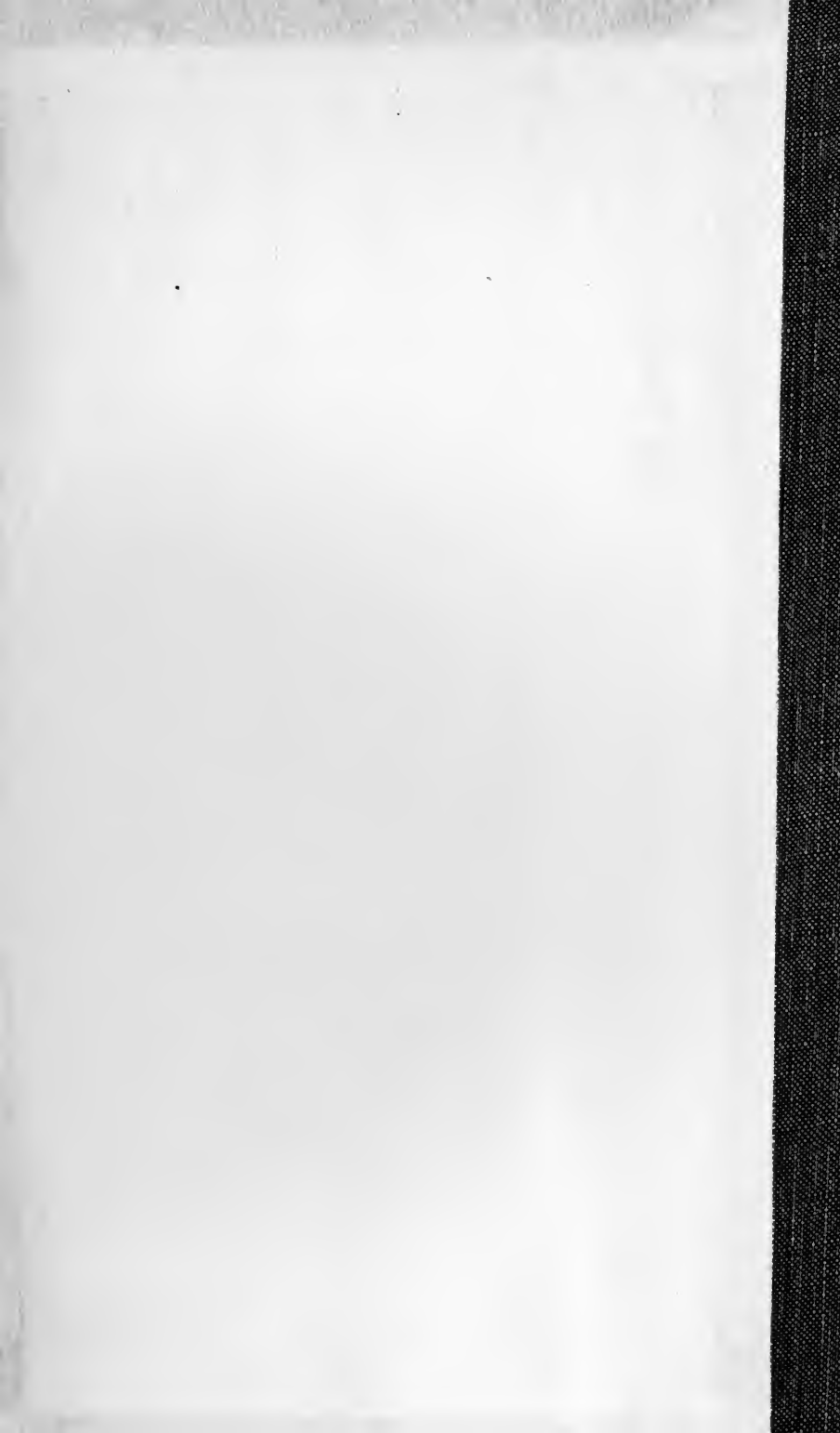
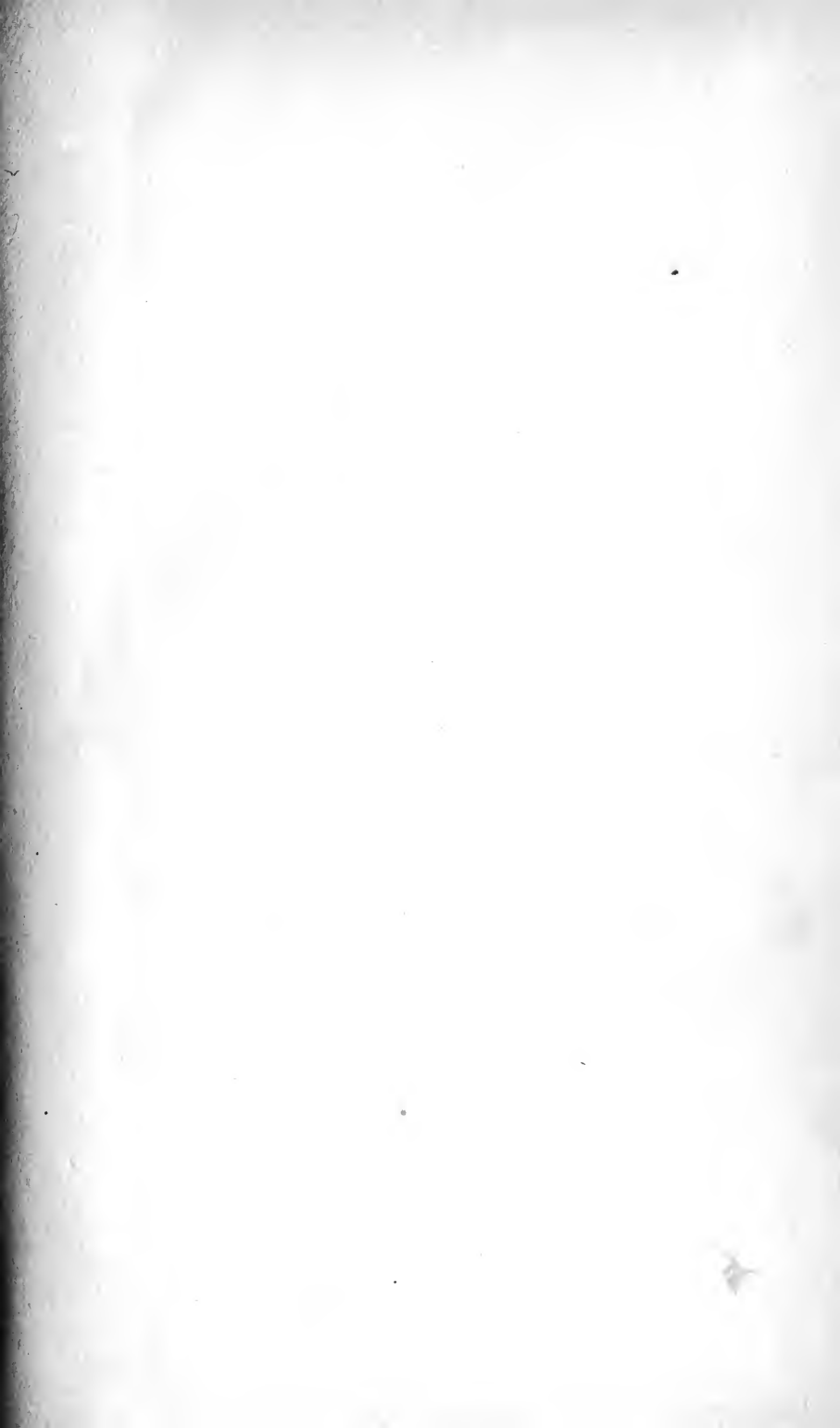


UNIV. OF
TORONTO
LIBRARY





1

SHELLEY'S WORKS IN VERSE AND PROSE

VOLUME I

1/11

Thus the tempestuous torrent of his grief
Is clothed in sweetest sounds and varying words
Of poesy. Unlike all human works,
It never slackens, and through every change
Wisdom and beauty and the power divine
Of mighty poesy together dwell,
Mingling in sweet accord.

1/11



Percy B. Shelley

5485

THE WORKS
OF
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY
IN VERSE AND PROSE

NOW FIRST BROUGHT TOGETHER
WITH MANY PIECES NOT BEFORE PUBLISHED

EDITED
With Prefaces Notes and Appendices
BY
HARRY BUXTON FORMAN

IN EIGHT VOLUMES
FIRST VOLUME—POETRY I

LONDON
REEVES AND TURNER 196 STRAND
1880

PR
5400
E80
v.1

$\frac{15811}{29/9/91}$

6

8/12
4-1

Toronto
8/1-

5

TO SHELLEY'S SON

SIR PERCY FLORENCE SHELLEY

BARONET

IS DEDICATED

WHATEVER MAY BE FOUND ACCEPTABLE IN

THE LABOUR HERE BESTOWED

ON THE WORKS OF

ENGLAND'S

GREATEST LYRIC POET

✓

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
DEDICATION	v
PREFACE BY THE EDITOR	xi
EDITOR'S NOTE BEFORE THE CHOICE	2
THE CHOICE, A POEM ON SHELLEY'S DEATH, BY HIS WIDOW	3
ALASTOR; OR, THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE: AND OTHER POEMS	
EDITOR'S NOTE BEFORE ALASTOR &C.	12
PREFACE BY SHELLEY	15
ALASTOR	21
TO COLERIDGE	49
STANZAS.—APRIL, 1814	50
MUTABILITY	52
"THERE IS NO WORK, NOR DEVICE" &C.	52
A SUMMER-EVENING CHURCH-YARD, LECHLADE, GLOUCES- TERSHIRE	54
SONNET.—TO WORDSWORTH	55
SONNET.—FEELINGS OF A REPUBLICAN ON THE FALL OF BONAPARTE	56
SUPERSTITION	56
SONNET, FROM THE ITALIAN OF DANTE (DANTE ALIGHIERI TO GUIDO CAVALCANTI)	57
SONNET.—TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK OF MOSCHUS	58
THE DEMON OF THE WORLD	61

	PAGE
EDITOR'S NOTE BEFORE MONT BLANC	72
MONT BLANC. LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI	73
CANCELLED PASSAGE OF MONT BLANC	78
LAON AND CYTHNA; OR THE REVOLUTION OF THE GOLDEN CITY	
(USUALLY KNOWN AS THE REVOLT OF ISLAM)	
EDITOR'S NOTE BEFORE LAON AND CYTHNA	80
PREFACE BY SHELLEY	85
DEDICATION	101
CANTO I	109
CANTO II	131
CANTO III	149
CANTO IV	162
CANTO V	174
CANTO VI	197
CANTO VII	217
CANTO VIII	232
CANTO IX	244
CANTO X	258
CANTO XI	276
CANTO XII	285
LIST OF ERRATA REPRINTED	302
LIST OF ERRATA MADE AVAILABLE FOR ALL EDITIONS	303
ROSALIND AND HELEN, A MODERN ECLOGUE; WITH OTHER	
POEMS	
EDITOR'S NOTE BEFORE ROSALIND AND HELEN &C.	306
ADVERTISEMENT BY SHELLEY	309
ROSALIND AND HELEN	315
LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS	358
HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY	371
SONNET.—OZYMANDIAS	375

CONTENTS.

ix

APPENDIX.

	PAGE
I.—FURTHER PARTICULARS AS TO LAON AND CYTHNA .	379
LIST OF LEAVES REMOVED FROM LAON AND CYTHNA	
TO CONVERT IT INTO THE REVOLT OF ISLAM .	391
II.—SHELLEY'S REVISED COPY OF LAON AND CYTHNA .	392
III.—EXTRACT FROM THE ADVERTISEMENTS AT THE END OF	
ROSALIND AND HELEN, &C.	400
IV.—ON CERTAIN WORDS USED BY SHELLEY IN THE POEMS	
PRINTED IN THE PRESENT VOLUME	401

ILLUSTRATIONS TO VOL. I.

PORTRAIT OF SHELLEY BY MISS CURRAN	<i>Frontispiece</i>
SHELLEY'S HOUSE AT MARLOW	<i>Opposite page 101</i>
FAC-SIMILE OF PAGE 180 OF SHELLEY'S REVISED	
COPY OF LAON AND CYTHNA	<i>Opposite page 393</i>



PREFACE.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE main object of this edition of the Poetical Works of Shelley is to put within the reach of students and the public generally as near an approximation as may be to the text that the poet intended to issue. This is a more than ordinarily difficult task,—and not from any lack of materials, for there is a mass of material extant, astonishing when we consider the vicissitudes to which Shelley's works were subjected while he was alive and for some time after his death. The difficulty is in deciding what shall be the authority for the text in each particular poem. In respect of books seen through the press by himself, there ought to be no difficulty whatever, except as regards isolated words and stops; but unfortunately he did not revise while at press one half of the entire bulk of his poetry, several of the volumes having been printed in England while he was abroad, and read through the press by friends. As regards the proportion of his mature works, from *Alastor* onwards, which had the advantage of his personal revision when in type, we should, I think, be making a liberal allowance if we assumed that he saw proofs of one third; and the largest of

the volumes seen through the press by himself is infamously printed. Generally speaking, however, where there is no manuscript extant, the text as printed in Shelley's life-time must be accepted as the nearest obtainable approach to an authority; and even when there is a manuscript extant, it is by no means a final authority as a matter of course. The relative value of a poem as printed in Shelley's life-time and as written out by him must depend not only upon the revision of the press by the author or his substitute, but upon the technical quality of the printer's work, and the amount of care bestowed upon the manuscript. If the printed version is obviously a careless piece of typography, it loses much of its authority even if seen through the press by Shelley himself. This is preëminently the case with *Laon and Cythna*; and the extant manuscript fragments tend to shew that the printer had not one of Shelley's best manuscripts to work from. *Alastor*, on the contrary, seems to me a very creditable piece of printer's work, on the whole; and, if a manuscript of that volume were discovered, I should not expect it to authorize more than two important verbal alterations. The *Rosalind and Helen* volume, again, of which proof sheets were certainly not seen by Shelley, is inferior to the *Alastor* volume as an authority; but probably the manuscript of the eclogue itself would be found very hasty and inconsistent in the matters of detail in which alone the printed text is suspicious to any great extent.

These three instances are merely typical of the kind of

consideration applicable to every one of Shelley's volumes; and to reprint the series of volumes published by and for him just as they stand, without correcting palpable errors, would thus be an inadequate attempt to approach the genuine text. I have therefore not scrupled to remove many small blemishes of three classes, (1) those for which I think the printer responsible, (2) those for which I think it likely Shelley is responsible, but would have removed if he had observed them, and (3) those for which I think Shelley's substitute for the time being responsible. Every alteration has been made simply because I have thought the original was not what Shelley meant it to be, or would have wished it to be; and every alteration is specified, as far as I am aware, and unless there be accidental errors of the press in getting this edition into type.

In one small matter, that of Latin, Greek, and Italian quotations, I have not sought to bring any scholastic interference to bear on what I have thought was deliberately written by Shelley: what have seemed to be printers' errors in these quotations, I have specified and removed; but in other cases I have not thought it worth while to supply or correct accents and so on; because, under my own regulation, I could not do so without a note, and notes would be perhaps still more of an affliction there than elsewhere. Besides, those who know more of the grammar of foreign tongues than Shelley did will not be misled,—those who know less will not be annoyed.

It is easy enough to go on the assumption that every-

thing in a text is right, and reprint it in fac-simile; and it is not much less easy to go on the opposite assumption that everything a little out of one's ordinary experience is wrong, and alter it forthwith. But the difficulty, with such texts as Shelley's, is to discriminate between unintentional inaccuracies in printing or writing and intentional eccentricities of style, metre, punctuation, and orthography. In my opinion the least correct of all the volumes published by Shelley during his life-time is very far pleasanter to read, and very much nearer the fact of his intention, than any of the posthumous texts that have been published up to the present time. The chief reason of this I take to be a want of veneration on the part of his editors,—a failure to perceive that one man is *not* as good as another, and that Shelley's eccentricities, even his errors if errors there be, must be far more interesting to intelligent humanity at large than the punctilious correctness of intelligent mediocrity. Even if the aggregate genius of the present generation were brought to bear upon the task of systematizing Shelley's style and grammar and so on, we might perhaps not obtain anything comparable to the real Shelley; and I can conceive no better service to do to his memory than the very humble one of attempting to restore in every instance what he wrote or meant to write. I have therefore adopted as a principle, that it is better to leave unchanged any doubtful passage, about which there may be several opinions, and which is not, as a matter of certainty, corrupt. There is a wide distinction between recording a suggestion in a

note and making an alteration in the text; and I would ask readers of this edition to consider as criticism merely, and not as emendations, all suggestions of possible change that they find in the foot-notes. Their being in the notes and not in the text is intended, and will doubtless be understood, as an indication that they are offered for consideration, and not laid down as safe emendations.

There can be no reasonable doubt that, from one cause and another, the current texts of Shelley are very corrupt; but the course of my studies has led me to think that the original editions are not nearly so corrupt as they are generally said to be, or as might be expected, and also that much has been called corrupt which is really nothing but elliptical, or unusual in point of grammar, of construction, of orthography, or of punctuation. Hitherto, in my opinion, Shelley's editors have not made sufficient allowance for unusual features of his work which were deliberate, or which he would have seen no reason, as far as we can judge, for altering. To take as an example a single curious instance of seeming inconsistency, I would draw attention to his use of the interjection *O* or *Oh*. Throughout his works *O* and *Oh* are used interchangeably without any apparent rule; and, more than this, they are sometimes followed by a comma, sometimes by no stop at all, sometimes by a note of exclamation. To me it appears most objectionable to interfere with this irregularity. Whatever Shelley's view on this small but important word may have been, I do not presume to think he unerringly carried out

that view in writing ; but *O* is so constantly used within a line or two of *Oh*, that I cannot think he would have left so many of these divergences of practice had they been wholly unintentional. Of the half-dozen different ways of using the two forms of interjection, no two, if minutely considered, are of precisely the same metric value ; and it is hardly fantastic to suppose that a slightly different intonation or stress is indicated by these slightly different interjections, though Shelley may have been wholly unconscious of any intention in the matter, and have simply written in each case what seemed to convey the weight of thought and word his mind was uttering.

The bearing on metric effect of what at first sight may appear to be mere slovenlinesses of grammar, orthography, and punctuation, is not easy to estimate in the case of so subtle a master of music as Shelley : I suspect his punctuation often depended more on euphony than on grammar ; and it must always be intrinsically safer to leave the text as it is in these minute particulars than to tamper with it, unless there be a strong presumption that it has become corrupt since it left his hands. At all events, not only has this seemed to me *safer* and more in accordance with editorial obligations ; but I have even thought it well worth while to preserve in the text, and not merely in the notes, so much of the minute history of Shelley's mind as is unfolded to us in the peculiarities and inconsistencies of his orthography &c.,—at least when it has seemed likely that the orthography &c. were his, and deliberately adopted.

But here again there are difficulties; for occasionally we come upon divergences of practice for which there is double and conflicting authority. In such cases, if I find good reason for belief in a certain rule as recognized by Shelley, I do not hesitate to apply his rule in correction of the text even where there is manuscript authority against the change,—because very often the manuscript giving such authority is either hasty or seemingly immature, and the change such as he might reasonably be expected to make on proof-sheets, or whenever he discovered the departure from his own rule. The greatest difficulties of this kind are in the minute details of *Laon and Cythna*, of which difficulties examples will be found discussed in the notes in this edition.

Indeed, to carry out this view of the service required towards the text of Shelley, it has been necessary to insert a great number of notes on variations of detail, trivial in themselves, but often involving questions of principle not readily apparent without making the notes longer than they are. It should therefore be premised that those to whom details are an affliction must not expect to find one note in a dozen interesting,—the bulk of the notes being merely in furtherance of the twofold view that the absolute text of the original editions ought to be accessible to every one, and yet that the text of a library edition should not include obvious errors of the press, or inadvertences, whatever it may be necessary to record in foot-notes. On similar grounds it has seemed desirable to afford all

possible bibliographical information, so that students may be in the best attainable position to study the original editions, and supplement, confirm, or controvert my conclusions on textual questions. And if the result has been the production of an edition of Shelley with much dry detail in the notes, that result is owing to my conviction that more service was to be done to the cause in this way than in any other, such as an unscrupulous remodelling of the text and a free addition of expository or explanatory notes.

In order to avoid many of these very uninteresting details, I have often left the punctuation or orthography of the text as I found it, even in cases where I have not been convinced of its being precisely as Shelley left it, but where the matter was of very little importance, *and could not possibly be decided*, so that, had I attempted any change, I must have burdened the page with a note, with no corresponding advantage. So many of the changes in punctuation made, but not specified, by Mr. W. M. Rossetti, and discussed in the notes to the present edition, alter the sense of the passages without letting the reader know what has been done, that I could see no way of guaranteeing "no important change" but that of specifying every change however minute. I therefore adopted that rule; and the only exception to it is the practice in regard to past tenses and participles in *ed.* In this case it is sufficient to say here, once for all, that the accents have been supplied wherever there was no doubt that the final syllable was meant to be separately sounded.

This is almost always decided beyond a doubt by the scansion ; but there are some few cases in which a line will scan equally well with the final *ed* mute or sounded. As far as I am aware Shelley *never* supplied the accents, so that whenever one occurs it is to be reckoned as a minute deviation from the original text.

The reproduction of the title-pages, tables of contents, &c., of the original editions will, I feel sure, be acceptable ; and, in reprinting Shelley's various volumes in chronological order, and with the contents arranged as issued in his life-time, there seems to me to be a marked artistic advantage. It is true that, in adhering to this principle I am debarred from inserting where it might best be inserted the newly discovered sonnet from the Italian, mentioned in note 1 at page 57 of this volume ; but on the other hand there is a decided interest in knowing what Shelley thought appropriate as minor poems to append to his larger ones. This knowledge might of course be afforded even in a rearranged edition ; but the effect must be lost ; and in such an instance as that of the poems issued with *Prometheus Unbound*, the effect is simply wonderful. Never since the age dominated by the genius of Æschylus was anything of like lyric exaltation produced in dramatic literature ; and never, perhaps, since, in our poet's own words, "God first dawned on Chaos," had there been any human soul that "panted forth a flood of rapture so divine" as that incomparable group of lyrics which follow the incomparable fourth act of *Prometheus*,—still sounding in diverse

echoing keys and under infinite variations of melody the same intense intellectual passion, the same most holy love of humanity, the same godlike perception of ideal beauty. A "flood of rapture" still more divine remained to crown the work of the master in *Epipsychidion*, and a still more certain grasp on the combined resources of the lyric and dramatic crafts was yet to be shewn in *Hellas*,—the one put forth by itself, the other with a single lyric of astonishing fitness; but the fact remains that the selection and arrangement of lyrics to accompany *Prometheus* was a thing unequalled in perceptiveness; and in that case, at all events, the highest importance is to be attached to the preservation of Shelley's order among these lesser poems,—lesser only than greater things of his own, and greater than anything lyric to be found elsewhere in modern literature.

In regard to the posthumous poems generally the case is different; and it is at the option of every editor to arrange these to the best of his judgment, according to the knowledge accessible to him, and the special requirements of his edition. Of at least one point, however, I have no doubt,—namely that everything distinctly immature should form a separate chronology; and it is for that reason that the immature *Queen Mab*, instead of preceding the mature *Alastor*, in which Shelley's real career begins, is treated as the climax of the juvenile period, and reserved for an appendix. Shelley lived to protest against its being published at all; but it has now become an

inalienable part of the world's possessions; and all we can do out of respect to his memory is to assign to it the position which he assigned,—that of a juvenile work.

As regards the juvenile works and all the other volumes published or printed while Shelley was alive, there were two courses open to me beside the one I have chosen; and both of them would have been very much easier: the one, to reprint with mechanical exactness and without remark the original editions, still remains to be done if it be thought worth while; but I do not imagine it will be thought worth while, as an exact reprint of the originals is embodied in the present text and notes: the other course, to rewrite Shelley's works according to the editor's view of how he ought to have written them, has been sufficiently pursued elsewhere.

Why there should be any need to do more than simply reprint those poems which were printed in the first instance under Shelley's own supervision, is a curious question, and one which needs to be considered carefully and fully. We have heard enough and too much about Shelley's being "a careless writer,"—enough because such truth as there is in this current assertion has been long ago laid to heart by those who are discerning in such matters, and too much because very few are discerning, and the text that cost the greatest lyric poet of England infinite pains to elaborate has been held fair ground whereon every clumsy and thoughtless emendator (or rather innovator) might do just what suited his fancy.

If, therefore, we admit at all that Shelley was a careless writer, we must guard such admission round about with saving clauses, and clearly understand in what sense the intrinsically damaging word *careless* is used. That he would have done himself no credit before a Chinese board of examiners in pen-craft and orthography and the punctilio of smart composition, may be safely admitted; and those who would fain fit his compositions for presentation before such a board are not qualified by natural proclivity for the labour of editing the works of a great poet. But that he was careless as an artist in any sense in which it behoved such an one to be careful, is amply refuted by the fact for which Mr. Garnett vouches in the following striking paragraph from the *Relics of Shelley*, pages xi and xii:

"They [the pieces in the *Relics*] appear to have been hitherto overlooked, for the reason that must also serve as an excuse for the imperfect manner in which they are even now presented to the public—the extremely confused state of these books [Shelley's manuscript note-books], and the equal difficulty of deciphering and connecting their contents. Being written in great haste, and frequently with pencil, the hand-writing is often indistinct of itself; and rendered far more so by erasures and interlineations *ad infinitum*. Shelley appears to have composed with his pen in his hand, and to have corrected as fast as he wrote; hence a page full of writing frequently yields only two or three available lines, which must be painfully disentangled from a chaos of obliterations. Much that at first sight

wears the appearance of novelty, proves on inspection to be merely a variation of something already published ; and sometimes the case is reversed, as in the *Prologue to Hellas*, so buried in the MS. of that drama (which has in itself on the average ten lines effaced for one retained), as to be only discoverable or separable upon very close scrutiny."

Mr. Garnett adds a note to the effect that, when Shelley wrote for the printer, his handwriting was "singularly neat and beautiful"; and it seems to me that the proportion of lines rejected and lines retained in his rough drafts, taken in connexion with the quality of his "printer's copy," is the best possible proof of due care. As regards the statement that his drafts for the printer were beautifully written, I can confirm that from the evidence of the copy of *Julian and Maddalo* which he sent from Italy to Hunt, to have published: not only is the writing most careful and beautiful; but the punctuation is at once eminently characteristic and peculiar, and generally adequate and accurate from the poet's own point of view. This is still more noteworthy, inasmuch as Shelley wrote the poem out with his own hand twice at least, in ink. One copy is in a book among those in Sir Percy Shelley's possession; the other, on what seem to be the gilt-edged leaves of a pocket-book, is that already referred to, and of which a specimen will be given in fac-simile in the volume containing the poem. I may say in the mean time that this manuscript supplies the missing line in one instance of rhymelessness, which has been hitherto among the items of

the count against Shelley for small sins of omission and commission.

That the confused note-books described by Mr. Garnett imply care, not the reverse, must be evident to any one who thinks for a moment: these were Shelley's means of putting his thoughts on record at once as they came burning upon him; and they were never meant for any one's guidance but his own. It was a need inherent in the fiery exaltation of his lyric mood that the result should be set down at once; and, for mere temporary *memoranda*, it mattered not how intricately one poem might be blended with another. He knew how to disentangle and write them fairly, or dictate them to Mrs. Shelley; and, had he lived to have the slightest suspicion how we should venerate every scrap of paper bearing the impress of his hand and pen, he would, we may be sure, have taken ample care to place these note-books beyond our reach.

The subject of Shelley's method of composition, a right understanding of which is the first requisite for any one aspiring to edit his works, would be a very fruitful theme for prolonged discussion. In one of the keenest and at the same time most enthusiastic of recent contributions to Shelley literature this theme is very happily touched upon. I refer to an article in *The Edinburgh Review* for April 1871, written *à propos* of Mr. Rossetti's edition of Shelley, —an article which I am authorized to connect with the name of Professor Thomas S. Baynes of St. Andrew's University, and which I cannot do better than quote.

"It is," says Professor Baynes, "a curious psychological problem how it is that amongst modern poets Shelley should be distinguished by his comparative neglect of minute verbal accuracy; how it comes to pass that the text even of poems which he himself carefully revised should be so extremely imperfect." Negligence, care, imperfection! This is a strange association of words; but in that association Professor Baynes seems to me to go right home to the facts of the case. The problem, he says, is, how it happens that in the poems which Shelley himself revised "there are grammatical laxities and metrical oversights, which are not only stumbling-blocks to readers of ordinary cultivation, but the despair of acute and accomplished verbal critics.

"This uncritical negligence, the want of minute accuracy in the details of his verse, seems to us intimately connected with the whole character of Shelley's mind, and especially with the lyrical sweep and intensity of his poetical genius. He had an intellect of the rarest delicacy and analytical strength, that intuitively perceived the most remote analogies, and discriminated with spontaneous precision the finest shades of sensibility, the subtlest differences of perception and emotion. He possessed a swift soaring and prolific imagination that clothed every thought and feeling with imagery in the moment of its birth, and instinctively read the spiritual meanings of material symbols. His fineness of sense was so exquisite that eye and ear and touch became, as it were, organs and inlets not

merely of sensitive apprehension, but of intellectual beauty and ideal truth. Every nerve in his slight but vigorous frame seemed to vibrate in unison with the deeper life of nature in the world around him, and, like the wandering harp, he was swept to music by every breath of material beauty, every gust of poetic emotion. Above all, he had a strength of intellectual passion and a depth of ideal sympathy that in moments of excitement fused all the powers of his mind into a continuous stream of creative energy, and gave the stamp of something like inspiration to all the higher productions of his muse. His very method of composition reflects these characteristics of his mind. He seems to have been urged by a sort of irresistible impulse to write, and displayed a vehement and passionate absorption in the work that recalls the old traditions of poetical frenzy and divine possession. His conceptions crowded so thickly upon him, were embodied in such exquisite verbal forms, and so enriched by illustrations flashed from remote and multiplied centres of association, that while the fever lasted his whole nature was carried impetuously forward on a full tide of mingled music and imagery. From this exuberance of poetical power some of his critics have reproached him with accumulating image upon image without pausing to select, discriminate, or contrast them. And it is no doubt true that there are passages in which metaphors and similies are heaped on each other in almost dazzling profusion. But even in his most opulent and ornate descriptions

there is hardly a trace of conscious labour or deliberate effort. In his higher work the brilliant diction and splendid imagery glow with kindled emotion, and are wrought into the very substance of the poem by the sustained vehemence and rapture of his impassioned verse. Many of his most exquisite pieces were in this way produced almost at a sitting—at a single heat, as it were—and some of his longest poems, such as *The Revolt of Islam* and *The Cenci*, were completed in a few months. Once engrossed with a great poetical conception, all his powers were kindled to a pitch of the highest intensity, and amidst the crowding realities of imagination the whole world of sense grew pale and dim, and everything around became for the time unsubstantial as a dream.

“This power of complete and passionate absorption in an ideal world of his own had marked Shelley from his earliest years. The stories told of his boyhood and youth strikingly illustrate this feature of his character. . . Shelley himself, however, gives the most vivid picture of this abstracted mood in the description of the poet by one of the spirits in *Prometheus*:—

He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illumine
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see, what things they be;
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality!

Shelley's ‘nurslings of immortality’ were produced in such

seasons of rapt and exulting vision, and they bear in every part authentic and indelible marks of their origin. The verbal obscurities and metrical defects that have given his critics so much trouble are amongst these marks. The thoughts and feelings and images that crowded upon him he was in the habit of committing to paper with the utmost rapidity, and so that the expression was clear and rhythmical enough to be for the moment a kind of musical transcript of what was passing in his own mind, he was satisfied. He could not pause to elaborate the niceties of diction while new and stimulating thoughts, fresh and more brilliant images, were every moment pressing for utterance. If any difficulty as to word or phrase arose, instead of staying to remove it, he left a blank and passed on to embody the fresh visions of ethereal beauty that filled the inward eye before they again faded into the obscurity out of which they had so swiftly arisen. Or he would sometimes give within brackets tentative or alternative expressions, to be afterwards examined and decided on more at leisure. When he returned to revise and complete the unfinished or fragmentary piece, his mind evidently kindled afresh into something like its first ardour, and the work was matured under conditions of poetical excitement similar to those that accompanied its birth. And once fairly finished he busied himself to get the new creation of his brain printed as soon as possible. His eagerness to publish and the reason he gives for it are highly interesting and characteristic. 'If you ask me,' he

says, writing to his friend Trelawney, 'why I publish what 'few or none will care to read, it is that the spirits I have 'raised haunt me until they are sent to the devil of a 'printer. . .' The real reason was, of course, that his mind being full of new conceptions he wanted to be free for fresh creative efforts. In this way, having once published a poem, he considered himself to have done with it, and rarely attempted afterwards anything in the shape of critical revision. Nor in the first printing did he make any important alterations or correct the press with any great care."

In regard to the last sentence but one, it is right to remark that *The Revolt of Islam*, at all events, Shelley was anxious to revise for a second edition, and in fact enquired with some insistence of Mr. Ollier whether an opportunity was likely to occur. "I have many corrections," he says (*Shelley Memorials*, page 153), "to make in it, and one part will be wholly remodelled." And again (page 159), "I could materially improve that poem on revision." I have been unable to ascertain that he ever carried out this project, though Medwin mentions having seen a revised copy. The circumstances must be taken for what they are worth in contemplating Shelley's mental attitude towards those works that he had seen safely launched in type.

In the expression, "Nor in the first printing did he make any important alterations or correct the press with any great care," Professor Baynes does not of course imply any want of due earnestness; but here again I must partially

dissent. The unique proof-leaf inserted in Shelley's own copy of *Laon and Cythna* (see pages 95 to 97 of this volume and also Appendix II) seems to me to indicate modifications important enough; and I think there is at all events a strong probability that great fastidiousness, involving in the event pretty considerable revisions of the proof sheets, are at the root of the strikingly corrupt state of the original edition of *Laon and Cythna*. I have, however, dwelt at some length on this subject in the Appendix to the present volume, and need only add here that the *Alastor* volume bears no evidence of careless revision, and that *The Cenci* and *Adonais*, printed in Italy under Shelley's own supervision expressly in order to avoid error, though characteristically inconsistent in minute details, shew remarkably few actual errors left undetected by Shelley. What he may have done in the way of modification on the proof-sheets, there are no *data* on which to form a hypothesis. With this note of partial dissent, I return to Professor Baynes's remarks; and they certainly qualify to some extent the expression from which I have dissented: "Not that Shelley was careless as to expression, or at all wanting in critical power. On the contrary, he had the finest instinct for language, which he had early cultivated so as to acquire a wonderful mastery over the more vivid, ideal, and expressive elements of poetical diction. But for this, indeed, with his rapid habit of composition, eagerness to print, and neglect of all after revision, the verbal difficulties of his poems would be far more serious than they

are. Again, his prose writings show that he possessed a critical faculty of the rarest delicacy and penetration, a power of philosophical analysis of the keenest edge and finest temper. But the persistent exercise of this faculty upon his own poetry would have required an amount of deliberation and delay, a coolness of temperament, a power of standing aloof from his own work and regarding it in a purely objective point of view wholly foreign to Shelley's nature. In seasons of inspiration he concentrated his whole soul on the work in hand, wrought strenuously to invest his poetical conceptions with 'the light of language,' and present them to the world in the most perfect form, and having done so he deliberately left them to their fate. To have occupied himself afterwards in touching and retouching the finished work would have been in his view a waste of time. Such careful and minute critical revision could in any case only be undertaken in intervals of leisure as a reaction and relief from creative effort. But Shelley was always producing; the completion of one poetical work being almost invariably followed by the commencement of another."

Still, we know that, before his poems went to the press he did not regard it as a waste of time to touch and retouch them; and I must confess I do not think he would ever have regarded as a waste of time the removal of anything that he recognized as a blemish. The fact is, however, that our current notions on the subject of artistic blemishes are crude, narrow, and conventional; and I do

not believe Shelley would have admitted as blemishes one fiftieth of the small inconsistencies of detail which his editors have been at so much pains to remove. It is perfectly true that, as Professor Baynes says, the longer poems rarely display "perfect evenness of verbal and metrical finish,"—Shelley's ideal of perfection being in fact something much higher than that,—so much so that we might as soon expect perfect evenness of utterance from his own inspirers the West Wind and the Skylark as from Shelley, whose highest technical feat was the production of works of art perfectly artless in aspect, and having the air rather of growth than of elaboration. "His finest passages," continues Professor Baynes, "have a witchery of ærial music, an exquisiteness of ideal beauty, and a white intensity of spiritual passion. . . . But the very qualities of mind and heart out of which these perfections spring carry with them the conditions of relative imperfection in the minor details of his work. The lyrical depth and impetuosity of feeling which carries Shelley on, and gives such freedom and grace to the poetical movement of his kindled thought, is unfavourable to perfect smoothness and accuracy in the mechanical details of his verse. He was often, in fact, too completely absorbed in the glorious substance of his poetry to give any minute attention to subordinate points of form. Thus, although from native fineness of ear his lines are never unrhythmical, the rhyme is often defective, and sometimes the metre as well. And while his thought, even in its most subtle refinements, is always lucid, the expres-

sion, from haste or extreme condensation, is sometimes far from being clear." I have freely quoted these remarks because they are admirable in themselves and appropriate to the subject in hand, and also because I think they enforce by implication the principles of editing which I have desired to follow. The lesson that we have to learn is that it was inherent in the very nature of Shelley's mind that certain unevennesses, inconsistencies, and divergences of practice should find place in his work, and that, instead of suspecting corruption where these occur, we should feel satisfied of incorruption, and do all in our power to preserve the fruit of his spirit intact,—not try to make it like the fruit of some other and lesser spirit.

In regard to Mrs. Shelley's editions of her immortal husband's works, there is nothing to be said derogatory to the admiration and gratitude which we all owe her. It is not surprising that, in the proximity of so radiant a source of light, she should have seen no need for studying minutely the details of a series of texts, faulty from several causes, and irregular to some extent owing to changes of method on the part of the author. In her lifetime the period had not arrived for the study of characteristic irregularities and changes in minute matters connected with Shelley's works; and she had quite enough to do in searching out new poems and passages of poems from among the mass of confused and undigested manuscripts which he left. On the text itself she probably worked pretty hard: but the measure of original genius with which she was herself endowed, though marking

her out for independent admiration, was rather a disqualification than otherwise for the editing of texts. Still, she must, through her intimate acquaintance with the mind and heart of Shelley, have been enabled to preserve and supply much of the spirit of his works that no one else could have seized in a situation similar to that in which she worked; and it is also fair to assume that some of the more important variations between the original and posthumous editions of his poems rest on something more than the intuition of his widow,—that she had, in some instances, manuscript authority for modifying passages in his poetry. That she also modified without such authority, there is no reasonable doubt; so that a re-editor has, necessarily, to use his own judgment, and whatever means are at his command, to discriminate between the authoritative and unauthoritative variations of Mrs. Shelley's editions from the originals. Having come to the definite conclusion that the changes in orthography and punctuation shewn by the posthumous editions are as a rule unauthoritative, I have not generally deemed it necessary to discuss or even note them; but I have carefully collated every page of the originals with the two collected editions of 1839, and sometimes with later editions, and have not failed to note all variations of importance to the sense,—of course adopting them when they seem to be improvements, and have a decided air of authority. I have also noted in many instances variations which seem destructive or subversive of the sense, and which I do not think can possibly have any authority; and this has been done because, in an edition

like the present, which aims at putting together all possible material for study of the text, it is important to have the evidence on *both sides* as to the value of Mrs. Shelley's text merely as a text, and without regard to extrinsic considerations. The extrinsic considerations are in this case so very important that Mrs. Shelley's editions will never be superseded, however fully they may be supplemented by editions brought out under different auspices, and which must in the nature of things be heavily indebted to hers. One thing we must bear clearly in mind, beside the fact that Mrs. Shelley's editions are the only authority for much of the text of the posthumous works,—namely that it is impossible to say how much of revision may have been floating in her mind from old experience of her husband's personal utterances,—what he may have noted in copies of his poems belonging to her, or what he may have said to her about general or special imperfections to be amended. And this consideration should make us careful in rejecting important changes made in her editions. I will not say that the two editions of 1839 must hold quite the same position in Shelley literature as Heming and Condell's folio of 1623 holds and will ever hold in Shakespeare literature,—I will not say this, because, for the bulk of Shelley's works, the earlier editions are certainly more authoritative than the later; but I do say that there is an analogy between the editions of 1839 and the folio of 1623,—which analogy will remain as long as the study of English literature lasts.

That Mrs. Shelley did not think in 1839 that she could

ever thenceforth add "a word or line" to the poetical works of her husband reflects nothing but honour upon the loving industry bestowed by her upon a mass of materials of great intricacy; and that, as late as 1862, Mr. Garnett should have discovered additions sufficient to form, with related documents, a volume of the highest interest, indicates a great advance in the price at which Shelley is held by a later generation of students. That much material was still forthcoming when Mr. Rossetti gave us the result of his labours in 1870 was fortunate for all concerned,—equally so that Miss Blind in the same year, through the further research and courtesy of Mr. Garnett, was enabled to supply omissions, make authoritative emendations, and controvert erroneous changes, as she did in *The Westminster Review* for July, 1870; and that, in 1876, another editor should be enabled to add, in Mrs. Shelley's literal phrase, "a word or line" in more than one instance where one was sorely wanted, and from sources that were certainly open to her, is less easy to explain than the discovery of some few complete small poems that may well have escaped her notice, though they would certainly have been available for her use had they happened to lie at the surface.

The frequent references to the edition of Mr. Rossetti, which I have been obliged to make in the foot-notes, arise mainly from the different opinions which he and I entertain of the duties of an editor; and while regretting the controversial character of so many of these notes, I conceive that the great services of Mr. Rossetti in elucidating various

matters connected with Shelley's life and works render it superfluous to apologize for the amount of space bestowed here on the discussion of his views of the text. It was not to be expected that any two editors should be wholly in agreement on a subject of this kind; but the attempt to undo what has been done by an able predecessor must — always be an ungrateful undertaking. Mr. Rossetti's position as a critic, however, and the amount of work he has done in connexion with Shelley, make it peculiarly necessary that another editor should not flinch from trying to undo whatever he thinks ought to be undone, however distasteful the task, and however laborious. The references are to the annotated edition, published by Messrs. Moxon in 1870. It did not seem incumbent on me to search through the unannotated (and undated) "popular" edition with the view of ascertaining whether the Editor has varied the text materially from that of the annotated edition; but in regard to that, I have carefully weighed every change made or proposed, and considered by Mr. Rossetti to be important enough for a note. I have also done the same in regard to many of his unspecified changes; but it did not seem necessary to collate the original editions line by line with his as I have done with Mrs. Shelley's.

To make the present edition easy of reference, the lines have been numbered in the margin, throughout, wherever the poems were not already, in Shelley's editions, divided into numbered stanzas, provided they exceeded in length a sonnet, or fourteen lines; but no new numeration of

stanzas has been introduced. Such helps as the insertion in the head-lines of "Canto I" &c., "Act I, Scene I" &c., are invariably given whether Shelley's editions give them or not; and I have sought to make the wording of the head-lines as useful as possible.

To Sir Percy Shelley I am largely indebted for enabling me to make this edition of his illustrious father's works complete by the reproduction of the various pieces of recent issue, whereof the copyright still remains in the hands of the poet's family. Among these are the whole of the *Relics of Shelley*; and, in regard to that highly important volume, I have to include in my acknowledgment Mr. Richard Garnett, who entirely concurs in my making unrestrained use of his labours in that book. I am also very greatly indebted to Mr. Garnett not only for help in revision of proof-sheets, but for freely imparting his valuable knowledge on numerous points connected with Shelley's works, and for rendering me more assistance than I can well detail, in various difficult matters.

My grateful acknowledgments are due to Mr. S. R. Townshend Mayer for unreservedly placing at my disposal the Shelley manuscripts formerly in the possession of Leigh Hunt, and which have yielded, beside the long-lost poem of Mrs. Shelley on her husband's death, some small inedited poems by Shelley, several fragments, including the greater part of the lost review of Peacock's *Rhododaphne*, and several important manuscripts of works already published. Nothing could exceed the frank courtesy with which Mr.

Mayer has met me in this matter, or the energy and acuteness with which he has searched through masses of documents of a confused and intricate character, to recover all that was recoverable; and all Shelley students will be indebted to him for what he has brought to light.

For unremitting and most valuable assistance in reading the proof-sheets, my warmest thanks are due to my friend Mr. John H. Ingram, the Editor of Poe's Works, and to my brother, Alfred Forman; and I have also to name in the same connexion my friend Mr. Alexander H. Japp, whose well known labours under the pseudonym of "H. A. Page" have led him in such paths as to make his help peculiarly valuable.

I have to thank Mr. Frederick Locker for permitting me to inspect or transcribe, as the case might be, various books and documents; and, for the loan of books, greatly facilitating my labours, I am much beholden to the kindness of Mr. George Bell, and of Mr. John R. P. Kirby, an enthusiastic and indefatigable collector of books in modern literature, who has given me much bibliographical information.

Concerning the illustrations there is not much to be said. The portrait by Miss Curran is inserted in deference to the wishes of Sir Percy Shelley, who, on the high authority of his mother, maintains that it is the best portrait extant. The etching of Shelley's house at Marlow will, I feel sure, be a welcome gift to the poet's many lovers and admirers: the artist, Dr. Arthur Evershed, made an

excursion to Marlow with the express view of etching this plate for the present volume, containing the main produce of Shelley's stay there; and while on the spot, Dr. Evershed copied for me the inscription placed upon the house by direction of Sir William Robert Clayton, Bart. It is as follows:

THIS TABLET WAS PLACED A.D. 1867
 AT THE INSTANCE OF
 SIR WILLIAM ROBERT CLAYTON BART.
 TO PERPETUATE THE RECORD THAT
 PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY
 LIVED AND WORKED IN THIS HOUSE
 AND WAS HERE VISITED BY
 LORD BYRON

HE IS GONE WHERE ALL THINGS WISE AND FAIR
 DESCEND. OH DREAM NOT THAT THE AMOROUS DEEP
 WILL YET RESTORE HIM TO THE VITAL AIR,
 DEATH FEEDS ON HIS MUTE VOICE, AND LAUGHS AT OUR DESPAIR.
 ADONAIS.

It should be noted that the reference to Byron is necessarily apocryphal, inasmuch as his Lordship had finally left England before Shelley took the house at Marlow,—a misapprehension which doubtless, to be promptly corrected, only needs to be pointed out.

H. BUXTON FORMAN.

PREFACE AND NOTES
TO THE
COLLECTED EDITIONS OF 1839
BY MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY

[Mrs. Shelley's remarks upon the poems, and the biographical details blended with those remarks, are of the highest value, and form, when brought together in the form of a connected narrative, a memoir as interesting as it is striking—although the gifted author would have been the first to disclaim its adequacy as a memoir of Shelley, more particularly on account of her want of materials for the early portion of his life referred to in her Preface (p. xlviii). I have in my possession a letter from Mrs. Shelley tendering certain corrections &c. for Galignani's edition of 1829, and offering to write a memoir on condition of strict secrecy. The corrections were used; and it is difficult to imagine that the offer of a memoir was declined, since, whether it were used in its integrity or not, the material would have been valuable to Galignani's editor. The memoir which appeared opens thus:—"Field-Place, in the county of Sussex, was the spot where Percy Bysshe Shelley first saw the light. He was born on the 4th of August, 1792; and was the eldest son of Sir Timothy Shelley, Bart., of Castle-Goring. His family is an ancient one, and a branch of it has become the representative of the house of the illustrious Sir Philip Sidney of Penshurst. Despising honours which only rest upon the accidental circumstances of birth, Shelley was proud of his connection with an immortal name."—This memoir moreover contains many passages which correspond pretty nearly with passages in the following notes, quotes largely from Leigh Hunt's *Lord Byron* &c., and ends with the Preface to the *Posthumous Poems* of 1824. There is much beside the passage extracted above pointing to a very intimate contemporary knowledge; and that and many other passages might well have been written by Mrs. Shelley; but on the other hand there is much that she would certainly not have written. A want of unity in the style and sentiment make it moderately easy to cut out what Galignani's editor contributed, if, as I imagine, Mrs. Shelley's offer was accepted and her memoir was used in a patchwork fashion; and there is some temptation to include here a series of excerpts from the brief Galignani biography; but in the absence of certainty as to the authorship, and having regard to the repetitions which would be involved, I abstain. Mrs. Shelley's foot-notes in the following pages are distinguished by the initials *M. S.* from such notes as I have had to supply—although her practice as to signing her foot-notes in her own editions was not uniform.—H. B. F.]

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL NOTES

FROM MRS. SHELLEY'S

COLLECTED EDITIONS OF 1839.

P R E F A C E.

OBSTACLES have long existed to my presenting the public with a perfect edition of Shelley's Poems. These being at last happily removed, I hasten to fulfil an important duty,—that of giving the productions of a sublime genius to the world, with all the correctness possible, and of, at the same time, detailing the history of those productions, as they sprung, living and warm, from his heart and brain. I abstain from any remark on the occurrences of his private life; except, inasmuch as the passions which they engendered, inspired his poetry. This is not the time to relate the truth; and I should reject any colouring of the truth. No account of these events has ever been given at all approaching reality in their details, either as regards himself or others; nor shall I further allude to them than to remark, that the errors of action, committed by a man as noble and generous as Shelley, may, as far as he only is concerned, be fearlessly avowed, by those who loved him, in the firm conviction, that were they judged impartially, his character would stand in fairer and brighter light than that of any contemporary. Whatever faults he had, ought to find ex-

tenuation among his fellows, since they proved him to be human ; without them, the exalted nature of his soul would have raised him into something divine.

The qualities that struck any one newly introduced to Shelley, were, first, a gentle and cordial goodness that animated his intercourse with warm affection, and helpful sympathy. The other, the eagerness and ardour with which he was attached to the cause of human happiness and improvement ; and the fervent eloquence with which he discussed such subjects. His conversation was marked by its happy abundance, and the beautiful language in which he clothed his poetic ideas and philosophical notions. To defecate life of its misery and its evil, was the ruling passion of his soul : he dedicated to it every power of his mind, every pulsation of his heart. He looked on political freedom as the direct agent to effect the happiness of mankind ; and thus any new-sprung hope of liberty inspired a joy and an exultation more intense and wild than he could have felt for any personal advantage. Those who have never experienced the workings of passion on general and unselfish subjects cannot understand this ; and it must be difficult of comprehension to the younger generation rising around, since they cannot remember the scorn and hatred with which the partisans of reform were regarded some few years ago, nor the persecutions to which they were exposed. He had been from youth the victim of the state of feeling inspired by the reaction of the French Revolution ; and believing firmly in the justice and excellence of his views, it cannot be wondered that a nature as sensitive, as impetuous, and as generous as his, should put its whole force into the attempt to alleviate for others the evils of those systems from which he had himself suffered. Many advantages attended his birth ; he spurned them all when balanced with what he considered his duties. He was generous to imprudence, devoted to heroism.

These characteristics breathe throughout his poetry. The struggle for human weal; the resolution firm to martyrdom; the impetuous pursuit; the glad triumph in good; the determination not to despair. Such were the features that marked those of his works which he regarded with most complacency, as sustained by a lofty subject and useful aim.

In addition to these, his poems may be divided into two classes,—the purely imaginative, and those which sprung from the emotions of his heart. Among the former may be classed "The Witch of Atlas," "Adonais," and his latest composition, left imperfect, "The Triumph of Life." In the first of these particularly, he gave the reins to his fancy, and luxuriated in every idea as it rose; in all, there is that sense of mystery which formed an essential portion of his perception of life—a clinging to the subtler inner spirit, rather than to the outward form—a curious and metaphysical anatomy of human passion and perception.

The second class is, of course, the more popular, as appealing at once to emotions common to us all; some of these rest on the passion of love; others on grief and despondency; others on the sentiments inspired by natural objects. Shelley's conception of love was exalted, absorbing, allied to all that is purest and noblest in our nature, and warmed by earnest passion; such it appears when he gave it a voice in verse. Yet he was usually averse to expressing these feelings, except when highly idealized; and many of his more beautiful effusions he had cast aside, unfinished, and they were never seen by me till after I had lost him. Others, as for instance, "Rosalind and Helen," and "Lines written among the Euganean Hills," I found among his papers by chance; and with some difficulty urged him to complete them. There are others, such as the "Ode to the Sky Lark," and "The Cloud," which, in the opinion of many critics, bear a purer poetical stamp than any other of his productions. They were written as his mind prompted, listening

to the carolling of the bird, aloft in the azure sky of Italy ; or marking the cloud as it sped across the heavens, while he floated in his boat on the Thames.

No poet was ever warmed by a more genuine and unforced inspiration. His extreme sensibility gave the intensity of passion to his intellectual pursuits ; and rendered his mind keenly alive to every perception of outward objects, as well as to his internal sensations. Such a gift is, among the sad vicissitudes of human life, the disappointments we meet, and the galling sense of our own mistakes and errors, fraught with pain ; to escape from such, he delivered up his soul to poetry, and felt happy when he sheltered himself from the influence of human sympathies, in the wildest regions of fancy. His imagination has been termed too brilliant, his thoughts too subtle. He loved to idealize reality ; and this is a taste shared by few. We are willing to have our passing whims exalted into passions, for this gratifies our vanity ; but few of us understand or sympathize with the endeavour to ally the love of abstract beauty, and adoration of abstract good, the *τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλὸν* of the Socratic philosophers, with our sympathies with our kind. In this Shelley resembled Plato ; both taking more delight in the abstract and the ideal, than in the special and tangible. This did not result from imitation ; for it was not till Shelley resided in Italy that he made Plato his study ; he then translated his *Symposium* and his *Ion* ; and the English language boasts of no more brilliant composition, than Plato's *Praise of Love*, translated by Shelley. To return to his own poetry. The luxury of imagination, which sought nothing beyond itself, as a child burthens itself with spring flowers, thinking of no use beyond the enjoyment of gathering them, often showed itself in his verses : they will be only appreciated by minds which have resemblance to his own ; and the mystic subtlety of many of his thoughts will share the same fate. The metaphysical strain that charac-

terizes much of what he has written, was, indeed, the portion of his works to which, apart from those whose scope was to awaken mankind to aspirations for what he considered the true and good, he was himself particularly attached. There is much, however, that speaks to the many. When he would consent to dismiss these huntings after the obscure, which, entwined with his nature as they were, he did with difficulty, no poet ever expressed in sweeter, more heart-reaching, or more passionate verse, the gentler or more forcible emotions of the soul.

A wise friend ¹ once wrote to Shelley, "You are still very young, and in certain essential respects you do not yet sufficiently perceive that you are so." It is seldom that the young know what youth is, till they have got beyond its period; and time was not given him to attain this knowledge. It must be remembered that there is the stamp of such inexperience on all he wrote; he had not completed his nine-and-twentieth ² year when he died. The calm of middle life did not add the seal of the virtues which adorn maturity to those generated by the vehement spirit of youth. Through life also he was a martyr to ill health, and constant pain wound up his nerves to a pitch of susceptibility that rendered his views of life different from those of a man in the enjoyment of healthy sensations. Perfectly gentle and forbearing in manner, he suffered a good deal of internal irritability, or rather excitement, and his fortitude to bear was almost always on the stretch; and thus, during a short life, had gone through more experience of sensation, than many whose existence is protracted. "If I die to-morrow," he said, on the eve of his unanticipated death, "I have lived to be older than my father." The weight of thought and feeling

¹ This was Mrs. Shelley's father, William Godwin.

² As Shelley was born on the 4th of August 1792, and was drowned on

the 8th of July 1822, we should of course read *thirtieth* for *nine-and-twentieth*.

burdened him heavily ; you read his sufferings in his attenuated frame, while you perceived the mastery he held over them in his animated countenance and brilliant eyes.

He died, and the world showed no outward sign ; but his influence over mankind, though slow in growth, is fast augmenting, and in the ameliorations that have taken place in the political state of his country, we may trace in part the operation of his arduous struggles. His spirit gathers peace in its new state from the sense that, though late, his exertions were not made in vain, and in the progress of the liberty he so fondly loved.

He died, and his place among those who knew him intimately, has never been filled up. He walked beside them like a spirit of good to comfort and benefit—to enlighten the darkness of life with irradiations of genius, to cheer it with his sympathy and love. Any one, once attached to Shelley, must feel all other affections, however true and fond, as wasted on barren soil in comparison. It is our best consolation to know that such a pure-minded and exalted being was once among us, and now exists where we hope one day to join him ;—although the intolerant, in their blindness, poured down anathemas, the Spirit of Good, who can judge the heart, never rejected him.

In the notes appended to the poems, I have endeavoured to narrate the origin and history of each. The loss of nearly all letters and papers which refer to his early life, renders the execution more imperfect than it would otherwise have been. I have, however, the liveliest recollection of all that was done and said during the period of my knowing him. Every impression is as clear as if stamped yesterday, and I have no apprehension of any mistake in my statements as far as they go. In other respects, I am, indeed, incompetent ; but I feel the importance of the task, and regard it as my most sacred duty. I endeavour to fulfil it in a manner he would himself approve ; and hope in this publication to lay

the first stone of a monument due to Shelley's genius, his sufferings, and his virtues :

S' al seguir son tarda,
Forse avverrà che 'l bel nome gentile
Consacrerò con questa stanca penna.

POSTSCRIPT.

IN revising this new edition,¹ and carefully consulting Shelley's scattered and confused papers, I found a few fragments which had hitherto escaped me, and was enabled to complete a few poems hitherto left unfinished. What at one time escapes the searching eye, dimmed by its own earnestness, becomes clear at a future period. By the aid of a friend I also present some poems complete and correct, which hitherto have been defaced by various mistakes and omissions.² It was suggested that the Poem "To the Queen of my Heart," was falsely attributed to Shelley. I certainly find no trace of it among his papers, and as those of his intimate friends whom I have consulted never heard of it, I omit it.³

Two Poems are added of some length, "Swellfoot the Tyrant," and "Peter Bell the Third." I have mentioned the circumstances under which they were written in the notes; and need only add, that they are conceived in a very different spirit from Shelley's usual compositions. They are specimens of the burlesque and fanciful; but although they adopt a familiar style and homely imagery, there shine through the radiance of the poet's imagination the earnest views and opinions of the politician and the moralist.

¹ The edition referred to is the second edition of 1839.

² See page xviii, Vol. IV, of the present edition.

³ This matter is discussed in the foot-note to the poem at p. 369 of Vol. IV.

At my request the publisher has restored the omitted passages of *Queen Mab*.¹—I now present this edition as a complete collection of my husband's poetical works, and I do not foresee that I can hereafter add to or take away a word or line.

Putney, November 6th, 1839.

QUEEN MAB.

SHELLEY was eighteen² when he wrote "*Queen Mab*:" he never published it. When it was written, he had come to the decision that he was too young to be a "judge of controversies;" and he was desirous of acquiring "that sobriety of spirit which is the characteristic of true heroism." But he never doubted the truth or utility of his opinions; and in printing and privately distributing "*Queen Mab*" he believed that he should further their dissemination, without occasioning the mischief either to others or himself that might arise from publication. It is doubtful whether he would himself have admitted it into a collection of his works. His severe classical taste, refined by the constant study of the Greek poets, might have discovered defects that escape the ordinary reader, and the change his opinions underwent in many points, would have prevented him from putting forth the speculations of his boyish days. But the poem is too beautiful in itself, and far too remarkable as the production of a boy of eighteen, to allow of its being passed over: besides that having been frequently reprinted, the omission would be vain. In the former edition certain portions were left out, as shocking the general reader from the violence of their attack on religion. I myself had a

¹ *The Athenæum* had blamed Mrs. Shelley harshly enough for their omission.

² This corresponds with Shelley's own account. But see note at p. 380 of Vol. IV.

painful feeling that such erasures might be looked upon as a mark of disrespect towards the author, and am glad to have the opportunity of restoring them. The notes also are reprinted entire ; not because they are models of reasoning or lessons of truth ; but because Shelley wrote them. And that all that a man, at once so distinguished and so excellent, ever did, deserves to be preserved. The alterations his opinions underwent ought to be recorded, for they form his history.

A series of articles was published in the "New Monthly Magazine," during the autumn of the year 1832, written by a man of great talent,¹ a fellow collegian and warm friend of Shelley: they describe admirably the state of his mind during his collegiate life. Inspired with ardour for the acquisition of knowledge ; endowed with the keenest sensibility, and with the fortitude of a martyr, Shelley came among his fellow-creatures, congregated for the purposes of education, like a spirit from another sphere, too delicately organized for the rough treatment man uses towards man, especially in the season of youth ; and too resolute in carrying out his own sense of good and justice not to become a victim. To a devoted attachment to those he loved, he added a determined resistance to oppression. Refusing to fag at Eton, he was treated with revolting cruelty by masters and boys: this roused, instead of taming his spirit, and he rejected the duty of obedience, when it was enforced by menaces and punishment. To aversion to the society of his fellow-creatures, such as he found them when collected together in societies, where one egged on the other to acts of tyranny, was joined the deepest sympathy and compassion : while the attachment he felt for individuals and the admiration with which he regarded their powers and their virtues, led him to entertain a high opinion of the perfectibility of

¹ Thomas Jefferson Hogg.

human nature, and he believed that all could reach the highest grade of moral improvement, did not the customs and prejudices of society foster evil passions, and excuse evil actions.

The oppression which, trembling at every nerve yet resolute to heroism, it was his ill fortune to encounter at school and at college, led him to dissent in all things from those whose arguments were blows, whose faith appeared to engender blame and hatred. "During my existence," he wrote to a friend in 1812, "I have incessantly speculated, thought, and read." His readings were not always well chosen; among them were the works of the French philosophers; as far as metaphysical argument went, he temporarily became a convert. At the same time, it was the cardinal article of his faith, that if men were but taught and induced to treat their fellows with love, charity, and equal rights, this earth would realize Paradise. He looked upon religion as it is professed, and, above all, practised, as hostile, instead of friendly, to the cultivation of those virtues, which would make men brothers.

Can this be wondered at? At the age of seventeen,¹ fragile in health and frame, of the purest habits in morals, full of devoted generosity and universal kindness, glowing with ardour to attain wisdom, resolved at every personal sacrifice to do right, burning with a desire for affection and sympathy,—he was treated as a reprobate, cast forth as a criminal.

The cause was, that he was sincere; that he believed the opinions which he entertained, to be true; and he loved truth with a martyr's love: he was ready to sacrifice station and fortune, and his dearest affections, at its shrine. The sacrifice was demanded from, and made by, a youth of

¹ If the reference is, as it would seem to be, to Shelley's expulsion from Oxford in March 1811, we should read

between eighteen and nineteen instead of seventeen.

seventeen. It is a singular fact in the history of society in the civilized nations of modern times, that no false step is so irretrievable as one made in early youth. Older men, it is true, when they oppose their fellows, and transgress ordinary rules, carry a certain prudence or hypocrisy as a shield along with them. But youth is rash; nor can it imagine, while asserting what it believes to be true, and doing what it believes to be right, that it should be denounced as vicious, and pursued as a criminal.

Shelley possessed a quality of mind which experience has shown me to be of the rarest occurrence among human beings: this was his *unworldliness*. The usual motives that rule men, prospects of present or future advantage, the rank and fortune of those around, the taunts and censures, or the praise of those who were hostile to him, had no influence whatever over his actions, and apparently none over his thoughts. It is difficult even to express the simplicity and directness of purpose that adorned him. Some few might be found in the history of mankind, and some one at least among his own friends, equally disinterested and scornful, even to severe personal sacrifices, of every baser motive. But no one, I believe, ever joined this noble but passive virtue to equal active endeavours, for the benefit of his friends and mankind in general, and to equal power to produce the advantages he desired. The world's brightest gauds, and its most solid advantages, were of no worth in his eyes, when compared to the cause of what he considered truth, and the good of his fellow-creatures. Born in a position which, to his inexperienced mind, afforded the greatest facilities to practise the tenets he espoused, he boldly declared the use he would make of fortune and station, and enjoyed the belief that he should materially benefit his fellow-creatures by his actions; while, conscious of surpassing powers of reason and imagination, it is not strange that he should, even while so young, have believed that his

written thoughts would tend to disseminate opinions, which he believed conducive to the happiness of the human race.

If man were a creature devoid of passion, he might have said and done all this with quietness. But he was too enthusiastic, and too full of hatred of all the ills he witnessed, not to scorn danger. Various disappointments tortured, but could not tame, his soul. The more enmity he met, the more earnestly he became attached to his peculiar views, and hostile to those of the men who persecuted him.

He was animated to greater zeal by compassion for his fellow-creatures. His sympathy was excited by the misery with which the world is bursting. He witnessed the sufferings of the poor, and was aware of the evils of ignorance. He desired to induce every rich man to despoil himself of superfluity, and to create a brotherhood of property and service, and was ready to be the first to lay down the advantages of his birth. He was of too uncompromising a disposition to join any party. He did not in his youth look forward to gradual improvement: nay, in those days of intolerance, now almost forgotten, it seemed as easy to look forward to the sort of millennium of freedom and brotherhood, which he thought the proper state of mankind, as to the present reign of moderation and improvement. Ill health made him believe that his race would soon be run; that a year or two was all he had of life. He desired that these years should be useful and illustrious. He saw, in a fervent call on his fellow-creatures to share alike the blessings of the creation, to love and serve each other, the noblest work that life and time permitted him. In this spirit he composed *QUEEN MAB*.

He was a lover of the wonderful and wild in literature; but had not fostered these tastes at their genuine sources—the romances and chivalry of the middle ages; but in the perusal of such German works as were current in those days.

Under the influence of these, he, at the age of fifteen,¹ wrote two short prose romances of slender merit. The sentiments and language were exaggerated, the composition imitative and poor. He wrote also a poem on the subject of Ahasuerus—being led to it by a German fragment he picked up, dirty and torn, in Lincoln's-inn-Fields. This fell afterwards into other hands—and was considerably altered before it was printed. Our earlier English poetry was almost unknown to him. The love and knowledge of nature developed by Wordsworth—the lofty melody and mysterious beauty of Coleridge's poetry—and the wild fantastic machinery and gorgeous scenery adopted by Southey, composed his favourite reading; the rhythm of *Queen Mab* was founded on that of *Thalaba*, and the first few lines bear a striking resemblance in spirit, though not in idea, to the opening of that poem. His fertile imagination, and ear, tuned to the finest sense of harmony, preserved him from imitation. Another of his favourite books was the poem of *Gebir*, by Walter Savage Landor. From his boyhood he had a wonderful facility of versification which he carried into another language, and his Latin school verses were composed with an ease and correctness that procured for him prizes—and caused him to be resorted to by all his friends for help. He was, at the period of writing *Queen Mab*, a great traveller within the limits of England, Scotland, and Ireland. His time was spent among the loveliest scenes of these countries. Mountain and lake and forest were his home; the phenomena of nature were his favourite study. He loved to inquire into their causes, and was addicted to pursuits of natural philosophy and chemistry, as far as they could be carried on, as an amusement. These tastes gave truth and vivacity to his descriptions, and warmed his soul with that deep admiration

¹ The reference may be presumed to be to *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne*. If so it is probable that the age is inad-

vertently understated here also, as in the case noted at p. lii.

for the wonders of Nature which constant association with her inspired.

He never intended to publish *Queen Mab* as it stands ; but a few years after, when printing *Alastor*, he extracted a small portion which he entitled "The Dæmon of the World : " in this he changed somewhat the versification—and made other alterations scarcely to be called improvements.¹

Some years after, when in Italy, a bookseller published an edition of *Queen Mab* as it originally stood. Shelley was hastily written to by his friends, under the idea that, deeply injurious as the mere distribution of the poem had proved, the publication might awaken fresh persecutions. At the suggestion of these friends he wrote a letter on the subject, printed in "The Examiner" newspaper.²

ALASTOR.

"ALASTOR" is written in a very different tone from "*Queen Mab*." In the latter, Shelley poured out all the cherished speculations of his youth—all the irrepressible emotions of sympathy, censure, and hope, to which the present suffering, and what he considers the proper destiny of his fellow-creatures, gave birth. "*Alastor*," on the contrary, contains an individual interest only. A very few years, with their attendant events, had checked the ardour of Shelley's hopes, though he still thought them well grounded, and that to advance their fulfilment was the noblest task man could achieve.

This is neither the time nor place to speak of the misfortunes that chequered his life. It will be sufficient to say, that in all he did, he at the time of doing it believed him-

¹ Mrs. Shelley extracted here as a specimen the Invocation to the Soul of Ianthe as altered in *The Dæmon of the World*. It will be found at pp.

63-4 of this volume.

² Mrs. Shelley gave the letter here. It is reprinted at pp. 548-9 of Vol. IV.

self justified to his own conscience; while the various ills of poverty and loss of friends brought home to him the sad realities of life. Physical suffering had also considerable influence in causing him to turn his eyes inward; inclining him rather to brood over the thoughts and emotions of his own soul, than to glance abroad, and to make, as in "Queen Mab," the whole universe the object and subject of his song. In the spring of 1815, an eminent physician pronounced that he was dying rapidly of a consumption; abscesses were formed on his lungs, and he suffered acute spasms. Suddenly a complete change took place; and though through life he was a martyr to pain and debility, every symptom of pulmonary disease vanished. His nerves, which nature had formed sensitive to an unexampled degree, were rendered still more susceptible by the state of his health.

As soon as the peace of 1814 had opened the Continent, he went abroad. He visited some of the more magnificent scenes of Switzerland, and returned to England from Lucerne, by the Reuss and the Rhine. This river navigation enchanted him. In his favourite poem of "Thalaba," his imagination had been excited by a description of such a voyage. In the summer of 1815, after a tour along the southern coast of Devonshire and a visit to Clifton, he rented a house on Bishopgate Heath, on the borders of Windsor Forest, where he enjoyed several months of comparative health and tranquil happiness. The later summer months were warm and dry. Accompanied by a few friends, he visited the source of the Thames, making the voyage in a wherry from Windsor to Cricklade. His beautiful stanzas in the churchyard of Lechlade were written on that occasion. "Alastor" was composed on his return. He spent his days under the oak-shades of Windsor Great Park; and the magnificent woodland was a fitting study to inspire the various descriptions of forest scenery we find in the poem.

None of Shelley's poems is more characteristic than this.

The solemn spirit that reigns throughout, the worship of the majesty of nature, the broodings of a poet's heart in solitude—the mingling of the exulting joy which the various aspect of the visible universe inspires, with the sad and struggling pangs which human passion imparts, give a touching interest to the whole. The death which he had often contemplated during the last months as certain and near, he here represented in such colours as had, in his lonely musings, soothed his soul to peace. The versification sustains the solemn spirit which breathes throughout: it is peculiarly melodious. The poem ought rather to be considered didactic than narrative: it was the out-pouring of his own emotions, embodied in the purest form he could conceive, painted in the ideal hues which his brilliant imagination inspired, and softened by the recent anticipation of death.

THE REVOLT OF ISLAM.

SHELLEY possessed two remarkable qualities of intellect—a brilliant imagination and a logical exactness of reason. His inclinations led him (he fancied) almost alike to poetry and metaphysical discussions. I say “he fancied,” because I believe the former to have been paramount, and that it would have gained the mastery even had he struggled against it. However, he said that he deliberated at one time whether he should dedicate himself to poetry or metaphysics, and resolving on the former, he educated himself for it, discarding in a great measure his philosophical pursuits, and engaging himself in the study of the poets of Greece, Italy, and England. To these may be added a constant perusal of portions of the Old Testament—the Psalms, the book of Job, the Prophet Isaiah, and others, the sublime poetry of which filled him with delight.

As a poet, his intellect and compositions were powerfully influenced by exterior circumstances, and especially by his

place of abode. He was very fond of travelling, and ill health increased this restlessness. The sufferings occasioned by a cold English winter, made him pine, especially when our colder spring arrived, for a more genial climate. In 1816 he again visited Switzerland, and rented a house on the banks of the lake of Geneva; and many a day, in cloud or sunshine, was passed alone in his boat—sailing as the wind listed, or weltering on the calm waters. The majestic aspect of nature ministered such thoughts as he afterwards enwove in verse. His lines on the Bridge of the Arve, and his Hymn to Intellectual Beauty, were written at this time. Perhaps during this summer his genius was checked by association with another poet whose nature was utterly dissimilar to his own, yet who, in the poem he wrote at that time, gave tokens that he shared for a period the more abstract and etherialized inspiration of Shelley. The saddest events awaited his return to England; but such was his fear to wound the feelings of others, that he never expressed the anguish he felt, and seldom gave vent to the indignation roused by the persecutions he underwent; while the course of deep unexpressed passion, and the sense of injury, engendered the desire to embody themselves in forms defecated of all the weakness and evil which cling to real life.

He chose therefore for his hero a youth nourished in dreams of liberty, some of whose actions are in direct opposition to the opinions of the world; but who is animated throughout by an ardent love of virtue, and a resolution to confer the boons of political and intellectual freedom on his fellow-creatures. He created for this youth a woman such as he delighted to imagine—full of enthusiasm for the same objects; and they both, with will unvanquished and the deepest sense of the justice of their cause, met adversity and death. There exists in this poem a memorial of a friend of his youth. The character of the old man who liberates Laon from his tower-prison, and tends on him in sickness,

is founded on that of Doctor Lind, who, when Shelley was at Eton, had often stood by to befriend and support him, and whose name he never mentioned without love and veneration.

During the year 1817, we were established at Marlow, in Buckinghamshire. Shelley's choice of abode was fixed chiefly by this town being at no great distance from London, and its neighbourhood to the Thames. The poem was written in his boat, as it floated under the beech groves of Bisham, or during wanderings in the neighbouring country, which is distinguished for peculiar beauty. The chalk hills break into cliffs that overhang the Thames, or form valleys clothed with beech; the wilder portion of the country is rendered beautiful by exuberant vegetation; and the cultivated part is peculiarly fertile. With all this wealth of nature which, either in the form of gentlemen's parks or soil dedicated to agriculture, flourishes around, Marlow was inhabited (I hope it is altered now) by a very poor population. The women are lace-makers, and lose their health by sedentary labour, for which they were very ill paid. The poor-laws ground to the dust not only the paupers, but those who had risen just above that state, and were obliged to pay poor-rates. The changes produced by peace following a long war, and a bad harvest, brought with them the most heart-rending evils to the poor. Shelley afforded what alleviation he could. In the winter, while bringing out his poem, he had a severe attack of ophthalmia, caught while visiting the poor cottages. I mention these things,—for this minute and active sympathy with his fellow-creatures gives a thousand-fold interest to his speculations, and stamps with reality his pleadings for the human race.

The poem, bold in its opinions and uncompromising in their expression, met with many censurers, not only among those who allow of no virtue but such as supports the cause they espouse, but even among those whose opinions were

similar to his own. I extract a portion of a letter written in answer to one of these friends;¹ it best details the impulses of Shelley's mind and his motives: it was written with entire unreserve; and is therefore a precious monument of his own opinion of his powers, of the purity of his designs, and the ardour with which he clung, in adversity and through the valley of the shadow of death, to views from which he believed the permanent happiness of mankind must eventually spring.

“ *Marlow, Dec. 11, 1817.*

“ I have read and considered all that you say about my general powers, and the particular instance of the Poem in which I have attempted to develop them. Nothing can be more satisfactory to me than the interest which your admonitions express. But I think you are mistaken in some points with regard to the peculiar nature of my powers, whatever be their amount. I listened with deference and self-suspicion to your censures of ‘the Revolt of Islam;’ but the productions of mine which you commend hold a very low place in my own esteem; and this reassured me, in some degree at least. The poem was produced by a series of thoughts which filled my mind with unbounded and sustained enthusiasm. I felt the precariousness of my life, and I engaged in this task, resolved to leave some record of myself. Much of what the volume contains was written with the same feeling, as real, though not so prophetic, as the communications of a dying man. I never presumed indeed to consider it anything approaching to faultless; but when I consider contemporary productions of the same apparent pretensions, I own I was filled with confidence. I felt that it was in many respects a genuine picture of my own mind. I felt that the sentiments were true, not assumed. And in this have I long believed that my power consists;

¹ William Godwin: see *Shelley Memorials*, p. 84.

in sympathy and that part of the imagination which relates to sentiment and contemplation. I am formed, if for anything not in common with the herd of mankind, to apprehend minute and remote distinctions of feeling, whether relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us, and to communicate the conceptions which result from considering either the moral or the material universe as a whole. Of course, I believe these faculties, which perhaps comprehend all that is sublime in man, to exist very imperfectly in my own mind. But when you advert to my chancery paper, a cold, forced, unimpassioned, insignificant piece of cramped and cautious argument; and to the little scrap about Mandeville, which expressed my feelings indeed, but cost scarcely two minutes' thought to express, as specimens of my powers, more favourable than that which grew as it were from 'the agony and bloody sweat' of intellectual travail; surely I must feel that in some manner, either I am mistaken in believing that I have any talent at all, or you in the selection of the specimens of it.

"Yet after all, I cannot but be conscious in much of what I write, of an absence of that tranquillity which is the attribute and accompaniment of power. This feeling alone would make your most kind and wise admonitions, on the subject of the economy of intellectual force, valuable to me. And if I live, or if I see any trust in coming years, doubt not but that I shall do something, whatever it may be, which a serious and earnest estimate of my powers will suggest to me, and which will be in every respect accommodated to their utmost limits."

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

ON the 12th of March, 1818, Shelley quitted England, never to return. His principal motive was the hope that his health would be improved by a milder climate; he

suffered very much during the winter previous to his emigration, and this decided his vacillating purpose. In December, 1817, he had written from Marlow to a friend, saying :—

“My health has been materially worse. My feelings at intervals are of a deadly and torpid kind, or awakened to such a state of unnatural and keen excitement, that only to instance the organ of sight, I find the very blades of grass and the boughs of distant trees present themselves to me with microscopic distinctness. Towards evening I sink into a state of lethargy and inanimation, and often remain for hours on the sofa between sleep and waking, a prey to the most painful irritability of thought. Such, with little intermission, is my condition. The hours devoted to study are selected with vigilant caution from among these periods of endurance. It is not for this that I think of travelling to Italy, even if I knew that Italy would relieve me. But I have experienced a decisive pulmonary attack, and although at present it has passed away without any considerable vestige of its existence, yet this symptom sufficiently shows the true nature of my disease to be consumptive. It is to my advantage that this malady is in its nature slow, and, if one is sufficiently alive to its advances, is susceptible of cure from a warm climate. In the event of its assuming any decided shape, *it would be my duty* to go to Italy without delay. It is not mere health, but life, that I should seek, and that not for my own sake; I feel I am capable of trampling on all such weakness—but for the sake of those to whom my life may be a source of happiness, utility, security, and honour—and to some of whom my death might be all that is the reverse.”

In almost every respect his journey to Italy was advantageous. He left behind friends to whom he was attached, but cares of a thousand kinds, many springing from his lavish generosity, crowded round him in his native country :

and, except the society of one or two friends, he had no compensation. The climate caused him to consume half his existence in helpless suffering. His dearest pleasure, the free enjoyment of the scenes of nature, was marred by the same circumstance.

He went direct to Italy, avoiding even Paris, and did not make any pause till he arrived at Milan. The first aspect of Italy enchanted Shelley; it seemed a garden of delight placed beneath a clearer and brighter heaven than any he had lived under before. He wrote long descriptive letters during the first year of his residence in Italy, which, as compositions, are the most beautiful in the world, and show how truly he appreciated and studied the wonders of nature and art in that divine land.

The poetical spirit within him speedily revived with all the power and with more than all the beauty of his first attempts. He meditated three subjects as the groundwork for lyrical Dramas. One was the story of Tasso; of this a slight fragment of a song of Tasso remains. The other was one founded on the book of Job, which he never abandoned in idea, but of which no trace remains among his papers. The third was the "Prometheus Unbound." The Greek tragedians were now his most familiar companions in his wanderings, and the sublime majesty of Æschylus filled him with wonder and delight. The father of Greek tragedy does not possess the pathos of Sophocles, nor the variety and tenderness of Euripides; the interest on which he founds his dramas is often elevated above human vicissitudes into the mighty passions and throes of gods and demigods—such fascinated the abstract imagination of Shelley.

We spent a month at Milan, visiting the Lake of Como during that interval. Thence we passed in succession to Pisa, Leghorn, the Baths of Lucca, Venice, Este, Rome, Naples, and back again to Rome, whither we returned early in March 1819. During all this time Shelley meditated the

subject of his drama, and wrote portions of it. Other poems were composed during this interval, and while at the Bagni di Lucca he translated Plato's Symposium. But though he diversified his studies, his thoughts centred in the "Prometheus." At last, when at Rome, during a bright and beautiful spring, he gave up his whole time to the composition. The spot selected for his study was, as he mentions in his preface, the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla. These are little known to the ordinary visitor at Rome. He describes them in a letter, with that poetry, and delicacy, and truth of description, which render his narrated impressions of scenery of unequalled beauty and interest.

At first he completed the drama in three acts. It was not till several months after, when at Florence, that he conceived that a fourth act, a sort of hymn of rejoicing in the fulfilment of the prophecies with regard to Prometheus, ought to be added to complete the composition.

The prominent feature of Shelley's theory of the destiny of the human species was, that evil is not inherent in the system of the creation, but an accident that might be expelled. This also forms a portion of Christianity; God made earth and man perfect, till he, by his fall,

"Brought death into the world and all our woe."

Shelley believed that mankind had only to will that there should be no evil, and there would be none. It is not my part in these notes to notice the arguments that have been urged against this opinion, but to mention the fact that he entertained it, and was indeed attached to it with fervent enthusiasm. That man could be so perfectionized as to be able to expel evil from his own nature, and from the greater part of the creation, was the cardinal point of his system. And the subject he loved best to dwell on, was the image of One warring with the Evil Principle,

oppressed not only by it, but by all, even the good, who were deluded into considering evil a necessary portion of humanity. A victim full of fortitude and hope, and the spirit of triumph emanating from a reliance in the ultimate omnipotence of good. Such he had depicted in his last poem, when he made Laon the enemy and the victim of tyrants. He now took a more idealized image of the same subject. He followed certain classical authorities in figuring Saturn as the good principle, Jupiter the usurping evil one, and Prometheus as the regenerator, who, unable to bring mankind back to primitive innocence, used knowledge as a weapon to defeat evil, by leading mankind beyond the state wherein they are sinless through ignorance, to that in which they are virtuous through wisdom. Jupiter punished the temerity of the Titan by chaining him to a rock of Caucasus, and causing a vulture to devour his still renewed heart. There was a prophecy afloat in heaven portending the fall of Jove, the secret of averting which was known only to Prometheus; and the god offered freedom from torture on condition of its being communicated to him. According to the mythological story, this referred to the offspring of Thetis, who was destined to be greater than his father. Prometheus at last bought pardon for his crime of enriching mankind with his gifts, by revealing the prophecy. Hercules killed the vulture and set him free, and Thetis was married to Peleus, the father of Achilles.

Shelley adapted the catastrophe of this story to his peculiar views. The son, greater than his father, born of the nuptials of Jupiter and Thetis, was to dethrone Evil, and bring back a happier reign than that of Saturn. Prometheus defies the power of his enemy, and endures centuries of torture, till the hour arrives when Jove, blind to the real event, but darkly guessing that some great good to himself will flow, espouses Thetis. At the moment, the Primal Power of the world drives him from his usurped throne, and

Strength, in the person of Hercules, liberates Humanity, typified in Prometheus, from the tortures generated by evil done or suffered. Asia, one of the Oceanides, is the wife of Prometheus—she was, according to other mythological interpretations, the same as Venus and Nature. When the Benefactor of Mankind is liberated, Nature resumes the beauty of her prime, and is united to her husband, the emblem of the human race, in perfect and happy union. In the Fourth Act, the Poet gives further scope to his imagination, and idealizes the forms of creation, such as we know them, instead of such as they appeared to the Greeks. Maternal Earth, the mighty Parent, is superseded by the Spirit of the Earth—the guide of our Planet through the realms of sky—while his fair and weaker companion and attendant, the Spirit of the Moon, receives bliss from the annihilation of Evil in the superior sphere.

Shelley develops, more particularly in the lyrics of this drama, his abstruse and imaginative theories with regard to the Creation. It requires a mind as subtle and penetrating as his own to understand the mystic meanings scattered throughout the poem. They elude the ordinary reader by their abstraction and delicacy of distinction, but they are far from vague. It was his design to write prose metaphysical essays on the nature of Man, which would have served to explain much of what is obscure in his poetry; a few scattered fragments of observations and remarks alone remain. He considered these philosophical views of mind and nature to be instinct with the intensest spirit of poetry.

More popular poets clothe the ideal with familiar and sensible imagery. Shelley loved to idealize the real—to gift the mechanism of the material universe with a soul and a voice, and to bestow such also on the most delicate and abstract emotions and thoughts of the mind. Sophocles was his great master in this species of imagery.

I find in one of his manuscript books some remarks on a line in the *Œdipus Tyrannus*, which shows at once the critical subtlety of Shelley's mind, and explains his apprehension of those "minute and remote distinctions of feeling, whether relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us," which he pronounces, in the letter quoted in the note to the *Revolt of Islam*, to comprehend all that is sublime in man.

"In the Greek Shakspeare, Sophocles, we find the image,

Πολλὰς δ' ὁδοὺς ἐλθόντα φροντίδος πλάνοις.

A line of almost unfathomable depth of poetry, yet how simple are the images in which it is arrayed,

Coming to many ways in the wanderings of careful thought.

If the words ὁδοὺς and πλάνοις had not been used, the line might have been explained in a metaphorical, instead of an absolute sense, as we say 'ways and means,' and wanderings, for error and confusion; but they meant literally paths or roads, such as we tread with our feet; and wanderings, such as a man makes when he loses himself in a desert, or roams from city to city, as *Œdipus*, the speaker of this verse, was destined to wander, blind and asking charity. What a picture does this line suggest of the mind as a wilderness of intricate paths, wide as the universe, which is here made its symbol, a world within a world, which he, who seeks some knowledge with respect to what he ought to do, searches throughout, as he would search the external universe for some valued thing which was hidden from him upon its surface."

In reading Shelley's poetry, we often find similar verses, resembling, but not imitating, the Greek in this species of imagery; for though he adopted the style, he gifted it with that originality of form and colouring which sprung from his own genius.

In the *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley fulfils the promise quoted from a letter in the Note on the Revolt of Islam.¹

The tone of the composition is calmer and more majestic, the poetry more perfect as a whole, and the imagination displayed at once more pleasingly beautiful and more varied and daring. The description of the Hours, as they are seen in the cave of Demogorgon, is an instance of this—it fills the mind as the most charming picture—we long to see an artist at work to bring to our view the

cars drawn by rainbow-winged steeds,
Which trample the dim winds : in each there stands
A wild-eyed charioteer, urging their flight.
Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,
And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars :
Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink
With eager lips the wind of their own speed,
As if the thing they loved fled on before,
And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright looks
Stream like a comet's flashing hair : they all
Sweep onward.

Through the whole Poem there reigns a sort of calm and holy spirit of love ; it soothes the tortured, and is hope to the expectant, till the prophecy is fulfilled, and Love, untainted by any evil, becomes the law of the world.

England had been rendered a painful residence to Shelley, as much by the sort of persecution with which in those days all men of liberal opinions were visited, and by the injustice he had lately endured in the Court of Chancery, as by the symptoms of disease which made him regard a visit

¹ While correcting the proof-sheets of that Poem, it struck me that the Poet had indulged in an exaggerated view of the evils of restored despotism, which, however injurious and degrading, were less openly sanguinary than the triumph of anarchy, such as it appeared in France at the close of the last century. But at this time a book, "Scenes of Spanish Life," translated

by Lieutenant Crawford from the German of Dr. Huber, of Rostock, fell into my hands. The account of the triumph of the priests and the serviles, after the French invasion of Spain in 1823, bears a strong and frightful resemblance to some of the descriptions of the massacre of the patriots in the Revolt of Islam.—*M. S.*

to Italy as necessary to prolong his life. An exile, and strongly impressed with the feeling that the majority of his countrymen regarded him with sentiments of aversion, such as his own heart could experience towards none, he sheltered himself from such disgusting and painful thoughts in the calm retreats of poetry, and built up a world of his own, with the more pleasure, since he hoped to induce some one or two to believe that the earth might become such, did mankind themselves consent. The charm of the Roman climate helped to clothe his thoughts in greater beauty than they had ever worn before. And as he wandered among the ruins, made one with nature in their decay, or gazed on the Praxitelean shapes that throng the Vatican, the Capitol, and the palaces of Rome, his soul imbibed forms of loveliness which became a portion of itself. There are many passages in the "Prometheus" which show the intense delight he received from such studies, and give back the impression with a beauty of poetical description peculiarly his own. He felt this, as a poet must feel when he satisfies himself by the result of his labours, and he wrote from Rome, "My Prometheus Unbound is just finished, and in a month or two I shall send it. It is a drama, with characters and mechanism of a kind yet unattempted, and I think the execution is better than any of my former attempts."

I may mention, for the information of the more critical reader, that the verbal alterations in this edition of Prometheus are made from a list of errata, written by Shelley himself.

THE CENCI.

THE sort of mistake that Shelley made, as to the extent of his own genius and powers, which led him deviously at first, but lastly into the direct track that enabled him fully to develop them, is a curious instance of his modesty of feeling, and of the methods which the human mind uses at

once to deceive itself, and yet, in its very delusion, to make its way out of error into the path which nature has marked out as its right one. He often incited me to attempt the writing a tragedy—he conceived that I possessed some dramatic talent, and he was always most earnest and energetic in his exhortations that I should cultivate any talent I possessed, to the utmost. I entertained a truer estimate of my powers; and, above all, though at that time not exactly aware of the fact, I was far too young to have any chance of succeeding, even moderately, in a species of composition, that requires a greater scope of experience in, and sympathy with, human passion than could then have fallen to my lot, or than any perhaps, except Shelley, ever possessed, even at the age of twenty-six, at which he wrote the *Cenci*.

On the other hand, Shelley most erroneously conceived himself to be destitute of this talent. He believed that one of the first requisites was the capacity of forming and following up a story or plot. He fancied himself to be defective in this portion of imagination—it was that which gave him least pleasure in the writings of others—though he laid great store by it, as the proper framework to support the sublimest efforts of poetry. He asserted that he was too metaphysical and abstract—too fond of the theoretical and the ideal, to succeed as a tragedian. It perhaps is not strange that I shared this opinion with himself, for he had hitherto shown no inclination for, nor given any specimen of his powers in framing and supporting the interest of a story, either in prose or verse. Once or twice, when he attempted such, he had speedily thrown it aside, as being even disagreeable to him as an occupation.

The subject he had suggested for a tragedy was Charles I., and he had written to me, "Remember, remember Charles I. I have been already imagining how you would conduct some scenes. The second volume of *St. Leon* begins with this

proud and true sentiment, 'There is nothing which the human mind can conceive which it may not execute.' Shakspeare was only a human being." These words were written in 1818, while we were in Lombardy, when he little thought how soon a work of his own would prove a proud comment on the passage he quoted. When in Rome, in 1819, a friend put into our hands the old manuscript account of the story of the Cenci. We visited the Colonna and Doria palaces, where the portraits of Beatrice were to be found; and her beauty cast the reflection of its own grace over her appalling story. Shelley's imagination became strongly excited, and he urged the subject to me as one fitted for a tragedy. More than ever I felt my incompetence; but I entreated him to write it instead; and he began and proceeded swiftly, urged on by intense sympathy with the sufferings of the human beings whose passions, so long cold in the tomb, he revived, and gifted with poetic language. This tragedy is the only one of his works that he communicated to me during its progress. We talked over the arrangement of the scenes together. I speedily saw the great mistake we had made, and triumphed in the discovery of the new talent brought to light from that mine of wealth, never, alas! through his untimely death, worked to its depths—his richly-gifted mind.

We suffered a severe affliction in Rome by the loss of our eldest child, who was of such beauty and promise as to cause him deservedly to be the idol of our hearts. We left the capital of the world, anxious for a time to escape a spot associated too intimately with his presence and loss.¹ Some friends of ours² were residing in the neighbourhood of Leg-

¹ Such feelings haunted him when, in the Cenci, he makes Beatrice speak to Cardinal Camillo of

that fair blue-eyed child,
Who was the load-star of your life.

And say—

All see, since his most piteous death,

That day and night, and heaven and earth
and time,
And all the things hoped for, or done therein,
Are changed to you, through your exceeding
grief.

—M. S.

² Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne and Henry Reveley.

horn, and we took a small house, Villa Valsovano, about half-way between the town and Monte Nero, where we remained during the summer. Our villa was situated in the midst of a podere; the peasants sang as they worked beneath our windows, during the heats of a very hot season, and in the evening the water-wheel creaked as the process of irrigation went on, and the fire-flies flashed from among the myrtle hedges:—nature was bright, sunshiny, and cheerful, or diversified by storms of a majestic terror, such as we had never before witnessed.

At the top of the house, there was a sort of terrace. There is often such in Italy, generally roofed. This one was very small, yet not only roofed but glazed; this Shelley made his study; it looked out on a wide prospect of fertile country, and commanded a view of the near sea. The storms that sometimes varied our day showed themselves most picturesquely as they were driven across the ocean; sometimes the dark lurid clouds dipped towards the waves, and became water-spouts, that churned up the waters beneath, as they were chased onward, and scattered by the tempest. At other times the dazzling sunlight and heat made it almost intolerable to every other; but Shelley basked in both, and his health and spirits revived under their influence. In this airy cell he wrote the principal part of *The Cenci*. He was making a study of Calderon at the time, reading his best tragedies with an accomplished lady¹ living near us, to whom his letter from Leghorn was addressed during the following year. He admired Calderon, both for his poetry and his dramatic genius; but it shows his judgment and originality, that, though greatly struck by his first acquaintance with the Spanish poet, none of his peculiarities crept into the composition of *The Cenci*; and there is no trace of his new studies, except in that passage

¹ Mrs. Gisborne.

to which he himself alludes, as suggested by one in *El Purgatorio de San Patricio*.

Shelley wished *The Cenci* to be acted. He was not a play-goer, being of such fastidious taste that he was easily disgusted by the bad filling up of the inferior parts. While preparing for our departure from England, however, he saw Miss O'Neil several times; she was then in the zenith of her glory, and Shelley was deeply moved by her impersonation of several parts, and by the graceful sweetness, the intense pathos, and sublime vehemence of passion she displayed. She was often in his thoughts as he wrote, and when he had finished, he became anxious that his tragedy should be acted, and receive the advantage of having this accomplished actress to fill the part of the heroine. With this view he wrote the following letter to a friend¹ in London:—

“The object of the present letter is to ask a favour of you. I have written a tragedy on a story well known in Italy, and, in my conception, eminently dramatic. I have taken some pains to make my play fit for representation, and those who have already seen it judge favourably. It is written without any of the peculiar feelings and opinions which characterize my other compositions; I having attended simply to the impartial development of such characters as it is probable the persons represented really were, together with the greatest degree of popular effect to be produced by such a development. I send you a translation of the Italian MS. on which my play is founded; the chief circumstance of which I have touched very delicately; for my principal doubt as to whether it would succeed, as an acting play, hangs entirely on the question as to whether any such a thing as incest in this shape, however treated, would be admitted on the stage. I think, however, it will form no

¹ Thomas Love Peacock.

objection, considering, first, that the facts are matter of history, and, secondly, the peculiar delicacy with which I have treated it.¹

"I am exceedingly interested in the question of whether this attempt of mine will succeed or not. I am strongly inclined to the affirmative at present; founding my hopes on this, that as a composition it is certainly not inferior to any of the modern plays that have been acted, with the exception of 'Remorse;' that the interest of the plot is incredibly greater and more real, and that there is nothing beyond what the multitude are contented to believe that they can understand, either in imagery, opinion, or sentiment. I wish to preserve a complete incognito, and can trust to you that, whatever else you do, you will at least favour me on this point. Indeed this is essential, deeply essential to its success. After it had been acted and successfully, (could I hope for such a thing) I would own it if I pleased, and use the celebrity it might acquire to my own purposes.

"What I want you to do, is to procure for me its presentation at Covent Garden. The principal character, Beatrice, is precisely fitted for Miss O'Neil, and it might even seem to have been written for her, (God forbid that I should see her play it—it would tear my nerves to pieces) and in all respects it is fitted only for Covent Garden. The chief male character I confess I should be very unwilling that any one but Kean should play—that is impossible, and I must be contented with an inferior actor."

The play was accordingly sent to Mr. Harris. He pronounced the subject to be so objectionable, that he could not even submit the part to Miss O'Neil for perusal, but ex-

¹ In speaking of his mode of treating this main incident, Shelley said that it might be remarked that, in the course of the play, he had never mentioned expressly Cenci's worst crime. Every one knew what it must

be, but it was never imaged in words—the nearest allusion to it being that portion of Cenci's curse, beginning,

"That if she have a child," &c.

—M. S.

pressed his desire that the author would write a tragedy on some other subject, which he would gladly accept. Shelley printed a small edition at Leghorn, to insure its correctness; as he was much annoyed by the many mistakes that crept into his text, when distance prevented him from correcting the press.

Universal approbation soon stamped *The Cenci* as the best tragedy of modern times. Writing concerning it, Shelley said: "I have been cautious to avoid the introducing faults of youthful composition; diffuseness, a profusion of inapplicable imagery, vagueness, generality, and, as Hamlet says, *words, words.*" There is nothing that is not purely dramatic throughout; and the character of Beatrice, proceeding from vehement struggle to horror, to deadly resolution, and lastly, to the elevated dignity of calm suffering joined to passionate tenderness and pathos, is touched with hues so vivid and so beautiful, that the poet seems to have read intimately the secrets of the noble heart imaged in the lovely countenance of the unfortunate girl. The Fifth Act is a masterpiece. It is the finest thing he ever wrote, and may claim proud comparison not only with any contemporary, but preceding poet. The varying feelings of Beatrice are expressed with passionate, heart-reaching eloquence. Every character has a voice that echoes truth in its tones. It is curious, to one acquainted with the written story, to mark the success with which the poet has inwoven the real incidents of the tragedy into his scenes, and yet, through the power of poetry, has obliterated all that would otherwise have shown too harsh or too hideous in the picture. His success was a double triumph; and often after he was earnestly entreated to write again in a style that commanded popular favour, while it was not less instinct with truth and genius. But the bent of his mind went the other way; and even when employed on subjects whose interest depended on character and incident, he would start off in another direction, and leave

the delineations of human passion, which he could depict in so able a manner, for fantastic creations of his fancy, or the expression of those opinions and sentiments with regard to human nature and its destiny; a desire to diffuse which, was the master passion of his soul.

Finding among my papers the account of the case of the Cenci family, translated from the old Roman MS., written at the period when the disastrous events it commemorates occurred, I append it here, as the perusal must interest every reader.¹

HELLAS.

THE south of Europe was in a state of great political excitement at the beginning of the year 1821. The Spanish Revolution had been a signal to Italy—secret societies were formed—and when Naples rose to declare the Constitution, the call was responded to from Brundisium to the foot of the Alps. To crush these attempts to obtain liberty, early in 1821, the Austrians poured their armies into the Peninsula: at first their coming rather seemed to add energy and resolution to a people long enslaved. The Piedmontese asserted their freedom; Genoa threw off the yoke of the King of Sardinia; and, as if in playful imitation, the people of the little state of Massa and Carrara gave the *congé* to their sovereign and set up a republic.

Tuscany alone was perfectly tranquil. It was said, that the Austrian minister presented a list of sixty Carbonari to the grand-duke, urging their imprisonment; and the grand-duke replied, "I do not know whether these sixty men are Carbonari, but I know if I imprison them, I shall directly have sixty thousand start up." But though the Tuscans had no desire to disturb the paternal government, beneath whose shelter they slumbered, they regarded the progress of

¹ See Appendix to Vol. II.

the various Italian revolutions with intense interest, and hatred for the Austrian was warm in every bosom. But they had slender hopes; they knew that the Neapolitans would offer no fit resistance to the regular German troops, and that the overthrow of the Constitution in Naples would act as a decisive blow against all struggles for liberty in Italy.

We have seen the rise and progress of reform. But the Holy Alliance was alive and active in those days, and few could dream of the peaceful triumph of liberty. It seemed then that the armed assertion of freedom in the south of Europe was the only hope of the liberals, as, if it prevailed, the nations of the north would imitate the example. Happily the reverse has proved the fact. The countries accustomed to the exercise of the privileges of freemen, to a limited extent, have extended, and are extending these limits. Freedom and knowledge have now a chance of proceeding hand in hand; and if it continue thus, we may hope for the durability of both. Then, as I have said, in 1821, Shelley, as well as every other lover of liberty, looked upon the struggles in Spain and Italy as decisive of the destinies of the world, probably for centuries to come. The interest he took in the progress of affairs was intense. When Genoa declared itself free, his hopes were at their highest. Day after day, he read the bulletins of the Austrian army, and sought eagerly to gather tokens of its defeat. He heard of the revolt of Genoa with emotions of transport. His whole heart and soul were in the triumph of their cause. We were living at Pisa at that time; and several well-informed Italians, at the head of whom we may place the celebrated Vaccá, were accustomed to seek for sympathy in their hopes from Shelley: they did not find such for the despair they too generally experienced, founded on contempt for their southern countrymen.

While the fate of the progress of the Austrian armies then

invading Naples was yet in suspense, the news of another revolution filled him with exultation. We had formed the acquaintance at Pisa of several Constantinopolitan Greeks, of the family of Prince Caradja, formerly Hospodar of Wallachia, who, hearing that the bowstring, the accustomed finale of his viceroyalty, was on the road to him, escaped with his treasures, and took up his abode in Tuscany. Among these was the gentleman to whom the drama of *Hellas* is dedicated. Prince Mavrocordato was warmed by those aspirations for the independence of his country, which filled the hearts of many of his countrymen. He often intimated the possibility of an insurrection in Greece; but we had no idea of its being so near at hand, when, on the 1st of April, 1821, he called on Shelley; bringing the proclamation of his cousin, Prince Ipsilanti, and, radiant with exultation and delight, declared that henceforth Greece would be free.

Shelley had hymned the dawn of liberty in Spain and Naples, in two odes, dictated by the warmest enthusiasm;—he felt himself naturally impelled to decorate with poetry the uprise of the descendants of that people, whose works he regarded with deep admiration; and to adopt the vaticinatory character in prophesying their success. "*Hellas*" was written in a moment of enthusiasm. It is curious to remark how well he overcomes the difficulty of forming a drama out of such scant materials. His prophecies, indeed, came true in their general, not their particular purport. He did not foresee the death of Lord Londonderry, which was to be the epoch of a change in English politics, particularly as regarded foreign affairs; nor that the navy of his country would fight for instead of against the Greeks; and by the battle of Navarino secure their enfranchisement from the Turks. Almost against reason, as it appeared to him, he resolved to believe that Greece would prove triumphant; and in this spirit, auguring ultimate good, yet grieving over the

vicissitudes to be endured in the interval, he composed his drama.

The chronological order to be observed in the arrangement of the remaining poems, is interrupted here, that his dramas may follow each other consecutively. "Hellas" was among the last of his compositions, and is among the most beautiful. The choruses are singularly imaginative, and melodious in their versification. There are some stanzas that beautifully exemplify Shelley's peculiar style; as, for instance, the assertion of the intellectual empire which must be for ever the inheritance of the country of Homer, Sophocles, and Plato :

But Greece and her foundations are
Built below the tide of war;
Based on the crystalline sea
Of thought and its eternity.

And again, that philosophical truth, felicitously imaged forth—

Revenge and wrong bring forth their kind,
The foul cubs like their parents are;
Their den is in the guilty mind,
And conscience feeds them with despair.

The conclusion of the last chorus is among the most beautiful of his lyrics; the imagery is distinct and majestic; the prophecy, such as poets love to dwell upon, the regeneration of mankind—and that regeneration reflecting back splendour on the foregone time, from which it inherits so much of intellectual wealth, and memory of past virtuous deeds, as must render the possession of happiness and peace of tenfold value.

ŒDIPUS TYRANNUS.

In the brief journal I kept in those days, I find recorded, in August 1820, Shelley "begins Swellfoot the Tyrant, suggested by the pigs at the fair of San Giuliano." This was the period of Queen Caroline's landing in England, and

the struggles made by Geo. IV. to get rid of her claims; which failing, Lord Castlereagh placed the "*Green Bag*" on the table of the House of Commons, demanding, in the King's name, that an inquiry should be instituted into his wife's conduct. These circumstances were the theme of all conversation among the English. We were then at the Baths of San Giuliano; a friend came to visit us on the day when a fair was held in the square, beneath our windows: Shelley read to us his Ode to Liberty; and was riotously accompanied by the grunting of a quantity of pigs brought for sale to the fair. He compared it to the "chorus of frogs" in the satiric drama of Aristophanes; and it being an hour of merriment, and one ludicrous association suggesting another, he imagined a political satirical drama on the circumstances of the day, to which the pigs would serve as chorus—and Swellfoot was begun. When finished, it was transmitted to England, printed and published anonymously; but stifled at the very dawn of its existence by the "Society for the Suppression of Vice," who threatened to prosecute it, if not immediately withdrawn. The friend¹ who had taken the trouble of bringing it out, of course did not think it worth the annoyance and expense of a contest, and it was laid aside.

Hesitation of whether it would do honour to Shelley prevented my publishing it at first; but I cannot bring myself to keep back anything he ever wrote, for each word is fraught with the peculiar views and sentiments which he believed to be beneficial to the human race; and the bright light of poetry irradiates every thought. The world has a right to the entire compositions of such a man; for it does not live and thrive by the out-worn lesson of the dullard or the hypocrite, but by the original free thoughts of men of Genius, who aspire to pluck bright truth

“————— from the pale-faced moon;

¹ Horace Smith.

Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,
And pluck up drowned—”

truth. Even those who may dissent from his opinions will consider that he was a man of genius, and that the world will take more interest in his slightest word, than from the waters of Lethe, which are so eagerly prescribed as medicinal for all its wrongs and woes. This drama, however, must not be judged for more than was meant. It is a mere plaything of the imagination, which even may not excite smiles among many, who will not see wit in those combinations of thought which were full of the ridiculous to the author. But, like everything he wrote, it breathes that deep sympathy for the sorrows of humanity, and indignation against its oppressors, which make it worthy of his name.

EARLY POEMS.

THE remainder of Shelley's Poems will be arranged in the order in which they were written. Of course, mistakes will occur in placing some of the shorter ones; for, as I have said, many of these were thrown aside, and I never saw them till I had the misery of looking over his writings, after the hand that traced them was dust; and some were in the hands of others, and I never saw them till now. The subjects of the poems are often to me an unerring guide; but on other occasions, I can only guess, by finding them in the pages of the same manuscript book that contains poems with the date of whose composition I am fully conversant. In the present arrangement all his poetical translations will be placed together at the end of the volume.

The loss of his early papers prevents my being able to give any of the poetry of his boyhood. Of the few I give as early poems, the greater part were published with “Alastor;” some of them were written previously, some at the same

period. The poem beginning, "Oh, there are spirits in the air," was addressed in idea to Coleridge, whom he never knew; and at whose character he could only guess imperfectly, through his writings, and accounts he heard of him from some who knew him well. He regarded his change of opinions as rather an act of will than conviction, and believed that in his inner heart he would be haunted by what Shelley considered the better and holier aspirations of his youth. The summer evening that suggested to him the poem written in the churchyard of Lechlade, occurred during his voyage up the Thames, in the autumn of 1815. He had been advised by a physician to live as much as possible in the open air; and a fortnight of a bright warm July was spent in tracing the Thames to its source. He never spent a season more tranquilly than the summer of 1815. He had just recovered from a severe pulmonary attack; the weather was warm and pleasant. He lived near Windsor Forest, and his life was spent under its shades, or on the water; meditating subjects for verse. Hitherto, he had chiefly aimed at extending his political doctrines; and attempted so to do by appeals, in prose essays, to the people, exhorting them to claim their rights¹; but he had now begun to feel that the time for action was not ripe in England, and that the pen was the only instrument wherewith to prepare the way for better things.

In the scanty journals kept during those years, I find a record of the books that Shelley read during several years. During the years of 1814 and 1815, the list is extensive. It includes in Greek; Homer, Hesiod, Theocritus—the histories of Thucydides and Herodotus, and Diogenes Laertius. In Latin; Petronius, Suetonius, some of the works of Cicero, a

¹ Perhaps this refers rather to the posthumous prose fragments assignable to the year 1815 than to actual publications in prose. Except *An Address to the Irish People*, the *Pro-*

posals for an Association, the *Declaration of Rights*, and *A Letter to Lord Ellenborough*, all printed in 1812, I do not know what works issued up to 1815 will come within the definition.

large proportion of those of Seneca and Livy. In English; Milton's Poems, Wordsworth's Excursion, Southey's Madoc and Thalaba, Locke on the Human Understanding, Bacon's Novum Organum. In Italian, Ariosto, Tasso, and Alfieri. In French, the *Rêveries d'un Solitaire* of Rousseau. To these may be added several modern books of travels. He read few novels.

POEMS OF 1816.

SHELLEY wrote little during this year. The Poem entitled the "Sunset" was written in the spring of the year, while still residing at Bishopgate. He spent the summer on the shores of the Lake of Geneva. "The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" was conceived during his voyage round the lake with Lord Byron. He occupied himself during this voyage, by reading the *Nouvelle Héloïse* for the first time. The reading it on the very spot where the scenes are laid, added to the interest; and he was at once surprised and charmed by the passionate eloquence and earnest enthralling interest that pervades this work. There was something in the character of Saint-Preux, in his abnegation of self, and in the worship he paid to Love, that coincided with Shelley's own disposition; and, though differing in many of the views, and shocked by others, yet the effect of the whole was fascinating and delightful.

"Mont Blanc" was inspired by a view of that mountain and its surrounding peaks and valleys, as he lingered on the Bridge of Arve on his way through the Valley of Chamouni. Shelley makes the following mention of this poem in his publication of the History of Six Weeks' Tour, and Letters from Switzerland:—

"The poem entitled 'Mont Blanc,' is written by the author of the two letters from Chamouni and Vevai. It was composed under the immediate impression of the deep

and powerful feelings excited by the objects which it attempts to describe ; and as an undisciplined overflowing of the soul, rests its claim to approbation on an attempt to imitate the untameable wildness and inaccessible solemnity from which those feelings sprang."

This was an eventful year, and less time was given to study than usual. In the list of his reading I find, in Greek : Theocritus, the Prometheus of Æschylus, several of Plutarch's Lives and the works of Lucian. In Latin : Lucretius, Pliny's Letters, the Annals and Germany of Tacitus. In French : the History of the French Revolution, by Lacretelle. He read for the first time, this year, Montaigne's Essays, and regarded them ever after as one of the most delightful and instructive books in the world. The list is scanty in English works—Locke's Essay, Political Justice, and Coleridge's Lay Sermon, form nearly the whole. It was his frequent habit to read aloud to me in the evening ; in this way we read, this year, the New Testament, Paradise Lost, Spenser's Fairy Queen, and Don Quixote.

POEMS OF 1817.

THE very illness that oppressed, and the aspect of death which had approached so near Shelley, appears to have kindled to yet keener life the Spirit of Poetry in his heart. The restless thoughts kept awake by pain clothed themselves in verse. Much was composed during this year. The "Revolt of Islam," written and printed, was a great effort—"Rosalind and Helen" was begun—and the fragments and poems I can trace to the same period, show how full of passion and reflection were his solitary hours.

In addition to such poems as have an intelligible aim and shape, many a stray idea and transitory emotion found imperfect and abrupt expression, and then again lost themselves in silence. As he never wandered without a book,

and without implements of writing, I find many such in his manuscript books, that scarcely bear record; while some of them, broken and vague as they are, will appear valuable to those who love Shelley's mind, and desire to trace its workings. Thus in the same book that addresses "Constantia, Singing," I find these lines:—

My spirit like a charmed bark doth swim
 Upon the liquid waves of thy sweet singing,
 Far away into the regions dim
 Of rapture—as a boat with swift sails winging
 Its way adown some many-winding river.

And this apostrophe to Music:

No, Music, thou art not the God of Love,
 Unless Love feeds upon its own sweet self,
 Till it becomes all music murmurs of.

In another fragment he calls it—

The silver key of the fountain of tears,
 Where the spirit drinks till the brain is wild;
 Softest grave of a thousand fears,
 Where their mother, Care, like a drowsy child,
 Is laid asleep in flowers.

And then again this melancholy trace of the sad thronging thoughts, which were the well whence he drew the idea of Athanase, and express the restless, passion-fraught emotions of one whose sensibility, kindled to too intense a life, perpetually preyed upon itself:

To thirst and find no fill—to wail and wander
 With short unsteady steps—to pause and ponder—
 To feel the blood run through the veins and tingle
 Where busy thought and blind sensation mingle;
 To nurse the image of unfelt caresses
 Till dim imagination just possesses.
 The half created shadow.

In the next page I find a calmer sentiment, better fitted to sustain one whose whole being was love:

Wealth and dominion fade into the mass
Of the great sea of human right and wrong,
When once from our possession they must pass;
But love, though misdirected, is among
The things which are immortal, and surpass
All that frail stuff which will be—or which was.

In another book, which contains some passionate outbreaks with regard to the great injustice that he endured this year, the poet writes:

My thoughts arise and fade in solitude,
The verse that would invest them melts away
Like moonlight in the heaven of spreading day:
How beautiful they were, how firm they stood,
Flecking the starry sky like woven pearl!

He had this year also projected a poem on the subject of *Otho*, inspired by the pages of Tacitus. I find one or two stanzas only, which were to open the subject.¹

He projected also translating the Hymns of Homer; his version of several of the shorter ones remain, as well as that to Mercury, already published in the *Posthumous Poems*. His readings this year were chiefly Greek. Besides the Hymns of Homer and the *Iliad*, he read the dramas of Æschylus and Sophocles, the *Symposium* of Plato, and Arrian's *Historia Indica*. In Latin, Apuleius alone is named. In English, the Bible was his constant study; he read a great portion of it aloud in the evening. Among these evening readings, I find also mentioned the *Fairy Queen*, and other modern works, the production of his contemporaries, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Moore, and Byron.

His life was now spent more in thought than action—he had lost the eager spirit which believed it could achieve what it projected for the benefit of mankind. And yet in the converse of daily life Shelley was far from being a

¹ Mrs. Shelley here inserts two stanzas of *Otho* (See Vol. III, p. 401) and the lines *To* — (“Yet look on me”) given at p. 366 of Vol. III.

melancholy man. He was eloquent when philosophy, or politics, or taste, were the subjects of conversation. He was playful—and indulged in the wild spirit that mocked itself and others—not in bitterness, but in sport. The Author of "Nightmare Abbey" seized on some points of his character and some habits of his life when he painted Scythrop. He was not addicted to "port or madeira," but in youth he had read of "Illuminati and Eleutherarchs," and believed that he possessed the power of operating an immediate change in the minds of men and the state of society. These wild dreams had faded; sorrow and adversity had struck home; but he struggled with despondency as he did with physical pain. There are few who remember him sailing paper boats, and watching the navigation of his tiny craft with eagerness—or repeating with wild energy the "Ancient Mariner," and Southey's "Old Woman of Berkeley,"—but those who do, will recollect that it was in such, and in the creations of his own fancy, when that was most daring and ideal, that he sheltered himself from the storms and disappointments, the pain and sorrow, that beset his life.

POEMS OF 1818.

ROSALIND AND HELEN was begun at Marlow, and thrown aside—till I found it; and, at my request, it was completed. Shelley had no care for any of his poems that did not emanate from the depths of his mind, and develop some high or abstruse truth. When he does touch on human life and the human heart, no pictures can be more faithful, more delicate, more subtle, or more pathetic. He never mentioned Love, but he shed a grace, borrowed from his own nature, that scarcely any other poet has bestowed, on that passion. When he spoke of it as the law of life, which inasmuch as we rebel against, we err and injure ourselves.

and others, he promulgated that which he considered an irrefragable truth. In his eyes it was the essence of our being, and all woe and pain arose from the war made against it by selfishness, or insensibility, or mistake. By reverting in his mind to this first principle, he discovered the source of many emotions, and could disclose the secret of all hearts, and his delineations of passion and emotion touch the finest chords of our nature.

Rosalind and Helen was finished during the summer of 1818, while we were at the Baths of Lucca. Thence Shelley visited Venice, and circumstances rendering it eligible that we should remain a few weeks in the neighbourhood of that city, he accepted the offer of Lord Byron, who lent him the use of a villa he rented near Este; and he sent for his family from Lucca to join him.

I Capuccini was a villa built on the site of a Capuchin convent, demolished when the French suppressed religious houses; it was situated on the very over-hanging brow of a low hill at the foot of a range of higher ones. The house was cheerful and pleasant; a vine-trellised walk, a Pergola, as it is called in Italian, led from the hall door to a summer-house at the end of the garden, which Shelley made his study, and in which he began the *Prometheus*; and here also, as he mentions in a letter, he wrote *Julian and Maddalo*; a slight ravine, with a road in its depth, divided the garden from the hill, on which stood the ruins of the ancient castle of Este, whose dark massive wall gave forth an echo, and from whose ruined crevices, owls and bats flitted forth at night, as the crescent moon sunk behind the black and heavy battlements. We looked from the garden over the wide plain of Lombardy, bounded to the west by the far Apennines, while to the east, the horizon was lost in misty distance. After the picturesque but limited view of mountain, ravine, and chesnut wood at the Baths of

Lucca, there was something infinitely gratifying to the eye in the wide range of prospect commanded by our new abode.

Our first misfortune, of the kind from which we soon suffered even more severely, happened here. Our little girl, an infant in whose small features I fancied that I traced great resemblance to her father, showed symptoms of suffering from the heat of the climate. Teething increased her illness and danger. We were at Este, and when we became alarmed, hastened to Venice for the best advice. When we arrived at Fusina, we found that we had forgotten our passport, and the soldiers on duty attempted to prevent our crossing the laguna; but they could not resist Shelley's impetuosity at such a moment. We had scarcely arrived at Venice, before life fled from the little sufferer, and we returned to Este to weep her loss.

After a few weeks spent in this retreat, which were interspersed by visits to Venice, we proceeded southward. We often hear of persons disappointed by a first visit to Italy. This was not Shelley's case—the aspect of its nature, its sunny sky, its majestic storms; of the luxuriant vegetation of the country, and the noble marble-built cities, enchanted him. The sight of the works of art were full enjoyment and wonder; he had not studied pictures or statues before, he now did so with the eye of taste, that referred not to the rules of schools, but to those of nature and truth. The first entrance to Rome opened to him a scene of remains of antique grandeur that far surpassed his expectations; and the unspeakable beauty of Naples and its environs added to the impression he received of the transcendent and glorious beauty of Italy. As I have said, he wrote long letters during the first year of our residence in this country, and these, when published, will be the best testimonials of his appreciation of the harmonious and beau-

tiful in art and nature, and his delicate taste in discerning and describing them.¹

Our winter was spent at Naples. Here he wrote the fragments of *Marengi* and the *Woodman* and the *Nightingale*, which he afterwards threw aside. At this time Shelley suffered greatly in health. He put himself under the care of a medical man, who promised great things, and made him endure severe bodily pain, without any good results. Constant and poignant physical suffering exhausted him; and though he preserved the appearance of cheerfulness, and often greatly enjoyed our wanderings in the environs of Naples, and our excursions on its sunny sea, yet many hours were passed when his thoughts, shadowed by illness, became gloomy, and then he escaped to solitude, and in verses, which he hid from fear of wounding me, poured forth morbid but too natural bursts of discontent and sadness. One looks back with unspeakable regret and gnawing remorse to such periods; fancying that had one been more alive to the nature of his feelings, and more attentive to soothe them, such would not have existed—and yet enjoying, as he appeared to do, every sight or influence of earth or sky, it was difficult to imagine that any melancholy he showed was aught but the effect of the constant pain to which he was a martyr.

We lived in utter solitude—and such is often not the nurse of cheerfulness; for then, at least with those who have been exposed to adversity, the mind broods over its sorrows too intently; while the society of the enlightened, the witty, and the wise, enables us to forget ourselves by making us the sharers of the thoughts of others, which is a portion of the philosophy of happiness. Shelley never liked society in numbers, it harassed and wearied him; but neither did he like loneliness, and usually when alone sheltered

¹ These letters, together with various essays, translations, and fragments, being the greater portion of the prose

writings left by Shelley, are now in the press.—*M. S.* [They are all included in my edition of the *Prose Works*.]

himself against memory and reflection, in a book. But with one or two whom he loved, he gave way to wild and joyous spirits, or in more serious conversation expounded his opinions with vivacity and eloquence. If an argument arose, no man ever argued better—he was clear, logical, and earnest, in supporting his own views; attentive, patient, and impartial, while listening to those on the adverse side. Had not a wall of prejudice been raised at this time between him and his countrymen, how many would have sought the acquaintance of one, whom to know was to love and to revere! how many of the more enlightened of his contemporaries have since regretted that they did not seek him! how very few knew his worth while he lived, and of those few, several were withheld by timidity or envy from declaring their sense of it. But no man was ever more enthusiastically loved—more looked up to as one superior to his fellows in intellectual endowments and moral worth, by the few who knew him well, and had sufficient nobleness of soul to appreciate his superiority. His excellence is now acknowledged; but even while admitted, not duly appreciated. For who, except those who were acquainted with him, can imagine his unwearied benevolence, his generosity, his systematic forbearance? And still less is his vast superiority in intellectual attainments sufficiently understood—his sagacity, his clear understanding, his learning, his prodigious memory; all these, as displayed in conversation, were known to few while he lived, and are now silent in the tomb:

Ahi orbo mondo ingrato,
Gran cagion hai di dover pianger meco.
Che quel ben ch' era in te, perduto hai seco.

POEMS OF 1819.

THOUGH Shelley's first eager desire to excite his countrymen to resist openly the oppressions existent during "the good old times" had faded with early youth, still his warmest sympathies were for the people. He was a republican, and loved a democracy. He looked on all human beings as inheriting an equal right to possess the dearest privileges of our nature, the necessities of life, when fairly earned by labour, and intellectual instruction. His hatred of any despotism, that looked upon the people as not to be consulted or protected from want and ignorance, was intense. He was residing near Leghorn, at Villa Valsovano, writing *The Cenci*, when the news of the Manchester Massacre reached us; it roused in him violent emotions of indignation and compassion. The great truth that the many, if accordant and resolute, could control the few, as was shown some years after, made him long to teach his injured countrymen how to resist. Inspired by these feelings, he wrote the *Masque of Anarchy*, which he sent to his friend, Leigh Hunt, to be inserted in the *Examiner*, of which he was then the Editor.

"I did not insert it," Leigh Hunt writes in his valuable and interesting preface to this poem, when he printed it in 1832, "because I thought that the public at large had not become sufficiently discerning to do justice to the sincerity and kindheartedness of his spirit, that walked in this flaming robe of verse." Days of outrage have passed away, and with them the exasperation that would cause such an appeal to the many to be injurious. Without being aware of them, they at one time acted on his suggestions, and gained the day; but they rose when human life was respected by the minister in power; such was not the case during the administration which excited Shelley's abhorrence.

The poem was written for the people, and is therefore in a more popular tone than usual; portions strike as abrupt and unpolished, but many stanzas are all his own. I heard him repeat, and admired those beginning,—

My Father Time is old and grey,

before I knew to what poem they were to belong. But the most touching passage is that which describes the blessed effects of liberty; they might make a patriot of any man, whose heart was not wholly closed against his humbler fellow-creatures.

Shelley loved the people, and respected them as often more virtuous, as always more suffering, and, therefore, more deserving of sympathy, than the great. He believed that a clash between the two classes of society was inevitable, and he eagerly ranged himself on the people's side. He had an idea of publishing a series of poems adapted expressly to commemorate their circumstances and wrongs—he wrote a few, but in those days of prosecution for libel they could not be printed. They are not among the best of his productions, a writer being always shackled when he endeavours to write down to the comprehension of those who could not understand or feel a highly imaginative style; but they show his earnestness, and with what heartfelt compassion he went home to the direct point of injury—that oppression is detestable, as being the parent of starvation, nakedness, and ignorance. Besides these outpourings of compassion and indignation, he had meant to adorn the cause he loved with loftier poetry of glory and triumph—such is the scope of the Ode to the Assertors of Liberty. He sketched also a new version of our national anthem, as addressed to Liberty.¹

Shelley had suffered severely from the death of our son during the summer. His heart, attuned to every kindly

¹ See Vol. IV, p. 8.

affection, was full of burning love for his offspring. No words can express the anguish he felt when his elder children were torn from him. In his first resentment against the Chancellor, on the passing of the decree, he had written a curse, in which there breathes, besides haughty indignation, all the tenderness of a father's love, which could imagine and fondly dwell upon its loss and the consequences.¹

At one time, while the question was still pending, the Chancellor had said some words that seemed to intimate that Shelley should not be permitted the care of any of his children, and for a moment he feared that our infant son would be torn from us. He did not hesitate to resolve, if such were menaced, to abandon country, fortune, everything, and to escape with his child; and I find some unfinished stanzas addressed to this son, whom afterwards we lost at Rome, written under the idea that we might suddenly be forced to cross the sea, so to preserve him. This poem, as well as the one previously quoted, were not written to exhibit the pangs of distress to the public; they were the spontaneous outbursts of a man who brooded over his wrongs and woes, and was impelled to shed the grace of his genius over the uncontrollable emotions of his heart.²

When afterwards this child died at Rome, he wrote, apropos of the English burying-ground in that city, "This spot is the repository of a sacred loss, of which the yearnings of a parent's heart are now prophetic; he is rendered immortal by love, as his memory is by death. My beloved child lies buried here. I envy death the body far less than the oppressors the minds of those whom they have torn from me. The one can only kill the body, the other crushes the affections."

¹ Mrs. Shelley here inserts the poem given at p. 394 of Vol. III.

² Mrs. Shelley gives here the stanzas to William Shelley which will be found

at p. 398 of Vol. III, and adds, "I ought to observe that the fourth verse of this effusion is introduced in *Rosalind and Helen*."

In this new edition I have added to the poems of this year, "Peter Bell the Third." A critique on Wordsworth's Peter Bell reached us at Leghorn, which amused Shelley exceedingly and suggested this poem.

I need scarcely observe that nothing personal to the Author of Peter Bell is intended in this poem.¹ No man ever admired Wordsworth's poetry more;—he read it perpetually, and taught others to appreciate its beauties. This poem is, like all others written by Shelley, ideal. He conceived the idealism of a poet—a man of lofty and creative genius,—quitting the glorious calling of discovering and announcing the beautiful and good, to support and propagate ignorant prejudices and pernicious errors; imparting to the unenlightened, not that ardour for truth and spirit of toleration which Shelley looked on as the sources of the moral improvement and happiness of mankind; but false and injurious opinions, that evil was good, and that ignorance and force were the best allies of purity and virtue. His idea was that a man gifted even as transcendentally as the Author of Peter Bell, with the highest qualities of genius, must, if he fostered such errors, be infected with dulness. This poem was written, as a warning—not as a narration of the reality. He was unacquainted personally with Wordsworth or with Coleridge, (to whom he alludes in the fifth part of the poem,) and therefore, I repeat, his poem is purely ideal;—it contains something of criticism on the compositions of these great poets. But nothing injurious to the men themselves.

No poem contains more of Shelley's peculiar views, with regard to the errors into which many of the wisest have fallen, and of the pernicious effects of certain opinions on society. Much of it is beautifully written—and though, like the burlesque drama of Swellfoot, it must be looked on

¹ See note at p. 224 of Vol. III.

as a plaything, it has so much merit and poetry—so much of *himself* in it, that it cannot fail to interest greatly, and by right belongs to the world for whose instruction and benefit it was written.

POEMS OF 1820.

WE spent the latter part of the year 1819 in Florence, where Shelley passed several hours daily in the Gallery, and made various notes on its ancient works of art. His thoughts were a good deal taken up also by the project of a steam-boat, undertaken by a friend,¹ an engineer, to ply between Leghorn and Marseilles, for which he supplied a sum of money. This was a sort of plan to delight Shelley, and he was greatly disappointed when it was thrown aside.

There was something in Florence that disagreed excessively with his health, and he suffered far more pain than usual; so much so that we left it sooner than we intended, and removed to Pisa, where we had some friends, and, above all, where we could consult the celebrated Vaccà, as to the cause of Shelley's sufferings. He, like every other medical man, could only guess at that, and gave little hope of immediate relief; he enjoined him to abstain from all physicians and medicine, and to leave his complaint to nature. As he had vainly consulted medical men of the highest repute in England, he was easily persuaded to adopt this advice. Pain and ill-health followed him to the end, but the residence at Pisa agreed with him better than any other, and there in consequence we remained.

In the spring we spent a week or two near Leghorn, borrowing the house of some friends, who were absent on a journey to England.²—It was on a beautiful summer evening, while wandering among the lanes, whose myrtle hedges were

¹ Henry Reveley.

² Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne.

the bowers of the fire-flies, that we heard the carolling of the sky-lark, which inspired one of the most beautiful of his poems. He addressed the letter to Mrs. Gisborne from this house, which was hers; he had made his study of the workshop of her son, who was an engineer. Mrs. Gisborne had been a friend of my father in her younger days. She was a lady of great accomplishments, and charming from her frank and affectionate nature. She had the most intense love of knowledge, a delicate and trembling sensibility, and preserved freshness of mind, after a life of considerable adversity. As a favourite friend of my father we had sought her with eagerness, and the most open and cordial friendship was established between us.

We spent the summer at the baths of San Giuliano, four miles from Pisa. These baths were of great use to Shelley in soothing his nervous irritability. We made several excursions in the neighbourhood. The country around is fertile; and diversified and rendered picturesque by ranges of near hills and more distant mountains. The peasantry are a handsome, intelligent race, and there was a gladsome sunny heaven spread over us, that rendered home and every scene we visited cheerful and bright. During some of the hottest days of August, Shelley made a solitary journey on foot to the summit of Monte San Pelegrino—a mountain of some height, on the top of which there is a chapel, the object, during certain days in the year, of many pilgrimages. The excursion delighted him while it lasted, though he exerted himself too much, and the effect was considerable lassitude and weakness on his return. During the expedition he conceived the idea and wrote, in the three days immediately succeeding to his return, the *Witch of Atlas*. This poem is peculiarly characteristic of his tastes—wildly fanciful, full of brilliant imagery, and discarding human interest and passion, to revel in the fantastic ideas that his imagination suggested.

The surpassing excellence of *The Cenci* had made me greatly desire that Shelley should increase his popularity, by adopting subjects that would more suit the popular taste, than a poem conceived in the abstract and dreamy spirit of the *Witch of Atlas*. It was not only that I wished him to acquire popularity as redounding to his fame ; but I believed that he would obtain a greater mastery over his own powers, and greater happiness in his mind, if public applause crowned his endeavours. The few stanzas that precede the poem were addressed to me on my representing these ideas to him. Even now I believe that I was in the right. Shelley did not expect sympathy and approbation from the public ; but the want of it took away a portion of the ardour that ought to have sustained him while writing. He was thrown on his own resources, and on the inspiration of his own soul, and wrote because his mind overflowed, without the hope of being appreciated. I had not the most distant wish that he should truckle in opinion, or submit his lofty aspirations for the human race to the low ambition and pride of the many, but I felt sure, that if his poems were more addressed to the common feelings of men, his proper rank among the writers of the day would be acknowledged ; and that popularity as a poet would enable his countrymen to do justice to his character and virtues ; which, in those days, it was the mode to attack with the most flagitious calumnies and insulting abuse. That he felt these things deeply cannot be doubted, though he armed himself with the consciousness of acting from a lofty and heroic sense of right. The truth burst from his heart sometimes in solitude, and he would write a few unfinished verses that showed that he felt the sting ; among such I find the following :—

Alas ! this is not what I thought life was.
I knew that there were crimes and evil men,
Misery and hate ; nor did I hope to pass
Untouched by suffering, through the rugged glen.

In mine own heart I saw as in a glass
The hearts of others. . . . And when
I went among my kind, with triple brass
Of calm endurance my weak breast I armed,
To bear scorn, fear, and hate, a woful mass!

I believed that all this morbid feeling would vanish, if the chord of sympathy between him and his countrymen were touched. But my persuasions were vain, the mind could not be bent from its natural inclination. Shelley shrunk instinctively from portraying human passion, with its mixture of good and evil, of disappointment and disquiet. Such opened again the wounds of his own heart, and he loved to shelter himself rather in the airiest flights of fancy, forgetting love and hate, and regret and lost hope, in such imaginations as borrowed their hues from sunrise or sunset, from the yellow moonshine or paly twilight, from the aspect of the far ocean or the shadows of the woods; which celebrated the singing of the winds among the pines, the flow of a murmuring stream, and the thousand harmonious sounds which nature creates in her solitudes. These are the materials which form the *Witch of Atlas*; it is a brilliant congregation of ideas, such as his senses gathered, and his fancy coloured, during his rambles in the sunny land he so much loved.

Our stay at the baths of San Giuliano was shortened by an accident. At the foot of our garden ran the canal that communicated between the Serchio and the Arno. The Serchio overflowed its banks, and breaking its bounds, this canal also overflowed; all this part of the country is below the level of its rivers, and the consequence was, that it was speedily flooded. The rising waters filled the square of the baths, in the lower part of which our house was situated. The canal overflowed in the garden behind; the rising waters on either side at last burst open the doors, and meeting in the house, rose to the height of six feet. It was a picturesque

sight at night, to see the peasants driving the cattle from the plains below, to the hills above the baths. A fire was kept up to guide them across the ford; and the forms of the men and the animals showed in dark relief against the red glare of the flame, which was reflected again in the waters that filled the square.

We then removed to Pisa, and took up our abode there for the winter. The extreme mildness of the climate suited Shelley, and his solitude was enlivened by an intercourse with several intimate friends. Chance cast us, strangely enough, on this quiet, half-unpeopled town; but its very peace suited Shelley,—its river, the near mountains, and not distant sea, added to its attractions, and were the objects of many delightful excursions. We feared the south of Italy and a hotter climate, on account of our child; our former bereavement inspiring us with terror. We seemed to take root here, and moved little afterwards; often, indeed, entertaining projects for visiting other parts of Italy, but still delaying. But for our fears, on account of our child, I believe we should have wandered over the world, both being passionately fond of travelling. But human life, besides its great unalterable necessities, is ruled by a thousand liliputian ties, that shackle at the time, although it is difficult to account afterwards for their influence over our destiny.

POEMS OF 1821.

My task becomes inexpressibly painful as the year draws near that which sealed our earthly fate; and each poem and each event it records, has a real or mysterious connexion with the fatal catastrophe. I feel that I am incapable of putting on paper the history of those times. The heart of the man, abhorred of the poet,

Who could peep and botanize upon his mother's grave,

does not appear to me less inexplicably framed than that of one who can dissect and probe past woes, and repeat to the public ear the groans drawn from them in the throes of their agony.

The year 1821 was spent in Pisa, or at the baths of San Giuliano. We were not, as our wont had been, alone—friends had gathered round us. Nearly all are dead; and when memory recurs to the past, she wanders among tombs: the genius with all his blighting errors and mighty powers; the companion of Shelley's ocean-wanderings, and the sharer of his fate, than whom no man ever existed more gentle, generous, and fearless; and others, who found in Shelley's society, and in his great knowledge and warm sympathy, delight, instruction and solace, have joined him beyond the grave. A few survive who have felt life a desert since he left it. What misfortune can equal death? Change can convert every other into a blessing, or heal its sting—death alone has no cure; it shakes the foundations of the earth on which we tread, it destroys its beauty, it casts down our shelter, it exposes us bare to desolation; when those we love have passed into eternity, "life is the desert and the solitude," in which we are forced to linger—but never find comfort more.

There is much in the Adonais which seems now more applicable to Shelley himself, than to the young and gifted poet whom he mourned. The poetic view he takes of death, and the lofty scorn he displays towards his calumniators, are as a prophecy on his own destiny, when received among immortal names, and the poisonous breath of critics has vanished into emptiness before the fame he inherits.

Shelley's favourite taste was boating; when living near the Thames, or by the lake of Geneva, much of his life was spent on the water. On the shore of every lake, or stream, or sea, near which he dwelt, he had a boat moored. He had latterly enjoyed this pleasure again. There are no pleasure-

boats on the Arno, and the shallowness of its waters except in winter time, when the stream is too turbid and impetuous for boating, rendered it difficult to get any skiff light enough to float. Shelley, however, overcame the difficulty; he, together with a friend, contrived a boat such as the huntsmen carry about with them in the Maremma, to cross the sluggish but deep streams that intersect the forests, a boat of laths and pitched canvas; it held three persons, and he was often seen on the Arno in it, to the horror of the Italians, who remonstrated on the danger, and could not understand how any one could take pleasure in an exercise that risked life. "Ma va per la vita!" they exclaimed. I little thought how true their words would prove. He once ventured with a friend, on the glassy sea of a calm day, down the Arno and round the coast, to Leghorn, which by keeping close in shore was very practicable. They returned to Pisa by the canal, when, missing the direct cut, they got entangled among weeds, and the boat upset; a wetting was all the harm done, except that the intense cold of his drenched clothes made Shelley faint. Once I went down with him to the mouth of the Arno, where the stream, then high and swift, met the tideless sea and disturbed its sluggish waters; it was a waste and dreary scene; the desert sand stretched into a point surrounded by waves that broke idly though perpetually around; it was a scene very similar to Lido, of which he had said,—

I love all waste
And solitary places; where we taste
The pleasure of believing what we see
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be;
And such was this wide ocean, and this shore
More barren than its billows.

Our little boat was of greater use, unaccompanied by any danger, when we removed to the baths. Some friends

lived at the village of Pugnano,¹ four miles off, and we went to and fro to see them, in our boat, by the canal; which, fed by the Serchio, was, though an artificial, a full and picturesque stream, making its way under verdant banks sheltered, by trees that dipped their boughs into the murmuring waters. By day, multitudes of ephemera darted to and fro on the surface; at night, the fire-flies came out among the shrubs on the banks; the cicale at noon day kept up their hum; the aziola² cooed in the quiet evening. It was a pleasant summer, bright in all but Shelley's health and inconstant spirits; yet he enjoyed himself greatly, and became more and more attached to the part of the country where chance appeared to cast us. Sometimes he projected taking a farm, situated on the height of one of the near hills, surrounded by chesnut and pine woods, and overlooking a wide extent of country; or of settling still further in the maritime Apennines, at Massa. Several of his slighter and unfinished poems were inspired by these scenes, and by the companions around us. It is the nature of that poetry however which overflows from the soul oftener to express sorrow and regret than joy; for it is when oppressed by the weight of life, and away from those he loves, that the poet has recourse to the solace of expression in verse.

Still Shelley's passion was the ocean; and he wished that our summers, instead of being passed among the hills near Pisa, should be spent on the shores of the sea. It was very difficult to find a spot. We shrank from Naples from a fear that the heats would disagree with Percy; Leghorn had lost its only attraction, since our friends who had resided there were returned to England; and Monte Nero being the resort of many English, we did not wish to find ourselves in the midst of a colony of chance travellers. No one then thought it possible to reside at Via Reggio, which latterly has become

¹ The Williamses.

² " 'Tis nothing but a little downy owl."

a summer resort. The low lands and bad air of Maremma stretch the whole length of the western shores of the Mediterranean, till broken by the rocks and hills of Spezia. It was a vague idea; but Shelley suggested an excursion to Spezia, to see whether it would be feasible to spend a summer there. The beauty of the bay enchanted him—we saw no house to suit us—but the notion took root, and many circumstances, enchaind as by fatality, occurred to urge him to execute it.

He looked forward this autumn with great pleasure to the prospect of a visit from Leigh Hunt. When Shelley visited Lord Byron at Ravenna, the latter had suggested his coming out, together with the plan of a periodical work, in which they should all join. Shelley saw a prospect of good for the fortunes of his friend, and pleasure in his society, and instantly exerted himself to have the plan executed. He did not intend himself joining in the work; partly from pride, not wishing to have the air of acquiring readers for his poetry by associating it with the compositions of more popular writers; and, also, because he might feel shackled in the free expression of his opinions, if any friends were to be compromised; by those opinions, carried even to their utmost extent, he wished to live and die, as being in his conviction not only true, but such as alone would conduce to the moral improvement and happiness of mankind. The sale of the work might, meanwhile, either really or supposed, be injured by the free expression of his thoughts, and this evil he resolved to avoid.

POEMS OF 1822.

THIS morn thy gallant bark
Sailed on a sunny sea,
'Tis noon, and tempests dark
Have wrecked it on the lee.

VOL. I.

Ah woe ! ah woe !
By spirits of the deep
Thou'rt cradled on the billow,
To thy eternal sleep.

i

Thou sleep'st upon the shore
 Beside the knelling surge,
 And sea-nymphs evermore
 Shall sadly chant thy dirge.
 They come ! they come,
 The spirits of the deep,
 While near thy sea-weed pillow
 My lonely watch I keep.

From far across the sea
 I hear a loud lament,
 By echo's voice for thee,
 From ocean's cavern sent.
 O list ! O list,
 The spirits of the deep ;
 They raise a wail of sorrow,
 While I for ever weep.¹

WITH this last year of the life of Shelley these Notes end. They are not what I intended them to be. I began with energy and a burning desire to impart to the world, in worthy language, the sense I have of the virtues and genius of the Beloved and the Lost ; my strength has failed under the task. Recurrence to the past—full of its own deep and unforgotten joys and sorrows, contrasted with succeeding years of painful and solitary struggle, has shaken my health. Days of great suffering have followed my attempts to write, and these again produced a weakness and languor that spread their sinister influence over these notes. I dislike speaking of myself, but cannot help apologizing to the dead, and to the public, for not having executed in the manner I desired the history I engaged to give of Shelley's writings.²

The winter of 1822 was passed in Pisa, if we might call that season winter in which autumn merged into spring, after the interval of but few days of bleaker weather. Spring sprang up early and with extreme beauty. Shelley had conceived the idea of writing a tragedy on the subject

¹ The reader will doubtless compare these stanzas with the earlier version of them from *The Keepsake* given at p. 10 of the present volume.

² I at one time feared that the correction of the press might be less exact through my illness ; but, I believe that it is nearly free from error. No omissions have been made in this edition ; (in the last of 1839 they were confined to certain passages of "Queen Mab" ;) some asterisks occur in a few pages, as they did in the volume of Posthumous Poems,

either because they refer to private concerns, or because the original manuscript was left imperfect. Did any one see the papers from which I drew that volume, the wonder would be how any eyes or patience were capable of extracting it from so confused a mass, interlined and broken into fragments, so that the sense could only be deciphered and joined by guesses, which might seem rather intuitive than founded on reasoning. Yet I believe no mistake was made. —M. S.

of Charles I. It was one that he believed adapted for a drama; full of intense interest, contrasted character, and busy passion. He had recommended it long before, when he encouraged me to attempt a play. Whether the subject proved more difficult than he anticipated, or whether in fact he could not bend his mind away from the broodings and wanderings of thought, divested from human interest, which he best loved, I cannot tell; but he proceeded slowly, and threw it aside for one of the most mystical of his poems, "The Triumph of Life," on which he was employed at the last.

His passion for boating was fostered at this time by having among our friends several sailors; his favourite companion, Edward Ellerker Williams, of the 8th Light Dragoons, had begun his life in the navy, and had afterwards entered the army; he had spent several years in India, and his love for adventure and manly exercises accorded with Shelley's taste. It was their favourite plan to build a boat such as they could manage themselves, and, living on the sea-coast, to enjoy at every hour and season the pleasure they loved best. Captain Roberts, R.N., undertook to build the boat at Genoa, where he was also occupied in building the *Bolivar* for Lord Byron. Ours was to be an open boat, on a model taken from one of the royal dock-yards. I have since heard that there was a defect in this model, and that it was never sea-worthy. In the month of February, Shelley and his friend went to Spezia to seek for houses for us. Only one was to be found at all suitable; however, a trifle such as not finding a house could not stop Shelley; the one found was to serve for all. It was unfurnished; we sent our furniture by sea, and with a good deal of precipitation, arising from his impatience, made our removal. We left Pisa on the 26th of April.

The bay of Spezia is of considerable extent, and divided by a rocky promontory into a larger and smaller one. The

town of Lerici is situated on the eastern point, and in the depth of the smaller bay, which bears the name of this town, is the village of Sant' Arenzo. Our house, Casa Magni, was close to this village; the sea came up to the door, a steep hill sheltered it behind. The proprietor of the estate on which it was situated was insane; he had begun to erect a large house at the summit of the hill behind, but his malady prevented its being finished, and it was falling into ruin. He had, and this to the Italians had seemed a glaring symptom of very decided madness, rooted up the olives on the hill side, and planted forest trees; these were mostly young, but the plantation was more in English taste than I ever elsewhere saw in Italy; some fine walnut and ilex trees intermingled their dark massy foliage, and formed groups which still haunt my memory, as then they satiated the eye, with a sense of loveliness. The scene was indeed of unimaginable beauty; the blue extent of waters, the almost land-locked bay, the near castle of Lerici, shutting it in to the east, and distant Porto Venere to the west; the varied forms of the precipitous rocks that bound in the beach, over which there was only a winding rugged foot-path towards Lerici, and none on the other side; the tideless sea leaving no sands nor shingle,—formed a picture such as one sees in Salvator Rosa's landscapes only: sometimes the sunshine vanished when the scirocco raged—the ponente, the wind was called on that shore. The gales and squalls, that hailed our first arrival, surrounded the bay with foam; the howling wind swept round our exposed house, and the sea roared unremittingly, so that we almost fancied ourselves on board ship. At other times sunshine and calm invested sea and sky, and the rich tints of Italian heaven bathed the scene in bright and ever-varying tints.

The natives were wilder than the place. Our near neighbours, of Sant' Arenzo, were more like savages than any people I ever before lived among. Many a night they

passed on the beach, singing or rather howling, the women dancing about among the waves that broke at their feet, the men leaning against the rocks and joining in their loud wild chorus. We could get no provisions nearer than Sarzana, at a distance of three miles and a half off, with the torrent of the Magra between; and even there the supply was very deficient. Had we been wrecked on an island of the South Seas, we could scarcely have felt ourselves further from civilization and comfort; but where the sun shines the latter becomes an unnecessary luxury, and we had enough society among ourselves. Yet I confess housekeeping became rather a toilsome task, especially as I was suffering in my health, and could not exert myself actively.

At first the fatal boat had not arrived, and was expected with great impatience. On Monday, May 12th, it came. Williams records the long-wished-for fact in his journal: "Cloudy and threatening weather. M. Maglian called, and after dinner and while walking with him on the terrace, we discovered a strange sail coming round the point of Porto Venere, which proved at length to be Shelley's boat. She had left Genoa on Thursday last, but had been driven back by the prevailing bad winds. A Mr. Heslop and two English seamen brought her round, and they speak most highly of her performances. She does indeed excite my surprise and admiration. Shelley and I walked to Lerici, and made a stretch off the land to try her; and I find she fetches whatever she looks at. In short, we have now a perfect plaything for the summer."—It was thus that short-sighted mortals welcomed death, he having disguised his grim form in a pleasing mask! The time of the friends was now spent on the sea; the weather became fine, and our whole party often passed the evenings on the water, when the wind promised pleasant sailing. Shelley and Williams made longer excursions; they sailed several times to Massa; they had engaged one of the seamen who brought

her round, a boy, by name Charles Vivian; and they had not the slightest apprehension of danger. When the weather was unfavourable, they employed themselves with alterations in the rigging, and by building a boat of canvas and reeds, as light as possible, to have on board the other, for the convenience of landing in waters too shallow for the larger vessel. When Shelley was on board, he had his papers with him; and much of the "Triumph of Life" was written as he sailed or weltered on that sea which was soon to engulf him.

The heats set in, in the middle of June; the days became excessively hot, but the sea breeze cooled the air at noon, and extreme heat always put Shelley in spirits: a long drought had preceded the heat, and prayers for rain were being put up in the churches, and processions of relics for the same effect took place in every town. At this time we received letters announcing the arrival of Leigh Hunt at Pisa. Shelley was very eager to see him. I was confined to my room by severe illness, and could not move; it was agreed that Shelley and Williams should go to Leghorn in the boat. Strange that no fear of danger crossed our minds! Living on the seashore, the ocean became as a plaything: as a child may sport with a lighted stick, till a spark inflames a forest and spreads destruction over all, so did we fearlessly and blindly tamper with danger, and make a game of the terrors of the ocean. Our Italian neighbours even trusted themselves as far as Massa in the skiff; and the running down the line of coast to Leghorn, gave no more notion of peril than a fair-weather inland navigation would have done to those who had never seen the sea. Once, some months before, Trelawny had raised a warning voice as to the difference of our calm bay, and the open sea beyond; but Shelley and his friend, with their one sailor boy, thought themselves a match for the storms of the Mediterranean, in a boat which they looked upon as equal to all it was put to do.

On the 1st of July they left us. If ever shadow of future ill darkened the present hour, such was over my mind when they went. During the whole of our stay at Lerici, an intense presentiment of coming evil brooded over my mind, and covered this beautiful place, and genial summer, with the shadow of coming misery—I had vainly struggled with these emotions—they seemed accounted for by my illness, but at this hour of separation they recurred with renewed violence. I did not anticipate danger for them, but a vague expectation of evil shook me to agony, and I could scarcely bring myself to let them go. The day was calm and clear, and a fine breeze rising at twelve they weighed for Leghorn; they made the run of about fifty miles in seven hours and a half: the Bolivar was in port, and the regulations of the health-office not permitting them to go on shore after sunset, they borrowed cushions from the larger vessel, and slept on board their boat.

They spent a week at Pisa and Leghorn. The want of rain was severely felt in the country. The weather continued sultry and fine. I have heard that Shelley all this time was in brilliant spirits. Not long before, talking of presentiment, he had said the only one that he ever found infallible, was the certain advent of some evil fortune when he felt peculiarly joyous. Yet if ever fate whispered of coming disaster, such inaudible, but not unfelt, prognostics hovered around us. The beauty of the place seemed unearthly in its excess: the distance we were at from all signs of civilization, the sea at our feet, its murmurs or its roaring for ever in our ears,—all these things led the mind to brood over strange thoughts, and, lifting it from everyday life, caused it to be familiar with the unreal. A sort of spell surrounded us, and each day, as the voyagers did not return, we grew restless and disquieted, and yet, strange to say, we were not fearful of the most apparent danger.

The spell snapped, it was all over; an interval of agoniz-

ing doubt—of days passed in miserable journeys to gain tidings, of hopes that took firmer root, even as they were more baseless—were changed to the certainty of the death that eclipsed all happiness for the survivors for evermore.

There was something in our fate peculiarly harrowing. The remains of those we lost were cast on shore; but by the quarantine laws of the coast, we were not permitted to have possession of them—the laws, with respect to everything cast on land by the sea, being, that such should be burned, to prevent the possibility of any remnant bringing the plague into Italy; and no representation could alter the law. At length, through the kind and unwearied exertions of Mr. Dawkins, our *Chargé d’Affaires* at Florence, we gained permission to receive the ashes after the bodies were consumed. Nothing could equal the zeal of Trelawny in carrying our wishes into effect. He was indefatigable in his exertions, and full of forethought and sagacity in his arrangements. It was a fearful task: he stood before us at last, his hands scorched and blistered by the flames of the funeral pyre, and by touching the burnt relics as he placed them in the receptacles prepared for the purpose. And there, in compass of that small case, was gathered all that remained on earth of him whose genius and virtue were a crown of glory to the world—whose love had been the source of happiness, peace, and good,—to be buried with him!

The concluding stanzas of the *Adonais* pointed out where the remains ought to be deposited; in addition to which our beloved child lay buried in the cemetery at Rome. Thither Shelley’s ashes were conveyed, and they rest beneath one of the antique weed-grown towers that recur at intervals in the circuit of the massy ancient wall of Rome. The vignette of the title page,¹ is taken from a sketch made on

¹ To be seen in Vol. III of Mr. Rossetti’s edition of 1878, and in most of Mrs. Shelley’s editions. It

is difficult to imagine how and from what point of view Roberts can have produced anything so unlike the place.

the spot by Captain Roberts. He selected the hallowed place himself; there is the

Sepulchre,

O, not of him, but of our joy!—

* * * * *

And grey walls moulder round, on which dull Time
Feeds like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
And one keen pyramid, with wedge sublime,
Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath
A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.

Could sorrow for the lost, and shuddering anguish at the vacancy left behind, be soothed by poetic imaginations, there was something in Shelley's fate to mitigate pangs, which yet alas! could not be so mitigated; for hard reality brings too miserably home to the mourner, all that is lost of happiness, all of lonely unsolaced struggle that remains. Still though dreams and hues of poetry cannot blunt grief, it invests his fate with a sublime fitness, which those less nearly allied may regard with complacency. A year before, he had poured into verse all such ideas about death as give it a glory of its own. He had, as it now seems, almost anticipated his own destiny; and when the mind figures his skiff wrapped from sight by the thunderstorm,¹ as it was

¹ Captain Roberts watched the vessel with his glass from the top of the light-house of Leghorn, on its homeward track. They were off Via Reggio, at some distance from shore, when a storm was driven over the sea. It enveloped them and several larger vessels in darkness. When the cloud passed onward, Roberts looked again, and saw every other vessel sailing on the ocean except their little schooner, which had vanished. From that time he could scarcely doubt the fatal truth; yet we fancied that they might have been driven towards Elba, or Corsica, and so be saved. The

observation made as to the spot where the boat disappeared, caused it to be found, through the exertions of Trelawny, for that effect. It had gone down in ten fathom water; it had not capsized, and, except such things as had floated from her, everything was found on board exactly as it had been placed when they sailed. The boat itself was uninjured. Roberts possessed himself of her, and decked her, but she proved not sea-worthy, and her shattered planks now lie rotting on the shore of one of the Ionian islands on which she was wrecked.—*M. S.*

last seen upon the purple sea ; and then, as the cloud of the tempest passed away, no sign remained of where it had been—who but will regard as a prophecy the last stanza of the “ Adonais ? ”

The breath, whose might I have invoked in song,
Descends on me ; my spirit's bark is driven,
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng,
Whose sails were never to the tempest given ;
The massy earth and sphered skies are riven !
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar ;
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.



5

THE CHOICE

A POEM ON SHELLEY'S DEATH

BY

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY

[In a letter from Mrs. Shelley to Mrs. Leigh Hunt, dated the 27th of November, 1823, and printed in Mr. Garnett's *Relics of Shelley*, occurs the following passage :—"When he [Leigh Hunt] does send a packet over (let it be directed to his brother), will he also be so good as to send me a copy of my 'Choice,' beginning after the line 'Entrenched sad lines, or blotted with its might.' Perhaps, dear Marianne, you would have the kindness to copy them for me, and send them soon." Mr. Garnett explains in a foot-note that the reference is to "a poem by Mrs. Shelley." Whether any copy was made and sent, I know not ; but the original manuscript has remained among the Shelley papers of Leigh Hunt till now ; and by the kindness of Mr. S. R. Townshend Mayer, who has placed these invaluable papers at my disposal, I am enabled to give to the world this most interesting and remarkable composition. The manuscript consists of six foolscap leaves, very clearly written : it had evidently been submitted to Leigh Hunt for revision or suggestion ; and it bears several markings by him, and words in his handwriting, which have some claim to be considered part and parcel of the text, inasmuch as Mrs. Shelley has evidently been over the manuscript after him,—one word of his being struck out and another substituted in her writing.—H. B. F.]

THE CHOICE.

My Choice!—My Choice, alas! was had and gone
 With the red gleam of last autumnal sun;¹
 Lost in that deep wherein he bathed his head,
 My choice, my life, my hope together fled:—
 A wanderer here, no more I seek a home, 5
 The sky a vault, and Italy a tomb.
 Yet as some days a pilgrim I remain,
 Linked to my orphan child² by love's strong chain;
 And since I have a faith that I must earn,
 By suffering and by patience, a return 10
 Of that companionship and love, which first
 Upon my young life's cloud like sunlight burst,
 And now has left me, dark, as when its beams,
 Quenched in the might of dreadful ocean streams,
 Leave that one cloud, a gloomy speck on high, 15
 Beside one star in the else darkened sky;—
 Since I must live, how would I pass the day,

¹ Shelley was drowned, it will be remembered, on the 8th of July, 1822. In the autumn of 1823, Mrs. Shelley arrived in London from Italy, where,

from the letter already quoted, she seems to have left this poem.

² Percy Florence, now Sir Percy Florence Shelley.

How meet with fewest tears the morning's ray,
 How sleep with calmest dreams, how find delights,
 As fire-flies¹ gleam through interlunar nights?² 20

First let me call on thee!³ Lost as thou art,
 Thy name aye fills my sense, thy love my heart.
 Oh, gentle Spirit! thou hast often sung,
 How fallen on evil days thy heart was wrung;
 Now fierce remorse and unreplying death 25
 Waken a chord within my heart, whose breath,
 Thrilling and keen, in accents audible
 A tale of unrequited love doth tell.
 It was not anger,—while thy earthly dress
 Encompassed still thy soul's rare loveliness, 30
 All anger was atoned by many a kind
 Caress or tear, that spoke the softened mind.—
 It speaks of cold neglect, averted eyes,
 That blindly crushed thy soul's fond sacrifice:—
 My heart was all thine own,—but yet a shell 35
 Closed in it's core, which seemed impenetrable,
 Till sharp-toothed¹ misery tore the husk in twain,
 Which gaping lies, nor may unite again.⁴
 Forgive me! let thy love descend in dew
 Of soft repentance and regret most true;— 40

¹ No hyphen in the MS.

² There is no note of interrogation in the MS.; but the sense obviously needs one.

³ There was originally a comma at *thee*. The note of exclamation was an afterthought. I presume it was meant to separate this sentence from the

next, and have therefore printed *lost* with a capital.

⁴ I cannot regard this passage as indicating anything more than a natural feeling of remorse in the noble heart of a woman who has suddenly lost an idolized husband, and fancies all kinds of deficiencies in her conduct to him.

In a strange guise thou dost descend, or how
 Could love soothe fell remorse,—as it does now?—¹
 By this remorse and love,—and by the years
 Through which we shared our common hopes and fears,
 By all our best companionship, I dare 45
 Call on thy sacred name without a fear;—
 And thus I pray to thee, my friend, my Heart!
 That in thy new abode, thou'lt bear a part²
 In soothing thy poor Mary's lonely pain,
 As link by link she weaves her heavy chain!— 50
 And thou, strange star! ascendant at my birth,
 Which rained, they said, kind influence on the earth,
 So from great parents sprung, I dared to boast
 Fortune my friend, till set, thy beams were lost!
 And thou, Inscrutable, by whose decree 55
 Has burst this hideous storm of misery!
 Here let me cling, here to these solitudes,
 These myrtle-shaded³ streams and chesnut woods;
 Tear me not hence—here let me live and die,
 In my adopted land—my country—Italy. 60

A happy Mother first I saw this sun,
 Beneath this sky my race of joy was run.
 First my sweet girl, whose face resembled *his*,
 Slept on bleak Lido, near Venetian seas.⁴

¹ Here also I have had to supply the note of interrogation.

² This passage originally stood thus,—

If in thy new abode thou bearest a part,
 In aught may lighten thy poor Mary's pain.

The alteration is in Mrs. Shelley's writing.

³ No hyphen in the MS.

⁴ Clara Shelley, who died in 1818. In the *Shelley Memorials* we read: "While they were at Este, their little

Yet still my eldest-born, my loveliest, dearest, 65
 Clung to my side, most joyful then when nearest.
 An English home had given this angel birth,
 Near those royal¹ towers, where the grass-clad² earth
 Is shadowed o'er by England's loftiest trees:—
 Then our companion o'er the swift-passed² seas, 70
 He dwelt beside the Alps, or gently slept,
 Rocked by the waves, o'er which our vessel swept,
 Beside his father, nurst upon my breast,
 While Leman's waters shook with fierce unrest.
 His fairest limbs had bathed in Serchio's stream; 75
 His eyes had watched Italian lightnings gleam;
 His childish voice had, with its loudest call,
 The echoes waked of Este's castle wall;
 Had paced Pompeii's Roman Market-place;²
 Had gazed with infant wonder on the grace 80
 Of stone-wrought² deities, and pictured saints,
 In Rome's high palaces:—there were no taints
 Of ruin on his cheek—all shadowless
 Grim death approached—the boy met his caress,
 And while his glowing limbs with life's warmth shone, 85
 Around those limbs his icy arms were thrown.

daughter, Clara, showed signs of suffering from the heat of the climate. Her indisposition being increased to an alarming extent by teething, the parents hastened to Venice for the best advice, but discovered at Fusina that, in their agitation, they had forgotten the passport. The soldiers on duty attempted to prevent their crossing the lagoon; but Shelley, with

his usual vehemence, augmented by the urgent nature of the case, broke through, and they reached Venice. Unhappily, it was too late; the little sufferer died just as they arrived."—*Shelley Memorials*, p. 95.

¹ Originally *ancient*, but altered by Hunt to *old*, and finally by Mrs. Shelley to *royal*.

² No hyphen in the MS.

His spoils were strewed beneath the soil¹ of Rome,
 Whose flowers now star the dark earth near his tomb :
 It's airs and plants received the mortal part,
 His spirit beats within his mother's heart. 90
 Infant immortal ! chosen for the sky !
 No grief upon thy brow's young purity
 Entrenched sad lines, or blotted with its might
 The sunshine of thy smile's celestial light ;—
 The image shattered, the bright spirit fled, 95
 Thou shin'st the evening star among the dead.²

And thou, his playmate, whose deep lucid eyes,
 Were a reflection of these bluest skies ;
 Child of our hearts, divided in ill hour,
 We could not watch the bud's expanding flower, 100
 Now thou art gone, one guileless victim more,
 To the black death that rules this sunny shore.³

Companion of my griefs ! thy sinking frame
 Had often drooped, and then erect again
 With shews of health had mocked forebodings dark ;— 105
 Watching the changes of that quivering spark,
 I feared and hoped, and dared to trust at length,

¹ This and the following line are printed as they originally stood in the MS. The words *soil*, *earth*, and *land* are written in and cancelled in such a way as to leave a doubt which were finally adopted : *land* is in line 87, in Hunt's writing.

² William Shelley, born 24 January, 1816, died at Rome in 1819, while Shelley was engaged in composing *The Cenci*,

—a tragic interruption of his tragedy, which, as Lady Shelley says (*Memorials*, p. 115), "drove the broken-hearted parents to the neighbourhood of Leghorn, where they took a small house (Villa Valsovano), about half way between the city and Monte Nero."

³ This refers to Allègra, or Alba, as she is sometimes called, the daughter of Claire Clairmont and Byron.

Thy very weakness was my tower of strength.
 Methought thou wert a spirit from the sky,
 Which struggled with it's chains, but could not die, 110
 And that destruction had no power to win
 From out those limbs the soul that burnt within.—
 Tell me, ye ancient walls, and weed-grown¹ towers,
 Ye Roman airs and brightly painted flowers,
 Does not his spirit visit that recess 115
 Which built of love enshrines his earthly dress?—
 —No more! no more!—what though that form be fled,
 My trembling hand shall never write thee—dead—
 Thou liv'st in Nature, Love, my Memory, }
 With deathless faith for aye adoring thee, } 120
 The wife of Time no more, I wed Eternity.

'Tis thus the Past—on which my spirit leans,
 Makes dearest to my soul Italian scenes.
 In Tuscan fields the winds in odours steeped
 From flowers and cypresses, when skies have wept, 125
 Shall, like the notes of music once most dear,
 Which brings the unstrung voice upon my ear
 Of one beloved, to memory display
 Past scenes, past hopes, past joys, in long array.
 Pugnano's trees, beneath whose shade he stood, 130
 The pools reflecting Pisa's old pine wood,
 The fire-flies'² beams, the aziola's cry
 All breathe his spirit which can never die.
 Such memories have linked these hills and caves,

¹ No hyphen in the MS.

² *Fire flies* in the MS.

These woodland paths, and streams, and knelling waves 135
 Fast to each sad pulsation of my breast,
 And made their melancholy arms the haven of my rest.

Here will I live, within a little dell,
 Which but a month ago¹ I saw full well:—
 A dream then pictured forth the solitude 140
 Deep in the shelter of a lovely wood;
 A voice then whispered a strange prophecy,
 My dearest, widowed friend,² that thou and I
 Should there together pass the weary day,
 As we before have done in Spezia's bay, 145
 As through long hours we watched the sails that neared
 O'er the far sea, their³ vessel ne'er appeared;
 One pang of agony, one dying gleam
 Of hope led us along, beside the ocean stream,
 But keen-eyed fear, the while all hope departs, 150
 Stabbed with a million stings our heart of hearts.
 The sad revolving year has not allayed
 The poison of those bleeding wounds, or made
 The anguish less of that corroding thought
 Which has with grief each single moment fraught. 155
 Edward,⁴ thy voice was hushed⁵—thy noble heart

¹ This would seem to indicate that the poem was composed within two or three weeks of Shelley's death,—in which case, *sad revolving year*, in line 152, must be taken merely as referring to the lapse of time, not the lapse of a year.

² Mrs. Williams,—the "Jane" of Shelley's exquisite song, "The keen stars were twinkling."

³ *That* originally, but altered to *their* in Mrs. Shelley's writing.

⁴ Williams, who was drowned with Shelley.

⁵ Leigh Hunt suggests as an emendation, *thou too! thou too!* . . . for *thy voice was hushed*; but, as the pen has not been drawn through either of the readings, I leave Mrs. Shelley's in the text.

With aspirations heaves no more—a part
Of¹ heaven-resumèd past thou art become,
Thy spirit waits with his in our far home.²

¹ The word *the* is inserted after *Of* in Hunt's writing: it does not seem to me an improvement.

² I cannot find a more appropriate place than the present in which to give the little poem by Mrs. Shelley, originally published in *The Keepsake* for 1831, and entitled—

A DIRGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "FRANKENSTEIN."

This morn, thy gallant bark, love,
Sail'd on the sunny sea;
'Tis noon, and tempests dark, love,
Have wreck'd it on the lee.

Ah, woe! ah, woe! ah, woe!
By spirits of the deep
He's cradled on the billow,
To his unwaking sleep!

Thou liest upon the shore, love,
Beside the swelling surge;

But sea-nymphs ever more, love,
Shall sadly chant thy dirge.
O come! O come! O come
Ye spirits of the deep!
While near his sea-weed pillow,
My lonely watch I keep.

From far across the sea, love,
I hear a wild lament,
By Echo's voice, for thee, love,
From ocean's caverns sent:—
O list! O list! O list!
The spirits of the deep—
Loud sounds their wail of sorrow,
While I for ever weep!

In her first collected edition of Shelley's Poetical Works (1839), Mrs. Shelley headed the Notes to the Poems of 1822 with a revised version of this Dirge; varying sufficiently from the original to make it quite worth while to rescue the earlier version.

ALASTOR, OR THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE,
&c.

[The little volume containing *Alastor* and other poems, whereof the original title-page is reproduced opposite, seems to have become scarce as early as 1824, for Mrs. Shelley says, in her preface to the *Posthumous Poems* of that year, "I have added a reprint of 'Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude':—the difficulty with which a copy can be obtained is the cause of its republication." This volume has no table of contents, but consists of title, 4 pages of preface, a fly-title with quotation from St. Augustine, and 101 pages of text, including the respective fly-titles to the *Poems* and *The Dæmon of the World*. The poems printed with *Alastor* are (1) the Stanzas addressed to Coleridge, headed ΔΑΚΡΤΕΙ [for ΔΑΚΡΤΕΙ] ΔΙΟΙΣΩ ΠΟΤΜΟΝ ΑΠΟΤΜΟΝ, (2) Stanzas, April, 1814, (3) *Mutability*, (4) the Stanzas on the verse of Ecclesiastes, "There is no work, nor device," &c., (5) *A Summer-Evening Church-yard*, (6) Sonnet To Wordsworth, (7) Sonnet, *Feelings of a Republican on the Fall of Bonaparte*, (8) *Superstition* (an excerpt from *Queen Mab*), (9) Sonnet from the Italian of Dante, (10) Sonnet, Translated from the Greek of Moschus, (11) *The Dæmon of the World*. I am not aware of any extant manuscript of *Alastor*.—H. B. F.]

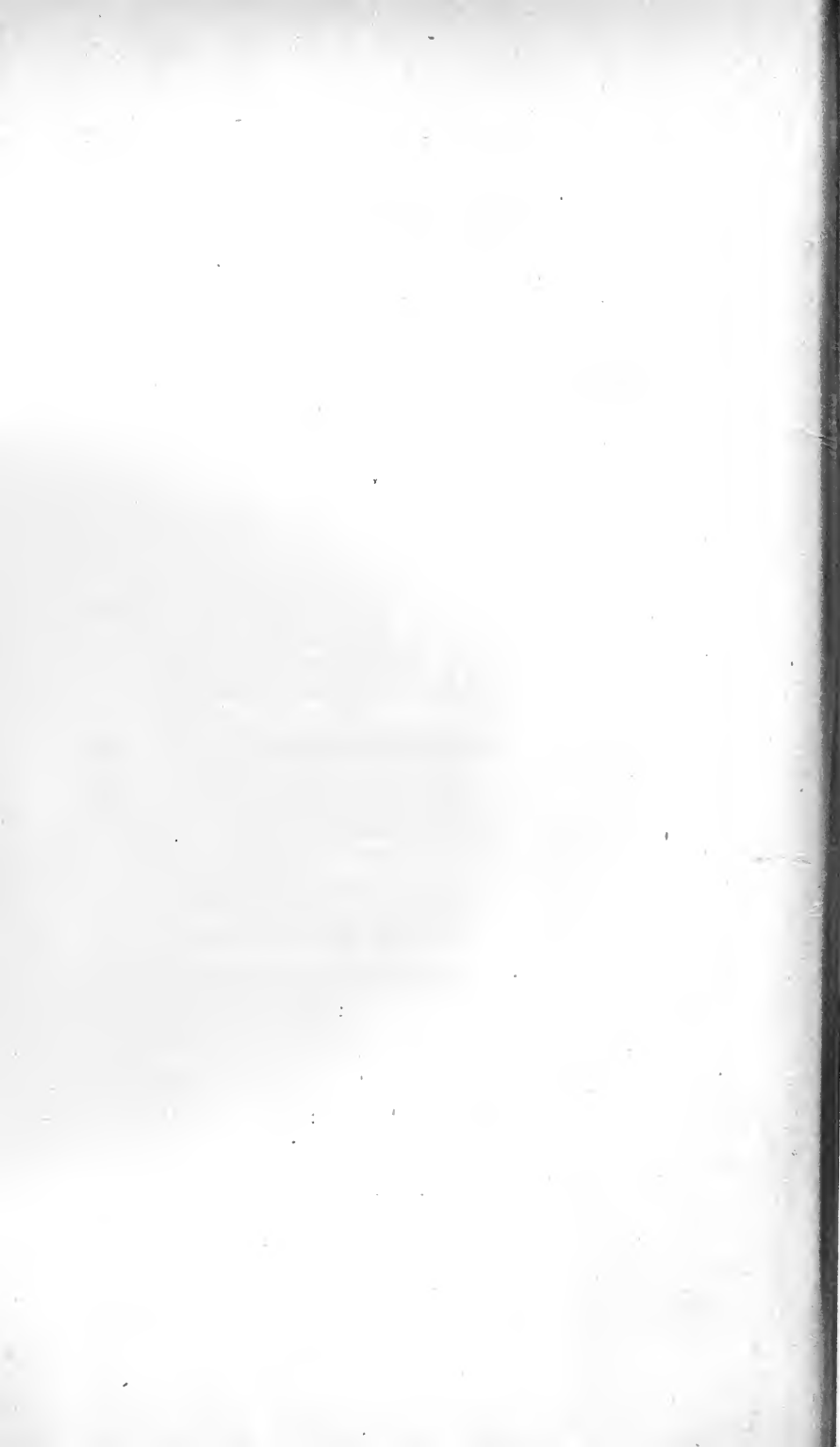
ALASTOR;
OR,
THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE:
AND OTHER POEMS.

BY
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR BALDWIN, CRADOCK, AND JOY, PATER-
NOSTER ROW; AND CARPENTER AND SON,
OLD BOND-STREET:

By S. Hamilton, Weybridge, Surrey.

1816.



PREFACE.

[BY SHELLEY.]

THE poem entitled 'ALASTOR,' may be considered as allegorical of one of the most interesting situations of the human mind. It represents a youth of uncorrupted feelings and adventurous genius led forth by an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic, to the contemplation of the universe. He drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge, and is still insatiate. The magnificence and beauty of the external world sinks profoundly into the frame of his conceptions, and affords to their modifications a variety not to be exhausted. So long as it is possible for his desires to point towards objects thus infinite and unmeasured, he is joyous, and tranquil, and self-possessed. But the period arrives when these objects cease to suffice. His mind is at length suddenly awakened and thirsts for intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself. He images to himself the Being whom he loves. Conversant with speculations of the sublimest and most perfect natures, the vision in which he embodies his own imaginations unites all of wonderful, or wise, or beautiful, which the poet, the philosopher, or the lover could depicture. The intellectual faculties, the imagination, the functions of sense, have their respective

requisitions on the sympathy of corresponding powers in other human beings. The Poet is represented as uniting these requisitions, and attaching them to a single image. He seeks in vain for a prototype of his conception. Blasted by his disappointment, he descends to an untimely grave.

The picture is not barren of instruction to actual men. The Poet's self-centred seclusion was avenged by the furies of an irresistible passion pursuing him to speedy ruin. But that Power which strikes the luminaries of the world with sudden darkness and extinction, by awakening them to too exquisite a perception of its influences, dooms to a slow and poisonous decay those meaner spirits that dare to abjure its dominion. Their destiny is more abject and inglorious as their delinquency is more contemptible and pernicious. They who, deluded by no generous error, instigated by no sacred thirst of doubtful knowledge, duped by no illustrious superstition, loving nothing on this earth, and cherishing no hopes beyond, yet keep aloof from sympathies with their kind, rejoicing neither in human joy nor mourning with human grief; these, and such as they, have their apportioned curse. They languish, because none feel with them their common nature. They are morally dead. They are neither friends, nor lovers, nor fathers, nor citizens of the world, nor benefactors of their country. Among those who attempt to exist without human sympathy, the pure and tender-hearted perish through the intensity and passion of their search after its communities, when the vacancy of their spirit suddenly makes itself felt. All else, selfish, blind, and torpid, are those unforeseeing multitudes who constitute, together with their own,

the lasting misery and loneliness of the world.¹ Those who love not their fellow-beings, live unfruitful lives, and prepare for their old age a miserable grave.

‘The good die first,
And those whose hearts are dry as summer dust,
Burn to the socket!’²

The Fragment, entitled ‘THE DÆMON OF THE WORLD,’ is a detached part of a poem³ which the author does not intend for publication. The metre in which it is composed is that of Samson Agonistes and the Italian pastoral drama, and may be considered as the natural measure into which poetical conceptions, expressed in harmonious language, necessarily fall.

December 14, 1815.

¹ In Shelley's edition there is a full stop at *world*,—possibly a printer's error, as the next sentence, though capable of standing alone, seems to me rather an extension of the last than a separate proposition.

² Wordsworth's *Excursion*, Book I. I have left the extract as misquoted by Shelley; but *those* should be *they*; and Wordsworth has no comma at *dust*.

³ A portion of *Queen Mab*, rewritten.



ALASTOR;

OR,

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE.

Nondum amabam, et amare amabam, quærebam quid amarem, amans amare.¹

—*Confess. St. August.*

¹ In Shelley's edition we read *mare* instead of *amare*.



ALASTOR;¹

OR,

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE.

EARTH, ocean, air, beloved brotherhood!
 If our great Mother has² imbued my soul
 With aught of natural piety to feel
 Your love, and recompense the boon with mine;
 If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even, 5
 With sunset and its gorgeous ministers,
 And solemn midnight's tingling silentness;
 If autumn's hollow sighs in the sere wood,
 And winter robing with pure snow and crowns
 Of starry ice the gray grass and bare boughs; 10
 If spring's voluptuous pantings when she breathes
 Her first sweet kisses, have been dear to me;
 If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast
 I consciously have injured, but still loved
 And cherished these my kindred; then forgive 15

¹ There has been much unnecessary discussion as to the meaning of this title. Mr. Peacock (in *Fraser's Magazine* for January, 1860) says that he proposed the title; and he explains the meaning thus: "The Greek word ἀλδστωρ is an evil genius, κακοδαίμων; though the sense of the two words is somewhat different—as in *phævets*

ἀλδστωρ ἢ κακὸς δαίμων ποθὲν of Æschylus. The poem treated the 'Spirit of Solitude' as a spirit of evil. I mention the true meaning of the word, because many have supposed 'Alastor' to be the name of the hero of the poem."

² Mrs. Shelley's editions read *have* for *has*.

This boast, beloved brethren, and withdraw
No portion of your wonted favour now!

Mother of this unfathomable world!
Favour my solemn song, for I have loved
Thee ever, and thee only; I have watched 20
Thy shadow, and the darkness of thy steps,
And my heart ever gazes on the depth
Of thy deep mysteries. I have made my bed
In charnels and on coffins, where black death
Keeps record of the trophies won from thee, 25
Hoping to still these obstinate questionings
Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost
Thy messenger, to render up the tale
Of what we are. In lone and silent hours,
When night makes a weird sound of its own stillness, 30
Like an inspired and desperate alchemist
Staking his very life on some dark hope,
Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks
With my most innocent love, until strange tears
Uniting with those breathless kisses, made 35
Such magic as compels the charmed night
To render up thy charge: . . . and, though ne'er yet
Thou hast unveiled¹ thy inmost sanctuary,
Enough from incommunicable dream,
And twilight phantasms, and deep noonday thought, 40
Has shone within me, that serenely now
And moveless, as a long-forgotten lyre
Suspended in the solitary dome
Of some mysterious and deserted fane,
I wait thy breath, Great Parent, that my strain 45
May modulate with murmurs of the air,

¹ *Unveil'd* in Shelley's edition; but throughout the volume it was probably unintentional here.
as he does not use the contraction

And motions of the forests and the sea,
 And voice of living beings, and woven hymns
 Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.

There was a Poet whose untimely tomb 50
 No human hands with pious reverence reared,
 But the charmed eddies of autumnal winds
 Built o'er his mouldering bones a pyramid
 Of mouldering leaves in the waste wilderness:—
 A lovely youth,—no mourning maiden decked 55
 With weeping flowers, or votive cypress wreath,
 The lone couch of his everlasting sleep:—
 Gentle, and brave, and generous,—no lorn bard
 Breathed o'er his dark fate one melodious sigh:
 He lived, he died, he sung,¹ in solitude. 60
 Strangers have wept to hear his passionate notes,
 And virgins, as unknown he past, have pined²
 And wasted for fond love of his wild eyes.
 The fire of those soft orbs has ceased to burn,
 And Silence,³ too enamoured of that voice, 65
 Locks its mute music in her rugged cell.

By solemn vision, and bright silver dream,
 His infancy was nurtured. Every sight
 And sound from the vast earth and ambient air,
 Sent to his heart its choicest impulses. 70
 The fountains of divine philosophy
 Fled not his thirsting lips, and all of great,
 Or good, or lovely, which the sacred past
 In truth or fable consecrates, he felt

¹ So in Shelley's edition and in the *Posthumous Poems*; but *sang* in the editions of 1839.

² In the *Posthumous Poems* Mrs. Shelley substituted *sighed* for *pined*; but she restored *pined* in 1839. Shelley

would have been unlikely to make a change involving a repetition: line 59 ends with *sigh*.

³ Mrs. Shelley changed the sense by putting the comma after *too* in her second edition of 1839.

And knew. When early youth had past, he left 75
 His cold fireside and alienated home
 To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands.
 Many a wide waste and tangled wilderness
 Has lured his fearless steps; and he has¹ bought
 With his sweet voice and eyes, from savage men, 80
 His rest and food. Nature's most secret steps
 He like her shadow has pursued, where'er
 The red volcano overcanopies
 Its fields of snow and pinnacles of ice
 With burning smoke, or where bitumen lakes 85
 On black bare pointed islets ever beat
 With sluggish surge, or where the secret caves
 Rugged and dark, winding among the springs
 Of fire and poison, inaccessible
 To avarice or pride, their starry domes 90
 Of diamond and of gold expand above
 Numberless and immeasurable halls,
 Frequent with crystal column, and clear shrines
 Of pearl, and thrones radiant with chrysolite.
 Nor had that scene of ampler majesty 95
 Than gems or gold, the varying roof of heaven
 And the green earth lost in his heart its claims
 To love and wonder; he would linger long
 In lonesome vales, making the wild his home,
 Until the doves and squirrels would partake 100
 From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,
 Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks,
 And the wild antelope, that starts whene'er
 The dry leaf rustles in the brake, suspend
 Her timid steps to gaze upon a form 105
 More graceful than her own.

¹ In the *Posthumous Poems*, the words
as he are substituted for *he has*; but

Mrs. Shelley restored the right read-
 ing in 1839.

His wandering step
Obedient to high thoughts, has visited
The awful ruins of the days of old:
Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste
Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers 110
Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,
Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of strange
Sculptured on alabaster obelisk,
Or jasper tomb, or mutilated sphynx,
Dark Æthiopia in her desert hills 115
Conceals. Among the ruined temples there,
Stupendous columns, and wild images
Of more than man, where marble dæmons watch
The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men
Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around, 120
He lingered, poring on memorials
Of the world's youth, through the long burning day
Gazed on those speechless shapes, nor, when the moon
Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades
Suspended he that task, but ever gazed 125
And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind
Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

Meanwhile an Arab maiden brought his food,
Her daily portion, from her father's tent, 130
And spread her matting for his couch, and stole
From duties and repose to tend his steps:—
Enamoured, yet not daring for deep awe
To speak her love:—and watched his nightly sleep,
Sleepless herself, to gaze upon his lips 135
Parted in slumber, whence the regular breath
Of innocent dreams arose: then, when red morn
Made paler the pale moon, to her cold home
Wildered, and wan, and panting, she returned.

The Poet wandering on, through Arabia 140
 And Persia, and the wild Carmanian waste,
 And o'er the ærial mountains which pour down
 Indus and Oxus from their icy caves,
 In joy and exultation held his way;
 Till in the vale of Cashmire, far within 145
 Its loneliest dell, where odorous plants entwine
 Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower,
 Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched
 His languid limbs. A vision on his sleep
 There came, a dream of hopes that never yet 150
 Had flushed his cheek. He dreamed a veiled maid
 Sate near him, talking in low solemn tones.
 Her voice was like the voice of his own soul
 Heard in the calm of thought; its music long,
 Like woven sounds of streams and breezes, held 155
 His inmost sense suspended in its web
 Of many-coloured woof and shifting hues.
 Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme,
 And lofty hopes of divine liberty,
 Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy, 160
 Herself¹ a poet. Soon the solemn mood
 Of her pure mind kindled through all her frame
 A permeating fire: wild numbers then
 She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous sobs
 Subdued by its own pathos: her fair hands 165
 Were bare alone, sweeping from some strange harp

¹ So in Shelley's edition and in Mrs. Shelley's two editions of 1839, but *himself* in some of the later collections. Mr. Rossetti says it is not quite clear that *himself* is a misprint. I feel absolutely certain that it is: it would be altogether unlike Shelley to remind us at this stage that his hero was a poet; but the idea involved in his telling us that the veiled maid was a poet is both beautiful and character-

istic. Shelley's ideal of female perfection,—the ideal of the poet-hero of *Alastor*,—should naturally be, *inter alia*, a poet; and she whose speech of knowledge and truth and virtue, and lofty hopes of divine liberty, kindled through all her frame a permeating fire, until she *raised wild numbers*, fulfilled the precise conditions of the poetic state.

Strange symphony, and in their branching veins
 The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale.
 The beating of her heart was heard to fill
 The pauses of her music, and her breath 170
 Tumultuously accorded with those fits
 Of intermitted song. Sudden she rose,
 As if her heart impatiently endured
 Its bursting burthen: at the sound he turned,
 And saw by the warm light of their own life 175
 Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous veil
 Of woven wind, her outspread arms now bare,
 Her dark locks floating in the breath of night,
 Her beamy bending eyes, her parted lips
 Outstretched, and pale, and quivering eagerly. 180
 His strong heart sunk¹ and sickened with excess
 Of love. He reared his shuddering limbs and quelled
 His gasping breath, and spread his arms to meet
 Her panting bosom: . . . she drew back a while,
 Then, yielding to the irresistible joy, 185
 With frantic gesture and short breathless cry
 Folded his frame in her dissolving arms.
 Now blackness veiled his dizzy eyes, and night
 Involved and swallowed up the vision; sleep,
 Like a dark flood suspended in its course, 190
 Rolled back its impulse on his vacant brain.

Roused by the shock he started from his trance—
 The cold white light of morning, the blue moon
 Low in the west, the clear and garish hills,
 The distinct valley and the vacant woods, 195
 Spread round him where he stood. Whither have fled
 The hues of heaven that canopied his bower
 Of yesternight? The sounds that soothed his sleep,

¹ So in Shelley's edition and in the *Posthumous Poems*, but *sank* in Mrs. Shelley's first edition of 1839 and onwards.

The mystery and the majesty of Earth,
 The joy, the exultation? His wan eyes 200
 Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly
 As ocean's moon looks on the moon in heaven.
 The spirit of sweet human love has sent
 A vision to the sleep of him who spurned
 Her choicest gifts. He eagerly pursues 205
 Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade;
 He overleaps the bounds.¹ Alas! alas!
 Were limbs, and breath, and being intertwined
 Thus treacherously? Lost, lost, for ever lost,
 In the wide pathless desert of dim sleep, 210
 That beautiful shape! Does the dark gate of death
 Conduct to thy mysterious paradise,
 O Sleep? Does the bright arch of rainbow clouds,
 And pendent mountains seen in the calm lake,
 Lead only to a black and watery depth, 215
 While death's blue vault, with loathliest vapours hung,
 Where every shade which the foul grave exhales
 Hides its dead eye from the detested day,
 Conduct,² O Sleep, to thy delightful realms?
 This doubt with sudden tide flowed on his heart,³ 220
 The insatiate hope which it awakened, stung
 His brain even like despair.

While day-light held

The sky, the Poet kept mute conference
 With his still soul. At night the passion came,

¹ *Bound*, in the *Posthumous Poems*.

² Mr. Rossetti substitutes *Conducts*, saying there is "an obvious violation of grammar"; but it is possible Shelley meant us to understand the rather *outré* construction, "Does the bright arch lead &c., while does death's blue vault conduct &c," while being used conjunctively, as in line 280 of *The Dæmon of the World* (see p. 70),

"Which human hearts must feel, while human tongues tremble to speak": there the ellipsis, a second *which*, is obvious; and if the case be not similar here, it is impossible to say whether he meant *vaults conduct* or *vault conducts*, or whether a whole line has dropped out.

³ The sense requires a colon instead of a comma at *heart*.

Like the fierce fiend of a distempered dream, 225
And shook him from his rest, and led him forth
Into the darkness.—As an eagle grasped
In folds of the green serpent, feels her breast
Burn with the poison, and precipitates
Through night and day, tempest, and calm, and cloud,
Frantic with dizzying anguish, her blind flight 231
O'er the wide æry wilderness: thus driven
By the bright shadow of that lovely dream,
Beneath the cold glare of the desolate night,
Through tangled swamps and deep precipitous dells, 235
Startling with careless step the moon-light snake,
He fled. Red morning dawned upon his flight,
Shedding the mockery of its vital hues
Upon his cheek of death. He wandered on
Till vast Aornos seen from Petra's steep 240
Hung o'er the low horizon like a cloud;
Through Balk, and where the desolated tombs
Of Parthian kings scatter to every wind
Their wasting dust, wildly he wandered on,
Day after day, a weary waste of hours, 245
Bearing within his life the brooding care
That ever fed on its decaying flame.
And now his limbs were lean; his scattered hair
Sered by the autumn of strange suffering
Sung dirges in the wind; his listless hand 250
Hung like dead bone within its withered skin;
Life, and the lustre that consumed it, shone
As in a furnace burning secretly
From his dark eyes alone. The cottagers,
Who ministered with human charity 255
His human wants, beheld with wondering awe
Their fleeting visitant. The mountaineer,
Encountering on some dizzy precipice
That spectral form, deemed that the Spirit of wind

With lightning eyes, and eager breath, and feet 260
 Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused
 In its career: the infant would conceal
 His troubled visage in his mother's robe
 In terror at the glare of those wild eyes,
 To remember their strange light in many a dream 265
 Of after-times; but youthful maidens, taught
 By nature, would interpret half the woe
 That wasted him, would call him with false names
 Brother, and friend, would press his pallid hand
 At parting, and watch, dim through tears, the path 270
 Of his departure from their father's door.

At length upon the lone Chorasman shore
 He paused, a wide and melancholy waste
 Of putrid marshes. A strong impulse urged
 His steps to the sea-shore.¹ A swan was there, 275
 Beside a sluggish stream among the reeds.
 It rose as he approached, and with strong wings
 Scaling the upward sky, bent its bright course
 High over the immeasurable main.
 His eyes pursued its flight.—“Thou hast a home, 280
 Beautiful bird; thou voyagest to thine home,
 Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck
 With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes
 Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy.
 And what am I that I should linger here, 285

¹ Mrs. Shelley's first reading of this passage (*Posthumous Poems*) shews considerable care and ingenuity:

At length upon the lone Chorasman shore
 He paused, a wide and melancholy waste
 Of putrid marshes—a strong impulse urged
 His steps to the sea shore.

It evidently struck her that, as the poet was already on the lone Chorasman shore, the last line and a half were explanatory of his being

there. But it can hardly be doubted on full consideration that Shelley meant the passage as he printed it,—as given in the text,—intending to indicate that the poet paused on the verge of the marshes, and that, when there, a strong impulse urged him to pierce through the marshy land to the absolute margin of the sea. Mrs. Shelley tacitly recanted her first ingenious reading, by restoring, in 1839, the true text.

With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,
Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned
To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers
In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven
That echoes not my thoughts?" A gloomy smile 290
Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering lips.
For sleep, he knew, kept most relentlessly
Its precious charge, and silent death exposed,
Faithless perhaps as sleep, a shadowy lure, 294
With doubtful smile mocking its own strange charms.

Startled by his own thoughts he looked around.
There was no fair fiend near him, not a sight
Or sound of awe but in his own deep mind.
A little shallop floating near the shore
Caught the impatient wandering of his gaze. 300
It had been long abandoned, for its sides
Gaped wide with many a rift, and its frail joints
Swayed with the undulations of the tide.
A restless impulse urged him to embark
And meet lone Death on the drear ocean's waste; 305
For well he knew that mighty Shadow loves
The slimy caverns of the populous deep.

The day was fair and sunny, sea and sky
Drank its inspiring radiance, and the wind
Swept strongly from the shore, blackening the waves.
Following his eager soul, the wanderer 311
Leaped in the boat, he spread his cloak aloft
On the bare mast, and took his lonely seat,
And felt the boat speed o'er the tranquil sea
Like a torn cloud before the hurricane. 315

As one that in a silver vision floats
Obedient to the sweep of odorous winds
Upon resplendent clouds, so rapidly

Along the dark and ruffled waters fled
 The straining boat.—A whirlwind swept it on, 320
 With fierce gusts and precipitating force,
 Through the white ridges of the chafed sea.
 The waves arose. Higher and higher still
 Their fierce necks writhed beneath the tempest's scourge
 Like serpents struggling in a vulture's grasp. 325
 Calm and rejoicing in the fearful war
 Of wave ruining¹ on wave, and blast on blast
 Descending, and black flood on whirlpool driven
 With dark obliterating course, he sate:
 As if their genii were the ministers 330
 Appointed to conduct him to the light
 Of those beloved eyes, the Poet sate
 Holding the steady helm. Evening came on,
 The beams of sunset hung their rainbow hues
 High 'mid the shifting domes of sheeted spray 335
 That canopied his path o'er the waste deep;
 Twilight, ascending slowly from the east,
 Entwined² in duskier wreaths her braided locks
 O'er the fair front and radiant eyes of day;
 Night followed, clad with stars. On every side 340
 More horribly the multitudinous streams
 Of ocean's mountainous waste to mutual war
 Rushed in dark tumult thundering, as to mock
 The calm and spangled sky. The little boat
 Still fled before the storm; still fled, like foam 345
 Down the steep cataract of a wintry river;
 Now pausing on the edge of the riven wave;
 Now leaving far behind the bursting mass
 That fell, convulsing ocean.³ Safely fled—

¹ *Ruining* is the word in Shelley's edition, and in Mrs. Shelley's of 1824; but in her other editions it is altered to *running*.

² *Entwin'd* in Shelley's edition; but see note at p. 22.

³ This punctuation strikes me as being Shelley's deliberate choice, though incorrect: probably no other stop would yield him a long enough pause before *Safely*. Mr. Rossetti alters it.

As if that frail and wasted human form, 350
Had been an elemental god.

At midnight

The moon arose: and lo! the etherial¹ cliffs
Of Caucasus, whose icy summits shone
Among the stars like sunlight, and around
Whose caverned² base the whirlpools and the waves 355
Bursting and eddying irresistibly
Rage and resound for ever.—Who shall save?—
The boat fled on,—the boiling torrent drove,—
The crags closed round with black and jagged arms,
The shattered mountain overhung the sea, 360
And faster still, beyond all human speed,
Suspended on the sweep of the smooth wave,
The little boat was driven. A cavern there
Yawned, and amid its slant and winding depths
Ingulphed the rushing sea. The boat fled on 365
With unrelaxing speed.—‘Vision and Love!’
The Poet cried aloud, ‘I have beheld
The path of thy departure. Sleep and death
Shall not divide us long!’

The boat pursued

The windings of the cavern. Day-light shone 370
At length upon that gloomy river’s flow;
Now, where the fiercest war among the waves
Is calm, on the unfathomable stream
The boat moved slowly. Where the mountain, riven,
Exposed those black depths to the azure sky, 375
Ere yet the flood’s enormous volume fell
Even to the base of Caucasus, with sound
That shook the everlasting rocks, the mass

¹ So spelt in Shelley’s edition of
Alastor, invariably.

² In Shelley’s edition, *cavern’d*.

Filled with one whirlpool all that ample chasm;
 Stair above stair the eddying waters rose, 380
 Circling immeasurably fast, and layed
 With alternating dash the knarlèd¹ roots
 Of mighty trees, that stretched their giant arms
 In darkness over it. I' the midst was left,
 Reflecting, yet distorting every cloud, 385
 A pool of treacherous and tremendous calm.
 Seized by the sway of the ascending stream,
 With dizzy swiftness, round, and round, and round,
 Ridge after ridge the straining boat arose,
 Till on the verge of the extremest curve, 390
 Where, through an opening of the rocky bank,
 The waters overflow, and a smooth spot
 Of glassy quiet mid those battling tides
 Is left, the boat paused shuddering.—Shall it sink
 Down the abyss? Shall the reverting stress 395
 Of that resistless gulph embosom it?
 Now shall it fall?—A wandering stream of wind,
 Breathed from the west, has caught the expanded sail,
 And, lo! with gentle motion, between banks
 Of mossy slope, and on a placid stream, 400
 Beneath a woven grove it sails, and, hark!
 The ghastly torrent mingles its far roar,
 With the breeze murmuring in the musical woods.
 Where the embowering trees recede, and leave
 A little space of green expanse, the cove 405
 Is closed by meeting banks, whose yellow flowers
 For ever gaze on their own drooping eyes,
 Reflected in the crystal calm. The wave
 Of the boat's motion marred their pensive task,
 Which nought but vagrant bird, or wanton wind, 410
 Or falling spear-grass, or their own decay

¹ I suspect this spelling was adopted advisedly, and that the *k* was meant to be pronounced; but see Appendix, "On Certain Words."

Had e'er disturbed before. The Poet longed
 To deck with their bright hues his withered hair,
 But on his heart its solitude returned,
 And he forbore. Not the strong impulse hid 415
 In those flushed cheeks, bent eyes, and shadowy frame
 Had yet performed its ministry: it hung
 Upon his life, as lightning in a cloud
 Gleams, hovering ere it vanish, ere the floods
 Of night close over it.

The noonday sun 420

Now shone upon the forest, one vast mass
 Of mingling shade, whose brown magnificence
 A narrow vale embosoms. There, huge caves,
 Scooped in the dark base of their¹ æry rocks
 Mocking its moans, respond and roar for ever. 425
 The meeting boughs and implicated leaves
 Wove twilight o'er the Poet's path, as led
 By love, or dream, or god, or mightier Death,
 He sought in Nature's dearest haunt, some bank,
 Her cradle, and his sepulchre. More dark 430
 And dark the shades accumulate. The oak,
 Expanding its immense and knotty² arms,
 Embraces the light beech. The pyramids
 Of the tall cedar overarching, frame
 Most solemn domes within, and far below, 435
 Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,
 The ash and the acacia floating hang
 Tremulous and pale. Like restless serpents, clothed
 In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,
 Starred with ten thousand blossoms, flow around 440

¹ Mrs. Shelley substituted *those* for *their* in 1824, and has been followed in all editions of any authority. I cannot see sufficient advantage in disturbing Shelley's text.

² *Immeasurable* is substituted for *immense and knotty* in the *Posthumous Poems*; but Mrs. Shelley restored the right reading in 1839.

The gray trunks, and, as gamesome infants' eyes,
 With gentle meanings, and most innocent wiles,
 Fold their beams round the hearts of those that love,
 These twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs
 Uniting their close union; the woven leaves 445
 Make net-work of the dark blue light of day,
 And the night's noontide clearness, mutable
 As shapes in the weird clouds. Soft mossy lawns
 Beneath these canopies extend their swells,
 Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed with blooms 450
 Minute yet beautiful. One darkest glen
 Sends from its woods of musk-rose, twined with jasmine,
 A soul-dissolving odour, to invite
 To some more lovely mystery. Through the dell,
 Silence and Twilight here, twin-sisters, keep 455
 Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades,
 Like vaporous shapes half seen; beyond, a well,
 Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent wave,
 Images all the woven boughs above,
 And each depending leaf, and every speck 460
 Of azure sky, darting between their chasms;
 Nor aught else in the liquid mirror laves
 Its portraiture, but some inconstant star
 Between one foliated lattice twinkling fair,
 Or, painted bird, sleeping beneath the moon, 465
 Or gorgeous insect floating motionless,
 Unconscious of the day, ere yet his wings
 Have spread their glories to the gaze of noon.

Hither the Poet came. His eyes beheld
 Their own wan light through the reflected lines 470
 Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark depth
 Of that still fountain; as the human heart,

Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave,
 Sees its own treacherous likeness there. He heard
 The motion of the leaves, the grass that sprung 475
 Startled and glanced and trembled even to feel
 An unaccustomed presence, and the sound
 Of the sweet brook that from the secret springs
 Of that dark fountain rose. A Spirit seemed
 To stand beside him—clothed in no bright robes 480
 Of shadowy silver or enshrining light,
 Borrowed from aught the visible world affords
 Of grace, or majesty, or mystery;—
 But, undulating woods, and silent well,
 And leaping¹ rivulet, and evening gloom 485
 Now deepening the dark shades, for speech assuming,²
 Held commune with him, as if he and it
 Were all that was,—only . . . when his regard
 Was raised by intense pensiveness, . . . two eyes,
 Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought, 490
 And seemed with their serene and azure smiles
 To beckon him.

Obedient to the light

That shone within his soul, he went, pursuing
 The windings of the dell.—The rivulet
 Wanton and wild, through many a green ravine 495

¹ Mrs. Shelley's later editions (from 1839 onwards) read *rippling rivulet* for *leaping rivulet*. One would hardly elect deliberately to credit Shelley with that piece of verbal mosaic; but the means by which Mrs. Shelley arrived at the corruption are not far to seek. In the *Posthumous Poems*, the printer put *reaping* for *leaping*; and it is to be assumed that Mrs. Shelley, using that text for the preparation of the 1839 edition, saw there was a blunder, and attempted to set it right conjecturally, instead of referring to the text of her husband.

Some of the readings restored in this poem would seem to indicate, however, that she was not without the original edition to refer to at need.

² There is no comma at *assuming* in Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions; but the sense, involved at the best, is inscrutable without the comma, which probably dropped out by accident. I take the passage to mean that the Spirit, assuming for speech the undulating woods, silent well, leaping rivulet, and evening gloom deepening the dark shades, communed with the Poet.

Beneath the forest flowed. Sometimes it fell
 Among the moss with hollow harmony
 Dark and profound. Now on the polished stones
 It danced; like childhood laughing as it went:
 Then, through the plain in tranquil wanderings crept, 500
 Reflecting every herb and drooping bud
 That overhung its quietness.—‘O stream!
 Whose source is inaccessible profound,
 Whither do thy mysterious waters tend?
 Thou imagerest my life. Thy darksome stillness, 505
 Thy dazzling waves, thy loud and hollow gulphs,
 Thy searchless fountain, and invisible course
 Have each their type in me: and the wide sky,
 And measureless ocean may declare as soon
 What oozy cavern or what wandering cloud 510
 Contains thy waters, as the universe
 Tell where these living thoughts reside, when stretched
 Upon thy flowers my bloodless limbs shall waste
 I’ the passing wind!’

Beside the grassy shore
 Of the small stream he went; he did impress 515
 On the green moss his tremulous step, that caught
 Strong shuddering from his burning limbs. As one
 Roused by some joyous madness from the couch
 Of fever, he did move; yet, not like him,
 Forgetful of the grave, where, when the flame 520
 Of his frail exultation shall be spent,
 He must descend. With rapid steps he went
 Beneath the shade of trees, beside the flow
 Of the wild babbling rivulet; and now
 The forest’s solemn canopies were changed 525
 For the uniform and lightsome evening sky.
 Gray rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemmed
 The struggling brook: tall spires of windlestrae

Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope,
 And nought but knarled¹ roots of ancient pines 530
 Branchless and blasted, clenched with grasping roots
 The unwilling soil. A gradual change was here,
 Yet ghastly. For, as fast years flow away,
 The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin
 And white, and where irradiate dewy eyes 535
 Had shone, gleam stony orbs:—so from his steps
 Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade
 Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds
 And musical motions. Calm, he still pursued
 The stream, that with a larger volume now 540
 Rolled through the labyrinthine dell; and there
 Fretted a path through its descending curves
 With its wintry speed. On every side now rose
 Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms,
 Lifted their black and barren pinnacles 545
 In the light of evening, and its precipice²

¹ Spelt with a *k* in Shelley's edition : see note at p. 34.

² This much-discussed passage has not yet been interpreted in a manner approaching satisfactoriness. Before Mr. Rossetti's edition came out, he proposed a reading which was disputed by Mr. Swinburne, and condemned on sufficient grounds, but persisted in by the emendator. By a strange fatality that seems to have pursued the works of Shelley up to the immediate past, this passage is mis-quoted in Mr. Swinburne's beautiful and invaluable essay, as are other passages : we extract as follows :—

"The passage cited from 'Alastor' is, I believe, corrupt, but I cannot accept the critic's proposed change of punctuation. Here are the words disputed :—

'On every side now rose
 Rocks which in unimaginable forms
 Lifted their black and barren pinnacles
 In the light of evening, and its precipice
 Obscuring the ravine disclosed above
 'Mid toppling stones, black gulfs, and yawning
 streams,' &c.

Mr. Rossetti in evident desperation would rearrange the last lines thus :—

'And—its precipice
 Obscuring—the ravine disclosed above,' &c.
 'i.e.' (he adds), 'the rocks, obscuring the precipice (the precipitous descent) of the ravine, disclosed said ravine overhead.'

"This [I still quote Mr. Swinburne] I must say is intolerable, and impossible. If the words could be wrenched and racked into such a meaning, we should have here from one of the mightiest masters of language the most monstrous example on record of verbal deformity, of distorted and convulsed inversion or perversion of words. I suspect the word 'its' to be wrong, and either a blind slip of the pen or a printer's error. If it is not, and we are to assume that there is any break in the sentence, the parenthesis must surely extend thus far—'its precipice obscuring the ravine'—i.e., the rocks opened or 'disclosed' where the precipice above the ravine obscured it. But I take 'disclosed'

Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,
 Mid toppling stones, black gulphs and yawning caves,
 Whose windings gave ten thousand various tongues
 To the loud stream. Lo! where the pass expands 550
 Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,
 And seems, with its accumulated crags,
 To overhang the world: for wide expand
 Beneath the wan stars and descending moon
 Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams, 555
 Dim tracts¹ and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom

to be the participle; 'its precipice darkened the ravine (which was) disclosed above.' Then the sentence is left hanging loose and ragged, short by a line at least, and never wound up to any end at all."—*Essays and Studies*, 1875, pp. 196 and 197.

The passage is given in the text precisely as it stands in Shelley's edition: whence Mr. Swinburne obtained the *yawning streams*, and the punctuation of the lines, we need not conjecture; but students have to thank him not only for defending the text against a ruinous new corruption, but also, probably, for finding the key to the lost right reading, in fixing the corruption of the received text on the word *its*, and insisting that *disclosed* is a participle here. I have not ventured to alter the text, because the reading I believe to be the true one might be deemed hazardous: it is this:—

On every side now rose
 Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms,
 Lifted their black and barren pinnacles
 In the light of evening, *amidst precipices*,
 Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,
 Mid toppling stones, &c.

This reading leaves the sense clear and complete, namely that, as the poet traversed the widening valley or ravine, on every side rose rocks of unimaginable form, in the midst of precipices; that these rocks obscured the outline of the ravine, which, however, was disclosed above,—and that these rocks rose in the midst, not only of precipices, but also of

toppling stones, black gulphs, and yawning caves,

Whose windings gave ten thousand various
 tongues
 To the loud stream.

The change proposed would have the advantage of clearing Shelley from the responsibility of omitting to revise his poem properly,—for the accepted corrupt reading might easily have occurred (according to my experience) by a printer's blunder in interpreting a final correction of previous blunders,—and it would also save us from the necessity of facing the possibility of the poet's having implied, as he would if Mr. Rossetti were correct, so great an improbability as the transportation of the echoing caves up to the top of the ravine. Miss Blind's proposal (*Westminster Review*, July, 1870), to read *inclosed* for *disclosed*, does not help us in the least to remove the obscurity or complete the sense.

¹ Mr. Rossetti (following Mrs. Shelley) printed *tracks* for *tracts*. He mentions, in a note, Mr. Garnett's statement (*Relics of Shelley*, p. 96), that the word should be *tracts*, and says he thinks Mr. Garnett is probably right, but as *tracks* would not be meaningless, he has not "felt safe in adopting Mr. Garnett's reading." Had he consulted Shelley's own text, he would have found that this was not Mr. Garnett's reading, but Shelley's. Unless there is clear proof of Mrs. Shelley's authority for the change (and no one imagines that she had any), surely the preference should be given to Shelley's own published text.

Of leaden-coloured even, and fiery hills
 Mingling their flames with twilight, on the verge
 Of the remote horizon. The near scene,
 In naked and severe simplicity, 560
 Made contrast with the universe. A pine,
 Rock-rooted, stretched athwart the vacancy
 Its swinging boughs, to each inconstant blast
 Yielding one only response, at each pause
 In most familiar cadence, with the howl 565
 The thunder and the hiss of homeless streams
 Mingling its solemn song, whilst the broad river,
 Foaming and hurrying o'er its rugged path,
 Fell into that immeasurable void
 Scattering its waters to the passing winds. 570

Yet the gray precipice and solemn pine
 And torrent, were not all;—one silent nook
 Was there. Even on the edge of that vast mountain,
 Upheld by knotty roots and fallen rocks,
 It overlooked in its serenity 575
 The dark earth, and the bending vault of stars.
 It was a tranquil spot, that seemed to smile
 Even in the lap of horror. Ivy clasped
 The fissured stones with its entwining arms,
 And did embower with leaves for ever green, 580
 And berries dark, the smooth and even space
 Of its inviolated floor, and here
 The children of the autumnal whirlwind bore,
 In wanton sport, those bright leaves, whose decay,
 Red, yellow, or etherially pale, 585
 Rivals¹ the pride of summer. 'Tis the haunt
 Of every gentle wind, whose breath can teach
 The wilds to love tranquillity. One step,

¹ Mrs. Shelley's editions give *rival* for *rivals*.

One human step alone, has ever broken
 The stillness of its solitude :—one voice 590
 Alone inspired its echoes ;—even that voice
 Which hither came, floating among the winds,
 And led the loveliest among human forms
 To make their wild haunts the depository
 Of all the grace and beauty that endued 595
 Its motions, render up its majesty,
 Scatter its music on the unfeeling storm,
 And to the damp leaves and blue cavern mould,
 Nurses of rainbow flowers and branching moss,
 Commit the colours of that varying cheek, 600
 That snowy breast, those dark and drooping eyes.

The dim and hornèd moon hung low, and poured
 A sea of lustre on the horizon's verge
 That overflowed its mountains. Yellow mist
 Filled the unbounded atmosphere, and drank 605
 Wan moonlight even to fulness : not a star
 Shone, not a sound was heard ; the very winds,
 Danger's grim playmates, on that precipice
 Slept, clasped in his embrace.—O, storm of death !
 Whose sightless speed divides this sullen night : 610
 And thou, colossal Skeleton, that, still
 Guiding its irresistible career
 In thy devastating omnipotence,
 Art king of this frail world, from the red field
 Of slaughter, from the reeking hospital, 615
 The patriot's sacred couch, the snowy bed
 Of innocence, the scaffold and the throne,
 A mighty voice invokes thee. Ruin calls
 His brother Death. A rare and regal prey
 He hath prepared, prowling around the world ; 620
 Glutted with which thou mayst repose, and men
 Go to their graves like flowers or creeping worms,

Nor ever more offer at thy dark shrine
The unheeded tribute of a broken heart.

When on the threshold of the green recess 625
The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew that death
Was on him. Yet a little, ere it fled,
Did he resign his high and holy soul
To images of the majestic past,
That paused within his passive being now, 630
Like winds that bear sweet music, when they breathe
Through some dim latticed chamber. He did place
His pale lean hand upon the rugged trunk
Of the old pine. Upon an ivied stone
Reclined his languid head, his limbs did rest, 635
Diffused and motionless, on the smooth brink
Of that obscurest chasm;—and thus he lay,
Surrendering to their final impulses
The hovering powers of life. Hope and despair,
The torturers, slept; no mortal pain or fear 640
Marred his repose, the influxes of sense,
And his own being unalloyed by pain,
Yet feebler and more feeble, calmly fed
The stream of thought, till he lay breathing there
At peace, and faintly smiling:—his last sight 645
Was the great moon, which o'er the western line
Of the wide world her mighty horn suspended,
With whose dun beams inwoven darkness seemed
To mingle. Now upon the jagged hills
It rests, and still as the divided frame 650
Of the vast meteor sunk, the Poet's blood,
That ever beat in mystic sympathy
With nature's ebb and flow, grew feebler still:
And when two lessening points of light alone
Gleamed through the darkness, the alternate gasp 655
Of his faint respiration scarce did stir

The stagnate night:—till the minutest ray
 Was quenched, the pulse yet lingered in his heart.
 It paused—it fluttered. But when heaven remained
 Utterly black, the murky shades involved 660
 An image, silent, cold, and motionless,
 As their own voiceless earth and vacant air.
 Even as a vapour fed with golden beams
 That ministered on sunlight, ere the west
 Eclipses it, was now that wondrous¹ frame— 665
 No sense, no motion, no divinity—
 A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings
 The breath of heaven did wander—a bright stream
 Once fed with many-voicèd waves—a dream
 Of youth, which night and time have quenched for ever, 670
 Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered now.²

O, for Medea's wondrous alchemy,
 Which wheresoe'er it fell made the earth gleam
 With bright flowers, and the wintry boughs exhale
 From vernal blooms fresh fragrance! O, that God, 675

¹ *Wonderous* in Shelley's edition.

² Mr. Rossetti re-punctuated the last three and a half lines of this passage thus:—

a bright stream
 Once fed with many-voicèd waves (a dream
 Of youth which night and time have
 quenched for ever),
 Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered
 now.

He says we "ought not, without strong grounds, to attribute to Shelley so incongruous and unmeaning an expression as a youthful dream now *dry*"; and he adds—"The punctuation which I have adopted welds the two images into one; viz.: a stream which used to be bright, and is now dark—flowing, and is now dry—sonorous, and is now still; it has been a dreamy reminiscence of youth, but now, through the influence of night (or oblivion) and time, is unremem-

bered." I have left Shelley's punctuation undisturbed, first because I do not think he would ever have altered it, even if his meaning were what Mr. Rossetti supposes, and secondly because the poet's own punctuation seems to me best fitted to express what I conceive to be his meaning, viz., a fragile lute, now still—a bright stream, now dry—a dream of youth, now dark. Thus the three adjectives, *still*, *dark*, and *dry* would refer to the three symbols applied to the wondrous frame, while the *unremembered*, I should take as referring to the wondrous frame independently of the symbols. The fact that the whole construction is quite illogical and inexact goes for nothing: we all know that Shelley was not punctiliously exact in matters of grammatical construction.

Profuse of poisons, would concede the chalice
 Which but one living man¹ has drained, who now,
 Vessel of deathless wrath, a slave that feels
 No proud exemption in the blighting curse
 He bears, over the world wanders for ever, 680
 Lone as incarnate death! O, that the dream
 Of dark magician in his visioned cave,
 Raking the cinders of a crucible
 For life and power, even when his feeble hand
 Shakes in its last decay, were the true law 685
 Of this so lovely world! But thou art fled
 Like some frail exhalation; which the dawn
 Robes in its golden beams,—ah! thou hast fled!
 The brave, the gentle, and the beautiful,
 The child of grace and genius. Heartless things 690
 Are done and said i' the world, and many worms
 And beasts and men live on, and mighty Earth
 From sea and mountain, city and wilderness,
 In vesper low or joyous orison,
 Lifts still its solemn voice:—but thou art fled— 695
 Thou canst no longer know or love the shapes
 Of this phantasmal scene, who have to thee
 Been purest ministers, who are, alas!
 Now thou art not. Upon those pallid lips
 So sweet even in their silence, on those eyes 700
 That image sleep in death, upon that form
 Yet safe from the worm's outrage, let no tear
 Be shed—not even in thought. Nor,² when those hues

¹ This allusion to the Wandering Jew, Ahasuerus, should be noted among the evidences of Shelley's tenacity of imagination. When he was about fifteen years old, he and Medwin wrote a poem on the subject of Ahasuerus (of which most of Shelley's portion remains to be discovered); in *Queen Mab*, the Jew figures again; and even in Shelley's

latest work published during his lifetime, *Hellas*, we find the character re-introduced.

² Note, among the reasons for not interfering with Shelley's grammar, the licence of the double negative, in which he follows Shakespeare and other writers who preceded him, and which, I presume, no one dare deny him.

Are gone, and those divinest lineaments,
 Worn by the senseless wind, shall live alone 705
 In the frail pauses of this simple strain,
 Let not high verse, mourning the memory
 Of that which is no more, or painting's woe
 Or sculpture, speak in feeble imagery
 Their own cold powers. Art and eloquence, 710
 And all the shews o' the world are frail and vain
 To weep a loss that turns their lights¹ to shade.
 It is a woe too 'deep for tears,' when all
 Is reft at once, when some surpassing Spirit,
 Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves 715
 Those who remain behind, not sobs² or groans,
 The passionate tumult of a clinging hope;
 But pale despair and cold tranquillity,
 Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,
 Birth and the grave, that are not as they were. 720

¹ *Light* for *lights* in Mrs. Shelley's editions.

nor groans for *not sobs or groans* in her editions,—ruinously as it seems to me.

² Mrs. Shelley substitutes *nor sobs*

P O E M S.

[Published with *Alastor*, 1816.]

[In Shelley's edition the first poem in the following series opens with a curious misprint, ΔΑΚΡΤΕΙ for ΔΑΚΡΤΣΙ, which has been repeated in nearly all subsequent editions.—H. B. F.]

49
P O E M S.

ΔΑΚΡΥΣΙ ΔΙΟΙΣΩ ΠΟΤΜΟΝ ΑΠΟΤΜΟΝ.

[To COLERIDGE.]

O! THERE are spirits of the air,
And genii of the evening breeze,
And gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair
As star-beams among twilight trees:—
Such lovely ministers to meet 5
Oft hast thou turned from men thy lonely feet.

With mountain winds, and babbling springs,
And moonlight¹ seas, that are the voice
Of these inexplicable things
Thou didst hold commune, and rejoice 10
When they did answer thee; but they
Cast, like a worthless boon, thy love away.

And thou hast sought in starry eyes
Beams that were never meant for thine,²
Another's wealth:—tame sacrifice 15
To a fond faith! still dost thou pine?
Still dost thou hope that greeting hands,
Voice, looks, or lips, may answer thy demands?

¹ *Mountain seas* in the collected editions.

² There is no comma here in Shelley's

edition: it may fairly be presumed to have dropped out by accident.

Ah! wherefore didst thou build thine hope
 On the false earth's inconstancy?
 Did thine own mind afford no scope
 Of love, or moving thoughts to thee?
 That natural scenes or human smiles
 Could steal the power to wind thee in their wiles.¹

20

Yes, all the faithless smiles are fled
 Whose falsehood left thee broken-hearted;
 The glory of the moon is dead;
 Night's ghosts and dreams have now departed;
 Thine own soul still is true to thee,
 But changed to a foul fiend through misery.

25

30

This fiend, whose ghastly presence ever
 Beside thee like thy shadow hangs,
 Dream not to chase;—the mad endeavour
 Would scourge thee to severer pangs.
 Be as thou art. Thy settled fate,
 Dark as it is, all change would aggravate.

35

STANZAS.—APRIL, 1814.

AWAY! the moor is dark beneath the moon,
 Rapid clouds have drank² the last pale beam of even:
 Away! the gathering winds will call the darkness soon,
 And profoundest midnight shroud the serene lights of heaven.

¹ Of course the note of interrogation should, in strictness, come after *wiles*. I have left it at *thee*, as in Shelley's edition, because I have no doubt he preferred a method of punctuation in support of which, though

eccentric, it may be urged that it ends the question where it does legitimately end,—the last two lines being in reality an assertion. Wordsworth and Keats often followed this plan.

² *Drunk* in Mrs. Shelley's editions.

Pause not! The time is past! Every voice cries, Away!
Tempt not with one last tear¹ thy friend's ungentle mood:
Thy lover's eye, so glazed and cold, dares not entreat thy stay:
Duty and dereliction guide thee back to solitude.

Away, away! to thy sad and silent home;
Pour bitter tears on its desolated hearth; 10
Watch the dim shades as like ghosts they go and come,
And complicate strange webs of melancholy mirth.

The leaves of wasted autumn woods shall float around thine
head:
The blooms of dewy spring shall gleam beneath thy feet:
But thy soul or this world must fade in the frost that binds
the dead, 15
Ere midnight's frown and morning's smile, ere thou and
peace may meet.

The cloud shadows of midnight possess their own repose,
For the weary winds are silent, or the moon is in the deep:
Some respite to its turbulence unresting ocean knows;
Whatever moves, or toils, or grieves, hath its appointed sleep.

Thou in the grave shalt rest—yet till the phantoms flee 21
Which that house and heath and garden made dear to
thee erewhile,
Thy remembrance, and repentance, and deep musings are
not free
From the music of two voices and the light of one sweet
smile.

¹ Mrs. Shelley puts *glance* for *tear*.

MUTABILITY.

WE are as clouds that veil the midnight moon;
 How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver,
 Streaking the darkness radiantly!—yet soon
 Night closes round, and they are lost for ever:

Or like forgotten lyres, whose dissonant strings 5
 Give various response to each varying blast,
 To whose frail frame no second motion brings
 One mood or modulation like the last.

We rest.—A dream has power to poison sleep;
 We rise.—One wandering thought pollutes the day;
 We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep; 11
 Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away:

It is the same!—For, be it joy or sorrow,
 The path of its departure still is free:
 Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow; 15
 Nought may endure but Mutability.¹

THERE IS NO WORK, NOR DEVICE, NOR KNOWLEDGE, NOR WISDOM, IN THE
 GRAVE, WHITHER THOU GOST. *Ecclesiastes.*

THE pale, the cold, and the moony smile
 Which the meteor beam of a starless night
 Sheds on a lonely and sea-girt isle,
 Ere the dawning of morn's undoubted light,

¹ Mrs. Shelley, whether quoting from memory or from MS., gave these two lines as an epigraph at the head

of Chapter XLIX of *Lodore*; thus—
 Man's yesterday can ne'er be like his morrow,
 Nor aught endure save mutability.

Is the flame of life so fickle and wan 5
That flits round our steps till their strength is gone.

O man! hold thee on in courage of soul
Through the stormy shades of thy worldly way,
And the billows of cloud that around thee roll
Shall sleep in the light of a wondrous day, 10
Where hell and heaven shall leave thee free
To the universe of destiny.

This world is the nurse of all we know,
This world is the mother of all we feel,
And the coming of death is a fearful blow 15
To a brain unencompassed with nerves of steel;
When all that we know, or feel, or see,
Shall pass like an unreal mystery.

The secret things of the grave are there,
Where all but this frame must surely be, 20
Though the fine-wrought eye and the wondrous ear
No longer will live to hear or to see
All that is great and all that is strange
In the boundless realm of unending change.

Who telleth a tale of unspeaking death? 25
Who lifteth the veil of what is to come?
Who painteth the shadows that are beneath
The wide-winding caves of the peopled tomb?
Or uniteth the hopes of what shall be
With the fears and the love for that which we see? 30

A

SUMMER-EVENING CHURCH-YARD,

LECHLADE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

THE wind has swept from the wide atmosphere
Each vapour that obscured the sunset's ray;
And pallid evening twines its beaming hair
In dusker braids around the languid eyes of day:
Silence and twilight, unbeloved of men, 5
Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.

They breathe their spells towards the departing day,
Encompassing the earth, air, stars, and sea;
Light, sound, and motion own the potent sway,
Responding to the charm with its own mystery. 10
The winds are still, or the dry church-tower grass
Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

Thou too, aerial Pile! whose pinnacles
Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire,
Obeyest in silence their sweet solemn spells, 15
Clothing in hues of heaven thy dim and distant spire,
Around whose lessening and invisible height
Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres:
And, mouldering as they sleep, a thrilling sound 20
Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs,
Breathed from their wormy beds all living things around,
And mingling with the still night and mute sky
Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

Thus solemnized and softened, death is mild 25
 And terrorless as this serenest night:
 Here could I hope, like some enquiring child
 Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human sight
 Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep
 That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep. 30

TO
 WORDSWORTH.¹

Poet of Nature, thou hast wept to know
 That things depart which never may return:
 Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,
 Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.
 These common woes I feel. One loss is mine
 Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone deplore.
 Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine
 On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar:
 Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood
 Above the blind and battling multitude:
 In honoured poverty thy voice did weave
 Songs consecrate to truth and liberty,—
 Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,
 Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

¹ It is probable that students have often compared this lament over Wordsworth's defection from the republican cause with Robert Browning's admirable dramatic treatment of that defection in *The Lost Leader*; and much controversy has from time to time had place as to whether that fine poem really did refer to Wordsworth. Browning's name must ever

stand in honourable connexion with that of Shelley (mentioned, indeed, in *The Lost Leader*); and, even if this sonnet be not among the *origines* of Browning's lyric, it is fitting to note here the recent publication, in Wordsworth's prose works (Vol. I, p. xxxvii), of a letter from the living poet avowing that his composition was based (only *based*) on the character of Wordsworth.

FEELINGS OF A REPUBLICAN
ON THE FALL OF BONAPARTE.

I HATED thee, fallen tyrant! I did groan
To think that a most unambitious slave,
Like thou, shouldst¹ dance and revel on the grave
Of Liberty. Thou mightst have built thy throne
Where it had stood even now: thou didst prefer
A frail and bloody pomp which time has swept
In fragments towards oblivion. Massacre,
For this I prayed, would on thy sleep have crept,
Treason and Slavery, Rapine, Fear, and Lust,
And stifled thee, their minister. I know
Too late, since thou and France are in the dust,
That virtue owns a more eternal foe
Than force or fraud: old Custom, legal Crime,
And bloody Faith the foulest birth of time.

SUPERSTITION.²

THOU taintest all thou lookest upon! The stars,
Which on thy cradle beamed so brightly sweet,
Were gods to the distempered playfulness
Of thy untutored infancy; the trees,
The grass, the clouds, the mountains, and the sea, 5
All living things that walk, swim, creep, or fly,
Were gods: the sun had homage, and the moon
Her worshipper. Then thou becamest, a boy,
More daring in thy frenzies: every shape,
Monstrous or vast, or beautifully wild, 10

¹ I leave the heretical grammar undisturbed. Mr. Rossetti substitutes *should* for *shouldst*.

² These lines are from the sixth section of *Queen Mab*, privately printed by Shelley in the year 1813, and, as

he stated in his preface to *Alastor &c.*, not intended for publication. The last two lines stand instead of the single line in *Queen Mab*,

Converging, thou didst bend, and called it
God!

Which, from sensation's relics, fancy culls;
 The spirits of the air, the shuddering ghost,
 The genii of the elements, the powers
 That give a shape to nature's varied works,
 Had life and place in the corrupt belief 15
 Of thy blind heart: yet still thy youthful hands
 Were pure of human blood. Then manhood gave
 Its strength and ardour to thy frenzied brain;
 Thine eager gaze scanned the stupendous scene,
 Whose wonders mocked the knowledge of thy pride: 20
 Their everlasting and unchanging laws
 Reproached thine ignorance. Awhile thou stoodest
 Baffled and gloomy; then thou didst sum up
 The elements of all that thou didst know;
 The changing seasons, winter's leafless reign, 25
 The budding of the heaven-breathing trees,
 The eternal orbs that beautify the night,
 The sun-rise, and the setting of the moon,
 Earthquakes and wars, and poisons and disease,
 And all their causes, to an abstract point 30
 Converging thou didst give it name, and form,
 Intelligence, and unity, and power.

SONNET.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF DANTE.

*Dante Alighieri to Guido Cavalcanti.*¹

GUIDO, I would that Lappo, thou, and I,
 Led by some strong enchantment, might ascend
 A magic ship, whose charmed sails should fly
 With winds at will where'er our thoughts might wend,
 And² that no change, nor any evil change

¹ Among the MSS. of Leigh Hunt, several times referred to in this edition, is a translation by Shelley of Guido Cavalcanti's Sonnet to Dante,

"Io vegno il giorno a te infinite volte."
 It will be found in the fourth volume.

² Mrs. Shelley's editions read so for and.

Should mar our joyous voyage; but it might be,
 That even satiety should still enhance
 Between our hearts their strict community:
 And that the bounteous wizard then would place
 Vanna and Bice and my¹ gentle love,
 Companions of our wandering, and would grace
 With passionate talk wherever we might rove
 Our time, and each were as content and free
 As I believe that thou and I should be.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK OF MOSCHUS.

Ταν ἄλα ταν γλαυκαν όταν ὤνεμος ατρεμα βαλλῇ, κ.τ.λ.

WHEN winds that move not its calm surface sweep
 The azure sea, I love the land no more;
 The smiles of the serene and tranquil deep
 Tempt my unquiet mind.—But when the roar
 Of ocean's gray abyss resounds, and foam
 Gathers upon the sea, and vast waves burst,
 I turn from the drear aspect to the home
 Of earth and its deep woods, where interspersed,
 When winds blow loud, pines make sweet melody.
 Whose house is some lone bark, whose toil the sea,
 Whose prey the wandering fish, an evil lot
 Has chosen.—But I my languid limbs will fling
 Beneath the plane, where the brook's murmuring
 Moves the calm spirit, but disturbs it not.

¹ Shelley can hardly have forgotten that Bice was the beloved of Dante, and I suspect the word *my* is a misprint for *thy*. The translation would still be incorrect; but the poet might easily have got confused about the less important ladies of Lapo and Guido. I cannot bring myself to think Shelley could have written

Vanna and Bice and *his* gentle love
 as a translation of the lines
 E Monna Vanna, e Monna Bice poi,
 Con quella su il numer delle trenta,
 meaning literally "and Lady Vanna,
 and then Lady Bice, with her on number thirty" (of Dante's list of the sixty fairest ladies of Florence: see *Vita Nuova*).

THE DÆMON OF THE WORLD.

A FRAGMENT.

Nec tantum prodere vati,
Quantum scire licet. Venit ætas omnis in unam
Congeriem, miserumque premunt tot sæcula pectus.

Lucan Phars. L. v. l. 176.

[The recently discovered Second Part of *The Dæmon of the World* will be found among the posthumous poems, in Vol. III, together with a full account of the copy of *Queen Mab* in which the revision was made.—H. B. F.]

THE DÆMON OF THE WORLD.

A FRAGMENT.¹

How wonderful is Death,
Death and his brother Sleep!
One pale as yonder wan and hornèd moon,
With lips of lurid blue,
The other glowing like the vital morn, 5
When throned on ocean's wave
It breathes over the world:
Yet both so passing strange and wonderful!

Hath then the iron-sceptred Skeleton,
Whose reign is in the tainted sepulchres, 10
To the hell dogs that couch beneath his throne
Cast that fair prey? Must that divinest form,
Which love and admiration cannot view
Without a beating heart, whose azure veins
Steal like dark streams along a field of snow, 15
Whose outline is as fair as marble clothed
In light of some sublimest mind, decay?
Nor putrefaction's breath
Leave aught of this pure spectacle

¹ A revised fragment of *Queen Mab*,
—of which Poem Shelley's edition will be found in its place among the
youthful poems in Vol. IV.

But loathsomeness and ruin?—
 Spare aught but a dark theme,
 On which the lightest heart might moralize?
 Or is it but that downy-wingèd slumbers
 Have charmed their nurse coy Silence near her lids
 To watch their own repose?
 Will they, when morning's beam
 Flows through those wells of light,
 Seek far from noise and day some western cave,
 Where woods and streams with soft and pausing winds
 A lulling murmur weave?—

Ianthe doth not sleep
 The dreamless sleep of death:
 Nor in her moonlight chamber silently
 Doth Henry hear her regular pulses throb,
 Or mark her delicate cheek
 With interchange of hues mock the broad moon,
 Outwatching weary night,
 Without assured reward.
 Her dewy eyes are closed;
 On their translucent lids, whose texture fine
 Scarce hides the dark blue orbs that burn below
 With unapparent fire,
 The baby Sleep is pillowed:
 Her golden tresses shade
 The bosom's stainless pride,
 Twining like tendrils of the parasite
 Around a marble column.

Hark! whence that rushing sound?
 'Tis like a wondrous strain that sweeps
 Around a lonely ruin
 When west winds sigh and evening waves respond
 In whispers from the shore:

'Tis wilder than the unmeasured notes
Which from the unseen lyres of dells and groves

The genii of the breezes sweep.

55

Floating on waves of music and of light
The chariot of the Dæmon of the World

Descends in silent power:

Its shape reposed within: slight as some cloud
That catches but the palest tinge of day

60

When evening yields to night,

Bright as that fibrous woof when stars indue

Its transitory robe.

Four shapeless shadows bright and beautiful
Draw that strange car of glory, reins of light

65

Check their unearthly speed; they stop and fold

Their wings of braided air:

The Dæmon leaning from the etherial car

Gazed on the slumbering maid.

Human eye hath ne'er beheld

70

A shape so wild, so bright, so beautiful,

As that which o'er the maiden's charmed sleep

Waving a starry wand,

Hung like a mist of light.

Such sounds as breathed around like odorous winds

75

Of wakening spring arose,

Filling the chamber and the moonlight sky.

Maiden, the world's supremest spirit

Beneath the shadow of her wings

Folds all thy memory doth inherit

80

From ruin of divinest things,

Feelings that lure thee to betray,

And light of thoughts that pass away.

For thou hast earned a mighty boon,

The truths which wisest poets see

85

Dimly, thy mind may make its own,
Rewarding its own majesty,
Entranced in some diviner mood
Of self-oblivious solitude.

Custom, and Faith, and Power thou spurnest; 90
From hate and awe thy heart is free;
Ardent and pure as day thou burnest,
For dark and cold mortality
A living light, to cheer it long,
The watch-fires of the world among. 95

Therefore from nature's inner shrine,
Where gods and fiends in worship bend,
Majestic spirit, be it thine
The flame to seize, the veil to rend,
Where the vast snake Eternity 100
In charmed sleep doth ever lie.

All that inspires thy voice of love,
Or speaks in thy unclosing eyes,
Or through thy frame doth burn or move,
Or think or feel, awake, arise! 105
Spirit, leave for mine and me
Earth's unsubstantial mimicry!¹

It ceased, and from the mute and moveless frame
A radiant spirit arose,
All beautiful in naked purity. 110
Robed in its human hues it did ascend,
Disparting as it went the silver clouds
It moved towards the car, and took its seat
Beside the Dæmon shape.

¹ *Mimickry* in Shelley's edition.

Obedient to the sweep of aery song, 115

The mighty ministers

Unfurled their prisms wings.

The magic car moved on;

The night was fair, innumerable stars

Studded heaven's dark blue vault; 120

The eastern wave grew pale

With the first smile of morn.

The magic car moved on.

From the swift sweep of wings

The atmosphere in flaming sparkles flew; 125

And where the burning wheels

Eddied above the mountain's loftiest peak

Was traced a line of lightning.

Now far above a rock the utmost verge

Of the wide earth it flew, 130

The rival of the Andes, whose dark brow

Frowned o'er the silver sea.

Far, far below the chariot's stormy path,

Calm as a slumbering babe,

Tremendous ocean lay. 135

Its broad and silent mirror gave to view

The pale and waning stars,

The chariot's fiery track,

And the grey light of morn

Tinging those fleecy clouds 140

That cradled in their folds the infant dawn.

The chariot seemed to fly

Through the abyss of an immense concave,

Radiant with million constellations, tinged

With shades of infinite colour, 145

And semicircled with a belt

Flashing incessant meteors.

As they approached their goal,
The wingèd shadows seemed to gather speed.
The sea no longer was distinguished; earth 150
Appeared a vast and shadowy sphere, suspended
In the black concave of heaven
With the sun's cloudless orb,
Whose rays of rapid light
Parted around the chariot's swifter course, 155
And fell like ocean's feathery spray
Dashed from the boiling surge
Before a vessel's prow.

The magic car moved on.
Earth's distant orb appeared 160
The smallest light that twinkles in the heavens,
Whilst round the chariot's way
Innumerable systems widely rolled,
And countless spheres diffused
An ever varying glory. 165
It was a sight of wonder! Some were horned,
And, like the moon's argentine crescent hung
In the dark dome of heaven, some did shed
A clear mild beam like Hesperus, while the sea
Yet glows with fading sun-light; others dashed 170
Athwart the night with trains of bickering fire,
Like spherèd worlds to death and ruin driven;
Some shone like stars, and as the chariot passed
Bedimmed all other light.

Spirit of Nature! here 175
In this interminable wilderness
Of worlds, at whose involved immensity
Even soaring fancy staggers,
Here is thy fitting temple.
Yet not the lightest leaf 180

That quivers to the passing breeze
Is less instinct with thee,—
Yet not the meanest worm,
That lurks in graves and fattens on the dead
Less shares thy eternal breath. 185
Spirit of Nature! thou
Imperishable as this glorious scene,
Here is thy fitting temple.

If solitude hath ever led thy steps
To the shore of the immeasurable sea, 190
And thou hast lingered there
Until the sun's broad orb
Seemed resting on the fiery line of ocean,
Thou must have marked the braided webs of gold
That without motion hang 195
Over the sinking sphere:
Thou must have marked the billowy mountain clouds,
Edged with intolerable radiancy,
Towering like rocks of jet
Above the burning deep: 200
And yet there is a moment
When the sun's highest point
Peers like a star o'er ocean's western edge,
When those far clouds of feathery purple gleam
Like fairy lands girt by some heavenly sea: 205
Then has thy rapt imagination soared
Where in the midst of all existing things
The temple of the mightiest Dæmon stands.

Yet not the golden islands
That gleam amid yon flood of purple light, 210
Nor the feathery curtains
That canopy the sun's resplendent couch,
Nor the burnished ocean waves

Paving that gorgeous dome,
So fair, so wonderful a sight 215
As the eternal temple could afford.
The elements of all that human thought
Can frame of lovely or sublime, did join
To rear the fabric of the fane, nor aught
Of earth may image forth its majesty. 220
Yet likest evening's vault that faëry hall,
As heaven low resting on the wave it spread
Its floors of flashing light,
Its vast and azure dome ;
And on the verge of that obscure abyss 225
Where crystal battlements o'erhang the gulph
Of the dark world, ten thousand spheres diffuse
Their lustre through its adamantine gates.

The magic car no longer moved ;
The Dæmon and the Spirit 230
Entered the eternal gates.
Those clouds of aery gold
That slept in glittering billows
Beneath the azure canopy,
With the etherial footsteps trembled not ; 235
While slight and odorous mists
Floated to strains of thrilling melody
Through the vast columns and the pearly shrines.

The Dæmon and the Spirit
Approached the overhanging battlement. 240
Below lay stretched the boundless universe !
There, far as the remotest line
That limits swift imagination's flight,
Unending orbs mingled in mazy motion,
Immutably fulfilling 245
Eternal Nature's law.

Above, below, around,
The circling systems formed
A wilderness of harmony,
Each with undeviating aim 250
In eloquent silence through the depths of space
Pursued its wondrous way.—

Awhile the Spirit paused in ecstasy.
Yet soon she saw, as the vast spheres swept by,
Strange things within their belted orbs appear. 255
Like animated frenzies, dimly moved
Shadows, and skeletons, and fiendly shapes,
Thronging round human graves, and o'er the dead
Sculpturing records for each memory
In verse, such as malignant gods pronounce, 260
Blasting the hopes of men, when heaven and hell
Confounded burst in ruin o'er the world:
And they did build vast trophies, instruments
Of murder, human bones, barbaric gold,
Skins torn from living men, and towers of skulls 265
With sightless holes gazing on blinder heaven,
Mitres, and crowns, and brazen chariots stained
With blood, and scrolls of mystic wickedness,
The sanguine codes of venerable crime.
The likeness of a thronèd king came by, 270
When these had past, bearing upon his brow
A threefold crown; his countenance was calm,
His eye severe and cold; but his right hand
Was charged with bloody coin, and he did gnaw
By fits, with secret smiles, a human heart 275
Concealed beneath his robe; and motley shapes,
A multitudinous throng, around him knelt,
With bosoms bare, and bowed heads, and false looks
Of true submission, as the sphere rolled by,
Brooking no eye to witness their foul shame, 280

Which human hearts must feel, while human tongues
Tremble to speak, they did rage horribly,
Breathing in self contempt fierce blasphemies
Against the Dæmon of the World, and high
Hurling their armèd hands where the pure Spirit, 285
Serene and inaccessibly secure,
Stood on an isolated pinnacle,
The flood of ages combating below
The depth of the unbounded universe
Above, and all around 290
Necessity's unchanging harmony.

THE END

[of *Alastor and other Poems.*]

The imprint of the *Alastor* volume is as follows —

Printed by S. Hamilton, Weybridge, Surrey.

MONT BLANC.

[The next book put forth by Shelley after *Alastor and other Poems* was the little volume containing, among other things, the following poem: the title-page of the book runs thus: "History of a Six Weeks' Tour through a Part of France, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland: with Letters descriptive of a Sail Round the Lake of Geneva, and of the Glaciers of Chamouni. London, Published by T. Hookham, Jun. Old Bond Street; and C. and J. Ollier, Welbeck Street. 1817." The History and two of the letters are by Mrs. Shelley,—the rest of the letters, two in number, by Shelley to Peacock. This poem, as well as *Alastor*, was included in the volume of *Posthumous Poems* (1824). In Shelley's preface to the *Six Weeks' Tour*, it is stated that *Mont Blanc* "was composed under the immediate impression of the deep and powerful feelings excited by the objects which it attempts to describe; and as an undisciplined overflowing of the soul, rests its claim to approbation on an attempt to imitate the untameable wildness and inaccessible solemnity from which those feelings sprang." Mrs. Shelley says the poem was inspired by the view, as Shelley "lingered on the Bridge of Arve on his way through the Vale of Chamouni." —H. B. F.]

MONT BLANC.

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI.

I.

THE everlasting universe of things
Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,
Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom—
Now lending splendour, where from secret springs
The source of human thought its tribute brings 5
Of waters,—with a sound but half its own,
Such as a feeble brook will oft assume
In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,
Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,
Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river 10
Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

II.

Thus thou, Ravine of Arve—dark, deep Ravine—
Thou many-coloured, many-voicèd vale,
Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail
Fast cloud shadows¹ and sunbeams: awful scene, 15
Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down
From the ice gulphs that gird his secret throne,
Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame
Of lightning thro' the tempest;—thou dost lie,

¹ In the *Posthumous Poems* (1824) Mrs. Shelley added a comma at *cloud*, thus changing the sense: in 1839 she added an *s*, thus, *Fast clouds, shadows*

&c. I take it Shelley meant *cloud-shadows*, but omitted the hyphen, as he often does in such cases, *e. g.* in the next line but one, *ice gulphs*.

Thy¹ giant brood of pines around thee clinging, 20
 Children of elder time, in whose devotion
 The chainless winds still come and ever came
 To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging
 To hear—an old and solemn harmony;
 Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep 25
 Of the ætherial² waterfall, whose veil
 Robes some unsculptured image; the strange sleep
 Which when the voices of the desert fail
 Wraps all in its own deep eternity;—
 Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion, 30
 A loud, lone sound no other sound can tame;
 Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,
 Thou art the path of that unresting sound—
 Dizzy Ravine! and when I gaze on thee
 I seem as in a trance sublime and strange 35
 To muse on my own separate phantasy,
 My own, my human mind, which passively
 Now renders and receives fast influencings,
 Holding an unremitting interchange
 With the clear universe of things around; 40
 One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings
 Now float above thy darkness, and now rest
 Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,
 In the still cave of the witch Poesy,
 Seeking among the shadows that pass by 45
 Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee,
 Some phantom, some faint image; till the breast
 From which they fled recalls them, thou art there!

III.

Some say that gleams of a remoter world
 Visit the soul in sleep,—that death is slumber, 50

¹ *The* in Mrs. Shelley's editions of 1839.² In Shelley's edition, *æthereal*.

And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber
 Of those who wake and live.—I look on high;
 Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled
 The veil of life and death? or do I lie
 In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep 55
 Spread¹ far around and inaccessible
 Its circles? For the very spirit fails,
 Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep
 That vanishes among the viewless gales!
 Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky, 60
 Mont Blanc appears,—still, snowy, and serene—
 Its subject mountains their unearthly forms
 Pile around² it, ice and rock; broad vales between
 Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,
 Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread 65
 And wind among the accumulated steeps;
 A desert peopled by the storms alone,
 Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,
 And the wolf tracks³ her there—how hideously
 Its shapes are heaped around! rude, bare, and high, 70
 Ghastly, and scarred, and riven.—Is this the scene
 Where the old Earthquake-dæmon taught her young
 Ruin? Were these their toys? or did a sea
 Of fire, envelope once this silent snow?
 None can reply—all seems eternal now. 75
 The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
 Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,
 So solemn, so serene, that man may be
 But for such faith⁴ with nature reconciled;
 Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal 80

¹ *Speed* in Mrs. Shelley's editions of 1839.

² So in Shelley's and all authoritative editions; but I suspect a printer's error for *round*.

³ *Tracts* in Shelley's edition. Mr.

Garnett tells me that in an extant MS., a draft mainly in pencil, this passage stands *and the wolf watches her*.

⁴ In the draft inspected by Mr. Garnett this passage stands *In such a faith*.

Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood
By all, but which the wise, and great, and good
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

IV.

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,
Ocean, and all the living things that dwell 85
Within the dædal earth; lightning, and rain,
Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,
The torpor of the year when feeble dreams
Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep
Holds every future leaf and flower;—the bound 90
With which from that detested trance they leap;
The works and ways of man, their death and birth,
And that of him and all that his may be;
All things that move and breathe with toil and sound
Are born and die; revolve, subside and swell. 95
Power dwells apart in its tranquillity
Remote, serene, and inaccessible:
And *this*, the naked countenance of earth,
On which I gaze, even these primæval mountains
Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep 100
Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains,
Slow¹ rolling on; there, many a precipice,
Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power
Have piled: dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,
A city of death, distinct with many a tower 105
And wall impregnable of beaming ice.
Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin
Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky²
Rolls its perpetual stream; vast pines are strewing

¹ Mrs. Shelley improves the grammar at the expense of the rhythm, by substituting *slowly* for *slow*, in her editions of 1839.

² Mr. Rossetti substitutes *boundary*

of the skies for *boundaries of the sky*, and secures a bad rhyme between *ice* and *skies*, but, as it seems to me, without advantage.

Its destined path, or in the mangled soil 110
 Branchless and shattered stand; the rocks, drawn down
 From yon remotest waste, have overthrown
 The limits of the dead and living world,
 Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place
 Of insects, beasts, and birds, becomes its spoil; 115
 Their food and their retreat for ever gone,
 So much of life and joy is lost. The race
 Of man, flies far in dread; his work and dwelling
 Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,
 And their place is not known. Below, vast caves 120
 Shine in the rushing torrent's¹ restless gleam,
 Which from those secret chasms in tumult welling
 Meet in the vale, and one majestic River,
 The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever
 Rolls its loud waters to the ocean waves, 125
 Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.

v.

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high:—the power is there,
 The still and solemn power of many sights,
 And many sounds, and much of life and death.
 In the calm darkness of the moonless nights, 130
 In the lone glare of day, the snows descend
 Upon that Mountain; none beholds them there,
 Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,
 Or the star-beams dart through them:—Winds contend
 Silently there, and heap the snow with breath 135
 Rapid and strong, but silently! Its home
 The voiceless lightning in these solitudes
 Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods
 Over the snow. The secret strength of things

¹ Mr. Rossetti substitutes *torrents*. ther Shelley would ever have made
 Of course the grammar of this reading such a change.
 is right; but it is questionable whe-

Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome 140
 Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee!
 And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
 If to the human mind's imaginings
 Silence and solitude were vacancy?

July¹ 23, 1816.

CANCELLED PASSAGE OF MONT BLANC.²

There is a voice, not understood by all,
 Sent from these desert-caves. It is the roar
 Of the rent ice-cliff which the sunbeams call,
 Plunging into the vale—it is the blast
 Descending on the pines—the torrents pour. . . .

¹ *June* in Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions; but the 23rd of June was the date of the excursion from Montalegre to Hermance and Nerni. It was not till the 21st of July that Shelley and his party entered the Vale of Chamouni,—not till the 23rd that he saw from the source of the Arveiron the glacier of Montanvert,

and visited in the evening the glacier of Boisson, whence he returned the same evening to Chamouni. The poem may have been first written down either in sight of the glacier of Boisson, or at Chamouni.

² From Garnett's *Relics of Shelley*, p. 75.

Mont Blanc being the concluding piece in the *Six Weeks' Tour*, the imprint of the volume comes here: it is as follows:—

LAON AND CYTHNA;

OR,

THE REVOLUTION OF THE GOLDEN CITY.

(Usually known as *The Revolt of Islam*).

[*Laon and Cythna*, written in the summer of 1817, was printed in the latter part of that year, the title-page being dated 1818. It is an octavo volume, consisting of title-page, preface pp. III to XXII, fly-title to the dedication, with quotation from Chapman's *Byron's Conspiracy* (Act III), dedication pp. XXIV to XXXII, fly-title *Laon and Cythna* with quotation from Pindar, and 270 pages of text. *The Revolt of Islam*, being made up from the same sheets with a fresh title-page and 27 cancel-leaves, the same particulars apply, except that the preface, having the final paragraph cancelled, ends on page XXI. Some few copies of *The Revolt* bear the date 1817, instead of 1818: probably a realistic compositor set up the new title-page, and his realism was only discovered after the printing was begun. The same sheets were used again in 1829 with a third title-page as follows: "THE REVOLT OF ISLAM; A POEM IN TWELVE CANTOS. BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY. LONDON: PRINTED FOR JOHN BROOKS, 421 OXFORD STREET, 1829." In the meantime some part of the stock of cancel-leaves had, I presume, been lost; for copies of the 1829 issue of *The Revolt of Islam* not unfrequently occur with *Laon and Cythna* text. There is a list of errata usually found in all the four varieties of the book, but sometimes missing. For further bibliographical particulars, and for an account of the copy worked upon by Shelley, now in my possession, and from which the poem is here edited, see Appendix. I am not aware of any complete extant MS. of *Laon and Cythna*; but Sir Percy Shelley has the preface and dedication, written fair for the press in Shelley's handwriting; Leigh Hunt published a fac-simile of four lines in his *Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries*; Mr. W. M. Rossetti owns a larger fragment (24 lines) formerly in the possession of Hunt, and of which a fac-simile was given in some copies of Mr. Rossetti's two-volume edition of Shelley's Poetry; and there is a still larger fragment (52 lines) among the Leigh Hunt MSS. placed at my disposal by Mr. Townshend Mayer. The principal variations shewn in these MSS. will be found in my foot-notes.—H. B. F.]

Laon and Cythna;

OR,

THE REVOLUTION

OF

THE GOLDEN CITY:

A Vision of the Nineteenth Century.

IN THE STANZA OF SPENSER.



BY

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

ΔΟΣ ΠΟΥ ΣΤΩ ΚΑΙ ΚΟΣΜΟΝ ΚΙΝΗΣΩ.

ARCHIMEDES.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SHERWOOD, NEELY, & JONES, PATERNOSTER-
ROW; AND C. AND J. OLLIER, WELBECK-STREET:

By B. M'Millan, Bow-Street, Covent-Garden.

1818.

THE
REVOLT OF ISLAM;

A POEM,

IN TWELVE CANTOS.

BY

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. AND J. OLLIER, WELBECK-STREET

By B. M'Millan, Bow-Street, Covent-Garden.

1818.

P R E F A C E.

[BY SHELLEY.]

THE Poem which I now present to the world, is an attempt from which I scarcely dare to expect success, and in which a writer of established fame might fail without disgrace. It is an experiment on the temper of the public mind, as to how far a thirst for a happier condition of moral and political society survives, among the enlightened and refined, the tempests which have shaken the age in which we live. I have sought to enlist the harmony of metrical language, the ætherial¹ combinations of the fancy, the rapid and subtle transitions of human passion, all those elements which essentially compose a Poem, in the cause of a liberal and comprehensive morality, and in the view of kindling within the bosoms of my readers, a virtuous enthusiasm for those doctrines of liberty and justice, that faith and hope in something good, which neither violence, nor misrepresentation, nor prejudice, can ever totally extinguish among mankind.

For this purpose I have chosen a story of human passion in its most universal character, diversified with moving and romantic adventures, and appealing, in contempt of all artificial opinions or institutions, to the common sympathies of every human breast. I have made no attempt to recommend the motives which I would substitute for those at present governing mankind by methodical and systematic argument. I would only awaken the feelings, so that the reader should see the beauty of true virtue, and

¹ In the original, *ætherial*.

be incited to those enquiries which have led to my moral and political creed, and that of some of the sublimest intellects in the world. The Poem therefore, (with the exception of the first Canto, which is purely introductory), is narrative, not didactic. It is a succession of pictures illustrating the growth and progress of individual mind aspiring after excellence, and devoted to the love of mankind; its influence in refining and making pure the most daring and uncommon impulses of the imagination, the understanding, and the senses; its impatience at "all the oppressions which are done under the sun;" its tendency to awaken public hope and to enlighten and improve mankind; the rapid effects of the application of that tendency; the awakening of an immense nation from their slavery and degradation to a true sense of moral dignity and freedom; the bloodless dethronement of their oppressors, and the unveiling of the religious frauds by which they had been deluded into submission; the tranquillity of successful patriotism, and the universal toleration and benevolence of true philanthropy; the treachery and barbarity of hired soldiers; vice not the object of punishment and hatred, but kindness and pity; the faithlessness of tyrants; the confederacy of the Rulers of the World, and the restoration of the expelled Dynasty by foreign arms; the massacre and extermination of the Patriots, and the victory of established power; the consequences of legitimate despotism, civil war, famine, plague, superstition, and an utter extinction of the domestic affections; the judicial murder of the advocates of Liberty; the temporary triumph of oppression, that secure earnest of its final and inevitable fall; the transient nature of ignorance and error, and the eternity of genius and

virtue. Such is the series of delineations of which the Poem consists. And if the lofty passions with which it has been my scope to distinguish this story, shall not excite in the reader a generous impulse, an ardent thirst for excellence, an interest profound and strong, such as belongs to no meaner desires—let not the failure be imputed to a natural unfitness for human sympathy in these sublime and animating themes. It is the business of the Poet to communicate to others the pleasure and the enthusiasm arising out of those images and feelings, in the vivid presence of which within his own mind, consists at once his inspiration and his reward.

The panic which, like an epidemic transport, seized upon all classes of men during the excesses consequent upon the French Revolution, is gradually giving place to sanity. It has ceased to be believed, that whole generations of mankind ought to consign themselves to a hopeless inheritance of ignorance and misery, because a nation of men who had been dupes and slaves for centuries, were incapable of conducting themselves with the wisdom and tranquillity of freemen so soon as some of their fetters were partially loosened. That their conduct could not have been marked by any other characters than ferocity and thoughtlessness, is the historical fact from which liberty derives all its recommendations, and falsehood¹ the worst features of its deformity. There is a reflux in the tide of human things which bears the shipwrecked hopes of men into a secure haven, after the storms are past. Methinks, those who now live have survived an age of despair.

¹ In Shelley's edition, *falsehood*.

The French Revolution may be considered as one of those manifestations of a general state of feeling among civilized mankind, produced by a defect of correspondence between the knowledge existing in society and the improvement, or gradual abolition of political institutions. The year 1788 may be assumed as the epoch of one of the most important crises produced by this feeling. The sympathies connected with that event extended to every bosom. The most generous and amiable natures were those which participated the most extensively in these sympathies. But such a degree of unmingled good was expected, as it was impossible to realize. If the Revolution had been in every respect prosperous, then misrule and superstition would lose half their claims to our abhorrence, as fetters which the captive can unlock with the slightest motion of his fingers, and which do not eat with poisonous rust into the soul. The revulsion occasioned by the atrocities of the demagogues and the re-establishment of successive tyrannies in France was terrible, and felt in the remotest corner of the civilized world. Could they listen to the plea of reason who had groaned under the calamities of a social state, according to the provisions of which, one man riots in luxury whilst another famishes for want of bread? Can he who the day before was a trampled slave, suddenly become liberal-minded, forbearing, and independent? This is the consequence of the habits of a state of society to be produced by resolute perseverance and indefatigable hope, and long-suffering and long believing courage, and the systematic efforts of generations of men of intellect and virtue. Such is the lesson which experience teaches now. But on the first reverses of hope in the progress of French

liberty, the sanguine eagerness for good overleapt the solution of these questions, and for a time extinguished itself in the unexpectedness of their result. Thus many of the most ardent and tender-hearted of the worshippers of public good, have been morally ruined by what a partial glimpse of the events they deplored, appeared to shew as the melancholy desolation of all their cherished hopes. Hence gloom and misanthropy have become the characteristics of the age in which we live, the solace of a disappointment that unconsciously finds relief only in the wilful exaggeration of its own despair. This influence has tainted the literature of the age with the hopelessness of the minds from which it flows. Metaphysics,¹ and enquiries into moral and political science, have become little else than vain attempts to revive exploded superstitions, or sophisms like those² of Mr. Malthus, calculated to lull the oppressors of mankind into a security of everlasting triumph. Our works of fiction and poetry have been overshadowed by the same infectious gloom. But mankind appear to me to be emerging from their trance. I am aware, methinks, of a slow, gradual, silent change. In that belief I have composed the following Poem.

I do not presume to enter into competition with our greatest contemporary Poets. Yet I am unwilling to tread in the footsteps of any who have preceded me. I have sought to avoid the imitation of any style of language or

¹ I ought to except Sir W. Drummond's "Academical Questions;" a volume of very acute and powerful metaphysical criticism. [SHELLEY'S NOTE].

² It is remarkable, as a symptom of the revival of public hope, that Mr. Malthus has assigned, in the later editions of his work, an indefinite dominion to moral restraint over the principle of population. This concession answers all the inferences from his doctrine unfavourable to human improvement, and reduces the "ESSAY ON POPULATION" to a commentary illustrative of the unanswerableness of "POLITICAL JUSTICE." [SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

versification peculiar to the original minds of which it is the character, designing that even if what I have produced be worthless, it should still be properly my own. Nor have I permitted any system relating to mere words, to divert the attention of the reader from whatever interest I may have succeeded in creating, to my own ingenuity in contriving to disgust them according to the rules of criticism. I have simply clothed my thoughts in what appeared to me the most obvious and appropriate language. A person familiar with nature, and with the most celebrated productions of the human mind, can scarcely err in following the instinct, with respect to selection of language, produced by that familiarity.

There is an education peculiarly fitted for a Poet, without which, genius and sensibility can hardly fill the circle of their capacities. No education indeed can entitle to this appellation a dull and unobservant mind, or one, though neither dull nor unobservant, in which the channels of communication between thought and expression have been obstructed or closed. How far it is my fortune to belong to either of the latter classes, I cannot know. I aspire to be something better. The circumstances of my accidental education have been favourable to this ambition. I have been familiar from boyhood with mountains and lakes, and the sea, and the solitude of forests: Danger which sports upon the brink of precipices, has been my playmate. I have trodden the glaciers of the Alps, and lived under the eye of Mont Blanc. I have been a wanderer among distant fields. I have sailed down mighty rivers, and seen the sun rise and set, and the stars come forth, whilst I have sailed night and day down a rapid

stream among mountains. I have seen populous cities, and have watched the passions which rise and spread, and sink and change amongst assembled multitudes of men. I have seen the theatre of the more visible ravages of tyranny and war, cities and villages reduced to scattered groups of black and roofless houses, and the naked inhabitants sitting famished upon their desolated thresholds. I have conversed with living men of genius. The poetry of antient Greece and Rome, and modern Italy, and our own country, has been to me like external nature, a passion and an enjoyment. Such are the sources from which the materials for the imagery of my Poem have been drawn. I have considered Poetry in its most comprehensive sense, and have read the Poets and the Historians, and the Metaphysicians¹ whose writings have been accessible to me, and have looked upon the beautiful and majestic scenery of the earth as common sources of those elements which it is the province of the Poet to embody and combine. Yet the experience and the feelings to which I refer, do not in themselves constitute men Poets, but only prepare² them to be the auditors of those who are. How far I shall be found to possess that more essential attribute of Poetry, the power of awakening in others sensations like those which animate my own bosom, is that which, to speak sincerely, I know not; and which with an acquiescent and contented spirit, I expect to be taught by the effect which I shall produce upon those whom I now address.

¹ In this sense there may be such a thing as perfectibility in works of fiction, notwithstanding the concession often made by the advocates of human improvement, that perfectibility is a term applicable only to science. [SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

² In Shelley's edition, *prepares*.

I have avoided, as I have said before, the imitation of any contemporary style. But there must be a resemblance which does not depend upon their own will, between all the writers of any particular age. They cannot escape from subjection to a common influence which arises out of an infinite combination of circumstances belonging to the times in which they live, though each is in a degree the author of the very influence by which his being is thus pervaded. Thus, the tragic Poets of the age of Pericles; the Italian revivers of ancient learning; those mighty intellects of our own country that succeeded the Reformation, the translators of the Bible, Shakspeare, Spenser, the Dramatists of the reign of Elizabeth, and Lord Bacon¹; the colder spirits of the interval that succeeded;—all, resemble each other, and differ from every other in their several classes. In this view of things, Ford can no more be called the imitator of Shakspeare, than Shakspeare the imitator of Ford. There were perhaps few other points of resemblance between these two men, than that which the universal and inevitable influence of their age produced. And this is an influence which neither the meanest scribbler, nor the sublimest genius of any æra can escape; and which I have not attempted to escape.

I have adopted the stanza of Spenser, (a measure inexpressibly beautiful) not because I consider it a finer model of poetical harmony than the blank verse of Shakspeare and Milton, but because in the latter there is no shelter for mediocrity: you must either succeed or fail. This perhaps an aspiring spirit should desire. But I was enticed

¹ Milton stands alone in the age which he illumined. [SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

also, by the brilliancy and magnificence of sound which a mind that has been nourished upon musical thoughts, can produce by a just and harmonious arrangement of the pauses of this measure. Yet there will be found some instances where I have completely failed in this attempt, and one, which I here request the reader to consider as an erratum, where there is left most inadvertently an alexandrine in the middle of a stanza.¹

¹ There are two instances of alexandrines left in the middle of stanzas. One is the central line of stanza 27, Canto IV,—

Of whirlwind, whose fierce blasts the waves
and clouds confound,—

the other the central line of stanza 36, Canto IX,—

"Fair star of life and love," I cried, "my
soul's delight,"—

and it is impossible to say which Shelley meant. He could hardly mean the third line of stanza 44, Canto V,—

By winds which feed on sunrise woven, to
inchant—

as stated by Mr. Garnett, or the third line of stanza 27, Canto VIII,—

Are children of one mother, even Love—
behold!

unwarrantably altered by Mr. Rossetti by the omission of the word *even*. Both of these are to be scanned as five-foot iambic lines without more elision than is frequent all through Shelley's works; and neither of these two is "in the middle" of a stanza. But even if we were or could be certain which of the two positive alexandrines Shelley meant, and asked to have considered "as an erratum," there would be no pretext for altering it without explicit direction *how*. He had ample opportunity to alter it if he wished; but it was not treated as an erratum in his own list of errata; and it is fair to assume that, had he meant to change

it, he would have taken the opportunity of the delay between the issue of *Laon and Cythna* and *The Revolt of Islam*, the one book being made up from the sheets of the other with cancel-leaves. But the metric irregularities do not end here. I find in my copy three instances of seven-foot ballad lines instead of alexandrines, noted when Mr. Garnett published *Relics of Shelley*, and I had a search for the "peccant alexandrine," which I *thought* then remained to be discovered. These long lines are

I turned in sickness, for a veil shrouded her
countenance bright. (St. 44, Canto V).—

On the gate's turret, and in rage and grief
and scorn I wept! (St. 3, Canto VI).—

A confident phalanx, which the foes on every
side invest. (St. 13, Canto VI):

In addition to these I find that stanza 18, Canto IV, has no alexandrine at all, the ninth line being

I prithee spare me;—did with ruth so take.

In stanza 54 of Canto V, *light* and *name* hold the position of a rhyme in the second quatrain, and *not* I should think by a printer's error. In stanza 3, Canto VI, *arms* and *arms*, and in stanza 14, Canto VI, *ever* and *forever* stand as rhymes. In stanza 22, Canto VIII, *self* and *self*, in stanza 8, Canto X, *way* and *way*, stand as rhymes. Then, stanza 15 of Canto IX is prolonged to ten lines in *Laon and Cythna*, the alexandrine thus coming out with a

But in this, as in every other respect, I have written fearlessly. It is the misfortune of this age, that its Writers, too thoughtless of immortality, are exquisitely sensible to temporary praise or blame. They write with the fear of Reviews before their eyes. This system of criticism sprang up in that torpid interval when Poetry was not. Poetry, and the art which professes to regulate and limit its powers, cannot subsist together. Longinus could not have been the contemporary of Homer, nor Boileau of Horace. Yet this species of criticism never presumed to assert an understanding of its own: it has always, unlike true science, followed, not preceded the opinion of mankind, and would even now bribe with worthless adulation some of our greatest Poets to impose gratuitous fetters on their own imaginations, and become unconscious accomplices in the daily murder of all genius either not so aspiring or not so fortunate as their own. I have sought therefore to write, as I believe that Homer, Shakspeare, and Milton wrote, with an utter disregard of anonymous censure. I am certain that calumny and misrepresentation, though it may move me to compassion, cannot disturb my peace. I shall understand the expressive silence of those sagacious enemies who dare not trust themselves to speak. I shall endeavour to extract from the midst of insult, and contempt, and maledictions, those admonitions which may tend to correct whatever imperfections such censurers may discover in this my first

wrong rhyme; but Shelley altered this in converting the poem into *The Revolt of Islam*. In stanza 34 of the same Canto *thee* and *thee* have to serve as a rhyme; and a similar thing happens again in stanza 5, Canto X, where

came and *came* stand for a rhyme. In stanza 14, Canto XI, *him* and *tone* stand instead of a rhyme. I do not suppose I have nearly exhausted the instances of metric irregularity in this poem.

serious appeal to the Public. If certain Critics were as clear-sighted as they are malignant, how great would be the benefit to be derived from their virulent writings! As it is, I fear I shall be malicious enough to be amused with their paltry tricks and lame invectives. Should the Public judge that my composition is worthless, I shall indeed bow before the tribunal from which Milton received his crown of immortality, and shall seek to gather, if I live, strength from that defeat, which may nerve me to some new enterprise of thought which may *not* be worthless. I cannot conceive that Lucretius, when he meditated that poem whose doctrines are yet the basis of our metaphysical knowledge, and whose eloquence has been the wonder of mankind, wrote in awe of such censure as the hired sophists of the impure and superstitious noblemen of Rome might affix to what he should produce. It¹ was at the period when Greece was led captive, and Asia made tributary to the Republic, fast verging itself to slavery and ruin, that a multitude of Syrian captives, bigotted to the worship of their obscene Ashtaroth, and the unworthy successors of Socrates and Zeno, found there a precarious subsistence by administering, under the name of freedmen, to the vices and vanities of the great. These wretched men were skilled to plead, with a superficial but plausible set of sophisms, in favour of that contempt for virtue which is the portion of slaves, and that faith in portents, the most

¹ In a proof-leaf inserted in my "cancelled copy" (see appendix) this passage reads thus :

"Asia was first made tributary, Greece was enslaved to the Republic, fast verging itself to slavery and ruin,

and a multitude of Syrian captives bigotted to the worship of their obscene Ashtaroth, and the unworthy successors of Socrates and Zeno, found a precarious subsistence by administering," &c.

fatal substitute for benevolence in the imaginations of men, which arising from the enslaved communities of the East, then first began to overwhelm the western nations in its stream. Were these the kind of men whose disapprobation the wise and lofty-minded Lucretius should have regarded with a salutary awe? The latest and perhaps the meanest of those who follow in his footsteps, would disdain to hold life on such conditions.

The Poem now presented to the Public occupied little more than six months in the composition. That period has been devoted to the task with unremitting ardour and enthusiasm. I have¹ exercised a watchful and earnest criticism on my work as it grew under my hands. I would willingly have sent it forth to the world with that perfection which long labour and revision is said to bestow. But I found that if I should gain something in exactness by this method, I might lose much of the newness and energy of imagery and language as it flowed fresh from my mind. And although the mere composition occupied no more than six months, the thoughts thus arranged were slowly gathered in as many years.

I trust that the reader will carefully distinguish between those opinions which have a dramatic propriety in reference to the characters which they are designed to elucidate, and such as are properly my own. The erroneous and degrading idea which men have² conceived of a Supreme Being, for instance, is spoken against, but not the Supreme Being itself. The³ belief which some superstitious persons whom

¹ The word *have* is not in the proof-leaf inserted in my copy.

² In that leaf we read *is* for *men have*.

³ In the inserted leaf this passage reads thus :

"The belief which some supersti-

I have brought upon the stage, entertain of the Deity, as injurious to the character of his benevolence, is widely different from my own. In recommending also a great and important change in the spirit which animates the social institutions of mankind, I have avoided all flattery to those violent and malignant passions of our nature, which are ever on the watch to mingle with and to alloy the most beneficial innovations. There is no quarter given to Revenge, or Envy, or Prejudice. Love is celebrated every where as the sole law, which should govern the moral world.¹

In the personal conduct of my Hero and Heroine, there is one circumstance which was intended to startle the reader from the trance of ordinary life. It was my object to break through the crust of those outworn opinions on which established institutions depend. I have appealed therefore to the most universal of all feelings, and have endeavoured to strengthen the moral sense, by forbidding it to waste its energies in seeking to avoid actions which are only crimes of convention. It is because there is so great a multitude of artificial vices, that there are so few real virtues. Those feelings alone which are benevolent or malevolent, are essentially good or bad. The circum-

tious persons whom I have brought upon the stage, express in the cruelty and malevolence of God, is widely different from my own." The words *express in the cruelty and malevolence of God* are underlined; and in the bottom margin are written the words *entertain of the Deity, as injurious to the character of his mercy and benevolence*, which words are signed with the initials of Mr. Buchanan M'Millan the printer of the volume, "B. M'M." This suggestion is written in a brownish

ink; the words *mercy and* are struck out in black ink such as all Shelley's corrections are made in; so that he would seem to have accepted his printer's suggestion in a modified form, and is not responsible for originating the ill-turned phrase of the text,—which, however, I leave, as it was adopted in *Laon and Cythna* before the poem was altered into *The Revolt of Islam*.

¹ The Preface to *The Revolt of Islam* ends here, the final paragraph being cancelled.

stance of which I speak, was introduced, however, merely to accustom men to that charity and toleration which the exhibition of a practice widely differing from their own, has a tendency to promote.¹ Nothing indeed can be more mischievous, than many actions innocent in themselves, which might bring down upon individuals the bigotted contempt and rage of the multitude.

¹ The sentiments connected with and characteristic of this circumstance have no personal reference to the Writer. [SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

DEDICATION.

THERE IS NO DANGER TO A MAN, THAT KNOWS
WHAT LIFE AND DEATH IS: THERE'S NOT ANY LAW
EXCEEDS HIS KNOWLEDGE; NEITHER IS IT LAWFUL
THAT HE SHOULD STOOP TO ANY OTHER LAW.

CHAPMAN.

100



A. Evershed. 1876.

TO

MARY _____¹

1.

So now my summer-task is ended, Mary,
 And I return to thee, mine own heart's home;
 As to his Queen some victor Knight of Faëry,
 Earning bright spoils for her enchanted dome;
 Nor thou disdain, that ere my fame become
 A star among the stars of mortal night,
 If it indeed may cleave its natal gloom,
 Its doubtful promise thus I would unite
 With thy belovèd name, thou Child of love and light.

2.

The toil which stole from thee so many an hour,
 Is ended,—and the fruit is at thy feet!
 No longer where the woods to frame a bower
 With interlacèd branches mix and meet,
 Or where with sound like many voices sweet,
 Water-falls leap among wild islands green,
 Which framed for my lone boat a lone retreat
 Of moss-grown trees and weeds, shall I be seen:
 But beside thee, where still my heart has ever been.

¹ Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. I presume we are meant to read
 leave the blanks as Shelley left them, simply "To Mary."

3.

Thoughts of great deeds were mine, dear Friend, when first
 The clouds which wrap this world from youth did pass.
 I do remember well the hour which burst
 My spirit's¹ sleep: a fresh May-dawn it was,
 When I walked forth upon the glittering grass,
 And wept, I knew not why; until there rose
 From the near school-room,² voices, that, alas!
 Were but one echo from a world of woes—
 The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.

4.

And then I clasped my hands and looked around—
 —But none was near to mock my streaming eyes,
 Which poured their warm drops on the sunny ground—
 So without shame, I spake:—"I will be wise,
 And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies
 Such power, for I grow weary to behold
 The selfish and the strong still tyrannise
 Without reproach or check." I then controuled
 My tears, my heart grew calm, and I was meek and bold.

5.

And from that hour did I with earnest thought
 Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore,

¹ In Shelley's edition we read *spirits*' instead of *spirit's*; but it is almost inconceivable that he can have meant the sleep of his spirits and not the sleep of his spirit.

² Lady Shelley connects this passage with Shelley's experience at Eton (*Memorials*, p. 7); but according to Medwin (*Shelley Papers*, pp. 3 and 4), the reference is to school-life of an earlier date, at Sion House, Brentford. I am disposed to think, with Mr. Rossetti, that Medwin, not always trustworthy, is veracious on this point; and Shelley's version of his school-life, as given

in the text, agrees with certain expressions in Sir John Rennie's Autobiography. Referring to his own experience at Sion House, he relates how Shelley behaved "when irritated by other boys, which they, knowing his infirmity, frequently did by way of teasing him"; and he adds that Shelley's "imagination was always roving upon something romantic and extraordinary, such as spirits, fairies, fighting, volcanoes, &c." This is certainly like the "knowledge from forbidden mines of lore" referred to in stanza 5. See also note 3, p. 374.

Yet nothing that my tyrants knew or taught
 I cared to learn, but from that secret store
 Wrought linkèd armour for my soul, before
 It might walk forth to war among mankind;
 Thus power and hope were strengthened more and more
 Within me, till there came upon my mind
 A sense of loneliness, a thirst with which I pined.

6.

Alas, that love should be a blight and snare
 To those who seek all sympathies in one!—
 Such once I sought in vain; then black despair,
 The shadow of a starless night, was thrown
 Over the world in which I moved alone:—
 Yet never found I one not false to me,
 Hard hearts, and cold, like weights of icy stone¹
 Which crushed and withered mine, that could not be
 Aught but a lifeless clog,² until revived by thee.

7.

Thou Friend, whose presence on my wintry heart
 Fell, like bright Spring upon some herbless plain;
 How beautiful and calm and free thou wert
 In thy young wisdom, when the mortal chain
 Of Custom thou didst burst and rend in twain,
 And walked³ as free as light the clouds among,

¹ Mr. Garnett tells me that lines 6 and 7 of stanza 6 stand, in Sir Percy Shelley's MS. of the dedication, thus:

One whom I found was dear, but false to me,
 The other's heart was like a heart of stone.

"One" refers to Shelley's first love, his Cousin Harriet Grove, "the other" to his first wife, Harriett Westbrook. No doubt he did well to cancel at the time so explicit a reference; but it is now of the greatest value.

² So in all authoritative editions; but Mr. Rossetti substitutes *clod*,—a doubtful emendation, as Shelley may well have used *clog* in its sense of *weight*, *encumbrance*.

³ I take *walked* to stand for *walkedst*, a word which would naturally seem to Shelley more heinous than a breach of grammatic rule. Mr. Rossetti reads *walk*,—a liberty which only slightly improves the grammar. He has reconstructed the whole passage so as to

Which many an envious slave then breathed in vain
 From his dim dungeon, and my spirit sprung
 To meet thee from the woes which had begirt it long.

8.

No more alone through the world's wilderness,
 Although I trod the paths of high intent,
 I journeyed now: no more companionless,
 Where solitude is like despair, I went.—
 There is the wisdom of a stern content
 When Poverty can blight the just and good,
 When Infamy dares mock the innocent,
 And cherished friends turn with the multitude
 To trample: this was ours, and we unshaken stood!

9.

Now has descended a serener hour,
 And with inconstant fortune, friends return;
 Tho' suffering leaves the knowledge and the power
 Which says:—Let scorn be not repaid with scorn.
 And from thy side two gentle babes are born
 To fill our home with smiles, and thus are we
 Most fortunate beneath life's beaming morn;
 And these delights, and thou, have been to me
 The parents of the Song I consecrate to thee.

10.

Is it, that now my inexperienced fingers
 But strike the prelude of a loftier strain?

make the dungeon that of Custom,
 thus—

And walk (as free as light the clouds among
 Which many an envious slave then breathed
 in vain)
 From his dim dungeon;

but it seems to me that the clouds are
 the dense atmosphere breathed by
 many an envious slave from *his* dim
 dungeon. Mr. Rossetti's construction
 is very tortuous for Shelley.

Or, must the lyre on which my spirit lingers
 Soon pause in silence, ne'er to sound again,
 Tho' it might shake the Anarch Custom's reign,
 And charm the minds of men to Truth's own sway
 Holier than was Amphion's? I would fain
 Reply in hope—but I am worn away,
 And Death and Love are yet contending for their prey.¹

11.

And what art thou? I know, but dare not speak:
 Time may interpret to his silent years.
 Yet in the paleness of thy thoughtful cheek,
 And in the light thine ample forehead wears,
 And in thy sweetest smiles, and in thy tears,
 And in thy gentle speech, a prophecy
 Is whispered, to subdue my fondest fears:
 And thro' thine eyes, even in thy soul I see
 A lamp of vestal fire burning internally.

12.

They say that thou wert lovely from thy birth,
 Of glorious parents,² thou aspiring Child.
 I wonder not—for One then left this earth
 Whose life was like a setting planet mild,
 Which clothed thee in the radiance undefiled
 Of its departing glory; still her fame
 Shines on thee, thro' the tempests dark and wild
 Which shake these latter days; and thou canst claim
 The shelter, from thy Sire, of an immortal name.

¹ A similar thought received a much more elaborate treatment in Shelley's uncompleted Fable, in Italian and English, printed in Mr. Garnett's *Relics of Shelley*, pp. 62 to 73, and assigned by him, doubtless on good, and probably

on conclusive grounds, to the year 1820.

² William Godwin and his first wife Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin. Mrs. Shelley's Mother had died shortly after giving birth to her.

13.

One voice came forth from many a mighty spirit,
Which was the echo of three thousand years;
And the tumultuous world stood mute to hear it,
As some lone man who in a desert hears
The music of his home:—unwonted fears
Fell on the pale oppressors of our race,
And Faith, and Custom, and low-thoughted cares,
Like thunder-stricken dragons, for a space
Left the torn human heart, their food and dwelling-place.

14.

Truth's deathless voice pauses among mankind!
If there must be no response to my cry—
If men must rise and stamp with fury blind
On his pure name who loves them,—thou and I,
Sweet friend! can look from our tranquillity
Like lamps into the world's tempestuous night,—
Two tranquil stars, while clouds are passing by
Which wrap them from the foundering seaman's sight,
That burn from year to year with unextinguished light.

Laon and Cythna.¹

ΟΣΑΙΣ ΔΕ ΒΡΟΤΟΝ ΕΘΝΟΣ ΑΓΛΑΙΑΙΣ 'ΑΠΤΟΜΕΣΘΑ,
ΠΕΡΑΙΝΕΙ ΠΡΟΣ ΕΣΧΑΤΟΝ
ΠΛΟΟΝ· ΝΑΥΣΙ Δ' ΟΥΤΕ ΠΕΖΟΣ ΙΩΝ ΑΝ ΕΥΡΟΙΣ
ΕΣ 'ΥΠΕΡΒΟΡΕΩΝ ΑΓΩΝΑ ΘΑΥΜΑΤΑΝ 'ΟΔΟΝ.

PIND. *Pyth.* X.

¹ In my copy Shelley has here cancelled the title *Laon and Cythna*, and written over it *Othman* (the name of the tyrant: see Canto V, stanzas XXXII and XXXIII). *Othman*, again, is struck through, and *The Revolt of Islam* substituted in Mr. Charles Ollier's handwriting.

Canto First.

I.

WHEN the last hope of trampled France had failed
Like a brief dream of unremaining glory,
From visions of despair I rose, and scaled
The peak of an aërial promontory,
Whose caverned base with the vext¹ surge was hoary;
And saw the golden dawn break forth, and waken
Each cloud, and every wave:—but transitory
The calm: for sudden, the firm earth was shaken,
As if by the last wreck its frame were overtaken.

II.

So as I stood,² one blast of muttering thunder
Burst in far peals along the waveless deep,
When, gathering fast, around, above and under,

¹ Shelley seems to have had a leaning to this phonetic method of spelling *vexed* and several similar words; and I see no more reason for altering them than there would be for changing, in the like particulars, the deliberate orthography of his contemporary Walter Savage Landor.

² I take the punctuation of the text to be as Shelley intended it, and *So as I stood* to mean *As I stood thus*, referring to the station he had taken on the promontory of stanza I. The meaning might be *So (therefore), as I stood*; but this reading seems to me inconsequent.

Long trains of tremulous mist began to creep,
Until their complicating lines did steep
The orient sun in shadow:—not a sound
Was heard; one horrible repose did keep
The forests and the floods, and all around
Darkness more dread than night was poured upon the ground.

III.

Hark! 'tis the rushing of a wind that sweeps
Earth and the ocean. See! the lightnings yawn
Deluging Heaven with fire, and the lashed deeps
Glitter and boil beneath: it rages on,
One mighty stream, whirlwind and waves upthrown,
Lightning, and hail, and darkness eddying by.
There is a pause—the sea-birds, that were gone
Into their caves to shriek, come forth, to spy
What calm has fall'n on earth, what light is in the sky.

IV.

For, where the irresistible storm had cloven
That fearful darkness, the blue sky was seen
Fretted with many a fair cloud interwoven
Most delicately, and the ocean green,
Beneath that opening spot of blue serene,
Quivered like burning emerald: calm was spread
On all below; but far on high, between
Earth and the upper air, the vast clouds fled,
Countless and swift as leaves on autumn's tempest shed.

V.

For ever, as the war became more fierce
Between the whirlwinds and the rack on high,

That spot grew more serene; blue light did pierce
 The woof of those white clouds, which seemed to lie
 Far, deep, and motionless; while thro' the sky
 The pallid semicircle of the moon
 Past¹ on, in slow and moving majesty;
 Its upper horn arrayed in mists, which soon
 But slowly fled, like dew beneath the beams of noon.

VI.

I could not choose but gaze; a fascination
 Dwelt in that moon, and sky, and clouds, which drew
 My fancy thither, and in expectation
 Of what I knew not, I remained:—the hue
 Of the white moon, amid that heaven so blue,
 Suddenly stained with shadow did appear;
 A speck, a cloud, a shape, approaching grew,
 Like a great ship in the sun's sinking sphere
 Beheld afar at sea, and swift it came anear.

VII.

Even like a bark, which from a chasm of mountains,
 Dark, vast, and overhanging, on a river
 Which there collects the strength of all its fountains,
 Comes forth, whilst with the speed its frame doth quiver,
 Sails, oars, and stream, tending to one endeavour;
 So, from that chasm of light a wingèd Form
 On all the winds of heaven approaching ever
 Floated, dilating as it came: the storm
 Pursued it with fierce blasts, and lightnings swift and warm.

¹ This is another of the words which Shelley seems to have chosen to spell phonetically at this period, and which his editors have generally chosen to alter.

VIII.

A course precipitous, of dizzy speed,
 Suspending thought and breath; a monstrous sight!
 For in the air do I behold indeed
 An Eagle and a Serpent wreathed in fight:—
 And now relaxing its impetuous flight,
 Before the aërial rock on which I stood,
 The Eagle, hovering, wheeled to left and right,
 And hung with lingering wings over the flood,
 And startled with its yells the wide air's solitude.

IX.

A shaft of light upon its wings descended,
 And every golden feather gleamed therein—
 Feather and scale inextricably blended.¹
 The Serpent's mailed and many-coloured skin
 Shone thro' the plumes its coils were twined within
 By many a swollen and knotted fold, and high
 And far, the neck receding lithe and thin,
 Sustained a crested head, which warily
 Shifted and glanced before the Eagle's stedfast eye.

X.

Around, around, in ceaseless circles wheeling
 With clang of wings and scream, the Eagle sailed
 Incessantly—sometimes on high concealing
 Its lessening orbs, sometimes as if it failed,
 Drooped thro' the air; and still it shrieked and wailed,

¹ I suspect the period at the end of this line and the pause at the end of the preceding one should change places. I leave matters as Shelley left them, because there may have been no oversight, the present construction being possible; but it would be more clearly

sequent to read the passage thus: "A shaft of light descended on the eagle's wings, and every golden feather in them gleamed. Feather and scale being blended inextricably, the serpent's mailed and many-coloured skin shone through the plumes," &c.

And casting back its eager head, with beak
 And talon unremittingly assailed
 The wreathèd Serpent, who did ever seek
 Upon his enemy's heart a mortal wound to wreak.

XI.

What life, what power,¹ was kindled and arose
 Within the sphere of that appalling fray!
 For, from the encounter of those wondrous² foes,
 A vapour like the sea's suspended spray
 Hung gathered: in the void air, far away,
 Floated the shattered plumes; bright scales did leap,
 Where'er the Eagle's talons made their way,
 Like sparks into the darkness;—as they sweep,
 Blood stains the snowy foam of the tumultuous deep.

XII.

Swift chances in that combat—many a check,
 And many a change, a dark and wild turmoil;
 Sometimes the Snake around his enemy's neck
 Locked in stiff rings his adamantine coil,
 Until the Eagle, faint with pain and toil,
 Remitted his strong flight, and near the sea
 Languidly fluttered, hopeless so to foil
 His adversary, who then reared on high
 His red and burning crest, radiant with victory.

XIII.

Then on the white edge of the bursting surge,
 Where they had sank together, would the Snake
 Relax his suffocating grasp, and scourge
 The wind with his wild writhings; for to break

¹ There are no commas at *life* and *power*, in Shelley's edition.

² *Wond'rous* in Shelley's edition; but

I take the apostrophe to be a printer's freak.

That chain of torment, the vast bird would shake
 The strength of his unconquerable wings
 As in despair, and with his sinewy neck,
 Dissolve in sudden shock those linkèd rings,
 Then soar—as swift as smoke from a volcano springs.

XIV.

Wile baffled wile, and strength encountered strength,
 Thus long, but unprevailing:—the event
 Of that portentous fight appeared at length:
 Until the lamp of day was almost spent
 It had endured, when lifeless,¹ stark, and rent,
 Hung high that mighty Serpent, and at last
 Fell to the sea, while o'er the continent,
 With clang of wings and scream the Eagle past,
 Heavily borne away on the exhausted blast.

XV.

And with it fled the tempest, so that ocean
 And earth and sky shone through the atmosphere—
 Only, 'twas strange to see the red commotion
 Of waves like mountains o'er the sinking sphere
 Of sun-set sweep, and their fierce roar to hear
 Amid the calm: down the steep path I wound
 To the sea-shore—the evening was most clear
 And beautiful, and there the sea I found
 Calm as a cradled child in dreamless slumber bound.

XVI.

There was a Woman, beautiful as morning,
 Sitting beneath the rocks, upon the sand
 Of the waste sea—fair as one flower adorning

¹ *Lifeless* is either an oversight or meant to imply *exhausted* merely, as we learn further on that the snake was still alive.

An icy wilderness—each delicate hand
Lay crossed upon her bosom, and the band
Of her dark hair had fall'n, and so she sate
Looking upon the waves; on the bare strand
Upon the sea-mark a small boat did wait,
Fair as herself, like Love by Hope left desolate.

XVII.

It seemed that this fair Shape had looked upon
That unimaginable fight, and now
That her sweet eyes were weary of the sun,
As brightly it illustrated her woe;
For in the tears which silently to flow
Paused not, its lustre hung: she watching aye
The foam-wreaths¹ which the faint tide wove below
Upon the spangled sands, groaned heavily,
And after every groan looked up over the sea.

XVIII.

And when she saw the wounded Serpent make
His path between the waves, her lips grew pale,
Parted, and quivered; the tears ceased to break
From her immovable² eyes; no voice of wail
Escaped her; but she rose, and on the gale
Loosening her star-bright robe and shadowy hair
Poured forth her voice; the caverns of the vale
That opened to the ocean, caught it there,
And filled with silver sounds the overflowing air.

XIX.

She spake in language whose strange melody
Might not belong to earth. I heard, alone,
What made its music more melodious be,

¹ *Foam-wreathes* in Shelley's edition.

² In Shelley's edition, *immoveable*.

The pity and the love of every tone;
But to the Snake those accents sweet were known
His native tongue and her's; nor did he beat
The hoar spray idly then, but winding on
Thro' the green shadows of the waves that meet
Near to the shore, did pause beside her snowy feet.

XX.

Then on the sands the Woman sate again,
And wept and clasped her hands, and all between,
Renewed the unintelligible strain
Of her melodious voice and eloquent mien;
And she unveiled her bosom, and the green
And glancing shadows of the sea did play
O'er its marmoreal depth:—one moment seen,
For ere the next, the Serpent did obey
Her voice, and, coiled in rest in her embrace it lay.

XXI.

Then she arose, and smiled on me with eyes
Serene yet sorrowing, like that planet fair,
While yet the day-light lingereth in the skies
Which cleaves with arrowy beams the dark-red air,
And said: To grieve is wise, but the despair
Was weak and vain which led thee here from sleep:
This shalt thou know, and more, if thou dost dare
With me and with this Serpent, o'er the deep,
A voyage divine and strange, companionship to keep.

XXII.

Her voice was like the wildest, saddest tone,
Yet sweet, of some loved voice heard long ago.
I wept. Shall this fair woman all alone,
Over the sea with that fierce Serpent go?
His head is on her heart, and who can know

How soon he may devour his feeble prey?—
 Such were my thoughts, when the tide 'gan to flow;
 And that strange boat, like the moon's shade did sway
 Amid reflected stars that in the waters lay.

XXIII.

A boat of rare device, which had no sail
 But its own curvèd prow of thin moonstone,
 Wrought like a web of texture fine and frail,
 To catch those gentlest winds which are not known
 To breathe, but by the steady speed alone
 With which it cleaves the sparkling sea; and now
 We are embarked, the mountains hang and frown
 Over the starry deep that gleams below¹
 A vast and dim expanse, as o'er the waves we go.

XXIV.

And as we sailed, a strange and awful tale
 That Woman told, like such mysterious dream
 As makes the slumberer's cheek with wonder pale!
 'Twas midnight, and around, a shoreless stream,
 Wide ocean rolled, when that majestic theme
 Shrined in her heart found utterance, and she bent
 Her looks on mine; those eyes a kindling beam
 Of love divine into my spirit sent,
 And ere her lips could move, made the air eloquent.

XXV.

Speak² not to me, but hear! much shalt thou learn,
 Much must remain unthought, and more untold,
 In the dark Future's ever-flowing urn:

¹ This punctuation I take to be what Shelley meant, implying that the deep gleamed below a vast and dim expanse, and not that it was a vast

and dim expanse gleaming below.

² The speech of the allegoric woman, beginning here, continues to the end of stanza XLVI.

Know then, that from the depth of ages old,
Two Powers o'er mortal things dominion hold
Ruling the world with a divided lot,
Immortal, all pervading, manifold,
Twin Genii, equal Gods—when life and thought
Sprang forth, they burst the womb of inessential Nought.

XXVI.

The earliest dweller of the world alone,
Stood on the verge of chaos: Lo! afar
O'er the wide wild abyss two meteors shone,
Sprung from the depth of its tempestuous jar:
A blood red Comet and the Morning Star
Mingling their beams in combat—as he stood,
All thoughts within his mind waged mutual war,
In dreadful sympathy—when to the flood
That fair Star fell, he turned and shed his brother's blood.

XXVII.

Thus evil triumphed, and the Spirit of evil,
One Power of many shapes which none may know,
One Shape of many names; the Fiend did revel
In victory, reigning o'er a world of woe,
For the new race of man went to and fro,
Famished and homeless, loathed and loathing, wild,
And hating good—for his immortal foe,
He changed from starry shape, beauteous and mild,
To a dire Snake, with man and beast unreconciled.

XXVIII.

The darkness lingering o'er the dawn of things,
Was Evil's breath and life: this made him strong
To soar aloft with overshadowing wings;
And the great Spirit of Good did creep among
The nations of mankind, and every tongue

Cursed and blasphemed him as he past ; for none
 Knew good from evil, tho' their names were hung
 In mockery o'er the fane where many a groan,
 As King, and Lord, and God, the conquering Fiend did own,—¹

XXIX.

The Fiend,² whose name was Legion ; Death, Decay,
 Earthquake and Blight, and Want, and Madness pale,
 Wingèd and wan diseases, an array
 Numerous as leaves that strew the autumnal gale ;
 Poison, a snake in flowers, beneath the veil
 Of food and mirth, hiding his mortal head ;
 And, without whom all these might nought avail,
 Fear, Hatred, Faith, and Tyranny, who spread
 Those subtle nets which snare the living and the dead.

XXX.

His spirit is their power, and they his slaves
 In air, and light, and thought, and language dwell ;
 And keep their state from palaces to graves,
 In all resorts of men—invisible,
 But, when in ebon mirror, Nightmare fell
 To tyrant or impostor bids them rise,
 Black wingèd demon forms—whom, from the hell,
 His reign and dwelling beneath nether skies,
 He loosens to their dark and blasting ministries.

XXXI.

In the world's youth his empire was as firm
 As its foundations—soon the Spirit of Good,
 Tho' in the likeness of a loathsome worm,
 Sprang from the billows of the formless flood,

¹ There is a full stop here in Shelley's text ; but the sense is clearly continuous.

² *Fiend* has no capital here in Shelley's edition.

Which shrank and fled; and with that Fiend¹ of blood
Renewed the doubtful war—thrones then first shook,
And earth's immense and trampled multitude,
In hope on their own powers began to look,
And Fear, the demon pale, his sanguine shrine forsook.

XXXII.

Then Greece arose, and to its bards and sages,
In dream, the golden pinioned Genii came,
Even where they slept amid the night of ages,
Steeping their hearts in the divinest flame,
Which thy breath kindled, Power of holiest name!
And oft in cycles since, when darkness gave
New weapons to thy foe, their sunlike fame
Upon the combat shone—a light to save,
Like Paradise spread forth beyond the shadowy grave.

XXXIII.

Such is this conflict—when mankind doth strive
With its oppressors in a strife of blood,
Or when free thoughts, like lightnings are alive;
And in each bosom of the multitude
Justice and truth, with Custom's¹ hydra brood,
Wage silent war;—when Priests¹ and Kings¹ dissemble
In smiles or frowns their fierce disquietude,
When round pure hearts, a host of hopes assemble,
The Snake and Eagle meet—the world's foundations tremble!

XXXIV.

Thou hast beheld that fight—when to thy home
Thou dost return, steep not its hearth in tears;
Tho' thou may'st hear that earth is now become
The tyrant's garbage, which to his compeers,
The vile reward of their dishonoured years,

¹ No capitals in Shelley's edition.

He will dividing give.—The victor Fiend
Omnipotent of yore, now quails, and fears
His triumph dearly won, which soon will lend
An impulse swift and sure to his approaching end.

XXXV.

List, stranger list, mine is an¹ human form,
Like that thou wearest—touch me—shrink not now!
My hand thou feel'st is not a ghost's, but warm
With human blood.—'Twas many years ago,
Since first my thirsting soul aspired to know
The secrets of this wondrous world, when deep
My heart was pierced with sympathy, for woe
Which could not be mine own—and thought did keep
In dream, unnatural watch beside an infant's sleep.

XXXVI.

Woe could not be mine own, since far from men
I dwelt, a free and happy orphan child,
By the sea-shore, in a deep mountain glen;
And near the waves, and thro' the forests wild,
I roamed, to storm and darkness reconciled:
For I was calm while tempest shook the sky:
But when the breathless heavens in beauty smiled,
I wept, sweet tears, yet too tumultuously
For peace, and clasped my hands aloft in ecstasy.²

XXXVII.

These were forebodings of my fate—before
A woman's heart beat in my virgin breast,
It had been nurtured in divinest lore:
A dying poet gave me books, and blest

¹ *a* in Mrs. Shelley's editions.² *Ecstasy* in Shelley's edition.

With wild but holy talk the sweet unrest
In which I watched him as he died away—
A youth with hoary hair—a fleeting guest
Of our lone mountains—and this lore did sway
My spirit like a storm, contending there alway.¹

XXXVIII.

Thus the dark tale which history doth unfold,
I knew, but not, methinks, as others know,
For they weep not; and Wisdom had unrolled
The clouds which hide the gulf of mortal woe:
To few can she that warning vision shew,
For I loved all things with intense devotion;
So that when Hope's deep source in fullest flow,
Like earthquake did uplift the stagnant ocean
Of human thoughts—mine shook beneath the wide emotion.

XXXIX.

When first the living blood thro' all these veins
Kindled a thought in sense, great France sprang forth,
And seized, as if to break, the ponderous chains
Which bind in woe the nations of the earth.
I saw, and started from my cottage hearth;
And to the clouds and waves in tameless gladness,
Shrieked, till they caught immeasurable mirth—
And laughed in light and music: soon, sweet madness
Was poured upon my heart, a soft and thrilling sadness.

XL.

Deep slumber fell on me:—my dreams were fire,
Soft and delightful thoughts did rest and hover
Like shadows o'er my brain; and strange desire,

The strong correspondence between
the persons and circumstances of this
stanza and the episode of the Arab

maiden in *Alastor* (see page 25) may
be worth pointing out.

The tempest of a passion, raging over
 My tranquil soul, its depths with light did cover,
 Which past; and calm, and darkness, sweeter far
 Came—then I loved; but not a human lover!
 For when I rose from sleep, the Morning Star
 Shone thro' the woodbine wreaths which round my casement
 were.

XLI.

'Twas like an eye which seemed to smile on me.
 I watched, till by the sun made pale, it sank
 Under the billows of the heaving sea;
 But from its beams deep love my spirit drank,
 And to my brain the boundless world now shrank
 Into one thought—one image—yes,¹ for ever!
 Even like the dayspring,² poured on vapours dank,
 The beams of that one Star did shoot and quiver
 Thro' my benighted mind—and were extinguished never.

XLII.

The day past thus: at night, methought in dream
 A shape of speechless³ beauty did appear:
 It stood like light on a careering stream
 Of golden clouds which shook the atmosphere;
 A wingèd youth, his radiant brow did wear
 The Morning Star: a wild dissolving bliss
 Over my frame he breathed, approaching near,
 And bent his eyes of kindling tenderness
 Near mine, and on my lips impressed a lingering kiss,⁴

¹ *Yea* in Mrs. Shelley's editions.

² *Day's-spring* in Mrs. Shelley's editions.

³ This word is doubtless used in the sense of *unspeakable*, that form of privative affix being constantly used by Shelley in an unusual manner, as

in *viewless*, *moveless*, *tameless*, and so on. The "And said" of stanza XLIII shews that Shelley did not mean *speechless* in the ordinary sense. Cf. Shakespeare ("viewless winds," *Measure for Measure*).

⁴ There is a full stop here in Shelley's edition,—presumably a printer's error.

XLIII.

And said: a Spirit loves thee, mortal maiden,
How wilt thou prove thy worth? Then joy and sleep
Together fled, my soul was deeply laden,
And to the shore I went to muse and weep;
But as I moved, over my heart did creep
A joy less soft, but more profound and strong
Than my sweet dream; and it forbade to keep
The path of the sea-shore: that Spirit's tongue
Seemed whispering in my heart, and bore my steps along.

XLIV.

How, to that vast and peopled city led,
Which was a field of holy warfare then,
I walked among the dying and the dead,
And shared in fearless deeds with evil men,¹
Calm as an angel in the dragon's den—
How I braved death for liberty and truth,
And spurned at peace, and power, and fame; and when
Those hopes had lost the glory of their youth,
How sadly I returned—might move the hearer's ruth:

XLV.

Warm tears throng fast! the tale may not be said—
Know then, that when this grief had been subdued,
I was not left, like others, cold and dead;
The Spirit whom I loved in solitude
Sustained his child: the tempest-shaken wood,
The waves, the fountains, and the hush of night—
These were his voice, and well I understood
His smile divine, when the calm sea was bright
With silent stars, and Heaven was breathless with delight.

¹ Here again I have substituted a comma for a full stop.

XLVI.

In lonely glens, amid the roar of rivers,
 When the dim nights were moonless, have I known
 Joys which no tongue can tell; my pale lip quivers
 When thought revisits them:—know thou alone,
 That after many wondrous years were flown,
 I was awakened by a shriek of woe;
 And over me a mystic robe was thrown,
 By viewless hands, and a bright Star did glow
 Before my steps—the Snake then met his mortal foe.

XLVII.

Thou¹ fearest not then the Serpent on thy heart?
 Fear it! she said, with brief and passionate cry,
 And spake no more: that silence made me start—
 I looked, and we were sailing pleasantly,
 Swift as a cloud between the sea and sky,
 Beneath the rising moon seen far away;
 Mountains of ice, like sapphire, piled on high
 Hemming the horizon round, in silence lay
 On the still waters—these we did approach alway.

XLVIII.

And swift and swifter grew the vessel's motion,
 So that a dizzy trance fell on my brain—
 Wild music woke me: we had past the ocean
 Which girds the pole, Nature's remotest reign—
 And we glode fast o'er a pellucid plain
 Of waters, azure with the noon-tide day.
 Ætherial mountains shone around—a Fane
 Stood in the midst, girt by green isles which lay
 On the blue sunny deep, resplendent far away.

¹ The Poet addresses his companion.

XLIX.

It was a Temple, such as mortal hand
 Has never built, nor ecstasy,¹ nor dream,
 Reared in the cities of enchanted land :
 'Twas likest Heaven, ere yet day's purple stream
 Ebbs o'er the western forest, while the gleam
 Of the unrisen moon among the clouds
 Is gathering—when with many a golden beam
 The thronging constellations rush in crowds,
 Paving with fire the sky and the marmoreal floods.

L.

Like what may be conceived of this vast dome,
 When from the depths which thought can seldom pierce
 Genius beholds it rise, his native home,
 Girt by the desarts of the Universe,²
 Yet, nor in painting's light, or mightier verse,
 Or sculpture's marble language can invest
 That shape to mortal sense—such glooms immerse
 That incommunicable sight, and rest
 Upon the labouring brain and overburthened breast.

LI.

Winding among the lawny islands fair,
 Whose blosmy³ forests starred the shadowy deep,

¹ *Ecstasy* in Shelley's edition.

² I leave the punctuation as I find it, except that a comma is substituted for a period at *Universe*. Stanza L is probably an enlargement of stanza XLIX;—the Fane or Temple was "likest Heaven,"—"like what may be conceived of this vast dome" (the sky) when genius (from some standpoint of thought "in the intense inane") contemplates it (the sky-dome) "girt by the desarts of the Universe." It would be quite like Shelley to leave the full stop at the end of stanza XLIX, even if the sense were meant to be thus continuous.

³ Mrs. Shelley seems to have been less acquainted with and enamoured of the language of the elder poets than Shelley himself was. This old-English adjective, printed *blosmy* in Shelley's text, was altered to *bloomy* in the posthumous editions, both here and in stanza XXXII, Canto IV; but there can be no doubt that Shelley chose to adopt the obsolete form of *blosomy* (derived from *blosme*, not *blossom*), to be found with precisely this orthography in Chaucer's *Troilus and Cryseyde*,

And shadwed wel with blosmy bowes grene
 BOOK II, stanza 118 (line 821).

The wingless boat paused where an ivory stair
Its fretwork in the crystal sea did steep,
Encircling that vast Fane's aërial heap:
We disembarked, and thro' a portal wide
We past—whose roof of moonstone carved, did keep
A glimmering o'er the forms on every side,
Sculptures like life and thought; immovable,¹ deep-eyed.

LII.

We came to a vast hall, whose glorious roof
Was diamond, which had drank² the lightning's sheen
In darkness, and now poured it thro' the woof
Of spell-inwoven clouds hung there to screen
Its blinding splendour—thro' such veil was seen
That work of subtlest power, divine and rare;
Orb above orb, with starry shapes between,
And hornèd moons, and meteors strange and fair,
On night-black columns poised—one hollow hemisphere!

LIII.

Ten thousand columns in that quivering light
Distinct—between whose shafts wound far away
The long and labyrinthine aisles—more bright
With their own radiance than the Heaven of Day;
And on the jasper walls around, there lay
Paintings, the poesy of mightiest thought,
Which did the Spirit's history display;
A tale of passionate change, divinely taught,
Which, in their wingèd dance, unconscious Genii wrought.

LIV.

Beneath, there sate on many a sapphire throne,
The Great, who had departed from mankind,

¹ In the original, *immoveable*.² *Drunk* in Mrs. Shelley's editions.

A mighty Senate;—some, whose white hair shone
Like mountain snow, mild, beautiful, and blind.
Some, female forms, whose gestures beamed with mind;
And ardent youths, and children bright and fair;
And some had lyres whose strings were intertwined
With pale and clinging flames, which ever there
Waked faint yet thrilling sounds that pierced the crystal air.

LV.

One seat was vacant in the midst, a throne,
Reared on a pyramid like sculptured flame,
Distinct with circling steps which rested on
Their own deep fire—soon as the Woman came
Into that hall, she shrieked the Spirit's name
And fell; and vanished slowly from the sight.
Darkness arose from her dissolving frame,
Which gathering, filled that dome of woven light,
Blotting it's spherèd stars with supernatural night.

LVI.

Then first, two glittering lights were seen to glide
In circles on the amethystine floor,
Small serpent eyes trailing from side to side,
Like meteors on a river's grassy shore,
They round each other rolled, dilating more
And more—then rose, commingling into one,
One clear and mighty planet hanging o'er
A cloud of deepest shadow, which was thrown
Athwart the glowing steps and the crystalline throne.

LVII.

The cloud which rested on that cone of flame
Was cloven; beneath the planet sate a Form,
Fairer than tongue can speak or thought may frame,

The radiance of whose limbs rose-like and warm
Flowed forth, and did with softest light inform
The shadowy dome, the sculptures, and the state
Of those assembled shapes—with clinging charm
Sinking upon their hearts and mine—He sate
Majestic, yet most mild—calm, yet compassionate.

LVIII.

Wonder and joy a passing faintness threw
Over my brow—a hand supported me,
Whose touch was magic strength: an eye of blue
Looked into mine, like moonlight, soothingly;
And a voice said—Thou must a listener be
This day—two mighty Spirits now return,
Like birds of calm, from the world's raging sea,
They pour fresh light from Hope's immortal urn;
A tale of human power—despair not—list and learn!

LIX.

I looked, and lo! one stood forth eloquently,
His eyes were dark and deep, and the clear brow
Which shadowed them was like the morning sky,
The cloudless Heaven of Spring, when in their flow
Thro' the bright air, the soft winds as they blow
Wake the green world—his gesture did obey
The oracular mind that made his features glow,
And where his curvèd lips half open lay,
Passion's divinest stream had made impetuous way.

LX.

Beneath the darkness of his outspread hair
He stood thus beautiful: but there was One
Who sate beside him like his shadow there,
And held his hand—far lovelier—she was known

To be thus fair, by the few lines¹ alone
Which thro' her floating locks and gathered cloke,²
Glances of soul-dissolving glory, shone:—
None else beheld her eyes—in him they woke
Memories which found a tongue, as thus he silence broke.³

¹ I can see no reason for questioning this word, or construing it, as Mr. Rossetti does, to mean "lines, rays, or pencils of light." It seems to me to mean simply such broken lines of her form as could be discerned through her hair and garment,—*shone* being used metaphorically, as a poet talks of anything beautiful shining

or beaming.

² I presume Shelley preferred this unusual orthography on the ground of the commonplace associations of the word *cloak* as ordinarily spelt.

³ It is to be noted that, at this point, the poet ostensibly disappears, the remaining eleven cantos being uttered by Laon.

Canto Second.

I.

THE star-light smile of children, the sweet looks
Of women, the fair breast from which I fed,
The murmur of the unreposing brooks,
And the green light which shifting overhead,
Some tangled bower of vines around me shed,
The shells on the sea-sand, and the wild flowers,
The lamp-light thro' the rafters cheerly spread,
And on the twining flax—in life's young hours
These sights and sounds did nurse my spirit's¹ folded powers.

II.

In Argolis, beside the echoing sea,
Such impulses within my mortal frame
Arose, and they were dear to memory,
Like tokens of the dead:—but others came
Soon, in another shape: the wondrous fame

¹ *Spirits* in Shelley's edition.

Of the past world, the vital words and deeds
Of minds whom neither time nor change can tame,
Traditions dark and old, whence evil creeds
Start forth, and whose dim shade a stream of poison feeds.

III.

I heard, as all have heard, the various story
Of human life, and wept unwilling tears.
Feeble historians of its shame and glory,
False disputants on all its hopes and fears,
Victims who worshipped ruin,—chroniclers
Of daily scorn, and slaves who loathed their state
Yet flattering power had given its ministers
A throne of judgment in the grave¹:—'twas fate,
That among such as these my youth should seek its mate.

IV.

The land in which I lived, by a fell bane
Was withered up. Tyrants dwelt side by side,
And stabled in our homes,—until the chain
Stifled the captive's cry, and to abide
That blasting curse men had no shame—all vied
In evil, slave and despot; fear with lust,
Strange fellowship through mutual hate had tied,
Like two dark serpents tangled in the dust,
Which on the paths of men their mingling poison thrust.

V.

Earth, our bright home, its mountains and its waters,
And the ætherial shapes which are suspended

¹ This seems to me to mean "Slaves who loathed their slavery, yet, being habituated to flatter worldly powers, imagined similar powers sitting in judgment on them after death,"—a simple realistic theory of the idea of

eternal punishments and rewards. I can imagine that Shelley, in omitting the three commas required by grammar, did so to secure rapidity of passage to the final proposition.

Over its green expanse, and those fair daughters,
The clouds, of Sun and Ocean, who have blended
The colours of the air since first extended
It cradled the young world, none wandered forth
To see or feel: a darkness had descended
On every heart: the light which shews its worth,
Must among gentle thoughts and fearless take its birth.

VI.

This vital world, this home of happy spirits,
Was as a dungeon to my blasted kind,
All that despair from murdered hope inherits
They sought, and in their helpless misery blind,
A deeper prison and heavier chains did find,
And stronger tyrants:—a dark gulph before,
The realm of a stern Ruler, yawned; behind,
Terror and Time conflicting drove, and bore
On their tempestuous flood the shrieking wretch from shore.

VII.

Out of that Ocean's wrecks had Guilt and Woe
Framed a dark dwelling for their homeless thought,
And, starting at the ghosts which to and fro
Glide o'er its dim and gloomy strand, had brought
The worship thence which they each other taught.
Well might men loathe their life, well might they turn
Even to the ills again from which they sought
Such refuge after death!—well might they learn
To gaze on this fair world with hopeless unconcern!

VIII.

For they all pined in bondage: body and soul,
Tyrant and slave, victim and torturer, bent
Before one Power, to which supreme controul

Over their will by their own weakness lent,
Made all its many names omnipotent;
All symbols of things evil, all divine;
And hymns of blood or mockery, which rent
The air from all its fanes, did intertwine
Imposture's impious toils round each discordant shrine.

IX.

I heard as all have heard, life's various story,
And in no careless heart transcribed the tale;
But, from the sneers of men who had grown hoary
In shame and scorn, from groans of crowds made pale
By famine, from a mother's desolate wail
O'er her polluted child, from innocent blood
Poured on the earth, and brows anxious and pale
With the heart's warfare; did I gather food
To feed my many thoughts: a tameless multitude!

X.

I wandered thro' the wrecks of days departed
Far by the desolated shore, when even
O'er the still sea and jagged islets darted
The light of moonrise; in the northern Heaven,
Among the clouds near the horizon driven,
The mountains lay beneath one planet pale;
Around me, broken tombs and columns riven
Looked vast in twilight, and the sorrowing gale
Waked in those ruins grey its everlasting wail!

XI.

I knew not who had framed these wonders then,
Nor, had I heard the story of their deeds;
But dwellings of a race of mightier men,
And monuments of less ungentle creeds

Tell their own tale to him who wisely heeds
 The language which they speak; and now, to me
 The moonlight making pale the blooming weeds,
 The bright stars shining in the breathless sea,
 Interpreted those scrolls of mortal mystery.¹

XII.

Such man has been, and such may yet become!
 Aye, wiser, greater, gentler, even than they
 Who on the fragments of yon shattered dome
 Have stamped the sign of power—I felt the sway
 Of the vast stream of ages bear away
 My floating thoughts—my heart beat loud and fast—
 Even as a storm let loose beneath the ray
 Of the still moon, my spirit onward past
 Beneath truth's steady beams upon its tumult cast.

XIII.

It shall be thus no more! too long, too long,
 Sons of the glorious dead, have ye lain bound
 In darkness and in ruin.—Hope is strong,
 Justice and Truth their wingèd child have found—
 Awake! arise! until the mighty sound
 Of your career shall scatter in its gust
 The thrones of the oppressor, and the ground
 Hide the last altar's unregarded dust,
 Whose Idol has so long betrayed your impious trust.

XIV.

It must be so—I will arise and waken
 The multitude, and like a sulphurous hill,

¹ This idea of interpretation of *Alastor*. See lines 116 to 128, page 25 records occurs in another form in of this volume.

Which on a sudden from its snows has¹ shaken
The swoon of ages, it shall burst and fill
The world with cleansing fire: it must, it will—
It may not be restrained!—and who shall stand
Amid the rocking earthquake stedfast still,
But Laon? on high Freedom's desert land
A tower whose marble walls the leaguèd storms withstand!

XV.

One summer night, in commune with the hope
Thus deeply fed, amid those ruins grey
I watched, beneath the dark sky's starry cope;
And ever from that hour upon me lay
The burthen of this hope, and night or day,
In vision or in dream, clove to my breast:
Among mankind, or when gone far away
To the lone shores and mountains, 'twas a guest
Which followed where I fled, and watched when I did rest.

XVI.

These hopes found words thro' which my spirit sought
To weave a bondage of such sympathy,
As might create some response to the thought
Which ruled me now—and as the vapours lie
Bright in the out-spread morning's radiancy,
So were these thoughts invested with the light
Of language: and all bosoms made reply
On which its lustre streamed, whene'er it might
Thro' darkness wide and deep those trancèd spirits smite.

XVII.

Yes, many an eye with dizzy tears was dim,
And oft I thought to clasp my own heart's brother.

¹ *Had* in Mrs. Shelley's editions.

When I could feel the listener's senses swim,
 And hear his breath its own swift gaspings smother
 Even as my words evoked them—and another,
 And yet another, I did fondly deem,
 Felt that we all were sons of one great mother;
 And the cold truth such sad reverse did seem,
 As to awake in grief from some delightful dream.

XVIII.

Yes, oft beside the ruined labyrinth
 Which skirts the hoary caves of the green deep,
 Did Laon and his friend on one grey plinth,
 Round whose worn base the wild waves hiss and leap,
 Resting at eve, a lofty converse keep:
 And that this¹ friend was false, may now be said
 Calmly,—that he like other men could weep
 Tears which are lies, and could betray and spread
 Snares for that guileless heart which for his own had bled.²

XIX.

Then, had no great aim recompensed my sorrow,
 I must have sought dark respite from its stress
 In dreamless rest, in sleep that sees no morrow—
 For to tread life's dismaying wilderness
 Without one smile to cheer, one voice to bless,
 Amid the snares and scoffs of human kind,
 Is hard—but I betrayed it not, nor less
 With love that scorned return, sought to unbind
 The interwoven clouds which make its wisdom blind.

¹ *His* in Mrs. Shelley's editions.² *Had bled*, used probably in thesense of *would have bled*; but possibly it is in the past tense, and metaphorical.

XX.

With deathless minds which leave where they have past
A path of light, my soul communion knew;
Till from that glorious intercourse, at last,
As from a mine of magic store, I drew
Words which were weapons;—round my heart there grew
The adamantine armour of their power,
And from my fancy wings of golden hue
Sprang forth—yet not alone from wisdom's tower,
A minister of truth, these plumes young Laon bore.

XXI.

I had a little sister, whose fair eyes¹
Were loadstars of delight, which drew me home
When I might wander forth; nor did I prize
Aught human thing beneath Heaven's mighty dome
Beyond this child: so when sad hours were come,
And baffled hope like ice still clung to me,
Since kin were cold, and friends had now become
Heartless and false, I turned from all, to be,
Cythna, the only source of tears and smiles to thee.

XXII.

What wert thou then? A child most infantine,
Yet wandering far beyond that innocent age
In all but its sweet looks and mien divine;
Even then, methought, with the world's tyrant rage
A patient warfare thy young heart did wage,
When those soft eyes of scarcely conscious thought,
Some tale, or thine own fancies would engage
To overflow with tears, or converse fraught
With passion, o'er their depths its fleeting light had wrought.

¹ In *The Revolt of Islam* this line reads:

An orphan with my parents lived, whose eyes . . .

XXIII.

She moved upon this earth a shape of brightness,
 A power, that from its objects scarcely drew
 One impulse of her being—in her lightness
 Most like some radiant cloud of morning dew,
 Which wanders thro' the waste air's pathless blue,
 To nourish some far desert: she did seem
 Beside me, gathering beauty as she grew,
 Like the bright shade of some immortal dream
 Which walks, when tempest sleeps, the wave of life's dark
 stream.

XXIV.

As mine own shadow was this child to me,
 A second self, far dearer and more fair;
 Which clothed in undissolving radiancy,
 All those steep paths which languor and despair
 Of human things, had made so dark and bare,
 But which I trod alone—nor, till bereft
 Of friends, and overcome by lonely care
 Knew I what solace for that loss was left,
 Though by a bitter wound my trusting heart was cleft.

XXV.

Once she was dear, now she was all I had
 To love in human life, this sister¹ sweet,
 This child of twelve years old—so she was made
 My sole associate, and her willing feet
 Wandered with mine where earth and ocean meet,
 Beyond the ærial mountains whose vast cells
 The unreposing billows ever beat,
 Thro' forests wide and old, and lawny dells,
 Where boughs of incense droop over the emerald wells.

¹ Playmate in *The Revolt of Islam*.

XXVI.

And warm and light I felt her clasping hand
When twined in mine: she followed where I went,
Thro' the lone paths of our immortal land.
It had no waste, but some memorial lent
Which strung me to my toil—some monument
Vital with mind: then, Cythna by my side,
Until the bright and beaming day were spent,
Would rest, with looks entreating to abide,
Too earnest and too sweet ever to be denied.

XXVII.

And soon I could not have refused her—thus
For ever, day and night, we two were ne'er
Parted, but when brief sleep divided us:
And when the pauses of the lulling air
Of noon beside the sea, had made a lair
For her soothed senses, in my arms she slept,
And I kept watch over her slumbers there,
While, as the shifting visions o'er her swept,
Amid her innocent rest by turns she smiled¹ and wept.

XXVIII.

And, in the murmur of her dreams was heard
Sometimes the name of Laon:—suddenly
She would arise, and like the secret bird
Whom sunset wakens, fill the shore and sky
With her sweet accents—a wild melody!
Hymns which my soul had woven to Freedom, strong
The source of passion whence they rose, to be;

¹ *Smil'd* in Shelley's edition; but
as he does not generally use the con-

tracted form in this poem, I assume
this was an accidental case.

Triumphant strains, which, like a spirit's tongue,
To the enchanted waves that child of glory sung.¹

XXIX.

Her white arms lifted thro' the shadowy stream
Of her loose hair—oh, excellently great
Seemed to me then my purpose, the vast theme
Of those impassioned songs, when Cythna sate
Amid the calm which rapture doth create
After its tumult, her heart vibrating,
Her spirit o'er the ocean's floating state
From her deep eyes far wandering, on the wing
Of visions that were mine, beyond its utmost spring.

XXX.

For, before Cythna loved it, had my song
Peopled with thoughts the boundless universe,
A mighty congregation, which were strong
Where'er they trod the darkness to disperse
The cloud of that unutterable curse
Which clings upon mankind:—all things became
Slaves to my holy and heroic verse,
Earth, sea and sky, the planets, life and fame
And fate, or whate'er else binds the world's wondrous frame.

XXXI.

And this belovèd child thus felt the sway
Of my conceptions, gathering like a cloud

¹ Mrs. Shelley omits the semicolon after *to be*; and Mr. Rossetti entirely changed the sense of the passage by punctuating it thus:

Hymns which my soul had woven to freedom. Strong

The source of passion whence they rose, to be
Triumphant strains which, like a spirit's tongue,
To the enchanted waves that child of glory sung—

But it seems to me that Shelley meant to describe the hymns as being strong or competent to become in others the source of that passion for liberty whence they had arisen in Laon, and not that the source of passion whence they rose, to be triumphant strains, was strong. The word *strong* is used in the sense of competent again in the next stanza but one.

The very wind on which it rolls away :
Her's too were all my thoughts, ere yet endowed
With music and with light, their fountains flowed
In poesy ; and her still and earnest face,
Pallid with feelings which intensely glowed
Within, was turned on mine with speechless¹ grace,
Watching the hopes which there her heart had learned to trace.

XXXII.

In me, communion with this purest being
Kindled intenser zeal, and made me wise
In knowledge, which in her's mine own mind seeing,
Left in the human world few mysteries :
How without fear of evil or disguise
Was Cythna !—what a spirit strong and mild,
Which death, or pain or peril could despise,
Yet melt in tenderness ! what genius wild
Yet mighty, was inclosed within one simple child !

XXXIII.

New lore was this—old age with its grey hair,
And wrinkled legends of unworthy things,
And icy sneers, is nought : it cannot dare
To burst the chains which life for ever flings
On the entangled soul's aspiring wings,
So is it cold and cruel, and is made
The careless slave of that dark power which brings
Evil, like blight on man, who still betrayed,
Laughs o'er the grave in which his living hopes are laid.

XXXIV.

Nor are the strong and the severe to keep
The empire of the world : thus Cythna taught

¹ *Speechless* for *unspeakable*, apparently.

Even in the visions of her eloquent sleep,
Unconscious of the power thro' which she wrought
The woof of such intelligible thought,
As from the tranquil strength which cradled lay
In her smile-peopled rest, my spirit sought
Why the deceiver and the slave has sway
O'er heralds so divine of truth's arising day.

XXXV.

Within that fairest form, the female mind
Untainted by the poison clouds which rest
On the dark world, a sacred home did find:
But else, from the wide earth's maternal breast,
Victorious Evil, which had dispossessed
All native power, had those fair children torn,
And made them slaves to soothe his vile unrest,
And minister to lust its joys forlorn,
Till they had learned to breathe the atmosphere of scorn.

XXXVI.

This misery was but coldly felt, till¹ she
Became my only friend, who had indued
My purpose with a wider sympathy;
Thus, Cythna mourned with me the servitude
In which the half of humankind were mewed
Victims of lust and hate, the slaves of slaves,
She mourned that grace and power were thrown as food
To the hyena lust, who, among graves,
Over his loathèd meal, laughing in agony, raves.

XXXVII.

And I, still gazing on that glorious child,
Even as these thoughts flushed o'er her:—² “Cythna sweet,

¹ In the original edition we read
'till.

² There is a full stop here instead
of a colon in Shelley's edition.

Well with the world art thou unreconciled ;
Never will peace and human nature meet
Till free and equal man and woman greet
Domestic peace ; and ere this power can make
In human hearts its calm and holy seat ;
This slavery must be broken"—as I spake,
From Cythna's eyes a light of exultation brake.

XXXVIII.

She replied earnestly :—" It shall be mine,
This task, mine, Laon!—thou hast much to gain ;
Nor wilt thou at poor Cythna's pride repine,
If she should lead a happy female train
To meet thee over the rejoicing plain,
When myriads at thy call shall throng around
The Golden City."—Then the child did strain
My arm upon her tremulous heart, and wound
Her own about my neck, till some reply she found.

XXXIX.

I smiled, and spake not—"wherefore dost thou smile
At what I say ? Laon, I am not weak,
And though my cheek might become pale the while,
With thee, if thou desirest, will I seek
Through their array of banded slaves to wreak .
Ruin upon the tyrants. I had thought
It was more hard to turn my unpractised cheek
To scorn and shame, and this belovèd spot
And thee, O dearest friend, to leave and murmur not.

XL.

"Whence came I what I am ? thou, Laon, knowest
How a young child should thus undaunted be ;
Methinks, it is a power which thou bestowest,

Through which I seek, by most resembling thee,
 So to become most good, and great and free,
 Yet far beyond this Ocean's utmost roar
 In towers and huts are many like to me,
 Who, could they see thine eyes, or feel such lore
 As I have learnt from them, like me would fear no more.

XLI.

"Think'st¹ thou that I shall speak unskilfully,
 And none will heed me? I remember now,
 How once, a slave in tortures doomed to die,
 Was saved, because in accents sweet and low
 He sung² a song his Judge loved long ago,
 As he was led to death.—All shall relent
 Who hear me—tears as mine have flowed, shall flow,
 Hearts beat as mine now beats, with such intent
 As renovates the world; a will omnipotent!

XLII.

"Yes, I will tread Pride's golden palaces,
 Thro' Penury's roofless huts and squalid cells
 Will I descend, where'er in abjectness
 Woman with some vile slave her tyrant dwells,
 There with the music of thine own sweet spells
 Will disinchant the captives, and will pour
 For the despairing, from the crystal wells
 Of thy deep spirit, reason's mighty lore,
 And power shall then abound, and hope arise once more.

XLIII.

"Can man be free if woman be a slave?
 Chain one who lives, and breathes this boundless air
 To the corruption of a closed grave!

¹ *Thinkest* in Mrs. Shelley's editions. ² *Sang* in Mrs. Shelley's editions.
 VOL. I. K

Can they whose mates are beasts, condemned to bear
Scorn, heavier far than toil or anguish, dare
To trample their oppressors? in their home
Among their babes, thou knowest a curse would wear
The shape of woman—hoary Crime¹ would come
Behind, and Fraud¹ rebuild religion's tottering dome.

XLIV.

"I am a child:—I would not yet depart.
When I go forth alone, bearing the lamp
Aloft which thou hast kindled in my heart,
Millions of slaves from many a dungeon damp
Shall leap in joy, as the benumbing cramp
Of ages leaves their limbs—no ill may harm
Thy Cythna ever—Truth¹ its radiant stamp
Has fixed, as an invulnerable charm
Upon her children's brow, dark Falsehood¹ to disarm.

XLV.

"Wait yet awhile for the appointed day—
Thou wilt depart, and I with tears shall stand
Watching thy dim sail skirt the ocean grey;
Amid the dwellers of this lonely land
I shall remain alone—and thy command
Shall then dissolve the world's unquiet trance,
And, multitudinous as the desert sand
Borne on the storm, its millions shall advance,
Thronging round thee, the light of their deliverance.

XLVI.

"Then, like the forests of some pathless mountain,
Which from remotest glens two warring winds

¹ *Crime, Fraud, Truth, and Falsehood* are given without capitals here in the original edition; and the last is spelt *falsehood*.

Involve in fire, which not the loosened fountain
Of broadest floods might quench, shall all the kinds
Of evil, catch from our uniting minds
The spark which must consume them;—Cythna then
Will have cast off the impotence that binds
Her childhood now, and thro' the paths of men
Will pass, as the charmed bird that haunts the serpent's den.

XLVII.

“We part!—O Laon, I must dare nor tremble
To meet those looks no more!—Oh, heavy stroke,
Sweet brother of my soul! can I dissemble
The agony of this thought?”—As thus she spoke
The gathered sobs her quivering accents broke,
And in my arms she hid her beating breast.
I remained still for tears—sudden she woke
As one awakes from sleep, and wildly prest
My bosom, her whole frame impetuously possest.

XLVIII.

“We part to meet again—but yon blue waste,
Yon desert wide and deep holds no recess,
Within whose happy silence, thus embraced
We might survive all ills in one caress:
Nor doth the grave—I fear 'tis passionless—
Nor yon cold vacant Heaven:—we meet again
Within the minds of men, whose lips shall bless
Our memory, and whose hopes its light retain
When these dissevered bones are trodden in the plain.”

XLIX.

I could not speak, tho' she had ceased, for now
The fountains of her feeling, swift and deep,
Seemed to suspend the tumult of their flow;

So we arose, and by the star-light steep
Went homeward—neither did we speak nor weep,
But pale, were calm¹ with passion—thus subdued
Like evening shades that o'er the mountains creep,
We moved towards our home; where, in this mood,
Each from the other sought refuge in solitude.

¹ Mrs. Shelley repunctuates this line thus :

But pale, were calm.—With passion thus subdued,

and Mr. Rossetti follows her, adding a comma after *but*. I cannot see any sufficient reason for disturbing the original text.

Canto Third.

I.

WHAT thoughts had sway over my sister's¹ slumber
That night, I know not ; but my own did seem
As if they did² ten thousand years outnumber
Of waking life, the visions of a dream,
Which hid in one dim gulph the troubled stream
Of mind ; a boundless chaos wild and vast,
Whose limits yet were never memory's theme :
And I lay struggling as its whirlwinds past,
Sometimes for rapture sick, sometimes for pain aghast.

II.

Two hours, whose mighty circle did embrace
More time than might make grey the infant world,
Rolled thus, a weary and tumultuous space :
When the third came, like mist on breezes curled,
From my dim sleep a shadow was unfurled :

¹ In *The Revolt of Islam*, this line reads thus—

What thoughts had sway o'er Cythna's lonely slumber.

² *Might* is substituted for *did* in *The Revolt of Islam* ; but no such change is made in Shelley's revised copy.

Methought, upon the threshold of a cave
 I sate with Cythna; drooping briony, pearled
 With dew from the wild streamlet's shattered wave,
 Hung, where we sate to taste the joys which Nature gave.

III.

We lived a day as we were wont to live,
 But Nature had a robe of glory on,
 And the bright air o'er every shape did weave
 Intenser hues, so that the herbless stone,
 The leafless bough among the leaves alone,
 Had being clearer than its own could be,
 And Cythna's pure and radiant self was shewn¹
 In this strange vision, so divine to me,
 That if I loved before, now love was agony.

IV.

Morn fled, noon came, evening, then night descended,
 And we prolonged calm talk beneath the sphere
 Of the calm moon—when, suddenly was blended
 With our repose a nameless sense of fear;
 And from the cave behind I seemed to hear
 Sounds gathering upwards!—accents incomplete,
 And stifled shrieks,—and now, more near and near,
 A tumult and a rush of thronging feet
 The cavern's secret depths beneath the earth did beat.

V.

The scene was changed, and away, away, away!
 Thro' the air and over the sea we sped,²

¹ In the original edition, we read *shown* in this instance.

² Having classed these two irregular lines among those miracles of telling irregularity so frequent in Shelley's

maturer works, I was naturally shocked to find Mr. Rossetti had substituted *Thorough* for *Thro'*, with the apology that the line "limped in every previous edition"! To my thinking

And Cythna in my sheltering bosom lay,
 And the winds bore me—thro' the darkness spread
 Around, the gaping earth then vomited
 Legions of foul and ghastly shapes, which hung
 Upon my flight; and ever as we fled,
 They plucked at Cythna—soon to me then clung
 A sense of actual things those monstrous dreams among.

VI.

And I lay struggling in the impotence
 Of sleep, while outward life had burst its bound.
 Tho', still deluded, strove the tortured sense
 To its dire wanderings to adapt the sound
 Which in the light of morn was poured around
 Our dwelling—breathless, pale, and unaware
 I rose, and all the cottage crowded found
 With armed men, whose glittering swords were bare,
 And whose degraded limbs the tyrant's garb did wear.

VII.

And ere with rapid lips and gathered brow
 I could demand the cause—a feeble shriek—
 It was a feeble shriek, faint, far and low,
 Arrested me—my mien grew calm and meek,
 And grasping a small knife, I went to seek
 That voice among the crowd—'twas Cythna's cry!
 Beneath most calm resolve did agony wreak
 Its whirlwind rage:—so I past quietly
 Till I beheld, where bound, that dearest child did lie.

both lines bound with marvellous
 appropriateness to the subject. Of
 course *Thro'* must not be slurred,

but pronounced with a special stress,
 its one heavy syllable doing duty for
 a whole foot.

VIII.

I started to behold her, for delight
And exultation, and a joyance free,
Solemn, serene and lofty, filled the light
Of the calm smile with which she looked on me:
So that I feared some brainless ecstasy,¹
Wrought from that bitter woe, had wildered her—
“Farewell! farewell!” she said, as I drew nigh.
“At first my peace was marred by this strange stir,
Now I am calm as truth—its chosen minister.

IX.

“Look not so, Laon—say farewell in hope,²
These bloody men are but the slaves who bear
Their mistress to her task—it was my scope
The slavery where they drag me now, to share,
And among captives willing chains to wear
Awhile—the rest thou knowest—return, dear friend!
Let our first triumph trample the despair
Which would ensnare us now, for in the end,
In victory or in death our hopes and fears must blend.”

X.

These words had fallen on my unheeding ear,
Whilst I had watched the motions of the crew
With seeming careless glance; not many were
Around her, for their comrades just withdrew
To guard some other victim—so I drew
My knife, and with one impulse, suddenly
All unaware three of their number slew,
And grasped a fourth by the throat, and with loud cry
My countrymen invoked to death or liberty!

¹ *Ecstasy* in the original edition.

² There should, possibly, be a full stop here; but as the present sense is

perfectly good,—“Say farewell in hope that these bloody men” &c.,—I do not venture on any change.

XI.

What followed then, I know not—for a stroke
 On my raised arm and naked head, came down,
 Filling my eyes with blood—when I awoke,
 I felt that they had bound me in my swoon,
 And up a rock which overhangs the town,
 By the steep path were bearing me: below,
 The plain was filled with slaughter,—overthrown
 The vineyards and the harvests, and the glow
 Of blazing roofs shone far o'er the white Ocean's flow.

XII.

Upon that rock a mighty column stood,
 Whose capital seemed sculptured in the sky,
 Which to the wanderers o'er the solitude
 Of distant seas, from ages long gone by,
 Had made a landmark¹; o'er its height to fly
 Scarcely the cloud, the vulture, or the blast,
 Has power—and when the shades of evening lie
 On Earth and Ocean, its carved² summits cast
 The sunken day-light far thro' the aerial waste.

XIII.

They bore me to a cavern in the hill
 Beneath that column, and unbound me there:
 And one did strip me stark; and one did fill
 A vessel from the putrid pool; one bare
 A lighted torch, and four with friendless care
 Guided my steps the cavern-paths along,
 Then up a steep and dark and narrow stair
 We wound, until the torch's³ fiery tongue
 Amid the gushing day beamless and pallid hung.

¹ *Had many a landmark*, in Mrs. Shelley's editions.

² *Carv'd* in the original edition.

³ In Shelley's edition, *torches*'.

XIV.

They raised me to the platform of the pile,
That column's dizzy height:—the grate of brass
Thro' which they thrust me, open stood the while,
As to its ponderous and suspended mass,
With chains which eat into the flesh, alas!
With brazen links, my naked limbs they bound:
The grate, as they departed to repass,
With horrid clangour fell, and the far sound
Of their retiring steps in the dense gloom were¹ drowned.

XV.

The noon was calm and bright:—around that column
The overhanging sky and circling sea
Spread forth in silentness profound and solemn
The darkness of brief frenzy cast² on me,
So that I knew not my own misery:
The islands and the mountains in the day
Like clouds reposed afar; and I could see
The town among the woods below that lay,
And the dark rocks which bound the bright and glassy bay.

XVI.

It was so calm, that scarce the feathery weed
Sown by some eagle on the topmost stone
Swayed in the air:—so bright, that noon did breed
No shadow in the sky beside mine own—
Mine, and the shadow of my chain alone.
Below the smoke of roofs involved in flame
Rested like night, all else was clearly shewn

¹ Was in Mrs. Shelley's and Mr. Rossetti's editions; but probably Shelley preferred euphony to grammar here as in many other cases.

² This word has been printed *cast* in all authoritative editions; but Miss Blind (*Westminster Review*) suggests *past*.

In that¹ broad glare, yet sound to me none came,
But of the living blood that ran within my frame.

XVII.

The peace of madness fled, and ah, too soon!
A ship was lying on the sunny main,
Its sails were flagging in the breathless noon—
Its shadow lay beyond—that sight again
Waked, with its presence, in my trancèd brain
The stings of a known sorrow, keen and cold:
I knew that ship bore Cythna o'er the plain
Of waters, to her blighting slavery sold,
And watched it with such thoughts as must remain untold.

XVIII.

I watched, until the shades of evening wrapt
Earth like an exhalation—then the bark
Moved, for that calm was by the sunset snapt.
It moved a speck upon the Ocean dark:
Soon the wan stars came forth, and I could mark
Its path no more!—I sought to close mine eyes,
But like the balls, their lids were stiff and stark;
I would have risen, but ere that I could rise,
My parchèd skin was split with piercing agonies.

XIX.

I gnawed my brazen chain, and sought to sever
Its adamantine links, that I might die:
O Liberty! forgive the base endeavour,
Forgive me, if reserved for victory,
The Champion of thy faith e'er sought to fly.—
That starry night, with its clear silence, sent
Tameless resolve which laughed at misery

¹ *The* in Mrs. Shelley's editions.

Into my soul—linkèd remembrance lent
To that such power, to me such a severe content.

XX.

To breathe, to be, to hope, or to despair
And die, I questioned not; nor, though the Sun
Its shafts of agony kindling thro' the air
Moved over me, nor though in evening dun,
Or when the stars their visible courses run,
Or morning, the wide universe was spread
In dreary calmness round me, did I shun
Its presence, nor seek refuge with the dead
From one faint hope whose flower a dropping poison shed.

XXI.

Two days thus past—I neither raved nor died—
Thirst raged within me, like a scorpion's nest
Built in mine entrails: I had spurned aside
The water-vessel, while despair possest
My thoughts, and now no drop remained! the uprest
Of the third sun brought hunger—but the crust
Which had been left, was to my craving breast
Fuel, not food. I chewed the bitter dust,
And bit my bloodless arm, and licked the brazen rust.

XXII.

My brain began to fail when the fourth morn
Burst o'er the golden isles—a fearful sleep,
Which through the caverns dreary and forlorn
Of the riven soul, sent its foul dreams to sweep
With whirlwind swiftness—a fall far and deep,—
A gulph, a void, a sense of senselessness—
These things dwelt in me, even as shadows keep
Their watch in some dim charnel's loneliness,
A shoreless sea, a sky sunless and planetless!

XXIII.

The forms which peopled this terrific trance
I well remember—like a quire of devils,
Around me they involved a giddy dance;
Legions seemed gathering from the misty levels
Of Ocean, to supply those ceaseless revels,
Foul, ceaseless shadows:—thought could not divide
The actual world from these entangling evils,
Which so bemocked themselves, that I descried
All shapes like mine own self, hideously multiplied.

XXIV.

The sense of day and night, of false and true,
Was dead within me. Yet two visions burst
That darkness—one, as since that hour I knew,
Was not a phantom of the realms accurst,
Where then my spirit dwelt—but of the first
I know not yet, was it a dream or no.
But both, tho' not distincter, were immersed
In hues which, when thro' memory's waste they flow,
Make their divided streams more bright and rapid now.

XXV.

Methought that gate was lifted, and the seven
Who brought me thither, four stiff corpses bare,
And from the frieze to the four winds of Heaven
Hung them on high by the entangled hair:
Swarthy were three—the fourth was very fair:
As they retired, the golden moon upsprung,
And eagerly, out in the giddy air,
Leaning that I might eat, I stretched and clung
Over the shapeless depth in which those corpses hung.

XXVI.

A woman's shape, now lank and cold and blue,
The dwelling of the many-coloured worm
Hung there, the white and hollow cheek I drew
To my dry lips—what radiance did inform
Those horny eyes? whose was that withered form?
Alas, alas! it seemed that Cythna's ghost
Laughed in those looks, and that the flesh was warm
Within my teeth!—a whirlwind keen as frost
Then in its sinking gulphs my sickening spirit tost.

XXVII.

Then seemed it that a tameless hurricane
Arose, and bore me in its dark career
Beyond the sun, beyond the stars that wane
On the verge of formless space—it languished there,
And dying, left a silence lone and drear,
More horrible than famine:—in the deep
The shape of an old man did then appear,
Stately and beautiful, that dreadful sleep
His heavenly smiles dispersed, and I could wake and weep.

XXVIII.

And when the blinding tears had fallen, I saw
That column, and those corpses, and the moon,
And felt the poisonous tooth of hunger gnaw
My vitals, I rejoiced, as if the boon
Of senseless death would be accorded soon;—
When from that stony gloom a voice arose,
Solemn and sweet as when low winds attune
The midnight pines; the grate did then unclose,
And on that reverend form the moonlight did repose.

XXIX.

He struck my chains, and gently spake and smiled:
 As they were loosened by that Hermit old,
 Mine eyes were of their madness half beguiled,
 To answer those kind looks—he did infold
 His giant arms around me, to uphold
 My wretched frame, my scorched limbs he wound
 In linen moist and balmy, and as cold
 As dew to drooping leaves;—the chain, with sound
 Like earthquake, thro' the chasm of that steep stair did bound,

XXX.

As lifting me, it fell!—What next I heard,
 Were billows leaping on the harbour bar,
 And the shrill sea-wind, whose breath idly stirred
 My hair;—I looked abroad, and saw a star
 Shining beside a sail, and distant far
 That mountain and its column, the known mark
 Of those who in the wide deep wandering are,
 So that I feared some Spirit, fell and dark,
 In trance had lain¹ me thus within a fiendish bark.

XXXI.

For now indeed, over the salt sea billow
 I sailed: yet dared not look upon the shape
 Of him who ruled the helm, altho' the pillow
 For my light head was hollowed in his lap,
 And my bare limbs his mantle did enwrap,
 Fearing it was a fiend: at last, he bent
 O'er me his agèd face, as if to snap
 Those dreadful thoughts the gentle grandsire bent,
 And to my inmost soul his soothing looks he sent.

¹ Mr. Rossetti substitutes *laid* for *lain*.

XXXII.

A soft and healing potion to my lips
 At intervals he raised—now looked on high,
 To mark if yet the starry giant dips
 His zone in the dim sea—now cheeringly,
 Though he said little, did he speak to me.
 “It is a friend beside thee—take good cheer,
 Poor victim, thou art now at liberty!”
 I joyed as those a human tone to hear,
 Who in cells deep and lone have languished many a year.

XXXIII.

A dim and feeble joy, whose glimpses oft
 Were quenched in a relapse of wildering dreams,
 Yet still methought we sailed, until aloft
 The stars of night grew pallid, and the beams
 Of morn descended on the ocean streams,
 And still that agèd man, so grand and mild,
 Tended me, even as some sick mother seems
 To hang in hope over a dying child,
 Till in the azure East darkness again was piled.

XXXIV.

And then the night-wind steaming¹ from the shore,
 Sent odours dying sweet across the sea,
 And the swift boat the little waves which bore,²
 Were cut by its keen keel, tho’ slantingly;
 Soon I could hear the leaves sigh, and could see

¹ Mr. Rossetti substitutes *streaming* for *steaming*, without authority. Certainly the emendation gives a more realizable sense to the passage; but I doubt whether it be a more Shelley-like reading than that of the received text, and therefore leave it as Shelley left it.

² There seems to be an oversight in the original construction of this passage, or else an accidental transposition. Of course the sense intended is that the waves were cut by the keel; but it reads that the *boat were* cut, &c. Probably *waves* and *boat* should change places.

The myrtle blossoms starring the dim grove,
 As past the pebbly beach the boat did flee
 On sidelong wing, into a silent cove,
 Where ebon pines a shade under the starlight wove.¹

¹ Hogg makes in his *Life of Shelley*, Vol. I, pp. 31-2, the following record concerning Dr. Lind, who is said to have been the prototype of the old man mentioned in the foregoing stanzas :—

“He became intimate, also, at Eton, with a man whom he never mentioned, except in terms of the tenderest respect. This was Dr. Lind, a name well known among the professors of medical science. ‘This man,’ he has often said, ‘is exactly what an old man ought to be. Free, calm-spirited, full of benevolence, and even of youthful ardour; his eye seemed to burn with supernatural spirit beneath his brow, shaded by his venerable white locks; he was tall, vigorous, and healthy in his body; tempered, as it had ever been, by his amiable mind. I owe to that man far, ah! far more than I owe to my father; he loved me, and I shall never forget our long talks, where he breathed the spirit of the kindest tolerance and the purest wisdom. Once, when I was very ill during the holidays, as I was recover-

ing from a fever which had attacked my brain, a servant overheard my father consult about sending me to a private madhouse. I was a favourite among all our servants, so this fellow came and told me as I lay sick in bed. My horror was beyond words, and I might soon have been mad indeed, if they had proceeded in their iniquitous plan. I had one hope. I was master of three pounds in money, and, with the servant’s help, I contrived to send an express to Dr. Lind. He came, and I shall never forget his manner on that occasion. His profession gave him authority; his love for me ardour. He dared my father to execute his purpose, and his menaces had the desired effect.’

“I relate this in my Shelley’s words, for I well remember them. I well remember where they were spoken; it was that night that decided my destiny; when he opened at first with the confidence of friendship, and then with the ardour of love, his whole heart to me.”

Canto Fourth.



I.

THE old man took the oars, and soon the bark
Smote on the beach beside a tower of stone;
It was a crumbling heap, whose portal dark
With blooming ivy trails was overgrown;
Upon whose floor the spangling sands were strown,
And rarest sea-shells, which the eternal flood,
Slave to the mother of the months, had thrown
Within the walls of that grey tower, which stood
A changeling of man's art, nursed amid Nature's brood.

II.

When the old man his boat had anchorèd,
He wound me in his arms with tender care,
And very few, but kindly words he said,
And bore me thro' the tower adown a stair,
Whose smooth descent some ceaseless step to wear
For many a year had fallen¹—We came at last
To a small chamber, which with mosses rare

¹ The duties of the dash in Shelley's system of punctuation are very varied; and instances such as this are to be

seen in some of his MSS. There is another case in stanza II, Canto V (p. 174).

Was tapestried, where me his soft hands placed
Upon a couch of grass and oak-leaves interlaced.

III.

The moon was darting through the lattices
Its yellow light, warm as the beams of day—
So warm, that to admit the dewy breeze,
The old man opened them; the moonlight lay
Upon a lake whose waters wove their play
Even to the threshold of that lonely home:
Within was seen in the dim wavering ray,
The antique sculptured roof, and many a tome
Whose lore had made that sage all that he had become.

IV.

The rock-built barrier of the sea was past,—
And I was on the margin of a lake,
A lonely lake, amid the forests vast
And snowy mountains:—did my spirit wake
From sleep, as many-coloured as the snake
That girds eternity? in life and truth,
Might not my heart its cravings ever slake?
Was Cythna then a dream, and all my youth,
And all its hopes and fears, and all its joy and ruth?

V.

Thus madness came again,—a milder madness,
Which darkened nought but time's unquiet flow
With supernatural shades of clinging sadness;
That gentle Hermit, in my helpless woe,
By my sick couch was busy to and fro,
Like a strong spirit ministrant of good:
When I was healed, he led me forth to shew
The wonders of his sylvan solitude,
And we together sate by that isle-fretted flood.

VI.

He knew his soothing words to weave with skill
From all my madness told; like mine own heart,
Of Cythna would he question me, until
That thrilling name had ceased to make me start,
From his familiar lips—it was not art,
Of wisdom and of justice when he spoke—
When mid soft looks of pity, there would dart
A glance as keen as is the lightning's stroke
When it doth rive the knots of some ancestral oak.

VII.

Thus slowly from my brain the darkness rolled,
My thoughts their due array did re-assume
Thro' the enchantments of that Hermit old;
Then I bethought me of the glorious doom
Of those who sternly struggle to relume
The lamp of Hope o'er man's bewildered lot,
And, sitting by the waters, in the gloom
Of eve, to that friend's heart I told my thought—
That heart which had grown old, but had corrupted not.

VIII.

That hoary man had spent his livelong age
In converse with the dead, who leave the stamp
Of ever-burning thoughts on many a page,
When they are gone into the senseless damp
Of graves;—his spirit thus became a lamp
Of splendour, like to those on which it fed:¹
Thro' peopled haunts, the City and the Camp,
Deep thirst for knowledge had his footsteps led,
And all the ways of men among mankind he read.

¹ There is no stop here in Shelley's edition. Mrs. Shelley puts a full stop; but I think the colon more

likely to be the one dropped out in the original edition.

IX.

But custom maketh blind and obdurate
 The loftiest hearts:—he had beheld the woe
 In which mankind was bound, but deemed that fate
 Which made them abject, would preserve them so;
 And in such faith, some steadfast¹ joy to know,
 He sought this cell: but when fame went abroad,
 That one in Argolis did undergo
 Torture for liberty, and that the crowd
 High truths from gifted lips had heard and understood;

X.

And that the multitude was gathering wide;
 His spirit leaped within his aged frame,
 In lonely peace he could no more abide,
 But to the land on which the victor's flame
 Had fed, my native land, the Hermit came:
 Each heart was there a shield, and every tongue
 Was as a sword of truth—young Laon's name
 Rallied their secret hopes, tho' tyrants sung
 Hymns of triumphant joy our scattered tribes among.

XI.

He came to the lone column on the rock,
 And with his sweet and mighty eloquence
 The hearts of those who watched it did unlock,
 And made them melt in tears of penitence.
 They gave him entrance free to bear me thence.
 "Since this,"² the old man said, "seven years are spent
 While slowly truth on thy benighted sense
 Has crept; the hope which wildered it has lent
 Meanwhile, to me the power of a sublime intent.

¹ In Shelley's edition, *stedfast*; but see note at p. 251.

² The quotation marks are intro-

duced here by Mrs. Shelley,—of course rightly; but in Shelley's edition they begin at line 1 of stanza XII.

XII.

“Yes, from the records of my youthful state,
 And from the lore of bards and sages old,
 From whatsoe’er my wakened thoughts create
 Out of the hopes of thine aspirings bold,
 Have I collected language to unfold
 Truth to my countrymen; from shore to shore
 Doctrines of human power my words have told,
 They have been heard, and men aspire to more
 Than they have ever gained or ever lost of yore.

XIII.

“In secret chambers parents read, and weep,
 My writings to their babes, no longer blind;
 And young men gather when their tyrants sleep,
 And vows of faith each to the other bind;
 And marriageable maidens, who have pined
 With love, till life seemed melting thro’ their look,
 A warmer zeal, a nobler hope now find;
 And every bosom thus is rapt and shook,
 Like autumn’s myriad leaves in one swoln mountain brook.

XIV.

“The tyrants of the Golden City tremble
 At voices which are heard about the streets,
 The ministers of fraud can scarce dissemble
 The lies of their own heart; but when one meets
 Another at the shrine, he inly weets,¹
 Tho’ he says nothing, that the truth is known;
 Murderers are pale upon the judgment seats,
 And gold grows vile even to the wealthy crone,
 And laughter fills the Fane, and curses shake the Throne.

¹ A curious instance of an obsolete word found convenient for rhyming purposes. Whether Shelley got it from Spenser or some such later poet

as Prior, I know not; but these, and of course others, use it in its strict sense of *to know*.

XV.

“Kind thoughts, and mighty hopes, and gentle deeds
Abound, for fearless love, and the pure law
Of mild equality and peace, succeeds
To faiths which long have held the world in awe,
Bloody and false, and cold:—as whirlpools draw
All wrecks of Ocean to their chasm, the sway
Of thy strong genius, Laon, which foresaw
This hope, compels all spirits to obey,
Which round thy secret strength now throng in wide array.

XVI.

“For I have been thy passive instrument”—
(As thus the old man spake, his countenance
Gleamed on me like a spirit’s)—“thou hast lent
To me, to all, the power to advance
Towards this unforeseen deliverance
From our ancestral chains—aye, thou didst rear
That lamp of hope on high, which time nor chance,
Nor change may not¹ extinguish, and my share
Of good, was o’er the world its gathered beams to bear.

XVII.

“But I, alas! am both unknown and old,
And though the woof of wisdom I know well
To dye in hues of language, I am cold
In seeming, and the hopes which inly dwell,
My manners note that I did long repel;
But Laon’s name to the tumultuous throng
Were like the star whose beams the waves compel
And tempests, and his soul-subduing tongue
Were as a lance to quell the mailèd crest of wrong.

¹ Another instance of the double negative,—so effectively used that it has not, as far as I know, been interfered with yet.

XVIII.

“Perchance blood need not flow, if thou at length
Wouldst rise, perchance the very slaves would spare
Their brethren and themselves; great is the strength
Of words—for lately did a maiden fair,
Who from her childhood has been taught to bear
The tyrant’s heaviest yoke, arise, and make
Her sex the law of truth and freedom hear,
And with these quiet words—‘for thine own sake
I prithee spare me;’¹—did with ruth so take

XIX.

“All hearts, that even the torturer who had bound
Her meek calm frame, ere it was yet impaled,
Loosened her weeping then; nor could be found
One human hand to harm her—unassailed
Therefore she walks thro’ the great City, veiled
In virtue’s adamantine eloquence,
’Gainst scorn, and death and pain thus trebly mailed,
And blending in the smiles of that defence,
The Serpent and the Dove, Wisdom and Innocence.

XX.

“The wild-eyed women throng around her path:
From their luxurious dungeons, from the dust
Of meaner thralls, from the oppressor’s wrath,
Or the caresses of his sated lust
They congregate:—in her they put their trust;
The tyrants send their armed slaves to quell
Her power;—they, even like a thunder gust
Caught by some forest, bend beneath the spell
Of that young maiden’s speech, and to their chiefs rebel.

¹ In Shelley’s edition there are double quotation marks here, although in stanza XXIV the usual single

marks for a quotation within a quotation are used.

XXI.

"Thus she doth equal laws and justice teach
 To woman, outraged and polluted long;
 Gathering the sweetest fruit in human reach
 For those fair hands now free, while armèd wrong
 Trembles before her look, tho' it be strong;
 Thousands thus dwell beside her, virgins bright,
 And matrons with their babes, a stately throng!
 Lovers renew the vows which they did plight
 In early faith, and hearts long parted now unite,

XXII.

"And homeless orphans find a home near her,
 And those poor victims of the proud, no less,
 Fair wrecks, on whom the smiling world with stir,
 Thrusts the redemption of its wickedness:—
 In squalid huts, and in its palaces
 Sits Lust alone, while o'er the land is borne
 Her voice, whose awful sweetness doth repress
 All evil, and her foes relenting turn,
 And cast the vote of love in hope's abandoned urn.

XXIII.

"So in the populous City, a young maiden
 Has baffled Havock¹ of the prey which he
 Marks as his own, whene'er with chains o'erladen
 Men make them arms to hurl down tyranny,
 False arbiter between the bound and free;
 And o'er the land, in hamlets and in towns
 The multitudes collect tumultuously,
 And throng in arms; but tyranny disowns
 Their claim, and gathers strength around its trembling thrones.

¹ Mrs. Shelley put a capital *H*, though there is not one in Shelley's edition. I follow her text rather than the original because it is according to

Shelley's practice to use the capital when he gives a quality a distinct personality, and I suspect the printer stole a march on him.

XXIV.

"Blood soon, altho' unwillingly to shed,¹
 The free cannot forbear—the Queen of Slaves,
 The hood-winked Angel of the blind and dead,
 Custom, with iron mace points to the graves
 Where² her own standard desolately waves
 Over the dust of Prophets and of Kings.
 Many yet stand in her array—'she paves
 Her path with human hearts,' and o'er it flings
 The wildering gloom of her immeasurable wings.

XXV.

"There is a plain beneath the City's wall,
 Bounded by misty mountains, wide and vast,
 Millions there lift at Freedom's thrilling call
 Ten thousand standards wide, they load the blast
 Which bears one sound of many voices past,
 And startles on his throne their sceptered foe:
 He sits amid his idle pomp aghast,
 And that his power hath past away, doth know—
 Why pause the victor swords to seal his overthrow?

XXVI.

"The tyrant's guards resistance yet maintain:
 Fearless, and fierce, and hard as beasts of blood,³
 They stand a speck amid the peopled plain;
 Carnage and ruin have been made their food
 From infancy—ill has become their good,
 And for its hateful sake their will has wove
 The chains which eat their hearts—the multitude
 Surrounding them, with words of human love,
 Seek from their own decay their stubborn minds to move.

¹ In Shelley's edition the comma is after *shed*. Mrs. Shelley puts it after *unwillingly*; and, as in some other cases, improves the grammar at the expense of the rhythm.

² This word is *When* in the original edition,—a printer's error, I presume.

³ There is a semicolon here in the original edition, and in Mrs. Shelley's editions.

XXVII.

“Over the land is felt a sudden pause,
 As night and day, those ruthless bands around,¹
 The watch of love is kept:—a trance which awes
 The thoughts of men with hope—as when the sound
 Of whirlwind, whose fierce blasts the waves and clouds con-
 found,²
 Dies suddenly, the mariner in fear
 Feels silence sink upon his heart—thus bound,
 The conquerors pause, and oh! may freemen ne’er
 Clasp the relentless knees of Dread the murderer!

XXVIII.

“If blood be shed, ’tis but a change and choice
 Of bonds,—from slavery to cowardice
 A wretched fall!—uplift thy charmed voice,
 Pour on those evil men the love that lies
 Hovering within those spirit-soothing eyes—
 Arise, my friend, farewell!”—As thus he spake,
 From the green earth lightly I did arise,
 As one out of dim dreams that doth awake,
 And looked upon the depth of that reposing lake.

XXIX.

I saw my countenance reflected there;—
 And then my youth fell on me like a wind
 Descending on still waters—my thin hair
 Was prematurely grey, my face was lined
 With channels, such as suffering leaves behind,
 Not age;—my brow was pale, but in my cheek
 And lips a flush of gnawing fire did find
 Their³ food and dwelling; tho’ mine eyes might speak
 A subtle mind and strong within a frame thus weak.

¹ The two commas in this line are not in Shelley’s edition.

² This may perhaps be the alexan-

drine inadvertently left in the middle of a stanza; but see p. 93.

³ Mr. Rossetti reads *Its* for *Their*.

XXX.

And tho' their lustre now was spent and faded,
 Yet in my hollow looks and withered mien
 The likeness of a shape for which was braided
 The brightest woof of genius, still was seen—
 One who, methought, had gone from the world's scene,
 And left it vacant—'twas her brother's¹ face—
 It might resemble her—it once had been
 The mirror of her thoughts, and still the grace
 Which her mind's shadow cast, left there a lingering trace.

XXXI.

What then was I? She slumbered with the dead.
 Glory and joy and peace, had come and gone.
 Doth the cloud perish, when the beams are fled
 Which steeped its skirts in gold? or dark and lone,
 Doth it not thro' the paths of night unknown,
 On outspread wings of its own wind upborne
 Pour rain upon the earth? the stars are shewn,
 When the cold moon sharpens her silver horn
 Under the sea, and make the wide night not forlorn.

XXXII.

Strengthened in heart, yet sad, that agèd man
 I left, with interchange of looks and tears,
 And lingering speech, and to the Camp began
 My way. O'er many a mountain chain which rears
 Its hundred crests aloft, my spirit bears
 My frame; o'er many a dale and many a moor,
 And gaily now meseems² serene earth wears

¹ In *The Revolt of Islam* we read
lover's for *brother's*,—an alteration
 which robs the stanza of half its

meaning.

² In Shelley's edition two words, *me*
seems,—probably a printer's error.

The blosmy¹ spring's star-bright² investiture,
A vision which aught³ sad from sadness might allure.

XXXIII.

My powers revived within me, and I went
As one whom winds waft o'er the bending grass,
Thro' many a vale of that broad continent.
At night when I reposed, fair dreams did pass
Before my pillow;—my own Cythna was,⁴
Not like a child of death, among them ever;
When I arose from rest, a woeful mass
That gentlest sleep seemed from my life to sever,
As if the light of youth were not withdrawn for ever.

XXXIV.

Aye as I went, that maiden who had reared
The torch of Truth afar, of whose high deeds
The Hermit in his pilgrimage had heard,
Haunted my thoughts.—Ah, Hope its sickness feeds
With whatso'er it finds, or flowers or weeds!
Could she be Cythna?—Was that corpse⁵ a shade
Such as self-torturing thought from madness breeds?
Why was this hope not torture? yet it made
A light around my steps which would not ever fade.

¹ Mrs. Shelley changed *blosmy* to *bloomy*, as in stanza LI of Canto I. See note at p. 126.

² No hyphen in Shelley's edition.

³ This word is printed *ought* in the original edition; but I suspect this was through the printer not understanding what part of speech it was.

Shelley spelt the word with an *a*, as in the fourth line of stanza XXI, Canto II.

⁴ There is no comma here in Shelley's edition; but I feel sure there must have been one, and restore it in the interest of sense and sound.

⁵ See Canto III, stanza XXVI, p. 70.

Canto Fifth.



I.

OVER the utmost hill at length I sped,
A snowy steep:—the moon was hanging low
Over the Asian mountains, and outspread
The plain, the City, and the Camp below,
Skirted the midnight Ocean's glimmering flow,
The City's moon-lit spires and myriad lamps,
Like stars in a sublunar sky did glow,
And fires blazed far amid the scattered camps,
Like springs of flame, which burst where'er swift Earth-
quake stamps.

II.

All slept but those in watchful arms who stood,
And those who sate tending the beacon's light,
And the few sounds from that vast multitude
Made silence more profound—Oh, what a might
Of human thought was cradled in that night!
How many hearts impenetrably veiled,
Beat underneath its shade, what secret fight
Evil and good, in woven passions mailed,
Waged thro' that silent throng; a war that never failed!

III.

And now the Power of Good held victory,¹
 So, thro' the labyrinth of many a tent,
 Among the silent millions who did lie
 In innocent sleep, exultingly I went;
 The moon had left Heaven desert² now, but lent
 From eastern morn the first faint lustre showed
 An armèd youth—over his spear he bent
 His downward face—"A friend!" I cried aloud,
 And quickly common hopes made freemen understood.

IV.

I sate beside him while the morning beam
 Crept slowly over Heaven, and talked with him
 Of those immortal hopes, a glorious theme!
 Which led us forth, until the stars grew dim:
 And all the while, methought, his voice did swim,
 As if it drownèd in remembrance were
 Of thoughts which make the moist eyes overbrim:
 At last, when daylight 'gan to fill the air,
 He looked on me, and cried in wonder—"thou art here!"

V.

Then, suddenly, I knew it was the youth³
 In whom its earliest hopes my spirit found;
 But envious tongues had stained his spotless truth,
 And thoughtless pride his love in silence bound,
 And shame and sorrow mine in toils had wound,

¹ There is no comma in Shelley's edition.

² So spelt in this instance in the first edition, though throughout with an *a*: perhaps Shelley adopted the *a* for *desart* (noun) to distinguish it from *desert* (adjective); but it may be the printer's doing.

³ Shelley may have forgotten that Laon speaks of his friend as *really* false

in Canto II, stanza XVIII (p. 137); but as it appears from stanza XVII, Canto II, that Laon had several friends in whom he was deceived, and as in stanza XXI of the same Canto (p. 138) we read "*friends* had now become heartless and false," it is not positive that we are to identify the youth of the present passage with the particular friend of stanza XVIII, Canto II.

Whilst he was innocent, and I deluded;
The truth now came upon me, on the ground
Tears of repenting joy, which fast intruded,
Fell fast, and o'er its peace our mingled spirits brooded.

VI.

Thus, while with rapid lips and earnest eyes
We talked, a sound of sweeping conflict spread,
As from the earth did suddenly arise;
From every tent roused by that clamour dread,
Our bands outsprung and seized their arms—we sped
Towards the sound: our tribes were gathering far.¹
Those sanguine slaves amid ten thousand dead
Stabbed in their sleep, trampled in treacherous war
The gentle hearts whose power their lives had sought to spare.

VII.

Like rabid snakes, that sting some gentle child
Who brings them food, when winter false and fair
Allures them forth with its cold smiles, so wild
They rage among the camp;—they overbear
The patriot hosts—confusion, then despair
Descends like night—when “Laon!” one did cry:
Like a bright ghost from Heaven that shout did scare
The slaves, and widening thro’ the vaulted sky,
Seemed sent from Earth to Heaven in sign of victory.

VIII.

In sudden panic those false murderers fled,
Like insect tribes before the northern gale:
But swifter still, our hosts encompassed

¹ It can hardly be doubted that the punctuation of this passage in Shelley's edition was corrupted by

the printer: there was a comma at the end of the sixth line of the stanza, and another at the end of the eighth.

Their shattered ranks, and in a craggy vale,
Where even their fierce despair might nought avail
Hemmed them around!—and then revenge and fear
Made the high virtue of the patriots fail:
One pointed on his foe the mortal spear—
I rushed before its point, and cried, “Forbear, forbear!”

IX.

The spear transfix'd my arm that was uplifted
In swift expostulation, and the blood
Gushed round its point: I smiled, and—“Oh! thou gifted
With eloquence which shall not be withstood,
Flow thus!”—I cried in joy, “thou vital flood,
Until my heart be dry, ere thus the cause
For which thou wert aught worthy be subdued—
Ah, ye are pale,—ye weep,—your passions pause,—
'Tis well! ye feel the truth of love's benignant laws.

X.

“Soldiers, our brethren and our friends are slain.
Ye murdered them, I think, as they did sleep!
Alas, what have ye done? the slightest pain
Which ye might suffer, there were eyes to weep;
But ye have quenched them—there were smiles to steep
Your hearts in balm, but they are lost in woe;
And those whom love did set his watch to keep
Around your tents truth's freedom to bestow,
Ye stabbed as they did sleep—but they forgive ye now.

XI.

“O wherefore should ill ever flow from ill,
And pain still keener pain forever breed?
We all are brethren—even the slaves who kill
For hire, are men; and to avenge misdeed
On the misdoer, doth but Misery feed

With her own broken heart! O Earth, O Heaven!
 And thou, dread Nature, which to every deed
 And all that lives, or is, to be¹ hath given,
 Even as to thee have these done ill, and are forgiven.

XII.

"Join then your hands and hearts, and let the past
 Be as a grave which gives not up its dead
 To evil thoughts"—a film then overcast
 My sense with dimness, for the wound, which bled
 Freshly, swift shadows o'er mine eyes had shed.
 When I awoke, I lay 'mid friends and foes,
 And earnest countenances on me shed
 The light of questioning looks, whilst one did close
 My wound with balmiest herbs, and soothed me to repose;

XIII.

And one² whose spear had pierced me, leaned beside
 With quivering lips and humid eyes;—and all
 Seemed like some brothers on a journey wide
 Gone forth, whom now strange meeting did befall
 In a strange land, round one whom they might call
 Their friend, their chief, their father, for assay
 Of peril, which had saved them from the thrall
 Of death, now suffering. Thus the vast array
 Of those fraternal bands were reconciled that day.

XIV.

Lifting the thunder of their acclamation,
 Towards the City then the multitude,

¹ In Mrs. Shelley's editions this line is pointed thus :

And all that lives, or is to be, hath given,

but Shelley's own punctuation as given in the text is right, as he obviously means Laon to apostrophize Nature as the mother of all deeds and

all things that live or exist,—“hath given (or allowed) to be, to every deed and all that lives, or is.” Mr. Rossetti substitutes *hast* for *hath*.

² Should not this be *he whose spear had pierced me*? In printing from Shelley's MS. of 1817 such a mistake might easily have occurred.

And I among them, went in joy—a nation
Made free by love;—a mighty brotherhood
Linked by a jealous interchange of good;
A glorious pageant, more magnificent
Than kingly slaves arrayed in gold and blood,
When they return from carnage, and are sent
In triumph bright beneath the populous battlement.

XV.

Afar, the city walls were thronged on high,
And myriads on each giddy turret clung,
And to each spire far lessening in the sky,
Bright pennons on the idle winds were hung;
As we approached a shout of joyance sprung
At once from all the crowd, as if the vast
And peopled Earth its boundless skies among
The sudden clamour of delight had cast,
When from before its face some general wreck had past.

XVI.

Our armies thro' the City's hundred gates
Were poured, like brooks which to the rocky lair
Of some deep lake, whose silence them awaits,
Throng from the mountains when the storms are there;
And as we past thro' the calm sunny air
A thousand flower-inwoven¹ crowns were shed,
The token flowers of truth and freedom fair,
And fairest hands bound them on many a head,
Those angels of love's heaven, that over all was spread.

XVII.

I trod as one tranced in some rapturous vision:
Those bloody bands so lately reconciled,
Were, ever as they went, by the contrition

¹ In the original, *flower-inwoven*.

Of anger turned to love from ill beguiled,
 And every one on them more gently smiled,
 Because they had done evil:—the sweet awe
 Of such mild looks made their own hearts grow mild,
 And did with soft attraction ever draw
 Their spirits to the love of freedom's equal law.

XVIII.

And they, and all, in one loud symphony
 My name with Liberty commingling, lifted,
 "The friend and the preserver of the free!
 The parent of this joy!" and fair eyes,¹ gifted
 With feelings caught from one who had uplifted
 The light of a great spirit, round me shone;
 And all the shapes of this grand scenery shifted
 Like restless clouds before the steadfast² sun,—
 Where was that Maid? I asked, but it was known of none.

XIX.

Laone was the name her love had chosen,
 For she was nameless, and her birth none knew:
 Where was Laone now?—the words were frozen
 Within my lips with fear; but to subdue
 Such dreadful hope, to my great task was due,
 And when at length one brought reply, that she
 To-morrow would appear, I then withdrew
 To judge what need for that great throng might be,
 For now the stars came thick over the twilight sea.

XX.

Yet need was none for rest or food to care,
 Even tho' that multitude was passing great,
 Since each one for the other did prepare
 All kindly succour—Therefore to the gate

¹ In Shelley's edition the comma is
 at *feelings* instead of *eyes*.

² In the original edition *stedfast*.
 See note, at pp. 191 and 251.

Of the Imperial House, now desolate,
 I past, and there was found aghast, alone,
 The fallen Tyrant!—silently he sate
 Upon the footstool of his golden throne,
 Which starred with sunny gems, in its own lustre shone.

XXI.

Alone, but for one child, who led before him
 A graceful dance: the only living thing
 Of all the crowd, which thither to adore him
 Flocked yesterday, who solace sought to bring
 In his abandonment!—she knew the King
 Had praised her dance of yore, and now she wove
 Its circles, aye weeping and murmuring
 'Mid her sad task of unregarded love,
 That to no smiles it might his speechless sadness move.

XXII.

She fled to him, and wildly clasped his feet
 When human steps were heard:—he moved nor spoke,
 Nor changed his hue, nor raised his looks to meet
 The gaze of strangers—our loud entrance woke
 The echoes of the hall, which circling broke
 The¹ calm of its recesses,—like a tomb
 Its sculptured walls vacantly to the stroke
 Of footfalls answered, and the twilight's gloom²
 Lay like a charnel's mist within the radiant dome.

XXIII.

The little child stood up when we came nigh;
 Her lips and cheeks seemed very pale and wan,
 But on her forehead, and within her eye
 Lay beauty, which makes hearts that feed thereon

¹ Misprinted *Thee* in Shelley's edition.

² There is a comma here in the original edition.

Sick with excess of sweetness; on the throne
She leaned;—the King with gathered brow, and lips
Wreathed by long scorn, did inly sneer and frown
With hue like that when some great painter dips
His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse.

XXIV.

She stood beside him like a rainbow braided
Within some storm, when scarce its shadows vast
From the blue paths of the swift sun have faded;
A sweet and solemn smile, like Cythna's, cast
One moment's light, which made my heart beat fast,
O'er that child's parted lips—a gleam of bliss,
A shade of vanished days,—as the tears past
Which wrapt it, even as with a father's kiss
I pressed those softest eyes in trembling tenderness.

XXV.

The sceptered wretch then from that solitude
I drew, and of his change compassionate,
With words of sadness soothed his rugged mood.
But he, while pride and fear held deep debate,
With sullen guile of ill-dissembled hate
Glared on me as a toothless snake might glare:
Pity, not scorn I felt, tho' desolate
The desolator now, and unaware
The curses which he mocked had caught him by the hair.

XXVI.

I led him forth from that which now might seem
A gorgeous grave: thro' portals sculptured deep
With imagery beautiful as dream
We went, and left the shades which tend on sleep
Over its unregarded gold to keep
Their silent watch.—The child trod faintly,

And as she went, the tears which she did weep
Glanced in the star-light; wildered seemèd she,
And when I spake, for sobs she could not answer me.

XXVII.

At last the tyrant cried, "She hungers, slave,
Stab her, or give her bread!"—It was a tone
Such as sick fancies in a new made grave
Might hear. I trembled, for the truth was known,
He with this child had thus been left alone,
And neither had gone forth for food,—but he
In mingled pride and awe cowered near his throne,
And she a nursling of captivity
Knew nought beyond those walls, nor what such change
might be.

XXVIII.

And he was troubled at a charm withdrawn
Thus suddenly; that scepters ruled no more—
That even from gold the dreadful strength was gone,
Which once made all things subject to its power—
Such wonder seized him, as if hour by hour
The past had come again; and the swift fall
Of one so great and terrible of yore,
To desolateness, in the hearts of all
Like wonder stirred, who saw such awful change befall.¹

XXIX.

A mighty crowd, such as the wide land pours
Once in a thousand years, now gathered round
The fallen tyrant;—like the rush of showers
Of hail in spring, pattering along the ground,
Their many footsteps fell, else came no sound
From the wide multitude: that lonely man
Then knew the burthen of his change, and found,

¹ In Shelley's edition *befal*.

Concealing in the dust his visage wan,
Refuge from the keen looks which thro' his bosom ran.

XXX.

And he was faint withal: I sate beside him
Upon the earth, and took that child so fair
From his weak arms, that ill might none betide him
Or her;—when food was brought to them, her share
To his averted lips the child did bear,
But when she saw he had enough, she ate
And wept the while;—the lonely man's despair
Hunger then overcame, and of his state
Forgetful, on the dust as in a trance he sate.

XXXI.

Slowly the silence of the multitudes
Past, as when far is heard in some lone dell
The gathering of a wind among the woods—
And he is fallen! they cry, he who did dwell
Like famine or the plague, or aught more fell
Among our homes, is fallen! the murderer
Who slaked his thirsting soul as from a well
Of blood and tears with ruin! he is here!
Sunk in a gulph of scorn from which none may him rear!

XXXII.

Then was heard—He who judged let him be brought
To judgment! blood for blood cries from the soil
On which his crimes have deep pollution wrought!
Shall Othman only unavenged despoil?
Shall they who by the stress of grinding toil,
Wrest from the unwilling earth his luxuries,
Perish for crime, while his foul blood may boil,
Or creep within his veins at will?—Arise!
And to high justice make her chosen sacrifice.

XXXIII.

“What do ye seek? what fear ye?” then I cried,
Suddenly starting forth, “that ye should shed
The blood of Othman—if your hearts are tried
In the true love of freedom, cease to dread
This one poor lonely man—beneath Heaven spread¹
In purest light above us all, thro’ earth,²
Maternal earth, who doth her sweet smiles shed
For all, let him go free; until the worth
Of human nature win from these a second birth.

XXXIV.

“What call ye *justice*? is there one who ne’er
In secret thought has wished another’s ill?—
Are ye all pure? let those stand forth who hear,
And tremble not. Shall they insult and kill,
If such they be? their mild eyes can they fill
With the false anger of the hypocrite?
Alas, such were not pure—the chastened will
Of virtue sees that justice is the light
Of love, and not revenge, and terror and despoite.”

XXXV.

The murmur of the people slowly dying,
Paused as I spake, then those who near me were,
Cast gentle looks where the lone man was lying
Shrouding his head, which now that infant fair
Clasped on her lap in silence;—thro’ the air
Sobs were then heard, and many kissed my feet
In pity’s madness, and to the despair
Of him whom late they cursed, a solace sweet
His very victims brought—soft looks and speeches meet.

¹ *Shed*, in Mrs. Shelley’s editions, is inserted here for *spread*, instead of at line 7 in the same stanza as indicated

in Shelley’s table of errata.

² There is no comma at *earth* in Shelley’s edition.

XXXVI.

Then to a home for his repose assigned,
 Accompanied by the still throng he went
 In silence, where to soothe his rankling mind,
 Some likeness of his antient state was lent;
 And if his heart could have been innocent
 As those who pardoned him, he might have ended
 His days in peace; but his straight¹ lips were bent,
 Men said, into a smile which guile portended,
 A sight with which that child like hope with fear was blended.

XXXVII.

'Twas midnight now, the eve of that great day
 Whereon the many nations at whose call
 The chains of earth like mist melted away,
 Decreed to hold a sacred Festival,
 A rite to attest the equality of all
 Who live. So to their homes, to dream or wake
 All went. The sleepless silence did recal
 Laone to my thoughts, with hopes that make
 The flood recede from which their thirst they seek to slake.

XXXVIII.

The dawn flowed forth, and from its purple fountains
 I drank those hopes which make the spirit quail;
 As to the plain between the misty mountains
 And the great City, with a countenance pale
 I went:—it was a sight which might avail
 To make men weep exulting tears, for whom
 Now first from human power the reverend veil
 Was torn, to see Earth from her general womb
 Pour forth her swarming sons to a fraternal doom:

¹ I imagine this is the word meant by Shelley, and not *strait* as Mr. Rossetti suggests. The idea seems to

me to be that of the cruelty of a curveless mouth, notwithstanding the occurrence of the expression *strait*

XXXIX.

To see, far glancing in the misty morning,
 The signs of that innumerable host,
 To hear one sound of many made, the warning
 Of Earth to Heaven from its free children tost,
 While the eternal hills, and the sea lost
 In wavering light, and, starring the blue sky
 The city's myriad spires of gold, almost
 With human joy made mute society,
 Its witnesses with men who must hereafter be.

XL.

To see like some vast island from the Ocean,
 The Altar of the Federation rear
 Its pile i'the midst; a work, which the devotion
 Of millions in one night created there,
 Sudden, as when the moonrise makes appear
 Strange clouds in the east; a marble pyramid
 Distinct with steps: that mighty shape did wear
 The light of genius; its still shadow hid
 Far ships: to know its height the morning mists forbid!

XLI.

To hear the restless multitudes forever
 Around the base of that great Altar flow,
 As on some mountain islet burst and shiver
 Atlantic waves; and solemnly and slow
 As the wind bore that tumult to and fro,
 To feel the dreamlike music, which did swim
 Like beams thro' floating clouds on waves below
 Falling in pauses, from that Altar dim
 As silver sounding tongues breathed an aërial hymn.

XLII.

To hear, to see, to live, was on that morn
 Lethean joy! so that all those assembled
 Cast off their memories of the past outworn;
 Two only bosoms with their own life trembled,
 And mine was one,—and we had both dissembled;
 So with a beating heart I went, and one,
 Who having much, covets yet more, resembled;
 A lost¹ and dear possession, which not won,
 He walks in lonely gloom beneath the noonday sun.

XLIII.

To the great Pyramid I came: its stair
 With female quires was thronged: the loveliest
 Among the free, grouped with its sculptures rare;
 As I approached, the morning's golden mist,
 Which now the wonder-stricken breezes kist
 With their cold lips, fled, and the summit shone
 Like Athos seen from Samothracia, drest
 In earliest light by vintagers, and one
 Sate there, a female Shape upon an ivory throne.

XLIV.

A Form most like the imagined habitant
 Of silver exhalations sprung from dawn,
 By winds which feed on sunrise woven, to inchant
 The faiths of men: all mortal eyes were drawn,
 As famished mariners thro' strange seas gone
 Gaze on a burning watch-tower, by the light
 Of those divinest lineaments—alone
 With thoughts which none could share, from that fair sight
 I turned in sickness, for a veil shrouded her countenance bright.

¹ This seems to me better than the word *last* suggested by Mr. Rossetti. The parallel is more strictly carried out if Laon compares himself to a

man who has much, yet wants to recover something he has had and lost, than to a man who covets one more new thing.

XLV.

And, neither did I hear the acclamations,
Which from brief silence bursting, filled the air
With her strange name and mine, from all the nations
Which we, they said, in strength had gathered there
From the sleep of bondage; nor the vision fair
Of that bright pageantry beheld,—but blind
And silent, as a breathing corpse did fare,
Leaning upon my friend, till like a wind
To fevered cheeks, a voice flowed o'er my troubled mind.

XLVI.

Like music of some minstrel heavenly gifted,
To one whom fiends inthrall, this voice to me;
Scarce did I wish her veil to be uplifted,
I was so calm and joyous.—I could see
The platform where we stood, the statues three
Which kept their marble watch on that high shrine,
The multitudes, the mountains, and the sea;
As when eclipse hath past, things sudden shine
To men's astonished eyes most clear and crystalline.

XLVII.

At first Laone spoke most tremulously:
But soon her voice the¹ calmness which it shed
Gathered, and—"thou art whom I sought to see,
And thou art our first votary here," she said:
"I had a brother² once, but he is dead!—
And of all those on the wide earth who breathe,
Thou dost resemble him alone—I spread

¹ Mrs. Shelley reads *that* for *the*. I can see no reason for changing the word in the text, which seems much better than the emendation.

² In Shelley's revised copy *brother* was at first altered to *lover*,—a repeti-

tion of the change made in stanza XXX, Canto IV, to avoid which repetition, I presume, the words *dear friend* were finally substituted for the *Revolt of Islam* version.

This veil between us two, that thou beneath
Shouldst image one who may have been long lost in death.

XLVIII.

“For this wilt thou not henceforth pardon me?
Yes, but those joys which silence well requite
Forbid reply;—why men have chosen me
To be the Priestess of this holiest rite
I scarcely know, but that the floods of light
Which flow over the world, have borne me hither
To meet thee, long most dear; and now unite
Thine hand with mine, and may all comfort wither
From both the hearts whose pulse in joy now beat¹ together,

XLIX.

“If our own will as others’ law we bind,
If the foul worship trampled here we fear;
If as ourselves we cease to love our kind!”—
She paused, and pointed upwards—sculptured there
Three shapes² around her ivory throne appear;
One was a Giant, like a child asleep
On a loose rock, whose grasp crushed, as it were
In dream, scepters and crowns; and one did keep
Its watchful eyes in doubt whether to smile or weep;

L.

A Woman sitting on the sculptured disk
Of the broad earth, and feeding from one breast
A human babe and a young basilisk;
Her looks were sweet as Heaven’s when loveliest
In Autumn eves.—The third Image was drest
In white wings swift as clouds in winter skies,³

¹ Mrs. Shelley corrects the grammar at the expense of the sound, and is followed by Mr. Rossetti, in the substitution of *beats* for *beat*.

² Equality, Love, and Wisdom.

³ Mrs. Shelley put a full stop here: Mr. Rossetti puts a semi-colon. I do not doubt the comma being Shelley’s.

Beneath his feet, 'mongst ghastliest forms, repress
 Lay Faith, an obscene worm, who sought to rise,
 While calmly on the Sun he turned his diamond eyes.

LI.

Beside that Image then I sate, while she
 Stood, 'mid the throngs which ever ebb'd and flow'd
 Like light amid the shadows of the sea
 Cast from one cloudless star, and on the crowd
 That touch which none who feels forgets, bestowed;
 And whilst the sun returned the steadfast¹ gaze
 Of the great Image as o'er Heaven it glode,
 That rite had place; it ceased when sunset's blaze
 Burn'd o'er the isles; all stood in joy and deep amaze,²

When in the silence of all spirits there
 Laone's voice was felt, and thro' the air
 Her thrilling gestures spoke, most eloquently fair.

1.

"Calm art thou as yon sunset! swift and strong
 As new-fledged Eagles, beautiful and young,
 That float among the blinding beams of morning;
 And underneath thy feet writhe Faith, and Folly,
 Custom, and Hell, and mortal Melancholy—
 Hark! the Earth starts to hear the mighty warning
 Of thy voice sublime and holy;
 Its free spirits here assembled,
 See thee, feel thee, know thee now,—
 To thy voice their hearts have trembled
 Like ten thousands clouds which flow
 With one wide wind as it flies!—
 Wisdom! thy irresistible children rise

¹ In Shelley's edition *steadfast*. See note at pp. 180 and 251.

² There is a full stop here in Shelley's edition.

To hail thee, and the elements they chain
And their own will to swell the glory of thy train.¹

2.

“O Spirit vast and deep as Night and Heaven!
Mother and soul of all to which is given
The light of life, the loveliness of being,
Lo! thou dost re-ascend the human heart,
Thy throne of power, almighty as thou wert,
In dreams of Poets old grown pale by seeing
The shade of thee:—now, millions start
To feel thy lightnings thro’ them burning:
Nature, or God, or Love, or Pleasure,
Or Sympathy the sad tears turning
To mutual smiles, a drainless treasure,
Descends amidst us;—Scorn, and Hate,
Revenge and Selfishness are desolate—
A hundred nations swear that there shall be
Pity and Peace and Love, among the good and free!

3.

“Eldest of things, divine Equality!
Wisdom and Love are but the slaves of thee,
The Angels of thy sway, who pour around thee
Treasures from all the cells of human thought,
And from the Stars, and from the Ocean brought,
And the last living heart whose beatings bound thee:
The powerful and the wise had sought
Thy coming, thou in light descending
O’er the wide land which is thine own
Like the spring whose breath is blending
All blasts of fragrance into one,
Comest upon the paths of men!—

¹ There is no stop here in Shelley’s edition; but the sense obviously requires one; and I have no doubt a full stop had dropped out.

Earth bares her general bosom to thy ken,
 And all her children here in glory meet
 To feed upon thy smiles, and clasp thy sacred feet.

4.

"My brethren,¹ we are free! the plains and mountains,
 The grey sea shore, the forests and the fountains,
 Are haunts of happiest dwellers;—man and woman,
 Their common bondage burst, may freely borrow
 From lawless love² a solace for their sorrow;
 For oft we still must weep, since we are human.

A stormy night's serenest morrow,
 Whose showers are pity's gentle tears,
 Whose clouds are smiles of those that die
 Like infants without hopes or fears,
 And whose beams are joys that lie
 In blended hearts, now holds dominion;
 The dawn of mind, which upwards on a pinion
 Borne, swift as sun-rise, far illumines space,
 And clasps this barren world in its own bright embrace!

5.

"My brethren, we are free! the fruits are glowing
 Beneath the stars, and the night winds are flowing
 O'er the ripe corn, the birds and beasts are dreaming—
 Never again may blood of bird or beast
 Stain with its venomous stream a human feast,
 To the pure skies in accusation steaming.³

Avenging poisons shall have ceased
 To feed disease and fear and madness,
 The dwellers of the earth and air
 Shall throng around our steps in gladness

¹ There is no stop here in Shelley's edition; but there is in the same place in the next stanza.

² The words *lawless love* seem to be

used, not in the conventional sense, but merely to signify *unshackled love*.

³ In the original edition there is a comma here.

Seeking their food or refuge there.
 Our toil from thought all glorious forms shall cull,
 To make this Earth, our home, more beautiful,
 And Science, and her sister Poesy,
 Shall clothe in light the fields and cities of the free!

6.

"Victory, Victory to the prostrate nations!
 Bear witness Night, and ye mute Constellations
 Who gaze on us from your crystalline¹ cars!
 Thoughts have gone forth whose powers can sleep no more!
 Victory! Victory! Earth's remotest shore,
 Regions which groan beneath the Antarctic stars,
 The green lands cradled in the roar
 Of western waves, and wildernesses
 Peopled and vast, which skirt the oceans
 Where morning dyes her golden tresses,
 Shall soon partake our high emotions:
 Kings shall turn pale! Almighty Fear
 The Fiend-God, when our charmed name he hear,
 Shall fade like shadow from his thousand fanes,
 While Truth with Joy enthroned o'er his lost empire reigns!"

LII.

Ere she had ceased, the mists of night intertwining
 Their dim woof, floated o'er the infinite throng;
 She, like a spirit thro' the darkness shining,
 In tones whose sweetness silence did prolong,
 As if to lingering winds they did belong,
 Poured forth her inmost soul: a passionate speech
 With wild and thrilling pauses woven among,
 Which whoso heard, was mute, for it could teach
 To rapture like her own all listening hearts to reach.

¹ In Shelley's edition this word is not here accented on the second syllable, though in some poems published

in his life-time it is so accented. In this case it is evidently meant to be *read* with the accent as given in the text.

LIII.

Her voice was as a mountain stream which sweeps
The withered leaves of Autumn to the lake,
And in some deep and narrow bay then sleeps
In the shadow of the shores; as dead leaves wake
Under the wave, in flowers and herbs which make
Those green depths beautiful when skies are blue,
The multitude so moveless did partake
Such living change, and kindling murmurs flew
As o'er that speechless calm delight and wonder grew.

LIV.

Over the plain the throngs were scattered then
In groups around the fires, which from the sea
Even to the gorge of the first mountain glen
Blazed wide and far: the banquet of the free
Was spread beneath many a dark cypress tree,
Beneath whose spires, which swayed in the red light,¹
Reclining as they ate, of Liberty,
And Hope, and Justice, and Laone's name,
Earth's children did a woof of happy converse frame.

LV.

Their feast was such as Earth, the general mother,
Pours from her fairest bosom, when she smiles
In the embrace of Autumn;—to each other
As when some parent fondly reconciles
Her warring children, she their wrath beguiles
With her own sustenance; they relenting weep:
Such was this Festival, which from their isles
And continents, and winds, and oceans deep,
All shapes might throng to share, that fly, or walk, or creep.

¹ I leave the word *light* notwithstanding the "conclusive" reasons

Mr. Rossetti sees in the words *name* and *frame* for altering *light* to *flame*.

LVI.

Might share in peace and innocence, for gore
Or poison none this festal did pollute,
But piled on high, an overflowing store
Of pomegranates, and citrons, fairest fruit,
Melons, and dates, and figs, and many a root
Sweet and sustaining, and bright grapes ere yet
Accursèd fire their mild juice could transmute
Into a mortal bane, and brown corn set
In baskets; with pure streams their thirsting lips they wet.

LVII.

Laone had descended from the shrine,
And every deepest look and holiest mind
Fed on her form, though now those tones divine
Were silent as she past; she did unwind
Her veil, as with the crowds of her own kind
She mixed; some impulse made my heart refrain
From seeking her that night, so I reclined
Amidst a group, where on the utmost plain
A festal watchfire burned beside the dusky main.

LVIII.

And joyous was our feast; pathetic talk,
And wit, and harmony of choral strains,
While far Orion o'er the waves did walk
That flow among the isles, held us in chains
Of sweet captivity, which none disdains
Who feels: but when his zone grew dim in mist
Which clothes the Ocean's bosom, o'er the plains
The multitudes went homeward, to their rest,
Which that delightful day with its own shadow blest.

Canto Sixth.

I.

BESIDE the dimness of the glimmering sea,
Weaving swift language from impassioned themes,
With that dear friend¹ I lingered, who to me
So late had been restored, beneath the gleams
Of the silver stars; and ever in soft dreams
Of future love and peace sweet converse lapt
Our willing fancies, till² the pallid beams
Of the last watchfire fell, and darkness wrapt
The waves, and each bright chain of floating fire was snapt,³

II.

And till we came even to the City's wall
And the great gate, then, none knew whence or why,
Disquiet on the multitudes did fall:
And first, one pale and breathless past us by,
And stared and spoke not;—then with piercing cry
A troop of wild-eyed women, by the shrieks
Of their own terror driven,—tumultuously

¹ The male friend,—not Cythna.

² In the original edition, *'till*.

³ There is a full stop here in Shelley's

edition; but I think there can be little
if any doubt that he would have put
a comma.

Hither and thither hurrying with pale cheeks,
Each one from fear unknown a sudden refuge seeks—

III.

Then, rallying cries of treason and of danger
Resounded: and—"they come! to arms! to arms!
The Tyrant is amongst us, and the stranger
Comes to enslave us in his name! to arms!"¹
In vain: for Panic, the pale fiend who charms
Strength to forswear her right, those millions swept
Like waves before the tempest—these alarms
Came to me, as to know their cause I leapt
On the gate's turret, and in rage and grief and scorn I wept!²

IV.

For to the North I saw the town on fire,
And its red light made morning pallid now,
Which burst over wide Asia;—louder, higher,
The yells of victory and the screams of woe
I heard approach, and saw the throng below
Stream through the gates like foam-wrought waterfalls
Fed from a thousand storms—the fearful glow
Of bombs flares overhead—at intervals
The red artillery's bolt mangling among them falls.

V.

And now the horsemen come—and all was done
Swifter than I have spoken—I beheld
Their red swords flash in the unrisen sun.

¹ One of several instances in which identical words have to serve as rhymes. In this case, at all events, I cannot imagine Shelley would have made any change; and I doubt whether he would in the case of the very next stanza. It is quite likely that he had in his mind the memorable instances of the same licence

taken by Dante in the *Paradiso*.

² Probably Shelley would have wished to reduce this line to the standard six feet, had he observed that it consisted of seven; but as we cannot tell whether *rage*, *grief*, or *scorn* would have been sacrificed, we can but leave it as it is.

I rushed among the rout to have repelled
 That miserable flight—one moment quelled
 By voice, and looks, and eloquent despair,
 As if reproach from their own hearts withheld
 Their steps, they stood; but soon came pouring there
 New multitudes, and did those rallied bands o'erbear.

VI.

I strove, as drifted on some cataract
 By irresistible streams, some wretch might strive
 Who hears its fatal roar:—the files compact
 Whelmed me, and from the gate availed to drive
 With quickening impulse, as each bolt did rive
 Their ranks with bloodier chasm:—into the plain
 Disgorged at length the dead and the alive
 In one dread mass, were parted, and the stain
 Of blood, from mortal steel fell o'er the fields like rain.

VII.

For now the despot's blood-hounds with their prey,
 Unarmed and unaware, were gorging deep
 Their gluttony of death; the loose array
 Of horsemen o'er the wide fields murdering sweep,
 And with loud laughter for their tyrant reap
 A harvest sown with other hopes, the while,
 Far overhead, ships from Propontis keep
 A killing rain of fire¹:—when the waves smile,
 As sudden earthquakes light many a volcano isle,²

¹ There is some difficulty in realizing this picture. It should seem that the hiring cavalry of Othman were sabring the patriots at close quarters, and that, at the same time, the warships from Propontis were firing bombs into the conflict, regardless whether hirelings or patriots were the victims. I presume Shelley did not notice this indiscriminate consequence, in the ardour of his narration.

² The final line and a half, as printed in Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions, are to me quite inscrutable, although Mr. Rossetti, without remark, follows those editions. The passage has hitherto stood thus:

When the waves smile
 As sudden earthquakes light many a volcano
 isle.

The full stop at the end closes it in as belonging to the sense of this stanza;

VIII.

Thus sudden, unexpected feast was spread
 For the carrion fowls of Heaven.—I saw the sight—¹
 I moved—I lived—as o'er the heaps of dead,
 Whose stony eyes glared in the morning light,²
 I trod;—to me there came no thought of flight,
 But with loud cries of scorn which whoso heard
 That dreaded death, felt in his veins the might
 Of virtuous shame return, the crowd I stirred,
 And desperation's hope in many hearts recurred.

IX.

A band of brothers gathering round me, made,
 Although unarmed, a steadfast³ front, and still
 Retreating, with stern looks beneath the shade
 Of gathered eyebrows, did the victors fill
 With doubt even in success; deliberate will
 Inspired our growing troop, not overthrown
 It gained the shelter of a grassy hill,
 And ever still our comrades were hewn down,
 And their defenceless limbs beneath our footsteps strown.

X.

Immovably⁴ we stood—in joy I found,
 Beside me then, firm as a giant pine
 Among the mountain vapours driven around,
 The old man whom I loved—his eyes divine
 With a mild look of courage answered mine,

and I fail to make any sense of it ; but by recognizing one of Shelley's extraordinary inversions, and substituting a comma for a full stop, we are able to read on to the next stanza, and make out a good meaning,—“as, when the waves smile, sudden earthquakes light many a volcano isle, thus sudden, unexpected feast was

spread for the carrion fowls of heaven.”

¹ This pause is supplied by Mrs. Shelley : it must have dropped accidentally from Shelley's edition.

² There is no comma here in Shelley's edition.

³ *Stedfast* in Shelley's edition ; but see note at p. 251.

⁴ *Immoveably* in Shelley's edition.

And my young friend was near, and ardently
 His hand grasped mine a moment—now the line
 Of war extended, to our rallying cry
 As myriads flocked in love and brotherhood to die.

XI.

For ever while the sun was climbing Heaven
 The horseman¹ hewed our unarmed myriads down
 Safely, tho' when by thirst of carnage driven
 Too near, those slaves were swiftly overthrown
 By hundreds leaping on them:—flesh and bone
 Soon made our ghastly ramparts; then the shaft
 Of the artillery from the sea was thrown
 More fast and fiery, and the conquerors laughed²
 In pride to hear the wind our screams of torment waft.

XII.

For on one side alone the hill gave shelter,
 So vast that phalanx of unconquered men,
 And there the living in the³ blood did welter
 Of the dead and dying, which, in that green glen,⁴
 Like stifled torrents, made a plashy fen
 Under the feet—thus was the butchery waged
 While the sun clomb⁵ Heaven's eastern steep—but when
 It 'gan to sink—a fiercer combat raged,
 For in more doubtful strife the armies were engaged.

XIII.

Within a cave upon the hill were found
 A bundle of rude pikes, the instrument
 Of those who war but on their native ground
 For natural rights: a shout of joyance sent

¹ *Horsemen* in Mrs. Shelley's and Mr. Rossetti's editions.

² In Shelley's edition *laughed* is contracted into *laugh'd*.

³ *Their* in Mrs. Shelley's editions.

⁴ There is no comma at *glen* in Shelley's edition.

⁵ *Clombe* in the original edition.

Even from our hearts the wide air pierced and rent,
 As those few arms the bravest and the best
 Seized, and each sixth, thus armed, did now present
 A line which covered and sustained the rest,
 A confident phalanx, which the foes on every side invest.¹

XIV.

That onset turned the foes to flight almost;²
 But soon they saw their present strength, and knew
 That coming night would to our resolute host
 Bring victory, so dismounting close they drew
 Their glittering files, and then the combat grew
 Unequal but most horrible;—and ever
 Our myriads, whom the swift bolt overthrew,
 Or the red sword, failed like a mountain river
 Which rushes forth in foam to sink in sands forever.

XV.

Sorrow and shame, to see with their own kind
 Our human brethren mix, like beasts of blood
 To mutual ruin armed by one behind
 Who sits and scoffs!—That friend so mild and good,
 Who like its shadow near my youth had stood,
 Was stabbed!—my old preserver's hoary hair
 With the flesh clinging to its roots, was strewed
 Under my feet!—I lost all sense or care,
 And like the rest I grew desperate and unaware.

XVI.

The battle became ghastlier—in the midst
 I paused, and saw how ugly and how fell,³

¹ Probably this line would have been reduced to the standard six feet had Shelley noticed it; but who shall say whether by making *on every side* give place to *all round*, or by sacrific-

ing the word *confident*?

² The semi-colon is supplied by Mrs. Shelley.

³ In the original edition the comma is at *saw* instead of at *fell*.

O Hate! thou art, even when thy life thou shed'st
For love. The ground in many a little dell
Was broken, up and down whose steeps befell
Alternate victory and defeat, and there
The combatants with rage most horrible
Strove, and their eyes started with cracking stare,
And impotent their tongues they lolled into the air,

XVII.

Flaccid and foamy, like a mad dog's hanging;
Want, and Moon-madness, and the pest's swift Bane
When its shafts smite—while yet its bow is twanging—
Have each their mark and sign—some ghastly stain;
And this was thine, O War! of hate and pain
Thou loathèd slave. I saw all shapes of death
And ministered to many, o'er the plain
While carnage in the sun-beam's warmth did seethe,
Till twilight o'er the east wove her serenest wreath.

XVIII.

The few who yet survived, resolute and firm
Around me fought. At the decline of day
Winding above the mountain's snowy term
New banners shone: they quivered in the ray
Of the sun's unseen orb—ere night the array
Of fresh troops hemmed us in—of those brave bands
I soon survived alone—and now I lay
Vanquished and faint, the grasp of bloody hands
I felt, and saw on high the glare of falling brands:

XIX.

When on my foes a sudden terror came,
And they fled, scattering—lo! with reinless speed

A black Tartarian horse¹ of giant frame
Comes trampling over the dead, the living bleed
Beneath the hoofs of that tremendous steed,
On which, like to an Angel, robed in white,
Sate one waving a sword;—the hosts recede
And fly, as thro' their ranks with awful might,
Sweeps in the shadow of eve that Phantom swift and bright;

XX.

And its path made a solitude.—I rose
And marked its coming: it relaxed its course
As it approached me, and the wind that flows
Thro' night, bore accents to mine ear whose force
Might create smiles in death—the Tartar horse
Paused, and I saw the shape its might which swayed,
And heard her musical pants, like the sweet source
Of waters in the desert, as she said,
“Mount with me Laon, now”—I rapidly obeyed.

XXI.

Then: “Away! away!” she cried, and stretched her sword
As 'twere a scourge over the courser's head,
And lightly shook the reins:—We spake no word
But like the vapour of the tempest fled
Over the plain; her dark hair was dispread
Like the pine's locks upon the lingering blast;
Over mine eyes its shadowy strings it spread
Fitfully, and the hills and streams fled fast,
As o'er their glimmering forms the steed's broad shadow past.

XXII.

And his hoofs ground the rocks to fire and dust,
His strong sides made the torrents rise in spray,

¹ The effect on the hirelings was what might be imagined of a horse of Tartarus; and in stanza X of Canto X (p. 261) it is described as “a hell-

And turbulence, as of¹ a whirlwind's gust
 Surrounded us;—and still away! away!
 Thro' the desert² night we sped, while she alway
 Gazed on a mountain which we neared, whose crest
 Crowned with a marble ruin, in the ray
 Of the obscure stars gleamed;—its rugged breast
 The steed strained up, and then his impulse did arrest.

XXIII.

A rocky hill which overhung the Ocean:—³
 From that lone ruin, when the steed that panted
 Paused, might be heard the murmur of the motion
 Of waters, as in spots forever haunted
 By the choicest winds of Heaven, which are enchanted
 To music, by the wand of Solitude,
 That wizard wild, and the far tents implanted
 Upon the plain, be seen by those who stood
 Thence marking the dark shore of Ocean's curvèd flood.

XXIV.

One moment these were heard and seen—another
 Past; and the two who stood beneath that night,
 Each only heard, or saw, or felt the other;
 As from the lofty steed she did alight,
 Cythna, (for, from the eyes whose deepest light

black horse"; but Shelley was not alone in using *Tartarian* for *of Tartary*, which the next stanza shews to be the meaning here.

¹ Mrs. Shelley reads *if for of*. I have no doubt that *of* is right, and that Mrs. Shelley was misled by the absence of a comma at *gust*. It is to be noticed that, in Shelley's editions, there is frequently but one comma where the sense is, logically, parenthetic, and demands two; and this practice is not, I am certain, always if ever attributable to the printer, as I have seen instances of it in Shelley's MSS. I

take it he was guided by the degree of rapidity of movement he desired to secure.

² It is right to note that here is an instance of *desart* with an *a* being used as an adjective,—though of course it may be the printer's doing. See note 2, p. 175.

³ The original punctuation is left because I take this line to be an independent proposition, elliptically expressed, rather than a clause amplificative of the last, as Mr. Rossetti has made it.

Of love and sadness made my lips feel pale
With influence strange of mournfullest delight,
My own sweet sister¹ looked), with joy did quail,
And felt her strength in tears of human weakness fail.

XXV.

And, for a space in my embrace she rested,
Her head on my unquiet heart reposing,
While my faint arms her languid frame invested:
At length she looked on me, and half unclosing
Her tremulous lips, said: "Friend, thy bands were losing
The battle, as I stood before the King
In bonds.—I burst them then, and swiftly choosing
The time, did seize a Tartar's sword, and spring
Upon his horse, and swift as on the whirlwind's wing,

XXVI.

"Have thou and I been borne beyond pursuer,
And we are here."—Then turning to the steed,
She pressed the white moon on his front with pure
And rose-like lips, and many a fragrant weed
From the green ruin plucked, that he might feed;—
But I to a stone seat that Maiden led,
And kissing her fair eyes, said, "Thou hast need
Of rest," and I heaped up the courser's bed
In a green mossy nook, with mountain flowers dispread.

XXVII.

Within that ruin, where a shattered portal
Looks to the eastern stars, abandoned now
By man, to be the home of things immortal,
Memories, like awful ghosts which come and go,
And must inherit all he builds below,

¹ *Cythna*, in *The Revolt of Islam*,—an obvious deterioration.

When he is gone, a hall stood; o'er whose roof
Fair clinging weeds with ivy pale did grow,
Clasping its grey rents with a verdurous woof,
A hanging dome of leaves, a canopy moon-proof.

XXVIII.

The autumnal winds, as if spell-bound, had made
A natural couch of leaves in that recess,
Which seasons none disturbed, but in the shade
Of flowering parasites, did Spring¹ love to dress
With their sweet blooms the wintry loneliness
Of those dead leaves, shedding their stars, whene'er
The wandering wind her nurslings might caress;
Whose intertwining fingers ever there,
Made music wild and soft that filled the listening air.

XXIX.

We know not where we go, or what sweet dream
May pilot us thro' caverns strange and fair
Of far and pathless passion, while the stream
Of life, our bark doth on its whirlpools bear,
Spreading swift wings as sails to the dim air;
Nor should we seek to know, so the devotion
Of love and gentle thoughts be heard still there
Louder and louder from the utmost Ocean
Of universal life, attuning its commotion.

XXX.

To the pure all things are pure! Oblivion wrapt
Our spirits, and the fearful overthrow
Of public hope was from our being snapt,
Tho' linkèd years had bound it there; for now
A power, a thirst, a knowledge, which below

¹ *Spring* has a small *s* in Shelley's edition, the printer's doing, I suspect.

All thoughts, like light beyond the atmosphere,
 Clothing its clouds with grace, doth ever flow,
 Came on us, as we sate in silence there,
 Beneath the golden stars of the clear azure air.¹

XXXI.

In silence which doth follow talk that causes
 The baffled heart to speak with sighs and tears,
 When wildering passion swalloweth up the pauses
 Of inexpressive speech:—the youthful years
 Which we together past, their hopes and fears,
 The common blood² which ran within our frames,
 That likeness of the features which endears
 The thoughts expressed by them, our very names,
 And all the wingèd hours which speechless memory claims,

XXXII.

Had found a voice:—and ere that voice did pass,
 The night grew damp and dim, and thro' a rent
 Of the ruin where we sate, from the morass,
 A wandering Meteor by some wild wind sent,
 Hung high in the green dome, to which it lent
 A faint and pallid lustre; while the song
 Of blasts, in which its blue hair quivering bent,
 Strewed strangest sounds the moving leaves among;
 A wondrous light, the sound as of a spirit's tongue.

XXXIII.

The Meteor shewed the leaves on which we sate,
 And Cythna's glowing arms, and the thick ties

¹ It seems to me better to leave this full stop as Shelley left it, than to tack the opening of the next stanza on to the sense of this as Mr. Rossetti does. I take the meaning to be that the "youthful years" &c. "had found a voice" in the "silence which doth

follow talk." If that be so the colon and dash at *speech* must be accepted as a metrical pause, being too long for grammatical purposes only.

² For *common blood* we read *blood itself* in *The Revolt of Islam*,—another change injurious to significance.

Of her soft hair¹ which bent with gathered weight
 My neck near hers, her dark and deepening eyes,
 Which, as twin phantoms of one star that lies
 O'er a dim well, move, though the star reposes,
 Swam in our mute and liquid ecstasies,²
 Her marble brow, and eager lips, like roses,
 With their own fragrance pale, which spring but half uncloses.

XXXIV.

The meteor to its far morass returned :
 The beating of our veins one interval
 Made still; and then I felt the blood that burned
 Within her frame, mingle with mine, and fall
 Around my heart like fire; and over all
 A mist was spread, the sickness of a deep
 And speechless swoon of joy, as might befall
 Two disunited spirits when they leap
 In union from this earth's obscure and fading sleep.

XXXV.

Was it one moment that confounded thus
 All thought, all sense, all feeling, into one
 Unutterable power, which shielded us
 Even from our own cold looks, when we had gone
 Into a wide and wild oblivion
 Of tumult and of tenderness? or now
 Had ages, such as make the moon and sun,
 The seasons, and mankind their changes know,
 Left fear and time unfelt by us alone below?

XXXVI.

I know not. What are kisses whose fire clasps
 The failing heart in languishment, or limb

¹ There is a comma at *hair* in *The Revolt of Islam*. Shelley's revised copy
 VOL. I.

furnishes no authority for this.

² Spelt *ecstasies* in Shelley's edition.

Twined within limb? or the quick dying gasps
Of the life meeting, when the faint eyes swim
Thro' tears of a wide mist boundless and dim,
In one caress? What is the strong controul
Which leads the heart that dizzy steep to climb,
Where far over the world those vapours roll
Which blend two restless frames in one reposing soul?

XXXVII.

It is the shadow which doth float unseen,
But not unfelt, o'er blind mortality,
Whose divine darkness fled not, from that green
And lone recess, where lapt in peace did lie
Our linkèd frames; till, from the changing sky,
That night and still another day had fled;
And then I saw and felt. The moon was high,
And clouds, as of a coming storm, were spread
Under its orb,—loud winds were gathering overhead.

XXXVIII.

Cythna's sweet lips seemed lurid in the moon,
Her fairest limbs with the night wind were chill,
And her dark tresses were all loosely strewn
O'er her pale bosom:—all within was still,
And the sweet peace of joy did almost fill
The depth of her unfathomable look;—
And we sate calmly, though that rocky hill,
The waves contending in its caverns strook,
For they foreknew the storm, and the grey ruin shook.

XXXIX.

There we unheeding sate, in the communion
Of interchangèd vows, which, with a rite
Of faith most sweet and sacred, stamped our union.—

Few were the living hearts which could unite
 Like ours, or celebrate a bridal night
 With such close sympathies, for to each other
 Had high and solemn hopes, the gentle might
 Of earliest love, and all the thoughts which smother
 Cold Evil's power, now linked a sister and a brother.¹

XL.

And such is Nature's modesty,² that those
 Who grow together cannot choose but love,
 If faith or custom do not interpose,
 Or common slavery mar what else might move
 All gentlest thoughts; as in the sacred grove
 Which shades the springs of Æthiopian Nile,
 That living tree, which, if the arrowy dove
 Strike with her shadow, shrinks in fear awhile,
 But its own kindred leaves clasps while the sun-beams smile;

XLI.

And clings to them, when darkness may dis sever
 The close caresses of all duller plants
 Which bloom on the wide earth—thus we forever
 Were linked, for love had nurst us in the haunts
 Where knowledge, from its secret source enchants
 Young hearts with the fresh music of its springing,
 Ere yet its gathered flood feeds human wants
 As the great Nile feeds Egypt;³ ever flinging
 Light on the woven boughs which o'er its waves are swinging.

¹ In *The Revolt of Islam* this passage is cancelled in favour of the following:

for they had sprung
 From linkèd youth, and from the gentle
 might
 Of earliest love, delayed and cherished
 long,
 Which common hopes and fears made, like a
 tempest, strong.

In Shelley's manuscript directions for this revision there is no comma at

long; but one is wanted, and he may have seen proofs of the cancel-leaves, and supplied this in correction. Instead of *gentle might*, Shelley had begun to write *earliest might*, the letters *earli* being erased.

² In *The Revolt of Islam*, *law divine* is substituted for *modesty*.

³ In *Laon and Cythna* there is a comma at *Egypt*; but, in revising the

XLII.

The tones of Cythna's voice like echoes were,
 Of those far murmuring streams; they rose and fell,
 Mixed with mine own in the tempestuous air,—
 And so we sate, until our talk befell¹
 Of the late ruin, swift and horrible,
 And how those seeds of hope might yet be sown,
 Whose fruit is Evil's² mortal poison: well,
 For us, this ruin made a watch-tower lone,
 But Cythna's eyes looked faint, and now two days were gone

XLIII.

Since she had food:—therefore I did awaken
 The Tartar steed, who, from his ebon mane,
 Soon as the clinging slumbers he had shaken,
 Bent his thin head to seek the brazen rein,
 Following me obediently; with pain
 Of heart, so deep and dread, that one caress,
 When lips and heart refuse to part again,
 Till they have told their fill, could scarce express
 The anguish of her mute and fearful tenderness,

XLIV.

Cythna beheld me part, as I bestrode
 That willing steed—the tempest and the night,
 Which gave my path its safety as I rode
 Down the ravine of rocks, did soon unite
 The darkness and the tumult of their might
 Borne on all winds.—Far thro' the streaming rain

page for the *Revolt of Islam* cancel-leaf, Shelley substituted a semi-colon. This is one of many proofs in my possession that Shelley's peculiar punctuation was not the result of carelessness, but of deliberate choice, and shews how dangerous is the system of change in punctuation adopted by Mr. Rossetti:

he in this case restored a comma deliberately removed by Shelley, who can have had no motive but an artistic one in removing it.

¹ In Shelley's edition, we have the orthography *befel*.

² In Shelley's edition, *evil*, with a small *e*.

Floating at intervals the garments white
Of Cythna gleamed, and her voice once again
Came to me on the gust, and soon I reached the plain.

XLV.

I dreaded not the tempest, nor did he
Who bore me, but his eyeballs wide and red
Turned on the lightning's cleft exultingly;
And when the earth beneath his tameless tread,
Shook with the sullen thunder, he would spread
His nostrils to the blast, and joyously
Mock the fierce peal with neighings;—thus we sped
O'er the lit plain, and soon I could descry
Where Death and Fire had gorged the spoil of victory.

XLVI.

There was a desolate village in a wood
Whose bloom-inwoven leaves now scattering fed
The hungry storm; it was a place of blood,
A heap of hearthless walls;—the flames were dead
Within those dwellings now,—the life had fled
From all those corpses now,—but the wide sky
Flooded with lightning was ribbed overhead
By the black rafters, and around did lie
Women, and babes, and men, slaughtered confusedly.

XLVII.

Beside the fountain in the market-place
Dismounting, I beheld those corpses stare
With horny eyes upon each other's face,
And on the earth and on the vacant air,
And upon me, close to the waters where
I stooped to slake my thirst;—I shrank to taste,
For the salt bitterness of blood was there;

But tied the steed beside, and sought in haste
If any yet survived amid that ghastly waste.

XLVIII.

No living thing was there beside one woman,
Whom I found wandering in the streets, and she
Was withered from a likeness of aught human
Into a fiend, by some strange misery :
Soon as she heard my steps she leaped on me,
And glued her burning lips to mine, and laughed
With a loud, long, and frantic laugh of glee,
And cried, "Now Mortal, thou hast deeply quaffed
The Plague's blue kisses—soon millions shall pledge the
draught!

XLIX.

"My name is Pestilence—this bosom dry,
Once fed two babes—a sister and a brother—
When I came home, one in the blood did lie
Of three death-wounds—the flames had ate the other!
Since then I have no longer been a mother,
But I am Pestilence;—hither and thither
I flit about, that I may slay and smother:—
All lips which I have kissed must surely wither,
But Death's—if thou art he, we'll go to work together!

L.

"What seek'st¹ thou here? the moonlight comes in flashes,—
The dew is rising dankly from the dell—
'Twill moisten her! and thou shalt see the gashes
In my sweet boy, now full of worms—but tell
First what thou seek'st."—"I seek for food."—" 'Tis well,
Thou shalt have food; Famine, my paramour,
Waits for us at the feast—cruel and fell

¹ Mrs. Shelley reads *seekest*.

Is Famine, but he drives not from his door
Those whom these lips have kissed, alone. No more, no more!"

LI.

As thus she spake, she grasped me with the strength
Of madness, and by many a ruined hearth
She led, and over many a corpse:—at length
We came to a lone hut, where on the earth
Which made its floor, she in her ghastly mirth
Gathering from all those homes now desolate,
Had piled three heaps of loaves, making a dearth
Among the dead—round which she set in state
A ring of cold, stiff babes; silent and stark they sate.

LII.

She leaped upon a pile, and lifted high
Her mad looks to the lightning, and cried: "Eat!
Share the great feast—to-morrow we must die!"
And then she spurned the loaves with her pale feet,
Towards her bloodless guests;—that sight to meet,
Mine eyes and my heart ached, and but that she
Who loved me, did with absent looks defeat
Despair, I might have raved in sympathy;
But now I took the food that woman offered me;

LIII.

And vainly having with her madness striven
If I might win her to return with me,
Departed. In the eastern beams of Heaven
The lightning now grew pallid—rapidly,
As by the shore of the tempestuous sea
The dark steed bore me, and the mountain grey
Soon echoed to his hoofs, and I could see
Cythna among the rocks, where she alway
Had sate, with anxious eyes fixed on the lingering day.

LIV.

And joy was ours to meet: she was most pale,
Famished, and wet and weary, so I cast
My arms around her, lest her steps should fail
As to our home we went, and thus embraced,
Her full heart seemed a deeper joy to taste
Than e'er the prosperous know; the steed behind
Trode peacefully along the mountain waste,
We reached our home ere morning could unbind
Night's latest veil, and on our bridal couch reclined.¹

LV.

Her chilled heart having cherished in my bosom,
And sweetest kisses past, we two did share
Our peaceful meal:—as an autumnal blossom
Which spreads its shrunk leaves in the sunny air,
After cold showers, like rainbows woven there,
Thus in her lips and cheeks the vital spirit
Mantled, and in her eyes, an atmosphere
Of health, and hope; and sorrow languished near it,
And fear, and all that dark despondence doth inherit.

¹ *Reclined* is contracted into *reclin'd* in Shelley's edition,—I presume by the printer, as such contractions are quite exceptional in that edition.

Canto Seventh.

I.

So we sate joyous as the morning ray
Which fed upon the wrecks of night and storm
Now lingering on the winds; light airs did play
Among the dewy weeds, the sun was warm,
And we sate linked in the inwoven charm
Of converse and caresses sweet and deep,
Speechless caresses, talk that might disarm
Time, tho' he wield the darts of death and sleep,
And those thrice mortal barbs in his own poison steep.

II.

I told her of my sufferings and my madness,
And how, awakened from that dreamy mood
By Liberty's uprise, the strength of gladness
Came to my spirit in my solitude;
And all that now I was, while tears pursued
Each other down her fair and listening cheek
Fast as the thoughts which fed them, like a flood
From sunbright dales; and when I ceased to speak,
Her accents soft and sweet the pausing air did wake.

III.

She told me a strange tale of strange endurance,
Like broken memories of many a heart
Woven into one; to which no firm assurance,
So wild were they, could her own faith impart.
She said that not a tear did dare to start
From the swoln brain, and that her thoughts were firm
When from all mortal hope she did depart,
Borne by those slaves across the Ocean's term,
And that she reached the port without one fear infirm.

IV.

One was she among many there, the thralls
Of the cold Tyrant's¹ cruel lust: and they
Laughed mournfully in those polluted halls;
But she was calm and sad, musing alway
On loftiest enterprise, till on a day
The Tyrant heard her singing to her lute
A wild, and sad, and spirit-thrilling lay,
Like winds that die in wastes—one moment mute
The evil thoughts it made, which did his breast pollute.

V.

Even when he saw her wondrous² loveliness,
One moment to great Nature's sacred power
He bent, and was no longer passionless;
But when he bade her to his secret bower
Be borne, a loveless victim, and she tore
Her locks in agony, and her words of flame
And mightier looks availed not; then he bore
Again his load of slavery, and became
A king, a heartless beast, a pageant and a name.

¹ In this case *tyrant* is spelt with a small *t* in the original edition, though with a capital in line 6 of the same

stanza. This cannot, of course, be intentional.

² *Wonderous* in Shelley's edition.

VI.

She told me what a loathsome agony
 Is that when selfishness mocks love's delight,
 Foul as in dream's¹ most fearful imagery
 To dally with the mowing dead—that night
 All torture, fear, or horror made seem light
 Which the soul dreams or knows, and when the day
 Shone on her awful frenzy, from the sight
 Where like a Spirit in fleshly chains she lay
 Struggling, aghast and pale the Tyrant fled away.

VII.

Her madness was a beam of light, a power
 Which dawned thro' the rent soul; and words it gave
 Gestures and looks, such as in whirlwinds bore
 Which might not be withstood, whence none could save
 All who approached their sphere, like some calm wave
 Vexed into whirlpools by the chasms beneath;²
 And sympathy made each attendant slave
 Fearless and free, and they began to breathe
 Deep curses, like the voice of flames far underneath.

¹ *Dreams*, without the apostrophe, in Shelley's edition.

² The sense of this much-canvassed passage seems to me to be perfectly clear, namely, "it (her madness) gave to looks and gestures such words as bore (upon all opposing forces) in whirlwinds which might not be withstood, and from the effect of which none could save or guard all those (fellow slaves) who approached the sphere of their operation, which sphere (the harem) was like some calm wave vexed into whirlpools." The expression *bore in whirlwinds*, which Mr. Rossetti pronounces nonsense, I take to be parallel to such phrases as *came in torrents*; and nothing would be

said against a poet's talking of even *gusts of eloquent speech*: why not *whirlwinds* then? *Looks such as in whirlwinds lour*, Mr. Rossetti's proposed "emendation," *would*, it seems to me, make nonsense of the passage. Mr. Swinburne's explanation, as interpreted by Mr. Rossetti, seems to need the insertion of a comma after *and words it gave*; but I feel sure the sense is not that her madness "gave words, gestures, and looks" &c., but that it gave eloquence to her gestures and looks, as explained above. Mr. Swinburne's own remarks (*Essays and Studies*, page 193) are confined to giving *bore* the sense of "bore onward or forward."

VIII.

The King felt pale upon his noonday throne:
 At night two slaves he to her chamber sent,
 One was a green and wrinkled eunuch, grown
 From human shape into an instrument
 Of all things ill—distorted, bowed and bent.
 The other was a wretch from infancy
 Made dumb by poison; who nought knew or meant
 But to obey: from the fire-isles came he,
 A diver lean and strong, of Oman's coral sea.

IX.

They bore her to a bark, and the swift stroke
 Of silent rowers clove the blue moonlight seas,
 Until upon their path the morning broke;
 They anchored then, where, be there calm or breeze,
 The gloomiest of the drear Symplegades
 Shakes with the sleepless surge;—the Æthiop there
 Wound his long arms around her, and with knees
 Like iron clasped her feet, and plunged with her
 Among the closing waves out of the boundless air.

X.

“Swift as an eagle stooping from the plain¹
 Of morning light, into some shadowy wood,
 He plunged thro' the green silence of the main,
 Thro' many a cavern which the eternal flood
 Had scooped, as dark lairs for its monster brood;
 And among mighty shapes which fled in wonder,
 And among mightier shadows which pursued
 His heels, he wound: until the dark rocks under
 He touched a golden chain—a sound arose like thunder.

¹ From this point, at which Laon begins to give the narrative in Cythna's words, her speech is almost unbroken for nearly three Cantos. After the *she said* of stanza XII in this Canto,

Laon only appears as a narrator once (namely in stanzas XVIII and XIX) until after the close of the speech. It extends to the last stanza but one of Canto IX.

XI.

"A stunning clang of massive bolts redoubling
 Beneath the deep—a burst of waters driven
 As from the roots of the sea, raging and bubbling:
 And in that roof of crags a space was riven
 Thro' which there shone the emerald beams of heaven,
 Shot thro' the lines of many waves invoven,
 Like sunlight thro' acacia woods at even,
 Thro' which, his way the diver having cloven,
 Past like a spark sent up out of a burning oven.

XII.

"And then," she said, "he laid me in a cave
 Above the waters, by that chasm of sea,
 A fountain round and vast, in which the wave
 Imprisoned, boiled and leaped perpetually,
 Down which, one moment resting, he did flee,
 Winning the adverse depth; that spacious cell
 Like an hupaithric¹ temple wide and high,
 Whose aëry dome is inaccessible,
 Was pierced with one round cleft thro' which the sun-beams
 fell.

XIII.

"Below, the fountain's brink was richly paven
 With the deep's wealth, coral, and pearl, and sand
 Like spangling gold, and purple shells engraven -
 With mystic legends by no mortal hand,
 Left there, when thronging to the moon's command,
 The gathering waves rent the Hesperian gate
 Of mountains, and on such bright floor did stand
 Columns, and shapes like statues, and the state
 Of kingless thrones, which Earth did in her heart create.

¹ How Shelley wrote this word I know not; but it is printed *upaithric* in his edition, and in those of Mrs. Shelley.

XIV.

“The fiend of madness, which had made its prey
Of my poor heart, was lulled to sleep awhile:
There was an interval of many a day,
And a sea-eagle brought me food the while,
Whose nest was built in that untrodden isle,
And who, to be the jailor had been taught,
Of that strange dungeon; as a friend whose smile
Like light and rest at morn and even is sought,
That wild bird was to me, till madness misery brought.

XV.

“The misery of a madness slow and creeping,
Which made the earth seem fire, the sea seem air,
And the white clouds of noon which oft were sleeping,
In the blue heaven so beautiful and fair,
Like hosts of ghastly shadows hovering there;
And the sea-eagle looked a fiend, who bore
Thy mangled limbs for food!—thus all things were
Transformed into the agony which I wore
Even as a poisoned robe around my bosom’s core.

XVI.

“Again I knew the day and night fast fleeing,
The eagle, and the fountain, and the air;
Another frenzy came—there seemed a being
Within me—a strange load my heart did bear,
As if some living thing had made its lair
Even in the fountains of my life:—a long
And wondrous vision wrought from my despair,
Then grew, like sweet reality among
Dim visionary woes, an unreposing throng.

XVII.

“Methought I was about to be a mother—
 Month after month went by, and still I dreamed
 That we should soon be all to one another,
 I and my child; and still new pulses seemed
 To beat beside my heart, and still I deemed
 There was a babe within—and when the rain
 Of winter thro’ the rifted cavern streamed,
 Methought, after a lapse of lingering pain,
 I saw that lovely shape, which near my heart had lain.

XVIII.¹

“It was a babe, beautiful from its birth,—
 It was like thee, dear love, its eyes were thine,
 Its brow, its lips, and so upon the earth
 It laid its fingers, as now rest on mine
 Thine own belovèd:—’twas a dream divine;
 Even to remember how it fled, how swift,
 How utterly, might make the heart repine,—
 Tho’ ’twas a dream.”—Then Cythna did uplift
 Her looks on mine, as if some doubt she sought to shift:

XIX.

A doubt which would not flee, a tenderness
 Of questioning grief, a source of thronging tears;
 Which, having past, as one whom sobs oppress,²
 She spoke: “Yes, in the wilderness of years
 Her memory, aye, like a green home appears,
 She sucked her fill even at this breast, sweet love,
 For many months. I had no mortal fears;
 Methought I felt her lips and breath approve,—
 It was a human thing which to my bosom clove.

¹ This beautiful stanza seems to have narrowly escaped “revision,” having been marked in pencil in Shelley’s copy, as other stanzas found

objectionable were marked out for revision.

² In Shelley’s edition we read *opprest*.

XX.

"I watched the dawn of her first smiles, and soon
 When zenith-stars were trembling on the wave,
 Or when the beams of the invisible moon,
 Or sun, from many a prism within the cave
 Their gem-born shadows to the water gave,
 Her looks would hunt them, and with outspread hand,
 From the swift lights which might that fountain pave,
 She would mark one, and laugh, when that command
 Slighting, it lingered there, and could not understand.

XXI.

"Methought her looks began to talk with me;
 And no articulate sounds, but something sweet
 Her lips would frame,—so sweet, it could not be¹
 That it was meaningless; her touch would meet
 Mine, and our pulses calmly flow and beat
 In response while we slept; and on a day
 When I was happiest in that strange retreat,
 With heaps of golden shells we two did play,—
 Both infants, weaving wings for time's perpetual way.

XXII.

"Ere night, methought, her waning eyes were grown
 Weary with joy, and tired with our delight,
 We, on the earth, like sister twins lay down
 On one fair mother's bosom:—from that night
 She fled;—like those illusions clear and bright,
 Which dwell in lakes, when the red moon on high
 Pause² ere it wakens tempest;—and her flight,
 Tho' 'twas the death of brainless phantasy,
 Yet smote my lonesome heart more than all misery.

¹ The comma is at *be* instead of at *sweet* in Shelley's edition.

² *When the moon . . . pause*,—an example of the sacrifice Shelley fre-

quently makes of grammar to euphony. It is possible he may have had some vague notion of using *when* as a kind of equivalent for *if*, with

XXIII.

"It seemed that in the dreary night, the diver
 Who brought me thither, came again, and bore
 My child away. I saw the waters quiver,
 When he so swiftly sunk, as once before:
 Then morning came—it shone even as of yore,
 But I was changed—the very life was gone
 Out of my heart—I wasted more and more,
 Day after day, and sitting there alone,
 Vexed the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan.

XXIV.

"I was no longer mad, and yet methought
 My breasts were swoln and changed:—in every vein
 The blood stood still one moment, while that thought
 Was passing—with a gush of sickening pain
 It ebbed even to its withered springs again:
 When my wan eyes in stern resolve I turned
 From that most strange delusion, which would fain
 Have waked the dream for which my spirit yearned
 With more than human love,—then left it unreturned.

XXV.

"So now my reason was restored to me,
 I struggled with that dream, which, like a beast
 Most fierce and beauteous, in my memory
 Had made its lair, and on my heart did feast;
 But all that cave and all its shapes possess
 By thoughts which could not fade, renewed each one
 Some smile, some look, some gesture which had blest
 Me heretofore: I, sitting there alone,
 Vexed the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan.¹

the subjunctive mood. The effect, at all events, is magical enough amply to justify the means.

¹ This repetition of the alexandrine of stanza XXIII is remarkable, but not, I think, to be classed among the

XXVI.

"Time past, I know not whether months or years;
 For day, nor night, nor change of seasons made
 Its note, but thoughts and unavailing tears:
 And I became at last even as a shade,
 A smoke, a cloud on which the winds have preyed,
 Till¹ it be thin as air; until, one even,
 A Nautilus upon the fountain played,
 Spreading his azure sail where breath of Heaven
 Descended not, among the waves and whirlpools driven.

XXVII.

"And when the Eagle came, that lovely thing,
 Oaring with rosy feet its silver boat,
 Fled near me as for shelter; on slow wing,
 The Eagle, hovering o'er his prey did float;
 But when he saw that I with fear did note
 His purpose, proffering my own food to him,
 The eager plumes subsided on his throat—
 He came where that bright child of sea did swim,
 And o'er it cast in peace his shadow broad and dim.

XXVIII.

"This wakened me, it gave me human strength,²
 And hope, I know not whence or wherefore, rose,
 But I resumed my ancient powers at length;
 My spirit felt again like one of those
 Like thine, whose fate it is to make the woes
 Of humankind their prey—what was this cave?
 Its deep foundation no firm purpose knows
 Immutable, resistless, strong to save,
 Like mind while yet it mocks the all-devouring grave.

metric irregularities. To me it seems highly artistic; and it is probable that Shelley did it deliberately.

¹ 'Till in the original edition.

² There is no comma here in Shelley's edition.

XXIX.

“And where was Laon? might my heart be dead,
While that far dearer heart could move and be?
Or whilst over the earth the pall was spread,
Which I had sworn to rend? I might be free,
Could I but win that friendly bird to me,
To bring me ropes; and long in vain I sought
By intercourse of mutual imagery
Of objects, if such aid he could be taught;
But fruit, and flowers, and boughs, yet never ropes he brought.

XXX.

“We live in our own world, and mine was made
From glorious phantasies of hope departed:
Aye, we are darkened with their floating shade,
Or cast a lustre on them—time imparted
Such power to me, I became fearless-hearted,
My eye and voice grew firm, calm was my mind,
And piercing, like the morn, now it has darted
Its lustre on all hidden things, behind
Yon dim and fading clouds which load the weary wind.

XXXI.

“My mind became the book through which I grew
Wise in all human wisdom, and its cave,
Which like a mine I rifled through and through,
To me the keeping of its secrets gave—
One mind, the type of all, the moveless wave
Whose calm reflects all moving things that are,
Necessity, and love, and life, the grave,
And sympathy, fountains of hope and fear;
Justice, and truth, and time, and the world’s natural sphere.

XXXII.

“And on the sand would I make signs to range
 These woofs, as they were woven, of my thought;
 Clear, elemental shapes, whose smallest change
 A subtler language within language wrought:
 The key of truths which once were dimly taught
 In old Crotona;—and sweet melodies
 Of love, in that lorn¹ solitude I caught
 From mine own voice in dream, when thy dear eyes
 Shone thro’ my sleep, and did that utterance harmonize.

XXXIII.

“Thy songs were winds whereon I fled at will,
 As in a wingèd chariot, o’er the plain
 Of crystal youth; and thou wert there to fill
 My heart with joy, and there we sate again
 On the grey margin of the glimmering main,
 Happy as then but wiser far, for we
 Smiled on the flowery grave in which were lain
 Fear, Faith, and Slavery; and mankind was free,
 Equal, and pure and wise, in wisdom’s prophecy.

XXXIV.

“For to my will my fancies were as slaves
 To do their sweet and subtile ministries;
 And oft from that bright fountain’s shadowy waves
 They would make human throngs gather and rise
 To combat with my overflowing eyes,
 And voice made deep with passion—thus I grew

¹ In the original edition and all others with which I am acquainted this word is *lone*; and Shelley has till now had to bear the blame of the tautology *lone solitude*. In my revised copy *lone* is changed to *lorn* in his own writing; but it would seem that, as there was

no offence to public morals involved, and no other change to be made on the same leaf, it was not thought worth while to print a cancel-leaf, or to take any other notice of this most important correction.

Familiar with the shock and the surprise
 And war of earthly minds, from which I drew
 The power which has been mine to frame their thoughts anew.

XXXV.

"And thus my prison was the populous earth—
 Where I saw—even as misery dreams of morn
 Before the east has given its glory birth—
 Religion's pomp made desolate by the scorn
 Of Wisdom's faintest smile, and thrones upturn,
 And dwellings of mild people interspersed
 With undivided fields of ripening corn,
 And love made free,—a hope which we have nurst
 Even with our blood and tears,—until its glory burst.

XXXVI.

"All is not lost! there is some recompense
 For hope whose fountain can be thus profound,
 Even throned Evil's splendid impotence,
 Girt by its hell of power, the secret sound
 Of hymns to truth and freedom—the dread bound
 Of life and death past fearlessly and well,
 Dungeons wherein the high resolve is found,
 Racks which degraded woman's greatness tell,
 And what may else be good and irresistible.

XXXVII.

"Such are the thoughts which, like the fires that flare
 In storm-encompassed isles, we cherish yet
 In this dark ruin—such were mine even there;
 As in its sleep some odorous violet,
 While yet its leaves with nightly dews are wet,
 Breathes in prophetic dreams of day's uprise,
 Or, as ere Scythian frost in fear has met

Spring's messengers descending from the skies,
The buds foreknow their life—this hope must ever rise.

XXXVIII.

“So years had past, when sudden earthquake rent
The depth of ocean and the cavern crackt
With sound, as if the world's wide continent
Had fallen in universal ruin wrackt;
And thro' the cleft streamed in one cataract,
The stifling waters:—when I woke, the flood
Whose banded waves that crystal cave had sacked
Was ebbing round me, and my bright abode
Before me yawned—a chasm desert,¹ and bare, and broad.

XXXIX.

“Above me was the sky, beneath the sea:
I stood upon a point of shattered stone,
And heard loose rocks rushing tumultuously
With splash and shock into the deep—anon
All ceased, and there was silence wide and lone.
I felt that I was free! the Ocean-spray
Quivered beneath my feet, the broad Heaven shone
Around, and in my hair the winds did play
Lingering as they pursued their unimpeded way.

XL.

“My spirit moved upon the sea like wind
Which round some thymy cape will lag and hover,
Tho' it can wake the still cloud, and unbind
The strength of tempest: day was almost over,
When thro' the fading light I could discover
A ship approaching—its white sails were fed

¹ This is another instance of *desert* (adjective) being spelt with an *e* instead of an *a*. See note on this word at p. 175.

With the north wind—its moving shade did cover
The twilight deep;—the mariners in dread
Cast anchor when they saw new rocks around them spread.

XLI.

“And when they saw one sitting on a crag,
They sent a boat to me;—the sailors rowed
In awe thro’ many a new and fearful jag
Of overhanging rock, thro’ which there flowed
The foam of streams that cannot make abode.
They came and questioned me, but when they heard
My voice, they became silent, and they stood
And moved as men in whom new love had stirred
Deep thoughts: so to the ship we past without a word.

Canto Eighth.



I.

"I SATE beside the steersman then, and gazing
Upon the west, cried, 'Spread the sails! behold!
The sinking moon is like a watch-tower blazing
Over the mountains yet;—the City of Gold
Yon Cape alone does from the sight withhold;
The stream is fleet—the north breathes steadily
Beneath the stars, they tremble with the cold!
Ye cannot rest upon the dreary sea!—
Haste, haste to the warm home of happier destiny!"

II.

"The Mariners obeyed—the Captain stood
Aloof, and whispering to the Pilot, said,
'Alas, alas! I fear we are pursued
By wicked ghosts: a Phantom of the Dead,
The night before we sailed, came to my bed
In dream, like that!'—The Pilot then replied,
'It cannot be—she is a human Maid—
Her low voice makes you weep—she is some bride,
Or daughter of high birth—she can be nought beside.'

III.

“We past the islets, borne by wind and stream,
 And as we sailed, the Mariners came near
 And thronged around to listen;—in the gleam
 Of the pale moon I stood, as one whom fear
 May not attain, and my calm voice did rear;
 ‘Ye all are human—yon broad moon gives light¹
 To millions who the self-same likeness wear,
 Even while I speak—beneath this very night,
 Their thoughts flow on like ours, in sadness or delight.

IV.

“‘What dream ye? Your own hands have built an home,²
 Even for yourselves on a belovèd shore:
 For some, fond eyes are pining till they come,
 How they will greet him when his toils are o’er,
 And laughing babes rush from the well-known door!
 Is this your care? ye toil for your own good—
 Ye feel and think—has some immortal power
 Such purposes? or in a human mood,
 Dream ye that God³ thus builds for man in solitude?

V.

“‘What then is God?⁴ ye mock yourselves, and give
 A human heart to what ye cannot know:
 As if the cause of life could think and live!⁵
 ‘Twere as if man’s own works should feel, and shew
 The hopes, and fears, and thoughts from which they flow,

¹ At this point, where Cythna begins to repeat her speech to the seamen, Shelley’s edition omits to give the double marks of quotation; and I have followed Mrs. Shelley, who supplied them where needed throughout the speech. It should be stated that, in Shelley’s revised copy, two turned commas (instead of one) are marked in pencil,—whether by Shelley I cannot say; but there was no cancel of this leaf printed, so that no change

was made.

² In Mrs. Shelley’s editions, *a home*.

^{3 4} For *that God* we read *some Power* in *The Revolt of Islam*, and, in the next line, *What is that Power* for *What then is God*.

⁵ This is another line marked out for condemnation: in my copy there is a pencil cross against it; but this is struck out in ink,—apparently the same ink as the revisions are made in.

And he be like to them. Lo! Plague is free
 To waste, Blight, Poison, Earthquake, Hail, and Snow,
 Disease, and Want, and worse Necessity
 Of hate and ill, and Pride, and Fear, and Tyranny.

VI.¹

“What then is God? Some moon-struck sophist stood
 Watching the shade from his own soul upthrown
 Fill Heaven and darken Earth, and in such mood
 The Form he saw and worshipped was his own,
 His likeness in the world’s vast mirror shewn;
 And ’twere an innocent dream, but that a faith
 Nursed by fear’s dew of poison, grows thereon,
 And that men say, God has appointed Death
 On all who scorn his will to wreak immortal wrath.

VII.

“Men say they have seen God, and heard from God,
 Or known from others who have known such things,
 And that his will is all our law, a rod
 To scourge us into slaves²—that Priests and Kings,
 Custom, domestic sway, aye, all that brings
 Man’s free-born soul beneath the oppressor’s heel,
 Are his strong ministers, and that the stings
 Of death will make the wise his vengeance feel,
 Tho’ truth and virtue arm their hearts with tenfold steel.

VIII.³

“And it is said, that God will punish wrong;
 Yes, add despair to crime, and pain to pain!

¹ In *The Revolt of Islam*, in this stanza, we read *What is that Power* for *What then is God*, in line 1, *that Power has chosen for God has appointed* in line 8, and *it’s laws for his will* in line 9.

² The *Revolt of Islam* version is
 Men say that they themselves have heard
 and seen,

Or known from others who have known such things,
 A Shade, a Form, which Earth and Heaven
 between
 Wields an invisible rod.

In the MS. revision the third line originally stood

A Shade, a Form, that, earth and Heaven
 between . . .

³ In *The Revolt of Islam* we again

And his red hell's undying snakes among
 Will bind the wretch on whom he fixed a stain,
 Which, like a plague, a burthen, and a bane,
 Clung to him while he lived;—for¹ love and hate,
 Virtue and vice, they say,² are difference vain—
 The will of strength is right—this human state
 Tyrants,³ that they may rule, with lies thus desolate.

IX.

“Alas, what strength? opinion is more frail
 Than yon dim cloud now fading on the moon
 Even while we gaze, tho' it awhile avail
 To hide the orb of truth—and every throne
 Of Earth or Heaven, tho' shadow,⁴ rests thereon,
 One shape of many names:—for this ye plough
 The barren waves of ocean, hence each one
 Is slave or tyrant;⁵ all betray and bow,
 Command, or kill, or fear, or wreak, or suffer woe.

X.

“Its names are each a sign which maketh holy
 All power—aye, the ghost, the dream, the shade
 Of power,—lust, falsehood, hate, and pride, and folly;
 The pattern whence all fraud and wrong is made,
 A law to which mankind has been betrayed;
 And human love, is as the name well known

find *this Power* put for *that God*; and line 3 of this stanza is given thus: And deepest hell, and deathless snakes among, . . .

Further, in line 4, we read *is* for *he*,—a change in favour of God with no MS. authority,—perhaps another of Mr. M'Millan's improvements!

¹ There is a comma at *for* in *Laon and Cythna*, and none in *The Revolt*. I think this change is likely to be Shelley's.

² Comma omitted in *The Revolt*.

³ This comma does not occur in *Laon and Cythna*, but in *The Revolt*. It clears the sense.

⁴ This punctuation is in *Laon and Cythna*: in *The Revolt of Islam* there is no comma at *shadow*; and the omission, which alters the whole sense, is not indicated by Shelley in my revised copy. The sense that all earthly and heavenly thrones, though shadow, rest on opinion, and are but one shape with many names, seems to me much more like Shelley than the sense that these thrones are one shape of many names, though shadow rests on them: both senses are possible.

⁵ In *Laon and Cythna* there is a comma here: the semicolon is substituted by Shelley in my copy.

Of a dear mother, whom the murderer laid
 In bloody grave, and into darkness thrown,
 Gathered her wildered babes around him as his own.

XI.

“O Love! who to the hearts of wandering men¹
 Art as the calm to Ocean’s weary waves!
 Justice, or truth, or joy! those only can
 From slavery and religion’s labyrinth caves
 Guide us, as one clear star the seaman saves,²
 To give to all an equal share of good,
 To track the steps of Freedom³ tho’ thro’ graves
 She pass, to suffer all in patient mood,
 To weep for crime⁴ tho’ stained with thy friend’s dearest blood.

XII.

“To feel the peace of self-contentment’s lot,
 To own all sympathies, and outrage none,
 And in the inmost bowers of sense and thought,
 Until life’s sunny day is quite gone down,
 To sit and smile with Joy, or, not alone,
 To kiss salt tears from the worn cheek of Woe;
 To live, as if to love and live were one,—

¹ Mr. Rossetti substituted, without giving any authority, *the heart of wandering man*; but *men* and *can* make a rhyme by no means to be peremptorily rejected according to Shelley’s own standard of sufficiency; and the sense is surely better as it is.

² There is a full stop here in Shelley’s and Mrs. Shelley’s editions, and a full stop also at the end of the stanza. This punctuation leaves a complex nominative, consisting of the last four lines of the stanza, without any verb; and, though Shelley was capable of such a violation of rule, I do not think he is responsible for this. The sense comes right by substituting a comma for a full stop either at *saves* or at *blood*. “To give to all an equal share

of good,” and so on, may be either the state to which “justice, or truth, or joy” can alone guide us, or it may be a part of the description of that state which “is not faith or law.” There is not much to choose in point of significance: Mr. Rossetti puts a semicolon at *blood*; but I have felt safer in putting a comma at *saves*, for the twofold reason that we thus avoid carrying the sense on to the next stanza, a thing I think Shelley avoided when he could, and that the rhythmic pause seems more Shelley-like.

³ *Freedom* has a small *f* here in Shelley’s edition.

⁴ There is a comma at *crime* in *The Revolt*: it is not marked in my copy; and I doubt its being Shelley’s.

This is not faith or law, nor those who bow
To thrones on Heaven or Earth, such destiny may know.

XIII.

“But children near their parents tremble now,
Because they must obey—one rules another,
For it is said God¹ rules both high and low,
And man is made the captive of his brother,
And Hate is throned on high with Fear his² mother,
Above the Highest—and those fountain-cells,
Whence love yet flowed when faith had choked all other,
Are darkened—Woman, as the bond-slave, dwells
Of man,³ a slave; and life is poisoned in its wells.

XIV.

“Man seeks for gold in mines, that he may weave
A lasting chain for his own slavery;—
In fear and restless care that he may live
He toils for others, who must ever be
The joyless thralls of like captivity;
He murders, for his chiefs delight in ruin;
He builds the altar, that its idol's fee
May be his very blood; he is pursuing
O, blind and willing wretch! his own obscure undoing.

XV.

“Woman!—she is his slave, she has become
A thing I weep to speak—the child of scorn,

¹ In *The Revolt of Islam* we read
And as one Power rules both high and low,
So man is made, &c.

In my copy Shelley had also written
governs for rules; but he afterwards
restored *rules*. This is interesting as
shewing that he recognized *power* as
either a monosyllable or a dissyllable.

² In *The Revolt of Islam* we read *her*
for *his*. Mrs. Shelley adopts this change
of sex; but there is no authority for
it in Shelley's revised copy; and in
Canto X, stanza XLII, Hate is mas-

culine (in all editions known to me),
being the mate of Fear, who is there
feminine.

³ The comma at *man* is not in *Laon*
and *Cythna*, nor is there MS. authori-
ty for it in my copy; but I suspect
Shelley put it in in a proof of the cancel.
Without it we have to understand
“Woman, as the bond slave, dwells a
slave of man,”—a shocking tautology:
with it, we read “Woman dwells as
the bond slave of man [who is himself]
a slave.”

The outcast of a desolated home,
Falsehood, and fear, and toil, like waves have worn
Channels upon her cheek, which smiles adorn,
As calm decks the false Ocean:—well ye know
What Woman is, for none of Woman born,
Can choose but drain the bitter dregs of woe,
Which ever from the oppressed to the oppressors flow.

XVI.

“‘This need not be; ye might arise, and will
That gold should lose its power, and thrones their glory;
That love, which none may bind, be free to fill
The world, like light; and evil faith, grown hoary
With crime, be quenched and die.—Yon promontory
Even now eclipses the descending moon!—
Dungeons and palaces are transitory—
High temples fade like vapour—Man alone
Remains, whose will has power when all beside is gone.

XVII.

“‘Let all be free and equal!—from your hearts
I feel an echo; thro’ my inmost frame
Like sweetest sound, seeking its mate, it darts—
Whence come ye, friends? alas, I cannot name
All that I read of sorrow, toil, and shame,
On your worn faces; as in legends old
Which make immortal the disastrous fame
Of conquerors and impostors false and bold,
The discord of your hearts, I in your looks behold.

XVIII.

“‘Whence come ye, friends? from pouring human blood
Forth on the earth? or bring ye steel and gold,
That Kings may dupe and slay the multitude?

Or from the famished poor, pale, weak, and cold,
 Bear ye the earnings of their toil? unfold!
 Speak! are your hands in slaughter's sanguine hue
 Stained freshly? have your hearts in guile grown old?
 Know yourselves thus! ye shall be pure as dew,
 And I will be a friend and sister unto you.

XIX.

“Disguise it not—we have one human heart—
 All mortal thoughts confess a common home:
 Blush not for what may to thyself impart
 Stains of inevitable crime: the doom
 Is this, which has, or may, or must become
 Thine, and all humankind's. Ye are the spoil
 Which Time thus marks for the devouring tomb,
 Thou and thy thoughts and they, and all the toil
 Wherewith ye twine the rings of life's perpetual coil.

XX.

“Disguise it not—ye blush for what ye hate,
 And Enmity is sister unto Shame;
 Look on your mind—it is the book of fate—
 Ah! it is dark with many a blazoned name
 Of misery—all are mirrors of the same;
 But the dark fiend who with his iron pen
 Dipped in scorn's fiery poison, makes his fame
 Enduring there, would o'er the heads of men
 Pass harmless, if they scorned to make their hearts his den.

XXI.

“Yes, it is Hate, that shapeless fiendly thing
 Of many names, all evil, some divine,
 Whom self-contempt arms with a mortal sting;
 Which, when the heart it's snaky folds intwine
 Is wasted quite, and when it doth repine

To gorge such bitter prey, on all beside
 It turns with ninefold rage, as with its twine
 When Amphisbæna some fair bird has tied,
 Soon o'er the putrid mass he threats on every side.

XXII.

“‘Reproach not thine own soul, but know thyself,
 Nor hate another’s crime, nor loathe thine own.
 It is the dark idolatry of self,
 Which, when our thoughts and actions once are gone,
 Demands that man should weep, and bleed, and groan;
 O vacant expiation! be at rest.—
 The past is Death’s, the future is thine own;
 And love and joy can make the foulest breast
 A paradise of flowers, where peace might build her nest.¹

XXIII.

“‘Speak thou! whence come ye?’—A Youth made reply,
 ‘Wearily, wearily o’er the boundless deep
 We sail;—thou readest well the misery
 Told in these faded eyes, but much doth sleep
 Within, which there the poor heart loves to keep,
 Or dare not write on the dishonoured brow;
 Even from our childhood have we learned to steep
 The bread of slavery in the tears of woe,
 And never dreamed of hope or refuge until now.

XXIV.

“‘Yes—I must speak—my secret should² have perished
 Even with the heart it wasted, as a brand
 Fades in the dying flame whose life it cherished,
 But that no human bosom can withstand

¹ The turned commas are unmeaningly closed at this point in the original edition.

² In Mrs. Shelley’s editions, we read *would* for *should*.

Thee, wondrous Lady, and the mild command
 Of thy keen eyes:—yes, we are wretched slaves,
 Who from their wonted loves and native land
 Are reft, and bear o'er the dividing waves
 The unregarded prey of calm and happy graves.

XXV.

“‘We drag afar from pastoral vales the fairest¹
 Among the daughters of those mountains lone,
 We drag them there, where all things best and rarest
 Are stained and trampled:—years have come and gone
 Since, like the ship which bears me, I have known
 No thought;—but now the eyes of one dear Maid
 On mine with light of mutual love have shone—
 She is my life,—I am but as the shade
 Of her,—a smoke sent up from ashes, soon to fade.

XXVI.

“‘For she must perish in the Tyrant’s² hall—
 Alas, alas!’—He ceased, and by the sail
 Sate cowering—but his sobs were heard by all,
 And still before the ocean and the gale
 The ship fled fast till³ the stars ’gan to fail,
 And⁴ round me gathered with mute countenance,
 The Seamen gazed, the Pilot, worn and pale
 With toil, the Captain with grey locks, whose glance
 Met mine in restless awe—they stood as in a trance.

XXVII.

“‘Recede not! pause not now! thou art grown old,
 But Hope will make thee young, for Hope and Youth

¹ There is a comma at *fairest* in Shelley’s edition; but it was probably a misprint, I think.

² In Shelley’s edition, *tyrant’s*, with a small *t*.

³ In the original edition, *’till*, as in some other instances.

⁴ Mrs. Shelley puts a full stop at *fail*, and substitutes *All* for *And*.

Are children of one mother, even Love—behold!¹
 The eternal stars gaze on us!—is the truth
 Within your soul? care for your own, or ruth
 For others?² sufferings? do ye thirst to bear
 A heart which not the serpent Custom's³ tooth
 May violate?—be free! and even here,
 Swear to be firm till death!' they cried, 'We swear! we
 swear!'

XXVIII.

"The very darkness shook, as with a blast
 Of subterranean thunder at the cry;
 The hollow shore its thousand echoes cast
 Into the night, as if the sea, and sky,
 And earth, rejoiced with new-born liberty,
 For in that name they swore! Bolts were undrawn,
 And on the deck, with unaccustomed eye
 The captives gazing stood, and every one
 Shrank as the inconstant torch upon her countenance shone.

XXIX.

"They were earth's purest children, young and fair,
 With eyes the shrines of unawakened thought,
 And brows as bright as spring or morning, ere
 Dark time had there its evil legend wrought
 In characters of cloud which wither not.—
 The change was like a dream to them; but soon
 They knew the glory of their altered lot,

¹ Mr. Rossetti cancels the word *even*, on the plea of Shelley's apology for leaving an alexandrine in the middle of a stanza. But this is neither in the middle of a stanza nor, as I conceive Shelley meant it to be scanned, an alexandrine:—

Are chil | dren of | one moth'r, | ev'n Love |
 —behold!

The line seems to me to fall into utter ruin when changed to

Are children of one mother, Love. Behold!

² In Shelley's edition we read *other's* for *others*'.

³ *Custom* is spelt with a small *c* in Shelley's edition.

In the bright wisdom of youth's breathless noon,
Sweet talk, and smiles, and sighs, all bosoms did attune.

XXX.

"But one was mute, her cheeks and lips most fair,
Changing their hue like lilies newly blown,
Beneath a bright acacia's shadowy hair,
Waved by the wind amid the sunny noon,
Shewed that her soul was quivering; and full soon
That Youth arose, and breathlessly did look
On her and me, as for some speechless boon:
I smiled, and both their hands in mine I took,
And felt a soft delight from what their spirits shook.¹

¹ Cythna's account of her proceedings is continued, it is to be observed, into the next Canto,—so that this break is purely artificial.

Canto Ninth.

I.

“THAT night we anchored in a woody bay,
And sleep no more around us dared to hover
Than, when all doubt and fear has past away,
It shades the couch of some unresting lover,
Whose heart is now at rest: thus night past over
In mutual joy:—around, a forest grew
Of poplars and dark oaks, whose shade did cover
The waning stars pranked in the waters blue,
And trembled in the wind which from the morning flew.

II.

“The joyous mariners, and each free maiden,
Now brought from the deep forest many a bough,
With woodland spoil most innocently laden;
Soon wreathes of budding foliage seemed to flow
Over the mast and sails, the stern and prow
Were canopied with blooming boughs,—the while
On the slant sun’s path o’er the waves we go
Rejoicing, like the dwellers of an isle
Doomed to pursue those waves that cannot cease to smile.

III.

“The many ships spotting the dark blue deep
 With snowy sails, fled fast as our’s came nigh,
 In fear and wonder; and on every steep
 Thousands did gaze, they heard the startling cry,
 Like earth’s own voice lifted unconquerably
 To all her children, the unbounded mirth,
 The glorious joy of thy name—Liberty!
 They heard!—As o’er the mountains of the earth
 From peak to peak leap on the beams of morning’s birth:

IV.

“So from that cry over the boundless hills,
 Sudden was caught one universal sound,
 Like a volcano’s voice, whose thunder fills
 Remotest skies,—such glorious madness found
 A path thro’ human hearts with stream which drowned
 Its struggling fears and cares, dark Custom’s¹ brood,
 They knew not whence it came, but felt around
 A wide contagion poured—they called aloud
 On Liberty—that name lived on the sunny flood.

V.

“We reached the port—alas! from many spirits
 The wisdom which had waked that cry, was fled,
 Like the brief glory which dark Heaven inherits
 From the false dawn, which fades ere² it is spread,
 Upon the night’s devouring darkness shed:
 Yet soon bright day will burst—even like a chasm
 Of fire, to burn the shrouds outworn and dead,
 Which wrap the world; a wide enthusiasm,
 To cleanse the fevered world as with an earthquake’s spasm!

¹ In Shelley’s edition *custom*, though obviously used personally, is given again with a small *c*.

² In Shelley’s edition we read *e’er* for *ere*.

VI.

“I walked thro’ the great City then, but free
From shame or fear; those toil-worn Mariners
And happy Maidens did encompass me;
And like a subterranean wind that stirs
Some forest among caves, the hopes and fears
From every human soul, a murmur strange
Made as I past; and many wept, with tears
Of joy and awe, and wingèd thoughts did range,
And half-extinguished words, which prophesied of change.

VII.

“For, with strong speech I tore the veil that hid
Nature, and Truth, and Liberty, and Love,—
As one who from some mountain’s pyramid,
Points to the unrisen sun!—the shades approve
His truth, and flee from every stream and grove.
Thus, gentle thoughts did many a bosom fill,—
Wisdom, the mail of tried affections wove
For many a heart, and tameless scorn of ill,
Thrice steeped in molten steel the unconquerable will.

VIII.

“Some said I was a maniac wild and lost;
Some, that I scarce had risen from the grave
The Prophet’s virgin bride, a heavenly ghost:—
Some said, I was a fiend from my weird cave,
Who had stolen human shape, and o’er the wave,
The forest, and the mountain came;—some said
I was the child of God, sent down to save
Women from bonds and death, and on my head
The burthen of their sins would frightfully be laid.

IX.

"But soon my human words found sympathy
 In human hearts : the purest and the best,
 As friend with friend made common cause with me,
 And they were few, but resolute;—the rest,
 Ere yet success the enterprise had blest,
 Leagued with me in their hearts;—their meals, their slumber,
 Their hourly occupations were possest
 By hopes which I had armed¹ to overnumber²
 Those hosts of meaner cares, which life's strong wings
 encumber.

X.

"But chiefly women, whom my voice did waken
 From their cold, careless, willing slavery,
 Sought me: one truth their dreary prison has³ shaken,—
 They looked around, and lo! they became free!
 Their many tyrants sitting desolately
 In slave-deserted halls, could none restrain;
 For wrath's red fire had withered in the eye,
 Whose lightning once was death,—nor fear, nor gain
 Could tempt one captive now to lock another's chain.

XI.

"Those who were sent to bind me, wept, and felt
 Their minds outsoar the bonds which clasped them round,
 Even as a waxen shape may waste and melt
 In the white furnace; and a visioned swoond,
 A pause of hope and awe the City bound,
 Which, like the silence of a tempest's birth,
 When in its awful shadow it has wound
 The sun, the wind, the ocean, and the earth,
 Hung terrible, ere yet the lightnings have leapt forth.

¹ In Shelley's edition, *arm'd*.

² There is a comma at *overnumber*
in Shelley's edition.

³ So in all editions known to me ;
but I suspect *has* is a misprint for
had.

XII.

“Like clouds inwoven in the silent sky,
 By winds from distant regions meeting there,
 In the high name of truth and liberty,
 Around the City millions gathered were,
 By hopes which sprang from many a hidden lair,
 Words, which the lore of truth in hues of flame¹
 Arrayed, thine own wild songs which in the air
 Like homeless odours floated, and the name
 Of thee, and many a tongue which thou hadst dipped in flame.

XIII.

“The Tyrant knew his power was gone, but Fear,
 The nurse of Vengeance, bade him wait the event—
 That perfidy and custom, gold and prayer,
 And whatsoe’er, when force is impotent,
 To fraud the scepter of the world has lent,
 Might, as he judged, confirm his failing sway.
 Therefore throughout the streets, the Priests he sent
 To curse the rebels.—To their God² did they
 For Earthquake, Plague, and Want, kneel in the public way.

XIV.

“And grave and hoary men were bribed to tell
 From seats where law is made the slave of wrong,
 How glorious Athens in her splendour fell,
 Because her sons were free,—and that among

¹ In all preceding editions known to me this expression is *hues of grace*; but, as the sense and the metre are both defective under that reading, I am convinced that *grace* is a misprint for *flame*. Shelley would hardly refer to colours as graceful, and these songs of Laon, inciting to revolution, would have more to do with fire than with grace. The fact that *flame* has

to do double duty as a rhyme in this stanza does not materially affect the question, as there are other like instances as in stanza XXXIV of this Canto (p. 256), and stanza III of Canto VI (p. 198). See note on metric irregularities at p. 93.

² God is replaced by *gods* in *The Revolt of Islam*.

Mankind, the many to the few belong,
 By God,¹ and Nature, and Necessity.
 They said, that age was truth, and that the young
 Marred with wild hopes the peace of slavery,
 With which old times and men had quelled the vain and free.

XV.²

“And with the falsehood of their poisonous lips
 They breathed on the enduring memory
 Of sages and of bards a brief eclipse;
 There was one teacher, who, necessity
 Had armed, with strength and wrong against mankind,
 His slave and his avenger aye to be;
 That we were weak and sinful, frail and blind,
 And that the will of one was peace, and we
 Should seek for nought on earth but toil and misery.

XVI.

“‘For thus we might avoid the hell hereafter.’
 So spake the hypocrites, who cursed and lied;
 Alas, their sway was past, and tears and laughter
 Clung to their hoary hair, withering the pride
 Which in their hollow hearts dared still abide;

¹ In *The Revolt of Islam* we read *Heaven* instead of *God*.

² I leave this stanza as printed in *The Revolt of Islam*. In *Laon and Cythna* the stanza has ten lines, and lines 4 to 7 of it read thus:

There was one teacher, and must ever be,
 They said, even God, who, the necessity
 Of rule and wrong had armed against man-
 kind,
 His slave and his avenger there to be;

and there can be little doubt that Shelley's attention was called to the passage to get rid of the obnoxious *God*. The appearance of the page in my copy shews that he was considerably exercised in this particular revision, there being words written in

and smeared out again before he could satisfy himself. It seems incredible that he should have run two lines into one as he did without considering how the process affected the regularity of the metre; and, if he had not already discovered that it was wrong, he would then do so. He would therefore have artistic reasons for the change made; and no other reasons could exist for the alteration of *there* to *aye* in line 6 of the stanza as given in the text. It is not surprising that in the annoyance of the whole business he did not discover that the remodelled stanza was still not Spenserian, inasmuch as lines 4 and 5 do not rhyme.

And yet obscener slaves with smother brow,
 And sneers on their strait lips, thin, blue and wide,
 Said, that the rule of men was over now,
 And hence, the subject world to woman's will must bow.¹

XVII.

"And gold was scattered thro' the streets, and wine
 Flowed at a hundred feasts within the wall.
 In vain! the steady towers in Heaven did shine
 As they were wont, nor at the priestly call,
 Left Plague² her banquet in the Æthiop's hall,
 Nor Famine from the rich man's portal came,
 Where at her ease she ever preys on all
 Who throng to kneel for food: nor fear nor shame,
 Nor faith, nor discord, dimmed hope's newly kindled flame.

XVIII.

"For gold was as a God³ whose faith began
 To fade, so that its worshippers were few,
 And Hell and Awe, which in the heart of man
 Is God itself; the Priests its downfall knew,
 As day by day their altars lonelier grew,
 Till they were left alone within the fane;⁴
 The shafts of falsehood⁵ unpolluting flew,
 And the cold sneers of calumny were vain,
 The union of the free with discord's brand to stain.

¹ There is a semi-colon here in *The Revolt of Islam*; but there is no MS. authority for it in my copy; and I doubt whether Shelley would have made such a change.

² In *Laon and Cythna*, *Plague*, though personal, is spelt with a small *p*: in *The Revolt* it is spelt with a capital.

³ *God* is spelt with a small *g* in *The Revolt of Islam*. This change is really

made in Shelley's writing in my copy!

⁴ In *The Revolt of Islam* these four lines stand thus:

And Faith itself, which in the heart of man
 Gives shape, voice, name, to spectral Terror,
 Knew

Its downfall, as the altars lonelier grew,
 Till the Priests stood alone within the fane.

⁵ Mr. Rossetti's MS. fragment yields in this place another instance of the orthography *falsehood*.

XIX.

"The rest thou knowest—Lo! we two are here—
 We have survived a ruin wide and deep—
 Strange thoughts are mine—I cannot grieve or fear.
 Sitting with thee upon this lonely steep
 I smile, tho' human love should make me weep,¹
 We have survived a joy that knows no sorrow,
 And I do feel a mighty calmness creep
 Over my heart, which can no longer borrow
 Its hues from chance or change, dark children of to-morrow.

XX.

"We know not what will come—yet Laon, dearest,
 Cythna shall be the prophetess of Love,²
 Her lips shall rob thee of the grace thou wearest,
 To hide thy³ heart, and clothe the shapes which rove
 Within the homeless Future's⁴ wintry grove;
 For I now, sitting thus beside thee, seem
 Even with thy breath and blood to live and move,
 And violence and wrong are as a dream
 Which rolls from steadfast⁵ truth an unreturning stream.

XXI.

"The blasts of Autumn⁶ drive the wingèd seeds
 Over the earth,—next come the snows, and rain,
 And frosts, and storms, which dreary Winter⁷ leads
 Out of his Scythian cave, a savage train;

¹ In these three lines I have followed what seems to me to be the punctuation of Mr. Rossetti's MS. fragment; but the fac-simile is not perfectly clear. In the printed edition of Shelley the lines are punctuated thus:

Strange thoughts are mine.—I cannot grieve
 or fear,

Sitting with thee upon this lonely steep
 I smile, though human love should make me
 weep.

But the sense as given in the text seems better; and I take the other

punctuation to be the printer's.

^{2 4} *Love* and *Future* begin with small letters in the original edition. The capitals are restored from Mr. Rossetti's MS.

³ In Mr. Rossetti's fragment the word *fairer* is cancelled between *thy* and *heart*.

⁵ So in the MS., but *stedfast* in the original edition.

^{6 7} *Autumn* and *Winter* are spelt with a small *a* and *w* in Shelley's edition.

Behold! Spring sweeps over the world again,
 Shedding soft dews from her ætherial wings;
 Flowers on the mountains, fruits over the plain,
 And music on the waves and woods she flings,
 And love on all that lives, and calm on lifeless things.

XXII.

“O Spring, of hope, and love, and youth, and gladness
 Wind-wingèd emblem! brightest, best and fairest!
 Whence comest thou, when, with dark Winter’s¹ sadness
 The tears that fade in sunny smiles thou sharest?²
 Sister of joy, thou art the child who wearest
 Thy mother’s dying smile, tender and sweet;
 Thy mother Autumn, for whose grave thou bearest
 Fresh flowers, and beams like flowers, with gentle feet,
 Disturbing not the leaves which are her winding-sheet.

XXIII.

“Virtue, and Hope, and Love, like light and Heaven,
 Surround the world.—We are their chosen slaves.
 Has not the whirlwind of our spirit driven
 Truth’s deathless germs to thought’s remotest caves?
 Lo, Winter comes!—the grief of many graves,
 The frost of death, the tempest of the sword,
 The flood of tyranny, whose sanguine waves
 Stagnate like ice at Faith, the inchanter’s word,
 And bind all human hearts in it’s repose abhorred.³

¹ *Winter* has a small *w* in Shelley’s edition.

² A semi-colon here in Shelley’s edition, but a note of interrogation in Mrs. Shelley’s.

³ Among the Shelley MSS. of Leigh Hunt is a fragment of the MS. of this Canto, beginning with this line, and ending at the sixth line of stanza XXIX. The variations are not considerable; but I note a few. In the printed text, in this very line, the

printer stole a march on Shelley and spelt *its* in the orthodox way, instead of *it’s* as Shelley spelt it there and usually. Leigh Hunt seems to have had more of the MS. of this part of the poem in his possession at one time, for the facsimile of Shelley’s writing given in *Lord Byron and Some of his Contemporaries* (opposite p. 1, Vol. I, of the 8vo edition of 1823) is the first four lines of this stanza,—i.e. from the leaf preceding, in the MS., the one mentioned above.

XXIV.

"The seeds are sleeping in the soil: meanwhile
 The Tyrant¹ peoples dungeons with his prey,
 Pale victims on the guarded scaffold smile
 Because they cannot speak; and, day by day,
 The moon of wasting Science wanes away
 Among her stars, and in that darkness vast
 The sons of earth to their foul idols pray,
 And grey Priests² triumph, and like blight or blast
 A shade of selfish care o'er human looks is cast.

XXV.

"This is the winter of the world;—and here
 We die, even as the winds of Autumn fade,
 Expiring in the froze³ and foggy air.—
 Behold! Spring comes, tho' we must pass, who made
 The promise of its birth,—even as the shade
 Which from our death, as from a mountain, flings
 The future, a broad sunrise;⁴ thus arrayed
 As with the plumes of overshadowing wings,
 From its dark gulph of chains, Earth⁵ like an eagle springs.

XXVI.

"O dearest love! we shall be dead and cold
 Before this morn⁶ may on the world arise;

The fac-simile of those four lines corresponds precisely with the printed text; but it is interesting as furnishing additional evidence that Shelley meant to be particular about putting a capital letter at the beginning of a common noun used personally, as he so constantly uses common nouns. Thus, in this opening quatrain of stanza XXIII, Virtue, Hope, and Love, being sufficiently personal to own Laon and Cythna as slaves, have their names spelt with capitals; but Hunt's fac-simile shews that Shelley had so far deliberated on the point as to carefully insert the capitals, having first written *love* and *hope* without.

^{1 2} There is a small *t* for *tyrant* and a small *p* for *priests* in the MS.; but they are generally given with capitals throughout the poem; and I have no doubt Shelley meant them to be so. In printing, *Priests* somehow got a capital, but *tyrant* did not.

³ It is not wonderful that this word should frequently have been printed *froze*. In the MS. it is so written in this instance, and altered to *frore*.

⁴ In the MS. *like a broad sunrise*, but *like* struck out.

⁵ In the MS. there is a comma at *Earth*.

⁶ *Before this dawn* in the MS.; but no doubt *morn* was substituted in the

Wouldst thou the glory of its dawn behold?
 Alas! gaze not on me, but turn thine eyes
 On thine own heart—it is a Paradise¹
 Which everlasting spring has made its own,
 And while drear winter² fills the naked skies,
 Sweet streams of sunny thought, and flowers fresh blown,
 Are there, and weave³ their sounds and odours into one.

XXVII.

“In their own hearts the earnest of the hope
 Which made them great, the good will ever find;
 And tho’ some envious shade may interlope
 Between the effect and it,—One comes behind,⁴
 Who aye the future to the past will bind—
 Necessity, whose sightless strength forever
 Evil with evil, good with good must wind
 In bands of union, which no power may sever:
 They must bring forth their kind, and be divided never!

XXVIII.

“The good and mighty of departed ages
 Are in their graves, the innocent and free,⁵
 Heroes, and Poets, and prevailing Sages,
 Who leave the vesture of their majesty
 To adorn and clothe this naked world;—and we
 Are like to them—such perish, but they leave
 All hope, or love, or truth, or liberty,
 Whose forms their mighty spirits could conceive
 To be a rule and law to ages that survive.

proof, because of *dawn* being in the next line.

¹ The capital *P* for *Paradise* is restored from the MS.

² *Winter* with a capital in the original edition, but not in the MS.

³ The word here was originally *blend*, which is cancelled in the MS. in favour of *weave*.

⁴ This line is given precisely as in

the MS. because the long pause and capital *O* for *One* seem to be deliberate and effective, and were probably suppressed by the printer. The line is printed thus in the original edition:

Between the effect and it, one comes behind.

⁵ There is no comma at *free* in the MS.; but I doubt whether the sense is not right in the printed text.

XXIX.

"So be the turf heaped over our remains
 Even in our happy youth, and that strange lot,
 Whate'er it be, when in these mingling veins
 The blood is still, be ours; let sense and thought
 Pass from our being, or be numbered not
 Among the things that are; let those who come
 Behind, for whom our steadfast¹ will has bought
 A calm inheritance, a glorious doom,
 Insult with careless tread, our undivided tomb.

XXX.

"Our many thoughts and deeds, our life and love,
 Our happiness, and all that we have been,
 Immortally must live, and burn and move,
 When we shall be no more;—the world has seen
 A type of peace; and as some most serene
 And lovely spot to a poor maniac's eye,
 After long years, some sweet and moving scene
 Of youthful hope returning suddenly,
 Quells his long madness—thus man shall remember thee.

XXXI.

"And Calumny meanwhile shall feed on us,
 As worms devour the dead, and near the throne
 And at the altar, most accepted thus
 Shall sneers and curses be;—what we have done
 None shall dare vouch, tho' it be truly known;
 That record shall remain, when they must pass
 Who built their pride in its oblivion;
 And fame, in human hope which sculptured was,
 Survive the' perished scrolls of unenduring brass.

¹ In Shelley's edition, *steadfast* again.

XXXII.

“The while we two, belovèd, must depart,
 And Sense and Reason, those inchanters fair,
 Whose wand of power is hope, would bid the heart
 That gazed beyond the wormy grave despair:
 These eyes, these lips, this blood, seems darkly there
 To fade in hideous ruin; no calm sleep
 Peopling with golden dreams the stagnant air,
 Seems our obscure and rotting eyes to steep
 In joy;—but senseless death—a ruin dark and deep!

XXXIII.

“These are blind fancies—reason cannot know
 What sense can neither feel, nor thought conceive;
 There is delusion in the world—and woe,
 And fear, and pain—we know not whence we live,
 Or why, or how, or what mute Power may give
 Their being to each plant, and star, and beast,
 Or even these thoughts:—Come near me! I do weave
 A chain I cannot break—I am possessèd
 With thoughts too swift and strong for one lone human
 breast.

XXXIV.

“Yes, yes—thy kiss is sweet, thy lips are warm—
 O! willingly,¹ belovèd, would these eyes,
 Might they no more drink being from thy form,
 Even as to sleep whence we again arise,
 Close their faint orbs in death: I fear nor prize
 Aught that can now betide, unshared by thee—
 Yes, Love when Wisdom² fails makes Cythna wise:
 Darkness and death, if death be true, must be
 Dearer than life and hope, if unenjoyed with thee.

¹ There is no comma at *willingly* in Shelley's edition.

² *Wisdom* is spelt with a small *w* in Shelley's edition.

XXXV.

“Alas, our thoughts flow on with stream, whose waters
 Return not to their fountain—Earth and Heaven,
 The Ocean and the Sun, the clouds their daughters,
 Winter, and Spring, and Morn, and Noon, and Even,
 All that we are or know, is darkly driven
 Towards one gulph—Lo! what a change is come
 Since I first spake—but time shall be forgiven,
 Tho’ it change all but thee!”—She ceased, night’s gloom
 Meanwhile had fallen on earth from the sky’s sunless dome.

XXXVI.

Tho’ she had ceased, her countenance uplifted
 To Heaven, still spake, with solemn, glory bright;
 Her dark deep eyes, her lips, whose motions gifted
 The air they breathed with love, her locks undight;
 “Fair star of life and love,” I cried, “my soul’s delight,¹
 Why lookest thou on the crystalline² skies?
 O, that my spirit were yon Heaven of night,
 Which gazes on thee with its thousand eyes!”
 She turned to me and smiled—that smile was Paradise!

¹ This “alexandrine in the middle of a stanza” divides with that in stanza XXVII of Canto IV the claim to be considered the one referred to in

Shelley’s preface.

² In Shelley’s edition *crystalline* has no accent on the second syllable, though clearly to be read with one.

Canto Tenth.

I.

WAS there a human spirit in the steed,
That thus with his proud voice, ere night was gone,
He broke our linkèd rest? or do indeed
All living things a common nature own,
And thought erect an¹ universal throne,
Where many shapes one tribute ever bear?
And Earth, their mutual mother, does she groan
To see her sons contend? and makes she bare
Her breast, that all in peace its drainless stores may share?

II.

I have heard friendly sounds from many a tongue,
Which was not human—the lone Nightingale
Has answered me with her most soothing song,
Out of her ivy bower, when I sate pale
With grief, and sighed beneath; from many a dale
The Antelopes who flocked for food have spoken
With happy sounds, and motions, that avail
Like man's own speech; and such was now the token
Of waning night, whose calm by that proud neigh was broken.

¹ We have *a* for *an* in Mrs. Shelley's editions.

III.

Each night, that mighty steed bore me abroad,
And I returned with food to our retreat,
And dark intelligence; the blood which flowed
Over the fields, had stained the courser's feet;—
Soon the dust drinks that bitter dew,—then meet
The vulture, and the wild-dog, and the snake,
The wolf, and the hyæna grey, and eat
The dead in horrid truce: their throngs did make
Behind the steed, a chasm like waves in a ship's wake.

IV.

For, from the utmost realms of earth, came pouring
The banded slaves whom every despot sent
At that throned¹ traitor's summons; like the roaring
Of fire, whose floods the wild deer circumvent
In the scorched pastures of the South; so bent
The armies of the leaguèd kings around
Their files of steel and flame;—the continent
Trembled, as with a zone of ruin bound,
Beneath their feet, the sea shook with their Navies' sound.

V.

From every nation of the earth they came,
The multitude of moving heartless things,
Whom slaves call men: obediently they came,
Like sheep whom from the fold the shepherd brings
To the stall, red with blood; their many kings
Led them, thus erring, from their native land;²
Tartar and Frank, and millions whom the wings
Of Indian breezes lull, and many a band
The Arctic Anarch sent, and Idumea's sand,

¹ *Thron'd* in Shelley's edition.

² In Shelley's edition the word here

is *home*,—clearly an oversight, whether
in writing or in correcting the press.

VI.

Fertile in prodigies and lies;—so there
 Strange natures made a brotherhood of ill.
 The desert savage ceased to grasp in fear
 His Asian shield and bow, when, at the will
 Of Europe's subtler son, the bolt would kill
 Some shepherd sitting on a rock secure;
 But smiles of wondering joy his face would fill,
 And savage sympathy: those slaves impure,
 Each one the other thus from ill to ill did lure.

VII.

For traitorously did that foul Tyrant robe
 His countenance in lies,—even at the hour
 When he was snatched from death, then o'er the globe,
 With secret signs from many a mountain tower,
 With smoke by day, and fire by night, the power
 Of Kings and Priests,¹ those dark conspirators
 He called:—they knew his cause their own, and swore
 Like wolves and serpents,² to their mutual wars
 Strange truce, with many a rite which Earth and Heaven abhors.

VIII.

Myriads had come—millions were on their way;
 The Tyrant past, surrounded by the steel
 Of hired assassins, thro' the public way,
 Choked with his country's dead:—his footsteps reel
 On the fresh blood—he smiles, "Aye, now I feel
 I am a King in truth!" he said, and took
 His royal seat, and bade the torturing wheel
 Be brought, and fire, and pincers, and the hook,
 And scorpions; that his soul on its revenge might look.

¹ *Kings* and *Priests* again given
 without capitals in Shelley's edition.

² In Shelley's edition the comma is
 at *wolves* instead of at *serpents*.

IX.

“But first, go slay the rebels—why return
The victor bands,” he said, “millions yet live,
Of whom the weakest with one word might turn
The scales of victory yet;—let none survive
But those within the walls—each fifth shall give
The expiation for his brethren here.—
Go forth, and waste and kill!”—“O king, forgive
My speech,” a soldier answered—“but we fear
The spirits of the night, and morn is drawing near;

X.

“For we were slaying still without remorse,
And now that dreadful chief beneath my hand
Defenceless lay, when, on a hell-black horse,
An Angel bright as day, waving a brand
Which flashed among the stars, past.”—“Dost thou stand
Parleying with me, thou wretch?” the king replied;
“Slaves, bind him to the wheel; and of this band,
Whoso will drag that woman to his side
That scared him thus, may burn his dearest foe beside;

XI.

“And gold and glory shall be his.—Go forth!”
They rushed into the plain.—Loud was the roar
Of their career: the horsemen shook the earth;
The wheeled artillery’s speed the pavement tore;
The infantry, file after file did pour
Their clouds on the utmost hills. Five days they slew
Among the wasted fields: the sixth saw gore
Stream thro’ the city; on the seventh, the dew
Of slaughter became stiff; and there was peace anew:

XII.

Peace in the desert¹ fields and villages,
 Between the glutted beasts and mangled dead!
 Peace in the silent streets! save when the cries
 Of victims to their fiery judgment led,
 Made pale their voiceless lips who seemed to dread
 Even in their dearest kindred, lest some tongue
 Be faithless to the fear² yet unbetrayed;
 Peace in the Tyrant's palace, where the throng
 Waste the triumphal hours in festival and song!

XIII.

Day after day the burning Sun rolled on
 Over the death-polluted land—it came
 Out of the east like fire, and fiercely shone
 A lamp of Autumn, ripening with its flame
 The few lone ears of corn;—the sky became
 Stagnate with heat, so that each cloud and blast
 Languished and died,—the thirsting air did claim
 All moisture, and a rotting vapour past
 From the unburied dead, invisible and fast.

XIV.

First Want, then Plague came on the beasts; their food
 Failed, and they drew the breath of its decay.
 Millions on millions, whom the scent of blood
 Had lured, or who, from regions far away,
 Had tracked the hosts in festival array,
 From their dark deserts; gaunt and wasting now,
 Stalked like fell shades among their perished prey;
 In their green eyes a strange disease did glow,
 They sank in hideous spasm, or pains severe and slow.

¹ Another instance of *desert*, with an *a*, being used adjectivally. See note 2, p. 175, and note 2, p. 205.

² Possibly, as Mr. Rossetti suggests,

fear may be a misprint for *few*; but I doubt it, as the passage may well be understood to mean, as it stands, "the cries of victims made pale the voice-

XV.

The fish were poisoned in the streams; the birds
In the green woods perished; the insect race
Was withered up; the scattered flocks and herds
Who had survived the wild beasts' hungry chase
Died moaning, each upon the other's face
In helpless agony gazing; round the City
All night, the lean hyænas their sad case
Like starving infants wailed; a woeful ditty!
And many a mother wept, pierced with unnatural pity.

XVI.

Amid the aërial minarets on high,
The Æthiopian vultures fluttering fell
From their long line of brethren in the sky,
Startling the concourse of mankind.—Too well
These signs the coming mischief did foretell:—
Strange panic first, a deep and sickening dread
Within each heart, like ice, did sink and dwell,
A voiceless thought of evil, which did spread
With the quick glance of eyes, like withering lightnings shed.

XVII.

Day after day, when the year wanes, the frosts
Strip its green crown of leaves, till all is bare;
So on those strange and congregated hosts
Came Famine, a swift shadow, and the air
Groaned with the burthen of a new despair;
Famine, than whom Misrule no deadlier daughter
Feeds from her thousand breasts, tho' sleeping there
With lidless eyes, lie Faith, and Plague, and Slaughter,
A ghastly brood; conceived of Lethe's sullen water.

less lips of certain bystanders, who
seemed to dread lest some tongue, not
yet betrayed to the fear, should still
prove faithless on arrival face to face

with death,"—i.e. should betray those
pale-lipped bystanders, with a view
to their own escape, or, as we say in
England, "turn Queen's evidence."

XVIII.

There was no food, the corn was trampled down,
The flocks and herds had perished; on the shore
The dead and putrid fish were ever thrown;
The deeps were foodless, and the winds no more
Creaked with the weight of birds, but as before
Those wingèd things sprang forth, were void of shade;
The vines and orchards, Autumn's golden store,
Were burned;—so that the meanest food was weighed
With gold, and Avarice died before the god it made.

XIX.

There was no corn—in the wide market-place
All loathliest things, even human flesh, was sold;
They weighed it in small scales—and many a face
Was fixed in eager horror then: his gold
The miser brought, the tender maid, grown bold
Thro' hunger, bared her scornèd charms in vain;
The mother brought her eldest born, controuled
By instinct blind as love, but turned again
And bade her infant suck, and died in silent pain.

XX.

Then fell blue Plague upon the race of man.
“O, for the sheathèd steel, so late which gave
Oblivion to the dead, when the streets ran
With brothers' blood! O, that the earthquake's grave¹
Would gape, or Ocean lift its stifling wave!”
Vain cries—throughout the streets, thousands pursued
Each by his fiery torture howl and rave,
Or sit, in frenzy's unimagined mood,
Upon fresh heaps of dead; a ghastly multitude.

¹ In Shelley's edition *earthquakes grave*.

XXI.

It was not hunger now, but thirst. Each well
 Was choked with rotting corpses, and became
 A cauldron of green mist made visible
 At sunrise. Thither still the myriads came,
 Seeking to quench the agony of the flame,
 Which raged like poison thro' their bursting veins;
 Naked they were from torture, without shame,
 Spotted with nameless scars and lurid blains,
 Childhood, and youth, and age, writhing in savage pains.

XXII.

It was not thirst but madness! many saw
 Their own lean image every where, it went
 A ghastlier self beside them, till the awe
 Of that dread sight to self-destruction sent
 Those shrieking victims; some, ere life was spent,
 Sought, with a horrid sympathy, to shed
 Contagion on the sound; and others rent
 Their matted hair, and cried aloud, "We tread
 On fire! Almighty God¹ his hell on earth has spread!"

XXIII.

Sometimes the living by the dead were hid.
 Near the great fountain in the public square,
 Where corpses made a crumbling pyramid
 Under the sun, was heard one stifled prayer
 For life, in the hot silence of the air;
 And strange 'twas amid² that hideous heap to see

¹ In *The Revolt of Islam*, *Almighty God* is replaced by *the avenging Power*, and the note of exclamation is changed to a full stop.

² It would probably be pretty safe to substitute '*mid* for *amid* here. I do not think it impossible that Shelley

might have intended to leave the line irregular; but I do think the particular irregularity unlike him, and very improbable. I have, moreover, little doubt that he made the same change himself on a proof of the cancel-leaf. There is no comma

Some shrouded in their long and golden hair,
 As if not dead, but slumbering quietly
 Like forms which sculptors carve, then love to agony.

XXIV.

Famine had spared the palace of the King¹:—
 He rioted in festival the while,
 He and his guards and Priests;² but Plague did fling
 One shadow upon all. Famine can smile
 On him who brings it food and pass, with guile
 Of thankful falsehood, like a courtier grey,
 The house-dog of the throne; but many a mile
 Comes Plague, a wingèd wolf, who loathes alway
 The garbage and the scum that strangers make her prey.

XXV.

So, near the throne, amid the gorgeous feast,
 Sheathed in resplendent arms, or loosely dight
 To luxury, ere the mockery yet had ceased
 That lingered on his lips, the warrior's might
 Was loosened, and a new and ghastlier night
 In dreams of frenzy lapped his eyes; he fell
 Headlong, or with stiff eyeballs sate upright
 Among the guests, or raving mad, did tell
 Strange truths; a dying seer of dark oppression's hell.

XXVI.

The Princes and the Priests were pale with terror;
 That monstrous faith wherewith they ruled mankind,
 Fell, like a shaft loosed by the bowman's error,

at 'twas in *Laon and Cythna*; but there is in *The Revolt of Islam*: no change there is marked in my copy; but I suspect that Shelley first noticed the awkwardness of the line in reading a proof of the cancel,—marked an apostrophe in the margin,—that the

printer mistook it for a comma, and that either poet or printer omitted to take out the *a* from *amid*.

^{1 2} *King* and *Priests* begin with small letters in this instance in Shelley's edition,—presumably through a printer's error.

On their own hearts: they sought and they could find
 No refuge—'twas the blind who led the blind!
 So, thro' the desolate streets to the high fane
 Of their Almighty God, the armies wind¹
 In sad procession: each among the train
 To his own Idol lifts his supplications vain.

XXVII.

"O God!" they cried, "we know our secret pride
 Has scorned thee, and thy worship, and thy name;
 Secure in human power we have defied
 Thy fearful might; we bend in fear and shame
 Before thy presence; with the dust we claim
 Kindred; be merciful, O King of Heaven!
 Most justly have we suffered for thy fame
 Made dim, but be at length our sins forgiven,
 Ere to despair and death thy worshippers be driven.

XXVIII.

"O God Almighty!² thou alone hast power!
 Who can resist thy will? who can restrain
 Thy wrath, when on the guilty thou dost shower
 The shafts of thy revenge, a blistering rain?
 Greatest and best, be merciful again!
 Have we not stabbed thine enemies, and made
 The Earth an altar, and the Heavens a fane,
 Where thou wert worshipped with their blood, and laid
 Those hearts in dust which would thy searchless works
 have weighed?

¹ In *The Revolt of Islam* this passage reads

The many-tongued and endless armies wind
 In sad procession:

and a comma is inserted at the end of the preceding line. This comma is not in the copy revised by Shelley;

and his first emendation was merely *The many-tongued*; but the firm deliberate stroke with which he habitually ended his corrections is carefully cancelled by him, and *& endless* added.

² *O King of Glory* in *The Revolt of Islam*.

XXIX.

"Well didst thou loosen on this impious City
 Thine angels of revenge: recall them now;
 Thy worshippers abased, here kneel for pity,
 And bind their souls by an immortal vow:
 We swear by thee! and to our oath do thou
 Give sanction, from thine hell of fiends and flame,
 That we will kill with fire and torments slow,
 The last of those who mocked thy holy name,
 And scorned the sacred laws thy prophets did proclaim."

XXX.

Thus they with trembling limbs and pallid lips
 Worshipped their own hearts' image, dim and vast,
 Scared by the shade wherewith they would eclipse
 The light of other minds;—troubled they past
 From the great Temple;—fiercely still and fast
 The arrows of the plague among them fell,
 And they on one another gazed aghast,
 And thro' the hosts contention wild befell,
 As each of his own God¹ the wondrous works did tell.

XXXI.

And Oromaze, and Christ,² and Mahomet,
 Moses, and Buddh, Zerdusht, and Brahm, and Foh,³
 A tumult of strange names, which never met
 Before, as watchwords of a single woe,
 Arose; each raging votary 'gan to throw
 Aloft his armèd hands, and each did howl

¹ *God* is spelt with a capital in *Laon and Cythna*, but with a small *g* in *The Revolt of Islam*. This change is made in Shelley's writing in my copy, in this case as well as in that already noted at p. 250.

² *Joshua* is substituted for *and Christ* in *The Revolt of Islam*.

³ There was a semi-colon here in the original edition: the comma is substituted by Shelley in my copy.

"Our God alone is God!" and slaughter now
 Would have gone forth, when from beneath a cowl
 A voice came forth, which pierced like ice thro' every soul.

XXXII.

He was a Christian Priest¹ from whom it came,
 A zealous man, who led the legioned west
 With words which faith and pride had steeped in flame,
 To quell the rebel Atheists;² a dire guest
 Even to his friends was he, for in his breast
 Did hate and guile lie watchful, intertwined,
 Twin serpents in one deep and winding nest;
 He loathed all faith beside his own, and pined
 To wreak his fear of God³ in vengeance on mankind.

XXXIII.

But more he loathed and hated the clear light
 Of wisdom and free thought, and more did fear,
 Lest, kindled once, its beams might pierce the night,
 Even where his Idol stood; for, far and near
 Did many a heart in Europe leap to hear
 That faith and tyranny were trampled down;
 Many a pale victim, doomed for truth to share
 The murderer's cell, or see, with helpless groan,
 The Priests⁴ his children drag for slaves to serve their own.

XXXIV.

He dared not kill the infidels with fire
 Or steel, in Europe: the slow agonies
 Of legal torture mocked his keen desire:

^{1 2 3} In *The Revolt of Islam* we read 'Twas an Iberian Priest in line 1, unbelievers for rebel Atheists in line 4, and Heaven for God in line 9. It is interesting to note that Shelley had pencilled in the margin, opposite line

4, the abbreviations *unbel.* and *infid.*, being, it would seem, at first uncertain how he should transform his Atheists, so obnoxious to Mr. Ollier.

⁴ *Priests* is spelt with a small *p* in Shelley's edition.

So he made truce with those who did despise
 His cradled Idol, and the sacrifice
 Of God to God's own wrath,—that Islam's creed¹
 Might crush for him those deadlier enemies;
 For fear of God did in his bosom breed
 A jealous hate of man, an unreposing need.

XXXV.

"Peace! Peace!" he cried, "when we are dead, the Day
 Of Judgment comes, and all shall surely know
 Whose God is God, each fearfully shall pay
 The errors of his faith in endless woe!
 But there is sent a mortal vengeance now
 On earth, because an impious race had spurned
 Him whom we all adore,—a subtle foe
 By whom for ye this dread reward was earned,
 And thrones, which rest on faith in God, nigh overturned."²

XXXVI.

"Think ye, because ye weep, and kneel, and pray,
 That God will lull the pestilence? it rose
 Even from beneath his throne, where, many a day
 His mercy soothed it to a dark repose:
 It walks upon the earth to judge his foes,
 And what are thou and I, that he should deign
 To curb his ghastly minister, or close
 The gates of death, ere they receive the twain
 Who shook with mortal spells his undefended reign?

¹ In *The Revolt of Islam* these two lines read thus:

The expiation, and the sacrifice,
 That, though detested, Islam's kindred creed.

² In *The Revolt of Islam* this line is as follows:

And kingly thrones, which rest on faith, nigh overturned.

In my revised copy Shelley has cut out *in God* but not supplied *kingly*,—another indication that he probably saw proofs of these cancel-leaves.

XXXVII.

"Aye, there is famine in the gulph of hell,
Its giant worms of fire for ever yawn,—
Their lurid eyes are on us! those who fell
By the swift shafts of pestilence ere dawn,
Are in their jaws! they hunger for the spawn
Of Satan, their own brethren, who were sent
To make our souls their spoil. See! See! they fawn
Like dogs, and they will sleep with luxury spent,
When those detested hearts their iron fangs have rent!

XXXVIII. .

"Our God may then lull Pestilence to sleep:—
Pile high the pyre of expiation now!
A forest's spoil of boughs, and on the heap
Pour venomous gums, which sullenly and slow,
When touched by flame, shall burn, and melt, and flow,
A stream of clinging fire,—and fix on high
A net of iron, and spread forth below
A couch of snakes, and scorpions, and the fry
Of centipedes and worms, earth's hellish progeny!

XXXIX.

"Let Laon and Laone on that pyre,
Linked tight with burning brass, perish! then pray
That, with this sacrifice, the withering ire
Of God¹ may be appeased." He ceased, and they
A space stood silent, as far, far away
The echoes of his voice among them died;
And he knelt down upon the dust, alway
Muttering the curses of his speechless pride,
Whilst shame, and fear, and awe, the armies did divide.

¹ *Heaven is again put for God in The Revolt of Islam.*

XL.

His voice was like a blast that burst the portal
Of fabled hell; and as he spake, each one
Saw gape beneath the chasms of fire immortal,
And Heaven above seemed cloven, where, on a throne
With storms and shadows girt, sate God, alone,¹
Their King and Judge—fear killed in every breast
All natural pity then, a fear unknown
Before, and with an inward fire possest,
They raged like homeless beasts whom burning woods invest.

XLI.

'Twas morn—at noon the public crier went forth,
Proclaiming thro' the living and the dead,
“The Monarch saith, that his great Empire's worth
Is set on Laon and Laone's head:
He who but one yet living here can lead,
Or who the life from both their hearts can wring,
Shall be the kingdom's heir, a glorious meed!
But he who both alive can hither bring,
The Princess shall espouse, and reign an equal King.”

XLII.

Ere night the pyre was piled, the net of iron
Was spread above, the fearful couch below,
It overtopped the towers that did environ
That spacious square; for Fear is never slow
To build the thrones of Hate, her mate and foe,
So, she scourged forth the maniac multitude
To rear this pyramid—tottering and slow,
Plague-stricken, foodless, like lean herds pursued
By gad-flies, they have piled the heath, and gums, and wood.

¹ For this line we read in *The Revolt of Islam*
Girt round with storms and shadows, sate alone.

XLIII.

Night came, a starless and a moonless gloom.
 Until the dawn, those hosts of many a nation
 Stood round that pile, as near one lover's tomb
 Two gentle sisters mourn their desolation;
 And in the silence of that expectation,
 Was heard on high the reptiles'¹ hiss and crawl—
 It was so deep, save when the devastation
 Of the swift pest with fearful interval,
 Marking its path with shrieks, among the crowd would fall.

XLIV.

Morn came,—among those sleepless multitudes,
 Madness, and Fear, and Plague, and Famine still
 Heaped corpse on corpse, as in autumnal woods
 The frosts of many a wind with dead leaves fill
 Earth's cold and sullen brooks; in silence² still,
 The pale survivors stood; ere noon, the fear
 Of Hell became a panic, which did kill
 Like hunger or disease, with whispers drear
 As "hush! hark! Come they yet? God, God,³ thine hour
 is near!"

XLV.

And Priests rushed thro' their ranks, some counterfeiting
 The rage they did inspire, some mad indeed
 With their own lies; they said their God⁴ was waiting
 To see his enemies writhe, and burn, and bleed,—
 And that, till then, the snakes of hell had need
 Of human souls:—three hundred furnaces
 Soon blazed thro' the wide City, where, with speed,

¹ In Shelley's edition *reptiles*.

² The comma is at *silence* instead of *still* in *The Revolt of Islam*; but the change does not appear in MS. in my copy, and does not commend itself as authentic.

³ In *The Revolt of Islam* this line
VOL. I.

appears thus:

As "Hush! hark! Come they yet? Just
 Heaven! thine hour is near!"

⁴ Another small *g* for *God* is substituted by Shelley (in pencil) in my copy; and this change is carried out in *The Revolt of Islam*.

Men brought their atheist¹ kindred to appease
 God's wrath, and while they burned, knelt round on quivering knees.

XLVI.

The noontide sun was darkened with that smoke,
 The winds of eve dispersed those ashes grey,
 The madness which these rites had lulled, awoke
 Again at sunset.—Who shall dare to say
 The deeds which night and fear brought forth, or weigh
 In balance just the good and evil there?
 He might man's deep and searchless heart display,
 And cast a light on those dim labyrinths, where
 Hope, near imagined chasms, is struggling with despair.

XLVII.

'Tis said, a mother dragged three children then,
 To those fierce flames which roast the eyes in the head,
 And laughed, and died; and that unholy men,
 Feasting like fiends upon the infidel dead,
 Looked from their meal, and saw an Angel tread
 The threshold of God's throne,² and it was she!
 And, on that night, one without doubt or dread
 Came to the fire, and said, "Stop, I am he!
 Kill me!" they burned them both³ with hellish mockery.

¹ In *The Revolt of Islam*, *infidel* is once more put for *atheist*.

² This is changed to *The visible floor of Heaven* in *The Revolt of Islam*.

³ Both is probably meant to include a representative of the "unholy men" who saw Cythna, as an angel, "tread the threshold of God's throne," or perhaps one who merely reported the sight seen by these cannibals. Shelley may either have forgotten, as he looked at the words *and it was she*, that they were the utterance of *men*, not of *one man*; or he may have seen no difficulty in making out that the martyr on account of the vision of Cythna would be the first man who brought

the report to where the burning was going on. In any case, it seems to me that one of the martyrs was burnt for professing to be Laon, the other for mentioning Cythna as an angel,—a very natural and characteristic sequence of ideas. Mr. Rossetti's notion that the second martyr might be the woman already dead seems to me untenable, while his suggestion to read *two* for *one* in the seventh line tends, in my judgment, to a result bordering on the grotesque:

And on that night, *two* without doubt or dread
 Came to the fire, and said, "Stop, I am he!
 Kill me!"

XLVIII.

And, one by one, that night, young maidens came,
Beauteous and calm, like shapes of living stone
Clothed in the light of dreams, and by the flame
Which shrank as overgorged, they laid them down,
And sung a low sweet song, of which alone
One word was heard, and that was Liberty;
And that some kist their marble feet, with moan
Like love, and died, and then that they did die
With happy smiles, which sunk in white tranquillity.

The multiplication of the peculiar kind of maniac who professes to be a certain criminal weakens the force of the incident immeasurably.

Canto Eleventh.



I.

SHE saw me not—she heard me not—alone
Upon the mountain's dizzy brink she stood;
She spake not, breathed not, moved not—there was thrown
Over her look, the shadow of a mood
Which only clothes the heart in solitude,
A thought of voiceless depth;—she stood alone,
Above, the Heavens were spread;—below, the flood
Was murmuring in its caves;—the wind had blown
Her hair apart, thro' which her eyes and forehead shone.

II.

A cloud was hanging o'er the western mountains;
Before its blue and moveless depth were flying
Grey mists poured forth from the unresting fountains
Of darkness in the North:—the day was dying:—
Sudden, the sun shone forth, its beams were lying
Like boiling gold on Ocean, strange to see,
And on the shattered vapours, which defying
The power of light in vain, tossed restlessly
In the red Heaven, like wrecks in a tempestuous sea.

III.

It was a stream of living beams, whose bank
 On either side by the cloud's cleft was made;
 And where its chasms that flood of glory drank,
 Its waves gushed forth like fire, and as if swayed
 By some mute tempest, rolled on *her*; the shade
 Of her bright image floated on the river
 Of liquid light, which then did end and fade—
 Her radiant shape upon its verge did shiver;
 Aloft, her flowing hair like strings of flame did quiver.

IV.

I stood beside her, but she saw me not—
 She looked upon the sea, and skies, and earth;
 Rapture, and love, and admiration wrought
 A passion deeper far than tears, or mirth,
 Or speech, or gesture, or whate'er has birth
 From common joy; which, with the speechless feeling
 That led her there united, and shot forth
 From her far eyes, a light of deep revealing,
 All but her dearest self from my regard concealing.

V.

Her lips were parted, and the measured breath
 Was now heard there;—her dark and intricate eyes
 Orb within orb, deeper than sleep or death,
 Absorbed the glories of the burning skies,
 Which, mingling with her heart's deep ecstasies,¹
 Burst from her looks and gestures;—and a light
 Of liquid tenderness like love, did rise
 From her whole frame, an atmosphere which quite
 Arrayed her in its beams, tremulous and soft and bright.

¹ Spelt *ecstasies* in the original edition.

VI.

She would have clasped me to her glowing frame;
Those warm and odorous lips might soon have shed
On mine the fragrance and the invisible flame
Which now the cold winds stole;—she would have laid
Upon my languid heart her dearest head;
I might have heard her voice, tender and sweet;
Her eyes mingling with mine, might soon have fed
My soul with their own joy.—One moment yet
I gazed—we parted then, never again to meet!

VII.

Never but once to meet on Earth again!
She heard me as I fled—her eager tone
Sunk¹ on my heart, and almost wove a chain
Around my will to link it with her own,
So that my stern resolve was almost gone.
“I cannot reach thee! whither dost thou fly?
“My steps are faint—Come back, thou dearest one—
“Return, ah me! return”—the wind past by
On which those accents died, faint, far, and lingeringly.

VIII.

Woe! woe! that moonless midnight—Want and Pest
Were horrible, but one more fell doth rear,
As in a hydra's swarming lair, its crest
Eminent among those victims—even the Fear
Of Hell: each girt by the hot atmosphere
Of his blind agony, like a scorpion stung
By his own rage upon his burning bier
Of circling coals of fire; but still there clung
One hope, like a keen sword on starting threads uphung:

¹ *Sank* in Mrs. Shelley's and Mr. Rossetti's editions.

IX.

Not death—death was no more refuge or rest;
 Not life—it was despair to be!—not sleep,
 For fiends and chasms of fire had dispossessed
 All natural dreams: to wake was not to weep,
 But to gaze mad and pallid, at the leap
 To which the Future, like a snaky scourge,
 Or like some tyrant's eye, which aye doth keep
 Its withering beam upon his slaves, did urge
 Their steps; they heard the roar of Hell's sulphureous surge.

X.

Each of that multitude alone, and lost
 To sense of outward things, one hope yet knew;
 As on a foam-girt crag some seaman tost,
 Stares at the rising tide, or like the crew
 Whilst now the ship is splitting thro' and thro';
 Each, if the tramp of a far steed was heard,
 Started from sick despair, or if there flew
 One murmur on the wind, or if some word
 Which none can gather yet, the distant crowd has stirred.

XI.

Why became cheeks wan with the kiss of death,
 Paler from hope? they had sustained despair.
 Why watched those myriads with suspended breath
 Sleepless a second night? they are not here
 The victims, and hour by hour, a vision drear,
 Warm corpses fall upon the clay-cold¹ dead;
 And even in death their lips are wreathed with fear.—
 The crowd is mute and moveless—overhead
 Silent Arcturus shines—ha! hear'st thou not the tread

¹ *Clay cold*, without a hyphen, in Shelley's edition.

XII.

Of rushing feet? laughter? the shout, the scream,
 Of triumph not to be contained? see! hark!
 They come, they come, give way! alas, ye deem
 Falsely—'tis but a crowd of maniacs stark
 Driven, like a troop of spectres, thro' the dark,
 From the choked well, whence a bright death-fire sprung,
 A lurid earth-star, which dropped many a spark
 From its blue train, and spreading widely, clung
 To their wild hair, like mist the topmost pines among.

XIII.

And many from the crowd collected there,
 Joined that strange dance in fearful sympathies;
 There was the silence of a long despair,
 When the last echo of those terrible cries
 Came from a distant street, like agonies
 Stifled afar.—Before the Tyrant's throne
 All night his aged Senate sate, their eyes
 In stony expectation fixed; when one¹
 Sudden before them stood, a Stranger and alone.

XIV.

Dark Priests and haughty Warriors gazed on him
 With baffled wonder, for a hermit's vest
 Concealed his face; but when he spake, his tone,
 Ere yet the matter did their thoughts arrest,
 Earnest, benignant, calm, as from a breast
 Void of all hate or terror, made them start;
 For as with gentle accents he addressed
 His speech to them, on each unwilling heart
 Unusual awe did fall—a spirit-quelling dart.

¹ This transition into the third person is very curious: Laon, hitherto narrating his deeds in the first person, suddenly drops that method and starts in another. At stanza V of

the next Canto, Shelley seems to have awoke to the need of identifying Laon, the narrator, with the stranger: I, Laon, led by mutes, ascend my bier, etc.

XV.

"Ye Princes of the Earth, ye sit aghast
 Amid the ruin which yourselves have made,
 Yes, Desolation¹ heard your trumpet's blast,
 And sprang from sleep!—dark Terror has obeyed
 Your bidding—O, that I whom ye have made
 Your foe, could set my dearest enemy free
 From pain and fear! but evil casts a shade,
 Which cannot pass so soon, and Hate must be
 The nurse and parent still of an ill progeny.

XVI.

"Ye turn to God² for aid in your distress;
 Alas, that ye, the³ mighty and the wise,
 Who, if ye⁴ dared, might not aspire to less
 Than ye conceive of power, should fear the lies
 Which thou, and thou, didst frame for mysteries
 To blind your slaves:—consider your own thought,
 An empty and a cruel sacrifice
 Ye now prepare, for a vain idol wrought
 Out of the fears and hate which vain desires have brought.

XVII.

"Ye seek for happiness—alas, the day!
 Ye find it not in luxury nor in gold,
 Nor in the fame, nor in the envied sway
 For which, O willing slaves to Custom old,
 Severe task-mistress!⁵ ye your hearts have sold.
 Ye seek for peace, and when ye die, to dream
 No evil dreams: all mortal things are cold.

¹ *Desolation* with a small *d* in Shelley's edition.

² *Heaven* in *The Revolt of Islam*.

³ This passage reads "tho' mighty and the wise" in Shelley's edition.

Mrs. Shelley rightly substituted *the* for *tho'*.

⁴ In *The Revolt*, *he* is misprinted for *ye*.

⁵ There is no hyphen in Shelley's edition.

And senseless then; if aught survive, I deem
It must be love and joy, for they immortal seem.

XVIII.

"Fear not the future, weep not for the past.
O, could I win your ears to dare be now
Glorious, and great, and calm! that ye would cast
Into the dust those symbols of your woe,
Purple, and gold, and steel! that ye would go
Proclaiming to the nations whence ye came,
That Want, and Plague, and Fear, from slavery flow;
And that mankind is free, and that the shame
Of royalty and faith is lost in freedom's fame.

XIX.

"If thus 'tis well—if not, I come to say
That Laon"—while the Stranger spoke, among
The Council¹ sudden tumult and affray
Arose, for many of those warriors young,
Had on his eloquent accents fed and hung
Like bees on mountain flowers; they knew the truth,
And from their thrones in vindication sprung;
The men of faith and law then without ruth
Drew forth their secret steel, and stabbed each ardent youth.

XX.

They stabbed them in the back and sneered—a slave
Who stood behind the throne, those corpses drew
Each to its bloody, dark, and secret grave;
And one more daring raised his steel anew
To pierce the Stranger: "What hast thou to do
With me, poor wretch?"—Calm, solemn, and severe,

¹ In *Laon and Cythna* there is a comma at *council*, which is there spelt with a small c: in *The Revolt of Islam*,

no doubt advisedly, the comma is removed, and a capital *C* introduced.

That voice unstrung his sinews, and he threw
 His dagger on the ground, and pale with fear,
 Sate silently—his voice then did the Stranger rear.

XXI.

“It doth avail not that I weep for ye—
 Ye cannot change, since ye are old and grey,
 And ye have chosen your lot—your fame must be
 A book of blood, whence in a milder day
 Men shall learn truth, when ye are wrapt in clay:
 Now ye shall triumph. I am Laon’s friend,
 And him to your revenge will I betray,
 So ye concede one easy boon. Attend!
 For now I speak of things which ye can apprehend.

XXII.

“There is a People mighty in its youth,
 A land beyond the Oceans of the West,
 Where, tho’ with rudest rites, Freedom and Truth
 Are worshipped; from a glorious Mother’s breast,
 Who, since high Athens fell, among the rest
 Sate like the Queen of Nations, but in woe,
 By inbred monsters outraged and oppressed,
 Turns to her chainless child for succour now,
 It draws¹ the milk of Power in Wisdom’s fullest flow.

XXIII.

“That² land is like an Eagle, whose young gaze
 Feeds on the noontide beam, whose golden plume
 Floats moveless on the storm, and in the blaze
 Of sun-rise gleams when Earth is wrapt in gloom;
 An epitaph of glory for the tomb

¹ *And draws* in Mrs. Shelley’s editions of 1839.

² *This for that* in Mrs. Shelley’s editions.

Of murdered Europe may thy fame be made,
 Great People: as the sands shalt thou become;
 Thy growth is swift as morn, when night must fade;
 The multitudinous Earth shall sleep beneath thy shade.

XXIV.

"Yes, in the desert there¹ is built a home
 For Freedom. Genius is made strong to rear
 The monuments of man beneath the dome
 Of a new Heaven; myriads assemble there,
 Whom the proud lords of man, in rage or fear,
 Drive from their wasted homes: the boon I pray
 Is this,—that Cythna² shall be convoyed³ there—
 Nay, start not at the name—America!
 And then to you this night Laon will I betray.

XXV.

"With me do what ye will. I am your foe!"
 The light of such a joy as makes the stare
 Of hungry snakes like living emeralds glow,
 Shone in a hundred human eyes—"Where, where
 Is Laon?—⁴haste! fly! drag him swiftly here!
 We grant thy boon."—"I put no trust in ye,
 Swear by your dreadful God."⁵—"We swear, we swear!"
 The Stranger threw his vest back suddenly,
 And smiled in gentle pride, and said, "Lo! I am he!"

¹ Then in Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions,—an obvious typographical error.

² Mr. Rossetti substitutes *Laone* for *that Cythna*, because he says *Laone* was the only name they knew Cythna by.

³ Conveyed in *Laon and Cythna*;

conveyed in *The Revolt of Islam*,—a correction of Shelley's, made in my copy.

⁴ This pause occurs in *Laon and Cythna*, but is wanting in *The Revolt*.

⁵ Swear by the Power ye dread, in *The Revolt of Islam*.

Canto Twelfth.

I.

THE transport of a fierce and monstrous gladness
Spread thro' the multitudinous streets, fast flying
Upon the winds of fear; from his dull madness
The starveling waked, and died in joy; the dying,
Among the corpses in stark agony lying,
Just heard the happy tidings, and in hope
Closed their faint eyes; from house to house replying
With loud acclaim, the living shook Heaven's cope,
And filled the startled Earth with echoes: morn did ope

II.

Its pale eyes then; and lo! the long array
Of guards in golden arms, and Priests¹ beside,
Singing their bloody hymns, whose garbs betray
The blackness of the faith it seems² to hide;

¹ In this place *Priests* is spelt with a small *p* in Shelley's edition.

² Mr. Rossetti alters *it seems to they seem*. I think however that Shelley, had he chosen to change the passage at all, would have been much more likely to make it read

and lo! the long arrays

Of guards in golden arms, and priests beside,
Singing their bloody hymns, whose garb
betrays

The blackness of the faith, &c.

thus getting rid of the somewhat awkward plural, *garbs*; but where we can but guess, the text should remain as it is.

And see, the Tyrant's gem-wrought chariot glide
Among the gloomy cowls and glittering spears—
A Shape of light is sitting by his side,
A child most beautiful. I'the midst appears
Laon,—exempt alone from mortal hopes and fears.

III.

His head and feet are bare, his hands are bound
Behind with heavy chains, yet none do wreak
Their scoffs on him, tho' myriads throng around;
There are no sneers upon his lip which speak
That scorn or hate has made him bold; his cheek
Resolve has not turned pale,—his eyes are mild
And calm, and like the morn about to break,
Smile on mankind—his heart seems reconciled
To all things and itself, like a reposing child.

IV.

Tumult was in the soul of all beside,
Ill joy, or doubt, or fear; but those who saw
Their tranquil victim pass, felt wonder glide
Into their brain, and became calm with awe.—
See, the slow pageant near the pile doth draw.
A thousand torches in the spacious square,
Borne by the ready slaves of ruthless law,
Await the signal round: the morning fair
Is changed to a dim night by that unnatural glare.

V.

And see! beneath a sun-bright canopy,
Upon a platform level with the pile,
The anxious Tyrant sit, enthroned on high,
Girt by the chieftains of the host; all smile
In expectation, but one child: the while
I, Laon, led by mutes, ascend my bier

Of fire, and look around; each distant isle
Is dark in the bright dawn; towers far and near,
Pierce like reposing flames the tremulous atmosphere.

VI.

There was such silence through the host, as when
An earthquake trampling on some populous town,
Has crushed ten thousand with one tread, and men
Expect the second; all were mute but one,
That fairest child, who, bold with love, alone
Stood up before the King, without avail,
Pleading for Laon's life—her stifled groan
Was heard—she trembled like one¹ aspen pale
Among the gloomy pines of a Norwegian vale.

VII.

What were his thoughts linked in the morning sun,
Among those reptiles, stingless with delay,
Even like a tyrant's wrath?—the signal gun
Roared—hark, again! in that dread pause he lay
As in a quiet dream—the slaves obey—
A thousand torches drop,—and hark, the last
Bursts on that awful silence; far away
Millions, with hearts that beat both loud and fast,
Watch for the springing flame expectant and aghast.

VIII.

They fly—the torches fall—a cry of fear
Has startled the triumphant! they recede!
For ere the cannon's roar has died, they hear
The tramp of hoofs like earthquake, and a steed
Dark and gigantic, with the tempest's speed,
Bursts thro' their ranks: a woman sits thereon,

¹ In Mrs. Shelley's editions *an* is substituted for *one*—much to the detriment of the figure's force. In

Shelley's edition *aspen* is spelt *aspin*; but I do not imagine that this orthography was deliberate.

Fairer it seems than aught that earth can breed,
 Calm, radiant, like the phantom of the dawn,
 A spirit from the caves of day-light wandering gone.

IX.

All thought it was God's Angel come to sweep
 The lingering guilty to their fiery grave ;
 The Tyrant¹ from his throne in dread did leap,—
 Her innocence his child from fear did save ;
 Scared by the faith they feigned, each priestly slave
 Knelt for his mercy whom they served with blood,
 And, like the reflux of a mighty wave
 Sucked into the loud sea, the multitude
 With crushing panic, fled in terror's altered mood.

X.

They pause, they blush, they gaze,—a gathering shout
 Bursts like one sound from the ten thousand streams
 Of a tempestuous sea :—that sudden rout
 One checked, who, never in his mildest dreams
 Felt awe from grace or loveliness, the seams
 Of his rent heart so hard and cold a creed
 Had seared with blistering ice—but he misdeems
 That he is wise, whose wounds do only bleed
 Inly for self, thus thought that Christian Priest² indeed,

XI.

And others too, thought he was wise to see,
 In pain, and fear, and hate, something divine ;³
 In love and beauty—no divinity.—
 Now with a bitter smile, whose light did shine
 Like a fiend's hope upon his lips and eyne,
 He said, and the persuasion of that sneer

¹ Tyrant with a small *t* in *The Revolt of Islam*.

² In *The Revolt of Islam* we have

again the Iberian Priest.

³ The semi-colon is supplied by Mrs. Shelley.

Rallied his trembling comrades—"Is it mine
To stand alone, when kings and soldiers fear
A woman? God has sent his other victim¹ here."

XII.

"Were it not impious," said the King, "to break
Our holy oath?"—"Impious to keep it, say!"
Shrieked the exulting Priest—"Slaves, to the stake
Bind her, and on my head the burthen lay
Of her just torments:—at the Judgment Day
Will I stand up before God's golden throne,
And cry, O Lord, to thee did I betray
An Atheist;² but for me she would have known
Another moment's joy! the glory be thine own."

XIII.

They trembled, but replied not, nor obeyed,
Pausing in breathless silence. Cythna sprung
From her gigantic steed, who, like a shade
Chased by the winds, those vacant streets among
Fled tameless, as the brazen rein she flung
Upon his neck, and kissed his moonèd brow.
A piteous sight, that one so fair and young,
The clasp of such a fearful death should woo
With smiles of tender joy as beamed from Cythna now.

XIV.

The warm tears burst in spite of faith and fear,
From many a tremulous eye, but like soft dews
Which feed spring's earliest buds, hung gathered there,

¹ *Heaven has sent its other victim*, in
The Revolt of Islam.

² In *The Revolt of Islam* this passage
is altered to

Will I stand up before the golden throne

VOL. I.

Of Heaven, and cry, to thee did I betray
An Infidel;

and Mrs. Shelley makes the further
change of substituting *I did* for *did I*
in line 7.

Frozen by doubt,—alas, they could not chuse,
 But weep; for when her faint limbs did refuse
 To climb the pyre, upon the mutes she smiled;
 And with her eloquent gestures, and the hues
 Of her quick lips, even as a weary child
 Wins sleep from some fond nurse with its caresses mild,

XV.

She won them, tho' unwilling, her to bind
 Near me, among the snakes.¹ When there² had fled
 One soft reproach that was most thrilling kind,
 She smiled on me, and nothing then we said,
 But each upon the other's countenance fed
 Looks of insatiate love; the mighty veil
 Which doth divide the living and the dead
 Was almost rent, the world grew dim and pale,—
 All light in Heaven or Earth beside our love did fail.—

¹ *Snakes* is changed to *stakes* in Mrs. Shelley's editions later than 1839.

² In Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions, *When then had fled*. It seems to me absolutely certain that *then* is wrong; and I should have altered it in the text, without further remark than a note of the change, had there not happened to be proof that there might be not only two but three opinions. Mr. Rossetti suggests that *then* was possibly a result of the influence of the succeeding *then* "on the mind of the compositor," and adds that "one may understand it to mean—'When then one soft and kind reproach had fled [from Cythna's lips]'"—which is of course the obvious meaning of the original text. But Mr. Rossetti, admitting this, confidently substitutes *they* for *then*, and says it seems to him that this sense and reading are "convincing,"—the sense "when the mutes had fled from the burning pyre, Cythna smiled on me one soft and kind reproach." But, in the first place, the pyre had not been lighted: at the

penultimate gun-shot of the "signal round" (stanza IV) "a thousand torches drop" (stanza VII), presumably that the slaves who held them might march towards the pyre with torches extended; and, as the last gun-shot is fired, Cythna's horse appears, and "they fly—the torches fall" (stanza VIII). The true reading, I feel certain, is "when *there* had fled one soft reproach," &c., the influence on the compositor's mind being that of the very common difficulty in distinguishing between *then* and *there* in manuscript. "She smiled on me, and nothing *then* we said," almost implies that something had been said before; and the something was apparently Cythna's "soft reproach." This reading is simpler, mechanically, than Mr. Rossetti's, does not involve other change (as his does), and leaves the sense entirely direct and unstrained, as his does not: still, in the face of his known and acknowledged ability, I make my own emendation in the text with some hesitation.

XVI.

Yet,—yet—one brief relapse, like the last beam
Of dying flames, the stainless air around
Hung silent and serene—a blood-red gleam
Burst upwards, hurling fiercely from the ground
The globèd smoke,—I heard the mighty sound
Of its uprise, like a tempestuous ocean;
And, thro' its chasms I saw, as in a swoond,
The tyrant's child fall without life or motion
Before his throne, subdued by some unseen emotion.¹

XVII.

And is this death? the pyre has disappeared,
The Pestilence, the Tyrant, and the throng;
The flames grow silent—slowly there is heard
The music of a breath-suspending song,
Which, like the kiss of love when life is young,
Steeps the faint eyes in darkness sweet and deep;
With ever changing notes it floats along,
Till on my passive soul there seemed to creep
A melody, like waves on wrinkled sands that leap.

XVIII.

The warm touch of a soft and tremulous hand
Wakened me then; lo, Cythna sate reclined
Beside me, on the waved and golden sand
Of a clear pool, upon a bank o'ertwined
With strange and star-bright flowers, which to the wind
Breathed divine odour; high above, was spread
The emerald heaven of trees of unknown kind,
Whose moonlike blooms and bright fruit overhead
A shadow, which was light, upon the waters shed.

¹ According to the traditions of English criticism, this use of *motion* and *emotion* as a rhyme will rank as

an addition to the list of metric irregularities.

XIX.

And round about sloped many a lawny mountain
With incense-bearing forests,¹ and vast caves
Of marble radiance to that mighty fountain;
And where the flood its own bright margin laves,
Their echoes talk with its eternal waves,
Which, from the depths whose jagged caverns breed
Their unreposing strife, it lifts and heaves,—
Till thro' a chasm of hills they roll, and feed
A river deep, which flies with smooth but arrowy speed.

XX.

As we sate gazing in a trance of wonder,
A boat approached, borne by the musical air
Along the waves which sung and sparkled under
Its rapid keel—a wingèd shape sate there,
A child with silver-shining wings, so fair,
That as her bark did thro' the waters glide,
The shadow of the lingering waves did wear
Light, as from starry beams; from side to side,
While veering to the wind her plumes the bark did guide.

XXI.

The boat was one curved shell of hollow pearl,
Almost translucent with the light divine
Of her within; the prow and stern did curl
Hornèd on high, like the young moon supine,
When o'er dim twilight mountains dark with pine,²
It floats upon the sunset's sea of beams,
Whose golden waves in many a purple line

¹ Probably a reminiscence of the "incense-bearing" trees of Coleridge's wonderful poem *Kubla Khan*, of which this whole stanza smacks: Shelley must have known it when he

and Byron discussed *Christabel*, with which it was published.

² Another rhyme similar to that noted in the foregoing page.

Fade fast, till borne on sunlight's ebbing streams,
Dilating, on earth's verge the sunken meteor gleams.

XXII.

Its keel has struck the sands beside our feet;—
Then Cythna turned to me, and from her eyes
Which swam with unshed tears, a look more sweet
Than happy love, a wild and glad surprise,
Glanced as she spake; "Aye, this is Paradise
And not a dream, and we are all united!
Lo, that is mine own child, who in the guise
Of madness came, like day to one benighted
In lonesome woods: my heart is now too well requited!"

XXIII.

And then she wept aloud, and in her arms
Clasped that bright Shape, less marvellously fair
Than her own human hues and living charms;
Which, as she leaned in passion's silence there,
Breathed warmth on the cold bosom of the air,
Which seemed to blush and tremble with delight;
The glossy darkness of her streaming hair
Fell o'er that snowy child, and wrapt from sight
The fond and long embrace which did their hearts unite.

XXIV.

Then the bright child, the plumèd Seraph came,
And fixed its blue and beaming eyes on mine,
And said, "I was disturbed by tremulous shame
When once we met, yet knew that I was thine
From the same hour in which thy lips divine
Kindled a clinging dream within my brain,
Which ever waked when I might sleep, to twine
Thine image with *her* memory dear—again
We meet; exempted now from mortal fear or pain.

XXV.

“When the consuming flames had wrapt ye round,
 The hope which I had cherished went away;
 I fell in agony on the senseless ground,
 And hid mine eyes in dust, and far astray
 My mind was gone, when bright, like dawning day,
 The Spectre of the Plague before me flew,
 And breathed upon my lips, and seemed to say,
 ‘They wait for thee belovèd;’¹—then I knew
 The death-mark on my breast, and became calm anew.²

XXVI.

“It was the calm of love—for I was dying.
 I saw the black and half-extinguished pyre
 In its own grey and shrunken ashes lying;
 The pitchy smoke of the departed fire
 Still hung in many a hollow dome and spire
 Above the towers like night; beneath whose shade
 Awed by the ending of their own desire
 The armies stood; a vacancy was made
 In expectation’s depth, and so they stood dismayed.³

XXVII.

“The frightful silence of that altered mood,
 The tortures of the dying clove alone,
 Till one uprose among the multitude,
 And said—‘The flood of time is rolling on,
 We stand upon its brink, whilst *they* are gone
 To glide in peace down death’s mysterious stream.
 Have ye done well? they moulder flesh and bone,
 Who might have made this life’s envenomed dream
 A sweeter draught than ye will ever taste, I deem.

¹ This speech within a speech has double turned commas in Shelley’s edition,—of course through an over-

sight, whether Shelley’s or the printer’s.

^{2 3} Two more rhymes of the kind noted at pp. 291 and 292.

XXVIII.

"These perish as the good and great of yore
 Have perished, and their murderers will repent,
 Yes, vain and barren tears shall flow before
 Yon smoke has faded from the firmament
 Even for this cause, that ye who must lament¹
 The death of those that made this world so fair,
 Cannot recall them now; but then² is lent
 To man the wisdom of a high despair,
 When such can die, and he live on and linger here.

XXIX.

"Aye, ye may fear not now the Pestilence,
 From fabled hell as by a charm withdrawn,
 All power and faith must pass, since calmly hence
 In torment and in fire have Atheists gone;³
 And ye must sadly turn away, and moan
 In secret, to his home each one returning,
 And to long ages shall this hour be known;
 And slowly shall its memory, ever burning,
 Fill this dark night of things with an eternal morning.

XXX.

"For me the world is grown too void and cold,
 Since hope pursues immortal destiny
 With steps thus slow—therefore shall ye behold
 How Atheists and Republicans can die—⁴
 Tell to your children this!' then suddenly

¹ Another rhyme like those noted on the preceding pages.

² In Shelley's and as far as I know all subsequent editions, we read *then* here. I feel almost certain this is again a printer's error for *there*: the two words in Shelley's manuscript of that period are often identical; and such a mistake would easily escape notice.

³ In *The Revolt of Islam* this line is In pain and fire have unbelievers gone.

⁴ In *The Revolt of Islam* we get How those who love, yet fear not, dare to die; a line which it must surely have been pain and grief to Shelley to substitute. In the written line in my copy there is no comma at *love*.

He sheathed a dagger in his heart and fell;
My brain grew dark in death, and yet to me
There came a murmur from the crowd, to tell
Of deep and mighty change which suddenly befell.¹

XXXI.

"Then suddenly I stood a wingèd Thought
Before the immortal Senate, and the seat
Of that star-shining spirit, whence is wrought
The strength of its dominion, good and great,
The better Genius of this world's estate.
His realm around one mighty Fane is spread,
Elysian islands bright and fortunate,
Calm dwellings of the free and happy dead,
Where I am sent to lead!" these wingèd words she said,

XXXII.

And with the silence of her eloquent smile,
Bade us embark in her divine canoe;
Then at the helm we took our seat, the while
Above her head those plumes of dazzling hue
Into the winds' invisible stream she threw,
Sitting beside the prow: like gossamer,
On the swift breath of morn, the vessel flew
O'er the bright whirlpools of that fountain fair,
Whose shores receded fast, whilst we seemed lingering there;

XXXIII.

Till down that mighty stream dark, calm, and fleet,
Between a chasm of cedarn² mountains riven,
Chased by the thronging winds whose viewless feet
As swift as twinkling beams, had, under Heaven,
From woods and waves wild sounds and odours driven,

¹ Another questionable rhyme.

² So in Shelley's, but *cedar* in Mrs. Shelley's editions: no doubt the

Miltonic adjective *cedarn*, another word from Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, is right.

The boat fled¹ visibly—three nights and days,
 Borne like a cloud thro' morn, and noon, and even,
 We sailed along the winding watery ways
 Of the vast stream, a long and labyrinthine maze.

XXXIV.

A scene of joy and wonder to behold
 That river's shapes and shadows changing ever,
 Where the broad sunrise, filled with deepening gold,
 Its whirlpools, where all hues did spread and quiver,
 And where melodious falls did burst and shiver
 Among rocks clad with flowers, the foam and spray
 Sparkled like stars upon the sunny river,
 Or when the moonlight poured a holier day,
 One vast and glittering lake around green islands lay.

XXXV.

Morn, noon, and even, that boat of pearl outran
 The streams which bore it, like the arrowy cloud
 Of tempest, or the speedier thought of man,
 Which fieth forth and cannot make abode,
 Sometimes thro' forests, deep like night, we glode,
 Between the walls of mighty mountains crowned
 With Cyclopean piles, whose turrets proud,
 The homes of the departed, dimly frowned
 O'er the bright waves which girt their dark foundations round.

XXXVI.

Sometimes between the wide and flowering meadows,
 Mile after mile we sailed, and 'twas delight
 To see far off the sunbeams chase the shadows
 Over the grass; sometimes beneath the night
 Of wide and vaulted caves, whose roofs were bright

¹ The word *fled* is changed to *flew* in Mrs. Shelley's editions; but the same change is not made in line 6 of stanza XXXVI (p. 298) or line 7 of stanza XXXIX (p. 299).

With starry gems, we fled, whilst from their deep
 And dark-green chasms, shades beautiful and white,
 Amid sweet sounds across our path would sweep,
 Like swift and lovely dreams that walk the waves of sleep.

XXXVII.

And ever as we sailed, our minds were full
 Of love and wisdom, which would overflow
 In converse wild, and sweet, and wonderful;¹
 And in quick smiles whose light would come and go,
 Like music o'er wide waves, and in the flow²
 Of sudden tears, and in the mute caress—
 For a deep shade was cleft, and we did know,
 That virtue, tho' obscured on Earth, not less
 Survives all mortal change in lasting loveliness.

XXXVIII.

Three days and nights we sailed, as thought and feeling
 Number delightful hours—for thro' the sky
 The spherèd lamps of day and night, revealing
 New changes and new glories, rolled on high,
 Sun, Moon, and moonlike lamps, the progeny
 Of a diviner Heaven, serene and fair:
 On the fourth day, wild as a wind-wrought sea
 The stream became, and fast and faster bare
 The spirit-wingèd boat, steadily speeding there.

XXXIX.

Steady³ and swift, where the waves rolled like mountains
 Within the vast ravine, whose rifts did pour
 Tumultuous floods from their ten thousand fountains,
 The thunder of whose earth-uplifting roar

^{1 2} Two more of the questionable rhymes of which so many occur in this Canto.

³ *Steadily* in Mrs. Shelley's editions.

Made the air sweep in whirlwinds from the shore,
 Calm as a shade, the boat of that fair child
 Securely fled, that rapid stress before,
 Amid the topmost spray, and sunbows wild,
 Wreathed in the silver mist: in joy and pride we smiled.

XL.

The torrent of that wide and raging river
 Is past, and our ærial speed suspended.
 We look behind; a golden mist did quiver
 Where¹ its wild surges with the lake were blended:
 Our bark hung there, as on a line suspended²
 Between two heavens, that windless waveless lake;
 Which four great cataracts from four vales, attended

¹ *When* in Shelley's edition, and Mrs. Shelley's; but changed by Mr. Rossetti to *Where*. I have no doubt the meaning is that the boat had shot down the fall of the river and out into the calm of the lake, and that the occupants looked back at the juncture of river and lake, *where* a golden mist quivered always, not at any particular time.

² This is printed as *one line suspended* in Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions. Metre and sense combine to make *on a line* an absolutely certain emendation, the credit of which belongs by priority of publication to Mr. Rossetti: that particular boat would not have been compared to one line (see the description of it in stanza XXI, p. 292); but the comparison of a watery surface to a line between the heaven and its reflection was a favourite thought of Shelley's, as in the verses,

Lo! the sun upsprings behind,
 Broad, red, radiant, half reclined
 On the level quivering line
 Of the waters crystalline.

(*Lines written among the Euganean Hills*), and again in the following, from *The Magic Plant*:—

And thus it lay in the Elysian calm
 Of its own beauty, floating on the line
 Which, like a film in purest space divided
 The heaven beneath the water from the heaven
 Above the clouds.

The two lines, as left by Shelley,
 Our bark hung there, as on a line suspended
 Between two heavens, that windless waveless
 lake

are clearly elliptical; but I suspect the ellipsis is merely the omission of the word *on* before *that windless waveless lake*,—that Shelley meant "our boat hung there, namely on the lake." He may however have meant to leave *line* and *lake* in simple apposition, and not noticed that this made the boat hang *as* on the lake, when it was *actually* on the lake: any way I do not think the punctuation will bear interfering with; but Mr. Rossetti points the stanza thus:—

The torrent of that wide and raging river
 Is passed, and our ærial speed suspended.
 We look behind; a golden mist did quiver
 Where its wild surges with the lake were
 blended,—

(Our bark hung there—as on a line, sus-
 pended

Between two heavens)—that windless
 waveless lake

Which four great cataracts from four vales,
 attended

By mists, aye feed: from rocks and clouds
 they break,

And of that azure sea a silent refuge make.

It seems to me that, by separating the passage which he gives in a parenthesis, he produces a kind of grammatical construction altogether unlike Shelley's, though strictly correct. The setting of *suspended* twice in this

By mists, aye feed ; from rocks and clouds they break,
And of that azure sea a silent refuge make.

XLI.

Motionless resting on the lake awhile,
I saw its marge of snow-bright mountains rear
Their peaks aloft, I saw each radiant isle,
And in the midst, afar, even like a sphere
Hung in one¹ hollow sky, did there appear
The Temple of the Spirit ; on the sound
Which issued thence, drawn nearer and more near,
Like the swift moon this glorious earth around,
The charmed boat approached, and there its haven found.

stanza, to serve as a rhyme, brings back the question of metric irregularities ; and it is to be observed that they come pretty thickly in this last Canto, if indeed they are to be so regarded,—which is after all an open question. In stanza VI (p. 287) we have *avail* and *vale*, in stanza VII (*ibid.*) *delay* and *lay*, in stanza XVI (p. 291) *motion* and *emotion* (a rhyme which recurs in the Fourth Act of *Prometheus Unbound*), in stanza XXI (p. 292) *pine* and *supine*, in stanza XXV (p. 294) *knew* and *anew*, in stanza XXVI (*ibid.*) *made* and *dismayed*, in stanza XXVIII (p. 295) *firmament* and *lament*, in stanza XXX (p. 296) *fell* and *befell*, in stanza XXXVII (p. 298) *full* and *wonderful*, as well as *flow* and *overflow*. Several of these are precisely analogous to such rhymes as Dante's *gemme* and *ingemme* in the *Paradiso*, and are in accordance with common continental

practice. Among contemporary English poets, Mr. Swinburne, whom no one has ever yet called a lax craftsman, defends this practice by example and precept. "The license," he says (*Essays and Studies*, p. 185), "if license it be, of perfection in the echo of a rhyme is forbidden only, and wrongly, by English critics." With all deference to such an authority, I confess that I do not regard this dictum as a final settlement of the question at large, however heartily I concur in protesting against any attempt to correct Shelley in any usage whatever.

¹ I suspect we should read *the* for *one* : it is hard to see what idea was meant to be conveyed by *one hollow sky*. *One* for *the* is among the commonest of printer's errors ; and the two words were often barely distinguishable in Shelley's writing.

Finis.

The imprint of *Laon and Cythna* is as follows :—

London : Printed by B. M'Millan, }
Bow Street, Covent Garden. }

SHELLEY'S LIST OF ERRATA.

[For the use of those who possess copies of the original edition of either *Laon and Cythna* or *The Revolt of Islam*, with the list of *errata* wanting, as it sometimes is, an exact reprint of it is appended.]

E R R A T A.

—◆—

The Author deems it right to state, that the following Errata are not attributable to the Printer.

- Page 37, line 6, *for our, read one.*
- 54, — 16, *for sands, read sand.*
 - 76, — 14, *for wore, read wove.*
 - 81, — 15, *for looks, read look.*
 - 83, — 14, *for Thy, read My.*
 - 90, — 1, *for were, read was.*
 - 107, — 4, *for whileom, read which once.*
 - 109, — 16, *for spread, read shed.*
 - 110, — 12, *for when, read where.*
 - 116, — 5, *for when, read where.*
 - 125, — 15, *for their, read her.*
 - 161, — 14, *for these, read there.*
 - 182, — 2, *for the shade, the dream, read the dream, the shade.*
 - 182, — 12, *for and, read or.*
 - 182, — 12, *for these, read those.*
 - 190, — 8, *for looks, read locks.*
 - 190, — 14, *read, for your own.*
 - 197, — 16, *for then, read their.*
 - 198, — 16, *for bound, read wound.*
 - 204, — 5, *for bearest, read wearest.*
 - 255, — 2, *for waves, read streams.*
 - 264, — 14, *for mourn, read moan.*

[On the opposite page will be found a repetition of this list, specifying the Canto, stanza, and line in which each correction was to be made, and rendering it available for reference to any edition.—H. B. F.]

SHELLEY'S LIST OF ERRATA FOR
LAON AND CYTHNA (THE REVOLT OF ISLAM)

MADE AVAILABLE FOR REFERENCE TO ALL EDITIONS.

Canto.	Stanza.	Line in Stanza	Correction.	Page in present volume.
II	X	6	<i>for our, read one.</i>	134
II	XLV	7	<i>for sands, read sand.</i>	146
IV	III	5	<i>for wore, read wove.</i>	163
IV	XIII	6	<i>for looks, read look.</i>	166
IV	XVII	5	<i>for Thy, read My.</i>	167
IV	XXX	1	<i>for were, read was.</i>	172
V	XXVIII	4	<i>for whileom, read which once.</i>	183
V	XXXIII	7	<i>for spread, read shed.</i>	185
V	XXXV	3	<i>for when, read where.</i>	185
V	XLVI	5	<i>for when, read where.</i>	189
V	LV	6	<i>for their, read her.</i>	195
VII	XI	5	<i>for these, read there.</i>	221
VIII	X	2	<i>for the shade, the dream, read the dream, } the shade.</i>	235
VIII	XI	3	<i>for and, read or.</i>	236
VIII	XI	3	<i>for these, read those.</i>	236
VIII	XXVI	8	<i>for looks, read locks.</i>	241
VIII	XXVII	5	<i>read, for your own.</i>	242
IX	IX	7	<i>for then, read their.</i>	247
IX	XI	7	<i>for bound, read wound.</i>	247
IX	XXII	5	<i>for bearest, read wearest.</i>	252
XII	X	2	<i>for waves, read streams.</i>	288
XII	XXIX	5	<i>for mourn, read moan.</i>	295

It was of course unnecessary for me to specify in separate footnotes the carrying out of all these alterations indicated by Shelley himself.—H. B. F.

305

ROSALIND AND HELEN.

[*Rosalind and Helen*, &c., of which the original title-page is given opposite, is a thin octavo volume, printed in the spring of 1819, and consisting of fly-title *Rosalind and Helen*, title-page, 2 pages of preface (called "advertisement"), contents, fly-title *Rosalind and Helen, a Modern Eclogue*, and text pp. 3 to 92. On the back of the first fly-title are advertisements of *The Revolt of Islam* and *Alastor*, and also an imprint, "C. H. REYNELL, Broad-street, Golden-square, London." At the end of the book are four pages of Ollier's advertisements,—of works by Lamb, Hunt, Shelley, Barry Cornwall, and Ollier. The fly-titles and contents, I insert in their places. In a letter to his publisher, dated "Leghorn, September 6th, 1819," Shelley says—"In the *Rosalind and Helen*, I see there are some few errors, which are so much the worse because they are errors in the sense. If there should be any danger of a second edition, I will correct them."—(*Shelley Memorials*, p. 119.) Whether he revised a copy, and, if so, whether Mrs. Shelley subsequently made use of it for her edition, I have no positive knowledge; but I do not discover in the variations between her text and his any trace of such a copy, and therefore think she left these "errors in the sense" uncorrected. As far as I am aware no entire MS. of *Rosalind and Helen* exists; but Mr. Garnett tells me of a fragment, written in pencil in a note-book, among Sir Percy Shelley's MSS.,—the conclusion of the poem,—presenting no variation from the printed text. Of the other three poems in the *Rosalind and Helen* volume, the only MSS. I know of are Sir Percy Shelley's pencil draft of the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, the variations shewn by which, communicated to me by Mr. Garnett, belong to an early stage of the composition,—and Mr. Locker's MS. of the interpolated passage relating to Byron in the *Lines written among the Euganean Hills*.—H. B. F.]

307

ROSALIND AND HELEN,

A MODERN ECLOGUE;

WITH

OTHER POEMS:

BY

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. AND J. OLLIER,

VERE STREET, BOND STREET.

1819.

ADVERTISEMENT.

[BY SHELLEY.]

THE story of "Rosalind and Helen" is, undoubtedly, not an attempt in the highest style of poetry.¹ It is in no degree calculated to excite profound meditation; and if, by interesting the affections and amusing the imagination, it awaken a certain ideal melancholy favourable to the reception of more important impressions, it will produce in the reader all that the writer experienced in the composition. I resigned myself, as I wrote, to the impulse of the feelings which moulded the conception of the story; and this

¹ Mrs. Shelley tells us that *Rosalind and Helen* was begun at Marlow, and thrown aside till she found it, when, at her request, Shelley finished it at the Baths of Lucca in the Summer of 1818; and Lady Shelley (*Memorials*, p. 87) says that a large part of it was written in 1817 (when the Shelleys lived at Marlow); but it is not stated whether this was in the Spring or Winter,—before or after the composition of *Laon and Cythna*, which occupied the summer and autumn. The lapse of many eventful months may account for some of the inconsistencies in detail; and the fact that Shelley had to be urged to finish it at all shews how little he prized it, and how little, therefore, he would have been likely to bring it up to any high degree of finish. In a letter to Peacock, written from Rome on the 6th of April 1819, while this Eclogue was being printed, the poet, after enquiring with some anxiety after the safety of his *Lines written among the Euga-*

nean Hills, says of *Rosalind and Helen*, "I lay no stress on it one way or the other." On the whole, therefore, I should imagine that it was hastily written with the full knowledge that such was the case, and that Shelley deliberately declined to reduce it to perfection of detail, however willing to correct "errors in the sense". If so, to attempt to make good the omission of rhymes and so on is simply to invade the poem with rash assistance, and forget the fate of *Uzza*. The very imperfections have a value; and the great beauty of passages in every page becomes the more wonderful. Peacock appears to have seen the book through the press, a circumstance which accounts for the general scarcity of Shelley's favourite item of punctuation, the pause, for I am told by a friend of Peacock that he cut out a great number of these pauses when revising anything of Shelley's for the press.

impulse determined the pauses of a measure, which only pretends to be regular inasmuch as it corresponds with, and expresses, the irregularity of the imaginations which inspired it.

I do not know which of the few scattered poems I left in England will be selected by my bookseller, to add to this collection. One, which I sent from Italy, was written after a day's excursion among those lovely mountains which surround what was once the retreat, and where is now the sepulchre, of Petrarch. If any one is inclined to condemn the insertion of the introductory lines, which image forth the sudden relief of a state of deep despondency by the radiant visions disclosed by the sudden burst of an Italian sunrise in autumn on the highest peak of those delightful mountains, I can only offer as my excuse, that they were not erased at the request of a dear friend, with whom added years of intercourse only add to my apprehension of its value, and who would have had more right than any one to complain, that she has not been able to extinguish in me the very power of delineating sadness.

Naples, Dec. 20, 1818.

CONTENTS.

Rosalind and Helen - - - - -	PAGE 315
Lines written on the Euganean Hills - - - - -	358
Hymn to Intellectual Beauty - - - - -	371
Sonnet - - - - -	376

ROSALIND AND HELEN,

A

MODERN ECLOGUE.



315

ROSALIND AND HELEN.

Rosalind, Helen and her Child.

Scene, the Shore of the Lake of Como.

HELEN.

COME hither, my sweet Rosalind.

'Tis long since thou and I have met;

And yet methinks it were unkind

Those moments to forget.

Come sit by me. I see thee stand

5

By this lone lake, in this far land,

Thy loose hair in the light wind flying,

Thy sweet voice to each tone of even

United, and thine eyes replying

To the hues of yon fair heaven.

10

Come, gentle friend: wilt sit by me?

And be as thou wert wont to be

Ere we were disunited?

None doth behold us now: the power

That led us forth at this lone hour

15

Will be but ill requited

If thou depart in scorn: oh! come,

And talk of our abandoned home.

Remember, this is Italy,

And we are exiles. Talk with me

20

Of that our land, whose wilds and floods,

Barren and dark although they be,
Were dearer than these chesnut woods:
Those heathy paths, that inland stream,
And the blue mountains, shapes which seem 25
Like wrecks of childhood's sunny dream:
Which that we have abandoned now,
Weighs on the heart like that remorse
Which altered friendship leaves. I seek
No more our youthful intercourse. 30
That cannot be! Rosalind, speak,
Speak to me. Leave me not.—When morn did come,
When evening fell upon our common home,
When for one hour we parted,—do not frown:
I would not chide thee, though thy faith is broken: 35
But turn to me. Oh! by this cherished token,
Of woven hair, which thou wilt not disown,
Turn, as 'twere but the memory of me,
And not my scornèd self who prayed to thee.

ROSALIND.

Is it a dream, or do I see 40
And hear frail Helen? I would flee
Thy tainting touch; but former years
Arise, and bring forbidden tears;
And my o'erburthened memory
Seeks yet its lost repose in thee. 45
I share thy crime. I cannot choose
But weep for thee: mine own strange grief
But seldom stoops to such relief:
Nor ever did I love thee less,
Though mourning o'er thy wickedness 50
Even with a sister's woe. I knew
What to the evil world is due,
And therefore sternly did refuse
To link me with the infamy

Of one so lost as Helen. Now
 Bewildered by my dire despair,
 Wondering I blush, and weep that thou
 Should'st love me still,—thou only!—There,
 Let us sit on that grey stone,
 Till our mournful talk be done.

55

60

HELEN.

Alas! not there; I cannot bear
 The murmur of this lake to hear.
 A sound from there,¹ Rosalind dear,
 Which never yet I heard elsewhere
 But in our native land, recurs,
 Even here where now we meet. It stirs
 Too much of suffocating sorrow!
 In the dell of yon dark chesnut wood
 Is a stone seat, a solitude
 Less like our own. The ghost of peace
 Will not desert this spot. To-morrow,
 If thy kind feelings should not cease,
 We may sit here.

65

70

ROSALIND.

Thou lead, my sweet,
 And I will follow.

HENRY.

'Tis Fenici's seat
 Where you are going? This is not the way,
 Mamma; it leads behind those trees that grow
 Close to the little river.

75

¹ Mr. Rossetti is doubtless right in thinking *thee* a misprint for *there*; and I adopt this fearlessly as one of the corrections Shelley would have made for a "second edition." The

sound so painful to Helen is of course "the murmur of the lake," reminding her of the wash of the waves round the fane where Lionel had died: see line 1049, p. 348, *et seq.*

HELEN.

Yes: I know:

I was bewildered. Kiss me, and be gay,
Dear boy: why do you sob?

HENRY.

I do not know:

But it might break any one's heart to see 80
You and the lady cry so bitterly.

HELEN.

It is a gentle child, my friend. Go home,
Henry, and play with Lilla till I come.
We only cried with joy to see each other;
We are quite merry now: Good night.

The boy 85

Lifted a sudden look upon his mother,
And in the gleam of forced and hollow joy
Which lightened o'er her face, laughed with the glee
Of light and unsuspecting infancy,
And whispered in her ear, "Bring home with you 90
That sweet strange lady-friend." Then off he flew,
But stopt, and beckoned with a meaning smile,
Where the road turned. Pale Rosalind the while,
Hiding her face, stood weeping silently.

In silence then they took the way 95

Beneath the forest's solitude.

It was a vast and antique wood,
Thro' which they took their way;

And the grey shades of evening
O'er that green wilderness did fling 100
Still deeper solitude.

Pursuing still the path that wound
The vast and knotted trees around
Thro' which slow shades were wandering,
To a deep lawny dell they came, 105
To a stone seat beside a spring,
O'er which the columned wood did frame
A roofless temple, like the fane
Where, ere new creeds could faith obtain,
Man's early race once knelt beneath 110
The overhanging deity.
O'er this fair fountain hung the sky,
Now spangled with rare stars. The snake,
The pale snake, that with eager breath
Creeps here his noontide thirst to slake, 115
Is beaming with many a mingled hue,
Shed from yon dome's eternal blue,
When he floats on that dark and lucid flood
In the light of his own loveliness;
And the birds that in the fountain dip 120
Their plumes, with fearless fellowship
Above and round him wheel and hover.
The fitful wind is heard to stir
One solitary leaf on high;
The chirping of the grasshopper 125
Fills every pause. There is emotion
In all that dwells at noontide here:
Then, thro' the intricate wild wood,
A maze of life and light and motion
Is woven. But there is stillness now: 130
Gloom, and the trance of Nature now:
The snake is in his cave asleep;
The birds are on the branches dreaming:
Only the shadows creep:
Only the glow-worm is gleaming: 135
Only the owls and the nightingales

Wake in this dell when day-light fails,
And grey shades gather in the woods :
And the owls have all fled far away
In a merrier glen to hoot and play,
For the moon is veiled and sleeping now.
The accustomed nightingale still broods
On her accustomed bough,
But she is mute; for her false mate
Has fled and left her desolate.

140

145

This silent spot tradition old
Had peopled with the spectral dead.
For the roots of the speaker's hair felt cold
And stiff, as with tremulous lips he told
That a hellish shape at midnight led
The ghost of a youth with hoary hair,
And sate on the seat beside him there,
Till a naked child came wandering by,
When the fiend would change to a lady fair!
A fearful tale! The truth was worse :
For here a sister and a brother
Had solemnized a monstrous curse,
Meeting in this fair solitude :
For beneath yon very sky,
Had they resigned to one another
Body and soul. The multitude,
Tracking them to the secret wood,
Tore limb from limb their innocent child,
And stabbed and trampled on it's mother ;
But the youth, for God's most holy grace,
A priest saved to burn in the market-place.

150

155

160

165

Duly at evening Helen came
To this lone silent spot,
From the wrecks of a tale of wilder sorrow

So much of sympathy to borrow 170
 As soothed her own dark lot.
 Duly each evening from her home,
 With her fair child would Helen come
 To sit upon that antique seat,
 While the hues of day were pale; 175
 And the bright boy beside her feet
 Now lay, lifting at intervals
 His broad blue eyes on her;
 Now, where some sudden impulse calls
 Following.¹ He was a gentle boy 180
 And in all gentle sports took joy;
 Oft in a dry leaf for a boat,
 With a small feather for a sail,
 His fancy on that spring would float,
 If some invisible breeze might stir 185
 It's marble calm: and Helen smiled
 Thro' tears of awe on the gay child,
 To think that a boy as fair as he,
 In years which never more may be,
 By that same fount, in that same wood, 190
 The like sweet fancies had pursued;
 And that a mother, lost like her,
 Had mournfully sate watching him.
 Then all the scene was wont to swim
 Through the mist of a burning tear. 195

For many months had Helen known
 This scene; and now she thither turned
 Her footsteps, not alone.
 The friend whose falsehood she had mourned,
 Sate with her on that seat of stone. 200
 Silent they sate; for evening,

¹ This word is printed *followed* by any profession of supposing that
 Mr. Rossetti, though he does not make Shelley wrote it so.
 VOL. I. X

And the power it's glimpses bring
 Had, with one awful shadow, quelled
 The passion of their grief. They sate
 With linkèd hands, for unrepelled 205
 Had Helen taken Rosalind's.
 Like the autumn wind, when it unbinds
 The tangled locks of the nightshade's hair,
 Which is twined in the sultry summer air
 Round the walls of an outworn sepulchre, 210
 Did the voice of Helen, sad and sweet,
 And the sound of her heart that ever beat,
 As with sighs and words she breathed on her,
 Unbind the knots of her friend's despair,
 Till her thoughts were free to float and flow ; 215
 And from her labouring bosom now,
 Like the bursting of a prisoned flame,
 The voice of a long pent sorrow came.

ROSALIND.

I saw the dark earth fall upon
 The coffin ; and I saw the stone 220
 Laid over him whom this cold breast
 Had pillowed to his nightly rest !
 Thou knowest not, thou canst¹ not know
 My agony. Oh ! I could not weep :
 The sources whence such blessings flow 225
 Were not to be approached by me !
 But I could smile, and I could sleep,
 Though with a self-accusing heart.
 In morning's light, in evening's gloom,
 I watched,—and would not thence depart—² 230

¹ In Shelley's edition, *can'st*.

² The consistency of this with other statements is not a matter of much importance ; but Rosalind does not keep her promise (line 248, p. 323) of telling the truth ; for further on she

says she went straight away on hearing the will (line 523 *et seq.*, p. 332),—an inaccuracy probably incidental to the interruption of the work. See note 1, p. 309.

My husband's unlamented tomb.
 My children knew their sire was gone,
 But when I told them,—‘he is dead,’—
 They laughed aloud in frantic glee,
 They clapped their hands and leaped about, 235
 Answering each other's ecstasy¹
 With many a prank and merry shout.
 But I sat² silent and alone,
 Wrapped in the mock of mourning weed.

They laughed, for he was dead: but I 240
 Sate with a hard and tearless eye,
 And with a heart which would deny
 The secret joy it could not quell,
 Low muttering o'er his loathed name;
 Till from that self-contention came 245
 Remorse where sin was none; a hell
 Which in pure spirits should not dwell.

I'll tell thee truth. He was a man
 Hard, selfish, loving only gold,
 Yet full of guile: his pale eyes ran 250
 With tears, which each some falsehood told,
 And oft his smooth and bridled tongue
 Would give the lie to his flushing cheek:
 He was a coward to the strong:
 He was a tyrant to the weak, 255
 On whom his vengeance he would wreak:
 For scorn, whose arrows search the heart,
 From many a stranger's eye would dart,
 And on his memory cling, and follow
 His soul to it's home so cold and hollow. 260

¹ In Shelley's edition, *ecstasy*.

² So in all authoritative editions from Shelley's onwards; but whether *sat* was used here, and *sate* throughout

the poem elsewhere, advisedly, it is bootless to guess. It certainly sounds better in this particular place; but I think it often would, where *sate* is used.

He was a tyrant to the weak,
 And we were such, alas the day !
 Oft, when my little ones at play,
 Were in youth's natural lightness gay,
 Or if they listened to some tale 265
 Of travellers, or of fairy land,—
 When the light from the wood-fire's dying brand
 Flashed on their faces,—if they heard
 Or thought they heard upon the stair
 His footstep, the suspended word 270
 Died on my lips: we all grew pale:
 The babe at my bosom was hushed with fear
 If it thought it heard its father near;
 And my two wild boys would near my knee
 Cling, cowed and cowering fearfully. 275

I'll tell thee truth: I loved another.
 His name in my ear was ever ringing,
 His form to my brain was ever clinging:
 Yet if some stranger breathed that name,
 My lips turned white, and my heart beat fast: 280
 My nights were once haunted by dreams of flame,
 My days were dim in the shadow cast¹
 By the memory of the same!
 Day and night, day and night,
 He was my breath and life and light, 285
 For three short years, which soon were past.
 On² the fourth, my gentle mother
 Led me to the shrine, to be
 His sworn bride eternally.

¹ In Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's editions, there is a comma at *cast*.

² Mr. Rossetti reads *In*, and suggests "printer's error" as the explanation of *On*. I think *on* is the preposition of Shelley's choice, and that he meant to

make use of an elliptical construction,—"On the dawn or coming of the fourth." *In* would be very vague; and I do not see that it has any but a scholastic advantage over *on*, if even it has that.

And¹ now we stood on the altar stair, 290
 When my father came from a distant land,
 And with a loud and fearful cry
 Rushed between us suddenly.
 I saw the stream of his thin grey hair,
 I saw his lean and lifted hand, 295
 And heard his words,—and live! Oh God!
 Wherefore do I live?—‘Hold, hold!’
 He cried,—‘I tell thee ’tis her brother!
 Thy mother, boy, beneath the sod
 Of yon church-yard rests in her shroud so cold: 300
 I am now weak, and pale, and old:
 We were once dear to one another,
 I and that corpse! Thou art our child!’
 Then with a laugh both long and wild
 The youth upon the pavement fell: 305
 They found him dead! All looked on me,
 The spasms of my despair to see:
 But I was calm. I went away:
 I was clammy-cold like clay!
 I did not weep: I did not speak: 310
 But day by day, week after week,
 I walked about like a corpse alive!
 Alas! sweet friend, you must believe
 This heart is stone: it did not break.

My father lived a little while, 315
 But all might see that he was dying,
 He smiled with such a woful smile!
 When he was in the church-yard lying
 Among the worms, we grew quite poor,
 So that no one would give us bread: 320

¹ In Shelley's edition there are un-
 meaning turned commas before this
 word, and none elsewhere to correspond

with them,—possibly the printer's in-
 terpretation of some mark meant to
 indicate a new paragraph.

My mother looked at me, and said
Faint words of cheer, which only meant
That she could die and be content;
So I went forth from the same church door
To another husband's bed.

325

And this was he who died at last,
When weeks and months and years had past,
Through which I firmly did fulfil
My duties, a devoted wife,
With the stern step of vanquished will,
Walking beneath the night of life,
Whose hours extinguished, like slow rain
Falling for ever, pain by pain,
The very hope of death's dear rest;
Which, since the heart within my breast
Of natural life was dispossessed,
It's strange sustainer there had been.

330

335

When flowers were dead, and grass was green
Upon my mother's grave,—that mother
Whom to outlive, and cheer, and make
My wan eyes glitter for her sake,
Was my vowed task, the single care
Which once gave life to my despair,—
When she was a thing that did not stir
And the crawling worms were cradling her
To a sleep more deep and so more sweet
Than a baby's rocked on its nurse's knee,
I lived: a living pulse then beat
Beneath my heart that awakened me.
What was this pulse so warm and free?
Alas! I knew it could not be
My own dull blood: 'twas like a thought
Of liquid love, that spread and wrought
Under my bosom and in my brain,

340

345

350

And crept with the blood through every vein; 355
 And hour by hour, day after day,
 The wonder could not charm away,
 But laid in sleep, my wakeful pain,
 Until I knew it was a child,
 And then I wept. For long, long years 360
 These frozen eyes had shed no tears:
 But now—'twas the season fair and mild
 When April has wept itself to May:
 I sate through the sweet sunny day
 By my window bowered round with leaves, 365
 And down my cheeks the quick tears ran¹
 Like twinkling rain-drops from the eaves,
 When warm spring showers are passing o'er:
 O Helen, none can ever tell
 The joy it was to weep once more! 370

I wept to think how hard it were
 To kill my babe, and take from it
 The sense of light, and the warm air,
 And my own fond and tender care,
 And love and smiles; ere I knew yet 375
 That these for it might, as for me,
 Be the masks of a grinning mockery.
 And haply, I would dream, 'twere sweet
 To feed it from my faded breast,
 Or mark my own heart's restless beat 380
 Rock it to its untroubled rest,
 And watch the growing soul beneath
 Dawn in faint smiles; and hear its breath,
 Half interrupted by calm sighs,

¹ Mr. Rossetti prints *fell* for *ran*, so as to get a rhyme for *tell*. It is certainly more correct to say tears run down the cheeks than fall down the cheeks; and the alteration is very in-

secure. It should be noted that the ensuing simile is somewhat loose, inas-much as rain-drops *from the eaves* do not either fall *down* anything or run *down* anything, but *through* the air.

And search the depth of its fair eyes 385
 For long departed memories!
 And so I lived till that sweet load
 Was lightened. Darkly forward flowed
 The stream of years, and on it bore
 Two shapes of gladness to my sight; 390
 Two other babes, delightful more
 In my lost soul's abandoned night,
 Than their own country ships may be
 Sailing towards wrecked mariners,
 Who cling to the rock of a wintry sea. 395
 For each, as it came, brought soothing tears,
 And a loosening warmth, as each one lay
 Sucking the sullen milk away
 About my frozen heart, did play,
 And weaned it, oh how painfully!— 400
 As they themselves were weaned each one
 From that sweet food,—even from the thirst
 Of death, and nothingness, and rest,
 Strange inmate of a living breast!
 Which all that I had undergone¹ 405
 Of grief and shame, since she, who first
 The gates of that dark refuge closed,
 Came to my sight, and almost burst
 The seal of that Lethean spring;
 But these fair shadows interposed: 410

¹ There is probably either corruption in the line "which all that I had undergone," or a hiatus after "The seal of that Lethean spring." If the latter, then the incompleted sense is that each child, as it came, weaned Rosalind from the thirst of death,—that the first child not only closed the gate through which the mother looked towards "that dark refuge," but also almost burst the seal of the fountain of forgetfulness,—that then came fresh grief and shame, reimposing (but this

is where the sense is incomplete) the thirst of death, to slake which "these fair shadows" (the remembered other children) interposed. It is conceivable, however, that there is neither corruption nor hiatus, but just that simple measure of laxity which Shelley allowed himself in this, perhaps the laxest of his mature poems in regard to diction and metre. If that be so, then he uses the word *interposed* in a strained and transitive sense; and the meaning would be "all that I had

For all delights are shadows now!
And from my brain to my dull brow
The heavy tears gather and flow:
I cannot speak: Oh let me weep!

The tears which fell from her wan eyes
Glimmered among the moonlight dew:
Her deep hard sobs and heavy sighs
Their echoes in the darkness threw.
When she grew calm, she thus did keep
The tenor of her tale:

415

He died:

420

I know not how: he was not old,
If age be numbered by its years:
But he was bowed and bent with fears,
Pale with the quenchless thirst of gold,
Which, like fierce fever, left him weak;
And his strait lip and bloated cheek
Were warped in spasms by hollow sneers;
And selfish cares with barren plough,
Not age, had lined his narrow brow,
And foul and cruel thoughts, which feed
Upon the withering life within,
Like vipers on some poisonous weed.
Whether his ill were death or sin
None knew, until he died indeed,

425

430

undergone since the birth of my first child only admitted an interchange of places between the thirst of death and these fair shadows,"—*but* being then used in the sense of *only, alone*. It is, however, likely enough that this is one of the passages in which we are to look for those "errors in the sense" referred to in the letter to Mr. Ollier (see p. 306). If it be so, I should suspect the word *which* in line 405, and the word *and* in line 408: among the commonest printer's errors are

which for *while*, and *and* for *had*; and, assuming those in this case, we get clear sense enough:

While all that I had undergone
Of grief and shame, since she, who first
The gates of that dark refuge closed,
Came to my sight, *had* almost burst, &c.

Each new child, that is to say, weaned her from the thirst of death, while her sufferings, since the birth of the first, had almost burst the seal which that first had put upon the "Lethæan spring" of death.

And then men owned they were the same. 435
 Seven days within my chamber lay
 That corse, and my babes made holiday:
 At last, I told them what is death:
 The eldest, with a kind of shame,
 Came to my knees with silent breath, 440
 And sate awe-stricken¹ at my feet;
 And soon the others left their play,
 And sate there too. It is unmeet
 To shed on the brief flower of youth
 The withering knowledge of the grave; 445
 From me remorse then wrung that truth.
 I could not bear the joy which gave
 Too just a response to mine own.
 In vain. I dared not feign a groan;
 And in their artless looks I saw, 450
 Between the mists of fear and awe,
 That my own thought was theirs; and they
 Expressed it not in words, but said,
 Each in its heart, how every day
 Will pass in happy work and play, 455
 Now he is dead and gone away.

After the funeral all our kin
 Assembled, and the will was read.
 My friend, I tell thee, even the dead
 Have strength, their putrid shrouds within, 460
 To blast and torture. Those who live
 Still fear the living, but a corse
 Is merciless, and Power² doth give
 To such pale tyrants half the spoil
 He rends from those who groan and toil, 465
 Because they blush not with remorse

¹ Mis-spelt *awe-stricken* in the original edition.

² *Power* is spelt with a small *p* in Shelley's edition.

Among their crawling worms. Behold,
I have no child! my tale grows old
With grief, and staggers: let it reach
The limits of my feeble speech, 470
And languidly at length recline
On the brink of its own grave and mine.

Thou knowest what a thing is Poverty
Among the fallen on evil days:
'Tis Crime, and Fear, and Infamy, 475
And houseless Want in frozen ways
Wandering ungarmented, and Pain,
And, worse than all, that inward stain
Foul Self-contempt, which drowns in sneers
Youth's starlight smile, and makes its tears 480
First like hot gall, then dry for ever!
And well thou knowest a mother never
Could doom her children to this ill,
And well he knew the same. The will
Imported, that if e'er again 485
I sought my children to behold,
Or in my birth-place did remain
Beyond three days, whose hours were told,
They should inherit nought: and he,
To whom next came their patrimony, 490
A sallow lawyer, cruel and cold,
Aye watched me, as the will was read,
With eyes askance, which sought to see
The secrets of my agony;
And with close lips and anxious brow 495
Stood canvassing still to and fro
The chance of my resolve, and all
The dead man's caution just did call;
For in that killing lie 'twas said—
"She is adulterous, and doth hold 500

In secret that the Christian creed
Is false, and therefore is much need
That I should have a care to save
My children from eternal fire."

Friend, he was sheltered by the grave,
And therefore dared to be a liar!

505

In truth, the Indian on the pyre
Of her dead husband, half consumed,
As well might there be false, as I
To those abhorred embraces doomed,
Far worse than fire's brief agony.

510

As to the Christian creed, if true
Or false, I never questioned it:

I took it as the vulgar do:

Nor my vexed soul had leisure yet
To doubt the things men say, or deem
That they are other than they seem.

515

All present who those crimes did hear,
In feigned or actual scorn and fear,
Men, women, children, slunk away,
Whispering with self-contented pride,
Which half suspects its own base lie.

520

I spoke to none, nor did abide,

But silently I went my way,

Nor noticed I where joyously

525

Sate my two younger babes at play,
In the court-yard through which I past;
But went with footsteps firm and fast
Till I came to the brink of the ocean green,

And there, a woman with grey hairs,

530

Who had my mother's servant been,
Kneeling, with many tears and prayers,
Made me accept a purse of gold,
Half of the earnings she had kept

To refuge her when weak and old. 535
 With woe, which never sleeps or slept,
 I wander now. 'Tis a vain thought—
 But on yon alp, whose snowy head
 'Mid the azure air is islanded,
 (We see it o'er the flood of cloud, 540
 Which sunrise from its eastern caves
 Drives, wrinkling into golden waves,
 Hung with its precipices proud,
 From that grey stone where first we met)
 There, now who knows the dead feel nought? 545
 Should be my grave; for he who yet
 Is my soul's soul, once said: "'Twere sweet
 'Mid stars and lightnings to abide,
 And winds and lulling snows, that beat
 With their soft flakes the mountain wide, 550
 When weary meteor lamps repose,
 And languid storms their pinions close:
 And all things strong and bright and pure,
 And ever during, aye endure:
 Who knows, if one were buried there, 555
 But these things might our spirits make,
 Amid the all-surrounding air,
 Their own eternity partake?"
 Then 'twas a wild and playful saying
 At which I laughed, or seemed to laugh: 560
 They were his words: now heed my praying,
 And let them be my epitaph.
 Thy memory for a term may be
 My monument. Wilt remember me?
 I know thou wilt, and canst forgive 565
 Whilst in this erring world to live
 My soul disdained not, that I thought

¹ This question is of course parenthetical, the main position being "There [that is to say, "on yon alp"] should be my grave."

Its lying forms were worthy aught
And much less thee.

HELEN.

O speak not so,
But come to me and pour thy woe 570
Into this heart, full though it be,
Aye overflowing with its own:
I thought that grief had severed me
From all beside who weep and groan;
Its likeness upon earth to be, 575
Its express image; but thou art
More wretched. Sweet! we will not part
Henceforth, if death be not division;
If so, the dead feel no contrition.
But wilt thou hear, since last we parted 580
All that has left me broken hearted?

ROSALIND.

Yes, speak. The faintest stars are scarcely shorn
Of their thin beams by that delusive morn
Which sinks again in darkness, like the light
Of early love, soon lost in total night. 585

HELEN.

Alas! Italian winds are mild,
But my bosom is cold—wintry cold—
When the warm air weaves, among the fresh leaves,
Soft music, my poor brain is wild,
And I am weak like a nursling child, 590
Though my soul with grief is grey¹ and old.

ROSALIND.

Weep not at thine own words, though they must make
Me weep. What is thy tale?

¹ In Shelley's edition *gray* in this instance, though elsewhere *grey*.

HELEN.

I fear 'twill shake

Thy gentle heart with tears. Thou well
Rememberest when we met no more, 595

And, though I dwelt with Lionel,
That friendless caution pierced me sore
With grief; a wound my spirit bore
Indignantly, but when he died
With him lay dead both hope and pride. 600

Alas! all hope is buried now.
But then men dreamed the agèd earth
Was labouring in that mighty birth,
Which many a poet and a sage
Has aye foreseen—the happy age 605
When truth and love shall dwell below
Among the works and ways of men;
Which on this world not power but will
Even now is wanting to fulfil.

Among mankind what thence befell¹ 610
Of strife, how vain, is known too well;
When liberty's dear pæan fell
'Mid murderous howls. To Lionel,
Though of great wealth and lineage high,
Yet through those dungeon walls there came 615
Thy thrilling light, O liberty!

And as the meteor's midnight flame
Startles the dreamer, sun-like truth
Flashed on his visionary youth,
And filled him, not with love, but faith, 620
And hope, and courage mute in death;
For love and life in him were twins,
Born at one birth: in every other
First life then love its course begins,

¹ In Shelley's edition, *befel*, as at p. 339.

Though they be children of one mother; 625
 And so through this dark world they fleet
 Divided, till in death they meet:
 But he loved all things ever. Then
 He past amid the strife of men,
 And stood at the throne of armed power 630
 Pleading for a world of woe:
 Secure as one on a rock-built tower
 O'er the wrecks which the surge trails to and fro,
 'Mid the passions wild of human kind
 He stood, like a spirit calming them; 635
 For, it was said, his words could bind
 Like music the lulled crowd, and stem
 That torrent of unquiet dream,
 Which mortals truth and reason deem,
 But is revenge and fear and pride. 640
 Joyous he was; and hope and peace
 On all who heard him did abide,
 Raining like dew from his sweet talk,
 As where the evening star may walk
 Along the brink of the gloomy seas, 645
 Liquid mists of splendour quiver.
 His very gestures touched to tears
 The unpersuaded tyrant, never
 So moved before: his presence stung
 The torturers with their victim's pain,¹ 650
 And none knew how; and through their ears,
 The subtle witchcraft of his tongue
 Unlocked the hearts of those who keep
 Gold, the world's bond of slavery.

¹ It has been suggested, in order to get a kind of rhyme where none exists, that this line should be printed

With their victims' pain the torturers.

It would be very hazardous to print it so without manuscript authority; and

it is quite open to question whether Shelley would have preferred inversion and a bad rhyme to directness and no rhyme, if he had had to make deliberate choice, in this or any other particular case.

Men wondered, and some sneered to see 655
One sow what he could never reap :
For he is rich, they said, and young,
And might drink from the depths of luxury.
If he seeks fame, fame never crowned
The champion of a trampled creed : 660
If he seeks power, power is enthroned
'Mid antient rights and wrongs, to feed
Which hungry wolves with praise and spoil,
Those who would sit near power must toil ;
And such, there sitting, all may see. 665
What seeks he ? All that others seek
He casts away, like a vile weed
Which the sea casts unreturningly.
That poor and hungry men should break
The laws which wreak them toil and scorn, 670
We understand ; but Lionel
We know is rich and nobly born.
So wondered they : yet all men loved
Young Lionel, though few approved ;
All but the priests, whose hatred fell 675
Like the unseen blight of a smiling day,
The withering honey dew, which clings
Under the bright green buds of May,
Whilst they unfold their emerald wings :
For he made verses wild and queer 680
On the strange creeds priests hold so dear,
Because they bring them land and gold.
Of devils and saints and all such gear,
He made tales which whoso heard or read
Would laugh till he were almost dead. 685
So this grew a proverb : " don't get old
Till Lionel's ' banquet in hell ' you hear,
And then you will laugh yourself young again."
So the priests hated him, and he

Repaid their hate with cheerful glee.

690

Ah, smiles and joyance quickly died,
For public hope grew pale and dim
In an altered time and tide,
And in its wasting withered him,
As a summer flower that blows too soon,
Droops in the smile of the waning moon,
When it scatters through an April night
The frozen dews of wrinkling blight.
None now hoped more. Grey Power was seated
Safely on her ancestral throne;
And Faith, the Python, undefeated,
Even to its blood-stained steps dragged on
Her foul and wounded train, and men
Were trampled and deceived again,
And words and shews again could bind
The wailing tribes of human kind
In scorn and famine. Fire and blood
Raged round the raging multitude,
To fields remote by tyrants sent
To be the scornèd instrument
With which they drag from mines of gore
The chains their slaves yet ever wore:
And in the streets men met each other,
And by old altars and in halls,
And smiled again at festivals.
But each man found in his heart's brother
Cold cheer; for all, though half deceived,
The outworn creeds again believed,
And the same round anew began,
Which the weary world yet ever ran.

695

700

705

710

715

720

Many then wept, not tears, but gall
Within their hearts, like drops which fall

Wasting the fountain-stone away.
 And in that dark and evil day
 Did all desires and thoughts, that claim 725
 Men's care—ambition, friendship, fame,
 Love, hope, though hope was now despair—
 Indue the colours of this change,
 As from the all-surrounding air
 The earth takes hues obscure and strange, 730
 When storm and earthquake linger there.

And so, my friend, it then befell¹
 To many, most to Lionel,
 Whose hope was like the life of youth
 Within him, and when dead, became 735
 A spirit of unresting flame,
 Which goaded him in his distress
 Over the world's vast wilderness.
 Three years he left his native land,
 And on² the fourth, when he returned, 740
 None knew him: he was stricken³ deep
 With some disease of mind, and turned
 Into aught unlike Lionel.
 On him, on whom, did he pause in sleep,
 Serenest smiles were wont to keep, 745
 And, did he wake, a wingèd band
 Of bright persuasions, which had fed
 On his sweet lips and liquid eyes,
 Kept their swift pinions half outspread,
 To do on men his least command; 750

¹ In Shelley's edition we have again *befel* instead of *befell*, as at p. 335.

² The whole construction of this sentence, from *Three years*, is very loose; but I do not think there is any corruption. It is of course meant, not that he went away three times in as many years, but *for* three years.

"On the fourth, when he returned," I take to be elliptical for "On his return at the dawn or beginning of the fourth." Mr. Rossetti substitutes *in* for *on*. See note 2, p. 324.

³ In Shelley's edition, *stricken*, as at p. 330.

On him, whom once 'twas paradise
Even to behold, now misery lay:¹
In his own heart 'twas merciless,
To all things else none may express
Its innocence and tenderness.

755

'Twas said that he had refuge sought
In love from his unquiet thought
In distant lands, and been deceived
By some strange shew; for there were found,
Blotted with tears as those relieved
By their own words are wont to do,
These mournful verses on the ground,
By all who read them blotted too.

760

“How am I changed! my hopes were once like fire:
I loved, and I believed that life was love.
How am I lost! on wings of swift desire
Among Heaven's winds my spirit once did move.
I slept, and silver dreams did aye inspire
My liquid sleep: I woke, and did approve
All nature to my heart, and thought to make
A paradise of earth for one sweet sake.

765

770

“I love, but I believe in love no more.
I feel desire, but hope not. O, from sleep
Most vainly must my weary brain implore
Its long lost flattery now: I wake to weep,
And sit through the long day gnawing the core
Of my bitter heart, and, like a miser, keep,
Since none in what I feel take pain or pleasure,
To my own soul its self-consuming treasure.”

775

He dwelt beside me near the sea:
And oft in evening did we meet,

780

¹ Mr. Rossetti suggests the substitution of *weighed* for *lay*.

When the waves, beneath the starlight, flee
O'er the yellow sands with silver feet,
And talked: our talk was sad and sweet,
Till slowly from his mien there passed 785
The desolation which it spoke;
And smiles,—as when the lightning's blast
Has parched some heaven-delighting oak,
The next spring shews leaves pale and rare,
But like flowers delicate and fair, 790
On its rent boughs,—again arrayed
His countenance in tender light:
His words grew subtile fire, which made
The air his hearers breathed delight:
His motions, like the winds, were free, 795
Which bend the bright grass gracefully,
Then fade away in circlets faint:
And wingèd hope, on which upborne
His soul seemed hovering in his eyes,
Like some bright spirit newly born 800
Floating amid the sunny skies,
Sprang forth from his rent heart anew.
Yet o'er his talk, and looks, and mien,
Tempering their loveliness too keen,
Past woe its shadow backward threw, 805
Till like an exhalation, spread
From flowers half drunk with evening dew,
They did become infectious: sweet
And subtile mists of sense and thought:
Which wrapt us soon, when we might meet, 810
Almost from our own looks and aught
The wide world holds. And so, his mind
Was healed, while mine grew sick with fear:
For ever now his health declined,
Like some frail bark which cannot bear 815
The impulse of an altered wind,

Though prosperous: and my heart grew full
'Mid its new joy of a new care:
For his cheek became, not pale, but fair,
As rose-o'ershadowed lilies are;
And soon his deep and sunny hair,
In this alone less beautiful,
Like grass in tombs grew wild and rare.
The blood in his translucent veins
Beat, not like animal life, but love
Seemed now its sullen springs to move,
When life had failed, and all its pains:
And sudden sleep would seize him oft
Like death, so calm, but that a tear,
His pointed eye-lashes between,
Would gather in the light serene
Of smiles, whose lustre bright and soft
Beneath lay undulating there.
His breath was like inconstant flame,
As eagerly it went and came;
And I hung o'er him in his sleep,
Till, like an image in the lake
Which rains disturb, my tears would break
The shadow of that slumber deep:
Then he would bid me not to weep,
And say with flattery false, yet sweet,
That death and he could never meet,
If I would never part with him.
And so we loved, and did unite
All that in us was yet divided:
For when he said, that many a rite,
By men to bind but once provided,
Could not be shared by him and me,
Or they would kill him in their glee,
I shuddered, and then laughing said—
“We will have rites our faith to bind,

820

825

830

835

840

845

850

But our church shall be the starry night,
 Our altar the grassy earth outspread,
 And our priest the muttering wind."

'Twas sunset as I spoke: one star 855
 Had scarce burst forth, when from afar
 The ministers of misrule sent,
 Seized upon Lionel, and bore
 His chained limbs to a dreary tower,
 In the midst of a city vast and wide. 860
 For he, they said, from his mind had bent
 Against their gods keen blasphemy,
 For which, though his soul must roasted be
 In hell's red lakes immortally,
 Yet even on earth must he abide 865
 The vengeance of their slaves: a trial,
 I think, 'men call it. What avail
 Are prayers and tears, which chase denial
 From the fierce savage, nursed in hate?
 What the knit soul that pleading and pale 870
 Makes wan the quivering cheek, which late
 It painted with its own delight?
 We were divided. As I could,
 I stilled the tingling of my blood,
 And followed him in their despite, 875
 As a widow follows, pale and wild,
 The murderers and corse of her only child;
 And when we came to the prison door
 And I prayed to share his dungeon floor
 With prayers which rarely have been spurned, 880
 And when men drove me forth and I
 Stared with blank frenzy on the sky,
 A farewell look of love he turned,
 Half calming me; then gazed awhile,
 As if thro' that black and massy pile, 885

And thro' the crowd around him there,
 And thro' the dense and murky air,
 And the thronged streets, he did espy
 What poets know and prophesy;¹
 And said, with voice that made them shiver 890
 And clung like music in my brain,
 And which the mute walls spoke again
 Prolonging it with deepened strain:
 "Fear not the tyrants shall rule for ever,
 Or the priests of the bloody faith; 895
 They stand on the brink of that mighty river,
 Whose waves they have tainted with death:
 It is fed from the depths of a thousand dells,
 Around them it foams, and rages, and swells,
 And their swords and their sceptres I floating see, 900
 Like wrecks in the surge of eternity." ²

I dwelt beside the prison gate,
 And the strange crowd that out and in
 Passed, some, no doubt, with mine own fate,
 Might have fretted me with its ceaseless din, 905
 But the fever of care was louder within.
 Soon, but too late, in penitence
 Or fear, his foes released him thence:
 I saw his thin and languid form,
 As leaning on the jailor's arm, 910
 Whose hardened eyes grew moist the while,
 To meet his mute and faded smile,
 And hear his words of kind farewell,
 He tottered forth from his damp cell.

¹ In Shelley's edition *prophecy*.

² This stanza occurs with some slight variations in the poem to William Shelley, written when Shelley feared the Lord Chancellor might seek to deprive him of that child also, after having taken away Charles and Ianthe. The variations are *will* for *shall* in

line 894, *evil* for *bloody* in line 895, *raging* for *mighty* in line 896, *depth* for *depths* in line 898; and line 899 has no commas in it in that version. In Shelley's edition there is a comma after *Fear not*, which Mrs. Shelley rightly omits both from *Rosalind and Helen* and from the poem to William.

Many had never wept before, 915
 From whom fast tears then gushed and fell:
 Many will relent no more,
 Who sobbed like infants then: aye, all
 Who thronged the prison's stony hall,
 The rulers or the slaves of law, 920
 Felt with a new surprise and awe
 That they were human, till strong shame
 Made them again become the same.
 The prison blood-hounds, huge and grim,
 From human looks the infection caught, 925
 And fondly crouched and fawned on him;
 And men have heard the prisoners say,
 Who in their rotting dungeons lay,
 That from that hour, throughout one day,
 The fierce despair and hate which kept 930
 Their trampled bosoms almost slept,¹
 When, like twin vultures, they hung feeding
 On each heart's wound, wide torn and bleeding,
 Because their jailors' rule, they thought,
 Grew merciful, like a parent's sway. 935

I know not how, but we were free:
 And Lionel sate alone with me,
 As the carriage drove thro' the streets apace;
 And we looked upon each other's face;
 And the blood in our fingers intertwined 940
 Ran like the thoughts of a single mind,
 As the swift emotions went and came
 Thro' the veins of each united frame.
 So thro' the long long streets we past
 Of the million-peopled City vast; 945
 Which is that desert, where each one

¹ There is a colon at *slept* in Shelley's edition, which is clearly wrong; and I doubt whether we should not read *Where* for *When* in line 932.

Seeks his mate yet is alone,
Beloved and sought and mourned of none ;
Until the clear blue sky was seen,
And the grassy meadows bright and green, 950
And then I sunk in his embrace,
Enclosing there a mighty space
Of love : and so we travelled on
By woods, and fields of yellow flowers,
And towns, and villages, and towers, 955
Day after day of happy hours.
It was the azure time of June,
When the skies are deep in the stainless noon,
And the warm and fitful breezes shake
The fresh green leaves of the hedge-row briar, 960
And there were odours then to make
The very breath we did respire
A liquid element, whereon
Our spirits, like delighted things
That walk the air on subtle wings, 965
Floated and mingled far away,
'Mid the warm winds of the sunny day.
And when the evening star came forth
Above the curve of the new bent moon,
And light and sound ebbed from the earth, 970
Like the tide of the full and weary sea
To the depths of its tranquillity,
Our natures to its own repose
Did the earth's breathless sleep attune :
Like flowers, which on each other close 975
Their languid leaves when day-light's gone,
We lay, till new emotions came,
Which seemed to make each mortal frame
One soul of interwoven flame,
A life in life, a second birth 980
In worlds diviner far than earth,
Which, like two strains of harmony

That mingle in the silent sky
 Then slowly disunite, past by
 And left the tenderness of tears, 985
 A soft oblivion of all fears,
 A sweet sleep: so we travelled on
 Till we came to the home of Lionel,
 Among the mountains wild and lone,
 Beside the hoary western sea, 990
 Which near the verge of the echoing shore
 The massy forest shadowed o'er.

The ancient steward, with hair all hoar,
 As we alighted, wept to see
 His master changed so fearfully; 995
 And the old man's sobs did waken me
 From my dream of unremaining gladness;
 The truth flashed o'er me like quick madness
 When I looked, and saw that there was death
 On Lionel: yet day by day 1000
 He lived, till fear grew hope and faith,
 And in my soul I dared to say,
 Nothing so bright can pass away:
 Death is dark, and foul, and dull,
 But he is—O how beautiful! 1005
 Yet day by day he grew more weak,
 And his sweet voice, when he might speak,
 Which ne'er was loud, became more low;
 And the light which flashed through his waxen cheek
 Grew faint, as the rose-like hues which flow 1010
 From sunset o'er the Alpine snow:
 And death seemed not like death in him,
 For the spirit of life o'er every limb
 Lingered, a mist of sense and thought.
 When the summer wind faint odours brought 1015
 From mountain flowers, even as it passed

His cheek would change, as the noon-day sea
Which the dying breeze sweeps fitfully.
If but a cloud the sky o'ercast,
You might see his colour come and go, 1020
And the softest strain of music made
Sweet smiles, yet sad, arise and fade
Amid the dew of his tender eyes;
And the breath, with intermitting flow,
Made his pale lips quiver and part. 1025
You might hear the beatings of his heart,
Quick, but not strong; and with my tresses
When oft he playfully would bind
In the bowers of mossy lonelineses
His neck, and win me so to mingle 1030
In the sweet depth of woven caresses,
And our faint limbs were intertwined,
Alas! the unquiet life did tingle
From mine own heart through every vein,
Like a captive in dreams of liberty, 1035
Who beats the walls of his stony cell.
But his, it seemed already free,
Like the shadow of fire surrounding me!
On my faint eyes and limbs did dwell
That spirit as it passed, till soon, 1040
As a frail cloud wandering o'er the moon,
Beneath its light invisible,
Is seen when it folds its grey wings again
To alight on midnight's dusky plain,
I lived and saw, and the gathering soul 1045
Passed from beneath that strong controul,
And I fell on a life which was sick with fear
Of all the woe that now I bear.

Amid a bloomless myrtle wood,
On a green and sea-girt promontory, 1050

Not far from where we dwelt, there stood
 In record of a sweet sad story,
 An altar and a temple bright
 Circled by steps, and o'er the gate
 Was sculptured, "To Fidelity;" 1055
 And in the shrine an image sate,
 All veiled: but there was seen the light
 Of smiles, which faintly could express
 A mingled pain and tenderness
 Through that ætherial¹ drapery. 1060
 The left hand held the head, the right—
 Beyond the veil, beneath the skin,
 You might see the nerves quivering within—
 Was forcing the point of a barbèd dart
 Into its side-convulsing heart. 1065
 An unskilled hand, yet one informed
 With genius, had the marble warmed
 With that pathetic life. This tale
 It told: A dog had from the sea,
 When the tide was raging fearfully, 1070
 Dragged Lionel's mother, weak and pale,
 Then died beside her on the sand,
 And she that temple thence had planned;
 But it was Lionel's own hand
 Had wrought the image. Each new moon 1075
 That lady did, in this lone fane,
 The rites of a religion sweet,
 Whose god was in her heart and brain:
 The seasons' loveliest flowers were strewn
 On the marble floor beneath her feet, 1080
 And she brought crowns of sea-buds white,
 Whose odour is so sweet and faint,
 And weeds, like branching chrysolite,²
 Woven in devices fine and quaint,

¹ In Shelley's edition, *ethereal*.² In Shelley's edition, *chrysolyte*.

And tears from her brown eyes did stain 1085
 The altar: need but look upon
 That dying statue, fair and wan,
 If tears should cease, to weep again :
 And rare Arabian odours came,
 Though the myrtle corses steaming thence 1090
 From the hissing frankincense,
 Whose smoke, wool-white as ocean foam,
 Hung in dense flocks beneath the dome,
 That ivory dome, whose azure night
 With golden stars, like heaven, was bright 1095
 O'er the split cedar's¹ pointed flame ;
 And the lady's harp would kindle there
 The melody of an old air,
 Softer than sleep; the villagers
 Mixt their religion up with her's, 1100
 And as they listened round, shed tears.

One eve he led me to this fane :
 Daylight on its last purple cloud
 Was lingering grey, and soon her strain
 The nightingale began; now loud, 1105
 Climbing in circles the windless sky,
 Now dying music; suddenly
 'Tis scattered in a thousand notes,
 And now to the hushed ear it floats
 Like field smells known in infancy, 1110
 Then failing, soothes the air again.
 We sate within that temple lone,
 Pavilioned round with Parian stone :
 His mother's harp stood near, and oft
 I had awakened music soft 1115
 Amid its wires: the nightingale
 Was pausing in her heaven-taught tale :

¹ In Shelley's edition, *cedars*.

“Now drain the cup,” said Lionel,
“Which the poet-bird has crowned so well
With the wine of her bright and liquid song ! 1120
Heardst thou not sweet words among
That heaven-resounding minstrelsy ?
Heardst thou not, that those who die
Awake in a world of ecstasy ?¹
That love, when limbs are interwoven, 1125
And sleep, when the night of life is cloven,
And thought, to the world’s dim boundaries clinging,
And music, when one beloved is singing,
Is death ? Let us drain right joyously
The cup which the sweet bird fills for me.” 1130
He paused, and to my lips he bent
His own : like spirit his words went
Through all my limbs with the speed of fire ;
And his keen eyes, glittering through mine,
Filled me with the flame divine, 1135
Which in their orbs was burning far,
Like the light of an unmeasured star,
In the sky of midnight dark and deep :
Yes, ’twas his soul that did inspire
Sounds, which my skill could ne’er awaken ; 1140
And first, I felt my fingers sweep
The harp, and a long quivering cry
Burst from my lips in symphony :
The dusk and solid air was shaken,
As swift and swifter the notes came 1145
From my touch, that wandered like quick flame,
And from my bosom, labouring
With some unutterable thing :
The awful sound of my own voice made
My faint lips tremble, in some mood 1150
Of wordless thought Lionel stood

¹ Spelt *extacy* in Shelley’s edition.

So pale, that even beside his cheek
 The snowy column from its shade
 Caught whiteness: yet his countenance
 Raised upward, burned with radiance 1155
 Of spirit-piercing joy, whose light,
 Like the moon struggling through the night
 Of whirlwind-rifted clouds, did break
 With beams that might not be confined.
 I paused, but soon his gestures kindled 1160
 New power, as by the moving wind
 The waves are lifted, and my song
 To low soft notes now changed and dwindled,
 And from the twinkling wires among,
 My languid fingers drew and flung 1165
 Circles of life-dissolving¹ sound,
 Yet faint: in aery rings they bound
 My Lionel, who,² as every strain
 Grew fainter but more sweet, his mien
 Sunk with the sound relaxedly; 1170
 And slowly now he turned to me,
 As slowly faded from his face
 That awful joy: with look serene
 He was soon drawn to my embrace,
 And my wild song then died away 1175
 In murmurs: words I dare not say,³
 We mixed, and on his lips mine fed
 Till they methought felt still and cold:
 "What is it with thee, love?" I said:

¹ No hyphen in Shelley's edition.

² Mr. Rossetti omits *who*, puts a full point after *Lionel*, commences a fresh sentence with *As*, and accuses Shelley of using bad English. Mr. Swinburne rebuts the charge on the ground that the construction, though licentious, is used by elder classical writers. But it is open to question whether *mien*

is nominative or accusative. Shelley may have meant to express that Lionel "sunk his mien," though it is more probable that the construction intended is that "Lionel's mien sunk."

³ In the original the sense is subverted by the comma being *at words* instead of *say*.

No word, no look, no motion! yes, 1180
 There was a change, but spare to guess,
 Nor let that moment's hope be told.
 I looked, and knew that he was dead,
 And fell, as the eagle on the plain
 Falls when life deserts her brain, 1185
 And the mortal lightning is veiled again.

O that I were now dead! but such
 (Did they not, love, demand too much,
 Those dying murmurs?) he forebade.¹
 O that I once again were mad! 1190
 And yet, dear Rosalind, not so,
 For I would live to share thy woe.
 Sweet boy, did I forget thee too?
 Alas, we know not what we do
 When we speak words.

No memory more 1195
 Is in my mind of that sea shore.
 Madness came on me, and a troop
 Of misty shapes did seem to sit
 Beside me, on a vessel's poop,
 And the clear north wind was driving it. 1200
 Then I heard strange tongues, and saw strange flowers,
 And the stars methought grew unlike ours,
 And the azure sky and the stormless sea
 Made me believe that I had died,
 And waked in a world, which was to me 1205
 Drear hell, though heaven to all beside:
 Then a dead sleep fell on my mind,

¹ In these three lines I have adopted Mr. Rossetti's punctuation, which rescues from ruin a passage where there is unmistakeable "error in the sense." In Shelley's edition the lines

stand thus:—

O that I were now dead! but such
 Did they not, love, demand too much
 Those dying murmurs? He forbade.

Whilst animal life many long years
 Had rescue¹ from a chasm of tears;
 And when I woke, I wept to find 1210
 That the same lady, bright and wise,
 With silver locks and quick brown eyes,
 The mother of my Lionel,
 Had tended me in my distress,
 And died some months before. Nor less 1215
 Wonder, but far more peace and joy
 Brought in that hour my lovely boy;
 For through that trance my soul had well
 The impress of thy being kept;
 And if I waked, or if I slept, 1220
 No doubt, though memory faithless be,
 Thy image ever dwelt on me;
 And thus, O Lionel, like thee
 Is our sweet child. 'Tis sure most strange
 I knew not of so great a change, 1225
 As that which gave him birth, who now
 Is all the solace of my woe.

That Lionel great wealth had left
 By will to me, and that of all
 The ready lies of law bereft 1230

¹ In Shelley's edition we read *rescued*; but this is certainly another instance of misprinting involving an "error in the sense." There are many possible ways of reconstructing the passage on an equally Shelley-like pattern; but I have no doubt that the sense intended by Shelley is that, while the mind was in a "dead sleep," the animal life was relieved from misery. This is good sense and good pathology, while the reading of the first edition is nonsense. The rescue of the animal life was evidently sub-

sequent to the time of hallucination, and contemporary with the "dead sleep",—because, if we make the rescue from the "chasm of tears" contemporary with the hallucination, we are met by the statement that the imaginary land of Helen's madness was "drear hell" to her, which is very much like *not* being rescued from a "chasm of tears." The unusual turn of the phrase *had rescue* probably baffled Peacock and led to the impossible reading of the first edition.

My child and me, might well befall.¹
 But let me think not of the scorn,
 Which from the meanest I have borne,
 When, for my child's beloved sake,
 I mixed with slaves, to vindicate 1235
 The very laws themselves do make:
 Let me not say scorn is my fate,
 Lest I be proud, suffering the same
 With those who live in deathless fame. 1239

She ceased.—“Lo, where red morning thro’ the woods²
 Is burning o’er the dew;” said Rosalind.
 And with these words they rose, and towards the flood
 Of the blue lake, beneath the leaves now wind
 With equal steps and fingers intertwined:
 Thence to a lonely dwelling, where the shore 1245
 Is shadowed with steep³ rocks, and cypresses
 Cleave with their dark green cones the silent skies,
 And with their shadows the clear depths below,
 And where a little terrace from its bowers,
 Of blooming myrtle and faint lemon-flowers, 1250
 Scatters its sense-dissolving fragrance o’er
 The liquid marble of the windless lake;
 And where the aged forest’s limbs look hoar,
 Under the leaves which their green garments make,
 They come: ’tis Helen’s home, and clean and white, 1255
 Like one which tyrants spare on our own land

¹ As this passage is punctuated in Shelley’s and Mrs. Shelley’s editions, namely with the comma at *bereft* instead of *me*, *bereft* is intransitive and *befall* transitive, so that the sense would stand—“it might well befall my child and me that the ready lies of law bereft of all”; but the sense is doubtless—“it might well befall that the ready lies of law bereft my child and me of all.”

² So in Shelley’s and all authorita-

tive editions; but Mr. Rossetti reads *wood* for *woods*, which, I have little doubt, is a safe emendation. As however the mere absence of a rhyme does not condemn a passage according to the standard of this poem, and *woods* is intrinsically as good as *wood*, I leave it as I find it.

³ Mrs. Shelley omits *steep*, no doubt accidentally, though, by accenting the *ed* of *shadowed*, the line still reads as a full line, without the word *steep*.

In some such solitude, its casements bright
Shone through their vine-leaves in the morning sun,
And even within 'twas scarce like Italy.
And when she saw how all things there were planned, 1260
As in an English home, dim memory
Disturbed poor Rosalind: she stood as one
Whose mind is where his body cannot be,
Till Helen led her where her child yet slept,
And said, "Observe, that brow was Lionel's, 1265
Those lips were his, and so he ever kept
One arm in sleep, pillowing his head with it.
You cannot see his eyes, they are two wells
Of liquid love: let us not wake him yet."
But Rosalind could bear no more, and wept 1270
A shower of burning tears, which fell upon
His face, and so his opening lashes shone
With tears unlike his own, as he did leap
In sudden wonder from his innocent sleep.

So Rosalind and Helen lived together 1275
Thenceforth, changed in all else, yet friends again,
Such as they were, when o'er the mountain heather
They wandered in their youth, through sun and rain.
And after many years, for human things
Change even like the ocean and the wind, 1280
Her daughter was restored to Rosalind,
And in their circle thence some visitings
Of joy 'mid their new calm would intervene:
A lovely child she was, of looks serene,
And motions which o'er things indifferent shed 1285
The grace and gentleness from whence they came.
And Helen's boy grew with her, and they fed
From the same flowers of thought, until each mind
Like springs which mingle in one flood became,
And in their union soon their parents saw 1290

The shadow of the peace denied to them.
And Rosalind, for when the living stem
Is cankered in its heart, the tree must fall,
Died ere her time; and with deep grief and awe
The pale survivors followed her remains 1295
Beyond the region of dissolving rains,
Up the cold mountain she was wont to call
Her tomb; and on Chiavenna's precipice
They raised a pyramid of lasting ice,
Whose polished sides, ere day had yet begun, 1300
Caught the first glow of the unrisen sun,
The last, when it had sunk; and thro' the night
The charioteers of Arctos wheelèd round
Its glittering point, as seen from Helen's home,
Whose sad inhabitants each year would come, 1305
With willing steps climbing that rugged height,
And hang long locks of hair, and garlands bound
With amaranth flowers, which, in the clime's despite,
Filled the froze air with unaccustomed light:
Such flowers, as in the wintry memory bloom 1310
Of one friend left, adorned that frozen tomb.

Helen, whose spirit was of softer mould,
Whose sufferings too were less, death slower led
Into the peace of his dominion cold:
She died among her kindred, being old. 1315
And know, that if love die not in the dead
As in the living, none of mortal kind
Are blest, as now Helen and Rosalind.

LINES

WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS,

OCTOBER, 1818.

MANY a green isle needs must be
In the deep wide sea of misery,
Or the mariner, worn and wan,
Never thus could voyage on
Day and night, and night and day,
Drifting on his dreary way,
With the solid darkness black
Closing round his vessel's track;
Whilst above the sunless sky,
Big with clouds, hangs heavily,
And behind the tempest fleet
Hurries on with lightning feet,
Riving sail, and cord, and plank,
Till the ship has almost drank
Death from the o'er-brimming deep;
And sinks down, down, like that sleep
When the dreamer seems to be
Weltering through eternity;
And the dim low line before

5

10

15

Of a dark and distant shore 20
 Still recedes, as ever still
 Longing with divided will,
 But no power to seek or shun,
 He is ever drifted on
 O'er the unreposing wave 25
 To the haven of the grave.
 What, if there no friends will greet;
 What, if there no heart will meet
 His with love's impatient beat;
 Wander wheresoe'er he may, 30
 Can he dream before that day
 To find refuge from distress
 In friendship's smile, in love's caress?
 Then 'twill wreak him little woe
 Whether such there be or no: 35
 Senseless is the breast, and cold,
 Which relenting love would fold;
 Bloodless are the veins and chill
 Which the pulse of pain did fill;
 Every little living nerve 40
 That from bitter words did swerve
 Round the tortured lips and brow,
 Are like sapless leaflets now¹
 Frozen upon December's bough.

¹ Mr. Rossetti substitutes for this line

Is like a sapless leaflet now;
 and says in a note that he has "rescued these lines (with some consciousness of audacity) from the annoying grammatical solecism of the original—

'Every little living nerve
 Are like sapless leaflets now.'"

Mr. Swinburne says (*Essays and Studies*, pp. 228-9)—"If the editor finds the license of such a phrase . . . too 'annoying' to be endured by a scholastic sense of propriety, the annoyance is far keener which will be inflicted on

others by his substituted reading . . . Shelley has indulged in a loose and obsolete construction which may or may not be defensible; I should not at the present day permit it to myself, or condone it in another; and had the editor been engaged in the revision of a schoolboy's theme, he would certainly have done right to correct such a phrase, and as certainly would not have done wrong to add such further correction as he might deem desirable; but the task here undertaken is not exactly comparable to the revision of a schoolboy's theme."

On the beach of a northern sea 45
 Which tempests shake eternally,
 As once the wretch there lay to sleep,
 Lies a solitary heap,
 One white skull and seven dry bones,
 On the margin of the stones, 50
 Where a few grey rushes stand,
 Boundaries of the sea and land :
 Nor is heard one voice of wail
 But the sea-mews, as they sail
 O'er the billows of the gale ; 55
 Or the whirlwind up and down
 Howling, like a slaughtered town,
 When a king in glory rides
 Through the pomp of fratricides :
 Those unburied bones around 60
 There is many a mournful sound ;
 There is no lament for him,
 Like a sunless vapour, dim,
 Who once clothed with life and thought
 What now moves nor murmurs not. 65

Aye, many flowering islands lie
 In the waters of wide Agony :
 To such a one this morn was led,
 My bark by soft winds piloted :
 'Mid the mountains Euganean 70
 I stood listening to the pæan,
 With which the legioned rooks did hail
 The sun's uprise majestic ;
 Gathering round with wings all hoar,
 Thro' the dewy mist they soar 75
 Like grey shades, till the¹ eastern heaven

¹ In Shelley's edition, *the* is contracted into *th'*, probably to bring the

line within Peacock's idea of regularity ; but Mrs. Shelley restores *the*.

Bursts, and then, as clouds of even,
 Flecked with fire and azure, lie
 In the unfathomable sky,
 So their plumes of purple grain, 80
 Starred with drops of golden rain,
 Gleam above the sunlight woods,
 As in silent multitudes
 On the morning's fitful gale
 Thro' the broken mist they sail, 85
 And the vapours cloven and gleaming
 Follow down the dark steep streaming,
 Till all is bright, and clear, and still,
 Round the solitary hill.

Beneath is spread like a green sea 90
 The waveless plain of Lombardy,
 Bounded by the vaporous air,
 Islanded by cities fair;
 Underneath day's azure eyes
 Ocean's nursling, Venice lies, 95
 A peopled labyrinth of walls,
 Amphitrite's destined halls,
 Which her hoary sire now paves
 With his blue and beaming waves.
 Lo! the sun upsprings behind, 100
 Broad, red, radiant, half reclined
 On the level quivering line
 Of the waters crystalline¹;
 And before that chasm of light,
 As within a furnace bright, 105
 Column, tower, and dome, and spire,

I say "restores," because I cannot suppose for a moment that the contraction was Shelley's,—the line being quite in his manner without it.

¹ In Shelley's edition, *chrystalline*,

probably written so by him inadvertently; but why so notable a Greek scholar as Peacock should have passed this orthography it is hard to conjecture.

Shine like obelisks of fire,
 Pointing with inconstant motion
 From the altar of dark ocean
 To the sapphire-tinted skies ; 110
 As the flames of sacrifice
 From the marble shrines did rise,
 As to pierce the dome of gold
 Where Apollo spoke of old.

Sun-girt¹ City, thou hast been 115
 Ocean's child, and then his queen ;
 Now is come a darker day,
 And thou soon must be his prey,
 If the power that raised thee here
 Hallow so thy watery bier. 120
 A less drear ruin than than now,
 With thy conquest-branded brow
 Stooping to the slave of slaves
 From thy throne, among the waves
 Wilt thou be, when the sea-mew 125
 Flies, as once before it flew,
 O'er thine isles depopulate,
 And all is in its antient state,
 Save where many a palace gate
 With green sea-flowers overgrown 130
 Like a rock of ocean's own,
 Topples o'er the abandoned sea
 As the tides change sullenly.

¹ As to this beautiful epithet *sun-girt*, I entirely agree with Mr. Swinburne, who says (*Essays and Studies*, p. 199) that Mr. Palgrave's proposal (*Golden Treasury*,—Notes), to substitute *sea-girt*, "may look plausible, but the new epithet is feeble, inadequate, inaccurate. Venice is not a sea-girt city ; it is interlaced and interwoven with sea, but not girdled ; pierced through

with water, but not ringed about. Seen by noon from the Euganean heights, clothed as with the very and visible glory of Italy, it might seem to Shelley a city girdled with the sunlight, as some Nereid with the arms of the sun-god."—Note that line 100,

Lo ! the sun upsprings behind,
 supports *sun-girt*, and puts *seen by noon*
 out of court.

The fisher on his watery way,
 Wandering at the close of day, 135
 Will spread his sail and seize his oar
 Till he pass the gloomy shore,
 Lest thy dead should, from their sleep
 Bursting o'er the starlight deep,
 Lead a rapid masque of death 140
 O'er the waters of his path.

Those who alone thy towers behold
 Quivering through aerial gold,
 As I now behold them here,
 Would imagine not they were 145
 Sepulchres, where human forms,
 Like pollution-nourished worms
 To the corpse of greatness cling,
 Murdered, and now mouldering:
 But if Freedom should awake 150
 In her omnipotence, and shake
 From the Celtic Anarch's hold
 All the keys of dungeons cold,
 Where a hundred cities lie
 Chained like thee, ingloriously, 155
 Thou and all thy sister band
 Might adorn this sunny land,
 Twining memories of old time
 With new virtues more sublime;
 If not, perish thou and they, 160
 Clouds which stain truth's rising day
 By her sun consumed away,
 Earth can spare ye: while like flowers,
 In the waste of years and hours,
 From your dust new nations spring 165
 With more kindly blossoming.

Perish—let there only be¹
 Floating o'er thy hearthless sea
 As the garment of thy sky
 Clothes the world immortally, 170
 One remembrance, more sublime
 Than the tattered pall of time,
 Which scarce hides thy visage wan;—
 That a tempest-cleaving Swan
 Of the songs² of Albion, 175
 Driven from his ancestral streams
 By the might of evil dreams,
 Found a nest in thee; and Ocean
 Welcomed him with such emotion
 That its joy grew his, and sprung 180
 From his lips like music flung
 O'er a mighty thunder-fit
 Chastening terror:—what though yet
 Poesy's unfailing River,
 Which thro' Albion winds for ever 185
 Lashing with melodious wave
 Many a sacred Poet's grave,
 Mourn its latest nursling fled?
 What though thou with all thy dead
 Scarce can for this fame repay 190

¹ This passage (lines 167 to 205) seems to have been an after-thought. Mr. Frederick Locker possesses a copy of *Rosalind and Helen, &c.*, containing the MS. interpolation sent after the poem had gone to the publisher; and with his kind permission I have followed that in preference to the printed text. The variations, though numerous, are very slight, being confined to matters of pointing and "capitalling." Shelley heads the passage thus:
 "After the lines

From thy dust shall nations spring
 With more kindly blossoming."

Doubtless he quoted from memory, and had no intention of changing

your to thy, and new to shall, in the first line of the couplet.

² I cannot but think this word should be *sons*, not *songs*. It has always, as far as I am aware, been printed *songs*; and it certainly is *songs* in Mr. Locker's MS. This, however, is somewhat hastily written; and Shelley might easily have made such a clerical mistake as I suspect; but in the absence of any other MS. the text must of course remain as it is,—the expression *a swan of the songs of Albion* being conceivable, and indeed being considered, by some critics with whom I have discussed this point, more probable than *a swan of the sons of Albion*.

Aught thine own? oh, rather say
 Though thy sins and slaveries foul
 Overcloud a sunlike soul?
 As the ghost of Homer clings
 Round Scamander's wasting springs; 195
 As divinest Shakespeare's might
 Fills Avon and the world with light
 Like omniscient power which he
 Imaged 'mid mortality;
 As the love from Petrarch's urn, 200
 Yet amid yon hills doth burn,
 A quenchless lamp by which the heart
 Sees things unearthly;—so thou art
 Mighty spirit—so shall be
 The City that did refuge thee. 205

Lo, the sun floats up the sky
 Like thought-wingèd Liberty,
 Till the universal light
 Seems to level plain and height;
 From the sea a mist has spread, 210
 And the beams of morn lie dead
 On the towers of Venice now,
 Like its glory long ago.
 By the skirts of that grey cloud
 Many-domèd Padua proud 215
 Stands, a peopled solitude,
 'Mid the harvest-shining plain,¹
 Where the peasant heaps his grain
 In the garner of his foe,
 And the milk-white oxen slow 220

¹ There is no hyphen to connect *harvest* and *shining* in Shelley's edition; and it is possible that he inadvertently omitted it, as he often did; but I have supplied it because, as the line was

originally printed, it might mean that Padua stood shining plainly amid the harvest, whereas I take it Shelley meant that she stood amid the plain which was shining with harvest.

With the purple vintage strain,
 Heaped upon the creaking wain,
 That the brutal Celt may swill
 Drunken sleep with savage will;
 And the sickle to the sword 225
 Lies unchanged, though many a lord,
 Like a weed whose shade is poison,
 Overgrows this region's foison,¹
 Sheaves of whom are ripe to come
 To destruction's harvest home: 230
 Men must reap the things they sow,
 Force from force must ever flow,
 Or worse; but 'tis a bitter woe
 That love or reason cannot change
 The despot's rage, the slave's revenge. 235

Padua, thou within whose walls
 Those mute guests at festivals,
 Son and Mother, Death and Sin,
 Played at dice for Ezzelin,
 Till Death cried, "I win, I win!" 240
 And Sin cursed to lose the wager,
 But Death promised, to assuage her,
 That he would petition for
 Her to be made Vice-Emperor,
 When the destined years were o'er, 245
 Over all between the Po
 And the eastern Alpine snow,
 Under the mighty Austrian.
 Sin smiled so as Sin only can,
 And since that time, aye, long before, 250
 Both have ruled from shore to shore,
 That incestuous pair, who follow
 Tyrants as the sun the swallow,

¹ Printed *foizon* in Shelley's edition.

As Repentance follows Crime,
 And as changes follow Time.
 255

In thine halls the lamp of learning,
 Padua, now no more is burning;
 Like a meteor, whose wild way
 Is lost over the grave of day,
 It gleams betrayed and to betray:
 260

Once remotest nations came
 To adore that sacred flame,
 When it lit not many a hearth
 On this cold and gloomy earth:
 Now new fires from antique light
 Spring beneath the wide world's might;
 But their spark lies dead in thee,
 Trampled out by tyranny.

As the Norway woodman quells,
 In the depth of piny dells,
 270
 One light flame among the brakes,
 While the boundless forest shakes,
 And its mighty trunks are torn
 By the fire thus lowly born:

The spark beneath his feet is dead,
 275
 He starts to see the flames it fed
 Howling through the darkened sky
 With a myriad tongues victoriously,
 And sinks down in fear: so thou,
 O Tyranny,¹ beholdest now
 280

Light around thee, and thou hearest
 The loud flames ascend, and fearest:
 Grovel on the earth: aye, hide
 In the dust thy purple pride!

Noon descends around me now:
 285

¹ *Tyranny* with a small *t* in Shelley's edition.

'Tis the noon of autumn's glow,
 When a soft and purple mist
 Like a vaporous amethyst,
 Or an air-dissolvèd star
 Mingling light and fragrance, far 290
 From the curved horizon's bound
 To the point of heaven's profound,
 Fills the overflowing sky;
 And the plains that silent lie
 Underneath, the leaves unsodden 295
 Where the infant frost has trodden
 With his morning-wingèd feet,
 Whose bright print is gleaming yet;
 And the red and golden vines,
 Piercing with their trellised lines 300
 The rough, dark-skirted wilderness;
 The dun and bladed grass no less,
 Pointing from this hoary tower
 In the windless air; the flower
 Glimmering at my feet; the line 305
 Of the olive-sandalled Apennine
 In the south dimly islanded;
 And the Alps, whose snows are spread
 High between the clouds and sun;
 And of living things each one; 310
 And my spirit which so long
 Darkened this swift stream of song,
 Interpenetrated lie
 By the glory of the sky:
 Be it love, light, harmony, 315
 Odour, or the soul of all
 Which from heaven like dew doth fall,
 Or the mind which feeds this verse
 Peopling the lone universe.

Noon descends, and after noon 320
 Autumn's evening meets me soon,
 Leading the infantine moon,
 And that one star, which to her
 Almost seems to minister
 Half the crimson light she brings 325
 From the sunset's radiant springs:
 And the soft dreams of the morn,
 (Which like wingèd winds had borne
 To that silent isle, which lies
 'Mid remembered agonies, 330
 The frail bark of this lone being,)
 Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,
 And its ancient pilot, Pain,
 Sits beside the helm again.

Other flowering isles must be 335
 In the sea of life and agony:
 Other spirits float and flee
 O'er that gulph: even now, perhaps,
 On some rock the wild wave wraps,
 With folded wings they waiting sit 340
 For my bark, to pilot it
 To some calm and blooming cove,
 Where for me, and those I love,
 May a windless bower be built,
 Far from passion, pain, and guilt, 345
 In a dell 'mid lawny hills,
 Which the wild sea-murmur fills,
 And soft sunshine, and the sound
 Of old forests echoing round,
 And the light and smell divine 350
 Of all flowers that breathe and shine:
 We may live so happy there,
 That the spirits of the air,

Envyng us, may even entice
 To our healing paradise 355
 The polluting multitude;
 But their rage would be subdued
 By that clime divine and calm,
 And the winds whose wings rain balm
 On the uplifted soul, and leaves 360
 Under which the bright sea heaves;
 While each breathless interval
 In their whisperings musical
 The inspired soul supplies
 With its own deep melodies, 365
 And the love which heals all strife
 Circling, like the breath of life,
 All things in that sweet abode
 With its own mild brotherhood:
 They, not it would change; and soon 370
 Every sprite beneath the moon
 Would repent its envy vain,
 And the earth grow young again.

HYMN

TO

INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY.¹

1.

THE awful shadow of some unseen Power
Floats tho' unseen amongst² us,—visiting
This various world with as inconstant wing
As summer winds that creep from flower to flower,—
Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,

¹ This poem was published in *The Examiner* for 19 January, 1817 (No. 473), having been, as the Editor remarks, "originally announced under the signature of the *Elfin Knight*." In the meantime the authorship had become known to the editor; and the poem was duly signed, on its appearance, with the name PERCY B. SHELLEY. I suspect that Shelley read a proof of this poem before it appeared in *The Examiner*, or else that it was pretty correctly printed from a very careful copy. The punctuation is wholly different in system from that of the version in the *Rosalind and Helen* volume; and, referring to the remark made in a former note (p. 309) as to Peacock's practice of removing the pauses so constantly used by Shelley, it should be observed that this *Hymn*, as printed in *The Examiner*, has no less than twenty-one pauses in it, while the other version has not a single

one left, the whole being replaced by more orthodox points. Moreover Shelley was in England when the *Examiner* version appeared, while, from the preface to the *Rosalind* volume, it would seem that he did not even know the *Hymn* was to be in that volume,—so that he is not likely to have prepared that version. On the whole therefore, I think it safer to give the earlier version, which presents no important difference from the other, except in this matter of punctuation, and in the few particulars specified in the following notes. Mrs. Shelley tells us in her note on Poems of 1816 that the *Hymn* "was conceived during his voyage round the Lake [of Geneva] with Lord Byron."

² In the version of 1819 *among*, instead of *amongst*,—one point in which that version seems to me preferable to the other,—more Shelley-like in instinct for sound.

It visits with inconstant glance
 Each human heart and countenance;
 Like hues and harmonies of evening,—
 Like clouds in starlight widely spread,—
 Like memory of music fled,—
 Like aught that for its grace may be
 Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

2.

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost¹ consecrate
 With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
 Of human thought or form,—where art thou gone?
 Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,
 This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?
 Ask why the sunlight not for ever
 Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river,
 Why aught should fail and fade that once is shewn,
 Why fear and dream² and death and birth
 Cast on the daylight of this earth
 Such gloom,—why man has such a scope
 For love and hate, despondency and hope?

3.

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever
 To sage or poet these responses given—
 Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven,
 Remain the records of their vain endeavour,
 Frail spells—whose uttered charm might not avail to sever,
 From all we hear and all we see,
 Doubt, chance, and mutability.
 Thy light alone—like mist o'er mountains driven,

¹ In *The Examiner*, *dost*; but *doth* in the *Rosalind and Helen* volume.

² Mr. Garnett tells me an interest-

ing MS. variation in this line,—*care and pain for fear and dream*,—is shewn by Sir Percy Shelley's MS.

Or music by the night wind sent,
 Thro' strings of some still instrument,
 Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
 Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

4.¹

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart
 And come, for some uncertain moments lent.
 Man were immortal, and omnipotent,
 Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
 Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.
 Thou messenger of sympathies,
 That wax and wane in lovers'² eyes—
 Thou—that to human thought art³ nourishment,
 Like darkness to a dying flame!
 Depart not as thy shadow came,
 Depart not—lest the grave should be,
 Like life and fear, a dark reality.

5.

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
 Thro' many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
 And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
 Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.
 I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed,
 I was not heard—I saw them not—
 When musing deeply on the lot
 Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing
 All vital things that wake to bring
 News of birds and blossoming,—

¹ Mr. Garnett tells me this stanza is not in the original draft.

² In both the *Examiner* version and that of 1819, this word is *lover's* in-

stead of *lovers'*.

³ In the *Rosalind and Helen* version, we read *are* for *art*.

Sudden, thy shadow fell on me ;
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy!¹

6.

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine—have I not kept the vow ?
With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now
I call the phantoms of a thousand hours
Each from his voiceless grave: they have in visioned bowers
Of studious zeal or love's² delight
Outwatched with me the envious night—
They know that never joy illumed my brow
Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free
This world from its dark slavery,
That thou—O awful LOVELINESS,
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.³

¹ Spelt *extacy* in both versions.

² We read *loves* instead of *love's*, both in the version printed in *The Examiner*, and in that published with *Rosalind and Helen*.

³ There can be but little doubt that these two stanzas (5 and 6) have reference to the same awakening of Shelley's spirit to its sublime mission, referred to in another passage of like autobiographic value, namely stanzas 3, 4, and 5 of the Dedication to *Laon and Cythna* (pp. 102 and 103). In a note on those stanzas the question whether the awakening was at Eton or at Brentford is referred to; and whichever be the correct version as to period and locality in that case is also correct as to this. The passage in Sir John Rennie's Autobiography alluded to there seems to me to correspond still more strikingly with these two stanzas of the *Hymn* than with the version of the same spiritual situation in the Dedication; and I have therefore reserved the following extract from the Autobiography as more fitting to be given here than there:—"During the time that I was

there the most remarkable scholar was the celebrated poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, who was then about twelve or thirteen (as far as I can remember), and even at that early age exhibited considerable poetical talent, accompanied by a violent and extremely excitable temper, which manifested itself in all kinds of eccentricities. ...His imagination was always roving upon something romantic and extraordinary, such as spirits, fairies, fighting, volcanoes, &c., and he not unfrequently astonished his school-fellows by blowing up the boundary palings of the playground with gunpowder, also the lid of his desk in the middle of schooltime, to the great surprise of Dr. Greenlaw himself and the whole school. In fact, at times he was considered to be almost upon the borders of insanity; yet with all this, when treated with kindness, he was very amiable, noble, high-spirited, and generous; he used to write verse, English and Latin, with considerable facility, and attained a high position in the school before he left for Eton, where I understand, he was equally, if not

7.

The day becomes more solemn and serene
 When noon is past—there is a harmony
 In autumn, and a lustre in its sky,
 Which thro' the summer is not heard or seen,
 As if it could not be, as if it had not been!
 Thus let thy power, which like the truth
 Of nature on my passive youth
 Descended, to my onward life supply
 Its calm—to one who worships thee,
 And every form containing thee,¹
 Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind
 To fear himself, and love all human kind.

more, extraordinary and eccentric." In reading this beside the two stanzas in the *Hymn*, allowance must of course be made for the difference between a poet's conception of incidents in his sensitive and persecuted boyhood, and another man's conception of those same incidents as seen by a schoolfellow, who probably, like most of the schoolfellows that any of us can recall, would have no sympathy whatever with a boy like Shelley. The drily recorded fact that he wrote "verse, English and Latin, with considerable facility," is probably the best corroborative evidence we can get of that vowed service to the spirit of Intellectual Beauty recorded by the poet in the words

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
 To thee and thine.

¹ The repetition here of the word *thee*, instead of finding a rhyme, is highly significant of deliberate intention, and certainly tends to confirm the view expressed in some of the notes on analogous and similar instances throughout *Laon and Cythna*, that it is not safe to regard such cases as "metric irregularities." In this case there could have been no possible difficulty (as there sometimes would be in the complex stanzas of *Laon and Cythna*); and I should look upon it as almost certain that here, at all events, the repetition of the word was well considered with regard to effect.

SONNET.¹

OZYMANDIAS.

I MET a traveller from an antique land
 Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
 Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
 The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed:²
 And on the pedestal these words appear:
 "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.

¹ First published in *The Examiner* of the 11th of January 1818, with the signature "Glirastes." There is no verbal variation between that version and the reprint in the *Rosalind and Helen* volume. In Middleton's *Shelley and His Writings* (Vol. II, p. 71) we are told that Shelley, Keats, and Leigh Hunt "tried to excel each other in writing a sonnet on the Nile;" and he adds that Shelley's *Ozymandias* "was one of these." He gives no authority for this latter statement; and I presume it rests upon the fact that Lord Houghton, in his *Life, Letters, and Literary Remains of John Keats*, appends the *Ozymandias* Sonnet, with those of Keats and Hunt, to the letter in which Keats recounts the friendly strife. Lord Houghton (Vol. I, p. 99) merely introduces the three Sonnets with the words, "These are the three sonnets on the Nile here

alluded to; and very characteristic they are." At all events it is to be remarked that this is *not* a sonnet on the Nile, and that, among the Leigh Hunt MSS. placed at my disposal by Mr. Townshend Mayer, there *is* a sonnet in Shelley's handwriting addressed "To the Nile,"—which will be found in Vol. III of this edition of his works.

² I should not have supposed lines 7 and 8 to present a difficulty; but as a man of letters of my acquaintance tells me he considers them unintelligible, it may be well to note that the clause *stamped on these lifeless things* is parenthetical, the meaning being that the passions of Ozymandias, being stamped on the lifeless fragments of his statue, still survive the sculptor's hand which mocked them, and the tyrant's heart which fed them.

APPENDIX TO VOL. I.

CONTENTS OF THE APPENDIX.

- I. Further Particulars as to *Laon and Cythna*, usually known as *The Revolt of Islam*.
- II. The Copy of *Laon and Cythna* worked upon by Shelley to change it into *The Revolt of Islam*.
- III. Extract from Advertisements at end of *Rosalind and Helen*, &c.
- IV. On certain Words used by Shelley.

APPENDIX.

I.

FURTHER PARTICULARS AS TO "LAON AND CYTHNA," USUALLY
KNOWN AS "THE REVOLT OF ISLAM."

IN the note forming page 80 of the present volume I have set down the outline of what is known to me concerning the bibliography of Shelley's longest work, *Laon and Cythna*, or, as it is usually called, *The Revolt of Islam*; but the whole history of the transaction whereby *Laon and Cythna* became *The Revolt of Islam* is so remarkable that I have thought it desirable to give in an appendix fuller details of a transformation which is, as far as I am aware, without parallel in the history of literature.

The late Thomas Love Peacock's version of this affair (valuable in virtue of his known intimacy with the poet, and also on account of the character which he has generally borne for unswerving veracity¹), first appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* for January 1860, in one of a series of papers

¹ I am of course not unaware of the bearing which my friend Mr. Garnett's masterly examination of some of Peacock's statements may be held to have on this word; but I can imagine that those statements may seem suspicious, and yet have been made in

perfect good faith. They form no part of the present subject; but whoever wishes to go into the question of Peacock's veracity should consult Vol. III of his *Works*, and Mr. Garnett's *Relics of Shelley*.

on Shelley which have since been reprinted in the author's collected works, and which are full of valuable and interesting details. According to Peacock, Shelley wrote *Laon and Cythna* "chiefly on a seat on a high prominence in Bisham Wood, where he passed whole mornings with a blank book and a pencil;" and this statement does not diverge materially from that of Mrs. Shelley, in her note on *The Revolt of Islam*, that "the poem was written in his boat, as it floated under the beech groves of Bisham, or during wanderings in the neighbouring country." Peacock's account goes on thus:—

"This work when completed was printed under the title of *Laon and Cythna*. In this poem he had carried the expression of his opinions, moral, political, and theological, beyond the bounds of discretion. The terror which, in those days of persecution of the press, the perusal of the book inspired in Mr. Ollier, the publisher, induced him to solicit the alteration of many passages which he had marked. Shelley was for some time inflexible; but Mr. Ollier's refusal to publish the poem as it was, backed by the advice of all his friends, induced him to submit to the required changes. Many leaves were cancelled, and it was finally published as *The Revolt of Islam*. Of *Laon and Cythna* only three copies had gone forth. One of these had found its way to *The Quarterly Review*, and the opportunity was readily seized of pouring out on it one of the most malignant effusions¹ of the *odium theologicum* that ever appeared even in those days, and in that periodical."

On this paragraph I have to observe (1) that altered passages of the poem are marked in pencil in the copy from which the text has been edited in the present volume,² so

¹ The article in *The Quarterly Review* is of no intrinsic value or importance whatever; but for those who are curi-

ous in such matters it may be stated that it is in No. 42 (September 1819).

² See Appendix II, on that copy.

that I presume that to be the copy marked by Mr. Ollier; and (2) that the expression "induced to submit to the required changes" seems to me to correspond exactly with all we know of the matter. There is a slight variation of phrase in the *Shelley Memorials* (p. 83), where Shelley is described as "convinced of the propriety of making certain alterations:" convinced of the need he no doubt was, for the alternative was a desperate one; but there is nothing in his subsequent history to countenance the idea that he regarded *Laon and Cythna* as in any way offensive. Indeed, when *The Quarterly Review*¹ returned after the lapse of over forty years, in a milder spirit, to the attack on Shelley, in regard to this poem, Peacock² added the following supplementary account of the affair:—"Mr. Ollier positively refused to publish the poem as it was, and Shelley had no hope of another publisher. He for a long time refused to alter a line: but his friends finally prevailed upon him to submit. Still he could not, or would not, sit down by himself to alter it, and the whole of the alterations were actually made in successive sittings of what I may call a literary committee. He contested the proposed alterations step by step: in the end, sometimes adopting, more frequently modifying, never originating, and always insisting that his poem was spoiled." For the rest, I cannot do better than quote some observations made in *Notes and Queries* (for April 12, 1862) by that acute and indefatigable Shelley-student Mr. Denis Florence MacCarthy: he says—

"If Mr. Peacock is correct in stating that *only three copies* of *Laon and Cythna* had gone forth, the fate of these three is easily accounted for. 'One,' as Mr. Peacock says, and as is evident both from the heading and the notes of the article referred to, 'found its way to *The Quarterly*

¹ No. 220, October 1861.

² *Fraser's Magazine*, March 1862.

Review.' Another was certainly sent to Godwin, as we have a letter of Shelley's dated December 11th, 1817 (three weeks before the poem came out under its new title of *The Revolt of Islam*), in reply to one of Godwin's, in which he says, 'I listened with deference and self-suspicion to your censures of *Laon and Cythna*.'¹ The third there can be no doubt was sent to Thomas Moore, 'whose most kind and encouraging letter on the subject of the poem,' Shelley had 'just received' when writing to his publisher, Mr. Ollier on the same day. This identical copy, with 'From the Author,' in Shelley's large bold hand-writing on the fly-leaf, is now in the Moore Library, Royal Irish Academy, Dawson Street, Dublin, where the poet's books have found an honoured resting place, owing to the liberality of Mrs. Moore. Moore's library contains also the original edition of *The Revolt of Islam*, but without any inscription from the author. I have looked carefully through both these volumes to see whether they contained any pencil marks by Moore, or any notes of admiration, condemnation, or protestation, from which we could infer whether his 'most kind and encouraging letter' in acknowledgment was confined merely to the literary execution of the poem. I have, however, found none. It is quite plain notwithstanding, that Shelley wished the frightened publisher to suppose that Moore might be considered in favour of the appearance of the poem in its original form.

"That Mr. Peacock's statement is strictly true is therefore extremely probable;² but that more copies were *made up* than the three that 'had gone forth' at the time of the publisher's objection to the further issue of the poem,

¹ *Sic* in the *Shelley Memorials*, p. 85; but Mrs. Shelley, who gave the same letter in her second edition of 1839, makes Shelley refer to the poem as *The Revolt of Islam*.

² Is not a fourth copy indicated by

the fact that, in *The Examiner* for 30 November, 1817, an extract from *Laon and Cythna* appeared? The passage quoted was one of those afterwards modified.

and that these copies are now stealing into the market, is beyond all doubt. Before alluding to the analysis which I have made of the differences existing between *Laon and Cythna*, and *The Revolt of Islam*, I may state that I have obtained two uncut copies of *Laon and Cythna* within the last six months from different London booksellers, neither of whom, however, could assist me in my inquiries as to the way in which original copies of this poem are now getting into circulation, or as to their probable number. That the number must be exceedingly small is, I think, evident from the parsimony almost with which the disagreeable process of cancelling the offending pages was carried out, and the eagerness with which every printed scrap of the original sheets that was admissible was turned to use in the making up of the new volume. An amusing instance of this may be seen in the list of 'Errata,' which is the same in both volumes. In the process of cancelling the peccant pages, some of these errors were however corrected; but the reader of *The Revolt of Islam* is, nevertheless, called upon to forgive mistakes that no longer exist (as at pp. 90 and 264), except in *Laon and Cythna*; and at p. 182 line 12, the 'these' of *Laon and Cythna*, is requested to be read 'those' in the list of errata to *The Revolt of Islam*. While in the text itself, the word 'thou,' which is different from either, is silently adopted."

The foregoing paragraph of Mr. MacCarthy's opens up the question of the rarity of uncanceled copies of *Laon and Cythna*; and I may as well state at once that their extreme rarity is a pure fiction. I could enumerate a dozen or two of copies existing within the circle of my own knowledge; and I am acquainted with two London booksellers each of whom assures me that he some years ago bought and sold again a bundle of 25 copies done up in boards, and being, positively, the uncanceled *Laon and Cythna*. These fifty copies (and one of the two booksellers

is not sure that his bundle alone did not consist of fifty), were bought for sixpence a copy and sold in the ordinary retail way at about half-a-crown a copy; and it is very improbable that any of them have since perished; so that they may be confidently expected to "steal into the market" from time to time. Moreover, Mr. Robert Browning, who has an unusually accurate memory for details, tells me that, when he was a youth, he met, in his wanderings about London, with a small bookseller who had for sale a large pile of copies in 'quires,' and that these were certainly *Laon and Cythna*, uncanceled. Of course it is possible that these copies in quires were afterwards made up into the identical two bundles in boards already mentioned; but I very much doubt this, because there was no market to induce a chance owner to make up "quire stock" of any book of Shelley's, even as late as twenty years ago; and we may better account for those two bundles in boards on the hypothesis that they were made up in 1817. It is very likely that the impetuous poet had given orders for a large number to be sent out for review *immediately*, and that these were made up as soon as the book was printed; and I suspect that *all* Peacock's "three copies" (very likely there were more) were sent out specially by Shelley himself;—that, before the "review copies" were despatched by the publisher, the doubts and fears so momentous to the prospects of the book arose in Mr. Ollier's mind; and that, when finally that gentleman had carried his point, and had got into existence the mutilated *Revolt of Islam*, the "review copies" of *Laon and Cythna* were laid aside because it was not sure that they would be wanted at all, and it would have been more troublesome to carry out the cancelling process with them than with the "quire stock." That no such copies ever could have been wanted to supply the demand for the original edition of *The Revolt of Islam*, we know,—for "quire stock" of the uncanceled

book was still in existence in 1829, when, as stated in the note on page 80 of this volume, the book was reissued with a new title-page by a different publisher, whose copies are sometimes *Revolt of Islam*, and sometimes *Laon and Cythna* uncanceled except as regards the title-page.

The "parsimony" referred to by Mr. MacCarthy as characterizing the process of "cancelling the offending pages" does not, as it seems to me, affect the question of the original book's scarcity at all; and indeed I think there was rather carelessness than parsimony,—a failure to observe that a fresh list of errata should have been printed when some of the errors in the list had been corrected. There could be no motive of economy, for instance, in not correcting the errors specified in the list when they happened to be on a leaf that was being cancelled on other grounds; and in some instances Shelley himself, in making a change to meet Mr. Ollier's views, failed to correct on the same leaf a flagrant error which had already been detected and provided for in the list of errata: he would, I presume, if he thought about it, take it as a matter of course that the corrections in that list would be made without further instructions, when they happened to have reference to a leaf that was cancelled. For example, in the very case quoted by Mr. MacCarthy (page 383) of *thou* instead of *those* being substituted for *these*,—turning to Shelley's revised copy, I find that, when he had altered stanza VIII of Canto VIII, to get rid of "God" and "his red hell's undying snakes", he made a correction in the pointing of stanza IX, *not* referred to in the list of errata, but did not touch stanzas X and XI, which, being on the same *leaf*, were also to be reprinted, and for which three corrections were provided in the list of errata. That one of those corrections was wrongly made, namely by inserting *thou* instead of *those*, I take as one indication, in addition to those noted elsewhere, that proofs of the cancel-

leaves were sent to Shelley: I imagine that in this case, after seeing that "God" and "his red hell's undying snakes" had duly given place to "this Power" and "deepest hell and deathless snakes," he turned the leaf over and found the corrections from the list of errata were not made,—that he made them,—and that his *those* was, as it well might be, mistaken for *thou*. In fact, I do not see how the mistake could have occurred if the corrections had been done from the list; and variations in the result of his seeing proofs of the cancel-leaves would easily occur through his reading some through, and merely attending to what was altered in others. Thus he cannot have looked very closely at the cancel-leaf including stanza X of Canto XII; for, in the second line of that stanza, *waves* was reprinted, although *streams* was substituted in the list of errata.

Mr. MacCarthy seems to assume that the object of parsimony in such a matter would be to turn as many copies of *Laon and Cythna* as possible into copies of *The Revolt of Islam*; but in fact the object of parsimony would be to make up as few copies as possible, just enough to keep pace with the demand, and to hold the "quire stock" of the original book unmutilated in readiness for any future demand. A thousand copies of *Laon and Cythna* would have been a very moderate number for Shelley to have printed: two hundred and fifty would have been a large number for the publisher to have cancelled and bound; and a residue of seven hundred and fifty copies would in the natural course of things remain in quires in Mr. Ollier's warehouse, or at the printer's, with the cancel-leaves done up separately. That some such thing *must* have happened is shewn by the fact, already dwelt upon, of the original book turning up again in 1829.

One of the inconveniences of the frequent occurrence of *Laon and Cythna* text uncanceled in the 1829 edition called

The Revolt of Islam, is that you have only to remove the new title-page and insert a fac-simile of the original title-page, to produce an apparently genuine copy of *Laon and Cythna*. I have such a copy in my possession; but of course such copies do not have the fly-title *Laon and Cythna* with the quotation from Pindar, which would not have fitted in with Mr. Brooks's new title-page of 1829. The existence of these made-up copies may perhaps account for Mr. MacCarthy's statement that that fly-title does not occur in *Laon and Cythna*, which means, I presume, that it is not in either of the copies he consulted. It is, however, in my genuine copy, though of course not in the made-up one with fac-simile title. But this fly-title is likely enough to be missing from even genuine copies of a book so carelessly printed and put together; for it is printed on a separate leaf, with a separate signature, *d*, and comes in between two complete sheets,—unfortunately at that point where the Roman numerals of the preliminary matter end, so that its absence does not make an obvious hiatus.

The daring idea of altering this book by means of a few cancel-leaves probably arose from the mechanical facilities which accident seems to have presented, in the mode of setting the book up; and these same facilities have since told in favour of all sorts of bibliographical mystifications. The book being uniformly set throughout, without foot-notes or head-lines, and with two stanzas on every page, except the pages at the beginning of cantos, which have but one stanza, the process of removing certain stanzas was quite simple, and the change of title only involved cancelling two leaves instead of reprinting the book, as it would have been necessary to do had the title been printed, according to custom, at the head of every page. Here, the pages were simply numbered at the centre of the top, and did as well for one title as another; and had it not been for that fatal circumstance, it is doubtful whether there would have

been any alteration whatever: it was the ease with which the book was convertible that probably weighed with Shelley to induce him to give way; and I cannot conceive that he would have consented to waste the whole issue of a book into which he had poured so much of his heart,—his gospel of the moment. The publisher's requirements must have seemed much more formidable had they not been rounded off with the specious consideration, "all can be managed by printing twenty-eight fresh leaves"; and but for this it seems to me Shelley would have been more likely to adopt the alternative of the withdrawal of Mr. Ollier's name from the publication,—damaging as that would have been. It should be borne in mind that it was at Shelley's expense, and not at Mr. Ollier's, that the book was printed: it is doubtful whether Shelley at that time could have commanded funds for printing *two* such volumes one after the other; and the earnestness of his letters to Godwin and Mr. Ollier on the subject of this poem leaves no room for the supposition that he would on any account have let it perish. To Godwin he says, "I felt the precariousness of my life, and I engaged in this task, resolved to leave some record of myself. Much of what the volume contains was written with the same feeling, as real, though not so prophetic, as the communications of a dying man"; and further on he speaks of the poem as having grown "as it were 'from the agony and bloody sweat' of intellectual travail."

A poem with such a genesis was not one to be readily given up by its author, or compromised by a withdrawal from publication, of which the consequences are thus described by Shelley in his letter to the publisher (*Shelley Memorials*, page 81): "You do your best to condemn my book before it is given forth, because you publish it, and then withdraw; so that no other bookseller will publish it, because one has already rejected it. You must be aware

of the great injury which you prepare for me. If I had never consulted your advantage, my book would have had a fair hearing. But now it is first published, and then the publisher, as if the author had deceived him as to the contents of the work—and as if the inevitable consequence of its publication would be ignominy and punishment—and as if none should dare to touch it or look at it—retracts, at a period when nothing but the most extraordinary and unforeseen circumstances can justify his retraction.”

It may perhaps be fanciful, but in the very painful earnestness of Shelley's utterances concerning this poem, I seem to discern a key to the extreme corruption of the text and its striking inconsistency in those minor details into which I have gone so fully in my notes to the text. The state of Shelley's mind as described by himself was such as would correspond with a very rapid and inaccurate manuscript,¹ and at the same time with a feverish desire to see the book printed accurately, which he could only, he would think, secure by revising it for the press himself. Anyone who has had much to do with printers will realize at once the result of handing over Shelley's manuscript to a printer with strict instructions to “follow copy,” that is to print it *verbatim*, *literatim*, and point for point, and to leave the revision to the author. For those who have not had much to do with printers, let it be stated that the manuscript would in such a case (as in any other) be divided among several compositors, that some of them would “follow copy” strictly, and that others would persistently disregard any such instruction, and correct the author wherever they thought him wrong: here I speak from positive experience, having never yet known a staff of compositors without its due proportion of men who *would not* “follow copy.” Then again, although in strict-

¹ Indeed the manuscript fragments of *Laon and Cythna* which I have

already mentioned are certainly anything but careful or consistent.

ness the printer's reader, who goes over the whole of the proofs with the manuscript, should see that the proofs *are* "according to copy," the fact is that this is seldom if ever scrupulously done when the instructions are to "follow copy" and let the author revise,—it being too often assumed that *he* will find out all the deviations from his manuscript.

Now the original edition of *Laon and Cythna* has to me all the appearance of a book printed under strict injunctions to "follow copy," and then revised by an author without an accurate eye for trivial detail. Such an author we know Shelley was; and when we come to consider the painful circumstances in which he worked at that time, we should be surprised at finding the book anything but inaccurate and inconsistent. If my hypothesis be correct, he would never discover half the mistakes of his own making which had been put into type by the compositor who *would* "follow copy," and which he would have wished to correct, or half the instances in which the compositor who *would not* "follow copy" had altered something that seemed to the compositor a mistake, but was really the author's deliberate intention.

Had I known this as a fact, I could have altered, securely, much that will be found annoying in the minutely reproduced text which I have given; but as it is a mere hypothesis I could not act upon it, though I feel tolerably confident that it is the real explanation of the infamous printing of the book in question.

On the following page is printed a summary of the cancel-leaves, which gave so much pain to Shelley, and have caused so much trouble to all who have had anything to do with the book.

H. B. F.

LIST of leaves removed from *Laon and Cythna* and reprinted with alterations in order to convert that book into *The Revolt of Islam*.

Title-page.

Pages XXI and XXII (the end of the Preface).¹

„ XXXIII and XXXIV (the fly-title *Laon and Cythna*, with quotation from Pindar).

Pages.				Printed in this edition at pages	
41 and 42,	being stanzas	XVIII	to XXI	of Canto II	... 137—138
43 „ 44,	„ „	XXII	„ XXV	„ II	... 138—139
57 „ 58,	„ „	I	„ III	„ III	... 149—150
89 „ 90,	„ „	XXVII	„ XXXI	„ IV	... 171—172
115 „ 116,	„ „	XLIV	„ XLVII	„ V	... 188—190
139 „ 140,	„ „	XXII	„ XXV	„ VI	... 205—206
143 „ 144,	„ „	XXX	„ XXXIII	„ VI	... 207—209
147 „ 148,	„ „	XXXVIII	„ XLI	„ VI	... 210—211
179 „ 180,	„ „	IV	„ VII	„ VIII	... 233—234
181 „ 182,	„ „	VIII	„ XI	„ VIII	... 234—236
183 „ 184,	„ „	XII	„ XV	„ VIII	... 236—238
199 „ 200,	„ „	XII	„ XV	„ IX	... 248—249
201 „ 202,	„ „	XVI	„ XIX	„ IX	... 249—251
223 „ 224,	„ „	XXII	„ XXV	„ X	... 265—266
225 „ 226,	„ „	XXVI	„ XXIX	„ X	... 266—268
227 „ 228,	„ „	XXX	„ XXXIII	„ X	... 268—269
229 „ 230,	„ „	XXXIV	„ XXXVII	„ X	... 269—271
231 „ 232,	„ „	XXXVIII	„ XLI	„ X	... 271—272
233 „ 234,	„ „	XLII	„ XLV	„ X	... 272—274
235 „ 236,	„ „	XLVI	„ XLVIII	„ X	... 274—275
245 „ 246,	„ „	XVI	„ XIX	„ XI	... 281—282
249 „ 250,	„ „	{ XXIV	„ XXV	„ XI	} ... 284—285
		{ I	„	„ XII	
255 „ 256,	„ „	X	„ XIII	„ XII	... 288—289
263 „ 264,	„ „	XXVI	„ XXIX	„ XII	... 294—295
265 „ 266,	„ „	XXX	„ XXXIII	„ XII	... 295—297

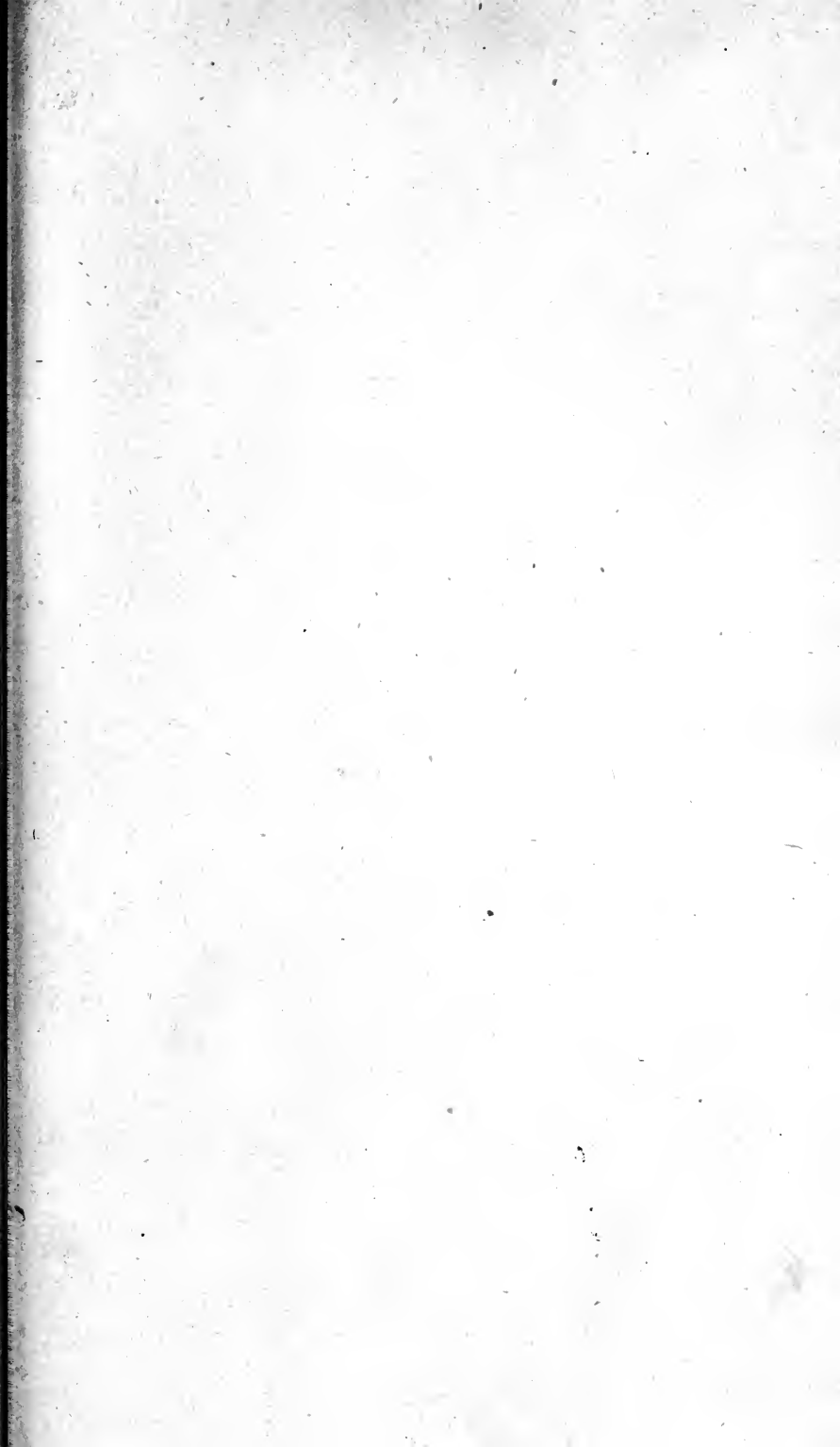
¹ Mr. Rossetti (p. CI of his Memoir) says the changes affected “some passages of the preface”: in case of misconception, I may add that nothing in the preface is cancelled or altered except the final paragraph, which simply disappears with its footnote. See pp. 97 & 98.

II.

SHELLEY'S REVISED COPY OF "LAON AND CYTHNA."

In the foregoing Appendix on *Laon and Cythna* and *The Revolt of Islam*, it has been stated that the copy from which the text has been edited in the present edition was presumably the one referred to by Peacock as having been marked by Mr. Ollier at the places considered by him objectionable; and, as it is certainly the copy worked upon by Shelley to meet the publisher's views, I do not see that there can be any reasonable doubt on the other point. The foot-notes, throughout the poem, furnish pretty full particulars of this most interesting relic, which it has been my good fortune to bring to light; but I think it well to give in the form of an appendix a less disjointed account of a volume which is really an important historical document, if it be true that our greatest poets are our greatest and most influential men,—or, as Shelley himself puts it, that "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."

I know of few incidents in the history of literature more closely bordering on the tragic, without being actually tragical, than this dead-set made upon a great poet, who conceived that he had a gospel to preach with a view to the alleviation of the wrongs and sufferings of humanity, and who, as a dying man, desired most earnestly to leave some substantial record of what, as he deemed, it was not to be permitted him to go on delivering in person. That Shelley was not really a dying man, but only thought so by himself and certain others whose opinion ought to have been worth something, does not affect the extreme painfulness of the situation: according to the letter to



What is that Power? VI.

~~“What then is God?”~~ Some moon-struck sophist stood

Watching the shade from his own soul upthrown

Fill Heaven and darken Earth, and in such mood

The Form he saw and worshipped was his own,

His likeness in the world's vast mirror shewn ;

And 'twere an innocent dream, but that a faith

Nursed by fear's dew of poison, grows thereon,

And that men say, ~~God has appointed~~ Death

On all who scorn ~~his will~~ to wreak immortal wrath.

*that Power has
chosen*

its laws

VII.

~~“Men say they have seen God, and heard from God,~~

~~Or known from others who have known such things,~~

~~And that his will is all our law, a rod~~

~~To scourge us into slaves—~~ that Priests and Kings,

Custom, domestic sway, aye, all that brings

Man's free-born soul beneath the oppressor's heel,

Are his strong ministers, and that the stings

Of death will make the wise his vengeance feel,

Tho' truth and virtue arm their hearts with tenfold steel.

*Men say that they themselves have seen &
Or known from others who have known such things
A Shade a Form, ^{which} that earth & Heaven between*

Godwin already quoted, he considered himself dying, and poured his most fervent convictions into the ready mould of a poem which, if not a perfect work, was an unprecedented and truly remarkable work, full of splendour of imagination, fire of speech, purity of aspiration, and sublime disinterestedness. The question of mistaken views does not affect the matter one iota: here was this poem ready to appear before the world,—when suddenly the author was informed that it must be altered in some of its most vital particulars, or be discredited by the withdrawal of the publisher's name; and, under strong pressure, he altered it in those vital particulars,—wittingly but unwillingly mangled it as a work of art, and let it go forth to the world, a monument fore-doomed as it were to crumble into ruin before he whom it was designed to commemorate should be well beneath the earth. It is the good fortune of humanity that Shelley was *not* a dying man, that he lived to erect for himself a far more glorious monument than the un mutilated *Laon and Cythna*, in the noble series of works with which he followed that hapless book, given out as it were by a god maimed and shackled; but the very series of works which he lived to leave us confers half its interest on the almost tragic episode of the cancelling of *Laon and Cythna*, the living record¹ of which episode has been lost to sight for nearly sixty years, to come to light again now in the fulness of that fame so tardily accorded by the poet's countrymen, but at length beyond all possibility of dispute or cavil.

It is not my business here to analyse, appraise, or criticize the poem whose creation shared the occupation of Shelley's mind with that harassing suit in Chancery, the result of

¹ To afford an idea of the general appearance of the pages worked upon in manuscript, a fac-simile of one of those pages has been prepared with

the most laudable care by Mr. G. I. F. Tupper, of Scott's Chambers, Eastcheap, and is inserted opposite.

which was to deprive him of the care of his two eldest children; nor need I discuss the propriety either of Lord Eldon's judgment against the poet as a citizen and parent, or of the publisher's judgment on the citizen as a poet; but surely Shelley had enough to harass him in that eventful year 1817, without the final blow to his hopes of literary fame which Mr. Ollier dealt him before the close of that year,—no doubt under strong conviction of the necessity of dealing it. My present business, however, is to give an account of the recovered evidence of his positive personal manipulation of the poem. Hitherto the evidence has only been that of witnesses,—credible witnesses enough; but there was no tangible proof of the alterations being actually Shelley's: now, the proof is forthcoming; and the changes certainly are his, while there is nothing to give a different colour to his known resistance to these changes, and clearly expressed ratification of the book as originally printed. The volume containing these changes in manuscript is, in fact, primarily, a copy of *both* the books dealt with in Appendix I, —a copy of *Laon and Cythna*, with all the cancel-leaves printed to convert it into *The Revolt of Islam*, bound in beside the original leaves; and it contains, moreover, a single leaf of a proof-sheet of the preface to *Laon and Cythna*, mentioned in the foot-notes at pages 95 to 97 of the present volume, where the variations shewn by this leaf will be found. The book is half-bound in a style which I should take to be considerably later than the style of 1818, and the edges are cut and marbled. Here and there the end of one of Shelley's letters is cut off; but, fortunately, there is no mutilation of the slightest importance to any but a bibliomaniac. For the information of that genus, I may add that the binder has left the sheets exactly eight inches and three-eighths in height, and that here and there is a leaf with the original rough edge of the paper left,—indicating that the book was not immoderately cut. The

lettering on the back is "P. B. Shelley's Laon and Cythna. Cancelled Copy 1818." The words "Cancelled Copy" are also written at the head of the preface, in a large, ordinary hand,—not Shelley's, but, I incline to think, Mr. M'Millan's.

The general appearance of the pages worked upon indicates, as would be expected, no very great respect on the part of publisher or author towards the fabric of a volume now thought so rare that it is not lawful to touch it in any but the most respectful manner; and the appearance of the binding and edges indicates that it was bound for use,—and used, though not ill used. It has had originally bound up with it, at the end, two sheets of paper very like that on which the book is printed; but the sixteen leaves of those sheets, as well as two leaves inserted between the Preface and Dedication, had been carefully removed, apparently with scissors, before the book came into my possession. What tale those leaves might have unfolded, I am at a loss to conjecture. Since the book was bound, some one has wafered in a cutting, seemingly from a provincial Newspaper, containing a long review of Hogg's Life of Shelley;—and here end the external particulars.

The first point in which this copy varies from the ordinary copies is in the substituted title-page,—the *Revolt of Islam* one,—which bears the date 1817, and has thus enabled me to speak positively of a plurality of copies with that curious variation, as I have done in the note at page 80 of this volume: until I got this copy I had only heard that some few of the later title-pages bore date a year earlier than the original ones;—I knew of no specimen but that in the British Museum. It is perhaps worth noting that the *Laon and Cythna* title-page bears no manuscript mark of any kind,—no indication of a revision of title by Shelley; but that he did, at one point in the controversy with Mr. Ollier, furnish a second title, is proved by the fact mentioned in my footnote at page 107, that, on the fly-title with the

quotation from Pindar, *Laon and Cythna* is erased by the poet, and *Othman* substituted by him. The finally adopted title is not in Shelley's writing, but in that of Mr. Charles Ollier; and from this I should infer that there was a separate correspondence on the subject of title, which may yet be discovered some day.

The single leaf from the proof-sheets of the Preface to *Laon and Cythna* (see pages 95 to 97), which looks much as if it had been preserved as a trophy of the prowess of Mr. M'Millan, has some value beyond that of shewing the variations which I have given beneath the text. It shews that the book was undergoing some scrutiny while the Preface was at press: this does not indicate, as might possibly be thought, that Shelley was under the espionage of the printer at the beginning of the printing,—for the Preface and dedication were presumably the last part *written*, and were certainly *printed* after the book, as the signatures to the sheet are “b” and “c,” to distinguish them from the sheets signed “B” and “C,” forming the opening of the poem; but the inference is that the printer, who signed the manuscript suggestion to alter the words “express in the cruelty and malevolence of God” to “entertain of the Deity, as injurious to the character of his mercy and benevolence,” was at the bottom of Mr. Ollier's fears about the book. I regret that there is no proof that Shelley was forced into this particular alteration, which would seem to have been adopted by him *before* the controversy with Mr. Ollier. Another point of interest in this leaf is that the fall of the lines does not correspond with the fall of the same lines in the published *Laon and Cythna*: the leaf is paged xix and xx, begins with the words “superstitious noblemen of Rome,” and ends with “In recommending,”—whereas, in the book as issued, page xix has two lines before we come to “superstitious noblemen,” and “In recommending” is in the third line of page xxi. From this it is to be assumed

that Shelley had sufficiently worked upon the proof sheets of the preface, up to page xviii, to leave the printer in the necessity of carrying over two lines from that page to page xix.

Coming now to the body of the book, it is to be observed that pencilled crosses still remain against several of the altered passages, others having, it would seem, been rubbed out before the alterations were written in: there are sometimes faint indications of these crosses, and sometimes, where these should be, there is the smear apparently of a not over fresh piece of india-rubber, accompanied by the clear impression of fingers where those members would naturally be placed to hold the page steady while rubbing it. This, however, is less interesting than the fact that most of Shelley's alterations would seem to have been made by him first in pencil and afterwards in ink: most of the pencillings have been more or less hastily rubbed out; but some remain untouched beside the ink markings; and those that remain intact are written upright, as if done constrainedly, while out of doors, with no firm resting place for the wrist, or while literally standing at bay before Peacock's literary committee. In one instance (Canto IX, stanza XIV,) where *God* was to give place to *Heaven*, that decision is noted by Shelley in pencil, merely with a capital letter *H*; and there are other pencilled abbreviations which I have referred to in the notes.

There are still remaining very clear traces of another kind of marking beside the crosses set against certain passages,—namely a long line drawn down beside a stanza, and a numeral put against it, not in Shelley's writing. The numerals when traceable are consecutive, and seem to point to some written communication drawing attention to the canvassed passages *seriatim*. One of these numerical markings ("No. 7"), for example, is at stanza XXX of Canto VI, in which, however, Shelley made no change, though he altered one word in the next stanza; and another one

ignored by Shelley was "No. 10,"—being at stanza XVIII of Canto VII, the beautiful stanza wherein Cythna describes her baby as resembling Laon, which of course loses much of its significance in *The Revolt of Islam*, wherein Laon and Cythna are no longer brother and sister.

In printing from this copy, I do not think I have let any variation between the manuscript revisions and the printed cancel-leaves escape me, however trivial such variations might sometimes appear: I have considered these as well as all other trivial variations which I have noted as portions of the material on which other students of Shelley's works may base such further revisions of the text as are not justified under my own conception of what is at present most urgently required. In this particular case of *Laon and Cythna*, whenever I have noted a variation from *The Revolt of Islam* without mentioning the copy worked upon by Shelley, it may safely be assumed that the manuscript revision corresponds precisely with the printed cancel-leaf.¹

As I have already said, there is nothing in this revised copy to change our views as to the preference which Shelley accorded to the original text: indeed it corresponds perfectly with Peacock's version of the affair as quoted at pages 380 and 381; and I have only to add a strong expression of the same preference, from Mr. Swinburne's admirable "Notes on the Text of Shelley" (*Essays and Studies*, pages

¹ I ought to mention, in exception to this assurance, (1) that the alteration of *were* to *was* in stanza XXX of Canto IV, noted at page 172, does not occur in manuscript in my copy, though I have no doubt of its authenticity, taking it as another evidence that Shelley saw proofs of the cancel-leaves; (2) that in changing the alexandrine of stanza VI, Canto VIII, from

On all who scorn his will to wreak immortal wrath,

to

On all who scorn it's laws, to wreak immortal wrath,

a comma was put in at *laws* without the authority of the revised copy; (3) that, in the manuscript of the four lines which are altered in stanza XVIII of Canto IX, there are no commas at *itself* and *grew*; and (4) that no manuscript authority appears in the book for changing the note of exclamation to a full-stop at the end of stanza XXII, Canto X.

193 and 194):—"Before passing from this poem I have to express a hope that a final edition of Shelley's Works will some day, rather sooner than later, restore to it the proper title and the genuine text. Every change made in it was forced upon the author by pressure from without; every change is for the worse. Has no reader ever asked himself what can be the meaning of the second title? What is the Revolt of Islam? Islam is not put forward as the sole creed of the tyrants and slaves who play their parts here with such frank ferocity; Persian and Indian, Christian and Mahometan mythologies are massed together for attack. And certainly Islam is not, as the rules of language would imply, the creed of the insurgents. Could the phrase 'revolt of the Christians' be taken to signify a revolt against the Christians? There is at least meaning in the first title—'Laon and Cythna, or the Revolution of the Golden City.' Readers may prefer a text which makes hero and heroine strangers in blood, but the fact remains that Shelley saw fit to make them brother and sister, and to defend their union as essentially innocent even if socially condemnable."

H. B. F.

III.

EXTRACT FROM THE ADVERTISEMENTS AT THE END OF ROSALIND
AND HELEN, &C.

The REVOLT OF ISLAM; a Poem in the Stanza of
Spenser, by PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.—8vo. 10s. 6d.

"It is in the pourtraying of that passionate love, which had been woven from infancy in the hearts of Laon and Cythna, and which, binding together all their impulses in one hope and one struggle, had rendered them through life no more than two different tenements for the inhabitation of the same enthusiastic spirit;—it is in the pourtraying of this intense, over-mastering, unfearing, unfading love, that Mr. Shelley has proved himself to be a genuine poet. Around his lovers, moreover, in the midst of all their fervours, he has shed an air of calm gracefulness, a certain majestic monumental stillness, which blends them harmoniously with the scene of their earthly existence, and realizes in them our ideas of Greeks struggling for freedom in the best spirit of their fathers.

· · · · ·
· · · · ·
"Mr. Shelley's praise is, in our judgment, that of having poured over his narrative a very rare strength and abundance of poetic imagery and feeling,—of having steeped every word in the essence of his inspiration."

Review of the REVOLT OF ISLAM—BLACKWOOD'S
EDINBURGH MAGAZINE.

ALASTOR; or the Spirit of Solitude, by the same Author.
—Foolscap 8vo. 5s.

HISTORY of a SIX WEEKS' TOUR through a Part of
France, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland; with Letters
descriptive of a Sail round the Lake of Geneva, and of the
Glaciers of Chamouni.—Foolscap 8vo. 5s.

The advertisement of *Alastor* was repeated in *Prometheus Unbound*, shewing that it was still offered for sale in the autumn of 1820.—H. B. F.

IV.

ON CERTAIN WORDS USED BY SHELLEY IN THE POEMS PRINTED
IN THE PRESENT VOLUME.

The textual notes in this volume threatened to cumber the poet's page so much and so often, that I thought it well to reserve some remarks on certain words used herein, and embody them in an appendix. A long and close study of Shelley has convinced me that, like his brother poet Keats, he took fancies to words which he encountered in his various and extensive reading. I also think that he had an impulsive way of adopting certain unusual orthographies, either with or without good reasons, as the case might be, and that a change of orthography in a given word is not by any means as a matter of course attributable to a change of substitute in the revision of the press. No doubt we might, by minute study, and with sufficient basis of actual knowledge, strip the several volumes, as originally published, of various characteristics (in regard to orthography and punctuation) which belong to Shelley's substitutes in revision for the press, rather than to Shelley; but I see good reason to think that much of the variation in these minute details presented by the whole series of his mature works, from *Alastor* to *Hellas*, is to be laid to his own charge, if it involve any charge. I confess I have not made these *minutiae* a study in the immature works preceding *Alastor*; but, in that and its successors, time spent in this way is not wasted, as it certainly brings one closer to the *spirit* of the works. At all events, wasted or not, here are some few notes resulting from the examination of these details; and I trust there may be some among my fellow-students whom they will interest.

Knarled.—Shelley's adoption of this remarkable obsolete orthography (in *Alastor*, line 382, page 34, and line 530, page 39) is somewhat puzzling. That it is his word, and not his printer's, I have no doubt whatever,—the *Alastor* volume being most carefully revised for the press, and the word being quite unlikely to occur to any one of the workmen of a Weybridge printer. I cannot see any reason for changing *gnarled* to *knarled* as a mere matter of preference to the eye; and, had Shelley not passed the Tweed, it would be difficult to account for this word as a part of his vocabulary. In Scotland, *knarled*, with the *k* separately pronounced, is common; and Scott, being in the daily habit of hearing the word so pronounced, naturally writes "the old knarled oak." Shelley must, I think, have adopted the word on account of the strong expressiveness of the sound; for it certainly is not, to an English ear, musical. My friend Mr. A. H. Japp, better known by his *nom de plume*, "H. A. Page," suggests to me that the poet may have come in contact with some Scotch gardener or other dependent, and taken to some of his words; and I think this a probable enough hypothesis; but his two sojourns in Edinburgh with his first wife may have afforded him ample opportunity to catch up the word.

Desart—*Desert*.—Shelley's procedure in regard to the orthography of the word *desert* is very curious. In *Alastor*, which, as I have said before, is a volume bearing every evidence of careful revision, the word is spelt in the orthodox way, *desert*; but in *Mont Blanc*, we have *desart*. In *Laon and Cythna* the word is as a rule spelt with an *a*; but there are some exceptions, all of which, I believe, are indicated in my notes. It is also spelt with an *a* in *Rosalind and Helen* (line 946, page 345), and in the Sonnet, *Ozymandias*, page 376. Now it is quite possible that the exceptions are the result of the different views of the compositors by whom the poem was set up, or of the poet's

own failure to carry out without variation his own view of the way of spelling *desert*; but I am disposed to think that he had some such reason as I have indicated in the note at page 175, namely to make a distinction between the noun and the adjective. It is quite certain that he deliberately adopted the word *desart*; for it occurs in some of his most careful manuscripts; but I have not succeeded in finding in manuscript either *desart* where the word is unquestionably an adjective, or *desert* where it is a noun,—although, among the instances I have noted in *Laon and Cythna*, will be found exceptions to the hypothetic rule of which I suspect the poet. It is interesting to note that, in all probability, he had been at the pains to convert Mrs. Shelley to his views on the orthography of this word; for in 1824, in reprinting *Alastor* with the *Posthumous Poems*, the word *desert* is changed to *desart*,—though any impression made on Mrs. Shelley by her husband in this respect would seem to have worn off with years, as she abandoned the word *desart* in 1839. In the cancelled passage of *Mont Blanc* given at page 78, and originally published in the *Relics of Shelley*, the word occurs in such a position that it might be either an adjective or a noun used adjectivally; and in the *Relics*, it is spelt with an *e*; but nothing can be founded on this, as my friend Mr. Garnett does not agree with me in my view of following Shelley's varying orthography implicitly where there is a fair presumption that it *is* his orthography. I have not been at the pains to search all dictionaries extant in Shelley's time for authorities; but I may say that Chatterton's friend Baily supports Shelley in numerous instances,—and, a matter of much more significance, the only contemporary dictionary authority I have chanced upon for *desart* with an *a* is Boyer's French and English. Now this is remarkable, because the orthography in question occurs first, in the mature series of Shelley's works, in *Mont Blanc*, the genesis of which must have involved some study

of French, and then, persistently, in *Laon and Cythna*, which could not have been written without considerable study of French literature. Two instances in which *desert*, unquestionably an adjective, is to be found with an *e* are at pages 175 and 230: one instance of *desart* with an *a*, when presumably an adjective, is at page 262, line 1.

Ætherial—Ethereal—Ethereal.—The spelling adopted for this word in *Alastor* is *etherial*: see line 352 and footnote, page 33. Throughout *Laon and Cythna* it is spelt *ætherial* (though *etherial* occurs in the preface); and I do not think there is any room for doubting that each printed book fulfils the general intention of the poet. In *Mont Blanc* and *Rosalind and Helen* the more usual orthography *ethereal* occurs: see line 26, page 74, and line 1060, page 349; but that book is less authoritative than either of the others in such details, not having been revised by Shelley. Assuming, therefore, that the change made in *Laon and Cythna* was deliberate, we must seek a reason; and we may find one in connexion with the copious renewal of Greek studies in 1817, indicated by the list of books read by Shelley and Mary in that year, printed at pages 88 and 89 of the *Shelley Memorials*. The reason surmised is of course a sound etymological one,—approximating the word as it does to the Greek original *αἰθήρ* whence it derives. This strikes me as an unmistakeable sign that Shelley really thought about his words, as *words*,—fitfully it may be, but still to some result; and we ought to give his text the benefit of such result, when there is any benefit. This particular change of orthography, I value more on account of its bearings on other words than for itself. For example, the word *ecstasy* in Shelley's editions, though rightly spelt in *The Dæmon of the World* (line 253, page 69), is sometimes spelt *ecstasy* and sometimes *extacy*, two almost equally vicious modes of spelling it, much in vogue in Shelley's day; and as it is inconceivable that he

could have meant to adopt both modes in one poem, I see no security in either, but assume that it was not a word he had given any particular attention to, and that he let the printers spell it according to their varying tastes. That he did think about it once, I judge from its being rightly spelt in *The Daemon*, while in the corresponding passage of *Queen Mab* it is spelt *extacy*. For these reasons, and because the Hellenism which alone can account for the deliberate adoption of the diphthong in *ætherial*, would certainly have induced Shelley to give his preference to *ecstasy*, I have not wittingly let the word pass in any other form, but have simply recorded in foot-notes any instances I have observed of either *ecstasy* or *extacy*,—to serve as they may in enabling those who have the will and the wit to discover by induction the several substitutes who revised Shelley's poems: such a discovery would have a considerable textual value. I may point out here to those who have not followed the foot-notes, that *ecstasy* occurs in line 236 of *Rosalind and Helen*, page 323, and *extacy* in line 1124 of the same poem, page 351. I do not of course overlook that the word *desart* is etymologically bad, and may be put in evidence against the hypothesis of etymological selection by Shelley; but there was a good practical reason forthcoming in that case,—the distinction between noun and adjective,—and that might outweigh the etymological consideration.

Uprest.—This curious word which occurs in *Laon and Cythna*, Canto III, stanza XXI, is not altogether difficult to account for; and I have very little doubt that Shelley invented it as deliberately as Chatterton invented some of his words,—only with a nearer approach to authority than the Bristol bard often had to shew. Mr. Rossetti says *uprest* “is evidently to be accepted for ‘Uprising,’” and he adds, “on no warrant—so far as I know—better than the exigency of rhyme. A very calm proceeding on Shelley's part.” The poet elsewhere uses *uprise* as a noun,—in

this very poem, as in Canto VII, stanzas II and XXXVII (pages 217 and 229), and Canto XII, stanza XVI (page 291), as well as in the *Lines written among the Euganean Hills*, line 73 (page 360); and he uses it, I think, legitimately enough,—there being no argument against its use that is not equally valid against the use of the very common noun *rise*. As regards authority for *uprest*,—he certainly had, even in modern literature, as Mr. Leicester Warren has pointed out to me, authority for a very near approach to his word,—that, namely, of a great poet contemporary with and senior to himself. In Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* (Part II, stanza 4) we have "The glorious Sun uprist"; Mr. J. W. Hales points out to me that Chaucer has *uprist* for *uprises*, and *upriste* for *uprising*; and *uprist* might easily pass, in Shelley's mind, to the noun *uprest*, even if he did not know the Chaucerian noun. His enthusiasm for *The Ancient Mariner* is well known; and Mrs. Shelley, in her Note on Poems of 1817, refers to his "repeating with wild energy" that noble poem.

Falshood.—This orthography of the word *falsehood* occurs in the Preface to *Laon and Cythna* (see page 87), and in several other instances; but I do not think it is one of Shelley's deliberate adoption, though I have seen it in his writing, and though Baily's dictionary would have authorized him in the use of it. I have therefore corrected it whenever I have observed it, and noted the correction. It is a word which occurs so constantly in its orthodox form, and which has so little to recommend it in its heterodox form, that I have no hesitation in ranking *falsehood* among the words concerning which Shelley had an habitual weakness. We all, I believe, have certain habits of writing that we know to be incorrect, and always set right when we observe them,—certain words from which we constantly drop a letter, though we know perfectly well how to spell them; and I suspect this word was one of

Shelley's. If that be so, we are of course authorized in correcting it whenever we find it spelt wrongly,—or rather in an inferior way not infrequently adopted by writers of his time.

Stedfast.—Very nearly the same remarks apply to this clipped word. It occurs frequently in *Laon and Cythna*, is authorized by Baily, and has, one would think, nothing to recommend it to Shelley. That he had not adopted this orthography as a matter of choice, I think is indicated by the manuscript referred to at page 251, which gives *steadfast*; but the frequency of *stedfast* makes it probable that he had some difficulty in giving the unpronounced *a* when he wrote hurriedly.

Befal and *Recal*.—These are two more words of the same class,—authorized by Baily and occurring exceptionally, but much less often than the other two. *Befal* is to be found in *Laon and Cythna*, Canto V, stanza XXVIII (page 183), and *recal* in stanza XXXVII of the same Canto (page 186). I have unhesitatingly corrected both words when I have met with them, because everything is against the probability of this orthography having been Shelley's deliberate choice. We even get, exceptionally, the past tense *befel*, with one *l*, in Shelley's edition of *Rosalind and Helen*, namely in line 610 (page 335) and line 732 (page 339).

Weets.—Although this obsolete word, occurring in *Laon and Cythna*, Canto IV, stanza XIV, page 166, was in all probability used simply for rhyming purposes, the whole phrase "he inly weets" has a curious and cunning antiquatedness suggestive of loving studies in old English; and it is even possible that the poet may have been as glad of an opportunity to introduce the phrase for the nonce, as of the convenience which it afforded him in finishing his stanza. In a poem which is expressly "a vision of the nineteenth century", it has no great appropriateness, and it does not, to my mind, enrich the poet's vocabulary.

Blosmy.—This beautiful old word, on the other hand, with no rhyming value to commend it, seems to me to be a great addition to Shelley's vocabulary, and one which might be restored, with much advantage, to its place in our language. As far as I am aware it has not been given, until Mr. Rossetti restored it, in any edition since the original issue of *Laon and Cythna*, where it will be found in two places, namely in Canto I, stanza LI, page 126, and in Canto IV, stanza XXXII, page 173. See note on this word at page 126.

Eyne.—I suspect this obsolete plural, used in *Laon and Cythna*, Canto XII, stanza XI, page 288, was adopted purely for the sake of the rhyme, as it only occurs once in the poem, and is unconnected with any remarkable phrase. It may of course have commended itself to Shelley as an eligible word to adopt from the vocabulary of the early English poets, and thus have been taken on its own merits in the same way as the beautiful word *blosmy*; but I do not think this is very likely. In *A Vision of the Sea*, which will be found in Vol. II of this edition, the plural *eyne* occurs again under similar circumstances, namely as a convenient rhyme. In line 86 of that poem we have the ordinary plural, *eyes*,—

Not to touch those sweet hands? Not to look at those eyes,
the last word of line 87 being *disguise*; but lines 92 and 93 are

The tygers leap up when they feel the slow brine
Crawling inch by inch on them, hair, ears, limbs, and eyne,

and I can see no reason for the variation here except the exigencies of rhyme. Professor Baynes, from whose admirable article in *The Edinburgh Review*, quoted in the preface, I am enabled to add a store of notes on words, thinks it probable that Shelley derived *eyne*, as well as *treen*, which he elsewhere uses, from Spenser; and this is quite likely; but as there is abundant evidence of

Shelley's close acquaintance with Shakespeare's works, and as Shakespeare also uses *eyne*, as in *A Lover's Complaint*,

Oft did she heave her napkin to her eyne,
it may with equal likelihood be to his influence that the occurrence of the word in Shelley's works is due.

Foison.—This is another Elizabethan word which Professor Baynes is probably right in attributing to the influence of Spenser. It occurs in the *Lines Written among the Euganean Hills*, line 228, page 366 of this volume.

Glode.—Professor Baynes remarks, "Again, amongst writers within the range of Shelley's reading, *glode* as the past tense of the verb to glide is, we believe, peculiar to Spenser, and used with some ambiguity even by him. We had imagined that amongst modern writers this form was peculiar to a single American humourist, and concluded that it must be the coinage of his curious brain . . . But the same form occurs three or four times in *The Revolt of Islam*, and Shelley uses it in perfect good faith as a legitimate form of expression. While found in Chaucer and Gower, *glode* is, however, an archaism even in *The Faery Queene*, from which it must have been borrowed by Shelley." Here again I have little doubt that Professor Baynes is right, though the word may have come to Shelley directly from Chaucer. As regards the American humourist, it is also quite probable that he obtained the word without any knowledge of Chaucer, Gower, Spenser, or Shelley; but, though he may not have used it "in perfect good faith," he was not so alone in its use as might be thought,—the word being employed certainly by two of the most distinguished serious writers of America, Longfellow and Emerson, and, I think, quite commonly by other writers on that side of the Atlantic. In *Laon and Cythna* the word in question occurs in Canto V, stanza LI, page 191, and in Canto XII, stanza XXXV, page 297 of this volume, in both of which cases it is wanted as a

rhyme; but there are other instances of its being employed without that inducement, as in Canto I, stanza XLVIII, page 125.

Strook.—This is another obsolete past tense which, as far as I am aware, was first used by Shelley in *Laon and Cythna*, where it occurs in stanza XXXVIII of Canto VI (page 210). There, as in *Arethusa*, written in Shelley's greatest period, the word is a convenient rhyme for *shook*; and it is also softer and more euphonious than the usual form, *struck*, though I do not recall an instance of his using it, except for a rhyme. Here again it is questionable whether Chaucer, rather than any later writer, was not the poet from whom Shelley took his word.

Undight.—"Another thoroughly Spenserian word," says Professor Baynes, "is *undight*, in the sense of undressed, or as applied to the hair, as Shelley applies it, in loose locks, dishevelled. The very phrase in which Shelley paints the rapt ecstasy of Cythna with countenance uplifted and 'her locks undight,' occurs in Spenser's description of Venus:—

'Her golden locks, that late in tresses bright
Embreaded were for hindring of her haste,
Now loose about her shoulders hung undight
And were with sweet Ambrosia all besprinkled light.'

For the passage referred to by Professor Baynes, see Canto IX, stanza XXXVI, of *Laon and Cythna*, page 257 of this volume. It is curious that there, as in the passage from Spenser, the word should be used to rhyme with *bright*.

Marmoreal.—This is one of a class of words and epithets on which Professor Baynes's remarks are peculiarly interesting,—words and epithets which Shelley uses frequently or in close proximity, instead of carefully avoiding such repetition as later poets have done. In Canto I of *Laon and Cythna*, stanza XX, page 116, the word *marmoreal* occurs "in a passage that, hurriedly read, might suggest its reference

to the sea, but where the context shows that it is metaphorically employed in a more familiar and intelligible way to the unveiled bosom of the fair shape sitting on the sand . . . A few stanzas further on, in the same canto, the epithet occurs again, and is applied, as Homer and Virgil apply it, to the sea. Speaking of the spirit-temple which lifts its vast dome beyond 'nature's remotest reign,' he says:—

'Twas likest Heaven, ere yet day's purple stream
Ebbs o'er the western forest, while the gleam
Of the unrisen moon among the clouds
Is gathering—when with many a golden beam
The thronging constellations rush in crowds,
Paving with fire the sky and the *marmoreal* floods.'

The epithet is noteworthy in several respects. In the first place, although *marmorean* occurs in older glossaries, *marmoreal* seems to be a coinage of Shelley's own. At least it is unknown to our standard English lexicographers, and we remember no instance of its use by previous writers. In the second place, though a classical epithet, it does not seem to be used by Shelley in the classical meaning of bright, shining, smooth, and brilliant. It is rather employed to describe an element or substance of lucid purity and depth with a faintly variegated surface, in much the same way as the term *marble* itself is applied by Milton and Shakspeare to the sky. Shelley himself, indeed, interprets his own use of the term as applied to watery expanses, when, in a later poem, he speaks of 'the 'liquid marble of the windless lake.' The beautiful phrase, 'liquid marble,' is Ben Jonson's, only it is applied by him to poesy in one of the finest passages of his more serious verse:—

'She can so mould Rome and her monuments
Within the liquid marble of her lines,
That they shall stand fresh and miraculous,
Even when they mix with innovating dust.'"

Breathless.—Professor Baynes's note on the use of this

word is also very interesting: he remarks on its being "applied to the sky and to the sea in a way that makes it doubtful whether it is used in its literal sense, to denote the perfect calm, the unruffled state of the elements when not a breeze or a ripple is stirring; or whether it is applied figuratively to express the expectant hush, the eager rapturous silence, when the very breath is held for admiration and delight, and all the powers of mind and body are stilled by an overmastering emotion into a state of ecstatic trance. The epithet may have been derived from the fine description of the hushed moonlit night at the end of the eighth book of the 'Iliad;' for although the Homeric epithet, applied also by Euripides to the sea, is *breezeless* rather than *breathless*, it might be fairly enough translated by the latter word. Or it may have been originally suggested by a passage in Wordsworth, of whose early writings Shelley was an appreciative reader. The poet is describing the address of an Indian chief to the assembled tribes

'In open circle seated round, and hushed
As the *unbreathing* air, when not a leaf
Stirs in the mighty woods.'

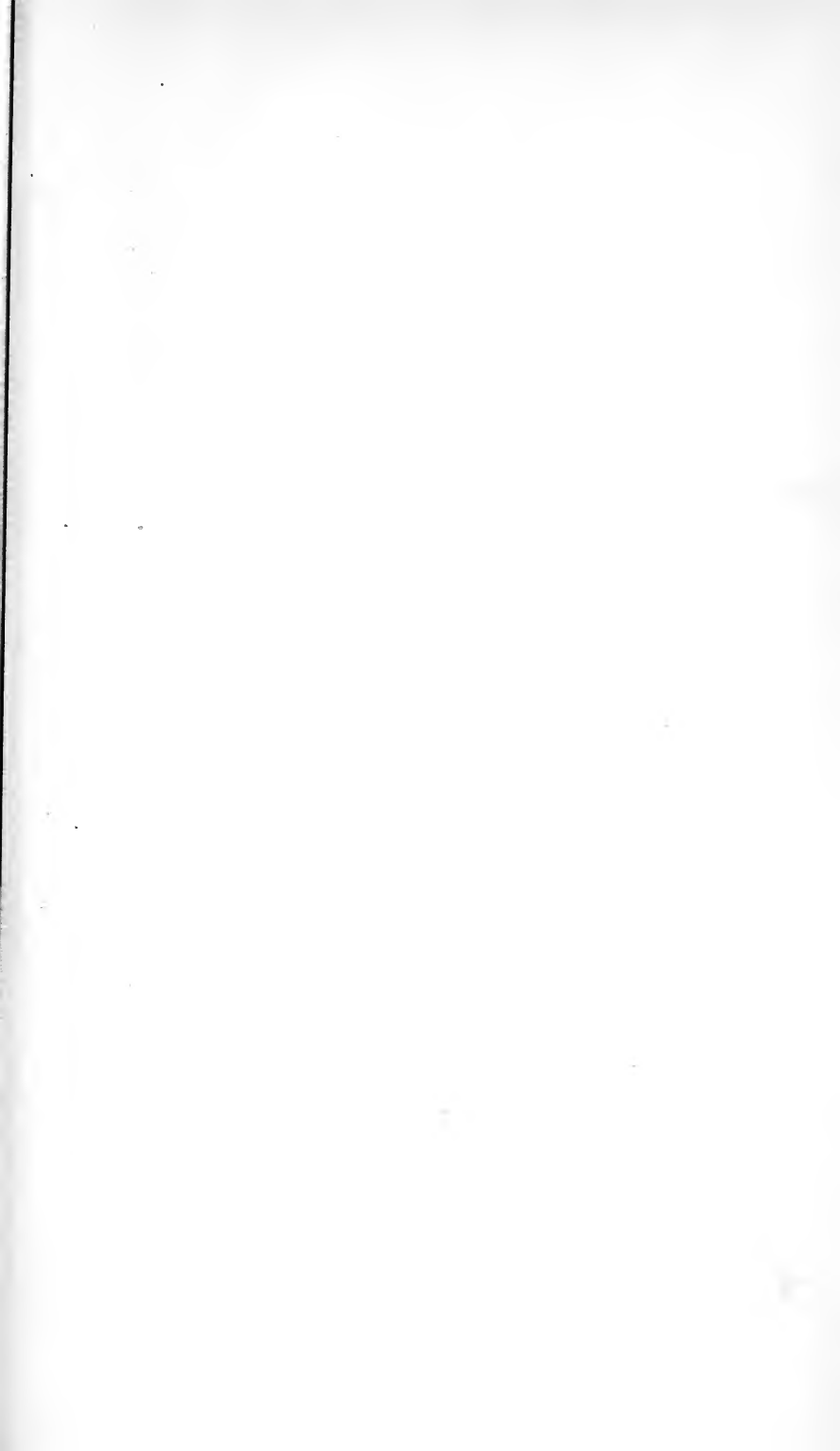
Here the precise meaning of the epithet is perfectly clear. Shelley, however, uses the analogous but more intense and eager term *breathless*, both more frequently and with greater latitude of meaning than Wordsworth's calm and critical nature would allow him to do." The instances cited to illustrate the use of this epithet, all occurring in the early part of *Laon and Cythna*, are (1) "the breathless heavens in beauty smiled," Canto I, stanza XXXVI, page 121,—(2) "Heaven was breathless with delight," Canto I, stanza XLV, page 124, and (3) "The bright stars shining in the breathless sea," Canto II, stanza XI, page 135. Professor Baynes says "there is perhaps no real ambiguity in any of these instances, the use of the term in the second case

being figurative, and, in the other two, mainly literal, expressive of perfect outward calm, undisturbed by breath or breeze. But even in these cases, where the term seems literally applied, there is probably the double reference so common in Shelley's poetry; the suggested subtle interfusion of human and natural influences, the blending in their higher moods of individual and general life, the instinctive sympathy, if not the momentary identification, of the soul of man with the soul of the universe."

H. B. F.

END OF VOL. I.











PR Shelley, Percy Bysshe
5400 Works
E80
v.1

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY
