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THE COMPLETE  
POETICAL WORKS  
OF  
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY  
VOLUME 1

OXFORD EDITION.

INCLUDING MATERIALS NEVER BEFORE  
PRINTED IN ANY EDITION OF THE POEMS.

EDITED WITH TEXTUAL NOTES

BY

THOMAS HUTCHINSON, M. A.  
EDITOR OF THE OXFORD WORDSWORTH.

1914.

PREFACE.

This edition of his "Poetical Works" contains all Shelley's ascertained poems and fragments of verse that have hitherto appeared in print. In preparing the volume I have worked as far as possible on the principle of recognizing the editio princeps as the primary textual authority. I have not been content to reprint Mrs. Shelley's recension of 1839, or that of any subsequent editor of the "Poems". The present text is the result of a fresh collation of the early editions; and in every material instance of departure from the wording of those originals the rejected reading has been subjoined in a footnote. Again, wherever--as in the case of "Julian and Maddalo"--there has appeared to be good reason for superseding the authority of the editio princeps, the fact is announced, and the substituted exemplar indicated, in the Prefatory Note. In the case of a few pieces extant in two or more versions of debatable authority the alternative text or texts will be found at the [end] of the [relevant work]; but it may be said once for all that this does not pretend to be a variorum edition, in the proper sense of the term--the textual apparatus does not claim to be exhaustive. Thus I have not thought it necessary to cumber the footnotes with every minute grammatical correction introduced by Mrs. Shelley, apparently on her own authority, into the texts of 1839; nor has it come within the scheme of this edition to record every conjectural emendation adopted or proposed by Rossetti and others in recent times. But it is hoped that, up to and including the editions of 1839 at least, no important variation of the text has been overlooked. Whenever a reading has been

adopted on manuscript authority, a reference to the particular source has been added below.

I have been chary of gratuitous interference with the punctuation of the manuscripts and early editions; in this direction, however, some revision was indispensable. Even in his most carefully finished "fair copy" Shelley under-punctuates (Thus in the exquisite autograph "Hunt MS." of "Julian and Maddalo", Mr. Buxton Forman, the most conservative of editors, finds it necessary to supplement Shelley's punctuation in no fewer than ninety-four places.), and sometimes punctuates capriciously. In the very act of transcribing his mind was apt to stray from the work in hand to higher things; he would lose himself in contemplating those airy abstractions and lofty visions of which alone he greatly cared to sing, to the neglect and detriment of the merely external and formal element of his song. Shelley recked little of the jots and tittles of literary craftsmanship; he committed many a small sin against the rules of grammar, and certainly paid but a halting attention to the nice distinctions of punctuation. Thus in the early editions a comma occasionally plays the part of a semicolon; colons and semicolons seem to be employed interchangeably; a semicolon almost invariably appears where nowadays we should employ the dash; and, lastly, the dash itself becomes a point of all work, replacing indifferently commas, colons, semicolons or periods. Inadequate and sometimes haphazard as it is, however, Shelley's punctuation, so far as it goes, is of great value as an index to his metrical, or at times, it may be, to his rhetorical intention--for, in Shelley's hands, punctuation serves rather to mark the rhythmical pause and onflow of the verse, or to secure some declamatory effect, than to indicate the structure or elucidate the sense. For this reason the original pointing has been retained, save where it tends to obscure or pervert the poet's meaning. Amongst the Editor's Notes at the end of the Volume 3 the reader will find lists of the punctual variations in the longer poems, by means of which the supplementary points now added may be identified, and the original points, which in this edition have been deleted or else replaced by others, ascertained, in the order of their occurrence. In the use of capitals Shelley's practice has been followed, while an attempt has been made to reduce the number of his inconsistencies in this regard.

To have reproduced the spelling of the manuscripts would only have served to divert attention from Shelley's poetry to my own ingenuity in disgusting the reader according to the rules of editorial punctilio. (I adapt a phrase or two from the preface to "The Revolt of Islam".) Shelley was neither very accurate, nor always consistent, in his spelling. He was, to say the truth, indifferent about all such matters: indeed, to one absorbed in the spectacle of a world travailing for lack of the gospel of "Political Justice", the study of orthographical niceties must have seemed an occupation for Bedlamites. Again--as a distinguished critic and editor of Shelley, Professor Dowden, aptly observes in this connexion--'a great poet is not of an age, but for all time.' Irregular or antiquated forms such as 'recieve,' 'sacrifize,' 'tyger,' 'gulph,' 'desart,' 'falshood,' and the like, can only serve to distract the reader's attention, and mar

his enjoyment of the verse. Accordingly Shelley's eccentricities in this kind have been discarded, and his spelling reversed in accordance with modern usage. All weak preterite-forms, whether indicatives or participles, have been printed with "ed" rather than "t", participial adjectives and substantives, such as 'past,' alone excepted. In the case of 'leap,' which has two preterite-forms, both employed by Shelley (See for an example of the longer form, the "Hymn to Mercury", 18 5, where 'leaped' rhymes with 'heaped' (line 1). The shorter form, rhyming to 'wept,' 'adapt,' etc., occurs more frequently.)--one with the long vowel of the present-form, the other with a vowel-change (Of course, wherever this vowel-shortening takes place, whether indicated by a corresponding change in the spelling or not, "t", not "ed" is properly used--'cleave,' 'cleft,'; 'deal,' 'dealt'; etc. The forms discarded under the general rule laid down above are such as 'wrackt,' 'prankt,' 'snatcht,' 'kist,' 'opprest,' etc.) like that of 'crept' from 'creep'--I have not hesitated to print the longer form 'leaped,' and the shorter (after Mr. Henry Sweet's example) 'lept,' in order clearly to indicate the pronunciation intended by Shelley. In the editions the two vowel-sounds are confounded under the one spelling, 'leapt.' In a few cases Shelley's spelling, though unusual or obsolete, has been retained. Thus in 'aethereal,' 'paean,' and one or two more words the "ae" will be found, and 'airy' still appears as 'aery'. Shelley seems to have uniformly written 'lightening': here the word is so printed whenever it is employed as a trisyllable; elsewhere the ordinary spelling has been adopted. (Not a little has been written about 'uprest' ("Revolt of Islam", 3 21 5), which has been described as a nonce-word deliberately coined by Shelley 'on no better warrant than the exigency of the rhyme.' There can be little doubt that 'uprest' is simply an overlooked misprint for 'uprist'--not by any means a nonce-word, but a genuine English verbal substantive of regular formation, familiar to many from its employment by Chaucer. True, the corresponding rhyme-words in the passage above referred to are 'nest,' 'possessed,' 'breast'; but a laxity such as 'nest'--'uprist' is quite in Shelley's manner. Thus in this very poem we find 'midst'--'shed'st' (6 16), 'mist'--'rest'--'blest' (5 58), 'loveliest'--'mist'--'kissed'--'dressed' (5 53). Shelley may have first seen the word in "The Ancient Mariner"; but he employs it more correctly than Coleridge, who seems to have mistaken it for a preterite-form (= 'uprose') whereas in truth it serves either as the third person singular of the present (= 'upriseth'), or, as here, for the verbal substantive (= 'uprising').

The editor of Shelley to-day enters upon a goodly heritage, the accumulated gains of a series of distinguished predecessors. Mrs. Shelley's two editions of 1839 form the nucleus of the present volume, and her notes are here reprinted in full; but the arrangement of the poems differs to some extent from that followed by her--chiefly in respect of "Queen Mab", which is here placed at the head of the "Juvenilia", instead of at the forefront of the poems of Shelley's maturity. In 1862 a slender volume of poems and fragments, entitled "Relics of Shelley", was published by Dr. Richard Garnett, C.B.--a precious sheaf gleaned from the manuscripts preserved at Boscombe Manor. The "Relics" constitute a salvage second only in value to the

"Posthumous Poems" of 1824. To the growing mass of Shelley's verse yet more material was added in 1870 by Mr. William Michael Rossetti, who edited for Moxon the "Complete Poetical Works" published in that year. To him we owe in particular a revised and greatly enlarged version of the fragmentary drama of "Charles I". But though not seldom successful in restoring the text, Mr. Rossetti pushed revision beyond the bounds of prudence, freely correcting grammatical errors, rectifying small inconsistencies in the sense, and too lightly adopting conjectural emendations on the grounds of rhyme or metre. In the course of an article published in the "Westminster Review" for July, 1870, Miss Mathilde Blind, with the aid of material furnished by Dr. Garnett, 'was enabled,' in the words of Mr. Buxton Forman, 'to supply omissions, make authoritative emendations, and controvert erroneous changes' in Mr. Rossetti's work; and in the more cautiously edited text of his later edition, published by Moxon in 1878, may be traced the influence of her strictures.

Six years later appeared a variorum edition in which for the first time Shelley's text was edited with scientific exactness of method, and with a due respect for the authority of the original editions. It would be difficult indeed to over-estimate the gains which have accrued to the lovers of Shelley from the strenuous labours of Mr. Harry Buxton Forman, C.B. He too has enlarged the body of Shelley's poetry (Mr. Forman's most notable addition is the second part of "The Daemon of the World", which he printed privately in 1876, and included in his Library Edition of the "Poetical Works" published in the same year. See the "List of Editions", etc. at the end of Volume 3.); but, important as his editions undoubtedly are, it may safely be affirmed that his services in this direction constitute the least part of what we owe him. He has vindicated the authenticity of the text in many places, while in many others he has succeeded, with the aid of manuscripts, in restoring it. His untiring industry in research, his wide bibliographical knowledge and experience, above all, his accuracy, as invariable as it is minute, have combined to make him, in the words of Professor Dowden, 'our chief living authority on all that relates to Shelley's writings.' His name stands securely linked for all time to Shelley's by a long series of notable works, including three successive editions (1876, 1882, 1892) of the Poems, an edition of the Prose Remains, as well as many minor publications--a Bibliography ("The Shelley Library", 1886) and several Facsimile Reprints of the early issues, edited for the Shelley Society.

To Professor Dowden, whose authoritative Biography of the poet, published in 1886, was followed in 1890 by an edition of the Poems (Macmillans), is due the addition of several pieces belonging to the juvenile period, incorporated by him in the pages of the "Life of Shelley". Professor Dowden has also been enabled, with the aid of the manuscripts placed in his hands, to correct the text of the "Juvenilia" in many places. In 1893 Professor George E. Woodberry edited a "Centenary Edition of the Complete Poetical Works", in which, to quote his own words, an attempt is made 'to summarize the labours of more than half a century on Shelley's text, and on his biography so far as the biography is bound up with the text.' In this Centenary

edition the textual variations found in the Harvard College manuscripts, as well as those in the manuscripts belonging to Mr. Frederickson of Brooklyn, are fully recorded. Professor Woodberry's text is conservative on the whole, but his revision of the punctuation is drastic, and occasionally sacrifices melody to perspicuity.

In 1903 Mr. C.D. Locock published, in a quarto volume of seventy-five pages, the fruits of a careful scrutiny of the Shelley manuscripts now lodged in the Bodleian Library. Mr. Locock succeeded in recovering several inedited fragments of verse and prose. Amongst the poems chiefly concerned in the results of his "Examination" may be named "Marenghi", "Prince Athanase", "The Witch of Atlas", "To Constantia", the "Ode to Naples", and (last, not least) "Prometheus Unbound". Full use has been made in this edition of Mr. Locock's collations, and the fragments recovered and printed by him are included in the text. Variants derived from the Bodleian manuscripts are marked "B." in the footnotes.

On the state of the text generally, and the various quarters in which it lies open to conjectural emendation, I cannot do better than quote the following succinct and luminous account from a "Causerie" on the Shelley manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, contributed by Dr. Richard Garnett, C.B., to the columns of "The Speaker" of December 19, 1903:--

'From the textual point of view, Shelley's works may be divided into three classes--those published in his lifetime under his own direction; those also published in his lifetime, but in his absence from the press; and those published after his death. The first class includes "Queen Mab", "The Revolt of Islam", and "Alastor" with its appendages, published in England before his final departure for the continent; and "The Cenci" and "Adonais", printed under his own eye at Leghorn and Pisa respectively. Except for some provoking but corrigible misprints in "The Revolt of Islam" and one crucial passage in "Alastor", these poems afford little material for conjectural emendation; for the Alexandrines now and then left in the middle of stanzas in "The Revolt of Islam" must remain untouched, as proceeding not from the printer's carelessness but the author's. The second class, poems printed during Shelley's lifetime, but not under his immediate inspection, comprise "Prometheus Unbound" and "Rosalind and Helen", together with the pieces which accompanied them, "Epipsychidion", "Hellas", and "Swellfoot the Tyrant". The correction of the most important of these, the "Prometheus", was the least satisfactory. Shelley, though speaking plainly to the publisher, rather hints than expresses his dissatisfaction when writing to Gisborne, the corrector, but there is a pretty clear hint when on a subsequent occasion he says to him, "I have received 'Hellas', which is prettily printed, and with fewer mistakes than any poem I ever published." This also was probably not without influence on his determination to have "The Cenci" and "Adonais" printed in Italy...Of the third class of Shelley's writings--those which were first published after his death--sufficient facsimiles have been published to prove that Trelawny's graphic description of the chaotic state of

most of them was really in no respect exaggerated...The difficulty is much augmented by the fact that these pieces are rarely consecutive, but literally *disiecti membra poetae*, scattered through various notebooks in a way to require piecing together as well as deciphering. The editors of the Posthumous Poems, moreover, though diligent according to their light, were neither endowed with remarkable acumen nor possessed of the wide knowledge requisite for the full intelligence of so erudite a poet as Shelley, hence the perpetration of numerous mistakes. Some few of the manuscripts, indeed, such as those of "The Witch of Atlas", "Julian and Maddalo", and the "Lines at Naples", were beautifully written out for the press in Shelley's best hand, but their very value and beauty necessitated the ordeal of transcription, with disastrous results in several instances. An entire line dropped out of the "Lines at Naples", and although "Julian and Maddalo" was extant in more than one very clear copy, the printed text had several such sense-destroying errors as "least" for "lead".

'The corrupt state of the text has stimulated the ingenuity of numerous correctors, who have suggested many acute and convincing emendations, and some very specious ones which sustained scrutiny has proved untenable. It should be needless to remark that success has in general been proportionate to the facilities of access to the manuscripts, which have only of late become generally available. If Shelley is less fortunate than most modern poets in the purity of his text, he is more fortunate than many in the preservation of his manuscripts. These have not, as regards a fair proportion, been destroyed or dispersed at auctions, but were protected from either fate by their very character as confused memoranda. As such they remained in the possession of Shelley's widow, and passed from her to her son and daughter-in-law. After Sir Percy Shelley's death, Lady Shelley took the occasion of the erection of the monument to Shelley at University College, Oxford, to present [certain of] the manuscripts to the Bodleian Library, and verse and sculpture form an imperishable memorial of his connection with the University where his residence was so brief and troubled.' (Dr. Garnett proceeds:--'The most important of the Bodleian manuscripts is that of "Prometheus Unbound", which, says Mr. Locock, has the appearance of being an intermediate draft, and also the first copy made. This should confer considerable authority on its variations from the accepted text, as this appears to have been printed from a copy not made by Shelley himself. "My 'Prometheus'," he writes to Ollier on September 6, 1819, "is now being transcribed," an expression which he would hardly have used if he had himself been the copyist. He wished the proofs to be sent to him in Italy for correction, but to this Ollier objected, and on May 14, 1820, Shelley signifies his acquiescence, adding, however, "In this case I shall repose trust in your care respecting the correction of the press; Mr. Gisborne will revise it; he heard it recited, and will therefore more readily seize any error." This confidence in the accuracy of Gisborne's verbal memory is touching! From a letter to Gisborne on May 26 following it appears that the offer to correct came from him, and that Shelley sent him "two little papers of corrections and additions," which were probably made use of, or the fact would have been made known. In the case of additions this may satisfactorily

account for apparent omissions in the Bodleian manuscript. Gisborne, after all, did not prove fully up to the mark. "It is to be regretted," writes Shelley to Ollier on November 20, "that the errors of the press are so numerous," adding, "I shall send you the list of errata in a day or two." This was probably "the list of errata written by Shelley himself," from which Mrs. Shelley corrected the edition of 1839.)

In placing "Queen Mab" at the head of the "Juvenilia" I have followed the arrangement adopted by Mr. Buxton Forman in his Library Edition of 1876. I have excluded "The Wandering Jew", having failed to satisfy myself of the sufficiency of the grounds on which, in certain quarters, it is accepted as the work of Shelley. The shorter fragments are printed, as in Professor Dowden's edition of 1890, along with the miscellaneous poems of the years to which they severally belong, under titles which are sometimes borrowed from Mr. Buxton Forman, sometimes of my own choosing. I have added a few brief Editor's Notes, mainly on textual questions, at the end of the book. Of the poverty of my work in this direction I am painfully aware; but in the present edition the ordinary reader will, it is hoped, find an authentic, complete, and accurately printed text, and, if this be so, the principal end and aim of the OXFORD SHELLEY will have been attained.

I desire cordially to acknowledge the courtesy of Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B., by whose kind sanction the second part of "The Daemon the World" appears in this volume. And I would fain express my deep sense of obligation for manifold information and guidance, derived from Mr. Buxton Forman's various editions, reprints and other publications--especially from the monumental Library Edition of 1876. Acknowledgements are also due to the poet's grandson, Charles E.J. Esdaile, Esq., for permission to include the early poems first printed in Professor Dowden's "Life of Shelley"; and to Mr. C.D. Locock, for leave to make full use of the material contained in his interesting and stimulating volume. To Dr. Richard Garnett, C.B., and to Professor Dowden, cordial thanks are hereby tendered for good counsel cheerfully bestowed. To two of the editors of the Shelley Society Reprints, Mr. Thomas J. Wise and Mr. Robert A. Potts--both generously communicative collectors--I am deeply indebted for the gift or loan of scarce volumes, as well as for many kind offices in other ways. Lastly, to the staff of the Oxford University Press my heartiest thanks are owing, for their unremitting care in all that relates to the printing and correcting of the sheets.

THOMAS HUTCHINSON.

December, 1904.

POSTSCRIPT.

In a valuable paper, 'Notes on Passages in Shelley,' contributed to "The Modern Language Review" (October, 1905), Mr. A.C. Bradley discussed, amongst other things, some fifty places in the text of Shelley's verse, and indicated certain errors and omissions in this



edition. With the aid of these "Notes" the editor has now carefully revised the text, and has in many places adopted the suggestions or conclusions of their accomplished author.

June, 1913.

#### PREFACE BY MRS. SHELLEY

TO FIRST COLLECTED EDITION, 1839.

Obstacles have long existed to my presenting the public with a perfect edition of Shelley's Poems. These being at last happily removed, I hasten to fulfil an important duty,--that of giving the productions of a sublime genius to the world, with all the correctness possible, and of, at the same time, detailing the history of those productions, as they sprang, living and warm, from his heart and brain. I abstain from any remark on the occurrences of his private life, except inasmuch as the passions which they engendered inspired his poetry. This is not the time to relate the truth; and I should reject any colouring of the truth. No account of these events has ever been given at all approaching reality in their details, either as regards himself or others; nor shall I further allude to them than to remark that the errors of action committed by a man as noble and generous as Shelley, may, as far as he only is concerned, be fearlessly avowed by those who loved him, in the firm conviction that, were they judged impartially, his character would stand in fairer and brighter light than that of any contemporary. Whatever faults he had ought to find extenuation among his fellows, since they prove him to be human; without them, the exalted nature of his soul would have raised him into something divine.

The qualities that struck any one newly introduced to Shelley were,--First, a gentle and cordial goodness that animated his intercourse with warm affection and helpful sympathy. The other, the eagerness and ardour with which he was attached to the cause of human happiness and improvement; and the fervent eloquence with which he discussed such subjects. His conversation was marked by its happy abundance, and the beautiful language in which he clothed his poetic ideas and philosophical notions. To defecate life of its misery and its evil was the ruling passion of his soul; he dedicated to it every power of his mind, every pulsation of his heart. He looked on political freedom as the direct agent to effect the happiness of mankind; and thus any new-sprung hope of liberty inspired a joy and an exultation more intense and wild than he could have felt for any personal advantage. Those who have never experienced the workings of passion on general and unselfish subjects cannot understand this; and it must be difficult of comprehension to the younger generation rising around, since they cannot remember the scorn and hatred with which the partisans of reform were regarded some few years ago, nor the

persecutions to which they were exposed. He had been from youth the victim of the state of feeling inspired by the reaction of the French Revolution; and believing firmly in the justice and excellence of his views, it cannot be wondered that a nature as sensitive, as impetuous, and as generous as his, should put its whole force into the attempt to alleviate for others the evils of those systems from which he had himself suffered. Many advantages attended his birth; he spurned them all when balanced with what he considered his duties. He was generous to imprudence, devoted to heroism.

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

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

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

No poet was ever warmed by a more genuine and unforced inspiration. His extreme sensibility gave the intensity of passion to his intellectual pursuits; and rendered his mind keenly alive to every perception of outward objects, as well as to his internal sensations. Such a gift is, among the sad vicissitudes of human life, the disappointments we meet, and the galling sense of our own mistakes and errors, fraught with pain; to escape from such, he delivered up his

soul to poetry, and felt happy when he sheltered himself, from the influence of human sympathies, in the wildest regions of fancy. His imagination has been termed too brilliant, his thoughts too subtle. He loved to idealize reality; and this is a taste shared by few. We are willing to have our passing whims exalted into passions, for this gratifies our vanity; but few of us understand or sympathize with the endeavour to ally the love of abstract beauty, and adoration of abstract good, the to agathon kai to kalon of the Socratic philosophers, with our sympathies with our kind. In this, Shelley resembled Plato; both taking more delight in the abstract and the ideal than in the special and tangible. This did not result from imitation; for it was not till Shelley resided in Italy that he made Plato his study. He then translated his "Symposium" and his "Ion"; and the English language boasts of no more brilliant composition than Plato's Praise of Love translated by Shelley. To return to his own poetry. The luxury of imagination, which sought nothing beyond itself (as a child burdens itself with spring flowers, thinking of no use beyond the enjoyment of gathering them), often showed itself in his verses: they will be only appreciated by minds which have resemblance to his own; and the mystic subtlety of many of his thoughts will share the same fate. The metaphysical strain that characterizes much of what he has written was, indeed, the portion of his works to which, apart from those whose scope was to awaken mankind to aspirations for what he considered the true and good, he was himself particularly attached. There is much, however, that speaks to the many. When he would consent to dismiss these huntings after the obscure (which, entwined with his nature as they were, he did with difficulty), no poet ever expressed in sweeter, more heart-reaching, or more passionate verse, the gentler or more forcible emotions of the soul.

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

He died, and the world showed no outward sign. But his influence over

mankind, though slow in growth, is fast augmenting; and, in the ameliorations that have taken place in the political state of his country, we may trace in part the operation of his arduous struggles. His spirit gathers peace in its new state from the sense that, though late, his exertions were not made in vain, and in the progress of the liberty he so fondly loved.

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

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

Se al seguir son tarda,  
Forse avverra che 'l bel nome gentile  
Consacrero con questa stanca penna.

#### POSTSCRIPT IN SECOND EDITION OF 1839.

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

Two poems are added of some length, "Swellfoot the Tyrant" and "Peter Bell the Third". I have mentioned the circumstances under which they were written in the notes; and need only add that they are conceived

in a very different spirit from Shelley's usual compositions. They are specimens of the burlesque and fanciful; but, although they adopt a familiar style and homely imagery, there shine through the radiance of the poet's imagination the earnest views and opinions of the politician and the moralist.

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

Putney, November 6, 1839.

PREFACE BY MRS. SHELLEY.

TO THE VOLUME OF POSTHUMOUS POEMS PUBLISHED IN 1824.

In nobil sangue vita umile e queta,  
Ed in alto intelletto un puro core  
Frutto senile in sul giovenil fibre,  
E in aspetto pensoso anima lieta.--PETRARCA.

It had been my wish, on presenting the public with the Posthumous Poems of Mr. Shelley, to have accompanied them by a biographical notice; as it appeared to me that at this moment a narration of the events of my husband's life would come more gracefully from other hands than mine, I applied to Mr. Leigh Hunt. The distinguished friendship that Mr. Shelley felt for him, and the enthusiastic affection with which Mr. Leigh Hunt clings to his friend's memory, seemed to point him out as the person best calculated for such an undertaking. His absence from this country, which prevented our mutual explanation, has unfortunately rendered my scheme abortive. I do not doubt but that on some other occasion he will pay this tribute to his lost friend, and sincerely regret that the volume which I edit has not been honoured by its insertion.

The comparative solitude in which Mr. Shelley lived was the occasion that he was personally known to few; and his fearless enthusiasm in the cause which he considered the most sacred upon earth, the improvement of the moral and physical state of mankind, was the chief reason why he, like other illustrious reformers, was pursued by hatred and calumny. No man was ever more devoted than he to the endeavour of making those around him happy; no man ever possessed friends more unfeignedly attached to him. The ungrateful world did not feel his loss, and the gap it made seemed to close as quickly over his memory as the murderous sea above his living frame. Hereafter men will lament that his transcendent powers of intellect were extinguished before they had bestowed on them their choicest treasures. To his friends his loss is irremediable: the wise, the brave, the gentle, is gone for ever! He is to them as a bright vision, whose radiant track, left behind in the memory, is worth all the realities that society can afford. Before the critics contradict me, let them appeal to any one

who had ever known him. To see him was to love him: and his presence, like Ithuriel's spear, was alone sufficient to disclose the falsehood of the tale which his enemies whispered in the ear of the ignorant world.

His life was spent in the contemplation of Nature, in arduous study, or in acts of kindness and affection. He was an elegant scholar and a profound metaphysician; without possessing much scientific knowledge, he was unrivalled in the justness and extent of his observations on natural objects; he knew every plant by its name, and was familiar with the history and habits of every production of the earth; he could interpret without a fault each appearance in the sky; and the varied phenomena of heaven and earth filled him with deep emotion. He made his study and reading-room of the shadowed copse, the stream, the lake, and the waterfall. Ill health and continual pain preyed upon his powers; and the solitude in which we lived, particularly on our first arrival in Italy, although congenial to his feelings, must frequently have weighed upon his spirits; those beautiful and affecting "Lines written in Dejection near Naples" were composed at such an interval; but, when in health, his spirits were buoyant and youthful to an extraordinary degree.

Such was his love for Nature that every page of his poetry is associated, in the minds of his friends, with the loveliest scenes of the countries which he inhabited. In early life he visited the most beautiful parts of this country and Ireland. Afterwards the Alps of Switzerland became his inspirers. "Prometheus Unbound" was written among the deserted and flower-grown ruins of Rome; and, when he made his home under the Pisan hills, their roofless recesses harboured him as he composed the "Witch of Atlas", "Adonais", and "Hellas". In the wild but beautiful Bay of Spezzia, the winds and waves which he loved became his playmates. His days were chiefly spent on the water; the management of his boat, its alterations and improvements, were his principal occupation. At night, when the unclouded moon shone on the calm sea, he often went alone in his little shallop to the rocky caves that bordered it, and, sitting beneath their shelter, wrote the "Triumph of Life", the last of his productions. The beauty but strangeness of this lonely place, the refined pleasure which he felt in the companionship of a few selected friends, our entire sequestration from the rest of the world, all contributed to render this period of his life one of continued enjoyment. I am convinced that the two months we passed there were the happiest which he had ever known: his health even rapidly improved, and he was never better than when I last saw him, full of spirits and joy, embark for Leghorn, that he might there welcome Leigh Hunt to Italy. I was to have accompanied him; but illness confined me to my room, and thus put the seal on my misfortune. His vessel bore out of sight with a favourable wind, and I remained awaiting his return by the breakers of that sea which was about to engulf him.

He spent a week at Pisa, employed in kind offices toward his friend, and enjoying with keen delight the renewal of their intercourse. He then embarked with Mr. Williams, the chosen and beloved sharer of his

pleasures and of his fate, to return to us. We waited for them in vain; the sea by its restless moaning seemed to desire to inform us of what we would not learn:--but a veil may well be drawn over such misery. The real anguish of those moments transcended all the fictions that the most glowing imagination ever portrayed; our seclusion, the savage nature of the inhabitants of the surrounding villages, and our immediate vicinity to the troubled sea, combined to imbue with strange horror our days of uncertainty. The truth was at last known,--a truth that made our loved and lovely Italy appear a tomb, its sky a pall. Every heart echoed the deep lament, and my only consolation was in the praise and earnest love that each voice bestowed and each countenance demonstrated for him we had lost,--not, I fondly hope, for ever; his unearthly and elevated nature is a pledge of the continuation of his being, although in an altered form. Rome received his ashes; they are deposited beneath its weed-grown wall, and 'the world's sole monument' is enriched by his remains.

I must add a few words concerning the contents of this volume. "Julian and Maddalo", the "Witch of Atlas", and most of the "Translations", were written some years ago; and, with the exception of the "Cyclops", and the Scenes from the "Magico Prodigioso", may be considered as having received the author's ultimate corrections. The "Triumph of Life" was his last work, and was left in so unfinished a state that I arranged it in its present form with great difficulty. All his poems which were scattered in periodical works are collected in this volume, and I have added a reprint of "Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude": the difficulty with which a copy can be obtained is the cause of its republication. Many of the Miscellaneous Poems, written on the spur of the occasion, and never retouched, I found among his manuscript books, and have carefully copied. I have subjoined, whenever I have been able, the date of their composition.

I do not know whether the critics will reprehend the insertion of some of the most imperfect among them; but I frankly own that I have been more actuated by the fear lest any monument of his genius should escape me than the wish of presenting nothing but what was complete to the fastidious reader. I feel secure that the lovers of Shelley's poetry (who know how, more than any poet of the present day, every line and word he wrote is instinct with peculiar beauty) will pardon and thank me: I consecrate this volume to them.

The size of this collection has prevented the insertion of any prose pieces. They will hereafter appear in a separate publication.

MARY W. SHELLEY.

London, June 1, 1824.

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THE DAEMON OF THE WORLD.

A FRAGMENT.

PART 1.

[Sections 1 and 2 of "Queen Mab" rehandled, and published by Shelley in the "Alastor" volume, 1816. See "Bibliographical List", and the Editor's Introductory Note to "Queen Mab".]

Nec tantum prodere vati,  
Quantum scire licet. Venit aetas omnis in unam  
Congeriem, miserumque premunt tot saecula pectus.  
LUCAN, Phars. v. 176.

How wonderful is Death,  
Death and his brother Sleep!  
One pale as yonder wan and horned moon,  
With lips of lurid blue,  
The other glowing like the vital morn,                     \_5  
When throned on ocean's wave  
It breathes over the world:  
Yet both so passing strange and wonderful!

Hath then the iron-sceptred Skeleton,  
Whose reign is in the tainted sepulchres,                     \_10  
To the hell dogs that couch beneath his throne  
Cast that fair prey? Must that divinest form,  
Which love and admiration cannot view  
Without a beating heart, whose azure veins  
Steal like dark streams along a field of snow,                     \_15  
Whose outline is as fair as marble clothed  
In light of some sublimest mind, decay?  
Nor putrefaction's breath  
Leave aught of this pure spectacle  
But loathsomeness and ruin?--                                     \_20  
Spare aught but a dark theme,  
On which the lightest heart might moralize?  
Or is it but that downy-winged slumbers  
Have charmed their nurse coy Silence near her lids  
To watch their own repose?                                     \_25  
Will they, when morning's beam  
Flows through those wells of light,  
Seek far from noise and day some western cave,  
Where woods and streams with soft and pausing winds  
A lulling murmur weave?--                                     \_30  
Ilanthe doth not sleep  
The dreamless sleep of death:  
Nor in her moonlight chamber silently  
Doth Henry hear her regular pulses throb,  
Or mark her delicate cheek                                     \_35  
With interchange of hues mock the broad moon,  
Outwatching weary night,  
Without assured reward.  
Her dewy eyes are closed;  
On their translucent lids, whose texture fine                     \_40  
Scarce hides the dark blue orbs that burn below  
With unapparent fire,  
The baby Sleep is pillowed:

Her golden tresses shade  
The bosom's stainless pride, \_45  
Twining like tendrils of the parasite  
Around a marble column.

Hark! whence that rushing sound?  
'Tis like a wondrous strain that sweeps  
Around a lonely ruin \_50  
When west winds sigh and evening waves respond  
In whispers from the shore:  
'Tis wilder than the unmeasured notes  
Which from the unseen lyres of dells and groves  
The genii of the breezes sweep. \_55  
Floating on waves of music and of light,  
The chariot of the Daemon of the World  
Descends in silent power:  
Its shape reposed within: slight as some cloud  
That catches but the palest tinge of day \_60  
When evening yields to night,  
Bright as that fibrous woof when stars indue  
Its transitory robe.  
Four shapeless shadows bright and beautiful  
Draw that strange car of glory, reins of light \_65  
Check their unearthly speed; they stop and fold  
Their wings of braided air:  
The Daemon leaning from the ethereal car  
Gazed on the slumbering maid.  
Human eye hath ne'er beheld \_70  
A shape so wild, so bright, so beautiful,  
As that which o'er the maiden's charmed sleep  
Waving a starry wand,  
Hung like a mist of light.  
Such sounds as breathed around like odorous winds \_75  
Of wakening spring arose,  
Filling the chamber and the moonlight sky.  
Maiden, the world's supremest spirit  
Beneath the shadow of her wings  
Folds all thy memory doth inherit \_80  
From ruin of divinest things,  
Feelings that lure thee to betray,  
And light of thoughts that pass away.  
For thou hast earned a mighty boon,  
The truths which wisest poets see \_85  
Dimly, thy mind may make its own,  
Rewarding its own majesty,  
Entranced in some diviner mood  
Of self-oblivious solitude.

Custom, and Faith, and Power thou spurnest; \_90  
From hate and awe thy heart is free;  
Ardent and pure as day thou burnest,  
For dark and cold mortality  
A living light, to cheer it long,

The watch-fires of the world among. \_95

Therefore from nature's inner shrine,  
Where gods and fiends in worship bend,  
Majestic spirit, be it thine  
The flame to seize, the veil to rend,  
Where the vast snake Eternity \_100  
In charmed sleep doth ever lie.

All that inspires thy voice of love,  
Or speaks in thy unclosing eyes,  
Or through thy frame doth burn or move,  
Or think or feel, awake, arise! \_105  
Spirit, leave for mine and me  
Earth's unsubstantial mimicry!

It ceased, and from the mute and moveless frame  
A radiant spirit arose,  
All beautiful in naked purity. \_110  
Robed in its human hues it did ascend,  
Disparting as it went the silver clouds,  
It moved towards the car, and took its seat  
Beside the Daemon shape.

Obedient to the sweep of aery song, \_115  
The mighty ministers  
Unfurled their prismatic wings.  
The magic car moved on;  
The night was fair, innumerable stars  
Studded heaven's dark blue vault; \_120  
The eastern wave grew pale  
With the first smile of morn.  
The magic car moved on.  
From the swift sweep of wings  
The atmosphere in flaming sparkles flew; \_125  
And where the burning wheels  
Eddied above the mountain's loftiest peak  
Was traced a line of lightning.  
Now far above a rock the utmost verge  
Of the wide earth it flew, \_130  
The rival of the Andes, whose dark brow  
Frowned o'er the silver sea.  
Far, far below the chariot's stormy path,  
Calm as a slumbering babe,  
Tremendous ocean lay. \_135  
Its broad and silent mirror gave to view  
The pale and waning stars,  
The chariot's fiery track,  
And the grey light of morn  
Tingeing those fleecy clouds \_140  
That cradled in their folds the infant dawn.  
The chariot seemed to fly  
Through the abyss of an immense concave,

Radiant with million constellations, tinged  
 With shades of infinite colour,                                     \_145  
 And semicircled with a belt  
 Flashing incessant meteors.

As they approached their goal,  
 The winged shadows seemed to gather speed.  
 The sea no longer was distinguished; earth                                     \_150  
 Appeared a vast and shadowy sphere, suspended  
 In the black concave of heaven  
 With the sun's cloudless orb,  
 Whose rays of rapid light  
 Parted around the chariot's swifter course,                                     \_155  
 And fell like ocean's feathery spray  
 Dashed from the boiling surge  
 Before a vessel's prow.

The magic car moved on.  
 Earth's distant orb appeared   \_160  
 The smallest light that twinkles in the heavens,  
 Whilst round the chariot's way  
 Innumerable systems widely rolled,  
 And countless spheres diffused  
 An ever varying glory.   \_165  
 It was a sight of wonder! Some were horned,  
 And like the moon's argentine crescent hung  
 In the dark dome of heaven; some did shed  
 A clear mild beam like Hesperus, while the sea  
 Yet glows with fading sunlight; others dashed                                     \_170  
 Athwart the night with trains of bickering fire,  
 Like sphered worlds to death and ruin driven;  
 Some shone like stars, and as the chariot passed  
 Bedimmed all other light.

Spirit of Nature! here   \_175  
 In this interminable wilderness  
 Of worlds, at whose involved immensity  
 Even soaring fancy staggers,  
 Here is thy fitting temple.  
 Yet not the lightest leaf   \_180  
 That quivers to the passing breeze  
 Is less instinct with thee,--  
 Yet not the meanest worm.  
 That lurks in graves and fattens on the dead,  
 Less shares thy eternal breath.   \_185  
 Spirit of Nature! thou  
 Imperishable as this glorious scene,  
 Here is thy fitting temple.

If solitude hath ever led thy steps  
 To the shore of the immeasurable sea,                                     \_190  
 And thou hast lingered there  
 Until the sun's broad orb

Seemed resting on the fiery line of ocean,  
Thou must have marked the braided webs of gold  
That without motion hang \_195  
Over the sinking sphere:  
Thou must have marked the billowy mountain clouds,  
Edged with intolerable radiancy,  
Towering like rocks of jet  
Above the burning deep: \_200  
And yet there is a moment  
When the sun's highest point  
Peers like a star o'er ocean's western edge,  
When those far clouds of feathery purple gleam  
Like fairy lands girt by some heavenly sea: \_205  
Then has thy rapt imagination soared  
Where in the midst of all existing things  
The temple of the mightiest Daemon stands.

Yet not the golden islands  
That gleam amid yon flood of purple light, \_210  
Nor the feathery curtains  
That canopy the sun's resplendent couch,  
Nor the burnished ocean waves  
Paving that gorgeous dome,  
So fair, so wonderful a sight \_215  
As the eternal temple could afford.  
The elements of all that human thought  
Can frame of lovely or sublime, did join  
To rear the fabric of the fane, nor aught  
Of earth may image forth its majesty. \_220  
Yet likest evening's vault that faery hall,  
As heaven low resting on the wave it spread  
Its floors of flashing light,  
Its vast and azure dome;  
And on the verge of that obscure abyss \_225  
Where crystal battlements o'erhang the gulf  
Of the dark world, ten thousand spheres diffuse  
Their lustre through its adamantine gates.

The magic car no longer moved;  
The Daemon and the Spirit \_230  
Entered the eternal gates.  
Those clouds of aery gold  
That slept in glittering billows  
Beneath the azure canopy,  
With the ethereal footsteps trembled not; \_235  
While slight and odorous mists  
Floated to strains of thrilling melody  
Through the vast columns and the pearly shrines.

The Daemon and the Spirit  
Approached the overhanging battlement, \_240  
Below lay stretched the boundless universe!  
There, far as the remotest line

That limits swift imagination's flight.  
 Unending orbs mingled in mazy motion,  
 Immutably fulfilling \_245  
 Eternal Nature's law.  
 Above, below, around,  
 The circling systems formed  
 A wilderness of harmony.  
 Each with undeviating aim \_250  
 In eloquent silence through the depths of space  
 Pursued its wondrous way.--

Awhile the Spirit paused in ecstasy.  
 Yet soon she saw, as the vast spheres swept by,  
 Strange things within their belted orbs appear. \_255  
 Like animated frenzies, dimly moved  
 Shadows, and skeletons, and fiendly shapes,  
 Thronging round human graves, and o'er the dead  
 Sculpturing records for each memory  
 In verse, such as malignant gods pronounce, \_260  
 Blasting the hopes of men, when heaven and hell  
 Confounded burst in ruin o'er the world:  
 And they did build vast trophies, instruments  
 Of murder, human bones, barbaric gold,  
 Skins torn from living men, and towers of skulls \_265  
 With sightless holes gazing on blinder heaven,  
 Mitres, and crowns, and brazen chariots stained  
 With blood, and scrolls of mystic wickedness,  
 The sanguine codes of venerable crime.  
 The likeness of a throned king came by. \_270  
 When these had passed, bearing upon his brow  
 A threefold crown; his countenance was calm.  
 His eye severe and cold; but his right hand  
 Was charged with bloody coin, and he did gnaw  
 By fits, with secret smiles, a human heart \_275  
 Concealed beneath his robe; and motley shapes,  
 A multitudinous throng, around him knelt.  
 With bosoms bare, and bowed heads, and false looks  
 Of true submission, as the sphere rolled by.  
 Brooking no eye to witness their foul shame, \_280  
 Which human hearts must feel, while human tongues  
 Tremble to speak, they did rage horribly,  
 Breathing in self-contempt fierce blasphemies  
 Against the Daemon of the World, and high  
 Hurling their armed hands where the pure Spirit, \_285  
 Serene and inaccessibly secure,  
 Stood on an isolated pinnacle.  
 The flood of ages combating below,  
 The depth of the unbounded universe  
 Above, and all around \_290  
 Necessity's unchanging harmony.

PART 2.

[Sections 8 and 9 of "Queen Mab" rehandled by Shelley. First printed in 1876 by Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B., by whose kind permission it is here reproduced. See Editor's Introductory Note to "Queen Mab".]

O happy Earth! reality of Heaven!  
To which those restless powers that ceaselessly  
Throng through the human universe aspire;  
Thou consummation of all mortal hope!                     \_295  
Thou glorious prize of blindly-working will!  
Whose rays, diffused throughout all space and time,  
Verge to one point and blend for ever there:  
Of purest spirits thou pure dwelling-place!  
Where care and sorrow, impotence and crime,                     \_300  
Languor, disease, and ignorance dare not come:  
O happy Earth, reality of Heaven!

Genius has seen thee in her passionate dreams,  
And dim forebodings of thy loveliness,  
Haunting the human heart, have there entwined                     \_305  
Those rooted hopes, that the proud Power of Evil  
Shall not for ever on this fairest world  
Shake pestilence and war, or that his slaves  
With blasphemy for prayer, and human blood  
For sacrifice, before his shrine for ever                     \_310  
In adoration bend, or Erebus  
With all its banded fiends shall not uprising  
To overwhelm in envy and revenge  
The dauntless and the good, who dare to hurl  
Defiance at his throne, girt tho' it be                     \_315  
With Death's omnipotence. Thou hast beheld  
His empire, o'er the present and the past;  
It was a desolate sight--now gaze on mine,  
Futurity. Thou hoary giant Time,  
Render thou up thy half-devoured babes,--                     \_320  
And from the cradles of eternity,  
Where millions lie lulled to their portioned sleep  
By the deep murmuring stream of passing things,  
Tear thou that gloomy shroud.--Spirit, behold  
Thy glorious destiny!

The Spirit saw                     \_325  
The vast frame of the renovated world  
Smile in the lap of Chaos, and the sense  
Of hope thro' her fine texture did suffuse  
Such varying glow, as summer evening casts  
On undulating clouds and deepening lakes.                     \_330  
Like the vague sighings of a wind at even,  
That wakes the wavelets of the slumbering sea  
And dies on the creation of its breath,  
And sinks and rises, fails and swells by fits,  
Was the sweet stream of thought that with wild motion                     \_335  
Flowed o'er the Spirit's human sympathies.  
The mighty tide of thought had paused awhile,



Which from the Daemon now like Ocean's stream  
Again began to pour.--

To me is given

The wonders of the human world to keep- \_340

Space, matter, time and mind--let the sight

Renew and strengthen all thy failing hope.

All things are recreated, and the flame

Of consentaneous love inspires all life:

The fertile bosom of the earth gives suck \_345

To myriads, who still grow beneath her care,

Rewarding her with their pure perfectness:

The balmy breathings of the wind inhale

Her virtues, and diffuse them all abroad:

Health floats amid the gentle atmosphere, \_350

Glow in the fruits, and mantles on the stream;

No storms deform the beaming brow of heaven,

Nor scatter in the freshness of its pride

The foliage of the undecaying trees;

But fruits are ever ripe, flowers ever fair, \_355

And Autumn proudly bears her matron grace,

Kindling a flush on the fair cheek of Spring,

Whose virgin bloom beneath the ruddy fruit

Reflects its tint and blushes into love.

The habitable earth is full of bliss; \_360

Those wastes of frozen billows that were hurled

By everlasting snow-storms round the poles,

Where matter dared not vegetate nor live,

But ceaseless frost round the vast solitude

Bound its broad zone of stillness, are unloosed; \_365

And fragrant zephyrs there from spicy isles

Ruffle the placid ocean-deep, that rolls

Its broad, bright surges to the sloping sand,

Whose roar is wakened into echoings sweet

To murmur through the heaven-breathing groves \_370

And melodise with man's blest nature there.

The vast tract of the parched and sandy waste

Now teems with countless rills and shady woods,

Corn-fields and pastures and white cottages;

And where the startled wilderness did hear \_375

A savage conqueror stained in kindred blood,

Hymning his victory, or the milder snake

Crushing the bones of some frail antelope

Within his brazen folds--the dewy lawn,

Offering sweet incense to the sunrise, smiles \_380

To see a babe before his mother's door,

Share with the green and golden basilisk

That comes to lick his feet, his morning's meal.

Those trackless deeps, where many a weary sail

Has seen, above the illimitable plain, \_385

Morning on night and night on morning rise,  
Whilst still no land to greet the wanderer spread  
Its shadowy mountains on the sunbright sea,  
Where the loud roarings of the tempest-waves  
So long have mingled with the gusty wind                    \_390  
In melancholy loneliness, and swept  
The desert of those ocean solitudes,  
But vocal to the sea-bird's harrowing shriek,  
The bellowing monster, and the rushing storm,  
Now to the sweet and many-mingling sounds                    \_395  
Of kindest human impulses respond:  
Those lonely realms bright garden-isles begem,  
With lightsome clouds and shining seas between,  
And fertile valleys resonant with bliss,  
Whilst green woods overcanopy the wave,                    \_400  
Which like a toil-worn labourer leaps to shore,  
To meet the kisses of the flowerets there.

Man chief perceives the change, his being notes  
The gradual renovation, and defines  
Each movement of its progress on his mind.                    \_405  
Man, where the gloom of the long polar night  
Lowered o'er the snow-clad rocks and frozen soil,  
Where scarce the hardiest herb that braves the frost  
Basked in the moonlight's ineffectual glow,  
Shrank with the plants, and darkened with the night;                    \_410  
Nor where the tropics bound the realms of day  
With a broad belt of mingling cloud and flame,  
Where blue mists through the unmoving atmosphere  
Scattered the seeds of pestilence, and fed  
Unnatural vegetation, where the land                    \_415  
Teemed with all earthquake, tempest and disease,  
Was man a nobler being; slavery  
Had crushed him to his country's blood-stained dust.

Even where the milder zone afforded man  
A seeming shelter, yet contagion there,                    \_420  
Blighting his being with unnumbered ills,  
Spread like a quenchless fire; nor truth availed  
Till late to arrest its progress, or create  
That peace which first in bloodless victory waved  
Her snowy standard o'er this favoured clime:                    \_425  
There man was long the train-bearer of slaves,  
The mimic of surrounding misery,  
The jackal of ambition's lion-rage,  
The bloodhound of religion's hungry zeal.

Here now the human being stands adorning                    \_430  
This loveliest earth with taintless body and mind;  
Blest from his birth with all bland impulses,  
Which gently in his noble bosom wake  
All kindly passions and all pure desires.  
Him, still from hope to hope the bliss pursuing,                    \_435

Which from the exhaustless lore of human weal  
Dawns on the virtuous mind, the thoughts that rise  
In time-destroying infiniteness gift  
With self-enshrined eternity, that mocks  
The unprevailing hoariness of age, \_440  
And man, once fleeting o'er the transient scene  
Swift as an unremembered vision, stands  
Immortal upon earth: no longer now  
He slays the beast that sports around his dwelling  
And horribly devours its mangled flesh, \_445  
Or drinks its vital blood, which like a stream  
Of poison thro' his fevered veins did flow  
Feeding a plague that secretly consumed  
His feeble frame, and kindling in his mind  
Hatred, despair, and fear and vain belief, \_450  
The germs of misery, death, disease and crime.  
No longer now the winged habitants,  
That in the woods their sweet lives sing away,  
Flee from the form of man; but gather round,  
And prune their sunny feathers on the hands \_455  
Which little children stretch in friendly sport  
Towards these dreadless partners of their play.  
All things are void of terror: man has lost  
His desolating privilege, and stands  
An equal amidst equals: happiness \_460  
And science dawn though late upon the earth;  
Peace cheers the mind, health renovates the frame;  
Disease and pleasure cease to mingle here,  
Reason and passion cease to combat there;  
Whilst mind unfettered o'er the earth extends \_465  
Its all-subduing energies, and wields  
The sceptre of a vast dominion there.

Mild is the slow necessity of death:  
The tranquil spirit fails beneath its grasp,  
Without a groan, almost without a fear, \_470  
Resigned in peace to the necessity,  
Calm as a voyager to some distant land,  
And full of wonder, full of hope as he.  
The deadly germs of languor and disease  
Waste in the human frame, and Nature gifts \_475  
With choicest boons her human worshippers.  
How vigorous now the athletic form of age!  
How clear its open and unwrinkled brow!  
Where neither avarice, cunning, pride, or care,  
Had stamped the seal of grey deformity \_480  
On all the mingling lineaments of time.  
How lovely the intrepid front of youth!  
How sweet the smiles of taintless infancy.

Within the massy prison's mouldering courts,  
Fearless and free the ruddy children play, \_485  
Weaving gay chaplets for their innocent brows

With the green ivy and the red wall-flower,  
That mock the dungeon's unavailing gloom;  
The ponderous chains, and gratings of strong iron,  
There rust amid the accumulated ruins \_490

Now mingling slowly with their native earth:  
There the broad beam of day, which feebly once  
Lighted the cheek of lean captivity  
With a pale and sickly glare, now freely shines  
On the pure smiles of infant playfulness: \_495  
No more the shuddering voice of hoarse despair  
Peals through the echoing vaults, but soothing notes  
Of ivy-fingered winds and gladsome birds  
And merriment are resonant around.

The fanes of Fear and Falsehood hear no more \_500

The voice that once waked multitudes to war  
Thundering thro' all their aisles: but now respond  
To the death dirge of the melancholy wind:  
It were a sight of awfulness to see  
The works of faith and slavery, so vast, \_505  
So sumptuous, yet withal so perishing!  
Even as the corpse that rests beneath their wall.

A thousand mourners deck the pomp of death  
To-day, the breathing marble glows above  
To decorate its memory, and tongues \_510

Are busy of its life: to-morrow, worms  
In silence and in darkness seize their prey.  
These ruins soon leave not a wreck behind:  
Their elements, wide-scattered o'er the globe,  
To happier shapes are moulded, and become \_515  
Ministrant to all blissful impulses:

Thus human things are perfected, and earth,  
Even as a child beneath its mother's love,  
Is strengthened in all excellence, and grows  
Fairer and nobler with each passing year. \_520

Now Time his dusky pennons o'er the scene  
Closes in steadfast darkness, and the past  
Fades from our charmed sight. My task is done:  
Thy lore is learned. Earth's wonders are thine own,  
With all the fear and all the hope they bring. \_525  
My spells are past: the present now recurs.  
Ah me! a pathless wilderness remains  
Yet unsubdued by man's reclaiming hand.

Yet, human Spirit, bravely hold thy course,  
Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue \_530

The gradual paths of an aspiring change:  
For birth and life and death, and that strange state  
Before the naked powers that thro' the world  
Wander like winds have found a human home,  
All tend to perfect happiness, and urge \_535  
The restless wheels of being on their way,

Whose flashing spokes, instinct with infinite life,  
Bicker and burn to gain their destined goal:  
For birth but wakes the universal mind  
Whose mighty streams might else in silence flow                    \_540  
Thro' the vast world, to individual sense  
Of outward shows, whose unexperienced shape  
New modes of passion to its frame may lend;  
Life is its state of action, and the store  
Of all events is aggregated there                                    \_545  
That variegate the eternal universe;  
Death is a gate of dreariness and gloom,  
That leads to azure isles and beaming skies  
And happy regions of eternal hope.  
Therefore, O Spirit! fearlessly bear on:                            \_550  
Though storms may break the primrose on its stalk,  
Though frosts may blight the freshness of its bloom,  
Yet spring's awakening breath will woo the earth,  
To feed with kindest dews its favourite flower,  
That blooms in mossy banks and darksome glens,                    \_555  
Lighting the green wood with its sunny smile.

Fear not then, Spirit, death's disrobing hand,  
So welcome when the tyrant is awake,  
So welcome when the bigot's hell-torch flares;  
'Tis but the voyage of a darksome hour,                            \_560  
The transient gulf-dream of a startling sleep.  
For what thou art shall perish utterly,  
But what is thine may never cease to be;  
Death is no foe to virtue: earth has seen  
Love's brightest roses on the scaffold bloom,                        \_565  
Mingling with freedom's fadeless laurels there,  
And presaging the truth of visioned bliss.  
Are there not hopes within thee, which this scene  
Of linked and gradual being has confirmed?  
Hopes that not vainly thou, and living fires                        \_570  
Of mind as radiant and as pure as thou,  
Have shone upon the paths of men--return,  
Surpassing Spirit, to that world, where thou  
Art destined an eternal war to wage  
With tyranny and falsehood, and uproot                            \_575  
The germs of misery from the human heart.  
Thine is the hand whose piety would soothe  
The thorny pillow of unhappy crime,  
Whose impotence an easy pardon gains,  
Watching its wanderings as a friend's disease:                        \_580  
Thine is the brow whose mildness would defy  
Its fiercest rage, and brave its sternest will,  
When fenced by power and master of the world.  
Thou art sincere and good; of resolute mind,  
Free from heart-withering custom's cold control,                    \_585  
Of passion lofty, pure and unsubdued.  
Earth's pride and meanness could not vanquish thee,  
And therefore art thou worthy of the boon

Which thou hast now received: virtue shall keep  
Thy footsteps in the path that thou hast trod,                    \_590  
And many days of beaming hope shall bless  
Thy spotless life of sweet and sacred love.  
Go, happy one, and give that bosom joy  
Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch  
Light, life and rapture from thy smile.                            \_595

The Daemon called its winged ministers.  
Speechless with bliss the Spirit mounts the car,  
That rolled beside the crystal battlement,  
Bending her beamy eyes in thankfulness.  
The burning wheels inflame   \_600  
The steep descent of Heaven's untrodden way.  
Fast and far the chariot flew:  
The mighty globes that rolled  
Around the gate of the Eternal Fane  
Lessened by slow degrees, and soon appeared                   \_605  
Such tiny twinklers as the planet orbs  
That ministering on the solar power  
With borrowed light pursued their narrower way.  
Earth floated then below:  
The chariot paused a moment;                                       \_610  
The Spirit then descended:  
And from the earth departing  
The shadows with swift wings  
Speeded like thought upon the light of Heaven.

The Body and the Soul united then,                               \_615  
A gentle start convulsed Ianthe's frame:  
Her veiny eyelids quietly unclosed;  
Moveless awhile the dark blue orbs remained:  
She looked around in wonder and beheld  
Henry, who kneeled in silence by her couch,                   \_620  
Watching her sleep with looks of speechless love,  
And the bright beaming stars  
That through the casement shone.

Notes:

\_87 Regarding cj. A.C. Bradley.)

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ALASTOR: OR, THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE.

[Composed at Bishopsgate Heath, near Windsor Park, 1815 (autumn);  
published, as the title-piece of a slender volume containing other  
poems (see "Biographical List", by Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, London,  
1816 (March). Reprinted--the first edition being sold out--amongst the  
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princeps, 1816; (2) "Posthumous Poems", 1824; (3) "Poetical Works",

1839, editions 1st and 2nd. For (2) and (3) Mrs. Shelley is responsible.]

## PREFACE.

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

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

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

December 14, 1815.

ALASTOR: OR, THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE.

Earth, Ocean, Air, beloved brotherhood!  
If our great Mother has imbued my soul  
With aught of natural piety to feel  
Your love, and recompense the boon with mine;  
If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even,                     \_5  
With sunset and its gorgeous ministers,  
And solemn midnight's tingling silentness;  
If autumn's hollow sighs in the sere wood,  
And winter robing with pure snow and crowns  
Of starry ice the grey grass and bare boughs;                     \_10  
If spring's voluptuous pantings when she breathes  
Her first sweet kisses, have been dear to me;  
If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast  
I consciously have injured, but still loved  
And cherished these my kindred; then forgive                     \_15  
This boast, beloved brethren, and withdraw  
No portion of your wonted favour now!

Mother of this unfathomable world!  
Favour my solemn song, for I have loved  
Thee ever, and thee only; I have watched                     \_20  
Thy shadow, and the darkness of thy steps,  
And my heart ever gazes on the depth  
Of thy deep mysteries. I have made my bed  
In charnels and on coffins, where black death  
Keeps record of the trophies won from thee,                     \_25  
Hoping to still these obstinate questionings  
Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost,  
Thy messenger, to render up the tale  
Of what we are. In lone and silent hours,  
When night makes a weird sound of its own stillness,                     \_30  
Like an inspired and desperate alchemist  
Staking his very life on some dark hope,  
Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks  
With my most innocent love, until strange tears,  
Uniting with those breathless kisses, made                     \_35  
Such magic as compels the charmed night  
To render up thy charge:...and, though ne'er yet  
Thou hast unveiled thy inmost sanctuary,  
Enough from incommunicable dream,  
And twilight phantasms, and deep noon-day thought,                     \_40  
Has shone within me, that serenely now  
And moveless, as a long-forgotten lyre



Suspended in the solitary dome  
Of some mysterious and deserted fane,  
I wait thy breath, Great Parent, that my strain                    \_45  
May modulate with murmurs of the air,  
And motions of the forests and the sea,  
And voice of living beings, and woven hymns  
Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.

There was a Poet whose untimely tomb                                 \_50  
No human hands with pious reverence reared,  
But the charmed eddies of autumnal winds  
Built o'er his mouldering bones a pyramid  
Of mouldering leaves in the waste wilderness:--  
A lovely youth,--no mourning maiden decked                         \_55  
With weeping flowers, or votive cypress wreath,  
The lone couch of his everlasting sleep:--  
Gentle, and brave, and generous,--no lorn bard  
Breathed o'er his dark fate one melodious sigh:  
He lived, he died, he sung in solitude.                                 \_60  
Strangers have wept to hear his passionate notes,  
And virgins, as unknown he passed, have pined  
And wasted for fond love of his wild eyes.  
The fire of those soft orbs has ceased to burn,  
And Silence, too enamoured of that voice,                             \_65  
Locks its mute music in her rugged cell.

By solemn vision, and bright silver dream  
His infancy was nurtured. Every sight  
And sound from the vast earth and ambient air,  
Sent to his heart its choicest impulses.                                 \_70  
The fountains of divine philosophy  
Fled not his thirsting lips, and all of great,  
Or good, or lovely, which the sacred past  
In truth or fable consecrates, he felt  
And knew. When early youth had passed, he left                         \_75  
His cold fireside and alienated home  
To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands.  
Many a wide waste and tangled wilderness  
Has lured his fearless steps; and he has bought  
With his sweet voice and eyes, from savage men,                         \_80  
His rest and food. Nature's most secret steps  
He like her shadow has pursued, where'er  
The red volcano overcanopies  
Its fields of snow and pinnacles of ice  
With burning smoke, or where bitumen lakes                             \_85  
On black bare pointed islets ever beat  
With sluggish surge, or where the secret caves,  
Rugged and dark, winding among the springs  
Of fire and poison, inaccessible  
To avarice or pride, their starry domes                                 \_90  
Of diamond and of gold expand above  
Numberless and immeasurable halls,  
Frequent with crystal column, and clear shrines

Of pearl, and thrones radiant with chrysolite.  
Nor had that scene of ampler majesty                    \_95  
Than gems or gold, the varying roof of heaven  
And the green earth lost in his heart its claims  
To love and wonder; he would linger long  
In lonesome vales, making the wild his home,  
Until the doves and squirrels would partake                    \_100  
From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,  
Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks,  
And the wild antelope, that starts whene'er  
The dry leaf rustles in the brake, suspend  
Her timid steps, to gaze upon a form  
More graceful than her own.    \_105  
His wandering step,  
Obedient to high thoughts, has visited  
The awful ruins of the days of old:  
Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste  
Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers                    \_110  
Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,  
Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of strange,  
Sculptured on alabaster obelisk,  
Or jasper tomb, or mutilated sphynx,  
Dark Aethiopia in her desert hills                                    \_115  
Conceals. Among the ruined temples there,  
Stupendous columns, and wild images  
Of more than man, where marble daemons watch  
The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men  
Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around,                    \_120  
He lingered, poring on memorials  
Of the world's youth: through the long burning day  
Gazed on those speechless shapes; nor, when the moon  
Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades  
Suspended he that task, but ever gazed                                    \_125  
And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind  
Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw  
The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

Meanwhile an Arab maiden brought his food,  
Her daily portion, from her father's tent,                                    \_130  
And spread her matting for his couch, and stole  
From duties and repose to tend his steps,  
Enamoured, yet not daring for deep awe  
To speak her love:--and watched his nightly sleep,  
Sleepless herself, to gaze upon his lips                                    \_135  
Parted in slumber, whence the regular breath  
Of innocent dreams arose; then, when red morn  
Made paler the pale moon, to her cold home  
Wildered, and wan, and panting, she returned.

The Poet, wandering on, through Arabie,                                    \_140  
And Persia, and the wild Carmanian waste,  
And o'er the aerial mountains which pour down  
Indus and Oxus from their icy caves,

In joy and exultation held his way;  
 Till in the vale of Cashmire, far within                    \_145  
 Its loneliest dell, where odorous plants entwine  
 Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower,  
 Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched  
 His languid limbs. A vision on his sleep  
 There came, a dream of hopes that never yet                    \_150  
 Had flushed his cheek. He dreamed a veiled maid  
 Sate near him, talking in low solemn tones.  
 Her voice was like the voice of his own soul  
 Heard in the calm of thought; its music long,  
 Like woven sounds of streams and breezes, held                    \_155  
 His inmost sense suspended in its web  
 Of many-coloured woof and shifting hues.  
 Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme,  
 And lofty hopes of divine liberty,  
 Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy,                        \_160  
 Herself a poet. Soon the solemn mood  
 Of her pure mind kindled through all her frame  
 A permeating fire; wild numbers then  
 She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous sobs  
 Subdued by its own pathos; her fair hands                        \_165  
 Were bare alone, sweeping from some strange harp  
 Strange symphony, and in their branching veins  
 The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale.  
 The beating of her heart was heard to fill  
 The pauses of her music, and her breath                        \_170  
 Tumultuously accorded with those fits  
 Of intermitted song. Sudden she rose,  
 As if her heart impatiently endured  
 Its bursting burthen: at the sound he turned,  
 And saw by the warm light of their own life                        \_175  
 Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous veil  
 Of woven wind, her outspread arms now bare,  
 Her dark locks floating in the breath of night,  
 Her beamy bending eyes, her parted lips  
 Outstretched, and pale, and quivering eagerly.                    \_180  
 His strong heart sunk and sickened with excess  
 Of love. He reared his shuddering limbs and quelled  
 His gasping breath, and spread his arms to meet  
 Her panting bosom:...she drew back a while,  
 Then, yielding to the irresistible joy,                                \_185  
 With frantic gesture and short breathless cry  
 Folded his frame in her dissolving arms.  
 Now blackness veiled his dizzy eyes, and night  
 Involved and swallowed up the vision; sleep,  
 Like a dark flood suspended in its course,                        \_190  
 Rolled back its impulse on his vacant brain.

Roused by the shock he started from his trance--  
 The cold white light of morning, the blue moon  
 Low in the west, the clear and garish hills,  
 The distinct valley and the vacant woods,                        \_195

Spread round him where he stood. Whither have fled  
 The hues of heaven that canopied his bower  
 Of yesternight? The sounds that soothed his sleep,  
 The mystery and the majesty of Earth,  
 The joy, the exultation? His wan eyes                     \_200  
 Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly  
 As ocean's moon looks on the moon in heaven.  
 The spirit of sweet human love has sent  
 A vision to the sleep of him who spurned  
 Her choicest gifts. He eagerly pursues                     \_205  
 Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade;  
 He overleaps the bounds. Alas! Alas!  
 Were limbs, and breath, and being intertwined  
 Thus treacherously? Lost, lost, for ever lost  
 In the wide pathless desert of dim sleep,                     \_210  
 That beautiful shape! Does the dark gate of death  
 Conduct to thy mysterious paradise,  
 O Sleep? Does the bright arch of rainbow clouds  
 And pendent mountains seen in the calm lake,  
 Lead only to a black and watery depth,                     \_215  
 While death's blue vault, with loathliest vapours hung,  
 Where every shade which the foul grave exhales  
 Hides its dead eye from the detested day,  
 Conducts, O Sleep, to thy delightful realms?  
 This doubt with sudden tide flowed on his heart;                     \_220  
 The insatiate hope which it awakened, stung  
 His brain even like despair.  
 While daylight held  
 The sky, the Poet kept mute conference  
 With his still soul. At night the passion came,  
 Like the fierce fiend of a distempered dream,                     \_225  
 And shook him from his rest, and led him forth  
 Into the darkness.--As an eagle, grasped  
 In folds of the green serpent, feels her breast  
 Burn with the poison, and precipitates  
 Through night and day, tempest, and calm, and cloud,                     \_230  
 Frantic with dizzying anguish, her blind flight  
 O'er the wide aery wilderness: thus driven  
 By the bright shadow of that lovely dream,  
 Beneath the cold glare of the desolate night,  
 Through tangled swamps and deep precipitous dells,                     \_235  
 Startling with careless step the moonlight snake,  
 He fled. Red morning dawned upon his flight,  
 Shedding the mockery of its vital hues  
 Upon his cheek of death. He wandered on  
 Till vast Aornos seen from Petra's steep                     \_240  
 Hung o'er the low horizon like a cloud;  
 Through Balk, and where the desolated tombs  
 Of Parthian kings scatter to every wind  
 Their wasting dust, wildly he wandered on,  
 Day after day a weary waste of hours,                     \_245  
 Bearing within his life the brooding care  
 That ever fed on its decaying flame.

And now his limbs were lean; his scattered hair,  
Sered by the autumn of strange suffering  
Sung dirges in the wind; his listless hand                    \_250  
Hung like dead bone within its withered skin;  
Life, and the lustre that consumed it, shone  
As in a furnace burning secretly  
From his dark eyes alone. The cottagers,  
Who ministered with human charity                         \_255  
His human wants, beheld with wondering awe  
Their fleeting visitant. The mountaineer,  
Encountering on some dizzy precipice  
That spectral form, deemed that the Spirit of wind  
With lightning eyes, and eager breath, and feet             \_260  
Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused  
In its career: the infant would conceal  
His troubled visage in his mother's robe  
In terror at the glare of those wild eyes,  
To remember their strange light in many a dream           \_265  
Of after-times; but youthful maidens, taught  
By nature, would interpret half the woe  
That wasted him, would call him with false names  
Brother and friend, would press his pallid hand  
At parting, and watch, dim through tears, the path         \_270  
Of his departure from their father's door.

At length upon the lone Chorasmian shore  
He paused, a wide and melancholy waste  
Of putrid marshes. A strong impulse urged  
His steps to the sea-shore. A swan was there,                 \_275  
Beside a sluggish stream among the reeds.  
It rose as he approached, and, with strong wings  
Scaling the upward sky, bent its bright course  
High over the immeasurable main.  
His eyes pursued its flight:--'Thou hast a home,             \_280  
Beautiful bird; thou voyagest to thine home,  
Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck  
With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes  
Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy.  
And what am I that I should linger here,                   \_285  
With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,  
Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned  
To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers  
In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven  
That echoes not my thoughts?' A gloomy smile               \_290  
Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering lips.  
For sleep, he knew, kept most relentlessly  
Its precious charge, and silent death exposed,  
Faithless perhaps as sleep, a shadowy lure,  
With doubtful smile mocking its own strange charms.         \_295

Startled by his own thoughts he looked around.  
There was no fair fiend near him, not a sight  
Or sound of awe but in his own deep mind.

A little shallop floating near the shore  
Caught the impatient wandering of his gaze.                    \_300  
It had been long abandoned, for its sides  
Gaped wide with many a rift, and its frail joints  
Swayed with the undulations of the tide.  
A restless impulse urged him to embark  
And meet lone Death on the drear ocean's waste;               \_305  
For well he knew that mighty Shadow loves  
The slimy caverns of the populous deep.

The day was fair and sunny; sea and sky  
Drank its inspiring radiance, and the wind  
Swept strongly from the shore, blackening the waves.           \_310  
Following his eager soul, the wanderer  
Leaped in the boat, he spread his cloak aloft  
On the bare mast, and took his lonely seat,  
And felt the boat speed o'er the tranquil sea  
Like a torn cloud before the hurricane.                         \_315

As one that in a silver vision floats  
Obedient to the sweep of odorous winds  
Upon resplendent clouds, so rapidly  
Along the dark and ruffled waters fled  
The straining boat.--A whirlwind swept it on,                   \_320  
With fierce gusts and precipitating force,  
Through the white ridges of the chafed sea.  
The waves arose. Higher and higher still  
Their fierce necks writhed beneath the tempest's scourge  
Like serpents struggling in a vulture's grasp.                   \_325  
Calm and rejoicing in the fearful war  
Of wave ruining on wave, and blast on blast  
Descending, and black flood on whirlpool driven  
With dark obliterating course, he sate:  
As if their genii were the ministers                             \_330  
Appointed to conduct him to the light  
Of those beloved eyes, the Poet sate,  
Holding the steady helm. Evening came on,  
The beams of sunset hung their rainbow hues  
High 'mid the shifting domes of sheeted spray                   \_335  
That canopied his path o'er the waste deep;  
Twilight, ascending slowly from the east,  
Entwined in duskier wreaths her braided locks  
O'er the fair front and radiant eyes of day;  
Night followed, clad with stars. On every side                 \_340  
More horribly the multitudinous streams  
Of ocean's mountainous waste to mutual war  
Rushed in dark tumult thundering, as to mock  
The calm and spangled sky. The little boat  
Still fled before the storm; still fled, like foam                 \_345  
Down the steep cataract of a wintry river;  
Now pausing on the edge of the riven wave;  
Now leaving far behind the bursting mass  
That fell, convulsing ocean: safely fled--

As if that frail and wasted human form,                    \_350  
Had been an elemental god.

At midnight  
The moon arose; and lo! the ethereal cliffs  
Of Caucasus, whose icy summits shone  
Among the stars like sunlight, and around  
Whose caverned base the whirlpools and the waves                    \_355  
Bursting and eddying irresistibly  
Rage and resound forever.--Who shall save?--  
The boat fled on,--the boiling torrent drove,--  
The crags closed round with black and jagged arms,  
The shattered mountain overhung the sea,                                 \_360  
And faster still, beyond all human speed,  
Suspended on the sweep of the smooth wave,  
The little boat was driven. A cavern there  
Yawned, and amid its slant and winding depths  
Ingulfed the rushing sea. The boat fled on                                 \_365  
With unrelaxing speed.--'Vision and Love!'  
The Poet cried aloud, 'I have beheld  
The path of thy departure. Sleep and death  
Shall not divide us long.'

The boat pursued  
The windings of the cavern. Daylight shone                                 \_370  
At length upon that gloomy river's flow;  
Now, where the fiercest war among the waves  
Is calm, on the unfathomable stream  
The boat moved slowly. Where the mountain, riven,  
Exposed those black depths to the azure sky,                                 \_375  
Ere yet the flood's enormous volume fell  
Even to the base of Caucasus, with sound  
That shook the everlasting rocks, the mass  
Filled with one whirlpool all that ample chasm:  
Stair above stair the eddying waters rose,                                 \_380  
Circling immeasurably fast, and laved  
With alternating dash the gnarled roots  
Of mighty trees, that stretched their giant arms  
In darkness over it. In the midst was left,  
Reflecting, yet distorting every cloud,                                 \_385  
A pool of treacherous and tremendous calm.  
Seized by the sway of the ascending stream,  
With dizzy swiftness, round, and round, and round,  
Ridge after ridge the straining boat arose,  
Till on the verge of the extremest curve,                                 \_390  
Where, through an opening of the rocky bank,  
The waters overflow, and a smooth spot  
Of glassy quiet mid those battling tides  
Is left, the boat paused shuddering.--Shall it sink  
Down the abyss? Shall the reverting stress                                 \_395  
Of that resistless gulf embosom it?  
Now shall it fall?--A wandering stream of wind,  
Breathed from the west, has caught the expanded sail,

And, lo! with gentle motion, between banks  
 Of mossy slope, and on a placid stream,                     \_400  
 Beneath a woven grove it sails, and, hark!  
 The ghastly torrent mingles its far roar,  
 With the breeze murmuring in the musical woods.  
 Where the embowering trees recede, and leave  
 A little space of green expanse, the cove                     \_405  
 Is closed by meeting banks, whose yellow flowers  
 For ever gaze on their own drooping eyes,  
 Reflected in the crystal calm. The wave  
 Of the boat's motion marred their pensive task,  
 Which naught but vagrant bird, or wanton wind,                     \_410  
 Or falling spear-grass, or their own decay  
 Had e'er disturbed before. The Poet longed  
 To deck with their bright hues his withered hair,  
 But on his heart its solitude returned,  
 And he forbore. Not the strong impulse hid                     \_415  
 In those flushed cheeks, bent eyes, and shadowy frame  
 Had yet performed its ministry: it hung  
 Upon his life, as lightning in a cloud  
 Gleams, hovering ere it vanish, ere the floods  
 Of night close over it.  
 The noonday sun                     \_420  
 Now shone upon the forest, one vast mass  
 Of mingling shade, whose brown magnificence  
 A narrow vale embosoms. There, huge caves,  
 Scooped in the dark base of their aery rocks,  
 Mocking its moans, respond and roar for ever.                     \_425  
 The meeting boughs and implicated leaves  
 Wove twilight o'er the Poet's path, as led  
 By love, or dream, or god, or mightier Death,  
 He sought in Nature's dearest haunt some bank,  
 Her cradle, and his sepulchre. More dark                     \_430  
 And dark the shades accumulate. The oak,  
 Expanding its immense and knotty arms,  
 Embraces the light beech. The pyramids  
 Of the tall cedar overarching frame  
 Most solemn domes within, and far below,                     \_435  
 Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,  
 The ash and the acacia floating hang  
 Tremulous and pale. Like restless serpents, clothed  
 In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,  
 Starred with ten thousand blossoms, flow around                     \_440  
 The grey trunks, and, as gamesome infants' eyes,  
 With gentle meanings, and most innocent wiles,  
 Fold their beams round the hearts of those that love,  
 These twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs  
 Uniting their close union; the woven leaves                     \_445  
 Make net-work of the dark blue light of day,  
 And the night's noontide clearness, mutable  
 As shapes in the weird clouds. Soft mossy lawns  
 Beneath these canopies extend their swells,  
 Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed with blooms                     \_450



Minute yet beautiful. One darkest glen  
Sends from its woods of musk-rose, twined with jasmine,  
A soul-dissolving odour to invite  
To some more lovely mystery. Through the dell,  
Silence and Twilight here, twin-sisters, keep \_455  
Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades,  
Like vaporous shapes half-seen; beyond, a well,  
Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent wave,  
Images all the woven boughs above,  
And each depending leaf, and every speck \_460  
Of azure sky, darting between their chasms;  
Nor aught else in the liquid mirror laves  
Its portraiture, but some inconstant star  
Between one foliated lattice twinkling fair,  
Or painted bird, sleeping beneath the moon, \_465  
Or gorgeous insect floating motionless,  
Unconscious of the day, ere yet his wings  
Have spread their glories to the gaze of noon.

Hither the Poet came. His eyes beheld  
Their own wan light through the reflected lines \_470  
Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark depth  
Of that still fountain; as the human heart,  
Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave,  
Sees its own treacherous likeness there. He heard  
The motion of the leaves, the grass that sprung \_475  
Startled and glanced and trembled even to feel  
An unaccustomed presence, and the sound  
Of the sweet brook that from the secret springs  
Of that dark fountain rose. A Spirit seemed  
To stand beside him--clothed in no bright robes \_480  
Of shadowy silver or enshrining light,  
Borrowed from aught the visible world affords  
Of grace, or majesty, or mystery;--  
But, undulating woods, and silent well,  
And leaping rivulet, and evening gloom \_485  
Now deepening the dark shades, for speech assuming,  
Held commune with him, as if he and it  
Were all that was,--only...when his regard  
Was raised by intense pensiveness,...two eyes,  
Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought, \_490  
And seemed with their serene and azure smiles  
To beckon him.

Obedient to the light  
That shone within his soul, he went, pursuing  
The windings of the dell.--The rivulet,  
Wanton and wild, through many a green ravine \_495  
Beneath the forest flowed. Sometimes it fell  
Among the moss with hollow harmony  
Dark and profound. Now on the polished stones  
It danced; like childhood laughing as it went:  
Then, through the plain in tranquil wanderings crept, \_500

Reflecting every herb and drooping bud  
That overhung its quietness.--'O stream!  
Whose source is inaccessibly profound,  
Whither do thy mysterious waters tend?  
Thou imagest my life. Thy darksome stillness,                     \_505  
Thy dazzling waves, thy loud and hollow gulfs,  
Thy searchless fountain, and invisible course  
Have each their type in me; and the wide sky.  
And measureless ocean may declare as soon  
What oozy cavern or what wandering cloud                     \_510  
Contains thy waters, as the universe  
Tell where these living thoughts reside, when stretched  
Upon thy flowers my bloodless limbs shall waste  
I' the passing wind!

Beside the grassy shore  
Of the small stream he went; he did impress                     \_515  
On the green moss his tremulous step, that caught  
Strong shuddering from his burning limbs. As one  
Roused by some joyous madness from the couch  
Of fever, he did move; yet, not like him,  
Forgetful of the grave, where, when the flame                     \_520  
Of his frail exultation shall be spent,  
He must descend. With rapid steps he went  
Beneath the shade of trees, beside the flow  
Of the wild babbling rivulet; and now  
The forest's solemn canopies were changed                     \_525  
For the uniform and lightsome evening sky.  
Grey rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemmed  
The struggling brook; tall spires of windlestrae  
Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope,  
And nought but gnarled roots of ancient pines                     \_530  
Branchless and blasted, clenched with grasping roots  
The unwilling soil. A gradual change was here,  
Yet ghastly. For, as fast years flow away,  
The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin  
And white, and where irradiate dewy eyes                     \_535  
Had shone, gleam stony orbs:--so from his steps  
Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade  
Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds  
And musical motions. Calm, he still pursued  
The stream, that with a larger volume now                     \_540  
Rolled through the labyrinthine dell; and there  
Fretted a path through its descending curves  
With its wintry speed. On every side now rose  
Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms,  
Lifted their black and barren pinnacles                     \_545  
In the light of evening, and its precipice  
Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,  
Mid toppling stones, black gulfs and yawning caves,  
Whose windings gave ten thousand various tongues  
To the loud stream. Lo! where the pass expands                     \_550  
Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,

And seems, with its accumulated crags,  
To overhang the world: for wide expand  
Beneath the wan stars and descending moon  
Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams,                     \_555  
Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom  
Of leaden-coloured even, and fiery hills  
Mingling their flames with twilight, on the verge  
Of the remote horizon. The near scene,  
In naked and severe simplicity,                     \_560  
Made contrast with the universe. A pine,  
Rock-rooted, stretched athwart the vacancy  
Its swinging boughs, to each inconstant blast  
Yielding one only response, at each pause  
In most familiar cadence, with the howl                     \_565  
The thunder and the hiss of homeless streams  
Mingling its solemn song, whilst the broad river  
Foaming and hurrying o'er its rugged path,  
Fell into that immeasurable void  
Scattering its waters to the passing winds.                     \_570

Yet the grey precipice and solemn pine  
And torrent were not all;--one silent nook  
Was there. Even on the edge of that vast mountain,  
Upheld by knotty roots and fallen rocks,  
It overlooked in its serenity                     \_575  
The dark earth, and the bending vault of stars.  
It was a tranquil spot, that seemed to smile  
Even in the lap of horror. Ivy clasped  
The fissured stones with its entwining arms,  
And did embower with leaves for ever green,                     \_580  
And berries dark, the smooth and even space  
Of its inviolated floor, and here  
The children of the autumnal whirlwind bore,  
In wanton sport, those bright leaves, whose decay,  
Red, yellow, or ethereally pale,                     \_585  
Rivals the pride of summer. 'Tis the haunt  
Of every gentle wind, whose breath can teach  
The wilds to love tranquillity. One step,  
One human step alone, has ever broken  
The stillness of its solitude:--one voice                     \_590  
Alone inspired its echoes;--even that voice  
Which hither came, floating among the winds,  
And led the loveliest among human forms  
To make their wild haunts the depository  
Of all the grace and beauty that endued                     \_595  
Its motions, render up its majesty,  
Scatter its music on the unfeeling storm,  
And to the damp leaves and blue cavern mould,  
Nurses of rainbow flowers and branching moss,  
Commit the colours of that varying cheek,                     \_600  
That snowy breast, those dark and drooping eyes.

The dim and horned moon hung low, and poured

A sea of lustre on the horizon's verge  
That overflowed its mountains. Yellow mist  
Filled the unbounded atmosphere, and drank \_605  
Wan moonlight even to fulness; not a star  
Shone, not a sound was heard; the very winds,  
Danger's grim playmates, on that precipice  
Slept, clasped in his embrace.--O, storm of death!  
Whose sightless speed divides this sullen night: 610  
And thou, colossal Skeleton, that, still  
Guiding its irresistible career  
In thy devastating omnipotence,  
Art king of this frail world, from the red field  
Of slaughter, from the reeking hospital, \_615  
The patriot's sacred couch, the snowy bed  
Of innocence, the scaffold and the throne,  
A mighty voice invokes thee. Ruin calls  
His brother Death. A rare and regal prey  
He hath prepared, prowling around the world; \_620  
Glutted with which thou mayst repose, and men  
Go to their graves like flowers or creeping worms,  
Nor ever more offer at thy dark shrine  
The unheeded tribute of a broken heart.

When on the threshold of the green recess \_625  
The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew that death  
Was on him. Yet a little, ere it fled,  
Did he resign his high and holy soul  
To images of the majestic past,  
That paused within his passive being now, \_630  
Like winds that bear sweet music, when they breathe  
Through some dim latticed chamber. He did place  
His pale lean hand upon the rugged trunk  
Of the old pine. Upon an ivied stone  
Reclined his languid head, his limbs did rest, \_635  
Diffused and motionless, on the smooth brink  
Of that obscurest chasm;--and thus he lay,  
Surrendering to their final impulses  
The hovering powers of life. Hope and despair,  
The torturers, slept; no mortal pain or fear \_640  
Marred his repose; the influxes of sense,  
And his own being unalloyed by pain,  
Yet feebler and more feeble, calmly fed  
The stream of thought, till he lay breathing there  
At peace, and faintly smiling;--his last sight \_645  
Was the great moon, which o'er the western line  
Of the wide world her mighty horn suspended,  
With whose dun beams inwoven darkness seemed  
To mingle. Now upon the jagged hills  
It rests; and still as the divided frame \_650  
Of the vast meteor sunk, the Poet's blood,  
That ever beat in mystic sympathy  
With nature's ebb and flow, grew feebler still:  
And when two lessening points of light alone

Gleamed through the darkness, the alternate gasp                    \_655  
Of his faint respiration scarce did stir  
The stagnate night:--till the minutest ray  
Was quenched, the pulse yet lingered in his heart.  
It paused--it fluttered. But when heaven remained  
Utterly black, the murky shades involved                         \_660  
An image, silent, cold, and motionless,  
As their own voiceless earth and vacant air.  
Even as a vapour fed with golden beams  
That ministered on sunlight, ere the west  
Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame--                         \_665  
No sense, no motion, no divinity--  
A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings  
The breath of heaven did wander--a bright stream  
Once fed with many-voiced waves--a dream  
Of youth, which night and time have quenched for ever,             \_670  
Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered now.

Oh, for Medea's wondrous alchemy,  
Which wheresoe'er it fell made the earth gleam  
With bright flowers, and the wintry boughs exhale  
From vernal blooms fresh fragrance! O, that God,                     \_675  
Profuse of poisons, would concede the chalice  
Which but one living man has drained, who now,  
Vessel of deathless wrath, a slave that feels  
No proud exemption in the blighting curse  
He bears, over the world wanders for ever,                         \_680  
Lone as incarnate death! O, that the dream  
Of dark magician in his visioned cave,  
Raking the cinders of a crucible  
For life and power, even when his feeble hand  
Shakes in its last decay, were the true law                         \_685  
Of this so lovely world! But thou art fled,  
Like some frail exhalation; which the dawn  
Robes in its golden beams,--ah! thou hast fled!  
The brave, the gentle and the beautiful,  
The child of grace and genius. Heartless things                     \_690  
Are done and said i' the world, and many worms  
And beasts and men live on, and mighty Earth  
From sea and mountain, city and wilderness,  
In vesper low or joyous orison,  
Lifts still its solemn voice:--but thou art fled--                     \_695  
Thou canst no longer know or love the shapes  
Of this phantasmal scene, who have to thee  
Been purest ministers, who are, alas!  
Now thou art not. Upon those pallid lips  
So sweet even in their silence, on those eyes                         \_700  
That image sleep in death, upon that form  
Yet safe from the worm's outrage, let no tear  
Be shed--not even in thought. Nor, when those hues  
Are gone, and those divinest lineaments,  
Worn by the senseless wind, shall live alone                         \_705  
In the frail pauses of this simple strain,

Let not high verse, mourning the memory  
 Of that which is no more, or painting's woe  
 Or sculpture, speak in feeble imagery  
 Their own cold powers. Art and eloquence,                     \_710  
 And all the shows o' the world are frail and vain  
 To weep a loss that turns their lights to shade.  
 It is a woe "too deep for tears," when all  
 Is left at once, when some surpassing Spirit,  
 Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves                     \_715  
 Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans,  
 The passionate tumult of a clinging hope;  
 But pale despair and cold tranquillity,  
 Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,  
 Birth and the grave, that are not as they were.                     \_720

Notes:

\_219 Conduct edition 1816. See "Editor's Notes".

\_530 roots edition 1816: query stumps or trunks. See "Editor's Notes".

NOTE ON ALASTOR, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

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

This is neither the time nor place to speak of the misfortunes that chequered his life. It will be sufficient to say that, in all he did, he at the time of doing it believed himself justified to his own conscience; while the various ills of poverty and loss of friends brought home to him the sad realities of life. Physical suffering had also considerable influence in causing him to turn his eyes inward; inclining him rather to brood over the thoughts and emotions of his own soul than to glance abroad, and to make, as in "Queen Mab", the whole universe the object and subject of his song. In the Spring of 1815, an eminent physician pronounced that he was dying rapidly of a consumption; abscesses were formed on his lungs, and he suffered acute spasms. Suddenly a complete change took place; and though through life he was a martyr to pain and debility, every symptom of pulmonary disease vanished. His nerves, which nature had formed sensitive to an unexampled degree, were rendered still more susceptible by the state of his health.

As soon as the peace of 1814 had opened the Continent, he went abroad. He visited some of the more magnificent scenes of Switzerland, and returned to England from Lucerne, by the Reuss and the Rhine. This

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

None of Shelley's poems is more characteristic than this. The solemn spirit that reigns throughout, the worship of the majesty of nature, the broodings of a poet's heart in solitude--the mingling of the exulting joy which the various aspects of the visible universe inspires with the sad and struggling pangs which human passion imparts--give a touching interest to the whole. The death which he had often contemplated during the last months as certain and near he here represented in such colours as had, in his lonely musings, soothed his soul to peace. The versification sustains the solemn spirit which breathes throughout: it is peculiarly melodious. The poem ought rather to be considered didactic than narrative: it was the outpouring of his own emotions, embodied in the purest form he could conceive, painted in the ideal hues which his brilliant imagination inspired, and softened by the recent anticipation of death.

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## THE REVOLT OF ISLAM.

### A POEM IN TWELVE CANTOS.

Osais de Broton ethnos aglaiais aptomestha  
perainei pros eschaton  
ploon nausi d oute pezos ion an eurois  
es Uperboreon agona thaumatan odon.

Pind. Pyth. x.

[Composed in the neighbourhood of Bisham Wood, near Great Marlow, Bucks, 1817 (April-September 23); printed, with title (dated 1818), "Laon and Cythna; or, The Revolution of the Golden City: A Vision of the Nineteenth Century", October, November, 1817, but suppressed, pending revision, by the publishers, C & J. Ollier. (A few copies had got out, but these were recalled, and some recovered.) Published, with a fresh title-page and twenty-seven cancel-leaves, as "The Revolt of Islam", January 10, 1818. Sources of the text are (1) "Laon and Cythna", 1818; (2) "The Revolt of Islam", 1818; (3) "Poetical Works", 1839, editions 1st and 2nd--both edited by Mrs. Shelley. A copy, with

several pages missing, of the "Preface", the Dedication", and "Canto 1" of "Laon and Cythna" is amongst the Shelley manuscripts at the Bodleian. For a full collation of this manuscript see Mr. C.D. Locock's "Examination of the Shelley Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library". Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903. Two manuscript fragments from the Hunt papers are also extant: one (twenty-four lines) in the possession of Mr. W.M. Rossetti, another (9 23 9 to 29 6) in that of Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B. See "The Shelley Library", pages 83-86, for an account of the copy of "Laon" upon which Shelley worked in revising for publication.]

#### AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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

For this purpose I have chosen a story of human passion in its most universal character, diversified with moving and romantic adventures, and appealing, in contempt of all artificial opinions or institutions, to the common sympathies of every human breast. I have made no attempt to recommend the motives which I would substitute for those at present governing mankind, by methodical and systematic argument. I would only awaken the feelings, so that the reader should see the beauty of true virtue, and be incited to those inquiries which have led to my moral and political creed, and that of some of the sublimest intellects in the world. The Poem therefore (with the exception of the first canto, which is purely introductory) is narrative, not didactic. It is a succession of pictures illustrating the growth and progress of individual mind aspiring after excellence, and devoted to the love of mankind; its influence in refining and making pure the most daring and uncommon impulses of the imagination, the understanding, and the senses; its impatience at 'all the oppressions which are done under the sun;' its tendency to awaken public hope, and to enlighten and improve mankind; the rapid effects of the application of that tendency; the awakening of an immense nation from their slavery and degradation to a true sense of moral dignity and freedom; the bloodless dethronement of their oppressors, and the unveiling of the religious frauds by which they had been deluded into submission; the tranquillity of successful patriotism, and the universal toleration and benevolence of true philanthropy; the treachery and barbarity of hired soldiers; vice not the object of punishment and hatred, but



kindness and pity; the faithlessness of tyrants; the confederacy of the Rulers of the World and the restoration of the expelled Dynasty by foreign arms; the massacre and extermination of the Patriots, and the victory of established power; the consequences of legitimate despotism,--civil war, famine, plague, superstition, and an utter extinction of the domestic affections; the judicial murder of the advocates of Liberty; the temporary triumph of oppression, that secure earnest of its final and inevitable fall; the transient nature of ignorance and error and the eternity of genius and virtue. Such is the series of delineations of which the Poem consists. And, if the lofty passions with which it has been my scope to distinguish this story shall not excite in the reader a generous impulse, an ardent thirst for excellence, an interest profound and strong such as belongs to no meaner desires, let not the failure be imputed to a natural unfitness for human sympathy in these sublime and animating themes. It is the business of the Poet to communicate to others the pleasure and the enthusiasm arising out of those images and feelings in the vivid presence of which within his own mind consists at once his inspiration and his reward.

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

The French Revolution may be considered as one of those manifestations of a general state of feeling among civilised mankind produced by a defect of correspondence between the knowledge existing in society and the improvement or gradual abolition of political institutions. The year 1788 may be assumed as the epoch of one of the most important crises produced by this feeling. The sympathies connected with that event extended to every bosom. The most generous and amiable natures were those which participated the most extensively in these sympathies. But such a degree of unmingled good was expected as it was impossible to realise. If the Revolution had been in every respect prosperous, then misrule and superstition would lose half their claims to our abhorrence, as fetters which the captive can unlock with the slightest motion of his fingers, and which do not eat with poisonous rust into the soul. The revulsion occasioned by the atrocities of the demagogues, and the re-establishment of successive tyrannies in France, was terrible, and felt in the remotest corner of the civilised world. Could they listen to the plea of reason who had groaned under the calamities of a social state according to the provisions of which

one man riots in luxury whilst another famishes for want of bread? Can he who the day before was a trampled slave suddenly become liberal-minded, forbearing, and independent? This is the consequence of the habits of a state of society to be produced by resolute perseverance and indefatigable hope, and long-suffering and long-believing courage, and the systematic efforts of generations of men of intellect and virtue. Such is the lesson which experience teaches now. But, on the first reverses of hope in the progress of French liberty, the sanguine eagerness for good overleaped the solution of these questions, and for a time extinguished itself in the unexpectedness of their result. Thus, many of the most ardent and tender-hearted of the worshippers of public good have been morally ruined by what a partial glimpse of the events they deplored appeared to show as the melancholy desolation of all their cherished hopes. Hence gloom and misanthropy have become the characteristics of the age in which we live, the solace of a disappointment that unconsciously finds relief only in the wilful exaggeration of its own despair. This influence has tainted the literature of the age with the hopelessness of the minds from which it flows. Metaphysics (I ought to except sir W. Drummond's "Academical Questions"; a volume of very acute and powerful metaphysical criticism.), and inquiries into moral and political science, have become little else than vain attempts to revive exploded superstitions, or sophisms like those of Mr. Malthus (It is remarkable, as a symptom of the revival of public hope, that Mr. Malthus has assigned, in the later editions of his work, an indefinite dominion to moral restraint over the principle of population. This concession answers all the inferences from his doctrine unfavourable to human improvement, and reduces the "Essay on Population" to a commentary illustrative of the unanswerableness of "Political Justice".), calculated to lull the oppressors of mankind into a security of everlasting triumph. Our works of fiction and poetry have been overshadowed by the same infectious gloom. But mankind appear to me to be emerging from their trance. I am aware, methinks, of a slow, gradual, silent change. In that belief I have composed the following Poem.

I do not presume to enter into competition with our greatest contemporary Poets. Yet I am unwilling to tread in the footsteps of any who have preceded me. I have sought to avoid the imitation of any style of language or versification peculiar to the original minds of which it is the character; designing that, even if what I have produced be worthless, it should still be properly my own. Nor have I permitted any system relating to mere words to divert the attention of the reader, from whatever interest I may have succeeded in creating, to my own ingenuity in contriving to disgust them according to the rules of criticism. I have simply clothed my thoughts in what appeared to me the most obvious and appropriate language. A person familiar with nature, and with the most celebrated productions of the human mind, can scarcely err in following the instinct, with respect to selection of language, produced by that familiarity.

There is an education peculiarly fitted for a Poet, without which genius and sensibility can hardly fill the circle of their capacities.

No education, indeed, can entitle to this appellation a dull and unobservant mind, or one, though neither dull nor unobservant, in which the channels of communication between thought and expression have been obstructed or closed. How far it is my fortune to belong to either of the latter classes I cannot know. I aspire to be something better. The circumstances of my accidental education have been favourable to this ambition. I have been familiar from boyhood with mountains and lakes and the sea, and the solitude of forests: Danger, which sports upon the brink of precipices, has been my playmate. I have trodden the glaciers of the Alps, and lived under the eye of Mont Blanc. I have been a wanderer among distant fields. I have sailed down mighty rivers, and seen the sun rise and set, and the stars come forth, whilst I have sailed night and day down a rapid stream among mountains. I have seen populous cities, and have watched the passions which rise and spread, and sink and change, amongst assembled multitudes of men. I have seen the theatre of the more visible ravages of tyranny and war, cities and villages reduced to scattered groups of black and roofless houses, and the naked inhabitants sitting famished upon their desolated thresholds. I have conversed with living men of genius. The poetry of ancient Greece and Rome, and modern Italy, and our own country, has been to me, like external nature, a passion and an enjoyment. Such are the sources from which the materials for the imagery of my Poem have been drawn. I have considered Poetry in its most comprehensive sense; and have read the Poets and the Historians and the Metaphysicians (In this sense there may be such a thing as perfectibility in works of fiction, notwithstanding the concession often made by the advocates of human improvement, that perfectibility is a term applicable only to science.) whose writings have been accessible to me, and have looked upon the beautiful and majestic scenery of the earth, as common sources of those elements which it is the province of the Poet to embody and combine. Yet the experience and the feelings to which I refer do not in themselves constitute men Poets, but only prepares them to be the auditors of those who are. How far I shall be found to possess that more essential attribute of Poetry, the power of awakening in others sensations like those which animate my own bosom, is that which, to speak sincerely, I know not; and which, with an acquiescent and contented spirit, I expect to be taught by the effect which I shall produce upon those whom I now address.

I have avoided, as I have said before, the imitation of any contemporary style. But there must be a resemblance, which does not depend upon their own will, between all the writers of any particular age. They cannot escape from subjection to a common influence which arises out of an infinite combination of circumstances belonging to the times in which they live; though each is in a degree the author of the very influence by which his being is thus pervaded. Thus, the tragic poets of the age of Pericles; the Italian revivers of ancient learning; those mighty intellects of our own country that succeeded the Reformation, the translators of the Bible, Shakespeare, Spenser, the Dramatists of the reign of Elizabeth, and Lord Bacon (Milton stands alone in the age which he illumined.); the colder spirits of the interval that succeeded;--all resemble each other, and differ from

every other in their several classes. In this view of things, Ford can no more be called the imitator of Shakespeare than Shakespeare the imitator of Ford. There were perhaps few other points of resemblance between these two men than that which the universal and inevitable influence of their age produced. And this is an influence which neither the meanest scribbler nor the sublimest genius of any era can escape; and which I have not attempted to escape.

I have adopted the stanza of Spenser (a measure inexpressibly beautiful), not because I consider it a finer model of poetical harmony than the blank verse of Shakespeare and Milton, but because in the latter there is no shelter for mediocrity; you must either succeed or fail. This perhaps an aspiring spirit should desire. But I was enticed also by the brilliancy and magnificence of sound which a mind that has been nourished upon musical thoughts can produce by a just and harmonious arrangement of the pauses of this measure. Yet there will be found some instances where I have completely failed in this attempt, and one, which I here request the reader to consider as an erratum, where there is left, most inadvertently, an alexandrine in the middle of a stanza.

But in this, as in every other respect, I have written fearlessly. It is the misfortune of this age that its Writers, too thoughtless of immortality, are exquisitely sensible to temporary praise or blame. They write with the fear of Reviews before their eyes. This system of criticism sprang up in that torpid interval when Poetry was not. Poetry, and the art which professes to regulate and limit its powers, cannot subsist together. Longinus could not have been the contemporary of Homer, nor Boileau of Horace. Yet this species of criticism never presumed to assert an understanding of its own; it has always, unlike true science, followed, not preceded, the opinion of mankind, and would even now bribe with worthless adulation some of our greatest Poets to impose gratuitous fetters on their own imaginations, and become unconscious accomplices in the daily murder of all genius either not so aspiring or not so fortunate as their own. I have sought therefore to write, as I believe that Homer, Shakespeare, and Milton wrote, with an utter disregard of anonymous censure. I am certain that calumny and misrepresentation, though it may move me to compassion, cannot disturb my peace. I shall understand the expressive silence of those sagacious enemies who dare not trust themselves to speak. I shall endeavour to extract, from the midst of insult and contempt and maledictions, those admonitions which may tend to correct whatever imperfections such censurers may discover in this my first serious appeal to the Public. If certain Critics were as clear-sighted as they are malignant, how great would be the benefit to be derived from their virulent writings! As it is, I fear I shall be malicious enough to be amused with their paltry tricks and lame invectives. Should the Public judge that my composition is worthless, I shall indeed bow before the tribunal from which Milton received his crown of immortality, and shall seek to gather, if I live, strength from that defeat, which may nerve me to some new enterprise of thought which may not be worthless. I cannot conceive that Lucretius, when he meditated that poem whose doctrines are yet the basis of our metaphysical knowledge, and whose

eloquence has been the wonder of mankind, wrote in awe of such censure as the hired sophists of the impure and superstitious noblemen of Rome might affix to what he should produce. It was at the period when Greece was led captive and Asia made tributary to the Republic, fast verging itself to slavery and ruin, that a multitude of Syrian captives, bigoted to the worship of their obscene Ashtaroth, and the unworthy successors of Socrates and Zeno, found there a precarious subsistence by administering, under the name of freedmen, to the vices and vanities of the great. These wretched men were skilled to plead, with a superficial but plausible set of sophisms, in favour of that contempt for virtue which is the portion of slaves, and that faith in portents, the most fatal substitute for benevolence in the imaginations of men, which, arising from the enslaved communities of the East, then first began to overwhelm the western nations in its stream. Were these the kind of men whose disapprobation the wise and lofty-minded Lucretius should have regarded with a salutary awe? The latest and perhaps the meanest of those who follow in his footsteps would disdain to hold life on such conditions.

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

I trust that the reader will carefully distinguish between those opinions which have a dramatic propriety in reference to the characters which they are designed to elucidate, and such as are properly my own. The erroneous and degrading idea which men have conceived of a Supreme Being, for instance, is spoken against, but not the Supreme Being itself. The belief which some superstitious persons whom I have brought upon the stage entertain of the Deity, as injurious to the character of his benevolence, is widely different from my own. In recommending also a great and important change in the spirit which animates the social institutions of mankind, I have avoided all flattery to those violent and malignant passions of our nature which are ever on the watch to mingle with and to alloy the most beneficial innovations. There is no quarter given to Revenge, or Envy, or Prejudice. Love is celebrated everywhere as the sole law which should govern the moral world.

#### DEDICATION.

There is no danger to a man that knows  
What life and death is: there's not any law  
Exceeds his knowledge; neither is it lawful

That he should stoop to any other law.--CHAPMAN.

TO MARY -- --.

1.

So now my summer-task is ended, Mary,  
And I return to thee, mine own heart's home;  
As to his Queen some victor Knight of Faery,  
Earning bright spoils for her enchanted dome;  
Nor thou disdain, that ere my fame become                     \_5  
A star among the stars of mortal night,  
If it indeed may cleave its natal gloom,  
Its doubtful promise thus I would unite  
With thy beloved name, thou Child of love and light.

2.

The toil which stole from thee so many an hour,                     \_10  
Is ended,--and the fruit is at thy feet!  
No longer where the woods to frame a bower  
With interlaced branches mix and meet,  
Or where with sound like many voices sweet,  
Waterfalls leap among wild islands green,                     \_15  
Which framed for my lone boat a lone retreat  
Of moss-grown trees and weeds, shall I be seen;  
But beside thee, where still my heart has ever been.

3.

Thoughts of great deeds were mine, dear Friend, when first  
The clouds which wrap this world from youth did pass.                     \_20  
I do remember well the hour which burst  
My spirit's sleep. A fresh May-dawn it was,  
When I walked forth upon the glittering grass,  
And wept, I knew not why; until there rose  
From the near schoolroom, voices that, alas!                     \_25  
Were but one echo from a world of woes--  
The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.

4.

And then I clasped my hands and looked around--  
--But none was near to mock my streaming eyes,  
Which poured their warm drops on the sunny ground--                     \_30  
So without shame I spake:--'I will be wise,  
And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies  
Such power, for I grow weary to behold  
The selfish and the strong still tyrannise  
Without reproach or check.' I then controlled                     \_35  
My tears, my heart grew calm, and I was meek and bold.

5.

And from that hour did I with earnest thought  
Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore;  
Yet nothing that my tyrants knew or taught  
I cared to learn, but from that secret store                     \_40

Wrought linked armour for my soul, before  
It might walk forth to war among mankind;  
Thus power and hope were strengthened more and more  
Within me, till there came upon my mind  
A sense of loneliness, a thirst with which I pined.                    \_45

6.  
Alas, that love should be a blight and snare  
To those who seek all sympathies in one!--  
Such once I sought in vain; then black despair,  
The shadow of a starless night, was thrown  
Over the world in which I moved alone:--                                   \_50  
Yet never found I one not false to me,  
Hard hearts, and cold, like weights of icy stone  
Which crushed and withered mine, that could not be  
Aught but a lifeless clod, until revived by thee.

7.  
Thou Friend, whose presence on my wintry heart                               \_55  
Fell, like bright Spring upon some herbless plain;  
How beautiful and calm and free thou wert  
In thy young wisdom, when the mortal chain  
Of Custom thou didst burst and rend in twain,  
And walked as free as light the clouds among,                               \_60  
Which many an envious slave then breathed in vain  
From his dim dungeon, and my spirit sprung  
To meet thee from the woes which had begirt it long!

8.  
No more alone through the world's wilderness,  
Although I trod the paths of high intent,                                   \_65  
I journeyed now: no more companionless,  
Where solitude is like despair, I went.--  
There is the wisdom of a stern content  
When Poverty can blight the just and good,  
When Infamy dares mock the innocent,   \_70  
And cherished friends turn with the multitude  
To trample: this was ours, and we unshaken stood!

9.  
Now has descended a serener hour,  
And with inconstant fortune, friends return;  
Though suffering leaves the knowledge and the power                       \_75  
Which says:--Let scorn be not repaid with scorn.  
And from thy side two gentle babes are born  
To fill our home with smiles, and thus are we  
Most fortunate beneath life's beaming morn;  
And these delights, and thou, have been to me                                 \_80  
The parents of the Song I consecrate to thee.

10.  
Is it that now my inexperienced fingers  
But strike the prelude of a loftier strain?

Or, must the lyre on which my spirit lingers  
Soon pause in silence, ne'er to sound again,                    \_85  
Though it might shake the Anarch Custom's reign,  
And charm the minds of men to Truth's own sway  
Holier than was Amphion's? I would fain  
Reply in hope--but I am worn away,  
And Death and Love are yet contending for their prey.                    \_90

11.  
And what art thou? I know, but dare not speak:  
Time may interpret to his silent years.  
Yet in the paleness of thy thoughtful cheek,  
And in the light thine ample forehead wears,  
And in thy sweetest smiles, and in thy tears,                    \_95  
And in thy gentle speech, a prophecy  
Is whispered, to subdue my fondest fears:  
And through thine eyes, even in thy soul I see  
A lamp of vestal fire burning internally.

12.  
They say that thou wert lovely from thy birth,                    \_100  
Of glorious parents thou aspiring Child.  
I wonder not--for One then left this earth  
Whose life was like a setting planet mild,  
Which clothed thee in the radiance undefiled  
Of its departing glory; still her fame                    \_105  
Shines on thee, through the tempests dark and wild  
Which shake these latter days; and thou canst claim  
The shelter, from thy Sire, of an immortal name.

13.  
One voice came forth from many a mighty spirit,  
Which was the echo of three thousand years;                    \_110  
And the tumultuous world stood mute to hear it,  
As some lone man who in a desert hears  
The music of his home:--unwonted fears  
Fell on the pale oppressors of our race,  
And Faith, and Custom, and low-thoughted cares,                    \_115  
Like thunder-stricken dragons, for a space  
Left the torn human heart, their food and dwelling-place.

14.  
Truth's deathless voice pauses among mankind!  
If there must be no response to my cry--  
If men must rise and stamp with fury blind                    \_120  
On his pure name who loves them,--thou and I,  
Sweet friend! can look from our tranquillity  
Like lamps into the world's tempestuous night,--  
Two tranquil stars, while clouds are passing by  
Which wrap them from the foundering seaman's sight,                    \_125  
That burn from year to year with unextinguished light.





That spot grew more serene; blue light did pierce                    \_165  
The woof of those white clouds, which seem to lie  
Far, deep, and motionless; while through the sky  
The pallid semicircle of the moon  
Passed on, in slow and moving majesty;  
Its upper horn arrayed in mists, which soon                    \_170  
But slowly fled, like dew beneath the beams of noon.

6.  
I could not choose but gaze; a fascination  
Dwelt in that moon, and sky, and clouds, which drew  
My fancy thither, and in expectation  
Of what I knew not, I remained:--the hue                        \_175  
Of the white moon, amid that heaven so blue,  
Suddenly stained with shadow did appear;  
A speck, a cloud, a shape, approaching grew,  
Like a great ship in the sun's sinking sphere  
Beheld afar at sea, and swift it came anear.                    \_180

7.  
Even like a bark, which from a chasm of mountains,  
Dark, vast and overhanging, on a river  
Which there collects the strength of all its fountains,  
Comes forth, whilst with the speed its frame doth quiver,  
Sails, oars and stream, tending to one endeavour;                \_185  
So, from that chasm of light a winged Form  
On all the winds of heaven approaching ever  
Floated, dilating as it came; the storm  
Pursued it with fierce blasts, and lightnings swift and warm.

8.  
A course precipitous, of dizzy speed,                            \_190  
Suspending thought and breath; a monstrous sight!  
For in the air do I behold indeed  
An Eagle and a Serpent wreathed in fight:--  
And now, relaxing its impetuous flight,  
Before the aerial rock on which I stood,                        \_195  
The Eagle, hovering, wheeled to left and right,  
And hung with lingering wings over the flood,  
And startled with its yells the wide air's solitude.

9.  
A shaft of light upon its wings descended,  
And every golden feather gleamed therein--                    \_200  
Feather and scale, inextricably blended.  
The Serpent's mailed and many-coloured skin  
Shone through the plumes its coils were twined within  
By many a swoln and knotted fold, and high  
And far, the neck, receding lithe and thin,                    \_205  
Sustained a crested head, which warily  
Shifted and glanced before the Eagle's steadfast eye.

10.

Around, around, in ceaseless circles wheeling  
With clang of wings and scream, the Eagle sailed  
Incessantly--sometimes on high concealing                    \_210  
Its lessening orbs, sometimes as if it failed,  
Drooped through the air; and still it shrieked and wailed,  
And casting back its eager head, with beak  
And talon unremittingly assailed  
The wreathed Serpent, who did ever seek                    \_215  
Upon his enemy's heart a mortal wound to wreak.

11.  
What life, what power, was kindled and arose  
Within the sphere of that appalling fray!  
For, from the encounter of those wondrous foes,  
A vapour like the sea's suspended spray                    \_220  
Hung gathered; in the void air, far away,  
Floated the shattered plumes; bright scales did leap,  
Where'er the Eagle's talons made their way,  
Like sparks into the darkness;--as they sweep,  
Blood stains the snowy foam of the tumultuous deep.                    \_225

12.  
Swift chances in that combat--many a check,  
And many a change, a dark and wild turmoil;  
Sometimes the Snake around his enemy's neck  
Locked in stiff rings his adamant coil,  
Until the Eagle, faint with pain and toil,                    \_230  
Remitted his strong flight, and near the sea  
Languidly fluttered, hopeless so to foil  
His adversary, who then reared on high  
His red and burning crest, radiant with victory.

13.  
Then on the white edge of the bursting surge,                    \_235  
Where they had sunk together, would the Snake  
Relax his suffocating grasp, and scourge  
The wind with his wild writhings; for to break  
That chain of torment, the vast bird would shake  
The strength of his unconquerable wings                    \_240  
As in despair, and with his sinewy neck,  
Dissolve in sudden shock those linked rings--  
Then soar, as swift as smoke from a volcano springs.

14.  
Wile baffled wile, and strength encountered strength,  
Thus long, but unprevailing:--the event                    \_245  
Of that portentous fight appeared at length:  
Until the lamp of day was almost spent  
It had endured, when lifeless, stark, and rent,  
Hung high that mighty Serpent, and at last  
Fell to the sea, while o'er the continent                    \_250  
With clang of wings and scream the Eagle passed,  
Heavily borne away on the exhausted blast.

15.

And with it fled the tempest, so that ocean  
And earth and sky shone through the atmosphere--  
Only, 'twas strange to see the red commotion                    \_255  
Of waves like mountains o'er the sinking sphere  
Of sunset sweep, and their fierce roar to hear  
Amid the calm: down the steep path I wound  
To the sea-shore--the evening was most clear  
And beautiful, and there the sea I found                       \_260  
Calm as a cradled child in dreamless slumber bound.

16.

There was a Woman, beautiful as morning,  
Sitting beneath the rocks, upon the sand  
Of the waste sea--fair as one flower adorning  
An icy wilderness; each delicate hand                         \_265  
Lay crossed upon her bosom, and the band  
Of her dark hair had fall'n, and so she sate  
Looking upon the waves; on the bare strand  
Upon the sea-mark a small boat did wait,  
Fair as herself, like Love by Hope left desolate.             \_270

17.

It seemed that this fair Shape had looked upon  
That unimaginable fight, and now  
That her sweet eyes were weary of the sun,  
As brightly it illustrated her woe;  
For in the tears which silently to flow                         \_275  
Paused not, its lustre hung: she watching aye  
The foam-wreaths which the faint tide wove below  
Upon the spangled sands, groaned heavily,  
And after every groan looked up over the sea.

18.

And when she saw the wounded Serpent make                     \_280  
His path between the waves, her lips grew pale,  
Parted, and quivered; the tears ceased to break  
From her immovable eyes; no voice of wail  
Escaped her; but she rose, and on the gale  
Loosening her star-bright robe and shadowy hair             \_285  
Poured forth her voice; the caverns of the vale  
That opened to the ocean, caught it there,  
And filled with silver sounds the overflowing air.

19.

She spake in language whose strange melody  
Might not belong to earth. I heard alone,                     \_290  
What made its music more melodious be,  
The pity and the love of every tone;  
But to the Snake those accents sweet were known  
His native tongue and hers; nor did he beat  
The hoar spray idly then, but winding on                     \_295

Through the green shadows of the waves that meet  
Near to the shore, did pause beside her snowy feet.

20.

Then on the sands the Woman sate again,  
And wept and clasped her hands, and all between,  
Renewed the unintelligible strain                    \_300  
Of her melodious voice and eloquent mien;  
And she unveiled her bosom, and the green  
And glancing shadows of the sea did play  
O'er its marmoreal depth:--one moment seen,  
For ere the next, the Serpent did obey               \_305  
Her voice, and, coiled in rest in her embrace it lay.

21.

Then she arose, and smiled on me with eyes  
Serene yet sorrowing, like that planet fair,  
While yet the daylight lingereth in the skies  
Which cleaves with arrowy beams the dark-red air,               \_310  
And said: 'To grieve is wise, but the despair  
Was weak and vain which led thee here from sleep:  
This shalt thou know, and more, if thou dost dare  
With me and with this Serpent, o'er the deep,  
A voyage divine and strange, companionship to keep.'           \_315

22.

Her voice was like the wildest, saddest tone,  
Yet sweet, of some loved voice heard long ago.  
I wept. 'Shall this fair woman all alone,  
Over the sea with that fierce Serpent go?  
His head is on her heart, and who can know               \_320  
How soon he may devour his feeble prey?'--  
Such were my thoughts, when the tide gan to flow;  
And that strange boat like the moon's shade did sway  
Amid reflected stars that in the waters lay:--

23.

A boat of rare device, which had no sail                   \_325  
But its own curved prow of thin moonstone,  
Wrought like a web of texture fine and frail,  
To catch those gentlest winds which are not known  
To breathe, but by the steady speed alone  
With which it cleaves the sparkling sea; and now               \_330  
We are embarked--the mountains hang and frown  
Over the starry deep that gleams below,  
A vast and dim expanse, as o'er the waves we go.

24.

And as we sailed, a strange and awful tale  
That Woman told, like such mysterious dream               \_335  
As makes the slumberer's cheek with wonder pale!  
'Twas midnight, and around, a shoreless stream,  
Wide ocean rolled, when that majestic theme

Shrined in her heart found utterance, and she bent  
Her looks on mine; those eyes a kindling beam                    \_340  
Of love divine into my spirit sent,  
And ere her lips could move, made the air eloquent.

25.  
'Speak not to me, but hear! Much shalt thou learn,  
Much must remain unthought, and more untold,  
In the dark Future's ever-flowing urn:                           \_345  
Know then, that from the depth of ages old  
Two Powers o'er mortal things dominion hold,  
Ruling the world with a divided lot,  
Immortal, all-pervading, manifold,  
Twin Genii, equal Gods--when life and thought                   \_350  
Sprang forth, they burst the womb of inessential Nought.

26.  
'The earliest dweller of the world, alone,  
Stood on the verge of chaos. Lo! afar  
O'er the wide wild abyss two meteors shone,  
Sprung from the depth of its tempestuous jar:                   \_355  
A blood-red Comet and the Morning Star  
Mingling their beams in combat--as he stood,  
All thoughts within his mind waged mutual war,  
In dreadful sympathy--when to the flood  
That fair Star fell, he turned and shed his brother's blood.       \_360

27.  
'Thus evil triumphed, and the Spirit of evil,  
One Power of many shapes which none may know,  
One Shape of many names; the Fiend did revel  
In victory, reigning o'er a world of woe,  
For the new race of man went to and fro,                         \_365  
Famished and homeless, loathed and loathing, wild,  
And hating good--for his immortal foe,  
He changed from starry shape, beauteous and mild,  
To a dire Snake, with man and beast unreconciled.

28.  
'The darkness lingering o'er the dawn of things,                   \_370  
Was Evil's breath and life; this made him strong  
To soar aloft with overshadowing wings;  
And the great Spirit of Good did creep among  
The nations of mankind, and every tongue  
Cursed and blasphemed him as he passed; for none               \_375  
Knew good from evil, though their names were hung  
In mockery o'er the fane where many a groan,  
As King, and Lord, and God, the conquering Fiend did own,--

29.  
'The Fiend, whose name was Legion: Death, Decay,  
Earthquake and Blight, and Want, and Madness pale,           \_380  
Winged and wan diseases, an array

Numerous as leaves that strew the autumnal gale;  
Poison, a snake in flowers, beneath the veil  
Of food and mirth, hiding his mortal head;  
And, without whom all these might nought avail,                    \_385  
Fear, Hatred, Faith, and Tyranny, who spread  
Those subtle nets which snare the living and the dead.

30.  
'His spirit is their power, and they his slaves  
In air, and light, and thought, and language, dwell;  
And keep their state from palaces to graves,                       \_390  
In all resorts of men--invisible,  
But when, in ebon mirror, Nightmare fell  
To tyrant or impostor bids them rise,  
Black winged demon forms--whom, from the hell,  
His reign and dwelling beneath nether skies,                       \_395  
He loosens to their dark and blasting ministries.

31.  
'In the world's youth his empire was as firm  
As its foundations...Soon the Spirit of Good,  
Though in the likeness of a loathsome worm,  
Sprang from the billows of the formless flood,                       \_400  
Which shrank and fled; and with that Fiend of blood  
Renewed the doubtful war...Thrones then first shook,  
And earth's immense and trampled multitude  
In hope on their own powers began to look,  
And Fear, the demon pale, his sanguine shrine forsook.                       \_405

32.  
'Then Greece arose, and to its bards and sages,  
In dream, the golden-pinioned Genii came,  
Even where they slept amid the night of ages,  
Steeping their hearts in the divinest flame  
Which thy breath kindled, Power of holiest name!                       \_410  
And oft in cycles since, when darkness gave  
New weapons to thy foe, their sunlike fame  
Upon the combat shone--a light to save,  
Like Paradise spread forth beyond the shadowy grave.

33.  
'Such is this conflict--when mankind doth strive                       \_415  
With its oppressors in a strife of blood,  
Or when free thoughts, like lightnings, are alive,  
And in each bosom of the multitude  
Justice and truth with Custom's hydra brood  
Wage silent war; when Priests and Kings dissemble                       \_420  
In smiles or frowns their fierce disquietude,  
When round pure hearts a host of hopes assemble,  
The Snake and Eagle meet--the world's foundations tremble!

34.  
'Thou hast beheld that fight--when to thy home

Thou dost return, steep not its hearth in tears;                    \_425  
Though thou may'st hear that earth is now become  
The tyrant's garbage, which to his compeers,  
The vile reward of their dishonoured years,  
He will dividing give.--The victor Fiend,  
Omnipotent of yore, now quails, and fears                    \_430  
His triumph dearly won, which soon will lend  
An impulse swift and sure to his approaching end.

35.

'List, stranger, list, mine is an human form,  
Like that thou wearest--touch me--shrink not now!  
My hand thou feel'st is not a ghost's, but warm                    \_435  
With human blood.--'Twas many years ago,  
Since first my thirsting soul aspired to know  
The secrets of this wondrous world, when deep  
My heart was pierced with sympathy, for woe  
Which could not be mine own, and thought did keep,                    \_440  
In dream, unnatural watch beside an infant's sleep.

36.

'Woe could not be mine own, since far from men  
I dwelt, a free and happy orphan child,  
By the sea-shore, in a deep mountain glen;  
And near the waves, and through the forests wild,                    \_445  
I roamed, to storm and darkness reconciled:  
For I was calm while tempest shook the sky:  
But when the breathless heavens in beauty smiled,  
I wept, sweet tears, yet too tumultuously  
For peace, and clasped my hands aloft in ecstasy.                    \_450

37.

'These were forebodings of my fate--before  
A woman's heart beat in my virgin breast,  
It had been nurtured in divinest lore:  
A dying poet gave me books, and blessed  
With wild but holy talk the sweet unrest                    \_455  
In which I watched him as he died away--  
A youth with hoary hair--a fleeting guest  
Of our lone mountains: and this lore did sway  
My spirit like a storm, contending there alway.

38.

'Thus the dark tale which history doth unfold                    \_460  
I knew, but not, methinks, as others know,  
For they weep not; and Wisdom had unrolled  
The clouds which hide the gulf of mortal woe,--  
To few can she that warning vision show--  
For I loved all things with intense devotion;                    \_465  
So that when Hope's deep source in fullest flow,  
Like earthquake did uplift the stagnant ocean  
Of human thoughts--mine shook beneath the wide emotion.



39.

'When first the living blood through all these veins  
Kindled a thought in sense, great France sprang forth,        \_470  
And seized, as if to break, the ponderous chains  
Which bind in woe the nations of the earth.  
I saw, and started from my cottage-hearth;  
And to the clouds and waves in tameless gladness  
Shrieked, till they caught immeasurable mirth--        \_475  
And laughed in light and music: soon, sweet madness  
Was poured upon my heart, a soft and thrilling sadness.

40.

'Deep slumber fell on me:--my dreams were fire--  
Soft and delightful thoughts did rest and hover  
Like shadows o'er my brain; and strange desire,        \_480  
The tempest of a passion, raging over  
My tranquil soul, its depths with light did cover,  
Which passed; and calm, and darkness, sweeter far,  
Came--then I loved; but not a human lover!  
For when I rose from sleep, the Morning Star        \_485  
Shone through the woodbine-wreaths which round my casement were.

41.

"'Twas like an eye which seemed to smile on me.  
I watched, till by the sun made pale, it sank  
Under the billows of the heaving sea;  
But from its beams deep love my spirit drank,        \_490  
And to my brain the boundless world now shrank  
Into one thought--one image--yes, for ever!  
Even like the dayspring, poured on vapours dank,  
The beams of that one Star did shoot and quiver  
Through my benighted mind--and were extinguished never.        \_495

42.

'The day passed thus: at night, methought, in dream  
A shape of speechless beauty did appear:  
It stood like light on a careering stream  
Of golden clouds which shook the atmosphere;  
A winged youth, his radiant brow did wear        \_500  
The Morning Star: a wild dissolving bliss  
Over my frame he breathed, approaching near,  
And bent his eyes of kindling tenderness  
Near mine, and on my lips impressed a lingering kiss,--

43.

'And said: "A Spirit loves thee, mortal maiden,        \_505  
How wilt thou prove thy worth?" Then joy and sleep  
Together fled; my soul was deeply laden,  
And to the shore I went to muse and weep;  
But as I moved, over my heart did creep  
A joy less soft, but more profound and strong        \_510  
Than my sweet dream; and it forbade to keep  
The path of the sea-shore: that Spirit's tongue

Seemed whispering in my heart, and bore my steps along.

44.

'How, to that vast and peopled city led,  
Which was a field of holy warfare then,                     \_515  
I walked among the dying and the dead,  
And shared in fearless deeds with evil men,  
Calm as an angel in the dragon's den--  
How I braved death for liberty and truth,  
And spurned at peace, and power, and fame--and when             \_520  
Those hopes had lost the glory of their youth,  
How sadly I returned--might move the hearer's ruth:

45.

'Warm tears throng fast! the tale may not be said--  
Know then, that when this grief had been subdued,  
I was not left, like others, cold and dead;                     \_525  
The Spirit whom I loved, in solitude  
Sustained his child: the tempest-shaken wood,  
The waves, the fountains, and the hush of night--  
These were his voice, and well I understood  
His smile divine, when the calm sea was bright                 \_530  
With silent stars, and Heaven was breathless with delight.

46.

'In lonely glens, amid the roar of rivers,  
When the dim nights were moonless, have I known  
Joys which no tongue can tell; my pale lip quivers  
When thought revisits them:--know thou alone,                 \_535  
That after many wondrous years were flown,  
I was awakened by a shriek of woe;  
And over me a mystic robe was thrown,  
By viewless hands, and a bright Star did glow  
Before my steps--the Snake then met his mortal foe.'             \_540

47.

'Thou fearest not then the Serpent on thy heart?'  
'Fear it!' she said, with brief and passionate cry,  
And spake no more: that silence made me start--  
I looked, and we were sailing pleasantly,  
Swift as a cloud between the sea and sky;                     \_545  
Beneath the rising moon seen far away,  
Mountains of ice, like sapphire, piled on high,  
Hemming the horizon round, in silence lay  
On the still waters--these we did approach alway.

48.

And swift and swifter grew the vessel's motion,                 \_550  
So that a dizzy trance fell on my brain--  
Wild music woke me; we had passed the ocean  
Which girds the pole, Nature's remotest reign--  
And we glode fast o'er a pellucid plain  
Of waters, azure with the noontide day.                     \_555

Ethereal mountains shone around--a Fane  
Stood in the midst, girt by green isles which lay  
On the blue sunny deep, resplendent far away.

49.

It was a Temple, such as mortal hand  
Has never built, nor ecstasy, nor dream                     \_560  
Reared in the cities of enchanted land:  
'Twas likest Heaven, ere yet day's purple stream  
Ebbs o'er the western forest, while the gleam  
Of the unrisen moon among the clouds  
Is gathering--when with many a golden beam                     \_565  
The thronging constellations rush in crowds,  
Paving with fire the sky and the marmoreal floods.

50.

Like what may be conceived of this vast dome,  
When from the depths which thought can seldom pierce  
Genius beholds it rise, his native home,                     \_570  
Girt by the deserts of the Universe;  
Yet, nor in painting's light, or mightier verse,  
Or sculpture's marble language, can invest  
That shape to mortal sense--such glooms immerse  
That incommunicable sight, and rest                     \_575  
Upon the labouring brain and overburdened breast.

51.

Winding among the lawny islands fair,  
Whose blosmy forests starred the shadowy deep,  
The wingless boat paused where an ivory stair  
Its fretwork in the crystal sea did steep,                     \_580  
Encircling that vast Fane's aerial heap:  
We disembarked, and through a portal wide  
We passed--whose roof of moonstone carved, did keep  
A glimmering o'er the forms on every side,  
Sculptures like life and thought, immovable, deep-eyed.                     \_585

52.

We came to a vast hall, whose glorious roof  
Was diamond, which had drunk the lightning's sheen  
In darkness, and now poured it through the woof  
Of spell-inwoven clouds hung there to screen  
Its blinding splendour--through such veil was seen                     \_590  
That work of subtlest power, divine and rare;  
Orb above orb, with starry shapes between,  
And horned moons, and meteors strange and fair,  
On night-black columns poised--one hollow hemisphere!

53.

Ten thousand columns in that quivering light                     \_595  
Distinct--between whose shafts wound far away  
The long and labyrinthine aisles--more bright  
With their own radiance than the Heaven of Day;

And on the jasper walls around, there lay  
Paintings, the poesy of mightiest thought,                    \_600  
Which did the Spirit's history display;  
A tale of passionate change, divinely taught,  
Which, in their winged dance, unconscious Genii wrought.

54.  
Beneath, there sate on many a sapphire throne,  
The Great, who had departed from mankind,                    \_605  
A mighty Senate;--some, whose white hair shone  
Like mountain snow, mild, beautiful, and blind;  
Some, female forms, whose gestures beamed with mind;  
And ardent youths, and children bright and fair;  
And some had lyres whose strings were intertwined            \_610  
With pale and clinging flames, which ever there  
Waked faint yet thrilling sounds that pierced the crystal air.

55.  
One seat was vacant in the midst, a throne,  
Reared on a pyramid like sculptured flame,  
Distinct with circling steps which rested on                    \_615  
Their own deep fire--soon as the Woman came  
Into that hall, she shrieked the Spirit's name  
And fell; and vanished slowly from the sight.  
Darkness arose from her dissolving frame,  
Which gathering, filled that dome of woven light,            \_620  
Blotting its sphered stars with supernatural night.

56.  
Then first, two glittering lights were seen to glide  
In circles on the amethystine floor,  
Small serpent eyes trailing from side to side,  
Like meteors on a river's grassy shore,                        \_625  
They round each other rolled, dilating more  
And more--then rose, commingling into one,  
One clear and mighty planet hanging o'er  
A cloud of deepest shadow, which was thrown  
Athwart the glowing steps and the crystalline throne.        \_630

57.  
The cloud which rested on that cone of flame  
Was cloven; beneath the planet sate a Form,  
Fairer than tongue can speak or thought may frame,  
The radiance of whose limbs rose-like and warm  
Flowed forth, and did with softest light inform                \_635  
The shadowy dome, the sculptures, and the state  
Of those assembled shapes--with clinging charm  
Sinking upon their hearts and mine. He sate  
Majestic, yet most mild--calm, yet compassionate.

58.  
Wonder and joy a passing faintness threw                    \_640  
Over my brow--a hand supported me,

Whose touch was magic strength; an eye of blue  
Looked into mine, like moonlight, soothingly;  
And a voice said:--'Thou must a listener be  
This day--two mighty Spirits now return,                    \_645  
Like birds of calm, from the world's raging sea,  
They pour fresh light from Hope's immortal urn;  
A tale of human power--despair not--list and learn!

59.  
I looked, and lo! one stood forth eloquently.  
His eyes were dark and deep, and the clear brow                    \_650  
Which shadowed them was like the morning sky,  
The cloudless Heaven of Spring, when in their flow  
Through the bright air, the soft winds as they blow  
Wake the green world--his gestures did obey  
The oracular mind that made his features glow,                    \_655  
And where his curved lips half-open lay,  
Passion's divinest stream had made impetuous way.

60.  
Beneath the darkness of his outspread hair  
He stood thus beautiful; but there was One  
Who sate beside him like his shadow there,                    \_660  
And held his hand--far lovelier; she was known  
To be thus fair, by the few lines alone  
Which through her floating locks and gathered cloak,  
Glances of soul-dissolving glory, shone:--  
None else beheld her eyes--in him they woke                    \_665  
Memories which found a tongue as thus he silence broke.

## CANTO 2.

1.  
The starlight smile of children, the sweet looks  
Of women, the fair breast from which I fed,  
The murmur of the unreposing brooks,  
And the green light which, shifting overhead,                    \_670  
Some tangled bower of vines around me shed,  
The shells on the sea-sand, and the wild flowers,  
The lamp-light through the rafters cheerly spread,  
And on the twining flax--in life's young hours  
These sights and sounds did nurse my spirit's folded powers.                    \_675

2.  
In Argolis, beside the echoing sea,  
Such impulses within my mortal frame  
Arose, and they were dear to memory,  
Like tokens of the dead:--but others came  
Soon, in another shape: the wondrous fame                    \_680  
Of the past world, the vital words and deeds  
Of minds whom neither time nor change can tame,  
Traditions dark and old, whence evil creeds

Start forth, and whose dim shade a stream of poison feeds.

3.

I heard, as all have heard, the various story                    \_685  
Of human life, and wept unwilling tears.  
Feeble historians of its shame and glory,  
False disputants on all its hopes and fears,  
Victims who worshipped ruin, chroniclers  
Of daily scorn, and slaves who loathed their state               \_690  
Yet, flattering power, had given its ministers  
A throne of judgement in the grave:--'twas fate,  
That among such as these my youth should seek its mate.

4.

The land in which I lived, by a fell bane  
Was withered up. Tyrants dwelt side by side,               \_695  
And stabled in our homes,--until the chain  
Stifled the captive's cry, and to abide  
That blasting curse men had no shame--all vied  
In evil, slave and despot; fear with lust  
Strange fellowship through mutual hate had tied,               \_700  
Like two dark serpents tangled in the dust,  
Which on the paths of men their mingling poison thrust.

5.

Earth, our bright home, its mountains and its waters,  
And the ethereal shapes which are suspended  
Over its green expanse, and those fair daughters,               \_705  
The clouds, of Sun and Ocean, who have blended  
The colours of the air since first extended  
It cradled the young world, none wandered forth  
To see or feel; a darkness had descended  
On every heart; the light which shows its worth,               \_710  
Must among gentle thoughts and fearless take its birth.

6.

This vital world, this home of happy spirits,  
Was as a dungeon to my blasted kind;  
All that despair from murdered hope inherits  
They sought, and in their helpless misery blind,               \_715  
A deeper prison and heavier chains did find,  
And stronger tyrants:--a dark gulf before,  
The realm of a stern Ruler, yawned; behind,  
Terror and Time conflicting drove, and bore  
On their tempestuous flood the shrieking wretch from shore.     \_720

7.

Out of that Ocean's wrecks had Guilt and Woe  
Framed a dark dwelling for their homeless thought,  
And, starting at the ghosts which to and fro  
Glide o'er its dim and gloomy strand, had brought  
The worship thence which they each other taught.               \_725  
Well might men loathe their life, well might they turn

Even to the ills again from which they sought  
Such refuge after death!--well might they learn  
To gaze on this fair world with hopeless unconcern!

8.

For they all pined in bondage; body and soul,                     \_730  
Tyrant and slave, victim and torturer, bent  
Before one Power, to which supreme control  
Over their will by their own weakness lent,  
Made all its many names omnipotent;  
All symbols of things evil, all divine;                     \_735  
And hymns of blood or mockery, which rent  
The air from all its fanes, did intertwine  
Imposture's impious toils round each discordant shrine.

9.

I heard, as all have heard, life's various story,  
And in no careless heart transcribed the tale;                     \_740  
But, from the sneers of men who had grown hoary  
In shame and scorn, from groans of crowds made pale  
By famine, from a mother's desolate wail  
O'er her polluted child, from innocent blood  
Poured on the earth, and brows anxious and pale                     \_745  
With the heart's warfare, did I gather food  
To feed my many thoughts--a tameless multitude!

10.

I wandered through the wrecks of days departed  
Far by the desolated shore, when even  
O'er the still sea and jagged islets darted                     \_750  
The light of moonrise; in the northern Heaven,  
Among the clouds near the horizon driven,  
The mountains lay beneath one planet pale;  
Around me, broken tombs and columns riven  
Looked vast in twilight, and the sorrowing gale                     \_755  
Waked in those ruins gray its everlasting wail!

11.

I knew not who had framed these wonders then,  
Nor had I heard the story of their deeds;  
But dwellings of a race of mightier men,  
And monuments of less ungentle creeds                     \_760  
Tell their own tale to him who wisely heeds  
The language which they speak; and now, to me  
The moonlight making pale the blooming weeds,  
The bright stars shining in the breathless sea,  
Interpreted those scrolls of mortal mystery.                     \_765

12.

Such man has been, and such may yet become!  
Ay, wiser, greater, gentler even than they  
Who on the fragments of yon shattered dome  
Have stamped the sign of power--I felt the sway

Of the vast stream of ages bear away                    \_770  
My floating thoughts--my heart beat loud and fast--  
Even as a storm let loose beneath the ray  
Of the still moon, my spirit onward passed  
Beneath truth's steady beams upon its tumult cast.

13.  
It shall be thus no more! too long, too long,                   \_775  
Sons of the glorious dead, have ye lain bound  
In darkness and in ruin!--Hope is strong,  
Justice and Truth their winged child have found--  
Awake! arise! until the mighty sound  
Of your career shall scatter in its gust                   \_780  
The thrones of the oppressor, and the ground  
Hide the last altar's unregarded dust,  
Whose Idol has so long betrayed your impious trust!

14.  
It must be so--I will arise and waken  
The multitude, and like a sulphurous hill,                   \_785  
Which on a sudden from its snows has shaken  
The swoon of ages, it shall burst and fill  
The world with cleansing fire; it must, it will--  
It may not be restrained!--and who shall stand  
Amid the rocking earthquake steadfast still,                   \_790  
But Laon? on high Freedom's desert land  
A tower whose marble walls the leagued storms withstand!

15.  
One summer night, in commune with the hope  
Thus deeply fed, amid those ruins gray  
I watched, beneath the dark sky's starry cope;                   \_795  
And ever from that hour upon me lay  
The burden of this hope, and night or day,  
In vision or in dream, clove to my breast:  
Among mankind, or when gone far away  
To the lone shores and mountains, 'twas a guest                   \_800  
Which followed where I fled, and watched when I did rest.

16.  
These hopes found words through which my spirit sought  
To weave a bondage of such sympathy,  
As might create some response to the thought  
Which ruled me now--and as the vapours lie                   \_805  
Bright in the outspread morning's radiancy,  
So were these thoughts invested with the light  
Of language: and all bosoms made reply  
On which its lustre streamed, whene'er it might  
Through darkness wide and deep those tranced spirits smite.                   \_810

17.  
Yes, many an eye with dizzy tears was dim,  
And oft I thought to clasp my own heart's brother,



When I could feel the listener's senses swim,  
And hear his breath its own swift gaspings smother  
Even as my words evoked them--and another,                    \_815  
And yet another, I did fondly deem,  
Felt that we all were sons of one great mother;  
And the cold truth such sad reverse did seem  
As to awake in grief from some delightful dream.

18.  
Yes, oft beside the ruined labyrinth                                 \_820  
Which skirts the hoary caves of the green deep,  
Did Laon and his friend, on one gray plinth,  
Round whose worn base the wild waves hiss and leap,  
Resting at eve, a lofty converse keep:  
And that this friend was false, may now be said                    \_825  
Calmly--that he like other men could weep  
Tears which are lies, and could betray and spread  
Snares for that guileless heart which for his own had bled.

19.  
Then, had no great aim recompensed my sorrow,  
I must have sought dark respite from its stress                    \_830  
In dreamless rest, in sleep that sees no morrow--  
For to tread life's dismaying wilderness  
Without one smile to cheer, one voice to bless,  
Amid the snares and scoffs of human kind,  
Is hard--but I betrayed it not, nor less                             \_835  
With love that scorned return sought to unbind  
The interwoven clouds which make its wisdom blind.

20.  
With deathless minds which leave where they have passed  
A path of light, my soul communion knew;  
Till from that glorious intercourse, at last,                         \_840  
As from a mine of magic store, I drew  
Words which were weapons;--round my heart there grew  
The adamantine armour of their power;  
And from my fancy wings of golden hue  
Sprang forth--yet not alone from wisdom's tower,                    \_845  
A minister of truth, these plumes young Laon bore.

21.  
An orphan with my parents lived, whose eyes  
Were lodestars of delight, which drew me home  
When I might wander forth; nor did I prize  
Aught human thing beneath Heaven's mighty dome                    \_850  
Beyond this child; so when sad hours were come,  
And baffled hope like ice still clung to me,  
Since kin were cold, and friends had now become  
Heartless and false, I turned from all, to be,  
Cythna, the only source of tears and smiles to thee.                 \_855

22.

What wert thou then? A child most infantine,  
Yet wandering far beyond that innocent age  
In all but its sweet looks and mien divine;  
Even then, methought, with the world's tyrant rage  
A patient warfare thy young heart did wage,                     \_860  
When those soft eyes of scarcely conscious thought  
Some tale, or thine own fancies, would engage  
To overflow with tears, or converse fraught  
With passion, o'er their depths its fleeting light had wrought.

23.  
She moved upon this earth a shape of brightness,                     \_865  
A power, that from its objects scarcely drew  
One impulse of her being--in her lightness  
Most like some radiant cloud of morning dew,  
Which wanders through the waste air's pathless blue,  
To nourish some far desert; she did seem                     \_870  
Beside me, gathering beauty as she grew,  
Like the bright shade of some immortal dream  
Which walks, when tempest sleeps, the wave of life's dark stream.

24.  
As mine own shadow was this child to me,  
A second self, far dearer and more fair;                     \_875  
Which clothed in undissolving radiancy  
All those steep paths which languor and despair  
Of human things, had made so dark and bare,  
But which I trod alone--nor, till bereft  
Of friends, and overcome by lonely care,                     \_880  
Knew I what solace for that loss was left,  
Though by a bitter wound my trusting heart was cleft.

25.  
Once she was dear, now she was all I had  
To love in human life--this playmate sweet,  
This child of twelve years old--so she was made                     \_885  
My sole associate, and her willing feet  
Wandered with mine where earth and ocean meet,  
Beyond the aerial mountains whose vast cells  
The unreposing billows ever beat,  
Through forests wild and old, and lawny dells                     \_890  
Where boughs of incense droop over the emerald wells.

26.  
And warm and light I felt her clasping hand  
When twined in mine; she followed where I went,  
Through the lone paths of our immortal land.  
It had no waste but some memorial lent                     \_895  
Which strung me to my toil--some monument  
Vital with mind; then Cythna by my side,  
Until the bright and beaming day were spent,  
Would rest, with looks entreating to abide,  
Too earnest and too sweet ever to be denied.                     \_900

27.

And soon I could not have refused her--thus  
For ever, day and night, we two were ne'er  
Parted, but when brief sleep divided us:  
And when the pauses of the lulling air  
Of noon beside the sea had made a lair                    \_905  
For her soothed senses, in my arms she slept,  
And I kept watch over her slumbers there,  
While, as the shifting visions over her swept,  
Amid her innocent rest by turns she smiled and wept.

28.

And, in the murmur of her dreams was heard                    \_910  
Sometimes the name of Laon:--suddenly  
She would arise, and, like the secret bird  
Whom sunset wakens, fill the shore and sky  
With her sweet accents, a wild melody!  
Hymns which my soul had woven to Freedom, strong                    \_915  
The source of passion, whence they rose, to be;  
Triumphant strains, which, like a spirit's tongue,  
To the enchanted waves that child of glory sung--

29.

Her white arms lifted through the shadowy stream  
Of her loose hair. Oh, excellently great                    \_920  
Seemed to me then my purpose, the vast theme  
Of those impassioned songs, when Cythna sate  
Amid the calm which rapture doth create  
After its tumult, her heart vibrating,  
Her spirit o'er the Ocean's floating state                    \_925  
From her deep eyes far wandering, on the wing  
Of visions that were mine, beyond its utmost spring!

30.

For, before Cythna loved it, had my song  
Peopled with thoughts the boundless universe,  
A mighty congregation, which were strong                    \_930  
Where'er they trod the darkness to disperse  
The cloud of that unutterable curse  
Which clings upon mankind:--all things became  
Slaves to my holy and heroic verse,  
Earth, sea and sky, the planets, life and fame                    \_935  
And fate, or whate'er else binds the world's wondrous frame.

31.

And this beloved child thus felt the sway  
Of my conceptions, gathering like a cloud  
The very wind on which it rolls away:  
Hers too were all my thoughts, ere yet, endowed                    \_940  
With music and with light, their fountains flowed  
In poesy; and her still and earnest face,  
Pallid with feelings which intensely glowed

Within, was turned on mine with speechless grace,  
Watching the hopes which there her heart had learned to trace.     \_945

32.

In me, communion with this purest being  
Kindled intenser zeal, and made me wise  
In knowledge, which, in hers mine own mind seeing,  
Left in the human world few mysteries:  
How without fear of evil or disguise             \_950  
Was Cythna!--what a spirit strong and mild,  
Which death, or pain or peril could despise,  
Yet melt in tenderness! what genius wild  
Yet mighty, was enclosed within one simple child!

33.

New lore was this--old age with its gray hair,             \_955  
And wrinkled legends of unworthy things,  
And icy sneers, is nought: it cannot dare  
To burst the chains which life for ever flings  
On the entangled soul's aspiring wings,  
So is it cold and cruel, and is made             \_960  
The careless slave of that dark power which brings  
Evil, like blight, on man, who, still betrayed,  
Laughs o'er the grave in which his living hopes are laid.

34.

Nor are the strong and the severe to keep  
The empire of the world: thus Cythna taught             \_965  
Even in the visions of her eloquent sleep,  
Unconscious of the power through which she wrought  
The woof of such intelligible thought,  
As from the tranquil strength which cradled lay  
In her smile-peopled rest, my spirit sought             \_970  
Why the deceiver and the slave has sway  
O'er heralds so divine of truth's arising day.

35.

Within that fairest form, the female mind,  
Untainted by the poison clouds which rest  
On the dark world, a sacred home did find:             \_975  
But else, from the wide earth's maternal breast,  
Victorious Evil, which had dispossessed  
All native power, had those fair children torn,  
And made them slaves to soothe his vile unrest,  
And minister to lust its joys forlorn,             \_980  
Till they had learned to breathe the atmosphere of scorn.

36.

This misery was but coldly felt, till she  
Became my only friend, who had endued  
My purpose with a wider sympathy;  
Thus, Cythna mourned with me the servitude             \_985  
In which the half of humankind were mewed

Victims of lust and hate, the slaves of slaves,  
She mourned that grace and power were thrown as food  
To the hyena lust, who, among graves,  
Over his loathed meal, laughing in agony, raves.                    \_990

37.  
And I, still gazing on that glorious child,  
Even as these thoughts flushed o'er her:--'Cythna sweet,  
Well with the world art thou unreconciled;  
Never will peace and human nature meet  
Till free and equal man and woman greet                           \_995  
Domestic peace; and ere this power can make  
In human hearts its calm and holy seat,  
This slavery must be broken'--as I spake,  
From Cythna's eyes a light of exultation brake.

38.  
She replied earnestly:--'It shall be mine,                           \_1000  
This task,--mine, Laon!--thou hast much to gain;  
Nor wilt thou at poor Cythna's pride repine,  
If she should lead a happy female train  
To meet thee over the rejoicing plain,  
When myriads at thy call shall throng around                       \_1005  
The Golden City.'--Then the child did strain  
My arm upon her tremulous heart, and wound  
Her own about my neck, till some reply she found.

39.  
I smiled, and spake not.--'Wherefore dost thou smile  
At what I say? Laon, I am not weak,                               \_1010  
And, though my cheek might become pale the while,  
With thee, if thou desirest, will I seek  
Through their array of banded slaves to wreak  
Ruin upon the tyrants. I had thought  
It was more hard to turn my unpractised cheek                     \_1015  
To scorn and shame, and this beloved spot  
And thee, O dearest friend, to leave and murmur not.

40.  
'Whence came I what I am? Thou, Laon, knowest  
How a young child should thus undaunted be;  
Methinks, it is a power which thou bestowest,                     \_1020  
Through which I seek, by most resembling thee,  
So to become most good and great and free;  
Yet far beyond this Ocean's utmost roar,  
In towers and huts are many like to me,  
Who, could they see thine eyes, or feel such lore                   \_1025  
As I have learnt from them, like me would fear no more.

41.  
'Think'st thou that I shall speak unskillfully,  
And none will heed me? I remember now,  
How once, a slave in tortures doomed to die,

Was saved, because in accents sweet and low \_1030  
He sung a song his Judge loved long ago,  
As he was led to death.--All shall relent  
Who hear me--tears, as mine have flowed, shall flow,  
Hearts beat as mine now beats, with such intent  
As renovates the world; a will omnipotent! \_1035

42.

'Yes, I will tread Pride's golden palaces,  
Through Penury's roofless huts and squalid cells  
Will I descend, where'er in abjectness  
Woman with some vile slave her tyrant dwells,  
There with the music of thine own sweet spells \_1040  
Will disenchant the captives, and will pour  
For the despairing, from the crystal wells  
Of thy deep spirit, reason's mighty lore,  
And power shall then abound, and hope arise once more.

43.

'Can man be free if woman be a slave? \_1045  
Chain one who lives, and breathes this boundless air,  
To the corruption of a closed grave!  
Can they whose mates are beasts, condemned to bear  
Scorn, heavier far than toil or anguish, dare  
To trample their oppressors? in their home \_1050  
Among their babes, thou knowest a curse would wear  
The shape of woman--hoary Crime would come  
Behind, and Fraud rebuild religion's tottering dome.

44.

'I am a child:--I would not yet depart.  
When I go forth alone, bearing the lamp \_1055  
Aloft which thou hast kindled in my heart,  
Millions of slaves from many a dungeon damp  
Shall leap in joy, as the benumbing cramp  
Of ages leaves their limbs--no ill may harm  
Thy Cythna ever--truth its radiant stamp \_1060  
Has fixed, as an invulnerable charm,  
Upon her children's brow, dark Falsehood to disarm.

45.

'Wait yet awhile for the appointed day--  
Thou wilt depart, and I with tears shall stand  
Watching thy dim sail skirt the ocean gray; \_1065  
Amid the dwellers of this lonely land  
I shall remain alone--and thy command  
Shall then dissolve the world's unquiet trance,  
And, multitudinous as the desert sand  
Borne on the storm, its millions shall advance, \_1070  
Thronging round thee, the light of their deliverance.

46.

'Then, like the forests of some pathless mountain,

Which from remotest glens two warring winds  
Involve in fire which not the loosened fountain  
Of broadest floods might quench, shall all the kinds        \_1075  
Of evil, catch from our uniting minds  
The spark which must consume them;--Cythna then  
Will have cast off the impotence that binds  
Her childhood now, and through the paths of men  
Will pass, as the charmed bird that haunts the serpent's den.     \_1080

47.

'We part!--O Laon, I must dare nor tremble,  
To meet those looks no more!--Oh, heavy stroke!  
Sweet brother of my soul! can I dissemble  
The agony of this thought?'--As thus she spoke  
The gathered sobs her quivering accents broke,                \_1085  
And in my arms she hid her beating breast.  
I remained still for tears--sudden she woke  
As one awakes from sleep, and wildly pressed  
My bosom, her whole frame impetuously possessed.

48.

'We part to meet again--but yon blue waste,                    \_1090  
Yon desert wide and deep, holds no recess,  
Within whose happy silence, thus embraced  
We might survive all ills in one caress:  
Nor doth the grave--I fear 'tis passionless--  
Nor yon cold vacant Heaven:--we meet again                    \_1095  
Within the minds of men, whose lips shall bless  
Our memory, and whose hopes its light retain  
When these dissevered bones are trodden in the plain.'

49.

I could not speak, though she had ceased, for now  
The fountains of her feeling, swift and deep,                \_1100  
Seemed to suspend the tumult of their flow;  
So we arose, and by the starlight steep  
Went homeward--neither did we speak nor weep,  
But, pale, were calm with passion--thus subdued  
Like evening shades that o'er the mountains creep,             \_1105  
We moved towards our home; where, in this mood,  
Each from the other sought refuge in solitude.

CANTO 3.

1.

What thoughts had sway o'er Cythna's lonely slumber  
That night, I know not; but my own did seem  
As if they might ten thousand years outnumber                \_1110  
Of waking life, the visions of a dream  
Which hid in one dim gulf the troubled stream  
Of mind; a boundless chaos wild and vast,  
Whose limits yet were never memory's theme:

And I lay struggling as its whirlwinds passed,                    \_1115  
Sometimes for rapture sick, sometimes for pain aghast.

2.

Two hours, whose mighty circle did embrace  
More time than might make gray the infant world,  
Rolled thus, a weary and tumultuous space:  
When the third came, like mist on breezes curled,                    \_1120  
From my dim sleep a shadow was unfurled:  
Methought, upon the threshold of a cave  
I sate with Cythna; drooping briony, pearled  
With dew from the wild streamlet's shattered wave,  
Hung, where we sate to taste the joys which Nature gave.            \_1125

3.

We lived a day as we were wont to live,  
But Nature had a robe of glory on,  
And the bright air o'er every shape did weave  
Intenser hues, so that the herbless stone,  
The leafless bough among the leaves alone,                    \_1130  
Had being clearer than its own could be,  
And Cythna's pure and radiant self was shown,  
In this strange vision, so divine to me,  
That if I loved before, now love was agony.

4.

Morn fled, noon came, evening, then night descended,            \_1135  
And we prolonged calm talk beneath the sphere  
Of the calm moon--when suddenly was blended  
With our repose a nameless sense of fear;  
And from the cave behind I seemed to hear  
Sounds gathering upwards!--accents incomplete,                    \_1140  
And stifled shrieks,--and now, more near and near,  
A tumult and a rush of thronging feet  
The cavern's secret depths beneath the earth did beat.

5.

The scene was changed, and away, away, away!  
Through the air and over the sea we sped,                    \_1145  
And Cythna in my sheltering bosom lay,  
And the winds bore me--through the darkness spread  
Around, the gaping earth then vomited  
Legions of foul and ghastly shapes, which hung  
Upon my flight; and ever, as we fled,                    \_1150  
They plucked at Cythna--soon to me then clung  
A sense of actual things those monstrous dreams among.

6.

And I lay struggling in the impotence  
Of sleep, while outward life had burst its bound,  
Though, still deluded, strove the tortured sense                    \_1155  
To its dire wanderings to adapt the sound  
Which in the light of morn was poured around



Our dwelling; breathless, pale and unaware  
I rose, and all the cottage crowded found  
With armed men, whose glittering swords were bare,                    \_1160  
And whose degraded limbs the tyrant's garb did wear.

7.  
And, ere with rapid lips and gathered brow  
I could demand the cause--a feeble shriek--  
It was a feeble shriek, faint, far and low,  
Arrested me--my mien grew calm and meek,                               \_1165  
And grasping a small knife, I went to seek  
That voice among the crowd--'twas Cythna's cry!  
Beneath most calm resolve did agony wreak  
Its whirlwind rage--so I passed quietly  
Till I beheld, where bound, that dearest child did lie.               \_1170

8.  
I started to behold her, for delight  
And exultation, and a joyance free,  
Solemn, serene and lofty, filled the light  
Of the calm smile with which she looked on me:  
So that I feared some brainless ecstasy,                               \_1175  
Wrought from that bitter woe, had wildered her--  
'Farewell! farewell!' she said, as I drew nigh;  
'At first my peace was marred by this strange stir,  
Now I am calm as truth--its chosen minister.

9.  
'Look not so, Laon--say farewell in hope,                               \_1180  
These bloody men are but the slaves who bear  
Their mistress to her task--it was my scope  
The slavery where they drag me now, to share,  
And among captives willing chains to wear  
Awhile--the rest thou knowest--return, dear friend!               \_1185  
Let our first triumph trample the despair  
Which would ensnare us now, for in the end,  
In victory or in death our hopes and fears must blend.'

10.  
These words had fallen on my unheeding ear,  
Whilst I had watched the motions of the crew                               \_1190  
With seeming-careless glance; not many were  
Around her, for their comrades just withdrew  
To guard some other victim--so I drew  
My knife, and with one impulse, suddenly  
All unaware three of their number slew,                               \_1195  
And grasped a fourth by the throat, and with loud cry  
My countrymen invoked to death or liberty!

11.  
What followed then, I know not--for a stroke  
On my raised arm and naked head, came down,  
Filling my eyes with blood.--When I awoke,                               \_1200

I felt that they had bound me in my swoon,  
And up a rock which overhangs the town,  
By the steep path were bearing me; below,  
The plain was filled with slaughter,--overthrown  
The vineyards and the harvests, and the glow                    \_1205  
Of blazing roofs shone far o'er the white Ocean's flow.

12.  
Upon that rock a mighty column stood,  
Whose capital seemed sculptured in the sky,  
Which to the wanderers o'er the solitude  
Of distant seas, from ages long gone by,                        \_1210  
Had made a landmark; o'er its height to fly  
Scarcely the cloud, the vulture, or the blast,  
Has power--and when the shades of evening lie  
On Earth and Ocean, its carved summits cast  
The sunken daylight far through the aerial waste.                \_1215

13.  
They bore me to a cavern in the hill  
Beneath that column, and unbound me there;  
And one did strip me stark; and one did fill  
A vessel from the putrid pool; one bare  
A lighted torch, and four with friendless care                 \_1220  
Guided my steps the cavern-paths along,  
Then up a steep and dark and narrow stair  
We wound, until the torch's fiery tongue  
Amid the gushing day beamless and pallid hung.

14.  
They raised me to the platform of the pile,                     \_1225  
That column's dizzy height:--the grate of brass  
Through which they thrust me, open stood the while,  
As to its ponderous and suspended mass,  
With chains which eat into the flesh, alas!  
With brazen links, my naked limbs they bound:                 \_1230  
The grate, as they departed to repass,  
With horrid clangour fell, and the far sound  
Of their retiring steps in the dense gloom was drowned.

15.  
The noon was calm and bright:--around that column  
The overhanging sky and circling sea                            \_1235  
Spread forth in silentness profound and solemn  
The darkness of brief frenzy cast on me,  
So that I knew not my own misery:  
The islands and the mountains in the day  
Like clouds reposed afar; and I could see                        \_1240  
The town among the woods below that lay,  
And the dark rocks which bound the bright and glassy bay.

16.  
It was so calm, that scarce the feathery weed

Sown by some eagle on the topmost stone  
Swayed in the air:--so bright, that noon did breed                    \_1245  
No shadow in the sky beside mine own--  
Mine, and the shadow of my chain alone.  
Below, the smoke of roofs involved in flame  
Rested like night, all else was clearly shown  
In that broad glare; yet sound to me none came,                    \_1250  
But of the living blood that ran within my frame.

17.

The peace of madness fled, and ah, too soon!  
A ship was lying on the sunny main,  
Its sails were flagging in the breathless noon--  
Its shadow lay beyond--that sight again                               \_1255  
Waked, with its presence, in my tranced brain  
The stings of a known sorrow, keen and cold:  
I knew that ship bore Cythna o'er the plain  
Of waters, to her blighting slavery sold,  
And watched it with such thoughts as must remain untold.           \_1260

18.

I watched until the shades of evening wrapped  
Earth like an exhalation--then the bark  
Moved, for that calm was by the sunset snapped.  
It moved a speck upon the Ocean dark:  
Soon the wan stars came forth, and I could mark                    \_1265  
Its path no more!--I sought to close mine eyes,  
But like the balls, their lids were stiff and stark;  
I would have risen, but ere that I could rise,  
My parched skin was split with piercing agonies.

19.

I gnawed my brazen chain, and sought to sever                    \_1270  
Its adamantine links, that I might die:  
O Liberty! forgive the base endeavour,  
Forgive me, if, reserved for victory,  
The Champion of thy faith e'er sought to fly.--  
That starry night, with its clear silence, sent                    \_1275  
Tameless resolve which laughed at misery  
Into my soul--linked remembrance lent  
To that such power, to me such a severe content.

20.

To breathe, to be, to hope, or to despair  
And die, I questioned not; nor, though the Sun                    \_1280  
Its shafts of agony kindling through the air  
Moved over me, nor though in evening dun,  
Or when the stars their visible courses run,  
Or morning, the wide universe was spread  
In dreary calmness round me, did I shun                            \_1285  
Its presence, nor seek refuge with the dead  
From one faint hope whose flower a dropping poison shed.

21.

Two days thus passed--I neither raved nor died--  
Thirst raged within me, like a scorpion's nest  
Built in mine entrails; I had spurned aside                    \_1290  
The water-vessel, while despair possessed  
My thoughts, and now no drop remained! The uprest  
Of the third sun brought hunger--but the crust  
Which had been left, was to my craving breast  
Fuel, not food. I chewed the bitter dust,                    \_1295  
And bit my bloodless arm, and licked the brazen rust.

22.

My brain began to fail when the fourth morn  
Burst o'er the golden isles--a fearful sleep,  
Which through the caverns dreary and forlorn  
Of the riven soul, sent its foul dreams to sweep            \_1300  
With whirlwind swiftness--a fall far and deep,--  
A gulf, a void, a sense of senselessness--  
These things dwelt in me, even as shadows keep  
Their watch in some dim charnel's loneliness,  
A shoreless sea, a sky sunless and planetless!            \_1305

23.

The forms which peopled this terrific trance  
I well remember--like a choir of devils,  
Around me they involved a giddy dance;  
Legions seemed gathering from the misty levels  
Of Ocean, to supply those ceaseless revels,                \_1310  
Foul, ceaseless shadows:--thought could not divide  
The actual world from these entangling evils,  
Which so bemocked themselves, that I descried  
All shapes like mine own self, hideously multiplied.

24.

The sense of day and night, of false and true,            \_1315  
Was dead within me. Yet two visions burst  
That darkness--one, as since that hour I knew,  
Was not a phantom of the realms accursed,  
Where then my spirit dwelt--but of the first  
I know not yet, was it a dream or no.                    \_1320  
But both, though not distincter, were immersed  
In hues which, when through memory's waste they flow,  
Make their divided streams more bright and rapid now.

25.

Methought that grate was lifted, and the seven  
Who brought me thither four stiff corpses bare,            \_1325  
And from the frieze to the four winds of Heaven  
Hung them on high by the entangled hair;  
Swarthy were three--the fourth was very fair;  
As they retired, the golden moon upsprung,  
And eagerly, out in the giddy air,                    \_1330  
Leaning that I might eat, I stretched and clung

Over the shapeless depth in which those corpses hung.

26.

A woman's shape, now lank and cold and blue,  
The dwelling of the many-coloured worm,  
Hung there; the white and hollow cheek I drew                    \_1335  
To my dry lips--what radiance did inform  
Those horny eyes? whose was that withered form?  
Alas, alas! it seemed that Cythna's ghost  
Laughed in those looks, and that the flesh was warm  
Within my teeth!--a whirlwind keen as frost                    \_1340  
Then in its sinking gulfs my sickening spirit tossed.

27.

Then seemed it that a tameless hurricane  
Arose, and bore me in its dark career  
Beyond the sun, beyond the stars that wane  
On the verge of formless space--it languished there,                    \_1345  
And dying, left a silence lone and drear,  
More horrible than famine:--in the deep  
The shape of an old man did then appear,  
Stately and beautiful; that dreadful sleep  
His heavenly smiles dispersed, and I could wake and weep.                    \_1350

28.

And, when the blinding tears had fallen, I saw  
That column, and those corpses, and the moon,  
And felt the poisonous tooth of hunger gnaw  
My vitals, I rejoiced, as if the boon  
Of senseless death would be accorded soon;--                    \_1355  
When from that stony gloom a voice arose,  
Solemn and sweet as when low winds attune  
The midnight pines; the grate did then uncloset,  
And on that reverend form the moonlight did repose.

29.

He struck my chains, and gently spake and smiled;                    \_1360  
As they were loosened by that Hermit old,  
Mine eyes were of their madness half beguiled,  
To answer those kind looks; he did enfold  
His giant arms around me, to uphold  
My wretched frame; my scorched limbs he wound                    \_1365  
In linen moist and balmy, and as cold  
As dew to drooping leaves;--the chain, with sound  
Like earthquake, through the chasm of that steep stair did bound,

30.

As, lifting me, it fell!--What next I heard,  
Were billows leaping on the harbour-bar,                    \_1370  
And the shrill sea-wind, whose breath idly stirred  
My hair;--I looked abroad, and saw a star  
Shining beside a sail, and distant far  
That mountain and its column, the known mark

Of those who in the wide deep wandering are,                    \_1375  
So that I feared some Spirit, fell and dark,  
In trance had lain me thus within a fiendish bark.

31.

For now indeed, over the salt sea-billow  
I sailed: yet dared not look upon the shape  
Of him who ruled the helm, although the pillow                    \_1380  
For my light head was hollowed in his lap,  
And my bare limbs his mantle did enwrap,  
Fearing it was a fiend: at last, he bent  
O'er me his aged face; as if to snap  
Those dreadful thoughts the gentle grandsire bent,                \_1385  
And to my inmost soul his soothing looks he sent.

32.

A soft and healing potion to my lips  
At intervals he raised--now looked on high,  
To mark if yet the starry giant dips  
His zone in the dim sea--now cheerfully,                         \_1390  
Though he said little, did he speak to me.  
'It is a friend beside thee--take good cheer,  
Poor victim, thou art now at liberty!'  
I joyed as those a human tone to hear,  
Who in cells deep and lone have languished many a year.        \_1395

33.

A dim and feeble joy, whose glimpses oft  
Were quenched in a relapse of wildering dreams;  
Yet still methought we sailed, until aloft  
The stars of night grew pallid, and the beams  
Of morn descended on the ocean-streams,                         \_1400  
And still that aged man, so grand and mild,  
Tended me, even as some sick mother seems  
To hang in hope over a dying child,  
Till in the azure East darkness again was piled.

34.

And then the night-wind steaming from the shore,                \_1405  
Sent odours dying sweet across the sea,  
And the swift boat the little waves which bore,  
Were cut by its keen keel, though slantingly;  
Soon I could hear the leaves sigh, and could see  
The myrtle-blossoms starring the dim grove,                         \_1410  
As past the pebbly beach the boat did flee  
On sidelong wing, into a silent cove,  
Where ebon pines a shade under the starlight wove.

NOTES:

\_1223 torches' editions 1818, 1839.

\_1385 bent]meant cj. J. Nettleship.

CANTO 4.

1.

The old man took the oars, and soon the bark  
Smote on the beach beside a tower of stone;                    \_1415  
It was a crumbling heap, whose portal dark  
With blooming ivy-trails was overgrown;  
Upon whose floor the spangling sands were strown,  
And rarest sea-shells, which the eternal flood,  
Slave to the mother of the months, had thrown                    \_1420  
Within the walls of that gray tower, which stood  
A changeling of man's art nursed amid Nature's brood.

2.

When the old man his boat had anchored,  
He wound me in his arms with tender care,  
And very few, but kindly words he said,                         \_1425  
And bore me through the tower adown a stair,  
Whose smooth descent some ceaseless step to wear  
For many a year had fallen.--We came at last  
To a small chamber, which with mosses rare  
Was tapestried, where me his soft hands placed                    \_1430  
Upon a couch of grass and oak-leaves interlaced.

3.

The moon was darting through the lattices  
Its yellow light, warm as the beams of day--  
So warm, that to admit the dewy breeze,  
The old man opened them; the moonlight lay                     \_1435  
Upon a lake whose waters wove their play  
Even to the threshold of that lonely home:  
Within was seen in the dim wavering ray  
The antique sculptured roof, and many a tome  
Whose lore had made that sage all that he had become.         \_1440

4.

The rock-built barrier of the sea was past,--  
And I was on the margin of a lake,  
A lonely lake, amid the forests vast  
And snowy mountains:--did my spirit wake  
From sleep as many-coloured as the snake                     \_1445  
That girds eternity? in life and truth,  
Might not my heart its cravings ever slake?  
Was Cythna then a dream, and all my youth,  
And all its hopes and fears, and all its joy and ruth?

5.

Thus madness came again,--a milder madness,                    \_1450  
Which darkened nought but time's unquiet flow  
With supernatural shades of clinging sadness;  
That gentle Hermit, in my helpless woe,  
By my sick couch was busy to and fro,

Like a strong spirit ministrant of good:                                 \_1455  
When I was healed, he led me forth to show  
The wonders of his sylvan solitude,  
And we together sate by that isle-fretted flood.

6.  
He knew his soothing words to weave with skill  
From all my madness told; like mine own heart,                                 \_1460  
Of Cythna would he question me, until  
That thrilling name had ceased to make me start,  
From his familiar lips--it was not art,  
Of wisdom and of justice when he spoke--  
When mid soft looks of pity, there would dart                                 \_1465  
A glance as keen as is the lightning's stroke  
When it doth rive the knots of some ancestral oak.

7.  
Thus slowly from my brain the darkness rolled,  
My thoughts their due array did re-assume  
Through the enchantments of that Hermit old;                                 \_1470  
Then I bethought me of the glorious doom  
Of those who sternly struggle to relume  
The lamp of Hope o'er man's bewildered lot,  
And, sitting by the waters, in the gloom  
Of eve, to that friend's heart I told my thought--                                 \_1475  
That heart which had grown old, but had corrupted not.

8.  
That hoary man had spent his livelong age  
In converse with the dead, who leave the stamp  
Of ever-burning thoughts on many a page,  
When they are gone into the senseless damp                                 \_1480  
Of graves;--his spirit thus became a lamp  
Of splendour, like to those on which it fed;  
Through peopled haunts, the City and the Camp,  
Deep thirst for knowledge had his footsteps led,  
And all the ways of men among mankind he read.                                 \_1485

9.  
But custom maketh blind and obdurate  
The loftiest hearts;--he had beheld the woe  
In which mankind was bound, but deemed that fate  
Which made them abject, would preserve them so;  
And in such faith, some steadfast joy to know,                                 \_1490  
He sought this cell: but when fame went abroad  
That one in Argolis did undergo  
Torture for liberty, and that the crowd  
High truths from gifted lips had heard and understood;

10.  
And that the multitude was gathering wide,--                                 \_1495  
His spirit leaped within his aged frame;  
In lonely peace he could no more abide,



But to the land on which the victor's flame  
Had fed, my native land, the Hermit came:  
Each heart was there a shield, and every tongue                    \_1500  
Was as a sword of truth--young Laon's name  
Rallied their secret hopes, though tyrants sung  
Hymns of triumphant joy our scattered tribes among.

11.  
He came to the lone column on the rock,  
And with his sweet and mighty eloquence                         \_1505  
The hearts of those who watched it did unlock,  
And made them melt in tears of penitence.  
They gave him entrance free to bear me thence.  
'Since this,' the old man said, 'seven years are spent,  
While slowly truth on thy benighted sense                         \_1510  
Has crept; the hope which wildered it has lent  
Meanwhile, to me the power of a sublime intent.

12.  
'Yes, from the records of my youthful state,  
And from the lore of bards and sages old,  
From whatsoe'er my wakened thoughts create                         \_1515  
Out of the hopes of thine aspirings bold,  
Have I collected language to unfold  
Truth to my countrymen; from shore to shore  
Doctrines of human power my words have told,  
They have been heard, and men aspire to more                     \_1520  
Than they have ever gained or ever lost of yore.

13.  
'In secret chambers parents read, and weep,  
My writings to their babes, no longer blind;  
And young men gather when their tyrants sleep,  
And vows of faith each to the other bind;                         \_1525  
And marriageable maidens, who have pined  
With love, till life seemed melting through their look,  
A warmer zeal, a nobler hope, now find;  
And every bosom thus is rapt and shook,  
Like autumn's myriad leaves in one swoln mountain-brook.             \_1530

14.  
'The tyrants of the Golden City tremble  
At voices which are heard about the streets;  
The ministers of fraud can scarce dissemble  
The lies of their own heart, but when one meets  
Another at the shrine, he inly weets,                             \_1535  
Though he says nothing, that the truth is known;  
Murderers are pale upon the judgement-seats,  
And gold grows vile even to the wealthy crone,  
And laughter fills the Fane, and curses shake the Throne.

15.  
'Kind thoughts, and mighty hopes, and gentle deeds                    \_1540

Abound, for fearless love, and the pure law  
Of mild equality and peace, succeeds  
To faiths which long have held the world in awe,  
Bloody and false, and cold:--as whirlpools draw  
All wrecks of Ocean to their chasm, the sway \_1545  
Of thy strong genius, Laon, which foresaw  
This hope, compels all spirits to obey,  
Which round thy secret strength now throng in wide array.

16.

'For I have been thy passive instrument'--  
(As thus the old man spake, his countenance \_1550  
Gleamed on me like a spirit's)--'thou hast lent  
To me, to all, the power to advance  
Towards this unforeseen deliverance  
From our ancestral chains--ay, thou didst rear  
That lamp of hope on high, which time nor chance \_1555  
Nor change may not extinguish, and my share  
Of good, was o'er the world its gathered beams to bear.

17.

'But I, alas! am both unknown and old,  
And though the woof of wisdom I know well  
To dye in hues of language, I am cold \_1560  
In seeming, and the hopes which inly dwell,  
My manners note that I did long repel;  
But Laon's name to the tumultuous throng  
Were like the star whose beams the waves compel  
And tempests, and his soul-subduing tongue \_1565  
Were as a lance to quell the mailed crest of wrong.

18.

'Perchance blood need not flow, if thou at length  
Wouldst rise, perchance the very slaves would spare  
Their brethren and themselves; great is the strength  
Of words--for lately did a maiden fair, \_1570  
Who from her childhood has been taught to bear  
The Tyrant's heaviest yoke, arise, and make  
Her sex the law of truth and freedom hear,  
And with these quiet words--"for thine own sake  
I prithee spare me;"--did with ruth so take \_1575

19.

'All hearts, that even the torturer who had bound  
Her meek calm frame, ere it was yet impaled,  
Loosened her, weeping then; nor could be found  
One human hand to harm her--unassailed  
Therefore she walks through the great City, veiled \_1580  
In virtue's adamantine eloquence,  
'Gainst scorn, and death and pain thus trebly mailed,  
And blending, in the smiles of that defence,  
The Serpent and the Dove, Wisdom and Innocence.

20.

'The wild-eyed women throng around her path:                    \_1585  
From their luxurious dungeons, from the dust  
Of meaner thralls, from the oppressor's wrath,  
Or the caresses of his sated lust  
They congregate:--in her they put their trust;  
The tyrants send their armed slaves to quell                   \_1590  
Her power;--they, even like a thunder-gust  
Caught by some forest, bend beneath the spell  
Of that young maiden's speech, and to their chiefs rebel.

21.

'Thus she doth equal laws and justice teach  
To woman, outraged and polluted long;                         \_1595  
Gathering the sweetest fruit in human reach  
For those fair hands now free, while armed wrong  
Trembles before her look, though it be strong;  
Thousands thus dwell beside her, virgins bright,  
And matrons with their babes, a stately throng!             \_1600  
Lovers renew the vows which they did plight  
In early faith, and hearts long parted now unite,

22.

'And homeless orphans find a home near her,  
And those poor victims of the proud, no less,  
Fair wrecks, on whom the smiling world with stir,             \_1605  
Thrusts the redemption of its wickedness:--  
In squalid huts, and in its palaces  
Sits Lust alone, while o'er the land is borne  
Her voice, whose awful sweetness doth repress  
All evil, and her foes relenting turn,                         \_1610  
And cast the vote of love in hope's abandoned urn.

23.

'So in the populous City, a young maiden  
Has baffled Havoc of the prey which he  
Marks as his own, whene'er with chains o'erladen  
Men make them arms to hurl down tyranny,--                 \_1615  
False arbiter between the bound and free;  
And o'er the land, in hamlets and in towns  
The multitudes collect tumultuously,  
And throng in arms; but tyranny disowns  
Their claim, and gathers strength around its trembling thrones.   \_1620

24.

'Blood soon, although unwillingly, to shed  
The free cannot forbear--the Queen of Slaves,  
The hoodwinked Angel of the blind and dead,  
Custom, with iron mace points to the graves  
Where her own standard desolately waves                     \_1625  
Over the dust of Prophets and of Kings.  
Many yet stand in her array--"she paves  
Her path with human hearts," and o'er it flings

The wildering gloom of her immeasurable wings.

25.

'There is a plain beneath the City's wall,                     \_1630  
Bounded by misty mountains, wide and vast,  
Millions there lift at Freedom's thrilling call  
Ten thousand standards wide, they load the blast  
Which bears one sound of many voices past,  
And startles on his throne their sceptred foe:                     \_1635  
He sits amid his idle pomp aghast,  
And that his power hath passed away, doth know--  
Why pause the victor swords to seal his overthrow?

26.

'The tyrant's guards resistance yet maintain:  
Fearless, and fierce, and hard as beasts of blood,                     \_1640  
They stand a speck amid the peopled plain;  
Carnage and ruin have been made their food  
From infancy--ill has become their good,  
And for its hateful sake their will has wove  
The chains which eat their hearts. The multitude                     \_1645  
Surrounding them, with words of human love,  
Seek from their own decay their stubborn minds to move.

27.

'Over the land is felt a sudden pause,  
As night and day those ruthless bands around,  
The watch of love is kept:--a trance which awes                     \_1650  
The thoughts of men with hope; as when the sound  
Of whirlwind, whose fierce blasts the waves and clouds confound,  
Dies suddenly, the mariner in fear  
Feels silence sink upon his heart--thus bound,  
The conquerors pause, and oh! may freemen ne'er                     \_1655  
Clasp the relentless knees of Dread, the murderer!

28.

'If blood be shed, 'tis but a change and choice  
Of bonds,--from slavery to cowardice  
A wretched fall!--Uplift thy charmed voice!  
Pour on those evil men the love that lies                     \_1660  
Hovering within those spirit-soothing eyes--  
Arise, my friend, farewell!--As thus he spake,  
From the green earth lightly I did arise,  
As one out of dim dreams that doth awake,  
And looked upon the depth of that reposing lake.                     \_1665

29.

I saw my countenance reflected there;--  
And then my youth fell on me like a wind  
Descending on still waters--my thin hair  
Was prematurely gray, my face was lined  
With channels, such as suffering leaves behind,                     \_1670  
Not age; my brow was pale, but in my cheek

And lips a flush of gnawing fire did find  
Their food and dwelling; though mine eyes might speak  
A subtle mind and strong within a frame thus weak.

30.

And though their lustre now was spent and faded,                    \_1675  
Yet in my hollow looks and withered mien  
The likeness of a shape for which was braided  
The brightest woof of genius, still was seen--  
One who, methought, had gone from the world's scene,  
And left it vacant--'twas her lover's face--                    \_1680  
It might resemble her--it once had been  
The mirror of her thoughts, and still the grace  
Which her mind's shadow cast, left there a lingering trace.

31.

What then was I? She slumbered with the dead.  
Glory and joy and peace, had come and gone.                    \_1685  
Doth the cloud perish, when the beams are fled  
Which steeped its skirts in gold? or, dark and lone,  
Doth it not through the paths of night unknown,  
On outspread wings of its own wind upborne  
Pour rain upon the earth? The stars are shown,                    \_1690  
When the cold moon sharpens her silver horn  
Under the sea, and make the wide night not forlorn.

32.

Strengthened in heart, yet sad, that aged man  
I left, with interchange of looks and tears,  
And lingering speech, and to the Camp began                    \_1695  
My war. O'er many a mountain-chain which rears  
Its hundred crests aloft, my spirit bears  
My frame; o'er many a dale and many a moor,  
And gaily now meseems serene earth wears  
The blosmy spring's star-bright investiture,                    \_1700  
A vision which aught sad from sadness might allure.

33.

My powers revived within me, and I went,  
As one whom winds waft o'er the bending grass,  
Through many a vale of that broad continent.  
At night when I reposed, fair dreams did pass                    \_1705  
Before my pillow;--my own Cythna was,  
Not like a child of death, among them ever;  
When I arose from rest, a woful mass  
That gentlest sleep seemed from my life to sever,  
As if the light of youth were not withdrawn for ever.                    \_1710

34.

Aye as I went, that maiden who had reared  
The torch of Truth afar, of whose high deeds  
The Hermit in his pilgrimage had heard,  
Haunted my thoughts.--Ah, Hope its sickness feeds

With whatsoe'er it finds, or flowers or weeds!                    \_1715  
Could she be Cythna?--Was that corpse a shade  
Such as self-torturing thought from madness breeds?  
Why was this hope not torture? Yet it made  
A light around my steps which would not ever fade.

NOTES:

\_1625 Where]When edition 1818.

CANTO 5.

1.  
Over the utmost hill at length I sped,                           \_1720  
A snowy steep:--the moon was hanging low  
Over the Asian mountains, and outspread  
The plain, the City, and the Camp below,  
Skirted the midnight Ocean's glimmering flow;  
The City's moonlit spires and myriad lamps,                   \_1725  
Like stars in a sublunar sky did glow,  
And fires blazed far amid the scattered camps,  
Like springs of flame, which burst where'er swift Earthquake stamps.

2.  
All slept but those in watchful arms who stood,  
And those who sate tending the beacon's light,               \_1730  
And the few sounds from that vast multitude  
Made silence more profound.--Oh, what a might  
Of human thought was cradled in that night!  
How many hearts impenetrably veiled  
Beat underneath its shade, what secret fight               \_1735  
Evil and good, in woven passions mailed,  
Waged through that silent throng--a war that never failed!

3.  
And now the Power of Good held victory.  
So, through the labyrinth of many a tent,  
Among the silent millions who did lie                       \_1740  
In innocent sleep, exultingly I went;  
The moon had left Heaven desert now, but lent  
From eastern morn the first faint lustre showed  
An armed youth--over his spear he bent  
His downward face.--'A friend!' I cried aloud,               \_1745  
And quickly common hopes made freemen understood.

4.  
I sate beside him while the morning beam  
Crept slowly over Heaven, and talked with him  
Of those immortal hopes, a glorious theme!  
Which led us forth, until the stars grew dim:               \_1750  
And all the while, methought, his voice did swim  
As if it drowned in remembrance were

Of thoughts which make the moist eyes overbrim:  
At last, when daylight 'gan to fill the air,  
He looked on me, and cried in wonder--'Thou art here!'                    \_1755

5.  
Then, suddenly, I knew it was the youth  
In whom its earliest hopes my spirit found;  
But envious tongues had stained his spotless truth,  
And thoughtless pride his love in silence bound,  
And shame and sorrow mine in toils had wound,                               \_1760  
Whilst he was innocent, and I deluded;  
The truth now came upon me, on the ground  
Tears of repenting joy, which fast intruded,  
Fell fast, and o'er its peace our mingling spirits brooded.

6.  
Thus, while with rapid lips and earnest eyes                               \_1765  
We talked, a sound of sweeping conflict spread  
As from the earth did suddenly arise;  
From every tent roused by that clamour dread,  
Our bands outsprung and seized their arms--we sped  
Towards the sound: our tribes were gathering far.                               \_1770  
Those sanguine slaves amid ten thousand dead  
Stabbed in their sleep, trampled in treacherous war  
The gentle hearts whose power their lives had sought to spare.

7.  
Like rabid snakes, that sting some gentle child  
Who brings them food, when winter false and fair                               \_1775  
Allures them forth with its cold smiles, so wild  
They rage among the camp;--they overbear  
The patriot hosts--confusion, then despair,  
Descends like night--when 'Laon!' one did cry;  
Like a bright ghost from Heaven that shout did scare                               \_1780  
The slaves, and widening through the vaulted sky,  
Seemed sent from Earth to Heaven in sign of victory.

8.  
In sudden panic those false murderers fled,  
Like insect tribes before the northern gale:  
But swifter still, our hosts encompassed                                       \_1785  
Their shattered ranks, and in a craggy vale,  
Where even their fierce despair might nought avail,  
Hemmed them around!--and then revenge and fear  
Made the high virtue of the patriots fail:  
One pointed on his foe the mortal spear--                                       \_1790  
I rushed before its point, and cried 'Forbear, forbear!'

9.  
The spear transfixed my arm that was uplifted  
In swift expostulation, and the blood  
Gushed round its point: I smiled, and--'Oh! thou gifted  
With eloquence which shall not be withstood,                                       \_1795

Flow thus!' I cried in joy, 'thou vital flood,  
Until my heart be dry, ere thus the cause  
For which thou wert aught worthy be subdued--  
Ah, ye are pale,--ye weep,--your passions pause,--  
'Tis well! ye feel the truth of love's benignant laws.        \_1800

10.  
'Soldiers, our brethren and our friends are slain.  
Ye murdered them, I think, as they did sleep!  
Alas, what have ye done? the slightest pain  
Which ye might suffer, there were eyes to weep,  
But ye have quenched them--there were smiles to steep        \_1805  
Your hearts in balm, but they are lost in woe;  
And those whom love did set his watch to keep  
Around your tents, truth's freedom to bestow,  
Ye stabbed as they did sleep--but they forgive ye now.

11.  
'Oh wherefore should ill ever flow from ill,                \_1810  
And pain still keener pain for ever breed?  
We all are brethren--even the slaves who kill  
For hire, are men; and to avenge misdeed  
On the misdoer, doth but Misery feed  
With her own broken heart! O Earth, O Heaven!                \_1815  
And thou, dread Nature, which to every deed  
And all that lives, or is, to be hath given,  
Even as to thee have these done ill, and are forgiven!

12.  
'Join then your hands and hearts, and let the past  
Be as a grave which gives not up its dead                \_1820  
To evil thoughts.'--A film then overcast  
My sense with dimness, for the wound, which bled  
Freshly, swift shadows o'er mine eyes had shed.  
When I awoke, I lay mid friends and foes,  
And earnest countenances on me shed                \_1825  
The light of questioning looks, whilst one did close  
My wound with balmiest herbs, and soothed me to repose;

13.  
And one whose spear had pierced me, leaned beside  
With quivering lips and humid eyes;--and all  
Seemed like some brothers on a journey wide                \_1830  
Gone forth, whom now strange meeting did befall  
In a strange land, round one whom they might call  
Their friend, their chief, their father, for assay  
Of peril, which had saved them from the thrall  
Of death, now suffering. Thus the vast array                \_1835  
Of those fraternal bands were reconciled that day.

14.  
Lifting the thunder of their acclamation,  
Towards the City then the multitude,



And I among them, went in joy--a nation  
Made free by love;--a mighty brotherhood                    \_1840  
Linked by a jealous interchange of good;  
A glorious pageant, more magnificent  
Than kingly slaves arrayed in gold and blood,  
When they return from carnage, and are sent  
In triumph bright beneath the populous battlement.                    \_1845

15.  
Afar, the city-walls were thronged on high,  
And myriads on each giddy turret clung,  
And to each spire far lessening in the sky  
Bright pennons on the idle winds were hung;  
As we approached, a shout of joyance sprung                    \_1850  
At once from all the crowd, as if the vast  
And peopled Earth its boundless skies among  
The sudden clamour of delight had cast,  
When from before its face some general wreck had passed.

16.  
Our armies through the City's hundred gates                    \_1855  
Were poured, like brooks which to the rocky lair  
Of some deep lake, whose silence them awaits,  
Throng from the mountains when the storms are there  
And, as we passed through the calm sunny air  
A thousand flower-inwoven crowns were shed,                    \_1860  
The token flowers of truth and freedom fair,  
And fairest hands bound them on many a head,  
Those angels of love's heaven that over all was spread.

17.  
I trod as one tranced in some rapturous vision:  
Those bloody bands so lately reconciled,                    \_1865  
Were, ever as they went, by the contrition  
Of anger turned to love, from ill beguiled,  
And every one on them more gently smiled,  
Because they had done evil:--the sweet awe  
Of such mild looks made their own hearts grow mild,                    \_1870  
And did with soft attraction ever draw  
Their spirits to the love of freedom's equal law.

18.  
And they, and all, in one loud symphony  
My name with Liberty commingling, lifted,  
'The friend and the preserver of the free!                    \_1875  
The parent of this joy!' and fair eyes gifted  
With feelings, caught from one who had uplifted  
The light of a great spirit, round me shone;  
And all the shapes of this grand scenery shifted  
Like restless clouds before the steadfast sun,--                    \_1880  
Where was that Maid? I asked, but it was known of none.

19.

Laone was the name her love had chosen,  
For she was nameless, and her birth none knew:  
Where was Laone now?--The words were frozen  
Within my lips with fear; but to subdue                    \_1885  
Such dreadful hope, to my great task was due,  
And when at length one brought reply, that she  
To-morrow would appear, I then withdrew  
To judge what need for that great throng might be,  
For now the stars came thick over the twilight sea.                    \_1890

20.  
Yet need was none for rest or food to care,  
Even though that multitude was passing great,  
Since each one for the other did prepare  
All kindly succour--Therefore to the gate  
Of the Imperial House, now desolate,                    \_1895  
I passed, and there was found aghast, alone,  
The fallen Tyrant!--Silently he sate  
Upon the footstool of his golden throne,  
Which, starred with sunny gems, in its own lustre shone.

21.  
Alone, but for one child, who led before him                    \_1900  
A graceful dance: the only living thing  
Of all the crowd, which thither to adore him  
Flocked yesterday, who solace sought to bring  
In his abandonment!--She knew the King  
Had praised her dance of yore, and now she wove                    \_1905  
Its circles, aye weeping and murmuring  
Mid her sad task of unregarded love,  
That to no smiles it might his speechless sadness move.

22.  
She fled to him, and wildly clasped his feet  
When human steps were heard:--he moved nor spoke,                    \_1910  
Nor changed his hue, nor raised his looks to meet  
The gaze of strangers--our loud entrance woke  
The echoes of the hall, which circling broke  
The calm of its recesses,--like a tomb  
Its sculptured walls vacantly to the stroke                    \_1915  
Of footfalls answered, and the twilight's gloom  
Lay like a charnel's mist within the radiant dome.

23.  
The little child stood up when we came nigh;  
Her lips and cheeks seemed very pale and wan,  
But on her forehead, and within her eye                    \_1920  
Lay beauty, which makes hearts that feed thereon  
Sick with excess of sweetness; on the throne  
She leaned;--the King, with gathered brow, and lips  
Wreathed by long scorn, did inly sneer and frown  
With hue like that when some great painter dips                    \_1925  
His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse.

24.

She stood beside him like a rainbow braided  
Within some storm, when scarce its shadows vast  
From the blue paths of the swift sun have faded;  
A sweet and solemn smile, like Cythna's, cast                     \_1930  
One moment's light, which made my heart beat fast,  
O'er that child's parted lips--a gleam of bliss,  
A shade of vanished days,--as the tears passed  
Which wrapped it, even as with a father's kiss  
I pressed those softest eyes in trembling tenderness.             \_1935

25.

The sceptred wretch then from that solitude  
I drew, and, of his change compassionate,  
With words of sadness soothed his rugged mood.  
But he, while pride and fear held deep debate,  
With sullen guile of ill-dissembled hate                     \_1940  
Glared on me as a toothless snake might glare:  
Pity, not scorn I felt, though desolate  
The desolator now, and unaware  
The curses which he mocked had caught him by the hair.

26.

I led him forth from that which now might seem                     \_1945  
A gorgeous grave: through portals sculptured deep  
With imagery beautiful as dream  
We went, and left the shades which tend on sleep  
Over its unregarded gold to keep  
Their silent watch.--The child trod faintingly,                     \_1950  
And as she went, the tears which she did weep  
Glanced in the starlight; wildered seemed she,  
And, when I spake, for sobs she could not answer me.

27.

At last the tyrant cried, 'She hungers, slave!  
Stab her, or give her bread!--It was a tone                     \_1955  
Such as sick fancies in a new-made grave  
Might hear. I trembled, for the truth was known;  
He with this child had thus been left alone,  
And neither had gone forth for food,--but he  
In mingled pride and awe cowered near his throne,                     \_1960  
And she a nursling of captivity  
Knew nought beyond those walls, nor what such change might be.

28.

And he was troubled at a charm withdrawn  
Thus suddenly; that sceptres ruled no more--  
That even from gold the dreadful strength was gone,                     \_1965  
Which once made all things subject to its power--  
Such wonder seized him, as if hour by hour  
The past had come again; and the swift fall  
Of one so great and terrible of yore,

To desolateness, in the hearts of all \_1970  
Like wonder stirred, who saw such awful change befall.

29.

A mighty crowd, such as the wide land pours  
Once in a thousand years, now gathered round  
The fallen tyrant;--like the rush of showers  
Of hail in spring, pattering along the ground, \_1975  
Their many footsteps fell, else came no sound  
From the wide multitude: that lonely man  
Then knew the burden of his change, and found,  
Concealing in the dust his visage wan,  
Refuge from the keen looks which through his bosom ran. \_1980

30.

And he was faint withal: I sate beside him  
Upon the earth, and took that child so fair  
From his weak arms, that ill might none betide him  
Or her;--when food was brought to them, her share  
To his averted lips the child did bear, \_1985  
But, when she saw he had enough, she ate  
And wept the while;--the lonely man's despair  
Hunger then overcame, and of his state  
Forgetful, on the dust as in a trance he sate.

31.

Slowly the silence of the multitudes \_1990  
Passed, as when far is heard in some lone dell  
The gathering of a wind among the woods--  
'And he is fallen!' they cry, 'he who did dwell  
Like famine or the plague, or aught more fell  
Among our homes, is fallen! the murderer \_1995  
Who slaked his thirsting soul as from a well  
Of blood and tears with ruin! he is here!  
Sunk in a gulf of scorn from which none may him rear!'

32.

Then was heard--'He who judged let him be brought  
To judgement! blood for blood cries from the soil \_2000  
On which his crimes have deep pollution wrought!  
Shall Othman only unavenged despoil?  
Shall they who by the stress of grinding toil  
Wrest from the unwilling earth his luxuries,  
Perish for crime, while his foul blood may boil, \_2005  
Or creep within his veins at will?--Arise!  
And to high justice make her chosen sacrifice!'

33.

'What do ye seek? what fear ye,' then I cried,  
Suddenly starting forth, 'that ye should shed  
The blood of Othman?--if your hearts are tried \_2010  
In the true love of freedom, cease to dread  
This one poor lonely man--beneath Heaven spread

In purest light above us all, through earth--  
Maternal earth, who doth her sweet smiles shed  
For all, let him go free; until the worth                    \_2015  
Of human nature win from these a second birth.

34.  
'What call ye "justice"? Is there one who ne'er  
In secret thought has wished another's ill?--  
Are ye all pure? Let those stand forth who hear  
And tremble not. Shall they insult and kill,                    \_2020  
If such they be? their mild eyes can they fill  
With the false anger of the hypocrite?  
Alas, such were not pure!--the chastened will  
Of virtue sees that justice is the light  
Of love, and not revenge, and terror and despite.'                    \_2025

35.  
The murmur of the people, slowly dying,  
Paused as I spake, then those who near me were,  
Cast gentle looks where the lone man was lying  
Shrouding his head, which now that infant fair  
Clasped on her lap in silence;--through the air                    \_2030  
Sobs were then heard, and many kissed my feet  
In pity's madness, and to the despair  
Of him whom late they cursed, a solace sweet  
His very victims brought--soft looks and speeches meet.

36.  
Then to a home for his repose assigned,                    \_2035  
Accompanied by the still throng, he went  
In silence, where, to soothe his rankling mind,  
Some likeness of his ancient state was lent;  
And if his heart could have been innocent  
As those who pardoned him, he might have ended                    \_2040  
His days in peace; but his straight lips were bent,  
Men said, into a smile which guile portended,  
A sight with which that child like hope with fear was blended.

37.  
'Twas midnight now, the eve of that great day  
Whereon the many nations at whose call                    \_2045  
The chains of earth like mist melted away,  
Decreed to hold a sacred Festival,  
A rite to attest the equality of all  
Who live. So to their homes, to dream or wake  
All went. The sleepless silence did recall                    \_2050  
Laone to my thoughts, with hopes that make  
The flood recede from which their thirst they seek to slake.

38.  
The dawn flowed forth, and from its purple fountains  
I drank those hopes which make the spirit quail,  
As to the plain between the misty mountains                    \_2055

And the great City, with a countenance pale,  
I went:--it was a sight which might avail  
To make men weep exulting tears, for whom  
Now first from human power the reverend veil  
Was torn, to see Earth from her general womb                     \_2060  
Pour forth her swarming sons to a fraternal doom:

39.  
To see, far glancing in the misty morning,  
The signs of that innumerable host;  
To hear one sound of many made, the warning  
Of Earth to Heaven from its free children tossed,                     \_2065  
While the eternal hills, and the sea lost  
In wavering light, and, starring the blue sky  
The city's myriad spires of gold, almost  
With human joy made mute society--  
Its witnesses with men who must hereafter be.                     \_2070

40.  
To see, like some vast island from the Ocean,  
The Altar of the Federation rear  
Its pile i' the midst; a work, which the devotion  
Of millions in one night created there,  
Sudden as when the moonrise makes appear                     \_2075  
Strange clouds in the east; a marble pyramid  
Distinct with steps: that mighty shape did wear  
The light of genius; its still shadow hid  
Far ships: to know its height the morning mists forbid!

41.  
To hear the restless multitudes for ever                     \_2080  
Around the base of that great Altar flow,  
As on some mountain-islet burst and shiver  
Atlantic waves; and solemnly and slow  
As the wind bore that tumult to and fro,  
To feel the dreamlike music, which did swim                     \_2085  
Like beams through floating clouds on waves below  
Falling in pauses, from that Altar dim,  
As silver-sounding tongues breathed an aerial hymn.

42.  
To hear, to see, to live, was on that morn  
Lethan joy! so that all those assembled                     \_2090  
Cast off their memories of the past outworn;  
Two only bosoms with their own life trembled,  
And mine was one,--and we had both dissembled;  
So with a beating heart I went, and one,  
Who having much, covets yet more, resembled;                     \_2095  
A lost and dear possession, which not won,  
He walks in lonely gloom beneath the noonday sun.

43.  
To the great Pyramid I came: its stair

With female choirs was thronged: the loveliest  
Among the free, grouped with its sculptures rare;                    \_2100  
As I approached, the morning's golden mist,  
Which now the wonder-stricken breezes kissed  
With their cold lips, fled, and the summit shone  
Like Athos seen from Samothracia, dressed  
In earliest light, by vintagers, and one                            \_2105  
Sate there, a female Shape upon an ivory throne:

44.  
A Form most like the imagined habitant  
Of silver exhalations sprung from dawn,  
By winds which feed on sunrise woven, to enchant  
The faiths of men: all mortal eyes were drawn,                    \_2110  
As famished mariners through strange seas gone  
Gaze on a burning watch-tower, by the light  
Of those divinest lineaments--alone  
With thoughts which none could share, from that fair sight  
I turned in sickness, for a veil shrouded her countenance bright.   \_2115

45.  
And neither did I hear the acclamations,  
Which from brief silence bursting, filled the air  
With her strange name and mine, from all the nations  
Which we, they said, in strength had gathered there  
From the sleep of bondage; nor the vision fair                    \_2120  
Of that bright pageantry beheld,--but blind  
And silent, as a breathing corpse did fare,  
Leaning upon my friend, till like a wind  
To fevered cheeks, a voice flowed o'er my troubled mind.

46.  
Like music of some minstrel heavenly gifted,                    \_2125  
To one whom fiends enthral, this voice to me;  
Scarce did I wish her veil to be uplifted,  
I was so calm and joyous.--I could see  
The platform where we stood, the statues three  
Which kept their marble watch on that high shrine,                \_2130  
The multitudes, the mountains, and the sea;  
As when eclipse hath passed, things sudden shine  
To men's astonished eyes most clear and crystalline.

47.  
At first Laone spoke most tremulously:  
But soon her voice the calmness which it shed                    \_2135  
Gathered, and--'Thou art whom I sought to see,  
And thou art our first votary here,' she said:  
'I had a dear friend once, but he is dead!--  
And of all those on the wide earth who breathe,  
Thou dost resemble him alone--I spread                            \_2140  
This veil between us two that thou beneath  
Shouldst image one who may have been long lost in death.

48.

'For this wilt thou not henceforth pardon me?  
Yes, but those joys which silence well requite  
Forbid reply;--why men have chosen me                    \_2145  
To be the Priestess of this holiest rite  
I scarcely know, but that the floods of light  
Which flow over the world, have borne me hither  
To meet thee, long most dear; and now unite  
Thine hand with mine, and may all comfort wither           \_2150  
From both the hearts whose pulse in joy now beat together,

49.

'If our own will as others' law we bind,  
If the foul worship trampled here we fear;  
If as ourselves we cease to love our kind!--  
She paused, and pointed upwards--sculptured there           \_2155  
Three shapes around her ivory throne appear;  
One was a Giant, like a child asleep  
On a loose rock, whose grasp crushed, as it were  
In dream, sceptres and crowns; and one did keep  
Its watchful eyes in doubt whether to smile or weep;       \_2160

50.

A Woman sitting on the sculptured disk  
Of the broad earth, and feeding from one breast  
A human babe and a young basilisk;  
Her looks were sweet as Heaven's when loveliest  
In Autumn eves. The third Image was dressed               \_2165  
In white wings swift as clouds in winter skies;  
Beneath his feet, 'mongst ghestliest forms, repressed  
Lay Faith, an obscene worm, who sought to rise,  
While calmly on the Sun he turned his diamond eyes.

51.

Beside that Image then I sate, while she                    \_2170  
Stood, mid the throngs which ever ebbd and flowed,  
Like light amid the shadows of the sea  
Cast from one cloudless star, and on the crowd  
That touch which none who feels forgets, bestowed;  
And whilst the sun returned the steadfast gaze               \_2175  
Of the great Image, as o'er Heaven it glode,  
That rite had place; it ceased when sunset's blaze  
Burned o'er the isles. All stood in joy and deep amaze--  
--When in the silence of all spirits there  
Laone's voice was felt, and through the air                   \_2180  
Her thrilling gestures spoke, most eloquently fair:--

51.1.

'Calm art thou as yon sunset! swift and strong  
As new-fledged Eagles, beautiful and young,  
That float among the blinding beams of morning;  
And underneath thy feet writhe Faith, and Folly,           \_2185  
Custom, and Hell, and mortal Melancholy--



Hark! the Earth starts to hear the mighty warning  
Of thy voice sublime and holy;  
Its free spirits here assembled  
See thee, feel thee, know thee now,-- \_2190  
To thy voice their hearts have trembled  
Like ten thousand clouds which flow  
With one wide wind as it flies!--  
Wisdom! thy irresistible children rise  
To hail thee, and the elements they chain \_2195  
And their own will, to swell the glory of thy train.

51.2.

'O Spirit vast and deep as Night and Heaven!  
Mother and soul of all to which is given  
The light of life, the loveliness of being,  
Lo! thou dost re-ascend the human heart, \_2200  
Thy throne of power, almighty as thou wert  
In dreams of Poets old grown pale by seeing  
The shade of thee;--now, millions start  
To feel thy lightnings through them burning:  
Nature, or God, or Love, or Pleasure, \_2205  
Or Sympathy the sad tears turning  
To mutual smiles, a drainless treasure,  
Descends amidst us;--Scorn and Hate,  
Revenge and Selfishness are desolate--  
A hundred nations swear that there shall be \_2210  
Pity and Peace and Love, among the good and free!

51.3.

'Eldest of things, divine Equality!  
Wisdom and Love are but the slaves of thee,  
The Angels of thy sway, who pour around thee  
Treasures from all the cells of human thought, \_2215  
And from the Stars, and from the Ocean brought,  
And the last living heart whose beatings bound thee:  
The powerful and the wise had sought  
Thy coming, thou in light descending  
O'er the wide land which is thine own \_2220  
Like the Spring whose breath is blending  
All blasts of fragrance into one,  
Comest upon the paths of men!--  
Earth bares her general bosom to thy ken,  
And all her children here in glory meet \_2225  
To feed upon thy smiles, and clasp thy sacred feet.

51.4

'My brethren, we are free! the plains and mountains,  
The gray sea-shore, the forests and the fountains,  
Are haunts of happiest dwellers;--man and woman,  
Their common bondage burst, may freely borrow \_2230  
From lawless love a solace for their sorrow;  
For oft we still must weep, since we are human.  
A stormy night's serenest morrow,

Whose showers are pity's gentle tears,  
Whose clouds are smiles of those that die                    \_2235  
Like infants without hopes or fears,  
And whose beams are joys that lie  
In blended hearts, now holds dominion;  
The dawn of mind, which upwards on a pinion  
Borne, swift as sunrise, far illumines space,               \_2240  
And clasps this barren world in its own bright embrace!

51.5

'My brethren, we are free! The fruits are glowing  
Beneath the stars, and the night-winds are flowing  
O'er the ripe corn, the birds and beasts are dreaming--  
Never again may blood of bird or beast                    \_2245  
Stain with its venomous stream a human feast,  
To the pure skies in accusation steaming;  
Avenging poisons shall have ceased  
To feed disease and fear and madness,  
The dwellers of the earth and air                            \_2250  
Shall throng around our steps in gladness,  
Seeking their food or refuge there.  
Our toil from thought all glorious forms shall cull,  
To make this Earth, our home, more beautiful,  
And Science, and her sister Poesy,                         \_2255  
Shall clothe in light the fields and cities of the free!

51.6

'Victory, Victory to the prostrate nations!  
Bear witness Night, and ye mute Constellations  
Who gaze on us from your crystalline cars!  
Thoughts have gone forth whose powers can sleep no more!       \_2260  
Victory! Victory! Earth's remotest shore,  
Regions which groan beneath the Antarctic stars,  
The green lands cradled in the roar  
Of western waves, and wildernesses  
Peopled and vast, which skirt the oceans                    \_2265  
Where morning dyes her golden tresses,  
Shall soon partake our high emotions:  
Kings shall turn pale! Almighty Fear,  
The Fiend-God, when our charmed name he hear,  
Shall fade like shadow from his thousand fanes,             \_2270  
While Truth with Joy enthroned o'er his lost empire reigns!'

51.52.

Ere she had ceased, the mists of night entwining  
Their dim woof, floated o'er the infinite throng;  
She, like a spirit through the darkness shining,  
In tones whose sweetness silence did prolong,               \_2275  
As if to lingering winds they did belong,  
Poured forth her inmost soul: a passionate speech  
With wild and thrilling pauses woven among,  
Which whoso heard was mute, for it could teach  
To rapture like her own all listening hearts to reach.       \_2280

53.

Her voice was as a mountain stream which sweeps  
The withered leaves of Autumn to the lake,  
And in some deep and narrow bay then sleeps  
In the shadow of the shores; as dead leaves wake,  
Under the wave, in flowers and herbs which make                    \_2285  
Those green depths beautiful when skies are blue,  
The multitude so moveless did partake  
Such living change, and kindling murmurs flew  
As o'er that speechless calm delight and wonder grew.

54.

Over the plain the throngs were scattered then                    \_2290  
In groups around the fires, which from the sea  
Even to the gorge of the first mountain-glen  
Blazed wide and far: the banquet of the free  
Was spread beneath many a dark cypress-tree,  
Beneath whose spires, which swayed in the red flame,                    \_2295  
Reclining, as they ate, of Liberty,  
And Hope, and Justice, and Laone's name,  
Earth's children did a woof of happy converse frame.

55.

Their feast was such as Earth, the general mother,  
Pours from her fairest bosom, when she smiles                    \_2300  
In the embrace of Autumn;--to each other  
As when some parent fondly reconciles  
Her warring children, she their wrath beguiles  
With her own sustenance, they relenting weep:  
Such was this Festival, which from their isles                    \_2305  
And continents, and winds, and oceans deep,  
All shapes might throng to share, that fly, or walk or creep,--

56.

Might share in peace and innocence, for gore  
Or poison none this festal did pollute,  
But, piled on high, an overflowing store                    \_2310  
Of pomegranates and citrons, fairest fruit,  
Melons, and dates, and figs, and many a root  
Sweet and sustaining, and bright grapes ere yet  
Accursed fire their mild juice could transmute  
Into a mortal bane, and brown corn set                    \_2315  
In baskets; with pure streams their thirsting lips they wet.

57.

Laone had descended from the shrine,  
And every deepest look and holiest mind  
Fed on her form, though now those tones divine  
Were silent as she passed; she did unwind                    \_2320  
Her veil, as with the crowds of her own kind  
She mixed; some impulse made my heart refrain  
From seeking her that night, so I reclined

Amidst a group, where on the utmost plain  
A festal watchfire burned beside the dusky main.                    \_2325

58.

And joyous was our feast; pathetic talk,  
And wit, and harmony of choral strains,  
While far Orion o'er the waves did walk  
That flow among the isles, held us in chains  
Of sweet captivity which none disdains                                   \_2330  
Who feels; but when his zone grew dim in mist  
Which clothes the Ocean's bosom, o'er the plains  
The multitudes went homeward, to their rest,  
Which that delightful day with its own shadow blessed.

NOTES:

\_2295 flame]light edition 1818.

CANTO 6.

1.

Beside the dimness of the glimmering sea,                               \_2335  
Weaving swift language from impassioned themes,  
With that dear friend I lingered, who to me  
So late had been restored, beneath the gleams  
Of the silver stars; and ever in soft dreams  
Of future love and peace sweet converse lapped                           \_2340  
Our willing fancies, till the pallid beams  
Of the last watchfire fell, and darkness wrapped  
The waves, and each bright chain of floating fire was snapped;

2.

And till we came even to the City's wall  
And the great gate; then, none knew whence or why,                    \_2345  
Disquiet on the multitudes did fall:  
And first, one pale and breathless passed us by,  
And stared and spoke not;--then with piercing cry  
A troop of wild-eyed women, by the shrieks  
Of their own terror driven,--tumultuously                           \_2350  
Hither and thither hurrying with pale cheeks,  
Each one from fear unknown a sudden refuge seeks--

3.

Then, rallying cries of treason and of danger  
Resounded: and--'They come! to arms! to arms!  
The Tyrant is amongst us, and the stranger                               \_2355  
Comes to enslave us in his name! to arms!  
In vain: for Panic, the pale fiend who charms  
Strength to forswear her right, those millions swept  
Like waves before the tempest--these alarms  
Came to me, as to know their cause I leapt                           \_2360  
On the gate's turret, and in rage and grief and scorn I wept!

4.

For to the North I saw the town on fire,  
And its red light made morning pallid now,  
Which burst over wide Asia;--louder, higher,  
The yells of victory and the screams of woe                    \_2365  
I heard approach, and saw the throng below  
Stream through the gates like foam-wrought waterfalls  
Fed from a thousand storms--the fearful glow  
Of bombs flares overhead--at intervals  
The red artillery's bolt mangling among them falls.           \_2370

5.

And now the horsemen come--and all was done  
Swifter than I have spoken--I beheld  
Their red swords flash in the unrisen sun.  
I rushed among the rout, to have repelled  
That miserable flight--one moment quelled                    \_2375  
By voice and looks and eloquent despair,  
As if reproach from their own hearts withheld  
Their steps, they stood; but soon came pouring there  
New multitudes, and did those rallied bands o'erbear.

6.

I strove, as, drifted on some cataract                         \_2380  
By irresistible streams, some wretch might strive  
Who hears its fatal roar:--the files compact  
Whelmed me, and from the gate availed to drive  
With quickening impulse, as each bolt did rive  
Their ranks with bloodier chasm:--into the plain             \_2385  
Disgorged at length the dead and the alive  
In one dread mass, were parted, and the stain  
Of blood, from mortal steel fell o'er the fields like rain.

7.

For now the despot's bloodhounds with their prey  
Unarmed and unaware, were gorging deep                    \_2390  
Their gluttony of death; the loose array  
Of horsemen o'er the wide fields murdering sweep,  
And with loud laughter for their tyrant reap  
A harvest sown with other hopes; the while,  
Far overhead, ships from Propontis keep                    \_2395  
A killing rain of fire:--when the waves smile  
As sudden earthquakes light many a volcano-isle,

8.

Thus sudden, unexpected feast was spread  
For the carrion-fowls of Heaven.--I saw the sight--  
I moved--I lived--as o'er the heaps of dead,                 \_2400  
Whose stony eyes glared in the morning light  
I trod;--to me there came no thought of flight,  
But with loud cries of scorn, which whoso heard  
That dreaded death, felt in his veins the might

Of virtuous shame return, the crowd I stirred,                    \_2405  
And desperation's hope in many hearts recurred.

9.

A band of brothers gathering round me, made,  
Although unarmed, a steadfast front, and still  
Retreating, with stern looks beneath the shade  
Of gathered eyebrows, did the victors fill                    \_2410  
With doubt even in success; deliberate will  
Inspired our growing troop; not overthrown  
It gained the shelter of a grassy hill,  
And ever still our comrades were hewn down,  
And their defenceless limbs beneath our footsteps strown.           \_2415

10.

Immovably we stood--in joy I found,  
Beside me then, firm as a giant pine  
Among the mountain-vapours driven around,  
The old man whom I loved--his eyes divine  
With a mild look of courage answered mine,                    \_2420  
And my young friend was near, and ardently  
His hand grasped mine a moment--now the line  
Of war extended, to our rallying cry  
As myriads flocked in love and brotherhood to die.

11.

For ever while the sun was climbing Heaven                    \_2425  
The horseman hewed our unarmed myriads down  
Safely, though when by thirst of carnage driven  
Too near, those slaves were swiftly overthrown  
By hundreds leaping on them:--flesh and bone  
Soon made our ghastly ramparts; then the shaft                    \_2430  
Of the artillery from the sea was thrown  
More fast and fiery, and the conquerors laughed  
In pride to hear the wind our screams of torment waft.

12.

For on one side alone the hill gave shelter,  
So vast that phalanx of unconquered men,                    \_2435  
And there the living in the blood did welter  
Of the dead and dying, which in that green glen,  
Like stifled torrents, made a plashy fen  
Under the feet--thus was the butchery waged  
While the sun clomb Heaven's eastern steep--but when            \_2440  
It 'gan to sink--a fiercer combat raged,  
For in more doubtful strife the armies were engaged.

13.

Within a cave upon the hill were found  
A bundle of rude pikes, the instrument  
Of those who war but on their native ground                    \_2445  
For natural rights: a shout of joyance sent  
Even from our hearts the wide air pierced and rent,

As those few arms the bravest and the best  
Seized, and each sixth, thus armed, did now present  
A line which covered and sustained the rest,                    \_2450  
A confident phalanx, which the foes on every side invest.

14.  
That onset turned the foes to flight almost;  
But soon they saw their present strength, and knew  
That coming night would to our resolute host  
Bring victory; so dismounting, close they drew                    \_2455  
Their glittering files, and then the combat grew  
Unequal but most horrible;--and ever  
Our myriads, whom the swift bolt overthrew,  
Or the red sword, failed like a mountain river  
Which rushes forth in foam to sink in sands for ever.            \_2460

15.  
Sorrow and shame, to see with their own kind  
Our human brethren mix, like beasts of blood,  
To mutual ruin armed by one behind  
Who sits and scoffs!--That friend so mild and good,  
Who like its shadow near my youth had stood,                    \_2465  
Was stabbed!--my old preserver's hoary hair  
With the flesh clinging to its roots, was strewed  
Under my feet!--I lost all sense or care,  
And like the rest I grew desperate and unaware.

16.  
The battle became ghastlier--in the midst                        \_2470  
I paused, and saw, how ugly and how fell  
O Hate! thou art, even when thy life thou shedd'st  
For love. The ground in many a little dell  
Was broken, up and down whose steeps befell  
Alternate victory and defeat, and there                        \_2475  
The combatants with rage most horrible  
Strove, and their eyes started with cracking stare,  
And impotent their tongues they lolled into the air,

17.  
Flaccid and foamy, like a mad dog's hanging;  
Want, and Moon-madness, and the pest's swift Bane                \_2480  
When its shafts smite--while yet its bow is twanging--  
Have each their mark and sign--some ghastly stain;  
And this was thine, O War! of hate and pain  
Thou loathed slave! I saw all shapes of death  
And ministered to many, o'er the plain                        \_2485  
While carnage in the sunbeam's warmth did seethe,  
Till twilight o'er the east wove her serenest wreath.

18.  
The few who yet survived, resolute and firm  
Around me fought. At the decline of day  
Winding above the mountain's snowy term                        \_2490

New banners shone; they quivered in the ray  
Of the sun's unseen orb--ere night the array  
Of fresh troops hemmed us in--of those brave bands  
I soon survived alone--and now I lay  
Vanquished and faint, the grasp of bloody hands                    \_2495  
I felt, and saw on high the glare of falling brands,

19.  
When on my foes a sudden terror came,  
And they fled, scattering--lo! with reinless speed  
A black Tartarian horse of giant frame  
Comes trampling over the dead, the living bleed                    \_2500  
Beneath the hoofs of that tremendous steed,  
On which, like to an Angel, robed in white,  
Sate one waving a sword;--the hosts recede  
And fly, as through their ranks with awful might,  
Sweeps in the shadow of eve that Phantom swift and bright;           \_2505

20.  
And its path made a solitude.--I rose  
And marked its coming: it relaxed its course  
As it approached me, and the wind that flows  
Through night, bore accents to mine ear whose force  
Might create smiles in death--the Tartar horse                    \_2510  
Paused, and I saw the shape its might which swayed,  
And heard her musical pants, like the sweet source  
Of waters in the desert, as she said,  
'Mount with me, Laon, now'--I rapidly obeyed.

21.  
Then: 'Away! away!' she cried, and stretched her sword                \_2515  
As 'twere a scourge over the courser's head,  
And lightly shook the reins.--We spake no word,  
But like the vapour of the tempest fled  
Over the plain; her dark hair was dispread  
Like the pine's locks upon the lingering blast;                    \_2520  
Over mine eyes its shadowy strings it spread  
Fitfully, and the hills and streams fled fast,  
As o'er their glimmering forms the steed's broad shadow passed.

22.  
And his hoofs ground the rocks to fire and dust,  
His strong sides made the torrents rise in spray,                    \_2525  
And turbulence, as of a whirlwind's gust  
Surrounded us;--and still away! away!  
Through the desert night we sped, while she always  
Gazed on a mountain which we neared, whose crest,  
Crowned with a marble ruin, in the ray                                \_2530  
Of the obscure stars gleamed;--its rugged breast  
The steed strained up, and then his impulse did arrest.

23.  
A rocky hill which overhung the Ocean:--



From that lone ruin, when the steed that panted  
Paused, might be heard the murmur of the motion                    \_2535  
Of waters, as in spots for ever haunted  
By the choicest winds of Heaven, which are enchanted  
To music, by the wand of Solitude,  
That wizard wild, and the far tents implanted  
Upon the plain, be seen by those who stood                       \_2540  
Thence marking the dark shore of Ocean's curved flood.

24.

One moment these were heard and seen--another  
Passed; and the two who stood beneath that night,  
Each only heard, or saw, or felt the other;  
As from the lofty steed she did alight,                               \_2545  
Cythna, (for, from the eyes whose deepest light  
Of love and sadness made my lips feel pale  
With influence strange of mournfullest delight,  
My own sweet Cythna looked), with joy did quail,  
And felt her strength in tears of human weakness fail.               \_2550

25.

And for a space in my embrace she rested,  
Her head on my unquiet heart reposing,  
While my faint arms her languid frame invested;  
At length she looked on me, and half unclosing  
Her tremulous lips, said, 'Friend, thy bands were losing               \_2555  
The battle, as I stood before the King  
In bonds.--I burst them then, and swiftly choosing  
The time, did seize a Tartar's sword, and spring  
Upon his horse, and swift, as on the whirlwind's wing,

26.

'Have thou and I been borne beyond pursuer,                       \_2560  
And we are here.'--Then, turning to the steed,  
She pressed the white moon on his front with pure  
And rose-like lips, and many a fragrant weed  
From the green ruin plucked, that he might feed;--  
But I to a stone seat that Maiden led,                               \_2565  
And, kissing her fair eyes, said, 'Thou hast need  
Of rest,' and I heaped up the courser's bed  
In a green mossy nook, with mountain flowers dispread.

27.

Within that ruin, where a shattered portal  
Looks to the eastern stars, abandoned now                       \_2570  
By man, to be the home of things immortal,  
Memories, like awful ghosts which come and go,  
And must inherit all he builds below,  
When he is gone, a hall stood; o'er whose roof  
Fair clinging weeds with ivy pale did grow,                       \_2575  
Clasping its gray rents with a verdurous woof,  
A hanging dome of leaves, a canopy moon-proof.

28.

The autumnal winds, as if spell-bound, had made  
A natural couch of leaves in that recess,  
Which seasons none disturbed, but, in the shade                    \_2580  
Of flowering parasites, did Spring love to dress  
With their sweet blooms the wintry loneliness  
Of those dead leaves, shedding their stars, whene'er  
The wandering wind her nurslings might caress;  
Whose intertwining fingers ever there                               \_2585  
Made music wild and soft that filled the listening air.

29.

We know not where we go, or what sweet dream  
May pilot us through caverns strange and fair  
Of far and pathless passion, while the stream  
Of life, our bark doth on its whirlpools bear,                       \_2590  
Spreading swift wings as sails to the dim air;  
Nor should we seek to know, so the devotion  
Of love and gentle thoughts be heard still there  
Louder and louder from the utmost Ocean  
Of universal life, attuning its commotion.                         \_2595

30.

To the pure all things are pure! Oblivion wrapped  
Our spirits, and the fearful overthrow  
Of public hope was from our being snapped,  
Though linked years had bound it there; for now  
A power, a thirst, a knowledge, which below                       \_2600  
All thoughts, like light beyond the atmosphere,  
Clothing its clouds with grace, doth ever flow,  
Came on us, as we sate in silence there,  
Beneath the golden stars of the clear azure air;--

31.

In silence which doth follow talk that causes                    \_2605  
The baffled heart to speak with sighs and tears,  
When wildering passion swalloweth up the pauses  
Of inexpressive speech:--the youthful years  
Which we together passed, their hopes and fears,  
The blood itself which ran within our frames,                    \_2610  
That likeness of the features which endears  
The thoughts expressed by them, our very names,  
And all the winged hours which speechless memory claims,

32.

Had found a voice--and ere that voice did pass,  
The night grew damp and dim, and, through a rent                    \_2615  
Of the ruin where we sate, from the morass  
A wandering Meteor by some wild wind sent,  
Hung high in the green dome, to which it lent  
A faint and pallid lustre; while the song  
Of blasts, in which its blue hair quivering bent,                    \_2620  
Strewed strangest sounds the moving leaves among;

A wondrous light, the sound as of a spirit's tongue.

33.

The Meteor showed the leaves on which we sate,  
And Cythna's glowing arms, and the thick ties  
Of her soft hair, which bent with gathered weight                    \_2625  
My neck near hers; her dark and deepening eyes,  
Which, as twin phantoms of one star that lies  
O'er a dim well, move, though the star reposes,  
Swam in our mute and liquid ecstasies,  
Her marble brow, and eager lips, like roses,                         \_2630  
With their own fragrance pale, which Spring but half uncloses.

34.

The Meteor to its far morass returned:  
The beating of our veins one interval  
Made still; and then I felt the blood that burned  
Within her frame, mingle with mine, and fall                         \_2635  
Around my heart like fire; and over all  
A mist was spread, the sickness of a deep  
And speechless swoon of joy, as might befall  
Two disunited spirits when they leap  
In union from this earth's obscure and fading sleep.                 \_2640

35.

Was it one moment that confounded thus  
All thought, all sense, all feeling, into one  
Unutterable power, which shielded us  
Even from our own cold looks, when we had gone  
Into a wide and wild oblivion   \_2645  
Of tumult and of tenderness? or now  
Had ages, such as make the moon and sun,  
The seasons, and mankind their changes know,  
Left fear and time unfelt by us alone below?

36.

I know not. What are kisses whose fire clasps                         \_2650  
The failing heart in languishment, or limb  
Twined within limb? or the quick dying gasps  
Of the life meeting, when the faint eyes swim  
Through tears of a wide mist boundless and dim,  
In one caress? What is the strong control                             \_2655  
Which leads the heart that dizzy steep to climb,  
Where far over the world those vapours roll  
Which blend two restless frames in one reposing soul?

37.

It is the shadow which doth float unseen,  
But not unfelt, o'er blind mortality,                                 \_2660  
Whose divine darkness fled not from that green  
And lone recess, where lapped in peace did lie  
Our linked frames, till, from the changing sky  
That night and still another day had fled;  
And then I saw and felt. The moon was high,                         \_2665

And clouds, as of a coming storm, were spread  
Under its orb,--loud winds were gathering overhead.

38.

Cythna's sweet lips seemed lurid in the moon,  
Her fairest limbs with the night wind were chill,  
And her dark tresses were all loosely strewn                     \_2670  
O'er her pale bosom:--all within was still,  
And the sweet peace of joy did almost fill  
The depth of her unfathomable look;--  
And we sate calmly, though that rocky hill,  
The waves contending in its caverns strook,                     \_2675  
For they foreknew the storm, and the gray ruin shook.

39.

There we unheeding sate, in the communion  
Of interchanged vows, which, with a rite  
Of faith most sweet and sacred, stamped our union.--  
Few were the living hearts which could unite                     \_2680  
Like ours, or celebrate a bridal night  
With such close sympathies, for they had sprung  
From linked youth, and from the gentle might  
Of earliest love, delayed and cherished long,  
Which common hopes and fears made, like a tempest, strong.                     \_2685

40.

And such is Nature's law divine, that those  
Who grow together cannot choose but love,  
If faith or custom do not interpose,  
Or common slavery mar what else might move  
All gentlest thoughts; as in the sacred grove                     \_2690  
Which shades the springs of Ethiopian Nile,  
That living tree which, if the arrowy dove  
Strike with her shadow, shrinks in fear awhile,  
But its own kindred leaves clasps while the sunbeams smile;

41.

And clings to them, when darkness may dissever                     \_2695  
The close caresses of all duller plants  
Which bloom on the wide earth--thus we for ever  
Were linked, for love had nursed us in the haunts  
Where knowledge, from its secret source enchants  
Young hearts with the fresh music of its springing,                     \_2700  
Ere yet its gathered flood feeds human wants,  
As the great Nile feeds Egypt; ever flinging  
Light on the woven boughs which o'er its waves are swinging.

42.

The tones of Cythna's voice like echoes were  
Of those far murmuring streams; they rose and fell,                     \_2705  
Mixed with mine own in the tempestuous air,--  
And so we sate, until our talk befell  
Of the late ruin, swift and horrible,

And how those seeds of hope might yet be sown,  
Whose fruit is evil's mortal poison: well,                    \_2710  
For us, this ruin made a watch-tower lone,  
But Cythna's eyes looked faint, and now two days were gone

43.  
Since she had food:--therefore I did awaken  
The Tartar steed, who, from his ebon mane  
Soon as the clinging slumbers he had shaken,                    \_2715  
Bent his thin head to seek the brazen rein,  
Following me obediently; with pain  
Of heart, so deep and dread, that one caress,  
When lips and heart refuse to part again  
Till they have told their fill, could scarce express            \_2720  
The anguish of her mute and fearful tenderness,

44.  
Cythna beheld me part, as I bestrode  
That willing steed--the tempest and the night,  
Which gave my path its safety as I rode  
Down the ravine of rocks, did soon unite                        \_2725  
The darkness and the tumult of their might  
Borne on all winds.--Far through the streaming rain  
Floating at intervals the garments white  
Of Cythna gleamed, and her voice once again  
Came to me on the gust, and soon I reached the plain.        \_2730

45.  
I dreaded not the tempest, nor did he  
Who bore me, but his eyeballs wide and red  
Turned on the lightning's cleft exultingly;  
And when the earth beneath his tameless tread,  
Shook with the sullen thunder, he would spread                \_2735  
His nostrils to the blast, and joyously  
Mock the fierce peal with neighings;--thus we sped  
O'er the lit plain, and soon I could descry  
Where Death and Fire had gorged the spoil of victory.

46.  
There was a desolate village in a wood                         \_2740  
Whose bloom-inwoven leaves now scattering fed  
The hungry storm; it was a place of blood,  
A heap of hearthless walls;--the flames were dead  
Within those dwellings now,--the life had fled  
From all those corpses now,--but the wide sky                 \_2745  
Flooded with lightning was ribbed overhead  
By the black rafters, and around did lie  
Women, and babes, and men, slaughtered confusedly.

47.  
Beside the fountain in the market-place  
Dismounting, I beheld those corpses stare                    \_2750  
With horny eyes upon each other's face,

And on the earth and on the vacant air,  
And upon me, close to the waters where  
I stooped to slake my thirst;--I shrank to taste,  
For the salt bitterness of blood was there;                    \_2755  
But tied the steed beside, and sought in haste  
If any yet survived amid that ghastly waste.

48.  
No living thing was there beside one woman,  
Whom I found wandering in the streets, and she  
Was withered from a likeness of aught human                    \_2760  
Into a fiend, by some strange misery:  
Soon as she heard my steps she leaped on me,  
And glued her burning lips to mine, and laughed  
With a loud, long, and frantic laugh of glee,  
And cried, 'Now, Mortal, thou hast deeply quaffed                \_2765  
The Plague's blue kisses--soon millions shall pledge the draught!

49.  
'My name is Pestilence--this bosom dry,  
Once fed two babes--a sister and a brother--  
When I came home, one in the blood did lie                    \_2770  
Of three death-wounds--the flames had ate the other!  
Since then I have no longer been a mother,  
But I am Pestilence;--hither and thither  
I flit about, that I may slay and smother:--  
All lips which I have kissed must surely wither,  
But Death's--if thou art he, we'll go to work together!        \_2775

50.  
'What seek'st thou here? The moonlight comes in flashes,--  
The dew is rising dankly from the dell--  
'Twill moisten her! and thou shalt see the gashes  
In my sweet boy, now full of worms--but tell  
First what thou seek'st.'--'I seek for food.'--'Tis well,            \_2780  
Thou shalt have food. Famine, my paramour,  
Waits for us at the feast--cruel and fell  
Is Famine, but he drives not from his door  
Those whom these lips have kissed, alone. No more, no more!

51.  
As thus she spake, she grasped me with the strength            \_2785  
Of madness, and by many a ruined hearth  
She led, and over many a corpse:--at length  
We came to a lone hut where on the earth  
Which made its floor, she in her ghastly mirth,  
Gathering from all those homes now desolate,                \_2790  
Had piled three heaps of loaves, making a dearth  
Among the dead--round which she set in state  
A ring of cold, stiff babes; silent and stark they sate.

52.  
She leaped upon a pile, and lifted high

Her mad looks to the lightning, and cried: 'Eat!                    \_2795  
Share the great feast--to-morrow we must die!  
And then she spurned the loaves with her pale feet,  
Towards her bloodless guests;--that sight to meet,  
Mine eyes and my heart ached, and but that she  
Who loved me, did with absent looks defeat                    \_2800  
Despair, I might have raved in sympathy;  
But now I took the food that woman offered me;

53.

And vainly having with her madness striven  
If I might win her to return with me,  
Departed. In the eastern beams of Heaven                    \_2805  
The lightning now grew pallid--rapidly,  
As by the shore of the tempestuous sea  
The dark steed bore me; and the mountain gray  
Soon echoed to his hoofs, and I could see  
Cythna among the rocks, where she alway                    \_2810  
Had sate with anxious eyes fixed on the lingering day.

54.

And joy was ours to meet: she was most pale,  
Famished, and wet and weary, so I cast  
My arms around her, lest her steps should fail  
As to our home we went, and thus embraced,                    \_2815  
Her full heart seemed a deeper joy to taste  
Than e'er the prosperous know; the steed behind  
Trode peacefully along the mountain waste;  
We reached our home ere morning could unbind  
Night's latest veil, and on our bridal-couch reclined.                    \_2820

55.

Her chilled heart having cherished in my bosom,  
And sweetest kisses past, we two did share  
Our peaceful meal:--as an autumnal blossom  
Which spreads its shrunk leaves in the sunny air,  
After cold showers, like rainbows woven there,                    \_2825  
Thus in her lips and cheeks the vital spirit  
Mantled, and in her eyes, an atmosphere  
Of health, and hope; and sorrow languished near it,  
And fear, and all that dark despondence doth inherit.

NOTES:

\_2397 -isle. Bradley, who cps. Marianne's Dream, St. 12. See note at end.

CANTO 7.

1.

So we sate joyous as the morning ray                    \_2830  
Which fed upon the wrecks of night and storm  
Now lingering on the winds; light airs did play

Among the dewy weeds, the sun was warm,  
And we sate linked in the inwoven charm  
Of converse and caresses sweet and deep,                     \_2835  
Speechless caresses, talk that might disarm  
Time, though he wield the darts of death and sleep,  
And those thrice mortal barbs in his own poison steep.

2.  
I told her of my sufferings and my madness,  
And how, awakened from that dreamy mood                     \_2840  
By Liberty's uprising, the strength of gladness  
Came to my spirit in my solitude;  
And all that now I was--while tears pursued  
Each other down her fair and listening cheek  
Fast as the thoughts which fed them, like a flood             \_2845  
From sunbright dales; and when I ceased to speak,  
Her accents soft and sweet the pausing air did wake.

3.  
She told me a strange tale of strange endurance,  
Like broken memories of many a heart  
Woven into one; to which no firm assurance,                 \_2850  
So wild were they, could her own faith impart.  
She said that not a tear did dare to start  
From the swollen brain, and that her thoughts were firm  
When from all mortal hope she did depart,  
Borne by those slaves across the Ocean's term,                 \_2855  
And that she reached the port without one fear infirm.

4.  
One was she among many there, the thralls  
Of the cold Tyrant's cruel lust; and they  
Laughed mournfully in those polluted halls;  
But she was calm and sad, musing away                     \_2860  
On loftiest enterprise, till on a day  
The Tyrant heard her singing to her lute  
A wild, and sad, and spirit-thrilling lay,  
Like winds that die in wastes--one moment mute  
The evil thoughts it made, which did his breast pollute.     \_2865

5.  
Even when he saw her wondrous loveliness,  
One moment to great Nature's sacred power  
He bent, and was no longer passionless;  
But when he bade her to his secret bower  
Be borne, a loveless victim, and she tore                     \_2870  
Her locks in agony, and her words of flame  
And mightier looks availed not; then he bore  
Again his load of slavery, and became  
A king, a heartless beast, a pageant and a name.

6.  
She told me what a loathsome agony                     \_2875



Is that when selfishness mocks love's delight,  
Foul as in dream's most fearful imagery,  
To dally with the mowing dead--that night  
All torture, fear, or horror made seem light  
Which the soul dreams or knows, and when the day        \_2880  
Shone on her awful frenzy, from the sight  
Where like a Spirit in fleshly chains she lay  
Struggling, aghast and pale the Tyrant fled away.

7.  
Her madness was a beam of light, a power  
Which dawned through the rent soul; and words it gave,        \_2885  
Gestures and looks, such as in whirlwinds bore  
Which might not be withstood--whence none could save--  
All who approached their sphere,--like some calm wave  
Vexed into whirlpools by the chasms beneath;  
And sympathy made each attendant slave                    \_2890  
Fearless and free, and they began to breathe  
Deep curses, like the voice of flames far underneath.

8.  
The King felt pale upon his noonday throne:  
At night two slaves he to her chamber sent,--  
One was a green and wrinkled eunuch, grown                \_2895  
From human shape into an instrument  
Of all things ill--distorted, bowed and bent.  
The other was a wretch from infancy  
Made dumb by poison; who nought knew or meant  
But to obey: from the fire isles came he,                \_2900  
A diver lean and strong, of Oman's coral sea.

9.  
They bore her to a bark, and the swift stroke  
Of silent rowers clove the blue moonlight seas,  
Until upon their path the morning broke;  
They anchored then, where, be there calm or breeze,        \_2905  
The gloomiest of the drear Symplegades  
Shakes with the sleepless surge;--the Ethiop there  
Wound his long arms around her, and with knees  
Like iron clasped her feet, and plunged with her  
Among the closing waves out of the boundless air.        \_2910

10.  
'Swift as an eagle stooping from the plain  
Of morning light, into some shadowy wood,  
He plunged through the green silence of the main,  
Through many a cavern which the eternal flood  
Had scooped, as dark lairs for its monster brood;        \_2915  
And among mighty shapes which fled in wonder,  
And among mightier shadows which pursued  
His heels, he wound: until the dark rocks under  
He touched a golden chain--a sound arose like thunder.

11.

'A stunning clang of massive bolts redoubling                    \_2920  
Beneath the deep--a burst of waters driven  
As from the roots of the sea, raging and bubbling:  
And in that roof of crags a space was riven  
Through which there shone the emerald beams of heaven,  
Shot through the lines of many waves inwoven,                    \_2925  
Like sunlight through acacia woods at even,  
Through which, his way the diver having cloven,  
Passed like a spark sent up out of a burning oven.

12.

'And then,' she said, 'he laid me in a cave  
Above the waters, by that chasm of sea,                            \_2930  
A fountain round and vast, in which the wave  
Imprisoned, boiled and leaped perpetually,  
Down which, one moment resting, he did flee,  
Winning the adverse depth; that spacious cell  
Like an hupathric temple wide and high,                            \_2935  
Whose aery dome is inaccessible,  
Was pierced with one round cleft through which the sunbeams fell.

13.

'Below, the fountain's brink was richly paven  
With the deep's wealth, coral, and pearl, and sand  
Like spangling gold, and purple shells engraven                    \_2940  
With mystic legends by no mortal hand,  
Left there, when thronging to the moon's command,  
The gathering waves rent the Hesperian gate  
Of mountains, and on such bright floor did stand  
Columns, and shapes like statues, and the state                    \_2945  
Of kingless thrones, which Earth did in her heart create.

14.

'The fiend of madness which had made its prey  
Of my poor heart, was lulled to sleep awhile:  
There was an interval of many a day,  
And a sea-eagle brought me food the while,                        \_2950  
Whose nest was built in that untrodden isle,  
And who, to be the gaoler had been taught  
Of that strange dungeon; as a friend whose smile  
Like light and rest at morn and even is sought  
That wild bird was to me, till madness misery brought.            \_2955

15.

'The misery of a madness slow and creeping,  
Which made the earth seem fire, the sea seem air,  
And the white clouds of noon which oft were sleeping,  
In the blue heaven so beautiful and fair,  
Like hosts of ghastly shadows hovering there;                    \_2960  
And the sea-eagle looked a fiend, who bore  
Thy mangled limbs for food!--Thus all things were  
Transformed into the agony which I wore

Even as a poisoned robe around my bosom's core.

16.

'Again I knew the day and night fast fleeing,                 \_2965  
The eagle, and the fountain, and the air;  
Another frenzy came--there seemed a being  
Within me--a strange load my heart did bear,  
As if some living thing had made its lair  
Even in the fountains of my life:--a long                     \_2970  
And wondrous vision wrought from my despair,  
Then grew, like sweet reality among  
Dim visionary woes, an unreposing throng.

17.

'Methought I was about to be a mother--  
Month after month went by, and still I dreamed             \_2975  
That we should soon be all to one another,  
I and my child; and still new pulses seemed  
To beat beside my heart, and still I deemed  
There was a babe within--and, when the rain  
Of winter through the rifted cavern streamed,             \_2980  
Methought, after a lapse of lingering pain,  
I saw that lovely shape, which near my heart had lain.

18.

'It was a babe, beautiful from its birth,--  
It was like thee, dear love, its eyes were thine,  
Its brow, its lips, and so upon the earth                     \_2985  
It laid its fingers, as now rest on mine  
Thine own, beloved!--'twas a dream divine;  
Even to remember how it fled, how swift,  
How utterly, might make the heart repine,--  
Though 'twas a dream.'--Then Cythna did uplift             \_2990  
Her looks on mine, as if some doubt she sought to shift:

19.

A doubt which would not flee, a tenderness  
Of questioning grief, a source of thronging tears;  
Which having passed, as one whom sobs oppress  
She spoke: 'Yes, in the wilderness of years                     \_2995  
Her memory, aye, like a green home appears;  
She sucked her fill even at this breast, sweet love,  
For many months. I had no mortal fears;  
Methought I felt her lips and breath approve,--  
It was a human thing which to my bosom clove.             \_3000

20.

'I watched the dawn of her first smiles; and soon  
When zenith stars were trembling on the wave,  
Or when the beams of the invisible moon,  
Or sun, from many a prism within the cave  
Their gem-born shadows to the water gave,                     \_3005  
Her looks would hunt them, and with outspread hand,

From the swift lights which might that fountain pave,  
She would mark one, and laugh, when that command  
Slighting, it lingered there, and could not understand.

21.

'Methought her looks began to talk with me;                    \_3010  
And no articulate sounds, but something sweet  
Her lips would frame,--so sweet it could not be,  
That it was meaningless; her touch would meet  
Mine, and our pulses calmly flow and beat  
In response while we slept; and on a day                        \_3015  
When I was happiest in that strange retreat,  
With heaps of golden shells we two did play,--  
Both infants, weaving wings for time's perpetual way.

22.

'Ere night, methought, her waning eyes were grown  
Weary with joy, and tired with our delight,                     \_3020  
We, on the earth, like sister twins lay down  
On one fair mother's bosom:--from that night  
She fled,--like those illusions clear and bright,  
Which dwell in lakes, when the red moon on high  
Pause ere it wakens tempest;--and her flight,                    \_3025  
Though 'twas the death of brainless fantasy,  
Yet smote my lonesome heart more than all misery.

23.

'It seemed that in the dreary night the diver  
Who brought me thither, came again, and bore  
My child away. I saw the waters quiver,                         \_3030  
When he so swiftly sunk, as once before:  
Then morning came--it shone even as of yore,  
But I was changed--the very life was gone  
Out of my heart--I wasted more and more,  
Day after day, and sitting there alone,                         \_3035  
Vexed the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan.

24.

'I was no longer mad, and yet methought  
My breasts were swoln and changed:--in every vein  
The blood stood still one moment, while that thought  
Was passing--with a gush of sickening pain                     \_3040  
It ebbed even to its withered springs again:  
When my wan eyes in stern resolve I turned  
From that most strange delusion, which would fain  
Have waked the dream for which my spirit yearned  
With more than human love,--then left it unreturned.         \_3045

25.

'So now my reason was restored to me  
I struggled with that dream, which, like a beast  
Most fierce and beautiful, in my memory  
Had made its lair, and on my heart did feast;

But all that cave and all its shapes, possessed                    \_3050  
By thoughts which could not fade, renewed each one  
Some smile, some look, some gesture which had blessed  
Me heretofore: I, sitting there alone,  
Vexed the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan.

26.  
'Time passed, I know not whether months or years;                    \_3055  
For day, nor night, nor change of seasons made  
Its note, but thoughts and unavailing tears:  
And I became at last even as a shade,  
A smoke, a cloud on which the winds have preyed,  
Till it be thin as air; until, one even,                                   \_3060  
A Nautilus upon the fountain played,  
Spreading his azure sail where breath of Heaven  
Descended not, among the waves and whirlpools driven.

27.  
'And, when the Eagle came, that lovely thing,  
Oaring with rosy feet its silver boat,                                   \_3065  
Fled near me as for shelter; on slow wing,  
The Eagle, hovering o'er his prey did float;  
But when he saw that I with fear did note  
His purpose, proffering my own food to him,  
The eager plumes subsided on his throat--                               \_3070  
He came where that bright child of sea did swim,  
And o'er it cast in peace his shadow broad and dim.

28.  
'This wakened me, it gave me human strength;  
And hope, I know not whence or wherefore, rose,  
But I resumed my ancient powers at length;                               \_3075  
My spirit felt again like one of those  
Like thine, whose fate it is to make the woes  
Of humankind their prey--what was this cave?  
Its deep foundation no firm purpose knows  
Immutable, resistless, strong to save,                                   \_3080  
Like mind while yet it mocks the all-devouring grave.

29.  
'And where was Laon? might my heart be dead,  
While that far dearer heart could move and be?  
Or whilst over the earth the pall was spread,  
Which I had sworn to rend? I might be free,                               \_3085  
Could I but win that friendly bird to me,  
To bring me ropes; and long in vain I sought  
By intercourse of mutual imagery  
Of objects, if such aid he could be taught;  
But fruit, and flowers, and boughs, yet never ropes he brought.       \_3090

30.  
'We live in our own world, and mine was made  
From glorious fantasies of hope departed:

Aye we are darkened with their floating shade,  
Or cast a lustre on them--time imparted  
Such power to me--I became fearless-hearted,                    \_3095  
My eye and voice grew firm, calm was my mind,  
And piercing, like the morn, now it has darted  
Its lustre on all hidden things, behind  
Yon dim and fading clouds which load the weary wind.

31.  
'My mind became the book through which I grew                    \_3100  
Wise in all human wisdom, and its cave,  
Which like a mine I rifled through and through,  
To me the keeping of its secrets gave--  
One mind, the type of all, the moveless wave  
Whose calm reflects all moving things that are,                   \_3105  
Necessity, and love, and life, the grave,  
And sympathy, fountains of hope and fear,  
Justice, and truth, and time, and the world's natural sphere.

32.  
'And on the sand would I make signs to range  
These woofs, as they were woven, of my thought;                   \_3110  
Clear, elemental shapes, whose smallest change  
A subtler language within language wrought:  
The key of truths which once were dimly taught  
In old Crotona;--and sweet melodies  
Of love, in that lorn solitude I caught                               \_3115  
From mine own voice in dream, when thy dear eyes  
Shone through my sleep, and did that utterance harmonize.

33.  
'Thy songs were winds whereon I fled at will,  
As in a winged chariot, o'er the plain  
Of crystal youth; and thou wert there to fill                       \_3120  
My heart with joy, and there we sate again  
On the gray margin of the glimmering main,  
Happy as then but wiser far, for we  
Smiled on the flowery grave in which were lain  
Fear, Faith and Slavery; and mankind was free,                   \_3125  
Equal, and pure, and wise, in Wisdom's prophecy.

34.  
'For to my will my fancies were as slaves  
To do their sweet and subtile ministries;  
And oft from that bright fountain's shadowy waves  
They would make human throngs gather and rise                   \_3130  
To combat with my overflowing eyes,  
And voice made deep with passion--thus I grew  
Familiar with the shock and the surprise  
And war of earthly minds, from which I drew  
The power which has been mine to frame their thoughts anew.       \_3135

35.



40.

'My spirit moved upon the sea like wind  
Which round some thymy cape will lag and hover,  
Though it can wake the still cloud, and unbind  
The strength of tempest: day was almost over,  
When through the fading light I could discover                    \_3185  
A ship approaching--its white sails were fed  
With the north wind--its moving shade did cover  
The twilight deep; the mariners in dread  
Cast anchor when they saw new rocks around them spread.

41.

'And when they saw one sitting on a crag,                                 \_3190  
They sent a boat to me;--the Sailors rowed  
In awe through many a new and fearful jag  
Of overhanging rock, through which there flowed  
The foam of streams that cannot make abode.  
They came and questioned me, but when they heard                    \_3195  
My voice, they became silent, and they stood  
And moved as men in whom new love had stirred  
Deep thoughts: so to the ship we passed without a word.

NOTES:

\_2877 dreams edition 1818.

\_2994 opprest edition 1818.

\_3115 lone solitude edition 1818.

CANTO 8.

1.

'I sate beside the Steersman then, and gazing  
Upon the west, cried, "Spread the sails! Behold!                         \_3200  
The sinking moon is like a watch-tower blazing  
Over the mountains yet;--the City of Gold  
Yon Cape alone does from the sight withhold;  
The stream is fleet--the north breathes steadily  
Beneath the stars; they tremble with the cold!                         \_3205  
Ye cannot rest upon the dreary sea!--  
Haste, haste to the warm home of happier destiny!"

2.

'The Mariners obeyed--the Captain stood  
Aloof, and, whispering to the Pilot, said,  
"Alas, alas! I fear we are pursued   \_3210  
By wicked ghosts; a Phantom of the Dead,  
The night before we sailed, came to my bed  
In dream, like that!" The Pilot then replied,  
"It cannot be--she is a human Maid--  
Her low voice makes you weep--she is some bride,                         \_3215  
Or daughter of high birth--she can be nought beside."



3.

'We passed the islets, borne by wind and stream,  
And as we sailed, the Mariners came near  
And thronged around to listen;--in the gleam  
Of the pale moon I stood, as one whom fear                    \_3220  
May not attain, and my calm voice did rear;  
"Ye are all human--yon broad moon gives light  
To millions who the selfsame likeness wear,  
Even while I speak--beneath this very night,  
Their thoughts flow on like ours, in sadness or delight.       \_3225

4.

"What dream ye? Your own hands have built an home,  
Even for yourselves on a beloved shore:  
For some, fond eyes are pining till they come,  
How they will greet him when his toils are o'er,  
And laughing babes rush from the well-known door!                   \_3230  
Is this your care? ye toil for your own good--  
Ye feel and think--has some immortal power  
Such purposes? or in a human mood,  
Dream ye some Power thus builds for man in solitude?

5.

"What is that Power? Ye mock yourselves, and give                   \_3235  
A human heart to what ye cannot know:  
As if the cause of life could think and live!  
'Twere as if man's own works should feel, and show  
The hopes, and fears, and thoughts from which they flow,  
And he be like to them! Lo! Plague is free                         \_3240  
To waste, Blight, Poison, Earthquake, Hail, and Snow,  
Disease, and Want, and worse Necessity  
Of hate and ill, and Pride, and Fear, and Tyranny!

6.

"What is that Power? Some moon-struck sophist stood  
Watching the shade from his own soul upthrown                         \_3245  
Fill Heaven and darken Earth, and in such mood  
The Form he saw and worshipped was his own,  
His likeness in the world's vast mirror shown;  
And 'twere an innocent dream, but that a faith  
Nursed by fear's dew of poison, grows thereon,                         \_3250  
And that men say, that Power has chosen Death  
On all who scorn its laws, to wreak immortal wrath.

7.

"Men say that they themselves have heard and seen,  
Or known from others who have known such things,  
A Shade, a Form, which Earth and Heaven between                         \_3255  
Wields an invisible rod--that Priests and Kings,  
Custom, domestic sway, ay, all that brings  
Man's freeborn soul beneath the oppressor's heel,  
Are his strong ministers, and that the stings

Of death will make the wise his vengeance feel,                    \_3260  
Though truth and virtue arm their hearts with tenfold steel.

8.

"And it is said, this Power will punish wrong;  
Yes, add despair to crime, and pain to pain!  
And deepest hell, and deathless snakes among,  
Will bind the wretch on whom is fixed a stain,                    \_3265  
Which, like a plague, a burden, and a bane,  
Clung to him while he lived; for love and hate,  
Virtue and vice, they say are difference vain--  
The will of strength is right--this human state  
Tyrants, that they may rule, with lies thus desolate.            \_3270

9.

"Alas, what strength? Opinion is more frail  
Than yon dim cloud now fading on the moon  
Even while we gaze, though it awhile avail  
To hide the orb of truth--and every throne  
Of Earth or Heaven, though shadow, rests thereon,                \_3275  
One shape of many names:--for this ye plough  
The barren waves of ocean, hence each one  
Is slave or tyrant; all betray and bow,  
Command, or kill, or fear, or wreak, or suffer woe.

10.

"Its names are each a sign which maketh holy                    \_3280  
All power--ay, the ghost, the dream, the shade  
Of power--lust, falsehood, hate, and pride, and folly;  
The pattern whence all fraud and wrong is made,  
A law to which mankind has been betrayed;  
And human love, is as the name well known                        \_3285  
Of a dear mother, whom the murderer laid  
In bloody grave, and into darkness thrown,  
Gathered her wildered babes around him as his own.

11.

"O Love, who to the hearts of wandering men  
Art as the calm to Ocean's weary waves!                        \_3290  
Justice, or Truth, or Joy! those only can  
From slavery and religion's labyrinth caves  
Guide us, as one clear star the seaman saves.  
To give to all an equal share of good,  
To track the steps of Freedom, though through graves                \_3295  
She pass, to suffer all in patient mood,  
To weep for crime, though stained with thy friend's dearest blood,--

12.

"To feel the peace of self-contentment's lot,  
To own all sympathies, and outrage none,  
And in the inmost bowers of sense and thought,                    \_3300  
Until life's sunny day is quite gone down,  
To sit and smile with Joy, or, not alone,

To kiss salt tears from the worn cheek of Woe;  
To live, as if to love and live were one,--  
This is not faith or law, nor those who bow                    \_3305  
To thrones on Heaven or Earth, such destiny may know.

13.  
"But children near their parents tremble now,  
Because they must obey--one rules another,  
And as one Power rules both high and low,  
So man is made the captive of his brother,                    \_3310  
And Hate is throned on high with Fear her mother,  
Above the Highest--and those fountain-cells,  
Whence love yet flowed when faith had choked all other,  
Are darkened--Woman as the bond-slave dwells  
Of man, a slave; and life is poisoned in its wells.           \_3315

14.  
"Man seeks for gold in mines, that he may weave  
A lasting chain for his own slavery;--  
In fear and restless care that he may live  
He toils for others, who must ever be  
The joyless thralls of like captivity;                         \_3320  
He murders, for his chiefs delight in ruin;  
He builds the altar, that its idol's fee  
May be his very blood; he is pursuing--  
O, blind and willing wretch!--his own obscure undoing.

15.  
"Woman!--she is his slave, she has become                    \_3325  
A thing I weep to speak--the child of scorn,  
The outcast of a desolated home;  
Falsehood, and fear, and toil, like waves have worn  
Channels upon her cheek, which smiles adorn,  
As calm decks the false Ocean:--well ye know               \_3330  
What Woman is, for none of Woman born  
Can choose but drain the bitter dregs of woe,  
Which ever from the oppressed to the oppressors flow.

16.  
"This need not be; ye might arise, and will  
That gold should lose its power, and thrones their glory;     \_3335  
That love, which none may bind, be free to fill  
The world, like light; and evil faith, grown hoary  
With crime, be quenched and die.--Yon promontory  
Even now eclipses the descending moon!--  
Dungeons and palaces are transitory--                       \_3340  
High temples fade like vapour--Man alone  
Remains, whose will has power when all beside is gone.

17.  
"Let all be free and equal!--From your hearts  
I feel an echo; through my inmost frame  
Like sweetest sound, seeking its mate, it darts--             \_3345

Whence come ye, friends? Alas, I cannot name  
All that I read of sorrow, toil, and shame,  
On your worn faces; as in legends old  
Which make immortal the disastrous fame  
Of conquerors and impostors false and bold,                     \_3350  
The discord of your hearts, I in your looks behold.

18.

"Whence come ye, friends? from pouring human blood  
Forth on the earth? Or bring ye steel and gold,  
That Kings may dupe and slay the multitude?  
Or from the famished poor, pale, weak and cold,                     \_3355  
Bear ye the earnings of their toil? Unfold!  
Speak! Are your hands in slaughter's sanguine hue  
Stained freshly? have your hearts in guile grown old?  
Know yourselves thus! ye shall be pure as dew,  
And I will be a friend and sister unto you.                     \_3360

19.

"Disguise it not--we have one human heart--  
All mortal thoughts confess a common home:  
Blush not for what may to thyself impart  
Stains of inevitable crime: the doom  
Is this, which has, or may, or must become                     \_3365  
Thine, and all humankind's. Ye are the spoil  
Which Time thus marks for the devouring tomb--  
Thou and thy thoughts and they, and all the toil  
Wherewith ye twine the rings of life's perpetual coil.

20.

"Disguise it not--ye blush for what ye hate,                     \_3370  
And Enmity is sister unto Shame;  
Look on your mind--it is the book of fate--  
Ah! it is dark with many a blazoned name  
Of misery--all are mirrors of the same;  
But the dark fiend who with his iron pen                     \_3375  
Dipped in scorn's fiery poison, makes his fame  
Enduring there, would o'er the heads of men  
Pass harmless, if they scorned to make their hearts his den.

21.

"Yes, it is Hate, that shapeless fiendly thing  
Of many names, all evil, some divine,                     \_3380  
Whom self-contempt arms with a mortal sting;  
Which, when the heart its snaky folds entwine  
Is wasted quite, and when it doth repine  
To gorge such bitter prey, on all beside  
It turns with ninefold rage, as with its twine                     \_3385  
When Amphisbaena some fair bird has tied,  
Soon o'er the putrid mass he threats on every side.

22.

"Reproach not thine own soul, but know thyself,

Nor hate another's crime, nor loathe thine own.  
It is the dark idolatry of self, \_3390  
Which, when our thoughts and actions once are gone,  
Demands that man should weep, and bleed, and groan;  
Oh, vacant expiation! Be at rest.--  
The past is Death's, the future is thine own;  
And love and joy can make the foulest breast \_3395  
A paradise of flowers, where peace might build her nest.

23.  
"Speak thou! whence come ye?"--A Youth made reply:  
"Wearily, wearily o'er the boundless deep  
We sail;--thou readest well the misery  
Told in these faded eyes, but much doth sleep \_3400  
Within, which there the poor heart loves to keep,  
Or dare not write on the dishonoured brow;  
Even from our childhood have we learned to steep  
The bread of slavery in the tears of woe,  
And never dreamed of hope or refuge until now. \_3405

24.  
"Yes--I must speak--my secret should have perished  
Even with the heart it wasted, as a brand  
Fades in the dying flame whose life it cherished,  
But that no human bosom can withstand  
Thee, wondrous Lady, and the mild command \_3410  
Of thy keen eyes:--yes, we are wretched slaves,  
Who from their wonted loves and native land  
Are reft, and bear o'er the dividing waves  
The unregarded prey of calm and happy graves.

25.  
"We drag afar from pastoral vales the fairest \_3415  
Among the daughters of those mountains lone,  
We drag them there, where all things best and rarest  
Are stained and trampled:--years have come and gone  
Since, like the ship which bears me, I have known  
No thought;--but now the eyes of one dear Maid \_3420  
On mine with light of mutual love have shone--  
She is my life,--I am but as the shade  
Of her,--a smoke sent up from ashes, soon to fade.

26.  
"For she must perish in the Tyrant's hall--  
Alas, alas!"--He ceased, and by the sail \_3425  
Sate cowering--but his sobs were heard by all,  
And still before the ocean and the gale  
The ship fled fast till the stars 'gan to fail;  
And, round me gathered with mute countenance,  
The Seamen gazed, the Pilot, worn and pale \_3430  
With toil, the Captain with gray locks, whose glance  
Met mine in restless awe--they stood as in a trance.

27.

"Recede not! pause not now! Thou art grown old,  
But Hope will make thee young, for Hope and Youth  
Are children of one mother, even Love--behold!                    \_3435  
The eternal stars gaze on us!--is the truth  
Within your soul? care for your own, or ruth  
For others' sufferings? do ye thirst to bear  
A heart which not the serpent Custom's tooth  
May violate?--Be free! and even here,                            \_3440  
Swear to be firm till death!" They cried, "We swear! We swear!"

28.

'The very darkness shook, as with a blast  
Of subterranean thunder, at the cry;  
The hollow shore its thousand echoes cast  
Into the night, as if the sea and sky,                            \_3445  
And earth, rejoiced with new-born liberty,  
For in that name they swore! Bolts were undrawn,  
And on the deck, with unaccustomed eye  
The captives gazing stood, and every one  
Shrank as the inconstant torch upon her countenance shone.       \_3450

29.

'They were earth's purest children, young and fair,  
With eyes the shrines of unawakened thought,  
And brows as bright as Spring or Morning, ere  
Dark time had there its evil legend wrought  
In characters of cloud which wither not.--                       \_3455  
The change was like a dream to them; but soon  
They knew the glory of their altered lot,  
In the bright wisdom of youth's breathless noon,  
Sweet talk, and smiles, and sighs, all bosoms did attune.

30.

'But one was mute; her cheeks and lips most fair,                   \_3460  
Changing their hue like lilies newly blown,  
Beneath a bright acacia's shadowy hair,  
Waved by the wind amid the sunny noon,  
Showed that her soul was quivering; and full soon  
That Youth arose, and breathlessly did look                       \_3465  
On her and me, as for some speechless boon:  
I smiled, and both their hands in mine I took,  
And felt a soft delight from what their spirits shook.

CANTO 9.

1.

'That night we anchored in a woody bay,  
And sleep no more around us dared to hover                       \_3470  
Than, when all doubt and fear has passed away,  
It shades the couch of some unresting lover,  
Whose heart is now at rest: thus night passed over

In mutual joy:--around, a forest grew  
Of poplars and dark oaks, whose shade did cover                    \_3475  
The waning stars pranked in the waters blue,  
And trembled in the wind which from the morning flew.

2.  
'The joyous Mariners, and each free Maiden  
Now brought from the deep forest many a bough,  
With woodland spoil most innocently laden;                         \_3480  
Soon wreaths of budding foliage seemed to flow  
Over the mast and sails, the stern and prow  
Were canopied with blooming boughs,--the while  
On the slant sun's path o'er the waves we go  
Rejoicing, like the dwellers of an isle                                 \_3485  
Doomed to pursue those waves that cannot cease to smile.

3.  
'The many ships spotting the dark blue deep  
With snowy sails, fled fast as ours came nigh,  
In fear and wonder; and on every steep  
Thousands did gaze, they heard the startling cry,                     \_3490  
Like Earth's own voice lifted unconquerably  
To all her children, the unbounded mirth,  
The glorious joy of thy name--Liberty!  
They heard!--As o'er the mountains of the earth  
From peak to peak leap on the beams of Morning's birth:             \_3495

4.  
'So from that cry over the boundless hills  
Sudden was caught one universal sound,  
Like a volcano's voice, whose thunder fills  
Remotest skies,--such glorious madness found  
A path through human hearts with stream which drowned             \_3500  
Its struggling fears and cares, dark Custom's brood;  
They knew not whence it came, but felt around  
A wide contagion poured--they called aloud  
On Liberty--that name lived on the sunny flood.

5.  
'We reached the port.--Alas! from many spirits                         \_3505  
The wisdom which had waked that cry, was fled,  
Like the brief glory which dark Heaven inherits  
From the false dawn, which fades ere it is spread,  
Upon the night's devouring darkness shed:  
Yet soon bright day will burst--even like a chasm                     \_3510  
Of fire, to burn the shrouds outworn and dead,  
Which wrap the world; a wide enthusiasm,  
To cleanse the fevered world as with an earthquake's spasm!

6.  
'I walked through the great City then, but free  
From shame or fear; those toil-worn Mariners                         \_3515  
And happy Maidens did encompass me;

And like a subterranean wind that stirs  
Some forest among caves, the hopes and fears  
From every human soul, a murmur strange  
Made as I passed; and many wept, with tears                    \_3520  
Of joy and awe, and winged thoughts did range,  
And half-extinguished words, which prophesied of change.

7.  
'For, with strong speech I tore the veil that hid  
Nature, and Truth, and Liberty, and Love,--  
As one who from some mountain's pyramid                         \_3525  
Points to the unrisen sun!--the shades approve  
His truth, and flee from every stream and grove.  
Thus, gentle thoughts did many a bosom fill,--  
Wisdom, the mail of tried affections wove  
For many a heart, and tameless scorn of ill,                     \_3530  
Thrice steeped in molten steel the unconquerable will.

8.  
'Some said I was a maniac wild and lost;  
Some, that I scarce had risen from the grave,  
The Prophet's virgin bride, a heavenly ghost:--  
Some said, I was a fiend from my weird cave,                     \_3535  
Who had stolen human shape, and o'er the wave,  
The forest, and the mountain, came;--some said  
I was the child of God, sent down to save  
Woman from bonds and death, and on my head  
The burden of their sins would frightfully be laid.             \_3540

9.  
'But soon my human words found sympathy  
In human hearts: the purest and the best,  
As friend with friend, made common cause with me,  
And they were few, but resolute;--the rest,  
Ere yet success the enterprise had blessed,                     \_3545  
Leagued with me in their hearts;--their meals, their slumber,  
Their hourly occupations, were possessed  
By hopes which I had armed to outnumber  
Those hosts of meaner cares, which life's strong wings encumber.

10.  
'But chiefly women, whom my voice did waken                     \_3550  
From their cold, careless, willing slavery,  
Sought me: one truth their dreary prison has shaken,--  
They looked around, and lo! they became free!  
Their many tyrants sitting desolately  
In slave-deserted halls, could none restrain;                     \_3555  
For wrath's red fire had withered in the eye,  
Whose lightning once was death,--nor fear, nor gain  
Could tempt one captive now to lock another's chain.

11.  
'Those who were sent to bind me, wept, and felt



Their minds outsoar the bonds which clasped them round,            \_3560  
Even as a waxen shape may waste and melt  
In the white furnace; and a visioned swound,  
A pause of hope and awe the City bound,  
Which, like the silence of a tempest's birth,  
When in its awful shadow it has wound                               \_3565  
The sun, the wind, the ocean, and the earth,  
Hung terrible, ere yet the lightnings have leaped forth.

12.

'Like clouds inwoven in the silent sky,  
By winds from distant regions meeting there,  
In the high name of truth and liberty,                               \_3570  
Around the City millions gathered were,  
By hopes which sprang from many a hidden lair,--  
Words which the lore of truth in hues of flame  
Arrayed, thine own wild songs which in the air  
Like homeless odours floated, and the name                               \_3575  
Of thee, and many a tongue which thou hadst dipped in flame.

13.

'The Tyrant knew his power was gone, but Fear,  
The nurse of Vengeance, bade him wait the event--  
That perfidy and custom, gold and prayer,  
And whatsoever, when force is impotent,                               \_3580  
To fraud the sceptre of the world has lent,  
Might, as he judged, confirm his failing sway.  
Therefore throughout the streets, the Priests he sent  
To curse the rebels.--To their gods did they  
For Earthquake, Plague, and Want, kneel in the public way.           \_3585

14.

'And grave and hoary men were bribed to tell  
From seats where law is made the slave of wrong,  
How glorious Athens in her splendour fell,  
Because her sons were free,--and that among  
Mankind, the many to the few belong,                               \_3590  
By Heaven, and Nature, and Necessity.  
They said, that age was truth, and that the young  
Marred with wild hopes the peace of slavery,  
With which old times and men had quelled the vain and free.

15.

'And with the falsehood of their poisonous lips                       \_3595  
They breathed on the enduring memory  
Of sages and of bards a brief eclipse;  
There was one teacher, who necessity  
Had armed with strength and wrong against mankind,  
His slave and his avenger aye to be;                               \_3600  
That we were weak and sinful, frail and blind,  
And that the will of one was peace, and we  
Should seek for nought on earth but toil and misery--

16.

"For thus we might avoid the hell hereafter."  
So spake the hypocrites, who cursed and lied;                     \_3605  
Alas, their sway was past, and tears and laughter  
Clung to their hoary hair, withering the pride  
Which in their hollow hearts dared still abide;  
And yet obscener slaves with smoother brow,  
And sneers on their strait lips, thin, blue and wide,             \_3610  
Said that the rule of men was over now,  
And hence, the subject world to woman's will must bow;

17.

'And gold was scattered through the streets, and wine  
Flowed at a hundred feasts within the wall.  
In vain! the steady towers in Heaven did shine                 \_3615  
As they were wont, nor at the priestly call  
Left Plague her banquet in the Ethiop's hall,  
Nor Famine from the rich man's portal came,  
Where at her ease she ever preys on all  
Who throng to kneel for food: nor fear nor shame,             \_3620  
Nor faith, nor discord, dimmed hope's newly kindled flame.

18.

'For gold was as a god whose faith began  
To fade, so that its worshippers were few,  
And Faith itself, which in the heart of man  
Gives shape, voice, name, to spectral Terror, knew             \_3625  
Its downfall, as the altars lonelier grew,  
Till the Priests stood alone within the fane;  
The shafts of falsehood unpolluting flew,  
And the cold sneers of calumny were vain,  
The union of the free with discord's brand to stain.           \_3630

19.

'The rest thou knowest.--Lo! we two are here--  
We have survived a ruin wide and deep--  
Strange thoughts are mine.--I cannot grieve or fear,  
Sitting with thee upon this lonely steep  
I smile, though human love should make me weep.             \_3635  
We have survived a joy that knows no sorrow,  
And I do feel a mighty calmness creep  
Over my heart, which can no longer borrow  
Its hues from chance or change, dark children of to-morrow.

20.

'We know not what will come--yet, Laon, dearest,             \_3640  
Cythna shall be the prophetess of Love,  
Her lips shall rob thee of the grace thou wearest,  
To hide thy heart, and clothe the shapes which rove  
Within the homeless Future's wintry grove;  
For I now, sitting thus beside thee, seem                     \_3645  
Even with thy breath and blood to live and move,  
And violence and wrong are as a dream

Which rolls from steadfast truth, an unreturning stream.

21.

'The blasts of Autumn drive the winged seeds  
Over the earth,--next come the snows, and rain,                    \_3650  
And frosts, and storms, which dreary Winter leads  
Out of his Scythian cave, a savage train;  
Behold! Spring sweeps over the world again,  
Shedding soft dews from her ethereal wings;  
Flowers on the mountains, fruits over the plain,                    \_3655  
And music on the waves and woods she flings,  
And love on all that lives, and calm on lifeless things.

22.

'O Spring, of hope, and love, and youth, and gladness  
Wind-winged emblem! brightest, best and fairest!  
Whence comest thou, when, with dark Winter's sadness                    \_3660  
The tears that fade in sunny smiles thou sharest?  
Sister of joy, thou art the child who wearest  
Thy mother's dying smile, tender and sweet;  
Thy mother Autumn, for whose grave thou bearest  
Fresh flowers, and beams like flowers, with gentle feet,                    \_3665  
Disturbing not the leaves which are her winding-sheet.

23.

'Virtue, and Hope, and Love, like light and Heaven,  
Surround the world.--We are their chosen slaves.  
Has not the whirlwind of our spirit driven  
Truth's deathless germs to thought's remotest caves?                    \_3670  
Lo, Winter comes!--the grief of many graves,  
The frost of death, the tempest of the sword,  
The flood of tyranny, whose sanguine waves  
Stagnate like ice at Faith the enchanter's word,  
And bind all human hearts in its repose abhorred.                    \_3675

24.

'The seeds are sleeping in the soil: meanwhile  
The Tyrant peoples dungeons with his prey,  
Pale victims on the guarded scaffold smile  
Because they cannot speak; and, day by day,  
The moon of wasting Science wanes away                                    \_3680  
Among her stars, and in that darkness vast  
The sons of earth to their foul idols pray,  
And gray Priests triumph, and like blight or blast  
A shade of selfish care o'er human looks is cast.

25.

'This is the winter of the world;--and here                                    \_3685  
We die, even as the winds of Autumn fade,  
Expiring in the frore and foggy air.  
Behold! Spring comes, though we must pass, who made  
The promise of its birth,--even as the shade  
Which from our death, as from a mountain, flings                                    \_3690

The future, a broad sunrise; thus arrayed  
As with the plumes of overshadowing wings,  
From its dark gulf of chains, Earth like an eagle springs.

26.

'O dearest love! we shall be dead and cold  
Before this morn may on the world arise;                    \_3695  
Wouldst thou the glory of its dawn behold?  
Alas! gaze not on me, but turn thine eyes  
On thine own heart--it is a paradise  
Which everlasting Spring has made its own,  
And while drear Winter fills the naked skies,               \_3700  
Sweet streams of sunny thought, and flowers fresh-blown,  
Are there, and weave their sounds and odours into one.

27.

'In their own hearts the earnest of the hope  
Which made them great, the good will ever find;  
And though some envious shade may interlope               \_3705  
Between the effect and it, One comes behind,  
Who aye the future to the past will bind--  
Necessity, whose sightless strength for ever  
Evil with evil, good with good must wind  
In bands of union, which no power may sever:             \_3710  
They must bring forth their kind, and be divided never!

28.

'The good and mighty of departed ages  
Are in their graves, the innocent and free,  
Heroes, and Poets, and prevailing Sages,  
Who leave the vesture of their majesty                    \_3715  
To adorn and clothe this naked world;--and we  
Are like to them--such perish, but they leave  
All hope, or love, or truth, or liberty,  
Whose forms their mighty spirits could conceive,  
To be a rule and law to ages that survive.               \_3720

29.

'So be the turf heaped over our remains  
Even in our happy youth, and that strange lot,  
Whate'er it be, when in these mingling veins  
The blood is still, be ours; let sense and thought  
Pass from our being, or be numbered not                   \_3725  
Among the things that are; let those who come  
Behind, for whom our steadfast will has bought  
A calm inheritance, a glorious doom,  
Insult with careless tread, our undivided tomb.

30.

'Our many thoughts and deeds, our life and love,           \_3730  
Our happiness, and all that we have been,  
Immortally must live, and burn and move,  
When we shall be no more;--the world has seen

A type of peace; and--as some most serene  
And lovely spot to a poor maniac's eye,                    \_3735  
After long years, some sweet and moving scene  
Of youthful hope, returning suddenly,  
Quells his long madness--thus man shall remember thee.

31.  
'And Calumny meanwhile shall feed on us,  
As worms devour the dead, and near the throne                    \_3740  
And at the altar, most accepted thus  
Shall sneers and curses be;--what we have done  
None shall dare vouch, though it be truly known;  
That record shall remain, when they must pass  
Who built their pride on its oblivion;                         \_3745  
And fame, in human hope which sculptured was,  
Survive the perished scrolls of unenduring brass.

32.  
'The while we two, beloved, must depart,  
And Sense and Reason, those enchanters fair,  
Whose wand of power is hope, would bid the heart                    \_3750  
That gazed beyond the wormy grave despair:  
These eyes, these lips, this blood, seems darkly there  
To fade in hideous ruin; no calm sleep  
Peopling with golden dreams the stagnant air,  
Seems our obscure and rotting eyes to steep                         \_3755  
In joy;--but senseless death--a ruin dark and deep!

33.  
'These are blind fancies--reason cannot know  
What sense can neither feel, nor thought conceive;  
There is delusion in the world--and woe,  
And fear, and pain--we know not whence we live,                    \_3760  
Or why, or how, or what mute Power may give  
Their being to each plant, and star, and beast,  
Or even these thoughts.--Come near me! I do weave  
A chain I cannot break--I am possessed  
With thoughts too swift and strong for one lone human breast.                    \_3765

34.  
'Yes, yes--thy kiss is sweet, thy lips are warm--  
O! willingly, beloved, would these eyes,  
Might they no more drink being from thy form,  
Even as to sleep whence we again arise,  
Close their faint orbs in death: I fear nor prize                    \_3770  
Aught that can now betide, unshared by thee--  
Yes, Love when Wisdom fails makes Cythna wise:  
Darkness and death, if death be true, must be  
Dearer than life and hope, if unenjoyed with thee.

35.  
'Alas, our thoughts flow on with stream, whose waters                    \_3775  
Return not to their fountain--Earth and Heaven,

The Ocean and the Sun, the Clouds their daughters,  
Winter, and Spring, and Morn, and Noon, and Even,  
All that we are or know, is darkly driven  
Towards one gulf.--Lo! what a change is come                    \_3780  
Since I first spake--but time shall be forgiven,  
Though it change all but thee!--She ceased--night's gloom  
Meanwhile had fallen on earth from the sky's sunless dome.

36.

Though she had ceased, her countenance uplifted  
To Heaven, still spake, with solemn glory bright;                   \_3785  
Her dark deep eyes, her lips, whose motions gifted  
The air they breathed with love, her locks undight.  
'Fair star of life and love,' I cried, 'my soul's delight,  
Why lookest thou on the crystalline skies?  
O, that my spirit were yon Heaven of night,                       \_3790  
Which gazes on thee with its thousand eyes!  
She turned to me and smiled--that smile was Paradise!

NOTES:

\_3573 hues of grace edition 1818.

CANTO 10.

1.

Was there a human spirit in the steed,  
That thus with his proud voice, ere night was gone,  
He broke our linked rest? or do indeed                       \_3795  
All living things a common nature own,  
And thought erect an universal throne,  
Where many shapes one tribute ever bear?  
And Earth, their mutual mother, does she groan  
To see her sons contend? and makes she bare                    \_3800  
Her breast, that all in peace its drainless stores may share?

2.

I have heard friendly sounds from many a tongue  
Which was not human--the lone nightingale  
Has answered me with her most soothing song,  
Out of her ivy bower, when I sate pale                         \_3805  
With grief, and sighed beneath; from many a dale  
The antelopes who flocked for food have spoken  
With happy sounds, and motions, that avail  
Like man's own speech; and such was now the token  
Of waning night, whose calm by that proud neigh was broken.   \_3810

3.

Each night, that mighty steed bore me abroad,  
And I returned with food to our retreat,  
And dark intelligence; the blood which flowed  
Over the fields, had stained the courser's feet;

Soon the dust drinks that bitter dew,--then meet                    \_3815  
The vulture, and the wild dog, and the snake,  
The wolf, and the hyaena gray, and eat  
The dead in horrid truce: their throngs did make  
Behind the steed, a chasm like waves in a ship's wake.

4.  
For, from the utmost realms of earth came pouring                    \_3820  
The banded slaves whom every despot sent  
At that throned traitor's summons; like the roaring  
Of fire, whose floods the wild deer circumvent  
In the scorched pastures of the South; so bent  
The armies of the leagued Kings around                               \_3825  
Their files of steel and flame;--the continent  
Trembled, as with a zone of ruin bound,  
Beneath their feet, the sea shook with their Navies' sound.

5.  
From every nation of the earth they came,  
The multitude of moving heartless things,                               \_3830  
Whom slaves call men: obediently they came,  
Like sheep whom from the fold the shepherd brings  
To the stall, red with blood; their many kings  
Led them, thus erring, from their native land;  
Tartar and Frank, and millions whom the wings                               \_3835  
Of Indian breezes lull, and many a band  
The Arctic Anarch sent, and Idumea's sand,

6.  
Fertile in prodigies and lies;--so there  
Strange natures made a brotherhood of ill.  
The desert savage ceased to grasp in fear                               \_3840  
His Asian shield and bow, when, at the will  
Of Europe's subtler son, the bolt would kill  
Some shepherd sitting on a rock secure;  
But smiles of wondering joy his face would fill,  
And savage sympathy: those slaves impure,                               \_3845  
Each one the other thus from ill to ill did lure.

7.  
For traitorously did that foul Tyrant robe  
His countenance in lies,--even at the hour  
When he was snatched from death, then o'er the globe,  
With secret signs from many a mountain-tower,                               \_3850  
With smoke by day, and fire by night, the power  
Of Kings and Priests, those dark conspirators,  
He called:--they knew his cause their own, and swore  
Like wolves and serpents to their mutual wars  
Strange truce, with many a rite which Earth and Heaven abhors.           \_3855

8.  
Myriads had come--millions were on their way;  
The Tyrant passed, surrounded by the steel

Of hired assassins, through the public way,  
Choked with his country's dead--his footsteps reel  
On the fresh blood--he smiles. 'Ay, now I feel                    \_3860  
I am a King in truth!' he said, and took  
His royal seat, and bade the torturing wheel  
Be brought, and fire, and pincers, and the hook,  
And scorpions, that his soul on its revenge might look.

9.  
'But first, go slay the rebels--why return                    \_3865  
The victor bands?' he said, 'millions yet live,  
Of whom the weakest with one word might turn  
The scales of victory yet;--let none survive  
But those within the walls--each fifth shall give  
The expiation for his brethren here.--                    \_3870  
Go forth, and waste and kill!--'O king, forgive  
My speech,' a soldier answered--'but we fear  
The spirits of the night, and morn is drawing near;

10.  
'For we were slaying still without remorse,  
And now that dreadful chief beneath my hand               \_3875  
Defenceless lay, when on a hell-black horse,  
An Angel bright as day, waving a brand  
Which flashed among the stars, passed.'--'Dost thou stand  
Parleying with me, thou wretch?' the king replied;  
'Slaves, bind him to the wheel; and of this band,           \_3880  
Whoso will drag that woman to his side  
That scared him thus, may burn his dearest foe beside;

11.  
'And gold and glory shall be his.--Go forth!  
They rushed into the plain.--Loud was the roar  
Of their career: the horsemen shook the earth;           \_3885  
The wheeled artillery's speed the pavement tore;  
The infantry, file after file, did pour  
Their clouds on the utmost hills. Five days they slew  
Among the wasted fields; the sixth saw gore  
Stream through the city; on the seventh, the dew           \_3890  
Of slaughter became stiff, and there was peace anew:

12.  
Peace in the desert fields and villages,  
Between the gluttoned beasts and mangled dead!  
Peace in the silent streets! save when the cries  
Of victims to their fiery judgement led,                   \_3895  
Made pale their voiceless lips who seemed to dread  
Even in their dearest kindred, lest some tongue  
Be faithless to the fear yet unbetrayer;  
Peace in the Tyrant's palace, where the throng  
Waste the triumphal hours in festival and song!           \_3900

13.



Day after day the burning sun rolled on  
Over the death-polluted land--it came  
Out of the east like fire, and fiercely shone  
A lamp of Autumn, ripening with its flame  
The few lone ears of corn;--the sky became \_3905  
Stagnate with heat, so that each cloud and blast  
Languished and died,--the thirsting air did claim  
All moisture, and a rotting vapour passed  
From the unburied dead, invisible and fast.

14.  
First Want, then Plague came on the beasts; their food \_3910  
Failed, and they drew the breath of its decay.  
Millions on millions, whom the scent of blood  
Had lured, or who, from regions far away,  
Had tracked the hosts in festival array,  
From their dark deserts; gaunt and wasting now, \_3915  
Stalked like fell shades among their perished prey;  
In their green eyes a strange disease did glow,  
They sank in hideous spasm, or pains severe and slow.

15.  
The fish were poisoned in the streams; the birds  
In the green woods perished; the insect race \_3920  
Was withered up; the scattered flocks and herds  
Who had survived the wild beasts' hungry chase  
Died moaning, each upon the other's face  
In helpless agony gazing; round the City  
All night, the lean hyaenas their sad case \_3925  
Like starving infants wailed; a woeful ditty!  
And many a mother wept, pierced with unnatural pity.

16.  
Amid the aerial minarets on high,  
The Ethiopian vultures fluttering fell  
From their long line of brethren in the sky, \_3930  
Startling the concourse of mankind.--Too well  
These signs the coming mischief did foretell:--  
Strange panic first, a deep and sickening dread  
Within each heart, like ice, did sink and dwell,  
A voiceless thought of evil, which did spread \_3935  
With the quick glance of eyes, like withering lightnings shed.

17.  
Day after day, when the year wanes, the frosts  
Strip its green crown of leaves, till all is bare;  
So on those strange and congregated hosts  
Came Famine, a swift shadow, and the air \_3940  
Groaned with the burden of a new despair;  
Famine, than whom Misrule no deadlier daughter  
Feeds from her thousand breasts, though sleeping there  
With lidless eyes, lie Faith, and Plague, and Slaughter,  
A ghastly brood; conceived of Lethe's sullen water. \_3945

18.

There was no food, the corn was trampled down,  
The flocks and herds had perished; on the shore  
The dead and putrid fish were ever thrown;  
The deeps were foodless, and the winds no more  
Creaked with the weight of birds, but, as before     \_3950  
Those winged things sprang forth, were void of shade;  
The vines and orchards, Autumn's golden store,  
Were burned;--so that the meanest food was weighed  
With gold, and Avarice died before the god it made.

19.

There was no corn--in the wide market-place     \_3955  
All loathliest things, even human flesh, was sold;  
They weighed it in small scales--and many a face  
Was fixed in eager horror then: his gold  
The miser brought; the tender maid, grown bold  
Through hunger, bared her scorned charms in vain;     \_3960  
The mother brought her eldest born, controlled  
By instinct blind as love, but turned again  
And bade her infant suck, and died in silent pain.

20.

Then fell blue Plague upon the race of man.  
'O, for the sheathed steel, so late which gave     \_3965  
Oblivion to the dead, when the streets ran  
With brothers' blood! O, that the earthquake's grave  
Would gape, or Ocean lift its stifling wave!  
Vain cries--throughout the streets thousands pursued  
Each by his fiery torture howl and rave,     \_3970  
Or sit in frenzy's unimagined mood,  
Upon fresh heaps of dead; a ghastly multitude.

21.

It was not hunger now, but thirst. Each well  
Was choked with rotting corpses, and became  
A cauldron of green mist made visible     \_3975  
At sunrise. Thither still the myriads came,  
Seeking to quench the agony of the flame,  
Which raged like poison through their bursting veins;  
Naked they were from torture, without shame,  
Spotted with nameless scars and lurid blains,     \_3980  
Childhood, and youth, and age, writhing in savage pains.

22.

It was not thirst, but madness! Many saw  
Their own lean image everywhere, it went  
A ghastlier self beside them, till the awe  
Of that dread sight to self-destruction sent     \_3985  
Those shrieking victims; some, ere life was spent,  
Sought, with a horrid sympathy, to shed  
Contagion on the sound; and others rent

Their matted hair, and cried aloud, 'We tread  
On fire! the avenging Power his hell on earth has spread!' \_3990

23.

Sometimes the living by the dead were hid.  
Near the great fountain in the public square,  
Where corpses made a crumbling pyramid  
Under the sun, was heard one stifled prayer  
For life, in the hot silence of the air; \_3995  
And strange 'twas, amid that hideous heap to see  
Some shrouded in their long and golden hair,  
As if not dead, but slumbering quietly  
Like forms which sculptors carve, then love to agony.

24.

Famine had spared the palace of the king:-- \_4000  
He rioted in festival the while,  
He and his guards and priests; but Plague did fling  
One shadow upon all. Famine can smile  
On him who brings it food, and pass, with guile  
Of thankful falsehood, like a courtier gray, \_4005  
The house-dog of the throne; but many a mile  
Comes Plague, a winged wolf, who loathes always  
The garbage and the scum that strangers make her prey.

25.

So, near the throne, amid the gorgeous feast,  
Sheathed in resplendent arms, or loosely dight \_4010  
To luxury, ere the mockery yet had ceased  
That lingered on his lips, the warrior's might  
Was loosened, and a new and ghastlier night  
In dreams of frenzy lapped his eyes; he fell  
Headlong, or with stiff eyeballs sate upright \_4015  
Among the guests, or raving mad did tell  
Strange truths; a dying seer of dark oppression's hell.

26.

The Princes and the Priests were pale with terror;  
That monstrous faith wherewith they ruled mankind,  
Fell, like a shaft loosed by the bowman's error, \_4020  
On their own hearts: they sought and they could find  
No refuge--'twas the blind who led the blind!  
So, through the desolate streets to the high fane,  
The many-tongued and endless armies wind  
In sad procession: each among the train \_4025  
To his own Idol lifts his supplications vain.

27.

'O God!' they cried, 'we know our secret pride  
Has scorned thee, and thy worship, and thy name;  
Secure in human power we have defied  
Thy fearful might; we bend in fear and shame \_4030  
Before thy presence; with the dust we claim

Kindred; be merciful, O King of Heaven!  
Most justly have we suffered for thy fame  
Made dim, but be at length our sins forgiven,  
Ere to despair and death thy worshippers be driven.                    \_4035

28.  
'O King of Glory! thou alone hast power!  
Who can resist thy will? who can restrain  
Thy wrath, when on the guilty thou dost shower  
The shafts of thy revenge, a blistering rain?  
Greatest and best, be merciful again!   \_4040  
Have we not stabbed thine enemies, and made  
The Earth an altar, and the Heavens a fane,  
Where thou wert worshipped with their blood, and laid  
Those hearts in dust which would thy searchless works have weighed?

29.  
'Well didst thou loosen on this impious City   \_4045  
Thine angels of revenge: recall them now;  
Thy worshippers, abased, here kneel for pity,  
And bind their souls by an immortal vow:  
We swear by thee! and to our oath do thou  
Give sanction, from thine hell of fiends and flame,   \_4050  
That we will kill with fire and torments slow,  
The last of those who mocked thy holy name,  
And scorned the sacred laws thy prophets did proclaim.'

30.  
Thus they with trembling limbs and pallid lips  
Worshipped their own hearts' image, dim and vast,   \_4055  
Scared by the shade wherewith they would eclipse  
The light of other minds;--troubled they passed  
From the great Temple;--fiercely still and fast  
The arrows of the plague among them fell,  
And they on one another gazed aghast,   \_4060  
And through the hosts contention wild befell,  
As each of his own god the wondrous works did tell.

31.  
And Oromaze, Joshua, and Mahomet,  
Moses, and Buddh, Zerdusht, and Brahm, and Foh,  
A tumult of strange names, which never met   \_4065  
Before, as watchwords of a single woe,  
Arose; each raging votary 'gan to throw  
Aloft his armed hands, and each did howl  
'Our God alone is God!'--and slaughter now  
Would have gone forth, when from beneath a cowl   \_4070  
A voice came forth, which pierced like ice through every soul.

32.  
'Twas an Iberian Priest from whom it came,  
A zealous man, who led the legioned West,  
With words which faith and pride had steeped in flame,

To quell the unbelievers; a dire guest                     \_4075  
Even to his friends was he, for in his breast  
Did hate and guile lie watchful, intertwined,  
Twin serpents in one deep and winding nest;  
He loathed all faith beside his own, and pined  
To wreak his fear of Heaven in vengeance on mankind.                     \_4080

33.  
But more he loathed and hated the clear light  
Of wisdom and free thought, and more did fear,  
Lest, kindled once, its beams might pierce the night,  
Even where his Idol stood; for, far and near  
Did many a heart in Europe leap to hear                     \_4085  
That faith and tyranny were trampled down;  
Many a pale victim, doomed for truth to share  
The murderer's cell, or see, with helpless groan,  
The priests his children drag for slaves to serve their own.

34.  
He dared not kill the infidels with fire                     \_4090  
Or steel, in Europe; the slow agonies  
Of legal torture mocked his keen desire:  
So he made truce with those who did despise  
The expiation, and the sacrifice,  
That, though detested, Islam's kindred creed                     \_4095  
Might crush for him those deadlier enemies;  
For fear of God did in his bosom breed  
A jealous hate of man, an unreposing need.

35.  
'Peace! Peace!' he cried, 'when we are dead, the Day  
Of Judgement comes, and all shall surely know                     \_4100  
Whose God is God, each fearfully shall pay  
The errors of his faith in endless woe!  
But there is sent a mortal vengeance now  
On earth, because an impious race had spurned  
Him whom we all adore,--a subtle foe,                     \_4105  
By whom for ye this dread reward was earned,  
And kingly thrones, which rest on faith, nigh overturned.

36.  
'Think ye, because ye weep, and kneel, and pray,  
That God will lull the pestilence? It rose  
Even from beneath his throne, where, many a day,                     \_4110  
His mercy soothed it to a dark repose:  
It walks upon the earth to judge his foes;  
And what are thou and I, that he should deign  
To curb his ghastly minister, or close  
The gates of death, ere they receive the twain                     \_4115  
Who shook with mortal spells his undefended reign?

37.  
'Ay, there is famine in the gulf of hell,

Its giant worms of fire for ever yawn.--  
Their lurid eyes are on us! those who fell  
By the swift shafts of pestilence ere dawn,                    \_4120  
Are in their jaws! they hunger for the spawn  
Of Satan, their own brethren, who were sent  
To make our souls their spoil. See! see! they fawn  
Like dogs, and they will sleep with luxury spent,  
When those detested hearts their iron fangs have rent!                    \_4125

38.  
'Our God may then lull Pestilence to sleep:--  
Pile high the pyre of expiation now,  
A forest's spoil of boughs, and on the heap  
Pour venomous gums, which sullenly and slow,  
When touched by flame, shall burn, and melt, and flow,                    \_4130  
A stream of clinging fire,--and fix on high  
A net of iron, and spread forth below  
A couch of snakes, and scorpions, and the fry  
Of centipedes and worms, earth's hellish progeny!

39.  
'Let Laon and Laone on that pyre,    \_4135  
Linked tight with burning brass, perish!--then pray  
That, with this sacrifice, the withering ire  
Of Heaven may be appeased.' He ceased, and they  
A space stood silent, as far, far away  
The echoes of his voice among them died;    \_4140  
And he knelt down upon the dust, always  
Muttering the curses of his speechless pride,  
Whilst shame, and fear, and awe, the armies did divide.

40.  
His voice was like a blast that burst the portal  
Of fabled hell; and as he spake, each one    \_4145  
Saw gape beneath the chasms of fire immortal,  
And Heaven above seemed cloven, where, on a throne  
Girt round with storms and shadows, sate alone  
Their King and Judge--fear killed in every breast  
All natural pity then, a fear unknown    \_4150  
Before, and with an inward fire possessed,  
They raged like homeless beasts whom burning woods invest.

41.  
'Twas morn.--At noon the public crier went forth,  
Proclaiming through the living and the dead,  
'The Monarch saith, that his great Empire's worth    \_4155  
Is set on Laon and Laone's head:  
He who but one yet living here can lead,  
Or who the life from both their hearts can wring,  
Shall be the kingdom's heir--a glorious meed!  
But he who both alive can hither bring,    \_4160  
The Princess shall espouse, and reign an equal King.'

42.

Ere night the pyre was piled, the net of iron  
Was spread above, the fearful couch below;  
It overtopped the towers that did environ  
That spacious square; for Fear is never slow                    \_4165  
To build the thrones of Hate, her mate and foe;  
So, she scourged forth the maniac multitude  
To rear this pyramid--tottering and slow,  
Plague-stricken, foodless, like lean herds pursued  
By gadflies, they have piled the heath, and gums, and wood.     \_4170

43.

Night came, a starless and a moonless gloom.  
Until the dawn, those hosts of many a nation  
Stood round that pile, as near one lover's tomb  
Two gentle sisters mourn their desolation;  
And in the silence of that expectation,                         \_4175  
Was heard on high the reptiles' hiss and crawl--  
It was so deep--save when the devastation  
Of the swift pest, with fearful interval,  
Marking its path with shrieks, among the crowd would fall.

44.

Morn came,--among those sleepless multitudes,                    \_4180  
Madness, and Fear, and Plague, and Famine still  
Heaped corpse on corpse, as in autumnal woods  
The frosts of many a wind with dead leaves fill  
Earth's cold and sullen brooks; in silence, still  
The pale survivors stood; ere noon, the fear                         \_4185  
Of Hell became a panic, which did kill  
Like hunger or disease, with whispers drear,  
As 'Hush! hark! Come they yet?--Just Heaven! thine hour is near!'

45.

And Priests rushed through their ranks, some counterfeiting  
The rage they did inspire, some mad indeed                         \_4190  
With their own lies; they said their god was waiting  
To see his enemies writhe, and burn, and bleed,--  
And that, till then, the snakes of Hell had need  
Of human souls:--three hundred furnaces  
Soon blazed through the wide City, where, with speed,             \_4195  
Men brought their infidel kindred to appease  
God's wrath, and, while they burned, knelt round on quivering knees.

46.

The noontide sun was darkened with that smoke,  
The winds of eve dispersed those ashes gray.  
The madness which these rites had lulled, awoke                    \_4200  
Again at sunset.--Who shall dare to say  
The deeds which night and fear brought forth, or weigh  
In balance just the good and evil there?  
He might man's deep and searchless heart display,  
And cast a light on those dim labyrinths, where                    \_4205

Hope, near imagined chasms, is struggling with despair.

47.

'Tis said, a mother dragged three children then,  
To those fierce flames which roast the eyes in the head,  
And laughed, and died; and that unholy men,  
Feasting like fiends upon the infidel dead,                    \_4210  
Looked from their meal, and saw an Angel tread  
The visible floor of Heaven, and it was she!  
And, on that night, one without doubt or dread  
Came to the fire, and said, 'Stop, I am he!  
Kill me!'--They burned them both with hellish mockery.           \_4215

48.

And, one by one, that night, young maidens came,  
Beauteous and calm, like shapes of living stone  
Clothed in the light of dreams, and by the flame  
Which shrank as overgorged, they laid them down,  
And sung a low sweet song, of which alone                    \_4220  
One word was heard, and that was Liberty;  
And that some kissed their marble feet, with moan  
Like love, and died; and then that they did die  
With happy smiles, which sunk in white tranquillity.

NOTES:

\_3834 native home edition 1818.

\_3967 earthquakes edition 1818.

\_4176 reptiles']reptiles edition 1818.

CANTO 11.

1.

She saw me not--she heard me not--alone                    \_4225  
Upon the mountain's dizzy brink she stood;  
She spake not, breathed not, moved not--there was thrown  
Over her look, the shadow of a mood  
Which only clothes the heart in solitude,  
A thought of voiceless depth;--she stood alone,            \_4230  
Above, the Heavens were spread;--below, the flood  
Was murmuring in its caves;--the wind had blown  
Her hair apart, through which her eyes and forehead shone.

2.

A cloud was hanging o'er the western mountains;  
Before its blue and moveless depth were flying            \_4235  
Gray mists poured forth from the unresting fountains  
Of darkness in the North:--the day was dying:--  
Sudden, the sun shone forth, its beams were lying  
Like boiling gold on Ocean, strange to see,  
And on the shattered vapours, which defying                \_4240  
The power of light in vain, tossed restlessly



In the red Heaven, like wrecks in a tempestuous sea.

3.

It was a stream of living beams, whose bank  
On either side by the cloud's cleft was made;  
And where its chasms that flood of glory drank,                     \_4245  
Its waves gushed forth like fire, and as if swayed  
By some mute tempest, rolled on HER; the shade  
Of her bright image floated on the river  
Of liquid light, which then did end and fade--  
Her radiant shape upon its verge did shiver;                     \_4250  
Aloft, her flowing hair like strings of flame did quiver.

4.

I stood beside her, but she saw me not--  
She looked upon the sea, and skies, and earth;  
Rapture, and love, and admiration wrought  
A passion deeper far than tears, or mirth,                     \_4255  
Or speech, or gesture, or whate'er has birth  
From common joy; which with the speechless feeling  
That led her there united, and shot forth  
From her far eyes a light of deep revealing,  
All but her dearest self from my regard concealing.                     \_4260

5.

Her lips were parted, and the measured breath  
Was now heard there;--her dark and intricate eyes  
Orb within orb, deeper than sleep or death,  
Absorbed the glories of the burning skies,  
Which, mingling with her heart's deep ecstasies,                     \_4265  
Burst from her looks and gestures;--and a light  
Of liquid tenderness, like love, did rise  
From her whole frame, an atmosphere which quite  
Arrayed her in its beams, tremulous and soft and bright.

6.

She would have clasped me to her glowing frame;                     \_4270  
Those warm and odorous lips might soon have shed  
On mine the fragrance and the invisible flame  
Which now the cold winds stole;--she would have laid  
Upon my languid heart her dearest head;  
I might have heard her voice, tender and sweet;                     \_4275  
Her eyes, mingling with mine, might soon have fed  
My soul with their own joy.--One moment yet  
I gazed--we parted then, never again to meet!

7.

Never but once to meet on Earth again!  
She heard me as I fled--her eager tone                     \_4280  
Sunk on my heart, and almost wove a chain  
Around my will to link it with her own,  
So that my stern resolve was almost gone.  
'I cannot reach thee! whither dost thou fly?

My steps are faint--Come back, thou dearest one-- \_4285  
Return, ah me! return!--The wind passed by  
On which those accents died, faint, far, and lingeringly.

8.

Woe! Woe! that moonless midnight!--Want and Pest  
Were horrible, but one more fell doth rear,  
As in a hydra's swarming lair, its crest \_4290  
Eminent among those victims--even the Fear  
Of Hell: each girt by the hot atmosphere  
Of his blind agony, like a scorpion stung  
By his own rage upon his burning bier  
Of circling coals of fire; but still there clung \_4295  
One hope, like a keen sword on starting threads uphung:

9.

Not death--death was no more refuge or rest;  
Not life--it was despair to be!--not sleep,  
For fiends and chasms of fire had dispossessed  
All natural dreams: to wake was not to weep, \_4300  
But to gaze mad and pallid, at the leap  
To which the Future, like a snaky scourge,  
Or like some tyrant's eye, which aye doth keep  
Its withering beam upon his slaves, did urge  
Their steps; they heard the roar of Hell's sulphureous surge. \_4305

10.

Each of that multitude, alone, and lost  
To sense of outward things, one hope yet knew;  
As on a foam-girt crag some seaman tossed  
Stares at the rising tide, or like the crew  
Whilst now the ship is splitting through and through; \_4310  
Each, if the tramp of a far steed was heard,  
Started from sick despair, or if there flew  
One murmur on the wind, or if some word  
Which none can gather yet, the distant crowd has stirred.

11.

Why became cheeks, wan with the kiss of death, \_4315  
Paler from hope? they had sustained despair.  
Why watched those myriads with suspended breath  
Sleepless a second night? they are not here,  
The victims, and hour by hour, a vision drear,  
Warm corpses fall upon the clay-cold dead; \_4320  
And even in death their lips are wreathed with fear.--  
The crowd is mute and moveless--overhead  
Silent Arcturus shines--'Ha! hear'st thou not the tread

12.

'Of rushing feet? laughter? the shout, the scream,  
Of triumph not to be contained? See! hark! \_4325  
They come, they come! give way!' Alas, ye deem  
Falsely--'tis but a crowd of maniacs stark

Driven, like a troop of spectres, through the dark,  
From the choked well, whence a bright death-fire sprung,  
A lurid earth-star, which dropped many a spark                    \_4330  
From its blue train, and spreading widely, clung  
To their wild hair, like mist the topmost pines among.

13.  
And many, from the crowd collected there,  
Joined that strange dance in fearful sympathies;  
There was the silence of a long despair,                                 \_4335  
When the last echo of those terrible cries  
Came from a distant street, like agonies  
Stifled afar.--Before the Tyrant's throne  
All night his aged Senate sate, their eyes  
In stony expectation fixed; when one                                 \_4340  
Sudden before them stood, a Stranger and alone.

14.  
Dark Priests and haughty Warriors gazed on him  
With baffled wonder, for a hermit's vest  
Concealed his face; but when he spake, his tone,  
Ere yet the matter did their thoughts arrest,--                         \_4345  
Earnest, benignant, calm, as from a breast  
Void of all hate or terror--made them start;  
For as with gentle accents he addressed  
His speech to them, on each unwilling heart  
Unusual awe did fall--a spirit-quelling dart.                         \_4350

15.  
'Ye Princes of the Earth, ye sit aghast  
Amid the ruin which yourselves have made,  
Yes, Desolation heard your trumpet's blast,  
And sprang from sleep!--dark Terror has obeyed  
Your bidding--O, that I whom ye have made                                 \_4355  
Your foe, could set my dearest enemy free  
From pain and fear! but evil casts a shade,  
Which cannot pass so soon, and Hate must be  
The nurse and parent still of an ill progeny.

16.  
'Ye turn to Heaven for aid in your distress;                                 \_4360  
Alas, that ye, the mighty and the wise,  
Who, if ye dared, might not aspire to less  
Than ye conceive of power, should fear the lies  
Which thou, and thou, didst frame for mysteries  
To blind your slaves:--consider your own thought,                         \_4365  
An empty and a cruel sacrifice  
Ye now prepare, for a vain idol wrought  
Out of the fears and hate which vain desires have brought.

17.  
'Ye seek for happiness--alas, the day!  
Ye find it not in luxury nor in gold,   \_4370

Nor in the fame, nor in the envied sway  
For which, O willing slaves to Custom old,  
Severe taskmistress! ye your hearts have sold.  
Ye seek for peace, and when ye die, to dream  
No evil dreams: all mortal things are cold                    \_4375  
And senseless then; if aught survive, I deem  
It must be love and joy, for they immortal seem.

18.

'Fear not the future, weep not for the past.  
Oh, could I win your ears to dare be now  
Glorious, and great, and calm! that ye would cast                    \_4380  
Into the dust those symbols of your woe,  
Purple, and gold, and steel! that ye would go  
Proclaiming to the nations whence ye came,  
That Want, and Plague, and Fear, from slavery flow;  
And that mankind is free, and that the shame                        \_4385  
Of royalty and faith is lost in freedom's fame!

19.

'If thus, 'tis well--if not, I come to say  
That Laon--' while the Stranger spoke, among  
The Council sudden tumult and affray  
Arose, for many of those warriors young,                            \_4390  
Had on his eloquent accents fed and hung  
Like bees on mountain-flowers; they knew the truth,  
And from their thrones in vindication sprung;  
The men of faith and law then without ruth  
Drew forth their secret steel, and stabbed each ardent youth.        \_4395

20.

They stabbed them in the back and sneered--a slave  
Who stood behind the throne, those corpses drew  
Each to its bloody, dark, and secret grave;  
And one more daring raised his steel anew  
To pierce the Stranger. 'What hast thou to do                            \_4400  
With me, poor wretch?'--Calm, solemn and severe,  
That voice unstrung his sinews, and he threw  
His dagger on the ground, and pale with fear,  
Sate silently--his voice then did the Stranger rear.

21.

'It doth avail not that I weep for ye--                                 \_4405  
Ye cannot change, since ye are old and gray,  
And ye have chosen your lot--your fame must be  
A book of blood, whence in a milder day  
Men shall learn truth, when ye are wrapped in clay:  
Now ye shall triumph. I am Laon's friend,                                \_4410  
And him to your revenge will I betray,  
So ye concede one easy boon. Attend!  
For now I speak of things which ye can apprehend.

22.

'There is a People mighty in its youth,  
A land beyond the Oceans of the West,                    \_4415  
Where, though with rudest rites, Freedom and Truth  
Are worshipped; from a glorious Mother's breast,  
Who, since high Athens fell, among the rest  
Sate like the Queen of Nations, but in woe,  
By inbred monsters outraged and oppressed,               \_4420  
Turns to her chainless child for succour now,  
It draws the milk of Power in Wisdom's fullest flow.

23.

'That land is like an Eagle, whose young gaze  
Feeds on the noontide beam, whose golden plume  
Floats moveless on the storm, and in the blaze               \_4425  
Of sunrise gleams when Earth is wrapped in gloom;  
An epitaph of glory for the tomb  
Of murdered Europe may thy fame be made,  
Great People! as the sands shalt thou become;  
Thy growth is swift as morn, when night must fade;       \_4430  
The multitudinous Earth shall sleep beneath thy shade.

24.

'Yes, in the desert there is built a home  
For Freedom. Genius is made strong to rear  
The monuments of man beneath the dome  
Of a new Heaven; myriads assemble there,                   \_4435  
Whom the proud lords of man, in rage or fear,  
Drive from their wasted homes: the boon I pray  
Is this--that Cythna shall be convoyed there--  
Nay, start not at the name--America!  
And then to you this night Laon will I betray.               \_4440

25.

'With me do what ye will. I am your foe!  
The light of such a joy as makes the stare  
Of hungry snakes like living emeralds glow,  
Shone in a hundred human eyes--'Where, where  
Is Laon? Haste! fly! drag him swiftly here!               \_4445  
We grant thy boon.'--'I put no trust in ye,  
Swear by the Power ye dread.'--'We swear, we swear!  
The Stranger threw his vest back suddenly,  
And smiled in gentle pride, and said, 'Lo! I am he!'

NOTES:

\_4321 wreathed]writhed. "Poetical Works" 1839. 1st edition.

\_4361 the mighty]tho' mighty edition 1818.

\_4362 ye]he edition 1818.

\_4432 there]then edition 1818.

CANTO 12.

1.  
The transport of a fierce and monstrous gladness                    \_4450  
Spread through the multitudinous streets, fast flying  
Upon the winds of fear; from his dull madness  
The starveling waked, and died in joy; the dying,  
Among the corpses in stark agony lying,  
Just heard the happy tidings, and in hope                            \_4455  
Closed their faint eyes; from house to house replying  
With loud acclaim, the living shook Heaven's cope,  
And filled the startled Earth with echoes: morn did ope

2.  
Its pale eyes then; and lo! the long array  
Of guards in golden arms, and Priests beside,                       \_4460  
Singing their bloody hymns, whose garbs betray  
The blackness of the faith it seems to hide;  
And see, the Tyrant's gem-wrought chariot glide  
Among the gloomy cowls and glittering spears--  
A Shape of light is sitting by his side,                               \_4465  
A child most beautiful. I' the midst appears  
Laon,--exempt alone from mortal hopes and fears.

3.  
His head and feet are bare, his hands are bound  
Behind with heavy chains, yet none do wreak  
Their scoffs on him, though myriads throng around;                   \_4470  
There are no sneers upon his lip which speak  
That scorn or hate has made him bold; his cheek  
Resolve has not turned pale,--his eyes are mild  
And calm, and, like the morn about to break,  
Smile on mankind--his heart seems reconciled                       \_4475  
To all things and itself, like a reposing child.

4.  
Tumult was in the soul of all beside,  
Ill joy, or doubt, or fear; but those who saw  
Their tranquil victim pass, felt wonder glide  
Into their brain, and became calm with awe.--                       \_4480  
See, the slow pageant near the pile doth draw.  
A thousand torches in the spacious square,  
Borne by the ready slaves of ruthless law,  
Await the signal round: the morning fair  
Is changed to a dim night by that unnatural glare.                   \_4485

5.  
And see! beneath a sun-bright canopy,  
Upon a platform level with the pile,  
The anxious Tyrant sit, enthroned on high,  
Girt by the chieftains of the host; all smile  
In expectation, but one child: the while                             \_4490  
I, Laon, led by mutes, ascend my bier  
Of fire, and look around: each distant isle  
Is dark in the bright dawn; towers far and near,

Pierce like reposing flames the tremulous atmosphere.

6.

There was such silence through the host, as when                    \_4495  
An earthquake trampling on some populous town,  
Has crushed ten thousand with one tread, and men  
Expect the second; all were mute but one,  
That fairest child, who, bold with love, alone  
Stood up before the King, without avail,                         \_4500  
Pleading for Laon's life--her stifled groan  
Was heard--she trembled like one aspen pale  
Among the gloomy pines of a Norwegian vale.

7.

What were his thoughts linked in the morning sun,  
Among those reptiles, stingless with delay,                         \_4505  
Even like a tyrant's wrath?--The signal-gun  
Roared--hark, again! In that dread pause he lay  
As in a quiet dream--the slaves obey--  
A thousand torches drop,--and hark, the last  
Bursts on that awful silence; far away,                             \_4510  
Millions, with hearts that beat both loud and fast,  
Watch for the springing flame expectant and aghast.

8.

They fly--the torches fall--a cry of fear  
Has startled the triumphant!--they recede!  
For, ere the cannon's roar has died, they hear                         \_4515  
The tramp of hoofs like earthquake, and a steed  
Dark and gigantic, with the tempest's speed,  
Bursts through their ranks: a woman sits thereon,  
Fairer, it seems, than aught that earth can breed,  
Calm, radiant, like the phantom of the dawn,                         \_4520  
A spirit from the caves of daylight wandering gone.

9.

All thought it was God's Angel come to sweep  
The lingering guilty to their fiery grave;  
The Tyrant from his throne in dread did leap,--  
Her innocence his child from fear did save;                             \_4525  
Scared by the faith they feigned, each priestly slave  
Knelt for his mercy whom they served with blood,  
And, like the reflux of a mighty wave  
Sucked into the loud sea, the multitude  
With crushing panic, fled in terror's altered mood.                         \_4530

10.

They pause, they blush, they gaze,--a gathering shout  
Bursts like one sound from the ten thousand streams  
Of a tempestuous sea:--that sudden rout  
One checked, who, never in his mildest dreams  
Felt awe from grace or loveliness, the seams                             \_4535  
Of his rent heart so hard and cold a creed

Had seared with blistering ice--but he misdeems  
That he is wise, whose wounds do only bleed  
Inly for self,--thus thought the Iberian Priest indeed,

11.

And others, too, thought he was wise to see,                     \_4540  
In pain, and fear, and hate, something divine;  
In love and beauty, no divinity.--  
Now with a bitter smile, whose light did shine  
Like a fiend's hope upon his lips and eyne,  
He said, and the persuasion of that sneer                     \_4545  
Rallied his trembling comrades--'Is it mine  
To stand alone, when kings and soldiers fear  
A woman? Heaven has sent its other victim here.'

12.

'Were it not impious,' said the King, 'to break  
Our holy oath?'--'Impious to keep it, say!'                     \_4550  
Shrieked the exulting Priest:--'Slaves, to the stake  
Bind her, and on my head the burden lay  
Of her just torments:--at the Judgement Day  
Will I stand up before the golden throne  
Of Heaven, and cry, "To Thee did I betray                     \_4555  
An infidel; but for me she would have known  
Another moment's joy! the glory be thine own.'"

13.

They trembled, but replied not, nor obeyed,  
Pausing in breathless silence. Cythna sprung  
From her gigantic steed, who, like a shade                     \_4560  
Chased by the winds, those vacant streets among  
Fled tameless, as the brazen rein she flung  
Upon his neck, and kissed his mooned brow.  
A piteous sight, that one so fair and young,  
The clasp of such a fearful death should woo                     \_4565  
With smiles of tender joy as beamed from Cythna now.

14.

The warm tears burst in spite of faith and fear  
From many a tremulous eye, but like soft dews  
Which feed Spring's earliest buds, hung gathered there,  
Frozen by doubt,--alas! they could not choose                     \_4570  
But weep; for when her faint limbs did refuse  
To climb the pyre, upon the mutes she smiled;  
And with her eloquent gestures, and the hues  
Of her quick lips, even as a weary child  
Wins sleep from some fond nurse with its caresses mild,                     \_4575

15.

She won them, though unwilling, her to bind  
Near me, among the snakes. When there had fled  
One soft reproach that was most thrilling kind,  
She smiled on me, and nothing then we said,



But each upon the other's countenance fed                     \_4580  
Looks of insatiate love; the mighty veil  
Which doth divide the living and the dead  
Was almost rent, the world grew dim and pale,--  
All light in Heaven or Earth beside our love did fail.--

16.  
Yet--yet--one brief relapse, like the last beam                     \_4585  
Of dying flames, the stainless air around  
Hung silent and serene--a blood-red gleam  
Burst upwards, hurling fiercely from the ground  
The globed smoke,--I heard the mighty sound  
Of its uprise, like a tempestuous ocean;                     \_4590  
And through its chasms I saw, as in a swoond,  
The tyrant's child fall without life or motion  
Before his throne, subdued by some unseen emotion.--

17.  
And is this death?--The pyre has disappeared,  
The Pestilence, the Tyrant, and the throng;                     \_4595  
The flames grow silent--slowly there is heard  
The music of a breath-suspending song,  
Which, like the kiss of love when life is young,  
Steeps the faint eyes in darkness sweet and deep;  
With ever-changing notes it floats along,                     \_4600  
Till on my passive soul there seemed to creep  
A melody, like waves on wrinkled sands that leap.

18.  
The warm touch of a soft and tremulous hand  
Wakened me then; lo! Cythna sate reclined  
Beside me, on the waved and golden sand                     \_4605  
Of a clear pool, upon a bank o'ertwined  
With strange and star-bright flowers, which to the wind  
Breathed divine odour; high above, was spread  
The emerald heaven of trees of unknown kind,  
Whose moonlike blooms and bright fruit overhead                     \_4610  
A shadow, which was light, upon the waters shed.

19.  
And round about sloped many a lawny mountain  
With incense-bearing forests and vast caves  
Of marble radiance, to that mighty fountain;  
And where the flood its own bright margin laves,                     \_4615  
Their echoes talk with its eternal waves,  
Which, from the depths whose jagged caverns breed  
Their unreposing strife, it lifts and heaves,--  
Till through a chasm of hills they roll, and feed  
A river deep, which flies with smooth but arrowy speed.                     \_4620

20.  
As we sate gazing in a trance of wonder,  
A boat approached, borne by the musical air

Along the waves which sung and sparkled under  
Its rapid keel--a winged shape sate there,  
A child with silver-shining wings, so fair,                     \_4625  
That as her bark did through the waters glide,  
The shadow of the lingering waves did wear  
Light, as from starry beams; from side to side,  
While veering to the wind her plumes the bark did guide.

21.  
The boat was one curved shell of hollow pearl,                     \_4630  
Almost translucent with the light divine  
Of her within; the prow and stern did curl  
Horned on high, like the young moon supine,  
When o'er dim twilight mountains dark with pine,  
It floats upon the sunset's sea of beams,                     \_4635  
Whose golden waves in many a purple line  
Fade fast, till borne on sunlight's ebbing streams,  
Dilating, on earth's verge the sunken meteor gleams.

22.  
Its keel has struck the sands beside our feet;--  
Then Cythna turned to me, and from her eyes                     \_4640  
Which swam with unshed tears, a look more sweet  
Than happy love, a wild and glad surprise,  
Glanced as she spake: 'Ay, this is Paradise  
And not a dream, and we are all united!  
Lo, that is mine own child, who in the guise                     \_4645  
Of madness came, like day to one benighted  
In lonesome woods: my heart is now too well requited!'

23.  
And then she wept aloud, and in her arms  
Clasped that bright Shape, less marvellously fair  
Than her own human hues and living charms;                     \_4650  
Which, as she leaned in passion's silence there,  
Breathed warmth on the cold bosom of the air,  
Which seemed to blush and tremble with delight;  
The glossy darkness of her streaming hair  
Fell o'er that snowy child, and wrapped from sight                     \_4655  
The fond and long embrace which did their hearts unite.

24.  
Then the bright child, the plumed Seraph came,  
And fixed its blue and beaming eyes on mine,  
And said, 'I was disturbed by tremulous shame  
When once we met, yet knew that I was thine                     \_4660  
From the same hour in which thy lips divine  
Kindled a clinging dream within my brain,  
Which ever waked when I might sleep, to twine  
Thine image with HER memory dear--again  
We meet; exempted now from mortal fear or pain.                     \_4665

25.

'When the consuming flames had wrapped ye round,  
The hope which I had cherished went away;  
I fell in agony on the senseless ground,  
And hid mine eyes in dust, and far astray  
My mind was gone, when bright, like dawning day,                    \_4670  
The Spectre of the Plague before me flew,  
And breathed upon my lips, and seemed to say,  
"They wait for thee, beloved!"--then I knew  
The death-mark on my breast, and became calm anew.

26.  
'It was the calm of love--for I was dying.                            \_4675  
I saw the black and half-extinguished pyre  
In its own gray and shrunken ashes lying;  
The pitchy smoke of the departed fire  
Still hung in many a hollow dome and spire  
Above the towers, like night,--beneath whose shade                \_4680  
Awed by the ending of their own desire  
The armies stood; a vacancy was made  
In expectation's depth, and so they stood dismayed.

27.  
'The frightful silence of that altered mood,  
The tortures of the dying clove alone,                               \_4685  
Till one uprose among the multitude,  
And said--"The flood of time is rolling on;  
We stand upon its brink, whilst THEY are gone  
To glide in peace down death's mysterious stream.  
Have ye done well? They moulder, flesh and bone,                 \_4690  
Who might have made this life's envenomed dream  
A sweeter draught than ye will ever taste, I deem.

28.  
"These perish as the good and great of yore  
Have perished, and their murderers will repent,--  
Yes, vain and barren tears shall flow before                         \_4695  
Yon smoke has faded from the firmament  
Even for this cause, that ye who must lament  
The death of those that made this world so fair,  
Cannot recall them now; but there is lent  
To man the wisdom of a high despair,                               \_4700  
When such can die, and he live on and linger here.

29.  
"Ay, ye may fear not now the Pestilence,  
From fabled hell as by a charm withdrawn;  
All power and faith must pass, since calmly hence  
In pain and fire have unbelievers gone;                               \_4705  
And ye must sadly turn away, and moan  
In secret, to his home each one returning;  
And to long ages shall this hour be known;  
And slowly shall its memory, ever burning,  
Fill this dark night of things with an eternal morning.               \_4710

30.

"For me that world is grown too void and cold,  
Since Hope pursues immortal Destiny  
With steps thus slow--therefore shall ye behold  
How those who love, yet fear not, dare to die;  
Tell to your children this!" Then suddenly                    \_4715  
He sheathed a dagger in his heart and fell;  
My brain grew dark in death, and yet to me  
There came a murmur from the crowd, to tell  
Of deep and mighty change which suddenly befell.

31.

'Then suddenly I stood, a winged Thought,                    \_4720  
Before the immortal Senate, and the seat  
Of that star-shining spirit, whence is wrought  
The strength of its dominion, good and great,  
The better Genius of this world's estate.  
His realm around one mighty Fane is spread,                    \_4725  
Elysian islands bright and fortunate,  
Calm dwellings of the free and happy dead,  
Where I am sent to lead!' These winged words she said,

32.

And with the silence of her eloquent smile,  
Bade us embark in her divine canoe;                            \_4730  
Then at the helm we took our seat, the while  
Above her head those plumes of dazzling hue  
Into the winds' invisible stream she threw,  
Sitting beside the prow: like gossamer  
On the swift breath of morn, the vessel flew                    \_4735  
O'er the bright whirlpools of that fountain fair,  
Whose shores receded fast, while we seemed lingering there;

33.

Till down that mighty stream, dark, calm, and fleet,  
Between a chasm of cedarn mountains riven,  
Chased by the thronging winds whose viewless feet                    \_4740  
As swift as twinkling beams, had, under Heaven,  
From woods and waves wild sounds and odours driven,  
The boat fled visibly--three nights and days,  
Borne like a cloud through morn, and noon, and even,  
We sailed along the winding watery ways                        \_4745  
Of the vast stream, a long and labyrinthine maze.

34.

A scene of joy and wonder to behold  
That river's shapes and shadows changing ever,  
Where the broad sunrise filled with deepening gold  
Its whirlpools, where all hues did spread and quiver;                    \_4750  
And where melodious falls did burst and shiver  
Among rocks clad with flowers, the foam and spray  
Sparkled like stars upon the sunny river,

Or when the moonlight poured a holier day,  
One vast and glittering lake around green islands lay.        \_4755

35.

Morn, noon, and even, that boat of pearl outran  
The streams which bore it, like the arrowy cloud  
Of tempest, or the speedier thought of man,  
Which flieth forth and cannot make abode;  
Sometimes through forests, deep like night, we glode,        \_4760  
Between the walls of mighty mountains crowned  
With Cyclopean piles, whose turrets proud,  
The homes of the departed, dimly frowned  
O'er the bright waves which girt their dark foundations round.

36.

Sometimes between the wide and flowering meadows,        \_4765  
Mile after mile we sailed, and 'twas delight  
To see far off the sunbeams chase the shadows  
Over the grass; sometimes beneath the night  
Of wide and vaulted caves, whose roofs were bright  
With starry gems, we fled, whilst from their deep        \_4770  
And dark-green chasms, shades beautiful and white,  
Amid sweet sounds across our path would sweep,  
Like swift and lovely dreams that walk the waves of sleep.

37.

And ever as we sailed, our minds were full  
Of love and wisdom, which would overflow        \_4775  
In converse wild, and sweet, and wonderful,  
And in quick smiles whose light would come and go  
Like music o'er wide waves, and in the flow  
Of sudden tears, and in the mute caress--  
For a deep shade was cleft, and we did know,        \_4780  
That virtue, though obscured on Earth, not less  
Survives all mortal change in lasting loveliness.

38.

Three days and nights we sailed, as thought and feeling  
Number delightful hours--for through the sky  
The sphered lamps of day and night, revealing        \_4785  
New changes and new glories, rolled on high,  
Sun, Moon and moonlike lamps, the progeny  
Of a diviner Heaven, serene and fair:  
On the fourth day, wild as a windwrought sea  
The stream became, and fast and faster bare        \_4790  
The spirit-winged boat, steadily speeding there.

39.

Steady and swift, where the waves rolled like mountains  
Within the vast ravine, whose rifts did pour  
Tumultuous floods from their ten thousand fountains,  
The thunder of whose earth-uplifting roar        \_4795  
Made the air sweep in whirlwinds from the shore,

Calm as a shade, the boat of that fair child  
Securely fled, that rapid stress before,  
Amid the topmost spray, and sunbows wild,  
Wreathed in the silver mist: in joy and pride we smiled.     \_4800

40.  
The torrent of that wide and raging river  
Is passed, and our aerial speed suspended.  
We look behind; a golden mist did quiver  
When its wild surges with the lake were blended,--  
Our bark hung there, as on a line suspended     \_4805  
Between two heavens,--that windless waveless lake  
Which four great cataracts from four vales, attended  
By mists, aye feed; from rocks and clouds they break,  
And of that azure sea a silent refuge make.

41.  
Motionless resting on the lake awhile,     \_4810  
I saw its marge of snow-bright mountains rear  
Their peaks aloft, I saw each radiant isle,  
And in the midst, afar, even like a sphere  
Hung in one hollow sky, did there appear  
The Temple of the Spirit; on the sound     \_4815  
Which issued thence, drawn nearer and more near,  
Like the swift moon this glorious earth around,  
The charmed boat approached, and there its haven found.

NOTES:

\_4577 there]then edition 1818.

\_4699 there]then edition 1818.

\_4749 When]Where edition 1818.

\_4804 Where]When edition 1818.

\_4805 on a line]one line edition 1818.

NOTE ON THE "REVOLT OF ISLAM", BY MRS. SHELLEY.

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

As a poet, his intellect and compositions were powerfully influenced

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

He chose therefore for his hero a youth nourished in dreams of liberty, some of whose actions are in direct opposition to the opinions of the world; but who is animated throughout by an ardent love of virtue, and a resolution to confer the boons of political and intellectual freedom on his fellow-creatures. He created for this youth a woman such as he delighted to imagine--full of enthusiasm for the same objects; and they both, with will unvanquished, and the deepest sense of the justice of their cause, met adversity and death. There exists in this poem a memorial of a friend of his youth. The character of the old man who liberates Laon from his tower prison, and tends on him in sickness, is founded on that of Doctor Lind, who, when Shelley was at Eton, had often stood by to befriend and support him, and whose name he never mentioned without love and veneration.

During the year 1817 we were established at Marlow in Buckinghamshire. Shelley's choice of abode was fixed chiefly by this town being at no great distance from London, and its neighbourhood to the Thames. The poem was written in his boat, as it floated under the beech groves of Bisham, or during wanderings in the neighbouring country, which is distinguished for peculiar beauty. The chalk hills break into cliffs that overhang the Thames, or form valleys clothed with beech; the wilder portion of the country is rendered beautiful by exuberant vegetation; and the cultivated part is peculiarly fertile. With all this wealth of Nature which, either in the form of gentlemen's parks or soil dedicated to agriculture, flourishes around, Marlow was inhabited (I hope it is altered now) by a very poor population. The women are lacemakers, and lose their health by sedentary labour, for which they were very ill paid. The Poor-laws ground to the dust not only the paupers, but those who had risen just above that state, and were obliged to pay poor-rates. The changes produced by peace following a long war, and a bad harvest, brought with them the most

heart-rending evils to the poor. Shelley afforded what alleviation he could. In the winter, while bringing out his poem, he had a severe attack of ophthalmia, caught while visiting the poor cottages. I mention these things,--for this minute and active sympathy with his fellow-creatures gives a thousandfold interest to his speculations, and stamps with reality his pleadings for the human race.

The poem, bold in its opinions and uncompromising in their expression, met with many censurers, not only among those who allow of no virtue but such as supports the cause they espouse, but even among those whose opinions were similar to his own. I extract a portion of a letter written in answer to one of these friends. It best details the impulses of Shelley's mind, and his motives: it was written with entire unreserve; and is therefore a precious monument of his own opinion of his powers, of the purity of his designs, and the ardour with which he clung, in adversity and through the valley of the shadow of death, to views from which he believed the permanent happiness of mankind must eventually spring.

'Marlowe, December 11, 1817.

'I have read and considered all that you say about my general powers, and the particular instance of the poem in which I have attempted to develop them. Nothing can be more satisfactory to me than the interest which your admonitions express. But I think you are mistaken in some points with regard to the peculiar nature of my powers, whatever be their amount. I listened with deference and self-suspicion to your censures of "The Revolt of Islam"; but the productions of mine which you commend hold a very low place in my own esteem; and this reassures me, in some degree at least. The poem was produced by a series of thoughts which filled my mind with unbounded and sustained enthusiasm. I felt the precariousness of my life, and I engaged in this task, resolved to leave some record of myself. Much of what the volume contains was written with the same feeling--as real, though not so prophetic--as the communications of a dying man. I never presumed indeed to consider it anything approaching to faultless; but, when I consider contemporary productions of the same apparent pretensions, I own I was filled with confidence. I felt that it was in many respects a genuine picture of my own mind. I felt that the sentiments were true, not assumed. And in this have I long believed that my power consists; in sympathy, and that part of the imagination which relates to sentiment and contemplation. I am formed, if for anything not in common with the herd of mankind, to apprehend minute and remote distinctions of feeling, whether relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us, and to communicate the conceptions which result from considering either the moral or the material universe as a whole. Of course, I believe these faculties, which perhaps comprehend all that is sublime in man, to exist very imperfectly in my own mind. But, when you advert to my Chancery-paper, a cold, forced, unimpassioned, insignificant piece of cramped and cautious argument, and to the little scrap about "Mandeville", which expressed my feelings indeed, but cost scarcely two minutes' thought to express, as specimens of my powers more favourable than that which



grew as it were from "the agony and bloody sweat" of intellectual travail; surely I must feel that, in some manner, either I am mistaken in believing that I have any talent at all, or you in the selection of the specimens of it. Yet, after all, I cannot but be conscious, in much of what I write, of an absence of that tranquillity which is the attribute and accompaniment of power. This feeling alone would make your most kind and wise admonitions, on the subject of the economy of intellectual force, valuable to me. And, if I live, or if I see any trust in coming years, doubt not but that I shall do something, whatever it may be, which a serious and earnest estimate of my powers will suggest to me, and which will be in every respect accommodated to their utmost limits.

[Shelley to Godwin.]

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PRINCE ATHANASE.

A FRAGMENT.

(The idea Shelley had formed of Prince Athanase was a good deal modelled on "Alastor". In the first sketch of the poem, he named it "Pandemos and Urania". Athanase seeks through the world the One whom he may love. He meets, in the ship in which he is embarked, a lady who appears to him to embody his ideal of love and beauty. But she proves to be Pandemos, or the earthly and unworthy Venus; who, after disappointing his cherished dreams and hopes, deserts him. Athanase, crushed by sorrow, pines and dies. 'On his deathbed, the lady who can really reply to his soul comes and kisses his lips' ("The Deathbed of Athanase"). The poet describes her [in the words of the final fragment, page 164]. This slender note is all we have to aid our imagination in shaping out the form of the poem, such as its author imagined. [Mrs. Shelley's Note.]

[Written at Marlow in 1817, towards the close of the year; first published in "Posthumous Poems", 1824. Part 1 is dated by Mrs. Shelley, 'December, 1817,' the remainder, 'Marlow, 1817.' The verses were probably rehandled in Italy during the following year. Sources of the text are (1) "Posthumous Poems", 1824; (2) "Poetical Works" 1839, editions 1st and 2nd; (3) a much-tortured draft amongst the Bodleian manuscripts, collated by Mr. C.D. Locock. For (1) and (2) Mrs. Shelley is responsible. Our text (enlarged by about thirty lines from the Bodleian manuscript) follows for the most part the "Poetical Works", 1839; verbal exceptions are pointed out in the footnotes. See also the Editor's Notes at the end of this volume, and Mr. Locock's "Examination of Shelley Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library", Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903.]

PART 1.

There was a youth, who, as with toil and travel,

Had grown quite weak and gray before his time;  
Nor any could the restless griefs unravel

Which burned within him, withering up his prime  
And goading him, like fiends, from land to land.        \_5  
Not his the load of any secret crime,

For nought of ill his heart could understand,  
But pity and wild sorrow for the same;--  
Not his the thirst for glory or command,

Baffled with blast of hope-consuming shame;        \_10  
Nor evil joys which fire the vulgar breast,  
And quench in speedy smoke its feeble flame,

Had left within his soul their dark unrest:  
Nor what religion fables of the grave  
Feared he,--Philosophy's accepted guest.        \_15

For none than he a purer heart could have,  
Or that loved good more for itself alone;  
Of nought in heaven or earth was he the slave.

What sorrow, strange, and shadowy, and unknown,  
Sent him, a hopeless wanderer, through mankind?--       \_20  
If with a human sadness he did groan,

He had a gentle yet aspiring mind;  
Just, innocent, with varied learning fed;  
And such a glorious consolation find

In others' joy, when all their own is dead:        \_25  
He loved, and laboured for his kind in grief,  
And yet, unlike all others, it is said

That from such toil he never found relief.  
Although a child of fortune and of power,  
Of an ancestral name the orphan chief,        \_30

His soul had wedded Wisdom, and her dower  
Is love and justice, clothed in which he sate  
Apart from men, as in a lonely tower,

Pitying the tumult of their dark estate.--  
Yet even in youth did he not e'er abuse        \_35  
The strength of wealth or thought, to consecrate

Those false opinions which the harsh rich use  
To blind the world they famish for their pride;  
Nor did he hold from any man his dues,

But, like a steward in honest dealings tried,        \_40  
With those who toiled and wept, the poor and wise,

His riches and his cares he did divide.

Fearless he was, and scorning all disguise,  
What he dared do or think, though men might start,  
He spoke with mild yet unaverted eyes;                     \_45

Liberal he was of soul, and frank of heart,  
And to his many friends--all loved him well--  
Whate'er he knew or felt he would impart,

If words he found those inmost thoughts to tell;  
If not, he smiled or wept; and his weak foes                     \_50  
He neither spurned nor hated--though with fell

And mortal hate their thousand voices rose,  
They passed like aimless arrows from his ear--  
Nor did his heart or mind its portal close

To those, or them, or any, whom life's sphere                     \_55  
May comprehend within its wide array.  
What sadness made that vernal spirit sere?--

He knew not. Though his life, day after day,  
Was failing like an unreplenished stream,  
Though in his eyes a cloud and burthen lay,                     \_60

Through which his soul, like Vesper's serene beam  
Piercing the chasms of ever rising clouds,  
Shone, softly burning; though his lips did seem

Like reeds which quiver in impetuous floods;  
And through his sleep, and o'er each waking hour,                     \_65  
Thoughts after thoughts, unresting multitudes,

Were driven within him by some secret power,  
Which bade them blaze, and live, and roll afar,  
Like lights and sounds, from haunted tower to tower

O'er castled mountains borne, when tempest's war                     \_70  
Is levied by the night-contending winds,  
And the pale dalesmen watch with eager ear;--

Though such were in his spirit, as the fiends  
Which wake and feed an everliving woe,--  
What was this grief, which ne'er in other minds                     \_75

A mirror found,--he knew not--none could know;  
But on whoe'er might question him he turned  
The light of his frank eyes, as if to show

He knew not of the grief within that burned,                     \_80  
But asked forbearance with a mournful look;  
Or spoke in words from which none ever learned

The cause of his disquietude; or shook  
With spasms of silent passion; or turned pale:  
So that his friends soon rarely undertook

To stir his secret pain without avail;-- \_85  
For all who knew and loved him then perceived  
That there was drawn an adamantine veil

Between his heart and mind,--both unrelieved  
Wrought in his brain and bosom separate strife.  
Some said that he was mad, others believed \_90

That memories of an antenatal life  
Made this, where now he dwelt, a penal hell;  
And others said that such mysterious grief

From God's displeasure, like a darkness, fell  
On souls like his, which owned no higher law \_95  
Than love; love calm, steadfast, invincible

By mortal fear or supernatural awe;  
And others,--"Tis the shadow of a dream  
Which the veiled eye of Memory never saw,

'But through the soul's abyss, like some dark stream \_100  
Through shattered mines and caverns underground,  
Rolls, shaking its foundations; and no beam

'Of joy may rise, but it is quenched and drowned  
In the dim whirlpools of this dream obscure;  
Soon its exhausted waters will have found \_105

'A lair of rest beneath thy spirit pure,  
O Athanase!--in one so good and great,  
Evil or tumult cannot long endure.

So spake they: idly of another's state  
Babbling vain words and fond philosophy; \_110  
This was their consolation; such debate

Men held with one another; nor did he,  
Like one who labours with a human woe,  
Decline this talk: as if its theme might be

Another, not himself, he to and fro \_115  
Questioned and canvassed it with subtlest wit;  
And none but those who loved him best could know

That which he knew not, how it galled and bit  
His weary mind, this converse vain and cold;  
For like an eyeless nightmare grief did sit \_120

Upon his being; a snake which fold by fold  
Pressed out the life of life, a clinging fiend  
Which clenched him if he stirred with deadlier hold;--  
And so his grief remained--let it remain--untold. [1]

## PART 2.

### FRAGMENT 1.

Prince Athanase had one beloved friend,             \_125  
An old, old man, with hair of silver white,  
And lips where heavenly smiles would hang and blend

With his wise words; and eyes whose arrowy light  
Shone like the reflex of a thousand minds.  
He was the last whom superstition's blight             \_130

Had spared in Greece--the blight that cramps and blinds,--  
And in his olive bower at Oenoe  
Had sate from earliest youth. Like one who finds

A fertile island in the barren sea,  
One mariner who has survived his mates             \_135  
Many a drear month in a great ship--so he

With soul-sustaining songs, and sweet debates  
Of ancient lore, there fed his lonely being:--  
'The mind becomes that which it contemplates,'--

And thus Zonoras, by for ever seeing             \_140  
Their bright creations, grew like wisest men;  
And when he heard the crash of nations fleeing

A bloodier power than ruled thy ruins then,  
O sacred Hellas! many weary years  
He wandered, till the path of Laian's glen             \_145

Was grass-grown--and the unremembered tears  
Were dry in Laian for their honoured chief,  
Who fell in Byzant, pierced by Moslem spears:--

And as the lady looked with faithful grief  
From her high lattice o'er the rugged path,             \_150  
Where she once saw that horseman toil, with brief

And blighting hope, who with the news of death  
Struck body and soul as with a mortal blight,  
She saw between the chestnuts, far beneath,

An old man toiling up, a weary wight;             \_155  
And soon within her hospitable hall  
She saw his white hairs glittering in the light

Of the wood fire, and round his shoulders fall;  
And his wan visage and his withered mien,  
Yet calm and gentle and majestic. \_160

And Athanase, her child, who must have been  
Then three years old, sate opposite and gazed  
In patient silence.

## FRAGMENT 2.

Such was Zonoras; and as daylight finds  
One amaranth glittering on the path of frost, \_165  
When autumn nights have nipped all weaker kinds,

Thus through his age, dark, cold, and tempest-tossed,  
Shone truth upon Zonoras; and he filled  
From fountains pure, nigh overgrown and lost,

The spirit of Prince Athanase, a child, \_170  
With soul-sustaining songs of ancient lore  
And philosophic wisdom, clear and mild.

And sweet and subtle talk they evermore,  
The pupil and the master, shared; until,  
Sharing that undiminishable store, \_175

The youth, as shadows on a grassy hill  
Outrun the winds that chase them, soon outran  
His teacher, and did teach with native skill

Strange truths and new to that experienced man;  
Still they were friends, as few have ever been \_180  
Who mark the extremes of life's discordant span.

So in the caverns of the forest green,  
Or on the rocks of echoing ocean hoar,  
Zonoras and Prince Athanase were seen

By summer woodmen; and when winter's roar \_185  
Sounded o'er earth and sea its blast of war,  
The Balearic fisher, driven from shore,

Hanging upon the peaked wave afar,  
Then saw their lamp from Laian's turret gleam,  
Piercing the stormy darkness, like a star \_190

Which pours beyond the sea one steadfast beam,  
Whilst all the constellations of the sky  
Seemed reeling through the storm...They did but seem--

For, lo! the wintry clouds are all gone by,

And bright Arcturus through yon pines is glowing,                    \_195  
And far o'er southern waves, immovably

Belted Orion hangs--warm light is flowing  
From the young moon into the sunset's chasm.--  
'O, summer eve! with power divine, bestowing

'On thine own bird the sweet enthusiasm                                 \_200  
Which overflows in notes of liquid gladness,  
Filling the sky like light! How many a spasm

'Of fevered brains, oppressed with grief and madness,  
Were lulled by thee, delightful nightingale,--  
And these soft waves, murmuring a gentle sadness,--                   \_205

'And the far sighings of yon piny dale  
Made vocal by some wind we feel not here.--  
I bear alone what nothing may avail

'To lighten--a strange load!--No human ear  
Heard this lament; but o'er the visage wan                                 \_210  
Of Athanase, a ruffling atmosphere

Of dark emotion, a swift shadow, ran,  
Like wind upon some forest-bosomed lake,  
Glassy and dark.--And that divine old man

Beheld his mystic friend's whole being shake,                             \_215  
Even where its inmost depths were gloomiest--  
And with a calm and measured voice he spake,

And, with a soft and equal pressure, pressed  
That cold lean hand:--'Dost thou remember yet  
When the curved moon then lingering in the west                         \_220

'Paused, in yon waves her mighty horns to wet,  
How in those beams we walked, half resting on the sea?  
'Tis just one year--sure thou dost not forget--

'Then Plato's words of light in thee and me  
Lingered like moonlight in the moonless east,                             \_225  
For we had just then read--thy memory

'Is faithful now--the story of the feast;  
And Agathon and Diotima seemed  
From death and dark forgetfulness released...'

### FRAGMENT 3.

And when the old man saw that on the green  
Leaves of his opening ... a blight had lighted                         \_230  
He said: 'My friend, one grief alone can wean

A gentle mind from all that once delighted:--  
Thou lovest, and thy secret heart is laden  
With feelings which should not be unrequited.' \_235

And Athanase ... then smiled, as one o'erladen  
With iron chains might smile to talk (?) of bands  
Twined round her lover's neck by some blithe maiden,  
And said...

#### FRAGMENT 4.

'Twas at the season when the Earth upsprings \_240  
From slumber, as a sphered angel's child,  
Shadowing its eyes with green and golden wings,

Stands up before its mother bright and mild,  
Of whose soft voice the air expectant seems--  
So stood before the sun, which shone and smiled \_245

To see it rise thus joyous from its dreams,  
The fresh and radiant Earth. The hoary grove  
Waxed green--and flowers burst forth like starry beams;--

The grass in the warm sun did start and move,  
And sea-buds burst under the waves serene:-- \_250  
How many a one, though none be near to love,

Loves then the shade of his own soul, half seen  
In any mirror--or the spring's young minions,  
The winged leaves amid the cosses green;--

How many a spirit then puts on the pinions \_255  
Of fancy, and outstrips the lagging blast,  
And his own steps--and over wide dominions

Sweeps in his dream-drawn chariot, far and fast,  
More fleet than storms--the wide world shrinks below,  
When winter and despondency are past. \_260

#### FRAGMENT 5.

'Twas at this season that Prince Athanase  
Passed the white Alps--those eagle-baffling mountains  
Slept in their shrouds of snow;--beside the ways

The waterfalls were voiceless--for their fountains  
Were changed to mines of sunless crystal now, \_265  
Or by the curdling winds--like brazen wings

Which clanged along the mountain's marble brow--



Warped into adamantine fretwork, hung  
And filled with frozen light the chasms below.

Vexed by the blast, the great pines groaned and swung                    \_270  
Under their load of [snow]--

...

...

Such as the eagle sees, when he dives down  
From the gray deserts of wide air, [beheld]                                 \_275  
[Prince] Athanase; and o'er his mien (?) was thrown

The shadow of that scene, field after field,  
Purple and dim and wide...

#### FRAGMENT 6.

Thou art the wine whose drunkenness is all  
We can desire, O Love! and happy souls,                                 \_280  
Ere from thy vine the leaves of autumn fall,

Catch thee, and feed from their o'erflowing bowls  
Thousands who thirst for thine ambrosial dew;--  
Thou art the radiance which where ocean rolls

Investeth it; and when the heavens are blue                                 \_285  
Thou fillest them; and when the earth is fair  
The shadow of thy moving wings imbue

Its deserts and its mountains, till they wear  
Beauty like some light robe;--thou ever soarest  
Among the towers of men, and as soft air                                 \_290

In spring, which moves the unawakened forest,  
Clothing with leaves its branches bare and bleak,  
Thou floatest among men; and aye implorest

That which from thee they should implore:--the weak  
Alone kneel to thee, offering up the hearts                                 \_295  
The strong have broken--yet where shall any seek

A garment whom thou clothest not? the darts  
Of the keen winter storm, barbed with frost,  
Which, from the everlasting snow that parts

The Alps from Heaven, pierce some traveller lost                             \_300  
In the wide waved interminable snow  
Ungarmented,...

#### ANOTHER FRAGMENT (A)

Yes, often when the eyes are cold and dry,

And the lips calm, the Spirit weeps within  
Tears bitterer than the blood of agony \_305

Trembling in drops on the discoloured skin  
Of those who love their kind and therefore perish  
In ghastly torture--a sweet medicine

Of peace and sleep are tears, and quietly  
Them soothe from whose uplifted eyes they fall \_310  
But...

#### ANOTHER FRAGMENT (B)

Her hair was brown, her sphered eyes were brown,  
And in their dark and liquid moisture swam,  
Like the dim orb of the eclipsed moon;

Yet when the spirit flashed beneath, there came \_315  
The light from them, as when tears of delight  
Double the western planet's serene flame.

#### NOTES:

\_19 strange edition 1839; deep edition 1824.

\_74 feed an Bodleian manuscript; feed on editions 1824, 1839.

\_124 [1. The Author was pursuing a fuller development of the ideal character of Athanase, when it struck him that in an attempt at extreme refinement and analysis, his conceptions might be betrayed into the assuming a morbid character. The reader will judge whether he is a loser or gainer by this diffidence. [Shelley's Note.]  
Footnote diffidence cj. Rossetti (1878); difference editions 1824, 1839.]

\_154 beneath editions 1824, 1839; between Bodleian manuscript.

\_165 One Bodleian manuscript edition 1839; An edition 1824.

\_167 Thus thro' Bodleian manuscript (?) edition 1839; Thus had edition 1824.

\_173 talk they edition 1824, Bodleian manuscript; talk now edition 1839.

\_175 that edition 1839; the edition 1824.

\_182 So edition 1839; And edition 1824.

\_183 Or on Bodleian manuscript; Or by editions 1824, 1839.

\_199 eve Bodleian manuscript edition 1839; night edition 1824.

\_212 emotion, a swift editions 1824, 1839;  
emotion with swift Bodleian manuscript.

\_250 under edition 1824, Bodleian manuscript; beneath edition 1839.

\_256 outstrips editions 1824, 1839; outrides Bodleian manuscript.

\_259 Exulting, while the wide Bodleian manuscript.

\_262 mountains editions 1824, 1839; crags Bodleian manuscript.

\_264 fountains editions 1824, 1839; springs Bodleian manuscript.

\_269 chasms Bodleian manuscript; chasm editions 1824, 1839.

\_283 thine Bodleian manuscript; thy editions 1824, 1839.

\_285 Investeth Bodleian manuscript; Investest editions 1824, 1839.

\_289 light Bodleian manuscript; bright editions 1824, 1839.

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ROSALIND AND HELEN.

A MODERN ECLOGUE.

[Begun at Marlow, 1817 (summer); already in the press, March, 1818; finished at the Baths of Lucca, August, 1818; published with other poems, as the title-piece of a slender volume, by C. & J. Ollier, London, 1819 (spring). See "Biographical List". Sources of the text are (1) editio princeps, 1819; (2) "Poetical Works", edition Mrs. Shelley, 1839, editions 1st and 2nd. A fragment of the text is amongst the Boscombe manuscripts. The poem is reprinted here from the editio princeps; verbal alterations are recorded in the footnotes, punctual in the Editor's Notes at the end of Volume 3.]

ADVERTISEMENT.

The story of "Rosalind and Helen" is, undoubtedly, not an attempt in the highest style of poetry. It is in no degree calculated to excite profound meditation; and if, by interesting the affections and amusing the imagination, it awakens a certain ideal melancholy favourable to the reception of more important impressions, it will produce in the reader all that the writer experienced in the composition. I resigned myself, as I wrote, to the impulses of the feelings which moulded the conception of the story; and this impulse determined the pauses of a measure, which only pretends to be regular inasmuch as it corresponds with, and expresses, the irregularity of the imaginations which inspired it.

I do not know which of the few scattered poems I left in England will be selected by my bookseller to add to this collection. One ("Lines written among the Euganean Hills".--Editor.), which I sent from Italy, was written after a day's excursion among those lovely mountains which surround what was once the retreat, and where is now the sepulchre, of Petrarch. If any one is inclined to condemn the insertion of the introductory lines, which image forth the sudden relief of a state of deep despondency by the radiant visions disclosed by the sudden burst of an Italian sunrise in autumn on the highest peak of those delightful mountains, I can only offer as my excuse, that they were not erased at the request of a dear friend, with whom added years of intercourse only add to my apprehension of its value, and who would have had more right than any one to complain, that she has not been able to extinguish in me the very power of delineating sadness.

Naples, December 20, 1818.

ROSALIND, HELEN, AND HER CHILD.

SCENE. THE SHORE OF THE LAKE OF COMO.

HELEN:

Come hither, my sweet Rosalind.

'Tis long since thou and I have met;

And yet methinks it were unkind

Those moments to forget.

Come, sit by me. I see thee stand \_5

By this lone lake, in this far land,

Thy loose hair in the light wind flying,

Thy sweet voice to each tone of even

United, and thine eyes replying

To the hues of yon fair heaven. \_10

Come, gentle friend: wilt sit by me?

And be as thou wert wont to be

Ere we were disunited?

None doth behold us now; the power

That led us forth at this lone hour \_15

Will be but ill requited

If thou depart in scorn: oh! come,

And talk of our abandoned home.

Remember, this is Italy,

And we are exiles. Talk with me \_20

Of that our land, whose wilds and floods,

Barren and dark although they be,

Were dearer than these chestnut woods:

Those heathy paths, that inland stream,

And the blue mountains, shapes which seem \_25

Like wrecks of childhood's sunny dream:

Which that we have abandoned now,

Weighs on the heart like that remorse

Which altered friendship leaves. I seek

No more our youthful intercourse. \_30

That cannot be! Rosalind, speak.

Speak to me. Leave me not.--When morn did come,

When evening fell upon our common home,

When for one hour we parted,--do not frown:

I would not chide thee, though thy faith is broken: \_35

But turn to me. Oh! by this cherished token,

Of woven hair, which thou wilt not disown,

Turn, as 'twere but the memory of me,

And not my scorned self who prayed to thee.

ROSALIND:

Is it a dream, or do I see \_40

And hear frail Helen? I would flee

Thy tainting touch; but former years

Arise, and bring forbidden tears;

And my o'erburthened memory

Seeks yet its lost repose in thee. \_45

I share thy crime. I cannot choose

But weep for thee: mine own strange grief

But seldom stoops to such relief:

Nor ever did I love thee less,  
Though mourning o'er thy wickedness \_50  
Even with a sister's woe. I knew  
What to the evil world is due,  
And therefore sternly did refuse  
To link me with the infamy  
Of one so lost as Helen. Now \_55  
Bewildered by my dire despair,  
Wondering I blush, and weep that thou  
Should'st love me still,--thou only!--There,  
Let us sit on that gray stone  
Till our mournful talk be done. \_60

HELEN:

Alas! not there; I cannot bear  
The murmur of this lake to hear.  
A sound from there, Rosalind dear,  
Which never yet I heard elsewhere  
But in our native land, recurs, \_65  
Even here where now we meet. It stirs  
Too much of suffocating sorrow!  
In the dell of yon dark chestnutwood  
Is a stone seat, a solitude  
Less like our own. The ghost of Peace \_70  
Will not desert this spot. To-morrow,  
If thy kind feelings should not cease,  
We may sit here.

ROSALIND:

Thou lead, my sweet,  
And I will follow.

HENRY:

'Tis Fenici's seat  
Where you are going? This is not the way, \_75  
Mamma; it leads behind those trees that grow  
Close to the little river.

HELEN:

Yes: I know;  
I was bewildered. Kiss me and be gay,  
Dear boy: why do you sob?

HENRY:

I do not know:  
But it might break any one's heart to see \_80  
You and the lady cry so bitterly.

HELEN:

It is a gentle child, my friend. Go home,  
Henry, and play with Lilla till I come.  
We only cried with joy to see each other;  
We are quite merry now: Good-night.

The boy \_85  
Lifted a sudden look upon his mother,  
And in the gleam of forced and hollow joy  
Which lightened o'er her face, laughed with the glee  
Of light and unsuspecting infancy,  
And whispered in her ear, 'Bring home with you \_90  
That sweet strange lady-friend.' Then off he flew,  
But stopped, and beckoned with a meaning smile,  
Where the road turned. Pale Rosalind the while,  
Hiding her face, stood weeping silently.

In silence then they took the way \_95  
Beneath the forest's solitude.  
It was a vast and antique wood,  
Thro' which they took their way;  
And the gray shades of evening  
O'er that green wilderness did fling \_100  
Still deeper solitude.  
Pursuing still the path that wound  
The vast and knotted trees around  
Through which slow shades were wandering,  
To a deep lawny dell they came, \_105  
To a stone seat beside a spring,  
O'er which the columned wood did frame  
A roofless temple, like the fane  
Where, ere new creeds could faith obtain,  
Man's early race once knelt beneath \_110  
The overhanging deity.  
O'er this fair fountain hung the sky,  
Now spangled with rare stars. The snake,  
The pale snake, that with eager breath  
Creeps here his noontide thirst to slake, \_115  
Is beaming with many a mingled hue,  
Shed from yon dome's eternal blue,  
When he floats on that dark and lucid flood  
In the light of his own loveliness;  
And the birds that in the fountain dip \_120  
Their plumes, with fearless fellowship  
Above and round him wheel and hover.  
The fitful wind is heard to stir  
One solitary leaf on high;  
The chirping of the grasshopper \_125  
Fills every pause. There is emotion  
In all that dwells at noontide here;  
Then, through the intricate wild wood,  
A maze of life and light and motion  
Is woven. But there is stillness now: \_130  
Gloom, and the trance of Nature now:  
The snake is in his cave asleep;  
The birds are on the branches dreaming:  
Only the shadows creep:  
Only the glow-worm is gleaming: \_135

Only the owls and the nightingales  
Wake in this dell when daylight fails,  
And gray shades gather in the woods:  
And the owls have all fled far away  
In a merrier glen to hoot and play,                    \_140  
For the moon is veiled and sleeping now.  
The accustomed nightingale still broods  
On her accustomed bough,  
But she is mute; for her false mate  
Has fled and left her desolate.                        \_145

This silent spot tradition old  
Had peopled with the spectral dead.  
For the roots of the speaker's hair felt cold  
And stiff, as with tremulous lips he told  
That a hellish shape at midnight led                    \_150  
The ghost of a youth with hoary hair,  
And sate on the seat beside him there,  
Till a naked child came wandering by,  
When the fiend would change to a lady fair!  
A fearful tale! The truth was worse:                    \_155

For here a sister and a brother  
Had solemnized a monstrous curse,  
Meeting in this fair solitude:  
For beneath yon very sky,  
Had they resigned to one another                    \_160  
Body and soul. The multitude:  
Tracking them to the secret wood,  
Tore limb from limb their innocent child,  
And stabbed and trampled on its mother;  
But the youth, for God's most holy grace,             \_165  
A priest saved to burn in the market-place.

Duly at evening Helen came  
To this lone silent spot,  
From the wrecks of a tale of wilder sorrow  
So much of sympathy to borrow                    \_170  
As soothed her own dark lot.

Duly each evening from her home,  
With her fair child would Helen come  
To sit upon that antique seat,  
While the hues of day were pale;                    \_175

And the bright boy beside her feet  
Now lay, lifting at intervals  
His broad blue eyes on her;  
Now, where some sudden impulse calls  
Following. He was a gentle boy                    \_180

And in all gentle sorts took joy;  
Oft in a dry leaf for a boat,  
With a small feather for a sail,  
His fancy on that spring would float,  
If some invisible breeze might stir                 \_185  
Its marble calm: and Helen smiled

Through tears of awe on the gay child,  
To think that a boy as fair as he,  
In years which never more may be,  
By that same fount, in that same wood,                    \_190  
The like sweet fancies had pursued;  
And that a mother, lost like her,  
Had mournfully sate watching him.  
Then all the scene was wont to swim  
Through the mist of a burning tear.                        \_195

For many months had Helen known  
This scene; and now she thither turned  
Her footsteps, not alone.  
The friend whose falsehood she had mourned,  
Sate with her on that seat of stone.                       \_200

Silent they sate; for evening,  
And the power its glimpses bring  
Had, with one awful shadow, quelled  
The passion of their grief. They sate  
With linked hands, for unrepelled                         \_205  
Had Helen taken Rosalind's.

Like the autumn wind, when it unbinds  
The tangled locks of the nightshade's hair,  
Which is twined in the sultry summer air  
Round the walls of an outworn sepulchre,                \_210

Did the voice of Helen, sad and sweet,  
And the sound of her heart that ever beat,  
As with sighs and words she breathed on her,  
Unbind the knots of her friend's despair,  
Till her thoughts were free to float and flow;         \_215  
And from her labouring bosom now,  
Like the bursting of a prisoned flame,  
The voice of a long pent sorrow came.

ROSALIND:

I saw the dark earth fall upon  
The coffin; and I saw the stone                         \_220  
Laid over him whom this cold breast  
Had pillowed to his nightly rest!

Thou knowest not, thou canst not know  
My agony. Oh! I could not weep:  
The sources whence such blessings flow                 \_225  
Were not to be approached by me!

But I could smile, and I could sleep,  
Though with a self-accusing heart.  
In morning's light, in evening's gloom,  
I watched,--and would not thence depart--             \_230

My husband's unlamented tomb.  
My children knew their sire was gone,  
But when I told them,--'He is dead,'--  
They laughed aloud in frantic glee,  
They clapped their hands and leaped about,             \_235  
Answering each other's ecstasy



With many a prank and merry shout.  
But I sate silent and alone,  
Wrapped in the mock of mourning weed.

They laughed, for he was dead: but I \_240  
Sate with a hard and tearless eye,  
And with a heart which would deny  
The secret joy it could not quell,  
Low muttering o'er his loathed name;  
Till from that self-contention came \_245  
Remorse where sin was none; a hell  
Which in pure spirits should not dwell.

I'll tell thee truth. He was a man  
Hard, selfish, loving only gold,  
Yet full of guile; his pale eyes ran \_250  
With tears, which each some falsehood told,  
And oft his smooth and bridled tongue  
Would give the lie to his flushing cheek;  
He was a coward to the strong:  
He was a tyrant to the weak, \_255  
On whom his vengeance he would wreak:  
For scorn, whose arrows search the heart,  
From many a stranger's eye would dart,  
And on his memory cling, and follow  
His soul to its home so cold and hollow. \_260

He was a tyrant to the weak,  
And we were such, alas the day!  
Oft, when my little ones at play,  
Were in youth's natural lightness gay,  
Or if they listened to some tale \_265  
Of travellers, or of fairy land,--  
When the light from the wood-fire's dying brand  
Flashed on their faces,--if they heard  
Or thought they heard upon the stair  
His footstep, the suspended word \_270  
Died on my lips: we all grew pale:  
The babe at my bosom was hushed with fear  
If it thought it heard its father near;  
And my two wild boys would near my knee  
Cling, cowed and cowering fearfully. \_275

I'll tell thee truth: I loved another.  
His name in my ear was ever ringing,  
His form to my brain was ever clinging:  
Yet if some stranger breathed that name,  
My lips turned white, and my heart beat fast: \_280  
My nights were once haunted by dreams of flame,  
My days were dim in the shadow cast  
By the memory of the same!  
Day and night, day and night,  
He was my breath and life and light, \_285  
For three short years, which soon were passed.

On the fourth, my gentle mother  
Led me to the shrine, to be  
His sworn bride eternally.  
And now we stood on the altar stair,                     \_290  
When my father came from a distant land,  
And with a loud and fearful cry  
Rushed between us suddenly.  
I saw the stream of his thin gray hair,  
I saw his lean and lifted hand,                     \_295  
And heard his words,--and live! Oh God!  
Wherefore do I live?--'Hold, hold!'  
He cried, 'I tell thee 'tis her brother!  
Thy mother, boy, beneath the sod  
Of yon churchyard rests in her shroud so cold:             \_300  
I am now weak, and pale, and old:  
We were once dear to one another,  
I and that corpse! Thou art our child!  
Then with a laugh both long and wild  
The youth upon the pavement fell:                     \_305  
They found him dead! All looked on me,  
The spasms of my despair to see:  
But I was calm. I went away:  
I was clammy-cold like clay!  
I did not weep: I did not speak:                     \_310  
But day by day, week after week,  
I walked about like a corpse alive!  
Alas! sweet friend, you must believe  
This heart is stone: it did not break.  
My father lived a little while,                     \_315  
But all might see that he was dying,  
He smiled with such a woeful smile!  
When he was in the churchyard lying  
Among the worms, we grew quite poor,  
So that no one would give us bread:                     \_320  
My mother looked at me, and said  
Faint words of cheer, which only meant  
That she could die and be content;  
So I went forth from the same church door  
To another husband's bed.                     \_325  
And this was he who died at last,  
When weeks and months and years had passed,  
Through which I firmly did fulfil  
My duties, a devoted wife,  
With the stern step of vanquished will,                     \_330  
Walking beneath the night of life,  
Whose hours extinguished, like slow rain  
Falling for ever, pain by pain,  
The very hope of death's dear rest;  
Which, since the heart within my breast                     \_335  
Of natural life was dispossessed,  
Its strange sustainer there had been.

When flowers were dead, and grass was green

Upon my mother's grave,--that mother  
 Whom to outlive, and cheer, and make \_340  
 My wan eyes glitter for her sake,  
 Was my vowed task, the single care  
 Which once gave life to my despair,--  
 When she was a thing that did not stir  
 And the crawling worms were cradling her \_345  
 To a sleep more deep and so more sweet  
 Than a baby's rocked on its nurse's knee,  
 I lived: a living pulse then beat  
 Beneath my heart that awakened me.  
 What was this pulse so warm and free? \_350  
 Alas! I knew it could not be  
 My own dull blood: 'twas like a thought  
 Of liquid love, that spread and wrought  
 Under my bosom and in my brain,  
 And crept with the blood through every vein; \_355  
 And hour by hour, day after day,  
 The wonder could not charm away,  
 But laid in sleep, my wakeful pain,  
 Until I knew it was a child,  
 And then I wept. For long, long years \_360  
 These frozen eyes had shed no tears:  
 But now--'twas the season fair and mild  
 When April has wept itself to May:  
 I sate through the sweet sunny day  
 By my window bowered round with leaves, \_365  
 And down my cheeks the quick tears fell  
 Like twinkling rain-drops from the eaves,  
 When warm spring showers are passing o'er.  
 O Helen, none can ever tell  
 The joy it was to weep once more! \_370

I wept to think how hard it were  
 To kill my babe, and take from it  
 The sense of light, and the warm air,  
 And my own fond and tender care,  
 And love and smiles; ere I knew yet \_375  
 That these for it might, as for me,  
 Be the masks of a grinning mockery.  
 And haply, I would dream, 'twere sweet  
 To feed it from my faded breast,  
 Or mark my own heart's restless beat \_380  
 Rock it to its untroubled rest,  
 And watch the growing soul beneath  
 Dawn in faint smiles; and hear its breath,  
 Half interrupted by calm sighs,  
 And search the depth of its fair eyes \_385  
 For long departed memories!  
 And so I lived till that sweet load  
 Was lightened. Darkly forward flowed  
 The stream of years, and on it bore  
 Two shapes of gladness to my sight; \_390

Two other babes, delightful more  
In my lost soul's abandoned night,  
Than their own country ships may be  
Sailing towards wrecked mariners,  
Who cling to the rock of a wintry sea.                     \_395

For each, as it came, brought soothing tears;  
And a loosening warmth, as each one lay  
Sucking the sullen milk away  
About my frozen heart, did play,  
And weaned it, oh how painfully--                     \_400

As they themselves were weaned each one  
From that sweet food,--even from the thirst  
Of death, and nothingness, and rest,  
Strange inmate of a living breast!  
Which all that I had undergone                     \_405

Of grief and shame, since she, who first  
The gates of that dark refuge closed,  
Came to my sight, and almost burst  
The seal of that Lethean spring;  
But these fair shadows interposed:                     \_410

For all delights are shadows now!  
And from my brain to my dull brow  
The heavy tears gather and flow:  
I cannot speak: Oh, let me weep!

The tears which fell from her wan eyes                     \_415  
Glimmered among the moonlight dew:  
Her deep hard sobs and heavy sighs  
Their echoes in the darkness threw.  
When she grew calm, she thus did keep  
The tenor of her tale:

He died:                     \_420

I know not how: he was not old,  
If age be numbered by its years:  
But he was bowed and bent with fears,  
Pale with the quenchless thirst of gold,  
Which, like fierce fever, left him weak;                     \_425

And his strait lip and bloated cheek  
Were warped in spasms by hollow sneers;  
And selfish cares with barren plough,  
Not age, had lined his narrow brow,  
And foul and cruel thoughts, which feed                     \_430

Upon the withering life within,  
Like vipers on some poisonous weed.  
Whether his ill were death or sin  
None knew, until he died indeed,  
And then men owned they were the same.                     \_435

Seven days within my chamber lay  
That corse, and my babes made holiday:  
At last, I told them what is death:  
The eldest, with a kind of shame,  
Came to my knees with silent breath,                     \_440

And sate awe-stricken at my feet;  
And soon the others left their play,  
And sate there too. It is unmeet  
To shed on the brief flower of youth  
The withering knowledge of the grave;                    \_445  
From me remorse then wrung that truth.  
I could not bear the joy which gave  
Too just a response to mine own.  
In vain. I dared not feign a groan,  
And in their artless looks I saw,                        \_450  
Between the mists of fear and awe,  
That my own thought was theirs, and they  
Expressed it not in words, but said,  
Each in its heart, how every day  
Will pass in happy work and play,                       \_455  
Now he is dead and gone away.

After the funeral all our kin  
Assembled, and the will was read.  
My friend, I tell thee, even the dead  
Have strength, their putrid shrouds within,               \_460  
To blast and torture. Those who live  
Still fear the living, but a corse  
Is merciless, and power doth give  
To such pale tyrants half the spoil  
He rends from those who groan and toil,                   \_465  
Because they blush not with remorse  
Among their crawling worms. Behold,  
I have no child! my tale grows old  
With grief, and staggers: let it reach  
The limits of my feeble speech,                         \_470  
And languidly at length recline  
On the brink of its own grave and mine.

Thou knowest what a thing is Poverty  
Among the fallen on evil days:  
'Tis Crime, and Fear, and Infamy,                         \_475  
And houseless Want in frozen ways  
Wandering ungarmented, and Pain,  
And, worse than all, that inward stain  
Foul Self-contempt, which drowns in sneers  
Youth's starlight smile, and makes its tears               \_480  
First like hot gall, then dry for ever!  
And well thou knowest a mother never  
Could doom her children to this ill,  
And well he knew the same. The will  
Imported, that if e'er again                               \_485  
I sought my children to behold,  
Or in my birthplace did remain  
Beyond three days, whose hours were told,  
They should inherit nought: and he,  
To whom next came their patrimony,                     \_490  
A sallow lawyer, cruel and cold,

Aye watched me, as the will was read,  
With eyes askance, which sought to see  
The secrets of my agony;  
And with close lips and anxious brow                     \_495  
Stood canvassing still to and fro  
The chance of my resolve, and all  
The dead man's caution just did call;  
For in that killing lie 'twas said--  
'She is adulterous, and doth hold                     \_500  
In secret that the Christian creed  
Is false, and therefore is much need  
That I should have a care to save  
My children from eternal fire.'  
Friend, he was sheltered by the grave,                     \_505  
And therefore dared to be a liar!  
In truth, the Indian on the pyre  
Of her dead husband, half consumed,  
As well might there be false, as I  
To those abhorred embraces doomed,                     \_510  
Far worse than fire's brief agony  
As to the Christian creed, if true  
Or false, I never questioned it:  
I took it as the vulgar do:  
Nor my vexed soul had leisure yet                     \_515  
To doubt the things men say, or deem  
That they are other than they seem.

All present who those crimes did hear,  
In feigned or actual scorn and fear,  
Men, women, children, slunk away,                     \_520  
Whispering with self-contented pride,  
Which half suspects its own base lie.  
I spoke to none, nor did abide,  
But silently I went my way,  
Nor noticed I where joyously                     \_525  
Sate my two younger babes at play,  
In the court-yard through which I passed;  
But went with footsteps firm and fast  
Till I came to the brink of the ocean green,  
And there, a woman with gray hairs,                     \_530  
Who had my mother's servant been,  
Kneeling, with many tears and prayers,  
Made me accept a purse of gold,  
Half of the earnings she had kept  
To refuge her when weak and old.                     \_535

With woe, which never sleeps or slept,  
I wander now. 'Tis a vain thought--  
But on yon alp, whose snowy head  
'Mid the azure air is islanded,  
(We see it o'er the flood of cloud,                     \_540  
Which sunrise from its eastern caves  
Drives, wrinkling into golden waves,

Hung with its precipices proud,  
From that gray stone where first we met)  
There now--who knows the dead feel nought?-- \_545  
Should be my grave; for he who yet  
Is my soul's soul, once said: "Twere sweet  
'Mid stars and lightnings to abide,  
And winds and lulling snows, that beat  
With their soft flakes the mountain wide, \_550  
Where weary meteor lamps repose,  
And languid storms their pinions close:  
And all things strong and bright and pure,  
And ever during, aye endure:  
Who knows, if one were buried there, \_555  
But these things might our spirits make,  
Amid the all-surrounding air,  
Their own eternity partake?'  
Then 'twas a wild and playful saying  
At which I laughed, or seemed to laugh: \_560  
They were his words: now heed my praying,  
And let them be my epitaph.  
Thy memory for a term may be  
My monument. Wilt remember me?  
I know thou wilt, and canst forgive \_565  
Whilst in this erring world to live  
My soul disdained not, that I thought  
Its lying forms were worthy aught  
And much less thee.

HELEN:

O speak not so,  
But come to me and pour thy woe \_570  
Into this heart, full though it be,  
Ay, overflowing with its own:  
I thought that grief had severed me  
From all beside who weep and groan;  
Its likeness upon earth to be, \_575  
Its express image; but thou art  
More wretched. Sweet! we will not part  
Henceforth, if death be not division;  
If so, the dead feel no contrition.  
But wilt thou hear since last we parted \_580  
All that has left me broken hearted?

ROSALIND:

Yes, speak. The faintest stars are scarcely shorn  
Of their thin beams by that delusive morn  
Which sinks again in darkness, like the light  
Of early love, soon lost in total night. \_585

HELEN:

Alas! Italian winds are mild,  
But my bosom is cold--wintry cold--  
When the warm air weaves, among the fresh leaves,

Soft music, my poor brain is wild,  
And I am weak like a nursling child,                     \_590  
Though my soul with grief is gray and old.

ROSALIND:

Weep not at thine own words, though they must make  
Me weep. What is thy tale?

HELEN:

I fear 'twill shake  
Thy gentle heart with tears. Thou well  
Rememberest when we met no more,                     \_595  
And, though I dwelt with Lionel,  
That friendless caution pierced me sore  
With grief; a wound my spirit bore  
Indignantly, but when he died,  
With him lay dead both hope and pride.                     \_600  
Alas! all hope is buried now.  
But then men dreamed the aged earth  
Was labouring in that mighty birth,  
Which many a poet and a sage  
Has aye foreseen--the happy age                     \_605  
When truth and love shall dwell below  
Among the works and ways of men;  
Which on this world not power but will  
Even now is wanting to fulfil.

Among mankind what thence befell                     \_610  
Of strife, how vain, is known too well;  
When Liberty's dear paeon fell  
'Mid murderous howls. To Lionel,  
Thought of great wealth and lineage high,  
Yet through those dungeon walls there came                     \_615  
Thy thrilling light, O Liberty!  
And as the meteor's midnight flame  
Startles the dreamer, sun-like truth  
Flashed on his visionary youth,  
And filled him, not with love, but faith,                     \_620  
And hope, and courage mute in death;  
For love and life in him were twins,  
Born at one birth: in every other  
First life then love its course begins,  
Though they be children of one mother;                     \_625  
And so through this dark world they fleet  
Divided, till in death they meet;  
But he loved all things ever. Then  
He passed amid the strife of men,  
And stood at the throne of armed power                     \_630  
Pleading for a world of woe:  
Secure as one on a rock-built tower  
O'er the wrecks which the surge trails to and fro,  
'Mid the passions wild of human kind  
He stood, like a spirit calming them;                     \_635



For, it was said, his words could bind  
 Like music the lulled crowd, and stem  
 That torrent of unquiet dream  
 Which mortals truth and reason deem,  
 But is revenge and fear and pride.   \_640  
 Joyous he was; and hope and peace  
 On all who heard him did abide,  
 Raining like dew from his sweet talk,  
 As where the evening star may walk  
 Along the brink of the gloomy seas,   \_645  
 Liquid mists of splendour quiver.  
 His very gestures touched to tears  
 The unpersuaded tyrant, never  
 So moved before: his presence stung  
 The torturers with their victim's pain,   \_650  
 And none knew how; and through their ears  
 The subtle witchcraft of his tongue  
 Unlocked the hearts of those who keep  
 Gold, the world's bond of slavery.  
 Men wondered, and some sneered to see   \_655  
 One sow what he could never reap:  
 For he is rich, they said, and young,  
 And might drink from the depths of luxury.  
 If he seeks Fame, Fame never crowned  
 The champion of a trampled creed:   \_660  
 If he seeks Power, Power is enthroned  
 'Mid ancient rights and wrongs, to feed  
 Which hungry wolves with praise and spoil,  
 Those who would sit near Power must toil;  
 And such, there sitting, all may see.   \_665  
 What seeks he? All that others seek  
 He casts away, like a vile weed  
 Which the sea casts unreturningly.  
 That poor and hungry men should break  
 The laws which wreak them toil and scorn,   \_670  
 We understand; but Lionel  
 We know, is rich and nobly born.  
 So wondered they: yet all men loved  
 Young Lionel, though few approved;  
 All but the priests, whose hatred fell   \_675  
 Like the unseen blight of a smiling day,  
 The withering honey dew, which clings  
 Under the bright green buds of May,  
 Whilst they unfold their emerald wings:  
 For he made verses wild and queer   \_680  
 On the strange creeds priests hold so dear,  
 Because they bring them land and gold.  
 Of devils and saints and all such gear,  
 He made tales which whoso heard or read  
 Would laugh till he were almost dead.   \_685  
 So this grew a proverb: 'Don't get old  
 Till Lionel's "Banquet in Hell" you hear,  
 And then you will laugh yourself young again.'

So the priests hated him, and he  
Repaid their hate with cheerful glee.                     \_690

Ah, smiles and joyance quickly died,  
For public hope grew pale and dim  
In an altered time and tide,  
And in its wasting withered him,  
As a summer flower that blows too soon                     \_695

Droops in the smile of the waning moon,  
When it scatters through an April night  
The frozen dews of wrinkling blight.  
None now hoped more. Gray Power was seated  
Safely on her ancestral throne;                     \_700

And Faith, the Python, undefeated,  
Even to its blood-stained steps dragged on  
Her foul and wounded train, and men  
Were trampled and deceived again,  
And words and shows again could bind                     \_705

The wailing tribes of human kind  
In scorn and famine. Fire and blood  
Raged round the raging multitude,  
To fields remote by tyrants sent  
To be the scorned instrument                     \_710

With which they drag from mines of gore  
The chains their slaves yet ever wore:  
And in the streets men met each other,  
And by old altars and in halls,  
And smiled again at festivals.                     \_715

But each man found in his heart's brother  
Cold cheer; for all, though half deceived,  
The outworn creeds again believed,  
And the same round anew began,  
Which the weary world yet ever ran.                     \_720

Many then wept, not tears, but gall  
Within their hearts, like drops which fall  
Wasting the fountain-stone away.  
And in that dark and evil day  
Did all desires and thoughts, that claim                     \_725

Men's care--ambition, friendship, fame,  
Love, hope, though hope was now despair--  
Indue the colours of this change,  
As from the all-surrounding air  
The earth takes hues obscure and strange,                     \_730  
When storm and earthquake linger there.

And so, my friend, it then befell  
To many, most to Lionel,  
Whose hope was like the life of youth  
Within him, and when dead, became                     \_735  
A spirit of unresting flame,  
Which goaded him in his distress  
Over the world's vast wilderness.

Three years he left his native land,  
And on the fourth, when he returned,                    \_740  
None knew him: he was stricken deep  
With some disease of mind, and turned  
Into aught unlike Lionel.

On him, on whom, did he pause in sleep,  
Serenest smiles were wont to keep,                    \_745

And, did he wake, a winged band  
Of bright persuasions, which had fed  
On his sweet lips and liquid eyes,  
Kept their swift pinions half outspread  
To do on men his least command;                    \_750

On him, whom once 'twas paradise  
Even to behold, now misery lay:  
In his own heart 'twas merciless,  
To all things else none may express  
Its innocence and tenderness.                        \_755

'Twas said that he had refuge sought  
In love from his unquiet thought  
In distant lands, and been deceived  
By some strange show; for there were found,  
Blotted with tears as those relieved                    \_760  
By their own words are wont to do,  
These mournful verses on the ground,  
By all who read them blotted too.

'How am I changed! my hopes were once like fire:  
I loved, and I believed that life was love.                    \_765  
How am I lost! on wings of swift desire  
Among Heaven's winds my spirit once did move.  
I slept, and silver dreams did aye inspire  
My liquid sleep: I woke, and did approve  
All nature to my heart, and thought to make                    \_770  
A paradise of earth for one sweet sake.

'I love, but I believe in love no more.  
I feel desire, but hope not. O, from sleep  
Most vainly must my weary brain implore  
Its long lost flattery now: I wake to weep,                    \_775  
And sit through the long day gnawing the core  
Of my bitter heart, and, like a miser, keep,  
Since none in what I feel take pain or pleasure,  
To my own soul its self-consuming treasure.'

He dwelt beside me near the sea;                        \_780  
And oft in evening did we meet,  
When the waves, beneath the starlight, flee  
O'er the yellow sands with silver feet,  
And talked: our talk was sad and sweet,  
Till slowly from his mien there passed                    \_785  
The desolation which it spoke;  
And smiles,--as when the lightning's blast

Has parched some heaven-delighting oak,  
 The next spring shows leaves pale and rare,  
 But like flowers delicate and fair,                     \_790  
 On its rent boughs,--again arrayed  
 His countenance in tender light:  
 His words grew subtle fire, which made  
 The air his hearers breathed delight:  
 His motions, like the winds, were free,                     \_795  
 Which bend the bright grass gracefully,  
 Then fade away in circlets faint:  
 And winged Hope, on which upborne  
 His soul seemed hovering in his eyes,  
 Like some bright spirit newly born                     \_800  
 Floating amid the sunny skies,  
 Sprang forth from his rent heart anew.  
 Yet o'er his talk, and looks, and mien,  
 Tempering their loveliness too keen,  
 Past woe its shadow backward threw,                     \_805  
 Till like an exhalation, spread  
 From flowers half drunk with evening dew,  
 They did become infectious: sweet  
 And subtle mists of sense and thought:  
 Which wrapped us soon, when we might meet,                     \_810  
 Almost from our own looks and aught  
 The wild world holds. And so, his mind  
 Was healed, while mine grew sick with fear:  
 For ever now his health declined,  
 Like some frail bark which cannot bear                     \_815  
 The impulse of an altered wind,  
 Though prosperous: and my heart grew full  
 'Mid its new joy of a new care:  
 For his cheek became, not pale, but fair,  
 As rose-o'ershadowed lilies are;                     \_820  
 And soon his deep and sunny hair,  
 In this alone less beautiful,  
 Like grass in tombs grew wild and rare.  
 The blood in his translucent veins  
 Beat, not like animal life, but love                     \_825  
 Seemed now its sullen springs to move,  
 When life had failed, and all its pains:  
 And sudden sleep would seize him oft  
 Like death, so calm, but that a tear,  
 His pointed eyelashes between,                     \_830  
 Would gather in the light serene  
 Of smiles, whose lustre bright and soft  
 Beneath lay undulating there.  
 His breath was like inconstant flame,  
 As eagerly it went and came;                     \_835  
 And I hung o'er him in his sleep,  
 Till, like an image in the lake  
 Which rains disturb, my tears would break  
 The shadow of that slumber deep:  
 Then he would bid me not to weep,                     \_840

And say, with flattery false, yet sweet,  
 That death and he could never meet,  
 If I would never part with him.  
 And so we loved, and did unite  
 All that in us was yet divided: \_845  
 For when he said, that many a rite,  
 By men to bind but once provided,  
 Could not be shared by him and me,  
 Or they would kill him in their glee,  
 I shuddered, and then laughing said-- \_850  
 'We will have rites our faith to bind,  
 But our church shall be the starry night,  
 Our altar the grassy earth outspread,  
 And our priest the muttering wind.'  
  
 'Twas sunset as I spoke: one star \_855  
 Had scarce burst forth, when from afar  
 The ministers of misrule sent,  
 Seized upon Lionel, and bore  
 His chained limbs to a dreary tower,  
 In the midst of a city vast and wide. \_860  
 For he, they said, from his mind had bent  
 Against their gods keen blasphemy,  
 For which, though his soul must roasted be  
 In hell's red lakes immortally,  
 Yet even on earth must he abide \_865  
 The vengeance of their slaves: a trial,  
 I think, men call it. What avail  
 Are prayers and tears, which chase denial  
 From the fierce savage, nursed in hate?  
 What the knit soul that pleading and pale \_870  
 Makes wan the quivering cheek, which late  
 It painted with its own delight?  
 We were divided. As I could,  
 I stilled the tingling of my blood,  
 And followed him in their despite, \_875  
 As a widow follows, pale and wild,  
 The murderers and corse of her only child;  
 And when we came to the prison door  
 And I prayed to share his dungeon floor  
 With prayers which rarely have been spurned, \_880  
 And when men drove me forth and I  
 Stared with blank frenzy on the sky,  
 A farewell look of love he turned,  
 Half calming me; then gazed awhile,  
 As if thro' that black and massy pile, \_885  
 And thro' the crowd around him there,  
 And thro' the dense and murky air,  
 And the thronged streets, he did espy  
 What poets know and prophesy;  
 And said, with voice that made them shiver \_890  
 And clung like music in my brain,  
 And which the mute walls spoke again

Prolonging it with deepened strain:  
'Fear not the tyrants shall rule for ever,  
Or the priests of the bloody faith;                    \_895  
They stand on the brink of that mighty river,  
Whose waves they have tainted with death:  
It is fed from the depths of a thousand dells,  
Around them it foams, and rages, and swells,  
And their swords and their sceptres I floating see,                    \_900  
Like wrecks in the surge of eternity.'

I dwelt beside the prison gate;  
And the strange crowd that out and in  
Passed, some, no doubt, with mine own fate,  
Might have fretted me with its ceaseless din,                    \_905  
But the fever of care was louder within.  
Soon, but too late, in penitence  
Or fear, his foes released him thence:  
I saw his thin and languid form,  
As leaning on the jailor's arm,    \_910  
Whose hardened eyes grew moist the while,  
To meet his mute and faded smile,  
And hear his words of kind farewell,  
He tottered forth from his damp cell.  
Many had never wept before,    \_915  
From whom fast tears then gushed and fell:  
Many will relent no more,  
Who sobbed like infants then; aye, all  
Who thronged the prison's stony hall,  
The rulers or the slaves of law,    \_920  
Felt with a new surprise and awe  
That they were human, till strong shame  
Made them again become the same.  
The prison blood-hounds, huge and grim,  
From human looks the infection caught,    \_925  
And fondly crouched and fawned on him;  
And men have heard the prisoners say,  
Who in their rotting dungeons lay,  
That from that hour, throughout one day,  
The fierce despair and hate which kept    \_930  
Their trampled bosoms almost slept:  
Where, like twin vultures, they hung feeding  
On each heart's wound, wide torn and bleeding,--  
Because their jailors' rule, they thought,  
Grew merciful, like a parent's sway.    \_935

I know not how, but we were free:  
And Lionel sate alone with me,  
As the carriage drove thro' the streets apace;  
And we looked upon each other's face;  
And the blood in our fingers intertwined    \_940  
Ran like the thoughts of a single mind,  
As the swift emotions went and came  
Thro' the veins of each united frame.

So thro' the long long streets we passed  
 Of the million-peopled City vast;                     \_945  
 Which is that desert, where each one  
 Seeks his mate yet is alone,  
 Beloved and sought and mourned of none;  
 Until the clear blue sky was seen,  
 And the grassy meadows bright and green,                     \_950  
 And then I sunk in his embrace,  
 Enclosing there a mighty space  
 Of love: and so we travelled on  
 By woods, and fields of yellow flowers,  
 And towns, and villages, and towers,                     \_955  
 Day after day of happy hours.  
 It was the azure time of June,  
 When the skies are deep in the stainless noon,  
 And the warm and fitful breezes shake  
 The fresh green leaves of the hedgerow briar,                     \_960  
 And there were odours then to make  
 The very breath we did respire  
 A liquid element, whereon  
 Our spirits, like delighted things  
 That walk the air on subtle wings,                     \_965  
 Floated and mingled far away,  
 'Mid the warm winds of the sunny day.  
 And when the evening star came forth  
 Above the curve of the new bent moon,  
 And light and sound ebbed from the earth,                     \_970  
 Like the tide of the full and the weary sea  
 To the depths of its own tranquillity,  
 Our natures to its own repose  
 Did the earth's breathless sleep attune:  
 Like flowers, which on each other close                     \_975  
 Their languid leaves when daylight's gone,  
 We lay, till new emotions came,  
 Which seemed to make each mortal frame  
 One soul of interwoven flame,  
 A life in life, a second birth                     \_980  
 In worlds diviner far than earth,  
 Which, like two strains of harmony  
 That mingle in the silent sky  
 Then slowly disunite, passed by  
 And left the tenderness of tears,                     \_985  
 A soft oblivion of all fears,  
 A sweet sleep: so we travelled on  
 Till we came to the home of Lionel,  
 Among the mountains wild and lone,  
 Beside the hoary western sea,                     \_990  
 Which near the verge of the echoing shore  
 The massy forest shadowed o'er.  
  
 The ancient steward, with hair all hoar,  
 As we alighted, wept to see  
 His master changed so fearfully;                     \_995

And the old man's sobs did waken me  
From my dream of unremitting gladness;  
The truth flashed o'er me like quick madness  
When I looked, and saw that there was death  
On Lionel: yet day by day                                        \_1000  
He lived, till fear grew hope and faith,  
And in my soul I dared to say,  
Nothing so bright can pass away:  
Death is dark, and foul, and dull,  
But he is--O how beautiful!                                        \_1005  
Yet day by day he grew more weak,  
And his sweet voice, when he might speak,  
Which ne'er was loud, became more low;  
And the light which flashed through his waxen cheek  
Grew faint, as the rose-like hues which flow                        \_1010  
From sunset o'er the Alpine snow:  
And death seemed not like death in him,  
For the spirit of life o'er every limb  
Lingered, a mist of sense and thought.  
When the summer wind faint odours brought                               \_1015  
From mountain flowers, even as it passed  
His cheek would change, as the noonday sea  
Which the dying breeze sweeps fitfully.  
If but a cloud the sky o'ercast,  
You might see his colour come and go,                               \_1020  
And the softest strain of music made  
Sweet smiles, yet sad, arise and fade  
Amid the dew of his tender eyes;  
And the breath, with intermitting flow,  
Made his pale lips quiver and part.                                        \_1025  
You might hear the beatings of his heart,  
Quick, but not strong; and with my tresses  
When oft he playfully would bind  
In the bowers of mossy lonelinesses  
His neck, and win me so to mingle                                        \_1030  
In the sweet depth of woven caresses,  
And our faint limbs were intertwined,  
Alas! the unquiet life did tingle  
From mine own heart through every vein,  
Like a captive in dreams of liberty,                                       \_1035  
Who beats the walls of his stony cell.  
But his, it seemed already free,  
Like the shadow of fire surrounding me!  
On my faint eyes and limbs did dwell  
That spirit as it passed, till soon,                                        \_1040  
As a frail cloud wandering o'er the moon,  
Beneath its light invisible,  
Is seen when it folds its gray wings again  
To alight on midnight's dusky plain,  
I lived and saw, and the gathering soul                                        \_1045  
Passed from beneath that strong control,  
And I fell on a life which was sick with fear  
Of all the woe that now I bear.



Amid a bloomless myrtle wood,  
 On a green and sea-girt promontory,                     \_1050  
 Not far from where we dwelt, there stood  
 In record of a sweet sad story,  
 An altar and a temple bright  
 Circled by steps, and o'er the gate  
 Was sculptured, 'To Fidelity;'                     \_1055  
 And in the shrine an image sate,  
 All veiled: but there was seen the light  
 Of smiles which faintly could express  
 A mingled pain and tenderness  
 Through that ethereal drapery.                     \_1060  
 The left hand held the head, the right--  
 Beyond the veil, beneath the skin,  
 You might see the nerves quivering within--  
 Was forcing the point of a barbed dart  
 Into its side-convulsing heart.                     \_1065  
 An unskilled hand, yet one informed  
 With genius, had the marble warmed  
 With that pathetic life. This tale  
 It told: A dog had from the sea,  
 When the tide was raging fearfully,                     \_1070  
 Dragged Lionel's mother, weak and pale,  
 Then died beside her on the sand,  
 And she that temple thence had planned;  
 But it was Lionel's own hand  
 Had wrought the image. Each new moon                     \_1075  
 That lady did, in this lone fane,  
 The rites of a religion sweet,  
 Whose god was in her heart and brain:  
 The seasons' loveliest flowers were strewn  
 On the marble floor beneath her feet,                     \_1080  
 And she brought crowns of sea-buds white  
 Whose odour is so sweet and faint,  
 And weeds, like branching chrysolite,  
 Woven in devices fine and quaint.  
 And tears from her brown eyes did stain                     \_1085  
 The altar: need but look upon  
 That dying statue fair and wan,  
 If tears should cease, to weep again:  
 And rare Arabian odours came,  
 Through the myrtle cosses steaming thence                     \_1090  
 From the hissing frankincense,  
 Whose smoke, wool-white as ocean foam,  
 Hung in dense flocks beneath the dome--  
 That ivory dome, whose azure night  
 With golden stars, like heaven, was bright--                     \_1095  
 O'er the split cedar's pointed flame;  
 And the lady's harp would kindle there  
 The melody of an old air,  
 Softer than sleep; the villagers  
 Mixed their religion up with hers,                     \_1100

And, as they listened round, shed tears.

One eve he led me to this fane:

Daylight on its last purple cloud

Was lingering gray, and soon her strain

The nightingale began; now loud, \_1105

Climbing in circles the windless sky,

Now dying music; suddenly

'Tis scattered in a thousand notes,

And now to the hushed ear it floats

Like field smells known in infancy, \_1110

Then failing, soothes the air again.

We sate within that temple lone,

Pavilioned round with Parian stone:

His mother's harp stood near, and oft

I had awakened music soft \_1115

Amid its wires: the nightingale

Was pausing in her heaven-taught tale:

'Now drain the cup,' said Lionel,

'Which the poet-bird has crowned so well

With the wine of her bright and liquid song! \_1120

Heardst thou not sweet words among

That heaven-resounding minstrelsy?

Heard'st thou not that those who die

Awake in a world of ecstasy?

That love, when limbs are interwoven, \_1125

And sleep, when the night of life is cloven,

And thought, to the world's dim boundaries clinging,

And music, when one beloved is singing,

Is death? Let us drain right joyously

The cup which the sweet bird fills for me.' \_1130

He paused, and to my lips he bent

His own: like spirit his words went

Through all my limbs with the speed of fire;

And his keen eyes, glittering through mine,

Filled me with the flame divine, \_1135

Which in their orbs was burning far,

Like the light of an unmeasured star,

In the sky of midnight dark and deep:

Yes, 'twas his soul that did inspire

Sounds, which my skill could ne'er awaken; \_1140

And first, I felt my fingers sweep

The harp, and a long quivering cry

Burst from my lips in symphony:

The dusk and solid air was shaken,

As swift and swifter the notes came \_1145

From my touch, that wandered like quick flame,

And from my bosom, labouring

With some unutterable thing:

The awful sound of my own voice made

My faint lips tremble; in some mood \_1150

Of wordless thought Lionel stood

So pale, that even beside his cheek

The snowy column from its shade  
Caught whiteness: yet his countenance,  
Raised upward, burned with radiance \_1155  
Of spirit-piercing joy, whose light,  
Like the moon struggling through the night  
Of whirlwind-rifted clouds, did break  
With beams that might not be confined.  
I paused, but soon his gestures kindled \_1160  
New power, as by the moving wind  
The waves are lifted, and my song  
To low soft notes now changed and dwindled,  
And from the twinkling wires among,  
My languid fingers drew and flung \_1165  
Circles of life-dissolving sound,  
Yet faint; in aery rings they bound  
My Lionel, who, as every strain  
Grew fainter but more sweet, his mien  
Sunk with the sound relaxedly; \_1170  
And slowly now he turned to me,  
As slowly faded from his face  
That awful joy: with looks serene  
He was soon drawn to my embrace,  
And my wild song then died away \_1175  
In murmurs: words I dare not say  
We mixed, and on his lips mine fed  
Till they methought felt still and cold:  
'What is it with thee, love?' I said:  
No word, no look, no motion! yes, \_1180  
There was a change, but spare to guess,  
Nor let that moment's hope be told.  
I looked, and knew that he was dead,  
And fell, as the eagle on the plain  
Falls when life deserts her brain, \_1185  
And the mortal lightning is veiled again.

O that I were now dead! but such  
(Did they not, love, demand too much,  
Those dying murmurs?) he forbade.  
O that I once again were mad! \_1190  
And yet, dear Rosalind, not so,  
For I would live to share thy woe.  
Sweet boy! did I forget thee too?  
Alas, we know not what we do  
When we speak words.  
No memory more \_1195  
Is in my mind of that sea shore.  
Madness came on me, and a troop  
Of misty shapes did seem to sit  
Beside me, on a vessel's poop,  
And the clear north wind was driving it. \_1200  
Then I heard strange tongues, and saw strange flowers,  
And the stars methought grew unlike ours,  
And the azure sky and the stormless sea

Made me believe that I had died,  
And waked in a world, which was to me \_1205  
Drear hell, though heaven to all beside:  
Then a dead sleep fell on my mind,  
Whilst animal life many long years  
Had rescued from a chasm of tears;  
And when I woke, I wept to find \_1210  
That the same lady, bright and wise,  
With silver locks and quick brown eyes,  
The mother of my Lionel,  
Had tended me in my distress,  
And died some months before. Nor less \_1215  
Wonder, but far more peace and joy,  
Brought in that hour my lovely boy;  
For through that trance my soul had well  
The impress of thy being kept;  
And if I waked, or if I slept, \_1220  
No doubt, though memory faithless be,  
Thy image ever dwelt on me;  
And thus, O Lionel, like thee  
Is our sweet child. 'Tis sure most strange  
I knew not of so great a change, \_1225  
As that which gave him birth, who now  
Is all the solace of my woe.

That Lionel great wealth had left  
By will to me, and that of all  
The ready lies of law bereft \_1230  
My child and me, might well befall.  
But let me think not of the scorn,  
Which from the meanest I have borne,  
When, for my child's beloved sake,  
I mixed with slaves, to vindicate \_1235  
The very laws themselves do make:  
Let me not say scorn is my fate,  
Lest I be proud, suffering the same  
With those who live in deathless fame.

She ceased.--'Lo, where red morning thro' the woods \_1240  
Is burning o'er the dew;' said Rosalind.  
And with these words they rose, and towards the flood  
Of the blue lake, beneath the leaves now wind  
With equal steps and fingers intertwined:  
Thence to a lonely dwelling, where the shore \_1245  
Is shadowed with steep rocks, and cypresses  
Cleave with their dark green cones the silent skies,  
And with their shadows the clear depths below,  
And where a little terrace from its bowers,  
Of blooming myrtle and faint lemon-flowers, \_1250  
Scatters its sense-dissolving fragrance o'er  
The liquid marble of the windless lake;  
And where the aged forest's limbs look hoar,  
Under the leaves which their green garments make,

They come: 'Tis Helen's home, and clean and white,                    \_1255  
Like one which tyrants spare on our own land  
In some such solitude, its casements bright  
Shone through their vine-leaves in the morning sun,  
And even within 'twas scarce like Italy.

And when she saw how all things there were planned,                   \_1260  
As in an English home, dim memory

Disturbed poor Rosalind: she stood as one  
Whose mind is where his body cannot be,  
Till Helen led her where her child yet slept,  
And said, 'Observe, that brow was Lionel's,                                 \_1265  
Those lips were his, and so he ever kept  
One arm in sleep, pillowing his head with it.

You cannot see his eyes--they are two wells  
Of liquid love: let us not wake him yet.'  
But Rosalind could bear no more, and wept                                 \_1270  
A shower of burning tears, which fell upon  
His face, and so his opening lashes shone  
With tears unlike his own, as he did leap  
In sudden wonder from his innocent sleep.

So Rosalind and Helen lived together   \_1275  
Thenceforth, changed in all else, yet friends again,  
Such as they were, when o'er the mountain heather  
They wandered in their youth, through sun and rain.

And after many years, for human things  
Change even like the ocean and the wind,                                 \_1280  
Her daughter was restored to Rosalind,

And in their circle thence some visitings  
Of joy 'mid their new calm would intervene:  
A lovely child she was, of looks serene,  
And motions which o'er things indifferent shed                                 \_1285  
The grace and gentleness from whence they came.

And Helen's boy grew with her, and they fed  
From the same flowers of thought, until each mind  
Like springs which mingle in one flood became,  
And in their union soon their parents saw                                 \_1290  
The shadow of the peace denied to them.

And Rosalind, for when the living stem  
Is cankered in its heart, the tree must fall,  
Died ere her time; and with deep grief and awe  
The pale survivors followed her remains   \_1295

Beyond the region of dissolving rains,  
Up the cold mountain she was wont to call  
Her tomb; and on Chiavenna's precipice  
They raised a pyramid of lasting ice,  
Whose polished sides, ere day had yet begun,                                 \_1300  
Caught the first glow of the unrisen sun,

The last, when it had sunk; and thro' the night  
The charioteers of Arctos wheeled round  
Its glittering point, as seen from Helen's home,  
Whose sad inhabitants each year would come,                                 \_1305  
With willing steps climbing that rugged height,

And hang long locks of hair, and garlands bound  
 With amaranth flowers, which, in the clime's despite,  
 Filled the frore air with unaccustomed light:  
 Such flowers, as in the wintry memory bloom                    \_1310  
 Of one friend left, adorned that frozen tomb.

Helen, whose spirit was of softer mould,  
 Whose sufferings too were less, Death slowlier led  
 Into the peace of his dominion cold:  
 She died among her kindred, being old.                            \_1315  
 And know, that if love die not in the dead  
 As in the living, none of mortal kind  
 Are blest, as now Helen and Rosalind.

NOTES:

- \_63 from there]from thee edition 1819.
- \_366 fell]ran edition 1819.
- \_405- \_408 See Editor's Note on this passage.
- \_551 Where]When edition 1819.
- \_572 Ay, overflowing]Aye overflowing edition 1819.
- \_612 dear]clear cj. Bradley.
- \_711 gore editions 1819, 1839. See Editor's Note.
- \_932 Where]When edition 1819.
- \_1093- \_1096 See Editor's Note.
- \_1168- \_1171] See Editor's Note.
- \_1209 rescue]rescued edition 1819. See Editor's Note.

NOTE BY MRS. SHELLEY.

"Rosalind and Helen" was begun at Marlow, and thrown aside--till I found it; and, at my request, it was completed. Shelley had no care for any of his poems that did not emanate from the depths of his mind, and develop some high or abstruse truth. When he does touch on human life and the human heart, no pictures can be more faithful, more delicate, more subtle, or more pathetic. He never mentioned Love but he shed a grace borrowed from his own nature, that scarcely any other poet has bestowed on that passion. When he spoke of it as the law of life, which inasmuch as we rebel against we err and injure ourselves and others, he promulgated that which he considered an irrefragable truth. In his eyes it was the essence of our being, and all woe and pain arose from the war made against it by selfishness, or insensibility, or mistake. By reverting in his mind to this first principle, he discovered the source of many emotions, and could disclose the secrets of all hearts, and his delineations of passion and emotion touch the finest chords of our nature.

"Rosalind and Helen" was finished during the summer of 1818, while we were at the Baths of Lucca.

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## JULIAN AND MADDALO.

### A CONVERSATION.

[Composed at Este after Shelley's first visit to Venice, 1818 (Autumn); first published in the "Posthumous Poems", London, 1824 (edition Mrs. Shelley). Shelley's original intention had been to print the poem in Leigh Hunt's "Examiner"; but he changed his mind and, on August 15, 1819, sent the manuscript to Hunt to be published anonymously by Ollier. This manuscript, found by Mr. Townshend Mayer, and by him placed in the hands of Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B., is described at length in Mr. Forman's Library Edition of the poems (volume 3 page 107). The date, 'May, 1819,' affixed to "Julian and Maddalo" in the "Posthumous Poems", 1824, indicates the time when the text was finally revised by Shelley. Sources of the text are (1) "Posthumous Poems", 1824; (2) the Hunt manuscript; (3) a fair draft of the poem amongst the Boscombe manuscripts; (4) "Poetical Works", 1839, 1st and 2nd editions (Mrs. Shelley). Our text is that of the Hunt manuscript, as printed in Forman's Library Edition of the Poems, 1876, volume 3, pages 103-30; variants of 1824 are indicated in the footnotes; questions of punctuation are dealt with in the notes at the end of the volume.]

### PREFACE.

The meadows with fresh streams, the bees with thyme,  
The goats with the green leaves of budding Spring,  
Are saturated not--nor Love with tears.--VIRGIL'S "Gallus".

Count Maddalo is a Venetian nobleman of ancient family and of great fortune, who, without mixing much in the society of his countrymen, resides chiefly at his magnificent palace in that city. He is a person of the most consummate genius, and capable, if he would direct his energies to such an end, of becoming the redeemer of his degraded country. But it is his weakness to be proud: he derives, from a comparison of his own extraordinary mind with the dwarfish intellects that surround him, an intense apprehension of the nothingness of human life. His passions and his powers are incomparably greater than those of other men; and, instead of the latter having been employed in curbing the former, they have mutually lent each other strength. His ambition preys upon itself, for want of objects which it can consider worthy of exertion. I say that Maddalo is proud, because I can find no other word to express the concentrated and impatient feelings which consume him; but it is on his own hopes and affections only that he seems to trample, for in social life no human being can be more gentle, patient and unassuming than Maddalo. He is cheerful, frank and witty. His more serious conversation is a sort of intoxication; men are held by it as by a spell. He has travelled much; and there is an inexpressible charm in his relation of his adventures in different countries.

Julian is an Englishman of good family, passionately attached to those

philosophical notions which assert the power of man over his own mind, and the immense improvements of which, by the extinction of certain moral superstitions, human society may be yet susceptible. Without concealing the evil in the world he is for ever speculating how good may be made superior. He is a complete infidel, and a scoffer at all things reputed holy; and Maddalo takes a wicked pleasure in drawing out his taunts against religion. What Maddalo thinks on these matters is not exactly known. Julian, in spite of his heterodox opinions, is conjectured by his friends to possess some good qualities. How far this is possible the pious reader will determine. Julian is rather serious.

Of the Maniac I can give no information. He seems, by his own account, to have been disappointed in love. He was evidently a very cultivated and amiable person when in his right senses. His story, told at length, might be like many other stories of the same kind: the unconnected exclamations of his agony will perhaps be found a sufficient comment for the text of every heart.

I rode one evening with Count Maddalo  
Upon the bank of land which breaks the flow  
Of Adria towards Venice: a bare strand  
Of hillocks, heaped from ever-shifting sand,  
Matted with thistles and amphibious weeds,                     \_5  
Such as from earth's embrace the salt ooze breeds,  
Is this; an uninhabited sea-side,  
Which the lone fisher, when his nets are dried,  
Abandons; and no other object breaks  
The waste, but one dwarf tree and some few stakes                     \_10  
Broken and unrepaired, and the tide makes  
A narrow space of level sand thereon,  
Where 'twas our wont to ride while day went down.  
This ride was my delight. I love all waste  
And solitary places; where we taste                                 \_15  
The pleasure of believing what we see  
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be:  
And such was this wide ocean, and this shore  
More barren than its billows; and yet more  
Than all, with a remembered friend I love                     \_20  
To ride as then I rode;--for the winds drove  
The living spray along the sunny air  
Into our faces; the blue heavens were bare,  
Stripped to their depths by the awakening north;  
And, from the waves, sound like delight broke forth                     \_25  
Harmonising with solitude, and sent  
Into our hearts aerial merriment.  
So, as we rode, we talked; and the swift thought,  
Winging itself with laughter, lingered not,  
But flew from brain to brain,--such glee was ours,                     \_30  
Charged with light memories of remembered hours,  
None slow enough for sadness: till we came  
Homeward, which always makes the spirit tame.



This day had been cheerful but cold, and now  
 The sun was sinking, and the wind also. \_35  
 Our talk grew somewhat serious, as may be  
 Talk interrupted with such raillery  
 As mocks itself, because it cannot scorn  
 The thoughts it would extinguish: --'twas forlorn,  
 Yet pleasing, such as once, so poets tell, \_40  
 The devils held within the dales of Hell  
 Concerning God, freewill and destiny:  
 Of all that earth has been or yet may be,  
 All that vain men imagine or believe,  
 Or hope can paint or suffering may achieve, \_45  
 We descanted; and I (for ever still  
 Is it not wise to make the best of ill?)  
 Argued against despondency, but pride  
 Made my companion take the darker side.  
 The sense that he was greater than his kind \_50  
 Had struck, methinks, his eagle spirit blind  
 By gazing on its own exceeding light.  
 Meanwhile the sun paused ere it should alight,  
 Over the horizon of the mountains;--Oh,  
 How beautiful is sunset, when the glow \_55  
 Of Heaven descends upon a land like thee,  
 Thou Paradise of exiles, Italy!  
 Thy mountains, seas and vineyards, and the towers  
 Of cities they encircle!--it was ours  
 To stand on thee, beholding it: and then, \_60  
 Just where we had dismounted, the Count's men  
 Were waiting for us with the gondola.--  
 As those who pause on some delightful way  
 Though bent on pleasant pilgrimage, we stood  
 Looking upon the evening, and the flood \_65  
 Which lay between the city and the shore,  
 Paved with the image of the sky...the hoar  
 And aery Alps towards the North appeared  
 Through mist, an heaven-sustaining bulwark reared  
 Between the East and West; and half the sky \_70  
 Was roofed with clouds of rich emblazonry  
 Dark purple at the zenith, which still grew  
 Down the steep West into a wondrous hue  
 Brighter than burning gold, even to the rent  
 Where the swift sun yet paused in his descent \_75  
 Among the many-folded hills: they were  
 Those famous Euganean hills, which bear,  
 As seen from Lido thro' the harbour piles,  
 The likeness of a clump of peaked isles--  
 And then--as if the Earth and Sea had been \_80  
 Dissolved into one lake of fire, were seen  
 Those mountains towering as from waves of flame  
 Around the vaporous sun, from which there came  
 The inmost purple spirit of light, and made  
 Their very peaks transparent. 'Ere it fade,' \_85  
 Said my companion, 'I will show you soon

A better station'--so, o'er the lagune  
 We glided; and from that funereal bark  
 I leaned, and saw the city, and could mark  
 How from their many isles, in evening's gleam,                     \_90  
 Its temples and its palaces did seem  
 Like fabrics of enchantment piled to Heaven.  
 I was about to speak, when--'We are even  
 Now at the point I meant,' said Maddalo,  
 And bade the gondolieri cease to row.                     \_95  
 'Look, Julian, on the west, and listen well  
 If you hear not a deep and heavy bell.'  
 I looked, and saw between us and the sun  
 A building on an island; such a one  
 As age to age might add, for uses vile,                     \_100  
 A windowless, deformed and dreary pile;  
 And on the top an open tower, where hung  
 A bell, which in the radiance swayed and swung;  
 We could just hear its hoarse and iron tongue:  
 The broad sun sunk behind it, and it tolled                     \_105  
 In strong and black relief.--'What we behold  
 Shall be the madhouse and its belfry tower,'  
 Said Maddalo, 'and ever at this hour  
 Those who may cross the water, hear that bell  
 Which calls the maniacs, each one from his cell,                     \_110  
 To vespers.'--'As much skill as need to pray  
 In thanks or hope for their dark lot have they  
 To their stern maker,' I replied. 'O ho!  
 You talk as in years past,' said Maddalo.  
 'Tis strange men change not. You were ever still                     \_115  
 Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel,  
 A wolf for the meek lambs--if you can't swim  
 Beware of Providence.' I looked on him,  
 But the gay smile had faded in his eye.  
 'And such,'--he cried, 'is our mortality,                     \_120  
 And this must be the emblem and the sign  
 Of what should be eternal and divine!--  
 And like that black and dreary bell, the soul,  
 Hung in a heaven-illuminated tower, must toll  
 Our thoughts and our desires to meet below                     \_125  
 Round the rent heart and pray--as madmen do  
 For what? they know not,--till the night of death  
 As sunset that strange vision, severeth  
 Our memory from itself, and us from all  
 We sought and yet were baffled.' I recall                     \_130  
 The sense of what he said, although I mar  
 The force of his expressions. The broad star  
 Of day meanwhile had sunk behind the hill,  
 And the black bell became invisible,  
 And the red tower looked gray, and all between                     \_135  
 The churches, ships and palaces were seen  
 Huddled in gloom;--into the purple sea  
 The orange hues of heaven sunk silently.  
 We hardly spoke, and soon the gondola

Conveyed me to my lodging by the way. \_140  
 The following morn was rainy, cold, and dim:  
 Ere Maddalo arose, I called on him,  
 And whilst I waited with his child I played;  
 A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made;  
 A serious, subtle, wild, yet gentle being, \_145  
 Graceful without design and unforeseeing,  
 With eyes--Oh speak not of her eyes!--which seem  
 Twin mirrors of Italian Heaven, yet gleam  
 With such deep meaning, as we never see  
 But in the human countenance: with me \_150  
 She was a special favourite: I had nursed  
 Her fine and feeble limbs when she came first  
 To this bleak world; and she yet seemed to know  
 On second sight her ancient playfellow,  
 Less changed than she was by six months or so; \_155  
 For after her first shyness was worn out  
 We sate there, rolling billiard balls about,  
 When the Count entered. Salutations past--  
 'The word you spoke last night might well have cast  
 A darkness on my spirit--if man be \_160  
 The passive thing you say, I should not see  
 Much harm in the religions and old saws  
 (Tho' I may never own such leaden laws)  
 Which break a teachless nature to the yoke:  
 Mine is another faith.'--thus much I spoke \_165  
 And noting he replied not, added: 'See  
 This lovely child, blithe, innocent and free;  
 She spends a happy time with little care,  
 While we to such sick thoughts subjected are  
 As came on you last night. It is our will \_170  
 That thus enchains us to permitted ill--  
 We might be otherwise--we might be all  
 We dream of happy, high, majestic.  
 Where is the love, beauty, and truth we seek,  
 But in our mind? and if we were not weak \_175  
 Should we be less in deed than in desire?'  
 'Ay, if we were not weak--and we aspire  
 How vainly to be strong!' said Maddalo:  
 'You talk Utopia.' 'It remains to know,'  
 I then rejoined, 'and those who try may find \_180  
 How strong the chains are which our spirit bind;  
 Brittle perchance as straw...We are assured  
 Much may be conquered, much may be endured,  
 Of what degrades and crushes us. We know  
 That we have power over ourselves to do \_185  
 And suffer--what, we know not till we try;  
 But something nobler than to live and die--  
 So taught those kings of old philosophy  
 Who reigned, before Religion made men blind;  
 And those who suffer with their suffering kind \_190  
 Yet feel their faith, religion.' 'My dear friend,'  
 Said Maddalo, 'my judgement will not bend

To your opinion, though I think you might  
 Make such a system refutation-tight  
 As far as words go. I knew one like you                     \_195  
 Who to this city came some months ago,  
 With whom I argued in this sort, and he  
 Is now gone mad,--and so he answered me,--  
 Poor fellow! but if you would like to go,  
 We'll visit him, and his wild talk will show                     \_200  
 How vain are such aspiring theories.'  
 'I hope to prove the induction otherwise,  
 And that a want of that true theory, still,  
 Which seeks a "soul of goodness" in things ill  
 Or in himself or others, has thus bowed                     \_205  
 His being--there are some by nature proud,  
 Who patient in all else demand but this--  
 To love and be beloved with gentleness;  
 And being scorned, what wonder if they die  
 Some living death? this is not destiny                     \_210  
 But man's own wilful ill.'  
 As thus I spoke  
 Servants announced the gondola, and we  
 Through the fast-falling rain and high-wrought sea  
 Sailed to the island where the madhouse stands.  
 We disembarked. The clap of tortured hands,                     \_215  
 Fierce yells and howlings and lamentings keen,  
 And laughter where complaint had merrier been,  
 Moans, shrieks, and curses, and blaspheming prayers  
 Accosted us. We climbed the oozy stairs  
 Into an old courtyard. I heard on high,                     \_220  
 Then, fragments of most touching melody,  
 But looking up saw not the singer there--  
 Through the black bars in the tempestuous air  
 I saw, like weeds on a wrecked palace growing,  
 Long tangled locks flung wildly forth, and flowing,                     \_225  
 Of those who on a sudden were beguiled  
 Into strange silence, and looked forth and smiled  
 Hearing sweet sounds. Then I: 'Methinks there were  
 A cure of these with patience and kind care,  
 If music can thus move...but what is he                     \_230  
 Whom we seek here?' 'Of his sad history  
 I know but this,' said Maddalo: 'he came  
 To Venice a dejected man, and fame  
 Said he was wealthy, or he had been so;  
 Some thought the loss of fortune wrought him woe;                     \_235  
 But he was ever talking in such sort  
 As you do--far more sadly--he seemed hurt,  
 Even as a man with his peculiar wrong,  
 To hear but of the oppression of the strong,  
 Or those absurd deceits (I think with you                     \_240  
 In some respects, you know) which carry through  
 The excellent impostors of this earth  
 When they outface detection--he had worth,  
 Poor fellow! but a humorist in his way'--

'Alas, what drove him mad?' 'I cannot say: \_245  
A lady came with him from France, and when  
She left him and returned, he wandered then  
About yon lonely isles of desert sand  
Till he grew wild--he had no cash or land  
Remaining--the police had brought him here-- \_250  
Some fancy took him and he would not bear  
Removal; so I fitted up for him  
Those rooms beside the sea, to please his whim,  
And sent him busts and books and urns for flowers,  
Which had adorned his life in happier hours, \_255  
And instruments of music--you may guess  
A stranger could do little more or less  
For one so gentle and unfortunate:  
And those are his sweet strains which charm the weight  
From madmen's chains, and make this Hell appear \_260  
A heaven of sacred silence, hushed to hear.'--  
'Nay, this was kind of you--he had no claim,  
As the world says'--'None--but the very same  
Which I on all mankind were I as he  
Fallen to such deep reverse;--his melody \_265  
Is interrupted--now we hear the din  
Of madmen, shriek on shriek, again begin;  
Let us now visit him; after this strain  
He ever communes with himself again,  
And sees nor hears not any.' Having said \_270  
These words, we called the keeper, and he led  
To an apartment opening on the sea--  
There the poor wretch was sitting mournfully  
Near a piano, his pale fingers twined  
One with the other, and the ooze and wind \_275  
Rushed through an open casement, and did sway  
His hair, and starred it with the brackish spray;  
His head was leaning on a music book,  
And he was muttering, and his lean limbs shook;  
His lips were pressed against a folded leaf \_280  
In hue too beautiful for health, and grief  
Smiled in their motions as they lay apart--  
As one who wrought from his own fervid heart  
The eloquence of passion, soon he raised  
His sad meek face and eyes lustrous and glazed \_285  
And spoke--sometimes as one who wrote, and thought  
His words might move some heart that heeded not,  
If sent to distant lands: and then as one  
Reproaching deeds never to be undone  
With wondering self-compassion; then his speech \_290  
Was lost in grief, and then his words came each  
Unmodulated, cold, expressionless--  
But that from one jarred accent you might guess  
It was despair made them so uniform:  
And all the while the loud and gusty storm \_295  
Hissed through the window, and we stood behind  
Stealing his accents from the envious wind

Unseen. I yet remember what he said  
Distinctly: such impression his words made.

'Month after month,' he cried, 'to bear this load                     \_300

And as a jade urged by the whip and goad  
To drag life on, which like a heavy chain  
Lengthens behind with many a link of pain!--  
And not to speak my grief--O, not to dare  
To give a human voice to my despair,                     \_305

But live, and move, and, wretched thing! smile on  
As if I never went aside to groan,  
And wear this mask of falsehood even to those  
Who are most dear--not for my own repose--  
Alas! no scorn or pain or hate could be                     \_310

So heavy as that falsehood is to me--  
But that I cannot bear more altered faces  
Than needs must be, more changed and cold embraces,  
More misery, disappointment, and mistrust  
To own me for their father...Would the dust                     \_315

Were covered in upon my body now!  
That the life ceased to toil within my brow!  
And then these thoughts would at the least be fled;  
Let us not fear such pain can vex the dead.

'What Power delights to torture us? I know                     \_320

That to myself I do not wholly owe  
What now I suffer, though in part I may.  
Alas! none strewed sweet flowers upon the way  
Where wandering heedlessly, I met pale Pain  
My shadow, which will leave me not again--                     \_325

If I have erred, there was no joy in error,  
But pain and insult and unrest and terror;  
I have not as some do, bought penitence  
With pleasure, and a dark yet sweet offence,  
For then,--if love and tenderness and truth                     \_330

Had overlived hope's momentary youth,  
My creed should have redeemed me from repenting;  
But loathed scorn and outrage unrelenting  
Met love excited by far other seeming  
Until the end was gained...as one from dreaming                     \_335

Of sweetest peace, I woke, and found my state  
Such as it is.--  
'O Thou, my spirit's mate

Who, for thou art compassionate and wise,  
Wouldst pity me from thy most gentle eyes  
If this sad writing thou shouldst ever see--                     \_340  
My secret groans must be unheard by thee,  
Thou wouldst weep tears bitter as blood to know  
Thy lost friend's incommunicable woe.

'Ye few by whom my nature has been weighed  
In friendship, let me not that name degrade                     \_345  
By placing on your hearts the secret load

Which crushes mine to dust. There is one road  
 To peace and that is truth, which follow ye!  
 Love sometimes leads astray to misery.  
 Yet think not though subdued--and I may well                     \_350  
 Say that I am subdued--that the full Hell  
 Within me would infect the untainted breast  
 Of sacred nature with its own unrest;  
 As some perverted beings think to find  
 In scorn or hate a medicine for the mind                     \_355  
 Which scorn or hate have wounded--O how vain!  
 The dagger heals not but may rend again...  
 Believe that I am ever still the same  
 In creed as in resolve, and what may tame  
 My heart, must leave the understanding free,                     \_360  
 Or all would sink in this keen agony--  
 Nor dream that I will join the vulgar cry;  
 Or with my silence sanction tyranny;  
 Or seek a moment's shelter from my pain  
 In any madness which the world calls gain,                     \_365  
 Ambition or revenge or thoughts as stern  
 As those which make me what I am; or turn  
 To avarice or misanthropy or lust...  
 Heap on me soon, O grave, thy welcome dust!  
 Till then the dungeon may demand its prey,                     \_370  
 And Poverty and Shame may meet and say--  
 Halting beside me on the public way--  
 "That love-devoted youth is ours--let's sit  
 Beside him--he may live some six months yet."  
 Or the red scaffold, as our country bends,                     \_375  
 May ask some willing victim; or ye friends  
 May fall under some sorrow which this heart  
 Or hand may share or vanquish or avert;  
 I am prepared--in truth, with no proud joy--  
 To do or suffer aught, as when a boy                     \_380  
 I did devote to justice and to love  
 My nature, worthless now!...  
 'I must remove  
 A veil from my pent mind. 'Tis torn aside!  
 O, pallid as Death's dedicated bride,  
 Thou mockery which art sitting by my side,                     \_385  
 Am I not wan like thee? at the grave's call  
 I haste, invited to thy wedding-ball  
 To greet the ghastly paramour, for whom  
 Thou hast deserted me...and made the tomb  
 Thy bridal bed...But I beside your feet                     \_390  
 Will lie and watch ye from my winding-sheet--  
 Thus...wide awake tho' dead...yet stay, O stay!  
 Go not so soon--I know not what I say--  
 Hear but my reasons...I am mad, I fear,  
 My fancy is o'erwrought...thou art not here...                     \_395  
 Pale art thou, 'tis most true...but thou art gone,  
 Thy work is finished...I am left alone!--  
 ...

'Nay, was it I who wooed thee to this breast  
Which, like a serpent, thou envenomest  
As in repayment of the warmth it lent? \_400

Didst thou not seek me for thine own content?  
Did not thy love awaken mine? I thought  
That thou wert she who said, "You kiss me not  
Ever, I fear you do not love me now"--  
In truth I loved even to my overthrow \_405  
Her, who would fain forget these words: but they  
Cling to her mind, and cannot pass away.

...  
'You say that I am proud--that when I speak  
My lip is tortured with the wrongs which break  
The spirit it expresses...Never one \_410

Humbled himself before, as I have done!  
Even the instinctive worm on which we tread  
Turns, though it wound not--then with prostrate head  
Sinks in the dusk and writhes like me--and dies?  
No: wears a living death of agonies! \_415

As the slow shadows of the pointed grass  
Mark the eternal periods, his pangs pass,  
Slow, ever-moving,--making moments be  
As mine seem--each an immortality!

...  
'That you had never seen me--never heard \_420

My voice, and more than all had ne'er endured  
The deep pollution of my loathed embrace--  
That your eyes ne'er had lied love in my face--  
That, like some maniac monk, I had torn out  
The nerves of manhood by their bleeding root \_425

With mine own quivering fingers, so that ne'er  
Our hearts had for a moment mingled there  
To disunite in horror--these were not  
With thee, like some suppressed and hideous thought  
Which flits athwart our musings, but can find \_430

No rest within a pure and gentle mind...  
Thou sealedst them with many a bare broad word,  
And searedst my memory o'er them,--for I heard  
And can forget not...they were ministered  
One after one, those curses. Mix them up \_435

Like self-destroying poisons in one cup,  
And they will make one blessing which thou ne'er  
Didst imprecate for, on me,--death.

...  
'It were  
A cruel punishment for one most cruel,  
If such can love, to make that love the fuel \_440

Of the mind's hell; hate, scorn, remorse, despair:  
But ME--whose heart a stranger's tear might wear  
As water-drops the sandy fountain-stone,  
Who loved and pitied all things, and could moan  
For woes which others hear not, and could see \_445  
The absent with the glance of phantasy,



And with the poor and trampled sit and weep,  
Following the captive to his dungeon deep;  
ME--who am as a nerve o'er which do creep  
The else unfelt oppressions of this earth,            \_450  
And was to thee the flame upon thy hearth,  
When all beside was cold--that thou on me  
Shouldst rain these plagues of blistering agony--  
Such curses are from lips once eloquent  
With love's too partial praise--let none relent        \_455  
Who intend deeds too dreadful for a name  
Henceforth, if an example for the same  
They seek...for thou on me lookedst so, and so--  
And didst speak thus...and thus...I live to show  
How much men bear and die not!

...  
'Thou wilt tell   \_460  
With the grimace of hate, how horrible  
It was to meet my love when thine grew less;  
Thou wilt admire how I could e'er address  
Such features to love's work...this taunt, though true,  
(For indeed Nature nor in form nor hue                \_465  
Bestowed on me her choicest workmanship)  
Shall not be thy defence...for since thy lip  
Met mine first, years long past, since thine eye kindled  
With soft fire under mine, I have not dwindled  
Nor changed in mind or body, or in aught             \_470  
But as love changes what it loveth not  
After long years and many trials.

'How vain  
Are words! I thought never to speak again,  
Not even in secret,--not to mine own heart--  
But from my lips the unwilling accents start,         \_475  
And from my pen the words flow as I write,  
Dazzling my eyes with scalding tears...my sight  
Is dim to see that characterized in vain  
On this unfeeling leaf which burns the brain  
And eats into it...blotting all things fair           \_480  
And wise and good which time had written there.

'Those who inflict must suffer, for they see  
The work of their own hearts, and this must be  
Our chastisement or recompense--O child!  
I would that thine were like to be more mild         \_485  
For both our wretched sakes...for thine the most  
Who feelest already all that thou hast lost  
Without the power to wish it thine again;  
And as slow years pass, a funereal train  
Each with the ghost of some lost hope or friend       \_490  
Following it like its shadow, wilt thou bend  
No thought on my dead memory?

...  
'Alas, love!

Fear me not...against thee I would not move  
A finger in despite. Do I not live  
That thou mayst have less bitter cause to grieve?                    \_495  
I give thee tears for scorn and love for hate;  
And that thy lot may be less desolate  
Than his on whom thou tramplest, I refrain  
From that sweet sleep which medicines all pain.  
Then, when thou speakest of me, never say                               \_500  
"He could forgive not." Here I cast away  
All human passions, all revenge, all pride;  
I think, speak, act no ill; I do but hide  
Under these words, like embers, every spark  
Of that which has consumed me--quick and dark                       \_505  
The grave is yawning...as its roof shall cover  
My limbs with dust and worms under and over  
So let Oblivion hide this grief...the air  
Closes upon my accents, as despair  
Upon my heart--let death upon despair!                               \_510

He ceased, and overcome leant back awhile,  
Then rising, with a melancholy smile  
Went to a sofa, and lay down, and slept  
A heavy sleep, and in his dreams he wept  
And muttered some familiar name, and we                               \_515  
Wept without shame in his society.  
I think I never was impressed so much;  
The man who were not, must have lacked a touch  
Of human nature...then we lingered not,  
Although our argument was quite forgot,                               \_520  
But calling the attendants, went to dine  
At Maddalo's; yet neither cheer nor wine  
Could give us spirits, for we talked of him  
And nothing else, till daylight made stars dim;  
And we agreed his was some dreadful ill                               \_525  
Wrought on him boldly, yet unspeakable,  
By a dear friend; some deadly change in love  
Of one vowed deeply which he dreamed not of;  
For whose sake he, it seemed, had fixed a blot  
Of falsehood on his mind which flourished not                       \_530  
But in the light of all-beholding truth;  
And having stamped this canker on his youth  
She had abandoned him--and how much more  
Might be his woe, we guessed not--he had store  
Of friends and fortune once, as we could guess                       \_535  
From his nice habits and his gentleness;  
These were now lost...it were a grief indeed  
If he had changed one unsustaining reed  
For all that such a man might else adorn.  
The colours of his mind seemed yet unworn;                               \_540  
For the wild language of his grief was high,  
Such as in measure were called poetry;  
And I remember one remark which then  
Maddalo made. He said: 'Most wretched men

Are cradled into poetry by wrong, \_545  
 They learn in suffering what they teach in song.'

If I had been an unconnected man,  
 I, from this moment, should have formed some plan  
 Never to leave sweet Venice,--for to me  
 It was delight to ride by the lone sea; \_550  
 And then, the town is silent--one may write  
 Or read in gondolas by day or night,  
 Having the little brazen lamp alight,  
 Unseen, uninterrupted; books are there,  
 Pictures, and casts from all those statues fair \_555  
 Which were twin-born with poetry, and all  
 We seek in towns, with little to recall  
 Regrets for the green country. I might sit  
 In Maddalo's great palace, and his wit  
 And subtle talk would cheer the winter night \_560  
 And make me know myself, and the firelight  
 Would flash upon our faces, till the day  
 Might dawn and make me wonder at my stay:  
 But I had friends in London too: the chief  
 Attraction here, was that I sought relief \_565  
 From the deep tenderness that maniac wrought  
 Within me--'twas perhaps an idle thought--  
 But I imagined that if day by day  
 I watched him, and but seldom went away,  
 And studied all the beatings of his heart \_570  
 With zeal, as men study some stubborn art  
 For their own good, and could by patience find  
 An entrance to the caverns of his mind,  
 I might reclaim him from this dark estate:  
 In friendships I had been most fortunate-- \_575  
 Yet never saw I one whom I would call  
 More willingly my friend; and this was all  
 Accomplished not; such dreams of baseless good  
 Oft come and go in crowds or solitude  
 And leave no trace--but what I now designed \_580  
 Made for long years impression on my mind.  
 The following morning, urged by my affairs,  
 I left bright Venice.

After many years  
 And many changes I returned; the name  
 Of Venice, and its aspect, was the same; \_585  
 But Maddalo was travelling far away  
 Among the mountains of Armenia.  
 His dog was dead. His child had now become  
 A woman; such as it has been my doom  
 To meet with few,--a wonder of this earth, \_590  
 Where there is little of transcendent worth,  
 Like one of Shakespeare's women: kindly she,  
 And, with a manner beyond courtesy,  
 Received her father's friend; and when I asked  
 Of the lorn maniac, she her memory tasked, \_595

And told as she had heard the mournful tale:  
 'That the poor sufferer's health began to fail  
 Two years from my departure, but that then  
 The lady who had left him, came again.  
 Her mien had been imperious, but she now                     \_600  
 Looked meek--perhaps remorse had brought her low.  
 Her coming made him better, and they stayed  
 Together at my father's--for I played,  
 As I remember, with the lady's shawl--  
 I might be six years old--but after all                     \_605  
 She left him.'...'Why, her heart must have been tough:  
 How did it end?' 'And was not this enough?  
 They met--they parted.'--'Child, is there no more?'  
 'Something within that interval which bore  
 The stamp of WHY they parted, HOW they met:                     \_610  
 Yet if thine aged eyes disdain to wet  
 Those wrinkled cheeks with youth's remembered tears,  
 Ask me no more, but let the silent years  
 Be closed and cered over their memory  
 As yon mute marble where their corpses lie.'                     \_615  
 I urged and questioned still, she told me how  
 All happened--but the cold world shall not know.

CANCELLED FRAGMENTS OF JULIAN AND MADDALO.

'What think you the dead are?' 'Why, dust and clay,  
 What should they be?' 'Tis the last hour of day.  
 Look on the west, how beautiful it is                     \_620  
 Vaulted with radiant vapours! The deep bliss  
 Of that unutterable light has made  
 The edges of that cloud ... fade  
 Into a hue, like some harmonious thought,  
 Wasting itself on that which it had wrought,                     \_625  
 Till it dies ... and ... between  
 The light hues of the tender, pure, serene,  
 And infinite tranquillity of heaven.  
 Ay, beautiful! but when not...'  
 ...  
 'Perhaps the only comfort which remains                     \_630  
 Is the unheeded clanking of my chains,  
 The which I make, and call it melody.'

NOTES:

- \_45 may Hunt manuscript; can 1824.
- \_99 a one Hunt manuscript; an one 1824.
- \_105 sunk Hunt manuscript; sank 1824.
- \_108 ever Hunt manuscript; even 1824.
- \_119 in Hunt manuscript; from 1824.
- \_124 a Hunt manuscript; an 1824.
- \_171 That Hunt manuscript; Which 1824.
- \_175 mind Hunt manuscript; minds 1824.

\_179 know 1824; see Hunt manuscript.  
\_188 those Hunt manuscript; the 1824.  
\_191 their Hunt manuscript; this 1824.  
\_218 Moons, etc., Hunt manuscript;  
    The line is wanting in editions 1824 and 1839.  
\_237 far Hunt manuscript; but 1824.  
\_270 nor Hunt manuscript; and 1824.  
\_292 cold Hunt manuscript; and 1824.  
\_318 least Hunt manuscript; last 1824.  
\_323 sweet Hunt manuscript; fresh 1824.  
\_356 have Hunt manuscript; hath 1824.  
\_361 in this keen Hunt manuscript; under this 1824.  
\_362 cry Hunt manuscript; eye 1824.  
\_372 on Hunt manuscript; in 1824.  
\_388 greet Hunt manuscript; meet 1824.  
\_390 your Hunt manuscript; thy 1824.  
\_417 his Hunt manuscript; its 1824.  
\_446 glance Hunt manuscript; glass 1824.  
\_447 with Hunt manuscript; near 1824.  
\_467 lip Hunt manuscript; life 1824.  
\_483 this Hunt manuscript; that 1824.  
\_493 I would Hunt manuscript; I'd 1824.  
\_510 despair Hunt manuscript; my care 1839.  
\_511 leant] See Editor's Note.  
\_518 were Hunt manuscript; was 1839.  
\_525 his Hunt manuscript; it 1824.  
\_530 on Hunt manuscript; in 1824.  
\_537 were now Hunt manuscript; now were 1824.  
\_588 regrets Hunt manuscript; regret 1824.  
\_569 but Hunt manuscript;  
    wanting in editions 1824 and 1839.  
\_574 his 1824; this [?] Hunt manuscript.

#### NOTE BY MRS. SHELLEY.

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

I Capuccini was a villa built on the site of a Capuchin convent, demolished when the French suppressed religious houses; it was situated on the very overhanging brow of a low hill at the foot of a range of higher ones. The house was cheerful and pleasant; a vine-trellised walk, a pergola, as it is called in Italian, led from the hall-door to a summer-house at the end of the garden, which Shelley made his study, and in which he began the "Prometheus"; and here also, as he mentions in a letter, he wrote "Julian and Maddalo". A slight ravine, with a road in its depth, divided the garden from the hill, on which stood the ruins of the ancient castle of Este, whose dark massive wall gave forth an echo, and from whose ruined crevices

owls and bats flitted forth at night, as the crescent moon sunk behind the black and heavy battlements. We looked from the garden over the wide plain of Lombardy, bounded to the west by the far Apennines, while to the east the horizon was lost in misty distance. After the picturesque but limited view of mountain, ravine, and chestnut-wood, at the Baths of Lucca, there was something infinitely gratifying to the eye in the wide range of prospect commanded by our new abode.

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

After a few weeks spent in this retreat, which was interspersed by visits to Venice, we proceeded southward.

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PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

A LYRICAL DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS.

AUDISNE HAEC AMPHIARAE, SUB TERRAM ABDITE?

[Composed at Este, September, October, 1818 (Act 1); at Rome, March-April 6, 1819 (Acts 2, 3); at Florence, close of 1819 (Act 4). Published by C. and J. Ollier, London, summer of 1820. Sources of the text are (1) edition of 1820; (2) text in "Poetical Works", 1839, prepared with the aid of a list of errata in (1) written out by Shelley; (3) a fair draft in Shelley's autograph, now in the Bodleian. This has been carefully collated by Mr. C.D. Locock, who prints the result in his "Examination of the Shelley Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library", Oxford (Clarendon Press), 1903. Our text is that of 1820, modified by edition 1839, and by the Bodleian fair copy. In the following notes B = the Bodleian manuscript; 1820 = the editio princeps, printed by Marchant for C. and J. Ollier, London; and 1839 = the text as edited by Mrs. Shelley in the "Poetical Works", 1st and 2nd editions, 1839. The reader should consult the notes on the Play at the end of the volume.]

PREFACE.

The Greek tragic writers, in selecting as their subject any portion of their national history or mythology, employed in their treatment of it

a certain arbitrary discretion. They by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common interpretation or to imitate in story as in title their rivals and predecessors. Such a system would have amounted to a resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors which incited the composition. The Agamemnonian story was exhibited on the Athenian theatre with as many variations as dramas.

I have presumed to employ a similar license. The "Prometheus Unbound" of Aeschylus supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim as the price of the disclosure of the danger threatened to his empire by the consummation of his marriage with Thetis. Thetis, according to this view of the subject, was given in marriage to Peleus, and Prometheus, by the permission of Jupiter, delivered from his captivity by Hercules. Had I framed my story on this model, I should have done no more than have attempted to restore the lost drama of Aeschylus; an ambition which, if my preference to this mode of treating the subject had incited me to cherish, the recollection of the high comparison such an attempt would challenge might well abate. But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary. The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan; and Prometheus is, in my judgement, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandisement, which, in the Hero of "Paradise Lost", interfere with the interest. The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. In the minds of those who consider that magnificent fiction with a religious feeling it engenders something worse. But Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends.

This Poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades, and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama.

The imagery which I have employed will be found, in many instances, to have been drawn from the operations of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed. This is unusual in modern poetry, although Dante and Shakespeare are full of instances of the same kind: Dante indeed more than any other poet, and with greater success. But the Greek poets, as writers to whom no resource of

awakening the sympathy of their contemporaries was unknown, were in the habitual use of this power; and it is the study of their works (since a higher merit would probably be denied me) to which I am willing that my readers should impute this singularity.

One word is due in candour to the degree in which the study of contemporary writings may have tinged my composition, for such has been a topic of censure with regard to poems far more popular, and indeed more deservedly popular, than mine. It is impossible that any one who inhabits the same age with such writers as those who stand in the foremost ranks of our own, can conscientiously assure himself that his language and tone of thought may not have been modified by the study of the productions of those extraordinary intellects. It is true, that, not the spirit of their genius, but the forms in which it has manifested itself, are due less to the peculiarities of their own minds than to the peculiarity of the moral and intellectual condition of the minds among which they have been produced. Thus a number of writers possess the form, whilst they want the spirit of those whom, it is alleged, they imitate; because the former is the endowment of the age in which they live, and the latter must be the uncommunicated lightning of their own mind.

The peculiar style of intense and comprehensive imagery which distinguishes the modern literature of England has not been, as a general power, the product of the imitation of any particular writer. The mass of capabilities remains at every period materially the same; the circumstances which awaken it to action perpetually change. If England were divided into forty republics, each equal in population and extent to Athens, there is no reason to suppose but that, under institutions not more perfect than those of Athens, each would produce philosophers and poets equal to those who (if we except Shakespeare) have never been surpassed. We owe the great writers of the golden age of our literature to that fervid awakening of the public mind which shook to dust the oldest and most oppressive form of the Christian religion. We owe Milton to the progress and development of the same spirit: the sacred Milton was, let it ever be remembered, a republican, and a bold inquirer into morals and religion. The great writers of our own age are, we have reason to suppose, the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition or the opinions which cement it. The cloud of mind is discharging its collected lightning, and the equilibrium between institutions and opinions is now restoring, or is about to be restored.

As to imitation, poetry is a mimetic art. It creates, but it creates by combination and representation. Poetical abstractions are beautiful and new, not because the portions of which they are composed had no previous existence in the mind of man or in nature, but because the whole produced by their combination has some intelligible and beautiful analogy with those sources of emotion and thought, and with the contemporary condition of them: one great poet is a masterpiece of nature which another not only ought to study but must study. He might as wisely and as easily determine that his mind should no longer be the mirror of all that is lovely in the visible universe as exclude



from his contemplation the beautiful which exists in the writings of a great contemporary. The pretence of doing it would be a presumption in any but the greatest; the effect, even in him, would be strained, unnatural and ineffectual. A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others; and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers; he is not one, but both. Every man's mind is, in this respect, modified by all the objects of nature and art; by every word and every suggestion which he ever admitted to act upon his consciousness; it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected, and in which they compose one form. Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors and musicians, are, in one sense, the creators, and, in another, the creations, of their age. From this subjection the loftiest do not escape. There is a similarity between Homer and Hesiod, between Aeschylus and Euripides, between Virgil and Horace, between Dante and Petrarch, between Shakespeare and Fletcher, between Dryden and Pope; each has a generic resemblance under which their specific distinctions are arranged. If this similarity be the result of imitation, I am willing to confess that I have imitated.

Let this opportunity be conceded to me of acknowledging that I have, what a Scotch philosopher characteristically terms, 'a passion for reforming the world:' what passion incited him to write and publish his book, he omits to explain. For my part I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than go to Heaven with Paley and Malthus. But it is a mistake to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life. Didactic poetry is my abhorrence; nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse. My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarise the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness. Should I live to accomplish what I purpose, that is, produce a systematical history of what appear to me to be the genuine elements of human society, let not the advocates of injustice and superstition flatter themselves that I should take Aeschylus rather than Plato as my model.

The having spoken of myself with unaffected freedom will need little apology with the candid; and let the uncandid consider that they injure me less than their own hearts and minds by misrepresentation. Whatever talents a person may possess to amuse and instruct others, be they ever so inconsiderable, he is yet bound to exert them: if his attempt be ineffectual, let the punishment of an unaccomplished purpose have been sufficient; let none trouble themselves to heap the dust of oblivion upon his efforts; the pile they raise will betray his grave which might otherwise have been unknown.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

PROMETHEUS.

DEMOGORGON.

JUPITER.

THE EARTH.

OCEAN.

APOLLO.

MERCURY.

OCEANIDES: ASIA, PANTHEA, IONE.

HERCULES.

THE PHANTASM OF JUPITER.

THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MOON.

SPIRITS OF THE HOURS.

SPIRITS. ECHOES. FAUNS. FURIES.

ACT 1.

SCENE:

A RAVINE OF ICY ROCKS IN THE INDIAN CAUCASUS.

PROMETHEUS IS DISCOVERED BOUND TO THE PRECIPICE.

PANTEA AND IONE ARE SEATED AT HIS FEET.

TIME, NIGHT.

DURING, THE SCENE MORNING SLOWLY BREAKS.

PROMETHEUS:

Monarch of Gods and DAEmons, and all Spirits

But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds

Which Thou and I alone of living things

Behold with sleepless eyes! regard this Earth

Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou \_5

Requittest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,

And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,

With fear and self-contempt and barren hope.

Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,

Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn, \_10

O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.

Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,

And moments aye divided by keen pangs

Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,

Scorn and despair,--these are mine empire:-- \_15

More glorious far than that which thou surveyest

From thine unenvied throne, O Mighty God!

Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame

Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here

Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain, \_20

Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,

Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.

Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.

I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?                    \_25  
I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,  
Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm,  
Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,  
Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?  
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!                         \_30

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears  
Of their moon-freezing crystals; the bright chains  
Eat with their burning cold into my bones.  
Heaven's winged hound, polluting from thy lips  
His beak in poison not his own, tears up                         \_35  
My heart; and shapeless sights come wandering by,  
The ghastly people of the realm of dream,  
Mocking me: and the Earthquake-fiends are charged  
To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds  
When the rocks split and close again behind:                   \_40  
While from their loud abysses howling throng  
The genii of the storm, urging the rage  
Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.  
And yet to me welcome is day and night,  
Whether one breaks the hoar-frost of the morn,                 \_45  
Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs  
The leaden-coloured east; for then they lead  
The wingless, crawling hours, one among whom  
--As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim--  
Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood                   \_50  
From these pale feet, which then might trample thee  
If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.  
Disdain! Ah, no! I pity thee. What ruin  
Will hunt thee undefended through wide Heaven!  
How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror,             \_55  
Gape like a hell within! I speak in grief,  
Not exultation, for I hate no more,  
As then ere misery made me wise. The curse  
Once breathed on thee I would recall. Ye Mountains,  
Whose many-voiced Echoes, through the mist                     \_60  
Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell!  
Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,  
Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept  
Shuddering through India! Thou serenest Air,  
Through which the Sun walks burning without beams!             \_65  
And ye swift Whirlwinds, who on poised wings  
Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hushed abyss,  
As thunder, louder than your own, made rock  
The orb'd world! If then my words had power,  
Though I am changed so that aught evil wish                   \_70  
Is dead within; although no memory be  
Of what is hate, let them not lose it now!  
What was that curse? for ye all heard me speak.

NOTE:

\_54 thro' wide B; thro' the wide 1820.

FIRST VOICE (FROM THE MOUNTAINS):

Thrice three hundred thousand years  
O'er the Earthquake's couch we stood:                    \_75  
Oft, as men convulsed with fears,  
We trembled in our multitude.

SECOND VOICE (FROM THE SPRINGS):

Thunderbolts had parched our water,  
We had been stained with bitter blood,  
And had run mute, 'mid shrieks of slaughter,                    \_80  
Thro' a city and a solitude.

THIRD VOICE (FROM THE AIR):

I had clothed, since Earth uprose,  
Its wastes in colours not their own,  
And oft had my serene repose  
Been cloven by many a rending groan.                               \_85

FOURTH VOICE (FROM THE WHIRLWINDS):

We had soared beneath these mountains  
Unresting ages; nor had thunder,  
Nor yon volcano's flaming fountains,  
Nor any power above or under  
Ever made us mute with wonder.                                       \_90

FIRST VOICE:

But never bowed our snowy crest  
As at the voice of thine unrest.

SECOND VOICE:

Never such a sound before  
To the Indian waves we bore.  
A pilot asleep on the howling sea                                       \_95  
Leaped up from the deck in agony,  
And heard, and cried, 'Ah, woe is me!'  
And died as mad as the wild waves be.

THIRD VOICE:

By such dread words from Earth to Heaven  
My still realm was never riven:                                       \_100  
When its wound was closed, there stood  
Darkness o'er the day like blood.

FOURTH VOICE:

And we shrank back: for dreams of ruin  
To frozen caves our flight pursuing  
Made us keep silence--thus--and thus--                               \_105  
Though silence is a hell to us.

THE EARTH:

The tongueless caverns of the craggy hills  
Cried, 'Misery!' then; the hollow Heaven replied,

'Misery!' And the Ocean's purple waves,  
Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds,                    \_110  
And the pale nations heard it, 'Misery!'

NOTE:

\_106 as hell 1839, B; a hell 1820.

PROMETHEUS:

I hear a sound of voices: not the voice  
Which I gave forth. Mother, thy sons and thou  
Scorn him, without whose all-enduring will  
Beneath the fierce omnipotence of Jove,                            \_115  
Both they and thou had vanished, like thin mist  
Unrolled on the morning wind. Know ye not me,  
The Titan? He who made his agony  
The barrier to your else all-conquering foe?  
Oh, rock-embosomed lawns, and snow-fed streams,                    \_120  
Now seen athwart frore vapours, deep below,  
Through whose o'ershadowing woods I wandered once  
With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes;  
Why scorns the spirit which informs ye, now  
To commune with me? me alone, who checked,                        \_125  
As one who checks a fiend-drawn charioteer,  
The falsehood and the force of him who reigns  
Supreme, and with the groans of pining slaves  
Fills your dim glens and liquid wildernesses:  
Why answer ye not, still? Brethren!

THE EARTH:

They dare not.    \_130

PROMETHEUS:

Who dares? for I would hear that curse again.  
Ha, what an awful whisper rises up!  
'Tis scarce like sound: it tingles through the frame  
As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strike.  
Speak, Spirit! from thine inorganic voice                            \_135  
I only know that thou art moving near  
And love. How cursed I him?

THE EARTH:

How canst thou hear  
Who knowest not the language of the dead?

PROMETHEUS:

Thou art a living spirit; speak as they.

THE EARTH:

I dare not speak like life, lest Heaven's fell King                    \_140  
Should hear, and link me to some wheel of pain  
More torturing than the one whereon I roll.  
Subtle thou art and good; and though the Gods  
Hear not this voice, yet thou art more than God,

Being wise and kind: earnestly hearken now. \_145

PROMETHEUS:

Obscurely through my brain, like shadows dim,  
Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick. I feel  
Faint, like one mingled in entwining love;  
Yet 'tis not pleasure.

THE EARTH:

No, thou canst not hear:  
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known \_150  
Only to those who die.

PROMETHEUS:

And what art thou,  
O, melancholy Voice?

THE EARTH:

I am the Earth,  
Thy mother; she within whose stony veins,  
To the last fibre of the loftiest tree  
Whose thin leaves trembled in the frozen air, \_155  
Joy ran, as blood within a living frame,  
When thou didst from her bosom, like a cloud  
Of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy!  
And at thy voice her pining sons uplifted  
Their prostrate brows from the polluting dust, \_160  
And our almighty Tyrant with fierce dread  
Grew pale, until his thunder chained thee here.  
Then, see those million worlds which burn and roll  
Around us: their inhabitants beheld  
My sphered light wane in wide Heaven; the sea \_165  
Was lifted by strange tempest, and new fire  
From earthquake-rifted mountains of bright snow  
Shook its portentous hair beneath Heaven's frown;  
Lightning and Inundation vexed the plains;  
Blue thistles bloomed in cities; foodless toads \_170  
Within voluptuous chambers panting crawled:  
When Plague had fallen on man, and beast, and worm,  
And Famine; and black blight on herb and tree;  
And in the corn, and vines, and meadow-grass,  
Teemed ineradicable poisonous weeds \_175  
Draining their growth, for my wan breast was dry  
With grief; and the thin air, my breath, was stained  
With the contagion of a mother's hate  
Breathed on her child's destroyer; ay, I heard  
Thy curse, the which, if thou rememberest not, \_180  
Yet my innumerable seas and streams,  
Mountains, and caves, and winds, and yon wide air,  
And the inarticulate people of the dead,  
Preserve, a treasured spell. We meditate  
In secret joy and hope those dreadful words, \_185  
But dare not speak them.

NOTE:

\_137 And love 1820; And lovest cj. Swinburne.

PROMETHEUS:

Venerable mother!

All else who live and suffer take from thee

Some comfort; flowers, and fruits, and happy sounds,

And love, though fleeting; these may not be mine.

But mine own words, I pray, deny me not. \_190

THE EARTH:

They shall be told. Ere Babylon was dust,

The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child,

Met his own image walking in the garden.

That apparition, sole of men, he saw.

For know there are two worlds of life and death: \_195

One that which thou beholdest; but the other

Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit

The shadows of all forms that think and live

Till death unite them and they part no more;

Dreams and the light imaginings of men, \_200

And all that faith creates or love desires,

Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes.

There thou art, and dost hang, a writhing shade,

'Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains; all the gods

Are there, and all the powers of nameless worlds, \_205

Vast, sceptred phantoms; heroes, men, and beasts;

And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom;

And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne

Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall utter

The curse which all remember. Call at will \_210

Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,

Hades or Typhon, or what mightier Gods

From all-prolific Evil, since thy ruin,

Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate sons.

Ask, and they must reply: so the revenge \_215

Of the Supreme may sweep through vacant shades,

As rainy wind through the abandoned gate

Of a fallen palace.

PROMETHEUS:

Mother, let not aught

Of that which may be evil, pass again

My lips, or those of aught resembling me. \_220

Phantasm of Jupiter, arise, appear!

IONE:

My wings are folded o'er mine ears:

My wings are crossed o'er mine eyes:

Yet through their silver shade appears,

And through their lulling plumes arise, \_225

A Shape, a throng of sounds;

May it be no ill to thee  
O thou of many wounds!  
Near whom, for our sweet sister's sake,  
Ever thus we watch and wake.                         \_230

PANTHEA:

The sound is of whirlwind underground,  
Earthquake, and fire, and mountains cloven;  
The shape is awful like the sound,  
Clothed in dark purple, star-inwoven.  
A sceptre of pale gold                                 \_235  
To stay steps proud, o'er the slow cloud  
His veined hand doth hold.  
Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,  
Like one who does, not suffers wrong.

PHANTASM OF JUPITER:

Why have the secret powers of this strange world                 \_240  
Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither  
On direst storms? What unaccustomed sounds  
Are hovering on my lips, unlike the voice  
With which our pallid race hold ghastly talk  
In darkness? And, proud sufferer, who art thou?                 \_245

PROMETHEUS:

Tremendous Image, as thou art must be  
He whom thou shadowest forth. I am his foe,  
The Titan. Speak the words which I would hear,  
Although no thought inform thine empty voice.

THE EARTH:

Listen! And though your echoes must be mute,                         \_250  
Grey mountains, and old woods, and haunted springs,  
Prophetic caves, and isle-surrounding streams,  
Rejoice to hear what yet ye cannot speak.

PHANTASM:

A spirit seizes me and speaks within:  
It tears me as fire tears a thunder-cloud.                         \_255

PANTHEA:

See, how he lifts his mighty looks, the Heaven  
Darkens above.

IONE:

He speaks! O shelter me!

PROMETHEUS:

I see the curse on gestures proud and cold,  
And looks of firm defiance, and calm hate,  
And such despair as mocks itself with smiles,                         \_260  
Written as on a scroll: yet speak! Oh, speak!



PHANTASM:

Fiend, I defy thee! with a calm, fixed mind,  
All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do;  
Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Humankind,  
One only being shalt thou not subdue.                    \_265  
Rain then thy plagues upon me here,  
Ghastly disease, and frenzying fear;  
And let alternate frost and fire  
Eat into me, and be thine ire  
Lightning, and cutting hail, and legioned forms            \_270  
Of furies, driving by upon the wounding storms.

Ay, do thy worst. Thou art omnipotent.  
O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,  
And my own will. Be thy swift mischiefs sent  
To blast mankind, from yon ethereal tower.                \_275  
Let thy malignant spirit move  
In darkness over those I love:  
On me and mine I imprecate  
The utmost torture of thy hate;  
And thus devote to sleepless agony,                    \_280  
This undeclining head while thou must reign on high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord: O, thou,  
Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe,  
To whom all things of Earth and Heaven do bow  
In fear and worship: all-prevailing foe!                 \_285  
I curse thee! let a sufferer's curse  
Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse;  
Till thine Infinity shall be  
A robe of envenomed agony;  
And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain,                 \_290  
To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain.

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this Curse,  
Ill deeds, then be thou damned, beholding good;  
Both infinite as is the universe,  
And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude.                \_295  
An awful image of calm power  
Though now thou sittest, let the hour  
Come, when thou must appear to be  
That which thou art internally;  
And after many a false and fruitless crime                \_300  
Scorn track thy lagging fall through boundless space and time.

PROMETHEUS:

Were these my words, O Parent?

THE EARTH:

They were thine.

PROMETHEUS:

It doth repent me: words are quick and vain;

Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.  
I wish no living thing to suffer pain. \_305

THE EARTH:

Misery, Oh misery to me,  
That Jove at length should vanquish thee.  
Wail, howl aloud, Land and Sea,  
The Earth's rent heart shall answer ye.  
Howl, Spirits of the living and the dead, \_310  
Your refuge, your defence, lies fallen and vanquished.

FIRST ECHO:

Lies fallen and vanquished!

SECOND ECHO:

Fallen and vanquished!

IONE:

Fear not: 'tis but some passing spasm,  
The Titan is unvanquished still. \_315  
But see, where through the azure chasm  
Of yon forked and snowy hill  
Trampling the slant winds on high  
With golden-sandalled feet, that glow  
Under plumes of purple dye, \_320  
Like rose-ensanguined ivory,  
A Shape comes now,  
Stretching on high from his right hand  
A serpent-cinctured wand.

PANTHEA:

'Tis Jove's world-wandering herald, Mercury. \_325

IONE:

And who are those with hydra tresses  
And iron wings that climb the wind,  
Whom the frowning God represses  
Like vapours steaming up behind,  
Clanging loud, an endless crowd-- \_330

PANTHEA:

These are Jove's tempest-walking hounds,  
Whom he gluts with groans and blood,  
When charioted on sulphurous cloud  
He bursts Heaven's bounds.

IONE:

Are they now led, from the thin dead \_335  
On new pangs to be fed?

PANTHEA:

The Titan looks as ever, firm, not proud.

FIRST FURY:

Ha! I scent life!

SECOND FURY:

Let me but look into his eyes!

THIRD FURY:

The hope of torturing him smells like a heap  
Of corpses, to a death-bird after battle.                      \_340

FIRST FURY:

Darest thou delay, O Herald! take cheer, Hounds  
Of Hell: what if the Son of Maia soon  
Should make us food and sport--who can please long  
The Omnipotent?

MERCURY:

Back to your towers of iron,  
And gnash, beside the streams of fire and wail,                      \_345  
Your foodless teeth. Geryon, arise! and Gorgon,  
Chimaera, and thou Sphinx, subtlest of fiends  
Who ministered to Thebes Heaven's poisoned wine,  
Unnatural love, and more unnatural hate:  
These shall perform your task.

FIRST FURY:

Oh, mercy! mercy!    \_350  
We die with our desire: drive us not back!

MERCURY:

Crouch then in silence.  
Awful Sufferer!  
To thee unwilling, most unwillingly  
I come, by the great Father's will driven down,  
To execute a doom of new revenge.                                      \_355  
Alas! I pity thee, and hate myself  
That I can do no more: aye from thy sight  
Returning, for a season, Heaven seems Hell,  
So thy worn form pursues me night and day,  
Smiling reproach. Wise art thou, firm and good,                      \_360  
But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife  
Against the Omnipotent; as yon clear lamps  
That measure and divide the weary years  
From which there is no refuge, long have taught  
And long must teach. Even now thy Torturer arms                      \_365  
With the strange might of unimagined pains  
The powers who scheme slow agonies in Hell,  
And my commission is to lead them here,  
Or what more subtle, foul, or savage fiends  
People the abyss, and leave them to their task.                      \_370  
Be it not so! there is a secret known  
To thee, and to none else of living things,  
Which may transfer the sceptre of wide Heaven,

The fear of which perplexes the Supreme:  
Clothe it in words, and bid it clasp his throne                     \_375  
In intercession; bend thy soul in prayer,  
And like a suppliant in some gorgeous fane,  
Let the will kneel within thy haughty heart:  
For benefits and meek submission tame  
The fiercest and the mightiest.

PROMETHEUS:

Evil minds   \_380  
Change good to their own nature. I gave all  
He has; and in return he chains me here  
Years, ages, night and day: whether the Sun  
Split my parched skin, or in the moony night  
The crystal-winged snow cling round my hair:                     \_385  
Whilst my beloved race is trampled down  
By his thought-executing ministers.  
Such is the tyrant's recompense: 'tis just:  
He who is evil can receive no good;  
And for a world bestowed, or a friend lost,                     \_390  
He can feel hate, fear, shame; not gratitude:  
He but requites me for his own misdeed.  
Kindness to such is keen reproach, which breaks  
With bitter stings the light sleep of Revenge.  
Submission, thou dost know I cannot try:                     \_395  
For what submission but that fatal word,  
The death-seal of mankind's captivity,  
Like the Sicilian's hair-suspended sword,  
Which trembles o'er his crown, would he accept,  
Or could I yield? Which yet I will not yield.                     \_400  
Let others flatter Crime, where it sits throned  
In brief Omnipotence: secure are they:  
For Justice, when triumphant, will weep down  
Pity, not punishment, on her own wrongs,  
Too much avenged by those who err. I wait,                     \_405  
Enduring thus, the retributive hour  
Which since we spake is even nearer now.  
But hark, the hell-hounds clamour: fear delay:  
Behold! Heaven lowers under thy Father's frown.

MERCURY:

Oh, that we might be spared; I to inflict                     \_410  
And thou to suffer! Once more answer me:  
Thou knowest not the period of Jove's power?

PROMETHEUS:

I know but this, that it must come.

MERCURY:

Alas!  
Thou canst not count thy years to come of pain?

PROMETHEUS:

They last while Jove must reign: nor more, nor less                    \_415  
Do I desire or fear.

MERCURY:

Yet pause, and plunge  
Into Eternity, where recorded time,  
Even all that we imagine, age on age,  
Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind  
Flags wearily in its unending flight,                                   \_420  
Till it sink, dizzy, blind, lost, shelterless;  
Perchance it has not numbered the slow years  
Which thou must spend in torture, unrelieved?

PROMETHEUS:

Perchance no thought can count them, yet they pass.

MERCURY:

If thou might'st dwell among the Gods the while  
Lapped in voluptuous joy?   \_425

PROMETHEUS:

I would not quit  
This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.

MERCURY:

Alas! I wonder at, yet pity thee.

PROMETHEUS:

Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven,  
Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene.                           \_430  
As light in the sun, throned: how vain is talk!  
Call up the fiends.

IONE:

O, sister, look! White fire  
Has cloven to the roots yon huge snow-loaded cedar;  
How fearfully God's thunder howls behind!

MERCURY:

I must obey his words and thine: alas!                                   \_435  
Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart!

PANTHEA:

See where the child of Heaven, with winged feet,  
Runs down the slanted sunlight of the dawn.

IONE:

Dear sister, close thy plumes over thine eyes  
Lest thou behold and die: they come: they come                       \_440  
Blackening the birth of day with countless wings,  
And hollow underneath, like death.

FIRST FURY:

Prometheus!

SECOND FURY:

Immortal Titan!

THIRD FURY:

Champion of Heaven's slaves!

PROMETHEUS:

He whom some dreadful voice invokes is here,  
Prometheus, the chained Titan. Horrible forms,                    \_445  
What and who are ye? Never yet there came  
Phantasms so foul through monster-teeming Hell  
From the all-miscreative brain of Jove;  
Whilst I behold such execrable shapes,  
Methinks I grow like what I contemplate,                    \_450  
And laugh and stare in loathsome sympathy.

FIRST FURY:

We are the ministers of pain, and fear,  
And disappointment, and mistrust, and hate,  
And clinging crime; and as lean dogs pursue  
Through wood and lake some struck and sobbing fawn,                    \_455  
We track all things that weep, and bleed, and live,  
When the great King betrays them to our will.

PROMETHEUS:

Oh! many fearful natures in one name,  
I know ye; and these lakes and echoes know  
The darkness and the clangour of your wings.                    \_460  
But why more hideous than your loathed selves  
Gather ye up in legions from the deep?

SECOND FURY:

We knew not that: Sisters, rejoice, rejoice!

PROMETHEUS:

Can aught exult in its deformity?

SECOND FURY:

The beauty of delight makes lovers glad,                    \_465  
Gazing on one another: so are we.  
As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels  
To gather for her festal crown of flowers  
The aerial crimson falls, flushing her cheek,  
So from our victim's destined agony                    \_470  
The shade which is our form invests us round,  
Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.

PROMETHEUS:

I laugh your power, and his who sent you here,  
To lowest scorn. Pour forth the cup of pain.

FIRST FURY:

Thou thinkest we will rend thee bone from bone,                    \_475  
And nerve from nerve, working like fire within?

PROMETHEUS:

Pain is my element, as hate is thine;  
Ye rend me now; I care not.

SECOND FURY:

Dost imagine  
We will but laugh into thy lidless eyes?

PROMETHEUS:

I weigh not what ye do, but what ye suffer,                         \_480  
Being evil. Cruel was the power which called  
You, or aught else so wretched, into light.

THIRD FURY:

Thou think'st we will live through thee, one by one,  
Like animal life, and though we can obscure not  
The soul which burns within, that we will dwell                   \_485  
Beside it, like a vain loud multitude  
Vexing the self-content of wisest men:  
That we will be dread thought beneath thy brain,  
And foul desire round thine astonished heart,  
And blood within thy labyrinthine veins                             \_490  
Crawling like agony?

PROMETHEUS:

Why, ye are thus now;  
Yet am I king over myself, and rule  
The torturing and conflicting throngs within,  
As Jove rules you when Hell grows mutinous.

CHORUS OF FURIES:

From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the earth,             \_495  
Where the night has its grave and the morning its birth,  
Come, come, come!  
Oh, ye who shake hills with the scream of your mirth,  
When cities sink howling in ruin; and ye  
Who with wingless footsteps trample the sea,                         \_500  
And close upon Shipwreck and Famine's track,  
Sit chattering with joy on the foodless wreck;  
Come, come, come!  
Leave the bed, low, cold, and red,  
Strewed beneath a nation dead;   \_505  
Leave the hatred, as in ashes  
Fire is left for future burning:  
It will burst in bloodier flashes  
When ye stir it, soon returning:  
Leave the self-contempt implanted   \_510  
In young spirits, sense-enchanted,  
Misery's yet unkindled fuel:

Leave Hell's secrets half uncharmed  
To the maniac dreamer; cruel  
More than ye can be with hate                     \_515  
Is he with fear.

Come, come, come!  
We are steaming up from Hell's wide gate  
And we burthen the blast of the atmosphere,  
But vainly we toil till ye come here.                     \_520

IONE:  
Sister, I hear the thunder of new wings.

PANTHEA:  
These solid mountains quiver with the sound  
Even as the tremulous air: their shadows make  
The space within my plumes more black than night.

FIRST FURY:  
Your call was as a winged car,                     \_525  
Driven on whirlwinds fast and far;  
It rapped us from red gulfs of war.

SECOND FURY:  
From wide cities, famine-wasted;

THIRD FURY:  
Groans half heard, and blood untasted;

FOURTH FURY:  
Kingly conclaves stern and cold,                     \_530  
Where blood with gold is bought and sold;

FIFTH FURY:  
From the furnace, white and hot,  
In which--

A FURY:  
Speak not: whisper not:  
I know all that ye would tell,  
But to speak might break the spell                     \_535  
Which must bend the Invincible,  
The stern of thought;  
He yet defies the deepest power of Hell.

FURY:  
Tear the veil!

ANOTHER FURY:  
It is torn.

CHORUS:  
The pale stars of the morn  
Shine on a misery, dire to be borne.                     \_540



Dost thou faint, mighty Titan? We laugh thee to scorn.  
 Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst for man?  
 Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran  
 Those perishing waters; a thirst of fierce fever,  
 Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for ever.            \_545  
 One came forth of gentle worth  
 Smiling on the sanguine earth;  
 His words outlived him, like swift poison  
 Withering up truth, peace, and pity.  
 Look! where round the wide horizon                                   \_550  
 Many a million-peopled city  
 Vomits smoke in the bright air.  
 Mark that outcry of despair!  
 'Tis his mild and gentle ghost  
 Wailing for the faith he kindled:                                   \_555  
 Look again, the flames almost  
 To a glow-worm's lamp have dwindled:  
 The survivors round the embers  
 Gather in dread.  
 Joy, joy, joy!   \_560  
 Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers,  
 And the future is dark, and the present is spread  
 Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.

NOTE:

\_553 Hark B; Mark 1820.

SEMICHORUS 1:

Drops of bloody agony flow  
 From his white and quivering brow.                                   \_565  
 Grant a little respite now:  
 See a disenchanting nation  
 Springs like day from desolation;  
 To Truth its state is dedicate,  
 And Freedom leads it forth, her mate;                               \_570  
 A legioned band of linked brothers  
 Whom Love calls children--

SEMICHORUS 2:

'Tis another's:  
 See how kindred murder kin:  
 'Tis the vintage-time for death and sin:  
 Blood, like new wine, bubbles within:                               \_575  
 Till Despair smothers  
 The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.

[ALL THE FURIES VANISH, EXCEPT ONE.]

IONE:

Hark, sister! what a low yet dreadful groan  
 Quite unexpressed is tearing up the heart  
 Of the good Titan, as storms tear the deep,                       \_580  
 And beasts hear the sea moan in inland caves.

Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him?

PANTHEA:

Alas! I looked forth twice, but will no more.

IONE:

What didst thou see?

PANTHEA:

A woful sight: a youth

With patient looks nailed to a crucifix. \_585

IONE:

What next?

PANTHEA:

The heaven around, the earth below

Was peopled with thick shapes of human death,

All horrible, and wrought by human hands,

And some appeared the work of human hearts,

For men were slowly killed by frowns and smiles: \_590

And other sights too foul to speak and live

Were wandering by. Let us not tempt worse fear

By looking forth: those groans are grief enough.

NOTE:

\_589 And 1820; Tho' B.

FURY:

Behold an emblem: those who do endure

Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains, but heap \_595

Thousand-fold torment on themselves and him.

PROMETHEUS:

Remit the anguish of that lighted stare;

Close those wan lips; let that thorn-wounded brow

Stream not with blood; it mingles with thy tears!

Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death, \_600

So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix,

So those pale fingers play not with thy gore.

O, horrible! Thy name I will not speak,

It hath become a curse. I see, I see

The wise, the mild, the lofty, and the just, \_605

Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee,

Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home,

An early-chosen, late-lamented home;

As hooded ounces cling to the driven hind;

Some linked to corpses in unwholesome cells: \_610

Some--Hear I not the multitude laugh loud?--

Impaled in lingering fire: and mighty realms

Float by my feet, like sea-uprooted isles,

Whose sons are kneaded down in common blood

By the red light of their own burning homes. \_615

FURY:

Blood thou canst see, and fire; and canst hear groans;  
Worse things unheard, unseen, remain behind.

PROMETHEUS:

Worse?

FURY:

In each human heart terror survives  
The ravin it has gorged: the loftiest fear  
All that they would disdain to think were true:                    \_620  
Hypocrisy and custom make their minds  
The fanes of many a worship, now outworn.  
They dare not devise good for man's estate,  
And yet they know not that they do not dare.  
The good want power, but to weep barren tears.                    \_625  
The powerful goodness want: worse need for them.  
The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom;  
And all best things are thus confused to ill.  
Many are strong and rich, and would be just,  
But live among their suffering fellow-men                         \_630  
As if none felt: they know not what they do.

NOTE:

\_619 ravin B, edition 1839; ruin 1820.

PROMETHEUS:

Thy words are like a cloud of winged snakes;  
And yet I pity those they torture not.

FURY:

Thou pitiest them? I speak no more!  
[VANISHES.]

PROMETHEUS:

Ah woe!  
Ah woe! Alas! pain, pain ever, for ever!                         \_635  
I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear  
Thy works within my woe-illumed mind,  
Thou subtle tyrant! Peace is in the grave.  
The grave hides all things beautiful and good:  
I am a God and cannot find it there,                                 \_640  
Nor would I seek it: for, though dread revenge,  
This is defeat, fierce king, not victory.  
The sights with which thou torturest gird my soul  
With new endurance, till the hour arrives  
When they shall be no types of things which are.                 \_645

PANTHEA:

Alas! what sawest thou more?

NOTE:

\_646 thou more? B; thou? 1820.

PROMETHEUS:

There are two woes:

To speak, and to behold; thou spare me one.

Names are there, Nature's sacred watchwords, they

Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry;

The nations thronged around, and cried aloud,                    \_650

As with one voice, Truth, liberty, and love!

Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven

Among them: there was strife, deceit, and fear:

Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil.

This was the shadow of the truth I saw.                               \_655

THE EARTH:

I felt thy torture, son; with such mixed joy

As pain and virtue give. To cheer thy state

I bid ascend those subtle and fair spirits,

Whose homes are the dim caves of human thought,

And who inhabit, as birds wing the wind,                               \_660

Its world-surrounding aether: they behold

Beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass,

The future: may they speak comfort to thee!

PANTHEA:

Look, sister, where a troop of spirits gather,

Like flocks of clouds in spring's delightful weather,                   \_665

Thronging in the blue air!

IONE:

And see! more come,

Like fountain-vapours when the winds are dumb,

That climb up the ravine in scattered lines.

And, hark! is it the music of the pines?

Is it the lake? Is it the waterfall?                                       \_670

PANTHEA:

'Tis something sadder, sweeter far than all.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS:

From unremembered ages we

Gentle guides and guardians be

Of heaven-oppressed mortality;

And we breathe, and sicken not,                                       \_675

The atmosphere of human thought:

Be it dim, and dank, and gray,

Like a storm-extinguished day,

Travelled o'er by dying gleams;

Be it bright as all between   \_680

Cloudless skies and windless streams,

Silent, liquid, and serene;

As the birds within the wind,

As the fish within the wave,

As the thoughts of man's own mind \_685  
Float through all above the grave;  
We make there our liquid lair,  
Voyaging cloudlike and unpent  
Through the boundless element:  
Thence we bear the prophecy \_690  
Which begins and ends in thee!

NOTE:

\_687 there B, edition 1839; these 1820.

IONE:

More yet come, one by one: the air around them  
Looks radiant as the air around a star.

FIRST SPIRIT:

On a battle-trumpet's blast  
I fled hither, fast, fast, fast, \_695  
'Mid the darkness upward cast.  
From the dust of creeds outworn,  
From the tyrant's banner torn,  
Gathering 'round me, onward borne,  
There was mingled many a cry-- \_700  
Freedom! Hope! Death! Victory!  
Till they faded through the sky;  
And one sound, above, around,  
One sound beneath, around, above,  
Was moving; 'twas the soul of Love; \_705  
'Twas the hope, the prophecy,  
Which begins and ends in thee.

SECOND SPIRIT:

A rainbow's arch stood on the sea,  
Which rocked beneath, immovably;  
And the triumphant storm did flee, \_710  
Like a conqueror, swift and proud,  
Between, with many a captive cloud,  
A shapeless, dark and rapid crowd,  
Each by lightning riven in half:  
I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh: \_715  
Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff  
And spread beneath a hell of death  
O'er the white waters. I alit  
On a great ship lightning-split,  
And speeded hither on the sigh \_720  
Of one who gave an enemy  
His plank, then plunged aside to die.

THIRD SPIRIT:

I sate beside a sage's bed,  
And the lamp was burning red  
Near the book where he had fed, \_725  
When a Dream with plumes of flame,

To his pillow hovering came,  
And I knew it was the same  
Which had kindled long ago  
Pity, eloquence, and woe;                         \_730  
And the world awhile below  
Wore the shade, its lustre made.  
It has borne me here as fleet  
As Desire's lightning feet:  
I must ride it back ere morrow,                 \_735  
Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

FOURTH SPIRIT:

On a poet's lips I slept  
Dreaming like a love-adept  
In the sound his breathing kept;  
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,                 \_740  
But feeds on the aerial kisses  
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.  
He will watch from dawn to gloom  
The lake-reflected sun illumine  
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,                 \_745  
Nor heed nor see, what things they be;  
But from these create he can  
Forms more real than living man,  
Nurslings of immortality!  
One of these awakened me,                         \_750  
And I sped to succour thee.

IONE:

Behold'st thou not two shapes from the east and west  
Come, as two doves to one beloved nest,  
Twin nurslings of the all-sustaining air  
On swift still wings glide down the atmosphere?                 \_755  
And, hark! their sweet sad voices! 'tis despair  
Mingled with love and then dissolved in sound.

PANTHEA:

Canst thou speak, sister? all my words are drowned.

IONE:

Their beauty gives me voice. See how they float  
On their sustaining wings of skiey grain,                 \_760  
Orange and azure deepening into gold:  
Their soft smiles light the air like a star's fire.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS:

Hast thou beheld the form of Love?

FIFTH SPIRIT:

As over wide dominions  
I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide air's wildernesses,  
That planet-crested shape swept by on lightning-braided pinions,         \_765  
Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial tresses:

His footsteps paved the world with light; but as I passed 'twas fading,  
And hollow Ruin yawned behind: great sages bound in madness,  
And headless patriots, and pale youths who perished, unupbraiding,  
Gleamed in the night. I wandered o'er, till thou, O King of sadness, \_770  
Turned by thy smile the worst I saw to recollected gladness.

SIXTH SPIRIT:

Ah, sister! Desolation is a delicate thing:  
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,  
But treads with lulling footstep, and fans with silent wing  
The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and gentlest bear; \_775  
Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes above  
And the music-stirring motion of its soft and busy feet,  
Dream visions of aerial joy, and call the monster, Love,  
And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom now we greet.

NOTE:

\_774 lulling B; silent 1820.

CHORUS:

Though Ruin now Love's shadow be, \_780  
Following him, destroyingly,  
On Death's white and winged steed,  
Which the fleetest cannot flee,  
Trampling down both flower and weed,  
Man and beast, and foul and fair, \_785  
Like a tempest through the air;  
Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,  
Woundless though in heart or limb.

PROMETHEUS:

Spirits! how know ye this shall be?

CHORUS:

In the atmosphere we breathe, \_790  
As buds grow red when the snow-storms flee,  
From Spring gathering up beneath,  
Whose mild winds shake the elder-brake,  
And the wandering herdsmen know  
That the white-thorn soon will blow: \_795  
Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace,  
When they struggle to increase,  
Are to us as soft winds be  
To shepherd boys, the prophecy  
Which begins and ends in thee. \_800

IONE:

Where are the Spirits fled?

PANTHEA:

Only a sense  
Remains of them, like the omnipotence  
Of music, when the inspired voice and lute

Languish, ere yet the responses are mute,  
Which through the deep and labyrinthine soul,                    \_805  
Like echoes through long caverns, wind and roll.

PROMETHEUS:

How fair these airborne shapes! and yet I feel  
Most vain all hope but love; and thou art far,  
Asia! who, when my being overflowed,  
Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine                    \_810  
Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.

All things are still: alas! how heavily  
This quiet morning weighs upon my heart;  
Though I should dream I could even sleep with grief  
If slumber were denied not. I would fain                    \_815

Be what it is my destiny to be,  
The saviour and the strength of suffering man,  
Or sink into the original gulf of things:  
There is no agony, and no solace left;  
Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more.                    \_820

PANTHEA:

Hast thou forgotten one who watches thee  
The cold dark night, and never sleeps but when  
The shadow of thy spirit falls on her?

PROMETHEUS:

I said all hope was vain but love: thou lovest.

PANTHEA:

Deeply in truth; but the eastern star looks white,                    \_825  
And Asia waits in that far Indian vale,  
The scene of her sad exile; rugged once  
And desolate and frozen, like this ravine;  
But now invested with fair flowers and herbs,  
And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow                    \_830  
Among the woods and waters, from the aether  
Of her transforming presence, which would fade  
If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell!

END OF ACT 1.

ACT 2.

SCENE 2.1:

MORNING.

A LOVELY VALE IN THE INDIAN CAUCASUS.

ASIA, ALONE.

ASIA:

From all the blasts of heaven thou hast descended:  
Yes, like a spirit, like a thought, which makes  
Unwonted tears throng to the horny eyes,



And beatings haunt the desolated heart,  
 Which should have learnt repose: thou hast descended        \_5  
 Cradled in tempests; thou dost wake, O Spring!  
 O child of many winds! As suddenly  
 Thou comest as the memory of a dream,  
 Which now is sad because it hath been sweet;  
 Like genius, or like joy which riseth up                    \_10  
 As from the earth, clothing with golden clouds  
 The desert of our life.  
 This is the season, this the day, the hour;  
 At sunrise thou shouldst come, sweet sister mine,  
 Too long desired, too long delaying, come!                \_15  
 How like death-worms the wingless moments crawl!  
 The point of one white star is quivering still  
 Deep in the orange light of widening morn  
 Beyond the purple mountains: through a chasm  
 Of wind-divided mist the darker lake                    \_20  
 Reflects it: now it wanes: it gleams again  
 As the waves fade, and as the burning threads  
 Of woven cloud unravel in pale air:  
 'Tis lost! and through yon peaks of cloud-like snow  
 The roseate sunlight quivers: hear I not                    \_25  
 The Aeolian music of her sea-green plumes  
 Winnowing the crimson dawn?

PANTHEA [ENTERS]:

I feel, I see  
 Those eyes which burn through smiles that fade in tears,  
 Like stars half quenched in mists of silver dew.  
 Beloved and most beautiful, who wearest                    \_30  
 The shadow of that soul by which I live,  
 How late thou art! the sphered sun had climbed  
 The sea; my heart was sick with hope, before  
 The printless air felt thy belated plumes.

PANTHEA:

Pardon, great Sister! but my wings were faint                \_35  
 With the delight of a remembered dream,  
 As are the noontide plumes of summer winds  
 Sate with sweet flowers. I was wont to sleep  
 Peacefully, and awake refreshed and calm  
 Before the sacred Titan's fall, and thy                    \_40  
 Unhappy love, had made, through use and pity,  
 Both love and woe familiar to my heart  
 As they had grown to thine: erewhile I slept  
 Under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean  
 Within dim bowers of green and purple moss,                \_45  
 Our young lone's soft and milky arms  
 Locked then, as now, behind my dark, moist hair,  
 While my shut eyes and cheek were pressed within  
 The folded depth of her life-breathing bosom:  
 But not as now, since I am made the wind                \_50  
 Which fails beneath the music that I bear

Of thy most wordless converse; since dissolved  
Into the sense with which love talks, my rest  
Was troubled and yet sweet; my waking hours  
Too full of care and pain.

ASIA:

Lift up thine eyes, \_55  
And let me read thy dream.

PANTHEA:

As I have said  
With our sea-sister at his feet I slept.  
The mountain mists, condensing at our voice  
Under the moon, had spread their snowy flakes, \_60  
From the keen ice shielding our linked sleep.  
Then two dreams came. One, I remember not.  
But in the other his pale wound-worn limbs  
Fell from Prometheus, and the azure night  
Grew radiant with the glory of that form \_65  
Which lives unchanged within, and his voice fell  
Like music which makes giddy the dim brain,  
Faint with intoxication of keen joy:  
'Sister of her whose footsteps pave the world  
With loveliness--more fair than aught but her,  
Whose shadow thou art--lift thine eyes on me.' \_70  
I lifted them: the overpowering light  
Of that immortal shape was shadowed o'er  
By love; which, from his soft and flowing limbs,  
And passion-parted lips, and keen, faint eyes,  
Steamed forth like vaporous fire; an atmosphere \_75  
Which wrapped me in its all-dissolving power,  
As the warm ether of the morning sun  
Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew.  
I saw not, heard not, moved not, only felt  
His presence flow and mingle through my blood \_80  
Till it became his life, and his grew mine,  
And I was thus absorbed, until it passed,  
And like the vapours when the sun sinks down,  
Gathering again in drops upon the pines,  
And tremulous as they, in the deep night \_85  
My being was condensed; and as the rays  
Of thought were slowly gathered, I could hear  
His voice, whose accents lingered ere they died  
Like footsteps of weak melody: thy name  
Among the many sounds alone I heard \_90  
Of what might be articulate; though still  
I listened through the night when sound was none.  
I awoke then, and said to me:  
'Canst thou divine what troubles me to-night?  
I always knew, what I desired before, \_95  
Nor ever found delight to wish in vain.  
But now I cannot tell thee what I seek;  
I know not; something sweet, since it is sweet

Even to desire; it is thy sport, false sister;  
Thou hast discovered some enchantment old,                    \_100  
Whose spells have stolen my spirit as I slept  
And mingled it with thine: for when just now  
We kissed, I felt within thy parted lips  
The sweet air that sustained me, and the warmth  
Of the life-blood, for loss of which I faint,                    \_105  
Quivered between our intertwining arms.'  
I answered not, for the Eastern star grew pale,  
But fled to thee.

ASIA:  
Thou speakest, but thy words  
Are as the air: I feel them not: Oh, lift  
Thine eyes, that I may read his written soul!                    \_110

PANTHEA:  
I lift them though they droop beneath the load  
Of that they would express: what canst thou see  
But thine own fairest shadow imaged there?

ASIA:  
Thine eyes are like the deep, blue, boundless heaven  
Contracted to two circles underneath                            \_115  
Their long, fine lashes; dark, far, measureless,  
Orb within orb, and line through line inwoven.

PANTHEA:  
Why lookest thou as if a spirit passed?

ASIA:  
There is a change: beyond their inmost depth  
I see a shade, a shape: 'tis He, arrayed                        \_120  
In the soft light of his own smiles, which spread  
Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded moon.  
Prometheus, it is thine! depart not yet!  
Say not those smiles that we shall meet again  
Within that bright pavilion which their beams                \_125  
Shall build o'er the waste world? The dream is told.  
What shape is that between us? Its rude hair  
Roughens the wind that lifts it, its regard  
Is wild and quick, yet 'tis a thing of air,  
For through its gray robe gleams the golden dew                \_130  
Whose stars the noon has quenched not.

NOTE:  
\_122 moon B; morn 1820.  
\_126 o'er B; on 1820.

DREAM  
Follow! Follow!

PANTHEA:

It is mine other dream.

ASIA:

It disappears.

PANTHEA:

It passes now into my mind. Methought  
As we sate here, the flower-infolding buds  
Burst on yon lightning-blasted almond tree,                     \_135  
When swift from the white Scythian wilderness  
A wind swept forth wrinkling the Earth with frost:  
I looked, and all the blossoms were blown down;  
But on each leaf was stamped, as the blue bells  
Of Hyacinth tell Apollo's written grief,                     \_140  
O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW!

ASIA:

As you speak, your words  
Fill, pause by pause, my own forgotten sleep  
With shapes. Methought among these lawns together  
We wandered, underneath the young gray dawn,  
And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds                     \_145  
Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains  
Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind;  
And the white dew on the new-bladed grass,  
Just piercing the dark earth, hung silently;  
And there was more which I remember not:                     \_150  
But on the shadows of the morning clouds,  
Athwart the purple mountain slope, was written  
FOLLOW, O, FOLLOW! as they vanished by;  
And on each herb, from which Heaven's dew had fallen,  
The like was stamped, as with a withering fire;                     \_155  
A wind arose among the pines; it shook  
The clinging music from their boughs, and then  
Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts,  
Were heard: O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW ME!  
And then I said, 'Panthea, look on me.'                     \_160  
But in the depth of those beloved eyes  
Still I saw, FOLLOW, FOLLOW!

NOTE:

\_143 these B; the 1820.

ECHO:

Follow, follow!

PANTHEA:

The crags, this clear spring morning, mock our voices  
As they were spirit-tongued.

ASIA:

It is some being  
Around the crags. What fine clear sounds! O, list!                     \_165

ECHOES, UNSEEN:

Echoes we: listen!

We cannot stay:

As dew-stars glisten

Then fade away--

Child of Ocean!

\_170

ASIA:

Hark! Spirits speak. The liquid responses

Of their aerial tongues yet sound.

PANTHEA:

I hear.

ECHOES:

Oh, follow, follow,

As our voice recedeth

Through the caverns hollow,

\_175

Where the forest spreadeth;

[MORE DISTANT.]

Oh, follow, follow!

Through the caverns hollow,

As the song floats thou pursue,

Where the wild bee never flew,

\_180

Through the noontide darkness deep,

By the odour-breathing sleep

Of faint night-flowers, and the waves

At the fountain-lighted caves,

While our music, wild and sweet,

\_185

Mocks thy gently falling feet,

Child of Ocean!

ASIA:

Shall we pursue the sound? It grows more faint

And distant.

PANTHEA:

List! the strain floats nearer now.

ECHOES:

In the world unknown

\_190

Sleeps a voice unspoken;

By thy step alone

Can its rest be broken;

Child of Ocean!

ASIA:

How the notes sink upon the ebbing wind!

\_195

ECHOES:

Oh, follow, follow!

Through the caverns hollow,

As the song floats thou pursue,  
By the woodland noontide dew;  
By the forests, lakes, and fountains,                    \_200  
Through the many-folded mountains;  
To the rents, and gulfs, and chasms,  
Where the Earth reposed from spasms,  
On the day when He and thou  
Parted, to commingle now;                               \_205  
Child of Ocean!

ASIA:

Come, sweet Panthea, link thy hand in mine,  
And follow, ere the voices fade away.

SCENE 2.2:

A FOREST, INTERMINGLED WITH ROCKS AND CAVERNS.  
ASIA AND PANTHEA PASS INTO IT.  
TWO YOUNG FAUNS ARE SITTING ON A ROCK LISTENING.

SEMICHORUS 1 OF SPIRITS:

The path through which that lovely twain  
Have passed, by cedar, pine, and yew,  
And each dark tree that ever grew,  
Is curtained out from Heaven's wide blue;  
Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain,                   \_5  
Can pierce its interwoven bowers,  
Nor aught, save where some cloud of dew,  
Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze,  
Between the trunks of the hoar trees,  
Hangs each a pearl in the pale flowers                   \_10  
Of the green laurel, blown anew,  
And bends, and then fades silently,  
One frail and fair anemone:  
Or when some star of many a one  
That climbs and wanders through steep night,           \_15  
Has found the cleft through which alone  
Beams fall from high those depths upon  
Ere it is borne away, away,  
By the swift Heavens that cannot stay,  
It scatters drops of golden light,                   \_20  
Like lines of rain that ne'er unite:  
And the gloom divine is all around,  
And underneath is the mossy ground.

SEMICHORUS 2:

There the voluptuous nightingales,  
Are awake through all the broad noonday.           \_25  
When one with bliss or sadness fails,  
And through the windless ivy-boughs,  
Sick with sweet love, droops dying away  
On its mate's music-panting bosom;  
Another from the swinging blossom,                   \_30  
Watching to catch the languid close

Of the last strain, then lifts on high  
The wings of the weak melody,  
Till some new strain of feeling bear  
The song, and all the woods are mute;                         \_35  
When there is heard through the dim air  
The rush of wings, and rising there  
Like many a lake-surrounded flute,  
Sounds overflow the listener's brain  
So sweet, that joy is almost pain.                         \_40

NOTE:

\_38 surrounded B, edition 1839; surrounding 1820.

SEMICHORUS 1:

There those enchanted eddies play  
Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,  
By Demogorgon's mighty law,  
With melting rapture, or sweet awe,  
All spirits on that secret way;                         \_45  
As inland boats are driven to Ocean  
Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw:  
And first there comes a gentle sound  
To those in talk or slumber bound,  
And wakes the destined soft emotion,--                         \_50  
Attracts, impels them; those who saw  
Say from the breathing earth behind  
There steams a plume-uplifting wind  
Which drives them on their path, while they  
Believe their own swift wings and feet                         \_55  
The sweet desires within obey:  
And so they float upon their way,  
Until, still sweet, but loud and strong,  
The storm of sound is driven along,  
Sucked up and hurrying: as they fleet                         \_60  
Behind, its gathering billows meet  
And to the fatal mountain bear  
Like clouds amid the yielding air.

NOTE:

\_50 destined]destinied 1820.

FIRST FAUN:

Canst thou imagine where those spirits live  
Which make such delicate music in the woods?                         \_65  
We haunt within the least frequented caves  
And closest coverts, and we know these wilds,  
Yet never meet them, though we hear them oft:  
Where may they hide themselves?

SECOND FAUN:

'Tis hard to tell;  
I have heard those more skilled in spirits say,                         \_70  
The bubbles, which the enchantment of the sun

Sucks from the pale faint water-flowers that pave  
The oozy bottom of clear lakes and pools,  
Are the pavilions where such dwell and float  
Under the green and golden atmosphere                    \_75  
Which noontide kindles through the woven leaves;  
And when these burst, and the thin fiery air,  
The which they breathed within those lucent domes,  
Ascends to flow like meteors through the night,  
They ride on them, and rein their headlong speed,                    \_80  
And bow their burning crests, and glide in fire  
Under the waters of the earth again.

FIRST FAUN:

If such live thus, have others other lives,  
Under pink blossoms or within the bells  
Of meadow flowers, or folded violets deep,                    \_85  
Or on their dying odours, when they die,  
Or in the sunlight of the sphered dew?

NOTE:

\_86 on 1820; in B.

SECOND FAUN:

Ay, many more which we may well divine.  
But should we stay to speak, noontide would come,  
And thwart Silenus find his goats undrawn,                    \_90  
And grudge to sing those wise and lovely songs  
Of Fate, and Chance, and God, and Chaos old,  
And Love, and the chained Titan's woful doom,  
And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth  
One brotherhood: delightful strains which cheer                    \_95  
Our solitary twilights, and which charm  
To silence the unenvying nightingales.

NOTE:

\_93 doom B, edition 1839; dooms 1820.

SCENE 2.3:

A PINNACLE OF ROCK AMONG MOUNTAINS.  
ASIA AND PANTHEA.

PANTHEA:

Hither the sound has borne us--to the realm  
Of Demogorgon, and the mighty portal,  
Like a volcano's meteor-breathing chasm,  
Whence the oracular vapour is hurled up  
Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth,                    \_5  
And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,  
That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain  
To deep intoxication; and uplift,  
Like Maenads who cry loud, Evoe! Evoe!  
The voice which is contagion to the world.                    \_10



ASIA:

Fit throne for such a Power! Magnificent!  
How glorious art thou, Earth! And if thou be  
The shadow of some spirit lovelier still,  
Though evil stain its work, and it should be  
Like its creation, weak yet beautiful, \_15  
I could fall down and worship that and thee.  
Even now my heart adareth: Wonderful!  
Look, sister, ere the vapour dim thy brain:  
Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,  
As a lake, paving in the morning sky, \_20  
With azure waves which burst in silver light,  
Some Indian vale. Behold it, rolling on  
Under the curdling winds, and islanding  
The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,  
Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests, \_25  
Dim twilight-lawns, and stream-illuminated caves,  
And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist;  
And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains  
From icy spires of sun-like radiance fling  
The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray, \_30  
From some Atlantic islet scattered up,  
Spangles the wind with lamp-like water-drops.  
The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl  
Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines,  
Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast, \_35  
Awful as silence. Hark! the rushing snow!  
The sun-awakened avalanche! whose mass,  
Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there  
Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds  
As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth \_40  
Is loosened, and the nations echo round,  
Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

NOTE:

\_26 illumed B; illumined 1820.

PANTHEA:

Look how the gusty sea of mist is breaking  
In crimson foam, even at our feet! it rises  
As Ocean at the enchantment of the moon \_45  
Round foodless men wrecked on some oozy isle.

ASIA:

The fragments of the cloud are scattered up;  
The wind that lifts them disentwines my hair;  
Its billows now sweep o'er mine eyes; my brain  
Grows dizzy; see'st thou shapes within the mist? \_50

NOTE:

see'st thou B; I see thin 1820; I see 1839.

PANTHEA:

A countenance with beckoning smiles: there burns  
An azure fire within its golden locks!  
Another and another: hark! they speak!

SONG OF SPIRITS:

To the deep, to the deep,  
Down, down! \_55

Through the shade of sleep,  
Through the cloudy strife  
Of Death and of Life;  
Through the veil and the bar  
Of things which seem and are \_60  
Even to the steps of the remotest throne,  
Down, down!

While the sound whirls around,  
Down, down!  
As the fawn draws the hound, \_65  
As the lightning the vapour,  
As a weak moth the taper;  
Death, despair; love, sorrow;  
Time both; to-day, to-morrow;  
As steel obeys the spirit of the stone, \_70  
Down, down!

Through the gray, void abysm,  
Down, down!  
Where the air is no prism,  
And the moon and stars are not, \_75  
And the cavern-crag wear not  
The radiance of Heaven,  
Nor the gloom to Earth given,  
Where there is One pervading, One alone,  
Down, down! \_80

In the depth of the deep,  
Down, down!  
Like veiled lightning asleep,  
Like the spark nursed in embers,  
The last look Love remembers, \_85  
Like a diamond, which shines  
On the dark wealth of mines,  
A spell is treasured but for thee alone.  
Down, down!

We have bound thee, we guide thee; \_90  
Down, down!  
With the bright form beside thee;  
Resist not the weakness,  
Such strength is in meekness  
That the Eternal, the Immortal, \_95  
Must unloose through life's portal  
The snake-like Doom coiled underneath his throne

By that alone.

SCENE 2.4:  
THE CAVE OF DEMOGORGON.  
ASIA AND PANTHEA.

PANTHEA:  
What veiled form sits on that ebon throne?

ASIA:  
The veil has fallen.

PANTHEA:  
I see a mighty darkness  
Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom  
Dart round, as light from the meridian sun.  
--Ungazed upon and shapeless; neither limb,                     \_5  
Nor form, nor outline; yet we feel it is  
A living Spirit.

DEMOGORGON:  
Ask what thou wouldst know.

ASIA:  
What canst thou tell?

DEMOGORGON:  
All things thou dar'st demand.

ASIA:  
Who made the living world?

DEMOGORGON:  
God.

ASIA:  
Who made all  
That it contains? thought, passion, reason, will,                     \_10  
Imagination?

DEMOGORGON:  
God: Almighty God.

ASIA:  
Who made that sense which, when the winds of Spring  
In rarest visitation, or the voice  
Of one beloved heard in youth alone,  
Fills the faint eyes with falling tears which dim                     \_15  
The radiant looks of unbewailing flowers,  
And leaves this peopled earth a solitude  
When it returns no more?

DEMOGORGON:

Merciful God.

ASIA:

And who made terror, madness, crime, remorse,  
Which from the links of the great chain of things,                    \_20  
To every thought within the mind of man  
Sway and drag heavily, and each one reels  
Under the load towards the pit of death;  
Abandoned hope, and love that turns to hate;  
And self-contempt, bitterer to drink than blood;                    \_25  
Pain, whose unheeded and familiar speech  
Is howling, and keen shrieks, day after day;  
And Hell, or the sharp fear of Hell?

DEMOGORGON:

He reigns.

ASIA:

Utter his name: a world pining in pain  
Asks but his name: curses shall drag him down.                    \_30

DEMOGORGON:

He reigns.

ASIA:

I feel, I know it: who?

DEMOGORGON:

He reigns.

ASIA:

Who reigns? There was the Heaven and Earth at first,  
And Light and Love; then Saturn, from whose throne  
Time fell, an envious shadow: such the state  
Of the earth's primal spirits beneath his sway,                    \_35  
As the calm joy of flowers and living leaves  
Before the wind or sun has withered them  
And semivital worms; but he refused  
The birthright of their being, knowledge, power,  
The skill which wields the elements, the thought                    \_40  
Which pierces this dim universe like light,  
Self-empire, and the majesty of love;  
For thirst of which they fainted. Then Prometheus  
Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter,  
And with this law alone, 'Let man be free,'                    \_45  
Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.  
To know nor faith, nor love, nor law; to be  
Omnipotent but friendless is to reign;  
And Jove now reigned; for on the race of man  
First famine, and then toil, and then disease,                    \_50  
Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before,  
Fell; and the unseasonable seasons drove  
With alternating shafts of frost and fire,

Their shelterless, pale tribes to mountain caves:  
 And in their desert hearts fierce wants he sent,                    \_55  
 And mad disquietudes, and shadows idle  
 Of unreal good, which levied mutual war,  
 So ruining the lair wherein they raged.  
 Prometheus saw, and waked the legioned hopes  
 Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers,                    \_60  
 Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms,  
 That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings  
 The shape of Death; and Love he sent to bind  
 The disunited tendrils of that vine  
 Which bears the wine of life, the human heart;                    \_65  
 And he tamed fire which, like some beast of prey,  
 Most terrible, but lovely, played beneath  
 The frown of man; and tortured to his will  
 Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power,  
 And gems and poisons, and all subtlest forms                    \_70  
 Hidden beneath the mountains and the waves.  
 He gave man speech, and speech created thought,  
 Which is the measure of the universe;  
 And Science struck the thrones of earth and heaven,  
 Which shook, but fell not; and the harmonious mind                \_75  
 Poured itself forth in all-prophetic song;  
 And music lifted up the listening spirit  
 Until it walked, exempt from mortal care,  
 Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound;  
 And human hands first mimicked and then mocked,                \_80  
 With moulded limbs more lovely than its own,  
 The human form, till marble grew divine;  
 And mothers, gazing, drank the love men see  
 Reflected in their race, behold, and perish.  
 He told the hidden power of herbs and springs,                    \_85  
 And Disease drank and slept. Death grew like sleep.  
 He taught the implicated orbits woven  
 Of the wide-wandering stars; and how the sun  
 Changes his lair, and by what secret spell  
 The pale moon is transformed, when her broad eye                \_90  
 Gazes not on the interlunar sea:  
 He taught to rule, as life directs the limbs,  
 The tempest-winged chariots of the Ocean,  
 And the Celt knew the Indian. Cities then  
 Were built, and through their snow-like columns flowed            \_95  
 The warm winds, and the azure ether shone,  
 And the blue sea and shadowy hills were seen.  
 Such, the alleviations of his state,  
 Prometheus gave to man, for which he hangs  
 Withering in destined pain: but who rains down                \_100  
 Evil, the immedicable plague, which, while  
 Man looks on his creation like a God  
 And sees that it is glorious, drives him on,  
 The wreck of his own will, the scorn of earth,  
 The outcast, the abandoned, the alone?                            \_105  
 Not Jove: while yet his frown shook Heaven ay, when

His adversary from adamantine chains  
Cursed him, he trembled like a slave. Declare  
Who is his master? Is he too a slave?

NOTE:

\_100 rains B, edition 1839; reigns 1820.

DEMOGORGON:

All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil:                    \_110

Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no.

ASIA:

Whom calledst thou God?

DEMOGORGON:

I spoke but as ye speak,

For Jove is the supreme of living things.

ASIA:

Who is the master of the slave?

DEMOGORGON:

If the abysm

Could vomit forth its secrets...But a voice                               \_115

Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless;

For what would it avail to bid thee gaze

On the revolving world? What to bid speak

Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance and Change? To these

All things are subject but eternal Love.                               \_120

ASIA:

So much I asked before, and my heart gave

The response thou hast given; and of such truths

Each to itself must be the oracle.

One more demand; and do thou answer me

As my own soul would answer, did it know                               \_125

That which I ask. Prometheus shall arise

Henceforth the sun of this rejoicing world:

When shall the destined hour arrive?

DEMOGORGON:

Behold!

ASIA:

The rocks are cloven, and through the purple night

I see cars drawn by rainbow-winged steeds                               \_130

Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands

A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight.

Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,

And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars:

Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink                       \_135

With eager lips the wind of their own speed,

As if the thing they loved fled on before,

And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright locks  
Stream like a comet's flashing hair; they all  
Sweep onward.

DEMOGORGON:

These are the immortal Hours, \_140  
Of whom thou didst demand. One waits for thee.

ASIA:

A Spirit with a dreadful countenance  
Checks its dark chariot by the craggy gulf.  
Unlike thy brethren, ghastly charioteer,  
Who art thou? Whither wouldst thou bear me? Speak! \_145

SPIRIT:

I am the shadow of a destiny  
More dread than is my aspect: ere yon planet  
Has set, the darkness which ascends with me  
Shall wrap in lasting night heaven's kingless throne.

ASIA:

What meanest thou?

PANTHEA:

That terrible shadow floats \_150  
Up from its throne, as may the lurid smoke  
Of earthquake-ruined cities o'er the sea.  
Lo! it ascends the car; the coursers fly  
Terrified: watch its path among the stars  
Blackening the night!

ASIA:

Thus I am answered: strange! \_155

PANTHEA:

See, near the verge, another chariot stays;  
An ivory shell inlaid with crimson fire,  
Which comes and goes within its sculptured rim  
Of delicate strange tracery; the young spirit  
That guides it has the dove-like eyes of hope; \_160  
How its soft smiles attract the soul! as light  
Lures winged insects through the lampless air.

SPIRIT:

My coursers are fed with the lightning,  
They drink of the whirlwind's stream,  
And when the red morning is bright'ning \_165

They bathe in the fresh sunbeam;  
They have strength for their swiftness I deem;  
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

I desire: and their speed makes night kindle;  
I fear: they outstrip the Typhoon; \_170  
Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle

We encircle the earth and the moon:  
We shall rest from long labours at noon:  
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

SCENE 2.5:

THE CAR PAUSES WITHIN A CLOUD ON THE TOP OF A SNOWY MOUNTAIN.  
ASIA, PANTHEA, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

SPIRIT:

On the brink of the night and the morning  
My coursers are wont to respire;  
But the Earth has just whispered a warning  
That their flight must be swifter than fire:  
They shall drink the hot speed of desire! \_5

ASIA:

Thou breathest on their nostrils, but my breath  
Would give them swifter speed.

SPIRIT:

Alas! it could not.

PANTHEA:

Oh Spirit! pause, and tell whence is the light  
Which fills this cloud? the sun is yet unrisen.

NOTE:

\_9 this B; the 1820.

SPIRIT:

The sun will rise not until noon. Apollo \_10  
Is held in heaven by wonder; and the light  
Which fills this vapour, as the aerial hue  
Of fountain-gazing roses fills the water,  
Flows from thy mighty sister.

PANTHEA:

Yes, I feel--

ASIA:

What is it with thee, sister? Thou art pale. \_15

PANTHEA:

How thou art changed! I dare not look on thee;  
I feel but see thee not. I scarce endure  
The radiance of thy beauty. Some good change  
Is working in the elements, which suffer  
Thy presence thus unveiled. The Nereids tell \_20  
That on the day when the clear hyaline  
Was cloven at thine uprise, and thou didst stand  
Within a veined shell, which floated on  
Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,  
Among the Aegean isles, and by the shores \_25



Which bear thy name; love, like the atmosphere  
Of the sun's fire filling the living world,  
Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven  
And the deep ocean and the sunless caves  
And all that dwells within them; till grief cast        \_30  
Eclipse upon the soul from which it came:  
Such art thou now; nor is it I alone,  
Thy sister, thy companion, thine own chosen one,  
But the whole world which seeks thy sympathy.  
Hearest thou not sounds i' the air which speak the love        \_35  
Of all articulate beings? Feelest thou not  
The inanimate winds enamoured of thee? List!

NOTE:

\_22 thine B; thy 1820.

[MUSIC.]

ASIA:

Thy words are sweeter than aught else but his  
Whose echoes they are; yet all love is sweet,  
Given or returned. Common as light is love,        \_40  
And its familiar voice wearies not ever.  
Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,  
It makes the reptile equal to the God:  
They who inspire it most are fortunate,  
As I am now; but those who feel it most        \_45  
Are happier still, after long sufferings,  
As I shall soon become.

PANTHEA:

List! Spirits speak.

VOICE IN THE AIR, SINGING:

Life of Life! thy lips enkindle  
With their love the breath between them;  
And thy smiles before they dwindle        \_50  
Make the cold air fire; then screen them  
In those looks, where whoso gazes  
Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of Light! thy limbs are burning  
Through the vest which seems to hide them;        \_55  
As the radiant lines of morning  
Through the clouds ere they divide them;  
And this atmosphere divinest  
Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.

Fair are others; none beholds thee,        \_60  
But thy voice sounds low and tender  
Like the fairest, for it folds thee  
From the sight, that liquid splendour,  
And all feel, yet see thee never,

As I feel now, lost for ever! \_65

Lamp of Earth! where'er thou movest  
Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,  
And the souls of whom thou lovest  
Walk upon the winds with lightness,  
Till they fail, as I am failing, \_70  
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing!

NOTE:

\_54 limbs B, edition 1839; lips 1820.

ASIA:

My soul is an enchanted boat,  
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float  
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing;  
And thine doth like an angel sit \_75  
Beside a helm conducting it,  
Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.  
It seems to float ever, for ever,  
Upon that many-winding river,  
Between mountains, woods, abysses, \_80  
A paradise of wildernesses!  
Till, like one in slumber bound,  
Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,  
Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound:

Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions \_85  
In music's most serene dominions;  
Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven.  
And we sail on, away, afar,  
Without a course, without a star,  
But, by the instinct of sweet music driven; \_90  
Till through Elysian garden islets  
By thee most beautiful of pilots,  
Where never mortal pinnacle glided,  
The boat of my desire is guided:  
Realms where the air we breathe is love, \_95  
Which in the winds on the waves doth move,  
Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above.

We have passed Age's icy caves,  
And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,  
And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray: \_100  
Beyond the glassy gulfs we flee  
Of shadow-peopled Infancy,  
Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day;  
A paradise of vaulted bowers,  
Lit by downward-gazing flowers, \_105  
And watery paths that wind between  
Wildernesses calm and green,  
Peopled by shapes too bright to see,  
And rest, having beheld; somewhat like thee;

Which walk upon the sea, and chant melodiously! \_110

NOTE:

\_96 winds and on B; winds on 1820.

END OF ACT 2.

ACT 3.

SCENE 3.1:

HEAVEN.

JUPITER ON HIS THRONE; THETIS AND THE OTHER DEITIES ASSEMBLED.

JUPITER:

Ye congregated powers of heaven, who share  
The glory and the strength of him ye serve,  
Rejoice! henceforth I am omnipotent.  
All else had been subdued to me; alone  
The soul of man, like unextinguished fire, \_5  
Yet burns towards heaven with fierce reproach, and doubt,  
And lamentation, and reluctant prayer,  
Hurling up insurrection, which might make  
Our antique empire insecure, though built  
On eldest faith, and hell's coeval, fear; \_10  
And though my curses through the pendulous air,  
Like snow on herbless peaks, fall flake by flake,  
And cling to it; though under my wrath's night  
It climbs the crags of life, step after step,  
Which wound it, as ice wounds unsandalled feet, \_15  
It yet remains supreme o'er misery,  
Aspiring, unrepressed, yet soon to fall:  
Even now have I begotten a strange wonder,  
That fatal child, the terror of the earth,  
Who waits but till the destined hour arrive, \_20  
Bearing from Demogorgon's vacant throne  
The dreadful might of ever-living limbs  
Which clothed that awful spirit unbeheld,  
To redescend, and trample out the spark.  
Pour forth heaven's wine, Idaean Ganymede, \_25  
And let it fill the Daedal cups like fire,  
And from the flower-inwoven soil divine  
Ye all-triumphant harmonies arise,  
As dew from earth under the twilight stars:  
Drink! be the nectar circling through your veins \_30  
The soul of joy, ye ever-living Gods,  
Till exultation burst in one wide voice  
Like music from Elysian winds.  
And thou  
Ascend beside me, veiled in the light  
Of the desire which makes thee one with me, \_35  
Thetis, bright image of eternity!  
When thou didst cry, 'Insufferable might!

God! Spare me! I sustain not the quick flames,  
The penetrating presence; all my being,  
Like him whom the Numidian seps did thaw                    \_40  
Into a dew with poison, is dissolved,  
Sinking through its foundations:’ even then  
Two mighty spirits, mingling, made a third  
Mightier than either, which, unbodied now,  
Between us floats, felt, although unbeheld,                    \_45  
Waiting the incarnation, which ascends,  
(Hear ye the thunder of the fiery wheels  
Gridding the winds?) from Demogorgon’s throne.  
Victory! victory! Feel’st thou not, O world,  
The earthquake of his chariot thundering up                    \_50  
Olympus?

[THE CAR OF THE HOUR ARRIVES.

DEMOGORGON DESCENDS, AND MOVES TOWARDS THE THRONE OF JUPITER.]

Awful shape, what art thou? Speak!

NOTES:

\_5 like unextinguished B, edition 1839; like an unextinguished 1820.  
\_13 night B, edition 1839; might 1820.  
\_20 destined B, edition 1839; distant 1820.

DEMOGORGON:

Eternity. Demand no direr name.  
Descend, and follow me down the abyss.  
I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn’s child;  
Mightier than thee: and we must dwell together                    \_55  
Henceforth in darkness. Lift thy lightnings not.  
The tyranny of heaven none may retain,  
Or reassume, or hold, succeeding thee:  
Yet if thou wilt, as ’tis the destiny  
Of trodden worms to writhe till they are dead,                    \_60  
Put forth thy might.

JUPITER:

Detested prodigy!  
Even thus beneath the deep Titanian prisons  
I trample thee! thou lingerest?  
Mercy! mercy!  
No pity, no release, no respite! Oh,  
That thou wouldst make mine enemy my judge,                    \_65  
Even where he hangs, seared by my long revenge,  
On Caucasus! he would not doom me thus.  
Gentle, and just, and dreadful, is he not  
The monarch of the world? What then art thou?  
No refuge! no appeal!  
Sink with me then,   \_70  
We two will sink on the wide waves of ruin,  
Even as a vulture and a snake outspent  
Drop, twisted in inextricable fight,  
Into a shoreless sea. Let hell unlock  
Its mounded oceans of tempestuous fire,                    \_75

And whelm on them into the bottomless void  
This desolated world, and thee, and me,  
The conqueror and the conquered, and the wreck  
Of that for which they combated.

Ai, Ai!

The elements obey me not. I sink \_80  
Dizzily down, ever, for ever, down.  
And, like a cloud, mine enemy above  
Darkens my fall with victory! Ai, Ai!

NOTE:

\_69 then B, edition 1839; omitted 1820.

SCENE 3.2:

THE MOUTH OF A GREAT RIVER IN THE ISLAND ATLANTIS.  
OCEAN IS DISCOVERED RECLINING NEAR THE SHORE;  
APOLLO STANDS BESIDE HIM.

OCEAN:

He fell, thou sayest, beneath his conqueror's frown?

APOLLO:

Ay, when the strife was ended which made dim  
The orb I rule, and shook the solid stars,  
The terrors of his eye illumined heaven  
With sanguine light, through the thick ragged skirts \_5  
Of the victorious darkness, as he fell:  
Like the last glare of day's red agony,  
Which, from a rent among the fiery clouds,  
Burns far along the tempest-wrinkled deep.

OCEAN:

He sunk to the abyss? To the dark void? \_10

APOLLO:

An eagle so caught in some bursting cloud  
On Caucasus, his thunder-baffled wings  
Entangled in the whirlwind, and his eyes  
Which gazed on the undazzling sun, now blinded  
By the white lightning, while the ponderous hail \_15  
Beats on his struggling form, which sinks at length  
Prone, and the aerial ice clings over it.

OCEAN:

Henceforth the fields of heaven-reflecting sea  
Which are my realm, will heave, unstained with blood,  
Beneath the uplifting winds, like plains of corn \_20  
Swayed by the summer air; my streams will flow  
Round many-peopled continents, and round  
Fortunate isles; and from their glassy thrones  
Blue Proteus and his humid nymphs shall mark  
The shadow of fair ships, as mortals see \_25  
The floating bark of the light-laden moon

With that white star, its sightless pilot's crest,  
Borne down the rapid sunset's ebbing sea;  
Tracking their path no more by blood and groans,  
And desolation, and the mingled voice                     \_30  
Of slavery and command; but by the light  
Of wave-reflected flowers, and floating odours,  
And music soft, and mild, free, gentle voices,  
And sweetest music, such as spirits love.

NOTES:

\_22 many-peopled B; many peopled 1820.

\_26 light-laden B; light laden 1820.

APOLLO:

And I shall gaze not on the deeds which make                     \_35  
My mind obscure with sorrow, as eclipse  
Darkens the sphere I guide; but list, I hear  
The small, clear, silver lute of the young Spirit  
That sits i' the morning star.

NOTE:

\_39 i' the B, edition 1839; on the 1820.

OCEAN:

Thou must away;  
Thy steeds will pause at even, till when farewell:                     \_40  
The loud deep calls me home even now to feed it  
With azure calm out of the emerald urns  
Which stand for ever full beside my throne.  
Behold the Nereids under the green sea,  
Their wavering limbs borne on the wind-like stream,                     \_45  
Their white arms lifted o'er their streaming hair  
With garlands pied and starry sea-flower crowns,  
Hastening to grace their mighty sister's joy.  
[A SOUND OF WAVES IS HEARD.]  
It is the unpastured sea hungering for calm.  
Peace, monster; I come now. Farewell.

APOLLO:

Farewell.   \_50

SCENE 3.3:

CAUCASUS.

PROMETHEUS, HERCULES, IONE, THE EARTH, SPIRITS, ASIA,  
AND PANTHEA, BORNE IN THE CAR WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.  
HERCULES UNBINDS PROMETHEUS, WHO DESCENDS.

HERCULES:

Most glorious among Spirits, thus doth strength  
To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love,  
And thee, who art the form they animate,  
Minister like a slave.

PROMETHEUS:

Thy gentle words

Are sweeter even than freedom long desired \_5

And long delayed.

Asia, thou light of life,

Shadow of beauty unbeheld: and ye,

Fair sister nymphs, who made long years of pain

Sweet to remember, through your love and care:

Henceforth we will not part. There is a cave, \_10

All overgrown with trailing odorous plants,

Which curtain out the day with leaves and flowers,

And paved with veined emerald, and a fountain

Leaps in the midst with an awakening sound.

From its curved roof the mountain's frozen tears \_15

Like snow, or silver, or long diamond spires,

Hang downward, raining forth a doubtful light:

And there is heard the ever-moving air,

Whispering without from tree to tree, and birds,

And bees; and all around are mossy seats, \_20

And the rough walls are clothed with long soft grass;

A simple dwelling, which shall be our own;

Where we will sit and talk of time and change,

As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged.

What can hide man from mutability? \_25

And if ye sigh, then I will smile; and thou,

lone, shalt chant fragments of sea-music,

Until I weep, when ye shall smile away

The tears she brought, which yet were sweet to shed.

We will entangle buds and flowers and beams \_30

Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make

Strange combinations out of common things,

Like human babes in their brief innocence;

And we will search, with looks and words of love,

For hidden thoughts, each lovelier than the last, \_35

Our unexhausted spirits; and like lutes

Touched by the skill of the enamoured wind,

Weave harmonies divine, yet ever new,

From difference sweet where discord cannot be;

And hither come, sped on the charmed winds, \_40

Which meet from all the points of heaven, as bees

From every flower aerial Enna feeds,

At their known island-homes in Himera,

The echoes of the human world, which tell

Of the low voice of love, almost unheard, \_45

And dove-eyed pity's murmured pain, and music,

Itself the echo of the heart, and all

That tempers or improves man's life, now free;

And lovely apparitions,--dim at first,

Then radiant, as the mind, arising bright \_50

From the embrace of beauty (whence the forms

Of which these are the phantoms) casts on them

The gathered rays which are reality--

Shall visit us, the progeny immortal

Of Painting, Sculpture, and rapt Poesy,                    \_55  
And arts, though unimagined, yet to be.  
The wandering voices and the shadows these  
Of all that man becomes, the mediators  
Of that best worship love, by him and us  
Given and returned; swift shapes and sounds, which grow           \_60  
More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind,  
And, veil by veil, evil and error fall:  
Such virtue has the cave and place around.  
[TURNING TO THE SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.]  
For thee, fair Spirit, one toil remains. lone,  
Give her that curved shell, which Proteus old                   \_65  
Made Asia's nuptial boon, breathing within it  
A voice to be accomplished, and which thou  
Didst hide in grass under the hollow rock.

IONE:

Thou most desired Hour, more loved and lovely  
Than all thy sisters, this is the mystic shell;                   \_70  
See the pale azure fading into silver  
Lining it with a soft yet glowing light:  
Looks it not like lulled music sleeping there?

SPIRIT:

It seems in truth the fairest shell of Ocean:  
Its sound must be at once both sweet and strange.                   \_75

PROMETHEUS:

Go, borne over the cities of mankind  
On whirlwind-footed coursers: once again  
Outspeed the sun around the orb'd world;  
And as thy chariot cleaves the kindling air,  
Thou breathe into the many-folded shell,                   \_80  
Loosening its mighty music; it shall be  
As thunder mingled with clear echoes: then  
Return; and thou shalt dwell beside our cave.  
And thou, O Mother Earth!--

THE EARTH:

I hear, I feel;  
Thy lips are on me, and thy touch runs down                   \_85  
Even to the adamantine central gloom  
Along these marble nerves; 'tis life, 'tis joy,  
And, through my withered, old, and icy frame  
The warmth of an immortal youth shoots down  
Circling. Henceforth the many children fair                   \_90  
Folded in my sustaining arms; all plants,  
And creeping forms, and insects rainbow-winged,  
And birds, and beasts, and fish, and human shapes,  
Which drew disease and pain from my wan bosom,  
Draining the poison of despair, shall take                   \_95  
And interchange sweet nutriment; to me  
Shall they become like sister-antelopes



By one fair dam, snow-white and swift as wind,  
Nursed among lilies near a brimming stream.  
The dew-mists of my sunless sleep shall float                    \_100  
Under the stars like balm: night-folded flowers  
Shall suck unwithering hues in their repose:  
And men and beasts in happy dreams shall gather  
Strength for the coming day, and all its joy:  
And death shall be the last embrace of her                        \_105  
Who takes the life she gave, even as a mother,  
Folding her child, says, 'Leave me not again.'

NOTES:

\_85 their B; thy 1820.

\_102 unwithering B, edition 1839; unwitting 1820.

ASIA:

Oh, mother! wherefore speak the name of death?  
Cease they to love, and move, and breathe, and speak,  
Who die?

THE EARTH:

It would avail not to reply:                                        \_110  
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known  
But to the uncommunicating dead.  
Death is the veil which those who live call life:  
They sleep, and it is lifted: and meanwhile  
In mild variety the seasons mild                                \_115  
With rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds,  
And long blue meteors cleansing the dull night,  
And the life-kindling shafts of the keen sun's  
All-piercing bow, and the dew-mingled rain  
Of the calm moonbeams, a soft influence mild,                \_120  
Shall clothe the forests and the fields, ay, even  
The crag-built deserts of the barren deep,  
With ever-living leaves, and fruits, and flowers.  
And thou! There is a cavern where my spirit  
Was panted forth in anguish whilst thy pain                    \_125  
Made my heart mad, and those who did inhale it  
Became mad too, and built a temple there,  
And spoke, and were oracular, and lured  
The erring nations round to mutual war,  
And faithless faith, such as Jove kept with thee;            \_130  
Which breath now rises, as amongst tall weeds  
A violet's exhalation, and it fills  
With a serener light and crimson air  
Intense, yet soft, the rocks and woods around;  
It feeds the quick growth of the serpent vine,                \_135  
And the dark linked ivy tangling wild,  
And budding, blown, or odour-faded blooms  
Which star the winds with points of coloured light,  
As they rain through them, and bright golden globes  
Of fruit, suspended in their own green heaven,                \_140  
And through their veined leaves and amber stems

The flowers whose purple and translucent bowls  
Stand ever mantling with aerial dew,  
The drink of spirits: and it circles round,  
Like the soft waving wings of noonday dreams,                     \_145  
Inspiring calm and happy thoughts, like mine,  
Now thou art thus restored. This cave is thine.  
Arise! Appear!  
[A SPIRIT RISES IN THE LIKENESS OF A WINGED CHILD.]  
This is my torch-bearer;  
Who let his lamp out in old time with gazing  
On eyes from which he kindled it anew                     \_150  
With love, which is as fire, sweet daughter mine,  
For such is that within thine own. Run, wayward,  
And guide this company beyond the peak  
Of Bacchic Nysa, Maenad-haunted mountain,  
And beyond Indus and its tribute rivers,                     \_155  
Trampling the torrent streams and glassy lakes  
With feet unwet, unwearied, undelaying,  
And up the green ravine, across the vale,  
Beside the windless and crystalline pool,  
Where ever lies, on unerasing waves,                     \_160  
The image of a temple, built above,  
Distinct with column, arch, and architrave,  
And palm-like capital, and over-wrought,  
And populous with most living imagery,  
Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles                     \_165  
Fill the hushed air with everlasting love.  
It is deserted now, but once it bore  
Thy name, Prometheus; there the emulous youths  
Bore to thy honour through the divine gloom  
The lamp which was thine emblem; even as those                     \_170  
Who bear the untransmitted torch of hope  
Into the grave, across the night of life,  
As thou hast borne it most triumphantly  
To this far goal of Time. Depart, farewell.  
Beside that temple is the destined cave.                     \_175

NOTE:

\_164 with most B; most with 1820.

SCENE 3.4:

A FOREST. IN THE BACKGROUND A CAVE.

PROMETHEUS, ASIA, PANTHEA, IONE, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

IONE:

Sister, it is not earthly: how it glides  
Under the leaves! how on its head there burns  
A light, like a green star, whose emerald beams  
Are twined with its fair hair! how, as it moves,  
The splendour drops in flakes upon the grass!                     \_5  
Knowest thou it?

PANTHEA:

It is the delicate spirit  
That guides the earth through heaven. From afar  
The populous constellations call that light  
The loveliest of the planets; and sometimes  
It floats along the spray of the salt sea,                    \_10  
Or makes its chariot of a foggy cloud,  
Or walks through fields or cities while men sleep,  
Or o'er the mountain tops, or down the rivers,  
Or through the green waste wilderness, as now,  
Wondering at all it sees. Before Jove reigned                \_15  
It loved our sister Asia, and it came  
Each leisure hour to drink the liquid light  
Out of her eyes, for which it said it thirsted  
As one bit by a dipsas, and with her  
It made its childish confidence, and told her                \_20  
All it had known or seen, for it saw much,  
Yet idly reasoned what it saw; and called her--  
For whence it sprung it knew not, nor do I--  
Mother, dear mother.

THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH [RUNNING TO ASIA]:

Mother, dearest mother;  
May I then talk with thee as I was wont?                    \_25  
May I then hide my eyes in thy soft arms,  
After thy looks have made them tired of joy?  
May I then play beside thee the long noons,  
When work is none in the bright silent air?

ASIA:

I love thee, gentlest being, and henceforth                \_30  
Can cherish thee unenvied: speak, I pray:  
Thy simple talk once solaced, now delights.

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH:

Mother, I am grown wiser, though a child  
Cannot be wise like thee, within this day;  
And happier too; happier and wiser both.                    \_35  
Thou knowest that toads, and snakes, and loathly worms,  
And venomous and malicious beasts, and boughs  
That bore ill berries in the woods, were ever  
An hindrance to my walks o'er the green world:  
And that, among the haunts of humankind,                    \_40  
Hard-featured men, or with proud, angry looks,  
Or cold, staid gait, or false and hollow smiles,  
Or the dull sneer of self-loved ignorance,  
Or other such foul masks, with which ill thoughts  
Hide that fair being whom we spirits call man;                \_45  
And women too, ugliest of all things evil,  
(Though fair, even in a world where thou art fair,  
When good and kind, free and sincere like thee)  
When false or frowning made me sick at heart  
To pass them, though they slept, and I unseen.                \_50  
Well, my path lately lay through a great city

Into the woody hills surrounding it:  
A sentinel was sleeping at the gate:  
When there was heard a sound, so loud, it shook  
The towers amid the moonlight, yet more sweet            \_55  
Than any voice but thine, sweetest of all;  
A long, long sound, as it would never end:  
And all the inhabitants leaped suddenly  
Out of their rest, and gathered in the streets,  
Looking in wonder up to Heaven, while yet               \_60  
The music pealed along. I hid myself  
Within a fountain in the public square,  
Where I lay like the reflex of the moon  
Seen in a wave under green leaves; and soon  
Those ugly human shapes and visages                   \_65  
Of which I spoke as having wrought me pain,  
Passed floating through the air, and fading still  
Into the winds that scattered them; and those  
From whom they passed seemed mild and lovely forms  
After some foul disguise had fallen, and all             \_70  
Were somewhat changed, and after brief surprise  
And greetings of delighted wonder, all  
Went to their sleep again: and when the dawn  
Came, wouldst thou think that toads, and snakes, and efts,  
Could e'er be beautiful? yet so they were,               \_75  
And that with little change of shape or hue:  
All things had put their evil nature off:  
I cannot tell my joy, when o'er a lake,  
Upon a drooping bough with nightshade twined,  
I saw two azure halcyons clinging downward             \_80  
And thinning one bright bunch of amber berries,  
With quick long beaks, and in the deep there lay  
Those lovely forms imaged as in a sky;  
So, with my thoughts full of these happy changes,  
We meet again, the happiest change of all.               \_85

ASIA:

And never will we part, till thy chaste sister  
Who guides the frozen and inconstant moon  
Will look on thy more warm and equal light  
Till her heart thaw like flakes of April snow  
And love thee.

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH:

What! as Asia loves Prometheus?                       \_90

ASIA:

Peace, wanton, thou art yet not old enough.  
Think ye by gazing on each other's eyes  
To multiply your lovely selves, and fill  
With sphered fires the interlunar air?

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH:

Nay, mother, while my sister trims her lamp

'Tis hard I should go darkling. \_95

ASIA:

Listen; look!

[THE SPIRIT OF THE HOUR ENTERS.]

PROMETHEUS:

We feel what thou hast heard and seen: yet speak.

SPIRIT OF THE HOUR:

Soon as the sound had ceased whose thunder filled  
The abysses of the sky and the wide earth,  
There was a change: the impalpable thin air \_100  
And the all-circling sunlight were transformed,  
As if the sense of love dissolved in them  
Had folded itself round the sphered world.  
My vision then grew clear, and I could see  
Into the mysteries of the universe: \_105  
Dizzy as with delight I floated down,  
Winnowing the lightsome air with languid plumes,  
My coursers sought their birthplace in the sun,  
Where they henceforth will live exempt from toil,  
Pasturing flowers of vegetable fire; \_110  
And where my moonlike car will stand within  
A temple, gazed upon by Phidian forms  
Of thee, and Asia, and the Earth, and me,  
And you fair nymphs looking the love we feel,--  
In memory of the tidings it has borne,-- \_115  
Beneath a dome fretted with graven flowers,  
Poised on twelve columns of resplendent stone,  
And open to the bright and liquid sky.  
Yoked to it by an amphisbaenic snake  
The likeness of those winged steeds will mock \_120  
The flight from which they find repose. Alas,  
Whither has wandered now my partial tongue  
When all remains untold which ye would hear?  
As I have said, I floated to the earth:  
It was, as it is still, the pain of bliss \_125  
To move, to breathe, to be. I wandering went  
Among the haunts and dwellings of mankind,  
And first was disappointed not to see  
Such mighty change as I had felt within  
Expressed in outward things; but soon I looked, \_130  
And behold, thrones were kingless, and men walked  
One with the other even as spirits do,  
None fawned, none trampled; hate, disdain, or fear,  
Self-love or self-contempt, on human brows  
No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell, \_135  
'All hope abandon ye who enter here;'  
None frowned, none trembled, none with eager fear  
Gazed on another's eye of cold command,  
Until the subject of a tyrant's will

Became, worse fate, the abject of his own, \_140  
Which spurred him, like an outspent horse, to death.  
None wrought his lips in truth-entangling lines  
Which smiled the lie his tongue disdained to speak;  
None, with firm sneer, trod out in his own heart  
The sparks of love and hope till there remained \_145  
Those bitter ashes, a soul self-consumed,  
And the wretch crept a vampire among men,  
Infecting all with his own hideous ill;  
None talked that common, false, cold, hollow talk  
Which makes the heart deny the "yes" it breathes, \_150  
Yet question that unmeant hypocrisy  
With such a self-mistrust as has no name.  
And women, too, frank, beautiful, and kind  
As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew  
On the wide earth, past; gentle radiant forms, \_155  
From custom's evil taint exempt and pure;  
Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,  
Looking emotions once they feared to feel,  
And changed to all which once they dared not be,  
Yet being now, made earth like heaven; nor pride, \_160  
Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame,  
The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall,  
Spoiled the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love.

Thrones, altars, judgement-seats, and prisons; wherein,  
And beside which, by wretched men were borne \_165  
Sceptres, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes  
Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance,  
Were like those monstrous and barbaric shapes,  
The ghosts of a no-more-remembered fame,  
Which, from their unworn obelisks, look forth \_170  
In triumph o'er the palaces and tombs  
Of those who were their conquerors: mouldering round,  
These imaged to the pride of kings and priests  
A dark yet mighty faith, a power as wide  
As is the world it wasted, and are now \_175  
But an astonishment; even so the tools  
And emblems of its last captivity,  
Amid the dwellings of the peopled earth,  
Stand, not o'erthrown, but unregarded now.  
And those foul shapes, abhorred by god and man,-- \_180  
Which, under many a name and many a form  
Strange, savage, ghastly, dark and execrable,  
Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world;  
And which the nations, panic-stricken, served  
With blood, and hearts broken by long hope, and love \_185  
Dragged to his altars soiled and garlandless,  
And slain among men's unreclaiming tears,  
Flattering the thing they feared, which fear was hate,--  
Frown, mouldering fast, o'er their abandoned shrines:  
The painted veil, by those who were, called life, \_190  
Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread,

All men believed and hoped, is torn aside;  
The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains  
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man  
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,                    \_195  
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king  
Over himself; just, gentle, wise; but man  
Passionless?--no, yet free from guilt or pain,  
Which were, for his will made or suffered them,  
Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves,                \_200  
From chance, and death, and mutability,  
The clogs of that which else might oversoar  
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,  
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

NOTES:

\_121 flight B, edition 1839; light 1820.

\_173 These B; Those 1820.

\_187 amid B; among 1820.

\_192 or B; and 1820.

END OF ACT 3.

ACT 4.

SCENE 4.1:

A PART OF THE FOREST NEAR THE CAVE OF PROMETHEUS.

PANTHEA AND IONE ARE SLEEPING: THEY AWAKEN GRADUALLY DURING THE FIRST SONG.

VOICE OF UNSEEN SPIRITS:

The pale stars are gone!  
For the sun, their swift shepherd,  
To their folds them compelling,  
In the depths of the dawn,  
Hastes, in meteor-eclipsing array, and the flee                \_5  
Beyond his blue dwelling,  
As fawns flee the leopard.  
But where are ye?

[A TRAIN OF DARK FORMS AND SHADOWS PASSES BY CONFUSEDLY, SINGING.]

Here, oh, here:  
We bear the bier    \_10  
Of the father of many a cancelled year!  
Spectres we  
Of the dead Hours be,  
We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.

Strew, oh, strew    \_15  
Hair, not yew!  
Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew!  
Be the faded flowers  
Of Death's bare bowers

Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours! \_20

Haste, oh, haste!  
As shades are chased,  
Trembling, by day, from heaven's blue waste.

We melt away,  
Like dissolving spray, \_25  
From the children of a diviner day,  
With the lullaby  
Of winds that die  
On the bosom of their own harmony!

IONE:  
What dark forms were they? \_30

PANTHEA:  
The past Hours weak and gray,  
With the spoil which their toil  
Raked together  
From the conquest but One could foil.

IONE:  
Have they passed?

PANTHEA:  
They have passed; \_35  
They outspeeded the blast,  
While 'tis said, they are fled:

IONE:  
Whither, oh, whither?

PANTHEA:  
To the dark, to the past, to the dead.

VOICE OF UNSEEN SPIRITS:  
Bright clouds float in heaven, \_40  
Dew-stars gleam on earth,  
Waves assemble on ocean,  
They are gathered and driven  
By the storm of delight, by the panic of glee!  
They shake with emotion, \_45  
They dance in their mirth.  
But where are ye?

The pine boughs are singing  
Old songs with new gladness,  
The billows and fountains \_50  
Fresh music are flinging,  
Like the notes of a spirit from land and from sea;  
The storms mock the mountains  
With the thunder of gladness.  
But where are ye? \_55



IONE:

What charioteers are these?

PANTHEA:

Where are their chariots?

SEMICHORUS OF HOURS:

The voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth  
Has drawn back the figured curtain of sleep  
Which covered our being and darkened our birth  
In the deep.

A VOICE:

In the deep?

SEMICHORUS 2:

Oh, below the deep. \_60

SEMICHORUS 1:

An hundred ages we had been kept  
Cradled in visions of hate and care,  
And each one who waked as his brother slept,  
Found the truth--

SEMICHORUS 2:

Worse than his visions were!

SEMICHORUS 1:

We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep; \_65  
We have known the voice of Love in dreams;  
We have felt the wand of Power, and leap--

SEMICHORUS 2:

As the billows leap in the morning beams!

CHORUS:

Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze,  
Pierce with song heaven's silent light, \_70  
Enchant the day that too swiftly flees,  
To check its flight ere the cave of Night.

Once the hungry Hours were hounds  
Which chased the day like a bleeding deer,  
And it limped and stumbled with many wounds \_75  
Through the nightly dells of the desert year.

But now, oh weave the mystic measure  
Of music, and dance, and shapes of light,  
Let the Hours, and the spirits of might and pleasure,  
Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite--

A VOICE:

Unite!

\_80

PANTHEA:

See, where the Spirits of the human mind  
Wrapped in sweet sounds, as in bright veils, approach.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS:

We join the throng  
Of the dance and the song,  
By the whirlwind of gladness borne along;                     \_85  
As the flying-fish leap  
From the Indian deep,  
And mix with the sea-birds, half-asleep.

CHORUS OF HOURS:

Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet,  
For sandals of lightning are on your feet,                     \_90  
And your wings are soft and swift as thought,  
And your eyes are as love which is veiled not?

CHORUS OF SPIRITS:

We come from the mind  
Of human kind  
Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind,                     \_95  
Now 'tis an ocean  
Of clear emotion,  
A heaven of serene and mighty motion.

From that deep abyss  
Of wonder and bliss,                     \_100  
Whose caverns are crystal palaces;  
From those skiey towers  
Where Thought's crowned powers  
Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours!

From the dim recesses                     \_105  
Of woven caresses,  
Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses;  
From the azure isles,  
Where sweet Wisdom smiles,  
Delaying your ships with her siren wiles.                     \_110

From the temples high  
Of Man's ear and eye,  
Roofed over Sculpture and Poesy;  
From the murmurings  
Of the unsealed springs                     \_115  
Where Science bedews her Daedal wings.

Years after years,  
Through blood, and tears,  
And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears;  
We waded and flew,                     \_120

And the islets were few  
Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness grew.

Our feet now, every palm,  
Are sandalled with calm,  
And the dew of our wings is a rain of balm;                    \_125  
And, beyond our eyes,  
The human love lies  
Which makes all it gazes on Paradise.

NOTE:  
\_116 her B; his 1820.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS AND HOURS:  
Then weave the web of the mystic measure;  
From the depths of the sky and the ends of the earth,           \_130  
Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure,  
Fill the dance and the music of mirth,  
As the waves of a thousand streams rush by  
To an ocean of splendour and harmony!

CHORUS OF SPIRITS:  
Our spoil is won,    \_135  
Our task is done,  
We are free to dive, or soar, or run;  
Beyond and around,  
Or within the bound  
Which clips the world with darkness round.                       \_140

We'll pass the eyes  
Of the starry skies  
Into the hoar deep to colonize;  
Death, Chaos, and Night,  
From the sound of our flight,   \_145  
Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's might.

And Earth, Air, and Light,  
And the Spirit of Might,  
Which drives round the stars in their fiery flight;  
And Love, Thought, and Breath,                                       \_150  
The powers that quell Death,  
Wherever we soar shall assemble beneath.

And our singing shall build  
In the void's loose field  
A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield;                       \_155  
We will take our plan  
From the new world of man,  
And our work shall be called the Promethean.

CHORUS OF HOURS:  
Break the dance, and scatter the song;  
Let some depart, and some remain;                                   \_160

SEMICHORUS 1:

We, beyond heaven, are driven along:

SEMICHORUS 2:

Us the enchantments of earth retain:

SEMICHORUS 1:

Ceaseless, and rapid, and fierce, and free,  
With the Spirits which build a new earth and sea,  
And a heaven where yet heaven could never be;                    \_165

SEMICHORUS 2:

Solemn, and slow, and serene, and bright,  
Leading the Day and outspeeding the Night,  
With the powers of a world of perfect light;

SEMICHORUS 1:

We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering sphere,  
Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds appear                    \_170  
From its chaos made calm by love, not fear.

SEMICHORUS 2:

We encircle the ocean and mountains of earth,  
And the happy forms of its death and birth  
Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

CHORUS OF HOURS AND SPIRITS:

Break the dance, and scatter the song;                                    \_175  
Let some depart, and some remain,  
Wherever we fly we lead along  
In leashes, like starbeams, soft yet strong,  
The clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain.

PANTHEA:

Ha! they are gone!

IONE:

Yet feel you no delight    \_180  
From the past sweetness?

PANTHEA:

As the bare green hill  
When some soft cloud vanishes into rain,  
Laughs with a thousand drops of sunny water  
To the unpavilioned sky!

IONE:

Even whilst we speak  
New notes arise. What is that awful sound?                                \_185

PANTHEA:

'Tis the deep music of the rolling world

Kindling within the strings of the waved air  
Aeolian modulations.

IONE:

Listen too,  
How every pause is filled with under-notes,  
Clear, silver, icy, keen awakening tones,                    \_190  
Which pierce the sense, and live within the soul,  
As the sharp stars pierce winter's crystal air  
And gaze upon themselves within the sea.

PANTHEA:

But see where through two openings in the forest  
Which hanging branches overcanopy,                            \_195  
And where two runnels of a rivulet,  
Between the close moss violet-inwoven,  
Have made their path of melody, like sisters  
Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles,  
Turning their dear disunion to an isle                         \_200  
Of lovely grief, a wood of sweet sad thoughts;  
Two visions of strange radiance float upon  
The ocean-like enchantment of strong sound,  
Which flows intenser, keener, deeper yet  
Under the ground and through the windless air.               \_205

IONE:

I see a chariot like that thinnest boat,  
In which the Mother of the Months is borne  
By ebbing light into her western cave,  
When she upsprings from interlunar dreams;  
O'er which is curved an orblike canopy                         \_210  
Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods,  
Distinctly seen through that dusk aery veil,  
Regard like shapes in an enchanter's glass;  
Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold,  
Such as the genii of the thunderstorm                         \_215  
Pile on the floor of the illumined sea  
When the sun rushes under it; they roll  
And move and grow as with an inward wind;  
Within it sits a winged infant, white  
Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow,            \_220  
Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost,  
Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowing folds  
Of its white robe, woof of ethereal pearl.  
Its hair is white, the brightness of white light  
Scattered in strings; yet its two eyes are heavens             \_225  
Of liquid darkness, which the Deity  
Within seems pouring, as a storm is poured  
From jagged clouds, out of their arrowy lashes,  
Tempering the cold and radiant air around,  
With fire that is not brightness; in its hand                    \_230  
It sways a quivering moonbeam, from whose point  
A guiding power directs the chariot's prow

Over its wheeled clouds, which as they roll  
Over the grass, and flowers, and waves, wake sounds,  
Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew.                    \_235

NOTES:

\_208 light B; night 1820.

\_212 aery B; airy 1820.

\_225 strings B, edition 1839; string 1820.

PANTHEA:

And from the other opening in the wood  
Rushes, with loud and whirlwind harmony,  
A sphere, which is as many thousand spheres,  
Solid as crystal, yet through all its mass  
Flow, as through empty space, music and light:                    \_240

Ten thousand orbs involving and involved,  
Purple and azure, white, and green, and golden,  
Sphere within sphere; and every space between  
Peopled with unimagined shapes,  
Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep,                    \_245

Yet each inter-translucent, and they whirl  
Over each other with a thousand motions,  
Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning,  
And with the force of self-destroying swiftness,  
Intensely, slowly, solemnly, roll on,                    \_250

Kindling with mingled sounds, and many tones,  
Intelligible words and music wild.  
With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb  
Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist  
Of elemental subtlety, like light;                    \_255

And the wild odour of the forest flowers,  
The music of the living grass and air,  
The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams  
Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed,  
Seem kneaded into one aerial mass                    \_260

Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself,  
Pillowed upon its alabaster arms,  
Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,  
On its own folded wings, and wavy hair,  
The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep,                    \_265

And you can see its little lips are moving,  
Amid the changing light of their own smiles,  
Like one who talks of what he loves in dream.

NOTE:

\_242 white and green B; white, green 1820.

IONE:

'Tis only mocking the orb's harmony.

PANTHEA:

And from a star upon its forehead, shoot,                    \_270  
Like swords of azure fire, or golden spears

With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtwined,  
 Embleming heaven and earth united now,  
 Vast beams like spokes of some invisible wheel  
 Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than thought,                     \_275  
 Filling the abyss with sun-like lightnings,  
 And perpendicular now, and now transverse,  
 Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and pass,  
 Make bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart;  
 Infinite mine of adamant and gold,   \_280  
 Valueless stones, and unimagined gems,  
 And caverns on crystalline columns poised  
 With vegetable silver overspread;  
 Wells of unfathomed fire, and water springs  
 Whence the great sea, even as a child is fed,                                 \_285  
 Whose vapours clothe earth's monarch mountain-tops  
 With kingly, ermine snow. The beams flash on  
 And make appear the melancholy ruins  
 Of cancelled cycles; anchors, beaks of ships;  
 Planks turned to marble; quivers, helms, and spears,                     \_290  
 And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels  
 Of scythed chariots, and the emblazonry  
 Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,  
 Round which death laughed, sepulchred emblems  
 Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin!   \_295  
 The wrecks beside of many a city vast,  
 Whose population which the earth grew over  
 Was mortal, but not human; see, they lie,  
 Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,  
 Their statues, homes and fanes; prodigious shapes                         \_300  
 Huddled in gray annihilation, split,  
 Jammed in the hard, black deep; and over these,  
 The anatomies of unknown winged things,  
 And fishes which were isles of living scale,  
 And serpents, bony chains, twisted around                                 \_305  
 The iron crags, or within heaps of dust  
 To which the tortuous strength of their last pangs  
 Had crushed the iron crags; and over these  
 The jagged alligator, and the might  
 Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once                                     \_310  
 Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,  
 And weed-overgrown continents of earth,  
 Increased and multiplied like summer worms  
 On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe  
 Wrapped deluge round it like a cloak, and they                             \_315  
 Yelled, gasped, and were abolished; or some God  
 Whose throne was in a comet, passed, and cried,  
 'Be not!' And like my words they were no more.

NOTES:

- \_274 spokes B, edition 1839; spoke 1820.
- \_276 lightnings B; lightnings 1820.
- \_280 mines B; mine 1820.
- \_282 poised B; poized edition 1839; poured 1820.

THE EARTH:

The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness!  
The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness,                     \_320  
The vaporous exultation not to be confined!  
Ha! ha! the animation of delight  
Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light,  
And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

THE MOON:

Brother mine, calm wanderer,   \_325  
Happy globe of land and air,  
Some Spirit is darted like a beam from thee,  
Which penetrates my frozen frame,  
And passes with the warmth of flame,  
With love, and odour, and deep melody                             \_330  
Through me, through me!

THE EARTH:

Ha! ha! the caverns of my hollow mountains,  
My cloven fire-crags, sound-exulting fountains  
Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter.  
The oceans, and the deserts, and the abysses,                     \_335  
And the deep air's unmeasured wildernesses,  
Answer from all their clouds and billows, echoing after.

They cry aloud as I do. Sceptred curse,  
Who all our green and azure universe  
Threatenedst to muffle round with black destruction, sending     \_340  
A solid cloud to rain hot thunderstones,  
And splinter and knead down my children's bones,  
All I bring forth, to one void mass battering and blending,--

Until each crag-like tower, and storied column,  
Palace, and obelisk, and temple solemn,                             \_345  
My imperial mountains crowned with cloud, and snow, and fire,  
My sea-like forests, every blade and blossom  
Which finds a grave or cradle in my bosom,  
Were stamped by thy strong hate into a lifeless mire:

How art thou sunk, withdrawn, covered, drunk up                     \_350  
By thirsty nothing, as the brackish cup  
Drained by a desert-troop, a little drop for all;  
And from beneath, around, within, above,  
Filling thy void annihilation, love  
Bursts in like light on caves cloven by the thunder-ball.         \_355

NOTES:

\_335-336 the abysses, And 1820, 1839; the abysses Of B.  
\_355 the omitted 1820.

THE MOON:

The snow upon my lifeless mountains



Is loosened into living fountains,  
My solid oceans flow, and sing and shine:  
A spirit from my heart bursts forth,  
It clothes with unexpected birth                    \_360  
My cold bare bosom: Oh! it must be thine  
On mine, on mine!

Gazing on thee I feel, I know  
Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers grow,  
And living shapes upon my bosom move:                    \_365  
Music is in the sea and air,  
Winged clouds soar here and there,  
Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of:  
'Tis love, all love!

THE EARTH:  
It interpenetrates my granite mass,                    \_370  
Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass  
Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers;  
Upon the winds, among the clouds 'tis spread,  
It wakes a life in the forgotten dead,  
They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest bowers.                    \_375

And like a storm bursting its cloudy prison  
With thunder, and with whirlwind, has arisen  
Out of the lammless caves of unimagined being:  
With earthquake shock and swiftness making shiver  
Thought's stagnant chaos, unremoved for ever,                    \_380  
Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-vanquished shadows, fleeing,

Leave Man, who was a many-sided mirror,  
Which could distort to many a shape of error,  
This true fair world of things, a sea reflecting love;  
Which over all his kind, as the sun's heaven                    \_385  
Gliding o'er ocean, smooth, serene, and even,  
Darting from starry depths radiance and life, doth move:

Leave Man, even as a leprous child is left,  
Who follows a sick beast to some warm cleft  
Of rocks, through which the might of healing springs is poured;                    \_390  
Then when it wanders home with rosy smile,  
Unconscious, and its mother fears awhile  
It is a spirit, then, weeps on her child restored.

Man, oh, not men! a chain of linked thought,  
Of love and might to be divided not,                    \_395  
Compelling the elements with adamant stress;  
As the sun rules, even with a tyrant's gaze,  
The unquiet republic of the maze  
Of planets, struggling fierce towards heaven's free wilderness.

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,                    \_400  
Whose nature is its own divine control,

Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea;  
Familiar acts are beautiful through love;  
Labour, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove  
Sport like tame beasts, none knew how gentle they could be!     \_405

His will, with all mean passions, bad delights,  
And selfish cares, its trembling satellites,  
A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,  
Is as a tempest-winged ship, whose helm  
Love rules, through waves which dare not overwhelm,     \_410  
Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign sway.

All things confess his strength. Through the cold mass  
Of marble and of colour his dreams pass;  
Bright threads whence mothers weave the robes their children wear;  
Language is a perpetual Orphic song,     \_415  
Which rules with Daedal harmony a throng  
Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and shapeless were.

The lightning is his slave; heaven's utmost deep  
Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep  
They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on!     \_420  
The tempest is his steed, he strides the air;  
And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare,  
Heaven, hast thou secrets? Man unveils me; I have none.

NOTE:

\_387 life B; light 1820.

THE MOON:

The shadow of white death has passed  
From my path in heaven at last,     \_425  
A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep;  
And through my newly-woven bowers,  
Wander happy paramours,  
Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep  
Thy vales more deep.     \_430

THE EARTH:

As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold  
A half unfrozen dew-globe, green, and gold,  
And crystalline, till it becomes a winged mist,  
And wanders up the vault of the blue day,  
Outlives the noon, and on the sun's last ray     \_435  
Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

NOTE:

\_432 unfrozen B, edition 1839; infrozen 1820.

THE MOON:

Thou art folded, thou art lying  
In the light which is undying  
Of thine own joy, and heaven's smile divine;

All suns and constellations shower                      \_440  
On thee a light, a life, a power  
Which doth array thy sphere; thou pourest thine  
On mine, on mine!

#### THE EARTH:

I spin beneath my pyramid of night,  
Which points into the heavens dreaming delight,                      \_445  
Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep;  
As a youth lulled in love-dreams faintly sighing,  
Under the shadow of his beauty lying,  
Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth doth keep.

#### THE MOON:

As in the soft and sweet eclipse,                      \_450  
When soul meets soul on lovers' lips,  
High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull;  
So when thy shadow falls on me,  
Then am I mute and still, by thee  
Covered; of thy love, Orb most beautiful,                      \_455  
Full, oh, too full!

Thou art speeding round the sun  
Brightest world of many a one;  
Green and azure sphere which shinest  
With a light which is divinest                      \_460  
Among all the lamps of Heaven  
To whom life and light is given;  
I, thy crystal paramour  
Borne beside thee by a power  
Like the polar Paradise,                      \_465  
Magnet-like of lovers' eyes;  
I, a most enamoured maiden  
Whose weak brain is overladen  
With the pleasure of her love,  
Maniac-like around thee move  
Gazing, an insatiate bride,                      \_470  
On thy form from every side  
Like a Maenad, round the cup  
Which Agave lifted up  
In the weird Cadmaean forest.                      \_475  
Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest  
I must hurry, whirl and follow  
Through the heavens wide and hollow,  
Sheltered by the warm embrace  
Of thy soul from hungry space,                      \_480  
Drinking from thy sense and sight  
Beauty, majesty, and might,  
As a lover or a chameleon  
Grows like what it looks upon,  
As a violet's gentle eye                      \_485  
Gazes on the azure sky  
Until its hue grows like what it beholds,

As a gray and watery mist  
Glow like solid amethyst  
Athwart the western mountain it enfolds,                    \_490  
When the sunset sleeps  
Upon its snow--

THE EARTH:

And the weak day weeps  
That it should be so.  
Oh, gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight                    \_495  
Falls on me like thy clear and tender light  
Soothing the seaman, borne the summer night,  
Through isles for ever calm;  
Oh, gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce  
The caverns of my pride's deep universe,                    \_500  
Charming the tiger joy, whose trappings fierce  
Made wounds which need thy balm.

PANTHEA:

I rise as from a bath of sparkling water,  
A bath of azure light, among dark rocks,  
Out of the stream of sound.

IONE:

Ah me! sweet sister,    \_505  
The stream of sound has ebbed away from us,  
And you pretend to rise out of its wave,  
Because your words fall like the clear, soft dew  
Shaken from a bathing wood-nymph's limbs and hair.

PANTHEA:

Peace! peace! a mighty Power, which is as darkness,                    \_510  
Is rising out of Earth, and from the sky  
Is showered like night, and from within the air  
Bursts, like eclipse which had been gathered up  
Into the pores of sunlight: the bright visions,  
Wherein the singing spirits rode and shone,                    \_515  
Gleam like pale meteors through a watery night.

IONE:

There is a sense of words upon mine ear.

PANTHEA:

An universal sound like words: Oh, list!

DEMOGORGON:

Thou, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul,  
Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies,                    \_520  
Beautiful orb! gathering as thou dost roll  
The love which paves thy path along the skies:

THE EARTH:

I hear: I am as a drop of dew that dies.

DEMOGORGON:

Thou, Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth  
With wonder, as it gazes upon thee; \_525  
Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift birth  
Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony:

THE MOON:

I hear: I am a leaf shaken by thee!

DEMOGORGON:

Ye Kings of suns and stars, Daemons and Gods,  
Ethereal Dominations, who possess \_530  
Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes  
Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness:

A VOICE FROM ABOVE:

Our great Republic hears: we are blest, and bless.

DEMOGORGON:

Ye happy Dead, whom beams of brightest verse  
Are clouds to hide, not colours to portray, \_535  
Whether your nature is that universe  
Which once ye saw and suffered--

A VOICE: FROM BENEATH:

Or as they  
Whom we have left, we change and pass away.

DEMOGORGON:

Ye elemental Genii, who have homes  
From man's high mind even to the central stone \_540  
Of sullen lead; from heaven's star-fretted domes  
To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on:

A CONFUSED VOICE:

We hear: thy words waken Oblivion.

DEMOGORGON:

Spirits, whose homes are flesh; ye beasts and birds,  
Ye worms and fish; ye living leaves and buds; \_545  
Lightning and wind; and ye untameable herds,  
Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes:--

NOTE:

\_547 through 1820, 1839; cancelled for feed B.

A VOICE:

Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

DEMOGORGON:

Man, who wert once a despot and a slave;  
A dupe and a deceiver; a decay; \_550

A traveller from the cradle to the grave  
Through the dim night of this immortal day:

ALL:

Speak: thy strong words may never pass away.

DEMOGORGON:

This is the day, which down the void abyss  
At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despotism,            \_555  
And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep:  
Love, from its awful throne of patient power  
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour  
Of dread endurance, from the slippery, steep,  
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs                   \_560  
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,  
These are the seals of that most firm assurance  
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength;  
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,                                 \_565  
Mother of many acts and hours, should free  
The serpent that would clasp her with his length;  
These are the spells by which to reassume  
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;                         \_570  
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;  
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;  
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates  
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;  
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;                         \_575  
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be  
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;  
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory!

NOTES:

\_559 dread B, edition 1839; dead 1820.

\_575 falter B, edition 1839; flatter 1820.

CANCELLED FRAGMENTS OF "PROMETHEUS UNBOUND".

[First printed by Mr. C.D. Locock, "Examination of the Shelley  
Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library", 1903, pages 33-7.]

(following 1.\_37.)

When thou descendst each night with open eyes  
In torture, for a tyrant seldom sleeps,  
Thou never; ...  
...

(following 1.\_195.)

Which thou henceforth art doomed to interweave

...

(following the first two words of 1.\_342.)  
[Of Hell:] I placed it in his choice to be  
The crown, or trampled refuse of the world  
With but one law itself a glorious boon--  
I gave--

...

(following 1.\_707.)  
SECOND SPIRIT:  
I leaped on the wings of the Earth-star damp  
As it rose on the steam of a slaughtered camp--  
The sleeping newt heard not our tramp  
As swift as the wings of fire may pass--  
We threaded the points of long thick grass  
Which hide the green pools of the morass  
But shook a water-serpent's couch  
In a cleft skull, of many such  
The widest; at the meteor's touch  
The snake did seem to see in dream  
Thrones and dungeons overthrown  
Visions how unlike his own...  
'Twas the hope the prophecy  
Which begins and ends in thee

...

(following 2.1.\_110.)  
Lift up thine eyes Panthea--they pierce they burn

PANTHEA:  
Alas! I am consumed--I melt away  
The fire is in my heart--

ASIA:  
Thine eyes burn burn!--  
Hide them within thine hair--

PANTHEA:  
O quench thy lips  
I sink I perish

ASIA:  
Shelter me now--they burn  
It is his spirit in their orbs...my life  
Is ebbing fast--I cannot speak--

PANTHEA:  
Rest, rest!  
Sleep death annihilation pain! aught else

...

(following 2.4.\_27.)

Or looks which tell that while the lips are calm  
And the eyes cold, the spirit weeps within  
Tears like the sanguine sweat of agony;  
...

UNCANCELLED PASSAGE.  
(following 2.5.\_71.)

ASIA:  
You said that spirits spoke, but it was thee  
Sweet sister, for even now thy curved lips  
Tremble as if the sound were dying there  
Not dead

PANTHEA:  
Alas it was Prometheus spoke  
Within me, and I know it must be so  
I mixed my own weak nature with his love  
...And my thoughts  
Are like the many forests of a vale  
Through which the might of whirlwind and of rain  
Had passed--they rest rest through the evening light  
As mine do now in thy beloved smile.

CANCELLED STAGE DIRECTIONS.  
(following 1.\_221.)

[THE SOUND BENEATH AS OF EARTHQUAKE AND THE DRIVING OF WHIRLWINDS--THE  
RAVINE IS SPLIT, AND THE PHANTASM OF JUPITER RISES, SURROUNDED BY  
HEAVY CLOUDS WHICH DART FORTH LIGHTNING.]

(following 1.\_520.)  
[ENTER RUSHING BY GROUPS OF HORRIBLE FORMS; THEY SPEAK AS THEY PASS IN  
CHORUS.]

(following 1.\_552.)  
[A SHADOW PASSES OVER THE SCENE, AND A PIERCING SHRIEK IS HEARD.]

NOTE ON "PROMETHEUS UNBOUND", BY MRS. SHELLEY.

On the 12th of March, 1818, Shelley quitted England, never to return.  
His principal motive was the hope that his health would be improved by  
a milder climate; he suffered very much during the winter previous to  
his emigration, and this decided his vacillating purpose. In December,  
1817, he had written from Marlow to a friend, saying:

'My health has been materially worse. My feelings at intervals are of  
a deadly and torpid kind, or awakened to such a state of unnatural and  
keen excitement that, only to instance the organ of sight, I find the  
very blades of grass and the boughs of distant trees present  
themselves to me with microscopic distinctness. Towards evening I sink  
into a state of lethargy and inanimation, and often remain for hours  
on the sofa between sleep and waking, a prey to the most painful



irritability of thought. Such, with little intermission, is my condition. The hours devoted to study are selected with vigilant caution from among these periods of endurance. It is not for this that I think of travelling to Italy, even if I knew that Italy would relieve me. But I have experienced a decisive pulmonary attack; and although at present it has passed away without any considerable vestige of its existence, yet this symptom sufficiently shows the true nature of my disease to be consumptive. It is to my advantage that this malady is in its nature slow, and, if one is sufficiently alive to its advances, is susceptible of cure from a warm climate. In the event of its assuming any decided shape, IT WOULD BE MY DUTY to go to Italy without delay. It is not mere health, but life, that I should seek, and that not for my own sake--I feel I am capable of trampling on all such weakness; but for the sake of those to whom my life may be a source of happiness, utility, security, and honour, and to some of whom my death might be all that is the reverse.'

In almost every respect his journey to Italy was advantageous. He left behind friends to whom he was attached; but cares of a thousand kinds, many springing from his lavish generosity, crowded round him in his native country, and, except the society of one or two friends, he had no compensation. The climate caused him to consume half his existence in helpless suffering. His dearest pleasure, the free enjoyment of the scenes of Nature, was marred by the same circumstance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Shelley believed that mankind had only to will that there should be no evil, and there would be none. It is not my part in these Notes to notice the arguments that have been urged against this opinion, but to mention the fact that he entertained it, and was indeed attached to it with fervent enthusiasm. That man could be so perfectionized as to be able to expel evil from his own nature, and from the greater part of the creation, was the cardinal point of his system. And the subject he loved best to dwell on was the image of One warring with the Evil Principle, oppressed not only by it, but by all--even the good, who were deluded into considering evil a necessary portion of humanity; a victim full of fortitude and hope and the spirit of triumph emanating from a reliance in the ultimate omnipotence of Good. Such he had depicted in his last poem, when he made Laon the enemy and the victim of tyrants. He now took a more idealized image of the same subject. He followed certain classical authorities in figuring Saturn as the good principle, Jupiter the usurping evil one, and Prometheus as the regenerator, who, unable to bring mankind back to primitive innocence, used knowledge as a weapon to defeat evil, by leading mankind, beyond the state wherein they are sinless through ignorance, to that in which they are virtuous through wisdom. Jupiter punished the temerity of the Titan by chaining him to a rock of Caucasus, and causing a vulture to devour his still-renewed heart. There was a prophecy afloat in heaven portending the fall of Jove, the secret of averting which was known only to Prometheus; and the god offered freedom from torture on condition of its being communicated to him. According to the mythological story, this referred to the offspring of Thetis, who was destined to be greater than his father. Prometheus at last bought pardon for his crime of enriching mankind with his gifts, by revealing the prophecy. Hercules killed the vulture, and set him free; and

Thetis was married to Peleus, the father of Achilles.

Shelley adapted the catastrophe of this story to his peculiar views. The son greater than his father, born of the nuptials of Jupiter and Thetis, was to dethrone Evil, and bring back a happier reign than that of Saturn. Prometheus defies the power of his enemy, and endures centuries of torture; till the hour arrives when Jove, blind to the real event, but darkly guessing that some great good to himself will flow, espouses Thetis. At the moment, the Primal Power of the world drives him from his usurped throne, and Strength, in the person of Hercules, liberates Humanity, typified in Prometheus, from the tortures generated by evil done or suffered. Asia, one of the Oceanides, is the wife of Prometheus--she was, according to other mythological interpretations, the same as Venus and Nature. When the benefactor of mankind is liberated, Nature resumes the beauty of her prime, and is united to her husband, the emblem of the human race, in perfect and happy union. In the Fourth Act, the Poet gives further scope to his imagination, and idealizes the forms of creation--such as we know them, instead of such as they appeared to the Greeks. Maternal Earth, the mighty parent, is superseded by the Spirit of the Earth, the guide of our planet through the realms of sky; while his fair and weaker companion and attendant, the Spirit of the Moon, receives bliss from the annihilation of Evil in the superior sphere.

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

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

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

'In the Greek Shakespeare, Sophocles, we find the image,

Pollas d' odous elthonta phrontidos planois:

a line of almost unfathomable depth of poetry; yet how simple are the images in which it is arrayed!

"Coming to many ways in the wanderings of careful thought."

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

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

In the "Prometheus Unbound", Shelley fulfils the promise quoted from a letter in the Note on the "Revolt of Islam". (While correcting the proof-sheets of that poem, it struck me that the poet had indulged in an exaggerated view of the evils of restored despotism; which, however injurious and degrading, were less openly sanguinary than the triumph of anarchy, such as it appeared in France at the close of the last century. But at this time a book, "Scenes of Spanish Life", translated by Lieutenant Crawford from the German of Dr. Huber, of Rostock, fell into my hands. The account of the triumph of the priests and the serviles, after the French invasion of Spain in 1823, bears a strong and frightful resemblance to some of the descriptions of the massacre of the patriots in the "Revolt of Islam".) The tone of the composition is calmer and more majestic, the poetry more perfect as a whole, and the imagination displayed at once more pleasingly beautiful and more varied and daring. The description of the Hours, as they are seen in the cave of Demogorgon, is an instance of this--it fills the mind as the most charming picture--we long to see an artist at work to bring to our view the

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

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

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

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

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THE CENCI.

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS.

[Composed at Rome and near Leghorn (Villa Valsovano), May-August 5, 1819; published 1820 (spring) by C. & J. Ollier, London. This edition of two hundred and fifty copies was printed in Italy 'because,' writes Shelley to Peacock, September 21, 1819, 'it costs, with all duties and freightage, about half what it would cost in London.' A Table of Errata in Mrs. Shelley's handwriting is printed by Forman in "The Shelley Library", page 91. A second edition, published by Ollier in 1821 (C.H. Reynell, printer), embodies the corrections indicated in this Table. No manuscript of "The Cenci" is known to exist. Our text follows that of the second edition (1821); variations of the first

(Italian) edition, the title-page of which bears date 1819, are given in the footnotes. The text of the "Poetical Works", 1839, 1st and 2nd editions (Mrs. Shelley), follows for the most part that of the editio princeps of 1819.]

#### DEDICATION, TO LEIGH HUNT, ESQ.

My dear friend--

I inscribe with your name, from a distant country, and after an absence whose months have seemed years, this the latest of my literary efforts.

Those writings which I have hitherto published, have been little else than visions which impersonate my own apprehensions of the beautiful and the just. I can also perceive in them the literary defects incidental to youth and impatience; they are dreams of what ought to be, or may be. The drama which I now present to you is a sad reality. I lay aside the presumptuous attitude of an instructor, and am content to paint, with such colours as my own heart furnishes, that which has been.

Had I known a person more highly endowed than yourself with all that it becomes a man to possess, I had solicited for this work the ornament of his name. One more gentle, honourable, innocent and brave; one of more exalted toleration for all who do and think evil, and yet himself more free from evil; one who knows better how to receive, and how to confer a benefit, though he must ever confer far more than he can receive; one of simpler, and, in the highest sense of the word, of purer life and manners I never knew: and I had already been fortunate in friendships when your name was added to the list.

In that patient and irreconcilable enmity with domestic and political tyranny and imposture which the tenor of your life has illustrated, and which, had I health and talents, should illustrate mine, let us, comforting each other in our task, live and die.

All happiness attend you! Your affectionate friend,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

Rome, May 29, 1819.

THE CENCI.

PREFACE.

A manuscript was communicated to me during my travels in Italy, which was copied from the archives of the Cenci Palace at Rome, and contains a detailed account of the horrors which ended in the extinction of one of the noblest and richest families of that city during the

Pontificate of Clement VIII, in the year 1599. The story is, that an old man having spent his life in debauchery and wickedness, conceived at length an implacable hatred towards his children; which showed itself towards one daughter under the form of an incestuous passion, aggravated by every circumstance of cruelty and violence. This daughter, after long and vain attempts to escape from what she considered a perpetual contamination both of body and mind, at length plotted with her mother-in-law and brother to murder their common tyrant. The young maiden, who was urged to this tremendous deed by an impulse which overpowered its horror, was evidently a most gentle and amiable being, a creature formed to adorn and be admired, and thus violently thwarted from her nature by the necessity of circumstance and opinion. The deed was quickly discovered, and, in spite of the most earnest prayers made to the Pope by the highest persons in Rome, the criminals were put to death. The old man had during his life repeatedly bought his pardon from the Pope for capital crimes of the most enormous and unspeakable kind, at the price of a hundred thousand crowns; the death therefore of his victims can scarcely be accounted for by the love of justice. The Pope, among other motives for severity, probably felt that whoever killed the Count Cenci deprived his treasury of a certain and copious source of revenue. (The Papal Government formerly took the most extraordinary precautions against the publicity of facts which offer so tragical a demonstration of its own wickedness and weakness; so that the communication of the manuscript had become, until very lately, a matter of some difficulty.) Such a story, if told so as to present to the reader all the feelings of those who once acted it, their hopes and fears, their confidences and misgivings, their various interests, passions, and opinions, acting upon and with each other, yet all conspiring to one tremendous end, would be as a light to make apparent some of the most dark and secret caverns of the human heart.

On my arrival at Rome I found that the story of the Cenci was a subject not to be mentioned in Italian society without awakening a deep and breathless interest; and that the feelings of the company never failed to incline to a romantic pity for the wrongs, and a passionate exculpation of the horrible deed to which they urged her, who has been mingled two centuries with the common dust. All ranks of people knew the outlines of this history, and participated in the overwhelming interest which it seems to have the magic of exciting in the human heart. I had a copy of Guido's picture of Beatrice which is preserved in the Colonna Palace, and my servant instantly recognized it as the portrait of La Cenci.

This national and universal interest which the story produces and has produced for two centuries and among all ranks of people in a great City, where the imagination is kept for ever active and awake, first suggested to me the conception of its fitness for a dramatic purpose. In fact it is a tragedy which has already received, from its capacity of awakening and sustaining the sympathy of men, approbation and success. Nothing remained as I imagined, but to clothe it to the apprehensions of my countrymen in such language and action as would bring it home to their hearts. The deepest and the sublimest tragic

compositions, King Lear and the two plays in which the tale of Oedipus is told, were stories which already existed in tradition, as matters of popular belief and interest, before Shakspeare and Sophocles made them familiar to the sympathy of all succeeding generations of mankind.

This story of the Cenci is indeed eminently fearful and monstrous: anything like a dry exhibition of it on the stage would be insupportable. The person who would treat such a subject must increase the ideal, and diminish the actual horror of the events, so that the pleasure which arises from the poetry which exists in these tempestuous sufferings and crimes may mitigate the pain of the contemplation of the moral deformity from which they spring. There must also be nothing attempted to make the exhibition subservient to what is vulgarly termed a moral purpose. The highest moral purpose aimed at in the highest species of the drama, is the teaching the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself; in proportion to the possession of which knowledge, every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant and kind. If dogmas can do more, it is well: but a drama is no fit place for the enforcement of them. Undoubtedly, no person can be truly dishonoured by the act of another; and the fit return to make to the most enormous injuries is kindness and forbearance, and a resolution to convert the injurer from his dark passions by peace and love. Revenge, retaliation, atonement, are pernicious mistakes. If Beatrice had thought in this manner she would have been wiser and better; but she would never have been a tragic character: the few whom such an exhibition would have interested, could never have been sufficiently interested for a dramatic purpose, from the want of finding sympathy in their interest among the mass who surround them. It is in the restless and anatomizing casuistry with which men seek the justification of Beatrice, yet feel that she has done what needs justification; it is in the superstitious horror with which they contemplate alike her wrongs and their revenge, that the dramatic character of what she did and suffered, consists.

I have endeavoured as nearly as possible to represent the characters as they probably were, and have sought to avoid the error of making them actuated by my own conceptions of right or wrong, false or true: thus under a thin veil converting names and actions of the sixteenth century into cold impersonations of my own mind. They are represented as Catholics, and as Catholics deeply tinged with religion. To a Protestant apprehension there will appear something unnatural in the earnest and perpetual sentiment of the relations between God and men which pervade the tragedy of the Cenci. It will especially be startled at the combination of an undoubting persuasion of the truth of the popular religion with a cool and determined perseverance in enormous guilt. But religion in Italy is not, as in Protestant countries, a cloak to be worn on particular days; or a passport which those who do not wish to be railed at carry with them to exhibit; or a gloomy passion for penetrating the impenetrable mysteries of our being, which terrifies its possessor at the darkness of the abyss to the brink of which it has conducted him. Religion coexists, as it were, in the mind



of an Italian Catholic, with a faith in that of which all men have the most certain knowledge. It is interwoven with the whole fabric of life. It is adoration, faith, submission, penitence, blind admiration; not a rule for moral conduct. It has no necessary connection with any one virtue. The most atrocious villain may be rigidly devout, and without any shock to established faith, confess himself to be so. Religion pervades intensely the whole frame of society, and is according to the temper of the mind which it inhabits, a passion, a persuasion, an excuse, a refuge; never a check. Cenci himself built a chapel in the court of his Palace, and dedicated it to St. Thomas the Apostle, and established masses for the peace of his soul. Thus in the first scene of the fourth act Lucretia's design in exposing herself to the consequences of an expostulation with Cenci after having administered the opiate, was to induce him by a feigned tale to confess himself before death; this being esteemed by Catholics as essential to salvation; and she only relinquishes her purpose when she perceives that her perseverance would expose Beatrice to new outrages.

I have avoided with great care in writing this play the introduction of what is commonly called mere poetry, and I imagine there will scarcely be found a detached simile or a single isolated description, unless Beatrice's description of the chasm appointed for her father's murder should be judged to be of that nature. (An idea in this speech was suggested by a most sublime passage in "El Purgatorio de San Patricio" of Calderon; the only plagiarism which I have intentionally committed in the whole piece.)

In a dramatic composition the imagery and the passion should interpenetrate one another, the former being reserved simply for the full development and illustration of the latter. Imagination is as the immortal God which should assume flesh for the redemption of mortal passion. It is thus that the most remote and the most familiar imagery may alike be fit for dramatic purposes when employed in the illustration of strong feeling, which raises what is low, and levels to the apprehension that which is lofty, casting over all the shadow of its own greatness. In other respects, I have written more carelessly; that is, without an over-fastidious and learned choice of words. In this respect I entirely agree with those modern critics who assert that in order to move men to true sympathy we must use the familiar language of men, and that our great ancestors the ancient English poets are the writers, a study of whom might incite us to do that for our own age which they have done for theirs. But it must be the real language of men in general and not that of any particular class to whose society the writer happens to belong. So much for what I have attempted; I need not be assured that success is a very different matter; particularly for one whose attention has but newly been awakened to the study of dramatic literature.

I endeavoured whilst at Rome to observe such monuments of this story as might be accessible to a stranger. The portrait of Beatrice at the Colonna Palace is admirable as a work of art: it was taken by Guido during her confinement in prison. But it is most interesting as a just representation of one of the loveliest specimens of the workmanship of

Nature. There is a fixed and pale composure upon the features: she seems sad and stricken down in spirit, yet the despair thus expressed is lightened by the patience of gentleness. Her head is bound with folds of white drapery from which the yellow strings of her golden hair escape, and fall about her neck. The moulding of her face is exquisitely delicate; the eyebrows are distinct and arched: the lips have that permanent meaning of imagination and sensibility which suffering has not repressed and which it seems as if death scarcely could extinguish. Her forehead is large and clear; her eyes, which we are told were remarkable for their vivacity, are swollen with weeping and lustreless, but beautifully tender and serene. In the whole mien there is a simplicity and dignity which, united with her exquisite loveliness and deep sorrow, are inexpressibly pathetic. Beatrice Cenci appears to have been one of those rare persons in whom energy and gentleness dwell together without destroying one another: her nature was simple and profound. The crimes and miseries in which she was an actor and a sufferer are as the mask and the mantle in which circumstances clothed her for her impersonation on the scene of the world.

The Cenci Palace is of great extent; and though in part modernized, there yet remains a vast and gloomy pile of feudal architecture in the same state as during the dreadful scenes which are the subject of this tragedy. The Palace is situated in an obscure corner of Rome, near the quarter of the Jews, and from the upper windows you see the immense ruins of Mount Palatine half hidden under their profuse overgrowth of trees. There is a court in one part of the Palace (perhaps that in which Cenci built the Chapel to St. Thomas), supported by granite columns and adorned with antique friezes of fine workmanship, and built up, according to the ancient Italian fashion, with balcony over balcony of open-work. One of the gates of the Palace formed of immense stones and leading through a passage, dark and lofty and opening into gloomy subterranean chambers, struck me particularly.

Of the Castle of Petrella, I could obtain no further information than that which is to be found in the manuscript.

THE CENCI: A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

COUNT FRANCESCO CENCI.

GIACOMO, BERNARDO, HIS SONS.

CARDINAL CAMILLO.

PRINCE COLONNA.

ORSINO, A PRELATE.

SAVELLA, THE POPE'S LEGATE.

OLIMPIO, MARZIO, ASSASSINS.

ANDREA, SERVANT TO CENCI.

NOBLES. JUDGES. GUARDS, SERVANTS.

LUCRETIA, WIFE OF CENCI AND STEP-MOTHER OF HIS CHILDREN.

BEATRICE, HIS DAUGHTER.

THE SCENE LIES PRINCIPALLY IN ROME, BUT CHANGES DURING THE FOURTH ACT TO PETRELLA, A CASTLE AMONG THE APULIAN APENNINES.

TIME. DURING THE PONTIFICATE OF CLEMENT VIII.

ACT 1.

SCENE 1.1:

AN APARTMENT IN THE CENCI PALACE.

ENTER COUNT CENCI AND CARDINAL CAMILLO.

CAMILLO:

That matter of the murder is hushed up  
If you consent to yield his Holiness  
Your fief that lies beyond the Pincian gate.--  
It needed all my interest in the conclave  
To bend him to this point; he said that you                    \_5  
Bought perilous impunity with your gold;  
That crimes like yours if once or twice compounded  
Enriched the Church, and respited from hell  
An erring soul which might repent and live: --  
But that the glory and the interest                                \_10  
Of the high throne he fills, little consist  
With making it a daily mart of guilt  
As manifold and hideous as the deeds  
Which you scarce hide from men's revolted eyes.

CENCI:

The third of my possessions--let it go!                                \_15  
Ay, I once heard the nephew of the Pope  
Had sent his architect to view the ground,  
Meaning to build a villa on my vines  
The next time I compounded with his uncle:  
I little thought he should outwit me so!                                \_20  
Henceforth no witness--not the lamp--shall see  
That which the vassal threatened to divulge  
Whose throat is choked with dust for his reward.  
The deed he saw could not have rated higher  
Than his most worthless life:--it angers me!                                \_25  
Respited me from Hell! So may the Devil  
Respite their souls from Heaven! No doubt Pope Clement,  
And his most charitable nephews, pray  
That the Apostle Peter and the Saints  
Will grant for their sake that I long enjoy                                \_30  
Strength, wealth, and pride, and lust, and length of days  
Wherein to act the deeds which are the stewards  
Of their revenue.--But much yet remains  
To which they show no title.

CAMILLO:

Oh, Count Cenci!  
So much that thou mightst honourably live                    \_35  
And reconcile thyself with thine own heart  
And with thy God, and with the offended world.  
How hideously look deeds of lust and blood  
Through those snow white and venerable hairs!--  
Your children should be sitting round you now,            \_40  
But that you fear to read upon their looks  
The shame and misery you have written there.  
Where is your wife? Where is your gentle daughter?  
Methinks her sweet looks, which make all things else  
Beauteous and glad, might kill the fiend within you.    \_45  
Why is she barred from all society  
But her own strange and uncomplaining wrongs?  
Talk with me, Count,--you know I mean you well.  
I stood beside your dark and fiery youth  
Watching its bold and bad career, as men                   \_50  
Watch meteors, but it vanished not--I marked  
Your desperate and remorseless manhood; now  
Do I behold you in dishonoured age  
Charged with a thousand unrepented crimes.  
Yet I have ever hoped you would amend,                   \_55  
And in that hope have saved your life three times.

CENCI:  
For which Aldobrandino owes you now  
My fief beyond the Pincian.--Cardinal,  
One thing, I pray you, recollect henceforth,  
And so we shall converse with less restraint.               \_60  
A man you knew spoke of my wife and daughter--  
He was accustomed to frequent my house;  
So the next day HIS wife and daughter came  
And asked if I had seen him; and I smiled:  
I think they never saw him any more.                    \_65

CAMILLO:  
Thou execrable man, beware!--

CENCI:  
Of thee?  
Nay, this is idle: --We should know each other.  
As to my character for what men call crime  
Seeing I please my senses as I list,  
And vindicate that right with force or guile,             \_70  
It is a public matter, and I care not  
If I discuss it with you. I may speak  
Alike to you and my own conscious heart--  
For you give out that you have half reformed me,  
Therefore strong vanity will keep you silent             \_75  
If fear should not; both will, I do not doubt.  
All men delight in sensual luxury,  
All men enjoy revenge; and most exult  
Over the tortures they can never feel--

Flattering their secret peace with others' pain.                    \_80  
But I delight in nothing else. I love  
The sight of agony, and the sense of joy,  
When this shall be another's, and that mine.  
And I have no remorse and little fear,  
Which are, I think, the checks of other men.                    \_85  
This mood has grown upon me, until now  
Any design my captious fancy makes  
The picture of its wish, and it forms none  
But such as men like you would start to know,  
Is as my natural food and rest debarred                         \_90  
Until it be accomplished.

CAMILLO:  
Art thou not  
Most miserable?

CENCI:  
Why miserable?--  
No.--I am what your theologians call  
Hardened;--which they must be in impudence,  
So to revile a man's peculiar taste.                             \_95  
True, I was happier than I am, while yet  
Manhood remained to act the thing I thought;  
While lust was sweeter than revenge; and now  
Invention palls:--Ay, we must all grow old--  
And but that there remains a deed to act                         \_100  
Whose horror might make sharp an appetite  
Duller than mine--I'd do,--I know not what.  
When I was young I thought of nothing else  
But pleasure; and I fed on honey sweets:  
Men, by St. Thomas! cannot live like bees,                     \_105  
And I grew tired:--yet, till I killed a foe,  
And heard his groans, and heard his children's groans,  
Knew I not what delight was else on earth,  
Which now delights me little. I the rather  
Look on such pangs as terror ill conceals,                     \_110  
The dry fixed eyeball; the pale, quivering lip,  
Which tell me that the spirit weeps within  
Tears bitterer than the bloody sweat of Christ.  
I rarely kill the body, which preserves,  
Like a strong prison, the soul within my power,                 \_115  
Wherein I feed it with the breath of fear  
For hourly pain.

NOTE:  
\_100 And but that edition 1821; But that editions 1819, 1839.

CAMILLO:  
Hell's most abandoned fiend  
Did never, in the drunkenness of guilt,  
Speak to his heart as now you speak to me;  
I thank my God that I believe you not.                         \_120

[ENTER ANDREA.]

ANDREA:

My Lord, a gentleman from Salamanca  
Would speak with you.

CENCI:

Bid him attend me  
In the grand saloon.

[EXIT ANDREA.]

CAMILLO:

Farewell; and I will pray  
Almighty God that thy false, impious words  
Tempt not his spirit to abandon thee. \_125

[EXIT CAMILLO.]

CENCI:

The third of my possessions! I must use  
Close husbandry, or gold, the old man's sword,  
Falls from my withered hand. But yesterday  
There came an order from the Pope to make  
Fourfold provision for my cursed sons; \_130  
Whom I had sent from Rome to Salamanca,  
Hoping some accident might cut them off;  
And meaning if I could to starve them there.  
I pray thee, God, send some quick death upon them!  
Bernardo and my wife could not be worse \_135  
If dead and damned:--then, as to Beatrice--  
[LOOKING AROUND HIM SUSPICIOUSLY.]  
I think they cannot hear me at that door;  
What if they should? And yet I need not speak  
Though the heart triumphs with itself in words.  
O, thou most silent air, that shalt not hear \_140  
What now I think! Thou, pavement, which I tread  
Towards her chamber,--let your echoes talk  
Of my imperious step scorning surprise,  
But not of my intent!--Andrea!

NOTES:

\_131 Whom I had edition 1821; Whom I have editions 1819, 1839.

\_140 that shalt edition 1821; that shall editions 1819, 1839.

[ENTER ANDREA.]

ANDREA:

My lord?

CENCI:

Bid Beatrice attend me in her chamber \_145

This evening;--no, at midnight and alone.

[EXEUNT.]

SCENE 1.2:

A GARDEN OF THE CENCI PALACE.

ENTER BEATRICE AND ORSINO, AS IN CONVERSATION.

BEATRICE:

Pervert not truth,  
Orsino. You remember where we held  
That conversation;--nay, we see the spot  
Even from this cypress;--two long years are past  
Since, on an April midnight, underneath \_5  
The moonlight ruins of Mount Palatine,  
I did confess to you my secret mind.

ORSINO:

You said you loved me then.

BEATRICE:

You are a Priest.  
Speak to me not of love.

ORSINO:

I may obtain  
The dispensation of the Pope to marry. \_10  
Because I am a Priest do you believe  
Your image, as the hunter some struck deer,  
Follows me not whether I wake or sleep?

BEATRICE:

As I have said, speak to me not of love;  
Had you a dispensation I have not; \_15  
Nor will I leave this home of misery  
Whilst my poor Bernard, and that gentle lady  
To whom I owe life, and these virtuous thoughts,  
Must suffer what I still have strength to share.  
Alas, Orsino! All the love that once \_20  
I felt for you, is turned to bitter pain.  
Ours was a youthful contract, which you first  
Broke, by assuming vows no Pope will loose.  
And thus I love you still, but holily,  
Even as a sister or a spirit might; \_25  
And so I swear a cold fidelity.  
And it is well perhaps we shall not marry.  
You have a sly, equivocating vein  
That suits me not.--Ah, wretched that I am!  
Where shall I turn? Even now you look on me \_30  
As you were not my friend, and as if you  
Discovered that I thought so, with false smiles  
Making my true suspicion seem your wrong.  
Ah, no! forgive me; sorrow makes me seem





Then as to what she suffers from her father,  
 In all this there is much exaggeration:--  
 Old men are testy and will have their way;  
 A man may stab his enemy, or his vassal,                     \_75  
 And live a free life as to wine or women,  
 And with a peevish temper may return  
 To a dull home, and rate his wife and children;  
 Daughters and wives call this foul tyranny.  
 I shall be well content if on my conscience                     \_80  
 There rest no heavier sin than what they suffer  
 From the devices of my love--a net  
 From which he shall escape not. Yet I fear  
 Her subtle mind, her awe-inspiring gaze,  
 Whose beams anatomize me nerve by nerve                     \_85  
 And lay me bare, and make me blush to see  
 My hidden thoughts.--Ah, no! A friendless girl  
 Who clings to me, as to her only hope:--  
 I were a fool, not less than if a panther  
 Were panic-stricken by the antelope's eye,                     \_90  
 If she escape me.

NOTE:

\_75 vassal edition 1821; slave edition 1819.

[EXIT.]

SCENE 1.3:

A MAGNIFICENT HALL IN THE CENCI PALACE.

A BANQUET.

ENTER CENCI, LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, ORSINO, CAMILLO, NOBLES.

CENCI:

Welcome, my friends and kinsmen; welcome ye,  
 Princes and Cardinals, pillars of the church,  
 Whose presence honours our festivity.  
 I have too long lived like an anchorite,  
 And in my absence from your merry meetings                     \_5  
 An evil word is gone abroad of me;  
 But I do hope that you, my noble friends,  
 When you have shared the entertainment here,  
 And heard the pious cause for which 'tis given,  
 And we have pledged a health or two together,                     \_10  
 Will think me flesh and blood as well as you;  
 Sinful indeed, for Adam made all so,  
 But tender-hearted, meek and pitiful.

FIRST GUEST:

In truth, my Lord, you seem too light of heart,  
 Too sprightly and companionable a man,                     \_15  
 To act the deeds that rumour pins on you.  
 [TO HIS COMPANION.]  
 I never saw such blithe and open cheer  
 In any eye!

SECOND GUEST:

Some most desired event,  
In which we all demand a common joy,  
Has brought us hither; let us hear it, Count.                     \_20

CENCI:

It is indeed a most desired event.  
If when a parent from a parent's heart  
Lifts from this earth to the great Father of all  
A prayer, both when he lays him down to sleep,  
And when he rises up from dreaming it;                     \_25  
One supplication, one desire, one hope,  
That he would grant a wish for his two sons,  
Even all that he demands in their regard--  
And suddenly beyond his dearest hope  
It is accomplished, he should then rejoice,                     \_30  
And call his friends and kinsmen to a feast,  
And task their love to grace his merriment,--  
Then honour me thus far--for I am he.

BEATRICE [TO LUCRETIA]:

Great God! How horrible! some dreadful ill  
Must have befallen my brothers.

LUCRETIA:

Fear not, child,                     \_35  
He speaks too frankly.

BEATRICE:

Ah! My blood runs cold.  
I fear that wicked laughter round his eye,  
Which wrinkles up the skin even to the hair.

CENCI:

Here are the letters brought from Salamanca;  
Beatrice, read them to your mother. God!                     \_40  
I thank thee! In one night didst thou perform,  
By ways inscrutable, the thing I sought.  
My disobedient and rebellious sons  
Are dead!--Why, dead!--What means this change of cheer?  
You hear me not, I tell you they are dead;                     \_45  
And they will need no food or raiment more:  
The tapers that did light them the dark way  
Are their last cost. The Pope, I think, will not  
Expect I should maintain them in their coffins.  
Rejoice with me--my heart is wondrous glad.                     \_50

[LUCRETIA SINKS, HALF FAINTING; BEATRICE SUPPORTS HER.]

BEATRICE :

It is not true!--Dear Lady, pray look up.  
Had it been true, there is a God in Heaven,

He would not live to boast of such a boon.  
Unnatural man, thou knowest that it is false.

CENCI:

Ay, as the word of God; whom here I call                         \_55  
To witness that I speak the sober truth;--  
And whose most favouring Providence was shown  
Even in the manner of their deaths. For Rocco  
Was kneeling at the mass, with sixteen others,  
When the church fell and crushed him to a mummy,             \_60  
The rest escaped unhurt. Cristofano  
Was stabbed in error by a jealous man,  
Whilst she he loved was sleeping with his rival;  
All in the self-same hour of the same night;  
Which shows that Heaven has special care of me.             \_65  
I beg those friends who love me, that they mark  
The day a feast upon their calendars.  
It was the twenty-seventh of December:  
Ay, read the letters if you doubt my oath.

[THE ASSEMBLY APPEARS CONFUSED; SEVERAL OF THE GUESTS RISE.]

FIRST GUEST:

Oh, horrible! I will depart--

SECOND GUEST:

And I.--

THIRD GUEST:

No, stay!   \_70  
I do believe it is some jest; though faith!  
'Tis mocking us somewhat too solemnly.  
I think his son has married the Infanta,  
Or found a mine of gold in El Dorado.  
'Tis but to season some such news; stay, stay!                 \_75  
I see 'tis only raillery by his smile.

CENCI [FILLING A BOWL OF WINE, AND LIFTING IT UP]:

Oh, thou bright wine whose purple splendour leaps  
And bubbles gaily in this golden bowl  
Under the lamplight, as my spirits do,  
To hear the death of my accursed sons!                             \_80  
Could I believe thou wert their mingled blood,  
Then would I taste thee like a sacrament,  
And pledge with thee the mighty Devil in Hell,  
Who, if a father's curses, as men say,  
Climb with swift wings after their children's souls,             \_85  
And drag them from the very throne of Heaven,  
Now triumphs in my triumph!--But thou art  
Superfluous; I have drunken deep of joy,  
And I will taste no other wine to-night.  
Here, Andrea! Bear the bowl around.

A GUEST [RISING]:

Thou wretch! \_90  
Will none among this noble company  
Check the abandoned villain?

CAMILLO:

For God's sake,  
Let me dismiss the guests! You are insane,  
Some ill will come of this.

SECOND GUEST:

Seize, silence him!

FIRST GUEST:

I will!

THIRD GUEST:

And !!

CENCI [ADDRESSING THOSE WHO RISE WITH A THREATENING GESTURE]:

Who moves? Who speaks?

[TURNING TO THE COMPANY.]

'tis nothing, \_95  
Enjoy yourselves.--Beware! For my revenge  
Is as the sealed commission of a king  
That kills, and none dare name the murderer.

[THE BANQUET IS BROKEN UP; SEVERAL OF THE GUESTS ARE DEPARTING.]

BEATRICE:

I do entreat you, go not, noble guests;  
What, although tyranny and impious hate \_100  
Stand sheltered by a father's hoary hair?  
What if 'tis he who clothed us in these limbs  
Who tortures them, and triumphs? What, if we,  
The desolate and the dead, were his own flesh,  
His children and his wife, whom he is bound \_105  
To love and shelter? Shall we therefore find  
No refuge in this merciless wide world?  
O think what deep wrongs must have blotted out  
First love, then reverence in a child's prone mind,  
Till it thus vanquish shame and fear! O think! \_110  
I have borne much, and kissed the sacred hand  
Which crushed us to the earth, and thought its stroke  
Was perhaps some paternal chastisement!  
Have excused much, doubted; and when no doubt  
Remained, have sought by patience, love, and tears \_115  
To soften him, and when this could not be  
I have knelt down through the long sleepless nights  
And lifted up to God, the Father of all,  
Passionate prayers: and when these were not heard  
I have still borne,--until I meet you here, \_120  
Princes and kinsmen, at this hideous feast

Given at my brothers' deaths. Two yet remain,  
His wife remains and I, whom if ye save not,  
Ye may soon share such merriment again  
As fathers make over their children's graves.                     \_125  
O Prince Colonna, thou art our near kinsman,  
Cardinal, thou art the Pope's chamberlain,  
Camillo, thou art chief justiciary,  
Take us away!

CENCI [HE HAS BEEN CONVERSING WITH CAMILLO DURING THE FIRST PART OF  
BEATRICE'S SPEECH; HE HEARS THE CONCLUSION, AND NOW ADVANCES]:

I hope my good friends here  
Will think of their own daughters--or perhaps                     \_130  
Of their own throats--before they lend an ear  
To this wild girl.

BEATRICE [NOT NOTICING THE WORDS OF CENCI]:

Dare no one look on me?  
None answer? Can one tyrant overbear  
The sense of many best and wisest men?  
Or is it that I sue not in some form                             \_135  
Of scrupulous law, that ye deny my suit?  
O God! That I were buried with my brothers!  
And that the flowers of this departed spring  
Were fading on my grave! And that my father  
Were celebrating now one feast for all!                             \_140

NOTE:

\_132 no edition 1821; not edition 1819.

CAMILLO:

A bitter wish for one so young and gentle.  
Can we do nothing?

COLONNA:

Nothing that I see.  
Count Cenci were a dangerous enemy:  
Yet I would second any one.

A CARDINAL:

And I.

CENCI:

Retire to your chamber, insolent girl!                             \_145

BEATRICE:

Retire thou, impious man! Ay, hide thyself  
Where never eye can look upon thee more!  
Wouldst thou have honour and obedience  
Who art a torturer? Father, never dream,  
Though thou mayst overbear this company,                             \_150  
But ill must come of ill.--Frown not on me!  
Haste, hide thyself, lest with avenging looks

My brothers' ghosts should hunt thee from thy seat!  
Cover thy face from every living eye,  
And start if thou but hear a human step:                    \_155  
Seek out some dark and silent corner, there,  
Bow thy white head before offended God,  
And we will kneel around, and fervently  
Pray that he pity both ourselves and thee.

CENCI:  
My friends, I do lament this insane girl                    \_160  
Has spoiled the mirth of our festivity.  
Good night, farewell; I will not make you longer  
Spectators of our dull domestic quarrels.  
Another time.--

[EXEUNT ALL BUT CENCI AND BEATRICE.]  
My brain is swimming round;  
Give me a bowl of wine!  
[TO BEATRICE.]  
Thou painted viper!   \_165  
Beast that thou art! Fair and yet terrible!  
I know a charm shall make thee meek and tame,  
Now get thee from my sight!

[EXIT BEATRICE.]  
Here, Andrea,  
Fill up this goblet with Greek wine. I said  
I would not drink this evening; but I must;                   \_170  
For, strange to say, I feel my spirits fail  
With thinking what I have decreed to do.--

[DRINKING THE WINE.]  
Be thou the resolution of quick youth  
Within my veins, and manhood's purpose stern,  
And age's firm, cold, subtle villainy;                       \_175  
As if thou wert indeed my children's blood  
Which I did thirst to drink! The charm works well;  
It must be done; it shall be done, I swear!

[EXIT.]

END OF ACT 1.

ACT 2.

SCENE 2.1:  
AN APARTMENT IN THE CENCI PALACE.  
ENTER LUCRETIA AND BERNARDO.

LUCRETIA:  
Weep not, my gentle boy; he struck but me  
Who have borne deeper wrongs. In truth, if he  
Had killed me, he had done a kinder deed.  
O God Almighty, do Thou look upon us,  
We have no other friend but only Thee!                       \_5

Yet weep not; though I love you as my own,  
I am not your true mother.

BERNARDO:

Oh, more, more,  
Than ever mother was to any child,  
That have you been to me! Had he not been  
My father, do you think that I should weep! \_10

LUCRETIA:

Alas! Poor boy, what else couldst thou have done?

[ENTER BEATRICE.]

BEATRICE [IN A HURRIED VOICE]:

Did he pass this way? Have you seen him, brother?  
Ah, no! that is his step upon the stairs;  
'Tis nearer now; his hand is on the door;  
Mother, if I to thee have ever been \_15  
A duteous child, now save me! Thou, great God,  
Whose image upon earth a father is,  
Dost thou indeed abandon me? He comes;  
The door is opening now; I see his face;  
He frowns on others, but he smiles on me, \_20  
Even as he did after the feast last night.

[ENTER A SERVANT.]

Almighty God, how merciful Thou art!  
'Tis but Orsino's servant.--Well, what news?

SERVANT:

My master bids me say, the Holy Father  
Has sent back your petition thus unopened. \_25  
[GIVING A PAPER.]  
And he demands at what hour 'twere secure  
To visit you again?

LUCRETIA:

At the Ave Mary.  
[EXIT SERVANT.]  
So, daughter, our last hope has failed. Ah me!  
How pale you look; you tremble, and you stand  
Wrapped in some fixed and fearful meditation, \_30  
As if one thought were over strong for you:  
Your eyes have a chill glare; O, dearest child!  
Are you gone mad? If not, pray speak to me.

BEATRICE:

You see I am not mad: I speak to you.

LUCRETIA:

You talked of something that your father did \_35  
After that dreadful feast? Could it be worse  
Than when he smiled, and cried, 'My sons are dead!'

And every one looked in his neighbour's face  
To see if others were as white as he?  
At the first word he spoke I felt the blood                    \_40  
Rush to my heart, and fell into a trance;  
And when it passed I sat all weak and wild;  
Whilst you alone stood up, and with strong words  
Checked his unnatural pride; and I could see  
The devil was rebuked that lives in him.                    \_45  
Until this hour thus you have ever stood  
Between us and your father's moody wrath  
Like a protecting presence; your firm mind  
Has been our only refuge and defence:  
What can have thus subdued it? What can now                    \_50  
Have given you that cold melancholy look,  
Succeeding to your unaccustomed fear?

BEATRICE:

What is it that you say? I was just thinking  
'Twere better not to struggle any more.  
Men, like my father, have been dark and bloody,                    \_55  
Yet never--Oh! Before worse comes of it  
'Twere wise to die: it ends in that at last.

LUCRETIA:

Oh, talk not so, dear child! Tell me at once  
What did your father do or say to you?  
He stayed not after that accursed feast                    \_60  
One moment in your chamber.--Speak to me.

BERNARDO:

Oh, sister, sister, prithee, speak to us!

BEATRICE [SPEAKING VERY SLOWLY, WITH A FORCED CALMNESS]:

It was one word, Mother, one little word;  
One look, one smile.  
[WILDLY.]  
Oh! He has trampled me  
Under his feet, and made the blood stream down                    \_65  
My pallid cheeks. And he has given us all  
Ditch-water, and the fever-stricken flesh  
Of buffaloes, and bade us eat or starve,  
And we have eaten.--He has made me look  
On my beloved Bernardo, when the rust                    \_70  
Of heavy chains has gangrened his sweet limbs,  
And I have never yet despaired--but now!  
What could I say?  
[RECOVERING HERSELF.]  
Ah, no! 'tis nothing new.  
The sufferings we all share have made me wild:  
He only struck and cursed me as he passed;                    \_75  
He said, he looked, he did;--nothing at all  
Beyond his wont, yet it disordered me.  
Alas! I am forgetful of my duty,



I should preserve my senses for your sake.

LUCRETIA:

Nay, Beatrice; have courage, my sweet girl. \_80  
If any one despairs it should be I  
Who loved him once, and now must live with him  
Till God in pity call for him or me.  
For you may, like your sister, find some husband,  
And smile, years hence, with children round your knees; \_85  
Whilst I, then dead, and all this hideous coil  
Shall be remembered only as a dream.

BEATRICE:

Talk not to me, dear lady, of a husband.  
Did you not nurse me when my mother died?  
Did you not shield me and that dearest boy? \_90  
And had we any other friend but you  
In infancy, with gentle words and looks,  
To win our father not to murder us?  
And shall I now desert you? May the ghost  
Of my dead Mother plead against my soul \_95  
If I abandon her who filled the place  
She left, with more, even, than a mother's love!

BERNARDO:

And I am of my sister's mind. Indeed  
I would not leave you in this wretchedness,  
Even though the Pope should make me free to live \_100  
In some blithe place, like others of my age,  
With sports, and delicate food, and the fresh air.  
Oh, never think that I will leave you, Mother!

LUCRETIA:

My dear, dear children!

[ENTER CENCI, SUDDENLY.]

CENCI:

What! Beatrice here!

Come hither!

[SHE SHRINKS BACK, AND COVERS HER FACE.]

Nay, hide not your face, 'tis fair; \_105  
Look up! Why, yesternight you dared to look  
With disobedient insolence upon me,  
Bending a stern and an inquiring brow  
On what I meant; whilst I then sought to hide  
That which I came to tell you--but in vain. \_110

BEATRICE [WILDLY STAGGERING TOWARDS THE DOOR]:

Oh, that the earth would gape! Hide me, O God!

CENCI:

Then it was I whose inarticulate words

Fell from my lips, and who with tottering steps  
Fled from your presence, as you now from mine.  
Stay, I command you--from this day and hour \_115

Never again, I think, with fearless eye,  
And brow superior, and unaltered cheek,  
And that lip made for tenderness or scorn,  
Shalt thou strike dumb the meanest of mankind;  
Me least of all. Now get thee to thy chamber! \_120

Thou too, loathed image of thy cursed mother,  
[TO BERNARDO.]

Thy milky, meek face makes me sick with hate!  
[EXEUNT BEATRICE AND BERNARDO.]  
[ASIDE.]

So much has passed between us as must make  
Me bold, her fearful.--'Tis an awful thing  
To touch such mischief as I now conceive: \_125  
So men sit shivering on the dewy bank,  
And try the chill stream with their feet; once in...  
How the delighted spirit pants for joy!

LUCRETIA [ADVANCING TIMIDLY TOWARDS HIM]:  
O husband! Pray forgive poor Beatrice.  
She meant not any ill.

CENCI:  
Nor you perhaps? \_130  
Nor that young imp, whom you have taught by rote  
Parricide with his alphabet? Nor Giacomo?  
Nor those two most unnatural sons, who stirred  
Enmity up against me with the Pope?  
Whom in one night merciful God cut off: \_135  
Innocent lambs! They thought not any ill.  
You were not here conspiring? You said nothing  
Of how I might be dungeoned as a madman;  
Or be condemned to death for some offence,  
And you would be the witnesses?--This failing, \_140  
How just it were to hire assassins, or  
Put sudden poison in my evening drink?  
Or smother me when overcome by wine?  
Seeing we had no other judge but God,  
And He had sentenced me, and there were none \_145  
But you to be the executioners  
Of His decree enregistered in heaven?  
Oh, no! You said not this?

LUCRETIA:  
So help me God,  
I never thought the things you charge me with!

CENCI:  
If you dare to speak that wicked lie again \_150  
I'll kill you. What! It was not by your counsel  
That Beatrice disturbed the feast last night?

You did not hope to stir some enemies  
Against me, and escape, and laugh to scorn  
What every nerve of you now trembles at? \_155  
You judged that men were bolder than they are;  
Few dare to stand between their grave and me.

LUCRETIA:

Look not so dreadfully! By my salvation  
I knew not aught that Beatrice designed;  
Nor do I think she designed any thing \_160  
Until she heard you talk of her dead brothers.

CENCI:

Blaspheming liar! You are damned for this!  
But I will take you where you may persuade  
The stones you tread on to deliver you:  
For men shall there be none but those who dare \_165  
All things--not question that which I command.  
On Wednesday next I shall set out: you know  
That savage rock, the Castle of Petrella:  
'Tis safely walled, and moated round about:  
Its dungeons underground, and its thick towers \_170  
Never told tales; though they have heard and seen  
What might make dumb things speak.--Why do you linger?  
Make speediest preparation for the journey!

[EXIT LUCRETIA.]

The all-beholding sun yet shines; I hear  
A busy stir of men about the streets; \_175  
I see the bright sky through the window panes:  
It is a garish, broad, and peering day;  
Loud, light, suspicious, full of eyes and ears,  
And every little corner, nook, and hole  
Is penetrated with the insolent light. \_180  
Come darkness! Yet, what is the day to me?  
And wherefore should I wish for night, who do  
A deed which shall confound both night and day?  
'Tis she shall grope through a bewildering mist  
Of horror: if there be a sun in heaven \_185  
She shall not dare to look upon its beams;  
Nor feel its warmth. Let her then wish for night;  
The act I think shall soon extinguish all  
For me: I bear a darker deadlier gloom  
Than the earth's shade, or interlunar air, \_190  
Or constellations quenched in murkiest cloud,  
In which I walk secure and unbeheld  
Towards my purpose.--Would that it were done!

[EXIT.]

SCENE 2.2:

A CHAMBER IN THE VATICAN.

ENTER CAMILLO AND GIACOMO, IN CONVERSATION.

CAMILLO:

There is an obsolete and doubtful law  
By which you might obtain a bare provision  
Of food and clothing--

GIACOMO:

Nothing more? Alas!

Bare must be the provision which strict law  
Awards, and aged, sullen avarice pays.                    \_5

Why did my father not apprentice me

To some mechanic trade? I should have then  
Been trained in no highborn necessities  
Which I could meet not by my daily toil.

The eldest son of a rich nobleman                           \_10

Is heir to all his incapacities;

He has wide wants, and narrow powers. If you,

Cardinal Camillo, were reduced at once

From thrice-driven beds of down, and delicate food,

An hundred servants, and six palaces,                       \_15

To that which nature doth indeed require?--

CAMILLO:

Nay, there is reason in your plea; 'twere hard.

GIACOMO:

'Tis hard for a firm man to bear: but I

Have a dear wife, a lady of high birth,

Whose dowry in ill hour I lent my father                       \_20

Without a bond or witness to the deed:

And children, who inherit her fine senses,

The fairest creatures in this breathing world;

And she and they reproach me not. Cardinal,

Do you not think the Pope would interpose                       \_25

And stretch authority beyond the law?

CAMILLO:

Though your peculiar case is hard, I know

The Pope will not divert the course of law.

After that impious feast the other night

I spoke with him, and urged him then to check                       \_30

Your father's cruel hand; he frowned and said,

'Children are disobedient, and they sting

Their fathers' hearts to madness and despair,

Requiting years of care with contumely.

I pity the Count Cenci from my heart;                           \_35

His outraged love perhaps awakened hate,

And thus he is exasperated to ill.

In the great war between the old and young

I, who have white hairs and a tottering body,

Will keep at least blameless neutrality.'                       \_40

[ENTER ORSINO.]

You, my good Lord Orsino, heard those words.

ORSINO:

What words?

GIACOMO:

Alas, repeat them not again!

There then is no redress for me, at least

None but that which I may achieve myself,

Since I am driven to the brink.--But, say, \_45

My innocent sister and my only brother

Are dying underneath my father's eye.

The memorable torturers of this land,

Galez Visconti, Borgia, Ezzelin,

Never inflicted on their meanest slave \_50

What these endure; shall they have no protection?

CAMILLO:

Why, if they would petition to the Pope

I see not how he could refuse it--yet

He holds it of most dangerous example

In aught to weaken the paternal power, \_55

Being, as 'twere, the shadow of his own.

I pray you now excuse me. I have business

That will not bear delay.

[EXIT CAMILLO.]

GIACOMO:

But you, Orsino,

Have the petition: wherefore not present it?

ORSINO:

I have presented it, and backed it with \_60

My earnest prayers, and urgent interest;

It was returned unanswered. I doubt not

But that the strange and execrable deeds

Alleged in it--in truth they might well baffle

Any belief--have turned the Pope's displeasure \_65

Upon the accusers from the criminal:

So I should guess from what Camillo said.

GIACOMO:

My friend, that palace-walking devil Gold

Has whispered silence to his Holiness:

And we are left, as scorpions ringed with fire. \_70

What should we do but strike ourselves to death?

For he who is our murderous persecutor

Is shielded by a father's holy name,

Or I would--

[STOPS ABRUPTLY.]

ORSINO:

What? Fear not to speak your thought.

Words are but holy as the deeds they cover: \_75  
A priest who has forsworn the God he serves;  
A judge who makes Truth weep at his decree;  
A friend who should weave counsel, as I now,  
But as the mantle of some selfish guile;  
A father who is all a tyrant seems, \_80  
Were the profaner for his sacred name.

NOTE:

\_77 makes Truth edition 1821; makes the truth editions 1819, 1839.

GIACOMO:

Ask me not what I think; the unwilling brain  
Feigns often what it would not; and we trust  
Imagination with such fantasies  
As the tongue dares not fashion into words, \_85  
Which have no words, their horror makes them dim  
To the mind's eye.--My heart denies itself  
To think what you demand.

ORSINO:

But a friend's bosom  
Is as the inmost cave of our own mind  
Where we sit shut from the wide gaze of day, \_90  
And from the all-communicating air.  
You look what I suspected--

GIACOMO:

Spare me now!  
I am as one lost in a midnight wood,  
Who dares not ask some harmless passenger  
The path across the wilderness, lest he, \_95  
As my thoughts are, should be--a murderer.  
I know you are my friend, and all I dare  
Speak to my soul that will I trust with thee.  
But now my heart is heavy, and would take  
Lone counsel from a night of sleepless care. \_100  
Pardon me, that I say farewell--farewell!  
I would that to my own suspected self  
I could address a word so full of peace.

ORSINO:

Farewell!--Be your thoughts better or more bold.  
[EXIT GIACOMO.]  
I had disposed the Cardinal Camillo \_105  
To feed his hope with cold encouragement:  
It fortunately serves my close designs  
That 'tis a trick of this same family  
To analyse their own and other minds.  
Such self-anatomy shall teach the will \_110  
Dangerous secrets: for it tempts our powers,  
Knowing what must be thought, and may be done.  
Into the depth of darkest purposes:

So Cenci fell into the pit; even I,  
Since Beatrice unveiled me to myself,                     \_115  
And made me shrink from what I cannot shun,  
Show a poor figure to my own esteem,  
To which I grow half reconciled. I'll do  
As little mischief as I can; that thought  
Shall fee the accuser conscience.  
[AFTER A PAUSE.]  
Now what harm   \_120  
If Cenci should be murdered?--Yet, if murdered,  
Wherefore by me? And what if I could take  
The profit, yet omit the sin and peril  
In such an action? Of all earthly things  
I fear a man whose blows outspeed his words                     \_125  
And such is Cenci: and while Cenci lives  
His daughter's dowry were a secret grave  
If a priest wins her.--Oh, fair Beatrice!  
Would that I loved thee not, or loving thee,  
Could but despise danger and gold and all                     \_130  
That frowns between my wish and its effect.  
Or smiles beyond it! There is no escape...  
Her bright form kneels beside me at the altar,  
And follows me to the resort of men,  
And fills my slumber with tumultuous dreams,                     \_135  
So when I wake my blood seems liquid fire;  
And if I strike my damp and dizzy head  
My hot palm scorches it: her very name,  
But spoken by a stranger, makes my heart  
Sicken and pant; and thus unprofitably                     \_140  
I clasp the phantom of unfelt delights  
Till weak imagination half possesses  
The self-created shadow. Yet much longer  
Will I not nurse this life of feverous hours:  
From the unravelled hopes of Giacomo                     \_145  
I must work out my own dear purposes.  
I see, as from a tower, the end of all:  
Her father dead; her brother bound to me  
By a dark secret, surer than the grave;  
Her mother scared and unexpostulating                     \_150  
From the dread manner of her wish achieved;  
And she!--Once more take courage, my faint heart;  
What dares a friendless maiden matched with thee?  
I have such foresight as assures success:  
Some unbeheld divinity doth ever,                     \_155  
When dread events are near, stir up men's minds  
To black suggestions; and he prospers best,  
Not who becomes the instrument of ill,  
But who can flatter the dark spirit, that makes  
Its empire and its prey of other hearts                     \_160  
Till it become his slave...as I will do.

[EXIT.]

END OF ACT 2.

ACT 3.

SCENE 3.1:

AN APARTMENT IN THE CENCI PALACE.

LUCRETIA, TO HER ENTER BEATRICE.

BEATRICE [SHE ENTERS STAGGERING AND SPEAKS WILDLY]:

Reach me that handkerchief!--My brain is hurt;  
My eyes are full of blood; just wipe them for me...  
I see but indistinctly...

LUCRETIA:

My sweet child,  
You have no wound; 'tis only a cold dew  
That starts from your dear brow.--Alas! Alas!                     \_5  
What has befallen?

BEATRICE:

How comes this hair undone?  
Its wandering strings must be what blind me so,  
And yet I tied it fast.--Oh, horrible!  
The pavement sinks under my feet! The walls  
Spin round! I see a woman weeping there,                     \_10  
And standing calm and motionless, whilst I  
Slide giddily as the world reels...My God!  
The beautiful blue heaven is flecked with blood!  
The sunshine on the floor is black! The air  
Is changed to vapours such as the dead breathe                     \_15  
In charnel pits! Pah! I am choked! There creeps  
A clinging, black, contaminating mist  
About me...'tis substantial, heavy, thick,  
I cannot pluck it from me, for it glues  
My fingers and my limbs to one another,                     \_20  
And eats into my sinews, and dissolves  
My flesh to a pollution, poisoning  
The subtle, pure, and inmost spirit of life!  
My God! I never knew what the mad felt  
Before; for I am mad beyond all doubt!                     \_25  
[MORE WILDLY.]  
No, I am dead! These putrefying limbs  
Shut round and sepulchre the panting soul  
Which would burst forth into the wandering air!  
[A PAUSE.]  
What hideous thought was that I had even now?  
'Tis gone; and yet its burthen remains here                     \_30  
O'er these dull eyes...upon this weary heart!  
O, world! O, life! O, day! O, misery!

LUCRETIA:

What ails thee, my poor child? She answers not:



Her spirit apprehends the sense of pain,  
But not its cause; suffering has dried away \_35  
The source from which it sprung...

BEATRICE [FRANTICLY]:  
Like Parricide...  
Misery has killed its father: yet its father  
Never like mine...O, God! What thing am I?

LUCRETIA:  
My dearest child, what has your father done?

BEATRICE [DOUBTFULLY]:  
Who art thou, questioner? I have no father. \_40  
[ASIDE.]

She is the madhouse nurse who tends on me,  
It is a piteous office.  
[TO LUCRETIA, IN A SLOW, SUBDUED VOICE.]

Do you know  
I thought I was that wretched Beatrice  
Men speak of, whom her father sometimes haies  
From hall to hall by the entangled hair; \_45

At others, pens up naked in damp cells  
Where scaly reptiles crawl, and starves her there,  
Till she will eat strange flesh. This woful story  
So did I overact in my sick dreams,  
That I imagined...no, it cannot be! \_50

Horrible things have been in this wide world,  
Prodigious mixtures, and confusions strange  
Of good and ill; and worse have been conceived  
Than ever there was found a heart to do.  
But never fancy imaged such a deed \_55  
As...

[PAUSES, SUDDENLY RECOLLECTING HERSELF.]  
Who art thou? Swear to me, ere I die  
With fearful expectation, that indeed  
Thou art not what thou seemest...Mother!

LUCRETIA:  
Oh!  
My sweet child, know you...

BEATRICE:  
Yet speak it not:  
For then if this be truth, that other too \_60  
Must be a truth, a firm enduring truth,

Linked with each lasting circumstance of life,  
Never to change, never to pass away.  
Why so it is. This is the Cenci Palace;  
Thou art Lucretia; I am Beatrice. \_65

I have talked some wild words, but will no more.  
Mother, come near me: from this point of time,  
I am...

[HER VOICE DIES AWAY FAINTLY.]

LUCRETIA:

Alas! What has befallen thee, child?  
What has thy father done?

BEATRICE:

What have I done?  
Am I not innocent? Is it my crime \_70  
That one with white hair, and imperious brow,  
Who tortured me from my forgotten years,  
As parents only dare, should call himself  
My father, yet should be!--Oh, what am I?  
What name, what place, what memory shall be mine? \_75  
What retrospects, outliving even despair?

LUCRETIA:

He is a violent tyrant, surely, child:  
We know that death alone can make us free;  
His death or ours. But what can he have done  
Of deadlier outrage or worse injury? \_80  
Thou art unlike thyself; thine eyes shoot forth  
A wandering and strange spirit. Speak to me,  
Unlock those pallid hands whose fingers twine  
With one another.

BEATRICE:

'Tis the restless life  
Tortured within them. If I try to speak, \_85  
I shall go mad. Ay, something must be done;  
What, yet I know not...something which shall make  
The thing that I have suffered but a shadow  
In the dread lightning which avenges it;  
Brief, rapid, irreversible, destroying \_90  
The consequence of what it cannot cure.  
Some such thing is to be endured or done:  
When I know what, I shall be still and calm,  
And never anything will move me more.  
But now!--O blood, which art my father's blood, \_95  
Circling through these contaminated veins,  
If thou, poured forth on the polluted earth,  
Could wash away the crime, and punishment  
By which I suffer...no, that cannot be!  
Many might doubt there were a God above \_100  
Who sees and permits evil, and so die:  
That faith no agony shall obscure in me.

LUCRETIA:

It must indeed have been some bitter wrong;  
Yet what, I dare not guess. Oh, my lost child,  
Hide not in proud impenetrable grief \_105  
Thy sufferings from my fear.

BEATRICE:

I hide them not.

What are the words which you would have me speak?

I, who can feign no image in my mind

Of that which has transformed me: I, whose thought

Is like a ghost shrouded and folded up \_110

In its own formless horror: of all words,

That minister to mortal intercourse,

Which wouldst thou hear? For there is none to tell

My misery: if another ever knew

Aught like to it, she died as I will die, \_115

And left it, as I must, without a name.

Death, Death! Our law and our religion call thee

A punishment and a reward...Oh, which

Have I deserved?

LUCRETIA:

The peace of innocence;

Till in your season you be called to heaven. \_120

Whate'er you may have suffered, you have done

No evil. Death must be the punishment

Of crime, or the reward of trampling down

The thorns which God has strewed upon the path

Which leads to immortality.

BEATRICE:

Ay, death... \_125

The punishment of crime. I pray thee, God,

Let me not be bewildered while I judge.

If I must live day after day, and keep

These limbs, the unworthy temple of Thy spirit,

As a foul den from which what Thou abhorrest \_130

May mock Thee, unavenged...it shall not be!

Self-murder...no, that might be no escape,

For Thy decree yawns like a Hell between

Our will and it:--O! In this mortal world

There is no vindication and no law \_135

Which can adjudge and execute the doom

Of that through which I suffer.

[ENTER ORSINO.]

[SHE APPROACHES HIM SOLEMNLY.]

Welcome, Friend!

I have to tell you that, since last we met,

I have endured a wrong so great and strange,

That neither life nor death can give me rest. \_140

Ask me not what it is, for there are deeds

Which have no form, sufferings which have no tongue.

NOTE:

\_140 nor edition 1821; or editions 1819, 1839 (1st).

ORSINO:

And what is he who has thus injured you?

BEATRICE:

The man they call my father: a dread name.

ORSINO:

It cannot be...

BEATRICE:

What it can be, or not, \_145  
Forbear to think. It is, and it has been;  
Advise me how it shall not be again.  
I thought to die; but a religious awe  
Restrains me, and the dread lest death itself  
Might be no refuge from the consciousness \_150  
Of what is yet unexpiated. Oh, speak!

ORSINO:

Accuse him of the deed, and let the law  
Avenge thee.

BEATRICE:

Oh, ice-hearted counsellor!  
If I could find a word that might make known  
The crime of my destroyer; and that done, \_155  
My tongue should like a knife tear out the secret  
Which cankers my heart's core; ay, lay all bare,  
So that my unpolluted fame should be  
With vilest gossips a stale mouthed story;  
A mock, a byword, an astonishment:-- \_160  
If this were done, which never shall be done,  
Think of the offender's gold, his dreaded hate,  
And the strange horror of the accuser's tale,  
Baffling belief, and overpowering speech;  
Scarce whispered, unimaginal, wrapped \_165  
In hideous hints...Oh, most assured redress!

ORSINO:

You will endure it then?

BEATRICE:

Endure!--Orsino,  
It seems your counsel is small profit.  
[TURNS FROM HIM, AND SPEAKS HALF TO HERSELF.]  
Ay,  
All must be suddenly resolved and done.  
What is this undistinguishable mist \_170  
Of thoughts, which rise, like shadow after shadow,  
Darkening each other?

ORSINO:

Should the offender live?  
Triumph in his misdeed? and make, by use,  
His crime, whate'er it is, dreadful no doubt,



For we cannot hope  
That aid, or retribution, or resource  
Will arise thence, where every other one                    \_205  
Might find them with less need.

[BEATRICE ADVANCES.]

ORSINO:

Then...

BEATRICE:

Peace, Orsino!  
And, honoured Lady, while I speak, I pray,  
That you put off, as garments overworn,  
Forbearance and respect, remorse and fear,  
And all the fit restraints of daily life,                    \_210  
Which have been borne from childhood, but which now  
Would be a mockery to my holier plea.  
As I have said, I have endured a wrong,  
Which, though it be expressionless, is such  
As asks atonement; both for what is past,                    \_215  
And lest I be reserved, day after day,  
To load with crimes an overburthened soul,  
And be...what ye can dream not. I have prayed  
To God, and I have talked with my own heart,  
And have unravelled my entangled will,                    \_220  
And have at length determined what is right.  
Art thou my friend, Orsino? False or true?  
Pledge thy salvation ere I speak.

ORSINO:

I swear  
To dedicate my cunning, and my strength,  
My silence, and whatever else is mine,                    \_225  
To thy commands.

LUCRETIA:

You think we should devise  
His death?

BEATRICE:

And execute what is devised,  
And suddenly. We must be brief and bold.

ORSINO:

And yet most cautious.

LUCRETIA:

For the jealous laws  
Would punish us with death and infamy                    \_230  
For that which it became themselves to do.

BEATRICE:

Be cautious as ye may, but prompt. Orsino,  
What are the means?

ORSINO:

I know two dull, fierce outlaws,  
Who think man's spirit as a worm's, and they  
Would trample out, for any slight caprice,                     \_235  
The meanest or the noblest life. This mood  
Is marketable here in Rome. They sell  
What we now want.

LUCRETIA:

To-morrow before dawn,  
Cenci will take us to that lonely rock,  
Petrella, in the Apulian Apennines.                     \_240  
If he arrive there...

BEATRICE:

He must not arrive.

ORSINO:

Will it be dark before you reach the tower?

LUCRETIA:

The sun will scarce be set.

BEATRICE:

But I remember  
Two miles on this side of the fort, the road  
Crosses a deep ravine; 'tis rough and narrow,                     \_245  
And winds with short turns down the precipice;  
And in its depth there is a mighty rock,  
Which has, from unimaginable years,  
Sustained itself with terror and with toil  
Over a gulf, and with the agony                     \_250  
With which it clings seems slowly coming down;  
Even as a wretched soul hour after hour,  
Clings to the mass of life; yet, clinging, leans;  
And leaning, makes more dark the dread abyss  
In which it fears to fall: beneath this crag                     \_255  
Huge as despair, as if in weariness,  
The melancholy mountain yawns...below,  
You hear but see not an impetuous torrent  
Raging among the caverns, and a bridge  
Crosses the chasm; and high above there grow,                     \_260  
With intersecting trunks, from crag to crag,  
Cedars, and yews, and pines; whose tangled hair  
Is matted in one solid roof of shade  
By the dark ivy's twine. At noonday here  
'Tis twilight, and at sunset blackest night.                     \_265

ORSINO:

Before you reach that bridge make some excuse

For spurring on your mules, or loitering  
Until...

BEATRICE:  
What sound is that?

LUCRETIA:  
Hark! No, it cannot be a servant's step  
It must be Cenci, unexpectedly \_270  
Returned...Make some excuse for being here.

BEATRICE [TO ORSINO AS SHE GOES OUT]:  
That step we hear approach must never pass  
The bridge of which we spoke.

[EXEUNT LUCRETIA AND BEATRICE.]

ORSINO:  
What shall I do?  
Cenci must find me here, and I must bear  
The imperious inquisition of his looks \_275  
As to what brought me hither: let me mask  
Mine own in some inane and vacant smile.  
[ENTER GIACOMO, IN A HURRIED MANNER.]  
How! Have you ventured hither? Know you then  
That Cenci is from home?

NOTE:  
\_278 hither edition 1821; thither edition 1819.

GIACOMO:  
I sought him here;  
And now must wait till he returns.

ORSINO:  
Great God! \_280  
Weigh you the danger of this rashness?

GIACOMO:  
Ay!  
Does my destroyer know his danger? We  
Are now no more, as once, parent and child,  
But man to man; the oppressor to the oppressed;  
The slanderer to the slandered; foe to foe: \_285  
He has cast Nature off, which was his shield,  
And Nature casts him off, who is her shame;  
And I spurn both. Is it a father's throat  
Which I will shake, and say, I ask not gold;  
I ask not happy years; nor memories \_290  
Of tranquil childhood; nor home-sheltered love;  
Though all these hast thou torn from me, and more;  
But only my fair fame; only one hoard  
Of peace, which I thought hidden from thy hate,



Under the penury heaped on me by thee,                    \_295  
Or I will...God can understand and pardon,  
Why should I speak with man?

ORSINO:

Be calm, dear friend.

GIACOMO:

Well, I will calmly tell you what he did.  
This old Francesco Cenci, as you know,  
Borrowed the dowry of my wife from me,                    \_300  
And then denied the loan; and left me so  
In poverty, the which I sought to mend  
By holding a poor office in the state.  
It had been promised to me, and already  
I bought new clothing for my ragged babes,                \_305  
And my wife smiled; and my heart knew repose.  
When Cenci's intercession, as I found,  
Conferred this office on a wretch, whom thus  
He paid for vilest service. I returned  
With this ill news, and we sate sad together                \_310  
Solacing our despondency with tears  
Of such affection and unbroken faith  
As temper life's worst bitterness; when he,  
As he is wont, came to upbraid and curse,  
Mocking our poverty, and telling us                         \_315  
Such was God's scourge for disobedient sons.  
And then, that I might strike him dumb with shame,  
I spoke of my wife's dowry; but he coined  
A brief yet specious tale, how I had wasted  
The sum in secret riot; and he saw                         \_320  
My wife was touched, and he went smiling forth.  
And when I knew the impression he had made,  
And felt my wife insult with silent scorn  
My ardent truth, and look averse and cold,  
I went forth too: but soon returned again;                \_325  
Yet not so soon but that my wife had taught  
My children her harsh thoughts, and they all cried,  
'Give us clothes, father! Give us better food!  
What you in one night squander were enough  
For months!' I looked, and saw that home was hell.        \_330  
And to that hell will I return no more  
Until mine enemy has rendered up  
Atonement, or, as he gave life to me  
I will, reversing Nature's law...

ORSINO:

Trust me,  
The compensation which thou seekest here                \_335  
Will be denied.

GIACOMO:

Then...Are you not my friend?

Did you not hint at the alternative,  
Upon the brink of which you see I stand,  
The other day when we conversed together?  
My wrongs were then less. That word parricide,                     \_340  
Although I am resolved, haunts me like fear.

ORSINO:  
It must be fear itself, for the bare word  
Is hollow mockery. Mark, how wisest God  
Draws to one point the threads of a just doom,  
So sanctifying it: what you devise                                     \_345  
Is, as it were, accomplished.

GIACOMO:  
Is he dead?

ORSINO:  
His grave is ready. Know that since we met  
Cenci has done an outrage to his daughter.

GIACOMO:  
What outrage?

ORSINO:  
That she speaks not, but you may  
Conceive such half conjectures as I do,                             \_350  
From her fixed paleness, and the lofty grief  
Of her stern brow bent on the idle air,  
And her severe unmodulated voice,  
Drowning both tenderness and dread; and last  
From this; that whilst her step-mother and I,                     \_355  
Bewildered in our horror, talked together  
With obscure hints; both self-misunderstood  
And darkly guessing, stumbling, in our talk,  
Over the truth, and yet to its revenge,  
She interrupted us, and with a look                             \_360  
Which told, before she spoke it, he must die:...

GIACOMO:  
It is enough. My doubts are well appeased;  
There is a higher reason for the act  
Than mine; there is a holier judge than me,  
A more unblamed avenger. Beatrice,                             \_365  
Who in the gentleness of thy sweet youth  
Hast never trodden on a worm, or bruised  
A living flower, but thou hast pitied it  
With needless tears! Fair sister, thou in whom  
Men wondered how such loveliness and wisdom                     \_370  
Did not destroy each other! Is there made  
Ravage of thee? O, heart, I ask no more  
Justification! Shall I wait, Orsino,  
Till he return, and stab him at the door?

ORSINO:

Not so; some accident might interpose \_375  
To rescue him from what is now most sure;  
And you are unprovided where to fly,  
How to excuse or to conceal. Nay, listen:  
All is contrived; success is so assured  
That...

[ENTER BEATRICE.]

BEATRICE:

'Tis my brother's voice! You know me not?

GIACOMO:

My sister, my lost sister! \_380

BEATRICE:

Lost indeed!  
I see Orsino has talked with you, and  
That you conjecture things too horrible  
To speak, yet far less than the truth. Now, stay not,  
He might return: yet kiss me; I shall know \_385  
That then thou hast consented to his death.

Farewell, farewell! Let piety to God,  
Brotherly love, justice and clemency,  
And all things that make tender hardest hearts  
Make thine hard, brother. Answer not...farewell. \_390

[EXEUNT SEVERALLY.]

SCENE 3.2:

A MEAN APARTMENT IN GIACOMO'S HOUSE.

GIACOMO ALONE.

GIACOMO:

'Tis midnight, and Orsino comes not yet.

[THUNDER, AND THE SOUND OF A STORM.]

What! can the everlasting elements  
Feel with a worm like man? If so, the shaft  
Of mercy-winged lightning would not fall  
On stones and trees. My wife and children sleep: \_5

They are now living in unmeaning dreams:  
But I must wake, still doubting if that deed  
Be just which is most necessary. O,  
Thou un replenished lamp! whose narrow fire  
Is shaken by the wind, and on whose edge \_10

Devouring darkness hovers! Thou small flame,  
Which, as a dying pulse rises and falls,  
Still flickerest up and down, how very soon,  
Did I not feed thee, wouldst thou fail and be  
As thou hadst never been! So wastes and sinks \_15  
Even now, perhaps, the life that kindled mine:  
But that no power can fill with vital oil

That broken lamp of flesh. Ha! 'tis the blood  
Which fed these veins that ebbs till all is cold:  
It is the form that moulded mine that sinks                    \_20  
Into the white and yellow spasms of death:  
It is the soul by which mine was arrayed  
In God's immortal likeness which now stands  
Naked before Heaven's judgement seat!

[A BELL STRIKES.]

One! Two!

The hours crawl on; and, when my hairs are white,                    \_25  
My son will then perhaps be waiting thus,  
Tortured between just hate and vain remorse;

Chiding the tardy messenger of news  
Like those which I expect. I almost wish  
He be not dead, although my wrongs are great;                    \_30

Yet... 'tis Orsino's step...

[ENTER ORSINO.]

Speak!

ORSINO:

I am come

To say he has escaped.

GIACOMO:

Escaped!

ORSINO:

And safe

Within Petrella. He passed by the spot  
Appointed for the deed an hour too soon.

GIACOMO:

Are we the fools of such contingencies?                    \_35

And do we waste in blind misgivings thus  
The hours when we should act? Then wind and thunder,  
Which seemed to howl his knell, is the loud laughter  
With which Heaven mocks our weakness! I henceforth

Will ne'er repent of aught designed or done                    \_40

But my repentance.

ORSINO:

See, the lamp is out.

GIACOMO:

If no remorse is ours when the dim air

Has drank this innocent flame, why should we quail

When Cenci's life, that light by which ill spirits

See the worst deeds they prompt, shall sink for ever?                    \_45

No, I am hardened.

ORSINO:

Why, what need of this?

Who feared the pale intrusion of remorse

In a just deed? Although our first plan failed,  
Doubt not but he will soon be laid to rest.  
But light the lamp; let us not talk i' the dark.                     \_50

GIACOMO [LIGHTING THE LAMP]:  
And yet once quenched I cannot thus relume  
My father's life: do you not think his ghost  
Might plead that argument with God?

ORSINO:  
Once gone  
You cannot now recall your sister's peace;  
Your own extinguished years of youth and hope;                     \_55  
Nor your wife's bitter words; nor all the taunts  
Which, from the prosperous, weak misfortune takes;  
Nor your dead mother; nor...

GIACOMO:  
O, speak no more!  
I am resolved, although this very hand  
Must quench the life that animated it.                     \_60

ORSINO:  
There is no need of that. Listen: you know  
Olimpio, the castellan of Petrella  
In old Colonna's time; him whom your father  
Degraded from his post? And Marzio,  
That desperate wretch, whom he deprived last year                     \_65  
Of a reward of blood, well earned and due?

GIACOMO:  
I knew Olimpio; and they say he hated  
Old Cenci so, that in his silent rage  
His lips grew white only to see him pass.  
Of Marzio I know nothing.

ORSINO:  
Marzio's hate                     \_70  
Matches Olimpio's. I have sent these men,  
But in your name, and as at your request,  
To talk with Beatrice and Lucretia.

GIACOMO:  
Only to talk?

ORSINO:  
The moments which even now  
Pass onward to to-morrow's midnight hour                     \_75  
May memorize their flight with death: ere then  
They must have talked, and may perhaps have done,  
And made an end...

GIACOMO:

Listen! What sound is that?

ORSINO:

The house-dog moans, and the beams crack: nought else.

GIACOMO:

It is my wife complaining in her sleep: \_80

I doubt not she is saying bitter things

Of me; and all my children round her dreaming

That I deny them sustenance.

ORSINO:

Whilst he

Who truly took it from them, and who fills

Their hungry rest with bitterness, now sleeps \_85

Lapped in bad pleasures, and triumphantly

Mocks thee in visions of successful hate

Too like the truth of day.

GIACOMO:

If e'er he wakes

Again, I will not trust to hireling hands...

ORSINO:

Why, that were well. I must be gone; good-night. \_90

When next we meet--may all be done!

NOTE:

\_91 may all be done!

Giacomo: And all edition 1821;

Giacomo: May all be done, and all edition 1819.

GIACOMO:

And all

Forgotten: Oh, that I had never been!

[EXEUNT.]

END OF ACT 3.

ACT 4.

SCENE 4.1:

AN APARTMENT IN THE CASTLE OF PETRELLA.

ENTER CENCI.

CENCI:

She comes not; yet I left her even now

Vanquished and faint. She knows the penalty

Of her delay: yet what if threats are vain?

Am I not now within Petrella's moat?

Or fear I still the eyes and ears of Rome? \_5

Might I not drag her by the golden hair?  
Stamp on her? keep her sleepless till her brain  
Be overworn? Tame her with chains and famine?  
Less would suffice. Yet so to leave undone  
What I most seek! No, 'tis her stubborn will                    \_10  
Which by its own consent shall stoop as low  
As that which drags it down.

[ENTER LUCRETIA.]

Thou loathed wretch!  
Hide thee from my abhorrence: fly, begone!  
Yet stay! Bid Beatrice come hither.

NOTE:

\_4 not now edition 1821; now not edition 1819.

LUCRETIA:

Oh,  
Husband! I pray, for thine own wretched sake                    \_15  
Heed what thou dost. A man who walks like thee  
Through crimes, and through the danger of his crimes,  
Each hour may stumble o'er a sudden grave.  
And thou art old; thy hairs are hoary gray;  
As thou wouldst save thyself from death and hell,                    \_20  
Pity thy daughter; give her to some friend  
In marriage: so that she may tempt thee not  
To hatred, or worse thoughts, if worse there be.

CENCI:

What! like her sister who has found a home  
To mock my hate from with prosperity?    \_25  
Strange ruin shall destroy both her and thee  
And all that yet remain. My death may be  
Rapid, her destiny outspeeds it. Go,  
Bid her come hither, and before my mood  
Be changed, lest I should drag her by the hair.    \_30

LUCRETIA:

She sent me to thee, husband. At thy presence  
She fell, as thou dost know, into a trance;  
And in that trance she heard a voice which said,  
'Cenci must die! Let him confess himself!  
Even now the accusing Angel waits to hear    \_35  
If God, to punish his enormous crimes,  
Harden his dying heart!

CENCI:

Why--such things are...  
No doubt divine revealings may be made.  
'Tis plain I have been favoured from above,  
For when I cursed my sons they died.--Ay...so...    \_40  
As to the right or wrong, that's talk...repentance...  
Repentance is an easy moment's work  
And more depends on God than me. Well...well...

I must give up the greater point, which was  
To poison and corrupt her soul.

[A PAUSE, LUCRETIA APPROACHES ANXIOUSLY,  
AND THEN SHRINKS BACK AS HE SPEAKS.]

One, two; \_45

Ay...Rocco and Cristofano my curse

Strangled: and Giacomo, I think, will find

Life a worse Hell than that beyond the grave:

Beatrice shall, if there be skill in hate,

Die in despair, blaspheming: to Bernardo, \_50

He is so innocent, I will bequeath

The memory of these deeds, and make his youth

The sepulchre of hope, where evil thoughts

Shall grow like weeds on a neglected tomb.

When all is done, out in the wide Campagna, \_55

I will pile up my silver and my gold;

My costly robes, paintings, and tapestries;

My parchments and all records of my wealth,

And make a bonfire in my joy, and leave

Of my possessions nothing but my name; \_60

Which shall be an inheritance to strip

Its wearer bare as infamy. That done,

My soul, which is a scourge, will I resign

Into the hands of him who wielded it;

Be it for its own punishment or theirs, \_65

He will not ask it of me till the lash

Be broken in its last and deepest wound;

Until its hate be all inflicted. Yet,

Lest death outspeed my purpose, let me make

Short work and sure...

[GOING.]

LUCRETIA [STOPS HIM]:

Oh, stay! It was a feint: \_70

She had no vision, and she heard no voice.

I said it but to awe thee.

CENCI:

That is well.

Vile palterer with the sacred truth of God,

Be thy soul choked with that blaspheming lie!

For Beatrice worse terrors are in store \_75

To bend her to my will.

LUCRETIA:

Oh! to what will?

What cruel sufferings more than she has known

Canst thou inflict?

CENCI:

Andrea! Go call my daughter,

And if she comes not tell her that I come.



What sufferings? I will drag her, step by step, \_80

Through infamies unheard of among men:  
She shall stand shelterless in the broad noon  
Of public scorn, for acts blazoned abroad,  
One among which shall be...What? Canst thou guess?

She shall become (for what she most abhors \_85

Shall have a fascination to entrap  
Her loathing will) to her own conscious self  
All she appears to others; and when dead,  
As she shall die unshrived and unforgiven,  
A rebel to her father and her God, \_90

Her corpse shall be abandoned to the hounds;  
Her name shall be the terror of the earth;  
Her spirit shall approach the throne of God  
Plague-spotted with my curses. I will make  
Body and soul a monstrous lump of ruin. \_95

[ENTER ANDREA.]

ANDREA:  
The Lady Beatrice...

CENCI:  
Speak, pale slave! What  
Said she?

ANDREA:  
My Lord, 'twas what she looked; she said:  
'Go tell my father that I see the gulf  
Of Hell between us two, which he may pass,  
I will not.'

[EXIT ANDREA.]

CENCI:  
Go thou quick, Lucretia, \_100  
Tell her to come; yet let her understand  
Her coming is consent: and say, moreover,  
That if she come not I will curse her.

[EXIT LUCRETIA.]

Ha!  
With what but with a father's curse doth God  
Panic-strike armed victory, and make pale \_105  
Cities in their prosperity? The world's Father  
Must grant a parent's prayer against his child,  
Be he who asks even what men call me.

Will not the deaths of her rebellious brothers  
Awe her before I speak? For I on them \_110  
Did imprecate quick ruin, and it came.

[ENTER LUCRETIA.]

Well; what? Speak, wretch!

LUCRETIA:

She said, 'I cannot come;  
Go tell my father that I see a torrent  
Of his own blood raging between us.'

CENCI [KNEELING]:

God,  
Hear me! If this most specious mass of flesh,                    \_115  
Which Thou hast made my daughter; this my blood,  
This particle of my divided being;  
Or rather, this my bane and my disease,  
Whose sight infects and poisons me; this devil  
Which sprung from me as from a hell, was meant                \_120  
To aught good use; if her bright loveliness  
Was kindled to illumine this dark world;  
If nursed by Thy selectest dew of love  
Such virtues blossom in her as should make  
The peace of life, I pray Thee for my sake,                        \_125  
As Thou the common God and Father art  
Of her, and me, and all; reverse that doom!  
Earth, in the name of God, let her food be  
Poison, until she be encrusted round  
With leprous stains! Heaven, rain upon her head                 \_130  
The blistering drops of the Maremma's dew,  
Till she be speckled like a toad; parch up  
Those love-enkindled lips, warp those fine limbs  
To loathed lameness! All-beholding sun,  
Strike in thine envy those life-darting eyes                     \_135  
With thine own blinding beams!

LUCRETIA:

Peace! Peace!  
For thine own sake unsay those dreadful words.  
When high God grants He punishes such prayers.

CENCI [LEAPING UP, AND THROWING HIS RIGHT HAND TOWARDS HEAVEN]:

He does his will, I mine! This in addition,  
That if she have a child...

LUCRETIA:

Horrible thought!    \_140

CENCI:

That if she ever have a child; and thou,  
Quick Nature! I adjure thee by thy God,  
That thou be fruitful in her, and increase  
And multiply, fulfilling his command,  
And my deep imprecation! May it be                                \_145  
A hideous likeness of herself, that as  
From a distorting mirror, she may see  
Her image mixed with what she most abhors,  
Smiling upon her from her nursing breast.  
And that the child may from its infancy                             \_150  
Grow, day by day, more wicked and deformed,

Turning her mother's love to misery:  
And that both she and it may live until  
It shall repay her care and pain with hate,  
Or what may else be more unnatural. \_155

So he may hunt her through the clamorous scoffs  
Of the loud world to a dishonoured grave.  
Shall I revoke this curse? Go, bid her come,  
Before my words are chronicled in Heaven.  
[EXIT LUCRETIA.]

I do not feel as if I were a man, \_160  
But like a fiend appointed to chastise  
The offences of some unremembered world.  
My blood is running up and down my veins;  
A fearful pleasure makes it prick and tingle:  
I feel a giddy sickness of strange awe; \_165  
My heart is beating with an expectation  
Of horrid joy.

[ENTER LUCRETIA.]  
What? Speak!

LUCRETIA:

She bids thee curse;  
And if thy curses, as they cannot do,  
Could kill her soul...

CENCI:

She would not come. 'Tis well,  
I can do both; first take what I demand, \_170  
And then extort concession. To thy chamber!  
Fly ere I spurn thee; and beware this night  
That thou cross not my footsteps. It were safer  
To come between the tiger and his prey.

[EXIT LUCRETIA.]

It must be late; mine eyes grow weary dim \_175  
With unaccustomed heaviness of sleep.

Conscience! Oh, thou most insolent of lies!  
They say that sleep, that healing dew of Heaven,  
Steeps not in balm the foldings of the brain  
Which thinks thee an impostor. I will go \_180

First to belie thee with an hour of rest,  
Which will be deep and calm, I feel: and then...  
O, multitudinous Hell, the fiends will shake  
Thine arches with the laughter of their joy!  
There shall be lamentation heard in Heaven \_185

As o'er an angel fallen; and upon Earth  
All good shall droop and sicken, and ill things  
Shall with a spirit of unnatural life,  
Stir and be quickened...even as I am now.

[EXIT.]

SCENE 4.2:

BEFORE THE CASTLE OF PETRELLA.

ENTER BEATRICE AND LUCRETIA ABOVE ON THE RAMPARTS.

BEATRICE:

They come not yet.

LUCRETIA:

'Tis scarce midnight.

BEATRICE:

How slow

Behind the course of thought, even sick with speed,

Lags leaden-footed time!

LUCRETIA:

The minutes pass...

If he should wake before the deed is done?

BEATRICE:

O, mother! He must never wake again.

\_5

What thou hast said persuades me that our act

Will but dislodge a spirit of deep hell

Out of a human form.

LUCRETIA:

'Tis true he spoke

Of death and judgement with strange confidence

For one so wicked; as a man believing

\_10

In God, yet recking not of good or ill.

And yet to die without confession!...

BEATRICE:

Oh!

Believe that Heaven is merciful and just,

And will not add our dread necessity

To the amount of his offences.

[ENTER OLIMPIO AND MARZIO BELOW.]

LUCRETIA:

See,

\_15

They come.

BEATRICE:

All mortal things must hasten thus

To their dark end. Let us go down.

[EXEUNT LUCRETIA AND BEATRICE FROM ABOVE.]

OLIMPIO:

How feel you to this work?

MARZIO:

As one who thinks

A thousand crowns excellent market price  
For an old murderer's life. Your cheeks are pale.                 \_20

OLIMPIO:  
It is the white reflection of your own,  
Which you call pale.

MARZIO:  
Is that their natural hue?

OLIMPIO:  
Or 'tis my hate and the deferred desire  
To wreak it, which extinguishes their blood.

MARZIO:  
You are inclined then to this business?

OLIMPIO:  
Ay,   \_25  
If one should bribe me with a thousand crowns  
To kill a serpent which had stung my child,  
I could not be more willing.  
[ENTER BEATRICE AND LUCRETIA BELOW.]  
Noble ladies!

BEATRICE:  
Are ye resolved?

OLIMPIO:  
Is he asleep?

MARZIO:  
Is all  
Quiet?

LUCRETIA:  
I mixed an opiate with his drink:                                 \_30  
He sleeps so soundly...

BEATRICE:  
That his death will be  
But as a change of sin-chastising dreams,  
A dark continuance of the Hell within him,  
Which God extinguish! But ye are resolved?  
Ye know it is a high and holy deed?                             \_35

OLIMPIO:  
We are resolved.

MARZIO:  
As to the how this act  
Be warranted, it rests with you.

BEATRICE:

Well, follow!

OLIMPIO:

Hush! Hark! What noise is that?

MARZIO:

Ha! some one comes!

BEATRICE:

Ye conscience-stricken cravens, rock to rest  
Your baby hearts. It is the iron gate,  
Which ye left open, swinging to the wind,  
That enters whistling as in scorn. Come, follow!  
And be your steps like mine, light, quick and bold.

\_40

[EXEUNT.]

SCENE 4.3:

AN APARTMENT IN THE CASTLE.  
ENTER BEATRICE AND LUCRETIA.

LUCRETIA:

They are about it now.

BEATRICE:

Nay, it is done.

LUCRETIA:

I have not heard him groan.

BEATRICE:

He will not groan.

LUCRETIA:

What sound is that?

BEATRICE:

List! 'tis the tread of feet  
About his bed.

LUCRETIA:

My God!  
If he be now a cold, stiff corpse...

BEATRICE:

O, fear not  
What may be done, but what is left undone:  
The act seals all.  
[ENTER OLIMPIO AND MARZIO.]  
Is it accomplished?

\_5

MARZIO:

What?

OLIMPIO:

Did you not call?

BEATRICE:

When?

OLIMPIO:

Now.

BEATRICE:

I ask if all is over?

OLIMPIO:

We dare not kill an old and sleeping man;  
His thin gray hair, his stern and reverend brow,                    \_10  
His veined hands crossed on his heaving breast,  
And the calm innocent sleep in which he lay,  
Quelled me. Indeed, indeed, I cannot do it.

NOTE:

\_10 reverend]reverent all editions.

MARZIO:

But I was bolder; for I chid Olimpio,  
And bade him bear his wrongs to his own grave                    \_15  
And leave me the reward. And now my knife  
Touched the loose wrinkled throat, when the old man  
Stirred in his sleep, and said, 'God! hear, O, hear,  
A father's curse! What, art Thou not our Father?'  
And then he laughed. I knew it was the ghost                    \_20  
Of my dead father speaking through his lips,  
And could not kill him.

BEATRICE:

Miserable slaves!  
Where, if ye dare not kill a sleeping man,  
Found ye the boldness to return to me  
With such a deed undone? Base palterers!                        \_25  
Cowards and traitors! Why, the very conscience  
Which ye would sell for gold and for revenge  
Is an equivocation: it sleeps over  
A thousand daily acts disgracing men;  
And when a deed where mercy insults Heaven...                    \_30  
Why do I talk?  
[SNATCHING A DAGGER FROM ONE OF THEM, AND RAISING IT.]  
Hadst thou a tongue to say,  
'She murdered her own father!'--I must do it!  
But never dream ye shall outlive him long!

OLIMPIO:

Stop, for God's sake!

MARZIO:

I will go back and kill him.

OLIMPIO:

Give me the weapon, we must do thy will. \_35

BEATRICE:

Take it! Depart! Return!

[EXEUNT OLIMPIO AND MARZIO.]

How pale thou art!

We do but that which 'twere a deadly crime

To leave undone.

LUCRETIA:

Would it were done!

BEATRICE:

Even whilst

That doubt is passing through your mind, the world

Is conscious of a change. Darkness and Hell \_40

Have swallowed up the vapour they sent forth

To blacken the sweet light of life. My breath

Comes, methinks, lighter, and the jellied blood

Runs freely through my veins. Hark!

[ENTER OLIMPIO AND MARZIO.]

He is...

OLIMPIO:

Dead!

MARZIO:

We strangled him that there might be no blood; \_45

And then we threw his heavy corpse i' the garden

Under the balcony; 'twill seem it fell.

BEATRICE [GIVING THEM A BAG OF COIN]:

Here, take this gold, and hasten to your homes.

And, Marzio, because thou wast only awed

By that which made me tremble, wear thou this! \_50

[CLOTHES HIM IN A RICH MANTLE.]

It was the mantle which my grandfather

Wore in his high prosperity, and men

Envied his state: so may they envy thine.

Thou wert a weapon in the hand of God

To a just use. Live long and thrive! And, mark, \_55

If thou hast crimes, repent: this deed is none.

[A HORN IS SOUNDED.]

LUCRETIA:

Hark, 'tis the castle horn: my God! it sounds

Like the last trump.



BEATRICE:

Some tedious guest is coming.

LUCRETIA:

The drawbridge is let down; there is a tramp  
Of horses in the court; fly, hide yourselves! \_60

[EXEUNT OLIMPIO AND MARZIO.]

BEATRICE:

Let us retire to counterfeit deep rest;  
I scarcely need to counterfeit it now:  
The spirit which doth reign within these limbs  
Seems strangely undisturbed. I could even sleep  
Fearless and calm: all ill is surely past. \_65

[EXEUNT.]

SCENE 4.4:

ANOTHER APARTMENT IN THE CASTLE.  
ENTER ON ONE SIDE THE LEGATE SAVELLA,  
INTRODUCED BY A SERVANT,  
AND ON THE OTHER LUCRETIA AND BERNARDO.

SAVELLA:

Lady, my duty to his Holiness  
Be my excuse that thus unseasonably  
I break upon your rest. I must speak with  
Count Cenci; doth he sleep?

LUCRETIA [IN A HURRIED AND CONFUSED MANNER]:

I think he sleeps;  
Yet, wake him not, I pray, spare me awhile, \_5  
He is a wicked and a wrathful man;  
Should he be roused out of his sleep to-night,  
Which is, I know, a hell of angry dreams,  
It were not well; indeed it were not well.  
Wait till day break...

[ASIDE.]

Oh, I am deadly sick! \_10

NOTE:

\_6 a wrathful edition 1821; wrathful editions 1819, 1839.

SAVELLA:

I grieve thus to distress you, but the Count  
Must answer charges of the gravest import,  
And suddenly; such my commission is.

LUCRETIA [WITH INCREASED AGITATION]:

I dare not rouse him: I know none who dare...  
'Twere perilous;...you might as safely waken \_15

A serpent; or a corpse in which some fiend  
Were laid to sleep.

SAVELLA:

Lady, my moments here  
Are counted. I must rouse him from his sleep,  
Since none else dare.

LUCRETIA [ASIDE]:

O, terror! O, despair!

[TO BERNARDO.]

Bernardo, conduct you the Lord Legate to  
Your father's chamber. \_20

[EXEUNT SAVELLA AND BERNARDO.]

[ENTER BEATRICE.]

BEATRICE:

'Tis a messenger  
Come to arrest the culprit who now stands  
Before the throne of unappealable God.  
Both Earth and Heaven, consenting arbiters,  
Acquit our deed.

LUCRETIA:

Oh, agony of fear! \_25  
Would that he yet might live! Even now I heard  
The Legate's followers whisper as they passed  
They had a warrant for his instant death.  
All was prepared by unforbidden means  
Which we must pay so dearly, having done. \_30  
Even now they search the tower, and find the body;  
Now they suspect the truth; now they consult  
Before they come to tax us with the fact;  
O, horrible, 'tis all discovered!

BEATRICE:

Mother,  
What is done wisely, is done well. Be bold \_35  
As thou art just. 'Tis like a truant child  
To fear that others know what thou hast done,  
Even from thine own strong consciousness, and thus  
Write on unsteady eyes and altered cheeks  
All thou wouldst hide. Be faithful to thyself, \_40  
And fear no other witness but thy fear.  
For if, as cannot be, some circumstance  
Should rise in accusation, we can blind  
Suspicion with such cheap astonishment,  
Or overbear it with such guiltless pride, \_45  
As murderers cannot feign. The deed is done,  
And what may follow now regards not me.  
I am as universal as the light;

Free as the earth-surrounding air; as firm  
As the world's centre. Consequence, to me,                                    \_50  
Is as the wind which strikes the solid rock,  
But shakes it not.

[A CRY WITHIN AND TUMULT.]

VOICES:  
Murder! Murder! Murder!

[ENTER BERNARDO AND SAVELLA.]

SAVELLA [TO HIS FOLLOWERS]:  
Go search the castle round; sound the alarm;  
Look to the gates, that none escape!

BEATRICE:  
What now?

BERNARDO:  
I know not what to say...my father's dead.                                    \_55

BEATRICE:  
How; dead! he only sleeps; you mistake, brother.  
His sleep is very calm, very like death;  
'Tis wonderful how well a tyrant sleeps.  
He is not dead?

BERNARDO:  
Dead; murdered.

LUCRETIA [WITH EXTREME AGITATION]:  
Oh no, no!  
He is not murdered though he may be dead;                                    \_60  
I have alone the keys of those apartments.

SAVELLA:  
Ha! Is it so?

BEATRICE:  
My Lord, I pray excuse us;  
We will retire; my mother is not well:  
She seems quite overcome with this strange horror.

[EXEUNT LUCRETIA AND BEATRICE.]

SAVELLA:  
Can you suspect who may have murdered him?                                    \_65

BERNARDO:  
I know not what to think.

SAVELLA:

Can you name any  
Who had an interest in his death?

BERNARDO:

Alas!

I can name none who had not, and those most  
Who most lament that such a deed is done;  
My mother, and my sister, and myself. \_70

SAVELLA:

'Tis strange! There were clear marks of violence.  
I found the old man's body in the moonlight  
Hanging beneath the window of his chamber,  
Among the branches of a pine: he could not  
Have fallen there, for all his limbs lay heaped \_75  
And effortless; 'tis true there was no blood...  
Favour me, Sir; it much imports your house  
That all should be made clear; to tell the ladies  
That I request their presence.

[EXIT BERNARDO.]

[ENTER GUARDS, BRINGING IN MARZIO.]

GUARD:

We have one.

OFFICER:

My Lord, we found this ruffian and another \_80  
Lurking among the rocks; there is no doubt  
But that they are the murderers of Count Cenci:

Each had a bag of coin; this fellow wore  
A gold-inwoven robe, which, shining bright  
Under the dark rocks to the glimmering moon \_85  
Betrayed them to our notice: the other fell  
Desperately fighting.

SAVELLA:

What does he confess?

OFFICER:

He keeps firm silence; but these lines found on him  
May speak.

SAVELLA:

Their language is at least sincere.

[READS.]

'To the Lady Beatrice. \_90

That the atonement of what my nature sickens to conjecture may soon  
arrive, I send thee, at thy brother's desire, those who will speak and  
do more than I dare write...

'Thy devoted servant, Orsino.'

[ENTER LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, AND BERNARDO.]

Knowest thou this writing, Lady?

BEATRICE:

No.

SAVELLA:

Nor thou? \_95

LUCRETIA [HER CONDUCT THROUGHOUT THE SCENE IS MARKED BY EXTREME AGITATION]:

Where was it found? What is it? It should be  
Orsino's hand! It speaks of that strange horror  
Which never yet found utterance, but which made  
Between that hapless child and her dead father  
A gulf of obscure hatred.

SAVELLA:

Is it so? \_100

Is it true, Lady, that thy father did  
Such outrages as to awaken in thee  
Unfilial hate?

BEATRICE:

Not hate, 'twas more than hate:  
This is most true, yet wherefore question me?

SAVELLA:

There is a deed demanding question done; \_105  
Thou hast a secret which will answer not.

BEATRICE:

What sayest? My Lord, your words are bold and rash.

SAVELLA:

I do arrest all present in the name  
Of the Pope's Holiness. You must to Rome.

LUCRETIA:

O, not to Rome! Indeed we are not guilty. \_110

BEATRICE:

Guilty! Who dares talk of guilt? My Lord,  
I am more innocent of parricide  
Than is a child born fatherless...Dear mother,  
Your gentleness and patience are no shield  
For this keen-judging world, this two-edged lie, \_115  
Which seems, but is not. What! will human laws,  
Rather will ye who are their ministers,  
Bar all access to retribution first,  
And then, when Heaven doth interpose to do

What ye neglect, arming familiar things \_120

To the redress of an unwonted crime,  
Make ye the victims who demanded it  
Culprits? 'Tis ye are culprits! That poor wretch

Who stands so pale, and trembling, and amazed,  
If it be true he murdered Cenci, was                    \_125  
A sword in the right hand of justest God.  
Wherefore should I have wielded it? Unless  
The crimes which mortal tongue dare never name  
God therefore scruples to avenge.

SAVELLA:  
You own  
That you desired his death?

BEATRICE:  
It would have been    \_130  
A crime no less than his, if for one moment  
That fierce desire had faded in my heart.  
'Tis true I did believe, and hope, and pray,  
Ay, I even knew...for God is wise and just,  
That some strange sudden death hung over him.                    \_135  
'Tis true that this did happen, and most true  
There was no other rest for me on earth,  
No other hope in Heaven...now what of this?

SAVELLA:  
Strange thoughts beget strange deeds; and here are both:  
I judge thee not.

BEATRICE:  
And yet, if you arrest me,   \_140  
You are the judge and executioner  
Of that which is the life of life: the breath  
Of accusation kills an innocent name,  
And leaves for lame acquittal the poor life  
Which is a mask without it. 'Tis most false                                 \_145  
That I am guilty of foul parricide;  
Although I must rejoice, for justest cause,  
That other hands have sent my father's soul  
To ask the mercy he denied to me.  
Now leave us free; stain not a noble house                                 \_150  
With vague surmises of rejected crime;  
Add to our sufferings and your own neglect  
No heavier sum: let them have been enough:  
Leave us the wreck we have.

SAVELLA:  
I dare not, Lady.  
I pray that you prepare yourselves for Rome:                                 \_155  
There the Pope's further pleasure will be known.

LUCRETIA:  
O, not to Rome! O, take us not to Rome!

BEATRICE:  
Why not to Rome, dear mother? There as here

Our innocence is as an armed heel  
To trample accusation. God is there                   \_160  
As here, and with His shadow ever clothes  
The innocent, the injured and the weak;  
And such are we. Cheer up, dear Lady, lean  
On me; collect your wandering thoughts. My Lord,  
As soon as you have taken some refreshment,               \_165  
And had all such examinations made  
Upon the spot, as may be necessary  
To the full understanding of this matter,  
We shall be ready. Mother; will you come?

LUCRETIA:  
Ha! they will bind us to the rack, and wrest               \_170  
Self-accusation from our agony!  
Will Giacomo be there? Orsino? Marzio?  
All present; all confronted; all demanding  
Each from the other's countenance the thing  
Which is in every heart! O, misery!                       \_175

[SHE FAINTS, AND IS BORNE OUT.]

SAVELLA:  
She faints: an ill appearance this.

BEATRICE:  
My Lord,  
She knows not yet the uses of the world.  
She fears that power is as a beast which grasps  
And loosens not: a snake whose look transmutes  
All things to guilt which is its nutriment.               \_180  
She cannot know how well the supine slaves  
Of blind authority read the truth of things  
When written on a brow of guilelessness:  
She sees not yet triumphant Innocence  
Stand at the judgement-seat of mortal man,               \_185  
A judge and an accuser of the wrong  
Which drags it there. Prepare yourself, my Lord;  
Our suite will join yours in the court below.

[EXEUNT.]

END OF ACT 4.

ACT 5.

SCENE 5.1:  
AN APARTMENT IN ORSINO'S PALACE.  
ENTER ORSINO AND GIACOMO.

GIACOMO:  
Do evil deeds thus quickly come to end?

O, that the vain remorse which must chastise  
Crimes done, had but as loud a voice to warn  
As its keen sting is mortal to avenge!  
O, that the hour when present had cast off                    \_5  
The mantle of its mystery, and shown  
The ghastly form with which it now returns  
When its scared game is roused, cheering the hounds  
Of conscience to their prey! Alas! Alas!  
It was a wicked thought, a piteous deed,                    \_10  
To kill an old and hoary-headed father.

ORSINO:  
It has turned out unluckily, in truth.

GIACOMO:  
To violate the sacred doors of sleep;  
To cheat kind Nature of the placid death  
Which she prepares for overworn age;                       \_15  
To drag from Heaven an unrepentant soul  
Which might have quenched in reconciling prayers  
A life of burning crimes...

ORSINO:  
You cannot say  
I urged you to the deed.

GIACOMO:  
O, had I never  
Found in thy smooth and ready countenance                \_20  
The mirror of my darkest thoughts; hadst thou  
Never with hints and questions made me look  
Upon the monster of my thought, until  
It grew familiar to desire...

ORSINO:  
'Tis thus  
Men cast the blame of their unprosperous acts             \_25  
Upon the abettors of their own resolve;  
Or anything but their weak, guilty selves.  
And yet, confess the truth, it is the peril  
In which you stand that gives you this pale sickness  
Of penitence; confess 'tis fear disguised                    \_30  
From its own shame that takes the mantle now  
Of thin remorse. What if we yet were safe?

GIACOMO:  
How can that be? Already Beatrice,  
Lucretia and the murderer are in prison.  
I doubt not officers are, whilst we speak,                \_35  
Sent to arrest us.

ORSINO:  
I have all prepared



For instant flight. We can escape even now,  
So we take fleet occasion by the hair.

GIACOMO:

Rather expire in tortures, as I may.  
What! will you cast by self-accusing flight \_40  
Assured conviction upon Beatrice?  
She, who alone in this unnatural work,  
Stands like God's angel ministered upon  
By fiends; avenging such a nameless wrong  
As turns black parricide to piety; \_45  
Whilst we for basest ends...I fear, Orsino,  
While I consider all your words and looks,  
Comparing them with your proposal now,  
That you must be a villain. For what end  
Could you engage in such a perilous crime, \_50  
Training me on with hints, and signs, and smiles,  
Even to this gulf? Thou art no liar? No,  
Thou art a lie! Traitor and murderer!  
Coward and slave! But no, defend thyself;  
[DRAWING.]  
Let the sword speak what the indignant tongue \_55  
Disdains to brand thee with.

ORSINO:

Put up your weapon.  
Is it the desperation of your fear  
Makes you thus rash and sudden with a friend,  
Now ruined for your sake? If honest anger  
Have moved you, know, that what I just proposed \_60  
Was but to try you. As for me, I think,  
Thankless affection led me to this point,  
From which, if my firm temper could repent,  
I cannot now recede. Even whilst we speak  
The ministers of justice wait below: \_65  
They grant me these brief moments. Now if you  
Have any word of melancholy comfort  
To speak to your pale wife, 'twere best to pass  
Out at the postern, and avoid them so.

NOTE:

\_58 a friend edition 1821; your friend edition 1839.

GIACOMO:

O, generous friend! How canst thou pardon me? \_70  
Would that my life could purchase thine!

ORSINO:

That wish  
Now comes a day too late. Haste; fare thee well!  
Hear'st thou not steps along the corridor?  
[EXIT GIACOMO.]  
I'm sorry for it; but the guards are waiting

At his own gate, and such was my contrivance \_75  
 That I might rid me both of him and them.  
 I thought to act a solemn comedy  
 Upon the painted scene of this new world,  
 And to attain my own peculiar ends  
 By some such plot of mingled good and ill \_80  
 As others weave; but there arose a Power  
 Which grasped and snapped the threads of my device  
 And turned it to a net of ruin...Ha!  
 [A SHOUT IS HEARD.]  
 Is that my name I hear proclaimed abroad?  
 But I will pass, wrapped in a vile disguise; \_85  
 Rags on my back, and a false innocence  
 Upon my face, through the misdeeming crowd  
 Which judges by what seems. 'Tis easy then  
 For a new name and for a country new,  
 And a new life, fashioned on old desires, \_90  
 To change the honours of abandoned Rome.  
 And these must be the masks of that within,  
 Which must remain unaltered...Oh, I fear  
 That what is past will never let me rest!  
 Why, when none else is conscious, but myself, \_95  
 Of my misdeeds, should my own heart's contempt  
 Trouble me? Have I not the power to fly  
 My own reproaches? Shall I be the slave  
 Of...what? A word? which those of this false world  
 Employ against each other, not themselves; \_100  
 As men wear daggers not for self-offence.  
 But if I am mistaken, where shall I  
 Find the disguise to hide me from myself,  
 As now I skulk from every other eye?

[EXIT.]

SCENE 5.2:

A HALL OF JUSTICE.

CAMILLO, JUDGES, ETC., ARE DISCOVERED SEATED;  
 MARZIO IS LED IN.

FIRST JUDGE:

Accused, do you persist in your denial?  
 I ask you, are you innocent, or guilty?  
 I demand who were the participators  
 In your offence? Speak truth, and the whole truth.

MARZIO:

My God! I did not kill him; I know nothing; \_5  
 Olimpio sold the robe to me from which  
 You would infer my guilt.

SECOND JUDGE:

Away with him!

FIRST JUDGE:

Dare you, with lips yet white from the rack's kiss  
Speak false? Is it so soft a questioner,  
That you would bandy lover's talk with it                    \_10  
Till it wind out your life and soul? Away!

MARZIO:

Spare me! O, spare! I will confess.

FIRST JUDGE:

Then speak.

MARZIO:

I strangled him in his sleep.

FIRST JUDGE:

Who urged you to it?

MARZIO:

His own son Giacomo, and the young prelate  
Orsino sent me to Petrella; there                                 \_15  
The ladies Beatrice and Lucretia  
Tempted me with a thousand crowns, and I  
And my companion forthwith murdered him.  
Now let me die.

FIRST JUDGE:

This sounds as bad as truth. Guards, there,  
Lead forth the prisoner!  
[ENTER LUCRETIA, BEATRICE AND GIACOMO, GUARDED.]  
Look upon this man;   \_20  
When did you see him last?

BEATRICE:

We never saw him.

MARZIO:

You know me too well, Lady Beatrice.

BEATRICE:

I know thee! How? where? when?

MARZIO:

You know 'twas I  
Whom you did urge with menaces and bribes  
To kill your father. When the thing was done                         \_25  
You clothed me in a robe of woven gold  
And bade me thrive: how I have thriven, you see.  
You, my Lord Giacomo, Lady Lucretia,  
You know that what I speak is true.  
[BEATRICE ADVANCES TOWARDS HIM;  
HE COVERS HIS FACE, AND SHRINKS BACK.]  
Oh, dart

The terrible resentment of those eyes \_30  
On the dead earth! Turn them away from me!  
They wound: 'twas torture forced the truth. My Lords,  
Having said this let me be led to death.

BEATRICE:  
Poor wretch, I pity thee: yet stay awhile.

CAMILLO:  
Guards, lead him not away.

BEATRICE:  
Cardinal Camillo, \_35  
You have a good repute for gentleness  
And wisdom: can it be that you sit here  
To countenance a wicked farce like this?  
When some obscure and trembling slave is dragged  
From sufferings which might shake the sternest heart \_40  
And bade to answer, not as he believes,  
But as those may suspect or do desire  
Whose questions thence suggest their own reply:  
And that in peril of such hideous torments  
As merciful God spares even the damned. Speak now \_45  
The thing you surely know, which is that you,  
If your fine frame were stretched upon that wheel,  
And you were told: 'Confess that you did poison  
Your little nephew; that fair blue-eyed child  
Who was the lodestar of your life: '--and though \_50  
All see, since his most swift and piteous death,  
That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time,  
And all the things hoped for or done therein  
Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief,  
Yet you would say, 'I confess anything:' \_55  
And beg from your tormentors, like that slave,  
The refuge of dishonourable death.  
I pray thee, Cardinal, that thou assert  
My innocence.

CAMILLO [MUCH MOVED]:  
What shall we think, my Lords?  
Shame on these tears! I thought the heart was frozen \_60  
Which is their fountain. I would pledge my soul  
That she is guiltless.

JUDGE:  
Yet she must be tortured.

CAMILLO:  
I would as soon have tortured mine own nephew  
(If he now lived he would be just her age;  
His hair, too, was her colour, and his eyes \_65  
Like hers in shape, but blue and not so deep)  
As that most perfect image of God's love

That ever came sorrowing upon the earth.  
She is as pure as speechless infancy!

JUDGE:

Well, be her purity on your head, my Lord,    \_70  
If you forbid the rack. His Holiness  
Enjoined us to pursue this monstrous crime  
By the severest forms of law; nay even  
To stretch a point against the criminals.  
The prisoners stand accused of parricide    \_75  
Upon such evidence as justifies  
Torture.

BEATRICE:

What evidence? This man's?

JUDGE:

Even so.

BEATRICE [TO MARZIO]:

Come near. And who art thou thus chosen forth  
Out of the multitude of living men  
To kill the innocent?

MARZIO:

I am Marzio,    \_80  
Thy father's vassal.

BEATRICE:

Fix thine eyes on mine;  
Answer to what I ask.  
[TURNING TO THE JUDGES.]  
I prithee mark  
His countenance: unlike bold calumny  
Which sometimes dares not speak the thing it looks,  
He dares not look the thing he speaks, but bends    \_85  
His gaze on the blind earth.  
[TO MARZIO.]  
What! wilt thou say  
That I did murder my own father?

MARZIO:

Oh!  
Spare me! My brain swims round...I cannot speak...  
It was that horrid torture forced the truth.  
Take me away! Let her not look on me!    \_90  
I am a guilty miserable wretch;  
I have said all I know; now, let me die!

BEATRICE:

My Lords, if by my nature I had been  
So stern, as to have planned the crime alleged,  
Which your suspicions dictate to this slave,    \_95

And the rack makes him utter, do you think  
I should have left this two-edged instrument  
Of my misdeed; this man, this bloody knife  
With my own name engraven on the heft,  
Lying unsheathed amid a world of foes,                     \_100  
For my own death? That with such horrible need  
For deepest silence, I should have neglected  
So trivial a precaution, as the making  
His tomb the keeper of a secret written  
On a thief's memory? What is his poor life?                     \_105  
What are a thousand lives? A parricide  
Had trampled them like dust; and, see, he lives!  
[TURNING TO MARZIO.]  
And thou...

MARZIO:

Oh, spare me! Speak to me no more!  
That stern yet piteous look, those solemn tones,  
Wound worse than torture.  
[TO THE JUDGES.]  
I have told it all;   \_110  
For pity's sake lead me away to death.

CAMILLO:

Guards, lead him nearer the Lady Beatrice;  
He shrinks from her regard like autumn's leaf  
From the keen breath of the serenest north.

BEATRICE:

O thou who tremblest on the giddy verge                     \_115  
Of life and death, pause ere thou answerest me;  
So mayst thou answer God with less dismay:  
What evil have we done thee? I, alas!  
Have lived but on this earth a few sad years,  
And so my lot was ordered, that a father                     \_120  
First turned the moments of awakening life  
To drops, each poisoning youth's sweet hope; and then  
Stabbed with one blow my everlasting soul;  
And my untainted fame; and even that peace  
Which sleeps within the core of the heart's heart;             \_125  
But the wound was not mortal; so my hate  
Became the only worship I could lift  
To our great father, who in pity and love,  
Armed thee, as thou dost say, to cut him off;  
And thus his wrong becomes my accusation;                     \_130  
And art thou the accuser? If thou hopest  
Mercy in heaven, show justice upon earth:  
Worse than a bloody hand is a hard heart.  
If thou hast done murders, made thy life's path  
Over the trampled laws of God and man,                     \_135  
Rush not before thy Judge, and say: 'My maker,  
I have done this and more; for there was one  
Who was most pure and innocent on earth;

And because she endured what never any  
Guilty or innocent endured before:                     \_140  
Because her wrongs could not be told, not thought;  
Because thy hand at length did rescue her;  
I with my words killed her and all her kin.'  
Think, I adjure you, what it is to slay  
The reverence living in the minds of men                     \_145  
Towards our ancient house, and stainless fame!  
Think what it is to strangle infant pity,  
Cradled in the belief of guileless looks,  
Till it become a crime to suffer. Think  
What 'tis to blot with infamy and blood                     \_150  
All that which shows like innocence, and is,  
Hear me, great God! I swear, most innocent,  
So that the world lose all discrimination  
Between the sly, fierce, wild regard of guilt,  
And that which now compels thee to reply                     \_155  
To what I ask: Am I, or am I not  
A parricide?

MARZIO:  
Thou art not!

JUDGE:  
What is this?

MARZIO:  
I here declare those whom I did accuse  
Are innocent. 'Tis I alone am guilty.

JUDGE:  
Drag him away to torments; let them be                     \_160  
Subtle and long drawn out, to tear the folds  
Of the heart's inmost cell. Unbind him not  
Till he confess.

MARZIO:  
Torture me as ye will:  
A keener pang has wrung a higher truth  
From my last breath. She is most innocent!                     \_165  
Bloodhounds, not men, glut yourselves well with me;  
I will not give you that fine piece of nature  
To rend and ruin.

NOTE:  
\_164 pang edition 1821; pain editions 1819, 1839.

[EXIT MARZIO, GUARDED.]

CAMILLO:  
What say ye now, my Lords?

JUDGE:

Let tortures strain the truth till it be white  
As snow thrice sifted by the frozen wind. \_170

CAMILLO:  
Yet stained with blood.

JUDGE [TO BEATRICE]:  
Know you this paper, Lady?

BEATRICE:  
Entrap me not with questions. Who stands here  
As my accuser? Ha! wilt thou be he,  
Who art my judge? Accuser, witness, judge,  
What, all in one? Here is Orsino's name; \_175  
Where is Orsino? Let his eye meet mine.  
What means this scrawl? Alas! ye know not what,  
And therefore on the chance that it may be  
Some evil, will ye kill us?

[ENTER AN OFFICER.]

OFFICER:  
Marzio's dead.

JUDGE:  
What did he say?

OFFICER:  
Nothing. As soon as we \_180  
Had bound him on the wheel, he smiled on us,  
As one who baffles a deep adversary;  
And holding his breath, died.

JUDGE:  
There remains nothing  
But to apply the question to those prisoners,  
Who yet remain stubborn.

CAMILLO:  
I overrule \_185  
Further proceedings, and in the behalf  
Of these most innocent and noble persons  
Will use my interest with the Holy Father.

JUDGE:  
Let the Pope's pleasure then be done. Meanwhile  
Conduct these culprits each to separate cells; \_190  
And be the engines ready; for this night  
If the Pope's resolution be as grave,  
Pious, and just as once, I'll wring the truth  
Out of those nerves and sinews, groan by groan.

[EXEUNT.]



SCENE 5.3:

THE CELL OF A PRISON.

BEATRICE IS DISCOVERED ASLEEP ON A COUCH.

ENTER BERNARDO.

BERNARDO:

How gently slumber rests upon her face,  
Like the last thoughts of some day sweetly spent  
Closing in night and dreams, and so prolonged.  
After such torments as she bore last night,  
How light and soft her breathing comes. Ay me!                     \_5  
Methinks that I shall never sleep again.  
But I must shake the heavenly dew of rest  
From this sweet folded flower, thus...wake, awake!  
What, sister, canst thou sleep?

BEATRICE [AWAKING]:

I was just dreaming  
That we were all in Paradise. Thou knowest                     \_10  
This cell seems like a kind of Paradise  
After our father's presence.

BERNARDO:

Dear, dear sister,  
Would that thy dream were not a dream! O God!  
How shall I tell?

BEATRICE:

What wouldst thou tell, sweet brother?

BERNARDO:

Look not so calm and happy, or even whilst                     \_15  
I stand considering what I have to say  
My heart will break.

BEATRICE:

See now, thou mak'st me weep:  
How very friendless thou wouldst be, dear child,  
If I were dead. Say what thou hast to say.

BERNARDO:

They have confessed; they could endure no more                     \_20  
The tortures...

BEATRICE:

Ha! What was there to confess?  
They must have told some weak and wicked lie  
To flatter their tormentors. Have they said  
That they were guilty? O white innocence,  
That thou shouldst wear the mask of guilt to hide                     \_25  
Thine awful and serenest countenance  
From those who know thee not!

[ENTER JUDGE WITH LUCRETIA AND GIACOMO, GUARDED.]

Ignoble hearts!

For some brief spasms of pain, which are at least  
As mortal as the limbs through which they pass,  
Are centuries of high splendour laid in dust? \_30

And that eternal honour which should live  
Sunlike, above the reek of mortal fame,  
Changed to a mockery and a byword? What!  
Will you give up these bodies to be dragged  
At horses' heels, so that our hair should sweep \_35

The footsteps of the vain and senseless crowd,  
Who, that they may make our calamity  
Their worship and their spectacle, will leave  
The churches and the theatres as void  
As their own hearts? Shall the light multitude \_40

Fling, at their choice, curses or faded pity,  
Sad funeral flowers to deck a living corpse,  
Upon us as we pass to pass away,  
And leave...what memory of our having been?  
Infamy, blood, terror, despair? O thou, \_45

Who wert a mother to the parentless,  
Kill not thy child! Let not her wrongs kill thee!  
Brother, lie down with me upon the rack,  
And let us each be silent as a corpse;  
It soon will be as soft as any grave. \_50

'Tis but the falsehood it can wring from fear  
Makes the rack cruel.

GIACOMO:

They will tear the truth  
Even from thee at last, those cruel pains:  
For pity's sake say thou art guilty now.

LUCRETIA:

Oh, speak the truth! Let us all quickly die; \_55  
And after death, God is our judge, not they;  
He will have mercy on us.

BERNARDO:

If indeed  
It can be true, say so, dear sister mine;  
And then the Pope will surely pardon you,  
And all be well.

JUDGE:

Confess, or I will warp \_60  
Your limbs with such keen tortures...

BEATRICE:

Tortures! Turn  
The rack henceforth into a spinning-wheel!  
Torture your dog, that he may tell when last  
He lapped the blood his master shed...not me!

My pangs are of the mind, and of the heart,                    \_65  
And of the soul; ay, of the inmost soul,  
Which weeps within tears as of burning gall  
To see, in this ill world where none are true,  
My kindred false to their deserted selves.  
And with considering all the wretched life                   \_70  
Which I have lived, and its now wretched end,  
And the small justice shown by Heaven and Earth  
To me or mine; and what a tyrant thou art,  
And what slaves these; and what a world we make,  
The oppressor and the oppressed...such pangs compel           \_75  
My answer. What is it thou wouldst with me?

JUDGE:

Art thou not guilty of thy father's death?

BEATRICE:

Or wilt thou rather tax high-judging God  
That He permitted such an act as that  
Which I have suffered, and which He beheld;                   \_80  
Made it unutterable, and took from it  
All refuge, all revenge, all consequence,  
But that which thou hast called my father's death?  
Which is or is not what men call a crime,  
Which either I have done, or have not done;                   \_85  
Say what ye will. I shall deny no more.  
If ye desire it thus, thus let it be,  
And so an end of all. Now do your will;  
No other pains shall force another word.

JUDGE:

She is convicted, but has not confessed.                   \_90  
Be it enough. Until their final sentence  
Let none have converse with them. You, young Lord,  
Linger not here!

BEATRICE:

Oh, tear him not away!

JUDGE:

Guards! do your duty.

BERNARDO [EMBRACING BEATRICE]:

Oh! would ye divide  
Body from soul?

OFFICER:

That is the headsman's business.                               \_95

[EXEUNT ALL BUT LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, AND GIACOMO.]

GIACOMO:

Have I confessed? Is it all over now?

No hope! No refuge! O weak, wicked tongue  
Which hast destroyed me, would that thou hadst been  
Cut out and thrown to dogs first! To have killed  
My father first, and then betrayed my sister;                    \_100  
Ay, thee! the one thing innocent and pure  
In this black, guilty world, to that which I  
So well deserve! My wife! my little ones!  
Destitute, helpless, and I...Father! God!  
Canst Thou forgive even the unforgiving,                        \_105  
When their full hearts break thus, thus!...

[COVERS HIS FACE AND WEEPS.]

LUCRETIA:  
O my child!  
To what a dreadful end are we all come!  
Why did I yield? Why did I not sustain  
Those torments? Oh, that I were all dissolved  
Into these fast and unavailing tears,                               \_110  
Which flow and feel not!

BEATRICE:  
What 'twas weak to do,  
'Tis weaker to lament, once being done;  
Take cheer! The God who knew my wrong, and made  
Our speedy act the angel of His wrath,  
Seems, and but seems, to have abandoned us.                     \_115  
Let us not think that we shall die for this.  
Brother, sit near me; give me your firm hand,  
You had a manly heart. Bear up! Bear up!  
O dearest Lady, put your gentle head  
Upon my lap, and try to sleep awhile:                             \_120  
Your eyes look pale, hollow, and overworn,  
With heaviness of watching and slow grief.  
Come, I will sing you some low, sleepy tune,  
Not cheerful, nor yet sad; some dull old thing,  
Some outworn and unused monotony,                               \_125  
Such as our country gossips sing and spin,  
Till they almost forget they live: lie down!  
So, that will do. Have I forgot the words?  
Faith! They are sadder than I thought they were.

SONG:  
False friend, wilt thou smile or weep                               \_130  
When my life is laid asleep?  
Little cares for a smile or a tear,  
The clay-cold corpse upon the bier!  
Farewell! Heighho!  
What is this whispers low?   \_135  
There is a snake in thy smile, my dear;  
And bitter poison within thy tear.

Sweet sleep, were death like to thee,

Or if thou couldst mortal be,  
I would close these eyes of pain; \_140  
When to wake? Never again.  
O World! Farewell!  
Listen to the passing bell!  
It says, thou and I must part,  
With a light and a heavy heart. \_145

[THE SCENE CLOSES.]

SCENE 5.4:

A HALL OF THE PRISON.

ENTER CAMILLO AND BERNARDO.

CAMILLO:

The Pope is stern; not to be moved or bent.  
He looked as calm and keen as is the engine  
Which tortures and which kills, exempt itself  
From aught that it inflicts; a marble form,  
A rite, a law, a custom: not a man. \_5  
He frowned, as if to frown had been the trick  
Of his machinery, on the advocates  
Presenting the defences, which he tore  
And threw behind, muttering with hoarse, harsh voice:  
'Which among ye defended their old father \_10  
Killed in his sleep?' Then to another: 'Thou  
Dost this in virtue of thy place; 'tis well.'  
He turned to me then, looking deprecation,  
And said these three words, coldly: 'They must die.'

BERNARDO:

And yet you left him not?

CAMILLO:

I urged him still; \_15  
Pleading, as I could guess, the devilish wrong  
Which prompted your unnatural parent's death.  
And he replied: 'Paolo Santa Croce  
Murdered his mother yester evening,  
And he is fled. Parricide grows so rife \_20  
That soon, for some just cause no doubt, the young  
Will strangle us all, dozing in our chairs.  
Authority, and power, and hoary hair  
Are grown crimes capital. You are my nephew,  
You come to ask their pardon; stay a moment; \_25  
Here is their sentence; never see me more  
Till, to the letter, it be all fulfilled.'

BERNARDO:

O God, not so! I did believe indeed  
That all you said was but sad preparation  
For happy news. Oh, there are words and looks \_30  
To bend the sternest purpose! Once I knew them,

Now I forget them at my dearest need.  
What think you if I seek him out, and bathe  
His feet and robe with hot and bitter tears?  
Importune him with prayers, vexing his brain \_35  
With my perpetual cries, until in rage  
He strike me with his pastoral cross, and trample  
Upon my prostrate head, so that my blood  
May stain the senseless dust on which he treads,  
And remorse waken mercy? I will do it! \_40  
Oh, wait till I return!

[RUSHES OUT.]

CAMILLO:  
Alas, poor boy!  
A wreck-devoted seaman thus might pray  
To the deaf sea.

[ENTER LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, AND GIACOMO, GUARDED.]

BEATRICE:  
I hardly dare to fear  
That thou bring'st other news than a just pardon.

CAMILLO:  
May God in heaven be less inexorable \_45  
To the Pope's prayers than he has been to mine.  
Here is the sentence and the warrant.

BEATRICE [WILDLY]:  
O  
My God! Can it be possible I have  
To die so suddenly? So young to go  
Under the obscure, cold, rotting, wormy ground! \_50  
To be nailed down into a narrow place;  
To see no more sweet sunshine; hear no more  
Blithe voice of living thing; muse not again  
Upon familiar thoughts, sad, yet thus lost--  
How fearful! to be nothing! Or to be... \_55  
What? Oh, where am I? Let me not go mad!  
Sweet Heaven, forgive weak thoughts! If there should be  
No God, no Heaven, no Earth in the void world;  
The wide, gray, lampless, deep, unpeopled world!  
If all things then should be...my father's spirit, \_60  
His eye, his voice, his touch surrounding me;  
The atmosphere and breath of my dead life!  
If sometimes, as a shape more like himself,  
Even the form which tortured me on earth,  
Masked in gray hairs and wrinkles, he should come \_65  
And wind me in his hellish arms, and fix  
His eyes on mine, and drag me down, down, down!  
For was he not alone omnipotent  
On Earth, and ever present? Even though dead,

Does not his spirit live in all that breathe,                         \_70  
And work for me and mine still the same ruin,  
Scorn, pain, despair? Who ever yet returned  
To teach the laws of Death's untrodden realm?  
Unjust perhaps as those which drive us now,  
Oh, whither, whither?

LUCRETIA:  
Trust in God's sweet love,   \_75  
The tender promises of Christ: ere night,  
Think, we shall be in Paradise.

BEATRICE:  
'Tis past!  
Whatever comes, my heart shall sink no more.  
And yet, I know not why, your words strike chill:  
How tedious, false, and cold seem all things. I                         \_80  
Have met with much injustice in this world;  
No difference has been made by God or man,  
Or any power moulding my wretched lot,  
'Twill be good or evil, as regarded me.  
I am cut off from the only world I know,                                 \_85  
From light, and life, and love, in youth's sweet prime.  
You do well telling me to trust in God;  
I hope I do trust in him. In whom else  
Can any trust? And yet my heart is cold.

[DURING THE LATTER SPEECHES GIACOMO HAS RETIRED CONVERSING WITH  
CAMILLO, WHO NOW GOES OUT;  
GIACOMO ADVANCES.]

GIACOMO:  
Know you not, Mother...Sister, know you not?                         \_90  
Bernardo even now is gone to implore  
The Pope to grant our pardon.

LUCRETIA:  
Child, perhaps  
It will be granted. We may all then live  
To make these woes a tale for distant years:  
Oh, what a thought! It gushes to my heart                                 \_95  
Like the warm blood.

BEATRICE:  
Yet both will soon be cold.  
Oh, trample out that thought! Worse than despair,  
Worse than the bitterness of death, is hope:  
It is the only ill which can find place  
Upon the giddy, sharp, and narrow hour                                 \_100  
Tottering beneath us. Plead with the swift frost  
That it should spare the eldest flower of spring:  
Plead with awakening earthquake, o'er whose couch  
Even now a city stands, strong, fair, and free;

Now stench and blackness yawn, like death. Oh, plead                                 \_105  
 With famine, or wind-walking Pestilence,  
 Blind lightning, or the deaf sea, not with man!  
 Cruel, cold, formal man; righteous in words,  
 In deeds a Cain. No, Mother, we must die:  
 Since such is the reward of innocent lives;                                 \_110  
 Such the alleviation of worst wrongs.  
 And whilst our murderers live, and hard, cold men,  
 Smiling and slow, walk through a world of tears  
 To death as to life's sleep; 'twere just the grave  
 Were some strange joy for us. Come, obscure Death,                                 \_115  
 And wind me in thine all-embracing arms!  
 Like a fond mother hide me in thy bosom,  
 And rock me to the sleep from which none wake.  
 Live ye, who live, subject to one another  
 As we were once, who now...

NOTE:  
 \_105 yawn edition 1821; yawns editions 1819, 1839.

[BERNARDO RUSHES IN.]

BERNARDO:  
 Oh, horrible!   \_120  
 That tears, that looks, that hope poured forth in prayer,  
 Even till the heart is vacant and despairs,  
 Should all be vain! The ministers of death  
 Are waiting round the doors. I thought I saw  
 Blood on the face of one...What if 'twere fancy?                                 \_125  
 Soon the heart's blood of all I love on earth  
 Will sprinkle him, and he will wipe it off  
 As if 'twere only rain. O life! O world!  
 Cover me! let me be no more! To see  
 That perfect mirror of pure innocence   \_130  
 Wherein I gazed, and grew happy and good,  
 Shivered to dust! To see thee, Beatrice,  
 Who made all lovely thou didst look upon...  
 Thee, light of life ... dead, dark! while I say, sister,  
 To hear I have no sister; and thou, Mother,   \_135  
 Whose love was as a bond to all our loves...  
 Dead! The sweet bond broken!

[ENTER CAMILLO AND GUARDS.]

They come! Let me  
 Kiss those warm lips before their crimson leaves  
 Are blighted...white...cold. Say farewell, before  
 Death chokes that gentle voice! Oh, let me hear   \_140  
 You speak!

NOTE:  
 \_136 was as a Rossetti cj.; was a editions 1819, 1821, 1839.

BEATRICE:



Farewell, my tender brother. Think  
Of our sad fate with gentleness, as now:  
And let mild, pitying thoughts lighten for thee  
Thy sorrow's load. Err not in harsh despair,  
But tears and patience. One thing more, my child:                    \_145  
For thine own sake be constant to the love  
Thou bearest us; and to the faith that I,  
Though wrapped in a strange cloud of crime and shame,  
Lived ever holy and unstained. And though  
Ill tongues shall wound me, and our common name                    \_150  
Be as a mark stamped on thine innocent brow  
For men to point at as they pass, do thou  
Forbear, and never think a thought unkind  
Of those, who perhaps love thee in their graves.  
So mayest thou die as I do; fear and pain                            \_155  
Being subdued. Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!

BERNARDO:  
I cannot say, farewell!

CAMILLO:  
Oh, Lady Beatrice!

BEATRICE:  
Give yourself no unnecessary pain,  
My dear Lord Cardinal. Here, Mother, tie  
My girdle for me, and bind up this hair                               \_160  
In any simple knot; ay, that does well.  
And yours I see is coming down. How often  
Have we done this for one another; now  
We shall not do it any more. My Lord,  
We are quite ready. Well, 'tis very well.                            \_165

THE END.

#### NOTE ON THE CENCI, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

The sort of mistake that Shelley made as to the extent of his own genius and powers, which led him deviously at first, but lastly into the direct track that enabled him fully to develop them, is a curious instance of his modesty of feeling, and of the methods which the human mind uses at once to deceive itself, and yet, in its very delusion, to make its way out of error into the path which Nature has marked out as its right one. He often incited me to attempt the writing a tragedy: he conceived that I possessed some dramatic talent, and he was always most earnest and energetic in his exhortations that I should cultivate any talent I possessed, to the utmost. I entertained a truer estimate of my powers; and above all (though at that time not exactly aware of the fact) I was far too young to have any chance of succeeding, even moderately, in a species of composition that requires a greater scope of experience in, and sympathy with, human passion than could then have fallen to my lot,--or than any perhaps, except Shelley, ever

possessed, even at the age of twenty-six, at which he wrote *The Cenci*.

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

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

We suffered a severe affliction in Rome by the loss of our eldest child, who was of such beauty and promise as to cause him deservedly to be the idol of our hearts. We left the capital of the world, anxious for a time to escape a spot associated too intimately with his presence and loss. (Such feelings haunted him when, in "*The Cenci*", he makes Beatrice speak to Cardinal Camillo of

'that fair blue-eyed child  
Who was the lodestar of your life:'--and say--  
All see, since his most swift and piteous death,  
That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time,  
And all the things hoped for or done therein

Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief.')

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

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

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

'The object of the present letter is to ask a favour of you. I have written a tragedy on a story well known in Italy, and, in my conception, eminently dramatic. I have taken some pains to make my play fit for representation, and those who have already seen it judge favourably. It is written without any of the peculiar feelings and opinions which characterize my other compositions; I have attended

simply to the impartial development of such characters as it is probable the persons represented really were, together with the greatest degree of popular effect to be produced by such a development. I send you a translation of the Italian manuscript on which my play is founded; the chief circumstance of which I have touched very delicately; for my principal doubt as to whether it would succeed as an acting play hangs entirely on the question as to whether any such a thing as incest in this shape, however treated, would be admitted on the stage. I think, however, it will form no objection; considering, first, that the facts are matter of history, and, secondly, the peculiar delicacy with which I have treated it. (In speaking of his mode of treating this main incident, Shelley said that it might be remarked that, in the course of the play, he had never mentioned expressly Cenci's worst crime. Every one knew what it must be, but it was never imaged in words--the nearest allusion to it being that portion of Cenci's curse beginning--

"That, if she have a child," etc.)

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

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

The play was accordingly sent to Mr. Harris. He pronounced the subject to be so objectionable that he could not even submit the part to Miss O'Neil for perusal, but expressed his desire that the author would write a tragedy on some other subject, which he would gladly accept. Shelley printed a small edition at Leghorn, to ensure its correctness; as he was much annoyed by the many mistakes that crept into his text when distance prevented him from correcting the press.

Universal approbation soon stamped "The Cenci" as the best tragedy of modern times. Writing concerning it, Shelley said: 'I have been cautious to avoid the introducing faults of youthful composition;

diffuseness, a profusion of inapplicable imagery, vagueness, generality, and, as Hamlet says, "words, words". There is nothing that is not purely dramatic throughout; and the character of Beatrice, proceeding, from vehement struggle, to horror, to deadly resolution, and lastly to the elevated dignity of calm suffering, joined to passionate tenderness and pathos, is touched with hues so vivid and so beautiful that the poet seems to have read intimately the secrets of the noble heart imaged in the lovely countenance of the unfortunate girl. The Fifth Act is a masterpiece. It is the finest thing he ever wrote, and may claim proud comparison not only with any contemporary, but preceding, poet. The varying feelings of Beatrice are expressed with passionate, heart-reaching eloquence. Every character has a voice that echoes truth in its tones. It is curious, to one acquainted with the written story, to mark the success with which the poet has inwoven the real incidents of the tragedy into his scenes, and yet, through the power of poetry, has obliterated all that would otherwise have shown too harsh or too hideous in the picture. His success was a double triumph; and often after he was earnestly entreated to write again in a style that commanded popular favour, while it was not less instinct with truth and genius. But the bent of his mind went the other way; and, even when employed on subjects whose interest depended on character and incident, he would start off in another direction, and leave the delineations of human passion, which he could depict in so able a manner, for fantastic creations of his fancy, or the expression of those opinions and sentiments, with regard to human nature and its destiny, a desire to diffuse which was the master passion of his soul.

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THE MASK OF ANARCHY.

WRITTEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE MASSACRE AT MANCHESTER.

[Composed at the Villa Valsovano near Leghorn--or possibly later, during Shelley's sojourn at Florence--in the autumn of 1819, shortly after the Peterloo riot at Manchester, August 16; edited with Preface by Leigh Hunt, and published under the poet's name by Edward Moxon, 1832 (Bradbury & Evans, printers). Two manuscripts are extant: a transcript by Mrs. Shelley with Shelley's autograph corrections, known as the 'Hunt manuscript'; and an earlier draft, not quite complete, in the poet's handwriting, presented by Mrs. Shelley to (Sir) John Bowring in 1826, and now in the possession of Mr. Thomas J. Wise (the 'Wise manuscript'). Mrs. Shelley's copy was sent to Leigh Hunt in 1819 with view to its publication in "The Examiner"; hence the name 'Hunt manuscript.' A facsimile of the Wise manuscript was published by the Shelley Society in 1887. Sources of the text are (1) the Hunt manuscript; (2) the Wise manuscript; (3) the editio princeps, editor Leigh Hunt, 1832; (4) Mrs. Shelley's two editions ("Poetical Works") of 1839. Of the two manuscripts Mrs. Shelley's transcript is the later and more authoritative.]

1.

As I lay asleep in Italy  
There came a voice from over the Sea,  
And with great power it forth led me  
To walk in the visions of Poesy.

2.

I met Murder on the way-- \_5  
He had a mask like Castlereagh--  
Very smooth he looked, yet grim;  
Seven blood-hounds followed him:

3.

All were fat; and well they might  
Be in admirable plight, \_10  
For one by one, and two by two,  
He tossed them human hearts to chew  
Which from his wide cloak he drew.

4.

Next came Fraud, and he had on,  
Like Eldon, an ermined gown; \_15  
His big tears, for he wept well,  
Turned to mill-stones as they fell.

5.

And the little children, who  
Round his feet played to and fro,  
Thinking every tear a gem, \_20  
Had their brains knocked out by them.

6.

Clothed with the Bible, as with light,  
And the shadows of the night,  
Like Sidmouth, next, Hypocrisy  
On a crocodile rode by. \_25

7.

And many more Destructions played  
In this ghastly masquerade,  
All disguised, even to the eyes,  
Like Bishops, lawyers, peers, or spies.

8.

Last came Anarchy: he rode \_30  
On a white horse, splashed with blood;  
He was pale even to the lips,  
Like Death in the Apocalypse.

9.

And he wore a kingly crown;  
And in his grasp a sceptre shone; \_35  
On his brow this mark I saw--

'I AM GOD, AND KING, AND LAW!'

10.

With a pace stately and fast,  
Over English land he passed,  
Trampling to a mire of blood \_40  
The adoring multitude.

11.

And a mighty troop around,  
With their trampling shook the ground,  
Waving each a bloody sword,  
For the service of their Lord. \_45

12.

And with glorious triumph, they  
Rode through England proud and gay,  
Drunk as with intoxication  
Of the wine of desolation.

13.

O'er fields and towns, from sea to sea, \_50  
Passed the Pageant swift and free,  
Tearing up, and trampling down;  
Till they came to London town.

14.

And each dweller, panic-stricken,  
Felt his heart with terror sicken \_55  
Hearing the tempestuous cry  
Of the triumph of Anarchy.

15.

For with pomp to meet him came,  
Clothed in arms like blood and flame,  
The hired murderers, who did sing \_60  
'Thou art God, and Law, and King.

16.

'We have waited, weak and lone  
For thy coming, Mighty One!  
Our purses are empty, our swords are cold,  
Give us glory, and blood, and gold.' \_65

17.

Lawyers and priests, a motley crowd,  
To the earth their pale brows bowed;  
Like a bad prayer not over loud,  
Whispering--'Thou art Law and God.'--

18.

Then all cried with one accord, \_70  
'Thou art King, and God, and Lord;

Anarchy, to thee we bow,  
Be thy name made holy now!

19.

And Anarchy, the Skeleton,  
Bowed and grinned to every one,                     \_75  
As well as if his education  
Had cost ten millions to the nation.

20.

For he knew the Palaces  
Of our Kings were rightly his;  
His the sceptre, crown, and globe,                     \_80  
And the gold-inwoven robe.

21.

So he sent his slaves before  
To seize upon the Bank and Tower,  
And was proceeding with intent  
To meet his pensioned Parliament                     \_85

22.

When one fled past, a maniac maid,  
And her name was Hope, she said:  
But she looked more like Despair,  
And she cried out in the air:

23.

'My father Time is weak and gray                     \_90  
With waiting for a better day;  
See how idiot-like he stands,  
Fumbling with his palsied hands!

24.

'He has had child after child,  
And the dust of death is piled                     \_95  
Over every one but me--  
Misery, oh, Misery!'

25.

Then she lay down in the street,  
Right before the horses' feet,  
Expecting, with a patient eye,                     \_100  
Murder, Fraud, and Anarchy.

26.

When between her and her foes  
A mist, a light, an image rose,  
Small at first, and weak, and frail  
Like the vapour of a vale:                     \_105

27.

Till as clouds grow on the blast,



Like tower-crowned giants striding fast,  
And glare with lightnings as they fly,  
And speak in thunder to the sky,

28.

It grew--a Shape arrayed in mail                             \_110  
Brighter than the viper's scale,  
And upborne on wings whose grain  
Was as the light of sunny rain.

29.

On its helm, seen far away,  
A planet, like the Morning's, lay;                             \_115  
And those plumes its light rained through  
Like a shower of crimson dew.

30.

With step as soft as wind it passed  
O'er the heads of men--so fast  
That they knew the presence there,                             \_120  
And looked,--but all was empty air.

31.

As flowers beneath May's footstep waken,  
As stars from Night's loose hair are shaken,  
As waves arise when loud winds call,  
Thoughts sprung where'er that step did fall.                             \_125

32.

And the prostrate multitude  
Looked--and ankle-deep in blood,  
Hope, that maiden most serene,  
Was walking with a quiet mien:

33.

And Anarchy, the ghastly birth,                             \_130  
Lay dead earth upon the earth;  
The Horse of Death tameless as wind  
Fled, and with his hoofs did grind  
To dust the murderers thronged behind.

34.

A rushing light of clouds and splendour,                             \_135  
A sense awakening and yet tender  
Was heard and felt--and at its close  
These words of joy and fear arose

35.

As if their own indignant Earth  
Which gave the sons of England birth                             \_140  
Had felt their blood upon her brow,  
And shuddering with a mother's throe

36.  
Had turned every drop of blood  
By which her face had been bedewed  
To an accent unwithstood,-- \_145  
As if her heart had cried aloud:

37.  
'Men of England, heirs of Glory,  
Heroes of unwritten story,  
Nurslings of one mighty Mother,  
Hopes of her, and one another; \_150

38.  
'Rise like Lions after slumber  
In unvanquishable number,  
Shake your chains to earth like dew  
Which in sleep had fallen on you--  
Ye are many--they are few. \_155

39.  
'What is Freedom?--ye can tell  
That which slavery is, too well--  
For its very name has grown  
To an echo of your own.

40.  
"Tis to work and have such pay \_160  
As just keeps life from day to day  
In your limbs, as in a cell  
For the tyrants' use to dwell,

41.  
'So that ye for them are made  
Loom, and plough, and sword, and spade, \_165  
With or without your own will bent  
To their defence and nourishment.

42.  
"Tis to see your children weak  
With their mothers pine and peak,  
When the winter winds are bleak,-- \_170  
They are dying whilst I speak.

43.  
"Tis to hunger for such diet  
As the rich man in his riot  
Casts to the fat dogs that lie  
Surfeiting beneath his eye; \_175

44.  
"Tis to let the Ghost of Gold  
Take from Toil a thousandfold  
More than e'er its substance could

In the tyrannies of old.

45.

'Paper coin--that forgery  
Of the title-deeds, which ye  
Hold to something of the worth  
Of the inheritance of Earth.

\_180

46.

"Tis to be a slave in soul  
And to hold no strong control  
Over your own wills, but be  
All that others make of ye.

\_185

47.

'And at length when ye complain  
With a murmur weak and vain  
'Tis to see the Tyrant's crew  
Ride over your wives and you  
Blood is on the grass like dew.

\_190

48.

'Then it is to feel revenge  
Fiercely thirsting to exchange  
Blood for blood--and wrong for wrong--  
Do not thus when ye are strong.

\_195

49.

'Birds find rest, in narrow nest  
When weary of their winged quest;  
Beasts find fare, in woody lair  
When storm and snow are in the air.

\_200

50.

'Asses, swine, have litter spread  
And with fitting food are fed;  
All things have a home but one--  
Thou, Oh, Englishman, hast none!

51.

'This is Slavery--savage men,  
Or wild beasts within a den  
Would endure not as ye do--  
But such ills they never knew.

\_205

52.

'What art thou Freedom? O! could slaves  
Answer from their living graves  
This demand--tyrants would flee  
Like a dream's dim imagery:

\_210

53.

'Thou art not, as impostors say,

A shadow soon to pass away,  
A superstition, and a name \_215  
Echoing from the cave of Fame.

54.

'For the labourer thou art bread,  
And a comely table spread  
From his daily labour come  
In a neat and happy home. \_220

55.

Thou art clothes, and fire, and food  
For the trampled multitude--  
No--in countries that are free  
Such starvation cannot be  
As in England now we see. \_225

56.

'To the rich thou art a check,  
When his foot is on the neck  
Of his victim, thou dost make  
That he treads upon a snake.

57.

Thou art Justice--ne'er for gold \_230  
May thy righteous laws be sold  
As laws are in England--thou  
Shield'st alike the high and low.

58.

'Thou art Wisdom--Freemen never  
Dream that God will damn for ever \_235  
All who think those things untrue  
Of which Priests make such ado.

59.

'Thou art Peace--never by thee  
Would blood and treasure wasted be  
As tyrants wasted them, when all \_240  
Leagued to quench thy flame in Gaul.

60.

'What if English toil and blood  
Was poured forth, even as a flood?  
It availed, Oh, Liberty,  
To dim, but not extinguish thee. \_245

61.

'Thou art Love--the rich have kissed  
Thy feet, and like him following Christ,  
Give their substance to the free  
And through the rough world follow thee,

62.  
'Or turn their wealth to arms, and make                    \_250  
War for thy beloved sake  
On wealth, and war, and fraud--whence they  
Drew the power which is their prey.

63.  
'Science, Poetry, and Thought  
Are thy lamps; they make the lot                         \_255  
Of the dwellers in a cot  
So serene, they curse it not.

64.  
'Spirit, Patience, Gentleness,  
All that can adorn and bless  
Art thou--let deeds, not words, express                 \_260  
Thine exceeding loveliness.

65.  
'Let a great Assembly be  
Of the fearless and the free  
On some spot of English ground  
Where the plains stretch wide around.                   \_265

66.  
'Let the blue sky overhead,  
The green earth on which ye tread,  
All that must eternal be  
Witness the solemnity.

67.  
'From the corners uttermost                             \_270  
Of the bounds of English coast;  
From every hut, village, and town  
Where those who live and suffer moan  
For others' misery or their own,

68.  
'From the workhouse and the prison  
Where pale as corpses newly risen,  
Women, children, young and old                         \_277  
Groan for pain, and weep for cold--

69.  
'From the haunts of daily life  
Where is waged the daily strife                         \_280  
With common wants and common cares  
Which sows the human heart with tares--

70.  
'Lastly from the palaces  
Where the murmur of distress  
Echoes, like the distant sound                             \_285

Of a wind alive around

71.

'Those prison halls of wealth and fashion,  
Where some few feel such compassion  
For those who groan, and toil, and wail  
As must make their brethren pale--

72.

'Ye who suffer woes untold,                     \_291  
Or to feel, or to behold  
Your lost country bought and sold  
With a price of blood and gold--

73.

'Let a vast assembly be,                         \_295  
And with great solemnity  
Declare with measured words that ye  
Are, as God has made ye, free--

74.

'Be your strong and simple words  
Keen to wound as sharpened swords,             \_300  
And wide as targes let them be,  
With their shade to cover ye.

75.

'Let the tyrants pour around  
With a quick and startling sound,  
Like the loosening of a sea,                     \_305  
Troops of armed emblazonry.

76.

'Let the charged artillery drive  
Till the dead air seems alive  
With the clash of clanging wheels,  
And the tramp of horses' heels.                 \_310

77.

'Let the fixed bayonet  
Gleam with sharp desire to wet  
Its bright point in English blood  
Looking keen as one for food.

78.

Let the horsemen's scimitars                     \_315  
Wheel and flash, like sphereless stars  
Thirsting to eclipse their burning  
In a sea of death and mourning.

79.

'Stand ye calm and resolute,  
Like a forest close and mute,                     \_320

With folded arms and looks which are  
Weapons of unvanquished war,

80.

'And let Panic, who outspeeds  
The career of armed steeds  
Pass, a disregarded shade                     \_325  
Through your phalanx undismayed.

81.

'Let the laws of your own land,  
Good or ill, between ye stand  
Hand to hand, and foot to foot,  
Arbiters of the dispute,                             \_330

82.

'The old laws of England--they  
Whose reverend heads with age are gray,  
Children of a wiser day;  
And whose solemn voice must be  
Thine own echo--Liberty!                             \_335

83.

'On those who first should violate  
Such sacred heralds in their state  
Rest the blood that must ensue,  
And it will not rest on you.

84.

'And if then the tyrants dare                     \_340  
Let them ride among you there,  
Slash, and stab, and maim, and hew,--  
What they like, that let them do.

85.

'With folded arms and steady eyes,  
And little fear, and less surprise,                     \_345  
Look upon them as they slay  
Till their rage has died away.

86.

Then they will return with shame  
To the place from which they came,  
And the blood thus shed will speak                     \_350  
In hot blushes on their cheek.

87.

'Every woman in the land  
Will point at them as they stand--  
They will hardly dare to greet  
Their acquaintance in the street.                     \_355

88.

'And the bold, true warriors  
 Who have hugged Danger in wars  
 Will turn to those who would be free,  
 Ashamed of such base company.

89.

'And that slaughter to the Nation \_360  
 Shall steam up like inspiration,  
 Eloquent, oracular;  
 A volcano heard afar.

90.

'And these words shall then become  
 Like Oppression's thundered doom \_365  
 Ringing through each heart and brain,  
 Heard again--again--again--

91.

'Rise like Lions after slumber  
 In unvanquishable number--  
 Shake your chains to earth like dew \_370  
 Which in sleep had fallen on you--  
 Ye are many--they are few.'

#### NOTES:

- \_15. Like Eldon Hunt manuscript; Like Lord Eldon Wise manuscript.
- \_15. ermined Hunt manuscript, Wise manuscript edition 1832;  
 ermine editions 1839.
- \_23 shadows]shadow editions 1839 only.
- \_29 or]and Wise manuscript only.
- \_35 And in his grasp Hunt manuscript, edition 1882;  
 In his hand Wise manuscript,  
 Hunt manuscript cancelled, edition 1839.
- \_36 On his]And on his edition 1832 only.
- \_51 the Hunt manuscript, edition 1832; that Wise manuscript.
- \_56 tempestuous]tremendous editions 1839 only.
- \_58 For with pomp]For from... Hunt manuscript, Wise manuscript.
- \_71 God]Law editions 1839 only.
- \_79 rightly Wise manuscript; nightly Hunt manuscript, editions 1832, 1839.
- \_93 Fumbling] Trembling editions 1839 only.
- \_105 a vale Hunt manuscript, Wise manuscript; the vale editions 1832, 1839.
- \_113 as]like editions 1839 only.
- \_116 its Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript; it editions 1832, 1839.
- \_121 but Wise MS; and Hunt manuscript, editions 1832, 1839.
- \_122 May's footstep Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript;  
 the footstep edition 1832; May's footsteps editions 1839.
- \_132-4 omit Wise manuscript.
- \_146 had cried Hunt manuscript, editions 1832, 1839;  
 cried out Wise manuscript.
- \_155 omit edition 1832 only.
- \_182 of]from Wise manuscript only.
- \_186 wills Hunt manuscript, editions 1832, 1839; will Wise manuscript.
- \_198 their Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript, editions 1839;



the edition 1832.

\_216 cave Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript, editions 1839;

caves edition 1832, Hunt manuscript cancelled.

\_220 In Wise manuscript, editions 1832, 1839; To Hunt manuscript.

(Note at stanza 49: The following stanza is found in the Wise manuscript and in editions 1839, but is wanting in the Hunt manuscript and in edition 1832:--

'Horses, oxen, have a home,  
When from daily toil they come;  
Household dogs, when the wind roars,  
Find a home within warm doors.'

\_233 the Hunt manuscript, editions 1832, 1839; both Wise manuscript.

\_234 Freeman Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript, editions 1839;

Freedom edition 1832.

\_235 Dream Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript, editions 1839;

Dreams edition 1832. damn]doom editions 1839 only.

\_248 Give Hunt manuscript, edition 1832;

Given Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript cancelled, editions 1839.

\_249 follow]followed editions 1839 only.

\_250 Or Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript; Oh editions 1832, 1839.

\_254 Science, Poetry, Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript;

Science, and Poetry editions 1832, 1839.

\_257 So Hunt manuscript, edition 1832;

Such they curse their Maker not Wise manuscript, editions 1839.

\_263 and]of edition 1832 only.

\_274 or]and edition 1832 only.

(Note to end of stanza 67: The following stanza is found (cancelled) at this place in the Wise manuscript:--

'From the cities where from caves,  
Like the dead from putrid graves,  
Troops of starvelings gliding come,  
Living Tenants of a tomb.'

\_282 sows Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript;

sow editions 1832, 1839.

\_297 measured Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript, edition 1832;

ne'er-said editions 1839.

\_322 of unvanquished Wise manuscript;

of an unvanquished Hunt manuscript, editions 1832, 1839.

\_346 slay Wise manuscript; Hunt manuscript, editions 1839;

stay edition 1832.

\_357 in wars Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript, edition 1832;

in the wars editions 1839.

NOTE ON THE MASK OF ANARCHY, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

Though Shelley's first eager desire to excite his countrymen to resist

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

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

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

'My Father Time is old and gray,'

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

\*\*\*

PETER BELL THE THIRD.

BY MICHING MALLECHO, ESQ.

Is it a party in a parlour,  
Crammed just as they on earth were crammed,  
Some sipping punch--some sipping tea;  
But, as you by their faces see,  
All silent, and all--damned!

"Peter Bell", by W. WORDSWORTH.

OPHELIA.--What means this, my lord?

HAMLET.--Marry, this is Miching Mallecho; it means mischief.

SHAKESPEARE.

[Composed at Florence, October, 1819, and forwarded to Hunt (November 2) to be published by C. & J. Ollier without the author's name; ultimately printed by Mrs. Shelley in the second edition of the "Poetical Works", 1839. A skit by John Hamilton Reynolds, "Peter Bell, a Lyrical Ballad", had already appeared (April, 1819), a few days before the publication of Wordsworth's "Peter Bell, a Tale". These productions were reviewed in Leigh Hunt's "Examiner" (April 26, May 3, 1819); and to the entertainment derived from his perusal of Hunt's criticisms the composition of Shelley's "Peter Bell the Third" is chiefly owing.]

DEDICATION.

TO THOMAS BROWN, ESQ., THE YOUNGER, H.F.

Dear Tom,

Allow me to request you to introduce Mr. Peter Bell to the respectable family of the Fudges. Although he may fall short of those very considerable personages in the more active properties which characterize the Rat and the Apostate, I suspect that even you, their historian, will confess that he surpasses them in the more peculiarly legitimate qualification of intolerable dulness.

You know Mr. Examiner Hunt; well--it was he who presented me to two of the Mr. Bells. My intimacy with the younger Mr. Bell naturally sprung from this introduction to his brothers. And in presenting him to you, I have the satisfaction of being able to assure you that he is considerably the dullest of the three.

There is this particular advantage in an acquaintance with any one of the Peter Bells, that if you know one Peter Bell, you know three Peter Bells; they are not one, but three; not three, but one. An awful mystery, which, after having caused torrents of blood, and having been hymned by groans enough to deafen the music of the spheres, is at length illustrated to the satisfaction of all parties in the theological world, by the nature of Mr. Peter Bell.

Peter is a polyhedric Peter, or a Peter with many sides. He changes colours like a chameleon, and his coat like a snake. He is a Proteus of a Peter. He was at first sublime, pathetic, impressive, profound; then dull; then prosy and dull; and now dull--oh so very dull! it is an ultra-legitimate dulness.

You will perceive that it is not necessary to consider Hell and the Devil as supernatural machinery. The whole scene of my epic is in 'this world which is'--so Peter informed us before his conversion to

"White Obi"--

'The world of all of us, AND WHERE  
WE FIND OUR HAPPINESS, OR NOT AT ALL.'

Let me observe that I have spent six or seven days in composing this sublime piece; the orb of my moonlike genius has made the fourth part of its revolution round the dull earth which you inhabit, driving you mad, while it has retained its calmness and its splendour, and I have been fitting this its last phase 'to occupy a permanent station in the literature of my country.'

Your works, indeed, dear Tom, sell better; but mine are far superior. The public is no judge; posterity sets all to rights.

Allow me to observe that so much has been written of Peter Bell, that the present history can be considered only, like the Iliad, as a continuation of that series of cyclic poems, which have already been candidates for bestowing immortality upon, at the same time that they receive it from, his character and adventures. In this point of view I have violated no rule of syntax in beginning my composition with a conjunction; the full stop which closes the poem continued by me being, like the full stops at the end of the Iliad and Odyssey, a full stop of a very qualified import.

Hoping that the immortality which you have given to the Fudges, you will receive from them; and in the firm expectation, that when London shall be an habitation of bitterns; when St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey shall stand, shapeless and nameless ruins, in the midst of an unpeopled marsh; when the piers of Waterloo Bridge shall become the nuclei of islets of reeds and osiers, and cast the jagged shadows of their broken arches on the solitary stream, some transatlantic commentator will be weighing in the scales of some new and now unimagined system of criticism, the respective merits of the Bells and the Fudges, and their historians. I remain, dear Tom, yours sincerely,

MICHING MALLECHO.

December 1, 1819.

P.S.--Pray excuse the date of place; so soon as the profits of the publication come in, I mean to hire lodgings in a more respectable street.

PROLOGUE.

Peter Bells, one, two and three,  
O'er the wide world wandering be.--  
First, the antenatal Peter,  
Wrapped in weeds of the same metre,  
The so-long-predestined raiment  
Clothed in which to walk his way meant

The second Peter; whose ambition  
 Is to link the proposition,  
 As the mean of two extremes--  
 (This was learned from Aldric's themes)                         \_10  
 Shielding from the guilt of schism  
 The orthodoxal syllogism;  
 The First Peter--he who was  
 Like the shadow in the glass  
 Of the second, yet unripe,   \_15  
 His substantial antitype.--

Then came Peter Bell the Second,  
 Who henceforward must be reckoned  
 The body of a double soul,  
 And that portion of the whole   \_20  
 Without which the rest would seem  
 Ends of a disjointed dream.--  
 And the Third is he who has  
 O'er the grave been forced to pass  
 To the other side, which is,--   \_25  
 Go and try else,--just like this.

Peter Bell the First was Peter  
 Smugger, milder, softer, neater,  
 Like the soul before it is  
 Born from THAT world into THIS.   \_30  
 The next Peter Bell was he,  
 Predevote, like you and me,  
 To good or evil as may come;  
 His was the severer doom,--  
 For he was an evil Cotter,   \_35  
 And a polygamic Potter.  
 And the last is Peter Bell,  
 Damned since our first parents fell,  
 Damned eternally to Hell--  
 Surely he deserves it well!   \_40

NOTES:  
\_10 Aldric's] i.e. Aldrich's--a spelling adopted here by Woodberry.

(\_36 The oldest scholiasts read--  
A dodecagamic Potter.  
This is at once more descriptive and more megalophonous,--but the  
alliteration of the text had captivated the vulgar ear of the herd of  
later commentators.--[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

PART 1.

DEATH.

1.  
And Peter Bell, when he had been

With fresh-imported Hell-fire warmed,  
Grew serious--from his dress and mien  
'Twas very plainly to be seen  
Peter was quite reformed. \_5

2.  
His eyes turned up, his mouth turned down;  
His accent caught a nasal twang;  
He oiled his hair; there might be heard  
The grace of God in every word  
Which Peter said or sang. \_10

3.  
But Peter now grew old, and had  
An ill no doctor could unravel:  
His torments almost drove him mad;--  
Some said it was a fever bad--  
Some swore it was the gravel. \_15

4.  
His holy friends then came about,  
And with long preaching and persuasion  
Convinced the patient that, without  
The smallest shadow of a doubt,  
He was predestined to damnation. \_20

5.  
They said--'Thy name is Peter Bell;  
Thy skin is of a brimstone hue;  
Alive or dead--ay, sick or well--  
The one God made to rhyme with hell;  
The other, I think, rhymes with you. \_25

6.  
Then Peter set up such a yell!--  
The nurse, who with some water gruel  
Was climbing up the stairs, as well  
As her old legs could climb them--fell,  
And broke them both--the fall was cruel. \_30

7.  
The Parson from the casement leapt  
Into the lake of Windermere--  
And many an eel--though no adept  
In God's right reason for it--kept  
Gnawing his kidneys half a year. \_35

8.  
And all the rest rushed through the door  
And tumbled over one another,  
And broke their skulls.--Upon the floor  
Meanwhile sat Peter Bell, and swore,  
And cursed his father and his mother; \_40

9.

And raved of God, and sin, and death,  
Blaspheming like an infidel;  
And said, that with his clenched teeth  
He'd seize the earth from underneath,  
And drag it with him down to hell. \_45

10.

As he was speaking came a spasm,  
And wrenched his gnashing teeth asunder;  
Like one who sees a strange phantasm  
He lay,--there was a silent chasm  
Between his upper jaw and under. \_50

11.

And yellow death lay on his face;  
And a fixed smile that was not human  
Told, as I understand the case,  
That he was gone to the wrong place:--  
I heard all this from the old woman. \_55

12.

Then there came down from Langdale Pike  
A cloud, with lightning, wind and hail;  
It swept over the mountains like  
An ocean,--and I heard it strike  
The woods and crags of Grasmere vale. \_60

13.

And I saw the black storm come  
Nearer, minute after minute;  
Its thunder made the cataracts dumb;  
With hiss, and clash, and hollow hum,  
It neared as if the Devil was in it. \_65

14.

The Devil WAS in it:--he had bought  
Peter for half-a-crown; and when  
The storm which bore him vanished, nought  
That in the house that storm had caught  
Was ever seen again. \_70

15.

The gaping neighbours came next day--  
They found all vanished from the shore:  
The Bible, whence he used to pray,  
Half scorched under a hen-coop lay;  
Smashed glass--and nothing more! \_75

PART 2.

## THE DEVIL.

1.

The Devil, I safely can aver,  
Has neither hoof, nor tail, nor sting;  
Nor is he, as some sages swear,  
A spirit, neither here nor there,  
In nothing--yet in everything. \_80

2.

He is--what we are; for sometimes  
The Devil is a gentleman;  
At others a bard bartering rhymes  
For sack; a statesman spinning crimes;  
A swindler, living as he can; \_85

3.

A thief, who cometh in the night,  
With whole boots and net pantaloons,  
Like some one whom it were not right  
To mention;--or the luckless wight  
From whom he steals nine silver spoons. \_90

4.

But in this case he did appear  
Like a slop-merchant from Wapping,  
And with smug face, and eye severe,  
On every side did perk and peer  
Till he saw Peter dead or napping. \_95

5.

He had on an upper Benjamin  
(For he was of the driving schism)  
In the which he wrapped his skin  
From the storm he travelled in,  
For fear of rheumatism. \_100

6.

He called the ghost out of the corse;--  
It was exceedingly like Peter,--  
Only its voice was hollow and hoarse--  
It had a queerish look of course--  
Its dress too was a little neater. \_105

7.

The Devil knew not his name and lot;  
Peter knew not that he was Bell:  
Each had an upper stream of thought,  
Which made all seem as it was not;  
Fitting itself to all things well. \_110

8.

Peter thought he had parents dear,



Brothers, sisters, cousins, cronies,  
In the fens of Lincolnshire;  
He perhaps had found them there  
Had he gone and boldly shown his \_115

9.  
Solemn phiz in his own village;  
Where he thought oft when a boy  
He'd clomb the orchard walls to pillage  
The produce of his neighbour's tillage,  
With marvellous pride and joy. \_120

10.  
And the Devil thought he had,  
'Mid the misery and confusion  
Of an unjust war, just made  
A fortune by the gainful trade  
Of giving soldiers rations bad-- \_125  
The world is full of strange delusion--

11.  
That he had a mansion planned  
In a square like Grosvenor Square,  
That he was aping fashion, and  
That he now came to Westmoreland \_130  
To see what was romantic there.

12.  
And all this, though quite ideal,--  
Ready at a breath to vanish,--  
Was a state not more unreal  
Than the peace he could not feel, \_135  
Or the care he could not banish.

13.  
After a little conversation,  
The Devil told Peter, if he chose,  
He'd bring him to the world of fashion  
By giving him a situation \_140  
In his own service--and new clothes.

14.  
And Peter bowed, quite pleased and proud,  
And after waiting some few days  
For a new livery--dirty yellow  
Turned up with black--the wretched fellow \_145  
Was bowled to Hell in the Devil's chaise.

PART 3.

HELL.

1.

Hell is a city much like London--  
A populous and a smoky city;  
There are all sorts of people undone,  
And there is little or no fun done;                     \_150  
Small justice shown, and still less pity.

2.

There is a Castles, and a Canning,  
A Cobbett, and a Castlereagh;  
All sorts of caitiff corpses planning  
All sorts of cozening for trepanning                     \_155  
Corpses less corrupt than they.

3.

There is a \*\*\*, who has lost  
His wits, or sold them, none knows which;  
He walks about a double ghost,  
And though as thin as Fraud almost--                     \_160  
Ever grows more grim and rich.

4.

There is a Chancery Court; a King;  
A manufacturing mob; a set  
Of thieves who by themselves are sent  
Similar thieves to represent;                             \_165  
An army; and a public debt.

5.

Which last is a scheme of paper money,  
And means--being interpreted--  
'Bees, keep your wax--give us the honey,  
And we will plant, while skies are sunny,                     \_170  
Flowers, which in winter serve instead.'

6.

There is a great talk of revolution--  
And a great chance of despotism--  
German soldiers--camps--confusion--  
Tumults--lotteries--rage--delusion--                     \_175  
Gin--suicide--and methodism;

7.

Taxes too, on wine and bread,  
And meat, and beer, and tea, and cheese,  
From which those patriots pure are fed,  
Who gorge before they reel to bed                             \_180  
The tenfold essence of all these.

8.

There are mincing women, mewing,  
(Like cats, who amant misere,)  
Of their own virtue, and pursuing

Their gentler sisters to that ruin,                     \_185  
Without which--what were chastity?(2)

9.  
Lawyers--judges--old hobnobbers  
Are there--bailiffs--chancellors--  
Bishops--great and little robbers--  
Rhymesters--pamphleteers--stock-jobbers--             \_190  
Men of glory in the wars,--

10.  
Things whose trade is, over ladies  
To lean, and flirt, and stare, and simper,  
Till all that is divine in woman  
Grows cruel, courteous, smooth, inhuman,             \_195  
Crucified 'twixt a smile and whimper.

11.  
Thrusting, toiling, wailing, moiling,  
Frowning, preaching--such a riot!  
Each with never-ceasing labour,  
Whilst he thinks he cheats his neighbour,             \_200  
Cheating his own heart of quiet.

12.  
And all these meet at levees;--  
Dinners convivial and political;--  
Suppers of epic poets;--teas,  
Where small talk dies in agonies;--             \_205  
Breakfasts professional and critical;

13.  
Lunches and snacks so aldermanic  
That one would furnish forth ten dinners,  
Where reigns a Cretan-tongued panic,  
Lest news Russ, Dutch, or Alemannic             \_210  
Should make some losers, and some winners--

45.  
At conversazioni--balls--  
Conventicles--and drawing-rooms--  
Courts of law--committees--calls  
Of a morning--clubs--book-stalls--             \_215  
Churches--masquerades--and tombs.

15.  
And this is Hell--and in this smother  
All are damnable and damned;  
Each one damning, damns the other;  
They are damned by one another,             \_220  
By none other are they damned.

16.

'Tis a lie to say, 'God damns!' (1)  
Where was Heaven's Attorney General  
When they first gave out such flams?  
Let there be an end of shams,                    \_225  
They are mines of poisonous mineral.

17.  
Statesmen damn themselves to be  
Cursed; and lawyers damn their souls  
To the auction of a fee;  
Churchmen damn themselves to see                    \_230  
God's sweet love in burning coals.

18.  
The rich are damned, beyond all cure,  
To taunt, and starve, and trample on  
The weak and wretched; and the poor  
Damn their broken hearts to endure                   \_235  
Stripe on stripe, with groan on groan.

19.  
Sometimes the poor are damned indeed  
To take,--not means for being blessed,--  
But Cobbett's snuff, revenge; that weed  
From which the worms that it doth feed                   \_240  
Squeeze less than they before possessed.

20.  
And some few, like we know who,  
Damned--but God alone knows why--  
To believe their minds are given  
To make this ugly Hell a Heaven;                    \_245  
In which faith they live and die.

21.  
Thus, as in a town, plague-stricken,  
Each man be he sound or no  
Must indifferently sicken;  
As when day begins to thicken,                    \_250  
None knows a pigeon from a crow,--

22.  
So good and bad, sane and mad,  
The oppressor and the oppressed;  
Those who weep to see what others  
Smile to inflict upon their brothers;                   \_255  
Lovers, haters, worst and best;

23.  
All are damned--they breathe an air,  
Thick, infected, joy-dispelling:  
Each pursues what seems most fair,  
Mining like moles, through mind, and there                   \_260

Scoop palace-caverns vast, where Care  
In throned state is ever dwelling.

PART 4.

SIN.

1.

Lo. Peter in Hell's Grosvenor Square,  
A footman in the Devil's service!  
And the misjudging world would swear                    \_265  
That every man in service there  
To virtue would prefer vice.

2.

But Peter, though now damned, was not  
What Peter was before damnation.  
Men oftentimes prepare a lot                                 \_270  
Which ere it finds them, is not what  
Suits with their genuine station.

3.

All things that Peter saw and felt  
Had a peculiar aspect to him;  
And when they came within the belt                         \_275  
Of his own nature, seemed to melt,  
Like cloud to cloud, into him.

4.

And so the outward world uniting  
To that within him, he became  
Considerably uninviting   \_280  
To those who, meditation slighting,  
Were moulded in a different frame.

5.

And he scorned them, and they scorned him;  
And he scorned all they did; and they  
Did all that men of their own trim                         \_285  
Are wont to do to please their whim,  
Drinking, lying, swearing, play.

6.

Such were his fellow-servants; thus  
His virtue, like our own, was built  
Too much on that indignant fuss                             \_290  
Hypocrite Pride stirs up in us  
To bully one another's guilt.

7.

He had a mind which was somehow  
At once circumference and centre

Of all he might or feel or know;                    \_295  
Nothing went ever out, although  
Something did ever enter.

8.  
He had as much imagination  
As a pint-pot;--he never could  
Fancy another situation,                            \_300  
From which to dart his contemplation,  
Than that wherein he stood.

9.  
Yet his was individual mind,  
And new created all he saw  
In a new manner, and refined                    \_305  
Those new creations, and combined  
Them, by a master-spirit's law.

10.  
Thus--though unimaginative--  
An apprehension clear, intense,  
Of his mind's work, had made alive                \_310  
The things it wrought on; I believe  
Wakening a sort of thought in sense.

11.  
But from the first 'twas Peter's drift  
To be a kind of moral eunuch,  
He touched the hem of Nature's shift,                \_315  
Felt faint--and never dared uplift  
The closest, all-concealing tunic.

12.  
She laughed the while, with an arch smile,  
And kissed him with a sister's kiss,  
And said--My best Diogenes,                        \_320  
I love you well--but, if you please,  
Tempt not again my deepest bliss.

13.  
"Tis you are cold--for I, not coy,  
Yield love for love, frank, warm, and true;  
And Burns, a Scottish peasant boy--                \_325  
His errors prove it--knew my joy  
More, learned friend, than you.

14.  
'Boeca bacciata non perde ventura,  
Anzi rinnuova come fa la luna:--  
So thought Boccaccio, whose sweet words might cure a        \_330  
Male prude, like you, from what you now endure, a  
Low-tide in soul, like a stagnant laguna.

15.

Then Peter rubbed his eyes severe.  
And smoothed his spacious forehead down  
With his broad palm;--'twixt love and fear,                    \_335  
He looked, as he no doubt felt, queer,  
And in his dream sate down.

16.

The Devil was no uncommon creature;  
A leaden-witted thief--just huddled  
Out of the dross and scum of nature;                       \_340  
A toad-like lump of limb and feature,  
With mind, and heart, and fancy muddled.

17.

He was that heavy, dull, cold thing,  
The spirit of evil well may be:  
A drone too base to have a sting;                         \_345  
Who gluts, and grimes his lazy wing,  
And calls lust, luxury.

18.

Now he was quite the kind of wight  
Round whom collect, at a fixed aera,  
Venison, turtle, hock, and claret,--                       \_350  
Good cheer--and those who come to share it--  
And best East Indian madeira!

19.

It was his fancy to invite  
Men of science, wit, and learning,  
Who came to lend each other light;                       \_355  
He proudly thought that his gold's might  
Had set those spirits burning.

20.

And men of learning, science, wit,  
Considered him as you and I  
Think of some rotten tree, and sit                         \_360  
Lounging and dining under it,  
Exposed to the wide sky.

21.

And all the while with loose fat smile,  
The willing wretch sat winking there,  
Believing 'twas his power that made                       \_365  
That jovial scene--and that all paid  
Homage to his unnoticed chair.

22.

Though to be sure this place was Hell;  
He was the Devil--and all they--  
What though the claret circled well,                       \_370

And wit, like ocean, rose and fell?--  
Were damned eternally.

PART 5.

GRACE.

1.

Among the guests who often stayed  
Till the Devil's petits-soupers,  
A man there came, fair as a maid,                     \_375  
And Peter noted what he said,  
Standing behind his master's chair.

2.

He was a mighty poet--and  
A subtle-souled psychologist;  
All things he seemed to understand,                     \_380  
Of old or new--of sea or land--  
But his own mind--which was a mist.

3.

This was a man who might have turned  
Hell into Heaven--and so in gladness  
A Heaven unto himself have earned;                     \_385  
But he in shadows undiscerned  
Trusted.--and damned himself to madness.

4.

He spoke of poetry, and how  
'Divine it was--a light--a love--  
A spirit which like wind doth blow                     \_390  
As it listeth, to and fro;  
A dew rained down from God above;

5.

'A power which comes and goes like dream,  
And which none can ever trace--  
Heaven's light on earth--Truth's brightest beam.'                     \_395  
And when he ceased there lay the gleam  
Of those words upon his face.

6.

Now Peter, when he heard such talk,  
Would, heedless of a broken pate,  
Stand like a man asleep, or balk                     \_400  
Some wishing guest of knife or fork,  
Or drop and break his master's plate.

7.

At night he oft would start and wake  
Like a lover, and began



In a wild measure songs to make                      \_405  
On moor, and glen, and rocky lake,  
And on the heart of man--

8.  
And on the universal sky--  
And the wide earth's bosom green,--  
And the sweet, strange mystery                      \_410  
Of what beyond these things may lie,  
And yet remain unseen.

9.  
For in his thought he visited  
The spots in which, ere dead and damned,  
He his wayward life had led;                      \_415  
Yet knew not whence the thoughts were fed  
Which thus his fancy crammed.

10.  
And these obscure remembrances  
Stirred such harmony in Peter,  
That, whensoever he should please,                      \_420  
He could speak of rocks and trees  
In poetic metre.

11.  
For though it was without a sense  
Of memory, yet he remembered well  
Many a ditch and quick-set fence;                      \_425  
Of lakes he had intelligence,  
He knew something of heath and fell.

12.  
He had also dim recollections  
Of pedlars tramping on their rounds;  
Milk-pans and pails; and odd collections                      \_430  
Of saws, and proverbs; and reflections  
Old parsons make in burying-grounds.

13.  
But Peter's verse was clear, and came  
Announcing from the frozen hearth  
Of a cold age, that none might tame                      \_435  
The soul of that diviner flame  
It augured to the Earth:

14.  
Like gentle rains, on the dry plains,  
Making that green which late was gray,  
Or like the sudden moon, that stains                      \_440  
Some gloomy chamber's window-panes  
With a broad light like day.

15.

For language was in Peter's hand  
Like clay while he was yet a potter;  
And he made songs for all the land, \_445  
Sweet both to feel and understand,  
As pipkins late to mountain Cotter.

16.

And Mr. --, the bookseller,  
Gave twenty pounds for some;--then scorning  
A footman's yellow coat to wear, \_450  
Peter, too proud of heart, I fear,  
Instantly gave the Devil warning.

17.

Whereat the Devil took offence,  
And swore in his soul a great oath then,  
'That for his damned impertinence \_455  
He'd bring him to a proper sense  
Of what was due to gentlemen!'

#### PART 6.

#### DAMNATION.

1.

'O that mine enemy had written  
A book!--cried Job!--a fearful curse,  
If to the Arab, as the Briton, \_460  
'Twas galling to be critic-bitten!--  
The Devil to Peter wished no worse.

2.

When Peter's next new book found vent,  
The Devil to all the first Reviews  
A copy of it slyly sent, \_465  
With five-pound note as compliment,  
And this short notice--'Pray abuse.'

3.

Then seriatim, month and quarter,  
Appeared such mad tirades.--One said--  
'Peter seduced Mrs. Foy's daughter, \_470  
Then drowned the mother in Ullswater,  
The last thing as he went to bed.'

4.

Another--'Let him shave his head!  
Where's Dr. Willis?--Or is he joking?  
What does the rascal mean or hope, \_475  
No longer imitating Pope,  
In that barbarian Shakespeare poking?'

5.

One more, 'Is incest not enough?  
And must there be adultery too?  
Grace after meat? Miscreant and Liar! \_480  
Thief! Blackguard! Scoundrel! Fool! hell-fire  
Is twenty times too good for you.

6.

'By that last book of yours WE think  
You've double damned yourself to scorn;  
We warned you whilst yet on the brink \_485  
You stood. From your black name will shrink  
The babe that is unborn.'

7.

All these Reviews the Devil made  
Up in a parcel, which he had  
Safely to Peter's house conveyed. \_490  
For carriage, tenpence Peter paid--  
Untied them--read them--went half mad.

8.

'What!' cried he, 'this is my reward  
For nights of thought, and days, of toil?  
Do poets, but to be abhorred \_495  
By men of whom they never heard,  
Consume their spirits' oil?

9.

'What have I done to them?--and who  
IS Mrs. Foy? 'Tis very cruel  
To speak of me and Betty so! \_500  
Adultery! God defend me! Oh!  
I've half a mind to fight a duel.

10.

'Or,' cried he, a grave look collecting,  
'Is it my genius, like the moon,  
Sets those who stand her face inspecting, \_505  
That face within their brain reflecting,  
Like a crazed bell-chime, out of tune?'

11.

For Peter did not know the town,  
But thought, as country readers do,  
For half a guinea or a crown, \_510  
He bought oblivion or renown  
From God's own voice (1) in a review.

12.

All Peter did on this occasion  
Was, writing some sad stuff in prose.

It is a dangerous invasion \_515  
When poets criticize; their station  
Is to delight, not pose.

13.

The Devil then sent to Leipsic fair  
For Born's translation of Kant's book;  
A world of words, tail foremost, where \_520  
Right--wrong--false--true--and foul--and fair  
As in a lottery-wheel are shook.

14.

Five thousand crammed octavo pages  
Of German psychologics,--he  
Who his furor verborum assuages \_525  
Thereon, deserves just seven months' wages  
More than will e'er be due to me.

15.

I looked on them nine several days,  
And then I saw that they were bad;  
A friend, too, spoke in their dispraise,-- \_530  
He never read them;--with amaze  
I found Sir William Drummond had.

16.

When the book came, the Devil sent  
It to P. Verbovale (2), Esquire,  
With a brief note of compliment, \_535  
By that night's Carlisle mail. It went,  
And set his soul on fire.

17.

Fire, which ex luce praebens fumum,  
Made him beyond the bottom see  
Of truth's clear well--when I and you, Ma'am, \_540  
Go, as we shall do, subter humum,  
We may know more than he.

18.

Now Peter ran to seed in soul  
Into a walking paradox;  
For he was neither part nor whole, \_545  
Nor good, nor bad--nor knave nor fool;  
--Among the woods and rocks

19.

Furious he rode, where late he ran,  
Lashing and spurring his tame hobby;  
Turned to a formal puritan, \_550  
A solemn and unsexual man,--  
He half believed "White Obi".

20.

This steed in vision he would ride,  
High trotting over nine-inch bridges,  
With Flibbertigibbet, imp of pride,                    \_555  
Mocking and mowing by his side--  
A mad-brained goblin for a guide--  
Over corn-fields, gates, and hedges.

21.

After these ghastly rides, he came  
Home to his heart, and found from thence                    \_560  
Much stolen of its accustomed flame;  
His thoughts grew weak, drowsy, and lame  
Of their intelligence.

22.

To Peter's view, all seemed one hue;  
He was no Whig, he was no Tory;                         \_565  
No Deist and no Christian he;--  
He got so subtle, that to be  
Nothing, was all his glory.

23.

One single point in his belief  
From his organization sprung,                             \_570  
The heart-enrooted faith, the chief  
Ear in his doctrines' blighted sheaf,  
That 'Happiness is wrong';

24.

So thought Calvin and Dominic;  
So think their fierce successors, who                     \_575  
Even now would neither stint nor stick  
Our flesh from off our bones to pick,  
If they might 'do their do.'

25.

His morals thus were undermined:--  
The old Peter--the hard, old Potter--                   \_580  
Was born anew within his mind;  
He grew dull, harsh, sly, unrefined,  
As when he tramped beside the Otter. (1)

26.

In the death hues of agony  
Lambently flashing from a fish,                         \_585  
Now Peter felt amused to see  
Shades like a rainbow's rise and flee,  
Mixed with a certain hungry wish(2).

27.

So in his Country's dying face  
He looked--and, lovely as she lay,                     \_590

Seeking in vain his last embrace,  
Wailing her own abandoned case,  
With hardened sneer he turned away:

28.

And coolly to his own soul said;--  
'Do you not think that we might make                    \_595  
A poem on her when she's dead;--  
Or, no--a thought is in my head--  
Her shroud for a new sheet I'll take:

29.

'My wife wants one.--Let who will bury  
This mangled corpse! And I and you,                    \_600  
My dearest Soul, will then make merry,  
As the Prince Regent did with Sherry,--'  
'Ay--and at last desert me too.'

30.

And so his Soul would not be gay,  
But moaned within him; like a fawn                    \_605  
Moaning within a cave, it lay  
Wounded and wasting, day by day,  
Till all its life of life was gone.

31.

As troubled skies stain waters clear,  
The storm in Peter's heart and mind                    \_610  
Now made his verses dark and queer:  
They were the ghosts of what they were,  
Shaking dim grave-clothes in the wind.

32.

For he now raved enormous folly,  
Of Baptisms, Sunday-schools, and Graves,                    \_615  
'Twould make George Colman melancholy  
To have heard him, like a male Molly,  
Chanting those stupid staves.

33.

Yet the Reviews, who heaped abuse  
On Peter while he wrote for freedom,                    \_620  
So soon as in his song they spy  
The folly which soothes tyranny,  
Praise him, for those who feed 'em.

34.

'He was a man, too great to scan;--  
A planet lost in truth's keen rays;--                    \_625  
His virtue, awful and prodigious;--  
He was the most sublime, religious,  
Pure-minded Poet of these days.'

35.

As soon as he read that, cried Peter,  
'Eureka! I have found the way \_630  
To make a better thing of metre  
Than e'er was made by living creature  
Up to this blessed day.'

36.

Then Peter wrote odes to the Devil;--  
In one of which he meekly said: \_635  
'May Carnage and Slaughter,  
Thy niece and thy daughter,  
May Rapine and Famine,  
Thy gorge ever cramming,  
Glut thee with living and dead! \_640

37.

'May Death and Damnation,  
And Consternation,  
Flit up from Hell with pure intent!  
Slash them at Manchester,  
Glasgow, Leeds, and Chester; \_645  
Drench all with blood from Avon to Trent.

38.

'Let thy body-guard yeomen  
Hew down babes and women,  
And laugh with bold triumph till Heaven be rent!  
When Moloch in Jewry \_650  
Munched children with fury,  
It was thou, Devil, dining with pure intent. (1)

PART 7.

DOUBLE DAMNATION.

1.

The Devil now knew his proper cue.--  
Soon as he read the ode, he drove  
To his friend Lord MacMurderchouse's, \_655  
A man of interest in both houses,  
And said:--'For money or for love,

2.

'Pray find some cure or sinecure;  
To feed from the superfluous taxes  
A friend of ours--a poet--fewer \_660  
Have fluttered tamer to the lure  
Than he.' His lordship stands and racks his

3.

Stupid brains, while one might count

As many beads as he had boroughs,--  
At length replies; from his mean front,                     \_665  
Like one who rubs out an account,  
Smoothing away the unmeaning furrows:

4.  
'It happens fortunately, dear Sir,  
I can. I hope I need require  
No pledge from you, that he will stir                     \_670  
In our affairs;--like Oliver.  
That he'll be worthy of his hire.'

5.  
These words exchanged, the news sent off  
To Peter, home the Devil hied,--  
Took to his bed; he had no cough,                     \_675  
No doctor,--meat and drink enough.--  
Yet that same night he died.

6.  
The Devil's corpse was leaded down;  
His decent heirs enjoyed his pelf,  
Mourning-coaches, many a one,                     \_680  
Followed his hearse along the town:--  
Where was the Devil himself?

7.  
When Peter heard of his promotion,  
His eyes grew like two stars for bliss:  
There was a bow of sleek devotion                     \_685  
Engendering in his back; each motion  
Seemed a Lord's shoe to kiss.

8.  
He hired a house, bought plate, and made  
A genteel drive up to his door,  
With sifted gravel neatly laid,--                     \_690  
As if defying all who said,  
Peter was ever poor.

9.  
But a disease soon struck into  
The very life and soul of Peter--  
He walked about--slept--had the hue                     \_695  
Of health upon his cheeks--and few  
Dug better--none a heartier eater.

10.  
And yet a strange and horrid curse  
Clung upon Peter, night and day;  
Month after month the thing grew worse,                     \_700  
And deadlier than in this my verse  
I can find strength to say.



11.

Peter was dull--he was at first  
Dull--oh, so dull--so very dull!  
Whether he talked, wrote, or rehearsed-- \_705  
Still with this dulness was he cursed--  
Dull--beyond all conception--dull.

12.

No one could read his books--no mortal,  
But a few natural friends, would hear him;  
The parson came not near his portal; \_710  
His state was like that of the immortal  
Described by Swift--no man could bear him.

13.

His sister, wife, and children yawned,  
With a long, slow, and drear ennui,  
All human patience far beyond; \_715  
Their hopes of Heaven each would have pawned,  
Anywhere else to be.

14.

But in his verse, and in his prose,  
The essence of his dulness was  
Concentred and compressed so close, \_720  
'Twould have made Guatimozin doze  
On his red gridiron of brass.

15.

A printer's boy, folding those pages,  
Fell slumbrously upon one side;  
Like those famed Seven who slept three ages. \_725  
To wakeful frenzy's vigil--rages,  
As opiates, were the same applied.

16.

Even the Reviewers who were hired  
To do the work of his reviewing,  
With adamantine nerves, grew tired;-- \_730  
Gaping and torpid they retired,  
To dream of what they should be doing.

17.

And worse and worse, the drowsy curse  
Yawned in him, till it grew a pest--  
A wide contagious atmosphere, \_735  
Creeping like cold through all things near;  
A power to infect and to infest.

18.

His servant-maids and dogs grew dull;  
His kitten, late a sportive elf;

The woods and lakes, so beautiful,                    \_740  
Of dim stupidity were full.  
All grew dull as Peter's self.

19.  
The earth under his feet--the springs,  
Which lived within it a quick life,  
The air, the winds of many wings,                    \_745  
That fan it with new murmurings,  
Were dead to their harmonious strife.

20.  
The birds and beasts within the wood,  
The insects, and each creeping thing,  
Were now a silent multitude;                       \_750  
Love's work was left unwrought--no brood  
Near Peter's house took wing.

21.  
And every neighbouring cottager  
Stupidly yawned upon the other:  
No jackass brayed; no little cur                    \_755  
Cocked up his ears;--no man would stir  
To save a dying mother.

22.  
Yet all from that charmed district went  
But some half-idiot and half-knave,  
Who rather than pay any rent,                     \_760  
Would live with marvellous content,  
Over his father's grave.

23.  
No bailiff dared within that space,  
For fear of the dull charm, to enter;  
A man would bear upon his face,                   \_765  
For fifteen months in any case,  
The yawn of such a venture.

24.  
Seven miles above--below--around--  
This pest of dulness holds its sway;  
A ghastly life without a sound;                   \_770  
To Peter's soul the spell is bound--  
How should it ever pass away?

NOTES:

(\_ 8 To those who have not duly appreciated the distinction between  
Whale and Russia oil, this attribute might rather seem to belong to  
the Dandy than the Evangelic. The effect, when to the windward, is  
indeed so similar, that it requires a subtle naturalist to  
discriminate the animals. They belong, however, to distinct  
genera.--[SHELLEY's NOTE.]

(\_183 One of the attributes in Linnaeus's description of the Cat. To a similar cause the caterwauling of more than one species of this genus is to be referred;--except, indeed, that the poor quadruped is compelled to quarrel with its own pleasures, whilst the biped is supposed only to quarrel with those of others.--[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

(\_186 What would this husk and excuse for a virtue be without its kernel prostitution, or the kernel prostitution without this husk of a virtue? I wonder the women of the town do not form an association, like the Society for the Suppression of Vice, for the support of what may be called the 'King, Church, and Constitution' of their order. But this subject is almost too horrible for a joke.--[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

(\_222 This libel on our national oath, and this accusation of all our countrymen of being in the daily practice of solemnly asseverating the most enormous falsehood, I fear deserves the notice of a more active Attorney General than that here alluded to.--[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

\_292 one Fleay cj., Rossetti, Forman, Dowden, Woodberry;  
out 1839, 2nd edition.

\_500 Betty]Emma 1839, 2nd edition. See letter from Shelley to Ollier,  
May 14, 1820 (Shelley Memorials, page 139).

(\_512 Vox populi, vox dei. As Mr. Godwin truly observes of a more famous saying, of some merit as a popular maxim, but totally destitute of philosophical accuracy.--[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

(\_534 Quasi, Qui valet verba:--i.e. all the words which have been, are, or may be expended by, for, against, with, or on him. A sufficient proof of the utility of this history. Peter's progenitor who selected this name seems to have possessed A PURE ANTICIPATED COGNITION of the nature and modesty of this ornament of his posterity.--[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

\_602-3 See Editor's Note.

(\_583 A famous river in the new Atlantis of the Dynastophylic Pantisocratists.--[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

(\_588 See the description of the beautiful colours produced during the agonizing death of a number of trout, in the fourth part of a long poem in blank verse, published within a few years. ["The Excursion", 8 2 568-71.--Ed.] That poem contains curious evidence of the gradual hardening of a strong but circumscribed sensibility, of the perversion of a penetrating but panic-stricken understanding. The author might have derived a lesson which he had probably forgotten from these sweet and sublime verses:--

'This lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,  
Taught both by what she (Nature) shows and what conceals,  
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride  
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.'--[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

( 652 It is curious to observe how often extremes meet. Cobbett and Peter use the same language for a different purpose: Peter is indeed a sort of metrical Cobbett. Cobbett is, however, more mischievous than Peter, because he pollutes a holy and how unconquerable cause with the principles of legitimate murder; whilst the other only makes a bad one ridiculous and odious.

If either Peter or Cobbett should see this note, each will feel more indignation at being compared to the other than at any censure implied in the moral perversion laid to their charge.--[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

#### NOTE ON PETER BELL THE THIRD, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

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

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

No poem contains more of Shelley's peculiar views with regard to the errors into which many of the wisest have fallen, and the pernicious effects of certain opinions on society. Much of it is beautifully written: and, though, like the burlesque drama of "Swellfoot", it must be looked on as a plaything, it has so much merit and poetry--so much of HIMSELF in it--that it cannot fail to interest greatly, and by right belongs to the world for whose instruction and benefit it was written.

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LETTER TO MARIA GISBORNE.

[Composed during Shelley's occupation of the Gisbornes' house at Leghorn, July, 1820; published in "Posthumous Poems", 1824. Sources of the text are (1) a draft in Shelley's hand, 'partly illegible' (Forman), amongst the Boscombe manuscripts; (2) a transcript by Mrs. Shelley; (3) the editio princeps, 1824; the text in "Poetical Works", 1839, 1st and 2nd editions. Our text is that of Mrs. Shelley's transcript, modified by the Boscombe manuscript. Here, as elsewhere in this edition, the readings of the editio princeps are preserved in the footnotes.]

LEGHORN, July 1, 1820.]

The spider spreads her webs, whether she be  
In poet's tower, cellar, or barn, or tree;  
The silk-worm in the dark green mulberry leaves  
His winding sheet and cradle ever weaves;  
So I, a thing whom moralists call worm,                    \_5  
Sit spinning still round this decaying form,  
From the fine threads of rare and subtle thought--  
No net of words in garish colours wrought  
To catch the idle buzzers of the day--  
But a soft cell, where when that fades away,                    \_10  
Memory may clothe in wings my living name  
And feed it with the asphodels of fame,  
Which in those hearts which must remember me  
Grow, making love an immortality.

Whoever should behold me now, I wist,                    \_15  
Would think I were a mighty mechanist,  
Bent with sublime Archimedean art  
To breathe a soul into the iron heart  
Of some machine portentous, or strange gin,  
Which by the force of figured spells might win                    \_20  
Its way over the sea, and sport therein;  
For round the walls are hung dread engines, such  
As Vulcan never wrought for Jove to clutch  
Ixion or the Titan:--or the quick  
Wit of that man of God, St. Dominic,                    \_25  
To convince Atheist, Turk, or Heretic,  
Or those in philanthropic council met,  
Who thought to pay some interest for the debt  
They owed to Jesus Christ for their salvation,  
By giving a faint foretaste of damnation                    \_30  
To Shakespeare, Sidney, Spenser, and the rest  
Who made our land an island of the blest,  
When lamp-like Spain, who now relumes her fire  
On Freedom's hearth, grew dim with Empire:--  
With thumbscrews, wheels, with tooth and spike and jag,                    \_35  
Which fishers found under the utmost crag  
Of Cornwall and the storm-encompassed isles,  
Where to the sky the rude sea rarely smiles  
Unless in treacherous wrath, as on the morn

When the exulting elements in scorn, \_40  
 Satiated with destroyed destruction, lay  
 Sleeping in beauty on their mangled prey,  
 As panthers sleep;--and other strange and dread  
 Magical forms the brick floor overspread,--  
 Proteus transformed to metal did not make \_45  
 More figures, or more strange; nor did he take  
 Such shapes of unintelligible brass,  
 Or heap himself in such a horrid mass  
 Of tin and iron not to be understood;  
 And forms of unimaginable wood, \_50  
 To puzzle Tubal Cain and all his brood:  
 Great screws, and cones, and wheels, and grooved blocks,  
 The elements of what will stand the shocks  
 Of wave and wind and time.--Upon the table  
 More knacks and quips there be than I am able \_55  
 To catalogize in this verse of mine:--  
 A pretty bowl of wood--not full of wine,  
 But quicksilver; that dew which the gnomes drink  
 When at their subterranean toil they swink,  
 Pledging the demons of the earthquake, who \_60  
 Reply to them in lava--cry halloo!  
 And call out to the cities o'er their head,--  
 Roofs, towers, and shrines, the dying and the dead,  
 Crash through the chinks of earth--and then all quaff  
 Another rouse, and hold their sides and laugh. \_65  
 This quicksilver no gnome has drunk--within  
 The walnut bowl it lies, veined and thin,  
 In colour like the wake of light that stains  
 The Tuscan deep, when from the moist moon rains  
 The inmost shower of its white fire--the breeze \_70  
 Is still--blue Heaven smiles over the pale seas.  
 And in this bowl of quicksilver--for I  
 Yield to the impulse of an infancy  
 Outlasting manhood--I have made to float  
 A rude idealism of a paper boat:-- \_75  
 A hollow screw with cogs--Henry will know  
 The thing I mean and laugh at me,--if so  
 He fears not I should do more mischief.--Next  
 Lie bills and calculations much perplexed,  
 With steam-boats, frigates, and machinery quaint \_80  
 Traced over them in blue and yellow paint.  
 Then comes a range of mathematical  
 Instruments, for plans nautical and statical,  
 A heap of rosin, a queer broken glass  
 With ink in it;--a china cup that was \_85  
 What it will never be again, I think,--  
 A thing from which sweet lips were wont to drink  
 The liquor doctors rail at--and which I  
 Will quaff in spite of them--and when we die  
 We'll toss up who died first of drinking tea, \_90  
 And cry out,--'Heads or tails?' where'er we be.  
 Near that a dusty paint-box, some odd hooks,

A half-burnt match, an ivory block, three books,  
Where conic sections, spherics, logarithms,  
To great Laplace, from Saunderson and Sims,                    \_95  
Lie heaped in their harmonious disarray  
Of figures,--disentangle them who may.  
Baron de Tott's Memoirs beside them lie,  
And some odd volumes of old chemistry.  
Near those a most inexplicable thing,                               \_100  
With lead in the middle--I'm conjecturing  
How to make Henry understand; but no--  
I'll leave, as Spenser says, with many mo,  
This secret in the pregnant womb of time,  
Too vast a matter for so weak a rhyme.                               \_105

And here like some weird Archimage sit I,  
Plotting dark spells, and devilish enginery,  
The self-impelling steam-wheels of the mind  
Which pump up oaths from clergymen, and grind  
The gentle spirit of our meek reviews                               \_110  
Into a powdery foam of salt abuse,  
Ruffling the ocean of their self-content;--  
I sit--and smile or sigh as is my bent,  
But not for them--Libeccio rushes round  
With an inconstant and an idle sound,                               \_115  
I heed him more than them--the thunder-smoke  
Is gathering on the mountains, like a cloak  
Folded athwart their shoulders broad and bare;  
The ripe corn under the undulating air  
Undulates like an ocean;--and the vines                               \_120  
Are trembling wide in all their trellised lines--  
The murmur of the awakening sea doth fill  
The empty pauses of the blast;--the hill  
Looks hoary through the white electric rain,  
And from the glens beyond, in sullen strain,                               \_125  
The interrupted thunder howls; above  
One chasm of Heaven smiles, like the eye of Love  
On the unquiet world;--while such things are,  
How could one worth your friendship heed the war  
Of worms? the shriek of the world's carrion jays,                       \_130  
Their censure, or their wonder, or their praise?

You are not here! the quaint witch Memory sees,  
In vacant chairs, your absent images,  
And points where once you sat, and now should be  
But are not.--I demand if ever we                               \_135  
Shall meet as then we met;--and she replies.  
Veiling in awe her second-sighted eyes;  
'I know the past alone--but summon home  
My sister Hope,--she speaks of all to come.'  
But I, an old diviner, who knew well                               \_140  
Every false verse of that sweet oracle,  
Turned to the sad enchantress once again,  
And sought a respite from my gentle pain,

In citing every passage o'er and o'er  
 Of our communion--how on the sea-shore \_145  
 We watched the ocean and the sky together,  
 Under the roof of blue Italian weather;  
 How I ran home through last year's thunder-storm,  
 And felt the transverse lightning linger warm  
 Upon my cheek--and how we often made \_150  
 Feasts for each other, where good will outweighed  
 The frugal luxury of our country cheer,  
 As well it might, were it less firm and clear  
 Than ours must ever be;--and how we spun  
 A shroud of talk to hide us from the sun \_155  
 Of this familiar life, which seems to be  
 But is not:--or is but quaint mockery  
 Of all we would believe, and sadly blame  
 The jarring and inexplicable frame  
 Of this wrong world:--and then anatomize \_160  
 The purposes and thoughts of men whose eyes  
 Were closed in distant years;--or widely guess  
 The issue of the earth's great business,  
 When we shall be as we no longer are--  
 Like babbling gossips safe, who hear the war \_165  
 Of winds, and sigh, but tremble not;--or how  
 You listened to some interrupted flow  
 Of visionary rhyme,--in joy and pain  
 Struck from the inmost fountains of my brain,  
 With little skill perhaps;--or how we sought \_170  
 Those deepest wells of passion or of thought  
 Wrought by wise poets in the waste of years,  
 Staining their sacred waters with our tears;  
 Quenching a thirst ever to be renewed!  
 Or how I, wisest lady! then ended \_175  
 The language of a land which now is free,  
 And, winged with thoughts of truth and majesty,  
 Flits round the tyrant's sceptre like a cloud,  
 And bursts the peopled prisons, and cries aloud,  
 'My name is Legion!'--that majestic tongue \_180  
 Which Calderon over the desert flung  
 Of ages and of nations; and which found  
 An echo in our hearts, and with the sound  
 Startled oblivion;--thou wert then to me  
 As is a nurse--when inarticulately \_185  
 A child would talk as its grown parents do.  
 If living winds the rapid clouds pursue,  
 If hawks chase doves through the aethereal way,  
 Huntsmen the innocent deer, and beasts their prey,  
 Why should not we rouse with the spirit's blast \_190  
 Out of the forest of the pathless past  
 These recollected pleasures?  
 You are now  
 In London, that great sea, whose ebb and flow  
 At once is deaf and loud, and on the shore  
 Vomits its wrecks, and still howls on for more. \_195



Yet in its depth what treasures! You will see  
 That which was Godwin,--greater none than he  
 Though fallen--and fallen on evil times--to stand  
 Among the spirits of our age and land,  
 Before the dread tribunal of "to come"                     \_200  
 The foremost,--while Rebuke cowers pale and dumb.  
 You will see Coleridge--he who sits obscure  
 In the exceeding lustre and the pure  
 Intense irradiation of a mind,  
 Which, with its own internal lightning blind,                     \_200  
 Flags wearily through darkness and despair--  
 A cloud-encircled meteor of the air,  
 A hooded eagle among blinking owls.--  
 You will see Hunt--one of those happy souls  
 Which are the salt of the earth, and without whom                     \_210  
 This world would smell like what it is--a tomb;  
 Who is, what others seem; his room no doubt  
 Is still adorned with many a cast from Shout,  
 With graceful flowers tastefully placed about;  
 And coronals of bay from ribbons hung,                     \_215  
 And brighter wreaths in neat disorder flung;  
 The gifts of the most learned among some dozens  
 Of female friends, sisters-in-law, and cousins.  
 And there is he with his eternal puns,  
 Which beat the dullest brain for smiles, like duns                     \_220  
 Thundering for money at a poet's door;  
 Alas! it is no use to say, 'I'm poor!'  
 Or oft in graver mood, when he will look  
 Things wiser than were ever read in book,  
 Except in Shakespeare's wisest tenderness.--                     \_225  
 You will see Hogg,--and I cannot express  
 His virtues,--though I know that they are great,  
 Because he locks, then barricades the gate  
 Within which they inhabit;--of his wit  
 And wisdom, you'll cry out when you are bit.                     \_230  
 He is a pearl within an oyster shell.  
 One of the richest of the deep;--and there  
 Is English Peacock, with his mountain Fair,  
 Turned into a Flamingo;--that shy bird  
 That gleams i' the Indian air--have you not heard                     \_235  
 When a man marries, dies, or turns Hindoo,  
 His best friends hear no more of him?--but you  
 Will see him, and will like him too, I hope,  
 With the milk-white Snowdonian Antelope  
 Matched with this cameleopard--his fine wit                     \_240  
 Makes such a wound, the knife is lost in it;  
 A strain too learned for a shallow age,  
 Too wise for selfish bigots; let his page,  
 Which charms the chosen spirits of the time,  
 Fold itself up for the serener clime                     \_245  
 Of years to come, and find its recompense  
 In that just expectation.--Wit and sense,  
 Virtue and human knowledge; all that might

Make this dull world a business of delight,  
Are all combined in Horace Smith.--And these.                     \_250  
With some exceptions, which I need not tease  
Your patience by descanting on,--are all  
You and I know in London.

I recall  
My thoughts, and bid you look upon the night.  
As water does a sponge, so the moonlight                     \_255  
Fills the void, hollow, universal air--  
What see you?--unpavilioned Heaven is fair,  
Whether the moon, into her chamber gone,  
Leaves midnight to the golden stars, or wan  
Climbs with diminished beams the azure steep;                     \_260

Or whether clouds sail o'er the inverse deep,  
Piloted by the many-wandering blast,  
And the rare stars rush through them dim and fast:--  
All this is beautiful in every land.--

But what see you beside?--a shabby stand                     \_265  
Of Hackney coaches--a brick house or wall  
Fencing some lonely court, white with the scrawl  
Of our unhappy politics;--or worse--

A wretched woman reeling by, whose curse  
Mixed with the watchman's, partner of her trade,                     \_270  
You must accept in place of serenade--  
Or yellow-haired Pollonia murmuring  
To Henry, some unutterable thing.

I see a chaos of green leaves and fruit  
Built round dark caverns, even to the root                     \_275  
Of the living stems that feed them--in whose bowers  
There sleep in their dark dew the folded flowers;

Beyond, the surface of the unsickled corn  
Trembles not in the slumbering air, and borne  
In circles quaint, and ever-changing dance,                     \_280  
Like winged stars the fire-flies flash and glance,

Pale in the open moonshine, but each one  
Under the dark trees seems a little sun,  
A meteor tamed; a fixed star gone astray  
From the silver regions of the milky way;--                     \_285

Afar the Contadino's song is heard,  
Rude, but made sweet by distance--and a bird  
Which cannot be the Nightingale, and yet  
I know none else that sings so sweet as it  
At this late hour;--and then all is still--                     \_290  
Now--Italy or London, which you will!

Next winter you must pass with me; I'll have  
My house by that time turned into a grave  
Of dead despondence and low-thoughted care,  
And all the dreams which our tormentors are;                     \_295  
Oh! that Hunt, Hogg, Peacock, and Smith were there,  
With everything belonging to them fair!--  
We will have books, Spanish, Italian, Greek;  
And ask one week to make another week

As like his father, as I'm unlike mine,                     \_300  
Which is not his fault, as you may divine.  
Though we eat little flesh and drink no wine,  
Yet let's be merry: we'll have tea and toast;  
Custards for supper, and an endless host  
Of syllabubs and jellies and mince-pies,                     \_305  
And other such lady-like luxuries,--  
Feasting on which we will philosophize!  
And we'll have fires out of the Grand Duke's wood,  
To thaw the six weeks' winter in our blood.  
And then we'll talk;--what shall we talk about?             \_310  
Oh! there are themes enough for many a bout  
Of thought-entangled descant;--as to nerves--  
With cones and parallelograms and curves  
I've sworn to strangle them if once they dare  
To bother me--when you are with me there.                 \_315  
And they shall never more sip laudanum,  
From Helicon or Himeros (1);--well, come,  
And in despite of God and of the devil,  
We'll make our friendly philosophic revel  
Outlast the leafless time; till buds and flowers             \_320  
Warn the obscure inevitable hours,  
Sweet meeting by sad parting to renew;--  
'To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.'

NOTES:

- \_13 must Bos. manuscript; most edition 1824.
- \_27 philanthropic Bos. manuscript; philosophic edition 1824.
- \_29 so 1839, 2nd edition; They owed... edition 1824.
- \_36 Which fishers Bos. manuscript; Which fishes edition 1824;  
With fishes editions 1839.
- \_38 rarely transcript; seldom editions 1824, 1839.
- \_61 lava--cry]lava-cry editions 1824, 1839.
- \_63 towers transcript; towns editions 1824, 1839.
- \_84 queer Bos. manuscript; green transcript, editions 1824, 1839.
- \_92 odd hooks transcript; old books editions 1839 (an evident misprint);  
old hooks edition 1824.
- \_93 A]An edition 1824.
- \_100 those transcript; them editions 1824, 1839.
- \_101 lead Bos. manuscript; least transcript, editions 1824, 1839.
- \_127 eye Bos. manuscript, transcript, editions 1839; age edition 1824.
- \_140 knew Bos. manuscript; know transcript, editions 1824, 1839.
- \_144 citing Bos. manuscript; acting transcript, editions 1824, 1839.
- \_151 Feasts transcript; Treats editions 1824, 1839.
- \_153 As well it]As it well editions 1824, 1839.
- \_158 believe, and]believe; or editions 1824, 1839.
- \_173 their transcript; the editions 1824, 1839.
- \_188 aethereal transcript; aerial editions 1824, 1839.
- \_197-201 See notes Volume 3.
- \_202 Coleridge]C-- edition 1824. So too H--t l. 209; H-- l. 226;  
P-- l. 233; H.S. l. 250; H-- -- and -- l. 296.
- \_205 lightning Bos. manuscript, transcript; lustre editions 1824, 1839.
- \_224 read Bos. manuscript; said transcript, editions 1824, 1839.

\_244 time Bos. manuscript, transcript; age editions 1824, 1839.  
\_245 the transcript; a editions 1824, 1839.  
\_272, \_273 found in the 2nd edition of P. W., 1839;  
    wanting in transcript, edition 1824 and 1839, 1st. edition.  
\_276 that transcript; who editions 1824, 1839.  
\_288 the transcript; a editions 1824, 1839.  
\_296 See notes Volume 3.  
\_299, \_300 So 1839, 2nd edition; wanting in editions 1824, 1839, 1st.  
\_301 So transcript; wanting in editions 1824, 1839.  
\_317 well, come 1839, 2nd edition; we'll come editions 1824, 1839. 1st.  
\_318 despite of God] transcript; despite of... edition 1824;  
    spite of... editions 1839.

(\_317 Imeros, from which the river Himera was named, is, with some slight shade of difference, a synonym of Love.--[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

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#### THE WITCH OF ATLAS.

[Composed at the Baths of San Giuliano, near Pisa, August 14-16, 1820; published in Posthumous Poems, edition Mrs. Shelley, 1824. The dedication To Mas-y first appeared in the Poetical Works, 1839, 1st edition Sources of the text are (1) the editio princeps, 1824; (2) editions 1839 (which agree, and, save in two instances, follow edition 1824); (3) an early and incomplete manuscript in Shelley's handwriting (now at the Bodleian, here, as throughout, cited as B.), carefully collated by Mr. C.D. Locock, who printed the results in his Examination of the Shelley manuscripts, etc., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903; (4) a later, yet intermediate, transcript by Mrs. Shelley, the variations of which are noted by Mr. H. Buxton Forman. The original text is modified in many places by variants from the manuscripts, but the readings of edition 1824 are, in every instance, given in the footnotes.]

#### TO MARY

(ON HER OBJECTING TO THE FOLLOWING POEM, UPON THE SCORE OF ITS CONTAINING NO HUMAN INTEREST).

1.

How, my dear Mary,--are you critic-bitten  
(For vipers kill, though dead) by some review,  
That you condemn these verses I have written,  
Because they tell no story, false or true?  
What, though no mice are caught by a young kitten,                    \_5  
May it not leap and play as grown cats do,  
Till its claws come? Prithee, for this one time,  
Content thee with a visionary rhyme.

2.

What hand would crush the silken-winged fly,



Incestuous Change bore to her father Time,                     \_50  
Error and Truth, had hunted from the Earth  
All those bright natures which adorned its prime,  
And left us nothing to believe in, worth  
The pains of putting into learned rhyme,  
A lady-witch there lived on Atlas' mountain                     \_55  
Within a cavern, by a secret fountain.

2.  
Her mother was one of the Atlantides:  
The all-beholding Sun had ne'er beholden  
In his wide voyage o'er continents and seas  
So fair a creature, as she lay enfolden                     \_60  
In the warm shadow of her loveliness;--  
He kissed her with his beams, and made all golden  
The chamber of gray rock in which she lay--  
She, in that dream of joy, dissolved away.

3.  
'Tis said, she first was changed into a vapour,                     \_65  
And then into a cloud, such clouds as flit,  
Like splendour-winged moths about a taper,  
Round the red west when the sun dies in it:  
And then into a meteor, such as caper  
On hill-tops when the moon is in a fit:                     \_70  
Then, into one of those mysterious stars  
Which hide themselves between the Earth and Mars.

4.  
Ten times the Mother of the Months had bent  
Her bow beside the folding-star, and bidden  
With that bright sign the billows to indent                     \_75  
The sea-deserted sand--like children chidden,  
At her command they ever came and went--  
Since in that cave a dewy splendour hidden  
Took shape and motion: with the living form  
Of this embodied Power, the cave grew warm.                     \_80

5.  
A lovely lady garmented in light  
From her own beauty--deep her eyes, as are  
Two openings of unfathomable night  
Seen through a Temple's cloven roof--her hair  
Dark--the dim brain whirls dizzy with delight.                     \_85  
Picturing her form; her soft smiles shone afar,  
And her low voice was heard like love, and drew  
All living things towards this wonder new.

6.  
And first the spotted cameleopard came,  
And then the wise and fearless elephant;                     \_90  
Then the sly serpent, in the golden flame  
Of his own volumes intervolv'd;--all gaunt

And sanguine beasts her gentle looks made tame.  
They drank before her at her sacred fount;  
And every beast of beating heart grew bold,                     \_95  
Such gentleness and power even to behold.

7.  
The brinded lioness led forth her young,  
That she might teach them how they should forego  
Their inborn thirst of death; the pard unstrung  
His sinews at her feet, and sought to know                     \_100  
With looks whose motions spoke without a tongue  
How he might be as gentle as the doe.  
The magic circle of her voice and eyes  
All savage natures did imparadise.

8.  
And old Silenus, shaking a green stick                     \_105  
Of lilies, and the wood-gods in a crew  
Came, blithe, as in the olive copses thick  
Cicadae are, drunk with the noonday dew:  
And Dryope and Faunus followed quick,  
Teasing the God to sing them something new;                     \_110  
Till in this cave they found the lady lone,  
Sitting upon a seat of emerald stone.

9.  
And universal Pan, 'tis said, was there,  
And though none saw him,--through the adamant  
Of the deep mountains, through the trackless air,                     \_115  
And through those living spirits, like a want,  
He passed out of his everlasting lair  
Where the quick heart of the great world doth pant,  
And felt that wondrous lady all alone,--  
And she felt him, upon her emerald throne.                     \_120

10.  
And every nymph of stream and spreading tree,  
And every shepherdess of Ocean's flocks,  
Who drives her white waves over the green sea,  
And Ocean with the brine on his gray locks,  
And quaint Priapus with his company,                     \_125  
All came, much wondering how the enwombed rocks  
Could have brought forth so beautiful a birth;--  
Her love subdued their wonder and their mirth.

11.  
The herdsmen and the mountain maidens came,  
And the rude kings of pastoral Garamant--                     \_130  
Their spirits shook within them, as a flame  
Stirred by the air under a cavern gaunt:  
Pigmies, and Polyphemes, by many a name,  
Centaur, and Satyr, and such shapes as haunt  
Wet clefts,--and lumps neither alive nor dead,                     \_135

Dog-headed, bosom-eyed, and bird-footed.

12.

For she was beautiful--her beauty made  
The bright world dim, and everything beside  
Seemed like the fleeting image of a shade:  
No thought of living spirit could abide,                     \_140  
Which to her looks had ever been betrayed,  
On any object in the world so wide,  
On any hope within the circling skies,  
But on her form, and in her inmost eyes.

13.

Which when the lady knew, she took her spindle                     \_145  
And twined three threads of fleecy mist, and three  
Long lines of light, such as the dawn may kindle  
The clouds and waves and mountains with; and she  
As many star-beams, ere their lamps could dwindle  
In the belated moon, wound skilfully;                     \_150  
And with these threads a subtle veil she wove--  
A shadow for the splendour of her love.

14.

The deep recesses of her odorous dwelling  
Were stored with magic treasures--sounds of air,  
Which had the power all spirits of compelling,                     \_155  
Folded in cells of crystal silence there;  
Such as we hear in youth, and think the feeling  
Will never die--yet ere we are aware,  
The feeling and the sound are fled and gone,  
And the regret they leave remains alone.                     \_160

15.

And there lay Visions swift, and sweet, and quaint,  
Each in its thin sheath, like a chrysalis,  
Some eager to burst forth, some weak and faint  
With the soft burthen of intensest bliss.  
It was its work to bear to many a saint                     \_165  
Whose heart adores the shrine which holiest is,  
Even Love's--and others white, green, gray, and black,  
And of all shapes--and each was at her beck.

16.

And odours in a kind of aviary  
Of ever-blooming Eden-trees she kept,                     \_170  
Clipped in a floating net, a love-sick Fairy  
Had woven from dew-beams while the moon yet slept;  
As bats at the wired window of a dairy,  
They beat their vans; and each was an adept,  
When loosed and missioned, making wings of winds,                     \_175  
To stir sweet thoughts or sad, in destined minds.

17.



And liquors clear and sweet, whose healthful might  
Could medicine the sick soul to happy sleep,  
And change eternal death into a night  
Of glorious dreams--or if eyes needs must weep,                    \_180  
Could make their tears all wonder and delight,  
She in her crystal vials did closely keep:  
If men could drink of those clear vials, 'tis said  
The living were not envied of the dead.

18.  
Her cave was stored with scrolls of strange device,                    \_185  
The works of some Saturnian Archimage,  
Which taught the expiations at whose price  
Men from the Gods might win that happy age  
Too lightly lost, redeeming native vice;  
And which might quench the Earth-consuming rage                    \_190  
Of gold and blood--till men should live and move  
Harmonious as the sacred stars above;

19.  
And how all things that seem untameable,  
Not to be checked and not to be confined,  
Obey the spells of Wisdom's wizard skill;                                 \_195  
Time, earth, and fire--the ocean and the wind,  
And all their shapes--and man's imperial will;  
And other scrolls whose writings did unbind  
The inmost lore of Love--let the profane  
Tremble to ask what secrets they contain.                                 \_200

20.  
And wondrous works of substances unknown,  
To which the enchantment of her father's power  
Had changed those ragged blocks of savage stone,  
Were heaped in the recesses of her bower;  
Carved lamps and chalices, and vials which shone                         \_205  
In their own golden beams--each like a flower,  
Out of whose depth a fire-fly shakes his light  
Under a cypress in a starless night.

21.  
At first she lived alone in this wild home,  
And her own thoughts were each a minister,                                 \_210  
Clothing themselves, or with the ocean foam,  
Or with the wind, or with the speed of fire,  
To work whatever purposes might come  
Into her mind; such power her mighty Sire  
Had girt them with, whether to fly or run,                                 \_215  
Through all the regions which he shines upon.

22.  
The Ocean-nymphs and Hamadryades,  
Oreads and Naiads, with long weedy locks,  
Offered to do her bidding through the seas,

Under the earth, and in the hollow rocks,                    \_220  
And far beneath the matted roots of trees,  
And in the gnarled heart of stubborn oaks,  
So they might live for ever in the light  
Of her sweet presence--each a satellite.

23.

'This may not be,' the wizard maid replied;                    \_225  
'The fountains where the Naiades bedew  
Their shining hair, at length are drained and dried;  
The solid oaks forget their strength, and strew  
Their latest leaf upon the mountains wide;  
The boundless ocean like a drop of dew                         \_230  
Will be consumed--the stubborn centre must  
Be scattered, like a cloud of summer dust.

24.

'And ye with them will perish, one by one;--  
If I must sigh to think that this shall be,  
If I must weep when the surviving Sun                         \_235  
Shall smile on your decay--oh, ask not me  
To love you till your little race is run;  
I cannot die as ye must--over me  
Your leaves shall glance--the streams in which ye dwell  
Shall be my paths henceforth, and so--farewell!--'             \_240

25.

She spoke and wept:--the dark and azure well  
Sparkled beneath the shower of her bright tears,  
And every little circlet where they fell  
Flung to the cavern-roof inconstant spheres  
And intertangled lines of light:--a knell                         \_245  
Of sobbing voices came upon her ears  
From those departing Forms, o'er the serene  
Of the white streams and of the forest green.

26.

All day the wizard lady sate aloof,  
Spelling out scrolls of dread antiquity,                         \_250  
Under the cavern's fountain-lighted roof;  
Or broidering the pictured poesy  
Of some high tale upon her growing woof,  
Which the sweet splendour of her smiles could dye  
In hues outshining heaven--and ever she                         \_255  
Added some grace to the wrought poesy.

27.

While on her hearth lay blazing many a piece  
Of sandal wood, rare gums, and cinnamon;  
Men scarcely know how beautiful fire is--  
Each flame of it is as a precious stone                         \_260  
Dissolved in ever-moving light, and this  
Belongs to each and all who gaze upon.

The Witch beheld it not, for in her hand  
She held a woof that dimmed the burning brand.

28.

This lady never slept, but lay in trance                    \_265  
All night within the fountain--as in sleep.  
Its emerald crags glowed in her beauty's glance;  
Through the green splendour of the water deep  
She saw the constellations reel and dance  
Like fire-flies--and withal did ever keep                    \_270  
The tenour of her contemplations calm,  
With open eyes, closed feet, and folded palm.

29.

And when the whirlwinds and the clouds descended  
From the white pinnacles of that cold hill,  
She passed at dewfall to a space extended,                    \_275  
Where in a lawn of flowering asphodel  
Amid a wood of pines and cedars blended,  
There yawned an inextinguishable well  
Of crimson fire--full even to the brim,  
And overflowing all the margin trim.                        \_280

30.

Within the which she lay when the fierce war  
Of wintry winds shook that innocuous liquor  
In many a mimic moon and bearded star  
O'er woods and lawns;--the serpent heard it flicker  
In sleep, and dreaming still, he crept afar--                    \_285  
And when the windless snow descended thicker  
Than autumn leaves, she watched it as it came  
Melt on the surface of the level flame.

31.

She had a boat, which some say Vulcan wrought  
For Venus, as the chariot of her star;                        \_290  
But it was found too feeble to be fraught  
With all the ardours in that sphere which are,  
And so she sold it, and Apollo bought  
And gave it to this daughter: from a car  
Changed to the fairest and the lightest boat                    \_295  
Which ever upon mortal stream did float.

32.

And others say, that, when but three hours old,  
The first-born Love out of his cradle lept,  
And clove dun Chaos with his wings of gold,  
And like a horticultural adept,                                \_300  
Stole a strange seed, and wrapped it up in mould,  
And sowed it in his mother's star, and kept  
Watering it all the summer with sweet dew,  
And with his wings fanning it as it grew.

33.  
The plant grew strong and green, the snowy flower                    \_305  
Fell, and the long and gourd-like fruit began  
To turn the light and dew by inward power  
To its own substance; woven tracery ran  
Of light firm texture, ribbed and branching, o'er  
The solid rind, like a leaf's veined fan--                                 \_310  
Of which Love scooped this boat--and with soft motion  
Piloted it round the circumfluous ocean.

34.  
This boat she moored upon her fount, and lit  
A living spirit within all its frame,  
Breathing the soul of swiftness into it.                                 \_315  
Couched on the fountain like a panther tame,  
One of the twain at Evan's feet that sit--  
Or as on Vesta's sceptre a swift flame--  
Or on blind Homer's heart a winged thought,--  
In joyous expectation lay the boat.   \_320

35.  
Then by strange art she kneaded fire and snow  
Together, tempering the repugnant mass  
With liquid love--all things together grow  
Through which the harmony of love can pass;  
And a fair Shape out of her hands did flow--                             \_325  
A living Image, which did far surpass  
In beauty that bright shape of vital stone  
Which drew the heart out of Pygmalion.

36.  
A sexless thing it was, and in its growth  
It seemed to have developed no defect                                 \_330  
Of either sex, yet all the grace of both,--  
In gentleness and strength its limbs were decked;  
The bosom swelled lightly with its full youth,  
The countenance was such as might select  
Some artist that his skill should never die,                             \_335  
Imaging forth such perfect purity.

37.  
From its smooth shoulders hung two rapid wings,  
Fit to have borne it to the seventh sphere,  
Tipped with the speed of liquid lightnings,  
Dyed in the ardours of the atmosphere:                                 \_340  
She led her creature to the boiling springs  
Where the light boat was moored, and said: 'Sit here!'  
And pointed to the prow, and took her seat  
Beside the rudder, with opposing feet.

38.  
And down the streams which clove those mountains vast,                 \_345  
Around their inland islets, and amid



Over its lips and eyes, as on the gale                     \_390  
A rapid shadow from a slope of grass,  
Into the darkness of the stream did pass.

44.  
And it unfurled its heaven-coloured pinions,  
With stars of fire spotting the stream below;  
And from above into the Sun's dominions                     \_395  
Flinging a glory, like the golden glow  
In which Spring clothes her emerald-winged minions,  
All interwoven with fine feathery snow  
And moonlight splendour of intensest rime,  
With which frost paints the pines in winter time.                     \_400

45.  
And then it winnowed the Elysian air  
Which ever hung about that lady bright,  
With its aethereal vans--and speeding there,  
Like a star up the torrent of the night,  
Or a swift eagle in the morning glare                     \_405  
Breasting the whirlwind with impetuous flight,  
The pinnacle, oared by those enchanted wings,  
Clove the fierce streams towards their upper springs.

46.  
The water flashed, like sunlight by the prow  
Of a noon-wandering meteor flung to Heaven;                     \_410  
The still air seemed as if its waves did flow  
In tempest down the mountains; loosely driven  
The lady's radiant hair streamed to and fro:  
Beneath, the billows having vainly striven  
Indignant and impetuous, roared to feel                     \_415  
The swift and steady motion of the keel.

47.  
Or, when the weary moon was in the wane,  
Or in the noon of interlunar night,  
The lady-witch in visions could not chain  
Her spirit; but sailed forth under the light                     \_420  
Of shooting stars, and bade extend amain  
Its storm-outspeeding wings, the Hermaphrodite;  
She to the Austral waters took her way,  
Beyond the fabulous Thamondocana,--

48.  
Where, like a meadow which no scythe has shaven,                     \_425  
Which rain could never bend, or whirl-blast shake,  
With the Antarctic constellations paven,  
Canopus and his crew, lay the Austral lake--  
There she would build herself a windless haven  
Out of the clouds whose moving turrets make                     \_430  
The bastions of the storm, when through the sky  
The spirits of the tempest thundered by:

49.

A haven beneath whose translucent floor  
The tremulous stars sparkled unfathomably,  
And around which the solid vapours hoar,                     \_435  
Based on the level waters, to the sky  
Lifted their dreadful crags, and like a shore  
Of wintry mountains, inaccessibly  
Hemmed in with rifts and precipices gray,  
And hanging crags, many a cove and bay.                     \_440

50.

And whilst the outer lake beneath the lash  
Of the wind's scourge, foamed like a wounded thing,  
And the incessant hail with stony clash  
Ploughed up the waters, and the flagging wing  
Of the roused cormorant in the lightning flash                     \_445  
Looked like the wreck of some wind-wandering  
Fragment of inky thunder-smoke--this haven  
Was as a gem to copy Heaven engraven,--

51.

On which that lady played her many pranks,  
Circling the image of a shooting star,                     \_450  
Even as a tiger on Hydaspes' banks  
Outspeeds the antelopes which speediest are,  
In her light boat; and many quips and cranks  
She played upon the water, till the car  
Of the late moon, like a sick matron wan,                     \_455  
To journey from the misty east began.

52.

And then she called out of the hollow turrets  
Of those high clouds, white, golden and vermilion,  
The armies of her ministering spirits--  
In mighty legions, million after million,                     \_460  
They came, each troop emblazoning its merits  
On meteor flags; and many a proud pavilion  
Of the intertexture of the atmosphere  
They pitched upon the plain of the calm mere.

53.

They framed the imperial tent of their great Queen                     \_465  
Of woven exhalations, underlaid  
With lambent lightning-fire, as may be seen  
A dome of thin and open ivory inlaid  
With crimson silk--cressets from the serene  
Hung there, and on the water for her tread                     \_470  
A tapestry of fleece-like mist was strewn,  
Dyed in the beams of the ascending moon.

54.

And on a throne o'erlaid with starlight, caught

Upon those wandering isles of aery dew,  
Which highest shoals of mountain shipwreck not,                     \_475  
She sate, and heard all that had happened new  
Between the earth and moon, since they had brought  
The last intelligence--and now she grew  
Pale as that moon, lost in the watery night--  
And now she wept, and now she laughed outright.                     \_480

55.  
These were tame pleasures; she would often climb  
The steepest ladder of the crudded rack  
Up to some beaked cape of cloud sublime,  
And like Arion on the dolphin's back  
Ride singing through the shoreless air;--oft-time                     \_485  
Following the serpent lightning's winding track,  
She ran upon the platforms of the wind,  
And laughed to bear the fire-balls roar behind.

56.  
And sometimes to those streams of upper air  
Which whirl the earth in its diurnal round,                     \_490  
She would ascend, and win the spirits there  
To let her join their chorus. Mortals found  
That on those days the sky was calm and fair,  
And mystic snatches of harmonious sound  
Wandered upon the earth where'er she passed,                     \_495  
And happy thoughts of hope, too sweet to last.

57.  
But her choice sport was, in the hours of sleep,  
To glide adown old Nilus, where he threads  
Egypt and Aethiopia, from the steep  
Of utmost Axume, until he spreads,                     \_500  
Like a calm flock of silver-fleeced sheep,  
His waters on the plain: and crested heads  
Of cities and proud temples gleam amid,  
And many a vapour-belted pyramid.

58.  
By Moeris and the Mareotid lakes,                     \_505  
Strewn with faint blooms like bridal chamber floors,  
Where naked boys bridling tame water-snakes,  
Or charioteering ghastly alligators,  
Had left on the sweet waters mighty wakes  
Of those huge forms--within the brazen doors                     \_510  
Of the great Labyrinth slept both boy and beast,  
Tired with the pomp of their Osirian feast.

59.  
And where within the surface of the river  
The shadows of the massy temples lie,  
And never are erased--but tremble ever                     \_515  
Like things which every cloud can doom to die,



Through lotus-paven canals, and wheresoever  
The works of man pierced that serenest sky  
With tombs, and towers, and fanes, 'twas her delight  
To wander in the shadow of the night. \_520

60.  
With motion like the spirit of that wind  
Whose soft step deepens slumber, her light feet  
Passed through the peopled haunts of humankind.  
Scattering sweet visions from her presence sweet,  
Through fane, and palace-court, and labyrinth mined \_525  
With many a dark and subterranean street  
Under the Nile, through chambers high and deep  
She passed, observing mortals in their sleep.

61.  
A pleasure sweet doubtless it was to see  
Mortals subdued in all the shapes of sleep. \_530  
Here lay two sister twins in infancy;  
There, a lone youth who in his dreams did weep;  
Within, two lovers linked innocently  
In their loose locks which over both did creep  
Like ivy from one stem;--and there lay calm \_535  
Old age with snow-bright hair and folded palm.

62.  
But other troubled forms of sleep she saw,  
Not to be mirrored in a holy song--  
Distortions foul of supernatural awe,  
And pale imaginings of visioned wrong; \_540  
And all the code of Custom's lawless law  
Written upon the brows of old and young:  
'This,' said the wizard maiden, 'is the strife  
Which stirs the liquid surface of man's life.'

63.  
And little did the sight disturb her soul.-- \_545  
We, the weak mariners of that wide lake  
Where'er its shores extend or billows roll,  
Our course unpiloted and starless make  
O'er its wild surface to an unknown goal:--  
But she in the calm depths her way could take, \_550  
Where in bright bowers immortal forms abide  
Beneath the weltering of the restless tide.

64.  
And she saw princes couched under the glow  
Of sunlike gems; and round each temple-court  
In dormitories ranged, row after row, \_555  
She saw the priests asleep--all of one sort--  
For all were educated to be so.--  
The peasants in their huts, and in the port  
The sailors she saw cradled on the waves,

And the dead lulled within their dreamless graves. \_560

65.

And all the forms in which those spirits lay  
Were to her sight like the diaphanous  
Veils, in which those sweet ladies oft array  
Their delicate limbs, who would conceal from us  
Only their scorn of all concealment: they \_565  
Move in the light of their own beauty thus.  
But these and all now lay with sleep upon them,  
And little thought a Witch was looking on them.

66.

She, all those human figures breathing there,  
Beheld as living spirits--to her eyes \_570  
The naked beauty of the soul lay bare,  
And often through a rude and worn disguise  
She saw the inner form most bright and fair--  
And then she had a charm of strange device,  
Which, murmured on mute lips with tender tone, \_575  
Could make that spirit mingle with her own.

67.

Alas! Aurora, what wouldst thou have given  
For such a charm when Tithon became gray?  
Or how much, Venus, of thy silver heaven  
Wouldst thou have yielded, ere Proserpina \_580  
Had half (oh! why not all?) the debt forgiven  
Which dear Adonis had been doomed to pay,  
To any witch who would have taught you it?  
The Heliad doth not know its value yet.

68.

'Tis said in after times her spirit free \_585  
Knew what love was, and felt itself alone--  
But holy Dian could not chaster be  
Before she stooped to kiss Endymion,  
Than now this lady--like a sexless bee  
Tasting all blossoms, and confined to none, \_590  
Among those mortal forms, the wizard-maiden  
Passed with an eye serene and heart unladen.

69.

To those she saw most beautiful, she gave  
Strange panacea in a crystal bowl:--  
They drank in their deep sleep of that sweet wave, \_595  
And lived thenceforward as if some control,  
Mightier than life, were in them; and the grave  
Of such, when death oppressed the weary soul,  
Was as a green and overarching bower  
Lit by the gems of many a starry flower. \_600

70.

For on the night when they were buried, she  
Restored the embalmers' ruining, and shook  
The light out of the funeral lamps, to be  
A mimic day within that deathly nook;  
And she unwound the woven imagery \_605  
Of second childhood's swaddling bands, and took  
The coffin, its last cradle, from its niche,  
And threw it with contempt into a ditch.

71.  
And there the body lay, age after age.  
Mute, breathing, beating, warm, and undecaying, \_610  
Like one asleep in a green hermitage,  
With gentle smiles about its eyelids playing,  
And living in its dreams beyond the rage  
Of death or life; while they were still arraying  
In liveries ever new, the rapid, blind \_615  
And fleeting generations of mankind.

72.  
And she would write strange dreams upon the brain  
Of those who were less beautiful, and make  
All harsh and crooked purposes more vain  
Than in the desert is the serpent's wake \_620  
Which the sand covers--all his evil gain  
The miser in such dreams would rise and shake  
Into a beggar's lap;--the lying scribe  
Would his own lies betray without a bribe.

73.  
The priests would write an explanation full, \_625  
Translating hieroglyphics into Greek,  
How the God Apis really was a bull,  
And nothing more; and bid the herald stick  
The same against the temple doors, and pull  
The old cant down; they licensed all to speak \_630  
Whate'er they thought of hawks, and cats, and geese,  
By pastoral letters to each diocese.

74.  
The king would dress an ape up in his crown  
And robes, and seat him on his glorious seat,  
And on the right hand of the sunlike throne \_635  
Would place a gaudy mock-bird to repeat  
The chatterings of the monkey.--Every one  
Of the prone courtiers crawled to kiss the feet  
Of their great Emperor, when the morning came,  
And kissed--alas, how many kiss the same! \_640

75.  
The soldiers dreamed that they were blacksmiths, and  
Walked out of quarters in somnambulism;  
Round the red anvils you might see them stand

Like Cyclopes in Vulcan's sooty abysm,  
Beating their swords to ploughshares;--in a band                    \_645  
The gaolers sent those of the liberal schism  
Free through the streets of Memphis, much, I wis,  
To the annoyance of king Amasis.

76.  
And timid lovers who had been so coy,  
They hardly knew whether they loved or not,                         \_650  
Would rise out of their rest, and take sweet joy,  
To the fulfilment of their inmost thought;  
And when next day the maiden and the boy  
Met one another, both, like sinners caught,  
Blushed at the thing which each believed was done                 \_655  
Only in fancy--till the tenth moon shone;

77.  
And then the Witch would let them take no ill:  
Of many thousand schemes which lovers find,  
The Witch found one,--and so they took their fill  
Of happiness in marriage warm and kind.                             \_660  
Friends who, by practice of some envious skill,  
Were torn apart--a wide wound, mind from mind!--  
She did unite again with visions clear  
Of deep affection and of truth sincere.

80.  
These were the pranks she played among the cities                    \_665  
Of mortal men, and what she did to Sprites  
And Gods, entangling them in her sweet ditties  
To do her will, and show their subtle sleights,  
I will declare another time; for it is  
A tale more fit for the weird winter nights                         \_670  
Than for these garish summer days, when we  
Scarcely believe much more than we can see.

#### NOTES:

- \_2 dead]deaf cj. A.C. Bradley, who cps. "Adonais" 317.
- \_65 first was transcript, B.; was first edition 1824.
- \_84 Temple's transcript, B.; tempest's edition 1824.
- \_165 was its transcript, B.; is its edition 1824.
- \_184 envied so all manuscripts and editions;  
    envious cj. James Thomson ('B. V.').
- \_262 upon so all manuscripts and editions: thereon cj. Rossetti.
- \_333 swelled lightly edition 1824, B.;  
    lightly swelled editions 1839;  
    swelling lightly with its full growth transcript.
- \_339 lightnings B., editions 1839; lightnings edition 1824, transcript.
- \_422 Its transcript; His edition 1824, B.
- \_424 Thamondocana transcript, B.; Thamondocona edition 1824.
- \_442 wind's transcript, B.; winds' edition 1834.
- \_493 where transcript, B.; when edition 1824.
- \_596 thenceforward B.;

thence forth edition 1824; henceforward transcript.  
\_599 Was as a B.; Was a edition 1824.  
\_601 night when transcript; night that edition 1824, B.  
\_612 smiles transcript, B.; sleep edition 1824.

#### NOTE ON THE WITCH OF ATLAS, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

We spent the summer of 1820 at the Baths of San Giuliano, four miles from Pisa. These baths were of great use to Shelley in soothing his nervous irritability. We made several excursions in the neighbourhood. The country around is fertile, and diversified and rendered picturesque by ranges of near hills and more distant mountains. The peasantry are a handsome intelligent race; and there was a gladsome sunny heaven spread over us, that rendered home and every scene we visited cheerful and bright. During some of the hottest days of August, Shelley made a solitary journey on foot to the summit of Monte San Pellegrino--a mountain of some height, on the top of which there is a chapel, the object, during certain days of the year, of many pilgrimages. The excursion delighted him while it lasted; though he exerted himself too much, and the effect was considerable lassitude and weakness on his return. During the expedition he conceived the idea, and wrote, in the three days immediately succeeding to his return, the "Witch of Atlas". This poem is peculiarly characteristic of his tastes--wildly fanciful, full of brilliant imagery, and discarding human interest and passion, to revel in the fantastic ideas that his imagination suggested.

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

showed that he felt the sting; among such I find the following:--

'Alas! this is not what I thought Life was.  
I knew that there were crimes and evil men,  
Misery and hate; nor did I hope to pass  
Untouched by suffering through the rugged glen.  
In mine own heart I saw as in a glass  
The hearts of others...And, when  
I went among my kind, with triple brass  
Of calm endurance my weak breast I armed,  
To bear scorn, fear, and hate--a woful mass!'

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

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OEDIPUS TYRANNUS

OR

SWELLFOOT THE TYRANT.

A TRAGEDY IN TWO ACTS

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL DORIC.

'Choose Reform or Civil War,  
When through thy streets, instead of hare with dogs,  
A CONSORT-QUEEN shall hunt a king with hogs,  
Riding on the IONIAN MINOTAUR.'

[Begun at the Baths of San Giuliano, near Pisa, August 24, 1819; published anonymously by J. Johnston, Cheapside (imprint C.F. Seyfang), 1820. On a threat of prosecution the publisher surrendered the whole impression, seven copies--the total number sold--excepted. "Oedipus" does not appear in the first edition of the "Poetical Works", 1839, but it was included by Mrs. Shelley in the second

edition of that year. Our text is that of the editio princeps, 1820, save in three places, where the reading of edition 1820 will be found in the notes.]

#### ADVERTISEMENT.

This Tragedy is one of a triad, or system of three Plays (an arrangement according to which the Greeks were accustomed to connect their dramatic representations), elucidating the wonderful and appalling fortunes of the SWELLFOOT dynasty. It was evidently written by some LEARNED THEBAN, and, from its characteristic dulness, apparently before the duties on the importation of ATTIC SALT had been repealed by the Boeotarchs. The tenderness with which he treats the PIGS proves him to have been a sus Boeotiae; possibly Epicuri de grege porcus; for, as the poet observes,

'A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind.'

No liberty has been taken with the translation of this remarkable piece of antiquity, except the suppressing a seditious and blasphemous Chorus of the Pigs and Bulls at the last Act. The work Hoydipouse (or more properly Oedipus) has been rendered literally SWELLFOOT, without its having been conceived necessary to determine whether a swelling of the hind or the fore feet of the Swinish Monarch is particularly indicated.

Should the remaining portions of this Tragedy be found, entitled, "Swellfoot in Angaria", and "Charite", the Translator might be tempted to give them to the reading Public.

#### DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

TYRANT SWELLFOOT, KING OF THEBES.  
IONA TAURINA, HIS QUEEN.  
MAMMON, ARCH-PRIEST OF FAMINE.  
PURGANAX, DAKRY, LAOCTONOS--WIZARDS, MINISTERS OF SWELLFOOT.  
THE GADFLY.  
THE LEECH.  
THE RAT.  
MOSES, THE SOW-GELDER.  
SOLOMON, THE PORKMAN.  
ZEPHANIAH, PIG-BUTCHER.  
THE MINOTAUR.  
CHORUS OF THE SWINISH MULTITUDE.  
GUARDS, ATTENDANTS, PRIESTS, ETC., ETC.

#### SCENE.--THEBES.

#### ACT 1.

SCENE 1.1.--A MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE, BUILT OF THIGH-BONES AND DEATH'S-HEADS, AND TILED WITH SCALPS. OVER THE ALTAR THE STATUE OF FAMINE, VEILED; A NUMBER OF BOARS, SOWS, AND SUCKING-PIGS, CROWNED

WITH THISTLE, SHAMROCK, AND OAK, SITTING ON THE STEPS, AND CLINGING  
ROUND THE ALTAR OF THE TEMPLE.

ENTER SWELLFOOT, IN HIS ROYAL ROBES, WITHOUT PERCEIVING THE PIGS.

SWELLFOOT:

Thou supreme Goddess! by whose power divine  
These graceful limbs are clothed in proud array  
[HE CONTEMPLATES HIMSELF WITH SATISFACTION.]  
Of gold and purple, and this kingly paunch  
Swells like a sail before a favouring breeze,  
And these most sacred nether promontories                     \_5  
Lie satisfied with layers of fat; and these  
Boeotian cheeks, like Egypt's pyramid,  
(Nor with less toil were their foundations laid),  
Sustain the cone of my untroubled brain,  
That point, the emblem of a pointless nothing!                     \_10  
Thou to whom Kings and laurelled Emperors,  
Radical-butchers, Paper-money-millers,  
Bishops and Deacons, and the entire army  
Of those fat martyrs to the persecution  
Of stifling turtle-soup, and brandy-devils,                     \_15  
Offer their secret vows! Thou plenteous Ceres  
Of their Eleusis, hail!

NOTE:

(\_8 See Universal History for an account of the number of people who  
died, and the immense consumption of garlic by the wretched Egyptians,  
who made a sepulchre for the name as well as the bodies of their  
tyrants.--[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

SWINE:

Eigh! eigh! eigh! eigh!

SWELLFOOT:

Ha! what are ye,  
Who, crowned with leaves devoted to the Furies,  
Cling round this sacred shrine?

SWINE:

Aigh! aigh! aigh!

SWELLFOOT:

What! ye that are  
The very beasts that, offered at her altar                     \_20  
With blood and groans, salt-cake, and fat, and inwards,  
Ever propitiate her reluctant will  
When taxes are withheld?

SWINE:

Ugh! ugh! ugh!

SWELLFOOT:



What! ye who grub  
With filthy snouts my red potatoes up  
In Allan's rushy bog? Who eat the oats                    \_25  
Up, from my cavalry in the Hebrides?  
Who swill the hog-wash soup my cooks digest  
From bones, and rags, and scraps of shoe-leather,  
Which should be given to cleaner Pigs than you?

SWINE--SEMICHORUS 1:  
The same, alas! the same;                                   \_30  
Though only now the name  
Of Pig remains to me.

SEMICHORUS 2:  
If 'twere your kingly will  
Us wretched Swine to kill,  
What should we yield to thee?                           \_35

SWELLFOOT:  
Why, skin and bones, and some few hairs for mortar.

CHORUS OF SWINE:  
I have heard your Laureate sing,  
That pity was a royal thing;  
Under your mighty ancestors, we Pigs  
Were bless'd as nightingales on myrtle sprigs,                   \_40  
Or grasshoppers that live on noontide dew,  
And sung, old annals tell, as sweetly too;  
But now our sties are fallen in, we catch  
The murrain and the mange, the scab and itch;  
Sometimes your royal dogs tear down our thatch,                   \_45  
And then we seek the shelter of a ditch;  
Hog-wash or grains, or ruta-baga, none  
Has yet been ours since your reign begun.

FIRST SOW:  
My Pigs, 'tis in vain to tug.

SECOND SOW:  
I could almost eat my litter.                           \_50

FIRST PIG:  
I suck, but no milk will come from the dug.

SECOND PIG:  
Our skin and our bones would be bitter.

THE BOARS:  
We fight for this rag of greasy rug,  
Though a trough of wash would be fitter.

SEMICHORUS:  
Happier Swine were they than we,                       \_55

Drowned in the Gadarean sea--  
I wish that pity would drive out the devils,  
Which in your royal bosom hold their revels,  
And sink us in the waves of thy compassion!  
Alas! the Pigs are an unhappy nation! \_60

Now if your Majesty would have our bristles  
To bind your mortar with, or fill our colons  
With rich blood, or make brawn out of our gristles,  
In policy--ask else your royal Solons--  
You ought to give us hog-wash and clean straw, \_65  
And sties well thatched; besides it is the law!

NOTE:

\_59 thy edition 1820; your edition 1839.

SWELLFOOT:

This is sedition, and rank blasphemy!  
Ho! there, my guards!

[ENTER A GUARD.]

GUARD:

Your sacred Majesty.

SWELLFOOT:

Call in the Jews, Solomon the court porkman,  
Moses the sow-gelder, and Zephaniah \_70  
The hog-butcher.

GUARD:

They are in waiting, Sire.

[ENTER SOLOMON, MOSES, AND ZEPHANIAH.]

SWELLFOOT:

Out with your knife, old Moses, and spay those Sows  
[THE PIGS RUN ABOUT IN CONSTERNATION.]  
That load the earth with Pigs; cut close and deep.  
Moral restraint I see has no effect,  
Nor prostitution, nor our own example, \_75  
Starvation, typhus-fever, war, nor prison--  
This was the art which the arch-priest of Famine  
Hinted at in his charge to the Theban clergy--  
Cut close and deep, good Moses.

MOSES:

Let your Majesty  
Keep the Boars quiet, else--

SWELLFOOT:

Zephaniah, cut \_80  
That fat Hog's throat, the brute seems overfed;  
Seditious hunks! to whine for want of grains.

ZEPHANIAH:

Your sacred Majesty, he has the dropsy;--  
We shall find pints of hydatids in 's liver,  
He has not half an inch of wholesome fat \_85  
Upon his carious ribs--

SWELLFOOT:

'Tis all the same,  
He'll serve instead of riot money, when  
Our murmuring troops bivouac in Thebes' streets  
And January winds, after a day  
Of butchering, will make them relish carrion. \_90  
Now, Solomon, I'll sell you in a lump  
The whole kit of them.

SOLOMON:

Why, your Majesty,  
I could not give--

SWELLFOOT:

Kill them out of the way,  
That shall be price enough, and let me hear  
Their everlasting grunts and whines no more! \_95

[EXEUNT, DRIVING IN THE SWINE.

ENTER MAMMON, THE ARCH-PRIEST,  
AND PURGANAX, CHIEF OF THE COUNCIL OF WIZARDS.]

PURGANAX:

The future looks as black as death, a cloud,  
Dark as the frown of Hell, hangs over it--  
The troops grow mutinous--the revenue fails--  
There's something rotten in us--for the level \_100  
Of the State slopes, its very bases topple,  
The boldest turn their backs upon themselves!

MAMMON:

Why what's the matter, my dear fellow, now?  
Do the troops mutiny?--decimate some regiments;  
Does money fail?--come to my mint--coin paper,  
Till gold be at a discount, and ashamed \_105  
To show his bilious face, go purge himself,  
In emulation of her vestal whiteness.

PURGANAX:

Oh, would that this were all! The oracle!!

MAMMON:

Why it was I who spoke that oracle,  
And whether I was dead drunk or inspired, \_110  
I cannot well remember; nor, in truth,  
The oracle itself!

PURGANAX:

The words went thus:--

'Boeotia, choose reform or civil war!

When through the streets, instead of hare with dogs,

A Consort Queen shall hunt a King with Hogs, \_115

Riding on the Ionian Minotaur.'

MAMMON:

Now if the oracle had ne'er foretold

This sad alternative, it must arrive,

Or not, and so it must now that it has;

And whether I was urged by grace divine \_120

Or Lesbian liquor to declare these words,

Which must, as all words must, be false or true,

It matters not: for the same Power made all,

Oracle, wine, and me and you--or none--

'Tis the same thing. If you knew as much \_125

Of oracles as I do--

PURGANAX:

You arch-priests

Believe in nothing; if you were to dream

Of a particular number in the Lottery,

You would not buy the ticket?

MAMMON:

Yet our tickets

Are seldom blanks. But what steps have you taken? \_130

For prophecies, when once they get abroad,

Like liars who tell the truth to serve their ends,

Or hypocrites who, from assuming virtue,

Do the same actions that the virtuous do,

Contrive their own fulfilment. This Iona-- \_135

Well--you know what the chaste Pasiphae did,

Wife to that most religious King of Crete,

And still how popular the tale is here;

And these dull Swine of Thebes boast their descent

From the free Minotaur. You know they still \_140

Call themselves Bulls, though thus degenerate,

And everything relating to a Bull

Is popular and respectable in Thebes.

Their arms are seven Bulls in a field gules;

They think their strength consists in eating beef,-- \_145

Now there were danger in the precedent

If Queen Iona--

NOTES:

\_114 the edition 1820; thy cj. Forman;

cf. Motto below Title, and II. i, 153-6. ticket? edition 1820;

ticket! edition 1839.

\_135 their own Mrs. Shelley, later editions;

their editions 1820 and 1839.

PURGANAX:

I have taken good care  
That shall not be. I struck the crust o' the earth  
With this enchanted rod, and Hell lay bare!  
And from a cavern full of ugly shapes \_150  
I chose a LEECH, a GADFLY, and a RAT.  
The Gadfly was the same which Juno sent  
To agitate Io, and which Ezekiel mentions  
That the Lord whistled for out of the mountains  
Of utmost Aethiopia, to torment \_155  
Mesopotamian Babylon. The beast  
Has a loud trumpet like the scarabee,  
His crooked tail is barbed with many stings,  
Each able to make a thousand wounds, and each  
Immedicable; from his convex eyes \_160  
He sees fair things in many hideous shapes,  
And trumpets all his falsehood to the world.  
Like other beetles he is fed on dung--  
He has eleven feet with which he crawls,  
Trailing a blistering slime, and this foul beast \_165  
Has tracked Iona from the Theban limits,  
From isle to isle, from city unto city,  
Urging her flight from the far Chersonese  
To fabulous Solyma, and the Aetnean Isle,  
Ortygia, Melite, and Calypso's Rock, \_170  
And the swart tribes of Garamant and Fez,  
Aeolia and Elysium, and thy shores,  
Parthenope, which now, alas! are free!  
And through the fortunate Saturnian land,  
Into the darkness of the West.

NOTES:

(\_153 (Io) The Prometheus Bound of Aeschylus.--[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]  
(\_153 (Ezekiel) And the Lord whistled for the gadfly out of Aethiopia,  
and for the bee of Egypt, etc.--EZEKIEL.--[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

MAMMON:

But if \_175  
This Gadfly should drive Iona hither?

PURGANAX:

Gods! what an IF! but there is my gray RAT:  
So thin with want, he can crawl in and out  
Of any narrow chink and filthy hole,  
And he shall creep into her dressing-room, \_180  
And--

MAMMON:

My dear friend, where are your wits? as if  
She does not always toast a piece of cheese  
And bait the trap? and rats, when lean enough  
To crawl through SUCH chinks--

PURGANAX:

But my LEECH--a leech  
Fit to suck blood, with lubricous round rings,                    \_185  
Capaciously expatiative, which make  
His little body like a red balloon,  
As full of blood as that of hydrogen,  
Sucked from men's hearts; insatiably he sucks  
And clings and pulls--a horse-leech, whose deep maw               \_190  
The plethoric King Swellfoot could not fill,  
And who, till full, will cling for ever.

MAMMON:

This  
For Queen Jona would suffice, and less;  
But 'tis the Swinish multitude I fear,  
And in that fear I have--

PURGANAX:

Done what?

MAMMON:

Disinherited   \_195  
My eldest son Chrysaor, because he  
Attended public meetings, and would always  
Stand prating there of commerce, public faith,  
Economy, and unadulterate coin,  
And other topics, ultra-radical;                                       \_200  
And have entailed my estate, called the Fool's Paradise,  
And funds in fairy-money, bonds, and bills,  
Upon my accomplished daughter Banknotina,  
And married her to the gallows. [1]

NOTE:

(\_204 'If one should marry a gallows, and beget young gibbets, I never  
saw one so prone.--CYMBELINE.--[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

PURGANAX:

A good match!

MAMMON:

A high connexion, Purganax. The bridegroom                    \_205  
Is of a very ancient family,  
Of Hounslow Heath, Tyburn, and the New Drop,  
And has great influence in both Houses;--oh!  
He makes the fondest husband; nay, TOO fond,--  
New-married people should not kiss in public;                    \_210  
But the poor souls love one another so!  
And then my little grandchildren, the gibbets,  
Promising children as you ever saw,--  
The young playing at hanging, the elder learning  
How to hold radicals. They are well taught too,                \_215  
For every gibbet says its catechism

And reads a select chapter in the Bible  
Before it goes to play.

[A MOST TREMENDOUS HUMMING IS HEARD.]

PURGANAX:  
Ha! what do I hear?

[ENTER THE GADFLY.]

MAMMON:  
Your Gadfly, as it seems, is tired of gadding.

GADFLY:  
Hum! hum! hum! \_220  
From the lakes of the Alps, and the cold gray scalps  
Of the mountains, I come!  
Hum! hum! hum!  
From Morocco and Fez, and the high palaces  
Of golden Byzantium; \_225  
From the temples divine of old Palestine,  
From Athens and Rome,  
With a ha! and a hum!  
I come! I come!

All inn-doors and windows \_230  
Were open to me:  
I saw all that sin does,  
Which lamps hardly see  
That burn in the night by the curtained bed,--  
The impudent lamps! for they blushed not red, \_235  
Dinging and singing,  
From slumber I rung her,  
Loud as the clank of an ironmonger;  
Hum! hum! hum!

Far, far, far! \_240  
With the trump of my lips, and the sting at my hips,  
I drove her--afar!  
Far, far, far!  
From city to city, abandoned of pity,  
A ship without needle or star;-- \_245  
Homeless she passed, like a cloud on the blast,  
Seeking peace, finding war;--  
She is here in her car,  
From afar, and afar;--  
Hum! hum! \_250

I have stung her and wrung her,  
The venom is working;--  
And if you had hung her  
With canting and quirking,  
She could not be deader than she will be soon;-- \_255

I have driven her close to you, under the moon,  
Night and day, hum! hum! ha!  
I have hummed her and drummed her  
From place to place, till at last I have dumbbed her,  
Hum! hum! hum! \_260

NOTE:

\_260 Edd. 1820, 1839 have no stage direction after this line.

[ENTER THE LEECH AND THE RAT.]

LEECH:

I will suck  
Blood or muck!  
The disease of the state is a plethory,  
Who so fit to reduce it as I?

RAT:

I'll silyly seize and \_265  
Let blood from her weasand,--  
Creeping through crevice, and chink, and cranny,  
With my snaky tail, and my sides so scranny.

PURGANAX:

Aroint ye! thou unprofitable worm!  
[TO THE LEECH.]  
And thou, dull beetle, get thee back to hell! \_270  
[TO THE GADFLY.]  
To sting the ghosts of Babylonian kings,  
And the ox-headed lo--

SWINE (WITHIN):

Ugh, ugh, ugh!  
Hail! Iona the divine,  
We will be no longer Swine,  
But Bulls with horns and dewlaps.

RAT:

For, \_275  
You know, my lord, the Minotaur--

PURGANAX (FIERCELY):

Be silent! get to hell! or I will call  
The cat out of the kitchen. Well, Lord Mammon,  
This is a pretty business.

[EXIT THE RAT.]

MAMMON:

I will go  
And spell some scheme to make it ugly then.-- \_280

[EXIT.]



[ENTER SWELLFOOT.]

SWELLFOOT:

She is returned! Taurina is in Thebes,  
When Swellfoot wishes that she were in hell!  
Oh, Hymen, clothed in yellow jealousy,  
And waving o'er the couch of wedded kings  
The torch of Discord with its fiery hair;                     \_285  
This is thy work, thou patron saint of queens!  
Swellfoot is wived! though parted by the sea,  
The very name of wife had conjugal rights;  
Her cursed image ate, drank, slept with me,  
And in the arms of Adiposa oft 290  
Her memory has received a husband's--  
[A LOUD TUMULT, AND CRIES OF 'IONA FOR EVER --NO SWELLFOOT!']  
Hark!  
How the Swine cry Iona Taurina;  
I suffer the real presence; Purganax,  
Off with her head!

PURGANAX:

But I must first impanel  
A jury of the Pigs.

SWELLFOOT:

Pack them then.                                     \_295

PURGANAX:

Or fattening some few in two separate sties.  
And giving them clean straw, tying some bits  
Of ribbon round their legs--giving their Sows  
Some tawdry lace, and bits of lustre glass,  
And their young Boars white and red rags, and tails                     \_300  
Of cows, and jay feathers, and sticking cauliflowers  
Between the ears of the old ones; and when  
They are persuaded, that by the inherent virtue  
Of these things, they are all imperial Pigs,  
Good Lord! they'd rip each other's bellies up,                     \_305  
Not to say, help us in destroying her.

SWELLFOOT:

This plan might be tried too;--where's General Laoctonos?  
[ENTER LAOCTONOS AND DAKRY.]  
It is my royal pleasure  
That you, Lord General, bring the head and body,  
If separate it would please me better, hither                     \_310  
Of Queen Iona.

LAOCTONOS:

That pleasure I well knew,  
And made a charge with those battalions bold,  
Called, from their dress and grin, the royal apes,

Upon the Swine, who in a hollow square  
Enclosed her, and received the first attack                    \_315  
Like so many rhinoceroses, and then  
Retreating in good order, with bare tusks  
And wrinkled snouts presented to the foe,  
Bore her in triumph to the public sty.

What is still worse, some Sows upon the ground                    \_320  
Have given the ape-guards apples, nuts, and gin,  
And they all whisk their tails aloft, and cry,  
'Long live Iona! down with Swellfoot!'

PURGANAX:  
Hark!

THE SWINE (WITHOUT):  
Long live Iona! down with Swellfoot!

DAKRY:  
I

Went to the garret of the swineherd's tower,                    \_325  
Which overlooks the sty, and made a long  
Harangue (all words) to the assembled Swine,

Of delicacy mercy, judgement, law,  
Morals, and precedents, and purity,  
Adultery, destitution, and divorce,                                 \_330  
Piety, faith, and state necessity,

And how I loved the Queen!--and then I wept  
With the pathos of my own eloquence,  
And every tear turned to a mill-stone, which  
Brained many a gaping Pig, and there was made                    \_335  
A slough of blood and brains upon the place,  
Greased with the pounded bacon; round and round  
The mill-stones rolled, ploughing the pavement up,  
And hurling Sucking-Pigs into the air,  
With dust and stones.--

[ENTER MAMMON.]

MAMMON:

I wonder that gray wizards    \_340  
Like you should be so beardless in their schemes;  
It had been but a point of policy  
To keep Iona and the Swine apart.

Divide and rule! but ye have made a junction  
Between two parties who will govern you                                 \_345  
But for my art.--Behold this BAG! it is

The poison BAG of that Green Spider huge,  
On which our spies skulked in ovation through  
The streets of Thebes, when they were paved with dead:  
A bane so much the deadlier fills it now                                 \_350  
As calumny is worse than death,--for here  
The Gadfly's venom, fifty times distilled,  
Is mingled with the vomit of the Leech,

In due proportion, and black ratsbane, which  
 That very Rat, who, like the Pontic tyrant,                     \_355  
 Nurtures himself on poison, dare not touch;--  
 All is sealed up with the broad seal of Fraud,  
 Who is the Devil's Lord High Chancellor,  
 And over it the Primate of all Hell  
 Murmured this pious baptism:--'Be thou called                     \_360  
 The GREEN BAG; and this power and grace be thine:  
 That thy contents, on whomsoever poured,  
 Turn innocence to guilt, and gentlest looks  
 To savage, foul, and fierce deformity.  
 Let all baptized by thy infernal dew                                 \_365  
 Be called adulterer, drunkard, liar, wretch!  
 No name left out which orthodoxy loves,  
 Court Journal or legitimate Review!--  
 Be they called tyrant, beast, fool, glutton, lover  
 Of other wives and husbands than their own--                     \_370  
 The heaviest sin on this side of the Alps!  
 Wither they to a ghastly caricature  
 Of what was human!--let not man or beast  
 Behold their face with unaverted eyes!  
 Or hear their names with ears that tingle not                     \_375  
 With blood of indignation, rage, and shame!--  
 This is a perilous liquor;--good my Lords.--  
 [SWELLFOOT APPROACHES TO TOUCH THE GREEN BAG.]  
 Beware! for God's sake, beware!--if you should break  
 The seal, and touch the fatal liquor--

NOTE:

\_373 or edition 1820; nor edition 1839.

PURGANAX:

There,  
 Give it to me. I have been used to handle                     \_380  
 All sorts of poisons. His dread Majesty  
 Only desires to see the colour of it.

MAMMON:

Now, with a little common sense, my Lords,  
 Only undoing all that has been done  
 (Yet so as it may seem we but confirm it),                     \_385  
 Our victory is assured. We must entice  
 Her Majesty from the sty, and make the Pigs  
 Believe that the contents of the GREEN BAG  
 Are the true test of guilt or innocence.  
 And that, if she be guilty, 'twill transform her                     \_390  
 To manifest deformity like guilt.  
 If innocent, she will become transfigured  
 Into an angel, such as they say she is;  
 And they will see her flying through the air,  
 So bright that she will dim the noonday sun;                     \_395  
 Showering down blessings in the shape of comfits.  
 This, trust a priest, is just the sort of thing

Swine will believe. I'll wager you will see them  
Climbing upon the thatch of their low sties,  
With pieces of smoked glass, to watch her sail \_400  
Among the clouds, and some will hold the flaps  
Of one another's ears between their teeth,  
To catch the coming hail of comfits in.

You, Purganax, who have the gift o' the gab,  
Make them a solemn speech to this effect: \_405  
I go to put in readiness the feast  
Kept to the honour of our goddess Famine,  
Where, for more glory, let the ceremony  
Take place of the uglification of the Queen.

DAKRY (TO SWELLFOOT):  
I, as the keeper of your sacred conscience, \_410  
Humbly remind your Majesty that the care  
Of your high office, as Man-milliner  
To red Bellona, should not be deferred.

PURGANAX:  
All part, in happier plight to meet again.

[EXEUNT.]

END OF THE ACT 1.

ACT 2.

SCENE 1.2:  
THE PUBLIC STY.  
THE BOARS IN FULL ASSEMBLY.  
ENTER PUEGANAX.

PURGANAX:  
Grant me your patience, Gentlemen and Boars,  
Ye, by whose patience under public burthens  
The glorious constitution of these sties  
Subsists, and shall subsist. The Lean-Pig rates  
Grow with the growing populace of Swine, \_5  
The taxes, that true source of Piggishness  
(How can I find a more appropriate term  
To include religion, morals, peace, and plenty,  
And all that fit Boeotia as a nation  
To teach the other nations how to live?), \_10  
Increase with Piggishness itself; and still  
Does the revenue, that great spring of all  
The patronage, and pensions, and by-payments,  
Which free-born Pigs regard with jealous eyes,  
Diminish, till at length, by glorious steps, \_15  
All the land's produce will be merged in taxes,  
And the revenue will amount to--nothing!  
The failure of a foreign market for

Sausages, bristles, and blood-puddings,  
 And such home manufactures, is but partial;                     \_20  
 And, that the population of the Pigs,  
 Instead of hog-wash, has been fed on straw  
 And water, is a fact which is--you know--  
 That is--it is a state-necessity--  
 Temporary, of course. Those impious Pigs,                     \_25  
 Who, by frequent squeaks, have dared impugn  
 The settled Swellfoot system, or to make  
 Irreverent mockery of the genuflexions  
 Inculcated by the arch-priest, have been whipped  
 Into a loyal and an orthodox whine.                     \_30  
 Things being in this happy state, the Queen  
 Iona--

NOTE:

\_16 land's]lands edition 1820.

A LOUD CRY FROM THE PIGS:

She is innocent! most innocent!

PURGANAX:

That is the very thing that I was saying,  
 Gentlemen Swine; the Queen Iona being  
 Most innocent, no doubt, returns to Thebes,                     \_35  
 And the lean Sows and Bears collect about her,  
 Wishing to make her think that WE believe  
 (I mean those more substantial Pigs, who swill  
 Rich hog-wash, while the others mouth damp straw)  
 That she is guilty; thus, the Lean-Pig faction                     \_40  
 Seeks to obtain that hog-wash, which has been  
 Your immemorial right, and which I will  
 Maintain you in to the last drop of--

A BOAR (INTERRUPTING HIM):

What

Does any one accuse her of?

PURGANAX:

Why, no one  
 Makes ANY positive accusation;--but                     \_45  
 There were hints dropped, and so the privy wizards  
 Conceived that it became them to advise  
 His Majesty to investigate their truth;--  
 Not for his own sake; he could be content  
 To let his wife play any pranks she pleased,                     \_50  
 If, by that sufferance, HE could please the Pigs;  
 But then he fears the morals of the Swine,  
 The Sows especially, and what effect  
 It might produce upon the purity and  
 Religion of the rising generation                     \_55  
 Of Sucking-Pigs, if it could be suspected  
 That Queen Iona--

[A PAUSE.]

FIRST BOAR:

Well, go on; we long  
To hear what she can possibly have done.

PURGANAX:

Why, it is hinted, that a certain Bull--  
Thus much is KNOWN:--the milk-white Bulls that feed            \_60  
Beside Clitumnus and the crystal lakes  
Of the Cisalpine mountains, in fresh dews  
Of lotus-grass and blossoming asphodel  
Sleeking their silken hair, and with sweet breath  
Loading the morning winds until they faint                    \_65  
With living fragrance, are so beautiful!--  
Well, \_I\_ say nothing;--but Europa rode  
On such a one from Asia into Crete,  
And the enamoured sea grew calm beneath  
His gliding beauty. And Pasiphae,                               \_70  
Iona's grandmother,--but SHE is innocent!  
And that both you and I, and all assert.

FIRST BOAR:

Most innocent!

PURGANAX:

Behold this BAG; a bag--

SECOND BOAR:

Oh! no GREEN BAGS!! Jealousy's eyes are green,  
Scorpions are green, and water-snakes, and efts,               \_75  
And verdigris, and--

PURGANAX:

Honourable Swine,  
In Piggish souls can prepossessions reign?  
Allow me to remind you, grass is green--  
All flesh is grass;--no bacon but is flesh--  
Ye are but bacon. This divining BAG                               \_80  
(Which is not green, but only bacon colour)  
Is filled with liquor, which if sprinkled o'er  
A woman guilty of--we all know what--  
Makes her so hideous, till she finds one blind  
She never can commit the like again.                             \_85  
If innocent, she will turn into an angel,  
And rain down blessings in the shape of comfits  
As she flies up to heaven. Now, my proposal  
Is to convert her sacred Majesty  
Into an angel (as I am sure we shall do),                       \_90  
By pouring on her head this mystic water.

[SHOWING THE BAG.]

I know that she is innocent; I wish

Only to prove her so to all the world.

FIRST BOAR:

Excellent, just, and noble Purganax.

SECOND BOAR:

How glorious it will be to see her Majesty                    \_95  
Flying above our heads, her petticoats  
Streaming like--like--like--

THIRD BOAR:

Anything.

PURGANAX:

Oh no!  
But like a standard of an admiral's ship,  
Or like the banner of a conquering host,  
Or like a cloud dyed in the dying day,                                 \_100  
Unravell'd on the blast from a white mountain;  
Or like a meteor, or a war-steed's mane,  
Or waterfall from a dizzy precipice  
Scattered upon the wind.

FIRST BOAR:

Or a cow's tail.

SECOND BOAR:

Or ANYTHING, as the learned Boar observed.                                 \_105

PURGANAX:

Gentlemen Boars, I move a resolution,  
That her most sacred Majesty should be  
Invited to attend the feast of Famine,  
And to receive upon her chaste white body  
Dews of Apotheosis from this BAG.   \_110

[A GREAT CONFUSION IS HEARD OF THE PIGS OUT OF DOORS, WHICH  
COMMUNICATES ITSELF TO THOSE WITHIN. DURING THE FIRST STROPHE, THE  
DOORS OF THE STY ARE STAVED IN, AND A NUMBER OF EXCEEDINGLY LEAN PIGS  
AND SOWS AND BOARS RUSH IN.]

SEMICHORUS 1:

No! Yes!

SEMICHORUS 2:

Yes! No!

SEMICHORUS 1:

A law!

SEMICHORUS 2:

A flaw!

SEMICHORUS 1:

Porkers, we shall lose our wash, \_115  
Or must share it with the Lean-Pigs!

FIRST BOAR:

Order! order! be not rash!  
Was there ever such a scene, Pigs!

AN OLD SOW (RUSHING IN):

I never saw so fine a dash  
Since I first began to wean Pigs. \_120

SECOND BOAR (SOLEMNLY):

The Queen will be an angel time enough.  
I vote, in form of an amendment, that  
Purganax rub a little of that stuff  
Upon his face.

PURGANAX [HIS HEART IS SEEN TO BEAT THROUGH HIS WAISTCOAT]:

Gods! What would ye be at?

SEMICHORUS 1:

Purganax has plainly shown a \_125  
Cloven foot and jackdaw feather.

SEMICHORUS 2:

I vote Swellfoot and Iona  
Try the magic test together;  
Whenever royal spouses bicker,  
Both should try the magic liquor. \_130

AN OLD BOAR [ASIDE]:

A miserable state is that of Pigs,  
For if their drivers would tear caps and wigs,  
The Swine must bite each other's ear therefore.

AN OLD SOW [ASIDE]:

A wretched lot Jove has assigned to Swine,  
Squabbling makes Pig-herds hungry, and they dine \_135  
On bacon, and whip Sucking-Pigs the more.

CHORUS:

Hog-wash has been ta'en away:  
If the Bull-Queen is divested,  
We shall be in every way  
Hunted, stripped, exposed, molested; \_140

Let us do whate'er we may,

That she shall not be arrested.

QUEEN, we entrench you with walls of brawn,  
And palisades of tusks, sharp as a bayonet:

Place your most sacred person here. We pawn \_145

Our lives that none a finger dare to lay on it.

Those who wrong you, wrong us;



Those who hate you, hate us;  
 Those who sting you, sting us;  
 Those who bait you, bait us; \_150  
 The ORACLE is now about to be  
 Fulfilled by circumvolving destiny;  
 Which says: 'Thebes, choose REFORM or CIVIL WAR,  
 When through your streets, instead of hare with dogs,  
 A CONSORT QUEEN shall hunt a KING with Hogs, \_155  
 Riding upon the IONIAN MINOTAUR.'

NOTE:

\_154 streets instead edition 1820.

[ENTER IONA TAURINA.]

IONA TAURINA (COMING FORWARD):  
 Gentlemen Swine, and gentle Lady-Pigs,  
 The tender heart of every Boar acquits  
 Their QUEEN, of any act incongruous  
 With native Piggishness, and she, reposing \_160  
 With confidence upon the grunting nation,  
 Has thrown herself, her cause, her life, her all,  
 Her innocence, into their Hoggish arms;  
 Nor has the expectation been deceived  
 Of finding shelter there. Yet know, great Boars, \_165  
 (For such whoever lives among you finds you,  
 And so do I), the innocent are proud!  
 I have accepted your protection only  
 In compliment of your kind love and care,  
 Not for necessity. The innocent \_170  
 Are safest there where trials and dangers wait;  
 Innocent Queens o'er white-hot ploughshares tread  
 Unsinged, and ladies, Erin's laureate sings it,  
 Decked with rare gems, and beauty rarer still,  
 Walked from Killarney to the Giant's Causeway, \_175  
 Through rebels, smugglers, troops of yeomanry,  
 White-boys and Orange-boys, and constables,  
 Tithe-proctors, and excise people, uninjured!  
 Thus I!--  
 Lord Purganax, I do commit myself \_180  
 Into your custody, and am prepared  
 To stand the test, whatever it may be!

NOTE:

(\_173 'Rich and rare were the gems she wore.' See Moore's "Irish Melodies".-- [SHELLEY'S NOTE.] )

PURGANAX:

This magnanimity in your sacred Majesty  
 Must please the Pigs. You cannot fail of being  
 A heavenly angel. Smoke your bits of glass, \_185  
 Ye loyal Swine, or her transfiguration  
 Will blind your wondering eyes.

AN OLD BOAR [ASIDE]:  
Take care, my Lord,  
They do not smoke you first.

PURGANAX:  
At the approaching feast  
Of Famine, let the expiation be.

SWINE:  
Content! content!

IONA TAURINA [ASIDE]:  
I, most content of all, \_190  
Know that my foes even thus prepare their fall!

[EXEUNT OMNES.]

SCENE 2.2:

THE INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE OF FAMINE.  
THE STATUE OF THE GODDESS, A SKELETON CLOTHED IN PARTI-COLOURED RAGS,  
SEATED UPON A HEAP OF SKULLS AND LOAVES INTERMINGLED.  
A NUMBER OF EXCEEDINGLY FAT PRIESTS IN BLACK GARMENTS ARRAYED ON EACH  
SIDE, WITH MARROW-BONES AND CLEAVERS IN THEIR HANDS.  
[SOLOMON, THE COURT PORKMAN.]  
A FLOURISH OF TRUMPETS.

ENTER MAMMON AS ARCH-PRIEST, SWELLFOOT, DAKRY, PURGANAX, LAOCTONOS,  
FOLLOWED BY IONA TAURINA GUARDED.  
ON THE OTHER SIDE ENTER THE SWINE.

CHORUS OF PRIESTS, ACCOMPANIED BY THE COURT PORKMAN ON MARROW-BONES  
AND CLEAVERS:

GODDESS bare, and gaunt, and pale,  
Empress of the world, all hail!  
What though Cretans old called thee  
City-crested Cybele?  
We call thee FAMINE! \_5  
Goddess of fasts and feasts, starving and cramming!  
Through thee, for emperors, kings, and priests and lords,  
Who rule by viziers, sceptres, bank-notes, words,  
The earth pours forth its plenteous fruits,  
Corn, wool, linen, flesh, and roots-- \_10  
Those who consume these fruits through thee grow fat,  
Those who produce these fruits through thee grow lean,  
Whatever change takes place, oh, stick to that!  
And let things be as they have ever been;  
At least while we remain thy priests, \_15  
And proclaim thy fasts and feasts.  
Through thee the sacred SWELLFOOT dynasty  
Is based upon a rock amid that sea  
Whose waves are Swine--so let it ever be!

[SWELLFOOT, ETC., SEAT THEMSELVES AT A TABLE MAGNIFICENTLY COVERED AT  
THE UPPER END OF THE TEMPLE.  
ATTENDANTS PASS OVER THE STAGE WITH HOG-WASH IN PAILS.  
A NUMBER OF PIGS, EXCEEDINGLY LEAN, FOLLOW THEM LICKING UP THE WASH.]

MAMMON:

I fear your sacred Majesty has lost                                     \_20  
The appetite which you were used to have.  
Allow me now to recommend this dish--  
A simple kickshaw by your Persian cook,  
Such as is served at the great King's second table.  
The price and pains which its ingredients cost                             \_25  
Might have maintained some dozen families  
A winter or two--not more--so plain a dish  
Could scarcely disagree.--

SWELLFOOT:

After the trial,  
And these fastidious Pigs are gone, perhaps  
I may recover my lost appetite,--                                     \_30  
I feel the gout flying about my stomach--  
Give me a glass of Maraschino punch.

PURGANAX (FILLING HIS GLASS, AND STANDING UP):

The glorious Constitution of the Pigs!

ALL:

A toast! a toast! stand up, and three times three!

DAKRY:

No heel-taps--darken daylights! --

LAOCTONOS:

Claret, somehow,                                     \_35  
Puts me in mind of blood, and blood of claret!

SWELLFOOT:

Laoctonos is fishing for a compliment,  
But 'tis his due. Yes, you have drunk more wine,  
And shed more blood, than any man in Thebes.  
[TO PURGANAX.]  
For God's sake stop the grunting of those Pigs!                             \_40

PURGANAX:

We dare not, Sire, 'tis Famine's privilege.

CHORUS OF SWINE:

Hail to thee, hail to thee, Famine!  
Thy throne is on blood, and thy robe is of rags;  
Thou devil which livest on damning;  
Saint of new churches, and cant, and GREEN BAGS,                             \_45  
Till in pity and terror thou risest,  
Confounding the schemes of the wisest;

When thou liftest thy skeleton form,  
 When the loaves and the skulls roll about,  
 We will greet thee-the voice of a storm \_50  
 Would be lost in our terrible shout!

Then hail to thee, hail to thee, Famine!  
 Hail to thee, Empress of Earth!  
 When thou risest, dividing possessions;  
 When thou risest, uprooting oppressions, \_55  
 In the pride of thy ghastly mirth;  
 Over palaces, temples, and graves,  
 We will rush as thy minister-slaves,  
 Trampling behind in thy train,  
 Till all be made level again! \_60

MAMMON:

I hear a crackling of the giant bones  
 Of the dread image, and in the black pits  
 Which once were eyes, I see two livid flames.  
 These prodigies are oracular, and show  
 The presence of the unseen Deity. \_65  
 Mighty events are hastening to their doom!

SWELLFOOT:

I only hear the lean and mutinous Swine  
 Grunting about the temple.

DAKRY:

In a crisis  
 Of such exceeding delicacy, I think  
 We ought to put her Majesty, the QUEEN, \_70  
 Upon her trial without delay.

MAMMON:

THE BAG  
 Is here.

PURGANAX:

I have rehearsed the entire scene  
 With an ox-bladder and some ditchwater,  
 On Lady P--; it cannot fail.  
 [TAKING UP THE BAG.]  
 Your Majesty  
 [TO SWELLFOOT.]  
 In such a filthy business had better \_75  
 Stand on one side, lest it should sprinkle you.  
 A spot or two on me would do no harm,  
 Nay, it might hide the blood, which the sad Genius  
 Of the Green Isle has fixed, as by a spell,  
 Upon my brow--which would stain all its seas, \_80  
 But which those seas could never wash away!

IONA TAURINA:

My Lord, I am ready--nay, I am impatient

To undergo the test.

[A GRACEFUL FIGURE IN A SEMI-TRANSPARENT VEIL PASSES UNNOTICED THROUGH THE TEMPLE; THE WORD "LIBERTY" IS SEEN THROUGH THE VEIL, AS IF IT WERE WRITTEN IN FIRE UPON ITS FOREHEAD. ITS WORDS ARE ALMOST DROWNED IN THE FURIOUS GRUNTING OF THE PIGS, AND THE BUSINESS OF THE TRIAL. SHE KNEELS ON THE STEPS OF THE ALTAR, AND SPEAKS IN TONES AT FIRST FAINT AND LOW, BUT WHICH EVER BECOME LOUDER AND LOUDER.]

Mighty Empress! Death's white wife!

Ghastly mother-in-law of Life! \_85

By the God who made thee such,

By the magic of thy touch,

By the starving and the cramming

Of fasts and feasts! by thy dread self, O Famine!

I charge thee! when thou wake the multitude, \_90

Thou lead them not upon the paths of blood.

The earth did never mean her foison

For those who crown life's cup with poison

Of fanatic rage and meaningless revenge--

But for those radiant spirits, who are still \_95

The standard-bearers in the van of Change.

Be they th' appointed stewards, to fill

The lap of Pain, and Toil, and Age!--

Remit, O Queen! thy accustomed rage!

Be what thou art not! In voice faint and low \_100

FREEDOM calls "Famine",--her eternal foe,

To brief alliance, hollow truce.--Rise now!

[WHILST THE VEILED FIGURE HAS BEEN CHANTING THIS STROPHE, MAMMON, DAKRY, LAOCTONOS, AND SWELLFOOT, HAVE SURROUNDED IONA TAURINA, WHO, WITH HER HANDS FOLDED ON HER BREAST, AND HER EYES LIFTED TO HEAVEN, STANDS, AS WITH SAINT-LIKE RESIGNATION, TO WAIT THE ISSUE OF THE BUSINESS, IN PERFECT CONFIDENCE OF HER INNOCENCE.]

[PURGANAX, AFTER UNSEALING THE GREEN BAG, IS GRAVELY ABOUT TO POUR THE LIQUOR UPON HER HEAD, WHEN SUDDENLY THE WHOLE EXPRESSION OF HER FIGURE AND COUNTENANCE CHANGES; SHE SNATCHES IT FROM HIS HAND WITH A LOUD LAUGH OF TRIUMPH, AND EMPTIES IT OVER SWELLFOOT AND HIS WHOLE COURT, WHO ARE INSTANTLY CHANGED INTO A NUMBER OF FILTHY AND UGLY ANIMALS, AND RUSH OUT OF THE TEMPLE. THE IMAGE OF FAMINE THEN ARISES WITH A TREMENDOUS SOUND, THE PIGS BEGIN SCRAMBLING FOR THE LOAVES, AND ARE TRIPPED UP BY THE SKULLS; ALL THOSE WHO EAT THE LOAVES ARE TURNED INTO BULLS, AND ARRANGE THEMSELVES QUIETLY BEHIND THE ALTAR. THE IMAGE OF FAMINE SINKS THROUGH A CHASM IN THE EARTH, AND A MINOTAUR RISES.]

MINOTAUR:

I am the Ionian Minotaur, the mightiest

Of all Europa's taurine progeny--

I am the old traditional Man-Bull; \_105

And from my ancestors having been Ionian,

I am called Ion, which, by interpretation,

Is JOHN; in plain Theban, that is to say,

My name's JOHN BULL; I am a famous hunter,



circumstances were the theme of all conversation among the English. We were then at the Baths of San Giuliano. A friend came to visit us on the day when a fair was held in the square, beneath our windows: Shelley read to us his "Ode to Liberty"; and was riotously accompanied by the grunting of a quantity of pigs brought for sale to the fair. He compared it to the 'chorus of frogs' in the satiric drama of Aristophanes; and, it being an hour of merriment, and one ludicrous association suggesting another, he imagined a political-satirical drama on the circumstances of the day, to which the pigs would serve as chorus--and "Swellfoot" was begun. When finished, it was transmitted to England, printed, and published anonymously; but stifled at the very dawn of its existence by the Society for the Suppression of Vice, who threatened to prosecute it, if not immediately withdrawn. The friend who had taken the trouble of bringing it out, of course did not think it worth the annoyance and expense of a contest, and it was laid aside.

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

'from the pale-faced moon;  
Or dive into the bottom of the deep  
Where fathom-line would never touch the ground,  
And pluck up drowned'

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

\*\*\*

EPIPSYCHIDION.

VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE NOBLE AND UNFORTUNATE LADY, EMILIA V--,

NOW IMPRISONED IN THE CONVENT OF --.

L'anima amante si slancia fuori del creato, e si crea nell' infinito un

Mondo tutto per essa, diverso assai da questo oscuro e pauroso baratro.  
HER OWN WORDS.

["Epipsychidion" was composed at Pisa, January, February, 1821, and published without the author's name, in the following summer, by C. & J. Ollier, London. The poem was included by Mrs. Shelley in the "Poetical Works", 1839, both editions. Amongst the Shelley manuscripts in the Bodleian is a first draft of "Epipsychidion", 'consisting of three versions, more or less complete, of the "Preface [Advertisement]"; a version in ink and pencil, much cancelled, of the last eighty lines of the poem, and some additional lines which did not appear in print' ("Examination of the Shelley manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, by C.D. Locock". Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903, page 3). This draft, the writing of which is 'extraordinarily confused and illegible,' has been carefully deciphered and printed by Mr. Locock in the volume named above. Our text follows that of the editio princeps, 1821.]

#### ADVERTISEMENT.

The Writer of the following lines died at Florence, as he was preparing for a voyage to one of the wildest of the Sporades, which he had bought, and where he had fitted up the ruins of an old building, and where it was his hope to have realised a scheme of life, suited perhaps to that happier and better world of which he is now an inhabitant, but hardly practicable in this. His life was singular; less on account of the romantic vicissitudes which diversified it, than the ideal tinge which it received from his own character and feelings. The present Poem, like the "Vita Nuova" of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers without a matter-of-fact history of the circumstances to which it relates and to a certain other class it must ever remain incomprehensible, from a defect of a common organ of perception for the ideas of which it treats. Not but that gran vergogna sarebbe a colui, che rimasse cosa sotto veste di figura, o di colore rettorico: e domandato non sapesse denudare le sue parole da cotal veste, in guisa che avessero verace intendimento.

The present poem appears to have been intended by the Writer as the dedication to some longer one. The stanza on the opposite page [1] is almost a literal translation from Dante's famous Canzone

Voi, ch' intendendo, il terzo ciel movete, etc.

The presumptuous application of the concluding lines to his own composition will raise a smile at the expense of my unfortunate friend: be it a smile not of contempt, but pity. S.

[1] i.e. the nine lines which follow, beginning, 'My Song, I fear,' etc.--ED.

My Song, I fear that thou wilt find but few  
Who fitly shalt conceive thy reasoning,



Of such hard matter dost thou entertain;  
Whence, if by misadventure, chance should bring  
Thee to base company (as chance may do),                     \_5  
Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,  
I prithee, comfort thy sweet self again,  
My last delight! tell them that they are dull,  
And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

#### EPIPSYCHIDION.

Sweet Spirit! Sister of that orphan one,  
Whose empire is the name thou weapest on,  
In my heart's temple I suspend to thee  
These votive wreaths of withered memory.

Poor captive bird! who, from thy narrow cage,                     \_5  
Pourest such music, that it might assuage  
The rugged hearts of those who prisoned thee,  
Were they not deaf to all sweet melody;  
This song shall be thy rose: its petals pale  
Are dead, indeed, my adored Nightingale!                     \_10  
But soft and fragrant is the faded blossom,  
And it has no thorn left to wound thy bosom.

High, spirit-winged Heart! who dost for ever  
Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain endeavour,  
Till those bright plumes of thought, in which arrayed                     \_15  
It over-soared this low and worldly shade,  
Lie shattered; and thy panting, wounded breast  
Stains with dear blood its unmaternal nest!  
I weep vain tears: blood would less bitter be,  
Yet poured forth gladlier, could it profit thee.                     \_20

Seraph of Heaven! too gentle to be human,  
Veiling beneath that radiant form of Woman  
All that is insupportable in thee  
Of light, and love, and immortality!  
Sweet Benediction in the eternal Curse!                     \_25  
Veiled Glory of this lampless Universe!  
Thou Moon beyond the clouds! Thou living Form  
Among the Dead! Thou Star above the Storm!  
Thou Wonder, and thou Beauty, and thou Terror!  
Thou Harmony of Nature's art! Thou Mirror                     \_30  
In whom, as in the splendour of the Sun,  
All shapes look glorious which thou gazest on!  
Ay, even the dim words which obscure thee now  
Flash, lightning-like, with unaccustomed glow;  
I pray thee that thou blot from this sad song                     \_35  
All of its much mortality and wrong,  
With those clear drops, which start like sacred dew  
From the twin lights thy sweet soul darkens through,  
Weeping, till sorrow becomes ecstasy:

Then smile on it, so that it may not die. \_40

I never thought before my death to see  
Youth's vision thus made perfect. Emily,  
I love thee; though the world by no thin name  
Will hide that love from its unvalued shame.  
Would we two had been twins of the same mother! \_45  
Or, that the name my heart lent to another  
Could be a sister's bond for her and thee,  
Blending two beams of one eternity!  
Yet were one lawful and the other true,  
These names, though dear, could paint not, as is due. \_50  
How beyond refuge I am thine. Ah me!  
I am not thine: I am a part of THEE.

Sweet Lamp! my moth-like Muse has burned its wings  
Or, like a dying swan who soars and sings,  
Young Love should teach Time, in his own gray style, \_55  
All that thou art. Art thou not void of guile,  
A lovely soul formed to be blessed and bless?  
A well of sealed and secret happiness,  
Whose waters like blithe light and music are,  
Vanquishing dissonance and gloom? A Star \_60  
Which moves not in the moving heavens, alone?  
A Smile amid dark frowns? a gentle tone  
Amid rude voices? a beloved light?  
A Solitude, a Refuge, a Delight?  
A Lute, which those whom Love has taught to play \_65  
Make music on, to soothe the roughest day  
And lull fond Grief asleep? a buried treasure?  
A cradle of young thoughts of wingless pleasure?  
A violet-shrouded grave of Woe?--I measure  
The world of fancies, seeking one like thee, \_70  
And find--alas! mine own infirmity.

She met me, Stranger, upon life's rough way,  
And lured me towards sweet Death; as Night by Day,  
Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift Hope,  
Led into light, life, peace. An antelope, \_75  
In the suspended impulse of its lightness,  
Were less aethereally light: the brightness  
Of her divinest presence trembles through  
Her limbs, as underneath a cloud of dew  
Embodied in the windless heaven of June \_80  
Amid the splendour-winged stars, the Moon  
Burns, inextinguishably beautiful:  
And from her lips, as from a hyacinth full  
Of honey-dew, a liquid murmur drops,  
Killing the sense with passion; sweet as stops \_85  
Of planetary music heard in trance.  
In her mild lights the starry spirits dance,  
The sunbeams of those wells which ever leap  
Under the lightnings of the soul--too deep

For the brief fathom-line of thought or sense. \_90  
 The glory of her being, issuing thence,  
 Stains the dead, blank, cold air with a warm shade  
 Of unentangled intermixture, made  
 By Love, of light and motion: one intense  
 Diffusion, one serene Omnipresence, \_95  
 Whose flowing outlines mingle in their flowing,  
 Around her cheeks and utmost fingers glowing  
 With the unintermitted blood, which there  
 Quivers, (as in a fleece of snow-like air  
 The crimson pulse of living morning quiver,) \_100  
 Continuously prolonged, and ending never,  
 Till they are lost, and in that Beauty furled  
 Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world;  
 Scarce visible from extreme loveliness.  
 Warm fragrance seems to fall from her light dress \_105  
 And her loose hair; and where some heavy tress  
 The air of her own speed has disentwined,  
 The sweetness seems to satiate the faint wind;  
 And in the soul a wild odour is felt  
 Beyond the sense, like fiery dews that melt \_110  
 Into the bosom of a frozen bud.--  
 See where she stands! a mortal shape indued  
 With love and life and light and deity,  
 And motion which may change but cannot die;  
 An image of some bright Eternity; \_115  
 A shadow of some golden dream; a Splendour  
 Leaving the third sphere pilotless; a tender  
 Reflection of the eternal Moon of Love  
 Under whose motions life's dull billows move;  
 A Metaphor of Spring and Youth and Morning; \_120  
 A Vision like incarnate April, warning,  
 With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy  
 Into his summer grave.  
 Ah, woe is me!  
 What have I dared? where am I lifted? how  
 Shall I descend, and perish not? I know \_125  
 That Love makes all things equal: I have heard  
 By mine own heart this joyous truth averred:  
 The spirit of the worm beneath the sod  
 In love and worship, blends itself with God.

Spouse! Sister! Angel! Pilot of the Fate \_130  
 Whose course has been so starless! O too late  
 Beloved! O too soon adored, by me!  
 For in the fields of Immortality  
 My spirit should at first have worshipped thine,  
 A divine presence in a place divine; \_135  
 Or should have moved beside it on this earth,  
 A shadow of that substance, from its birth;  
 But not as now:--I love thee; yes, I feel  
 That on the fountain of my heart a seal  
 Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright \_140

For thee, since in those TEARS thou hast delight.  
We--are we not formed, as notes of music are,  
For one another, though dissimilar;  
Such difference without discord, as can make  
Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits shake                    \_145  
As trembling leaves in a continuous air?

Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me dare  
Beacon the rocks on which high hearts are wrecked.  
I never was attached to that great sect,  
Whose doctrine is, that each one should select                    \_150  
Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,  
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend  
To cold oblivion, though it is in the code  
Of modern morals, and the beaten road  
Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread,               \_155  
Who travel to their home among the dead  
By the broad highway of the world, and so  
With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe,  
The dreariest and the longest journey go.

True Love in this differs from gold and clay,                    \_160  
That to divide is not to take away.  
Love is like understanding, that grows bright,  
Gazing on many truths; 'tis like thy light,  
Imagination! which from earth and sky,  
And from the depths of human fantasy,                               \_165  
As from a thousand prisms and mirrors, fills  
The Universe with glorious beams, and kills  
Error, the worm, with many a sun-like arrow  
Of its reverberated lightning. Narrow  
The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates,                \_170  
The life that wears, the spirit that creates  
One object, and one form, and builds thereby  
A sepulchre for its eternity.

Mind from its object differs most in this:  
Evil from good; misery from happiness;                               \_175  
The baser from the nobler; the impure  
And frail, from what is clear and must endure.  
If you divide suffering and dross, you may  
Diminish till it is consumed away;  
If you divide pleasure and love and thought,                       \_180  
Each part exceeds the whole; and we know not  
How much, while any yet remains unshared,  
Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow spared:  
This truth is that deep well, whence sages draw  
The unenvied light of hope; the eternal law                        \_185  
By which those live, to whom this world of life  
Is as a garden ravaged, and whose strife  
Tills for the promise of a later birth  
The wilderness of this Elysian earth.

There was a Being whom my spirit oft   \_190  
 Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft,  
 In the clear golden prime of my youth's dawn,  
 Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,  
 Amid the enchanted mountains, and the caves  
 Of divine sleep, and on the air-like waves   \_195  
 Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous floor  
 Paved her light steps;--on an imagined shore,  
 Under the gray beak of some promontory  
 She met me, robed in such exceeding glory,  
 That I beheld her not. In solitudes   \_200  
 Her voice came to me through the whispering woods,  
 And from the fountains, and the odours deep  
 Of flowers, which, like lips murmuring in their sleep  
 Of the sweet kisses which had lulled them there,  
 Breathed but of HER to the enamoured air;   \_205  
 And from the breezes whether low or loud,  
 And from the rain of every passing cloud,  
 And from the singing of the summer-birds,  
 And from all sounds, all silence. In the words  
 Of antique verse and high romance,--in form,   \_210  
 Sound, colour--in whatever checks that Storm  
 Which with the shattered present chokes the past;  
 And in that best philosophy, whose taste  
 Makes this cold common hell, our life, a doom  
 As glorious as a fiery martyrdom;   \_215  
 Her Spirit was the harmony of truth.--

Then, from the caverns of my dreamy youth  
 I sprang, as one sandalled with plumes of fire,  
 And towards the lodestar of my one desire,  
 I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight   \_220  
 Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet light,  
 When it would seek in Hesper's setting sphere  
 A radiant death, a fiery sepulchre,  
 As if it were a lamp of earthly flame.--  
 But She, whom prayers or tears then could not tame,   \_225  
 Passed, like a God throned on a winged planet,  
 Whose burning plumes to tenfold swiftness fan it,  
 Into the dreary cone of our life's shade;  
 And as a man with mighty loss dismayed,  
 I would have followed, though the grave between   \_230  
 Yawned like a gulf whose spectres are unseen:  
 When a voice said:--'O thou of hearts the weakest,  
 The phantom is beside thee whom thou seekest.'  
 Then I--'Where?'--the world's echo answered 'where?'  
 And in that silence, and in my despair,   \_235  
 I questioned every tongueless wind that flew  
 Over my tower of mourning, if it knew  
 Whither 'twas fled, this soul out of my soul;  
 And murmured names and spells which have control  
 Over the sightless tyrants of our fate;   \_240  
 But neither prayer nor verse could dissipate

The night which closed on her; nor uncreate  
That world within this Chaos, mine and me,  
Of which she was the veiled Divinity,  
The world I say of thoughts that worshipped her:                    \_245  
And therefore I went forth, with hope and fear  
And every gentle passion sick to death,  
Feeding my course with expectation's breath,  
Into the wintry forest of our life;  
And struggling through its error with vain strife,                    \_250  
And stumbling in my weakness and my haste,  
And half bewildered by new forms, I passed,  
Seeking among those untaught foresters  
If I could find one form resembling hers,  
In which she might have masked herself from me.                    \_255  
There,--One, whose voice was venom'd melody  
Sate by a well, under blue nightshade bowers:  
The breath of her false mouth was like faint flowers,  
Her touch was as electric poison,--flame  
Out of her looks into my vitals came,                                 \_260  
And from her living cheeks and bosom flew  
A killing air, which pierced like honey-dew  
Into the core of my green heart, and lay  
Upon its leaves; until, as hair grown gray  
O'er a young brow, they hid its unblown prime                    \_265  
With ruins of unseasonable time.

In many mortal forms I rashly sought  
The shadow of that idol of my thought.  
And some were fair--but beauty dies away:  
Others were wise--but honeyed words betray:                    \_270  
And One was true--oh! why not true to me?  
Then, as a hunted deer that could not flee,  
I turned upon my thoughts, and stood at bay,  
Wounded and weak and panting; the cold day  
Trembled, for pity of my strife and pain.                             \_275  
When, like a noonday dawn, there shone again  
Deliverance. One stood on my path who seemed  
As like the glorious shape which I had dreamed  
As is the Moon, whose changes ever run  
Into themselves, to the eternal Sun;                                 \_280  
The cold chaste Moon, the Queen of Heaven's bright isles,  
Who makes all beautiful on which she smiles,  
That wandering shrine of soft yet icy flame  
Which ever is transformed, yet still the same,  
And warms not but illumines. Young and fair                    \_285  
As the descended Spirit of that sphere,  
She hid me, as the Moon may hide the night  
From its own darkness, until all was bright  
Between the Heaven and Earth of my calm mind,  
And, as a cloud charioted by the wind,                             \_290  
She led me to a cave in that wild place,  
And sate beside me, with her downward face  
Illumining my slumbers, like the Moon

Waxing and waning o'er Endymion.  
 And I was laid asleep, spirit and limb,                     \_295  
 And all my being became bright or dim  
 As the Moon's image in a summer sea,  
 According as she smiled or frowned on me;  
 And there I lay, within a chaste cold bed:  
 Alas, I then was nor alive nor dead:--                     \_300  
 For at her silver voice came Death and Life,  
 Unmindful each of their accustomed strife,  
 Masked like twin babes, a sister and a brother,  
 The wandering hopes of one abandoned mother,  
 And through the cavern without wings they flew,                     \_305  
 And cried 'Away, he is not of our crew.'  
 I wept, and though it be a dream, I weep.

What storms then shook the ocean of my sleep,  
 Blotting that Moon, whose pale and waning lips  
 Then shrank as in the sickness of eclipse;--                     \_310  
 And how my soul was as a lampless sea,  
 And who was then its Tempest; and when She,  
 The Planet of that hour, was quenched, what frost  
 Crept o'er those waters, till from coast to coast  
 The moving billows of my being fell                     \_315  
 Into a death of ice, immovable;--  
 And then--what earthquakes made it gape and split,  
 The white Moon smiling all the while on it,  
 These words conceal:--If not, each word would be  
 The key of staunchless tears. Weep not for me!                     \_320

At length, into the obscure Forest came  
 The Vision I had sought through grief and shame.  
 Athwart that wintry wilderness of thorns  
 Flashed from her motion splendour like the Morn's,  
 And from her presence life was radiated                     \_325  
 Through the gray earth and branches bare and dead;  
 So that her way was paved, and roofed above  
 With flowers as soft as thoughts of budding love;  
 And music from her respiration spread  
 Like light,--all other sounds were penetrated                     \_330  
 By the small, still, sweet spirit of that sound,  
 So that the savage winds hung mute around;  
 And odours warm and fresh fell from her hair  
 Dissolving the dull cold in the frore air:  
 Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun,                     \_335  
 When light is changed to love, this glorious One  
 Floated into the cavern where I lay,  
 And called my Spirit, and the dreaming clay  
 Was lifted by the thing that dreamed below  
 As smoke by fire, and in her beauty's glow                     \_340  
 I stood, and felt the dawn of my long night  
 Was penetrating me with living light:  
 I knew it was the Vision veiled from me  
 So many years--that it was Emily.

Twin Spheres of light who rule this passive Earth,                    \_345  
 This world of loves, this ME; and into birth  
 Awaken all its fruits and flowers, and dart  
 Magnetic might into its central heart;  
 And lift its billows and its mists, and guide  
 By everlasting laws, each wind and tide                                 \_350  
 To its fit cloud, and its appointed cave;  
 And lull its storms, each in the craggy grave  
 Which was its cradle, luring to faint bowers  
 The armies of the rainbow-winged showers;  
 And, as those married lights, which from the towers                    \_355  
 Of Heaven look forth and fold the wandering globe  
 In liquid sleep and splendour, as a robe;  
 And all their many-mingled influence blend,  
 If equal, yet unlike, to one sweet end;--  
 So ye, bright regents, with alternate sway                                 \_360  
 Govern my sphere of being, night and day!  
 Thou, not disdaining even a borrowed might;  
 Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light;  
 And, through the shadow of the seasons three,  
 From Spring to Autumn's sere maturity,                                 \_365  
 Light it into the Winter of the tomb,  
 Where it may ripen to a brighter bloom.  
 Thou too, O Comet beautiful and fierce,  
 Who drew the heart of this frail Universe  
 Towards thine own; till, wrecked in that convulsion,                    \_370  
 Alternating attraction and repulsion,  
 Thine went astray and that was rent in twain;  
 Oh, float into our azure heaven again!  
 Be there Love's folding-star at thy return;  
 The living Sun will feed thee from its urn                                 \_375  
 Of golden fire; the Moon will veil her horn  
 In thy last smiles; adoring Even and Morn  
 Will worship thee with incense of calm breath  
 And lights and shadows; as the star of Death  
 And Birth is worshipped by those sisters wild                             \_380  
 Called Hope and Fear--upon the heart are piled  
 Their offerings,--of this sacrifice divine  
 A World shall be the altar.  
 Lady mine,  
 Scorn not these flowers of thought, the fading birth  
 Which from its heart of hearts that plant puts forth                    \_385  
 Whose fruit, made perfect by thy sunny eyes,  
 Will be as of the trees of Paradise.

The day is come, and thou wilt fly with me.  
 To whatsoever of dull mortality  
 Is mine, remain a vestal sister still;   \_390  
 To the intense, the deep, the imperishable,  
 Not mine but me, henceforth be thou united  
 Even as a bride, delighting and delighted.  
 The hour is come:--the destined Star has risen



Which shall descend upon a vacant prison. \_395  
 The walls are high, the gates are strong, thick set  
 The sentinels--but true Love never yet  
 Was thus constrained: it overleaps all fence:  
 Like lightning, with invisible violence  
 Piercing its continents; like Heaven's free breath, \_400  
 Which he who grasps can hold not; liker Death,  
 Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way  
 Through temple, tower, and palace, and the array  
 Of arms: more strength has Love than he or they;  
 For it can burst his chanel, and make free \_405  
 The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,  
 The soul in dust and chaos.  
 Emily,  
 A ship is floating in the harbour now,  
 A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's brow;  
 There is a path on the sea's azure floor, \_410  
 No keel has ever ploughed that path before;  
 The halcyons brood around the foamless isles;  
 The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its wiles;  
 The merry mariners are bold and free:  
 Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me? \_415  
 Our bark is as an albatross, whose nest  
 Is a far Eden of the purple East;  
 And we between her wings will sit, while Night,  
 And Day, and Storm, and Calm, pursue their flight,  
 Our ministers, along the boundless Sea, \_420  
 Treading each other's heels, unheededly.  
 It is an isle under Ionian skies,  
 Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise,  
 And, for the harbours are not safe and good,  
 This land would have remained a solitude \_425  
 But for some pastoral people native there,  
 Who from the Elysian, clear, and golden air  
 Draw the last spirit of the age of gold,  
 Simple and spirited; innocent and bold.  
 The blue Aegean girds this chosen home, \_430  
 With ever-changing sound and light and foam,  
 Kissing the sifted sands, and caverns hoar;  
 And all the winds wandering along the shore  
 Undulate with the undulating tide:  
 There are thick woods where sylvan forms abide; \_435  
 And many a fountain, rivulet, and pond,  
 As clear as elemental diamond,  
 Or serene morning air; and far beyond,  
 The mossy tracks made by the goats and deer  
 (Which the rough shepherd treads but once a year) \_440  
 Pierce into glades, caverns, and bowers, and halls  
 Built round with ivy, which the waterfalls  
 Illumining, with sound that never fails  
 Accompany the noonday nightingales;  
 And all the place is peopled with sweet airs; \_445  
 The light clear element which the isle wears

Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers,  
 Which floats like mist laden with unseen showers.  
 And falls upon the eyelids like faint sleep;  
 And from the moss violets and jonquils peep,                     \_450  
 And dart their arrowy odour through the brain  
 Till you might faint with that delicious pain.  
 And every motion, odour, beam and tone,  
 With that deep music is in unison:  
 Which is a soul within the soul--they seem                     \_455  
 Like echoes of an antenatal dream.--  
 It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea,  
 Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity;  
 Bright as that wandering Eden Lucifer,  
 Washed by the soft blue Oceans of young air.                     \_460  
 It is a favoured place. Famine or Blight,  
 Pestilence, War and Earthquake, never light  
 Upon its mountain-peaks; blind vultures, they  
 Sail onward far upon their fatal way:  
 The winged storms, chanting their thunder-psalm                     \_465  
 To other lands, leave azure chasms of calm  
 Over this isle, or weep themselves in dew,  
 From which its fields and woods ever renew  
 Their green and golden immortality.  
 And from the sea there rise, and from the sky                     \_470  
 There fall, clear exhalations, soft and bright.  
 Veil after veil, each hiding some delight,  
 Which Sun or Moon or zephyr draw aside,  
 Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride  
 Glowing at once with love and loveliness,                     \_475  
 Blushes and trembles at its own excess:  
 Yet, like a buried lamp, a Soul no less  
 Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,  
 An atom of th' Eternal, whose own smile  
 Unfolds itself, and may be felt, not seen                     \_480  
 O'er the gray rocks, blue waves, and forests green,  
 Filling their bare and void interstices.--  
 But the chief marvel of the wilderness  
 Is a lone dwelling, built by whom or how  
 None of the rustic island-people know:                     \_485  
 'Tis not a tower of strength, though with its height  
 It overtops the woods; but, for delight,  
 Some wise and tender Ocean-King, ere crime  
 Had been invented, in the world's young prime,  
 Reared it, a wonder of that simple time,                     \_490  
 An envy of the isles, a pleasure-house  
 Made sacred to his sister and his spouse.  
 It scarce seems now a wreck of human art,  
 But, as it were Titanic; in the heart  
 Of Earth having assumed its form, then grown                     \_495  
 Out of the mountains, from the living stone,  
 Lifting itself in caverns light and high:  
 For all the antique and learned imagery  
 Has been erased, and in the place of it

The ivy and the wild-vine interknit \_500  
 The volumes of their many-twining stems;  
 Parasite flowers illumine with dewy gems  
 The lampless halls, and when they fade, the sky  
 Peeps through their winter-woof of tracery  
 With moonlight patches, or star atoms keen, \_505  
 Or fragments of the day's intense serene;--  
 Working mosaic on their Parian floors.  
 And, day and night, aloof, from the high towers  
 And terraces, the Earth and Ocean seem  
 To sleep in one another's arms, and dream \_510  
 Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks, and all that we  
 Read in their smiles, and call reality.

This isle and house are mine, and I have vowed  
 Thee to be lady of the solitude.--  
 And I have fitted up some chambers there \_515  
 Looking towards the golden Eastern air,  
 And level with the living winds, which flow  
 Like waves above the living waves below.--  
 I have sent books and music there, and all  
 Those instruments with which high Spirits call \_520  
 The future from its cradle, and the past  
 Out of its grave, and make the present last  
 In thoughts and joys which sleep, but cannot die,  
 Folded within their own eternity.  
 Our simple life wants little, and true taste \_525  
 Hires not the pale drudge Luxury, to waste  
 The scene it would adorn, and therefore still,  
 Nature with all her children haunts the hill.  
 The ring-dove, in the embowering ivy, yet  
 Keeps up her love-lament, and the owls flit \_530  
 Round the evening tower, and the young stars glance  
 Between the quick bats in their twilight dance;  
 The spotted deer bask in the fresh moonlight  
 Before our gate, and the slow, silent night  
 Is measured by the pants of their calm sleep. \_535  
 Be this our home in life, and when years heap  
 Their withered hours, like leaves, on our decay,  
 Let us become the overhanging day,  
 The living soul of this Elysian isle,  
 Conscious, inseparable, one. Meanwhile \_540  
 We two will rise, and sit, and walk together,  
 Under the roof of blue Ionian weather,  
 And wander in the meadows, or ascend  
 The mossy mountains, where the blue heavens bend  
 With lightest winds, to touch their paramour; \_545  
 Or linger, where the pebble-paven shore,  
 Under the quick, faint kisses of the sea  
 Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy,--  
 Possessing and possessed by all that is  
 Within that calm circumference of bliss, \_550  
 And by each other, till to love and live

Be one:--or, at the noontide hour, arrive  
Where some old cavern hoar seems yet to keep  
The moonlight of the expired night asleep,  
Through which the awakened day can never peep;                    \_555  
A veil for our seclusion, close as night's,  
Where secure sleep may kill thine innocent lights:  
Sleep, the fresh dew of languid love, the rain  
Whose drops quench kisses till they burn again.  
And we will talk, until thought's melody                           \_560  
Become too sweet for utterance, and it die  
In words, to live again in looks, which dart  
With thrilling tone into the voiceless heart,  
Harmonizing silence without a sound.  
Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms bound,                   \_565  
And our veins beat together; and our lips  
With other eloquence than words, eclipse  
The soul that burns between them, and the wells  
Which boil under our being's inmost cells,  
The fountains of our deepest life, shall be                       \_570  
Confused in Passion's golden purity,  
As mountain-springs under the morning sun.  
We shall become the same, we shall be one  
Spirit within two frames, oh! wherefore two?  
One passion in twin-hearts, which grows and grew,             \_575  
Till like two meteors of expanding flame,  
Those spheres instinct with it become the same,  
Touch, mingle, are transfigured; ever still  
Burning, yet ever unconsumable:  
In one another's substance finding food,                       \_580  
Like flames too pure and light and unimbued  
To nourish their bright lives with baser prey,  
Which point to Heaven and cannot pass away:  
One hope within two wills, one will beneath  
Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death,                 \_585  
One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality,  
And one annihilation. Woe is me!  
The winged words on which my soul would pierce  
Into the height of Love's rare Universe,  
Are chains of lead around its flight of fire--                   \_590  
I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire!

...

Weak Verses, go, kneel at your Sovereign's feet,  
And say:--'We are the masters of thy slave;  
What wouldest thou with us and ours and thine?'  
Then call your sisters from Oblivion's cave,                     \_595  
All singing loud: 'Love's very pain is sweet,  
But its reward is in the world divine  
Which, if not here, it builds beyond the grave.'  
So shall ye live when I am there. Then haste  
Over the hearts of men, until ye meet                           \_600  
Marina, Vanna, Primus, and the rest,

And bid them love each other and be blessed:  
And leave the troop which errs, and which reproveth,  
And come and be my guest,--for I am Love's.

NOTES:

- \_100 morning]morn may Rossetti cj.
- \_118 of]on edition 1839.
- \_405 it]he edition 1839.
- \_501 many-twining]many twining editio prin. 1821.
- \_504 winter-woof]inter-woof Rossetti cj.

FRAGMENTS CONNECTED WITH EPIPSYCHIDION.

[Of the fragments of verse that follow, lines 1-37, 62-92 were printed by Mrs. Shelley in "Posthumous Works", 1839, 2nd edition; lines 1-174 were printed or reprinted by Dr. Garnett in "Relics of Shelley", 1862; and lines 175-186 were printed by Mr. C.D. Locock from the first draft of "Epipsychidion" amongst the Shelley manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. See "Examination, etc.", 1903, pages 12, 13. The three early drafts of the "Preface (Advertisement)" were printed by Mr. Locock in the same volume, pages 4, 5.]

THREE EARLY DRAFTS OF THE PREFACE.

(ADVERTISEMENT.)

PREFACE 1.

The following Poem was found amongst other papers in the Portfolio of a young Englishman with whom the Editor had contracted an intimacy at Florence, brief indeed, but sufficiently long to render the Catastrophe by which it terminated one of the most painful events of his life.--

The literary merit of the Poem in question may not be considerable; but worse verses are printed every day, &

He was an accomplished & amiable person but his error was, thunto on unthunta phronein,--his fate is an additional proof that 'The tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.'--He had framed to himself certain opinions, founded no doubt upon the truth of things, but built up to a Babel height; they fell by their own weight, & the thoughts that were his architects, became unintelligible one to the other, as men upon whom confusion of tongues has fallen.

[These] verses seem to have been written as a sort of dedication of some work to have been presented to the person whom they address: but his papers afford no trace of such a work--The circumstances to which [they] the poem allude, may easily be understood by those to whom [the] spirit of the poem itself is [un]intelligible: a detail of facts, sufficiently romantic in [themselves but] their combinations

The melancholy [task] charge of consigning the body of my poor friend to the grave, was committed to me by his desolated family. I caused him to be buried in a spot selected by himself, & on the h

## PREFACE 2.

[Epips] T. E. V. Epipsych

Lines addressed to

the Noble Lady

[Emilia] [E. V.]

Emilia

[The following Poem was found in the PF. of a young Englishman, who died on his passage from Leghorn to the Levant. He had bought one of the Sporades] He was accompanied by a lady [who might have been] supposed to be his wife, & an effeminate looking youth, to whom he shewed an [attachment] so [singular] excessive an attachment as to give rise to the suspicion, that she was a woman--At his death this suspicion was confirmed;...object speedily found a refuge both from the taunts of the brute multitude, and from the...of her grief in the same grave that contained her lover.--He had bought one of the Sporades, & fitted up a Saracenic castle which accident had preserved in some repair with simple elegance, & it was his intention to dedicate the remainder of his life to undisturbed intercourse with his companions

These verses apparently were intended as a dedication of a longer poem or series of poems

## PREFACE 3.

The writer of these lines died at Florence in [January 1820] while he was preparing \* \* for one wildest of the of the Sporades, where he bought & fitted up the ruins of some old building--His life was singular, less on account of the romantic vicissitudes which diversified it, than the ideal tinge which they received from his own character & feelings--

The verses were apparently intended by the writer to accompany some longer poem or collection of poems, of which there\* [are no remnants in his] \* \* \* remains [in his] portfolio.--

The editor is induced to

The present poem, like the vita Nova of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers without a matter of fact history of the circumstances to which it relate, & to a certain other class, it must & ought ever to remain incomprehensible--It was evidently intended to be prefixed to a longer poem or series of poems--but among his papers there are no traces of such a collection.

PASSAGES OF THE POEM, OR CONNECTED THEREWITH.

Here, my dear friend, is a new book for you;  
I have already dedicated two  
To other friends, one female and one male,--  
What you are, is a thing that I must veil;  
What can this be to those who praise or rail?                   \_5  
I never was attached to that great sect  
Whose doctrine is that each one should select  
Out of the world a mistress or a friend,  
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend  
To cold oblivion--though 'tis in the code                   \_10  
Of modern morals, and the beaten road  
Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread  
Who travel to their home among the dead  
By the broad highway of the world--and so  
With one sad friend, and many a jealous foe,                   \_15  
The dreariest and the longest journey go.

Free love has this, different from gold and clay,  
That to divide is not to take away.  
Like ocean, which the general north wind breaks  
Into ten thousand waves, and each one makes                   \_20  
A mirror of the moon--like some great glass,  
Which did distort whatever form might pass,  
Dashed into fragments by a playful child,  
Which then reflects its eyes and forehead mild;  
Giving for one, which it could ne'er express,                   \_25  
A thousand images of loveliness.

If I were one whom the loud world held wise,  
I should disdain to quote authorities  
In commendation of this kind of love:--  
Why there is first the God in heaven above,                   \_30  
Who wrote a book called Nature, 'tis to be  
Reviewed, I hear, in the next Quarterly;  
And Socrates, the Jesus Christ of Greece,  
And Jesus Christ Himself, did never cease  
To urge all living things to love each other,                   \_35  
And to forgive their mutual faults, and smother  
The Devil of disunion in their souls.

...

I love you!--Listen, O embodied Ray  
Of the great Brightness; I must pass away  
While you remain, and these light words must be                   \_40  
Tokens by which you may remember me.  
Start not--the thing you are is unbetraysed,  
If you are human, and if but the shade  
Of some sublimer spirit...

...

And as to friend or mistress, 'tis a form;                     \_45  
Perhaps I wish you were one. Some declare  
You a familiar spirit, as you are;  
Others with a ... more inhuman  
Hint that, though not my wife, you are a woman;  
What is the colour of your eyes and hair?                     \_50  
Why, if you were a lady, it were fair  
The world should know--but, as I am afraid,  
The Quarterly would bait you if betrayed;  
And if, as it will be sport to see them stumble  
Over all sorts of scandals. hear them mumble                     \_55  
Their litany of curses--some guess right,  
And others swear you're a Hermaphrodite;  
Like that sweet marble monster of both sexes,  
Which looks so sweet and gentle that it vexes  
The very soul that the soul is gone                             \_60  
Which lifted from her limbs the veil of stone.

...

It is a sweet thing, friendship, a dear balm,  
A happy and auspicious bird of calm,  
Which rides o'er life's ever tumultuous Ocean;  
A God that broods o'er chaos in commotion;                     \_65  
A flower which fresh as Lapland roses are,  
Lifts its bold head into the world's frore air,  
And blooms most radiantly when others die,  
Health, hope, and youth, and brief prosperity;  
And with the light and odour of its bloom,                     \_70  
Shining within the dun eon and the tomb;  
Whose coming is as light and music are  
'Mid dissonance and gloom--a star  
Which moves not 'mid the moving heavens alone--  
A smile among dark frowns--a gentle tone                     \_75  
Among rude voices, a beloved light,  
A solitude, a refuge, a delight.  
If I had but a friend! Why, I have three  
Even by my own confession; there may be  
Some more, for what I know, for 'tis my mind                     \_80  
To call my friends all who are wise and kind,-  
And these, Heaven knows, at best are very few;  
But none can ever be more dear than you.  
Why should they be? My muse has lost her wings,  
Or like a dying swan who soars and sings,                     \_85  
I should describe you in heroic style,  
But as it is, are you not void of guile?  
A lovely soul, formed to be blessed and bless:  
A well of sealed and secret happiness;  
A lute which those whom Love has taught to play                     \_90  
Make music on to cheer the roughest day,



And enchant sadness till it sleeps?...

...

To the oblivion whither I and thou,  
All loving and all lovely, hasten now  
With steps, ah, too unequal! may we meet \_95  
In one Elysium or one winding-sheet!

If any should be curious to discover  
Whether to you I am a friend or lover,  
Let them read Shakespeare's sonnets, taking thence  
A whetstone for their dull intelligence \_100

That tears and will not cut, or let them guess  
How Diotima, the wise prophetess,  
Instructed the instructor, and why he  
Rebuked the infant spirit of melody  
On Agathon's sweet lips, which as he spoke \_105  
Was as the lovely star when morn has broke  
The roof of darkness, in the golden dawn,  
Half-hidden, and yet beautiful.

I'll pawn  
My hopes of Heaven-you know what they are worth --  
That the presumptuous pedagogues of Earth, \_110  
If they could tell the riddle offered here  
Would scorn to be, or being to appear  
What now they seem and are--but let them chide,  
They have few pleasures in the world beside;  
Perhaps we should be dull were we not chidden, \_115  
Paradise fruits are sweetest when forbidden.  
Folly can season Wisdom, Hatred Love.

...

Farewell, if it can be to say farewell  
To those who

...

I will not, as most dedicators do, \_120  
Assure myself and all the world and you,  
That you are faultless--would to God they were  
Who taunt me with your love! I then should wear  
These heavy chains of life with a light spirit,  
And would to God I were, or even as near it \_125

As you, dear heart. Alas! what are we? Clouds  
Driven by the wind in warring multitudes,  
Which rain into the bosom of the earth,  
And rise again, and in our death and birth,  
And through our restless life, take as from heaven \_130  
Hues which are not our own, but which are given,  
And then withdrawn, and with inconstant glance  
Flash from the spirit to the countenance.

There is a Power, a Love, a Joy, a God  
Which makes in mortal hearts its brief abode,                    \_135  
A Pythian exhalation, which inspires  
Love, only love--a wind which o'er the wires  
Of the soul's giant harp  
There is a mood which language faints beneath;  
You feel it striding, as Almighty Death                         \_140  
His bloodless steed...

...

And what is that most brief and bright delight  
Which rushes through the touch and through the sight,  
And stands before the spirit's inmost throne,  
A naked Seraph? None hath ever known.                         \_145  
Its birth is darkness, and its growth desire;  
Untameable and fleet and fierce as fire,  
Not to be touched but to be felt alone,  
It fills the world with glory-and is gone.

...

It floats with rainbow pinions o'er the stream                     \_150  
Of life, which flows, like a ... dream  
Into the light of morning, to the grave  
As to an ocean...

...

What is that joy which serene infancy  
Perceives not, as the hours content them by,                     \_155  
Each in a chain of blossoms, yet enjoys  
The shapes of this new world, in giant toys  
Wrought by the busy ... ever new?

Remembrance borrows Fancy's glass, to show  
These forms more ... sincere   \_160  
Than now they are, than then, perhaps, they were.

When everything familiar seemed to be  
Wonderful, and the immortality  
Of this great world, which all things must inherit,  
Was felt as one with the awakening spirit,                         \_165  
Unconscious of itself, and of the strange  
Distinctions which in its proceeding change  
It feels and knows, and mourns as if each were  
A desolation...

...

Were it not a sweet refuge, Emily,                                     \_170  
For all those exiles from the dull insane  
Who vex this pleasant world with pride and pain,  
For all that band of sister-spirits known  
To one another by a voiceless tone?

...

If day should part us night will mend division                     \_175  
And if sleep parts us--we will meet in vision  
And if life parts us--we will mix in death  
Yielding our mite [?] of unreluctant breath  
Death cannot part us--we must meet again  
In all in nothing in delight in pain:                                     \_180  
How, why or when or where--it matters not  
So that we share an undivided lot...

...

And we will move possessing and possessed  
Wherever beauty on the earth's bare [?] breast  
Lies like the shadow of thy soul--till we                             \_185  
Become one being with the world we see...

#### NOTES:

\_52-\_53 afraid The cj. A.C. Bradley.  
\_54 And as cj. Rossetti, A.C. Bradley.  
\_61 stone... cj. A.C. Bradley.  
\_155 them]trip or troop cj. A.C. Bradley.  
\_157 in]as cj. A.C. Bradley.

\*\*\*

#### ADONAIIS.

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS,  
AUTHOR OF ENDYMION, HYPERION, ETC.

Aster prin men elampes eni zoisin Eoos  
nun de thanon lampeis Esperos en phthimenois.--PLATO.

["Adonais" was composed at Pisa during the early days of June, 1821, and printed, with the author's name, at Pisa, 'with the types of Didot,' by July 13, 1821. Part of the impression was sent to the brothers Ollier for sale in London. An exact reprint of this Pisa edition (a few typographical errors only being corrected) was issued in 1829 by Gee & Bridges, Cambridge, at the instance of Arthur Hallam and Richard Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton). The poem was included in Galignani's edition of "Coleridge, Shelley and Keats", Paris, 1829, and by Mrs. Shelley in the "Poetical Works" of 1839. Mrs. Shelley's text presents three important variations from that of the editio princeps. In 1876 an edition of the "Adonais", with Introduction and Notes, was printed for private circulation by Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B. Ten years later a reprint 'in exact facsimile' of the Pisa edition was edited with a Bibliographical Introduction by Mr. T.J. Wise ("Shelley Society Publications", 2nd Series, No. 1, Reeves & Turner, London, 1886). Our text is that of the editio princeps, Pisa,

1821, modified by Mrs. Shelley's text of 1839. The readings of the editio princeps, wherever superseded, are recorded in the footnotes. The Editor's Notes at the end of the Volume 3 should be consulted.]

#### PREFACE.

Pharmakon elthe, Bion, poti son stoma, pharmakon eides.  
pos ten tois cheilessi potesrame, kouk eglukanthe;  
tis de Brotos tossouton anameros, e kerasai toi,  
e dounai laleonti to pharmakon; ekphugen odan.  
--MOSCHUS, EPITAPH. BION.

It is my intention to subjoin to the London edition of this poem a criticism upon the claims of its lamented object to be classed among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age. My known repugnance to the narrow principles of taste on which several of his earlier compositions were modelled prove at least that I am an impartial judge. I consider the fragment of "Hyperion" as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years.

John Keats died at Rome of a consumption, in his twenty-fourth year, on the -- of -- 1821; and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and where cankerworms abound, what wonder if its young flower was blighted in the bud? The savage criticism on his "Endymion", which appeared in the "Quarterly Review", produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued, and the succeeding acknowledgements from more candid critics of the true greatness of his powers were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

It may be well said that these wretched men know not what they do. They scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether the poisoned shaft lights on a heart made callous by many blows or one like Keats's composed of more penetrable stuff. One of their associates is, to my knowledge, a most base and unprincipled calumniator. As to "Endymion", was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated, with various degrees of complacency and panegyric, "Paris", and "Woman", and a "Syrian Tale", and Mrs. Lefanu, and Mr. Barrett, and Mr. Howard Payne, and a long list of the illustrious obscure? Are these the men who in their venal good nature presumed to draw a parallel between the Reverend Mr. Milman and Lord Byron? What gnat did they strain at here, after having swallowed all those camels? Against

what woman taken in adultery dares the foremost of these literary prostitutes to cast his opprobrious stone? Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse, that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers, but used none.

The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the "Elegy" was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of "Endymion" was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits; the poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life, no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius, than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care. He was accompanied to Rome, and attended in his last illness by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, 'almost risked his own life, and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend.' Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from 'such stuff as dreams are made of.' His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career--may the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!

\*\*\*

#### ADONAIIS.

I weep for Adonais--he is dead!  
O, weep for Adonais! though our tears  
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!  
And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years  
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,                   \_5  
And teach them thine own sorrow, say: "With me  
Died Adonais; till the Future dares  
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be  
An echo and a light unto eternity!"

2.  
Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,                   \_10  
When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies  
In darkness? where was Iorn Urania  
When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,  
'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise  
She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath,                   \_15  
Rekindled all the fading melodies,  
With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,  
He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of Death.

3.

Oh, weep for Adonais--he is dead!  
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!                    \_20  
Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed  
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep  
Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;  
For he is gone, where all things wise and fair  
Descend;--oh, dream not that the amorous Deep                    \_25  
Will yet restore him to the vital air;  
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

4.  
Most musical of mourners, weep again!  
Lament anew, Urania!--He died,  
Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,                        \_30  
Blind, old and lonely, when his country's pride,  
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,  
Trampled and mocked with many a loathed rite  
Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,  
Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite                        \_35  
Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among the sons of light.

5.  
Most musical of mourners, weep anew!  
Not all to that bright station dared to climb;  
And happier they their happiness who knew,  
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time                    \_40  
In which suns perished; others more sublime,  
Struck by the envious wrath of man or god,  
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;  
And some yet live, treading the thorny road,  
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene abode.            \_45

6.  
But now, thy youngest, dearest one, has perished--  
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,  
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,  
And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew;  
Most musical of mourners, weep anew!                        \_50  
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,  
The bloom, whose petals nipped before they blew  
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;  
The broken lily lies--the storm is overpast.

7.  
To that high Capital, where kingly Death                        \_55  
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,  
He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,  
A grave among the eternal.--Come away!  
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day  
Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still                        \_60  
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;  
Awake him not! surely he takes his fill  
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

8.

He will awake no more, oh, never more!--  
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace                    \_65  
The shadow of white Death, and at the door  
Invisible Corruption waits to trace  
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;  
The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe  
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface                \_70  
So fair a prey, till darkness and the law  
Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

9.

Oh, weep for Adonais!--The quick Dreams,  
The passion-winged Ministers of thought,  
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams            \_75  
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught  
The love which was its music, wander not,--  
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,  
But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn their lot  
Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,         \_80  
They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

10.

And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head,  
And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries;  
'Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead;  
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,                    \_85  
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies  
A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain.'  
Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!  
She knew not 'twas her own; as with no stain  
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.         \_90

11.

One from a lucid urn of starry dew  
Washed his light limbs as if embalming them;  
Another clipped her profuse locks, and threw  
The wreath upon him, like an adadem,  
Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem;                    \_95  
Another in her wilful grief would break  
Her bow and winged reeds, as if to stem  
A greater loss with one which was more weak;  
And dull the barbed fire against his frozen cheek.

12.

Another Splendour on his mouth alit,                         \_100  
That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath  
Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,  
And pass into the panting heart beneath  
With lightning and with music: the damp death  
Quenched its caress upon his icy lips;                         \_105  
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath

Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,  
It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its eclipse.

13.

And others came...Desires and Adorations,  
Winged Persuasions and veiled Destinies,                    \_110  
Splendours, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations  
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies;  
And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,  
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam  
Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,                    \_115  
Came in slow pomp;--the moving pomp might seem  
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

14.

All he had loved, and moulded into thought,  
From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,  
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought                            \_120  
Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,  
Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,  
Dimmed the aerial eyes that kindle day;  
Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,  
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,                            \_125  
And the wild Winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

15.

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,  
And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,  
And will no more reply to winds or fountains,  
Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray,                    \_130  
Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;  
Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear  
Than those for whose disdain she pined away  
Into a shadow of all sounds:--a drear  
Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear.                    \_135

16.

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down  
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,  
Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown,  
For whom should she have waked the sullen year?  
To Phoebus was not Hyacinth so dear                            \_140  
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both  
Thou, Adonais: wan they stand and sere  
Amid the faint companions of their youth,  
With dew all turned to tears; odour, to sighing ruth.

17.

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale                    \_145  
Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain;  
Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale  
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain  
Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,



Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,                                 \_150  
As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain  
Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,  
And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

18.  
Ah, woe is me! Winter is come and gone,  
But grief returns with the revolving year;                                 \_155  
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;  
The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear;  
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier;  
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,  
And build their mossy homes in field and brere;                                 \_160  
And the green lizard, and the golden snake,  
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

19.  
Through wood and stream and field and hill and Ocean  
A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst  
As it has ever done, with change and motion,                                 \_165  
From the great morning of the world when first  
God dawned on Chaos; in its stream immersed,  
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light;  
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst;  
Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's delight,                                 \_170  
The beauty and the joy of their renewed might.

20.  
The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit tender,  
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;  
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour  
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death                                 \_175  
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath;  
Nought we know, dies. Shall that alone which knows  
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath  
By sightless lightning?--the intense atom glows  
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose.                                 \_180

21.  
Alas! that all we loved of him should be,  
But for our grief, as if it had not been,  
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!  
Whence are we, and why are we? of what scene  
The actors or spectators? Great and mean                                 \_185  
Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.  
As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,  
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,  
Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.

22.  
HE will awake no more, oh, never more!                                 \_190  
'Wake thou,' cried Misery, 'childless Mother, rise  
Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,

A wound more fierce than his, with tears and sighs.'  
And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,  
And all the Echoes whom their sister's song                    \_195  
Had held in holy silence, cried: 'Arise!'  
Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,  
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.

23.  
She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs  
Out of the East, and follows wild and drear                    \_200  
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,  
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,  
Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear  
So struck, so roused, so rapped Urania;  
So saddened round her like an atmosphere                    \_205  
Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way  
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

24.  
Out of her secret Paradise she sped,  
Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,  
And human hearts, which to her aery tread                    \_210  
Yielding not, wounded the invisible  
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell:  
And barbed tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they,  
Rent the soft Form they never could repel,  
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,                    \_215  
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

25.  
In the death-chamber for a moment Death,  
Shamed by the presence of that living Might,  
Blushed to annihilation, and the breath  
Revisited those lips, and Life's pale light                    \_220  
Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight.  
'Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,  
As silent lightning leaves the starless night!  
Leave me not!' cried Urania: her distress  
Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her vain caress.                    \_225

26.  
'Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;  
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;  
And in my heartless breast and burning brain  
That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts else survive,  
With food of saddest memory kept alive,                    \_230  
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part  
Of thee, my Adonais! I would give  
All that I am to be as thou now art!  
But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart!

27.  
'O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,                    \_235

Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men  
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart  
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?  
Defenceless as thou wert, oh, where was then  
Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear?                    \_240  
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when  
Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,  
The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer.

28.

'The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;  
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead;                    \_245  
The vultures to the conqueror's banner true  
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,  
And whose wings rain contagion;--how they fled,  
When, like Apollo, from his golden bow  
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped                         \_250  
And smiled!--The spoilers tempt no second blow,  
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

29.

'The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;  
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then  
Is gathered into death without a dawn,                         \_255  
And the immortal stars awake again;  
So is it in the world of living men:  
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight  
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when  
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light             \_260  
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night.'

30.

Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds came,  
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;  
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame  
Over his living head like Heaven is bent,                         \_265  
An early but enduring monument,  
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song  
In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent  
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,  
And Love taught Grief to fall like music from his tongue.         \_270

31.

Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,  
A phantom among men; companionless  
As the last cloud of an expiring storm  
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,  
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,                         \_275  
Actaeon-like, and now he fled astray  
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,  
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,  
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

32.

A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift-- \_280

A Love in desolation masked;--a Power

Girt round with weakness;--it can scarce uplift

The weight of the superincumbent hour;

It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,

A breaking billow;--even whilst we speak \_285

Is it not broken? On the withering flower

The killing sun smiles brightly: on a cheek

The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

33.

His head was bound with pansies overblown,

And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue; \_290

And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,

Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew

Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,

Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart

Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew \_295

He came the last, neglected and apart;

A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

34.

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan

Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band

Who in another's fate now wept his own, \_300

As in the accents of an unknown land

He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned

The Stranger's mien, and murmured: 'Who art thou?'

He answered not, but with a sudden hand

Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow, \_305

Which was like Cain's or Christ's--oh! that it should be so!

35.

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?

Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?

What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,

In mockery of monumental stone, \_310

The heavy heart heaving without a moan?

If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,

Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the departed one,

Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,

The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice. \_315

36.

Our Adonais has drunk poison--oh!

What deaf and viperous murderer could crown

Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?

The nameless worm would now itself disown:

It felt, yet could escape, the magic tone \_320

Whose prelude held all envy, hate and wrong,

But what was howling in one breast alone,

Silent with expectation of the song,

Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

37.

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame! \_325

Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,

Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!

But be thyself, and know thyself to be!

And ever at thy season be thou free

To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow; \_330

Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee;

Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,

And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt--as now.

38.

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled

Far from these carrion kites that scream below; \_335

He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;

Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now--

Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow

Back to the burning fountain whence it came,

A portion of the Eternal, which must glow \_340

Through time and change, unquenchably the same,

Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

39.

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep--

He hath awakened from the dream of life--

'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep \_345

With phantoms an unprofitable strife,

And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife

Invulnerable nothings.--WE decay

Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief

Convulse us and consume us day by day, \_350

And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

40.

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;

Envy and calumny and hate and pain,

And that unrest which men miscall delight,

Can touch him not and torture not again; \_355

From the contagion of the world's slow stain

He is secure, and now can never mourn

A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain;

Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,

With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn. \_360

41.

He lives, he wakes--'tis Death is dead, not he;

Mourn not for Adonais.--Thou young Dawn,

Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee

The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;

Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan! \_365

Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,

Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown  
O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare  
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

42.

He is made one with Nature: there is heard                     \_370  
His voice in all her music, from the moan  
Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;  
He is a presence to be felt and known  
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,  
Spreading itself where'er that Power may move                     \_375  
Which has withdrawn his being to its own;  
Which wields the world with never-wearied love,  
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

43.

He is a portion of the loveliness  
Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear                     \_380  
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress  
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there  
All new successions to the forms they wear;  
Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight  
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;                     \_385  
And bursting in its beauty and its might  
From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

44.

The splendours of the firmament of time  
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;  
Like stars to their appointed height they climb,                     \_390  
And death is a low mist which cannot blot  
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought  
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,  
And love and life contend in it, for what  
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there                     \_395  
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

45.

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown  
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,  
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton  
Rose pale,--his solemn agony had not                     \_400  
Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought  
And as he fell and as he lived and loved  
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,  
Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved:  
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reprov'd.                     \_405

46.

And many more, whose names on Earth are dark,  
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die  
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,  
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.

'Thou art become as one of us,' they cry,                    \_410  
'It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long  
Swung blind in unascended majesty,  
Silent alone amid a Heaven of Song.  
Assume thy winged throne, thou Vesper of our throng!'

47.  
Who mourns for Adonais? Oh, come forth,                    \_415  
Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.  
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;  
As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light  
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might  
Satiated the void circumference: then shrink                \_420  
Even to a point within our day and night;  
And keep thy heart light lest it make thee sink  
When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.

48.  
Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,  
Oh, not of him, but of our joy: 'tis nought                \_425  
That ages, empires and religions there  
Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;  
For such as he can lend,--they borrow not  
Glory from those who made the world their prey;  
And he is gathered to the kings of thought                \_430  
Who waged contention with their time's decay,  
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

49.  
Go thou to Rome,--at once the Paradise,  
The grave, the city, and the wilderness;  
And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise,            \_435  
And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress  
The bones of Desolation's nakedness  
Pass, till the spirit of the spot shall lead  
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access  
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead                \_440  
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread;

50.  
And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time  
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;  
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,  
Pavilions the dust of him who planned                    \_445  
This refuge for his memory, doth stand  
Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,  
A field is spread, on which a newer band  
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,  
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.     \_450

51.  
Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet  
To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned

Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,  
Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,  
Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find  
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,  
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind  
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.  
What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

52.

The One remains, the many change and pass;  
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;  
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,  
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,  
Until Death tramples it to fragments.--Die,  
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!  
Follow where all is fled!--Rome's azure sky,  
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak  
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

53.

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?  
Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here  
They have departed; thou shouldst now depart!  
A light is passed from the revolving year,  
And man, and woman; and what still is dear  
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.  
The soft sky smiles,--the low wind whispers near:  
'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,  
No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

54.

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,  
That Beauty in which all things work and move,  
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse  
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love  
Which through the web of being blindly wove  
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,  
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of  
The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me,  
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

55.

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



\_49 true-love]true love editions 1821, 1839.  
\_72 Of change, etc. so editions 1829 (Galignani), 1839;  
Of mortal change, shall fill the grave which is her maw edition 1821.  
\_81 or edition 1821; nor edition 1839.  
\_105 his edition 1821; its edition 1839.  
\_126 round edition 1821; around edition 1839.  
\_143 faint companions edition 1839; drooping comrades edition 1821.  
\_204 See Editor's Note.  
\_252 lying low edition 1839; as they go edition 1821.

#### CANCELLED PASSAGES OF ADONAI.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, "Relics of Shelley", 1862.]

#### PASSAGES OF THE PREFACE.

...the expression of my indignation and sympathy. I will allow myself a first and last word on the subject of calumny as it relates to me. As an author I have dared and invited censure. If I understand myself, I have written neither for profit nor for fame. I have employed my poetical compositions and publications simply as the instruments of that sympathy between myself and others which the ardent and unbounded love I cherished for my kind incited me to acquire. I expected all sorts of stupidity and insolent contempt from those...

...These compositions (excepting the tragedy of "The Cenci", which was written rather to try my powers than to unburthen my full heart) are insufficiently...commendation than perhaps they deserve, even from their bitterest enemies; but they have not attained any corresponding popularity. As a man, I shrink from notice and regard; the ebb and flow of the world vexes me; I desire to be left in peace. Persecution, contumely, and calumny have been heaped upon me in profuse measure; and domestic conspiracy and legal oppression have violated in my person the most sacred rights of nature and humanity. The bigot will say it was the recompense of my errors; the man of the world will call it the result of my imprudence; but never upon one head...

...Reviewers, with some rare exceptions, are a most stupid and malignant race. As a bankrupt thief turns thieftaker in despair, so an unsuccessful author turns critic. But a young spirit panting for fame, doubtful of its powers, and certain only of its aspirations, is ill qualified to assign its true value to the sneer of this world. He knows not that such stuff as this is of the abortive and monstrous births which time consumes as fast as it produces. He sees the truth and falsehood, the merits and demerits, of his case inextricably entangled...No personal offence should have drawn from me this public comment upon such stuff...

...The offence of this poor victim seems to have consisted solely in his intimacy with Leigh Hunt, Mr. Hazlitt, and some other enemies of despotism and superstition. My friend Hunt has a very hard skull to crack, and will take a deal of killing. I do not know much of Mr.

Hazlitt, but...

...I knew personally but little of Keats; but on the news of his situation I wrote to him, suggesting the propriety of trying the Italian climate, and inviting him to join me. Unfortunately he did not allow me...

#### PASSAGES OF THE POEM.

And ever as he went he swept a lyre  
Of unaccustomed shape, and ... strings  
Now like the ... of impetuous fire,  
Which shakes the forest with its murmurings,  
Now like the rush of the aerial wings                    \_5  
Of the enamoured wind among the trees,  
Whispering unimaginable things,  
And dying on the streams of dew serene,  
Which feed the unmown meads with ever-during green.

...

And the green Paradise which western waves                    \_10  
Embosom in their ever-wailing sweep,  
Talking of freedom to their tongueless caves,  
Or to the spirits which within them keep  
A record of the wrongs which, though they sleep,  
Die not, but dream of retribution, heard                    \_15  
His hymns, and echoing them from steep to steep,  
Kept--

...

And then came one of sweet and earnest looks,  
Whose soft smiles to his dark and night-like eyes  
Were as the clear and ever-living brooks                    \_20  
Are to the obscure fountains whence they rise,  
Showing how pure they are: a Paradise  
Of happy truth upon his forehead low  
Lay, making wisdom lovely, in the guise  
Of earth-awakening morn upon the brow                    \_25  
Of star-deserted heaven, while ocean gleams below.

His song, though very sweet, was low and faint,  
A simple strain--

...

A mighty Phantasm, half concealed  
In darkness of his own exceeding light,                    \_30  
Which clothed his awful presence unrevealed,  
Charioted on the ... night  
Of thunder-smoke, whose skirts were chrysolite.

And like a sudden meteor, which outstrips  
The splendour-winged chariot of the sun,                    \_35  
... eclipse  
The armies of the golden stars, each one  
Pavilioned in its tent--all strewn  
Over the chasms of blue night--

\*\*\*

HELLAS

A LYRICAL DRAMA.

MANTIS EIM EZTHLON AGONUN.--OEDIP. COLON.

["Hellas" was composed at Pisa in the autumn of 1821, and dispatched to London, November 11. It was published, with the author's name, by C. & J. Ollier in the spring of 1822. A transcript of the poem by Edward Williams is in the Rowfant Library. Ollier availed himself of Shelley's permission to cancel certain passages in the notes; he also struck out certain lines of the text. These omissions were, some of them, restored in Galignani's one-volume edition of "Coleridge, Shelley and Keats", Paris, 1829, and also by Mrs. Shelley in the "Poetical Works", 1839. A passage in the "Preface", suppressed by Ollier, was restored by Mr. Buxton Forman (1892) from a proof copy of "Hellas" in his possession. The "Prologue to Hellas" was edited by Dr. Garnett in 1862 ("Relics of Shelley") from the manuscripts at Boscombe Manor.

Our text is that of the editio princeps, 1822, corrected by a list of "Errata" sent by Shelley to Ollier, April 11, 1822. The Editor's Notes at the end of Volume 3 should be consulted.]

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

PRINCE ALEXANDER MAVROCORDATO

LATE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO THE HOSPODAR OF WALLACHIA

THE DRAMA OF HELLAS IS INSCRIBED AS AN

IMPERFECT TOKEN OF THE ADMIRATION,

SYMPATHY, AND FRIENDSHIP OF

THE AUTHOR.

Pisa, November 1, 1821.

## PREFACE.

The poem of "Hellas", written at the suggestion of the events of the moment, is a mere improvise, and derives its interest (should it be found to possess any) solely from the intense sympathy which the Author feels with the cause he would celebrate.

The subject, in its present state, is insusceptible of being treated otherwise than lyrically, and if I have called this poem a drama from the circumstance of its being composed in dialogue, the licence is not greater than that which has been assumed by other poets who have called their productions epics, only because they have been divided into twelve or twenty-four books.

The "Persae" of Aeschylus afforded me the first model of my conception, although the decision of the glorious contest now waging in Greece being yet suspended forbids a catastrophe parallel to the return of Xerxes and the desolation of the Persians. I have, therefore, contented myself with exhibiting a series of lyric pictures, and with having wrought upon the curtain of futurity, which falls upon the unfinished scene, such figures of indistinct and visionary delineation as suggest the final triumph of the Greek cause as a portion of the cause of civilisation and social improvement.

The drama (if drama it must be called) is, however, so inartificial that I doubt whether, if recited on the Thespian waggon to an Athenian village at the Dionysiaca, it would have obtained the prize of the goat. I shall bear with equanimity any punishment, greater than the loss of such a reward, which the Aristarchi of the hour may think fit to inflict.

The only "goat-song" which I have yet attempted has, I confess, in spite of the unfavourable nature of the subject, received a greater and a more valuable portion of applause than I expected or than it deserved.

Common fame is the only authority which I can allege for the details which form the basis of the poem, and I must trespass upon the forgiveness of my readers for the display of newspaper erudition to which I have been reduced. Undoubtedly, until the conclusion of the war, it will be impossible to obtain an account of it sufficiently authentic for historical materials; but poets have their privilege, and it is unquestionable that actions of the most exalted courage have been performed by the Greeks--that they have gained more than one naval victory, and that their defeat in Wallachia was signalized by circumstances of heroism more glorious even than victory.

The apathy of the rulers of the civilised world to the astonishing circumstance of the descendants of that nation to which they owe their civilisation, rising as it were from the ashes of their ruin, is something perfectly inexplicable to a mere spectator of the shows of this mortal scene. We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts have their root in Greece. But for Greece--Rome,

the instructor, the conqueror, or the metropolis of our ancestors, would have spread no illumination with her arms, and we might still have been savages and idolaters; or, what is worse, might have arrived at such a stagnant and miserable state of social institution as China and Japan possess.

The human form and the human mind attained to a perfection in Greece which has impressed its image on those faultless productions, whose very fragments are the despair of modern art, and has propagated impulses which cannot cease, through a thousand channels of manifest or imperceptible operation, to ennoble and delight mankind until the extinction of the race.

The modern Greek is the descendant of those glorious beings whom the imagination almost refuses to figure to itself as belonging to our kind, and he inherits much of their sensibility, their rapidity of conception, their enthusiasm, and their courage. If in many instances he is degraded by moral and political slavery to the practice of the basest vices it engenders--and that below the level of ordinary degradation--let us reflect that the corruption of the best produces the worst, and that habits which subsist only in relation to a peculiar state of social institution may be expected to cease as soon as that relation is dissolved. In fact, the Greeks, since the admirable novel of Anastasius could have been a faithful picture of their manners, have undergone most important changes; the flower of their youth, returning to their country from the universities of Italy, Germany, and France, have communicated to their fellow-citizens the latest results of that social perfection of which their ancestors were the original source. The University of Chios contained before the breaking out of the revolution eight hundred students, and among them several Germans and Americans. The munificence and energy of many of the Greek princes and merchants, directed to the renovation of their country with a spirit and a wisdom which has few examples, is above all praise.

The English permit their own oppressors to act according to their natural sympathy with the Turkish tyrant, and to brand upon their name the indelible blot of an alliance with the enemies of domestic happiness, of Christianity and civilisation.

Russia desires to possess, not to liberate Greece; and is contented to see the Turks, its natural enemies, and the Greeks, its intended slaves, enfeeble each other until one or both fall into its net. The wise and generous policy of England would have consisted in establishing the independence of Greece, and in maintaining it both against Russia and the Turk;--but when was the oppressor generous or just?

[Should the English people ever become free, they will reflect upon the part which those who presume to represent their will have played in the great drama of the revival of liberty, with feelings which it would become them to anticipate. This is the age of the war of the oppressed against the oppressors, and every one of those ringleaders



That green and azure sphere, that earth enwrapped                    \_20  
Less in the beauty of its tender light  
Than in an atmosphere of living spirit  
Which interpenetrating all the ...  
it rolls from realm to realm  
And age to age, and in its ebb and flow                               \_25  
Impels the generations  
To their appointed place,  
Whilst the high Arbiter  
Beholds the strife, and at the appointed time  
Sends His decrees veiled in eternal...                               \_30

Within the circuit of this pendent orb  
There lies an antique region, on which fell  
The dews of thought in the world's golden dawn  
Earliest and most benign, and from it sprung  
Temples and cities and immortal forms                               \_35  
And harmonies of wisdom and of song,  
And thoughts, and deeds worthy of thoughts so fair.  
And when the sun of its dominion failed,  
And when the winter of its glory came,  
The winds that stripped it bare blew on and swept                   \_40  
That dew into the utmost wildernesses  
In wandering clouds of sunny rain that thawed  
The unmaternal bosom of the North.  
Haste, sons of God, ... for ye beheld,  
Reluctant, or consenting, or astonished,                               \_45  
The stern decrees go forth, which heaped on Greece  
Ruin and degradation and despair.  
A fourth now waits: assemble, sons of God,  
To speed or to prevent or to suspend,  
If, as ye dream, such power be not withheld,                       \_50  
The unaccomplished destiny.

NOTE:

\_8 your Garnett; yon Forman, Dowden.

...

CHORUS:

The curtain of the Universe  
Is rent and shattered,  
The splendour-winged worlds disperse  
Like wild doves scattered.   \_55

Space is roofless and bare,  
And in the midst a cloudy shrine,  
Dark amid thrones of light.  
In the blue glow of hyaline  
Golden worlds revolve and shine.                                       \_60  
In ... flight  
From every point of the Infinite,  
Like a thousand dawns on a single night

The splendours rise and spread;  
And through thunder and darkness dread                    \_65  
Light and music are radiated,  
And in their pavilioned chariots led  
By living wings high overhead  
The giant Powers move,  
Gloomy or bright as the thrones they fill.                    \_70

...

A chaos of light and motion  
Upon that glassy ocean.

...

The senate of the Gods is met,  
Each in his rank and station set;  
There is silence in the spaces--                                 \_75  
Lo! Satan, Christ, and Mahomet  
Start from their places!

CHRIST:

Almighty Father!  
Low-kneeling at the feet of Destiny

...

There are two fountains in which spirits weep                    \_80  
When mortals err, Discord and Slavery named,  
And with their bitter dew two Destinies  
Filled each their irrevocable urns; the third  
Fiercest and mightiest, mingled both, and added  
Chaos and Death, and slow Oblivion's lymph,                    \_85  
And hate and terror, and the poisoned rain

...

The Aurora of the nations. By this brow  
Whose pores wept tears of blood, by these wide wounds,  
By this imperial crown of agony,                                 \_90  
By infamy and solitude and death,  
For this I underwent, and by the pain  
Of pity for those who would ... for me  
The unremembered joy of a revenge,  
For this I felt--by Plato's sacred light,                                 \_95  
Of which my spirit was a burning morrow--  
By Greece and all she cannot cease to be.  
Her quenchless words, sparks of immortal truth,  
Stars of all night--her harmonies and forms,  
Echoes and shadows of what Love adores  
In thee, I do compel thee, send forth Fate,                    \_100  
Thy irrevocable child: let her descend,  
A seraph-winged Victory [arrayed]



In tempest of the omnipotence of God  
Which sweeps through all things.

From hollow leagues, from Tyranny which arms \_105

Adverse miscreeds and emulous anarchies  
To stamp, as on a winged serpent's seed,  
Upon the name of Freedom; from the storm  
Of faction, which like earthquake shakes and sickens  
The solid heart of enterprise; from all \_110  
By which the holiest dreams of highest spirits  
Are stars beneath the dawn...

She shall arise  
Victorious as the world arose from Chaos!  
And as the Heavens and the Earth arrayed  
Their presence in the beauty and the light \_115  
Of Thy first smile, O Father,--as they gather  
The spirit of Thy love which paves for them  
Their path o'er the abyss, till every sphere  
Shall be one living Spirit,--so shall Greece--

SATAN:

Be as all things beneath the empyrean, \_120

Mine! Art thou eyeless like old Destiny,  
Thou mockery-king, crowned with a wreath of thorns?  
Whose sceptre is a reed, the broken reed  
Which pierces thee! whose throne a chair of scorn;  
For seest thou not beneath this crystal floor \_125  
The innumerable worlds of golden light

Which are my empire, and the least of them  
which thou wouldst redeem from me?  
Know'st thou not them my portion?  
Or wouldst rekindle the ... strife \_130

Which our great Father then did arbitrate  
Which he assigned to his competing sons  
Each his apportioned realm?  
Thou Destiny,  
Thou who art mailed in the omnipotence  
Of Him who tends thee forth, whate'er thy task, \_135

Speed, spare not to accomplish, and be mine  
Thy trophies, whether Greece again become  
The fountain in the desert whence the earth  
Shall drink of freedom, which shall give it strength  
To suffer, or a gulf of hollow death \_140  
To swallow all delight, all life, all hope.

Go, thou Vicegerent of my will, no less  
Than of the Father's; but lest thou shouldst faint,  
The winged hounds, Famine and Pestilence,  
Shall wait on thee, the hundred-forked snake \_145  
Insatiate Superstition still shall...

The earth behind thy steps, and War shall hover  
Above, and Fraud shall gape below, and Change  
Shall flit before thee on her dragon wings,  
Convulsing and consuming, and I add \_150

Three vials of the tears which daemons weep  
When virtuous spirits through the gate of Death  
Pass triumphing over the thorns of life,  
Sceptres and crowns, mitres and swords and snares,  
Trampling in scorn, like Him and Socrates.     \_155  
The first is Anarchy; when Power and Pleasure,  
Glory and science and security,  
On Freedom hang like fruit on the green tree,  
Then pour it forth, and men shall gather ashes.  
The second Tyranny--

CHRIST:  
Obdurate spirit!     \_160  
Thou seest but the Past in the To-come.  
Pride is thy error and thy punishment.  
Boast not thine empire, dream not that thy worlds  
Are more than furnace-sparks or rainbow-drops  
Before the Power that wields and kindles them.     \_165  
True greatness asks not space, true excellence  
Lives in the Spirit of all things that live,  
Which lends it to the worlds thou callest thine.

...

MAHOMET:  
...Haste thou and fill the waning crescent  
With beams as keen as those which pierced the shadow     \_170  
Of Christian night rolled back upon the West,  
When the orient moon of Islam rode in triumph  
From Tmolus to the Acroceraunian snow.

...

Wake, thou Word  
Of God, and from the throne of Destiny     \_175  
Even to the utmost limit of thy way  
May Triumph

...

Be thou a curse on them whose creed  
Divides and multiplies the most high God.

HELLAS.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

MAHMUD.

HASSAN.

DAOOD.

AHASUERUS, A JEW.

CHORUS OF GREEK CAPTIVE WOMEN.

[THE PHANTOM OF MAHOMET II. (OMITTED, EDITION 1822.)]  
MESSENGERS, SLAVES, AND ATTENDANTS.

SCENE:  
CONSTANTINOPLE.

TIME: SUNSET.

SCENE:  
A TERRACE ON THE SERAGLIO.  
MAHMUD SLEEPING,  
AN INDIAN SLAVE SITTING BESIDE HIS COUCH.

CHORUS OF GREEK CAPTIVE WOMEN:

We strew these opiate flowers  
On thy restless pillow,--  
They were stripped from Orient bowers,  
By the Indian billow.  
Be thy sleep \_5  
Calm and deep,  
Like theirs who fell--not ours who weep!

INDIAN:

Away, unlovely dreams!  
Away, false shapes of sleep  
Be his, as Heaven seems, \_10  
Clear, and bright, and deep!  
Soft as love, and calm as death,  
Sweet as a summer night without a breath.

CHORUS:

Sleep, sleep! our song is laden  
With the soul of slumber; \_15  
It was sung by a Samian maiden,  
Whose lover was of the number  
Who now keep  
That calm sleep  
Whence none may wake, where none shall weep. \_20

INDIAN:

I touch thy temples pale!  
I breathe my soul on thee!  
And could my prayers avail,  
All my joy should be  
Dead, and I would live to weep, \_25  
So thou mightst win one hour of quiet sleep.

CHORUS:

Breathe low, low  
The spell of the mighty mistress now!  
When Conscience lulls her sated snake,  
And Tyrants sleep, let Freedom wake. \_30  
Breathe low--low

The words which, like secret fire, shall flow  
Through the veins of the frozen earth--low, low!

SEMICHORUS 1:

Life may change, but it may fly not;  
Hope may vanish, but can die not;                    \_35  
Truth be veiled, but still it burneth;  
Love repulsed,--but it returneth!

SEMICHORUS 2:

Yet were life a charnel where  
Hope lay coffined with Despair;  
Yet were truth a sacred lie,                            \_40  
Love were lust--

SEMICHORUS 1:

If Liberty  
Lent not life its soul of light,  
Hope its iris of delight,  
Truth its prophet's robe to wear,  
Love its power to give and bear.                    \_45

CHORUS:

In the great morning of the world,  
The Spirit of God with might unfurled  
The flag of Freedom over Chaos,  
And all its banded anarchs fled,  
Like vultures frightened from Imaus,                    \_50  
Before an earthquake's tread.--  
So from Time's tempestuous dawn  
Freedom's splendour burst and shone:--  
Thermopylae and Marathon  
Caught like mountains beacon-lighted,                \_55  
The springing Fire.--The winged glory  
On Philippi half-alighted,  
Like an eagle on a promontory.  
Its unwearied wings could fan  
The quenchesless ashes of Milan.                    \_60  
From age to age, from man to man,  
It lived; and lit from land to land  
Florence, Albion, Switzerland.

Then night fell; and, as from night,  
Reassuming fiery flight,                            \_65  
From the West swift Freedom came,  
Against the course of Heaven and doom.  
A second sun arrayed in flame,  
To burn, to kindle, to illumine.  
From far Atlantis its young beams                    \_70  
Chased the shadows and the dreams.  
France, with all her sanguine steams,  
Hid, but quenched it not; again  
Through clouds its shafts of glory rain

From utmost Germany to Spain. \_75  
As an eagle fed with morning  
Scorns the embattled tempest's warning,  
When she seeks her aerie hanging  
In the mountain-cedar's hair,  
And her brood expect the clanging \_80  
Of her wings through the wild air,  
Sick with famine:--Freedom, so  
To what of Greece remaineth now  
Returns; her hoary ruins glow  
Like Orient mountains lost in day; \_85  
Beneath the safety of her wings  
Her renovated nurslings prey,  
And in the naked lightnings  
Of truth they purge their dazzled eyes.  
Let Freedom leave--where'er she flies, \_90  
A Desert, or a Paradise:  
Let the beautiful and the brave  
Share her glory, or a grave.

NOTES:

\_77 tempest's]tempests edition 1822.

\_87 prey edition 1822; play editions 1839.

SEMICHORUS 1:

With the gifts of gladness  
Greece did thy cradle strew; \_95

SEMICHORUS 2:

With the tears of sadness  
Greece did thy shroud bedew!

SEMICHORUS 1:

With an orphan's affection  
She followed thy bier through Time;

SEMICHORUS 2:

And at thy resurrection \_100  
Reappeareth, like thou, sublime!

SEMICHORUS 1:

If Heaven should resume thee,  
To Heaven shall her spirit ascend;

SEMICHORUS 2:

If Hell should entomb thee,  
To Hell shall her high hearts bend. \_105

SEMICHORUS 1:

If Annihilation--

SEMICHORUS 2:

Dust let her glories be!

And a name and a nation  
Be forgotten, Freedom, with thee!

INDIAN:

His brow grows darker--breathe not--move not!                    \_110  
He starts--he shudders--ye that love not,  
With your panting loud and fast,  
Have awakened him at last.

MAHMUD [STARTING FROM HIS SLEEP]:

Man the Seraglio-guard! make fast the gate!  
What! from a cannonade of three short hours?                    \_115  
'Tis false! that breach towards the Bosphorus  
Cannot be practicable yet--who stirs?  
Stand to the match; that when the foe prevails  
One spark may mix in reconciling ruin  
The conqueror and the conquered! Heave the tower                \_120  
Into the gap--wrench off the roof!  
[ENTER HASSAN.]  
Ha! what!  
The truth of day lightens upon my dream  
And I am Mahmud still.

HASSAN:

Your Sublime Highness  
Is strangely moved.

MAHMUD:

The times do cast strange shadows  
On those who watch and who must rule their course,                \_125  
Lest they, being first in peril as in glory,  
Be whelmed in the fierce ebb--and these are of them.  
Thrice has a gloomy vision hunted me  
As thus from sleep into the troubled day;  
It shakes me as the tempest shakes the sea,                        \_130  
Leaving no figure upon memory's glass.  
Would that--no matter. Thou didst say thou knewest  
A Jew, whose spirit is a chronicle  
Of strange and secret and forgotten things.  
I bade thee summon him--'tis said his tribe                        \_135  
Dream, and are wise interpreters of dreams.

HASSAN:

The Jew of whom I spake is old,--so old  
He seems to have outlived a world's decay;  
The hoary mountains and the wrinkled ocean  
Seem younger still than he;--his hair and beard                    \_140  
Are whiter than the tempest-sifted snow;  
His cold pale limbs and pulseless arteries  
Are like the fibres of a cloud instinct  
With light, and to the soul that quickens them  
Are as the atoms of the mountain-drift                                \_145  
To the winter wind:--but from his eye looks forth

A life of unconsumed thought which pierces  
The Present, and the Past, and the To-come.  
Some say that this is he whom the great prophet  
Jesus, the son of Joseph, for his mockery,                     \_150  
Mocked with the curse of immortality.  
Some feign that he is Enoch: others dream  
He was pre-adamite and has survived  
Cycles of generation and of ruin.  
The sage, in truth, by dreadful abstinence                     \_155  
And conquering penance of the mutinous flesh,  
Deep contemplation, and unwearied study,  
In years outstretched beyond the date of man,  
May have attained to sovereignty and science  
Over those strong and secret things and thoughts             \_160  
Which others fear and know not.

MAHMUD:  
I would talk  
With this old Jew.

HASSAN:  
Thy will is even now  
Made known to him, where he dwells in a sea-cavern  
'Mid the Demonesi, less accessible  
Than thou or God! He who would question him                     \_165  
Must sail alone at sunset, where the stream  
Of Ocean sleeps around those foamless isles,  
When the young moon is westering as now,  
And evening airs wander upon the wave;  
And when the pines of that bee-pasturing isle,                     \_170  
Green Erebinthus, quench the fiery shadow  
Of his gilt prow within the sapphire water,  
Then must the lonely helmsman cry aloud  
'Ahasuerus!' and the caverns round  
Will answer 'Ahasuerus!' If his prayer                     \_175  
Be granted, a faint meteor will arise  
Lighting him over Marmora, and a wind  
Will rush out of the sighing pine-forest,  
And with the wind a storm of harmony  
Unutterably sweet, and pilot him                     \_180  
Through the soft twilight to the Bosphorus:  
Thence at the hour and place and circumstance  
Fit for the matter of their conference  
The Jew appears. Few dare, and few who dare  
Win the desired communion--but that shout                     \_185  
Bodes--

[A SHOUT WITHIN.]

MAHMUD:  
Evil, doubtless; Like all human sounds.  
Let me converse with spirits.

HASSAN:

That shout again.

MAHMUD:

This Jew whom thou hast summoned--

HASSAN:

Will be here--

MAHMUD:

When the omnipotent hour to which are yoked

He, I, and all things shall compel--enough! \_190

Silence those mutineers--that drunken crew,

That crowd about the pilot in the storm.

Ay! strike the foremost shorter by a head!

They weary me, and I have need of rest.

Kinks are like stars--they rise and set, they have \_195

The worship of the world, but no repose.

[EXEUNT SEVERALLY.]

CHORUS:

Worlds on worlds are rolling ever

From creation to decay,

Like the bubbles on a river

Sparkling, bursting, borne away. \_200

But they are still immortal

Who, through birth's orient portal

And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,

Clothe their unceasing flight

In the brief dust and light \_205

Gathered around their chariots as they go;

New shapes they still may weave,

New gods, new laws receive,

Bright or dim are they as the robes they last

On Death's bare ribs had cast. \_210

A power from the unknown God,

A Promethean conqueror, came;

Like a triumphal path he trod

The thorns of death and shame.

A mortal shape to him \_215

Was like the vapour dim

Which the orient planet animates with light;

Hell, Sin, and Slavery came,

Like bloodhounds mild and tame,

Nor preyed, until their Lord had taken flight; \_220

The moon of Mahomet

Arose, and it shall set:

While blazoned as on Heaven's immortal noon

The cross leads generations on.

Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep \_225



From one whose dreams are Paradise  
 Fly, when the fond wretch wakes to weep,  
 And Day peers forth with her blank eyes;  
 So fleet, so faint, so fair,  
 The Powers of earth and air                                 \_230  
 Fled from the folding-star of Bethlehem:  
 Apollo, Pan, and Love,  
 And even Olympian Jove  
 Grew weak, for killing Truth had glared on them;  
 Our hills and seas and streams,                                 \_235  
 Dispeopled of their dreams,  
 Their waters turned to blood, their dew to tears,  
 Wailed for the golden years.

[ENTER MAHMUD, HASSAN, DAOOD, AND OTHERS.]

MAHMUD:  
 More gold? our ancestors bought gold with victory,  
 And shall I sell it for defeat?

DAOOD:  
 The Janizars   \_240  
 Clamour for pay.

MAHMUD:  
 Go! bid them pay themselves  
 With Christian blood! Are there no Grecian virgins  
 Whose shrieks and spasms and tears they may enjoy?  
 No infidel children to impale on spears?  
 No hoary priests after that Patriarch                         \_245  
 Who bent the curse against his country's heart,  
 Which clove his own at last? Go! bid them kill,  
 Blood is the seed of gold.

DAOOD:  
 It has been sown,  
 And yet the harvest to the sicklemen  
 Is as a grain to each.

MAHMUD:  
 Then, take this signet,   \_250  
 Unlock the seventh chamber in which lie  
 The treasures of victorious Solyman,--  
 An empire's spoil stored for a day of ruin.  
 O spirit of my sires! is it not come?  
 The prey-birds and the wolves are gorged and sleep;         \_255  
 But these, who spread their feast on the red earth,  
 Hunger for gold, which fills not.--See them fed;  
 Then, lead them to the rivers of fresh death.

[EXIT DAOOD.]

O miserable dawn, after a night  
 More glorious than the day which it usurped!                 \_260  
 O faith in God! O power on earth! O word

Of the great prophet, whose o'ershadowing wings  
Darkened the thrones and idols of the West,  
Now bright!--For thy sake cursed be the hour,  
Even as a father by an evil child,                     \_265  
When the orient moon of Islam rolled in triumph  
From Caucasus to White Ceraunia!  
Ruin above, and anarchy below;  
Terror without, and treachery within;  
The Chalice of destruction full, and all                     \_270  
Thirsting to drink; and who among us dares  
To dash it from his lips? and where is Hope?

HASSAN:

The lamp of our dominion still rides high;  
One God is God--Mahomet is His prophet.  
Four hundred thousand Moslems, from the limits                     \_275  
Of utmost Asia, irresistibly  
Throng, like full clouds at the Sirocco's cry;  
But not like them to weep their strength in tears:  
They bear destroying lightning, and their step  
Wakes earthquake to consume and overwhelm,                     \_280  
And reign in ruin. Phrygian Olympus,  
Tmolus, and Latmos, and Mycale, roughen  
With horrent arms; and lofty ships even now,  
Like vapours anchored to a mountain's edge,  
Freighted with fire and whirlwind, wait at Scala                     \_285  
The convoy of the ever-veering wind.  
Samos is drunk with blood;--the Greek has paid  
Brief victory with swift loss and long despair.  
The false Moldavian serfs fled fast and far  
When the fierce shout of 'Allah-illa-Allah!'                     \_290  
Rose like the war-cry of the northern wind  
Which kills the sluggish clouds, and leaves a flock  
Of wild swans struggling with the naked storm.  
So were the lost Greeks on the Danube's day!  
If night is mute, yet the returning sun                     \_295  
Kindles the voices of the morning birds;  
Nor at thy bidding less exultingly  
Than birds rejoicing in the golden day,  
The Anarchies of Africa unleash  
Their tempest-winged cities of the sea,                     \_300  
To speak in thunder to the rebel world.  
Like sulphurous clouds, half-shattered by the storm,  
They sweep the pale Aegean, while the Queen  
Of Ocean, bound upon her island-throne,  
Far in the West, sits mourning that her sons                     \_305  
Who frown on Freedom spare a smile for thee:  
Russia still hovers, as an eagle might  
Within a cloud, near which a kite and crane  
Hang tangled in inextricable fight,  
To stoop upon the victor;--for she fears                     \_310  
The name of Freedom, even as she hates thine.  
But recreant Austria loves thee as the Grave

Loves Pestilence, and her slow dogs of war  
 Fleshed with the chase, come up from Italy,  
 And howl upon their limits; for they see                     \_315  
 The panther, Freedom, fled to her old cover,  
 Amid seas and mountains, and a mightier brood  
 Crouch round. What Anarch wears a crown or mitre,  
 Or bears the sword, or grasps the key of gold,  
 Whose friends are not thy friends, whose foes thy foes?             \_320  
 Our arsenals and our armouries are full;  
 Our forts defy assault; ten thousand cannon  
 Lie ranged upon the beach, and hour by hour  
 Their earth-convulsing wheels affright the city;  
 The galloping of fiery steeds makes pale                     \_325  
 The Christian merchant; and the yellow Jew  
 Hides his hoard deeper in the faithless earth.  
 Like clouds, and like the shadows of the clouds,  
 Over the hills of Anatolia,  
 Swift in wide troops the Tartar chivalry                     \_330  
 Sweep;--the far flashing of their starry lances  
 Reverberates the dying light of day.  
 We have one God, one King, one Hope, one Law;  
 But many-headed Insurrection stands  
 Divided in itself, and soon must fall.                     \_335

NOTES:

\_253 spoil edition 1822; spoils editions 1839.  
 \_279 bear edition 1822; have editions 1839.  
 \_322 assault edition 1822; assaults editions 1839.

MAHMUD:

Proud words, when deeds come short, are seasonable:  
 Look, Hassan, on yon crescent moon, emblazoned  
 Upon that shattered flag of fiery cloud  
 Which leads the rear of the departing day;  
 Wan emblem of an empire fading now!                     \_340  
 See how it trembles in the blood-red air,  
 And like a mighty lamp whose oil is spent  
 Shrinks on the horizon's edge, while, from above,  
 One star with insolent and victorious light  
 Hovers above its fall, and with keen beams,                     \_345  
 Like arrows through a fainting antelope,  
 Strikes its weak form to death.

HASSAN:

Even as that moon  
 Renews itself--

MAHMUD:

Shall we be not renewed!  
 Far other bark than ours were needed now  
 To stem the torrent of descending time:                     \_350  
 The Spirit that lifts the slave before his lord  
 Stalks through the capitals of armed kings,

And spreads his ensign in the wilderness:  
 Exults in chains; and, when the rebel falls,  
 Cries like the blood of Abel from the dust;                     \_355  
 And the inheritors of the earth, like beasts  
 When earthquake is unleashed, with idiot fear  
 Cower in their kingly dens--as I do now.  
 What were Defeat when Victory must appal?  
 Or Danger, when Security looks pale?--                     \_360  
 How said the messenger--who, from the fort  
 Islanded in the Danube, saw the battle  
 Of Bucharest?--that--

NOTES:

\_351 his edition 1822; its editions 1839.  
 \_356 of the earth edition 1822; of earth editions 1839.

HASSAN:

Ibrahim's scimitar  
 Drew with its gleam swift victory from Heaven,  
 To burn before him in the night of battle--                     \_365  
 A light and a destruction.

MAHMUD:

Ay! the day  
 Was ours: but how?--

HASSAN:

The light Wallachians,  
 The Arnaut, Servian, and Albanian allies  
 Fled from the glance of our artillery  
 Almost before the thunderstone alit.                     \_370  
 One half the Grecian army made a bridge  
 Of safe and slow retreat, with Moslem dead;  
 The other--

MAHMUD:

Speak--tremble not.--

HASSAN:

Islanded  
 By victor myriads, formed in hollow square  
 With rough and steadfast front, and thrice flung back                     \_375  
 The deluge of our foaming cavalry;  
 Thrice their keen wedge of battle pierced our lines.  
 Our baffled army trembled like one man  
 Before a host, and gave them space; but soon,  
 From the surrounding hills, the batteries blazed,                     \_380  
 Kneading them down with fire and iron rain:  
 Yet none approached; till, like a field of corn  
 Under the hook of the swart sickleman,  
 The band, intrenched in mounds of Turkish dead,  
 Grew weak and few.--Then said the Pacha, 'Slaves,                     \_385  
 Render yourselves--they have abandoned you--

What hope of refuge, or retreat, or aid?  
 We grant your lives.' 'Grant that which is thine own!  
 Cried one, and fell upon his sword and died!  
 Another--'God, and man, and hope abandon me;                     \_390  
 But I to them, and to myself, remain  
 Constant:'--he bowed his head, and his heart burst.  
 A third exclaimed, 'There is a refuge, tyrant,  
 Where thou darest not pursue, and canst not harm  
 Shouldst thou pursue; there we shall meet again.'                     \_395  
 Then held his breath, and, after a brief spasm,  
 The indignant spirit cast its mortal garment  
 Among the slain--dead earth upon the earth!  
 So these survivors, each by different ways,  
 Some strange, all sudden, none dishonourable,                     \_400  
 Met in triumphant death; and when our army  
 Closed in, while yet wonder, and awe, and shame  
 Held back the base hyaenas of the battle  
 That feed upon the dead and fly the living,  
 One rose out of the chaos of the slain:                     \_405  
 And if it were a corpse which some dread spirit  
 Of the old saviours of the land we rule  
 Had lifted in its anger, wandering by;--  
 Or if there burned within the dying man  
 Unquenchable disdain of death, and faith                     \_410  
 Creating what it feigned;--I cannot tell--  
 But he cried, 'Phantoms of the free, we come!  
 Armies of the Eternal, ye who strike  
 To dust the citadels of sanguine kings,  
 And shake the souls throned on their stony hearts,                     \_415  
 And thaw their frostwork diadems like dew;--  
 O ye who float around this clime, and weave  
 The garment of the glory which it wears,  
 Whose fame, though earth betray the dust it clasped,  
 Lies sepulchred in monumental thought;--                     \_420  
 Progenitors of all that yet is great,  
 Ascribe to your bright senate, O accept  
 In your high ministrations, us, your sons--  
 Us first, and the more glorious yet to come!  
 And ye, weak conquerors! giants who look pale                     \_425  
 When the crushed worm rebels beneath your tread,  
 The vultures and the dogs, your pensioners tame,  
 Are overgorged; but, like oppressors, still  
 They crave the relic of Destruction's feast.  
 The exhalations and the thirsty winds                     \_430  
 Are sick with blood; the dew is foul with death;  
 Heaven's light is quenched in slaughter: thus, where'er  
 Upon your camps, cities, or towers, or fleets,  
 The obscene birds the reeking remnants cast  
 Of these dead limbs,--upon your streams and mountains,                     \_435  
 Upon your fields, your gardens, and your housetops,  
 Where'er the winds shall creep, or the clouds fly,  
 Or the dews fall, or the angry sun look down  
 With poisoned light--Famine, and Pestilence,

And Panic, shall wage war upon our side! \_440  
Nature from all her boundaries is moved  
Against ye: Time has found ye light as foam.  
The Earth rebels; and Good and Evil stake  
Their empire o'er the unborn world of men  
On this one cast;--but ere the die be thrown, \_445  
The renovated genius of our race,  
Proud umpire of the impious game, descends,  
A seraph-winged Victory, bestriding  
The tempest of the Omnipotence of God,  
Which sweeps all things to their appointed doom, \_450  
And you to oblivion!--More he would have said,  
But--

NOTE:

\_384 band edition 1822; bands editions 1839.

MAHMUD:

Died--as thou shouldst ore thy lips had painted  
Their ruin in the hues of our success.  
A rebel's crime, guilt with a rebel's tongue!  
Your heart is Greek, Hassan.

HASSAN:

It may be so: \_455  
A spirit not my own wrenched me within,  
And I have spoken words I fear and hate;  
Yet would I die for--

MAHMUD:

Live! oh live! outlive  
Me and this sinking empire. But the fleet--

HASSAN:

Alas!--

MAHMUD:

The fleet which, like a flock of clouds \_460  
Chased by the wind, flies the insurgent banner!  
Our winged castles from their merchant ships!  
Our myriads before their weak pirate bands!  
Our arms before their chains! our years of empire  
Before their centuries of servile fear! \_465  
Death is awake! Repulse is on the waters!  
They own no more the thunder-bearing banner  
Of Mahmud; but, like hounds of a base breed,  
Gorge from a stranger's hand, and rend their master.

NOTE:

\_466 Repulse is "Shelley, Errata", edition 1822; Repulsed edition 1822.

HASSAN:

Latmos, and Ampelos, and Phanae saw \_470

The wreck--

MAHMUD:

The caves of the Icarian isles  
Told each to the other in loud mockery,  
And with the tongue as of a thousand echoes,  
First of the sea-convulsing fight--and, then,--  
Thou darrest to speak--senseless are the mountains:        \_475  
Interpret thou their voice!

NOTE:

\_472 Told Errata, Wms. transcript; Hold edition 1822.

HASSAN:

My presence bore  
A part in that day's shame. The Grecian fleet  
Bore down at daybreak from the North, and hung  
As multitudinous on the ocean line,  
As cranes upon the cloudless Thracian wind.                \_480  
Our squadron, convoying ten thousand men,  
Was stretching towards Nauplia when the battle  
Was kindled.--  
First through the hail of our artillery  
The agile Hydriote barks with press of sail                \_485  
Dashed:--ship to ship, cannon to cannon, man  
To man were grappled in the embrace of war,  
Inextricable but by death or victory.  
The tempest of the raging fight convulsed  
To its crystalline depths that stainless sea,                \_490  
And shook Heaven's roof of golden morning clouds,  
Poised on an hundred azure mountain-isles.  
In the brief trances of the artillery  
One cry from the destroyed and the destroyer  
Rose, and a cloud of desolation wrapped                    \_495  
The unforeseen event, till the north wind  
Sprung from the sea, lifting the heavy veil  
Of battle-smoke--then victory--victory!  
For, as we thought, three frigates from Algiers  
Bore down from Naxos to our aid, but soon                \_500  
The abhorred cross glimmered behind, before,  
Among, around us; and that fatal sign  
Dried with its beams the strength in Moslem hearts,  
As the sun drinks the dew.--What more? We fled!--  
Our noonday path over the sanguine foam                \_505  
Was beacons,--and the glare struck the sun pale,--  
By our consuming transports: the fierce light  
Made all the shadows of our sails blood-red,  
And every countenance blank. Some ships lay feeding  
The ravening fire, even to the water's level;             \_510  
Some were blown up; some, settling heavily,  
Sunk; and the shrieks of our companions died  
Upon the wind, that bore us fast and far,  
Even after they were dead. Nine thousand perished!

We met the vultures legioned in the air                     \_515  
Stemming the torrent of the tainted wind;  
They, screaming from their cloudy mountain-peaks,  
Stooped through the sulphurous battle-smoke and perched  
Each on the weltering carcass that we loved,  
Like its ill angel or its damned soul,                     \_520  
Riding upon the bosom of the sea.  
We saw the dog-fish hastening to their feast.  
Joy waked the voiceless people of the sea,  
And ravening Famine left his ocean cave  
To dwell with War, with us, and with Despair.             \_525  
We met night three hours to the west of Patmos,  
And with night, tempest--

NOTES:

\_503 in edition 1822; of editions 1839.  
\_527 And edition 1822; As editions 1839.

MAHMUD:

Cease!

[ENTER A MESSENGER.]

MESSENGER:

Your Sublime Highness,  
That Christian hound, the Muscovite Ambassador,  
Has left the city.--If the rebel fleet  
Had anchored in the port, had victory                     \_530  
Crowned the Greek legions in the Hippodrome,  
Panic were tamer.--Obedience and Mutiny,  
Like giants in contention planet-struck,  
Stand gazing on each other.--There is peace  
In Stamboul.--

MAHMUD:

Is the grave not calmer still?                     \_535  
Its ruins shall be mine.

HASSAN:

Fear not the Russian:  
The tiger leagues not with the stag at bay  
Against the hunter.--Cunning, base, and cruel,  
He crouches, watching till the spoil be won,  
And must be paid for his reserve in blood.                 \_540  
After the war is fought, yield the sleek Russian  
That which thou canst not keep, his deserved portion  
Of blood, which shall not flow through streets and fields,  
Rivers and seas, like that which we may win,  
But stagnate in the veins of Christian slaves!             \_545

[ENTER SECOND MESSENGER.]

SECOND MESSENGER:



Nauplia, Tripolizza, Mothon, Athens,  
 Navarin, Artas, Monembasia,  
 Corinth, and Thebes are carried by assault,  
 And every Islamite who made his dogs  
 Fat with the flesh of Galilean slaves \_550  
 Passed at the edge of the sword: the lust of blood,  
 Which made our warriors drunk, is quenched in death;  
 But like a fiery plague breaks out anew  
 In deeds which make the Christian cause look pale  
 In its own light. The garrison of Patras \_555  
 Has store but for ten days, nor is there hope  
 But from the Briton: at once slave and tyrant,  
 His wishes still are weaker than his fears,  
 Or he would sell what faith may yet remain  
 From the oaths broke in Genoa and in Norway; \_560  
 And if you buy him not, your treasury  
 Is empty even of promises--his own coin.  
 The freedman of a western poet-chief  
 Holds Attica with seven thousand rebels,  
 And has beat back the Pacha of Negropont: \_565  
 The aged Ali sits in Yanina  
 A crownless metaphor of empire:  
 His name, that shadow of his withered might,  
 Holds our besieging army like a spell  
 In prey to famine, pest, and mutiny; \_570  
 He, bastioned in his citadel, looks forth  
 Joyless upon the sapphire lake that mirrors  
 The ruins of the city where he reigned  
 Childless and sceptreless. The Greek has reaped  
 The costly harvest his own blood matured, \_575  
 Not the sower, Ali--who has bought a truce  
 From Ypsilanti with ten camel-loads  
 Of Indian gold.

NOTE:

\_563 freedman edition 1822; freeman editions 1839.

[ENTER A THIRD MESSENGER.]

MAHMUD:

What more?

THIRD MESSENGER:

The Christian tribes  
 Of Lebanon and the Syrian wilderness  
 Are in revolt;--Damascus, Hems, Aleppo \_580  
 Tremble;--the Arab menaces Medina,  
 The Aethiop has intrenched himself in Sennaar,  
 And keeps the Egyptian rebel well employed,  
 Who denies homage, claims investiture  
 As price of tardy aid. Persia demands \_585  
 The cities on the Tigris, and the Georgians  
 Refuse their living tribute. Crete and Cyprus,

Like mountain-twins that from each other's veins  
Catch the volcano-fire and earthquake-spasm,  
Shake in the general fever. Through the city,                    \_590  
Like birds before a storm, the Santons shriek,  
And prophesyings horrible and new  
Are heard among the crowd: that sea of men  
Sleeps on the wrecks it made, breathless and still.  
A Dervise, learned in the Koran, preaches                         \_595  
That it is written how the sins of Islam  
Must raise up a destroyer even now.  
The Greeks expect a Saviour from the West,  
Who shall not come, men say, in clouds and glory,  
But in the omnipresence of that Spirit                             \_600  
In which all live and are. Ominous signs  
Are blazoned broadly on the noonday sky:  
One saw a red cross stamped upon the sun;  
It has rained blood; and monstrous births declare  
The secret wrath of Nature and her Lord.                         \_605  
The army encamped upon the Cydaris  
Was roused last night by the alarm of battle,  
And saw two hosts conflicting in the air,  
The shadows doubtless of the unborn time  
Cast on the mirror of the night. While yet                         \_610  
The fight hung balanced, there arose a storm  
Which swept the phantoms from among the stars.  
At the third watch the Spirit of the Plague  
Was heard abroad flapping among the tents;  
Those who relieved watch found the sentinels dead.             \_615  
The last news from the camp is, that a thousand  
Have sickened, and--

[ENTER A FOURTH MESSENGER.]

MAHMUD:

And thou, pale ghost, dim shadow  
Of some untimely rumour, speak!

FOURTH MESSENGER:

One comes  
Fainting with toil, covered with foam and blood:  
He stood, he says, on Chelonites'                                     \_620  
Promontory, which o'erlooks the isles that groan  
Under the Briton's frown, and all their waters  
Then trembling in the splendour of the moon,  
When as the wandering clouds unveiled or hid  
Her boundless light, he saw two adverse fleets                     \_625  
Stalk through the night in the horizon's glimmer,  
Mingling fierce thunders and sulphureous gleams,  
And smoke which strangled every infant wind  
That soothed the silver clouds through the deep air.  
At length the battle slept, but the Sirocco                         \_630  
Awoke, and drove his flock of thunder-clouds  
Over the sea-horizon, blotting out



Of the free--  
I would flee  
A tempestuous herald of victory!  
My golden rain  
For the Grecian slain \_665  
Should mingle in tears with the bloody main,  
And my solemn thunder-knell  
Should ring to the world the passing-bell  
Of Tyranny! \_670

SEMICHORUS 2:  
Ah king! wilt thou chain  
The rack and the rain?  
Wilt thou fetter the lightning and hurricane?  
The storms are free,  
But we-- \_675

CHORUS:  
O Slavery! thou frost of the world's prime,  
Killing its flowers and leaving its thorns bare!  
Thy touch has stamped these limbs with crime,  
These brows thy branding garland bear,  
But the free heart, the impassive soul \_680  
Scorn thy control!

SEMICHORUS 1:  
Let there be light! said Liberty,  
And like sunrise from the sea,  
Athens arose!--Around her born,  
Shone like mountains in the morn \_685  
Glorious states;--and are they now  
Ashes, wrecks, oblivion?

SEMICHORUS 2:  
Go,  
Where Thermae and Asopus swallowed  
Persia, as the sand does foam:  
Deluge upon deluge followed, \_690  
Discord, Macedon, and Rome:  
And lastly thou!

SEMICHORUS 1:  
Temples and towers,  
Citadels and marts, and they  
Who live and die there, have been ours,  
And may be thine, and must decay; \_695  
But Greece and her foundations are  
Built below the tide of war,  
Based on the crystalline sea  
Of thought and its eternity;  
Her citizens, imperial spirits, \_700  
Rule the present from the past,  
On all this world of men inherits

Their seal is set.

SEMICHORUS 2:

Hear ye the blast,  
Whose Orphic thunder thrilling calls  
From ruin her Titanian walls? \_705  
Whose spirit shakes the sapless bones  
Of Slavery? Argos, Corinth, Crete  
Hear, and from their mountain thrones  
The daemons and the nymphs repeat  
The harmony.

SEMICHORUS 1:

I hear! I hear! \_710

SEMICHORUS 2:

The world's eyeless charioteer,  
Destiny, is hurrying by!  
What faith is crushed, what empire bleeds  
Beneath her earthquake-footed steeds?  
What eagle-winged victory sits \_715  
At her right hand? what shadow flits  
Before? what splendour rolls behind?  
Ruin and renovation cry  
'Who but We?'

SEMICHORUS 1:

I hear! I hear!  
The hiss as of a rushing wind, \_720  
The roar as of an ocean foaming,  
The thunder as of earthquake coming.  
I hear! I hear!  
The crash as of an empire falling,  
The shrieks as of a people calling \_725  
'Mercy! mercy!--How they thrill!  
Then a shout of 'kill! kill! kill!'  
And then a small still voice, thus--

SEMICHORUS 2:

For  
Revenge and Wrong bring forth their kind,  
The foul cubs like their parents are, \_730  
Their den is in the guilty mind,  
And Conscience feeds them with despair.

NOTE:

\_728 For edition 1822, Wms. transcript;  
Fear cj. Fleay, Forman, Dowden. See Editor's Note.

SEMICHORUS 1:

In sacred Athens, near the fane  
Of Wisdom, Pity's altar stood:  
Serve not the unknown God in vain. \_735

But pay that broken shrine again,  
Love for hate and tears for blood.

[ENTER MAHMUD AND AHASUERUS.]

MAHMUD:

Thou art a man, thou sayest, even as we.

AHASUERUS:

No more!

MAHMUD:

But raised above thy fellow-men  
By thought, as I by power.

AHASUERUS:

Thou sayest so. \_740

MAHMUD:

Thou art an adept in the difficult lore  
Of Greek and Frank philosophy; thou numberest  
The flowers, and thou measurest the stars;  
Thou severest element from element;  
Thy spirit is present in the Past, and sees \_745

The birth of this old world through all its cycles  
Of desolation and of loveliness,  
And when man was not, and how man became  
The monarch and the slave of this low sphere,  
And all its narrow circles--it is much-- \_750

I honour thee, and would be what thou art  
Were I not what I am; but the unborn hour,  
Cradled in fear and hope, conflicting storms,  
Who shall unveil? Nor thou, nor I, nor any  
Mighty or wise. I apprehended not \_755

What thou hast taught me, but I now perceive  
That thou art no interpreter of dreams;  
Thou dost not own that art, device, or God,  
Can make the Future present--let it come!  
Moreover thou disdainest us and ours; \_760  
Thou art as God, whom thou contemplatest.

AHASUERUS:

Disdain thee?--not the worm beneath thy feet!  
The Fathomless has care for meaner things  
Than thou canst dream, and has made pride for those  
Who would be what they may not, or would seem \_765

That which they are not. Sultan! talk no more  
Of thee and me, the Future and the Past;  
But look on that which cannot change--the One,  
The unborn and the undying. Earth and ocean,  
Space, and the isles of life or light that gem \_770  
The sapphire floods of interstellar air,  
This firmament pavilioned upon chaos,

With all its cressets of immortal fire,  
 Whose outwall, bastioned impregnably  
 Against the escape of boldest thoughts, repels them            \_775  
 As Calpe the Atlantic clouds--this Whole  
 Of suns, and worlds, and men, and beasts, and flowers,  
 With all the silent or tempestuous workings  
 By which they have been, are, or cease to be,  
 Is but a vision;--all that it inherits                           \_780  
 Are motes of a sick eye, bubbles and dreams;  
 Thought is its cradle and its grave, nor less  
 The Future and the Past are idle shadows  
 Of thought's eternal flight--they have no being:  
 Nought is but that which feels itself to be.                   \_785

NOTE:

\_762 thy edition 1822; my editions 1839.

MAHMUD:

What meanest thou? Thy words stream like a tempest  
 Of dazzling mist within my brain--they shake  
 The earth on which I stand, and hang like night  
 On Heaven above me. What can they avail?  
 They cast on all things surest, brightest, best,               \_790  
 Doubt, insecurity, astonishment.

AHASUERUS:

Mistake me not! All is contained in each.  
 Dodona's forest to an acorn's cup  
 Is that which has been, or will be, to that  
 Which is--the absent to the present. Thought                   \_795  
 Alone, and its quick elements, Will, Passion,  
 Reason, Imagination, cannot die;  
 They are, what that which they regard appears,  
 The stuff whence mutability can weave  
 All that it hath dominion o'er, worlds, worms,               \_800  
 Empires, and superstitions. What has thought  
 To do with time, or place, or circumstance?  
 Wouldst thou behold the Future?--ask and have!  
 Knock and it shall be opened--look, and lo!  
 The coming age is shadowed on the Past                       \_805  
 As on a glass.

MAHMUD:

Wild, wilder thoughts convulse  
 My spirit--Did not Mahomet the Second  
 Win Stamboul?

AHASUERUS:

Thou wouldst ask that giant spirit  
 The written fortunes of thy house and faith.  
 Thou wouldst cite one out of the grave to tell               \_810  
 How what was born in blood must die.

MAHMUD:  
Thy words  
Have power on me! I see--

AHASUERUS:  
What hearest thou?

MAHMUD:  
A far whisper--  
Terrible silence.

AHASUERUS:  
What succeeds?

MAHMUD:  
The sound  
As of the assault of an imperial city,   \_815  
The hiss of inextinguishable fire,  
The roar of giant cannon; the earthquaking  
Fall of vast bastions and precipitous towers,  
The shock of crags shot from strange enginery,  
The clash of wheels, and clang of armed hoofs,                                 \_820  
And crash of brazen mail as of the wreck  
Of adamantine mountains--the mad blast  
Of trumpets, and the neigh of raging steeds,  
The shrieks of women whose thrill jars the blood,  
And one sweet laugh, most horrible to hear,   \_825  
As of a joyous infant waked and playing  
With its dead mother's breast, and now more loud  
The mingled battle-cry,--ha! hear I not  
'En touto nike!' 'Allah-illa-Allah!'

AHASUERUS:  
The sulphurous mist is raised--thou seest--

MAHMUD:  
A chasm,   \_830  
As of two mountains in the wall of Stamboul;  
And in that ghastly breach the Islamites,  
Like giants on the ruins of a world,  
Stand in the light of sunrise. In the dust  
Glimmers a kingless diadem, and one   \_835  
Of regal port has cast himself beneath  
The stream of war. Another proudly clad  
In golden arms spurs a Tartarian barb  
Into the gap, and with his iron mace  
Directs the torrent of that tide of men,   \_840  
And seems--he is--Mahomet!

AHASUERUS:  
What thou seest  
Is but the ghost of thy forgotten dream.  
A dream itself, yet less, perhaps, than that



Thou call'st reality. Thou mayst behold  
How cities, on which Empire sleeps enthroned, \_845  
Bow their towered crests to mutability.  
Poised by the flood, e'en on the height thou holdest,  
Thou mayst now learn how the full tide of power  
Ebbs to its depths.--Inheritor of glory,  
Conceived in darkness, born in blood, and nourished \_850  
With tears and toil, thou seest the mortal throes  
Of that whose birth was but the same. The Past  
Now stands before thee like an Incarnation  
Of the To-come; yet wouldst thou commune with  
That portion of thyself which was ere thou \_855  
Didst start for this brief race whose crown is death,  
Dissolve with that strong faith and fervent passion  
Which called it from the uncreated deep,  
Yon cloud of war, with its tempestuous phantoms  
Of raging death; and draw with mighty will \_860  
The imperial shade hither.

[EXIT AHASUERUS.]

[THE PHANTOM OF MAHOMET THE SECOND APPEARS.]

MAHMUD:

Approach!

PHANTOM:

I come

Thence whither thou must go! The grave is fitter  
To take the living than give up the dead;  
Yet has thy faith prevailed, and I am here.  
The heavy fragments of the power which fell \_865

When I arose, like shapeless crags and clouds,  
Hang round my throne on the abyss, and voices  
Of strange lament soothe my supreme repose,  
Wailing for glory never to return.--  
A later Empire nods in its decay: \_870

The autumn of a greener faith is come,  
And wolfish change, like winter, howls to strip  
The foliage in which Fame, the eagle, built  
Her aerie, while Dominion whelped below.  
The storm is in its branches, and the frost \_875

Is on its leaves, and the blank deep expects  
Oblivion on oblivion, spoil on spoil,  
Ruin on ruin:--Thou art slow, my son;  
The Anarchs of the world of darkness keep  
A throne for thee, round which thine empire lies \_880  
Boundless and mute; and for thy subjects thou,  
Like us, shalt rule the ghosts of murdered life,  
The phantoms of the powers who rule thee now--  
Mutinous passions, and conflicting fears,  
And hopes that sate themselves on dust, and die!-- \_885  
Stripped of their mortal strength, as thou of thine.

Islam must fall, but we will reign together  
Over its ruins in the world of death:--  
And if the trunk be dry, yet shall the seed  
Unfold itself even in the shape of that                    \_890  
Which gathers birth in its decay. Woe! woe!  
To the weak people tangled in the grasp  
Of its last spasms.

MAHMUD:  
Spirit, woe to all!  
Woe to the wronged and the avenger! Woe  
To the destroyer, woe to the destroyed!                    \_895  
Woe to the dupe, and woe to the deceiver!  
Woe to the oppressed, and woe to the oppressor!  
Woe both to those that suffer and inflict;  
Those who are born and those who die! but say,  
Imperial shadow of the thing I am,                            \_900  
When, how, by whom, Destruction must accomplish  
Her consummation!

PHANTOM:  
Ask the cold pale Hour,  
Rich in reversion of impending death,  
When HE shall fall upon whose ripe gray hairs  
Sit Care, and Sorrow, and Infirmary--                    \_905  
The weight which Crime, whose wings are plumed with years,  
Leaves in his flight from ravaged heart to heart  
Over the heads of men, under which burthen  
They bow themselves unto the grave: fond wretch!  
He leans upon his crutch, and talks of years                    \_910  
To come, and how in hours of youth renewed  
He will renew lost joys, and--

VOICE WITHOUT:  
Victory! Victory!

[THE PHANTOM VANISHES.]

MAHMUD:  
What sound of the importunate earth has broken  
My mighty trance?

VOICE WITHOUT:  
Victory! Victory!

MAHMUD:  
Weak lightning before darkness! poor faint smile                    \_915  
Of dying Islam! Voice which art the response  
Of hollow weakness! Do I wake and live?  
Were there such things, or may the unquiet brain,  
Vexed by the wise mad talk of the old Jew,  
Have shaped itself these shadows of its fear?                    \_920  
It matters not!--for nought we see or dream,

Possess, or lose, or grasp at, can be worth  
More than it gives or teaches. Come what may,  
The Future must become the Past, and I  
As they were to whom once this present hour, \_925  
This gloomy crag of time to which I cling,  
Seemed an Elysian isle of peace and joy  
Never to be attained.--I must rebuke  
This drunkenness of triumph ere it die,  
And dying, bring despair. Victory! poor slaves! \_930

[EXIT MAHMUD.]

VOICE WITHOUT:

Shout in the jubilee of death! The Greeks  
Are as a brood of lions in the net  
Round which the kingly hunters of the earth  
Stand smiling. Anarchs, ye whose daily food  
Are curses, groans, and gold, the fruit of death, \_935  
From Thule to the girdle of the world,  
Come, feast! the board groans with the flesh of men;  
The cup is foaming with a nation's blood,  
Famine and Thirst await! eat, drink, and die!

SEMICHORUS 1:

Victorious Wrong, with vulture scream, \_940  
Salutes the rising sun, pursues the flying day!  
I saw her, ghastly as a tyrant's dream,  
Perch on the trembling pyramid of night,  
Beneath which earth and all her realms pavilioned lay  
In visions of the dawning undelight. \_945  
Who shall impede her flight?  
Who rob her of her prey?

VOICE WITHOUT:

Victory! Victory! Russia's famished eagles  
Dare not to prey beneath the crescent's light.  
Impale the remnant of the Greeks! despoil! \_950  
Violate! make their flesh cheaper than dust!

SEMICHORUS 2:

Thou voice which art  
The herald of the ill in splendour hid!  
Thou echo of the hollow heart  
Of monarchy, bear me to thine abode \_955  
When desolation flashes o'er a world destroyed:  
Oh, bear me to those isles of jagged cloud  
Which float like mountains on the earthquake, mid  
The momentary oceans of the lightning,  
Or to some toppling promontory proud \_960  
Of solid tempest whose black pyramid,  
Riven, overhangs the founts intensely bright'ning  
Of those dawn-tinted deluges of fire  
Before their waves expire,

When heaven and earth are light, and only light                    \_965  
In the thunder-night!

NOTE:

\_958 earthquake edition 1822; earthquakes editions 1839.

VOICE WITHOUT:

Victory! Victory! Austria, Russia, England,  
And that tame serpent, that poor shadow, France,  
Cry peace, and that means death when monarchs speak.  
Ho, there! bring torches, sharpen those red stakes,                    \_970  
These chains are light, fitter for slaves and poisoners  
Than Greeks. Kill! plunder! burn! let none remain.

SEMICHORUS 1:

Alas! for Liberty!  
If numbers, wealth, or unfulfilling years,  
Or fate, can quell the free!   \_975  
Alas! for Virtue, when  
Torments, or contumely, or the sneers  
Of erring judging men  
Can break the heart where it abides.  
Alas! if Love, whose smile makes this obscure world splendid,                    \_980  
Can change with its false times and tides,  
Like hope and terror,--  
Alas for Love!  
And Truth, who wanderest lone and unbefriended,  
If thou canst veil thy lie-consuming mirror   \_985  
Before the dazzled eyes of Error,  
Alas for thee! Image of the Above.

SEMICHORUS 2:

Repulse, with plumes from conquest torn,  
Led the ten thousand from the limits of the morn  
Through many an hostile Anarchy!   \_990  
At length they wept aloud, and cried, 'The Sea! the Sea!'  
Through exile, persecution, and despair,  
Rome was, and young Atlantis shall become  
The wonder, or the terror, or the tomb  
Of all whose step wakes Power lulled in her savage lair:   \_995  
But Greece was as a hermit-child,  
Whose fairest thoughts and limbs were built  
To woman's growth, by dreams so mild,  
She knew not pain or guilt;  
And now, O Victory, blush! and Empire, tremble   \_1000  
When ye desert the free--  
If Greece must be  
A wreck, yet shall its fragments reassemble,  
And build themselves again impregnably  
In a diviner clime,   \_1005  
To Amphionic music on some Cape sublime,  
Which frowns above the idle foam of Time.

SEMICHORUS 1:

Let the tyrants rule the desert they have made;  
Let the free possess the Paradise they claim;  
Be the fortune of our fierce oppressors weighed                    \_1010  
With our ruin, our resistance, and our name!

SEMICHORUS 2:

Our dead shall be the seed of their decay,  
Our survivors be the shadow of their pride,  
Our adversity a dream to pass away--  
Their dishonour a remembrance to abide!                                 \_1015

VOICE WITHOUT:

Victory! Victory! The bought Briton sends  
The keys of ocean to the Islamite.--  
Now shall the blazon of the cross be veiled,  
And British skill directing Othman might,  
Thunder-strike rebel victory. Oh, keep holy                                 \_1020  
This jubilee of unrevenged blood!  
Kill! crush! despoil! Let not a Greek escape!

SEMICHORUS 1:

Darkness has dawned in the East  
On the noon of time:  
The death-birds descend to their feast                                 \_1025  
From the hungry clime.  
Let Freedom and Peace flee far  
To a sunnier strand,  
And follow Love's folding-star  
To the Evening land!   \_1030

SEMICHORUS 2:

The young moon has fed  
Her exhausted horn  
With the sunset's fire:  
The weak day is dead,  
But the night is not born;   \_1035  
And, like loveliness panting with wild desire  
While it trembles with fear and delight,  
Hesperus flies from awakening night,  
And pants in its beauty and speed with light  
Fast-flashing, soft, and bright.   \_1040  
Thou beacon of love! thou lamp of the free!  
Guide us far, far away,  
To climes where now veiled by the ardour of day  
Thou art hidden  
From waves on which weary Noon   \_1045  
Faints in her summer swoon,  
Between kingless continents sinless as Eden,  
Around mountains and islands inviolably  
Pranked on the sapphire sea.

SEMICHORUS 1:

Through the sunset of hope, \_1050  
Like the shapes of a dream.  
What Paradise islands of glory gleam!  
Beneath Heaven's cope,  
Their shadows more clear float by--  
The sound of their oceans, the light of their sky, \_1055  
The music and fragrance their solitudes breathe  
Burst, like morning on dream, or like Heaven on death,  
Through the walls of our prison;  
And Greece, which was dead, is arisen!

NOTE:

\_1057 dream edition 1822; dreams editions 1839.

CHORUS:

The world's great age begins anew, \_1060  
The golden years return,  
The earth doth like a snake renew  
Her winter weeds outworn:  
Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,  
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream. \_1065

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains  
From waves serener far;  
A new Peneus rolls his fountains  
Against the morning star.  
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep \_1070  
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,  
Fraught with a later prize;  
Another Orpheus sings again,  
And loves, and weeps, and dies. \_1075  
A new Ulysses leaves once more  
Calypso for his native shore.

Oh, write no more the tale of Troy,  
If earth Death's scroll must be!  
Nor mix with Laian rage the joy \_1080  
Which dawns upon the free:  
Although a subtler Sphinx renew  
Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,  
And to remoter time \_1085  
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,  
The splendour of its prime;  
And leave, if nought so bright may live,  
All earth can take or Heaven can give.

Saturn and Love their long repose \_1090  
Shall burst, more bright and good  
Than all who fell, than One who rose,

Than many unsubdued:  
Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,  
But votive tears and symbol flowers.                      \_1095

Oh, cease! must hate and death return?  
Cease! must men kill and die?  
Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn  
Of bitter prophecy.  
The world is weary of the past,                              \_1100  
Oh, might it die or rest at last!

NOTES:

- \_1068 his edition 1822; its editions 1839.
- \_1072 Argo]Argos edition 1822.
- \_1091-\_1093 See Editor's note.
- \_1091 bright editions 1839; wise edition 1829 (ed. Galignani).
- \_1093 unsubdued editions 1839; unwithstood edition 1829 (ed. Galignani).

NOTES.

(1) THE QUENCHLESS ASHES OF MILAN [L. 60].

Milan was the centre of the resistance of the Lombard league against the Austrian tyrant. Frederic Barbarossa burnt the city to the ground, but liberty lived in its ashes, and it rose like an exhalation from its ruin. See Sismondi's "Histoire des Republiques Italiennes", a book which has done much towards awakening the Italians to an imitation of their great ancestors.

(2) THE CHORUS [L. 197].

The popular notions of Christianity are represented in this chorus as true in their relation to the worship they superseded, and that which in all probability they will supersede, without considering their merits in a relation more universal. The first stanza contrasts the immortality of the living and thinking beings which inhabit the planets, and to use a common and inadequate phrase, "clothe themselves in matter", with the transience of the noblest manifestations of the external world.

The concluding verses indicate a progressive state of more or less exalted existence, according to the degree of perfection which every distinct intelligence may have attained. Let it not be supposed that I mean to dogmatise upon a subject, concerning which all men are equally ignorant, or that I think the Gordian knot of the origin of evil can be disentangled by that or any similar assertions. The received hypothesis of a Being resembling men in the moral attributes of His nature, having called us out of non-existence, and after inflicting on us the misery of the commission of error, should superadd that of the punishment and the privations consequent upon it, still would remain inexplicable and incredible. That there is a true solution of the riddle, and that in our present state that solution is unattainable by

us, are propositions which may be regarded as equally certain: meanwhile, as it is the province of the poet to attach himself to those ideas which exalt and ennoble humanity, let him be permitted to have conjectured the condition of that futurity towards which we are all impelled by an inextinguishable thirst for immortality. Until better arguments can be produced than sophisms which disgrace the cause, this desire itself must remain the strongest and the only presumption that eternity is the inheritance of every thinking being.

(3) NO HOARY PRIESTS AFTER THAT PATRIARCH [L. 245].

The Greek Patriarch, after having been compelled to fulminate an anathema against the insurgents, was put to death by the Turks.

Fortunately the Greeks have been taught that they cannot buy security by degradation, and the Turks, though equally cruel, are less cunning than the smooth-faced tyrants of Europe. As to the anathema, his Holiness might as well have thrown his mitre at Mount Athos for any effect that it produced. The chiefs of the Greeks are almost all men of comprehension and enlightened views on religion and politics.

(4) THE FREEDMAN OF A WESTERN POET-CHIEF [L. 563].

A Greek who had been Lord Byron's servant commands the insurgents in Attica. This Greek, Lord Byron informs me, though a poet and an enthusiastic patriot, gave him rather the idea of a timid and unenterprising person. It appears that circumstances make men what they are, and that we all contain the germ of a degree of degradation or of greatness whose connection with our character is determined by events.

(5) THE GREEKS EXPECT A SAVIOUR FROM THE WEST [L. 598].

It is reported that this Messiah had arrived at a seaport near Lacedaemon in an American brig. The association of names and ideas is irresistibly ludicrous, but the prevalence of such a rumour strongly marks the state of popular enthusiasm in Greece.

(6) THE SOUND AS OF THE ASSAULT OF AN IMPERIAL CITY [LL. 814-15].

For the vision of Mahmud of the taking of Constantinople in 1453, see Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", volume 12 page 223.

The manner of the invocation of the spirit of Mahomet the Second will be censured as over subtle. I could easily have made the Jew a regular conjuror, and the Phantom an ordinary ghost. I have preferred to represent the Jew as disclaiming all pretension, or even belief, in supernatural agency, and as tempting Mahmud to that state of mind in which ideas may be supposed to assume the force of sensations through the confusion of thought with the objects of thought, and the excess of passion animating the creations of imagination.

It is a sort of natural magic, susceptible of being exercised in a



degree by any one who should have made himself master of the secret associations of another's thoughts.

(7) THE CHORUS [L. 1060].

The final chorus is indistinct and obscure, as the event of the living drama whose arrival it foretells. Prophecies of wars, and rumours of wars, etc., may safely be made by poet or prophet in any age, but to anticipate however darkly a period of regeneration and happiness is a more hazardous exercise of the faculty which bards possess or feign. It will remind the reader 'magno NEC proximus intervallo' of Isaiah and Virgil, whose ardent spirits overleaping the actual reign of evil which we endure and bewail, already saw the possible and perhaps approaching state of society in which the 'lion shall lie down with the lamb,' and 'omnis feret omnia tellus.' Let these great names be my authority and my excuse.

(8) SATURN AND LOVE THEIR LONG REPOSE SHALL BURST [L. 1090].

Saturn and Love were among the deities of a real or imaginary state of innocence and happiness. ALL those WHO FELL, or the Gods of Greece, Asia, and Egypt; the ONE WHO ROSE, or Jesus Christ, at whose appearance the idols of the Pagan World wore amerced of their worship; and the MANY UNSUBDUED, or the monstrous objects of the idolatry of China, India, the Antarctic islands, and the native tribes of America, certainly have reigned over the understandings of men in conjunction or in succession, during periods in which all we know of evil has been in a state of portentous, and, until the revival of learning and the arts, perpetually increasing, activity. The Grecian gods seem indeed to have been personally more innocent, although it cannot be said, that as far as temperance and chastity are concerned, they gave so edifying an example as their successor. The sublime human character of Jesus Christ was deformed by an imputed identification with a Power, who tempted, betrayed, and punished the innocent beings who were called into existence by His sole will; and for the period of a thousand years, the spirit of this most just, wise, and benevolent of men has been propitiated with myriads of hecatombs of those who approached the nearest to His innocence and wisdom, sacrificed under every aggravation of atrocity and variety of torture. The horrors of the Mexican, the Peruvian, and the Indian superstitions are well known.

NOTE ON HELLAS, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

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

imitation, the people of the little state of Massa and Carrara gave the conge to their sovereign, and set up a republic.

Tuscany alone was perfectly tranquil. It was said that the Austrian minister presented a list of sixty Carbonari to the Grand Duke, urging their imprisonment; and the Grand Duke replied, 'I do not know whether these sixty men are Carbonari, but I know, if I imprison them, I shall directly have sixty thousand start up.' But, though the Tuscans had no desire to disturb the paternal government beneath whose shelter they slumbered, they regarded the progress of the various Italian revolutions with intense interest, and hatred for the Austrian was warm in every bosom. But they had slender hopes; they knew that the Neapolitans would offer no fit resistance to the regular German troops, and that the overthrow of the constitution in Naples would act as a decisive blow against all struggles for liberty in Italy.

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

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

Prince Ypsilanti, and, radiant with exultation and delight, declared that henceforth Greece would be free.

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

"Hellas" was among the last of his compositions, and is among the most beautiful. The choruses are singularly imaginative, and melodious in their versification. There are some stanzas that beautifully exemplify Shelley's peculiar style; as, for instance, the assertion of the intellectual empire which must be for ever the inheritance of the country of Homer, Sophocles, and Plato:--

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

And again, that philosophical truth felicitously imaged forth--

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

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

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FRAGMENTS OF AN UNFINISHED DRAMA.

[Published in part (lines 1-69, 100-120) by Mrs. Shelley, "Posthumous Poems", 1824; and again, with the notes, in "Poetical Works", 1839. Lines 127-238 were printed by Dr. Garnett under the title of "The Magic Plant" in his "Relics of Shelley", 1862. The whole was edited in its present form from the Boscombe manuscript by Mr. W.M. Rossetti in 1870 ("Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.", Moxon, 2 volumes.). 'Written at Pisa during the late winter or early spring of 1822' (Garnett).]

The following fragments are part of a Drama undertaken for the amusement of the individuals who composed our intimate society, but left unfinished. I have preserved a sketch of the story as far as it had been shadowed in the poet's mind.

An Enchantress, living in one of the islands of the Indian Archipelago, saves the life of a Pirate, a man of savage but noble nature. She becomes enamoured of him; and he, inconstant to his mortal love, for a while returns her passion; but at length, recalling the memory of her whom he left, and who laments his loss, he escapes from the Enchanted Island, and returns to his lady. His mode of life makes him again go to sea, and the Enchantress seizes the opportunity to bring him, by a spirit-brewed tempest, back to her Island. --[MRS. SHELLEY'S NOTE, 1839.]

SCENE.--BEFORE THE CAVERN OF THE INDIAN ENCHANTRESS.

THE ENCHANTRESS COMES FORTH.

ENCHANTRESS:

He came like a dream in the dawn of life,  
He fled like a shadow before its noon;  
He is gone, and my peace is turned to strife,  
And I wander and wane like the weary moon.  
O, sweet Echo, wake, \_5  
And for my sake  
Make answer the while my heart shall break!

But my heart has a music which Echo's lips,  
Though tender and true, yet can answer not,  
And the shadow that moves in the soul's eclipse \_10  
Can return not the kiss by his now forgot;  
Sweet lips! he who hath  
On my desolate path  
Cast the darkness of absence, worse than death!

NOTE:

\_8 my omitted 1824.

[THE ENCHANTRESS MAKES HER SPELL: SHE IS ANSWERED BY A SPIRIT.]

SPIRIT:

Within the silent centre of the earth \_15

My mansion is; where I have lived insphered  
From the beginning, and around my sleep  
Have woven all the wondrous imagery  
Of this dim spot, which mortals call the world;  
Infinite depths of unknown elements             \_20  
Massed into one impenetrable mask;  
Sheets of immeasurable fire, and veins  
Of gold and stone, and adamantine iron.  
And as a veil in which I walk through Heaven  
I have wrought mountains, seas, and waves, and clouds,         \_25  
And lastly light, whose interfusion dawns  
In the dark space of interstellar air.

NOTES:

\_15-\_27 Within...air. 1839; omitted 1824.

See these lines in "Posthumous Poems", 1824, page 209: "Song of a Spirit".

\_16 have 1839; omitted 1824, page 209.

\_25 seas, and waves 1824, page 209; seas, waves 1839.

[A good Spirit, who watches over the Pirate's fate, leads, in a mysterious manner, the lady of his love to the Enchanted Isle. She is accompanied by a Youth, who loves the lady, but whose passion she returns only with a sisterly affection. The ensuing scene takes place between them on their arrival at the Isle. [MRS. SHELLEY'S NOTE, 1839.]]

ANOTHER SCENE.

INDIAN YOUTH AND LADY.

INDIAN:

And, if my grief should still be dearer to me  
Than all the pleasures in the world beside,  
Why would you lighten it?--

NOTE:

\_29 pleasures]pleasure 1824.

LADY:

I offer only                                     \_30  
That which I seek, some human sympathy  
In this mysterious island.

INDIAN:

Oh! my friend,  
My sister, my beloved!--What do I say?  
My brain is dizzy, and I scarce know whether  
I speak to thee or her.

LADY:

Peace, perturbed heart!                     \_35  
I am to thee only as thou to mine,  
The passing wind which heals the brow at noon,

And may strike cold into the breast at night,  
Yet cannot linger where it soothes the most,  
Or long soothe could it linger.

INDIAN:

But you said \_40  
You also loved?

NOTE:

\_32- \_41 Assigned to INDIAN, 1824.

LADY:

Loved! Oh, I love. Methinks  
This word of love is fit for all the world,  
And that for gentle hearts another name  
Would speak of gentler thoughts than the world owns.  
I have loved.

INDIAN:

And thou lovest not? if so, \_45  
Young as thou art thou canst afford to weep.

LADY:

Oh! would that I could claim exemption  
From all the bitterness of that sweet name.  
I loved, I love, and when I love no more  
Let joys and grief perish, and leave despair \_50  
To ring the knell of youth. He stood beside me,  
The embodied vision of the brightest dream,  
Which like a dawn heralds the day of life;  
The shadow of his presence made my world  
A Paradise. All familiar things he touched, \_55  
All common words he spoke, became to me  
Like forms and sounds of a diviner world.  
He was as is the sun in his fierce youth,  
As terrible and lovely as a tempest;  
He came, and went, and left me what I am. \_60  
Alas! Why must I think how oft we two  
Have sate together near the river springs,  
Under the green pavilion which the willow  
Spreads on the floor of the unbroken fountain,  
Strewn, by the nurslings that linger there, \_65  
Over that islet paved with flowers and moss,  
While the musk-rose leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,  
Showered on us, and the dove mourned in the pine,  
Sad prophetess of sorrows not her own?  
The crane returned to her unfrozen haunt, \_70  
And the false cuckoo bade the spray good morn;  
And on a wintry bough the widowed bird,  
Hid in the deepest night of ivy-leaves,  
Renewed the vigils of a sleepless sorrow.  
I, left like her, and leaving one like her, \_75  
Alike abandoned and abandoning

(Oh! unlike her in this!) the gentlest youth,  
Whose love had made my sorrows dear to him,  
Even as my sorrow made his love to me!

NOTE:

\_71 spray Rossetti 1870, Woodberry; Spring Forman, Dowden.

INDIAN:

One curse of Nature stamps in the same mould                    \_80  
The features of the wretched; and they are  
As like as violet to violet,  
When memory, the ghost, their odours keeps  
Mid the cold relics of abandoned joy.--  
Proceed.

LADY:

He was a simple innocent boy.                                       \_85  
I loved him well, but not as he desired;  
Yet even thus he was content to be:--  
A short content, for I was--

INDIAN [ASIDE]:

God of Heaven!  
From such an islet, such a river-spring--!  
I dare not ask her if there stood upon it                         \_90  
A pleasure-dome surmounted by a crescent,  
With steps to the blue water.

[ALLOUD.]

It may be  
That Nature masks in life several copies  
Of the same lot, so that the sufferers  
May feel another's sorrow as their own,                         \_95  
And find in friendship what they lost in love.  
That cannot be: yet it is strange that we,  
From the same scene, by the same path to this  
Realm of abandonment-- But speak! your breath--  
Your breath is like soft music, your words are                   \_100  
The echoes of a voice which on my heart  
Sleeps like a melody of early days.  
But as you said--

LADY:

He was so awful, yet  
So beautiful in mystery and terror,  
Calming me as the loveliness of heaven                         \_105  
Soothes the unquiet sea:--and yet not so,  
For he seemed stormy, and would often seem  
A quenchless sun masked in portentous clouds;  
For such his thoughts, and even his actions were;  
But he was not of them, nor they of him,                         \_110  
But as they hid his splendour from the earth.  
Some said he was a man of blood and peril,  
And steeped in bitter infamy to the lips.

More need was there I should be innocent,  
More need that I should be most true and kind,                                 \_115  
And much more need that there should be found one  
To share remorse and scorn and solitude,  
And all the ills that wait on those who do  
The tasks of ruin in the world of life.  
He fled, and I have followed him.

INDIAN:

Such a one   \_120  
Is he who was the winter of my peace.  
But, fairest stranger, when didst thou depart  
From the far hills where rise the springs of India?  
How didst thou pass the intervening sea?

LADY:

If I be sure I am not dreaming now,                                 \_125  
I should not doubt to say it was a dream.  
Methought a star came down from heaven,  
And rested mid the plants of India,  
Which I had given a shelter from the frost  
Within my chamber. There the meteor lay,                                 \_130  
Panting forth light among the leaves and flowers,  
As if it lived, and was outworn with speed;  
Or that it loved, and passion made the pulse  
Of its bright life throb like an anxious heart,  
Till it diffused itself; and all the chamber                                 \_135  
And walls seemed melted into emerald fire  
That burned not; in the midst of which appeared  
A spirit like a child, and laughed aloud  
A thrilling peal of such sweet merriment  
As made the blood tingle in my warm feet:                                 \_140  
Then bent over a vase, and murmuring  
Low, unintelligible melodies,  
Placed something in the mould like melon-seeds,  
And slowly faded, and in place of it  
A soft hand issued from the veil of fire,                                 \_145  
Holding a cup like a magnolia flower,  
And poured upon the earth within the vase  
The element with which it overflowed,  
Brighter than morning light, and purer than  
The water of the springs of Himalah.                                 \_150

NOTE:

\_120-126 Such...dream 1839; omitted 1824.

INDIAN:

You waked not?

LADY:

Not until my dream became  
Like a child's legend on the tideless sand.  
Which the first foam erases half, and half



Leaves legible. At length I rose, and went,  
 Visiting my flowers from pot to pot, and thought     \_155  
 To set new cuttings in the empty urns,  
 And when I came to that beside the lattice,  
 I saw two little dark-green leaves  
 Lifting the light mould at their birth, and then  
 I half-remembered my forgotten dream.     \_160  
 And day by day, green as a gourd in June,  
 The plant grew fresh and thick, yet no one knew  
 What plant it was; its stem and tendrils seemed  
 Like emerald snakes, mottled and diamonded  
 With azure mail and streaks of woven silver;     \_165  
 And all the sheaths that folded the dark buds  
 Rose like the crest of cobra-di-capel,  
 Until the golden eye of the bright flower,  
 Through the dark lashes of those veined lids,  
 ...disencumbered of their silent sleep,     \_170  
 Gazed like a star into the morning light.  
 Its leaves were delicate, you almost saw  
 The pulses  
 With which the purple velvet flower was fed  
 To overflow, and like a poet's heart     \_175  
 Changing bright fancy to sweet sentiment,  
 Changed half the light to fragrance. It soon fell,  
 And to a green and dewy embryo-fruit  
 Left all its treasured beauty. Day by day  
 I nursed the plant, and on the double flute     \_180  
 Played to it on the sunny winter days  
 Soft melodies, as sweet as April rain  
 On silent leaves, and sang those words in which  
 Passion makes Echo taunt the sleeping strings;  
 And I would send tales of forgotten love     \_185  
 Late into the lone night, and sing wild songs  
 Of maids deserted in the olden time,  
 And weep like a soft cloud in April's bosom  
 Upon the sleeping eyelids of the plant,  
 So that perhaps it dreamed that Spring was come,     \_190  
 And crept abroad into the moonlight air,  
 And loosened all its limbs, as, noon by noon,  
 The sun averted less his oblique beam.

INDIAN:

And the plant died not in the frost?

LADY:

It grew;  
 And went out of the lattice which I left     \_195  
 Half open for it, trailing its quaint spires  
 Along the garden and across the lawn,  
 And down the slope of moss and through the tufts  
 Of wild-flower roots, and stumps of trees o'ergrown  
 With simple lichens, and old hoary stones,     \_200  
 On to the margin of the glassy pool,

Even to a nook of unblown violets  
And lilies-of-the-valley yet unborn,  
Under a pine with ivy overgrown.  
And there its fruit lay like a sleeping lizard                    \_205  
Under the shadows; but when Spring indeed  
Came to unsathe her infants, and the lilies  
Peeped from their bright green masks to wonder at  
This shape of autumn couched in their recess,  
Then it dilated, and it grew until                                   \_210  
One half lay floating on the fountain wave,  
Whose pulse, elapsed in unlike sympathies,  
Kept time  
Among the snowy water-lily buds.  
Its shape was such as summer melody                               \_215  
Of the south wind in spicy vales might give  
To some light cloud bound from the golden dawn  
To fairy isles of evening, and it seemed  
In hue and form that it had been a mirror  
Of all the hues and forms around it and                             \_220  
Upon it pictured by the sunny beams  
Which, from the bright vibrations of the pool,  
Were thrown upon the rafters and the roof  
Of boughs and leaves, and on the pillared stems  
Of the dark sylvan temple, and reflections                         \_225  
Of every infant flower and star of moss  
And veined leaf in the azure odorous air.  
And thus it lay in the Elysian calm  
Of its own beauty, floating on the line  
Which, like a film in purest space, divided                         \_230  
The heaven beneath the water from the heaven  
Above the clouds; and every day I went  
Watching its growth and wondering;  
And as the day grew hot, methought I saw  
A glassy vapour dancing on the pool,                                 \_235  
And on it little quaint and filmy shapes.  
With dizzy motion, wheel and rise and fall,  
Like clouds of gnats with perfect lineaments.

...

O friend, sleep was a veil uplift from Heaven--  
As if Heaven dawned upon the world of dream--                    \_240  
When darkness rose on the extinguished day  
Out of the eastern wilderness.

INDIAN:

I too  
Have found a moment's paradise in sleep  
Half compensate a hell of waking sorrow.

\*\*\*

CHARLES THE FIRST.

["Charles the First" was designed in 1818, begun towards the close of 1819 [Medwin, "Life", 2 page 62], resumed in January, and finally laid aside by June, 1822. It was published in part in the "Posthumous Poems", 1824, and printed, in its present form (with the addition of some 530 lines), by Mr. W.M. Rossetti, 1870. Further particulars are given in the Editor's Notes at the end of Volume 3.]

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

KING CHARLES I.

QUEEN HENRIETTA.

LAUD, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

WENTWORTH, EARL OF STRAFFORD.

LORD COTTINGTON.

LORD WESTON.

LORD COVENTRY.

WILLIAMS, BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

SECRETARY LYTTTELTON.

JUXON.

ST. JOHN.

ARCHY, THE COURT FOOL.

HAMPDEN.

PYM.

CROMWELL.

CROMWELL'S DAUGHTER.

SIR HARRY VANE THE YOUNGER.

LEIGHTON.

BASTWICK.

PRYNNE.

GENTLEMEN OF THE INNS OF COURT, CITIZENS, PURSUIVANTS,  
MARSHALSMEN, LAW STUDENTS, JUDGES, CLERK.

SCENE 1:

THE MASQUE OF THE INNS OF COURT.

A PURSUIVANT:

Place, for the Marshal of the Masque!

FIRST CITIZEN:

What thinkest thou of this quaint masque which turns,  
Like morning from the shadow of the night,  
The night to day, and London to a place  
Of peace and joy?

SECOND CITIZEN:

And Hell to Heaven.

\_5

Eight years are gone,

And they seem hours, since in this populous street

I trod on grass made green by summer's rain,

For the red plague kept state within that palace

Where now that vanity reigns. In nine years more

\_10

The roots will be refreshed with civil blood;  
And thank the mercy of insulted Heaven  
That sin and wrongs wound, as an orphan's cry,  
The patience of the great Avenger's ear.

NOTE:

\_10 now that vanity reigns 1870; now reigns vanity 1824.

A YOUTH:

Yet, father, 'tis a happy sight to see,                    \_15  
Beautiful, innocent, and unforbidden  
By God or man;--'tis like the bright procession  
Of skiey visions in a solemn dream  
From which men wake as from a Paradise,  
And draw new strength to tread the thorns of life.                    \_20  
If God be good, wherefore should this be evil?  
And if this be not evil, dost thou not draw  
Unseasonable poison from the flowers  
Which bloom so rarely in this barren world?  
Oh, kill these bitter thoughts which make the present                    \_25  
Dark as the future!--

...

When Avarice and Tyranny, vigilant Fear,  
And open-eyed Conspiracy lie sleeping  
As on Hell's threshold; and all gentle thoughts  
Waken to worship Him who giveth joys                                    \_30  
With His own gift.

SECOND CITIZEN:

How young art thou in this old age of time!  
How green in this gray world? Canst thou discern  
The signs of seasons, yet perceive no hint  
Of change in that stage-scene in which thou art                    \_35  
Not a spectator but an actor? or  
Art thou a puppet moved by [enginery]?  
The day that dawns in fire will die in storms,  
Even though the noon be calm. My travel's done,--  
Before the whirlwind wakes I shall have found                         \_40  
My inn of lasting rest; but thou must still  
Be journeying on in this inclement air.  
Wrap thy old cloak about thy back;  
Nor leave the broad and plain and beaten road,  
Although no flowers smile on the trodden dust,                         \_45  
For the violet paths of pleasure. This Charles the First  
Rose like the equinoctial sun, ...  
By vapours, through whose threatening ominous veil  
Darting his altered influence he has gained  
This height of noon--from which he must decline                         \_50  
Amid the darkness of conflicting storms,  
To dank extinction and to latest night...  
There goes

The apostate Strafford; he whose titles  
whispered aphorisms \_55  
From Machiavel and Bacon: and, if Judas  
Had been as brazen and as bold as he--

NOTES:

\_33-\_37 Canst...enginery 1870;  
Canst thou not think  
Of change in that low scene, in which thou art  
Not a spectator but an actor?... 1824.  
\_43-\_57 Wrap...bold as he 1870; omitted 1824.

FIRST CITIZEN:

That  
Is the Archbishop.

SECOND CITIZEN:

Rather say the Pope:  
London will be soon his Rome: he walks  
As if he trod upon the heads of men: \_60  
He looks elate, drunken with blood and gold;--  
Beside him moves the Babylonian woman  
Invisibly, and with her as with his shadow,  
Mitred adulterer! he is joined in sin,  
Which turns Heaven's milk of mercy to revenge. \_65

THIRD CITIZEN [LIFTING UP HIS EYES]:

Good Lord! rain it down upon him!...  
Amid her ladies walks the papist queen,  
As if her nice feet scorned our English earth.  
The Canaanitish Jezebel! I would be  
A dog if I might tear her with my teeth! \_70  
There's old Sir Henry Vane, the Earl of Pembroke,  
Lord Essex, and Lord Keeper Coventry,  
And others who make base their English breed  
By vile participation of their honours  
With papists, atheists, tyrants, and apostates. \_75  
When lawyers masque 'tis time for honest men  
To strip the vizard from their purposes.  
A seasonable time for masquers this!  
When Englishmen and Protestants should sit  
dust on their dishonoured heads \_80  
To avert the wrath of Him whose scourge is felt  
For the great sins which have drawn down from Heaven  
and foreign overthrow.  
The remnant of the martyred saints in Rochefort  
Have been abandoned by their faithless allies \_85  
To that idolatrous and adulterous torturer  
Lewis of France,--the Palatinate is lost--  
[ENTER LEIGHTON (WHO HAS BEEN BRANDED IN THE FACE) AND BASTWICK.]  
Canst thou be--art thou?

NOTE:

\_73 make 1824; made 1839.

LEIGHTON:

I WAS Leighton: what

I AM thou seest. And yet turn thine eyes,

And with thy memory look on thy friend's mind, \_90

Which is unchanged, and where is written deep

The sentence of my judge.

THIRD CITIZEN:

Are these the marks with which

Laud thinks to improve the image of his Maker

Stamped on the face of man? Curses upon him,

The impious tyrant!

SECOND CITIZEN:

It is said besides \_95

That lewd and papist drunkards may profane

The Sabbath with their

And has permitted that most heathenish custom

Of dancing round a pole dressed up with wreaths

On May-day. \_100

A man who thus twice crucifies his God

May well ... his brother.--In my mind, friend,

The root of all this ill is prelacy.

I would cut up the root.

THIRD CITIZEN:

And by what means?

SECOND CITIZEN:

Smiting each Bishop under the fifth rib. \_105

THIRD CITIZEN:

You seem to know the vulnerable place

Of these same crocodiles.

SECOND CITIZEN:

I learnt it in

Egyptian bondage, sir. Your worm of Nile

Betrays not with its flattering tears like they;

For, when they cannot kill, they whine and weep. \_110

Nor is it half so greedy of men's bodies

As they of soul and all; nor does it wallow

In slime as they in simony and lies

And close lusts of the flesh.

NOTE:

\_78-\_114 A seasonable...of the flesh 1870; omitted 1824.

\_108 bondage cj. Forman; bondages 1870.

A MARSHALSMAN:

Give place, give place!

You torch-bearers, advance to the great gate,                    \_115  
And then attend the Marshal of the Masque  
Into the Royal presence.

A LAW STUDENT:

What thinkest thou  
Of this quaint show of ours, my aged friend?  
Even now we see the redness of the torches  
Inflame the night to the eastward, and the clarions               \_120  
[Gasp?] to us on the wind's wave. It comes!  
And their sounds, floating hither round the pageant,  
Rouse up the astonished air.

NOTE:

\_119-\_123 Even now...air 1870; omitted 1824.

FIRST CITIZEN:

I will not think but that our country's wounds  
May yet be healed. The king is just and gracious,                 \_125  
Though wicked counsels now pervert his will:  
These once cast off--

SECOND CITIZEN:

As adders cast their skins  
And keep their venom, so kings often change;  
Councils and counsellors hang on one another,  
Hiding the loathsome   \_130  
Like the base patchwork of a leper's rags.

THE YOUTH:

Oh, still those dissonant thoughts!--List how the music  
Grows on the enchanted air! And see, the torches  
Restlessly flashing, and the crowd divided  
Like waves before an admiral's prow!

NOTE:

\_132 how the 1870; loud 1824.

A MARSHALSMAN:

Give place   \_135  
To the Marshal of the Masque!

A PURSUIVANT:

Room for the King!

NOTE:

\_136 A Pursuivant: Room for the King! 1870; omitted 1824.

THE YOUTH:

How glorious! See those thronging chariots  
Rolling, like painted clouds before the wind,  
Behind their solemn steeds: how some are shaped  
Like curved sea-shells dyed by the azure depths                 \_140

Of Indian seas; some like the new-born moon;  
And some like cars in which the Romans climbed  
(Canopied by Victory's eagle-wings outspread)  
The Capitolian--See how gloriously  
The mettled horses in the torchlight stir                    \_145  
Their gallant riders, while they check their pride,  
Like shapes of some diviner element  
Than English air, and beings nobler than  
The envious and admiring multitude.

NOTE:

\_138-40 Rolling...depths 1870;  
Rolling like painted clouds before the wind  
Some are  
Like curved shells, dyed by the azure depths 1824.

SECOND CITIZEN:

Ay, there they are--   \_150  
Nobles, and sons of nobles, patentees,  
Monopolists, and stewards of this poor farm,  
On whose lean sheep sit the prophetic crows,  
Here is the pomp that strips the houseless orphan,  
Here is the pride that breaks the desolate heart.               \_155  
These are the lilies glorious as Solomon,  
Who toil not, neither do they spin,--unless  
It be the webs they catch poor rogues withal.  
Here is the surfeit which to them who earn  
The niggard wages of the earth, scarce leaves                   \_160  
The tithe that will support them till they crawl  
Back to her cold hard bosom. Here is health  
Followed by grim disease, glory by shame,  
Waste by lame famine, wealth by squalid want,  
And England's sin by England's punishment.                   \_165  
And, as the effect pursues the cause foregone,  
Lo, giving substance to my words, behold  
At once the sign and the thing signified--  
A troop of cripples, beggars, and lean outcasts,               \_170  
Horsed upon stumbling jades, carted with dung,  
Dragged for a day from cellars and low cabins  
And rotten hiding-holes, to point the moral  
Of this presentment, and bring up the rear  
Of painted pomp with misery!

NOTES:

\_162 her 1870; its 1824.  
\_170 jades 1870; shapes 1824.  
\_173 presentment 1870; presentiment 1824.

THE YOUTH:

'Tis but  
The anti-masque, and serves as discords do                   \_175  
In sweetest music. Who would love May flowers  
If they succeeded not to Winter's flaw;



Or day unchanged by night; or joy itself  
Without the touch of sorrow?

SECOND CITIZEN:

I and thou-

A MARSHALSMAN:

Place, give place! \_180

NOTE:

\_179, \_180 I...place! 1870; omitted 1824.

SCENE 2:

A CHAMBER IN WHITEHALL.

ENTER THE KING, QUEEN, LAUD, LORD STRAFTORD,  
LORD COTTINGTON, AND OTHER LORDS; ARCHY;  
ALSO ST. JOHN, WITH SOME GENTLEMEN OF THE INNS OF COURT.

KING:

Thanks, gentlemen. I heartily accept  
This token of your service: your gay masque  
Was performed gallantly. And it shows well  
When subjects twine such flowers of [observance?]  
With the sharp thorns that deck the English crown. \_5  
A gentle heart enjoys what it confers,  
Even as it suffers that which it inflicts,  
Though Justice guides the stroke.  
Accept my hearty thanks.

NOTE:

\_3-9 And...thanks 1870; omitted 1824.

QUEEN:

And gentlemen,  
Call your poor Queen your debtor. Your quaint pageant \_10  
Rose on me like the figures of past years,  
Treading their still path back to infancy,  
More beautiful and mild as they draw nearer  
The quiet cradle. I could have almost wept  
To think I was in Paris, where these shows \_15  
Are well devised--such as I was ere yet  
My young heart shared a portion of the burthen,  
The careful weight, of this great monarchy.  
There, gentlemen, between the sovereign's pleasure  
And that which it regards, no clamour lifts \_20  
Its proud interposition.  
In Paris ribald censurers dare not move  
Their poisonous tongues against these sinless sports;  
And HIS smile  
Warms those who bask in it, as ours would do \_25  
If ... Take my heart's thanks: add them, gentlemen,  
To those good words which, were he King of France,

My royal lord would turn to golden deeds.

ST. JOHN:

Madam, the love of Englishmen can make  
The lightest favour of their lawful king                    \_30  
Outweigh a despot's.--We humbly take our leaves,  
Enriched by smiles which France can never buy.

[EXEUNT ST. JOHN AND THE GENTLEMEN OF THE INNS OF COURT.]

KING:

My Lord Archbishop,  
Mark you what spirit sits in St. John's eyes?  
Methinks it is too saucy for this presence.                    \_35

ARCHY:

Yes, pray your Grace look: for, like an unsophisticated [eye] sees  
everything upside down, you who are wise will discern the shadow of an  
idiot in lawn sleeves and a rochet setting springes to catch woodcocks  
in haymaking time. Poor Archy, whose owl-eyes are tempered to the  
error of his age, and because he is a fool, and by special ordinance  
of God forbidden ever to see himself as he is, sees now in that deep  
eye a blindfold devil sitting on the ball, and weighing words out  
between king and subjects. One scale is full of promises, and the  
other full of protestations: and then another devil creeps behind the  
first out of the dark windings [of a] pregnant lawyer's brain, and  
takes the bandage from the other's eyes, and throws a sword into the  
left-hand scale, for all the world like my Lord Essex's there.     \_48

STRAFFORD:

A rod in pickle for the Fool's back!

ARCHY:

Ay, and some are now smiling whose tears will make the brine; for the  
Fool sees--

STRAFFORD:

Insolent! You shall have your coat turned and be whipped out of the  
palace for this.    \_53

ARCHY:

When all the fools are whipped, and all the Protestant writers, while  
the knaves are whipping the fools ever since a thief was set to catch  
a thief. If all turncoats were whipped out of palaces, poor Archy  
would be disgraced in good company. Let the knaves whip the fools, and  
all the fools laugh at it. [Let the] wise and godly slit each other's  
noses and ears (having no need of any sense of discernment in their  
craft); and the knaves, to marshal them, join in a procession to  
Bedlam, to entreat the madmen to omit their sublime Platonic  
contemplations, and manage the state of England. Let all the honest  
men who lie [pinched?] up at the prisons or the pillories, in custody  
of the pursuivants of the High-Commission Court, marshal them.     \_65

NOTE:

\_64 pinched marked as doubtful by Rossetti.  
1870; Forman, Dowden; penned Woodberry.

[ENTER SECRETARY LYTTTELTON, WITH PAPERS.]

KING [LOOKING OVER THE PAPERS]:

These stiff Scots

His Grace of Canterbury must take order

To force under the Church's yoke.--You, Wentworth,

Shall be myself in Ireland, and shall add

Your wisdom, gentleness, and energy, \_70

To what in me were wanting.--My Lord Weston,

Look that those merchants draw not without loss

Their bullion from the Tower; and, on the payment

Of shipmoney, take fullest compensation

For violation of our royal forests, \_75

Whose limits, from neglect, have been o'ergrown

With cottages and cornfields. The uttermost

Farthing exact from those who claim exemption

From knighthood: that which once was a reward

Shall thus be made a punishment, that subjects \_80

May know how majesty can wear at will

The rugged mood.--My Lord of Coventry,

Lay my command upon the Courts below

That bail be not accepted for the prisoners

Under the warrant of the Star Chamber. \_85

The people shall not find the stubbornness

Of Parliament a cheap or easy method

Of dealing with their rightful sovereign:

And doubt not this, my Lord of Coventry,

We will find time and place for fit rebuke.-- \_90

My Lord of Canterbury.

NOTE:

\_22-90 In Paris...rebuke 1870; omitted 1824.

ARCHY:

The fool is here.

LAUD:

I crave permission of your Majesty

To order that this insolent fellow be

Chastised: he mocks the sacred character,

Scoffs at the state, and--

NOTE:

\_95 state 1870; stake 1824.

KING:

What, my Archy? \_95

He mocks and mimics all he sees and hears,

Yet with a quaint and graceful licence--Prithee

For this once do not as Prynne would, were he  
 Primate of England. With your Grace's leave,  
 He lives in his own world; and, like a parrot                     \_100  
 Hung in his gilded prison from the window  
 Of a queen's bower over the public way,  
 Blasphemes with a bird's mind:--his words, like arrows  
 Which know no aim beyond the archer's wit,  
 Strike sometimes what eludes philosophy.--                     \_105  
 [TO ARCHY.]  
 Go, sirrah, and repent of your offence  
 Ten minutes in the rain; be it your penance  
 To bring news how the world goes there.  
 [EXIT ARCHY.]  
 Poor Archy!  
 He weaves about himself a world of mirth  
 Out of the wreck of ours.   \_110

NOTES:

\_99 With your Grace's leave 1870; omitted 1824.  
 \_106-\_110 Go...ours spoken by THE QUEEN, 1824.

LAUD:

I take with patience, as my Master did,  
 All scoffs permitted from above.

KING:

My lord,  
 Pray overlook these papers. Archy's words  
 Had wings, but these have talons.

QUEEN:

And the lion  
 That wears them must be tamed. My dearest lord,                     \_115  
 I see the new-born courage in your eye  
 Armed to strike dead the Spirit of the Time,  
 Which spurs to rage the many-headed beast.  
 Do thou persist: for, faint but in resolve,  
 And it were better thou hadst still remained                     \_120  
 The slave of thine own slaves, who tear like curs  
 The fugitive, and flee from the pursuer;  
 And Opportunity, that empty wolf,  
 Flies at his throat who falls. Subdue thy actions  
 Even to the disposition of thy purpose,                     \_125  
 And be that tempered as the Ebro's steel;  
 And banish weak-eyed Mercy to the weak,  
 Whence she will greet thee with a gift of peace  
 And not betray thee with a traitor's kiss,  
 As when she keeps the company of rebels,                     \_130  
 Who think that she is Fear. This do, lest we  
 Should fall as from a glorious pinnacle  
 In a bright dream, and wake as from a dream  
 Out of our worshipped state.

NOTES:

\_116 your 1824; thine 1870.

\_118 Which...beast 1870; omitted 1824.

KING:

Beloved friend,

God is my witness that this weight of power, \_135

Which He sets me my earthly task to wield

Under His law, is my delight and pride

Only because thou lovest that and me.

For a king bears the office of a God

To all the under world; and to his God \_140

Alone he must deliver up his trust,

Unshorn of its permitted attributes.

[It seems] now as the baser elements

Had mutinied against the golden sun

That kindles them to harmony, and quells \_145

Their self-destroying rapine. The wild million

Strike at the eye that guides them; like as humours

Of the distempered body that conspire

Against the spirit of life throned in the heart,--

And thus become the prey of one another, \_150

And last of death--

STRAFFORD:

That which would be ambition in a subject

Is duty in a sovereign; for on him,

As on a keystone, hangs the arch of life,

Whose safety is its strength. Degree and form, \_155

And all that makes the age of reasoning man

More memorable than a beast's, depend on this--

That Right should fence itself inviolably

With Power; in which respect the state of England

From usurpation by the insolent commons \_160

Cries for reform.

Get treason, and spare treasure. Fee with coin

The loudest murmurers; feed with jealousies

Opposing factions,--be thyself of none;

And borrow gold of many, for those who lend \_165

Will serve thee till thou payest them; and thus

Keep the fierce spirit of the hour at bay,

Till time, and its coming generations

Of nights and days unborn, bring some one chance,

...

Or war or pestilence or Nature's self,-- \_170

By some distemperature or terrible sign,

Be as an arbiter betwixt themselves.

Nor let your Majesty

Doubt here the peril of the unseen event.

How did your brother Kings, coheritors \_175

In your high interest in the subject earth,

Rise past such troubles to that height of power  
Where now they sit, and awfully serene  
Smile on the trembling world? Such popular storms  
Philip the Second of Spain, this Lewis of France,                    \_180  
And late the German head of many bodies,  
And every petty lord of Italy,  
Quelled or by arts or arms. Is England poorer  
Or feebler? or art thou who wield'st her power  
Tamer than they? or shall this island be--                            \_185  
[Girdled] by its inviolable waters--  
To the world present and the world to come  
Sole pattern of extinguished monarchy?  
Not if thou dost as I would have thee do.

KING:

Your words shall be my deeds:    \_190  
You speak the image of my thought. My friend  
(If Kings can have a friend, I call thee so),  
Beyond the large commission which [belongs]  
Under the great seal of the realm, take this:  
And, for some obvious reasons, let there be                           \_195  
No seal on it, except my kingly word  
And honour as I am a gentleman.  
Be--as thou art within my heart and mind--  
Another self, here and in Ireland:  
Do what thou judgest well, take amplest licence,                    \_200  
And stick not even at questionable means.  
Hear me, Wentworth. My word is as a wall  
Between thee and this world thine enemy--  
That hates thee, for thou lovest me.

STRAFFORD:

I own  
No friend but thee, no enemies but thine:                            \_205  
Thy lightest thought is my eternal law.  
How weak, how short, is life to pay--

KING:

Peace, peace.  
Thou ow'st me nothing yet.  
[TO LAUD.]  
My lord, what say  
Those papers?

LAUD:

Your Majesty has ever interposed,                                    \_210  
In lenity towards your native soil,  
Between the heavy vengeance of the Church  
And Scotland. Mark the consequence of warming  
This brood of northern vipers in your bosom.  
The rabble, instructed no doubt                                        \_215  
By London, Lindsay, Hume, and false Argyll  
(For the waves never menace heaven until

Scourged by the wind's invisible tyranny),  
 Have in the very temple of the Lord  
 Done outrage to His chosen ministers. \_220  
 They scorn the liturgy of the Holy Church,  
 Refuse to obey her canons, and deny  
 The apostolic power with which the Spirit  
 Has filled its elect vessels, even from him  
 Who held the keys with power to loose and bind, \_225  
 To him who now pleads in this royal presence.--  
 Let ample powers and new instructions be  
 Sent to the High Commissioners in Scotland.  
 To death, imprisonment, and confiscation,  
 Add torture, add the ruin of the kindred \_230  
 Of the offender, add the brand of infamy,  
 Add mutilation: and if this suffice not,  
 Unleash the sword and fire, that in their thirst  
 They may lick up that scum of schismatics.  
 I laugh at those weak rebels who, desiring \_235  
 What we possess, still prate of Christian peace,  
 As if those dreadful arbitrating messengers  
 Which play the part of God 'twixt right and wrong,  
 Should be let loose against the innocent sleep  
 Of templed cities and the smiling fields, \_240  
 For some poor argument of policy  
 Which touches our own profit or our pride  
 (Where it indeed were Christian charity  
 To turn the cheek even to the smiter's hand):  
 And, when our great Redeemer, when our God, \_245  
 When He who gave, accepted, and retained  
 Himself in propitiation of our sins,  
 Is scorned in His immediate ministry,  
 With hazard of the inestimable loss  
 Of all the truth and discipline which is \_250  
 Salvation to the extremest generation  
 Of men innumerable, they talk of peace!  
 Such peace as Canaan found, let Scotland now:  
 For, by that Christ who came to bring a sword,  
 Not peace, upon the earth, and gave command \_255  
 To His disciples at the Passover  
 That each should sell his robe and buy a sword,-  
 Once strip that minister of naked wrath,  
 And it shall never sleep in peace again  
 Till Scotland bend or break.

NOTES:

- \_134- \_232 Beloved...mutilation 1870; omitted 1824.
- \_237 arbitrating messengers 1870; messengers of wrath 1824.
- \_239 the 1870; omitted 1524.
- \_243- \_244 Parentheses inserted 1870.
- \_246, \_247 When He...sins 1870; omitted 1824.
- \_248 ministry 1870; ministers 1824.
- \_249-52 With...innumerable 1870; omitted 1824.

KING:

My Lord Archbishop, \_260  
Do what thou wilt and what thou canst in this.  
Thy earthly even as thy heavenly King  
Gives thee large power in his unquiet realm.  
But we want money, and my mind misgives me  
That for so great an enterprise, as yet, \_265  
We are unfurnished.

STRAFFORD:

Yet it may not long  
Rest on our wills.

COTTINGTON:

The expenses  
Of gathering shipmoney, and of distraining  
For every petty rate (for we encounter  
A desperate opposition inch by inch \_270  
In every warehouse and on every farm),  
Have swallowed up the gross sum of the imposts;  
So that, though felt as a most grievous scourge  
Upon the land, they stand us in small stead  
As touches the receipt.

STRAFFORD:

'Tis a conclusion \_275  
Most arithmetical: and thence you infer  
Perhaps the assembling of a parliament.  
Now, if a man should call his dearest enemies  
To sit in licensed judgement on his life,  
His Majesty might wisely take that course. \_280

[ASIDE TO COTTINGTON.]

It is enough to expect from these lean imposts  
That they perform the office of a scourge,  
Without more profit.

[ALLOUD.]

Fines and confiscations,  
And a forced loan from the refractory city,  
Will fill our coffers: and the golden love \_285  
Of loyal gentlemen and noble friends  
For the worshipped father of our common country,  
With contributions from the catholics,  
Will make Rebellion pale in our excess.  
Be these the expedients until time and wisdom \_290  
Shall frame a settled state of government.

LAUD:

And weak expedients they! Have we not drained  
All, till the ... which seemed  
A mine exhaustless?

STRAFFORD:

And the love which IS,



If loyal hearts could turn their blood to gold. \_295

LAUD:

Both now grow barren: and I speak it not  
As loving parliaments, which, as they have been  
In the right hand of bold bad mighty kings  
The scourges of the bleeding Church, I hate.  
Methinks they scarcely can deserve our fear. \_300

STRAFFORD:

Oh! my dear liege, take back the wealth thou gavest:  
With that, take all I held, but as in trust  
For thee, of mine inheritance: leave me but  
This unprovided body for thy service,  
And a mind dedicated to no care \_305  
Except thy safety:--but assemble not  
A parliament. Hundreds will bring, like me,  
Their fortunes, as they would their blood, before--

KING:

No! thou who judgest them art but one. Alas!  
We should be too much out of love with Heaven, \_310  
Did this vile world show many such as thee,  
Thou perfect, just, and honourable man!  
Never shall it be said that Charles of England  
Stripped those he loved for fear of those he scorns;  
Nor will he so much misbecome his throne \_315  
As to impoverish those who most adorn  
And best defend it. That you urge, dear Strafford,  
Inclines me rather--

QUEEN:

To a parliament?  
Is this thy firmness? and thou wilt preside  
Over a knot of ... censurers, \_320  
To the unswearing of thy best resolves,  
And choose the worst, when the worst comes too soon?  
Plight not the worst before the worst must come.  
Oh, wilt thou smile whilst our ribald foes,  
Dressed in their own usurped authority, \_325  
Sharpen their tongues on Henrietta's fame?  
It is enough! Thou lovest me no more!  
[WEEPS.]

KING:

Oh, Henrietta!

[THEY TALK APART.]

COTTINGTON [TO LAUD]:

Money we have none:  
And all the expedients of my Lord of Strafford  
Will scarcely meet the arrears.

LAUD:

Without delay \_330  
An army must be sent into the north;  
Followed by a Commission of the Church,  
With amplest power to quench in fire and blood,  
And tears and terror, and the pity of hell,  
The intenser wrath of Heresy. God will give \_335  
Victory; and victory over Scotland give  
The lion England tamed into our hands.  
That will lend power, and power bring gold.

COTTINGTON:

Meanwhile  
We must begin first where your Grace leaves off.  
Gold must give power, or--

LAUD:

I am not averse \_340  
From the assembling of a parliament.  
Strong actions and smooth words might teach them soon  
The lesson to obey. And are they not  
A bubble fashioned by the monarch's mouth,  
The birth of one light breath? If they serve no purpose, \_345  
A word dissolves them.

STRAFFORD:

The engine of parliaments  
Might be deferred until I can bring over  
The Irish regiments: they will serve to assure  
The issue of the war against the Scots.  
And, this game won--which if lost, all is lost-- \_350  
Gather these chosen leaders of the rebels,  
And call them, if you will, a parliament.

KING:

Oh, be our feet still tardy to shed blood.  
Guilty though it may be! I would still spare  
The stubborn country of my birth, and ward \_355  
From countenances which I loved in youth  
The wrathful Church's lacerating hand.  
[TO LAUD.]  
Have you o'erlooked the other articles?

[ENTER ARCHY.]

LAUD:

Hazlerig, Hampden, Pym, young Harry Vane,  
Cromwell, and other rebels of less note, \_360  
Intend to sail with the next favouring wind  
For the Plantations.

ARCHY:

Where they think to found  
A commonwealth like Gonzalo's in the play,  
Gynaecocoenic and pantisocratic.

NOTE:

\_363 Gonzalo's 1870; Gonzaga Boscombe manuscript.

KING:

What's that, sirrah?

ARCHY:

New devil's politics. \_365

Hell is the pattern of all commonwealths:

Lucifer was the first republican.

Will you hear Merlin's prophecy, how three [posts?]

'In one brainless skull, when the whitethorn is full,

Shall sail round the world, and come back again: \_370

Shall sail round the world in a brainless skull,

And come back again when the moon is at full:'--

When, in spite of the Church,

They will hear homilies of whatever length

Or form they please. \_375

[COTTINGTON?]:

So please your Majesty to sign this order

For their detention.

ARCHY:

If your Majesty were tormented night and day by fever, gout,  
rheumatism, and stone, and asthma, etc., and you found these diseases  
had secretly entered into a conspiracy to abandon you, should you  
think it necessary to lay an embargo on the port by which they meant  
to dispeople your unquiet kingdom of man? \_383

KING:

If fear were made for kings, the Fool mocks wisely;

But in this case--[WRITING]. Here, my lord, take the warrant,

And see it duly executed forthwith.--

That imp of malice and mockery shall be punished. \_387

[EXEUNT ALL BUT KING, QUEEN, AND ARCHY.]

ARCHY:

Ay, I am the physician of whom Plato prophesied, who was to be accused  
by the confectioner before a jury of children, who found him guilty  
without waiting for the summing-up, and hanged him without benefit of  
clergy. Thus Baby Charles, and the Twelfth-night Queen of Hearts, and  
the overgrown schoolboy Cottington, and that little urchin Laud--who  
would reduce a verdict of 'guilty, death,' by famine, if it were  
impregnable by composition--all impannelled against poor Archy for  
presenting them bitter physic the last day of the holidays. \_397

QUEEN:

Is the rain over, sirrah?

KING:

When it rains

And the sun shines, 'twill rain again to-morrow:

And therefore never smile till you've done crying.                    \_400

ARCHY:

But 'tis all over now: like the April anger of woman, the gentle sky  
has wept itself serene.

QUEEN:

What news abroad? how looks the world this morning?

ARCHY:

Gloriously as a grave covered with virgin flowers. There's a rainbow  
in the sky. Let your Majesty look at it, for

'A rainbow in the morning    \_407

Is the shepherd's warning;

and the flocks of which you are the pastor are scattered among the  
mountain-tops, where every drop of water is a flake of snow, and the  
breath of May pierces like a January blast.                                \_411

KING:

The sheep have mistaken the wolf for their shepherd, my poor boy; and  
the shepherd, the wolves for their watchdogs.

QUEEN:

But the rainbow was a good sign, Archy: it says that the waters of the  
deluge are gone, and can return no more.

ARCHY:

Ay, the salt-water one: but that of tears and blood must yet come  
down, and that of fire follow, if there be any truth in lies.--The  
rainbow hung over the city with all its shops,...and churches, from  
north to south, like a bridge of congregated lightning pieced by the  
masonry of heaven--like a balance in which the angel that distributes  
the coming hour was weighing that heavy one whose poise is now felt in  
the lightest hearts, before it bows the proudest heads under the  
meanest feet.    \_424

QUEEN:

Who taught you this trash, sirrah?

ARCHY:

A torn leaf out of an old book trampled in the dirt.--But for the  
rainbow. It moved as the sun moved, and...until the top of the  
Tower...of a cloud through its left-hand tip, and Lambeth Palace look  
as dark as a rock before the other. Methought I saw a crown figured  
upon one tip, and a mitre on the other. So, as I had heard treasures  
were found where the rainbow quenches its points upon the earth, I set

off, and at the Tower-- But I shall not tell your Majesty what I found close to the closet-window on which the rainbow had glimmered.

KING:

Speak: I will make my Fool my conscience. \_435

ARCHY:

Then conscience is a fool.--I saw there a cat caught in a rat-trap. I heard the rats squeak behind the wainscots: it seemed to me that the very mice were consulting on the manner of her death.

QUEEN:

Archy is shrewd and bitter.

ARCHY:

Like the season, \_440  
So blow the winds.--But at the other end of the rainbow, where the gray rain was tempered along the grass and leaves by a tender interfusion of violet and gold in the meadows beyond Lambeth, what think you that I found instead of a mitre?

KING:

Vane's wits perhaps. \_445

ARCHY:

Something as vain. I saw a gross vapour hovering in a stinking ditch over the carcass of a dead ass, some rotten rags, and broken dishes--the wrecks of what once administered to the stuffing-out and the ornament of a worm of worms. His Grace of Canterbury expects to enter the New Jerusalem some Palm Sunday in triumph on the ghost of this ass. \_451

QUEEN:

Enough, enough! Go desire Lady Jane  
She place my lute, together with the music  
Mari received last week from Italy,  
In my boudoir, and--

[EXIT ARCHY.]

KING:

I'll go in.

NOTE:

\_254- \_455 For by...I'll go in 1870; omitted 1824.

QUEEN:

MY beloved lord, \_455  
Have you not noted that the Fool of late  
Has lost his careless mirth, and that his words  
Sound like the echoes of our saddest fears?  
What can it mean? I should be loth to think  
Some factious slave had tutored him.

KING:

Oh, no! \_460  
He is but Occasion's pupil. Partly 'tis  
That our minds piece the vacant intervals  
Of his wild words with their own fashioning,--  
As in the imagery of summer clouds,  
Or coals of the winter fire, idlers find \_465  
The perfect shadows of their teeming thoughts:  
And partly, that the terrors of the time  
Are sown by wandering Rumour in all spirits;  
And in the lightest and the least, may best  
Be seen the current of the coming wind. \_470

NOTES:

\_460, \_461 Oh...pupil 1870; omitted 1824.

\_461 Partly 'tis 1870; It partly is 1824.

\_465 of 1870; in 1824.

QUEEN:

Your brain is overwrought with these deep thoughts.  
Come, I will sing to you; let us go try  
These airs from Italy; and, as we pass  
The gallery, we'll decide where that Correggio  
Shall hang--the Virgin Mother \_475  
With her child, born the King of heaven and earth,  
Whose reign is men's salvation. And you shall see  
A cradled miniature of yourself asleep,  
Stamped on the heart by never-erring love;  
Liker than any Vandyke ever made, \_480  
A pattern to the unborn age of thee,  
Over whose sweet beauty I have wept for joy  
A thousand times, and now should weep for sorrow,  
Did I not think that after we were dead  
Our fortunes would spring high in him, and that \_485  
The cares we waste upon our heavy crown  
Would make it light and glorious as a wreath  
Of Heaven's beams for his dear innocent brow.

NOTE:

\_473-477 and, as...salvation 1870; omitted 1824.

KING:

Dear Henrietta!

SCENE 3:

THE STAR CHAMBER.

LAUD, JUXON, STRAFFORD, AND OTHERS, AS JUDGES.

PRYNNE AS A PRISONER, AND THEN BASTWICK.

LAUD:

Bring forth the prisoner Bastwick: let the clerk

Recite his sentence.

CLERK:

'That he pay five thousand  
Pounds to the king, lose both his ears, be branded  
With red-hot iron on the cheek and forehead,  
And be imprisoned within Lancaster Castle                    \_5  
During the pleasure of the Court.'

LAUD:

Prisoner,  
If you have aught to say wherefore this sentence  
Should not be put into effect, now speak.

JUXON:

If you have aught to plead in mitigation,  
Speak.

BASTWICK:

Thus, my lords. If, like the prelates, I                                 \_10  
Were an invader of the royal power  
A public scorner of the word of God,  
Profane, idolatrous, popish, superstitious,  
Impious in heart and in tyrannic act,  
Void of wit, honesty, and temperance;                                 \_15  
If Satan were my lord, as theirs,--our God  
Pattern of all I should avoid to do;  
Were I an enemy of my God and King  
And of good men, as ye are;--I should merit  
Your fearful state and guilt prosperity,                                 \_20  
Which, when ye wake from the last sleep, shall turn  
To cowls and robes of everlasting fire.  
But, as I am, I bid ye grudge me not  
The only earthly favour ye can yield,  
Or I think worth acceptance at your hands,--                         \_25  
Scorn, mutilation, and imprisonment.  
even as my Master did,  
Until Heaven's kingdom shall descend on earth,  
Or earth be like a shadow in the light  
Of Heaven absorbed--some few tumultuous years                         \_30  
Will pass, and leave no wreck of what opposes  
His will whose will is power.

NOTE:

\_27-\_32 even...power printed as a fragment, Garnett, 1862; inserted  
here conjecturally, Rossetti, 1870.

LAUD:

Officer, take the prisoner from the bar,  
And be his tongue slit for his insolence.

BASTWICK:

While this hand holds a pen--

LAUD:

Be his hands--

JUXON:

Stop! \_35  
Forbear, my lord! The tongue, which now can speak  
No terror, would interpret, being dumb,  
Heaven's thunder to our harm;...  
And hands, which now write only their own shame,  
With bleeding stumps might sign our blood away. \_40

LAUD:

Much more such 'mercy' among men would be,  
Did all the ministers of Heaven's revenge  
Flinch thus from earthly retribution. I  
Could suffer what I would inflict.  
[EXIT BASTWICK GUARDED.]  
Bring up  
The Lord Bishop of Lincoln.--  
[TO STRATFORD.]  
Know you not \_45  
That, in distraining for ten thousand pounds  
Upon his books and furniture at Lincoln,  
Were found these scandalous and seditious letters  
Sent from one Osbaldistone, who is fled?  
I speak it not as touching this poor person; \_50  
But of the office which should make it holy,  
Were it as vile as it was ever spotless.  
Mark too, my lord, that this expression strikes  
His Majesty, if I misinterpret not.

[ENTER BISHOP WILLIAMS GUARDED.]

STRAFFORD:

'Twere politic and just that Williams taste \_55  
The bitter fruit of his connection with  
The schismatics. But you, my Lord Archbishop,  
Who owed your first promotion to his favour,  
Who grew beneath his smile--

LAUD:

Would therefore beg  
The office of his judge from this High Court,-- \_60  
That it shall seem, even as it is, that I,  
In my assumption of this sacred robe,  
Have put aside all worldly preference,  
All sense of all distinction of all persons,  
All thoughts but of the service of the Church.-- \_65  
Bishop of Lincoln!

WILLIAMS:

Peace, proud hierarch!



I know my sentence, and I own it just.  
Thou wilt repay me less than I deserve,  
In stretching to the utmost

...

NOTE:

Scene 3. \_1- \_69 Bring...utmost 1870; omitted 1824.

SCENE 4:

HAMPDEN, PYM, CROMWELL, HIS DAUGHTER, AND YOUNG SIR HARRY VANE.

HAMPDEN:

England, farewell! thou, who hast been my cradle,  
Shalt never be my dungeon or my grave!  
I held what I inherited in thee  
As pawn for that inheritance of freedom  
Which thou hast sold for thy despoiler's smile:                    \_5  
How can I call thee England, or my country?--  
Does the wind hold?

VANE:

The vanes sit steady  
Upon the Abbey towers. The silver lightnings  
Of the evening star, spite of the city's smoke,  
Tell that the north wind reigns in the upper air.                    \_10  
Mark too that flock of fleecy-winged clouds  
Sailing athwart St. Margaret's.

NOTE:

\_11 flock 1824; fleet 1870.

HAMPDEN:

Hail, fleet herald  
Of tempest! that rude pilot who shall guide  
Hearts free as his, to realms as pure as thee,  
Beyond the shot of tyranny,    \_15  
Beyond the webs of that swoln spider...  
Beyond the curses, calumnies, and [lies?]  
Of atheist priests! ... And thou  
Fair star, whose beam lies on the wide Atlantic,  
Athwart its zones of tempest and of calm,                                \_20  
Bright as the path to a beloved home  
Oh, light us to the isles of the evening land!  
Like floating Edens cradled in the glimmer  
Of sunset, through the distant mist of years  
Touched by departing hope, they gleam! lone regions,                \_25  
Where Power's poor dupes and victims yet have never  
Propitiated the savage fear of kings  
With purest blood of noblest hearts; whose dew  
Is yet unstained with tears of those who wake  
To weep each day the wrongs on which it dawns;                        \_30

Whose sacred silent air owns yet no echo  
Of formal blasphemies; nor impious rites  
Wrest man's free worship, from the God who loves,  
To the poor worm who envies us His love!  
Receive, thou young ... of Paradise.                    \_35  
These exiles from the old and sinful world!

...

This glorious clime, this firmament, whose lights  
Dart mitigated influence through their veil  
Of pale blue atmosphere; whose tears keep green  
The pavement of this moist all-feeding earth;                    \_40  
This vaporous horizon, whose dim round  
Is bastioned by the circumfluous sea,  
Repelling invasion from the sacred towers,  
Presses upon me like a dungeon's grate,  
A low dark roof, a damp and narrow wall.                    \_45  
The boundless universe  
Becomes a cell too narrow for the soul  
That owns no master; while the loathliest ward  
Of this wide prison, England, is a nest  
Of cradling peace built on the mountain tops,--                    \_50  
To which the eagle spirits of the free,  
Which range through heaven and earth, and scorn the storm  
Of time, and gaze upon the light of truth,  
Return to brood on thoughts that cannot die  
And cannot be repelled.    \_55  
Like eaglets floating in the heaven of time,  
They soar above their quarry, and shall stoop  
Through palaces and temples thunderproof.

#### NOTES:

- \_13 rude 1870; wild 1824.
- \_16-18 Beyond...priests 1870; omitted 1824.
- \_25 Touched 1870; Tinged 1824.
- \_34 To the poor 1870; Towards the 1824.
- \_38 their 1870; the 1824.
- \_46 boundless 1870; mighty 1824.
- \_48 owns no 1824; owns a 1870. ward 1870; spot 1824.
- \_50 cradling 1870; cradled 1824.
- \_54, \_55 Return...repelled 1870;  
Return to brood over the [ ] thoughts  
That cannot die, and may not be repelled 1824.
- \_56-58 Like...thunderproof 1870; omitted 1824.

#### SCENE 5:

#### ARCHY:

I'll go live under the ivy that overgrows the terrace, and count the  
tears shed on its old [roots?] as the [wind?] plays the song of

'A widow bird sate mourning  
Upon a wintry bough.' \_5  
[SINGS]

Heigho! the lark and the owl!  
One flies the morning, and one lulls the night:--  
Only the nightingale, poor fond soul,  
Sings like the fool through darkness and light.

'A widow bird sate mourning for her love \_10  
Upon a wintry bough;  
The frozen wind crept on above,  
The freezing stream below.

There was no leaf upon the forest bare.  
No flower upon the ground, \_15  
And little motion in the air  
Except the mill-wheel's sound.'

NOTE:

Scene 5. \_1- \_9 I'll...light 1870; omitted 1824.

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THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE.

[Composed at Lerici on the Gulf of Spezzia in the spring and early summer of 1822--the poem on which Shelley was engaged at the time of his death. Published by Mrs. Shelley in the "Posthumous Poems" of 1824, pages 73-95. Several emendations, the result of Dr. Garnett's examination of the Boscombe manuscript, were given to the world by Miss Mathilde Blind, "Westminster Review", July, 1870. The poem was, of course, included in the "Poetical Works", 1839, both editions. See Editor's Notes.]

Swift as a spirit hastening to his task  
Of glory and of good, the Sun sprang forth  
Rejoicing in his splendour, and the mask

Of darkness fell from the awakened Earth--  
The smokeless altars of the mountain snows \_5  
Flamed above crimson clouds, and at the birth

Of light, the Ocean's orison arose,  
To which the birds tempered their matin lay.  
All flowers in field or forest which unclose

Their trembling eyelids to the kiss of day, \_10  
Swinging their censers in the element,  
With orient incense lit by the new ray

Burned slow and unconsumably, and sent  
Their odorous sighs up to the smiling air;

And, in succession due, did continent, \_15

Isle, ocean, and all things that in them wear  
The form and character of mortal mould,  
Rise as the Sun their father rose, to bear

Their portion of the toil, which he of old  
Took as his own, and then imposed on them: \_20  
But I, whom thoughts which must remain untold

Had kept as wakeful as the stars that gem  
The cone of night, now they were laid asleep  
Stretched my faint limbs beneath the hoary stem

Which an old chestnut flung athwart the steep \_25  
Of a green Apennine: before me fled  
The night; behind me rose the day; the deep

Was at my feet, and Heaven above my head,--  
When a strange trance over my fancy grew  
Which was not slumber, for the shade it spread \_30

Was so transparent, that the scene came through  
As clear as when a veil of light is drawn  
O'er evening hills they glimmer; and I knew

That I had felt the freshness of that dawn  
Bathe in the same cold dew my brow and hair, \_35  
And sate as thus upon that slope of lawn

Under the self-same bough, and heard as there  
The birds, the fountains and the ocean hold  
Sweet talk in music through the enamoured air,  
And then a vision on my train was rolled. \_40

...

As in that trance of wondrous thought I lay,  
This was the tenour of my waking dream:--  
Methought I sate beside a public way

Thick strewn with summer dust, and a great stream  
Of people there was hurrying to and fro, \_45  
Numerous as gnats upon the evening gleam,

All hastening onward, yet none seemed to know  
Whither he went, or whence he came, or why  
He made one of the multitude, and so

Was borne amid the crowd, as through the sky \_50  
One of the million leaves of summer's bier;  
Old age and youth, manhood and infancy,

Mixed in one mighty torrent did appear,  
Some flying from the thing they feared, and some  
Seeking the object of another's fear;                    \_55

And others, as with steps towards the tomb,  
Pored on the trodden worms that crawled beneath,  
And others mournfully within the gloom

Of their own shadow walked, and called it death;  
And some fled from it as it were a ghost,             \_60  
Half fainting in the affliction of vain breath:

But more, with motions which each other crossed,  
Pursued or shunned the shadows the clouds threw,  
Or birds within the noonday aether lost,

Upon that path where flowers never grew,--  
And, weary with vain toil and faint for thirst,  
Heard not the fountains, whose melodious dew

Out of their mossy cells forever burst;  
Nor felt the breeze which from the forest told  
Of grassy paths and wood-lawns interspersed             \_70

With overarching elms and caverns cold,  
And violet banks where sweet dreams brood, but they  
Pursued their serious folly as of old.

And as I gazed, methought that in the way  
The throng grew wilder, as the woods of June             \_75  
When the south wind shakes the extinguished day,

And a cold glare, intenser than the noon,  
But icy cold, obscured with blinding light  
The sun, as he the stars. Like the young moon--

When on the sunlit limits of the night                     \_80  
Her white shell trembles amid crimson air,  
And whilst the sleeping tempest gathers might--

Doth, as the herald of its coming, bear  
The ghost of its dead mother, whose dim form  
Bends in dark aether from her infant's chair,--             \_85

So came a chariot on the silent storm  
Of its own rushing splendour, and a Shape  
So sate within, as one whom years deform,

Beneath a dusky hood and double cape,  
Crouching within the shadow of a tomb;             \_90  
And o'er what seemed the head a cloud-like crape

Was bent, a dun and faint aethereal gloom

Tempering the light. Upon the chariot-beam  
A Janus-visaged Shadow did assume

The guidance of that wonder-winged team;                     \_95  
The shapes which drew it in thick lightnings  
Were lost:--I heard alone on the air's soft stream

The music of their ever-moving wings.  
All the four faces of that Charioteer  
Had their eyes banded; little profit brings                     \_100

Speed in the van and blindness in the rear,  
Nor then avail the beams that quench the sun,--  
Or that with banded eyes could pierce the sphere

Of all that is, has been or will be done;  
So ill was the car guided--but it passed                     \_105  
With solemn speed majestically on.

The crowd gave way, and I arose aghast,  
Or seemed to rise, so mighty was the trance,  
And saw, like clouds upon the thunder-blast,

The million with fierce song and maniac dance                     \_110  
Raging around--such seemed the jubilee  
As when to greet some conqueror's advance

Imperial Rome poured forth her living sea  
From senate-house, and forum, and theatre,  
When ... upon the free   \_115

Had bound a yoke, which soon they stooped to bear.  
Nor wanted here the just similitude  
Of a triumphal pageant, for where'er

The chariot rolled, a captive multitude  
Was driven;--all those who had grown old in power                     \_120  
Or misery,--all who had their age subdued

By action or by suffering, and whose hour  
Was drained to its last sand in weal or woe,  
So that the trunk survived both fruit and flower;--

All those whose fame or infamy must grow                     \_125  
Till the great winter lay the form and name  
Of this green earth with them for ever low;--

All but the sacred few who could not tame  
Their spirits to the conquerors--but as soon  
As they had touched the world with living flame,                     \_130

Fled back like eagles to their native noon,  
Or those who put aside the diadem

Of earthly thrones or gems...

Were there, of Athens or Jerusalem.  
Were neither mid the mighty captives seen,                    \_135  
Nor mid the ribald crowd that followed them,

Nor those who went before fierce and obscene.  
The wild dance maddens in the van, and those  
Who lead it--fleet as shadows on the green,

Outspeed the chariot, and without repose                    \_140  
Mix with each other in tempestuous measure  
To savage music, wilder as it grows,

They, tortured by their agonizing pleasure,  
Convulsed and on the rapid whirlwinds spun  
Of that fierce Spirit, whose unholy leisure                   \_145

Was soothed by mischief since the world begun,  
Throw back their heads and loose their streaming hair;  
And in their dance round her who dims the sun,

Maidens and youths fling their wild arms in air  
As their feet twinkle; they recede, and now                   \_150  
Bending within each other's atmosphere,

Kindle invisibly--and as they glow,  
Like moths by light attracted and repelled,  
Oft to their bright destruction come and go,

Till like two clouds into one vale impelled,               \_155  
That shake the mountains when their lightnings mingle  
And die in rain--the fiery band which held

Their natures, snaps--while the shock still may tingle  
One falls and then another in the path  
Senseless--nor is the desolation single,                   \_160

Yet ere I can say WHERE--the chariot hath  
Passed over them--nor other trace I find  
But as of foam after the ocean's wrath

Is spent upon the desert shore;--behind,  
Old men and women foully disarrayed,                   \_165  
Shake their gray hairs in the insulting wind,

And follow in the dance, with limbs decayed,  
Seeking to reach the light which leaves them still  
Farther behind and deeper in the shade.

But not the less with impotence of will                   \_170  
They wheel, though ghastly shadows interpose  
Round them and round each other, and fulfil

Their work, and in the dust from whence they rose  
Sink, and corruption veils them as they lie,  
And past in these performs what ... in those.                    \_175

Struck to the heart by this sad pageantry,  
Half to myself I said--'And what is this?  
Whose shape is that within the car? And why--'

I would have added--'is all here amiss?--'  
But a voice answered--'Life!--I turned, and knew                    \_180  
(O Heaven, have mercy on such wretchedness!)

That what I thought was an old root which grew  
To strange distortion out of the hill side,  
Was indeed one of those deluded crew,

And that the grass, which methought hung so wide                    \_185  
And white, was but his thin discoloured hair,  
And that the holes he vainly sought to hide,

Were or had been eyes:--'If thou canst forbear  
To join the dance, which I had well forborne,'  
Said the grim Feature, of my thought aware,                    \_190

'I will unfold that which to this deep scorn  
Led me and my companions, and relate  
The progress of the pageant since the morn;

'If thirst of knowledge shall not then abate,  
Follow it thou even to the night, but I                            \_195  
Am weary.'--Then like one who with the weight

Of his own words is staggered, wearily  
He paused; and ere he could resume, I cried:  
'First, who art thou?'--'Before thy memory,

'I feared, loved, hated, suffered, did and died,                    \_200  
And if the spark with which Heaven lit my spirit  
Had been with purer nutriment supplied,

'Corruption would not now thus much inherit  
Of what was once Rousseau,--nor this disguise  
Stain that which ought to have disdained to wear it;                    \_205

'If I have been extinguished, yet there rise  
A thousand beacons from the spark I bore'--  
'And who are those chained to the car?'--'The wise,

'The great, the unforgotten,--they who wore  
Mitres and helms and crowns, or wreaths of light,                    \_210  
Signs of thought's empire over thought--their lore



'Taught them not this, to know themselves; their might  
Could not repress the mystery within,  
And for the morn of truth they feigned, deep night

'Caught them ere evening.'--'Who is he with chin                    \_215  
Upon his breast, and hands crossed on his chain?'--  
'The child of a fierce hour; he sought to win

'The world, and lost all that it did contain  
Of greatness, in its hope destroyed; and more  
Of fame and peace than virtue's self can gain                    \_220

'Without the opportunity which bore  
Him on its eagle pinions to the peak  
From which a thousand climbers have before

'Fallen, as Napoleon fell.'--I felt my cheek                        \_225  
Alter, to see the shadow pass away,  
Whose grasp had left the giant world so weak

That every pigmy kicked it as it lay;  
And much I grieved to think how power and will  
In opposition rule our mortal day,

And why God made irreconcilable                                    \_230  
Good and the means of good; and for despair  
I half disdained mine eyes' desire to fill

With the spent vision of the times that were  
And scarce have ceased to be.--'Dost thou behold,'  
Said my guide, 'those spoilers spoiled, Voltaire,                    \_235

'Frederick, and Paul, Catherine, and Leopold,  
And hoary anarchs, demagogues, and sage--  
names which the world thinks always old,

'For in the battle Life and they did wage,  
She remained conqueror. I was overcome                         \_240  
By my own heart alone, which neither age,

'Nor tears, nor infamy, nor now the tomb  
Could temper to its object.'--'Let them pass,'  
I cried, 'the world and its mysterious doom

'Is not so much more glorious than it was,                        \_245  
That I desire to worship those who drew  
New figures on its false and fragile glass

'As the old faded.'--'Figures ever new  
Rise on the bubble, paint them as you may;  
We have but thrown, as those before us threw,                    \_250

'Our shadows on it as it passed away.

But mark how chained to the triumphal chair  
The mighty phantoms of an elder day;

'All that is mortal of great Plato there  
Expiates the joy and woe his master knew not;                    \_255  
The star that ruled his doom was far too fair.

'And life, where long that flower of Heaven grew not,  
Conquered that heart by love, which gold, or pain,  
Or age, or sloth, or slavery could subdue not.

'And near him walk the ... twain,   \_260  
The tutor and his pupil, whom Dominion  
Followed as tame as vulture in a chain.

'The world was darkened beneath either pinion  
Of him whom from the flock of conquerors  
Fame singled out for her thunder-bearing minion;                    \_265

'The other long outlived both woes and wars,  
Throned in the thoughts of men, and still had kept  
The jealous key of Truth's eternal doors,

'If Bacon's eagle spirit had not leapt  
Like lightning out of darkness--he compelled                         \_270  
The Proteus shape of Nature, as it leapt

'To wake, and lead him to the caves that held  
The treasure of the secrets of its reign.  
See the great bards of elder time, who quelled

'The passions which they sung, as by their strain                    \_275  
May well be known: their living melody  
Tempers its own contagion to the vein

'Of those who are infected with it--I  
Have suffered what I wrote, or viler pain!  
And so my words have seeds of misery--                                 \_180

'Even as the deeds of others, not as theirs.'  
And then he pointed to a company,

'Midst whom I quickly recognized the heirs  
Of Caesar's crime, from him to Constantine;  
The anarch chiefs, whose force and murderous snares                 \_285

Had founded many a sceptre-bearing line,  
And spread the plague of gold and blood abroad:  
And Gregory and John, and men divine,

Who rose like shadows between man and God;  
Till that eclipse, still hanging over heaven,                             \_290  
Was worshipped by the world o'er which they strode,

For the true sun it quenched--'Their power was given  
But to destroy,' replied the leader:--'I  
Am one of those who have created, even

'If it be but a world of agony.'-- \_295  
'Whence camest thou? and whither goest thou?  
How did thy course begin?' I said, 'and why?

'Mine eyes are sick of this perpetual flow  
Of people, and my heart sick of one sad thought--  
Speak!--'Whence I am, I partly seem to know, \_300

'And how and by what paths I have been brought  
To this dread pass, methinks even thou mayst guess;--  
Why this should be, my mind can compass not;

'Whither the conqueror hurries me, still less;--  
But follow thou, and from spectator turn \_305  
Actor or victim in this wretchedness,

'And what thou wouldst be taught I then may learn  
From thee. Now listen:--In the April prime,  
When all the forest-tips began to burn

'With kindling green, touched by the azure clime \_310  
Of the young season, I was laid asleep  
Under a mountain, which from unknown time

'Had yawned into a cavern, high and deep;  
And from it came a gentle rivulet,  
Whose water, like clear air, in its calm sweep \_315

'Bent the soft grass, and kept for ever wet  
The stems of the sweet flowers, and filled the grove  
With sounds, which whoso hears must needs forget

'All pleasure and all pain, all hate and love,  
Which they had known before that hour of rest; \_320  
A sleeping mother then would dream not of

'Her only child who died upon the breast  
At eventide--a king would mourn no more  
The crown of which his brows were dispossessed

'When the sun lingered o'er his ocean floor \_325  
To gild his rival's new prosperity.  
'Thou wouldst forget thus vainly to deplore

'Ills, which if ill can find no cure from thee,  
The thought of which no other sleep will quell,  
Nor other music blot from memory, \_330

'So sweet and deep is the oblivious spell;  
And whether life had been before that sleep  
The Heaven which I imagine, or a Hell

'Like this harsh world in which I woke to weep,  
I know not. I arose, and for a space                    \_335  
The scene of woods and waters seemed to keep,

Though it was now broad day, a gentle trace  
Of light diviner than the common sun  
Sheds on the common earth, and all the place

'Was filled with magic sounds woven into one                    \_340  
Oblivious melody, confusing sense  
Amid the gliding waves and shadows dun;

'And, as I looked, the bright omnipresence  
Of morning through the orient cavern flowed,  
And the sun's image radiantly intense                    \_345

'Burned on the waters of the well that glowed  
Like gold, and threaded all the forest's maze  
With winding paths of emerald fire; there stood

'Amid the sun, as he amid the blaze                               \_350  
Of his own glory, on the vibrating  
Floor of the fountain, paved with flashing rays,

'A Shape all light, which with one hand did fling  
Dew on the earth, as if she were the dawn,  
And the invisible rain did ever sing

'A silver music on the mossy lawn;                               \_355  
And still before me on the dusky grass,  
Iris her many-coloured scarf had drawn:

'In her right hand she bore a crystal glass,  
Mantling with bright Nepenthe; the fierce splendour  
Fell from her as she moved under the mass                    \_360

'Of the deep cavern, and with palms so tender,  
Their tread broke not the mirror of its billow,  
Glided along the river, and did bend her

'Head under the dark boughs, till like a willow  
Her fair hair swept the bosom of the stream                    \_365  
That whispered with delight to be its pillow.

'As one enamoured is upborne in dream  
O'er lily-paven lakes, mid silver mist  
To wondrous music, so this shape might seem

'Partly to tread the waves with feet which kissed                    \_370

The dancing foam; partly to glide along  
The air which roughened the moist amethyst,

'Or the faint morning beams that fell among  
The trees, or the soft shadows of the trees;  
And her feet, ever to the ceaseless song \_375

'Of leaves, and winds, and waves, and birds, and bees,  
And falling drops, moved in a measure new  
Yet sweet, as on the summer evening breeze,

'Up from the lake a shape of golden dew  
Between two rocks, athwart the rising moon, \_380  
Dances i' the wind, where never eagle flew;

'And still her feet, no less than the sweet tune  
To which they moved, seemed as they moved to blot  
The thoughts of him who gazed on them; and soon

'All that was, seemed as if it had been not; \_385  
And all the gazer's mind was strewn beneath  
Her feet like embers; and she, thought by thought,

'Trampled its sparks into the dust of death  
As day upon the threshold of the east  
Treads out the lamps of night, until the breath \_390

'Of darkness re-illumine even the least  
Of heaven's living eyes--like day she came,  
Making the night a dream; and ere she ceased

'To move, as one between desire and shame  
Suspended, I said--If, as it doth seem, \_395  
Thou comest from the realm without a name

'Into this valley of perpetual dream,  
Show whence I came, and where I am, and why--  
Pass not away upon the passing stream.

'Arise and quench thy thirst, was her reply. \_400  
And as a shut lily stricken by the wand  
Of dewy morning's vital alchemy,

'I rose; and, bending at her sweet command,  
Touched with faint lips the cup she raised,  
And suddenly my brain became as sand \_405

'Where the first wave had more than half erased  
The track of deer on desert Labrador;  
Whilst the wolf, from which they fled amazed,

'Leaves his stamp visibly upon the shore,  
Until the second bursts;--so on my sight \_410

Burst a new vision, never seen before,

'And the fair shape waned in the coming light,  
As veil by veil the silent splendour drops  
From Lucifer, amid the chrysolite

'Of sunrise, ere it tinge the mountain-tops;                     \_415  
And as the presence of that fairest planet,  
Although unseen, is felt by one who hopes

'That his day's path may end as he began it,  
In that star's smile, whose light is like the scent  
Of a jonquil when evening breezes fan it,                     \_420

'Or the soft note in which his dear lament  
The Brescian shepherd breathes, or the caress  
That turned his weary slumber to content;

'So knew I in that light's severe excess  
The presence of that Shape which on the stream                     \_425  
Moved, as I moved along the wilderness,

'More dimly than a day-appearing dream,  
The host of a forgotten form of sleep;  
A light of heaven, whose half-extinguished beam

'Through the sick day in which we wake to weep                     \_430  
Glimmers, for ever sought, for ever lost;  
So did that shape its obscure tenour keep

'Beside my path, as silent as a ghost;  
But the new Vision, and the cold bright car,  
With solemn speed and stunning music, crossed                     \_435

'The forest, and as if from some dread war  
Triumphantly returning, the loud million  
Fiercely extolled the fortune of her star.

'A moving arch of victory, the vermillion  
And green and azure plumes of Iris had                     \_440  
Built high over her wind-winged pavilion,

'And underneath aethereal glory clad  
The wilderness, and far before her flew  
The tempest of the splendour, which forbade

'Shadow to fall from leaf and stone; the crew                     \_445  
Seemed in that light, like atomies to dance  
Within a sunbeam;--some upon the new

'Embroidery of flowers, that did enhance  
The grassy vesture of the desert, played,  
Forgetful of the chariot's swift advance;                     \_450

'Others stood gazing, till within the shade  
Of the great mountain its light left them dim;  
Others outspeeded it; and others made

'Circles around it, like the clouds that swim  
Round the high moon in a bright sea of air;                     \_455  
And more did follow, with exulting hymn,

'The chariot and the captives fettered there:--  
But all like bubbles on an eddying flood  
Fell into the same track at last, and were

'Borne onward.--I among the multitude                     \_460  
Was swept--me, sweetest flowers delayed not long;  
Me, not the shadow nor the solitude;

'Me, not that falling stream's Lethean song;  
Me, not the phantom of that early Form  
Which moved upon its motion--but among                     \_465

'The thickest billows of that living storm  
I plunged, and bared my bosom to the clime  
Of that cold light, whose airs too soon deform.

'Before the chariot had begun to climb  
The opposing steep of that mysterious dell,                     \_470  
Behold a wonder worthy of the rhyme

'Of him who from the lowest depths of hell,  
Through every paradise and through all glory,  
Love led serene, and who returned to tell

'The words of hate and awe; the wondrous story                     \_475  
How all things are transfigured except Love;  
For deaf as is a sea, which wrath makes hoary,

'The world can hear not the sweet notes that move  
The sphere whose light is melody to lovers--  
A wonder worthy of his rhyme.--The grove                     \_480

'Grew dense with shadows to its inmost covers,  
The earth was gray with phantoms, and the air  
Was peopled with dim forms, as when there hovers

'A flock of vampire-bats before the glare  
Of the tropic sun, bringing, ere evening,                     \_485  
Strange night upon some Indian isle;--thus were

'Phantoms diffused around; and some did fling  
Shadows of shadows, yet unlike themselves,  
Behind them; some like eaglets on the wing

'Were lost in the white day; others like elves \_490  
Danced in a thousand unimagined shapes  
Upon the sunny streams and grassy shelves;

'And others sate chattering like restless apes  
On vulgar hands,...  
Some made a cradle of the ermined capes \_495

'Of kingly mantles; some across the tiar  
Of pontiffs sate like vultures; others played  
Under the crown which girt with empire

'A baby's or an idiot's brow, and made  
Their nests in it. The old anatomies \_500  
Sate hatching their bare broods under the shade

'Of daemon wings, and laughed from their dead eyes  
To reassume the delegated power,  
Arrayed in which those worms did monarchize,

'Who made this earth their charnel. Others more \_505  
Humble, like falcons, sate upon the fist  
Of common men, and round their heads did soar;

Or like small gnats and flies, as thick as mist  
On evening marshes, thronged about the brow  
Of lawyers, statesmen, priest and theorist;-- \_510

'And others, like discoloured flakes of snow  
On fairest bosoms and the sunniest hair,  
Fell, and were melted by the youthful glow

'Which they extinguished; and, like tears, they were  
A veil to those from whose faint lids they rained \_515  
In drops of sorrow. I became aware

'Of whence those forms proceeded which thus stained  
The track in which we moved. After brief space,  
From every form the beauty slowly waned;

'From every firmest limb and fairest face \_520  
The strength and freshness fell like dust, and left  
The action and the shape without the grace

'Of life. The marble brow of youth was cleft  
With care; and in those eyes where once hope shone,  
Desire, like a lioness bereft \_525

'Of her last cub, glared ere it died; each one  
Of that great crowd sent forth incessantly  
These shadows, numerous as the dead leaves blown

'In autumn evening from a poplar tree. \_530



Each like himself and like each other were  
At first; but some distorted seemed to be

'Obscure clouds, moulded by the casual air;  
And of this stuff the car's creative ray  
Wrought all the busy phantoms that were there,

'As the sun shapes the clouds; thus on the way                    \_535  
Mask after mask fell from the countenance  
And form of all; and long before the day

'Was old, the joy which waked like heaven's glance  
The sleepers in the oblivious valley, died;  
And some grew weary of the ghastly dance,                       \_540

'And fell, as I have fallen, by the wayside;--  
Those soonest from whose forms most shadows passed,  
And least of strength and beauty did abide.

'Then, what is life? I cried.'--

CANCELLED OPENING OF THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE.

[Published by Miss M. Blind, "Westminster Review", July, 1870.]

Out of the eastern shadow of the Earth,  
Amid the clouds upon its margin gray  
Scattered by Night to swathe in its bright birth

In gold and fleecy snow the infant Day,  
The glorious Sun arose: beneath his light,                       \_5  
The earth and all...

\_10-\_17 A widow...sound 1870; omitted here 1824;  
printed as 'A Song,' 1824, page 217.

\_34, \_35 dawn Bathe Mrs. Shelley (later editions); dawn, Bathed 1824, 1839.

\_63 shunned Boscombe manuscript; spurned 1824, 1839.

\_70 Of...interspersed Boscombe manuscript;

Of grassy paths and wood, lawn-interspersed 1824;  
wood-lawn-interspersed 1839.

\_84 form]frown 1824.

\_93 light...beam]light upon the chariot beam; 1824.

\_96 it omitted 1824.

\_109 thunder Boscombe manuscript; thunders 1824; thunder's 1839.

\_112 greet Boscombe manuscript; meet 1824, 1839.

\_129 conqueror or conqueror's cj. A.C. Bradley.

\_131-\_134 See Editor's Note.

\_158 while Boscombe manuscript; omitted 1824, 1839.

\_167 And...dance 1839 To seek, to [ ], to strain 1824.

\_168 Seeking 1839; Limping 1824.

\_188 canst, Mrs. Shelley 1824, 1839, 1847.

\_189 forborne! 1824, 1839, 1847.  
\_190 Feature, (of my thought aware); Mrs. Shelley 1847.  
\_188-190 The punctuation is A.C. Bradley's.  
\_202 nutriment Boscombe manuscript; sentiment 1824, 1839.  
\_205 Stain]Stained 1824, 1839.  
\_235 Said my 1824, 1839; Said then my cj. Forman.  
\_238 names which the 1839: name the 1824.  
\_252 how]now cj. Forman.  
\_260 him 1839; omitted 1824.  
\_265 singled for cj. Forman.  
\_280 See Editor's Note.  
\_281, \_282 Even...then Boscombe manuscript; omitted 1824, 1839.  
\_296 camest Boscombe manuscript; comest 1824, 1839.  
\_311 season Boscombe manuscript; year's dawn 1824, 1839.  
\_322 the Boscombe manuscript; her 1824, 1839.  
\_334 woke cj. A.C. Bradley; wake 1824, 1839. Cf. \_296, footnote.  
\_361 Of...and Boscombe manuscript; Out of the deep cavern with 1824, 1839.  
\_363 Glided Boscombe manuscript; She glided 1824, 1839.  
\_377 in Boscombe manuscript; to 1824.  
\_422 The favourite song, Stanco di pascolar le pecorelle,  
    is a Brescian national air.--[MRS. SHELLEY'S NOTE.]  
\_464 early]aery cj. Forman.  
\_475 awe Boscombe manuscript; care 1824.  
\_486 isle Boscombe manuscript; vale 1824.  
\_497 sate like vultures Boscombe manuscript; rode like demons 1824.  
\_515 those]eyes cj. Rossetti.  
\_534 Wrought Boscombe manuscript; Wrapt 1824.

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New figures on its false and fragile glass

'As the old faded.'--'Figures ever new

Rise on the bubble, paint them as you may;

We have but thrown, as those before us threw,                    \_250

'Our shadows on it as it passed away.

But mark how chained to the triumphal chair

The mighty phantoms of an elder day;

'All that is mortal of great Plato there

Expiates the joy and woe his master knew not;                    \_255

The star that ruled his doom was far too fair.

'And life, where long that flower of Heaven grew not,

Conquered that heart by love, which gold, or pain,

Or age, or sloth, or slavery could subdue not.

'And near him walk the ... twain,                                        \_260

The tutor and his pupil, whom Dominion

Followed as tame as vulture in a chain.

'The world was darkened beneath either pinion

Of him whom from the flock of conquerors

Fame singled out for her thunder-bearing minion;                    \_265

'The other long outlived both woes and wars,

Throned in the thoughts of men, and still had kept

The jealous key of Truth's eternal doors,

'If Bacon's eagle spirit had not lept

Like lightning out of darkness--he compelled \_270

The Proteus shape of Nature, as it slept

'To wake, and lead him to the caves that held

The treasure of the secrets of its reign.

See the great bards of elder time, who quelled

'The passions which they sung, as by their strain \_275

May well be known: their living melody

Tempers its own contagion to the vein

'Of those who are infected with it--I

Have suffered what I wrote, or viler pain!

And so my words have seeds of misery-- \_180

'Even as the deeds of others, not as theirs.'

And then he pointed to a company,

'Midst whom I quickly recognized the heirs

Of Caesar's crime, from him to Constantine;

The anarch chiefs, whose force and murderous snares \_285

Had founded many a sceptre-bearing line,

And spread the plague of gold and blood abroad:

And Gregory and John, and men divine,

Who rose like shadows between man and God;

Till that eclipse, still hanging over heaven,                    \_290

Was worshipped by the world o'er which they strode,

For the true sun it quenched--'Their power was given

But to destroy,' replied the leader:--'I

Am one of those who have created, even

'If it be but a world of agony.'--                                 \_295

'Whence camest thou? and whither goest thou?

How did thy course begin?' I said, 'and why?

'Mine eyes are sick of this perpetual flow

Of people, and my heart sick of one sad thought--

Speak!--'Whence I am, I partly seem to know,                    \_300

'And how and by what paths I have been brought

To this dread pass, methinks even thou mayst guess;--

Why this should be, my mind can compass not;

'Whither the conqueror hurries me, still less;--

But follow thou, and from spectator turn                         \_305

Actor or victim in this wretchedness,

'And what thou wouldst be taught I then may learn

From thee. Now listen:--In the April prime,

When all the forest-tips began to burn

'With kindling green, touched by the azure clime                    \_310

Of the young season, I was laid asleep

Under a mountain, which from unknown time

'Had yawned into a cavern, high and deep;

And from it came a gentle rivulet,

Whose water, like clear air, in its calm sweep                    \_315

'Bent the soft grass, and kept for ever wet

The stems of the sweet flowers, and filled the grove

With sounds, which whoso hears must needs forget

'All pleasure and all pain, all hate and love,

Which they had known before that hour of rest;                    \_320

A sleeping mother then would dream not of

'Her only child who died upon the breast

At eventide--a king would mourn no more

The crown of which his brows were dispossessed

'When the sun lingered o'er his ocean floor                    \_325

To gild his rival's new prosperity.

'Thou wouldst forget thus vainly to deplore

'Ills, which if ills can find no cure from thee,

The thought of which no other sleep will quell,

Nor other music blot from memory, \_330

'So sweet and deep is the oblivious spell;

And whether life had been before that sleep

The Heaven which I imagine, or a Hell

'Like this harsh world in which I woke to weep,

I know not. I arose, and for a space \_335

The scene of woods and waters seemed to keep,

Though it was now broad day, a gentle trace

Of light diviner than the common sun

Sheds on the common earth, and all the place

'Was filled with magic sounds woven into one \_340

Oblivious melody, confusing sense

Amid the gliding waves and shadows dun;

'And, as I looked, the bright omnipresence

Of morning through the orient cavern flowed,

And the sun's image radiantly intense \_345

'Burned on the waters of the well that glowed  
Like gold, and threaded all the forest's maze  
With winding paths of emerald fire; there stood

'Amid the sun, as he amid the blaze                                  \_350  
Of his own glory, on the vibrating  
Floor of the fountain, paved with flashing rays,

'A Shape all light, which with one hand did fling  
Dew on the earth, as if she were the dawn,  
And the invisible rain did ever sing

'A silver music on the mossy lawn;                                  \_355  
And still before me on the dusky grass,  
Iris her many-coloured scarf had drawn:

'In her right hand she bore a crystal glass,  
Mantling with bright Nepenthe; the fierce splendour  
Fell from her as she moved under the mass                          \_360

'Of the deep cavern, and with palms so tender,  
Their tread broke not the mirror of its billow,  
Glided along the river, and did bend her

'Head under the dark boughs, till like a willow  
Her fair hair swept the bosom of the stream                          \_365

That whispered with delight to be its pillow.

'As one enamoured is upborne in dream

O'er lily-paven lakes, mid silver mist

To wondrous music, so this shape might seem

'Partly to tread the waves with feet which kissed                    \_370

The dancing foam; partly to glide along

The air which roughened the moist amethyst,

'Or the faint morning beams that fell among

The trees, or the soft shadows of the trees;

And her feet, ever to the ceaseless song                                 \_375

'Of leaves, and winds, and waves, and birds, and bees,

And falling drops, moved in a measure new

Yet sweet, as on the summer evening breeze,

'Up from the lake a shape of golden dew

Between two rocks, athwart the rising moon,                         \_380

Dances i' the wind, where never eagle flew;

'And still her feet, no less than the sweet tune

To which they moved, seemed as they moved to blot

The thoughts of him who gazed on them; and soon

'All that was, seemed as if it had been not;                             \_385

And all the gazer's mind was strewn beneath

Her feet like embers; and she, thought by thought,

'Trampled its sparks into the dust of death

As day upon the threshold of the east

Treads out the lamps of night, until the breath                    \_390

'Of darkness re-illumine even the least

Of heaven's living eyes--like day she came,

Making the night a dream; and ere she ceased

'To move, as one between desire and shame

Suspended, I said--If, as it doth seem,                               \_395

Thou comest from the realm without a name

'Into this valley of perpetual dream,

Show whence I came, and where I am, and why--

Pass not away upon the passing stream.

'Arise and quench thy thirst, was her reply.                       \_400

And as a shut lily stricken by the wand

Of dewy morning's vital alchemy,

'I rose; and, bending at her sweet command,

Touched with faint lips the cup she raised,

And suddenly my brain became as sand                               \_405



'Where the first wave had more than half erased

The track of deer on desert Labrador;

Whilst the wolf, from which they fled amazed,

'Leaves his stamp visibly upon the shore,

Until the second bursts;--so on my sight                    \_410

Burst a new vision, never seen before,

'And the fair shape waned in the coming light,

As veil by veil the silent splendour drops

From Lucifer, amid the chrysolite

'Of sunrise, ere it tinge the mountain-tops;                   \_415

And as the presence of that fairest planet,

Although unseen, is felt by one who hopes

'That his day's path may end as he began it,

In that star's smile, whose light is like the scent

Of a jonquil when evening breezes fan it,                   \_420

'Or the soft note in which his dear lament

The Brescian shepherd breathes, or the caress

That turned his weary slumber to content;

'So knew I in that light's severe excess

The presence of that Shape which on the stream                   \_425

Moved, as I moved along the wilderness,

'More dimly than a day-appearing dream,

The host of a forgotten form of sleep;

A light of heaven, whose half-extinguished beam

'Through the sick day in which we wake to weep \_430

Glimmers, for ever sought, for ever lost;

So did that shape its obscure tenour keep

'Beside my path, as silent as a ghost;

But the new Vision, and the cold bright car,

With solemn speed and stunning music, crossed \_435

'The forest, and as if from some dread war

Triumphantly returning, the loud million

Fiercely extolled the fortune of her star.

'A moving arch of victory, the vermilion

And green and azure plumes of Iris had \_440

Built high over her wind-winged pavilion,

'And underneath aethereal glory clad

The wilderness, and far before her flew

The tempest of the splendour, which forbade

'Shadow to fall from leaf and stone; the crew                    \_445

Seemed in that light, like atomies to dance

Within a sunbeam;--some upon the new

'Embroidery of flowers, that did enhance

The grassy vesture of the desert, played,

Forgetful of the chariot's swift advance;                    \_450

'Others stood gazing, till within the shade

Of the great mountain its light left them dim;

Others outspeeded it; and others made

'Circles around it, like the clouds that swim

Round the high moon in a bright sea of air;                    \_455

And more did follow, with exulting hymn,

'The chariot and the captives fettered there:--

But all like bubbles on an eddying flood

Fell into the same track at last, and were

'Borne onward.--I among the multitude                    \_460

Was swept--me, sweetest flowers delayed not long;

Me, not the shadow nor the solitude;

'Me, not that falling stream's Lethean song;

Me, not the phantom of that early Form

Which moved upon its motion--but among                    \_465

'The thickest billows of that living storm  
I plunged, and bared my bosom to the clime  
Of that cold light, whose airs too soon deform.

'Before the chariot had begun to climb  
The opposing steep of that mysterious dell,                    \_470  
Behold a wonder worthy of the rhyme

'Of him who from the lowest depths of hell,  
Through every paradise and through all glory,  
Love led serene, and who returned to tell

'The words of hate and awe; the wondrous story                    \_475  
How all things are transfigured except Love;  
For deaf as is a sea, which wrath makes hoary,

'The world can hear not the sweet notes that move  
The sphere whose light is melody to lovers--  
A wonder worthy of his rhyme.--The grove                    \_480

'Grew dense with shadows to its inmost covers,  
The earth was gray with phantoms, and the air  
Was peopled with dim forms, as when there hovers

'A flock of vampire-bats before the glare

Of the tropic sun, bringing, ere evening, \_485

Strange night upon some Indian isle;--thus were

'Phantoms diffused around; and some did fling

Shadows of shadows, yet unlike themselves,

Behind them; some like eaglets on the wing

'Were lost in the white day; others like elves \_490

Danced in a thousand unimagined shapes

Upon the sunny streams and grassy shelves;

'And others sate chattering like restless apes

On vulgar hands,...

Some made a cradle of the ermined capes \_495

'Of kingly mantles; some across the tiar

Of pontiffs sate like vultures; others played

Under the crown which girt with empire

'A baby's or an idiot's brow, and made

Their nests in it. The old anatomies \_500

Sate hatching their bare broods under the shade

'Of daemon wings, and laughed from their dead eyes

To reassume the delegated power,

Arrayed in which those worms did monarchize,

'Who made this earth their charnel. Others more \_505

Humble, like falcons, sate upon the fist

Of common men, and round their heads did soar;

Or like small gnats and flies, as thick as mist

On evening marshes, thronged about the brow

Of lawyers, statesmen, priest and theorist;-- \_510

'And others, like discoloured flakes of snow

On fairest bosoms and the sunniest hair,

Fell, and were melted by the youthful glow

'Which they extinguished; and, like tears, they were

A veil to those from whose faint lids they rained \_515

In drops of sorrow. I became aware

'Of whence those forms proceeded which thus stained

The track in which we moved. After brief space,

From every form the beauty slowly waned;

'From every firmest limb and fairest face \_520

The strength and freshness fell like dust, and left

The action and the shape without the grace

'Of life. The marble brow of youth was cleft

With care; and in those eyes where once hope shone,

Desire, like a lioness bereft

\_525

'Of her last cub, glared ere it died; each one

Of that great crowd sent forth incessantly

These shadows, numerous as the dead leaves blown

'In autumn evening from a poplar tree.

\_530

Each like himself and like each other were

At first; but some distorted seemed to be

'Obscure clouds, moulded by the casual air;

And of this stuff the car's creative ray

Wrought all the busy phantoms that were there,

'As the sun shapes the clouds; thus on the way

\_535

Mask after mask fell from the countenance

And form of all; and long before the day

'Was old, the joy which waked like heaven's glance

The sleepers in the oblivious valley, died;

And some grew weary of the ghastly dance,

\_540

'And fell, as I have fallen, by the wayside;--

Those soonest from whose forms most shadows passed,

And least of strength and beauty did abide.

'Then, what is life? I cried.'--

CANCELLED OPENING OF THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE.

[Published by Miss M. Blind, "Westminster Review", July, 1870.]

Out of the eastern shadow of the Earth,

Amid the clouds upon its margin gray

Scattered by Night to swathe in its bright birth

In gold and fleecy snow the infant Day,

The glorious Sun arose: beneath his light,                    \_5

The earth and all...

\_10- \_17 A widow...sound 1870; omitted here 1824;

printed as 'A Song,' 1824, page 217.

\_34, \_35 dawn Bathe Mrs. Shelley (later editions); dawn, Bathed 1824, 1839.

\_63 shunned Boscombe manuscript; spurned 1824, 1839.

\_70 Of...interspersed Boscombe manuscript;

Of grassy paths and wood, lawn-interspersed 1824;

wood-lawn-interspersed 1839.

\_84 form]frown 1824.

\_93 light...beam]light upon the chariot beam; 1824.

\_96 it omitted 1824.

\_109 thunder Boscombe manuscript; thunders 1824; thunder's 1839.



\_112 greet Boscombe manuscript; meet 1824, 1839.

\_129 conqueror or conqueror's cj. A.C. Bradley.

\_131- \_134 See Editor's Note.

\_158 while Boscombe manuscript; omitted 1824, 1839.

\_167 And...dance 1839 To seek, to [ ], to strain 1824.

\_168 Seeking 1839; Limping 1824.

\_188 canst, Mrs. Shelley 1824, 1839, 1847.

\_189 forborne! 1824, 1839, 1847.

\_190 Feature, (of my thought aware); Mrs. Shelley 1847.

\_188- \_190 The punctuation is A.C. Bradley's.

\_202 nutriment Boscombe manuscript; sentiment 1824, 1839.

\_205 Stain]Stained 1824, 1839.

\_235 Said my 1824, 1839; Said then my cj. Forman.

\_238 names which the 1839: name the 1824.

\_252 how]now cj. Forman.

\_260 him 1839; omitted 1824.

\_265 singled for cj. Forman.

\_280 See Editor's Note.

\_281, \_282 Even...then Boscombe manuscript; omitted 1824, 1839.

\_296 camest Boscombe manuscript; comest 1824, 1839.

\_311 season Boscombe manuscript; year's dawn 1824, 1839.

\_322 the Boscombe manuscript; her 1824, 1839.

\_334 woke cj. A.C. Bradley; wake 1824, 1839. Cf. \_296, footnote.

\_361 Of...and Boscombe manuscript; Out of the deep cavern with 1824, 1839.

\_363 Glided Boscombe manuscript; She glided 1824, 1839.

\_377 in Boscombe manuscript; to 1824.

\_422 The favourite song, Stanco di pascolar le pecorelle,

is a Brescian national air.--[MRS. SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

\_464 early]aery cj. Forman.

\_475 awe Boscombe manuscript; care 1824.

\_486 isle Boscombe manuscript; vale 1824.

\_497 sate like vultures Boscombe manuscript; rode like demons 1824.

\_515 those]eyes cj. Rossetti.

\_534 Wrought Boscombe manuscript; Wrapt 1824.

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