-slaughter,
In washing down Pedrillo with salt water.
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,
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,
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.

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.
Nor yet had he arrived but for the oar,
Which, providentially for him, was wash'd
Just as his feeble arms could strike no more,
And the hard wave o'erwhelm'd him as 'twas dash'd
Within his grasp; he clung to it, and sore
The waters beat while he thereto was lash'd;
At last, with swimming, wading, scrambling, he
Roll'd on the beach, half senseless, from the sea:

There, breathless, with his digging nails he clung
Fast to the sand, lest the returning wave,
From whose reluctant roar his life he wrung,
Should suck him back to her insatiate grave:
And there he lay, full length, where he was flung,
Before the entrance of a cliff-worn cave,
With just enough of life to feel its pain,
And deem that it was saved, perhaps, in vain.

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,
Who died two days before, and now had found
An unknown barren beach for burial ground.

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.
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
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;
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;
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 whatsoe’er
She was, appear’d distinct, and tall, and fair.

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,
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
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,\textsuperscript{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,
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,\textsuperscript{130} they
Seem at the same time mystical and gay.

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 sparkle'd, 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
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:
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 dinner\textsuperscript{131} 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,
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.\textsuperscript{132}

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.
He was a Greek, and on his isle had built
(One of the wild and smaller Cyclades)
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.

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:
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.

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,
As far as in her lay, 'to take him in,
A stranger' dying, with so white a skin.

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 'vouç',
Unlike the honest Arab thieves so brave,
He would have hospitably cured the stranger,
And sold him instantly when out of danger.
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 Paul\textsuperscript{135} 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
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,
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,
Till the eye, cheated, opens thick with tears.
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.

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.

The morn broke, and found Juan slumbering still
Fast in his cave, and nothing clash’d upon
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

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 strewn’d upon the shore;
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,
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.

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,
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.
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, (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.

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 
Must breakfast, and betimes – lest they should ask it, 
She drew out her provision from the basket.

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.

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
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,
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
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,
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.
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
   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 whatso’er it was, by feeling
A most prodigious appetite: the steam
   Of Zoe’s cookery no doubt was stealing
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,
Others are fair and fertile, among which
This, though not large, was one of the most rich.
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.\textsuperscript{139}

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.

But to resume. The languid Juan raised
His head upon his elbow, and he saw
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.

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:
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.
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 –  
She snatch'd it, and refused another morsel,  
Saying, he had gorged enough to make a horse ill.

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.

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.

And then she had recourse to nods, and signs,  
And smiles, and sparkles of the speaking eye,  
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 exprest  
A world of words, and things at which she guess'd.
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:
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.

'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
Pressure of hands, perhaps even a chaste kiss; —
I learn'd the little that I know by this:

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.

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
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;
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.

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
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.
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
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:
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,
Not as of yore to carry off an Io,¹⁴⁴
But three Ragusan¹⁴⁵ vessels, bound for Scio.

¹⁴⁴ Io was the name of the ship that carried off the character from the story.
¹⁴⁵ Ragusan vessels, possibly referring to ships from the Republic of Ragusa.
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.

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.

It was a wild and breaker-beaten coast,
With cliffs above, and a broad sandy shore,
Guarded by shoals and rocks as by an host,
With here and there a creek, whose aspect wore
A better welcome to the tempest-tost;
And rarely ceased the haughty billow's roar,
Save on the dead long summer days, which make
The outstretch'd ocean glitter like a lake.

And the small ripple spilt upon the beach
Scarcely o'erpass'd the cream of your champagne,
When o'er the brim the sparkling bumpers reach,
That spring-dew of the spirit! the heart's rain!
Few things surpass old wine; and they may preach
Who please, — the more because they preach in vain, —
Let us have wine and woman, mirth and laughter,
Sermons and soda water the day after.
Man, being reasonable, must get drunk;
    The best of life is but intoxication:
Glory, the grape, love, gold, in these are sunk
    The hopes of all men, and of every nation;
Without their sap, how branchless were the trunk
    Of life's strange tree, so fruitful on occasion:
But to return, — Get very drunk; and when
You wake with headache, you shall see what then.

Ring for your valet — bid him quickly bring
    Some hock and soda-water, then you'll know
A pleasure worthy Xerxes the great king;
    For not the blest sherbet, sublimed with snow,
Nor the first sparkle of the desert-spring,
    Nor Burgundy in all its sunset glow,
After long travel, ennui, love, or slaughter,
Vie with that draught of hock and soda-water.

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 crest
By some low rock or shelf, that made it fret
Against the boundary it scarcely wet.

And forth they wandered, her sire being gone,
    As I have said, upon an expedition;
And mother, brother, guardian, she had none,
    Save Zoe, who, although with due precision
She waited on her lady with the sun,
    Thought daily service was her only mission,
Bringing warm water, wreathing her long tresses,
And asking now and then for cast-off dresses.
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,
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.

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,
They turn'd to rest; and, each clasp'd by an arm,
Yielded to the deep twilight's purple charm.

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;

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
  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,
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
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 incurr’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.
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.

Alas! they were so young, so beautiful,
So lonely, loving, helpless, and the hour
Was that in which the heart is always full
And, having o’er itself no further power,
Prompts deeds eternity can not annul,
But pays off moments in an endless shower
Of hell-fire – all prepared for people giving
Pleasure or pain to one another living.

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;
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.

They look upon each other, and their eyes
Gleam in the moonlight; and her white arm clasps
Round Juan’s head, and his around her lies
Half buried in the tresses which it grasps;
She sits upon his knee, and drinks his sighs,
He hers, until they end in broken gasps;
And thus they form a group that’s quite antique,
Half naked, loving, natural, and Greek.
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’er flowing heart, which pants
With all it granted, and with all it grants.

An infant when it gazes on a light,
A child the moment when it drains the breast,
A devotee when soars the Host 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.

For there it lies so tranquil, so beloved,
All that it hath of life with us is living;
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.

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
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.
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,
Deadly, and quick, and crushing; yet, as real
Torture is theirs, what they inflict they feel.

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.

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,
Their being an unnatural situation,
From the dull palace to the dirty hovel:
Some play the devil, and then write a novel.

Haidee was Nature's bride, and knew not this;
Haidee was Passion's child, born where the sun
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.
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
Joy of its alchymy, 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.

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:
And they were happy, for to their young eyes
Each was an angel, and earth paradise.

Oh Love! of whom great Caesar was the suitor,
Titus the master, Antony the slave,
Horace, Catullus, scholars, Ovid tutor,
Sappho 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.

Thou mak’st the chaste connubial state precarious,
And jestest with the brows of mightiest men:
Caesar and Pompey, Mahomet, Belisarius,
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,\textsuperscript{152} a material crew!
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.\textsuperscript{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
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,
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).
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'.

212
'Tis the perception of the beautiful,
A fine extension of the faculties,
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,
'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
Pours forth at last the heart's-blood turn'd to tears,
Which make the English climate of our years.
Canto Two

DON JUAN

215

The liver is the lazaret\textsuperscript{155} 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’.\textsuperscript{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! \textit{et cetera}.\textsuperscript{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! what is it in this world of ours
Which makes it fatal to be loved? Ah why
With cypress branches hast thou wreathed thy bowers,
And made thy best interpreter a sigh?
As those who dote on odours pluck the flowers,
And place them on their breast – but place to die –
Thus the frail beings we would fondly cherish
Are laid within our bosoms but to perish.

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,
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 planted –
(Unless at once she plunge for life in prayers) –
After a decent time must be gallanted;
Although, no doubt, her first of love affairs
Is that to which her heart is wholly granted;
Yet there are some, they say, who have had none,
But those who have ne’er end with only one.

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.
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
(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;
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;
So leaving each their priest and prayer-book ready,
They say no more of Death or of the Lady.
The only two that in my recollection
Have sung of heaven and hell, or marriage, are
Dante and Milton, and of both the affection
Was hapless in their nuptials, for some bar
Of fault or temper ruin'd the connection
(Such things, in fact, it don't ask much to mar);
But Dante's Beatrice and Milton's Eve
Were not drawn from their spouses, you conceive.

Some persons say that Dante meant theology
By Beatrice, and not a mistress – I,
Although my opinion may require apology,
Deem this a commentator's fantasy,
Unless indeed it was from his own knowledge he
Decided thus, and show'd good reason why;
I think that Dante's more abstruse ecstacies
Meant to personify the mathematics.

Haidée and Juan were not married, but
The fault was theirs, not mine: it is not fair,
Chaste reader, then, in any way to put
The blame on me, unless you wish they were;
Then if you'd have them wedded, please to shut
The book which treats of this erroneous pair,
Before the consequences grow too awful;
'Tis dangerous to read of loves unlawful.

Yet they were happy, – happy in the illicit
Indulgence of their innocent desires;
But more imprudent grown with every visit,
Haidée forgot the island was her sire's;
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 honester vocation
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.

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,
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.
A monkey, a Dutch mastiff, a mackaw,  
Two parrots, with a Persian cat and kittens,  
He chose from several animals he saw –  
A terrier, too, which once had been a Briton’s,  
Who dying on the coast of Ithaca,\textsuperscript{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.

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,  
And rough with reefs which ran out many a mile,  
His port lay on the other side o’ the isle.

And there he went ashore without delay,  
Having no custom-house nor quarantine  
To ask him awkward questions on the way  
About the time and place where he had been:  
He left his ship to be hove down next day,  
With orders to the people to careen;\textsuperscript{167}  
So that all hands were busy beyond measure,  
In getting out goods, ballast, guns, and treasure.

Arriving at the summit of a hill  
Which overlook’d the white walls of his home,  
He stopp’d. – What singular emotions fill  
Their bosoms who have been induced to roam!  
With fluttering doubts if all be well or ill –  
With love for many, and with fears for some;  
All feelings which o’erleap the years long lost,  
And bring our hearts back to their starting-post.
22
The approach of home to husbands and to sires,
   After long travelling by land or water,
Most naturally some small doubt inspires –
   A female family’s a serious matter;
(None trusts the sex more, or so much admires –
   But they hate flattery, so I never flatter);
Wives in their husbands’ absences grow subtler,
And daughters sometimes run off with the butler.

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;
The odds are that he finds a handsome urn
   To his memory, and two or three young misses
Born to some friend, who holds his wife and riches,
And that his Argus$^{168}$ 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;
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.
Lambro, our sea-solicitor, who had
Much less experience of dry land than ocean,
On seeing his own chimney-smoke, felt glad;
But not knowing metaphysics, had no notion
Of the true reason of his not being sad,
Or that of any other strong emotion;
He loved his child, and would have wept the loss of her,
But knew the cause no more than a philosopher.

He saw his white walls shining in the sun,
His garden trees all shadowy and green;
He heard his rivulet’s light bubbling run,
The distant dog-bark; and perceived between
The umbrage of the wood so cool and dun
The moving figures, and the sparkling sheen
Of arms (in the East all arm) – and various dyes
Of colour’d garbs, as bright as butterflies.

And as the spot where they appear he nears,
Surprised at these unwonted signs of idling,
He hears — alas! no music of the spheres,
But an unhallow’d, earthly sound of fiddling!
A melody which made him doubt his ears,
The cause being past his guessing or unriddling;
A pipe, too, and a drum, and shortly after,
A most unoriental roar of laughter.

And still more nearly to the place advancing,
Descending rather quickly the declivity,
Through the waved branches, o’er the greensward glancing,
’Midst other indications of festivity,
Seeing a troop of his domestics dancing
Like dervises, who turn as on a pivot, he
Perceived it was the Pyrrhic dance so martial,
To which the Levantines are very partial.
And further on a group of Grecian girls,
   The first and tallest her white kerchief waving,
Were strung together like a row of pearls;
   Link'd hand in hand, and dancing; each too having
Down her white neck long floating auburn curls –
   (The least of which would set ten poets raving);
Their leader sang – and bounded to her song,
With choral step and voice, the virgin throng.

And here, assembled cross-legg'd round their trays,
   Small social parties just begun to dine;
Pilaus and meats of all sorts met the gaze,
   And flasks of Samian and of Chian wine,
And sherbet cooling in the porous vase;
   Above them their dessert grew on its vine,
The orange and pomegranate nodding o'er,
Dropp'd in their laps, scarce pluck'd, their mellow store.

A band of children, round a snow-white ram,
   There wreath his venerable horns with flowers;
While peaceful as if still an unwean'd lamb,
   The patriarch of the flock all gently cowers
His sober head, majestically tame,
   Or eats from out the palm, or playful lowers
His brow, as if in act to butt, and then
Yielding to their small hands, draws back again.

Their classical profiles, and glittering dresses,
   Their large black eyes, and soft seraphic cheeks,
Crimson as cleft pomegranates, their long tresses,
   The gesture which enchants, the eye that speaks,
The innocence which happy childhood blesses,
   Made quite a picture of these little Greeks;
So that the philosophical beholder
Sigh'd for their sakes – that they should e'er grow older.
Afar, a dwarf buffoon stood telling tales
   To a sedate grey circle of old smokers
Of secret treasures found in hidden vales,
   Of wonderful replies from Arab jokers,
Of charms to make good gold, and cure bad ails,
   Of rocks bewitch'd that open to the knockers,
Of magic ladies who, by one sole act,
Transform'd their lords to beasts, (but that's a fact).

Here was no lack of innocent diversion
   For the imagination or the senses,
Song, dance, wine, music, stories from the Persian,
   All pretty pastimes in which no offence is;
But Lambro saw all these things with aversion,
   Perceiving in his absence such expenses,
Dreading that climax of all human ills,
The inflammation of his weekly bills.

Ah! what is man? what perils still environ
   The happiest mortals even after dinner –
A day of gold from out an age of iron
   Is all that life allows the luckiest sinner;
Pleasure (whene'er she sings, at least) 's a siren,
   That lures to flay alive the young beginner;
Lambro's reception at his people's banquet
Was such as fire accords to a wet blanket.

He – being a man who seldom used a word
   Too much, and wishing gladly to surprise
(In general he surprised men with the sword)
   His daughter – had not sent before to advise
Of his arrival, so that no one stirr’d;
   And long he paused to re-assure his eyes,
In fact much more astonish’d than delighted,
To find so much good company invited.
38
He did not know (Alas! how men will lie)
That a report (especially the Greeks)
Avouch’d\textsuperscript{172} his death (such people never die),
And put his house in mourning several weeks,
But now their eyes and also lips were dry;
The bloom too had return’d to 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;
’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.

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
Gird\textsuperscript{173} more deceit within a petticoat;
Pity he loved adventurous life’s variety,
He was so great a loss to good society.
Advancing to the nearest dinner tray,
    Tapping the shoulder of the nighest guest,
With a peculiar smile, which, by the way,
    Boded no good, whatever it express'd,
He ask'd the meaning of this holiday;
    The vinous Greek to whom he had address'd
His question, much too merry to divine
The questioner, fill'd up a glass of wine,

And without turning his facetious head,
    Over his shoulder, with a Bacchant air,
Presented the o'erflowing cup, and said,
    'Talking's dry work, I have no time to spare.'
A second hiccup'd, 'Our old master's dead,
    You'd better ask our mistress who's his heir.'
'Our mistress!' quoth a third: 'Our mistress! – pooh! –
    You mean our master – not the old but new.'

These rascals, being new comers, knew not whom
    They thus address'd – and Lambro's visage fell –
And o'er his eye a momentary gloom
    Pass'd, but he strove quite courteously to quell
The expression, and endeavouring to resume
    His smile, requested one of them to tell
The name and quality of his new patron,
Who seem'd to have turn'd Haidée into a matron.

'I know not,' quoth the fellow, 'who or what
    He is, nor whence he came – and little care;
But this I know, that this roast capon's fat,
    And that good wine ne'er wash'd down better fare;
And if you are not satisfied with that,
    Direct your questions to my neighbour there;
He'll answer all for better or for worse,
For none likes more to hear himself converse.'
I said that Lambro was a man of patience,
    And certainly he show'd the best of breeding,
Which scarce even France, the paragon of nations,
    E'er saw her most polite of sons exceeding;
He bore these sneers against his near relations,
    His own anxiety, his heart too bleeding,
The insults too of every servile glutton,
Who all the time were eating up his mutton.

Now in a person used to much command –
    To bid men come, and go, and come again –
To see his orders done too out of hand –
    Whether the word was death, or but the chain
It may seem strange to find his manners bland;
    Yet such things are, which I can not explain,
Though doubtless he who can command himself
Is good to govern – almost as a Guelf.

Not that he was not sometimes rash or so,
    But never in his real and serious mood;
Then calm, concentrated, and still, and slow,
    He lay coil'd like the boa in the wood;
With him it never was a word and blow,
    His angry word once o'er, he shed no blood,
But in his silence there was much to rue,
And his one blow left little work for two.

He ask'd no further questions, and proceeded
    On to the house, but by a private way,
So that the few who met him hardly heeded,
    So little they expected him that day;
If love paternal in his bosom pleaded
    For Haïdée's sake, is more than I can say,
But certainly to one deem'd dead returning,
This revel seem'd a curious mode of mourning.
If all the dead could now return to life,
    (Which God forbid!) or some, or a great many,
For instance, if a husband or his wife
    (Nuptial examples are as good as any),
No doubt whate’er might be their former strife,
    The present weather would be much more rainy –
Tears shed into the grave of the connection
Would share most probably its resurrection.

He enter’d in the house no more his home,
    A thing to human feelings the most trying,
And harder for the heart to overcome,
    Perhaps, than even the mental pangs of dying;
To find our hearthstone turn’d into a tomb,
    And round its once warm precincts palely lying
The ashes of our hopes, is a deep grief,
Beyond a single gentleman’s belief.

He enter’d in the house – his home no more,
    For without hearts there is no home; – and felt
The solitude of passing his own door
    Without a welcome; there he long had dwelt,
There his few peaceful days Time had swept o’er,
    There his worn bosom and keen eye would melt
Over the innocence of that sweet child,
His only shrine of feelings undefiled.

He was a man of a strange temperament,
    Of mild demeanour though of savage mood,
Moderate in all his habits, and content
    With temperance in pleasure, as in food,
Quick to perceive, and strong to bear, and meant
    For something better, if not wholly good;
His country’s wrongs and his despair to save her
Had stung him from a slave to an enslaver.
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,
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.

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
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;
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,
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.

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.
The dinner made about a hundred dishes;
   Lamb and pistachio nuts – in short, all meats,
And saffron soups, and sweetbreads; and the fishes
   Were of the finest that e’er flounced in nets,
Drest to a Sybarite’s most pamper’d wishes;
   The beverage was various sherbets
Of raisin, orange, and pomegranate juice,
Squeezed through the rind, which makes it best for use.

These were ranged round, each in its crystal ewer,
   And fruits, and date-bread loaves closed the repast,
And Mocha’s berry, from Arabia pure,
   In small fine China cups, came in at last;
Gold cups of filigree made to secure
   The hand from burning underneath them placed,
Cloves, cinnamon, and saffron too were boil’d
Up with the coffee, which (I think) they spoil’d.

The hangings of the room were tapestry, made
   Of velvet panels, each of different hue,
And thick with damask flowers of silk inlaid;
   And round them ran a yellow border too;
The upper border, richly wrought, display’d,
   Embroider’d delicately o’er with blue,
Soft Persian sentences, in lilac letters,
From poets, or the moralists their betters.

These oriental writings on the wall,
   Quite common in those countries, are a kind
Of monitors adapted to recall,
   Like skulls at Memphian banquets, to the mind
The words which shook Belshazzar in his hall,
   And took his kingdom from him: You will find,
Though sages may pour out their wisdom’s treasure,
There is no sterner moralist than pleasure.
A beauty at the season's close grown hectic,
A genius who has drunk himself to death,
A rake turn'd methodistic or Eclectic—
(For that's the name they like to pray beneath)—
But most, an alderman struck apoplectic,
Are things that really take away the breath
And show that late hours, wine, and love are able
To do not much less damage than the table.

Haidée and Juan carpeted their feet
On crimson satin, border'd with pale blue;
Their sofa occupied three parts complete
Of the apartment—and appear'd quite new;
The velvet cushions—(for a throne more meet)—
Were scarlet, from whose glowing centre grew
A sun emboss'd in gold, whose rays of tissue,
Meridian-like, were seen all light to issue.

Crystal and marble, plate and porcelain,
Had done their work of splendour; Indian mats
And Persian carpets, which the heart bled to stain,
Over the floors were spread; gazelles and cats,
And dwarfs and blacks, and such like things, that gain
Their bread as ministers and favourites—(that's
To say, by degradation)—mingled there
As plentiful as in a court or fair.

There was no want of lofty mirrors, and
The tables, most of ebony inlaid
With mother of pearl or ivory, stood at hand,
Or were of tortoise-shell or rare woods made,
Fretted with gold or silver:—by command
The greater part of these were ready spread
With viands and sherbets in ice—and wine—
Kept for all comers, at all hours to dine.
Of all the dresses I select 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.

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 adom’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.

Around, as princess of her father’s land,
    A like gold bar above her instep roll’d
Announced her rank; twelve rings were on her hand;
    Her hair was starr’d with gems; her veil’s fine fold
Below her breast was fasten’d with a band
    Of lavish pearls, whose worth could scarce be told;
Her orange silk full Turkish trousers furl’d
About the prettiest ankle in the world.

Her hair’s long auburn waves down to her heel
    Flow’d like an Alpine torrent which the sun
Dyes with his morning light, – and would conceal
    Her person if allow’d at large to run,
And still they seem resentfully to feel
    The silken fillet’s curb, and sought to shun
Their bonds when e’er some Zephyr caught began
To offer his young pinion as her fan.
Round her she made an atmosphere of life,
The very air seem'd lighter from her eyes,
They were so soft and beautiful, and rife
With all we can imagine of the skies,
And pure as Psyche ere she grew a wife—
Too pure even for the purest human ties;
Her overpowering presence made you feel
It would not be idolatry to kneel.

Her eyelashes, though dark as night, were tinged
(‘It is the country’s custom), but in vain;
For those large black eyes were so blackly fringed,
The glossy rebels mock’d the jetty stain,
And in their native beauty stood avenged:
Her nails were touch’d with henna; but again
The power of art was turn’d to nothing, for
They could not look more rosy than before.

The henna should be deeply dyed to make
The skin relieved appear more fairly fair;
She had no need of this, day ne’er will break
On mount ain 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’.

Juan had on a shawl of black and gold,
But a white baracan, and so transparent
The sparkling gems beneath you might behold,
Like small stars through the milky way apparent;
His turban, furl’d in many a graceful fold,
An emerald aigrette with Haidée’s hair in’t
Surmounted as its clasp—a glowing crescent,
Whose rays shone ever trembling, but incessant.
And now they were diverted by their suite,
   Dwarfs, dancing girls, black eunuchs, and a poet,
Which made their new establishment complete;
   The last was of great fame, and liked to show it:
His verses rarely wanted their due feet –
   And for his theme – he seldom sung below it,
He being paid to satirize or flatter,
As the psalm\textsuperscript{183} says, 'inditing a good matter.'

He praised the present, and abused the past,
   Reversing the good custom of old days,
An eastern anti-jacobin at last
   He turn’d, preferring pudding to no praise –
For some few years his lot had been o’ercast
   By his seeming independent in his lays,
But now he sung the Sultan and the Pacha
With truth like Southey and with verse like Crashaw.\textsuperscript{184}

He was a man who had seen many changes,
   And always changed as true as any needle;
His polar star being one which rather ranges,
   And not the fix’d – he knew the way to wheedle:
So vile, he ’scaped the doom which oft avenges;
   And being fluent (save indeed when fee’d ill),
He lied with such a fervour of intention –
There was no doubt he earn’d his laureate pension.

But he had genius, – when a turncoat has it
   The ‘Vates irritabilis’\textsuperscript{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.
Their poet, a sad trimmer, but no less
In company a very pleasant fellow,
Had been the favourite of full many a mess
Of men, and made them speeches when half mellow;
And though his meaning they could rarely guess,
Yet still they deign'd to hiccup or to bellow
The glorious meed of popular applause,
Of which the first ne'er knows the second cause.

But now being lifted into high society,
And having pick'd up several odds and ends
Of free thoughts in his travels, for variety,
He deem'd, being in a lone isle, among friends,
That without any danger of a riot, he
Might for long lying make himself amends;
And singing as he sung in his warm youth,
Agree to a short armistice with truth.

He had travell'd 'mongst the Arabs, Turks, and Franks,
And knew the self-loves of the different nations;
And having lived with people of all ranks,
Had something ready upon most occasions –
Which got him a few presents and some thanks.
He varied with some skill his adulations;
To 'do at Rome as Romans do', a piece
Of conduct was which he observed in Greece.

Thus, usually, when he was ask'd to sing,
He gave the different nations something national;
'Twas all the same to him – 'God save the king,'
Or 'Ça ira', according to the fashion all;
His muse made increment of any thing,
From the high lyric down to the low rational:
If Pindar sang horse-races, what should hinder
Himself from being as pliable as Pindar?
In France, for instance, he would write a chanson; 
   In England, a six canto quarto tale; 
In Spain, he’d make a ballad or romance on 
   The last war – much the same in Portugal; 
In Germany, the Pegasus he’d prance on 
   Would be old Goethe’s – (see what says De Staël) 
In Italy, he’d ape the ‘Trecentisti’; 
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, 
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’.

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 king sate on the rocky brow
   Which looks o’er sea-born Salamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
   And men in nations; – all were his!
He counted them at break of day –
And when the sun set where were they?
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,
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!

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!
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 Cadmus\(^{192}\) 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!
It made Anacreon's song divine:
He served – but served Polycrates\(^{193}\) –
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.

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 Doric\(^{196}\) mothers bore;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan\(^{197}\) 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;
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.
Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
   Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
   There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine —
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

Thus sung, or would, or could, or should have sung,
   The modern Greek, in tolerable verse;
If not like Orpheus quite, when Greece was young,
   Yet in these times he might have done much worse:
His strain display'd some feeling — right or wrong;
   And feeling, in a poet, is the source
Of others' feeling; but they are such liars,
And take all colours — like the hands of dyers.

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

And when his bones are dust, his grave a blank,
   His station, generation, even his nation,
Become a thing, or nothing, save to rank
   In chronological commemoration,
Some dull MS oblivion long has sank,
   Or graven stone found in a barrack's station
In digging the foundation of a closet,
May turn his name up, as a rare deposit.
And glory long has made the sages smile;  
'Tis something, nothing, words, illusion, wind –
Depending more upon the historian's style
Than on the name a person leaves behind:
Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to Hoyle;¹⁹⁸
The present century was growing blind
To the great Marlborough's skill in giving knocks,
Until his late Life by Archdeacon Coxe.¹⁹⁹

Milton's the prince of poets — so we say;
A little heavy, but no less divine:
An independent being in his day —
Learn'd, pious, temperate in love and wine;
But his life falling into Johnson's way,
We're told this great high priest of all the Nine
Was whipt at college — a harsh sire — odd spouse,
For the first Mrs Milton left his house.

All these are, certes, entertaining facts,
Like 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,
As most essential to their hero's story,
They do not much contribute to his glory.

All are not moralists, like Southey, when
He prated to the world of 'Pantisocracy';
Or Wordsworth unexcised, unhired, who then
Season'd his pedlar poems with democracy;
Or Coleridge, long before his flighty pen
Lent to the Morning Post its aristocracy;
When he and Southey, following the same path,
Espoused two partners (milliners of Bath.)
Such names at present cut a convict figure,
   The very Botany Bay\textsuperscript{201} in moral geography;
Their loyal treason, renegado rigour,
   Are good manure for their more bare biography.
Wordsworth's last quarto, by the way, is bigger
   Than any since the birthday of typography;
A drowsy frowzy poem, call'd the 'Excursion',
   Writ in a manner which is my aversion.

He there builds up a formidable dyke
   Between his own and others' intellect;
But Wordsworth's poem, and his followers, like
   Joanna Southcote's Shiloh, and her sect,
Are things which in this century don't strike
   The public mind, so few are the elect;
And the new births of both their stale virginities
   Have proved but dropsies, taken for divinities.

But let me to my story: I must own,
   If I have any fault, it is digression;
Leaving my people to proceed alone,
   While I soliloquize beyond expression;
But these are my addresses from the throne,
   Which put off business to the ensuing session:
Forgetting each omission is a loss to
   The world, not quite so great as Ariosto.

I know that what our neighbours call 'longueurs',\textsuperscript{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
Some fine examples of the \textit{épopée},\textsuperscript{203}
   To prove it grand ingredient is \textit{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.

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 ‘waggons’! Oh! ye shades
Of Pope and Dryden, are we come to this?
That trash of such sort not alone evades
Contempt, but from the bathos' vast abyss
Floats scumlike uppermost, and these Jack 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;
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,
And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet the forest leaves seem’d stirr’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.

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
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!
Canto Three

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;
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,
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!

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,
To do with the transactions of my hero,
   More than such madmen's fellow man - the moon's?
Sure my invention must be down at zero,
   And I grown one of many 'wooden spoons'
Of verse (the name with which we Cantabs please
To dub the last of honours in degrees).

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
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.\textsuperscript{210} – See Ποιητικής.

\begin{center}
\textit{Canto Four}
\end{center}

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'd\textsuperscript{211} 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
Man, – and, as we would hope, – perhaps the devil,
   That neither of their intellects are vast:
While youth's hot wishes in our red veins revel,
   We know not this – the blood flows on too fast;
But as the torrent widens towards the ocean,
   We ponder deeply on each past emotion.
As boy, I thought myself a clever fellow,
   And wish'd that others held the same opinion;
They took it up when my days grew more mellow,
   And other minds acknowledged my dominion:
Now my sere fancy 'falls into the yellow
   Leaf', and imagination droops her pinion,
And the sad truth which hovers o'er my desk
Turns what was once romantic to burlesque.

And if I laugh at any mortal thing,
   '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:
Theisis baptized her mortal son in Styx;
A mortal mother would on Lethe fix.

Some have accused me of a strange design
   Against the creed and morals of the land,
And trace it in this poem every line:
   I don't pretend that I quite understand
My own meaning when I would be very fine;
   But the fact is that I have nothing plann'd,
Unless it were to be a moment merry,
A novel word in my vocabulary.

To the kind reader of our sober clime
   This way of writing will appear exotic;
Pulci was sire of the half-serious rhyme,
   Who sang when chivalry was more Quixotic,
And revel'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
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
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
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 –
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:
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:
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;
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.

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 cloys,
For theirs were buoyant spirits, never bound
By the mere senses; and that which destroys
Most love, possession, unto them appear'd
A thing which each endearment more endear'd.

17
Oh beautiful! and rare as beautiful!
But theirs was love in which the mind delights
To lose itself, when the old world grows dull,
And we are sick of its hack sounds and sights,
Intrigues, adventures of the common school,
Its petty passions, marriages, and flights,
Where Hymen's torch but brands one strumpet more,
Whose husband only knows her not a wh—re.

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?
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;
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.

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,
As if their last day of a happy date
   With his broad, bright, and dropping orb were gone;
Juan gazed on her as to ask his fate –
   He felt a grief, but knowing cause for none,
His glance inquired of hers for some excuse
For feelings causeless, or at least abstruse.
She turn'd to him, and smiled, but in that sort
   Which makes not others smile; then turn'd aside:
Whatever feeling shook her, it seem'd short,
   And master'd by her wisdom or her pride;
When Juan spoke, too – it might be in sport –
   Of this their mutual feeling, she replied –
'If it should be so, – but – it cannot be –
Or I at least shall not survive to see.'

Juan would question further, but she press'd
   His lip to hers, and silenced him with this,
And then dismiss'd the omen from her breast,
   Defying augury with that fond kiss;
And no doubt of all methods 'tis the best:
   Some people prefer wine – 'tis not amiss;
I have tried both; so those who would a part take
May choose between the headache and the heartache.

One of the two, according to your choice,
   Woman or wine, you'll have to undergo;
Both maladies are taxes on our joys:
   But which to choose, I really hardly know;
And if I had to give a casting voice,
   For both sides I could many reasons show,
And then decide, without great wrong to either,
It were much better to have both than neither.

Juan and 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
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:
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
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.
She dream’d of being alone on the sea-shore,  
Chain’d to a rock; she knew not how, but stir  
She could not from the spot, and the loud roar  
Grew, and each wave rose roughly, threatening her;  
And o’er her upper lip they seem’d to pour,  
Until she sobb’d for breath, and soon they were  
Foaming o’er her lone head, so fierce and high –  
Each broke to drown her, yet she could not die.

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

The dream changed; in a cave she stood, its walls  
Were hung with marble icicles; the work  
Of ages on its water-fretted halls,  
Where waves might wash, and seals might breed  
and lurk;  

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

And wet, and cold, and lifeless at her feet,  
Pale as the foam that froth’d on his dead brow,  
Which she essay’d in vain to clear, (how sweet  
Were once her cares, how idle seem’d they now!)  
Lay Juan, nor could aught renew the beat  
Of his quench’d heart; and the sea dirges low  
Rang in her sad ears like a mermaid’s song,  
And that brief dream appear’d a life too long.
And gazing on the dead, she thought his face
   Faded, or alter'd into something new –
Like to her father's features, till each trace
   More like and like to Lambro's aspect grew –
With all his keen worn look and Grecian grace;
   And starting, she awoke, and what to view?
Oh! Powers of Heaven! what dark eye meets she there?
'Tis – 'tis her father's – fix'd upon the pair!

Then shrieking, she arose, and shrieking fell,
   With joy and sorrow, hope and fear, to see
Him whom she deem'd a habitant where dwell
   The ocean-buried, risen from death, to be
Perchance the death of one she loved too well:
   Dear as her father had been to Haidée,
It was a moment of that awful kind –
   I have seen such – but must not call to mind.

Up Juan sprung to Haidée's bitter shriek,
   And caught her falling, and from off the wall
Snatch'd down his sabre, in hot haste to wreak
   Vengeance on him who was the cause of all:
Then Lambro, who till now forbore to speak,
   Smiled scornfully, and said, 'Within my call,
A thousand scimitars await the word;
   Put up, young man, put up your silly sword.'

And 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
Of pleasure and of pain – even while I kiss
   Thy garment's hem with transport, can it be
That doubt should mingle with my filial joy?
Deal with me as thou wilt, but spare this boy.'
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;
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.

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,\(^{210}\) and less nice.

42
Lambro presented, and one instant more
   Had stopp’d this Canto, and Don Juan’s breath,
When Haidee threw herself her boy before;
   Stern as her sire: ‘On me,’ she cried, ‘let death
Descend – the fault is mine; this fatal shore
   He found – but sought not. I have pledged my faith;
I love him – I will die with him: I knew
Your nature’s firmness – know your daughter’s too.’
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;
   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:
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.

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!’

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 –  
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  
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, placed in line;  
On board of one of these, and under hatches,  
They stow’d him, with strict orders to the watches.
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 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 nymph of tears, green tea!
Than whom Cassandra was not more prophetic;
For if my pure libations exceed three,
I feel my heart become so sympathetic,
That I must have recourse to black Bohea:
'Tis pity wine should be so deleterious,
For tea and coffee leave us much more serious,

53
Unless when qualified with thee, Cogniac!
Sweet Naiad of the Phlege thonic rill!
Ah! why the liver wilt thou thus attack,
And make, like other nymphs, thy lovers ill?
I would take refuge in weak punch, but rack
(In each sense of the word), whene'er I fill
My mild and midnight beakers to the brim,
Wakes me next morning with its synonym.

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;
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 fonts; there grain, and flower, and fruit,
Gush from the earth until the land runs o’er;
But there too many a poison-tree has root,
And midnight listens to the lion’s roar,
And long, long deserts scorch the camel’s foot,
Or heaving whelm the helpless caravan,
And as the soil is, so the heart of man.

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,
Till slowly charged with thunder they display
Terror to earth, and tempest to the air,
Had held till now her soft and milky way;
But overwrought with passion and despair,
The fire burst forth from her Numidian veins,
Even as the Simoom sweeps the blasted plains.

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;
Thus much she view’d an instant and no more,—
Her struggles ceased with one convulsive groan;
On her sire’s arm, which until now scarce held
Her writhing, fell she like a cedar fell’d.
A vein had burst, and her sweet lips' pure dyes  
       Were dabbled with the deep blood which ran o'er;  
And her head droop'd as when the lily lies  
       O'ercharged with rain: her summon'd handmaids bore  
Their lady to her couch with gushing eyes;  
       Of herbs and cordials they produced their store,  
But she defied all means they could employ,  
Like one life could not hold, nor death destroy.

Days lay she in that state unchanged, though chill  
       With nothing livid, still her lips were red;  
She had no pulse, but death seem'd absent still;  
       No hideous sign proclaim'd her surely dead;  
Corruption came not in each mind to kill  
       All hope; to look upon her sweet face bred  
New thoughts of life, for it seem'd full of soul,  
She had so much, earth could not claim the whole.

The ruling passion, such as marble shows  
       When exquisitely chisell'd, still lay there,  
But fix'd as marble's unchanged aspect throws  
       O'er the fair Venus, but for ever fair;  
O'er the Laocoön's all eternal throes,  
       And ever-dying Gladiator's air,  
Their energy like life forms all their fame,  
Yet looks not life, for they are still the same.

She woke at length, but not as sleepers wake,  
       Rather the dead, for life seem'd something new,  
A strange sensation which she must partake  
       Perforce, since whatsoever met her view  
Struck not on memory, though a heavy ache  
       Lay at her heart, whose earliest beat still true  
Brought back the sense of pain without the cause,  
For, for a while, the furies made a pause.
She look'd on many a face with vacant eye,
On many a token without knowing what;
She saw them watch her without asking why,
And reck'd not who around her pillow sat;
Not speechless though she spoke not; not a sigh
Relieved her thoughts; dull silence and quick chat
Were tried in vain by those who served; she gave
No sign, save breath, of having left the grave.

Her handmaids tended, but she heeded not;
Her father watch'd, she turn'd her eyes away;
She recognized no being, and no spot
However dear or cherish'd in their day;
They changed from room to room, but all forgot,
Gentle, but without memory she lay;
At length those eyes, which they would fain be weaning
Back to old thoughts, wax'd full of fearful meaning.

And then a slave bethought her of a harp;
The harper came, and tuned his instrument;
At the first notes, irregular and sharp,
On him her flashing eyes a moment bent,
Then to the wall she turn'd as if to warp
Her thoughts from sorrow through her heart re-sent,
And he begun a long low island song
Of ancient days, ere tyranny grew strong.

Anon her thin wan fingers beat the wall
In time to his old tune; he changed the theme,
And sung of love; the fierce name struck through all
Her recollection; on her flash'd the dream
Of what she was, and is, if ye could call
To be so being; in a gushing stream
The tears rush'd forth from her o'erclouded brain,
Like mountain mists at length dissolved in rain.
Short solace, vain relief! – thought came too quick,  
And whirl’d her brain to madness; she arose  
As one who ne’er had dwelt among the sick,  
And flew at all she met, as on her foes;  
But no one ever heard her speak or shriek,  
Although her paroxysm drew towards its close:  
Hers was a frenzy which disdain’d to rave,  
Even when they smote her, in the hope to save.

Yet she betray’d at times a gleam of sense;  
Nothing could make her meet her father’s face,  
Though on all other things with looks intense  
She gazed, but none she ever could retrace;  
Food she refused, and raiment; no pretence  
Avail’d for either; neither change of place,  
Nor time, nor skill, nor remedy, could give her  
Senses to sleep – the power seem’d gone for ever.

Twelve days and nights she wither’d thus; at last,  
Without a groan, or sigh, or glance, to show  
A parting pang, the spirit from her past:  
And they who watch’d her nearest could not know  
The very instant, till the change that cast  
Her sweet face into shadow, dull and slow,  
Glazed o’er her eyes – the beautiful, the black –  
Oh! to possess such lustre – and then lack!

She died, but not alone; she held within  
A second principle of life, which might  
Have dawn’d a fair and sinless child of sin;  
But closed its little being without light,  
And went down to the grave unborn, wherein  
Blossom and bough lie wither’d with one blight;  
In vain the dews of Heaven descend above  
The bleeding flower and blasted fruit of love.
Thus lived — thus died she; never more on her
Shall sorrow light, or shame. She was not made
Through years or moons the inner weight to bear,
Which colder hearts endure till they are laid
By age in earth; her days and pleasures were
Brief, but delightful — such as had not staid
Long with her destiny; but she sleeps well
By the sea shore, whereon she loved to dwell.

That isle is now all desolate and bare,
Its dwellings down, its tenants past away;
None but her own and father's grave is there,
And nothing outward tells of human clay;
Ye could not know where lies a thing so fair,
No stone is there to show, no tongue to say
What was; no dirge, except the hollow sea's,
Mourns o'er the beauty of the Cyclades.

But many a Greek maid in a loving song
Sighs o'er her name; and many an islander
With her sire's story makes the night less long;
Valour was his, and beauty dwelt with her;
If she loved rashly, her life paid for wrong —
A heavy price must all pay who thus err,
In some shape; let none think to fly the danger,
For soon or late Love is his own avenger.

But let me change this theme, which grows too sad,
And lay this sheet of sorrows on the shelf;
I don't much like describing people mad,
For fear of seeming rather touch'd myself —
Besides I've no more on this head to add;
And as my Muse is a capricious elf,
We'll put about, and try another tack
With Juan, left half-kill'd some stanzas back.
Wounded and fetter'd, 'cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd',\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{226}

There, on the green and village-cotted hill, is (Flank'd by the Hellespont, and by the sea) Entomb'd the bravest of the brave, Achilles; They say so – (Bryant\textsuperscript{227} says the contrary): And further downward, tall and towering still, is The tumulus – of whom? Heaven knows; 't may be Patroclus,\textsuperscript{228} Ajax, or Protesilaus; All heroes who if living still would slay us.

High barrows, without marble, or a name, A vast, untill'd, and mountain-skirted plain, And Ida\textsuperscript{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;

Troops of untended horses; here and there Some little hamlets, with new names uncouth; Some shepherds, (unlike Paris) led to stare A moment at the European youth Whom to the spot their school-boy feelings bear. A Turk, with beads in hand, and pipe in mouth, Extremely taken with his own religion, Are what I found there – but the devil a Phrygian.\textsuperscript{229b}
Don Juan, here permitted to emerge
From his dull cabin, found himself a slave;
Forlorn, and gazing on the deep blue surge,
O’ershadow’d there by many a hero’s grave;
Weak still with loss of blood, he scarce could urge
A few brief questions; and the answers gave
No very satisfactory information
About his past or present situation.

He saw some fellow captives, who appear’d
To be Italians, as they were in fact;
From them, at least, their destiny he heard,
Which was an odd one; a troop going to act
In Sicily — all singers, duly rear’d
In their vocation; had not been attack’d
In sailing from Livorno by the pirate,
But sold by the impresario at no high rate.

By one of these, the buffo of the party,
Juan was told about their curious case;
For although destined to the Turkish mart, he
Still kept his spirits up — at least his face,
The little fellow really look’d quite hearty,
And bore him with some gaiety and grace,
Showing a much more reconciled demeanour
Than did the prima donna and the tenor.

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

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
The tenor's voice is spoilt by affectation,
And for the bass, the beast can only bellow;
In fact, he had no singing education,
An ignorant, noteless, timeless, tuneless fellow,
But being the prima donna's near relation,
Who swore his voice was very rich and mellow,
They hired him, though to hear him you'd believe
An ass was practising recitative.

'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:
You've heard of Raucocanti? - I'm the man;
The time may come when you may hear me too;
You was not last year at the fair of Lugo,
But next, when I'm engaged to sing there - do go.

'Our baritone I almost had forgot,
A pretty lad, but bursting with conceit;
With graceful action, science not a jot,
A voice of no great compass, and not sweet,
He always is complaining of his lot,
Forsooth, scarce fit for ballads in the street;
In lovers' parts his passion more to breathe,
Having no heart to show, he shows his teeth.'

Here Raucocanti's eloquent recital
Was interrupted by the pirate crew,
Who came at stated moments to invite all
The captives back to their sad berths; each threw
A rueful glance upon the waves (which bright all
From the blue skies derived a double blue,
Dancing all free and happy in the sun),
And then went down the hatchway one by one.
They heard next day – that in the Dardanelles,\textsuperscript{236} Waiting for his sublimity’s firman,\textsuperscript{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.

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

With Raucocanti lucklessly was chain’d The tenor; these two hated with a hate Found only on the stage, and each more pain’d With this his tuneful neighbour than his fate; Sad strife arose, for they were so cross-grain’d, Instead of bearing up without debate, That each pull’d different ways with many an oath, ‘Arcades ambo’,\textsuperscript{id est}\textsuperscript{238} – blackguards both.

Juan’s companion was a Romagnole,\textsuperscript{239} But bred within the March of old Ancona,\textsuperscript{240} With eyes that look’d into the very soul (And other chief points of a ‘bella donna’),\textsuperscript{241} Bright – and as black and burning as a coal; And through her clear brunette complexion shone a 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.

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,
But hear that several people take exception
   At the first two books having too much truth;
Therefore I'll make Don Juan leave the ship soon,
   Because the publisher declares, in sooth,
Through needles' eyes it easier for the camel is 243
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;
I once had great alacrity in wielding
   My pen, and liked poetic war to wage,
And recollect the time when all this cant
Would have provoked remarks which now it shan't.
As boys love rows, my boyhood liked a squabble;
   But at this hour I wish to part in peace,
Leaving such to the literary rabble,
   Whether my verse's fame be doom'd to cease,
While the right hand which wrote it still is able,
   Or of some centuries to take a lease;
The grass upon my grave will grow as long,
   And sigh to midnight winds, but not to song.

Of poets who come down to us through distance
   Of time and tongues, the foster-babes of Fame,
Life seems the smallest portion of existence;
   Where twenty ages gather o'er a name,
'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.

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 just\textsuperscript{245} –
Save change; I've stood upon Achilles' tomb,
And heard Troy doubted; time will doubt of Rome.

The very generations of the dead
   Are swept away, and tomb inherits tomb,
Until the memory of an age is fled,
   And, buried, sinks beneath its offspring's doom:
Where are the epitaphs our fathers read?
   Save a few glean'd from the sepulchral gloom
Which once-named myriads nameless lie beneath,
And lose their own in universal death.
I canter by the spot each afternoon
Where perish’d in his fame the hero-boy,
Who lived too long for men, but died too soon
For human vanity, the young De Foix!\(^{246}\)  
A broken pillar, not uncouthly hewn,
But which neglect is hastening to destroy,
Records Ravenna’s carnage on its face,
While weeds and ordure rankle round the base.

I pass each day where Dante’s bones are laid:
A little cupola, more neat than solemn,
Protects his dust, but reverence here is paid
To the bard’s tomb, and not the warrior’s column:
The time must come, when both alike decay’d,
The chieftain’s trophy, and the poet’s volume,
Will sink where lie the songs and wars of earth,
Before Pelides\(^{247}\) death, or Homer’s birth.

With human blood that column was cemented,
With human filth that column is defiled,
As if the peasant’s coarse contempt were vented
To show his loathing of the spot he soil’d;
Thus is the trophy used, and thus lamented
Should ever be those blood-hounds, from whose wild
Instinct of gore and glory earth has known
Those sufferings Dante saw in hell alone.

Yet there will still be bards; though fame is smoke,
Its fumes are frankincense to human thought;
And the unquiet feelings, which first woke
Song in the world, will seek what then they sought;
As on the beach the waves at last are broke,
Thus to their extreme verge the passions brought
Dash into poetry, which is but passion,
Or at least was so ere it grew a fashion.
107
If in the course of such a life as was
   At once adventurous and contemplative,
Men who partake all passions as they pass,
   Acquire the deep and bitter power to give
Their images again as in a glass,
   And in such colours that they seem to live;
You may do right forbidding them to show 'em,
But spoil (I think) a very pretty poem.

108
Oh! ye, who make the fortunes of all books!
   Benign ceruleans of the second sex!
Who advertise new poems by your looks,
   Your 'imprimatur' will ye not annex?
What, must I go to the oblivious cooks?
   Those Cornish plunderers of Parnassian wrecks?
Ah! must I then the only minstrel be,
Proscribed from tasting your Castalian tea!

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

110
Oh! 'darkly, deeply, beautifully blue',
   As some one somewhere sings about the sky,
And I, ye learned ladies, say of you;
   They say your stockings are so (Heaven knows why,
I have examined few pair of that hue);
   Blue as the garters which serenely lie
Round the Patrician left-legs, which adorn
The festal midnight, and the levee morn.
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,
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;
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;
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.

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:

All this must be reserved for further song;
Also our hero’s lot, howe’er unpleasant,
(Because this Canto has become too long)
Must be postponed discreetly for the present;
I’m sensible redundancy is wrong,
But could not for the muse of me put less in’t:
And now delay the progress of Don Juan,
Till what is call’d in Ossian the fifth 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;
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;
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:
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 Parcae\(^{263}\) 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;
Each bevy\(^{264}\) 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 no\(^v\) and then a tear stole down by stealth;
Perhaps his recent loss of blood might pull
His spirit down; and then the loss of wealth,
A mistress, and such comfortable quarters,
To be put up for auction amongst Tartars,
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;
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.

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
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.
Canto Five

Don Juan

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,
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;
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’.

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,  
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  
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 hardiest 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:  
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.’
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,

This skin must go the way too of all flesh,

Or sometimes only wear a week or two; –

Love’s the first net which spreads its deadly mesh;

Ambition, Avarice, Vengeance, Glory, glue

The glittering lime-twigs of our latter days,

Where still we flutter on for pence or praise.’

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

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;

Meantime (yon old black eunuch seems to eye us)

I wish to G – d that somebody would buy us!'
'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.'

Just now a black old neutral personage
Of the third sex stept up, and peering over
The captives, seem'd to mark their looks and age,
And capabilities, as to discover
If they were fitted for the purposed cage:
No lady e'er is ogled by a lover,
Horse by a blackleg,\textsuperscript{267} broadcloth by a tailor,
Fee by a counsel, felon by a jailor,
As is a slave by his intended bidder.
'Tis pleasant purchasing our fellow creatures;
And all are to be sold, if you consider
Their passions, and are dext'rous; some by features
Are bought up, others by a warlike leader,
Some by a place – as tend their years or natures;
The most by ready cash – but all have prices,
From crowns to kicks,\textsuperscript{268} according to their vices.

The eunuch having eyed them o'er with care,
Turn'd to the merchant, and begun to bid
First but for one, and after for the pair;
They haggled, wrangled, swore, too – so they did!
As though they were in a mere christian fair
Cheapening an ox, an ass, a lamb, or kid;
So that their bargain sounded like a battle
For this superior yoke of human cattle.
At last they settled into simple grumbling,
   And pulling out reluctant purses, and
Turning each piece of silver o’er, and tumbling
   Some down, and weighing others in their hand,
And by mistake sequins with paras269 jumbling,
   Until the sum was accurately scann’d,
And then the merchant giving change, and signing
Receipts in full, began to think of dining.

I wonder if his appetite was good?
   Or, if it were, if also his digestion?
Methinks at meals some odd thoughts might intrude,
   And conscience ask a curious sort of question,
About the right divine how far we should
   Sell flesh and blood. When dinner has opprest one,
I think it is perhaps the gloomiest hour
Which turns up out of the sad twenty-four.

Voltaire says ‘No:’ he tells you that Candide
   Found life most tolerable after meals;
He’s wrong – unless man were a pig, indeed,
   Repletion rather adds to what he feels,
Unless he’s drunk, and then no doubt he’s freed
   From his own brain’s oppression while it reels.
Of food I think with Philip’s son, or rather
Ammon’s (ill pleased with one world and one father);

I think with Alexander, that the act
   Of eating, with another act or two,
Makes us feel our mortality in fact
   Redoubled; when a roast and a ragout,
And fish, and soup, by some side dishes back’d,
   Can give us either pain or pleasure, who
Would pique himself on intellects, whose use
Depends so much upon the gastric juice?
The other evening ('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,
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.

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;
The man was gone: in some Italian quarrel
Kill'd by five bullets from an old gun-barrel.

I gazed upon him, for I knew him well;
And though I have seen many corpses, never
Saw one, whom such an accident befell,
So calm; though pierced through stomach, heart, and liver,
He seem'd to sleep, for you could scarcely tell
(As he bled inwardly, no hideous river
Of gore divulged the cause) that he was dead:
So as I gazed on him, I thought or said –

'Can this be death? then what is life or death?
"Speak!" but he spoke not: "wake!" but still he slept: –
But yesterday and who had mightier breath?
A thousand warriors by his word were kept
In awe: he said,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.'
And they who waited once and worshipp'd – they
With their rough faces throng'd about the bed
To gaze once more on the commanding clay
Which for the last though not the first time bled:
And such an end! that he who many a day
Had faced Napoleon's foes until they fled, –
The foremost in the charge or in the sally,
Should now be butcher'd in a civic alley.

The scars of his old wounds were near his new,
Those honourable scars which brought him fame;
And horrid was the contrast to the view –
But let me quit the theme; as such things claim
Perhaps even more attention than is due
From me: I gazed (as oft I have gazed the same)
To try if I could wrench aught out of death
Which should confirm, or shake, or make a faith;

But it was all a mystery. Here we are,
And there we go: – but where? five bits of lead,
Or three, or two, or one, send very far!
And is this blood, then, form'd but to be shed?
Can every element our elements mar?
And air – earth – water – fire live – and we dead?
We, whose minds comprehend all things? No more;
But let us to the story as before.

The purchaser of Juan and acquaintance
Bore off his bargains to a gilded boat,
Embark'd himself and them, and off they went thence
As fast as oars could pull and water float;
They look'd like persons being led to sentence,
Wondering what next, till the caique was brought
Up in a little creek below a wall
O'ertopp'd with cypresses dark-green and tall.
41
Here their conductor tapping at the wicket\textsuperscript{271}
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:     \textsuperscript{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 occurr'd to you or me.
'Methinks,' - said he, - 'it would be no great shame
If we should strike a stroke to set us free;
Let's knock that old black fellow on the head,
And march away - 'twere easier done than said.'

44
'Yes,' said the other, 'and when done, what then?
\textit{How get} out? how the devil got we in?
And when we once were fairly out, and when
From Saint Bartholomew\textsuperscript{272} we have saved our skin,
Tomorrow'd see us in some other den,
And worse off than we hitherto have been;
Besides, I'm hungry, and just now would take,
Like Esau, for my birthright\textsuperscript{273} 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 besprent a deal of gilding
And various hues, as is the Turkish wont, —
A gaudy taste; for they are little skill'd in
The arts of which these lands were once the font:
Each villa on the Bosphorus looks a screen
New painted, or a pretty opera-scene.

47
And nearer as they came, a genial savour
Of certain stews, and roast-meats, and pilaus,
Things which in hungry mortals' eyes find favour,
Made Juan in his harsh intentions pause,
And put himself upon his good behaviour:
His friend, too, adding a new saving clause,
Said, 'In Heaven's name let's get some supper now,
And then I'm with you, if you're for a row.' 370

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.
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. —
But I digress: of all appeals, — although
I grant the power of pathos, and of gold,
Of beauty, flattery, threats, a shilling, — no
Method’s more sure at moments to take hold
Of the best feelings of mankind, which grow
More tender, as we every day behold,
Than that all-softening, over-powering knell,
The tocsin of the soul — the dinner bell.

Turkey contains no bells, and yet men dine;
And Juan and his friend, albeit they heard
No christian knoll to table, saw no line
Of lackeys usher to the feast prepared,
Yet smelt roast-meat, beheld a huge fire shine,
And cooks in motion with their clean arms bared,
And gazed around them to the left and right
With the prophetic eye of appetite.

And giving up all notions of resistance,
They follow’d close behind their sable guide,
Who little thought that his own crack’d existence
Was on the point of being set aside:
He motion’d them to stop at some small distance,
And knocking at the gate, ’twas open’d wide,
And a magnificent large hall display’d
The Asian pomp of Ottoman parade.

I won’t describe; description is my forte,
But every fool describes in these bright days
His wond’rous journey to some foreign court,
And spawns his quarto, and demands your praise —
Death 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.
Along this hall, and up and down, some, squatted
   Upon their hams, were occupied at chess;
Others in monosyllable talk chatted,
   And some seem’d much in love with their own dress,
And divers smoked superb pipes decorated
   With amber mouths of greater price or less;
And several strutted, others slept, and some
Prepared for supper with a glass of rum.

As the black eunuch enter’d with his brace
   Of purchased Infidels, some raised their eyes
A moment without slackening from their pace;
   But those who sate, ne’er stirr’d in any wise:
One or two stared the captives in the face,
   Just as one views a horse to guess his price;
Some nodded to the negro from their station,
But no one troubled him with conversation.

He leads them through the hall, and, without stopping,
   On through a farther range of goodly rooms,
Splendid but silent, save in one, where, dropping,
   A marble fountain echoes through the glooms
Of night, which robe the chamber, or where popping
   Some female head most curiously presumes
To thrust its black eyes through the door or lattice,
As wondering what the devil noise that is.

Some faint lamps gleaming from the lofty walls
   Gave light enough to hint their farther way,
But not enough to show the imperial halls
   In all the flashing of their full array;
Perhaps there’s nothing – I’ll not say appals,
   But saddens more by night as well as day,
Than an enormous room without a soul
To break the lifeless splendour of the whole.
57
Two or three seem so little, one seems nothing:
   In deserts, forests, crowds, or by the shore,
There solitude, we know, has her full growth in
   The spots which were her realms for evermore;
But in a mighty hall or gallery, both in
   More modern buildings and those built of yore,
A kind of death comes o'er us all alone,
Seeing what's meant for many with but one.

58
A neat, snug study on a winter's night,
   A book, friend, single lady, or a glass
Of claret, sandwich, and an appetite,
   Are things which make an English evening pass;
Though certes by no means so grand a sight
   As is a theatre lit up by gas.
I pass my evenings in long galleries solely,
And that's the reason I'm so melancholy.

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:
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.
That injured Queen, by Chroniclers so coarse
Has been accused (I doubt not by conspiracy)
Of an improper friendship for her horse
(Love, like religion, sometimes runs to heresy):
This monstrous tale\textsuperscript{279} had probably its source
(For such exaggerations here and there I see)
In writing ‘Courser’ by mistake for ‘Courier’:
I wish the case could come before a jury here.

But to resume, – should there be (what may not
Be in these days?) some infidels, who don’t,
Because they can’t, find out the very spot
Of that same Babel, or because they won’t,
(Though Claudius Rich, Esquire, some bricks has got
And written lately two memoirs upon’t)\textsuperscript{280}
Believe the Jews, those unbelievers, who
Must be believed, though they believe not you.

Yet let them think that Horace has exprest
Shortly and sweetly the masonic folly
Of those, forgetting the great place of rest,
Who give themselves to architecture wholly;
We know where things and men must end at best,
A moral (like all morals) melancholy,
And ‘Et sepulchri immemor struis domos’\textsuperscript{281}
Shows that we build when we should but entomb us.

At last they reach’d a quarter most retired,
Where echo woke as if from a long slumber;
Though full of all things which could be desired,
One wonder’d what to do with such a number
Of articles which nobody required;
Here wealth had done its utmost to encumber
With furniture an exquisite apartment,
Which puzzled nature much to know what art meant.
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.

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
A quantity of clothes fit for the back
Of any Mussulman, whate’er his worth;
And of variety there was no lack –
And yet, though I have said there was no dearth,
He chose himself to point out what he thought
Most proper for the Christians he had bought.

68
The suit he thought most suitable to each
Was, for the elder and the stout er, first
A cандiote cloak, which to the knee might reach,
And trousers not so tight that they would burst,
But such as fit an Asiatic breech;
A shawl, whose folds in Cashmire had been nurst,
Slippers of saffron, dagger rich and handy;
In short, all things which form a Turkish Dandy.
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,
‘ ’Twould greatly tend to better their condition,
If they would condescend to circumcision.  

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.

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:
You put me out in what I had to say.
Sir! – as I said, as soon as I have supt,
I shall perpend if your proposal may
Be such as I can properly accept;
Provided always your great goodness still
Remits the matter to our own free-will.’
Baba eyed Juan, and said 'Be so good
As dress yourself – ’ and pointed out a suit
In which a Princess with great pleasure would
Array her limbs; but Juan standing mute,
As not being in a masquerading mood,
Gave it a slight kick with his christian foot;
And when the old negro told him to ‘Get ready,’
Replied, ‘Old gentleman, I’m not a lady.’

‘What you may be, I neither know nor care,’
Said Baba; ‘but pray do as I desire:
I have no more time nor many words to spare.’
‘At least,’ said Juan, ‘sure I may inquire
The cause of this odd travesty?’ – ‘Forbear’,
Said Baba, ‘to be curious; ’twill transpire,
No doubt, in proper place, and time, and season:
I have no authority to tell the reason.’

‘Then if I do’, said Juan ‘I’ll be – ’ ‘Hold!’
Rejoin’d the Negro, ‘pray be not provoking;
This spirit’s well, but it may wax too bold,
And you will find us not 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.

‘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,
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:
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
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.
'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.

'You fool! I tell you no one means you harm.'
'So much the better,' Juan said, 'for them;
Else they shall feel the weight of this my arm,
Which is not quite so light as you may deem.
I yield thus far; but soon will break the charm
If any take me for that which
So that I trust for every body's sake,
That this disguise may lead to no mistake.'

'Blockhead! come on, and see,' quoth Baba; while
Don Juan, turning to his comrade, who
Though somewhat grieved, could scarce forbear a smile
Upon the metamorphosis in view,
'Farewell!' they mutually 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.'

'Farewell!' said Juan; 'should we meet no more,
I wish you a good appetite.' – 'Farewell!'
Replied the other; 'though it grieves me sore;
When we next meet, we'll have a tale to tell:
We needs must follow when Fate puts from shore.
Keep your good name; though Eve herself once fell.'
'Nay,' quoth the maid, 'the Sultan's self shan't carry me,
Unless his highness promises to marry me.'
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.

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
Two little dwarfs, the least you could suppose,
Were sate, like ugly imps, as if allied
In mockery to the enormous gate which rose
O'er them in almost pyramidal pride:
The gate so splendid was in all its features,
You never thought about those little creatures,

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,
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.
Their duty was – for they were strong, and though
They look’d so little, did strong things at times –
To ope this door, which they could really do,
The hinges being as smooth as Rogers’ rhymes;
And now and then with tough strings of the bow,
As is the custom of those eastern climes,
To give some rebel Pacha a cravat;²⁸⁵
For mutes are generally used for that.

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.

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’)
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,

‘ ’Twould be convenient; for these mutes have eyes
Like needles, which may pierce those petticoats;
And if they should discover your disguise,
You know how near us the deep Bosphorus floats;
And you and I may chance ere morning rise,
To find our way to 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
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;
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.

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.
Her presence was as lofty as her state;  
Her beauty of that overpowering kind,  
Whose force description only would abate:  
I'd rather leave it much to your own mind,  
Than lessen it by what I could relate  
Of forms and features; it would strike you blind  
Could I do justice to the full detail;  
So, luckily for both, my phrases fail.

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,  
Such as was Mary’s Queen of Scots; true – tears  
And love destroy; and sapping sorrow wrings  
Charms from the charmer, yet some never grow  
Ugly; for instance – Ninon de l’Enclos.  

She spake some words to her attendants, who  
Composed a choir of girls, ten or a dozen,  
And were all clad alike; like Juan, too,  
Who wore their uniform, by Baba chosen:  
They form’d a very nymph-like looking crew,  
Which might have call’d Diana’s chorus ‘cousin,’  
As far as outward show may correspond;  
I won’t be bail for any thing beyond.

They bow’d obeisance and withdrew, retiring,  
But not by the same door through which came in  
Baba and Juan, which last stood admiring,  
At some small distance, all he saw within  
This strange saloon, much fitted for inspiring  
Marvel and praise; for both or none things win;  
And I must say, I ne’er could see the very  
Great happiness of the ‘Nil Admirari.’
101

'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;
(For take it in the very words of Creech).'
Thus Horace wrote we all know long ago;
And thus Pope quotes the precept to re-teach
From his translation; but had none admired,
Would Pope have sung, or Horace been inspired?

102

Baba, when all the damsels were withdrawn,
Motion'd to Juan to approach, and then
A second time desired him to kneel down,
And kiss the lady's foot; which maxim when
He heard repeated, Juan with a frown
Drew himself up to his full height again,
And said, 'It grieved him, but he could not stoop
To any shoe, unless it shod the Pope.'

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
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, with a world of words
About his ears, and nathless would not bend;
The blood of all his line's Castilian lords
Boil'd in his veins, and rather than descend
To stain his pedigree, a thousand swords
A thousand times of him had made an end;
At length perceiving the 'foot' could not stand,
Baba proposed that he should kiss the hand.
Here was an honourable compromise,
A half-way house of diplomatic rest,
Where they might meet in much more peaceful guise;
And Juan now his willingness exprest,
To use all fit and proper courtesies,
Adding, that this was commonest and best,
For through the South, the custom still commands
The gentleman, to kiss the lady’s hands.

And he advanced, though with but a bad grace,
Though on more thorough-bred or fairer fingers
No lips e’er left their transitory trace;
On such as these the lip too fondly lingers,
And for one kiss would fain imprint a brace,
As you will see, if she you love shall bring hers
In contact; and sometimes even a fair stranger’s
An almost twelvemonth’s constancy endangers.

The lady eyed him o’er and o’er, and bade
Baba retire, which he obey’d in style,
As if well-used to the retreating trade;
And taking hints in good part all the while,
He whisper’d Juan not to be afraid,
And looking on him with a sort of smile,
Took leave, with such a face of satisfaction,
As good men wear who have done a virtuous action.

When he was gone, there was a sudden change:
I know not what might be the lady’s thought,
But o’er her bright brow flash’d a tumult strange,
And into her clear cheek the blood was brought,
Blood-red as sunset summer clouds which range
The verge of Heaven; and in her large eyes wrought
A mixture of sensations might be scann’d,
Of half-voluptuousness and half command.
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, and paved (God knows how) the road to evil;
The sun himself was scarce more free from specks
Than she from aught at which the eye could cavil;
Yet, somehow, there was something somewhere wanting,
As if she rather order'd than was granting. –

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.

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
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
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:  
There was no end unto the things she bought,  
Nor to the trouble which her fancies caused;  
Yet even her tyranny had such a grace,  
The women pardon’d all except her face.

Juan, the latest of her whims, had caught  
Her eye in passing on his way to sale;  
She order’d him directly to be bought,  
And Baba, who had ne’er been known to fail  
In any kind of mischief to be wrought,  
At all such auctions knew how to prevail:  
She had no prudence, but he had; and this  
Explains the garb which Juan took amiss.

His youth and features favour’d the disguise,  
And, should you ask how she, a sultan’s bride,  
Could risk or 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.

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
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:
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
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, whatsoe'er their nation,
They naturally pour the 'wine and oil',
Samaritans in every situation;
And thus Gulbeyaz, though she knew not why,
Felt an odd glistening moisture in her eye.
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 reproved;
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
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,
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 Haïdée into his head:
However strange, he could not yet forget her,
Which made him seem exceedingly ill-bred.
Gulbeyaz, who look’d on him as her debtor
For having had him to her palace led,
Began to blush up to the eyes, and then
Grow deadly pale, and then blush back again.
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.

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!
In this vile garb, the distaff, web, and woof,
Were fitter for me: Love is for the free!
I am not dazzled by this splendid roof.
Whate’er thy power, and great it seems to be,
Heads bow, knees bend, eyes watch around a throne,
And hands obey – our hearts are still our own.’

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.
If hearts lay on the left side or the right
She hardly knew, to such perfection brings
Legitimacy its born votaries, when
Aimed of their due royal rights o’er men.
Besides, as has been said, she was so fair
As even in a much humbler lot had made
A kingdom or confusion anywhere,
And also, as may be presumed, she laid
Some stress on charms which seldom are, if e'er,
By their possessors thrown into the shade;
She thought hers gave a double 'right divine',\(^{298}\)
And half of that opinion's also mine.

Remember, or (if you can not) imagine,
Ye! who have kept your chastity when young,
While some more desperate dowager has been waging
Love with you, and been in the dog-days\(^{299}\) stung
By your refusal, recollect her raging!
Or recollect all that was said or sung
On such a subject; then suppose the face
Of a young downright beauty in this case.

Suppose, but you already have supposed,
The spouse of Potiphar, the Lady Booby,
Phaedra,\(^{300}\) 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.

A tigress robb'd of young, a lioness,
Or any interesting beast of prey,
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;
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:
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.

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 Hotspur on the immortal page;
Her anger pitch’d into a lower tune,
Perhaps the fault of her soft sex and age –
Her wish was but to ‘kill, kill, kill,’ like Lear’s,
And then her thirst of blood was quench’d in tears.
A storm it raged, and like the storm it pass'd,  
Pass'd without words - in fact she could not speak;  
And then her sex's shame broke in at last,  
A sentiment till then in her but weak,  
But now it flow'd in natural and fast,  
As water through an unexpected leak,  
For she felt humbled - and humiliation  
is sometimes good for people in her station.

It teaches them that they are flesh and blood,  
It also gently hints to them that others,  
Although of clay, are yet not quite of mud;  
That urns and pipkins\textsuperscript{303} are but fragile brothers,  
And works of the same pottery, bad or good,  
Though not all born of the same sires and mothers:  
It teaches - Heaven knows only what it teaches,  
But sometimes it may mend, and often reaches.

Her first thought was to cut off Juan's head;  
Her second, to cut only his - acquaintance;  
Her third, to ask him where he had been bred;  
Her fourth, to rally him into repentance;  
Her fifth, to call her maids and go to bed;  
Her sixth, to stab herself; her seventh, to sentence  
The lash to Baba: - but her grand resource  
Was to sit down again, and cry of course.

She thought to stab herself, but then she had  
The dagger close at hand, which made it awkward;  
For eastern stays are little made to pad,  
So that a poniard pierces if '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.
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;
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,
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:
The Sun himself has sent me like a ray
To hint that he is coming up this way.'
‘Is it,’ exclaim’d Gulbeyaz, ‘as you say?
I wish to heaven he would not shine till morning!
But bid my women form the milky way.
Hence, my old comet! give the stars due warning –
And, Christian! mingle with them as you may,
And as you’d have me pardon your past scorning –
Here they were interrupted by a humming
Sound, and then by a cry, ‘the sultan’s coming!’

First came her damsels, a decorous file,
And then his Highness’ eunuchs, black and white;
The train might reach a quarter of a mile:
His majesty was always so polite
As to announce his visits a long while
Before he came, especially at night;
For being the last wife of the emperor,
She was of course the favourite of the four.

His highness was a man of solemn port,
Shawl’d to the nose, and bearded to the eyes,
Snatch’d from a prison to preside at court,
His lately bowstrung brother caused his rise;
He was as good a sovereign of the sort
As any mention’d in the histories
Of Cantemir, or Knolles, where few shine
Save Solyman, the glory of their line.

He went to mosque in state, and said his prayers
With more than ‘Oriental scrupulosity’;
He left to his vizier all state affairs,
And show’d but little royal curiosity:
I know not if he had domestic cares –
No process proved connubial animosity;
Four wives and twice five hundred maids, unseen,
Were ruled as calmly as a Christian queen.
If now and then there happen'd a slight slip,
Little was heard of criminal or crime;
The story scarcely pass'd a single lip –
The sack and sea had settled all in time,
From which the secret nobody could rip:
The Public knew no more than does this rhyme;
No scandals made the daily press a curse –
Morals were better, and the fish no worse.

He saw with his own eyes the moon was round,
Was also certain that the earth was square,
Because he had journey'd fifty miles and found
No sign that it was circular 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';

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.

He had fifty daughters and four dozen sons,
Of whom all such as came of age were stow'd,
The former in a palace, where like nuns
They lived till some Bashaw was sent abroad,
When she, whose turn it was, was wed at once,
Sometimes at six years old – though 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;
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:
To no men are such cordial greetings given
As those whose wives have made them fit for heaven.

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.'

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,
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;
Spoilt, as a pipe of claret is when prick’d:
But then their own Polygamy’s to blame;
Why don’t they knead two virtuous souls for life
Into that moral centaur, man and wife?

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;
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 enfuie des coeurs, et c'est refugiée sur les lèvres'. . . 'Plus les moeurs sont dépravées, 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’\textsuperscript{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:
Those navigators must be able seamen
Whose charts lay down its current to a hair;
Not all the reveries of Jacob Behmen\textsuperscript{312}
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
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,
But Actium, lost for Cleopatra’s eyes,
Outbalance all the Caesar’s victories.’\textsuperscript{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.

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,
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.
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 theoric' 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,
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.

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. 

12
Gulbeyaz was the fourth, and (as I said)
The favourite; but what's favour amongst four?
Polygamy may well be held in dread,
Not only as a sin, but as a bore: -
Most wise men with one moderate woman wed,
Will scarcely find philosophy for more;
And all (except Mahometans) forbear
To make the nuptial couch a 'Bed of Ware'. 
His Highness, the sublimest of mankind—
So styled according to the usual forms
Of every monarch, till they are consigned
To those sad hungry jacobins the worms,
Who on the very loftiest kings have dined,—
His Highness gazed upon Gulbeyaz’ charms,
Expecting all the welcome of a lover,
(A ‘Highland welcome’ all the wide world over).

Now here we should distinguish; for how’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,
Which form an ornament, but no more part
Of heads, than their caresses of the heart.

A slight blush, a soft tremor, a calm kind
Of gentle feminine delight, and shown
More in the eyelids than the eyes, 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.

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,
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
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:
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.
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;
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
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,
To toss, to tumble, doze, revive, and quake
Lest their too lawful bed-fellow should wake.
These are beneath the canopy of heaven,
Also beneath the canopy of beds
Four-posted and silk 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.

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.

I love the sex, and sometimes would reverse
The tyrant's wish, 'that mankind only had
One neck, which he with one fell stroke might pierce':
My wish is quite as wide, but not so bad,
And much more tender on the whole than fierce;
It being (not now, but only while a lad)
That Womankind had but one rosy mouth,
To kiss them all at once from North to South.

Oh enviable Briareus! with thy hands
And heads, if thou hadst all things multiplied
In such proportion! – But my Muse withstands
The giant thought of being a Titan's bride,
Or travelling in Patagonian lands;
So let us back to Lilliput, and guide
Our hero through the labyrinth of love
In which we left him several lines above.
29
He went forth with the lovely Odalisques, 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 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.'

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: 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 Except his Majesty, who, with her aid, And guards, and bolts, and walls, and now and then A slight example, just to cast a shade Along the rest, contrived to keep this den Of beauties cool as an Italian convent, Where all the passions have, alas! but one vent.
And what is that? Devotion, doubtless – how
Could you ask such a question? – but we will
Continue. As I said, this goodly row
Of ladies of all countries at the will
Of one good man, with stately march and slow,
Like water-lilies floating down a rill
Or rather lake – for rills do not run slowly, –
Paced on most maiden-like and melancholy.

But when they reached their own apartments, there,
Like birds, or boys, or bedlamites broke loose,
Waves at spring-tide, or women anywhere
When freed from bonds (which are of no great use
After all) or like Irish at a fair,
Their guards being gone, and as it were a truce
Established between them and bondage, they
Began to sing, dance, chatter, smile and play.

Their talk of course ran most on the new comer,
Her shape, her hair, her air, her 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.

But no one doubted on the whole, that she
Was what her dress bespoke, a damsel fair,
And fresh, and ‘beautiful exceedingly’,
Who with the brightest Georgians might compare:
They 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.
But what was strangest in this virgin crew,
Although her beauty was enough to vex,
After the first investigating view,
They all found out as few, or fewer, specks
In the fair form of their companion new,
Than is the custom of the gentle sex,
When they survey, with Christian eyes or Heathen,
In a new face 'the ugliest creature breathing.'

And yet they had their little jealousies
Like all the rest; but upon this occasion,
Whether there are such things as sympathies
Without our knowledge or our approbation,
Although they could not see through his disguise,
All felt a soft kind of concatenation,
Like Magnetism, or Devilism, or what
You please – we will not quarrel about that:

But certain '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,
Whom, if they were at home in sweet Circassia,
They would prefer to Padisha or Pacha.

Of those who had most genius for this sort
Of sentimental friendship, there were three,
Lolah, Katinka, and 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.
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 Dudu'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 Dudu,
    Yet very fit to 'murder sleep' in those
Who gazed upon her cheek's transcendent hue,
    Her Attic forehead, and her Phidian nose:
Few angles were there in her form '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;
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,
To poor Katinka: 'Spain's an island near
Morocco, betwixt Egypt and Tangier.'
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.

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.'

Here Lolah interposed — 'Mamma, you know
You don’t sleep soundly, and I cannot bear
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.'

'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;
And then I have the worst dreams that can be,
Of Guebres, Giaours, and Ginns, and Goul in hosts'.
The Dame replied, 'Between your dreams and you
I fear Juanna’s dreams would be but few.'
'You, Lolah, must continue still to lie
   Alone, for reasons which don't matter; you
The same, Katinka, until by and bye;
   And I shall place Juanna with Dudù,
Who's quiet, inoffensive, silent, shy,
   And will not toss and chatter the night through.
What say you, child?' – Dudù said nothing, as
Her talents were of the more silent class;

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
   (Curtsies 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.

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.

Dudù, as has been said, was a sweet creature,
   Not very dashing, but extremely winning,
With the most regulated charms of feature,
   Which painters cannot catch like faces sinning
Against proportion – the wild strokes of nature
   Which they hit off at once in the beginning,
Full of expression, right or wrong, that strike,
   And pleasing or unpleasing, still are like.
But she was a soft Landscape of mild Earth,
   Where all was harmony and calm and quiet,
Luxuriant, budding; cheerful without mirth,
   Which if not happiness, is much more nigh it
Than are your mighty passions and so forth,
   Which some call 'the sublime': I wish they'd try it:
I've seen your stormy seas and stormy women,
And pity lovers rather more than seamen.

But she was pensive more than melancholy,
   And serious more than pensive, and serene,
It may be more than either – not unholy
   Her thoughts, at least till now, appear to have been.
The strangest thing was, beauteous, she was wholly
   Unconscious, albeit turned of quick seventeen,
That she was fair, or dark, or short, or tall;
She never thought about herself at all.

And therefore was she kind and gentle as
   The age of Gold (when Gold was yet unknown,
By which its nomenclature came to pass;
   Thus most appropriately has been shown
'Lucus a non Lucendo,' not what was,
   But what was not; a sort of style that's grown
Extremely common in this age, whose metal
The Devil may decompose but never settle;

I think it may be of 'Corinthian Brass,'
   Which was a Mixture of all Metals, but
The Brazen uppermost. Kind reader! pass
   This long parenthesis: I could not shut
It sooner for the soul of me, and class
   My faults even with your own! which meaneth, Put
A kind construction upon them and me:
But that you won't – then don't – I am not less free.
'Tis time we should return to plain narration,
And thus my narrative proceeds: – Dudù,
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.

And next she gave her (I say *her*, because
The Gender still was Epicene, at least
In outward show, which is a saving clause)
An outline of the Customs of the East,
With all their chaste integrity of laws,
By which the more a Harem is encresed,
The stricter doubtless grow the vestal duties
Of any supernumerary beauties.

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.
’Kiss’ rhymes to ‘bliss’ in fact as well as verse –
I wish it never led to something worse.

In perfect Innocence she then unmade
Her toilet, which cost little, for she was
A Child of Nature, carelessly 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.
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, –

Making a woman like a porcupine,
Not to be rashly touched. But still more dread,
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.

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;
But still the spouseless Virgin Knowledge flies.
What are we? and whence came we? what shall be
Our ultimate existence? what’s our present?
Are questions answerless, and yet incessant.

There was deep silence in the chamber: dim
And distant from each other 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,
And shown themselves as Ghosts of better taste
Than haunting some old Ruin or wild Waste.
Many and beautiful lay those around,

Like flowers of different hue and 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.

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.

This is no bull, although it sounds so; for

'Twas night, but there were lamps, as hath been said.

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.

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,

Or Lot's wife done in salt — 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.
And lo! a fifth appears; – and what is she?
A lady of ‘a certain age,’ which means
Certainly aged – what her years might be
I know not, never counting past their teens;
But there she slept, not quite so fair to see,
As ere that awful period intervenes
Which lays both men and women on the shelf,
To meditate upon their sins and self.

But all this time how slept, or 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:

And that so loudly, that upstarted 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.

But wide awake she was, and round her bed,
With floating draperies and with flying hair,
With eager eyes, and light but hurried tread,
And bosoms, arms and ankles glancing bare,
And bright as any meteor ever bred,
By the North Pole, – they sought her cause of care,
For she seemed agitated, flushed and frightened,
Her eye dilated and her colour heightened.
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.
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.

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,
But being 'no orator as Brutus is',
Could not at first expound what was amiss.

At length she said, that in a slumber sound
She 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;

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
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.
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,
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.
‘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.’

Lolah’s eyes sparkled at the proposition;
But poor Dudù, with large drops in her own,
Resulting from the scolding or the vision
 Implored that present pardon might be shown
For this first fault, and that on no condition
(She added in a soft and piteous tone)
Juanna should be taken from her, and
Her future dreams should all be kept in hand.

She promised never more to have a dream,
At least to dream so loudly as just now;
She wondered at herself how she could scream –
’Twas foolish, nervous, as she must allow,
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.

And here Juanna kindly interposed,
And said she felt herself extremely well
Where she then was, as her sound sleep disclosed
When all around rang like a tocsin bell:
She did not find herself the least disposed
To quit her gentle partner, and to dwell
Apart from one who had no sin to show
Save that of dreaming once ‘mal-à-propos’.
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.

And so good night to them, — or, if you will,
Good morrow — for the cock had crown, and light
Began to clothe each Asiatic hill,
And the mosque crescent struggled into sight
Of the long caravan, which in the chill
Of dewy dawn wound slowly round each height
That stretches to the stony belt, which girds
Asia, where Kaff looks down upon the Kurds.

With the first ray, or rather grey of morn,
Gulbeyaz rose from restlessness; and pale
As Passion rises, with its bosom worn,
Arrayed herself with mantle, gem, and veil.
The nightingale that sings with the deep thorn,
Which Fable places in her breast of wail,
Is lighter far of heart and voice than those
Whose headlong passions form their proper woes.

And that's the moral of this composition,
If people would but see its real drift; —
But that they will not do without suspicion,
Because all gentle readers have the gift
Of closing 'gainst the light their orbs of vision;
While gentle writers also love to lift
Their voices 'gainst each other, which is natural,
The numbers are too great for them to flatter all.
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: –
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

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,
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 Petersburgh, and lend
A dreadful impulse to each loud meander
Of murmuring Liberty's wide waves, which blend
Their roar even with the Baltic's — so you be
Your father's son, '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 what' er you please to rhyme on:
But people's ancestors are history's game;
And if one lady's slip could leave a crime on
All generations, I should like to know
What pedigree the best would have to show?

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.

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.
Meantime Gulbeyaz, when her king was gone,
    Retired into her boudoir, a sweet place
For love or breakfast; private, pleasing, lone,
    And rich with all contrivances which grace
Those gay recesses: — many a precious stone
    Sparkled along its roof, and many a vase
Of porcelain held in the fettered flowers,
    Those captive soothers of a captive’s hours.

Mother of pearl, and porphyry, and marble,
    Vied with each other on this costly spot;
And singing birds without were heard to warble;
    And the stained glass which lighted this fair grot
Varied each ray; — but all descriptions garble
The true effect, and so we had better not
Be too minute; an outline is the best, —
A lively reader’s fancy does the rest.

And here she 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
Kept up; and above all, the where-and how
He had passed the night, was what she wished to know.

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.
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
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's 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,
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,
And thrown into the sea. – Thus Baba spoke
Of all save Dudù's dream, which was no joke.
This he discreetly kept in the background,
    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.

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',
    When things beyond the common have occurred; —
Gulbeyaz proved in that brief agony
What she could ne'er express — then how should I?

She stood a moment as a Pythoness
    Stands on her tripod, agonized, and full
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.

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,
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.
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!
Oh that my words were colours! but their tints
May serve perhaps as outlines or slight hints.

Baba, who knew by experience when to talk
And when to hold his tongue, now held it till
This passion might blow o'er, nor dared to balk
Gulbeyaz' taciturn or speaking will.
At length she rose up, and began to walk
Slowly along the room, but silent still,
And her brow cleared, but not her troubled eye;
The Wind was down, but still the Sea ran high.

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, who, chased
By all the Demons of all Passions, showed
Their work even by the way in which he trode.

Gulbeyaz stopped and beckoned Baba: – 'Slave!
Bring the two slaves!' she said in a low tone,
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.
'The Georgian and her paramour,' replied 
The Imperial Bride — and added, 'Let the boat 
Be ready by the secret portal's side: 
You know the rest.' The words stuck in her throat, 
Despite her injured love and fiery pride; 
And of this Baba willingly took note, 
And begged by every hair of Mahomet's beard 
She would revoke the order he had heard.

'To hear is to obey,' he said; 'but still, 
Sultana, think upon the consequence: 
It is not that I shall not all fulfil 
Your orders, even in their severest sense; 
But such precipitation may end ill, 
Even at your own imperative expense: 
I do not mean destruction and exposure 
In case of any premature disclosure;

'But your own feelings. Even should all the rest 
Be hidden by the rolling waves, which hide 
Already many a once love-beaten breast 
Deep in the caverns of the deadly tide — 
You love this boyish, new, Seraglio guest, 
And if this violent remedy be tried — 
Excuse my freedom, when I here assure you, 
That killing him is not the way to cure you.'

'What dost thou know of love or feeling? — wretch! 
Begone!' she cried, with kindling eyes — 'And do 
My bidding!' Baba vanished, for to stretch 
His own remonstrance further he well knew 
Might end in acting as his own 'Jack Ketch';

And though he wished extremely to get through 
This awkward business without harm to others, 
He still preferred his own neck to another's.
Away he went then upon his commission,  
Growling and grumbling in good Turkish phrase  
Against all women of whate’er condition,  
Especially Sultanas and their ways;  
Their obstinacy, pride, and indecision,  
Their never knowing their own mind two days,  
The trouble that they gave, their Immorality,  
Which made him daily bless his own Neutrality.

And then he 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,  
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.

And here I leave them at their preparation  
For the Imperial presence, wherein whether  
Gulbeyaz show’d them both commiseration,  
Or got rid of the parties altogether,  
Like other angry ladies of her nation, –  
Are things the turning of a hair or feather  
May settle; but far be’t from me to anticipate  
In what way feminine Caprice may dissipate.

I leave them for the present with good wishes,  
Though doubts of their well doing, to arrange  
Another part of History, for the dishes  
Of this our banquet we must sometimes change,  
And trusting Juan may escape the fishes,  
Although his situation now seems strange,  
And scarce secure: as such digressions are fair,  
The Muse will take a little touch at warfare.
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,
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
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,
Nor even Diogenes.348 – We live and die,
But which is best, you know no more than I.
Socrates said, our only knowledge was ‘To know that nothing could be known’; a pleasant Science enough, which levels to an ass
Each Man of Wisdom, future, past, or present. Newton (that Proverb of the Mind) alas!
Declared, with all his grand discoveries recent,
That he himself felt only ‘like a youth
Picking up shells by the great Ocean – Truth’.  

Ecclesiastes said, ‘that all is vanity’ —
Most modern preachers say the same, or show it By their examples of true Christianity;
In short, all know, or very soon may know it;
And in this scene of all-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?

Dogs, or Men! (for I flatter you in saying
That ye are dogs – your betters far) ye may
Read, or read not, what I am now essaying
To show ye what ye are in every way.
As little as the Moon stops for the baying
Of wolves, will the bright Muse withdraw one ray From out her skies – then howl your idle wrath! While she still silvers o’er your gloomy path.

‘Fierce loves and faithless wars’ – I am not sure
If this be the right reading – ’tis no matter;
The fact’s about the same, I am secure;
I sing them both, and am about to batter
A town which did a famous siege endure,
And was beleaguer’d both by land and water By Suvaroff, or anglicè Suwarrow, Who loved blood as an Alderman loves marrow.
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:
It stands some eighty versts\textsuperscript{353} from the high sea,
And measures round of toises thousands three.

Within the extent of this fortification
A Borough is comprised along the height
Upon the left, which from its loftier station
Commands the city, and upon its site
A Greek had raised around this elevation
A quantity of palisades \textit{upright},
So placed as to \textit{impede} the fire of those
Who held the place, and to \textit{assist} the foe's.

This circumstance may serve to give a notion
Of the high talents of this new Vauban:\textsuperscript{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,
(Prithée, excuse this engineering slang)
Nor work advanced, nor covered way was there,
To hint at least 'Here is no thoroughfare'.

But a stone bastion, with a narrow gorge,\textsuperscript{355}
And walls as thick as most sculls born as yet;
Two batteries, cap-à-pie, as our St George,
Case-mated one, and t'other 'a barbette',\textsuperscript{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,
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
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 Tschitshakoff, and Roguenoff, and Chokenoff,
And others of twelve consonants apiece;
   And more might be found out, if I could poke enough
Into gazettes; but Fame (capricious strumpet)
It seems, has got an ear as well as trumpet,

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, drawling 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,
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;
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,
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.
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
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,
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;
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.’

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,
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,
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:
The match was lit too soon, and no assistance
Could remedy this lubberly defect;
They blew up in the middle of the river,
While, though ’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 length their vessels lay
Off Ismail, and commenced a cannonade,
Which was returned with interest, I may say,
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.

31
The Moslem too had lost both ships and men;
But when they saw the enemy retire,
Their Delhis 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,
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,
Names great as any that the roll of Fame has.
This being the case, may show us what fame is:
For out of these three 'preux Chevaliers,' how
Many of common readers give a guess
That such existed? (and they may live now
For aught we know). Renown's all hit or miss;
There's Fortune even in fame, we must allow.
'Tis true, the Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne
Have half withdrawn from him oblivion's screen.

But here are men who fought in gallant actions
As gallantly as ever heroes fought,
But buried in the heap of such transactions
Their names are rarely found, nor often sought.
Thus even good fame may suffer sad contractions,
And is extinguished sooner than she ought:
Of all our modern battles, I will bet
You can't repeat nine names from each Gazette.

In short, this last attack, though rich in glory,
Show'd that somewhere, somehow, there was a fault,
And Admiral Ribas (known in Russian story)
Most strongly recommended an assault;
In which he was opposed by young and hoary,
Which made a long debate; but I must halt,
For if I wrote down every warrior's speech,
I doubt few readers e'er would mount the breach.

There was a man, if that he was a man,
Not that his manhood could be 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.
This was Potemkin – a great thing in days
When homicide and harlotry made great;
If stars and titles could entail long praise,
His glory might half equal his estate.
This fellow, being six foot high, could raise
A kind of fantasy proportionate
In the then Sovereign of the Russian people,
Who measured men as you would do a steeple.

While things were in abeyance, Ribas sent
A courier to the Prince, and he succeeded
In ordering matters after his own bent;
I cannot tell the way in which he pleaded,
But shortly he had cause to be content.
In the mean time, the batteries proceeded,
And fourscore cannon on the Danube’s border
Were briskly fired and answered in due order.

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;
Announcing the appointment of that lover of
Battles, to the command, Field Marshal Souvaroff.

The letter of the Prince to the same Marshal
Was worthy of a Spartan, had the cause
Been one to which a good heart could be partial –
Defence of freedom, country, or of laws;
But as it was mere lust of power to o’er-arch all
With its proud brow, it merits slight applause,
Save for its style, which said, all in a trice,
‘You will take Ismail at whatever price.’
41
‘Let there be light!’ 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,
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.

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,
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,
Which to that bottle-conjurer, 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
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.

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,
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;
Or as a little dog will lead the blind,
Or a bell-wether form the flock's connection
By tinkling sounds, when they go forth to victual;
Such is the sway of your great men o'er little.
The whole camp rung with joy; you would have thought
That they were going to a marriage feast:
(This metaphor, I think, holds good as aught,
Since there is discord after both at least).
There was not now a luggage boy but sought
Danger and spoil with ardour much increased;
And why? because a little – odd – old man,
Stript to his shirt, was come to lead the van.

But so it was; and every preparation
Was made with all alacrity: the first
Detachment of three columns took its station,
And waited but the signal's voice to burst
Upon the foe: the second's ordination
Was also in three columns, with a thirst
For Glory gaping o'er a sea of slaughter:
The third, in columns two, attacked by water.

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.

It is an actual fact, that he, Commander
In Chief, in proper person deigned to drill
The awkward squad, and could afford to squander
His time, a corporal's duty to fulfil;
Just as you'd break a sucking salamander
To swallow flame, and never take it ill;
He showed them how to mount a ladder (which
Was not like Jacob's) or to cross a ditch.
Also he dressed up, for the nonce,\textsuperscript{375} fascines
Like men with turbans, scimitars and dirks,
And made them charge with bayonet these machines
By way of lesson against actual Turks;
And when well practised in these mimic scenes,
He judged them proper to assail the works;
At which your wise men sneered in phrases witty:
He made no answer; but he took the city.

Most things were in this posture on the eve
Of the assault, and all the camp was in
A stern repose; which you would scarce conceive;
Yet men, resolved to dash through thick and thin,
Are very silent when they once believe
That all is settled: – there was little din,
For some were thinking of their home and friends,
And others of themselves and latter ends.

Suwarrow chiefly was on the alert,
Surveying, drilling, ordering, jesting, pondering,
For the man was, we safely may assert,
A thing to wonder at beyond most wondering;
Hero, buffoon, half-demon and half-dirt,
Praying, instructing, desolating, plundering;
Now Mars, now Momus,\textsuperscript{376} and when bent to storm
A fortress, Harlequin in uniform.

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.
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.

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, –

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
This dialogue; for he who answered knew
To whom he spoke, and made his words but few.

‘Your names?’ – ‘Mine’s Johnson, and my comrade’s Juan,
The other two are women, and the third
Is neither man nor woman.’ The Chief threw on
The party a slight glance, then said: ‘I have heard
Your name before, the second is a new one;
To bring the other three here was absurd;
But let that pass; – I think I have heard your name
In the Nikolaiew regiment?’ – ‘The same.’

‘You served at Widin?’ – ‘Yes.’ – ‘You led the attack?’
‘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.

‘Where will you serve?’ – ‘Where’er you please.’ – ‘I know
You like to be the hope of the forlorn
And doubtless would be foremost on the foe
After the hardships you’ve already borne.
And this young fellow – say what can he do?
He with the beardless chin and garments torn?’
‘Why, General, if he hath no greater fault
In war than love, he had better lead the assault.’

‘He shall if that he dare.’ Here Juan bowed
Low as the compliment deserved. Suwarrow
Continued: ‘Your old regiment’s allowed,
By special providence, to lead tomorrow,
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 tusk
Be unimpeded by the proudest Mosque.

‘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
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.'

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
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.
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.
Suwarro, 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
Is butchery, sometimes a single sorrow
Will touch even Heroes, and such was Suwarro.

He said, — and in the kindest Calmuck tone, —
'Why, Johnson, what the devil do you mean
By bringing women here? They shall be shown
All the attention possible, and seen
In safety to the waggons, where alone
In fact they can be safe. You should have been
Aware this kind of baggage never thrives;
Save wed a year, I hate recruits with wives.'

'May it please your Excellency,' thus replied
Our British friend, 'these are the wives of others,
And not our own. I am too qualified
By service with my military brothers,
To break the rules by bringing one's own bride
Into a camp: I know that nought so bothers
The hearts of the heroic on a charge,
As leaving a small family at large.

'But these are but two Turkish ladies, who
With their attendant aided our escape,
And afterwards accompanied us through
A thousand perils in this dubious shape.
To me this kind of life is not so new;
To them, poor things, it is an awkward 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)
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)\(^{378}\)
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.

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

Suwarow, — who but saw things in the gross,
    Being much too gross to see them in detail,
Who calculated life as so much dross,
    And as the wind a 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;
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,
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;
81
If not in poetry, at least in fact,
And fact is truth, the grand desideratum.\(^{1379}\)
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!\(^{1380}\)
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,
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.
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-major[^383] from a village steeple.

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,
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.
The army, like a lion from his den,
Marched forth with nerve and sinews bent to slay, –
A human Hydra, 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,
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,
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.

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,
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,
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!’
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, that great son of Slaughter,
As brave as ever faced both bomb and ball.
‘Carnage’ (so Wordsworth tells you) ‘is
God’s daughter’;
If he speak truth, she is Christ’s sister, and
Just now behaved as in the Holy Land.

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?

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.

Three hundred cannon threw up their emetic,
And thirty thousand muskets flung their pills
Like hail, to make a bloody diuretic.
Mortality! thou hast thy monthly bills;
Thy Plagues, thy Famines, thy Physicians, yet tick,
Like the death-watch, within our ears the ills
Past, present, and to come; but all may yield
To the true portrait of one battle-field.
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 –
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!

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
Your wars eternally, besides enjoying
Half-pay for life, make mankind worth destroying.

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.

And this was admirable; for so hot
   The fire was, that were red Vesuvius\textsuperscript{389} 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:
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
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,
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.
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
With something not much better or as bad:
   Frederick the Great from Molwitz deigned to run,
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,
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;)

24
But Juan was quite 'a broth of a boy',
   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
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'.

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.

27
Juan, by some strange chance, which oft divides
  Warrior from warrior in their grim career,
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
Caesar himself, who in the very sight
  Of his whole army, which so much abounded
In courage, was obliged to snatch a shield
And rally back his Romans to the field.
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
This simile enough for Ajax, Juan
Perhaps may find it better than a new one): –

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.

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): –

Perceiving nor commander nor commanded,
And left at large, like a young heir, to make
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.
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;
And where the hottest fire was seen and heard,
And the loud cannon pealed his hoardest strains,
He rushed, while Earth and Air were sadly shaken
By thy humane discovery, Friar Bacon!

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
Air 'midst the rest, who kept their valiant faces
And levelled weapons still against the glacis.

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.

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 indues
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'.
And there, a little sheltered from the shot
    Which rained from bastion, battery, parapet,
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, all scattered
By the resistance of the chase they battered.

And these he called on; and, what’s strange, they came
    Unto his call, unlike ‘the Spirits from
The vasty deep’, to whom you may exclaim,
    Says Hotspur, long ere they will leave their home.
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.

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,
    And could be very busy without bustle;

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.
But Johnson only ran off, to return
   With many other warriors, as we said,
Unto that rather somewhat misty bourn,
   Which Hamlet tells us is a pass of dread.
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.

Egad! they found the second time what they
   The first time thought quite terrible enough
To fly from, malgré 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.

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.
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.

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,
That Johnson and some few who had not scampered,
Reached the interior talus of the rampart.
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.

But those who scaled, found out that their advance
Was favoured by an accident or blunder:
The Greek or Turkish Cohorn's ignorance
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) –
Right in the middle of the parapet
Just named, these palisades were primly set:
So that on either side some nine or ten
Paces were left, whereon you could contrive
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.

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:
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; –
And that if Blücher, Bulow, Gneisenau,
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 claw,
The Duke of Wellington had ceased to show
His orders, also to receive his pensions,
Which are the heaviest that our history mentions.

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 wrings
So much into the raw as quite to wrong her
Beyond the rules of posting, – and the Mob
At last fall sick of imitating Job:

At first it grumbles, then it swears, and then,
Like David, flings smooth pebbles 'gainst a giant;
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.

But to continue; – I say not the first,
But of the first, our little friend Don Juan
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 confess,
   To him it was Elysium\(^{411}\) to be there;
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
The loftiest, hurried by the time and place,
Dashed on like a spurred blood-horse\(^{412}\) 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.

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.\(^{413}\)
Juan, to whom he spoke in German, knew
As much of German as of Sanscrit, and
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.

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
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.

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,
As soon as thunder, 'midst the general noise
Of human Nature's agonizing voice!

The town was entered. Oh Eternity! —
'God made the country, and man made the town',
So Cowper says — and I begin to be
Of his opinion, when I see cast down
Rome, Babylon, Tyre, Carthage, Nineveh,
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: —
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, 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.

Crime came not near him – she is not the child
Of Solitude; health shrank not from him – for
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;

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 –
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 Ross run wild.

'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;
But where he met the individual man,
He showed himself as kind as mortal can.
He was not all alone: around him grew
A sylvan tribe of children of the chase,
Whose young, unwakened 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.

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.

Motion was in their days, Rest in their slumbers,
And Cheerfulness the handmaid of their toil;
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.

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,
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.
The town was entered: first one column made
   Its sanguinary 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
The breath of Morn and Man, where foot by foot
The maddened Turks their city still dispute.

Koutousow, 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:

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.

And had it not been for some stray troops, landing
   They knew not where, being carried by the stream
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.
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,
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.

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 dilettanti in topography
Of fortresses, but fighting where it pleases
Their chiefs to order, – were all cut to pieces.

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.

Then being taken by the tail[^423] – 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 carcases,
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
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:
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,
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 dished:
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.

The city’s taken – only part by part –
And Death is drunk with gore: there’s not a street
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.

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:
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.

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
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.

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:
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,
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; –
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, Pharisaic 426 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.

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
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?
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,
I shall not say exactly what he said,
Because it might not solace 'ears polite';
But what he did, was to lay on their backs,
The readiest way of reasoning with Cossacques.

One's hip he slashed, and split the other's shoulder,
And drove them with their brutal yells to seek
If there might be chirurgeons 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,
Don Juan raised his little captive from
The heap a moment more had made her tomb.

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.

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; –
Up came John Johnson: (I will not say 'Jack,'
For that were vulgar, cold, and common place
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

'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
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.

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
And black silk neckcloth – and replied, 'You're right;
Poor thing! what's to be done? I'm puzzled quite.'

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.'
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 immovable; until
    Johnson, who really loved him in his way,
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:
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
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,
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
By mowing Christians down on every side,
As obstinate as Swedish Charles*431 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
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,
And poured upon him and his sons like rain,
Which they resisted like a sandy plain

870

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,
To save a sire who blushed that he begot him.

880

111
The eldest was a true and tameless Tartar,
As great a scorner of the Nazarene
As ever Mahomet picked out for a martyr,
Who only saw the black-eyed girls in green,
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;
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.
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,
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.

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
Whereas, if all be true we hear of Heaven
And Hell, there must at least be six or seven.

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:

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.
The soldiers, who beheld him drop his point,
   Stopped as if once more willing to concede Quarter, in case he bade them not 'aroyn't! 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.

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 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.

'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 Flowed from their blood-shot eyes, all red with strife,
   They honoured such determined scorn of life.

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 bey To answer Ribas' summons to give way.
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

The town was taken — whether he might yield
   Himself or bastion, little mattered now;
His stubborn valour was no future shield.
   Ismail's no more! The crescent's silver bow
Sunk, and the crimson cross 437 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.

All that the mind would shrink from of excesses;
   All that the body perpetrates of bad;
All that we read, hear, dream, of man's distresses;
   All that the Devil would do if run stark mad;
All that defies the worst which pen expresses;
   All by which Hell is peopled, or as sad
As Hell — mere mortals who their power abuse, —
   Was here (as heretofore and since) let loose.

If here and there some transient trait of pity
   Was shown, and some more noble heart broke through
Its bloody bond, and 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?
Cockneys of London! Muscadins 438 of Paris!
Just ponder what a pious pastime war is:
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,
Then feed her famine fat with Wellesley's glory.

But still there is unto a patriot nation,
Which loves so well its country and its King,
A subject of sublimest exultation –
Bear it, ye Muses, on your brightest wing!
Howe'er the mighty locust, Desolation,
Strip your green fields, and to your harvests cling,
Gaunt Famine never shall approach the throne –
Though Ireland starve, Great George\(^440\) weighs twenty stone.

But let me put an end unto my theme:
There was an end of Ismail – hapless town!
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!

In one thing ne'ertheless 'tis fit to praise
The Russian army upon this occasion,
A virtue much in fashion now-a-days,
And therefore worthy of commemoration:
The topic's tender, so shall be my phrase –
Perhaps the season's chill, and their long station
In winter's depth, or want of rest and victual,
Had made them chaste; - they ravish'd very little.
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;
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.

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’, and thought it good
(Since it was not their fault, but only fate,
To bear these crosses) for each waning prude
To make a Roman sort of Sabine wedding,
Without the expense and the suspense of bedding.

132
Some voices of the buxom middle-aged
Were also heard to wonder in the din
(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 Zinghis\textsuperscript{443} in his trade.
While mosques and streets, beneath his eyes, like thatch
   Blazed, and the cannon’s roar was scarce allayed,
With bloody hands he wrote his first dispatch;
   And here exactly follows what he said: –
‘Glory to \textit{God} and to the Empress!’ \textit{(Powers
Eternal!!! such names mingled!)} ‘Ismail’s ours.’

134
Methinks these are the most tremendous words,
   Since ‘Menè, Menè, Tekel’, and ‘Upharsin’,\textsuperscript{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
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 truckle\textsuperscript{445} unto thrones; –
But ye – our children’s children! think how we
Showed what things were before the world was free!

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 \textit{painted} their \textit{bare} limbs, but \textit{not} with gore.
And when you hear historians talk of thrones,
And those that sate upon them, let it be
As we now gaze upon the Mammoth’s bones,
And wonder what old world such things could see,
Or hieroglyphics on Egyptian stones,
The pleasant riddles of Futurity –
Guessing at what shall happily be hid,
As the real purpose of a Pyramid.

Reader! I have kept my word, – at least so far
As the first Canto promised. You have now
Had sketches of love, tempest, travel, war –
All very accurate, you must allow,
And Epic, if plain truth should prove no bar;
For I have drawn much less with a long bow
Than my forerunners. Carelessly I sing,
But Phoebus lends me now and then a string,

With which I still can harp, and carp, and fiddle,
What further hath befallen or may befall
The Hero of this grand poetic riddle,
I by and 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,
While Juan is sent off with the dispatch,
For which all Petersburgh is on the watch.

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.
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's 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' – 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!'!

2

I don't think that you used Kinnaird quite well
In Marinet's affair – in fact 'twas shabby,
And like some other things won't do to tell
Upon your tomb in Westminster's old abbey.
Upon the rest 'tis not worth while to dwell,
Such tales being for the tea hours of some tabby;
But though your years as man tend fast to zero,
In fact your Grace is still but a young Hero.

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:
The Spanish, and the French, as well as Dutch,
Have seen, and felt, how strongly you restore;
And Waterloo has made the world your debtor –
(I wish your bards would sing it rather better).
You are 'the best of cut-throats': do not start;  
The phrase is 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,  
And I shall be delighted to learn who,  
Save you and yours, have gained by Waterloo?  

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.  

I've done. Now go and dine from off the plate  
Presented by the Prince of the Brazils,  
And send the sentinel before your gate  
A slice or two from your luxurious meals:  
He fought, but has not fed so well of late.  
Some hunger too they say the people feels: –  
There is no doubt that you deserve your ration,  
But pray give back a little to the nation.  

I don't mean to reflect – a man so great as  
You, my Lord Duke! is far above reflection.  
The high Roman fashion too of Cincinnatus,  
With modern history has but small connection:  
Though as an Irishman you love potatoes,  
You need not take them under your direction;  
And half a million for your Sabine farm  
Is rather dear! – I'm sure I mean no harm.
Great men have always scorned great recompenses:
   Epaminondas saved his Thebes, and died,
Not leaving even his funeral expenses:
   George Washington had thanks and nought beside,
Except the all-cloudless Glory (which few men's is)
   To free his country: Pitt too had his pride,
And, as a high-soul'd Minister of State, is
Renowned for ruining Great Britain gratis.

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?
Go, hear it in your famished Country's cries!
Behold the World! and curse your victories!

As these new Cantos touch on warlike feats,
   To you the unflattering Muse deigns to inscribe
Truths that you will not read in the Gazettes,
   But which, 'tis time to teach the hireling tribe
Who fatten on their Country's gore and debts,
   Must be recited, and – without a bribe.
You did great things; but not being great in mind,
Have left undone the greatest – and mankind.

Death laughs – Go ponder o'er the skeleton
   With which men image out the unknown thing
That hides the past world, like to a set sun
   Which still elsewhere may rouse a brighter spring, –
Death laughs at all you weep for: – look upon
This hourly dread of all, whose 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
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
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
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.
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 sais-je?' was the motto of Montaigne,
As also of the first Academicians:
That all is dubious which Man may attain,
Was one of their most favourite positions.
There's no such thing as certainty, that's plain
As any of Mortality's Conditions:
So little do we know what we're about in
This world, I doubt if doubt itself be doubting.

18
It is a pleasant voyage perhaps to float,
Like Pyrrho, on a sea of speculation;
But what if carrying sail capsise the boat?
Your wise men don't know much of navigation;
And swimming long in the abyss of thought
Is apt to tire: a calm and shallow station
Well nigh the shore, where one stoops down and gathers
Some pretty shell, is best for moderate bathers.

19
'But Heaven,' as Cassio says, 'is above all, –
No more of this then, – let us pray!' We have
Souls to save, since Eve's slip and Adam's fall,
Which tumbled all mankind into the grave,
Besides fish, beasts, and birds. 'The Sparrow's fall
Is special providence,' though how it gave
Offence, we know not; probably it perched
Upon the tree which Eve so fondly searched.
20
Oh, ye immortal Gods! what is Theogony? Oh, thou too mortal Man! what is Philanthropy? Oh, World! which was and is, what is Cosmogony?
Some people have accused me of Misanthropy; And yet I know no more than the mahogany That forms this desk, of what they mean; – Lykanthropy
I comprehend, for without transformation Men become wolves on any slight occasion.

21
But I, the mildest, meekest of mankind, Like Moses, or Melancthon, 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, Not only in the body, but the proem, However little both are understood Just now, – but by and by the Truth will show ’em Herself in her sublimest attitude: And till she doth, I fain must be content To share her Beauty and her Banishment.

23
Our Hero (and, I trust, kind reader! yours) – Was left upon his way to the chief City Of the immortal Peter’s polished boors, Who still have shown themselves more brave than witty. I know its mighty Empire now allures Much flattery – even Voltaire’s, and that’s a pity. For me, I deem an absolute Autocrat Not a Barbarian, but much worse than that.
And I will war, at least in words (and—should
My chance so happen—deeds) with all who war
With Thought;—and of Thought's foes by far most rude,
Tyrants and Sycophants have been and are.
I know not who may conquer: if I could
Have such a prescience, it should be no bar
To this my plain, sworn, downright detestation
Of every despotism in every nation.

It is not that I adulate the people:
Without me, there are Demagogues enough,
And Infidels, to pull down every steeple
And set up in their stead some proper stuff.
Whether they may sow Scepticism to reap Hell,
As is the Christian dogma rather rough,
I do not know;—I wish men to be free
As much from mobs as kings—from you as me.

The consequence is, being of no party,
I shall offend all parties:—never mind!
My words, at least, are more sincere and hearty
Than if I sought to sail before the wind.
He who has nought to gain can have small art: he
Who neither wishes to be bound nor bind,
May still expatiate freely, as will I,
Nor give my voice to Slavery's Jackall cry.

That's an appropriate simile, that Jackall;—
I've heard them in the Ephesian ruins howl
By night, as do that mercenary pack all,
Power's base purveyors, who for pickings prowl,
And scent the prey their masters would attack all.
However, the poor 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!
The web of these Tarantulas each day
Increases, till you shall make common cause:
None, save the Spanish Fly and Attic Bee,*
As yet are strongly stinging to be free.

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 carcases that lay as thick as thatch
O'er silenced cities, merely served to flatter
Fair Catherine's pastime, – who looked on the match
Between these nations as a main of cocks,*
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.

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
'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,
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:
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; –
Oh, ye great Authors! – ‘Apropos des bottes’\textsuperscript{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:
\textit{Certes} it would have been but thrown away,
And that’s one comfort for my lost advice,
Although no doubt it was beyond all price.

But let it go: – it will one day be found
With other relics of ‘a former world’,
When this world shall be \textit{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.

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:
Like to the notions we now entertain
Of Titans, Giants, fellows of about
Some hundred feet in height, \textit{not} to say \textit{miles},
And Mammoths, and your winged Crocodiles.

Think if then George the Fourth should be dug up!
How the new worldlings of the then new East
Will wonder where such animals could sup!
(For they themselves will be but of the least:
Even worlds miscarry, when too oft they pup,
And every new Creation hath decreased
In size, from overworking the material –
Men are but maggots of some huge Earth’s burial.)
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?

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:
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 Petersburgh; 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,
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:
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) —
Behold him placed as if upon a pillar! He
Seems Love turned a Lieutenant of Artillery!

His Bandage slipped down into a cravat;
   His Wings subdued to epaulettes; his Quiver
Shrank 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.

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.

Juan was none of these, but slight and slim,
   Blushing and beardless; and yet ne’ertheless
There was a something in his turn of limb,
   And still more in his eye, which 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.
No wonder then that Yermoloff, or Momonoff,
Or Scherbatoff, or any other off
Or on, might dread her Majesty had room enough
Within her bosom (which was not too tough)
For a new flame; a thought to cast of gloom enough
Along the aspect whether smooth or rough
Of him who, in the language of his station,
Then held that 'high official situation.'

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,
Perhaps you may pick out some queer no-meaning,
Of that weak wordy harvest the sole gleaning.

I think I can explain myself without
That sad inexplicable beast of prey –
That Sphinx, whose words would ever be a doubt,
Did not his deeds unriddle them each day –
That monstrous Hieroglyphic – that long Spout
Of blood and water, leaden Castlereagh!
And here I must an anecdote relate,
But luckily of no great length or weight.

An English lady 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
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
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
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.
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
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
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:
In vain! – As fall the dews on quenchless sands,
Blood only serves to wash Ambition’s hands!
Her next amusement was more fanciful;
She smiled at mad Suwarrow's rhymes, who threw
Into a Russian couplet rather dull
The whole gazette of thousands whom he slew.
Her third was feminine enough to annul
The shudder which runs naturally through
Our veins, when things called Sovereigns think it best
To kill, and Generals turn it into jest.

The two first feelings ran their course complete,
And lighted first her eye and then her mouth:
The whole Court 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.

Though somewhat large, exuberant, and truculent,
When wroth; while pleased, she was as fine a figure
As those who like things rosy, ripe, and succulent,
Would wish to look on, while they are in vigour.
She could repay each amatory look you lent
With interest, and in turn was wont with rigour
To exact of Cupid's bills the full amount
At sight, nor would permit you to discount.

With her the latter, though at times convenient,
Was not so necessary; for they tell
That she was handsome, and though fierce looked lenient,
And always used her favourites too well.
If once beyond her boudoir's precincts in ye went,
Your 'Fortune' was in a fair way 'to swell
A Man,' as Giles says: for though she would widow all
Nations, she liked Man as an individual.
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
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!

66
Shakespeare talks of 'the herald Mercury
New lighted on a Heaven-kissing hill';
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's 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,
His grace, his God-knows-what: for Cupid's cup
With the first draught intoxicates apace,
A quintessential laudanum or 'black drop',
Which makes one drunk at once, without the base
Expedit of full bumpers; for the eye
In love drinks all life's fountains (save tears) dry.
He, on the other hand, if not in love
   Fell into that no less imperious passion,
Self-love – which, when some sort of Thing above
   Ourselves, a singer, dancer, much in fashion,
Or duchess, princess, Empress, 'deigns to prove',
   ('Tis Pope's phrase) a great longing, tho' a rash one,
For one especial person out of many,
Makes us believe ourselves as good as any.

Besides, he was of that delighted age
   Which makes all female ages equal – when
We don't much care with whom we may engage
   As bold as Daniel in the Lion's den,
So that we can our native Sun assuage
   In the next Ocean, which may flow just then,
To make a twilight in, just as Sol's heat is
Quenched in the lap of the salt Sea, or Thetis.

And Catherine (we must say thus much for Catherine)
   Though bold and bloody, was the kind of thing
Whose temporary passion was quite flattering,
   Because each lover 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.

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) –
Her sweet smile, and her then majestic figure,
Her plumpness, her imperial condescension,
Her preference of a boy to men much bigger,
(Fellows whom Messalina's self would pension)
Her prime of life, just now in juicy vigour,
With other extras, which we need not mention, –
All these, or any one of these, explain
Enough to make a stripling very vain.

And that's enough, for love is vanity,
Selfish in its beginning as its end,
Except where 'tis a mere Insanity,
A Maddening Spirit which would strive to blend
Itself with Beauty's frail Inanit'y,
On which the passion's self seems to depend;
And hence some heathenish philosophers
Make Love the Main Spring of the Universe.

Besides Platonic love, besides the love
Of God, the love of Sentiment, the loving
Of faithful pairs – (I needs must rhyme with dove,
That good old steam-boat which keeps verses moving
'Gainst Reason – Reason ne'er was hand-and-glove
With rhyme, but always leant less to improving
The sound than sense) – besides all these pretences
To Love, there are those things which Words name Senses; –

Those movements, those improvements in our bodies
Which make all bodies anxious to get out
Of their own-sand-pits to mix with a Goddess,
For such all Women are at first no doubt.
How beautiful that moment! and how odd is
That fever which precedes the languid rout
Of our Sensations! What a curious way
The whole thing is of clothing souls in clay!
The noblest kind of Love is Love Platonical,
To end or to begin with; the next grand
Is that which may be christened Love canonical,
Because the clergy take the thing in hand;
The third sort to be noted in our Chronicle
As flourishing in every Christian land,
Is, when chaste Matrons to their other ties
Add what may be called Marriage in Disguise.

Well, we won't analyse — our story must
Tell for itself: the Sovereign was smitten,
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.

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
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.

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 specie can,
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;\textsuperscript{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 favourite\textsuperscript{492} 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'
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.
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.
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,  
Named from her mystic office ‘l’Éprouveuse’,  
A term inexplicable to the Muse.

With her then, as in humble duty bound,  
Juan retired, – and so will I, until  
My Pegasus shall tire of touching ground.  
We have just lit on a ‘Heaven-kissing hill’,  
So lofty that I feel my brain turn round,  
And all my fancies whirling like a mill;  
Which is a signal to my nerves and brain,  
To take a quiet ride in some green lane.

Canto Ten

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.

Man fell with apples, and with apples rose,  
If this be true; for we must deem the mode  
In which Sir Isaac Newton could disclose  
Through the then unpaved stars the turnpike road,  
A thing to counterbalance human woes;  
For ever since immortal man hath glowed  
With all kinds of mechanics, and full soon  
Steam-engines will conduct him to the Moon.
3
And wherefore this exordium? — Why, just now,
In taking up this paltry sheet of paper,
My bosom underwent a glorious glow,
   And my internal Spirit cut a caper:
And though so much inferior, as I know,
   To those who, by the dint of glass and vapour,
Discover stars, and sail in the wind’s eye,
I wish to do as much by Poesy.

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,
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.

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!’
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?
But sighs subside, and tears (even widows’) shrink,
Like Arno in the summer, to a shallow,
So narrow as to shame their wintry brink,
Which threatens inundations deep and yellow!
Such difference doth a few months make. You’d think
Grief a rich field which never would lie fallow;
No more it doth, – its ploughs but change their boys,
Who furrow some new soil to sow for joys.

But coughs will come when sighs depart – and now
And then before sighs cease; for oft the one
Will bring the other, ere the lake-like brow
Is ruffled by a wrinkle, or the Sun
Of life reach ten o’clock: and while a glow,
Hectic and brief as summer’s day nigh done,
O’erspreads the cheek which seems too pure for clay,
Thousands blaze, love, hope, die – how happy they! –

But Juan was not meant to die so soon.
We left him in the focus of such Glory
As may be won by favour of the Moon
Or ladies’ fancies – rather transitory
Perhaps; but who would scorn the month of June,
Because December, with his breath so hoary,
Must come? Much rather should he court the ray,
To hoard up warmth against a wintry day.

Besides, he had some qualities which fix
Middle-aged ladies even more than young:
The former know what’s what; while new-fledged chicks
Know little more of Love than what is sung
In rhymes, or dreamt (for Fancy will play tricks)
In visions of those skies from whence Love sprung.
Some reckon women by their Suns or Years,
I rather think the Moon should date the dears.
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;
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',
   Whom he forsook to fill the Laureate's sty:
And honest men, from Iceland to Barbadoes,
   Whether in Caledon or Italy,
Should not veer round with every breath, nor seize,
To pain, the moment when you cease to please.

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,
Dissecting the whole inside of a question,
And with it all the process of digestion.
15
A legal broom's a moral chimney-sweeper,
And that's the reason he himself's so dirty:
The endless soot bestows a tint far deeper
Than can be hid by altering his shirt; he
Retains the sable stains of the dark creeper,
At least some twenty-nine do out of thirty,
In all their habits: – Not so you, I own;
As Caesar wore his robe you wear your gown.

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
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, the blue hills, and clear streams,
The Dee, the Don, Balgounie's brig's black wall,
All my boy feelings, all my gentler dreams
Of what I then dreamt, clothed in their own pall,
Like Banquo's offspring; – floating past me seems
My childhood in this childishness of mine:
I care not – 'tis a glimpse of 'Auld Lang Syne'.
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:
I 'scotched, not killed', the Scotchman in my blood,
And love the land of 'mountain and of flood'.

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: —

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,
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.
About this time, as might have been anticipated,
Seduced by youth and dangerous examples,
Don Juan grew, I fear, a little dissipated;
Which is a sad thing, and not only tramples
On our fresh feelings, but — as being participated
With all kinds of incorrigible samples
Of frail humanity — must make us selfish,
And shut our souls up in us like a shell-fish.

This we pass over. We will also pass
The usual progress of intrigues between
Unequal matches, such as are, alas!
A young Lieutenant's with a not old Queen,
But one who is not so youthful as she was
In all the royalty of sweet seventeen.
Sovereigns may sway materials, but not matter,
And wrinkles (the d—d democrats) won't flatter.

And Death, the sovereign's Sovereign, though the great
Gracchus of all mortality, who levels
With his Agrarian laws, the high estate
Of him who feasts, and fights, and roars, and revels,
To one small grass-grown patch (which must await
Corruption for its crop) with the poor devils
Who never had a foot of land till now —
Death's a reformer, all men must allow.

He lived (not Death, but Juan) in a hurry
Of waste, and haste, and glare, and gloss, and glitter,
In this gay clime of bear-skins black and 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 harlot —
And neutralize her outward show of Scarlet.
27
And this same state we won’t describe: we could
Perhaps from hearsay, or from recollection;
But getting nigh grim Dante’s ‘obscure wood’,
That horrid equinox, that hateful section
Of human years, that half-way house, that rude
Hut, whence wise travellers drive with circumspection
Life’s sad post-horses o’er the dreary frontier
Of age, and looking back to youth, give one tear; –

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
Of this odd labyrinth; or as the kelp of
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,
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.
31
His Mother, Donna Inez, finding too
That in the lieu of drawing on his banker,
Where his assets were waxing rather few,
He had brought his spending to a handsome anchor, —
Replied, 'that she was glad to see him through
Those pleasures after which wild youth will hanker;
As the sole sign of man's being in his senses
Is, learning to reduce his past expenses.

32
'She also recommended him to God,
And no less to God's Son, as well as Mother;
Warned him against Greek worship, which looks odd
In Catholic eyes; but told him too to smother
Outward dislike, which don't look well abroad:
Informed him that he had a little brother
Born in a second wedlock; and above
All, praised the Empress's maternal love.

33
'She could not too much give her approbation
Unto an Empress, who preferred young men
Whose age, and, what was better still, whose nation
And climate, stopped all scandal (now and then): —
At home it might have given her some vexation;
But where thermometers sunk down to ten,
Or five, or one, or zero, she could never
Believe that virtue thawed before the river.'

34
Oh for a forty-parson-power to chant
Thy praise, Hypocrisy! Oh for a hymn
Loud as the Virtues thou dost loudly vaunt,
Not practise! Oh for trumps of cherubim!
Or the ear-trumpet of my good old aunt,
Who, though her spectacles at last grew dim,
Drew quiet consolation through its hint,
When she no more could read the pious print.
She was no hypocrite at least, poor soul,
But went to heaven in as sincere a way
As any body on the Elected Roll,
Which portions out upon the judgment day
Heaven’s freeholds, in a sort of doomsday scroll,
Such as the conqueror William did repay
His knights with, lotting others’ properties
Into some sixty thousand new knights’ fees.  

I can’t complain, whose ancestors are there,
Erneis, Radulphus—eight-and-forty manors
(If that my memory doth not greatly err)
Were their reward for following Billy’s banners;
And though I can’t help thinking ’twas scarce fair
To strip the Saxons of their hydes, like tanners;
Yet as they founded churches with the produce,
You’ll deem, no doubt, they put it to a good use.

The gentle Juan flourished, though at times
He felt like other plants called Sensitive,
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 ice would cease to live
Before May-day: perhaps, despite his duty,
In royalty’s vast arms he sighed for beauty:

Perhaps – but, sans perhaps, we need not seek
For causes young or old: the canker-worm
Will feed upon the fairest, freshest cheek,
As well as further drain the withered form:
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.
I don't know how it was, but he grew sick:
The Empress was alarmed, and her physician
(The same who physicked Peter) found the tick
Of his fierce pulse betoken a condition
Which augured of the dead, however quick
Itself, and showed a feverish disposition;
At which the whole court was extremely troubled,
The Sovereign shocked, and all his medicines doubled.

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.'

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.'

This is the way physicians mend or end us,
Secundum artem: but although we sneer
In health – when ill, we call them to attend us,
Without the least propensity to jeer:
While that 'hiatus maxime deflendus',
To be filled up by spade or mattock, 's near,
Instead of gliding graciously down Lethe,
We tease mild Baillie, or soft Abernethy.
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.
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 Faculty — who said that he must travel.

The climate was too cold they said for him,
Meridian-born, to bloom in. This opinion
Made the chaste Catherine look a little grim,
Who did not like at first to lose her minion
But when she saw his dazzling eye wax dim,
And drooping like an eagle's with clipt pinion,
She then resolved to send him on a mission,
But in a style becoming his condition.

There was just then a kind of a discussion,
A sort of treaty or negotiation
Between the British cabinet and Russian,
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'.

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.
But she was lucky, and luck’s all. Your Queens
Are generally prosperous in reigning;
Which puzzles us to know what Fortune means.
But to continue: though her years were waning,
Her climacteric teased her like her teens;
And though her dignity brooked no complaining,
So much did Juan’s setting off distress her,
She could not find at first a fit successor.

But Time the comforter will come at last;
And four-and-twenty hours, and twice that number
Of candidates requesting to be placed,
Made Catherine taste next night a quiet slumber: –
Not that she meant to fix again in haste,
Nor did she find the quantity encumber,
But always choosing with deliberation,
Kept the place open for their emulation.

While this high post of honour’s in abeyance,
For one or two days, reader, we request
You’ll mount with our young hero the conveyance
Which wafted him from Petersburgh: the best
Barouche, which had the glory to display once
The fair Czarin a’s Autocratic crest,
(When, a new Iphigene, she went to Tauris)
Was given to her favourite, and now bore his.

A bull-dog, and a 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; –
The animals aforesaid occupied
Their station: there were valets, secretaries,
In other vehicles; but at his side
Sat little Leila, who survived the parries
He made 'gainst Cossacque sabres, in the wide
Slaughter of Ismail. Though my wild Muse varies
Her note, she don't forget the infant girl
Whom he preserved – a pure and living pearl.

Poor little thing! She was as fair as docile,
And with that gentle, serious character,
As rare in living beings as a fossil
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.

Don Juan loved her, and she loved him, as
Nor brother, father, sister, daughter love.
I cannot tell exactly what it was;
He was not yet quite old enough to prove
Parental feelings, and the other class,
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!

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,
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
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
   Which gave her dukes the graceless name of ‘Biron’.
'Tis the same landscape which the modern Mars 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.
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 through Poland, there is Kosciusko’s name\textsuperscript{524} Might scatter fire through ice, like Hecla’s flame.

From Poland they came on through Prussia Proper,
And Konigsberg the capital, whose vaunt,
Besides some veins of iron, lead, or copper,
Has lately been the great Professor Kant.\textsuperscript{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.

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.

But Juan posted on through Manheim, Bonn,
Which Drachenfels frowns over like a spectre
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,\textsuperscript{526}
The greatest number Flesh hath ever known.
63
From thence to Holland's Hague and Helvoetsluy, That water land of Dutchmen and of ditches, Where juniper expresses its best juice, The poor man's sparkling substitute for riches. Senates and sages have 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 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 who sternly dealt Their goods and edicts out from pole to pole, And made the very billows pay them toll.

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.
Alas! could She but fully, truly, know
How her great name is now throughout abhorred;
How eager all the earth is for the blow
Which shall lay bare her bosom to the sword;
How all the nations deem her their worst foe,
That worse than worst of foes, the once adored
False friend, who held out freedom to mankind,
And now would chain them, to the very mind;

Would she be proud, or boast herself the free,
Who is but first of slaves? The nations are
In prison, — but the jailor, what is he?
No less a victim to the bolt and bar.
Is the poor privilege to turn the key
Upon the captive, freedom? He’s as far
From the enjoyment of the earth and air
Who watches o’er the chain, as they who wear.

Don Juan now saw Albion’s earliest beauties, —
Thy cliffs, dear Dover! harbour, and hotel;
Thy custom-house, with all its delicate duties;
Thy waiters running mucks at every bell;
Thy packets, all whose passengers are booties
To those who upon land or water dwell;
And last, not least, to strangers uninstructed,
Thy long, long bills, whence nothing is deducted.

Juan, though careless, young, and magnifique,
And rich in rubles, diamonds, cash, and credit,
Who did not limit much his bills per week,
Yet stared at this a little, though he paid it, —
(His Maggior Duomo, a smart, subtle Greek,
Before him summed the awful scroll and read it):
But doubtless as the air, though seldom sunny,
Is free, the respiration’s worth the money.
71
On with the horses! Off to Canterbury!
  Tramp, tramp, o'er pebble, and splash, splash, splash,
    thro' puddle;
Hurrah! how swiftly speeds the post so merry!
  Not like slow Germany, wherein they muddle
Along the road, as if they went to bury
  Their fare; and also pause besides, to fuddle
With 'schnapps' – sad dogs! whom 'Hundsfot' or
    'Verflucrer'\textsuperscript{532}
Affect no more than lightning a conductor.

72
Now there is nothing gives a man such spirits,
  Leavening his blood as Cayenne doth a curry,
As going at full speed – no matter where its
  Direction be, so 'tis but in a hurry,
And merely for the sake of its own merits:
  For the less cause there is for all this flurry,
The greater is the pleasure in arriving
At the great \textit{end} of travel – which is driving.

73
They saw at Canterbury the Cathedral;
  Black Edward's helm, and Becket's bloody stone,\textsuperscript{533}
Were pointed out as usual by the Bedral,\textsuperscript{534}
  In the same quaint, uninterested tone: –
There's Glory again for you, gentle reader! All
  Ends in a rusty casque, and dubious bone,
Half-solved into those sodas or magnesias,
Which form that bitter draught, the human species.

74
The effect on Juan was of course sublime:
  He breathed a thousand Cressys,\textsuperscript{535} as he saw
The casque which never stooped, except to Time.
  Even the bold Churchman's tomb excited awe,
Who died in the then great attempt to climb
  O'er kings, who \textit{now} at least \textit{must talk} of law,
Before they butcher. Little Leila gazed,
And asked why such a structure had been raised:
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.

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!
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' 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.
Had such been cut in Phaeton's time, the God
Had told his son to satisfy his craving
With the York mail; – but onward as we roll,
'Surgit amari aliquid' – the toll!
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:
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!

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
Could reach, with here and there a sail just skipping
In sight, then lost amidst the forestry
Of masts; a wilderness of steeple 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):
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,
With a soft besom\(^5^{40}\) 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.

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[i]a)m C[i]r[i]l[i]s is a bore,
Too dull even for the dullest of excesses –
The witless Falstaff of a hoary Hal,\(^5^{41}\)
A fool whose bells have ceased to ring at all; –
Tell them, though it may be perhaps too late
   On life’s worn confine, jaded, bloated, sated,
To set up vain 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

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.

What a sublime discovery ’twas to make the
   Universe universal Egotism!
That all’s ideal – all ourselves: I’ll stake the
   World (be it what you will) that that’s no Schism.
Oh, Doubt! – if thou be’est 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.

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,
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 –
If it be Chance; or if it be according
To the Old Text, still better: – lest it should
Turn out so, we’ll say nothing ’gainst the wording,
As several people think such hazards rude:
They’re right; our days are too brief for affording
Space to dispute what no one ever could
Decide, and every body one day will
Know very clearly – or at least lie still.

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.

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.

To our theme: – The man who has stood on the Acropolis,
And looked down over Attica; or he
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;
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
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!'

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.
Juan, who did not understand a word
   Of English, save their shibboleth,546 'God damn!'
And even that he had so rarely heard,
   He sometimes thought 'twas only their 'Salâm',
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; —

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 —
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!'

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,
Stood calling out for bandages and lint,
   And wished he had been less hasty with his flint.

'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.'
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! 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
Exactly why it was before him thrown,
  Nor what the meaning of the man’s farewell.
Poor Tom was once a kiddy upon town,
  A thorough varmint, and a real swell,
Full flash, all fancy, until fairly diddled,
His pockets first, and then his body riddled.

18
Don Juan, having done the best he could
  In all the circumstances of the case,
As soon as ‘Crownér’s quest’ allowed, pursued
  His travels to the capital apace; –
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?
Who on a lark, with black-eyed Sal (his blowing)
So prime, so swell, so nutty, and so knowing?
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; –

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; –

Through coaches, drays, choked turnpikes, and a whirl
Of wheels, and roar of voices and confusion;
Here taverns wooing to a pint of 'purl',
There mails fast flying off like a delusion;
There 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:) –

Through this, and much, and more, is the approach
Of travellers to mighty Babylon:
Whether they come by horse, or chaise, or coach,
With slight exceptions, all the ways seem one.
I could say more, but do not choose to encroach
Upon the guide-book's privilege. The Sun
Had set some time, and night was on the ridge
Of twilight, as the party crossed the bridge.
That's rather fine, the gentle sound of Thamis –
Who vindicates a moment too his stream –
Though hardly heard through multifarious 'damme's'.
The lamps of Westminster's more regular gleam,
The breadth of pavement, and yon shrine where Fame is
A spectral resident – whose pallid beam
In shape of moonshine hovers o'er the pile –
Make this a sacred part of Albion's Isle.

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.

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.

A row of gentlemen along the streets
Suspended, may illuminate mankind,
As also bonfires made of country seats,
But the old way is best for the purblind:
The other looks like phosphorus on sheets,
A sort of 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,
'Twere not for want of lamps to aid his dodging 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,
Pursued his path, and drove past some Hotels,
St James's Palace, and St James's 'Hells'.

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

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.
Juan, whose was a delicate commission,
Private, though publicly important, bore
No title to point out with due precision
The exact affair on which he was sent o'er.
'Twas merely known that on a secret mission
A foreigner of rank had graced our shore,
Young, handsome, and accomplished, who was said
(In whispers) to have turned his Sovereign's head.

Some rumour also of some strange adventures
Had gone before him, and his wars and loves;
And as romantic heads are pretty painters,
And, above all, an Englishwoman's roves
Into the excursive, breaking the indentures
Of sober reason, whereso'er it moves,
He found himself extremely in the fashion,
Which serves our thinking people for a passion.

I don't mean that they are passionless, but quite
The contrary; but then 'tis in the head;
Yet as the consequences are as bright
As if they acted with the heart instead,
What after all can signify the site
Of ladies' lucubrations? So they lead
In safety to the place for which you start,
What matters if the road be head or heart?

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
Who, seeing a handsome stripling with smooth face,
Thought (what in state affairs is most essential)
That they as easily might do the younger,
As hawks may pounce upon a woodland songster.
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,
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.

And, after all, what is a lie? 'Tis but
   The truth in masquerade; and I defy
Historians, heroes, lawyers, priests to put
   A fact without some leaven of a lie.
The very shadow of true Truth would shut
   Up annals, revelations, poesy,
And prophecy – except it should be dated
Some years before the incidents related.

Praised be all liars and all lies! Who now
   Can tax my mild Muse with misanthropy?
She rings the world's 'Te Deum', and her brow
   Blushes for those who will not: – but to sigh
Is idle; let us like most others bow,
   Kiss hands, feet, any part of majesty,
After the good example of 'Green Erin',
Whose Shamrock now seems rather worse for wearing.

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'
   (In love or brandy's fervent fermentation)
Bestowed upon him, as the public learned;
And, to say truth, it had been fairly earned.
Besides the Ministers and underlings,
Who must be courteous to the accredited
Diplomatists of rather wavering kings,
Until their royal riddle's fully read,
The very clerks – those somewhat dirty springs
Of office, or the House of Office, fed
By foul corruption into streams, – even they
Were hardly rude enough to earn their pay.

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.

But Juan was received with much 'empriseement':
These phrases of refinement I must borrow
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) made even the tongue more free.

And yet the British 'Damme's' rather Attic:
Your Continental oaths are but incontinent,
And turn on things which no Aristocratic
Spirit would name, and therefore even I won't anent
This subject quote; as it would be schismatic.
In politesse, and have a sound affronting in't: –
But 'Damme's' quite ethereal, though too daring –
Platonic blasphemy, the soul of swearing.
For downright rudeness, ye may stay at home;
   For true or false politeness (and scarce that
Now) you may cross the blue deep and white foam –
   The first the emblem (rarely though) of what
You leave behind – the next of much you come
   To meet. However, 'tis no time to chat
On general topics: poems must confine
Themselves to Unity, like this of mine.

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.

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.

But Juan was a bachelor – of arts,
   And parts, and hearts: he danced and sung, and had
An air as sentimental as Mozart's
   Softest of melodies; and could be sad
Or cheerful, without any 'flaws or starts',
   Just at the proper time; and though a lad,
Had seen the world – which is a curious sight,
And very much unlike what people write.
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,\textsuperscript{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’\textsuperscript{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,
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?

51
Juan, who was a little superficial,
   And not in literature a great Drawcansir,\textsuperscript{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,
Which lent his learned lucubrations pith,
And passed for arguments of good endurance.
That prodigy, Miss Araminta Smith,
(Who at sixteen translated ‘Hercules Furens’)
Into as furious English) with her best look,
Set down his sayings in her common-place book.

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.
There wanted but this requisite to swell
His qualitites (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;
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 foolscape subjects to be king, –
Was reckoned, a considerable time,
The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme.
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,
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;
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;
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

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; –
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;
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
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 sofas makes us lie dejected,
   And talk in tender horrors of our loathing
All kinds of toil, save for our country’s good –
Which grows no better, though ’tis time it should.

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’,
(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
Through street and square fast flashing chariots, hurled
   Like harnessed meteors; then along the floor
Chalk mimics 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’. 
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.
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',
And let the Babel round run as it may,
  And look on as a mourner, or a scouter,
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 proudlier prancing with mercurial skill
Where Science marshals forth her own quadrille.

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: –
Oh, ye ambrosial moments! always upper
In mind, a sort of sentimental bogle,
Which sits for ever upon Memory’s crupper,
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
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’, 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,
And having voted, dined, drank, gamed, and whored,
The family vault receives another lord.
Canto Eleven

‘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.

Where is Napoleon the Grand? God knows:
Where little Castlereagh? The devil can tell:
Where Grattan, Curran, Sheridan, all those
Who bound the bar or senate in their spell?
Where is the unhappy Queen, with all her woes?
And where the Daughter,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!

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 ‘Fum600 the Fourth, our ‘royal bird’?
Gone down it seems to Scotland, to be fiddled
Unto by Sawney’s violin,601 we have heard:
‘Caw me, caw thee602 – for six months hath been hatching
This scene of royal itch and loyal scratching.

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?\textsuperscript{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. \textsuperscript{640}

81
Some who once set their caps at cautious Dukes,
Have taken up at length with younger brothers:
Some heiresses have bit at sharers' 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
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.
But it is time that I should hoist my 'blue Peter',\textsuperscript{605}
And sail for a new theme: – I have seen – and shook
To see it – the King hissed, and then carest;
And don't pretend to settle which was best.
I have seen the landholders without a rap —
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 —
I have seen some nations like o’erloaded asses
Kick off their burthens — meaning the high classes.

I have seen small poets, and great prosers, and
Interminable — not eternal — speakers —
I have seen the Funds at war with house and land —
I’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’ by John Bull —
I have seen John half detect himself a fool. —

But ‘Carpe diem’, 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!’ 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.

But how shall I relate in other Cantos
Of what befell our hero in the land,
Which 'tis the common cry and lie to vaunt as
A moral country? But I hold my hand —
For I disdain to write an Atalantis; But 'tis as well at once to understand,
You are not a moral people, and you know it
Without the aid of too sincere a poet.
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,
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, –
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.
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 fools-cap, 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, –
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.
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.
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?\(^6\)\(^1\)\(^2\)
(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 glibber all?
The shade of Bonaparte's noble daring? –
Jew Rothschild, and his fellow Christian Baring.

6
Those, and the truly liberal Lafitte,\(^6\)\(^1\)\(^3\)
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;\(^6\)\(^1\)\(^4\) 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,
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
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.
The lands on either side are his: the ship
   From Ceylon, Inde, or far Cathay,\textsuperscript{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;
While he, despising every sensual call,
Commands – the intellectual lord of all.

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.

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’?\textsuperscript{616}
Or do they benefit mankind? Lean Miser!
Let spendthrifts’ heirs enquire of yours – who’s wiser?

How Beauteous are rouleaus\textsuperscript{617} how charming chests,
   Containing ingots, bags of dollars, coins
(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.
'Love rules the camp, the court, the grove', – 'for Love
Is Heaven, and Heaven is Love': so sings the bard;
Which it were rather difficult to prove,
(A thing with poetry in general hard).
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.

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 Cynthia sways the tides;
And as for 'Heaven being Love', why not say honey
Is wax? Heaven is not Love, 'tis Matrimony.

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.

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 lapsus of the pen; –
Strange too in my 'buon camerado' 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,
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, –
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.\

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's\ lives have but picked out a few,
And 'gainst those few your annalists have thundered;
And Mitford 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.
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’ is –
(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.
’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:
All countries have their ‘Lions’, but in thee
There is but one superb menagerie.
But I am sick of politics. Begin,  
‘Paulo Majora’. 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.

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?’

The little Leila, with her orient eyes  
And taciturn Asiatic disposition,  
(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.

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:  
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.
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,
Would be much better taught beneath the eye
Of Peeresses whose follies had run dry.

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,
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).

How all the needy honourable misters,
Each out-at-elbow peer, or desperate dandy
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!
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.
'Tantaene! 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.

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
To his billets? Why waltz with him? Why, I pray,
Look yes last night and yet say no today?

'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?

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
(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;
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
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.
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.

Besides, he had found out that he was no tutor:
   (I wish that others would find out the same)
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 Pinchbeck was his choice.

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
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.

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,
Are wiser in their warnings 'gainst the woe
Which the mere passionless can never know.
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.

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 Show Of vestals brought into the marriage mart,
   Than those bred up by prudes without a heart.

I said that Lady Pinchbeck had been talked about –
   As who has not, if female, young, and pretty?
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.

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.
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.
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, 
At least entirely, for he had seen too many 
Changes in youth, to be surprised at any.

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.

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, 
To the next comer; or — as it will tell 
More Muse-like — say like Cytherea's shell.

I call such things transmission; for there is 
A floating balance of accomplishment 
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
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, trying just a string or two
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 rosin
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.

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.
He had many friends who had many wives, and was
Well looked upon by both, to that extent
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.

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', as I may say,
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.

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 reticulæ –
'Fishers for men', like Sirens with soft lutes:
For talk six times with the same single lady,
And you may get the wedding dresses ready.

Perhaps you'll have a letter from the mother,
To say her daughter's feelings are trepann'd;
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.
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,
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', 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.
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) –
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!

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;
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,
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
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.

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
Construction as your cures for hectic phthisics,
   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.
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;
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 Andalusian[^44] 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 warble
   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); –

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.
And if in fact she takes to a *grande passion*,
It is a very serious thing indeed:
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.

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,
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.

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
For her return to Virtue – as they call
That Lady who should be at home to all.

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.
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 'blase' – '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.

He also had been busy seeing sights –
The Parliament and all the other houses;
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 far as where the musk-bull browses:
He had also stood at times behind the throne –
But Grey was not arrived, and Chatham gone.

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,
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.

There too he saw (whate'er he may be now)
A Prince, 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,
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.

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,
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,
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
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.\textsuperscript{654}

My plan (but I, if but for singularity,
Reserve it) will be very sure to take.

Mean time read all the National Debt-sinkers,
And tell me what you think of your great thinkers.

\textit{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
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 gainsay\textsuperscript{655} 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:

’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;
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,
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.

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' –
The only truth that yet has been confess
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.
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.
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: 'tis his virtue makes him mad!
But his adventures form a sorry sight; —
A sorrier still is the great moral taught
By that real Epic unto all who have thought.

10
Redressing injury, revenging wrong,
To aid the damsel and destroy the caitiff; 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?

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.
I'm 'at my old lunes — digression, and forget
The Lady Adeline Amundeville;
The fair most fatal Juan ever met,
Although she was not evil, nor meant ill;
But Destiny and Passion spread the net,
(Fate is a good excuse for our own will)
And caught them; — what do they not catch, methinks?
But I'm not Oedipus, and life's a Sphinx.

I tell the tale as it is told, nor dare
To venture a solution: 'Davus sum!' And now I will proceed upon the pair.
Sweet Adeline, amidst the gay world's hum,
Was the Queen-Bee, the glass of all that's fair;
Whose charms made all men speak, and women dumb.
The last's a miracle, and such was reckoned,
And since that time there has not been a second.

Chaste was she, to detraction's desperation,
And wedded unto one she had loved well;
A man known in the councils of the nation,
Cool, and quite English; imperturbable,
Though apt to act with fire upon occasion;
Proud of himself and her, the world could tell
Nought against either, and both seemed secure —
She in her virtue, he in his hauteur.

It chanced some diplomatical relations,
Arising out of business, often brought
Himself and Juan in their mutual stations
Into close contact. Though reserved, nor caught
By specious seeming, Juan's youth, and patience,
And talent, on his haughty spirit wrought,
And formed a basis of esteem, which ends
In making men what Courtesy calls friends.
And thus Lord Henry, who was cautious as 
Reserve and pride could make him, and full slow 
In judging men – when once his judgment was 
Determined, right or wrong, on friend or foe, 
Had all the pertinacity pride has, 
Which knows no ebb to its imperious flow, 
And loves or hates, disdaining to be guided, 
Because its own good pleasure hath decided.

His friendships therefore, and no less aversions, 
Though oft well founded, which confirmed but more 
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.

’Tis not in mortals to command success; 
But do you more, Sempronius – don’t deserve it’; 
And take my word, you won’t have any less: 
Be wary, watch the time, and always serve it; 
Give gently way, when there’s too great a press; 
And for your conscience, only learn to nerve it, – 
For, like a racer or a boxer training, 
’Twill make, if proved, vast efforts without paining.

Lord Henry also liked to be superior, 
As most men do, the little or the great; 
The very lowest find out an inferior, 
At least they think so, to exert their state 
Upon: for there are very few things wearier 
Than solitary Pride’s oppressive weight, 
Which mortals generously would divide, 
By bidding others carry while they ride.
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

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,
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.
Of courser 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;
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 squares 667
    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;
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.
At Henry’s mansion then, in Blank-Blank Square,
   Was Juan a recherché, welcome guest,
As many other noble scions were;
   And some who had but talent for their crest;
Or wealth, which is a passport every where;
   Or even mere fashion, which indeed’s the best
Recommendation; – and to be well drest
Will very often supersede the rest.

And since ‘there’s safety in a multitude
   Of counsellors’, as Solomon has said,
Or some one for him, in some sage, grave mood; –
   Indeed we see the daily proof displayed
In Senates, at the Bar, in wordy feud,
   Where’er collective wisdom can parade,
Which is the only cause that we can guess
Of Britain’s present wealth and happiness; –

But as ‘there’s safety grafted in the number
   Of Counsellors’ for men, – thus for the sex
A large acquaintance lets not Virtue slumber;
   Or should it shake, the choice will more perplex –
Variety itself will more encumber.
   'Midst many rocks we guard more against wrecks;
And thus with women: howsoe’er it shock some’s
Self-love, there’s safety in a crowd of coxcombs.

But Adeline had not the least occasion
   For such a shield, which leaves but little merit
To virtue proper, or good education.
   Her chief resource was in her own high spirit,
Which judged mankind at their due estimation;
   And for coquetry, she 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
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,
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 mandarin finds nothing fine, –
   At least his manner suffers not to guess
That any thing he views can greatly please.
Perhaps we have borrowed this from the Chinese –

35
Perhaps from Horace: his ‘Nil admirari’
   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 certes don’t produce distress;
And rash Enthusiasm in good society
Were nothing but a moral Inebriety.
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?
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,
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 efforts look a lucky presage)
   Thus gentlemen may run upon a shoal;
For if the Pole's not open, but all frost,
(A chance still) 'tis a voyage or vessel lost.
And young beginners may as well commence
With quiet cruising o’er the ocean woman;
While those who are not beginners, should have sense
Enough to make for port, ere Time shall summon
With his grey signal flag; and the past tense,
The dreary ‘Fuimus’\(^675\) of all things human,
Must be declined, while life’s thin thread’s spun out
Between the gaping heir and gnawing gout.

But Heaven must be diverted: its diversion
Is sometimes truculent – but never mind:
The world upon the whole is worth the assertion
(If but for comfort) that all things are kind:
And that same devilish doctrine of the Persian,
Of the two principles,\(^676\) but leaves behind
As many doubts as any other doctrine
Has ever puzzled Faith withal, or yoked her in.

The English winter – ending in July,
To recommence in August – now was done.
’Tis the 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 premising that said son at college
Has not contracted much more debt than knowledge.

The London winter’s ended in July –
Sometimes a little later. I don’t err
In this: whatever other blunders lie
Upon my shoulders, here I must aver\(^677\)
My Muse a glass of weatherology;
For parliament is our barometer:
Let radicals its other acts attack,
Its sessions form our only almanack.\(^678\)
When its quicksilver's down at zero, — lo!
    Coach, chariot, luggage, baggage, equipage!
Wheels whirl from Carlton palace to Soho,
    And happiest they who horses can engage;
The turnpikes glow with dust; and Rotten Row
    Sleeps from the chivalry of this bright age;
And tradesmen, with long bills and longer faces,
Sigh — as the postboys fasten on the traces.

They and their bills, 'Arcadians both', are left
    To the Greek kalends of another session.
Alas! to them of ready cash bereft,
    What hope remains? Of hope the full possession,
Or generous draft, conceded as a gift,
    At a long date — till they can get a fresh one —
Hawked about at a discount, small or large; —
Also the solace of an overcharge.

But these are trifles. Downward flies my Lord
    Nodding beside my Lady in his carriage.
Away! away! 'Fresh horses!' are the word,
    And changed as quickly as hearts after marriage;
The obsequious landlord hath the change restored;
    The postboys have no reason to disparage
Their fee; but ere the water'd wheels may hiss hence,
The ostler pleads for a small reminiscence.

'Tis granted; and the valet mounts the dickey —
    That gentleman of lords and gentlemen;
Also my lady's gentlewoman, tricky,
    Tricked out, but modest more than poet's pen
Can paint, 'Cosi Viaggino i Ricchi'!
    (Excuse a foreign slipslop now and then,
If but to show I've travell'd; and what's travel,
Unless it teaches one to quote and cavil?)
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,
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.
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.

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
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',
Which those most swear to who believe them most) –
Our gay Russ Spaniard was ordained to shine,
Decked by the rays reflected from his host,
With those who, Pope says, 'greatly daring dine'.
'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;
Whose loss in the late action we regret:
The vacancies are filled up – see Gazette.'

55

To Norman Abbey whirl'd 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.
56
It stood embosom’d in a happy valley,
   Crown’d by high woodlands, where the Druid oak
Stood like Caractacus in act to rally
   His host, with broad arms ’gainst the 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
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
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,
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, 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,
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 quenched like fire. 490

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
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, 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:
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.

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 unimpress'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,
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,
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,
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’s\(^{692}\) 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.

71
But ever and anon, to soothe your vision,
Fatigued with these hereditary glories,
There rose a Carlo Dolce\(^{694}\) or a Titian,
Or wilder group of savage Salvatore’s:
Here danced Albano’s boys, and here the sea shone
In Vernet’s ocean lights; and there the stories
Of martyrs awed, as Spagnoletto tainted
His brush with all the blood of all the sainted.
Here sweetly spread a landscape of Lorraine;
  There Rembrandt made his darkness equal light,
Or gloomy Caravaggio's gloomier stain
  Bronzed o'er some lean and stoic Anchorite: –
But lo! a Teniers woos, and not in vain,
  Your eyes to revel in a livelier sight:
His bell-mouthed goblet makes me feel quite Danish
Or Dutch with thirst – What ho! a flask of Rhenish.

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
  Virtues of which both you and I have need.
Firstly, begin with the beginning – (though
  That clause is hard); and secondly, proceed;
Thirdly, commence not with the end – or, sinning
In this sort, end at least with the beginning.

But, reader, thou hast patient been of late,
  While I, without remorse of rhyme, or fear,
Have built and laid out ground at such a rate,
  Dan Phoebus takes me for an auctioneer.
That Poets were so from their earliest date,
  By Homer's 'Catalogue of Ships', is clear;
But a mere modern must be moderate –
I spare you then the furniture and plate.

The mellow Autumn came, and with it came
  The promised party, to enjoy its sweets.
The corn is cut, the manor full of game;
  The pointer ranges, and the sportsman beats
In russet jacket: – lynx-like is his aim,
  Full grows his bag, and wonderful his feats.
Ah, nutbrown Partridges! Ah, brilliant Pheasants!
And ah, ye Poachers! – 'Tis no sport for peasants.
An English autumn, though it hath no vines,
   Blushing with Bacchant coronals along
The paths, o’er which the far festoon entwines
   The red grape in the sunny lands of song,
Hath yet a purchased choice of choicest wines;
   The Claret light, and the Madeira strong.
If Britain mourn her bleakness, we can tell her
The very best of vineyards is the cellar.

Then, if she hath not that serene decline,
   Which makes the Southern Autumn’s day appear
As if ’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.

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;
Even Nimrod’s self might leave the plains of Dura,
   And wear the Melton jacket for a space: –
If she hath no wild boars, she hath a tame
Preserve of Bores, who ought to be made game.

The noble guests, assembled at the Abbey,
   Consisted of – we give the sex the pas –
The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke; the Countes Crabbey;
   The ladies Scilly, Busey; – Miss Eclat,
Miss Bombazeen, Miss Mackstay, Miss O’Tabby,
   And Mrs Rabbi, the rich banker’s squaw;
Also the Honourable Mrs Sleep,
Who look’d a white lamb, yet was a black sheep:
Canto Thirteen

DON JUAN

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:

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.
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.\(^{703}\)
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 Parolles\textsuperscript{705} 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 Rackrhmyme, who had newly
Come out and glimmer'd as a six-weeks' star.
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 inch\textsuperscript{706} a’ duke; there were twelve peers\textsuperscript{707}
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.

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;
Angle, the \textit{soi-disant} mathematician;
Sir Henry Silvercup, the great race-winner.
There was the Reverend Rodomont Precisian,\textsuperscript{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.
There was Jack Jargon the gigantic guardsman;
   And General Fireface, famous in the field,
A great tactician, and no less a swordsman,
   Who ate, last war, more Yankees than he kill'd.
There was the waggish 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.

Good company's a chess-board – there are kings,
   Queens, bishops, knights, rooks, pawns; the
         world's a game;
Save that the puppets pull at their own strings;
   Methinks gay Punch hath something of the same.
My Muse, the butterfly hath but her wings,
   Not stings, and flits through ether without aim,
Alighting rarely: – were she but a hornet,
Perhaps there might be vices which would mourn it.

I had forgotten – but must not forget –
   An Orator, the latest of the session,
Who had deliver'd well a very set
   Smooth speech, his first and maidenly transgression
Upon debate: the papers echoed yet
   With 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.'

Proud of his 'Hear hims!' proud too of his vote
   And lost virginity of oratory,
Proud of his learning (just enough to quote).
   He revell'd in his Ciceronian glory:
With memory excellent to get by rote,
   With wit to hatch a pun or tell a story,
Graced with some merit and with more effrontery,
   'His Country's pride', he came down to the country.
There also were two wits by acclamation,
   Longbow from Ireland, Strongbow from the Tweed,
Both lawyers and both men of education;
   But Strongbow's wit was of more polished breed:
Longbow was rich in an imagination,
   As beautiful and bounding as a steed,
But sometimes stumbling over a potato, –
While Strongbow's best things might have come from Cato.

Strongbow was like a new-tuned harpsichord;
   But Longbow wild as an Aeolian harp,
With which the winds of heaven can claim accord,
   And made a music, whether flat or sharp.
Of Strongbow's talk you would not change a word;
   At Longbow's phrases you might sometimes carp:
Both wits – one born so, and the other bred,
This by his heart – his rival by his head.

If all these seem 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's bête:
Society is smooth'd to that excess,
   That manners hardly differ more than dress.

Our ridicules are kept in the back-ground –
   Ridiculous enough, but also dull;
Professions too are no more to be found
   Professional; and there is nought to cull
Of folly's fruit: for, though your fools abound,
They're barren and not worth the pains to pull.
Society is now one polish'd horde,
Form'd of two mighty tribes, the Bores and Bored.
But from being farmers, we turn gleaners, gleaning
The scanty but right-well thrashed ears of truth;
And, gentle reader! when you gather meaning,
You may be Boaz, and I – modest Ruth.  

Further I’d quote, but Scripture intervening,
Forbids. A great impression in my youth
Was made by Mrs Adams, where she cries
‘That Scriptures out of church are blasphemies’.

But what we can we glean in this vile age
Of chaff, although our gleanings be not grist.
I must not quite omit the talking sage,
Kit-Cat, the famous conversationist,
Who, in his common-place book, had a page
Prepared each morn for evenings. ‘List, oh list!’ –
‘Alas, poor Ghost!’ – What unexpected woes
Await those who have studied their bon mots!

Firstly, they must allure the conversation
By many windings to their clever clinch;
And secondly, must let slip no occasion,
Nor abate their hearers of an inch,
But take an ell – and make a great sensation,
If possible: and thirdly, never flinch
When some smart talker puts them to the test,
But seize the last word, which no doubt’s the best.

Lord Henry and his Lady were the hosts;
The party we have touch’d on were the guests:
Their table was a board to tempt even ghosts
To pass the Styx for more substantial feasts.
I will not dwell upon ragoûts or roasts,
Albeit all human history attests,
That happiness for Man – the hungry sinner! –
Since Eve ate apples, much depends on dinner.
Witness the lands which 'flow’d with milk and honey',
Held out unto the hungry Israelites:
To this we have added since, the love of money,
The only sort of pleasure which requites.
Youth fades, and leaves our days no longer sunny;
We tire of mistresses and parasites;
But oh, ambrosial cash! Ah! who would lose thee?
When we no more can use, or even abuse thee!

The gentlemen got up betimes to shoot,
Or hunt; the young, because they liked the sport—
The first thing boys like, after play and fruit:
The middle-aged, to make the day more short;
For ennui is a growth of English root,
Though nameless in our language: — we retort
The fact for words, and let the French translate
That awful yawn which sleep can not abate.

The elderly walked through the library,
And tumbled books, or criticized the pictures,
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.

But none were 'gênê': the great hour of union
Was rung by dinner's knell; till then all were
Masters of their own time — or in communion,
Or solitary, as they chose to bear
The hours, which how to pass is but to few known.
Each rose up at his own, and had to spare
What time he chose for dress, and broke his fast
When, where, and how he chose for that repast.
The ladies – some rouged, some a little pale –
Met the morn as they might. If fine, they rode,
Or 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,
Or crammed twelve sheets into one little letter,
To make each correspondent a new debtor.717

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.

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.

With evening came the banquet and the wine;
The conversazione;720 the duet,
Attuned by voices more or less divine,
(My heart or head aches with the memory yet).
The four Miss Rawbolds in a glee would shine;
But the two youngest loved more to be set
Down to the harp – because to music’s charms
They added graceful necks, white hands and arms.
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;
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
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,
But gentlemen in stays, as stiff as stones.

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
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.
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)
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.

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,
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';
And such a straw, borne on by human breath,
   Is Poesy, according as the mind glows;
A paper kite, which flies 'twixt life and death,
   A shadow which the onward Soul behind throws:
And mine's a bubble not blown up for praise,
But just to play with, as an infant plays.
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:
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.

11
But 'why then publish'?23 – 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:
So long I've battled either more or less,
   That no defeat can drive me from the Nine.
This feeling 'tis not easy to express,
   And yet 'tis not affected, I opine.
In play, there are two pleasures for your choosing –
The one is winning, and the other losing.
Besides, my Muse by no means deals in fiction:
She gathers a repertory of facts,
Of course with some reserve and slight restriction,
But mostly sings of human things and acts —
And that's one cause she meets with contradiction;
For too much truth, at first sight, ne'er attracts;
And were her object only what's call'd glory,
With more ease too she'd tell a different story.

Love, war, a tempest — surely there's variety;
Also a seasoning slight of lucubration;
A bird's-eye view too of that wild, Society;
A slight glance thrown on men of every station.
If you have nought else, here's at least satiety
Both in performance and in preparation;
And though these lines should only line portmanteaus,
Trade will be all the better for these Cantos.

The portion of this world which I at present
Have taken up to fill the following sermon,
Is one of which there's no description recent:
The reason why, is easy to determine:
Although it seems both prominent and pleasant,
There is a sameness in its gems and ermine,
A dull and family likeness through all ages,
Of no great promise for poetic pages.

With much to excite, there's little to exalt;
Nothing that speaks to all men and all times;
A sort of varnish over every fault;
A kind of common-place, even in their crimes:
Factitious passions, wit without much salt,
A want of that true nature which sublimes
Whate'er it shows with truth; a smooth monotony
Of character, in those at least who have got any.
Sometimes indeed, like soldiers off parade,
    They break their ranks and gladly leave the drill;
But then the roll-call draws them back afraid,
    And they must be or seem what they were: still
Doubtless it is a brilliant masquerade;
    But when of the first sight you have had your fill,
It palls – at least it did so upon me,
This Paradise of Pleasure and Ennui.

When we have made our love, and gamed our gaming,
    Drest, voted, shone, and may be, something more;
With dandies dined; heard senators declaiming;
    Seen beauties brought to market by the score;
Sad rakes to sadder husbands chastely taming;
    There’s little left but to be bored or bore.
Witness those ‘ci-devant jeunes hommes’ who stem
The stream, nor leave the world which leaveth them.

'Tis said – indeed a general complaint –
    That no one has succeeded in describing
The Monde, exactly as they ought to paint.
    Some say, that Authors only snatch, by bribing
The porter, some slight scandals strange and quaint,
    To furnish matter for their moral gibing;
And that their books have but one style in common –
My lady’s prattle, filter’d through her woman.

But this can’t well be true just now; for writers
    Are grown of the Beau Monde a part potential:
I’ve seen them balance even the scale with fighters,
    Especially when young, for that’s essential.
Why do their sketches fail them as inditers?
    Of what they deem themselves most consequential –
The real portrait of the highest tribe?
'Tis that, in fact, there’s little to describe.
21

‘Haud ignara loquor’: these are Nuæae, ‘quarum Pars parva fui’ but still art and part.

Now I could much more easily sketch a harem,
A battle, wreck, or history of the heart,
Than these things; and besides, I wish to spare ’em,
For reasons which I choose to keep apart.
‘Vetabo Cereris sacrum qui vulgarit’ –
Which means that vulgar people must not share it.

22

And therefore what I throw off is ideal –
Lower’d, leaven’d, like a history of freemasons;
Which bears the same relation to the real,
As Captain Parry’s voyage may do to Jason’s.
The grand arcanum’s not for men to see all;
My music has some mystic diapasons;
And there is much which could not be appreciated
In any manner by the uninitiated.

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.
Poor Thing of Usages! Coerced, compell’d,
Victim when wrong, and martyr oft when right,
Condemn’d to child-bed, as men for their sins
Have shaving too 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.
Their love, their virtue, beauty, education,
But form good housekeepers to breed a nation.
All this were very well and can't be better;
But even this is difficult, Heaven knows!
So many troubles from her birth beset her,
Such small distinction between friends and foes,
The gilding wears so soon from off her fetter,
That— but ask any woman if she'd choose
(Take her at thirty, that is) to have been
Female or male? a school-boy or a queen?

'Petticoat Influence' is a great reproach,
Which even those who obey would fain be thought
To fly from, as from hungry pikes a roach;
But, since beneath it upon earth we are brought
By various joltings of life's hackney coach,
I for one venerate a petticoat—
A garment of a mystical sublimity,
No matter whether russet, silk, or dimity.

Much I respect, and much I have adored,
In my young days, that chaste and goodly veil,
Which holds a treasure, like a miser's hoard,
And more attracts by all it doth conceal—
A golden scabbard on a Damasque sword,
A loving letter with a mystic seal,
A cure for grief— for what can ever rankle
Before a petticoat and peeping ankle?

And when upon a silent, sullen day,
With a Sirocco, for example, blowing,
Then even the sea looks dim with all its spray
And sulkily the river's ripple's flowing,
And the sky shows that very ancient gray,
The sober sad antithesis to glowing,—
'Tis pleasant, if then any thing is pleasant,
To catch a glimpse even of a pretty peasant.
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,
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.

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 coxcombr y of certain She Men.

32
A fox-hunt to a foreigner is strange;
'Tis also subject to the double danger
Of tumbling first, and having in exchange
Some pleasant jesting at the awkward stranger:
But Juan had been early taught to range
The wilds, as doth an Arab turn'd Avenger,
So that his horse, or charger, hunter, hack,
Knew that he had a rider on his back.
And now in this new field, with some applause,
He clear'd hedge, ditch, and double post, and rail,
And never craned,\textsuperscript{731} and made but few 'faux pas',
And only fretted when the scent 'gan fail.

He broke, 'tis true, some statutes of the laws
Of hunting – for the sagest youth is frail;
Rode o'er the hounds, it may be, now and then,
And once o'er several Country Gentlemen.

But on the whole, to general admiration
He acquitted both himself and horse: the 'squires
Marvell'd at merit of another nation;
The boors cried 'Dang it! who'd have thought it?' – Sires,
The Nestors\textsuperscript{732} of the sporting generation
Swore praises, and recall'd their former fires;
The Huntsman's self relented to a grin,
And rated him almost a whipper-in.\textsuperscript{733}

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,\textsuperscript{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?'

He also had a quality uncommon
To early risers after a long chase,
Who wake in winter ere the cock can summon
December's drowsy day to his dull race, –
A quality agreeable to woman,
When her soft, liquid words run on apace,
Who likes a listener, whether Saint or Sinner, –
He did not fall asleep just after dinner.
But, light and airy, stood on the alert,
And shone in the best part of dialogue,
By humouring always what they might assert,
And listening to the topics most in vogue;
Now grave, now gay, but never dull or pert;
And smiling but in secret—cunning rogue!
He ne'er presumed to make an error clearer;
In short, there never was a better hearer.

And then he danced;—all foreigners excel
The serious Angles in the eloquence
Of pantomime;—he danced, I say, right well,
With emphasis, and also with good sense—
A thing in footing indispensable:
He danced without theatrical pretence,
Not like a ballet-master in the van
Of his drill'd nymphs, but like a gentleman.

Chaste were his steps, each kept within due bound,
And elegance was sprinkled o'er his figure;
Like swift Camilla, he scarce skim'd the ground,
And rather held in than put forth his vigour;
And then he had an ear for music's sound,
Which might defy a Crotchet Critic's rigour.
Such classic pas — sans flaws — set off our hero,
He glanced like a personified Bolero;

Or, like a flying Hour before Aurora,
In Guido's famous fresco, which alone
Is worth a tour to Rome, although no more a
Remnant were there of the old world's sole throne.
The 'tout ensemble' of his movements wore a
Grace of the soft Ideal, seldom shown,
And ne'er to be described; for to the dolour
Of bards and prosers, words are void of colour.
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’.  

42
She was a fine and somewhat full-blown blonde,
   Desirable, distinguish’d, celebrated
For several winters in the grand, grand Monde.
   I’d rather not say what might be related
Of her exploits, for this were ticklish ground;
   Besides there might be falsehood in what’s stated:
Her late performance had been a dead set
At Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

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.
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;
And several pitied with sincere regret
Poor Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.
But what is odd, none ever named the Duke,
   Who, one might think, was something in the affair.
True, he was absent, and 'twas rumour'd, took
   But small concern about the when, or where,
Or what his consort did: if he could brook
   Her gaieties, none had a right to stare:
Theirs was that best of unions, past all doubt,
Which never meets and therefore can't fall out.

But, oh that I should ever pen so sad a line!
   Fired with an abstract love of virtue, she,
My Dian of the Ephesians, Lady Adeline,
   Began to think the Duchess' conduct free;
Regretting much that she had chosen so bad a line,
   And waxing chiller in her courtesy,
Looked grave and pale to see her friend's fragility,
For which most friends reserve their sensibility.

There's nought in this bad world like sympathy:
   'Tis so becoming to the soul and face;
Sets to soft music the harmonious sigh,
   And robes sweet friendship in a Brussels lace.
Without a friend, what were humanity,
   To hunt our errors up with a good grace?
Consoling us with - 'Would you had thought twice!
Ah! if you had but follow'd my advice!'

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.
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:
'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',
With a long memorandum of old stories.

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,
Boldly referring to the list of peers
And noble births, nor dread the enumeration –
Gave her a right to have maternal fears
For a young gentleman's fit education,
Though she was far from that leap year, whose leap,
In female dates, strikes Time all of a heap.
This may be 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.
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.

But Adeline was far from that ripe age,
   Whose ripeness is but bitter at the best:
'Twas rather her experience made her sage,
   For she had seen the world, and stood its test,
As I have said in – I forget what page;
   My Muse despises reference, as you have guess'd
By this time; – but strike six from seven-and-twenty,
And you will find her sum of years in plenty.

At sixteen she came out; presented, vaunted,
   She put all coronets into commotion:
At seventeen too the world was still enchanted
   With the new Venus of their brilliant ocean:
At eighteen, though below her feet still panted
   A hecatomb\(^{741}\) of suitors with devotion,
She had consented to create again
That Adam, called 'the Happiest of Men'.

Since then she had sparkled through three glowing winters,
   Admired, adored; but also so correct,
That she had puzzled all the acutest hindes,
   Without the apparel of being circumspect:
They could not even glean the slightest splinters
   From off the marble, which had no defect.
She had also snatch'd a moment since her marriage
To bear a son and heir – and one miscarriage.
Fondly the wheeling fire-flies flew around her,
    Those little glitterers of the London night;
But none of these possess'd a sting to wound her –
    She was a pitch beyond a coxcomb's flight.
Perhaps she wish'd an aspirant profounder;
    But whatsoever she wished, she acted right;
And whether coldness, pride, or virtue, dignify
A Woman, so she's good, what does it signify?

I hate a motive like a lingering bottle,
    Which with the landlord makes too long a stand,
Leaving all claretless the unmoistened throttle,
    Especially with politics on hand;
I hate it, as I hate a drove of cattle,
    Who whirl the dust as Simooms whirl the sand;
I hate it, as I hate an argument,
A Laureate's ode, or servile Peer's 'content'.

'Tis sad to hack into the roots of things,
    They are so much intertwined with the earth:
So that the branch a goodly verdure flings,
    I reck not if an acorn gave it birth.
To trace all actions to their secret springs
    Would make indeed some melancholy mirth;
But this is not at present my concern,
And I refer you to wise Oxenstiern.

With the kind view of saving an 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); –
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.

It was not that she fear’d the very worst:
   His Grace was an enduring, married man,
And was not likely all at once to burst
   Into a scene, and swell the clients’ clan
Of Doctors’ Commons; but she dreaded first
   The magic of her Grace’s talisman, and
And next a quarrel (as he seemed to fret)
   With Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

Her Grace too pass’d for being an intrigante,
   And somewhat méchante in her amorous sphere;
One of those pretty, precious plagues, which haunt
   A lover with caprices soft and dear,
That like to make a quarrel, when they can’t
   Find one, each day of the delightful year;
Bewitching, torturing, as they freeze or glow,
   And – what is worst of all – won’t let you go:

The sort of thing to turn a young man’s head,
   Or make a 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.
’Tis best to pause, and think, ere you rush on,
   If that a ‘bonne fortune’ be really ‘bonne’.
65
And first, in the o'er flowing 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.

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
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;
And if their full contents I do not give ye,
It is because I do not know them yet,
But I shall add them in a brief appendix,
To come between mine epic and its index.
But ere he went, he added a slight hint,
   Another gentle common-place or two,
Such as are 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,
Retired; and, as he went out, calmly kissed her,
Less like a young wife than an aged sister.

He was a cold, good, honourable man,
   Proud of his birth, and proud of every thing;
A goodly spirit for a state divan,
   A figure fit to walk before a king;
Tall, stately, form'd to lead the courtly van
   On birthdays, glorious with a star and string;
The very model of a chamberlain —
And such I mean to make him when I reign.

But there was something wanting on the whole —
   I don't know what, and therefore cannot tell —
Which pretty women — the sweet souls! — call Soul.
   Certes it was not body; he was well
Proportion'd, as a poplar or a pole,
   A handsome man, that human miracle;
And in each circumstance of love or war
Had still preserved his perpendicular.

Still there was something wanting, as I've said —
   That undefinable 'Fe ne sais quoi,'
Which, for what I know, may of yore have led
   To Homer's Iliad, since it drew to Troy
The Greek Eve, Helen, from the Spartan's bed;
   Though on the whole, no doubt, the Dardan boy
Was much inferior to King Menelaus; —
But thus it is some women will betray us.
73
There is an awkward thing which much perplexes,
   Unless like wise Tiresias we had proved
By turns the difference of the several sexes:
   Neither can show quite how they would be loved.
The sensual for a short time but connects us –
   The sentimental boasts to be unmoved;
But both together form a kind of centaur,
Upon whose back ’tis better not to venture.

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;
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!’

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;

His other maxim, 'Noscitur a sociis',\textsuperscript{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:

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,

Blue devils, and Blue-stockings, and Romances

    Reduced to practice and perform'd like dances.

80

I do declare, upon an affidavit,\textsuperscript{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.
81

‘An oyster may be cross’d in Love,’ - and why?
Because he mopeth idly in his shell,
And heaves a lonely subterraneeous 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,
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 Three to Senegal;
Teach them that ‘sauce for goose is sauce for gander’,
And ask them how they like to be in thrall?
Shut up each high heroic Salamander,
Who eats fire gratis (since the pay’s but small);
Shut up – no, not the King, but the Pavilion,
Or else ’twill cost us all another million.

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;
But till that point d’appui is found, alas!
Like Archimedes, I leave earth as ’twas.
Our gentle Adeline had one defect –
   Her heart was vacant, though a splendid 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.

She loved her lord, or thought so; but that love
   Cost her an effort, which is a sad toil,
The stone of Sysiphus, if once we move
   Our feelings 'gainst the nature of the soil.
She had nothing to complain of, or reprove,
   No bickerings, no connubial turmoil:
Their union was a model to behold,
   Serene, and noble, – conjugal, but cold.

There was no great disparity of years,
   Though much in temper; but they never clash’d:
They moved like stars united in their spheres,
   Or like the Rhone by Leman’s\textsuperscript{764} waters wash’d,
Where mingled and yet separate appears
   The river from the lake, all bluely dash’d
Through the serene and placid glassy deep,
   Which fain would lull its river-child to sleep.

Now when she once had ta’en an interest
   In any thing, however she might flatter
Herself that her intentions were the best –
   Intense intentions are a dangerous matter:
Impressions were much stronger than she guess’d,
   And gather’d as they run like growing water
Upon her mind; the more so, as her breast
   Was not at first too readily impress’d.
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: —
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.

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
Of Platonism, which leads so oft amiss
Ladies who have studied friendship but in France,
Or Germany, where people purely kiss.
To thus much Adeline would not advance;
But of such friendship as man's may to man be,
She was as capable as woman can be.
No doubt the secret influence of the sex
   Will there, as also in the ties of blood,
An innocent predominance annex,
   And tune the concord to a finer mood.
If free from passion, which all friendship checks,
   And your true feelings fully understood,
No friend like to a woman earth discovers,
    So that you have not been nor will be lovers.

Love bears within its breast the very germ
   Of change; and how should this be otherwise?
That violent things more quickly find a term
   Is shown through nature’s whole analogies;
And how should the most fierce of all be firm?
   Would you have endless lightning in the skies?
Methinks Love’s very title says enough:
How should ‘the tender Passion’ e’er be tough?

Alas! by all experience, seldom yet
   (I merely quote what I have heard from many)
Had lovers not some reason to regret
   The passion which made Solomon a zany.
I’ve also seen some wives (not to forget
   The marriage state, the best or worst of any)
Who were the very paragons of wives,
   Yet made the misery of at least two lives.

I’ve also seen some female friends (’tis odd,
   But true – as, if expedient, I could prove)
That faithful were through thick and thin, abroad,
   At home, far more than ever yet was Love –
Who did not quit me when Oppression trod
   Upon me; whom no scandal could remove;
Who fought, and fight, in absence too, my battles,
Despite the snake Society’s loud rattles.
Whether Don Juan and chaste Adeline
Grew friends in this or any other sense,
Will be discuss'd hereafter, I opine:
At present I am glad of a pretence
To leave them hovering, as the effect is fine,
And keeps the atrocious reader in suspense;
The surest way for ladies and for books
To bait their tender or their tenter hooks.767

Whether they rode, or walk'd, or studied Spanish
To read Don Quixote in the original,
A pleasure before which all others vanish;
Whether their talk was of the kind call'd 'small,'
Or serious, are the topics I must banish
To the next Canto; where perhaps I shall
Say something to the purpose, and display
Considerable talent in my way.

Above all, I beg all men to forbear
Anticipating aught about the matter:
They'll only make mistakes about the fair,
And Juan too, especially the latter.
And I shall take a much more serious air
Than I have yet done, in this Epic Satire.
It is not clear that Adeline and Juan
Will fall; but if they do, 'twill be their ruin.

But great things spring from little: - Would you think,
That in our youth, as dangerous a passion
As e'er brought man and woman to the brink
Of ruin, rose from such a slight occasion,
As few would ever dream could form the link
Of such a sentimental situation?
You'll never guess, I'll bet you millions, milliards -
It all sprung from a harmless game at billiards.
'Tis strange – but true; for Truth is always strange,  
Stranger than Fiction: if it could be told,  
How much would novels gain by the exchange!  
How differently the world would men behold!  
How oft would vice and virtue places change!  
The new world would be nothing to the old,  
If some Columbus of the moral seas  
Would show mankind their souls’ Antipodes.

What ‘Antres vast and deserts idle then  
Would be discover’d in the human soul!  
What Icebergs in the hearts of mighty men,  
With Self-love in the centre as their Pole!  
What Anthropophagi 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.

Canto Fifteen

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.

But, more or less, the whole’s a syncopé  
Or a singultus – emblems of Emotion,  
The grand Antithesis to great Ennui,  
Wherewith we break our bubbles on the ocean,  
That Watery Outline of Eternity,  
Or miniature at least, as is my notion,  
Which ministers unto the soul’s delight,  
In seeing matters which are out of sight.
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.
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,
    Hath got blue devils for his morning mirrors:
What though on Lethe's stream he seem to float,
    He cannot sink his tremors or his terrors;
The ruby glass that shakes within his hand,
Leaves a sad sediment of Time's worst sand.

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.

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
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
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:
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.
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,\textsuperscript{777}
The art of living in all climes with ease.

His manner was perhaps the more seductive,
Because he ne’er seem’d anxious to seduce;
Nothing affected, studied, or constructive
Of coxcombr y or conquest: no abuse
Of his attractions mar’d the fair perspective,
To indicate a Cupidon broke loose,
And seem to say, ‘resist us if you can’ –
Which makes a dandy while it spoils a man.

They are wrong – that’s not the way to set about it;
As, if they told the truth, could well be shown.
But right or wrong, Don Juan was without it;
In fact, his manner was his own alone:
Sincere he was – at least you could not doubt it,
In listening merely to his voice’s tone.
The Devil hath not in all his quiver’s choice
An arrow for the heart like a sweet voice.

By Nature soft, his whole address held off
Suspicion: though not timid, his regard
Was such as rather seem’d to keep aloof,
To shield himself, than put you on your guard:
Perhaps ’twas hardly quite assured enough,
But Modesty’s at times its own reward,
Like Virtue; and the absence of pretension
Will go much 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.

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.

17
Adeline, no deep judge of character,
Was apt to add a colouring from her own.
'Tis thus the good will amially 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 thou\textsuperscript{779} Diviner still,
Whose lot it is by man to be mistaken,
And thy pure creed made sanction of all ill?
Redeeming worlds to be by bigots shaken,
How was thy toil rewarded? We might fill
Volumes with similar sad illustrations,
But leave them to the conscience of the nations.
I perch upon an humbler promontory,  
   Amidst life's infinite variety:  
With no great care for what is nicknamed glory,  
   But speculating as I cast mine eye  
On what may suit or may not suit my story,  
   And never straining hard to versify,  
I rattle on exactly as I'd talk  
With any body in a ride or walk.

I don't know that there may be much ability  
   Shown in this sort of desultory rhyme;  
But there's a conversational facility,  
   Which may round off an hour upon a time.  
Of this I'm sure at least, there's no servility  
   In mine irregularity of chime,  
Which rings what's uppermost of new or hoary,  
Just as I feel the 'Improvisatore'.

The first is rather more than monal can do;  
The second may be sadly done or gaily:  
The third is still more difficult to stand to;  
The fourth we hear, and see, and say too, daily:  
The whole together is what I could wish  
To serve in this conundrum of a dish.

A modest hope – but modesty's my forte,  
   And pride my feeble: – let us ramble on.  
I meant to make this poem very short,  
   But now I can't tell where it may not run.  
No doubt, if I had wish'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.
But then 'tis mostly on the weaker side:
So that I verily believe if they
Who now are basking in their full-blown pride,
Were shaken down, and 'dogs had had their day',
Though at the first I might perchance deride
Their tumble, I should turn the other way,
And wax an Ultra-royalist in loyalty,
Because I hate even democratic royalty.

I think I should have made a decent spouse,
If I had never proved the soft condition;
I think I should have made monastic vows,
But for my own peculiar superstition:
'Gainst rhyme I never should have knock'd my brows,
Nor broken my own head, nor that of Priscian,
Nor worn the motley mantle of a poet,
If some one had not told me to forego it.

But 'laissez aller' – knights and dames I sing,
Such as the times may furnish. 'Tis a flight
Which seems at first to need no lofty wing,
Plumed by Longinus or the Stagyrite:
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.

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;
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,
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
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.
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 pelf')
   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,
Or wed already, who object to this)
   Was there chaste dame who had not in her head
Some drama of the marriage unities,
   Observed as strictly both at board and bed,
As those of Aristotle, though sometimes
They turn out melodrames or pantomimes.

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
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;
A second for her excellent connections;
A third, because there can be no objections.
35
When Rapp the Harmonist embargoed marriage\textsuperscript{791}
    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 \textit{sans} wedlock?
Now here I have got the preacher at a dead lock.\textsuperscript{792}

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, \textit{malgré} Malthus, generation –
Professors of that genial art, and patrons
    Of all the modest part of propagation,
Which after all at such a desperate rate runs,
    That half its produce tends to emigration,\textsuperscript{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 \textit{well}:
    This he (as far as I can understand) meant:
'Tis not my purpose on his views to dwell,
    Nor canvass what ‘so eminent a hand’\textsuperscript{794} meant;
But \textit{certes} it conducts to lives ascetic,
Or turning marriage into arithmetic.
But Adeline, who probably presumed
    That Juan had enough of maintenance,
Or separate maintenance, in case 'twas doom'd –
    As on the whole it is an even chance
That bridegrooms, after they are fairly groom'd,
    May retrograde a little in the dance
Of marriage – (which might form a painter's fame,
Like Holbein's 'Dance of Death'⁷⁹⁵ – but 'tis the same); –

But Adeline determined Juan's wedding
    In her own mind, and that's enough for woman.
But then, with whom? There was the sage Miss Reading,
    Miss Raw, Miss Flaw, Miss Showman, and Miss Knowman,
And the two fair co-heiresses Giltbedding.
    She deemed his merits something more than common:
All these were unobjectionable matches,
    And might go on, if well wound up, like watches.

There was Miss Millpond,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.

And then there was the Miss Audacia Shoestring,
    A dashing demoiselle of good estate,
Whose heart was fix'd upon a star or blue string,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.
And then there was – but why should I go on, 
Unless the ladies should go off? – there was 
Indeed a certain fair and fairy one, 
Of the best class, and better than her class, – 
Aurora Raby, a young star who shone 
O’er life, too sweet an image for such glass, 
A lovely being, scarcely form’d or moulded, 
A Rose with all its sweetest leaves yet folded;

Rich, noble, but an orphan; left an only 
Child to the care of guardians good and kind; 
But still her aspect had an air so lonely! 
Blood is not water; and where shall we find 
Feelings of youth like those which overthrown lie 
By death, when we are left, alas! behind, 
To feel, in friendless palaces, a home 
Is wanting, and our best ties in the tomb?

Early in years, and yet more infantine 
In figure, she had something of sublime 
In eyes which sadly shone, as seraphs’ shine. 
All youth – but with an aspect beyond time; 
Radiant and grave – as pitying man’s decline; 
Mournful – but mournful of another’s crime, 
She look’d as if she sat by Eden’s door, 
And grieved for those who could return no more.

She was a Catholic too, sincere, austere, 
As far as her own gentle heart allow’d, 
And deem’d that fallen worship far more dear 
Perhaps because ’twas fallen: her sires were proud 
Of deeds and days when they had fill’d the ear 
Of nations, and had never bent or bow’d 
To novel power; and as she was the last, 
She held their old faith and old feelings fast.
She gazed upon a world she scarcely knew
   As seeking not to know it; silent, lone,
As grows a flower, thus quietly she grew,
   And kept her heart serene within its zone.
There was awe in the homage which she drew;
   Her spirit seem'd as seated on a throne
Apart from the surrounding world, and strong
In its own strength – most strange in one so young!

Now it so happen'd, in the catalogue
   Of Adeline, Aurora was omitted,
Although her birth and wealth had given her vogue
   Beyond the charmers we have already cited;
Her beauty also seem'd to form no clog
   Against her being mention'd as well fitted,
By many virtues, to be worth the trouble
Of single gentlemen who would be double.

And this omission, like that of the bust
   Of Brutus\textsuperscript{798} at the pageant of Tiberius,
Made Juan wonder, as no doubt he must.
   This he express'd half smiling and half serious;
When Adeline replied with some disgust,
   And with an air, to say the least, imperious,
She marvell'd 'what he saw in such a baby
As that prim, silent, cold Aurora Raby?'

Juan 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.
And wherefore not? A reasonable reason,
If good, is none the worse for repetition;
If bad, the best way's certainly to tease on
And amplify: you lose much by concision,
Whereas insisting in or out of season
Convinces all men, even a politician;
Or – what is just the same – it wearies out.
So the end's gain'd, what signifies the route?

Why Adeline had this slight prejudice –
For prejudice it was – against a creature
As pure as sanctity itself from vice,
With all the added charm of form and feature,
For me appears a question far too nice,
Since Adeline was liberal by Nature;
But Nature's Nature, and has more caprices
Than I have time, or will, to take to pieces.

Perhaps she did not like the quiet way
With which Aurora on those baubles look'd,
Which charm most people in their earlier day:
For there are few things by mankind less brook'd,
And womankind too, if we so may say,
Than finding thus their genius stand rebuked,
Like 'Anthony's by Caesar', by the few
Who look upon them as they ought to do.

It was not envy – Adeline had none;
Her place was far beyond it, and her mind.
It was not scorn – which could not light on one
Whose greatest fault was leaving few to find.
It was not jealousy, I think: but shun
Following the 'Ignes Fatui' of mankind.
It was not – but 'tis easier far, alas!
To say what it was not, than what it was.
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 Sibyl 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 deuce with womankind,
A heterogeneous mass of glorious blame,
   Half virtues and whole vices being combined;
Faults which attract because they are not tame;
   Follies trick'd out so brightly that they blind: —
These seals upon her wax made no impression,
Such was her coldness or her self-possession.

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,
More warm, as lovely, and not less sincere,
   Was Nature's all: Aurora could not be
Nor would be thus; — the difference in them
Was such as lies between a flower and gem.
Having wound up with this sublime comparison,
Methinks we may proceed upon our narrative,
And, as my friend Scott says, 'I sound my warison';
Scott, the superlative of my comparative –
Scott, who can paint your Christian knight or Saracen,
Serf, Lord, Man, with such skill as none would
share it, if

There had not been one Shakespeare and Voltaire,
Of one or both of whom he seems the heir.

I say, in my slight way I may proceed
To play upon the surface of Humanity.
I write the world, nor care if the world read,
At least for this I cannot spare its vanity.
My Muse hath bred, and still perhaps may breed
More foes by this same scroll: when I began it, I
Thought that it might turn out so – now I know it,
But still I am, or was, a pretty poet

The conference or congress (for it ended
As congresses of late do) of the Lady
Adeline and Don Juan rather blended
Some acids with the sweets – for she was heady;
But, ere the matter could be marr’d or mended,
The silvery bell rung, not for ‘dinner ready,’
But for that hour, called half-hour, given to dress,
Though ladies’ robes seem scant enough for less.

Great things were now to be achieved at table,
With massy plate for armour, knives and forks
For weapons; but what Muse since Homer’s able
(His feasts are not the worst part of his works)
To draw up in array a single day-bill
Of modern dinners where more mystery lurks
In soups or sauces, or a sole ragoût,
Than witches, b—ches, or physicians brew.
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 Périgueux;
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.

But I must crowd all into one grand mess
   Or mass; for should I stretch into detail,
My Muse would run much more into excess,
   Than when some squeamish people deem her frail.
But though a ‘bonne vivante’, I must confess
   Her stomach’s not her peccant part: this tale
However doth require some slight reflection,
   Just to relieve her spirits from dejection.

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.
And then there was Champagne with foaming whirls,
   As white as Cleopatra’s melted pearls.

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 piddle with at hand,
   Gently to lull down the subsiding soul;
While great Lucullus Rôbe triumphal muffles –
(There’s Fame) – young Partridge fillets, deck’d with truffles.
What are the fillets on the victor's brow
   To these? They are rags or dust. Where is the arch
Which nodded to the nation's spoils below?
   Where the triumphal chariots' haughty march?
Gone to where victories must like dinners go.
   Further I shall not follow the research:
But oh! ye modern heroes with your cartridges,
When will your names lend lustre even to partridges?

Those truffles too are no bad accessories,
   Follow'd by 'petits puits d'amour' — a dish
Of which perhaps the cookery rather varies,
   So every one may dress it to his wish,
According to the best of dictionaries,
   Which encyclopedise both flesh and fish;
But even sans 'confitures', it no less true is,
There's pretty picking in those 'petits puits'.

The mind is lost in mighty contemplation
   Of intellect 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,
As form a science and a nomenclature
From out the commonest demands of nature?

The glasses jingled, and the palates tingled;
   The diners of celebrity dined well;
The ladies with more moderation mingled
   In the feast, pecking less than I can tell;
Also the younger men too; for a springald
   Can't like ripe age in gourmandise excel,
But thinks less of good eating than the whisper
(When seated next him) of some pretty lisper.
Alas! I must leave undescribed the gibier,
   The salmi, the consomme, the 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

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.

The simple olives, best allies of wine,
   Must I pass over in my bill of fare?
I must, although a favourite ‘plat’ of mine
   In Spain, and Lucca, Athens, every where:
On them and bread ’twas oft my luck to dine,
   The grass my table-cloth, in open air,
On Sunium or Hymettus, like Diogenes,
   Of whom half my philosophy the progeny is.

Amidst this tumult of fish, flesh, and fowl,
   And vegetables, all in masquerade,
The guests were placed according to their roll,
   But various as the various meats display’d:
Don Juan sat next an ‘à l’Espagnole’ –
   No damsel, but a dish, as hath been said;
But so far like a lady, that ’twas drest
Superbly, and contained a world of zest,
By some odd chance too he was placed between
Aurora and the Lady Adeline –
A situation difficult, I ween,
For man therein, with eyes and heart, to dine.
Also the conference which we have seen
Was not such as to encourage him to shine;
For Adeline, addressing few words to him,
With two transcendent eyes seemed to look through him.

I sometimes almost think that eyes have ears:
This much is sure, that, out of earshot, things
Are somehow echoed to the pretty dears,
Of which I can’t tell whence their knowledge springs;
Like that same mystic music of the spheres,
Which no one hears so loudly though it rings.
’Tis wonderful how oft the sex have heard
Long dialogues which pass’d without a word!

Aurora sate with that indifference
Which piques a preux Chevalier – as it ought:
Of all offences that’s the worst offence,
Which seems to hint you are not worth a thought.
Now Juan, though no coxcomb in pretence,
Was not exactly pleased to be so caught:
Like a good ship entangled among ice,
And after so much excellent advice.

To his gay nothings, nothing was replied,
Or something which was nothing, as urbanity
Required. Aurora scarcely look’d aside,
Nor even smiled enough for any vanity.
The devil was in the girl! Could it be pride?
Or modesty, or absence, or inanity?
Heaven knows! But Adeline’s malicious eyes
Sparkled with her successful prophecies,
And look'd as much as if to say, 'I said it'; –
A kind of triumph I'll not recommend,
Because it sometimes, as I'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:
For all men prophesy what is or was,
And hate those who won't let them come to pass.

Juan was drawn thus into some attentions,
Slight but select, and just enough to express,
To females of perspicuous comprehensions,
That he would rather make them more than less.
Aurora at the last (so history mentions,
Though probably much less a fact than guess)
So far relax'd her thoughts from their sweet prison,
As once or twice to smile, if not to listen.

From answering, she began to question: this
With her was rare; and Adeline, who as yet
Thought her predictions went not much amiss,
Began to dread she'd thaw to a coquette –
So very difficult; they say, it is
To keep extremes from meeting, when once set
In motion; but she here too much refined –
Aurora's spirit was not of that kind.

But Juan had a sort of winning way,
A proud humility, if such there be,
Which show'd such deference to what females say,
As if each charming word were a decree.
His tact too temper'd him from grave to gay,
And taught him when to be reserved or free:
He had the art of drawing people out,
Without their seeing what he was about.
Aurora, who in her indifference
Confounded him in common with the crowd
Of flutterers, though she deem’d he had more sense
Than whispering foplings, or than witlings 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.

And then he had good looks; – that point was carried
Nem. con. amongst the women, which I grieve
To say leads oft to crim. con. with the married –
A case which to the Juries we may leave,
Since with digressions we too long have tarried.
Now though we know of old that looks deceive,
And always have done, somehow these good looks
Make more impression than the best of books.

Aurora, who look’d more on books than faces,
Was very young, although so very sage,
Admiring more Minerva than the Graces,
Especially upon a printed page.
But Virtue’s self, with all her tightest laces,
Has not the natural stays of strict old age;
And Socrates that model of all duty,
Own’d to a penchant, though discreet, for beauty.

And girls of sixteen are thus far Socratic,
But innocently so, as Socrates:
And really, if the Sage sublime and Attic
At seventy years had 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’.
Also observe, that like the great Lord Coke,
       (See Littleton)⁸¹⁸ whene'er I have expressed
Opinions two, which at first sight may look
       Twin opposites, the second is the best.
Perhaps I have a third too in a nook,
       Or none at all – which seems a sorry jest;
But if a writer should be quite consistent,
How could he possibly show things existent?

If people contradict themselves, can I
       Help contradicting them, and everybody,
Even my veracious self? – But that's a lie;
       I never did so, never will – how should I?
He who doubts all things, nothing can deny;
       Truth's fountains may be clear – her streams are muddy,
And cut through such canals of contradiction,
That she must often navigate o'er fiction.

Apologue,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?
Philosophy? No; she too much rejects.
Religion? Yes; but which of all her sects?

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.
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,\textsuperscript{820}
For I was bred a moderate Presbyterian.

92
But though I am a temperate Theologian,
And also meek as a Metaphysician,
Impartial between Tyrian and Trojan,
As Eldon on a lunatic\textsuperscript{821} 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;
Because my business is to \textit{dress} society,
And stuff with \textit{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',\textsuperscript{822} –
Yes, I'll begin a thorough reformation.
Indeed I never knew what people meant
By deeming that my Muse's conversation
Was dangerous; – I think she is as harmless
As some who labour more and yet may charm less.
Grim reader! did you ever see a ghost?
   No; but you have heard – I understand – be dumb!
And don’t regret the time you may have lost,
   For you have got that pleasure still to come:
And do not think I mean to sneer at most
   Of these things, or by ridicule benumb
That source of the sublime and the mysterious: –
For certain reasons, my belief is serious.

Serious? You laugh: – you may; that will I not;
   My smiles must be sincere or not at all.
I say I do believe a haunted spot
   Exists – and where? That I shall not recall,
Because I’d rather it should be forgot,
   ‘Shadows the soul of Richard’ may appal.
In short, upon that subject I’ve some qualms very
Like those of the Philosopher of Malmsbury.

The night (I sing by night – sometimes an owl,
   And now and then a nightingale) – is dim,
And the loud shriek of sage Minerva’s fowl
   Rattles around me her discordant hymn:
Old portraits from old walls upon me scowl –
   I wish to heaven they would not look so grim;
The dying embers dwindle in the grate –
I think too that I have sate up too late:

And therefore, though ’tis by no means my way
   To rhyme at noon – when I have other things
To think of, if I ever think, – I say
   I feel some chilly midnight shudderings,
And prudently postpone, until mid-day,
   Treating a topic which alas but brings
Shadows; – but you must be in my condition
Before you learn to call this superstition.
Between two worlds life hovers like a star,
'Twixt night and morn, upon the horizon's verge:
How little do we know that which we are!
How less what we may be! The eternal surge
Of time and tide rolls on, and bears afar
Our bubbles; as the old burst, new emerge,
Lash'd from the foam of ages; while the graves
Of Empires heave but like some passing waves.

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, best of kings —
A mode adopted since by modern youth.
Bows have they, generally with two strings;
Horses they ride without remorse or ruth;
At speaking truth perhaps they are less clever,
But draw the long bow better now than ever.

2
The cause of this effect, or this defect, —
'For this effect defective comes by cause', —
Is what I have not leisure to inspect;
But this I must say in my own applause,
Of all the Muses that I recollect,
Whate'er may be her follies or her flaws
In some things, mine's beyond all contradiction
The most sincere that ever dealt in fiction.

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,
'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'.
But of all truths which she has told, the most
True is that which she is about to tell.
I said it was a story of a ghost –
What then? I only know it so befell.
Have you explored the limits of the coast,
Where all the dwellers of the earth must dwell?
'Tis time to strike such puny doubters dumb as
The sceptics who would not believe Columbus.

Some people would impose now with authority,
Turpin’s or Monmouth Geoffry’s Chronicle; Men whose historical superiority
Is always greatest at a miracle.
But Saint Augustine has the great priority,
Who bids all men believe the impossible,
Because 'tis so. Who nibble, scribble, quibble, he Quiets at once with ‘quia impossibile’.

And therefore, mortals, cavil not at all;
Believe: – if 'tis improbable, you must;
And if it is impossible, you shall:
'Tis always best to take things upon trust.
I do not speak profanely, to recall
Those holier mysteries, which the wise and just Receive as gospel, and which grow more rooted, As all truths must, the more they are disputed.

I merely mean to say what Johnson said,
That in the course of some six thousand years,
All nations have believed that from the dead
A visitant at intervals appears;
And what is strangest upon this strange head,
Is, that whatever bar the reason rears
'Gainst such belief, there's something stronger still
In its behalf, let those deny who will.
8
The dinner and the soirée too were done,
The supper too discussed, the dames admired,
The banqueters had dropped off one by one –
The song was silent, and the dance expired:
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;
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 vest
Dyed purple, none at present can tell how,
If from a shell-fish or from cochineal.
So perish every tyrant’s robe piece-meal!

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, 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.
And Juan, on retiring for the night,
   Felt restless, and perplexed, and compromised;
He thought Aurora Raby’s eyes more bright
   Than Adeline (such is advice) advised;
If he had known exactly his own plight,
   He probably would have philosophised;
A great resource to all, and ne’er denied
Till wanted; therefore Juan only sighed.

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;
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.

But lover, poet, or astronomer,
   Shepherd, or swain, whoever may behold,
Feel some abstraction when they gaze on her:
   Great thoughts we catch from thence (besides a cold
Sometimes, unless my feelings rather err);
   Deep secrets to her rolling light are told;
The ocean’s tides and mortal’s brains she sways,
   And also hearts, if there be truth in lays.

Juan felt somewhat pensive, and disposed
   For contemplation rather than his pillow:
The Gothic chamber, where he was enclosed,
   Let in the rippling sound of the lake’s billow,
With all the mystery by midnight caused;
   Below his window waved (of course) a willow;
And he stood gazing out on the cascade
That flashed and after darkened in the shade.
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
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 urn
Appear to wake, and shadows wild and quaint
Start from the frames which fence their aspects stern,
As if to ask how you can dare to keep
A vigil there, where all but death should sleep.

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 spars within some dusky cave,
But death is imaged in their shadowy beams
A picture is the past; even ere its frame
Be gilt, who sate hath ceased to be the same.
As Juan mused on mutability,
    Or on his mistress – terms synonymous –
No sound except the echo of his sigh
    Or step ran sadly through that antique house,
When suddenly he heard, or thought so, nigh,
    A supernatural agent – or a mouse,
Whose little nibbling rustle will embarrass
Most people as it plays along the arras.837

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.

Juan was petrified; he had heard a hint
    Of such a spirit in these halls of old,
But thought, like most men, there was nothing in’t
    Beyond the rumour which such spots unfold,
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?

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
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.
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
Might come or go; but Juan could not state
Through which the spectre seemed to evaporate.

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.

All there was as he left it: still his taper
Burnt, and not blue, 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’.

This savoured of this world; but his hand shook –
He shut his door, and after having read
A paragraph, I think about Horne Tooke,
Undrest, and rather slowly went to bed.
There 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.
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.
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.

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,
His very neckcloth's Gordian knot was tied
Almost an hair's breadth too much on one side.

And when he walked down into the saloon,
   He sat 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.

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.
But seeing him all cold and silent still,
And everybody wondering more or less,
Fair Adeline enquired, 'If he were ill?'
He started, and said, 'Yes – no – rather – yes.'
The family physician had great skill,
And being present, now began to express
His readiness to feel his pulse and tell
The cause, but Juan said, 'He was quite well.'

'Quite well; yes; no.' – These answers were mysterious,
And yet his looks appeared to sanction both,
However they might savour of delirious;
Something like illness of a sudden growth
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.

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
With some slight, light, hereditary twinges
Of gout, which rusts aristocratic hinges.

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.
'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.

'The last time was – ' 'I pray,' said Adeline, –  
(Who watched the changes of Don Juan's brow,  
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.'

'Jest!' quoth Milor, '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.'  
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.'

'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 –  
The voice, the words, the harper's skill, at once  
Could hardly be united by a dunce.
After some fascinating hesitation, —  
The charming of these charmers, who seem bound,  
I can’t tell why, to this dissimulation, —  
Fair Adeline, with eyes 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.

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.

Though he came in his might, with King Henry's right,  
To turn church lands to lay,  
With sword in hand, and torch to light  
Their walls, if they said nay,  
A monk 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.

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.  
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;
But his eyes may be seen from the folds between,
And they seem of a parted soul.

350

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! 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 wires
   Died from the touch that kindled them to sound;
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.
Fair Adeline, though in a careless way,
As if she rated such accomplishment
As the mere pastime of an idle day,
Pursued an instant for her own content,
Would now and then as 'twere without display,
Yet with display in fact, at times relent
To such performances with haughty smile,
To show she could, if it were worth her while.

Now this (but we will whisper it aside)
Was – pardon the pedantic illustration –
Trampling on Plato's pride with greater pride,
As did the Cynic on some like occasion;
Deeming the sage would be much mortified,
Or thrown into a philosophic passion,
For a spoilt carpet – but the 'Attic Bee' was much consoled by his own repartee.

Thus Adeline would throw into the shade,
(By doing easily when'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.

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' 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,
That bring Lochaber back\textsuperscript{850} to eyes that roam
O'er far Atlantic continents or islands,
The calentures\textsuperscript{851} of music which o'ercome
All mountaineers with dreams that they are nigh lands,
No more to be beheld but in such visions, —
Was Adeline well versed, as compositions.

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 everybody ought.
But still from that sublimer azure hue,
So much the present dye, she was remote,
Was weak enough to deem Pope a great poet,
And what was worse, was not ashamed to show it.

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
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 Hebe\textsuperscript{852} of Fitz-Fulke, whose mind,
If she had any, was upon her face,
And that was of a fascinating kind.
A little turn for mischief you might trace
Also thereon, — but that's not much; we find
Few females without some such gentle leaven,
For fear we should suppose us quite in heaven.
I have not heard she was at all poetic,
    Though once she was seen reading the 'Bath Guide',
And 'Hayley’s Triumphs',\textsuperscript{853} which she deemed pathetic,
    Because, she said, \textit{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'.\textsuperscript{854}

'Twere difficult to say what was the object
    Of Adeline, in bringing this same lay
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.

But so far the immediate effect
    Was to restore him to his self propriety,
A thing quite necessary to the elect,
    Who wish to take the tone of their society:
In which you cannot be too circumspect,
    Whether the mode be persiflage\textsuperscript{855} or piety,
But wear the newest mantle of hypocrisy,
    On pain of much displeasing the gynocracy.

And therefore Juan now began to rally
    His spirits, and without more explanation,
To jest upon such themes in many a sally.
    Her Grace too also seized the same occasion,
With various similar remarks to tally,
    But wished for a still more detailed narration
Of this same mystic Friar's curious doings,
    About the present family’s deaths and wooings.
Of these few could say more than has been said;  
They 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.

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.

There was a picture dealer who had brought  
A special Titian, warranted original,  
So precious that it was not to be bought,  
Though princes the possessor were besieging all.  
The king himself had cheapened it, but thought  
The civil list (he deigns to accept, obliging all  
His subjects by his gracious acceptation)  
Too scanty, in these times of low taxation.

But as Lord Henry was a connoisseur, –  
The friend of artists, if not arts, – the owner,  
With motives the most classical and pure,  
So that he would have been the very donor,  
Rather than seller, had his wants been fewer,  
So much he deemed his patronage an honour,  
Had brought the capo d'opera, not for sale,  
But for his judgement, – never known to fail.
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
New buildings of correctest conformation,
And throw down old, which he called restoration.858

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

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.

There were two poachers caught in a steel trap
    Ready for jail, their place of convalescence;
There was a country girl in a close cap
    And scarlet cloak (I hate the sight to see, since –
Since – since – in youth, I had the sad mishap –
    But luckily I have paid few parish 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,
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:
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.

65
Her black, bright, downcast, wet espiegle 863 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 scorrer,
But stood in trembling, patient tribulation,
   To be called up for her examination.
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.

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') 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.

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, Have 'public days,' when all men may carouse, Though not exactly what's called 'open house.'

But once a week or fortnight, uninvited (Thus we translate a general invitation) All country gentlemen, esquired or knighted, May drop in without cards, and take their station At the full board, and sit alike delighted With fashionable wines and conversation; And as the isthmus of the grand connection, Talk o'er themselves, the past and next election.
Lord Henry was a great electioneerer,\textsuperscript{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).

Courteous and cautious therefore in his county,
He was all things to all men, and dispensed
To some civility, to others bounty,
And promises to all – which last commenced
To gather to a somewhat large amount, he
Not calculating how much they condensed;
But what with keeping some, and breaking others,
His word had the same value as another’s.

A friend to freedom and freeholders – yet
No less a friend to government – he held,
That he exactly the just medium hit
'Twixt place and patriotism – albeit compelled,
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.

He was ‘free to confess’ – (whence comes this phrase?
Is’t English? No – ’tis only parliamentary)
That innovation’s spirit now-a-days
Had made more progress than for the last century.
He would not tread a factious path to praise,
Though for the public weal disposed to venture high;
As for his place, he could but say this of it,
That the fatigue was greater than the profit.
Heaven, and his friends, knew that a private life
Had ever been his sole and whole ambition;
But could he quit his king in times of strife
Which 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.

Sooner 'come place into the civil list
And champion him to the utmost – 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.

He was an independent – aye, much more –
Than those who were not paid for independence,
As common soldiers, or a common — shore,
Have in their several arts or parts ascendance
O'er the irregulars in lust or gore,
Who do not give professional attendance.
Thus on the mob all statesmen are as eager
To prove their pride, as footmen to a beggar.

All this (save the last stanza) Henry said,
And thought. I say no more – I've said too much;
For all of us have either heard or read
Of – or upon the hustings – some slight such
Hints from the independent heart or head
Of the official candidate. I'll touch
No more on this – the dinner bell hath rung,
And grace is said; the grace I should have sung –
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,
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.

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
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,
(Oh, Providence! how wondrous are thy ways,
   Who would suppose thy gifts sometimes obdurate?)
Gave him, to lay the devil who looks o'er Lincoln,
A fat fen vicarage, and nought to think on.

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
Imbibed the gay bon mot, or happy hoax:
   The poor priest was reduced to common sense,
Or to coarse efforts very loud and long,
To hammer a coarse laugh from the thick throng.

84
There is a difference, says the song, ‘between
   A beggar and a queen,’ or was (of late
The latter worse used of the two we’ve seen –
   But we’ll say nothing of affairs of state)
A difference ‘twixt a bishop and a dean,
   A difference between crockery ware and plate,
As between English beef and Spartan broth –
And yet great heroes have been bred by both.

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! The light loves languish o'er Long banquets and too many guests, although
A slight repast makes people love much more, Bacchus and Ceres being, as we know, Even from our grammar upwards, friends of yore With vivifying Venus, who doth owe To these the invention of champagne and truffles: Temperance delights her, but long fasting ruffles.

87
Dully past o'er the dinner of the day; And Juan took his place, he knew not where, Confused, in the confusion, and distraint, And sitting as if nailed upon his chair; 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, 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.
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.

But what confused him more than smile or stare
From all the 'squires and 'squiresses around,
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) –

Was, that he caught Aurora's eye on his,
And something like a smile upon her cheek.
Now this he really rather took amiss:
In those who rarely smile, their smiles bespeak
A strong external motive; and in this
Smile of Aurora's there was nought to pique
Or hope, or love, with any of the wiles
Which some pretend to trace in ladies' smiles.

'Twas a mere quiet smile of contemplation,
Indicative of some surprise and pity;
And Juan grew carination with vexation,
Which was not very wise and still less witty,
Since he had gained at least her observation,
A most important outwork of the city –
As Juan should have known, had not his senses
By last night's ghost been driven from their defences.
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.

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)\textsuperscript{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
On Adeline while playing her grand role,
   Which she went through as though it were a dance,
(Betraving 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,
A thing of temperament and not of art,
   Though seeming so, from its supposed facility;
And false – though true; for surely they’re sincerest,
Who are strongly acted on by what is nearest.
This makes your actors, artists, and romancers, Heroes sometimes, though seldom – sages never; But speakers, bards, diplomatists, and dancers, Little that’s great, but much of what is clever; Most orators, but very few financiers, Though all Exchequer Chancellors endeavour, Of late years, to dispense with Cocker’s rigours, And grow quite figurative with their figures.

The poets of arithmetic are they Who, though they prove not two and two to be Five, as they 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’s unfathomable sea, That most unliquidating liquid, leaves The debt unsunk, yet sinks all it receives.

While Adeline dispensed her airs and graces, The fair Fitz-Fulke 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.

However, the day closed, as days must close; The evening also waned – and coffee came. Each carriage was announced, and ladies rose, And curtseying 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.
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 indemnification.
   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;
   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’, 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.

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
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.
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
The heart in an existence of its own,
Of which another's bosom is the zone.

109
Who would not sigh Aiai ταῦ Κυθρευαν!883
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'!884
And full of sentiments, sublime as billows
Heaving between this world and worlds beyond,

Don Juan, when the midnight hour of pillows
Arrived, retired to his; but to despond

Rather than rest. Instead of poppies, willows

Waved o'er his couch; he meditated, fond

Of those sweet bitter thoughts which banish sleep,
And make the worldling sneer, the youngling weep.

The night was as before: he was undrest,
Saving his night gown, which is an undress;

Completely 'sans culotte', and without vest;

In short, he hardly could be clothed with less;

But apprehensive of his spectral guest,

He sate, with feelings awkward to express,
(By those who have not had such visitations)

Expectant of the ghost's fresh operations.

And not in vain he 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!

So like a spiritual pit-a-pat,

Or tiptoe of an amatory Miss,

Gliding the first time to a rendezvous,

And dreading the chaste echoes of her shoe.

Again - what is't? The wind? No, no, - this time

It is the sable Friar as before,

With awful footsteps regular as rhyme,

Or (as rhymes may be in these days) much more.

Again, through shadows of the night sublime,

When deep sleep fell on men, and the world wore

The starry darkness round her like a girdle
Spangled with gems - the monk made his blood curdle.
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.

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.\textsuperscript{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!'\textsuperscript{888} The hinge seemed to speak,
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,
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.
Don Juan shook, as erst he had been shaken
The night before; but being sick of shaking,
He first inclined to think he had been mistaken,
And then to be ashamed of such mistaking;
His own internal ghost\(^889\) began to awaken
Within him, and to quell his corporal quaking –
Hinting that soul and body on the whole
Were odds against a disembodied soul.

And then his dread grew wrath, and his wrath fierce;
And he arose, advanced – the shade retreated;
But Juan, eager now the truth to pierce,
Followed, his veins no longer cold, but heated,
Resolved to thrust the mystery carte and tierce,\(^890\)
At whatsoever risk of being defeated:
The ghost stopped, menaced, then retired, until
He reached the ancient wall, then stood stone still.

Juan put forth one arm – Eternal Powers!
It touched no soul, nor body, but the wall,
On which the moonbeams fell in silvery showers
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!

But still the shade remained; the blue eyes glared,
And rather variably for stony death;
Yet one thing rather good the grave had spared,
The ghost had a remarkably sweet breath.
A straggling curl showed he had been fair-haired;
A red lip, with two rows of pearls beneath,
Gleamed forth, as through the casement’s ivy shroud
The moon peeped, just escaped from a grey cloud.
And Juan, puzzled, but still curious, thrust
His other arm forth – Wonder upon wonder!
It pressed upon a hard but glowing bust,
Which beat as if there was a warm heart under.
He found, as people on most trials must,
That he had made at first a silly blunder,
And that in his confusion he had caught
Only the wall, instead of what he sought.

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!
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.


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-farow’  See Macbeth, 4, 1, 65.
20 (p. 58) Dumoirier ... Moreau  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) messuages  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.54 BC) 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) muct 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) *Cortez* 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 *1 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
127 (p. 136) muffle  boxing glove
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.

An Irish lady, probably Adele Forbes (1789–1858), is mentioned. In ancient Greece, a basquinna was an outer skirt and a mantilla was a small cloak.

Homer... dinner. *See Iliad*, 9, 166–7.

Piastres were a Turkish coin.

'Take... stranger.'... from Matthew, 25:34–40

'Vouch'... (Greek).

St Paul says... Colossians, 3:14.

Grand-dad's *Narrative*... Patagonia. Byron gained much information especially about shipwreck and storms at sea from this.

To a tittle... thoroughly

Pose... here, to urge

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.

Romaic... modern vernacular Greek

Barrow... Blair... renowned English preachers

dogs... day. *See Hamlet*, 5, 1, 209.

Sweet south... the south wind

Lo... a sea nymph

Ragusan... from Dubrovnik

Hock... a German white wine

Sublimed with... cooled with snow

The Host... the bread of Holy Communion

Some... a novel... possibly a reference to *Glenarvon*. *See General Introduction.*

Caesar... Sappho... historical and mythical lovers, or writers about love, often unhappy in love

Mahomet, Belisarius... Rumours were spread that Mohammed's wife Ayesha had an affair; Belisarius was a Roman general whose wife had many affairs.

Epicurus and Aristippus... third-century-BC philosophers, believed to endorse a life of pleasure above all else

Sardanapalus... an Assyrian philosopher of uncertain date

'Beau ideal'. French, the beautiful ideal, derived from (neo)Platonic philosophy

Lazaret... a storeroom, a sickroom

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) *cypress 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*  to be excessively fond of one's wife

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 Staël 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) épôpée  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) galliots 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 Berbryces
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) Nebuchadnezzar 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 Shake-
speare’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 loosing 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 know 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) Odalisques 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) Pythoness 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) verss 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, drawling a dig at the speechmaking of Castlereaagh – 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) *Arsenie* 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) *emet* . . . *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


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
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) ‘aröynt!’ 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) Pyrrho third-century–bc complete sceptic who doubted everything
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 . . . botte’s’ in relation to nothing in particular
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) ‘teterrima . . . 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) noods 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 . . . Abernethy contemporary surgeons

517 (p. 389) to gravel the Faculty baffle the doctors

518 (p. 389) Thetis . . . 'uti possebitis' 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 Biren (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) Kosiucisko'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) Helvoet'sluys 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) 'Hundsfot . . . Verflucter' German expletives, scoundrel and curses

533 (p. 396) Black . . . stone Edward, the Black Prince (1330–76), and Thomas à Becket, 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 Roland 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) 'Crowners 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 blaggart 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
John Keats (1795–1821), poet, popularly believed to have been killed by hostile criticism.

The Roman Guard sold the Empire at public auction in AD 193; here a reference to literary critics.

'frightful . . . samphire' collecting an aromatic plant which grows on dangerous rocks. See King Lear, 4, 6, 15–16.

Janizaries literally, members of the Turkish army

In the Regency period it was common for floors to be decorated with elaborate chalk drawings on special occasions.

'Or Molu' ormolu, gilded-bronze decorated furniture

'Jack Horner' in the nursery rhyme, sat in the corner

quadrille a formal eighteenth-century dance

bogle goblin

crupper rump

rack and ruin, waste and destruction

Such nobles vote indiscriminately, for either side, on political questions.

'Where . . . world' See Edward Young's poem Resignation (1762).

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.

Five per Cents Government bonds

Beau Brummel, Regency society figure, was forced to retire to Calais in 1816 to escape debts.

William Wellesley (1788–1857), notorious high liver

Samuel Whitbread, politician, supporter of Queen Caroline, committed suicide in 1815.

There was a scandal over the status of George III's will following his death in 1820.

George IV

an attack on the perceived servility of the Scots to the king. Sawney is Sandy, a Scotsman.

'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


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, 1, 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
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 lowers 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
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-Passage... 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 alamanac, 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) Sirius  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 Erskin (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 . . . fuì’ ‘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.930 BC), 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) Anthropophagi cannibals

CANTO FIFTEEN

771 (p. 498) synocópé... singlátus 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) 'Impróvisatore' 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.
proved the soft condition tried out marriage
Priscian fifth-century Latin grammarian
‘laissez aller’ let it go, pass
Stagyrite See Aristotle in the Glossary.
cutter . . . brigantine . . . pink types of sailing ship
non-age infancy
pelf riches
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.
dead lock stalemate
The great emigrations, particularly to America, to escape poverty, particularly in the case of the Irish, began in 1819.
‘so . . . hand’ Pope’s phrase for writers, taken from a letter to the essayist Steele, 29 November 1712
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.
Miss Millpond Lady Byron, Anabella Millbanke
star . . . string someone with honours, an aristocrat
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.
‘Anthony’s by Caesar’ from Macbeth, 3, 1, 56. Anthony and Caesar were enemies.
Sibyl a prophetess
plays the deuce plays the devil, trifles with
‘I . . . warison’ from Lay of the Last Minstrel (1815), note to 4.24. Scott uses the word, probably incorrectly, to mean assault.
massey heavy
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 pâtés.
‘bonne vivante’ literally one who lives well, enjoys food
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


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
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.

'Mama Mia's'... 'Amor Mio's'... 'Lasciami's'... 'Addio's'... 'Tu michamas's'  (Italian) phrases from popular song; Portingale means from the Portuguese.

'Babylon's... back' contrasting sophisticated metropolitan songs with the folk song of Ireland and Scotland. Lochaber is a mountainous region of Scotland.

calentures  literally, fevers inducing hallucinations

Hebe  after the goddess of youth and attendant to the gods


'bouts rimés'  rhyming exercises

persiflage  flippant banter

civil list  money granted by the state to the monarch, and other public figures

capo d'opera  masterpiece

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

tenures burgage  rented property

'Untying... churches'  See Macbeth, 4, 1, 52-3.

parish fees  money paid to support the destitute. In 1809 Byron fathered a child with a servant girl, Lucy, whom he subsequently supported.

consistory  a Church council

espiegle  rougish

beer 'small'  beer with a low alcohol content

without cards  without a formal invitation

isthmus  literally a small strip of land connecting two larger masses, thus here an indication of the relative importance of these guests

electioneer  Byron is writing at a time of no real democracy, when most constituencies or boroughs were effectively under the control of wealthy individuals.

'come... utmost'  See Macbeth, 3, 1, 70-1.

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) Aiai τάν Κυθερειαν 'Woe for Cytherea [Aphrodite]', from third-century-B.C 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 individu­
als 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 contempor­
aneous, 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 undoubt­
edly 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, multivoiced, 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 tomb\(^1\) which, gleaming o’er the cliff,
First greets the homeward-veering skiff,
High o'er the land he saved in vain –
When shall such hero live again?

Fair clime! where every season smiles
Benignant o'er those blessed isles,
Which seen from far Colonna's height,
Make glad the heart that hails the sight,
And lend to loneliness delight.
There mildly dimpling - Ocean's cheek
Reflects the tints of many a peak
Caught by the laughing tides that lave
These Edens of the eastern wave;
And if at times a transient breeze
Break the blue chrystal of the seas,
Or sweep one blossom from the trees,
How welcome is each gentle air,
That wakes and wafts the odours there!
For there - the Rose o'er crag or vale,
Sultana of the Nightingale,

The maid for whom his melody –
His thousand songs are heard on high,
Blooms blushing to her lover's tale;
His queen, the garden queen, his Rose,
Unbent by winds, unchill'd by snows,
Far from the winters of the west
By every breeze and season blest,
Returns the sweets by nature given
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;
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,
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,
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,
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,
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 –
’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!
Spark of that flame – perchance of heavenly birth –
Which gleams – but warms no more its cherish’d earth!

Climе 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
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,
And leave his sons a hope, a fame,
They too will rather die than shame;
For Freedom’s battle once begun,
Bequeathed by bleeding Sire to Son,
Though baffled oft is ever won.
Bear witness, Greece, thy living page,
Attest it many a deathless age!
While kings in dusty darkness hid,
Have left a nameless pyramid,
Thy heroes – though the general doom
Hath swept the column from their tomb,
A mightier monument command,
The mountains of 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
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,
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.
In vain might Liberty invoke
The spirit to its bondage broke,
Or raise the neck that courts the yoke:
No more her sorrows I bewail,
Yet this will be a mournful tale,
And they who listen may believe,
Who heard it first had cause to grieve.

Far, dark, along the blue sea glancing,
The shadows of the rocks advancing,
Start on the fisher's eye like boat
Of island-pirate or Mainote;
And fearful for his light caique
He shuns the near but doubtful creek,
Though worn and weary with his toil,
And cumber'd with his scaly spoil,
Slowly, yet strongly, plies the oar,
Till Port Leone's safer shore
Receives him by the lovely light
That best becomes an Eastern night.

Who thundering comes on blackest steed?
With slacken'd bit and hoof of speed,
Beneath the clattering iron's sound
The cavern'd echoes wake around
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!
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
My gaze of wonder as he flew:
Though like a demon of the night
He passed and vanished from my sight;
His aspect and his air impressed
A troubled memory on my breast;
And long upon my startled ear
Rung his dark courser’s hoofs of fear.
He spurs his steed – he nears the steep,
That jutting shadows o’er the deep –
He winds around – he hurries by –
The rock relieves him from mine eye –
For well I ween unwelcome he
Whose glance is fixed on those that flee;
And not a 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 –
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
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 –
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 –
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;
But in that instant, o’er his soul
Winters of Memory seemed to roll,
And gather in that drop of time
A life of pain, an age of crime.
O’er him who loves, or hates, or fears,
Such moment pours the grief of years –
What felt he then – at once opprest
By all that most distracts the breast?
That pause – which pondered o’er his fate,
Oh, who its dreary length shall date!
Though in Time’s record nearly nought,
It was Eternity to Thought!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
To turn a palace to a tomb;
He came, he went, like the Simoom,
That harbinger of fate and gloom,
Beneath whose widely-wasting breath
The very cypress droops to death –
Dark tree – still sad, when others’ grief is fled,
The only constant mourner o’er the dead!

The steed is vanished from the stall,
No serf is seen in Hassan’s hall;
The lonely Spider’s thin grey pall
Waves slowly widening o’er the wall;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 –
As springing high the silver dew
In whirls fantastically flew,
And flung luxurious coolness round
The air, and verdure o’er the ground. –
’Twas sweet, when cloudless stars were bright,
To view the wave of watery light,
And hear its melody by night. –
And oft had Hassan’s Childhood played
Around the verge of that cascade;
And oft upon his mother’s breast
That sound had harmonized his rest;
And oft had Hassan’s Youth along
Its bank been 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
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
Might wake an Echo like relief –
At least ’twould say, ‘all are not gone;
There lingers Life, though but in one’ –
For many a gilded chamber’s there,
Which Solitude might well forbear;
Within that dome as yet Decay
Hath slowly worked her cankering way –
But Gloom is gathered o’er the gate,
Nor there the Fakir’s\textsuperscript{17} self will wait;
Nor there will wandering Dervise stay,
For Bounty cheers not his delay;
Nor there will weary stranger halt
To bless the sacred ‘bread and salt’.\textsuperscript{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,
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:\textsuperscript{19}
‘Ho! who art thou!’ – ‘this low salam
Replies of Moslem faith I am.’
‘The burthen ye so gently bear,
Seems one that claims your utmost care,
And, doubtless, holds some precious freight,
My humble bark would gladly wait.'

'Thou speakest sooth, 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,
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;
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 queen of eastern spring,
O'er emerald meadows of Kashmeer
Invites the young pursuer near,
And leads him on from flower to flower
A weary chase and wasted hour,
Then leaves him, as it soars on high
With panting heart and tearful eye:
So Beauty lures the full-grown child
With hue as bright, and wing as wild;
A chase of idle hopes and fears,
Begun in folly, closed in tears.
If won, to equal ills betrayed,
Woe waits the insect and the maid,
A life of pain, the loss of peace,
From infant's play, 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,
Ah! where shall either victim rest?
Can this with faded pinion soar
From rose to tulip as before?
Or Beauty, blighted in an hour,
Find joy within her broken bower?
No: gayer insects fluttering by
Ne'er droop the wing o'er those that die,
And lovelier things have mercy shown
To every failing but their own,
And every woe a tear can claim
Except an erring sister's shame.

The Mind, that broods o'er guilty woes,
   Is like the 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,
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,  
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  
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,  
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 Nubians 22 tell,  
Who did not watch their charge too well;  
But others say, that on that night,  
By pale Phingari's 23 trembling light,  
The Giaour upon his jet-black steed  
Was seen — but seen alone to speed  
With bloody spur along the shore,  
Nor maid nor page behind him bore.

Her eye's dark charm 'twere vain to tell,  
But gaze on that of the Gazelle,  
It will assist thy fancy well,  
As large, as languishingly dark,  
But Soul 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
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?
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
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;
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,
Each arm'd as best becomes a man
With arquebuss 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,
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;
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,
The rest in lengthening line the while
Wind slowly through the long defile;
Above, the mountain rears a peak,
Where vultures whet the thirsty beak,
And theirs may be a feast tonight,
Shall tempt them down ere morrow's light.
Beneath, a river's wintry stream
Has shrunk before the summer beam,
And left a channel bleak and bare,
Save shrubs that spring to perish there.
Each side the midway path there lay
Small broken crags of granite gray,
By time or mountain lightning riven,
From summits clad in mists of heaven;
For where is he that hath beheld
The peak of Liakura\textsuperscript{29} 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'.\textsuperscript{30}
The Chiaus\textsuperscript{31} spake, and as he said,
A bullet whistled o'er his head;
The foremost Tartar bites the ground!
Scarcely 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,
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
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,
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,
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,
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 thund’ring clash,
The lightnings of the waters flash
In awful whiteness o’er the shore,
That shines and shakes beneath the roar;
Thus – as the stream and ocean greet,
With waves that madden as they meet –
Thus join the bands whom mutual wrong,
And fate and fury drive along.
The bickering sabres’ shivering jar;
And pealing wide – or ringing near,
Its echoes on the throbbing ear,
The deathshot hissing from afar –
The shock – the shout – the groan of war –
Reverberate along that vale,
More suited to the 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,
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;
His flowing robe by falchion\textsuperscript{34} 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,\textsuperscript{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,
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:  
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,  
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 courser less swift?  
Oh, false reproach! yon Tartar now  
Has gained our nearest mountain's brow,  
And warily the steep descends,  
And now within the valley bends;  
And he bears the gift at his saddle bow –  
How could I deem his courser slow?  
Right well my largess shall repay  
His welcome speed, and weary way.' –

The Tartar lighted at the gate,  
But scarce upheld his fainting weight;  
His swarthy visage spake distress,  
But this might be from weariness;  
His garb with sanguine spots was dyed,  
But these might be from his courser's side; –
He drew the token from his vest –
Angel of Death! 'tis Hassan's cloven crest!
His calpac rent – his caftan red –
'Lady, a fearful bride thy Son hath wed –
Me, not from mercy, did they spare,
But this empurpled pledge to bear.
Peace to the brave! whose blood is spilt –
Woe to the Giaour! for his the guilt.'

A turban 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 Osmanlie
As e'er at Mecca bent the knee;
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 land –
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,
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' throne;
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 Vampire\(^{40}\) sent,
Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent;
Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
And suck the blood of all thy race,
There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
At midnight drain the stream of life;
Yet loathe the banquet which perforce
Must feed thy livid living corse;
Thy victims ere they yet expire
Shall know the 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 belov’d of all,
Shall bless thee with a father’s name –
That word shall wrap thy heart in flame!
Yet must thou end thy task, and mark
Her cheek’s last tinge, her eye’s last spark,
And the last glassy glance must view
Which freezes o’er its lifeless blue;
Then with unhallowed hand shalt tear
The tresses of her yellow hair,
Of which in life a lock when shorn,
Affection’s fondest pledge was worn;
But now is borne away by thee,
Memorial of thine agony!
Wet with thine own best blood shall drip,
Thy gnashing tooth and haggard lip;
Then stalking to thy sullen grave –
Go – and with Gouls and Afrits rave;
Till these in horror shrink away
From spectre more accursed than they!.

‘How name ye yon lone Caloyer?\(^{41}\)
His features I have scann’d before
In mine own land – ’tis many a year,
Since, dashing by the lonely shore,
I saw him urge as fleet a steed
As ever 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
For some dark deed he will not name.

But never at our vesper prayer,
Nor e'er before confession chair
Kneels he, nor reck 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 crosst,
And here ascended from the coast,
Yet seems he not of Othman race,
But only Christian in his face:
I'd judge him some stray renegade,
Repentant of the change he made,
Save that he shuns our holy shrine,
Nor tastes the sacred bread and wine.

Great largess to these walls he brought,
And thus our abbot's favour bought;
But were I Prior, not a day
Should brook such stranger's further stay,
Or pent within our penance cell
Should doom him there for aye to dwell.

Much in his visions mutters he
Of maiden 'whelmed\(^{42}\) 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,
And lures to leap into the wave.'

Dark and unearthly is the scowl
That glares beneath his dusky cowl –
The flash of that dilating eye
Reveals too much of times gone by –
Though varying – indistinct its hue,
Oft will his glance the gazer rue –
For in it lurks that nameless spell
Which speaks – itself unspeakable –
A spirit yet unquelled and high
That claims and keeps ascendancy,
And like the bird whose pinions quake –
But cannot fly the gazing snake –
Will others quail beneath his look,
Nor 'scape the glance they scarce can brook.
From him the half-affrighted Friar
When met alone would fain retire –
As if that eye and bitter smile
Transferred to others fear and guile –
Not oft to smile descendeth he,
And when he doth 'tis sad to see
That he but mocks at Misery.
How that pale lip will curl and quiver!
Then fix once more as if for ever –
As if his sorrow or disdain
Forbade him e'er to smile again. –
Well were it so – such ghastly mirth
From joyaunce ne'er deriv'd its birth. –
But sadder still it were to trace
What once were feelings in that face –
Time hath not yet the features fixed,
But brighter traits with evil mixed –
And there are hues not always faded,
Which speak a mind not all degraded
Even by the crimes through which it waded –
The common crowd but see the gloom
Of wayward deeds – and fitting doom –
The close observer can espy
A noble soul, and lineage high. –
Alas! though both bestowed in vain,
Which Grief could change – and Guilt could stain –
It was no vulgar tenement
To which such lofty gifts were lent,
And still with little less than dread
On such the sight is riveted.
  The roofless cot decayed and rent,
    Will scarce delay the passer by
  The tower by war or tempest bent,
While yet may frown one battlement,
    Demands and daunts the stranger's eye
Each ivied arch - and pillar lone,
Pleads haughtily for glories gone!

'His floating robe around him folding,
  Slow sweeps he through the columned aisle
With dread beheld - with gloom beholding
    The rites that sanctify the pile.
But when the anthem shakes the choir,
And kneel the monks - his steps retire
  By yonder lone and wavering torch
His aspect glares within the porch;
There will he pause till all is done
And hear the prayer - but utter none
  See - by the half-illumin'd wall
His hood fly back - his dark hair fall
That pale brow wildly wreathing round,
As if the Gorgon there had bound
The sablest of the serpent-braid
That o'er her fearful forehead strayed.
For he declines the convent oath,
And leaves those locks' unhallowed growth
  But wears our garb in all beside;
And - not from piety but pride
Gives wealth to walls that never heard
Of his one holy vow nor word.
  Lo! - mark ye - as the harmony
Peals louder praises to the sky
That livid cheek - that stoney air
Of mixed defiance and despair!
Saint Francis! keep him from the shrine!
Else may we dread the wrath divine
  Made manifest by awful sign.
If ever evil angel bore
The form of mortal, such he wore -
By all my hope of sins forgiven
Such looks are not of earth nor heaven!

To love the softest hearts are prone,
But such can ne’er be all his own;
Too timid in his woes to share,
Too meek to meet, or brave, despair;
And sterner hearts alone may feel
The wound that time can never heal.
The rugged metal of the mine
Must burn before its surface shine,
But 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!

Thus passion’s fire, and woman’s art,
Can turn and tame the sterner heart;
From these its form and tone are ta’en,
And what they make it, must remain,
But break – before it bend again.

If solitude succeed to grief,
Release from pain is slight relief;
The vacant bosom’s wilderness
Might thank the pang that made it less.

We loathe what none are left to share –
Even bliss – ’twere woe alone to bear;
The heart once left thus desolate,
Must fly at last for ease – to hate.
It is as if the dead could feel
The icy worm around them steal,
And shudder, as the reptiles creep
To revel o’er their rotting sleep
Without the power to scare away
The cold consumers of their clay!

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 –
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!

'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
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 crawls
Most noxious o'er a dungeon's walls,
Than pass my dull, unvarying days,
Condemn’d to meditate and gaze –
Yet, lurks a wish within my breast
For rest – but not to feel ’tis rest –
Soon shall my fate that wish fulfil;
   And I shall sleep without the dream
Of what I was, and would be still;
   Dark as to thee my deeds may seem –
My memory now is but the tomb
Of joys long dead – my hope – their doom –
Though better to have died with those
Than bear a life of lingering woes –
My spirit shrunk not to sustain
The searching throes of ceaseless pain;
Nor sought the self-accorded grave
Of ancient fool, and modern knave:
Yet death I have not fear’d to meet,
And in the field it had been sweet
Had danger wooed me on to move
The slave of glory, not of love.
I’ve brav’d it – not for honour’s boast;
I smile at laurels won or lost. –
To such let others carve their way,
For high renown, or hireling pay;
But place again before my eyes
Aught that I deem a worthy prize; –
The maid I love – the man I hate –
And I will hunt the steps of fate,
(To save or slay – as these require)
Through rending steel, and rolling fire;
Nor need’st thou doubt this speech from one
Who would but do – what he hath done.
Death is but what the haughty brave –
The weak must bear – the wretch must crave –
Then let Life go to him who gave:
I have not quailed to danger’s brow –
When high and happy – need I now?

‘I lov’d her, friar! nay, adored –
   But these are words that all can use –
I prov’d it more in deed than word –
There’s blood upon that dinted sword –
A stain its steel can never lose:
'Twas shed for her, who died for me,
It warmed the heart of one abhorred:
Nay, start not – no – nor bend thy knee,
Nor midst my sins such act record,
Thou wilt absolve me from the deed,
For he was hostile to thy creed!
The very name of Nazarene
Was wormwood to his Paynim spleen,
Ungrateful fool! since but for brands,
Well wielded in some hardy hands;
And wounds by Galileans given,
The surest pass to Turkish 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,
And if it dares enough, 'twere hard
If passion met not some reward –
No matter how – or where – or why,
I did not vainly seek – nor sigh:
Yet sometimes with remorse in vain
I wish she had not lov'd again.
She died – I dare not tell thee how,
But look – 'tis written on my brow!
There read of Cain the curse and crime,
In characters unworn by time:
Still, ere thou dost condemn me – pause –
Not mine the act, though I the cause;
Yet did he but what I had done
Had she been false to more than one;
Faithless to him – he gave the blow,
But true to me – I laid him low;
Howe'er 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,
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 –
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;
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 piling 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,
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 possesst,
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.

I grieve, but not, my holy guide!
For him who dies, but her who died;
She sleeps beneath the wandering wave –
Ah! had she but an earthly grave,
This breaking heart and throbbing head
Should seek and share her narrow bed.
She was a form of life and light –
That seen – became a part of sight,
And rose – where’er I turned mine eye –
The Morning-star of Memory!  

‘Yes, Love indeed is light from heaven –
    A spark of that immortal fire
With angels 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!

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,
    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 –
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,
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 –
Leila – each thought was only thine! –
My good, my guilt, my weal, my woe,
My hope on high – my all below.
Earth holds no other like to thee,
Or if it doth, in vain for me –
For worlds I dare not view the dame
Resembling thee, yet not the same.
The very crimes that mar my youth,
This bed of death – attest my truth –
’Tis all too late – thou wert – thou art
The cherished madness of my heart!

‘And she was lost – and yet I breathed,
But not the breath of human life –
A serpent round my heart was wreathed,
   And stung my every thought to strife. —
Alike all time — abhorred all place,
Shuddering I shrunk from Nature's face,
Where every hue that charmed before
The blackness of my bosom wore: —
The rest — thou dost already know,
And all my sins and half my woe —
But talk no more of penitence,
Thou see'st I soon shall part from hence —
And if thy holy tale were true —
The deed that's done can'tst 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'tst bid my Leila live,
Then will I sue thee to forgive;
Then plead my cause in that high place
Where purchased masses52 profer 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 —
   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,
   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
To bless his memory ere I died;
But heaven in wrath would turn away,
If Guilt should for the guiltless pray.
I do not ask him not to blame –
    Too gentle he to wound my name;
And what have I to do with fame?
I do not ask him not to mourn,
    Such cold request might sound like scorn;
And what than friendship's manly tear
May better grace a brother's bier?
But bear this ring – his own of old –
And tell him – what thou dost behold!
The 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;
But could not, for my burning brow
Throb'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.
'Twas then, I tell thee, father! then
I saw her – yes – she liv'd again;
And shining in her white symar,
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.
I wander, father! for my soul
Is fleeting towards the final goal;
I saw her, friar! and I rose,
Forgetful of our former woes;
And rushing from my couch, I dart,
And clasp her to my desperate heart;
I clasp – what is it that I clasp?
No breathing form within my grasp,
No heart that beats reply to mine,
Yet, Leila! yet the form is thine!
And art thou, dearest, 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 –
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
Thou com’st to claim a calmer grave,
Oh! pass thy dewy fingers o’er
This brow that then will burn no more;
Or place them on my hopeless heart –
But, shape or shade! – whate’er thou art,
In mercy, ne’er again depart –
Or farther with thee bear my soul,
Than winds can waft – or waters roll! –

‘Such is my name, and such my tale,
Confessor – to thy secret ear,
I breathe the sorrows I bewail,
And thank thee for the generous tear
This glazing eye could never shed.
Then lay me with the humblest dead,
And save the cross above my head,
Be neither name nor emblem spread
By prying stranger to be read,
Or stay the passing pilgrim’s tread.’

He pass’d – nor of his name and race
Hath left a token or a trace,
Save what the father must not say
Who shrived him on his dying day;
This broken tale was all we knew
Of her he 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 Kislar Aga.

10 (p. 606) *Port Leone* the port of Piraeus.

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.


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;
Not thou, vain lord of wantonness and ease!
Whom slumber soothes not – pleasure cannot please –
Oh, who can tell, save he whose heart hath tried,
And danced in triumph o’er the waters wide,
The exulting sense – the pulse’s maddening play,
That thrills the wanderer of that trackless way?
That for itself can woo the approaching fight,
And turn what some deem danger to delight;
That seeks what cravens shun with more than zeal,
And where the feebler faint can only feel –
Feel – to the rising bosom’s inmost core,
Its hope awaken and its spirit soar?
No dread of death if with us die our foes –
Save that it seems even duller than repose:
Come when it will – we snatch the life of life –
When lost – what recks it but disease or strife?
Let him who crawls enamour’d of decay,
Cling to his couch, and sicken years away:
Heave his thick breath, and shake his palsied head;
Ours – the fresh turf, and not the feverish bed.
While gasp by gasp he falters forth his soul,
Ours with one pang – one bound – escapes control.
His corse may boast its urn and narrow cave,
And they who loath’d his life may gild his grave:
Ours are the tears, though few, sincerely shed,
When Ocean shrouds and sepulchres our dead.
For us, even banquets fond regret supply
In the red cup that crowns our memory;
And the brief epitaph in danger’s day,
When those who win at length divide the prey,
And cry, Remembrance saddening o’er each brow,
How had the brave who fell exulted now!’

Such were the notes that from the Pirate’s isle
Around the kindling watch-fire rang the while:
Such were the sounds that thrill’d the rocks along,
And unto ears as rugged seem’d a song!
In scatter’d groups upon the golden sand,
They game – carouse – converse – or whet the brand:
Select the arms – to each his blade assign,
And careless eye the blood that dims its shine;
Repair the boat, replace the helm or oar,
While others straggling muse along the shore;
For the wild bird the busy springes set,
Or spread beneath the sun the dripping net;
Gaze where some distant sail a speck supplies,
With all the thirsting 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.
But who that Chief? his name on every shore
Is famed and fear’d – they ask and know no more.
With these he mingles not but to command;
Few are his words, but keen his eye and hand.
Ne’er seasons he with mirth their jovial mess,
But they forgive his silence for success.
Ne’er for his lip the purpling cup they fill,
That goblet passes him untasted still –
And for his fare – the rudest of his crew
Would that, in turn, have pass’d untasted too;
Earth's coarsest bread, the garden's homeliest roots,
And scarce the summer luxury of fruits,
His short repast in humbleness supply
With all a hermit's board would scarce deny.
But while he shuns the grosser joys of sense,
His mind seems nourish'd by that abstinence.
'Steer to that shore!' - they sail. 'Do this!' - 'tis done:
'Now form and follow me!' - the spoil is won.
Thus prompt his accents and his actions still,
And all obey and few inquire his will;
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 doubled^2 is the cape - our bay
Receives that prow which proudly spurns the spray.
How gloriously her gallant course she goes!
Her white wings flying - never from her foes -
She walks the waters like a thing of life,
And seems to dare the elements to strife.
Who would not brave the battle-fire, the wreck,
To move the monarch of her peopled deck?

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.
'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!
The tidings spread, and gathering grows the crowd;  
The hum of voices, and the laughter loud,  
And woman's gentler anxious tone is heard –  
Friends', husbands', lovers' names in each dear word:  

'Oh! are they safe? we ask not of success –  
But shall we see them? will their accents bless?  
From where the battle roars, the billows chafe,  
They doubtless boldly did – but who are safe?  
Here let them haste to gladden and surprise,  
And kiss the doubt from these delighted eyes!'  

'Twhere is our chief? for him we bear report –  
And doubt that joy – which hails our coming – short;  
Yet thus sincere, 'tis cheering, though so brief;  
But, Juan! instant guide us to our chief:  

Our greeting paid, we'll feast on our return,  
And all shall hear what each may wish to learn.'  
Ascending slowly by the rock-hewn way,  
To where his watch-tower beetle's o'er the bay,  
By bushy brake, and wild flowers blossoming,  
And freshness breathing from each silver spring,  
Whose scatter'd streams from granite basins burst,  
Leap into life, and sparkling woo your thirst;  
From crag to cliff they mount – Near yonder cave,  
What lonely straggler looks along the wave?  

In pensive posture leaning on the brand,  
Not oft a resting-staff to that red hand?  
'Tis he – 'tis Conrad – here, as wont, alone;  
On – Juan! – on – and make our purpose known.  
The bark he views – and tell him we would greet  
His ear with tidings he must quickly meet:  
We dare not yet approach – thou know'st his mood  
When strange or uninvited steps intrude.'  

Him Juan sought, and told of their intent; –  
He spake not, but a sign express'd assent.  
These Juan calls – they come – to their salute  
He bends him slightly, but his lips are mute.  
'These letters, Chief, are from the Greek – the spy,
Who still proclaims our spoil or peril nigh:
Whate’er his tidings, we can well report,
Much that’ – ‘Peace, peace!’ – he cuts their prating short.
Wondering they turn, abash’d, while each to each
Conjecture whispers in his muttering speech:
They watch his glance with many a stealing look,
To gather how that eye the tidings took;
But, this as if he guess’d, with head aside,
Perchance from some emotion, doubt, or pride,
He read the scroll – ‘My tablets, Juan, hark –
Where is Gonsalvo?’

‘In the anchor’d bark.’
‘There let him stay – to him this order bear –
Back to your duty – for my course prepare:
Myself this enterprise tonight will share.’

‘Tonight, Lord Conrad!’

‘Ay! at set of sun:
The breeze will freshen when the day is done.
My corslet, cloak – one hour and we are gone.
Sling on thy bugle – see that free from rust
My carbine-lock springs worthy of my trust;
Be the edge sharpen’d of my boarding-brand,
And give its guard more room to fit my hand.
This let the armourer with speed dispose;
Last time, it more fatigued my arm than foes:
Mark that the signal-gun be duly fired,
To tell us when the hour of stay’s expired.’

They make obeisance, and retire in haste,
Too soon to seek again the watery waste:
Yet they repine not – so that Conrad guides;
And who dare question aught that he decides?
That man of loneliness and mystery,
Scarce seen to smile, and seldom heard to sigh;
Whose name appals the fiercest of his crew,
And tints each swarthy cheek with sallower hue;
Still sways their souls with that commanding art
That dazzles, leads, yet chills the vulgar heart.
What is that spell, that thus his lawless train
Confess and envy, yet oppose in vain?
What should it be, that thus their faith can bind?
The power of Thought – the magic of the Mind!
Link’d with success, assumed and kept with skill,
That moulds another’s weakness to its will;
Wields with their hands, but, still to these unknown,
Makes even their mightiest deeds appear his own.
Such hath it been – shall be – beneath the sun
The many still must labour for the one!
’Tis Nature’s doom – but let the wretch who toils
Accuse not, hate not him who wears the spoils.
Oh! if he knew the weight of splendid chains,
How light the balance of his humbler pains!

Unlike the heroes of each ancient race,
Demons in act, but Gods at least in face,
In Conrad’s form seems little to admire,
Though his dark eyebrow shades a glance of fire:
Robust but not Herculean – to the sight
No giant frame sets forth his common height;
Yet, in the whole, who paused to look again,
Saw more than marks the crowd of vulgar men;
They gaze and marvel how – and still confess
That thus it is, but why they cannot guess.
Sun-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,
As if within that murkiness of mind
Work’d feelings fearful, and yet undefined;
Such might it be – that none could truly tell –
Too close inquiry his stern glance would quell.
There breathe but few whose aspect might defy
The full encounter of his searching eye;
He had the skill, when Cunning’s gaze would seek
To probe his heart and watch his changing cheek,
At once the observer's purpose to espy,
And on himself roll back his scrutiny,
Lest he to Conrad rather should betray
Some secret thought, than drag that chief's to day.
There was a laughing Devil in his sneer,
That raised emotions both of rage and fear;
And where his frown of hatred darkly fell,
Hope withering fled, and Mercy sigh'd farewell!

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;
The lip's least curl, the lightest paleness thrown
Along the govern'd aspect, speak alone
Of deeper passions; and to judge their mien,
He, who would see, must be himself unseen.
Then -- with the hurried tread, the upward eye,
The clenched hand, the pause of agony,
That listens, starting, lest the step too near
Approach intrusive on that mood of fear;
Then -- with each feature working from the heart,
With feelings, loosed to strengthen -- not depart,
That rise, convulse, contend -- that freeze, or glow,
Flush in the cheek, or damp upon the brow;
Then, Stranger! if thou canst, and tremblest not,
Behold his soul -- the rest that soothes his lot!
Mark how that lone and blighted bosom sears
The scathing thought of execrated years!
Behold -- but who hath seen, or e'er shall see,
Man as himself -- the secret spirit free?

11

Yet was not Conrad thus by Nature sent
To lead the guilty -- guilt's worse instrument --
His soul was changed, before his deeds had driven
Him forth to war with man and forfeit heaven.
Warp'd by the world in Disappointment's school,
In words too wise, in conduct there a fool;
Too firm to yield, and far too proud to stoop,
Doom'd by his very virtues for a dupe,
He cursed those virtues as the cause of ill,
And not the traitors who betray’d him still;
Nor deem’d that gifts bestow’d on better men
Had left him joy, and means to give again.  
Fear’d, shunn’d, belied, ere youth had lost her force,
He hated man too much to feel remorse,
And thought the voice of wrath a sacred call,
To pay the injuries of some on all.
He knew himself a villain – but he deem’d
The rest no better than the thing he seem’d;
And scorn’d the best as hypocrites who hid
Those deeds the bolder spirit plainly did.
He knew himself detested, but he knew
The hearts that loath’d him, crouch’d and dreaded too.  
Lone, wild, and strange, he stood alike exempt
From all affection and from all contempt:
His name could sadden, and his acts surprise;
But they that fear’d him dared not to despise:
Man spurns the worm, but pauses ere he wake
The slumbering venom of the folded snake:
The first may turn, but not avenge the blow;
The last expires, but leaves no living foe;
Fast to the doom’d offender’s form it clings,
And he may crush – not conquer – still it stings!

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冷ly pass’d them by;
Though many a beauty droop’d in prison’d bower,
None ever sooth’d his most unguarded hour.
Yes – it was Love – if thoughts of tenderness
Tried in temptation, strengthen’d by distress,
Unmoved by absence, firm in every clime,
And yet – oh more than all! untired by time;
Which nor defeated hope, nor baffled wile,
Could render sullen were she near to smile,
Nor rage could fire, nor sickness fret to vent
On her one murmur of his discontent;
Which still would meet with joy, with calmness part,
Lest that his look of grief should reach her heart;
Which nought removed, nor menaced to remove –
If there be love in mortals – this was love!
He was a villain – ay, reproaches shower
On him – but not the passion, nor its power,
Which only proved, all other virtues gone,
Not guilt itself could quench this loveliest one!

13

He paused a moment – till his hastening men
Pass’d the first winding downward to the glen.
‘Strange tidings! – many a peril have I pass’d,
Nor know I why this next appears the last!
Yet so my heart forebodes, but must not fear,
Nor shall my followers find me falter here.
’Tis rash to meet, but surer death to wait
Till here they hunt us to undoubted fate;
And, if my plan but hold, and Fortune smile,
We’ll furnish mourners for our funeral pile.
Ay, let them slumber – peaceful be their dreams!
Morn ne’er awoke them with such brilliant beams
As kindle high 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;
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.'

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.

2
'There, in its centre, a sepulchral lamp
Burns the slow flame, eternal, but unseen;
Which not the darkness of despair can damp,
Though vain its ray as it had never been.

3
'Remember me – Oh! pass not thou my grave
Without one thought whose relics there recline:
The only pang my bosom dare not brave
Must be to find forgetfulness in thine.

4
'My fondest, faintest, latest accents hear –
Grief for the dead not virtue can reprove;
Then give me all I ever ask'd – a tear, 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!  
Oh! many a night on this lone couch reclined,  
My dreaming fear with storms hath wing'd the wind,  
And deem'd the breath that faintly fann'd thy sail  
The murmuring prelude of the ruder gale;  
Though soft, it seem'd the low prophetic dirge,  
That mourn'd thee floating on the savage surge;  
Still would I rise to rouse the beacon fire,  
Lest spies less true should let the blaze expire;  
And many a restless hour outwatch'd each star,  
And morning came - and still thou wert afar.  
Oh! how the chill blast on my bosom blew,  
And day broke dreary on my troubled view,  
And still I gazed and gazed - and not a prow  
Was granted to my tears, my truth, my vow!  
At length '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  
As bright as this invites us not to roam:  
Thou know'st it is not peril that I fear,  
I only tremble when thou art not here;  
Then not for mine, but that far dearer life,  
Which flies from love and languishes for strife -  
How strange that heart, to me so tender still,  
Should war with nature and its better will!'  

'Yea, strange indeed - that heart hath long been changed;  
Worm-like 'twas trampled, adder-like avenged,  
Without one hope on earth beyond thy love,  
And scarce a glimpse of mercy from above.  
Yet the same feeling which thou dost condemn,  
My very love to thee is hate to them,  
So closely mingling here, that disentwined,  
I cease to love thee when I love mankind:
Yet dread not this – the proof of all the past
Assures the future that my love will last;
But – oh, Medora! nerve thy gentler heart:
This hour again – but not for long – we part.’
‘This hour we part – my heart foreboded this:
Thus ever fade my fairy dreams of bliss.
This hour – it cannot be – this hour away!
Yon bark hath hardly anchor’d in the bay:
Her consort still is absent, and her crew
Have need of rest before they toil anew:
My love! thou mock’st my weakness; and wouldst steel
My breast before the time when it must feel;
But trifle now no more with my distress,
Such mirth hath less of play than bitterness.
Be silent, Conrad! – dearest! come and share
The feast these hands delighted to prepare;
Light toil! to cull and dress thy frugal fare!
See, I have pluck’d the fruit that promised best,
And where not sure, perplex’d, but pleased, I guess’d
At such as seem’d the fairest; thrice the hill
My steps have wound to try the coolest rill;
Yes! thy sherbet tonight will sweetly flow,
See how it sparkles in its vase of snow!
The grapes’ gay juice thy bosom never cheers;
Thou more than Moslem when the cup appears:
Think not I mean to chide – for I rejoice
What others deem a penance is thy choice.
But come, the board is spread; our silver lamp
Is trimm’d, and heeds not the sirocco’s damp:
Then shall my handmaids while the time along,
And join with me the dance, or wake the song;
Or my guitar, which still thou lov’st to hear,
Shall soothe or lull – or, should it vex thine ear,
We’ll turn the tale, by Ariosto told,
Of fair Olympia loved and left of old.
Why, thou wert worse than he who broke his vow
To that lost damsels, shouldst thou leave me now;
Or even that traitor chief – I’ve seen thee smile,
When the clear sky show’d Ariadne’s Isle,
Which I have pointed from these cliffs the while:
And thus half sportive, half in fear, I said,
Lest time should 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!
If there be life below, and hope above,
He will return – but now, the moments bring
The time of parting with redoubled wing:
The why, the where – what boots it now to tell?
Since all must end in that wild word – farewell!
Yet would I fain – did time allow – disclose –
Fear not – these are no formidable foes;
And here shall watch a more than wonted guard,
For sudden siege and long defence prepared:
Nor be thou lonely, though thy lord’s away,
Our matrons and thy handmaids with thee stay;
And this thy comfort – that, when next we meet,
Security shall make repose more sweet.
List! – ’tis the bugle!’ – Juan shrilly blew –
‘One kiss – one more – another – Oh! Adieu!’

She rose – she sprung – she clung to his embrace,
Till his heart heaved beneath her hidden face:
He dared not raise to his that deep-blue eye,
Which downcast droop’d in tearless agony.
Her long fair hair lay floating o’er his arms,
In all the wildness of dishevell’d charms;
Scarce beat that bosom where his image dwelt
So full – that feeling seem’d almost unfelt!
Hark – peals the thunder of the signal-gun!
It told ’twas sunset, and he cursed that sun.
Again – again – that form he madly press’d,
Which mutely clasp’d imploringly caress’d!
And tottering to the couch his bride he bore,
One moment gazed, as if to gaze no more;
Felt that for him earth held but her alone,
Kiss’d her cold forehead – turn’d – is Conrad gone?

‘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. 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: 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!' From crag to crag descending, swiftly sped Stern Conrad down, nor once he turn'd his head; But shrunk whene'er the windings of his way Forced on his eye what he would not survey, His lone but lovely dwelling on the steep, That hail'd him first when homeward from the deep: And she – the dim and melancholy star, Whose ray of beauty reach'd him from afar, On her he must not gaze, he must not think, There he might rest – but on Destruction's brink: Yet once almost he stopp'd, and nearly gave His fate to chance, his projects to the wave: But no – it must not be – a worthy chief May melt, but not betray to woman's grief. He sees his bark, he notes how fair the wind, And sternly gathers all his might of mind: Again he hurries on – and as he hears The 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 seboy on the mast,
The anchors rise, the sails unfurling fast,
The waving kerchiefs of the crowd that urge
That mute adieu to those who stem the surge;
And more than all, his blood-red flag aloft,
He marvell'd how his heart could seem so soft.

Fire in his glance, and wildness in his breast,
He feels of all his former self possesst;
He bounds – he flies – until his footsteps reach
The verge where ends the cliff, begins the beach,
There checks his speed; but pauses less to breathe
The breezy freshness of the deep beneath,
Than there his wonted statelier step renew;
Nor rush, disturb’d by haste, to vulgar view:
For well had Conrad learn’d to curb the crowd,
By arts that veil, and oft preserve the proud;
His was the lofty port, the distant mien,
That seems to shun the sight – and awes if seen:
The solemn aspect, and the high-born eye,
That checks low mirth, but lacks not courtesy;
All these he wielded to command assent:
But where he wish’d to win, so well unbent,
That kindness cancell’d fear in those who heard,
And others’ gifts show’d mean beside his word,
When echo’d to the heart as from his own
His deep yet tender melody of tone:

But such was foreign to his wonted mood,
He cared not what he soften’d, but subdued:
The evil passions of his youth had made
Him value less who loved – than what obey’d.

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.’

Soon firmly girded on, and lightly slung,
His belt and cloak were o’er his shoulders flung:
‘Call Pedro here!’ He comes – and Conrad bends,
With all the courtesy he deign’d his friends;
‘Receive these tablets, and peruse with care,
Words of high trust and truth are graven there;
Double the guard, and when Anselmo’s bark
Arrives, let him alike these orders mark:
In three days (serve the breeze) the sun shall shine
On our return – till then all peace be thine!’
This said, his brother Pirate’s hand he wrung,
Then to his boat with haughty gesture sprung.
Flash’d the dipt oars, and sparkling with the stroke,
Around the waves’ phosphoric brightness broke;
They gain the vessel – on the deck he stands, –
Shrieks the shrill whistle, ply the busy hands –
He marks how well the ship her helm obeys,
How gallant all her crew, and deigns to praise.
His eyes of pride to young Gonsalvo turn –
Why doth he start, and inly seem to mourn?
Alas! those eyes beheld his rocky tower,
And live a moment o’er the parting hour;
She – his Medora – did she mark the prow?
Ah! never loved he half so much as now!
But much must yet be done ere dawn of day –
Again he mans himself and turns away;
Down to the cabin with Gonsalvo bends,
And there unfolds his plan, his means, and ends;
Before them burns the lamp, and spreads the chart,
And all that speaks and aids the naval art;
They to the midnight watch protract debate;
To anxious eyes what hour is ever late?
Meantime, the steady breeze serenely blew,
And fast and falcon-like the vessel flew;
Pass’d the high headlands of each clustering isle,
To gain their port – long – long ere morning smile:
And soon the night-glass through the narrow bay
Discovers where the Pacha’s galleys lay.
Count they each sail, and mark how there supine
The lights in vain o’er heedless Moslem shine.
Secure, unnoted, Conrad’s prow pass’d by,
And anchor’d where his ambush meant to lie;
Canto One

TALES – THE CORSAIR

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 dubiosi desiri14
DANTE

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,
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,
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.
 Removed the banquet, and the last pilaff –
Forbidden draughts, ’tis said, he dared to quaff,
Though to the rest the sober berry’s juice
The slaves bear round for rigid Moslems’ use;
The long chibouque’s dissolving cloud supply,
While dance the Almas to wild minstrelsy.
The rising morn will view the chiefs embark;
But waves are somewhat treacherous in the dark:
And revellers may more securely sleep
On silken couch than o’er the rugged deep:
Feast there who can – nor combat till they must,
And less to conquest than to Korans trust:
And yet the numbers crowded in his host
Might warrant more than even the Pacha’s boast.

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.’
He took the sign from Seyd’s assenting eye,
And led the holy man in silence nigh.
His arms were folded on his dark-green vest,
His step was feeble, and his look deprest;
Yet worn he seem’d of hardship more than years,
And pale his cheek with penance, not from fears.
Vow’d to his God – his sable locks he wore,
And these his lofty cap rose proudly o’er:
Around his form his loose long robe was thrown,
And wrapt a breast bestow’d on heaven alone;
Submissive, yet with self-possession mann’d,
He calmly met the curious eyes that scann’d;
And question of his coming fain would seek,
Before the Pacha’s will allow’d to speak.
‘Whence com’st thou, Dervise?’

‘From the outlaw’s den,
A fugitive – 

‘Thy capture where and when?’

‘From Scalanovo’s port to Scio’s isle,
The Saick was bound; but Allah did not smile
Upon our course – the Moslem merchant’s gains
The Rovers won; our limbs have worn their chains.

I had no death to fear, nor wealth to boast,
Beyond the wandering freedom which I lost;
At length a fisher’s humble boat by night
Afforded hope, and offer’d chance of flight;
I seized the hour, and find my safety here –
With thee – most mighty Pacha! who can fear?’

‘How speed the outlaws? stand they well prepared,
Their plunder’d wealth, and robber’s rock, to guard?
Dream they of this our preparation, doom’d
To view with fire their scorpion nest consumed?’

‘Pacha! the fetter’d captive’s mourning eye,
That weeps for flight, but ill can play the spy;
I only heard the reckless waters roar,
Those waves that would not bear me from the shore;
I only mark’d the glorious sun and sky,
Too bright, too blue, 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;
Else vainly had I pray’d or sought the chance
That leads me here – if eyed with vigilance:
The careless guard that did not see me fly
May watch as idly when thy power is nigh.
Pacha! my limbs are faint – and nature craves
Food for my hunger, rest from tossing waves:
Permit my absence – peace be with thee! Peace
With all around! – now grant repose – release.’

‘Stay, Dervise! I have more to question – stay,
I do command thee – sit – dost hear? – obey!’
More I must ask, and food the slaves shall bring; 
Thou shalt not pine where all are banqueting: 
The supper done – prepare thee to reply, 
Clearly and full – I love not mystery.’ 
’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: 
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, blunt s the sabre’s edge, 
Makes ev’n contending tribes in peace unite, 
And hated hosts seem brethren to the sight!’

‘Salt seasons dainties – and my food is still 
The humblest root, my drink the simplest rill; 
And my stern vow and order’s laws oppose 
To break or mingle bread with friends or foes; 
It may seem strange – if there be aught to dread, 
That peril rests upon my single head; 
But for thy sway – nay more – thy Sultan’s throne, 
I taste nor bread nor banquet – save alone; 
Infringed our order’s rule, the Prophet’s rage 
To Mecca’s dome might bar my pilgrimage.’

‘Well – as thou wilt – ascetic as thou art – 
One question answer; then in peace depart. 
How many? – Ha! it cannot sure be day? 
What star – what sun is bursting on the bay? 
It shines a lake of fire! – away – away! 
Ho! treachery! my guards! my scimitar!
The galleys feed the flames – and I afar!
Accursed Dervise! – these thy tidings – thou
Some villain spy – seize – cleave him – slay him now!'

Up rose the Dervise with that burst of light,
Nor less his change of form appall’d the sight:
Up rose that Dervise – not in saintly garb,
But like a warrior bounding on his barb,
Dash’d his high cap, and tore his robe away –
Shone his mail’d breast, and flash’d his sabre’s ray!
His close but glittering casque, and sable plume,
More glittering eye, and black brow’s sabler gloom,
Glared on the Moslems’ eyes some Afrit sprite,
Whose demon death-blow left no hope for fight.
The wild confusion, and the swarthy glow
Of flames on high, and torches from below;
The shriek of terror, and the mingling yell –
For swords began to 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!
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 baldric drew
His bugle – brief the blast – but shrilly blew;
’Tis answered – ‘Well ye speed, my gallant crew!
Why did I doubt their quickness of career?
And deem design had left me single here?’
Sweeps his long arm – that sabre’s whirling sway
Sheds fast atonement for its first delay;
Completes his fury what their fear begun,
And makes the many basely quail to one.
The cloven turbans o’er the chamber spread,
And scarce an arm dare rise to guard its head:
Even Seyd, convulsed, o’erwhelm’d, with rage, surprise,
Retreats before him, though he still defies.
No craven he – and yet he dreads the blow,
So much Confusion magnifies his foe!
His blazing galleys still distract his sight,
He tore his beard, and foaming fled the fight;
For now the pirates pass'd the Haram gate,
And burst within – and it were death to wait;
Where wild Amazement shrieking – kneeling throws
The sword aside – in vain – the blood o'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,
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?'

Quick at the word they seized him each a torch,
And fire the dome from minaret to porch.
A stern delight was fix'd in Conrad's eye,
But sudden sunk – for on his ear the cry
Of women struck, and like a deadly knell
Knock'd at that heart unmoved by battle's yell.
'Oh! burst the Haram – wrong not on your lives
One female form – remember – we have wives.
On them such outrage Vengeance will repay;
Man is our foe, and such 'tis ours to slay:
But still we spared – must spare the weaker prey.
Oh! I forgot – but Heaven will not forgive
If at my word the helpless cease to live;
Follow who will – I go – we yet have time
Our souls to lighten of at least a crime.'

He climbs the crackling stair, he bursts the door,
Nor feels his feet glow scorching with the floor;
His breath choked gasping with the volumed smoke,
But still from room to room his way he broke.
They search – they find – they save: with lusty arms
Each bears a prize of unregarded charms;
Calm their loud fears; sustain their sinking frames
With all the care defenceless beauty claims:
So well could Conrad tame their fiercest mood,
And check the very hands with gore imbrued.  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 slowlier 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 outwornried rather than o’ercome,
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,
Much did she marvel o'er the courtesy
That smooth'd his accents; soften'd in his eye:
'Twas strange – *that* robber thus with gore bedew'd
Seem'd gentler then than Seyd in fondest mood.
The Pacha woo'd as if he deem'd the slave
Must seem delighted with the heart he gave;
The Corsair vow'd protection, soothed affright,
As if his homage were a woman's right.
'The wish is wrong – nay, worse for female – vain:
Yet much I long to view that chief again;
If but to thank for, what my fear forgot,
The life my loving lord remember'd not!'

And him she saw, where thickest carnage spread,
But gather'd breathing from the happier dead;
Far from his band, and battling with a host
That deem right dearly won the field he lost,
Fell'd – bleeding – baffled of the death he sought,
And snatch'd to expiate all the ills he wrought;
Preserved to linger and to live in vain,
While Vengeance ponder'd o'er new plans of pain,
And stanch'd the blood she saves to shed again –
But drop for drop, for Seyd's unglutted eye
Would doom him ever dying – ne'er to die!
Can this be he? triumphant late she saw,
When his red hand's wild gesture waved, a law!
'Tis he indeed – disarm'd but undeprest,
His sole regret the life he still possesst;
His wounds too slight, though taken with that will,
Which would have kiss'd the hand that then could kill.
Oh were there none, of all the many given,
To send his soul – he scarcely ask'd to heaven?
Must he alone of all retain his breath,
Who more than all had striven and struck for death?
He deeply felt – what mortal hearts must feel,
When thus reversed on faithless fortune's wheel,
For crimes committed, and the victor's threat
Of lingering tortures to repay the debt –
He deeply, darkly felt; but evil pride
That led to perpetrate, now serves to hide.
Still in his stern and self-collected mien
A conqueror's more than captive's air is seen,
Though faint with wasting toil and stiffening wound,
But few that saw – so calmly gazed around:
Though the far shouting of the distant crowd,
Their tremors o'er, rose insolently loud,
The better warriors who beheld him near,
Insulted not the foe who taught them fear;
And the grim guards that to his durance led,
In silence eyed him with a secret dread.

9

The Leech was sent – but not in mercy – there,
To note how much the life yet left could bear;
He found enough to load with heaviest chain,
And promise feeling for the wrench of pain;
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,
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,
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.¹²⁸
Even in that lonely hour when most it feels,
And, to itself, all, all that self reveals, –
No single passion, and no ruling thought
That leaves the rest, as once, unseen, unsought,
But the wild prospect when the soul reviews,
All rushing through their thousand avenues.
Ambition's dreams expiring, love's regret,
Endanger'd glory, life itself beset;
The joy untasted, the contempt or hate
'Gainst those who fain would triumph in our fate;
The hopeless past, the hasting future driven
Too quickly on to guess of hell or heaven;
Deeds, thoughts, and words, perhaps remember'd not
So keenly till that hour, but ne'er forgot;
Things light or lovely in their acted time,
But now to stern reflection each a crime;
The withering sense of evil unreveal'd,
Not cankering less because the more 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,
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,
His foe, if vanquish'd, had but shared the same: –
Alone he sate— in solitude had scannd'd
His guilty bosom, but that breast he mann'd:
One thought alone he could not— dared not meet—
'Oh, how these tidings will Medora greet?'
Then— only then— his clanking hands he raised,
And strain'd with rage the chain on which he gazed;
But soon he found, or feign'd, or dream'd relief,
And smiled in self-derision of his grief,
'And now come torture when it will—or may,
More need of rest to nerve me for the day!'
This said, with languor to his mat he crept,
And, whatsoe'er his visions, quickly slept.
'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—
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,
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, Guinare!
She could not sleep— and while the Pacha's rest
In muttering dreams yet saw his pirate-guest,
She left his side – his signet-ring\textsuperscript{29} 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.  

\textbf{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:  
He moved his hand – the grating of his chain  
Too harshly told him that he lived again.  
‘What is that form? if not a shape of air,  
Methinks, my jailor’s face shows wondrous fair!’  

‘Pirate! thou know’st me not – but I am one,  
Grateful for deeds thou hast too rarely done;  
Look on me – and remember her, thy hand  
Snatch’d from the flames, and thy more fearful band.  
I come through darkness – and I scarce know why –  
Yet not to hurt – I would not see thee die.’  
‘If so, kind lady! thine the only eye  
That would not here in that gay hope delight:  
Theirs is the chance – and let them use their right.  
But still I thank their courtesy or thine,  
That would confess me at so fair a shrine!’  
Strange though it seem – yet with 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,
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
To soothe the Pacha in his weaker hour.
Thee would I spare – nay more – would save thee now,
But this – time – hope – nor even thy strength allow;
But all I can, I will: at least, delay
The sentence that remits thee scarce a day.
More now were ruin – even thyself were loth
The vain attempt should bring but doom to both.’

‘Yes! loth indeed: – my soul is nerved to all,
Or fall’n too low to fear a further fall:
Tempt not thyself with peril – me with hope
Of flight from foes with whom I could not cope:
Unfit to vanquish, shall I meanly fly,
The one of all my band that would not die?
Yet there is one to whom my memory clings,
Till to these eyes her own wild softness springs.
My sole resources in the path I trod
Were these – my bark, my sword, my love, my God!
The last I left in youth! – he leaves me now –
And Man but works his will to lay me low.
I have no thought to mock his throne with prayer
Wrung from the coward crouching of despair;
It is enough – I breathe, and I can bear.
My sword is shaken from the worthless hand
That might have better kept so true a brand;
My bark is sunk or captive – but my love –
For her in sooth my voice would mount above:
Oh! she is all that still to earth can bind—
And this will break a heart so more than kind,
And blight a form—till thine appear'd, Gulinare!
Mine eye ne'er ask'd if others were as fair.’

‘Thou lov'st another then?—but what to me
Is this—'tis nothing—nothing e'er can be:
But yet—thou lov'st—and—Oh! I envy those
Whose hearts on hearts as faithful can repose,
Who never feel the void—the wandering thought
That sighs o'er 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
To meet his passion—but it would not be.
I felt—I feel—love dwells with—with the free.
I am a slave, a favour'd slave at best,
To share his splendour, and seem very blest!
Oft must my soul the question undergo,
Of—"Dost thou love?" and burn to answer, "No!"
Oh! hard it is that fondness to sustain,
And struggle not to feel averse in vain;
But harder still the heart's recoil to bear,
And hide from one—perhaps another there.
He takes the hand I give not, nor withhold—
Its pulse nor check'd, nor quicken'd—calmly cold:
And when resign'd, it drops a lifeless weight
From one I never loved enough to hate.
No warmth these lips return by his impress,
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.
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;
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,
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.
Yet be the soft triumvir's fault forgiven;
By this – how many lose not earth – but heaven!
Consign their souls to man's eternal foe,
And seal their own to spare some wanton's woe!

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,
Chill, wet, and misty round each stiffen'd limb,
Refreshing earth – reviving all but him!
Canto Three

Come vedi – ancor non m’abbandona.\textsuperscript{32}

Dante

1

Slow sinks, more lovely ere his race be run,
Along Morea’s hills\textsuperscript{33} 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,\textsuperscript{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.

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 Wisest\textsuperscript{35} look’d his last.

How watch’d thy better sons his farewell ray,
That closed their murder’d sage’s latest day!
Not yet – not yet – Sol pauses on the hill –
The precious hour of parting lingers still;
But sad his light to agonising eyes,
And dark the mountain’s once delightful dyes:
Gloom o’er the lovely laud he seem’d to pour,
The land, where Phoebus never frown’d before;
But ere he sank below Cithaeron’s\textsuperscript{36} head,
The cup of woe was quaff’d – the spirit fled;

The soul of him who scorn’d to fear or fly –
Who lived and died, as none can live or die!
But lo! from high Hymettus to the plain,
The queen of night\(^{37}\) 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:
The groves of olive scatter’d dark and wide
Where meek Cephisus\(^{38}\) 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;
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?
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.
Last eve Anselmo's bark return'd, and yet
His only tidings that they had not met!
Though wild, as now, far different were the tale
Had Conrad waited for that single sail.

The night-breeze freshens – she that day had pass’d
In watching all that Hope proclaim’d a mast;
Sadly she sate on high – Impatience bore
At last her footsteps to the midnight shore,
And there she wander’d, heedless of the spray
That dash’d her garments oft, and warn’d away:
She saw not, felt not this – nor dared depart,
Nor deem’d it cold – her chill was at her heart;
Till grew such certainty from that suspense –
His very sight had shock’d from life or sense!

It came at last – a sad and shatter’d boat,
Whose inmates first beheld whom first they sought;
Some bleeding – all most wretched – these the few –
Scarce knew they how escaped – this all they knew.
In silence, darkling, each appear’d to wait
His fellow’s mournful guess at Conrad’s fate:
Something they would have said; but seem’d to fear
To trust their accents to Medora’s ear.
She saw at once, yet sunk not – trembled not –
Beneath that grief, that loneliness of lot,
Within that meek fair form, were feelings high,
That deem’d not till they found their energy.
While yet was Hope they soften’d, flutter’d, wept –
All lost – that softness died not – but it slept;
And o’er its slumber rose that Strength which said,
‘With nothing left to love, there’s nought to dread.’
’Tis more than nature’s; like the burning 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 –
So throb'd each vein – each thought – till then withstood;
Her own dark soul – these words at once subdued:
She totters – falls – and senseless had the wave
Perchance but snatched her from another grave,
But that with hands though rude, yet weeping eyes,
They yield such aid as Pity's haste supplies:
Dash o'er her deathlike cheek the ocean dew,
Raise, fan, sustain – till life returns anew;
Awake her handmaids, with the matrons leave
That fainting form o'er which they gaze and grieve;
Then seek Anselmo's cavern, to report
The tale too tedious – when the triumph short.

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.

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,
But inly views his victim as he bleeds.

'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;
But once cut off – the remnant of his band
Embark their wealth, and seek a safer strand.’

‘Gulnare! – if for each drop of blood a gem
Were offer’d rich as Stamboul’s diadem;
If for each hair of his a massy mine
Of virgin ore should supplicating shine;
If all our Arab tales divulge or dream
Of wealth were here – that gold should not redeem!
It had not now redeem’d a single hour,
But that I know him fetter’d, in my power;
And, thirsting for revenge, I ponder still
On pangs that longest rack, and latest kill.’

‘Nay, Seyd! I seek not to restrain thy rage,
Too justly moved for mercy to assuage;
My thoughts were only to secure for thee
His riches – thus released, he were not free:
Disabled, shorn of half his might and band,
His capture could but wait thy first command.’
‘His capture could! – and shall I then resign
One day to him – the wretch already mine?
Release my foe! – at whose remonstrance? – thine!
Fair suitor! – to thy virtuous gratitude,
That thus repays this Giaour’s relenting mood,
Which thee and thine alone of all could spare,
No doubt – regardless if the prize were fair,
My thanks and praise alike are due – now hear!
I have a counsel for thy gentler ear:
I do mistrust thee, woman! and each word
Of thine stamps truth on all Suspicion heard.
Borne in his arms through fire from yon Serai –
Say, wert thou lingering there with him to fly?
Thou need’st not answer – thy confession speaks,
Already reddening on thy guilty cheeks;
Then, lovely dame, bethink thee! and beware:
'Tis not his life alone may claim such care!
Another word and — nay — I need no more.
Accursed was the moment when he bore
Thee from the flames, which better far — but no —
I then had mourn'd thee with a lover's woe —
Now 'tis thy lord that warns — deceitful thing!
Know'st thou that I can clip thy wanton wing?
In words alone I am not wont to chafe:
Look to thyself, nor deem thy falsehood safe!'

He rose — and slowly, sternly thence withdrew,
Rage in his eye and threats in his adieu:
Ah! little reck'd that chief of womanhood —
Which frowns ne'er quell'd, nor menaces subdued;
And little deem'd he what thy heart, Gulnare!
When soft could feel, and when incensed could dare.
His doubts appear'd to wrong — nor yet she knew
How deep the root from whence com passion 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!

Meanwhile long, anxious, weary, still the same
Roll'd day and night: his soul could terror tame —
This fearful interval of doubt and dread,
When every hour might doom him worse than dead,
When every step that echo'd by the gate,
Might entering lead where axe and stake await;
When every voice that grated on his ear
Might be the last that he could ever hear;
Could terror tame — that spirit stern and high
Had proved unwilling as unfit to die;
'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,
Leave scarce one thought inert enough to quail;
But bound and fix’d in fetter’d solitude,
To pine, the prey of every changing mood;
To gaze on thine own heart; and meditate
Irrevocable faults, and coming fate –
Too late the last to shun – the first to mend –
To count the hours that struggle to thine end,
With not a friend to animate, and tell
To other ears that death became thee well;
Around thee foes to forge the ready lie,
And blot life’s latest scene with calumny;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,
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 – Guinare –
The second, third – and still she came not there;
But what her words avouch’d, her charms had done,
Or else he had not seen another sun.
The fourth day roll’d along, and with the night
Came storm and darkness in their mingling might.
Oh! how he listen’d to the rushing deep,
That ne’er till now so broke upon his sleep;
And his wild spirit wilder wishes sent,
Roused by the roar of his own element!
Oft had he ridden on that winged wave,
And loved its roughness for the speed it gave;
And now its dashing echo’d on his ear,
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,
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
A light step came – it paused – it moved once more;
Slow turns the grating bolt and sullen key:
’Tis as his heart foreboded – that fair she!
Whate’er her sins, to him a guardian saint,
And beauteous still as hermit’s hope can paint;
Yet changed since last within that cell she came,
More pale her cheek, more tremulous her frame:
On him she cast her dark and hurried eye,
Which spoke before her accents – ‘Thou must die!
Yes, thou must die – there is but one resource,
The last – the worst – if torture were not worse.’

‘Lady! I look to none; my lips proclaim
What last proclaim’d they – Conrad still the same:
Why shouldst thou seek an outlaw’s life to spare,
And change the sentence I deserve to bear?
Well have I earn’d – nor here alone – the meed
Of Seyd’s revenge, by many a lawless deed.’
‘Why should I seek? because – Oh! didst thou not
Redeem my life from worse than slavery’s lot?
Why should I seek? – hath misery made thee blind
To the fond workings of a woman’s mind?
And must I say? – albeit my heart rebel
With all that woman feels, but should not tell –
Because, despite thy crimes, that heart is moved:
It fear’d thee, thank’d thee, pitied, madden’d, loved.
Reply not, tell not now thy tale again,
Thou lov’st another, and I love in vain:
Though fond as mine her bosom, form more fair,
I rush through peril which she would not dare.
If that thy heart to hers were truly dear,
Were I thine own thou wert not lonely here:
An outlaw's spouse and leave her lord to roam!
What hath such gentle dame to do with home?
But speak not now – o'er thine and o'er my head
Hangs the keen sabre by a single thread;
If thou hast courage still, and wouldst be free,
Receive this poniard – rise and follow me!' 300

'Ay in my chains! my steps will gently tread,
With these adornments, o'er each slumbering head!
Thou hast forgot – is this a garb for flight?
Or is that instrument more fit for fight?' 310

'Misdoubting Corsair! I have gain'd the guard,
Ripe for revolt, and greedy for reward.
A single word of mine removes that chain:
Without some aid how here could I remain?
Well, since we met, hath sped my busy time,
If in aught evil, for thy sake the crime:
The crime – 'tis none to punish those of Seyd.
That hated tyrant, Conrad – he must bleed!
I see thee shudder, but my soul is changed –
Wrong'd, spurn'd, reviled, and it shall be avenged –
Accused of what till now my heart disdain'd –
Too faithful, though to bitter bondage chain'd.
Yes, smile! – but he had little cause to sneer,
I was not treacherous then, nor thou too dear:
But he has said it – and the jealous well –
Those tyrants, teasing, tempting to rebel –
Deserve the fate their fretting lips foretell.
I never loved – he bought me – somewhat high –
Since with me came a heart he could not buy.
I was a slave unmurmuring; he hath said,
But for his rescue I with thee had fled.
'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,
There yawns the sack, and yonder rolls the sea!
What, am I then a toy for dotard's play,
To wear but till the gilding frets away?
I saw thee – loved thee – owe thee all – would save,
If but to show how grateful is a slave.
But had he not thus menaced fame and life –
(And well he keeps his oaths pronounced in strife) –
I still had saved thee, but the Pacha spared.
Now I am all thine own, for all prepared:
Thou lov’st me not, nor know’st – or but the worst.
Alas! this love – that hatred – are the first –
Oh! couldst thou prove my truth, thou wouldst not start,
Nor fear the fire that lights an Eastern heart;
’Tis now the beacon of thy safety – now
It points within the port a Mainote prow:
But in one chamber, where our path must lead,
There sleeps – he must not wake – the oppressor Seyd!’

‘Gulnare – Gulnare – I never felt till now
My abject fortune, wither’d fame so low:
Seyd is mine enemy; had swept my band
From earth with ruthless but with open hand,
And therefore came I, in my bark of war,
To smite the smiter with the scimitar;
Such is my weapon – not the secret knife;
Who spares a woman’s seeks not slumber’s life.
Thine saved I gladly, Lady – not for this;
Let me not deem that mercy shown amiss.
Now fare thee well – more peace be with thy breast!
Night wears apace, my last of earthly rest!’

‘Rest! rest! by sunrise must thy sinews shake,
And thy limbs writhe around the ready stake.
I heard the order – saw – I will not see –
If thou wilt perish, I will fall with thee.
My life, my love, my hatred – all below
Are on this cast – Corsair! ’tis but a blow!
Without it flight were idle – how evade
His sure pursuit? – my wrongs too unrepaid,
My youth disgraced, the long, long wasted years,
One blow shall cancel with our future fears;
But since the dagger suits thee less than brand,
I'll try the firmness of a female hand.

The guards are gain’d – one moment all were o’er –
Corsair! we meet in safety or no more;
If err 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,
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,
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
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.
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;
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, obey'd,
Nor cared he now if rescued or betray'd;
Resistance were as useless as if Seyd
Yet lived to view the doom his ire decreed.
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,
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?
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 unexpress’d,
They bleed within that silent cell – his breast.
Still onward, fair the breeze, nor rough the surge,
The blue waves sport around the stern they urge;
Far on the horizon’s verge appears a speck,
A spot – a mast – a sail – an armed deck!
Their little bark her men of watch descry,
And ampler canvas woos the wind from high;
She bears her down majestically near,
Speed on her prow, and terror in her tier;
A flash is seen – the ball beyond their bow.
Booms harmless, hissing to the deep below.
Up rose keen Conrad from his silent trance,
A long, long absent gladness in his glance;
'Tis mine — my blood-red flag! again — again —
I am not all deserted on the main!' 490
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,
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,
She were their queen — less scrupulous are they 510
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?
Canto Three

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.
'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.
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;
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:
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;
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,
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
The indistinctness of the suffering breast;
Where thousand thoughts begin to end in one,
Which seeks from all the refuge found in none;
No words suffice the secret soul to show,
For Truth denies all eloquence to Woe.
On Conrad’s stricken soul exhaustion prest,
And stupor almost lull’d it into rest;
So feeble now – his mother’s softness crept
To those wild eyes, which like an infant’s wept:
It was the very weakness of his brain,
Which thus confess’d without relieving pain.
None saw his trickling tears – perchance, if seen,
That useless flood of grief had never been:
Nor long they flow’d – he dried them to depart,
In helpless – hopeless – brokenness of heart:
The sun goes forth, but Conrad’s day is dim;
And the night cometh** – ne’er to pass from him.
There is no darkness like the cloud of mind,
On Grief’s vain eye – the blindest of the blind!
Which may not – dare not see – but turns aside
To blackest shade – nor will endure a guide!

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,
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;
Ere night, alarm'd, their isle is traversed o'er:
Another morn – another bids them seek,
And shout his name till echo waxeth weak;
Mount, grotto, cavern, valley search'd in vain,
They find on shore a sea-boat's broken chain:
Their hope revives – they follow o'er the main.
'Tis idle all – moons roll on moons away,
And Conrad comes not, came not since that day:
Nor trace, nor tidings of his doom declare
Where lives his grief, or perish'd his despair!
Long mourn'd his band whom none could mourn beside;
And fair the monument they gave his bride:
For him they raise not the recording stone –
His death yet dubious, deeds too widely known;
He left a Corsair's name to other times,
Link'd with one virtue, and a thousand crimes.
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) corset 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 Naxus by her lover Theseus – see Glossary.

13 (p. 653) capote a long cloak

THE CORSAIR – CANTO TWO

14 (p. 655) Epigraph: ‘Conoscestes ... 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) *writhe . . . 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 *comboioio* or Muslim prayer beads

40 (p. 676) *calummy* 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)
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 Judgment* 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 George’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!
The pen! foredoom’d to aid the mental throes
Of brains that labour, big with verse or prose,
Though nymphs forsake, and critics may deride,
The lover’s solace, and the author’s pride.
What wits, what poets dost thou daily raise!
How frequent is thy use, how small thy praise!
Condemn’d at length to be forgotten quite,
With all the pages which ’twas thine to write.
But thou, at least, mine own especial pen!
Once laid aside, but now assumed again,
Our task complete, like Hamet’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;
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.
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.
'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:
Not seek great Jeffrey's, yet, like him, will be
Self-constituted judge of poesy.

A man must serve his time to every trade
Save censure – critics all are ready made.
Take hackney'd jokes from Miller, got by rote,
With just enough of learning to misquote;
A mind well skill'd to find or forge a fault;
A turn for punning, call it Attic salt;
To Jeffrey go, be silent and discreet,
His pay is just ten sterling pounds per sheet:
Fear not to lie, 'twill seem a sharper hit;
Shrink not from blasphemy, 'twill pass for wit;
Care not for feeling – pass 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;
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;
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 ‘ll 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:’ –
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;
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.
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:
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;
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,
To strange mysterious dulness still the friend,
Admires the strain she cannot comprehend.
Thus Lays of Minstrels – may they be the last! –
On half-strung harps whine mournful to the blast.
While mountain spirits prate to river sprites,
That dames may listen to the sound at nights;
And goblin brats, of Gilpin Horner's brood,
Decoy young border-nobles through the wood,
And skip at every step, Lord knows how high,
And frighten foolish babes, the Lord knows why;

While high-born ladies in their magic cell,
Forbidding knights to read who cannot spell,
Despatch a courier to a wizard's grave,
And fight with honest men to shield a knave.

Next view in state, proud prancing on his roan,
The golden-crested haughty Marmion,
Now forging scrolls, now foremost in the fight,
Not quite a felon, yet but half a knight,
The gibbet or the field prepared to grace;
A mighty mixture of the great and base.

And think'st thou, Scott! by vain conceit perchance,
On public taste to foist thy stale romance,
Though Murray with his Miller may combine
To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per line?
No! when the sons of song descend to trade,
Their bays are sear, their former laurels fade.
Let such forego the poet's sacred name,
Who rack their brains for lucre, not for fame:
Still for stern Mammon may they toil in vain!
And sadly gaze on gold they cannot gain!
Such be their meed, such still the just reward
Of prostituted muse and hireling bard!
For this we spurn Apollo's venal son,
And bid a long 'good night to Marmion'.

These are the themes that claim our plaudits now;
These are the bards to whom the muse must bow;
While Milton, Dryden, Pope, alike forgot,
Resign their hallow'd bays to Walter Scott.
The time has been, when yet the muse was young,
When Homer swept the lyre, and Maro\textsuperscript{16} sung,
An epic scarce ten centuries could claim,
While awe-struck nations hail'd the magic name:
The work of each immortal bard appears
The single wonder of a thousand years.
Empires have moulder'd from the face of earth,
Tongues have 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:
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.
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!\textsuperscript{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!
Now, last and greatest, Madoc spreads his sails,
Cacique\textsuperscript{18} in Mexico, and prince in Wales;
Tells us strange tales, as other travellers do,
More old than Mandeville's,\textsuperscript{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;
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’; \( ^{20} \)
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;
So close on each pathetic part he dwells,
And each adventure so sublimely tells,
That all who view the ‘idiot in his glory’
Conceive the bard the hero of the story.

Shall gentle Coleridge pass unnoticed here,
To turgid ode and tumid stanza dear?
Though themes of innocence amuse him best,
Yet still obscurity’s a welcome guest.
If Inspiration should her aid refuse
To him who takes a pixy for a muse,
Yet none in lofty numbers can surpass
The bard who soars to 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 sexton thou!
Whether on ancient tombs thou tak’st thy stand,
By gibb'ring spectres hail’d, thy kindred band;
Or tracest chaste descriptions on thy page,
To please the females of our modest age;
All hail, M.P.! from whose infernal brain
Thin-sheeted phantoms glide, a grisly train;
At whose command ‘grim women’ throng in crowds,
And kings of fire, of water, and of clouds,
With ‘small gray men,’ ‘wild yagers,’ and what not,
To crown with honour thee and Walter Scott;
Again all hail! if tales like thine may please,
St Luke alone can vanquish the disease;
Even Satan’s self with thee might dread to dwell,
And in thy skull discern a deeper hell.

Who in soft guise, surrounded by a choir
Of virgins melting, not to Vesta’s fire,
With sparkling eyes, and cheek by passion flush’d,
 Strikes his wild lyre, whilst listening dames are hush’d?
’Tis Little! young Catullus of his day,
As sweet, but as immoral, in his lay!
Grieved to condemn, the muse must still be just,
Nor spare melodious advocates of lust.
Pure is the flame which o’er her altar burns;
From grosser incense with disgust she turns:
Yet kind to youth, this expiation o’er,
She bids thee ‘mend thy line and sin no more’.

For thee, translator of the tinsel song,
To whom such glittering ornaments belong,
Hibernian Strangford! with thine eyes of blue,
And boasted locks of red or auburn hue,
Whose plaintive strain each love-sick miss admires,
And o’er harmonious fustian half expires,
Learn, if thou canst, to yield thine author’s sense,
Nor vend thy sonnets on a false pretence.
Think’st thou to gain thy verse a higher place,
By dressing Camoëns in 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;
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,\textsuperscript{27a} rise! bestow some meet reward
On dull devotion – Lo! the Sabbath bard,
Sepulchral Grahame, pours his notes sublime
In mangled prose, nor e'en aspires to rhyme;
Breaks into blank the Gospel of St Luke,
And boldly pilfers from the Pentateuch,\textsuperscript{27b}
And, undisturb'd by conscientious qualms,
Perverts the Prophets, and purloins the Psalms.

Hail, Sympathy,\textsuperscript{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.
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!
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 scornerest to confine
The lofty numbers of a harp like thine;
‘Awake a louder and a loftier strain’,
Such as none heard before, or will again!
Where all Discoveries jumbled from the flood,
Since first the leaky ark reposed in mud,
By more or less, are sung in every book,
From Captain Noah down to Captain Cook.
Nor this alone; but, pausing on the road,
The bard sighs forth a gentle episode;
And gravely tells – attend, each beauteous miss! –
When first Madeira trembled to a kiss.
Bowles! in thy memory let this precept dwell,
Stick to thy sonnets, man! – at least they sell.
But if some new-born whim, or larger bribe,
Prompt thy crude brain, and claim thee for a scribe;
If chance some bard, though once by dunces fear’d,
Now, prone in dust, can only be revered;
If Pope, whose fame and genius, from the first,
Have foil’d the best of critics, needs the worst,
Do thou essay: each fault, each failing scan;
The first of poets was, alas! but man.
Rake from each ancient dunghill every pearl,
Consult Lord Fanny, and confide in Curll;
Let all the scandals of a former age
Perch on thy pen, and flutter o’er thy page;
Affect a candour which thou canst not feel,
Clothe envy in the garb of honest zeal;
Write, as if St John’s soul could still inspire,
And do from hate what Mallet did for hire.
Oh! hadst thou lived in that congenial time,
To rave with Dennis, and with Ralph to rhyme;
Throng’d with the rest around his living head,
Not raised thy hoof against the lion dead;
A meet reward had crown’d thy glorious gains,
And link’d thee to the Dunciad for thy pains.
Another epic! Who inflicts again
More books of blank upon the sons of men?
Boeotian Cottle, rich Bristowa's boast,
Imports old stories from the Cambrian coast,
And sends his goods to market - all alive!
Lines forty thousand, cantos twenty-five?
Fresh fish from Helicon! who'll buy, who'll buy?
The precious bargain's cheap - in faith, not I.
Your turtle-feeder's verse must needs be flat,
Though Bristol bloat 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!
Oh, Amos Cottle! for a moment think
What meagre profits spring from pen and ink!
When thus devoted to poetic dreams,
Who will peruse thy prostituted reams?
Oh! pen perverted! paper misapplied!
Had Cottle still adorn'd the counter's side,
Bent o'er the desk, or, born to useful toils,
Been taught to make the paper which he soils,
Plough'd, delved, or plied the oar with lusty limb,
He had not sung of Wales, nor I of him.

As Sisyphus against the infernal steep
Rolls the huge rock whose motions ne'er may sleep,
So up thy hill, ambrosial Richmond, heaves
Dull Maurice33 all his granite weight of leaves:
Smooth, solid monuments of mental pain!
The petrifactions 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,
His hopes have perish'd by the northern blast:
Nipp'd in the bud by Caledonian gales,
His blossoms wither as the blast prevails!
O'er his lost works let *classic* Sheffield weep;
May no rude hand disturb their early sleep!

Yet say! why should the bard at once resign
His claim to favour from the sacred nine?
For ever startled by the mingled howl
Of northern wolves, that still in darkness prowl;
A coward brood, which mangle as they prey,
By hellish instinct, all that cross their way;
Aged or young, the living or the dead,
No mercy find – these harpies must be fed.
Why do the injured unresisting yield
The calm possession of their native field?
Why tamely thus before their fangs retreat,
Nor hunt the blood-hounds back to Arthur's Seat?

Health to immortal Jeffrey! once, in name,
England could boast a judge almost the same;
In soul so like, so merciful, yet just,
Some think that Satan has resign'd his trust,
And given the spirit to the world again,
To sentence letters, as he sentenced men.
With hand less mighty, but with heart as black,
With voice as willing to decree the rack;
Bred in the courts betimes, though all that law
As yet hath taught him is to find a flaw;
Since well instructed in the patriot school
To rail at party, though a party tool,
Who knows, if chance his patrons should restore
Back to the sway they forfeited before,
His scribbling toils some recompense may meet,
And raise this Daniel to the judgment-seat?
Let Jeffreys' shade indulge the pious hope,
And greeting thus, present him with a rope:
'Heir to my virtues! man of equal mind!
Skill'd to condemn as to traduce mankind,
This cord receive, for thee reserved with care,
To wield in judgment, and at length to wear.'

Health to great Jeffrey! Heaven preserve his life,
To flourish on the fertile shores of Fife,
And guard it sacred in its future wars,
Since authors sometimes seek the field of Mars!
Can none remember that eventful day,
That ever-glorious, almost fatal fray,
When Little’s leadless pistol met his eye,
And Bow-street myrmidons stood laughing by?
Oh, day disastrous! on her firm-set rock,
Dunedin’s castle felt a secret shock;
Dark roll’d the sympathetic waves of Forth,
Low groan’d the startled whirlwinds of the north;
Tweed ruffled half his waves to form a tear,
The other half pursued its calm career;
Arthur’s steep summit nodded to its base,
The surly Tolbooth scarcely kept her place.
The Tolbooth felt – for marble sometimes can,
On such occasions, feel as much as man –
The Tolbooth felt defrauded of his charms,
If Jeffrey died, except within her arms:
Nay last, not least, on that portentous morn,
The sixteenth story, where himself was born,
His patrimonial garret, fell to 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
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,
And, though the thickening dross will scarce refine,
Augments its ore, and is itself a mine.
‘My son,’ she cried, ‘ne’er thirst for gore again,
Resign the pistol and resume the pen;
O’er politics and poesy preside,
Boast of thy country, and Britannia’s guide!
For 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,
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's luckless votary, Lambe,
Damn'd like the devil, devil-like will damn.
Known be thy name, unbounded be thy sway!
Thy Holland's banquets shall each toil repay;
While grateful Britain yields the praise she owes
To Holland's hirelings and to learning's foes.
Yet mark one caution ere thy next Review
Spread its light wings of saffron and of blue,
Beware lest blundering Brougham destroy the sale,
Turn beef to bannocks, cauliflowers to kail.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,
In double portion swells thy glorious lot;
For thee Edina culls her evening sweets,
And showers their odours on thy candid sheets,
Whose hue and fragrance to thy work adhere –
This scents its pages, and that gilds its rear.
Lo! blushing Itch, coy nymph, enamour'd grown,
Forsakes the rest, and cleaves to thee alone;
And, too unjust to other Pictish men,
Enjoys thy person, and inspires thy pen!

Illustrious Holland! hard would be his lot,
His hirelings mention'd, and himself forgot!
Holland, with Henry PetttS at his back,
The whipper-in and huntsman of the pack.  
Blest be the banquets spread at Holland House,  
Where Scotchmen feed, and critics may carouse!  
Long, long beneath that hospitable roof  
Shall Grub-street dine, while duns are kept aloof.  
See honest Hallam lay aside his fork,  
Resume his pen, review his Lordship’s work,  
And, grateful for the dainties on his plate,  
Declare his landlord can at least translate!  
Dunedin! view thy children with delight,  
They write for food – and feed because they write:  
And lest, when heated with the unusual grape,  
Some glowing thoughts should to the press escape,  
And tinge with red the female reader’s cheek,  
My lady skims the cream of each critique;  
Breathes o’er the page her purity of soul,  
Reforms each error, and refines the whole.

Now to the Drama turn – Oh! motley sight!
What precious scenes the wondering eyes invite!
Puns, and a prince within a barrel pent,  
And Dibdin’s nonsense yield complete content.  
Though now, thank Heaven! the Rosciomania’s o’er,  
And full-grown actors are endured once more;  
Yet what avail their vain attempts to please,  
While British critics suffer scenes like these;  
While Reynolds vents his ‘dammes!’ ‘poohs!’ and ‘zounds!’  
And common-place and common sense confounds?  
While Kenney’s ‘World’ – ah! where is Kenney’s wit? –  
Tires the sad gallery, lulls the listless pit;  
And Beaumont’s pilfer’d Caratach affords  
A tragedy complete in all but words?  
Who but must mourn, while these are all the rage,  
The degradation of our vaunted stage!  
Heavens! is all sense of shame and talent gone?  
Have we no living bard of merit? – none!  
Awake, George Colman! Cumberland, awake!  
Ring the alarum bell! let folly quake!  
Oh, Sheridan! if aught can move thy pen,  
Let Comedy assume her throne again;
Abjure the mummeries 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 Siddons' lives to tread?
On those shall Farce display Buffoon'ry's mask,
And Hook conceal his heroes in a cask?
Shall sapient managers new scenes produce
From Cherry, Skeffington, and Mother Goose?
While Shakespeare, Otway, Massinger, forgot,
On stalls must moulder, or in closets rot?
Lo! with what pomp the daily prints proclaim
The rival candidates for Attic fame!
In grim array though Lewis' spectres rise,
Still Skeffington and Goose divide the prize.
And sure great Skeffington must claim our praise,
For skirtless coats and skeletons of plays
Renown'd alike; whose genius ne'er confines
Her flight to garnish Greenwood's gay designs;
Nor sleeps with 'Sleeping Beauties,' but anon
In five facetious acts comes thundering on,
While poor John Bull, bewilder'd with the scene
Stares, wondering what the devil it can mean;
But as some hands applaud, a venal few!
Rather than sleep, why John applauds it too.

Such are we now. Ah! wherefore should we turn
To what our fathers were, unless to mourn?
Degenerate Britons! are ye dead to shame,
Or, kind to 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's pantaloons,
Since their own drama yields no fairer trace
Of wit than puns, of humour than grimace.

Then let Ausonia, skill'd in every art
To soften manners, but corrupt the heart,
Pour her exotic follies o'er the town,
To sanction Vice, and hunt Decorum down:
Let wedded strumpets languish o'er Deshayes,
And bless the promise which his form displays;
While 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,
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!
Where yon proud palace, Fashion's hallow'd fane,
Spreads wide her portals for the motley train,
Behold the new Petronius of the day,
Our arbiter of pleasure and of play!
There the hired eunuch, the Hesperian choir,
The melting lute, the soft lascivious lyre,
The song from Italy, the step from France,
The midnight orgy, and the mazy dance,
The smile of beauty, and the flush of wine,
For fops, fools, gamesters, knaves, and lords combine:
Each to his humour – Comus all allows;
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 burletta o'er,
The audience take their turn upon the floor:
Now round the room the circling dow'gers sweep,
Now in loose waltz the thin-clad daughters leap;
The first in lengthen'd line majestic swim,
The last display the free unfetter'd limb!
Those for Hibemia's lusty sons repair
With art the charms which nature could not spare;
These after husbands wing their eager flight,
Nor leave much mystery for the nuptial night.

Oh! blest retreats of infamy and ease,
Where, all forgotten but the power to please,
Each maid may give a loose to genial thought,
Each swain may teach new systems, or be taught:
There the blithe youngster, just return'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!
If, mad with loss, existence 'gins to tire,
And all your hope or wish is to expire,
Here's Powell's pistol ready for your life,
And, kinder still, two Pagets for your wife;
Fit consummation of an earthly race
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.

Truth! rouse some genuine bard, and guide his hand
To drive this pestilence from out the land.
E'en I -- least thinking of a thoughtless throng,
Just skill'd to know the right and choose the wrong,
Freed at that age when reason's shield is lost,
To fight my course through passion's countless host,
Whom every path of pleasure's flowery way
Has lured in turn, and all have led astray --
E'en I must raise my voice, e'en I must feel
Such scenes, such men, destroy the public weal:
Although some kind, censorious friend will say,
'What art thou better, meddling fool, than they?'
And every brother rake will smile to see
That miracle, a moralist in me.
No matter – when some bard in virtue strong,
Gifford perchance, shall raise the chastening song,
Then sleep my pen for ever! and my voice
Be only heard to hail him, and rejoice;
Rejoice, and yield my feeble praise, though I
May feel the lash that Virtue must apply.  

As for the smaller fry, who swarm in shoals,
From silly Hafiz up to simple Bowles,
Why should we call them from their dark abode,
In broad St Giles’s or in Tottenham Road?
Or (since some men of fashion nobly dare
To scrawl in verse) from Bond Street or the Square?
If things of ton their harmless lays 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 Andrews 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.
Yet, did or taste or reason sway the times,
Ah! who would take their titles with their rhymes?
Roscommon! Sheffield! with your spirits fled,
No future laurels deck a noble head;
No muse will cheer, with renovating smile,
The paralytic puling of Carlisle.
The puny schoolboy and his early lay
Men pardon, if his follies pass away;
But who forgives the senior’s ceaseless verse,
Whose hairs grow hoary as his rhymes grow worse?
What heterogeneous honours deck the peer!
Lord, rhymester, petit-maitre, 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!’
Nor drugg’d their audience with the tragic stuff.
Yet at their judgment let his lordship laugh,
And case his volumes in congenial calf;
Yes! doff that covering, where morocco shines,
And hang a calf-skin on those recreant lines.  

With you, ye Druids! rich in native lead,  
Who daily scribble for your daily bread;  
With you I war not: Gifford's heavy hand  
Has crush'd, without remorse, your numerous band.  
On 'all the talents' vent your venal spleen;  
Want is your plea, let pity be your screen.  
Let monodies on Fox regale your crew,  
And Melville's Mantle prove a blanket too!  
One common Lethe waits each hapless bard,  
And, peace be with you! 'tis your best reward.  
Such damning fame as Dunciads only give  
Could bid your lines beyond a morning live;  
But now at once your fleeting labours close,  
With names of greater note in blest repose.  
Far be't from me unkindly to upbraid  
The lovely Rosa's prose in masquerade,  
Whose strains, the faithful echoes of her mind,  
Leave wondering comprehension far behind.  
Though Crusca's bards no more our journals fill,  
Some stragglers skirmish round the columns still;  
Last of the howling host which once was Bell's,  
Matilda snivels yet, and 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,  
Leaves his snug shop, forsakes his store of shoes,  
St Crispin quits, and cobbles for the muse,  
Heavens! how the vulgar stare! how crowds applaud!  
How ladies read, and literati laud!  
If chance some wicked wag should pass his jest,  'Tis sheer ill-nature – don't the world know best?  
Genius must guide when wits admire the rhyme,  
And Capel Lofft declares 'tis quite sublime.  
Hear, then, ye happy sons of needless trade!  
Swains! quit the plough, resign the useless spade!  
Lo! Burns and Bloomfield, nay, a greater far,  
Gifford was born beneath an adverse star,
Forsook the labours of a servile state,
Stemm'd the rude storm, and triumph'd over fate:
Then why no more? if Phoebus smiled on you,
Bloomfield! why not on brother Nathan too?
Him too the mania, not the muse, has seized;
Not inspiration, but a mind diseased:
And now no boor can seek his last abode,
No common be enclosed without an ode.
Oh! since increased refinement deigns to smile
On Britain's sons, and bless our genial isle,
Let poesy go forth, pervade the whole,
Alike the rustic, and mechanic soul!
Ye tuneful cobblers! still your notes prolong,
Compose at once a slipper and a song;
So shall the fair your 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.
Come forth, oh Campbell! give thy talents scope;
Who dares aspire if thou must cease to hope?
And thou, melodious Rogers! rise at last,
Recall the pleasing memory of the past;
Arise! let blest remembrance still inspire,
And strike to wonted tones thy hallow'd lyre;
Restore Apollo to his vacant throne,
Assert thy country's honour and thine own.
What! must deserted Poesy still weep
Where her last hopes with pious Cowper sleep?
Unless, perchance, from his cold bier she turns,
To deck the turf that wraps her minstrel, Burns!
No! though contempt hath mark'd the spurious brood,
The race who rhyme from folly, or for food,
Yet still some genuine sons '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.
‘Why slumbers Gifford?’ once was ask’d in vain;
Why slumbers Gifford? let us ask again.
Are there no follies for his pen to purge?
Are there no fools whose backs demand the scourge?
Are there no sins for satire’s bard to greet?
Stalks not gigantic Vice in every street?
Shall peers or princes tread pollution’s path,
And ’scape alike the law’s and muse’s wrath?
Nor blaze with guilty glare through future time,
Eternal beacons of consummate crime?
Arouse thee, Gifford! be thy promise claim’d,
Make bad men better, or at least ashamed.

Unhappy White! while life was in its spring,
And thy young muse just waved her joyous wing,
The spoiler swept that soaring lyre away,
Which else had sounded an immortal lay.
Oh! what a noble heart was here undone,
When Science’ self destroy’d her favourite son!
Yes, she too much indulged thy fond pursuit,
She sow’d the seeds, but death has reap’d the fruit.
’T was thine own genius gave the final blow,
And help’d to plant the wound that laid thee low:
So the struck eagle, stretch’d upon the plain,
No more through rolling clouds to soar again,
View’d his own feather on the fatal dart,
And wing’d the shaft that quiver’d in his heart;
Keen were his pangs, but keener far to feel
He nursed the pinion which impell’d the steel;
While the same plumage that had warm’d his nest
Drank the last life-drop of his bleeding breast.

There be who say, in these enlighten’d days,
That splendid lies are all the poet’s praise;
That strain’d invention, ever on the wing,
Alone impels the modern bard to sing:
’Tis true, that all who rhyme – nay, all who write,
Shrink from that fatal word to genius – trite;
Yet Truth sometimes will lend her noblest fires,
And decorate the verse herself inspires:
This fact in Virtue’s name let Crabbe attest;
Though nature’s sternest painter, yet the best.

And here let Shee and Genius find a place,
Whose pen and pencil yield an equal grace;
To guide whose hand the sister arts combine,
And trace the poet’s or the painter’s line;
Whose magic touch can bid the canvas glow,
Or pour the easy rhyme’s harmonious flow;
While honours, doubly merited, attend
The poet’s rival, but the painter’s friend.

Blest is the man who dares approach the bower
Where dwelt the muses at their natal hour;
Whose steps have press’d, whose eye has mark’d afar,
The clime that nursed the sons of song and war,
The scenes which glory still must hover o’er,
Her place of birth, her own Achaian shore.
But doubly blest is he whose heart expands
With hallow’d feelings for those classic lands;
Who rends the veil of ages long gone by,
And views their remnants with a poet’s eye!
Wright! ’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.

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 Aonion odours breathe,
And all their renovated fragrance flung
To grace the beauties of your native tongue;
Now let those minds, that nobly could transfuse
The glorious spirit of the Grecian muse,
Though soft the echo, scorn a borrow’d tone:
Resign Achaia’s lyre, and strike your own.

Let these, or such as these, with just applause,
Restore the muse’s violated laws;
But not in flimsy Darwin’s pompous chime,
That mighty master of unmeaning rhyme,
Whose gilded cymbals, more adorn’d than clear,
The eye delighted, but fatigued the ear;
In show the simple lyre could once surpass,
But now, worn down, appear in native brass;
While all his train of hovering sylphs around
Evaporate in similes and sound:
Him let them shun, with him let tinsel die:
False glare attracts, but more offends the eye.

Yet let them not to vulgar Wordsworth stoop,
The meanest object of the lowly group,
Whose verse, of all but childish prattle void,
Seems blessed harmony to Lamb and Lloyd.\(^2\)
Let them — but hold, my muse, nor dare to teach
A strain far, far beyond thy humble reach:
The native genius with their being given
Will point the path, and peal their notes to heaven.

And thou, too, Scott! resign to minstrels rude
The wilder slogan of a border feud:
Let others spin their meagre lines for hire;
Enough for genius, if itself inspire!
Let Southey sing, although his teeming muse,
Prolific every spring, be too profuse;
Let simple Wordsworth chime his childish verse,
And brother Coleridge lull the babe at nurse;
Let spectre-mongering Lewis aim, at most,
To rouse the galleries, or to raise a ghost;
Let Moore still sigh; let Strangford steal from Moore,
And swear that 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.
But thou, with powers that mock the aid of praise,
Shouldst leave to humbler bards ignoble lays:
Thy country’s voice, the voice of all the nine,
Demand a hallow'd harp – that harp is thine.
Say! will not Caledonia's annals yield
The glorious record of some nobler field,
Than the wild foray of a plundering clan,
Whose proudest deeds disgrace the name of man?
Or Marmion's acts of darkness, fitter food
For Sherwood's outlaw tales of Robin Hood?
Scotland! still proudly claim thy native bard,
And be thy praise his first, his best reward!
Yet not with thee alone his name should live,
But own the vast renown a world can give:
Be known, perchance, when Albion is no more,
And tell the tale of what she was before;
To future times her faded fame recall,
And save her glory, though his country fall.

Yet what avails the sanguine poet's hope,
To conquer ages, and with time to cope?
New eras spread their wings, new nations rise,
And other victors fill the applauding skies;
A few brief generations fleet along,
Whose sons forget the poet and his song:
E'en now, what once-loved minstrels scarce may claim
The transient mention of a dubious name!
When fame's loud trump hath blown 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.

Shall hoary Granta call her sable sons,
Expert in science, more expert at puns?
Shall these approach the muse? ah, no! she flies,
Even from the tempting ore of Seaton's prize;
Though printers condescend the press to soil
With rhyme by Hoare, 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;
A foal well worthy of her ancient dam,
Whose Helicon is duller than her Cam.
There Clarke, 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.

Oh! dark asylum of a Vandal race!
At once the boast of learning, and disgrace!
So lost to Phoebus, that nor Hodgson's verse
Can make thee better, nor poor Hewson's worse.
But where fair Isis rolls her purer wave,
The partial muse delighted loves to lave;
On her green banks a greener wreath she wove,
To crown the bards that haunt her classic grove:
Where Richards wakes a genuine poet's fires,
And modern Britons glory in their sires.

For me, who, thus unask'd, have dared to tell
My country what her sons should know too well,
Zeal for her honour bade me here engage
The host of idiots that infest her age;
No just applause her honour'd name shall lose,
As first in freedom, dearest to the muse.
Oh! would thy bards but emulate thy fame,
And rise more worthy, Albion, of thy name!
What Athens was in science, Rome in power,
What Tyre appear'd in her meridian hour,
'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.
Then, hapless Britain! be thy rulers blest,
The senate's oracles, the people's jest!
Still hear thy motley orators dispense
The flowers of rhetoric, though not of sense,
While Canning's colleagues hate him for his wit,
And old dame Portland fills the place of Pitt.

Yet once again, adieu! ere this the sail
That wafts me hence is shivering in the gale;
And Afric's coast and Calpe's adverse height,
And Stamboul's minarets must greet my sight:
Thence shall I stray through beauty's native clime,
Where Kaff is clad in rocks, and crown'd with snows sublime.
But should I back return, no tempting press
Shall drag my journal from the desk's recess;
Let coxcombs, printing as they come from far,
Snatch his own wreath of ridicule from Carr;
Let Aberdeen and Elgin still pursue
The shade of fame through regions of virtù;
Waste useless thousands on their Phidian freaks,
Misshapen monuments and maim'd antiques;
And make their grand saloons a general mart
For all the mutilated blocks of art:
Of Dardan tours let dilettanti tell,
I leave topography to rapid Gell;
And, quite content, no more shall interpose
To stun the public ear - at least with prose.

Thus far I've held my undisturb'd career,
Prepared for rancour, steel'd 'gainst selfish fear:
This thing of rhyme I ne'er disdain'd to own -
Though not obtrusive, yet not quite unknown:
My voice was heard again, though not so loud,
My page, though nameless, never disavow'd;
And now at once I tear the veil away: -
Cheer on the pack! the quarry stands at bay,
Unscared by all the din of Melbourne House,
By Lambe's resentment, or by Holland's spouse,
By Jeffrey's harmless pistol, Hallam's rage,
Edina's brawny sons and brimstone page.
Our men in buckram shall have blows enough,
And feel they too are 'penetrable stuff'\textsuperscript{93}
And though I hope not hence unscathed to go,
Who conquers me shall find a stubborn foe.
The time hath been, when no harsh sound would fall
From lips that now may seem imbued with gall;
Nor fools nor follies tempt me to despise
The meanest thing that crawl'd beneath my eyes:
But now, so callous grown, so changed since youth,
I've learn'd to think, and sternly speak the truth;
Learn'd to deride the critic's starch decree,
And break him on the wheel he meant for me;
To spurn the rod a scribbler bids me kiss,
Nor care if courts and crowds applaud or hiss:
Nay more, though all my rival rhymesters frown,
I too can hunt a poetaster\textsuperscript{94} down;
And, arm'd in proof, the gauntlet cast at once
To Scotch marauder, and to southern dunce.
Thus much I've dared; if my incondite\textsuperscript{95} 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
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 Bruger
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.
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.


63 (p. 717) though . . . apply echoes Juvenal, 1, 147–71

64 (p. 717) Miles Andrews (d. 1814) minor, prolific dramatist

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 Lefft* 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.
Hewson Clarke (1787–1832), poet, author of ‘The Art of Pleasing’, had attacked Byron in the *Satirist*.

Francis Hodgson (1781–1852), poet and translator of Greek verse, a friend of Byron’s.

the river that flows through Oxford

George Richards (1767–1837), poet, author of ‘Aboriginal Britons’ (1792)

George Canning (1777–1827), politician, Foreign Secretary in Portland’s government, reviewer; William Cavendish, Duke of Portland (1738–1809), Prime Minister (1807–9)

John Carr (1772–1832), travel writer

William Gell (1777–1836), antiquarian, mapped the supposed area of Troy (1804)

a course Scottish cloth

‘penetrable stuff’ from *Hamlet*, 3, 4, 36

a bad poet

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 era\textsuperscript{1} 'eighty-eight'
   The devils had ta'en a longer, stronger pull,
And 'a pull altogether',\textsuperscript{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,
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
   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
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.

6
This by the way; ’tis not mine to record
   What angels shrink from: even the very devil
On this occasion his own work abhor’d,
   So surfeited with the infernal revel:
Though he himself had sharpen’d every sword,
   It almost quench’d his innate thirst of evil.
(Here Satan’s sole good work deserves insertion –
   ’Tis, that he has both generals in reversion.)

7
Let’s skip a few short years of hollow peace,
   Which peopled earth no better, hell as wont,
And heaven none – they form the tyrant’s lease,
   With nothing but new names subscribed upon’t;
’T will one day finish: meantime they increase,
   ‘With seven heads and ten horns’, and all in front,
Like Saint John’s foretold beast; but ours are born
Less formidable in the head than horn.

8
In the first year of freedom’s second dawn
   Died George the Third; although no tyrant, one
Who shielded tyrants, till each sense withdrawn
   Left him nor mental nor external sun:
A better farmer ne’er brush’d dew from lawn,
   A worse king never left a realm undone!
He died – but left his subjects still behind,
One half as mad – and t’other no less blind.
He died! his death made no great stir on earth:
   His burial made some pomp; there was profusion
Of velvet, gilding, brass, and no great dearth
   Of aught but tears – save those shed by collusion.
For these things may be bought at their true worth;
   Of elegy there was the due infusion –
Bought also; and the torches, cloaks, and banners,
Heralds, and relics of old Gothic manners,

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.

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 unmummied clay –
Yet all his spices but prolong decay

He's dead – and upper earth with him has done;
   He's buried; save the undertaker's bill,
Or lapidary scrawl, the world is gone
   For him, unless he left a German will: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.
'God save the king!' It is a large economy
In God to save the like; but if he will
Be saving, all the better; for not one am I
Of those who think damnation better still:
I hardly know too if not quite alone am I
In this small hope of bettering future ill
By circumscribing, with some slight restriction,
The eternity of hell's hot jurisdiction.

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,
And that the other twice two hundred churches
And synagogues have made a damn'd bad purchase.

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.

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!'
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?'

'No,' quoth the cherub; 'George the Third is dead.'
    'And who is George the Third?' replied the apostle:
'What George? what Third?' 'The king of England,' said
   The angel. 'Well! he won't find kings to jostle
   Him on his way; but does he wear his head?'
    Because the last we saw here had a tustle,
And ne'er would have got into heaven's good graces,
   Had he not flung his head in all our faces.

'He was, if I remember, king of France;
   That head of his, which could not keep a crown
On earth, yet ventured in my face to advance
   A claim to those of martyrs — like my own:
If I had had my sword, as I had once
   When I cut ears off, I had cut him down;
But having but my keys, and not my brand,
   I only knock'd his head from out his hand.

'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! The skin
Of St Bartholomew, which makes his cowl
   In heaven, and upon earth redeem'd his sin,
So as to make a martyr, never sped
   Better than did this weak and wooden head.
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,
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,
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 Spirit 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
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.

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 belt\(^{13}\)
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
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:
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.
'Twas the archangel Michael; all men know
The make of angels and archangels, since
There's scarce a scribbler has not one to show,
From the fiends' leader to the angels' prince;
There also are some altar-pieces, though
I really can't say that they much evince
One's inner notions of immortal spirits;
But let the connoisseurs explain their merits.

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).

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.

He and the sombre, silent Spirit met –
They knew each other both for good and ill;
Such was their power, that neither could forget
His former friend and future foe; but still
There was a high, immortal, proud regret
In either's eye, as if 'twere less their will
Than destiny to make the eternal years
Their date of war, and their 'champ clos' the spheres.
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',\textsuperscript{15} like those of clay,
Must keep him company; and we might show
   From the same book, in how polite a way
The dialogue is held between the Powers
Of Good and Evil – but '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.
'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 place\textsuperscript{16} 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.

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 rich\textsuperscript{17} civilian.
37
He merely bent his diabolic brow
   An instant; and then raising it, he stood
In act to assert his right or wrong, and show
   Cause why King George by no means could or should
Make out a case to be exempt from woe
   Eternal, more than other kings, endued
With better sense and hearts, whom history mentions,
Who long have ‘paved hell with their good intentions.’

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,
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
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, –
'And these but as a kind of quit-rent, to
Assert my right as lord: and even had
I such an inclination, 'twere (as you
Well know) superfluous; they are grown so bad,
That hell has nothing better left to do
Than leave them to themselves: so much more mad
And evil by their own internal curse,
Heaven cannot make them better, nor I worse.

'Look to the earth, I said, and say again:
When this old, blind, mad, helpless, weak, poor worm
Began in youth's first bloom and flush to reign,
The world and he both wore a different form,
And 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.

'He came to his sceptre young; he leaves it old:
Look to the state in which he found his realm,
And left it; and his annals too behold,
How to a minion first he gave the helm;
How grew upon his heart a thirst for gold,
The beggar's vice, which can but overwhelm
The meanest he arts; and for the rest, but glance
Thine eye along America and France.

'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,
Take the worst pupil; and produce a reign
More drench'd with gore, more cumber'd with the slain.
'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;

'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.

'The New World shook him off,' the Old yet groans
Beneath what he and his prepared, if not
Completed: he leaves heirs on many thrones
To all his vices, without what begot
Compassion for him - his tame virtues; drones
Who sleep, or despots who have now forgot
A lesson which shall be re-taught them, wake
Upon the thrones of earth; but let them quake!

'Five millions of the primitive, who hold
The faith which makes ye great on earth, implored
A part of that vast all they held of old, -
Freedom to worship - not alone your Lord,
Michael, but you, and you, Saint Peter! Cold
Must be your souls, if you have not 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:
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!'

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
Clouds farther off than we can understand,
Although we find him sometimes in our skies;
Infernal thunder shook both sea and land
Let off the artillery,22 which Milton mentions
As one of Satan's most sublime inventions.
This was a signal unto such damn'd souls
As have the privilege of their damnation
Extended far beyond the mere controls
Of worlds past, present, or to come; no station
Is theirs particularly in the rolls
Of hell assign'd; but where their inclination
Or business carries them in search of game,
They may range freely – being damn'd the same.

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
Offended with such base low likenesses;
We know their posts are nobler far than these.

When the great signal ran from heaven to hell –
About ten million times the distance reckon’d
From our sun to its earth, as we can tell
How much time it takes up, even to a second,
For every ray that travels\(^1\) to dispel
The fogs of London, through which, dimly beacon’d,
The weathercocks are gilt some thrice a year,
If that the \textit{summer} is not too severe:

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, a little speck appear'd
(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 aerial 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;
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 Jusus!' – '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,
The voice of Jonathan 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 isle to Salisbury Plain,
Of all climes and professions, years and trades,
Ready to swear against the good king's reign,
Bitter as clubs in cards are against spades:
All summon'd by this grand 'subpoena,' to
Try if kings mayn't be damn'd like me or you.
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
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,
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
Upon a point of form: you may dispose
Of him; I’ve kings enough below, God knows!’
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.’

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.

The spirit look’d around upon the crowds
   Assembled, and exclaim’d, ‘My friends of all
   The spheres, we shall catch cold amongst these clouds;
So let’s to business: why this general call?
   If those are freeholders I see in shrouds,
   And ’tis for an election that they bawl,
Behold a candidate with unturn’d coat!
Saint Peter, may I count upon your vote?’

‘Sir,’ replied Michael, ‘you mistake; these things
   Are of a former life, and what we do
Above is more august; to judge of kings
   Is the tribunal met: so now you know.’
‘Then I presume those gentlemen with wings,’
   Said Wilkes, ‘are cherubs; and that soul below
Looks much like George the Third, but to my mind
A good deal older – Bless me! is he blind?’
'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,
For such a liberty – and I, for one,
Have told them what I thought beneath the sun.'

'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.'

'Foolish, no doubt, and wicked, to oppress
A poor unlucky devil without a shilling;
But then I blame the man himself much less
Than Bute and Grafton, and shall be unwilling
To see him punish’d here for their excess,
Since they were both damn’d long ago, and still in
Their place below: for me, I have forgiven,
And vote his 'habeas corpus' into heaven.'

'Wilkes,' said the Devil, 'I understand all this;
You turn’d to half a courtier ere you died,
And seem to think it would not be amiss
To grow a whole one on the other side
Of Charon’s ferry; you forget that his
Reign is concluded; 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,
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 gagged\(^2\) – ’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 aërial ease,
But were all ram’d, and jamm’d (but to be balk’d,
As we shall see), and jostled hands and knees,
Like wind compress’d and pent within a bladder,
Or like a human colic, which is sadder.

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.

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:
Another, that he was a duke, or knight,  
An orator, a lawyer, or a priest,  
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.

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  
(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’.\(^{31}\)

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:  
Now Burke, now Tooke,\(^{33}\) he grew to people’s fancies,  
And certes often like Sir Philip Francis.

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.
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, 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,'
Replied this mighty shadow of a shade:
'If I have kept my secret half an age,
I scarce shall tell it now.' — 'Canst thou upbraid,'
Continued Michael, 'George Rex, or allege
Aught further?' Junius answer'd, 'You had better
First ask him for his answer to my letter:

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
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,
And Franklin;' — but at this time there was heard
A cry for room, though not a phantom stirr'd.
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.'

'Confound the renegado! I have sprain'd
   My left wing, he's so heavy; one would think
Some of his works about his neck were chain'd.
   But to the point; while hovering o'er the brink
Of Skiddaw (where as usual it still rain'd),
   I saw a taper, far below me, wink,
And stooping, caught this fellow at a libel –
   No less on history than the Holy Bible.

'The former is the devil's scripture, and
   The latter yours, good Michael: so the affair
Belongs to all of us, you understand.
   I snatch'd him up just as you see him there,
And brought him off for sentence out of hand:
   I've scarcely been ten minutes in the air –
At least a quarter it can hardly be:
I dare say that his wife is still at tea.'

Here Satan said, 'I know this man of old,
   And have expected him for some time here;
A sillier fellow you will scarce behold,
   Or more conceited in his petty sphere:
But surely it was not worth while to fold
   Such trash below your wing, Asmodeus dear:
We had the poor wretch safe (without being bored
With carriage) coming of his own accord.
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?'

'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.

91

But ere the spavin'd dactyls could be spurr'd
Into recitative, in great dismay
Both cherubim and seraphim were heard
To murmur loudly through their long array;
And Michael rose ere he could get a word
Of all his founder'd verses under way,
And cried, 'For God's sake stop, my friend! 'twere best—
Non Di, non homines— you know the rest.'

92

A general bustle spread throughout the throng,
Which seem'd to hold all verse in detestation;
The angels had of course enough of song
When upon service; and the generation
Of ghosts had heard too much in life, not long
Before, to profit by a new occasion:
The monarch, mute till then, exclaim'd, 'What! what!
Pye come again? No more — no more of that!'
The tumult grew; an universal cough
Convulsed the skies, as during a debate,
When Castlereagh has been up long enough
(Before he was first minister of state,
I mean — the slaves hear now); some cried 'Off, off!'
As at a farce; till, grown quite desperate,
The bard Saint Peter pray'd to interpose
(Himself an author) only for his prose.

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;
But that, indeed, was hopeless as can be,
Quite a poetic felony 'de se'.

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.

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'.

93
94
95
96
97
He had written praises of a regicide;
   He had written praises of all kings what ever;
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', and then
   Become as base a critic as e’er crawl’d –
Fed, paid, and pamper’d by the very men
   By whom his muse and morals had been maul’d:
He had written much blank verse, and blanker prose,
   And more of both than anybody knows.

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:
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.
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,
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 —
(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
Woven for the Laureate's final wreath, whene'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

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 teamwork
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 Engander

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) gagged  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 ombrâ’: ‘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 Thyrza 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.
This 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,  
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.

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, deploiring,
    Contemplates the scenes of her youth with a tear;

That the time must arrive, when, no longer retaining
    Their auburn, those locks must wave thin to the breeze,
When a few silver hairs of those tresses remaining,
    Prove nature a prey to decay and disease.

’Tis this, my beloved, which spreads gloom o’er my features,
    Though I ne’er shall presume to arraign the decree
Which God has proclaim’d as the fate of his creatures,
    In the death which 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.

But as death, my beloved, soon or late shall o’ertake us,
    And our breasts, which alive with such sympathy glow,
Will sleep in the grave till the blast shall awake us,
    When calling the dead, in earth’s bosom laid low, –

Oh! then let us drain, while we may, draughts of pleasure,
    Which from passion like ours may unceasingly flow;
Let us pass round the cup of love’s bliss in full measure,
    And quaff the contents as our nectar below.

1805
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,
   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.

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
Lachiny Gair

Away, ye gay landscapes, ye gardens of roses!
In you let the minions of luxury rove;
Restore me the rocks, where the snowflake repose,
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;
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,
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,
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.

**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,
The palaces of crowned kings – the huts,
The habitations of all things which dwell,
Were burnt for beacons; cities were consumed,
And men were gather'd round their blazing homes
To look once more into each other's face;
Happy were those who dwelt within the eye
Of the volcanos, and their mountain-torch:
A fearful hope was all the world contain'd;
Forests were set on fire – but hour by hour
They fell and faded – and the crackling trunks
Extinguish'd with a crash – and all was black.
The brows of men by the despairing light
Wore an unearthly aspect, as by fits
The flashes fell upon them; some lay down
And hid their eyes and wept; and some did rest
Their chins upon their clenched hands, and smiled;
And others hurried to and fro, and fed
Their funeral piles with fuel, and look'd up
With mad disquietude on the dull sky,
The pall of a past world; and then again
With curses cast them down upon the dust,
And gnash'd their teeth and howl'd: the wild birds shriek'd
And, terrified, did flutter on the ground,
And flap their useless wings; the wildest brutes
Came tame and tremulous; and vipers crawl'd
And twined themselves among the multitude,
Hissing, but stingless – 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
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 corse, and kept
The birds and beasts and famish'd men at bay,
Till hunger clung\(^6\) them, or the dropping dead
Lured their lank jaws; himself sought out no food,
But with a piteous and perpetual moan,
And a quick desolate cry, licking the hand
Which answer'd not with a caress – he died.
The crowd was famish'd by degrees; but two
Of an enormous city did survive,
And they were enemies: they met beside
The dying embers of an altar-place
Where had been heap'd a mass of holy things
For an unholy usage; they raked up,
And shivering scraped with their cold skeleton hands
The feeble ashes, and their feeble breath
Blew for a little life, and made a flame
Which was a mockery; then they lifted up
Their eyes as it grew lighter, and beheld
Each other's aspects – saw, and shriek'd, and died –
Even of their mutual hideousness they died,
Unknowing who he was upon whose brow
Famine had written Fiend. The world was void,
The populous and the powerful was a lump.
Seasonless, herbless, treeless, manless, lifeless,
A lump of death – a chaos of hard clay.
The rivers, lakes, and ocean all stood still,
And nothing stirr’d within their silent depths;
Ships sailorless lay rotting on the sea,
And their masts fell down piecemeal: as they dropp’d
They slept on the abyss without a surge –
The waves were dead; the tides were in their grave,
The moon, their mistress, had expired before;
The winds were wither’d in the stagnant air,
And the clouds perish’d; Darkness had no need
Of aid from them – She was the Universe.\(^7\)

Diodati, July, 1816
To Thyrza

Without a stone to mark the spot,
And say, what Truth might well have said,
By all, save one, perchance forgot,
Ah! wherefore art thou* lowly laid?

By many a shore and many a sea
Divided, yet beloved in vain;
The past, the future fled to thee,
To bid us meet – no – no'er again!

Could this have been – a word, a look,
That softly said, 'We part in peace,'
Had taught my bosom how to brook,
With fainter sighs, thy soul's release.

And didst thou not, since Death for thee
Prepared a light and pangless dart,
Once long for him thou ne'er 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,

Till all was past? But when no more
'T was thine to reck of human woe,
Affection's heart-drops, gushing o'er,
Had flow'd as fast – as now they flow.

Shall they not flow, when many a day
In these, to me, deserted towers,
Ere call'd but for a time away,
Affection's mingling tears were ours?

Ours too the glance none saw beside;
The smile none else might understand;
The whisper'd thought of hearts allied,
The pressure of the thrilling hand:
The kiss, so guiltless and refined,
That Love each warmer wish forbore;
Those eyes proclaim'd so pure a mind,
Even Passion blush'd to plead for more.

The tone, that taught me to rejoice,
When prone, unlike thee, to repine;
The song, celestial from thy voice,
But sweet to me from none but thine;

The pledge we wore — I wear it still,
But where is thine? — Ah! where art thou?
Oft have I borne the weight of ill,
But never bent beneath till now!

Well hast thou left in life's best bloom
The cup of woe for me to drain.
If rest alone be in the tomb,
I would not wish thee here again.

But if in worlds more blest than this
Thy virtues seek a fitter sphere,
Impart some portion of thy bliss,
To wean me from mine anguish here.

Teach me — too early taught by thee!
To bear, forgiving and forgiven:
On earth 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;
I told him, when the gift I took,
My only fear should be to lose it.

This pledge attentively I view'd,
And sparkling as I held it near,
Methought one drop the stone bedew'd,
And ever since I've loved a tear.

Still, to adorn his humble youth,
Nor wealth nor birth their treasures yield,
But he who seeks the flowers of truth
Must quit the garden for the field.

'Tis not the plant uprear'd in sloth,
Which beauty shows, and sheds perfume;
The flowers which yield the most of both
In Nature's wild luxuriance bloom.

Had 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;
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 –
It felt like the warning
   Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
   And light is thy fame:
I hear thy name spoken,
   And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
   A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o'er me –
   Why wert thou so dear?
They know not I knew thee,
   Who knew thee 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,
How should I greet thee? –
   With silence and tears.

1808
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,
My dripping limbs I faintly stretch,
And think I've done a feat today.

But since he cross'd the rapid tide,
According to the doubtful story,
To woo, – and – Lord knows what beside,
And swam for Love, as I for Glory;

'Twere hard to say who fared the best:
Sad mortals! thus the gods still plague you!
He lost his labour, I my jest;
For he was drown'd, and I've the ague.

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;
No torch is kindled at its blaze –
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love, I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

But 'tis not thus – and 'tis not here –
Such thoughts should shake my soul, nor now,
Where glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,
Glory and Greece, around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece – she is awake!)
Awake, my spirit! Think through whom
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood! – unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of beauty be.
If thou 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.

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


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

Aetna  a volcano on Sicily under which the mythical Enceladus was imprisoned

Africa  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

Allah  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.
Glossary

Boccaccio  Giovanni Boccoccio (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 Athenian 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 (102–44 BC); 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)
Cupidon  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
Diana  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
dilettante  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)
distrait  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
drought  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

déclat  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

*Ilion*  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

Letha  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)

lisas  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.
Mohomt 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 Catullus
Murray John Murray (1778–1843), (Byron’s) publisher
musico 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.
Poésie poetry
Pompey Roman general (106–48BC), member of the First Triumvirate, defeated by Julius Caesar
poniard a small dagger. Gulbeyz'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
pumcheon 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 Pizarro (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
Skeffington  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 (469–399 BC), 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 Suwarrow  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  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.

villeggatora 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
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