Lake English Classics

SHORTER ENGLISH POEMS

SCUDDER

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The Lake English Classics

EDITED BY

LINDSAY TODD DAMON, A.B.

Professor of English Literature and Rhetoric in
Brown University

SHORTER ENGLISH POEMS

FROM THE
COLLEGE ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS
IN ENGLISH

EDITED BY
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PREFATORY NOTE

The selections in this volume include the majority of the shorter poems demanded by the College Entrance Requirements in English. They are presented in this form because it was judged that one volume of reasonable size would be more convenient for both teachers and students than a series of very thin volumes.

VIDA D. SCUDDER.

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THOMAS GRAY

THOMAS GRAY. 1716—1771.

I.

Gray was born in 1716, in a decade when Addison and Pope, Steele and Swift, were delighting the English public with their keen wit and their ironic worldly wisdom. He died in 1771, five years before the American Declaration of Independence, and eighteen years before the Fall of the Bastille in France. His life thus covered the central portion of the eighteenth century. It was a period when no great faith or hope was exciting the world, when people admired correctness rather than originality, and when English letters inclined rather to prose than to poetry. Dr. Johnson was in London, playing the rôle of literary dictator; in his hands and in those of Oliver Goldsmith and others, periodical journals continued the tradition established in Queen Anne's day by Addison and Steele. The novel, in the hands of Richardson, Fielding, Sterne, and Smollett, was expressing contemporary life with a new breadth, zest, and freedom. Over on the Continent, Voltaire and Diderot were flashing a cold light across the age. Lessing, the great rationalistic critic, flourished in Germany. Far in the North, a man quite apart from his century, the seer and mystic Emanuel Swedenborg was bearing firm witness to much that the spirit of the times most scornfully ignored. Jean Jacques Rousseau, a restless genius, full of passion destined to stir almost at once a new life in England, was, it is interesting to notice, almost an exact contemporary of Gray: his *Nouvelle Héloise* appeared in 1760, ten years after the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard.*

Poets, at this time, were few and far between. Apart from Oliver Goldsmith, the only English poet of real importance besides Gray himself was Gray's brother in spirit, Collins. "A sort of spiritual east wind," says Matthew Arnold, "was at that time blowing"; we shall probably not be wrong if we agree with him in accounting by this prevalent atmosphere for the slightness in quantity of Gray's production and for the impression it conveys of a man stirred by deeper emotions than he can express.

Gray was a scholar-poet.[1] A friend wrote, "Mr. Gray was perhaps the most learned man in Europe," and the claim appears to have been just. The poet was at home in every branch of history: he was an unwearied student of metaphysics and politics, an eager antiquarian, and he had a fine taste in "painting, prints, architecture, and gardening." We know him to have been an ardent student of the natural sciences as his age conceived them, a fine and fastidious lover of the classics, and an omnivorous reader in many languages. In short, he represents that union of wide culture and sound scholarship which, as specialization increases, is becoming increasingly difficult to attain, but which marked to a rare degree a few of the distinguished men of the eighteenth century.

It is quite fitting that we see a man of such tastes and acquirements against the background of the great university where he spent his life. Gray's uneventful biography may be briefly chronicled. He was born of simple folk: his mother and aunt, to both of whom he was sincerely attached, kept a milliners' shop in London. The father was apparently half insane, but the women of the family managed to give the clever boy the education of an English gentleman, at Eton and at Cambridge. In the eighteenth century, the English universities were hardly great centres of intellectual activity. The life in them was rather dull and languid; the education was stereotyped, confined to mediæval lines, and not nearly so stimulating as it is today. But the beautiful old town presented then as now its noble buildings and wide sweeps of greensward dotted by great trees: and it had in its keeping that great gift which modern universities offer all too rarely,—the gift of scholastic leisure. Here Gray's life was to be passed. But first he knew for three years the privilege that has always been deemed essential to the training of an English scholar,—extended travel on the Continent. In 1739, he went to Europe as the guest of his school friend, Horace Walpole. Walpole, the son of Sir Robert Walpole, the prime minister, was an erratic, clever, restless, superficial man. He is known in English literature as the author of many sprightly letters which throw much light on his time, and of an extraordinary story, *The Castle of Otranto,* one of the landmarks of the Romantic Revival. Before very long Gray and Walpole disagreed, and Gray returned to England alone, after a three years' absence, to settle down in his university. After a few years he renewed his relation with Walpole; in time he made many other friends, especially, as he grew older, among younger men. He had indeed a rare capacity for warm friendship; and we may agree with a Swiss friend of his named Bonstetten that Gray would have been a happier man and have written more poetry had he married and known the joys of fatherhood. However, the semi-monastic life at the university suited his tastes very well. He held at one time the professorship of Poetry, but, according to a curious fashion of the times, never gave any lectures. He was offered, and declined, the laureateship. There is nothing further to record in outward events, except his death, which occurred in 1771.

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[1] It is interesting to notice, as Matthew Arnold suggests in another connection, quoting from Sainte Beuve, "how often we see the alliance, singular as it may at first sight appear, of the poetical genius with the genius for scholarship and philology."

Gray lived somewhat apart from the other literary men of his day. He declined, for instance, to meet Dr. Johnson; and the surly old dictator reciprocated with an unreasonable distaste for his poetry. But Gray's aloofness from his contemporaries was more than external: he really did undergo different experiences from theirs. They were sons of the pseudo-classic age; their great liking was for the literature of Rome and for the French books formed upon it: Gray had a fine appreciation of classical literature, but his affinity was rather for the Greek than for the Roman. They repudiated with scorn and impatience all that was "Gothicke": Gray was fascinated by Norse, Celtic and mediæval literature, that is, by the remote, primitive, and rude. Few of his contemporaries cared to stir often out of London: Gray was one of the first men to be sensitive to the beauty of wild nature, and to feel toward mountains and precipices somewhat as Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and Ruskin taught the nineteenth century to feel. The men of his day still used exclusively heroic couplets: Gray enjoyed and experimented with finely wrought lyrical forms. No wonder that he withdrew within himself. His instinctive reserve was increased by an inclination to a constitutional melancholy, or "leucocholy,"—as he called it,—a mild "white" depression that at times threatened to inhibit his powers. He liked to write: it was, as he told Walpole, his greatest pleasure. But freedom and power seldom visited him, and when they did, made short and elusive stay. Profoundly stirred at times by the instincts of the coming age, he was ill at ease between the limitations of his own nature and the critical canons of his day. He allowed few men to penetrate his intimacy, but those few loved him keenly and honored him truly: and his reticent figure, while it still leaves the majority indifferent, will always be especially attractive to those to whom it appeals at all.

II.

Swinburne said that the Muse gave birth to Collins: she only gave suck to Gray. Yet in spite of this dictum we must accept the statement of Mr. Gosse that Gray is the most important poetical figure in our literature between Pope and Wordsworth. This is partly due to the preciseness with which his work represents the transition from an earlier period to that which was to follow. In his scant but highly finished achievement we can recognize clearly the "notes" of successive poetic schools, and one of the charms of these poems for the scholarly reader is the various literary associations which they evoke. Yet even while we perceive the sequence of associations, we realize that we are listening to no mere echoes of other men. Gray's genius was distinctive. His poetry may seem at first impersonal and cold; but through its reticence the sensitive reader finds no difficulty in seeing the man. He did not merely wear his learning as an ornament, he made it a part of himself: the different influences which his poems reflect are no fashions adopted languidly to suit the mood of the hour, but forces that have stirred his being to the depths. The melodies he gives us are no less genuine because they are no "native wood-notes wild," but proceed from an instrument shaped by conscious art.

The first group of poems in the slender volume that represents Gray's entire work in verse, contains a few odes written in the year 1742, when he was twenty-six years old: *To Spring; On a Distant Prospect of Eton College; On Adversity.* Already in these poems Gray breaks away from the heroic couplet into free lyrical forms. But these carefully phrased odes fall cold on the ear. They reflect the inveterate pleasure of the eighteenth century in personification and abstraction, and the current habit of moralizing, so fatal, from the modern point of view, to true imaginative verse. The lover of Gray can rightly commend the grace, the elaborately delicate workmanship, of these lyrics: but Gray never would have been the most important figure in our poetic history between Pope and Wordsworth had he continued to write in this vein.

During this same year, the *Elegy* was begun but not completed: and now there fell on Gray, for some reason, a long-continued incapacity to write. For five years he lived a life of academic seclusion, apparently unvisited by creative impulse. He broke silence in 1747 with a charming and gay trifle, the *Ode* on Horace Walpole's cat, drowned in a vase of goldfishes: and in 1750, exactly one hundred years before Tennyson published *In Memoriam,* he finished the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard.* It was not until seven years later that he published his two important and elaborate Pindaric odes, *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard.* Of the *Elegy* we shall speak later. The two odes are of great significance in the history of English letters. *The Progress of Poesy,* severely formal in structure, is suffused by a fine imaginative fervor, a subtle and penetrating perception of beauty, strange indeed to that prosaic age. It shows how a critical subject, dealing not with life but with the imaginative interpretation of life, may so quicken emotion that it becomes fit inspiration for lofty poetry. *The Bard* is in some ways on a still higher level: it marks the free play of a type of enthusiasm which Pope, Addison, Johnson would alike have despised. Gray is fired by an old legend that the bards of Wales were massacred by order of King Edward I. He imagines an ancient bard, the solitary survivor of his class, high on a cliff above a gloomy defile through which the King passes; denouncing, cursing, lamenting, till his impassioned chant evokes the vision of the grisly band of his murdered comrades, who together weave the bloody tissue of Edward's line and in weird chorus predict the tragic fate of his descendants. At the end the bard plunges from the precipice into the roaring flood. It is a wild and striking theme. The poem is born of that reaction from suave or satiric pictures of artificial life, that craving for the primeval, the passionate, the strange, which were beginning to stir in the breast of the decorous eighteenth century. It is one of the great landmarks in the progress of what we know as the Romantic Revolt.

In Gray's later life he yielded himself almost wholly to the romantic impulse. A French book on Norse mythology, by Paul Henri Mallet, fired his imagination. He learned Icelandic,—an unheard-of feat in those days,—and became as fascinated with the ancient myths of the far North as William Morris was to be in the nineteenth century. Two odes, *The Fatal Sister* and *The Descent of Odin,* and certain fragmentary translations from the Welsh, are the fruits of this enthusiasm, in which Gray was more than a century in advance of his age. The incongruous precision by which impressions of savage beauty and terror are presented, still, however, betrays the eighteenth century, and the poems are singularly interesting monuments of a transformation of poetic taste.

These poems end the significant work of Gray in verse. But wholly to know him, one must turn also to his prose.[1] In his letters, late and early, and in his *Journal in the Lakes,* written two years before his death, Gray is more off his guard than in his verse: and they reveal him to have been in his instincts practically a modern man. One can trace through Gray's prose an almost complete prophecy of the awakening and growth of modern romantic feeling. It is full of evidences of exquisite taste and sound critical feeling, such as Matthew Arnold need not have disowned. It reveals the wide range of intellectual interests that doubtless helped to preserve the sanity of a nature inclined to introspective brooding, if not to melancholia: and above all it shows a feeling for natural beauty entirely new in his generation. "You cannot imagine," Addison had written after vivid descriptions of the horrors of a journey across the Alps, "how pleased I am at the sight of a plain." But Gray, not many years later, can break into rhapsodies over the glory of the mountain landscape around the Grande Chartreuse: "Not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry." Mountains to him were "monstrous creatures of God." The experiences of his spirit among the English lakes or the Welsh hills are charming reading still.

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[1] Excellently edited by Mr. Gosse.

If one adds the testimony of the prose to that of the poetry, it is hard to avoid agreeing with Matthew Arnold that had Gray lived three-quarters of a century later, in a more favorable air, he might have proved himself, in quantity as in quality of achievement, a worthy comrade to Keats, Wordsworth, and Shelley. He lived in the twilight, when the romantic dawn was faint and chill: yet all who love the sober purity of the light before the sun has risen should love his poetry. "The style I have aimed at," he said, "is extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, perspicuous, and musical." Pure, perspicuous, musical! They are words which no verse in the language more fully deserves than his.

III.

It is curious that a fastidious recluse, whose point of view was so largely academic as that of Gray, should have written what was long the most widely popular poem in English literature. The fact may suggest that the experiences and reflections of the keenest scholars are, after all, fundamentally much the same as those of everyone else: or it may show that the finest resources of poetic art are most effectively used on a subject of universal appeal. Someone has well pointed out that Gray doubtless found it as natural to write for his masterpiece a poem dealing with the commonplaces of our mortality as each new artist finds it to give to the world his conception of the Madonna.

Gray kept the *Elegy* by him for a long while before he finally finished it and sent it to Walpole. Even then, he did not publish it until news of a pirated edition reached him when it was published he did not at first sign his name. The authorship, however, could not remain a secret: probably he did not really wish it to do so; and it is a credit to the times that the high excellence of the poem was at once recognized.

The measure used by Gray,—the quatrain composed of iambic pentameters with alternate rhymes,—had been pronounced by Dryden, doubtless with some exaggeration, to be "the most magnificent that our language afforded." He had himself composed in it his *Annus Mirabilis.* Gray popularized the measure and in a way consecrated it to elegiac use. Its rich amplitude, even flow, and lofty dignity are evident at once. If we compare with the movement of this stanza some cf the exquisite lyrical measures in Gray,—as, for instance, in the *Progress of Poesy* or the unfinished *Ode on Vicissitude,*—the rare fineness of his ear and the variety in his singing tones will be evident at once.

If the melody charms, the imagery is no less perfect, especially at the beginning and the end, which present us with concrete pictures framing the more general reflections of the central portion of the poem. The whole poem is "a twilight piece," to borrow a phrase from Browning; during the first four stanzas, the darkness gradually closes in, with exquisite gradations from dusk to moonlight. The atmosphere and the scene afford an ideal setting for pensive meditation, in which now and again the memory of "incense-breathing Morn" affords the beauty of contrast.

It is even more true of the *Elegy* than of Gray's other works that it is in one way not an original poem. To a cultured reader, the undertones of association constitute much of the charm. Every line can be annotated by parallel passages from other literatures,—Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and English. We shall mention in the notes only a few of such passages, and those chiefly from Milton, because to this poet Gray owed a special debt. But the process, if one has leisure, is interesting. It assuredly shows the breadth of Gray's reading, although one is tempted to ascribe many resemblances which the critics point out rather to natural coincidence than to conscious borrowing. But if Gray takes his good where he finds it, as the French proverb says, he makes it intimately his own.

> True wit is Nature to advantage dressed,—
> What oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed.

All poetry is more than is commonly recognized the consummate flower of a long social process, and a poem is none the worse, nay, it is better, because it puts the final stamp of perfect excellence on an idea which hundreds of writers have before rendered.

Not only is the theme of the *Elegy* commonplace, and the detail full of poetic echoes: the poem as a whole is the best example of a type of writing widely current at that time which is in itself so consciously literary as to seem to many artificial. The poetry of Milton in general, and his *Il Penseroso* in particular, exerted a surprising influence over a whole group of poets during the middle of the eighteenth century. To revel in the sweets of Melancholy became the order of the day. Yet there was more in this than a literary fashion. In an age so lacking in poetic and positive inspiration, melancholy was the easiest and most natural mood for sensitive and imaginative men. Who can conceive a contemporary of Johnson's breaking into exultation, like Shelley in *The Skylark,* or penetrating to the deeper sources of permanent joy, like Wordsworth in *The Daffodils?* The mood of pensive reflection was the mood native to the age. Death, above all, is the great Reality which no decorum can obscure: and on Death the sentiment of the time brooded incessantly. Two great and lovely poems stand out, in a mass of kindred verse, as the chief contribution of this mood to English poetry: the one is, of course, Gray's *Elegy;* the other is the *Ode to Evening* of William Collins. The two may well be compared, and it will be evident, despite entire difference in the scheme and subject, that the same order of feeling inspires them. Collins's ode reads like a commentary on the *Elegy,* expressing a temperament even more sensitive but less intellectual than that of Gray.

We have placed the *Elegy* in its period and in its relation to poetic tradition and contemporary work.

The best way to feel its intrinsic value is to learn it by heart and to let its quiet and stately music set the tune to a series of one's days. In spite of the fact that the poem is, as we have shown, the product of a definite literary movement, close acquaintance with it reveals two things that impart to it an intimate and individual charm. The .first is the implied revelation of personality: the second, the sense, rare indeed in a time which valued chiefly the exclusive, the sophisticated, and the novel, of fellowship with the universal, the simple, and the abiding: with Poverty and Labor, with Nature and with Death.

Gray does not, to be sure, reveal himself as Shelley does in *Adonais,* or Tennyson in *In Memoriam.* Compared with these poems, also elegiac, the *Elegy* remains impersonal, even to the close. But it is in vain that the intentional pose, so to speak, retains that impersonal attitude demanded by the conventions of the time and grateful to Gray's natural reserve. The whole tone of the poem, its every detail and cadence, reveal a personal feeling uninterrupted by one false or jarring note. The twilight landscape at the opening, and the subdued sadness of the general reflections on mortality lead to the last stanzas, where we get the direct picture of the poet's soul. For Gray, by a slight turn, looks forward and thinks of himself as buried in the churchyard; and so the poem does not, after all, confine itself to general musings, but, like Bion's *Elegy on Moschus,* or Shelley's *Adonais,* or Milton's *Lycidas,* mourns with a note of individual sorrow, touched in this case by self-pity, over one dear dead youth.

In this self-revelation we have an earnest of that poetry of the interior life which was to be the gift of the nineteenth century to the world. No less do we find in the *Elegy* a faint prophecy of the democratic breadth of the coming age. Gray not only draws from deeper wells than most of his contemporaries; he also gazes wider afield. The "storied urn and animated bust"—such trophies of the distinguished dead as greet the tourists' eyes in every large English church—do not arrest him. Outside, under the yew-tree, he loves to linger, tenderly meditating on the graves of the humble and unknown. If the familiar lines concerning the emptiness of worldly glory read like platitudes, let us realize that these are platitudes all too seldom apprehended as truths. Reverence for "the short and simple annals of the poor," gives to the *Elegy* high sincerity and enduring worth.

Yet, in conclusion, it is hard to resist a sense of disappointment when one sets the *Elegy* beside other great elegies of the English race. For the first thing that strikes one about all these other poems, is, that the thought of Death is transfigured in them by the thought of Immortality. In *Lycidas,* the elegy of the seventeenth century, classical memories blend strangely with the Hebraic theme, but echoes of

> The inexpressive nuptial song
> In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love

sound through the Miltonic harmonies. In *Adonais,* the elegy of the post-Revolutionary age, though the thought of personal immortality is absent, the poet is rapt by the vision of the soul of man as "a portion of the Eternal." In *In Memoriam,* the Victorian elegy, Tennyson through many tempests reaches an assured haven, whence he perceives triumphantly that Love can never be bound of Death. Compared with these, we must indeed feel that Gray's world is "left to darkness." In vain we long that he should lift his eyes, if only for one brief moment, from graves to stars. Nay,—place the *Elegy,* not beside a supreme expression of victorious faith, like *Adonais* or *In Memoriam,* but beside a casual poem like Wordsworth's *We Are Seven,*—are we not forced to recognize that the little cottage girl, with her clustering curls, who persistently counts her dead brothers and sisters among her living playfellows, had a vision denied to the poet-scholar? But let us not ask from Gray what he cannot give us. Rather let us recognize what he brings: a deep sense of the realities of human life, a grave piety, a sensitive and pure emotion that never lacks the restraining grace of self-control. And all these are expressed in verse whose high perfection of finish, whose noble harmonies and lovely images, make an appeal to the universal heart that time can not wither nor custom stale.

ELEGY, WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o’er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tow’r,
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wand’ring near her secret bow’r,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree’s shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould’ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twitt’ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock’s shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;

No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn, or animated bust,
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire,
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little Tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade: nor circumscrib'd alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;
Forbade to wade thro' slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;

Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply;
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonour'd dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall enquire thy fate,—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn:

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove;
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

"One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath, and near his fav'rite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next, with dirges due in sad array,
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne:—
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Grav'd on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH.

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth,
A youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown:
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send;
He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,
He gained from Heav'n ('t was all he wish'd) a friend.

125 No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.

NOTES.

Line 1. Gray himself annotated this line by quoting an exquisite passage from the opening of the eighth canto of Dante's *Purgatorio:*

Squilla di lontano,
Che paia il giorno pianger che si muore.

The translation of the whole passage is: "'Twas now the hour . . . that pierces the new pilgrim with love, if from afar he hears the chimes which seem to mourn for the dying day."

Curfew: From "couvre-feu": a bell rung during the middle ages about eight o'clock, to bid people cover their fires and put out their lights. A few years ago, the curfew could still be heard in some parts of England.

2. *Wind:* Another reading is "winds," but "wind" is better. Gray wants us to see the cattle meandering over the meadow, as their habit is when homeward-bound, rather than going in a straight file.

Lea: An old word for meadow.

3. Why did Gray use so many long o's? E. g., "tolls," "lowing," "slowly," "homeward."

5. *Glimmering:* This is the only time that Gray uses this word, though at one other point he has "glimmerings." "Glittering," on the other hand, is a great favorite with him.

6. What is the subject of "holds"? Watch Gray's habit with regard to inversions.

8. As the darkness grows, we begin to hear more than we see. Note the drone of the beetle, the "drowsy tinkling" of far cowbells, the hooting owl. Gray, like Wordsworth, knew how many sounds that would escape attention in daylight seem, as dusk gathers, to fill while they do not interrupt the silence.

13. *Yew-tree's shade:* Yews are common in English churchyards. Compare Tennyson's *In Memoriam,* Canto II:

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the underlying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

. . . . . .

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom.

Perhaps the finest yews in English poetry are Wordsworth's "Fraternal Four of Borrowdale," in *Yew-Trees*—

A pillared shade,
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
Perennially,—beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
With unrejoicing berries,—ghostly Shapes
May meet at noon-tide; Fear and trembling Hope,
Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton
And Time the Shadow.

16. *Rude,* in the sense of "humble," "low," "uncivilized," "unpolished."

17. Note how the sounds of this lovely stanza contrast with those that preceded. Gray presents his dawn, like his twilight, through sound rather than sight impressions.

Paraphrase *incense-breathing.* The word was absent from an early version. What do we gain from it?

21. Compare with the picture suggested in this stanza that elaborated by Burns in *The Cotter's Saturday Night.* Burns used the next stanza but one as a motto for his poem.

22. *Ply her evening care:* "Whether the phrase be good or bad, it is the kind of diction against which Wordsworth vigorously protested. When he had occasion to describe a similar scene, he wrote:

She I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire."—*Wattrous.*

It is good exercise to go through the *Elegy* distinguishing the places where Gray uses the concrete language native to poetry from those in which he slips into the generalized and abstract speech common to his age.

26. *Glebe:* "The cultivated land belonging to a parish church or ecclesiastical benefice."

27. *Drive their team afield:* See Milton's *Lycidas,* line 27.

29. Do you like the personifications?

33. *The boast of heraldry:* The pride of rank. Birth, force, beauty, and wealth are of course four things most valued by the world: they lead to *glory* as a climax.

35. *Awaits* is often printed "await." But Gray wrote the word

as in the text. He was steeped in Milton and had learned from his master a love of inversions.

36. This is the passage quoted by General Wolfe on his way to take Quebec and die: "For two full hours the procession of boats, borne on the current, steered silently down the St. Lawrence. The stars were visible, but the night was moonless and sufficiently dark. The general was in one of the foremost boats, and near him was a young midshipman, John Robison, afterwards professor of natural philosophy in the University of Edinburgh. He used to tell in his later life how Wolfe, with a low voice, repeated *Gray's Elegy in a Country Churchyard* to the officers about him. Probably it was to relieve the intense strain of his thoughts. Among the rest was the verse which his own fate was soon to illustrate: 'The paths of glory lead but to the grave.' 'Gentlemen,' he said as his recital ended, 'I would rather have written those lines than take Quebec.' None were there to tell him that the hero is greater than the poet." Parkman's *Montcalm and Wolfe*, II, 285.

This story has lately been investigated and substantiated.

39. *Fretted:* A *fret* is an architectural ornament, made by carving, cutting or embossing.

41. *Storied:* "Storied windows richly dight." *Il Penseroso.*

Stained glass picturing stories, from saint-legend or scripture.

43. *Provoke the silent dust: Provoke* in the etymological sense of "call forth."

51. *Rage:* What sort of "rage" deserves the epithet "noble"? Gray broods more calmly over the possible waste of genius entailed by "chill penury" than we do today.

52. *Genial* may mean "warm, kindly," or "native, inborn."

53-56. Platitudes, but perfectly put.

57. There is an interesting early version to this stanza. Gray, fine classical scholar that he was, first wrote:

Some village Cato, who, with dauntless breath,
  The little Tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Tully here may rest,
  Some Cæsar guiltless of his country's blood.

The change to the English names was a bold act in those days of literary convention. It gives much more reality to this picture of an English Churchyard. The new form has an added force when we realize that Hampden, the patriot of the days of Charles I, lived in the county of the Churchyard, and that Milton finished his *Paradise Lost* only a few miles away. Gray's allusion to Cromwell reflects the general attitude of the eighteenth century. It was not till Carlyle wrote that Cromwell came to be appreciated at his true value.

It would be well for the student to compare the ancients of the first version with the moderns of the second and to explain why in each case one name could fill the place of the other.

61. Here begins a long periodic sentence, quite in the Latin manner. But the continuity between stanzas affords a pleasant variety to the ear.

71. Gray is thinking of the adulation given to noble or royal patrons by literature. Cf. the mass of flattering verse addressed to Queen Elizabeth. At this time, the system of patronage was dying hard. See Johnson's *Letter to Lord Chesterfield.*

In Gray's first manuscript, the poem continued with the four following stanzas, with which, as Mason, Gray's friend, tells us, it was meant to conclude. Note how carefully Gray wove the phrases which he liked best in these lines into the final version:

The thoughtless world to majesty may bow,
  Exalt the brave, and idolize success;
But more to innocence their safety owe,
  Than pow'r or genius e'er conspired to bless.

And thou who mindful of th' unhonor'd dead
  Dost in these notes their artless tale relate,
By night and lonely contemplation led
  To wander in the gloomy walks of fate;

Hark, how the sacred calm, that breathes around,
  Bids every fierce tumultuous passion cease:
In still small accents whisp'ring from the ground,
  A grateful earnest of eternal peace.

No more, with reason and thyself at strife,
  Give anxious cares and endless wishes room;
But through the cool sequester'd vale of life
  Pursue the silent tenor of thy doom.

73. *Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife: Madding* means not maddening, but acting madly.

76. *Tenor:* From the Latin *tenor,* a holding-on.

81. There is a mis-spelled epitaph on a tomb-stone under the very yew pointed out as standing in Gray's time in the grave-yard of Stoke Pogis, which is the scene of the *Elegy.*

86. *Pleasing anxious:* Note the fine epitome of human experience in these two words.

93. The abrupt turn at this point gives a new and personal interest to the generalizations of the poem. But Gray's reticence

still preserves a little veil by his device of apostrophizing himself in the third person.

95. *Chance:* Perchance.

97. *The Hoary-headed swain* walks out of an eighteenth-century pastoral, not out of a real village. Wordsworth would never have used this phrase.

99. See *Paradise Lost,* V. 429.

100. After this stanza, in the first version, followed four lines: it is hard to see why they were omitted, since, as Mason says, they have "the same sort of Doric delicacy which charms us peculiarly in this part of the poem," and as he also points out, they complete the account of the poet's day:

> Him have we seen the greenwood side along,
>   While o'er the heath we hied, our labour done,
> Oft as the woodlark pip'd her farewell song,
>   With wistful eyes pursue the setting sun.

101. If any proof were needed that Gray has himself in mind in this pathetic portrait of the young poet, it may be found in the following passage from a letter written by him to Walpole in September, 1737. The wood described is that containing the famous Burnham beeches:

"I have at the distance of half a mile through a green lane, a forest (the vulgar call it a common) all my own, at least as good as so, for I spy no human thing in it but myself. It is a little chaos of mountains and precipices. . . . Both vale and hill are covered with most venerable beeches, and other very reverend vegetables, that, like most other ancient people, are always dreaming out their old stories to the winds. . . .

"At the foot of one of these squats ME; (I, Il Penseroso) and there grow to a trunk the whole morning."

111. *Another,* day, not person.

116. Here came, in the original version, an omitted stanza which almost everyone wishes that Gray had retained; for there is none more beautiful in the *Elegy.* His reason for leaving it out was to have the Epitaph follow directly the invitation to read. But he hesitated, constantly inserting the stanza and then omitting it again, so that Mr. Gosse says that we need not regard it as finally cancelled:

> There scatter'd oft, the earliest of the year,
>   By hands unseen are show'rs of violets found;
> The redbreast loves to build and warble there,
>   And little footsteps lightly print the ground.

119. *Fair Science:* Gray habitually uses Science in the sense of learning or knowledge. See his *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College,* line 3:

> Where grateful Science still adores
> Her Henry's holy shade.

128. Do you agree with some critics who find the Epitaph more frigid and artificial than the rest of the poem? Or does it touch you?

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

OLIVER GOLDSMITH. 1728—1774.

I.

It was in a good year for English letters that Oliver Goldsmith was born: for in this year Pope published his *Dunciad,* Thomson his poem on *Spring,* and Gay his *Beggars' Opera.* Goldsmith, unlike the three poets just mentioned, was an Irishman. His father was a poor, unworldly, and gentle Protestant clergyman. The boy, until he was seventeen, lived in the country. He was thought to be a dull child, and the smallpox disfigured his face so that he remained to the end of his life unusually ugly. He attended Trinity College, Dublin: Burke was there at the same time, but the two youths did not know each other. Goldsmith was not happy in his college life, but he took his degree in 1749, lowest in the list. He knocked about for a few years: studied medicine at the University of Edinburgh, and later at Leyden: and wandered over the Continent, penniless, and making his way by various devices, much as students in the middle ages used to do. Sometimes he earned his passage by flute-playing. He has given a pretty account in *The Traveller* of the sprightly French peasants dancing to the music of the strolling Irish player:

> And haply, though my harsh touch, faltering still,
> But mocked all tune, and marr'd the dancers' skill,
> Yet would the village praise my wondrous power,
> And dance, forgetful of the noon-tide hour.

At twenty-seven, Goldsmith settled down in London for the remainder of his life. He had a doctor's degree; but it was as a man of letters that he picked up a precarious living. London was at this time full of authors. A large reading public had grown up during the eighteenth century, so that writers were escaping from their old thraldom to rich patrons and growing able to support themselves independently. But the task was no easy one, and the best writers of the day, unless, like Gray, they held an academic position, were likely to know a hard struggle. No one struggled harder than Goldsmith. Beneath an indolent exterior he concealed an immense power of work, as anyone who reads the long list of his hack writings can see. He was always carelessly generous and he lived from hand to mouth: but no one could call him lazy. Like most writers of the day, he began by writing for the numerous periodicals, which, following the fashion set by Addison and Steele, were the chief literary type then current. It was not long before some of these papers, collected later under the title *The Citizen of the World,* made a hit. They were an entertaining study of English life from the point of view of an imaginary visitor from China: a device revived in our own day by Mr. Lowes-Dickenson in his *Letters of a Chinese Official.* Goldsmith was already favourably known by an *Inquiry into the State of Polite Learning in Europe,* published in 1759. And now, when he was only a little over thirty years old, he formed the acquaintance, soon to ripen into friendship, of the burly and lovable dictator of English letters with whom his name is always associated,—Dr. Johnson. Johnson was the centre of the literary life of London.

The doings of the brilliant group in which Goldsmith played a part secondary only to his own is chronicled for all time by his biographer, Boswell; to the pages of the immortal biographer and to the other memoirs of the period, the student must turn for an inimitably vivid record of the personality and ways, the speech, the tastes, the habits of those good comrades and great men, over whose converse everyone loves to linger,—Sir Joshua Reynolds, Burke, Garrick, Goldsmith. Here we can only chronicle the story, told by Johnson himself, how late in the year 1764 Goldsmith in great distress sent for Johnson, having been arrested for rent: how Johnson bore away a manuscript novel, called *The Vicar of Wakefield,* sold it for sixty pounds,—three hundred dollars,—and set his friend free. The price was little for that delightful work: yet the fact that Johnson could secure such a sum proves that Goldsmith had already a certain reputation.

More prosperous days came later. Many of the ablest men in the eighteenth century were unhappy: several, including Gray, Collins, Cowper, and Johnson himself, were over-shadowed by mental disease. But Goldy, as the great Doctor called him, was apparently a fairly happy man, who enjoyed his friends, his trips into the country and to the Continent, and not least the innocent personal vanities which are mercilessly recorded for us in contemporary accounts. He achieved distinction in one line of letters after another. First known as a light essayist, his poem *The Traveller,* published in 1764, when he was thirty-six years old, gave him a leading position among writers of verse: his novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield,* published in 1766, found its way at once to people's hearts: and his two dramas, *The Good-Natured Man* (1767) and *She Stoops to Conquer* (1771), had a charm that still holds the stage. Goldsmith was a blunderer in social converse, and funny stories are told of his awkwardness and simplicity. Yet he had on occasion a pretty wit of his own, and if people laughed at him, they loved him. When news came of his death, Burke burst into tears and Reynolds painted no more that day. "Let not his frailties be remembered: he was a very great man," said Dr. Johnson. "Frailties" he had in abundance, but his instincts were pure and gay, his spirit was sensitive to all fine things, his whole nature, in a worldly age, was unworldly, tender, and sincere. In that famous group there is no other man who appeals so warmly to the affections.

II.

Goldsmith is one of the most charming and versatile of English writers. Great writers usually do one thing supremely well. Shakespeare wrote dramas, Shelley lyrics, Thackeray novels. Goldsmith did many things: none supremely, all delightfully. We need not speak of the hack work he conscientiously performed, the *History of England,* the compilations of scientific information: putting these aside, how much remains! Goldsmith's essays, especially those collected as *The Citizen of the World,* are the most graceful writing of that order between Addison and Lamb: his two dramas are, with the exception of the plays of Sheridan, the most living comedies in an undramatic age: *The Vicar of Wakefield* is an idyll that has become a classic: and the two companion poems, *The Deserted Village* and *The Traveller,* give him an assured place among English poets.

Goldsmith wrote in the middle of the eighteenth century. The men who carried on the pseudo-classic traditions were his contemporaries; so too were the leaders of the romantic revolt, Gray, Collins, Dr. Percy of the *Reliques,* and Horace Walpole. The great novelists, Richardson, (for whom he was once proofreader) Fielding, and Smollett, had immediately preceded him. The stars of Gibbon, Hume, and Adam Smith were rising. For the Romantic school Goldsmith had no liking, and he adhered stoutly to old forms: but nevertheless the new spirit is in his work. True, it shows no trace of that awakening imaginative passion memorable in the poems of Gray and Collins. Goldsmith's imagination was weak: his subjects were drawn from what he had observed or experienced in the flesh, and when, as in *The Citizen of the World,* he spins a thread of story out of pure fantasy, it is laughable to a degree. But if deficient in imagination, his work is redolent of feeling. It is emotion of that purest type in which tears and laughter blend, which makes *The Vicar of Wakefield* a limpid source of refreshment, whether to a Goethe or to a little school-girl. Warm sympathy mingles with keen powers of observation in *The Traveller,* a poem that records the impressions of different nations received by Goldsmith in his youthful travels. His comedies are provocative of hearty laughter, but the laughter is innocent and loving, not barbed with a sneer like the laughter of Swift or Pope.

It is humor indeed that saves his sentiment from sentimentality, and it is largely humor that enables us to claim Goldsmith as one of the pioneers of literary realism. His realism is not sustained. Sweet Auburn may be a true village, but the inhabitants wend their way to a country of fantasy. The plot of *The Vicar of Wakefield* is full of harmless conventions; nor is the joyous world of the comedies quite the actual world. Yet there is evident in all Goldsmith's writings the instinctive quest of simplicity and truth. He really prefers the Vicar of Wakefield for a hero to any of the fine folk who move in stately minuet through the literature of the age of Queen Anne. He was in a sense a man of the world; his essays attest a keen if not profound gift of social criticism (as in the entertaining panegyric of the beauty of the ladies of China as compared with those of England); yet he was never worldly. His books evince a nature of rare delicacy, in which the keynote is a gentle sincerity that charms us still. Many eighteenth century writers seem successfully to hide themselves when they write: if it were not for Boswell, who would know Dr. Johnson? Goldsmith, on the contrary, revealed himself, and the man he reveals is one whom everyone must love.

III.

The Deserted Village, published in 1770, has always been the most popular of Goldsmith's poems, just because it is the one in which his heart speaks most clearly. The companion-poem, *The Traveller,* is full of general statements, aptly put, about great nations and different racial types. *The Deserted Village* lingers fondly over the fate of one little village such as he loved when a boy. It may not possess the highest qualities of poetry: but it is written in English beautifully pure; it is full of feeling and of gentle humorous wisdom; it gives us delightful sketches of innocent country life and of two or three quaint village people; and with all its quiet tone, it is aflame with a noble passion for social justice and a fine, hot sympathy with the wrongs of the poor.

Let us first note the form of the poem. In the preface to *The Traveller* Goldsmith says: "What criticisms have we not heard of late, in favour of blank verse, Pindaric odes, choruses, anapests, and iambics, alliterative care, and happy negligence!" It happened that Gray had recently published his *Pindaric Odes,* and that discussion had indeed been rife regarding the advisability of enlarging the borders of poetic style. Goldsmith was a conservative so far as the metrical form of his poems is concerned. He adhered to the chief poetic tradition of his century in using the so-called heroic couplet which had been brought to perfection by Dryden and Pope and which had for more than one generation driven all free movement of poetic feeling out of the field in favor of "a wit all see-saw between That and This." We may question whether the couplet, with its demand for epigrammatic conciseness, was the best possible vehicle for the sympathetic picture of village life which Goldsmith desired to present: but he draws from his measure, to a certain degree, effects of a new order. His treatment is less brilliant than spontaneous. Pope's couplets are chiselled like a cameo; Goldsmith's flow quietly, like his own "glassy" and "never-failing brook" between their careful banks. Goldsmith has more touches of pure poetry and fewer rhetorical figures. Pope could no more have written the line "Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn" than Goldsmith could have described the toilette of Belinda. If we have fewer antitheses and epigrams in Goldsmith, however, we have a like perfection of finish within the limits of the line or couplet, a like search for condensation and for classical precision of outline. Another age was to break loose from tradition altogether and to draw from the couplet a music fresh and strange. Compare these four well-known lines from *The Deserted Village* with the passage from Keats's *Sleep and Poetry* which follows:

As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees young and old, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep.

Note how great the gain to the modern ear from the freedom and variety with which Keats's music overflows the ends of lines. But no one was writing in this way in Goldsmith's time. He made a singularly perfect use of the instrument ready to his hand, and it is profitable to study his diction line by line, noting how each word is charged with significance and each phrase adds to the luminous completeness of the whole. Bartlett in his *Familiar Quotations* gives no less than seventy-four lines from *The Deserted Village.* This surprising figure shows how thoroughly England has made the poem her own.

The description of Auburn is full of reminiscences of Lissoy, the Irish village where Goldsmith lived as a child. People said then that the eviction of the peasants in obedience to the cruel greed of the landlord might occur across the Channel, but could not happen in England. Goldsmith, as may be seen in the graceful dedication of the poem to Sir Joshua Reynolds, insisted that it could: but without doubt dim memories of what happened in sorrowful Erin affected his ostensible pictures of English life. The portraits of the Parson and the Schoolmaster, which give the poem so much of its charm, are Irish portraits: the Parson was drawn partly from his father, partly from the beloved brother to whom he dedicated *The Traveller,* and who, like the Parson in the poem, was, he tells us, "passing rich on forty pounds a year." This description is one of the best character studies in English verse. It is curiously like Chaucer's account of his poor parson in the Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales;* and every student should compare the two passages and note with interest how the humble service of the People in the Name of God has produced the same types from age to age. There is more humor in the portrait of the Schoolmaster, Goldsmith's old teacher in Lissoy,—yet this picture, too, is full of sympathy. Indeed, the sympathy in all these studies puts this poem in quite a different class from the clever character-sketching in verse practiced by Pope and Dryden. It is interesting to compare such a study as Zimri in Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel,* or Atticus in Pope's *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* with these loving verses of Goldsmith's. Dryden and Pope point their couplets with venom. Goldsmith's laugh is always affectionate. Does satire or sympathy, criticism or affection, penetrate to a deeper understanding of character? All literature and all life suggest the question.

Poetry, said Milton, should be "simple, sensuous, and passionate," and Wordsworth adds that poetry can only exist where "it can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move its wings." Goldsmith, like most men of his day, was careless of this truth, and in parts of his poem abstractions ring cold on the ear. Yet even in these, though the poetry may flag, the thought and spirit are fine; the wide social outlook bespeaks a man not only of tender heart but of clear, grave intellectual vision. Goldsmith may have been hazy about his economic facts in detail: but that absorption of the land of England by great estates, which so moved his indignation, is a crying evil which still strikes the eye even of the tourist, and which is even now vigorously demanding redress through political struggle. Perhaps the poet's evicted immigrants never made their way to those dimly-conceived regions "where wild Altama murmurs to their woe." But there were plenty of evictions in Ireland, and today many a depopulated village in southern Italy shows conditions not literally similar nor due to the same cause as those described by Goldsmith, yet vividly suggested by his lines. It is with a fine turn at the end that the poet sees, no longer the poor simple people, but the rural virtues themselves, sadly leaving the land where luxury and greed have become masters: some of his ringing couplets may well sound in our American ears today, as he tells us

How wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land;

or exclaims in noble anger,

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay.

The Deserted Village, then, follows in many respects the pseudo-classic tradition of the eighteenth century. But it also marks the quickening of a new spirit. Far more explicitly than Gray's *Elegy* it shifts the centre of interest from court and town and the artificial society which Pope and Addison and the novelists of the age revelled in describing, to simple village life. It is suffused by undisguised tenderness, and it is full of solicitude for the humble, and of a social passion in which Goldsmith is distinctly in advance of his generation and a precursor of the school that is to the fore today in political economy. We can trace in it but vaguely that rebirth of beauty and of wonder already dimly prophesied in the poetry of Gray and of Collins: but we do find in it a harbinger of that poetry of personal sentiment and of democratic sympathies which was to be one of the glories of the coming age. *The Deserted Village* points the way to Burns's *The Cotter's Saturday Night,* to Wordsworth's *Michael* and *Leech-Gatherer,* and to all those interpretations of the beauty and pathos in the lives of the poor which were to form a distinctive feature alike of the poetry and the fiction of the nineteenth century.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

DEDICATION.

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

Dear Sir,—I can have no expectations, in an address of this kind, either to add to your reputation, or to establish my own. You can gain nothing from my admiration, as I am ignorant of that art in which you are said to excel; and I may lose much by the severity of your judgment, as few have a juster taste in poetry than you. Setting interest, therefore, aside, to which I never paid much attention, I must be indulged at present in following my affections. The only dedication I ever made was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this poem to you.

How far you may be pleased with the versification and mere mechanical parts of this attempt, I do not pretend to inquire; but I know you will object (and indeed several of our best and wisest friends concur in the opinion), that the depopulation it deplores is nowhere to be seen, and the disorders it laments are only to be found in the poet's own imagination. To this I can scarce make any other answer than that I sincerely believe what I have written; that I have taken all possible pains, in my country excursions, for these four or five years past, to be certain of what I allege; and that all my views and inquiries have led me to believe those miseries real, which I here attempt to display. But this is not the place to enter into an inquiry, whether the country be depopulating or not; the discussion would take up much room, and I should prove myself, at best, an indifferent politician, to tire the reader with a long preface, when I want his unfatigued attention to a long poem.

In regretting the depopulation of the country, I inveigh against the increase of our luxuries, and here also I expect the shout of modern politicians against me. For twenty or thirty years past, it has been the fashion to consider luxury as one of the greatest national advantages; and all the wisdom of antiquity, in that particular, as erroneous. Still, however, I must remain a professed ancient on that head, and continue to think those luxuries prejudicial to states by which so many vices are introduced, and so many kingdoms have been undone. Indeed, so much has been poured out of late on the other side of the question, that, merely for the sake of novelty and variety, one would sometimes wish to be in the right.—I am, dear Sir,

Your sincere Friend and ardent Admirer,
Oliver Goldsmith.

Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheer'd the laboring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delay'd;
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endear'd each scene!
How often have I paus'd on every charm,
The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topt the neighboring hill,
The hawthorn bush with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made!
How often have I blest the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labor free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree;
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old survey'd;
And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,

And sleights of art and feats of strength went round;
And still, as each repeated pleasure tir'd,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspir'd;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown,
By holding out, to tire each other down;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter titter'd round the place;
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove:
These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught e'en toil to please;
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed,
These were thy charms,—but all these charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn!
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green:
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain.
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But chok'd with sedges works its weedy way;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amidst thy desert-walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall;
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand
Far, far away thy children leave the land.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;

Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade:
A breath can make them, as a breath has made,
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintain'd its man;
For him light labor spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life requir'd, but gave no more;
His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are alter'd; trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain;
Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose;
And every want to opulence allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that ask'd but little room,
Those healthful sports that grac'd the peaceful scene,
Liv'd in each look, and brighten'd all the green:
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here, as I take my solitary rounds
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruin'd grounds,
And, many a year elaps'd, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes, with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose;
I still had hopes—for pride attends us still—
Amidst the swains to show my book-learn'd skill,
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;
And, as a hare whom hounds and horns pursue
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return,—and die at home at last.

O blest retirement! friend to life's decline,
Retreat from care, that never must be mine,
How blest is he who crowns in shades like these
A youth of labor with an age of ease;
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 't is hard to combat, learns to fly!
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;
No surly porter stands in guilty state,
To spurn imploring famine from the gate:
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending virtue's friend;
Bends to the grave with unperceiv'd decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way;
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past.

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close

Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.
There, as I pass'd with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came soften'd from below;
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that low'd to meet their young;
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool;
The playful children just let loose from school;
The watch-dog's voice that bay'd the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind:
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
But all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
All but yon widow'd, solitary thing
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring;
She, wretched matron,—forc'd in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry fagot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn—
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smil'd,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild,
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year.
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had chang'd, nor wish'd to change, his place;

Unpractis'd he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize,
More skill'd to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train,
He chid their wanderings, but reliev'd their pain;
The long-remember'd beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sate by his fire, and talk'd the night away;
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shoulder'd his crutch, and shew'd how fields were won.
Pleas'd with his guests, the good man learn'd to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings lean'd to virtue's side:
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt for all.
And as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way.

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismay'd,
The reverend champion stood. At his control,
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;

Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whisper'd praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorn'd the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remain'd to pray.
The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;
Even children follow'd, with endearing wile,
And pluck'd his gown, to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest,
Their welfare pleas'd him, and their cares distrest;
To them his heart, his love, his griefs, were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven:
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way
With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule,
The village master taught his little school.
A man severe he was, and stern to view;
I knew him well, and every truant knew:
Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laugh'd, with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he:
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd.
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,

The love he bore to learning was in fault.
The village all declar'd how much he knew;
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher, too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could gauge;
In arguing, too, the parson own'd his skill,
For even though vanquish'd he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amaz'd the gazing rustics rang'd around;
And still they gaz'd, and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame. The very spot,
Where many a time he triumph'd, is forgot.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspir'd,
Where gray-beard mirth and smiling toil retir'd,
Where village statesmen talk'd with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.
Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlor splendors of that festive place:
The whitewash'd wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the door;
The chest, contriv'd a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;
The pictures plac'd for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose;
The hearth, except when winter chill'd the day,
With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay,
While broken teacups, wisely kept for show,
Rang'd o'er the chimney, glisten'd in a row.

Vain, transitory splendors! could not all
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart.
Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art.
Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfin'd.
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd,—
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
And even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart, distrusting, asks if this be joy.

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'T is yours to judge how wide the limits stand

Between a splendid and a happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore;
Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains: this wealth is but a name,
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds:
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robb'd the neighboring fields of half their growth;
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies.
While thus the land, adorn'd for pleasure, all
In barren splendor feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female, unadorn'd and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slights every borrow'd charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes;
But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,
When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress:
Thus fares the land, by luxury betray'd,
In nature's simplest charms at first array'd;
But, verging to decline, its splendors rise,
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;

While, scourged by famine from the smiling land,
The mournful peasant leads his humble band;
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms—a garden and a grave.

Where then, ah! where shall poverty reside,
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd,
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And even the bare-worn common is denied.
If to the city sped, what waits him there?
To see profusion that he must not share;
To see ten thousand baneful arts combin'd,
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;
To see those joys the sons of pleasure know
Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe.
Here, while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;
Here, while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
The dome where Pleasure holds her midnight reign,
Here, richly deck'd, admits the gorgeous train;
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!
Sure these denote one universal joy!
Are these thy serious thoughts? Ah! turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distrest;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,

Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn;
Now lost to all—her friends, her virtue fled—
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel, and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet Auburn, thine, the loveliest train,
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread.

Ah, no! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charm'd before,
The various terrors of that horrid shore:
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day;
Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling;
Those pois'nous fields with rank luxuriance crown'd,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey
And savage men more murderous still than they;
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravag'd landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy-vested green,

The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day
That call'd them from their native walks away;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
Hung round the bowers, and fondly look'd their last,
And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main;
And, shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep!
The good old sire the first prepar'd to go
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.

His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And bless'd the cot where every pleasure rose;
And kiss'd her thoughtless babes with many a tear
And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly dear;
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.

O Luxury! thou curst by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchang'd are things like these for thee!
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,

Boast of a florid vigor not their own.
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank, unwieldy woe;
Till sapp'd their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

Even now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done;
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural Virtues leave the land.
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail
That, idly waiting, flaps with every gale,
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented Toil, and hospitable Care,
And kind connubial Tenderness, are there;
And Piety with wishes plac'd above,
And steady Loyalty, and faithful Love.
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade;
Unfit, in these degenerate times of shame,
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame;
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;
Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;
Thou guide, by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!
Farewell! and oh! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
Whether where equinoctial fervors glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,

Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigors of the inclement clime;
Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain,
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
425 Teach him that states of native strength possest,
Though very poor, may still be very blest;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labor'd mole away;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
430 As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

NOTES.

The Dedication: Sir Joshua, the great painter to whom the poem is dedicated in these graceful and touching words, was so pleased with the compliment that he painted a picture called "Resignation," representing an aged beggar, which was to be engraved and to carry the inscription: "This attempt to express a character in *The Deserted Village* is dedicated to Dr. Goldsmith by his sincere friend and admirer, Joshua Reynolds."

Goldsmith was wrong in his opinion that England was "depopulating," but not wrong in his general view of the land question. When he inveighed "against the increase of our luxuries" he may have been a "professed ancient" to his own time, but he was also a prophet of the future. Many of the greatest nineteenth century thinkers, Carlyle and Ruskin especially, were to make his cry the burden of their teaching. Today, even "modern politicians" and economists shout no longer against him but for him: and only the rash and ignorant person dares to claim that the production of luxuries can in the long run relieve economic distress.

12. *Decent:* Akin to Latin "decus," honor, and used in its frequent eighteenth century sense of becoming, comely, fit. Compare Wordsworth's *Prelude,* Book IV, 21:

> I saw the snow-white church upon her hill
> Sit like a throned Lady, sending out
> A gracious look all over her domain.

24, etc. This description, although in the slightly formal manner of the times, presents real memories of a real village. It is quite different in tone from the pastoral poetry of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which was usually written by men who knew little of country life at first hand, but who invented a pretty dream-land where the manners and customs were derived rather from Sicily than from England, and where the fruits of civilization might be enjoyed without its pains. On the other hand, Goldsmith does not present his village nearly as vividly as Crabbe or Burns or Wordsworth would have done. His poem is transitional between the conventionality of the older pastoral and modern realism.

39. *One only master:* In 1910, one-tenth of the inhabitants of England owned nine-tenths of the land. Whole villages often belong to the great landed estates as part of their property. See for an admirable description of such a village, the opening chapters of Trollope's novel, *Dr. Thorne:* and for a picture of the constant ill-feeling between the tillers of the soil and the landed gentry, Charles Kingsley's *Yeast.*

40. *Half a tillage:* The land is kept for shooting, not for agriculture.

44. *The hollow-sounding bittern:* A bittern is a kind of heron, a marsh-bird.

51. *Ill fares the land, etc.:* Goldsmith is deeply in earnest in the following passage. Note the strong progressive word, "hastening." And compare the long address of the Vicar in the nineteenth chapter of *The Vicar of Wakefield,* especially the passage beginning: "An accumulation of wealth, however, must necessarily be the consequence when, as at present, more riches flow in from external commerce than from internal industry," and ending: "Those, however, who are willing to move in a great man's vortex are only such as must be slaves, the rabble of mankind."

"There is no wealth but life," said John Ruskin in a memorable epigram. And he accordingly defined the aim of political economy to be "The multiplication of human life at the highest standard."

58. *Maintained its man:* Peasant-proprietorship is still urged by many thoughtful people as the solution of the land-question. Others prefer communal or state ownership, with carefully guarded methods of tenure.

But what is the time of which Goldsmith is thinking when he says, "Ere England's griefs began"? Not the middle ages, with their system of villeinage. Not the fifteenth century, with the miseries of which one may read in the first book of Sir Thomas More's *Utopia.* Hardly the sixteenth century, or the seventeenth. One fears that it was the Saturnian Age ever dear to poetic dream.

63. *Trade's unfeeling train:* Note the instinctive delight of the poet in agriculture and his distaste for commerce. It is worth noting that many of the great landholders in England today made their money in trade.

67. *And every want to opulence allied:* What are some of the

wants "to opulence allied" as compared with those allied to poverty?

80. This entire line is the object of "view."

83. This, the most touching section of the poem, is written in singularly pure and simple English.

103. *For him no wretches, etc.:* The following passage evinces Goldsmith's sensitiveness in a surprising way. The recoil from profiting by the painful labor of others is one of the best products of modern democracy. But here it is, in the full tide of the eighteenth century, felt as keenly as Ruskin could have felt it. Another eighteenth century worthy, the saintly American Quaker, John Woolman, suffered agonies from this same cause.

114. *The village murmur:* Charmingly analyzed in the following lines. Only we should hardly today take a pensive pleasure in hearing, even blended with other sounds, "the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind."

Carlyle, looking down at a village from a hill-top, takes especial satisfaction in watching the colored smoke that spouts from cottage chimneys and suggests dinners a-cooking (*Sartor Resartus*). Is anything too homely to be proper material for poetry? Gabbling geese, mooing cows, screaming children, barking dogs, none of them produce music. What is the secret of their charm to the imagination in this passage?

129. *Yon widow'd solitary thing*: This single figure on whom our eyes are now fixed anticipates the type of subject dear to Wordsworth in poetry and to Millet in painting. This special old woman has been identified by curious critics as one Catherine Gerarty: but really, Goldsmith need not have had any individual in mind.

142. *Passing rich with forty pounds a year:* "Passing" is used in the sense often found in Shakespeare: the expression "passing strange" still seems hardly obsolete.

In Goldsmith's dedication of *The Traveller* to his brother Henry, a clergyman in Ireland, we read that the poem "is addressed to a man who, despising fame and fortune, has retired early to happiness and obscurity, with an income of forty pounds a year. I now perceive, my dear brother, the wisdom of your humble choice."

This whole description is most deservedly a familiar quotation.

160, 161. Would these two lines appear admirable, do you think, to our modern Associated Charities?

194. *With blossom'd furze:* One of the lines that shows Goldsmith the poet.

196. *The village master:* Identified with Thomas Byrne, familiarly known as "Paddy Byrne," an old soldier who taught school in Lissoy when the poet was a little boy.

209. *Terms* are the terms of law-courts and universities. *Tides* are not tides on the sea, but seasons like Christmastide, Eastertide.

210. *Gauge:* "A gauger is in some places a sworn officer, whose duty it is to measure the contents of hogsheads, barrels, or casks."

220. Compare the talk at the Inn with similar scenes presented by Dickens and George Eliot. Old-fashioned English inns have furnished much delightful material to literature.

225, etc. The following description of an author's bed-chamber was sent by Goldsmith to his brother some time earlier than the date of *The Deserted Village.* It is doubtless a picture of his own way of living in the days of his poverty. A comparison with the passage in the text will show the careful and minute art which has gone to shaping a poem so seemingly spontaneous, so easy and simple in movement, as *The Deserted Village.* Writers in the eighteenth century spared no pains with their lines, and the best of them well knew that ease and plainness in the style were no result of an easy-going way of writing but of deliberate effort.

Where the Red Lion, staring o'er the way,
Invites each passing stranger that can pay;
Where Calvert's butt, and Parson's black champagne,
Regale the drabs and bloods of Drury-lane;
There, in a lonely room, from bailiffs snug,
The Muse found Scroggen stretch'd beneath a rug.
A window, patch'd with paper, lent a ray,
That dimly show'd the state in which he lay;
The sanded floor that grits beneath the tread;
The humid wall with paltry pictures spread;
The royal game of goose was there in view,
And the twelve rules the royal martyr drew;
The seasons, fram'd with listing, found a place,
And brave prince William show'd his lampblack face.
The morn was cold; he views with keen desire
The rusty grate unconscious of a fire:
With beer and milk arrears the frieze was scor'd,
And five crack'd teacups dress'd the chimney board;
A nightcap deck'd his brows instead of bay,
A cap by night,—a stocking all the day!

232. *The twelve good rules:* Portraits of King Charles, by a queer twist of favor become a popular hero, in those days adorned inns and lodgings much as portraits of Lord Byron did within living memory. Beneath the portrait would be engraved the Twelve Rules assigned to the Royal Martyr. They ran: 1. Urge no healths. 2. Profane no divine ordinances. 3. Touch no state matters. 4. Reveal no secrets. 5. Pick no quarrels. 6. Make no companions. 7. Maintain no ill opinions. 8. Keep no bad company. 9. Encourage no vice. 10. Make no long meal. 11. Re-

peat no grievances. 12. Lay no wagers. The royal game of goose was a species of checkers.

Goldsmith, for once, is less afraid of the concrete than Wordsworth. See *The Prelude,* Book I, 509, for a description of the Royal Game of Goose.

244. *The woodman's ballad:* The woodman is the man used to the woods, the hunter. Perhaps he sang a ballad of Robin Hood and the good greenshawe.

262. *The toiling pleasure sickens into pain:* Again a line that summarizes a whole train of thought and experience.

265-286. Carlyle, a little over half a century later, was to say much the same thing with even more force. What in Goldsmith is admirable general statement becomes in Carlyle direct analysis:

"The condition of England . . . is justly regarded as one of the most ominous and withal one of the strangest ever seen in this world. England is full of wealth, of multifarious produce, supply for human want in every kind; yet England is dying of inanition. With unabated bounty the land of England blooms and grows; waving with yellow harvests; thick-studded with workshops, industrial implements, with fifteen millions of workers: The work they have done is here, abundant, exuberant, on every hand of us; and behold, some baleful fiat as of Enchantment has gone forth, saying, Touch it not, ye workers; none of you can touch it, no man of you shall be the better for it; this is enchanted fruit." *Past and Present.*

287. *Female:* Now a vulgarism, but in good use at that time.

295. Other great invectives against luxury may be found in the writings of Ruskin, Tolstoy, and William Morris. It is noteworthy that poets and artists are especially prominent among the enemies of extravagance and waste. Can you cite any instances in history of the process described by Goldsmith?

308. *Even the bare-worn common:* This line illustrates the change then going on in agricultural holdings.

316. *Artist:* Artizan.

318. *The black gibbet:* This is no fancy picture. In Goldsmith's time many trifling offences were punishable by death, and the gallows, with a corpse hanging from it, was still a familiar object on country cross-roads. Goldsmith makes clear that it was to be met in the city also.

341. Shortly before this time, the philanthropist Oglethorpe, the founder of the State of Georgia, had welcomed a number of poor debtors to the colony of Georgia. This fact has worked on Goldsmith's imagination. But the description given here does not at all resemble Georgia, although the Altama is a Georgian river.

363-384. Although there is a good deal of poetic conventionality in the account of the departure of the exiles, and although many lines have rather a prim eighteenth century quality, the general feeling in this passage is sweet and sound. Similar scenes may be witnessed any day now in Italy. De Amicis, the Italian writer, in a book called *On the Ocean,* has an excellent and moving account of the departure of poor emigrants from their native land and of the terrors and joys of a sea-voyage to their new homes.

395, etc. This vision of "the rural virtues" leaving the land as the poor emigrants had done, presents in imaginative form the national catastrophe which Goldsmith has had in view throughout. We love best to linger on the portraits of the Parson and the Schoolmaster and the graceful descriptions of the happy village. But the poet wrote with serious purpose, using the fate of his village to illustrate what he conceived to be a great and threatening evil. This concluding section combines his intellectual conviction with his poetic instinct and is a fitting termination to both strains in the poem.

410, etc. Goldsmith only mentions the other departing Virtues: but he gives ten charming lines to Poetry. He was more intimate perhaps with her than with the others. Do you approve of having Poetry put among the rural virtues? Does she really flee the land given over to luxury?

418. Torno is a river dividing Sweden from Russia and falling into the Gulf of Bothnia. Pambamarca is a mountain near Quito. Goldsmith wanted a Northern and a Southern name.

423. *Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain:* Goldsmith's idea of the function of poetry may seem didactic. But it was shared by Shelley, who wrote in *A Defense of Poetry,* "The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause."

427. *That trade's proud empire, etc.:* Dr. Johnson told Boswell that he had written the last four lines of *The Deserted Village.* We might not have suspected this from internal evidence, but the stately lines are characteristic of Johnson.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON

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I.

Byron was born in 1788, a year before the Bastille was taken. He died in 1824, nine years after the battle of Waterloo. His life thus covered that period of political storms and unrest spiritual and social which inaugurated the period we live in. Goldsmith and Gray represent a restrained epoch that "studied to be quiet," and offered few incentives to poetry. Byron's brief life was passed in an age which, perhaps on account of its outer excitements, proved a mighty nursing mother to poets. Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey were from fifteen to twenty years his senior; Shelley and Keats were a few years younger. Among these men of genius, Byron expressed most clearly, if not most deeply, the passions of contemporary Europe. "It is he," says the Danish critic Georg Brandes, "who sets the final and decisive stamp on the poetic literature of the age."

Byron has well been called "a revolutionary aristocrat." He was of an ancient line; several of his predecessors had led violent and disorderly lives. The child was born lame, and although he was always of remarkable personal beauty, this defect embittered his whole life. His mother, a woman of ungoverned passions, alternately petted and abused him. She encouraged him in pride of rank; when the little boy was told that he had succeeded to a title, he was so moved and excited that he burst into tears. With the title went the estate of Newstead Abbey; and Byron, when he was ten years old, left Scotland, his early home, for England. Here he received his education, first at the public school of Harrow, then at Trinity College, Cambridge. He was a careless though clever student, an omnivorous reader, a lover of sport and a singularly ardent friend; but his tastes were wild. In 1808 he received the honorary title of M. A. from his university.

While an undergraduate Byron had printed two little volumes of verse, the second of which, *Hours of Idleness,* fell into the hands of Lord Brougham, who treated it severely in *The Edinburgh Review.* Byron was roused to anger, and a year later took his revenge in the satirical poem *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,* which first revealed his literary power. About the same time he came of age and took his seat in the House of Lords. Presently, however, he was seized with the impulse to travel, and betook himself with a friend to the Continent, where he spent two years, visiting many countries, some of them, like Sardinia, Turkey, and Greece, unfamiliar enough to satisfy his restless passion for romantic adventure. He returned to England in 1811 with a number of satires, which he valued, and a poetic record of his travels in the Spenserian stanza, of which he seems to have thought lightly. But this record, published under the title *Childe Harold,* fascinated the English public; and, to use Byron's own well-known phrase, he awoke one morning and found himself famous.

Byron now became for a time the idol of English society. His genius was in its first fervor, and he poured from the press a series of metrical romances: *The Waltz, The Giaour, The Bride of Abydos, The Corsair, Lara, The Siege of Corinth,* and *Parisina.* These vivid tales benefited English literature in more ways than one, for they quite eclipsed the spirited but less highly colored work of Scott in the same vein, and thus led indirectly to the writing of *The Waverley Novels.*

In a few years sunshine changed to storm. Byron was a man of unregulated impulses. He had married in 1815 an English girl, Miss Milbanke. A year later she left him, and all England took her side in the quarrel. Byron, previously so flattered, became the object of universal execration and abuse. In a mood of smarting pride and rage, he left England, never to return. Again he sought relief in travel: spent some time on the lovely Lake of Geneva, where his sorrows were partially soothed by the inspiration of Alpine scenery and the gentle fellowship of the most ethereal of English poets, Percy Bysshe Shelley: and finally settled in Venice. During these later years of his life, his genius found expression in a long series of poems. Meantime, Byron became intensely interested in the political agitation going on all over Europe. His sympathies were always with the oppressed: his maiden speech in the British Parliament had been in favor of the striking weavers of Nottingham. But English methods had proved too tame for the taste of a man who wrote contemptuously: "I have simplified my politics to an utter detestation of all existing governments." Now he flung himself with energy into revolutionary movements on the Continent and joined the Society of the Carbonari, who in Italy were conspiring against the hated Austrian rule. His best poems are full of ardor for freedom, and he described what seemed to him the situation of his day when he wrote:

> Yet, Freedom, yet, thy banner, torn but flying,
> Streams like a thunder cloud against the wind.

The period immediately following the battle of Waterloo was deeply discouraging to all friends of liberty, and it was truly against the prevailing wind that the banner of freedom had to float. A monarchial reaction had set in and the Continental courts of Russia, Austria, and Prussia had formed in 1815 what they called a "Holy Alliance" for the repression of liberal and revolutionary movements. Such movements, however, flourish in persecution. Byron, in the nineteenth stanza of the third canto of *Childe Harold* asks bitterly whether the despotism of Napoleon had been overthrown in vain,—

> Is Earth more free?
> Did nations combat to make *One* submit;
> Or league to teach all kings due sovereignty?
> What! Shall reviving Thraldom again be
> The patched-up idol of enlightened days?
> Shall we, who struck the Lion down, shall we
> Pay the Wolf homage? proffering lowly gaze
> And servile knees to thrones?

But Byron not only wrote and conspired: he proved his earnestness by his death. The Greek war of independence against Turkey, which broke out in 1822, appealed to all lovers of "The Glory that was Greece." We hear musical echoes of the struggle in Shelley's drama, *Hellas*. Byron equipped a ship at his own expense and sailed for the scene. In Greece his patience, sagacity, and courage won general admiration. There was talk of making him king. But his death put an end to all such plans. He died of a fever at Missolonghi, in 1824,—a martyr to the cause of that freedom he had sung. He was thirty-six years old. Much in his life had been reckless and wrong, but his last months, as well as the nobler phases of his work, went far to make atonement.

II.

Until lately Byron had the greatest reputation in Europe of any English poet since Shakespeare. Probably this is still true, although the Continental peoples are now waking to the value of Wordsworth and Shelley. Byron's great contemporary fame may be due to the fact that he was neither behind his age, as a formalist is likely to be, nor in advance of it, as often happens to an idealist. He expressed it exactly, and it hailed the expression with rapture. As Brandes says, "The legions of the fugitives, the banished, the oppressed, the conspirators of every nation, kept their eyes fixed upon the one man who, among the universal debasement of intelligences and characters, stood upright. He made himself the mouthpiece of the dumb revolutionary indignation which was seething in the breasts of the best friends and lovers of liberty in Europe."

Byron's poems fall into clear divisions. They comprise a number of lyrics; the group of metrical romances, the work of his youth; the fine poem of travel, in Spenserian stanzas, *Childe Harold;* lyrical dramas, of which the best are *Manfred* and *Cain;* other dramas, including *Marino Faliero* and *The Two Foscari;* a group of satires, of which *The Vision of Judgment* is the finest; and finally, an unfinished epic, half romantic, half satirical in spirit, which is generally admitted to be his masterpiece, *Don Juan.*

The varying types of his work are the expression of a rich nature subject to many experiences. Yet through them all we see one persistent impulse. It is the impulse to escape from civilization, which seemed to him, as to many fine spirits in those days of the post-Napoleonic reaction, hopelessly repressive to lovers of freedom. In his metrical romances Byron seeks to escape the conventionalities that galled him by dwelling on romantic tales of life among primitive peoples and in remote lands. *Childe Harold* records his quest for freedom and healing in another fashion, through communion with nature and with the human past. In *Manfred* and *Cain* the poet expressed the pure spirit of revolt, and the endeavor to flee the galling bonds of law and order by retreat within the recesses of an untamed spirit and by an attitude of proud defiance. Finally, in *Don Juan,* Byron, weary of all these methods, and pursued, to use Wordsworth's phrase, "by a sense deathlike, of treacherous desertion, felt in that last place of refuge, his own soul," gave up the attempt to escape from the world he despised, and abandoned himself to it with sneering laughter. Here, where the romantic and the satiric strains in his genius flow at last together, we have the most distinctive and splendid expression of his genius.

In all these different forms he showed the power "to exhibit, with all the force of life, a world that had broken loose from its moorings."[1] Through his poems moves one gloomy figure, "lord of himself, that heritage of woe," in whose embittered reflection we catch the accents of Byron himself. Matthew Arnold asks:

> What boots it now that Byron bore,
> With haughty scorn that mocked the smart,
> Through Europe to the Aetolian shore,
> The pageant of his bleeding heart?
> That thousands counted every groan,
> And England made his woe her own?

It matters a great deal, for this "pageant" is the pageant of the romantic revolt; it is the truest expression in letters of the colossal egotism born of the Revolution. And if the next age was, with Carlyle in *Sartor Resartus*, scornfully to repudiate the mood, and to abandon "writing Satanic poetry" as an escape from the torture of the soul, the better way would hardly have been found had not Byron exhausted the possibilities of his own way. "There is no better proof of the enormous force of Byron's genius," says Lord Morley in his brilliant essay on the poet, "than that it was able to produce so fine an expression from elements so intrinsically unfavorable to high poetry as doubt, denial, antagonism, and weariness. Bare rebellion can not endure, and no succession of generations can continue to nourish themselves on the poetry of complaint and the idealization of revolt."

There are positive qualities also in Byron's poetry, and it is those which today give it a more than historic importance. What are these qualities? First, his gift of looking straight at life. Such passages as the famous account of the battle of Waterloo, in the third canto of *Childe Harold,* and all the well-known descriptions of natural beauty and of the great monuments of the past, attest Byron's sense for reality. He moves in the world of facts, instead of in that world of dreams inhabited by some of his contemporaries. Dreams are good in their way, but facts are good also. Again, Byron is capable of a noble enthusiasm and a contagious ardor. Our selections show how swiftly and justly he was moved by the more obviously heroic in human life, by the charm of Nature, by the significance of history. Even when he is most cynical his poetry yields ample evidences of a perverted power of direct and lofty feeling. One must also note his poetic equipment. Of the two qualities of good metre, movement and grace, he has been said to possess the first perfectly; nor is the second absent, though it is less marked. His impetuous rhythms, though often lacking in fineness, or even in accuracy,—for Byron's ear was not perfect,—are admirable for the freedom of their force and flow. Then we must do justice to Byron's intellectual power, which shows itself, not in his dealing with abstract themes, —"The moment he reflects he is a child," says Goethe,— but in his keen insight into human nature and in a sort of glorified common sense. His brilliant wit and satire are enough in themselves to place him among great English writers. The union of this satirical wit, by which he is allied to the school of Pope, with the adventurous temper and quick emotion that mark him as a contemporary of the great romanticists, gives the distinctive quality to his poetry. And, finally, we care for Byron on account of a true and manly sincerity.

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[1] John Morley.

This sincerity is curiously mingled with a good deal of affectation: often we feel that Byron is posing. But whenever he escapes from irritating self-consciousness and writes out of his heart, as in some of his lyrics, we know that we are listening to a great poet. Some people will always find a more intimate joy in the quiet gospel and delicate metres of Wordsworth; others will prefer to soar aloft with Shelley into that fair region "where music and moonlight and feeling are one." But the poet of Harold and Manfred and Don Juan will always hold his own beside these spirits of a differing greatness: for he is not only the chief voice of a past epoch, he is also at his best a great interpreter of permanent realities.

III.

The selections from Byron presented in this book are on the whole in his romantic, not in his satiric, manner. *The Prisoner of Chillon* and the third canto of *Childe Harold* were written in the spring of 1816, while the poet was living with Shelley on the shores of the lovely Lake of Geneva,—"clear, placid Leman." The fourth canto of *Childe Harold* was written just a year later, in Italy.

The serious Byron is seen at his best in these extracts. *The Prisoner of Chillon* may be classed in a way with his long series of metrical romances. But it is superior to nearly all of them in the dignity of its subject, in true emotion, in the beauty of its lyrical movement. Byron knew little in detail concerning the life of the not wholly attractive patriot in whose person he writes, and the poem is, as he himself calls it, "a fable." But it is a fable in which a noble sympathy with all who suffer for the cause of freedom has quickened the poet's imagination to a white heat.

The selections from *Childe Harold* also have been applauded and learned by heart by every generation since they were written. Indeed, the traveler in Europe encounters nearly all the most famous stanzas cut up into fragmentary quotations in his guide books; and he may be tempted to feel that the poet has given us a mere poetic gazetteer. But this would be doing him a great injustice. The value of the poem is not in mere description; close analysis reveals that there is comparatively little direct description in it. It is fine poetry because it is personal. It records the impact of much that is most beautiful in nature and most interesting in the human past, upon a fiery and responsive though not faultless spirit, and upon a keen intelligence.

Byron published the first two cantos of the poem in 1809, on his return from his first trip in Europe. He tells the story of his wanderings, but instead of using the first person he shields himself behind an imaginary hero, whom the public insisted on identifying with the poet himself. "Childe" is a title used in old romances for a young man, usually of noble birth. These first cantos are in every way inferior to the second two, which were written when the poet was seven and eight years older, and had passed through great and real sorrow. In the later cantos, Childe Harold virtually disappears, and nobody misses him. The poem becomes a direct transcript of Byron's experiences.

Our first selection is the famous meditation on the battle of Waterloo. Byron visited the battlefield within a year after the battle, and his stately stanzas thrill with the grandeur of the event and the force of his emotion. The other selections from this canto are inspired by the literary associations of the Lake of Geneva and by the sight of a thunderstorm among the mountains that surround it.

The fourth canto, here given as a whole, is inspired by Italy. It has no underlying principle of unity, except such as comes from the course of Byron's travels. These begin in Venice, to which he devotes twenty-nine stanzas. Then, after an excursion to Arqua, where Petrarch is buried, he turns southward, and stops at Ferrara, where he commemorates Tasso, and is led by meditation on other Italian poets to the fine passage on the wrongs of modern Italy. The forty-eighth to the sixty-second stanzas center in Florence, where the galleries and the Church of Santa Croce claim his chief attention. Still southward bound, he pauses in Umbria by Lake Thrasymene, but in the seventy-eighth stanza reaches Rome, his "City of the Soul," to which nearly ninety stanzas are dedicated. Throughout the poem his own sufferings have again and again pressed into utterance: now toward the end he pauses to glance at a contemporary public sorrow in England,—the death of the Princess Charlotte,—and then, with a right instinct for contrast and relief, closes the long survey of historic events and monuments by the great concluding stanzas,—the one hundred seventy-fifth to the end,—which transport us from the record of the human past and the experience of the human present to the solitudes of nature and the tameless reaches of the tumultuous sea.

Byron is only one among many English writers to feel the influence of the "woman-country" of Browning's love. The effect of Italy on English letters can indeed hardly be over-estimated. Hither came Chaucer in the fourteenth century, Sidney in the sixteenth, Milton in the seventeenth, to be quickened at her sacred fires. From Italy, the drama of the time of Shakespeare and the romantic epic of the same period drew models and themes. In the eighteenth century France took the lead, and French fashions ruled supreme in thought and letters. The nineteenth century was to turn to Italy again, and the poetry of Byron and Shelley witnesses to the revival of her spell. It is felt in different ways by Ruskin, by Swinburne, by both the Brownings, by Rossetti, and by many later men; and we may find evidence of the inexhaustible wealth of that fair land in the fact that no two of these writers have found the same treasures there.

Byron's Italy is a rather obvious one. It is the country of that classic antiquity in the knowledge of which every English schoolboy was drilled, and of the art and literature of the High Renaissance, familiar in those days as a matter of course to every man of taste. To much that is now most cherished in Italy he was blind. The Italy of the middle ages had no charms for him. He never noticed the little walled mediæval towns that from their hilltops fascinate the modern traveler. One can search the canto in vain for a mention of the great saints, a St. Francis or a St. Catherine, who impart such glory to the land. His mention of Dante is perfunctory, and would not prove that he had ever read a line of the poet. In art, his taste resembles that of

Shelley, who turned faint with ecstasy over the vulgar paintings of Guido Reni, and never gave a glance to the great work of Botticelli, of Giotto, or of the earlier artists; but we can hardly imagine Shelley visiting the Medici Chapel and never mentioning those superb statues of Michael Angelo that rest solemnly upon the tombs, awaiting the word of life. Byron not only shared the limitations of the taste of his time,—he evinces no natural affinity for much that is noblest in the Old World.

But if there are certain blind spots in his vision, how much he sees! One needs a wide knowledge of history in Roman and Renaissance days to appreciate fully the force of the emotions that sway him. Notes can give the essential information in scattered items, but the student should be quickened to desire more intimate understanding. Above all, he should realize keenly the situation of modern Italy when Byron wrote. Supreme among nations for the glory of her record, she lay, enslaved and all but supine, at the feet of the Austrian tyrant, the days of her liberation from the yoke and her union as a people still almost half a century in the future. But in her sleep she stirred, and Byron had identified himself with the forces that sought to awaken her. This underlying situation lends dramatic poignancy to his high praise and his enthusiastic devotion, and enables us to understand the ring of personal feeling in such stanzas as the twenty-sixth, forty-second, and forty-seventh.

Childe Harold is written in the stanza used by Spenser in his romantic epic, *The Faery Queen*. This stanza consists of eight lines of iambic pentameter, the same line as that used by Shakespeare in his dramas and by Milton in *Paradise Lost,* followed by an Alexandrine, or a line composed of six feet instead of five. It is the most dignified stanza in English verse and probably the one best adapted to description and reflection. Byron's handling of it should be compared with that of Shelley in his *Revolt of Islam* and *Adonais,* and that of Keats, in *The Eve of St. Agnes.* Byron himself gets very different effects from the stanza at different times. In the first two cantos he writes with dignified and leisurely grace; in the last two, he allows himself a more broken and irregular movement. The impetuous flow of his thought disregards ends, not only of lines but of stanzas, and gives an impression of masterful ease.

SONNET ON CHILLON

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart, which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consign'd—
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.

Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard! May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON.

I.

My hair is gray, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears;
My limbs are bowed, though not with toil,
But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are banned, and bárred—forbidden fare;
But this was for my father's faith
I suffered chains and courted death;
That father perished at the stake

For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling place;
We were seven—who now are one,
  Six in youth, and one in age,
Finished as they had begun,
  Proud of Persecution's rage;
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have sealed:
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;—
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II.

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns massy and gray,
Dim with a dull imprisoned ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left:
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp:
And in each pillar there is a ring,
  And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,
  For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise

For years—I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score
When my last brother drooped and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III.

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

IV.

I was the eldest of the three,
And to uphold and cheer the rest
I ought to do—and did my best—

And each did well in his degree.
  The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him—with eyes as blue as heaven,
  For him my soul was sorely moved:
And truly might it be distressed
To see such bird in such a nest;
For he was beautiful as day—
  (When day was beautiful to me
  As to young eagles being free)—
  A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
  Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun:
  And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for naught but others' ills,
And then they flowed like mountain rills,
Unless he could assuage the woe
Which he abhorred to view below.

V.

The other was as pure of mind,
But formed to combat with his kind;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perished in the foremost rank
  With joy:—but not in chains to pine:
His spirit withered with their clank,
  I saw it silently decline—
  And so perchance in sooth did mine:
But yet I forced it on to cheer

Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had followed there the deer and wolf;
To him this dungeon was a gulf,
And fettered feet the worst of ills.

VI.

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

VII.

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food;
It was not that 't was coarse and rude,

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

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

VIII.

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

Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray—
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright,
And not a word of murmur, not
A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence—lost
In this last loss, of all the most;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less:
I listened, but I could not hear—
I called, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 't was hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonishèd;
I called, and thought I heard a sound—
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rushed to him:—I found him not,
I only stirred in this black spot,
I only lived—*I* only drew
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
The last, the sole, the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.
One on the earth, and one beneath—
My brothers—both had ceased to breathe.
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,

But felt that I was still alive—
A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.
I know not why
I could not die,
I had no earthly hope—but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death.

IX.

What next befell me then and there
I know not well—I never knew—
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too:
I had no thought, no feeling—none—
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and gray;
It was not night—it was not day,
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness, without a place;
There were no stars, no earth, no time,
No check, no change, no good, no crime,
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

X.

A light broke in upon my brain,—
It was the carol of a bird;

It ceased, and then it came again,
  The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track;
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perched, as fond and tame,
  And tamer than upon the tree;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
  And seemed to say them all for me!
I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
It seemed like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
  Or broke its cage to perch on mine,
But knowing well captivity,
  Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
Or if it were, in wingèd guise,
A visitant from Paradise;

For—Heaven forgive that thought! the while
Which made me both to weep and smile;
I sometimes deemed that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 't was mortal well I knew,
For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone,—
Lone—as the corse within its shroud,
Lone—as a solitary cloud,
A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI.

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

My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crushed heart fell blind and sick.

XII.

I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me:
No child, no sire, no kin had I,
No partner in my misery;
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barred windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high,
The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII.

I saw them—and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high—their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channelled rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-walled distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down;
And then there was a little isle,

Which in my very face did smile,
The only one in view;
A small green isle, it seemed no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing,
Of gentle breath and hue.
The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seemed joyous each and all;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seemed to fly,
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled—and would fain
I had not left my recent chain;
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save,—
And yet my glance, too much oppressed,
Had almost need of such a rest.

XIV.

It might be months, or years, or days,
I kept no count—I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
And clear them of their dreary mote;
At last men came to set me free,
I asked not why, and recked not where;

It was at length the same to me,
Fettered or fetterless to be,
  I learned to love despair.
And thus when they appeared at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage—and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home:
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watched them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learned to dwell—
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are:—even I
Regained my freedom with a sigh.

CHILDE HAROLD.

SELECTIONS FROM CANTO III.

XVII.

Stop!—for thy tread is on an Empire's dust!
An earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!
Is the spot marked with no colossal bust,
Nor column trophied for triumphal show?
None; but the moral's truth tells simpler so,
As the ground was before, thus let it be;—
How that red rain hath made the harvest grow!
And is this all the world has gained by thee,
Thou first and last of fields, king-making victory?

XVIII.

And Harold stands upon this place of skulls,
The grave of France, the deadly Waterloo!
How in an hour the power which gave annuls
Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting too!
In 'pride of place' here last the eagle flew,
Then tore with bloody talon the rent plain,
Pierced by the shaft of banded nations through;
Ambition's life and labors all were vain;
He wears the shattered links of the world's broken chain.

XIX.

Fit retribution! Gaul may champ the bit
And foam in fetters,—but is Earth more free?

Did nations combat to make *One* submit,
Or league to teach all kings true sovereignty?
What! shall reviving Thraldom again be
The patched-up idol of enlightened days?
Shall we who struck the Lion down, shall we
Pay the Wolf homage, proffering lowly gaze
And servile knees to thrones? No; *prove* before ye praise!

XX.

If not, o'er one fallen despot boast no more!
In vain fair cheeks were furrowed with hot tears
For Europe's flowers long rooted up before
The trampler of her vineyards; in vain years
Of death, depopulation, bondage, fears,
Have all been borne, and broken by the accord
Of roused-up millions: all that most endears
Glory is when the myrtle wreathes a sword
Such as Harmodius drew on Athens' tyrant lord.

XXI.

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage-bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

XXII.

Did ye not hear it?—No; 't was but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;

On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet—
But hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once more,
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar!

XXIII.

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

XXIV.

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness;
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
Which ne'er might be repeated; who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise?

XXV.

And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,

Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering with white lips — 'The foe! they come! they come!'

XXVI.

And wild and high the 'Cameron's gathering' rose,
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes! —
How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills
Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring which instils
The stirring memory of a thousand years,
And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ears.

XXVII.

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

XXVIII.

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

. . . . .

LXXVI.

But this is not my theme; and I return
To that which is immediate, and require
Those who find contemplation in the urn,
To look on One whose dust was once all fire,
A native of the land where I respire
The clear air for a while — a passing guest,—
Where he became a being whose desire
Was to be glorious; 't was a foolish quest,
The which to gain and keep he sacrificed all rest.

LXXVII.

Here the self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau,
The apostle of affliction, he who threw
Enchantment over passion and from woe
Wrung overwhelming eloquence, first drew
The breath which made him wretched; yet he knew
How to make madness beautiful, and cast
O'er erring deeds and thoughts a heavenly hue

Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they passed
The eyes which o'er them shed tears feelingly and fast.

LXXVIII.

His love was passion's essence: — as a tree
On fire by lightning, with ethereal flame
Kindled he was, and blasted; for to be
Thus, and enamored, were in him the same.
But his was not the love of living dame,
Nor of the dead who rise upon our dreams,
But of ideal beauty, which became
In him existence, and o'erflowing teems
Along his burning page, distempered though it seems.

LXXIX.

This breathed itself to life in Julie, *this*
Invested her with all that 's wild and sweet;
This hallowed, too, the memorable kiss
Which every morn his fevered lip would greet
From hers, who but with friendship his would meet;
But to that gentle touch through brain and breast
Flashed the thrilled spirit's love-devouring heat,
In that absorbing sigh perchance more blest
Than vulgar minds may be with all they seek possessed.

LXXX.

His life was one long war with self-sought foes,
Or friends by him self-banished; for his mind
Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and chose
For its own cruel sacrifice the kind,
'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange and blind.
But he was phrensied, — wherefore, who may know?

Since cause might be which skill could never find;
But he was phrensied, by disease or woe,
To that worst pitch of all, which wears a reasoning show.

LXXXI.

For then he was inspired, and from him came,
As from the Pythian's mystic cave of yore,
Those oracles which set the world in flame,
Nor ceased to burn till kingdoms were no more.
Did he not this for France, which lay before
Bowed to the inborn tyranny of years,
Broken and trembling to the yoke she bore,
Till by the voice of him and his compeers
Roused up to too much wrath which follows o'ergrown fears?

LXXXII.

They made themselves a fearful monument!
The wreck of old opinions — things which grew,
Breathed from the birth of time: the veil they rent,
And what behind it lay all earth shall view.
But good with ill they also overthrew,
Leaving but ruins, wherewith to rebuild
Upon the same foundation, and renew
Dungeons and thrones, which the same hour refilled,
As heretofore, because ambition was self-willed.

LXXXIII.

But this will not endure, nor be endured!
Mankind have felt their strength, and made it felt.
They might have used it better, but, allured
By their new vigor, sternly have they dealt

On one another; Pity ceased to melt
With her once natural charities. But they,
Who in oppression's darkness caved have dwelt,
They were not eagles, nourished with the day;
What marvel then, at times, if they mistook their prey?

LXXXIV.

What deep wounds ever closed without a scar?
The heart's bleed longest, and but heal to wear
That which disfigures it; and they who war
With their own hopes, and have been vanquished, bear
Silence, but not submission: in his lair
Fixed Passion holds his breath, until the hour
Which shall atone for years; none need despair:
It came, it cometh, and will come, — the power
To punish or forgive — in *one* we shall be slower.

LXXXV.

Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake
With the wild world I dwelt in is a thing
Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.
This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
To waft me from distraction; once I loved
Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
Sounds sweet as if a sister's voice reproved,
That I with stern delights should e'er have been so moved.

LXXXVI.

It is the hush of night, and all between
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,

Mellowed and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
Save darkened Jura, whose capped heights appear
Precipitously steep; and drawing near,
There breathes a living fragrance from the shore
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more.

LXXXVII.

He is an evening reveller, who makes
His life an infancy and sings his fill;
At intervals, some bird from out the brakes
Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
There seems a floating whisper on the hill,
But that is fancy, for the starlight dews
All silently their tears of love instil,
Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
Deep into Nature's breast the spirit of her hues.

LXXXVIII.

Ye stars, which are the poetry of heaven!
If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
Of men and empires, — 't is to be forgiven,
That in our aspirations to be great
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
A beauty and a mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar
That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves
a star.

LXXXIX.

All heaven and earth are still — though not in sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most,
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep: —
All heaven and earth are still; from the high host
Of stars, to the lulled lake and mountain-coast,
All is concentred in a life intense,
Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of being, and a sense
Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

XC.

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude, where we are *least* alone;
A truth, which through our being then doth melt
And purifies from self: it is a tone,
The soul and source of music, which makes known
Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm
Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
Binding all things with beauty; — 't would disarm
The spectre Death, had he substantial power to harm.

XCI.

Not vainly did the early Persian make
His altar the high places and the peak
Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take
A fit and unwalled temple, there to seek
The Spirit in whose honor shrines are weak,
Upreared of human hands. Come, and compare
Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or Greek,
With Nature's realms of worship, earth and air,
Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy prayer!

XCII.

The sky is changed! — and such a change! O night,
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder! not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

XCIII.

And this is in the night. — Most glorious night!
Thou were not sent for slumber! let me be
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight, —
A portion of the tempest and of thee!
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
And now again 't is black, — and now the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.

XCIV.

Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his way between
Heights which appear as lovers who have parted
In hate, whose mining depths so intervene
That they can meet no more, though broken-hearted;
Though in their souls, which thus each other thwarted,
Love was the very root of the fond rage
Which blighted their life's bloom, and then departed;
Itself expired, but leaving them an age
Of years all winters,—war within themselves to wage:—

XCV.

Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath cleft his way,
The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en his stand:
For here, not one, but many, make their play,
And fling their thunderbolts from hand to hand,
Flashing and cast around; of all the band,
The brightest through these parted hills hath forked
His lightnings, — as if he did understand
That in such gaps as desolation worked,
There the hot shaft should blast whatever therein lurked.

XCVI.

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

. . . . .

CV.

Lausanne and Ferney, ye have been the abodes
Of names which unto you bequeathed a name;
Mortals, who sought and found, by dangerous roads,
A path to perpetuity of fame:
They were gigantic minds, and their steep aim
Was, Titan-like, on daring doubts to pile
Thoughts which should call down thunder, and the flame

Of Heaven again assailed, if Heaven the while
On man and man's research could deign do more than smile.

CVI.

The one was fire and fickleness, a child,
Most mutable in wishes, but in mind
A wit as various, — gay, grave, sage, or wild, —
Historian, bard, philosopher, combined;
He multiplied himself among mankind,
The Proteus of their talents, but his own
Breathed most in ridicule, — which, as the wind,
Blew where it listed, laying all things prone, —
Now to o'erthrow a fool, and now to shake a throne.

CVII.

The other, deep and slow, exhausting thought,
And hiving wisdom with each studious year,
In meditation dwelt, with learning wrought,
And shaped his weapon with an edge severe,
Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer;
The lord of irony, — that master-spell,
Which stung his foes to wrath, which grew from fear,
And doomed him to the zealot's ready hell,
Which answers to all doubts so eloquently well.

CHILDE HAROLD.

CANTO IV.

I.

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

II.

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from ocean,
Rising with her tiara of proud towers
At airy distance, with majestic motion,
A ruler of the waters and their powers.
And such she was;—her daughters had their dowers
From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East
Pour'd in her lap all gems in sparkling showers:
In purple was she robed, and of her feast
Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dignity increased.

III.

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,
And silent rows the songless gondolier;

Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
And music meets not always now the ear;
Those days are gone, but Beauty still is here;
States fall, arts fade, but Nature doth not die,
Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear,
The pleasant place of all festivity,
The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy!

IV.

But unto us she hath a spell beyond
Her name in story, and her long array
Of mighty shadows, whose dim forms despond
Above the dogeless city's vanish'd sway:
Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor
And Pierre can not be swept or worn away,
The keystones of the arch! — though all were o'er,
For us repeopled were the solitary shore.

V.

The beings of the mind are not of clay;
Essentially immortal, they create
And multiply in us a brighter ray
And more beloved existence. That which Fate
Prohibits to dull life in this our state
Of mortal bondage, by these spirits supplied,
First exiles, then replaces what we hate;
Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,
And with a fresher growth replenishing the void.

VI.

Such is the refuge of our youth and age,
The first from Hope, the last from Vacancy;

And this worn feeling peoples many a page,
And, may be, that which grows beneath mine eye.
Yet there are things whose strong reality
Outshines our fairy-land; in shape and hues
More beautiful than our fantastic sky,
And the strange constellations which the Muse
O'er her wild universe is skilful to diffuse:

VII.

I saw or dream'd of such, — but let them go, —
They came like truth, and disappear'd like dreams;
And whatso'er they were — are now but so.
I could replace them if I would; still teems
My mind with many a form which aptly seems
Such as I sought for, and at moments found:
Let these too go, for waking Reason deems
Such over-weening phantasies unsound,
And other voices speak and other sights surround.

VIII.

I've taught me other tongues, and in strange eyes
Have made me not a stranger — to the mind
Which is itself, no changes bring surprise;
Nor is it harsh to make, nor hard to find
A country with — ay, or without mankind;
Yet was I born where men are proud to be,
Not without cause; and should I leave behind
The inviolate island of the sage and free,
And seek me out a home by a remoter sea,

IX.

Perhaps I loved it well; and should I lay
My ashes in a soil which is not mine,

My spirit shall resume it — if we may
Unbodied choose a sanctuary. I twine
My hopes of being remember'd in my line
With my land's language: if too fond and far
These aspirations in their scope incline, —
If my fame should be, as my fortunes are,
Of hasty growth and blight, and dull Oblivion bar

X.

My name from out the temple where the dead
Are honour'd by the nations — let it be,
And light the laurels on a loftier head!
And be the Spartan's epitaph on me,
'Sparta hath many a worthier son than he.'
Meantime I seek no sympathies, nor need;
The thorns which I have reap'd are of the tree
I planted, — they have torn me — and I bleed:
I should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed.

XI.

The spouseless Adriatic mourns her lord;
And annual marriage now no more renew'd,
The Bucentaur lies rotting unrestored,
Neglected garment of her widowhood!
St. Mark yet sees his lion where he stood
Stand, but in mockery of his wither'd power,
Over the proud Place where an Emperor sued,
And monarchs gazed and envied in the hour
When Venice was a queen with an unequall'd dower.

XII.

The Suabian sued, and now the Austrian reigns —
An Emperor tramples where an Emperor knelt;

Kingdoms are shrunk to provinces, and chains
Clank over sceptred cities; nations melt
From power's high pinnacle, when they have felt
The sunshine for a while, and downward go
Like lauwine loosen'd from the mountain's belt;—
Oh, for one hour of blind old Dandolo,
Th' octogenarian chief, Byzantium's conquering foe!

XIII.

Before St. Mark still glow his steeds of brass,
Their gilded collars glittering in the sun;
But is not Doria's menace come to pass?
Are they not *bridled?*— Venice lost and won,
Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,
Sinks, like a sea-weed, into whence she rose!
Better be whelm'd beneath the waves, and shun,
Even in destruction's depth, her foreign foes,
From whom submission wrings an infamous repose.

XIV.

In youth she was all glory, a new Tyre,
Her very by-word sprung from victory,
The 'Planter of the Lion,' which through fire
And blood she bore o'er subject earth and sea;
Though making many slaves, herself still free,
And Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite;—
Witness Troy's rival, Candia! Vouch it, ye
Immortal waves that saw Lepanto's fight!
For ye are names no time nor tyranny can blight.

XV.

Statues of glass — all shiver'd — the long file
Of her dead Doges are declined to dust;

But where they dwelt, the vast and sumptuous pile
Bespeaks the pageant of their splendid trust;
Their sceptre broken, and their sword in rust,
Have yielded to the stranger; empty halls,
Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such as must
Too oft remind her who and what enthralls,
Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice' lovely walls.

XVI.

When Athens' armies fell at Syracuse,
And fetter'd thousands bore the yoke of war,
Redemption rose up in the Attic Muse,
Her voice their only ransom from afar:
See! as they chant the tragic hymn, the car
Of the o'ermaster'd victor stops, the reins
Fall from his hands — his idle scimitar
Starts from its belt — he rends his captive's chains,
And bids him thank the bard for freedom and his strains.

XVII.

Thus, Venice, if no stronger claim were thine,
Were all thy proud historic deeds forgot,
Thy choral memory of the Bard divine,
Thy love of Tasso, should have cut the knot
Which ties thee to thy tyrants; and thy lot
Is shameful to the nations, — most of all,
Albion, to thee: the Ocean queen should not
Abandon Ocean's children; in the fall
Of Venice think of thine, despite thy watery wall.

XVIII.

I loved her from my boyhood; she to me
Was as a fairy city of the heart,

Rising like water-columns from the sea,
Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the mart:
And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakespeare's art,
Had stamp'd her image in me; and even so,
Although I found her thus, we did not part,
Perchance even dearer in her day of woe
Than when she was a boast, a marvel, and a show.

XIX.

I can repeople with the past — and of
The present there is still for eye and thought,
And meditation chasten'd down, enough,
And more, it may be, than I hoped or sought;
And of the happiest moments which were wrought
Within the web of my existence, some
From thee, fair Venice, have their colours caught:
There are some feelings Time cannot benumb,
Nor torture shake, or mine would now be cold and dumb.

XX.

But from their nature will the tannen grow
Loftiest on loftiest and least shelter'd rocks,
Rooted in barrenness, where nought below
Of soil supports them 'gainst the Alpine shocks
Of eddying storms; yet springs the trunk, and mocks
The howling tempest, till its height and frame
Are worthy of the mountains from whose blocks
Of bleak, gray granite into life it came,
And grew a giant tree; — the mind may grow the same.

XXI.

Existence may be borne, and the deep root
Of life and sufferance make its firm abode

In bare and desolated bosoms: mute
The camel labours with the heaviest load,
And the wolf dies in silence, — not bestow'd
In vain should such example be; if they,
Things of ignoble or of savage mood,
Endure and shrink not, we of nobler clay
May temper it to bear, — it is but for a day.

XXII.

All suffering doth destroy, or is destroy'd
Even by the sufferer; and, in each event,
Ends: — Some, with hope replenish'd and rebuoy'd,
Return to whence they came — with like intent,
And weave their web again; some, bow'd and bent,
Wax gray and ghastly, withering ere their time,
And perish with the reed on which they leant;
Some seek devotion, toil, war, good, or crime,
According as their souls were form'd to sink or climb.

XXIII.

But ever and anon of griefs subdued
There comes a token like a scorpion's sting,
Scarce seen, but with fresh bitterness imbued;
And slight withal may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
Aside for ever: it may be a sound, —
A tone of music, summer's eve, or spring,
A flower, the wind, the ocean, — which shall wound,
Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound;

XXIV.

And how and why we know not, nor can trace
Home to its cloud this lightning of the mind,
But feel the shock renew'd, nor can efface
The blight and blackening which it leaves behind,
Which out of things familiar, undesign'd,
When least we deem of such, calls up to view
The spectres whom no exorcism can bind,
The cold—the changed—perchance the dead—anew,
The mourn'd, the loved, the lost — too many! — yet how few!

XXV.

But my soul wanders; I demand it back
To meditate amongst decay, and stand
A ruin amidst ruins; there to track
Fall'n states and buried greatness, o'er a land
Which *was* the mightiest in its old command,
And *is* the loveliest, and must ever be
The master-mould of Nature's heavenly hand,
Wherein were cast the heroic and the free,
The beautiful, the brave — the lords of earth and sea,

XXVI.

The commonwealth of kings, the men of Rome!
And even since, and now, fair Italy,
Thou art the garden of the world, the home
Of all Art yields, and Nature can decree;
Even in thy desert, what is like to thee?
Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
More rich than other climes' fertility;
Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced
With an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced.

XXVII.

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

XXVIII.

A single star is at her side, and reigns
With her o'er half the lovely heaven; but still
Yon sunny sea heaves brightly, and remains
Roll'd o'er the peak of the far Rhætian hill,
As Day and Night contending were, until
Nature reclaim'd her order: gently flows
The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues instil
The odorous purple of a new-born rose,
Which streams upon her stream, and glass'd within it glows,

XXIX.

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

XXX.

There is a tomb in Arqua; — rear'd in air,
Pillar'd in their sarcophagus, repose
The bones of Laura's lover: here repair
Many familiar with his well-sung woes,
The pilgrims of his genius. He arose
To raise a language, and his land reclaim
From the dull yoke of her barbaric foes;
Watering the tree which bears his lady's name
With his melodious tears, he gave himself to fame.

XXXI.

They keep his dust in Arqua where he died,
The mountain-village where his latter days
Went down the vale of years; and 't is their pride —
An honest pride, and let it be their praise —
To offer to the passing stranger's gaze
His mansion and his sepulchre; both plain
And venerably simple, such as raise
A feeling more accordant with his strain
Than if a pyramid form'd his monumental fane.

XXXII.

And the soft quiet hamlet where he dwelt
Is one of that complexion which seems made
For those who their mortality have felt,
And sought a refuge from their hopes decay'd
In the deep umbrage of a green hill's shade,
Which shows a distant prospect far away
Of busy cities, now in vain display'd,
For they can lure no further; and the ray
Of a bright sun can make sufficient holiday,

XXXIII.

Developing the mountains, leaves, and flowers,
And shining in the brawling brook, where-by,
Clear as its current, glide the sauntering hours
With a calm languor, which, though to the eye
Idlesse it seem, hath its mortality.
If from society we learn to live,
'T is solitude should teach us how to die;
It hath no flatterers; vanity can give
No hollow aid; alone — man with his God must strive:

XXXIV.

Or, it may be, with demons, who impair
The strength of better thoughts, and seek their prey
In melancholy bosoms, such as were
Of moody texture from their earliest day
And loved to dwell in darkness and dismay,
Deeming themselves predestined to a doom
Which is not of the pangs that pass away;
Making the sun like blood, the earth a tomb,
The tomb a hell, and hell itself a murkier gloom.

XXXV.

Ferrara, in thy wide and grass-grown streets,
Whose symmetry was not for solitude,
There seems as 't were a curse upon the seats
Of former sovereigns, and the antique brood
Of Este, which for many an age made good
Its strength within thy walls, and was of yore
Patron or tyrant, as the changing mood
Of petty power impell'd, of those who wore
The wreath which Dante's brow alone had worn before.

XXXVI.

And Tasso is their glory and their shame:
Hark to his strain and then survey his cell!
And see how dearly earn'd Torquato's fame,
And where Alfonso bade his poet dwell.
The miserable despot could not quell
The insulted mind he sought to quench, and blend
With the surrounding maniacs, in the hell
Where he had plunged it. Glory without end
Scatter'd the clouds away, and on that name attend

XXXVII.

The tears and praises of all time; while thine
Would rot in its oblivion — in the sink
Of worthless dust which from thy boasted line
Is shaken into nothing — but the link
Thou formest in his fortunes bids us think
Of thy poor malice, naming thee with scorn.
Alfonso! how thy ducal pageants shrink
From thee! if in another station born,
Scarce fit to be the slave of him thou mad'st to mourn:—

XXXVIII.

Thou! form'd to eat, and be despised, and die,
Even as the beasts that perish, save that thou
Hadst a more splendid trough and wider sty;
He! with a glory round his furrow'd brow,
Which emanated then, and dazzles now,
In face of all his foes, the Cruscan quire,
And Boileau, whose rash envy could allow
No strain which shamed his country's creaking lyre,
That whetstone of the teeth — monotony in wire!

XXXIX.

Peace to Torquato's injured shade! 't was his
In life and death to be the mark where Wrong
Aim'd with her poison'd arrows, but to miss.
Oh, victor unsurpass'd in modern song!
Each year brings forth its millions; but how long
The tide of generations shall roll on,
And not the whole combined and countless throng
Compose a mind like thine! Though all in one
Condensed their scatter'd rays, they would not form a sun

XL.

Great as thou art, yet parallel'd by those,
Thy countrymen, before thee born to shine,
The Bards of Hell and Chivalry: first rose
The Tuscan father's comedy divine;
Then, not unequal to the Florentine
The southern Scott, the minstrel who call'd forth
A new creation with his magic line,
And, like the Ariosto of the North,
Sang ladye-love and war, romance and knightly worth.

XLI.

The lightning rent from Ariosto's bust
The iron crown of laurel's mimic'd leaves;
Nor was the ominous element unjust,
For the true laurel-wreath which Glory weaves
Is of the tree no bolt of thunder cleaves,
And the false semblance but disgraced his brow;
Yet still, if fondly Superstition grieves,
Know, that the lightning sanctifies below
Whate'er it strikes; — yon head is doubly sacred now.

XLII.

Italia! oh, Italia! thou who hast
The fatal gift of beauty, which became
A funeral dower of present woes and past,
On thy sweet brow is sorrow plough'd by shame,
And annals graved in characters of flame.
Oh, God! that thou wert in thy nakedness
Less lovely or more powerful, and couldst claim
Thy right, and awe the robbers back, who press
To shed thy blood and drink the tears of thy distress;

XLIII.

Then mightst thou more appal; or, less desired,
Be homely and be peaceful, undeplored
For thy destructive charms; then, still untired,
Would not be seen the armèd torrents pour'd
Down the deep Alps; nor would the hostile horde
Of many-nation'd spoilers from the Po
Quaff blood and water; nor the stranger's sword
Be thy sad weapon of defence, and so,
Victor or vanquished, thou the slave of friend or foe.

XLIV.

Wandering in youth, I traced the path of him,
The Roman friend of Rome's least-mortal mind,
The friend of Tully. As my bark did skim
The bright blue waters with a fanning wind,
Came Megara before me, and behind
Ægina lay, Piræus on the right,
And Corinth on the left; I lay reclined
Along the prow, and saw all these unite
In ruin, even as he had seen the desolate sight;—

XLV.

For Time hath not rebuilt them, but uprear'd
Barbaric dwellings on their shatter'd site,
Which only make more mourn'd and more endear'd
The few last rays of their far-scatter'd light
And the crush'd relics of their vanish'd might.
The Roman saw these tombs in his own age,
These sepulchres of cities which excite
Sad wonder, and his yet surviving page
The moral lesson bears, drawn from such pilgrimage.

XLVI.

That page is now before me, and on mine
His country's ruin added to the mass
Of perish'd states he mourn'd in their decline,
And I in desolation. All that *was*
Of then destruction *is;* and now, alas!
Rome — Rome imperial, bows her to the storm,
In the same dust and blackness, and we pass
The skeleton of her Titanic form,
Wrecks of another world whose ashes still are warm.

XLVII.

Yet, Italy! through every other land
Thy wrongs should ring, and shall, from side to side;
Mother of Arts, as once of arms; thy hand
Was then our guardian, and is still our guide;
Parent of our Religion, whom the wide
Nations have knelt to for the keys of heaven!
Europe, repentant of her parricide,
Shall yet redeem thee, and, all backward driven,
Roll the barbarian tide, and sue to be forgiven.

XLVIII.

But Arno wins us to the fair white walls,
Where the Etrurian Athens claims and keeps
A softer feeling for her fairy halls.
Girt by her theatre of hills, she reaps
Her corn and wine and oil, and Plenty leaps
To laughing life with her redundant horn.
Along the banks where smiling Arno sweeps
Was modern Luxury of Commerce born,
And buried Learning rose, redeem'd to a new morn.

XLIX.

There, too, the Goddess loves in stone, and fills
The air around with beauty. We inhale
The ambrosial aspect, which, beheld, instils
Part of its immortality; the veil
Of heaven is half undrawn; within the pale
We stand, and in that form and face behold
What mind can make when Nature's self would fail;
And to the fond idolaters of old
Envy the innate flash which such a soul could mould.

L.

We gaze and turn away, and know not where,
Dazzled and drunk with beauty, till the heart
Reels with its fulness; there — for ever there —
Chain'd to the chariot of triumphal Art,
We stand as captives and would not depart.
Away! — there need no words nor terms precise,
The paltry jargon of the marble mart
Where Pedantry gulls Folly — we have eyes:

Blood, pulse, and breast confirm the Dardan Shepherd's prize.

LI.

Appear'dst thou not to Paris in this guise?
Or to more deeply blest Anchises? or,
In all thy perfect goddess-ship, when lies
Before thee thy own vanquish'd Lord of War?
And gazing in thy face as toward a star,
Laid on thy lap, his eyes to thee upturn,
Feeding on thy sweet cheek; while thy lips are
With lava kisses melting while they burn,
Shower'd on his eyelids, brow, and mouth, as from an urn!

LII.

Glowing and circumfused in speechless love,
Their full divinity inadequate
That feeling to express or to improve,
The gods become as mortals, and man's fate
Has moments like their brightest; but the weight
Of earth recoils upon us; — let it go!
We can recall such visions, and create,
From what has been or might be, things which grow
Into thy statue's form and look like gods below.

LIII.

I leave to learnèd fingers and wise hands,
The artist and his ape, to teach and tell
How well his connoisseurship understands
The graceful bend and the voluptuous swell:
Let these describe the undescribable;
I would not their vile breath should crisp the stream

Wherein that image shall for ever dwell,
The unruffled mirror of the loveliest dream
That ever left the sky on the deep soul to beam.

LIV.

In Santa Croce's holy precincts lie
Ashes which make it holier, dust which is
Even in itself an immortality,
Though there were nothing save the past, and this,
The particle of those sublimities
Which have relapsed to chaos: here repose
Angelo's, Alfieri's bones, and his,
The starry Galileo, with his woes;
Here Machiavelli's earth return'd to whence it rose.

LV.

These are four minds, which, like the elements,
Might furnish forth creation. Italy!
Time, which hath wrong'd thee with ten thousand rents
Of thine imperial garment, shall deny,
And hath denied, to every other sky
Spirits which soar from ruin: — thy decay
Is still impregnate with divinity,
Which gilds it with revivifying ray;
Such as the great of yore, Canova is to-day.

LVI.

But where repose the all Etruscan three —
Dante, and Petrarch, and, scarce less than they,
The Bard of Prose, creative spirit, he
Of the Hundred Tales of love — where did they lay

Their bones, distinguish'd from our common clay
In death as life? Are they resolved to dust,
And have their country's marbles nought to say?
Could not her quarries furnish forth one bust?
Did they not to her breast their filial earth intrust?

LVII.

Ungrateful Florence! Dante sleeps afar,
Like Scipio, buried by the upbraiding shore;
Thy factions, in their worse than civil war,
Proscribed the bard whose name for evermore
Their children's children would in vain adore
With the remorse of ages; and the crown
Which Petrarch's laureate brow supremely wore,
Upon a far and foreign soil had grown,
His life, his fame, his grave, though rifled — not thine own.

LVIII.

Boccaccio to his parent earth bequeath'd
His dust; and lies it not her Great among,
With many a sweet and solemn requiem breathed
O'er him who form'd the Tuscan's siren tongue?
That music in itself, whose sounds are song,
The poetry of speech? No; — even his tomb
Uptorn must bear the hyæna bigot's wrong,
No more amidst the meaner dead find room,
Nor claim a passing sigh, because it told for *whom!*

LIX.

And Santa Croce wants their mighty dust,—
Yet for this want more noted, as of yore
The Cæsar's pageant, shorn of Brutus' bust,

Did but of Rome's best Son remind her more.
Happier Ravenna! on thy hoary shore,
Fortress of falling empire, honour'd sleeps
The immortal exile; Arqua, too, her store
Of tuneful relics proudly claims and keeps,
While Florence vainly begs her banish'd dead, and weeps.

LX.

What is her pyramid of precious stones,
Of porphyry, jasper, agate, and all hues
Of gem and marble, to encrust the bones
Of merchant-dukes? The momentary dews
Which, sparkling to the twilight stars, infuse
Freshness in the green turf that wraps the dead,
Whose names are mausoleums of the Muse,
Are gently prest with far more reverent tread
Than ever paced the slab which paves the princely head.

LXI.

There be more things to greet the heart and eyes
In Arno's dome of Art's most princely shrine,
Where Sculpture with her rainbow sister vies;
There be more marvels yet — but not for mine;
For I have been accustom'd to entwine
My thoughts with Nature rather in the fields,
Than Art in galleries: though a work divine
Calls for my spirit's homage, yet it yields
Less than it feels, because the weapon which it wields

LXII.

Is of another temper, and I roam
By Thrasimene's lake, in the defiles

Fatal to Roman rashness, more at home;
For there the Carthaginian's warlike wiles
Come back before me, as his skill beguiles
The host between the mountains and the shore,
Where Courage falls in her despairing files,
And torrents, swoll'n to rivers with their gore,
Reek through the sultry plain with legions shattered o'er.

LXIII.

Like to a forest fell'd by mountain winds;
And such the storm of battle on this day,
And such the frenzy, whose convulsion blinds
To all save carnage, that, beneath the fray,
An earthquake reel'd unheededly away!
None felt stern Nature rocking at his feet,
And yawning forth a grave for those who lay
Upon their bucklers for a winding sheet;
Such is the absorbing hate when warring nations meet!

LXIV.

The Earth to them was as a rolling bark
Which bore them to Eternity; they saw
The Ocean round, but had no time to mark
The motions of their vessel; Nature's law,
In them suspended, reck'd not of the awe
Which reigns when mountains tremble, and the birds
Plunge in the clouds for refuge and withdraw
From their down-toppling nests; and bellowing herds
Stumble o'er heaving plains, and man's dread hath no words.

LXV.

Far other scene is Thrasimene now;
Her lake a sheet of silver, and her plain

Rent by no ravage save the gentle plough;
Her aged trees rise thick as once the slain
Lay where their roots are; but a brook hath ta'en —
A little rill of scanty stream and bed —
A name of blood from that day's sanguine rain;
And Sanguinetto tells ye where the dead
Made the earth wet and turn'd the unwilling waters red.

LXVI.

But thou, Clitumnus, in thy sweetest wave
Of the most living crystal that was e'er
The haunt of river nymph, to gaze and lave
Her limbs where nothing hid them, thou dost rear
Thy grassy banks whereon the milk-white steer
Grazes, — the purest god of gentle waters,
And most serene of aspect, and most clear!
Surely that stream was unprofaned by slaughters —
A mirror and a bath for Beauty's youngest daughters!

LXVII.

And on thy happy shore a Temple still,
Of small and delicate proportion, keeps,
Upon a mild declivity of hill,
Its memory of thee; beneath it sweeps
Thy current's calmness; oft from out it leaps
The finny darter with the glittering scales,
Who dwells and revels in thy glassy deeps;
While, chance, some scatter'd water-lily sails
Down where the shallower wave still tells its bubbling tales.

LXVIII.

Pass not unblest the Genius of the place!
If through the air a zephyr more serene
Win to the brow, 't is his; and if ye trace
Along his margin a more eloquent green,
If on the heart the freshness of the scene
Sprinkle its coolness, and from the dry dust
Of weary life a moment lave it clean
With Nature's baptism,—'t is to him ye must
Pay orisons for this suspension of disgust.

LXIX.

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

LXX.

And mounts in spray the skies, and thence again
Returns in an unceasing shower, which round,
With its unemptied cloud of gentle rain,
Is an eternal April to the ground,
Making it all one emerald: — how profound
The gulf! and how the giant element
From rock to rock leaps with delirious bound,
Crushing the cliffs, which, downward worn and rent
With his fierce footsteps, yield in chasms a fearful vent

LXXI.

To the broad column which rolls on, and shows
More like the fountain of an infant sea
Torn from the womb of mountains by the throes
Of a new world, than only thus to be
Parent of rivers, which flow gushingly,
With many windings, through the vale: — Look back!
Lo, where it comes like an eternity,
As if to sweep down all things in its track,
Charming the eye with dread — a matchless cataract,

LXXII.

Horribly beautiful! but on the verge,
From side to side, beneath the glittering morn,
An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge,
Like Hope upon a death-bed, and, unworn
Its steady dyes while all around is torn
By the distracted waters, bears serene
Its brilliant hues with all their beams unshorn;
Resembling, 'mid the torture of the scene,
Love watching Madness with unalterable mien.

LXXIII.

Once more upon the woody Apennine,
The infant Alps, which — had I not before
Gazed on their mightier parents, where the pine
Sits on more shaggy summits, and where roar
The thundering lauwine — might be worshipp'd more;
But I have seen the soaring Jungfrau rear
Her never-trodden snow, and seen the hoar
Glaciers of bleak Mont Blanc both far and near,
And in Chimari heard the thunder-hills of fear,

LXXIV.

Th’ Acroceraunian mountains of old name;
And on Parnassus seen the eagles fly
Like spirits of the spot, as ’t were for fame,
For still they soar’d unutterably high:
I ’ve look’d on Ida with a Trojan’s eye;
Athos, Olympus, Ætna, Atlas, made
These hills seem things of lesser dignity,
All, save the lone Soracte’s height, display’d
Not *now* in snow, which asks the lyric Roman’s aid

LXXV.

For our remembrance, and from out the plain
Heaves like a long-swept wave about to break,
And on the curl hangs pausing. Not in vain
May he, who will, his recollections rake,
And quote in classic raptures, and awake
The hills with Latin echoes; I abhorr’d
Too much, to conquer for the poet’s sake,
The drill’d dull lesson, forced down word by word
In my repugnant youth, with pleasure to record

LXXVI.

Aught that recalls the daily drug which turn’d
My sickening memory; and, though Time hath taught
My mind to meditate what then it learn’d,
Yet such the fix’d inveteracy wrought
By the impatience of my early thought,
That, with the freshness wearing out before
My mind could relish what it might have sought,
If free to choose, I cannot now restore
Its health; but what it then detested, still abhor.

LXXVII.

Then farewell, Horace; whom I hated so,
Not for thy faults, but mine; it is a curse
To understand, not feel thy lyric flow,
To comprehend, but never love thy verse,
Although no deeper Moralist rehearse
Our little life, nor Bard prescribe his art,
Nor livelier Satirist the conscience pierce,
Awakening without wounding the touch'd heart;
Yet fare thee well — upon Soracte's ridge we part.

LXXVIII.

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

LXXIX.

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;
An empty urn within her wither'd hands,
Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago:
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;
The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers; — dost thou flow,
Old Tiber, through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress!

LXXX.

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

LXXXI.

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

LXXXII.

Alas, the lofty city! and alas,
The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day
When Brutus made the dagger's edge surpass
The conqueror's sword in bearing fame away!
Alas, for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,
And Livy's pictured page!—but these shall be
Her resurrection; all beside—decay.
Alas, for Earth, for never shall we see
That brightness in her eye she bore when Rome was free!

LXXXIII.

Oh thou, whose chariot roll'd on Fortune's wheel,
Triumphant Sylla! thou, who didst subdue
Thy country's foes ere thou wouldst pause to feel
The wrath of thy own wrongs, or reap the due
Of hoarded vengeance till thine eagles flew
O'er prostrate Asia; — thou, who with thy frown
Annihilated senates — Roman, too,
With all thy vices, for thou didst lay down
With an atoning smile a more than earthly crown,

LXXXIV.

The dictatorial wreath, — couldst thou divine
To what would one day dwindle that which made
Thee more than mortal? and that so supine
By aught than Romans Rome should thus be laid?
She who was named Eternal; and array'd
Her warriors but to conquer — she who veil'd
Earth with her haughty shadow, and display'd,
Until the o'er-canopied horizon fail'd,
Her rushings wings — Oh, she who was Almighty hail'd!

LXXXV.

Sylla was first of victors; but our own
The sagest of usurpers, Cromwell; he
Too swept off senates while he hew'd the throne
Down to a block — immortal rebel! See
What crimes it costs to be a moment free
And famous through all ages! but beneath
His fate the moral lurks of destiny;
His day of double victory and death

Beheld him win two realms, and, happier, yield his breath.

LXXXVI.

The third of the same moon whose former course
Had all but crown'd him, on the self-same day
Deposed him gently from his throne of force,
And laid him with the earth's preceding clay.
And show'd not Fortune thus how fame and sway,
And all we deem delightful and consume
Our souls to compass through each arduous way,
Are in her eyes less happy than the tomb?
Were they but so in man's, how different were his doom?

LXXXVII.

And thou, dread statue, yet existent in
The austerest form of naked majesty!
Thou who beheldest, 'mid the assassins' din,
At thy bathed base the bloody Cæsar lie,
Folding his robe in dying dignity,
An offering to thine altar from the queen
Of gods and men, great Nemesis! did he die,
And thou, too, perish, Pompey? have ye been
Victors of countless kings, or puppets of a scene?

LXXXVIII.

And thou, the thunder-stricken nurse of Rome!
She-wolf, whose brazen-imaged dugs impart
The milk of conquest yet within the dome
Where, as a monument of antique art,
Thou standest; mother of the mighty heart,
Which the great founder suck'd from thy wild teat,
Scorch'd by the Roman Jove's ethereal dart,

And thy limbs black with lightning — dost thou yet
Guard thine immortal cubs, nor thy fond charge forget?

LXXXIX.

Thou dost; but all thy foster-babes are dead —
The men of iron; and the world hath rear'd
Cities from out their sepulchres. Men bled
In imitation of the things they fear'd
And fought and conquer'd and the same course steer'd,
At apish distance; but as yet none have,
Nor could the same supremacy have near'd,
Save one vain man, who is not in the grave,
But vanquish'd by himself, to his own slaves a slave—

XC.

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

XCI.

And came — and saw — and conquered. But the man
Who would have tamed his eagles down to flee,
Like a train'd falcon, in the Gallic van,
Which he, in sooth, long led to victory,
With a deaf heart which never seem'd to be

A listener to itself, was strangely framed;
With but one weakest weakness — vanity,
Coquettish in ambition — still he aim'd —
At what? can he avouch—or answer what he claimed?—

XCII.

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

XCIII.

What from this barren being do we reap?
Our senses narrow, and our reason frail,
Life short, and truth a gem which loves the deep,
And all things weigh'd in custom's falsest scale;
Opinion an omnipotence, — whose veil
Mantles the earth with darkness, until right
And wrong are accidents, and men grow pale
Lest their own judgments should become too bright,
And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth have too much light.

XCIV.

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,
Rotting from sire to son, and age to age,
Proud of their trampled nature, and so die,
Bequeathing their hereditary rage

To the new race of inborn slaves, who wage
War for their chains, and rather than be free,
Bleed gladiator-like, and still engage
Within the same arena where they see
Their fellows fall before, like leaves of the same tree.

XCV.

I speak not of men's creeds — they rest between
Man and his Maker — but of things allow'd,
Averr'd, and known — and daily, hourly seen —
The yoke that is upon us doubly bow'd
And the intent of tyranny avow'd,
The edict of Earth's rulers, who are grown
The apes of him who humbled once the proud
And shook them from their slumbers on the throne;
Too glorious, were this all his mighty arm had done.

XCVI.

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquer'd be,
And Freedom find no champion and no child
Such as Columbia saw arise when she
Sprung forth a Pallas, arm'd and undefiled?
Or must such minds be nourish'd in the wild,
Deep in the unpruned forest, 'midst the roar
Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled
On infant Washington? Has Earth no more
Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore?

XCVII.

But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime,
And fatal have her Saturnalia been
To Freedom's cause, in every age and clime;

Because the deadly days which we have seen,
And vile Ambition, that built up between
Man and his hopes an adamantine wall,
And the base pageant last upon the scene,
Are grown the pretext for the eternal thrall
Which nips life's tree, and dooms man's worst — his second fall.

XCVIII.

Yet, Freedom, yet thy banner, torn but flying,
Streams like the thunder-storm *against* the wind;
Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,
The loudest still the tempest leaves behind:
Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,
Chopp'd by the axe, looks rough and little worth,
But the sap lasts, — and still the seed we find
Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;
So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring forth.

XCIX.

There is a stern round tower of other days,
Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone,
Such as an army's baffled strength delays,
Standing with half its battlements alone,
And with two thousand years of ivy grown,
The garland of eternity, where wave
The green leaves over all by time o'erthrown; —
What was this tower of strength? within its cave
What treasure lay so lock'd, so hid? A woman's grave.

C.

But who was she, the lady of the dead,
Tomb'd in a palace? Was she chaste and fair?

Worthy a king's — or more — a Roman's bed?
What race of chiefs and heroes did she bear?
What daughter of her beauties was the heir?
How lived, how loved, how died she? Was she not
So honour'd — and conspicuously there,
Where meaner relics must not dare to rot,
Placed to commemorate a more than mortal lot?

CI.

Was she as those who love their lords, or they
Who love the lords of others? — such have been
Even in the olden time, Rome's annals say.
Was she a matron of Cornelia's mien,
Or the light air of Egypt's graceful queen,
Profuse of joy — or 'gainst it did she war,
Inveterate in virtue? did she lean
To the soft side of the heart, or wisely bar
Love from amongst her griefs? — for such the affections are.

CII.

Perchance she died in youth: it may be, bow'd
With woes far heavier than the ponderous tomb
That weigh'd upon her gentle dust, a cloud
Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom
In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom
Heaven gives its favourites — early death; yet shed
A sunset charm around her, and illume
With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead,
Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-like red.

CIII.

Perchance she died in age — surviving all,
Charms, kindred, children — with the silver gray

On her long tresses, which might yet recall,
It may be, still a something of the day
When they were braided, and her proud array
And lovely form were envied, praised, and eyed
By Rome. — But whither would Conjecture stray?
Thus much alone we know — Metella died,
The wealthiest Roman's wife. Behold his love or pride!

CIV.

I know not why, but standing thus by thee,
It seems as if I had thine inmate known,
Thou tomb! and other days come back on me
With recollected music, though the tone
Is changed and solemn, like the cloudy groan
Of dying thunder on the distant wind;
Yet could I seat me by this ivied stone
Till I had bodied, forth the heated mind,
Forms from the floating wreck which Ruin leaves behind;

CV.

And from the planks, far shatter'd o'er the rocks,
Built me a little bark of hope, once more
To battle with the ocean and the shocks
Of the loud breakers, and the ceaseless roar
Which rushes on the solitary shore
Where all lies founder'd that was ever dear.
But could I gather from the wave-worn store
Enough for my rude-boat, where should I steer?
There woos no home, nor hope, nor life, save what is here.

CVI.

Then let the winds howl on! their harmony
Shall henceforth be my music, and the night

The sound shall temper with the owlets' cry,
As I now hear them, in the fading light
Dim o'er the bird of darkness' native site,
Answering each other on the Palatine,
With their large eyes all glistening gray and bright,
And sailing pinions. Upon such a shrine
What are our petty griefs? — let me not number mine.

CVII.

Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown
Matted and mass'd together, hillocks heap'd
On what were chambers, arch crush'd, column strown
In fragments, choked up vaults, and frescos steep'd
In subterranean damps where the owl peep'd,
Deeming it midnight: — Temples, baths, or halls?
Pronounce who can; for all that Learning reap'd
From her research hath been, that these are walls —
Behold the Imperial Mount! 't is thus the mighty falls.

CVIII.

There is the moral of all human tales;
'T is but the same rehearsal of the past,
First Freedom and then Glory — when that fails,
Wealth, vice, corruption, — barbarism at last.
And History, with all her volumes vast,
Hath but *one* page, — 't is better written here
Where gorgeous Tyranny hath thus amass'd
All treasures, all delights, that eye or ear,
Heart, soul could seek, tongue ask. — Away with words, draw near,

CIX.

Admire, exult, despise, laugh, weep, — for here
There is such matter for all feeling: — Man!
Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear,
Ages and realms are crowded in this span,
This mountain, whose obliterated plan
The pyramid of empires pinnacled,
Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van
Till the sun's rays with added flame were fill'd!
Where are its golden roofs? where those who dared to build?

CX.

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

CXI.

Buried in air, the deep blue sky of Rome,
And looking to the stars. They had contain'd
A spirit which with these would find a home,
The last of those who o'er the whole earth reign'd,
The Roman globe, for after none sustain'd
But yielded back his conquests: he was more
Than a mere Alexander, and, unstain'd

With household blood and wine, serenely wore
His sovereign virtues—still we Trajan's name adore.

CXII.

Where is the rock of Triumph, the high place
Where Rome embraced her heroes? where the steep
Tarpeian, fittest goal of Treason's race,
The promontory whence the Traitor's Leap
Cured all ambition? Did the conquerors heap
Their spoils here? Yes; and in yon field below,
A thousand years of silenced factions sleep —
The Forum, where the immortal accents glow,
And still the eloquent air breathes — burns with Cicero!

CXIII.

The field of freedom, faction, fame, and blood:
Here a proud people's passions were exhaled,
From the first hour of empire in the bud
To that when further worlds to conquer fail'd;
But long before had Freedom's face been veil'd,
And Anarchy assumed her attributes;
Till every lawless soldier who assail'd
Trod on the trembling senate's slavish mutes,
Or raised the venal voice of baser prostitutes.

CXIV.

Then turn me to her latest tribune's name,
From her ten thousand tyrants turn to thee,
Redeemer of dark centuries of shame —
The friend of Petrarch — hope of Italy —
Rienzi! last of Romans! While the tree
Of freedom's wither'd trunk puts forth a leaf

Even for thy tomb a garland let it be —
The forum's champion, and the people's chief —
Her new-born Numa thou — with reign, alas, too brief.

CXV.

Egeria, sweet creation of some heart
Which found no mortal resting-place so fair
As thine ideal breast! whate'er thou art
Or wert, — a young Aurora of the air,
The nympholepsy of some fond despair;
Or, it might be, a beauty of the earth,
Who found a more than common votary there
Too much adoring; whatsoe'er thy birth,
Thou wert a beautiful thought, and softly bodied forth.

CXVI.

The mosses of thy fountain still are sprinkled
With thine Elysian water-drops; the face
Of thy cave-guarded spring, with years unwrinkled,
Reflects the meek-eyed genius of the place,
Whose green, wild margin now no more erase
Art's works; nor must the delicate waters sleep,
Prison'd in marble; bubbling from the base
Of the cleft statue, with a gentle leap
The rill runs o'er, and round, fern, flowers, and ivy creep,

CXVII.

Fantastically tangled. The green hills
Are clothed with early blossoms, through the grass
The quick-eyed lizard rustles, and the bills
Of summer-birds sing welcome as ye pass;

Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their class,
Implore the pausing step, and with their dyes
Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass;
The sweetness of the violet's deep blue eyes
Kiss'd by the breath of heaven, seems colour'd by its skies.

CXVIII.

Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted cover,
Egeria! thy all heavenly bosom beating
For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover.
The purple Midnight veil'd that mystic meeting
With her most starry canopy; and seating
Thyself by thine adorer, what befell?
This cave was surely shaped out for the greeting
Of an enamour'd Goddess, and the cell
Haunted by holy Love — the earliest oracle!

CXIX.

And didst thou not, thy breast to his replying,
Blend a celestial with a human heart;
And Love, which dies as it was born, in sighing,
Share with immortal transports? Could thine art
Make them indeed immortal, and impart
The purity of heaven to earthly joys,
Expel the venom and not blunt the dart —
The dull satiety which all destroys —
And root from out the soul the deadly weed which cloys?

CXX.

Alas! our young affections run to waste,
Or water but the desert; whence arise
But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,

Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes,
Flowers whose wild odours breathe but agonies,
And trees whose gums are poison; — such the plants
Which spring beneath her steps as Passion flies
O'er the world's wilderness, and vainly pants
For some celestial fruit forbidden to our wants.

CXXI.

Oh Love! no habitant of earth thou art —
An unseen seraph, we believe in thee,
A faith whose martyrs are the broken heart,
But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see
The naked eye, thy form, as it should be;
The mind hath made thee, as it peopled heaven,
Even with its own desiring phantasy,
And to a thought such shape and image given,
As haunts the unquench'd soul — parch'd — wearied — wrung — and riven.

CXXII.

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,
And fevers into false creation: — where,
Where are the forms the sculptor's soul hath seized? —
In him alone. Can Nature show so fair?
Where are the charms and virtues which we dare
Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men,
The unreach'd Paradise of our despair,
Which o'er-informs the pencil and the pen,
And overpowers the page where it would bloom again?

CXXIII.

Who loves, raves — 't is youth's frenzy; but the cure
Is bitterer still. As charm by charm unwinds

Which robed our idols, and we see too sure
Nor worth nor beauty dwells from out the mind's
Ideal shape of such; yet still it binds
The fatal spell, and still it draws us on,
Reaping the whirlwind from the oft-sown winds;
The stubborn heart, its alchemy begun,
Seems ever near the prize,—wealthiest when most undone.

CXXIV.

We wither from our youth, we gasp away—
Sick—sick; unfound the boon—unslaked the thirst,
Though to the last, in verge of our decay,
Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first—
But all too late,—so are we doubly curst.
Love, fame, ambition, avarice—'t is the same,
Each idle, and all ill, and none the worst—
For all are meteors with a different name,
And Death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame.

CXXV.

Few—none—find what they love or could have loved,
Though accident, blind contact, and the strong
Necessity of loving, have removed
Antipathies—but to recur, ere long,
Envenom'd with irrevocable wrong;
And Circumstance, that unspiritual god
And miscreator, makes and helps along
Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod,
Whose touch turns Hope to dust,—the dust we all have trod.

CXXVI.

Our life is a false nature, 't is not in
The harmony of things,—this hard decree,
This uneradicable taint of sin,
This boundless upas, this all-blasting tree
Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be
The skies which rain their plagues on men like dew —
Disease, death, bondage — all the woes we see —
And worse, the woes we see not — which throb through
The immedicable soul, with heart-aches ever new.

CXXVII.

Yet let us ponder boldly; 't is a base
Abandonment of reason to resign
Our right of thought, our last and only place
Of refuge — this, at least, shall still be mine.
Though from our birth the faculty divine
Is chain'd and tortured — cabin'd, cribb'd, confined,
And bred in darkness, lest the truth should shine
Too brightly on the unpreparèd mind,
The beam pours in, for time and skill will couch the blind.

CXXVIII.

Arches on arches! as it were that Rome,
Collecting the chief trophies of her line,
Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,—
Her Coliseum stands; the moonbeams shine
As 't were its natural torches, for divine
Should be the light which streams here, to illume
This long-explored but still exhaustless mine

Of contemplation; and the azure gloom
Of an Italian night, where the deep skies assume

CXXIX.

Hues which have words and speak to ye of heaven
Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,
And shadows forth its glory. There is given
Unto the things of earth, which Time hath bent,
A spirit's feeling; and where he hath leant
His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a power,
And magic in the ruin'd battlement,
For which the palace of the present hour
Must yield its pomp and wait till ages are its dower.

CXXX.

Oh, Time! the beautifier of the dead,
Adorner of the ruin, comforter
And only healer when the heart hath bled —
Time! the corrector where our judgments err,
The test of truth, love,— sole philosopher,
For all besides are sophists, from thy thrift
Which never loses though it doth defer —
Time, the avenger! unto thee I lift
My hands and eyes and heart, and crave of thee a gift:

CXXXI.

Amidst this wreck, where thou hast made a shrine
And temple more divinely desolate,
Among thy mightier offerings here are mine,
Ruins of years — though few, yet full of fate:—
If thou hast ever seen me too elate,
Hear me not; but if calmly I have borne

Good, and reserved my pride against the hate
Which shall not whelm me, let me not have worn
This iron in my soul in vain — shall *they* not mourn?

CXXXII.

And thou, who never yet of human wrong
Left the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis!
Here, where the ancient paid thee homage long —
Thou, who didst call the Furies from the abyss,
And round Orestes bade them howl and hiss
For that unnatural retribution — just,
Had it but been from hands less near — in this
Thy former realm, I call thee from the dust!
Dost thou not hear my heart? — Awake! thou shalt, and must.

CXXXIII.

It is not that I may not have incurr'd
For my ancestral faults or mine the wound
I bleed withal, and, had it been conferr'd
With a just weapon, it had flow'd unbound;
But now my blood shall not sink in the ground;
To thee I do devote it — *thou* shalt take
The vengeance, which shall yet be sought and found,
Which if *I* have not taken for the sake —
But let that pass — I sleep, but thou shalt yet awake.

CXXXIV.

And if my voice break forth, 't is not that now
I shrink from what is suffer'd; let him speak
Who hath beheld decline upon my brow,
Or seen my mind's convulsion leave it weak:
But in this page a record will I seek.

Not in the air shall these my words disperse,
Though I be ashes; a far hour shall wreak
The deep prophetic fulness of this verse,
And pile on human heads the mountain of my curse!

CXXXV.

That curse shall be Forgiveness. Have I not —
Hear me, my mother Earth! behold it, Heaven! —
Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?
Have I not suffer'd things to be forgiven?
Have I not had my brain sear'd, my heart riven,
Hopes sapp'd, name blighted, Life's life lied away?
And only not to desperation driven,
Because not altogether of such clay
As rots into the souls of those whom I survey.

CXXXVI.

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
Have I not seen what human things could do?
From the loud roar of foaming calumny
To the small whisper of the as paltry few,
And subtler venom of the reptile crew,
The Janus glance of whose significant eye,
Learning to lie with silence, would *seem* true,
And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,
Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.

CXXXVII.

But I have lived, and have not lived in vain:
My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
And my frame perish even in conquering pain;
But there is that within me which shall tire

Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire;
Something unearthly which they deem not of,
Like the remember'd tone of a mute lyre,
Shall on their soften'd spirits sink, and move
In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love.

CXXXVIII.

The seal is set.— Now welcome, thou dread power!
Nameless, yet thus omnipotent, which here
Walk'st in the shadow of the midnight hour
With a deep awe, yet all distinct from fear;
Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls rear
Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene
Derives from thee a sense so deep and clear
That we become a part of what has been,
And grow unto the spot, all-seeing but unseen.

CXXXIX.

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

CXL.

I see before me the Gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand — his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,

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

CXLI.

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

CXLII.

But here, where Murder breathed her bloody steam;
And there, where buzzing nations choked the ways,
And roar'd or murmur'd like a mountain stream
Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;
Here, where the Roman millions' blame or praise
Was death or life, the playthings of a crowd,
My voice sounds much, and fall the stars' faint rays
On the arena void — seats crush'd — walls bow'd —
And galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely loud.

CXLIII.

A ruin — yet what ruin! From its mass
Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been rear'd;

Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
And marvel where the spoil could have appear'd.
Hath it indeed been plunder'd, or but clear'd?
Alas! developed, opens the decay,
When the colossal fabric's form is near'd:
It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all, years, man have reft away.

CXLIV.

But when the rising moon begins to climb
Its topmost arch and gently pauses there;
When the stars twinkle through the loops of time,
And the low night-breeze waves along the air
The garland forest, which the gray walls wear
Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head;
When the light shines serene but doth not glare,
Then in this magic circle raise the dead:
Heroes have trod this spot — 't is on their dust ye tread.

CXLV.

'While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;
And when Rome falls — the World.' From our own land
Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty wall
In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
Ancient; and these three mortal things are still
On their foundations, and unalter'd all;
Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill,
The World, the same wide den — of thieves, or what ye will.

CXLVI.

Simple, erect, severe, austere, sublime —
Shrine of all saints and temple of all gods,
From Jove to Jesus — spared and blest by time;
Looking tranquility, while falls or nods
Arch, empire, each thing round thee, and man plods
His way through thorns to ashes — glorious dome!
Shalt thou not last? Time's scythe and tyrants' rods
Shiver upon thee —sanctuary and home
Of art and piety —Pantheon! — pride of Rome!

CXLVII.

Relic of nobler days and noblest arts!
Despoil'd, yet perfect, with thy circle spreads
A holiness appealing to all hearts —
To art a model; and to him who treads
Rome for the sake of ages, Glory sheds
Her light through thy sole aperture; to those
Who worship, here are altars for their beads;
And they who feel for genius may repose
Their eyes on honour'd forms whose busts around them close.

CXLVIII.

There is a dungeon, in whose dim drear light
What do I gaze on? Nothing: Look again!
Two forms are slowly shadow'd on my sight —
Two insulated phantoms of the brain:
It is not so; I see them full and plain —
An old man, and a female young and fair,
Fresh as a nursing mother, in whose vein
The blood is nectar; — but what doth she there
With her unmantled neck, and bosom white and bare?

CXLIX.

Full swells the deep pure fountain of young life,
Where *on* the heart and *from* the heart we took
Our first and sweetest nurture, when the wife,
Blest into mother, in the innocent look
Or even the piping cry of lips that brook
No pain and small suspense, a joy perceives
Man knows not, when from out its cradled nook
She sees her little bud put forth its leaves —
What may the fruit be yet? — I know not, Cain was Eve's.

CL.

But here youth offers to old age the food,
The milk of his own gift: — it is her sire
To whom she renders back the debt of blood
Born with her birth. No; he shall not expire
While in those warm and lovely veins the fire
Of health and holy feeling can provide
Great Nature's Nile, whose deep stream rises higher
Than Egypt's river: — from that gentle side
Drink, drink and live, old man! Heaven's realm holds no such tide.

CLI.

The starry fable of the milky way
Has not thy story's purity; it is
A constellation of a sweeter ray,
And sacred Nature triumphs more in this
Reverse of her decree than in the abyss
Where sparkle distant worlds. Oh, holiest nurse!
No drop of that clear stream its way shall miss

To thy sire's heart, replenishing its source
With life, as our freed souls rejoin the universe.

CLII.

Turn to the Mole which Hadrian rear'd on high,
Imperial mimic of old Egypt's piles,
Colossal copyist of deformity,
Whose travell'd phantasy from the far Nile's
Enormous model doom'd the artist's toils
To build for giants, and for his vain earth,
His shrunken ashes, raise this dome. How smiles
The gazer's eye with philosophic mirth,
To view the huge design which sprung from such a birth!

CLIII.

But lo, the dome, the vast and wondrous dome
To which Diana's marvel was a cell,
Christ's mighty shrine above his martyr's tomb!
I have beheld the Ephesian's miracle —
Its columns strew the wilderness, and dwell
The hyæna and the jackal in their shade;
I have beheld Sophia's bright roofs swell
Their glittering mass i' the sun, and have survey'd
Its sanctuary the while the usurping Moslem pray'd;

CLIV.

But thou, of temples old or altars new,
Standest alone, with nothing like to thee —
Worthiest of God, the holy and the true.
Since Zion's desolation, when that He
Forsook his former city, what could be,

Of earthly structures, in his honor piled
Of a sublimer aspect? Majesty,
Power, Glory, Strength, and Beauty, all are aisled
In this eternal ark of worship undefiled.

CLV.

Enter: its grandeur overwhelms thee not;
And why? it is not lessen'd; but thy mind,
Expanded by the genius of the spot,
Has grown colossal, and can only find
A fit abode wherein appear enshrined
Thy hopes of immortality; and thou
Shalt one day, if found worthy, so defined,
See thy God face to face as thou dost now
His Holy of Holies, nor be blasted by his brow.

CLVI.

Thou movest — but increasing with the advance,
Like climbing some great Alp, which still doth rise,
Deceived by its gigantic elegance;
Vastness which grows, but grows to harmonise —
All musical in its immensities;
Rich marbles, richer painting, shrines where flame
The lamps of gold, and haughty dome which vies
In air with Earth's chief structures, though their frame
Sits on the firm-set ground — and this the clouds must claim.

CLVII.

Thou seest not all; but piecemeal thou must break
To separate contemplation the great whole;
And as the ocean many bays will make,

That ask the eye — so here condense thy soul
To more immediate objects, and control
Thy thoughts until thy mind hath got by heart
Its eloquent proportions, and unroll
In mighty graduations, part by part,
The glory which at once upon thee did not dart,

CLVIII.

Not by its fault — but thine. Our outward sense
Is but of gradual grasp: and as it is
That what we have of feeling most intense
Outstrips our faint expression; even so this
Outshining and o'erwhelming edifice
Fools our fond gaze, and greatest of the great
Defies at first our Nature's littleness,
Till, growing with its growth, we thus dilate
Our spirits to the size of that they contemplate.

CLIX.

Then pause, and be enlighten'd; there is more
In such a survey than the sating gaze
Of wonder pleased, or awe which would adore
The worship of the place, or the mere praise
Of art and its great masters, who could raise
What former time, nor skill, nor thought could plan;
The fountain of sublimity displays
Its depth, and thence may draw the mind of man
Its golden sands, and learn what great conceptions can.

CLX.

Or, turning to the Vatican, go see
Laocoön's torture dignifying pain —

A father's love and mortal's agony
With an immortal's patience blending. Vain
The struggle; vain, against the coiling strain
And gripe and deepening of the dragon's grasp,
The old man's clench; the long envenom'd chain
Rivets the living links, the enormous asp
Enforces pang on pang, and stifles gasp on gasp.

CLXI.

Or view the Lord of the unerring bow,
The God of life and poesy and light,—
The Sun in human limbs array'd, and brow
All radiant from his triumph in the fight;
The shaft hath just been shot — the arrow bright
With an immortal's vengeance; in his eye
And nostril beautiful disdain and might
And majesty flash their full lightnings by,
Developing in that one glance the Deity.

CLXII.

But in his delicate form — a dream of Love,
Shaped by some solitary nymph, whose breast
Long'd for a deathless lover from above
And madden'd in that vision — are exprest
All that ideal beauty ever bless'd
The mind with in its most unearthly mood,
When each conception was a heavenly guest —
A ray of immortality — and stood,
Starlike, around, until they gather'd to a god!

CLXIII.

And if it be Prometheus stole from Heaven
The fire which we endure, it was repaid

By him to whom the energy was given
Which this poetic marble hath array'd
With an eternal glory — which, if made
By human hands, is not of human thought;
And Time himself hath hallow'd it, nor laid
One ringlet in the dust; nor hath it caught
A tinge of years, but breathes the flame with which 't was wrought.

CLXIV.

But where is he, the Pilgrim of my song,
The being who upheld it through the past?
Methinks he cometh late and tarries long.
He is no more — these breathings are his last;
His wanderings done, his visions ebbing fast,
And he himself as nothing: — if he was
Aught but a phantasy, and could be class'd
With forms which live and suffer — let that pass —
His shadow fades away into Destruction's mass,

CLXV.

Which gathers shadow, substance, life, and all
That we inherit in its mortal shroud,
And spreads the dim and universal pall
Through which all things grow phantoms; and the cloud
Between us sinks and all which ever glow'd,
Till Glory's self is twilight, and displays
A melancholy halo scarce allow'd
To hover on the verge of darkness; — rays
Sadder than saddest night, for they distract the gaze,

CLXVI.

And send us prying into the abyss,
To gather what we shall be when the frame
Shall be resolved to something less than this
Its wretched essence; and to dream of fame,
And wipe the dust from off the idle name
We never more shall hear, — but never more,
Oh, happier thought! can we be made the same:
It is enough in sooth that *once* we bore
These fardels of the heart — the heart whose sweat was gore.

CLXVII.

Hark! forth from the abyss a voice proceeds,
A long low distant murmur of dread sound,
Such as arises when a nation bleeds
With some deep and immedicable wound;
Through storm and darkness yawns the rending ground;
The gulf is thick with phantoms, but the chief
Seems royal still, though with her head discrown'd;
And pale, but lovely, with maternal grief
She clasps a babe to whom her breast yields no relief.

CLXVIII.

Scion of chiefs and monarchs, where art thou?
Fond hope of many nations, art thou dead?
Could not the grave forget thee, and lay low
Some less majestic, less beloved head?
In the sad midnight, while thy heart still bled,
The mother of a moment, o'er thy boy,
Death hush'd that pang for ever; with thee fled

The present happiness and promised joy
Which fill'd the imperial isles so full it seem'd to cloy.

CLXIX.

Peasants bring forth in safety. — Can it be,
Oh thou that wert so happy, so adored!
Those who weep not for kings shall weep for thee,
And Freedom's heart, grown heavy, cease to hoard
Her many griefs for One; for she had pour'd
Her orisons for thee, and o'er thy head
Beheld her Iris. — Thou, too, lonely lord,
And desolate consort — vainly wert thou wed!
The husband of a year! the father of the dead!

CLXX.

Of sackcloth was thy wedding garment made;
Thy bridal's fruit is ashes; in the dust
The fair-hair'd Daughter of the Isles is laid,
The love of millions! How we did intrust
Futurity to her! and, though it must
Darken above our bones, yet fondly deem'd
Our children should obey her child, and bless'd
Her and her hoped-for seed, whose promise seem'd
Like stars to shepherds' eyes: — 't was but a meteor beam'd.

CLXXI.

Woe unto us, not her; for she sleeps well:
The fickle reek of popular breath, the tongue
Of hollow counsel, the false oracle,
Which from the birth of monarchy hath rung
Its knell in princely ears till the o'er-stung

Nations have arm'd in madness, the strange fate
Which tumbles mightiest sovereigns, and hath flung
Against their blind omnipotence a weight
Within the opposing scale which crushes soon or late, —

CLXXII.

These might have been her destiny; but no,
Our hearts deny it: and so young, so fair,
Good without effort, great without a foe;
But now a bride and mother — and now *there!*
How many ties did that stern moment tear!
From thy Sire's to his humblest subject's breast
Is link'd the electric chain of that despair,
Whose shock was as an earthquake's, and opprest
The land which loved thee so that none could love thee best.

CLXXIII.

Lo, Nemi! navell'd in the woody hills
So far, that the uprooting wind which tears
The oak from his foundation, and which spills
The ocean o'er its boundary, and bears
Its foam against the skies, reluctant spares
The oval mirror of thy glassy lake; —
And, calm as cherish'd hate, its surface wears
A deep cold settled aspect nought can shake,
All coil'd into itself and round, as sleeps the snake.

CLXXIV.

And near Albano's scarce divided waves
Shine from a sister valley; and afar
The Tiber winds, and the broad ocean laves

The Latian coast where sprung the Epic war,
'Arms and the Man,' whose re-ascending star
Rose o'er an empire: but beneath thy right
Tully reposed from Rome; and where yon bar
Of girdling mountains intercepts the sight
The Sabine farm was till'd, the weary bard's delight.

CLXXV.

But I forget. — My Pilgrim's shrine is won,
And he and I must part — so let it be:
His task and mine alike are nearly done;
Yet once more let us look upon the sea;
The midland ocean breaks on him and me,
And from the Alban Mount we now behold
Our friend of youth, that ocean, which when we
Beheld it last by Calpe's rock unfold
Those waves, we follow'd on till the dark Euxine roll'd

CLXXVI.

Upon the blue Symplegades. Long years —
Long, though not very many — since have done
Their work on both; some suffering and some tears
Have left us nearly where we had begun:
Yet not in vain our mortal race hath run;
We have had our reward, and it is here, —
That we can yet feel gladden'd by the sun,
And reap from earth, sea, joy almost as dear
As if there were no man to trouble what is clear.

CLXXVII.

Oh that the Desert were my dwelling-place,
With one fair Spirit for my minister,

That I might all forget the human race,
And, hating no one, love but only her!
Ye Elements, in whose ennobling stir
I feel myself exalted, can ye not
Accord me such a being? Do I err
In deeming such inhabit many a spot,
Though with them to converse can rarely be our lot?

CLXXVIII.

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and music in its roar:
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be or have been before,
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet can not all conceal.

CLXXIX.

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore; upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

CLXXX.

His steps are not upon thy paths, thy fields
Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise

And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray
And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth: — there let him lay.

CLXXXI.

The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee and arbiter of war, —
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar
Alike the Armada's pride or spoils of Trafalgar.

CLXXXII.

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee —
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
Thy waters wash'd them power while they were free,
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts: — not so thou,
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play;
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow;
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

CLXXXIII.

Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time,

Calm or convulsed — in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving; — boundless, endless, and sublime —
The image of Eternity — the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made; each zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone.

CLXXXIV.

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward. From a boy
I wanton'd with thy breakers — they to me
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror — 't was a pleasing fear,
For I was as it were a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane — as I do here.

CLXXXV.

My task is done — my song hath ceased — my theme
Has died into an echo; it is fit
The spell should break of this protracted dream.
The torch shall be extinguish'd which hath lit
My midnight lamp — and what is writ, is writ,—
Would it were worthier! but I am not now
That which I have been — and my visions flit
Less palpably before me — and the glow
Which in my spirit dwelt is fluttering, faint, and low.

CLXXXVI.

Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been —
A sound which makes us linger; — yet — farewell!

Ye, who have traced the Pilgrim to the scene
Which is his last, if in your memories dwell
1670 A thought which once was his, if on ye swell
A single recollection, not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon and scallop-shell;
Farewell! with *him* alone may rest the pain,
If such there were — with *you*, the moral of his strain!

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON.

NOTES.

The Castle of Chillon completes the picturesque beauty of the crescent-shaped Lake of Geneva. The bright blue waters of the lake are surrounded by steep mountains, the lower slopes of which are vine-covered, while the summits cut the air in fantastic forms. At the end of the lake, the valley of the Rhone opens toward higher peaks, dimly seen and flashing with snow. The serrated Dent du Midi, however, closes the view from most points. The white castle, satisfying all ideals of a castle aroused by fairy-tale and romance, stands on a little island so close to the shore that it appears to project into the lake. People were apparently imprisoned here as early as the ninth century. François Bonivard, whose name Byron erroneously spelled Bonnivard, lived in the sixteenth century. Byron did not know much about him when he wrote the poem. He said later: "When this poem was composed, I was not sufficiently aware of the history of Bonnivard, or I should have endeavored to dignify the subject by an attempt to celebrate his courage and his virtues."

The real Bonivard began life as a Roman Catholic and inherited from an uncle a rich priory near the city of Geneva, that carried with it the title of prior. He became, however, a reformer and an ardent republican. "As soon as I began to read the history of nations," he wrote, "I felt drawn by a strong preference for republics, the interests of which I always espoused." The Duke of Savoy opposed the liberties of Geneva, and Bonivard, especially in 1519, helped to defend the city from his attacks. In 1530 he fell for the second time into the power of the Duke, who imprisoned him in Chillon for six years. During the first two years he had fairly comfortable quarters; then "the Duke visited Chillon, and . . . . . the Captain thrust me into a cell lower than the lake, where I lived four years. I had so little space for walking that I wore in the rock which was the pavement a little path or track as if it had been made with a hammer." After Bonivard's release he lived many years as an honored and respected citizen of Geneva. It is said that in private life he was far from being an admirable man; but he was certainly a person of patriotic zeal and intellectual power. In the bitter religious strife that prevailed, during those Reformation days, he seems to have striven to reconcile parties. He writes in one excellent passage: "Both factions boast of preaching Christ Crucified: and we tell the truth: for we leave Him crucified and naked upon the Tree of the Cross, and we play at dice at the foot of that Cross to know who will have His vestments."

See an article entitled "The True Story of the Prisoner of Chillon" in *The Nineteenth Century,* May, 1900.

Byron's name is carved on the southern side of the third column in the dungeon, but it is not certain that he carved it himself. The fifth column is that to which Bonivard is said to have been chained.

Line 3. *In a single night:* "Ludovico Sforza and others. The same is asserted of Marie Antoinette's, the wife of Louis Sixteenth, though not in quite so short a period. Grief is said to have the same effect. To such, and not to fear, this change in hers was to be attributed." *Byron.*

11. *My father's faith:* The whole tenor of this passage suggests that Bonivard was a victim of religious persecution. But the real Bonivard was imprisoned for political reasons.

17. *We were seven, etc.* Note the increase in solemnity due to the change from the iambic to the trochaic movement.

27. *There are seven pillars, etc.:* There are electric lights in the dungeon now! What sort of mould is a "Gothic mould"?

31. *A sunbeam:* Of the effect of this sunlight Mr. Neaf in his *Guide to the Castle of Chillon* writes: "This is really so: Bonivard, from the spot where he was chained, could, perhaps, never get an idea of the loveliness and variety of radiating light which the sunbeams shed at different hours of the day. In the morning this light is of luminous and transparent shining, which the curves of the vaults send back all along the hall. During the afternoon the hall assumes a much deeper and warmer coloring, and the blue transparency of the morning disappears; but at eventide, after the sun has set behind the Jura, the scene changes to the deep glow of fire."

73. *The youngest:* This picture suggests in one or two points Shelley's portrait of Lionel, in his poem, *Rosalind and Helen.*

82. *A polar day:* Analyze the pathos and beauty of this figure.

103. *A hunter of the hills:* The description of the elder brother reminds us that we are in Switzerland.

107. *Lake Leman:* Another name for the Lake of Geneva.

109. *Its massy waters meet and flow:* Ruskin applauds the perfect truth of each word in this line. The water is really about

eight hundred feet deep beside the castle walls. See *Modern Painters,* Part IV, ch. 1, sec. 9.

160. *Earth*: Parse the word.

185. *Unmixed with such:* With such horrors. Study in the following passage the effect of restrained pathos, culminating in the agony which gives the prisoner strength to burst his chains and rush to the side of his dead brother.

227. *I know not why:* Can you explain the reason for the break in the metre?

231. It is interesting to compare the description of prison life in Silvio Pellico's *My Prisons,* in the story of Dr. Manette as told in Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities,* and the pictures of imprisonment in Russia given in the *Memoirs* of Prince Kropotkin, the Russian Revolutionist.

238. *Shrubless crags within the mist:* What does "shrubless" add to this figure? What "within the mist"/

247. *A stirless breath:* This section presents the heart of the prisoner's agony. Why is it so brief?

284. *A visitant from Paradise:* "The souls of the Blessed are supposed by some to animate green birds in the fields of Paradise."

294. *A solitary cloud:* Is this gentle simile appropriate here? Why did not Byron add another simile of horror like the preceding?

331. *The quiet of a loving eye:* "Compare Wordsworth, in *A Poet's Epitaph:* 'The harvest of a quiet eye.' Byron had satirized Wordsworth severely in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.* He later regretted his stricture and by such lines as these acknowledged a poetic debt." *Thomas.* The poetry which Byron wrote during 1816, the year of this poem, reflects the joint influence of Wordsworth and Shelley.

332. Remember the gloom to which his eyes have so long been accustomed. Note what arrests his eye. First the snow-mountains, then the lake, then the little town, then the island, on which his thought rests lovingly, and then the happy free creatures in wave and air.

341. *A little isle:* "Between the entrance of the Rhone and Villeneuve, not far from Chillon, is a very small island; the only one I could perceive in my voyage round and over the lake, within its circumference. It contains a few trees (I think not over three), and from its singleness and diminutive size has a peculiar effect upon the view."—*E. H. Coleridge.*

378. *A hermitage:* Cf. Lovelace's *To Althea in Prison:*—

Stone walls do not a prison make,
  Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
  That for a hermitage.

381. *With spiders:* Byron's prisoner is not the only one who has found this possible. See Silvio Pellico.

CHILDE HAROLD: CANTO III.

NOTES.

Stanza XVII. After an interval of some years, Byron has resumed his wanderings. The first part of the canto has been filled with meditations on his personal sorrows, either in his own person or in that of his hero. Now, he begins comment on his travels, and first commemorates the field of Waterloo. Here, hardly a year before, the Duke of Wellington and the Powers allied with England had finally defeated Napoleon and so put an end to the ten years' despotism which had changed the map of Europe. There was as yet no monument to mark the site of the battle; a mound surmounted by the Belgian Lion was erected by William I of Holland in 1823.

Stanza XVIII. *"Pride of place* is a term of falconry, meaning the highest pitch of flight. See *Macbeth:*

> An eagle towering in her pride of place
> Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and killed."
>
> —*Byron.*

For the correct form of the quotation, see *Macbeth,* Act II, scene IV, line 12.

Byron copied these first two stanzas in a lady's album in Brussels. The central lines of the second then ran:

> Here his last flight the haughty eagle flew,
> Then tore with bloody beak the fatal plain.

The poet was impelled to alter the lines by seeing an illustration of them drawn by a Mr. Reinagle, representing "a spirited chained eagle grasping the earth with his talons." Byron wrote: "Reinagle is a better poet and a better ornithologist than I am. Eagles and all birds of prey attack with their talons and not with their beaks." The eagle is of course the imperial eagle of Napoleon.

Stanza XIX. See the Introduction for an explanation of the tone of this passage. Compare Shelley's Sonnet, *Feelings of a Republican on the Fall of Bonaparte:*

> I know
> Too late, since thou and France are in the dust,
> That Virtue owns a more eternal foe
> Than Force or Fraud: old Custom, legal Crime,
> And bloody Faith, the foulest birth of Time.

Stanza XX. Last line: Hippias and Hipparchus, the sons of Peisistratus, were the tyrants of Athens in B. C. 514. Two friends, Harmodius and Aristogiton, assassinated them at the Festival of Athena, having concealed their daggers in festive boughs of myrtle. The old Greek poem on the exploit ran:

> I'll wreathe my sword in myrtle-bough,
> The sword that laid the tyrant low,
> When patriots burning to be free
> To Athens gave equality.

See for a description of an imaginary relief referring to the event, Browning's *Pippa Passes,* Act II.

Stanza XXI. This famous Ball was given by the Duchess of Richmond at Brussels, on the fifteenth of June, the eve of the battle. Thackeray has made effective use of it in *Vanity Fair.*

Stanza XXIII. Frederick William, Duke of Brunswick, died in the front of the line almost in the beginning of the battle. His father had been killed in the battle of Jena in 1806.

Stanza XXVI. The Scotch troops fought valiantly at Waterloo. Sir Evan Campbell fought on the Royalist side against Cromwell in the seventeenth century. His grandson, Lochiel, also an adherent of the ill-fated Stuarts, was wounded at Culloden in 1746. A great-great-grandson in command of the Highlanders was killed at Waterloo.

Stanza XXVII. Byron was mistaken in thinking that the wood of Soignies, on the site of the battle, was the traditional Forest of Arden.

Stanzas LXXVI-LXXXIV. These stanzas contain Byron's character-study of Jean Jacques Rousseau, the famous Swiss writer of the eighteenth century. Rousseau's writings aroused enthusiasm for a return to more natural modes of thought and feeling. His theories of social equality played an important part in creating the Republics of the United States and of France. See *Rousseau,* by John Morley. The scene of Rousseau's novel, *La Nouvelle Héloise,* is the shores of the Lake of Geneva. Byron and Shelley read the book and visited the sites it mentions, together.

Byron was evidently chiefly impressed by the element of passion in the writings of Rousseau. In the eighty-first and eighty-second stanzas, however, he does justice to the power of Rousseau's intellectual conceptions.

Stanza LXXXII. A concise statement of Byron's estimate of the French Revolution. Compare that of Shelley, as given in the preface to *The Revolt of Islam.*

Stanzas LXXXIII-LXXXIV. Byron wrote in 1822: "The king-times are finishing. There will be blood shed like water and tears like mist: but the Peoples will conquer in the end. I shall not live to see it, but I foresee it."

Stanzas LXXXVII-XCVI. This passage is one of the most famous of Byron's descriptions of Nature. Stanzas LXXXVIII-XCII are intended to be full of solemn calm, and are dramatically contrasted with the following stanzas, which seek to render the sublimity of the storm. Byron wrote this passage among glorious scenery. He was also at this time strongly under the influence of Wordsworth and Shelley, and had moreover been re-reading with enthusiasm the work of Rousseau, who had helped to create in Europe a new sympathy with Nature.

Stanza LXXXIX. The sentiment of the latter part of this stanza is tinged with the pantheism common to the nature-poetry of this period.

Stanza XC. *Cytherea's zone* was the magic girdle of Venus, which endowed any one who wore it with irresistible charm.

Stanza XCI. "It is to be recollected that the most beautiful and impressive doctrines of the Divine Founder of Christianity were delivered not in the TEMPLE but on the MOUNT. . . . It is one thing to read the *Iliad* at Sigaeum and on the tumuli, or by the springs with Mount Ida above, and the plain and rivers and Archipelago around you, and quite another to trim your taper over it in a snug library—this I KNOW. Were the early and rapid progress of what is called Methodism to be attributed to any cause beyond the enthusiasm excited by its vehement faith and doctrines, I should venture to ascribe it to the practice of preaching in the fields."—*Byron.*

Stanza XCII. "The thunder storm to which these lines refer occurred on the thirteenth of June, 1816, at midnight. I have seen among the Acroceraunian mountains of Chimari several more terrible but none more beautiful."—*Byron.*

Stanza XCIII. Note the strong sense of revelling in the tumult of Nature. Such enthusiasm was as natural to Byron as a quiet joy in Nature's calmer aspects was to Wordsworth.

Stanza XCIV. The critics agree that Byron borrowed this fine metaphor from the second part of Coleridge's *Christabel,* where Coleridge describes the alienation of two friends:

> But never either found another
> To free the hollow heart from paining—
> They stood aloof, the scars remaining
> Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
>   A dreary sea now flows between,
> But neither heat nor frost nor thunder
>   Shall wholly do away, I ween,
>   The marks of that which once hath been.

Stanzas CV-CVII. In these stanzas, Byron gives a character sketch of two famous men of the preceding age: Voltaire, the

French critic and skeptic, who lived for many years at Ferney, near Geneva; and Gibbon, the English historian, who in 1788 finished his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* at Lausanne on the site of the hotel now called by his name.

CHILDE HAROLD: CANTO IV.

NOTES.

Byron wrote one hundred and thirty stanzas of this canto at white heat in thirty-three days after his return to Venice from a six-weeks' trip to Ferrara, Florence, and Rome, in the spring of 1817.

If the reader would share the emotion of the opening stanza he should know something of the history and art of Venice. Good books to consult are Horatio Brown's *Venice: an Historical Sketch,* and T. Okey's *The Story of Venice.* Ruskin's great book, *The Stones of Venice,* though not to be trusted as formal history, is full of splendid passages. Merely to turn its pages is to realize how slightly Byron touched on the treasures of the city.

Venice was founded by country-folk who fled from the invasion of the Huns under Attila in the fifth century, taking refuge on the little islands in the lagoon. Her power rose to its height in the fifteenth century, when she was the mistress of wide possessions to the east of her, in Dalmatia, the Grecian isles, and the Levant. Her magnificent art coincided with the height of her power and with the early stages of her decline. She remained a free Republic till 1797, when Napoleon put an end to her liberties and abolished the office of Doge. From that date to 1805 she was under the power of Austria. From 1805 till 1814 she belonged to Napoleon's Kingdom of Italy. She then passed again under Austrian dominion, and was, when Byron wrote, still subjected to this unendurable ignominy, which continued until the union and independence of Italy were consummated in 1866. These brief statements will explain many allusions in the text.

Line 1. *The Bridge of Sighs* spans with a single covered arch the narrow canal between the Palace of the Doges, well described by Ruskin, and the old city dungeon.

8. *The wingèd Lion's marble piles:* St. Mark's Lion, the emblem of Venice, still looks proudly out from a column in the Piazza in front of St. Mark's Church, with St. Theodore and his crocodile as a pendant.

10. *A sea Cybele:* Byron borrowed this figure from Sabellicus, an Italian writer of the Renaissance. Cybele, the mother of the gods, was represented as crowned with towers. Her name is usually accented on the first syllable, but there is some authority for Byron's use, which he probably caught from the Italian pronunciation, which accents the penult.

19. *Tasso's echoes:* "The well-known song of the Gondoliers, of alternate stanzas from Tasso's *Jerusalem,* has died with the independence of Venice." So Byron's fellow-traveler, Hobhouse, annotates this line.

21. *Crumbling to the shore:* One of these palaces has now been carried away piecemeal from the Grand Canal, and forms part of Mrs. Jack Gardner's Museum at Fenway Court, Boston. See also note on line 114.

27. *The masque of Italy:* Masque here means carnival, festivity.

33, 34. *The Rialto, etc.:* The Rialto is the famous bridge across the Grand Canal. Shylock and the Moor need no explanation. But alas for Byron's proud faith in literary immortality! How many people can identify Pierre without a note? He is a character in Otway's *Venice Preserved.* That Byron makes his name a monosyllable is an evidence of the provincialism of educated Englishmen in his day.

48. *This worn feeling:* The phrase is loosely used. The antecedent is that sentiment which is the theme of the last stanza.

51. The *fairy-land* of the imagination is contrasted, first, with historic memories, then with personal experience.

57. *Are now but so:* Parse "but so," if possible.

71. *The inviolate island of the sage and free:* Byron's hurt resentment against England breathes through these stanzas; yet his unwilling tribute to her in this line ranks with the best expressions of patriotism in her literature.

74. *In a soil which is not mine:* The poet's tempestuous spirit knew many moods. On another occasion he wrote to a friend: "I am sure my bones would not rest in an English grave, or my clay mix with the earth of that country. I believe the thought would drive me mad on my death-bed—I would not even feed your worms if I could help it."

82, 83. *The temple where the dead are honour'd:* Not "dull oblivion" but the protest of the authorities debarred Byron from burial in Westminster Abbey.

85. *The Spartan's epitaph:* The answer made by the mother of Brasidas, the Spartan general, to those who praised her son. This stanza has the manly ring which atones for much of Byron's egotism and lack of self-discipline.

91. *The spouseless Adriatic:* Stanzas V to IX have formed an interlude. The poet now returns to Venice. This stanza is full of allusions. The Bucentaur was the barge in which the Doge annually sailed out into the Lagoon, that he might throw a ring into the sea in token of Venice's supremacy over the waters. St. Mark's Lion, like many other treasures, was carried to Paris by Napoleon, but was afterwards restored. The Piazza where it stands was the scene of the submission of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa to Pope Alexander III in 1177, a central episode in

the long mediaeval struggle between the Papacy and the Empire. Frederick was of the House of Suabia.

Wordsworth's Sonnet *On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic* is an admirable companion to these stanzas:

> Once did She hold the gorgeous east in fee;
>   And was the safeguard of the west: the worth
>   Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
> Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
>   She was a maiden City, bright and free;
>   No guile seduced, no force could violate;
>   And, when she took unto herself a Mate,
> She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
>   And what if she had seen those glories fade,
> Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;
>   Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
> When her long life hath reached its final day:
>   Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
> Of that which once was great, is passed away.

100, etc. These stanzas give an indignant and accurate picture of the situation of Italy. That which Wordsworth contemplates with philosophic sorrow, as a finality, stirs Byron to a wrath charged with rebellion.

106. *Lauwine:* A German word for avalanche. The word "avalanche" was not yet acclimated in English when Byron wrote.

107. *Blind old Dandolo:* Commander-in-chief of the Venetians at the taking of Constantinople in the last decade of the twelfth century. He was eighty-five years old at the time.

109. *His steeds of brass* still ramp proudly above the portal of the Church of St. Mark. They were brought from Constantinople by Dandolo.

112. *Are they not bridled:* The allusion is to legendary history, which tells that when the Venetians in 1379 were overcome by the armies of Genoa and Padua, they sent an embassy entreating that their city be allowed to retain her independence. The Genoese sent back answer through their general, Pietro Doria: "On God's faith, gentlemen of Venice, ye shall have no peace . . . . until we have first put a rein upon those unbridled horses of yours, that are upon the porch of your evangelist, St. Mark." Modern research does not support the authenticity of the story.

114. *Sinks, like a sea-weed:* Critics discuss whether Byron be thinking of the encroachments of the literal sea or of the moral decline of the city. Why not of the second under figure of the first? The passage in its literal meaning received a striking illustration when the Campanile, one of the oldest buildings in the city, fell into ruins in 1902. See a beautiful passage parallel to this in Shelley's *Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills:*

Sun-girt city, thou hast been
Ocean's child, and then his queen:
Now has come a darker day,
And thou soon must be his prey.

Read also the splendid tribute to Byron a little later in the same poem.

118. *A new Tyre:* Consult the description of this great commercial city of the ancient world, in *Ezekiel,* XXVI-XXVIII.

120. *The 'Planter of the Lion':* Byron here relies on a probably false etymology. The Venetians were nick-named Pantaloni; but the real origin of the term, which is the source of our "pantaloon" and of the Italian name for a clown, is now thought to have been the baptismal name "Pantaleone," frequently given to Venetian children in honor of St. Pantaleone, whose cult was common in Northern Italy.

123. *The Ottomite:* The Turk.

124. *Troy's rival, Candia:* In 1669, Candia, an island on the coast of Crete, was lost to Venice after a defense which had lasted twenty-five years.

125. *Lepanto's fight:* This naval battle against the Turks was won by the Venetians and their allies in 1570.

136. *When Athens' armies, etc.:* See Plutarch's *Life of Nicias* and Browning's *Balaustion's Adventure.* In the fifth century B. C. the dramas of Euripides were so popular throughout Sicily that Athenian prisoners who could recite them were especially favored by their masters.

151. *The Ocean queen, etc.:* Would this argument appeal to the practical statesman? On the other hand, is the appeal of Byron in the last stanza based on the highest ground?

154. *I loved her from my boyhood:* Byron wrote to John Murray: "Venice pleases me as much as I expected, and I expected much. It is one of those places which I know before I see them, and has always haunted me the most after the East."

158. It is amusing today to find the crudely romantic story Mrs. Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho,* ranked by Byron with the fine though now neglected drama, Otway's *Venice Preserved,* with Schiller's *Geister-Seer,* and with Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice.*

160. Interpret *thus.*

172. What is the force of *But? Tannen* is the plural of Tanne, a fir tree. The Alpine fir, Byron says, "only thrived in very rocky parts, where scarcely soil sufficient for its nourishment can be found. On these spots it grows to a greater height than any other tree." The propriety of introducing foreign words with no quotation marks into the text, as Byron has done here and in the case of "lauwine," is questionable.

Stanzas XX-XXV. Passages like these were in Matthew Arnold's mind when he described Byron as parading over Europe

"The pageant of his bleeding heart," and in Carlyle's mind, when in *Sartor Resartus* he sneered at the practice of crying aloud when one is hurt and represented his own suffering hero as "mute, silent, or speaking only of the Weather or the Journals."

197. *Devotion, toil, war, good, or crime:* Which among these resources should you say were sought by Byron?

204. The power of association is exquisitely suggested in the following lines. E. H. Coleridge calls attention here to Browning's *Bishop Blougram's Apology:*

> Just when we are safest, there's a sunset-touch,
> A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,
> A chorus-ending from Euripides—
> And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears
> As old and new at once as nature's self
> To rap and knock and enter in our soul.

216. Note the condensation of thought possible to poetic expression: *Too many,* since we lose and mourn; *how few* since life at best is very lonely.

217. Byron now turns from Venice and from the personal interlude, to wanderings farther afield. The relation of the personal parts of the poem to the impersonal description is indicated in the opening lines of this stanza, where Byron says that he stands "A ruin among ruins." Despite his poetic melancholy, we know that he was fairly happy in Italy: and he was still a young man in the prime of vigor.

226. *The commonwealth of kings:* One of the best things in the poem is Byron's honest enthusiasm for Italy. He forgets, when he praises her, his cynicism and his assumed despair: he forgets himself. Compare Shelley's feelings for Italy, as shown in his *Letters,* his *Lines Among the Euganean Hills,* and elsewhere. And compare the feeling of Browning, and of Mrs. Browning.

235. This sunset was seen by Byron as he rode one evening on the mainland opposite Venice, along the banks of the little river Brenta. He says that he saw many another equally beautiful, and one who knows Italy can well believe him. Englishmen are less accustomed than Americans to brilliant sunsets.

238. *Blue Friuli's mountains:* The mountains meant are "the Julian Alps, which form an arc from behind Trieste to the neighborhood of Verona." The same chain, or higher summits beyond, are called below "the far Rhætian hill," that is, the Tyrolese heights.

244. *A single star is at her side:* Cf. Shelley, who describes a similar sunset seen from the Euganean Hills, looking down on the city:

> Autumn's evening meets me soon,
> Leading the infantine moon

> And that one star, which to her
> Almost seems to minister
> Half the crimson light she brings
> From the sunset's radiant springs.

Compare also Coleridge's:

> Hornèd moon, with one bright star
> Within the nether tip.

259. Ruskin objects to the figure of the hues on the dying dolphin. He says that only an insensitive nature could have used it. Do you agree? Does the dolphin really change hues when dying?

262. We now start with Byron on our travels. First we visit Arqua, a hill-village on the southeast slope of Shelley's Euganean Hills, between Padua and Ferrara. Here Petrarch spent the later years of his life, here he died. His house is adorned with charming old frescoes depicting scenes from his poems. It is at the top of the town in a fine situation. Petrarch was one of the first people in the post-Roman world to prefer country to city living.

267. *To raise a language, etc.:* Petrarch, the herald of the renaissance in Italy, was as strong a patriot as the Italians with whom Byron was conspiring for the overthrow of the Austrian. His sonnets in the vernacular completed the work begun by Dante's *Divine Comedy,* of establishing Italian among the great languages of literature.

269. *The tree which bears his lady's name* is of course the laurel.

293. *Idlesse:* An old word, taken from Spenser, to whom Byron owes the stanzaic form of the poem.

295. Byron did not really love solitude, as Wordsworth did. But he could sentimentalize over it.

303. *Predestined to a doom:* This gruesome stanza suggests an intermittent terror of Byron's that he was himself destined to eternal loss. Although often defiant in religious attitude, he never quite shook himself free from the older orthodoxy. It is noteworthy that solitude suggests to him gloom rather than rest and joy. He says: "The struggle is quite as likely to be with demons as with our better thoughts. Satan chose the wilderness for the temptation of Our Saviour. And our unsullied John Locke preferred the presence of a child to complete solitude."

307. Now we come to Ferrara, a famous centre of art and letters during the Italian renaissance. See Browning's *My Last Duchess.* The House of Este, patrons of Tasso, who honored them in his poetry, long held rule here.

319. It is popularly believed that the Duke Alfonso II "because of Tasso's political intrigues and because of his daring to love the Duke's sister" Leonora "had the poet confined as a lunatic in a narrow cell. (Cf. Byron's *Lament of Tasso,* and Goethe's *Torquato Tasso.*) But later authorities assert that this confinement was

due to the genuine insanity of the poet, and Byron's attack here may not be justifiable."—*Thomas.*

339. *The Cruscan quire:* "The Accademia della Crusca, established at Florence in 1582, with the object of purifying the national language. It censured Tasso's *Jerusalem. Quire* is now commonly spelled *choir.*"—*Rolfe.*

340. *Boileau:* "The celebrated French critic, who complained that the taste of his time preferred the tinsel of Tasso to the gold of Virgil."—*Rolfe.*

342. *That whetstone of the teeth:* It is all very well for Byron to sneer cleverly at the heroic couplet endorsed by Boileau. But then how explain his avowed preference for the school of Pope? He wrote to Gifford that he and all his important contemporaries were on the wrong tack and Pope on the right one.

354. *The Bards of Hell and Chivalry:* Dante and Ariosto. We now think Dante to be the Bard of Paradise quite as truly as the Bard of Hell. But Byron really did not know much about Dante. His comparison of Ariosto to Scott, however, is felicitous and just: the first bit of discriminating criticism he has given us in his torrent of praise.

359. *The Ariosto of the North:* Byron and Scott admired each other. See a generous letter from Byron to the elder poet, written after an interview with the Prince Regent in which the Prince had warmly praised Scott's poetry to the rising poet who was largely to supersede the elder in popularity.

361. *The lightning, etc.:* "Before the remains of Tasso were removed from the Benedictine church to the library of Ferrara, his bust, which surmounted the tomb, was struck by lightning, and a crown of laurels melted away."—*Hobhouse.*

368. "Among the Romans it was a superstition that the lightning sanctified the objects it struck. Because of this belief the Curtian lake and the Ruminal fig-tree in the Forum were held sacred."—*Thomas.*

370, *etc.:* This noble stanza and the next are, Byron tells us, a free translation of a sonnet by Filicaja, an Italian poet.

385. *The stranger's sword:* Compare for the sentiment in this whole passage, Browning's *Italian in England,* and Meredith's novels, *Sandro Belloni* and *Emilia in England.* Byron is only one of many Englishmen whose indignant sympathy for Italy has been expressed in letters and in deeds.

388-395. In a celebrated letter to Cicero, Servius Sulpicius tries to console the great orator for the death of his daughter Tullia. Parts of the letter describe a route by sea and land which Byron often traced. "On my return from Asia," writes Sulpicius, "as I was sailing from Ægina towards Megara, I began to contemplate the prospects of the countries around me: Ægina was behind, Megara before me; Piræus on the right, Corinth on the left; all which towns once famous and flourishing, now lie over-turned and buried in their ruins. Upon this sight, I could not but think presently within myself: Alas! how do we poor mortals fret and vex ourselves if any of our friends happen to die or be killed, whose life is yet so short, when the carcasses of so many noble cities lie here exposed before me in one view."

421. How and when was this prophecy fulfilled?

425. *The Etrurian Athens* is Florence, situated on the river Arno. Byron did not appreciate this city, which today is deemed as interesting as Venice or Rome. He stopped there one day only, and wrote before he went: "I have not the least curiosity about Florence, though I must see it for the sake of the Venus." One of the reasons for his attitude was his indifference to painting, which is a chief glory of the city of Botticelli and Fra Angelico. He wrote: "I know nothing of painting; and I detest it unless it reminds me of something I have seen or think it possible to see, for which reason I spit upon and abhor all the saints and subjects of half the impostures I see in the churches and palaces." Ruskin was to rouse Englishmen to a different frame of mind. But Byron did feel impressed in the great Florentine galleries, and half recanted his heresy.

431. *Modern Luxury:* Byron speaks truly here: Florence owed her pre-eminence in arts and letters during the Renaissance to the advance in civilization rendered possible by her commercial supremacy.

433. *The Goddess loves in stone:* The Venus de Medici, long the central ornament of the Tribune, or central hall, in the Uffizi, the chief art gallery of Florence. Byron went to Florence on purpose to rhapsodize over this famous statue, and he does so eloquently. One feels a little suspicion, however, that his raptures were partly made to order. He was really more sensitive to historic memories than to art. Shelley also, fainted with ecstasy before the remains of ancient sculpture, while he hardly noted the great religious art of the painters before Raphael.

445. *Chained to the chariot:* Explain the allusion.

450. *The Dardan Shepherd's prize:* See classical dictionary.

478. *In Santa Croce's holy precincts:* Byron does not really care anything about Santa Croce. All he had to say about it in prose was that it contains "much illustrious nothing." To the modern traveler, the precincts are indeed "holy," not on account of the famous people buried in the church, which is a kind of Italian Westminster Abbey, but on account of its association with the sweetest of mediæval saints, Francis of Assisi. The church contains remarkable frescoes of the early schools, some of which celebrate the life and death of St. Francis. It was built by his followers. See Ruskin's *Mornings in Florence.*

484. For what was each of these men famous?

487. *The elements:* Water, air, earth, fire.

495. *Canova:* An Italian sculptor, more highly esteemed in Byron's day than in our own. He died in 1822.

498. *Bard of Prose:* Boccaccio, author of the *Decamerone.*

505-506. Dante is buried in Ravenna. Scipio Africanus the Elder gave orders that he [Scipio] was not to be buried in Rome, but in the home of his voluntary exile, Liturnum. The inscription on his tomb, according to some historians, was: "Ungrateful country, you shall not have my ashes."

507. Owing to the factions between the Ghibellines and the Guelfs, the parties of the Emperor and the Pope, Dante, to the everlasting shame of Florence, was exiled from the city. Compare Rossetti's beautiful poem, *Dante at Verona.*

514. *Boccaccio* was buried at his birthplace, Certaldo. Later, the religious authorities whom Byron calls "hyæna bigots" caused his body to be removed.

517. *Tuscan's siren tongue:* Byron is said to have spoken Italian like a native. This is just praise of the language.

525. *Cæsar's pageant:* Byron means a pageant decreed by Tiberius. At the public funeral of the sister of Brutus and wife of Cassius, the busts of her husband and brother were not allowed to be carried in the procession because they had conspired against Cæsar. Yet, says Tacitus, their glory was the more conspicuous in men's minds because their images were withheld.

528. *Fortress of falling empire:* During the barbarian invasions Ravenna was a stronghold of the Empire.

532. Byron in this stanza alludes to the tombs of the Medici in the Chapel of San Lorenzo at Florence. He wrote to Murray: "I also went to the Medici Chapel—fine frippery in great slabs of various expensive stones, to commemorate fifty rotten and forgotten carcasses."

536. These lines may suggest the graves of Byron's contemporaries, Keats and Shelley, in the seclusion of the English cemetery at Rome.

543. *Where Sculpture, etc.:* The reference probably is to the great picture galleries at Florence. One likes the honesty of the last of the stanza. Byron wrote to Murray: "I never yet saw the picture or the statue which came a league within my conception or expectation; but I have seen many mountains and seas and rivers and views.....(that) went far beyond it."

551. *Thrasimene's lake:* Macaulay more accurately makes only three syllables of this name:

And dark Verbenna from the hold
By reedy Thrasymene.

—*Horatius, 191.*

The lake is in modern Umbria. It was the scene of a great defeat of the Romans at the hands of Hannibal.

563. *An earthquake, etc.:* Livy is the authority for this statement.

578. A very excellent description of the lake as the tourist today sees it.

586. *But thou, Clitumnus:* "No book of travels has omitted to expatiate on the temple of the Clitumnus, between Foligno and Spoleto, and no sight—even in Italy—is more worthy a description."—*Byron.*

590. *Milk-white steer:* The traveler in Umbria and Tuscany is still delighted by the beauty of the white oxen and the larger mouse colored ones. Cf. Macaulay's *Horatius,* l. 46, 55. For probably the first mention, in literature, see Vergil, *Georgics,* II, 14.

600. *The finny darter:* Do you like this paraphrase for a fish?

602. *Chance:* It may chance.

612. Note the etymological sense of *disgust,* which is tastelessness.

614. *Velino cleaves:* One object of Byron's journey was to see this famous waterfall of Terni, formed by the Velino river. He wrote that he thought it finer than any cataract in the Alps, and he spared no pains in the following stanzas.

620. *Phlegethon:* One of the four rivers of Hades. The figure is well sustained. Byron had shown in *Manfred* his power to describe the wilder aspects of Nature.

625. A line more delicate in beauty than is usual with Byron.

637. *Like an eternity:* Point out the effect of the similes in this stanza.

639. *Cataract* and *track* are a false rhyme.

640. The similes in this stanza should be studied.

651. *Their mightier parents:* Byron had only just published his *Manfred,* which was written partly to express his feelings in the presence of Alpine scenery. The snow of the Jungfrau is no longer untrodden.

653. *Lauwine:* See note, line 106. The correct plural is "Lauwinen."

657, 658. *Chimari* is the name of the town near the Acroceraunian mountains. *Acroceraunian* means in Greek, peaks struck by thunder or lightning. Shelley, too, loved this sonorous name. His Arethusa

arose
From her couch of snows
In the Acroceraunian mountains.

662, 663. *With a Trojan's eye* must mean, from the plain of Troy: for the position of these other mountains, consult a classical atlas.

665. *Soracte's height:* "This mountain (now known as *San Oreste*), to the north of Rome, though only 2,260 feet high, is a

conspicuous object in the view from many points in the city, on account of its isolated position. Its broken contour, as it rises 'from out the plain' (we have in mind particularly the view from San Pietro di Montorio—the ancient Janiculum), at once recalls the poet's comparison to a breaking wave. Vergil refers to Soracte in the *Æn.* vi. 696: 'Hi Soractis habent arces;' and *id.* xi. 785; 'Summe deum, sancti custos Soractis Apollo;' and Horace, in *Od.* i. 9: 'Vides ut alta stet nive candidum Soracte.' It is this last passage that Byron had in mind in saying that the height is 'not *now* in snow.' The temple of Apollo on the summit, to which Vergil alludes, is replaced by the modern church of San Silvestro."—*Rolfe.*

666. *lyric Roman:* Horace. See note above.

685. *Then farewell Horace; whom I hated so:* This passage has been a comfort to hundreds of people, disgusted with classic literature by the monotonous drill of old-fashioned classical training. Byron himself writes:

"I wish to express that we become tired of the task before we can comprehend the beauty; that we learn by rote before we can get by heart; that the freshness is worn away, and the future pleasure and advantage deadened and destroyed, by the didactic anticipation, at an age when we can neither feel nor understand the power of compositions which it requires an acquaintance with life, as well as Latin and Greek, to relish or to reason upon. . . . In some parts of the Continent young persons are taught from more common authors, and do not read the best classics till their maturity."

694. *O Rome, my country:* Byron now reaches the goal of his journey. He is more entirely his most interesting self, in the stanzas that follow than he has been except in flashes up to this time. Can you point out why contact with the "lone mother of dead empires" should be peculiarly soothing as well as exalting to a man like Byron?

703. *The Niobe of nations:* Consult a classical dictionary.

707. *The Scipios' tomb:* Discovered in 1780 and soon rifled.

715. *Up the steep:* Tourists may still climb the Capitoline Hill and recall old days when the triumphal processions led Rome's captives up it.

722. What grammatical error do you discover in this line?

730. *Alas, the lofty city:* Some general knowledge of Roman history, at least of the most dramatic moments, is necessary to appreciate the stanzas that follow. See the *Student's History of Rome,* by H. G. Liddell (Murray), or any other good Roman history.

740-746. Sylla, in 87 B. C., set out for a war against Mithridates before he had profited by his victory over his enemy, Marius. He was appointed Dictator in B. C. 81, but after two years resigned the dictatorship and retired into private life.

758. *Cromwell* arbitrarily dissolved the Long Parliament and

was responsible for the execution of Charles I, a deed which Byron here seems to regard as a crime.

763. *His fate:* "On the third of September, Cromwell gained the victory of Dunbar (1650), a year afterwards he obtained his 'crowning mercy' of Worcester (1651); and a few years after (1658), on the same day, which he had ever esteemed the most fortunate for him, he died."—*Byron.*

775. *Dread statue:* The statue of Pompey, still to be seen in the Spada Palace at Rome, at the base of which, if tradition is right, Cæsar fell, assassinated by Brutus. See Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar,* Act. III, Scene II. Compare line 732, *yet existent in:* What offends the ear at this point? It is such lapses in melody, such misuse of accent, not infrequent in Byron, that force us to realize how much weaker the spirit of melody was in him than it is in the greatest poets.

781. *Great Nemesis:* Explain the force of this phrase.

784. *Thunder-stricken:* In the Capitoline museum of Rome stands a bronze wolf, a highly archaic work of the fifth century B. C. "This is probably the wolf which stood in the Capitoline Temple and was injured in B. C. 65 by lightning, of which traces are still evident on the hind-legs." Baedeker's *Italy.* See Cicero, third *Oration Against Catiline.*

789. *Which the great founder sucked:* Compare *The Prophecy of Capys,* line 37. But the Nurslings of the Wolf of the Capitol were added only in the Renaissance.

799. Awkward grammar. Parse *supremacy.*

803. *Bastard Cæsar:* Napoleon was, when Byron wrote, an exile at St. Helena. In the third Canto of *Childe Harold,* Byron has a long character-study of him:

XXXVI.

There sunk the greatest, nor the worst of men,
Whose spirit, antithetically mixt,
One moment of the mightiest, and again
On little objects with like firmness fixed;
Extreme in all things! hadst thou been betwixt
Thy throne had still been thine, or never been;
For daring made thy rise as fall: thou seek'st
Even now to reassume the imperial mien,
And shake again the world, the Thunderer of the scene!

XXXVII.

Conqueror and captive of the earth art thou!
She trembles at thee still, and thy wild name
Was ne'er more bruited in men's minds than now
That thou art nothing, save the jest of fame,
Who wooed thee once, thy vassal, and became

The flatterer of thy fierceness, till thou wert
A god unto thyself; nor less the same
To the astounded kingdoms all inert
Who deemed thee for a time whate'er thou didst assert.

XXXVIII.

O, more or less than man — in high or low,
Battling with nations, flying from the field;
Now making monarchs' necks thy footstool, now
More than thy meanest soldier taught to yield;
An empire thou couldst crush, command, rebuild,
But govern not thy pettiest passion, nor,
However deeply in men's spirits skilled,
Look through thine own, nor curb the lust of war,
Nor learn that tempted fate will leave the loftiest star.

XXXIX.

Yet well thy soul hath brooked the turning tide
With that untaught innate philosophy,
Which, be it wisdom, coldness, or deep pride,
Is gall and wormwood to an enemy.
When the whole host of hatred stood hard by,
To watch and mock thee shrinking, thou hast smiled
With a sedate and all-enduring eye;—
When fortune fled her spoiled and favourite child,
He stood unbowed beneath the ills upon him piled.

XL.

Sager than in thy fortunes; for in them
Ambition steeled thee on too far to show
That just habitual scorn, which could contemn
Men and their thoughts; 'twas wise to feel, not so
To wear it ever on thy lip and brow,
And spurn the instruments thou wert to use
Till they were turned unto thine overthrow;
'Tis but a worthless world to win or lose;
So hath it proved to thee, and all such lot who choose.

XLI.

If, like a tower upon a headlong rock,
Thou hast been made to stand or fall alone,
Such scorn of man had helped to brave the shock;
But men's thoughts were the steps which paved thy throne,
Their admiration thy best weapon shone:
The part of Philip's son was thine, not then—
Unless aside thy purple had been thrown—
Like stern Diogenes to mock at men;
For sceptred cynics earth were far too wide a den.

809. *Alcides with the distaff:* See classical dictionary.

811. *And came—and saw—and conquered:* A translation of Cæsar's own words, "Veni, vidi, vici."

812. The *eagles* are the French troops, trained to "flee" toward the enemy, like hawks.

824, 825. *The tears and blood of earth:* When Byron wrote Europe was still convulsed with the near memory of the great and bloody Napoleonic wars which had followed the outrages of the French Revolution. See Introduction and selections from Canto III.

828. *Renew thy rainbow, God!* An appeal peculiarly dignified and natural under the political circumstances.

832. *Custom's falsest scale:*

> Custom lies upon us with a weight
> Heavy as frost and deep almost as life.
> —*Wordsworth: Ode on the Intimations of Immortality.*

Stanzas XCIII-XCVIII. It is well to summarize the view of human life and contemporary history given in these stanzas. Byron had lived through a great historic epoch, the real meaning of which was in his day hard to discern. The confusion and discouragement expressed in this passage are the natural reaction from the excitement of the Revolutionary hope, seemingly contradicted and mocked by the tyranny of Napoleon and all the corruption of social life under the Empire. It is natural for a poet, musing among the ruins of Imperial Rome, to contemplate sadly the nothingness of Fame, the failure of human effort: but Byron had an especial excuse for his hopelessness, and he shows the indomitable courage of the idealist, when, after the gloom and depression of the earlier stanzas, he suddenly makes the splendid turn to faith and hope in the ninety-eighth.

852. *Earth's rulers, etc.:* The Empire was followed by a revival of absolute government in Europe. See Introduction.

859. *A Pallas:* See classical dictionary. Byron was not alone in his day in turning from the apparently hopeless scene presented to a lover of freedom by European politics, to the brighter prospect of America.

This stanza suggests the attitude, common at the time, of the followers of Rousseau, who believed that civilization was an evil and that the only remedy for it was a return to Nature.

865. *But France got drunk with blood, etc.:* A painful but expressive figure: one aspect of a whole historic epoch summed up in a metaphor.

866. *Saturnalia:* A Roman festival marked by the wildest license.

871. *The base pageant last upon the scene:* "By the base pageant Byron refers to the Congress of Vienna (September, 1815): The Holy Alliance (September 26) into which the Duke of Wellington

would not enter, and the Second Treaty of Paris, November 20, 1815."—*E. H. Coleridge.*

872. *Thrall* is equivalent to thralldom.

874. *Yet, Freedom, yet etc.:* This ringing stanza is one of the most memorable strains in Byron. It deserves to rank with the sonnet prefixed to *The Prisoner of Chillon.* We see in it just why the young conspirators and lovers of liberty all over Europe looked to the poet as a leader. Each figure here has a meaning to be carefully studied. Note (line 881) that whatever personal grievance Byron may cherish against England, it is still to her that he turns when at his best, as to the protector of freedom.

883. After the excitement in the last stanzas, Byron and his readers crave the relief of pensive meditation. Nothing could create this mood more swiftly than the Tomb of Cecilia Metella, on the Appian Way, which he now describes. As Byron suggests, we know nothing about this lady except that she was wife of the youngest Crassus, son of the Triumvir. The round tower which is her tomb was built during the reign of Augustus.

905. *Egypt's graceful queen:* Cleopatra.

Stanza CIV. In this and the following stanza, Byron drifts back into the vein of personal sentiment. The passage is meant to be pathetic and quiet. Compare a more delicate rendering of a similar mood in Shelley's exquisite *Stanzas Written in Dejection, near Naples.*

951. *On the Palatine:* The hill above the Forum, still covered with the great ruins of the Palace of the Cæsars.

955. *Cypress and ivy, etc.:* The ruins of Rome are not so romantic today as when Byron visited the city: for modern archaeologists have scraped them clear of the tangle of vines and mosses here described. On the other hand, we can meet his challenge and pronounce in many cases not only that "these are walls," but just what walls they were. Compare with the description in this stanza, the following passage from a letter of Shelley's, picturing the Baths of Caracalla, in which he wrote part of his lyrical drama, *Prometheus Unbound.*

"Never was any desolation more sublime and lovely. The perpendicular wall of ruin is cloven into steep ravines filled up with flowering shrubs, whose thick twisted roots are knotted in the rifts of the stones. . . . In one of the buttresses are the crumbling remains of an antique winding staircase . . . This you ascend and arrive on the summit of these piles. There grow on every side thick entangled wildernesses of myrtle, and the myrletus, and bay, and the flowering laurestinus, whose white blossoms are just developed, the white fig, and a thousand nameless plants sown by the wandering winds. . . . Come to Rome. It is a scene by which expression is overpowered, which words can not convey."

Stanza CVIII. Do you find Byron's moralizings fresh, or is there to your mind a certain monotony about them? How much space do you think it would take to put into prose the ideas in this canto of *Childe Harold?*

975. *Thou pendulum:* A frequently quoted line.

976. *In this span:* Immediately around the Palatine, on which the poet is still meditating.

981. *Where are its golden roofs?* The roofs of the enormous Golden House of Nero, extending from the Palatine to the Esquiline.

983. *Nameless column:* The column had ceased to be nameless in 1813, when it received the name of the Column of Phocas (A. D. 608). But modern archaeology ascribes it to an earlier time, that of Diocletian, A. D. 284.

987. The Arch of Titus rises at the foot of the Palatine: the column under which Trajan was buried is at some distance. In 1587 the statue of Trajan on the top was replaced by that of St. Peter. There was an old tradition that the ashes of the Emperor were in an urn on the summit of the pillar. Trajan was one of the best of the Roman Emperors.

1000. *The rock of Triumph* marked the spot on the Capitoline Hill where the Triumphs ended. The *steep Tarpeian* (1002) was the precipice from which criminals were thrown. See an effective scene placed above it in Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun,* Vol. I, Ch. 18.

1005. *Yon field below:* Throughout these last stanzas Byron, though his mind roams abroad, is seated on the Palatine looking down into the Forum.

1009. *The field of freedom, etc.:* This stanza suggests in outline the whole history of Imperial Rome.

1022. *Rienzi:* The mediæval patriot who, inspired by the history of ancient Roman freedom, led a popular movement against the nobles and was given the classic title of Tribune in 1347. For his tragic story see Bulwer Lytton's novel, *Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes.*

1026. *Her new-born Numa thou:* Numa, one of the seven kings of Rome, a legendary law-giver, beloved and instructed, according to the myth, by the nymph Egeria.

1031. *Nympholepsy:* An ecstasy that possesses one who sees a nymph in spring or fountain. Byron means that Egeria may have been the hallucination of some fondly despairing man. See Browning's poem, *Numpholeptos.*

1036. *The mosses of thy fountain:* About a mile and a quarter from the city, a footpath leads off from the Appian Way to a small wood, commanding a view of Rome, the Campagna, and the Alban Hills, and known as the Bosco Sacro, because Numa is said here to have met Egeria. Near at hand is the so-called "Grotto of Egeria." "The grotto is a Nymphæum (a little sanctuary, sacred to a nymph), originally covered with marble, the shrine of the brook Almo, . . . and was erected at a somewhat late period."—*Baedeker.*

1047. *Bills:* Does this word give you a shock? Why?

Stanzas CXX-CXXVII. These stanzas again form a long interlude expressing personal emotions very slightly connected with the sights of Rome. Roman history does not afford many instances of lovers or of youthful sentiment: Byron had to hark back to the legend of Egeria to find an occasion for his very modern musings. The passage shows clear evidence of the influence of Shelley, whose *Epipsychidion* renders in more subtle and enchanting verse, a similar attitude and emotion.

1085. *The naked eye* is the subject of the verbs in the preceding line.

1086. *The mind hath made thee:* Byron was no student of Plato, as Shelley was, but at times throughout this passage his experience of disappointment leads him to use pseudo-platonic phrases. But Plato did not think that the image of beauty was a delusion created by the mind, but an elusive hint of a beauty really existent, invisible, and immortal.

1108. *We wither from our youth:* Byron now extends his arraignment of life to cover a wider range than disappointed affection. There is a genuine note to the lines. Compare the Chorus of Furies in Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound,* Act. I, and the choruses in Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon,* for a similar pessimism.

1109. *Unslaked the thirst:* Do you agree with Byron that the absence of satisfaction in earthly life is an evil? Or do you rather hold with Browning in *Rabbi Ben Ezra,*

What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me?

1113. *Love, fame, ambition, avarice:* Might not faith, service, the thirst for sacrifice be also counted as impelling motives?

1126. *Our life is a false nature:* This strong stanza is the climax of Byron's pessimism.

1129. *Upas:* Look up the "Upas Tree," and explain the figure fully.

1135. *Yet let us ponder boldly:* Byron suggests that in courageous thought is the only escape from life's miseries.

1140. *Cabin'd, cribbed, confined: Macbeth* III, IV, 24.

1143. *Couch:* Couching is an operation to remove a cataract by the use of a needle.

1147. *Coliseum:* This largest theatre in the world, originally called the Flavian Amphitheatre, was completed by Titus in A. D. 80. Gladiatorial combats and wild-beasts fights were the forms of amusement here offered to the Roman public, until 405 A. D., when the gladiatorial fights were forbidden. The first three stories were built upon great arches divided by columns. See *Manfred,* Act III, Scene IV, for another description of the Coliseum by night.

Since Byron's time probably thousands of tourists have visited the Coliseum by moonlight.

1169. *Stanzas CXXX-CXXXVIII.* Byron does not contemplate the great monuments of history very long without turning from them to his own unhappy condition. Is the poetry better or worse for this habit of his?

The following stanzas more than any others in the poem deserve Matthew Arnold's descriptive phrase already quoted. Byron feels himself deeply wronged by the English public and by those nearest to him, and solemnly calls on Time to revenge and reinstate him. "This wreck," the ruined Coliseum, is a dramatic background for his emotions.

1184. *Orestes:* See a classical dictionary.

1186. *Had it but been from hands less near:* In the next stanza Byron seems to imply that he might have thought his fate just had his punishment not been inflicted by those near to him.

1196. *For the sake:* Probably the name which he checks himself from speaking is that of his sister Augusta or his little daughter Ada.

1207. *That curse shall be Forgiveness:* There is a striking parallel to this fine turn in the first act of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound.* The suffering Titan, representative of humanity, has learned through his pain to translate hate into pity, and despite the reluctance of the spiritual forces that represent the natural order, recalls the curse he has once pronounced on Jupiter, his tyrant. The recalling of this curse and the perfecting of forgiveness in the Titan's soul is the signal for the dramatic action to open. Shelley may for once have been influenced by Byron, as he wrote in 1818, a year after this canto was published.

1214. *Not altogether of such clay:* Perhaps there is not in English poetry a more arrogant passage than this.

1221. *The Janus glance:* Janus, from whom our mid-winter month is named, was the Roman god who looked in two directions.

1234. *The seal is set:* The curse is ended. If we are inclined to find the foregoing passage melodramatic, we must remember that Byron lived at the height of the Romantic movement. The essence of the Romantic temper is said by M. Brunetière, the French critic, to be "the display of the Ego."

Thou dread power: "The sentiment of antiquity," according to one commentator.

1250. *Listed:* The "Lists" were in the middle ages the grounds marked off for combat in a tournament.

1252. *The Gladiator:* This famous statue in the Capitoline Museum is now known to represent, not a Gladiator dying in the Coliseum, but a Gaul, who may be dying on any battle-field. He is recognized as a Gaul by his twisted collar, short hair, and moustache.

This is probably the best description of a work of art in *Childe*

Harold. Notice that it interprets, not the emotions aroused in Byron by the statue, as in the case of his description of the Venus de Medici, but the emotions which the Gaul himself feels.

1269. *Arise! ye Goths:* A fine dramatic turn, suggesting the final conquest of Rome by the Goths and Vandals.

1274. *Millions' blame or praise, etc.:* "When one gladiator wounded another, he shouted, 'He has it,' 'Hoc habet,' or 'Habet.' The wounded combatant dropped his weapon, and, advancing to the edge of the arena, supplicated the spectators. If he had fought well, the people saved him, if otherwise, or as they happened to be inclined, they turned down their thumbs and he was slain."—*Hobhouse.*

1279. *From its mass:* In the Middle Ages the Coliseum was used as a stone quarry.

1292. *The garland forest:* See Note, line 955.

1293. *Like laurels, etc.:* "Suetonius informs us that Julius Cæsar was particularly gratified by that decree of the senate which enabled him to wear a wreath of laurel on all occasions. He was anxious, not to show that he was the conqueror of the world, but to hide that he was bald."—*Byron.*

1297. *While stands the Coliseum, etc.:* "This is quoted in the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* as a proof that the Coliseum was entire when seen by the Anglo-Saxon pilgrims at the end of the 7th or the beginning of the 8th century."—*Byron.* It is ascribed to the Venerable Bede, and the original reads: "Quamdiu stabit Coliseus, stabit et Roma; quando cadet Coliseus, cadet Roma; quando cadet Roma, cadet et mundus."

1306. *Simple, erect, etc.:* Byron now leaves the Coliseum and turns abruptly to talking about another Roman monument, the Pantheon. The name of this building means "very sacred," not as Byron probably thought a temple of "all the gods." It was probably dedicated to the gods of the seven planets. It is a round building, lighted only by an orifice in the dome. In 609 it was consecrated as a Christian Church. It is the only ancient building in Rome still in perfect preservation.

1324. *There is a dungeon:* Another abrupt turn. In the earlier part of the poem, the transitions are naturally effected by means of some association of ideas. But from now on Byron's method is more disconnected and the poem reads like a collection of stanzas dealing with various subjects, taken almost at random from his note-book.

His own note reads: "This and the three next stanzas allude to the story of a Roman daughter, which is recalled to the traveler by the site or pretended site of that adventure now shown at the church of San Nicola in Carcere." The imprisoned father was sentenced to die by starvation, but the daughter nourished him by milk from her breast.

1341. *Cain was Eve's:* Byron enjoys giving a cynical twist to the end of a stanza. Compare line 1306. Cynicism and sentimentality are never far apart.

1360. *The Mole:* Now known as the Castle of St. Angelo. Erected by Hadrian in 136, for his own tomb. See the interesting summary of the history of the building in *Baedeker.*

Stanzas CLIII-CLX. From ancient Rome we turn to the Rome of the Renaissance. Early Christian Rome had no interest for Byron. He now dedicates seven stanzas to the Basilica of St. Peter's, the great Church rebuilt by Bramante and Michelangelo. It is difficult to avoid feeling that in the case of buildings and works of art, Byron admired with docility what the taste of his age bade him admire. St. Peter's is a marvelous architectural monument, but to call it among all temples "worthiest of God, the Holy and the True," is to claim too much.

1372. *The Ephesian's miracle:* The Temple of Diana of the Ephesians, alluded to in the *Acts of the Apostles.*

1375. *Sophia's bright roofs:* The Mosque of Santa Sophia at Constantinople.

1387. *Overwhelms thee not:* One appreciates the size of St. Peter's, not at once, but only after repeated visits. Byron expresses this fact effectively in the next stanzas.

1396. *Increasing with the advance:* Can you parse "increasing"?

1398. *Gigantic elegance:* A good phrase for St. Peter's. Would it be a good phrase for an Alp?

1402. Michael Angelo said of this dome that his plan would raise the Pantheon in air.

1433. *Laocoön's torture:* See classical dictionary. This is the statue which affords the text to Lessing's famous treatise on æsthetics, *The Laocoön.*

1441. *The Lord of the unerring bow:* The statue known as the Apollo Belvedere.

1468. *The Pilgrim of my song:* Childe Harold, the nominal hero of the first two cantos, who has been lost to sight since the 55th stanza of Canto III. We have not especially missed him, but as Byron draws to the end of his poem, he realizes that he must wind matters up, and these lines in which he dismisses his quondam hero into that general past of ruin on which he has throughout been dwelling, are clever and effective.

1494. *Fardels:* Burdens: a Shakespearean word.

1495. *Hark! forth from the abyss, etc.:* "From the thought of death the poet passes to the death of the Princess Charlotte, which happened when he was at Venice. No other event during the present century has caused so great a shock to public feeling in England; and Byron himself, as we learn from his letters, was deeply moved by it. She was the only daughter of George IV, who at the time was Prince Regent, and consequently she was Heiress Presumptive to the British crown. She was virtuous, accomplished, large-hearted, and sympathetic, and the hopes of the nation were fixed upon her as one who might inaugurate an era of prosperity. On May 16, 1816, she married Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg (afterward king of the Belgians), and on Nov. 6, 1817, she died in childbirth."—*Tozer.*

Byron's deep and real feeling for his country, as well as his unfailing interest in political events, is evident in this passage.

1537. *Tumbles mightiest sovereigns:* "Mary died on the scaffold; Elizabeth of a broken heart; Charles V, a hermit; Louis XIV, a bankrupt in means and glory; Cromwell, of anxiety; and, 'the greatest is behind,' Napoleon lives a prisoner. To these sovereigns a long but superfluous list might be added of names equally illustrious and unhappy."—*Byron.*

1549. *Lo Nemi:* This time, the abruptness of the transition is painfully startling. The exquisite little Lake Nemi fills an extinct crater among the Alban Hills. This is the region to which belongs the strange and haunting old story alluded to in Macaulay's *Battle of the Lake Regillus,* line 171.

1561. *The Latian coast:* On this coast began the war celebrated by Vergil in *The Aeneid.*

1563. *Beneath thy right:* The allusion is to Cicero's villa at Tusculum.

1566. *The Sabine farm* belonged to Horace. Byron chafed against classical studies, but they enabled him to enjoy the rich associations of a landscape like this.

1574. *Calpe's rock:* Gibraltar. *"Last* may be the last time that Byron and Childe Harold saw the Mediterranean together. Byron had seen it in his return journey to England in 1811. Or by 'last' he may mean the last time that it burst upon his view. He had not seen the Mediterranean on his way from Geneva to Venice or on his way from Venice to Rome, but now from the Alban Mount the ocean was in full view."—*E. H. Coleridge.*

1576. *Symplegades:* Two small islands near the entrance of the Euxine or Black Sea.

1582. *Gladdened by the sun:* Here is a much more wholesome note than many that the poet has struck.

1586. *One fair Spirit:* Some commentators question whether Byron has in mind a spirit or a mortal. But the sequel surely makes it clear that he is thinking of a spirit.

Stanzas CLXXVIII-CLXXXV: In spite of the diversity of subjects treated, this canto of the poem has had one ever-recurrent theme: the vanity of human life, illustrated by the personal experience of the poet, and by the transitoriness of human glory. It is with a fitting climax that he turns at the end to the abiding might and freedom of Nature. Coleridge, too, seeking in vain for Freedom in the range of human experience, finds it in Nature alone.

> Ye ocean-waves, which wheresoe'er ye rove,
> Yield homage only to eternal laws.
>
> —*Ode to France.*

Do you find in these stanzas the intimate sense of communion with Nature conveyed by the poetry of Wordsworth? Or does Byron impress you as using Nature after all chiefly for purposes of contrast?

1620. *There let him lay:* This last unfortunate blunder has always made sport for the critics. Luckily the lines that it spoils are not among the best.

1629. *The Armada's pride or spoils of Trafalgar:* The Spanish Armada and a large portion of the fleet captured by the British at Trafalgar were destroyed by storms.

1632. *Thy waters washed them power:* These maritime states all owed their supremacy to the facilities afforded them for commerce by their sea-coasts.

1661. *My midnight lamp:* It is rather a pity to be reminded that the poem is not composed high among the Alban Hills, gazing on the distant sea, but by the midnight lamp in the poet's own room.

THOMAS BABINGTON, LORD MACAULAY

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1800-1859.

I.

Macaulay's birth year is the birth year of a century. "It was on the twenty-fifth of October, 1800," says his nephew and biographer, Trevelyan, "that Lord Macaulay opened his eyes on a world that he was destined so thoroughly to learn and so intensely to enjoy."

Whether Macaulay really did learn the world thoroughly may be questioned. That is a great claim. He had a remarkable knowledge of books, of political life, and of contemporary society; but there were many reaches of knowledge and experience that he never entered. Of his enjoyment of the world, however, there can be no doubt; it is a pleasure to dwell on a life so laborious and happy, so full of zest, energy, and satisfying achievement.

Macaulay had a good tradition behind him. His father, Zachary Macaulay, was actively concerned in abolishing the slave trade, and the son's childhood was passed in constant contact with the group of high-minded men concerned with this great issue. He was a sweet-tempered, affectionate boy, normal in everything except in his prodigious cleverness; for like his contemporary, John Stuart Mill, he was an infant phenomenon. Many entertaining stories of his precocity may be read in the admirable biography by his nephew already alluded to. "Thank you, Madam, the agony is abated," replied the little fellow of four to an apologetic hostess when hot coffee had been spilled on his wee legs. From the age of three he read incessantly, and what is more to the point, remembered much. He picked up Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* one day when he had accompanied his mother on a call, read contentedly while she chatted, and on their return perched on the edge of her bed and repeated nearly the whole poem to her. In later years he used to say that if all copies of *Paradise Lost* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* were to be destroyed, he could restore them from memory. Macaulay was no prig, however, but a perfectly natural boy. His homesick letters when away at school were just what one would like a schoolboy to write, though few boys or men have command of such pellucid English. His parents never allowed a hint that he was cleverer than other children to reach him. In one way the result was unfortunate: Macaulay always overestimated the attainments of other people. His "Every schoolboy knows" became almost a proverbial expression, and one very discouraging to schoolboys.

After a distinguished career at his university, Cambridge, Macaulay gained a fellowship, in 1824. He was called to the bar but never practiced. Politics and literature were to be the pursuits of his life. He was only twenty-five years old when his brilliant essay on Milton, which appeared in *The Edinburgh Review,* achieved a wide success. A few years later he entered Parliament. Zachary Macaulay, in spite of his philanthropic ardor, had been a Tory. But his son was, when a very young man, converted to the principles of the Liberals, or, as they were then called, the Whigs.

This party was now in the ascendant, and stood for gradual extension of political democracy. It neither clung to the past like the Tories nor dreamed of a far future like the Radicals, but was satisfied with a policy of moderate reform. Macaulay, with his party, believed ardently in constitutional freedom. He thought that carefully protected and cautiously extended political rights plus free competition, with no State interference in industry, would suffice to make England a perfectly prosperous country. It was at a propitious moment for him that he entered Parliament—just in time to play an effective part in the great fight that led to the indorsement of these principles in the Reform Bill of 1832. This bill enlarged the franchise, ended much political corruption, and definitely placed the balance of power in the hands of that middle and commercial class which was to control England during the nineteenth century as effectively as the aristocracy of birth had controlled it during the middle ages, or as the laboring classes want to control it in the future. It was to this middle class that Macaulay himself belonged: he was to fight its battles, become its favorite author, and express its attitude better than any other writer of the Victorian age.

Soon after the passage of the Reform Bill, Macaulay received a reward for his services to his party by an appointment to the Indian Civil Service. After a few years in India, during which he wrote some of his best known essays, he came home, in 1838. He held high offices: at one time he was Secretary of War, at another Postmaster-General. But his political career is a little disappointing after his early promise. In truth, literature rather than politics held his deepest love. In 1842 he published the *Lays of Ancient Rome,* in 1843 a collection of his *Essays.* His literary fame was now high; but it mounted yet more when he took advantage of an interval during which he held no seat in Parliament, to complete and publish, in 1848, the first two volumes of his masterpiece, *The History of England from the Accession of James II.* If the story be true that Macaulay wanted to write a history which would appear on as many drawing-room tables as a popular novel, he realized his ambition. He published two more volumes in 1855, was raised to the House of Lords in 1857, and died of heart disease in 1859, without having finished his history. The work was planned on so large a scale that human powers could hardly have sufficed to complete it.

Macaulay never married. He was a kind, honorable, vigorous man, of great intellectual vitality. He was somewhat self-confident, and people complained that he never let anyone else share in the talking: but there can seldom have been any one else in a room so well worth hearing. Many of his greatest contemporaries, —Carlyle, Newman, Ruskin, Arnold,—were stirred by deep dissatisfaction, spiritual and social. But to him the Liberal creed of his youth always seemed to solve all problems, and he rejoiced with unshaken cheer in the commercial prosperity, the spread of popular education, and the religious freedom, of his beloved country.

II.

Macaulay is known as a political writer, an essayist, an historian, and a writer of verse. His speeches are today undeservedly neglected: they are admirable in their way and there is no better record of the attitude of a high-minded Liberal during the reign of Victoria. But his popularity and his solid fame alike rest upon the other three departments of his work.

Macaulay's essays constituted a sort of university extension course in general knowledge for his contemporaries, and they retain a good deal of the same value today. They have the great advantage of being interesting: "The most restless of juvenile minds," says Mr. Saintsbury, "if induced to enter one of Macaulay's essays, is almost certain to reappear at the other end of it, gratified and, to an appreciable extent, cultivated."

The chief reason that Macaulay is so interesting is that he is interested himself. He writes on a large variety of themes, and on each he has something fresh, stimulating, and convincing to say. These essays are usually nominal reviews of books, but he is very little occupied with the book under discussion. He uses it only as a point of departure for his own ideas, and in many a case the book is remembered in our day solely as having given occasion to the essay. In his themes, English literature takes the lead, with subjects derived from English history a good second. A smaller number of notable essays deal with European letters or history. But the ostensible subject often allows a widely discursive treatment which would entitle Macaulay to hold Carlyle's imaginary chair, as Professor of Things in General.

It is the fashion nowadays to warn people that Macaulay's essays are shallow. This is true in a sense. Place him beside a critic like Matthew Arnold, and the lack of sensitiveness and impartiality is evident at once. Nothing ever was so simple as everything appeared to him: he labored, as Saintsbury says, from "a constitutional incapacity for not making up his mind." Now, life is a very complex affair, and an overconfident person is sure to make blunders. Macaulay is prejudiced: Whig convictions determine his attitude toward everything in history and letters, and his dogmatic tone appears to us no longer a strength but a weakness. Yet, when all is said, these essays are capital reading, and to any one a little on his guard they afford an invaluable introduction to their subjects. Only they should never be considered to have said the last word.

Much in what we have been saying can be applied to the famous *History*. Macaulay's preferences had free play in this chronicle of the final overthrow in England of the ideal of absolute monarchy. He painted his Stuarts and all belonging to them too black, his William of Orange and the House of Hanover too white. After his day, a school of historians arose who tried to write without sympathies, believing that truth can only be found apart from all personal prepossession. The controversy between these two schools is not yet settled, but it is interesting to notice that the pendulum is just now swinging back a little toward the method of Macaulay. People are beginning to say that no historian can escape the "personal equation"; that he may as well accept this fact and make the best of it, giving us his own honest interpretation of history in a harmonized story, and leave correction to come from others who will tell the story in their turn from their own point of view. Whichever school may prevail, it is certain that Macaulay's *History* is better reading than that of many a more dispassionate writer. Some portions, for example, the well-known Chapter III, which gives a picture of England in the seventeenth century, contrasting it with the England of Macaulay's own day, are extremely brilliant.

Macaulay's prose style reflects the qualities of his mind. It has been accused of artificiality on account of its balance and symmetry; but the sharp antitheses, the habitual periodic structure, the effective if rather obvious use of climax, form a natural manner for a man like Macaulay, who was always balancing thought against thought after the fashion of a parliamentary debater, who saw no half-shades, and was endowed with a great gift of systematizing material. Macaulay's style is excellent in exposition and in rapid narrative: moreover, it can rise to an effective eloquence. He can praise generously, he can condemn crushingly. He builds up his style clause by clause, using language rather as a builder uses his bricks than as a musician uses his tones. But it is good building.

III.

It remains to speak of Macaulay's verse. That is the one aspect of his work which this little book presents, and the *Lays of Ancient Rome,* which is here given, is his most important poetic writing, with the exception of one or two other ballads, such as *Ivry* and *The Battle of Naseby*. From a man of such qualities as those on which we have just dwelt it would be idle to look for poetry of the highest order. Macaulay himself was very modest about his poems and alluded to them as trifling things. These trifles, however, sold out edition after edition, and they richly deserve the popularity which they have always retained. Macaulay does not quicken our sense of the beauty or the mystery in the world. Nor is there any magic in these spirited metres such as haunts the ear in the cadences of Coleridge and Shelley. Indeed, the rhythm, though at its best it stirs the most sluggish blood, has at its worst something of that monotony that marks the cadences of Macaulay's prose. But in spite of these limitations, he is an apathetic reader who is not moved by the *Lays,* for they treat heroic material with contagious enthusiasm: they are the best imaginative rendering that English literature possesses of the romantic legendary history of ancient Rome.

These poems spring from the intimate knowledge of classic antiquity which Macaulay shared with all educated Englishmen of his day. The insistent drill in the classics which was then the distinctive feature of education is rapidly becoming, even in England, a thing of the past. Perhaps this is not to be regretted. But as one reads the *Lays* one can not help feeling that the training was worth something. It quickened imaginative enthusiasm for the great past of civilization, a thing which is really quite as important for us to know about as is the past of nature: it fixed the mind on high and splendid examples. Even if we see the old education pass without a pang, we may profit by the fruits of it as seen in the intellectual achievement of England through many generations. Among these fruits, Macaulay's *Lays* hold an honorable place.

Rightly to read and enjoy these poems one should be familiar with the outlines of Roman history: one should at least have read Livy. The notes can give chopped facts, but they can not give the swing of the history nor the atmosphere of old Roman days as Macaulay conceived it. His own introductions help a great deal, but even these presuppose more knowledge of Roman civilization than the average boy possesses. We can not here write the History of Rome; but let us hint briefly where we must place ourselves to enjoy the *Lays* with intelligence.

The *Lays* commemorate certain great and picturesque moments in Roman legendary history. But they do more than this, for each is supposed to be sung or said by a minstrel of later days. Thus Macaulay, as has not often enough been pointed out, anticipates Browning in his use of the dramatic lyric. He conceives these old Roman minstrels, each stirred by a thrilling crisis to celebrate some glorious legend of his race: it will be found on close study that each *Lay* is carefully written in character, and the poems thus throw a double light on the story of Rome as Macaulay conceived it. The circumstances under which each *Lay* was supposed to be sung, and the character and point of view of the imaginary minstrel, he has explained to us in his own introductions, considerable extracts from which follow this section. We have here therefore only to speak of the legendary stories.

If, then, we want to think ourselves back into the old Roman traditions, the first *Lay* to read is *The Prophecy of Capys*. We are in the year of the founding of the city, the famous traditional date, 753 B. C. Through the rich country of the Alban hills, lying to the south of Rome, that still gleams across the Campagna from the higher points of the city, march "two goodly youths and tall," bearing in triumph on the tip of sword and spear two shaggy frowning heads. These are the She-Wolf's Litter, Romulus and Remus, the twins, who have slain the wicked king who usurped their rights, and his false priest, and return to their ancestral halls amid the plaudits of the simple country folk. Here in the hall gate sits Capys, the old seer. He trembles as he discerns the approach of Romulus, and in ringing measures, fire flashing from his blind eyes, pours forth a splendid prophecy of the founding of the city, and the future power of Rome. The whole spirit of the Roman dominion, as Macaulay conceived it, is in the stately stanzas from the fifteenth to the twenty-first. The advancing conquests of the city are then outlined: victory over the Etruscans and the Gauls is commemorated, and finally the poem sweeps on into a vision of the event supposed to be comtemporary with the writing of it, the first victory of Rome over Greece, in the year 479 A. U. C. But the image that lingers in the reader's mind is that of the bright, fierce foster-sons of the Wolf, true children of Mars, pausing in their triumphant advance to listen to the uplifted strains of the old bard.

The next poems in the historical order are the twin lays, *Horatius* and *The Battle of the Lake Regillus*. Both are inspired by the same phase of legendary history: the struggle of Rome against the wicked kings of the House of Tarquin. According to the legend, Rome was first governed by a monarchy, Romulus being the first king. The last three kings belonged to an Etruscan dynasty. Their rule became increasingly hated, and in 510 the infamous treatment of a noble Roman matron, Lucretia, by Sextus, the son of the king Tarquinius Superbus, resulted in a popular rising that expelled the kings and ended the monarchy. In 509 the Roman republic, under two consuls, was established. Tarquin first invoked the aid of Lars Porsena, the king of Etruria, which lay to the north of Rome. Later, in 596, he sought the protection of the league of thirty Latin cities, to the south of Rome. *Horatius* presents an episode in the first struggle: *The Battle of the Lake Regillus* describes the conflict which ended the second. There is no need of recounting "how well Horatio kept the bridge," nor of pointing out how vividly the fighting is handled in the less dramatic but carefully wrought ballad of *The Battle of the Lake Regillus.* But it is worth while to suggest that the modern reader may read about Macaulay's haughty Etruscans with added enjoyment if he realizes the fascination of that mysterious race. Their memories pursue and baffle the traveler in Tuscany and Umbria today. Many of the little towns whose names run so trippingly from the tongue as one declaims Macaulay's verses are still standing on their hills: the visitor will find in their walls and in their ancient buildings, huge blocks that seem to have been carved by giants—all Etruscan work. He may, if he likes, penetrate the gloom of old tombs underground, and gaze on the lifelike recumbent effigies of Etruscan men and women, antedating the earliest legendary history of Rome, who look solemnly upon him as the guide flashes the candle in their faces. A touch of awe will surely overcome him, and if he recalls Macaulay's lines he will realize with a new glow the dramatic nature of the conflict commemorated between the free, rude soldier of ancient Rome and the tyrants sprung from that more ancient and dominant race, whose civilization, all but miraculously advanced, was yet doomed to perish before the onward march of the Legions. To the glimpses of the Etruscans, the Romans, and the Latins afforded by the *Lays,* add the suggestions of beautiful Greek myth contained in the lay on the *Battle of the Lake Regillus,* and the great contending races in the Italian peninsula rise up before our eyes.

One more episode from the early traditions of the city Macaulay gave us: the touching ballad of *Virginia,* the only thing he ever wrote, as has been justly observed, that can make the tears come to the eyes. But here also the historic interest is as strong as the merely human. Since the battle of Lake Regillus a long period has elapsed. The monarchy is past and gone: but in the republic the struggle for effective liberty now centers in the conflict of the patricians with the plebeians. The ballad, written supposedly at one crisis in that long conflict, describes the tragic occasion of an early victory of the plebeians, and the establishment of those Tribunes who were the champions of popular rights. It shows us patrician insolence and tyranny, popular uprising, liberties sealed in innocent blood.

Thus do the *Lays* give us glimpses of the founding of the city and of the most significant moments in the legends of its early history. Add to these stories of the most stirring moments in the legendary past the constant suggestion of some real historic crisis through the circumstances of the narration, and the value of the *Lays* to any one who would quicken his enthusiasm and his knowledge concerning the mighty city, for centuries the mistress of the world, may clearly be seen.

SELECTIONS FROM MACAULAY'S INTRODUCTIONS.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

That what is called the history of the Kings and early Consuls of Rome is to a great extent fabulous, few scholars have, since the time of Beaufort, ventured to deny. It is certain that, more than three hundred and sixty years after the date ordinarily assigned for the foundation of the city, the public records were, with scarcely an exception, destroyed by the Gauls. It is certain that the oldest annals of the Commonwealth were compiled more than a century and a half after this destruction of the records. It is certain, therefore, that the great Latin writers of later period did not possess those materials without which a trustworthy account of the infancy of the republic could not possibly be framed. They own, indeed, that the chronicles to which they had access were filled with battles that were never fought, and Consuls that never were inaugurated; and we have abundant proof that, in those chronicles, events of the greatest importance, such as the issue of the war with Porsena, and the issue of the war with Brennus, were grossly misrepresented. Under these circumstances a wise man will look with great suspicion on the legend which has come down to us. He will distrust almost all the details, not only because they seldom rest on any solid evidence, but also because he will constantly detect in them, even when they are within the limits of physical possibility, that peculiar character, more easily understood than defined, which distinguishes the creations of the imagination from the realities of the world in which we live.

The early history of Rome is, indeed, far more poetical than anything else in Latin literature. The loves of the Vestal and the God of War, the cradle laid among the reeds of Tiber, the fig-tree, the she-wolf, the shepherd's cabin, the recognition, the fratricide, the rape of the Sabines, the death of Tarpeia, the fall of Hostus Hostilius, the struggle of Mettus Curtius through the marsh, the women rushing with torn raiment and dishevelled hair between their fathers and their husbands, the nightly meetings of Numa and the Nymph by the well in the sacred grove, the fight of the three Romans and the three Albans, the purchase of the Sibylline books, the crime of Tullia, the simulated madness of Brutus, the ambiguous reply of the Delphian oracle to the Tarquins, the wrongs of Lucretia, the heroic actions of Horatius Cocles, of Scævola, and of Clœlia, the battle of Regillus won by the aid of Castor and Pollux, the defense of Cremera, the touching story of Coriolanus, the still more touching story of Virginia, the wild legend about the draining of the Alban lake, the combat between Valerius Corvus and the gigantic Gaul, are among the many instances which will at once suggest themselves to every reader.

The Latin literature which has come down to us is of later date than the commencement of the Second Punic War, and consists almost exclusively of works fashioned on Greek models.

But there was an earlier Latin literature, a literature truly Latin, which has wholly perished, — which had, indeed, almost perished long before those whom we are in the habit of regarding as the greatest Latin writers were born. That literature abounded with metrical romances, such as are found in every country where there is much curiosity and intelligence, but little reading and writing. All human beings, not utterly savage, long for some information about past times, and are delighted by narratives which present pictures to the eye of the mind. But it is only in very enlightened communities that books are readily accessible. Metrical composition, therefore, which, in a highly civilized nation, is a mere luxury, is, in nations imperfectly civilized, almost a necessary of life, and is valued less on account of the pleasure which it gives to the ear, than on account of the help which it gives to the memory. A man who can invent or embellish an interesting story, and put it into a form which others may easily retain in their recollection, will always be highly esteemed by a people eager for amusement and information, but destitute of libraries. Such is the origin of ballad-poetry, a species of composition which scarcely ever fails to spring up and flourish in every society, at a certain point in the progress towards refinement.

. . . .

The proposition that Rome had ballad-poetry is not merely in itself highly probable, but is fully proved by direct evidence of the greatest weight.

This proposition being established, it becomes easy to understand why the early history of the city is unlike almost everything else in Latin literature, — native where almost everything else is borrowed, imaginative where almost everything else is prosaic. We can scarcely hesitate to pronounce that the magnificent, pathetic, and truly national legends, which present so striking a contrast to all that surrounds them, are broken and defaced fragments of that early poetry which, even in the age of Cato the Censor, had become antiquated, and of which Tully had never heard a line.

That this poetry should have been suffered to perish will not appear strange when we consider how complete was the triumph of the Greek genius over the public mind of Italy. It is probable that at an early period Homer and Herodotus furnished some hints to the Latin minstrels; but it was not until after the war with Pyrrhus that the poetry of Rome began to put off its old Ausonian character. . . . It is not improbable that, at the time when Cicero lamented the irreparable loss of the poems mentioned by Cato, a search among the nooks of the Apennines, as active as the search which Sir Walter Scott made among the descendants of the moss-troopers of Liddesdale, might have brought to light many fine remains of ancient minstrelsy. No such search was made. The Latin ballads perished forever. Yet discerning critics have thought that they could still perceive in the early history of Rome numerous fragments of this lost poetry, as the traveler on classic ground sometimes finds, built into the heavy wall of a fort or convent, a pillar rich with acanthus leaves, or a frieze where the Amazons and Bacchanals seem to live. The theaters and temples of the Greek and the Roman were degraded into the quarries of the Turk and the Goth. Even so did the ancient Saturnian poetry become the quarry in which a crowd of orators and annalists found the materials for their prose.

It is not difficult to trace the process by which the old songs were transmuted into the form which they now wear. Funeral panegyric and chronicle appear to have been the intermediate links which connected the lost ballads with the histories now extant. From a very early period it was the usage that an oration should be pronounced over the remains of a noble Roman. The orator, as we learn from Polybius, was expected, on such an occasion, to recapitulate all the services which the ancestors of the deceased had, from the earliest time, rendered to the commonwealth. There can be little doubt that the speaker on whom this duty was imposed would make use of all the stories suited to his purpose which were to be found in the popular lays. There can be as little doubt that the family of an eminent man would preserve a copy of the speech which had been pronounced over his corpse. The compilers of the early chronicles would have recourse to these speeches, and the great historians of a later period would have recourse to the chronicles.

. . . .

Such, or nearly such, appears to have been the process by which the lost ballad-poetry of Rome was transformed into history. To reverse that process, to transform some portions of early Roman history back into the poetry out of which they were made, is the object of this work.

In the following poems the author speaks, not in his own person, but in the persons of ancient minstrels who know only what a Roman citizen, born three or four hundred years before the Christian era, may be supposed to have known, and who are in no wise above the passions and prejudices of their age and nation. To these imaginary poets must be ascribed some blunders, which are so obvious that it is unnecessary to point them out. The real blunder would have been to represent these old poets as deeply versed in general history, and studious of chronological accuracy. To them must also be attributed the illiberal sneers at the Greeks, the furious party spirit, the contempt for the arts of peace, the love of war for its own sake, the ungenerous exultation over the vanquished, which the reader will sometimes observe. To portray a Roman of the age of Camillus or Curius as superior to national antipathies, as mourning over the devastation and slaughter by which empire and triumphs were to be won, as looking on human suffering with the sympathy of Howard, or as treating conquered enemies with the delicacy of the Black Prince, would be to violate all dramatic propriety. The old Romans had some great virtues, — fortitude, temperance, veracity, spirit to resist oppression, respect for legitimate authority, fidelity in the observing of contracts, disinterestedness, ardent patriotism; but Christian charity and chivalrous generosity were alike unknown to them.

It would have been obviously improper to mimic the manner of any particular age or country. Something has been borrowed, however, from our own ballads, and more from Sir Walter Scott, the great restorer of our ballad-poetry. To the Iliad still greater obligations are due; and those obligations have been contracted with the less hesitation because there is reason to believe that some of the old Latin minstrels really had recourse to that inexhaustible store of poetical images.

HORATIUS.

There can be little doubt that among those parts of early Roman history which had a poetical origin was the legend of Horatius Cocles. We have several versions of the story, and these versions differ from each other in points of no small importance. Polybius, there is reason to believe, heard the tale recited over the remains of some consul or prætor descended from the old Horatian patricians; for he introduces it as a specimen of the narratives with which the Romans were in the habit of embellishing their funeral oratory. It is remarkable that, according to him, Horatius defended the bridge alone, and perished in the waters. According to the chronicles which Livy and Dionysius followed, Horatius had two companions, swam safe to shore, and was loaded with honors and rewards.

. . . .

It is by no means unlikely that there were two old Roman lays about the defence of the bridge; and that, while the story which Livy has transmitted to us was preferred by the multitude, the other, which ascribed the whole glory to Horatius alone, may have been the favorite with the Horatian house.

The following ballad is supposed to have been made about a hundred and twenty years after the war which it celebrates, and just before the taking of Rome by the Gauls. The author seems to have been an honest citizen, proud of the military glory of his country, sick of the disputes of factions, and much given to pining after good old times which had never really existed. The allusion, however, to the partial manner in which the public lands were allotted could proceed only from a plebeian; and the allusion to the fraudulent sale of spoils marks the date of the poem, and shows that the poet shared in the general discontent with which the proceedings of Camillus, after the taking of Veii, were regarded.

HORATIUS.

A LAY MADE ABOUT THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCLX.

1

Lars Porsena of Clusium
By the Nine Gods he swore
That the great house of Tarquin
Should suffer wrong no more.
By the Nine Gods he swore it,
And named a trysting day,
And bade his messengers ride forth
East and west and south and north,
To summon his array.

2

East and west and south and north
The messengers ride fast,
And tower and town and cottage
Have heard the trumpet's blast.
Shame on the false Etruscan
Who lingers in his home,
When Porsena of Clusium
Is on the march for Rome.

3

The horsemen and the footmen
Are pouring in amain

From many a stately market-place;
From many a fruitful plain;
From many a lonely hamlet,
Which, hid by beech and pine,
Like an eagle's nest, hangs on the crest
Of purple Apennine;

4

From lordly Volaterræ,
Where scowls the far-famed hold
Piled by the hands of giants
For godlike kings of old;
From seagirt Populonia,
Whose sentinels descry
Sardinia's snowy mountain-tops
Fringing the southern sky;

5

From the proud mart of Pisæ,
Queen of the western waves,
Where ride Massilia's triremes
Heavy with fair-haired slaves;
From where sweet Clanis wanders
Through corn and vines and flowers;
From where Cortona lifts to heaven
Her diadem of towers.

6

Tall are the oaks whose acorns
Drop in dark Auser's rill;
Fat are the stags that champ the boughs
Of the Ciminian hill;

Beyond all streams Clitumnus
  Is to the herdsman dear;
Best of all pools the fowler loves
  The great Volsinian mere.

7

But now no stroke of woodman
  Is heard by Auser's rill;
No hunter tracks the stag's green path
  Up the Ciminian hill;
Unwatched along Clitumnus
  Grazes the milk-white steer;
Unharmed the waterfowl may dip
  In the Volsinian mere.

8

The harvest of Arretium,
  This year, old men shall reap,
This year, young boys in Umbro
  Shall plunge the struggling sheep;
And in the vats of Luna,
  This year, the must shall foam
Round the white feet of laughing girls
  Whose sires have marched to Rome.

9

There be thirty chosen prophets,
  The wisest of the land,
Who alway by Lars Porsena
  Both morn and evening stand:
Evening and morn the Thirty
  Have turned the verses o'er,

Traced from the right on linen white
By mighty seers of yore.

10

And with one voice the Thirty
Have their glad answer given:
"Go forth, go forth, Lars Porsena;
Go forth, beloved of Heaven:
Go, and return in glory
To Clusium's royal dome;
And hang round Nurscia's altars
The golden shields of Rome."

11

And now hath every city
Sent up her tale of men:
The foot are fourscore thousand,
The horse are thousands ten.
Before the gates of Sutrium
Is met the great array.
A proud man was Lars Porsena
Upon this trysting day.

12

For all the Etruscan armies
Were ranged beneath his eye,
And many a banished Roman,
And many a stout ally;
And with a mighty following
To join the muster came
The Tusculan Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name.

13

But by the yellow Tiber
Was tumult and affright:
From all the spacious champaign
To Rome men took their flight.
A mile around the city,
The throng stopped up the ways;
A fearful sight it was to see
Through two long nights and days.

14

For aged folks on crutches,
And women great with child,
And mothers sobbing over babes
That clung to them and smiled,
And sick men borne in litters
High on the necks of slaves,
And troops of sunburnt husbandmen
With reaping-hooks and staves,

15

And droves of mules and asses
Laden with skins of wine,
And endless flocks of goats and sheep,
And endless herds of kine,
And endless trains of wagons
That creaked beneath the weight
Of corn-sacks and of household goods,
Choked every roaring gate.

16

Now, from the rock Tarpeian,
Could the wan burghers spy

The line of blazing villages
Red in the midnight sky.
The Fathers of the City,
They sat all night and day,
For every hour some horseman came
With tidings of dismay.

17

To eastward and to westward
Have spread the Tuscan bands;
Nor house nor fence nor dovecote
In Crustumerium stands.
Verbenna down to Ostia
Hath wasted all the plain;
Astur hath stormed Janiculum,
And the stout guards are slain.

18

Iwis, in all the Senate,
There was no heart so bold,
But sore it ached, and fast it beat,
When that ill news was told.
Forthwith up rose the Consul,
Up rose the Fathers all;
In haste they girded up their gowns,
And hied them to the wall.

19

They held a council standing
Before the River-Gate;
Short time was there, ye well may guess,
For musing or debate.

Out spake the Consul roundly:
"The bridge must straight go down;
For, since Janiculum is lost,
Naught else can save the town."

20

Just then a scout came flying,
All wild with haste and fear;
"To arms! to arms! Sir Consul:
Lars Porsena is here."
On the low hills to westward
The Consul fixed his eye,
And saw the swarthy storm of dust
Rise fast along the sky.

21

And nearer fast and nearer
Doth the red whirlwind come;
And louder still and still more loud,
From underneath that rolling cloud,
Is heard the trumpet's war-note proud,
The trampling, and the hum.
And plainly and more plainly
Now through the gloom appears,
Far to left and far to right,
In broken gleams of dark-blue light,
The long array of helmets bright,
The long array of spears.

22

And plainly and more plainly
Above that glimmering line,

Now might ye see the banners
Of twelve fair cities shine;
But the banner of proud Clusium
Was highest of them all,
The terror of the Umbrian,
The terror of the Gaul.

23

And plainly and more plainly
Now might the burghers know,
By port and vest, by horse and crest,
Each warlike Lucumo.
There Cilnius of Arretium
On his fleet roan was seen;
And Astur of the four-fold shield,
Girt with the brand none else may wield,
Tolumnius with the belt of gold,
And dark Verbenna from the hold
By reedy Thrasymene.

24

Fast by the royal standard,
O'erlooking all the war,
Lars Porsena of Clusium
Sat in his ivory car.
By the right wheel rode Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name;
And by the left false Sextus,
That wrought the deed of shame.

25

But when the face of Sextus
Was seen among the foes,

A yell that rent the firmament
From all the town arose.
On the house-tops was no woman
But spat towards him and hissed,
No child but screamed out curses,
And shook its little fist.

26

But the Consul's brow was sad,
And the Consul's speech was low,
And darkly looked he at the wall,
And darkly at the foe.
"Their van will be upon us
Before the bridge goes down;
And if they once may win the bridge,
What hope to save the town?"

27

Then out spake brave Horatius,
The Captain of the Gate:
"To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late;
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his Gods,

28

"And for the tender mother
Who dandled him to rest,
And for the wife who nurses
His baby at her breast,
And for the holy maidens
Who feed the eternal flame,

To save them from false Sextus
That wrought the deed of shame?

29

"Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul,
With all the speed ye may;
I, with two more to help me,
Will hold the foe in play.
In yon strait path a thousand
May well be stopped by three.
Now who will stand on either hand,
And keep the bridge with me?"

30

Then out spake Spurius Lartius;
A Ramnian proud was he:
"Lo, I will stand at thy right hand,
And keep the bridge with thee."
And out spake strong Herminius;
Of Titian blood was he:
"I will abide on thy left side,
And keep the bridge with thee."

31

"Horatius," quoth the Consul,
"As thou sayest, so let it be."
And straight against that great array
Forth went the dauntless Three.
For Romans in Rome's quarrel
Spared neither land nor gold,
Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
In the brave days of old.

32

Then none was for a party;
  Then all were for the state;
Then the great man helped the poor,
  And the poor man loved the great:
Then lands were fairly portioned;
  Then spoils were fairly sold:
The Romans were like brothers
  In the brave days of old.

33

Now Roman is to Roman
  More hateful than a foe,
And the Tribunes beard the high,
  And the Fathers grind the low.
As we wax hot in faction,
  In battle we wax cold:
Wherefore men fight not as they fought
  In the brave days of old.

34

Now while the Three were tightening
  Their harness on their backs,
The Consul was the foremost man
  To take in hand an axe:
And Fathers mixed with Commons
  Seized hatchet, bar, and crow,
And smote upon the planks above,
  And loosed the props below.

35

Meanwhile the Tuscan army,
  Right glorious to behold,

Came flashing back the noonday light,
Rank behind rank, like surges bright
Of a broad sea of gold.
Four hundred trumpets sounded
A peal of warlike glee,
As that great host, with measured tread,
And spears advanced, and ensigns spread,
Rolled slowly towards the bridge's head,
Where stood the dauntless Three.

36

The Three stood calm and silent,
And looked upon the foes,
And a great shout of laughter
From all the vanguard rose;
And forth three chiefs came spurring
Before that deep array;
To earth they sprang, their swords they drew,
And lifted high their shields, and flew
To win the narrow way;

37

Aunus from green Tifernum,
Lord of the Hill of Vines;
And Seius, whose eight hundred slaves
Sicken in Ilva's mines;
And Picus, long to Clusium
Vassal in peace and war,
Who led to fight his Umbrian powers
From that gray crag where, girt with towers,
The fortress of Nequinum lowers
O'er the pale waves of Nar.

38

Stout Lartius hurled down Aunus
Into the stream beneath:
Herminius struck at Seius,
And clove him to the teeth:
At Picus brave Horatius
Darted one fiery thrust;
And the proud Umbrian's gilded arms
Clashed in the bloody dust.

39

Then Ocnus of Falerii
Rushed on the Roman Three;
And Lausulus of Urgo,
The rover of the sea;
And Aruns of Volsinium,
Who slew the great wild boar,
The great wild boar that had his den
Amidst the reeds of Cosa's fen,
And wasted fields, and slaughtered men,
Along Albinia's shore.

40

Herminius smote down Aruns:
Lartius laid Ocnus low:
Right to the heart of Lausulus
Horatius sent a blow.
"Lie there," he cried, "fell pirate!
No more, aghast and pale,
From Ostia's walls the crowd shall mark
The track of thy destroying bark.
No more Campania's hinds shall fly

To woods and caverns when they spy
Thy thrice accursed sail."

41

But now no sound of laughter
Was heard among the foes.
A wild and wrathful clamor
From all the vanguard rose.
Six spears' lengths from the entrance
Halted that deep array,
And for a space no man came forth
To win the narrow way.

42

But hark! the cry is Astur:
And lo! the ranks divide;
And the great Lord of Luna
Comes with his stately stride.
Upon his ample shoulders
Clangs loud the four-fold shield,
And in his hand he shakes the brand
Which none but he can wield.

43

He smiled on those bold Romans
A smile serene and high;
He eyed the flinching Tuscans,
And scorn was in his eye.
Quoth he, "The she-wolf's litter
Stand savagely at bay:
But will ye dare to follow,
If Astur clears the way?"

44

Then, whirling up his broadsword
With both hands to the height,
He rushed against Horatius,
And smote with all his might.
With shield and blade Horatius
Right deftly turned the blow.
The blow, though turned, came yet too nigh;
It missed his helm, but gashed his thigh:
The Tuscans raised a joyful cry
To see the red blood flow.

45

He reeled, and on Herminius
He leaned one breathing-space;
Then, like a wild-cat mad with wounds,
Sprang right at Astur's face.
Through teeth, and skull, and helmet,
So fierce a thrust he sped,
The good sword stood a handbreadth out
Behind the Tuscan's head.

46

And the great Lord of Luna
Fell at that deadly stroke,
As falls on Mount Alvernus
A thunder-smitten oak.
Far o'er the crashing forest
The giant arms lie spread;
And the pale augurs, muttering low,
Gaze on the blasted head.

47

On Astur's throat Horatius
Right fiercely pressed his heel,
And thrice and four times tugged amain,
Ere he wrenched out the steel.
"And see," he cried, "the welcome,
Fair guests, that waits you here!
What noble Lucumo comes next
To taste our Roman cheer?"

48

But at his haughty challenge
A sullen murmur ran,
Mingled of wrath and shame and dread,
Along that glittering van.
There lacked not men of prowess,
Nor men of lordly race;
For all Etruria's noblest
Were round the fatal place.

49

But all Etruria's noblest
Felt their hearts sink to see
On the earth the bloody corpses,
In the path the dauntless Three:
And, from the ghastly entrance
Where those bold Romans stood,
All shrank, like boys who unaware,
Ranging the woods to start a hare,
Come to the mouth of the dark lair
Where, growling low, a fierce old bear
Lies amidst bones and blood.

50

Was none who would be foremost
  To lead such dire attack:
But those behind cried "Forward!"
  And those before cried "Back!"
And backward now and forward
  Wavers the deep array;
And on the tossing sea of steel,
To and fro the standards reel;
And the victorious trumpet-peal
  Dies fitfully away.

51

Yet one man for one moment
  Stood out before the crowd;
Well known was he to all the Three,
  And they gave him greeting loud,
"Now welcome, welcome, Sextus!
  Now welcome to thy home!
Why dost thou stay, and turn away?
  Here lies the road to Rome."

52

Thrice looked he at the city;
  Thrice looked he at the dead;
And thrice came on in fury,
  And thrice turned back in dread;
And, white with fear and hatred,
  Scowled at the narrow way
Where, wallowing in a pool of blood,
  The bravest Tuscans lay.

53

But meanwhile axe and lever
  Have manfully been plied;
And now the bridge hangs tottering
  Above the boiling tide.
"Come back, come back, Horatius!"
  Loud cried the Fathers all.
"Back, Lartius! back, Herminius!
  Back, ere the ruin fall!"

54

Back darted Spurius Lartius;
  Herminius darted back:
And, as they passed, beneath their feet
  They felt the timbers crack.
But when they turned their faces,
  And on the farther shore
Saw brave Horatius stand alone,
  They would have crossed once more.

55

But with a crash like thunder
  Fell every loosened beam,
And, like a dam, the mighty wreck
  Lay right athwart the stream;
And a long shout of triumph
  Rose from the walls of Rome,
As to the highest turret-tops
  Was splashed the yellow foam.

56

And, like a horse unbroken
  When first he feels the rein,

The furious river struggled hard,
  And tossed his tawny mane,
And burst the curb, and bounded,
  Rejoicing to be free,
And whirling down, in fierce career
Battlement, and plank, and pier,
  Rushed headlong to the sea.

57

Alone stood brave Horatius,
  But constant still in mind;
Thrice thirty thousand foes before,
  And the broad flood behind.
"Down with him!" cried false Sextus,
  With a smile on his pale face.
"Now yield thee," cried Lars Porsena,
  "Now yield thee to our grace."

58

Round turned he, as not deigning
  Those craven ranks to see;
Naught spake he to Lars Porsena,
  To Sextus naught spake he;
But he saw on Palatinus
  The white porch of his home;
And he spake to the noble river
  That rolls by the towers of Rome.

59

"O Tiber! father Tiber!
  To whom the Romans pray,
A Roman's life, a Roman's arms,
  Take thou in charge this day!"

So he spake, and, speaking, sheathed
The good sword by his side,
And with his harness on his back
Plunged headlong in the tide.

60

No sound of joy or sorrow
Was heard from either bank;
But friends and foes in dumb surprise,
With parted lips and straining eyes,
Stood gazing where he sank;
And when above the surges
They saw his crest appear,
All Rome sent forth a rapturous cry,
And even the ranks of Tuscany
Could scarce forbear to cheer.

61

But fiercely ran the current,
Swollen high by months of rain:
And fast his blood was flowing,
And he was sore in pain,
And heavy with his armor,
And spent with changing blows:
And oft they thought him sinking,
But still again he rose.

62

Never, I ween, did swimmer,
In such an evil case,
Struggle through such a raging flood
Safe to the landing-place:

But his limbs were borne up bravely
By the brave heart within;
And our good father Tiber
Bore bravely up his chin.

63

"Curse on him!" quoth false Sextus;
"Will not the villain drown?
But for this stay, ere close of day
We should have sacked the town!"
"Heaven help him!" quoth Lars Porsena,
"And bring him safe to shore;
For such a gallant feat of arms
Was never seen before."

64

And now he feels the bottom;
Now on dry earth he stands;
Now round him throng the Fathers
To press his gory hands;
And now, with shouts and clapping,
And noise of weeping loud,
He enters through the River-Gate,
Borne by the joyous crowd.

65

They gave him of the corn-land,
That was of public right,
As much as two strong oxen
Could plough from morn till night;
And they made a molten image,
And set it up on high,

And there it stands unto this day
To witness if I lie.

66

It stands in the Comitium,
Plain for all folk to see;
Horatius in his harness,
Halting upon one knee:
And underneath is written,
In letters all of gold,
How valiantly he kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.

67

And still his name sounds stirring
Unto the men of Rome,
As the trumpet-blast that cries to them
To charge the Volscian home;
And wives still pray to Juno
For boys with hearts as bold
As his who kept the bridge so well
In the brave days of old.

68

And in the nights of winter,
When the cold north-winds blow,
And the long howling of the wolves
Is heard amidst the snow;
When round the lonely cottage
Roars loud the tempest's din,
And the good logs of Algidus
Roar louder yet within:

69

When the oldest cask is opened,
  And the largest lamp is lit;
When the chestnuts glow in the embers,
  And the kid turns on the spit;
When young and old in circle
  Around the firebrands close;
When the girls are weaving baskets
  And the lads are shaping bows;

70

When the goodman mends his armor,
  And trims his helmet's plume;
When the goodwife's shuttle merrily
  Goes flashing through the loom,—
With weeping and with laughter
  Still is the story told,
How well Horatius kept the bridge
  In the brave days of old.

THE BATTLE OF THE LAKE REGILLUS.

The following poem is supposed to have been produced ninety years after the lay of Horatius. Some persons mentioned in the lay of Horatius make their appearance again, and some appellations and epithets used in the lay of Horatius have been purposely repeated; for, in an age of ballad-poetry, it scarcely ever fails to happen that certain phrases come to be appropriated to certain men and things, and are regularly applied to those men and things by every minstrel.

. . . .

The principal distinction between the lay of Horatius and the lay of the Lake Regillus is, that the former is meant to be purely Roman, while the latter, though national in its general spirit, has a slight tincture of Greek learning and of Greek superstition. The story of the Tarquins, as it has come down to us, appears to have been compiled from the works of several popular poets; and one at least of those poets appears to have visited the Greek colonies in Italy, if not Greece itself, and to have had some acquaintance with the works of Homer and Herodotus. Many of the most striking adventures of the house of Tarquin, before Lucretia makes her appearance, have a Greek character.

. . . .

In the following poem, therefore, images and incidents have been borrowed, not merely without scruple, but on principle, from the incomparable battle-pieces of Homer.

The popular belief at Rome, from an early period, seems to have been that the event of the great day of Regillus was decided by supernatural agency. Castor and Pollux, it is said, had fought, armed and mounted, at the head of the legions of the commonwealth, and had afterwards carried the news of the victory with incredible speed to the city. The well in the Forum at which they had alighted was pointed out. Near the well rose their ancient temple. A great festival was kept to their honor on the ides of Quintilis, supposed to be the anniversary of the battle; and on that day sumptuous sacrifices were offered to them at the public charge. One spot of the margin of Lake Regillus was regarded during many ages with superstitious awe. A mark, resembling in shape a horse's hoof, was discernible in the volcanic rock; and this mark was believed to have been made by one of the celestial chargers.

. . . .

It is therefore conceivable that the appearance of Castor and Pollux may have become an article of faith before the generation which had fought at Regillus had passed away. Nor could anything be more natural than that the poets of the next age should embellish this story, and make the celestial horsemen bear the tidings of victory to Rome. . . . It was ordained that a grand muster and inspection of the equestrian body [the knights of Rome] should be part of the ceremonial performed on the anniversary of the battle of Regillus in honor of Castor and Pollux, the two equestrian gods. All the knights, clad in purple and crowned with olive, were to meet at the Temple of Mars in the suburbs. Thence they were to ride in state to the Forum, where the Temple of the Twins stood. This pageant was, during several centuries, considered as one of the most splendid sights of Rome. In the time of Dionysius the cavalcade sometimes consisted of five thousand horsemen, all persons of fair repute and easy fortune.

. . . .

Songs, we know, were chanted at the religious festivals of Rome from an early period; indeed, from so early a period that some of the sacred verses were popularly ascribed to Numa and were utterly unintelligible in the age of Augustus. . . . It is therefore likely that the Censors and Pontiffs, when they had resolved to add a grand procession of knights to the other solemnities annually performed on the ides of Quintilis, would call in the aid of a poet.

THE BATTLE OF THE LAKE REGILLUS.

A LAY SUNG AT THE FEAST OF CASTOR AND POLLUX ON THE IDES OF QUINTILIS, IN THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCCLI.

1

Ho, trumpets, sound a war note!
Ho, lictors, clear the way!
The Knights will ride in all their pride
Along the streets to-day.

To-day the doors and windows
Are hung with garlands all,
From Castor in the Forum
To Mars without the wall.
Each Knight is robed in purple,
With olive each is crowned;
A gallant war-horse under each
Paws haughtily the ground.
While flows the Yellow River,
While stands the Sacred Hill,
The proud Ides of Quintilis
Shall have such honor still.
Gay are the Martian Kalends:
December's Nones are gay:
But the proud Ides, when the squadron rides,
Shall be Rome's whitest day.

2

Unto the Great Twin Brethren
We keep this solemn feast.
Swift, swift, the Great Twin Brethren
Came spurring from the east.
They came o'er wild Parthenius,
Tossing in waves of pine,
O'er Cirrha's dome, o'er Adria's foam,
O'er purple Apennine,
From where with flutes and dances
Their ancient mansion rings,
In lordly Lacedæmon,
The City of two kings,
To where, by Lake Regillus,
Under the Porcian height,

All in the lands of Tusculum,
  Was fought the glorious fight.

3

Now on the place of slaughter
  Are cots and sheepfolds seen,
And rows of vines, and fields of wheat,
  And apple-orchards green;
The swine crush the big acorns
  That fall from Corne's oaks.
Upon the turf by the Fair Fount
  The reaper's pottage smokes.
The fisher baits his angle;
  The hunter twangs his bow;
Little they think on those strong limbs
  That moulder deep below.
Little they think how sternly
  That day the trumpets pealed;
How in the slippery swamp of blood
  Warrior and war-horse reeled;
How wolves came with fierce gallop,
  And crows on eager wings,
To tear the flesh of captains,
  And peck the eyes of kings;
How thick the dead lay scattered
  Under the Porcian height;
How through the gates of Tusculum
  Raved the wild stream of flight;
And how the Lake Regillus
  Bubbled with crimson foam,
What time the Thirty Cities
  Came forth to war with Rome.

4

But, Roman, when thou standest
Upon that holy ground,
Look thou with heed on the dark rock
That girds the dark lake round,
So shalt thou see a hoof-mark
Stamped deep into the flint:
It was no hoof of mortal steed
That made so strange a dint:
There to the Great Twin Brethren
Vow thou thy vows, and pray
That they, in tempest and in fight,
Will keep thy head alway.

5

Since last the Great Twin Brethren
Of mortal eyes were seen,
Have years gone by an hundred
And fourscore and thirteen.
That summer a Virginius
Was Consul first in place;
The second was stout Aulus,
Of the Posthumian race.
The Herald of the Latines
From Gabii came in state:
The Herald of the Latines
Passed through Rome's Eastern Gate:
The Herald of the Latines
Did in our Forum stand;
And there he did his office,
A sceptre in his hand.

6

"Hear, Senators and people
Of the good town of Rome,
The Thirty Cities charge you
To bring the Tarquins home;
And if ye still be stubborn,
To work the Tarquins wrong,
The Thirty Cities warn you,
Look that your walls be strong."

7

Then spake the Consul Aulus,
He spake a bitter jest:
"Once the jays sent a message
Unto the eagle's nest:
Now yield thou up thine eyrie
Unto the carrion-kite,
Or come forth valiantly, and face
The jays in mortal fight.
Forth looked in wrath the eagle;
And carrion-kite and jay,
Soon as they saw his beak and claw,
Fled screaming far away."

8

The Herald of the Latines
Hath hied him back in state;
The Fathers of the City
Are met in high debate.
Thus spake the elder Consul,
An ancient man and wise:

"Now hearken, Conscript Fathers,
To that which I advise.
In seasons of great peril
'T is good that one bear sway;
Then choose we a Dictator,
Whom all men shall obey.
Camerium knows how deeply
The sword of Aulus bites,
And all our city calls him
The man of seventy fights.
Then let him be Dictator
For six months and no more,
And have a Master of the Knights,
And axes twenty-four."

9

So Aulus was Dictator,
The man of seventy fights;
He made Æbutius Elva
His Master of the Knights.
On the third morn thereafter,
At dawning of the day,
Did Aulus and Æbutius
Set forth with their array.
Sempronius Atratinus
Was left in charge at home
With boys, and with gray-headed men,
To keep the walls of Rome.
Hard by the Lake Regillus
Our camp was pitched at night;
Eastward a mile the Latines lay,
Under the Porcian height.

Far over hill and valley
Their mighty host was spread;
And with their thousand watch-fires
The midnight sky was red.

10

Up rose the golden morning
Over the Porcian height,
The proud Ides of Quintilis
Marked evermore with white.
Not without secret trouble
Our bravest saw the foes;
For girt by threescore thousand spears,
The thirty standards rose.
From every warlike city
That boasts the Latian name,
Foredoomed to dogs and vultures,
That gallant army came;
From Setia's purple vineyards,
From Norba's ancient wall,
From the white streets of Tusculum,
The proudest town of all;
From where the Witch's Fortress
O'erhangs the dark-blue seas;
From the still glassy lake that sleeps
Beneath Aricia's trees,—
Those trees in whose dim shadow
The ghastly priest doth reign,
The priest who slew the slayer,
And shall himself be slain;
From the drear banks of Ufens,
Where flights of marsh-fowl play,

And buffaloes lie wallowing
Through the hot summer's day;
From the gigantic watch-towers,
No work of earthly men,
Whence Cora's sentinels o'erlook
The never-ending fen;
From the Laurentian jungle,
The wild hog's reedy home;
From the green steeps whence Anio leaps
In floods of snow-white foam.

11

Aricia, Cora, Norba,
Velitræ, with the might
Of Setia and of Tusculum,
Were marshalled on the right:
The leader was Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name;
Upon his head a helmet
Of red gold shone like flame;
High on a gallant charger
Of dark-gray hue he rode;
Over his gilded armor
A vest of purple flowed,
Woven in the land of sunrise
By Syria's dark-browed daughters,
And by the sails of Carthage brought
Far o'er the southern waters.

12

Lavinium and Laurentum
Had on the left their post,

With all the banners of the marsh,
  And banners of the coast.
Their leader was false Sextus,
  That wrought the deed of shame:
With restless pace and haggard face
  To his last field he came.
Men said he saw strange visions
  Which none beside might see,
And that strange sounds were in his ears,
  Which none might hear but he.
A woman fair and stately,
  But pale as are the dead,
Oft through the watches of the night
  Sat spinning by his bed.
And as she plied the distaff,
  In a sweet voice and low,
She sang of great old houses,
  And fights fought long ago.
So spun she, and so sang she,
  Until the east was gray,
Then pointed to her bleeding breast,
  And shrieked, and fled away.

13

But in the centre thickest
  Were ranged the shields of foes,
And from the centre loudest
  The cry of battle rose.
There Tibur marched and Pedum
  Beneath proud Tarquin's rule,
And Ferentinum of the rock,
  And Gabii of the pool.

There rode the Volscian succors:
There, in a dark stern ring,
The Roman exiles gathered close
Around the ancient king.
Though white as Mount Soracte,
When winter nights are long,
His beard flowed down o'er mail and belt,
His heart and hand were strong;
Under his hoary eyebrows
Still flashed forth quenchless rage,
And, if the lance shook in his gripe,
'T was more with hate than age.
Close at his side was Titus
On an Apulian steed,
Titus, the youngest Tarquin,
Too good for such a breed.

14

Now on each side the leaders
Gave signal for the charge;
And on each side the footmen
Strode on with lance and targe;
And on each side the horsemen
Struck their spurs deep in gore,
And front to front the armies
Met with a mighty roar:
And under that great battle
The earth with blood was red;
And, like the Pomptine fog at morn,
The dust hung overhead;
And louder still and louder
Rose from the darkened field

The braying of the war-horns,
  The clang of sword and shield,
The rush of squadrons sweeping
  Like whirlwinds o'er the plain,
The shouting of the slayers,
  And screeching of the slain.

15

False Sextus rode out foremost;
  His look was high and bold;
His corselet was of bison's hide,
  Plated with steel and gold.
As glares the famished eagle
  From the Digentian rock
On a choice lamb that bounds alone
  Before Bandusia's flock,
Herminius glared on Sextus,
  And came with eagle speed,
Herminius on black Auster,
  Brave champion on brave steed;
In his right hand the broadsword
  That kept the bridge so well,
And on his helm the crown he won
  When proud Fidenæ fell.
Woe to the maid whose lover
  Shall cross his path to-day!
False Sextus saw, and trembled,
  And turned, and fled away.
As turns, as flies, the woodman
  In the Calabrian brake,
When through the reeds gleams the round eye
  Of that fell speckled snake;

So turned, so fled, false Sextus,
And hid him in the rear,
Behind the dark Lavinian ranks,
Bristling with crest and spear.

16

But far to north Æbutius,
The Master of the Knights,
Gave Tubero of Norba
To feed the Porcian kites.
Next under those red horse-hoofs
Flaccus of Setia lay;
Better had he been pruning
Among his elms that day.
Mamilius saw the slaughter,
And tossed his golden crest,
And towards the Master of the Knights
Through the thick battle pressed.
Æbutius smote Mamilius
So fiercely on the shield,
That the great lord of Tusculum
Wellnigh rolled on the field.
Mamilius smote Æbutius,
With a good aim and true,
Just where the neck and shoulder join,
And pierced him through and through;
And brave Æbutius Elva
Fell swooning to the ground,
But a thick wall of bucklers
Encompassed him around.
His clients from the battle
Bare him some little space,

And filled a helm from the dark lake,
  And bathed his brow and face;
And when at last he opened
  His swimming eyes to light,
Men say, the earliest word he spake
  Was, "Friends, how goes the fight?"

17

But meanwhile in the centre
  Great deeds of arms were wrought;
There Aulus the Dictator
  And there Valerius fought.
Aulus with his good broadsword
  A bloody passage cleared
To where, amidst the thickest foes,
  He saw the long white beard.
Flat lighted that good broadsword
  Upon proud Tarquin's head.
He dropped the lance; he dropped the reins;
  He fell as fall the dead.
Down Aulus springs to slay him,
  With eyes like coals of fire;
But faster Titus hath sprung down,
  And hath bestrode his sire.
Latian captains, Roman knights,
  Fast down to earth they spring,
And hand to hand they fight on foot
  Around the ancient king.
First Titus gave tall Cæso
  A death wound in the face;
Tall Cæso was the bravest man
  Of the brave Fabian race:

Aulus slew Rex of Gabii,
The priest of Juno's shrine:
Valerius smote down Julius,
Of Rome's great Julian line;
Julius, who left his mansion
High on the Velian hill,
And through all turns of weal and woe
Followed proud Tarquin still.
Now right across proud Tarquin
A corpse was Julius laid;
And Titus groaned with rage and grief,
And at Valerius made.
Valerius struck at Titus,
And lopped off half his crest;
But Titus stabbed Valerius
A span deep in the breast.
Like a mast snapped by the tempest,
Valerius reeled and fell.
Ah! woe is me for the good house
That loves the people well!
Then shouted loud the Latines,
And with one rush they bore
The struggling Romans backward
Three lances' length and more;
And up they took proud Tarquin,
And laid him on a shield,
And four strong yeomen bare him,
Still senseless, from the field.

18

But fiercer grew the fighting
Around Valerius dead;

For Titus dragged him by the foot,
  And Aulus by the head.
"On, Latines, on!" quoth Titus,
  "See how the rebels fly!"
"Romans, stand firm!" quoth Aulus,
  "And win this fight or die!
They must not give Valerius
  To raven and to kite;
For aye Valerius loathed the wrong,
  And aye upheld the right;
And for your wives and babies
  In the front rank he fell.
Now play the men for the good house
  That loves the people well!"

19

Then tenfold round the body
  The roar of battle rose,
Like the roar of a burning forest
  When a strong north-wind blows.
Now backward, and now forward,
  Rocked furiously the fray,
Till none could see Valerius,
  And none wist where he lay.
For shivered arms and ensigns
  Were heaped there in a mound,
And corpses stiff, and dying men
  That writhed and gnawed the ground;
And wounded horses kicking,
  And snorting purple foam;
Right well did such a couch befit
  A Consular of Rome.

20

But north looked the Dictator;
North looked he long and hard;
And spake to Caius Cossus,
The Captain of his Guard:
"Caius, of all the Romans
Thou hast the keenest sight;
Say, what through yonder storm of dust
Comes from the Latian right?"

21

Then answered Caius Cossus:
"I see an evil sight:
The banner of proud Tusculum
Comes from the Latian right;
I see the plumed horsemen;
And far before the rest
I see the dark-gray charger,
I see the purple vest;
I see the golden helmet
That shines far off like flame;
So ever rides Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name."

22

"Now hearken, Caius Cossus:
Spring on thy horse's back;
Ride as the wolves of Apennine
Were all upon thy track;
Haste to our southward battle,
And never draw thy rein

Until thou find Herminius,
  And bid him come amain."

23

So Aulus spake, and turned him
  Again to that fierce strife;
And Caius Cossus mounted,
  And rode for death and life.
Loud clanged beneath his horse-hoofs
  The helmets of the dead,
And many a curdling pool of blood
  Splashed him from heel to head.
So came he far to southward,
  Where fought the Roman host,
Against the banners of the marsh
  And banners of the coast.
Like corn before the sickle
  The stout Lavinians fell,
Beneath the edge of the true sword
  That kept the bridge so well.

24

"Herminius! Aulus greets thee;
  He bids thee come with speed,
To help our central battle;
  For sore is there our need.
There wars the youngest Tarquin,
  And there the Crest of Flame,
The Tusculan Mamilius,
  Prince of the Latian name.
Valerius hath fallen fighting
  In front of our array,

And Aulus of the seventy fields
  Alone upholds the day."

25

Herminius beat his bosom,
  But never a word he spake.
He clapped his hand on Auster's mane,
  He gave the reins a shake,
Away, away went Auster,
  Like an arrow from the bow;
Black Auster was the fleetest steed
  From Aufidus to Po.

26

Right glad were all the Romans
  Who, in that hour of dread,
Against great odds bare up the war
  Around Valerius dead,
When from the south the cheering
  Rose with a mighty swell:
"Herminius comes, Herminius,
  Who kept the bridge so well!"

27

Mamilius spied Herminius,
  And dashed across the way.
"Herminius! I have sought thee
  Through many a bloody day.
One of us two, Herminius,
  Shall nevermore go home.
I will lay on for Tusculum,
  And lay thou on for Rome!"

28

All round them paused the battle,
While met in mortal fray
The Roman and the Tusculan,
The horses black and gray.
Herminius smote Mamilius
Through breastplate and through breast;
And fast flowed out the purple blood
Over the purple vest.
Mamilius smote Herminius
Through head-piece and through head;
And side by side those chiefs of pride
Together fell down dead.
Down fell they dead together
In a great lake of gore;
And still stood all who saw them fall
While men might count a score.

29

Fast, fast, with heels wild spurning,
The dark-gray charger fled;
He burst through ranks of fighting men,
He sprang o'er heaps of dead.
His bridle far out-streaming,
His flanks all blood and foam,
He sought the southern mountains,
The mountains of his home.
The pass was steep and rugged,
The wolves they howled and whined;
But he ran like a whirlwind up the pass,
And he left the wolves behind.

Through many a startled hamlet
  Thundered his flying feet;
He rushed through the gate of Tusculum,
  He rushed up the long white street;
He rushed by tower and temple,
  And paused not from his race
Till he stood before his master's door
  In the stately market-place.
And straightway round him gathered
  A pale and trembling crowd,
And when they knew him, cries of rage
  Brake forth, and wailing loud:
And women rent their tresses
  For their great prince's fall;
And old men girt on their old swords,
  And went to man the wall.

30

But, like a graven image,
  Black Auster kept his place,
And ever wistfully he looked
  Into his master's face.
The raven-mane that daily,
  With pats and fond caresses,
The young Herminia washed and combed,
  And twined in even tresses,
And decked with colored ribands
  From her own gay attire,
Hung sadly o'er her father's corpse
  In carnage and in mire.
Forth with a shout sprang Titus,
  And seized black Auster's rein.

Then Aulus sware a fearful oath,
And ran at him amain.
"The furies of thy brother
With me and mine abide,
If one of your accursed house
Upon black Auster ride!"
As on an Alpine watch-tower
From heaven comes down the flame,
Full on the neck of Titus
The blade of Aulus came;
And out the red blood spouted,
In a wide arch and tall,
As spouts a fountain in the court
Of some rich Capuan's hall.
The knees of all the Latines
Were loosened with dismay
When dead, on dead Herminius,
The bravest Tarquin lay.

31

And Aulus the Dictator
Stroked Auster's raven mane,
With heed he looked unto the girths,
With heed unto the rein.
"Now bear me well, black Auster,
Into yon thick array;
And thou and I will have revenge
For thy good lord this day."

32

So spake he; and was buckling
Tighter black Auster's band,

When he was aware of a princely pair
That rode at his right hand.
So like they were, no mortal
Might one from other know;
White as snow their armor was,
Their steeds were white as snow.
Never on earthly anvil
Did such rare armor gleam;
And never did such gallant steeds
Drink of an earthly stream.

33

And all who saw them trembled,
And pale grew every cheek;
And Aulus the Dictator
Scarce gathered voice to speak.
"Say by what name men call you?
What city is your home?
And wherefore ride ye in such guise
Before the ranks of Rome?"

34

"By many names men call us;
In many lands we dwell:
Well Samothracia knows us;
Cyrene knows us well.
Our house in gay Tarentum
Is hung each morn with flowers;
High o'er the masts of Syracuse
Our marble portal towers;
But by the proud Eurotas
Is our dear native home;

And for the right we come to fight
Before the ranks of Rome."

35

So answered those strange horsemen,
And each couched low his spear;
And forthwith all the ranks of Rome
Were bold, and of good cheer.
And on the thirty armies
Came wonder and affright,
And Ardea wavered on the left,
And Cora on the right.
"Rome to the charge!" cried Aulus;
"The foe begins to yield!
Charge for the hearth of Vesta!
Charge for the Golden Shield!
Let no man stop to plunder,
But slay, and slay, and slay;
The gods who live forever
Are on our side to-day."

36

Then the fierce trumpet-flourish
From earth to heaven arose.
The kites know well the long stern swell
That bids the Romans close.
Then the good sword of Aulus
Was lifted up to slay;
Then, like a crag down Apennine,
Rushed Auster through the fray.
But under those strange horsemen
Still thicker lay the slain;

And after those strange horses
Black Auster toiled in vain.
Behind them Rome's long battle
Came rolling on the foe,
Ensigns dancing wild above,
Blades all in line below.
So comes the Po in flood-time
Upon the Celtic plain;
So comes the squall, blacker than night,
Upon the Adrian main.
Now, by our Sire Quirinus,
It was a goodly sight
To see the thirty standards
Swept down the tide of flight.
So flies the spray of Adria
When the black squall doth blow,
So corn-sheaves in the flood-time
Spin down the whirling Po.
False Sextus to the mountains
Turned first his horse's head;
And fast fled Ferentinum,
And fast Lavinium fled.
The horsemen of Nomentum
Spurred hard out of the fray;
The footmen of Velitræ
Threw shield and spear away.
And underfoot was trampled,
Amidst the mud and gore,
The banner of proud Tusculum,
That never stooped before.
And down went Flavius Faustus,
Who led his stately ranks

From where the apple-blossoms wave
  On Anio's echoing banks,
And Tullus of Arpinum,
  Chief of the Volscian aids,
And Metius with the long fair curls,
  The love of Anxur's maids,
And the white head of Vulso,
  The great Arician seer,
And Nepos of Laurentum,
  The hunter of the deer;
And in the back false Sextus
  Felt the good Roman steel,
And wriggling in the dust he died,
  Like a worm beneath the wheel.
And fliers and pursuers
  Were mingled in a mass,
And far away the battle
  Went roaring through the pass.

37

Sempronius Atratinus
  Sate in the Eastern Gate,
Beside him were three Fathers,
  Each in his chair of state;
Fabius, whose nine stout grandsons
  That day were in the field,
And Manlius, eldest of the Twelve
  Who kept the Golden Shield;
And Sergius, the High Pontiff,
  For wisdom far renowned;
In all Etruria's colleges
  Was no such Pontiff found.

And all around the portal,
And high above the wall,
Stood a great throng of people,
But sad and silent all;
Young lads, and stooping elders
That might not bear the mail,
Matrons with lips that quivered,
And maids with faces pale.
Since the first gleam of daylight,
Sempronius had not ceased
To listen for the rushing
Of horse-hoofs from the east.
The mist of eve was rising,
The sun was hastening down,
When he was aware of a princely pair
Fast pricking towards the town.
So like they were, man never
Saw twins so like before;
Red with gore their armor was,
Their steeds were red with gore.

38

"Hail to the great Asylum!
Hail to the hill-tops seven!
Hail to the fire that burns for aye,
And the shield that fell from heaven!
This day, by Lake Regillus,
Under the Porcian height,
All in the lands of Tusculum
Was fought a glorious fight;
To-morrow your Dictator
Shall bring in triumph home

The spoils of thirty cities
To deck the shrines of Rome!"

39

Then burst from that great concourse
A shout that shook the towers,
And some ran north, and some ran south,
Crying, "The day is ours!"
But on rode these strange horsemen,
With slow and lordly pace;
And none who saw their bearing
Durst ask their name or race.
On rode they to the Forum,
While laurel-boughs and flowers,
From house-tops and from windows,
Fell on their crests in showers.
When they drew nigh to Vesta,
They vaulted down amain,
And washed their horses in the well
That springs by Vesta's fane.
And straight again they mounted,
And rode to Vesta's door;
Then, like a blast, away they passed,
And no man saw them more.

40

And all the people trembled,
And pale grew every cheek;
And Sergius the High Pontiff
Alone found voice to speak:
"The gods who live forever
Have fought for Rome to-day!

These be the Great Twin Brethren
To whom the Dorians pray.
Back comes the Chief in triumph
Who, in the hour of fight,
Hath seen the Great Twin Brethren
In harness on his right.
Safe comes the ship to haven,
Through billows and through gales,
If once the Great Twin Brethren
Sit shining on the sails.
Wherefore they washed their horses
In Vesta's holy well,
Wherefore they rode to Vesta's door,
I know, but may not tell.
Here, hard by Vesta's Temple,
Build we a stately dome
Unto the Great Twin Brethren
Who fought so well for Rome.
And when the months returning
Bring back this day of fight,
The proud Ides of Quintilis,
Marked evermore with white,
Unto the Great Twin Brethren
Let all the people throng,
With chaplets and with offerings,
With music and with song;
And let the doors and windows
Be hung with garlands all,
And let the Knights be summoned
To Mars without the wall.
Thence let them ride in purple
With joyous trumpet-sound,

Each mounted on his war-horse,
  And each with olive crowned;
And pass in solemn order
  Before the sacred dome,
795 Where dwell the Great Twin Brethren
  Who fought so well for Rome!"

VIRGINIA.

A collection consisting exclusively of war-songs would give an imperfect, or rather an erroneous, notion of the spirit of the old Latin ballads. The Patricians, during more than a century after the expulsion of the Kings, held all the high military commands. A Plebeian, even though, like Lucius Siccius, he were distinguished by his valor and knowledge of war, could serve only in subordinate posts. A minstrel, therefore, who wished to celebrate the early triumphs of his country, could hardly take any but Patricians for his heroes. The warriors who are mentioned in the two preceding lays—Horatius, Lartius, Herminius, Aulus Posthumius, Æbutius Elva, Sempronius Atratinus, Valerius Poplicola—were all members of the dominant order.

But there was a class of compositions in which the great families were by no means so courteously treated. No parts of early Roman history are richer with poetical coloring than those which relate to the long contest between the privileged houses and the commonalty. The population of Rome was, from a very early period, divided into hereditary castes, which, indeed, readily united to repel foreign enemies, but which regarded each other, during many years, with bitter animosity. . . . Among the grievances under which the Plebeians suffered, three were felt as peculiarly severe. They were excluded from the highest magistracies; they were excluded from all share in the public land; and they were ground down to the dust by partial and barbarous legislation touching pecuniary contracts. . . . .

The Plebeians were, however, not wholly without constitutional rights. From an early period they had been admitted to some share of political power. . . . The Plebeians had also the privilege of annually appointing officers, named Tribunes, who had no active share in the government of the Commonwealth, but who, by degrees, acquired a power formidable even to the ablest and most resolute Consuls and Dictators. The person of the Tribune was inviolable; and, though he could directly effect little, he could obstruct everything.

During more than a century after the institution of the Tribuneship, the Commons struggled manfully for the removal of grievances under which they labored; and, in spite of many checks and reverses, succeeded in wringing concession after concession from the stubborn aristocracy. At length, in the year of the city 378, both parties mustered their whole strength for their last and most desperate conflict. The popular and active Tribune, Caius Licinius, proposed the three memorable laws which are called by his name, and which were intended to redress the three great evils of which the Plebeians complained.

. . . .

During the great Licinian contest the Plebeian poets were, doubtless, not silent. . . . These minstrels, as Niebuhr has remarked, appear to have generally taken the popular side. We can hardly be mistaken in supposing that, at the great crisis of the civil conflict, they employed themselves in versifying all the most powerful and virulent speeches of the Tribunes, and in heaping abuse on the leaders of the aristocracy. Every personal defect, every domestic scandal, every tradition dishonorable to a noble house, would be sought out, brought into notice, and exaggerated. . . . During the Licinian conflict, Appius Claudius Crassus signalized himself by the ability and severity with which he harangued against the two great agitators. He would naturally, therefore, be the favorite mark of the Plebeian satirists; nor would they have been at a loss to find a point on which he was open to attack.

His grandfather, called, like himself, Appius Claudius, had left a name as much detested as that of Sextus Tarquinius. He had been Consul more than seventy years before the introduction of the Licinian laws. By availing himself of a singular crisis in public feeling, he had obtained the consent of the Commons to the abolition of the Tribuneship, and had been chief of that Council of Ten to which the whole direction of the state had been committed. In a few months his administration had become universally odious. It was swept away by an irresistible outbreak of popular fury, and its memory was still held in abhorrence by the whole city. The immediate cause of the downfall of this execrable government was said to have been an attempt made by Appius Claudius to get possession of a beautiful young girl of humble birth.

It can hardly be doubted that a story so admirably adapted to the purposes both of the poet and of the demagogue would be eagerly seized upon by minstrels burning with hatred against the Patrician order, against the Claudian house, and especially against the grandson and namesake of the infamous Decemvir.

In order that the reader may judge fairly of these fragments of the lay of Virginia, he must imagine himself a Plebeian who has just voted for the reëlection of Sextius and Licinius. All the power of the Patricians has been exerted to throw out the two great champions of the Commons. Every Posthumius, Æmilius, and Cornelius has used his influence to the utmost. Debtors have been let out of the workhouses on condition of voting against the men of the people; clients have been posted to hiss and interrupt the favorite candidates; Appius Claudius Crassus has spoken with more than his usual eloquence and asperity: all has been in vain; Licinius and Sextius have a fifth time carried all the tribes; work is suspended; the booths are closed; the

Plebeians bear on their shoulders the two champions of liberty through the Forum. Just at this moment it is announced that a popular poet, a zealous adherent of the Tribunes, has made a new song which will cut the Claudian nobles to the heart. The crowd gathers round him, and calls on him to recite it. He takes his stand on the spot where, according to tradition, Virginia, more than seventy years ago, was seized by the pander of Appius, and begins his story.

VIRGINIA.

FRAGMENTS OF A LAY SUNG IN THE FORUM ON THE DAY WHEREON LUCIUS SEXTIUS SEXTINUS LATERANUS AND CAIUS LICINIUS CALVUS STOLO WERE ELECTED TRIBUNES OF THE COMMONS THE FIFTH TIME, IN THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCLXXXII.

Ye good men of the Commons, with loving hearts and true,
Who stand by the bold Tribunes that still have stood by you,
Come, make a circle round me, and mark my tale with care,
A tale of what Rome once hath borne, of what Rome yet may bear.
This is no Grecian fable, of fountains running wine,
Of maids with snaky tresses, or sailors turned to swine.
Here, in this very Forum, under the noonday sun,
In sight of all the people, the bloody deed was done.
Old men still creep among us who saw that fearful day,
Just seventy years and seven ago, when the wicked Ten bare sway.

Of all the wicked Ten still the names are held accursed,
And of all the wicked Ten Appius Claudius was the worst.
He stalked along the Forum like King Tarquin in his pride;
Twelve axes waited on him, six marching on a side;
The townsmen shrank to right and left, and eyed askance with fear
His lowering brow, his curling mouth, which always seemed to sneer:
That brow of hate, that mouth of scorn, marks all the kindred still;
For never was there Claudius yet but wished the Commons ill;
Nor lacks he fit attendance; for close behind his heels,
With outstretched chin and crouching pace, the client Marcus steals,
His loins girt up to run with speed, be the errand what it may,
And the smile flickering on his cheek, for aught his lord may say.
Such varlets pimp and jest for hire among the lying Greeks:
Such varlets still are paid to hoot when brave Licinius speaks.
Where'er ye shed the honey, the buzzing flies will crowd;
Where'er ye fling the carrion, the raven's croak is loud;
Where'er down Tiber garbage floats, the greedy pike ye see;
And wheresoe'er such lord is found, such client still will be.

Just then, as through one cloudless chink in a black stormy sky,
Shines out the dewy morning-star, a fair young girl came by.
With her small tablets in her hand, and her satchel on her arm,
Home she went bounding from the school, nor dreamed of shame or harm;
And past those dreaded axes she innocently ran,
With bright, frank brow that had not learned to blush at gaze of man;
And up the Sacred Street she turned, and, as she danced along,
She warbled gayly to herself lines of the good old song,
How for a sport the princes came spurring from the camp,
And found Lucrece, combing the fleece, under the midnight lamp.
The maiden sang as sings the lark, when up he darts his flight,
From his nest in the green April corn, to meet the morning light;
And Appius heard her sweet young voice, and saw her sweet young face,
And loved her with the accursed love of his accursed race,
And all along the Forum, and up the Sacred Street,
His vulture eye pursued the trip of those small glancing feet.

. . . .

Over the Alban mountains the light of morning broke;
From all the roofs of the Seven Hills curled the thin wreaths of smoke.
The city-gates were opened; the Forum all alive,
With buyers and with sellers was humming like a hive.
Blithely on brass and timber the craftsman's stroke was ringing,
And blithely o'er her panniers the market-girl was singing,
And blithely young Virginia came smiling from her home:
Ah! woe for young Virginia, the sweetest maid in Rome!
With her small tablets in her hand, and her satchel on her arm,
Forth she went bounding to the school, nor dreamed of shame or harm.
She crossed the Forum shining with stalls in alleys gay,
And just had reached the very spot whereon I stand this day,
When up the varlet Marcus came; not such as when erewhile
He crouched behind his patron's heels with the true client smile:
He came with lowering forehead, swollen features, and clenched fist,
And strode across Virginia's path, and caught her by the wrist.
Hard strove the frighted maiden, and screamed with look aghast;
And at her scream from right and left the folk came running fast;
The money-changer Crispus, with his thin silver hairs,

And Hanno from the stately booth glittering with Punic wares,
65 And the strong smith Muræna, grasping a half-forged brand,
And Volero the flesher, his cleaver in his hand.
All came in wrath and wonder; for all knew that fair child;
And, as she passed them twice a day, all kissed their hands and smiled;
And the strong smith Muræna gave Marcus such a blow,
70 The caitiff reeled three paces back, and let the maiden go.
Yet glared he fiercely round him, and growled in harsh, fell tone,
"She's mine, and I will have her: I seek but for mine own:
She is my slave, born in my house, and stolen away and sold,
The year of the sore sickness, ere she was twelve hours old.
75 'Twas in the sad September, the month of wail and fright,
Two augurs were borne forth that morn; the Consul died ere night.
I wait on Appius Claudius, I waited on his sire;
Let him who works the client wrong beware the patron's ire!"

So spake the varlet Marcus; and dread and silence came
80 On all the people at the sound of the great Claudian name.

For then there was no Tribune to speak the word of might,
Which makes the rich man tremble, and guards the poor man's right.
There was no brave Licinius, no honest Sextius then;
But all the city, in great fear, obeyed the wicked Ten.
Yet ere the varlet Marcus again might seize the maid,
Who clung tight to Muræna's skirt, and sobbed and shrieked for aid,
Forth through the throng of gazers the young Icilius pressed,
And stamped his foot, and rent his gown, and smote upon his breast,
And sprang upon that column, by many a minstrel sung,
Whereon three mouldering helmets, three rusting swords, are hung,
And beckoned to the people, and in bold voice and clear
Poured thick and fast the burning words that tyrants quake to hear.

"Now, by your children's cradles, now by your fathers' graves,
Be men to-day, Quirites, or be forever slaves!
For this did Servius give us laws? For this did Lucrece bleed?
For this was the great vengeance wrought on Tarquin's evil seed?
For this did those false sons make red the axes of their sire?
For this did Scævola's right hand hiss in the Tuscan fire?
Shall the vile fox-earth awe the race that stormed the lion's den?

Shall we, who could not brook one lord, crouch to the wicked Ten?
Oh for that ancient spirit which curbed the Senate's will!
Oh for the tents which in old time whitened the Sacred Hill!
In those brave days our fathers stood firmly side by side;
They faced the Marcian fury; they tamed the Fabian pride;
They drove the fiercest Quinctius an outcast forth from Rome;
They sent the haughtiest Claudius with shivered fasces home.
But what their care bequeathed us our madness flung away:
All the ripe fruit of threescore years was blighted in a day.
Exult, ye proud Patricians! The hard-fought fight is o'er.
We strove for honors — 't was in vain; for freedom — 't is no more.
No crier to the polling summons the eager throng;
No Tribune breathes the word of might that guards the weak from wrong.
Our very hearts, that were so high, sink down beneath your will.
Riches, and lands, and power, and state — ye have them: — keep them still.
Still keep the holy fillets; still keep the purple gown,
The axes, and the curule chair, the car, and laurel crown:
Still press us for your cohorts, and, when the fight is done,

Still fill your garners from the soil which our good swords have won.
Still, like a spreading ulcer, which leech-craft may not cure,
Let your foul usance eat away the substance of the poor.
Still let your haggard debtors bear all their fathers bore;
Still let your dens of torment be noisome as of yore;
No fire when Tiber freezes; no air in dogstar heat;
And store of rods for free-born backs, and holes for free-born feet.
Heap heavier still the fetters; bar closer still the grate;
Patient as sheep we yield us up unto your cruel hate.
But, by the Shades beneath us, and by the gods above,
Add not unto your cruel hate your yet more cruel love!
Have ye not graceful ladies, whose spotless lineage springs
From Consuls, and High Pontiffs, and ancient Alban kings?
Ladies, who deign not on our paths to set their tender feet,
Who from their cars look down with scorn upon the wondering street,
Who in Corinthian mirrors their own proud smiles behold,
And breathe of Capuan odors, and shine with Spanish gold?
Then leave the poor Plebeian his single tie to life —
The sweet, sweet love of daughter, of sister, and of wife,
The gentle speech, the balm for all that his vexed soul endures,
The kiss, in which he half forgets even such a yoke as yours.

Still let the maiden's beauty swell the father's breast with pride;
140 Still let the bridegroom's arms infold an unpolluted bride.
Spare us the inexpiable wrong, the unutterable shame,
That turns the coward's heart to steel, the sluggard's blood to flame,
Lest, when our latest hope is fled, ye taste of our despair,
And learn by proof, in some wild hour, how much the wretched dare."

. . . .

145 Straightway Virginius led the maid a little space aside,
To where the reeking shambles stood, piled up with horn and hide,
Close to yon low dark archway, where, in a crimson flood,
Leaps down to the great sewer the gurgling stream of blood.
Hard by, a flesher on a block had laid his whittle down;
150 Virginius caught the whittle up, and hid it in his gown.
And then his eyes grew very dim, and his throat began to swell,
And in a hoarse, changed voice he spake, "Farewell, sweet child! Farewell!
Oh, how I loved my darling! Though stern I sometimes be,
To thee, thou know'st, I was not so. Who could be so to thee?
155 And how my darling loved me! How glad she was to hear
My footstep on the threshold when I came back last year!

And how she danced with pleasure to see my civic crown,
And took my sword, and hung it up, and brought me forth my gown!
Now all those things are over, — yes, all thy pretty ways,
Thy needlework, thy prattle, thy snatches of old lays;
And none will grieve when I go forth, or smile when I return,
Or watch beside the old man's bed, or weep upon his urn.
The house that was the happiest within the Roman walls,
The house that envied not the wealth of Capua's marble halls,
Now, for the brightness of thy smile, must have eternal gloom,
And for the music of thy voice, the silence of the tomb.
The time is come. See how he points his eager hand this way!
She how his eyes gloat on thy grief, like a kite's upon the prey!
With all his wit, he little deems that, spurned, betrayed, bereft,
Thy father hath in his despair one fearful refuge left.
He little deems that in this hand I clutch what still can save
Thy gentle youth from taunts and blows, the portion of the slave;
Yea, and from nameless evil, that passeth taunt and blow,—
Foul outrage which thou knowest not, which thou shalt never know.
Then clasp me round the neck once more, and give me one more kiss;

And now, mine own dear little girl, there is no way but this."
With that he lifted high the steel, and smote her in the side,
And in her blood she sank to earth, and with one sob she died.

Then, for a little moment, all people held their breath;
And through the crowded Forum was stillness as of death;
And in another moment brake forth from one and all
A cry as if the Volscians were coming o'er the wall.
Some with averted faces shrieking fled home amain;
Some ran to call a leech; and some ran to lift the slain;
Some felt her lips and little wrist, if life might there be found;
And some tore up their garments fast, and strove to stanch the wound.
In vain they ran, and felt, and stanched, for never truer blow
That good right arm had dealt in fight against a Volscian foe.

When Appius Claudius saw that deed, he shuddered and sank down,
And hid his face some little space with the corner of his gown,
Till, with white lips and bloodshot eyes, Virginius tottered nigh,
And stood before the judgment-seat, and held the knife on high.
"O dwellers in the nether gloom, avengers of the slain,

By this dear blood I cry to you, do right between us twain;
And even as Appius Claudius hath dealt by me and mine,
Deal you by Appius Claudius and all the Claudian line!"
So spake the slayer of his child, and turned, and went his way;
But first he cast one haggard glance to where the body lay,
And writhed, and groaned a fearful groan, and then, with steadfast feet,
Strode right across the market-place unto the Sacred Street.

Then up sprang Appius Claudius: "Stop him, alive or dead!
Ten thousand pounds of copper to the man who brings his head!"
He looked upon his clients; but none would work his will.
He looked upon his lictors; but they trembled and stood still.
And, as Virginius through the press his way in silence cleft,
Ever the mighty multitude fell back to right and left.
And he hath passed in safety unto his woful home,
And there ta'en horse to tell the camp what deeds are done in Rome.

By this the flood of people was swollen from every side,
And streets and porches round were filled with that o'erflowing tide;
And close around the body gathered a little train
Of them that were the nearest and dearest to the slain.

They brought a bier, and hung it with many a cypress crown,
And gently they uplifted her, and gently laid her down.
The face of Appius Claudius wore the Claudian scowl and sneer,
And in the Claudian note he cried, "What doth this rabble here?
Have they no crafts to mind at home, that hitherward they stray?
Ho! lictors, clear the market-place, and fetch the corpse away!"
The voice of grief and fury till then had not been loud;
But a deep sullen murmur wandered among the crowd,
Like the moaning noise that goes before the whirlwind on the deep,
Or the growl of a fierce watch-dog but half aroused from sleep.
But when the lictors at that word, tall yeomen all and strong,
Each with his axe and sheaf of twigs, went down into the throng,
Those old men say, who saw that day of sorrow and of sin,
That in the Roman Forum was never such a din.
The wailing, hooting, cursing, the howls of grief and hate,
Were heard beyond the Pincian Hill, beyond the Latin Gate.
But close around the body, where stood the little train
Of them that were the nearest and dearest to the slain,
No cries were there, but teeth set fast, low whispers and black frowns,

And breaking up of benches, and girding up of gowns;
'T was well the lictors might not pierce to where the maiden lay,
Else surely had they been all twelve torn limb from limb that day.
Right glad they were to struggle back, blood streaming from their heads,
With axes all in splinters, and raiment all in shreds.
Then Appius Claudius gnawed his lip and the blood left his cheek;
And thrice he beckoned with his hand, and thrice he strove to speak;
And thrice the tossing Forum set up a frightful yell:
"See, see, thou dog! what thou hast done; and hide thy shame in hell!
Thou that wouldst make our maidens slaves must first make slaves of men.
Tribunes! Hurrah for Tribunes! Down with the wicked Ten!"
And straightway, thick as hailstones, came whizzing through the air
Pebbles, and bricks, and potsherds, all round the curule chair;
And upon Appius Claudius great fear and trembling came;
For never was a Claudius yet brave against aught but shame.
Though the great houses love us not, we own, to do them right,
That the great houses, all save one, have borne them well in fight.
Still Caius of Corioli, his triumphs and his wrongs,

His vengeance and his mercy, live in our camp-fire songs.
Beneath the yoke of Furius oft have Gaul and Tuscan bowed;
And Rome may bear the pride of him of whom herself is proud.
But evermore a Claudius shrinks from a stricken field,
And changes color like a maid at sight of sword and shield.
The Claudian triumphs all were won within the city towers;
The Claudian yoke was never pressed on any necks but ours.
A Cossus, like a wild-cat, springs ever at the face;
A Fabius rushes like a boar against the shouting chase;
But the vile Claudian litter, raging with currish spite,
Still yelps and snaps at those who run, still runs from those who smite.
So now 't was seen of Appius. When stones began to fly,
He shook, and crouched, and wrung his hands, and smote upon his thigh.
"Kind clients, honest lictors, stand by me in this fray!
Must I be torn in pieces? Home, home, the nearest way!"
While yet he spake, and looked around with a bewildered stare,
Four sturdy lictors put their necks beneath the curule chair;
And fourscore clients on the left, and fourscore on the right,
Arrayed themselves with swords and staves, and loins girt up for fight.

But, though without or staff or sword, so furious was the throng,
That scarce the train with might and main could bring their lord along.
Twelve times the crowd made at him; five times they seized his gown;
Small chance was his to rise again, if once they got him down.
And sharper came the pelting; and evermore the yell —
"Tribunes! we will have Tribunes!" rose with a louder swell.
And the chair tossed as tosses a bark with tattered sail
When raves the Adriatic beneath an eastern gale,
When the Calabrian sea-marks are lost in clouds of spume,
And the great Thunder Cape has donned his veil of inky gloom.
One stone hit Appius in the mouth, and one beneath the ear;
And ere he reached Mount Palatine, he swooned with pain and fear.
His cursed head, that he was wont to hold so high with pride,
Now, like a drunken man's, hung down, and swayed from side to side;
And when his stout retainers had brought him to his door,
His face and neck were all one cake of filth and clotted gore.
As Appius Claudius was that day, so may his grandson be!

God send Rome one such other sight, and send me there
to see!

. . . .

THE PROPHECY OF CAPYS.

It can hardly be necessary to remind any reader that, according to the popular tradition, Romulus, after he has slain his grand-uncle, Amulius, and restored his grandfather Numitor, determined to quit Alba, the hereditary domain of the Sylvian princes, and to found a new city. The gods, it was added, vouchsafed the clearest signs of the favor with which they regarded the enterprise, and of the high destinies reserved for the young colony.

This event was likely to be a favorite theme of the old Latin minstrels. They would naturally attribute the project of Romulus to some divine intimation of the power and prosperity which it was decreed that his city should attain. They would probably introduce seers foretelling the victories of unborn consuls and dictators, and the last great victory would generally occupy the most conspicuous place in the prediction. There is nothing strange in the supposition that the poet who was employed to celebrate the first great triumph of the Romans over the Greeks might throw his song of exultation into this form.

The occasion was one likely to excite the strongest feelings of national pride. A great outrage had been followed by a great retribution. Seven years before this time, Lucius Posthumius Megellus, who sprang from one of the noblest houses of Rome, and had been thrice Consul, was sent ambassador to Tarentum, with charge to demand reparation for grievous injuries. The Tarentines gave him audience in their theatre, where he addressed them in such Greek as he could command, which, we may well believe, was not exactly such as Cineas would have spoken. An exquisite sense of the ridiculous belonged to the Greek character; and closely connected with this faculty was a strong propensity to flippancy and impertinence. When Posthumius placed an accent wrong, his hearers burst into a laugh. When he remonstrated, they hooted him, and called him a barbarian; and at length hissed him off the stage as if he had been a bad actor. As the grave Roman retired, a buffoon, who, from his constant drunkenness, was nicknamed the Pint Pot, came up with gestures of the grossest indecency, and bespattered the senatorial gown with filth. Posthumius turned round to the multitude, and held up the gown, as if appealing to the universal law of nations. The sight only increased the insolence of the Tarentines. They clapped their hands, and set up a shout of laughter which shook the theatre. "Men of Tarentum," said Posthumius, "it will take not a little blood to wash this gown."

Rome, in consequence of this insult, declared war against the Tarentines. The Tarentines sought for allies beyond the Ionian Sea. Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, came to their help with a large army; and, for the first time, the two great nations of antiquity were fairly matched against each other.

The fame of Greece in arms, as well as in arts, was then at the height. Half a century earlier, the career of Alexander had excited the admiration and terror of all nations from the Ganges to the Pillars of Hercules. Royal houses, founded by Macedonian captains, still reigned at Antioch and Alexandria. That barbarian warriors, led by barbarian chiefs, should win a pitched battle against Greek valor guided by Greek science, seemed as incredible as it would now seem that the Burmese or the Siamese should, in the open plain, put to flight an equal number of the best English troops. . . . Of the Greek generals then living, Pyrrhus was indisputably the first. Among the troops who were trained in the Greek discipline, his Epirotes ranked high. His expedition to Italy was a turning-point in the history of the world. He found there a people who, far inferior to the Athenians and Corinthians in the fine arts, in the speculative sciences, and in all the refinements of life, were the best soldiers on the face of the earth. Their arms, their gradations of rank, their order of battle, their method of intrenchment, were all of Latian origin, and had all been gradually brought near to perfection, not by the study of foreign models, but by the genius and experience of many generations of great native commanders. The first words which broke from the king, when his practised eye had surveyed the Roman encampment, were full of meaning: “These barbarians,” he said, “have nothing barbarous in their military arrangements.” He was at first victorious; for his own talents were superior to those of the captains who were opposed to him; and the Romans were not prepared for the onset of the elephants of the East, which were then for the first time seen in Italy, — moving mountains, with long snakes for hands. But the victories of the Epirotes were fiercely disputed, dearly purchased, and altogether unprofitable. At length, Manius Curius Dentatus, who had in his first consulship won two triumphs, was again placed at the head of the Roman Commonwealth, and sent to encounter the invaders. A great battle was fought near Beneventum. Pyrrhus was completely defeated. He repassed the sea; and the world learned with amazement that a people had been discovered who, in fair fighting, were superior to the best troops that had been drilled on the system of Parmenio and Antigonus.

. . . .

It is said by Florus, and may easily be believed, that the triumph far surpassed in magnificence any that Rome had previously seen. The only spoils which Papirius Cursor and Fabius Maximus could exhibit were flocks and herds, wagons of rude structure, and heaps of spears and helmets. But now, for the first time, the riches of Asia and the arts of Greece adorned a Roman pageant. Plate, fine stuffs, costly furniture, rare animals, exquisite paintings and sculptures, formed part of the procession. At the banquet would be assembled a crowd of warriors and statesmen.

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On such a day we may suppose that the patriotic enthusiasm of a Latin poet would vent itself in reiterated shouts of "Io Triumphe," such as were uttered by Horace on a far less exciting occasion, and in boasts resembling those which Virgil, two hundred and fifty years later, put into the mouth of Anchises. The superiority of some foreign nations, and especially of the Greeks, in the lazy arts of peace, would be admitted with disdainful candor; but preëminence in all the qualities which fit a people to subdue and govern mankind would be claimed for the Romans.

The following lay belongs to the latest age of Latin ballad-poetry. Nævius and Livius Andronicus were probably among the children whose mothers held them up to see the chariot of Curius go by. The minstrel who sang on that day might possibly have lived to read the first hexameters of Ennius, and to see the first comedies of Plautus. His poem, as might be expected, shows a much wider acquaintance with the geography, manners, and productions of remote nations than would have been found in compositions of the age of Camillus. But he troubles himself little about dates; and having heard travelers talk with admiration of the Colossus of Rhodes, and of the structures and gardens with which the Macedonian kings of Syria had embellished their residence on the banks of the Orontes, he has never thought of inquiring whether these things existed in the age of Romulus.

THE PROPHECY OF CAPYS.

A LAY SUNG AT THE BANQUET IN THE CAPITOL, ON THE DAY WHEREON MANIUS CURIUS DENTATUS, A SECOND TIME CONSUL, TRIUMPHED OVER KING PYRRHUS AND THE TARENTINES, IN THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCCLXXIX.

1

Now slain is King Amulius,
  Of the great Sylvian line,
Who reigned in Alba Longa,
  On the throne of Aventine.
Slain is the Pontiff Camers,
  Who spake the words of doom:
"The children to the Tiber;
  The mother to the tomb."

2

In Alba's lake no fisher
  His net to-day is flinging;
On the dark rind of Alba's oaks
  To-day no axe is ringing;
The yoke hangs o'er the manger;
  The scythe lies in the hay;
Through all the Alban villages
  No work is done to-day.

3

And every Alban burgher
  Hath donned his whitest gown;
And every head in Alba
  Weareth a poplar crown;

And every Alban doorpost
  With boughs and flowers is gay;
For to-day the dead are living;
  The lost are found to-day.

4

They were doomed by a bloody king;
  They were doomed by a lying priest;
They were cast on the raging flood;
  They were tracked by the raging beast.
Raging beast and raging flood
  Alike have spared the prey;
And to-day the dead are living;
  The lost are found to-day.

5

The troubled river knew them,
  And smoothed his yellow foam,
And gently rocked the cradle
  That bore the fate of Rome.
The ravening she-wolf knew them,
  And licked them o'er and o'er,
And gave them of her own fierce milk,
  Rich with raw flesh and gore.
Twenty winters, twenty springs,
  Since then have rolled away;
And to-day the dead are living,
  The lost are found to-day.

6

Blithe it was to see the twins,
  Right goodly youths and tall,

Marching from Alba Longa
To their old grandsire's hall.
Along their path fresh garlands
Are hung from tree to tree;
Before them stride the pipers,
Piping a note of glee.

7

On the right goes Romulus,
With arms to the elbows red,
And in his hand a broadsword,
And on the blade a head, —
A head in an iron helmet,
With horse-hair hanging down,
A shaggy head, a swarthy head,
Fixed in a ghastly frown, —
The head of King Amulius
Of the great Sylvian line,
Who reigned in Alba Longa,
On the throne of Aventine.

8

On the left side goes Remus,
With wrists and fingers red,
And in his hand a boar-spear,
And on the point a head, —
A wrinkled head and aged,
With silver beard and hair,
And holy fillets round it,
Such as the pontiffs wear, —
The head of ancient Camers,
Who spake the words of doom:

"The children to the Tiber;
  The mother to the tomb."

9

Two and two behind the twins
  Their trusty comrades go,
Four-and-forty valiant men,
  With club, and axe, and bow.
On each side every hamlet
  Pours forth its joyous crowd,
Shouting lads and baying dogs
  And children laughing loud,
And old men weeping fondly
  As Rhea's boys go by,
And maids who shriek to see the heads,
  Yet, shrieking, press more nigh.

10

So they marched along the lake;
  They marched by fold and stall,
By cornfield and by vineyard,
  Unto the old man's hall.

11

In the hall-gate sate Capys,
  Capys, the sightless seer;
From head to foot he trembled
  As Romulus drew near.
And up stood stiff his thin white hair,
  And his blind eyes flashed fire:
"Hail! foster-child of the wondrous nurse!
  Hail! son of the wondrous sire!

12

“But thou, — what dost thou here
In the old man’s peaceful hall?
What doth the eagle in the coop,
The bison in the stall?
Our corn fills many a garner;
Our vines clasp many a tree;
Our flocks are white on many a hill;
But these are not for thee.

13

“For thee no treasure ripens
In the Tartessian mine:
For thee no ship brings precious bales
Across the Libyan brine;
Thou shalt not drink from amber;
Thou shalt not rest on down;
Arabia shall not steep thy locks,
Nor Sidon tinge thy gown.

14

“Leave gold and myrrh and jewels,
Rich table and soft bed,
To them who of man’s seed are born,
Whom woman’s milk have fed.
Thou wast not made for lucre,
For pleasure, nor for rest;
Thou, that art sprung from the War-god’s loins,
And hast tugged at the she-wolf’s breast.

15

“From sunrise unto sunset
All earth shall hear thy fame;

A glorious city thou shalt build,
  And name it by thy name.
And there, unquenched through ages,
  Like Vesta's sacred fire,
Shall live the spirit of thy nurse,
  The spirit of thy sire.

16

"The ox toils through the furrow,
  Obedient to the goad;
The patient ass, up flinty paths,
  Plods with his weary load;
With whine and bound the spaniel
  His master's whistle hears;
And the sheep yields her patiently
  To the loud clashing shears.

17

"But thy nurse will hear no master;
  Thy nurse will bear no load;
And woe to them that shear her,
  And woe to them that goad!
When all the pack, loud baying,
  Her bloody lair surrounds,
She dies in silence, biting hard,
  Amidst the dying hounds.

18

"Pomona loves the orchard;
  And Liber loves the vine;
And Pales loves the straw-built shed
  Warm with the breath of kine;

And Venus loves the whispers
Of plighted youth and maid,
In April's ivory moonlight
Beneath the chestnut shade.

19

"But thy father loves the clashing
Of broadsword and of shield;
He loves to drink the steam that reeks
From the fresh battle-field.
He smiles a smile more dreadful
Than his own dreadful frown,
When he sees the thick black cloud of smoke
Go up from the conquered town.

20

"And such as is the War-god,
The author of thy line,
And such as she who suckled thee,
Even such be thou and thine.
Leave to the soft Campanian
His baths and his perfumes;
Leave to the sordid race of Tyre
Their dyeing-vats and looms:
Leave to the sons of Carthage
The rudder and the oar:
Leave to the Greek his marble Nymphs
And scrolls of wordy lore.

21

"Thine, Roman, is the pilum;
Roman, the sword is thine,

The even trench, the bristling mound,
  The legion's ordered line;
And thine the wheels of triumph,
  Which with their laurelled train
Move slowly up the shouting streets
  To Jove's eternal fame.

22

"Beneath thy yoke the Volscian
  Shall veil his lofty brow;
Soft Capua's curled revellers
  Before thy chairs shall bow;
The Lucumoes of Arnus
  Shall quake thy rods to see;
And the proud Samnite's heart of steel
  Shall yield to only thee.

23

"The Gaul shall come against thee
  From the land of snow and night;
Thou shalt give his fair-haired armies
  To the raven and the kite.

24

"The Greek shall come against thee,
  The conqueror of the East.
Beside him stalks to battle
  The huge earth-shaking beast,
The beast on whom the castle
  With all its guards doth stand,
The beast who hath between his eyes
  The serpent for a hand.

First march the bold Epirotes,
Wedged close with shield and spear;
And the ranks of false Tarentum
Are glittering in the rear.

25

"The ranks of false Tarentum
Like hunted sheep shall fly;
In vain the bold Epirotes
Shall round their standards die.
And Apennine's gray vultures
Shall have a noble feast
On the fat and the eyes
Of the huge earth-shaking beast.

26

"Hurrah! for the good weapons
That keep the War-god's land.
Hurrah! for Rome's stout pilum
In a stout Roman hand.
Hurrah! for Rome's short broadsword,
That through the thick array
Of levelled spears and serried shields
Hews deep its gory way.

27

"Hurrah! for the great triumph
That stretches many a mile.
Hurrah! for the wan captives
That pass in endless file.
Ho! bold Epirotes, whither
Hath the Red King ta'en flight?

Ho! dogs of false Tarentum,
  Is not the gown washed white?

28

"Hurrah! for the great triumph
  That stretches many a mile.
Hurrah! for the rich dye of Tyre,
  And the fine web of Nile,
The helmets gay with plumage
  Torn from the pheasant's wings,
The belts set thick with starry gems
  That shone on Indian kings,
The urns of massy silver,
  The goblets rough with gold,
The many-colored tablets bright
  With loves and wars of old,
The stone that breathes and struggles,
  The brass that seems to speak, —
Such cunning they who dwell on high
  Have given unto the Greek.

29

"Hurrah! for Manius Curius,
  The bravest son of Rome,
Thrice in utmost need sent forth,
  Thrice drawn in triumph home.
Weave, weave for Manius Curius
  The third embroidered gown:
Make ready the third lofty car,
  And twine the third green crown;
And yoke the steeds of Rosea
  With necks like a bended bow,

And deck the bull, Mevania's bull,
The bull as white as snow.

30

"Blest and thrice blest the Roman
Who sees Rome's brightest day,
Who sees that long victorious pomp
Wind down the Sacred Way,
And through the bellowing Forum
And round the Suppliant's Grove,
Up to the everlasting gates
Of Capitolian Jove.

31

"Then where, o'er two bright havens,
The towers of Corinth frown;
Where the gigantic King of Day
On his own Rhodes looks down;
Where soft Orontes murmurs
Beneath the laurel shades;
Where Nile reflects the endless length
Of dark-red colonnades;
Where in the still deep water,
Sheltered from waves and blasts,
Bristle the dusky forests
Of Byrsa's thousand masts;
Where fur-clad hunters wander
Amidst the northern ice;
Where through the sand of morning-land
The camel bears the spice;
Where Atlas flings his shadow
Far o'er the western foam,—

Shall be great fear on all who hear
The mighty name of Rome."

LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

NOTES.

LOCALITIES:

In the sixth century B. C., the Etrurians occupied Northern Italy, and extended on the west, with the Tiber for their general boundary, almost to the gates of Rome. On the eastern or Adriatic side, came the people of Latin blood, speaking the dialects of Central Italy: the Latini, the Umbri, the Sabini, the Volsci, etc. South of the Tiber, these people covered the peninsula. There were Pelagian and Greek colonies in the South, and small Phoenician colonies in Sardinia and Sicily.

One of the most effective things in the Lays is the sonorous use of proper names. These serve two purposes; first, their mere sound is so skillfully interwoven that it adds resonance and helps the swing of the measure; second, they add to the vividness of the scene by a rich and romantic suggestion of local color. To the reader with intimate knowledge of Italy, these names have in themselves a rare charm of association. But the younger reader does not gain much by stopping in his reading to learn that a little town is in Northern Latium or Southern Etruria. The editor has therefore simply gathered the names together in the Geographical Index that follows, which can be consulted at will and has referred to this Index from time to time in the Notes. Additional study of a classical Atlas is recommended to students curious concerning geography.

Most of the places in *Horatius* lie to the North of Rome, in Etruria, whence the troops march on the city. In *The Battle of the Lake Regillus,* the troops march from Latium, the province to the South; but the coming of the Great White Brethren is accompanied by many Greek names. *Virginia* has no geographical allusions. In *The Prophecy of Capys,* the scene is laid near Alba Longa, the mother-city of Rome; but other localities are mentioned in the prophecy of the extending triumphs of the city.

GEOGRAPHICAL INDEX.

LOCALITIES IN ETRURIA ALPHABETICALLY ARRANGED:

Arnus: A river in Northern Etruria: the modern Arno. on which Florence is situated.

Alvernus: A mountain on the border of Umbria. Later known as Mt. Alverna; on this mountain St. Francis was stigmatized.

Auser: A muddy little river.

Arretium: A town: modern Arezzo.

Ciminian: Mount Ciminus.

Clanis: A river.

Clitumnus: A river with beautiful clear springs still visited. See *Childe Harold,* Canto IV, l. 586.

Clausium: A town; modern Chiusi.

Cortona: A town, in a lofty situation, which still keeps the same name.

Cosa: A town on the sea-coast.

Falerii: A town.

Ferentinum: A town.

Luna: A town in the very North of Etruria, between Pisa and Genoa.

Nar: A river that flows into the Tiber.

Pisae: Modern Pisa.

Populonia: A town on a little peninsula.

Soracte: A mountain; see *Childe Harold,* Canto IV, l. 665.

Sutrium: A town.

Tifernum: A town on the Northern Tiber.

Thrasymene: A lake. See *Childe Harold,* Canto IV, l. 551.

Umbro: A little river flowing into the Mediterranean.

Volaterrae: Modern Volterra.

Volsinian mere: A lake.

Volsinium: A town.

LOCALITIES IN LATIUM:

Alba Longa: The town among the hills to the South of Rome from which, according to legend, the city was settled.

Algidus: A mountain.

Anio: A river flowing into the Tiber.

Anxur: A town.

Ardea: A town.

Arpinum: A town.

Aricia: A town among the hills. See note to *Childe Harold,* Canto IV, l. 1549.

Camerium: A town.

Cora: A town.

Crustumerium: A town.

Fidenae: A town; modern Castel Guibileo, on the Tiber.

Gabei: A town.

Janiculum: One of the Seven Hills of Rome.

Laurentian: An adjective from Laurentum, a town on the sea-coast.

Lavinium: On the coast; see the *Aeneid.*

Nomentum: A town.

Norba: A town.

Ostia: The sea-port of Rome, still bearing the same name.

Palatinus: One of the Seven Hills of Rome, on which later the Palace of the Caesars was built. See *Childe Harold,* Canto IV, l. 951.

Pedum: A town.

Pomptine fog: The miasma from the Pontine Marshes, which extended over the lowlands of Latium.

Regillus: The small lake by which the battle was fought between the Romans and the Latins.

Setia: A town.

Tibur: An important town; modern Tivoli.

Tusculum: A town very near Rome.

Ufens: A river.

Velitrae: A town.

The *Velian Hill:* Another of the Seven Hills of Rome.

Witch's Fortress: A promontory, named from Circe the Sorceress.

OTHER LOCALITIES:

Adria: The Adriatic Sea.

Apulian: Apulia was a district in Southern Italy.

Atlas: A mountain in Africa.

Aufidus: A river in Apulia.

Bandusia: A fountain in Apulia near the birth-place of Horace.

Byrsa: The citadel of Carthage.

Calabrian: Calabria is still a district in Southern Italy.

Campania: A province south of Latium.

Capua: A city in Campania notorious for its luxury.

Carthage: A famous city in Africa, long the chief rival of Rome.

Cirrha: A city in Greece.

Corinth: One of the chief cities in Greece.

Cyrene: A mountain in Africa.

Digentian: Digentia was a stream in Sabini.

Eurotas: The river in Greece on which Lacedæmon or Sparta was built.

Ilva: The modern island of Elba, where Napoleon was exiled.

Lacedæmon: The most important city in Greece, next to Athens.

Libyan: Libya was in Africa.

Massilia: The modern Marseilles, in France.

Mevania: A town in Umbria.

Orontes: A river in Syria.

Parthenius: A mountain in Greece.

Po: One of the larger Italian rivers.

Rhodes: An island in the Ægean Sea sacred to Apollo.

Samothracia: An island in the Grecian seas.

Sardinia: An island off the coast of Italy.

Sidon: An ancient city in Phoenicia, mentioned in the Scriptures.

Syracuse: A city in Sicily.

Tarentum: A Greek town in Calabria.

Tartessian: Tartessus was in Spain.

Thunder-Cape: A promontory in Greece opposite Calabria.

Tyre: A famous city in Phoenicia, usually coupled with Sidon.

Urgo: A little island off the coast of Etruria.

HORATIUS.

The story is told in Livy, Book II, 10.

1. *Lars Porsena:* Lars was the old Etruscan word for Lord, or Chieftain. It was an hereditary title.

3. *House of Tarquin:* The dynasty of Tarquin. As we say, the House of Hapsburg.

6. *Trysting day:* This medieval word is in keeping with the frankly romantic tone of the *Lays*. Macaulay freely uses terms from the old English ballads.

36. *Triremes:* Vessels propelled by three banks of oars. Familiar in classic times.

37. *Fair-haired slaves:* Slaves from Northern countries, whose fair hair was always an amazement to the Romans.

39. *Through corn, etc.* In Italy the fields of grain and the vineyards are often gay with flowers, like the bright rosy wild gladiolus, and our Love in a Mist, and red tulips.

40. *Cortona:* For this and preceding proper names in this stanza, see Geographical Index.

63. *Must:* The new wine, trodden from the grapes. Wine is still made in this way in Italy.

72. *Traced from the right:* Etruscan writing, derived from the Phoenicians, was written in this way, still practised in some parts of the Orient. The Etruscan religion placed great stress on omens of various kinds.

79. *Royal dome:* The word *dome* here stands for any impressive building. Cf. Latin *domus,* house. Compare Coleridge's *Kubla Khan:*

> In Xanada did Kubla Khan
> A stately pleasure-dome decree.

80. *Nurscia:* Probably the goddess of good-fortune.

81. In the early days of Rome there was found in the courtyard of the king's palace a golden shield, which the priests declared had fallen from heaven; and while it remained safe, they said, Rome could not be conquered. To protect it from theft, eleven other shields exactly like it were made, and twelve priests appointed to guard the twelve shields.

83. *Tale:* Compare our modern word "tally." "Tale" in this sense means the number counted. Cf. Milton's *L'Allegro:*

> And every shepherd tells his tale.

96. *Mamilius* was Tarquin's son-in-law. His home, Tusculum, is famous in later Roman annals from the distinguished Romans, Cicero in particular, who had villas there.

100. *Champaign:* Latin *campum.* Compare French "Champ" and modern Italian "Campagna," by which name the level country around Rome still goes.

113. Note how admirably the impression of breathless haste is increased by the absence of any pause except a comma at the end of this line. These three stanzas are memorable for the vivid use of concrete detail in which Macaulay excels.

115. *Skins of wine:* The Cossacks and other Orientals still carry liquids in bottles made of skins sewed firmly together.

121. *Roaring:* What is the force of this word?

122. The Tarpeian rock overhung the Tiber. Tarpeia was a

Roman girl who agreed to throw open the doors of the citadel to the Sabines, if they would give her "what they wore on their left arms." She meant their gold bracelets; but they threw their heavy shields upon her, as she stood waiting for her reward, and she was crushed to death.

123. *Burghers:* This word suits the mediaeval style of the *Lays,* and also brings the life of ancient Rome closely home to us.

126. *The Fathers of the City:* The Senators. Our half-jesting phrase, "The City Fathers," goes back to Roman associations.

130. Reference to a map will make more vivid the way in which the foes close in upon the city, till one of the sacred seven hills is stormed by them.

138. *Iwis:* An archaic word meaning "certainly." Macaulay probably mistook the "I" for the personal pronoun, but it is really a prefix.

144. *Girded up their gowns:* They must be pictured clad in the long flowing Roman toga.

151. The Sublician bridge (*sublicae*=props), a wooden structure connecting Janiculum with Rome; 250 years old at the time of Horatius. Its site is not known exactly.

162. *And nearer:* Has Macaulay previously varied the length of his usual eight-line stanza? Where? Why? What does he gain by changing here to a stanza of twelve lines? What is the rhyme-scheme? What use of color is there? What of sound? By what stages is the "swarthy storm of dust" gradually recognized as a glittering army? When does the army get near enough for individuals to be known?

184. *Port and vest:* "Port" is carriage, bearing. Cf. our "deportment." "Vest" is from the Latin *vestis.* Cf. "vestment."

185. *Lucumo:* The name given by Latin writers to the Etruscan chiefs.

188. *Four-fold shield:* Four thicknesses of hide and various metals. See *Regillus,* 276.

217. *Brave Horatius:* He was called Cocles, the one-eyed. He came of a patrician family, the Luceres. Livy says that he "happened to be on guard at the bridge." Compare his simple and noble speech with that of Beowulf, the Anglo-Saxon hero, when he plunges into the depths of the sea to fight a sea-monster: or with the speech of other epic heroes at decisive moments.

223, 224. Reverence for ancestors and for the gods were close together in Roman minds. The Romans usually burned their dead, though burial was not unknown.

229, 230. These maidens were the six Vestal Virgins, girls who, vowing never to marry, devoted themselves to the service of Vesta, goddess of the hearth. They kept a fire burning, night and day, upon Vesta's shrine. The Romans held them in high honor.

235. *I with two more:* In Livy, Horatius offers to hold the bridge alone, but the others beg permission to join him.

237. *Yon strait path:* Cf. *Matthew* VII, 13: "Enter ye in at the strait gate." Not the same word as "straight."

241, etc.: Spurius Lartius and Titus Herminius are both mentioned in Livy.

242. The Luceres (see note, l. 217), the Ramnes, and the Tities were the three Roman tribes. The Ramnes were said to be direct descendants of Romulus, founder of Rome; hence they were called proud.

253. *For Romans in Rome's quarrel:* Who is speaking here? What is the force of the interpolation?

261. *Lands were fairly portioned:* Land conquered by the city was supposedly held for the common benefit of the citizens.

267. *The tribunes:* The official representatives of the tribes of the common people, or Plebs, of Rome. The Fathers (patres) were the representatives of the nobles, the Patricians.

269. *As we wax hot:* Two often quoted and powerful lines.

274. *Harness:* Armor, trappings of war. Cf. *Macbeth,* V. 5, 52:

> At least we'll die with harness on our back.

277. *Commons:* Macaulay again suggests the modern parallel to old Roman days by using the English parliamentary term.

304. *Ilva's mines:* The iron mines of Elba are still worked.

310. *The pale waves of Nar:* The waters of the river Nar were impregnated with sulphur, which gave them a whitish tinge. Notice how intimate Macaulay is with the rivers of Italy. Auser is really "dark" with a sort of black mud: Clitumnus flows silvery pure: Tiber, at Rome, is tawny "yellow," though nearer its source it is blue-green.

323. *Aruns:* The Etruscan title for a younger son.

324. *The great wild boar:* Macaulay alters the real legend, according to which this boar was so terrible that finally the gods, in answer to prayer, destroyed him by lightning.

333. *Fell pirate:* Apparently Macaulay invented him. He is given fitting home in the small island of Urgo. But if there never was a Lausulus, the Etruscans were nevertheless often pirates as well as merchants.

337. *Hinds:* Country-people, peasants.

346. *And for a space no man came forth:* In Livy, the Etruscans throw their spears from all sides against the solitary enemy. He challenges them singly, but they hesitate and for a time no one comes to meet him.

350. *Luna:* See Geographical Index.

366. *The she-wolf's litter:* See *The Prophecy of Capys;* also notes to *Childe Harold,* Canto IV, line 789.

354. *And in his hand he shakes the brand:* Can you find other examples of internal rhyme in the poem?

384. *Mount Alvernus:* See Geographical Index, page 314.

388. *The pale augurs:* Soothsayers, or priests who interpreted the will of the Gods by reading the flight of birds, the entrails of sacrificed beasts, etc.

412-415. These four lines all run on one rhyme.

492. *O Tiber! father Tiber:* The Tiber was represented in Roman sculpture of a later date as an old river-god reclining, surrounded by children who represented his tributaries.

In Livy, this prayer reads as follows: "Father Tiber, I pray thee, Holy One, receive these arms and this thy soldier in thy propitious waters." Do you prefer this version or Macaulay's? Would Horatius have explained, at that moment, that the Romans pray to the Tiber, or would he have taken it for granted?

525. *Bore bravely up his chin:* Macaulay cites, in connection with this line, the following passages:

> Our ladye bare upp her chinne.
> —*Ballad of Childe Waters.*

> Never heavier man and horse
> Stemmed a midnight torrent's force;
> Yet through good heart and Our Lady's grace,
> At last he gained the landing-place.
> Scott: *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

545. *Could plow* may mean could plow a furrow round; which would be a good deal. Most even of the rich Romans owned little real estate; nearly all their property was personal.

548, 549. What day? And who is speaking?

550. The Forum was the Roman place of public assembly. In the middle was the Rostra, from which all speakers addressed the people. The patricians gathered on one side, in the *Comitium,* the plebeians on the other, in the Forum proper.

558, 559. The story is now finished. Why does Macaulay add these stanzas? Does he show good judgment?

561. The Romans were at war with their neighbors, the Volsci, at the time this ballad is supposed to have been written.

562. The goddess of motherhood.

THE BATTLE OF THE LAKE REGILLUS.

The battle chronicled in the poem took place some years after the expedition of Porsena. Tarquin, still conspiring against Rome, had now appealed to the League of the Thirty Latin Cities. His son-in-law, Mamilius, nominally head of this League, turned the Thirty Cities against Rome. But this final effort of Tarquin, as the ballad narrates, failed completely. Just where Lake Regillus lay is in doubt. Macaulay inclines to favor the idea that it was between Frascati and Monte Porzio (the "Porcian Height" of ll. 34, 148), about fifteen to twenty miles to the north of Rome.

The story is told in Livy, Book II, chapters 19, 20.

Title: Castor and Pollux were the twin brothers of Helen, wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta, the woman whose fatal beauty was the cause of the Trojan War. The remains of their Temple in the Roman Forum can still be seen.

2. *Lictors:* The bodyguard of the magistrates. Twelve attended each consul. The insignia of office were the fasces, a bundle of rods surrounding an axe.

3. *Knights:* The "Equites," an order that ranked below the Senate and above the plebeians. They were a kind of honorary cavalry, recruited from among the rich young men. The use of the word is characteristic of Macaulay's intention to quicken in us the same romantic feeling toward ancient Rome which we have toward the middle ages. It would be interesting to go through the *Lays,* noting how cleverly mediæval words are used as a parallel to Latin expressions.

7, 8. *Castor . . . Mars:* The two temples between which the procession passed.

14. *The Sacred Hill:* A small hill outside the city. The common people, in one famous struggle against the patricians, 494 B. C., withdrew in a body to this hill and waited there till the Tribunes they wanted were granted to them.

15-20. "The Ides of Quintilis fell on the fifteenth of July. The months were counted, and July was the fifth month, hence its name (Quintilis). In the Roman calendar, the first day of each month was named the 'Calends,' from the verb meaning to 'call' The next division was Nones, which, as the ninth day before the Ides, fell on different dates in different months. The Ides, a word of uncertain derivation, fell on the fifteenth in March, May, July, and October, on the thirteenth in other months."

17. *The Martian Kalends:* The first of March was the great yearly holiday of Roman women.

18. *December's Nones:* The fifth of December was a day devoted to wild festivities in honour of the god of the woods, Faunus.

20. *Rome's whitest day:* See line 156. White was lucky, black unlucky. The Latin word *Candidatus,* our "Candidate," meant one dressed in white for good luck. In the Te Deum, the Latin adjective for our "Noble army of martyrs" is *Candidatus.*

25-32. Follow their course on a map. They pass from their Eastern birth-place over mountains, cities, and seas. Their *ancient mansion* is their temple in Lacedæmon or Sparta, the home of Menelaus and Helen. Sparta was in ancient days governed by two kings at once.

36-50. In these martial poems, Macaulay loves to pause now and then, as in the conclusion of *Horatius,* to give us idyllic and pastoral pictures. The contrast helps us to realize the primitive simplicity of life in ancient Italy.

60. Note how well Macaulay in this stanza leads up to the beginning of his narrative.

69. *A hoof-mark:* See Introduction. Every country has its mysterious foot-prints around which legends gather. In this poem, we are not in the region of plain human story as in *Horatius,* but in the solemn region of myth and religious faith. Our imaginations must be kindled with awe. The old Romans had a strong sense for the sanctity of localities. The word "holy" a few lines above is deliberately meant.

77. *Since last:* The listeners to the *Lay* are Romans who are still living under the same general conditions as those the poem implies. But even they have to have some information. Macaulay has shown much dramatic imagination in the way in which he puts himself at their precise point of view.

82. *Consul first in place:* First to have been elected: he had, however, no superior rights.

89. *The Herald of the Latines:* Note the stately effect produced by the repetition.

119. *Conscript Fathers:* The members of the Patrician order whose names were written, "conscripti," in the Senate Roll.

123. *A Dictator:* Roman history records many an occasion when such a temporary head of the State was chosen.

125. *Camerium:* A Latin city which Aulus had almost annihilated.

132. *Axes twenty-four:* All the Lictors were now to belong to him.

163. *Foredoomed to dogs and vultures:* Notice that Macaulay in this *Lay* foregoes appeal to suspense. It is an avowed song of triumph. Wherein does the excitement then consist?

173. Compare note on *Childe Harold,* Canto IV, 1549. Aricia had a temple dedicated to Diana, where the priest was always to be a run-away slave who gained the office only by killing his predecessor. Naturally the priest temporarily in charge always went armed.

195. *Upon his head a helmet:* Mamilius is in Livy "conspicuous for his armor."

201-204. Why does the metre change? Purple cloth was a famous product of Tyre on the coast of Syria.

209. *False Sextus:* See *Horatius,* ll. 199-200, and note.

217. *A woman fair and stately:* Lucretia.

237. *The Volscian succors:* Allies from the Volscian Hills.

239. *The Roman exiles:* The nobles who had been exiles with Tarquin. The singer is a Roman and presents them with sympathy though disapproval.

241. *Mount Soracte:* See *Childe Harold,* Canto IV, l. 665, and note.

251. *Titus the youngest Tarquin:* Really the oldest.

254. *Gave signal for the charge:* Livy says: "For the leaders were in the battle not merely to guide it by their strategy, but mixed in the fray themselves . . . and almost none of the chiefs came out of either army without a wound except the Roman Dictator." From this hint, Macaulay has elaborated the spirited series of single combats in which he imitated Homer.

263. *The Pomptine fog:* See Geographical Index, p. 315.

277. *As glares the famished eagle:* Note that Macaulay introduces these figures of speech much more often here than in other parts of the *Lays*. One reason probably is to afford relief from the fighting; another to follow the epic manner of Homer, whose formal similes are famous.

283. *Black Auster:* This sympathetic steed is named from the Southwest wind, which is a black wind, in Italy. Herminius is of course older than in *Horatius*.

308. *Among his elms:* Grape-vines are still frequently trained upon trees in Italy.

309. *Mamilius:* See note on 195.

323. *A thick wall of bucklers:* Bucklers are shields. In classic days they were often several feet long, and could well form a wall if placed upright edge to edge.

325. *His clients:* Clients in old Roman days were the dependents of a noble house. The term is frequently found. See *Virginia,* 20.

332. Compare the famous story of General Wolfe, who drove the French from Canada. Near the close of the battle of Quebec, while he lay mortally wounded, some one cried in his hearing: "They run! They run!" "Who run?" demanded Wolfe: and the answer was, "The French!" "Then," answered the general, "I can die happy."

333. *But meanwhile in the centre:* Note the crescendo: Tarquin and the dictator are now to engage in single combat.

Compare this battle with classic battles in Homer, and with battles described by some of those mediæval minstrels whom Macaulay was imitating: for instance, that in the old French Chanson de Geste, *The Song of Roland.* See translation by O'Hagan or by Isabel Butler.

360. *Rome's great Julian line:* The Julian House of Rome traced its ancestry to Iulus, the grandson of the hero of the Æneid.

375, 376. The first Valerius was called Publicola, the People's Friend.

383. *Yeomen:* Another strong old English word, which, however, has not so close a parallel in Latin as most of the words Macaulay uses.

401. Macaulay alternates single combats with general pictures. Note the appeal to eye and ear.

414. *Purple foam:* "Purple" is Macaulay's favorite color-word.

He works it hard in the *Lays* and usually to good effect. Do you think it is better here than "bloody" would have been?

415, 416. A stirring climax. We can imagine how fast and loud the minstrel is now singing. The patriotic passion of his hearers is at its height. Valerius had once been Consul.

431. Mamilius' armor was described in detail when first he was introduced. Now we see one reason why: he is identified by it from afar.

513. The battle is so far an even thing. At this point, Macaulay, with high art, pauses, and through the wild ride of the charger of Herminius and the touching sorrow of Black Auster, gives us relief. This stanza and the next prepare us for the coming of the Gods.

The metre in the twenty-ninth stanza should be carefully studied. Note especially how the anapæsts in the lines 523, 527, 531, suggest the gallop, and the spondees of the monosyllabic line 539 the restrained sorrow and resolution of the old men.

Compare *The Ride of Paul Revere,* and Browning's *Through the Metidja,* and *How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix.*

557. *The furies of thy brother:* The Furies were in Greek mythology three dreadful sisters who took vengeance on murderers. "Thy brother" is of course the false Sextus.

568. *Rich Capuan's hall:* A hundred years after the singing of this *Lay,* the soldiers of Hannibal were subjugated by the seductive luxury of Capua. Compare *The Prophecy of Capys,* line 187.

581. The Romans must not be represented as discouraged. Aulus is going right on with the fight. But it is time for the gods to come.

583. The "princely pair" suddenly appear, no one knows whence, in the central heat of the battle. One catches the thrill with which these lines would be received by a Roman audience.

588. *Their steeds were white as snow:* The emphasis on Black Auster and on the grey horse of Herminius has been directly meant to lead up to our joy in these more strange and beautiful creatures.

603. *Samothracia, etc.:* Macaulay suggests the wide extent of the worship of Castor and Pollux by thus mentioning places in Greece, Africa, Southern Italy, and Sicily.

605. *Tarentum:* For the proper names in this stanza, see Geographical Index, p. 316. The *house* of the gods is a Temple.

614. *Couched low:* Leveled.

623. *The hearth of Vesta:* Horatius too, it will be remembered, was nerved to his feat by desire to protect the Vestal Virgins.

649. *Our Sire Quirinus:* Romulus after death was worshiped as Quirinus the Spear-god.

687-88. *The battle Went roaring through the pass:* After the detail of the hand to hand fighting, the general term "the battle" is just the summary we want, and the vision of the conflict sweeping farther and farther away and seen only in the mass, could not be better given.

689, etc. We turn to anxious and expectant Rome in a transition as effective as it is abrupt.

695. *The Twelve* were the twelve patrician guardians of the Golden Shield and its eleven copies.

697. *The High Pontiff:* The Pontiff Maximus, the head of the priestly order of Rome: a most important personage.

699. *Etruria's colleges:* The College in this sense was an assemblage of men devoted to the study of religious ceremonies.

721. *Hail to the great Asylum:* According to the legend, Romulus had, when he founded Rome set apart a certain section of the city for a refuge to fugitives.

Note the stateliness of this greeting.

723. *The fire that burns for aye:* The never-dying flame tended by the Vestals.

760. *The Dorians:* The Greeks of the province in which Lacedæmon, the home of the Great Brethren, is situated.

768. *Sit shining on the sails:* Castor and Pollux are known in astronomy as one of the signs of the Zodiac, the constellation Gemini. As such they are invoked as the guides to mariners. Others interpret this line as referring to electric or phosphorescent phenomena.

773. *Here hard by Vesta's Temple:* Three columns of the Temple of Castor and Pollux, still standing, are among the most impressive ruins in the Roman Forum. These columns, however, belong to a later date than the supposed date of our *Lay*. They probably belong to a restoration of the Temple in the time of Trajan or Hadrian. They are of Parian marble with fine Corinthian capitals. The temple had eight columns in front and probably thirteen on each side. "Dome" is used again in the sense of "House" or "Temple."

793. *And pass in solemn order:* It is effective that the procession should end, as it began, the poem.

VIRGINIA.

Horatius and *The Battle of the Lake Regillus* celebrate the exploits of warriors, who, like all men of military prominence among the old Romans, belonged to the Patrician class. In *Virginia* we have, as Macaulay points out in his Introduction, an attack upon the Patricians. The Licinian Laws, his imaginary occasion of the ballad, were three laws introduced by Caius Licinius, the Tribune or representative of the people. The first proposed to give the Plebs a share in the distribution of the public lands, the second to make them eligible to high office, and the third to free them from the terrible "debtor's law" of the time.

The story is found in Livy, Bk. III, 44-49. Macaulay follows Livy very closely.

5. *Of fountains running wine:* Various Grecian legends, principally of Bacchus the Wine-God, include this idea.

6. See the legend of Perseus and the Gorgons, and the story of Circe, in the *Odyssey*.

10. *The wicked Ten:* The Decemvirs were Patricians who had been appointed to draw up laws satisfactory to both parties and to perform the duties of magistrates for one year. They did well at first, but in their second year they used their power tyrannically and became hated by the people.

14. *Twelve axes:* Lictors. See note on *Regillus,* 1, 2.

20. *The client:* The client was expected in return for protection to carry out the orders of his patron. The relation was hereditary.

23. *Such varlets, etc.:* This passage is quite in dramatic character. It expresses the bitterness of feeling and the prejudice of plebeian Rome.

24. *Licinius.* The newly re-elected Tribune. See Title and Introduction.

31. *With her small tablets in her hand:* These tablets were thin pieces of wood covered on one side with wax, on which the pupil wrote with an iron pencil called a stylus. They were the slates of the time.

The picture of the little Virginia is in a different tone from anything else in the *Lays,* except the few lines about "The young Herminia" in *The Battle of the Lake Regillus.*

35. *The Sacred Street:* The Via Sacra, leading to the Forum.

36. *Lines of the good old song:* The story is that the sons of Tarquin and their cousin, the husband of Lucrece, made a wager as to which possessed the most dutiful wife. They rode home at midnight to settle it. The wives of the king's sons were at a banquet, but Lucrece was found spinning among her maidens.

47. *The Forum all alive:* We have not before in the *Lays* been allowed to see Rome at peace. This homely, cheerful picture is a good contrast to the tragedy to follow.

50. *Panniers:* Baskets usually slung at the side of a saddle. Originally meant to hold bread, as suggested by the derivation from the Latin *panis.*

55. *With stalls in alleys gay:* Very small open shops: there are many in Italian cities today.

64. *Punic wares:* Carthaginian. Hanno is a Carthaginian name. People then talked of Punic wares as we today talk of wares from Paris.

66. *Flesher:* Butcher. These were all well-known professions among the Romans.

74. *The year of the sore sickness:* The plague, which devas-

tated Rome, in 463 B. C. September is the most unhealthy month there.

76. *Two augurs:* See Note on *Horatius,* 388.

81. *No Tribune:* Note how repeatedly the purpose of the poem is indicated.

83. *Honest Sextius:* Fellow-Tribune with Licinius.

86. *Murœna's skirt:* The dress of the laboring men was not the toga, but a short garment something like a Scotch kilt.

87. *The young Icilius:* Betrothed to Virginia.

89. *That column:* Three Roman brothers, the Horatii (unrelated to the hero of Macaulay's *Lay*) fought three brothers of Alba, the Curatii, to settle a dispute between Alba and Rome. All the Curatii and two of the Horatii were killed: the surviving brother brought back in triumph the armor of his enemies and hung it on this column in the Forum.

92. *The burning words:* Macaulay loved political oratory. Compare this speech of Icilius with Mark Antony's speech over the body of Caesar.

94. *Quirites:* Roman citizens: The word is said to be derived from Cures, a Sabine town, whose inhabitants were called Quirites. "After the Sabines and the Romans had united themselves into one community, under Romulus, the name of Quirites was taken in addition to that of Romani, the people calling themselves in a civil capacity Quirites, while in a political and military capacity they retained the name of Romans."—Andrews.

95. *Servius:* Servius Tullius, sixth king of Rome, a wise lawgiver, supposedly of divine origin, who gave the city her military constitution.

97. *Those false sons:* One of the best-known stories in Roman legendary history is that of Brutus, an early consul, who, having discovered his two sons to be involved in a conspiracy to restore Tarquin, ordered them to be beheaded.

98. *Scœvola* means left-handed. Caius Mucius, a young Roman noble, gained this surname through an exploit at the time when Porsena of Clusium was besieging Rome. He went into the Etruscan camp in an attempt to kill the king, but was discovered. Brought before Porsena and questioned, he thrust his right hand into the flame of a torch and held it there quietly, to show how little he cared for torture; then he informed Porsena that there were in Rome hundreds more young men as brave as he. The Etruscan was so impressed that he at once proposed peace on terms favorable to Rome.

102. See *Regillus*, l. 14, note.

104. *Marcian fury:* Caius Marcius, nicknamed Coriolanus, from Corioli, one of the towns he conquered, was banished from Rome, and in revenge led the Volscians against the city. On the point of victory he was checked by the tears and prayers of his mother and his wife, who had been sent to him to intercede for the city. See

Regillus, l. 356, note. *The Fabian pride* refers to the action of the troops of Caeso Fabius when they refused to storm the camp of the enemy, and so, by leaving the victory incomplete, deprived the general of his triumph.

105. *The fiercest Quinctius:* A son of the great Cincinnatus, banished for his opposition to the Plebs.

106. *The haughtiest Claudius:* Grandfather of the Claudius of this poem.

111. *No crier to the pollings:* The Romans were summoned to the elections by word of mouth and by the sound of a trumpet.

115. *The holy fillets:* The fillets were the insignia of the priesthood and only Patricians might be priests. They were small bands worn on the hair. The purple gown was worn by consuls and equites on public occasions.

116. *The curule chair* was the chair of state. It was inlaid with ivory and had neither arms nor back. In curule chairs sat the Fathers at the Eastern Gate in the *Battle of the Lake Regillus,* stanza 37, waiting for news of the battle. In these chairs the Gauls found the City Fathers sitting when they raided the city in 390 B. C.

The *Car* is the chariot used in triumphal processions: the *laurel crown* the wreath worn in such triumphs by the victor.

117. *Press us for your cohorts:* Impress.

120. *Usance:* Usury.

122. *Your dens of torment:* The debtors' prisons in Rome were notorious for horrors.

124. *Holes:* Stocks. Wooden frames in which the feet were held.

130. Ascanius, son of Æneas, is said to have founded Alba Longa three hundred years before Romulus laid the walls of Rome. See *The Prophecy of Capys.*

133. *Corinthian mirrors:* Corinth, like Capua, was famous for its luxury. It produced fine bronze; mirrors in classic times were made of polished metal.

144. The asterisks throughout this poem are Macaulay's own. See his Introduction for the portion of the story which he has here omitted. He calls his verses the fragments of a lay.

146. The Roman butchering was done in the open street.

148. *The great sewer:* The Cloaca Maxima.

149. *Whittle:* Butcher's knife.

153. Why does he use the past tense?

157. *My civic crown:* A crown of oak leaves was granted to any soldier who saved the life of a Roman freeman in battle by killing his opponent.

162. *His urn:* In which the ashes were kept after his dead body had been burned.

193. *O dwellers in the nether gloom:* An invocation of the gods of the lower world, especially the Furies.

213. *Cypress crown:* The cypress is the tree of churchyards, especially in Italy.

217. *Crafts:* Occupations: as in our phrase "Arts and Crafts."

221, 222. Scan these lines.

228. *The Pincian Hill:* One of the Seven Hills, then on the outskirts of the town.

242. *Tribunes! Hurrah for Tribunes!* The occasion of the ballad is to describe this popular rising.

246. Macaulay says of this family in his Introduction: "In war they were not distinguished by skill or valor. One of them had been entrusted with an army and had failed ignominiously. None of them had been honored with a Triumph. None of them had achieved any martial exploit."

249. *Caius of Corioli:* Shakespeare's Coriolanus, who took his name from the town he had conquered. See note, line 104.

251. *The yoke of Furius:* Marcus Furius Camillus drove the Gauls from Rome after they had captured it in 390 B. C. See *The Prophecy of Capys,* 193-196, note.

257. *A Cossus:* Surname of a house belonging to the gens Cornelia. See *Lake Regillus*, stanza 23.

277. *Sea-marks:* Light-houses.

278. *The great Thunder Cape:* See Geographical Index, p. 316. It was a promontory in Greece, opposite Brindisi, of a volcanic nature.

286. The ridicule and unrestrained abuse heaped upon Appius give a truly popular quality to this *Lay,* quite different from the dignity of all the others.

THE PROPHECY OF CAPYS.

In order fully to enjoy this *Lay* it is necessary to bear in mind the occasion on which it is supposed to be sung. Macaulay's picturesque Introduction gives a full account of this occasion, the first and dramatic victory of the Romans over the Greeks, 275 B. C. It will be noticed that *Horatius* is presented as composed three hundred and sixty years after the founding of the city: *The Prophecy of Capys* four hundred and seventy-nine years after. As Macaulay tells us, the age during which ballad poetry could be composed is drawing to an end and the period of literary poetry is about to dawn. But this Ballad. supposed to be written last, carries us back to the very foundation of Rome and thus spans the whole period which Macaulay had in mind.

1. *Amulius,* grand-uncle of Romulus, founder of Rome, was king of the city Alba Longa, which had been founded by Ascanius, son of Æneas, on the hillside above the Alban Lake. Amulius dragged Numitor, his brother, from the throne and by the advice of Camers, the high-priest, buried Numitor's daughter, Rhea Silvia,

alive, and threw the two baby boys who had been born to her and the God Mars into the Tiber. Through the care of the gods, however, the little twins were saved and nursed by a wolf till a shepherd found them and adopted them as his foster-children.

4. *Aventine:* Aventinus was a descendant of Æneas.

25. Notice the change in the metre: it would accompany a change in the music, to a slower and more solemn strain.

56. *And on the blade a head:* This picture has a barbaric cast. Of Irish Cuchulin we are told: "In one hand he carried nine heads, nine also in the other: the which in token of valor and of skill in arms he held at arms' length and in sight of all the army shook." "Head-hunting" still lingers among the Igorots in the Philippines. The picture Macaulay draws here indicates an earlier epoch than do the pictures of the other *Lays*.

80. *Club and axe and bow:* Very different weapons from those used in *The Battle of the Lake Regillus*.

94. *Capys the sightless seer:* Can you remember any other instances in literature of blind old minstrels?

115. Arabian perfumes and Syrian dyes were loved and much used in the more effeminate days of Rome. Cf. Lady Macbeth: "All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand."

121. Rome is not to be a merely commercial city: nor a center of effeminate luxury: nor a health resort. All three were familiar types to the ancients.

132. *The spirit of thy sire:* This is the text of the following stanzas. The present stanza is Macaulay's interpretation of the Roman spirit.

147. *She dies in silence:* For the same legend see Byron, *Childe Harold,* Canto IV, line 185.

149. *Pomona:* The Roman goddess of fruits and orchards.

150. *Liber:* An Italian rural deity.

151. *Pales:* A rustic divinity, it is uncertain whether god or goddess. All these are the native Italian gods,—no importations from Greece.

155. The epithet *ivory* is especially appropriate for the moonlight of the South. The chestnut is a common tree in Italy.

156. *Thy father:* The military genius of the Romans probably suggested the myth that the founder of the city was the son of Mars.

169. *The soft Campanian:* The fertile region south of Latium bred an effeminate race to whom contemptuous reference is often made in Latin literature.

175. *His marble Nymphs:* The distinctive mark of each race as conceived by the fierce and haughty Roman is given in a line or half-line.

176. *Scrolls of wordy lore:* Ancient books were written upon leaves of papyrus or parchment which were joined end to end and rolled on a long stick. The scroll was then unrolled to be read.

177. *The pilum:* The long Roman spear. The trench was used in defense, the mound in attack. The Roman legion was made up of different numbers at different times, usually five or six thousand, divided into ten cohorts, each officered by six centurions or captains of a hundred.

181. See *Virginia*, 116. The Triumphs in which the conqueror was borne in his triumphant car up the Capitoline Hill to the Temple of Jove with his captives in his train, were the culminating moments of the public life of Rome. It was on the occasion of such a triumph that this *Lay* is supposed to be sung.

185. *The Volscian:* The reference is to the wars of Coriolanus.

189. *The Lucumos:* See *Horatius* 1, note.

191. *The proud Samnites:* Rome fought three wars against the Samnites, who lived southeast of Latium.

193. *The Gaul shall come against thee:* In this rapid prediction of the victorious advance of Rome, Macaulay dismisses most of her victories in one or two lines: but he puts victory over the Gauls in a four-line stanza by itself, to mark its importance by isolating it. The more special reference is probably to the famous victory over Brennus, in 390 B. C., when the cackling of the geese saved the city.

197. *The Greek shall come against thee:* Now we come to the especial victory which the *Lay* is written to commemorate. See Macaulay's Introduction.

200. *The huge earth-shaking beast:* The elephant, which so terrified the Romans that they were hard put to it to gain the victory.

207. *False Tarentum:* It was "gay Tarentum" in *The Battle of the Lake Regillus.*

215. Mark the change of metre. It gives an effect of gloating slowly over the feast.

217. *Hurrah! for the good weapons:* The Singer strikes his instrument more loudly and his voice rings forth.

225. *Hurrah! for the great triumph:* Here comes the prophetic vision of the Triumph, sung to an audience which has just witnessed the Triumph itself or perhaps awaits its coming.

230. *The Red King:* Pyrrhus. His name means Red.

232. Recall the story in the Introduction.

235, etc. These are the spoils of the East, the richest, as Macaulay reminds us, ever yet seen in a Roman triumph.

249. *Manius Curius:* His other name was Dentatus. He had defeated Pyrrhus and the Epirotes in a great battle at Beneventum in Samnium.

257. *Rosea . . . Mevania:* Rosea was famous for its horses. Mevania for its beautiful white bulls such as may be seen in old Italian pictures of festal processions.

266. *The Suppliant's Grove:* The Asylum of Romulus. See *Regillus* 721, note.

269-288. This last stanza in a superb sweep looks out over the whole expanse of the Roman Empire to be, from Greece, Syria, Egypt, and Africa, to far Northern lands and the remoter East. The *Lay* places us at the starting point of Roman history and concludes with a summary of the glory of Rome at its zenith.

277. The reference is to the Colossus of Rhodes, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

276. *Dark red colonnades:* Colonnades made of porphyry, a stone much used in Egypt.

280. *Byrsa:* See Geographical Index, p. 316.

285. *Where Atlas:* Look up the giant Atlas in a classical dictionary. Here the reference is rather to the African mountain range named after him.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

MATTHEW ARNOLD. 1822—1888.

I.

Matthew Arnold, probably the most eminent English critic, and certainly one of the most notable among Victorian poets, was born in the year in which Shelley died. He was three years younger than Ruskin and George Eliot, twenty-seven years younger than the veteran of Victorian letters, Thomas Carlyle. His books, including both poetry and prose, express perhaps with more sensitiveness than those of any other man, the main currents in the intellectual life of the central portion of the Victorian period.

By inheritance, by temperament, and by circumstance, Matthew Arnold was a scholar. In many respects he reminds one of Gray, concerning whom he wrote an admirable essay. There is the same fastidiousness of taste, the same blending of classical and romantic instincts, the same academic stamp. Yet if we look at the whole scope and sweep of Matthew Arnold's achievement, we must judge him to have been a larger and nobler man than his eighteenth century counterpart. Gray idled away his life in pleasant academic seclusion, devoting himself to self-culture. How well and on how many lines Arnold served his day and generation, the following summary will show.

The events in Arnold's honorable, laborious life may be briefly recorded. His early associations were with the lovely country of the English lakes, and he was brought up in a feeling of reverence for the great poet Wordsworth, the interpreter of that region. His father, Dr. Thomas Arnold, was Head-Master of Rugby. Matthew Arnold had his schooling partly at Rugby, partly at Winchester, another public school. That fine story, which every boy should know, *Tom Brown's School-days* by Thomas Hughes, tells what the great school was like in the days of Matthew Arnold and of his friends Arthur Stanley and Arthur Hugh Clough. From school, Arnold passed to the university of Oxford, which he always dearly loved, and more than once beautifully praised. Oxford in the forties was not like the cold eighteenth century Cambridge of Gray. It had lately been stirred to the depths by a great religious movement, the revival in the Church of England known as the Oxford or Tractarian Movement. The leader of the movement, John Henry Newman, who was soon to leave the Church of England for that of Rome, was still preaching at the University Church, St. Mary's. Pusey, Keble, and other leaders were familiar figures. The type of religion then flourishing at Oxford did not attract Matthew Arnold, who, though religious, was neither a mystic nor interested in controversies between churches. But there is no doubt that the excitement over things of the mind and soul that then possessed the finer young men in the University, fostered that keen and wistful interest in spiritual matters which is the undertone of all his writings.

Arnold took the Newdigate prize for an English poem, and was elected Fellow of Oriel College in 1844. He published his first volume of poems, *The Strayed Reveller,* in 1848. That was a year of profound social upheavals. Revolutions, centering in France and Italy, were shaking the Continent; in England the year saw the culmination and collapse of the Chartist movement, the first general uprising of the working people in the Victorian age. In the midst of this excitement, the quiet beauty of Arnold's little volume aroused little attention, though it is interesting to find that the book was reviewed by William Michael Rossetti, in *The Germ,* the short-lived organ of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Arnold published other volumes of poems in 1853, 1858, and 1867. But his leisure for literary work was slight. At twenty-nine he married, and in order to support himself and his family accepted the position of Inspector of Schools, which he held almost till the end of his life. He died in 1888. During all the intervening years he put his best energy and labor at the service of his professional work, meeting its severe demands with faithful, gallant, though sometimes rueful cheer. He contrived, however, in his scant hours of freedom, not only to write poems, but to enrich English literature with a large body of valuable criticism, the most sane and sensitive that it possesses. When one looks at the goodly row of volumes in the collected edition of Arnold's works, and reflects that they represent no deliberate life-work, but the product of a scant and hard-earned leisure, one feels a resolution to allow no handicaps, however serious, to serve as excuse for failure to give the world one's best.

Arnold was also for a time Professor of Poetry at Oxford. He travelled much on the Continent, in the interests of education, and he was at all times a studious lover of European literature, doing much to enlarge the intellectual horizon of his countrymen. Coleridge and Carlyle, in an earlier generation, had tried hard "to Germanize the public." Ruskin and Rossetti, in Arnold's own day, were bringing their countrymen under the spell of Italy. The country to which Arnold was especially drawn was France, and through a constant effort to familiarize the English public with French literature and social life he sought to conquer that foe to all sound culture and right living, intellectual provincialism. Arnold's own mind had many of the qualities that he particularly valued in the French. His freshness and elasticity of sympathies no less than his discriminating insight entitle him to be called an English Sainte Beuve.

Twice Arnold visited America on lecture-tours, and told us many salutary truths concerning ourselves. Despite his keen criticism, he liked much in our country. Indeed, his unfailing critical honesty never degenerated into indifference or contempt. He was a sharp critic of the English national life and religion, but England had no more loyal son than he, and he remained to his death a faithful communicant of her established church. In private life Arnold knew much sorrow, courageously borne: three of his sons died within four years. He was a man devoted to his family and his friends: to flowers, to animals, and to all that is lovely in natural scenery. To those at a distance, he sometimes seemed harsh and supercilious; but the ones nearest him were the ones who loved and honored him most.

II.

Arnold's prose writings may be divided into three groups: criticism of letters, of society, and of religion.

He first turned to criticism of literature, and many people think that his best and most enduring work was in this field. His first volumes of *Essays in Criticism,* comprising, besides several essays on individual writers, two admirable studies of the function of criticism and of the intellectual situation in England, appeared in 1865. The days were past when University professors delivered no lectures, and two illuminating volumes, *Celtic Literature* and *On Translating Homer,* were the fruits of Mr. Arnold's professorship. The admirable quality of his work was swiftly recognized, and the essays which he contributed as introductions to editions of various authors, or as memorial addresses, have all been collected.

But his mind widened from the contemplation of literature to the contemplation of life. And soon he gave the public stimulating criticism of contemporaneous society. *Culture and Anarchy,* the volume in which he expressed himself most fully, was published in 1869. It is one of the most stimulating books of social criticism in the Victorian age, a period that was noteworthy for brilliant work in this line. Like his great contemporaries, Carlyle and Ruskin, Arnold is out of sympathy with his age: unlike them, he has no reactionary impulses nor yearnings for the restoration of past social conditions. He accepts democracy, which they never did, and he understands the necessity of social evolution. The goal of that evolution is, as he sees it, social equality: the means, the extension of that culture which is a passion for "making reason and the Will of God prevail." The thought-provocative title of the book gives the clue to his ideas. Many later essays are in the same vein as *Culture and Anarchy.* Two in particular, entitled *Dem-*

ocracy and *Equality,* may be mentioned as containing a clear expression of his ripest wisdom. It is instructive to compare the social discontent of Arnold with the complacency of Macaulay.

A man of Arnold's serious nature and tradition could not pause with criticism of letters and society: he was impelled to discuss religion also. For England was in a ferment of religious unrest, and all the great teachers, from Carlyle and Newman to George Eliot, had their solutions to offer. The title of Arnold's most important book on religious problems, *Literature and Dogma,* suggests his distinctive attitude. He felt that the highest values of Christianity could never be lost, but that they were to be retained under the form not of dogma but of literature. "Morality touched with emotion," was his famous definition of religion. *God and the Bible, St. Paul and Protestantism,* were books on similar lines. Arnold meant to help people to keep their faith, but he often did just the opposite. Deeply in earnest as he was, there was a flippancy of tone about his religious writings that troubled and unsettled his readers. His criticism on religion met a need of the day, but it is commonly judged to be more transitory in character and value than his criticism on letters or on social life. We may, however, notice that his attitude is in certain respects far more familiar today than it was when he wrote.

In all phases of Arnold's critical work, we feel the play of those qualities which he tells us himself a sound critic should possess: intellectual curiosity, disinterestedness, sincerity. Add to these a choice if not unerring taste and a style at its best captivating and lucid, and we see what a stimulus his work as a critic gave to his age.

III.

That this critic should also have been a poet of a high order of excellence is at first surprising. But the surprise vanishes on closer knowledge, for the poetry shows the same qualities as the prose. It answers to the much-discussed definition which he once gave. Poetry, said he, is "a criticism of life." This may not be true of all poetry, but it is in the main true of his, which is the best expression we have, if we except the work of his friend and brother poet, Arthur Hugh Clough, of certain characteristic phases in the experience of intellectual men in the Victorian age. In style, his poetry is exquisitely wrought: it is chiselled like a cut gem. Some people think it cold, but for others the emotion is all the more moving because the poet never yields to it without reserve, and keeps firm mastery over his instrument. Much of this emotion is elegiac in character. Arnold wrote one elaborate and beautiful elegy, *Thyrsis,* on his friend Clough. His verses on his father, on Goethe, on his little dog Geist, and on others whom he had loved, are full of noble melody and tender feeling. Moreover, all his more important poems—*Empedocles on Ætna,* a lyrical drama, *Switzerland, Stanzas on the Grande Chartreuse,* and the most felicitous lyrics—are charged with under tones of regret for what is past, mingled with uncertainty about the future. Arnold had in his early years a theory that poetry should always deal with great action and should be universal in its appeal. He withdrew his drama, *Empedocles on Ætna,* for a time, because it failed to meet this requirement. But, in truth, nearly all his poetry fails to meet it. It deals, not with action, but with emotions and ideals. It appeals not to what is universal, but to experiences known only to the few. Arnold's instincts impelled him to write poems contrary to his critical convictions. Yet the poetry is none the worse for this; neither need the critical convictions be wholly despised. As a rule, these convictions were sound: but Arnold's poetry sprang from very special conditions, and it met a special need,—the interpretation of certain phases in modern experience none the less human or deserving of study because they were hardly universal.

IV.

In *Sohrab and Rustum* Arnold did for once carry out his critical theories. The poem deals with noble and heroic action: and the story of the father slaying his own son under a misapprehension, must appeal to the universal heart. It is indeed an old, old story, held in common by Aryan, Celtic, and Germanic tradition.

In Germanic legend it appears as the epic *Hadubrand.* Only a fragment has come down to us: in this, Hadubrand the son is killed, like Sohrab. This is probably the more ancient outcome: but in younger tradition (see the *Thidreksaga,* a German folk-song) the combat ends in a reconciliation.

An interesting version of the tale may be found in Irish literature. It tells us how Cuchullin, the hero of the Tales of the Red Branch, otherwise known as the Cycle of Ulster, slew unwitting his son Connla. Aifé, the mother of Connla, was a warrior maid with whom Cuchullin had wrestled in his youth. In parting, he bade her place a ring on the finger of the son who was to be born to them, and send the lad to Ireland to find his father. The boy is sent, but according to an old Irish custom is put under "geasa," or fairy bonds, never to reveal his name and never to refuse a combat. He knows all feats except one, the use of a special weapon called the "Gae Bulga." He fights ignorantly with Cuchullin, who slays him with this weapon and only as the boy is dying recognizes the ring on his finger. Over his son's body Cuchullin utters a fine lament.

The story in this version is wild and primitive. In the older Persian form also it has more of the fairy-tale than in the version Arnold chose; Sohrab is only ten years old when, assisting a warrior maiden in the defence of a castle, he enters into single combat with his father and is slain by him. The story is told by the Persian epic poet Firdusi in his epic of *Shahnameh.* He calls it "A tale full of the waters of the eye." The version of the story followed by Arnold is that given after Firdusi by Sir John Malcolm in his *History of Persia:*

> "The young Sohrab . . . had left his mother, and sought fame under the banners of Afrasiab, whose armies he commanded, and soon obtained a renown beyond that of all contemporary heroes but his father. He had carried death and dismay into the ranks of the Persians, and had terrified the boldest warriors of that country, before Rustum encountered him, which at last that hero resolved to do, under a feigned name. They met three times. The first time they parted by mutual consent, though Sohrab had the advantage; the second, the youth obtained a victory, but granted life to his unknown father; the third was fatal to Sohrab, who, when writhing in the pangs of death, warned his conqueror to shun the vengeance that is inspired by parental woes, and bade him dread the rage of the mighty Rustum, who must soon learn that he had slain

his son Sohrab. These words, we are told, were as death to the aged hero; and when he recovered from a trance, he called in despair for proofs of what Sohrab had said. The afflicted and dying youth tore open his mail, and showed his father a seal which his mother had placed on his arm when she discovered to him the secret of his birth, and bade him seek his father. The sight of his own signet rendered Rustum quite frantic; he cursed himself, attempting to put an end to his existence, and was only prevented by the efforts of his expiring son. After Sohrab's death, he burnt his tents and all his goods, and carried the corpse to Seistan, where it was interred; the army of Turan was, agreeably to the last request of Sohrab, permitted to cross the Oxus unmolested. To reconcile us to the improbability of this tale, we are informed that Rustum could have no idea his son was in existence. The mother of Sohrab had written to him her child was a daughter, fearing to lose her darling infant if she revealed the truth; and Rustum, as before stated, fought under a feigned name, an usage not uncommon in the chivalrous combats of those days.''

Arnold treats the theme in a dignified epic style. His treatment has uplift and majesty, but it affects us perhaps less poignantly than the old Irish way of story-telling. Arnold's method reminds us of what his lectures *On Translating Homer* described as the method of Homer himself. "The translator of Homer," he says, "should above all be penetrated by a sense of four qualities in his author,—that he is eminently rapid, that he is eminently plain and direct, both in the evolution of his thought and in the expression of it, that is, both in his syntax and in his words; that he is eminently plain and direct in the substance of his thought, that is, in his matter and ideas; and that finally he is eminently noble." One can take these points one by one—rapidity; plainness and directness of both speech and thought; nobility of manner—and trace them in almost any isolated passage of *Sohrab and Rustum*. Taken together, they afford an all but perfect description of the merits of the poem,—merits characteristic of the classic rather than the romantic spirit. The careful metaphors are quite in the vein of those used in Homer and Virgil, and apart from these the poem has few ornaments: all is direct, simple, lucidly expressed; the feeling repressed rather than expanded, the pathos treated with a high simplicity. Arnold has studied his setting with great care and to good effect: the dress, the landscape, are alike true to history: but the effect is not that of a savage tale, such as the romanticist would make from these materials: we do not think of Rustum or of his son as half-tamed denizens of those wild Asiatic lands. Rather they are universal figures, expressing a passion and pain independent of circumstance: and this note of universality, so different from what the romanticist would seek to give, is at once the strength of the poem and in a sense its limitation.

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM.

And the first grey of morning fill'd the east,
And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream.
But all the Tartar camp along the stream
Was hush'd, and still the men were plung'd in sleep;
Sohrab alone, he slept not; all night long
He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed.
But when the grey dawn stole into his tent,
He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,
And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,
And went abroad into the cold wet fog,

Through the dim camp, to Peran-Wisa's tent.
Through the black Tartar tents he pass'd, which stood
Clustering like beehives on the low flat strand
Of Oxus, where the summer-floods o'erflow
When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere:
Through the black tents he pass'd, o'er that low strand,
And to a hillock came, a little back
From the stream's brink; the spot where first a boat,
Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.
The men of former times had crown'd the top
With a clay fort; but that was fall'n, and now
The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,
A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread.
And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood
Upon the thick-pil'd carpets in the tent,
And found the old man sleeping on his bed
Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms.
And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step
Was dull'd; for he slept light, an old man's sleep;
And he rose quickly on one arm, and said: —
"Who art thou? for it is not yet clear dawn.
Speak! is there news, or any night alarm?"
But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said: —
"Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa! it is I.
The sun is not yet risen, and the foe
Sleep, but I sleep not; all night long I lie
Tossing and wakeful; and I come to thee.
For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek
Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,
In Samarcand, before the army march'd;
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.
Thou know'st if, since from Ader-baijan first

I came among the Tartars and bore arms,
I have still serv'd Afrasiab well, and shown,
At my boy's years, the courage of a man.
This too thou know'st, that while I still bear on
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,
And beat the Persians back on every field,
I seek one man, one man, and one alone:
Rustum, my father; who I hop'd should greet,
Should one day greet, upon some well-fought field,
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.
So I long hop'd, but him I never find.
Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask!
Let the two armies rest to-day: but I
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords
To meet me, man to man; if I prevail,
Rustum will surely hear it: if I fall —
Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.
Dim is the rumour of a common fight
Where host meets host, and many names are sunk;
But of a single combat fame speaks clear."
He spoke; and Peran-Wisa took the hand
Of the young man in his, and sigh'd, and said: —
"O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine!
Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,
And share the battle's common chance with us
Who love thee, but must press for ever first,
In single fight incurring single risk,
To find a father thou hast never seen?
That were far best, my son, to stay with us
Unmurmuring: in our tents, while it is war,
And when 't is truce, then in Afrasiab's towns.
But, if this one desire indeed rules all,

To seek out Rustum, seek him not through fight!
Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,
O Sohrab! carry an unwounded son!
But far hence seek him, for he is not here.
For now it is not as when I was young,
When Rustum was in front of every fray;
But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,
In Seistan, with Zal, his father old,
Whether that his own mighty strength at last
Feels the abhorr'd approaches of old age,
Or in some quarrel with the Persian King.
There go! — Thou wilt not? Yet my heart forebodes
Danger or death awaits thee on this field.
Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost
To us; fain therefore send thee hence, in peace
To seek thy father, not seek single fights
In vain. But who can keep the lion's cub
From ravening, and who govern Rustum's son?
Go: I will grant thee what thy heart desires."
So said he, and dropp'd Sohrab's hand, and left
His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay;
And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat
He pass'd, and tied his sandals on his feet,
And threw a white cloak round him, and he took
In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword;
And on his head he set his sheep-skin cap,
Black, glossy, curl'd, the fleece of Kara-Kul;
And rais'd the curtain of his tent, and call'd
His herald to his side, and went abroad.
The sun by this had risen, and clear'd the fog
From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands.
And from their tents the Tartar horsemen fil'd

Into the open plain; so Haman bade:
Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa rul'd
The host, and still was in his lusty prime.
From their black tents, long files of horse, they stream'd;
As when some grey November morn the files,
In marching order spread, of long-neck'd cranes
Stream over Casbin and the southern slopes
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,
Or some frore Caspian reed-bed, southward bound
For the warm Persian sea-board: so they stream'd.
The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's guard,
First, with black sheep-skin caps and with long spears;
Large men, large steeds, who from Bokhara come
And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares.
Next, the more temperate Toorkmuns of the south,
The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,
And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands;
Light men and on light steeds, who only drink
The acrid milk of camels, and their wells.
And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came
From far, and a more doubtful service own'd;
The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks
Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards
And close-set skull-caps; and those wilder hordes
Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste;
Kalmucks and unkempt Kuzzaks, tribes who stray
Nearest the Pole; and wandering Kirghizzes,
Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere: —
These all fil'd out from camp into the plain.
And on the other side the Persians form'd:
First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they seem'd,
The Ilyats of Khorassan; and behind,

The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,
Marshall’d battalions bright in burnish’d steel.
But Peran-Wisa with his herald came,
Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,
And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks.
And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw
That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back,
He took his spear, and to the front he came,
And check’d his ranks, and fix’d them where they stood.
And the old Tartar came upon the sand
Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said:—
“Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear!
Let there be truce between the hosts to-day,
But choose a champion from the Persian lords
To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man.”
As, in the country, on a morn in June,
When the dew glistens on the pearled ears,
A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy,
So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran
Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they lov’d.
But as a troop of pedlars, from Cabool,
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,
That vast sky-neighbouring mountain of milk snow;
Crossing so high, that, as they mount, they pass
Long flocks of traveling birds dead on the snow,
Chok’d by the air, and scarce can they themselves
Slake their parch’d throats with sugar’d mulberries;
In single file they move, and stop their breath,
For fear they should dislodge the o’erhanging snows,
So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.
And to Ferood his brother chiefs came up

To counsel; Gudurz and Zoarrah came,
And Feraburz, who rul'd the Persian host
Second, and was the uncle of the King;
These came and counsell'd, and then Gudurz said:—
"Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up,
Yet champion have we none to match this youth.
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.
But Rustum came last night; aloof he sits
And sullen, and has pitch'd his tents apart.
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear
The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name:
Haply will he forget his wrath, and fight.
Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up."
So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and cried:—
"Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said!
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man."
He spake: and Peran-Wisa turn'd, and strode
Back through the opening squadrons to his tent.
But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,
And cross'd the camp which lay behind, and reach'd,
Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.
Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,
Just pitch'd; the high pavilion in the midst
Was Rustum's, and his men lay camp'd around.
And Gudurz enter'd Rustum's tent, and found
Rustum; his morning meal was done, but still
The table stood before him, charg'd with food:
A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,
And dark green melons; and there Rustum sate
Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist,
And play'd with it; but Gudurz came and stood
Before him; and he look'd, and saw him stand,

And with a cry sprang up and dropp'd the bird,
And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said:—
"Welcome! these eyes could see no better sight.
What news? but sit down first, and eat and drink."
But Gudurz stood in the tent-door, and said:—
"Not now! a time will come to eat and drink,
But not to-day: to-day has other needs.
The armies are drawn out, and stand and gaze;
For from the Tartars is a challenge brought
To pick a champion from the Persian lords
To fight their champion, and thou know'st his name:
Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.
O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's!
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart;
And he is young, and Iran's chiefs are old,
Or else too weak; and all eyes turn to thee.
Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose!"
He spoke; but Rustum answer'd with a smile:—
"Go to! if Iran's chiefs are old, then I
Am older; if the young are weak, the King
Errs strangely: for the King, for Kai Khosroo,
Himself is young, and honours younger men,
And lets the aged moulder to their graves.
Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young:
The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts, not I.
For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?
For would that I myself had such a son,
And not that one slight helpless girl I have:
A son so fam'd, so brave, to send to war,
And I to tarry with the snow-hair'd Zal,
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,
And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,

And he has none to guard his weak old age.
There would I go, and hang my armour up,
And with my great name fence that weak old man,
And spend the goodly treasures I have got,
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,
And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings,
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no more."
He spoke, and smil'd; and Gudurz made reply:—
"What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,
When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks
Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks,
Hidest thy face? Take heed lest men should say:
Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,
And shuns to peril it with younger men."
And, greatly mov'd, then Rustum made reply:—
"O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such words?
Thou knowest better words than this to say.
What is one more, one less, obscure or fam'd,
Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?
Are not they mortal, am not I myself?
But who for men of nought would do great deeds?
Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame!
But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms;
Let not men say of Rustum, he was match'd
In single fight with any mortal man."
He spoke, and frown'd; and Gudurz turn'd, and ran
Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy:
Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.
But Rustum strode to his tent-door, and call'd
His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,
And clad himself in steel; the arms he chose
Were plain, and on his shield was no device,

Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,
And, from the fluted spine atop, a plume
Of horsehair wav'd, a scarlet horsehair plume.
So arm'd, he issued forth; and Ruksh, his horse,
Follow'd him like a faithful hound, at heel,
Ruksh, whose renown was nois'd through all the earth:
The horse, whom Rustum on a foray once
Did in Bokhara by the river find
A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home,
And rear'd him: a bright bay, with lofty crest,
Dight with a saddle-cloth of broider'd green
Crusted with gold, and on the ground were work'd
All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know.
So follow'd, Rustum left his tents, and cross'd
The camp, and to the Persian host appear'd.
And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts
Hail'd; but the Tartars knew not who he was.
And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,
By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,
Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands:
So dear, to the pale Persians Rustum came.
  And Rustum to the Persian front advanc'd,
And Sohrab arm'd in Haman's tent, and came.
And as afield the reapers cut a swath
Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,
And on each side are squares of standing corn,
And in the midst a stubble, short and bare;
So on each side were squares of men, with spears
Bristling, and in the midst, the open sand.

And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast
His eyes toward the Tartar tents, and saw
Sohrab come forth, and eyed him as he came.
As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge
Who with numb blacken'd fingers makes her fire
At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn,
When the frost flowers the whiten'd window-panes,
And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts
Of that poor drudge may be; so Rustum eyed
The unknown adventurous youth, who from afar
Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth
All the most valiant chiefs: long he perus'd
His spirited air, and wonder'd who he was.
For very young he seem'd, tenderly rear'd;
Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight,
Which in a queen's secluded garden throws
Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,
By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound:
So slender Sohrab seem'd, so softly rear'd.
And a deep pity enter'd Rustum's soul
As he beheld him coming; and he stood,
And beckon'd to him with his hand, and said:—
"O thou young man, the air of heaven is soft,
And warm, and pleasant; but the grave is cold!
Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.
Behold me: I am vast, and clad in iron,
And tried; and I have stood on many a field
Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe:
Never was that field lost, or that foe sav'd.
O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?
Be govern'd! quit the Tartar host, and come

To Iran, and be as my son to me,
And fight beneath my banner till I die!
There are no youths in Iran brave as thou."
So he spake, mildly; Sohrab heard his voice,
The mighty voice of Rustum, and he saw
His giant figure planted on the sand,
Sole, like some single tower, which a chief
Hath builded on the waste in former years
Against the robbers; and he saw that head,
Streak'd with its first grey hairs: hope fill'd his soul,
And he ran forward and embrac'd his knees,
And clasp'd his hand within his own, and said:—
"Oh, by thy father's head! by thine own soul!
Art thou not Rustum? speak! art thou not he?"
But Rustum eyed askance the kneeling youth,
And turn'd away, and spake to his own soul:—
"Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean!
False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.
For if I now confess this thing he asks,
And hide it not, but say: *Rustum is here!*
He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,
But he will find some pretext not to fight,
And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,
A belt or sword, perhaps, and go his way.
And on a feast-tide, in Afrasiab's hall,
In Samarcand, he will arise and cry:
'I challeng'd once, when the two armies camp'd
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords
To cope with me in single fight; but they
Shrank, only Rustum dar'd: then he and I
Chang'd gifts, and went on equal terms away.'
So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud.

Then were the chiefs of Iran sham'd through me."
And then he turn'd, and sternly spake aloud:—
"Rise! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus
Of Rustum? I am here, whom thou hast call'd
By challenge forth: make good thy vaunt, or yield!
Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight?
Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face and flee!
For well I know, that did great Rustum stand
Before thy face this day, and were reveal'd,
There would be then no talk of fighting more.
But being what I am, I tell thee this:
Do thou record it in thine inmost soul:
Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt and yield,
Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds
Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer-floods,
Oxus in summer, wash them all away."
He spoke; and Sohrab answer'd, on his feet:—
"Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so!
I am no girl, to be made pale by words.
Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand
Here on this field, there were no fighting then.
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.
Begin! thou art more vast, more dread than I,
And thou art prov'd, I know, and I am young:
But yet success sways with the breath of Heaven.
And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know;
For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,
Pois'd on the top of a huge wave of fate,
Which hangs, uncertain to which side to fall.
And whether it will heave us up to land,
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,

Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,
We know not, and no search will make us know:
Only the event will teach us, in its hour."
He spoke, and Rustum answer'd not, but hurl'd
His spear: down from the shoulder, down it came,
As on some partridge in the corn, a hawk
That long has tower'd in the airy clouds,
Drops like a plummet: Sohrab saw it come,
And sprang aside, quick as a flash; the spear
Hiss'd, and went quivering down into the sand,
Which it sent flying wide; then Sohrab threw
In turn, and full struck; Rustum's shield sharp rang,
The iron plates rang sharp, but turn'd the spear.
And Rustum seiz'd his club, which none but he
Could wield; an unlopp'd trunk it was, and huge,
Still rough: like those which men in treeless plains,
To build them boats, fish from the flooded rivers,
Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up
By their dark springs, the wind in winter-time
Hath made in Himalayan forests wrack,
And strewn the channels with torn boughs; so huge
The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck
One stroke; but again Sohrab sprang aside,
Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came
Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's hand.
And Rustum follow'd his own blow, and fell
To his knees, and with his fingers clutch'd the sand;
And now might Sohrab have unsheath'd his sword,
And pierc'd the mighty Rustum while he lay
Dizzy, and on his knees, and chok'd with sand:
But he look'd on, and smil'd, nor bar'd his sword,

But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said:—
"Thou strik'st too hard! that club of thine will float
Upon the summer-floods, and not my bones.
But rise, and be not wroth! not wroth am I;
No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my soul.
Thou say'st thou art not Rustum: be it so!
Who art thou then, that canst so touch my soul?
Boy as I am, I have seen battles too;
Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,
And heard their hollow roar of dying men;
But never was my heart thus touch'd before.
Are they from Heaven, these softenings of the heart?
O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven!
Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,
And make a truce, and sit upon this sand,
And pledge each other in red wine, like friends;
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.
There are enough foes in the Persian host,
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang;
Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou
Mayst fight: fight *them*, when they confront thy spear!
But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me!"
He ceas'd, but while he spake, Rustum had risen
And stood erect, trembling with rage; his club
He left to lie, but had regain'd his spear,
Whose fiery point now in his mail'd right-hand
Blaz'd bright and baleful, like that autumn-star,
The baleful signs of fevers; dust had soil'd
His stately crest, and dimm'd his glittering arms.
His breast heav'd, his lips foam'd, and twice his voice
Was chok'd with rage; at last these words broke way:—
"Girl! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands!

Curl'd minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words!
Fight: let me hear thy hateful voice no more.
Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now
With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to dance;
But on the Oxus-sands, and in the dance
Of battle, and with me, who make no play
Of war: I fight it out, and hand to hand.
Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine!
Remember all thy valour; try thy feints
And cunning! All the pity I had is gone:
Because thou hast sham'd me, before both the hosts
With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles."
  He spoke; and Sohrab kindled at his taunts,
And he too drew his sword: at once they rush'd
Together, as two eagles on one prey
Come rushing down together from the clouds,
One from the east, one from the west: their shields
Dash'd with a clang together, and a din
Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters
Make often in the forest's heart at morn,
Of hewing axes, crashing trees: such blows
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hail'd.
And you would say that sun and stars took part
In that unnatural conflict; for a cloud
Grew suddenly in heaven, and dark'd the sun
Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose
Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,
And in a sandy whirlwind wrapp'd the pair.
In gloom they twain were wrapp'd, and they alone;
For both the on-looking hosts on either hand
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.

But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes
And labouring breath; first Rustum struck the shield
Which Sohrab held stiff out: the steel-spik'd spear
Rent the tough plates, but fail'd to reach the skin,
And Rustum pluck'd it back with angry groan.
Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm,
Nor clove its steel quite through; but all the crest
He shore away, and that proud horsehair plume,
Never till now defil'd, sank to the dust;
And Rustum bow'd his head; but then the gloom
Grew blacker, thunder rumbled in the air,
And lightnings rent the cloud; and Ruksh, the horse,
Who stood at hand, utter'd a dreadful cry:
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar
Of some pain'd desert-lion, who all day
Hath trail'd the hunter's javelin in his side,
And comes, at night, to die upon the sand.
The two hosts heard that cry, and quak'd for fear,
And Oxus curdled as it cross'd his stream.
But Sohrab heard, and quail'd not, but rush'd on,
And struck again; and again Rustum bow'd
His head; but this time all the blade, like glass,
Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,
And in the hand the hilt remain'd alone.
Then Rustum raised his head; his dreadful eyes
Glar'd, and he shook on high his menacing spear,
And shouted: *Rustum!*—Sohrab heard that shout,
And shrank amaz'd; back he recoil'd one step,
And scann'd with blinking eyes the advancing form;
And then he stood bewilder'd; and he dropp'd
His covering shield, and the spear pierc'd his side.
He reel'd, and staggering back, sank to the ground;

And then the gloom dispers'd, and the wind fell,
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all
The cloud; and the two armies saw the pair:
Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet,
And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.
Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum began:—
"Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill
A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,
And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab's tent,
Or else that the great Rustum would come down
Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would move
His heart to take a gift, and let thee go.
And then that all the Tartar host would praise
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame,
To glad thy father in his weak old age.
Fool, thou art slain, and by an unknown man!
Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old."
And, with a fearless mien, Sohrab replied:—
"Unknown thou art: yet thy fierce vaunt is vain.
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man!
No: Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.
For were I match'd with ten such men as thee,
And I were that which till to-day I was,
They should be lying here, I standing there.
But that beloved name unnerv'd my arm:
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield
Fall; and thy spear transfix'd an unarm'd foe.
And now thou boastest, and insult'st my fate.
But hear thou this, fierce man, tremble to hear:
The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death,

My father, whom I seek through all the world!
He shall avenge my death, and punish thee."
As when some hunter in the spring hath found
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,
Upon the craggy isle of a hill-lake,
And pierc'd her with an arrow as she rose,
And follow'd her to find her where she fell
Far off;—anon her mate comes winging back
From hunting, and a great way off descries
His huddling young left sole; at that, he checks
His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams
Chiding his mate back to her nest; but she
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,
A heap of fluttering feathers: never more
Shall the lake glass her, flying over it;
Never the black and dripping precipices
Echo her stormy scream as she sails by:
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss,
So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood
Over his dying son, and knew him not.
But, with a cold incredulous voice, he said:—
"What prate is this of fathers and revenge?
The mighty Rustum never had a son."
And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied:—
"Ah yes, he had; and that lost son am I.
Surely the news will one day reach his ear,
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,
Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here;
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap
To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee.

Fierce man, bethink thee, for an only son!
What will that grief, what will that vengeance be?
Oh, could I live till I that grief had seen!
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells
With that old King, her father, who grows grey
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.
Her most I pity, who no more will see
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,
With spoils and honour, when the war is done.
But a dark rumour will be bruited up,
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear:
And then will that defenceless woman learn
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more,
But that in battle with a nameless foe,
By the far-distant Oxus, he is slain.”
　He spoke; and as he ceas’d, he wept aloud,
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.
He spoke; but Rustum listen’d, plung’d in thought,
Nor did he yet believe it was his son
Who spoke, although he call’d back names he knew;
For he had had sure tidings that the babe,
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all:
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear
Rustum should seek the boy, to train in arms.
And so he deem’d that either Sohrab took,
By a false boast, the style of Rustum’s son;
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.
So deem’d he; yet he listen’d, plung’d in thought.
And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide
Of the bright rocking ocean sets to shore

At the full moon; tears gather'd in his eyes;
For he remember'd his own early youth,
And all its bounding rapture; as, at dawn,
The shepherd from his mountain-lodge descries
A far bright city, smitten by the sun,
Through many rolling clouds, so Rustum saw
His youth; saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom;
And that old King, her father, who lov'd well
His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child
With joy; and all the pleasant life they led,
They three, in that long-distant summer-time:
The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt
And hound, and morn on those delightful hills
In Ader-baijan. And he saw that youth,
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,
Like some rich hyacinth which by the scythe
Of an unskilful gardener has been cut,
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
On the mown, dying grass: so Sohrab lay,
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.
And Rustum gaz'd on him with grief, and said:—
"O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have lov'd.
Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men
Have told thee false: thou art not Rustum's son,
For Rustum had no son; one child he had,
But one: a girl who with her mother now
Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us;
Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war."
But Sohrab answer'd him in wrath; for now

The anguish of the deep-fix'd spear grew fierce,
And he desir'd to draw forth the steel,
And let the blood flow free, and so to die;
But first he would convince his stubborn foe.
And, rising sternly on one arm, he said:—
"Man, who art thou who dost deny my words?
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men;
And falsehood, while I liv'd, was far from mine.
I tell thee, prick'd upon this arm I bear
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,
That she might prick it on the babe she bore."
He spoke; and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks,
And his knees totter'd, and he smote his hand
Against his breast, his heavy-mailed hand,
That the hard iron corslet clank'd aloud;
And to his heart he press'd the other hand,
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said:—
"Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie!
If thou show this, then art thou Rustum's son."
Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loos'd
His belt, and near the shoulder bar'd his arm,
And show'd a sign in faint vermilion points
Prick'd: as a cunning workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,
An emperor's gift; at early morn he paints,
And all day long; and, when night comes, the lamp
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands:
So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.
It was that griffin, which of old rear'd Zal,
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,
A helpless babe, among the mountain-rocks;

Him that kind creature found, and rear'd, and lov'd:
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.
And Sohrab bar'd that image on his arm,
And himself scann'd it long with mournful eyes,
And then he touch'd it with his hand, and said:—
"How say'st thou? Is that sign the proper sign
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?"
He spoke; but Rustum gaz'd, and gaz'd, and stood
Speechless; and then he utter'd one sharp cry:
O boy—thy father! and his voice chok'd there.
And then a dark cloud pass'd before his eyes,
And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.
But Sohrab crawl'd to where he lay, and cast
His arms about his neck, and kiss'd his lips,
And with fond faltering fingers strok'd his cheeks,
Trying to call him back to life; and life
Came back to Rustum: and he op'd his eyes,
And they stood wide with horror; and he seiz'd
In both his hands the dust which lay around,
And threw it on his head, and smirch'd his hair,
His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms;
And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,
And his sobs chok'd him; and he clutch'd his sword,
To draw it, and forever let life out.
But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,
And with a soothing voice he spake, and said:—
"Father, forbear! for I but meet to-day
The doom which at my birth was written down
In Heaven; and thou art Heaven's unconscious hand.
Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,
When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke too,
I know it: but fate trod those promptings down

Under its iron heel; fate, fate engag'd
The strife, and hurl'd me on my father's spear.
But let us speak no more of this: I find
My father; let me feel that I have found!
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
And wash them with thy tears, and say: *My son!*
Quick! quick! for number'd are my sands of life,
And swift; for like the lightning to this field
I came, and like the wind I go away:
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind.
But it was writ in Heaven that this should be."
  So said he, and his voice releas'd the heart
Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth: he cast
His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,
And kiss'd him. And awe fell on both the hosts,
When they saw Rustum's grief; and Ruksh, the horse,
With his head bowing to the ground, and mane
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe
First to the one, then to the other, mov'd
His head, as if inquiring what their grief
Might mean; and from his dark compassionate eyes,
The big warm tears roll'd down, and cak'd the sand.
But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said:—
  "Ruksh, now thou grievest; but O Ruksh, thy feet
Should first have rotted on their nimble joints,
Or e'er they brought thy master to this field!"
  But Sohrab look'd upon the horse and said:—
"Is this, then, Ruksh? How often, in past days,
My mother told me of thee, thou brave steed,
My terrible father's terrible horse! and said
That I should one day find thy lord and thee.

Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane!
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I:
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,
And snuff'd the breezes of my father's home.
And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan,
And seen the River of Helmund, and the Lake
Of Zirrah; and the aged Zal himself
Has often strok'd thy neck, and given thee food,
Corn in a golden platter, soak'd with wine,
And said: *O Ruksh, bear Rustum well!*—but I
Have never known my grandsire's furrow'd face,
Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,
Nor slak'd my thirst at the clear Helmund stream;
But lodg'd among my father's foes, and seen
Afrasiab's cities only: Samarcand,
Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,
And the black Toorkmun tents; and only drunk
The desert rivers: Moorghab and Tejend,
Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,
The northern Sir; and this great Oxus stream,
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die."
Then, with a heavy groan, Rustum bewail'd:—
"Oh, that its waves were flowing over me!
Oh, that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head!"
But, with a grave, mild voice, Sohrab replied:—
"Desire not that, my father! thou must live:
For some are born to do great deeds, and live,
As some are born to be obscur'd, and die.
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,
And reap a second glory in thine age:
Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.

But come: thou seest this great host of men
Which follow me; I pray thee, slay not these!
Let me entreat for them: what have they done?
They follow'd me, my hope, my fame, my star.
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,
But carry me with thee to Seistan,
And place me on a bed, and mourn for me;
Thou, and the snow-hair'd Zal, and all thy friends.
And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above my bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all,
That so the passing horseman on the waste
May see my tomb a great way off, and cry:
Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,
Whom his great father did in ignorance kill!
And I be not forgotten in my grave."
And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied:—
"Fear not! as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,
So shall it be: for I will burn my tents,
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,
And carry thee away to Seistan,
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee,
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all,
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave.
And I will spare thy host; yea, let them go:
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
What should I do with slaying any more?
For would that all that I have ever slain

Might be once more alive: my bitterest foes,
And they who were call'd champions in their time,
And through whose death I won that fame I have!
And I were nothing but a common man,
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown,
So thou mightest live too, my son, my son!
Or rather would that I, even I myself,
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,
Not thou of mine! and I might die, not thou,
And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan;
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine,
And say: *O son, I weep thee not too sore,*
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end!
But now in blood and battles was my youth,
And full of blood and battles is my age;
And I shall never end this life of blood."
Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied:—
"A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful man!
But thou shalt yet have peace; only not now,
Not yet: but thou shalt have it on that day,
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,
Thou and the other peers of Kai Khosroo,
Returning home over the salt blue sea,
From laying thy dear master in his grave."
And Rustum gaz'd in Sohrab's face, and said:—
"Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea!
Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure."
He spoke; and Sohrab smil'd on him, and took
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eas'd
His wound's imperious anguish; but the blood
Came welling from the open gash, and life

Flow'd with the stream; all down his cold white side
The crimson torrent ran, dim now and soil'd,
Like the soil'd tissue of white violets
Left, freshly gather'd, on their native bank,
By children whom their nurses call with haste
Indoors from the sun's eye; his head droop'd low,
His limbs grew slack; motionless, white, he lay,
White, with eyes clos'd; only when heavy gasps,
Deep heavy gasps, quivering through all his frame,
Convuls'd him back to life, he open'd them,
And fix'd them feebly on his father's face;
Till now all strength was ebb'd: and from his limbs
Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
Regretting the warm mansion which it left,
And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world.
So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead:
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak
Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.
As those black granite pillars, once high-rear'd
By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear
His house, now 'mid their broken flights of steps
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side:
So, in the sand, lay Rustum by his son.
And night came down over the solemn waste,
And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,
And darken'd all; and a cold fog, with night,
Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,
As of a great assembly loos'd, and fires
Began to twinkle through the fog; for now
Both armies mov'd to camp, and took their meal:
The Persians took it on the open sands
Southward, the Tartars by the river marge:

And Rustum and his son were left alone.
But the majestic river floated on,
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there mov'd,
Rejoicing, through the hush'd Chorasmian waste,
Under the solitary moon: he flow'd
Right for the polar star, past Orgunjĕ,
Brimming, and bright, and large; then sands begin
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents, that for many a league
The shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles;
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain-cradle in Pamere,
A foil'd circuitous wanderer: till at last
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bath'd stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

NOTES.

Line 1. *And:* The poem begins with a conjunction in order to give the epic tone by suggesting that this story is only an episode in an action of larger scope.

2. *The Oxus stream:* The Oxus is for 680 miles the boundary between Afghanistan and Russia. It rises in the Pamir mountains and flows in a general northwesterly direction into the Aral Sea. It is "an imposing stream, rarely less than a thousand yards wide, and in some places fully a mile across."

11. *Peran-Wisa* is a famous figure in the Persian Epic: an aged sage, prime-minister to his monarch, filling something the place that Nestor fills in the Iliad.

12. *Through the black Tartar tents:* Throughout the poem, Arnold works up his local color carefully. It is that of the wild, half-civilized life of the tribes in Central Asia, where even today conditions are almost as primitive as in Homeric times. Some

critics find, however, that the Greek tone of the poem does not quite harmonize with the Oriental setting.

25. *Carpets:* Rugs; one of the Persian touches.

40. *Samarcand:* For the numerous places mentioned in the poem consult the Century Atlas.

82. *Zal, his father old:* The father of Rustum was always called Zal the Aged, because he was born with white hair. The story of his wooing of Rustum's mother is familiar from many a fairy-tale. When a youth he came one day to the foot of a high tower, in which sat a maiden whom he loved as soon as he saw her. The tower appeared inaccessible, but the maiden let down to him her beautiful long black hair, and he used it as a ladder and climbed up to her.

111, etc. One of the most striking features of the poem is the frequency of long similes, employed by Arnold with deliberate intention of copying the method of Homer. It will be noted that with few exceptions they are drawn from the life and landscape of Central Asia. At first, they were apparently of a more general nature. Arnold writes to a critical friend: "What you say concerning the similes looks very just on paper. I can only say that I took a great deal of trouble to orientalize them (The Bahrein diver"—see line 284—"was originally an ordinary fisher), because I thought they looked strange, and jarred, if Western."

129. *The Jaxartes:* This river is more commonly known as the Syr Daria. It, too, flows into the Aral Sea.

160. *But as a troop:* Notice how constantly Arnold puts the second member of the simile first. This is the Homeric custom, but here it becomes almost mechanical.

Stopford Brooke does not like the similes in this poem. He says that Arnold, like Homer himself, seems to fetch them from other poems and fit them in unsuitably. And again: "They weaken the passion in the poem and retard the movement." The student would do well to consider whether or no he agrees with the critic. Mr. Brooke adds an excellent account of the function which a simile should serve: some may think that Arnold meets his demands more nearly than he is willing to admit:

"The just simile should only be introduced when the action or the emotion is heightened, when the moment is worthy, and when, as it were in a pause, men draw in their breath to think what may happen next, for the moment has reached intensity. The simile fills that pause and allows men to breathe."

216. *He has the wild stag's foot, etc.* Note the force of this recurrent descriptive phrase. So in the classic epic, one phrase or epithet is reserved for each hero.

257. *But I will fight unknown:* A favorite device with heroes alike of epic and romance. Sir Lancelot, in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur,* is especially addicted to it.

284. See Note, line 111.

302. *As some rich woman:* This is the first simile that is of a purely general character. The scene might be Oriental, but the lines suggest nothing but London. In themselves they are vivid and admirable: perhaps Arnold could not bear to sacrifice them when he "orientalized" his similes.

314. *Like some young cypress:* This, on the other hand, is in perfect keeping with the whole tone and atmosphere of the poem.

447. *But oh, Let there be peace twixt thee and me:* Notice that after the first, all the pleadings for peace come from Sohrab.

480. *And you would say:* In the following passage we gain an effect of supernatural awe with no real use of the supernatural.

556. *As when some hunter:* The longest of the similes. It surely meets Stopford Brooke's requirements in one respect: the moment is worthy and the suspense is keen.

634. *Like some rich hyacinth:* A figure from classical literature.

671. *And showed a sign*: In the old story, Sohrab wears a bracelet or a ring given to his mother by Rustum. The tattooed sign is far better, both because it is surer proof and because it introduces us to the griffin, who according to the legend, was foster-nurse to Zal.

730. *And Ruksh, the horse:* Compare with this passage the tears wept by the horse of Herminius in *The Battle of the Lake Regillus.* The prototypes of both are the horses of Achilles who weep over the body of Patroclus, in Homer.

742. *Is this, then, Ruksh?* The speeches of Sohrab after he is wounded make one feel his youth and boyish charm.

799-805. The repetition increases the gravity and majesty of the passage, making it round like a chant or dirge. The whole method throughout this scene between the father and the dying son is that of epic, not of dramatic, poetry: the movement is solemn and slow, and the emotion calm despite its depth.

827. *Then, at the point of death:* According to old legend, here followed, dying men are endowed with prophetic power.

Firdusi places this episode about the middle of the career of Rustum. He has many other adventures. Among them he lives to fight with the son of Sohrab: but this time the identity of the two combatants is discovered, and they are reconciled.

865. *And night came down over the solemn waste:* "The poem closes in a lonely beauty. The son and the father lie alone on the plain as night falls, between the mourning hosts, none daring to intrude. The dark heaven alone is their tent and their sorrow their shroud and we hear the deep river flowing by, the image of the destiny of man that bears us on, helpless, on its breast, until with it we find the sea."—*Stopford Brooke.*

Firdusi continues his poem with a fervid description of the wild grief of the mother of Sohrab. Arnold's severe taste excluded it.

875. *But the majestic river floated on:* "Below Kamish to its

final disappearance in the Aral Sea, the great river rolls in silent majesty through a vast expanse of sand and desert."—*Encyclopædia Britannica.*

Richard Holt Hutton says: "Arnold, after describing the tender farewell of Sohrab to his father, concludes with this most beautiful passage, in which the accomplished geographer turns the half-scientific, half-poetical pleasure which he always betrays in defining a geographical course to the purpose of providing a poetical anodyne for the pain which the tragic ending . . . has given. . . . Of course the intention may have been to make the flow of the Oxus . . . a sort of parable of the unhappy Rustum's great career, and the peace of his passing away; but nothing of this is so much as hinted and we should rather say that, though the course of a great river may be selected . . . for the vague analogy it presents to the chequered life of a great leader, the intention of the poet is simply to refresh his own mind after the spectacle of mis-spent heroism and clouded destiny, with the image of one of Nature's greater works in which there seems to be . . . the same loss of pristine force and grandeur, and yet a recovery of all the majestic volume and triumphant strength of the earlier period at the end."

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