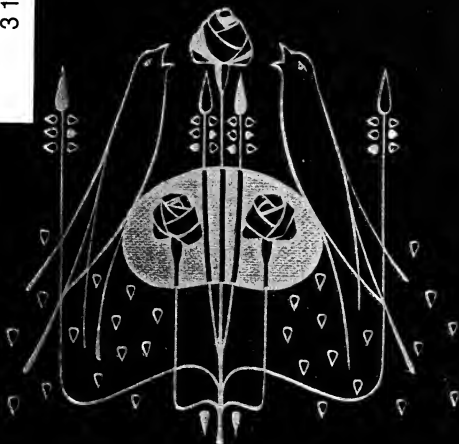
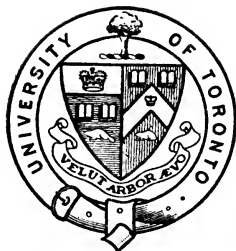




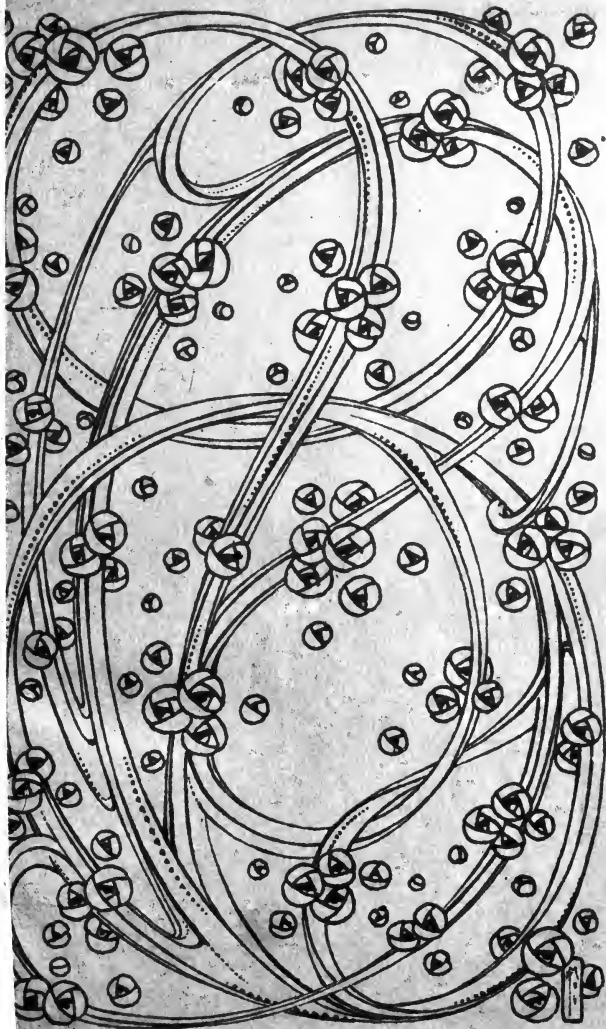
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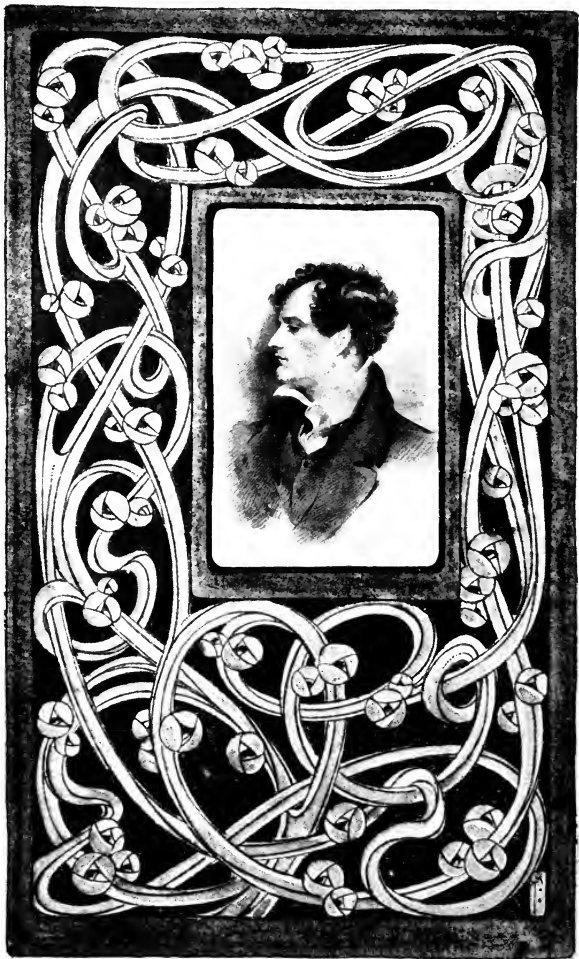




Red Letter Library

G. Stanley Russell

POEMS BY
LORD BYRON





POEMS

BY
LORD BYRON



WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
ARTHUR SYMONS



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Byron is to be judged by the whole mountainous mass of his work, and not by any fragment of coloured or glittering spar which one's pick may have extricated from the precipitous hill-side. His work is a kind of natural formation, high enough to climb, and wide enough to walk on. There is hard climbing and heavy walking, but, once there, the air braces and the view is wide.

In making a selection from this large and uneven mass of poetry, it is difficult to do justice to a writer who was almost never a really good writer of verse, except in a form of what he rightly defined as "nondescript and ever-varying rhyme". The serio-comic ottava rima of "Don Juan" and "The Vision of Judgment" is the only metre which Byron ever completely mastered; and it is only in those unique poems, in which Goethe detected, for the first time in modern poetry, a "classically elegant comic style", that Byron is wholly able to express the new quality which he brought into English literature in a wholly personal, or at all satisfying, way. From the first he was a new

force, but a force unconscious of direction, with all the uncouthness of nature in convulsions. He had a strong, direct, and passionate personality, but we find him, even in the better parts of "Childe Harold", putting rhetoric in the place of that simplicity which he was afterwards to discover by accident, and in jest; we find him, throughout almost the whole of the poetical romances, a mere masquerader in Eastern frippery, which is scarcely the better because it happened to have been bought on the spot; we find him, in his serious reflections, either quite sensible and quite obvious, or, as in addresses to the ocean, and the like, straining on tiptoe towards heights that can only be reached by wings. His lyric verse was always without magic, and only now and then, and chiefly in the lines beginning "When we two parted", was he able to turn speech into a kind of emphatic and intense chant, into which poetry comes as a kind of momentary suspension of the emphasis. His rendering of actual sensation, as in parts of "Mazeppa", is the nearest approach to poetry which he made in those poems which were supposed to be the very voice of passion. Everything that he wrote in blank verse, and consequently the whole of the plays, is vitiated by his incapacity to handle that

metre, or indeed to distinguish it, in any vital or audible way, from prose. Now and again personal feeling flung off the ill-fitting and constraining clothes of rhetoric, and stood up naked; sentiments of resentment, against his wife, or against the world, or against himself, made poetry sometimes. Then, as it was to be under other conditions in the later work, his flame is the burning of much dross: excellent food for flame.

And yet, out of all this writing which is hardly literature, this poetry which is hardly verse, there comes, even to the reader of to-day, for whom "the grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme" is as dead and buried as Napoleon, some inexplicable thrill, appeal, potency; Byron still lives, and we shall never cease to read almost his worst work, because some warmth of his life comes through it. Almost everything that he wrote was written for relief, and its effect upon us is due to something never actually said in it; it is a kind of wild dramatic speech of some person in a play, whose words become weighty, tragic, and pathetic because of the fierce light thrown upon them by a significant character and by transfiguring circumstance.

When Byron wrote to Murray, "You might as well want a midnight all stars as

rhyme all perfect", he was theorizing over his own failure to achieve sustained excellence on any one level. Luckily he carried the theory, in his own downright way, into practice, and, in the "versified Aurora Borealis" of the great comic poems, the defect turns into a quality, and creates what is really a new poetical form. Byron is a heroical buffoon, the great jester of English poetry; and he is this because he is the only English poet who is wholly buoyant, arrogant, and irresponsible. "I never know the word which will come next", he boasts, in "Don Juan", and, for once, improvisation becomes a means to an end, almost an end in itself. It is in the comic verse, strangely enough, that the first real mastery over form shows itself: a genius for rhyme which becomes a new music and decoration, as of cap and bells on the head of sober marching verse, and a genius for plain statement which leaves prose behind in mere fighting force, and glorifies fighting force with a divine natural illumination.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

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STAGS

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The Vision of Judgment



I

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate:

His keys were rusty, and the lock was
dull,

So little trouble had been given of late;

Not that the place by any means was
full,

But since the Gallic era "eighty-eight"

The devils had ta'en a longer, stronger
pull,

And "a pull all together", as they say

At sea—which drew most souls another
way.

II

The angels all were singing out of tune,

And hoarse with having little else to
do,

Excepting to wind up the sun and moon,

Or curb a runaway young star or two,

Or wild colt of a comet, which too soon

Broke out of bounds o'er the eternal
blue,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Splitting some planet with its playful tail,
As boats are sometimes by a wanton
whale.

III

The guardian seraphs had retired on
high,
Finding their charges past all care
below;
Terrestrial business fill'd nought in the
sky
Save the recording angel's black bureau;
Who found, indeed, the facts to multiply
With such rapidity of vice and woe,
That he had stripp'd off both his wings
in quills,
And yet was in arrear of human ills.

IV

His business so augmented of late years,
That he was forced, against his will no
doubt
(Just like those cherubs, earthly ministers),
For some resource to turn himself about,
And claim the help of his celestial peers,
To aid him ere he should be quite worn
out,
By the increased demand for his remarks:
Six angels and twelve saints were named
his clerks.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

v

This was a handsome board—at least for
heaven;
And yet they had even then enough to
do,
So many conquerors' cars were daily
driven,
So many kingdoms fitted up anew;
Each day too slew its thousands six or
seven,
Till at the crowning carnage, Waterloo,
They threw their pens down in divine
disgust—
The page was so besmear'd with blood
and dust.

vi

This by the way; 'tis not mine to record
What angels shrink from: even the
very devil
On this occasion his own work abhorr'd,
So surfeited with the infernal revel:
Though he himself had sharpen'd every
sword,
It almost quench'd his innate thirst of
evil.
(Here Satan's sole good work deserves
insertion—
'Tis, that he has both generals in rever-
sion.)

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

VII

Let's skip a few short years of hollow
peace,
Which peopled earth no better, hell as
wont,
And heaven none—they form the tyrant's
lease,
With nothing but new names sub-
scribed upon't:
'T will one day finish: meantime they
increase,
“ With seven heads and ten horns ”, and
all in front,
Like Saint John's foretold beast; but ours
are born
Less formidable in the head than horn.

VIII

In the first year of freedom's second
dawn
Died George the Third; although no
tyrant, one
Who shielded tyrants, till each sense
withdrawn
Left him nor mental nor external sun:
A better farmer ne'er brush'd dew from
lawn,
A worse king never left a realm un-
done!

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

He died—but left his subjects still behind,
One half as mad—and t' other no less blind.

IX

He died!—his death made no great stir
on earth;
His burial made some pomp; there was
profusion
Of velvet, gilding, brass, and no great
dearth
Of aught but tears—save those shed by
collusion.
For these things may be bought at their
true worth;
Of elegy there was the due infusion—
Bought also; and the torches, cloaks,
and banners,
Heralds, and relics of old Gothic man-
ners,

X

Form'd a sepulchral melodrame. Of all
The fools who flock'd to swell or see
the show,
Who cared about the corpse? The funeral
Made the attraction, and the black the woe.
There throb'd not there a thought which
pierced the pall;
And when the gorgeous coffin was laid
low,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

It seem'd the mockery of hell to fold
The rottenness of eighty years in gold.

XI

So mix his body with the dust! It might
Return to what it *must* far sooner,
were
The natural compound left alone to fight
Its way back into earth, and fire, and
air;
But the unnatural balsams merely blight
What nature made him at his birth, as
bare
As the mere million's base un-mummied
clay—
Yet all his spices but prolong decay.

XII

He's dead—and upper earth with him
has done;
He's buried; save the undertaker's bill,
Or lapidary scrawl, the world is gone
For him, unless he left a German will;
But where's the proctor who will ask his
son?
In whom his qualities are reigning still,
Except that household virtue, most un-
common,
Of constancy to a bad, ugly woman.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

XIII

“God save the king!” It is a large
economy

In God to save the like; but if he will
Be saving, all the better; for not one am

I

Of those who think damnation better
still:

I hardly know too if not quite alone am I

In this small hope of bettering future ill
By circumscribing, with some slight re-
striction,

The eternity of hell’s hot jurisdiction.

XIV

I know this is unpopular; I know

’Tis blasphemous; I know one may be
damn’d

For hoping no one else may e’er be so;

I know my catechism; I know we are
cramm’d

With the best doctrines till we quite o’er-
flow;

I know that all save England’s church
have sham’d,

And that the other twice two hundred
churches

And synagogues have made a *damn’d*
bad purchase.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

XV

God help us all! God help me too! I
am,
God knows, as helpless as the devil
can wish,
And not a whit more difficult to damn,
Than is to bring to land a late-hook'd
fish,
Or to the butcher to purvey the lamb;
Not that I'm fit for such a noble dish,
As one day will be that immortal fry
Of almost every body born to die.

XVI

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate,
And nodded o'er his keys; when, lo!
there came
A wondrous noise he had not heard^o of
late—
A rushing sound of wind, and stream,
and flame;
In short, a roar of things extremely great,
Which would have made aught save a
saint exclaim;
But he, with first a start and then a
wink,
Said, "There's another star gone out, I
think!"

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

XVII

But ere he could return to his repose,
A cherub flapp'd his right wing o'er
his eyes—
At which Saint Peter yawn'd, and rubb'd
his nose:
“Saint porter,” said the angel, “prithee
rise!”
Waving a goodly wing, which glow'd, as
glows
An earthly peacock's tail, with heavenly
dyes;
To which the Saint replied, “Well, what 's
the matter?
Is Lucifer come back with all this clatter?”

XVIII

“No,” quoth the cherub; “George the
Third is dead.”
“And who *is* George the Third?” re-
plied the apostle:
“*What George? what Third?*” “The
king of England,” said
The angel. “Well! he won't find kings
to jostle
Him on his way; but does he wear his
head?
Because the last we saw here had a
tussle,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

And ne'er would have got into heaven's
good graces,
Had he not flung his head in all our
faces.

XIX

“He was, if I remember, king of France;
That head of his, which could not keep
a crown
On earth, yet ventured in my face to
advance
A claim to those of martyrs—like my
own:
If I had had my sword, as I had once
When I cut ears off, I had cut him
down;
But having but my *keys*, and not my
brand,
I only knock'd his head from out his
hand.

XX

“And then he set up such a headless
howl,
That all the saints came out and took
him in;
And there he sits by St. Paul, cheek by
jowl;
That fellow Paul—the parvenù! The
skin

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Of Saint Bartholomew, which makes his
cowl
In heaven, and upon earth redeem'd
his sin,
So as to make a martyr, never sped
Better than did this weak and wooden
head.

XXI

“But had it come up here upon its
shoulders,
There would have been a different tale
to tell:
The fellow-feeling in the saints beholders
Seems to have acted on them like a
spell;
And so this very foolish head heaven
solders
Back on its trunk: it may be very well,
And seems the custom here to overthrow
Whatever has been wisely done below.”

XXII

The angel answer'd, “Peter! do not
pout:
The king who comes has head and all
entire,
And never knew much what it was
about—
He did as doth the puppet—by its wire,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

And will be judged like all the rest, no
doubt:

My business and your own is not to
inquire

Into such matters, but to mind our cue—
Which is to act as we are bid to do.”

XXIII

While thus they spake, the angelic caravan,
Arriving like a rush of mighty wind,
Cleaving the fields of space, as doth the
swan

Some silver stream (say Ganges, Nile,
or Inde,

Or Thames, or Tweed), and 'midst them
an old man

With an old soul, and both extremely
blind,

Halted before the gate, and in his shroud
Seated their fellow-traveller on a cloud.

XXIV

But bringing up the rear of this bright
host

A Spirit of a different aspect waved
His wings, like thunder-clouds above
some coast

Whose barren beach with frequent
wrecks is paved;

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

His brow was like the deep when tempest-
toss'd;
Fierce and unfathomable thoughts en-
graved
Eternal wrath on his immortal face,
And *where* he gazed a gloom pervaded
space.

XXV

As he drew near, he gazed upon the gate
Ne'er to be enter'd more by him or Sin,
With such a glance of supernatural hate,
As made St. Peter wish himself within;
He patter'd with his keys at a great rate,
And sweated through his apostolic skin:
Of course his perspiration was but ichor,
Or some such other spiritual liquor.

XXVI

The very cherubs huddled all together,
Like birds when soars the falcon; and
they felt
A tingling to the tip of every feather,
And form'd a circle like Orion's belt
Around their poor old charge; who scarce
knew whither
His guards had led him, though they
gently dealt
With royal manes (for by many stories,
And true, we learn the angels all are Tories).

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

XXVII

As things were in this posture, the gate
flew

Asunder, and the flashing of its hinges
Flung over space an universal hue

Of many-colour'd flame, until its tinges
Reach'd even our speck of earth, and
made a new

Aurora borealis spread its fringes
O'er the North Pole; the same seen,
when ice-bound,
By Captain Parry's crew, in "Melville's
Sound".

XXVIII

And from the gate thrown open issued
beaming

A beautiful and mighty Thing of Light,
Radiant with glory, like a banner stream-
ing

Victorious from some world-o'erthrow-
ing fight:

My poor comparisons must needs be
teeming

With earthly likenesses, for here the
night

Of clay obscures our best conceptions,
saving

Johanna Southcote, or Bob Southey rav-
ing.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

XXIX

'T was the archangel Michael: all men
know
The make of angels and archangels,
since
There's scarce a scribbler has not one to
show,
From the fiends' leader to the angels'
prince;
There also are some altar-pieces, though
I really can't say that they much evince
One's inner notions of immortal spirits;
But let the connoisseurs explain *their*
merits.

XXX

Michael flew forth in glory and in good;
A goodly work of him from whom all
glory
And good arise; the portal pass'd—he
stood;
Before him the young cherubs and
saints hoary—
(I say *young*, begging to be understood
By looks, not years; and should be
very sorry
To state, they were not older than St.
Peter,
But merely that they seem'd a little
sweeter).

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

XXXI

The cherubs and the saints bow'd down
before
That arch-angelic hierarch, the first
Of essences angelical, who wore
The aspect of a god; but this ne'er
nursed
Pride in his heavenly bosom, in whose
core
No thought, save for his Master's ser-
vice, durst
Intrude, however glorified and high;
He knew him but the viceroy of the sky.

XXXII

He and the sombre, silent Spirit met—
They knew each other both for good
and ill;
Such was their power, that neither could
forget
His former friend and future foe; but
still
There was a high, immortal, proud re-
gret
In either's eye, as if 'twere less their
will
Than destiny to make the eternal years
Their date of war, and their "champ clos"
the spheres.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

XXXIII

But here they were in neutral space: we
know
From Job, that Satan hath the power
to pay
A heavenly visit thrice a year or so;
And that "the sons of God", like those
of clay,
Must keep him company; and we might
show
From the same book, in how polite a
way
The dialogue is held between the Powers
Of Good and Evil—but 't would take up
hours.

XXXIV

And this is not a theologic tract,
To prove with Hebrew and with Ara-
bic,
If Job be allegory or a fact,
But a true narrative; and thus I
pick
From out the whole but such and such
an act
As sets aside the slightest thought of
trick.
'Tis every tittle true, beyond suspicion,
And accurate as any other vision.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

XXXV

The spirits were in neutral space, before
The gate of heaven; like eastern thresh-
olds is
The place where Death's grand cause is
argued o'er,
And souls despatch'd to that world or
to this;
And therefore Michael and the other wore
A civil aspect: though they did not kiss,
Yet still between his Darkness and his
Brightness
There pass'd a mutual glance of great
politeness.

XXXVI

The Archangel bow'd, not like a modern
beau,
But with a graceful oriental bend,
Pressing one radiant arm just where be-
low
The heart in good men is supposed to
tend;
He turn'd as to an equal, not too low,
But kindly; Satan met his ancient
friend
With more hauteur, as might an old
Castilian
Poor noble meet a mushroom rich civilian.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

XXXVII

He merely bent his diabolic brow
An instant; and then raising it, he
stood
In act to assert his right or wrong, and
show
Cause why King George by no means
could or should
Make out a case to be exempt from woe
Eternal, more than other kings, endued
With better sense and hearts, whom his-
tory mentions,
Who long have "paved hell with their
good intentions".

XXXVIII

Michael began: "What wouldst thou
with this man,
Now dead, and brought before the Lord?
What ill
Hath he wrought since his mortal race
began,
That thou canst claim him? Speak!
and do thy will,
If it be just: if in this earthly span
He hath been greatly failing to fulfil
His duties as a king and mortal, say,
And he is thine; if not, let him have
way."

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

XXXIX

“Michael!” replied the Prince of Air,
“even here,
Before the Gate of him thou servest,
must
I claim my subject: and will make ap-
pear
That as he was my worshipper in dust,
So shall he be in spirit, although dear
To thee and thine, because nor wine
nor lust
Were of his weaknesses; yet on the
throne
He reign'd o'er millions to serve me
alone.

XL

“Look to *our* earth, or rather *mine*; it
was,
Once, more thy master's: but I triumph
not
In this poor planet's conquest; nor, alas!
Need he thou servest envy me my lot:
With all the myriads of bright worlds
which pass
In worship round him, he may have
forgot
Yon weak creation of such paltry things:
I think few worth damnation save their
kings,—

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

XLI

“And these but as a kind of quit-rent, to
Assert my right as lord; and even had
I such an inclination, 't were (as you
Well know) superfluous; they are
grown so bad,
That hell has nothing better left to do
Than leave them to themselves: so
much more mad
And evil by their own internal curse,
Heaven cannot make them better, nor I
worse.

XLII

“Look to the earth, I said, and say
again:
When this old, blind, mad, helpless,
weak, poor worm
Began in youth's first bloom and flush
to reign,
The world and he both wore a different
form,
And much of earth and all the watery
plain
Of ocean call'd him king: through
many a storm
His isles had floated on the abyss of
time;
For the rough virtues chose them for
their clime.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

XLIII

“He came to his sceptre young; he
leaves it old:
Look to the state in which he found
his realm,
And left it; and his annals too behold,
How to a minion first he gave the
helm;
How grew upon his heart a thirst for
gold,
The beggar’s vice, which can but over-
whelm
The meanest hearts; and for the rest,
but glance
Thine eye along America and France.

XLIV

“’Tis true, he was a tool from first to
last
(I have the workmen safe); but as a
tool
So let him be consumed. From out the
past
Of ages, since mankind have known
the rule
Of monarchs — from the bloody rolls
amass’d
Of sin and slaughter—from the Cæsars’
school,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Take the worst pupil; and produce a
reign
More drench'd with gore, more cumber'd
with the slain.

XLV

“He ever warr'd with freedom and the
free:
Nations as men, home subjects, foreign
foes,
So that they utter'd the word “Liberty!”
Found George the Third their first op-
ponent. Whose
History was ever stain'd as his will be
With national and individual woes?
I grant his household abstinence; I grant
His neutral virtues, which most mon-
archs want;

XLVI

“I know he was a constant consort; own
He was a decent sire, and middling
lord.
All this is much, and most upon a
throne;
As temperance, if at Apicius' board,
Is more than at an anchorite's supper
shown.
I grant him all the kindest can accord;

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

And this was well for him, but not for
those
Millions who found him what oppression
chose.

XLVII

“The New World shook him off; the
Old yet groans
Beneath what he and his prepared, if
not
Completed: he leaves heirs on many
thrones
To all his vices, without what begot
Compassion for him—his tame virtues;
drones
Who sleep, or despots who have now
forgot
A lesson which shall be re-taught them,
wake
Upon the thrones of earth; but let them
quake!

XLVIII

“Five millions of the primitive, who
hold
The faith which makes ye great on
earth, implored
A *part* of that vast *all* they held of old,—
Freedom to worship—not alone your
Lord,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Michael, but you, and you, Saint Peter!
Cold
Must be your souls, if you have not
abhorr'd
The foe to Catholic participation
In all the license of a Christian nation.

XLIX

“True! he allow'd them to pray God:
but as
A consequence of prayer, refused the law
Which would have placed them upon the
same base
With those who did not hold the saints
in awe.”
But here Saint Peter started from his
place,
And cried, “You may the prisoner
withdraw:
Ere heaven shall ope her portals to this
Guelph,
While I am guard, may I be damn'd
myself!

L

“Sooner will I with Cerberus exchange
My office (and *his* is no sinecure)
Than see this royal Bedlam bigot range
The azure fields of heaven, of that be
sure!”

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

“Saint!” replied Satan, “you do well to
 avenge
 The wrongs he made your satellites
 endure;
And if to this exchange you should be
 given,
I’ll try to coax *our* Cerberus up to
 heaven.”

LI

Here Michael interposed: “Good saint!
 and devil!
 Pray, not so fast; you both outrun dis-
 cretion.
Saint Peter! you were wont to be more
 civil:
 Satan! excuse this warmth of his ex-
 pression,
And condescension to the vulgar’s level:
 Even saints sometimes forget them-
 selves in session.
Have you got more to say?”—“No.”—“If
 you please,
I’ll trouble you to call your witnesses.”

LII

Then Satan turn’d and waved his swarthy
 hand,
 Which stirr’d with its electric qualities

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Clouds farther off than we can understand,
Although we find him sometimes in
our skies;
Infernal thunder shook both sea and land
In all the planets, and hell's batteries
Let off the artillery, which Milton mentions
As one of Satan's most sublime inventions.

LIII

This was a signal unto such damn'd
souls
As have the privilege of their damnation
Extended far beyond the mere controls
Of worlds past, present, or to come;
no station
Is theirs particularly in the rolls
Of hell assign'd; but where their inclination
Or business carries them in search of
game,
They may range freely—being damn'd
the same.

LIV

They are proud of this—as very well they
may,
It being a sort of knighthood, or gilt key

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Stuck in their loins; or like to an "entré"
Up the back stairs, or such free-masonry.
I borrow my comparisons from clay,
Being clay myself. Let not those spirits
be
Offended with such base low likenesses;
We know their posts are nobler far than
these.

LV

When the great signal ran from heaven
to hell—
About ten million times the distance
reckon'd
From our sun to its earth, as we can
tell
How much time it takes up, even to a
second,
For every ray that travels to dispel
The fogs of London, through which,
dimly beacon'd,
The weathercocks are gilt some thrice a
year,
If that the *summer* is not too severe:—

LVI

I say that I can tell—'t was half a minute:
I know the solar beams take up more
time

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Ere, pack'd up for their journey, they
begin it;
But then their telegraph is less sub-
lime,
And if they ran a race, they would not
win it
'Gainst Satan's couriers bound for their
own clime.
The sun takes up some years for every
ray
To reach its goal—the devil not half a
day.

LVII

Upon the verge of space, about the size
Of half-a-crown, a little speck appear'd
(I've seen a something like it in the skies
In the Ægean, e'er a squall); it near'd,
And, growing bigger, took another guise;
Like an aërial ship it tack'd, and steer'd,
Or *was* steer'd (I am doubtful of the
grammar
Of the last phrase, which makes the
stanza stammer;—

LVIII

But take your choice); and then it grew
a cloud;
And so it was—a cloud of witnesses.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

But such a cloud! No land e'er saw a
crowd
Of locusts numerous as the heavens
saw these;
They shadow'd with their myriads space;
their loud
And varied cries were like those of wild
geese
(If nations may be liken'd to a goose),
And realized the phrase of "hell broke
loose".

LIX

Here crash'd a sturdy oath of stout John
Bull,
Who damn'd away his eyes as hereto-
fore:
There Paddy brogued "By Jasmus!"—
"What's your wull?"
The temperate Scot exclaim'd: the
French ghost swore
In certain terms I sha'n't translate in
full,
As the first coachman will; and 'midst
the war,
The voice of Jonathan was heard to
express,
"Our president is going to war, I
guess."

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

LX

Besides there were the Spaniard, Dutch,
and Dane;
In short, an universal shoal of shades,
From Otaheite's isle to Salisbury Plain,
Of all climes and professions, years and
trades,
Ready to swear against the good king's
reign,
Bitter as clubs in cards are against
spades:
All summon'd by this grand "subpœna",
to
Try if kings mayn't be damned like me
or you.

LXI

When Michael saw this host, he first
grew pale,
As angels can; next, like Italian twi-
light,
He turn'd all colours—as a peacock's tail,
Or sunset streaming through a Gothic
skylight
In some old abbey, or a trout not stale,
Or distant lightning on the horizon *by*
night,
Or a fresh rainbow, or a grand review
Of thirty regiments in red, green, and
blue.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

LXII

Then he address'd himself to Satan:
 " Why—
 My good old friend, for such I deem
 you, though
Our different parties make us fight so
shy,
 I ne'er mistake you for a *personal* foe;
Our difference is *political*, and I
 Trust that, whatever may occur below,
You know my great respect for you: and
 this
Makes me regret whate'er you do amiss—

LXIII

" Why, my dear Lucifer, would you abuse
 My call for witnesses? I did not mean
That you should half of earth and hell
 produce;
 'Tis even superfluous, since two honest,
 clean,
True testimonies are enough: we lose
 Our time, nay, our eternity, between
The accusation and defence: if we
Hear both, 't will stretch our immortality."

LXIV

Satan replied, "To me the matter is
 Indifferent, in a personal point of view:

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

I can have fifty better souls than this
With far less trouble than we have
gone through
Already; and I merely argued his
Late majesty of Britain's case with you
Upon a point of form: you may dispose
Of him; I've kings enough below, God
knows!"

LXV

Thus spoke the Demon (late call'd "mul-
tifaced"
By multo-scribbling Southey). "Then
we'll call
One or two persons of the myriads placed
Around our congress, and dispense with
all
The rest," quoth Michael: "Who may be
so graced
As to speak first? there's choice enough
—who shall
It be?" Then Satan answer'd, "There
are many;
But you may choose Jack Wilkes as well
as any."

LXVI

A merry, cock-eyed, curious-looking sprite
Upon the instant started from the
throng,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Dress'd in a fashion now forgotten quite;
For all the fashions of the flesh stick
long
By people in the next world; where unite
All the costumes since Adam's, right or
wrong,
From Eve's fig-leaf down to the petticoat,
Almost as scanty, of days less remote.

LXVII

The spirit look'd around upon the crowds
Assembled, and exclaim'd, "My friends
of all
The spheres, we shall catch cold amongst
these clouds;
So let's to business: why this general
call?
If those are freeholders I see in shrouds,
And 't is for an election that they bawl,
Behold a candidate with unturn'd coat!
Saint Peter, may I count upon your
-vote?"

LXVIII

"Sir," replied Michael, you mistake;
these things
Are of a former life, and what we do
Above is more august; to judge of kings
Is the tribunal met: so now you know."

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

“Then I presume those gentlemen with
wings,”
Said Wilkes, “are cherubs; and that
soul below
Looks much like George the Third, but
to my mind
A good deal older—Bless me! is he blind?”

LXIX

“He is what you behold him, and his
doom
Depends upon his deeds,” the Angel
said.
“If you have aught to arraign in him,
the tomb
Gives license to the humblest beggar’s
head
To lift itself against the loftiest.”—
“Some,”
Said Wilkes, “don’t wait to see them
laid in lead,
For such a liberty—and I, for one,
Have told them what I thought beneath
the sun.”

LXX

“*Above* the sun repeat, then, what thou
hast
To urge against him,” said the Arch-
angel. “Why,”

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Replied the spirit, "since old scores are
past,
Must I turn evidence? In faith, not I.
Besides, I beat him hollow at the last,
With all his Lords and Commons: in
the sky
I don't like ripping up old stories, since
His conduct was but natural in a prince.

LXXI

"Foolish, no doubt, and wicked, to
oppress
A poor unlucky devil without a shilling;
But then I blame the man himself much
less
Than Bute and Grafton, and shall be
unwilling
To see him punish'd here for their excess,
Since they were both damn'd long ago,
and still in
Their place below: for me, I have for-
given,
And vote his 'habeas corpus' into heaven."

LXXII

"Wilkes," said the Devil, "I understand
all this;
You turn'd to half a courtier ere you
died,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

And seem to think it would not be amiss
To grow a whole one on the other side
Of Charon's ferry; you forget that *his*
Reign is concluded; whatsoe'er betide,
He won't be sovereign more: you've lost
your labour,
For at the best he will but be your
neighbour.

LXXIII

“However, I knew what to think of it,
When I beheld you in your jesting way,
Flitting and whispering round about the
spit
Where Belial, upon duty for the day,
With Fox's lard was basting William
Pitt,
His pupil; I knew what to think, I
say:
That fellow even in hell breeds farther
ills;
I'll have him *gagg'd*—'t was one of his
own bills.

LXXIV

“Call Junius!” From the crowd a
shadow stalk'd,
And at the name there was a general
squeeze,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

So that the very ghosts no longer walk'd
In comfort, at their own aërial ease,
But were all ramm'd, and jamm'd (but to
be balk'd,
As we shall see), and jostled hands and
knees,
Like wind compress'd and pent within a
bladder,
Or like a human colic, which is sadder.

LXXV

The shadow came—a tall, thin, gray-
hair'd figure,
That look'd as it had been a shade on
earth;
Quick in its motions, with an air of
vigour,
But nought to mark its breeding or its
birth:
Now it wax'd little, then again grew bigger,
With now an air of gloom, or savage
mirth;
But as you gazed upon its features, they
Changed every instant—to *what*, none
could say.

LXXVI

The more intently the ghosts gazed, the less
Could they distinguish whose the fea-
tures were;

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

The Devil himself seem'd puzzled even to
guess;
They varied like a dream—now here,
now there;
And several people swore from out the
press,
They knew him perfectly; and one
could swear
He was his father: upon which another
Was sure he was his mother's cousin's
brother:

LXXVII

Another, that he was a duke, or knight,
An orator, a lawyer, or a priest,
A nabob, a man-midwife: but the wight
Mysterious changed his countenance at
least
As oft as they their minds: though in
full sight
He stood, the puzzle only was increased;
The man was a phantasmagoria in
Himself—he was so volatile and thin.

LXXVIII

The moment that you had pronounced
him *one*,
Presto! his face changed, and he was
another;

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

And when that change was hardly well
put on,
It varied, till I don't think his own
mother
(If that he had a mother) would her son
Have known, he shifted so from one to
t' other;
Till guessing from a pleasure grew a task,
At this epistolary "Iron Mask".

LXXIX

For sometimes he like Cerberus would
seem—
"Three gentlemen at once" (as sagely
says
Good Mrs. Malaprop); then you might deem
That he was not even *one*; now many
rays
Were flashing round him; and now a
thick steam
Hid him from sight—like fogs on Lon-
don days:
Now Burke, now Tooke, he grew to
people's fancies,
And certes often like Sir Philip Francis.

LXXX

I've an hypothesis—'t is quite my own;
I never let it out till now, for fear

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Of doing people harm about the throne,
And injuring some minister or peer,
On whom the stigma might perhaps be
blown;

It is—my gentle public, lend thine ear!
'Tis, that what Junius we are wont to
call

Was *really, truly*, nobody at all.

LXXXI

I don't see wherefore letters should not be
Written without hands, since we daily
view

Them written without heads; and books,
we see,

Are fill'd as well without the latter too:
And really till we fix on somebody

For certain sure to claim them as his
due,

Their author, like the Niger's mouth, will
bother

The world to say if *there* be mouth or
author.

LXXXII

“And who and what art thou?” the
Archangel said.

“For *that* you may consult my title-
page,”

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Replied this mighty shadow of a shade:
“If I have kept my secret half an age,
I scarce shall tell it now.”—“Canst thou
upbraid,”
Continued Michael, “George Rex, or
allege
Aught further?” Junius answer’d, “You
had better
First ask him for *his* answer to my letter:

LXXXIII

“My charges upon record will outlast
The brass of both his epitaph and
tomb.”
“Repent’st thou not,” said Michael, “of
some past
Exaggeration? something which may
doom
Thyself if false, as him if true? Thou
wast
Too bitter—is it not so?—in thy gloom
Of passion?”—“Passion!” cried the phan-
tom dim,
“I loved my country, and I hated him.

LXXXIV

“What I have written, I have written: let
The rest be on his head or mine!” So
spoke

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Old "Nominis Umbra"; and while speak-
ing yet,
Away he melted in celestial smoke.
Then Satan said to Michael, "Don't
forget
To call George Washington, and John
Horne Tooke,
And Franklin;"—but at this time there
was heard
A cry for room, though not a phantom
stirr'd.

LXXXV

At length with jostling, elbowing, and
the aid
Of cherubim appointed to that post,
The devil Asmodeus to the circle made
His way, and look'd as if his journey cost
Some trouble. When his burden down
he laid,
"What's this?" cried Michael; "why,
't is not a ghost?"
"I know it," quoth the incubus; "but he
Shall be one, if you leave the affair to
me.

LXXXVI

"Confound the renegado! I have sprain'd
My left wing, he's so heavy; one would
think

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Some of his works about his neck were
chain'd.

But to the point; while hovering o'er
the brink

Of Skiddaw (where as usual it still rain'd),

I saw a taper, far below me, wink,
And stooping, caught this fellow at a
libel—

No less on history than the Holy Bible.

LXXXVII

“The former is the devil's scripture, and
The latter yours, good Michael: so the
affair

Belongs to all of us, you understand.

I snatch'd him up just as you see him
there,

And brought him off for sentence out of
hand:

I've scarcely been ten minutes in the
air—

At least a quarter it can hardly be:

I dare say that his wife is still at tea.”

LXXXVIII

Here Satan said, “I know this man of
old,

And have expected him for some time
here;

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

A sillier fellow you will scarce behold,
Or more conceited in his petty sphere:
But surely it was not worth while to fold
Such trash below your wing, Asmodeus
dear:
We had the poor wretch safe (without
being bored
With carriage) coming of his own accord.

LXXXIX

“But since he’s here, let’s see what he
has done.”

“Done!” cried Asmodeus, “he anticipates

The very business you are now upon,
And scribbles as if head clerk to the
Fates.

Who knows to what his ribaldry may run,
When such an ass as this, like Balaam’s,
prates?”

“Let’s hear,” quoth Michael, “what he
has to say;

You know we’re bound to that in every
way.”

XC

Now the bard, glad to get an audience,
which

By no means often was his case below,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Began to cough, and hawk, and hem,
and pitch

His voice into that awful note of woe
To all unhappy hearers within reach
Of poets when the tide of rhyme's in
flow ;

But stuck fast with his first hexameter,
Not one of all whose gouty feet would
stir.

XCI

But ere the spavin'd dactyls could be
spurr'd

Into recitative, in great dismay,
Both cherubim and seraphim were heard
To murmur loudly through their long
array ;

And Michael rose ere he could get a word
Of all his founder'd verses under way,
And cried, "For God's sake, stop, my
friend! 't were best—

Non Di, non homines—you know the rest."

XCII

A general bustle spread throughout the
throng,

Which seem'd to hold all verse in detes-
tation ;

The angels had of course enough of song
When upon service ; and the generation

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Of ghosts had heard too much in life, not
long

Before, to profit by a new occasion;
The monarch, mute till then, exclaim'd,
"What! what!

Pye come again? No more—no more of
that!"

XCIII

The tumult grew; an universal cough
Convulsed the skies, as during a debate,
When Castlereagh has been up long
enough

(Before he was first minister of state,
I mean—the *slaves hear now*); some cried
"Off, off!"

As at a farce; till, grown quite desper-
ate,

The bard Saint Peter pray'd to interpose
(Himself an author) only for his prose.

XCIV

The varlet was not an ill-favour'd knave;
A good deal like a vulture in the
face,

With a hook nose and a hawk's eye,
which gave

A smart and sharper-looking sort of
grace

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

To his whole aspect, which, though rather
grave,
Was by no means so ugly as his case;
But that, indeed, was hopeless as can be,
Quite a poetic felony "*de se*".

XCIV

Then Michael blew his trump, and still'd
the noise
With one still greater, as is yet the
mode
On earth besides; except some grumbling
voice,
Which now and then will make a
slight inroad
Upon decorous silence, few will twice
Lift up their lungs when fairly over-
crow'd;
And now the bard could plead his own
bad cause,
With all the attitudes of self-applause.

XCVI

He said—(I only give the heads)—he said,
He meant no harm in scribbling; 't was
his way
Upon all topics; 't was, besides, his bread,
Of which he butter'd both sides; 't would
delay

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Too long the assembly (he was pleas'd to
dread),
And take up rather more time than a
day,
To name his works—he would but cite a
few—
“Wat Tyler”—“Rhymes on Blenheim”—
“Waterloo”.

XCVII

He had written praises of a regicide;
He had written praises of all kings
whatever;
He had written for republics far and
wide,
And then against them bitterer than
ever;
For pantisocracy he once had cried
Aloud—a scheme less moral than 't was
clever;
Then grew a hearty anti-Jacobin—
Had turn'd his coat—and would have
turn'd his skin.

XCVIII

He had sung against all battles, and
again
In their high praise and glory; he had
call'd

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Reviewing "the ungentle craft", and
then

Become as base a critic as e'er crawl'd—
Fed, paid, and pamper'd by the very men
By whom his muse and morals had
been maul'd:

He had written much blank verse, and
blanker prose,
And more of both than anybody knows.

XCIX

He had written Wesley's life:—here turn-
ing round

To Satan, "Sir, I'm ready to write
yours,

In two octavo volumes, nicely bound,
With notes and preface, all that most
allures

The pious purchaser; and there's no
ground

For fear, for I can choose my own
reviewers:

So let me have the proper documents,
That I may add you to my other saints."

C

Satan bow'd, and was silent. "Well, if
you,

With amiable modesty, decline

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

My offer, what says Michael? There are
few

Whose memoirs could be render'd more
divine.

Mine is a pen of all work; not so new
As it was once, but I would make you shine
Like your own trumpet. By the way, my
own

Has more of brass in it, and is as well
blown.

CI

“But talking about trumpets, here's my
Vision!

Now you shall judge, all people; yes,
you shall

Judge with my judgment, and by my
decision

Be guided who shall enter heaven or fall.

I settle all these things by intuition,

Times present, past, to come, heaven,
hell, and all,

Like King Alfonso. When I thus see
double,

I save the Deity some worlds of trouble.”

CII

He ceased, and drew forth an MS.; and no
Persuasion on the part of devils, or
saints,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Or angels, now could stop the torrent; so
He read the first three lines of the
contents;
But at the fourth, the whole spiritual
show
Had vanish'd, with variety of scents,
Ambrosial and sulphureous, as they
sprang,
Like lightning, off from his "melodious
twang".

CIII

Those grand heroics acted as a spell:
The angels stopp'd their ears and plied
their pinions;
The devils ran howling, deafen'd, down
to hell;
The ghosts fled, gibbering, for their own
dominions—
(For 'tis not yet decided where they dwell,
And I leave every man to his opinions);
Michael took refuge in his trump—but,
lo!
His teeth were set on edge, he could not
blow!

CIV

Saint Peter, who has hitherto been known
For an impetuous saint, upraised his
keys,

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

And at the fifth line knock'd the poet
down;
Who fell like Phaeton, but more at
ease,
Into his lake, for there he did not drown;
A different web being by the Destinies
Woven for the Laureate's final wreath,
whene'er
Reform shall happen either here or there.

CV

He first sank to the bottom—like his
works,
But soon rose to the surface—like him-
self;
For all corrupted things are buoy'd like
corks,
By their own rottenness, light as an elf,
Or wisp that flits o'er a morass: he lurks,
It may be, still, like dull books on a
shelf,
In his own den, to scrawl some "Life"
or "Vision",
As Welborn says—"the devil turn'd pre-
cision".

CVI

As for the rest, to come to the conclusion
Of this true dream, the telescope is
gone

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

Which kept my optics free from all
delusion,
And show'd me what I in my turn
have shown;
All I saw farther, in the last confusion,
Was, that King George slipp'd into
heaven for one;
And when the tumult dwindled to a calm,
I left him practising the hundredth psalm.

The Destruction of Sennacherib



The Assyrian came down like the wolf on
the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple
and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like
stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep
Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer
is green,
That host with their banners at sunset
were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn
hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay wither'd
and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings
on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as
he pass'd;

SENNACHERIB

And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly
and chill,
And their hearts but once heav'd, and for
ever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril
all wide,
But through it there roll'd not the breath
of his pride:
And the foam of his gasping lay white
on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating
surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and
pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust
on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners
alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Asshur are loud in
their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of
Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote
by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of
the Lord!

Ode to
Napoleon
Buonaparte

'Tis done—but yesterday a King!
And arm'd with Kings to strive—
And now thou art a nameless thing:
So abject—yet alive!
Is this the man of thousand thrones,
Who strew'd our earth with hostile bones,
And can he thus survive?
Since he, miscall'd the Morning Star,
Nor man nor fiend hath fallen so far.

Ill-minded man! why scourge thy kind
Who bow'd so low the knee?
By gazing on thyself grown blind,
Thou taught'st the rest to see.
With might unquestion'd, — power to
save,—
Thine only gift hath been the grave,
To those that worshipp'd thee;
Nor till thy fall could mortals-guess
Ambition's less than littleness!

ODE TO

Thanks for that lesson—it will teach
To after-warriors more,
Than high Philosophy can preach,
And vainly preach'd before.
That spell upon the minds of men
Breaks never to unite again,
That led them to adore
Those Pagod things of sabre sway,
With fronts of brass, and feet of clay.

The triumph, and the vanity,
The rapture of the strife—
The earthquake voice of Victory,
To thee the breath of life;
The sword, the sceptre, and that sway
Which man seem'd made but to obey,
Wherewith renown was rife—
All quell'd!—Dark Spirit! what must be
The madness of thy memory!

The Desolator desolate!
The Victor overthrown!
The Arbiter of others' fate
A Suppliant for his own!
Is it some yet imperial hope,
That with such change can calmly cope?
Or dread of death alone?
To die a prince—or live a slave—
Thy choice is most ignobly brave!

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE

He who of old would rend the oak,
Dream'd not of the rebound:
Chain'd by the trunk he vainly broke—
Alone—how look'd he round?
Thou, in the sternness of thy strength,
An equal deed has done at length,
And darker fate hast found:
He fell, the forest prowlers' prey;
But thou must eat thy heart away!

The Roman, when his burning heart
Was slaked with blood of Rome,
Threw down the dagger—dared depart—
In savage grandeur, home—
He dared depart in utter scorn
Of men that such a yoke had borne,
Yet left him such a doom!
His only glory was that hour
Of self-upheld abandon'd power.

The Spaniard, when the lust of sway
Had lost its quickening spell,
Cast crowns for rosaries away,
An empire for a cell;
A strict accountant of his beads,
A subtle disputant on creeds,
His dotage trifled well:
Yet better had he neither known
A bigot's shrine, nor despot's throne.

ODE TO

But thou—from thy reluctant hand
The thunderbolt is wrung—
Too late thou leav'st the high command
To which thy weakness clung;
All Evil Spirit as thou art,
It is enough to grieve the heart
To see thine own unstrung;
To think that God's fair world hath been
The footstool of a thing so mean;

And Earth hath spilt her blood for him,
Who thus can hoard his own!
And Monarchs bow'd the trembling limb,
And thank'd him for a throne!
Fair Freedom! we may hold thee dear,
When thus thy mightiest foes their fear
In humblest guise have shown.
Oh! ne'er may tyrant leave behind
A brighter name to lure mankind!

Thine evil deeds are writ in gore,
Nor written thus in vain—
Thy triumphs tell of fame no more,
Or deepen every stain:
If thou hadst died as honour dies,
Some new Napoleon might arise,
To shame the world again—
But who would soar the solar height,
To set in such a starless night?

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE

Weigh'd in the balance, hero dust
Is vile as vulgar clay;
Thy scales, Mortality! are just
To all that pass away:
But yet methought the living great
Some higher sparks should animate,
To dazzle and dismay:
Nor deem'd Contempt could thus make
mirth
Of these, the Conquerors of the earth.

And she, proud Austria's mournful flower,
Thy still imperial bride;
How bears her breast the torturing hour?
Still clings she to thy side?
Must she too bend, must she too share
Thy late repentance, long despair,
Thou throneless Homicide?
If still she loves thee, hoard that gem;
'Tis worth thy vanish'd diadem!

Then haste thee to thy sullen Isle,
And gaze upon the sea;
That element may meet thy smile—
It ne'er was ruled by thee!
Or trace with thine all idle hand,
In loitering mood upon the sand,
That Earth is now as free!
That Corinth's pedagogue hath now
Transferr'd his by-word to thy brow.

ODE TO

Thou Timour! in his captive's cage
What thoughts will there be thine,
While brooding in thy prison'd rage?
But one—The “world *was* mine!”
Unless, like he of Babylon,
All sense is with thy sceptre gone,
Life will not long confine
That spirit pour'd so widely forth—
So long obey'd—so little worth!

Or, like the thief of fire from heaven,
Wilt thou withstand the shock?
And share with him, the unforgiven,
His vulture and his rock?
Foredoom'd by God—by man accurst,
And that last act, though not thy worst,
The very Fiend's arch mock;
He in his fall preserved his pride,
And, if a mortal, had as proudly died!

There was a day—there was an hour,
While earth was Gaul's—Gaul thine—
When that immeasurable power
Unsated to resign
Had been an act of purer fame,
Than gathers round Marengo's name,
And gilded thy decline,
Through the long twilight of all time,
Despite some passing clouds of crime.

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE

But thou forsooth must be a king,
And don the purple vest,
As if that foolish robe could wring
Remembrance from thy breast.
Where is that faded garment? where
The gewgaws thou wert fond to wear,
The star—the string—the crest?
Vain froward child of empire! say,
Are all thy playthings snatch'd away?

Where may the wearied eye repose,
When gazing on the Great;
Where neither guilty glory glows,
Nor despicable state?
Yes—one—the first—the last—the best—
The Cincinnatus of the West,
Whom envy dared not hate,
Bequeath the name of Washington,
To make man blush there was but one!

Ode from
the French



I

We do not curse thee, Waterloo!
Though Freedom's blood thy plain bedew;
There 't was shed, but is not sunk—
Rising from each gory trunk,
Like the water-spout from ocean,
With a strong and growing motion—
It soars, and mingles in the air,
With that of lost Labedoyère—
With that of him whose honour'd grave
Contains the "bravest of the brave".
A crimson cloud it spreads and glows,
But shall return to whence it rose;
When 'tis full 't will burst asunder—
Never yet was heard such thunder,
As then shall shake the world with
wonder—
Never yet was seen such lightning
As o'er heaven shall then be bright'ning!
Like the Wormwood Star foretold
By the sainted Seer of old,
Show'ring down a fiery flood,
Turning rivers into blood.

ODE FROM THE FRENCH

II

The Chief has fallen, but not by you,
Vanquishers of Waterloo!
When the soldier citizen
Sway'd not o'er his fellow-men—
Save in deeds that led them on
Where Glory smiled on Freedom's son—
Who, of all the despots banded,
With that youthful chief competed?
Who could boast o'er France defeated,
Till lone Tyranny commanded?
Till, goaded by ambition's sting,
The Hero sunk into the King?
Then he fell:—so perish all,
Who would men by man enthrall!

III

And thou, too, of the snow-white plume!
Whose realm refused thee ev'n a tomb;
Better hadst thou still been leading
France o'er hosts of hirelings bleeding,
Than sold thyself to death and shame
For a meanly royal name;
Such as he of Naples wears,
Who thy blood-bought title bears.
Little didst thou deem, when dashing
On thy war-horse through the ranks,
Like a stream which burst its banks,
While helmets cleft, and sabres clashing,

ODE FROM THE FRENCH

Shone and shiver'd fast around thee—
Of the fate at last which found thee:
Was that haughty plume laid low
By a slave's dishonest blow?
Once — as the Moon sways o'er the
 tide,
It roll'd in air, the warrior's guide;
Through the smoke-created night
Of the black and sulphurous fight,
The soldier raised his seeking eye
To catch that crest's ascendancy—
And as it onward rolling rose,
So moved his heart upon our foes.
There, where death's brief pang was
 quickest,
And the battle's wreck lay thickest,
Strew'd beneath the advancing banner
 Of the eagle's burning crest—
(There with thunder-clouds to fan her,
 Who could then her wing arrest—
 Victory beaming from her breast?)
While the broken line enlarging
 Fell, or fled along the plain;
There be sure was Murat charging!
 There he ne'er shall charge again!

IV

O'er glories gone the invaders march,
Weeps Triumph o'er each levell'd arch—

ODE FROM THE FRENCH

But let Freedom rejoice,
With her heart in her voice;
But, her hand on her sword,
Doubly shall she be adored;
France hath twice too well been taught
The "moral lesson" dearly bought—
Her safety sits not on a throne,
With Capet or Napoleon!
But in equal rights and laws,
Hearts and hands in one great cause—
Freedom, such as God hath given
Unto all beneath his heaven,
With their breath, and from their birth,
Though Guilt would sweep it from the
earth;
With a fierce and lavish hand
Scattering nations' wealth like sand;
Pouring nations' blood like water,
In imperial seas of slaughter!

v

But the heart and the mind,
And the voice of mankind,
Shall arise in communion—
And who shall resist that proud union?
The time is past when swords subdued—
Man may die—the soul's renew'd:
Even in this low world of care
Freedom ne'er shall want an heir;

ODE FROM THE FRENCH

Millions breathe but to inherit
Her for ever bounding spirit—
When once more her hosts assemble,
Tyrants shall believe and tremble—
Smile they at this idle threat?
Crimson tears will follow yet.

Napoleon

FROM "CHILDE HAROLD'S
PILGRIMAGE"

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

And came—and saw—and conquer'd!
But the man
Who would have tamed his eagles down
to flee,
Like a train'd falcon, in the Gallic van,
Which he, in sooth, long led to victory,

NAPOLEON

With a deaf heart which never seem'd
to be
A listener to itself, was strangely
fram'd;
With but one weakest weakness—
vanity,
Coquettish in ambition—still he aim'd—
At what? Can he avouch—or answer
what he claim'd?

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

.
There sunk the greatest, nor the worst
of men,
Whose spirit, antithetically mixt,

NAPOLEON

One moment of the mightiest, and again
On little objects with like firmness fixt;
Extreme in all things! hadst thou been
betwixt,
Thy throne had still been thine, or never
been;
For daring made thy rise as fall: thou
seek'st
Even now to re-assume the imperial mien,
And shake again the world, the Thunderer
of the scene!

.
But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,
And *there* hath been thy bane; there is
a fire
And motion of the soul which will not
dwell
In its own narrow being but aspire
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;
And, but once kindled, quenchless ever-
more,
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever
bore.

This makes the madmen who have made
men mad
By their contagion! Conquerors and
Kings,

NAPOLEON

Founders of sects and systems, to whom
add
Sophists, Bards, Statesmen, all unquiet
things
Which stir too strongly the soul's secret
springs,
And are themselves the fools to those
they fool;
Envied, yet how unenviable! what stings
Are theirs! One breast laid open were
a school
Which would unteach mankind the lust
to shine or rule.

Waterloo

FROM "CHILDE HAROLD'S
PILGRIMAGE"

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

WATERLOO

Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and
bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and
brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and
when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake
again,
And all went merry as a marriage-
bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like
a rising knell!

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

WATERLOO

Within a window'd niche of that high
hall
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain; he did
hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's pro-
phetic ear;
And when they smiled because he deem'd
it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too
well
Which stretch'd his father on a bloody
bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone
could quell;
He rush'd into the field, and, foremost
fighting, fell.

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and
fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of
distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour
ago
Blush'd at the praise of their own loveli-
ness;
And there were sudden partings, such as
press
The life from out young hearts, and
choking sighs

WATERLOO

Which ne'er might be repeated; who
could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual
eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful
morn could rise!

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

And wild and high the "Cameron's
gathering" rose!
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's
hills

WATERLOO

Have heard, and heard, too, have her
Saxon foes:—
How in the noon of night that pibroch
thrills,
Savage and shrill! But with the breath
which fills
Their mountain-pipe, so fill the moun-
taineers
With the fierce native daring which in-
stils
The stirring memory of a thousand
years,
And Evans, Donald's fame rings in each
clansman's ears!

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

WATERLOO

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound
of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms,—the
day
Battle's magnificently-stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which
when rent
The earth is cover'd thick with other
clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd
and pent,
Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red
burial blent!

Their praise is hymn'd by loftier harps
than mine:
Yet one I would select from that proud
throng,
Partly because they blend me with his
line,
And partly that I did his sire some
wrong,
And partly that bright names will hallow
song;
And his was of the bravest, and when
shower'd
The death-bolts deadliest the thinn'd files
along,

WATERLOO

Even where the thickest of war's tempest
 lower'd,
They reach'd no nobler breast than thine,
 young, gallant Howard!

There have been tears and breaking
 hearts for thee,
And mine were nothing, had I such to
 give;
But when I stood beneath the fresh green
 tree,
Which living waves where thou didst
 cease to live,
And saw around me the wide field re-
 vive
With fruits and fertile promise, and the
 Spring
Came forth her work of gladness to con-
 trive,
With all her reckless birds upon the
 wing,
I turn'd from all she brought to those she
 could not bring.

**Epitaph for
William Pitt**



With death doom'd to grapple,
Beneath this cold slab, he
Who lied in the Chapel
Now lies in the Abbey.

Vision of Belshazzar

The King was on his throne,
The Satraps throng'd the hall;
A thousand bright lamps shone
O'er that high festival.
A thousand cups of gold,
In Judah deem'd divine—
Jehovah's vessels hold
The godless Heathen's wine.

In that same hour and hall,
The fingers of a hand
Came forth against the wall,
And wrote as if on sand:
The fingers of a man;—
A solitary hand
Along the letters ran,
And traced them like a wand.

The monarch saw, and shook,
And bade no more rejoice;
All bloodless wax'd his look,
And tremulous his voice.

VISION OF BELSHAZZAR

“ Let the men of lore appear,
The wisest of the earth,
And expound the words of fear,
Which mar our royal mirth.”

Chaldea's seers are good,
But here they have no skill;
And the unknown letters stood
Untold and awful still.
And Babel's men of age
Are wise and deep in lore,
But now they were not sage,
They saw—but knew no more.

A captive in the land,
A stranger and a youth,
He heard the king's command,
He saw that writing's truth,
The lamps around were bright,
The prophecy in view;
He read it on that night,—
The morrow proved it true.

“ Belshazzar's grave is made,
His kingdom pass'd away,
He, in the balance weigh'd,
Is light and worthless clay,
The shroud his robe of state,
His canopy the stone:
The Mede is at his gate!
The Persian on his throne!”

Greece

FROM "THE GIAOUR"

Clime of the unforgotten brave!
Whose land from plain to mountain-cave
Was Freedom's home or Glory's grave!
Shrine of the mighty! can it be,
That this is all remains of thee?
Approach, thou craven crouching slave:
Say, is not this Thermopylæ?
These waters blue that round you lave,
Oh servile offspring of the free—
Pronounce what sea, what shore is this?
The gulf, the rock of Salamis!
These scenes, their story not unknown,
Arise, and make again your own;
Snatch from the ashes of your sires
The embers of their former fires;
And he who in the strife expires
Will add to theirs a name of fear
That Tyranny shall quake to hear,
And leave his sons a hope, a fame,
They too will rather die than shame:

GREECE

For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeath'd by bleeding Sire to Son,
Though baffled oft is ever won.
Bear witness, Greece, thy living page!
Attest it many a deathless age!
While kings, in dusty darkness hid,
Have left a nameless pyramid,
Thy heroes, though the general doom
Hath swept the column from their tomb,
A mightier monument command,
The mountains of their native land!
There points thy Muse to stranger's eye
The graves of those that cannot die!
'T were long to tell, and sad to trace,
Each step from splendour to disgrace;
Enough—no foreign foe could quell
Thy soul, till from itself it fell;
Yes! Self-abasement paved the way
To villain-bonds and despot sway.

The Prisoner of Chillon

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou
art,
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can
bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are con-
sign'd—
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless
gloom,
Their country conquers with their mar-
tyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every
wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 't was
trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a
sod,
By Bonnivard!—May none those marks
efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

I

My hair is gray, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears:
My limbs are bow'd, though not with toil,
But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are bann'd, and barr'd—forbidden fare;
But this was for my father's faith
I suffer'd chains and courted death;
That father perish'd at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling-place;
We were seven—who now are one,
Six in youth, and one in age,
Finish'd as they had begun,
Proud of persecution's rage;
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have seal'd;
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould,
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and
gray,

Dim with a dull imprison'd ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp:

And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,

For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away,
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years—I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score,
When my last brother droop'd and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III

They chain'd us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face,

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight:
And thus together—yet apart,
Fetter'd in hand, but joined in heart,
'T was still some solace in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope, or legend old,
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
 A grating sound—not full and free
 As they of yore were wont to be:
 It might be fancy—but to me
They never sounded like our own.

IV

I was the eldest of the three,
 And to uphold and cheer the rest
 I ought to do—and did my best—
And each did well in his degree.
 The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him—with eyes as blue as heaven,
 For him my soul was sorely moved:
And truly might it be distress'd
To see such bird in such a nest;

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

For he was beautiful as day—
 (When day was beautiful to me
 As to young eagles, being free)—
 A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
 Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun:
 And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for nought but others' ills,
And then they flow'd like mountain rills,
Unless he could assuage the woe
Which he abhorr'd to view below.

v

The other was as pure of mind,
But form'd to combat with his kind;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perish'd in the foremost rank
 With joy:—but not in chains to pine:
His spirit wither'd with their clank,
 I saw it silently decline—
 And so perchance in sooth did mine;
But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
 Had follow'd there the deer and wolf;
 To him this dungeon was a gulf,
And fetter'd feet the worst of ills.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

VI

Lake Lemán lies by Chillon's walls:
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
Which round about the wave enthralls:
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made—and like a living grave
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay,
We heard it ripple night and day;
Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd;
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were
high
And wanton in the happy sky;
And then the very rock hath rock'd,
And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

VII

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food;
It was not that 't was coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunters' fare,
And for the like had little care:

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captive's tears
Have moisten'd many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den;
But what were these to us or him?
These wasted not his heart or limb;
My brother's soul was of that mould
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free-breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side;
But why delay the truth?—he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,—
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died—and they unlock'd his chain,
And scoop'd for him a shallow grave
Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begg'd them, as a boon, to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine—it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,
That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer—
They coldly laugh'd—and laid him there:
The flat and turfless earth above
The being we so much did love;

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument!

VIII

But he, the favourite and the flower,
Most cherish'd since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyr'd father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be
Less wretched now, and one day free;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired—
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was wither'd on the stalk away.
Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood:
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I've seen it on the breaking ocean
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread:
But these were horrors—this was woe
Unmix'd with such—but sure and slow:
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender—kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

With all the while a cheek whose
bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray—
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright,
And not a word of murmur—not
A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence—lost
In this last loss, of all the most;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less:
I listen'd, but I could not hear;
I call'd, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 't was hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonished;
I call'd, and thought I heard a sound—
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rush'd to him:—I found him not,
I only stirr'd in this black spot,
I only lived—*I* only drew
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
The last—the sole—the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

One on the earth, and one beneath—
My brothers—both had ceased to breathe:
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive—
A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.
 I know not why
 I could not die,
I had no earthly hope but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death.

IX

What next befell me then and there
 I know not well—I never knew—
First came the loss of light, and air,
 And then of darkness too:
I had no thought, no feeling—none—
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and gray,
It was not night—it was not day;
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness—without a place;

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

There were no stars—no earth—no time—
No check—no change—no good—no
crime—

But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

x

A light broke in upon my brain,—
It was the carol of a bird;
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track;
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seem'd to say them all for me!

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
It seem'd like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine,
But knowing well captivity,
Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
Or if it were, in winged guise,
A visitant from Paradise;
For—Heaven forgive that thought! the
while
Which made me both to weep and smile;
I sometimes deem'd that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 't was mortal well I knew,
For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone,—
Lone—as the corse within its shroud,
Lone—as a solitary cloud,
A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

XI

A kind of change came in my fate,
My keepers grew compassionate;
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was:—my broken chain
With links unfasten'd did remain,
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part;
And round the pillars one by one,
Returning where my walk begun,
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crush'd heart fell blind and sick.

XII

I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me:
No child—no sire—no kin had I,
No partner in my misery;

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barr'd windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high,
The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII

I saw them—and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high—their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channell'd rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-wall'd distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down;
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,
 The only one in view;
A small green isle, it seem'd no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers grow-
 ing,
 Of gentle breath and hue.
The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seem'd joyous each and all;

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seem'd to fly,
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled—and would fain
I had not left my recent chain;
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save,—
And yet my glance, too much oppress'd,
Had almost need of such a rest.

XIV

It might be months, or years, or days,
I kept no count—I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
And clear them of their dreary mote;
At last men came to set me free,
I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where,
It was at length the same to me,
Fetter'd or fetterless to be,
I learn'd to love despair.
And thus when they appear'd at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage—and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home:

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

With spiders I had friendship made,
And watch'd them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learn'd to dwell;
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are:—even I
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

The Coliseum



FROM "CHILDE HAROLD"

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

I see before me the Gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his droop'd head sinks gradually
low—

THE COLISEUM

And through his side the last drops,
 ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by
 one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and
 now
The arena swims around him—he is
 gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd
 the wretch who won.

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

The Dogs' Carnival

FROM "THE SIEGE
OF CORINTH"

He wander'd on along the beach,
Till within the range of a carbine's reach
Of the leaguer'd wall; but they saw him
not,
Or how could he 'scape from the hostile
shot?
Did traitors lurk in the Christians' hold?
Were their hands grown stiff, or their
hearts wax'd cold?
I know not, in sooth; but from yonder
wall
There flash'd no fire, and there hiss'd no
ball,
Though he stood beneath the bastion's
frown,
That flank'd the sea-ward gate of the
town;
Though he heard the sound, and could
almost tell
The sullen words of the sentinel,

THE DOGS' CARNIVAL

As his measured step on the stone below
Clank'd, as he paced it to and fro;
And he saw the lean dogs beneath the wall
Hold o'er the dead their carnival,
Gorging and growling o'er carcass and
limb;
They were too busy to bark at him!
From a Tartar's skull they had stripp'd
the flesh,
As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh;
And their white tusks crunch'd over the
whiter skull,
As it slipped through their jaws, when
their edge grew dull,
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the
dead,
When they scarce could rise from the spot
where they fed;
So well had they broken a lingering fast
With those who had fallen for that night's
repast.
And Alp knew, by the turbans that roll'd
on the sand,
The foremost of these were the best of
his band:
Crimson and green were the shawls of
their wear,
And each scalp had a single long tuft of
hair,
All the rest was shaven and bare.

THE DOGS' CARNIVAL

The scalps were in the wild dog's maw,
The hair was tangled round his jaw:
But close by the shore, on the edge of
the gulf,
There sat a vulture flapping a wolf,
Who had stolen from the hills, but kept
away,
Scared by the dogs, from the human prey;
But he seized on his share of a steed
that lay,
Pick'd by the birds, on the sands of the
bay.

Mazeppa's Ride.

FROM "MAZEPPA"

"The wood was pass'd; 't was more than
noon,
But chill the air, although in June;
Or it might be my veins ran cold—
Prolong'd endurance tames the bold;
And I was then not what I seem,
But headlong as a wintry stream,
And wore my feelings out before
I well could count their causes o'er:
And what with fury, fear, and wrath,
The tortures which beset my path,
Cold, hunger, sorrow, shame, distress,
Thus bound in nature's nakedness;
Sprung from a race whose rising blood
When stirr'd beyond its calmer mood,
And trodden hard upon, is like
The rattle-snake's, in act to strike,
What marvel if this worn-out trunk
Beneath its woes a moment sunk?

MAZEPPA'S RIDE

The earth gave way, the skies roll'd
round,

I seem'd to sink upon the ground;
But err'd, for I was fastly bound.

My heart turn'd sick, my brain grew
sore,

And throbb'd awhile, then beat no more:

The skies spun like a mighty wheel;

I saw the trees like drunkards reel,

And a slight flash sprang o'er my eyes,

Which saw no farther: he who dies

Can die no more than then I died.

O'ertortured by that ghastly ride,

I felt the blackness come and go,

And strove to wake; but could not
make

My senses climb up from below:

I felt as on a plank at sea,

When all the waves that dash o'er thee,

At the same time upheave and whelm,

And hurl thee towards a desert realm.

My undulating life was as

The fancied lights that flitting pass

Our shut eyes in deep midnight, when

Fever begins upon the brain.

“Up rose the sun; the mists were curl'd

Back from the solitary world

Which lay around—behind—before.

What boot'd it to traverse o'er

MAZEPPA'S[®] RIDE

Plain, forest, river? Man nor brute,
Nor dint of hoof, nor print of foot,
Lay in the wild luxuriant soil;
No sign of travel—none of toil;
The very air was mute;
And not an insect's shrill small horn,
Nor matin bird's new voice was borne
From herb nor thicket. Many a werst,
Panting as if his heart would burst,
The weary brute still stagger'd on;
And still we were—or seem'd—alone.
At length, while reeling on our way,
Methought I heard a courser neigh,
From out yon tuft of blackening firs.
Is it the wind whose branches stirs?
No, no! from out the forest prance

A trampling troop; I see them come!
In one vast squadron they advance!

I strove to cry—my lips were dumb.
The steeds rush on in plunging pride;
But where are they the reins to guide?
A thousand horse—and none to ride!
With flowing tail, and flying mane,
Wide nostrils—never stretch'd by pain,
Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,
And feet that iron never shod,
And flanks unscarr'd by spur or rod,
A thousand horse, the wild, the free,
Like waves that follow o'er the sea,
Came quickly thundering on,

MAZEPPA'S RIDE

As if our faint approach to meet;
The sight re-nerved my courser's feet,
A moment staggering, feebly fleet,
A moment, with a faint low neigh,
 He answer'd, and then fell;
With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,
 And reeking limbs immoveable,
 His first and last career is done!
On come the troop—they saw him stoop,
 They saw me strangely bound along
 His back with many a bloody thong:
They stop—they start—they snuff the air,
Gallop a moment here and there,
Approach, retire, wheel round and round,
Then plunging back with sudden bound,
Headed by one black mighty steed,
Who seem'd the patriarch of his breed,
 Without a single speck or hair
Of white upon his shaggy hide;
They snort—they foam—neigh—swerve
 aside,
And backward to the forest fly,
By instinct, from a human eye.

“The sun was sinking—still I lay
 Chain'd to the chill and stiffening steed;
I thought to mingle there our clay,
 And my dim eyes of death had need,
 No hope arose of being freed:

MAZEPPA'S RIDE

I cast my last looks up the sky,
And there between me and the sun
I saw the expecting raven fly,
Who scarce would wait till both should die,
Ere his repast begun;
He flew, and perch'd, then flew once more,
And each time nearer than before;
I saw his wing through twilight flit,
And once so near me he alit
I could have smote, but lack'd the
strength;
But the slight motion of my hand,
And feeble scratching of the sand,
The exerted throat's faint struggling noise,
Which scarcely could be call'd a voice,
Together scared him off at length.
I know no more—my latest dream
Is something of a lovely star
Which fix'd my dull eyes from afar,
And went and came with wandering beam,
And of the cold, dull, swimming, dense
Sensation of recurring sense,
And then subsiding back to death,
And then again a little breath,
A little thrill, a short suspense,
An icy sickness curdling o'er
My heart, and sparks that cross'd my
brain—
A gasp, a throb, a start of pain,
A sigh, and nothing more.

The Falls of Terni



FROM "CHILDE HAROLD"

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

And mounts in spray the skies, and
thence again
Returns in an unceasing shower, which
round,

THE FALLS OF TERNI

With its unemptied cloud of gentle rain,
Is an eternal April to the ground,
Making it all one emerald:—how profound

The gulf! and how the giant element
From rock to rock leaps with delirious bound,

Crushing the cliffs, which, downward worn and rent

With his fierce footsteps, yield in chasms
a fearful vent

To the broad column which rolls on,
and shows

More like the fountain of an infant sea
Torn from the womb of mountains by the throes

Of a new world, than only thus to be
Parent of rivers, which flow gushingly,
With many windings, through the vale:
—Look back!

Lo! where it comes like an eternity,
As if to sweep down all things in its track,

Charming the eye with dread,—a matchless cataract,

Horribly beautiful! but on the verge,
From side to side, beneath the glittering morn,

THE FALLS OF TERNI

An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge,
Like Hope upon a death-bed, and, un-
worn

Its steady dyes, while all around is torn
By the distracted waters, bears serene
Its brilliant hues with all their beams
unshorn :

Resembling, 'mid the torture of the
scene,
Love watching Madness with unalterable
mien.

An August Evening on the Brenta



FROM "CHILDE HAROLD"

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

A single star is at her side, and reigns
With her o'er half the lovely heaven;
but still

AN AUGUST EVENING

Yon sunny sea heaves brightly, and
remains
Roll'd o'er the peak of the far Rhætian
hill,
As Day and Night contending were,
until
Nature reclaim'd her order:—gently
flows
The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues
instil
The odorous purple of a new-born rose,
Which streams upon her stream, and
glass'd within it glows,

Fill'd with the face of heaven, which,
from afar,
Comes down upon its waters; all its
hues,
From the rich sunset to the rising star,
Their magical variety diffuse:
And now they change; a paler shadow
strews
Its mantle o'er the mountains; parting
day
Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang
imbues
With a new colour as it gasps away,
The last still loveliest, till—'t is gone—and
all is gray.

Venice



FROM "CHILDE HAROLD"

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

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from
ocean,
Rising with her tiara of proud towers
At airy distance, with majestic motion,
A ruler of the waters and their powers:

VENICE

And such she was;—her daughters had
their dowers
From spoils of nations, and the exhaust-
less East
Pour'd in her lap all gems in sparkling
showers.
In purple was she robed, and of her
feast
Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dig-
nity increased.

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,
And silent rows the songless gondolier;
Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
And music meets not always now the ear:
Those days are gone—but Beauty still
is here.
States fall, arts fade — but Nature doth
not die,
Nor yet forget how Venice once was
dear,
The pleasant place of all festivity,
The revel of the earth, the masque of
Italy!

.
The spouseless Adriatic mourns her lord;
And, annual marriage now no more
renew'd,
The Bucentaur lies rotting unrestored,
Neglected garment of her widowhood!

VENICE

St. Mark yet sees his lion where he
stood
Stand, but in mockery of his wither'd
power,
Over the proud Place where an Emperor
sued,
And monarchs gazed and envied in the
hour
When Venice was a queen with an un-
equall'd dower.

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

VENICE

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

Rome



FROM "CHILDE HAROLD"

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

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless
woe;

ROME

An empty urn within her wither'd hands,
Whose holy dust was scatter'd long
ago;
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes
now;
The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou
flow,
Old Tiber! through a marble wilder-
ness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle
her distress.

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

ROME

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

.
Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower
 grown
Matted and mass'd together, hillocks
 heap'd
On what were chambers, arch crush'd,
 column strown
In fragments, choked-up vaults, and
 frescoes steep'd
In subterranean damps, where the owl
 peep'd,
Deeming it midnight:—Temples, baths,
 or halls?
Pronounce who can; for all that Learn-
 ing reap'd

ROME

From her research hath been, that these
are walls—
Behold the Imperial Mount! 'tis thus the
mighty falls.

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

Admire, exult—despise—laugh, weep,—
for here

There is such matter for all feeling:—
Man!

Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and
tear,
Ages and realms are crowded in this
span,

ROME

This mountain, whose obliterated plan
The pyramid of empires pinnacled,
Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van
Till the sun's rays with added flame
were fill'd!
Where are its golden roofs? where those
who dared to build?

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

Nature and Solitude



FROM "CHILDE HAROLD"

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

But 'midst the crowd, the hum, the
shock of men,
To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess,

NATURE AND SOLITUDE

And roam along, the world's tired deni-
zen,
With none who bless us, none whom
we can bless;
Minions of splendour shrinking from
distress!
None that, with kindred consciousness
endued,
If we were not, would seem to smile
the less,
Of all that flatter'd, follow'd, sought,
and sued;
This is to be alone; this, this is solitude!

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

And thus I am absorb'd, and this is life:
I look upon the peopled desert past.

NATURE AND SOLITUDE

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

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

Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake,
 lightnings! ye!
With night, and clouds, and thunder,
 and a soul

NATURE AND SOLITUDE

To make these felt and feeling, well
 may be
Things that have made me watchful;
 the far roll
Of your departing voices, is the knoll
Of what in me is sleepless,—if I rest.
But where of ye, O tempests! is the
 goal?
Are ye like those within the human
 breast?
Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some
 high nest?

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

Lines

ON HEARING THAT
LADY BYRON
WAS ILL

And thou wert sad—yet I was not with thee;
And thou wert sick, and yet I was not
near;

Methought that joy and health alone
could be

Where I was *not*—and pain and sorrow
here!

And is it thus?—it is as I foretold,

And shall be more so; for the mind re-
coils

Upon itself, and the wreck'd heart lies
cold,

While heaviness collects the shatter'd
spoils.

It is not in the storm nor in the strife

We feel benumb'd, and wish to be no
more,

But in the after-silence on the shore,
When all is lost, except a little life.

LINES

I am too well avenged!—but 't was my
right;

Whate'er my sins might be, *thou* wert
not sent

To be the Nemesis who should requite—
Nor did Heaven choose so near an
instrument.

Mercy is for the merciful!—if thou
Hast been of such, 't will be accorded
now.

Thy nights are banish'd from the realms
of sleep!—

Yes! they may flatter thee, but thou
shalt feel

A hollow agony which will not heal,
For thou art pillow'd on a curse too deep;
Thou hast sown in my sorrow, and must
reap

The bitter harvest in a woe as real!

I have had many foes, but none like
thee;

For 'gainst the rest myself I could de-
fend,

And ' be avenged, or turn them into
friend;

But thou in safe implacability
Hadst nought to dread—in thy own weak-
ness shielded,

And in my love, which hath but too
much yielded,

LINES

And spared, for thy sake, some I should
not spare;
And thus upon the world—trust in thy
truth,
And the wild fame of my ungovern'd
youth—
On things that were not, and on things
that are—
Even upon such a basis hast thou built
A monument, whose cement hath been
guilt!
The moral Clytemnestra of thy lord,
And hew'd down, with an unsuspected
sword,
Fame, peace, and hope—and all the better
life
Which, but for this cold treason of thy
heart,
Might still have risen from out the grave
of strife;
And found a nobler duty than to part.
But of thy virtues didst thou make a
vice,
Trafficking with them in a purpose
cold,
For present anger, and for future gold—
And buying other's grief at any price.
And thus once enter'd into crooked ways,
The early truth, which was thy proper
praise,

LINES

Did not still walk beside thee—but at
times,
And with a breast unknowing its own
crimes,
Deceit, averments incompatible,
Equivocations, and the thoughts which
dwell

In Janus-spirits—the significant eye
Which learns to lie with silence—the pre-
text

Of prudence, with advantages annex'd—
The acquiescence in all things which tend,
No matter how, to the desired end—

All found a place in thy philosophy.
The means were worthy, and the end is
won—

I would not do by thee as thou hast done!

Stanzas

Could Love for ever
Run like a river,
And Time's endeavour
 Be tried in vain—
No other pleasure
With this could measure;
And like a treasure
 We'd hug the chain.
But since our sighing
Ends not in dying,
And, form'd for flying,
 Love plumes his wing;
Then for this reason
Let's love a season;
But let that season be only Spring.

When lovers parted
Feel broken-hearted,
And, all hopes thwarted,
 Expect to die;
A few years older,
Ah! how much colder
They might behold her
 For whom they sigh!

STANZAS

When link'd together,
In every weather,
They pluck Love's feather
From out his wing—
He'll stay for ever,
But sadly shiver
Without his plumage, when past the
Spring.

Stanzas for Music

Bright be the place of thy soul!
No lovelier spirit than thine
E'er burst from its mortal control,
In the orbs of the blessed to shine.
On earth thou wert all but divine,
As thy soul shall immortally be;
And our sorrow may cease to repine
When we know that thy God is with
thee.

Light be the turf of thy tomb!
May its verdure like emeralds be!
There should not be the shadow of gloom
In aught that reminds us of thee.
Young flowers and an evergreen tree
May spring from the spot of thy rest:
But nor cypress nor yew let us see;
For why should we mourn for the
blest?

She Walks In Beauty

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair'd the nameless grace,
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-
place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

When we
Two Parted



When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss;
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning
Sank chill on my brow—
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame;
I hear thy name spoken,
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o'er me—
Why wert thou so dear?

WHEN WE TWO PARTED

They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee too well:—
Long, long shall I rue thee,
Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met—
In silence I grieve,
That thy heart could forget,
Thy spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee
After long years,
How should I greet thee?—
With silence and tears.

Oh, Snatch'd Away
In Beauty's Bloom



Oh! snatch'd away in beauty's bloom,
On thee shall press no ponderous tomb;
But on thy turf shall roses rear
Their leaves, the earliest of the year;
And the wild cypress wave in tender
gloom:

And oft by yon blue gushing stream
Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,
And feed deep thought with many a
dream,
And lingering pause and lightly tread;
Fond wretch! as if her step disturb'd
the dead!

Away! we know that tears are vain,
That death nor heeds nor hears distress:
Will this unteach us to complain?
Or make one mourner weep the less?
And thou—who tell'st me to forget,
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

Euthanasia



When Time, or soon or late, shall bring
The dreamless sleep that lulls the dead,
Oblivion! may thy languid wing
Wave gently o'er my dying bed!

No band of friends or heirs be there,
To weep, or wish, the coming blow:
No maiden, with dishevell'd hair,
To feel, or feign, decorous woe,

But silent let me sink to earth,
With no officious mourners near:
I would not mar one hour of mirth,
Nor startle friendship with a tear.

Yet Love, if Love in such an hour
Could nobly check its useless sighs,
Might then exert its latest power
In her who lives and him who dies.

'T were sweet, my Psyche, to the last
Thy features still serene to see:
Forgetful of its struggles past,
E'en Pain itself should smile on thee.

EUTHANASIA

But vain the wish—for Beauty still
Will shrink, as shrinks the ebbing breath;
And women's tears, produced at will,
Deceive in life, unman in death.

Then lonely be my latest hour,
Without regret, without a groan;
For thousands Death hath ceased to
lower,
And pain been transient or unknown.

“Ay, but to die, and go”, alas!
Where all have gone, and all must go!
To be the nothing that I was
Ere born to life and living woe!

Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
And know, whatever thou hast been,
'Tis something better not to be.

And Thou
art Dead,
as Young
and Fair



And thou art dead, as young and fair
As aught of mortal birth;
And form so soft, and charms so rare,
Too soon return'd to Earth!
Though Earth received them in her bed,
And o'er the spot the crowd may tread
In carelessness or mirth,
There is an eye which could not brook
A moment on that grave to look.

I will not ask where thou liest low,
Nor gaze upon the spot;
There flowers or weeds at will may grow,
So I behold them not:
It is enough for me to prove
That what I loved, and long must love,
Like common earth can rot;
To me there needs no stone to tell,
'Tis Nothing that I loved so well.

AND THOU ART DEAD

Yet did I love thee to the last
As fervently as thou,
Who didst not change through all the past,
And canst not alter now.
The love where Death has set his seal,
Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,
Nor falsehood disavow:
And, what were worse, thou canst not see
Or wrong, or change, or fault in me.

The better days of life were ours;
The worst can be but mine:
The sun that cheers, the storm that
lowers,
Shall never more be thine.
The silence of that dreamless sleep
I envy now too much to weep;
Nor need I to repine
That all those charms have pass'd away;
I might have watch'd through long decay.

The flower in ripen'd bloom unmatch'd
Must fall the earliest prey;
Though by no hand untimely snatch'd,
The leaves must drop away:
And yet it were a greater grief
To watch it withering, leaf by leaf,
Than see it pluck'd to-day;
Since earthly eye but ill can bear
To trace the change to foul from fair.

AND THOU ART DEAD

I know not if I could have borne
To see thy beauties fade;
The night that follow'd such a morn
Had worn a deeper shade:
Thy day without a cloud hath pass'd,
And thou wert lovely to the last;
Extinguish'd, not decay'd;
As stars that shoot along the sky
Shine brightest as they fall from high.

At once I wept, if I could weep,
My tears might well be shed,
To think I was not near to keep
One vigil o'er thy bed;
To gaze, how fondly! on thy face,
To fold thee in a faint embrace,
Uphold thy drooping head;
And show that love, however vain,
Nor thou nor I can feel again.

Yet how much less it were to gain,
Though thou hast left me free,
The loveliest things that still remain,
Than thus remember thee!
The all of thine that cannot die
Through dark and dread Eternity
Returns again to me.
And more thy buried love endears
Than aught, except its living years.

Stanzas Written
on the Road
between Florence
and Pisa

Oh, talk not to me of a name great in story;
The days of our youth are the days of
our glory;
And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-
twenty
Are worth all your laurels, though ever
so plenty.

What are garlands and crowns to the
brow that is wrinkled?
'Tis but as a dead-flower with May-dew
besprinkled.
Then away with all such from the head
that is hoary!
What care I for the wreaths that can
only give glory?

Oh Fame!—if I e'er took delight in thy
praises,
'Twas less for the sake of thy high-
sounding phrases,

STANZAS

Than to see the bright eyes of the dear
one discover
She thought that I was not unworthy to
love her.

There chiefly I sought thee, *there* only
I found thee;
Her glance was the best of the rays that
surround thee;
When it sparkled o'er aught that was
bright in my story,
I knew it was love, and I felt it was
glory.

To Thomas Moore

My boat is on the shore,
And my bark is on the sea,
But, before I go, Tom Moore,
Here's a double health to thee

Here's a sigh to those who love me,
And a smile to those who hate;
And, whatever sky's above me,
Here's a heart for every fate.

Though the ocean roar around me,
Yet it still shall bear me on;
Though a desert should surround me,
It hath springs that may be won.

Were't the last drop in the well,
As I gasp'd upon the brink,
Ere my fainting spirit fell,
'Tis to thee that I would drink.

With that water, as this wine,
The libation I would pour
Should be—peace with thine and mine,
And a health to thee, Tom Moore.

So, We'll go
No More
A Roving



So, we'll go no more a roving
So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,
And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,
And the day returns too soon,
Yet we'll go no more a roving
By the light of the moon.

Italy and England



FROM "BEPPPO"

With all its sinful doings, I must say,
That Italy's a pleasant place to me,
Who love to see the Sun shine every day,
And vines (not nail'd to walls) from
tree to tree
Festoon'd, much like the back scene of a
play,
Or melodrame, which people flock to
see,
When the first act is ended by a dance
In vineyards copied from the south of
France.

I like on Autumn evenings to ride out,
Without being forced to bid my groom
be sure
My cloak is round his middle strapp'd
about,
Because the skies are not the most
secure;

ITALY AND ENGLAND

I know too that, if stopp'd upon my
route,
Where the green alleys windingly
allure,
Reeling with grapes red waggons choke
the way,—
In England 't would be dung, dust, or a
dray.

I also like to dine on becaficas,
To see the Sun set, sure he'll rise to-
morrow,
Not through a misty morning twinkling
weak as
A drunken man's dead eye in maudlin
sorrow,
But with all Heaven t' himself; that day
will break as
Beauteous as cloudless, nor be forced
to borrow
That sort of farthing candlelight which
glimmers
Where reeking London's smoky caldron
simmers.

I love the language, that soft bastard
Latin,
Which melts like kisses from a female
mouth,

ITALY AND ENGLAND

And sounds as if it should be writ on
satin,
With syllables which breathe of the
sweet South,
And gentle liquids gliding all so pat in,
That not a single accent seems uncouth,
Like our harsh northern whistling, grunting
guttural,
Which we're obliged to hiss, and spit,
and sputter all.

I like the women too (forgive my folly),
From the rich peasant-cheek of ruddy
bronze,
And large black eyes that flash on you a
volley
Of rays that say a thousand things at
once,
To the high dama's brow, more melancholy,
But clear, and with a wild and liquid
glance,
Heart on her lips, and soul within her
eyes,
Soft as her clime, and sunny as her
skies.

Eve of the land which still is Paradise!
Italian beauty! didst thou not inspire

ITALY AND ENGLAND

Raphael, who died in thy embrace, and
vies

With all we know of Heaven, or can
desire,

In what he hath bequeath'd us?—in what
guise,

Though flashing from the fervour of
the lyre,

Would *words* describe thy past and present
glow,

While yet Canova can create below?

“England! with all thy faults I love
thee still,”

I said at Calais, and have not forgot it;

I like to speak and lucubrate my fill;

I like the government (but that is not
it);

I like the freedom of the press and quill;

I like the Habeas Corpus (when we've
got it);

I like a parliamentary debate,

Particularly when 't is not too late;

I like the taxes, when they're not too
many;

I like a seacoal fire, when not too
dear;

I like a beef-steak, too, as well as any;

Have no objection to a pot of beer;

ITALY AND ENGLAND

I like the weather, when it is not rainy,
That is, I like two months of every
year.

And so God save the Regent, Church,
and King!

Which means that I like all and every-
thing.

Our standing army, and disbanded sea-
men,

Poor's rate, Reform, my own, the
nation's debt,

Our little riots just to show we are free
men,

Our trifling bankruptcies in the Gazette,
Our cloudy climate, and our chilly women,
All these I can forgive, and those forget,
And greatly venerate our recent glories,
And wish they were not owing to the
Tories.

But to my tale of Laura,—for I find
Digression is a sin, that by degrees
Becomes exceeding tedious to my mind,
And, therefore, may the reader too dis-
please—

The gentle reader, who may wax unkind,
And caring little for the author's ease,
Insist on knowing what he means, a hard
And hapless situation for a bard.

ITALY AND ENGLAND

Oh that I had the art of easy writing
What should be easy reading! could
I scale
Parnassus, where the Muses sit inditing
Those pretty poems never known to
fail,
How quickly would I print (the world
delighting)
A Grecian, Syrian, or Assyrian tale;
And sell you, mix'd with western senti-
mentalism,
Some samples of the finest Orientalism.

But I am but a nameless sort of person
(A broken Dandy lately on my travels),
And take for rhyme, to hook my ram-
bling verse on,
The first that Walker's Lexicon un-
ravels,
And when I can't find that, I put a
worse on,
Not caring as I ought for critics' cavils;
I've half a mind to tumble down to
prose,
But verse is more in fashion—so here
goes.

Epistle from
Mr. Murray to
Dr. Polidori

Dear Doctor, I have read your play
Which is a good one in its way,—
Purges the eyes and moves the bowels,
And drenches handkerchiefs like towels
With tears, that, in a flux of grief,
Afford hysterical relief
To shatter'd nerves and quicken'd pulses,
Which your catastrophe convulses.

I like your moral and machinery;
Your plot, too, has such scope for scenery;
Your dialogue is apt and smart;
The play's concoction full of art;
Your hero raves, your heroine cries,
All stab, and every body dies.
In short, your tragedy would be
The very thing to hear and see:
And for a piece of publication,
If I decline on this occasion,
It is not that I am not sensible
To merits in themselves ostensible,

EPISTLE FROM MR. MURRAY

But—and I grieve to speak it—plays
Are drugs—mere drugs, sir,—now-a-days.
I had a heavy loss by “Manuel”,—
Too lucky if it prove not annual,—
And Sotheby, with his “Orestes”
(Which, by the by, the author’s best is),
Has lain so very long on hand,
That I despair of all demand.
I’ve advertised, but see my books,
Or only watch my shopman’s looks;—
Still Ivan, Ina, and such lumber,
My back-shop glut, my shelves encumber.

There’s Byron too, who once did better,
Has sent me, folded in a letter,
A sort of—it’s no more a drama
Than Darnley, Ivan, or Kehama:
So alter’d since last year his pen is,
I think he’s lost his wits at Venice.
In short, sir, what with one and t’other,
I dare not venture on another.
I write in haste; excuse each blunder;
The coaches through the streets so thunder!
My room’s so full—we’ve Gifford here
Reading MS., with Hookham Frere,
Pronouncing on the nouns and particles
Of some of our forthcoming Articles.

The Quarterly—Ah, sir, if you
Had but the genius to review!—

TO DR. POLIDORI

A smart critique upon St. Helena,
Or if you only would but tell in a
Short compass what—but, to resume:
As I was saying, sir, the room—
The room's so full of wits and bards,
Crabbes, Campbells, Crokers, Freres, and
Wards,
And others, neither bards nor wits:—
My humble tenement admits
All persons in the dress of gent,
From Mr. Hammond to Dog Dent.

A party dines with me to-day,
All clever men, who make their way:
Crabbe, Malcolm, Hamilton, and Chan-
trey,
Are all partakers of my pantry.
They're at this moment in discussion
On poor De Staël's late dissolution.
Her book, they say, was in advance—
Pray Heaven, she tell the truth of France!
Thus run our time and tongues away;—
But, to return, sir, to your play:
Sorry, sir, but I cannot deal,
Unless 'twere acted by O'Neill.
My hands so full, my head so busy,
I'm almost dead, and always dizzy;
And so, with endless truth and hurry,
Dear Doctor, I am yours,

JOHN MURRAY.

The Coteries

FROM "BEPPPO"

They cannot read, and so don't lisp in
criticism;

Nor write, and so they don't affect the
muse:

Were never caught in epigram or witti-
cism,

Have no romances, sermons, plays, re-
views,—

In harams learning soon would make a
pretty schism!

But luckily these beauties are no
"Blues",

No bustling Botherbys have they to show
'em

"That charming passage in the last new
poem":

No solemn, antique gentleman of rhyme,
Who having angled all his life for
fame,

And getting but a nibble at a time,

Still fussily keeps fishing on, the same

THE COTERIES

Small "Triton of the minnows", the sub-
lime

Of mediocrity, the furious tame,
The echo's echo, usher of the school
Of female wits, boy bards—in short, a
fool!

A stalking oracle of awful phrase,
The approving "Good!" (by no means
GOOD in law),
Humming like flies around the newest
blaze,
The bluest of bluebottles you e'er saw,
Teasing with blame, excruciating with
praise,
Gorging the little fame he gets all
raw,
Translating tongues he knows not even
by letter,
And sweating plays so middling, bad
were better.

One hates an author that's *all author*,
fellows
In foolscap uniforms turn'd up with
ink,
So very anxious, clever, fine, and jealous,
One don't know what to say to them,
or think,

THE COTERIES

Unless to puff them with a pair of bel-
lows;
Of coxcomby's worst coxcombs e'en
the pink
Are preferable to these shreds of paper,
These unquench'd snuffings of the mid-
night taper.

Of these same we see several, and of
others,
Men of the world, who know the world
like men,
Scott, Rogers, Moore, and all the better
brothers,
Who think of something else besides
the pen;
But for the children of the "mighty
mother's",
The would-be wits and can't-be gentle-
men,
I leave them to their daily "tea is ready",
Smug coterie, and literary lady.

Dedication



TO "DON JUAN"

I

Bob Southey! You're a poet—Poet-laureate,

And representative of all the race;
Although 't is true that you turn'd out a
Tory at

Last,—yours has lately been a common
case;

And now, my Epic Renegade! what are
ye at?

With all the Lakers, in and out of
place?

A nest of tuneful persons, to my eye
Like "four and twenty Blackbirds in a
pye;

II

"Which pye being open'd they began to
sing"

(This old song and new simile holds
good),

DEDICATION

“A dainty dish to set before the King”,
Or Regent, who admires such kind of
food;—
And Coleridge, too, has lately taken wing,
But like a hawk encumber'd with his
hood,—
Explaining metaphysics to the nation—
I wish he would explain his Explana-
tion.

III

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

IV

And Wordsworth, in a rather long “Ex-
cursion”
(I think the quarto holds five hundred
pages),
Has given a sample from the vasty ver-
sion
Of his new system to perplex the sages;

TO "DON JUAN"

'Tis poetry—at least by his assertion,
And may appear so when the dog-star
rages—
And he who understands it would be
able
To add a story to the Tower of Babel.

V

You—Gentlemen! by dint of long seclu-
sion
From better company, have kept your
own
At Keswick, and, through still continued
fusion
Of one another's minds, at last have
grown
To deem as a most logical conclusion,
That Poesy has wreaths for you alone:
There is a narrowness in such a notion,
Which makes me wish you'd change your
lakes for ocean.

VI

I would not imitate the petty thought,
Nor coin my self-love to so base a vice,
For all the glory your conversion brought,
Since gold alone should not have been
its price.

DEDICATION

You have your salary; was't for that
you wrought?

And Wordsworth has his place in the
Excise.

You're shabby fellows—true—but poets
still,

And duly seated on the immortal hill.

VII

Your bays may hide the baldness of your
brows—

Perhaps some virtuous blushes;—let
them go—

To you I envy neither fruit nor boughs—

And for the fame you would engross
below,

The field is universal, and allows

Scope to all such as feel the inherent
glow:

Scott, Rogers, Campbell, Moore, and
Crabbe, will try

'Gainst you the question with posterity.

VIII

For me, who, wandering with pedestrian
Muses,

Contend not with you on the winged
steed,

TO "DON JUAN"

I wish your fate may yield ye, when she
chooses,
The fame you envý; and the skill you
need;
And recollect a poet nothing loses
In giving to his brethren their full
meed
Of merit, and complaint of present days
Is not the certain path to future praise.

IX

He that reserves his laurels for posterity
(Who does not often claim the bright
reversion)
Has generally no great crop to spare it,
he
Being only injured by his own asser-
tion;
And although here and there some glorious
rarity
Arise like Titan from the sea's immer-
sion,
The major part of such appellants go
To—God knows where—for no one else
can know.

X

If, fallen in evil days on evil tongues,
Milton appeal'd to the Avenger, Time,

DEDICATION

If Time, the Avenger, execrates his
wrongs,
And makes the word "Miltonic" mean
"sublime",
He deign'd not to belie his soul in songs,
Nor turn his very talent to a crime;
He did not loathe the Sire to laud the Son,
But closed the tyrant-hater he begun.

XI

Think'st thou, could he—the blind Old
Man—arise
Like Samuel from the grave, to freeze
once more
The blood of monarchs with his pro-
phecies,
Or be alive again—again all hoar
With time and trials, and those helpless
eyes,
And heartless daughters—worn—and
pale—and poor;
Would *he* adore a sultan? *he* obey
The intellectual eunuch Castlereagh?

XII

Cold-blooded, smooth-faced, placid mis-
creant!
Dabbling its sleek young hands in
Erin's gore,

TO "DON JUAN"

And thus for wider carnage taught to pant,
Transferr'd to gorge upon a sister
shore,
The vulgarest tool that Tyranny could
want,
With just enough of talent, and no
more,
To lengthen fetters by another fix'd,
And offer poison long already mix'd.

XIII

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

XIV

A bungler even in its disgusting trade,
And botching, patching, leaving still
behind

DEDICATION

Something of which its masters are afraid,
States to be curb'd, and thoughts to be
confined,
Conspiracy or Congress to be made—
Cobbling at manacles for all mankind—
A tinkering slave-maker, who mends old
chains,
With God and man's abhorrence for its
gains.

xv

If we may judge of matter by the mind,
Emasculated to the marrow *It*
Hath but two objects, how to serve, and
bind,
Deeming the chain it wears even men
may fit,
Eutropius of its many masters,—blind
To worth as freedom, wisdom as to wit,
Fearless—because *no* feeling dwells in ice,
Its very courage stagnates to a vice.

xvi

Where shall I turn me not to *view* its
bonds,
For I will never *feel* them;—Italy!
Thy late reviving Roman soul desponds
Beneath the lie this State-thing breathed
o'er thee—

TO "DON JUAN"

Thy clanking chain, and Erin's yet green
wounds,
Have voices—tongues to cry aloud for
me.
Europe has slaves—allies—kings—armies
still,
And Southey lives to sing them very ill.

XVII

Meantime—Sir Laureate—I proceed to
dedicate,
In honest simple verse, this song to
you.
And, if in flattering strains I do not pre-
dicate,
'Tis that I still retain my "buff and
blue";
My politics as yet are all to educate:
Apostasy's so fashionable, too,
To keep *one* creed's a task grown quite
Herculean;
Is it not so, my Tory, ultra-Julian?

Character of a Learned Lady



FROM "DON JUAN"

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

Her memory was a mine: she knew by
heart
All Calderon and greater part of Lopé,
So that if any actor miss'd his part
She could have served him for the
prompter's copy;

A LEARNED LADY

For her Feinagle's were an useless
art,
And he himself obliged to shut up shop
—he
Could never make a memory so fine as
That which adorn'd the brain of Donna
Inez.

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

She knew the Latin—that is, “the Lord's
prayer”,
And Greek—the alphabet—I'm nearly
sure;

CHARACTER OF

She read some French romances here
and there,
Although her mode of speaking was
not pure;
For native Spanish she had no great care,
At least her conversation was obscure;
Her thoughts were theorems, her words
a problem,
As if she deem'd that mystery would
ennoble 'em.

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

Some women use their tongues—she
look'd a lecture,
Each eye a sermon, and her brow a
homily,

A LEARNED LADY

An all-in-all sufficient self-director,
Like the lamented late Sir Samuel
Romilly,
The Law's expounder, and the State's
corrector,
Whose suicide was almost an anomaly—
One sad example more, that "All is
vanity",—
(The jury brought their verdict in "In-
sanity".)

In short, she was a walking calculation,
Miss Edgeworth's novels stepping from
their covers,
Or Mrs. Trimmer's books on education,
Or "Cœleb's Wife" set out in quest of
lovers,
Morality's prim personification,
In which not Envy's self a flaw dis-
covers;
To others' share let "female errors fall",
For she had not even one—the worst of
all.

Oh! she was perfect past all parallel—
Of any modern female saint's com-
parison;
So far above the cunning powers of hell,
Her guardian angel had given up his
garrison;

CHARACTER OF

Even her minutest motions went as
well

As those of the best time-piece made
by Harrison:

In virtues nothing earthly could surpass
her,

Save thine "incomparable oil", Macassar!

Now Donna Inez had, with all her merit,
A great opinion of her own good
qualities;

Neglect, indeed, requires a saint to bear
it,

And such, indeed, she was in her
moralities;

But then she had a devil of a spirit,
And sometimes mix'd up fancies with
realities,

And let few opportunities escape
Of getting her liege lord into a scrape.

This was an easy matter with a man
Oft in the wrong, and never on his
guard;

And even the wisest, do the best they
can,

Have moments, hours, and days, so
unprepared,

That you might "brain them with their
lady's fan";

A LEARNED LADY

And sometimes ladies hit exceeding
hard,
And fans turn into falchions in fair hands,
And why and wherefore no one under-
stands.

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

Juan and Julia



FROM "DON JUAN"

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

'T was on a summer's day—the sixth of
June:
I like to be particular in dates,
Not only of the age, and year, but moon;
They are a sort of post-house, where
the Fates

JUAN AND JULIA

Change horses, making history change
its tune.

Then spur away o'er empires and o'er
states,
Leaving at last not much besides chron-
ology,
Excepting the post-obits of theology.

'T was on the sixth of June, about the
hour

Of half-past six—perhaps still nearer
seven—

When Julia sate within as pretty a bower
As e'er held houri in that heathenish
heaven

Described by Mahomet, and Anacreon
Moore,

To whom the lyre and laurels have
been given,

With all the trophies of triumphant song—
He won them well, and may he wear
them long!

She sate, but not alone; I know not well
How this same interview had taken
place,

And even if I knew, I should not tell—

People should hold their tongues in any
case;

JUAN AND JULIA

No matter how or why the thing befell,
But there were she and Juan, face to
face—

When two such faces are so, 't would be
wise,
But very difficult, to shut their eyes.

The sun set, and up rose the yellow
moon:

The devil's in the moon for mischief;
they

Who call'd her CHASTE, methinks, began
too soon

Their nomenclature; there is not a day,
The longest, not the twenty-first of June,
Sees half the business in a wicked way,
On which three single hours of moon-
shine smile—

And then she looks so modest all the
while!

There is a dangerous silence in that hour,
A stillness, which leaves room for the
full soul

To open all itself, without the power
Of calling wholly back its self-control;
The silver light which, hallowing tree
and tower,

Sheds beauty and deep softness o'er the
whole,

JUAN AND JULIA

Breathes also to the heart, and o'er it
throws

A loving languor, which is not repose.

Oh Plato! Plato! you have paved the way,
With your confounded fantasies, to
more

Immoral conduct by the fancied sway
Your system feigns o'er the controlless
core

Of human hearts, than all the long
array

Of poets and romancers:—You're a bore,
A charlatan, a coxcomb—and have been,
At best, no better than a go-between.

And Julia's voice was lost, except in sighs,
Until too late for useful conversation;
The tears were gushing from her gentle
eyes,

I wish, indeed, they had not had occa-
sion;

But who, alas! can love, and then be
wise?

Not that remorse did not oppose temp-
tation;

A little still she strove, and much re-
pented,

And whispering "I will ne'er consent"—
consented.

Julia's Letter



FROM "DON JUAN"

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

"I loved, I love you, for this love have
lost
State, station, heaven, mankind's, my
own esteem,
And yet can not regret what it hath cost,
So dear is still the memory of that
dream;

JULIA'S LETTER

Yet, if I name my guilt, 't is not to boast,
None can deem harshlier of me than I
deem :

I trace this scrawl because I cannot rest—
I've nothing to reproach, or to request.

“ Man's love is of man's life a thing
apart,

'Tis woman's whole existence; man
may range

The court, camp, church, the vessel, and
the mart;

Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in ex-
change

Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up his heart,
And few there are whom these can not
estrangle;

Men have all these resources, we but one,
To love again, and be again undone.

' You will proceed in pleasure, and in
pride,

Beloved and loving many; all is o'er
For me on earth, except some years to
hide

My shame and sorrow deep in my
heart's core:

These I could bear, but cannot cast aside
The passion which still rages as before,—

JULIA'S LETTER

And so farewell—forgive me, love me—
No,
That word is idle now—but let it go.

“My breast has been all weakness, is so
yet;
But still I think I can collect my mind;
My blood still rushes where my spirit's
set,
As roll the waves before the settled
wind;
My heart is feminine, nor can forget—
To all, except one image, madly blind;
So shakes the needle, and so stands the
pole,
As vibrates my fond heart to my fix'd
soul.

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

JULIA'S LETTER

This note was written upon gilt-edged
paper

With a neat little crow-quill, slight and
new;

Her small white hand could hardly reach
the taper,

It trembled as magnetic needles do,
And yet she did not let one tear escape
her;

The seal a sun-flower; "*Elle vous suit
partout*",

The motto cut upon a white cornelian;

The wax was superfine, its hue ver-
milion.

Poetical Com- mandments

FROM "DON JUAN"

My poem's epic, and is meant to be
Divided in twelve books; each book
containing,
With love, and war, a heavy gale at
sea,
A list of ships, and captains, and kings
reigning,
New characters; the episodes are three:
A panoramic view of hell's in training,
After the style of Virgil and of Homer,
So that my name of Epic's no misnomer.

All these things will be specified in time,
With strict regard to Aristotle's rules,
The *Vade Mecum* of the true sublime,
Which makes so many poets, and some
fools:

Prose poets like blank-verse, I'm fond of
rhyme,

POETICAL COMMANDMENTS

Good workmen never quarrel with their
tools;
I've got new mythological machinery,
And very handsome supernatural scenery.

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

If any person doubt it, I appeal
To history, tradition, and to facts,
To newspapers, whose truth all know
and feel,
To plays in five, and operas in three
acts;
All these confirm my statement a good
deal,
But that which more completely faith
exacts
Is, that myself, and several now in
Seville,
Saw Juan's last elopement with the devil.

POETICAL COMMANDMENTS

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

Thou shalt believe in Milton, Dryden,
Pope;
Thou shalt not set up Wordsworth,
Coleridge, Southey;
Because the first is crazed beyond all
hope,
The second drunk, the third so quaint
and mouthy:
With Crabbe it may be difficult to cope,
And Campbell's Hippocrene is some-
what drouthy:
Thou shalt not steal from Samuel Rogers,
nor
Commit—flirtation with the muse of
Moore.

Thou shalt not covet Mr. Sotheby's Muse,
His Pegasus, nor anything that's his;

POETICAL COMMANDMENTS

Thou shalt not bear false witness like
“the Blues”—

(There's one, at least, is very fond of
this);

Thou shalt not write, in short, but what
I choose:

This is true criticism, and you may
kiss—

Exactly as you please, or not—the rod;
But if you don't, I'll lay it on, by G—d!

Youth and Fame



FROM "DON JUAN"

"*Non ego hoc ferrem calida juventâ
Consule Planco,*" Horace said, and so
Say I; by which quotation there is meant a
Hint that some six or seven good
years ago

(Long ere I dreamt of dating from the
Brenta)

I was most ready to return a blow,
And would not brook at all this sort of
thing

In my hot youth—when George the
Third was king.

But now at thirty years my hair is
gray—

(I wonder what it will be like at forty?
I thought of a peruke the other day)—

My heart is not much greener; and, in
short, I

Have squander'd my whole summer while
't was May,

And feel no more the spirit to retort; I

YOUTH AND FAME

Have spent my life, both interest and
principal,
And deem not, what I deem'd, my soul
invincible.

No more—no more—Oh! never more on
me

The freshness of the heart can fall like
dew,

Which out of all the lovely things we
see

Extracts emotions beautiful and new,
Hived in our bosoms like the bag o' the
bee.

Think'st thou the honey with those
objects grew?

Alas! 'twas not in them, but in thy
power

To double even the sweetness of a flower.

No more—no more—Oh! never more, my
heart,

Canst thou be my sole world, my
universe!

Once all in all, but now a thing apart,

Thou canst not be my blessing or my
curse:

The illusion's gone for ever, and thou
art

Insensible, I trust, but none the worse,

YOUTH AND FAME

And in thy stead I've got a deal of
judgment,
Though heaven knows how it ever found
a lodgment.

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

Ambition was my idol, which was broken
Before the shrines of Sorrow, and of
Pleasure;
And the two last have left me many a
token
O'er which reflection may be made at
leisure:
Now, like Friar Bacon's brazen head, I've
spoken,
"Time is, Time was, Time's past":—
a chymic treasure

YOUTH AND FAME

Is glittering youth, which I have spent
betimes—

My heart in passion, and my head on
rhymes.

What is the end of Fame? 'tis but to fill

A certain portion of uncertain paper:
Some liken it to climbing up a hill,
Whose summit, like all hills, is lost in
vapour;

For this men write, speak, preach, and
heroes kill,

And bards burn what they call their
“midnight taper”.

To have, when the original is dust,
A name, a wretched picture, and worse
bust.

What are the hopes of man? Old Egypt's
King

Cheops erected the first pyramid
And largest, thinking it was just the
thing

To keep his memory whole, and mummy
hid;

But somebody or other rummaging
Burglariously broke his coffin's lid:

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

YOUTH AND FAME

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

Fame and Time



FROM "DON JUAN"

Well—well; the world must turn upon its
axis,

And all mankind turn with it, heads or
tails,

And live and die, make love and pay our
taxes,

And as the veering wind shifts, shift
our sails;

The king commands us, and the doctor
quacks us,

The priest instructs, and so our life
exhales,

A little breath, love, wine, ambition,
fame,

Fighting, devotion, dust, — perhaps a
name.

.

But words are things, and a small drop
of ink,

Falling like dew, upon a thought, pro-
duces

FAME AND TIME

That which makes thousands, perhaps
millions, think;

'Tis strange, the shortest letter which
man uses

Instead of speech, may form a lasting
link

Of ages; to what straits old Time re-
duces

Frail man, when paper—even a rag like
this,

Survives himself, his tomb, and all that's
his.

And when his bones are dust, his grave
a blank,

His station, generation, even his nation,
Become a thing, or nothing, save to rank

In chronological commemoration,
Some dull MS. oblivion long has sank,

Or graven stone found in a barrack's
station

In digging the foundation of a closet,
May turn his name up, as a rare deposit.

And glory long has made the sages
smile;

'Tis something, nothing, words, illusion,
wind—

Depending more upon the historian's style

FAME AND TIME

Than on the name a person leaves
behind:

Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to
Hoyle:

The present century was growing blind
To the great Marlborough's skill in
giving knocks,
Until his late Life by Archdeacon Coxe.

Milton's the prince of poets—so we
say;

A little heavy, but no less divine:

An independent being in his day—

Learn'd, pious, temperate in love and
wine;

But his life falling into Johnson's way,

We're told this great high priest of all
the Nine

Was whipt at college—a harsh sire—odd
spouse,

For the first Mrs. Milton left his house.

All these are, *certes*, entertaining facts,

Like Shakspeare stealing deer, Lord
Bacon's bribes;

Like Titus' youth, and Cæsar's earliest
acts;

Like Burns (whom Doctor Currie well
describes);

FAME AND TIME

Like Cromwell's pranks;— but although
truth exacts

These amiable descriptions from the
scribes,

As most essential to their hero's story,
They do not much contribute to his glory.

All are not moralists, like Southey, when
He prated to the world of "Panti-
socracy";

Or Wordsworth unexcised, unhired, who
then

Season'd his pedlar poems with democ-
racy;

Or Coleridge, long before his flighty pen
Let to the *Morning Post* its aristocracy;
When he and Southey, following the same
path,

Espoused two partners (milliners of Bath).

Such names at present cut a convict figure,
The very Botany Bay in moral geo-
graphy;

Their loyal treason, renegado rigour,
Are good manure for their more bare
biography;

Wordsworth's last quarto, by the way, is
bigger

Than any since the birthday of typo-
graphy;

FAME AND TIME

A drowsy frowsy poem call'd the "Ex-
cursion",
Writ in a manner which is my aversion.

He there builds up a formidable dyke
Between his own and others' intellect;
But Wordsworth's poem, and his followers,
like

Johanna Southcote's Shiloh, and her
sect,

Are things which in this century don't
strike

The public mind,—so few are the elect;
And the new births of both their stale
virginities

Have proved but dropsies, taken for
divinities.

The Shipwreck



FROM "DON JUAN"

At one o'clock the wind with sudden
shift

Threw the ship right into the trough
of the sea,

Which struck her aft, and made an awk-
ward rift,

Started the stern-post, also shatter'd the
Whole of her stern frame, and, ere she
could lift

Herself from out her present jeopardy,
The rudder tore away: 't was time to
sound

The pumps, and there were four feet
water found.

One gang of people instantly was put

Upon the pumps, and the remainder set
To get up part of the cargo, and what
not;

But they could not come at the leak
as yet;

THE SHIPWRECK

At last they did get at it really, but
Still their salvation was an even bet:
The water rush'd through in a way quite
puzzling,
While they thrust sheets, shirts, jackets,
bales of muslin,

Into the opening; but all such ingredi-
ents

Would have been vain, and they must
have gone down,

Despite of all their efforts and expedients,
But for the pumps: I'm glad to make
them known

To all the brother tars who may have
need hence,

For fifty tons of water were upthrown
By them per hour, and they had all been
undone,

But for the maker, Mr. Mann, of London.

As day advanced the weather seem'd to
abate,

And then the leak they reckon'd to
reduce,

And keep the ship afloat, though three
feet yet

Kept two hand and one chain-pump
still in use.

THE SHIPWRECK

The wind blew fresh again: as it grew
late

A squall came on, and while some guns
broke loose,

A gust—which all descriptive power tran-
scends—

Laid with one blast the ship on her beam
ends

There she lay, motionless, and seem'd
upset;

The water left the hold, and wash'd the
decks,

And made a scene men do not soon forget;

For they remember battles, fires, and
wrecks,

Or any other thing that brings regret,

Or breaks their hopes, or hearts, or
heads, or necks:

Thus drownings are much talk'd of by
the divers,

And swimmers, who may chance to be
survivors.

Immediately the masts were cut away,

Both main and mizen; first the mizen
went,

The main-mast follow'd: but the ship still
lay

Like a mere log, and baffled our intent.

THE SHIPWRECK

Foremast and bowsprit were cut down,
and they
Eased her at last (although we never
meant
To part with all till every hope was
blighted),
And then with violence the old ship
righted.

It may be easily supposed, while this
Was going on, some people were un-
quiet,
That passengers would find it much amiss
To lose their lives, as well as spoil their
diet;
That even the able seaman, deeming his
Days nearly o'er, might be disposed to
riot,
As upon such occasions tars will ask
For grog, and sometimes drink rum from
the cask.

There's nought, no doubt, so much the
spirit calms
As rum and true religion: thus it was,
Some plunder'd, some drank spirits, some
sung psalms,
The high wind made the treble, and as
bass

THE SHIPWRECK

The hoarse harsh waves kept time; fright
cured the qualms

Of all the luckless landsmen's sea-sick
maws:

Strange sounds of wailing, blasphemy, de-
votion,

Clamour'd in chorus to the roaring ocean.

Perhaps more mischief had been done,
but for

Our Juan, who, with sense beyond his
years,

Got to the spirit-room, and stood before

It with a pair of pistols; and their fears,
As if Death were more dreadful by his
door

Of fire than water, spite of oaths and
tears,

Kept still aloof the crew, who, ere they
sunk,

Thought it would be becoming to die
drunk.

"Give us more grog," they cried, "for it
will be

All one an hour hence." Juan answer'd,
"No!

'Tis true that death awaits both you and
me,

But let us die like men, not sink below

THE SHIPWRECK

Like brutes:"—and thus his dangerous
post kept he,
And none liked to anticipate the blow;
And even Pedrillo, his most reverend
tutor,
Was for some rum a disappointed suitor.

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

But now there came a flash of hope once
more;
Day broke, and the wind lull'd: the
masts were gone,
The leak increased; shoals round her, but
no shore,
The vessel swam, yet still she held her
own.
They tried the pumps again, and though
before
Their desperate efforts seem'd all useless
grown,

THE SHIPWRECK

A glimpse of sunshine set some hands to
bale—

The stronger pump'd, the weaker thrumm'd
a sail.

Under the vessel's keel the sail was pass'd
And for the moment it had some effect;
But with a leak, and not a stick of mast,
Nor rag of canvas, what could they
expect?

But still 't is best to struggle to the last,
'T is never too late to be wholly wreck'd:
And though 't is true that man can only die
once,

'T is not so pleasant in the Gulf of Lyons.

There winds and waves had hurl'd them,
and from thence,

Without their will, they carried them
away,

For they were forced with steering to
dispense,

And never had as yet a quiet day
On which they might repose, or even com-
mence

A jnymast or rudder, or could say
The ship would swim an hour, which, by
good luck,

Still swam--though not exactly like a
duck.

THE SHIPWRECK

The wind, in fact, perhaps, was rather less,
But the ship labour'd so, they scarce
 could hope
To weather out much longer; the distress
Was also great with which they had to
 cope
For want of water, and their solid mess
Was scant enough: in vain the telescope
Was used—nor sail nor shore appear'd in
 sight,
Nought but the heavy sea, and coming
 night.

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

Then came the carpenter, at last, with
tears
In his rough eyes, and told the captain,
he

THE SHIPWRECK

Could do no more: he was a man in years,
And long had voyaged through many a
stormy sea,
And if he wept at length, they were not
fears
That made his eyelids as a woman's be,
But he, poor fellow, had a wife and chil-
dren,—
Two things for dying people quite be-
wildering.

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

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

THE SHIPWRECK

Some cursed the day on which they saw
the sun,
And gnash'd their teeth, and, howling,
tore their hair;
And others went on as they had begun,
Getting the boats out, being well aware
That a tight boat will live in a rough sea,
Unless with breakers close beneath her lee.

The worst of all was, that in their con-
dition,
Having been several days in great distress,
'T was difficult to get out such provision
As now might render their long suffer-
ing less:
Men, even when dying, dislike inanition;
Their stock was damaged by the weather's
stress:
Two casks of biscuit, and a keg of butter,
Were all that could be thrown into the
cutter.

But in the long-boat they contrived to stow
Some pounds of bread, though injured
by the wet;
Water, a twenty-gallon cask or so;
Six flasks of wine; and they contrived
to get
A portion of their beef up from below,
And with a piece of pork, moreover, met,

THE SHIPWRECK

But scarce enough to serve them for a
luncheon—

Then there was rum, eight gallons in a
puncheon.

The other boats, the yawl and pinnace, had
Been stove in the beginning of the gale;
And the long-boat's condition was but bad,
As there were but two blankets for a sail,
And one oar for a mast, which a young lad
Threw in by good luck over the ship's
rail;

And two boats could not hold, far less be
stored,

To save one half the people then on board.

'T was twilight, and the sunless day went
down

Over the waste of waters; like a veil,
Which, if withdrawn, would but disclose
the frown

Of one whose hate is mask'd but to
assail.

Thus to their hopeless eyes the night was
shown,

And grimly darkled o'er their faces pale,
And the dim desolate deep: twelve days
had Fear

Been their familiar, and now Death was
here.

THE SHIPWRECK

Some trial had been making at a raft,
With little hope in such a rolling sea,
A sort of thing at which one would have
 laugh'd,
If any laughter at such times could
 be,
Unless with people who too much have
 quaff'd,
And have a kind of wild and horrid
 glee,
Half epileptical and half hysterical:—
Their preservation would have been a
 miracle.

At half-past eight o'clock, booms, hen-
 coops, spars,
And all things, for a chance, had been
 cast loose,
That still could keep afloat the struggling
 tars,
For yet they strove, although of no great
 use:
There was no light in heaven but a few
 stars,
The boats put off o'ercrowded with their
 crews;
She gave a heel, and then a lurch to
 port,
And, going down head foremost—sunk, in
 short.

THE SHIPWRECK

Then rose from sea to sky the wild fare-
well—

Then shriek'd the timid, and stood still
the brave,—

Then some leap'd overboard with dreadful
yell,

As eager to anticipate their grave;
And the sea yawn'd around her like a hell,
And down she suck'd with her the whirl-
ing wave,

Like one who grapples with his enemy,
And strives to strangle him before he die.

And first one universal shriek there rush'd,
Louder than the loud ocean, like a crash
Of echoing thunder; and then all was
hush'd,

Save the wild wind and the remorseless
dash

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

Juan and Haidee



FROM "DON JUAN"

It was a wild and breaker-beaten coast,
With cliffs above, and a broad sandy
shore,
Guarded by shoals and rocks as by an
host,
With here and there a creek, whose
aspect wore
A better welcome to the tempest-tost;
And rarely ceased the haughty billow's
roar,
Save on the dead long summer days, which
make
The outstretch'd ocean glitter like a lake.
And the small ripple spilt upon the beach
Scarcely o'erpass'd the cream of your
champagne,
When o'er the brim the sparkling bumpers
reach,
That spring-dew of the spirit! the
heart's rain!

JUAN AND HAIDEE

Few things surpass old wine; and they
may preach

Who please,—the more because they
preach in vain,—

Let us have wine and women, mirth and
laughter,

Sermons and soda-water the day after.

Man, being reasonable, must get drunk;
The best of life is but intoxication:

Glory, the grape, love, gold, in these are
sunk

The hopes of all men, and of every
nation;

Without their sap, how branchless were
the trunk

Of life's strange tree, so fruitful on
occasion!

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

Ring for your valet—bid him quickly bring
Some hock and soda-water, then you'll
know

A pleasure worthy Xerxes the great king;
For not the blest sherbet, sublimed with
snow,

Nor the first sparkle of the desert-spring,
Nor Burgundy in all its sunset glow,

JUAN AND HAIDEE

After long travel, ennui, love, or slaughter,
Vie with that draught of hock and soda-
water.

The coast—I think it was the coast that I
Was just describing—Yes, it *was* the
coast—

Lay at this period quiet as the sky,
The sands untumbled, the blue waves
untost,

And all was stillness, save the sea-bird's cry,
And dolphin's leap, and little billow crost
By some low rock or shelve, that made it
fret

Against the boundary it scarcely wet.

And forth they wander'd, her sire being
gone,

As I have said, upon an expedition;
And mother, brother, guardian, she had
none,

Save Zoe, who, although with due pre-
cision

She waited on her lady with the sun,
Thought daily service was her only
mission,

Bringing warm water, wreathing her long
tresses,

And asking now and then for cast-off
dresses.

JUAN AND HAIDEE

It was the cooling hour, just when the
rounded
Red sun sinks down behind the azure
hill,
Which then seems as if the whole earth it
'bounded,
Circling all nature, hush'd, and dim, and
still,
With the far mountain-crescent half sur-
rounded
On one side, and the deep sea calm and
chill
Upon the other, and the rosy sky
With one star sparkling through it like an
eye.

And thus they wander'd forth, and hand in
hand,
Over the shining pebbles and the
shells,
Glided along the smooth and harden'd
sand,
And in the worn and wild receptacles
Work'd by the storms, yet work'd as it
were plann'd,
In hollow halls, with sparry roofs and
cells,
They turn'd to rest; and, each clasped by
an arm,
Yielded to the deep twilight's purple charm.

JUAN AND HAIDEE

They look'd up to the sky, whose floating
glow

Spread like a rosy ocean, vast and bright;
They gazed upon the glittering sea below,
Whence the broad moon rose circling
into sight;

They heard the waves' splash, and the
wind so low,

And saw each other's dark eyes darting
light

Into each other—and, beholding this,
Their lips drew near, and clung into a
kiss;

A long, long kiss, a kiss of youth, and
love,

And beauty, all concentrating like rays
Into one focus, kindled from above;

Such kisses as belong to early days,
Where heart, and soul, and sense, in
concert move,

And the blood's lava, and the pulse a
blaze,

Each kiss a heart-quake,—for a kiss's
strength,

I think, it must be reckon'd by its length.

By length I mean duration; theirs endured
Heaven knows how long—no doubt they
never reckon'd;

JUAN AND HAIDEE

And if they had, they could not have
secured

The sum of their sensations to a second :
They had not spoken ; but they felt allured,
As if their souls and lips each other
beckon'd,

Which, being join'd, like swarming bees
they clung—

Their hearts the flowers from whence the
honey sprung.

They were alone, but not alone as they
Who shut in chambers think it loneli-
ness ;

The silent ocean, and the starlight bay,
The twilight glow, which momentarily
grew less,

The voiceless sands, and dropping caves,
that lay

Around them, made them to each other
press,

As if there were no life beneath the sky
Save theirs, and that their life could never
die.

They fear'd no eyes nor ears on that lone
beach ;

They felt no terrors from the night ; they
were

JUAN AND HAIDEE

All in all to each other: though their speech
Was broken words, they *thought* a lan-
guage there,—

And all the burning tongues the passions
teach

Found in one sigh the best interpreter
Of nature's oracle—first love,—that all
Which Eve has left her daughters since
her fall.

Alas, the love of women! it is known
To be a lovely and a fearful thing;
For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,
And if 'tis lost, life hath no more to
bring

To them but mockeries of the past alone,
And their revenge is as the tiger's spring,
Deadly, and quick, and crushing; yet, as
real

Torture is theirs—what they inflict they feel.

They are right; for man, to man so oft
unjust,

Is always so to women; one sole bond
Awaits them, treachery is all their trust;
Taught to conceal, their bursting hearts
despond

Over their idol, till some wealthier lust
Buys them in marriage—and what rests
beyond?

JUAN AND HAIDEE

A thankless husband, next a faithless
lover,
Then dressing, nursing, praying, and all's
over.

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

Marriage and the Muse

FROM "DON JUAN"

There's doubtless something in domestic
doings

Which forms, in fact, true love's anti-
thesis;

Romances paint at full length people's
wooings,

But only give a bust of marriages;

For no one cares for matrimonial cooings,

There's nothing wrong in a connubial
kiss:

Think you, if Laura had been Petrarch's
wife,

He would have written sonnets all his
life?

All tragedies are finish'd by a death,

All comedies are ended by a marriage;

The future states of both are left to faith,

For authors fear description might dis-
parage

MARRIAGE AND THE MUSE

The worlds to come of both, or fall beneath,
And then both worlds would punish
their miscarriage;
So leaving each their priest and prayer-
book ready,
They say no more of Death or of the
Lady.

The only two that in my recollection
Have sung of heaven and hell, *or
marriage, are
Dante and Milton, and of both the affec-
tion
Was hapless in their nuptials, for some
bar
Of fault or temper ruin'd the connection
(Such things, in fact, it don't ask much
to mar);
But Dante's Beatrice and Milton's Eve
Were not drawn from their spouses, you
conceive.

Some persons say that Dante meant
theology
By Beatrice, and not a mistress—I,
Although my opinion may require apo-
logy,
Deem this a commentator's phantasy,

MARRIAGE AND THE MUSE

Unless indeed it was from his own know-
ledge he
Decided thus, and show'd good reason
why;
I think that Dante's more abstruse ecstasies
Meant to personify the mathematics.

Troy

FROM "DON JUAN"

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

High barrows, without marble, or a name,
A vast, untill'd, and mountain-skirted
plain,
And Ida in the distance, still the same,
And old Scamander (if 't is he), remain;

TROY

The situation seems still form'd for fame—
A hundred thousand men might fight
again,
With ease; but where I sought for Ilion's
walls,
The quiet sheep feeds, and the tortoise
crawls;

Troops of untended horses; here and there
Some little hamlets, with new names
uncouth;
Some shepherds (unlike Paris), led to stare
A moment at the European youth
Whom to the spot their school-boy feel-
ings bear;
A Turk, with beads in hand and pipe
in mouth,
Extremely taken with his own religion,
Are what I found there—but the devil a
Phrygian.

Great Names



FROM "DON JUAN"

As boys love rows, my boyhood liked a
squabble;

But at this hour I wish to part in peace,
Leaving such to the literary rabble;

Whether my verse's fame be doom'd to
cease

While the right hand which wrote it still
is able,

Or of some centuries to take a lease

The grass upon my grave will grow as
long,

And sigh to midnight winds, but not to
song.

Of poets who come down to us through
distance

Of time and tongues, the foster-babes
of Fame,

Life seems the smallest portion of exis-
tence;

Where twenty ages gather o'er a name,

GREAT NAMES

'Tis as a snowball which derives assistance

From every flake, and yet rolls on the same,

Even till an iceberg it may chance to grow;

But, after all, 'tis nothing but cold snow.

And so great names are nothing more than nominal,

And love of glory's but an airy lust,
Too often in its fury overcoming all

Who would as 'twere identify their dust

From out the wide destruction, which, entombing all,

Leaves nothing till "the coming of the just"—

Save change: I've stood upon Achilles' tomb,

And heard Troy doubted; time will doubt of Rome.

The very generations of the dead

Are swept away, and tomb inherits tomb,

Until the memory of an age is fled,

And, buried, sinks beneath its offspring's doom:

GREAT NAMES

Where are the epitaphs our fathers
read?

Save a few glean'd from the sepulchral
gloom

Which once-named myriads nameless lie
beneath,

And lose their own in universal death.

I canter by the spot each afternoon

Where perish'd in his fame the hero-
boy,

Who lived too long for men, but died too
soon

For human vanity, the young De
Foix!

A broken pillar, not uncouthly hewn,

But which neglect is hastening to de-
stroy,

Records Ravenna's carnage on its face,

While weeds and ordure rankle round the
base.

I pass each day where Dante's bones are
laid :

A little cupola, more neat than solemn,
Protects his dust, but reverence here is
paid

To the bard's tomb, and not the warrior's
column :

GREAT NAMES

The time must come, when both alike
decay'd,
The chieftain's trophy, and the poet's
volume,
Will sink where lie the songs and wars
of earth,
Before Pelides' death, or Homer's birth.

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

Yet there will still be bards: though fame
is smoke,
Its fumes are frankincense to human
thought;
And the unquiet feelings, which first woke
Song in the world, will seek what then
they sought;

GREAT NAMES

As on the beach the waves at last are
 broke,
 Thus to their extreme verge the pas-
 sions brought
Dash into poetry, which is but passion,
Or at least was so ere it grew a fashion.

If in the course of such a life as was
 At once adventurous and contemplative,
Men who partake all passions as they
 pass,
 Acquire the deep and bitter power to
 give
Their images again, as in a glass,
 And in such colours that they seem to
 live;
You may do right forbidding them to
 show 'em,
But spoil (I think) a very pretty poem.

Change of Illusions

FROM "DON JUAN"

"You take things coolly, sir," said Juan.

"Why,"

Replied the other, "what can a man
do?

There still are many rainbows in your sky,
But mine have vanish'd. All, when life
is new,

Commence with feelings warm, and pros-
pects high;

But time strips our illusions of their
hue,

And one by one in turn, some grand mis-
take

Casts off its bright skin yearly like the
snake.

"'Tis true, it gets another bright and
fresh,

Or fresher, brighter; but the year gone
through,

CHANGE OF ILLUSIONS

This skin must go the way, too, of all
flesh,
Or sometimes only wear a week or
two;—
Love's the first net which spreads its
deadly mesh;
Ambition, Avarice, Vengeance, Glory,
glue
The glittering lime-twigs of our latter
days,
Where still we flutter on for pence or
praise."

Life

FROM "DON JUAN"

O Love! O Glory! what are you who fly
 Around us ever, rarely to alight?
There's not a meteor in the polar sky
 Of such transcendent and more fleeting
 flight.

Chill, and chain'd to cold earth, we lift
 on high

 Our eyes in search of either lovely
 light;

A thousand and a thousand colours they
Assume, then leave us on our freezing way.

And such as they are, such my present
 tale is,

 A nondescript and ever-varying rhyme,
A versified Aurora Borealis,
 Which flashes o'er a waste and icy
 clime.

When we know what all are, we must
 bewail us,

 But ne'ertheless I hope it is no crime

LIFE

To laugh at *all* things—for I wish to know
What, after *all*, are *all* things—but a
show?

They accuse me—*Me*—the present writer
of

The present poem—of—I know not
what—

A tendency to under-rate and scoff

At human power and virtue, and all
that;

And this they say in language rather
rough.

Good God! I wonder what they would
be at!

I say no more than hath been said in
Danté's

Verse, and by Solomon and by Cervantes;

By Swift, by Machiavel, by Rochefoucault,

By Fénelon, by Luther, and by Plato;

By Tillotson, and Wesley, and Rousseau,

Who knew this life was not worth a
potato.

'Tis not their fault, nor mine, if this be
so,—

For my part, I pretend not to be Cato,
Nor even Diogenes.—We live and die,

But which is best, you know no more
than I.

LIFE

Socrates said, our only knowledge was
 “To know that nothing could be
 known”; a pleasant
Science enough, which levels to an ass
 Each man of wisdom, future, past, or
 present.
Newton (that proverb of the mind), alas!
 Declared, with all his grand discoveries
 recent,
That he himself felt only “like a youth
Picking up shells by the great ocean—
 Truth”.

Ecclesiastes said, “that all is vanity”—
 Most modern preachers say the same,
 or show it
By their examples of true Christianity:
 In short, all know, or very soon may
 know it;
And in this scene of all-confess'd inanity,
 By saint, by sage, by preacher, and by
 poet,
Must I restrain me, through the fear of
 strife,
From holding up the nothingness of life?

The Glory of War



FROM "DON JUAN"

Oh, thou eternal Homer! I have now
To paint a siege, wherein more men
were slain,
With deadlier engines and a speedier
blow,
Than in thy Greek gazette of that cam-
paign;
And yet, like all men else, I must allow,
To vie with thee would be about as
vain
As for a brook to cope with ocean's flood;
But still we moderns equal you in blood;
If not in poetry, at least in fact;
And fact is truth, the grand desidera-
tum!
Of which, howe'er the Muse describes
each act,
There should be ne'ertheless a slight
substratum.

THE GLORY OF WAR

But now the town is going to be attack'd;
Great deeds are doing—how shall I
relate 'em?

Souls of immortal generals! Phœbus
watches

To colour up his rays from your des-
patches.

Oh, ye great bulletins of Bonaparte!

Oh, ye less grand long lists of kill'd
and wounded!

Shade of Leonidas, who fought so hearty,
When my poor Greece was once, as
now, surrounded!

Oh, Cæsar's Commentaries! now impart,
ye

Shadows of glory! (lest I be con-
founded),

A portion of your fading twilight hues,
So beautiful, so fleeting, to the Muse.

When I call "fading" martial im-
mortality,

I mean, that every age and every year,
And almost every day, in sad reality,

Some sucking hero is compell'd to rear,
Who, when we come to sum up the
totality

Of deeds to human happiness most
dear,

THE GLORY OF WAR

Turns out to be a butcher in great business,
Afflicting young folks with a sort of dizziness.

Medals, rank, ribands, lace, embroidery,
scarlet,

Are things immortal to immortal man,
As purple to the Babylonian harlot:

An uniform to boys is like a fan
To women; there is scarce a crimson varlet

But deems himself the first in Glory's
van.

But Glory's glory; and if you would find
What that is—ask the pig who sees the
wind!

A Battle-field

FROM "DON JUAN"

Oh, blood and thunder! and oh, blood
and wounds!

These are but vulgar oaths, as you
may deem,
Too gentle reader! and most shocking
sounds:

And so they are; yet thus is Glory's
dream
Unriddled, and as my true Muse ex-
pounds

At present such things, since they are
her theme,
So be they her inspirers! Call them
Mars,
Bellona, what you will—they mean but
wars.

All was prepared—the fire, the sword, the
men
To wield them in their terrible array.

A BATTLE-FIELD

The army, like a lion from his den,
March'd forth with nerves and sinews
bent to slay,—
A human Hydra, issuing from its fen
To breathe destruction on its winding
way,
Whose heads were heroes, which cut off
in vain,
Immediately in others grew again.

History can only take things in the gross;
But could we know them in detail,
perchance
In balancing the profit and the loss,
War's merit it by no means might en-
hance,
To waste so much gold for a little dross,
As hath been done, mere conquest to
advance.
The drying up a single tear has more
Of honest fame, than shedding seas of
gore.

And why?—because it brings self-approba-
tion;
Whereas the other, after all its glare,
Shouts, bridges, arches, pensions from a
nation,
Which (it may be) has not much left
to spare,

A BATTLE-FIELD

A higher title, or a loftier station,
Though they may make Corruption gape
or stare,
Yet, in the end, except in Freedom's
battles,
Are nothing but a child of Murder's
rattles.

And such they are—and such they will be
found :

Not so Leonidas and Washington,
Whose every battle-field is holy ground,
Which breathes of nations saved, not
worlds undone.

How sweetly on the ear such echoes
sound !

While the mere victor's may appal or
stun
The servile and the vain, such names
will be
A watchword till the future shall be free.

The night was dark, and the thick mist
allow'd

Nought to be seen save the artillery's
flame,
Which arch'd the horizon like a fiery
cloud,
And in the Danube's waters shone the
same—

A BATTLE-FIELD

A mirror'd hell! the volleying roar, and
loud
Long booming of each peal on peal,
o'ercome
The ear far more than thunder; for
Heaven's flashes
Spare, or smite rarely — man's make
millions ashes!

The column order'd on the assault scarce
pass'd
Beyond the Russian batteries a few
toises,
When up the bristling Moslem rose at
last,
Answering the Christian thunders with
like voices:
Then one vast fire, air, earth, and stream
embraced,
Which rock'd as 'twere beneath the
mighty noises;
While the whole rampart blazed like
Etna, when
The restless Titan hiccups in his den;

And one enormous shout of "Aliah!"
rose
In the same moment, loud as even the
roar

A BATTLE-FIELD

Of war's most mortal engines, to their foes
Hurling defiance: city, stream, and
shore

Resounded "Allah!" and the clouds which
close

With thickening canopy the conflict o'er,
Vibrate to the Eternal Name. Hark!
through

All sounds it pierceth, "Allah! Allah!
Hu!"

The columns were in movement one and
all,

But of the portion which attack'd by
water,

Thicker than leaves the lives began to fall,
Though led by Arseniew, that great
son of slaughter,

As brave as ever faced both bomb and
ball.

"Carnage" (so Wordsworth tells you)
"is God's daughter":

If *he* speak truth, she is Christ's sister,
and

Just now behaved as in the Holy Land.

The Prince de Ligne was wounded in the
knee;

Count Chapeau-Bras, too, had a ball
between

A BATTLE-FIELD

His cap and head, which proves the head
to be

Aristocratic as was ever seen,
Because it then received no injury
More than the cap; in fact, the ball
could mean

No harm unto a right legitimate head;
“Ashes to ashes”—why not lead to lead?

Also the General Markow, Brigadier,
Insisting on removal of *the prince*
Amidst some groaning thousands dying
near,—

All common fellows, who might writhe
and wince,
And shriek for water into a deaf ear,—
The General Markow, who could thus
evince

His sympathy for rank, by the same
token,
To teach him greater, had his own leg
broken.

Three hundred cannon threw up their
emetic,
And thirty thousand muskets flung their
pills,
Like hail, to make a bloody diuretic.
Mortality! thou hast thy monthly bills:

A BATTLE-FIELD

Thy plagues, thy famines, thy physicians,
yet tick,
Like the death-watch, within our ears
the ills
Past, present, and to come;—but all may
yield
To the true portrait of one battle-field;

There the still-varying pangs, which
multiply
Until their very number makes men
hard
By the infinities of agony,
Which meet the gaze, whate'er it may
regard—
The groan, the roll in dust, the all-white
eye
Turn'd back within its socket,—these
reward
Your rank and file by thousands, while
the rest
May win perhaps a riband at the breast!

Yet I love glory;—glory's a great thing:—
Think what it is to be in your old age
Maintain'd at the expense of your good
king:
A moderate pension shakes full many
a sage,

A BATTLE-FIELD

And heroes are but made for bards to
sing,
Which is still better; thus in verse to
wage
Your wars eternally, besides enjoying
Half-pay for life, make mankind worth
destroying.

Wellington



FROM "DON JUAN"

Oh, Wellington! (or "Villainton"—for
Fame

Sounds the heroic syllables both ways;
France could not even conquer your great
name,

But punn'd it down to this facetious
phrase—

Beating or beaten she will laugh the
same)

You have obtain'd great pensions and
much praise:

Glory like yours should any dare gainsay,
Humanity would rise, and thunder "Nay!"

I don't think that you used Kinnaird
quite well

In Marinèt's affair — in fact, 't was
shabby,

And like some other things won't do to tell
Upon your tomb in Westminster's old
abbey.

WELLINGTON

Upon the rest 't is not worth while to dwell,
Such tales being for the tea-hours of
some tabby;
But though your years as *man* tend fast
to zero,
In fact your grace is still but a *young*
hero.

Though Britain owes (and pays you too)
so much,
Yet Europe doubtless owes you greatly
more:
You have repair'd Legitimacy's crutch,
A prop not quite so certain as before:
The Spanish, and the French, as well as
Dutch,
Have seen, and felt, how strongly you
restore;
And Waterloo has made the world your
debtor
(I wish your bards would sing it rather
better).

You are "the best of cut-throats":—do
not start;
The phrase is Shakspeare's, and not
misapplied:—
War's a brain-spattering, windpipe-slitting
art,
Unless her cause by right be sanctified.

WELLINGTON

If you have acted *once* a generous part,
The world, not the world's masters,
will decide,
And I shall be delighted to learn who,
Save you and yours, have gain'd by
Waterloo?

I am no flatterer—you've supp'd full of
flattery:
They say you like it too—'t is no great
wonder.
He whose whole life has been assault
and battery,
At last may get a little tired of thun-
der;
And swallowing eulogy much more than
satire, he
May like being praised for every lucky
blunder,
Call'd "Saviour of the Nations" not yet
saved,
And "Europe's Liberator"—still enslaved.

I've done. Now go and dine from off
the plate
Presented by the Prince of the Brazils,
And send the sentinel before your gate
A slice or two from your luxurious
meals:

WELLINGTON

He fought, but has not fed so well of
late.

Some hunger, too, they say the people
feels:—

There is no doubt that you deserve your
ration,

But pray give back a little to the nation.

I don't mean to reflect—a man so great
as

You, my lord duke! is far above re-
flection:

The high Roman fashion, too, of Cincin-
natus,

With modern history has but small
connection:

Though as an Irishman you love potatoes,

You need not take them under your
direction;

And half a million for your Sabine farm

Is rather dear!—I'm sure I mean no
harm.

Great men have always scorn'd great re-
compenses:

Epaminondas saved his Thebes, and
died,

Not leaving even his funeral expenses:

George Washington had thanks, and
nought beside,

WELLINGTON

Except the all-cloudless glory (which few
men's is)

To free his country: Pitt too had his
pride,

And as a high-soul'd minister of state is
Renown'd for ruining Great Britain gratis.

Never had mortal man such opportunity,
Except Napoleon, or abused it more:
You might have freed fallen Europe from
the unity

Of tyrants, and been blest from shore
to shore:

And *now*—what *is* your fame? Shall the
Muse tune it ye?

Now—that the rabble's first vain shouts
are o'er?

Go! hear it in your famish'd country's
cries!

Behold the world! and curse your vic-
tories!

As these new cantos touch on warlike
feats,

To *you* the unflattering Muse deigns to
inscribe

Truths, that you will not read in the
Gazettes,

But which 't is time to teach the hire-
ling tribe

WELLINGTON

Who fatten on their country's gore, and
debts,
Must be recited—and without a bribe.
You *did great* things: but not being
great in mind,
Have left *undone the greatest*—and man-
kind.

Don Juan at St. Petersburg

FROM "DON JUAN"

But I am apt to grow too metaphysical:
"The time is out of joint",—and so am
I;
I quite forget this poem's merely quizzical,
And deviate into matters rather dry.
I ne'er decide what I shall say, and this
I call
Much too poetical: men should know
why
They write, and for what end; but, note
or text,
I never know the word which will come
next.

So on I ramble, now and then narrating,
Now pondering:—it is time we should
narrate.
I left Don Juan with his horses baiting—
Now we'll get o'er the ground at a
great rate.

DON JUAN AT

I shall not be particular in stating
His journey, we've so many tours of
late:
Suppose him then at Petersburg; sup-
pose
That pleasant capital of painted snows;

Suppose him in a handsome uniform;
A scarlet coat, black facings, a long
plume,
Waving, like sails new shiver'd in a
storm,
Over a cock'd hat in a crowded room,
And brilliant breeches, bright as a Cairn
Gorme,
Of yellow casimire we may presume,
White stockings drawn uncurdled as new
milk
O'er limbs whose symmetry set off the
silk;

Suppose him sword by side, and hat in
hand,
Made up by youth, fame, and an army
tailor—
That great enchanter, at whose rod's
command
Beauty springs forth, and Nature's self
turns paler,

ST. PETERSBURG

Seeing how Art can make her work more
grand

(When she don't pin men's limbs in
like a gaoler),—

Behold him placed as if upon a pillar!

He

Seems Love turn'd a lieutenant of artil-
lery!

His bandage slipp'd down into a cravat;

His wings subdued to epaulettes; his
quiver

Shrunk to a scabbard, with his arrows at

His side as a small sword, but sharp
as ever;

His bow converted into a cock'd hat;

But still so like, that Psyche were more
clever

Than some wives (who make blunders no
less stupid),

If she had not mistaken him for Cupid.

Newton and Poets



FROM "DON JUAN"

When Newton saw an apple fall, he found
In that slight startle from his contem-
plation—

'T is *said* (for I'll not answer above ground
For any sage's creed or calculation)—
A mode of proving that the earth turn'd
round

In a most natural whirl, call'd "gravi-
tation";
And this is the sole mortal who could
grapple,
Since Adam, with a fall, or with an apple.

Man fell with apples, and with apples
rose,

If this be true; for we must deem the
mode
In which Sir Isaac Newton could disclose
Through the then unpaved stars the
turnpike road,

NEWTON AND POETS

A thing to counterbalance human woes:
For ever since immortal man hath
glow'd
With all kinds of mechanics, and full soon
Steam-engines will conduct him to the moon.

And wherefore this exordium?—Why, just
now,

In taking up this paltry sheet of paper,
My bosom underwent a glorious glow,
And my internal spirit cut a caper:
And though so much inferior, as I know,
To those who, by the dint of glass and
vapour,
Discover stars, and sail in the wind's eye,
I wish to do as much by poesy.

In the wind's eye I have sail'd, and sail;
but for

The stars, I own my telescope is dim;
But at the least I have shunn'd the com-
mon shore,
And leaving land far out of sight,
would skim

The ocean of eternity: the roar
Of breakers has not daunted my slight,
trim,

But *still* sea-worthy skiff; and she may float
Where ships have founder'd, as doth many
a boat.

London



FROM "DON JUAN"

The sun went down, the smoke rose up,
as from

A half-unquench'd volcano, o'er a space
Which well beseem'd the "Devil's drawing-
room",

As some have qualified that wondrous
place:

But Juan felt, though not approaching *home*,
As one who, though he were not of
the race,

Revered the soil, of those true sons the
mother,

Who butcher'd half the earth, and bullied
t' other.

A mighty mass of brick, and smoke, and
shipping,

Dirty and dusky, but as wide as eye
Could reach, with here and there a sail
just skipping

In sight, then lost amidst the forestry

LONDON

Of masts; a wilderness of steeples peep-
ing

On tiptoe through their seal-coal canopy;
A huge, dun cupola, like a foolscap
crown

On a fool's head—and there is London
Town!

But Juan saw not this: each wreath of
smoke

Appear'd to him as but the magic
vapour

Of some alchymic furnace, from whence
broke

The wealth of worlds (a wealth of tax
and paper):

The gloomy clouds, which o'er it as a yoke
Are bow'd, and put the sun out like a
taper,

Were nothing but the natural atmosphere,
Extremely wholesome, though but rarely
clear.

He paused—and so will I; as doth a
crew

Before they give their broadside. By
and by,

My gentle countrymen, we will renew
Our old acquaintance; and at least I'll
try

LONDON

To tell you truths *you* will not take as
true,

Because they are so;—a male Mrs. Fry,
With a soft besom will I sweep your
halls,

And brush a web or two from off the
walls.

Oh, Mrs. Fry! Why go to Newgate?
Why

Preach to poor rogues? And wherefore
not begin

With Carlton, or with other houses? Try
Your hand at harden'd and imperial sin.

To mend the people's an absurdity,

A jargon, a mere philanthropic din,
Unless you make their betters better:—

Fy!

I thought you had more religion, Mrs.
Fry.

Teach them the decencies of good three-
score,

Cure them of tours, hussar and high-
land dresses;

Tell them that youth once gone returns
no more,

That hired huzzas redeem no land's
distresses;

LONDON

Tell them Sir William Curtis is a bore,
Too dull even for the dullest of ex-
cesses,
The witless Falstaff of a hoary Hal,
A fool whose bells have ceased to ring at
all.

Tell them, though it may be perhaps too
late
On life's worn confine, jaded, bloated,
sated,
To set up vain pretences of being great,
'Tis not so to be good; and be it
stated,
The worthiest kings have ever loved least
state:
And tell them—But you won't, and I
have prated
Just now enough; but by and by I'll
prattle
Like Roland's horn in Roncesvalles' battle.

Poets of the Age

FROM "DON JUAN"

In twice five years the "greatest living
poet",

Like to the champion in the fisty ring,
Is call'd on to support his claim, or show it,
Although 'tis an imaginary thing.

Even I—albeit I'm sure I did not know
it,

Nor sought of foolscap subjects to be
king,—

Was reckon'd, a considerable time,
The grand Napoleon of the realms of
rhyme.

But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero
My Leipsic, and my Mont Saint Jean
seems Cain :

"La Belle Alliance" of dunces down at
zero,

Now that the Lion's fall'n, may rise
again :

POETS OF THE AGE

But I will fall at least as fell my hero;
Nor reign at all, or as a *monarch* reign;
Or to some lonely isle of gaolers go,
With turncoat Southey for my turnkey
Lowe.

Sir Walter reign'd before me; Moore and
Campbell
Before and after; but now grown more
holy,
The Muses upon Sion's hill must ramble
With poets almost clergymen, or wholly;
And Pegasus has a psalmodic amble
Beneath the very Reverend Rowley
Powley,
Who shoes the glorious animal with stilts,
A modern Ancient Pistol—by the hilts!

Still he excels that artificial hard
Labourer in the same vineyard, though
the vine
Yields him but vinegar for his reward,—
That neutralized dull Dorus of the Nine;
That swarthy Sporus, neither man nor
bard;
That ox of verse, who *ploughs* for every
line:—
Cambyses' roaring Romans beat at least
The howling Hebrews of Cybele's priest.—

POETS OF THE AGE

Then there's my gentle Euphues; who,
they say,

Sets up for being a sort of *moral me*;
He'll find it rather difficult some day

To turn out both, or either, it may
be.

Some persons think that Coleridge hath
the sway;

And Wordsworth hath supporters, two
or three;

And that deep-mouth'd Bœotian, "Savage
Landor",

Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's
gander.

John Keats, who was kill'd off by one
critique,

Just as he really promis'd something
great,

If not intelligible, without Greek

Contrived to talk about the gods of
late,

Much as they might have been supposed
to speak.

Poor fellow! His was an untoward
fate;

'Tis strange the mind, that very fiery
particle,

Should let itself be snuff'd out by an
article.

POETS OF THE AGE

The list grows long of live and dead
pretenders

To that which none will gain—or none
will know

The conqueror at least; who, ere Time
renders

His last award, will have the long
grass grow

Above his burnt-out brain, and sapless
cinders.

If I might augur, I should rate but low
Their chances;—they are too numerous,
like the thirty

Mock tyrants, when Rome's annals wax'd
but dirty.

This is the literary *lower* empire,

Where the prætorian bands take up the
matter;—

A "dreadful trade", like his who "gathers
samphire",

The insolent soldiery to soothe and
flatter,

With the same feelings as you'd coax a
vampire.

Now, were I once at home, and in good
satire,

I'd try conclusions with those Janizaries,
And show them *what* an intellectual war
is.

POETS OF THE AGE

I think I know a trick or two, would
turn
Their flanks;—but it is hardly worth
my while,
With such small gear to give myself
concern:
Indeed I've not the necessary bile;
My natural temper's really aught but
stern,
And even my Muse's worst reproof's a
smile;
And then she drops a brief and modern
curtsy,
And glides away, assured she never hurts
ye.

Carpe Diem



FROM "DON JUAN"

"Where is the world?" cries Young, at
eighty—"Where

The world in which a man was born?"
Alas!

Where is the world of *eight* years past?
'*T*was *there*—

I look for it—'t is gone, a globe of
glass!

Crack'd, shiver'd, vanish'd, scarcely gazed
on, ere

A silent change dissolves the glittering
mass.

Statesmen, chiefs, orators, queens, patriots,
kings,

And dandies, all are gone on the wind's
wings.

Where is Napoleon the Grand? God
knows:

Where little Castlereagh? The devil
can tell:

CARPE DIEM

Where Grattan, Curran, Sheridan, all
those

Who bound the bar or senate in their
spell?

Where is the unhappy Queen, with all
her woes?

And where the Daughter, whom the
Isles loved well?

Where are those martyr'd saints the Five
per Cents?

And where—oh, where the devil are the
Rents?

Where's Brummel? Dish'd. Where's
Long Pole Wellesley? Diddled.

Where's Whitbread? Romilly? Where's
George the Third?

Where is his will? (That's not so soon
unriddled.)

And where is "Fum" the Fourth, our
"royal bird"?

Gone down, it seems, to Scotland, to be
fiddled

Unto by Sawney's violin, we have
heard:

"Caw me, caw thee"—for six months
hath been hatching

This scene of royal itch and royal scratch-
ing.

CARPE DIEM

Where is Lord This? And where my Lady
That?

The Honourable Mistresses and Misses?
Some laid aside like an old Opera hat,
Married, unmarried, and remarried: (this
is
An evolution oft performed of late).

Where are the Dublin shouts — and
London hisses?
Where are the Grenvilles? Turn'd, as
usual. Where
My friends the Whigs? Exactly where
they were.

Where are the Lady Carolines and Fran-
ceses?

Divorced or doing thereanent. Ye
annals
So brilliant, where the lists of routs and
dances is,—

Thou *Morning Post*, sole record of the
panels
Broken in carriages, and all the phan-
tasies
Of fashion,—say what streams now fill
those channels?

Some die, some fly, some languish on
the Continent,
Because the times have hardly left them
one tenant.

CARPE DIEM

Some who once set their caps at cautious
dukes,

Have taken up at length with younger
brothers:

Some heiresses have bit at sharpers'
hooks:

Some maids have been made wives,
some merely mothers:

Others have lost their fresh and fairy
looks:

In short, the list of alterations bothers.
There's little strange in this, but some-
thing strange is

The unusual quickness of these common
changes.

Talk not of seventy years as age; in
seven

I have seen more changes, down from
monarchs to

The humblest individual under heaven,
Than might suffice a moderate century
through.

I knew that nought was lasting, but now
even

Change grows too changeable, without
being new:

Nought's permanent among the human
race,

Except the Whigs *not* getting into place.

CARPE DIEM

I have seen Napoleon, who seem'd quite
a Jupiter,

Shrink to a Saturn. I have seen a Duke
(No matter which) turn politician stupider,
If that can well be, than his wooden
look.

But it is time that I should hoist my
"Blue Peter",

And sail for a new theme:—I have seen
—and shook
To see it—the king hiss'd, and then
carest;

But don't pretend to settle which was best.

I have seen the Landholders without a
rap—

I have seen Joanna Southcote—I have
seen

The House of Commons turn'd to a tax-
trap—

I have seen that sad affair of the late
Queen—

I have seen crowns worn instead of a
fool's cap,

I have seen a Congress doing all that's
mean—

I have seen some nations, like o'erloaded
asses,

Kick off their burthens—meaning the
high classes.

CARPE DIEM

I have seen small poets, and great prozers,
and
Interminable—*not eternal*—speakers—
I have seen the funds at war with house
and land—
I have seen the country gentlemen turn
squeakers—
I have seen the people ridden o'er like
sand
By slaves on horseback—I have seen
malt liquors
Exchanged for “thin potations” by John
Bull—
I have seen John half detect himself a
fool.—

But “carpe diem”, Juan, “carpe, carpe”!
To-morrow sees another race as gay
And transient, and devour'd by the same
harpy.
“Life's a poor player”,—then “play
out the play,
Ye villains!” and above all keep a sharp
eye
Much less on what you do than what
you say:
Be hypocritical, be cautious, be
Not what you *seem*, but always what you
see.

The Age of Indifference



FROM "DON JUAN"

I'll not gainsay them; it is not my cue;
I'll leave them to their taste, no doubt
the best:
An eye's an eye, and whether black or
blue,
Is no great matter, so 'tis in request;
'Tis nonsense to dispute about a hue—
The kindest may be taken as a test.
The fair sex should be always fair; and
no man,
Till thirty, should perceive there's a plain
woman.

And after that serene and somewhat dull
Epoch, that awkward corner turn'd for
days
More quiet, when our moon's no more at
full,
We may presume to criticise or praise;

THE AGE OF INDIFFERENCE

Because indifference begins to lull
Our passions, and we walk in wisdom's
ways;
Also because the figure and the face
Hint, that 'tis time to give the younger
place.

I know that some would fain postpone
this era,
Reluctant as all placemen to resign
Their post; but theirs is merely a chimera,
For they have pass'd life's equinoctial
line:
But then they have their claret and Ma-
deira,
To irrigate the dryness of decline;
And county meetings, and the parliament,
And debt, and what not, for their solace
sent.

And is there not religion, and reform,
Peace, war, the taxes, and what's call'd
the "Nation"?
The struggle to be pilots in a storm?
The landed and the money'd specula-
tion?
The joys of mutual hate to keep them
warm,
Instead of love, that mere hallucina-
tion?

THE AGE OF INDIFFERENCE

Now hatred is by far the longest pleasure;
Men love in haste, but they detest at leisure.

Rough Johnson, the great moralist, profess'd,
Right honestly, "he liked an honest hater!"—

The only truth that yet has been confest
Within these latest thousand years or later.

Perhaps the fine old fellow spoke in jest:—
For my part, I am but a mere spectator,
And gaze where'er the palace or the hovel is,
Much in the mood of Goethe's Mephistopheles;

But neither love nor hate in much excess;
Though 't was not once so. If I sneer sometimes,
It is because I cannot well do less,
And now and then it also suits my rhymes.

I should be very willing to redress
Men's wrongs, and rather check than punish crimes,

THE AGE OF INDIFFERENCE

Had not Cervantes, in that too true tale
Of Quixote, shown how all such efforts
fail.

Of all tales 'tis the saddest—and more
sad,

Because it makes us smile: his hero's
right,
And still pursues the right;—to curb the
bad

His only object, and 'gainst odds to
fight.

His guerdon: 'tis his virtue makes him
mad!

But his adventures form a sorry sight;—
A sorrier still is the great moral taught,
By that real epic unto all who have
thought.

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

Opposing singly the united strong,
From foreign yoke to free the helpless
native:—

Alas! must noblest views, like an old
song,

Be for mere fancy's sport a theme crea-
tive,

THE AGE OF INDIFFERENCE

A jest, a riddle, Fame through thin and
thick sought!
And Socrates himself but Wisdom's Quix-
ote?

Cervantes smiled Spain's chivalry away;
A single laugh demolish'd the right
arm
Of his own country;—seldom since that
day
Has Spain had heroes. While Ro-
mance could charm,
The world gave ground before her bright
array;
And therefore have his volumes done
such harm,
That all their glory, as a composition,
Was dearly purchased by his land's per-
dition.

On My Thirty-
third Birthday



January 22, 1821

Through life's dull road, so dim and dirty,
I have dragg'd to three-and-thirty.
What have these years left to me?
Nothing—except thirty-three.

On this Day I
Complete my
Thirty-sixth year



MISSOLONGHI,
Jan. 22, 1824.

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move:
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze—
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love, I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

MY THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR

But 'tis not THUS—and 'tis not HERE—
Such thoughts should shake my soul,
nor NOW,
Where glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,
Glory and Greece, around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece—she *is* awake!)
Awake my spirit! Think through WHOM
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood!—unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of beauty be.

If thou regret'st thy youth, WHY LIVE?
The land of honourable death
Is here:—up to the field, and give
Away thy breath!

Seek out—less often sought than found—
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest.

Note



As I have frequently omitted and sometimes transposed stanzas in my quotations from Byron's longer poems, I give here the exact reference to every passage in which any alteration has been made. Where no reference is given, the poem has been printed exactly as it stands in Byron's works.

69. *Napoleon*. "Childe Harold", canto iv, stanzas 90-92; canto iii, stanzas 36, 42, 43.

73. *Waterloo*. "Childe Harold", canto iii, stanzas 17, 21-30.

83. *Greece*. "The Giaour", lines 103-141.

101. *The Coliseum*. "Childe Harold", canto iv, stanzas 139-141.

103. *The Dogs' Carnival*. "The Siege of Corinth", stanza 16, lines 17-55.

106. *Mazeppa's Ride*. "Mazeppa", stanza 13, lines 1-40; stanza 17, lines 1-56; stanza 18.

111. *The Falls of Terni*. "Childe Harold", canto iv, stanzas 69-72.

114. *An August Evening on the Brenta*. "Childe Harold", canto iv, stanzas 27-29.

NOTE

116. *Venice*. "Childe Harold," canto iv, stanzas 1-3, 11, 15, 18.

120. *Rome*. "Childe Harold", canto iv, stanzas 78-81; canto iii, stanzas 107-110.

125. *Nature and Solitude*. "Childe Harold", canto ii, stanzas 25, 26; canto iii, stanzas 72-74, 96, 97.

133. *Stanzas*. Lines 1-30.

149. *Italy and England*. "Beppo", stanzas 41-52.

158. *The Coteries*. "Beppo", stanzas 72-76.

170. *Character of a Learned Lady*. "Don Juan", canto i, stanzas 10-16, 20-22.

176. *Juan and Julia*. "Don Juan", canto i, stanzas 102-105, 113, 114, 116, 117.

180. *Julia's Letter*. "Don Juan", canto i, stanzas 192-198.

184. *Poetical Commandments*. "Don Juan", canto i, stanzas 200-206.

188. *Youth and Fame*. "Don Juan", canto i, stanzas 212-220.

193. *Fame and Time*. "Don Juan", canto ii, stanzas 4, 88-95.

198. *The Shipwreck*. "Don Juan", canto ii, stanzas 27-53.

211. *Juan and Haidee*. "Don Juan", canto ii, stanzas 177-189, 199-201.

219. *Marriage and the Muse*. "Don Juan", canto iii, stanzas 8-11.

NOTE

222. *Troy*. "Don Juan", canto iv, stanzas 76-78.

224. *Great Names*. "Don Juan", canto iv, stanzas 99-107.

229. *Change of Illusions*. "Don Juan", canto v, stanzas 21, 22.

231. *Life*. "Don Juan", canto vii, stanzas 1-6.

234. *The Glory of War*. "Don Juan", canto vii, stanzas 80-84.

237. *A Battle-field*. "Don Juan", canto viii, stanzas 6-14.

245. *Wellington*. "Don Juan", canto ix, stanzas 1-10.

251. *Don Juan at St. Petersburg*. "Don Juan", canto ix, stanzas 41-45.

254. *Newton and Poets*. "Don Juan", canto x, stanzas 1-4.

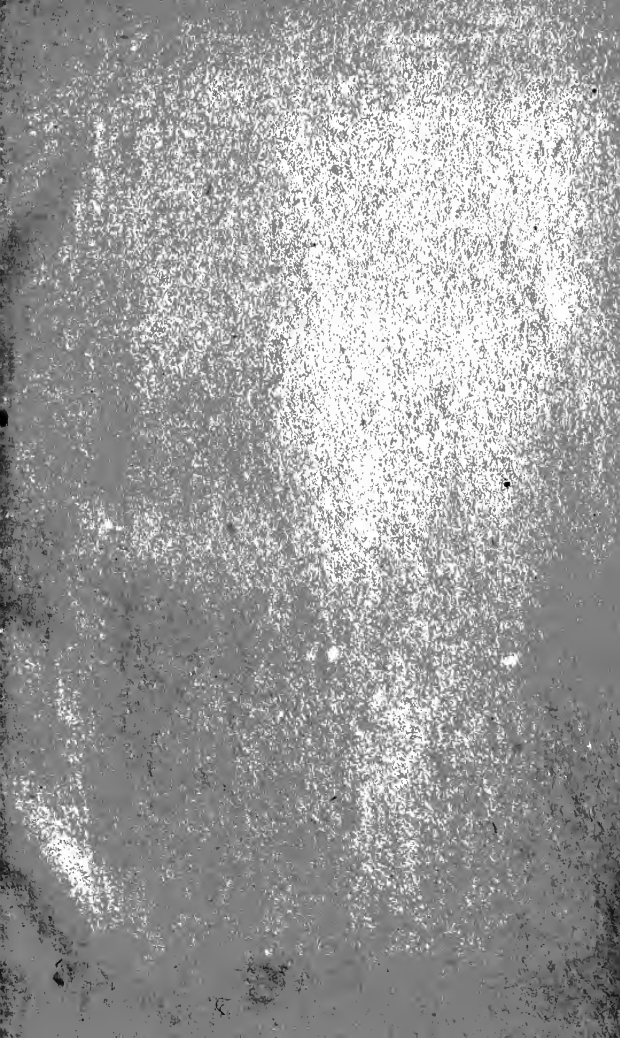
256. *London*. "Don Juan", canto x, stanzas 81-87.

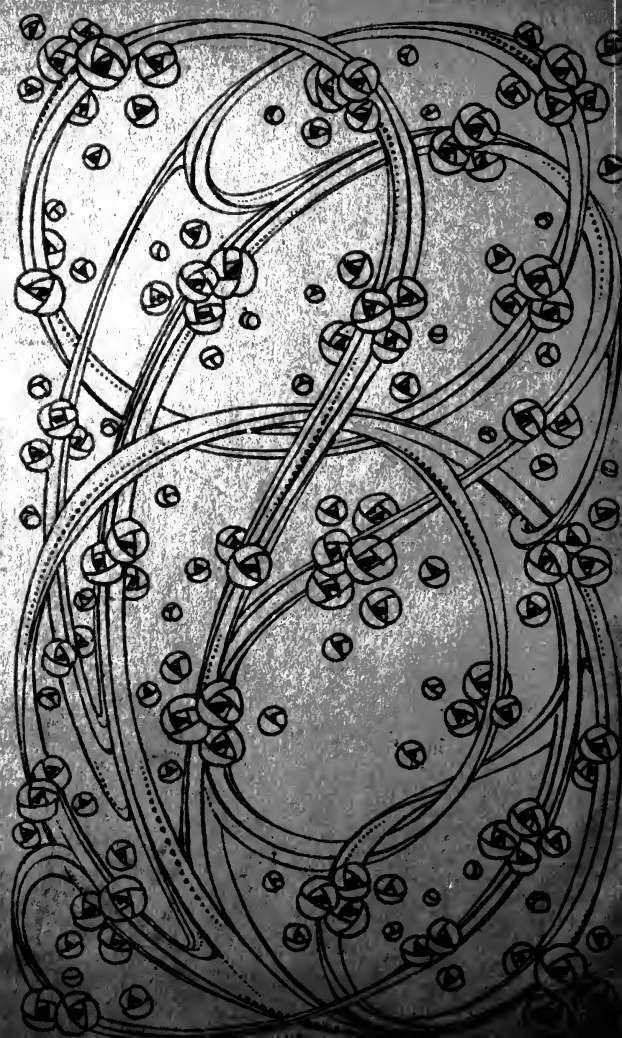
260. *Poets of the Age*. "Don Juan", canto xi, stanzas 55-63.

265. *Carpe Diem*. "Don Juan", canto xi, stanzas 76-86.

271. *The Age of Indifference*. "Don Juan" canto xiii, stanzas 3-11.







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