

According as you take things well or ill ;—
Bold Britons, we are now on Shooter's Hill !

LXXXI.

The Sun went down, the smoke rose up, as
from

A half-unquenched volcano, o'er a space
Which well beseemed the "Devil's drawing-
room,"

As some have qualified that wondrous place :
But Juan felt, though not approaching *Home*,

As one who, though he were not of the race,
Revered the soil, of those true sons the
mother,

Who butchered half the earth, and bullied
t' other.

LXXXII.

A mighty mass of brick, and smoke, and
shipping,

Dirty and dusky, but as wide as eye
Could reach, with here and there a sail just
skipping

In sight, then lost amidst the forestry
Of masts ; a wilderness of steeples peeping

On tiptoe through their sea-coal canopy ;
A huge, dun Cupola, like a foolscap crown
On a fool's head—and there is London Town !

LXXXIII.

But Juan saw not this : each wreath of smoke
Appeared to him but as the magic vapour

Of some alchymic furnace, from whence broke
The wealth of worlds (a wealth of tax and
paper) :

The gloomy clouds, which o'er it as a yoke
Are bowed, and put the Sun out like a taper,
Were nothing but the natural atmosphere,
Extremely wholesome, though but rarely clear.

LXXXIV.

He paused—and so will I ; as doth a crew
Before they give their broadside. By and by,

My gentle countrymen, we will renew
Our old acquaintance ; and at least I 'll try

To tell you truths *you* will not take as true,
Because they are so ;—a male Mrs. Fry,

With a soft besom will I sweep your halls,
And brush a web or two from off the walls.

LXXXV.

Oh Mrs. Fry ! Why go to Newgate ? Why
Preach to *poor* rogues ? And wherefore
not begin

With Carlton, or with other houses ? Try
Your hand at hardened and imperial Sin.

To mend the People's an absurdity,
A jargon, a mere philanthropic din,

Unless you make their betters better :—Fie !
I thought you had more religion, Mrs. Fry.

LXXXVI.

Teach *them* the decencies of good threescore ;
Cure *them* of tours, hussar and highland
dresses ;

Tell *them* that youth once gone returns no
more,

That hired huzzas redeem no land's
distresses ;

Tell them Sir William Curtis is a bore,
Too dull even for the dullest of excesses—

The witless Falstaff of a hoary Hal,
A fool whose bells have ceased to ring at all.

LXXXVII.

Tell them, though it may be, perhaps, too
late—

On Life's worn confine, jaded, bloated,
sated—

To set up vain pretence of being *great*,

'T is not so to be *good* ; and, be it stated,
The worthiest kings have ever loved least
state :

And tell them—But you won't, and I
have prated

Just now enough ; but, by and by, I 'll prattle
Like Roland's horn in Roncesvalles' battle.

CANTO THE ELEVENTH.

I.

WHEN Bishop Berkeley said "there was no
matter,"

And proved it—'t was no matter what he
said :

They say his system 't is in vain to batter,
Too subtle for the airiest human head ;

And yet who can believe it ? I would shatter
Gladly all matters down to stone or lead,

Or adamant, to find the World a spirit,
And wear my head, denying that I wear it.

II.

What a sublime discovery 't was to make the
Universe universal egotism,

That all's ideal—*all ourselves* !—I 'll stake the
World (be it what you will) that *that's* no
schism.

Oh Doubt !—if thou be'st Doubt, for which
some take thee,

But which I doubt extremely—thou sole
prism

Of the Truth's rays, spoil not my draught of spirit!

Heaven's brandy, though our brain can hardly bear it.

III.

For ever and anon comes Indigestion
(Not the most "dainty Ariel"), and perplexes

Our soarings with another sort of question:
And that which after all my spirit vexes,
Is, that I find no spot where Man can rest eye on,

Without confusion of the sorts and sexes,
Of Beings, Stars, and this unriddled wonder,
The World, which at the worst 's a *glorious*
blunder—

IV.

If it be chance—or, if it be according
To the old text, still better:—lest it should
Turn out so, we'll say nothing 'gainst the wording,

As several people think such hazards rude.
They're right; our days are too brief for affording

Space to dispute what *no one* ever could
Decide, and *everybody one day* will
Know very clearly—or at least lie still.

V.

And therefore will I leave off metaphysical
Discussion, which is neither here nor there:
If I agree that what is, is;—then this I call
Being quite perspicuous and extremely fair;
The truth is, I've grown lately rather
phthisical:

I don't know what the reason is—the air
Perhaps; but as I suffer from the shocks
Of illness, I grow much more orthodox.

VI.

The first attack at once proved the Divinity
(But *that* I never doubted, nor the Devil);
The next, the Virgin's mystical virginity;
The third, the usual Origin of Evil;
The fourth at once established the whole
Trinity

On so uncontrovertible a level,
That I devoutly wished the three were four—
On purpose to believe so much the more.

VII.

To our theme.—The man who has stood on
the Acropolis,
And looked down over Attica; or he
Who has sailed where picturesque Constanti-
nople is,
Or seen Timbuctoo, or hath taken tea

In small-eyed China's crockery-ware metro-
polis,

Or sat amidst the bricks of Nineveh,
May not think much of London's first
appearance—

But ask him what he thinks of it a year hence!

VIII.

Don Juan had got out on Shooter's Hill;
Sunset the time, the place the same declivity
Which looks along that vale of Good and Ill
Where London streets ferment in full
activity,

While everything around was calm and still,
Except the creak of wheels, which on their
pivot he

Heard,—and that bee-like, bubbling, busy
hum

Of cities, that boil over with their scum:—

IX.

I say, Don Juan, wrapped in contemplation,
Walked on behind his carriage, o'er the
summit,

And lost in wonder of so great a nation,
Gave way to 't, since he could not over-
come it.

"And here," he cried, "is Freedom's chosen
station;

Here peals the People's voice nor can
entomb it

Racks—prisons—inquisitions; Resurrection
Awaits it, each new meeting or election.

X.

"Here are chaste wives, pure lives; here
people pay

But what they please; and if that things be
dear,

'T is only that they love to throw away
Their cash, to show how much they have
a-year.

Here laws are all inviolate—none lay
Traps for the traveller—every highway's
clear—

Here"—he was interrupted by a knife,
With—"Damn your eyes! your money or
your life!"—

XI.

These free-born sounds proceeded from four
pads

In ambush laid, who had perceived him
loiter

Behind his carriage; and, like handy lads,
Had seized the lucky hour to reconnoitre,

In which the heedless gentleman who gads
Upon the road, unless he prove a fighter
May find himself within that isle of riches
Exposed to lose his life as well as breeches.

XII.

Juan, who did not understand a word
Of English, save their shibboleth, "God
damn!"

And even that he had so rarely heard,
He sometimes thought 't was only their
"Salām,"

Or "God be with you!"—and 't is not absurd
To think so,—for half English as I am
(To my misfortune), never can I say
I heard them wish "God with you," save
that way;—

XIII.

Juan yet quickly understood their gesture,
And being somewhat choleric and sudden,
Drew forth a pocket pistol from his vesture,
And fired it into one assailant's pudding—
Who fell, as rolls an ox o'er in his pasture,
And roared out, as he writhed his native
mud in,
Unto his nearest follower or henchman,
"Oh Jack! I 'm floored by that ere bloody
Frenchman!"

XIV.

On which Jack and his train set off at speed,
And Juan's suite, late scattered at a distance,
Came up, all marvelling at such a deed,
And offering, as usual, late assistance.
Juan, who saw the moon's late minion bleed
As if his veins would pour out his existence,
Stood calling out for bandages and lint,
And wished he had been less hasty with his
flint.

XV.

"Perhaps," thought he, "it is the country's
wont

To welcome foreigners in this way: now
I recollect some innkeepers who don't
Differ, except in robbing with a bow,
In lieu of a bare blade and brazen front—
But what is to be done? I can't allow
The fellow to lie groaning on the road:
So take him up—I 'll help you with the load."

XVI.

But ere they could perform this pious duty,
The dying man cried, "Hold! I 've got
my gruel!

Oh! for a glass of *max*!¹ We 've missed
our booty;

Let me die where I am!" And as the fuel

¹ [Gin.]

Of Life shrunk in his heart, and thick and
sooty

The drops fell from his death-wound, and
he drew ill

His breath,—he from his swelling throat
untied

A kerchief, crying, "Give Sal that!"—and
died.

XVII.

The cravat stained with bloody drops fell down
Before Don Juan's feet: he could not tell
Exactly why it was before him thrown,
Nor what the meaning of the man's farewell.
Poor Tom was once a kiddy upon town,
A thorough varmint, and a *real* swell,
Full flash,¹ all fancy, until fairly diddled,
His pockets first and then his body riddled.

XVIII.

Don Juan, having done the best he could
In all the circumstances of the case,
As soon as "Crowner's quest" allowed,
pursued

His travels to the capital apace;—
Esteeming it a little hard he should

In twelve hours' time, and very little space,
Have been obliged to slay a free-born native
In self-defence: this made him meditative.

XIX.

He from the world had cut off a great man,
Who in his time had made heroic bustle.
Who in a row like Tom could lead the van,
Booze in the ken, or at the spellken hustle?
Who queer a flat?² Who (spite of Bow-
street's ban)

On the high toby-spice so flash the muzzle?

¹ [According to the *Vocabulary of the Flash Language*, compiled by James Hardy Vaux, in 1812, a kiddy, or "flash-kiddy," is a thief of the lower orders, who, when he is *breeched* by a course of successful depredation dresses in the extreme of vulgar gentility, and affects a knowingness in his air and conversation. A "swell" or "rank swell" ("real swell" appears in Egan's *Life in London*) is a swell mob man; and "flash" is "fly," "down," or "awake," *i.e.* knowing, not easily imposed upon.]

² ["Ken" is a house, *s.c.* a thieves' lodging-house; "spellken," a play-house; "high toby-spice" is robbery on horseback, as distinguished from "spice," *i.e.* footpad robbery; to "flash the muzzle" is to show off the face, to swagger openly; "blowing" or "blowen" is a doxy or trull; and "nutty" is, conjointly, amorous and fascinating.]

Who on a lark with black-eyed Sal (his blowing),
So prime—so swell—so nutty—and so knowing?¹

XX.

But Tom's no more—and so no more of Tom.
Heroes must die; and by God's blessing 't
is

Not long before the most of them go home.

Hail! Thamis, hail! Upon thy verge it is
That Juan's chariot, rolling like a drum

In thunder, holds the way it can't well miss,
Through Kennington and all the other "tons,"
Which make us wish ourselves in town at
once;—

¹ The advance of science and of language has rendered it unnecessary to translate the above good and true English, spoken in its original purity by the select mobility and their patrons. The following is a stanza of a song which was very popular at least in my early days:—

"On the high toby-spice flash the muzzle,
In spite of each gallows old scout;
If you at the spellken can't hustle,
You'll be hobbled in making a clout.

"Then your blowing will wax gallows haughty,
When she hears of your scaly mistake,
She'll surely turn snitch for the forty—
That her Jack may be regular weight."

If there be any gemman so ignorant as to require a traduction, I refer him to my old friend and corporeal pastor and master, John Jackson, Esq., Professor of Pugilism; who, I trust, still retains the strength and symmetry of his model of a form, together with his good humour, and athletic as well as mental accomplishments.

[Gentleman Jackson was of good renown. "Servility," says Egan (*Life in London*, 1823, p. 217), "is not known to him. Flattery he detests. Integrity, impartiality, good-nature, and manliness, are the corner-stones of his understanding." *Hints from Horace*, line 638, note 1, *vide ante*, p. 124. As to the stanza quoted by Egan (*Anecdotes of the Turf*, 1827, p. 44), but not traduced or interpreted, "To be hobbled for making a clout" is to be taken into custody for stealing a handkerchief, "to turn snitch" is to inform, and the "forty" is the £40 offered for the detection of a capital crime, and shared by the police or Bow Street runners. Dangerous characters were let alone and tacitly encouraged to continue their career of crime, until the measure of their iniquity was full, and they "weighed forty." If Jack was clumsy enough to be detected in a trifling theft, his "blowen" would go over to the enemy, and betray him for the sake of the Government reward (see *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, by Francis Grose, 1823, art. "Weigh forty").]

XXI.

Through Groves, so called as being void of trees,

(Like *lucus* from *no* light); through prospects named

Mount Pleasant, as containing nought to please,

Nor much to climb; through little boxes framed

Of bricks, to let the dust in at your ease,

With "To be let," upon their doors proclaimed;

Through "Rows" most modestly called "Paradise,"

Which Eve might quit without much sacrifice;—

XXII.

Through coaches, drays, choked turnpikes, and a whirl

Of wheels, and roar of voices, and confusion;

Here taverns wooing to a pint of "purl,"

There mails fast flying off like a delusion;

There barbers' blocks with periwigs in curl

In windows; here the lamplighter's infusion

Slowly distilled into the glimmering glass

(For in those days we had not got to gas—);

XXIII.

Through this, and much, and more, is the approach

Of travellers to mighty Babylon:

Whether they come by horse, or chaise, or coach,

With slight exceptions, all the ways seem one.

I could say more, but do not choose to encroach

Upon the Guide-book's privilege. The Sun Had set some time, and night was on the ridge

Of twilight, as the party crossed the bridge.

XXIV.

That's rather fine, the gentle sound of Thamis—

Who vindicates a moment, too, his stream—
Though hardly heard through multifarious

"damme's:"

The lamps of Westminster's more regular gleam,

The breadth of pavement, and yon shrine where Fame is

A spectral resident—whose pallid beam

In shape of moonshine hovers o'er the pile—
Make this a sacred part of Albion's isle.

XXV.

The Druids' groves are gone—so much the
better :

Stonehenge is not—but what the devil is
it?—

But Bedlam still exists with its sage fetter,
That madmen may not bite you on a visit;
The Bench too seats or suits full many a
debtor ;

The Mansion House, too (though some
people quiz it),
To me appears a stiff yet grand erection ;
But then the Abbey's worth the whole collec-
tion.

XXVI.

The line of lights, too, up to Charing Cross,
Pall Mall, and so forth, have a coruscation
Like gold as in comparison to dross,
Matched with the Continent's illumination,
Whose cities Night by no means deigns to
gloss.

The French were not yet a lamp-lighting
nation,
And when they grew so—on their new-found
lantern,
Instead of wicks, they made a wicked man
turn.¹

XXVII.

A row of Gentlemen along the streets
Suspended may illuminate mankind,
As also bonfires made of country seats ;
But the old way is best for the purblind :
The other looks like phosphorus on sheets,
A sort of *ignis fatuus* to the mind,
Which, though 't is certain to perplex and
frighten,
Must burn more mildly ere it can enlighten.

XXVIII.

But London's so well lit, that if Diogenes
Could recommence to hunt his *honest man*,
And found him not amidst the various
progenies
Of this enormous City's spreading span,

¹ [Joseph François Foulon, army commissioner, provoked the penalty of the "lantern" (*i.e.* an improvised gallows on the yard of a lamp-post at the corner of the Rue de la Vannerie) by his heartless sneer, "Eh bien ! si cette canaille n'a pas de pain, elle mangera du foin." He was hanged, July 22, 1789.]

'T were not for want of lamps to aid his
dodging his
Yet undiscovered treasure. What I can,
I've done to find the same throughout Life's
journey,
But see the World is only one attorney.

XXIX.

Over the stones still rattling, up Pall Mall,
Through crowds and carriages, but wax-
ing thinner
As thundered knockers broke the long sealed
spell
Of doors 'gainst duns, and to an early
dinner

Admitted a small party as night fell,—
Don Juan, our young diplomatic sinner,
Pursued his path, and drove past some hotels,
St. James's Palace, and St. James's "Hells."¹

XXX.

They reached the hotel : forth streamed from
the front door
A tide of well-clad waiters, and around
The mob stood, and as usual several score
Of those pedestrian Paphians who abound
In decent London when the daylight's o'er ;
Commodious but immoral, they are found
Useful, like Malthus, in promoting marriage.—
But Juan now is stepping from his carriage

XXXI.

Into one of the sweetest of hotels,
Especially for foreigners—and mostly
For those whom favour or whom Fortune
swells,
And cannot find a bill's small items costly.
There many an envoy either dwelt or dwells
(The den of many a diplomatic lost lie),
Until to some conspicuous square they pass,
And blazon o'er the door their names in
brass.

XXXII.

Juan, whose was a delicate commission,
Private, though publicly important, bore
No title to point out with due precision
The exact affair on which he was sent o'er.
'T was merely known, that on a secret mission
A foreigner of rank had graced our shore,

¹ "Hells," gaming-houses. What their number may now be in this life, I know not. Before I was of age I knew them pretty accurately, both "gold" and "silver." I was once nearly called out by an acquaintance, because when he asked me where I thought that his soul would be found hereafter, I answered, "In Silver Hell." [A certain Captain Wallace.]

Young, handsome, and accomplished, who
was said
(In whispers) to have turned his Sovereign's
head.

XXXIII.

Some rumour also of some strange adventures
Had gone before him, and his wars and
loves;

And as romantic heads are pretty painters,
And, above all, an Englishwoman's roves
Into the excursive, breaking the indentures
Of sober reason, wheresoe'er it moves,
He found himself extremely in the fashion,
Which serves our thinking people for a
passion.

XXXIV.

I don't mean that they are passionless, but
quite

The contrary; but then 't is in the head;
Yet as the consequences are as bright

As if they acted with the heart instead,
What after all can signify the site

Of ladies' lucubrations? So they lead
In safety to the place for which you start,
What matters if the road be head or heart?

XXXV.

Juan presented in the proper place,
To proper placement, every Russ credential;
And was received with all the due grimace
By those who govern in the mood potential,
Who, seeing a handsome stripling with
smooth face,

Thought (what in state affairs is most
essential),

That they as easily might *do* the youngster,
As hawks may pounce upon a woodland
songster.

XXXVI.

They erred, as agéd men will do; but by
And by we 'll talk of that; and if we don't,

'T will be because our notion is not high
Of politicians and their double front,
Who live by lies, yet dare not boldly lie:—

Now, what I love in women is, they won't
Or can't do otherwise than lie—but do it
So well, the very Truth seems falsehood to it.

XXXVII.

And, after all, what is a lie? 'T is but
The truth in masquerade; and I defy
Historians—heroes—lawyers—priests, to put
A fact without some leaven of a lie.
The very shadow of true Truth would shut
Up annals—revelations—poesy,

And prophecy—except it should be dated
Some years before the incidents related.

XXXVIII.

Praised be all liars and all lies! Who now
Can tax my mild Muse with misanthropy?
She rings the World's "Te Deum," and her
brow

Blushes for those who will not:—but to
sigh

Is idle; let us like most others bow,

Kiss hands—feet—any part of Majesty,
After the good example of "Green Erin,"
Whose shamrock now seems rather worse
for wearing.

XXXIX.

Don Juan was presented, and his dress
And mien excited general admiration—

I don't know which was more admired
or less:

One monstrous diamond drew much
observation,

Which Catherine in a moment of "*ivresse*"
(In Love or Brandy's fervent fermentation),
Bestowed upon him, as the public learned;
And, to say truth, it had been fairly earned.

XL.

Besides the ministers and underlings,
Who must be courteous to the accredited
Diplomatists of rather wavering Kings,
Until their royal riddle's fully read,
The very clerks,—those somewhat dirty
springs

Of Office, or the House of Office, fed
By foul corruption into streams,—even they
Were hardly rude enough to earn their pay:

XLI.

And insolence no doubt is what they are
Employed for, since it is their daily labour,
In the dear offices of Peace or War;
And should you doubt, pray ask of your
next neighbour,

When for a passport, or some other bar
To freedom, he applied (a grief and a bore),
If he found not this spawn of tax-born riches,
Like lap-dogs, the least civil sons of b—s.

XLII.

But Juan was received with much "*empresse-
ment*":—

These phrases of refinement I must borrow
From our next neighbours' land, where,
like a chessman,

There is a move set down for joy or sorrow,

Not only in mere talking, but the press. Man
In Islands is, it seems, downright and
thorough,
More than on Continents—as if the Sea
(See Billingsgate) made even the tongue
more free.

XLIII.

And yet the British “Damme” ’s rather
Attic,
Your continental oaths are but incon-
tinent,
And turn on things which no aristocratic
Spirit would name, and therefore even I
won’t anent¹

This subject quote; as it would be schismatic
In *politesse*, and have a sound affronting
in ’t;—

But “Damme” ’s quite ethereal, though
too daring—

Platonic blasphemy—the soul of swearing.

XLIV.

For downright rudeness, ye may stay at home;
For true or false politeness (and scarce *that*
Now) you may cross the blue deep and white
foam—

The first the emblem (rarely though) of
what

You leave behind, the next of much you come
To meet. However, ’t is no time to chat
On general topics: poems must confine
Themselves to unity, like this of mine.

XLV.

In the great world,—which, being interpreted,
Meaneth the West or worst end of a city,
And about twice two thousand people bred

By no means to be very wise or witty,
But to sit up while others lie in bed,
And look down on the Universe with pity,—

Juan, as an inveterate patrician,
Was well received by persons of condition.

XLVI.

He was a bachelor, which is a matter
Of import both to virgin and to bride,
The former’s hymeneal hopes to flatter;
And (should she not hold fast by Love or
Pride)

’T is also of some moment to the latter:
A rib’s a thorn in a wed gallant’s side,

¹ “Anent” was a Scotch phrase meaning “con-
cerning”—“with regard to”: it has been made
English by the Scotch novels; and, as the French-
man said, “If it *be not, ought to be* English.”

Requires decorum, and is apt to double
The horrid sin—and what’s still worse, the
trouble.

XLVII.

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

XLVIII.

Fair virgins blushed upon him; wedded
dames

Bloomed also in less transitory hues;
For both commodities dwell by the Thames
The painting and the painted; Youth,
Ceruse,

Against his heart preferred their usual claims,
Such as no gentleman can quite refuse:

Daughters admired his dress, and pious
mothers

Inquired his income, and if he had brothers.

XLIX.

The milliners who furnish “drapery Misses”¹

Throughout the season, upon speculation
Of payment ere the Honeymoon’s last kisses

Have waned into a crescent’s coruscation,
Thought such an opportunity as this is,

Of a rich foreigner’s initiation,
Not to be overlooked—and gave such credit,
That future bridegrooms swore, and sighed,
and paid it.

¹ “Drapery Misses.”—This term is probably
anything now but a *mystery*. It was, however,
almost so to me when I first returned from the
East in 1811—1812. It means a pretty, a high-
born, a fashionable young female, well instructed
by her friends, and furnished by her milliner with
a wardrobe upon credit, to be repaid, when
married, by the *husband*. The riddle was first
read to me by a young and pretty heiress, on my
praising the “drapery” of the “*untochered*” but
“pretty virginities” (like Mrs. Anne Page) of the
then day, which has now been some years
yesterday: she assured me that the thing was
common in London; and as her own thousands,
and blooming looks, and rich simplicity of array,
put any suspicion in her own case out of the
question, I confess I gave some credit to the
allegation. If necessary, authorities might be cited;
in which case I could quote both “drapery” and
the wearers. Let us hope, however, that it is now
obsolete.

L.

The Blues, that tender tribe, who sigh o'er
sonnets,
And with the pages of the last Review
Line the interior of their heads or bonnets,
Advanced in all their azure's highest hue :
They talked bad French or Spanish, and
upon its
Late authors asked him for a hint or two ;
And which was softest, Russian or Castilian ?
And whether in his travels he saw Iliion ?

LI.

Juan, who was a little superficial,
And not in literature a great Drawcansir,
Examined by this learned and especial
Jury of matrons, scarce knew what to answer :
His duties warlike, loving or official,
His steady application as a dancer,
Had kept him from the brink of Hippocrene,
Which now he found was blue instead of
green.

LII.

However, he replied at hazard, with
A modest confidence and calm assurance,
Which lent his learned lucubrations pith,
And passed for arguments of good endurance.
That prodigy, Miss Araminta Smith
(Who at sixteen translated "Hercules
Furens"
Into as furious English), with her best look,
Set down his sayings in her common-place
book.

LIII.

Juan knew several languages—as well
He might—and brought them up with
skill, in time
To save his fame with each accomplished
belle,
Who still regretted that he did not rhyme.
There wanted but this requisite to swell
His qualities (with them) into sublime :
Lady Fitz-Frisky, and Miss Mævia Mannish,
Both longed extremely to be sung in Spanish.

LIV.

However, he did pretty well, and was
Admitted as an aspirant to all
The coteries, and, as in Banquo's glass,
At great assemblies or in parties small,
He saw ten thousand living authors pass,
That being about their average numeral ;
Also the eighty "greatest living poets,"
As every paltry magazine can show *it*'s.

LV.

In twice five years the "greatest living poet,"
Like to the champion in the fisty ring,
Is called on to support his claim, or show it,
Although 't is an imaginary thing.
Even I—albeit I'm sure I did not know it,
Nor sought of foolscap subjects to be
king,—
Was reckoned, a considerable time,
The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme.

LVI.

But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero
My Leipsic, and my Mont Saint Jean
seems Cain :
La Belle Alliance of dunces down at zero,
Now that the Lion's fallen, may rise
again :
But I will fall at least as fell my Hero ;
Nor reign at all, or as a *monarch* reign ;
Or to some lonely isle of gaolers go,
With turncoat Southey for my turnkey Lowe.

LVII.

Sir Walter reigned before me ; Moore and
Campbell
Before and after ; but now grown more
holy,
The Muses upon Sion's hill must ramble
With poets almost clergymen, or wholly ;
And Pegasus has a psalmodic amble
Beneath the very Reverend Rowley Powley,¹
Who shoes the glorious animal with stilts,
A modern Ancient Pistol—"by these hilts !"

LVIII.

Still he excels that artificial hard
Labourer in the same vineyard, though the
vine
Yields him but vinegar for his reward,—
That neutralised dull Dorus of the Nine ;
That swarthy Sporus, neither man nor bard ;
That ox of verse, who *ploughs* for every
line :—
Cambyses' roaring Romans beat at least
The howling Hebrews of Cybele's priest.—²

¹ [The Reverend George Croly, D.D. (1780-1860). He wrote, *inter alia*, *Paris in 1815*, a poem ; and *Salathiel*, a novel, 1827. In lines 7, 8, Byron seems to refer to *The Angel of the World, An Arabian Poem*, published in 1820.]

² [Stanza lviii. was first published in 1837. The reference is to Henry Hart Milman (1791-1868). Byron was under the impression that Milman had influenced Murray against continuing the publica-

LIX.

Then there 's my gentle Euphues,—¹ who,
 they say,
 Sets up for being a sort of *moral me*;
 He 'll find it rather difficult some day
 To turn out both, or either, it may be.
 Some persons think that Coleridge hath the
 sway;
 And Wordsworth has supporters, two or
 three;
 And that deep-mouthed Bœotian "Savage
 Landor"
 Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's
 gander.

LX.

John Keats, who was killed off by one
 critique,²
 Just as he really promised something great,
 If not intelligible, without Greek
 Contrived to talk about the gods of late,
 Much as they might have been supposed to
 speak.
 Poor fellow! His was an untoward fate;
 'T is strange the mind, that very fiery particle,³
 Should let itself be snuffed out by an article.

LXI.

The list grows long of live and dead
 pretenders
 To that which none will gain—or none
 will know
 The conqueror at least; who, ere Time
 renders
 His last award, will have the long grass
 grow
 Above his burnt-out brain, and sapless
 cinders.
 If I might augur, I should rate but low

tion of *Don Juan*. Hence the virulence of the
 attack. The "roaring Romans" (l. 7) are "The
 soldiery" who shout "All, All," in Croly's *Catiline*,
 act v. sc. 2.]

¹ [Bryan Waller Procter (Barry Cornwall), 1787-
 1874.]

² [Croker's article in the *Quarterly* (April, 1818
 [pub. September], vol. xix. pp. 204-208) did not
 "kill John Keats." See a letter to George and
 Georgiana Keats, October, 1818. Byron adopts
 Shelley's belief that the Reviewer, "miserable
 man," "one of the meanest," had "wantonly
 defaced one of the noblest specimens of the
 workmanship of God." See Preface to *Adonais*,
 and stanzas xxxvi., xxxvii.]

³ "Divinæ particulam auræ" [Hor., *Sat.* ii. 2.
 79.]

Their chances;—they 're too numerous, like
 the thirty
 Mock tyrants, when Rome's annals waxed
 but dirty.

LXII.

This is the literary *lower* empire,
 Where the prætorian bands take up the
 matter;—
 A "dreadful trade," like his who "gathers
 samphire,"
 The insolent soldiery to soothe and flatter,
 With the same feelings as you 'd coax a
 vampire.
 Now, were I once at home, and in good
 satire,
 I 'd try conclusions with those Janizaries,
 And show them *what* an intellectual war is.

LXIII.

I think I know a trick or two, would turn
 Their flanks;—but it is hardly worth my
 while,
 With such small gear to give myself concern:
 Indeed I 've not the necessary bile;
 My natural temper 's really aught but stern,
 And even my Muse's worst reproof 's a
 smile;
 And then she drops a brief and modern
 curtsy,
 And glides away, assured she never hurts ye.

LXIV.

My Juan, whom I left in deadly peril
 Amongst live poets and *blue* ladies,
 passed
 With some small profit through that field so
 sterile,
 Being tired in time—and, neither least nor
 last,
 Left it before he had been treated very ill;
 And henceforth found himself more gaily
 classed
 Amongst the higher spirits of the day,
 The Sun's true son, no vapour, but a ray.

LXV.

His morns he passed in business—which
 dissected,
 Was, like all business, a laborious nothing
 That leads to lassitude, the most infected
 And Centaur Nessus garb of mortal
 clothing,
 And on our sofas makes us lie dejected,
 And talk in tender horrors of our loathing

All kinds of toil, save for our country's good—
Which grows no better, though 't is time it
should.

LXVI.

His afternoons he passed in visits, luncheons,
Lounging and boxing; and the twilight
hour

In riding round those vegetable puncheons
Called "Parks," where there is neither
fruit nor flower

Enough to gratify a bee's slight munchings;
But after all it is the only "bower"
(In Moore's phrase) where the fashionable
fair

Can form a slight acquaintance with fresh air.

LXVII.

Then dress, then dinner, then awakes the
world!

Then glare the lamps, then whirl the
wheels, then roar

Through street and square fast flushing
chariots hurled

Like harnessed meteors; then along the
floor

Chalk mimics painting; then festoons are
twirled;

Then roll the brazen thunders of the door,
Which opens to the thousand happy few
An earthly Paradise of *Or Molu*.

LXVIII.

There stands the noble hostess, nor shall sink
With the three-thousandth curtsy; there
the waltz,

The only dance which teaches girls to think,
Makes one in love even with its very faults.

Saloon, room, hall, o'erflow beyond their
brink,

And long the latest of arrivals halts,
'Midst royal dukes and dames condemned to
climb,

And gain an inch of staircase at a time.

LXIX.

'Thrice happy he who, after a survey
Of the good company, can win a corner,
A door that 's *in* or boudoir *out* of the way,
Where he may fix himself like small "Jack
Horner,"

And let the Babel round run as it may,

And look on as a mourner, or a scorner,
Or an approver, or a mere spectator,

Yawning a little as the night grows later.

LXX.

But this won't do, save by and by; and he
Who, like Don Juan, takes an active share,
Must steer with care through all that glitter-
ing sea

Of gems and plumes and pearls and silks,
to where

He deems it is his proper place to be;

Dissolving in the waltz to some soft air,
Or prouder prancing with mercurial skill,
Where Science marshals forth her own
quadrille.

LXXI.

Or, if he dance not, but hath higher views

Upon an heiress or his neighbour's bride,
Let him take care that that which he pursues

Is not at once too palpably descried:

Full many an eager gentleman oft rues

His haste; Impatience is a blundering
guide

Amongst a people famous for reflection,

Who like to play the fool with circumspection.

LXXII.

But, if you can contrive, get next at supper;

Or, if forestalled, get opposite and ogle:—
Oh, ye ambrosial moments! always upper

In mind, a sort of sentimental bogle,¹

Which sits for ever upon Memory's crupper,

The ghost of vanished pleasures once in
vogue! Ill

Can tender souls relate the rise and fall

Of hopes and fears which shake a single ball.

LXXIII.

But these precautionary hints can touch

Only the common run, who must pursue,
And watch and ward; whose plans a word
too much

Or little overturns; and not the few

Or many (for the number 's sometimes such)

Whom a good mien, especially if new,

Or fame—or name—for Wit, War, Sense, or
Nonsense,

Permits whate'er they please,—or *did* not
long since.

LXXIV.

Our Hero—as a hero—young and handsome,

Noble, rich, celebrated, and a stranger,

Like other slaves of course must pay his
ransom,

Before he can escape from so much danger

¹ Scotch for goblin.

As will environ a conspicuous man. Some
Talk about poetry, and "rack and manger,"
And ugliness, disease, as toil and trouble;—
I wish they knew the life of a young noble.

LXXV.

They are young, but know not Youth—it is
anticipated;
Handsome but wasted, rich without a sou;
Their vigour in a thousand arms is dissipated;
Their cash comes *from*, their wealth goes
to a Jew;
Both senates see their nightly votes partici-
pated
Between the Tyrant's and the Tribunes'
crew;
And having voted, dined, drunk, gamed and
whored,
The family vault receives another Lord.

LXXVI.

"Where is the World?" cries Young, "at
eighty"—"Where
The World in which a man was born?"
Alas!
Where is the world of *eight* years past?
'*T was there*—
I look for it—'t is gone, a globe of glass!
Cracked, shivered, vanished, scarcely gazed
on, ere
A silent change dissolves the glittering
mass.
Statesmen, Chiefs, Orators, Queens, Patriots,
Kings,
And Dandies—all are gone on the Wind's
wings.

LXXVII.

Where is Napoleon the Grand? God knows!
Where little Castlereagh? The devil can
tell!
Where Grattan, Curran, Sheridan—all those
Who bound the Bar or Senate in their
spell?
Where is the unhappy Queen, with all her
woes?
And where the Daughter, whom the Isles
loved well?
Where are those martyred saints the Five per
Cents?
And where—oh, where the devil are the
Rents?

LXXVIII.

Where 's Brummell? Dished. Where 's
Long Pole Wellesley?¹ Diddled.
Where 's Whitbread? Romilly? Where 's
George the Third?
Where is his will? (That 's not so soon un-
riddled.)
And where is "Fum" the Fourth, our
"royal bird"?²
Gone down, it seems, to Scotland to be
fiddled
Unto by Sawney's violin, we have heard:
"Caw me, caw thee"—for six months hath
been hatching
This scene of royal itch and loyal scratching.

LXXIX.

Where is Lord This? And where my Lady
That?
The Honourable Mistresses and Misses?
Some laid aside like an old Opera hat,
Married, unmarried, and remarried: (this
is
An evolution oft performed of late).
Where are the Dublin shouts—and London
hisses?
Where are the Grenvilles? Turned as usual.
Where
My friends the Whigs? Exactly where they
were.

LXXX.

Where are the Lady Carolines and Franceses?
Divorced or doing thereanent. Ye annals
So brilliant, where the list of routs and
dances is,—
Thou Morning Post, sole record of the
panels
Broken in carriages, and all the phantasies
Of fashion,—say what streams now fill
those channels?
Some die, some fly, some languish on the
Continent,
Because the times have hardly left them *one*
tenant.

¹ [For William Wellesley Pole Tylney Long Wellesley (1788-1857), *vide ante*, *The Waltz*, line 21, p. 135, *note* 1. Samuel Whitbread, born 1758, committed suicide July 6, 1815. Sir Samuel Romilly, born 1758, committed suicide November 2, 1818.]

² [See Moore's *Fum and Hum, the Two Birds of Royalty*, appended to his *Fudge Family*.]

LXXXI.

Some who once set their caps at cautious dukes,
 Have taken up at length with younger brothers:
 Some heiresses have bit at sharper's hooks:
 Some maids have been made wives, some merely mothers:
 Others have lost their fresh and fairy looks:
 In short, the list of alterations bothers.
 There's little strange in this, but something strange is
 The unusual quickness of these common changes.

LXXXII.

Talk not of seventy years as age; in seven
 I have seen more changes, down from monarchs to
 The humblest individuals under Heaven,
 Than might suffice a moderate century through.
 I knew that nought was lasting, but now even
 Change grows too changeable, without being new:
 Nought's permanent among the human race,
 Except the Whigs *not* getting into place.

LXXXIII.

I have seen Napoleon, who seemed quite a Jupiter,
 Shrink to a Saturn. I have seen a Duke
 (No matter which) turn politician stupider,
 If that can well be, than his wooden look.
 But it is time that I should hoist my "blue Peter,"
 And sail for a new theme:—I have seen—
 and shook
 To see it—the King hissed, and then caressed;
 But don't pretend to settle which was best.

LXXXIV.

I have seen the Landholders without a rap—
 I have seen Joanna Southcote—I have seen
 The House of Commons turned to a tax-trap—
 I have seen that sad affair of the late Queen—
 I have seen crowns worn instead of a fool's cap—
 I have seen a Congress doing all that's mean—
 I have seen some nations, like o'erloaded asses,
 Kick off their burthens—meaning the high classes.

LXXXV.

I have seen small poets, and great prozers,
 and
 Interminable—*not eternal*—speakers—
 I have seen the funds at war with house and land—
 I have seen the country gentlemen turn squeakers—
 I have seen the people ridden o'er like sand
 By slaves on horseback—I have seen malt liquors
 Exchanged for "thin potations" by John Bull—
 I have seen John half detect himself a fool.—

LXXXVI.

But "*carpe diem*," Juan, "*carpe, carpe!*"
 To-morrow sees another race as gay
 And transient, and devoured by the same harpy.
 "Life's a poor player,"—then "play out the play,
 Ye villains!" and above all keep a sharp eye
 Much less on what you do than what you say:
 Be hypocritical, be cautious, be
 Not what you *seem*, but always what you *see*.

LXXXVII.

But how shall I relate in other cantos
 Of what befell our hero in the land,
 Which 't is the common cry and lie to vaunt as
 A moral country? But I hold my hand—
 For I disdain to write an *Atalantis*;¹
 But 't is as well at once to understand,
 You are *not* a moral people, and you know it,
 Without the aid of too sincere a poet.

LXXXVIII.

What Juan saw and underwent shall be
 My topic, with of course the due restriction
 Which is required by proper courtesy;
 And recollect the work is only fiction,
 And that I sing of neither mine nor me,
 Though every scribe, in some slight turn
 of diction,
 Will hint allusions never *meant*. Ne'er doubt
This—when I speak, I *don't hint*, but *speak out*.

¹ [See the *Secret Memoirs and Manners of several Persons of Quality, of Both Sexes, from the New Atalantis*, 1709, a work in which the authoress, Mrs. Manley, satirises the distinguished characters of her day.]

LXXXIX.

Whether he married with the third or fourth
 Offspring of some sage husband-hunting
 countess,
 Or whether with some virgin of more worth
 (I mean in Fortune's matrimonial bounties),
 He took to regularly peopling Earth,
 Of which your lawful, awful wedlock fount
 is,—
 Or whether he was taken in for damages,
 For being too excursive in his homages,—

XC.

Is yet within the unread events of Time.
 Thus far, go forth, thou Lay, which I will
 back
 Against the same given quantity of rhyme,
 For being as much the subject of attack
 As ever yet was any work sublime,
 By those who love to say that white is
 black.
 So much the better!—I may stand alone,
 But would not change my free thoughts for a
 throne.

CANTO THE TWELFTH.¹

I.

OF all the barbarous middle ages, that
 Which is most barbarous is the middle age
 Of man! it is—I really scarce know what;
 But when we hover between fool and sage,
 And don't know justly what we would be at—
 A period something like a printed page,
 Black letter upon foolscap, while our hair
 Grows grizzled, and we are not what we
 were;—

II.

Too old for Youth,—too young, at thirty-five,
 To herd with boys, or hoard with good
 threescore,—
 I wonder people should be left alive;
 But since they are, that epoch is a bore:
 Love lingers still, although 't were late to
 wive:
 And as for other love, the illusion 's o'er;
 And Money, that most pure imagination,
 Gleans only through the dawn of its creation.

¹ [Cantos xii., xiii, xiv. were written, January—
 March, 1823. They were published (by John
 Hunt) December 17, 1823.]

III.

O Gold! Why call we misers miserable?
 Theirs is the pleasure that can never pall;
 Theirs is the best bower anchor, the chain
 cable
 Which holds fast other pleasures great and
 small.
 Ye who but see the saving man at table,
 And scorn his temperate board, as none at
 all,
 And wonder how the wealthy can be sparing,
 Know not what visions spring from each
 cheese-paring.

IV.

Love or lust makes Man sick, and wine much
 sicker;
 Ambition rends, and gaming gains a loss;
 But making money, slowly first, then quicker,
 And adding still a little through each cross
 (Which *will* come over things), beats Love
 or liquor,
 The gamester's counter, or the statesman's
dross.
 O Gold! I still prefer thee unto paper,
 Which makes bank credit like a bank of
vapour.

V.

Who hold the balance of the World? Who
 reign
 O'er congress, whether royalist or liberal?
 Who rouse the shirtless patriots of Spain?¹
 (That make old Europe's journals "squeak
 and gibber" all)
 Who keep the World, both old and new, in
 pain
 Or pleasure? Who make politics run
 glibber all?
 The shade of Buonaparte's noble daring?—
 Jew Rothschild, and his fellow-Christian,
 Baring.

VI.

Those, and the truly liberal Lafitte,²
 Are the true Lords of Europe. Every loan
 Is not a merely speculative hit,
 But seats a Nation or upsets a Throne.
 Republics also get involved a bit;
 Columbia's stock hath holders not unknown

¹ [The *Descamisados*, or Sansculottes of the
 Spanish Revolution of 1820-1823.]

² [Jacques Laffitte (1767-1844), as Governor of
 the Bank of France, advanced sums to Parisians to
 meet their enforced contributions to the allies, and,
 in 1817, advocated liberal measures as a Deputy.]

On 'Change; and even thy silver soil, Peru,
Must get itself discounted by a Jew.

VII.

Why call the miser miserable? as
I said before: the frugal life is his,
Which in a saint or cynic ever was
The theme of praise: a hermit would not
miss
Canonization for the self-same cause,
And wherefore blame gaunt Wealth's
austerities?
Because, you 'll say, nought calls for such
a trial;—
Then there 's more merit in his self-denial.

VIII.

He is your only poet;—Passion, pure
And sparkling on from heap to heap,
displays,
Possessed, the ore, of which *mere hopes* allure
Nations athwart the deep: the golden rays
Flash up in ingots from the mine obscure:
On him the Diamond pours its brilliant
blaze,
While the mild Emerald's beam shades down
the dies
Of other stones, to soothe the miser's eyes.

IX.

The lands on either side are his; the ship
From Ceylon, Inde, or far Cathay, unloads
For him the fragrant produce of each trip;
Beneath his cars of Ceres groan the roads,
And the vine blushes like Aurora's lip;
His very cellars might be King's abodes;
While he, despising every sensual call,
Commands—the intellectual Lord of *all*.

X.

Perhaps he hath great projects in his mind,
To build a college, or to found a race,
A hospital, a church,—and leave behind
Some dome surmounted by his meagre face:
Perhaps he fain would liberate Mankind
Even with the very ore which makes them
base;
Perhaps he would be wealthiest of his nation,
Or revel in the joys of calculation.

XI.

But whether all, or each, or none of these
May be the hoarder's principle of action,
The fool will call such mania a disease:—
What is his *own*? Go—look at each tran-
saction,

Wars, revels, loves—do these bring men
more ease

Than the mere plodding through each
“vulgar fraction”?
Or do they benefit Mankind? Lean Miser!
Let spendthrifts' heirs inquire of yours—
who 's wiser?

XII.

How beauteous are rouleaus! how charming
chests
Containing ingots, bags of dollars, coins
(Not of old victors, all whose heads and crests
Weigh not the thin ore where their visage
shines,
But) of fine unclipped gold, where dully rests
Some likeness, which the glittering cirque
confines,
Of modern, reigning, sterling, stupid stamp!—
Yes! ready money *is* Aladdin's lamp.

XIII.

“Love rules the Camp, the Court, the Grove,
—for Love
Is Heaven, and Heaven is Love:”—so
sings the bard;
Which it were rather difficult to prove
(A thing with poetry in general hard).
Perhaps there may be something in “the
Grove,”
At least it rhymes to “Love”: but I 'm
prepared
To doubt (no less than landlords of their
rental)
If “Courts” and “Camps” be quite so
sentimental.

XIV.

But if Love don't, *Cash* does, and Cash alone:
Cash rules the Grove, and fells it too
besides;
Without cash, camps were thin, and courts
were none;
Without cash, Malthus tells you—“take
no brides.”
So Cash rules Love the ruler, on his own
High ground, as virgin Cynthia sways the
tides:
And as for “Heaven being Love,” why not
say honey
Is wax? Heaven is not Love, 't is Matrimony.

XV.

Is not all Love prohibited whatever,
Excepting Marriage? which is Love, no
doubt,
After a sort; but somehow people never
With the same thought the two words
have helped out.

Love may exist *with* Marriage, and *should*
ever,
And Marriage also may exist without ;
But Love *sans* banns is both a sin and shame,
And ought to go by quite another name.

XVI.

Now if the "Court," and "Camp," and
"Grove," be not
Recruited all with constant married men,
Who never coveted their neighbour's lot,
I say *that* line 's a lapsus of the pen ;—
Strange too in my *buon camerado* Scott,
So celebrated for his morals, when
My Jeffrey held him up as an example
To me ;—of whom these morals are a sample.

XVII.

Well, if I don't succeed, I *have* succeeded,
And that 's enough ;—succeeded in my
youth,
The only time when much success is needed :
And my success produced what I, in sooth,
Cared most about ; it need not now be
pleaded—
Whate'er it was, 'twas mine ; I 've paid, in
truth,
Of late, the penalty of such success,
But have not learned to wish it any less.

XVIII.

That suit in Chancery,—which some persons
plead
In an appeal to the unborn, whom they,
In the faith of their procreative creed,
Baptize Posterity, or future clay,—
To me seems but a dubious kind of reed
To lean on for support in any way ;
Since odds are that Posterity will know
No more of them, than they of her, I trow.

XIX.

Why, I 'm Posterity—and so are you ;
And whom do we remember ? Not a
hundred.
Were every memory written down all true,
The tenth or twentieth name would be
but blundered ;
Even Plutarch's Lives have but picked out
a few,
And 'gainst those few your annalists have
thundered ;
And Mitford¹ in the nineteenth century
Gives, with Greek truth, the good old Greek
the lie.

¹ See [William] Mitford's *Greece* (1829, v. 314, 315). "*Græcia Verax*." His great pleasure

XX.

Good people all, of every degree,
Ye gentle readers and ungentle writers,
In this twelfth Canto 't is my wish to be
As serious as if I had for inditers
Malthus and Wilberforce :—the last set free
The Negroes, and is worth a million
fighters ;
While Wellington has but enslaved the Whites,
And Malthus¹ does the thing 'gainst which
he writes.

XXI.

I 'm serious—so are all men upon paper ;
And why should I not form my speculation,
And hold up to the Sun my little taper ?
Mankind just now seem wrapped in
meditation
On constitutions and steam-boats of vapour ;
While sages write against all procreation,
Unless a man can calculate his means
Of feeding brats the moment his wife weans.

XXII.

That 's noble ! That 's romantic ! For my
part,
I think that "Philo-genitiveness" is—
(Now here 's a word quite after my own heart,
Though there 's a shorter a good deal than
this,
If that politeness set it not apart ;
But I 'm resolved to say nought that 's
amiss)—
I say, methinks that "Philo-genitiveness"
Might meet from men a little more forgiveness.

XXIII.

And now to business.—O my gentle Juan !
Thou art in London—in that pleasant place,
Where every kind of mischief 's daily brewing,
Which can await warm Youth in its wild
race.

consists in praising tyrants, abusing Plutarch,
spelling oddly, and writing quaintly ; and what is
strange, after all, *his* is the best modern history of
Greece in any language, and he is perhaps the best
of all modern historians whatsoever. Having
named his sins, it is but fair to state his virtues—
learning, labour, research, wrath, and partiality.
I call the latter virtues in a writer, because they
make him write in earnest.

¹ [Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834) author of the *Essay on the Principle of Population*, married, in 1804, Harriet, daughter of John Eckersall of Claverton House, near Bath. There were three children of the marriage, of whom two survived him. Byron may be alluding to the apocryphal story of "his eleven daughters," related by J. L. A. Cherbuliez, in the *Journal des Économistes* (1850, vol. xxv. p. 135).]

'T is true, that thy career is not a new one ;
 Thou art no novice in the headlong chase
 Of early life; but this is a new land,
 Which foreigners can never understand.

XXIV.

What with a small diversity of climate,
 Of hot or cold, mercurial or sedate,
 I could send forth my mandate like a Primate
 Upon the rest of Europe's social state ;
 But thou art the most difficult to rhyme at,
 Great Britain, which the Muse may
 penetrate.

All countries have their "Lions," but in thee
 There is but one superb menagerie.

XXV.

But I am sick of politics. Begin—
 "Paulo Majora." Juan, undecided
 Amongst the paths of being "taken in,"
 Above the ice had like a skater glided :
 When tired of play, he flirted without sin
 With some of those fair creatures who have
 prided
 Themselves on innocent tantalisation,
 And hate all vice except its reputation.

XXVI.

But these are few, and in the end they make
 Some devilish escapade or stir, which shows
 That even the purest people may mistake
 Their way through Virtue's primrose paths
 of snows ;
 And then men stare, as if a new ass spake
 To Balaam, and from tongue to ear o'erflows
 Quicksilver small talk, ending (if you note it)
 With the kind World's Amen—"Who would
 have thought it?"

XXVII.

The little Leila, with her Orient eyes,
 And taciturn Asiatic disposition,
 (Which saw all Western things with small
 surprise,
 To the surprise of people of condition,
 Who think that novelties are butterflies
 To be pursued as food for inanition,)
 Her charming figure and romantic history
 Became a kind of fashionable mystery.

XXVIII.

The women much divided—as is usual
 Amongst the sex in little things or great—
 Think not, fair creatures, that I mean to
 abuse you all,
 I have always liked you better than I state—

Since I've grown moral, still I must accuse
 you all

Of being apt to talk at a great rate ;
 And now there was a general sensation
 Amongst you, about Leila's education.

XXIX.

In one point only were you settled—and
 You had reason ; 't was that a young child
 of grace,
 As beautiful as her own native land,
 And far away, the last bud of her race,
 Howe'er our friend Don Juan might command
 Himself for five, four, three, or two years'
 space,
 Would be much better taught beneath the eye
 Of peeresses whose follies had run dry.

XXX.

So first there was a generous emulation,
 And then there was a general competition,
 To undertake the orphan's education :
 As Juan was a person of condition,
 It had been an affront on this occasion
 To talk of a subscription or petition ;
 But sixteen dowagers, ten unwed she sages
 Whose tale belongs to "Hallam's Middle
 Ages,"

XXXI.

And one or two sad, separate wives, without
 A fruit to bloom upon their withering
 bough—
 Begged to bring *up* the little girl, and
 "out,"—
 For that 's the phrase that settles all things
 now,
 Meaning a virgin's first blush at a rout,
 And all her points as thorough-bred to
 show :
 And I assure you, that like virgin honey
 Tastes their first season (mostly if they have
 money).

XXXII.

How all the needy honourable misters,
 Each out-at-elbow peer, or desperate dandy,
 The watchful mothers, and the careful sisters,
 (Who, by the by, when clever, are more
 handy
 At making matches, where "'t is gold that
 glisters,"
 Than their *he* relatives), like flies o'er candy
 Buzz round "the Fortune" with their busy
 battery,
 To turn her head with waltzing and with
 flattery !

XXXIII.

Each aunt, each cousin, hath her speculation ;
 Nay, married dames will now and then
 discover
 Such pure disinterestedness of passion,
 I 've known them court an heiress for their
 lover.
 " *Tantæne!*" Such the virtues of high
 station,
 Even in the hopeful Isle, whose outlet 's
 "Dover"!
 While the poor rich wretch, object of these
 cares,
 Has cause to wish her sire had had male heirs.

XXXIV.

Some are soon bagged, and some reject three
 dozen :
 'T is fine to see them scattering refusals
 And wild dismay o'er every angry cousin
 (Friends of the party), who begin accusals,
 Such as—"Unless Miss Blank meant to have
 chosen
 Poor Frederick, why did she accord perusals
 To his billets? *Why* waltz with him? Why,
 I pray,
 Look 'Yes' last night, and yet say 'No'
 to-day?

XXXV.

"Why?—Why?—Besides, Fred really was
attached ;
 'T was not her fortune—he has enough
 without ;
 The time will come she 'll wish that she had
 snatched
 So good an opportunity, no doubt :—
 But the old Marchioness some plan had
 hatched,
 As I 'll tell Aurea at to-morrow's rout :
 And after all poor Frederick may do better—
 Pray did you see her answer to his letter?"

XXXVI.

Smart uniforms and sparkling coronets
 Are spurned in turn, until her turn arrives,
 After male loss of time, and hearts, and bets
 Upon the sweepstakes for substantial wives ;
 And when at last the pretty creature gets
 Some gentleman, who fights, or writes, or
 drives,
 It soothes the awkward squad of the rejected
 'To find how very badly she selected.

XXXVII.

For sometimes they accept some long pursuer,
 Worn out with importunity ; or fall
 (But here perhaps the instances are fewer)
 To the lot of him who scarce pursued at all.
 A hazy widower turned of forty 's sure¹
 (If 't is not vain examples to recall)
 To draw a high prize : now, howe'er he got
 her, I
 See nought more strange in this than 't other
 lottery.

XXXVIII.

I, for my part—(one "modern instance" more,
 "True, 't is a pity—pity 't is, 't is true")—
 Was chosen from out an amatory score,
 Albeit my years were less discreet than few ;
 But though I also had reformed before
 Those became one who soon were to be two,
 I 'll not gainsay the generous public's voice,
 That the young lady made a monstrous choice.

XXXIX.

Oh, pardon my digression—or at least
 Peruse ! 'T is always with a moral end
 That I dissert, like grace before a feast :
 For like an agéd aunt, or tiresome friend,
 A rigid guardian, or a zealous priest,
 My Muse by exhortation means to mend
 All people, at all times, and in most places,
 Which puts my Pegasus to these grave paces.

XL.

But now I 'm going to be immoral ; now
 I mean to show things really as they are,
 Not as they ought to be : for I avow,
 That till we see what 's what in fact, we're
 far
 From much improvement with that virtuous
 plough
 Which skims the surface, leaving scarce a
 scar
 Upon the black loam long manured by Vice,
 Only to keep its corn at the old price.

XLI.

But first of little Leila we 'll dispose,
 For like a day-dawn she was young and
 pure—
 Or like the old comparison of snows,
 (Which are more pure than pleasant, to be
 sure,

¹ This line may puzzle the commentators more
 than the present generation.

Like many people everybody knows),—
 Don Juan was delighted to secure
 A goodly guardian for his infant charge,
 Who might not profit much by being at large.

XLII.

Besides, he had found out he was no tutor
 (I wish that others would find out the same),
 And rather wished in such things to stand
 neuter,
 For silly wards will bring their guardians
 blame:

So when he saw each ancient dame a suitor
 To make his little wild Asiatic tame,
 Consulting "the Society for Vice
 Suppression," Lady Pinchbeck was his choice.

XLIII.

Olden she was—but had been very young;
 Virtuous she was—and had been, I believe;
 Although the World has such an evil tongue.
 That—but my chaster ear will not receive
 An echo of a syllable that 's wrong:

In fact, there 's nothing makes me so much
 grieve,
 As that abominable tittle-tattle,
 Which is the cud eschewed by human cattle.

XLIV.

Moreover I 've remarked (and I was once
 A slight observer in a modest way),
 And so may every one except a dunce,
 That ladies in their youth a little gay,
 Besides their knowledge of the World, and
 sense

Of the sad consequence of going astray,
 Are wiser in their warnings 'gainst the woe
 Which the mere passionless can never know.

XLV.

While the harsh prude indemnifies her virtue
 By railing at the unknown and envied
 passion,
 Seeking far less to save you than to hurt you,
 Or, what 's still worse, to put you out of
 fashion,—

The kinder veteran with calm words will
 court you,

Entreating you to pause before you dash on;
 Expounding and illustrating the riddle
 Of epic Love's beginning—end—and middle.

XLVI.

Now whether it be thus, or that they are
 stricter,

As better knowing why they should be so,
 I think you 'll find from many a family picture.
 That daughters of such mothers as may
 know

The World by experience rather than by
 lecture,
 Turn out much better for the Smithfield
 Show

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

XLVII.

I said that Lady Pinchbeck had been talked
 about—

As who has not, if female, young, and pretty?
 But now no more the ghost of Scandal stalked
 about;

She merely was deemed amiable and witty,
 And several of her best *bons-mots* were
 hawked about:

Then she was given to charity and pity,
 And passed (at least the latter years of life)
 For being a most exemplary wife.

XLVIII.

High in high circles, gentle in her own,
 She was the mild reprover of the young,
 Whenever—which means every day—they 'd
 shown

An awkward inclination to go wrong.
 The quantity of good she did 's unknown,
 Or at the least would lengthen out my song:
 In brief, the little orphan of the East
 Had raised an interest in her, — which
 increased.

XLIX.

Juan, too, was a sort of favourite with her,
 Because she thought him a good heart
 at bottom,

A little spoiled, but not so altogether;
 Which was a wonder, if you think who got
 him,

And how he had been tossed, he scarce knew
 whither:

Though this might ruin others, it did *not*
 him,

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

L.

And these vicissitudes tell best in youth;
 For when they happen at a riper age,
 People are apt to blame the Fates, forsooth,
 And wonder Providence is not more sage.

Adversity is the first path to Truth:

He who hath proved War—Storm—or
 Woman's rage,

Whether his winters be eighteen or eighty,
 Hath won the experience which is deemed so
 weighty.

LI.

How far it profits is another matter.—
 Our hero gladly saw his little charge
 Safe with a lady, whose last grown-up daughter
 Being long married, and thus set at large,
 Had left all the accomplishments she taught
 her
 To be transmitted, like the Lord Mayor's
 barge,
 To the next comer; or—as it will tell
 More Muse-like—like to Cytherea's shell.

LII.

I call such things transmission; for there is
 A floating balance of accomplishment,
 Which forms a pedigree from Miss to Miss,
 According as their minds or backs are bent.
 Some waltz—some draw—some fathom the
 abyss
 Of Metaphysics; others are content
 With Music; the most moderate shine as
 wits;—
 While others have a genius turned for fits.

LIII.

But whether fits, or wits, or harpsichords—
 Theology—fine arts—or finer stays,
 May be the baits for Gentlemen or Lords
 With regular descent, in these our days,
 The last year to the new transfers its hoards;
 New vestals claim men's eyes with the same
 praise
 Of "elegant" *et cætera*, in fresh batches—
 All matchless creatures—and yet bent on
 matches.

LIV.

But now I will begin my poem. 'Tis
 Perhaps a little strange, if not quite new,
 That from the first of Cantos up to this
 I've not begun what we have to go through.
 These first twelve books are merely flourishes,
Preludios, trying just a string or two
 Upon my lyre, or making the pegs sure;
 And when so, you shall have the overture.

LV.

My Muses do not care a pinch of rosin
 About what's called success, or not suc-
 ceeding:
 Such thoughts are quite below the strain they
 have chosen;
 'T is a "great moral lesson" they are
 reading.
 I thought, at setting off, about two dozen
 Cantos would do; but at Apollo's pleading,
 If that my Pegasus should not be foundered,
 I think to canter gently through a hundred.

LVI.

Don Juan saw that Microcosm on stilts,
 Yclept the Great World; for it is the least,
 Although the highest: but as swords have
 hilts
 By which their power of mischief is in-
 creased,
 When Man in battle or in quarrel tilts,
 Thus the low world, north, south, or west,
 or east,
 Must still obey the high—which is their
 handle,
 Their Moon, their Sun, their gas, their
 farthing candle.

LVII.

He had many friends who had many wives,
 and was
 Well looked upon by both, to that extent
 Of friendship which you may accept or pass,
 It does nor good nor harm; being merely
 meant
 To keep the wheels going of the higher class,
 And draw them nightly when a ticket's
 sent;
 And what with masquerades, and fêtes, and
 balls,
 For the first season such a life scarce palls.

LVIII.

A young unmarried man, with a good name
 And fortune, has an awkward part to play;
 For good society is but a game,
 "The royal game of Goose," as I may say,
 Where everybody has some separate aim,
 An end to answer, or a plan to lay—
 The single ladies wishing to be double,
 The married ones to save the virgins trouble.

LIX.

I don't mean this as general, but particular
 Examples may be found of such pursuits:
 Though several also keep their perpendicular
 Like poplars, with good principles for roots;
 Yet many have a method more *reticular*—
 "Fishers for men," like Sirens with soft
 lutes:
 For talk six times with the same single lady,
 And you may get the wedding-dresses ready.

LX.

Perhaps you'll have a letter from the mother,
 To say her daughter's feelings are tre-
 panned;
 Perhaps you'll have a visit from the brother,
 All strut, and stays, and whiskers, to de-
 mand

What "your intentions are"?—One way or other

It seems the virgin's heart expects your hand:

And between pity for her case and yours,
You'll add to Matrimony's list of cures.

LXI.

I've known a dozen weddings made even *thus*,
And some of them high names: I have also
known

Young men who—though they hated to discuss

Pretensions which they never dreamed to
have shown—

Yet neither frightened by a female fuss,

Nor by mustachios moved, were let alone,
And lived, as did the broken-hearted fair,
In happier plight than if they formed a pair.

LXII.

There's also nightly, to the uninitiated,

A peril—not indeed like Love or Marriage,
But not the less for this to be depreciated:

It is—I meant and mean not to disparage
The show of Virtue even in the vitiated—

It adds an outward grace unto their
carriage—

But to denounce the amphibious sort of
harlot,

Couleur de rose, who's neither white nor
scarlet.

LXIII.

Such is your cold coquette, who can't say
"No,"

And won't say "Yes," and keeps you on
and off-ing

On a lee-shore, till it begins to blow—

Then sees your heart wrecked, with an in-
ward scoffing.

This works a world of sentimental woe,

And sends new Werters yearly to their
coffin;

But yet is merely innocent flirtation,

Not quite adultery, but adulteration.

LXIV.

"Ye gods, I grow a talker!" Let us prate.

The next of perils, though I place it *sternest*,
Is when, without regard to Church or State,

A wife makes or takes love in upright
earnest.

Abroad, such things decide few women's
fate—

(Such, early Traveller! is the truth thou
learnest)—

But in old England, when a young bride errs,
Poor thing! Eve's was a trifling case to hers.

LXV.

For 't is a low, newspaper, humdrum law-
suit

Country, where a young couple of the same
ages

Can't form a friendship, but the world o'er-
awes it.

Then there's the vulgar trick of those d—d
damages!

A verdict—grievous foe to those who cause
it!—

Forms a sad climax to romantic homages;
Besides those soothing speeches of the
pleaders,

And evidences which regale all readers.

LXVI.

But they who blunder thus are raw beginners;

A little genial sprinkling of hypocrisy
Has saved the fame of thousand splendid
sinners,

The loveliest oligarchs of our Gynocracy;
You may see such at all the balls and dinners,

Among the proudest of our aristocracy,
So gentle, charming, charitable, chaste—

And all by having *tact* as well as taste.

LXVII.

Juan, who did not stand in the predicament

Of a mere novice, had one safeguard more;
For he was sick—no, 't was not the word
sick I meant—

But he had seen so much good love before,
That he was not in heart so very weak;—I
meant

But thus much, and no sneer against the
shore

Of white cliffs, white necks, blue eyes, bluer
stockings—

Tithes, taxes, duns—and doors with double
knockings.

LXVIII.

But coming young from lands and scenes
romantic,

Where lives, not lawsuits, must be risked
for Passion,

And Passion's self must have a spice of
frantic,

Into a country where 't is half a fashion,
Seemed to him half commercial, half pedantic,

Howe'er he might esteem this moral
nation:

Besides (alas! his taste—forgive and pity!)
At *first* he did not think the women pretty.

LXIX.

I say at *first*—for he found out at *last*,
But by degrees, that they were fairer far
Than the more glowing dames whose lot is
cast

Beneath the influence of the Eastern Star.
A further proof we should not judge in haste;
Yet inexperience could not be his bar
To taste:—the truth is, if men would confess,
That novelties *please* less than they *impress*.

LXX.

Though travelled, I have never had the luck to
Trace up those shuffling negroes, Nile or
Niger,

To that impracticable place Timbuctoo,
Where Geography finds no one to oblige
her

With such a chart as may be safely stuck to—
For Europe ploughs in Afric like "*bos
piger*":

But if I *had been* at Timbuctoo, there
No doubt I should be told that black is fair.

LXXI.

It is. I will not swear that black is white,
But I suspect in fact that white is black,
And the whole matter rests upon eye-sight:—
Ask a blind man, the best judge. You'll
attack

Perhaps this new position—but I'm right;
Or if I'm wrong, I'll not be ta'en aback:—
He hath no morn nor night, but all is dark
Within—and what seest thou? A dubious
spark!

LXXII.

But I'm relapsing into Metaphysics,
That labyrinth, whose clue is of the same
Construction as your cures for hectic
phthisics,

Those bright moths fluttering round a
dying flame:
And this reflection brings me to plain Physics,
And to the beauties of a foreign dame,
Compared with those of our pure pearls of
price,
Those polar summers, *all* Sun, and some ice.

LXXIII.

Or say they are like virtuous mermaids, whose
Beginnings are fair faces, ends mere
fishes;—

Not that there's not a quantity of those
Who have a due respect for their own
wishes.

Like Russians rushing from hot baths to
snows¹

Are they, at bottom virtuous even when
vicious:

They warm into a scrape, but keep of course,
As a reserve, a plunge into remorse.

LXXIV.

But this has nought to do with their outsides.

I said that Juan did not think them pretty
At the first blush; for a fair Briton hides
Half her attractions—probably from pity—
And rather calmly into the heart glides,

Than storms it as a foe would take a city;
But once *there* (if you doubt this, prithee try)
She keeps it for you like a true ally.

LXXV.

She cannot step as does an Arab barb,
Or Andalusian girl from mass returning,
Nor wear as gracefully as Gauls her garb,
Nor in her eye Ausonia's glance is burning;
Her voice, though sweet, is not so fit to
warb-

le those *bravuras* (which I still am learning
To like, though I have been seven years in
Italy,

And have, or had, an ear that served me
prettily);—

LXXVI.

She cannot do these things, nor one or two
Others, in that off-hand and dashing style
Which takes so much—to give the Devil his
due;

Nor is she quite so ready with her smile,
Nor settles all things in one interview,
(A thing approved as saving time and
toil);—

But though the soil may give you time and
trouble,
Well cultivated, it will render double.

LXXVII.

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

Nine times in ten 't is but caprice or fashion,
Coquetry, or a wish to take the lead,

The pride of a mere child with a new sash on,
Or wish to make a rival's bosom bleed:

But the *tenth* instance will be a tornado,
For there's no saying what they will or
may do.

¹ The Russians, as is well known, run out from their hot baths to plunge into the Neva; a pleasant practical antithesis, which it seems does them no harm.

LXXVIII.

The reason is obvious : if there 's an *éclat*,
They lose their caste at once, as do the
Parias ;
And when the delicacies of the Law
Have filled their papers with their
comments various,
Society, that china without flaw,
(The Hypocrite!) will banish them like
Marius,
To sit amidst the ruins of their guilt :
For Fame 's a Carthage not so soon rebuilt.

LXXIX.

Perhaps this is as it should be ;—it is
A comment on the Gospel's " Sin no more,
And be thy sins forgiven : "—but upon this
I leave the Saints to settle their own score.
Abroad, though doubtless they do much
amiss,
An erring woman finds an opener door
For her return to Virtue—as they call
That Lady, who should be at home to all.

LXXX.

For me, I leave the matter where I find it,
Knowing that such uneasy virtue leads
People some ten times less in fact to mind it,
And care but for discoveries, and not deeds.
And as for Chastity, you 'll never bind it
By all the laws the strictest lawyer pleads,
But aggravate the crime you have not pre-
vented,
By rendering desperate those who had else
repented.

LXXXI.

But Juan was no casuist, nor had pondered
Upon the moral lessons of mankind :
Besides, he had not seen of several hundred
A lady altogether to his mind.
A little *blasé*—'t is not to be wondered
At, that his heart had got a tougher rind :
And though not vainer from his past success,
No doubt his sensibilities were less.

LXXXII.

He also had been busy seeing sights—
The Parliament and all the other houses ;
Had sat beneath the Gallery at nights,
To hear debates whose thunder *roused* (not
rouses)

The World to gaze upon those Northern
Lights,
Which flashed as far as where the musk-
bull browses ;¹
He had also stood at times behind the
Throne—
But Grey was not arrived, and Chatham
gone.

LXXXIII.

He saw, however, at the closing session,
That noble sight, when *really* free the
nation,
A King in constitutional possession
Of such a Throne as is the proudest station,
Though Despots know it not—till the pro-
gression
Of Freedom shall complete their education.
'T is not mere Splendour makes the show
august
To eye or heart—it is the People's trust.

LXXXIV.

There, too, he saw (whate'er he may be now)
A Prince, the Prince of Princes at the time,
With fascination in his very bow,
And full of promise, as the spring of prime.
Though Royalty was written on his brow,
He had *then* the grace, too, rare in every
clime,
Of being, without alloy of fop or beau,
A finished Gentleman from top to toe.

LXXXV.

And Juan was received, as hath been said,
Into the best society ; and there
Occurred what often happens, I 'm afraid,
However disciplined and debonnaire :—
The talent and good humour he displayed,
Besides the marked distinction of his air,
Exposed him, as was natural, to temptation,
Even though himself avoided the occasion.

LXXXVI.

But what, and where, with whom, and when,
and why,
Is not to be put hastily together ;
And as my object is Morality
(Whatever people say), I don't know
whether
I 'll leave a single reader's eyelid dry,
But harrow up his feelings till they wither,

¹ For a description and print of this inhabitant of the polar region and native country of the Auroræ Boreales, see Sir E. Parry's *Voyage In Search of a North-West Passage*, [1821, p. 257].

And hew out a huge monument of pathos,
As Philip's son proposed to do with Athos.

LXXXVII.

Here the twelfth canto of our Introduction
Ends: When the body of the Book 's
begun,
You 'll find it of a different construction
From what some people say 't will be when
done;
The plan at present 's simple in concoction.
I can't oblige you, reader, to read on;
That 's your affair, not mine: a real spirit
Should neither court neglect, nor dread to
bear it.

LXXXVIII.

And if my thunderbolt not always rattles,
Remember, reader! you have had before,
The worst of tempests and the best of battles,
That e'er were brewed from elements or
gore,
Besides the most sublime of—Heaven knows
what else;
An usurer could scarce expect much more—
But my best canto—save one on astronomy—
Will turn upon "Political Economy."

LXXXIX.

That is your present theme for popularity:
Now that the public hedge hath scarce
a stake,
It grows an act of patriotic charity,
To show the people the best way to break.
My plan (but I, if but for singularity,
Reserve it) will be very sure to take.
Meantime, read all the National-Debt sinkers,
And tell me what you think of our great
thinkers.

CANTO THE THIRTEENTH.

I.

I NOW mean to be serious;—it is time,
Since Laughter now-a-days is deemed too
serious;
A jest at Vice by Virtue 's called a crime,
And critically held as deleterious:
Besides, the sad 's a source of the sublime,
Although, when long, a little apt to weary
us;
And therefore shall my lay soar high and
solemn,
As an old temple dwindled to a column.

II.

The Lady Adeline Amundeville
('T is an old Norman name, and to be
found
In pedigrees, by those who wander still
Along the last fields of that Gothic ground)
Was high-born, wealthy by her father's will,
And beauteous, even where beauties most
abound,
In Britain,—which, of course, true patriots find
The goodliest soil of Body and of Mind.

III.

I 'll not gainsay them; it is not my cue;
I'll leave them to their taste, no doubt the
best;
An eye 's an eye, and whether black or blue,
Is no great matter, so 't is in request;
'T is nonsense to dispute about a hue—
The kindest may be taken as a test.
The fair sex should be always fair; and no
man,
Till thirty, should perceive there 's a plain
woman.

IV.

And after that serene and somewhat dull
Epoch, that awkward corner turned for
days
More quiet, when our moon 's no more at
full,
We may presume to criticize or praise;
Because Indifference begins to lull
Our passions, and we walk in Wisdom's
ways;
Also because the figure and the face
Hint that 't is time to give the younger place.

V.

I know that some would fain postpone this
era,
Reluctant as all placemen to resign
Their post; but theirs is merely a chimera,
For they have passed Life's equinoctial
line:
But then they have their claret and Madeira,
To irrigate the dryness of decline;
And County meetings, and the Parliament,
And debt—and what not, for their solace sent.

VI.

And is there not Religion and Reform,
Peace, War, the taxes, and what 's called
the "Nation" ?
The struggle to be pilots in a storm?
The landed and the monied speculation?

The joys of mutual hate to keep them warm,
 Instead of Love, that mere hallucination?
 Now Hatred is by far the longest pleasure;
 Men love in haste, but they detest at leisure.

VII.

Rough Johnson, the great moralist, professed,
 Right honestly, "he liked an honest hater"!
 The only truth that yet has been confessed
 Within these latest thousand years or later.
 Perhaps the fine old fellow spoke in jest:—
 For my part, I am but a mere spectator,
 And gaze where'er the place or the hovel is,
 Much in the mode of Goethe's Mephistopheles;

VIII.

But neither love nor hate in much excess;
 Though 't was not once so. If I sneer
 sometimes,
 It is because I cannot well do less,
 And now and then it also suits my rhymes.
 I should be very willing to redress
 Men's wrongs, and rather check than
 punish crimes,
 Had not Cervantes, in that too true tale
 Of Quixote, shown how all such efforts fail.

IX.

Of all tales 't is the saddest—and more sad,
 Because it makes us smile: his hero's right,
 And still pursues the right;—to curb the bad
 His only object, and 'gainst odds to fight
 His guerdon: 't is his virtue makes him mad!
 But his adventures form a sorry sight;—
 A sorrier still is the great moral taught
 By that real Epic unto all who have thought.

X.

Redressing injury, revenging wrong,
 To aid the damsel and destroy the caitiff;
 Opposing singly the united strong,
 From foreign yoke to free the helpless
 native:—
 Alas! must noblest views, like an old song,
 Be for mere Fancy's sport a theme creative,
 A jest, a riddle, Fame through thin and thick
 sought!
 And Socrates himself but Wisdom's Quixote?

XI.

Cervantes smiled Spain's chivalry away;
 A single laugh demolished the right arm
 Of his own country;—seldom since that day
 Has Spain had heroes. While Romance
 could charm,

The World gave ground before her bright
 array;
 And therefore have his volumes done such
 harm,
 That all their glory, as a composition,
 Was dearly purchased by his land's perdition.

XII.

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

XIII.

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

XIV.

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

XV.

It chanced some diplomatical relations,
 Arising out of business, often brought
 Himself and Juan in their mutual stations
 Into close contact. Though reserved, nor
 caught
 By specious seeming, Juan's youth, and
 patience,
 And talent, on his haughty spirit wrought,
 And formed a basis of esteem, which ends
 In making men what Courtesy calls friends.

XVI.

And thus Lord Henry, who was cautious as
 Reserve and Pride could make him, and full
 slow
 In judging men—when once his judgment
 was
 Determined, right or wrong, on friend or
 foe,
 Had all the pertinacity Pride has,
 Which knows no ebb to its imperious flow,
 And loves or hates, disdaining to be guided,
 Because its own good pleasure hath decided.

XVII.

His friendships, therefore, and no less aver-
 sions,
 Though oft well founded, which confirmed
 but more
 His prepossessions, like the laws of Persians
 And Medes, would ne'er revoke what went
 before.
 His feelings had not those strange fits, like
 tertians,
 Of common likings, which make some de-
 plore
 What they should laugh at—the mere ague
 still
 Of men's regard, the fever or the chill.

XVIII.

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

XIX.

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

XX.

In birth, in rank, in fortune likewise equal,
 O'er Juan he could no distinction claim ;
 In years he had the advantage of Time's
 sequel ;
 And, as he thought, in country much the
 same—
 Because bold Britons have a tongue and free
 quill,
 At which all modern nations vainly aim ;
 And the Lord Henry was a great debater,
 So that few Members kept the House up later.

XXI.

These were advantages : and then he
 thought—
 It was his foible, but by no means sinister—
 That few or none more than himself had
 caught
 Court mysteries, having been himself a
 minister :
 He liked to teach that which he had been
 taught,
 And greatly shone whenever there had been
 a stir ;
 And reconciled all qualities which grace man,
 Always a patriot—and, sometimes, a placeman.

XXII.

He liked the gentle Spaniard for his gravity ;
 He almost honoured him for his docility ;
 Because, though young, he acquiesced with
 suavity,
 Or contradicted but with proud humility.
 He knew the World, and would not see
 depravity
 In faults which sometimes show the soil's
 fertility,
 If that the weeds o'erlive not the first crop—
 For then they are very difficult to stop.

XXIII.

And then he talked with him about Madrid,
 Constantinople, and such distant places ;
 Where people always did as they were bid,
 Or did what they should not with foreign
 graces.
 Of coursers also spake they : Henry rid
 Well, like most Englishmen, and loved the
 races ;
 And Juan, like a true-born Andalusian,
 Could back a horse, as Despots ride a
 Russian.

XXIV.

And thus acquaintance grew, at noble routs,
 And diplomatic dinners, or at other—
 For Juan stood well both with Ins and Outs,
 As in freemasonry a higher brother.
 Upon his talent Henry had no doubts ;
 His manner showed him sprung from a
 high mother,
 And all men like to show their hospitality
 To him whose breeding matches with his
 quality.

XXV.

At Blank-Blank Square ;—for we will break
 no squares
 By naming streets : since men are so
 censorious,
 And apt to sow an author's wheat with tares,
 Reaping allusions private and inglorious,
 Where none were dreamt of, unto Love's
 affairs,
 Which were, or are, or are to be notorious,
 That therefore do I previously declare,
 Lord Henry's mansion was in Blank-Blank
 Square.

XXVI.

Also there bin another pious reason
 For making squares and streets anonymous ;
 Which is, that there is scarce a single season
 Which doth not shake some very splendid
 house
 With some slight heart-quake of domestic
 treason—
 A topic Scandal doth delight to rouse :
 Such I might stumble over unawares,
 Unless I knew the very chastest squares.

XXVII.

'T is true, I might have chosen Piccadilly,
 A place where peccadillos are unknown ;
 But I have motives, whether wise or silly,
 For letting that pure sanctuary alone.
 Therefore I name not square, street, place,
 until I
 Find one where nothing naughty can be
 shown,
 A vestal shrine of Innocence of Heart :
 Such are—but I have lost the London
 Chart.

XXVIII.

At Henry's mansion then, in Blank-Blank
 Square,
 Was Juan a *recherché*, welcome guest,
 As many other noble scions were ;
 And some who had but Talent for their
 crest ;

Or Wealth, which is a passport everywhere ;
 Or even mere Fashion, which indeed 's the
 best
 Recommendation ; and to be well dressed
 Will very often supersede the rest.

XXIX.

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

XXX.

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

XXXI.

But Adeline had not the least occasion
 For such a shield, which leaves but little
 merit
 To Virtue proper, or good education.
 Her chief resource was in her own high
 spirit,
 Which judged Mankind at their due estima-
 tion ;
 And for coquetry, she disdained to wear it—
 Secure of admiration : its impression
 Was faint—as of an every-day possession.

XXXII.

To all she was polite without parade ;
 To some she showed attention of that kind
 Which flatters, but is flattery conveyed
 In such a sort as cannot leave behind
 A trace unworthy either wife or maid ;—
 A gentle, genial courtesy of mind,
 To those who were, or passed for meritorious,
 Just to console sad Glory for being glorious ;

XXXIII.

Which is in all respects, save now and then,
 A dull and desolate appendage. Gaze
 Upon the shades of those distinguished men
 Who were or are the puppet-shows of
 praise,
 The praise of persecution. Gaze again
 On the most favoured; and amidst the
 blaze
 Of sunset halos o'er the laurel-browed,
 What can ye recognise?—a gilded cloud.

XXXIV.

There also was of course in Adeline
 That calm patrician polish in the address,
 Which ne'er can pass the equinoctial line
 Of anything which Nature would express;
 Just as a Mandarin finds nothing fine,—
 At least his manner suffers not to guess,
 That anything he views can greatly please:
 Perhaps we have borrowed this from the
 Chinese—

XXXV.

Perhaps from Horace: his "*Nil admirari*"
 Was what he called the "Art of
 Happiness"—
 An art on which the artists greatly vary,
 And have not yet attained to much success.
 However, 't is expedient to be wary:
 Indifference, certes, don't produce distress;
 And rash Enthusiasm in good society
 Were nothing but a moral inebriety.

XXXVI.

But Adeline was not indifferent: for
 (*Now* for a common-place!) beneath the
 snow,
 As a Volcano holds the lava more
 Within—*et cætera*. Shall I go on?—No!
 I hate to hunt down a tired metaphor,
 So let the often-used Volcano go.
 Poor thing! How frequently, by me and
 others,
 It hath been stirred up till its smoke quite
 smothers!

XXXVII.

I'll have another figure in a trice:—
 What say you to a bottle of champagne?
 Frozen into a very vinous ice,
 Which leaves few drops of that immortal
 rain,
 Yet in the very centre, past all price,
 About a liquid glassful will remain;
 And this is stronger than the strongest grape
 Could e'er express in its expanded shape:

XXXVIII.

'T is the whole spirit brought to a quint-
 essence;
 And thus the chilliest aspects may con-
 centre
 A hidden nectar under a cold presence.
 And such are many—though I only meant
 her
 From whom I now deduce these moral lessons,
 On which the Muse has always sought to
 enter.
 And your cold people are beyond all price,
 When once you've broken their confounded
 ice.

XXXIX.

But after all they are a North-West Passage
 Unto the glowing India of the soul;
 And as the good ships sent upon that message
 Have not exactly ascertained the Pole
 (Though Parry's efforts look a lucky presage),
 Thus gentlemen may run upon a shoal;
 For if the Pole's not open, but all frost
 (A chance still), 't is a voyage or vessel lost.

XL.

And young beginners may as well commence
 With quiet cruising o'er the ocean, Woman;
 While those who are not beginners should
 have sense
 Enough to make for port, ere Time shall
 summon
 With his grey signal-flag; and the past tense,
 The dreary *Fuimus* of all things human,
 Must be declined, while Life's thin thread's
 spun out
 Between the gaping heir and gnawing gout.

XLI.

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

XLII.

The English winter—ending in July,
 To recommence in August—now was done.
 'T is the postilion's paradise: wheels fly;
 On roads, East, South, North, West,
 there is a run.

But for post-horses who finds sympathy?
 Man's pity 's for himself, or for his son,
 Always premising that said son at college
 Has not contracted much more debt than
 knowledge.

XLIII.

The London winter 's ended in July—
 Sometimes a little later. I don't err
 In this: whatever other blunders lie
 Upon my shoulders, here I must aver
 My Muse a glass of *Weatherology*;
 For Parliament is our barometer:
 Let Radicals its other acts attack,
 Its sessions form our only almanack.

XLIV.

When its quicksilver 's down at zero,—lo!
 Coach, chariot, luggage, baggage, equi-
 page!
 Wheels whirl from Carlton Palace to Soho,
 And happiest they who horses can engage;
 The turnpikes glow with dust; and Rotten
 Row
 Sleeps from the Chivalry of this bright age;
 And tradesmen, with long bills and longer
 faces,
 Sigh—as the postboys fasten on the traces.

XLV.

They and their bills, "Arcadians both,"¹
 are left
 To the Greek Kalends of another session.
 Alas! to them of ready cash bereft,
 What hope remains? Of *hope* the full
 possession,
 Or generous draft, conceded as a gift,
 At a long date—till they can get a fresh
 one—
 Hawked about at a discount, small or large;
 Also the solace of an overcharge.

XLVI.

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

¹ "Arcades ambo." [Virgil, *Bucol.*, Ecl. vii. 4.]

XLVII.

'T is granted; and the valet mounts the
 dickey—
 That gentleman of Lords and Gentlemen;
 Also my Lady's gentlewoman, tricky,
 Tricked out, but modest more than poet's
 pen
 Can paint,—"*Così viaggino i Ricchi!*"¹
 (Excuse a foreign slipslop now and then,
 If but to show I 've travelled: and what 's
 Travel,
 Unless it teaches one to quote and cavil?)

XLVIII.

The London winter and the country summer
 Were well nigh over. 'T is perhaps a pity,
 When Nature wears the gown that doth
 become her,
 To lose those best months in a sweaty city,
 And wait until the nightingale grows dumber,
 Listening debates not very wise or witty,
 Ere patriots their true *country* can re-
 member;—
 But there 's no shooting (save grouse) till
 September.

XLIX.

I 've done with my tirade. The World was
 gone;
 The twice two thousand, for whom Earth
 was made,
 Were vanished to be what they call alone—
 That is, with thirty servants for parade,
 As many guests, or more; before whom groan
 As many covers, duly, daily laid.
 Let none accuse old England's hospitality—
 Its quantity is but condensed to quality.

L.

Lord Henry and the Lady Adeline
 Departed like the rest of their compeers,
 The peerage, to a mansion very fine—
 The Gothic Babel of a thousand years.
 None than themselves could boast a longer
 line,
 Where Time through heroes and through
 beauties steers;
 And oaks as olden as their pedigree
 Told of their Sires—a tomb in every tree.

LI.

A paragraph in every paper told
 Of their departure—such is modern fame:
 'T is pity that it takes no further hold
 Than an advertisement, or much the same;

¹ [So travel the rich.]

When, ere the ink be dry, the sound grows cold.

The Morning Post was foremost to proclaim—

“Departure, for his country seat, to-day,
Lord H. Amundeville and Lady A.

LII.

“We understand the splendid host intends
To entertain, this autumn, a select
And numerous party of his noble friends;
’Midst whom we have heard, from sources
quite correct,
The Duke of D—— the shooting season
spends,
With many more by rank and fashion
decked;
Also a foreigner of high condition,
The envoy of the secret Russian mission.”

LIII.

And thus we see—who doubts the Morning
Post?
(Whose articles are like the “Thirty-nine,”
Which those most swear to who believe them
most)—
Our gay Russ Spaniard was ordained to
shine,
Decked by the rays reflected from his host,
With those who, Pope says, “Greatly
daring dine.”—
’T is odd, but true,—last war the News
abounded
More with these dinners than the killed or
wounded;—

LIV.

As thus: “On Thursday there was a grand
dinner;
Present, Lords A. B. C.” Earls, dukes,
by name
Announced with no less pomp than Victory’s
winner:
Then underneath, and in the very same
Column: date, “Falmouth. There has
lately been here
The Slap-dash regiment, so well known to
Fame,
Whose loss in the late action we regret:
The vacancies are filled up—see Gazette.”

LV.

To Norman Abbey¹ whirled the noble pair,—
An old, old Monastery once, and now
Still older mansion—of a rich and rare
Mixed Gothic, such as artists all allow

¹ Newstead Abbey or Priory was founded by Henry II., by way of deodand or expiation for the

Few specimens yet left us can compare

Withal: it lies, perhaps, a little low,
Because the monks preferred a hill behind,
To shelter their devotion from the wind.

murder of Thomas Becket. Lands which bordered the valley of the Leen, and which had formed part of Sherwood Forest, were assigned for the use and endowment of a chapter of “black canons regular of the order of St. Augustine,” and on a site, by the river-side to the south of the forest uplands (stanza lv. lines 5-8) the new stede, or place, or station, arose. It was a “Norman Abbey” (stanza lv. line 1) which the Black Canons dedicated to Our Lady, but the enlargement and completion of the monastery was carried out in successive stages and “transition periods,” in a style or styles which, Byron rightly named “mixed Gothic” (stanza lv. line 4). To work their mills, and perhaps to drain the marshy valley, the monks dammed the Leen and excavated a chain of lakes—the largest to the north-west, Byron’s “lucid lake.” The “cascade,” which flows over and through a stone-work sluice, and forms a rocky water-fall, issues from this lake, and is in full view of the west front of the Abbey.

The Abbey, which, at the dissolution of monasteries in 1539, was handed over by Henry VIII. to Sir John Byron, “steward and warden of the forest of Shirewood,” was converted, here and there, more or less, into a baronial “mansion” (stanza lxvi.). It is, roughly speaking, a square block of buildings, flanking the sides of a grassy quadrangle. Surrounding the quadrangle are two-storied cloisters, and in the centre a “Gothic fountain” (stanza lxv. line 1) of composite workmanship. When the Byrons took possession of the Abbey the upper stories of the cloisters were converted, on three sides of the quadrangle, into galleries, and on the fourth, the north side, into a library. Abutting on the cloisters are the monastic buildings proper, in part transformed, but with “much of the monastic” preserved. On the west, the front of the Abbey, the ground floor consists of the entrance hall and Monks’ Parlour, and, above, the Guests’ Refectory, and the Prior’s Parlour. On the south, the Guesten Hall, and, above, the Monks’ Refectory, or Grand Drawing-room; on the south and east, on the ground floor, the Prior’s Lodgings, the Chapter House (“the exquisite small chapel,” stanza lxvi. line 5); and in the upper story, the state bedrooms, named after the kings, Edward III., Henry VII., etc., who, by the terms of the grant of land to the Prior and Canons, were entitled to free quarters in the Abbey. During Byron’s brief tenure of Newstead, and for long years before, these “huge halls, long galleries, and spacious chambers” (stanza lxxvii. line 1) were half dismantled, and in a more or less ruinous condition. A few pictures remained. There are and were portraits, by Lely (stanza lxviii. line 7), of a Lady Byron, of Fanny Jennings, Duchess of Tyrconnel, “loveliness personified,” of Mrs. Hughes, and of Nell Gwynne; by Sir

LVI.

It stood embosomed in a happy valley,
Crowned by high woodlands, where the
Druid oak¹

Stood like Caractacus, in act to rally
His host, with broad arms 'gainst the
thunder-stroke;

And from beneath his boughs were seen to
sally

The dappled foresters; as Day awoke,
The branching stag swept down with all his
herd,

To quaff a brook which murmured like a bird.

Godfrey Kneller, of William and Mary; by unnamed artists, of George I. and George II., etc., etc.; but of portraits of judges or bishops, or of pictures by old masters, there is neither trace nor record.

But the characteristic feature of Newstead Abbey, so familiar that description seems unnecessary, and, yet, never quite accurately described, is the west front of the Priory Church, which is in line with the west front of the Abbey. "Half apart," the southern portion of this front, which abuts on the windows of the Prior's Parlour, and the room above, where Byron slept, flanks and conceals the west end of the north cloisters and library; but, with this exception, it is a screen, and nothing more. In the centre is the "mighty window" (stanza lxii. line 1), shorn of glass and tracery; above are six lancet windows (which Byron seems to have regarded as niches), and, above again, in a "higher niche" (stanza lxi. line 1), is the crowned Virgin with the Babe in her arms, which escaped, as by a miracle, the "fiery darts"—the shot and cannon-balls of the Cromwellian troopers. Over the west door there is the mutilated figure of (?) the Saviour, but of twelve saints or twelve niches there is no trace. The "grand arch" is an ivy-clad screen, and nothing more. Behind and beyond, in place of vanished nave, of aisle and transept, is the smooth green turf; and at the east end, on the site of the high altar, stands the urn-crowned masonry of "Boatswain's" tomb.

Newstead Abbey was sold by Lord Byron to his old schoolfellow, Colonel Thomas Wildman, in November, 1817. The house and property were resold in 1861, by his widow, to William Frederick Webb, Esq., a traveller in many lands, the friend and host of David Livingstone. At his death the estate was inherited by his daughter, Miss Geraldine Webb, who was married to General Sir Herbert Charles Chermiside, G.C.M.G., etc.

¹ [Perhaps by the Druid oak Byron meant to celebrate the "Pilgrims' Oak," which, in his day, before the woods were replanted, must have stood out in solitary grandeur.]

LVII.

Before the mansion lay a lucid Lake,
Broad as transparent, deep, and freshly fed
By a river, which its softened way did take
In currents through the calmer water spread
Around: the wildfowl nestled in the brake
And sedges, brooding in their liquid bed:
The woods sloped downwards to its brink,
and stood
With their green faces fixed upon the flood.

LVIII.

Its outlet dashed into a deep cascade,
Sparkling with foam, until again subsiding,
Its shriller echoes—like an infant made
Quiet—sank into softer ripples, gliding
Into a rivulet; and thus allayed,
Pursued its course, now gleaming, and
now hiding
Its windings through the woods; now clear,
now blue,
According as the skies their shadows threw.

LIX.

A glorious remnant of the Gothic pile
(While yet the Church was Rome's) stood
half apart
In a grand Arch, which once screened many
an aisle.
These last had disappeared—a loss to Art:
The first yet frowned superbly o'er the soil,
And kindled feelings in the roughest heart,
Which mourned the power of Time's or
Tempest's march,
In gazing on that venerable Arch.

LX.

Within a niche, nigh to its pinnacle,
Twelve Saints had once stood sanctified in
stone;
But these had fallen, not when the friars fell,
But in the war which struck Charles from
his throne,
When each house was a fortalice—as tell
The annals of full many a line undone,—
The gallant Cavaliers, who fought in vain
For those who knew not to resign or reign.

LXI.

But in a higher niche, alone, but crowned,
The Virgin-Mother of the God-born Child,
With her Son in her blessed arms, looked
round,
Spared by some chance when all beside
was spoiled:

She made the earth below seem holy ground.

This may be superstition, weak or wild ;
But even the faintest relics of a shrine
Of any worship wake some thoughts divine.

LXII.

A mighty window, hollow in the centre,
Shorn of its glass of thousand colourings,
Through which the deepened glories once
could enter,

Streaming from off the Sun like Seraph's
wings,

Now yawns all desolate : now loud, now
fainter,

The gale sweeps through its fretwork, and
oft sings

The owl his anthem, where the silenced quire
Lie with their Hallelujahs quenched like fire.

LXIII.

But in the noontide of the moon, and when
The wind is wingéd from one point of
heaven,

There moans a strange unearthly sound,
which then

Is musical—a dying accent driven
Through the huge Arch, which soars and
sinks again.

Some deem it but the distant echo given
Back to the night wind by the waterfall,
And harmonized by the old choral wall :

LXIV.

Others, that some original shape, or form
Shaped by decay perchance, hath given
the power

(Though less than that of Memnon's statue,
warm

In Egypt's rays, to harp at a fixed hour)
To this grey ruin : with a voice to charm,
Sad, but serene, it sweeps o'er tree or tower ;
The cause I know not, nor can solve ; but such
The fact :—I 've heard it, —once perhaps too
much.¹

¹ This is not a frolic invention : it is useless to specify the spot, or in what county, but I have heard it both alone and in company with those who will never hear it more. It can, of course, be accounted for by some natural or accidental cause, but it was a strange sound, and unlike any other I have ever heard (and I have heard many above and below the surface of the earth produced in ruins, etc., etc., or caverns).—[M.S.]

[“The unearthly sound” may still be heard at rare intervals, but it is difficult to believe that the “huge arch” can act as an Æolian harp. Perhaps the smaller lancet windows may vocalise the wind.]

LXV.

Amidst the court a Gothic fountain played,
Symmetrical, but decked with carvings
quaint—

Strange faces, like to men in masquerade,
And here perhaps a monster, there a saint :
The spring gushed through grim mouths of
granite made,

And sparkled into basins, where it spent
Its little torrent in a thousand bubbles,
Like man's vain glory, and his vainer troubles.

LXVI.

The Mansion's self was vast and venerable,
With more of the monastic than has been
Elsewhere preserved : the cloisters still were
stable,

The cells, too, and Refectory, I ween :
An exquisite small chapel had been able,
Still unimpaired, to decorate the scene ;
The rest had been reformed, replaced, or
sunk,

And spoke more of the baron than the monk.

LXVII.

Huge halls, long galleries, spacious chambers,
joined

By no quite lawful marriage of the arts,
Might shock a connoisseur ; but when com-
bined,

Formed a whole which, irregular in parts,
Yet left a grand impression on the mind,
At least of those whose eyes are in their
hearts :

We gaze upon a giant for his stature,
Nor judge at first if all be true to nature.

LXVIII.

Steel Barons, molten the next generation
To silken rows of gay and gartered Earls,
Glanced from the walls in goodly preservation:
And Lady Marys blooming into girls,
With fair long locks, had also kept their
station :

And Countesses mature in robes and pearls:
Also some beauties of Sir Peter Lely,
Whose drapery hints we may admire them
freely.

LXIX.

Judges in very formidable ermine

Were there, with brows that did not much
invite

The accused to think their lordships would
determine

His cause by leaning much from might to
right :

Bishops, who had not left a single sermon ;
 Attorneys-general, awful to the sight,
 As hinting more (unless our judgments warp
 us)
 Of the "Star Chamber" than of "Habeas
 Corpus."

LXX.

Generals, some all in armour, of the old
 And iron time, ere lead had ta'en the lead ;
 Others in wigs of Marlborough's martial fold,
 Huger than twelve of our degenerate breed :
 Lordlings, with staves of white or keys of gold :
 Nimrods, whose canvas scarce contained
 the steed ;
 And, here and there, some stern high patriot
 stood,
 Who could not get the place for which he
 sued.

LXXI.

But ever and anon, to soothe your vision,
 Fatigued with these hereditary glories,
 There rose a Carlo Dolce or a Titian,
 Or wilder group of savage Salvator's :¹
 Here danced Albano's boys, and here the
 sea shone
 In Vernet's ocean lights ; and there the
 stories
 Of martyrs awed, as Spagnoletto tainted
 His brush with all the blood of all the sainted.

LXXII.

Here sweetly spread a landscape of Lorraine ;
 There Rembrandt made his darkness equal
 light,
 Or gloomy Caravaggio's gloomier stain
 Bronzed o'er some lean and stoic
 anchorite :—
 But, lo ! a Teniers woos, and not in vain,
 Your eyes to revel in a livelier sight :
 His bell-mouthed goblet makes me feel quite
 Danish²
 Or Dutch with thirst—What, ho ! a flask of
 Rhenish.

LXXIII.

Oh, reader ! if that thou canst read,—and
 know,
 'T is not enough to spell, or even to read,
 To constitute a reader—there must go
 Virtues of which both you and I have
 need ;—

¹ Salvator Rosa.

² If I err not, "your Dane" is one of Iago's catalogue of nations "exquisite in their drinking."

Firstly, begin with the beginning—(though
 That clause is hard) ; and secondly, pro-
 ceed :

Thirdly, commence not with the end—or
 sinning

In this sort, end at last with the beginning.

LXXIV.

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

LXXV.

The mellow Autumn came, and with it came
 The promised party, to enjoy its sweets.
 The corn is cut, the manor full of game ;
 The pointer ranges, and the sportsman
 beats
 In russet jacket :—lynx-like in his aim ;
 Full grows his bag, and wonderful his feats.
 Ah, nutbrown partridges ! Ah, brilliant
 pheasants !
 And ah, ye poachers !—'T is no sport for
 peasants.

LXXVI.

An English Autumn, though it hath no vines,
 Blushing with Bacchant coronals along
 The paths o'er which the far festoon entwines
 The red grape in the sunny lands of song,
 Hath yet a purchased choice of choicest
 wines ;
 The Claret light, and the Madeira strong.
 If Britain mourn her bleakness, we can tell
 her,
 The very best of vineyards is the cellar.

LXXVII.

Then, if she hath not that serene decline
 Which makes the southern Autumn's day
 appear
 As if 't would to a second Spring resign
 The season, rather than to Winter drear,—
 Of in-door comforts still she hath a mine,—
 The sea-coal fires, the "earliest of the
 year" ;
 Without doors, too, she may compete in
 mellow,
 As what is lost in green is gained in yellow.

LXXVIII.

And for the effeminate *villeggiatura*—
 Rife with more horns than hounds—she
 hath the chase,
 So animated that it might allure a
 Saint from his beads to join the jocund
 race:
 Even Nimrod's self might leave the plains of
 Dura,¹
 And wear the Melton jacket for a space:
 If she hath no wild boars, she hath a tame
 Preserve of bores, who ought to be made
 game.

LXXIX.

The noble guests, assembled at the Abbey,
 Consisted of—we give the sex the *pas*—
 The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke; the Countess
 Crabby;²
 The Ladies Scilly, Busey;—Miss Eclat,
 Miss Bombazeen, Miss Mackstay, Miss
 O'Tabby,
 And Mrs. Rabbi,³ the rich banker's squaw;
 Also the honourable Mrs. Sleep,
 Who looked a white lamb, yet was a black
 sheep:

LXXX.

With other Countesses of Blank—but rank;
 At once the "lie" and the *élite* of crowds;
 Who pass like water filtered in a tank,
 All purged and pious from their native
 clouds;
 Or paper turned to money by the Bank:
 No matter how or why, the passport
 shrouds
 The *passée* and the past; for good society
 Is no less famed for tolerance than piety,—

LXXXI.

That is, up to a certain point; which point
 Forms the most difficult in punctuation.
 Appearances appear to form the joint
 On which it hinges in a higher station;
 And so that no explosion cry "Aroint
 Thee, witch!" or each Medea has her
 Jason;

¹ In Assyria. [See *Daniel* iii. 1.]

² [Perhaps Mary, widow of the eighth Earl of Cork and Orrery: "Dowager Cork," "Old Corky," of Joseph Jekyll's *Correspondence*, 1894, pp. 83, 275.]

³ [Mrs. Rabbi may be Mrs. Coutts, the Mrs. Million of *Vivian Grey* (1826, i. 183), who arrived at "Château Desir in a crimson silk pelisse, hat and feathers, with diamond ear-rings, and a rope of gold round her neck."]

Or (to the point with Horace and with Pulci)
 "Omne tulit punctum, quæ miscuit utile
 dulci."

LXXXII.

I can't exactly trace their rule of right,
 Which hath a little leaning to a lottery:
 I've seen a virtuous woman put down quite
 By the mere combination of a coterie;
 Also a so-so matron boldly fight
 Her way back to the world by dint of
 plottery,
 And shine the very *Siria*¹ of the spheres,
 Escaping with a few slight, scarless sneers.

LXXXIII.

I have seen more than I'll say:—but we will
 see
 How our "*villeggiatura*" will get on.
 The party might consist of thirty-three
 Of highest caste—the Brahmins of the *ton*.
 I have named a few, not foremost in degree,
 But ta'en at hazard as the rhyme may run.
 By way of sprinkling, scattered amongst
 these,
 There also were some Irish absentees.

LXXXIV.

There was Parolles,² too, the legal bully,
 Who limits all his battles to the Bar
 And Senate: when invited elsewhere, truly,
 He shows more appetite for words than war.
 There was the young bard Rackrhyme, who
 had newly
 Come out and glimmered as a six weeks'
 star.
 There was Lord Pyrrho, too, the great
 freethinker;
 And Sir John Pottledeep, the mighty drinker.

LXXXV.

There was the Duke of Dash, who was a—
 duke,
 "Aye, every inch a" duke; there were
 twelve peers
 Like Charlemagne's—and all such peers in
 look
 And *intellect*, that neither eyes nor ears

¹ *Siria*, i.e. bitch-star.

² [Parolles [see *All's Well that Ends Well*, *passim*] is Brougham. It was thought that his discretion exceeded his valour. Compare *Vivian Grey* (1826, i. 186, 187). "What do you think Booby says? he says, that Foaming Fudge [Brougham] can do more than any man in Great Britain; that he had one day to plead in the King's Bench, spout at a tavern, speak in the House, and fight a duel—and that he found time for everything but the last."]

For commoners had ever them mistook.

There were the six Miss Rawbolds—pretty dears!
All song and sentiment; whose hearts were set
Less on a convent than a coronet.

LXXXVI.

There were four Honourable Misters, whose Honour was more before their names than after;
There was the *preux Chevalier de la Ruse*,¹
Whom France and Fortune lately deigned to waft here,
Whose chiefly harmless talent was to amuse;
But the clubs found it rather serious laughter,
Because—such was his magic power to please—
The dice seemed charmed, too, with his repartees.

LXXXVII.

There was Dick Dubious,² the metaphysician,
Who loved philosophy and a good dinner;
Angle, the *soi-disant* mathematician;
Sir Henry Silvercup, the great race-winner.
There was the Reverend Rodomont Precisian,
Who did not hate so much the sin as sinner:
And Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet,
Good at all things, but better at a bet.

LXXXVIII.

There was Jack Jargon, the gigantic guardsman;³
And General Fireface,⁴ famous in the field,
A great tactician, and no less a swordsman,
Who ate, last war, more Yankees than he killed.

¹ [Gronow (*Reminiscences*, 1889 i. 234-240) identifies the *Chevalier de la Ruse* with Casimir Comte de Montrond (1768-1843), back-stairs diplomatist, wit, gambler, and man of fashion.]

² [Perhaps Sir James Mackintosh—a frequent guest at Holland House.]

³ [Possibly Colonel (afterwards Sir James) Macdonell [d. 1857], “a man of colossal stature,” who occupied and defended the Château of Hougoumont on the night before the battle of Waterloo.]

⁴ [Sir George Prevost (1767-1816), the Governor-General of British North America. At a critical moment in the engagement of September 11, 1814, between Commodore Macdonough and Captain Downie in Plattsburg Bay. He issued an *order* for the troops to *cook*.]

There was the waggish Welsh Judge, Jefferies Hardsman,¹

In his grave office so completely skilled,
That when a culprit came for condemnation,
He had his Judge’s joke for consolation.

LXXXIX.

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

XC.

I had forgotten—but must not forget—
An orator, the latest of the session,
Who had delivered well a very set
Smooth speech, his first and maidenly transgression
Upon debate: the papers echoed yet
With his *début*, which made a strong impression,
And ranked with what is every day displayed—
“The best first speech that ever yet was made.”

XCI.

Proud of his “Hear him!” proud, too, of his vote,
And lost virginity of oratory,
Proud of his learning (just enough to quote),
He revelled in his Ciceronian glory:
With memory excellent to get by rote,
With wit to hatch a pun or tell a story,
Graced with some merit, and with more effrontery,
“His country’s pride,” he came down to the country.

¹ [George Hardinge (1744-1816), who was returned M.P. for Old Sarum in 1784, was appointed, in 1787, Senior Justice of the Counties of Brecon, Glamorgan, and Radnor. He “indulged in pleasantries,” but Byron was mistaken in supposing that he cut jokes at the expense of condemned prisoners.]

XCII.

There also were two wits by acclamation,
 Longbow from Ireland,¹ Strongbow from
 the Tweed²—
 Both lawyers and both men of education—
 But Strongbow's wit was of more polished
 breed ;
 Longbow was rich in an imagination
 As beautiful and bounding as a steed,
 But sometimes stumbling over a potato,—
 While Strongbow's best things might have
 come from Cato.

XCIII.

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

XCIV.

If all these seem an heterogeneous mass
 To be assembled at a country seat,
 Yet think, a specimen of every class
 Is better than a humdrum tête-à-tête.
 The days of Comedy are gone, alas !
 When Congreve's fool could vie with
 Molière's *bête* :
 Society is smoothed to that excess,
 That manners hardly differ more than dress.

XCV.

Our ridicules are kept in the back-ground—
 Ridiculous enough, but also dull ;
 Professions, too, are no more to be found
 Professional ; and there is nought to cull
 Of Folly's fruit ; for though your fools
 abound,
 They're barren, and not worth the pains
 to pull.
 Society is now one polished horde,
 Formed of two mighty tribes, the *Bores* and
Bored.

¹ [John Philpot Curran (1750-1817).]

² [Thomas Lord Erskine (1750-1823).]

XCVI.

But from being farmers, we turn gleaners,
 gleaning
 The scanty but right-well threshed ears of
 Truth ;
 And, gentle reader ! when you gather mean-
 ing,
 You may be Boaz, and I—modest Ruth.
 Further I'd quote, but Scripture intervening
 Forbids. A great impression in my youth
 Was made by Mrs. Adams, where she cries,
 "That Scriptures out of church are blas-
 phemies."¹

XCVII.

But what we can we glean in this vile age
 Of chaff, although our gleanings be not
 grist.
 I must not quite omit the talking sage,
 Kit-Cat, the famous Conversationist,²
 Who, in his common-place book, had a page
 Prepared each morn for evenings. "List,
 oh list !"
 "Alas, poor ghost !" —What unexpected woes
 Await those who have studied their *bons-mots* !

XCVIII.

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

XCIX.

Lord Henry and his lady were the hosts ;
 The party we have touched on were the
 guests.
 Their table was a board to tempt even ghosts
 To pass the Styx for more substantial
 feasts.
 I will not dwell upon *ragoûts* or roasts,
 Albeit all human history attests
 That happiness for Man—the hungry sinner!—
 Since Eve ate apples, much depends on
 dinner.

¹ [See *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews*, Bk. IV. chap. xi. ed. 1876. p. 324.]

² [Probably Richard Sharp (1759-1835), known as "Conversation Sharp."]

C.

Witness the lands which "flowed with milk
and honey,"
Held out unto the hungry Israelites:
To this we have added since, the love of
money,
The only sort of pleasure which requites.
Youth fades, and leaves our days no longer
sunny;
We tire of mistresses and parasites;
But oh, ambrosial cash! Ah! who would
lose thee?
When we no more can use, or even abuse
thee!

CI.

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

CII.

The elderly walked through the library,
And tumbled books, or criticized the
pictures,
Or sauntered through the gardens piteously,
And made upon the hot-house several
strictures,
Or rode a nag which trotted not too high,
Or on the morning papers read their
lectures,
Or on the watch their longing eyes would fix,
Longing at sixty for the hour of six.

CIII.

But none were *géné*: the great hour of union
Was rung by dinner's knell; till then all
were
Masters of their own time—or in communion,
Or solitary, as they chose to bear
The hours, which how to pass is but to few
known.
Each rose up at his own, and had to spare
What time he chose for dress, and broke his
fast
When, where, and how he chose for that re-
past.

CIV.

The ladies—some rouged, some a little pale—
Met the morn as they might. If fine, they
rode,
Or walked; if foul, they read, or told a tale,
Sung, or rehearsed the last dance from
abroad;
Discussed the fashion which might next pre-
vail,
And settled bonnets by the newest code,
Or crammed twelve sheets into one little
letter,
To make each correspondent a new debtor.

CV.

For some had absent lovers, all had friends;
The earth has nothing like a she epistle,
And hardly Heaven—because it never ends—
I love the mystery of a female missal,
Which, like a creed, ne'er says all it intends,
But full of cunning as Ulysses' whistle,
When he allured poor Dolon:—you had
better
Take care what you reply to such a letter.

CVI.

Then there were billiards; cards, too, but *no*
dice;—
Save in the clubs no man of honour plays;—
Boats when 't was water, skating when 't was
ice,
And the hard frost destroyed the scenting
days:
And angling, too, that solitary vice,
Whatever Izaak Walton sings or says:
The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb, in his gullet
Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull
it.¹

¹ It would have taught him humanity at least. This sentimental savage, whom it is a mode to quote (amongst the novelists) to show their sympathy for innocent sports and old songs, teaches how to sew up frogs, and break their legs by way of experiment, in addition to the art of angling,—the cruelest, the coldest, and the stupidest of pretended sports. They may talk about the beauties of nature, but the angler merely thinks of his dish of fish; he has no leisure to take his eyes from off the streams, and a single *bite* is worth to him more than all the scenery around. Besides, some fish bite best on a rainy day. The whale, the shark, and the tunny fishery have somewhat of noble and perilous in them; even net fishing, trawling, etc., are more humane and useful. But angling!—no angler can be a good man.

"One of the best men I ever knew,—as humane, delicate-minded, generous, and excellent a creature

CVII.

With evening came the banquet and the wine ;

The conversazione—the duet
Attuned by voices more or less divine
(My heart or head aches with the memory yet).

The four Miss Rawbolds in a glee would shine ;

But the two youngest loved more to be set
Down to the harp—because to Music's charms
They added graceful necks, white hands and arms.

CVIII.

Sometimes a dance (though rarely on field days,

For then the gentlemen were rather tired)
Displayed some sylph-like figures in its maze ;
Then there was small-talk ready when required ;

Flirtation—but decorous ; the mere praise
Of charms that should or should not be admired.

The hunters fought their fox-hunt o'er again,
And then retreated soberly—at ten.

CIX.

The politicians, in a nook apart,
Discussed the World, and settled all the spheres :

The wits watched every loophole for their art,
To introduce a *bon-mot* head and ears ;
Small is the rest of those who would be smart,
A moment's good thing may have cost them years

Before they find an hour to introduce it ;
And then, even *then*, some bore may make them lose it.

CX.

But all was gentle and aristocratic
In this our party ; polished, smooth, and cold,

As Phidian forms cut out of marble Attic.
There now are no Squire Westerns, as of old ;

And our Sophias are not so emphatic,
But fair as then, or fairer to behold :

as any in the world,—was an angler : true, he angled with painted flies, and would have been incapable of the extravagancies of I. Walton."

The above addition was made by a friend in reading over the MS.—"Audi alteram partem."—I leave it to counter-balance my own observation.

We have no accomplished blackguards, like Tom Jones,
But gentlemen in stays, as stiff as stones.

CXI.

They separated at an early hour ;
That is, ere midnight—which is London's noon :

But in the country ladies seek their bower
A little earlier than the waning moon.

Peace to the slumbers of each folded flower—
May the rose call back its true colour soon!
Good hours of fair cheeks are the fairest tinters,

And lower the price of rouge—at least some winters.

CANTO THE FOURTEENTH.

I.

IF from great Nature's or our own abyss
Of Thought we could but snatch a certainty,
Perhaps Mankind might find the path they miss—

But then 't would spoil much good philosophy.

One system eats another up, and this
Much as old Saturn ate his progeny ;
For when his pious consort gave him stones
In lieu of sons, of these he made no bones.

II.

But System doth reverse the Titan's breakfast,
And eats her parents, albeit the digestion
Is difficult. Pray tell me, can you make fast,
After due search, your faith to any question?
Look back o'er ages, ere unto the stake fast
You bind yourself, and call some mode the best one.

Nothing more true than *not* to trust your senses ;
And yet what are your other evidences?

III.

For me, I know nought ; nothing I deny,
Admit—reject—contemn : and what know *you*,

Except perhaps that you were born to die?
And both may after all turn out untrue.

An age may come, Font of Eternity,
When nothing shall be either old or new.
Death, so called, is a thing which makes men weep,

And yet a third of Life is passed in sleep.

IV.

A sleep without dreams, after a rough day
Of toil, is what we covet most ; and yet
How clay shrinks back from more quiescent
clay !

The very Suicide that pays his debt
At once without instalments (an old way
Of paying debts, which creditors regret),
Lets out impatiently his rushing breath,
Less from disgust of Life than dread of Death.

V.

'T is round him—near him—here—there—
everywhere—

And there 's a courage which grows out of
fear,
Perhaps of all most desperate, which will
dare

The worst to *know* it :—when the mountains
rear
Their peaks beneath your human foot, and
there
You look down o'er the precipice, and
drear

The gulf of rock yawns,—you can't gaze a
minute,
Without an awful wish to plunge within it.

VI.

'T is true, you don't—but, pale and struck
with terror,

Retire : but look into your past impression !
And you will find, though shuddering at the
mirror

Of your own thoughts, in all their self-
confession,
The lurking bias, be it truth or error,
To the *unknown* ; a secret prepossession,
To plunge with all your fears—but where?
You know not,
And that 's the reason why you do—or do
not.

VII.

But what 's this to the purpose? you will say.
Gent. reader, nothing ; a mere speculation,
For which my sole excuse is—'t is my way ;
Sometimes *with* and sometimes without
occasion,

I write what 's uppermost, without delay ;
This narrative is not meant for narration,
But a mere airy and fantastic basis,
To build up common things with common
places.

VIII.

You know, or don't know, that great Bacon
saith,

“ Fling up a straw, 't will show the way the
wind blows ; ”

And such a straw, borne on by human breath,
Is Poesy, according as the Mind glows ;
A paper kite which flies 'twixt Life and Death,
A shadow which the onward Soul behind
throws :

And mine 's a bubble, not blown up for
praise,

But just to play with, as an infant plays.

IX.

The World is all before me—or behind ;
For I have seen a portion of that same,
And quite enough for me to keep in mind ;—
Of passions, too, I have proved enough to
blame,

To the great pleasure of our friends, Mankind,
Who like to mix some slight alloy with
fame ;

For I was rather famous in my time,
Until I fairly knocked it up with rhyme.

X.

I have brought this world about my ears, and
eke

The other ; that 's to say, the Clergy—who
Upon my head have bid their thunders break
In pious libels by no means a few.

And yet I can't help scribbling once a week,
Tiring old readers, nor discovering new.
In Youth I wrote because my mind was full,
And *now* because I feel it growing dull.

XI.

But “ why then publish? ”—There are no
rewards

Of fame or profit when the World grows
weary.

I ask in turn,—Why do you play at cards?
Why drink? Why read?—To make some
hour less dreary.

It occupies me to turn back regards
On what I 've seen or pondered, sad or
cheery ;

And what I write I cast upon the stream,
To swim or sink—I have had at least my
dream.

XII.

I think that were I *certain* of success,
I hardly could compose another line :
So long I 've battled either more or less,
That no defeat can drive me from the Nine,

This feeling 't is not easy to express,
 And yet 't is not affected, I opine.
 In play, there are two pleasures for your
 choosing—
 The one is winning, and the other losing.

XIII.

Besides, my Muse by no means deals in
 fiction:
 She gathers a repertory of facts,
 Of course with some reserve and slight
 restriction,
 But mostly sings of human things and acts—
 And that 's one cause she meets with con-
 tradiction;
 For too much truth, at first sight, ne'er
 attracts;
 And were her object only what 's called Glory,
 With more ease, too, she 'd tell a different
 story.

XIV.

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

XV.

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

XVI.

With much to excite, there 's little to exalt;
 Nothing that speaks to all men and all
 times;
 A sort of varnish over every fault,
 A kind of common-place, even in their
 crimes;
 Factitious passions—Wit without much salt—
 A want of that true nature which sublimes

Whate'er it shows with Truth; a smooth
 monotony
 Of character, in those at least who have got
 any.

XVII.

Sometimes, indeed, like soldiers off parade
 They break their ranks and gladly leave
 the drill;
 But then the roll-call draws them back afraid,
 And they must be or seem what they *were*:
 still
 Doubtless it is a brilliant masquerade:
 But when of the first sight you have had
 your fill,
 It palls—at least it did so upon me,
 This paradise of Pleasure and *Ennui*.

XVIII.

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

XIX.

'T is said—indeed a general complaint—
 That no one has succeeded in describing
 The *monde*, exactly as they ought to paint:
 Some say, that authors only snatch, by
 bribing
 The porter, some slight scandals strange and
 quaint,
 To furnish matter for their moral gibing;
 And that their books have but one style in
 common—
 My Lady's prattle, filtered through her
 woman.

XX.

But this can't well be true, just now; for
 writers
 Are grown of the *beau monde* a part
 potential:
 I've seen them balance even the scale with
 fighters,
 Especially when young, for that 's essential.

Why do their sketches fail them as inditers
Of what they deem themselves most
consequential,
The *real* portrait of the highest tribe?
'T is that—in fact—there's little to describe.

XXI.

"*Haud ignara loquor*;" these are *Nugæ*,
"quarum

Pars parva fui," but still art and part.
Now I could much more easily sketch a harem,
A battle, wreck, or history of the heart,
Than these things; and besides, I wish to
spare 'em,

For reasons which I choose to keep apart.
"*Vetabo Cereris sacrum qui vulgarit*"—
Which means, that vulgar people must not
share it.

XXII.

And therefore what I throw off is ideal—
Lowered, leavened, like a history of Free-
masons,

Which bears the same relation to the real,
As Captain Parry's Voyage may do to
Jason's.

The grand *Arcanum*'s not for men to see all;
My music has some mystic diapasons;
And there is much which could not be
appreciated
In any manner by the uninitiated.

XXIII.

Alas! worlds fall—and Woman, since she
felled

The World (as, since that history, less polite
Than true, hath been a creed so strictly held),
Has not yet given up the practice quite.
Poor Thing of Usages! coerced, compelled,
Victim when wrong, and martyr oft when
right,

Condemned to child-bed, as men for their sins
Have shaving, too, entailed upon their chins.—

XXIV.

A daily plague, which in the aggregate
May average on the whole with
parturition.—

But as to women—who can penetrate
The real sufferings of their she condition?
Man's very sympathy with their estate
Has much of selfishness, and more
suspicion.

Their love, their virtue, beauty, education,
But form good housekeepers—to breed a
nation.

XXV.

All this were very well, and can't be better;
But even this is difficult, Heaven knows,
So many troubles from her birth beset her,
Such small distinction between friends and
foes;

The gilding wears so soon from off her fetter,
That—but ask any woman if she'd choose
(Take her at thirty, that is) to have been
Female or male? a schoolboy or a Queen?

XXVI.

"Petticoat Influence" is a great reproach,
Which even those who obey would fain be
thought

To fly from, as from hungry pikes a roach;
But since beneath it upon earth we are
brought,

By various joltings of Life's hackney coach,
I for one venerate a petticoat—
A garment of a mystical sublimity,
No matter whether russet, silk, or dimity.

XXVII.

Much I respect, and much I have adored,
In my young days, that chaste and goodly
veil,

Which holds a treasure, like a miser's hoard,
And more attracts by all it doth conceal—
A golden scabbard on a Damasque sword,
A loving letter with a mystic seal,
A cure for grief—for what can ever rankle
Before a petticoat and a peeping ankle?

XXVIII.

And when upon a silent, sullen day,
With a Sirocco, for example, blowing,
When even the sea looks dim with all its spray,
And sulkily the river's ripple's flowing,
And the sky shows that very ancient gray,
The sober, sad antithesis to glowing,—
'T is pleasant, if *then* anything is pleasant,
To catch a glimpse even of a pretty peasant.

XXIX.

We left our heroes and our heroines
In that fair clime which don't depend on
climate,
Quite independent of the Zodiac's signs,
Though certainly more difficult to rhyme at,
Because the Sun, and stars, and aught that
shines,
Mountains, and all we can be most sublime
at,

Are there oft dull and dreary as a *dun*—
Whether a sky's or tradesman's is all one.

XXX.

An in-door life is less poetical ;
 And out-of-door hath showers, and mists,
 and sleet,
 With which I could not brew a pastoral :
 But be it as it may, a bard must meet
 All difficulties, whether great or small,
 To spoil his undertaking, or complete—
 And work away—like Spirit upon Matter—
 Embarrassed somewhat both with fire and
 water.

XXXI.

Juan—in this respect, at least, like saints—
 Was all things unto people of all sorts,
 And lived contentedly, without complaints,
 In camps, in ships, in cottages, or courts—
 Born with that happysoul which seldom faints,
 And mingling modestly in toils or sports.
 He likewise could be most things to all
 women,
 Without the coxcomby of certain *she* men.

XXXII.

A fox-hunt to a foreigner is strange ;
 'T is also subject to the double danger
 Of tumbling first, and having in exchange
 Some pleasant jesting at the awkward
 stranger :

But Juan had been early taught to range
 The wilds, as doth an Arab turned avenger,
 So that his horse, or charger, hunter, hack,
 Knew that he had a rider on his back.

XXXIII.

And now in this new field, with some applause,
 He cleared hedge, ditch, and double post,
 and rail,
 And never *craned*,¹ and made but few "*faux
 pas*,"
 And only fretted when the scent 'gan fail.
 He broke, 't is true, some statutes of the laws
 Of hunting—for the sagest youth is frail ;
 Rode o'er the hounds, it may be, now and
 then,
 And once o'er several Country Gentlemen.

¹ *Craning*.—"To *crane*" is, or was, an expression used to denote a gentleman's stretching out his neck over a hedge, "to look before he leaped;"—a pause in his "vaulting ambition," which in the field doth occasion some delay and execration in those who may be immediately behind the equestrian sceptic. "Sir, if you don't choose to take the leap, let me!"—was a phrase which generally sent the aspirant on again ; and to good purpose : for though "the horse and rider" might fall, they made a gap through which, and over him and his steed, the field might follow.

XXXIV.

But on the whole, to general admiration,
 He acquitted both himself and horse : the
 Squires
 marvelled at merit of another nation ;
 The boors cried "Dang it ! who 'd have
 thought it?"—Sires,
 The Nestors of the sporting generation,
 Swore praises, and recalled their former
 fires ;
 The Huntsman's self relented to a grin,
 And rated him almost a whipper-in.

XXXV.

Such were his trophies—not of spear and
 shield,
 But leaps, and bursts, and sometimes foxes'
 brushes ;
 Yet I must own,—although in this I yield
 To patriot sympathy a Briton's blushes,—
 He thought at heart like courtly Chesterfield,
 Who, after a long chase o'er hills, dales,
 bushes,
 And what not, though he rode beyond all
 price,
 Asked next day, "If men ever hunted *twice*?"

XXXVI.

He also had a quality uncommon
 To early risers after a long chase,
 Who wake in winter ere the cock can summon
 December's drowsy day to his dull race,—
 A quality agreeable to Woman,
 When her soft, liquid words run on apace,
 Who likes a listener, whether Saint or
 Sinner,—
 He did not fall asleep just after dinner ;

XXXVII.

But, light and airy, stood on the alert,
 And shone in the best part of dialogue,
 By humouring always what they might assert,
 And listening to the topics most in vogue,—
 Now grave, now gay, but never dull or pert ;
 And smiling but in secret—cunning rogue !
 He ne'er presumed to make an error clearer ;—
 In short, there never was a better hearer.

XXXVIII.

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

XXXIX.

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

XL.

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

XLI.

No marvel then he was a favourite;
 A full-grown Cupid, very much admired;
 A little spoilt, but by no means so quite;
 At least he kept his vanity retired.
 Such was his tact, he could alike delight
 The chaste, and those who are not so much
 inspired.
 The Duchess of Fitz-Fulke, who loved
tracasserie,
 Began to treat him with some small *agacerie*.

XLII.

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

XLIII.

This noble personage began to look
 A little black upon this new flirtation;
 But such small licences must lovers brook,
 Mere freedoms of the female corporation.
 Woe to the man who ventures a rebuke!
 'T will but precipitate a situation
 Extremely disagreeable, but common
 To calculators when they count on Woman.

XLIV.

The circle smiled, then whispered, and then
 sneered;
 The misses bridled, and the matrons
 frowned;
 Some hoped things might not turn out as they
 feared;
 Some would not deem such women could
 be found;
 Some ne'er believed one half of what they
 heard;
 Some looked perplexed, and others looked
 profound:
 And several pitied with sincere regret
 Poor Lord Augustus Fitz-Plantagenet.

XLV.

But what is odd, none ever named the Duke,
 Who, one might think, was something in
 the affair:
 True, he was absent, and, 't was rumoured,
 took
 But small concern about the when, or where,
 Or what his consort did: if he could brook
 Her gaieties, none had a right to stare:
 Theirs was that best of unions, past all doubt,
 Which never meets, and therefore can't fall
 out.

XLVI.

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

XLVII.

There's nought in this bad world like
 sympathy:
 'T is so becoming to the soul and face
 Sets to soft music the harmonious sigh,
 And robes sweet Friendship in a Brussels
 lace.
 Without a friend, what were Humanity,
 To hunt our errors up with a good grace?
 Consoling us with—"Would you had thought
 twice!
 Ah! if you had but followed my advice!"

XLVIII.

O Job! you had two friends: one 's quite
 enough,
 Especially when we are ill at ease;
 They 're but bad pilots when the weather 's
 rough,
 Doctors less famous for their cures than
 fees.
 Let no man grumble when his friends fall off,
 As they will do like leaves at the first breeze:
 When your affairs come round, one way or
 t 'other,
 Go to the coffee-house, and take another.¹

XLIX.

But this is not my maxim: had it been,
 Some heart-aches had been spared me:
 yet I care not—
 I would not be a tortoise in his screen
 Of stubborn shell, which waves and weather
 wear not:
 'T is better on the whole to have felt and seen
 That which Humanity may bear, or bear
 not:
 'T will teach discernment to the sensitive,
 And not to pour their Ocean in a sieve.

L.

Of all the horrid, hideous notes of woe,
 Sadder than owl-songs or the midnight
 blast,
 Is that portentous phrase, "I told you so,"
 Uttered by friends, those prophets of the
past,
 Who, 'stead of saying what you *now* should
 do,
 Own they foresaw that you would fall at
 last,

¹ In Swift's or Horace Walpole's letters I think it is mentioned that somebody, regretting the loss of a friend, was answered by an universal Pylades: "When I lose one, I go to the Saint James's Coffee-house, and take another." I recollect having heard an anecdote of the same kind.—Sir W. D. was a great gamester. Coming in one day to the Club of which he was a member, he was observed to look melancholy.—"What is the matter, Sir William?" cried Hare, of facetious memory.—"Ah!" replied Sir W., "I have just lost poor Lady D."—"Lost! What at? *Quinze* or *Hazard*?" was the consolatory rejoinder of the querist.

[The *dramatis personæ* are probably Sir William Drummond (1770-1828), author of the *Academical Questions, etc.*, and Francis Hare, the wit, known as the "Silent Hare," from his extreme loquacity."—Gronow's *Reminiscences*, 1889, ii. 98-101.]

And solace your slight lapse 'gainst *bonos*
mores,
 With a long memorandum of old stories.

LI.

The Lady Adeline's serene severity
 Was not confined to feeling for her friend,
 Whose fame she rather doubted with posterity,
 Unless her habits should begin to mend:
 But Juan also shared in her austerity,
 But mixed with pity, pure as e'er was penned:
 His Inexperience moved her gentle ruth,
 And (as her junior by six weeks) his Youth.

LII.

These forty days' advantage of her years—
 And hers were those which can face
 calculation,
 Boldly referring to the list of Peers
 And noble births, nor dread the enumera-
 tion—
 Gave her a right to have maternal fears
 For a young gentleman's fit education,
 Though she was far from that leap year,
 whose leap,
 In female dates, strikes Time all of a heap.

LIII.

This may be fixed at somewhere before thirty—
 Say seven-and-twenty; for I never knew
 The strictest in chronology and virtue
 Advance beyond, while they could pass for
 new.
 O Time! why dost not pause? Thy scythe,
 so dirty
 With rust, should surely cease to hack and
 hew:
 Reset it—shave more smoothly, also slower,
 If but to keep thy credit as a mower.

LIV.

But Adeline was far from that ripe age,
 Whose ripeness is but bitter at the best:
 'T was rather her Experience made her sage,
 For she had seen the World and stood its
 test,
 As I have said in—I forget what page;
 My Muse despises reference, as you have
 guessed
 By this time;—but strike six from seven-and-
 twenty,
 And you will find her sum of years in plenty.

LV.

At sixteen she came out; presented, vaunted,
She put all coronets into commotion:
At seventeen, too, the World was still en-
chanted

With the new Venus of their brilliant
Ocean:
At eighteen, though below her feet still
panted

A Hecatomb of suitors with devotion,
She had consented to create again
That Adam, called "The happiest of Men."

LVI.

Since then she had sparkled through three
glowing winters,

Admired, adored; but also so correct,
That she had puzzled all the acutest hinters,
Without the apparel of being circumspect:
They could not even glean the slightest
splinters

From off the marble, which had no defect.
She had also snatched a moment since her
marriage
To bear a son and heir—and one miscarriage.

LVII.

Fondly the wheeling fire-flies flew around her,
Those little glitterers of the London night;
But none of these possessed a sting to wound
her—

She was a pitch beyond a coxcomb's flight.
Perhaps she wished an aspirant profounder;
But whatso'er she wished, she acted right;
And whether Coldness, Pride, or Virtue
dignify

A Woman—so she 's good—what *does* it
signify?

LVIII.

I hate a motive, like a lingering bottle
Which with the landlord makes too long a
stand,
Leaving all-claretless the unmoistened throttle,
Especially with politics on hand;
I hate it, as I hate a drove of cattle,
Who whirl the dust as Simooms whirl the
sand;

I hate it as I hate an argument,
A Laureate's Ode, or servile Peer's "Content."

LIX.

'T is sad to hack into the roots of things,
They are so much intertwined with the
earth;
So that the branch a goodly verdure flings,
I reckon not if an acorn gave it birth.

To trace all actions to their secret springs
Would make indeed some melancholy mirth:
But this is not at present my concern,
And I refer you to wise Oxenstiern.¹

LX.

With the kind view of saving an *éclat*,
Both to the Duchess and Diplomatist,
The Lady Adeline, as soon 's she saw
That Juan was unlikely to resist—
(For foreigners don't know that a *faux pas*
In England ranks quite on a different list
From those of other lands unblest with juries,
Whose verdict for such sin a certain cure is;—)

LXI.

The Lady Adeline resolved to take
Such measures as she thought might best
impede
The farther progress of this sad mistake.
She thought with some simplicity indeed;
But Innocence is bold even at the stake,
And simple in the World, and doth not need
Nor use those palisades by dames erected,
Whose virtue lies in never being detected.

LXII.

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

LXIII.

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

¹ The famous Chancellor [Axel Oxenstiern (1583-1654)] said to his son, on the latter expressing his surprise upon the great effects arising from petty causes in the presumed mystery of politics: "You see by this, my son, with how little wisdom the kingdoms of the world are governed."

LXIV.

The sort of thing to turn a young man's head,
Or make a Werter of him in the end.
No wonder then a purer soul should dread
This sort of chaste *liaison* for a friend;
It were much better to be wed or dead,
Than wear a heart a Woman loves to rend.
'T is best to pause, and think, ere you rush
on,
If that a *bonne fortune* be really *bonne*.

LXV.

And first, in the overflowing of her heart,
Which really knew or thought it knew no
guile,
She called her husband now and then apart,
And bade him counsel Juan. With a smile
Lord Henry heard her plans of artless art
To wean Don Juan from the Siren's wile;
And answered, like a statesman or a prophet,
In such guise that she could make nothing of
it.

LXVI.

Firstly, he said, "he never interfered
In anybody's business but the King's:"
Next, that "he never judged from what
appeared,
Without strong reason, of those sort of
things:"
Thirdly, that "Juan had more brain than
beard,
And was not to be held in leading strings;"
And fourthly, what need hardly be said twice,
"That good but rarely came from good
advice."

LXVII.

And, therefore, doubtless to approve the
truth
Of the last axiom, he advised his spouse
To leave the parties to themselves, forsooth—
At least as far as *bienséance* allows:
That time would temper Juan's faults of
youth;
That young men rarely made monastic
vows;
That Opposition only more attaches—
But here a messenger brought in despatches:

LXVIII.

And being of the council called "the Privy,"
Lord Henry walked into his cabinet,
To furnish matter for some future Livy
To tell how he reduced the Nation's debt;
And if their full contents I do not give ye,
It is because I do not know them yet;

But I shall add them in a brief appendix,
To come between mine Epic and its index.

LXIX.

But ere he went, he added a slight hint,
Another gentle common-place or two,
Such as are coined in Conversation's mint,
And pass, for want of better, though not
new:
Then broke his packet, to see what was in 't,
And having casually glanced it through,
Retired: and, as he went out, calmly kissed
her,
Less like a young wife than an aged sister.

LXX.

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

LXXI.

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

LXXII.

Still there was something wanting, as I've
said—
That undefinable "*Je ne sçais quoi*,"
Which, for what I know, may of yore have
led
To Homer's Iliad, since it drew to Troy
The Greek Eve, Helen, from the Spartan's
bed;
Though on the whole, no doubt, the Dar-
dan boy
Was much inferior to King Menelaüs:—
But thus it is some women will betray us.

LXXIII.

There is an awkward thing which much perplexes,
 Unless like wise Tiresias we had proved
 By turns the difference of the several sexes;
 Neither can show quite *how* they would be loved.
 The Sensual for a short time but connects us—
 The Sentimental boasts to be unmoved;
 But both together form a kind of Centaur,
 Upon whose back 't is better not to venture.

LXXIV.

A something all-sufficient for the *heart*
 Is that for which the sex are always seeking:
 But how to fill up that same vacant part?
 There lies the rub—and this they are but weak in.
 Frail mariners afloat without a chart,
 They run before the wind through high seas breaking;
 And when they have made the shore through every shock,
 'T is odd—or odds—it may turn out a rock.

LXXV.

There is a flower called "Love in Idleness,"
 For which see Shakespeare's ever-blooming garden;—
 I will not make his great description less,
 And beg his British godship's humble pardon,
 If, in my extremity of rhyme's distress,
 I touch a single leaf where he is warden;—
 But, though the flower is different, with the French
 Or Swiss Rousseau—cry "*Voilà la Per-venche!*"¹

LXXVI.

Eureka! I have found it! What I mean
 To say is, not that Love is Idleness,
 But that in Love such idleness has been
 An accessory, as I have cause to guess.
 Hard Labour's an indifferent go-between;
 Your men of business are not apt to express
 Much passion, since the merchant-ship, the Argo,
 Conveyed Medea as her supercargo.

¹ See *La Nouvelle Héloïse*.

LXXVII.

"*Beatus ille procul!*" from "*negotiis*,"¹
 Saith Horace; the great little poet's wrong;
 His other maxim, "*Noscitur a sociis*,
 Is much more to the purpose of his song;
 Though even that were sometimes too ferocious,
 Unless good company be kept too long;
 But, in his teeth, whate'er their state or station,
 Thrice happy they who *have* an occupation!

LXXVIII.

Adam exchanged his Paradise for ploughing,
 Eve made up millinery with fig leaves—
 The earliest knowledge from the Tree so knowing,
 As far as I know, that the Church receives:
 And since that time it need not cost much showing,
 That many of the ills o'er which Man grieves,
 And still more Women, spring from not employing
 Some hours to make the remnant worth enjoying.

LXXIX.

And hence high life is oft a dreary void,
 A rack of pleasures, where we must invent
 A something wherewithal to be annoyed.
 Bards may sing what they please about
Content;
Contented, when translated, means but cloyed;
 And hence arise the woes of Sentiment,
 Blue-devils—and Blue-stockings—and Romances
 Reduced to practice, and performed like dances.

LXXX.

I do declare, upon an affidavit,
 Romances I ne'er read like those I have seen;
 Nor, if unto the World I ever gave it,
 Would some believe that such a tale had been:
 But such intent I never had, nor have it;
 Some truths are better kept behind a screen,
 Especially when they would look like lies;
 I therefore deal in generalities.

¹ Hor., *Epod.*, II. line 1.

LXXXI.

“An oyster may be crossed in love”—and why?

Because he mopeth idly in his shell,
And heaves a lonely subterraqueous sigh,
Much as a monk may do within his cell:
And *à-propos* of monks, their Piety
With Sloth hath found it difficult to dwell:
Those vegetables of the Catholic creed
Are apt exceedingly to run to seed.

LXXXII.

O Wilberforce! thou man of black renown,
Whose merit none enough can sing or say,
Thou hast struck one immense Colossus
down,

Thou moral Washington of Africa!
But there's another little thing, I own,
Which you should perpetrate some summer's day,
And set the other half of Earth to rights;
You have freed the *blacks*—now pray shut up
the whites.

LXXXIII.

Shut up the bald-coot bully Alexander!
Ship off the Holy Three to Senegal;
Teach them that “sauce for goose is sauce
for gander,”

And ask them how *they* like to be in thrall!
Shut up each high heroic Salamander,
Who eats fire gratis (since the pay's but
small);
Shut up—no, *not* the King, but the Pavilion,
Or else 't will cost us all another million.

LXXXIV.

Shut up the World at large, let Bedlam out;
And you will be perhaps surprised to find
All things pursue exactly the same route,
As now with those of *soi-disant* sound
mind.

This I could prove beyond a single doubt,
Were there a jot of sense among Mankind;
But till that *point d'appui* is found, alas!
Like Archimedes, I leave Earth as 't was.

LXXXV.

Our gentle Adeline had one defect—
Her heart was vacant, though a splendid
mansion;
Her conduct had been perfectly correct,
As she had seen nought claiming its expansion.

A wavering spirit may be easier wrecked,
Because 't is frailer, doubtless, than a
staunch one;

But when the latter works its own undoing,
Its inner crash is like an Earthquake's ruin.

LXXXVI.

She loved her Lord, or thought so; but *that*
love

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

LXXXVII.

There was no great disparity of years,
Though much in temper; but they never
clashed:

They moved like stars united in their spheres,
Or like the Rhone by Leman's waters
washed,

Where mingled and yet separate appears
The River from the Lake, all blueely dashed
Through the serene and placid glassy deep,
Which fain would lull its river-child to sleep.

LXXXVIII.

Now when she once had ta'en an interest
In anything, however she might flatter
Herself that her intentions were the best,
Intense intentions are a dangerous matter:
Impressions were much stronger than she
guessed,

And gathered as they run like growing
water
Upon her mind; the more so, as her breast
Was not at first too readily impressed.

LXXXIX.

But when it was, she had that lurking Demon
Of double nature, and thus doubly named—
Firmness yclept in Heroes, Kings, and sea-
men,

That is, when they succeed; but greatly
blamed
As *Obstinacy*, both in Men and Women,
Whene'er their triumph pales, or star is
tamed:—

And 't will perplex the casuist in morality
To fix the due bounds of this dangerous
quality.

XC.

Had Buonaparte won at Waterloo,
 It had been firmness; now 't is pertinacity:
 Must the event decide between the two?
 I leave it to your people of sagacity
 To draw the line between the false and true,
 If such can e'er be drawn by Man's
 capacity:
 My business is with Lady Adeline,
 Who in her way too was a heroine.

XCI.

She knew not her own heart; then how
 should I?
 I think not she was *then* in love with Juan:
 If so, she would have had the strength to fly
 The wild sensation, unto her a new one:
 She merely felt a common sympathy
 (I will not say it was a false or true one)
 In him, because she thought he was in
 danger,—
 Her husband's friend—her own—young—and
 a stranger.

XCII.

She was, or thought she was, his friend—and
 this
 Without the farce of Friendship, or ro-
 mance
 Of Platonism, which leads so oft amiss
 Ladies who have studied Friendship but in
 France
 Or Germany, where people *purely* kiss.
 To thus much Adeline would not advance;
 But of such friendship as Man's may to Man
 be
 She was as capable as Woman can be.

XCIII.

No doubt the secret influence of the Sex
 Will there, as also in the ties of blood,
 An innocent predominance annex,
 And tune the concord to a finer mood.
 If free from Passion, which all Friendship
 checks,
 And your true feelings fully understood,
 No friend like to a woman Earth discovers,
 So that you have not been nor will be lovers.

XCIV.

Love bears within its breast the very germ
 Of Change; and how should this be other-
 wise?
 That violent things more quickly find a term
 Is shown through Nature's whole analogies;

And how should the most fierce of all be firm?
 Would you have endless lightning in the
 skies?

Methinks Love's very title says enough:
 How should "the *tender* passion" e'er be
tough?

XCV.

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

XCVI.

I've also seen some female *friends*¹ ('t is odd,
 But true—as, if expedient, I could prove)
 That faithful were through thick and thin,
 abroad,
 At home, far more than ever yet was Love—
 Who did not quit me when Oppression trod
 Upon me; whom no scandal could remove;
 Who fought, and fight, in absence, too, my
 battles,
 Despite the snake Society's loud rattles.

XCVII.

Whether Don Juan and chaste Adeline
 Grew friends in this or any other sense,
 Will be discussed hereafter, I opine:
 At present I am glad of a pretence
 To leave them hovering, as the effect is fine,
 And keeps the atrocious reader in *suspense*:
 The surest way—for ladies and for books—
 To bait their tender—or their tenter—hooks.

XCVIII.

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

¹ [Lady Holland, Lady Jersey, Madame de Staël, and before and above all, his sister, Mrs. Leigh.]

XCIX.

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

C.

But great things spring from little :—Would
 you think,
 That in our youth, as dangerous a passion
 As e'er brought Man and Woman to the
 brink
 Of ruin, rose from such a slight occasion,
 As few would ever dream could form the link
 Of such a sentimental situation?
 You 'll never guess, I 'll bet you millions,
 milliards—
 It all sprung from a harmless game at
 billiards.

CI.

'T is strange,—but true ; for Truth is always
 strange—
 Stranger than fiction : if it could be told,
 How much would novels gain by the exchange !
 How differently the World would men be-
 hold !
 How oft would Vice and Virtue places change !
 The new world would be nothing to the old,
 If some Columbus of the moral seas
 Would show mankind their Souls' antipodes.

CII.

What "antres vast and deserts idle," then,
 Would be discovered in the human soul !
 What icebergs in the hearts of mighty men,
 With self-love in the centre as their Pole !
 What Anthropophagi are nine of ten
 Of those who hold the kingdoms in control !
 Were things but only called by their right
 name,
 Cæsar himself would be ashamed of Fame.

CANTO THE FIFTEENTH.¹

I.

AH!—What should follow slips from my
 reflection ;
 Whatever follows ne'ertheless may be
 As *à-propos* of Hope or Retrospection,
 As though the lurking thought had followed
 free.

¹ [Cantos xv., xvi., were written in March—April
 1823. They were published (by John Hunt) March
 26, 1824.]

All present life is but an Interjection,
 An "Oh!" or "Ah!" of Joy or Misery,
 Or a "Ha! ha!" or "Bah!"—a yawn, or
 "Pooh!"
 Of which perhaps the latter is most true.

II.

But, more or less, the whole 's a Syncopé
 Or a *Singultus*—emblems of Emotion,
 The grand Antithesis to great *Ennui*,
 Wherewith we break our bubbles on the
 Ocean—
 That Watery Outline of Eternity,
 Or miniature, at least, as is my notion—
 Which ministers unto the Soul's delight,
 In seeing matters which are out of sight.

III.

But all are better than the sigh suppressed,
 Corroding in the cavern of the heart,
 Making the countenance a masque of rest
 And turning Human Nature to an art.
 Few men dare show their thoughts of worst
 or best ;
 Dissimulation always sets apart
 A corner for herself ; and, therefore, Fiction
 Is that which passes with least contradiction.

IV.

Ah ! who can tell? Or rather, who can not
 Remember, without telling, Passion's errors?
 The drainer of Oblivion, even the sot,
 Hath got *blue devils* for his morning
 mirrors :
 What though on Lethe's stream he seem to
 float,
 He cannot sink his tremours or his terrors ;
 The ruby glass that shakes within his hand
 Leaves a sad sediment of Time's worst sand.

V.

And as for Love—O Love!—We will
 proceed :—
 The Lady Adeline Amundeville,
 A pretty name as one would wish to read,
 Must perch harmonious on my tuneful quill.
 There 's Music in the sighing of a reed ;
 There 's Music in the gushing of a rill ;
 There 's Music in all things, if men had ears :
 Their Earth is but an echo of the Spheres.

VI.

The Lady Adeline, Right Honourable,
 And honoured, ran a risk of growing less
 so ;
 For few of the soft sex are very stable
 In their resolves—alas! that I should say
 so ;

They differ as wine differs from its label,
When once decanted ;—I presume to guess
so,
But will not swear : yet both upon occasion,
Till old, may undergo adulteration.

VII.

But Adeline was of the purest vintage,
The unmingled essence of the grape ; and
yet
Bright as a new napoleon from its mintage,
Or glorious as a diamond richly set ;
A page where Time should hesitate to print
age,
And for which Nature might forego her
debt—
Sole creditor whose process doth involve in 't
The luck of finding everybody solvent.

VIII.

O Death ! thou dunnest of all duns ! thou daily
Knockest at doors, at first with modest tap,
Like a meek tradesman when approaching
palely
Some splendid debtor he would take by
sap :
But oft denied, as Patience 'gins to fail, he
Advances with exasperated rap,
And (if let in) insists, in terms unhandsome,
On ready money, or "a draft on Ransom."¹

IX.

Whate'er thou takest, spare awhile poor
Beauty !
She is so rare, and thou hast so much prey.
What though she now and then may slip
from duty,
The more 's the reason why you ought to
stay ;
Gaunt Gourmand, with whole nations for
your booty,
You should be civil in a modest way :
Suppress, then, some slight feminine diseases,
And take as many heroes as Heaven pleases.

X.

Fair Adeline, the more ingenuous
Where she was interested (as was said),
Because she was not apt, like some of us,
To like too readily, or too high bred
To show it—(points we need not now
discuss)—
Would give up artlessly both Heart and
Head
Unto such feelings as seemed innocent,
For objects worthy of the sentiment.

¹ [Ransom and Morland were Byron's bankers.]

XI.

Some parts of Juan's history, which Rumour,
That live Gazette, had scattered to disfigure,
She had heard ; but Women hear with more
good humour
Such aberrations than we men of rigour :
Besides, his conduct, since in England, grew
more
Strict, and his mind assumed a manlier
vigour :
Because he had, like Alcibiades,
The art of living in all climes with ease.

XII.

His manner was perhaps the more seductive,
Because he ne'er seemed anxious to seduce ;
Nothing affected, studied, or constructive
Of coxcombry or conquest : no abuse
Of his attractions marred the fair perspective,
To indicate a Cupidon broke loose,¹
And seem to say, "Resist us if you can"—
Which makes a Dandy while it spoils a Man.

XIII.

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

XIV.

By nature soft, his whole address held off
Suspicion : though not timid, his regard
Was such as rather seemed to keep aloof,
To shield himself than put *you* on your
guard :
Perhaps 't was hardly quite assured enough,
But Modesty 's at times its own reward,
Like Virtue ; and the absence of pretension
Will go much farther than there 's need to
mention.

XV.

Serene, accomplished, cheerful but not loud ;
Insinuating without insinuation ;
Observant of the foibles of the crowd,
Yet ne'er betraying this in conversation ;

¹ [For the phrase "Cupidon Déchainé," applied to Count D'Orsay. See letters to Moore and the Earl of Blessington, April 2, 1823.]

Proud with the proud, yet courteously proud,
So as to make them feel he knew his station
And theirs:—without a struggle for priority,
He neither brooked nor claimed superiority—

XVI.

That is, with Men: with Women he was what
They pleased to make or take him for;
and their
Imagination's quite enough for that:
So that the outline's tolerably fair,
They fill the canvas up—and "*verbum sat.*"
If once their phantasies be brought to bear
Upon an object, whether sad or playful,
They can transfigure brighter than a Raphael.

XVII.

Adeline, no deep judge of character,
Was apt to add a colouring from her own:
'T is thus the Good will amiably err,
And eke the Wise, as has been often shown.
Experience is the chief philosopher,
But saddest when his science is well known:
And persecuted Sages teach the Schools
Their folly in forgetting there are fools.

XVIII.

Was it not so, great Locke? and greater
Bacon?
Great Socrates? And thou, Diviner still,¹
Whose lot it is by Man to be mistaken,
And thy pure creed made sanction of all
ill?
Redeeming Worlds to be by bigots shaken,
How was thy toil rewarded? We might
fill
Volumes with similar sad illustrations,
But leave them to the conscience of the
nations.

XIX.

I perch upon an humbler promontory,
Amidst Life's infinite variety:
With no great care for what is nicknamed
Glory,
But speculating as I cast mine eye

¹ As it is necessary in these times to avoid ambiguity, I say that I mean, by "Diviner still," CHRIST. If ever God was man—or man God—he was *both*. I never arraigned his creed, but the use—or abuse—made of it. Mr Canning one day quoted Christianity to sanction negro slavery, and Mr Wilberforce had little to say in reply. And was Christ crucified, that black men might be scourged? If so, He had better been born a Mulatto, to give both colours an equal chance of freedom, or at least salvation.

On what may suit or may not suit my story,
And never straining hard to versify,
I rattle on exactly as I'd talk
With anybody in a ride or walk.

XX.

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

XXI.

"*Omnia vult belle Matho dicere — dic
aliquando
Et bene, dic neutrum, dic aliquando
male.*"¹

The first is rather more than mortal can do;
The second may be sadly done or gaily;
The third is still more difficult to stand to;
The fourth we hear, and see, and say too,
daily:

The whole together is what I could wish
To serve in this conundrum of a dish.

XXII.

A modest hope—but Modesty's my forte,
And Pride my feeble:—let us ramble on.
I meant to make this poem very short,
But now I can't tell where it may not run.
No doubt, if I had wished to pay my court
To critics, or to hail the *setting* sun
Of Tyranny of all kinds, my concision
Were more;—but I was born for opposition.

XXIII.

But then 't is mostly on the weaker side;
So that I verily believe if they
Who now are basking in their full-blown
pride
Were shaken down, and "dogs had had
their day,"
Though at the first I might perchance deride
Their tumble, I should turn the other way,
And wax an ultra-royalist in Loyalty,
Because I hate even democratic Royalty.

XXIV.

I think I should have made a decent spouse,
If I had never proved the soft condition;
I think I should have made monastic vows
But for my own peculiar superstition:

¹ [Martial, *Epig.*, x. 46.]

'Gainst rhyme I never should have knocked
my brows,
Nor broken my own head, nor that of
Priscian,
Nor worn the motley mantle of a poet,
If some one had not told me to forego it.

XXV.

But *laissez aller*—Knights and Dames I sing,
Such as the times may furnish. 'T is a
flight
Which seems at first to need no lofty wing,
Plumed by Longinus or the Stagyrte:
The difficulty lies in colouring
(Keeping the due proportions still in sight)
With Nature manners which are artificial,
And rend'ring general that which is especial.

XXVI.

The difference is, that in the days of old
Men made the Manners; Manners now
make men—
Pinned like a flock, and fleeced too in their
fold,
At least nine, and a ninth beside of ten.
Now this at all events must render cold
Your writers, who must either draw again
Days better drawn before, or else assume
The present, with their common-place
costume.

XXVII.

We 'll do our best to make the best on 't:—
March!
March, my Muse! If you cannot fly, yet
flutter;
And when you may not be sublime, be arch,
Or starch, as are the edicts statesmen utter.
We surely may find something worth research:
Columbus found a new world in a cutter,
Or brigantine, or pink, of no great tonnage,
While yet America was in her non-age.

XXVIII.

When Adeline, in all her growing sense
Of Juan's merits and his situation,
Felt on the whole an interest intense,—
Partly perhaps because a fresh sensation,
Or that he had an air of innocence,
Which is for Innocence a sad temptation,—
As Women hate half measures, on the whole,
She 'gan to ponder how to save his soul.

XXIX.

She had a good opinion of Advice,
Like all who give and eke receive it gratis,
For which small thanks are still the market
price,
Even where the article at highest rate is:
She thought upon the subject twice or thrice,
And morally decided—the best state is
For Morals—Marriage; and, this question
carried,
She seriously advised him to get married.

XXX.

Juan replied, with all becoming deference,
He had a predilection for that tie;
But that, at present, with immediate reference
To his own circumstances, there might lie
Some difficulties, as in his own preference,
Or that of her to whom he might apply:
That still he 'd wed with such or such a lady,
If that they were not married all already.

XXXI.

Next to the making matches for herself,
And daughters, brothers, sisters, kith or kin,
Arranging them like books on the same shelf,
There 's nothing women love to dabble in
More (like a stock-holder in growing pelf)
Than match-making in general: 't is no sin
Certes, but a preventative, and therefore
That is, no doubt, the only reason wherefore.

XXXII.

But never yet (except of course a miss
Unwed, or mistress never to be wed,
Or wed already, who object to this)
Was there chaste dame who had not in her
head
Some drama of the marriage Unities,
Observed as strictly both at board and bed,
As those of Aristotle, though sometimes
They turn out Melodrames or Pantomimes.

XXXIII.

They generally have some only son,
Some heir to a large property, some friend
Of an old family, some gay Sir John,
Or grave Lord George, with whom perhaps
might end
A line, and leave Posterity undone,
Unless a marriage was applied to mend
The prospect and their morals: and besides,
They have at hand a blooming glut of brides.

XXXIV.

From these they will be careful to select,
 For this an heiress, and for that a beauty;
 For one, a songstress who hath no defect,
 For t' other, one who promises much duty;
 For this a lady no one can reject,
 Whose sole accomplishments were quite a
 booty;
 A second for her excellent connections;
 A third, because there can be no objections.

XXXV.

When Rapp the Harmonist embargoed
 Marriage¹
 In his harmonious settlement — (which
 flourishes
 Strangely enough as yet without miscarriage,
 Because it breeds no more mouths than it
 nourishes,
 Without those sad expenses which disparage
 What Nature naturally most encourages)—
 Why called he "Harmony" a state *sans*
 wedlock?
 Now here I've got the preacher at a dead
 lock,

XXXVI.

Because he either meant to sneer at Harmony
 Or Marriage, by divorcing them thus oddly.
 But whether reverend Rapp learned this in
 Germany
 Or no, 't is said his sect is rich and godly,
 Pious and pure, beyond what I can term any
 Of ours, although they propagate more
 broadly.
 My objection 's to his title, not his ritual,
 Although I wonder how it grew habitual.

¹ This extraordinary and flourishing German colony in America does not entirely exclude matrimony, as the "Shakers" do; but lays such restrictions upon it as prevents more than a certain quantum of births within a certain number of years; which births (as Mr. Hulme [perhaps Thomas Hulme, whose *Journal* is quoted in *Hints to Emigrants*, 1817, pp. 5-18] observes) generally arrive "in a little flock like those of a farmer's lambs, all within the same month perhaps." These Harmonists (so called from the name of their settlement) are represented as a remarkably flourishing, pious, and quiet people. See the various recent writers on America.

[The Harmonists were emigrants from Würtemberg, who settled (1803-1805) under the auspices of George Rapp, in a township 120 miles north of Philadelphia.]

XXXVII.

But Rapp is the reverse of zealous matrons,
 Who favour, *malgré* Malthus, Generation—
 Professors of that genial art, and patrons
 Of all the modest part of Propagation;
 Which after all at such a desperate rate runs,
 That half its produce tends to Emigration,
 That sad result of passions and potatoes—
 Two weeds which pose our economic Catos.

XXXVIII.

Had Adeline read Malthus? I can't tell;
 I wish she had: his book 's the eleventh
 commandment,
 Which says, "Thou shalt not marry," unless
well:
 This he (as far as I can understand) meant.¹
 'T is not my purpose on his views to dwell,
 Nor canvass what "so eminent a hand"
 meant;
 But, certes, it conducts to lives ascetic,
 Or turning Marriage into Arithmetic.

XXXIX.

But Adeline, who probably presumed
 That Juan had enough of maintenance,
 Or *separate* maintenance, in case 't was
 doomed—
 As on the whole it is an even chance
 That bridegrooms, after they are fairly
groomed,
 May retrograde a little in the Dance
 Of Marriage—(which might form a painter's
 fame,
 Like Holbein's "Dance of Death"—but 't is
 the same)—

XL.

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

¹ Jacob Tonson, according to Mr. Pope, was accustomed to call his writers "able pens," "persons of honour," and, especially, "eminent hands." *Vide* Correspondence, etc., etc.

XLI.

There was Miss Millpond, smooth as summer's sea,
 That usual paragon, an only daughter,
 Who seemed the cream of Equanimity,
 Till skimmed—and then there was some milk and water,
 With a slight shade of blue too, it might be,
 Beneath the surface; but what did it matter?
 Love's riotous, but Marriage should have quiet,
 And being consumptive, live on a milk diet.

XLII.

And then there was the Miss Audacia Shoe-string,
 A dashing *demoiselle* of good estate,
 Whose heart was fixed upon a star or blue string;
 But whether English Dukes grew rare of late,
 Or that she had not harped upon the true string,
 By which such Sirens can attract our great,
 She took up with some foreign younger brother,
 A Russ or Turk—the one's as good as t' other.

XLIII.

And then there was—but why should I go on,
 Unless the ladies should go off?—there was
 Indeed a certain fair and fairy one,
 Of the best class, and better than her class,—
 Aurora Raby, a young star who shone
 O'er Life, too sweet an image for such glass,
 A lovely being, scarcely formed or moulded,
 A rose with all its sweetest leaves yet folded;

XLIV.

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

XLV.

Early in years, and yet more infantine
 In figure, she had something of Sublime
 In eyes which sadly shone, as Seraphs' shine.
 All Youth—but with an aspect beyond
 Time;
 Radiant and grave—as pitying Man's decline;
 Mournful — but mournful of another's
 crime,
 She looked as if she sat by Eden's door,
 And grieved for those who could return no
 more.

XLVI.

She was a Catholic, too, sincere, austere,
 As far as her own gentle heart allowed,
 And deemed that fallen worship far more
 dear
 Perhaps because 't was fallen: her Sires
 were proud
 Of deeds and days when they had filled the
 ear
 Of nations, and had never bent or bowed
 To novel power; and as she was the last,
 She held their old faith and old feelings fast.

XLVII.

She gazed upon a World she scarcely knew,
 As seeking not to know it; silent, lone,
 As grows a flower, thus quietly she grew,
 And kept her heart serene within its zone.
 There was awe in the homage which she
 drew;
 Her Spirit seemed as seated on a throne
 Apart from the surrounding world, and
 strong
 In its own strength—most strange in one so
 young!

XLVIII.

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

XLIX.

And this omission, like that of the bust
 Of Brutus at the pageant of Tiberius,
 Made Juan wonder, as no doubt he must.
 This he expressed half smiling and half
 serious;

When Adeline replied with some disgust,
 And with an air, to say the least, imperious,
 She marvelled "what he saw in such a baby
 As that prim, silent, cold Aurora Raby?"

L.

Juan rejoined—"She was a Catholic,
 And therefore fittest, as of his persuasion;
 Since he was sure his mother would fall sick,
 And the Pope thunder excommunication,
 If——" But here Adeline, who seemed to
 pique

Herself extremely on the inoculation
 Of others with her own opinions, stated—
 As usual—the same reason which she late
 did.

LI.

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

LII.

Why Adeline had this slight prejudice—
 For prejudice it was—against a creature
 As pure, as Sanctity itself, from Vice,—
 With all the added charm of form and
 feature,—

For me appears a question far too nice,
 Since Adeline was liberal by nature;
 But Nature 's Nature, and has more caprices
 Than I have time, or will, to take to pieces.

LIII.

Perhaps she did not like the quiet way
 With which Aurora on those baubles
 looked,
 Which charm most people in their earlier
 day:

For there are few things by Mankind less
 brooked,
 And Womankind too, if we so may say,
 Than finding thus their genius stand re-
 buked,

Like "Antony's by Cæsar," by the few
 Who look upon them as they ought to do.

LIV.

It was not envy—Adeline had none;
 Her place was far beyond it, and her mind:
 It was not scorn—which could not light on
 one
 Whose greatest *fault* was leaving few to
 find:

It was not jealousy, I think—but shun
 Following the *ignes fatui* of Mankind:
 It was not—but 't is easier far, alas!
 To say what it was *not* than what it was.

LV.

Little Aurora deemed she was the theme
 Of such discussion. She was there a guest;
 A beauteous ripple of the brilliant stream
 Of Rank and Youth, though purer than
 the rest,
 Which flowed on for a moment in the beam
 Time sheds a moment o'er each sparkling
 crest.
 Had she known this, she would have calmly
 smiled—
 She had so much, or little, of the child.

LVI.

The dashing and proud air of Adeline
 Imposed not upon her; she saw her blaze
 Much as she would have seen a glow-warm
 shine,
 Then turned unto the stars for loftier rays.
 Juan was something she could not divine,
 Being no Sibyl in the new world's ways;
 Yet she was nothing dazzled by the meteor,
 Because she did not pin her faith on feature.

LVII.

His fame too,—for he had that kind of fame
 Which sometimes plays the deuce with
 Womankind,
 A heterogeneous mass of glorious blame,
 Half virtues and whole vices being com-
 bined;
 Faults which attract because they are not
 tame;
 Follies tricked out so brightly that they
 blind:—
 These seals upon her wax made no impres-
 sion,
 Such was her coldness or her self-possession.

LVIII.

Juan knew nought of such a character—
 High, yet resembling not his lost Haidée;
 Yet each was radiant in her proper sphere:
 The island girl, bred up by the lone sea,
 More warm, as lovely, and not less sincere,
 Was Nature's all: Aurora could not be,
 Nor would be thus:—the difference in them
 Was such as lies between a flower and gem.

LIX.

Having wound up with this sublime comparison,
Methinks we may proceed upon our narrative,
And, as my friend Scott says, "I sound my warison;"
Scott, the superlative of my comparative—
Scott, who can paint your Christian knight or Saracen,
Serf—Lord—Man, with such skill as none would share it, if
There had not been one Shakespeare and Voltaire,
Of one or both of whom he seems the heir.

LX.

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

LXI.

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

LXII.

Great things were now to be achieved at table,
With massy plate for armour, knives and forks
For weapons; but what Muse since Homer's able
(His feasts are not the worst part of his works)
To draw up in array a single day-bill
Of modern dinners? where more mystery lurks,

In soups or sauces, or a sole *ragoût*,
Than witches, b—ches, or physicians, brew.

LXIII.

There was a goodly "*soupe à la bonne femme*,"
Though God knows whence it came from;
there was, too,
A turbot for relief of those who cram,
Relieved with "*dindon à la Périgeux*";
There also was—the sinner that I am!
How shall I get this gourmand stanza through?—
"*Soupe à la Beauveau*," whose relief was dory,
Relieved itself by pork, for greater glory.

LXIV.

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

LXV.

Fowls "*à la Condé*," slices eke of salmon,
With "*sauces Gènévoises*," and haunch of venison;
Wines too, which might again have slain young Ammon—¹
A man like whom I hope we sha'n't see many soon;
They also set a glazed Westphalian ham on,
Whereon Apicius would bestow his benison;
And then there was champagne with foaming whirls,
As white as Cleopatra's melted pearls.

LXVI.

Then there was God knows what "*à l'Allemande*,"
"*A l'Espagnole*," "*timballe*," and "*salpicon*"—
With things I can't withstand or understand,
Though swallowed with much zest upon the whole;
And "*entremets*" to piddle with at hand,
Gently to lull down the subsiding soul;

¹ [Alexander the Great.]

While great Lucullus' *Robe triumphal*
muffles—
(*There 's fame*)—young partridge fillets,
decked with truffles.¹

LXVII.

What are the *fillets* on the Victor's brow
To these? They are rags or dust. Where
is the arch
Which nodded to the nation's spoils below?
Where the triumphal chariots' haughty
march?
Gone to where Victories must like dinners go.
Farther I shall not follow the research:
But oh! ye modern Heroes with your
cartridges,
When will your names lend lustre e'en to
partridges?

LXVIII.

Those truffles too are no bad accessories,
Followed by "petits puits d'amour"—a
dish
Of which perhaps the cookery rather varies,
So every one may dress it to his wish,
According to the best of dictionaries,
Which encyclopedize both flesh and fish;
But even, sans *confitures*, it no less true is,
There 's pretty picking in those *petits puits*.²

LXIX.

The mind is lost in mighty contemplation
Of intellect expanded on two courses;
And Indigestion's grand multiplication
Requires arithmetic beyond my forces.
Who would suppose, from Adam's simple
ration,
That cookery could have called forth such
resources,
As form a science and a nomenclature
From out the commonest demands of Nature?

¹ A dish "à la Lucullus." This hero, who conquered the East, has left his more extended celebrity to the transplantation of cherries (which he first brought into Europe), and the nomenclature of some very good dishes;—and I am not sure that (barring indigestion) he has not done more service to mankind by his cookery than by his conquests. A cherry tree may weigh against a bloody laurel; besides, he has contrived to earn celebrity from both.

² "Petits puits d'amour garnis de confitures,"—a classical and well-known dish for part of the flank of a second course.

LXX.

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

LXXI.

Alas! I must leave undescribed the *gibier*,
The *salmi*, the *consommé*, the *purée*,
All which I use to make my rhymes run glibber
Than could roast beef in our rough John
Bull way:
I must not introduce even a spare rib here,
"Bubble and squeak" would spoil my
liquid lay:
But I have dined, and must forego, alas!
The chaste description even of a "bécasse";

LXXII.

And fruits, and ice, and all that Art refines
From Nature for the service of the *goût*—
Taste or the *gout*,—pronounce it as inclines
Your stomach! Ere you dine, the French
will do;
But *after*, there are sometimes certain signs
Which prove plain English truer of the two.
Hast ever *had* the *gout*? I have not had it—
But I may have, and you too, reader, dread it.

LXXIII.

The simple olives, best allies of wine,
Must I pass over in my bill of fare?
I must, although a favourite *plat* of mine
In Spain, and Lucca, Athens, everywhere:
On them and bread 't was oft my luck to
dine—
The grass my table-cloth, in open air,
On Sunium or Hymettus, like Diogenes,
Of whom half my philosophy the progeny is.

LXXIV.

Amidst this tumult of fish, flesh, and fowl,
And vegetables, all in masquerade,
The guests were placed according to their roll,
But various as the various meats displayed:
Don Juan sat next an "à l'Espagnole"—
No damsel, but a dish, as hath been said;
But so far like a lady, that 't was drest
Superbly, and contained a world of zest.