

BELL'S ENGLISH CLASSICS



BYRON'S
CHILDE HAROLD
CANTOS III & IV

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

7660

H. G. KEENE, M.A., C.I.E.

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12 II.

CHILDE HAROLD

CANTOS III. AND IV.

To suit the convenience of students for examination, this portion of Mr Keene's edition of "Childe Harold" has been bound up separately.

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BYRON'S

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WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

H. G. KEENE, HON. M.A. OXON.

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THIRD CANTO

THIRD CANTO.

[In the interval between Cantos II. and III. Byron had married Miss Millbanke ; his daughter Ada was born ; and his wife had left him, in 1816.]

I

Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child !
 Ada ! sole daughter of my house and heart ?
 When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smiled,
 And then we parted,—not as now we part,
 But with a hope.—

5

Awaking with a start,
 The waters heave around me ; and on high
 The winds lift up their voices : I depart,
 Whither I know not ; but the hour's gone by,
 When Albion's lessening shores could grieve or glad mine
 eye.

II

Once more upon the waters ! yet once more !
 And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
 That knows his rider. Welcome, to the roar !
 Swift be their guidance, whereso'er it lead !
 Though the strained 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, the tempest's breath pre-
 vail.

15

III

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

20

THIRD CANTO.

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

IV

Since my young days of passion—joy, or pain,
Perchance my heart and harp have lost a string, 30
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 35
Forgetfulness around me—it shall seem
To me, though to none else, a not ungrateful theme.

V

He, who grown aged in this world of woe,
In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of life,
So that no wonder waits him; nor below 40
Can love or sorrow, fame, ambition, strife,
Cut to his heart again with the keen knife
Of silent, sharp endurance: he can tell
Why thought seeks refuge in lone caves, yet rife
With airy images, and shapes which dwell 45
Still unimpaired, though old, in the soul's haunted cell.

VI

'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 image, even as I do now. 50
What am I? Nothing: but not so art thou,
Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,

Invisible but gazing, as I glow
 Mixed with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,
 And feeling still with thee in my crushed feelings' dearth. 55

VII

Yet must I think less wildly :—I *have* thought
 Too long and darkly, till my brain became,
 In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,
 A whirling gulf of phantasy and flame :
 And thus, untaught in youth my heart to tame, 60
 My springs of life were poisoned. 'Tis too late !
 Yet am I changed ; though still enough the same
 In strength to bear what time can not abate,
 And feed on bitter fruits without accusing Fate.

VIII

Something too much of this :—but now 'tis past,
 And the spell closes with its silent seal. 65
 Long absent HAROLD re-appears at last ;
 He of the breast which fain no more would feel,
 Wrung with the wounds which kill not, but ne'er heal ;
 Yet Time, who changes all, had altered him 70
 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.

IX

His had been quaffed too quickly, and he found
 The dregs were wormwood ; but he filled again, 75
 And from a purer fount, on holier ground,
 And deemed its spring perpetual ; but in vain !
 Still round him clung invisibly a chain
 Which galled for ever, fettering though unseen,
 And heavy though it clanked not ; worn with pain, 80
 Which pined although it spoke not, and grew keen,
 Entering with every step he took through many a scene.

X

Secure in guarded coldness, he had mixed
 Again in fancied safety with his kind,
 And deemed his spirit now so firmly fixed 85
 And sheathed with an invulnerable mind,
 That, if no joy, no sorrow lurked behind ;
 And he, as one, might 'midst the many stand
 Unheeded, searching through the crowd to find
 Fit speculation ; such as in strange land 90
 He found in wonder-works of God and Nature's hand.

XI

But who can view the ripened rose, nor seek
 To wear it ? who can curiously behold
 The smoothness and the sheen of Beauty's cheek,
 Nor feel the heart can never all grow old ? 95
 Who can contemplate Fame through clouds unfold
 The star which rises o'er her steep, nor climb ?
 Harold, once more within the vortex, rolled
 On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,
 Yet with a nobler aim than in his youth's fond prime. 100

XII

But soon he knew himself the most unfit
 Of men to herd with Man ; with whom he held
 Little in common ; untaught to submit
 His thoughts to others, though his soul was quelled
 In youth by his own thoughts ; still uncompelled, 105
 He would not yield dominion of his mind
 To spirits against whom his own rebelled ;
 Proud though in desolation ; which could find
 A life within itself, to breathe without mankind.

XIII

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends ; 110
 Where rolled 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 115
 A mutual language, clearer than the tome
 Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake
 For Nature's pages glassed by sunbeams on the lake.

XIV

Like the Chaldean, he could watch the stars,
 Till he had peopled them with beings bright 120
 As their own beams ; and earth, and earth-born jars,
 And human frailties, were forgotten quite :
 Could he have kept his spirit to that flight
 He had been happy ; but this clay will sink
 Its spark immortal, envying it the light 125
 To which it mounts, as if to break the link
 That keeps us from yon heaven which woos us to its brink.

XV

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing
 Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,
 Drooped as a wild-born falcon with clipt wing, 130
 To whom the boundless air alone were home :
 Then came his fit again, which to o'ercome,
 As eagerly the barred-up bird will beat
 His breast and beak against his wiry dome
 Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the heat 135
 Of his impeded soul would through his bosom eat.

XVI

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,
 With nought of hope left, but with less of gloom ;
 The very knowledge that he lived in vain,
 That all was over on this side the tomb, 140
 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 forebore to check. 145

XVII

Stop!—for thy tread is on an Empire's dust!
 An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!
 Is the spot marked with no colossal bust?
 Nor column trophied for triumphal show?
 None; but the moral's truth tells simpler so, 150
 As the ground was before, thus let it be;
 How that red rain hath made the harvest grow!
 And is this all the world has gained by thee,
 'Thou first and last of fields! king-making Victory.

XVIII

And Harold stands upon this place of skulls, 155
 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, 160
 Pierced by the shaft of banded nations through;
 Ambition's life and labours all were vain;
 He wears the shattered links of the world's broken chain.

XIX

Fit retribution! Gaul may champ the bit
 And foam in fetters;—but is Earth more free? 165
 Did nations combat to make *One* submit;
 Or league to teach all kings true sovereignty?
 What! shall reviving Thralldom again be
 The patched-up idol of enlightened days?
 Shall we, who struck the Lion down, shall we 170
 Pay the Wolf homage? proffering lowly gaze
 And servile knees to thrones? No; *prove* before ye praise.

XX

If not, o'er one fallen despot boast no more !
 In vain fair cheeks were furrowed with hot tears
 For Europe's flowers long rooted up before 175
 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 180
 Such as Harmodius drew on Athens' tyrant lord.

XXI

There was a sound of revelry by night,
 And Belgium's capital had gathered then
 Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
 The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men · 185
 A thousand hearts beat happily ; and when
 Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
 Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
 And all went merry as a marriage bell ;
 But hush ! hark ! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell ! 190

XXII

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— 195
 But hark !—that heavy sound breaks in once more
 As if the clouds its echo would repeat ;
 And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before !
 Arm ! Arm ! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar !

XXIII

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

That sound the first amidst the festival,
 And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear ;
 And when they smiled because he deemed it near,
 His heart more truly knew that peal too well 205
 Which stretched his father on a bloody bier,
 And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell ;
 He rushed into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

XXIV

Ah ! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
 And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress, 210
 And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
 Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness ;
 And there were sudden partings, such as press
 The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
 Which ne'er might be repeated ; who could guess 215
 If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
 Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise !

XXV

And there was mounting in hot haste : the steed,
 The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
 Went pouring forward with impetuous speed, 220
 And swiftly forming in the ranks of war ;
 And the deep thunder peal on peal afar ;
 And near, the beat of the alarming drum
 Roused up the soldier ere the morning star ;
 While thronged the citizens with terror dumb, 225
 Or whispering, with white lips—' The foe ! They come ! they
 come !'

XXVI

And wild and high the 'Cameron's gathering' rose !
 The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
 Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes :
 How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills, 230
 Savage and shrill ! But with the breath which fills
 Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers

With the fierce native daring which instils
 The stirring memory of a thousand years,
 And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ears! 235

XXVII

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
 Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
 Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
 Over the unreturning brave,—alas!
 Ere evening to be trodden like the grass 240
 Which now beneath them, but above shall grow
 In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
 Of living valour, rolling on the foe
 And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

XXVIII

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life, 245
 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 250
 The earth is covered thick with other clay,
 Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,
 Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial blent!

XXIX

Their praise is hymned by loftier harps than mine;
 Yet one I would select from that proud throng, 255
 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 showered
 The death-bolts deadliest the thinned files along, 260
 Even where the thickest of war's tempest lowered,
 They reached no nobler breast than thine, young, gallant
 Howard!

XXX

There have been tears and breaking hearts for thee,
 And mine were nothing, had I such to give ;
 But when I stood beneath the fresh green tree, 265
 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, 270
 I turned from all she brought to those she could not bring.

XXXI

I turned 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 ; 275
 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. 280

XXXII

They mourn, but smile at length ; and, smiling, mourn :
 The tree will wither long before it fall ;
 The hull drives on, though mast and sail be torn ;
 The roof-tree sinks, but moulders on the hall
 In massy hoariness ; the ruined wall 285
 Stands when its wind-worn battlements are gone ;
 The bars survive the captive they enthal :
 The day drags through, though storms keep out the sun ;
 And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on :

XXXIII

Even as a broken mirror, which the glass 290
 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, 295
 And bloodless with its sleepless sorrow aches,
 Yet withers on till all without is old,
 Showing no visible sign, for such things are untold.

XXXIV

There is a very life in our despair,
 Vitality of poison,—a quick root 300
 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 on the Dead Sea's shore,
 All ashes to the taste : Did man compute 305
 Existence by enjoyment, and count o'er
 Such hours 'gainst years of life, say, would he name three-
 score ?

XXXV

The Psalmist numbered out the years of man :
 They are enough ; and if thy tale be *true*,
 Thou, who didst grudge him even that fleeting span, 310
 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 ! ' 315
 And this is much, and all which will not pass away.

XXXVI

There sunk the greatest, nor the worst of men,
 Whose spirit, antithetically mixt,
 One moment of the mightiest, and again
 On little objects with like firmness fixt ; 320

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 reassume the imperial mien,
 And shake again the world, the Thunderer of the scene ! 325

XXXVII

Conqueror and captive of the earth art thou !
 She trembles at thee still, and thy wild name
 Was ne'er more bruited in men's minds than now
 That thou art nothing, save the jest of fame,
 Who wooed thee once, thy vassal, and became 330
 The flatterer of thy fierceness, till thou wert
 A god unto thyself ; nor less the same
 To the astounded kingdoms all inert
 Who deemed thee for a time whate'er thou didst assert.

XXXVIII

Oh, more or less than man—in high or low : 335
 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, 340
 However deeply in men's spirits skilled,
 Look through thine own, nor curb the lust of war,
 Nor learn that tempted fate will leave the loftiest star.

XXXIX

Yet well thy soul hath brooked the turning tide
 With that untaught innate philosophy, 345
 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 ;— 350
 When fortune fled her spoiled and favourite child,
 He stood unbowed beneath the ills upon him piled.

XL

Sager than in thy fortunes ; for in them
 Ambition steeled thee on too far to show
 That just habitual scorn, which could contemn 355
 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 turned unto thine overthrow ;
 'Tis but a worthless world to win or lose ; 360
 So hath it proved to thee, and all such lot who choose.

XLI

If, like a tower upon a headlong rock,
 Thou hadst been made to stand or fall alone,
 Such scorn of man had helped to brave the shock ;
 But men's thoughts were the steps which paved thy throne, 365
Their admiration thy best weapon shone ;
 The part of Philip's son was thine, not then
 (Unless aside thy purple had been thrown)
 Like stern Diogenes to mock at men ;
 For sceptred cynics earth were far too wide a den. 370

XLII

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 ; 375
 And, but once kindled, quenchless evermore,
 Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
 Of aught but rest ; a fever at the core,
 Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore.

XLIII

This makes the madmen who have made men mad 380
 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 ; 385
 Envied, yet how unenviable ! what stings
 Are theirs ! One breast laid open were a school
 Which would unteach mankind the lust to shine or rule :

XLIV

Their breath is agitation, and their life
 A storm whereon they ride, to sink at last, 390
 And yet so nursed and bigoted 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 395
 With its own flickering, or a sword laid by
 Which eats into itself, and rusts ingloriously.

XLV

He who ascends to mountain-tops, shall find
 The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow ;
 He who surpasses or subdues mankind, 400
 Must look down on the hate of those below.
 Though high *above* the sun of glory glow,
 And rar *beneath* the earth and ocean spread,
Round him are icy rocks, and loudly blow
 Contending tempests on his naked head, 405
 And thus reward the toils which to those summits led.

XLVI

Away with these ! true Wisdom's world will be
 Within its own creation, or in thine,

Maternal Nature ! for who teems like thee,
 Thus on the banks of thy majestic Rhine ? 410
 There Harold gazes on a work divine,
 A blending of all beauties ; streams and dells,
 Fruit, foliage, crag, wood, cornfield, mountain, vine,
 And chiefless castles breathing stern farewells
 From gray but leafy walls, where Ruin greenly dwells. 415

XLVII

And there they stand, as stands a lofty mind,
 Worn, but unstooping to the baser crowd,
 All tenantless, save to the crannying wind,
 Or holding dark communion with the cloud.
 There was a day when they were young and proud ; 420
 Banners on high, and battles passed below ;
 But they who fought are in a bloody shroud,
 And those which waved are shredless dust ere now,
 And the bleak battlements shall bear no future blow.

XLVIII

Beneath these battlements, within those walls, 425
 Power dwelt amidst her passions ; in proud state
 Each robber chief upheld his armed halls,
 Doing his evil will, nor less elate
 Than mightier heroes of a longer date.
 What want these outlaws conquerors should have 430
 But History's purchased page to call them great ?
 A wider space, an ornamented grave ?
 Their hopes were not less warm, their souls were full as
 brave.

XLIX

In their baronial feuds and single fields,
 What deeds of prowess unrecorded died ! 435
 And Love, which lent a blazon to their shields,
 With emblems well devised by amorous pride,
 Through all the mail of iron hearts would glide ;
 But still their flame was fierceness, and drew on

Keen contest and destruction near allied, 440
 And many a tower for some fair mischief won,
 Saw the discoloured Rhine beneath its ruin run.

L

But Thou, exulting and abounding river !
 Making thy waves a blessing as they flow
 Through banks whose beauty would endure for ever 445
 Could man but leave thy bright creation so,
 Nor its fair promise from the surface mow
 With the sharp scythe of conflict,—then to see
 Thy valley of sweet waters, were to know
 Earth paved like Heaven ; and to seem such to me, 450
 Even now what wants thy stream ? — that it should
 Lethe be.

LI

A thousand battles have assailed thy banks,
 But these and half their fame have passed away,
 And Slaughter heaped on high his weltering ranks ;
 Their very graves are gone, and what are they ? 455
 Thy tide washed down the blood of yesterday,
 And all was stainless, and on thy clear stream
 Glased, with its dancing light, the sunny ray ;
 But o'er the blackened memory's blighting dream
 Thy waves would vainly roll, all sweeping as they seem. 460

LII

Thus Harold inly said, and passed along,
 Yet not insensibly to all which here
 Awoke the jocund birds to early song
 In glens which might have made even exile dear :
 Though on his brow were graven lines austere, 465
 And tranquil sternness, which had ta'en the place
 Of feelings fierier far but less severe,
 Joy was not always absent from his face,
 But o'er it in such scenes would steal with transient trace.

LIII

Nor was all love shut from him, though his days 470
 Of passion had consumed themselves to dust.
 It is in vain that we would coldly gaze
 On such as smile upon us ; the heart must
 Leap kindly back to kindness, though disgust
 Hath weaned it from all worldlings : thus he felt, 475
 For there was soft remembrance, and sweet trust
 In one fond breast, to which his own would melt,
 And in its tenderer hour on that his bosom dwelt.

LIV

And he had learned to love,—I know not why,
 For this in such as him seems strange of mood,— 480
 The helpless looks of blooming infancy,
 Even in its earliest nurture ; what subdued,
 To change like this, a mind so far imbued
 With scorn of man, it little boots to know ;
 But thus it was ; and though in solitude 485
 Small power the nipped affections have to grow,
 In him this glowed when all beside had ceased to glow.

LV

And there was one soft breast, as hath been said,
 Which unto his was bound by stronger ties
 Than the church links withal ; and, though unwed, 490
That love was pure, and, far above disguise,
 Had stood the test of mortal enmities
 Still undivided, and cemented more
 By peril, dreaded most in female eyes ;
 But this was firm, and from a foreign shore 495
 Well to that heart might his these absent greetings pour !

1

The castled crag of Drachenfels
 Frowns o'er the wide and winding Rhine,

Whose breast of waters broadly swells
 Between the banks which bear the vine, 500
 And hills all rich with blossomed trees,
 And fields which promise corn and wine,
 And scattered cities crowning these,
 Whose far white walls along them shine,
 Have strewed a scene, which I should see 505
 With double joy wert *thou* with me.

2

And peasant girls, with deep blue eyes,
 And hands which offer early flowers,
 Walk smiling o'er this paradise ;
 Above, the frequent feudal towers 510
 Through green leaves lift their walls of gray ;
 And many a rock which steeply lowers,
 And noble arch in proud decay,
 Look o'er this vale of vintage-bowers ;
 But one thing want these banks of Rhine, — 515
 Thy gentle hand to clasp in mine !

3

I send the lilies given to me ;
 Though long before thy hand they touch,
 I know that they must withered be,
 But yet reject them not as such ; 520
 For I have cherished them as dear,
 Because they yet may meet thine eye,
 And guide thy soul to mine even here,
 When thou behold'st them drooping nigh,
 And know'st them gathered by the Rhine, 525
 And offered from my heart to thine !

4

The river nobly foams and flows,
 The charm of this enchanted ground,

And all its thousand turns disclose
 Some fresher beauty varying round : 530
 The haughtiest breast its wish might bound
 Through life to dwell delighted here ;
 Nor could on earth a spot be found
 To nature and to me so dear,
 Could thy dear eyes in following mine 535
 Still sweeten more these banks of Rhine !

LVI

By Coblentz, on a rise of gentle ground,
 There is a small and simple pyramid,
 Crowning the summit of the verdant mound ;
 Beneath its base are heroes' ashes hid, 540
 Our enemy's—but let not that forbid
 Honour to Marceau ! o'er whose early tomb
 Tears, big tears, gushed from the rough soldier's lid,
 Lamenting and yet envying such a doom,
 Falling for France, whose rights he battled to resume. 545

LVII

Brief, brave, and glorious was his young career,—
 His mourners were two hosts, his friends and foes ;
 And fitly may the stranger lingering here
 Pray for his gallant spirit's bright repose ;
 For he was Freedom's champion, one of those, 550
 The few in number, who had o'erstept
 The charter to chastise, which she bestows
 On such as wield her weapons : he had kept
 The whiteness of his soul, and thus men o'er him wept.

LVIII

Here Ehrenbreitstein, with her shattered wall 555
 Black with the miner's blast, upon her height
 Yet shows of what she was, when shell and ball
 Rebounding idly on her strength did light :

A tower of victory ! from whence the flight
 Of baffled foes was watched along the plain : 560
 But Peace destroyed what War could never blight,
 And laid those proud roofs bare to Summer's rain—
 On which the iron shower for years had poured in vain.

LIX

Adieu to thee, fair Rhine ! How long delighted
 The stranger fain would linger on his way ! 565
 Thine is a scene alike where souls united
 Or lonely Contemplation thus might stray ;
 And could the ceaseless vulture cease to prey
 On self-condemning bosoms, it were here,
 Where Nature, nor too sombre nor too gay, 570
 Wild but not rude, awful yet not austere,
 Is to the mellow Earth as Autumn to the year.

LX

Adieu to thee, again : a vain adieu !
 There can be no farewell to scene like thine ;
 The mind is coloured by thy every hue ; 575
 And if reluctantly the eyes resign
 Their cherished gaze upon thee, lovely Rhine !
 'Tis with the thankful glance of parting praise ;
 More mighty spots may rise—more glaring shine,
 But none unite in one attaching maze 580
 The brilliant, fair, and soft,—the glories of old days.

LXI

The negligently grand, the fruitful bloom
 Of coming ripeness, the white city's sheen,
 The rolling stream, the precipice's gloom,
 The forest's growth, and Gothic walls between, 585
 The wild rocks shaped, as they had turrets been,
 In mockery of man's art ; and these withal

A race of faces happy as the scene,
 Whose fertile bounties here extend to all,
 Still springing o'er thy banks, though Empires near them 590
 fall.

LXII

But these recede. Above me are the Alps,
 The palaces of Nature, whose vast walls
 Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps,
 And throned Eternity in icy halls
 Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls 595
 The avalanche—the thunderbolt of snow !
 All that expands the spirit, yet appals,
 Gather around these summits, as to show
 How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave vain man below.

LXIII

But ere these matchless heights I dare to scan, 600
 There is a spot should not be passed in vain,—
 Morat ! the proud, the patriot field ! where man
 May gaze on ghastly trophies of the slain,
 Nor blush for those who conquered on that plain ;
 Here Burgundy bequeathed his tombless host, 605
 A bony heap, through ages to remain,
 Themselves their monument ;—the Stygian coast
 Unsepulchred they roamed, and shrieked each wandering
 ghost.

LXIV

While Waterloo with Cannæ's carnage vies,
 Morat and Marathon twin names shall stand ; 610
 They were true Glory's stainless victories,
 Won by the unambitious heart and hand
 Of a proud, brotherly, and civic band,
 All unbought champions in no princely cause
 Of vice-entailed Corruption ; they no land 615
 Doomed to bewail the blasphemy of laws
 Making kings' rights divine, by some Draconic clause.

LXV

By a lone wall a lonelier column rears
 A gray and grief-worn aspect of old days ;
 'Tis the last remnant of the wreck of years, 620
 And looks as with the wild-bewildered gaze
 Of one to stone converted by amaze,
 Yet still with consciousness ; and there it stands
 Making a marvel that it not decays,
 When the coeval pride of human hands, 625
 Levelled Aventicum, hath strewed her subject lands.

LXVI

And there—oh ! sweet and sacred be the name !—
 Julia—the daughter, the devoted—gave
 Her youth to Heaven ; her heart, beneath a claim
 Nearest to Heaven's, broke o'er a father's grave. 630
 Justice is sworn 'gainst tears, and hers would crave
 The life she lived in ; but the judge was just,
 And then she died on him she could not save.
 Their tomb was simple, and without a bust,
 And held within their urn, one mind, one heart, one dust. 635

LXVII

But these are deeds which should not pass away.
 And names that must not wither, though the earth
 Forgets her empires with a just decay,
 The enslavers and the enslaved, their death and birth ;
 The high, the mountain-majesty of worth 640
 Should be, and shall, survivor of its woe,
 And from its immortality look forth
 In the sun's face, like yonder Alpine snow,
 Imperishably pure beyond all things below.

LXVIII

Lake Lemman woos me with its crystal face, 645
 The mirror where the stars and mountains view

The stillness of their aspect in each trace
 Its clear depth yields of their far height and hue :
 There is too much of man here, to look through
 With a fit mind the might which I behold ; 650
 But soon in me shall Loneliness renew
 Thoughts hid, but not less cherished than of old,
 Ere mingling with the herd had penned me in their fold.

LXIX

To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind :
 All are not fit with them to stir and toil. 655
 Nor is it discontent to keep the mind
 Deep in its fountain, lest it overboil
 In the hot throng, where we become the spoil
 Of our infection, till too late and long
 We may deplore and struggle with the coil, 660
 In wretched interchange of wrong for wrong
 Midst a contentious world, striving where none are strong.

LXX

There, in a moment, we may plunge our years
 In fatal penitence, and in the blight
 Of our own soul turn all our blood to tears, 665
 And colour things to come with hues of Night ;
 The race of life becomes a hopeless flight
 To those that walk in darkness : on the sea,
 The boldest steer but where their ports invite ;
 But there are wanderers o'er Eternity 670
 Whose bark drives on and on, and anchor'd ne'er shall be.

LXXI

Is it not better, then, to be alone,
 And love Earth only for its earthly sake ?
 By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,
 Or the pure bosom of its nursing lake, 675
 Which feeds it as a mother who doth make
 A fair but froward infant her own care,

Kissing its cries away as these awake ;—
 Is it not better thus our lives to wear,
 Than join the crushing crowd, doomed to inflict or bear ? 680

LXXII

I live not in myself, but I become
 Portion of that around me ; and to me
 High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
 Of human cities torture : I can see
 Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be 685
 A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
 Classed among creatures, when the soul can flee,
 And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
 Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain.

LXXIII

And thus I am absorbed, and this is life ; 690
 I look upon the peopled desert past,
 As on a place of agony and strife,
 Where, for some sin, to sorrow I was cast,
 To act and suffer, but remount at last
 With a fresh pinion ; which I feel to spring, 695
 Though young, yet waxing vigorous as the blast
 Which it would cope with, on delighted wing,
 Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round our being cling.

LXXIV

And when, at length, the mind shall be all free
 From what it hates in this degraded form, 700
 Reft of its carnal life, save what shall be
 Existent happier in the fly and worm,—
 When elements to elements conform,
 And dust is as it should be, shall I not
 Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more warm ? 705
 The bodiless thought ? the Spirit of each spot ?
 Of which, even now, I share at times the immortal lot ?

LXXV

Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part
 Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
 Is not the love of these deep in my heart 710
 With a pure passion? should I not contemn
 All objects, if compared with these? and stem
 A tide of suffering, rather than forego
 Such feelings for the hard and worldly phlegm
 Of those whose eyes are only turned below, 715
 Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts which dare not glow?

LXXVI

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, 720
 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 follish quest,
 The which to gain and keep, he sacrificed all rest. 725

LXXVII

Here the self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau,
 The apostle of affliction, he who threw
 Enchantment over passion, and from woe
 Wrung overwhelming eloquence, first drew
 The breath which made him wretched; yet he knew 730
 How to make madness beautiful, and cast
 O'er erring deeds and thoughts a heavenly hue
 Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they past
 The eyes, which o'er them shed tears feelingly and fast.

LXXVIII

His love was passion's essence:—as a tree 735
 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, 740
 But of ideal beauty, which became
 In him existence, and o'erflowing teems
 Along his burning page, distempered though it seems.

LXXIX

This breathed itself to life in Julie, *this*
 Invested her with all that's wild and sweet ; 745
 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
 Flashed the thrilled spirit's love-devouring heat ; 750
 In that absorbing sigh perchance more blest
 Than vulgar minds may be with all they seek possess.

LXXX

His life was one long war with self-sought foes,
 Or friends by him self-banished ; for his mind
 Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and chose, 755
 For its own cruel sacrifice, the kind,
 'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange and blind,
 But he was phrensied,—wherefore, who may know ?
 Since cause might be which skill could never find ;
 But he was phrensied by disease or woe, 760
 To that worst pitch of all, which wears a reasoning show.

LXXXI

For then he was inspired, and from him came,
 As from the Pythian's mystic cave of yore,
 Those oracles which set the world in flame,
 Nor ceased to burn till kingdoms were no more, 765

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? 770

LXXXII

They made themselves a fearful monument!
 The wreck of old opinions—things which grew,
 Breathed from the birth of time: the veil they rent,
 And what behind it lay all earth shall view.
 But good with ill they also overthrew, 775
 Leaving but ruins, wherewith to rebuild
 Upon the same foundation, and renew
 Dungeons and thrones, which the same hour refilled
 As heretofore, because ambition was self-willed.

LXXXIII

But this will not endure, nor be endured! 780
 Mankind have felt their strength, and made it felt.
 They might have used it better, but, allured
 By their new vigour, sternly have they dealt
 On one another; pity ceased to melt
 With her once natural charities.—But they, 785
 Who in oppression's darkness caved had dwelt,
 They were not eagles, nourished with the day;
 What marvel then, at times, if they mistook their prey?

LXXXIV

What deep wounds ever closed without a scar?
 The heart's bleed longest, and but heal to wear 790
 That which disfigures it; and they who war
 With their own hopes, and have been vanquished, bear
 Silence, but not submission: in his lair
 Fixed Passion holds his breath, until the hour

Which shall atone for years ; none need despair : 795
 It came, it cometh, and will come,—the power
 To punish or forgive—in *one* we shall be slower.

LXXXV

Clear, placid Lemman ! thy contrasted lake,
 With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing
 Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake 800
 Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.
 This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
 To waft me from distraction ; once I loved
 Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
 Sounds sweet as if a sister's voice reprov'd, 805
 That I with stern delights should e'er have been so moved.

LXXXVI

It is the hush of night, and all between
 Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,
 Mellowed and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
 Save darkened Jura, whose capt heights appear 810
 Precipitously steep ; and drawing near,
 There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
 Of flowers yet fresh with childhood ; on the ear
 Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
 Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more : 815

LXXXVII

He is an evening reveller, who makes
 His life an infancy, and sings his fill ;
 At intervals, some bird from out the brakes
 Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
 There seems a floating whisper on the hill, 820
 But that is fancy, for the starlight dews
 All silently their tears of love instil,
 Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
 Deep into nature's breast the spirit of her hues.

LXXXVIII

Ye stars ! which are the poetry of heaven ! 825
 If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
 Of men and empires,—'tis to be forgiven,
 That in our aspirations to be great,
 Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
 And claim a kindred with you ; for ye are 830
 A beauty and a mystery, and create
 In us such love and reverence from afar,
 That fortune, fame, power, life have named themselves a star.

LXXXIX

All heaven and earth are still—though not in sleep,
 But breathless, as we grow when feeling most ; 835
 And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep :—
 All heaven and earth are still : From the high host
 Of stars, to the lulled lake and mountain-coast,
 All is centered in a life intense,
 Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost, 840
 But hath a part of being, and a sense
 Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

XC

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
 In solitude where we are *least* alone ;
 A truth, which through our being then doth melt, 845
 And purifies from self : it is a tone,
 The soul and source of music, which makes known
 Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm
 Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
 Binding all things with beauty ;—'twould disarm 850
 The spectre Death, had he substantial power to harm.

XCI

Not vainly did the early Persian make
 His altar the high places, and the peak

Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take
 A fit and unwalled temple, there to seek 855
 The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak,
 Upreared of human hands. Come, and compare
 Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or Greek,
 With Nature's realms of worship, earth and air,
 Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy prayer ! 860

XCII

The sky is changed !—and such a change ! Oh night,
 And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
 Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
 Of a dark eye in woman ! Far along,
 From peak to peak, the rattling crags among 865
 Leaps the live thunder ! Not from one lone cloud,
 But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
 And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
 Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud !

XCIII

And this is in the night :—Most glorious night ! 870
 Thou wert not sent for slumber ! let me be
 A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,—
 A portion of the tempest and of thee !
 How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
 And the big rain comes dancing to the earth ! 875
 And now again 'tis black,—and now, the glee
 Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
 As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.

XCIV

Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his way between
 Heights which appear as lovers who have parted 880
 In hate, whose mining depths so intervene,
 That they can meet no more, though broken-hearted !
 Though in their souls, which thus each other thwarted,
 Love was the very root of the fond rage

Which blighted their life's bloom, and then departed :--- 885
 Itself expired, but leaving them an age
 Of years all winters,—war within themselves to wage :—

XCV

Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath cleft his way,
 The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en his stand :
 For here, not one, but many, make their play, 890
 And fling their thunder-bolts from hand to hand,
 Flashing and cast around : of all the band,
 The brightest through these parted hills hath forked
 His lightnings,—as if he did understand,
 That in such gaps as desolation worked, 895
 There the hot shaft should blast whatever therein lurked.

XCVI

Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, lightnings ! ye !
 With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a soul
 To make these felt and feeling, well may be
 Things that have made me watchful ; the far roll 900
 Of your departing voices, is the knoll
 Of what in me is sleepless,—if I rest.
 But where of you, O tempests ! is the goal ?
 Are ye like those within the human breast ?
 Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some high nest ? 905

XCVII

Could I embody and unbosom now
 That which is most within me,—could I wreak
 My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
 Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak.
 All that I would have sought, and all I seek, 910
 Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe—into *one* word,
 And that one word were Lightning, I would speak ;
 But as it is, I live and die unheard,
 With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.

XCVIII

The morn is up again, the dewy morn, 915
 With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom,
 Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn,
 And living as if earth contained no tomb,—
 And glowing into day : we may resume
 The march of our existence : and thus I, 920
 Still on thy shores, fair Leman ! may find room
 And food for meditation, nor pass by
 Much, that may give us pause, if pondered fittingly.

XCIX

Clarens ! sweet Clarens, birthplace of deep love !
 Thine air is the young breath of passionate thought ; 925
 Thy trees take root in Love ; the snows above
 The very Glaciers have his colours caught,
 And sun-set into rose-hues sees them wrought
 By rays which sleep there lovingly : the rocks,
 The permanent crags, tell here of Love, who sought 930
 In them a refuge from the worldly shocks,
 Which stir and sting the soul with hope that woos, then
 mocks.

C

Clarens ! by heavenly feet thy paths are trod,—
 Undying Love's, who here ascends a throne
 To which the steps are mountains ; where the god 935
 Is a pervading life and light,—so shown
 Not on those summits solely, nor alone
 In the still cave and forest ; o'er the flower
 His eye is sparkling, and his breath hath blown,
 His soft and summer breath, whose tender power 940
 Passes the strength of storms in their most desolate hour.

CI

All things are here of *him* ; from the black pines,
 Which are his shade on high, and the loud roar

Of torrents, where he listeneth, to the vines
 Which slope his green path downward to the shore, 945
 Where the bowed waters meet him, and adore,
 Kissing his feet with murmurs ; and the wood,
 The covert of old trees, with trunks all hoar,
 But light leaves, young as joy, stands where it stood,
 Offering to him, and his, a populous solitude. 950

CII

A populous solitude of bees and birds,
 And fairy-formed and many-coloured things,
 Who worship him with notes more sweet than words,
 And innocently open their glad wings,
 Fearless and full of life : the gush of springs, 955
 And fall of lofty fountains, and the bend
 Of stirring branches, and the bud which brings
 The swiftest thought of beauty, here extend,
 Mingling, and made by Love, unto one mighty end.

CIII

He who hath loved not, here would learn that lore, 960
 And make his heart a spirit ; he who knows
 That tender mystery, will love the more ;
 For this is Love's recess, where vain men's woes,
 And the world's waste, have driven him far from those,
 For 'tis his nature to advance or die ; 965
 He stands not still, but or decays, or grows
 Into a boundless blessing, which may vie
 With the immortal lights, in its eternity !

CIV

'Twas not for fiction chose Rousseau this spot,
 Peopling it with affections ; but he found 970
 It was the scene which passion must allot
 To the mind's purified beings ; 'twas the ground
 Where early Love his Psyche's zone unbound
 And hallowed it with loveliness : 'tis lone,

And wonderful, and deep, and hath a sound, 975
 And sense, and sight of sweetness ; here the Rhone
 Hath spread himself a couch, the Alps have reared a throne.

CV

Lausanne ! and Ferney ! ye have been the abodes
 Of names which unto you bequeathed a name ;
 Mortals, who sought and found, by dangerous roads, 980
 A path to perpetuity of fame :
 They were gigantic minds, and their steep aim
 Was, Titan-like, on daring doubts to pile
 Thoughts which should call down thunder, and the flame
 Of Heaven again assailed, if Heaven the while 985
 On man and man's research could deign do more than smile.

CVI

The one was fire and fickleness, a child
 Most mutable in wishes, but in mind
 A wit as various ;—gay, grave, sage, or wild,—
 Historian, bard, philosopher, combined ; 990
 He multiplied himself among mankind,
 The Proteus of their talents : But his own
 Breathed most in ridicule,—which, as the wind,
 Blew where it listed, laying all things prone,—
 Now to o'erthrow a fool, and now to shake a throne. 995

CVII

The other, deep and slow, exhausting thought,
 And hiving wisdom with each studious year,
 In meditation dwelt, with learning wrought,
 And shaped his weapon with an edge severe,
 Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer ; 1000
 The lord of irony,—that master-spell,
 Which stung his foes to wrath, which grew from fear,
 And doomed him to the zealot's ready Hell,
 Which answers to all doubts so eloquently well.

CVIII

Yet, peace be with their ashes,—for by them, 1005
 If merited, the penalty is paid ;
 It is not ours to judge,—far less condemn ;
 The hour must come when such things shall be made
 Known unto all, or hope and dread allayed
 By slumber, on one pillow, in the dust, 1010
 Which, thus much we are sure, must lie decayed ;
 And when it shall revive, as is our trust,
 'Twill be to be forgiven, or suffer what is just.

CIX

But let me quit man's works, again to read
 His Maker's, spread around me, and suspend 1015
 This page, which from my reveries I feed,
 Until it seems prolonging without end.
 The clouds above me to the white Alps tend,
 And I must pierce them, and survey whate'er
 May be permitted, as my steps I bend 1020
 To their most great and growing region, where
 The earth to her embrace compels the powers of air.

CX

Italia ! too, Italia ! looking on thee,
 Full flashes on the soul the light of ages,
 Since the fierce Carthaginian almost won thee, 1025
 To the last halo of the chiefs and sages
 Who glorify thy consecrated pages ;
 Thou wert the throne and grave of empires ; still,
 The fount at which the panting mind assuages
 Her thirst, of knowledge, quaffing there her fill, 1030
 Flows from the eternal source of Rome's imperial hill.

CXI

Thus far have I proceeded in a theme
 Renewed with no kind auspices : to feel

We are not what we have been, and to deem
 We are not what we should be, and to steel 1035
 The heart against itself ; and to conceal,
 With a proud caution, love, or hate, or aught,—
 Passion or feeling, purpose, grief, or zeal,—
 Which is the tyrant spirit of our thought,
 Is a stern task of soul :—No matter,—it is taught. 1040

CXII

And for these words, thus woven into song,
 It may be that they are a harmless wile,—
 The colouring of the scenes which fleet along,
 Which I would seize, in passing, to beguile
 My breast, or that of others, for a while. 1045
 Fame is the thirst of youth, but I am not
 So young as to regard men's frown or smile,
 As loss or guerdon of a glorious lot ;
 I stood and stand alone,—remembered or forgot.

CXIII

I have not loved the world, nor the world me ; 1050
 I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bowed
 To its idolatries a patient knee,
 Nor coined my cheek to smiles, nor cried aloud
 In worship of an echo ; in the crowd
 They could not deem me one of such ; I stood 1055
 Among them, but not of them ; in a shroud
 Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still
 could,
 Had I not filed my mind, which thus itself subdued.

CXIV

I have not loved the world, nor the world me,—
 But let us part fair foes ; I do believe, 1060
 Though I have found them not, that there may be
 Words which are things, hopes which will not deceive,

And virtues which are merciful, nor weave
 Snares for the failing, I would also deem
 O'er others' griefs that some sincerely grieve ; 1065
 That two, or one, are almost what they seem,
 That goodness is no name, and happiness no dream.

CXV

My daughter ! with thy name this song begun ;
 My daughter ! with thy name thus much shall end
 I see thee not, I hear thee not, but none 1070
 Can be so wrapt in thee ; thou art the friend
 To whom the shadows of far years extend :
 Albeit my brow thou never should'st behold,
 My voice shall with thy future visions blend,
 And reach into thy heart, when mine is cold, 1075
 A token and a tone, even from thy father's mould.

CXVI

To aid thy mind's development, to watch
 Thy dawn of little joys, to sit and see
 Almost thy very growth, to view thee catch
 Knowledge of objects,—wonders yet to thee ! 1080
 To hold thee lightly on a gentle knee,
 And print on thy soft cheek a parent's kiss,—
 This, it should seem, was not reserved for me ;
 Yet this was in my nature : as it is
 I know not what is there, yet something like to this. 1085

CXVII

Yet, though dull Hate as duty should be taught,
 I know that thou wilt love me ; though my name
 Should be shut from thee, as a spell still fraught
 With desolation, and a broken claim :
 Though the grave closed between us,—'twere the same, 1090
 I know that thou wilt love me ; though to drain

My blood from out thy being were an aim,
 And an attainment,—all would be in vain,—
 Still thou would'st love me, still that more than life retain

CXVIII

The child of love, though born in bitterness, 1095
 And nurtured in convulsion. Of thy sire
 These were the elements, and thine no less.
 As yet such are around thee, but thy fire
 Shall be more tempered, and thy hope far higher.
 Sweet be thy cradled slumbers! O'er the sea 1100
 And from the mountains where I now respire,
 Fain would I waft such blessing upon thee,
 As, with a sigh, I deem thou might'st have been to me!

FOURTH CANTO.

I

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

5

Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred
 isles.

II

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

10

15

III

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,
 And silent rows the songless gondolier ;
 Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
 And music meets not always now the ear :

20

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, 25
 The pleasant place of all festivity,
 The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy!

IV

But unto us she hath a spell beyond
 Her name in story, and her long array
 Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond 30
 Above the dogeless city's vanished sway ;
 Ours is a trophy which will not decay
 With the Rialto ; Shylock and the Moor,
 And Pierre, can not be swept or worn away—
 The keystones of the arch ! though all were o'er 35
 For us repeopled were the solitary shore.

V

The beings of the mind are not of clay ;
 Essentially immortal, they create
 And multiply in us a brighter ray
 And more beloved existence : that which Fate 40
 Prohibits to dull life, in this our state
 Of mortal bondage, by these spirits supplied,
 First exiles, then replaces what we hate ;
 Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,
 And with a fresher growth replenishing the void. 45

VI

Such is the refuge of our youth and age,
 The first from Hope, the last from Vacancy ;
 And this worn feeling peoples many a page,
 And, may be, that which grows beneath mine eye :
 Yet there are things whose strong reality 50
 Outshines our fairy-land ; in shape and hues

More beautiful than our fantastic sky,
 And the strange constellations which the Muse
 O'er her wild universe is skilful to diffuse :

VII

I saw or dreamed of such,—but let them go,—
 They came like truth, and disappeared like dreams ;
 And whatso'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 phantasies unsound,
 And other voices speak, and other sights surround.

VIII

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

IX

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

X

My name from out the temple where the dead
 Are honoured by the nations—let it be—
 And light the laurels on a loftier head !
 And be the Spartan's epitaph on me—
 'Sparta hath many a worthier son than he.' 85
 Meantime I seek no sympathies, nor need ;
 The thorns which I have reaped are of the tree
 I planted ; they have torn me, and I bleed :
 I should have known what fruit would spring from such 90
 a seed.

XI

The spouseless Adriatic mourns her lord ;
 And, annual marriage now no more renewed,
 The Bucentaur lies rotting unrestored,
 Neglected garment of her widowhood !
 St. Mark yet sees his lion where he stood
 Stand, but in mockery of his withered power, 95
 Over the proud Place where an Emperor sued,
 And monarchs gazed and envied in the hour
 When Venice was a queen with an unequalled dower.

XII

The Suabian sued, and now the Austrian reigns—
 An Emperor tramples where an Emperor knelt ; 100
 Kingdoms are shrunk to provinces, and chains
 Clank over sceptred cities ; nations melt
 From power's high pinnacle, when they have felt
 The sunshine for a while, and downward go
 Like lauwine loosened from the mountain's belt ; 105
 Oh for one hour of blind old Dandolo !
 Th' octogenarian chief, Byzantium's conquering foe.

XIII

Before St. Mark still glow his steeds of brass,
 Their gilded collars glittering in the sun ; 110

But is not Doria's menace come to pass?
 Are they not *bridled*?—Venice, lost and won,
 Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,
 Sinks, like a sea-weed, into whence she rose!
 Better be whelmed beneath the waves, and shun, 115
 Even in destruction's depth, her foreign foes,
 From whom submission wrings an infamous repose.

XIV

In youth she was all glory,—a new Tyre;
 Her very by-word sprung from victory,
 The 'Planter of the Lion,' which through fire 120
 And blood she bore o'er subject earth and sea;
 Though making many slaves, herself still free,
 And Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite;
 Witness Troy's rival, Candia! Vouch it, ye
 Immortal waves that saw Lepanto's fight! 125
 For ye are names no time nor tyranny can blight

XV

Statues of glass—all shivered—the long file
 Of her dead Doges are declined to dust;
 But where they dwelt, the vast and sumptuous pile 130
 Bespeaks the pageant of their splendid trust;
 Their sceptre broken, and their sword in rust,
 Have yielded to the stranger: empty halls,
 Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such as must
 Too oft remind her who and what enthral,
 Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice' lovely walls 135

XVI

When Athens' armies fell at Syracuse,
 And fettered thousands bore the yoke of war,
 Redemption rose up in the Attic Muse,
 Her voice their only ransom from afar:
 See! as they chant the tragic hymn, the car 140
 Of the o'ermastered victor stops, the reins

Fall from his hands, his idle scimitar
Starts from its belt—he rends his captive's chains,
And bids him thank the bard for freedom and his strains.

XVII

Thus, Venice, if no stronger claim were thine, 145
Were all thy proud historic deeds forgot,
Thy choral memory of the Bard divine,
Thy love of Tasso, should have cut the knot
Which ties thee to thy tyrants ; and thy lot
Is shameful to the nations, most of all, 150
Albion ! to thee : the Ocean queen should not
Abandon Ocean's children ; in the fall
Of Venice think of thine, despite thy watery wall.

XVIII

I loved her from my boyhood ; she to me
Was as a fairy city of the heart, 155
Rising like water-columns from the sea,
Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the mart ;
And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakspeare's art,
Had stamped her image in me, and even so,
Although I found her thus, we did not part ; 160
Perchance even dearer in her day of woe,
Than when she was a boast, a marvel, and a show.

XIX

I can repeople with the past—and of
The present there is still for eye and thought,
And meditation chastened down, enough ; 165
And more, it may be, than I hoped or sought ;
And of the happiest moments which were wrought,
Within the web of my existence, some
From thee, fair Venice ! have their colours caught :
There are some feelings time can not benumb, 170
Nor Torture shake, or mine would now be cold and dumb.

XX

But from their nature will the tannen grow
 Loftiest on loftiest and least sheltered rocks,
 Rooted in barrenness, where nought below
 Of soil supports them 'gainst the Alpine shocks 175
 Of eddying storms ; yet springs the trunk, and mocks
 The howling tempest, till its height and frame
 Are worthy of the mountains from whose blocks
 Of bleak, gray granite into life it came,
 And grew a giant tree ;—the mind may grow the same. 180

XXI

Existence may be borne, and the deep root
 Of life and sufferance make its firm abode
 In bare and desolated bosoms ; mute
 The camel labours with the heaviest load,
 And the wolf dies in silence,—not bestowed 185
 In vain should such example be ; if they,
 Things of ignoble or of savage mood
 Endure and shrink not, we of nobler clay
 May temper it to bear,—it is but for a day.

XXII

All suffering doth destroy, or is destroyed, 190
 Even by the sufferer ; and, in each event,
 Ends :—Some, with hope replenished and rebuoyed,
 Return to whence they came—with like intent,
 And weave their web again ; some, bowed and bent,
 Wax gray and ghastly, withering ere their time, 195
 And perish with the reed on which they leant,
 Some seek devotion, toil, war, good, or crime,
 According as their souls were formed to sink or climb.

XXIII

But ever and anon of griefs subdued
 There comes a token like a scorpion's sting, 200

Scarce seen, but with fresh bitterness imbued ;
 And slight withal may be the things which bring
 Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
 Aside for ever : it may be a sound—
 A tone of music—summer's eve—or spring— 205
 A flower—the wind—the ocean—which shall wound,
 Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound ;

XXIV

And how and why we know not, nor can trace
 Home to its cloud this lightning of the mind,
 But feel the shock renewed, nor can efface 210
 The blight and blackening which it leaves behind,
 Which out of things familiar, undesigned,
 When least we deem of such, calls up to view
 The spectres whom no exorcism can bind,—
 The cold, the changed, perchance the dead—*anew*, 215
 The mourned, the loved, the lost—too many !—yet how
 few !

XXV

But my soul wanders ; I demand it back
 To meditate amongst decay, and stand
 A ruin amidst ruins ; there to track
 Fallen states and buried greatness, o'er a land 220
 Which *was* the mightiest in its old command,
 And *is* the loveliest, and must ever be
 The master-mould of Nature's heavenly hand ;
 Wherein were cast the heroic and the free,
 The beautiful, the brave, the lords of earth and sea. 225

XXVI

The commonwealth of kings, the men of Rome !
 And even since, and now, fair Italy !
 Thou art the garden of the world, the home
 Of all Art yields, and Nature can decree ;
 Even in thy desert, what is like to thee ? 230
 Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste

More rich than other climes' fertility ;
 Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced
 With an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced.

XXVII

The moon is up, and yet it is not night ; 235
 Sunset divides the sky with her ; a sea
 Of glory streams along the Alpine height
 Of blue Friuli's mountains ; Heaven is free
 From clouds, but of all colours seems to be,—
 Melted to one vast Iris of the West,— 240
 Where the Day joins the past Eternity ;
 While, on the other hand, meek Dian's crest
 Floats through the azure air—an island of the blest !

XXVIII

A single star is at her side, and reigns
 With her o'er half the lovely heaven ; but still 245
 Yon sunny sea heaves brightly, and remains
 Rolled o'er the peak of the far Rhætian hill,
 As Day and Night contending were, until
 Nature reclaimed her order : gently flows
 The deep-dyed Brenta,—where their hues instil 250
 The odorous purple of a new-born rose,
 Which streams upon her stream, and glassed within it
 glows,—

XXIX

Filled with the face of heaven, which, from afar,
 Comes down upon the waters ; all its hues,
 From the rich sunset to the rising star, 255
 Their magical variety diffuse :
 And now they change ; a paler shadow strews
 Its mantle o'er the mountains ; parting day
 Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang imbues
 With a new colour as it gasps away, 260
 The last still loveliest, till—'tis gone—and all is gray.

XXX

There is a tomb in Arqua ;—reared in air,
 Pillared in their sarcophagus, repose
 The bones of Laura's lover : here repair
 Many familiar with his well-sung woes, 265
 The pilgrims of his genius. He arose
 To raise a language, and his land reclaim
 From the dull yoke of her barbaric foes :
 Watering the tree which bears his lady's name
 With his melodious tears, he gave himself to fame. 270

XXXI

They keep his dust in Arqua, where he died ;
 The mountain-village where his latter days
 Went down the vale of years ; and 'tis their pride—
 An honest pride—and let it be their praise,
 To offer to the passing stranger's gaze 275
 His mansion and his sepulchre ; both plain
 And venerably simple, such as raise
 A feeling more accordant with his strain
 Than if a pyramid formed his monumental fane.

XXXII

And the soft quiet hamlet where he dwelt 280
 Is one of that complexion which seems made
 For those who their mortality have felt,
 And sought a refuge from their hopes decayed
 In the deep umbrage of a green hill's shade,
 Which shows a distant prospect far away 285
 Of busy cities, now in vain displayed,
 For they can lure no further ; and the ray
 Of a bright sun can make sufficient holiday,

XXXIII

Developing the mountains, leaves, and flowers,
 And shining in the brawling brook, where-by, 290

Clear as its current, glide the sauntering hours
 With a calm langour, which, though to the eye
 Idlesse it seem, hath its mortality.
 If from society we learn to live,
 'Tis solitude should teach us how to die ; 295
 It hath no flatterers ; vanity can give
 No hollow aid ; alone—man with his God must strive :

XXXIV

Or, it may be, with demons, who impair
 The strength of better thoughts, and seek their prey
 In melancholy bosoms, such as were 300
 Of moody texture from their earliest day,
 And loved to dwell in darkness and dismay
 Deeming themselves predestined to a doom
 Which is not of the pangs that pass away ;
 Making the sun like blood, the earth a tomb, 305
 The tomb a hell, and hell itself a murkier gloom.

XXXV

Ferrara ! in thy wide and grass-grown streets,
 Whose symmetry was not for solitude,
 There seems as 'twere a curse upon the seats
 Of former sovereigns, and the antique brood 310
 Of Este, which for many an age made good
 Its strength within thy walls, and was of yore
 Patron or tyrant, as the changing mood
 Of petty power impelled, of those who wore
 The wreath which Dante's brow alone had worn before. 315

XXXVI

And Tasso is their glory and their shame.
 Hark to his strain ! and then survey his cell !
 And see how dearly earned Torquato's fame,
 And where Alfonso bade his poet dwell :
 The miserable despot could not quell 320
 The insulted mind he sought to quench, and blend

With the surrounding maniacs, in the hell
 Where he had plunged it. Glory without end
 Scattered the clouds away ; and on that name attend

XXXVII

The tears and praises of all time ; while thine 325
 Would rot in its oblivion—in the sink
 Of worthless dust, which from thy boasted line
 Is shaken into nothing—but the link
 Thou formest in his fortunes bids us think
 Of thy poor malice, naming thee with scorn ; 330
 Alfonso ! how thy ducal pageants shrink
 From thee ! if in another station born,
 Scarce fit to be the slave of him thou mad'st to mourn :

XXXVIII

Thou ! formed to eat, and be despised, and die,
 Even as the beasts that perish, save that thou 335
 Hadst a more splendid trough and wider sty :
He ! with a glory round his furrowed brow,
 Which emanated then, and dazzles now,
 In face of all his foes, the Cruscan quire,
 And Boileau, whose rash envy could allow 340
 No strain which shamed his country's creaking lyre,
 That whetstone of the teeth—monotony in wire !

XXXIX

Peace to Torquato's injured shade ! 'twas his
 In life and death to be the mark where Wrong
 Aimed with her poisoned arrows,—but to miss. 345
 Oh, victor unsurpassed in modern song !
 Each year brings forth its millions ; but how long
 The tide of generations shall roll on,
 And not the whole combined and countless throng
 Compose a mind like thine ! though all in one 350
 Condensed their scattered rays, they would not form a sun.

XL

Great as thou art, yet paralleled by those,
 Thy countrymen, before thee born to shine,
 The Bards of Hell and Chivalry : first rose
 The Tuscan father's comedy divine ; 355
 Then, not unequal to the Florentine,
 The southern Scott, the minstrel who called forth
 A new creation with his magic line,
 And, like the Ariosto of the North,
 Sang lady-love and war, romance and knightly worth. 360

XLI

The lightning rent from Ariosto's bust
 The iron crown of laurel's mimic'd leaves ;
 Nor was the ominous element unjust,
 For the true laurel-wreath which Glory weaves
 Is of the tree no bolt of thunder cleaves, 365
 And the false semblance but disgraced his brow ;
 Yet still, if fondly Superstition grieves,
 Know, that the lightning sanctifies below
 Whate'er it strikes ;—yon head is doubly sacred now.

XLII

Italia ! oh Italia ! thou who hast 370
 The fatal gift of beauty, which became
 A funeral dower of present woes and past,
 On thy sweet brow is sorrow ploughed by shame,
 And annals graved in characters of flame.
 Oh, God ! that thou were in thy nakedness 375
 Less lovely or more powerful, and could claim
 Thy right, and awe the robbers back, who press
 To shed thy blood, and drink the tears of thy distress ;

XLIII

Then might'st thou more appal ; or, less desired,
 Be homely and be peaceful, undeplord 380

For thy destructive charms ; then, still untired,
 Would not be seen the armed torrents poured
 Down the deep Alps ; nor would the hostile horde !
 Of many-nationed spoilers from the Po
 Quaff blood and water ; nor the stranger's sword 385
 Be thy sad weapon of defence, and so,
 Victor or vanquished, thou the slave of friend or foe.

XLIV

Wandering in youth, I traced the path of him,
 The Roman friend of Rome's least-mortal mind,
 The friend of Tully : as my bark did skim 390
 The bright blue waters with a fanning wind,
 Came Megara before me, and behind
 Ægina lay, Piræus on the right,
 And Corinth on the left ; I lay reclined
 Along the prow, and saw all these unite 395
 In ruin, even as he had seen the desolate sight ;

XLV

For Time hath not rebuilt them, but upreared
 Barbaric dwellings on their shattered site,
 Which only make more mourned and more endeared
 The few last rays of their far-scattered light, 400
 And the crushed relics of their vanished might.
 The Roman saw these tombs in his own age,
 These sepulchres of cities, which excite
 Sad wonder, and his yet surviving page
 The moral lesson bears, drawn from such pilgrimage. 405

XLVI

That page is now before me, and on mine
 His country's ruin added to the mass
 Of perished states he mourned in their decline,
 And I in desolation : all that *was*
 Of then destruction *is* : and now, alas ! 410
 Rome—Rome imperial, bows her to the storm,

In the same dust and blackness, and we pass
 The skeleton of her Titanic form,
 Wrecks of another world, whose ashes still are warm.

XLVII

Yet, Italy! through every other land 415
 Thy wrongs should ring, and shall, from side to side;
 Mother of Arts! as once of arms; thy hand
 Was then our guardian, and is still our guide;
 Parent of our Religion! whom the wide
 Nations have knelt to for the keys of heaven! 420
 Europe, repentant of her parricide,
 Shall yet redeem thee, and, all backward driven,
 Roll the barbarian tide, and sue to be forgiven.

XLVIII

But Arno wins us to the fair white walls,
 Where the Etrurian Athens claims and keeps 425
 A softer feeling for her fairy halls,
 Girt by her theatre of hills, she reaps
 Her corn, and wine, and oil, and Plenty leaps
 To laughing life, with her redundant horn.
 Along the banks where smiling Arno sweeps 430
 Was modern Luxury of Commerce born,
 And buried Learning rose, redeemed to a new morn.

XLIX

There, too, the Goddess loves in stone, and fills
 The air around with beauty; we inhale
 The ambrosial aspect, which, beheld, instils 435
 Part of its immortality; the veil
 Of heaven is half undrawn; within the pale
 We stand, and in that form and face behold
 What Mind can make, when Nature's self would fail;
 And to the fond idolaters of old 440
 Envy the inmate flash which such a soul could mould:

L

We gaze and turn away, and know not where,
 Dazzled and drunk with beauty, till the heart
 Reels with its fulness ; there—for ever there—
 Chained to the chariot of triumphal Art, 445
 We stand as captives, and would not depart.
 Away!—there need no words, nor terms precise,
 The paltry jargon of the marble mart,
 Where Pedantry gulls Folly—we have eyes :
 Blood, pulse, and breast confirm the Dardan Shepherd's 450
 prize.

LI

Appear'dst thou not to Paris in this guise ?
 Or to more deeply blest Anchises ? or,
 In all thy perfect goddess-ship, when lies
 Before thee thy own vanquished Lord of War,
 And gazing in thy face as toward a star, 455
 Laid on thy lap, his eyes to thee upturn,
 Feeding on thy sweet cheek ! while thy lips are
 With lava kisses melting while they burn,
 Showered on his eyelids, brow, and mouth, as from an
 urn !

LII

Glowing, and circumfused in speechless love, 460
 There full divinity inadequate
 That feeling to express, or to improve,
 The gods become as mortals, and man's fate
 Has moments like their brightest ; but the weight
 Of earth recoils upon us ; let it go ! 465
 We can recall such visions, and create,
 From what has been, or might be, things which grow
 Into thy statue's form, and look like gods below.

LIII

I leave to learned fingers, and wise hands,
 The artist and his ape, to teach and tell 470

How well his connoisseurship understands
 The graceful bend, and the voluptuous swell :
 Let these describe the undescribable :
 I would not their vile breath should crisp the stream
 Wherein that image shall for ever dwell : 475
 The unruffled mirror of the loveliest dream
 That ever left the sky on the deep soul to beam.

LIV

In Santa Croce's holy precincts lie
 Ashes which make it holier, dust which is
 Even in itself an immortality, 480
 Though there were nothing save the past, and this,
 The particle of those sublimities
 Which have relapsed to chaos : here repose
 Angelo's, Alfieri's bones, and his,
 The starry Galileo, with his woes ; 485
 Here Machiavelli's earth returned to whence it rose.

LV

These are four minds, which, like the elements,
 Might furnish forth creation :—Italy !
 Time, which hath wronged thee with ten thousand rents
 Of thine imperial garment, shall deny, 490
 And hath denied, to every other sky,
 Spirits which soar from ruin : thy decay
 Is still impregnate with divinity,
 Which gilds it with revivifying ray :
 Such as the great of yore, Canova is to-day. 495

LVI

But where repose the all Etruscan three—
 Dante and Petrarch, and scarce less than they,
 The bard of Prose, creative spirit ! he
 Of the Hundred Tales of love—where did they lay
 Their bones, distinguished from our common clay 500
 In death as life ? Are they resolved to dust,

And have their country's marbles nought to say ?
 Could not her quarries furnish forth one bust ?
 Did they not to her breast their filial earth entrust ?

LVII

Ungrateful Florence ! Dante sleeps afar, 505
 Like Scipio, buried by the upbraiding shore :
 Thy factions, in their worse than civil war,
 Proscribed the bard whose name for evermore
 Their children's children would in vain adore
 With the remorse of ages : and the crown 510
 Which Petrarch's laureate brow supremely wore,
 Upon a far and foreign soil had grown,
 His life, his fame, his grave, though rifled—not thine own.

LVIII

Boccaccio to his parent earth bequeathed
 His dust,—and lies it not her great among, 515
 With many a sweet and solemn requiem breathed
 O'er him who formed the Tuscan's siren tongue ?
 That music in itself, whose sounds are song,
 The poetry of speech ? No ;—even his tomb,
 Uptorn, must bear the hyæna bigot's wrong, 520
 No more amidst the meaner dead find room,
 Nor claim a passing sigh, because it told for *whom* !

LIX

And Santa Croce wants their mighty dust ;
 Yet for this want more noted, as of yore
 The Cæsar's pageant, shorn of Brutus' bust, 525
 Did but of Rome's best Son remind her more :
 Happier Ravenna ! on thy hoary shore,
 Fortress of falling empire ! honoured sleeps
 The immortal exile :—Arqua, too, her store
 Of tuneful relics proudly claims and keeps, 530
 While Florence vainly begs her banished dead and weeps.

LX

What is her pyramid of precious stones?
 Of porphyry, jasper, agate, and all hues
 Of gem and marble, to encrust the bones
 Of merchant-dukes? the momentary dews 535
 Which, sparkling to the twilight stars, infuse
 Freshness in the green turf that wraps the dead
 Whose names are mausoleums of the Muse,
 Are gently prest with far more reverent tread
 Than ever placed the slab which paves the princely head. 540

LXI

There be more things to greet the heart and eyes
 In Arno's dome of Art's most princely shrine,
 Where Sculpture with her rainbow sister vies;
 There be more marvels yet—but not for mine;
 For I have been accustomed to entwine 545
 My thoughts with Nature rather in the fields,
 Than Art in galleries: though a work divine
 Calls for my spirit's homage, yet it yields
 Less than it feels, because the weapon which it wields

LXII

Is of another temper, and I roam 550
 By Thrasimene's lake, in the defiles
 Fatal to Roman rashness, more at home;
 For there the Carthaginian's warlike wiles
 Come back before me, as his skill beguiles
 The host between the mountains and the shore, 555
 Where Courage falls in her despairing files,
 And torrents, swollen to rivers with their gore,
 Reek through the sultry plain, with legends scattered
 o'er.

LXIII

Like to a forest felled by mountain winds;
 And such the storm of battle on this day, 560

And such the frenzy, whose convulsion blinds
 To all save carnage, that, beneath the fray,
 An earthquake reeled unheededly away !
 None felt stern Nature rocking at his feet,
 And yawning forth a grave for those who lay 565
 Upon their bucklers for a winding sheet,
 Such is the absorbing hate when warring nations meet !

LXIV

The Earth to them was as a rolling bark
 Which bore them to Eternity ; they saw
 The Ocean round, but had no time to mark 570
 The motions of their vessel ; Nature's law
 In them suspended, recked not of the awe
 Which reigns when mountains tremble, and the birds
 Plunge in the clouds for refuge, and withdraw
 From their down-toppling nests ; and bellowing herds 575
 Stumble o'er heaving plains, and man's dread hath no
 words.

LXV

Far other scene is Thrasimene now :
 Her lake a sheet of silver, and her plain
 Rent by no ravage save the gentle plough ;
 Her aged trees rise thick as once the slain 580
 Lay where their roots are ; but a brook hath ta'en—
 A little rill of scanty stream and bed—
 A name of blood from that day's sanguine rain ;
 And Sanguinetto tells ye where the dead
 Made the earth wet, and turned the unwilling waters red. 585

LXVI

But thou, Clitumnus ! in thy sweetest wave
 Of the most living crystal that was e'er
 The haunt of river nymph, to gaze and lave
 Her limbs where nothing hid them, thou dost rear
 Thy grassy banks whereon the milk-white steer 590
 Grazes ; the purest god of gentle waters !

And most serene of aspect, and most clear ;
 Surely that stream was unprofaned by slaughters—
 A mirror and a bath for Beauty's youngest daughters !

LXVII

And on thy happy shore a Temple still, 595
 Of small and delicate proportion, keeps,
 Upon a mild declivity of hill,
 Its memory of thee ; beneath it sweeps
 Thy current's calmness ; oft from out it leaps
 The finny darter with the glittering scales, 600
 Who dwells and revels in thy glassy deeps ;
 While, chance, some scattered water-lily sails
 Down where the shallower wave still tells its bubbling
 tales.

LXVIII

Pass not unblest the Genius of the place !
 If through the air a zephyr more serene 605
 Win to the brow, 'tis his ; and if ye trace
 Along his margin a more eloquent green,
 If on the heart the freshness of the scene
 Sprinkle its coolness, and from the dry dust
 Of weary life a moment lave it clean 610
 With Nature's baptism—'tis to him ye must
 Pay orisons for this suspension of disgust.

LXIX

The roar of waters !—from the headlong height
 Velino cleaves the wave-worn precipice ;
 The fall of waters ! rapid as the light 615
 The flashing mass foams shaking the abyss ;
 The hell of waters ! where they howl and hiss,
 And boil in endless torture : while the sweat
 Of their great agony, wrung out from this
 Their Phlegethon, curls round the rocks of jet 620
 That gird the gulf around, in pitiless horror set,

LXX

And mounts in spray the skies, and thence again
 Returns in an unceasing shower, which round,
 With its unemptied cloud of gentle rain,
 Is an eternal April to the ground, 625
 Making it all one emerald :—how profound
 The gulf ! and how the giant element
 From rock to rock leaps with delirious bound,
 Crushing the cliffs, which, downward worn and rent
 With his fierce footsteps, yield in chasms a fearful vent 630

LXXI

To the broad column which rolls on, and shows
 More like the fountain of an infant sea
 Torn from the womb of mountains by the throes
 Of a new world, than only thus to be
 Parent of rivers, which flow gushingly, 635
 With many windings, through the vale :—Look back !
 Lo ! where it comes like an eternity,
 As if to sweep down all things in its track,
 Charming the eye with dread,—a matchless cataract,

LXXII

Horribly beautiful ! but on the verge, 640
 From side to side, beneath the glittering morn,
 An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge,
 Like hope upon a death-bed, and, unworn
 Its steady dyes, while all around is torn
 By the distracted waters, bears serene 645
 Its brilliant hues with all their beams unshorn :
 Resembling, 'mid the torture of the scene,
 Love watching Madness with unalterable mein.

LXXIII

Once more upon the woody Apennine,
 The infant Alps, which—had I not before 650

Gazed on their mightier parents, where the pine
 Sits on more shaggy summits, and where roar
 The thundering lawine—might be worshipped more ;
 But I have seen the soaring Jungfrau rear
 Her never-trodden snow, and seen the hoar 655
 Glaciers of bleak Mont Blanc both far and near,
 And in Chimari heard the thunder-hills of fear,

LXXIV

Th' Acroceraunian mountains of old name ;
 And on Parnassus seen the eagles fly
 Like spirits of the spot, as 'twere for fame, 660
 For still they soared unutterably high :
 I've looked on Ida with a Trojan's eye ;
 Athos, Olympus, Ætna, Atlas, made
 These hills seem things of lesser dignity,
 All, save the lone Soracte's height, displayed 665
 Not *now* in snow, which asks the lyric Roman's aid

LXXV

For our remembrance, and from out the plain
 Heaves like a long-swept wave about to break,
 And on the curl hangs pausing : not in vain
 May he, who will, his recollections rake, 670
 And quote in classic raptures, and awake
 The hills with Latian echoes ; I abhorred
 Too much, to conquer for the poet's sake,
 The drilled dull lesson, forced down word by word
 In my repugnant youth, with pleasure to record 675

LXXVI

Aught that recalls the daily drug which turned
 My sickening memory ; and, though Time hath taught
 My mind to meditate what then it learned,
 Yet such the fixed inveteracy wrought
 By the impatience of my early thought, 680
 That, with the freshness wearing out before

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

LXXVII

Then farewell, Horace ; whom I hated so, 685
 Not for thy faults, but mine ; it is a curse
 To understand, not feel thy lyric flow,
 To comprehend, but never love thy verse ;
 Although no deeper Moralist rehearse
 Our little life, nor Bard prescribe his art, 690
 Nor livelier Satirist the conscience pierce,
 Awakening without wounding the touched heart,
 Yet fare thee well—upon Soracte's ridge we part.

LXXVIII

Oh Rome ! my country ! City of the soul ! 695
 The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
 Lone mother of dead empires ! and control
 In their shut breasts their petty misery,
 What are our woes and sufferance ? Come and see
 The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way
 O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, Ye ! 700
 Whose agonies are evils of a day—
 A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

LXXIX

The Niobe of nations ! there she stands
 Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe ;
 An empty urn within her withered hands, 705
 Whose holy dust was scattered long ago ;
 The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now ;
 The very sepulchres lie tenantless
 Of their heroic dwellers : dost thou flow,
 Old Tiber ! through a marble wilderness ? 710
 Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress.

LXXX

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire,
 Have dealt upon the seven-hilled city's pride ;
 She saw her glories star by star expire,
 And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride, 715
 Where the car climbed the Capitol ; far and wide
 Temple and tower went down, nor left a site :
 Chaos of ruins ! who shall trace the void,
 O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
 And say, ' here was, or is,' where all is double night ? 720

LXXXI

The double night of ages, and of her,
 Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt and wrap
 All round us ; we but feel our way to err :
 The ocean hath his chart, the stars their map,
 And Knowledge spreads them on her ample lap ; 725
 But Rome is as the desert, where we steer
 Stumbling o'er recollections ; now we clap
 Our hands, and cry ' Eureka ! it is clear—
 When but some false mirage of ruin rises near.

LXXXII

Alas ! the lofty city ! and alas ! 730
 The trebly hundred triumphs ! and the day
 When Brutus made the dagger's edge surpass
 The conqueror's sword in bearing fame away !
 Alas, for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,
 And Livy's pictured page ! but these shall be 735
 Her resurrection ; all beside—decay.
 Alas, for Earth, for never shall we see
 That brightness in her eye she bore when Rome was free !

LXXXIII

Oh thou, whose chariot rolled on Fortune's wheel,
 Triumphant Sylla ! Thou, who didst subdue 740

Thy country's foes ere thou wouldst 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—

745

LXXXIV

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

750

755

LXXXV

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

760

765

LXXXVI

The third of the same moon whose former course
 Had all but crowned him, on the selfsame day
 Deposed him gently from his throne of force,
 And laid him with the earth's preceding clay.
 And showed not Fortune thus how fame and sway,
 And all we deem delightful, and consume

770

Our souls to compass through each arduous way,
 Are in her eyes less happy than the tomb?
 Were they but so in man's, how different were his doom!

LXXXVII

And thou, dread statue? yet existent in 775
 The austerest form of naked majesty,
 Thou who beheldest, 'mid the assassin's din,
 At thy bathed base the bloody Cæsar lie,
 Folding his robe in dying dignity,
 An offering to thine altar from the queen 780
 Of gods and men, great Nemesis! did he die,
 And thou, too, perish, Pompey? have ye been
 Victors of countless kings, or puppets of a scene?

LXXXVIII

And thou, the thunder-stricken nurse of Rome!
 She-wolf! whose brazen-imagèd dugs impart 785
 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 sucked from thy wild teat,
 Scorched by the Roman Jove's ethereal dart, 790
 And thy limbs black with lightning—dost thou yet
 Guard thine immortal cubs, nor thy fond charge forget?

LXXXIX

Thou dost; but all thy foster-babes are dead—
 The men of iron; and the world hath reared 795
 Cities from out their sepulchres: men bled
 In imitation of the things they feared,
 And fought and conquered, and the same course steered,
 At apish distance; but as yet none have,
 Nor could, the same supremacy have neared,
 Save one vain man, who is not in the grave, 800
 But, vanquished by himself, to his own slaves a slave—

XC

The fool of false dominion—and a kind
 Of bastard Cæsar, following him of old
 With steps unequal; for the Roman's mind
 Was modelled in a less terrestrial mould,
 With passions fiercer, yet a judgment cold,
 And an immortal instinct which redeemed
 The frailties of a heart so soft, yet bold,
 Alcides with the distaff now he seemed
 At Cleopatra's feet,—and now himself he beamed,

805

810

XCI

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

815

XCII

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

820

825

XCIII

What from this barren being do we reap?
 Our senses narrow, and our reason frail,

830

Life short, and truth a gem which loves the deep,
 And all things weighed 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 835
 Lest their own judgments should become too bright,
 And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth have too much
 light.

XCIV

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,
 Rotting from sire to son, and age to age,
 Proud of their trampled nature, and so die, 840
 Bequeathing their hereditary rage
 To the new race of inborn slaves, who wage
 War for their chains, and rather than be free,
 Bleed gladiator-like, and still engage
 Within the same arena where they see 845
 Their fellows fall before, like leaves of the same tree.

XCV

I speak not of men's creeds—they rest between
 Man and his Maker—but of things allowed,
 Averred, and known, and daily, hourly seen—
 The yoke that is upon us doubly bowed, 850
 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. 855

XCVI

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, 860
 Deep in the unpruned forest 'midst the roar

Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled
 On infant Washington? Has Earth no more
 Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore?

XCVII

But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime, 865
 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 adamant wall, 870
 And the base pageant last upon the scene,
 Are grown the pretext for the eternal thrall
 Which nips life's tree, and dooms man's worst—his second
 fall.

XCVIII

Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn, but flying,
 Streams like the thunder-storm *against* the wind; 875
 Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,
 The loudest still the tempest leaves behind;
 Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,
 Chopped by the axe, looks rough and little worth,
 But the sap lasts,—and still the seed we find 880
 Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;
 So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring forth.

XCIX

There is a stern round tower of other days,
 Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone,
 Such as an army's baffled strength delays, 885
 Standing with half its battlements alone,
 And with two thousand years of ivy grown,
 The garland of eternity, where wave
 The green leaves over all by time o'erthrown:—
 What was this tower of strength? within its cave 890
 What treasure lay so locked, so hid?—A woman's grave.

C

But who was she, the lady of the dead,
 Tombed in a palace? Was she chaste and fair?
 Worthy a king's or more—a Roman's bed?
 What race of chiefs and heroes did she bear? 895
 What daughter of her beauties was the heir?
 How lived, how loved, how died she? Was she not
 So honoured—and conspicuously there,
 Where meaner relics must not dare to rot,
 Placed to commemorate a more than mortal lot? 900

CI

Was she as those who love their lords, or they
 Who love the lords of others? such have been
 Even in the olden time, Rome's annals say.
 Was she a matron of Cornelia's mien,
 Or the light air of Egypt's graceful queen, 905
 Profuse of joy—or 'gainst it did she war,
 Inveterate in virtue? Did she lean
 To the soft side of the heart, or wisely bar
 Love from amongst her griefs?—for such the affections are.

CII

Perchance she died in youth: it may be, bowed 910
 With woes far heavier than the ponderous tomb
 That weighed upon her gentle dust, a cloud
 Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom
 In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom
 Heaven gives its favourites—early death; yet shed 915
 A sunset charm around her, and illumine
 With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead,
 Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-like red.

CIII

Perchance she died in age—surviving all,
 Charms, kindred, children—with the silver gray 920

On her long tresses, which might yet recall,
 It may be, still a something of the day
 When they were braided, and her proud array
 And lovely form were envied, praised, and eyed
 By Rome—But whither would Conjecture stray? 925
 Thus much alone we know—Metella died,
 The wealthiest Roman's wife : Behold his love or pride !

CIV

I know not why—but standing thus by thee
 It seems as if I had thine inmate known,
 Thou Tomb ! and other days come back to me 930
 With recollected music, though the tone
 Is changed and solemn, like a cloudy groan
 Of dying thunder on the distant wind ;
 Yet could I seat me by this ivied stone
 Till I had bodied forth the heated mind 935
 Forms from the floating wreck which Ruin leaves behind ;

CV

And from the planks, far shattered o'er the rocks,
 Built me a little bark of hope, once more
 To battle with the ocean and the shocks
 Of the loud breakers, and the ceaseless roar 940
 Which rushes on the solitary shore
 Where all lies foundered that was ever dear :
 But could I gather from the wave-worn store
 Enough for my rude boat, where should I steer ?
 There woos no home, nor hope, nor life, save what is here. 945

CVI

Then let the winds howl on ! their harmony
 Shall henceforth be my music, and the night
 The sound shall temper with the owlets' cry,
 As I now hear them, in the fading light
 Dim o'er the bird of darkness' native site, 950
 Answering each other on the Palatine,

With their large eyes, all glistening gray and bright,
 And sailing pinions.—Upon such a shrine
 What are our petty griefs?—let me not number mine.

CVII

Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown 955
 Matted and massed together, hillocks heaped
 On what were chambers, arch crushed, column strown
 In fragments, choked up vaults, and frescos steeped
 In subterranean damp, where the owl peeped,
 Deeming it midnight :—Temples, baths, or halls ? 960
 Pronounce who can ; for all that Learning reaped
 From her research hath been, that these are walls—
 Behold the Imperial Mount ! 'tis thus the mighty falls

CVIII

There is the moral of all human tales ;
 'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past, 965
 First Freedom and then Glory—when that fails,
 Wealth, vice, corruption,—barbarism at last,
 And History, with all her volumes vast,
 Hath but *one* page—'tis better written here,
 Where georgeous Tyranny hath thus amassed 970
 All treasures, all delights, that eye or ear,
 Heart, soul could seek, tongue ask—Away with words
 draw near,

CIX

Admire, exult, despise, laugh, weep, —for here
 There is such matter for all feeling :—Man !
 Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear, 975
 Ages and realms are crowded in this span,
 This mountain, whose obliterated plan
 The pyramid of empires pinnaced,
 Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van
 Till the sun's rays with added flame were filled ! 980
 Where are its golden roofs ? where those who dared to
 build ?

CX

Tully was not so eloquent as thou,
 Thou nameless column with the buried base !
 What are the laurels of the Cæsar's brow ?
 Crown me with ivy from his dwelling-place. 985
 Whose arch or pillar meets me in the face,
 Titus or Trajan's ? No—'tis that of Time ;
 Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth displace
 Scoffing ; and apostolic statues climb
 To crush the imperial urn, whose ashes slept sublime 990

CXI

Buried in air, the deep blue sky of Rome,
 And looking to the stars : they had contained
 A spirit which with these would find a home,
 The last of those who o'er the whole earth reigned
 The Roman globe, for after none sustained, 995
 But yielded back his conquests:—he was more
 Than a mere Alexander, and, unstained
 With household blood and wine, serenely wore
 His sovereign virtues—still we Trajan's name adore.

CXII

Where is the rock of Triumph, the high place 1000
 Where Rome embraced her heroes ? where the steep
 Tarpeian ? fittest goal of Treason's race,
 The promontory whence the Traitor's Leap
 Cured all ambition. Did the conquerors heap
 Their spoils here ? Yes ; and in yon field below 1005
 A thousand years of silenced factions sleep—
 The Forum, where the immortal accents glow,
 And still the eloquent air breathes—burns with Cicero !

CXIII

The field of freedom, faction, fame, and blood :
 Here a proud people's passions were exhaled, 1010

From the first hour of empire in the bud
 To that when further worlds to conquer failed ;
 But long before had Freedom's face been veiled,
 And Anarchy assumed her attributes ;
 Till every lawless soldier who assailed
 Trod on the trembling senate's slavish mutes,
 Or raised the venal voice of baser prostitutes.

1015

CXIV

Then turn we to her latest tribune's name,
 From her ten thousand tyrants turn to thee,
 Redeemer of dark centuries of shame—
 The friend of Petrarch—hope of Italy—
 Rienzi ! last of Romans ! While the tree
 Of freedom's withered trunk puts forth a leaf,
 Even for thy tomb a garland let it be—
 The forum's champion, and the people's chief—
 Her new-born Numa thou—with reign, alas ! too brief.

1020

1025

CXV

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

1030

1035

CXVI

The mosses of thy fountain still are sprinkled
 With thine Elysian water-drops ; the face
 Of thy cave-guarded spring, with years unwrinkled,
 Reflects the meek-eyed genius of the place,
 Whose green, wild margin now no more erase
 Art's works ; nor must the delicate waters sleep,

1040

Prisoned in marble ; bubbling from the base
 Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap
 The rill runs o'er, and round, fern, flowers, and ivy creep,

CXVII

Fantastically tangled : the green hills 1045
 Are clothed with early blossoms, through the grass
 The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the bills
 Of summer-birds sing welcome as ye pass ;
 Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their class,
 Implore the pausing step, and with their dyes 1050
 Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass ;
 The sweetness of the violet's deep blue eyes,
 Kissed by the breath of heaven, seems coloured by its skies.

CXVIII

Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted cover.
 Egeria ! thy all heavenly bosom beating 1055
 For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover ;
 The purple Midnight veiled that mystic meeting
 With her most starry canopy, and seating
 Thyself by thine adorer, what befel ?
 This cave was surely shaped out for the greeting 1060
 Of an enamoured Goddess, and the cell
 Haunted by holy Love—the earliest oracle !

CXIX

And didst thou not, thy breast to his replying,
 Blend a celestial with a human heart ;
 And Love, which dies as it was born, in sighing, 1065
 Share with immortal transports ? could thine art
 Make them indeed immortal, and impart
 The purity of heaven to earthly joys,
 Expel the venom and not blunt the dart—
 The dull satiety which all destroys— 1070
 And root from out the soul the deadly weed which cloy.

CXX

Alas! our young affections run to waste,
 Or water but the desert; whence arise
 But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,
 Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes, 1075
 Flowers whose wild odours breathe but agonies,
 And trees whose gums are poison; such the plants
 Which spring beneath her steps as Passion flies
 O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly pants
 For some celestial fruit forbidden to our wants. 1080

CXXI

Oh Love! no habitant of earth thou art—
 An unseen seraph, we believe in thee,
 A faith whose martyrs are the broken heart, —
 But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see
 The naked eye, thy form, as it should be; 1085
 The mind hath made thee, as it peopled heaven,
 Even with its own desiring phantasy,
 And to a thought such shape and image given,
 As haunts the unquenched soul—parched, wearied, wrung
 and riven.

CXXII

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased, 1090
 And fevers into false creation:—where,
 Where are the forms the sculptor's soul hath seized?
 In him alone. Can nature show so fair?
 Where are the charms and virtues which we dare
 Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men, 1095
 The unreached Paradise of our despair,
 Which o'er-informs the pencil and the pen,
 And overpowers the page where it would bloom again?

CXXIII

Who loves, raves—'tis youth's frenzy—but the cure
 Is bitterer still, as charm by charm unwinds 1100

Which robed our idols, and we see too sure
 Nor worth nor beauty dwells from out the mind's
 Ideal shape of such ; yet still it binds
 The fatal spell, and still it draws us on,
 Reaping the whirlwind from the oft-sown winds ; 1105
 The stubborn heart, its alchemy begun,
 Seems ever near the prize—wealthiest when most undone.

CXXIV

We wither from our youth, we gasp away—
 Sick—sick ; unfound the boon, unslaked the thirst,
 Though to the last, in verge of our decay, 1110
 Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first—
 But all too late,—so are we doubly curst.
 Love, fame, ambition, avarice—'tis the same,
 Each idle, and all ill, and none the worst—
 For all are meteors with a different name, 1115
 And Death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame.

CXXV

Few—none—find what they love or could have loved.
 Though accident, blind contact, and the strong
 Necessity of loving, have removed
 Antipathies—but to recur, ere long, 1120
 Envenomed with irrevocable wrong ;
 And Circumstance, that unspiritual god
 And miscreator, makes and helps along
 Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod,
 Whose touch turns Hope to dust,—the dust we all have 1125
 trod.

CXXVI

Our life is a false nature : 'tis not in
 The harmony of things,—this hard decree,
 This uneradicable taint of sin,
 This boundless upas, this all-blasting tree,
 Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be 1130
 The skies which rain their plagues on men like dew—

Disease, death, bondage—all the woes we see,
 And worse, the woes we see not—which throb through
 The immedicable soul, with heart-aches ever new.

CXXVII

Yet let us ponder boldly—'tis a base
 Abandonment of reason to resign 1135
 Our right of thought—our last and only place
 Of refuge : this, at least, shall still be mine :
 Though from our birth the faculty divine
 Is chained and tortured—cabined, cribbed, confined, 1140
 And bred in darkness, lest the truth should shine
 Too brightly on the unprepared mind,
 The beam pours in, for time and skill will couch the
 blind.

CXXVIII

Arches on arches ! as it were that Rome,
 Collecting the chief trophies of her line, 1145
 Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,
 Her Coliseum stands ; the moonbeams shine
 As 'twere its natural torches, for divine
 Should be the light which streams here, to illumine
 This long-explored but still exhaustless mine 1150
 Of contemplation ; and the azure gloom
 Of an Italian night, where the deep skies assume

CXXIX

Hues which have words, and speak to ye of heaven
 Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,
 And shadows forth its glory. There is given 1155
 Unto the things of earth, which Time hath bent,
 A spirit's feeling, and where he hath leant
 His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a power
 And magic in the ruined battlement,
 For which the palace of the present hour 1160
 Must yield its pomp, and wait till ages are its dower.

CXXX

Oh Time! the beautifier of the dead,
 Adorner of the ruin, comforter
 And only healer when the heart hath bled ;
 Time! the corrector where our judgments err, 1165
 The test of truth, love—sole philosopher,
 For all beside are sophists—from thy thrift,
 Which never loses though it doth defer—
 Time, the avenger? unto thee I lift
 My hands, and eyes, and heart, and crave of thee a gift : 1170

CXXXI

Amidst this wreck, where thou hast made a shrine
 And temple more divinely desolate,
 Among thy mightier offerings here are mine,
 Ruins of years, though few, yet full of fate :
 If thou hast ever seen me too elate, 1175
 Hear me not ; but if calmly I have borne
 Good, and reserved my pride against the hate
 Which shall not overwhelm me, let me not have worn
 This iron in my soul in vain—shall *they* not mourn?

CXXXII

And thou, who never yet of human wrong 1180
 Left the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis!
 Here; where the ancient paid thee homage long—
 Thou, who didst call the Furies from the abyss,
 And round Orestes bade them howl and hiss
 For that unnatural retribution—just, 1185
 Had it but been from hands less near—in this
 Thy former realm, I call thee from the dust!
 Dost thou not hear my heart?—Awake! thou shalt, and
 must.

CXXXIII

It is not that I may not have incurred
 For my ancestral faults or mine the wound 1190

I bleed withal, and had it been conferred
 With a just weapon, it had flowed unbound ;
 But now my blood shall not sink in the ground :
 To thee I do devote it—*thou* shalt take
 The vengeance, which shall yet be sought and found 1195
 Which if *I* have not taken for the sake—
 But let that pass—I sleep, but thou shalt yet awake.

CXXXIV

And if my voice break forth, 'tis not that now
 I shrink from what is suffered : let him speak
 Who hath beheld decline upon my brow, 1200
 Or seen my mind's convulsion leave it weak ;
 But in this page a record will I seek.
 Not in the air shall these my words disperse,
 Though I be ashes ; a far hour shall wreak
 The deep prophetic fulness of this verse, 1205
 And pile on human heads the mountains of my curse !

CXXXV

That curse shall be Forgiveness,—Have I not—
 Hear me, my mother Earth ! behold it, Heaven !—
 Have I not had to wrestle with my lot ?
 Have I not suffered things to be forgiven ? 1210
 Have I not had my brain seared, my heart riven,
 Hopes sapped, name blighted, Life's life lied away ?
 And only not to desperation driven,
 Because not altogether of such clay
 As rots into the souls of those whom I survey. 1215

CXXXVI

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
 Have I not seen what human things could do ?
 From the loud roar of foaming calumny
 To the small whisper of the as paltry few,
 And subtler venom of the reptile crew, 1220
 The Janus glance of whose significant eye,

Learning to lie with silence, would *seem* true,
 And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,
 Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.

CXXXVII

But I have lived, and have not lived in vain : 1225
 My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
 And my frame perish even in conquering pain ;
 But there is that within me which shall tire
 Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire ;
 Something unearthly, which they deem not of, 1230
 Like the remembered tone of a mute lyre,
 Shall on their softened spirits sink, and move
 In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love.

CXXXVIII

The seal is set.—Now welcome, thou dread power !
 Nameless, yet thus omnipotent, which here 1235
 Walkest in the shadow of the midnight hour
 With a deep awe, yet all distinct from fear ;
 Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls rear
 Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene
 Derives from thee a sense so deep and clear 1240
 That we become a part of what has been,
 And grow unto the spot, all-seeing but unseen.

CXXXIX

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
 In murmured pity, or loud-roared applause,
 As man was slaughtered by his fellow man. 1245
 And wherefore slaughtered ? wherefore, but because
 Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
 And the imperial pleasure.—Wherefore not ?
 What matters where we fall to fill the maws
 Of worms.—on battle-plains or listed spot ? 1250
 Both are but theatres where the chief actors rot.

CXL

I see before me the Gladiator lie :
 He leans upon his hands—his manly brow
 Consents to death, but conquers agony,
 And his drooped head sinks gradually low— 1255
 And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
 From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
 Like the first of a thunder-shower ; and now
 The arena swims around him—he is gone,
 Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch who 1260
 won.

CXLI

He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes
 Were with his heart, and that was far away ;
 He recked not of the life he lost nor prize,
 But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at play, 1265
There was their Dacian mother—he, their sire,
 Butchered to make a Roman holiday—
 All this rushed with his blood—Shall he expire
 And unavenged ? Arise ! ye Goths, and glut your ire !

CXLII

But here, where Murder breathed her bloody steam ; 1270
 And here, where buzzing nations choked the ways,
 And roared or murmured like a mountain stream
 Dashing or winding as its torrent strays ;
 Here, where the Roman millions' blame or praise
 Was death or life, the playthings of a crowd, 1275
 My voice sounds much—and fall the stars' faint rays
 On the arena void—seats crushed—walls bowed—
 And galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely loud

CXLIII

A ruin—yet what ruin !—from its mass
 Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been reared ; 1280

Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
 And marvel where the spoil could have appeared.
 Hath it indeed been plundered, or but cleared?
 Alas! developed, opens the decay,
 When the colossal fabric's form is neared : 1285
 It will not bear the brightness of the day.
 Which streams too much to all, years man have reft
 away.

CXLIV

But when the rising moon begins to climb
 Its topmost arch, and gently pauses there ;
 When the stars twinkle through the loops of time, 1290
 And the low night-breeze waves along the air
 The garland-forest, which the gray walls wear,
 Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head ;
 When the light shines serene but doth not glare,
 Then in this magic circle raise the dead : 1295
 Heroes have trod this spot—'tis on their dust ye tread.

CXLV

' While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand ;
 ' When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall,
 ' And when Rome falls—the World.' From our own
 land
 Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty wall 1300
 In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
 Ancient ; and these three mortal things are still
 On their foundations, and unaltered all ;
 Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill,
 The World, the same wide den—of thieves, or what ye will. 1305

CXLVI

Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime—
 Shrine of all saints and temple of all gods,
 From Jove to Jesus—spared and blessed by time :
 Looking tranquillity, while falls or nods

Arch, empire, each thing round thee, and man plods 1310
 His way through thorns to ashes—glorious dome !
 Shalt thou not last? Time's scythe and tyrants' rods
 Shiver upon thee—sanctuary and home
 Of art and piety—Pantheon!—pride of Rome !

CXLVII

Relic of nobler days, and noblest arts ! 1315
 Despoiled yet perfect, with thy circle spreads
 A holiness appealing to all hearts—
 To art a model ; and to him who treads
 Rome for the sake of ages, Glory sheds
 Her light through thy sole aperture ; to those 1320
 Who worship, here are altars for their beads ;
 And they who feel for genius may repose
 Their eyes on honoured forms, whose busts around them
 close.

CXLVIII

There is a dungeon, in whose dim drear light
 What do I gaze on? Nothing : Look again ! 1325
 Two forms are slowly shadowed on my sight—
 Two insulated phantoms of the brain :
 It is not so ; I see them full and plain—
 An old man, and a female young and fair,
 Fresh as a nursing mother, in whose vein 1330
 The blood is nectar :—But what doth she there,
 With her unmantled neck, and bosom white and bare?

CXLIX

Full swells the deep pure fountain of young life,
 Where *on* the heart and *from* the heart we took
 Our first and sweetest nurture, when the wife, 1335
 Blest into mother, in the innocent look,
 Or even the piping cry of lips that brook
 No pain, and small suspense, a joy perceives

Man knows not, when from out its cradled nook
 She sees her little bud put forth its leaves— 1340
 What may the fruit be yet?—I know not—Cain was Eve's.

CL

But here youth offers to old age the food,
 The milk of his own gift : it is her sire
 To whom she renders back the debt of blood
 Born with her birth. No ; he shall not expire 1345
 While in those warm and lovely veins the fire
 Of health and holy feeling can provide
 Great Nature's Nile, whose deep stream rises higher
 Than Egypt's river : from that gentle side
 Drink, drink and live, old man ! Heaven's realm holds no 1350
 such tide.

CLI

The starry fable of the milky way
 Has not thy story's purity ; it is
 A constellation of a sweeter ray,
 And sacred Nature triumphs more in this
 Reverse of her decree, than in the abyss 1355
 Where sparkle distant worlds :—Oh, holiest nurse !
 No drop of that clear stream its way shall miss
 To thy sire's heart, replenishing its source
 With life, as our freed souls rejoin the universe.

CLII

Turn to the mole which Hadrian reared on high, 1360
 Imperial mimic of old Egypt's piles,
 Colossal copyist of deformity,
 Whose travelled phantasy from the far Nile's
 Enormous model, doomed the artist's toils
 To build for giants, and for his vain earth, 1365
 His shrunken ashes, raise this dome : How smiles
 The gazer's eye with philosophic mirth,
 To view the huge design which sprung from such a birth !

CLIII

But lo ! the dome—the vast and wondrous dome,
 To which Diana's marvel was a cell— 1370
 Christ's mighty shrine above his martyr's tomb !
 I have beheld the Ephesian's miracle ;—
 Its columns strew the wilderness, and dwell
 The hyæna and the jackal in their shade ;
 I have beheld Sophia's bright roofs swell 1375
 Their glittering mass i' the sun, and have surveyed
 Its sanctuary the while the usurping Moslem prayed ;

CLIV

But thou, of temples old, or altars new,
 Standest alone, with nothing like to thee—
 Worthiest of God, the holy and the true. 1380
 Since Zion's desolation, when that He
 Forsook his former city, what could be,
 Of earthly structures, in his honour piled,
 Of a sublimer aspect ? Majesty,
 Power, Glory, Strength, and Beauty all are aisled 1385
 In this eternal ark of worship undefiled.

CLV

Enter : its grandeur overwhelms thee not ;
 And why ? it is not lessened ; but thy mind,
 Expanded by the genius of the spot,
 Has grown colossal, and can only find 1390
 A fit abode wherein appear enshrined
 Thy hopes of immortality ; and thou
 Shalt one day, if found worthy, so defined,
 See thy God face to face, as thou dost now
 His Holy of Holies, nor be blasted by his brow. 1395

CLVI

Thou movest, but increasing with the advance,
 Like climbing some great Alp, which still doth rise,

Deceived by its gigantic elegance ;
 Vastness which grows, but grows to harmonise—
 All musical in its immensities ; 1400
 Rich marbles, richer painting—shrines where flame
 The lamps of gold—and haughty dome which vies
 In air with Earth's chief structures, though their frame
 Sits on the firm-set ground, and this the clouds must claim.

CLVII

Thou seest not all ; but piecemeal thou must break, 1405
 To separate contemplation, the great whole ;
 And as the ocean many bays will make
 That ask the eye—so here condense thy soul
 To more immediate objects, and control
 Thy thoughts until thy mind hath got by heart 1410
 Its eloquent proportions, and unroll
 In mighty graduations, part by part,
 The glory which at once upon thee did not dart,

CLVIII

Not by its fault—but thine : Our outward sense
 Is but of gradual grasp—and as it is 1415
 That what we have of feeling most intense
 Outstrips our faint expression : even so this
 Outshining and o'erwhelming edifice
 Fools our fond gaze, and greatest of the great
 Defies at first our Nature's littleness, 1420
 Till, growing with its growth, we thus dilate
 Our spirits to the size of that they contemplate.

CLIX

Then pause, and be enlightened ; there is more
 In such a survey than the sating gaze
 Of wonder pleased, or awe which would adore 1425
 The worship of the place, or the mere praise
 Of art and its great masters, who could raise
 What former time, nor skill, nor thought could plan ;

The fountain of sublimity displays
 Its depth, and thence may draw the mind of man 1430
 Its golden sands, and learn what great conceptions can.

CLX

Or, turning to the Vatican, go see
 Laocoön's torture dignifying pain—
 A father's love and mortal's agony
 With an immortal patience blending: Vain 1435
 The struggle; vain, against the coiling strain
 And gripe, and deepening of the dragon's grasp,
 The old man's clench; the long envenomed chain
 Rivets the living links,—the enormous asp
 Enforces pang on pang, and stifles gasp on gasp. 1440

CLXI

Or view the Lord of the unerring bow,
 The God of life, and poesy, and light—
 The sun in human limbs arrayed, and brow
 All radiant from his triumph in the fight;
 The shaft hath just been shot—the arrow bright 1445
 With an immortal's vengeance; in his eye
 And nostril beautiful disdain, and might
 And majesty, flash their full lightnings by,
 Developing in that one glance the Deity.

CLXII

But in his delicate form—a dream of Love, 1450
 Shaped by some solitary nymph, whose breast
 Longed for a deathless lover from above,
 And maddened in that vision—are exprest
 All that ideal beauty ever blessed
 The mind with, in it most unearthly mood, 1455
 When each conception was a heavenly guest—
 A ray of immortality—and stood,
 Starlike, around, until they gathered to a god!

CLXIII

And if it be Prometheus stole from Heaven
 The fire which we endure, it was repaid 1460
 By him to whom the energy was given
 Which this poetic marble hath arrayed
 With an eternal glory—which, if made
 By human hands, is not of human thought ;
 And Time himself hath hallowed it, nor laid 1465
 One ringlet in the dust—nor hath it caught
 A tinge of years, but breathes the flame with which 'twas
 wrought.

CLXIV

But where is he, the Pilgrim of my song,
 The being who upheld it through the past ?
 Methinks he cometh late and tarries long. 1470
 He is no more—these breathings are his last ;
 His wanderings done, his visions ebbing fast,
 And he himself as nothing :—if he was
 Aught but a phantasy, and could be classed
 With forms which live and suffer—let that pass— 1475
 His shadow fades away into Destruction's mass,

CLXV

Which gathers shadow, substance, life, and all
 That we inherit in its mortal shroud,
 And spreads the dim and universal pall
 Through which all things grow phantoms ; and the 1480
 cloud
 Between us sinks and all which ever glowed,
 Till Glory's self is twilight, and displays
 A melancholy halo scarce allowed
 To hover on the verge of darkness ; rays
 Sadder than saddest night, for they distract the gaze. 1485

CLXVI

And send us prying into the abyss,
 To gather what we shall be when the frame

Shall be resolved to something less than this
 Its wretched essence ; and to dream of fame,
 And wipe the dust from off the idle name 1490
 We never more shall hear,—but never more,
 Oh, happier thought ! can we be made the same :
 It is enough in sooth that *once* we bore
 These fardels of the heart—the heart whose sweat was
 gore.

CLXVII

Hark—forth from the abyss a voice proceeds, 1495
 A long low distant murmur of dread sound,
 Such as arises when a nation bleeds
 With some deep and immedicable wound ;
 Through storm and darkness yawns the rending ground,
 The gulf is thick with phantoms, but the chief 1500
 Seems royal still, though with her head discrowned,
 And pale, but lovely, with maternal grief
 She clasps a babe, to whom her breast yields no relief.

CLXVIII

Scion of chiefs and monarchs, where art thou ?
 Fond hope of many nations, art thou dead ? 1505
 Could not the grave forget thee, and lay low
 Some less majestic, less beloved head ?
 In the sad midnight, while thy heart still bled,
 The mother of a moment, o'er thy boy,
 Death hushed that pang for ever : with thee fled 1510
 The present happiness and promised joy
 Which filled the imperial isles so full it seemed to cloy.

CLXIX

Peasants bring forth in safety.—Can it be,
 Oh thou that wert so happy, so adored,
 Those who weep not for kings shall weep for thee, 1515
 And freedom's heart grown heavy, cease to hoard
 Her many griefs for ONE ! for she had poured
 Her orisons for thee, and o'er thy head

Beheld her Iris.—Thou, too, lonely lord,
 And desolate consort—vainly wert thou wed! 1520
 The husband of a year! the father of the dead!

CLXX

Of sackcloth was thy wedding garment made ;
 Thy bridal's fruit is ashes : in the dust
 The fair haired Daughter of the Isles is laid,
 The love of millions ! How we did entrust 1525
 Futurity to her ; and, though it must
 Darken above our bones, yet fondly deemed
 Our children should obey her child, and blessed
 Her and her hoped-for seed, whose promise seemed
 Like stars to shepherd's eyes :—'twas but a meteor beamed. 1530

CLXXI

Woe unto us, not her ; for she sleeps well :
 The fickle reek of popular breath, the tongue
 Of hollow counsel, the false oracle,
 Which from the birth of monarchy hath rung
 Its knell in princely ears, till the o'erstung 1535
 Nations have armed in madness, the strange fate
 Which tumbles mightiest sovereigns, and hath flung
 Against their blind omnipotence a weight
 Within the opposing scale, which crushes soon or late,—

CLXXII

These might have been her destiny ; but no, 1540
 Our hearts deny it : and so young, so fair,
 Good without effort, great without a foe,
 But now a bride and mother—and now *there* !
 How many ties did that stern moment tear !
 From thy Sire's to his humblest subject's breast 1545
 Is linked the electric chain of that despair,
 Whose shock was as an earthquake's, and opprest
 The land which loved thee so that none could love thee
 best.

CLXXIII

Lo, Nemi ! navelled in the woody hills
 So far, that the uprooting wind which tears 1550
 The oak from his foundation, and which spills
 The ocean o'er its boundary, and bears
 Its foam against the skies, reluctant spares
 The oval mirror of thy glassy lake ;
 And calm as cherished hate, its surface wears 1555
 A deep cold settled aspect nought can shake,
 All coiled into itself and round, as sleeps the snake,

CLXXIV

And near, Albano's scarce divided waves
 Shine from a sister valley ;—and afar
 The Tiber winds, and the broad ocean laves 1560
 The Latian coast where sprung the Epic war,
 ' Arms and the man,' whose re-ascending star
 Rose o'er an empire :—but beneath thy right
 Tully reposed from Rome ;—and where yon bar
 Of girdling mountains intercepts the sight 1565
 The Sabine farm was tilled, ' the weary bard's ' delight.

CLXXV

But I forget.—My Pilgrim's shrine is won,
 And he and I must part,—so let it be,—
 His task and mine alike are nearly done ;
 Yet once more let us look upon the sea ; 1570
 The midland ocean breaks on him and me,
 And from the Alban Mount we now behold
 Our friend of youth, that Ocean, which when we
 Beheld it last by Calpe's rock unfold
 Those waves, we followed on till the dark Euxine rolled 1575

CLXXVI

Upon the blue Symplegades : long years—
 Long, though not very many—since have done

Their work on both ; some suffering and some tears
 Have left us nearly where we had begun :
 Yet not in vain our mortal race hath run ; 1580
 We have had our reward, and it is here,—
 That we can yet feel gladdened by the sun,
 And reap from earth, sea, joy almost as dear
 As if there were no man to trouble what is clear.

CLXXVII

Oh ! that the Desert were my dwelling-place, 1585
 With one fair Spirit for my minister,
 That I might all forget the human race,
 And, hating no one, love but only her !
 Ye elements !—in whose ennobling stir
 I feel myself exalted—Can ye not 1590
 Accord me such a being ? Do I err
 In deeming such inhabit many a spot ?
 Though with them to converse can rarely be our lot.

CLXXVIII

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
 There is a rapture on the lonely shore, 1595
 There is society, where none intrudes,
 By the deep Sea, and music in its roar :
 I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
 From these our interviews, in which I steal
 From all I may be, or have been before, 1600
 To mingle with the Universe, and feel
 What I can ne'er express, yet can not all conceal.

CLXXIX

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll !
 Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain ;
 Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
 Stops with the shore ; upon the watery plain
 The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
 A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,



When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
 He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
 Without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown. 1610

CLXXX

His steps are not upon thy paths,—thy fields
 Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise
 And shake him from thee ; the vile strength he wields
 For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
 Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies, 1615
 And sendest him, shivering in thy playful spray
 And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
 His petty hope in some near port or bay,
 And dashest him again to earth :—there let him lay. 1620

CLXXXI

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
 Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,
 And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
 The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
 Their clay creator the vain title take 1625
 Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war—
 These are thy toys, and as the snowy flake,
 They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
 Alike the Armada's pride or spoils of Trafalgar.

CLXXXII

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee— 1630
 Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they ?
 Thy waters washed them power while they were free,
 And many a tyrant since ; their shores obey
 The stranger, slave, or savage ! their decay
 Has dried up realms to deserts :—not so thou ; 1635
 Unchangeable, save to thy wild waves' play,
 Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow
 Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

CLXXXIII

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
 Glasses itself in tempests ; in all time,— 1640
 Calm or convulsed, in breeze or gale or storm,
 Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
 Dark-heaving—boundless, endless, and sublime,
 The image of eternity, the throne
 Of the Invisible ; even from out thy slime 1645
 The monsters of the deep are made ; each zone
 Obeys thee ; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

CLXXXIV

And I have loved thee, Ocean ! and my joy
 Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
 Borne, like thy bubbles, onward : from a boy 1650
 I wantoned with thy breakers—they to me
 Were a delight ; and if the freshening sea
 Made them a terror—'twas a pleasing fear,
 For I was as it were a child of thee,
 And trusted to thy billows far and near, 1655
 And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do here.

CLXXXV

My task is done, my song has ceased, my theme
 Has died into an echo ; it is fit
 The spell should break of this protracted dream.
 The torch shall be extinguished which hath lit 1660
 My midnight lamp—and what is writ, is writ ;
 Would it were worthier ! but I am not now
 That which I have been—and my visions flit
 Less palpably before me—and the glow
 Which in my spirit dwelt is fluttering, faint, and low. 1665

CLXXXVI

Farewell ! a word that must be, and hath been—
 A sound which makes us linger ;—yet—farewell !

Ye! who have traced the pilgrim to the scene
Which is his last, if in your memories dwell
A thought which once was his, if on ye swell
A single recollection, not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon, and scallop-shell ;
Farewell ! with *him* alone may rest the pain,
If such there were—with *you*, the moral of his strain.

NOTES

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NOTES
TO
CHILDE HAROLD.

THIRD CANTO.

“I have just finished a 3rd Canto of *Childe Harold*, longer than either of the two former, and in some parts it may be better.”
—*Letter to Murray*, d. Ouchy, nr. Lausanne, June 27, 1816.]

St. i., l. 2, **Augusta Ada**, the only offspring of the poet's marriage, born 1815; m. 1st Earl of Lovelace (1835), and d. 1852.

l. 6, **Awaking**, etc. Awkward construction: it was Byron who awoke, not “the waters.”

l. 10, **Albion's lessening shores**, etc. The disappearance of England as the ship proceeds into the open sea makes no difference to the poet's mind. Byron left England, for the last time, April 25, 1816.

l. 13, **That knows his rider**.

“ . . . Feel our fiery horses
Like proud seas under us.”

[Beaumont and Fletcher
(*Two Noble Kinsmen*).]

Byron may have borrowed the thought ; if he did he certainly improved it. * The idea of his being like a piece of seaweed, torn from its root and drifting before wind and tide, is also a fine one, finely expressed.

l. 20, **Youth's summer.** Spring rather. He was still under 30.

St. iv. Byron here pretends (St. iv.) that he does not think this canto equal to the preceding : but the letter quoted above (n. 1) shows that this was not his opinion in real fact.

The two stanzas that follow (v., vi.) are of an egotistical character ; but the egotism of so marked a man was interesting. Scott speaks of their "moral interest and poetic beauty." The poet's thought may be thus explained :—

A man whose experience makes him old—no matter what his age—has seen so deeply into existence as not to be surprised at anything that may happen, nor can events cause him any fresh suffering ; for he knows the value of solitary reflection. The satisfaction of adding to our sense of life by originating new notions is now the poet's object ; and his sense of his own nothingness yields to the feeling that his thoughts are real. This idea may be compared to the proposition of the French philosopher, Descartes :—"I reflect, therefore I am." It is the exercise of the thinking faculty that proves to man that he exists.

St. vii. still displays egotism ; yet the sentiment of the latter half is manly :—

He confesses that it is too late to cure the faults produced in his character by bad bringing-up. Whatever change time may have worked in him, he has lost none of his moral courage.

l. 65, **Something too much of this** : a phrase that has become proverbial in the English language. [*Hamlet*, iii. 2. 69.]

l. 67, **Long absent Harold.** Childe Harold, or the poet in that character, has not been before the public for some time. The first and second cantos had appeared in February 1812, after which Byron had published other poems, in various styles, chiefly tales, somewhat in the manner of Scott's metrical romances. In April 1814 he recorded a resolution to write no more verse, of any kind whatever.

l. 73, **Life's enchanted cup.** Pleasure is here compared to champagne, a wine which is liveliest when first drunk. Harold, we are told, took his pleasure in haste, and found it bitter to the after-taste : a **purser fount**, alludes to his own marriage, which he goes on to lament as an invisible but unbreakable fetter for his limbs, which was heavy to bear and caused painful sores.

l. 74, He proceeds to relate how these troubles drove him to fresh wanderings. A journey to Brussels or Geneva was a more

serious undertaking before the days of steamers, railways, and Cook's tickets.

l. 83, Yet, before leaving his country he had tried to amuse himself there.

l. 95, all grow old, *i.e.* grow entirely old : a Latin idiom.

l. 96, Fame untold, *i.e.* the clouds that hide the star.

Until he found that his nature was too undisciplined to find solace in what is called "Society," he preferred to "breathe without mankind"—*i.e.* to live a solitary life. So he said, and—perhaps—thought. For the next few years he was to show that it was not company from which he shrank so much as restraint.

St. xiii. is a variation on the theme, so dear to poets, of the pleasures of scenery—what is known as "Nature"; though there are, of course, aspects of the material world which are not pleasant for man.

l. 116, A mutual language . . . lake. A speech as clear to him as he to the powers of Nature ; clearer than an ordinary English book, such as he would often leave to look at the landscapes reflected in water.

l. 119, the Chaldean : an ancient people of this name, on the plains of the Euphrates and Tigris, were held to have discovered a rude science of astronomy. Byron says, he—or his hero—might have been happy if he could have confined his thoughts to the contemplation of the stars.

l. 123, But he had found himself recalled to human habitations which wore him and made him weary and ill-tempered ; and then, like a bird in a cage, his spirit tried another upward flight.

The hero is represented, in St. xvi., as setting out in a mingled mood of despair and a sort of wild recklessness, which the poet tries to explain, by comparing it with the practice ascribed to sailors whose vessel is about to founder ; who intoxicate themselves before they go down. The wild laugh of despair was capable of causing a passing elevation of spirit which he would not disturb. Then came his fit again, etc., in *Macbeth*, *v. n. iii. 4. 21.*

l. 146, Thy tread is on an Empire's dust. One of the poet's most justly-famous passages. Less than a twelvemonth had passed since the French Empire, established by Napoleon Bonaparte, had been destroyed at the battle of Waterloo, a famous field near Brussels, the capital of Belgium.

l. 150, The poet thinks that such a field requires no monument. One, however, has since been erected.

l. 154, King-making : the restoration of King Louis XVIII. followed the fall of Napoleon. Other monarchs, too, owed the security of their thrones to his overthrow at Waterloo.

l. 155, **Place of skulls.** An allusion to the "Calvary" of the New Testament.

l. 159, **Pride of place:** a term of falconry, used by Shakspeare in *Macbeth*, ii. 4. 12; marked, accordingly, as a quotation, by Byron.

St. xix. The poet meditates on the fall of the French Emperor, and asks if it has done anything for the freedom of Europe. It was one of Byron's claims to distinction that he was among the first English aristocrats who denounced Privilege and sympathised with the cause of Freedom. See, among other expressions of this feeling, the noble passage in Canto IV. St. xviii.

l. 163. He had broken the chain by which the world bound him, but its fragments hang about him still. Alludes to Napoleon's captivity at St Helena.

ll. 168, 9, Shall the work of the Revolution be undone?

l. 171, **The wolf:** see Canto IV. St. xcv. Napoleon is the stricken lion; the wolf symbolises the system of legitimacy which seems to the poet meaner but equally tyrannical.

l. 172, **Prove before,** etc.: determine by experience whether a man be a good ruler, or Waterloo a true deliverance of humanity.

St. xx. The thoughts of the last are continued in this stanza. The truest glory seems to Byron to be in the death of tyrants. The tyrant of Athens, Hipparchus, was murdered by two patriots—Harmodius and Aristogeiton—at a public festival whither they had brought weapons concealed in boughs of myrtle (514 B.C.).

St. xxi. On the 15th of June the Duchess of Richmond, an English visitor, gave a ball, or dance-party, at Brussels, the capital of Belgium. The poet gives currency to the story that the British General was surprised at this gathering by the sound of the approaching artillery of the enemy. It appears, however, from the best accounts, that Wellington was well aware that Napoleon was then crossing the Belgian frontier, but desired that the festivity should go forward. The French were then at Charleroi, 35 miles south of Brussels, where their guns could hardly have been heard, even if they had any occasion to fire them. They had, in fact, a slight encounter there with the Prussian outposts under General Ziethen.

St. xxii. By Wellington's orders the British Generals left the ball-room about 10 o'clock, and each proceeded to join his division on the road to Quatre Bras, a village on the way to Charleroi, whence the French were known to be advancing. The Duke himself stayed to supper; and it is related, by one who was present, that he asked for a map of Belgium and, having looked at it attentively, pointed out Waterloo as the place where

the decisive battle would be fought. He had a meeting with Blucher on the 16th, near Ligny, when the plan of concentration was arranged.

St. xxiii. The Duke of Brunswick, whose father had been killed at the battle of Jena, 1806, was in command of a detachment of German cavalry who wore a black uniform. He fell at Quatre Bras, 16th June 1815.

St. xxiv. The hurried departure of the officers for the field and their separation from their friends are described in St. xxiv. All knew that they might never meet again. This Byron tersely describes as sighs which might never be repeated.

l. 216, **Mutual eyes**: looks of reciprocated affection. Some of these pathetic feelings are portrayed in Thackeray's celebrated story, *Vanity Fair*.

St. xxv. pursues the description, vividly representing the confusion of the march and the alarm of the Belgians—many of whom, however, sympathised with the French.

l. 227, **The Camerons' gathering**: a piece of Scottish music, so called from a famous clan of the Highlands, whose chief was Laird of Lochiel.

l. 228, **Albyn**: an ancient name for northern Scotland.

l. 230, **Pibroch**: a tune of military character played on the bagpipe.

l. 235, **Evan**; **Donald**: two famous chiefs of the Camerons, both of whom fought, in turn, against the English.

l. 236, **Ardennes**: should be "Soignies": the Ardennes is a wild country 50 miles away.

The weather was rainy; as if—says the stanza—Nature was weeping over so many brave men doomed to an early and violent end; but their ranks, now so full of warlike ardour, shall be covered by the green grass of spring.

St. xxviii. This stanza seems to confuse two famous fights. The battle of Quatre Bras was on the day following the ball, when Wellington encountered the French Marshal, Ney, losing 5200 men, but repulsing all attacks. In the evening, however, having heard of the defeat of the Prussians, by Napoleon, at Ligny, the Duke withdrew his army to Waterloo, where they halted all the 17th.

Sir W. Scott—of whose admiration for Byron we have already seen specimens—thus characterises the above passage:—

"Though he shuns to celebrate the victory of Waterloo" (Scott himself wrote a poem on the subject) "he gives us here a most beautiful description of the evening which preceded the battle of Quatre Bras. . . I am not sure that any verses in our language surpass, in vigour and feeling, this description."

St. xxix. "In the late battles, like all the world, I have lost

a connection, poor Frederick Howard, the best of his race" [*Letter to Moore*]. This young officer was the son of Byron's former guardian, the Earl of Carlisle, whom the poet had attacked in his famous Satire "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." He refers to this in l. 257.

St. xxx. is a lovely passage of true feeling. Major Howard's grave was pointed out to Byron under two trees on the field of Waterloo. The exquisite couplet which concludes the stanza deserves especial notice.

In St. xxxi. Byron expresses his sympathy with those who mourned the loss of relations killed at Waterloo: the British were abandoned by their Belgian allies, and attacked all day, from noon to past six in the evening, when the Prussian advance began to tell upon the French right. In these long hours Wellington lost 14,500 men—chiefly British—in killed and wounded. These, cries the poet, will wake no more at the summons of an earthly clarion.

l. 270, **reckless** := **indifferent**: a powerful touch, contrasting the unhappy mourners with the unheeding denizens of air above them.

ll. 279, 280, The honour that glorifies the dead is a cause of sorrow to the survivors. He seems here to fight with consolation, and will not be comforted for the loss of his friends.

St. xxxii. returns to the survivors: their mourning ceases by slow degrees, but they will never again be what they were before their loss.

l. 289, **Brokenly**: an unusual locution which will be readily understood. Note the very artistic repetition of the word which develops into a simile in the next stanza.

St. xxxiii. Lord Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review* dwelt with glowing admiration on this passage.

l. 294, **Not forsakes**: *i.e.* does not forget. Showing no visible sign. Such sorrows are silent.

St. xxxiv. The thought is expanded in a manner characteristic of Byron's reflective intellect.

ll. 299, 300, So long as we live our life gives birth to grief, as the root of a poisonous plant to its deadly branches.

l. 304, **Apples**. It was an old belief that the fruit produced by the trees on the shore of the "Dead Sea"—a bituminous lake in Palestine—were fair on the outside but had a pulp of ashes: they are said to be a kind of gall-nut. The years of man are so full of sorrowful hours that the poet thinks no one, fully reckoning the latter, would wish for sixty of the former. **Threescore**: an old-fashioned phrase for sixty. Most persons, however, who reach this age are found willing to live a little longer: suicide belongs to younger men.

l. 308, **The Psalmist** : in the Old Testament ; "The days of man's life are threescore years and ten" (Psalm xc. 10).

l. 310, Waterloo prevented many from attaining that limit : the recollection of posterity is all that they have gained.

St. xxxvi. contains one of Byron's many fine tributes of mingled praise and blame to Napoleon. In a passage of his diary, written in April 1814, after the Emperor's first fall, he thus expresses himself :—

"Out of town six days. On my return find my poor little pagod Napoleon pushed off his pedestal. It is his own fault . . . That Muscovite winter wedged his arms ; ever since he has fought with his feet and teeth. These last may still leave their marks . . . *he will yet play them a pass.*" Byron correctly judged the situation : Napoleon owed his first fall to the disastrous retreat from Moscow in the winter of 1812 ; he fought in vain through 1813 and abdicated in the following year ; but he gave one more terrible "pass" to the European nations before the final crash of Waterloo.

The stanzas that follow were translated to Eugène Beauharnais, the Emperor's stepson and favourite, in 1817 ; when the prince exclaimed that "the delineation was correct" [see Byron's note to *Don Juan*, Canto I. St. ii.].

l. 318, **Antithetically** ; contradictory qualities met in his character.

l. 321, Could Napoleon have steered a middle course between boundless ambition and vulgar objects he might have kept, or never obtained, the throne of France.

l. 326, Napoleon is here described as a prisoner of the world he had once subdued.

l. 332, **A god unto thyself.** Napoleon began to regard himself as omnipotent, and the helpless nations he conquered took a like view, while he prospered. But the battles of Leipsic disposed of his hold on Northern Europe (October 14–19, 1813). During the ensuing winter France was invaded by the Russians, Prussians, and Austrians at once. Napoleon endeavoured to fight them in detail, but they pushed past him, took Paris (March 3, 1814), and forced him to abdicate (April 11, *id.*). He was allowed to go to the island of Elba, but escaped in the following spring ; failed at Waterloo, and surrendered to the British. Confined in a more remote island this time, he lived at St Helena, in the Atlantic, till May 5, 1821, when he died of internal cancer.

In Stanzas xxxviii. to xli. Byron testifies to Napoleon's consummate skill, but notes his want of judgment before the temptations of ambition.

l. 344, Byron notes the pride which made Napoleon bear his sorrows (as was thought) with dignity. It was bitter for his

enemies to see him so self-possessed. Unhappily Napoleon did not always maintain this dignified attitude.

But, in St. xl. and St. xli., Byron dwells on the point that such pride, however suitable to a fallen champion, was out of place in better days. [see *Age of Bronze. Works*, p. 526.]

On St. xli. the poet records this note :—"The great error of Napoleon was a continued obtrusion on mankind of his want of all community of feeling for or with them ; perhaps more offensive to human vanity than the active cruelty of more trembling and suspicious tyranny."

l. 367, **Philip's son.** Alexander "the Great," King of Macedonia from 336 B.C. to 323, a mighty conqueror whom Byron would have had Napoleon resemble rather than Diogenes, a philosopher of the same period, who prided himself on showing contempt for all that men most desire and esteem. This sect was called "the Cynic," from a Greek word meaning "dog": as implying a snarling and inhuman temper.

Byron attempts, in St. xlii., to account for the ultimate failure of Napoleon by saying that there are certain minds which flame up in a search of tasks of extreme difficulty, and are only conscious of fatigue when they have nothing to do. This, with the next two stanzas, seems to form one of those passages of metrical rhetoric which evaporates in the process of analysis. The following may be taken as a general explanation :—

Distinguished men in all paths of human effort have been mad, and have caused madness in others : if the machinery of their minds could be shown, we should cease either to envy them or wish to imitate their conduct. The habits that such men form in their existence of excitement are fatal to the repose which marks a calm old age. Thus they perish when deprived of the means of action ; like a torch from which oil is withheld, or a sword neglected and eaten by rust.

l. 393, **Overcast with sorrow**, etc. Twilight, to them, instead of being clear and calm, is clouded over : the metaphors are a little confused.

St. 398 ff., Here Byron, according to his wont, pushes on his thoughts to an excess which has attracted criticism. Lord Jeffrey remarked on the fallacy of supposing, either that all the unscrupulous great had these feelings, or that the other greater men who were also good were always in the like unhappy predicament.

ll. 407, 8, The meaning is :—The sphere of action for you, if you would be truly wise, must be either of your own wisdom's creation or of Nature's : and Harold—not having much wisdom—turns to Nature as displayed upon the Rhine.

ll. 414, 5, The castles on the banks have lost their masters ;

but seem to salute their memory from these shattered walls clothed in the leaves of ivy and other plants that grow on ruins.

St. xlvi. The poet at last breaks off from his reflections on Napoleon ; saying that he at least will find a happier sphere in his own imaginations on the actual material world around him, of which the river Rhine is an example. This is one of the most famous rivers of Europe : coming down from the Swiss Alps it flows N.W. to Basle, then N.E. and N. through Germany, forming between Bingen and Bonn the special stream of German romance and patriotism. Its banks are clothed with vines, and studded with castle-crowned crags, about which legends linger.

The ruins are described in St. xlvii. **Crannyng** : penetrating the rifts of the masonry.

ll. 421-3, Banners once floated over the towers, and battles were fought in the fields below them : but now the warriors lie buried where they fell and of their flags no shred remains ; all is dust !

In St. xlviii. Byron says that the Barons and Robber-Knights by whom those towers were built and inhabited were in character and conduct all that the greatest conquerors were, only that the scale of their operations was smaller.

l. 426, **Power** : = Powerful men, surrounded by strong cravings.

l. 430, "What wants that knave that a king should have ?" was the question of a King of Scotland when he saw a leader of the border clan of Armstrong riding towardshim with a well-equipped train of followers.

l. 434 ff., The subject is pursued in the next stanza. The Rhine-Knights fought and loved, bearing on their shields tokens of the ladies whom they loved, and winning or losing their castles in civil warfare. Although the habit of wearing iron corslets could not protect their hearts from the arrows of love, it made their passions and actions ferocious.

l. 441, **Fair mischief** : some lady caused disaster.

l. 443 ff., The poet apostrophises the Rhine, saying that its banks would be still more beautiful if man would not mar them ; and that to him, even as it is, the stream would be perfect could it but yield forgetfulness.

l. 451, **Lethe** : one of the rivers of the Greek mythology which the dead were believed to drink before entering the infernal regions, so that they might forget the cares of the life behind them. [*v. Cant. I. St. lxxxii.*]

ll. 449, 50, Either Byron would wish to find in Rhine's waters oblivion of his own past sorrows, or perhaps forgetfulness of the way in which the sharp scythe of conflict had cut down the promise of Nature on its banks.

l. 452 ff., The next stanza is musical, but vague like all music.

The meaning, generally, may be thus put: The waters of the Rhine bear no trace of the blood that has so often stained them for a moment; but they cannot wash away the impression that all this carnage has made upon History.

St. lii. So the Childe thought, and yet took pleasure in the wooded nooks where the cheerful birds sang in the summer morning.

l. 465, **Though on his brow . . . transient trace**, recall Scott's description of the changeful cast of Byron's countenance quoted in *Analysis* (Canto III.).

St. liii. perhaps refers to Miss Clairmont, a member of the poet Shelley's family, who was the mother of Byron's daughter Allegra, d. April 1822. Or the reference may be to his sister, to whom the song that follows is generally thought to have been addressed.

Byron—for he is inextricably mixed with his hero by this time—was, like most great men, sincerely attached to children. His letters written in Italy—terminating with a short note to Shelley, d. April 23, 1822—show consistent affection and care for Allegra.

The allusion in St. lv. has not been definitely explained by the commentators: it could hardly be to Miss Clairmont (see concluding couplet). Perhaps it is imaginary: perhaps it only means his sister Mrs Leigh, to whom the poet was tenderly attached.

l. 497, **The Castled Crag**, etc. "Drachenfels," or the Dragon's rock, is a peak of the Siebengebirge, on the right bank of the Rhine, 8 miles S.E. of Bonn, with the ruins of a castle on the summit.

l. 517, **I send the lilies**. Apparently suggested by Ben Jonson's famous lines:—

"I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honouring thee
As giving them a hope that there
They would not withered be."

Could thy dear eyes, etc. These lines are generally believed to have been addressed to the poet's sister.

l. 537, **Coblentz**, or **Koblentz**: called by the Romans *Confluentes*, because the Moselle here joins its waters to those of the Rhine, making a "conference."

l. 542, **Marceau**: one of the most distinguished Generals of the French Revolution, shot in battle at Altekirchen in 1796. His body was interred at Coblentz, in the same grave as that where his colleague, Gen. Hoche, who died in Germany, was laid the following year. Marceau's remains were removed to Paris in 1889. The meaning of "heroes" in the plural, with "enemy"

in the singular, is not very clear : if Hoche is included in the former the latter should have been "enemies." Hoche was the officer charged with the invasion of Ireland. Marceau is held by historians to rank next after Hoche among the soldiers of the Revolution, not only for military genius but for his pure and humane character at a time when such qualities were by no means universal. It was the respect thus inspired that led to his honourable interment by the Austrians.

ll. 551, 2, Byron says that Marceau was not content with the punitive part of war.

l. 555, **Ehrenbreitstein**. A fortified rock opposite Coblenz, with which it is connected by a bridge across the river. After the war of 1800-1801 it fell into the hands of the French and was demolished by blasting. The fortifications have been restored since the Germans have regained possession of the place. **The iron shower** : the cannonades to which it was often subjected in past wars.

Stt. lix.-lxii. The poet now leaves the Rhine to enter the mountains of Switzerland.

ll. 568, 9, **The vulture**. Allusion to the bird which never ceased to torment the bound Prometheus, a Titan fabled to have been overthrown by Zeus for his acts of friendliness to Man, and fastened to a peak in the chain of Caucasus.

Wild but not rude . . . to the year. The sober charms of the Rhine valley are in this passage compared to those of Autumn.

l. 572, **Mellow** : soft and ripe (Lat. *mollis*).

In St. lx. Byron takes leave of the Rhine—or that portion of it above-mentioned—with the remark that the feelings it excites are not to be forgotten. [It is noted in *Works*, p. 34, on this stanza, that a body of Austrian troops, in the midst of an action near Mayence, were so struck with the first aspect of the river from a height they had just gained, that they stood still in admiration and suspended their advance, until the General rode up to see what was the matter.]

In the next stanza the poet dwells for the last time on the assemblage of objects of interest here left : "the precipice, the forest, the numerous Gothic churches and towns," with which this part of the Rhine abounds.

l. 591, **The Alps**. To reach the Swiss mountains so called Byron proceeded through the little canton of Freiburg, the home of the Helvetic race, to Geneva. The word "Alp" is very ancient, and has been connected by philologists with Albyn—the old name of the Scottish Highlands. They are the most extensive mountain system of Europe, standing on a base of 90,000 square miles, abounding in lakes and glaciers. Mont Blanc (15,800 feet) is their highest summit. They lie between the valley of

the Rhone on the west, and that of the Po on the east ; and are thought to have been upheaved from those depressions.

l. 593, **Snowy scalps.** The bald tops of the Alps are covered by perpetual snow, from 8 to 9000 feet on the north, and rising to 10,000 feet high on the warmer declivities of Italy on the south. **scalp**=the top of the head, the word being akin to "scale" and "shell." The **avalanche** (from a French verb *aval* "to descend," or go to the valley) is a mass of snow which rolls down the sides of the Alps when thaws occur in the lower levels of the "snow-line." Whole villages are thus swept away ; while to visitors on the mountains they are often peculiarly dangerous, as they come down without warning in the solitudes which adventurous climbers often invade. In the year 1887 no less than eight persons lost their lives above the snow-line.

During the four months of his abode in Switzerland the poet made his head-quarters at the village of Coligny, where the Shelleys were also living. It is close to Geneva ; and the house occupied by Byron was called Campagna Diodati, after a celebrated Protestant pastor of the 17th cent. A.D., whose nephew Charles Diodati was a friend of the great poet Milton, and ended his days in England. From this place Byron and Shelley made a tour of the lake ; and the former produced some of his best work while residing at Diodati.

l. 602, **Morat**, a village in the canton of Freiburg, between Neuchâtel and the town of Berne, famous for the defeat of Charles the Rash, Duke of Burgundy, by the Swiss, June 22, 1476. At the time of Byron's visit the remains of a pyramid of human bones were still to be seen there ; and he records that he brought away enough of those relics "to have made a quarter of a hero."

l. 607, **The Stygian coast**, refers to the ancient Greek fable that the spirits of unburied men were unable to cross the Styx (genitive Stygis) which was the boundary river of the other world.

l. 609, **Cannae** : modern, Canosa, in southern Italy, near the mouth of the river Ofanto (anc. Aufidus), where Hannibal defeated a Roman army far more numerous than his own in 216 B.C.

l. 610, **Marathon** : see above, p. 197 and Canto II. lxxxviii.

Byron's political liberalism has been already mentioned (*v. n.* 19). He here contrasts such battles as Morat with those fought for what he considers more selfish purposes ; but it is open to doubt whether the causes contended for at Cannae and Waterloo were less noble. Hannibal was struggling to save Carthage in his invasion of Italy : the English and Prussians were defending their respective countries against the incorrigible ambition of Bonaparte.

l. 613, **Vice-entailed corruption**, the cause of princes has dishonesty "entailed," or settled on it.

l. 616, **Draconic**, alludes to the code of Draco, a Greek law-giver, whose laws were said to be written in blood.

St. lxx. refers to the story of Julia Alpinula, a young Helvetian priestess of Aventicum, the capital of her country, who died (after a vain attempt to save her father, condemned to death for resisting the Romans) at the age of 23. Her epitaph was supposed to be discovered some years before the poet's visit. Byron remarks that is the only remnant of the ancient city; but the place still bears the old name in the slightly corrupted form of "Avenche." The old man was executed by order of Aulus Caecina about 69 A.D. One column is all that remains to mark where the city stood (see Tacitus, *Hist.* i. 68).

l. 628, **Julia**: the young maid's epitaph is in Latin, and may be thus rendered:—

"Julia Alpinula, unhappy offspring of an unhappy sire, Priestess of the Aventian goddess, could not obtain by prayers the sparing of my father's life; it was fated that he should die an evil death. I lived twenty-three years." "These," notes Byron, "are the names and actions that should not perish." [The epitaph is now known to be a modern forgery.]

ll. 631, 2, Judges are bound by their oaths to resist the weeping of suitors, even when—as here—they sue for a father's life.

In St. lxxvii. the thought is carried on. The poet records, in a prose note, that impression; and adds that he is writing the lines (June 3, 1816) with Mont Blanc shining upon him from a distance of sixty miles. The sight inspired the grand simile with which the stanza closes.

l. 645, **Lake Lemán**: the "Lake of Geneva." The distant mountains were reflected in the still water as the poet crossed it (July 20).

l. 649, cp. **Too much of man here** (see *n.* 12 to this canto). Byron excuses his desire for solitude in this passage; adding that, as soon as he gets free from society his suppressed thoughts will break out again.

l. 658, **We become the spoil . . . none are strong**. The meaning of the passage is:—

We are in a world of competition and strife; from which we may endeavour to escape, not because we *hate* our fellow-men, but because we *fear* their contact, which may reduce us to their level of contentious weakness. It cannot be denied that the sentiment is somewhat morbid. It may be quite true that reserve is "not discontent;" yet a shrinking from the duties of social intercourse is bad citizenship even where it is not misanthropic.

l. 663, **There in a moment . . . Night**, *i.e.* in an instant of

error we may incur eternal repentance, and have nothing left but to weep and mourn. Bold men direct their course to goals they know and desire ; but such as he are unable to do so, and never reach a haven. The metaphor is obvious : and Byron, no less than his brother poet, Shelley, with whom he had just begun to be intimate, was destined to furnish examples.

He goes on in St. lxxi. to ask if it be not better, with such feelings, to live alone in some beautiful spot, admiring the scenery, and passing one's life away, the "eternal child" of Nature. He found, too late, that there was a nobler life than that.

ll. 674, 5, The Rhone as it leaves the lake—here viewed as a nurse's breast—is swift and blue (see below, *n.* 881).

St. lxxii. is a flight towards what is called "Transcendentalism," where man is supposed to blend into the tissue of the Universe, feeling taking the place of experience ; with a vague Pantheism obliterating the prosaic conditions of common life. Such a system was well suited to the prismatic intellect of Shelley, but could hardly take permanent hold of a mind like Byron's, who was, at bottom, a man of the world. **High mountains are a feeling.** Expresses the sentiment caused by Alpine scenery as contrasted with the din of the crowded town.

In the next three stanzas the matter, already somewhat thin, is beaten threadbare. We seem to meet a mundane representation of what religious people call "conversion ;" the solitary communing with Nature having bathed the soul and sent it forth, equipped for a new and nobler career.

l. 699, **The mind . . . worm.** We are now in an element almost too subtle for expression : whether the poet looks forward to a dream, a trance, or death itself, he contemplates something like complete emancipation, in which he shall, at last, be united with abstract Beauty.

l. 708, **The mountains . . . as I of them :** he blows the bubble almost to bursting here, and asks whether the material things about him may be a part of himself as much as he may be a part of those ? **Should I not contemn . . . dare not glow ?** The meaning apparently is :—Am I not entitled to despise everything in the world in comparison, and set my breast against the current of trouble, sooner than join the worldly pursuits of the multitude ?

l. 717, **I return . . . immediate :** it was, surely, full time to do so : his readers could hardly have followed his flight much higher : fortunately, the rest of the poem remains on a lower and more habitable level.

l. 719, **Contemplation in the urn :** matter for reflection in the monuments of the dead. The Romans of old used to burn their deceased friends and collect their ashes in a vessel called an

"urn": Byron did this, years after, to his present companion Shelley.

l. 720, **To look on One.** To think of J. J. Rousseau, a native of Geneva (d. 1778), with whose strange character Byron had a sympathy due to some common features. Byron here seems to attribute the troubles of Rousseau's life to a thirst for fame. Rousseau was the writer who both caused and largely influenced the movement which overthrew the old French monarchy. He believed, or affected to believe, that civilisation was the cause of all social evils. His fallacious teaching, enforced by a fascinating eloquence, provided no discipline for the passions, but supplied them with specious texts and sonorous maxims. Hence he is here said to have thrown "enchantment over passion."

In June, Byron and Shelley left Geneva for a boat-voyage along the southern side of the Lake, which was in the kingdom of Sardinia. Between Evian and Meillerie they encountered a storm, but reached the latter in safety, and studied the scene of Rousseau's celebrated tale *The New Heloise*; of which book Sir W. Scott has noted that it made a "deep impression upon the feelings of the poet." Scott was totally unable to share this; but the book is generally allowed to merit the praise bestowed on it in this stanza by its idyllic eloquence and consummate descriptive power.

St. lxxviii. In the next stanza we find praise of the work, extending to the author in a somewhat exaggerated spirit and style. **For to be thus**, etc., may be taken to mean that Rousseau's love had a tendency to ruin and waste him. Rousseau was a sincere and generous *thinker*; but, as a man, was more remarkable for self-indulgence than for pursuit of any high "ideal beauty;" and his conduct has been usually palliated by the supposition that his mind was permanently disordered. In all this there was little in common with Byron, the high-born man of the world, with good judgment and a fairly strong will. Where Byron was most in sympathy with Rousseau was, perhaps, in the combination of contempt for civilised men with a readiness to seek their approval by unreserved revelations of self.

l. 744, **Julie**: the heroine of the romance referred to in the last note: her conduct will hardly seem either mild or sweet to calmer readers.

Sir W. Scott professed scorn of Julie and her friend St Preux; "we can see little in the loves of these two tiresome pedants to interest our feelings for either of them." Burke called the book "an unfashioned, indelicate, sour, gloomy, ferocious medley of pedantry and lewdness." In ll. 749, 50, the poet accepts the notion that the kiss of a female friend might every morning cause an innocent glow in Rousseau or his hero.

St. lxxx. Rousseau's conduct towards those who endeavoured to befriend him is truly painted.

l. 757, **But he was phrensied . . . reasoning show.** That is to say, Rousseau's conduct was due to a sort of madness, the more dangerous because it never could be accurately discovered. His madness, says Byron, had all that logical quality which makes madness most dangerous.

l. 763, **The Pythian's cave:** the Delphic oracle in ancient Greece; where a priestess called "the Pythia" inhaled a sort of intoxicating vapour and then uttered mysterious sayings which the people, high and low, accepted as oracles of the deity.

l. 764, **Set the world in flame.** The doctrines expressed in some of Rousseau's writings were as sparks to set fire to the combustible elements, which had long been collecting in France. His works were in the French language, which is ordinarily used at Geneva.

l. 770, **Too much wrath.** Byron explains the crimes of the French Revolution by the excessive sense of danger, felt by the people and their leaders. [See Carlyle's dramatic and penetrating book on the subject.]

The judgment of Byron on the Revolution has been justly praised for its sympathetic sobriety.

St. lxxxiii. contains a wise and manly account of the terrible events of 1793 in Paris.

l. 776, **To rebuild, etc.** In 1816—when these lines were written—the self-willed ambition of Bonaparte had caused a temporary pause in the work of the Revolution; and the Bourbon Monarchy may have seemed permanently restored. After many vicissitudes a democratic system was founded in 1871, which has already lasted longer than most of its predecessors (1893). Byron's foresight is strongly shown in the expression—"this will not endure nor be endured."

l. 785, **They who . . . their prey:** this is the best that can be said for the crimes of the Parisians. They had come to power without any previous political education.

In St. lxxxiv. Byron veers round to one of his customary egotisms, and is more than usually mysterious and obscure. In one of his letters he compared himself to a beast of prey which, when baffled in its spring, retires in a sullen way to its lair. This, or some similar thought, was in his mind now. His hour was to come, though it was very brief. He was slower to punish than to forgive.

St. lxxxv. Shelley described this excursion in a letter, dated July 12, 1816. Meillerie, he said, was "enchanted ground, were Rousseau no magician." He adds:—"The lake appears somewhat calmer as we left Meillerie, sailing close to the banks,

whose magnificence augmented with the turn of every promontory."

l. 796, The alternative of punishing or forgiving will present itself, and the latter will be my choice.

l. 798, **Contrasted lake**: "an awkward phrase, of which, however, the intention is not dubious."

The lake's calm is a contrast to the wildness of Byron's world, which repeats the lesson dwelt on in Stanzas lxxix. to lxxiii.

l. 802, **This quiet sail**: the poet must be supposed to be in a boat upon the lake.

l. 803, **Once I loved . . . so moved**. This placid water rebukes the old liking for the sea [but see below, conclusion of Canto IV.].

Sts. lxxxvi. to ix. In this lovely passage the charms of the calm are enhanced, as a skilful preparation for what is coming. Note the combination of the senses: sight, smell, and hearing all soothed and gratified at once.

l. 810, **Jura**. An elevated plateau of eastern France, of which the higher points are over 5000 feet in altitude.

St. lxxxvii. The grasshopper is a small insect whose noise reminds the poet of a child making merriment by night. After notes of grasshopper and roosting bird comes silence, and the dew condensed by the radiation of the earth after sunset, when the stars appear. Dew, being only formed in calm and cloudless nights, has become a symbol of nocturnal repose.

The imagined connection between the heavenly bodies and our earthly fates is the subject of St. lxxxviii., **'tis to be forgiven**, etc. We may be pardoned if we allow our ambition to carry us in fancy to a fellowship with those heavenly bodies.

l. 833, **Fortune, fame, power . . . a star**. Thus we speak of "the star of our destiny," "born under an evil star," and so forth: assigning to the stars the aggregate of those things which do not seem to be in our own control.

St. lxxxix. works out the thought, and ends by tracing all beauty to its ultimate source.

The next stanza is an attempt to expound the feeling of unity, or concord, which the poet recognises as binding the universe in a girdle of beauty.

l. 849, **Cytherea**; a Greek name for the goddess of love.

Every evening, during his stay at Diodati, the poet embarked upon the lake. In September he made another distant excursion, visiting Vevay and the Bernese Alps — or "Oberland" — in company with his former fellow-traveller, Mr. J. C. Hobhouse.

l. 851, **'twould disarm**, etc. The charm, or spell, of this celestial accord would deprive Death of his terrors, were there any reality about them.

l. 852, **The early Persian.** The inhabitants of ancient Persia were fire-worshippers, and—like the people of Canaan—loved to hold their orisons on mountain-tops. Byron observes, in a note appended to his collected *Works* (Note F. p. 768), that prayer and preaching in the open air are most effective, alike on ministers and on their congregations.

Mr Tozer, in his edition of the poem (Clarendon Press, 1890), refers to Herodotus (i. 131) "Calling the whole circle of the sky Zeus, they go up to the highest peaks of the mountains to offer sacrifices to Him." So the old Roman poet, Ennius, speaks of looking at "that high brightness which all invoke as Jove." [Compare Sansk. *Dyaus*, "the shining one."]

l. 861, **The sky is changed.** On leaving Meillerie the visitors encountered a still more violent storm, in which they were nearly wrecked, and which both Byron and Shelley described in letters to their friends. That must have been about the 26th June; but the tempest described in Stt. xcii. to xcvii. must be placed some ten days earlier on the authority of Byron himself. He says:—"the thunder-storm to which these lines refer occurred on the 13th June. I have seen among the mountains of Chimari [see above, Canto II. *nn.* (50, 51)] several more terrific, but none more beautiful."

ll. 868, 9, This couplet is little more than a phrase of verbal music. **Jura** is a mountain chain of France, visible from Geneva.

"This," notes Sir Walter Scott, "is one of the most beautiful passages of the poem. The fierce and far delight of a thunder-storm is described in verse almost as vivid as its lightnings . . . a picture of sublime terror, yet of enjoyment, often attempted but never so well brought out in poetry."

ll. 871, 2, The poet says that in a night like this he would not go to bed.

l. 879, **The swift Rhone.** "We passed from the blue waters of the lake over the stream of the Rhone, which is rapid even at a great distance from its confluence with the lake" (Shelley, as above).

l. 881, **Mining depths.** The expression is hard to render in prose: the precipitous banks are regarded as descending to the deep bottom of the stream; and so, the poet says, does hate, that parts two persons whose love has turned to hatred. The Rhone rises in the N.E. corner of the Valais, through which it flows until it enters the lake of Geneva, S. of Chillon. [Simile perhaps taken from Coleridge's *Christabel*.]

At this point the water of the river is yellow and turbid. At the Geneva end of the lake a stream emerges which is considered a re-appearance of the same river, as blue and clear as stained glass.

St. xcv. In this and the next stanza storms are viewed as concrete and separate beings, leaping in flame from hill to hill. These storms are represented as mighty jugglers tossing about their balls of fire.

l. 901, **Knoll** : he means "knell," the stroke of a bell. Byron here implies that the watchfulness of which he spoke at l. 872, is by the storms' east voices.

l. 904, **Ye** : properly "you" ; **ye** is the *nominative* ; but this somewhat ungraceful licence is not peculiar to Byron, being found in some, though chiefly earlier, writers.

l. 906, **Could I embody** : if he could condense his whole mind and moral nature into one word he would fain do so, even were that word a flash or bolt. It must not be supposed that all these violences are genuine : yet we find Byron, in a letter to his sister of this date, employing language hardly less strong :—

"The recollection of bitterness, and more especially of recent home-desolation, has preyed upon me here ; and neither the music of the shepherd, the crashing of the avalanche, nor the torrent, the glacier, the forest, or the cloud have for one moment lightened the weight upon my heart, nor enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty, the power, and the glory around me."

l. 915, **The morn.** Here Byron recurs to the ancient personification of the dawn as a "rosy-fingered" maiden, growing ever brighter till she turns into, or introduces, the full day, and calling upon men who had slept or watched all night to resume the pilgrimage of life. For his part, the poet pursues his study of the scenes on the Lake of Geneva and its shores.

ll. 919, 20, The journey is pursued on the morning after the tempest.

l. 921, **Leman** : *Lemanus* is an old Latin name for this inland sea, which is 45 miles long and covers an area of 323 square miles.

l. 924, **Clarens** : a village $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles S. of Vevay on the N.E. corner of the lake, with a small four-cornered castle, opposite to the rocks of Meillerie, and—like them—described by Rousseau in *The New Heloisa*. The French writer particularly dwells upon the effect of sunset on the neighbouring heights ; "whose red rays," he says, "form on those white summits a lovely roseate hue which is seen from a great distance" (*Lett.* 17, part 4, note).

In his *Confessions* Rousseau says :—"Visit these spots . . . and then say if nature has not made this fair land for a Julie and for a St Preux ; but you must not look for them there."

"It is a scene," so Byron notes, "of the existence of love in its most extended and sublime capacity and of our participation of its good and of its glory. . . If Rousseau had never lived, the same associations would none the less have belonged to such

scenes. He has added to the interest of his work by their adoption, but they have done for him that which no human being could have done for them."

ll. 925, 6, Accordingly the poet says that not only is the air Love's breath but the soil in which the trees are rooted is also Love's, etc. etc.

l. 950, **Offering to him and his**, etc. Giving to his readers—as once to himself—a retreat lonely in appearance, yet filled with the creatures of imagination and—

St. cii., of beautiful objects which seem to adore his memory and blend in love's concert.

Much of this may be classed as rhetoric and rhapsody; yet the English language had seldom been made to sing so before.

l. 960, **He who hath loved not . . . the more**. From the *Per-vigilium Veneris*, an old Latin poem.

l. 965, **For 'tis his nature**, etc. : love must either dwindle and perish, or must grow into an immortal benediction.

l. 971, The landscape, as viewed by Byron, was suited to the intercourse between such refined persons.

See above, *nn.* (99–101).

l. 973, **Psyche**: Greek for "the soul," married to Love in the well-known legend embodied by Apuleius—a Latin writer of the second century A.D.—in his novel, *The Golden Ass*.

l. 976, For the **Rhone** see above, 879–881 *nn.* For the **Alps** see *n.* 62.

l. 977, **A couch**. This is a variation of the phrase "the bed of the river."

l. 978, **Lausanne**. "From Vevai we came to Ouchy, a village near Lausanne. . . . We visited Lausanne and saw Gibbon's house. We were shown the decayed summer-house where he finished his history, and the old acacias on the terrace from which he saw Mont Blanc after having written the last sentence" (Shelley's *Letter*, quoted above). Lausanne, the capital of the Pays de Vaud, is on the N. of the lake, and the poets passed two days in the neighbourhood on their way back to Coligny. Here Byron wrote his poem, "The Prisoner of Chillon."

l. 978, **Ferney**; a village $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles N.W. of the town of Geneva, once the residence of Voltaire.

l. 982, **Gigantic minds**. Allusion to the power with which Gibbon and Voltaire led attacks on the then universally received opinions of Christendom. The poet affects to compare them with the fabled Titans repulsed by Zeus when they laid siege to Olympus. These modern "Titans," however, had no wish to take possession of the medieval Heaven, but rather to disprove its existence.

l. 987, **The one . . . throne**. Voltaire is set forth in this

passage as a combination of opposite characters: see Pope's epitaph on Gay:—

“In wit a man, simplicity a child.”

It is true, there was not much “simplicity” in Voltaire—taking the word as commonly used: yet the antithesis may be justified by those who observe the *naïveté* of his inconsistencies. He was as ready to disturb the majesty of kings as to scathe the self-esteem of a pedant. [The names of the chief subjects of these controversial passages are Maupertuis, Larcher, Fréron, etc.]

l. 996, **The other.** Gibbon has been justly esteemed for the research of his great work (*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*), conceived 1764, and not completed till 1788. It is also praised for the dignity of the style and its marvellous imagination. On the other hand, it has given abiding offence to conservative thinkers, not merely by its active depreciation of the origin and effects of the Christian creed, but still more by the total absence of that enthusiasm always professed for the heroism of its first supporters.

l. 1004, This line is a side-blow at those who would dispose of all doubts, that they cannot meet otherwise, by saying that the doubters will be eternally punished in the next life.

l. 1005, **By them, if merited, the penalty is paid.** That is:—Voltaire and Gibbon attacked orthodox opinions on their own responsibility. It is not the part of their weak fellow-men to sit in judgment upon their words and actions; they will be judged in a far higher Tribunal.

The poet returns to his favourite Nature in St. six. In July he finished this canto: and passed August and September with Hobhouse, in the Alpine tour that furnished material for *Manfred*, and for the first moiety of Canto IV. of *Childe Harold*. In October he “pierced” the Alps, and entered Italy by the Simplon route and the Lago Maggiore, the great water that divides Italy from Switzerland.

ll. 1021, 2, A somewhat forced description of the Alpine region as one that seems to grow upward until earth embraces heaven.

l. 1025, **The fierce Carthaginian:** Hannibal (3), 247–183 B.C., a famous Carthaginian general, conquered the Romans in several battles, but was ultimately driven from Italy (see above p. 209, l. 609, n. 7). Rome bequeathed to Europe almost all the materials of modern civilisation, an indirect but obvious consequence of the Carthaginian failure.

ll. 1026, 7, Modern authors of Italy, such as Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch, Tasso, Ariosto, etc.

l. 1033 refers to his marriage-troubles which drove him to wander. Byron once more reverts to his ideal attitude of proud reserve.

l. 1036 **To conceal . . . task of soul.** We have to learn how

to hide all the feelings which most deeply agitate our minds, and the lesson, though difficult, is finally conveyed.

So he may have thought: but, in truth, Byron learned this lesson less effectively than many far inferior men. Both his poems and his letters show a constant yearning for human sympathy, which he was willing to buy even at the price of the most intimate revelations.

He affirms that he wrote this Canto for his own amusement, and without any need of blame or praise.

In Stt. cxii.-cxiv. the poet declares that he feels conscious of having offended public opinion: but no matter, he has "filed his mind"—see Shakspeare, *Macbeth*, iii. 1. (where, however, the word is only a contraction for "defiled").

ll. 1053, 4, **cried aloud . . . echo.** Shouted to harmonise with a senseless sound.

l. 1058, To "file" is to arrange in order, p. Lat. *filum* "a thread": so we speak of "filing our papers," and of "files" of soldiers: here it may mean "sharpen."

ll. 1063, 4, *i.e.* there may be virtuous persons who do not seek to entrap those who are weak.

In the last of the three stanzas he holds out a scanty olive-branch, admitting the possibility of some isolated cases of honesty and true affection.

Scott's simpler and less egotistic nature led him to remark on this passage that the surest way to peace lay in stooping "to the realities of life." We ought to "repent if we have offended, and pardon if we have been trespassed against; looking on the world less as a foe than as a capricious friend whose applause we ought—as far as possible—to deserve, but neither to court nor to contemn."

This Canto concludes with an apostrophe to the child mentioned in the opening (see *n.* 1). He means the Canto ("thus much") to be a special memorial for her whereby to remember her father, even should she never meet him in the body.

l. 1084, **This was in my nature** (see above, *n.* 54): Byron's yearnings for his children were more than a passing impulse. His relations to the little Allegra showed that his complex character included the feelings of a fond parent.

In St. cxvii. Byron assumes that his daughter will be brought up in a bad opinion of her father; his very name employed in her hearing as an evil charm that has desolated her home and forfeited paternal rights.

l. 1092, **An aim and an attainment.** Even though Lady Byron and others should endeavour, with success, to dissolve the filial feeling that ought to exist between a father and daughter, he will

still reckon on a maintenance or revival of her affection if she in any degree inherits his passionate nature.

l. 1097, **Elements.** Bitterness and convulsions are round her as his child : but he hopes that they will be softened in her case ; and so ends with a benediction.

l. 1101, **respire** := "breathe."

FOURTH CANTO.

[The Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold* was begun at Venice in June 1817. In the previous autumn the poet had left Switzerland, travelling with Mr Hobhouse through the Valais, over the Simplon Pass by the new road made by Napoleon, crossing the Lake Maggiore, and passing a short time at Milan and Verona. The middle of November saw him established at Venice, where he remained till March. During the spring he visited the northern parts of Italy, going as far as Rome ; and soon after his return to Venice he began this Canto. It was ready for press by the end of the year, and was dedicated to Hobhouse, who was going to England and carried the MS. to Murray.]

l. 1, **The Bridge of Sighs.** The ducal palace is separated from the ancient state-prison of Venice by a canal crossed by a covered bridge hung in the air between the windows. Being covered it was used for the passage of persons secretly tried and condemned. At one time few—if any—could expect to return ; hence it became known as "The Bridge of Sighs," as of farewells to life.

l. 3, **Her structures . . . isles.** Venice is built on an archipelago of small islands. The Lion of S. Mark, which stands guard over the principal square, has wings ; and in the surrounding buildings the government of conquered dependencies used to be carried on in the Republic's palmy days (see *n.* 14).

l. 10, **A sea Cybele . . . powers.** The city reminds him of a goddess rising from the sea. Cybele was a Phrygian goddess—not of the sea.

l. 14, **Such she was . . . increased.** The great power of the Venetian Republic was due to the commercial advantages which her position gave her in the Levant, or eastern part of the Mediterranean, and the consequent command of the overland trade with Asiatic countries. These advantages were diminished and finally destroyed by the opening of the Cape route, which proved both cheaper and safer, and was open to other nations.

l. 19, **Tasso**: an Italian poet who died 1595 A.D. His great poem is called *Jerusalem Delivered*, and is a legendary account of the first crusade. Some passages of its love-poetry were favourite recitations of the Italian people, though the poet learned to look upon these passages as the great sin of his life and a moral blemish of his work.

l. 20, **Gondolier**. The man who propels the "gondola" or boat of the canals. They have ceased their singing.

l. 24, **Nature doth not die**, etc. "Beauty" is here still, and our "nature," or love of beauty, remembers what made Venice what she was. The remainder of the stanza refers to the frivolity and dissipated life for which Venice was once so famous.

l. 26, **The pleasant place**. So Shakspeare, describing the death of Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, says that at Venice he gave—

"His body to that pleasant country's earth."

(*Rich. II.* iv. 1.)

The passage is quoted in one of Byron's Letters.

l. 28, **Unto us . . . ours is a trophy**. Venice is for English people peculiarly interesting from the part she has played in our literature.

l. 31, **dogeless**. The head of the Venetian state was called *Doge*.

l. 33, **Rialto**. The merchants used to frequent a bridge, so called, on the grand canal. The name originally applied to an elevated island to which the bridge led from the quarter of Saint Mark.

l. 33, **Shylock**: the "Jew" in Shakspeare's *Merchant of Venice*.

l. 33, **The Moor**: Othello, hero of another of his plays.

l. 34, **Pierre and Jaffier**, characters in a piece by Otway (d. 1685), once a favourite on the London stage: it is called *Venice Preserved*.

l. 35, **Of the arch**. The Rialto is a bridge of one span; and English readers are regarded as making these associations its central point, or "Keystone."

The meaning of St. v. will be best understood by making it carry out the preceding thought. Such characters as Shylock, etc., Byron thinks, are more beneficial to the mind than real human beings. Such imaginings are, for different reasons, the consolation of both ends of life. Perhaps, says the poet (who stood midway), even the poem I am now engaged on may owe its origin to some such feeling (compare *Don Juan*, XIV., x., "In youth I wrote because my mind was full, And now because I find it growing dull.")

ll. 40 ff., What is forbidden by the conditions of human life is supplied by the creatures of the imagination.

ll. 51 ff., And perhaps one's mind dreams of things even fairer

than any that poets have described. [For "the Muse," see above, p. 164.]

l. 55, **I saw or dreamed of**, *i.e.* I believed that I beheld things and beings more lovely than the creations of art and fancy; they are now gone into the land of dreams, though (perhaps) not beyond recall: but I have others now to take their place.

l. 64, **Taught me**, etc. The poet says he has learned foreign languages and made himself at home in strange company, and even in solitude. He is, however, proud of being English-born; and—even if he never returns—he will not cease to love his native island, and will revisit England, in spirit, if he can.

I connect, he says, the hope of being remembered as a poet with the English tongue; or if that be too ambitious, and I be excluded from Westminster Abbey—why, then—let a better win the prize, and let me have no epitaph but that of Brasidas (that my country has many worthier sons).

l. 85, **Spartan's epitaph**: refers to the stern self-repressed cry of the mother of a Lacedæmonian general, killed in the hour of victory over the Athenians, 422 B.C.

l. 87, **Meantime I seek no sympathy**. These are fine sentiments, finely expressed. Byron had offended the conscience of England: he knows it, and is content to blame himself and bear the consequences.

l. 91, **The spouseless Adriatic**. The Doge, or elective Duke, of the Venetian Republic used to drop a wedding-ring into the sea in token of being her lord. It became a yearly ceremony, but ceased when the Republic was destroyed by virtue of the treaty of Campo Formio, and made over to Austria (1798).

l. 93, **The Bucentaur**: a state-barge so called from a monster in Greek mythology, half man half ox, which perhaps formed the figure-head of the original vessel: it was demolished by the French soldiers, and what Byron saw must have been some portions of it preserved in the Arsenal for the sake of their carving and gold.

l. 95, **St Mark**: the patron of Venice, whose winged lion is still to be seen on a pillar at the entrance to the Piazzetta, or Square (see St. i.). It was here, but higher up towards the church gate, that the Emperor, mentioned in next stanza, knelt at the feet of Pope Alexander III. (1177).

St. xii. Frederick, Duke of Suabia—called by the Italians "Barbarossa" by reason of his red beard—became Emperor of Germany in 1152 A.D. A man of strong will, he got entangled in the politics of Rome, which he besieged and took. But his army was dissolved by sickness, and he made his peace with the Pope, who came to Venice to meet him. He led a crusade, or holy

war, into Asia Minor, where he was drowned in endeavouring to cross a stream, 1190 A.D.

l. 100, **The Austrian reigns.** The Emperor of Austria—the representative of the Suabian—ceded the territory of Venice to the French in 1866; and it was made over to the King of Italy, of which country it has ever since been a province

l. 106, **Lauwine:** *Die Lawine*, German for “avalanche.” Byron had a quick ear for foreign words and used them sometimes in an unexpected way (see below, St. xx.). He, however, did not know German. For avalanche, see ciii., lxii. n.

l. 107, **Dandolo.** A Doge who led the storm of Constantinople—or Byzantium—in 1204, though totally blind and over 80.

l. 109, **steeds of brass.** Dandolo brought away four bronze horses ascribed to Lysippus, a Greek sculptor (flourished 330 B.C.). They were put up over the entrance to S. Mark’s, taken to Paris by Napoleon, and restored to Venice after Waterloo. They are still to be seen over the door of S. Mark’s Cathedral.

l. 111, **Doria:** a Genoese commander who, in 1379, threatened to bridle the horses.

l. 118, **A new Tyre.** A Phœnician seaport destroyed by Alexander the Great (see l. xlv.).

l. 120, **The Planter of the Lion.** Byron’s note explains this to mean the standard of S. Mark. *Planta Leone*, corrupted into *Pantaleon*, became a “by word,” or nickname, for a Venetian, and so for a comic character. See Shakspeare:—“lean and slippered pantaloan.” [*As You Like It*, II. vii.]

l. 123, **Ottomite:** follower of Othman, Turk of “The Ottoman Empire” (more properly “Osmanli”). The word is used by Shakspeare.

l. 124, **Candia:** capital of the island of Crete, besieged by the Venetians for 24 years, and hence called here “Troy’s rival,” though Troy only held out 10, according to legend.

l. 125, **Lepanto.** The ancient Naupaktos, where the Turkish fleet was defeated by a league of Christians in which Venice had a squadron of ships (see above II., St. xl.).

l. 127, **Statues of glass,** *i.e.* fragile figures.

l. 129, **Vast and sumptuous pile:** the ducal palace.

The emptiness and desolation of Venice under Austrian rule are here described. In a letter written from Venice about this time, Byron says:—“The city is decaying daily, and does not gain in population.”

l. 136, **Syracuse.** A city of Sicily where the Athenians were defeated, under their leader Nikias: the people spoke Greek, and released some of the captives because they recited verses of the Greek poet Euripides. “Balaustion’s Adventure,” by Robert

Browning, is a poem on this subject (see his collected *Works*, vol. vi.).

In St. xvii. Byron argues—or suggests—that the habit of reciting passages from Tasso might have done a similar service to the Venetians; or, at least, Great Britain—here called “Albion”—might have interposed to save a State which, like herself, had risen by commerce, to maintain supremacy.

l. 155, **City of the heart.** Compare St. lxxviii. “O Rome, my country! City of the soul.”

In line 156 the buildings seen arising out of the sea are compared to water-spouts.

l. 158 refers to the plays mentioned in *nn.* 32–4, and also to *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, a novel by Ann Radcliffe; and to *The Ghost Seer*, a tale by the German poet J. C. F. Schiller, published 1784.

l. 161, **Perchance . . . supply:** “she was.”

St. xix. ll. 1, 2. This unsatisfactory opening must be set down to the hurried way in which the poet habitually wrote. For not only are both meaning and construction obscure, but the running of one line into another is done in a manner offensive to the ear, and not sanctioned by the practice of any other good author.

l. 172, **Tannen.** Another instance of the employment of foreign words. *Tannen* are said in the original note to be a particular kind of tree that will grow on rocks. But the word is the common German name for “fir-trees” of any kind.

Like the “tannen,” the mind of man may be able to grow by its own inward power; its roots being struck in barrenness. We should take example by the patience of lower animals and learn to suffer in silence.

l. 189, **Temper it:** we may strengthen the “clay” of which we are made, to bear even as the camel and the wolf do who are less gifted than we.

St. xxii. Either we conquer pain or pain conquers us: in either case the pain ends.

l. 192, **Hope . . . they came.** That is, some minds, like boats after a storm, are newly equipped and made navigable for a fresh voyage. Others are worn-out till they break down; minds of a third class seek to forget their troubles in religion, pleasure, well-doing, or wickedness, each according to his disposition.

St. xxiii. Nevertheless, do what we may, the old ache that we thought cured is sure to come back and make itself felt from time to time. Note the pathetic lines which close the stanza. But “wound” is not a true rhyme to “found.”

In St. xxiv. the poet takes up the idea of an “electric chain”: we cannot account for the shock that we have received.

The concluding line means that he had made few friends, but had lost of that few too many.

St. xxv. In April 1817 the poet left Venice on a tour through Northern Italy, returning at the end of May. These few weeks were enough time in which to reap the imperishable harvest of this Canto, which was begun on his return to Venice.

l. 221, **Was the mightiest.** Reference to the old days of Rome, once mistress of the civilised world: **in its old command**=in the times of its ancient power.

l. 223, **master-mould.** Mould, or hollow, in which a master casts his designs.

St. xxvi. is a passage of high feeling couched in faultless language.

l. 226, **The commonwealth of kings** applies to the Roman Republic, whose citizens were all associated—theoretically at least—in the government.

Sts. xxvii., xxviii. contain an exquisite picture of the mainland of the Venetian territory, painted in more detail than is our poet's custom.

l. 238, **Friuli**: the district at the head of the Gulf of Venice.

l. 240, **Iris of the West . . . past Eternity.** It is evening on the Lombard plain: the western sky is full of blended liquid hues, like a rainbow in the place where the sinking day is disappearing. [So Gray sings of "parting day."]

l. 242, **Meek Dian**: the moon, associated by some ancient poets with the goddess Diana.

l. 246, **Sunny sea**: the ocean-like expanse of heaven retains the reflection of sunset brightness, above the summit of the Rhætian Alps, as if a temporary struggle were going on between the powers of light and of darkness.

l. 250, **Brenta**: a river which flows through the Venetian territory past Vicenza and Padua: here Byron had his summer home during his sojourn in the north of Italy.

ll. 252, 3, **Glassed within it glows filled with the face of heaven.** By this bold, if somewhat entangled metaphor, the poet pictures the evening glow as mirrored in the expanse of the river. But it fades and gives way to other and softer hues.

l. 259, **Dies like the dolphin.** Not the whale-like creature properly so called, but a bony fish of the mackerel family, known in the Mediterranean as "coryphene," which shows a series of metallic colours, especially noticed while it is dying after being caught. Also found in the Indian Ocean.

l. 262, **Arqua**: a little village in the Euganean Hills, 12 miles S.W. of Padua. Here the Italian poet Petrarca, or "Petrarch," died July 18, 1374, and his tomb of red marble is still to be seen, by the church.

l. 264, **Laura** : a lady to whom Petrarch addressed some of his sonnets. The laurel is the "tree" which bears her name. Petrarch was one of the first distinguished writers who wrote in the modern language of Italy, which bears the same relation to Latin that the Hindi of Chand and Tulsi Dās does to Sanskrit.

l. 276, **Mansion**. The house of Petrarch is shown as well as his tomb.

l. 279, **A pyramid**. The enormous monuments of the 4th dynasty of Egyptian kings, near Cairo, are here cited as not more appealing to the mind than the poet's unpretentious gravestone.

ll. 280 ff., A pretty description of the little village.

l. 280. **Hamlet** : a small group of houses in a rural place ; the Anglo-Saxon word "ham" occurs in many names of English places, like the related word "heim" in German.

ll. 286 ff., It is of no use to show distant towns to those who have retired to such a place as this

l. 290, **Where-by**, "by which."

l. 293, **Idlesse** : "idleness," almost the last of Childe Harold's archaic words. The poet here affirms that what appears a mere vacant mood may have its moral uses, if it teaches us to live without applause and trust ourselves alone.

ll. 296, 7, Man at bottom has to commune with spirits, whether good or evil.

l. 303, **Predestined** (see above, III. lxx.). Byron's mind had been permanently clouded by his childhood's lessons in Scotland, with the terrible doctrine of "Predestination" ; he speaks here of the horror of believing that one is doomed to everlasting punishment. Such views were very general in the British islands at the time.

l. 307, **Ferrara** : chief town of an Italian province, formerly a Duchy under the family of Este, which however became extinct in 1598.

l. 314, **Those who wore**. The successors of Dante here contemplated are Ariosto and Tasso.

l. 316, **Tasso**. In April Byron visited Ferrara, and was inspired by its associations to compose a poem entitled "The Lament of Tasso." It is dated April 20, 1817, and Tasso is represented as mourning his fate in a madhouse.

The subject of these lines had been attempting to escape from Ferrara, where he had become impatient of the ill-requited service he performed at the court of Alfonso d'Este, the Duke. At last he went to Rome (1575), but, being unable to carry out his purpose, became violently irritated ; and, after returning to Ferrara, used such wild, abusive language that he was pronounced insane and confined in the hospital of Sta. Anna, whence he was not released until July 1586.

ll. 330 ff., Byron apostrophises the Duke for ill-treating a man so far his superior in everything but rank and riches.

l. 334, **Thou . . . He.** Contrast between the wealthy but useless Duke, and the writer of *Jerusalem Delivered*, with a forehead marked by the lines of care, but shining with glory.

l. 339, **Cruscan.** There was a literary society at Florence, called the "Academy of Chaff," or *della Crusca* in Italian, whose purpose was to winnow, or purify, the language, as wheat is separated from chaff.

l. 340, **Boileau:** an "academic" or formal French critic who spoke of Tasso's poetry as "tinsel."

ll. 341, 2, **Creaking lyre . . . whetstone of the teeth.** Byron, in his excitement on behalf of Tasso, hardly does justice to French poetry.

Whetstone . . . lyre. French verse appeared to Byron a thing to set the teeth on edge, with a certain note of metallic sameness.

The praise of Tasso in St. xxxix. savours of extravagance.

l. 354, **Bards.** Dante and Ariosto. The first part of Dante's *Divine Comedy* is called *L'Inferno*, or "Hell," and is a fanciful picture of the infernal regions and their inmates: the author is called "Tuscan father," as being the first native author of distinction in Tuscany, of which Florence is the capital.

l. 359, **Ariosto**, to whom Byron compares Sir W. Scott, wrote *Orlando Furioso*, a rhymed romance of the wars supposed to have been waged in the 9th century A.D. between the Spanish Muslims and the Franks. Dante's poem belongs to the 13th century, Ariosto's to the 15th and 16th.

l. 361, **The lightning**, etc. Hobhouse notes that the crown of laurels made of iron which had surrounded the head of Ariosto's bust at Ferrara, was melted by a stroke of lightning while it still surmounted the tomb in the Benedictine monastery of Ferrara. It was believed by the ancient Romans that no wreath of laurel would ever be struck by lightning; but, of course, an imitation in iron would carry no such protection. But they also held that anything so struck became holy.

St. xlii. This and the succeeding stanza reproduce a famous Italian sonnet of the poet Filicaia, of which the general signification is, that if the country were either stronger or less fair it would not have been so often invaded by barbarians from the North.

l. 383, **The hostile horde . . . the Po.** The army of aliens would not drink from the Italian rivers so much blood-stained water.

l. 388, **Wandering in youth.** Reference to the travels in Greece related in Canto II.

l. 389, **Roman friend.** Servius Sulpicius, who wrote to the famous orator, Tullius Cicero, to console him on the death of his daughter :—

“Returning out of Asia, when I was sailing from Ægina towards Megara, on my right lay Piræus, on my left Corinth, places once most flourishing, now prostrate in ruinous downfall. How, I bethought me, can we feel so deeply the loss of a beloved being—who must needs be short-lived—while so many corpses of dead cities lie before us in one neighbourhood !”

The places mentioned can be seen in the Gulf of Ægina (23° 30' E., 37° 30' N.).

l. 398, **Barbaric dwellings.** Towns built by foreign conquerors have risen on the ground where the ruins of those ancient cities, Byron adds, lie scattered. Sulpicius saw one set of ruins, Greek ; his own empire-city is now in a like condition, which I celebrate on my page as he did the other on his.

l. 409, **All that was of then destruction is.** All that the Romans saw in ruin is ruined still.

l. 413, **Skeleton.** Byron was thinking of Poggio, a mediæval traveller who compared the ruins of Rome to the unburied remains of a dead giant. “As a whole,” he himself wrote elsewhere, “it beats Greece : everything, at least, that I have ever seen.”

In St. xlvii. Byron again addresses Italy as the source of European civilization—military, moral, and artistic.

l. 424, **Arno :** the river on which is situated the city of Florence, the Athens of Tuscany, where the buildings are of a magical, irresistible charm, where the surrounding hills yield food and drink in abundance, and whose merchant-princes founded modern refinement and the re-birth of letters in the 14th and 15th centuries of the Christian era.

ll. 428, 9, **Cornucopia,** the horn of plenty. A wreathed horn in the hand of a goddess, filled to overflowing with the fruits of the earth.

l. 432, **Redeemed to a new morn.** The *Renaissance* or resurrection of polite intercourse and imaginative production, often attributed to the fall of Constantinople and consequent dispersal of Greek scholars 1454 : it really began a century and a half earlier, being an inevitable step in European progress after the termination of the Crusades.

l. 433, **The Goddess.** This and the following stanza are an overwrought but eloquent description of a statue of secondary importance in the gallery of the Uffizi at Florence. Discovered in the ruins of Hadrian's villa at Tivoli, near Rome, in the 18th century, it was extolled by the taste of that day as a master-piece of ancient Greek sculpture. It is now considered an uninspired

copy by some trade-artist living at Rome about the time of Augustus, at the beginning of the Christian era. Byron elsewhere calls it:—"Venus rather for admiration than love" [*Letters.*] **Loves in stone**, *i.e.* the stone statue conveys the idea of love.

ll. 440, 1, Wish that we had the inspiration that could form such objects.

"At Florence I remained but a day . . . I went to the two galleries, from which one returns drunk with beauty" [*Letters.*] The cant of critics is satirised in the lines that follow.

l. 450, **Dardan shepherd**: Paris, son of Priam, King of Troy.

The goddess appeared to Paris as a competitress for the prize of beauty, but to Anchises as his wife: hence Byron calls the latter "more deeply-blessed."

St. liii., a fine piece of writing, without much significance.

l. 454, **Lord of War**. Mars, the Roman war-god, took the place in later classical mythology of the Greek Arés, fabled to have been the lover of Aphrodite, the Greek Venus.

l. 461, **There full divinity**. As purely spiritual beings the god and goddess could not put their passion into the prose of practice.

l. 463, **The gods become**, etc. The ancient gods, Byron somewhat fancifully says, found their divine nature too ethereal and subtle for the enjoyments of sense: so they took upon them human form. Man, too, has his short periods of brightness, equal to those of the fabled Deities. But such soon pass, or are only recorded in the productions of the artist.

l. 470, Another satire on the critics.

l. 474, **Vile breath . . . to beam**. Now that we have learned the real value of the "Medicean Venus," we can hardly relish this rather scornful language. The critics who would judge a work like this are likened by Byron to the frost.

l. 478, **Santa Croce**: "Holy Cross," the chief place of worship in Florence and resting-place of many great men's remains. Some of these are here enumerated by name. Their ashes, says the poet, are of themselves enough to make the place immortal.

l. 484, **Angelo**: Michel Angelo Buonarotti, a painter, sculptor, and architect (1474-1563).

l. 484, **Alfieri**; a Piedmontese nobleman and dramatic poet (b. 1749, d. 1803).

l. 485, **Galileo**: the famous astronomer, hence called here "starry" (1564-1642).

l. 486, **Machiavelli**: politician and publicist (d. 1527).

l. 487, **Elements**. The Greeks and Romans held that the Universe consisted of four primal substances, Earth, Water, Air, and Fire, which were called in Latin "Elements," a word of uncertain derivation. Playing on the number, Byron says these four minds, like the four elements, might make a world. He

then adds that even in her decay a country that can produce an artist like Canova is not quite dead. Canova was a Venetian who hit the taste of the day in his sculptured works, but is now considered little more than a skilful sentimentalist, unobservant of the truth of Nature. D. 1822.

l. 496, **The all Etruscan**: the three great men, who were entirely Tuscan in blood and birth, are Dante, Petrarch (see above), and Boccaccio "the poet of prose," who wrote an account of the plague at Florence and the "Ten Days of Story-telling," called *The Decameron*.

l. 501, **Resolved** = "dissolved."

Why have these men no monuments at home? Dante is buried at Ravenna, where he died an exile (see below St. lxix.); Scipio Africanus, the Roman leader who conquered Carthage, died 183 B.C., at Liternum, on the sea-shore of Campania.

l. 511, **Laureate**. Petrarch received a laurel-crown at Rome in 1341 A.D.: he died at his village-home in the Euganeans (see above, St. xxx. ff.): his grave was plundered by some Venetians, 1630.

l. 514, **Boccaccio** (d. 1375) was buried at Certaldo, near Florence, his birth-place.

l. 517, **Who formed . . . tongue**: refers to his having fixed the Italian prose-speech. Petrarch wrote some of his works in Latin; and the best Italian authors before that time had used French, "which," said one of them (Brunetto Latini) "is the sweetest and most widely-known speech." Boccaccio's tomb-stone has long since disappeared.

l. 520, **Hyæna, bigot**. Those who from objections to a great man's opinions would remove his body from a church where it had been buried are compared here to the hyæna, an animal that preys on corpses. Byron's own body was excluded from Westminster Abbey.

l. 525, **The Cæsar's pageant**. Junia, sister of one of the murderers of the great Roman Dictator Caius Julius, and widow of another, was buried in the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, A.D. 22; on which occasion the images of her husband and brother were omitted from the procession. But the historian (Tacitus, *Annals*, iii. 76) says that "they were conspicuous by their absence,"—the origin of a now common phrase.

l. 527, **Ravenna**: an ancient town in eastern Italy, where—as already stated—Dante lies interred. For **Arqua**, see above, St. xxx. ff.

l. 530, A poet's remains are called "tuneful relics."

l. 532, **Pyramid** (see above, l. 279 n.).

The monumental chapel of the Medici, the "merchant-dukes" of Florence (see above, St. xlvi and n.), is adorned with

inlaid marble of various colours interspersed with precious stones, as at the Taj at Agra, and the palace of Shahjahan at Delhi.

l. 535, **The momentary dews.** The transient drops that adorn the grass on starlight nights (see above, C. III. St. lxxxvii. *n.*) are more to be venerated than all the artificial splendours of the Medicean chapel.

l. 538, **Names are Mausoleums.** Overwrought expression to imply that "the Muse" or inspiration of true artists requires no monument but such men's famous names.

Here Byron confesses that he has but little taste for Art. See a letter of this period, in which he tells a friend:—"I know nothing of painting . . . I never saw the picture or the statue which came a league within my conception." He professed a conviction that Art was an imposition "upon the nonsense of mankind."

ll. 548, 9, **Yet it yields . . . feels.** *i.e.* However I may acknowledge the claims of a painting or a statue I do not know how to express properly my admiration for what is entirely out of my line.

l. 551, **Thrasimene** : should be "Trasimeno." Byron, or Hobhouse for him, devoted a long and interesting Note to a minute account of this place, which is about midway between Cortona and Bolsena, on the road that they pursued from Florence to Rome. Here the Roman army, under the Consul Flaminius, was surrounded and destroyed by the Carthaginians under Hannibal, 218 B.C. Enclosed between the hills and the lake, with the passes blocked in front and rear, the Romans fought bravely for three hours; and "such was the animosity on both sides," says the Roman historian Livius, "that an earthquake which partly destroyed many Italian cities, turned rapid streams, poured back rivers from the sea, and even tore down mountains, failed to be felt by any of them." Flaminius was killed and his army annihilated. The lake is in the neighbourhood of Perugia, in Tuscany, the home of Peter "Perugino," master of the famous painter, Raphael, or Raffaele Sanzio, of Urbino.

l. 556, **despairing fills.** The ranks of brave men are deprived of hope: yet they can die.

St. lxiv. The poet moralises upon the story of the earthquake, comparing our planet to a storm-tost vessel whose movements are not observed by the crew. **bucklers for a winding-sheet**, means that the earth opened to swallow the bodies of those whose only funeral garments were their shields.

The present repose of the scene is brought out in beautiful terms of contrast by the picture in St. lxv.

l. 584, **Sanguinetto** : the name of a neighbouring brook: *Sanguis* is Latin for "blood."

Tells ye. "Tells you" would be more regular.

These two lovely stanzas attracted the warm and judicious admiration of Sir Walter Scott

l. 586, **Clitumnus**. A northern affluent of the river Tiber, on whose shore, between Foligno and Spoleto, is situated a small temple of oblong form, in the order or style of Greek architecture known as Corinthian. The repose of the scene is beautiful.

l. 592, applies to the water. It is to him you owe the coolness that finds its way to your forehead.

l. 595, **A Temple**. This little remnant of the past is built of white marble, and probably owes its preservation to the fact of having been consecrated as a Christian chapel.

The still clearness of the water made the old Romans believe that cattle and sheep which habitually drank of it would be always white. Macaulay alludes to this:—

"Unwatched, along Clitumnus
Grazes the milk-white steer."

[*Lays of Ancient Rome.*]

l. 602, **While, chance**, etc., *i.e.* perhaps some water-lily floats with opened leaves where the stream is not too deep for the plant to lie anchored to its roots. The unusual details are, no doubt, as intentional as they are artistic.

l. 604, Utter a prayer to the local deity as you go on your way. **Orison** (French, *oraison*) used for "prayer" by Shakspeare and other poets.

In St. lxix, the fall of the Velino is described, situated where the road from Spoleto begins to ascend the chain of the Appenine. This magnificent stanza is a fine specimen of what words can do towards painting a scene of external Nature. Note the climax:—"the roar of waters," heard as you approach; "the fall of waters," seen as you draw near; "the hell of waters," as you gaze and a momentary wind removes the mist of spray that, like a curtain, hides the havoc and confusion of the mysterious gulf. **Phlegethon**: flame-stream of infernal regions. The river rushes to its fall, which is 300 ft. in depth: after shooting this it takes two minor falls, leaving the spray ascending like the smoke of some vast furnace behind it; and, joining the river Nera, sends the blended waters bounding down the valley.

l. 625, **An eternal April**. The neighbouring soil is of wonderful fertility, and the trees retain their greenness all the year through.

St. lxxii. The eternal tumult of the descent is now contrasted with the peace of the valley and the undimmed, unshaken beauty of the rainbow, formed by the morning sun upon the spray of the now distant cataract. The same effect had already been noticed by the poet in his Swiss wanderings (*Manfred*, II. ii.), but he records in a note that Terni is "worth all the cascades

and torrents of Switzerland put together." The effect ceases at mid-day.

l. 643, **Hope upon a death-bed . . . Love watching Madness.** Beautiful *similes*, or imagined resemblances, denoting the peace of the prismatic arch over the restless fury of the waterfall.

l. 649, The Appenine chain is here spoken of as the children of the Swiss Alps.

l. 653, **Lauwine** (see above, St. xii. and *note*): it is not clear how it can take the plural verb "roar."

l. 654, **Jungfrau.** A mountain in the S. of the Bernese Oberland, 13,671 ft. high: the name means, in German, "virgin." **Never-trodden.** The mountain had been ascended by two Swiss climbers five years before this stanza was written; and often since.

l. 656, **Mont Blanc.** In the Savoyard Alps, 15,782 ft. above sea-level, the scene of extensive glaciers, or frozen rivers, moving slowly over the mountain-side.

l. 657, **Chimari** (or Chimäre). The mountains on the sea-coast of Epirus, called by the ancient "Acroceraunian" (see next stanza). The poet was caught by a thunder-storm in ascending this chain (II. 456 *n.*).

St. lxxiv. Full of movement and music. **Acroceraunian** = "Thunder-peaks," a Greek name for a wild coast line in Epirus.

l. 661, **Ida.** The mountain above Troy.

l. 663, **Athos** (see above, II. xxvii. *n.*).

l. 663, **Ætna.** Mount Ætna, a volcano in Sicily, near Syracuse (see above, St. xvi.).

l. 665, **Soracte.** A hill N. of Rome, the covering of which by snow is noticed by the poet Horatius Flaccus ("Horace") as a sign of a severe winter.

l. 672, **Latian echoes** = "Latin quotations." "I wish to express," noted Byron on this passage, "that we become tired of the task before we can comprehend the beauty; that we learn by rote before we can get by heart . . . I do not speak on this point from any pique or aversion towards the place of my education." On which his friend Moore adds the comment that a great poet, Thomas Gray, never enjoyed the Latin poetry of Virgil until released from the duty of reading him as a task. Now, Byron and Gray themselves are become liable to the same objection.

l. 676, **Daily drug.** The study of Latin at school is compared to the nauseating effect of medicine that one has to swallow every day.

ll. 689, 90, This couplet pays a reluctant homage to the old Roman satirist, for his profound views of human nature.

l. 693, **Soracte** is a hill on the road by which Byron travelled from Tuscany to Rome. The modern Italians call it Sant' Oreste,

after a saint in whose honour a monastery was built on the top of the hill.

l. 694, **Rome!** etc. Not meaning more than that Rome is the mother-city of refinement and, therefore, of refined persons, and those who have lost so much of human love and sympathy that they may be compared to those children who have been bereaved of their parents by death.

l. 698, **What are our woes . . . our clay.** How slight and passing our sorrows seem compared to the secular sufferings of such a city!

l. 703, **Niobe:** a queen of ancient Greece, fabled to mourn the death of her children slain by a jealous god. So Rome, whose derivative States have been taken from her. Since 1870, Rome has once more become the capital of Italy, not altogether—as some think—to her advantage.

l. 707, **Scipios' tomb.** A family vault near Rome, by the side of the road called "Appian Way." The inscriptions found here are among the earliest documents of Roman history, and have been carried to the Pope's Museum (in the Vatican)

l. 711, **Yellow waves.** The Tiber washes down silt by which its waters are tinged. **mantle her distress** = Throw a cloak over the woes of the modern Niobe.

l. 712, **The Goth,** etc. To the pagan glory of the ancient Romans have succeeded the rule of the Gothic invaders—Alaric (400) to Totila (552); and the "Christian" Popes who were "kings" in Rome till the destruction of the "temporal power" in 1870. **Time, War, Flood, and Fire:** various accidents by which the monuments of Old Rome have suffered.

l. 715, **The steep.** The ascent to the Capitol, or central hill of Rome—now "The Campidoglio"—once ascended by the triumphal car of victorious Roman generals.

l. 718, **Who shall trace,** etc. ? It is but a feeble light that antiquarian researches can throw upon the places of the old buildings and events. Much has been done since Byron's time to verify these scenes, by digging and exploring under the surface.

l. 719, **Who can give even a ray of moonlight** on some of these remains!

The *grammar* of the first two lines of this stanza is hopeless. The *meaning*, however, is not hard to hit. Time, and the lapse of knowledge, have combined to darken Roman story.

l. 728, **Eureka:** Greek word meaning "I have found," applied to any discovery that has cost trouble. Rome is compared to a trackless wilderness, and the fancied discovery of some old scene to the "mirage" or deceptive vision seen in the desert.

ll. 732, 3, **He** says that the poniard with which Brutus stabbed Cæsar was a more glorious weapon than Cæsar's own sword.

St. lxxxii. is intended to call up the memory of some of the great events of ancient Rome—the 326 triumphal processions recorded by her historians; the murder of C. Julius in the Senate-House; the speeches of M. Tullius Cicero; the works of the poet Virgil (P. Virgilius Maro) and the historian Livy (Titus Livius), contemporary writers of the age of Augustus Cæsar. Virgil's *Æneid* has been translated into English by Dryden and Morris, Livy's *History of Rome* by Philemon Holland.

l. 740, **Sylla**. Lucius Cornelius Sulla, surnamed Felix, or "Fortunate"; a Roman statesman who assumed power in the Republic after the conquest of Asia Minor, and resigned it (79 B.C.).

l. 748, **The dictatorial wreath**. Sulla was created Dictator 81 B.C.

l. 750, **Supine**, etc. Could this powerful Roman ruler have imagined that the mighty State over which he had obtained power could sink by the act of any but her own citizens?

l. 754, **Displayed**, etc. Spread her wings until they covered the visible vault of heaven.

l. 698, **Cromwell**. Oliver Cromwell (d. 1658) brought King Charles I. to trial which led to his being beheaded on "the block" (1649); after which Cromwell dissolved more than one House of Commons—which is here called "sweeping off senates."

ll. 760, 1, **See what crimes it costs**, etc.

If this be intended to put the actions of Oliver on the same level of criminality with those of the bloodthirsty Roman Dictator it is by no means what all men will accept. Sulla massacred indiscriminately that he might live a life of self-indulgence. The English Protector was habitually merciful; and his rare bloodshed—even if contrary to modern notions—is usually thought to have been prompted by conscientious motives [see Carlyle's work: *Letters and Speeches of Cromwell*].

l. 762, **Beneath his fate . . . destiny**. A strange law seems to prevail through his fortunes.

l. 764, **His day**. Cromwell died Sept. 3, having won two battles on the same day of the month; Dunbar 1650, Worcester 1651. Byron says that his death was the most fortunate event of the three, as it brought Cromwell peace after all his struggles.

l. 775, **And thou, dread statue!** In the Spada palace is shown a statue which is usually believed to be the figure at whose base the great Dictator C. Julius was stabbed by Brutus and Cassius, B.C. 44 (see above 525, 732 *nn.*). He covered his face as he fell.

l. 781, **Nemesis**. The Greek goddess of Retribution, feared and propitiated lest she should bring down immoderate prosperity.

l. 782, **Pompey**. Cnaeus Pompeius Magnus, a Roman statesman, in youth a partizan of Sulla, after a long struggle with

Julius was utterly defeated at Pharsalia and escaped to Egypt. He was murdered there, 48 B.C.

l. 783, **Puppets of a scene.** Mere players on the stage of a theatre.

l. 785, **She-wolf.** In the museum of the Capitol is a group in bronze, formed of a she-wolf and a pair of babes sucking at the dugs ; it bears marks supposed to have been caused by lightning. The figures of the children—believed to be of later date than the wolf—are meant for Romulus and Remus, founders of Rome, according to legend. Byron says ;—The bronze wolf may nurse her babes yet ; but the iron men, who were the real children of Rome, have passed away out of the world ; and all those who have tried to imitate their conquering course are gone too, except Napoleon ; and he also is ruined.

l. 803, Being a man wholly inferior to the great Roman conqueror, C. Julius, the first Cæsar ; who had a cool intellect and a warm softness of disposition, which made him bow to Cleopatra, queen of Egypt.

ll. 810, 11, **And next he shone forth. Came—and saw—and conquered.** The words of Cæsar to the Senate after a campaign in Asia.

He attacked the King of Pontus on the Euxine (or Black Sea) in a single campaign, which he reported in a despatch consisting of only these three words. Napoleon—according to Byron—cared for conquest, and certainly knew how to obtain it ; but he cared for nothing else ; had no weakness but the thought of a self which he never properly consulted. As for his aims, one doubts if he himself had formally defined them. The character of Napoleon was one of perpetual interest to Byron, who—perhaps—resembled him as closely as a well-born civilian could resemble a military continental *parvenu*. Beautiful, bold, able, and contemptuous of other men—such persons are not very likely to occur often in civilised society, or to prosper if they did. One may be stronger than others, but not stronger than all others together.

In 811-16, Byron pursues the comparison between Julius Cæsar and Napoleon ; dwelling on the vain and personal ambition of the latter.

Byron goes on in St. xcii. to point out how little use it was to struggle with the world, where Death soon brings all to one common level. All but *good men*, he should have said :—

“ Only the actions of the just

Smell sweet, and blossom, in their dust.”

(Shirley, 1659.)

ll. 821, 2, In a few years Napoleon might have been killed or died a natural death upon the throne.

l. 828, **Renew thy rainbow.** May God give the world a pledge against a deluge of blood and carnage, as once in the rainbow he was said (Genesis ix. 14, 15) to have promised that "he would set His bow in the clouds as a token of a covenant" that there should be no more a flood of waters.

Limited perception, weak intellect, short life, and truth beyond our reach, these are all the gifts that our existence has to bestow; while we are helpless victims of habit and conventional beliefs, who fear to be original or free.

St. xciv. This stanza implies that there is no such thing as moral progress: a dreary tenet! **Gladiator-like.** The gladiators were public prize-fighters who killed each other as a spectacle in the arena or Roman theatre.

St. xcv. The poet guards against being suspected of referring to religious belief; he only means to speak of social and political systems: as to which he holds that the abolished tyranny of the fallen Emperor was no worse than the system known as "The Holy Alliance" set up by the established rulers of Europe after his fall in 1815 [See III. xix. and *note*].

l. 855, **Too glorious:** meaning, if all Napoleon had done were to rouse the rulers of Europe to a sense of their duty to their subjects we should owe him more than we could pay.

l. 858, **Columbia.** A general poetic phrase for America, where the signal of independence and self-government was given in what are now the United States. George Washington was the leader of the American forces, and first President of the Republic (died 1799). **Sprung forth a Pallas.** This goddess was fabled to have been born, fully armed, from the head of Zeus, the chief of the gods.

l. 865, **But France . . . crime.** A coarse but powerful image.

l. 866, **Saturnalia.** A feast of the ancient Romans, in honour of the god *Saturn*, at which all sorts of liberty and indulgence were allowed.

ll. 868-73, He means that the crimes of Napoleon were made by his conquerors an excuse for even greater encroachments on human freedom.

St. xcvi. **Yet, Freedom!** To understand this grand passage we must bear in mind that thunder-clouds are often brought up by a wind blowing in the direction opposite to the current of air prevailing on the ground. And so, says the poet, the banner of Liberty can float in a line opposed to the apparent force of the current prevailing amongst us, while her voice, though almost inaudible at the moment, survives the seeming departure of the storm.

l. 878. Changing the image, he says the tree planted by the Revolution may be cut down, but the root retains its sap; and

the seed is harboured in the winter's frosts, to revive again in a happier season, and yield more pleasant produce : the reference is to England.

St. xcix. The poem now passes abruptly to the strange round tower, two miles beyond the walls of Rome, known as "The tomb of Caecilia Metella," by the side of the Appian Way, like the neighbouring "Tombs of the Scipios." It is a drum, or cylinder, of masonry on a square basement, and is believed to be the monument of the wife of Marcus Crassus, a Consul of Rome, killed by the Parthians in Mesopotamia, 55 B.C.

The next two stanzas speculate on the possibilities suggested by our ignorance of the character and conduct of this lady, on whom friends lavished this massive monument, and on whom twenty centuries have bestowed their wreaths of ivy.

l. 904, **Cornelia**. The famous "mother of the Gracchi" and sister of the Scipio mentioned in St. lvii.

l. 905, **Egypt's graceful queen**. Cleopatra : see above, St. xc. and *note*.

l. 906, **Profuse of joy**. Cleopatra was said to have devised extravagant entertainments and pleasures.

l. 908, **Wisely bar . . . the affections are**. Another cynical remark.

l. 915, **Heaven gives . . . death**.

"Whom the gods love die young," was a well-known Greek saying.

l. 917, **Hectic . . . Hesperus**. The glow on the cheek of some mortally-stricken persons is compared to the evening star, the harbinger of approaching darkness.

l. 925, **The wealthiest Roman**. Crassus was so fond of money that the Parthians are said to have mocked him in death by pouring molten gold into his mouth. His surname among the Romans was *Dives*, "Rich," as Sulla's had been *Felix*.

l. 927, See here the memorial either of the husband's affection for his lost wife or of his own wish for fame.

St. civ. Byron, in his usual manner, brings the matter round to himself : though not with any great amount of skill. The notion seems to be :—thinking over the person who was buried here makes me think of my own past.

l. 932, **Cloudy groan of dying thunder** = the moan of a retreating storm.

l. 935, *Cf.* Shakspeare : *Midsummer Night's Dream*, v. 1. 14.

l. 936, **The floating wreck . . . a little bark**, etc. The poet, seated on an ivy-grown fragment of the ruin, might gather the elements of his past trouble to furnish himself with a new, however slender, beginning of fresh endeavour ; but his isolation and loss of ground for exertion would still remain to check his efforts.

l. 951, **The Palatine.** One of the seven hills on which ancient Rome was built, whence we have the modern word "palace" (French *palais*) for the house of a king, bishop, etc.

Byron here speaks as if all the havoc of the ruined city were before him. This is a "figure of speech," as he did not begin to write until he got back to Venice.

l. 949, In *Manfred*, a work of the same period, he says:—

"From out the Cæsars' palace came

The owl's long cry."—III. iv.

l. 963, **Imperial Mount.** Augustus Cæsar, the first Emperor, lived on this hill, which has been laid bare and explored, to a great extent, since the poem was written. The sub-structures of at least six palaces have been discovered and identified, together with baths, barracks, and gardens.

l. 964, **All human tales**, *i.e.* all history shows the same course of evolution and dissolution.

l. 969, **Written here**: see above, *n.* (106).

l. 970, **Gorgeous Tyranny**: absolute power that loved display.

l. 972, Looking at such ruins calls out the most various feelings.

l. 975, **Pendulum.** Man is always oscillating from one extreme to another.

l. 979, **Gewgaws**: An old English word meaning "baubles," things of more show than value.

l. 983, **Nameless column.** Now ascertained—says Mr Tozer—to have been dedicated to Phocas, a tyrannical Emperor of Byzantium, or Constantinople (602–610 A.D.).

l. 986, **Whose arch or [whose] pillar.** The arch called "of Titus," the pillar named from Trajan: of which, says the poet, possession has been taken by "Time." The urn containing the ashes of the Emperor, after cremation, had been replaced by the statue of a Christian Apostle, St Peter.

l. 990, **Sublime** = on high.

l. 995, **After none.** The Emperor Trajan, one of the best and latest of Rome's great rulers; after whose time no extension of the Empire took place; but, rather, distant conquests were restored to native rulers [A.D. 98–117].

l. 996, **A mere Alexander** = no more than a warrior.

l. 997, **Alexander . . . unstained**, etc. Alexander of Macedon (356, 323 B.C.) conquered Persia and invaded India, in which countries he is still remembered as Sikandar Zulkarnain: he killed his friend Clitus in a drunken quarrel.

l. 1000, **The rock of Triumph . . . Tarpeian.** The Capitol, on which stood the temple of Jove, was the place to which the Roman generals ascended when received in triumphal procession after a victory. The Tarpeian, from which it was once customary to hurl convicted traitors, is hard by.

l. 1014, **Anarchy assumed.** The Emperors of the first dynasties affected to be only military commanders, and maintained the Senate, the Consuls, and the Tribunes, of the Republic. "Emperor" (*Imperator*) originally meant no more than *General*.

l. 1018, **Latest Tribune.** Cola di Rienzi assumed the government of Rome with the title of "Tribune" in 1347 A.D. He was killed in a popular tumult seven years later. His career is described in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*.

l. 1026, **Numa.** (See next stanzas.)

l. 1027, **Egeria:** the *Camena*, or Latin "Muse" to whom Numa Pompilius the legendary (second) King of Rome is fabled to have been espoused. The place where he used to meet her, and receive her advice as to his public conduct, is still shown near the Porta *Capena*, or Southern Gate, now Porta San Sebastiano.

l. 1031, **Nympholepsy:** hallucination caused by "nymphs" or fairies.

l. 1041, **Delicate**=pure.

l. 1044, **Cleft statue:** a mutilated image near the spring. In old times the natural grass and *tufa* were encroached on and expelled by marble masonry. See Juvenal, III. 18.

How much more beauteous had the Fountain been,

Embellished with her first created green,

Whose crystal streams through living turf had gone,

Contented with an urn of Native Stone!—DRYDEN.

l. 1047, **Quick-eyed lizard.** This is one of those delicate epithets by which the observation of a true artist is revealed. The restless vigilance of the little animal's bright glance will be familiar to all who know its timid habits.

l. 1057, **Purple Midnight.** Allusion to the warm darkness of southern night, so different from the steely blue of high latitudes.

St. cxix. The old, old story!

The notion seems to be that what is called "love" by European poets is based on true affection, which, however, is often deceived and disappointed.

Pursuing the subject, Byron extols "love;" the second line of stanza cxvii. being lawless even to the verge of unintelligibility.

"The general meaning is,—the mind is infected with the longing for a beauty which only exists in itself; and, by the action of this lever, conceives of perfect beings which cannot be found in real life" (TOZER): so of the ideal figures of the statuary, and the imagined persons we create on the basis of reality. Such is the Heaven we have to give up hoping for.

l. 1096, The ideal which we seek to reach causes our despair by remaining unattainable.

l. 1097, **O'er-informs**: so Dryden—(*Absalom and Ahithophel*) writing of the spirit of the first Lord Shaftesbury—says that it

“Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And *o'er-informed* the tenement of clay.”

In St. cxxiii. the thought of this idealising habit being morbid is further developed. It is a disease, says the poet; but the remedy is even worse: for it consists in stripping off the drapery with which our fancy had clothed the loved object, which—with a curious mixture of metaphors—is compared to a magic cord binding us and dragging us on; also sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind, and encountering the failure of one who tries to be rich by making gold. **Alchemy** (Arab. *alkimia*) was a false chemistry, devoted to two vain objects; the transmutation of base into precious metals, and the indefinite prolongation of human life. Men were often ruined in these researches.

l. 1110, **In verge of our decay**: when we are on the very edge of dissolution.

l. 1114, **None the worst**: each is as bad as the other in respect of disappointment.

l. 1119, **Removed antipathies**: that is, various chances combine to make men reconciled with the unwelcome results of their efforts. As Goethe has more tersely said:—

“What in our youth we ask of Heaven
In age is too profusely given.”

l. 1124, **Fortune**—here called “circumstance,” supplies the troubles that attack us with a staff which they use against our hopes.

l. 1126, **Our life . . . in**: Another of Byron’s careless lines.

l. 1129, **Boundless upas**: the word in Malay means “poison,” and is given to an imaginary tree supposed to contaminate the atmosphere for miles around, and destroy all vegetable, and even animal, life in the vicinity.

l. 1134, **Immedicable**: not to be benefited by medicine: a word borrowed from Latin.

The next stanza contains two more awkward combinations; **base abandonment**, and **place of refuge**.

l. 1139, **Faculty divine**. Phrase used by a poet for whom Byron professed contempt—William Wordsworth. **Cabined**, etc. Misquotation from Shakspeare (*Macbeth*, III. iv. 24).

l. 1143, **Couch**. To *depress* a “cataract,” an ocular obstruction so called, which used to be treated by *pressure*; it is now more safely and successfully treated by *extraction*.

l. 1147, **Coliseum**. More properly “Colosseum,” a popular

name for the Flavian Amphitheatre of Rome, situated in the valley between the Palatine and Esquiline Hills, begun by the Emperor Flavius Vespasianus, and completed by his son and successor, Titus, 80 A.D.

l. 1153, **Speak to ye.** Preferably "to you"; *ye* being, more grammatically, the nominative case.

l. 1155, **There is given.** Ancient buildings that bear the marks of Time are more apt to create impression on the mind than modern abodes of wealth and grandeur. This thought starts the poet upon an eloquent course of self-exculpation:—

"If time causes so much comfort and compassion, will it do nothing for me?"—so asks the unhappy man.

l. 1166, **Philosopher . . . sophists.** The former word is used for the true sages, or "lovers of wisdom"; the latter for their incompetent and frivolous imitators.

ll. 1165-7, **Time is the ultimate criterion of truth:** and therefore, according to this doctrine, the only genuine teacher. The economy of Time preserves his gifts, however slowly they may seem to come.

The iron in my soul. Founded on a mistranslation of *Psalms*, cv. 18. In the Revised Version it is given, "He was laid *in chains* of iron."

l. 1172, **More divinely desolate.** The consecration of Time makes old shrines more divine (not more desolate). Byron says that his life is not yet old enough for this, but deserves sympathy for its sorrows.

l. 1179, Shall *they* not mourn? *i.e.* my foes and detractors.

l. 1181, **Nemesis.** "Here," *i.e.* in Rome (781 *n.*): here they worshipped a goddess of retribution named "Nemesis"; it was she that caused Orestes to be tormented by the Furies (*q.d.* of remorse for murdering his mother). Orestes, the Hamlet of Greek tragedy, killed his mother, Clytemnestra, in revenge for the death of his father Agamemnon due to her. He was pursued by the Furies as a punishment from the gods.

St. cxxxiii. Byron admits that he had brought his troubles on himself; but some of the people by whose instrumentality he suffered are, in his opinion, deserving of punishment. **hands less near:** a reference to his wife (See *Introduction*, p. vii). There is in this passage a sad touch of pain, amid rhetoric and showy declamation.

l. 1207, **Forgiveness.** "I will curse the authors of my sufferings,"—he had, however, accepted the responsibility more than once himself—"But my curse is that I forgive them."

l. 1220, **Reptile . . . Janus.** Byron compares some of the objects of this boisterous pardon to reptiles (snakes, etc.), who look two ways like the double-faced god "Janus." The effect of

the whole passage is to remind us of one of Dickens's characters who tells his daughter to remind him at bed-time to pray for a person by whom he has been injured [*Martin Chuzzlewit*]. **Deal round** = "communicate."

l. 1223, 4. Refers to those hostile censors who employ silence as a method of condemnation (*cf.* Pope's lines on Addison; *Epistle to Arbuthnot*).

l. 1228, **There is that within me . . . love**. The meaning is, "I have a character that will leave behind me, after death, something to win the love of survivors."

l. 1234, **The seal**, etc. "A minstrel's malison is said" (Scott).

Dread power. According to Mr Tozer, "the sentiment of antiquity."

l. 1243, **Eager nations**. So many distant regions owned the sway of the Roman Empire that various "nations" were represented among the multitude who thronged the Colosseum. **genial laws**. Ironical, of course.

l. 1250, **battle-plains . . . spot**. It does not much matter, he would say, whether the scene of our death be a field or a theatre; in either case there is an end of us. **Listed** = enclosed: the lists (*Fr. lice*) were fields fenced round for the tournaments, or encounters of chivalry.

l. 1257, **The Gladiator**. The statue in the Museum of the Capitol described in this passage has long been known as "The Dying Gladiator," from an opinion that it represented a public swordsman, wounded in the sports of the circus, and condemned to die by the spectators. These cruel spectacles were forbidden after Christianity became the State-religion.

These two stanzas are as remarkable for humanity as for force.

l. 1264, **Danube . . . Dacian**. Dacia was the land of the barbarians on the left or northern bank of the Lower Danube. The Emperor Trajan (see above, St. cxi. and *n.*) reduced them to submission, and exhibited 10,000 of them fighting in the Colosseum.

l. 1269, **Goths**. An invocation to the barbarians by whom these cruelties should be avenged. The statue is now considered to be one of a military group, sculptured (perhaps) so late as the age of the Emperor Hadrian—Trajan's successor—and representing a Gaul mortally wounded in battle. It has been mutilated by burial or in the digging up again, and restored by Michel Angelo (above, l. 484 *n.*).

l. 1270, **Murder breathed**. A personification of the system to which were sacrificed all the arena's victims.

l. 1271, **buzzing nations**, see l. 1243 *n.*

It has been computed that 87,000 persons could find seats in

the Colosseum : the poet pictures the throng of so many people crowding the approaches and passages.

ll. 1276, 7, **My voice sounds.** Now, one man speaking, one step falling, will disturb the stillness of the empty space, with its walls that lean from the perpendicular and its seats broken down.

l. 1279, **From its mass . . . appeared.** Many architects of later times have quarried in these enormous ruins, which still, says Byron, at a first glance seem almost whole. (See description in *Manfred*, III. iv.)

“I do remember me :—in such a night
I stood within the Coliseum’s walls,” etc.

ll. 1283–5, **appeared.** This word is used more for rhyme than reason : the poet means, “where can the damage be, since it is so little apparent?” It is only seen on a near approach.

l. 1292, **Gray walls . . . head.** The walls of the building, in Byron’s time covered with trees and shrubs, are compared to C. Julius Cæsar, who had lost his hair, and obtained from the Roman senate leave to wear a wreath of leaves by which the effect of his baldness was lessened.

l. 1301, **In Saxon times.** In a fragment ascribed to “the venerable Bede,” an Anglo-Saxon writer of the 7th century, it is related that some of his contemporaries visiting Rome uttered this (unfulfilled) prediction : which is cited by the historian Gibbon (iii. 107, *n.*).

l. 1303, **Unaltered . . . Redemption’s skill.** Rome has been much restored and renovated since becoming the capital of the modern kingdom of Italy.

l. 1307, **Shrine . . . all gods.** Pantheon, a Greek word meaning “temple of all the deities.”

In its present state the Pantheon consists of a circular building, lighted by an opening in the roof, and entered by a Corinthian portico, stated, in a frontal inscription, to have been built by Agrippa, minister under Augustus, 27 B.C. The latest examination (1891–2) has led to the conclusion that the porch is all that is left of the original temple, which was consumed by fire, and replaced by the present rotunda in the time of Hadrian, in the 2nd century A.D. Consecrated 610 A.D. it became a Christian church, under the name of “Santa Maria Rotonda.” Hence the phrase, **altars for their beads** (a false rhyme to **treads and spreads**). The word **beads** alludes to the little balls by which prayers are marked off on a rosary.

ll. 1310, 11, Man painfully pursues his path through the wild and prickly ways that lead him to the tomb.

The stanzas that follow are devoted to a story told in connection with the church of St Nicolas *in carcere*, where the visitor is in-

formed that an old man was once in danger of starvation in confinement, but kept alive by the piety of a daughter who fed him like an infant from her own breast.

l. 1335, **The wife blest into mother**, etc. A married woman, he says, who becomes a mother, receives a happiness unknown to the male while watching her helpless and impatient offspring, though she cannot be sure that the infant will grow up a better man than Cain, the eldest born of Eve in the Old Testament story.

l. 1348, **Great Nature's Nile . . . no such tide**. Byron compares the young woman's breast first to the river Nile, "the creator of Egypt," and then to the white stream seen by night in the sky, and known as "The Milky Way."

l. 1351, **The starry fable . . . sweeter ray**. The "galaxy" or "milky way" of astronomy was fabled by the ancient poets to be spilt from the breast of the great goddess Heré. But here, the poet says, is a sweeter story.

l. 1360, **The mole**. The Castle of S. Angelo (*Moles Hadrianus*), a vast circular pile, built for the mausoleum of the Emperor Hadrian, but converted into a fortress by Belisarius, the famous Byzantine general, about 536 A.D.

The contemptuous terms in which it is here mentioned arise, perhaps, from a notion that Hadrian—who had travelled in Egypt—desired that his monument should rival the Pyramids of that country. But the tomb was probably built by Hadrian's successor, as that prince himself was originally interred at Gaeta.

l. 1369, **The dome**. This and the next six stanzas, as Byron notes, are devoted to the Cathedral of Rome, the church of S. Peter, or "the Vatican." It stands on the left bank of the river Tiber, which separates it and the castle from the rest of the city; and occupies, together with the adjoining palace and museum, a place on the site of the gardens of the Emperor Nero, where the Christians were tortured and killed about 64 A.D.

l. 1370, **Diana's marvel**. The temple of the Greek goddess Artemis, at Ephesus in Asia Minor, once esteemed one of "the wonders of the world." It was 425 ft. long—about two-thirds the length of S. Peter's.

l. 1381, **Zion's desolation**. The temple of the Jewish God Jehovah at Jerusalem, or "Zion," was destroyed by the Roman general Titus, son of the Emperor Vespasian (whom he afterwards succeeded), in the year 70 A.D.

l. 1387, **Its grandeur overwhelms thee not**. This is an established fact; even if not quite for the reason assigned in St. clv. It is probably due, in a great measure, to the absence of anything in the building to give *scale*. In a Gothic church a low arch leads

to one that is higher, and small chapels are seen along the sides of the towering aisles. In S. Peter's all is uniform, and—except under the cupola—horizontal.

l. 1397, **Some great Alp.** At a distance of several miles this is so. The great dome then seems to rise like the summit of a hill or float on the horizon like a cloud. Seen close at hand—either without or within—the bulk of the building is not realised; and no one would think, until told, that the nave is 150 ft. high, and the cross which surmounts the dome 435 ft., nearly as high as the Kutb Minar of Delhi would be if it stood on the top of the Agra Taj.

This failure to produce the effect of vastness is surely a fault rather than a merit. A building that exhausted the resources of its builders during a period of 120 years should appear vast without the necessity of study.

With this reservation, however, Byron's description of S. Peter's will be always admitted to be a noble piece of metrical eloquence.

The church is due to the successive designs of Bramanté, Michel Angelo, and Bernini; and the provision of funds for it is regarded as one of the indirect causes of the "Reformation."

St. clix. The poet concludes his fine description by reminding us that mere admiration is not the only attitude of the mind appropriate to the mighty fabric, for it teaches us the golden lesson of true greatness and the resources of human genius.

St. clx. Laocoon was a Trojan priest destroyed, with his two sons, by serpents sent for the purpose by the angry gods who sympathised with the Greeks in the Trojan war. The story is represented by a famous group of sculpture in the Vatican, which was dug up on the Esquiline in the year 1506, and has been the theme of general admiration ever since. The composition is pyramidal, and may be called an apotheosis of physical and mental suffering; the boys being almost crushed, while their father still exerts his strength to strangle the serpents or make them relax their grasp. It forms the subject of a celebrated work by the German critic G. E. Lessing, published in 1766 A.D., and more than once translated into English.

The group is ascribed, by Pliny, a writer of the Emperor Trajan, to three Greek artists, and is believed to be of the first century B.C.

l. 1441, **the Lord . . . bow.** The so-called "Apollo of the Belvedere" is described in the three following stanzas. This statue, like the Laocoon group, is a work of a period later than that of the best sculptors of antiquity. It was discovered, about the end of the 15th century A.D., among the ruins of Antium near Rome.

It has been restored, the entire right fore-arm and the left hand being the work of a pupil of Michel Angelo, named Montorsoli. There is much doubt as to whether the god was ever meant to be discharging a "bow," the later view being that he was presenting an *ægis*, or Gorgon's head. It is believed to be a marble copy of a work in bronze, perhaps by Lysippus.—fl. 330 B.C. (see above, St. xiii. *n.*).

St. clxii. In such a passage as this we must make allowance for Byron's avowed ignorance of Art (see above, St. lxi. *n.*). All that he attempted was to put into eloquent verse the current opinions of his time. All the statues praised by him are products of a decadent period, or are copies, imperfectly restored by comparatively modern hands. Recent criticism shows that after Phidias (500 to 432 B.C.) classical sculpture slowly but surely degenerated.

St. clxiv. Childe Harold, who has not been heard of since the middle of Canto III., here makes a faint reappearance, only to take a final leave of the reader.

l. 1476, **Destruction.** Non-existence, oblivion.

St. clxv. Whether a portrait of the author or not, the Childe must now pass into forgetfulness, like all that we inherit or become; and fade into twilight and darkness, even as happens to the brightest day. Or if not quite into the realms of night, at best linger in lights

St. clxvi. that vainly lead us to loo : into the unknown to forecast the future of our being, and to wonder if we shall be at all remembered. One comfort is in the reflection that the exact compound of sin and suffering we called "ourselves" will no more exist to sweat blood under life's loads. [Compare *Hamlet*, III. i. 76, "who would *fardels* bear?" The word is from French *fardeau*, "a burden."]

l. 1495, The poet turns abruptly to the death of the Princess Charlotte of Wales, daughter of the Prince Regent (afterwards King George IV.), which occurred November 6, 1817, while this canto was being written. "It has been a shock, even at Venice," wrote Byron in a letter of the time, "and must have been an earthquake in London . . . I feel sorry in every respect."

l. 1503, **Clasps a babe.** The Princess died in giving birth to a son, who died with his mother.

l. 1504, **Scion of . . . monarchs.** "Scion" is a twig cut for grafting; hence, by metaphor, a young member of a family. The family of the Princess united some of the noblest blood of England, Scotland, and Germany.

l. 1512, **The imperial isles.** The delight of the British people at the marriage and expected maternity of the heiress to the Crown is contrasted with the grief that so soon followed. The

Princess had hardly been a wife 18 months when she died.

l. 1519, **Iris**=rainbow. **Lonely lord.** Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg, the husband of the Princess, afterwards King of the Belgians.

The gloomy feeling of this stanza was happily frustrated by the birth, two years later, of the Princess of Kent, afterwards for so many years the venerated Queen Victoria still reigning.

l. 1532, **The tongue . . . princely ears.** Compare the Persian saying:—"If the Shah says at noon 'It is night,' answer, 'Behold the moon and the stars!'"

St. clxxii. The rude shocks of political convulsions—which have since lowered many crowned heads—might have awaited her. Yet we cannot but lament the blow that has fallen on the nation, from the highest to the most lowly.

l. 1549, **Nemi.** A lake in the volcanic Alban hills; once, doubtless a crater; so land-locked, says the poet, that the most violent gales of the neighbouring sea-coast are unable to disturb its calm.

l. 1558, **Albano.** A similar sheet of water in the same neighbourhood. From the heights above are visible the "Campagna" or plain through which the Tiber winds, and the sea on the shore of which Virgil places the scenes of the war in the *Aeneid*, his famous epic poem; of which the opening is "Arms and the man I sing."

ll. 1563 ff., On the right hand, as you look towards Rome, is Tusculum, where Cicero had his country-seat, **Tully reposed**; and on the farther hills, Digentia and the site of Horace's Villa.

St. clxxv. But before taking leave of the Childe, the poet represents him as looking towards the Mediterranean, "the *mid-land* ocean," from the top of the Hill above Albano: "that ocean which he and I once crossed in the war-ships that carried me from Gibraltar to the Bosphorus, where are the Symplegades, or as he has sung elsewhere, the islands called Clashers. He and I are alike deteriorated somewhat by the lapse of time since then: but still," says the poet, "there is much to live for." As Byron elsewhere says:—"In the desert a fountain is springing. In the wild waste there still is a tree."

St. clxxvi. Here is the *mirage* again: the cry for the ideal rings so through the song of Byron and of his friend Shelley, and gives such a sad and broken character to their lives.

Sts. clxxviii. to clxxxiv. form a splendid passage that has long been classical. The noble climax with which the poem culminates may be taken as a sufficient proof of the great powers of the author. (See below, St. clxxxv.)

l. 1604, **Sweep . . . vain.** This does not mean that the ships of man have never gained him any advantage by sailing on the sea, but only that they leave no marks of havoc such as his armies leave on land. What ruin is made on the sea is the sea's work alone.

St. clxxx. The thought is followed out. Man is not master on the waters.

l. 1620, **Let him lay.** "Lay" is a transitive, and should have been "lie," but for the rhyme.

St. clxxxi. Observe the magnificent music of the rhythm in these lines :—

St. clxxxi. **The Armaments . . . Trafalgar.** (See above, p. 188.) This (clxxxi.) is the finest complete stanza in the whole poem. Any attempt at comment would be worse than superfluous : there is nothing like it : and we feel that no other language would have given due expression to the sense. The grand word "thunderstrike" is coined for the purpose of this passage.

l. 1624, **Leviathans ;** "a sea monster." The Hebrew poet called "Psalmist" has compared ships to such creatures (Ps. civ. 26).

l. 1629, **Armada.** The fleet collected by King Philip of Spain for the invasion of England was known as "Invincible Armada," but was entirely destroyed by the English sailors and the tempests, 1588 A.D.

l. 1629, **Trafalgar.** (See above, II. St. xl.) Between Cadiz and Gibraltar, where the combined fleets of Spain and France were defeated by the British under Nelson, Oct. 21, 1805. Twenty ships were taken, but were almost all destroyed by a gale next evening.

l. 1631, **Assyria, etc.** These powers or "empires" were enumerated as owing their temporary greatness to the sea. The 3rd line of this stanza was originally "Thy waters wasted them."

l. 1639, **Almost too strong.** The idea of a mirror is opposed to that of a tempest. The poet means that which the Psalmist did when he said :—"They that go down to the sea in ships . . . see the works of the LORD and his wonders on the deep," etc. (Ps. cvii. 23-5). The construction of this stanza is defective, but the music noble.

Byron alludes to his love of swimming in St. clxxxix.

l. 1656, **As I do here.** He has forgotten that he was regarding the sea from the Alban mount (*above*, St. clxxv.), which is about 3000 feet above the level of the sea.

ll. 1663 ff., One can find no ground for this complaint of diminished power ; on the contrary, the whole passage is a climax marking the highest line of attainment that Byron ever reached—before or after.

1. 1671. **Not in vain**, etc. "If I have left any impression on my readers' minds I have not acted the Pilgrim's part without reward. **Sandal-shoon** (old plural for "shoes") and **scallop-shell** are symbols of pilgrimage employed in early times of European civilization. Pilgrims in the middle-ages returning from a visit to Jerusalem and the shrines of the Holy Land, used to exhibit their travel-worn **sandals** and the shells that they had picked up on the sea-shore.



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INDEX.

- Achelous river, 193.
 Acheron river, 190.
 Acherusia lake, 189.
 Acroceraunian mountains, 233.
 Actium, 188, 9.
 Ada, Byron's daughter, 198.
 Adriatic sea, so-called, 222.
 Aegis, meaning of, 184.
 Ætolia, 193.
 Age of man, 203, 204.
 Abasuerus, "Wandering Jew," 180.
 Ajax, tomb of, 183.
 Albania, 187, 334.
 — costume, 190.
 — character of people, 192.
 Albano, lake of, 248.
 Albyn, name for Scotland, 202.
 Alchemy, 241.
 Alexander, 205, 38.
 Ali Pasha, 189, 192.
 Allah, 195.
 Alps, 208, 9.
 Ambracia, gulf of, 189.
 Analysis of poem, xii.
 Andalusia, 170, 171.
 Apollo Belvedere, 246.
 Ardennes, forest of, 202.
 Arion, 185.
 Ariosto, 227.
 Armada, Spanish, 249.
 Arno, river, 228.
 Arqua, 225.
 Art, Byron's view of, 231, 247.
 Athens, 182-184.
 Athos, mount, 186.
 Attila, 174.
 Avalanche, 223.
 Avenche or Aventicum, 210.
 Bale fires, 171.
 Barons and Rhine knights, 206.
 Barossa, battle of, 181.
 Beads, 244.
 Beadsmen, 175.
 Biscay, Bay of, 167.
 Boatswain, 185.
 Boccacio, 229.
 Boileau, 227.
 Bonaparte, see Joseph or Napoleon.
 Bondsmen, 193, 196.
 Bosphorus, 195.
 Brenta, river, 225.
 British soldiers, 172.
 Browning, R., 224.
 Brunswick, Duke of, 202.
 Bucentaur, 222.
 Bull fight described, 177.
 Byron, his career, v, ff.
 — his love of children, 192,
 207, 219.
 — his peculiar attitude, 198.
 Caecilia, tomb of, 238.
 Cadiz, 211.
 Cæsar, 189, 236.
 Caique, 196.
 Caloyer, 190.
 Calpe, 185.
 Calypso, 186.
 Camerons, 202.
 Camese, 194.
 Candia, 223.
 Cannae, 209.
 Capitol, 236, 258.
 Capote, 194.
 Captain and officers, British Navy,
 185.

- Carnival, 193.
 Castalia, 175.
 Cava, 170.
 Chaldæans, 200.
 Charlotte, Princess, 247.
 Cherub, 176.
 Childe, meaning of word, 164.
 Childe Harold, how far representative, 176.
 Chimari, 190, 233.
 China, wall of, 170.
 Cintra, 167, 8.
 Clarens, 216.
 Clarion, 173, 178.
 Cleopatra, 238.
 Clitumnus, 232.
 Coblentz, 207.
 Coliseum, 241, 4.
 Concubines, 164.
 Contemplation, 211.
 Convention, 168, 9.
 Cornelia, 238.
 Cornish wreckers, 193.
 Cornucopia, 228.
 Couching, the eyes, 241.
 Crassus, 238.
 Cromwell, 235.
 Croupe, 178.
 Crusca, Academy della, 227.
 Cytherea, 214.
 Dalrymple, Sir H., 169.
 Dandolo, 223.
 Dante (see C. IV. St. lvii.), 168.
 Daphne, 176.
 Dead Sea, apples of, 203.
 Dedication to poem, 163.
 Delhi, 191, 194.
 Delphi, Parnassus not seen from, 176.
 Despot, 172.
 Dew, 214.
 Dian, the moon, 225.
 Diodati, Villa of, 209.
 Diogenes, 205.
 Dodona, 190.
 Doge, 221.
 Dolphin, dying, 225.
 Domestic peace, 165.
 Dons, Spanish, 178.
 Doria, 223.
 Dotard, 179.
 Dover, C. H. leaves,
 Draco, 210.
 Drachenfels, 207.
 Duenna, 179.
 Edleston, 183, 198.
 Egeria, 240.
 Ehrenbeitstein, 208.
 Elements, the four, 229.
 Elgin (see Parthenon).
 Emperors, The Roman, 240.
 Epirus, 190.
 Eros, 166.
 Eurotas, river, 194.
 Fandango, 173.
 Ferrara, 226.
 Filicaia, 227.
 Florence, 229.
 Florence (Mrs S. Smith), 186, 7.
 Franks, Christians so-called, 193.
 Freedom, address to, 237.
 French poetry, 227.
 Galaxy, 245.
 Galileo, 229.
 Giaours, 194.
 Gibbon, 217, 218.
 Gladiator, 237.
 — dying, 243.
 Godoy, 173.
 Gondolier, 221.
 "Good-night," song, on what modelled, 167.
 Goths, 234.
 Greeks, ancient and modern, 184
 196.
 Hackney-coach, 177.
 Hades, 174.
 Hadrian tomb, 245.
 Hafiz, 192.
 Hamlet, 226.
 Hampstead, 177.
 Hannibal, 218.
 Harem, 175.
 Hecate, 185.

- Hellas, 164.
 Helots, 195.
 Heralds, 165.
 Hippocrates, 197.
 Hispania, 170.
 Hoblhouse, 214, 218.
 Holsters, 174.
 Hope, 224.
 Horace, Byron on, 233.
 Horns, 177.
 Horse-tail (standards), 194.
 Houries, 175.
 Howitzer, 174.
 Hyperion, a frigate, 185.

 Ianthe, meaning of the name, 164.
 Ilion, siege of, 172.
 Illyria, 189, 194.
 Improvisation, 180.
 India, Byron plans a visit to, 165.
 Inez, song to, 180.
 Islam, conditions of women in, 192.
 Italy, authors of, 218.
 — address to, 227.

 Joannina, or Yanina, 189.
 Joseph Bonaparte, 180, 181.
 Joyaunce, 170.
 Judges, duties of, 210.
 Julia Alpinula, 210.
 Julian, Count, 170.
 Julie, Rousseau's, 210.
 Jungfrau mountain, 233.
 Junia, funeral of, 230.
 Junta, Supreme Council of Spaniards, 174.
 Jura mountains, 215.

 Kibes, 177.
 King-making, 200.
 Knoll, 216.

 Lacedaemon, 196.
 Laocoon, 246.
 Laos, river, 190, 191.
 Laura, 226.
 Laurel, 176, 181.
 Lausanne, 217.
 Lauwine, 223.

 Leman, lake, 210, 216.
 Lepanto, 188, 223.
 Lethe, 179.
 Leucadia (*v.* Sappho).
 Leutraki, 193.
 Lisbon, 167, 168.
 Lucretius, lines from, 179.
 Lysippus, horses of, 223.

 Machiavel, 229.
 Mafra, 169.
 Marialva, 168.
 Mars, 229.
 Marathon, 197.
 Marceau, 207.
 Mauritania or Morocco, 185.
 Medici, chapel of the, 229.
 Mendeli, 197.
 Michael Angelo, 229.
 Midshipman, 185.
 Minerva, 182, 197.
 Mont Blanc, 223.
 Moors, expelled from Spain, 171.
 Morat, battle of, 209.
 Morena mountains, 173.
 Muezzin, call of, 191.
 Muse, 164.

 Napoleon (Bonaparte), Emperor of the French, 204, 5, 6.
 Nature, 200.
 Nemesis, 255, 242.
 Nemi, lake of, 248.
 Newstead, described, 165, 6.
 Niobe, 234.
 Numa, 240.

 Ocean, address to, 249.
 Olive branch, 181.
 Osmānli, 195, 223.
 Ottomite *v.* Osmanli.

 Page, the Childe's, 166.
 Palafox, 180.
 Palatine, 239.
 Palikar, 193.
 Pantheon, 244.
 Paphian, Paphos, 165.
 Paramour, 167.
 Parga, 194.

- Parnassus, 175.
 Parthenon and Lord Elgin, 182, 184.
 Patras, 193.
 Pelagio (Pelayo), 170.
 Peña, N. S. de, 168.
 Pentelicus, 196, 7.
 Peri, 163.
 Persians, their worship, 215.
 Petrarch, 225, 6.
 Phalanx, 179.
 Phlegethon, 232.
 Phyle, 194.
 Pict (*v.* Elgin).
 Pindus, 188, 9.
 Pizarro, 181.
 Pleasaunces, 168.
 Pompey, statue of, 235.
 Predestination, 216.
 Prevesa, 188, 194.
 Psalmist, 204.
 Psyche, 217.
 Pyramid, 226.
 Pythagoras, 183.
 Pythian's cave, 213.
 Quaint, 176.
 Quatre Bras, battle of, 202.
 Quito, 181.
 Ravenna, 229.
 Renaissance, 228.
 Revolution, Byron's view of the French, 213.
 Rhaetian Alps, 225.
 Rhine, 206.
 Rhone, 211, 215.
 Rialto, 221.
 Rienzi, 240.
 Robber knights of Rhine, 206.
 Rome, 225, 234.
 Rousseau, J. J., 212, 213.
 Sabbath, 177.
 Sadducee, 183.
 Santa Croce, 229.
 Santon, 191.
 Sappho, island of, 188.
 Saragossa, maid of, 174.
 Scanderbeg, 187.
 Scipios, tomb of the, 234.
 Scott, Sir Walter, 202, 219.
 Sea-mew, 166.
 Sebastiani, French General, 173.
 Selictar, 194.
 Seville, 172, 176.
 Shelley, P. B., 211, 213.
 Sirocco, 171.
 Socrates, 183.
 Solano, killed at Cadiz, 180.
 Sophia Santa, 195.
 Sophist, 182.
 Soracte mountain, 233.
 Spain, now divided from Portugal 170.
 Spaniards as soldiers, 180, 1.
 Spanish women, 175.
 Sparta (*v.* Lacedaemon).
 Styx, 209.
 Suli, 188, 192.
 Suliote, 194.
 Sulpicius, letter of, 228.
 Superstition, 188.
 Sylla (Sulla), 235.
 Syracuse, 223.
 Tagus, river, 167.
 Talavera, battle of, 171.
 Tambourgi, 193.
 Tannen (trees), 224.
 Tarpæan rock, 238.
 Tartar (Tātār), 191.
 Tasso, T., 221, 226.
 Tempe, vale of, 189.
 Tepaleni, 191.
 Terni, falls of, 212.
 Thames, river, 177.
 Thermopylae, 194.
 Thrasimene, battle of, 231.
 Thrasybulus, 194.
 Thyrsa, 198.
 Tomerit, 190.
 Trafalgar, battle of, 188.
 Trajan, 238.
 Tritonia, cape so-called, 196.
 Tyre, 173, 223.
 United States, 257.
 Upas, 241.
 Utopia, 187.

Vatican and S. Peters, 245, 6.
Venice, 220, 1.
Venus, the Medicean, 176, 228.
Voltaire, 217, 8.

Wahhabis, 195.
Wassailers, 164.
Waterloo, 200, 203.
Wellington, 170, 201.

Westminster, Byron not buried at
222.

Wingfield, John, 181.

Yeoman, 166.

Zeus, temple of, on Acropolis at
Athens, 184.

Zitza, 189, 190.

Zoroaster, 183.

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