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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.

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                    \_5  
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

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--  
 Gin--suicide--and methodism; \_175

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?

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'!  
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 a  
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 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 psychologies,--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, 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.

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.

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.

PART 7.

DOUBLE DAMNATION.

1.



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?

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