

A bad old woman making a worse will,¹
Which leaves you minus of the cash you
counted

As certain;—these are paltry things, and yet
I've rarely seen the man they did not fret.

XXII.

I'm a philosopher; confound them all!
Bills, beasts, and men, and—no! *not*
womankind!

With one good hearty curse I vent my gall,
And then my Stoicism leaves nought behind
Which it can either pain or evil call,

And I can give my whole soul up to mind;
Though what *is* soul, or mind, their birth or
growth,
Is more than I know—the deuce take them
both!

XXIII.

So now all things are damned one feels at
ease,

As after reading Athanasius' curse,
Which doth your true believer so much
please:

I doubt if any now could make it worse
O'er his worst enemy when at his knees,
'T is so sententious, positive, and terse,
And decorates the Book of Common Prayer,
As doth a rainbow the just clearing air.

XXIV.

Gulbeyaz and her lord were sleeping, or
At least one of them!—Oh, the heavy night,
When wicked wives, who love some bachelor,
Lie down in dungeon to sigh for the light
Of the grey morning, and look vainly for
Its twinkle through the lattice dusky quite—
To toss, to tumble, doze, revive, and quake
Lest their too lawful bed-fellow should wake!

XXV.

These are beneath the canopy of heaven,
Also beneath the canopy of beds
Four-posted and silk-curtained, which are
given

For rich men and their brides to lay their
heads

Upon, in sheets white as what bards call
"driven

Snow," Well! 't is all hap-hazard when
one weds.

¹ [Lady Noel's will was proved February 22, 1822. She left to the trustees a portrait of Byron . . . with directions that it was not to be shown to his daughter Ada until she attained the age of twenty-one.—*Letters*, 1901, vi. 42, note 1.]

Gulbeyaz was an empress, but had been
Perhaps as wretched if a *peasant's quean*.

XXVI.

Don Juan in his feminine disguise,
With all the damsels in their long array,
Had bowed themselves before th' imperial
eyes,

And at the usual signal ta'en their way
Back to their chambers, those long galleries
In the seraglio, where the ladies lay
Their delicate limbs; a thousand bosoms
there

Beating for Love, as the caged bird's for air.

XXVII.

I love the sex, and sometimes would reverse
The Tyrant's wish, "that Mankind only
had

One neck, which he with one fell stroke
might pierce:"

My wish is quite as wide, but not so bad,
And much more tender on the whole than
fierce;

It being (not *now*, but only while a lad)
That Womankind had but one rosy mouth,
To kiss them all at once from North to South.

XXVIII.

Oh, enviable Briareus! with thy hands
And heads, if thou hadst all things multi-
plied

In such proportion!—But my Muse with-
stands

The giant thought of being a Titan's bride,
Or travelling in Patagonian lands;

So let us back to Lilliput, and guide
Our hero through the labyrinth of Love
In which we left him several lines above.

XXIX.

He went forth with the lovely Odalisques,¹

At the given signal joined to their array;
And though he certainly ran many risks,

Yet he could not at times keep, by the way,
(Although the consequences of such frisks
Are worse than the worst damages men pay
In moral England, where the thing's a tax,)
From ogling all their charms from breasts to
backs.

XXX.

Still he forgot not his disguise:—along

The galleries from room to room they
walked,

A virgin-like and edifying throng,

By eunuchs flanked; while at their head
there stalked

¹ The ladies of the Seraglio.

A dame who kept up discipline among
The female ranks, so that none stirred or
talked,
Without her sanction on their she-parades:
Her title was "the Mother of the Maids."

XXXI.

Whether she was a "Mother," I know not,
Or whether they were "Maids" who called
her Mother;
But this is her Seraglio title, got
I know not how, but good as any other;
So Cantemir¹ can tell you, or De Tott:²
Her office was to keep aloof or smother
All bad propensities in fifteen hundred
Young women, and correct them when they
blundered.

XXXII.

A goodly sinecure, no doubt! but made
More easy by the absence of all men—
Except his Majesty,—who with her aid,
And guards, and bolts, and walls, and now
and then
A slight example, just to cast a shade
Along the rest, contrived to keep this den
Of beauties cool as an Italian convent,
Where all the passions have, alas! but one
vent.

XXXIII.

And what is that? Devotion, doubtless—how
Could you ask such a question?—but we
will
Continue. As I said, this goodly row
Of ladies of all countries at the will³
Of one good man, with stately march and
slow,
Like water-lilies floating down a rill—
Or rather lake—for *rills* do *not* run *slowly*,—
Paced on most maiden-like and melancholy.

¹ [Demetrius Cantemir, hospodar of Moldavia. His work, the *History of the Growth and Decay of the Othman Empire*, was translated into English by N. Tyndal, 1734.]

² [Baron de Tott, in his *Memoirs concerning the State of the Turkish Empire* (1786, i. 72), gives the title of this functionary as *Kiaya Kadun*, i.e. Mistress or Governess of the Ladies.]

³ [The repetition of the same rhyme-word was noted in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, July, 1823, vol. xiv. p. 90.]

XXXIV.

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

XXXV.

Their talk, of course, ran most on the new
comer;
Her shape, her hair, her air, her every-
thing:
Some thought her dress did not so much
become her,
Or wondered at her ears without a ring;
Some said her years were getting nigh their
summer,
Others contended they were but in spring;
Some thought her rather masculine in height,
While others wished that she had been so
quite.

XXXVI.

But no one doubted on the whole, that she
Was what her dress bespoke, a damsel fair,
And fresh, and "beautiful exceedingly,"
Who with the brightest Georgians might
compare:
They wondered how Gulbeyaz, too, could be
So silly as to buy slaves who might share
(If that his Highness wearied of his bride)
Her Throne and Power, and everything
beside.

XXXVII.

But what was strangest in this virgin crew,
Although her beauty was enough to vex,
After the first investigating view,
They all found out as few, or fewer, specks
In the fair form of their companion new,
Than is the custom of the gentle sex,
When they survey, with Christian eyes or
Heathen,
In a new face "the ugliest creature breathing."

XXXVIII.

And yet they had their little jealousies,
Like all the rest; but upon this occasion,
Whether there are such things as sympathies
Without our knowledge or our approbation,

Although they could not see through his
disguise,

All felt a soft kind of concatenation,
Like Magnetism, or Devilism, or what
You please—we will not quarrel about that :

XXXIX.

But certain 't is they all felt for their new
Companion something newer still, as 't were
A sentimental friendship through and through,
Extremely pure, which made them all
concur

In wishing her their sister, save a few
Who wished they had a brother just like
her,
Whom, if they were at home in sweet
Circassia,
They would prefer to Padisha¹ or Pacha.

XL.

Of those who had most genius for this sort
Of sentimental friendship, there were three,
Lolah, Katinka, and Dudù—in short
(To save description), fair as fair can be
Were they, according to the best report,
Though differing in stature and degree,
And clime and time, and country and
complexion—
They all alike admired their new connection.

XLI.

Lolah was dusk as India and as warm ;
Katinka was a Georgian, white and red,
With great blue eyes, a lovely hand and arm,
And feet so small they scarce seemed made
to tread,
But rather skim the earth ; while Dudù's form
Looked more adapted to be put to bed,
Being somewhat large, and languishing, and
lazy,
Yet of a beauty that would drive you crazy.

XLII.

A kind of sleepy Venus seemed Dudù,
Yet very fit to "murder sleep" in those
Who gazed upon her cheek's transcendent
hue,
Her Attic forehead, and her Phidian nose :
Few angles were there in her form, 't is true,
Thinner she might have been, and yet
scarce lose ;
Yet, after all, 't would puzzle to say where
It would not spoil some separate charm to
pare.

¹ Padisha is the Turkish title of the Grand Signior.

XLIII.

She was not violently lively, but
Stole on your spirit like a May-day break-
ing ;
Her eyes were not too sparkling, yet, half-shut,
They put beholders in a tender taking ;
She looked (this simile 's quite new) just cut
From marble, like Pygmalion's statue
waking,
The mortal and the marble still at strife,
And timidly expanding into Life.

XLIV.

Lolah demanded the new damsel's name—
"Juanna."—Well, a pretty name enough.
Katinka asked her also whence she came—
"From Spain."—"But where *is* Spain?"
—"Don't ask such stuff,
Nor show your Georgian ignorance—for
shame !"

Said Lolah, with an accent rather rough,
To poor Katinka : "Spain 's an island near
Morocco, betwixt Egypt and Tangier."

XLV.

Dudù said nothing, but sat down beside
Juanna, playing with her veil or hair ;
And, looking at her steadfastly, she sighed,
As if she pitied her for being there,
A pretty stranger without friend or guide,
And all abashed, too, at the general stare
Which welcomes hapless strangers in all
places,
With kind remarks upon their mien and faces.

XLVI.

But here the Mother of the Maids drew near,
With "Ladies, it is time to go to rest.
I 'm puzzled what to do with *you*, my dear!"
She added to Juanna, their new guest :
"Your coming has been unexpected here,
And every couch is occupied ; you had best
Partake of mine ; but by to-morrow early
We will have all things settled for you fairly."

XLVII.

Here Lolah interposed—"Mamma, you know
You don't sleep soundly, and I cannot bear
That anybody should disturb you so ;
I'll take Juanna ; we 're a slenderer pair
Than you would make the half of ;—don't
say no ;
And I of your young charge will take due
care."

But here Katinka interfered, and said,
"She also had compassion and a bed."

XLVIII.

"Besides, I hate to sleep alone," quoth she.
The matron frowned: "Why so?"—"For
fear of ghosts,"

Replied Katinka; "I am sure I see
A phantom upon each of the four posts;
And then I have the worst dreams that can
be,
Of Guebres, Giaours, and Ginns, and
Gouls in hosts."

The dame replied, "Between your dreams
and you,
I fear Juanna's dreams would be but few.

XLIX.

"You, Lolah, must continue still to lie
Alone, for reasons which don't matter; you
The same, Katinka, until by and by:
And I shall place Juanna with Dudù,
Who's quiet, inoffensive, silent, shy,
And will not toss and chatter the night
through.

What say you, child?"—Dudù said nothing,
as

Her talents were of the more silent class;

L.

But she rose up, and kissed the matron's brow
Between the eyes, and Lolah on both
cheeks,

Katinka too; and with a gentle bow
(Curt'sies are neither used by Turks nor
Greeks)

She took Juanna by the hand to show
Their place of rest, and left, to both their
piques,

The others pouting at the matron's preference
Of Dudù, though they held their tongues
from deference.

LI.

It was a spacious chamber (Oda is
The Turkish title), and ranged round the
wall

Were couches, toilets—and much more than
this

I might describe, as I have seen it all,
But it suffices—little was amiss;

'T was on the whole a nobly furnished hall,
With all things ladies want, save one or two,
And even those were nearer than they knew.

LII.

Dudù, as has been said, was a sweet creature,
Not very dashing, but extremely winning,
With the most regulated charms of feature,
Which painters cannot catch like faces
sinning

Against proportion—the wild strokes of nature
Which they hit off at once in the beginning,
Full of expression, right or wrong, that strike,
And pleasing, or unpleasing, still are like.

LIII.

But she was a soft landscape of mild earth,
Where all was harmony, and calm, and
quiet,

Luxuriant, budding; cheerful without mirth,
Which, if not happiness, is much more
nigh it

Than are your mighty passions and so forth,
Which, some call "the Sublime": I wish
they 'd try it:

I've seen your stormy seas and stormy women,
And pity lovers rather more than seamen.

LIV.

But she was pensive more than melancholy,
And serious more than pensive, and serene,
It may be, more than either—not unholy
Her thoughts, at least till now, appear to
have been.

The strangest thing was, beauteous, she was
wholly

Unconscious, albeit turned of quick seven-
teen,

That she was fair, or dark, or short, or tall;
She never thought about herself at all.

LV.

And therefore was she kind and gentle as
The Age of Gold (when gold was yet un-
known,

By which its nomenclature came to pass;
Thus most appropriately has been shown
"Lucus à non lucendo," not what was,

But what was not; a sort of style that 's
grown

Extremely common in this age, whose metal
The Devil may decompose, but never settle:

LVI.

I think it may be of "Corinthian Brass,"¹

Which was a mixture of all metals, but
The brazen uppermost). King reader! pass
This long parenthesis: I could not shut

It sooner for the soul of me, and class

My faults even with your own! which
meaneth, Put

A kind construction upon them and me:

But *that* you won't—then don't—I am not
less free.

¹ [Hence the title of the satire, *The Age of Bronze*.]

LVII.

'T is time we should return to plain narration,
 And thus my narrative proceeds:—Dudù,
 With every kindness short of ostentation,
 Showed Juan, or Juanna, through and
 through
 This labyrinth of females, and each station
 Described—what 's strange—in words
 extremely few:
 I have but one simile, and that 's a blunder,
 For wordless women, which is *silent* thunder.

LVIII.

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

LIX.

And then she gave Juanna a chaste kiss:
 Dudù was fond of kissing—which I 'm sure
 That nobody can ever take amiss,
 Because 't is pleasant, so that it be pure,
 And between females means no more than
 this—
 That they have nothing better near, or newer.
 "Kiss" rhymes to "bliss" in fact as well as
 verse—
 I wish it never led to something worse.

LX.

In perfect innocence she then unmade
 Her toilet, which cost little, for she was
 A child of Nature, carelessly arrayed:
 If fond of a chance ogle at her glass,
 T was like the fawn, which, in the lake
 displayed,
 Beholds her own shy, shadowy image pass,
 When first she starts, and then returns to peep,
 Admiring this new native of the deep.

LXI.

And one by one her articles of dress
 Were laid aside; but not before she offered
 Her aid to fair Juanna, whose excess
 Of modesty declined the assistance proffered:
 Which passed well off—as she could do no less;
 Though by this *politesse* she rather suffered,
 Pricking her fingers with those cursed pins,
 Which surely were invented for our sins,—

LXII.

Making a woman like a porcupine,
 Not to be rashly touched. But still more
 dread,
 Oh ye! whose fate it is, as once 't was mine,
 In early youth, to turn a lady's maid;—
 I did my very boyish best to shine
 In tricking her out for a masquerade:
 The pins were placed sufficiently, but not
 Stuck all exactly in the proper spot.

LXIII.

But these are foolish things to all the wise,
 And I love Wisdom more than she loves me;
 My tendency is to philosophize
 On most things, from a tyrant to a tree;
 But still the spouseless virgin *Knowledge* flies.
 What are we? and whence came we? what
 shall be
 Our *ultimate* existence? what 's our present?
 Are questions answerless, and yet incessant.

LXIV.

There was deep silence in the chamber: dim
 And distant from each other burned the
 lights,
 And slumber hovered o'er each lovely limb
 Of the fair occupants: if there be sprites,
 They should have walked there in their
 sprightliest trim,
 By way of change from their sepulchral sites,
 And shown themselves as ghosts of better taste
 Than haunting some old ruin or wild waste.

LXV.

Many and beautiful lay those around,
 Like flowers of different hue, and clime,
 and root,
 In some exotic garden sometimes found,
 With cost, and care, and warmth induced
 to shoot.
 One with her auburn tresses lightly bound,
 And fair brows gently drooping, as the fruit
 Nods from the tree, was slumbering with
 soft breath,
 And lips apart, which showed the pearls
 beneath.

LXVI.

One with her flushed cheek laid on her white
 arm,
 And raven ringlets gathered in dark crowd
 Above her brow, lay dreaming soft and warm;
 And smiling through her dream, as through
 a cloud

The moon breaks, half unveiled each further
charm,
As, slightly stirring in her snowy shroud,
Her beauties seized the unconscious hour of
night
All bashfully to struggle into light.

LXVII.

This is no bull, although it sounds so; for
'T was night, but there were lamps, as hath
been said.

A third's all pallid aspect offered more
The traits of sleeping sorrow, and betrayed
Through the heaved breast the dream of some
far shore

Belovéd and deplored; while slowly strayed
(As night-dew, on a cypress glittering, tinges
The black bough) tear-drops through her
eyes' dark fringes.

LXVIII.

A fourth as marble, statue-like and still,
Lay in a breathless, hushed, and stony
sleep;

White, cold, and pure, as looks a frozen rill,
Or the snow minaret on an Alpine steep,
Or Lot's wife done in salt,—or what you
will;—

My similes are gathered in a heap,
So pick and choose—perhaps you'll be content
With a carved lady on a monument.

LXIX.

And lo! a fifth appears;—and what is she?

A lady of a "certain age," which means
Certainly agéd—what her years might be

I know not, never counting past their teens;
But there she slept, not quite so fair to see,

As ere that awful period intervenes
Which lays both men and women on the shelf,
To meditate upon their sins and self.

LXX.

But all this time how slept, or dreamed, Dudù?

With strict inquiry I could ne'er discover,
And scorn to add a syllable untrue;

But ere the middle watch was hardly over,
Just when the fading lamps waned dim and
blue,

And phantoms hovered, or might seem to
hover,

To those who like their company, about
The apartment, on a sudden she screamed
out:

LXXI.

And that so loudly, that upstarted all
The Oda, in a general commotion:
Matron and maids, and those whom you may
call

Neither, came crowding like the waves of
Ocean,

One on the other, throughout the whole hall,
All trembling, wondering, without the least
notion

More than I have myself of what could make
The calm Dudù so turbulently wake.

LXXII.

But wide awake she was, and round her bed,
With floating draperies and with flying hair,
With eager eyes, and light but hurried tread,
And bosoms, arms, and ankles glancing
bare,

And bright as any meteor ever bred
By the North Pole,—they sought her cause
of care,

For she seemed agitated, flushed, and
frightened—

Her eye dilated, and her colour heightened.

LXXIII.

But what is strange—and a strong proof how
great

A blessing is sound sleep—Juanna lay

As fast as ever husband by his mate

In holy matrimony snores away.

Not all the clamour broke her happy state

Of slumber, ere they shook her,—so they
say

At least,—and then she, too, unclosed her eyes,
And yawned a good deal with discreet surprise.

LXXIV.

And now commenced a strict investigation,
Which, as all spoke at once, and more
than once

Conjecturing, wondering, asking a narration,
Alike might puzzle either wit or dunce

To answer in a very clear oration.

Dudù had never passed for wanting sense,
But being "no orator as Brutus is,"

Could not at first expound what was amiss.

LXXV.

At length she said, that in a slumber sound
She dreamed a dream, of walking in a
wood—

A "wood obscure," like that where Dante
found

Himself in at the age when all grow good;

Life's half-way house, where dames with
virtue crowned

Run much less risk of lovers turning rude ;
And that this wood was full of pleasant
fruits,
And trees of goodly growth and spreading
roots ;

LXXVI.

And in the midst a golden apple grew,—
A most prodigious pippin—but it hung
Rather too high and distant ; that she threw
Her glances on it, and then, longing, flung
Stones and whatever she could pick up, to
Bring down the fruit, which still perversely
clung
To its own bough, and dangled yet in sight,
But always at a most provoking height ;

LXXVII.

That on a sudden, when she least had hope,
It fell down of its own accord before
Her feet ; that her first movement was to
stoop
And pick it up, and bite it to the core ;
That just as her young lip began to ope
Upon the golden fruit the vision bore,
A bee flew out, and stung her to the heart,
And so—she woke with a great scream and
start.

LXXVIII.

All this she told with some confusion and
Dismay, the usual consequence of dreams
Of the unpleasant kind, with none at hand
To expound their vain and visionary
gleams.
I 've known some odd ones which seemed
really planned
Prophetically, or that which one deems
A "strange coincidence," to use a phrase
By which such things are settled now-a-days.¹

LXXIX.

The damsels, who had thoughts of some
great harm,
Began, as is the consequence of fear,
To scold a little at the false alarm
That broke for nothing on their sleeping
ear.

¹ [One of the advocates employed for Queen Caroline in the House of Lords spoke of some of the most puzzling passages in the history of her intercourse with Bergami, as amounting to "odd instances of strange coincidence."—Ed. 1833, xvi. 160.]

The matron, too, was wroth to leave her
warm

Bed for the dream she had been obliged to
hear,
And chafed at poor Dudù, who only sighed,
And said, that she was sorry she had cried,

LXXX.

"I've heard of stories of a cock and bull ;
But visions of an apple and a bee,
To take us from our natural rest, and pull
The whole Oda from their beds at half-past
three,
Would make us think the moon is at its full.
You surely are unwell, child ! we must see,
To-morrow, what his Highness's physician
Will say to this hysteric of a vision.

LXXXI.

"And poor Juanna, too, the child's first night
Within these walls, to be broke in upon
With such a clamour—I had thought it right
That the young stranger should not lie
alone,
And, as the quietest of all, she might
With you, Dudù, a good night's rest have
known :
But now I must transfer her to the charge
Of Lolah—though her couch is not so large."

LXXXII.

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

LXXXIII.

She promised never more to have a dream,
At least to dream so loudly as just now ;
She wondered at herself how she could
scream—
'T was foolish, nervous, as she must allow,
A fond hallucination, and a theme
For laughter—but she felt her spirits low,
And begged they would excuse her ; she 'd
get over
This weakness in a few hours, and recover.

LXXXIV.

And here Juanna kindly interposed,
And said she felt herself extremely well
Where she then was, as her sound sleep
disclosed,

When all around rang like a tocsin bell ;
She did not find herself the least disposed
To quit her gentle partner, and to dwell
Apart from one who had no sin to show,
Save that of dreaming once "mal-à-propos."

LXXXV.

As thus Juanna spoke, Dudù turned round
And hid her face within Juanna's breast :
Her neck alone was seen, but that was found
The colour of a budding rose's crest.
I can't tell why she blushed, nor can expound
The mystery of this rupture of their rest ;
All that I know is, that the facts I state
Are true as Truth has ever been of late,

LXXXVI.

And so good night to them,—or, if you will,
Good morrow—for the cock had crown,
and light
Began to clothe each Asiatic hill,
And the mosque crescent struggled into
sight
Of the long caravan, which in the chill
Of dewy dawn wound slowly round each
height
That stretches to the stony belt, which girds
Asia, where Kaff looks down upon the Kurds.¹

LXXXVII.

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

¹ [Byron used Kaff for Caucasus. But there may be some allusion to the fabulous Kaff, "anciently imagined by the Asiatics to surround the world, to bind the horizon on all sides." There was a proverb "From Kaf to Kaf," *i.e.* "the wide world through."]

LXXXVIII.

And that 's the moral of this composition,
If people would but see its real drift ;—
But *that* they will not do without suspicion,
Because all gentle readers have the gift
Of closing 'gainst the light their orbs of
vision :

While gentle writers also love to lift
Their voices 'gainst each other, which is
natural,
The numbers are too great for them to flatter
all.

LXXXIX.

Rose the Sultana from a bed of splendour,
Softer than the soft Sybarite's, who cried
Aloud because his feelings were too tender
To brook a ruffled rose-leaf by his side,—
So beautiful that Art could little mend her,
Though pale with conflicts between Love
and Pride ;—
So agitated was she with her error,
She did not even look into the mirror.

XC.

Also arose about the self-same time,
Perhaps a little later, her great Lord,
Master of thirty kingdoms so sublime,
And of a wife by whom he was abhorred ;
A thing of much less import in that clime—
At least to those of incomes which afford
The filling up their whole connubial cargo—
Than where two wives are under an embargo.

XCI.

He did not think much on the matter, nor
Indeed on any other : as a man
He liked to have a handsome paramour
At hand, as one may like to have a fan,
And therefore of Circassians had good store,
As an amusement after the Divan ;
Though an unusual fit of love, or duty,
Had made him lately bask in his bride's
beauty.

XCII.

And now he rose ; and after due ablutions
Exacted by the customs of the East,
And prayers and other pious evolutions,
He drank six cups of coffee at the least,
And then withdrew to hear about the
Russians,
Whose victories had recently increased
In Catherine's reign, whom Glory still adores,
As greatest of all sovereigns and w-----s.

XCIII.

But oh, thou grand legitimate Alexander !
 Her son's son, let not this last phrase offend
 Thine ear, if it should reach—and now
 rhymes wander
 Almost as far as Petersburg, and lend
 A dreadful impulse to each loud meander
 Of murmuring Liberty's wide waves, which
 blend
 Their roar even with the Baltic's—so you be
 Your father's son, 't is quite enough for me.

XCIV.

To call men love-begotten, or proclaim
 Their mothers as the antipodes of Timon,
 That hater of Mankind, would be a shame,
 A libel, or whate'er you please to rhyme
 on :
 But people's ancestors are History's game ;
 And if one Lady's slip could leave a crime
 on
 All generations, I should like to know
 What pedigree the best would have to show ?

XCV.

Had Catherine and the Sultan understood
 Their own true interests, which Kings
 rarely know,
 Until 't is taught by lessons rather rude,
 There was a way to end their strife, although
 Perhaps precarious, had they but thought
 good,
 Without the aid of Prince or Plenipo :
 She to dismiss her guards and he his Harem,
 And for their other matters, meet and share
 'em.

XCVI.

But as it was, his Highness had to hold
 His daily council upon ways and means
 How to encounter with this martial scold,
 This modern Amazon and Queen of
 queans ;
 And the perplexity could not be told
 Of all the pillars of the State, which leans
 Sometimes a little heavy on the backs
 Of those who cannot lay on a new tax.

XCVII.

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

XCVIII.

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

XCIX.

And here she summoned Baba, and required
 Don Juan at his hands, and information
 Of what had passed since all the slaves
 retired,
 And whether he had occupied their station :
 If matters had been managed as desired,
 And his disguise with due consideration
 Kept up ; and above all, the where and how
 He had passed the night, was what she
 wished to know.

C.

Baba, with some embarrassment, replied
 To this long catechism of questions, asked
 More easily than answered,—that he had tried
 His best to obey in what he had been
 tasked ;
 But there seemed something that he wished
 to hide,
 Which Hesitation more betrayed than
 masked ;
 He scratched his ear, the infallible resource
 To which embarrassed people have recourse.

CI.

Gulbeyaz was no model of true patience,
 Nor much disposed to wait in word or
 deed ;
 She liked quick answers in all conversations ;
 And when she saw him stumbling like a
 steed
 In his replies, she puzzled him for fresh ones ;
 And as his speech grew still more broken-
 kneed,
 Her cheek began to flush, her eyes to sparkle,
 And her proud brow's blue veins to swell and
 darkle.

CII.

When Baba saw these symptoms, which he
 knew
 To bode him no great good, he deprecated
 Her anger, and beseeched she 'd hear him
 through—
 He could not help the thing which he
 related :

Then out it came at length, that to Dudù
 Juan was given in charge, as hath been
 stated ;
 But not by Baba's fault, he said, and swore
 on
 The holy camel's hump, besides the Koran.

CIII.

The chief dame of the Oda, upon whom
 The discipline of the whole Harem bore,
 As soon as they re-entered their own room,
 For Baba's function stopped short at the
 door,
 Had settled all ; nor could he then presume
 (The aforesaid Baba) just then to do more,
 Without exciting such suspicion as
 Might make the matter still worse than it was.

CIV.

He hoped, indeed he thought, he could be
 sure,
 Juan had not betrayed himself ; in fact
 'T was certain that his conduct had been pure,
 Because a foolish or imprudent act
 Would not alone have made him insecure,
 But ended in his being found out and *sacked*,
 And thrown into the sea.—Thus Baba spoke
 Of all save Dudù's dream, which was no joke.

CV.

This he discreetly kept in the back ground,
 And talked away—and might have talked
 till now,
 For any further answer that he found,
 So deep an anguish wrung Gulbeyaz' brow :
 Her cheek turned ashes, ears rung, brain
 whirled round,
 As if she had received a sudden blow,
 And the heart's dew of pain sprang fast and
 chilly
 O'er her fair front, like Morning's on a lily.

CVI.

Although she was not of the fainting sort,
 Baba thought she would faint, but there he
 erred—
 It was but a convulsion, which though short
 Can never be described ; we all have heard,
 And some of us have felt thus "*all amort*,"
 When things beyond the common have
 occurred ;—
 Gulbeyaz proved in that brief agony
 What she could ne'er express—then how
 should I?

CVII.

She stood a moment as a Pythoness
 Stands on her tripod, agonized, and full
 Of inspiration gathered from distress,
 When all the heart-strings like wild horses
 pull
 The heart asunder ;—then, as more or less
 Their speed abated or their strength grew
 dull,
 She sunk down on her seat by slow degrees,
 And bowed her throbbing head o'er trembling
 knees.

CVIII.

Her face declined and was unseen ; her hair
 Fell in long tresses like the weeping willow,
 Sweeping the marble underneath her chair,
 Or rather sofa (for it was all pillow,
 A low, soft ottoman), and black Despair
 Stirred up and down her bosom like a
 billow,
 Which rushes to some shore whose shingles
 check
 Its farther course, but must receive its wreck.

CIX.

Her head hung down, and her long hair in
 stooping
 Concealed her features better than a veil ;
 And one hand o'er the ottoman lay drooping,
 White, waxen, and as alabaster pale :
 Would that I were a painter ! to be grouping
 All that a poet drags into detail !
 Oh that my words were colours ! but their
 tints
 May serve perhaps as outlines or slight hints.

CX.

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

CXI.

She stopped, and raised her head to speak—
 but paused
 And then moved on again with rapid pace ;
 Then slackened it, which is the march most
 caused
 By deep emotion :—you may sometimes
 trace

A feeling in each footstep, as disclosed
 By Sallust in his Catiline, who, chased
 By all the demons of all passions, showed
 Their work even by the way in which he
 trode.¹

CXII.

Gulbeyaz stopped and beckoned Baba:—
 “Slave!

Bring the two slaves!” she said in a low
 tone,
 But one which Baba did not like to brave,
 And yet he shuddered, and seemed rather
 prone
 To prove reluctant, and begged leave to crave
 (Though he well knew the meaning) to be
 shown

What slaves her Highness wished to indicate,
 For fear of any error, like the late.

CXIII.

“The Georgian and her paramour,” replied
 The Imperial Bride—and added, “Let the
 boat

Be ready by the secret portal’s side:
 You know the rest.” The words stuck in
 her throat,

Despite her injured love and fiery pride;
 And of this Baba willingly took note,
 And begged by every hair of Mahomet’s
 beard,

She would revoke the order he had heard.

CXIV.

“To hear is to obey,” he said; “but still,
 Sultana, think upon the consequence:
 It is not that I shall not all fulfil

Your orders, even in their severest sense;
 But such precipitation may end ill,

Even at your own imperative expense:
 I do not mean destruction and exposure,
 In case of any premature disclosure;

CXV.

“But your own feelings. Even should all the
 rest

Be hidden by the rolling waves, which hide
 Already many a once love-beaten breast
 Deep in the caverns of the deadly tide—

¹ [“His guilty soul, at enmity with gods and men, could find no rest; so violently was his mind torn and distracted by a consciousness of guilt. Accordingly his countenance was pale, his eyes ghastly, his pace one while quick, another slow [citus modo, modo tardus incessus]: indeed, in all his looks there was an air of distraction.”—Sallust, *Catilina*, cap. xv. *sf.*]

You love this boyish, new, Seraglio guest,
 And if this violent remedy be tried—
 Excuse my freedom, when I here assure you,
 That killing him is not the way to cure you.”

CXVI.

“What dost thou know of Love or feeling?
 —Wretch!

Begone!” she cried, with kindling eyes—
 “and do

My bidding!” Baba vanished, for to stretch
 His own remonstrance further he well knew
 Might end in acting as his own “Jack Ketch”;
 And though he wished extremely to get
 through

This awkward business without harm to others,
 He still preferred his own neck to another’s.

CXVII.

Away he went then upon his commission,
 Growling and grumbling in good Turkish
 phrase

Against all women of whate’er condition,
 Especially Sultanas and their ways;
 Their obstinacy, pride, and indecision,
 Their never knowing their own mind two
 days,

The trouble that they gave, their immorality,
 Which made him daily bless his own neutrality.

CXVIII.

And then he called his brethren to his aid,
 And sent one on a summons to the pair,
 That they must instantly be well arrayed,
 And above all be combed even to a hair,
 And brought before the Empress, who had
 made

Inquiries after them with kindest care:
 At which Dudù looked strange, and Juan
 silly;

But go they must at once, and will I—nill I.

CXIX.

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

CXX.

I leave them for the present with good wishes,
 Though doubts of their well doing, to
 arrange

Another part of History; for the dishes
 Of this our banquet we must sometimes
 change;

And trusting Juan may escape the fishes,
 (Although his situation now seems strange,
 And scarce secure),—as such digressions *are*
 fair,
 The Muse will take a little touch at warfare.

CANTO THE SEVENTH.

I.

O LOVE! O Glory! what are ye who fly
 Around us ever, rarely to alight?
 There's not a meteor in the polar sky
 Of such transcendent and more fleeting
 flight.
 Chill, and chained to cold earth, we lift on
 high
 Our eyes in search of either lovely light;
 A thousand and a thousand colours they
 Assume, then leave us on our freezing way.

II.

And such as they are, such my present tale is,
 A nondescript and ever-varying rhyme,
 A versified Aurora Borealis,
 Which flashes o'er a waste and icy clime.
 When we know what all are, we must bewail
 us,
 But ne'ertheless I hope it is no crime
 To laugh at *all* things—for I wish to know
What, after all, are all things—but a show?

III.

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;

IV.

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.
 'T is 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.

V.

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."

VI.

Ecclesiastes said, "that all is vanity"—
 Most modern preachers say the same, or
 show it
 By their examples of true Christianity:
 In short, all know, or very soon may know
 it;
 And in this scene of all-confessed inanity,
 By Saint, by Sage, by Preacher, and by
 Poet,
 Must I restrain me, through the fear of strife,
 From holding up the nothingness of Life?

VII.

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

VIII.

"Fierce loves and faithless wars"—I am not
 sure
 If this be the right reading—'t is no matter;
 The fact's about the same, I am secure;
 I sing them both, and am about to batter
 A town which did a famous siege endure,
 And was beleagured both by land and
 water
 By Souvaroff,¹ or Anglicè Suwarrow,
 Who loved blood as an alderman loves
 marrow.

¹ [Aleksandr Vasilievitch Suvóroff (1729-1800) opened his attack on Ismail, November 30, 1790. His forces, including Kossacks, exceeded 27,000 men.—*Essai sur l'Histoire Ancienne et Moderne de la Nouvelle Russie*, par le Marquis Gabriel de Castelnau, 1827, ii. 201. The paragraphs in the

IX.

The fortress is called Ismail, and is placed
 Upon the Danube's left branch and left
 bank,
 With buildings in the Oriental taste,
 But still a fortress of the foremost rank,
 Or was at least, unless 't is since defaced,
 Which with your conquerors is a common
 prank:
 It stands some eighty versts from the high
 sea,
 And measures round of toises thousands
 three.

X.

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

XI.

This circumstance may serve to give a notion
 Of the high talents of this new Vauban:
 But the town ditch below was deep as Ocean,
 The rampart higher than you 'd wish to
 hang:
 But then there was a great want of precaution
 (Prithee, excuse this engineering slang),
 Nor work advanced, nor covered way was
 there,
 To hint, at least, "Here is no thoroughfare."

XII.

But a stone bastion, with a narrow gorge,
 And walls as thick as most skulls born as
 yet;
 Two batteries, cap-à-pie, as our St. George,
 Casemated one, and t'other "a barbette,"
 Of Danube's bank took formidable charge;
 While two-and-twenty cannon duly set
 Rose over the town's right side, in bristling
 tier,
 Forty feet high, upon a cavalier.

Marquis de Castelnau's *Essai* (vol. ii.) which Byron
 versified and worked into Cantos vii. and viii. are
 quoted in full in the *Works* of 1832-1833 (vol. xvi.);
 in the one volume edition (1837, and onwards),
 and in vol. vi. of the edition of 1898-1903.]

XIII.

But from the river the town 's open quite,
 Because the Turks could never be per-
 suaded
 A Russian vessel e'er would heave in sight;
 And such their creed was till they were
 invaded,
 When it grew rather late to set things right:
 But as the Danube could not well be
 waded,
 They looked upon the Muscovite flotilla
 And only shouted, "Allah!" and "Bis
 Millah!"

XIV.

The Russians now were ready to attack;
 But oh, ye goddesses of War and Glory!
 How shall I spell the name of each Cossacque
 Who were immortal, could one tell their
 story?
 Alas! what to their memory can lack?
 Achilles' self was not more grim and gory
 Than thousands of this new and polished
 nation,
 Whose names want nothing but—pronuncia-
 tion.

XV.

Still I 'll record a few, if but to increase
 Our euphony: there was Strongenoff and
 Strokonoff,
 Meknop, Serge Lwow, Arséniew of modern
 Greece,
 And Tschitsshakoff, and Roguenoff, and
 Chokenoff,
 And others of twelve consonants apiece;
 And more might be found out, if I could
 poke enough
 Into gazettes; but Fame (capricious
 strumpet),
 It seems, has got an ear as well as trumpet,

XVI.

And cannot tune those discords of narration,
 Which may be names at Moscow, into
 rhyme;
 Yet there were several worth commemoration,
 As e'er was virgin of a nuptial chime;
 Soft words, too, fitted for the peroration
 Of Londonderry drawling against time,
 Ending in "ischskin," "ousckin," "iffskchy,"
 "ouski,"
 Of whom we can insert but Rousamouski,

XVII.

Scherematoff and Chrematoff, Koklophti,
Koclobski, Kourakin, and Mouskin
Pouskin,

All proper men of weapons, as e'er scoffed
high

Against a foe, or ran a sabre through skin:
Little cared they for Mahomet or Mufti,
Unless to make their kettle-drums a new
skin

Out of their hides, if parchment had grown
dear,

And no more handy substitute been near.

XVIII.

Then there were foreigners of much renown,
Of various nations, and all volunteers;

Not fighting for their country or its crown,
But wishing to be one day brigadiers;

Also to have the sacking of a town;—

A pleasant thing to young men at their
years.

'Mongst them were several Englishmen of
pith,

Sixteen called Thomson, and nineteen named
Smith.

XIX.

Jack Thomson and Bill Thomson;—all the
rest

Had been called "*Jemmy*," after the great
bard;

I don't know whether they had arms or crest,
But such a godfather's as good a card.

Three of the Smiths were Peters; but the best
Amongst them all, hard blows to inflict or
ward,

Was *he*, since so renowned "in country
quarters

At Halifax;"¹ but now he served the Tartars.

XX.

The rest were Jacks and Gills and Wills and
Bills,

But when I've added that the elder Jack
Smith

Was born in Cumberland among the hills,

And that his father was an honest
blacksmith,

¹ [Captain Smith, in the song—

"A Captain bold, in Halifax,
That dwelt in country quarters,
Seduc'd a maid who hang'd herself
One Monday in her garters."

See George Colman's farce, *Love Laughs at
Locksmiths*, 1818, p. 31.]

I've said all *I* know of a name that fills
Three lines of the despatch in taking
"Schmacksmith,"

A village of Moldavia's waste, wherein
He fell, immortal in a bulletin.

XXI.

I wonder (although Mars no doubt 's a god I
Praise) if a man's name in a *bulletin*

May make up for a *bullet* in his body?

I hope this little question is no sin,

Because, though I am but a simple noddy,

I think one Shakespeare puts the same
thought in

The mouth of some one in his plays so doting,
Which many people pass for wits by quoting.

XXII.

Then there were Frenchmen, gallant, young,
and gay;

But I'm too great a patriot to record
Their Gallic names upon a glorious day;

I'd rather tell ten lies than say a word
Of truth;—such truths are treason; they
betray

Their country; and as traitors are abhorred,
Who name the French in English, save to
show

How Peace should make John Bull the
Frenchman's foe.

XXIII.

The Russians, having built two batteries on
An isle near Ismail, had two ends in view;

The first was to bombard it, and knock down
The public buildings and the private too,

No matter what poor souls might be undone
The city's shape suggested this, 't is true,

Formed like an amphitheatre—each dwelling
Presented a fine mark to throw a shell in.

XXIV.

The second object was to profit by

The moment of the general consternation,
To attack the Turk's flotilla, which lay nigh,

Extremely tranquil, anchored at its station;
But a third motive was as probably

To frighten them into capitulation;

A phantasy which sometimes seizes warriors,
Unless they are game as bull-dogs and fox-
terriers.

XXV.

A habit rather blameable, which is

That of despising those we combat with,
Common in many cases, was in this

The cause of killing Tchitchitzkoff and
Smith—

One of the valorous "Smiths" whom we
shall miss
Out of those nineteen who late rhymed to
"pith";
But 't is a name so spread o'er "Sir" and
"Madam,"
That one would think the *first* who bore it
"Adam."

XXVI.

The Russian batteries were incomplete,
Because they were constructed in a hurry;
Thus the same cause which makes a verse
want feet,
And throws a cloud o'er Longman and
John Murray,
When the sale of new books is not so fleet
As they who print them think is necessary,
May likewise put off for a time what story
Sometimes calls "Murder," and at others
"Glory."

XXVII.

Whether it was their engineer's stupidity,
Their haste or waste, I neither know nor
care,
Or some contractor's personal cupidity,
Saving his soul by cheating in the ware
Of homicide, but there was no solidity
In the new batteries erected there;
They either missed, or they were never missed,
And added greatly to the missing list.

XXVIII.

A sad miscalculation about distance
Made all there naval matters incorrect;
Three fireships lost their amiable existence
Before they reached a spot to take effect;
The match was lit too soon, and no assistance
Could remedy this lubberly defect;
They blew up in the middle of the river,
While, though 't was dawn, the Turks slept
fast as ever.

XXIX.

At seven they rose, however, and surveyed
The Russ flotilla getting under way;
'T was nine, when still advancing undismayed,
Within a cable's length their vessels lay
Off Ismail, and commenced a cannonade,
Which was returned with interest, I may
say,
And by a fire of musketry and grape,
And shells and shot of every size and shape.

XXX.

For six hours bore they without intermission
The Turkish fire, and, aided by their own
Land batteries, worked their guns with great
precision;
At length they found mere cannonade alone
By no means would produce the town's
submission,
And made a signal to retreat at one.
One bark blew up, a second near the works
Running aground, was taken by the Turks.

XXXI.

The Moslem, too, had lost both ships and
men;
But when they saw the enemy retire,
Their Delhis manned some boats, and sailed
again,
And galled the Russians with a heavy fire,
And tried to make a landing on the main;
But here the effect fell short of their desire:
Count Damas drove them back into the water
Pell-mell, and with a whole gazette of
slaughter.

XXXII.

"If" (says the historian here) "I could report
All that the Russians did upon this day,
I think that several volumes would fall short,
And I should still have many things to say;"
And so he says no more—but pays his court
To some distinguished strangers in that fray;
The Prince de Ligne, and Langeron,¹ and
Damas,
Names great as any that the roll of Fame has.

XXXIII.

This being the case, may show us what Fame
is:
For out of these three "*preux Chevaliers*,"
how
Many of common readers give a guess
That such existed? (and they may live now

¹ [Andrault, Comte de Langeron (1763-1831) on the outbreak of the Revolution (1790) took service in the Russian Army. He commanded a division of the Russian Army in the German campaign of 1813, and entered Paris with Blücher, March 30, 1814. He was afterwards Governor of Odessa and of New Russia; and, a second time, fought against the Turks in 1828. Joseph Elizabeth Roger, Comte de Damas d'Antigny (1765-1823) owed his commission in the Russian Army to the influence of the Prince de Ligne. He fought against the Turks in 1787-88, and was distinguished for bravery and daring.]

For aught we know.) Renown 's all hit or miss ;

There's fortune even in Fame, we must allow.
'Tis true, the Memoirs of the Prince de Ligne¹
Have half withdrawn from *him* Oblivion's
screen.

XXXIV.

But here are men who fought in gallant actions
As gallantly as ever heroes fought,
But buried in the heap of such transactions
Their names are rarely found, nor often
sought.

Thus even good fame may suffer sad con-
tractions,

And is extinguished sooner than she ought :
Of all our modern battles, I will bet
You can't repeat nine names from each
Gazette.

XXXV.

In short, this last attack, though rich in glory,
Showed that *somewhere, somehow*, there
was a fault,

And Admiral Ribas (known in Russian story)
Most strongly recommended an assault ;
In which he was opposed by young and hoary,
Which made a long debate ; but I must halt,
For if I wrote down every warrior's speech,
I doubt few readers e'er would mount the
breach.

XXXVI.

There was a man, if that he was a man,
Not that his manhood could be called in
question,

For had he not been Hercules, his span
Had been as short in youth as indigestion
Made his last illness, when, all worn and wan,
He died beneath a tree, as much unblest on
The soil of the green province he had wasted,
As e'er was locust on the land it blasted.

XXXVII.

This was Potemkin²—a great thing in days
When homicide and harlotry made great ;
If stars and titles could entail long praise,
His glory might half equal his estate.

¹ [Charles Joseph, Prince de Ligne, (1735-1814). In 1782 he visited St. Petersburg as envoy of the Emperor Joseph II., won Catherine's favour, and was appointed Field Marshal in the Russian Army. His *Melanges Militaires, etc.*, were first published in 1795.]

² [Prince (Gregor Alexandrovitch) Potemkin, born 1736, died October 15, 1791. "He alighted from his carriage in the midst of the highway, threw himself on the grass, and died under a tree" (*Life of Catherine II.*, by W. Tooke, 1800, iii. 324).]

This fellow, being six foot high, could raise
A kind of phantasy proportionate
In the then Sovereign of the Russian people,
Who measured men as you would do a steeple.

XXXVIII.

While things were in abeyance, Ribas sent
A courier to the Prince, and he succeeded
In ordering matters after his own bent ;

I cannot tell the way in which he pleaded,
But shortly he had cause to be content.

In the mean time, the batteries proceeded,
And fourscore cannon on the Danube's
border

Were briskly fired and answered in due order.

XXXIX.

But on the thirteenth when already part
Of the troops were embarked, the siege to
raise,

A courier on the spur inspired new heart
Into all panthers for newspaper praise,
As well as dilettanti in War's art,

By his despatches (couched in pithy phrase)
Announcing the appointment of that lover of
Battles to the command, Field-Marshal
Souvaroff.

XL.

The letter of the Prince to the same Marshal
Was worthy of a Spartan, had the cause
Been one to which a good heart could be
partial—

Defence of freedom, country, or of laws ;
But as it was mere lust of Power to o'er-arch
all

With its proud brow, it merits slight
applause,

Save for its style, which said, all in a trice,
" You will take Ismail at whatever price."

XLI.

" Let there be Light ! said God, and there
was Light !"

" Let there be Blood !" says man, and
there 's a sea !

The fiat of this spoiled child of the Night
(For Day ne'er saw his merits) could decree
More evil in an hour, than thirty bright
Summers could renovate, though they
should be

Lovely as those which ripened Eden's fruit ;
For War cuts up not only branch, but root.

XLII.

Our friends, the Turks, who with loud
 "Allahs" now
 Began to signalise the Russ retreat,
 Were damnably mistaken; few are slow
 In thinking that their enemy is beat,
 (Or *beaten*, if you insist on grammar, though
 I never think about it in a heat,)
 But here I say the Turks were much mis-
 taken,
 Who hating hogs, yet wished to save their
 bacon.

XLIII.

For, on the sixteenth, at full gallop, drew
 In sight two horsemen, who were deemed
 Cossacques
 For some time, till they came in nearer view:
 They had but little baggage at their backs,
 For there were but *three* shirts between the
 two;
 But on they rode upon two Ukraine hacks,
 Till, in approaching, were at length descried
 In this plain pair, Suwarrow and his guide.

XLIV.

"Great joy to London now!" says some
 great fool,
 When London had a grand illumination,
 Which to that bottle-conjurer, John Bull,
 Is of all dreams the first hallucination;
 So that the streets of coloured lamps are full,
 That sage (*said* John) surrenders at dis-
 cretion
 His purse, his soul, his sense, and even his
 nonsense,
 To gratify, like a huge moth, this *one* sense.

XLV.

'T is strange that he should further "Damn
 his eyes,"
 For they are damned; that once all-famous
 oath
 Is to the Devil now no further prize,
 Since John has lately lost the use of both.
 Debt he calls Wealth, and taxes Paradise;
 And Famine, with her gaunt and bony
 growth,
 Which stare him in the face, he won't examine,
 Or swears that Ceres hath begotten Famine.

XLVI.

But to the tale;—great joy unto the camp!
 To Russian, Tartar, English, French,
 Cossacque,
 O'er whom Suwarrow shone like a gas lamp,
 Presaging a most luminous attack;

Or like a wisp along the marsh so damp,
 Which leads beholders on a boggy walk,
 He flitted to and fro a dancing light,
 Which all who saw it followed, wrong or
 right.

XLVII.

But, certes, matters took a different face;
 There was enthusiasm and much applause,
 The fleet and camp saluted with great grace,
 And all presaged good fortune to their
 cause.
 Within a cannon-shot length of the place
 They drew, constructed ladders, repaired
 flaws
 In former works, made new, prepared
 fascines,
 And all kinds of benevolent machines.

XLVIII.

'T is thus the spirit of a single mind
 Makes that of multitudes take one direction,
 As roll the waters to the breathing wind,
 Or roams the herd beneath the bull's pro-
 tection;
 Or as a little dog will lead the blind,
 Or a bell-wether form the flocks con-
 nection
 By tinkling sounds, when they go forth to
 victual;
 Such is the sway of your great men o'er little.

XLIX.

The whole camp rung with joy; you would
 have thought
 That they were going to a marriage feast
 (This metaphor, I think, holds good as aught
 Since there is discord after both at least):
 There was not now a luggage boy but sought
 Danger and spoil with ardour much
 increased;
 And why? because a little—odd—old man,
 Stripped to his shirt, was come to lead the
 van.

L.

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

LI.

New batteries were erected, and was held
A general council, in which Unanimity
That stranger to most councils, here prevailed,

As sometimes happens in a great extremity ;
And every difficulty being dispelled,
Glory began to dawn with due sublimity,
While Souvaroff, determined to obtain it,
Was teaching his recruits to use the bayonet.¹

LII.

It is an actual fact, that he, commander
In chief, in proper person deigned to drill
The awkward squad, and could afford to squander

His time, a corporal's duty to fulfil ;
Just as you'd break a sucking salamander
To swallow flame, and never take it ill :
He showed them how to mount a ladder
(which
Was not like Jacob's) or to cross a ditch. ●

LIII.

Also he dressed up, for the nonce, fascines
Like men with turbans, scimitars, and dirks,
And made them charge with bayonet these
machines,

By way of lesson against actual Turks ;
And when well practised in these mimic
scenes,
He judged them proper to assail the
works,—

(At which your wise men sneered in phrases
witty),
He made no answer—but he took the city.

LIV.

Most things were in this posture on the eve
Of the assault, and all the camp was in
A stern repose—which you would scarce
conceive ;

Yet men resolved to dash through thick
and thin

Are very silent when they once believe
That all is settled:—there was little din,
For some were thinking of their home and
friends,
And others of themselves and latter ends.

LV.

Suwarrow chiefly was on the alert,
Surveying, drilling, ordering, jesting,
pondering ;
For the man was, we safely may assert,
A thing to wonder at beyond most wonder-
ing ;

¹ Fact : Suwaroff did this in person.

Hero, buffoon, half-demon, and half-dirt,
Praying, instructing, desolating, plunder-
ing—

Now Mars, now Momus—and when bent to
storm

A fortress, Harlequin in uniform.

LVI.

The day before the assault, while upon drill—
For this great conqueror played the
corporal—

Some Cossacques, hovering like hawks round
a hill,

Had met a party towards the Twilight's
fall,

One of whom spoke their tongue—or well or
ill,

'T was much that he was understood at all ;
But whether from his voice, or speech, or
manner,

They found that he had fought beneath their
banner.

LVII.

Whereon immediately at his request

They brought him and his comrades to
head-quarters ;

Their dress was Moslem, but you might have
guessed

That these were merely masquerading
Tartars,

And that beneath each Turkish-fashioned
vest

Lurked Christianity — which sometimes
barters

Her inward grace for outward show, and
makes

It difficult to shun some strange mistakes.

LVIII.

Suwarrow, who was standing in his shirt

Before a company of Calmucks, drilling,
Exclaiming, fooling, swearing at the inert,

And lecturing on the noble art of killing,—

For deeming human clay but common dirt,

This great philosopher was thus instilling
His maxims, which, to martial comprehension,
Proved death in battle equal to a pension ;—

LIX.

Suwarrow, when he saw this company

Of Cossacques and their prey, turned round
and cast

Upon them his slow brow and piercing eye:—

“ Whence come ye ? ” — “ From Constanti-
nople last,

Captives just now escaped," was the reply.

"What are ye?"—"What you see us."

Briefly passed

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

LX.

"Your names?"—"Mine 's Johnson, and
my comrade 's Juan;

The other two are women, and the third
Is neither man nor woman." The Chief
threw on

The party a slight glance, then said, "I
have heard

Your name before, the second is a new one:

To bring the other three here was absurd:
But let that pass:—I think I have heard your
name

In the Nikolaiew regiment?"—"The same."

LXI.

"You served at Widdin?"—"Yes."—"You
led the attack?"

"I did."—"What next?"—"I really hardly
know"—

"You were the first i' the breach?"—"I was
not slack

At least to follow those who might be so"—

"What followed?"—"A shot laid me on my
back,

And I became a prisoner to the foe"—

"You shall have vengeance, for the town
surrounded

Is twice as strong as that where you were
wounded.

LXII.

"Where will you serve?"—"Where'er you
please."—"I know

You like to be the hope of the forlorn,
And doubtless would be foremost on the foe

After the hardships you've already borne.
And this young fellow—say what can he do?

He with the beardless chin and garments
torn?"—

"Why, General, if he hath no greater fault
In War than Love, he had better lead the
assault"—

LXIII.

"He shall if that he dare." Here Juan
bowed

Low as the compliment deserved. Su-
warrow

Continued: "Your old regiment 's allowed,
By special providence, to lead to-morrow,

Or, it may be, to-night, the assault: I have
vowed

To several Saints, that shortly plough or
harrow

Shall pass o'er what was Ismail, and its tusk
Be unimpeded by the proudest mosque.

LXIV.

"So now, my lads, for Glory!"—Here he
turned

And drilled away in the most classic Russian,
Until each high heroic bosom burned

For cash and conquest, as if from a cushion
A preacher had held forth (who nobly spurned
All earthly goods save tithes) and bade
them push on

To slay the Pagans who resisted, battering
The armies of the Christian Empress
Catherine.

LXV.

Johnson, who knew by this long colloquy

Himself a favourite, ventured to address
Suwarrow, though engaged with accents high

In his resumed amusement. "I confess
My debt in being thus allowed to die

Among the foremost; but if you'd express
Explicitly our several posts, my friend

And self would know what duty to attend."

LXVI.

"Right! I was busy, and forgot. Why, you
Will join your former regiment, which

should be

Now under arms. Ho! Katskoff, take him
to"—

(Here he called up a Polish orderly)

"His post, I mean the regiment Nikolaiew:
The stranger stripling may remain with me;

He's a fine boy. The women may be sent
To the other baggage, or to the sick tent."

LXVII.

But here a sort of scene began to ensue:

The ladies,—who by no means had been
bred

To be disposed of in a way so new,

Although their Harem education led,

Doubtless, to that of doctrines the most true,
Passive obedience,—now raised up the head,

With flashing eyes and starting tears, and
flung

Their arms, as hens their wings about their
young,

LXVIII.

O'er the promoted couple of brave men
Who were thus honoured by the greatest
Chief

That ever peopled Hell with heroes slain,
Or plunged a province or a realm in grief.
Oh, foolish mortals! Always taught in vain!
Oh, glorious Laurel! since for one sole leaf
Of thine imaginary deathless tree,
Of blood and tears must flow the unebbing
sea.

LXIX.

Suwarrow, who had small regard for tears,
And not much sympathy for blood, surveyed
The women with their hair about their ears,
And natural agonies, with a slight shade
Of feeling: for however Habit sears
Men's hearts against whole millions, when
their trade

Is butchery, sometimes a single sorrow
Will touch even heroes—and such was Su-
warrow.

LXX.

He said,—and in the kindest Calmuck tone,—
“Why, Johnson, what the devil do you
mean
By bringing women here? They shall be
shown

All the attention possible, and seen
In safety to the waggons, where alone
In fact they can be safe. You should have
been

Aware this kind of baggage never thrives;
Save wed a year, I hate recruits with wives”—

LXXI.

“May it please your Excellency,” thus replied
Our British friend, “these are the wives of
others,

And not our own. I am too qualified
By service with my military brothers
To break the rules by bringing one's own
bride

Into a camp: I know that nought so
bothers

The hearts of the heroic on a charge,
As leaving a small family at large.

LXXII.

“But these are but two Turkish ladies, who
With their attendant aided our escape,
And afterwards accompanied us through
A thousand perils in this dubious shape.

To me this kind of life is not so new;

To them, poor things, it is an awkward
scrape:

I therefore, if you wish me to fight freely,
Request that they may both be used genteelly.”

LXXIII.

Meantime these two poor girls, with swim-
ming eyes,

Looked on as if in doubt if they could trust
Their own protectors; nor was their surprise

Less than their grief (and truly not less just)
To see an old man, rather wild than wise

In aspect, plainly clad, besmeared with dust,
Stripped to his waistcoat, and that not too
clean,

More feared than all the Sultans ever seen.

LXXIV.

For everything seemed resting on his nod,
As they could read in all eyes. Now to
them,

Who were accustomed, as a sort of god,

To see the Sultan, rich in many a gem,
Like an imperial peacock stalk abroad

(That royal bird, whose tale's a diadem,)
With all the pomp of Power, it was a doubt
How Power could condescend to do without.

LXXV.

John Johnson, seeing their extreme dismay,

Though little versed in feelings oriental,
Suggested some slight comfort in his way:

Don Juan, who was much more sentimental,
Swore they should see him by the dawn of
day,

Or that the Russian army should repent all:
And, strange to say, they found some con-
solation

In this—for females like exaggeration.

LXXVI.

And then with tears, and sighs, and some
slight kisses,

They parted for the present—these to await,
According to the artillery's hits or misses,

What sages call Chance, Providence, or
Fate—

(Uncertainty is one of many blisses,

A mortgage on Humanity's estate;—

While their belovéd friends began to arm,

To burn a town which never did them harm.

LXXVII.

Suwarrow,—who but saw things in the gross,
 Being much too gross to see them in detail,
 Who calculated life as so much dross,
 And as the wind a widowed nation's wail,
 And cared as little for his army's loss
 (So that their efforts should at length pre-
 vail)
 As wife and friends did for the boils of Job,—
 What was't to him to hear two women sob?

LXXVIII.

Nothing.—The work of Glory still went on
 In preparations for a cannonade
 As terrible as that of Ilium,
 If Homer had found mortars ready made;
 But now, instead of slaying Priam's son,
 We only can but talk of escalade,
 Bombs, drums, guns, bastions, batteries,
 bayonets, bullets—
 Hard words, which stick in the soft Muses'
 gullets.

LXXIX.

Oh, thou eternal Homer! who couldst charm
 All ears, though long; all ages, though
 so short,
 By merely wielding with poetic arm
 Arms to which men will never more resort,
 Unless gunpowder should be found to harm
 Much less than is the hope of every court,
 Which now is leagued young Freedom to
 annoy;
 But they will not find Liberty a Troy:—

LXXX.

Oh, thou eterna! Homer! I have now
 To paint a siege, wherein more men were
 slain,
 With deadlier engines and a speedier blow,
 Than in thy Greek gazette of that
 campaign;
 And yet, like all men else, I must allow,
 To vie with thee would be about as vain
 As for a brook to cope with Ocean's flood,—
 But still we moderns equal you in blood:

LXXXI.

If not in poetry, at least in fact;
 And fact is Truth, the grand desideratum!
 Of which, howe'er the Muse describes each
 act,
 There should be ne'ertheless a slight
 substratum.
 But now the town is going to be attacked;
 Great deeds are doing—how shall I relate
 'em?

Souls of immortal Generals! Phœbus watches
 To colour up his rays from your despatches.

LXXXII.

Oh, ye great bulletins of Bonaparte!
 Oh, ye less grand long lists of killed 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 confounded),
 A portion of your fading twilight hues—
 So beautiful, so fleeting—to the Muse.

LXXXIII.

When I call "fading" martial immortality,
 I mean, that every age and every year,
 And almost every day, in sad reality,
 Some sucking hero is compelled to rear,
 Who, when we come to sum up the totality
 Of deeds to human happiness most dear,
 Turns out to be a butcher in great business,
 Afflicting young folks with a sort of dizziness.

LXXXIV.

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!

LXXXV.

At least *he feels it*, and some say he *sees*,
 Because he runs before it like a pig;
 Or, if that simple sentence should displease,
 Say, that he scuds before it like a brig,
 A schooner, or—but it is time to ease
 This Canto, ere my Muse perceives fatigue.
 The next shall ring a peal to shake all people.
 Like a bob-major from a village steeple.

LXXXVI.

Hark! through the silence of the cold, dull
 night,
 The hum of armies gathering rank on
 rank!
 Lo! dusky masses steal in dubious sight
 Along the leaguered wall and bristling
 bank

Of the armed river, while with straggling
light
The stars peep through the vapours dim
and dank,
Which curl in various wreaths :—how soon
the smoke
Of Hell shall pall them in a deeper cloak !

LXXXVII.

Here pause we for the present—as even then
That awful pause, dividing Life from
Death,
Struck for an instant on the hearts of men,—
Thousands of whom were drawing their
last breath !
A moment—and all will be Life again !
The march ! the charge ! the shouts of
either faith,
Hurrah ! and Allah ! and one moment more—
The death-cry drowning in the Battle's roar.

CANTO THE EIGHTH.

I.

OH, blood and thunder ! and oh, blood and
wounds !
These are but vulgar oaths, as you may
deem,
Too gentle reader ! and most shocking
sounds :—
And so they are ; yet thus is Glory's dream
Unriddled, and as my true Muse expounds
At present such things, since they are her
theme,
So be they her inspirers ! Call them Mars,
Bellona, what you will—they mean but wars.

II.

All was prepared—the fire, the sword, the
men
To wield them in their terrible array,—
The army, like a lion from his den,
Marched forth with nerve and sinews bent
to slay,—
A human Hydra, issuing from its fen
To breathe destruction on its winding way,
Whose heads were heroes, which cut off in
vain
Immediately in others grew again.

III.

History can only take things in the gross ;
But could we know them in detail,
perchance
In balancing the profit and the loss,
War's merit it by no means might enhance,

To waste so much gold for a little dross,
As hath been done, mere conquest to
advance.

The drying up a single tear has more
Of honest fame, than shedding seas of gore.

IV.

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 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.

V.

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.

VI.

The night was dark, and the thick mist allowed
Nought to be seen save the artillery's flame,
Which arched the horizon like a fiery cloud,
And in the Danube's waters shone the
same—

A mirrored Hell ! the volleying roar, and loud
Long booming of each peal on peal,
o'ercame

The ear far more than thunder ; for Heaven's
flashes

Spare, or smite rarely—Man's make millions
ashes !

VII.

The column, ordered on the assault, scarce
passed

Beyond the Russian batteries a few toises,
When up the bristling Moslem rose at last,
Answering the Christian thunders with like
voices :

Then one vast fire, air, earth, and stream
embraced,

Which rocked as 't were beneath the
mighty noises ;

While the whole rampart blazed like Etna,
when
The restless Titan hiccups in his den ;

VIII.

And one enormous shout of "Allah!" rose
In the same moment, loud as even the roar
Of War's most mortal engines, to their foes
Hurling defiance : city, stream, and shore
Resounded "Allah!" and the clouds which
close

With thickening canopy the conflict o'er,
Vibrate to the Eternal name. Hark! through
All sounds it pierceth—"Allah! Allah Hu!"¹

IX.

The columns were in movement one and all,
But of the portion which attacked by water,
Thicker than leaves the lives began to fall,
Though led by Arseniew, that great son of
slaughter,

As brave as ever faced both bomb and ball.

"Carnage" (so Wordsworth tells you) "is
God's daughter :"²

If *he* speak truth, she is Christ's sister, and
Just now behaved as in the Holy Land.

X.

The Prince de Ligne was wounded in the
knee ;

Count Chapeau-Bras, too, had a ball
between

His cap and head, which proves the head to be
Aristocratic as was ever seen,

Because it then received no injury

More than the cap ; in fact, the ball could
mean

No harm unto a right legitimate head ;

"Ashes to ashes"—why not lead to lead ?

¹ Allah Hu! is properly the war-cry of the
Mussulmans, and they dwell on the last syllable,
which gives it a wild and peculiar effect.

² "But *Thy** most dreaded instrument,
In working out a pure intent,
Is Man—arrayed for mutual slaughter,—
Yea, *Carnage is thy daughter!*"

—Wordsworth's *Thanksgiving Ode* (January 18,
1816), [stanza xii. lines 20, 23.]

Wordsworth omitted the lines in the last edition
of his poems, which was revised by his own hand.]

* To wit, the Deity's: this is perhaps as pretty
a pedigree for murder as ever was found out by
Garter King at Arms.—What would have been
said, had any free-spoken people discovered such a
lineage ?

XI.

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
evinced

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

XII.

Three hundred cannon threw up their emetic,
And thirty thousand muskets flung their
pills

Like hail, to make a bloody Diuretic.

Mortality! thou hast thy monthly bills :
Thy plagues—thy famines—thy physicians—
yet tick,

Like the death-watch, within our ears theills
Past, present, and to come ;—but all may yield
To the true portrait of one battle-field ;

XIII.

There the still varying pangs, which multiply

Until their very number makes men hard

By the infinities of agony,

Which meet the gaze, whate'er it may
regard—

The groan, the roll in dust, the all-*white* eye
Turned back within its socket,—these
reward

Your rank and file by thousands, while the rest
May win perhaps a riband at the breast !

XIV.

Yet I love Glory ;—Glory is a great thing :—

Think what it is to be in your old age

Maintained at the expense of your good
King :

A moderate pension shakes full many a
sage,

And Heroes are but made for bards to sing,
Which is still better—thus, in verse, to wage

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

XV.

The troops, already disembarked, pushed on

To take a battery on the right : the others,

Who landed lower down, their landing done,

Had set to work as briskly as their brothers :

Being grenadiers, they mounted one by one,
Cheerful as children climb the breasts of
mothers,
O'er the intrenchment and the palisade,
Quite orderly, as if upon parade.

XVI.

And this was admirable: for so hot
The fire was, that were red Vesuvius loaded,
Besides its lava, with all sorts of shot
And shells or hells, it could not more have
goaded.
Of officers a third fell on the spot,
A thing which Victory by no means boded
To gentlemen engaged in the assault:
Hounds, when the huntsman tumbles, are at
fault.

XVII.

But here I leave the general concern
To track our Hero on his path of Fame:
He must his laurels separately earn—
For fifty thousand heroes, name by name,
Though all deserving equally to turn
A couplet, or an elegy to claim,
Would form a lengthy lexicon of Glory,
And, what is worse still, a much longer story:

XVIII.

And therefore we must give the greater
number
To the Gazette—which doubtless fairly dealt
By the deceased, who lie in famous slumber
In ditches, fields, or wheresoe'er they felt
Their clay for the last time their souls
encumber;—
Thrice happy he whose name has been well
spelt
In the despatch: I knew a man whose loss
Was printed *Grove*, although his name was
Grose.¹

¹ A fact: see the Waterloo Gazettes. I recollect remarking at the time to a friend:—"There is fame! a man is killed, his name is Grose, and they print it Grove." I was at college with the deceased, who was a very amiable and clever man, and his society in great request for his wit, gaiety, and "Chansons à boire."

[In the *London Gazette Extraordinary* of June 22, 1815, Captain Grove, 1st Guards, is among the list of killed. In the supplement to the *London Gazette*, published July 3, 1815, the mistake was corrected, and the entry runs, "1st Guards, 3d Batt. Lieut. Edward Grose, (Captain)."]

XIX.

Juan and Johnson joined a certain corps,
And fought away with might and main,
not knowing
The way which they had never trod before,
And still less guessing where they might be
going;
But on they marched, dead bodies trampling
o'er,
Firing, and thrusting, slashing, sweating,
glowing,
But fighting thoughtlessly enough to win,
To their *two* selves, *one* whole bright bulletin.

XX.

Thus on they wallowed in the bloody mire
Of dead and dying thousands,—sometimes
gaining
A yard or two of ground, which brought them
nigher
To some odd angle for which all were
straining;
At other times, repulsed by the close fire,
Which really poured as if all Hell were
raining
Instead of Heaven, they stumbled backwards
o'er
A wounded comrade, sprawling in his gore.

XXI.

Though 't was Don Juan's first of fields, and
though
The nightly muster and the silent march
In the chill dark, when Courage does not glow
So much as under a triumphal arch,
Perhaps might make him shiver, yawn, or
throw
A glance on the dull clouds (as thick as
starch,
Which stiffened Heaven) as if he wished for
day;—
Yet for all this he did not run away.

XXII.

Indeed he could not. But what if he had?
There *have been* and *are* heroes who begun
With something not much better, or as bad:
Frederick the Great from Molwitz deigned
to run,
For the first and last time; for, like a pad,
Or hawk, or bride, most mortals after one
Warm bout are broken in to their new tricks,
And fight like fiends for pay or politics.

XXIII.

He was what Erin calls, in her sublime
 Old Erse or Irish, or it may be *Punic*;—
 (The antiquarians¹—who can settle Time;
 Which settles all things, Roman, Greek, or
 Runic—
 Swear that Pat's language sprung from the
 same clime
 With Hannibal, and wears the Tyrian tunic
 Of Dido's alphabet—and this is rational
 As any other notion, and not national;—)

XXIV.

But Juan was quite "a broth of a boy,"
 A thing of impulse and a child of song;
 Now swimming in the sentiment of joy,
 Or the *sensation* (if that phrase seem wrong),
 And afterward, if he must needs destroy,
 In such good company as always throng
 To battles, sieges, and that kind of pleasure,
 No less delighted to employ his leisure;

XXV.

But always without malice: if he warred
 Or loved, it was with what we call "the best
 Intentions," which form all Mankind's *trump
 card*,
 To be produced when brought up to the test.
 The statesman—hero—harlot—lawyer—ward
 Off each attack, when people are in quest
 Of their designs, by saying they *meant well*;
 'T is pity "that such meaning should pave
 Hell."

XXVI.

I almost lately have begun to doubt
 Whether Hell's pavement—if it be so
paved—
 Must not have latterly been quite worn out,
 Not by the numbers good intent hath saved
 But by the mass who go below without
 Those ancient good intentions, which once
 shaved
 And smoothed the brimstone of that street of
 Hell
 Which bears the greatest likeness to Pall Mall.

¹ See General Valancey and Sir Lawrence Parsons.

[General Charles Valancey (1721-1812) published an "Essay on the Celtic Language," etc., in 1782. Sir Lawrence Parsons (1758-1841), second Earl of Rosse, in a pamphlet entitled *Defence of the Antient History of Ireland*, in 1795, maintains (p. 158) "that the Carthaginian and the Irish language being originally the same, either the Carthaginians must have been descended from the Irish, or the Irish from the Carthaginians."]

XXVII.

Juan, by some strange chance, which oft
 divides
 Warrior from warrior in their grim career,
 Like chastest wives from constant husbands'
 sides
 Just at the close of the first bridal year,
 By one of those odd turns of Fortune's tides,
 Was on a sudden rather puzzled here,
 When, after a good deal of heavy firing,
 He found himself alone, and friends retiring.

XXVIII.

I don't know how the thing occurred—it might
 Be that the greater part were killed or
 wounded,
 And that the rest had faced unto the right
 About; a circumstance which has con-
 founded
 Cæsar himself, who, in the very sight
 Of his whole army, which so much
 abounded
 In courage, was obliged to snatch a shield,
 And rally back his Romans to the field.

XXIX.

Juan, who had no shield to snatch, and was
 No Cæsar, but a fine young lad, who fought
 He knew not why, arriving at this pass,
 Stopped for a minute, as perhaps he ought
 For a much longer time; then, like an ass
 (Start not, kind reader, since great Homer¹
 thought
 This simile enough for Ajax, Juan
 Perhaps may find it better than a new one);

XXX.

Then, like an ass, he went upon his way,
 And, what was stranger, never looked
 behind;
 But seeing, flashing forward, like the day
 Over the hills, a fire enough to blind
 Those who dislike to look upon a fray,
 He stumbled on, to try if he could find
 A path, to add his own slight arm and forces
 To corps, the greater part of which were
 corses.

¹ ["As near a field of corn, a stubborn ass . . .
 E'en so great Ajax son of Telamon."]

—*The Iliad*, Lord Derby's translation,
 bk. xi. lines 639, 645.]

XXXI.

Perceiving then no more the commandant
Of his own corps, nor even the corps,
which had
Quite disappeared—the gods know how! (I
can't

Account for everything which may look bad
In history; but we at least may grant

It was not marvellous that a mere lad,
In search of Glory, should look on before,
Nor care a pinch of snuff about his corps:—

XXXII.

Perceiving nor commander nor commanded,
And left at large, like a young heir,¹ to make
His way to—where he knew not—single
handed;

As travellers follow over bog and brake
An "ignis fatuus," or as sailors stranded
Unto the nearest hut themselves betake,
So Juan, following Honour and his nose,
Rushed where the thickest fire announced
most foes.

XXXIII.

He knew not where he was, nor greatly
cared,

For he was dizzy, busy, and his veins
Filled as with lightning—for his spirit shared
The hour, as is the case with lively brains;
And where the hottest fire was seen and
heard,

And the loud cannon pealed his hoarsest
strains,
He rushed, while earth and air were sadly
shaken

By thy humane discovery, Friar Bacon!²

XXXIV.

And as he rushed along, it came to pass he
Fell in with what was late the second
column,

Under the orders of the General Lascy,
But now reduced, as is a bulky volume
Into an elegant extract (much less massy)
Of heroism, and took his place with solemn
Air 'midst the rest, who kept their valiant
faces

And levelled weapons still against the Glacis.

¹ [In the Preface to *Childe Harold* Byron compares his hero to a "poetical Zeluco"—a "young heir," left to his own devices.]

² Gunpowder is said to have been discovered by this friar.

XXXV.

Just at this crisis up came Johnson too,
Who had "retreated," as the phrase is
when

Men run away much rather than go through
Destruction's jaws into the Devil's den;
But Johnson was a clever fellow, who
Knew when and how "to cut and come
again,"

And never ran away, except when running
Was nothing but a valorous kind of cunning.

XXXVI.

And so, when all his corps were dead or
dying,

Except Don Juan, a mere novice, whose
More virgin valour never dreamt of flying,
From ignorance of danger, which induces
Its votaries, like Innocence relying
On its own strength, with careless nerves
and thews,—

Johnson retired a little, just to rally
Those who catch cold in "shadows of
Death's valley."

XXXVII.

And there, a little sheltered from the shot,
Which rained from bastion, battery,
parapet,
Rampart, wall, casement, house—for there
was not

In this extensive city, sore beset
By Christian soldiery, a single spot
Which did not combat like the Devil, as
yet,—

He found a number of Chasseurs, all scattered
By the resistance of the chase they battered.

XXXVIII.

And these he called on; and, what's strange,
they came

Unto his call, unlike "the spirits from
The vasty deep," to whom you may exclaim,
Says Hotspur, long ere they will leave
their home:—

Their reasons were uncertainty, or shame
At shrinking from a bullet or a bomb,
And that odd impulse, which in wars or
creeds
Makes men, like cattle, follow him who leads.

XXXIX.

By Jove! he was a noble fellow, Johnson,
And though his name, than Ajax or
Achilles,
Sounds less harmonious, underneath the sun
soon

We shall not see his likeness: he could
kill his

Man quite as quietly as blows the Monsoon
Her steady breath (which some months
the same *still* is):
Seldom he varied feature, hue, or muscle,
And could be very busy without bustle;

XL.

And therefore, when he ran away, he did so
Upon reflection, knowing that behind
He would find others who would fain be rid so
Of idle apprehensions, which like wind
Trouble heroic stomachs. Though their lids
so

Oft are soon closed, all heroes are not blind,
But when they light upon immediate death,
Retire a little, merely to take breath.

XLI.

But Johnson only ran off, to return
With many other warriors, as we said,
Unto that rather somewhat misty bourne,
Which Hamlet tells us is a pass of dread.
To Jack, howe'er, this gave but slight concern:
His soul (like galvanism upon the dead)
Acted upon the living as on wire,
And led them back into the heaviest fire.

XLII.

Egad! they found the second time what they
The first time thought quite terrible enough
To fly from, malgré all which people say
Of Glory, and all that immortal stuff
Which fills a regiment (besides their pay,
That daily shilling which makes warriors
tough)—
They found on their return the self-same
welcome,
Which made some *think*, and others *know*,
a *hell* come.

XLIII.

They fell as thick as harvests beneath hail,
Grass before scythes, or corn below the sickle,
Proving that trite old truth, that Life's as frail
As any other boon for which men stickle.
The Turkish batteries thrashed them like a
flail,

Or a good boxer, into a sad pickle
Putting the very bravest, who were knocked
Upon the head before their guns were cocked.

XLIV.

The Turks behind the traverses and flanks
Of the next bastion, fired away like devils,
And swept, as gales sweep foam away, whole
ranks:

However, Heaven knows how, the Fate
who levels

Towns—nations—worlds, in her revolving
pranks,

So ordered it, amidst these sulphury revels,
That Johnson, and some few who had
not scampered,
Reached the interior "talus" of the rampart.

XLV.

First one or two, then five, six, and a dozen
Came mounting quickly up, for it was now
All neck or nothing, as, like pitch or rosin,
Flame was showered forth above, as well's
below,
So that you scarce could say who best had
chosen,

The gentlemen that were the first to show
Their martial faces on the parapet,
Or those who thought it brave to wait as yet.

XLVI.

But those who scaled, found out that their
advance
Was favoured by an accident or blunder:
The Greek or Turkish Cohorn's¹ ignorance
Had palisadoed in a way you'd wonder
To see in forts of Netherlands or France—
(Though these to our Gibraltar must knock
under)—

Right in the middle of the parapet
Just named, these palisades were primly set:

XLVII.

So that on either side some nine or ten
Paces were left, whereon you could con-
trive
To march; a great convenience to our men,
At least to all those who were left alive,
Who thus could form a line and fight again;
And that which further aided them to
strive
Was, that they could kick down the palisades,
Which scarcely rose much higher than grass
blades.

XLVIII.

Among the first,—I will not say *the first*,
For such precedence upon such occasions
Will oftentimes make deadly quarrels burst
Out between friends as well as allied
nations:

¹ [Baron Menno van Coehoorn (circ. 1641-1704), a Dutch military engineer, the contemporary and rival of Vauban, invented a mortar which bore his name. He was the author of a celebrated work on fortification, published in 1692.]

The Briton must be bold who really durst
Put to such trial John Bull's partial patience,
As say that Wellington at Waterloo
Was beaten,—though the Prussians say so
too;—

XLIX.

And that if Blucher, Bulow, Gneisenau,
And God knows who besides in "au" and
"ow,"
Had not come up in time to cast an awe
Into the hearts of those who fought till now
As tigers combat with an empty crew,
The Duke of Wellington had ceased to show
His Orders—also to receive his pensions,
Which are the heaviest that our history
mentions.

L.

But never mind;—"God save the King!"
and *Kings!*
For if *he* don't I doubt if *men* will longer—
I think I hear a little bird, who sings
The people by and by will be the stronger:
The veriest jade will wince whose harness
wrings
So much into the raw as quite to wrong her
Beyond the rules of posting,—and the mob
At last fall sick of imitating Job.

LI.

At first it grumbles, then it swears, and then,
Like David, flings smooth pebbles 'gainst
a Giant;
At last it takes to weapons such as men
Snatch when Despair makes human hearts
less pliant.
Then comes "the tug of war";—'t will come
again,
I rather doubt; and I would fain say "fie
on 't,"
If I had not perceived that Revolution
Alone can save the earth from Hell's pollution.

LII.

But to continue:—I say not *the* first,
But of the first, our little friend Don Juan
Walked o'er the walls of Ismail, as if nursed
Amidst such scenes—though this was quite
a new one
To him, and I should hope to *most*. The
thirst
Of Glory, which so pierces through and
through one,
Pervaded him—although a generous creature,
As warm in heart as feminine in feature.

LIII.

And here he was—who upon Woman's breast,
Even from a child, felt like a child; howe'er
The Man in all the rest might be confessed,
To him it was Elysium to be there;
And he could even withstand that awkward
test
Which Rousseau points out to the dubious
fair,
"Observe your lover when he *leaves* your
arms;"
But Juan never *left* them—while they had
charms,

LIV.

Unless compelled by Fate, or wave, or wind,
Or near relations who are much the same.
But *here* he was!—where each tie that can
bind
Humanity must yield to steel and flame:
And *he* whose very body was all mind,
Flung here by Fate or Circumstance,
which tame
The loftiest, hurried by the time and place,
Dashed on like a spurred blood-horse in a race.

LV.

So was his blood stirred while he found
resistance,
As is the hunter's at the five-bar gate,
Or double post and rail, where the existence
Of Britain's youth depends upon their
weight—
The lightest being the safest: at a distance
He hated cruelty, as all men hate
Blood, until heated—and even then his own
At times would curdle o'er some heavy groan.

LVI.

The General Lascy, who had been hard
pressed,
Seeing arrive an aid so opportune
As were some hundred youngsters all abreast,
Who came as if just dropped down from
the moon
To Juan, who was nearest him, addressed
His thanks, and hopes to take the city soon,
Not reckoning him to be a "base Bezonian"
(As Pistol calls it), but a young Livonian.

LVII.

Juan, to whom he spoke in German, knew
As much of German as of Sanscrit, and
In answer made an inclination to
The General who held him in command;

For seeing one with ribands, black and blue,
 Stars, medals, and a bloody sword in hand,
 Addressing him in tones which seemed to
 thank,
 He recognised an officer of rank.

LVIII.

Short speeches pass between two men who
 speak

No common language; and besides, in time
 Of war and taking towns, when many a shriek
 Rings o'er the dialogue, and many a crime
 Is perpetrated ere a word can break

Upon the ear, and sounds of horror chime
 In like church-bells, with sigh, howl, groan,
 yell, prayer,
 There cannot be much conversation there.

LIX.

And therefore all we have related in
 Two long octaves, passed in a little minute;
 But in the same small minute, every sin
 Contrived to get itself comprised within it.
 The very cannon, deafened by the din,
 Grew dumb, for you might almost hear a
 linnet,
 As soon as thunder, 'midst the general noise
 Of Human Nature's agonizing voice!

LX.

The town was entered. Oh Eternity!—
 "God made the country, and man made
 the town,"

So Cowper says—and I begin to be
 Of his opinion, when I see cast down
 Rome — Babylon — Tyre — Carthage — Nine-
 veh—

All walls men know, and many never
 known;
 And pondering on the present and the past,
 To deem the woods shall be our home at
 last:—

LXI.

Of all men, saving Sylla, the man-slayer,
 Who passes for in life and death most
 lucky,
 Of the great names which in our faces stare,
 The General Boon,¹ back-woodsman of
 Kentucky,

¹ [Daniel Boone (1735-1820) was the grandson of an English settler, George Boone, of Exeter. His great work in life was the conquest of Kentucky. He constructed a fort, which he named Boonesborough, and carried on a protracted campaign with varying but final success against the Indians. In 1795 he removed to Missouri, then a Spanish possession. Napoleon wrested Missouri from the Spaniards, only to sell the territory to the United

Was happiest amongst mortals anywhere;
 For killing nothing but a bear or buck, he
 Enjoyed the lonely, vigorous, harmless days
 Of his old age in wilds of deepest maze.

LXII.

Crime came not near him—she is not the
 child
 Of solitude; Health shrank not from him
 —for

Her home is in the rarely trodden wild,
 Where if men seek her not, and death be
 more
 Their choice than life, forgive them, as be-
 guiled

By habit to what their own hearts abhor,
 In cities caged. The present case in point I
 Cite is, that Boon lived hunting up to ninety;

LXIII.

And, what 's still stranger, left behind a name
 For which men vainly decimate the throng,
 Not only famous, but of that *good* fame,
 Without which Glory's but a tavern song—
 Simple, serene, the *antipodes* of Shame,
 Which Hate nor Envy e'er could tinge with
 wrong;

An active hermit, even in age the child
 Of Nature—or the Man of Ross run wild.

LXIV.

'T is true he shrank from men even of his
 nation,—

When they built up unto his darling trees,
 He moved some hundred miles off, for a
 station

Where there were fewer houses and more
 ease;

The inconvenience of civilisation
 Is, that you neither can be pleased nor
 please;

But where he met the individual man,
 He showed himself as kind as mortal can.

LXV.

He was not all alone: around him grew
 A sylvan tribe of children of the chase,
 Whose young, unawakened world was ever
 new,

Nor sword nor sorrow yet had left a trace
 States, with the result that in 1810 he was con-
 firmed in the possession of 850 out of the 8000 acres
 which he had acquired in 1795. "Boone was then
 seventy-five years of age, hale and strong. The
 charm of the hunter's life clung to him to the last,
 and in his eighty-second year he went on a hunting
 excursion to the mouth of the Kansas river."—
 Appleton's *Encyclopedia, etc.*, art. "Boone."

On her unwrinkled brow, nor could you view
 A frown on Nature's or on human face;
 The free-born forest found and kept them
 free,
 And fresh as is a torrent or a tree.

LXVI.

And tall, and strong, and swift of foot were
 they,
 Beyond the dwarfing city's pale abortions,
 Because their thoughts had never been the
 prey
 Of care or gain: the green woods were
 their portions;
 No sinking spirits told them they grew grey,
 No fashion made them apes of her distor-
 tions;
 Simple they were, not savage—and their
 rifles,
 Though very true, were not yet used for
 trifles.

LXVII.

Motion was in their days, Rest in their
 slumbers,
 And Cheerfulness the handmaid of their
 toil;
 Nor yet too many nor too few their numbers;
 Corruption could not make their hearts her
 soil;
 The lust which stings, the splendour which
 encumbers,
 With the free foresters divide no spoil;
 Serene, not sullen, were the solitudes
 Of this unsighing people of the woods.

LXVIII.

So much for Nature:—by way of variety,
 Now back to thy great joys, Civilisation!
 And the sweet consequence of large society,
 War—pestilence—the despot's desolation,
 The kingly scourge, the lust of notoriety,
 The millions slain by soldiers for their
 ration,
 The scenes like Catherine's boudoir at three-
 score,
 With Ismail's storm to soften it the more.

LXIX.

The town was entered: first one column
 made
 Its sanguinary way good—then another;
 The reeking bayonet and the flashing blade
 Clashed 'gainst the scimitar, and babe and
 mother

With distant shrieks were heard Heaven to
 upbraid:—

Still closer sulphury clouds began to
 smother
 The breath of morn and man, where foot by
 foot
 The maddened Turks their city still dispute.

LXX.

Koutousow, he who afterwards beat back
 (With some assistance from the frost and
 snow)
 Napoleon on his bold and bloody track,
 It happened was himself beat back just
 now:
 He was a jolly fellow, and could crack
 His jest alike in face of friend or foe,
 Though Life, and Death, and Victory were
 at stake;
 But here it seemed his jokes had ceased to
 take:

LXXI.

For having thrown himself into a ditch,
 Followed in haste by various grenadiers,
 Whose blood the puddle greatly did enrich,
 He climbed to where the parapet appears;
 But there his project reached its utmost pitch
 ('Mongst other deaths the General Ribau-
 pierre's
 Was much regretted), for the Moslem men
 Threw them all down into the ditch again.

LXXII.

And had it not been for some stray troops
 landing
 They knew not where, being carried by the
 stream
 To some spot, where they lost their under-
 standing,
 And wandered up and down as in a dream,
 Until they reached, as daybreak was expand-
 ing,
 That which a portal to their eyes did
 seem,—
 The great and gay Koutousow might have
 lain
 Where three parts of his column yet remain.

LXXIII.

And scrambling round the rampart, these
 same troops,
 After the taking of the "Cavalier,"
 Just as Koutousow's most "forlorn" of
 "hopes"
 Took, like chameleons, some slight tinge
 of fear,

Opened the gate called "Kilia," to the
groups
Of baffled heroes, who stood shyly near,
Sliding knee-deep in lately frozen mud,
Now thawed into a marsh of human blood.

LXXIV.

The Kozacks, or, if so you please, Cos-
sacques—
(I don't much pique myself upon ortho-
graphy,
So that I do not grossly err in facts,
Statistics, tactics, politics and geography)—
Having been used to serve on horses' backs,
And no great dilettanti in topography
Of fortresses, but fighting where it pleases
Their chiefs to order,—were all cut to pieces.

LXXV.

Their column, though the Turkish batteries
thundered
Upon them, ne'ertheless had reached the
rampart,
And naturally thought they could have
plundered
The city, without being farther hampered ;
But as it happens to brave men, they
blundered—
The Turks at first pretended to have
scampered,
Only to draw them 'twixt two bastion corners,
From whence they sallied on those Christian
scorners.

LXXVI.

Then being taken by the tail—a taking
Fatal to bishops as to soldiers—these
Cossacques were all cut off as day was
breaking,
And found their lives were let at a short
lease—
But perished without shivering or shaking,
Leaving as ladders their heaped carcasses,
O'er which Lieutenant-Colonel Yesouskoi
Marched with the brave battalion of
Polouzki :—

LXXVII.

This valiant man killed all the Turks he met,
But could not eat them, being in his turn
Slain by some Mussulmans, who would not
yet,
Without resistance, see their city burn.
The walls were won, but 't was an even bet
Which of the armies would have cause to
mourn :

'T was blow for blow, disputing inch by inch,
For one would not retreat, nor 't other flinch.

LXXVIII.

Another column also suffered much :—
And here we may remark with the historian,
You should but give few cartridges to such
Troops as are meant to march with
greatest glory on :
When matters must be carried by the touch
Of the bright bayonet, and they all should
hurry on,
They sometimes, with a hankering for
existence,
Keep merely firing at a foolish distance.

LXXIX.

A junction of the General Meknop's men
(Without the General, who had fallen some
time
Before, being badly seconded just then)
Was made at length with those who dared
to climb
The death-disgorging rampart once again ;
And, though the Turk's resistance was
sublime,
They took the bastion, which the Seraskier
Defended at a price extremely dear.

LXXX.

Juan and Johnson, and some volunteers,
Among the foremost, offered him good
quarter,
A word which little suits with Seraskiers,
Or at least suited not this valiant Tartar.
He died, deserving well his country's tears,
A savage sort of military martyr :
An English naval officer, who wished
To make him prisoner, was also dished :

LXXXI.

For all the answer to his proposition
Was from a pistol-shot that laid him dead ;
On which the rest, without more intermission,
Began to lay about with steel and lead—
The pious metals most in requisition
On such occasions : not a single head
Was spared ;—three thousand Moslems
perished here,
And sixteen bayonets pierced the Seraskier.

LXXXII.

The city 's taken—only part by part—
And Death is drunk with gore : there 's not
a street
Where fights not to the last some desperate
heart
For those for whom it soon shall cease to
beat.

Here War forgot his own destructive art
 In more destroying Nature; and the heat
 Of Carnage, like the Nile's sun-sodden slime,
 Engendered monstrous shapes of every crime.

LXXXIII.

A Russian officer, in martial tread
 Over a heap of bodies, felt his heel
 Seized fast, as if 't were by the serpent's head
 Whose fangs Eve taught her human seed
 to feel;
 In vain he kicked, and swore, and writhed,
 and bled,
 And howled for help as wolves do for a
 meal—
 The teeth still kept their gratifying hold,
 As do the subtle snakes described of old.

LXXXIV.

A dying Moslem, who had felt the foot
 Of a foe o'er him, snatched at it, and bit
 The very tendon which is most acute—
 (That which some ancient Muse or modern
 wit
 Named after thee, Achilles!) and quite
 through 't
 He made the teeth meet, nor relinquished
 it
 Even with his life—for (but they lie) 't is said
 To the live leg still clung the severed head.

LXXXV.

However this may be, 't is pretty sure
 The Russian officer for life was lamed,
 For the Turk's teeth stuck faster than a
 skewer,
 And left him 'midst the invalid and maimed:
 The regimental surgeon could not cure
 His patient, and, perhaps, was to be blamed
 More than the head of the inveterate foe,
 Which was cut off, and scarce even then
 let go.

LXXXVI.

But then the fact 's a fact—and 't is the part
 Of a true poet to escape from fiction
 Whene'er he can; for there is little art
 In leaving verse more free from the
 restriction
 Of Truth than prose, unless to suit the mart
 For what is sometimes called poetic diction,
 And that outrageous appetite for lies
 Which Satan angles with for souls, like flies.

LXXXVII.

The city 's taken, but not rendered!—No!
 There 's not a Moslem that hath yielded
 sword:
 The blood may gush out, as the Danube's
 flow
 Rolls by the city wall; but deed nor word
 Acknowledge aught of dread of Death or
 foe:
 In vain the yell of victory is roared
 By the advancing Muscovite—the groan
 Of the last foe is echoed by his own.

LXXXVIII.

The bayonet pierces and the sabre cleaves,
 And human lives are lavished everywhere,
 As the year closing whirls the scarlet leaves
 When the stripped forest bows to the bleak
 air,
 And groans; and thus the peopled city
 grieves,
 Shorn of its best and loveliest, and left
 bare;
 But still it falls in vast and awful splinters,
 As oaks blown down with all their thousand
 winters.

LXXXIX.

It is an awful topic—but 't is not
 My cue for any time to be terrific:
 For checkered as is seen our human lot
 With good, and bad, and worse, alike
 prolific
 Of melancholy merriment, to quote
 Too much of one sort would be soporific;—
 Without, or with, offence to friends or foes,
 I sketch your world exactly as it goes.

XC.

And one good action in the midst of crimes
 Is "quite refreshing," in the affected
 phrase
 Of these ambrosial, Pharisaic times,
 With all their pretty milk-and-water ways,
 And may serve therefore to bedew these
 rhymes,
 A little scorched at present with the blaze
 Of conquest and its consequences, which
 Make Epic poesy so rare and rich.

XCI.

Upon a taken bastion, where there lay
 Thousands of slaughtered men, a yet warm
 group
 Of murdered women, who had found their
 way
 To this vain refuge, made the good heart
 droop

And shudder ;—while, as beautiful as May,
A female child of ten years tried to stoop
And hide her little palpitating breast
Amidst the bodies lulled in bloody rest.

XCII.

Two villanous Cossacques pursued the child
With flashing eyes and weapons : matched
with *them*,
The rudest brute that roams Siberia's wild
Has feelings pure and polished as a gem,—
The bear is civilised, the wolf is mild ;
And whom for this at last must we
condemn ?
Their natures ? or their sovereigns, who
employ
All arts to teach their subjects to destroy ?

XCIII.

Their sabres glittered o'er her little head,
Whence her fair hair rose twining with
affright,
Her hidden face was plunged amidst the
dead :
When Juan caught a glimpse of this sad
sight,
I shall not say exactly what he *said*,
Because it might not solace " ears polite " ;
But what he *did*, was to lay on their backs,
The readiest way of reasoning with Cos-
sacques.

XCIV.

One's hip he slashed, and split the other's
shoulder,
And drove them with their brutal yells to
seek
If there might be chirurgeons who could
solder
The wounds they richly merited, and shriek
Their baffled rage and pain ; while waxing
colder
As he turned o'er each pale and gory cheek,
Don Juan raised his little captive from
The heap a moment more had made her
tomb.

XCV.

And she was chill as they, and on her face
A slender streak of blood announced how
near
Her fate had been to that of all her race ;
For the same blow which laid her mother
here
Had scarred her brow, and left its crimson
trace,
As the last link with all she had held dear ;

But else unhurt, she opened her large eyes,
And gazed on Juan with a wild surprise.

XCVI.

Just at this instant, while their eyes were
fixed
Upon each other, with dilated glance,
In Juan's look, pain, pleasure, hope, fear,
mixed
With joy to save, and dread of some mis-
chance
Unto his protégée ; while hers, transfixed
With infant terrors, glared as from a trance,
A pure, transparent, pale, yet radiant face,
Like to a lighted alabaster vase :—

XCVII.

Up came John Johnson (I will not say
" *Jack*,"
For that were vulgar, cold, and common-
place
On great occasions, such as an attack
On cities, as hath been the present case) :
Up Johnson came, with hundreds at his
back,
Exclaiming—" Juan ! Juan ! On, boy !
brace
Your arm, and I 'll bet Moscow to a dollar,
That you and I will win St. George's collar.¹

XCVIII.

" The Seraskier is knocked upon the head,
But the stone bastion still remains, wherein
The old Pacha sits among some hundreds
dead,
Smoking his pipe quite calmly 'midst the
din
Of our artillery and his own : 't is said
Our killed, already piled up to the chin,
Lie round the battery ; but still it batters,
And grape in volleys, like a vineyard, scatters.

XCIX.

" Then up with me !"—But Juan answered,
" Look
Upon this child—I saved her—must not
leave
Her life to chance ; but point me out some
nook
Of safety, where she less may shrink and
grieve,

¹ A Russian military order.

And I am with you."—Whereon Johnson
took

A glance around — and shrugged — and
twitched his sleeve

And black silk neckcloth — and replied,
"You're right ;

Poor thing ! what 's to be done ? I 'm puzzled
quite."

C.

Said Juan—"Whatsoever is to be

Done, I'll not quit her till she seems secure
Of present life a good deal more than we."—

Quoth Johnson—"Neither will I quite
insure ;

But at the least *you* may die gloriously."—

Juan replied—"At least I will endure
Whate'er is to be borne—but not resign
This child, who is parentless, and therefore
mine."

CI.

Johnson said—"Juan, we've no time to lose ;
The child 's a pretty child—a very pretty—
I never saw such eyes—but hark ! now choose
Between your fame and feelings, pride and
pity :—

Hark ! how the roar increases !—no excuse
Will serve when there is plunder in a
city ;—

I should be loath to march without you, but,
By God ! we 'll be too late for the first cut."

CII.

But Juan was immovable ; until

Johnson, who really loved him in his way,
Picked out amongst his followers with some
skill

Such as he thought the least given up to
prey,

And, swearing, if the infant came to ill

That they should all be shot on the next
day,—

But if she were delivered safe and sound,
They should at least have fifty rubles round,

CIII.

And all allowances besides of plunder

In fair proportion with their comrades ;—
then

Juan consented to march on through thunder,
Which thinned at every step their ranks of
men :

And yet the rest rushed eagerly—no wonder,
For they were heated by the hope of gain,

A thing which happens everywhere each day—
No hero trusteth wholly to half pay.

CIV.

And such is Victory, and such is Man !
At least nine tenths of what we call so :—
God

May have another name for half we scan

As human beings, or his ways are odd.

But to our subject : a brave Tartar Khan—

Or "Sultan," as the author (to whose nod
In prose I bend my humble verse) doth call
This chieftain—somehow would not yield at
all :

CV.

But flanked by *five* brave sons (such is poly-
gamy,

That she spawns warriors by the score,
where none

Are prosecuted for that false crime bigamy),
He never would believe the city won

While Courage clung but to a single twig.—
Am I

Describing Priam's, Peleus', or Jove's son ?
Neither—but a good, plain, old, temperate
man,

Who fought with his five children in the van.

CVI.

To *take* him was the point.—The truly brave,
When they behold the brave oppressed
with odds,

Are touched with a desire to shield and
save ;—

A mixture of wild beasts and demi-gods
Are they—now furious as the sweeping wave,
Now moved with pity : even as sometimes
nods

The rugged tree unto the summer wind,
Compassion breathes along the savage mind.

CVII.

But he would *not* be *taken*, and replied

To all the propositions of surrender

By mowing Christians down on every side,

As obstinate as Swedish Charles at Bender.

His five brave boys no less the foe defied ;

Whereon the Russian pathos grew less
tender

As being a virtue, like terrestrial patience,
Apt to wear out on trifling provocations.

CVIII.

And spite of Johnson and of Juan, who

Expended all their Eastern phraseology

In begging him, for God's sake, just to show

So much less fight as might form an
apology

For *them* in saving such a desperate foe—
 He hewed away, like Doctors of Theology
 When they dispute with sceptics; and with
 curses
 Struck at his friends, as babies beat their
 nurses.

CIX.

Nay, he had wounded, though but slightly,
 both
 Juan and Johnson; whereupon they fell,
 The first with sighs, the second with an oath,
 Upon his angry Sultanship, pell-mell,
 And all around were grown exceeding wroth
 At such a pertinacious infidel,
 And poured upon him and his sons like rain,
 Which they resisted like a sandy plain

CX.

That drinks and still is dry. At last they
 perished—
 His second son was levelled by a shot;
 His third was sabred; and the fourth, most
 cherished
 Of all the five, on bayonets met his lot;
 The fifth, who, by a Christian mother
 nourished,
 Had been neglected, ill-used, and what not,
 Because deformed, yet died all game and
 bottom,
 To save a Sire who blushed that he begot
 him.

CXI.

The eldest was a true and tameless Tartar,
 As great a scorner of the Nazarene
 As ever Mahomet picked out for a martyr,
 Who only saw the black-eyed girls in green,
 Who make the beds of those who won't take
 quarter
 On earth, in Paradise; and when once
 seen,
 Those houris, like all other pretty creatures,
 Do just whate'er they please, by dint of
 features.

CXII.

And what they pleased to do with the young
 Khan
 In Heaven I know not, nor pretend to
 guess;
 But doubtless they prefer a fine young man
 To tough old heroes, and can do no less;

And that 's the cause no doubt why, if we
 scan

A field of battle's ghastly wilderness,
 For one rough, weather-beaten, veteran body,
 You'll find ten thousand handsome coxcombs
 bloody.

CXIII.

Your houris also have a natural pleasure
 In lopping off your lately married men,
 Before the bridal hours have danced their
 measure
 And the sad, second moon grows dim again,
 Or dull Repentance hath had dreary leisure
 To wish him back a bachelor now and then:
 And thus your Houri (it may be) disputes
 Of these brief blossoms the immediate fruits.

CXIV.

Thus the young Khan, with Houris in his
 sight,
 Thought not upon the charms of four
 young brides,
 But bravely rushed on his first heavenly night.
 In short, howe'er *our* better faith derides,
 These black-eyed virgins make the Moslems
 fight,
 As though there were one Heaven and
 none besides—
 Whereas, if all be true we hear of Heaven
 And Hell, there must at least be six or seven.

CXV.

So fully flashed the phantom on his eyes,
 That when the very lance was in his heart,
 He shouted "Allah!" and saw Paradise
 With all its veil of mystery drawn apart,
 And bright Eternity without disguise
 On his soul, like a ceaseless sunrise, dart:—
 With Prophets—Houris—Angels—Saints,
 descried
 In one voluptuous blaze,—and then he died,—

CXVI.

But with a heavenly rapture on his face.
 The good old Khan, who long had ceased
 to see
 Houris, or aught except his florid race,
 Who grew like cedars round him glori-
 ously—
 When he beheld his latest hero grace
 The earth, which he became like a felled
 tree,
 Paused for a moment from the fight, and cast
 A glance on that slain son, his first and last.

CXVII.

The soldiers, who beheld him drop his point,
 Stopped as if once more willing to concede
 Quarter, in case he bade them not "aroynt!"
 As he before had done. He did not heed
 Their pause nor signs: his heart was out of
 joint,

And shook (till now unshaken) like a reed,
 As he looked down upon his children gone,
 And felt—though done with life—he was
 alone.

CXVIII.

But 't was a transient tremor:—with a spring
 Upon the Russian steel his breast he flung,
 As carelessly as hurls the moth her wing
 Against the light wherein she dies: he clung
 Closer, that all the deadlier they might wring,
 Unto the bayonets which had pierced his
 young;
 And throwing back a dim look on his sons,
 In one wide wound poured forth his soul at
 once.

CXIX.

'Tis strange enough—the rough, tough
 soldiers, who
 Spared neither sex nor age in their career
 Of carnage, when this old man was pierced
 through,
 And lay before them with his children near,
 Touched by the heroism of him they slew,
 Were melted for a moment; though no tear
 Flowed from their bloodshot eyes, all red
 with strife,
 They honoured such determined scorn of
 Life.

CXX.

But the stone bastion still kept up its fire,
 Where the chief Pacha calmly held his post:
 Some twenty times he made the Russ retire,
 And baffled the assaults of all their host;
 At length he condescended to inquire
 If yet the city's rest were won or lost;
 And being told the latter, sent a Bey
 To answer Ribas' summons to give way.

CXXI.

In the meantime, cross-legged, with great
 sang-froid,
 Among the scorching ruins he sat smoking
 Tobacco on a little carpet;—Troy
 Saw nothing like the scene around;—yet
 looking

With martial Stoicism, nought seemed to
 annoy

His stern philosophy; but gently stroking
 His beard, he puffed his pipe's ambrosial
 gales,
 As if he had three lives, as well as tails.

CXXII.

The town was taken—whether he might yield
 Himself or bastion, little mattered now:
 His stubborn valour was no future shield.
 Ismail's no more! The Crescent's silver
 bow

Sunk, and the crimson Cross glared o'er the
 field,

But red with no *redeeming* gore: the glow
 Of burning streets, like moonlight on the
 water,

Was imaged back in blood, the sea of
 slaughter.

CXXIII.

All that the mind would shrink from of
 excesses—

All that the body perpetrates of bad;
 All that we read—hear—dream, of man's
 distresses—

All that the Devil would do if run stark mad;
 All that defies the worst which pen
 expresses,—

All by which Hell is peopled, or as sad
 As Hell—mere mortals, who their power
 abuse—

Was here (as heretofore and since) let loose.

CXXIV.

If here and there some transient trait of pity
 Was shown, and some more noble heart
 broke through

Its bloody bond, and saved, perhaps, some
 pretty

Child, or an agéd, helpless man or two—
 What 's this in one annihilated city,
 Where thousand loves, and ties, and duties
 grew?

Cockneys of London! Muscadins of Paris!
 Just ponder what a pious pastime War is.

CXXV.

Think how the joys of reading a Gazette
 Are purchased by all agonies and crimes:
 Or if these do not move you, don't forget
 Such doom may be your own in after-times.
 Meantime the Taxes, Castlereagh, and Debt,
 Are hints as good as sermons, or as rhymes

Read your own hearts and Ireland's present
story,
Then feed her famine fat with Wellesley's
glory.

CXXVI.

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

CXXVII.

But let me put an end unto my theme:
There was an end of Ismail—hapless town!
Far flashed her burning towers o'er Danube's
stream,
And redly ran his blushing waters down.
The horrid war-whoop and the shriller scream
Rose still; but fainter were the thunders
grown:
Of forty thousand who had manned the wall,
Some hundreds breathed—the rest were
silent all!

CXXVIII.

In one thing ne'ertheless 't is fit to praise
The Russian army upon this occasion,
A virtue much in fashion now-a-days,
And therefore worthy of commemoration:
The topic's tender, so shall be my phrase—
Perhaps the season's chill, and their long
station
In Winter's depth, or want of rest and victual,
Had made them chaste;—they ravished very
little.

CXXIX.

Much did they slay, more plunder, and no less
Might here and there occur some violation
In the other line;—but not to such excess
As when the French, that dissipated nation,
Take towns by storm: no causes can I guess,
Except cold weather and commiseration;
But all the ladies, save some twenty score,
Were almost as much virgins as before.

CXXX.

Some odd mistakes, too, happened in the dark,
Which showed a want of lanterns, or of
taste—
Indeed the smoke was such they scarce could
mark
Their friends from foes,—besides such
things from haste
Occur, though rarely, when there is a spark
Of light to save the venerably chaste:
But six old damsels, each of seventy years,
Were all deflowered by different grenadiers.

CXXXI.

But on the whole their continence was great;
So that some disappointment there ensued
To those who had felt the inconvenient state
Of "single blessedness," and thought it
good
(Since it was not their fault, but only fate,
To bear these crosses) for each waning prude
To make a Roman sort of Sabine wedding,
Without the expense and the suspense of
bedding.

CXXXII.

Some voices of the buxom middle-aged
Were also heard to wonder in the din
(Widows of forty were these birds long caged)
"Wherefore the ravishing did not begin!"
But while the thirst for gore and plunder raged,
There was small leisure for superfluous sin;
But whether they escaped or no, lies hid
In darkness—I can only hope they did.

CXXXIII.

Suwarrow now was conqueror—a match
For Timour or for Zinghis in his trade.
While mosques and streets, beneath his eyes,
like thatch
Blazed, and the cannon's roar was scarce
allayed,
With bloody hands he wrote his first despatch;
And here exactly follows what he said:—
"Glory to God and to the Empress!" (*Powers
Eternal! such names mingled!*) "Ismail's
ours."¹

¹ In the original Russian—

"Slava bogu! slava vam!
Krépost vzata i ya tam;"

a kind of couplet; for he was a poet.

[According to Spalding (*Suvóroff*, 1890, pp. 42, 43), the words, which were written on a scrap of paper, and addressed to Soltikoff, ran thus: "Your Excellency, we have conquered. Glory to God! Glory to you! Alexander Suvóroff."]

CXXXIV.

Methinks these are the most tremendous words,
 Since "MENE, MENE, TEKEL," and
 "UPHARSIN,"
 Which hands or pens have ever traced of
 swords.

Heaven help me! I'm but little of a parson:
 What Daniel read was short-hand of the
 Lord's,
 Severe, sublime; the prophet wrote no
 farce on
 The fate of nations;—but this Russ so witty
 Could rhyme, like Nero, o'er a burning city.

CXXXV.

He wrote this Polar melody, and set it,
 Duly accompanied by shrieks and groans,
 Which few will sing, I trust, but none forget
 it—

For I will teach, if possible, the stones
 To rise against Earth's tyrants. Never let it
 Be said that we still truckle unto thrones;—
 But ye—our children's children! think how we
 Showed *what things were* before the World
 was free!

CXXXVI.

That hour is not for us, but 't is for you:
 And as, in the great joy of your Millennium,
 You hardly will believe such things were true
 As now occur, I thought that I would pen
 you 'em;
 But may their very memory perish too!—
 Yet if perchance remembered, still disdain
 you 'em
 More than you scorn the savages of yore,
 Who *painted* their *bare* limbs, but *not* with
 gore.

CXXXVII.

And when you hear historians talk of thrones,
 And those that sate upon them, let it be
 As we now gaze upon the mammoth's bones,
 And wonder what old world such things
 could see,
 Or hieroglyphics on Egyptian stones,
 The pleasant riddles of futurity—
 Guessing at what shall happily be hid,
 As the real purpose of a pyramid.

CXXXVIII.

Reader! I have kept my word,—at least so
 far
 As the first Canto promised. You have
 now
 Had sketches of Love—Tempest—Travel—
 War,—
 All very accurate, you must allow,

And *Epic*, if plain truth should prove no bar;
 For I have drawn much less with a long
 bow
 Than my forerunners. Carelessly I sing,
 But Phoebus lends me now and then a string,

CXXXIX.

With which I still can harp, and carp, and
 fiddle.
 What further hath befallen or may befall
 The hero of this grand poetic riddle,
 I by and by may tell you, if at all:
 But now I choose to break off in the middle,
 Worn out with battering Ismail's stubborn
 wall,
 While Juan is sent off with the despatch,
 For which all Petersburg is on the watch.

CXL.

This special honour was conferred, because
 He had behaved with courage and human-
 ity—
 Which *last* men like, when they have time to
 pause
 From their ferocities produced by vanity.
 His little captive gained him some applause
 For saving her amidst the wild insanity
 Of carnage,—and I think he was more glad
 in her
 Safety, than his new order of St. Vladimir.

CXLI.

The Moslem orphan went with her protector,
 For she was homeless, houseless, helpless;
 all
 Her friends, like the sad family of Hector,
 Had perished in the field or by the wall:
 Her very place of birth was but a spectre
 Of what it had been; there the Muezzin's
 call
 To prayer was heard no more!—and Juan
 wept,
 And made a vow to shield her, which he kept.

CANTO THE NINTH.¹

I.

OH, Wellington! (or "Villainton"²— for
Fame

Sounds the heroic syllables both ways ;
France could not even conquer your great
name,

But punned it down to this facetious phrase—
Beating or beaten she will laugh the same,)

You have obtained great pensions and
much praise :

Glory like yours should any dare gainsay,
Humanity would rise, and thunder "Nay!"³

II.

I don't think that you used Kinnaird quite
well

In Marinet's affair⁴—in fact, 't was shabby,
And like some other things won't do to tell
Upon your tomb in Westminster's old
Abbey.

Upon the rest 't is not worth while to dwell,
Such tales being for the tea-hours of some
tabby ;

¹ [Cantos ix., x., and xi., were written in September-October, 1822. They were published (by John Hunt), August 29, 1823.]

² The following epigram dates from the occupation of Paris by the Allies in 1815-1816:—

"These French *petit-maitres* who the spectacle
throng,

Say of Wellington's dress *qu'il fait vilain ton!*

But, at Waterloo, Wellington made the French
stare

When their army he dressed *à la mode Angle-
terre!*"]

³ Query, *Ney?*—Printer's Devil. [Michel Ney, Duke of Elchingen, "the bravest of the brave" (see *Ode from the French*, stanza i.), born January 10, 1769, was arrested August 5, and shot December 7, 1815.]

⁴ [A fraudulent official, Nicholle or Marinet by name, revealed to Lord Kinnaird, then (January 30, 1818) at Brussels, the existence of a plot to assassinate the Duke of Wellington. On February 11 there was an attempt to carry out the plot. The authorities urged Kinnaird to disclose the name of his informant. This he declined to do, but, on the strength of an implied promise of safe conduct, started for Paris, taking Marinet with him. At Paris, and, while Kinnaird was the Duke's guest, the man was arrested, and his identity established. This was regarded as a breach of faith on the part of the French Government, and, by inference, of the Duke, who must have been privy to the transaction. See his *Letter to the Duke, etc., on the Arrest of M. Marinet*, 1818.]

But though your years as *man* tend fast to
zero,

In fact your Grace is still but a *young Hero*.

III.

Though Britain owes (and pays you too) so
much,

Yet Europe doubtless owes you greatly
more :

You have repaired Legitimacy's crutch,

A prop not quite so certain as before :

The Spanish, and the French, as well as
Dutch,

Have seen, and felt, how strongly you
restore ;

And Waterloo has made the world your
debtor

(I wish your bards would sing it rather better).

IV.

You are "the best of cut-throats" : do not
start ;

The phrase is Shakespeare's, and not mis-
applied :—

War 's a brain-spattering, windpipe-slitting
art,

Unless her cause by right be sanctified.

If you have acted *once* a generous part,

The World, not the World's masters, will
decide,

And I shall be delighted to learn who,

Save you and yours, have gained by Waterloo?

V.

I am no flatterer—you 've supped 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 thunder ;

And swallowing eulogy much more than
satire, he

May like being praised for every lucky
blunder,

Called "Saviour of the Nations"—not yet
saved,—

And "Europe's Liberator"—still enslaved.¹

VI.

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 :

¹ *Vide* speeches in Parliament, after the battle of Waterloo.

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.

VII.

I don't mean to reflect—a man so great as
 You, my lord Duke ! is far above reflection :
 The high Roman fashion, too, of Cincinnatus,
 With modern history has but small connec-
 tion :
 Though as an Irishman you love potatoes,
 You need not take them under your direc-
 tion ;
 And half a million for your Sabine farm
 Is rather dear !—I 'm sure I mean no harm.

VIII.

Great men have always scorned great recom-
 penses :
 Epaminondas saved his Thebes, and died,
 Not leaving even his funeral expenses :
 George Washington had thanks, and
 nought beside,
 Except the all-cloudless glory (which few
 men's is)
 To free his country : Pitt too had his pride,
 And as a high-souled Minister of state is
 Renowned for ruining Great Britain gratis.

IX.

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 famished country's cries !
 Behold the World ! and curse your victories !

X.

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 hireling
 tribe
 Who fatten on their country's gore, and debts,
 Must be recited—and without a bribe.

You *did great* things, but not being *great*
 in mind,
 Have left *undone* the *greatest*—and mankind.

XI.

Death laughs—Go ponder o'er the skeleton
 With which men image out the unknown
 thing
 That hides the past world, like to a set sun
 Which still elsewhere may rouse a brighter
 spring—
 Death laughs at all you weep for !—look upon
 This hourly dread of all ! whose *threatened*
sting
 Turns Life to terror, even though in its sheath :
 Mark ! how its lipless mouth grins without
 breath !

XII.

Mark ! how it laughs and scorns at all you are !
 And yet *was* what you are ; from *ear* to *ear*
 It *laughs not*—there is now no fleshy bar
 So called ; the Antic long hath ceased to
hear,
 But still he *smiles* ; and whether near or far,
 He strips from man that mantle (far more
 dear
 Than even the tailor's), his incarnate skin,
 White, black, or copper—the dead bones
 will grin.

XIII.

And thus Death laughs,—it is sad merriment,
 But still it is so ; and with such example
 Why should not Life be equally content
 With his Superior, in a smile to trample
 Upon the nothings which are daily spent
 Like bubbles on an Ocean much less ample
 Than the Eternal Deluge, which devours
 Suns as rays—worlds like atoms—years like
 hours?

XIV.

“ To be, or not to be ? *that* is the question,”
 Says Shakespeare, who just now is much
 in fashion.
 I am neither Alexander nor Hephæstion,
 Nor ever had for *abstract* fame much
 passion ;
 But would much rather have a sound digestion
 Than Buonaparte's cancer :—could I dash on
 Through fifty victories to shame or fame—
 Without a stomach what were a good name?

XV.

"*O dura ilia messorum!*"—"Oh
 Ye rigid guts of reapers!" I translate
 For the great benefit of those who know
 What indigestion is—that inward fate
 Which makes all Styx through one small
 liver flow.
 A peasant's sweat is worth his lord's estate:
 Let *this* one toil for bread—*that* rack for rent,
 He who sleeps best may be the most content.

XVI.

"To be, or not to be?"—Ere I decide,
 I should be glad to know that which *is*
being.
 'T is true we speculate both far and wide,
 And deem, because we *see*, we are *all-*
seeing:
 For my part, I 'll enlist on neither side,
 Until I see both sides for once agreeing.
 For me, I sometimes think that Life is Death,
 Rather than Life a mere affair of breath.

XVII.

"*Que sais-je?*" was the motto of Montaigne,
 As also of the first academicians:
 That all is dubious which man may attain,
 Was one of their most favourite positions.
 There 's no such thing as certainty, that 's
 plain
 As any of Mortality's conditions;
 So little do we know what we're about in
 This world, I doubt if doubt itself be doubting.

XVIII.

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

XIX.

"But Heaven," as Cassio says, "is above all—
 No more of this, then, let us pray!"
 We have
 Souls to save, since Eve's slip and Adam's fall,
 Which tumbled all mankind into the grave,
 Besides fish, beasts, and birds. "The
 sparrow's fall
 Is special providence," though how *it* gave

Offence we know not; probably it perched
 Upon the tree which Eve so fondly searched.

XX.

Oh! ye immortal Gods! what is Theogony?
 Oh! thou, too, mortal man! what is
 Philanthropy?
 Oh! World, which was and is, what is
 Cosmogony?
 Some people have accused me of Mis-
 anthropy;
 And yet I know no more than the mahogany
 That forms this desk, of what they mean;
 —*Lykanthropy*
 I comprehend, for without transformation
 Men become wolves on any slight occasion.

XXI.

But I, the mildest, meekest of mankind,
 Like Moses, or Melancthon, who have ne'er
 Done anything exceedingly unkind,—
 And (though I could not now and then
 forbear
 Following the bent of body or of mind)
 Have always had a tendency to spare,—
 Why do they call me Misanthrope? Because
They hate me, not I them:—and here we 'll
 pause.

XXII.

'T is time we should proceed with our good
 poem,—
 For I maintain that it is really good,
 Not only in the body but the proem,
 However little both are understood
 Just now,—but by and by the Truth will show
 'em
 Herself in her sublimest attitude:
 And till she doth, I fain must be content
 To share her beauty and her banishment.

XXIII.

Our hero (and, I trust, kind reader! yours)
 Was left upon his way to the chief city
 Of the immortal Peter's polished boors,
 Who still have shown themselves more
 brave than witty.
 I know its mighty Empire now allures
 Much flattery—even Voltaire's, and that 's
 a pity.
 For me, I deem an absolute autocrat
Not a barbarian, but much worse than that.

XXIV.

And I will war, at least in words (and—should
My chance so happen—deeds), with all
who war

With Thought;—and of Thought's foes by
far most rude,

Tyrants and sycophants have been and are.
I know not who may conquer: if I could
Have such a prescience, it should be no bar
To this my plain, sworn, downright detestation
Of every despotism in every nation.

XXV.

It is not that I adulate the people:

Without *me*, there are demagogues enough,
And infidels, to pull down every steeple,

And set up in their stead some proper stuff.
Whether they may sow scepticism to reap Hell,
As is the Christian dogma rather rough,
I do not know;—I wish men to be free
As much from mobs as kings—from you as
me.

XXVI.

The consequence is, being of no party,

I shall offend all parties:—never mind!
My words, at least, are more sincere and
hearty

Than if I sought to sail before the wind.
He who has nought to gain can have small
art: he

Who neither wishes to be bound or bind,
May still expatiate freely, as will I,
Nor give my voice to slavery's jackal cry.

XXVII.

That's an appropriate simile, *that jackal*;—

I've heard them in the Ephesian ruins howl¹
By night, as do that mercenary pack all,

Power's base purveyors, who for pickings
prowl,
And scent the prey their masters would attack
all.

However, the poor jackals are less foul
(As being the brave lions' keen providers)
Than human insects, catering for spiders.

XXVIII.

Raise but an arm! 't will brush their web away,
And without *that*, their poison and their
claws

Are useless. Mind, good people! what I
say—

(Or rather Peoples) *go on* without pause!

¹ In Greece I never saw or heard these animals;
but among the ruins of Ephesus I have heard them
by hundreds.

The web of these Tarantulas each day

Increases, till you shall make common cause:
None, save the Spanish Fly and Attic Bee,
As yet are strongly stinging to be free.

XXIX.

Don Juan, who had shone in the late slaughter,
Was left upon his way with the despatch,
Where blood was talked of as we would of
water;

And carcasses that lay as thick as thatch
O'er silenced cities, merely served to flatter
Fair Catherine's pastime—who looked on
the match

Between these nations as a main of cocks,
Wherein she liked her own to stand like rocks.

XXX.

And there in a *kibitka* he rolled on,
(A curséd sort of carriage without springs,
Which on rough roads leaves scarcely a
whole bone,)

Pondering on Glory, Chivalry, and Kings,
And Orders, and on all that he had done—
And wishing that post-horses had the wings
Of Pegasus, or at the least post-chaises
Had feathers, when a traveller on deep ways is.

XXXI.

At every jolt—and they were many—still
He turned his eyes upon his little charge,
As if he wished that she should fare less ill
Than he, in these sad highways left at large
To ruts, and flints, and lovely Nature's skill,
Who is no paviour, nor admits a barge
On *her* canals, where God takes sea and land,
Fishery and farm, both into his own hand.

XXXII.

At least he pays no rent, and has best right
To be the first of what we used to call
"Gentlemen farmers"—a race worn out quite,
Since lately there have been no rents at all,
And "gentlemen" are in a piteous plight,
And "farmers" can't raise Ceres from her
fall:

She fell with Buonaparte. What strange
thoughts

Arise, when we see Emperors fall with oats!

XXXIII.

But Juan turned his eyes on the sweet child
Whom he had saved from slaughter—what
a trophy!

Oh! ye who build up monuments, defiled
With gore, like Nadir Shah, that costive
Sophy,

Who, after leaving Hindostan a wild,
 And scarce to the Mogul a cup of coffee
 To soothe his woes withal, was slain, the
 sinner!
 Because he could no more digest his
 dinner;—¹

XXXIV.

Oh ye! or we! or he! or she! reflect,
 That *one* life saved, especially if young
 Or pretty, is a thing to recollect
 Far sweeter than the greenest laurels sprung
 From the manure of human clay, though
 decked
 With all the praises ever said or sung:
 Though hymned by every harp, unless within
 Your heart joins chorus, Fame is but a din.

XXXV.

Oh! ye great authors luminous, voluminous!
 Yet twice ten hundred thousand daily scribes!
 Whose pamphlets, volumes, newspapers,
 illumine us!
 Whether you 're paid by government in
 bribes,
 To prove the public debt is not consuming
 us—
 Or, roughly treading on the "courtier's
 kibes"
 With clownish heel, your popular circulation
 Feeds you by printing half the realm's
 starvation;—

XXXVI.

Oh ye great authors!—*À propos des bottes*,—
 I have forgotten what I meant to say,
 As sometimes have been greater sages' lots;—
 'T was something calculated to allay
 All wrath in barracks, palaces, or cots:
 Certes it would have been but thrown away,
 And that 's one comfort for my lost advice,
 Although no doubt it was beyond all price.

XXXVII.

But let it go:—it will one day be found
 With other relics of "a former World,"
 When this World shall be *former*, under-
 ground,
 Thrown topsy-turvy, twisted, crisped, and
 curled,

¹ He was killed in a conspiracy, after his temper had been exasperated by his extreme costivity to a degree of insanity. [Nadir Shah, or Thamas Kouli Khan, born November, 1688, invaded India, 1739-40, was assassinated June 19, 1747.]

Baked, fried, or burnt, turned inside-out, or
 drowned,
 Like all the worlds before, which have
 been hurled
 First out of, and then back again to chaos—
 The superstratum which will overlay us.

XXXVIII.

So Cuvier says:—and then shall come again
 Unto the new creation, rising out
 From our old crash, some mystic, ancient
 strain
 Of things destroyed and left in airy doubt;
 Like to the notions we now entertain
 Of Titans, giants, fellows of about
 Some hundred feet in height, *not* to say *miles*,
 And mammoths, and your wingéd crocodiles.

XXXIX.

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

XL.

How will—to these young people, just thrust
 out
 From some fresh Paradise, and set to
 plough,
 And dig, and sweat, and turn themselves
 about,
 And plant, and reap, and spin, and grind,
 and sow,
 Till all the arts at length are brought about,
 Especially of War and taxing,—*how*,
 I say, will these great relics, when they see
 'em,
 Look like the monsters of a new Museum!

XLI.

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.

XLII.

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:

I shall not be particular in stating
His journey, we 've so many tours of late:
Suppose him then at Petersburg; suppose
That pleasant capital of painted snows;

XLIII.

Suppose him in a handsome uniform—
A scarlet coat, black facings, a long plume,
Waving, like sails new shivered in a storm,
Over a cocked hat in a crowded room,
And brilliant breeches, bright as a Cairn
Gorme,

Of yellow casimire we may presume,
White stockings drawn uncurdled as new
milk
O'er limbs whose symmetry set off the silk;

XLIV.

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 com-
mand
Beauty springs forth, and Nature's self
turns paler,

Seeing how Art can make her work more
grand
(When she don't pin men's limbs in like a
gaoler),—

Behold him placed as if upon a pillar! He
Seems Love turned a Lieutenant of Artillery!

LXV.

His bandage slipped 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 cocked hat—
But still so like, that Psyche were more
clever

Than some wives (who make blunders no
less stupid),
If she had not mistaken him for Cupid.

XLVI.

The courtiers stared, the ladies whispered,
and

The Empress smiled: the reigning favour-
ite frowned—

I quite forget which of them was in hand
Just then, as they are rather numerous
found,¹

Who took, by turns, that difficult command
Since first her Majesty was singly crowned:²
But they were mostly nervous six-foot fellows,
All fit to make a Patagonian jealous.

XLVII.

Juan was none of these, but slight and slim,
Blushing and beardless; and, yet, ne'er-
theless,

There was a something in his turn of limb,
And still more in his eye, which seemed to
express,

That, though he looked one of the Seraphim,
There lurked a man beneath the Spirit's
dress.

Besides, the Empress sometimes liked a boy,
And had just buried the fair-faced Lanskoï.³

XLVIII.

No wonder then that Vermoloff, or Momonoff,⁴
Or Scherbatoff, or any other *off*

Or *on*, might dread her Majesty had not
room enough

Within her bosom (which was not too
tough),

¹ [C. F. P. Masson, in his *Mémoires Secrets, etc.*, 1880, i. 150-178, gives a list of twelve favourites, and in this Canto, Don Juan takes upon himself the characteristics of at least three, Lanskoï, Zoritch (or Zovitch), and Plato Zoubof.]

² [After the death or murder of her husband, Peter III., Catherine Alexievna (1729-1796) (born Sophia Augusta), daughter of the Prince of Anhalt Zerst, was solemnly crowned (September, 1762) Empress of all the Russias.]

³ He was the grande passion of the grande Catherine. See her Lives under the head of "Lanskoï."

[“Of all Catherine's favourites, Lanskoï was the man whom she loved the most. In 1784 he was attacked with a fever, and perished in the arms of her Majesty. When he was no more, Catherine gave herself up to the most poignant grief. . . . She afterwards raised a superb monument to his memory.” (See *Life of Catherine II.*, by W. Tooke, 1800, iii. 88, 89.)]

⁴ [Ten months after the death of Lanskoï, the Empress consoled herself with Iermolof, described as “a modest refined young man, who cultivates

For a new flame; a thought to cast of gloom
enough

Along the aspect, whether smooth or rough,
Of him who, in the language of his station,
Then held that "high official situation."

XLIX.

O gentle ladies! should you seek to know
The import of this diplomatic phrase,
Bid Ireland's Londonderry's Marquess¹ show
His parts of speech, and in the strange
displays

Of that odd string of words, all in a row,
Which none divine, and every one obeys,
Perhaps you may pick out some queer *no*
meaning,—
Of that weak wordy harvest the sole gleaning.

L.

I think I can explain myself without
That sad inexplicable beast of prey—
That Sphinx, whose words would ever be a
doubt,

Did not his deeds unriddle them each day—
That monstrous hieroglyphic—that long spout
Of blood and water—leaden Castlereagh!
And here I must an anecdote relate,
But luckily of no great length or weight.

LI.

An English lady asked of an Italian,
What were the actual and official duties
Of the strange thing some women set a value
on,

Which hovers oft about some married
beauties,
Called "Cavalier Servente?"—a Pygmalion
Whose statues warm (I fear, alas! too true
't is)
Beneath his art:—the dame, pressed to dis-
close them,
Said—"Lady, I beseech you to *suppose them.*"

the society of serious people." In less than a year
he was, in turn, displaced by Dmitrief Mamonof.
But Mamonof suffered from "scruples of con-
science," and, after a while, with Catherine's
consent, was happily married to the Princess
Shtcherbatof, a maid of honour, and not, as Byron
supposed, a rival "favourite."—See *The Story of
a Throne*, by K. Waliszewski, 1895, ii. 135, sq.]

¹ This was written long before the suicide of
that person.

LII.

And thus I supplicate your supposition,
And mildest, matron-like interpretation,
Of the imperial favourite's condition.

'T was a high place, the highest in the
nation
In fact, if not in rank; and the suspicion
Of any one's attaining to his station,
No doubt gave pain, where each new pair of
shoulders,
If rather broad, made stocks rise—and their
holders.

LIII.

Juan, I said, was a most beauteous boy,
And had retained his boyish look beyond
The usual hirsute seasons which destroy,
With beards and whiskers, and the like,
the fond

Parisian aspect, which upset old Troy
And founded Doctors' Commons:—I have
conned

The history of divorces, which, though
chequered,
Calls Ilion's the first damages on record.

LIV.

And Catherine, who loved all things (save
her Lord,
Who was gone to his place), and passed
for much,

Admiring those (by dainty dames abhorred)
Gigantic gentlemen, yet had a touch
Of sentiment; and he she most adored
Was the lamented Lanskoï, who was such
A lover as had cost her many a tear,
And yet but made a middling grenadier.

LV.

Oh thou "*teterrima causa*" of all "*belli*"—
Thou gate of Life and Death—thou nonde-
script!

Whence is our exit and our entrance,—well I
May pause in pondering how all souls are
dipped

In thy perennial fountain:—how man *fell* I
Know not, since Knowledge saw her
branches stripped

Of her first fruit; but how he *falls* and rises
Since,—*thou* hast settled beyond all surmises.

LVI.

Some call thee "the *worst* cause of War,
but I

Maintain thou art the *best*: for after all,
From thee we come, to thee we go, and why
To get at thee not batter down a wall,

¹ Hor., *Sat.*, lib. i. sat. iii. lines 107, 108.

Or waste a World? since no one can deny
Thou dost replenish worlds both great and
small :

With—or without thee—all things at a stand
Are, or would be, thou sea of Life's dry land !

LVII.

Catherine, who was the grand Epitome
Of that great cause of War, or Peace, or
what

You please (it causes all the things which be,
So you may take your choice of this or
that)—

Catherine, I say, was very glad to see
The handsome herald, on whose plumage
sat

Victory ; and, pausing as she saw him kneel
With his despatch, forgot to break the seal.

LVIII.

Then recollecting the whole Empress, nor
Forgetting quite the Woman (which com-
posed

At least three parts of this great whole), she
tore

The letter open with an air which posed
The Court, that watched each look her visage
wore,

Until a royal smile at length disclosed
Fair weather for the day. Though rather
spacious,

Her face was noble, her eyes fine, mouth
gracious.

LIX.

Great joy was hers, or rather joys : the first
Was a ta'en city, thirty thousand slain :
Glory and triumph o'er her aspect burst,
As an East Indian sunrise on the main :—
These quenched a moment her Ambition's
thirst—

So Arab deserts drink in Summer's rain :
In vain!—As fall the dews on quenchless
sands,
Blood only serves to wash Ambition's hands !

LX.

Her next amusement was more fanciful ;
She smiled at mad Suwarrow's rhymes,
who threw

Into a Russian couplet rather dull
The whole gazette of thousands whom he
slew :

Her third was feminine enough to annul
The shudder which runs naturally through

Our veins, when things called Sovereigns
think it best
To kill, and Generals turn it into jest.

LXI.

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

The whole court looked immediately most
sweet,
Like flowers well watered after a long
drouth:—

But when on the Lieutenant at her feet
Her Majesty, who liked to gaze on youth
Almost as much as on a new despatch,
Glanced mildly,—all the world was on the
watch.

LXII.

Though somewhat large, exuberant, and
truculent,
When *wroth*—while *pleased*, she was as fine
a figure

As those who like things rosy, ripe, and
succulent,
Would wish to look on, while they are in
vigour.

She could repay each amatory look you lent
With interest, and, in turn, was wont with
rigour

To exact of Cupid's bills the full amount
At sight, nor would permit you to discount.

LXIII.

With her the latter, though at times
convenient,

Was not so necessary ; for they tell
That she was handsome, and though fierce
looked lenient,

And always used her favourites too well.
If once beyond her boudoir's precincts in ye
went,

Your "fortune" was in a fair way "to swell
A man" (as Giles says); for though she
would widow all

Nations, she liked Man as an individual.

LXIV.

What a strange thing is Man! and what a
stranger

Is Woman! What a whirlwind is her head
And what a whirlpool full of depth and danger
Is all the rest about her! Whether wed,
Or widow—maid—or mother, she can change
her

Mind like the wind : whatever she has said

Or done, is light to what she 'll say or do ;—
The oldest thing on record, and yet new !

LXV.

Oh Catherine ! (for of all interjections,
To thee both *oh* ! and *ah* ! belong, of right,
In Love and War) how odd are the
connections
Of human thoughts, which jostle in their
flight !
Just now *yours* were cut out in different
sections :
First Ismail's capture caught your fancy
quite ;
Next of new knights, the fresh and glorious
batch :
And *thirdly* he who brought you the despatch !

LXVI.

Shakespeare talks of "the herald Mercury
New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill" :
And some such visions crossed her Majesty,
While her young herald knelt before her
still.
'T is very true the hill seemed rather high,
For a Lieutenant to climb up ; but skill
Smoothed even the Simplon's steep, and by
God's blessing,
With Youth and Health all kisses are
"Heaven-kissing."

LXVII.

Her Majesty looked down, the youth looked
up—
And so they fell in love ;—she with his face,
His grace, his God-knows-what : for Cupid's
cup
With the first draught intoxicates apace,
A quintessential laudanum or "Black Drop,"
Which makes one drunk at once, without
the base
Expedient of full bumpers ; for the eye
In love drinks all Life's fountain's (save tears)
dry.

LXVIII.

He, on the other hand, if not in love,
Fell into that no less imperious passion,
Self-love—which, when some sort of thing
above
Ourselves, a singer, dancer, much in
fashion,
Or Duchess—Princess—Empress, "deigns
to prove"
('T is Pope's phrase) a great longing,
though a rash one,

For one especial person out of many,
Makes us believe ourselves as good as any.

LXIX.

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

LXX.

And Catherine (we must say thus much for
Catherine),
Though bold and bloody, was the kind of
thing
Whose temporary passion was quite flattering,
Because each lover looked a sort of King,
Made up upon an amatory pattern,
A royal husband in all save the *ring*—
Which, (being the damnedest part of
matrimony,)
Seemed taking out the sting to leave the
honey :

LXXI.

And when you add to this, her Womanhood
In its meridian, her blue eyes or gray—
(The last, if they have soul, are quite as good,
Or better, as the best examples say :
Napoleon's, Mary's (Queen of Scotland),
should
Lend to that colour a transcendent ray ;
And Pallas also sanctions the same hue,
Too wise to look through optics black or
blue)—

LXXII.

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

LXXIII.

And that 's enough, for Love is vanity,
Selfish in its beginning as its end,
Except where 't is a mere insanity,
A maddening spirit which would strive to
blend

Itself with Beauty's frail inanity,
 On which the Passion's self seems to
 depend;
 And hence some heathenish philosophers
 Make Love the main-spring of the Universe.

LXXIV.

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

LXXV.

Those movements, those improvements in
 our bodies
 Which make all bodies anxious to get out
 Of their own sand-pits, to mix with a goddess,
 For such all women are at first no doubt.
 How beautiful that moment! and how odd is
 That fever which precedes the languid rout
 Of our sensations! What a curious way
 The whole thing is of clothing souls in clay!

LXXVI.

The noblest kind of love is love Platonical,
 To end or to begin with; the next grand
 Is that which may be christened love canon-
 ical,
 Because the clergy take the thing in hand;
 The third sort to be noted in our chronicle
 As flourishing in every Christian land,
 Is when chaste matrons to their other ties
 Add what may be called *marriage in disguise*.

LXXVII.

Well, we won't analyse—our story must
 Tell for itself: the Sovereign was smitten,
 Juan much flattered by her love, or lust;—
 I cannot stop to alter words once written,
 And the *two* are so mixed with human dust,
 That he who *names one*, both perchance
 may hit on:
 But in such matters Russia's mighty Empress
 Behaved no better than a common sempstress.

LXXVIII.

The whole court melted into one wide whisper,
 And all lips were applied unto all ears!
 The elder ladies' wrinkles curled much crisper
 As they beheld; the younger cast some leers
 On one another, and each lovely lisper
 Smiled as she talked the matter o'er; but
 tears
 Of rivalry rose in each clouded eye
 Of all the standing army who stood by.

LXXIX.

All the ambassadors of all the powers
 Inquired, Who was this very new young
 man,
 Who promised to be great in some few hours?
 Which is full soon (though Life is but a
 span).
 Already they beheld the silver showers
 Of rubles rain, as fast as specie can,
 Upon his cabinet, besides the presents
 Of several ribands, and some thousand
 peasants.¹

LXXX.

Catherine was generous,—all such ladies are:
 Love—that great opener of the heart and
 all
 The ways that lead there, be they near or far,
 Above, below, by turnpikes great or small,—
 Love—(though she had a curséd taste for
 War,
 And was not the best wife unless we call
 Such Clytemnestra, though perhaps 't is better
 That one should die—than two drag on the
 fetter)—

LXXXI.

Love had made Catherine make each
 lover's fortune,
 Unlike our own half-chaste Elizabeth,
 Whose avarice all disbursements did im-
 portune,
 If History, the grand liar, ever saith
 The truth; and though grief her old age
 might shorten,
 Because she put a favourite to death,
 Her vile, ambiguous method of flirtation,
 And stinginess, disgrace her sex and station.

LXXXII.

But when the levée rose, and all was bustle
 In the dissolving circle, all the nations'
 Ambassadors began as 't were to hustle
 Round the young man with their congratu-
 lations.

¹ A Russian estate is always valued by the
 number of the slaves upon it.

Also the softer silks were heard to rustle
Of gentle dames, among whose recreations
It is to speculate on handsome faces,
Especially when such lead to high places.

LXXXIII.

Juan, who found himself, he knew not how,
A general object of attention, made
His answers with a very graceful bow,
As if born for the ministerial trade.
Though modest, on his unembarrassed brow
Nature had written "Gentleman!" He
said
Little, but to the purpose; and his manner
Flung hovering graces o'er him like a banner.

LXXXIV.

An order from her Majesty consigned
Our young Lieutenant to the genial care
Of those in office: all the world looked kind,
(As it will look sometimes with the first
stare,
Which Youth would not act ill to keep in
mind,)
As also did Miss Protasoff¹ then there,
Named from her mystic office "l'Eprou-
veuse,"
A term inexplicable to the Muse.

LXXXV.

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

CANTO THE TENTH.

I.

WHEN Newton saw an apple fall, he found
In that slight startle from his contempla-
tion—
'T is *said* (for I 'll not answer above ground
For any sage's creed or calculation)—
A mode of proving that the Earth turned
round
In a most natural whirl, called "gravita-
tion";

¹ [The "Protasova" (born 1744) was a cousin of the Orlofs. She is named *l'éprouveuse* in a note to the *Mémoires Secrets*, 1800, i. 148.]

And this is the sole mortal who could grapple,
Since Adam—with a fall—or with an apple.

II

Man fell with apples, and with apples rose,
If this be true; for we must deem the mode
In which Sir Isaac Newton could disclose
Through the then unpaved stars the turnpike
road,
A thing to counterbalance human woes:
For, ever since, immortal man hath glowed
With all kinds of mechanics, and full soon
Steam-engines will conduct him to the moon.

III.

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.

IV.

In the wind's eye I have sailed, and sail; but
for
The stars, I own my telescope is dim;
But at the least I have shunned the common
shore,
And leaving land far out of sight, would
skim
The Ocean of Eternity:¹ the roar
Of breakers has not daunted my slight, trim,
But *still* sea-worthy skiff; and she may float
Where ships have foundered, as doth many
a boat.

V.

We left our hero, Juan, in the *bloom*
Of favouritism, but not yet in the *blush*;—
And far be it from my *Muses* to presume
(For I have more than one Muse at a push),
To follow him beyond the drawing-room:
It is enough that Fortune found him flush
Of Youth, and Vigour, Beauty, and those
things
Which for an instant clip Enjoyment's wings.

¹ [Shelley entitles him "The Pilgrim of Eternity," in his *Adonais* (stanza xxx. line 3), which was written and published at Pisa in 1821.]

VI.

But soon they grow again and leave their nest.
 "Oh!" saith the Psalmist, "that I had a
 dove's

Pinions to flee away, and be at rest!"

And who that recollects young years and
 loves,—

Though hoary now, and with a withering
 breast,

And palsied Fancy, which no longer roves
 Beyond its dimmed eye's sphere,—but would
 much rather

Sigh like his son, than cough like his grand-
 father?

VII.

But sighs subside, and tears (even widows')
 shrink,

Like Arno¹ in the summer, to a shallow,
 So narrow as to shame their wintry brink,

Which threatens inundations deep and
 yellow!

Such difference doth a few months make.
 You'd think

Grief a rich field which never would lie
 fallow;

No more it doth—its ploughs but change
 their boys,

Who furrow some new soil to sow for joys.

VIII.

But coughs will come when sighs depart—
 and now

And then before sighs cease; for oft the
 one

Will bring the other, ere the lake-like brow

Is ruffled by a wrinkle, or the Sun
 Of Life reached ten o'clock: and while a
 glow,

Hectic and brief as summer's day nigh done,
 O'erspreads the cheek which seems too pure
 for clay,

Thousands blaze, love, hope, die,—how happy
 they!—

IX.

But Juan was not meant to die so soon:—

We left him in the focus of such glory

As may be won by favour of the moon

Or ladies' fancies—rather transitory

Perhaps; but who would scorn the month
 of June,

Because December, with his breath so
 hoary,

¹ [Byron left Pisa (Palazzo Lanfranchi on the Arno) for the Villa Saluzzo at Genoa, in the autumn of 1822.]

Must come? Much rather should he court
 the ray,

To hoard up warmth against a wintry day.

X.

Besides, he had some qualities which fix

Middle-aged ladies even more than young:
 The former know what 's what; while new-
 fledged chicks

Know little more of Love than what is sung
 In rhymes, or dreamt (for Fancy will play
 tricks)

In visions of those skies from whence Love
 sprung.

Some reckon women by their suns or years,
 I rather think the Moon should date the dears.

XI.

And why? because she 's changeable and
 chaste:

I know no other reason, whatso'er
 Suspicious people, who find fault in haste,
 May choose to tax me with; which is not
 fair,

Nor flattering to "their temper or their taste,"

As my friend Jeffrey writes with such an air:
 However, I forgive him, and I trust

He will forgive himself;—if not, I must.

XII.

Old enemies who have become new friends

Should so continue—'t is a point of honour;
 And I know nothing which could make amends

For a return to Hatred: I would shun her
 Like garlic, howsoever she extends

Her hundred arms and legs, and fain out-
 run her.

Old flames, new wives, become our bitterest
 foes—

Converted foes should scorn to join with those.

XIII.

This were the worst desertion:—renegadoes,
 Even shuffling Southey, that incarnate lie,

Would scarcely join again the "reformadoes,"¹
 Whom he forsook to fill the Laureate's sty;

And honest men from Iceland to Barbadoes,
 Whether in Caledon or Italy,

Should not veer round with every breath, nor
 seize

To pain, the moment when you cease to please.

¹ 'Reformers,' or rather "Reformed." The Baron Bradwardine in *Waverley* is authority for the word [not the Baron, but Reginald Lowestoffe, in the *Fortunes of Nigel*.]

XIV.

The lawyer and the critic but behold
 The baser sides of literature and life,
 And nought remains unseen, but much untold,
 By those who scour those double vales of
 strife;
 While common men grow ignorantly old,
 The lawyer's brief is like the surgeon's knife,
 Dissecting the whole inside of a question,
 And with it all the process of digestion.

XV.

A legal broom 's a moral chimney-sweeper,
 And that 's the reason he himself 's so dirty;
 The endless soot¹ bestows a tint far deeper
 Than can be hid by altering his shirt; he
 Retains the sable stains of the dark creeper,
 At least some twenty-nine do out of thirty,
 In all their habits;—not so *you*, I own;
 As Cæsar wore his robe you wear your gown.

XVI.

And all our little feuds, at least all *mine*,
 Dear Jeffrey, once my most redoubted foe
 (As far as rhyme and criticism combine
 To make such puppets of us things below),
 Are over: Here's a health to "Auld Lang
 Syne!"
 I do not know you, and may never know
 Your face—but you have acted on the whole
 Most nobly, and I own it from my soul.

XVII.

And when I use the phrase of "Auld Lang
 Syne!"
 'T is not addressed to you—the more 's the
 pity
 For me, for I would rather take my wine
 With you, than aught (save Scott) in
 your proud city:
 But somehow it may seem a schoolboy's whine,
 And yet I seek not to be grand nor witty,
 But I am half a Scot by birth, and bred
 A whole one, and my heart flies to my head,—

XVIII.

As "Auld Lang Syne" brings Scotland,
 one and all,
 Scotch plaids, Scotch snoods, the blue
 hills, and clear streams,
 The Dee—the Don—Balgounie's brig's
black wall—²
 All my boy feelings, all my gentler dreams

¹ Query, *suit*?—Printer's Devil.

² The brig of Don, near the "auld toun" of
 Aberdeen, with its one arch, and its black deep

Of what I *then dreamt*, clothed in their own
 pall,—
 Like Banquo's offspring—floating past
 me seems
 My childhood, in this childishness of mine:—
 I care not—'t is a glimpse of "*Auld Lang
 Syne.*"

XIX.

And though, as you remember, in a fit
 Of wrath and rhyme, when juvenile and
 curly,
 I railed at Scots to show my wrath and wit,
 Which must be owned was sensitive and
 surly,
 Yet 't is in vain such sallies to permit,
 They cannot quench young feelings fresh
 and early:
 I "*scotched* not killed" the Scotchman in
 my blood,
 And love the land of "mountain and of
 flood."

XX.

Don Juan who was real, or ideal,—
 For both are much the same, since what
 men think
 Exists when the once thinkers are less real
 Than what they thought, for Mind can
 never sink,
 And 'gainst the Body makes a strong appeal;
 And yet 't is very puzzling on the brink
 Of what is called Eternity to stare,
 And know no more of what is *here*, than
there;—

XXI.

Don Juan grew a very polished Russian—
How we won't mention, *why* we need not
 say:
 Few youthful minds can stand the strong
 concussion
 Of any slight temptation in their way;
 But *his* just now were spread as is a cushion
 Smoothed for a Monarch's seat of honour:
 gay

salmon stream below, is in my memory as yesterday.
 I still remember, though perhaps I may misquote,
 the awful proverb which made me pause to cross it,
 and yet lean over it with a childish delight, being
 an only son, at least by the mother's side. The
 saying as recollected by me was this, but I
 have never heard or seen it since I was nine years
 of age:—

"Brig of Balgounie, *black* 's your *wa*,
 Wi' a wife's *ae son*, and a mear's *ae foal*,
 Doun ye shall fa'!"

Damsels, and dances, revels, ready money,
Made ice seem Paradise, and winter sunny.

XXII.

The favour of the Empress was agreeable ;
And though the duty waxed a little hard,
Young people at his time of life should be
able

To come off handsomely in that regard.
He was now growing up like a green tree, able
For Love, War, or Ambition, which reward
Their luckier votaries, till old Age's tedium
Make some prefer the circulating medium.

XXIII.

About this time as might have been anti-
cipated,

Seduced by Youth and dangerous examples,
Don Juan grew, I fear, a little dissipated ;
Which is a sad thing, and not only tramples
On our fresh feelings, but—as being parti-
cipated

With all kinds of incorrigible samples
Of frail humanity—must make us selfish,
And shut our souls up in us like a shell-fish.

XXIV.

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

XXV.

And Death, the Sovereign's Sovereign,
though the great
Gracchus of all mortality, who levels,
With his *Agrarian* laws,¹ the high estate
Of him who feasts, and fights, and roars,
and revels,
To one small grass-grown patch (which must
await
Corruption for its crop) with the poor devils
Who never had a foot of land till now,—
Death's a reformer—all men must allow.

¹ Tiberius Gracchus, being tribune of the people, demanded in their name the execution of the Agrarian law ; by which all persons possessing above a certain number of acres were to be deprived of the surplus for the benefit of the poor citizens.

XXVI.

He lived (not Death, but Juan) in a hurry
Of waste, and haste, and glare, and gloss,
and glitter,
In this gay clime of bear-skins black and furry—
Which (though I hate to say a thing that's
bitter)
Peep out sometimes, when things are in a flurry,
Though all the "purple and fine linen,"
fitter
For Babylon's than Russia's royal harlot—
And neutralise her outward show of scarlet.

XXVII.

And this same state we won't describe :
we would
Perhaps from hearsay, or from recollection ;
But getting nigh grim Dante's "obscure
wood,"¹
That horrid equinox, that hateful section
Of human years—that half-way house—that
rude
Hut, whence wise travellers drive with
circumspection
Life's sad post-horses o'er the dreary frontier
Of Age, and looking back to Youth, give
one tear ;—

XXVIII.

I won't describe,—that is, if I can help
Description ; and I won't reflect,— that is,
If I can stave off thought, which—as a whelp
Clings to its teat—sticks to me through the
abyss
Of this odd labyrinth ; or as the kelp
Holds by the rock ; or as a lover's kiss
Drains its first draught of lips :—but, as I
said,
I *won't* philosophize, and *will* be read.

XXIX.

Juan, instead of courting courts, was courted,—
A thing which happens rarely : this he
owed
Much to his youth, and much to his
reported
Valour ; much also to the blood he showed,
Like a race-horse ; much to each dress he
sporting,
Which set the beauty off in which he
glowed,
As purple clouds befringe the sun ; but most
He owed to an old woman and his post.

¹ "Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura."
—*Inferno*, Canto I. line 2.

XXX.

He wrote to Spain;—and all his near relations,
Perceiving he was in a handsome way
Of getting on himself, and finding stations
For cousins also, answered the same day.
Several prepared themselves for emigrations;
And eating ices, were o'erheard to say,
That with the addition of a slight pelisse,
Madrid's and Moscow's climes were of a piece.

XXXI.

His mother, Donna Inez, finding, too,
That in the lieu of drawing on his banker,
Where his assets were waxing rather few,
He had brought his spending to a hand-
some anchor,—
Replied, "that she was glad to see him through
Those pleasures after which wild youth will
hanker;
As the sole sign of Man's being in his senses
Is—learning to reduce his past expenses.

XXXII.

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

XXXIII.

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

XXXIV.

Oh for a *forty-parson power*¹ to chant
Thy praise, Hypocrisy! Oh for a hymn
Loud as the virtues thou dost loudly vaunt,
Not practise! Oh for trump of Cherubim!

¹ A metaphor taken from the "forty-horse power" of a steam-engine. That mad wag, the

Or the ear-trumpet of my good old aunt,
Who, though her spectacles at last grew
dim,
Drew quiet consolation through its hint,
When she no more could read the pious print.

XXXV.

She was no Hypocrite at least, poor soul,
But went to heaven in as sincere a way
As anybody on the elected roll,
Which portions out upon the Judgment
Day
Heaven's freeholds, in a sort of Doomsday
scroll,
Such as the conqueror William did repay
His knights with, lotting others' properties
Into some sixty thousand new knights' fees.

XXXVI.

I can't complain, whose ancestors are there,
Erneis, Radulphus—eight-and-forty manors
(If that my memory doth not greatly err)
Were *their* reward for following Billy's
banners:
And though I can't help thinking 't was scarce
fair
To strip the Saxons of their *hydes*,¹ like
tanners;
Yet as they founded churches with the produce,
You'll deem, no doubt, they put it to a good
use.

XXXVII.

The gentle Juan flourished, though at times
He felt like other plants called sensitive,
Which shrink from touch, as Monarchs do
from rhymes,
Save such as Southey can afford to give.
Perhaps he longed in bitter frosts for climes
In which the Neva's ice would cease to live
Before May-day: perhaps, despite his duty,
In Royalty's vast arms he sighed for Beauty:

XXXVIII.

Perhaps—but, *sans* perhaps, we need not
seek
For causes young or old: the canker-worm
Will feed upon the fairest, freshest cheek,
As well as further drain the withered form:
Care, like a housekeeper, brings every week
His bills in, and however we may storm,
Reverend Sydney Smith, sitting by a brother
clergyman at dinner, observed afterwards that his
dull neighbour had a "*twelve-parson power*" of
conversation.

¹ "Hyde."—I believe a hyde of land to be a
egitimate word, and, as such, subject to the tax
of a quibble.

They must be paid: though six days smoothly
run,
The seventh will bring blue devils or a dun.

XXXIX.

I don't know how it was, but he grew sick:
The Empress was alarmed, and her
physician
(The same who physicked Peter) found the
tick

Of his fierce pulse betoken a condition
Which augured of the dead, however *quick*
Itself, and showed a feverish disposition;
At which the whole Court was extremely
troubled,
The Sovereign shocked, and all his medicines
doubled.

XL.

Low were the whispers, manifold the rumours:
Some said he had been poisoned by
Potemkin;
Others talked learnedly of certain tumours,
Exhaustion, or disorders of the same kin;
Some said 't was a concoction of the humours,
Which with the blood too readily will
claim kin:
Others again were ready to maintain,
" 'Twas only the fatigue of last campaign."

XLI.

But here is one prescription out of many:
" *Sodæ sulphat. ℥vj. ℥ss. Mannæ optim.
Aq. fervent. F. ℥ ijs. ℥ij. tinct. Sennæ
Haustus*" (And here the surgeon came and
cupped him)
" *R. Pulv. Com. gr. iij. Ipecacuanhæ*"
(With more beside if Juan had not stopped
'em).

" *Bolus Potassæ Sulphuret. sumendus,
Et haustus ter in die capiendus.*"

XLII.

This is the way physicians mend or end us,
Secundum artem: but although we sneer
In health—when ill, we call them to attend
us,

Without the least propensity to jeer;
While that "*hiatus maxime deſtendus*"
To be filled up by spade or mattock's near,
Instead of gliding graciously down Lethe,
We tease mild Baillie,¹ or soft Abernethy.

¹ [Matthew Baillie (1761-1823), the nephew of William Hunter, the brother of Agnes and Joanna Baillie, was a celebrated anatomist. "Mild" Baillie, and "soft" Abernethy must be taken *per contra*.]

XLIII.

Juan demurred at this first notice to
Quit; and though Death had threatened
an ejection,
His youth and constitution bore him through,
And sent the doctors in a new direction.
But still his state was delicate: the hue
Of health but flickered with a faint reflec-
tion
Along his wasted cheek, and seemed to gravel
The faculty—who said that he must travel.

XLIV.

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

XLV.

There was just then a kind of a discussion,
A sort of treaty or negotiation,
Between the British cabinet and Russian,
Maintained with all the due prevarication
With which great states such things are apt
to push on;
Something about the Baltic's navigation,
Hides, train-oil, tallow, and the rights of
Thetis,
Which Britons deem their *uti possidetis*.

XLVI.

So Catherine, who had a handsome way
Of fitting out her favourites, conferred
This secret charge on Juan, to display
At once her royal splendour, and reward
His services. He kissed hands the next day,
Received instructions how to play his card,
Was laden with all kinds of gifts and honours,
Which showed what great discernment was
the donor's.

XLVII.

But she was lucky, and luck's all. Your
Queens
Are generally prosperous in reigning—
Which puzzles us to know what Fortune
means:—
But to continue—though her years were
waning,

Her climacteric teased her like her teens ;
 And though her dignity brooked no com-
 plaining,
 So much did Juan's setting off distress her,
 She could not find at first a fit successor.

XLVIII.

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

XLIX.

While this high post of honour 's in abeyance,
 For one or two days, reader, we request
 You 'll mount with our young hero the con-
 veyance
 Which wafted him from Petersburg : the
 best
 Barouche, which had the glory to display
 once
 The fair Czarina's autocratic crest,
 When, a new Iphigene, she went to Tauris,
 Was given to her favourite,¹ and now bore his

L.

A bull-dog, and a bullfinch, and an ermine,
 All private favourites of Don Juan ;—for
 (Let deeper sages the true cause determine)
 He had a kind of inclination, or
 Weakness, for what most people deem mere
 vermin,
 Live animals : an old maid of threescore
 For cats and birds more penchant ne'er dis-
 played,
 Although he was not old, nor even a maid ;—

LI.

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

¹ The empress went to the Crimea, accompanied
 by the Emperor Joseph, in the year—I forget which.

LII.

Poor little thing ! She was as fair as docile,
 And with that gentle, serious character,
 As rare in living beings as a fossile
 Man, 'midst thy mouldy mammoths,
 "grand Cuvier !"
 Ill fitted was her ignorance to jostle
 With this o'erwhelming world, where all
 must err :
 But she was yet but ten years old, and there-
 fore
 Was tranquil, though she knew not why or
 wherefore.

LIII.

Don Juan loved her, and she loved him, as
 Nor brother, father, sister, daughter love.—
 I cannot tell exactly what it was ;
 He was not yet quite old enough to prove
 Parental feelings, and the other class,
 Called brotherly affection, could not move
 His bosom,—for he never had a sister :
 Ah ! if he had—how much he would have
 missed her !

LIV.

And still less was it sensual ; for besides
 That he was not an ancient debauchee,
 (Who like sour fruit, to stir their veins' salt
 tides,
 As acids rouse a dormant alkali,)
 Although ('t will happen as our planet guides)
 His youth was not the chastest that might
 be,
 There was the purest Platonism at bottom
 Of all his feelings—only he forgot 'em.

LV.

Just now there was no peril of temptation ;
 He loved the infant orphan he had saved,
 As patriots (now and then) may love a
 nation ;
 His pride, too, felt that she was not en-
 slaved
 Owing to him ;—as also her salvation
 Through his means and the Church's might
 be paved.
 But one thing 's odd, which here must be
 inserted,
 The little Turk refused to be converted.

LVI.

'T was strange enough she should retain the
 impression
 Through such a scene of change, and dread,
 and slaughter ;

But though three Bishops told her the
transgression,
She showed a great dislike to holy water;
She also had no passion for confession;
Perhaps she had nothing to confess:—no
matter,
Whate'er the cause, the Church made little
of it—
She still held out that Mahomet was a prophet.

LVII.

In fact, the only Christian she could bear
Was Juan; whom she seemed to have
selected
In place of what her home and friends once
were.

He naturally loved what he protected:
And thus they formed a rather curious pair,
A guardian green in years, a ward connected
In neither clime, time, blood, with her
defender;
And yet this want of ties made theirs more
tender.

LVIII.

They journeyed on through Poland and
through Warsaw,
Famous for mines of salt and yokes of
iron:
Through Courland also, which that famous
farce saw
Which gave her dukes the graceless name
of "Biron."¹
'T is the same landscape which the modern
Mars saw,
Who marched to Moscow, led by Fame,
the Siren!
To lose by one month's frost some twenty
years
Of conquest, and his guard of Grenadiers.

LIX.

Let this not seem an anti-climax:—"Oh!
My guard! my old guard!" exclaimed that
god of clay.
Think of the Thunderer's falling down below
Carotid-artery-cutting Castlereagh!

¹ In the Empress Anne's time, Biron, her favourite, assumed the name and arms of the "Birons" of France; which families are yet extant with that of England. There are still the daughters of Courland of that name; one of them I remember seeing in England in the blessed year of the Allies (1814)—the Duchess of S.—to whom the English Duchess of Somerset presented me as a namesake.

Alas! that glory should be chilled by snow!
But should we wish to warm us on our
way
Through Poland, there is Kosciusko's name
Might scatter fire through ice, like Hecla's
flame.

LX.

From Poland they came on through Prussia
Proper,
And Königsberg, the capital, whose vaunt,
Besides some veins of iron, lead, or copper,
Has lately been the great Professor Kant.
Juan, who cared not a tobacco-stopper
About philosophy, pursued his jaunt
To Germany, whose somewhat tardy millions
Have princes who spur more than their
postilions.

LXI.

And thence through Berlin, Dresden, and
the like,
Until he reached the castellated Rhine:—
Ye glorious Gothic scenes! how much ye
strike
All phantasies, not even excepting mine!
A grey wall, a green ruin, rusty pike,
Make my soul pass the equinoctial line
Between the present and past worlds, and
hover
Upon their airy confines, half-seas-over.

LXII.

But Juan posted on through Mannheim,
Bonn,
Which Drachenfels frowns over like a
spectre
Of the good feudal times for ever gone,
On which I have not time just now to
lecture.
From thence he was drawn onwards to
Cologne,
A city which presents to the inspector
Eleven thousand maiden heads of bone.
The greatest number flesh hath ever known.¹

LXIII.

From thence to Holland's Hague and
Helvoetsluys,
That water-land of Dutchmen and of
ditches,
Where juniper expresses its best juice,
The poor man's sparkling substitute for
riches.

¹ St. Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins were still extant in 1816, and may be so yet, as much as ever.

Senates and sages have condemned its use—

But to deny the mob a cordial, which is
Too often all the clothing, meat, or fuel,
Good government has left them, seems but
cruel.

LXIV.

Here he embarked, and with a flowing sail
Went bounding for the Island of the free,
Towards which the impatient wind blew
half a gale;

High dashed the spray, the bows dipped in
the sea,
And sea-sick passengers turned somewhat
pale;

But Juan, seasoned, as he well might be,
By former voyages, stood to watch the skiffs
Which passed, or catch the first glimpse of
the cliffs.

LXV.

At length they rose, like a white wall along
The blue sea's border; and Don Juan felt—
What even young strangers feel a little strong
At the first sight of Albion's chalky belt—
A kind of pride that he should be among
Those haughty shopkeepers, who sternly
dealt

Their goods and edicts out from pole to pole,
And made the very billows pay them toll.

LXVI.

I've no great cause to love that spot of earth,
Which holds what *might have been* the
noblest nation;

But though I owe it little but my birth,
I feel a mixed regret and veneration
For its decaying fame and former worth.

Seven years (the usual term of transporta-
tion)
Of absence lay one's old resentments level,
When a man's country's going to the devil.

LXVII.

Alas! could she but fully, truly, know
How her great name is now throughout
abhorred;

How eager all the Earth is for the blow
Which shall lay bare her bosom to the
sword;

How all the nations deem her their worst foe
That worse than *worst of foes*, the once
adored

False friend, who held out Freedom to
Mankind,

And now would chain them—to the very
mind;—

LXVIII.

Would she be proud, or boast herself the
free,

Who is but first of slaves? The nations are
In prison,—but the gaoler, what is he?
No less a victim to the bolt and bar.

Is the poor privilege to turn the key
Upon the captive, Freedom? He's as
far

From the enjoyment of the earth and air
Who watches o'er the chain, as they who
wear.

LXIX.

Don Juan now saw Albion's earliest beauties,
Thy cliffs, *dear* Dover! harbour, and
hotel;

Thy custom-house, with all its delicate
duties;

Thy waiters running mucks at every bell;
Thy packets, all whose passengers are booties
To those who upon land or water dwell;
And last, not least, to strangers uninstructed,
Thy long, long bills, whence nothing is
deducted.

LXX.

Juan, though careless, young, and *magnifique*,
And rich in rubles, diamonds, cash, and
credit,

Who did not limit much his bills per week,
Yet stared at this a little, though he paid
it,—

(His Maggior Duomo, a smart, subtle Greek,
Before him summed the awful scroll and
read it):

But, doubtless, as the air—though seldom
sunny—

Is free, the respiration's worth the money.

LXXI.

On with the horses! Off to Canterbury!
Tramp, tramp o'er pebble, and splash,
splash through puddle;

Hurrah! how swiftly speeds the post so
merry!

Not like slow Germany, wherein they
muddle

Along the road, as if they went to bury
Their fare; and also pause besides, to
fuddle

With "schnapps"—sad dogs! whom
"Hundsfot," or "Verflucter,"

Affect no more than lightning a conductor.

LXXII.

Now there is nothing gives a man such
spirits,
Leavening his blood as cayenne doth a
curry,
As going at full speed—no matter where its
Direction be, so 't is but in a hurry,
And merely for the sake of its own merits ;
For the less cause there is for all this flurry,
The greater is the pleasure in arriving
At the great *end* of travel—which is driving.

LXXIII.

They saw at Canterbury the cathedral ;
Black Edward's helm, and Becket's bloody
stone,
Were pointed out as usual by the bedral,
In the same quaint, uninterested tone :—
There 's glory again for you, gentle reader !
All
Ends in a rusty casque and dubious bone,
Half-solved into these sodas or magnesias,
Which form that bitter draught, the human
species.

LXXIV.

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

LXXV.

And being told it was "God's House," she
said
He was well lodged, but only wondered
how
He suffered Infidels in his homestead,
The cruel Nazarenes, who had laid low
His holy temples in the lands which bred
The True Believers ;—and her infant brow
Was bent with grief that Mahomet should
resign
A mosque so noble, flung like pearls to swine.

LXXVI.

On! on! through meadows, managed like a
garden,
A paradise of hops and high production ;
For, after years of travel by a bard in
Countries of greater heat, but lesser suction,

A green field is a sight which makes him
pardon
The absence of that more sublime con-
struction,
Which mixes up vines—olives—precipices—
Glaciers—volcanoes—oranges and ices.

LXXVII.

And when I think upon a pot of beer—
But I won't weep!—and so drive on,
postilions !
As the smart boys spurred fast in their career,
Juan admired these highways of free
millions—
A country in all senses the most dear
To foreigner or native, save some silly ones,
Who "kick against the pricks" just at this
juncture,
And for their pains get only a fresh puncture.

LXXVIII.

What a delightful thing 's a turnpike road!
So smooth, so level, such a mode of shav-
ing
The Earth, as scarce the eagle in the broad
Air can accomplish, with his wide wings
waving.
Had such been cut in Phaeton's time, the
god
Had told his son to satisfy his craving
With the York mail ;—but onward as we roll,
Surgit amari aliquid—the toll !

LXXIX.

Alas! how deeply painful is all payment!
Take lives—take wives—take aught except
men's purses :
As Machiavel shows those in purple raiment,
Such is the shortest way to general curses.
They hate a murderer much less than a
claimant
On that sweet ore which everybody nurses.—
Kill a man's family, and he may brook it,
But keep your hands out of his breeches'
pocket :

LXXX.

So said the Florentine : ye monarchs, hearken
To your instructor. Juan now was borne,
Just as the day began to wane and darken,
O'er the high hill, which looks with pride
or scorn
Toward the great city.—Ye who have a
spark in
Your veins of Cockney spirit, smile or
mourn