The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley

by Percy Bysshe Shelley

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THE COMPLETE

POETICAL WORKS

OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY VOLUME 1

OXFORD EDITION.

INCLUDING MATERIALS NEVER BEFORE PRINTED IN ANY EDITION OF THE POEMS. EDITED WITH TEXTUAL NOTES BY THOMAS HUTCHINSON, M. A. EDITOR OF THE OXFORD WORDSWORTH.

1914.

PREFACE.

This edition of his “Poetical Works” contains all Shelley’s ascertained poems and fragments of verse that have hitherto appeared in print. In preparing the volume I have worked as far as possible on the principle of recognizing the editio princeps as the primary textual authority. I have not been content to reprint Mrs. Shelley’s recension of 1839, or that of any subsequent editor of the “Poems”. The present text is the result of a fresh collation of the early editions; and in every material instance of departure from the wording of those originals the rejected reading has been subjoined in a footnote. Again, wherever—as in the case of “Julian and Maddalo”—there has appeared to be good reason for superseding the authority of the editio princeps, the fact is announced, and the substituted exemplar indicated, in the Prefatory Note. in the case of a few pieces extant in two or more versions of debatable authority the alternative text or texts will be found at the [end] of the [relevant work]; but it may be said once for all that this does not pretend to be a variorum edition, in the proper sense of the term—the textual apparatus does not claim to be exhaustive. Thus I have not thought it necessary to cumber the footnotes with every minute grammatical correction introduced by Mrs. Shelley, apparently on her own authority, into the texts of 1839; nor has it come within the scheme of this edition to record every conjectural emendation adopted or proposed by Rossetti and

others in recent times. But it is hoped that, up to and including the editions of 1839 at least, no important variation of the text has been overlooked. Whenever a reading has been adopted on manuscript authority, a reference to the particular source has been added below.

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

longer poems, by means of which the supplementary points now added may be identified, and the original points, which in this edition have been deleted or else replaced by others, ascertained, in the order of their occurrence. In the use of capitals Shelley's practice has been followed, while an attempt has been made to reduce the number of his inconsistencies in this regard.

To have reproduced the spelling of the manuscripts would only have served to divert attention from Shelley's poetry to my own ingenuity in disgusting the reader according to the rules of editorial punctilio. (I adapt a phrase or two from the preface to "The Revolt of Islam".) Shelley was neither very accurate, nor always consistent, in his spelling. He was, to say the truth, indifferent about all such matters: indeed, to one absorbed in the spectacle of a world travailing for lack of the gospel of "Political Justice", the study of orthographical niceties must have seemed an occupation for Bedlamites. Again—as a distinguished critic and editor of Shelley, Professor Dowden, aptly observes in this connexion—'a great poet is not of an age, but for all time.' Irregular or antiquated forms such as 'recieve,' 'sacrifize,' 'tyger,' 'gulph,' 'desart,' 'falshood,' and the like, can only serve to distract the reader's attention, and mar his enjoyment of the verse. Accordingly Shelley's eccentricities in this kind have been discarded, and his spelling reversed in accordance with modern usage. All weak preterite-forms, whether indicatives or participles, have been printed with "ed" rather than "t", participial adjectives and substantives, such as 'past,' alone excepted. In the case of 'leap,' which has two preterite-forms, both employed by Shelley (See for an example of the longer form, the "Hymn to Mercury", 18 5, where 'leaped' rhymes with 'heaped' (line 1). The shorter form, rhyming to 'wept,' 'adapt,' etc., occurs more frequently.)—one with the long vowel of the present-form, the other with a vowel-change (Of course, wherever this vowel-shortening takes place, whether indicated by a corresponding change in the spelling or not, "t", not "ed" is properly used—'cleave,' 'cleft,'; 'deal,' 'dealt'; etc. The forms discarded under the general rule laid down above are such as 'wrackt,'

‘prankt,’ ‘snatcht,’ ‘kist,’ ‘opprest,’ etc.) like that of ‘crept’ from ‘creep’—I have not hesitated to print the longer form ‘leaped,’ and the shorter (after Mr. Henry Sweet’s example) ‘lept,’ in order clearly to indicate the pronunciation intended by Shelley. In the editions the two vowel-sounds are confounded under the one spelling, ‘leapt.’ In a few cases Shelley’s spelling, though unusual or obsolete, has been retained. Thus in ‘aethereal,’ ‘paean,’ and one or two more words the “ae” will be found, and ‘airy’ still appears as ‘aery’. Shelley seems to have uniformly written ‘lightening’: here the word is so printed whenever it is employed as a trisyllable; elsewhere the ordinary spelling has been adopted. (Not a little has been written about ‘uprest’ (“Revolt of Islam”, 3 21 5), which has been described as a nonce-word deliberately coined by Shelley ‘on no better warrant than the exigency of the rhyme.’ There can be little doubt that ‘uprest’ is simply an overlooked misprint for ‘uprist’—not by any means a nonce-word, but a genuine English verbal substantive of regular formation, familiar to many from its employment by Chaucer. True, the corresponding rhyme-words in the passage above referred to are ‘nest,’ ‘possessed,’ ‘breast’; but a laxity such as ‘nest’—‘uprist’ is quite in Shelley’s manner. Thus in this very poem we find ‘midst’—‘shed’st’ (6 16), ‘mist’—‘rest’—‘blest’ (5 58), ‘loveliest’—‘mist’—kissed’—‘dressed’ (5 53). Shelley may have first seen the word in “The Ancient Mariner”; but he employs it more correctly than Coleridge, who seems to have mistaken it for a preterite-form (=‘uprose’) whereas in truth it serves either as the third person singular of the present (=‘upriseth’), or, as here, for the verbal substantive (=‘uprising’).

The editor of Shelley to-day enters upon a goodly heritage, the accumulated gains of a series of distinguished predecessors. Mrs. Shelley’s two editions of 1839 form the nucleus of the present volume, and her notes are here reprinted in full; but the arrangement of the poems differs to some extent from that followed by her—chiefly in respect of “Queen Mab”, which is here placed at the head of the “Juvenilia”, instead of at the forefront of the poems of Shelley’s maturity. In 1862 a slender

volume of poems and fragments, entitled “Relics of Shelley”, was published by Dr. Richard Garnett, C.B.—a precious sheaf gleaned from the manuscripts preserved at Boscombe Manor. The “Relics” constitute a salvage second only in value to the “Posthumous Poems” of 1824. To the growing mass of Shelley’s verse yet more material was added in 1870 by Mr. William Michael Rossetti, who edited for Moxon the “Complete Poetical Works” published in that year. To him we owe in particular a revised and greatly enlarged version of the fragmentary drama of “Charles I”. But though not seldom successful in restoring the text, Mr. Rossetti pushed revision beyond the bounds of prudence, freely correcting grammatical errors, rectifying small inconsistencies in the sense, and too lightly adopting conjectural emendations on the grounds of rhyme or metre. In the course of an article published in the “Westminster Review” for July, 1870, Miss Mathilde Blind, with the aid of material furnished by Dr. Garnett, ‘was enabled,’ in the words of Mr. Buxton Forman, ‘to supply omissions, make authoritative emendations, and controvert erroneous changes’ in Mr. Rossetti’s work; and in the more cautiously edited text of his later edition, published by Moxon in 1878, may be traced the influence of her strictures.

Six years later appeared a variorum edition in which for the first time Shelley’s text was edited with scientific exactness of method, and with a due respect for the authority of the original editions. It would be difficult indeed to over-estimate the gains which have accrued to the lovers of Shelley from the strenuous labours of Mr. Harry Buxton Forman, C.B. He too has enlarged the body of Shelley’s poetry (Mr. Forman’s most notable addition is the second part of “The Daemon of the World”, which he printed privately in 1876, and included in his Library Edition of the “Poetical Works” published in the same year. See the “List of Editions”, etc. at the end of Volume 3.); but, important as his editions undoubtedly are, it may safely be affirmed that his services in this direction constitute the least part of what we owe him. He has vindicated the authenticity of the text in many places, while in many others he has succeeded, with the aid of manuscripts, in restoring it. His untiring

industry in research, his wide bibliographical knowledge and experience, above all, his accuracy, as invariable as it is minute, have combined to make him, in the words of Professor Dowden, ‘our chief living authority on all that relates to Shelley’s writings.’ His name stands securely linked for all time to Shelley’s by a long series of notable words, including three successive editions (1876, 1882, 1892) of the Poems, an edition of the Prose Remains, as well as many minor publications—a Bibliography (“The Shelley Library”, 1886)and several Facsimile Reprints of the early issues, edited for the Shelley Society.

To Professor Dowden, whose authoritative Biography of the poet, published in 1886, was followed in 1890 by an edition of the Poems (Macmillans), is due the addition of several pieces belonging to the juvenile period, incorporated by him in the pages of the “Life of Shelley”. Professor Dowden has also been enabled, with the aid of the manuscripts placed in his hands, to correct the text of the “Juvenilia” in many places. In 1893 Professor George E. Woodberry edited a “Centenary Edition of the Complete Poetical Works”, in which, to quote his own words, an attempt is made ‘to summarize the labours of more than half a century on Shelley’s text, and on his biography so far as the biography is bound up with the text.’ In this Centenary edition the textual variations found in the Harvard College manuscripts, as well as those in the manuscripts belonging to Mr. Frederickson of Brooklyn, are fully recorded. Professor Woodberry’s text is conservative on the whole, but his revision of the punctuation is drastic, and occasionally sacrifices melody to perspicuity.

In 1903 Mr. C.D. Locock published, in a quarto volume of seventy-five pages, the fruits of a careful scrutiny of the Shelley manuscripts now lodged in the Bodleian Library. Mr. Locock succeeded in recovering several inedited fragments of verse and prose. Amongst the poems chiefly concerned in the results of his “Examination” may be named “Marenghi”, “Prince Athanase”, “The Witch of Atlas”, “To Constantia”, the “Ode to Naples”, and (last, not least) “Prometheus Unbound”. Full

use has been made in this edition of Mr. Locock's collations, and the fragments recovered and printed by him are included in the text. Variants derived from the Bodleian manuscripts are marked "B." in the footnotes.

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

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

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

‘The corrupt state of the text has stimulated the ingenuity of numerous correctors, who have suggested many acute and convincing emendations, and some very specious ones which sustained scrutiny has proved untenable. It should be needless to remark that success has in general been proportionate to the facilities of access to the manuscripts, which have only of late become generally available. If Shelley is less fortunate than most modern poets in the purity of his text, he is more fortunate than many in the preservation of his manuscripts. These have not, as regards a fair proportion, been destroyed or dispersed at auctions, but were protected from either fate by their very character as confused memoranda. As such they remained in the possession of Shelley’s widow, and passed from her to her son and daughter-in-law. After Sir Percy Shelley’s death, Lady Shelley took the occasion of the erection of

the monument to Shelley at University College, Oxford, to present [certain of] the manuscripts to the Bodleian Library, and verse and sculpture form an imperishable memorial of his connection with the University where his residence was so brief and troubled.' (Dr. Garnett proceeds:—'The most important of the Bodleian manuscripts is that of "Prometheus Unbound", which, says Mr. Locock, has the appearance of being an intermediate draft, and also the first copy made. This should confer considerable authority on its variations from the accepted text, as this appears to have been printed from a copy not made by Shelley himself. "My 'Prometheus'," he writes to Ollier on September 6, 1819, "is now being transcribed," an expression which he would hardly have used if he had himself been the copyist. He wished the proofs to be sent to him in Italy for correction, but to this Ollier objected, and on May 14, 1820, Shelley signifies his acquiescence, adding, however, "In this case I shall repose trust in your care respecting the correction of the press; Mr. Gisborne will revise it; he heard it recited, and will therefore more readily seize any error." This confidence in the accuracy of Gisborne's verbal memory is touching! From a letter to Gisborne on May 26 following it appears that the offer to correct came from him, and that Shelley sent him "two little papers of corrections and additions," which were probably made use of, or the fact would have been made known. In the case of additions this may satisfactorily account for apparent omissions in the Bodleian manuscript. Gisborne, after all, did not prove fully up to the mark. "It is to be regretted," writes Shelley to Ollier on November 20, "that the errors of the press are so numerous," adding, "I shall send you the list of errata in a day or two." This was probably "the list of errata written by Shelley himself," from which Mrs. Shelley corrected the edition of 1839.')

In placing "Queen Mab" at the head of the "Juvenilia" I have followed the arrangement adopted by Mr. Buxton Forman in his Library Edition of 1876. I have excluded "The Wandering Jew", having failed to satisfy myself of the sufficiency of the grounds on which, in certain quarters, it is accepted as the work of Shelley. The

shorter fragments are printed, as in Professor Dowden's edition of 1890, along with the miscellaneous poems of the years to which they severally belong, under titles which are sometimes borrowed from Mr. Buxton Forman, sometimes of my own choosing. I have added a few brief Editor's Notes, mainly on textual questions, at the end of the book. Of the poverty of my work in this direction I am painfully aware; but in the present edition the ordinary reader will, it is hoped, find an authentic, complete, and accurately printed text, and, if this be so, the principal end and aim of the OXFORD SHELLEY will have been attained.

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

THOMAS HUTCHINSON.

December, 1904.

POSTSCRIPT.

In a valuable paper, ‘Notes on Passages in Shelley,’ contributed to “The Modern Language Review” (October, 1905), Mr. A.C. Bradley discussed, amongst other things, some fifty places in the text of Shelley’s verse, and indicated certain errors and omissions in this edition. With the aid of these “Notes” the editor has now carefully revised the text, and has in many places adopted the suggestions or conclusions of their accomplished author.

June, 1913.

PREFACE BY MRS. SHELLEY

TO FIRST COLLECTED EDITION, 1839.

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

The qualities that struck any one newly introduced to Shelley were,—First, a gentle

and cordial goodness that animated his intercourse with warm affection and helpful sympathy. The other, the eagerness and ardour with which he was attached to the cause of human happiness and improvement; and the fervent eloquence with which he discussed such subjects. His conversation was marked by its happy abundance, and the beautiful language in which he clothed his poetic ideas and philosophical notions. To defecate life of its misery and its evil was the ruling passion of his soul; he dedicated to it every power of his mind, every pulsation of his heart. He looked on political freedom as the direct agent to effect the happiness of mankind; and thus any new-sprung hope of liberty inspired a joy and an exultation more intense and wild than he could have felt for any personal advantage. Those who have never experienced the workings of passion on general and unselfish subjects cannot understand this; and it must be difficult of comprehension to the younger generation rising around, since they cannot remember the scorn and hatred with which the partisans of reform were regarded some few years ago, nor the persecutions to which they were exposed. He had been from youth the victim of the state of feeling inspired by the reaction of the French Revolution; and believing firmly in the justice and excellence of his views, it cannot be wondered that a nature as sensitive, as impetuous, and as generous as his, should put its whole force into the attempt to alleviate for others the evils of those systems from which he had himself suffered. Many advantages attended his birth; he spurned them all when balanced with what he considered his duties. He was generous to imprudence, devoted to heroism.

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

In addition to these, his poems may be divided into two classes,—the purely imaginative, and those which sprang from the emotions of his heart. Among the

former may be classed the “Witch of Atlas”, “Adonais”, and his latest composition, left imperfect, the “Triumph of Life”. In the first of these particularly he gave the reins to his fancy, and luxuriated in every idea as it rose; in all there is that sense of mystery which formed an essential portion of his perception of life—a clinging to the subtler inner spirit, rather than to the outward form—a curious and metaphysical anatomy of human passion and perception.

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

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

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

A wise friend once wrote to Shelley: ‘You are still very young, and in certain essential respects you do not yet sufficiently perceive that you are so.’ It is seldom that the young know what youth is, till they have got beyond its period; and time was not given him to attain this knowledge. It must be remembered that there is the stamp of such inexperience on all he wrote; he had not completed his

nine-and-twentieth year when he died. The calm of middle life did not add the seal of the virtues which adorn maturity to those generated by the vehement spirit of youth. Through life also he was a martyr to ill-health, and constant pain wound up his nerves to a pitch of susceptibility that rendered his views of life different from those of a man in the enjoyment of healthy sensations. Perfectly gentle and forbearing in manner, he suffered a good deal of internal irritability, or rather excitement, and his fortitude to bear was almost always on the stretch; and thus, during a short life, he had gone through more experience of sensation than many whose existence is protracted. ‘If I die to-morrow,’ he said, on the eve of his unanticipated death, ‘I have lived to be older than my father.’ The weight of thought and feeling burdened him heavily; you read his sufferings in his attenuated frame, while you perceived the mastery he held over them in his animated countenance and brilliant eyes.

He died, and the world showed no outward sign. But his influence over mankind, though slow in growth, is fast augmenting; and, in the ameliorations that have taken place in the political state of his country, we may trace in part the operation of his arduous struggles. His spirit gathers peace in its new state from the sense that, though late, his exertions were not made in vain, and in the progress of the liberty he so fondly loved.

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

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

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

POSTSCRIPT IN SECOND EDITION OF 1839.

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

Two poems are added of some length, "Swellfoot the Tyrant" and "Peter Bell the Third". I have mentioned the circumstances under which they were written in the notes; and need only add that they are conceived in a very different spirit from Shelley's usual compositions. They are specimens of the burlesque and fanciful; but, although they adopt a familiar style and homely imagery, there shine through the

radiance of the poet's imagination the earnest views and opinions of the politician and the moralist.

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

Putney, November 6, 1839.

PREFACE BY MRS. SHELLEY.

TO THE VOLUME OF POSTHUMOUS POEMS PUBLISHED IN 1824.

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

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

The comparative solitude in which Mr. Shelley lived was the occasion that he was personally known to few; and his fearless enthusiasm in the cause which he considered the most sacred upon earth, the improvement of the moral and physical state of mankind, was the chief reason why he, like other illustrious reformers, was pursued by hatred and calumny. No man was ever more devoted than he to the endeavour of making those around him happy; no man ever possessed friends more

unfeignedly attached to him. The ungrateful world did not feel his loss, and the gap it made seemed to close as quickly over his memory as the murderous sea above his living frame. Hereafter men will lament that his transcendent powers of intellect were extinguished before they had bestowed on them their choicest treasures. To his friends his loss is irremediable: the wise, the brave, the gentle, is gone for ever! He is to them as a bright vision, whose radiant track, left behind in the memory, is worth all the realities that society can afford. Before the critics contradict me, let them appeal to any one who had ever known him. To see him was to love him: and his presence, like Ithuriel's spear, was alone sufficient to disclose the falsehood of the tale which his enemies whispered in the ear of the ignorant world.

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

Such was his love for Nature that every page of his poetry is associated, in the minds of his friends, with the loveliest scenes of the countries which he inhabited. In early life he visited the most beautiful parts of this country and Ireland. Afterwards the Alps of Switzerland became his inspirers. "Prometheus Unbound" was written among the deserted and flower-grown ruins of Rome; and, when he made his home

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

He spent a week at Pisa, employed in kind offices toward his friend, and enjoying with keen delight the renewal of their intercourse. He then embarked with Mr. Williams, the chosen and beloved sharer of his pleasures and of his fate, to return to us. We waited for them in vain; the sea by its restless moaning seemed to desire to inform us of what we would not learn:—but a veil may well be drawn over such misery. The real anguish of those moments transcended all the fictions that the most glowing imagination ever portrayed; our seclusion, the savage nature of the inhabitants of the surrounding villages, and our immediate vicinity to the troubled sea, combined to imbue with strange horror our days of uncertainty. The truth was at last known,—a truth that made our loved and lovely Italy appear a tomb, its sky a pall. Every heart echoed the deep lament, and my only consolation was in the praise

and earnest love that each voice bestowed and each countenance demonstrated for him we had lost,—not, I fondly hope, for ever; his unearthly and elevated nature is a pledge of the continuation of his being, although in an altered form. Rome received his ashes; they are deposited beneath its weed-grown wall, and ‘the world’s sole monument’ is enriched by his remains.

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

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

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

MARY W. SHELLEY.

London, June 1, 1824.

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THE DAEMON OF THE WORLD.

A FRAGMENT. PART 1.

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

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

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

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

assured reward. Her dewy eyes are closed; On their translucent lids, whose texture fine _40 Scarce hides the dark blue orbs that burn below With unapparent fire, The baby Sleep is pillowed: Her golden tresses shade The bosom’s stainless pride, _45 Twining like tendrils of the parasite Around a marble column.

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

Custom, and Faith, and Power thou spurnest; _90 From hate and awe thy heart is free; Ardent and pure as day thou burnest, For dark and cold mortality A living light, to cheer it long, The watch-fires of the world among. _95

Therefore from nature’s inner shrine, Where gods and fiends in worship bend,

Majestic spirit, be it thine The flame to seize, the veil to rend, Where the vast snake Eternity _100 In charmed sleep doth ever lie.

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

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

Obedient to the sweep of aery song, _115 The mighty ministers Unfurled their prismy wings. The magic car moved on; The night was fair, innumerable stars Studded heaven’s dark blue vault; _120 The eastern wave grew pale With the first smile of morn. The magic car moved on. From the swift sweep of wings The atmosphere in flaming sparkles flew; _125 And where the burning wheels Eddied above the mountain’s loftiest peak Was traced a line of lightning. Now far above a rock the utmost verge Of the wide earth it flew, _130 The rival of the Andes, whose dark brow Frowned o’er the silver sea. Far, far below the chariot’s stormy path, Calm as a slumbering babe, Tremendous ocean lay. _135 Its broad and silent mirror gave to view The pale and waning stars, The chariot’s fiery track, And the grey light of morn Tingeing those fleecy clouds _140 That cradled in their folds the infant dawn. The chariot seemed to fly Through the abyss of an immense concave, Radiant with million constellations, tinged With shades of infinite colour, _145 And semicircled with a belt Flashing incessant meteors.

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

feathery spray Dashed from the boiling surge Before a vessel's prow.

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

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

If solitude hath ever led thy steps To the shore of the immeasurable sea, _190 And thou hast lingered there Until the sun's broad orb Seemed resting on the fiery line of ocean, Thou must have marked the braided webs of gold That without motion hang _195 Over the sinking sphere: Thou must have marked the billowy mountain clouds, Edged with intolerable radiancy, Towering like rocks of jet Above the burning deep: _200 And yet there is a moment When the sun's highest point Peers like a star o'er ocean's western edge, When those far clouds of feathery purple gleam Like fairy lands girt by some heavenly sea: _205 Then has thy rapt imagination soared Where in the midst of all existing things The temple of the mightiest Daemon stands.

Yet not the golden islands That gleam amid yon flood of purple light, _210 Nor the feathery curtains That canopy the sun's resplendent couch, Nor the burnished ocean waves Paving that gorgeous dome, So fair, so wonderful a sight _215 As the eternal

temple could afford. The elements of all that human thought Can frame of lovely or sublime, did join To rear the fabric of the fane, nor aught Of earth may image forth its majesty. _220 Yet likest evening's vault that faery hall, As heaven low resting on the wave it spread Its floors of flashing light, Its vast and azure dome; And on the verge of that obscure abyss _225 Where crystal battlements o'erhang the gulf Of the dark world, ten thousand spheres diffuse Their lustre through its adamantine gates.

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

The Daemon and the Spirit Approached the overhanging battlement, _240 Below lay stretched the boundless universe! There, far as the remotest line That limits swift imagination's flight. Unending orbs mingled in mazy motion, Immutably fulfilling _245 Eternal Nature's law. Above, below, around, The circling systems formed A wilderness of harmony. Each with undeviating aim _250 In eloquent silence through the depths of space Pursued its wondrous way.—

Awhile the Spirit paused in ecstasy. Yet soon she saw, as the vast spheres swept by, Strange things within their belted orbs appear. _255 Like animated frenzies, dimly moved Shadows, and skeletons, and fiendly shapes, Thronging round human graves, and o'er the dead Sculpturing records for each memory In verse, such as malignant gods pronounce, _260 Blasting the hopes of men, when heaven and hell Confounded burst in ruin o'er the world: And they did build vast trophies, instruments Of murder, human bones, barbaric gold, Skins torn from living men, and towers of skulls _265 With sightless holes gazing on blinder heaven, Mitres, and crowns, and brazen chariots stained With blood, and scrolls of mystic wickedness, The sanguine codes of venerable crime. The likeness of a throned king came by. _270 When these

had passed, bearing upon his brow A threefold crown; his countenance was calm. His eye severe and cold; but his right hand Was charged with bloody coin, and he did gnaw By fits, with secret smiles, a human heart _275 Concealed beneath his robe; and motley shapes, A multitudinous throng, around him knelt. With bosoms bare, and bowed heads, and false looks Of true submission, as the sphere rolled by. Brooking no eye to witness their foul shame, _280 Which human hearts must feel, while human tongues Tremble to speak, they did rage horribly, Breathing in self-contempt fierce blasphemies Against the Daemon of the World, and high Hurling their armed hands where the pure Spirit, _285 Serene and inaccessibly secure, Stood on an isolated pinnacle. The flood of ages combating below, The depth of the unbounded universe Above, and all around _290 Necessity's unchanging harmony.

PART 2.

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

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

Genius has seen thee in her passionate dreams, And dim forebodings of thy loveliness, Haunting the human heart, have there entwined _305 Those rooted hopes, that the proud Power of Evil Shall not for ever on this fairest world Shake pestilence and war, or that his slaves With blasphemy for prayer, and human blood For sacrifice, before his shrine for ever _310 In adoration bend, or Erebus With all

its banded fiends shall not uprise To overwhelm in envy and revenge The dauntless and the good, who dare to hurl Defiance at his throne, girt tho' it be _315 With Death's omnipotence. Thou hast beheld His empire, o'er the present and the past; It was a desolate sight—now gaze on mine, Futurity. Thou hoary giant Time, Render thou up thy half-devoured babes,— _320 And from the cradles of eternity, Where millions lie lulled to their portioned sleep By the deep murmuring stream of passing things, Tear thou that gloomy shroud.—Spirit, behold Thy glorious destiny!

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

To me is given The wonders of the human world to keep- _340 Space, matter, time and mind—let the sight Renew and strengthen all thy failing hope. All things are recreated, and the flame Of consentaneous love inspires all life: The fertile bosom of the earth gives suck _345 To myriads, who still grow beneath her care, Rewarding her with their pure perfectness: The balmy breathings of the wind inhale Her virtues, and diffuse them all abroad: Health floats amid the gentle atmosphere, _350 Glows in the fruits, and mantles on the stream; No storms deform the beaming brow of heaven, Nor scatter in the freshness of its pride The foliage of the undecaying trees; But fruits are ever ripe, flowers ever fair, _355 And Autumn proudly bears her matron grace, Kindling a flush on the fair cheek of Spring, Whose virgin bloom beneath the ruddy fruit Reflects its tint and blushes into love.

The habitable earth is full of bliss; _360 Those wastes of frozen billows that were

hurled By everlasting snow-storms round the poles, Where matter dared not vegetate nor live, But ceaseless frost round the vast solitude Bound its broad zone of stillness, are unloosed; _365 And fragrant zephyrs there from spicy isles Ruffle the placid ocean-deep, that rolls Its broad, bright surges to the sloping sand, Whose roar is wakened into echoings sweet To murmur through the heaven-breathing groves _370 And melodise with man's blest nature there.

The vast tract of the parched and sandy waste Now teems with countless rills and shady woods, Corn-fields and pastures and white cottages; And where the startled wilderness did hear _375 A savage conqueror stained in kindred blood, Hymmng his victory, or the milder snake Crushing the bones of some frail antelope Within his brazen folds—the dewy lawn, Offering sweet incense to the sunrise, smiles _380 To see a babe before his mother's door, Share with the green and golden basilisk That comes to lick his feet, his morning's meal.

Those trackless deeps, where many a weary sail Has seen, above the illimitable plain, _385 Morning on night and night on morning rise, Whilst still no land to greet the wanderer spread Its shadowy mountains on the sunbright sea, Where the loud roarings of the tempest-waves So long have mingled with the gusty wind _390 In melancholy loneliness, and swept The desert of those ocean solitudes, But vocal to the sea-bird's harrowing shriek, The bellowing monster, and the rushing storm, Now to the sweet and many-mingling sounds _395 Of kindliest human impulses respond: Those lonely realms bright garden-isles begem, With lightsome clouds and shining seas between, And fertile valleys resonant with bliss, Whilst green woods overcanopy the wave, _400 Which like a toil-worn labourer leaps to shore, To meet the kisses of the flowerets there.

Man chief perceives the change, his being notes The gradual renovation, and defines Each movement of its progress on his mind. _405 Man, where the gloom of the long polar night Lowered o'er the snow-clad rocks and frozen soil, Where scarce the

hardiest herb that braves the frost Basked in the moonlight's ineffectual glow, Shrank with the plants, and darkened with the night; _410 Nor where the tropics bound the realms of day With a broad belt of mingling cloud and flame, Where blue mists through the unmoving atmosphere Scattered the seeds of pestilence, and fed Unnatural vegetation, where the land _415 Teemed with all earthquake, tempest and disease, Was man a nobler being; slavery Had crushed him to his country's blood-stained dust.

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

Here now the human being stands adorning _430 This loveliest earth with taintless body and mind; Blest from his birth with all bland impulses, Which gently in his noble bosom wake All kindly passions and all pure desires. Him, still from hope to hope the bliss pursuing, _435 Which from the exhaustless lore of human weal Dawns on the virtuous mind, the thoughts that rise In time-destroying infiniteness gift With self-enshrined eternity, that mocks The unprevailing hoariness of age, _440 And man, once fleeting o'er the transient scene Swift as an unremembered vision, stands Immortal upon earth: no longer now He slays the beast that sports around his dwelling And horribly devours its mangled flesh, _445 Or drinks its vital blood, which like a stream Of poison thro' his fevered veins did flow Feeding a plague that secretly consumed His feeble frame, and kindling in his mind Hatred, despair, and fear and vain belief, _450 The germs of misery, death, disease and crime. No longer now the winged habitants, That in the woods their sweet lives sing away, Flee from the form of man; but gather round, And prune their sunny feathers on the hands _455 Which little children stretch in friendly sport Towards these

dreadless partners of their play. All things are void of terror: man has lost His desolating privilege, and stands An equal amidst equals: happiness _460 And science dawn though late upon the earth; Peace cheers the mind, health renovates the frame; Disease and pleasure cease to mingle here, Reason and passion cease to combat there; Whilst mind unfettered o’er the earth extends _465 Its all-subduing energies, and wields The sceptre of a vast dominion there.

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

Within the massy prison’s mouldering courts, Fearless and free the ruddy children play, _485 Weaving gay chaplets for their innocent brows With the green ivy and the red wall-flower, That mock the dungeon’s unavailing gloom; The ponderous chains, and gratings of strong iron, There rust amid the accumulated ruins _490 Now mingling slowly with their native earth: There the broad beam of day, which feebly once Lighted the cheek of lean captivity With a pale and sickly glare, now freely shines On the pure smiles of infant playfulness: _495 No more the shuddering voice of hoarse despair Peals through the echoing vaults, but soothing notes Of ivy-fingered winds and gladsome birds And merriment are resonant around.

The fanes of Fear and Falsehood hear no more _500 The voice that once waked multitudes to war Thundering thro’ all their aisles: but now respond To the death dirge of the melancholy wind: It were a sight of awfulness to see The works of faith

and slavery, so vast, _505 So sumptuous, yet withal so perishing! Even as the corpse that rests beneath their wall. A thousand mourners deck the pomp of death To-day, the breathing marble glows above To decorate its memory, and tongues _510 Are busy of its life: to-morrow, worms In silence and in darkness seize their prey. These ruins soon leave not a wreck behind: Their elements, wide-scattered o'er the globe, To happier shapes are moulded, and become _515 Ministrant to all blissful impulses: Thus human things are perfected, and earth, Even as a child beneath its mother's love, Is strengthened in all excellence, and grows Fairer and nobler with each passing year. _520

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

Yet, human Spirit, bravely hold thy course, Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue _530 The gradual paths of an aspiring change: For birth and life and death, and that strange state Before the naked powers that thro' the world Wander like winds have found a human home, All tend to perfect happiness, and urge _535 The restless wheels of being on their way, Whose flashing spokes, instinct with infinite life, Bicker and burn to gain their destined goal: For birth but wakes the universal mind Whose mighty streams might else in silence flow _540 Thro' the vast world, to individual sense Of outward shows, whose unexperienced shape New modes of passion to its frame may lend; Life is its state of action, and the store Of all events is aggregated there _545 That variegate the eternal universe; Death is a gate of dreariness and gloom, That leads to azure isles and beaming skies And happy regions of eternal hope. Therefore, O Spirit! fearlessly bear on: _550 Though storms may break the primrose on its stalk, Though frosts may blight the freshness of its bloom, Yet spring's awakening breath will woo the earth, To feed with kindliest

dews its favourite flower, That blooms in mossy banks and darksome glens, _555 Lighting the green wood with its sunny smile.

Fear not then, Spirit, death's disrobing hand, So welcome when the tyrant is awake, So welcome when the bigot's hell-torch flares; 'Tis but the voyage of a darksome hour, _560 The transient gulf-dream of a startling sleep. For what thou art shall perish utterly, But what is thine may never cease to be; Death is no foe to virtue: earth has seen Love's brightest roses on the scaffold bloom, _565 Mingling with freedom's fadeless laurels there, And presaging the truth of visioned bliss. Are there not hopes within thee, which this scene Of linked and gradual being has confirmed? Hopes that not vainly thou, and living fires _570 Of mind as radiant and as pure as thou, Have shone upon the paths of men—return, Surpassing Spirit, to that world, where thou Art destined an eternal war to wage With tyranny and falsehood, and uproot _575 The germs of misery from the human heart. Thine is the hand whose piety would soothe The thorny pillow of unhappy crime, Whose impotence an easy pardon gains, Watching its wanderings as a friend's disease: _580 Thine is the brow whose mildness would defy Its fiercest rage, and brave its sternest will, When fenced by power and master of the world. Thou art sincere and good; of resolute mind, Free from heart-withering custom's cold control, _585 Of passion lofty, pure and unsubdued. Earth's pride and meanness could not vanquish thee, And therefore art thou worthy of the boon Which thou hast now received: virtue shall keep Thy footsteps in the path that thou hast trod, _590 And many days of beaming hope shall bless Thy spotless life of sweet and sacred love. Go, happy one, and give that bosom joy Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch Light, life and rapture from thy smile. _595

The Daemon called its winged ministers. Speechless with bliss the Spirit mounts the car, That rolled beside the crystal battlement, Bending her beamy eyes in thankfulness. The burning wheels inflame _600 The steep descent of Heaven's untrodden way. Fast and far the chariot flew: The mighty globes that rolled Around the gate of the Eternal Fane Lessened by slow degrees, and soon appeared _605

Such tiny twinklers as the planet orbs That ministering on the solar power With borrowed light pursued their narrower way. Earth floated then below: The chariot paused a moment; _610 The Spirit then descended: And from the earth departing The shadows with swift wings Speeded like thought upon the light of Heaven.

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

Notes: _87 Regarding cj. A.C. Bradley.)

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ALASTOR: OR, THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE.

[Composed at Bishopsgate Heath, near Windsor Park, 1815 (autumn); published, as the title-piece of a slender volume containing other poems (see "Biographical List", by Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, London, 1816 (March). Reprinted—the first edition being sold out—amongst the "Posthumous Poems", 1824. Sources of the text are (1) the editio princeps, 1816; (2) "Posthumous Poems", 1824; (3) "Poetical Works", 1839, editions 1st and 2nd. For (2) and (3) Mrs. Shelley is responsible.]

PREFACE.

The poem entitled "Alastor" may be considered as allegorical of one of the most interesting situations of the human mind. It represents a youth of uncorrupted feelings and adventurous genius led forth by an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic, to the contemplation of the universe. He drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge, and is still insatiate. The magnificence and beauty of the external world sinks profoundly into the frame of his conceptions, and affords to their modifications at variety not to be exhausted. so long as it is possible for his desires to point towards objects thus infinite and

unmeasured, he is joyous, and tranquil, and self-possessed. But the period arrives when these objects cease to suffice. His mind is at length suddenly awakened and thirsts for intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself. He images to himself the Being whom he loves. Conversant with speculations of the sublimest and most perfect natures, the vision in which he embodies his own imaginations unites all of wonderful, or wise, or beautiful, which the poet, the philosopher, or the lover could depicture. The intellectual faculties, the imagination, the functions of sense, have their respective requisitions on the sympathy of corresponding powers in other human beings. The Poet is represented as uniting these requisitions, and attaching them to a single image. He seeks in vain for a prototype of his conception. Blasted by his disappointment, he descends to an untimely grave.

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

with their own, the lasting misery and loneliness of the world. Those who love not their fellow-beings live unfruitful lives, and prepare for their old age a miserable grave.

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

December 14, 1815.

ALASTOR: OR, THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE.

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

Mother of this unfathomable world! Favour my solemn song, for I have loved Thee ever, and thee only; I have watched _20 Thy shadow, and the darkness of thy steps, And my heart ever gazes on the depth Of thy deep mysteries. I have made my bed In charnels and on coffins, where black death Keeps record of the trophies won from thee, _25 Hoping to still these obstinate questionings Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost, Thy messenger, to render up the tale Of what we are. In lone and silent hours, When night makes a weird sound of its own stillness, _30 Like an inspired and desperate alchymist Staking his very life on some dark hope, Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks With my most innocent love, until strange tears, Uniting with those breathless kisses, made _35 Such magic as compels the charmed

night To render up thy charge:…and, though ne’er yet Thou hast unveiled thy inmost sanctuary, Enough from incommunicable dream, And twilight phantasms, and deep noon-day thought, _40 Has shone within me, that serenely now And moveless, as a long-forgotten lyre Suspended in the solitary dome Of some mysterious and deserted fane, I wait thy breath, Great Parent, that my strain _45 May modulate with murmurs of the air, And motions of the forests and the sea, And voice of living beings, and woven hymns Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.

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

By solemn vision, and bright silver dream His infancy was nurtured. Every sight And sound from the vast earth and ambient air, Sent to his heart its choicest impulses. _70 The fountains of divine philosophy Fled not his thirsting lips, and all of great, Or good, or lovely, which the sacred past In truth or fable consecrates, he felt And knew. When early youth had passed, he left _75 His cold fireside and alienated home To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands. Many a wide waste and tangled wilderness Has lured his fearless steps; and he has bought With his sweet voice and eyes, from savage men, _80 His rest and food. Nature’s most secret steps He like her shadow has pursued, where’er The red volcano overcanopies Its fields of snow and pinnacles of ice With burning smoke, or where bitumen lakes _85

On black bare pointed islets ever beat With sluggish surge, or where the secret caves, Rugged and dark, winding among the springs Of fire and poison, inaccessible To avarice or pride, their starry domes _90 Of diamond and of gold expand above Numberless and immeasurable halls, Frequent with crystal column, and clear shrines Of pearl, and thrones radiant with chrysolite. Nor had that scene of ampler majesty _95 Than gems or gold, the varying roof of heaven And the green earth lost in his heart its claims To love and wonder; he would linger long In lonesome vales, making the wild his home, Until the doves and squirrels would partake _100 From his innocuous hand his bloodless food, Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks, And the wild antelope, that starts whene'er The dry leaf rustles in the brake, suspend Her timid steps, to gaze upon a form More graceful than her own. _105 His wandering step, Obedient to high thoughts, has visited The awful ruins of the days of old: Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers _110 Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids, Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of strange, Sculptured on alabaster obelisk, Or jasper tomb, or mutilated sphynx, Dark Aethiopia in her desert hills _115 Conceals. Among the ruined temples there, Stupendous columns, and wild images Of more than man, where marble daemons watch The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around, _120 He lingered, poring on memorials Of the world's youth: through the long burning day Gazed on those speechless shapes; nor, when the moon Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades Suspended he that task, but ever gazed _125 And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

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

Made paler the pale moon, to her cold home Wildered, and wan, and panting, she returned.

The Poet, wandering on, through Arabie, _140 And Persia, and the wild Carmanian waste, And o’er the aerial mountains which pour down Indus and Oxus from their icy caves, In joy and exultation held his way; Till in the vale of Cashmire, far within _145 Its loneliest dell, where odorous plants entwine Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower, Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched His languid limbs. A vision on his sleep There came, a dream of hopes that never yet _150 Had flushed his cheek. He dreamed a veiled maid Sate near him, talking in low solemn tones. Her voice was like the voice of his own soul Heard in the calm of thought; its music long, Like woven sounds of streams and breezes, held _155 His inmost sense suspended in its web Of many-coloured woof and shifting hues. Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme, And lofty hopes of divine liberty, Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy, _160 Herself a poet. Soon the solemn mood Of her pure mind kindled through all her frame A permeating fire; wild numbers then She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous sobs Subdued by its own pathos; her fair hands _165 Were bare alone, sweeping from some strange harp Strange symphony, and in their branching veins The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale. The beating of her heart was heard to fill The pauses of her music, and her breath _170 Tumultuously accorded with those fits Of intermitted song. Sudden she rose, As if her heart impatiently endured Its bursting burthen: at the sound he turned, And saw by the warm light of their own life _175 Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous veil Of woven wind, her outspread arms now bare, Her dark locks floating in the breath of night, Her beamy bending eyes, her parted lips Outstretched, and pale, and quivering eagerly. _180 His strong heart sunk and sickened with excess Of love. He reared his shuddering limbs and quelled His gasping breath, and spread his arms to meet Her panting bosom:…she drew back a while, Then, yielding to the irresistible joy, _185 With frantic gesture and short breathless cry Folded his frame in her dissolving arms. Now blackness

veiled his dizzy eyes, and night Involved and swallowed up the vision; sleep, Like a dark flood suspended in its course, _190 Rolled back its impulse on his vacant brain.

Roused by the shock he started from his trance— The cold white light of morning, the blue moon Low in the west, the clear and garish hills, The distinct valley and the vacant woods, _195 Spread round him where he stood. Whither have fled The hues of heaven that canopied his bower Of yesternight? The sounds that soothed his sleep, The mystery and the majesty of Earth, The joy, the exultation? His wan eyes _200 Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly As ocean's moon looks on the moon in heaven. The spirit of sweet human love has sent A vision to the sleep of him who spurned Her choicest gifts. He eagerly pursues _205 Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade; He overleaps the bounds. Alas! Alas! Were limbs, and breath, and being intertwined Thus treacherously? Lost, lost, for ever lost In the wide pathless desert of dim sleep, _210 That beautiful shape! Does the dark gate of death Conduct to thy mysterious paradise, O Sleep? Does the bright arch of rainbow clouds And pendent mountains seen in the calm lake, Lead only to a black and watery depth, _215 While death's blue vault, with loathliest vapours hung, Where every shade which the foul grave exhales Hides its dead eye from the detested day, Conducts, O Sleep, to thy delightful realms? This doubt with sudden tide flowed on his heart; _220 The insatiate hope which it awakened, stung His brain even like despair. While daylight held The sky, the Poet kept mute conference With his still soul. At night the passion came, Like the fierce fiend of a distempered dream, _225 And shook him from his rest, and led him forth Into the darkness.—As an eagle, grasped In folds of the green serpent, feels her breast Burn with the poison, and precipitates Through night and day, tempest, and calm, and cloud, _230 Frantic with dizzying anguish, her blind flight O'er the wide aery wilderness: thus driven By the bright shadow of that lovely dream, Beneath the cold glare of the desolate night, Through tangled swamps and deep precipitous dells, _235 Startling with careless step the moonlight snake, He fled. Red morning dawned upon his flight, Shedding

the mockery of its vital hues Upon his cheek of death. He wandered on Till vast Aornos seen from Petra's steep _240 Hung o'er the low horizon like a cloud; Through Balk, and where the desolated tombs Of Parthian kings scatter to every wind Their wasting dust, wildly he wandered on, Day after day a weary waste of hours, _245 Bearing within his life the brooding care That ever fed on its decaying flame. And now his limbs were lean; his scattered hair, Sered by the autumn of strange suffering Sung dirges in the wind; his listless hand _250 Hung like dead bone within its withered skin; Life, and the lustre that consumed it, shone As in a furnace burning secretly From his dark eyes alone. The cottagers, Who ministered with human charity _255 His human wants, beheld with wondering awe Their fleeting visitant. The mountaineer, Encountering on some dizzy precipice That spectral form, deemed that the Spirit of wind With lightning eyes, and eager breath, and feet _260 Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused In its career: the infant would conceal His troubled visage in his mother's robe In terror at the glare of those wild eyes, To remember their strange light in many a dream _265 Of after-times; but youthful maidens, taught By nature, would interpret half the woe That wasted him, would call him with false names Brother and friend, would press his pallid hand At parting, and watch, dim through tears, the path _270 Of his departure from their father's door.

At length upon the lone Chorasmian shore He paused, a wide and melancholy waste Of putrid marshes. A strong impulse urged His steps to the sea-shore. A swan was there, _275 Beside a sluggish stream among the reeds. It rose as he approached, and, with strong wings Scaling the upward sky, bent its bright course High over the immeasurable main. His eyes pursued its flight:—'Thou hast a home, _280 Beautiful bird; thou voyagest to thine home, Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy. And what am I that I should linger here, _285 With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes, Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned To

beauty, wasting these surpassing powers In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven That echoes not my thoughts?' A gloomy smile _290 Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering lips. For sleep, he knew, kept most relentlessly Its precious charge, and silent death exposed, Faithless perhaps as sleep, a shadowy lure, With doubtful smile mocking its own strange charms. _295

Startled by his own thoughts he looked around. There was no fair fiend near him, not a sight Or sound of awe but in his own deep mind. A little shallop floating near the shore Caught the impatient wandering of his gaze. _300 It had been long abandoned, for its sides Gaped wide with many a rift, and its frail joints Swayed with the undulations of the tide. A restless impulse urged him to embark And meet lone Death on the drear ocean's waste; _305 For well he knew that mighty Shadow loves The slimy caverns of the populous deep.

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

As one that in a silver vision floats Obedient to the sweep of odorous winds Upon resplendent clouds, so rapidly Along the dark and ruffled waters fled The straining boat.—A whirlwind swept it on, _320 With fierce gusts and precipitating force, Through the white ridges of the chafed sea. The waves arose. Higher and higher still Their fierce necks writhed beneath the tempest's scourge Like serpents struggling in a vulture's grasp. _325 Calm and rejoicing in the fearful war Of wave ruining on wave, and blast on blast Descending, and black flood on whirlpool driven With dark obliterating course, he sate: As if their genii were the ministers _330 Appointed to conduct him to the light Of those beloved eyes, the Poet sate, Holding the steady helm. Evening came on, The beams of sunset hung their rainbow hues High 'mid the

shifting domes of sheeted spray _335 That canopied his path o’er the waste deep; Twilight, ascending slowly from the east, Entwined in duskier wreaths her braided locks O’er the fair front and radiant eyes of day; Night followed, clad with stars. On every side _340 More horribly the multitudinous streams Of ocean’s mountainous waste to mutual war Rushed in dark tumult thundering, as to mock The calm and spangled sky. The little boat Still fled before the storm; still fled, like foam _345 Down the steep cataract of a wintry river; Now pausing on the edge of the riven wave; Now leaving far behind the bursting mass That fell, convulsing ocean: safely fled— As if that frail and wasted human form, _350 Had been an elemental god.

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

The boat pursued The windings of the cavern. Daylight shone _370 At length upon that gloomy river’s flow; Now, where the fiercest war among the waves Is calm, on the unfathomable stream The boat moved slowly. Where the mountain, riven, Exposed those black depths to the azure sky, _375 Ere yet the flood’s enormous volume fell Even to the base of Caucasus, with sound That shook the everlasting rocks, the mass Filled with one whirlpool all that ample chasm: Stair above stair the eddying waters rose, _380 Circling immeasurably fast, and laved With alternating dash the gnarled roots Of mighty trees, that stretched their giant arms In darkness over it. I’ the midst was left, Reflecting, yet distorting every cloud, _385 A pool of

treacherous and tremendous calm. Seized by the sway of the ascending stream, With dizzy swiftness, round, and round, and round, Ridge after ridge the straining boat arose, Till on the verge of the extremest curve, _390 Where, through an opening of the rocky bank, The waters overflow, and a smooth spot Of glassy quiet mid those battling tides Is left, the boat paused shuddering.—Shall it sink Down the abyss? Shall the reverting stress _395 Of that resistless gulf embosom it? Now shall it fall?—A wandering stream of wind, Breathed from the west, has caught the expanded sail, And, lo! with gentle motion, between banks Of mossy slope, and on a placid stream, _400 Beneath a woven grove it sails, and, hark! The ghastly torrent mingles its far roar, With the breeze murmuring in the musical woods. Where the embowering trees recede, and leave A little space of green expanse, the cove _405 Is closed by meeting banks, whose yellow flowers For ever gaze on their own drooping eyes, Reflected in the crystal calm. The wave Of the boat’s motion marred their pensive task, Which naught but vagrant bird, or wanton wind, _410 Or falling spear-grass, or their own decay Had e’er disturbed before. The Poet longed To deck with their bright hues his withered hair, But on his heart its solitude returned, And he forbore. Not the strong impulse hid _415 In those flushed cheeks, bent eyes, and shadowy frame Had yet performed its ministry: it hung Upon his life, as lightning in a cloud Gleams, hovering ere it vanish, ere the floods Of night close over it. The noonday sun _420 Now shone upon the forest, one vast mass Of mingling shade, whose brown magnificence A narrow vale embosoms. There, huge caves, Scooped in the dark base of their aery rocks, Mocking its moans, respond and roar for ever. _425 The meeting boughs and implicated leaves Wove twilight o’er the Poet’s path, as led By love, or dream, or god, or mightier Death, He sought in Nature’s dearest haunt some bank, Her cradle, and his sepulchre. More dark _430 And dark the shades accumulate. The oak, Expanding its immense and knotty arms, Embraces the light beech. The pyramids Of the tall cedar overarching frame Most solemn domes within, and far below, _435 Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky, The ash and

the acacia floating hang Tremulous and pale. Like restless serpents, clothed In rainbow and in fire, the parasites, Starred with ten thousand blossoms, flow around _440 The grey trunks, and, as gamesome infants' eyes, With gentle meanings, and most innocent wiles, Fold their beams round the hearts of those that love, These twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs Uniting their close union; the woven leaves _445 Make net-work of the dark blue light of day, And the night's noontide clearness, mutable As shapes in the weird clouds. Soft mossy lawns Beneath these canopies extend their swells, Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed with blooms _450 Minute yet beautiful. One darkest glen Sends from its woods of musk-rose, twined with jasmine, A soul-dissolving odour to invite To some more lovely mystery. Through the dell, Silence and Twilight here, twin-sisters, keep _455 Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades, Like vaporous shapes half-seen; beyond, a well, Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent wave, Images all the woven boughs above, And each depending leaf, and every speck _460 Of azure sky, darting between their chasms; Nor aught else in the liquid mirror laves Its portraiture, but some inconstant star Between one foliaged lattice twinkling fair, Or painted bird, sleeping beneath the moon, _465 Or gorgeous insect floating motionless, Unconscious of the day, ere yet his wings Have spread their glories to the gaze of noon.

Hither the Poet came. His eyes beheld Their own wan light through the reflected lines _470 Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark depth Of that still fountain; as the human heart, Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave, Sees its own treacherous likeness there. He heard The motion of the leaves, the grass that sprung _475 Startled and glanced and trembled even to feel An unaccustomed presence, and the sound Of the sweet brook that from the secret springs Of that dark fountain rose. A Spirit seemed To stand beside him—clothed in no bright robes _480 Of shadowy silver or enshrining light, Borrowed from aught the visible world affords Of grace, or majesty, or mystery;— But, undulating woods, and silent well, And leaping

rivulet, and evening gloom _485 Now deepening the dark shades, for speech assuming, Held commune with him, as if he and it Were all that was,—only…when his regard Was raised by intense pensiveness,…two eyes, Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought, _490 And seemed with their serene and azure smiles To beckon him.

Obedient to the light That shone within his soul, he went, pursuing The windings of the dell.—The rivulet, Wanton and wild, through many a green ravine _495 Beneath the forest flowed. Sometimes it fell Among the moss with hollow harmony Dark and profound. Now on the polished stones It danced; like childhood laughing as it went: Then, through the plain in tranquil wanderings crept, _500 Reflecting every herb and drooping bud That overhung its quietness.—'O stream! Whose source is inaccessibly profound, Whither do thy mysterious waters tend? Thou imagest my life. Thy darksome stillness, _505 Thy dazzling waves, thy loud and hollow gulfs, Thy searchless fountain, and invisible course Have each their type in me; and the wide sky. And measureless ocean may declare as soon What oozy cavern or what wandering cloud _510 Contains thy waters, as the universe Tell where these living thoughts reside, when stretched Upon thy flowers my bloodless limbs shall waste I' the passing wind!'

Beside the grassy shore Of the small stream he went; he did impress _515 On the green moss his tremulous step, that caught Strong shuddering from his burning limbs. As one Roused by some joyous madness from the couch Of fever, he did move; yet, not like him, Forgetful of the grave, where, when the flame _520 Of his frail exultation shall be spent, He must descend. With rapid steps he went Beneath the shade of trees, beside the flow Of the wild babbling rivulet; and now The forest's solemn canopies were changed _525 For the uniform and lightsome evening sky. Grey rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemmed The struggling brook; tall spires of windlestrae Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope, And nought but gnarled roots of ancient pines _530 Branchless and blasted, clenched with

grasping roots The unwilling soil. A gradual change was here, Yet ghastly. For, as fast years flow away, The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin And white, and where irradiate dewy eyes _535 Had shone, gleam stony orbs:—so from his steps Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds And musical motions. Calm, he still pursued The stream, that with a larger volume now _540 Rolled through the labyrinthine dell; and there Fretted a path through its descending curves With its wintry speed. On every side now rose Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms, Lifted their black and barren pinnacles _545 In the light of evening, and its precipice Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above, Mid toppling stones, black gulfs and yawning caves, Whose windings gave ten thousand various tongues To the loud stream. Lo! where the pass expands _550 Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks, And seems, with its accumulated crags, To overhang the world: for wide expand Beneath the wan stars and descending moon Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams, _555 Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom Of leaden-coloured even, and fiery hills Mingling their flames with twilight, on the verge Of the remote horizon. The near scene, In naked and severe simplicity, _560 Made contrast with the universe. A pine, Rock-rooted, stretched athwart the vacancy Its swinging boughs, to each inconstant blast Yielding one only response, at each pause In most familiar cadence, with the howl _565 The thunder and the hiss of homeless streams Mingling its solemn song, whilst the broad river Foaming and hurrying o’er its rugged path, Fell into that immeasurable void Scattering its waters to the passing winds. _570

Yet the grey precipice and solemn pine And torrent were not all;—one silent nook Was there. Even on the edge of that vast mountain, Upheld by knotty roots and fallen rocks, It overlooked in its serenity _575 The dark earth, and the bending vault of stars. It was a tranquil spot, that seemed to smile Even in the lap of horror. Ivy clasped The fissured stones with its entwining arms, And did embower with leaves for ever green, _580 And berries dark, the smooth and even space Of its inviolated

floor, and here The children of the autumnal whirlwind bore, In wanton sport, those bright leaves, whose decay, Red, yellow, or ethereally pale, _585 Rivals the pride of summer. 'Tis the haunt Of every gentle wind, whose breath can teach The wilds to love tranquillity. One step, One human step alone, has ever broken The stillness of its solitude:—one voice _590 Alone inspired its echoes;—even that voice Which hither came, floating among the winds, And led the loveliest among human forms To make their wild haunts the depository Of all the grace and beauty that endued _595 Its motions, render up its majesty, Scatter its music on the unfeeling storm, And to the damp leaves and blue cavern mould, Nurses of rainbow flowers and branching moss, Commit the colours of that varying cheek, _600 That snowy breast, those dark and drooping eyes.

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

When on the threshold of the green recess _625 The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew that death Was on him. Yet a little, ere it fled, Did he resign his high and holy soul To images of the majestic past, That paused within his passive being now, _630 Like winds that bear sweet music, when they breathe Through some dim latticed

chamber. He did place His pale lean hand upon the rugged trunk Of the old pine. Upon an ivied stone Reclined his languid head, his limbs did rest, _635 Diffused and motionless, on the smooth brink Of that obscurest chasm;—and thus he lay, Surrendering to their final impulses The hovering powers of life. Hope and despair, The torturers, slept; no mortal pain or fear _640 Marred his repose; the influxes of sense, And his own being unalloyed by pain, Yet feebler and more feeble, calmly fed The stream of thought, till he lay breathing there At peace, and faintly smiling:—his last sight _645 Was the great moon, which o’er the western line Of the wide world her mighty horn suspended, With whose dun beams inwoven darkness seemed To mingle. Now upon the jagged hills It rests; and still as the divided frame _650 Of the vast meteor sunk, the Poet’s blood, That ever beat in mystic sympathy With nature’s ebb and flow, grew feebler still: And when two lessening points of light alone Gleamed through the darkness, the alternate gasp _655 Of his faint respiration scarce did stir The stagnate night:—till the minutest ray Was quenched, the pulse yet lingered in his heart. It paused—it fluttered. But when heaven remained Utterly black, the murky shades involved _660 An image, silent, cold, and motionless, As their own voiceless earth and vacant air. Even as a vapour fed with golden beams That ministered on sunlight, ere the west Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame— _665 No sense, no motion, no divinity— A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings The breath of heaven did wander—a bright stream Once fed with many-voiced waves—a dream Of youth, which night and time have quenched for ever, _670 Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered now.

Oh, for Medea’s wondrous alchemy, Which wheresoe’er it fell made the earth gleam With bright flowers, and the wintry boughs exhale From vernal blooms fresh fragrance! O, that God, _675 Profuse of poisons, would concede the chalice Which but one living man has drained, who now, Vessel of deathless wrath, a slave that feels No proud exemption in the blighting curse He bears, over the world wanders for ever, _680 Lone as incarnate death! O, that the dream Of dark magician in his

visioned cave, Raking the cinders of a crucible For life and power, even when his feeble hand Shakes in its last decay, were the true law _685 Of this so lovely world! But thou art fled, Like some frail exhalation; which the dawn Robes in its golden beams,—ah! thou hast fled! The brave, the gentle and the beautiful, The child of grace and genius. Heartless things _690 Are done and said i' the world, and many worms And beasts and men live on, and mighty Earth From sea and mountain, city and wilderness, In vesper low or joyous orison, Lifts still its solemn voice:—but thou art fled— _695 Thou canst no longer know or love the shapes Of this phantasmal scene, who have to thee Been purest ministers, who are, alas! Now thou art not. Upon those pallid lips So sweet even in their silence, on those eyes _700 That image sleep in death, upon that form Yet safe from the worm's outrage, let no tear Be shed—not even in thought. Nor, when those hues Are gone, and those divinest lineaments, Worn by the senseless wind, shall live alone _705 In the frail pauses of this simple strain, Let not high verse, mourning the memory Of that which is no more, or painting's woe Or sculpture, speak in feeble imagery Their own cold powers. Art and eloquence, _710 And all the shows o' the world are frail and vain To weep a loss that turns their lights to shade. It is a woe "too deep for tears," when all Is reft at once, when some surpassing Spirit, Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves _715 Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans, The passionate tumult of a clinging hope; But pale despair and cold tranquillity, Nature's vast frame, the web of human things, Birth and the grave, that are not as they were. _720

Notes: _219 Conduct edition 1816. See "Editor's Notes". _530 roots edition 1816: query stumps or trunks. See "Editor's Notes".

NOTE ON ALASTOR, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

"Alastor" is written in a very different tone from "Queen Mab". In the latter, Shelley poured out all the cherished speculations of his youth—all the irrepressible emotions of sympathy, censure, and hope, to which the present suffering, and what he

considers the proper destiny of his fellow-creatures, gave birth. “Alastor”, on the contrary, contains an individual interest only. A very few years, with their attendant events, had checked the ardour of Shelley’s hopes, though he still thought them well-grounded, and that to advance their fulfilment was the noblest task man could achieve.

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

As soon as the peace of 1814 had opened the Continent, he went abroad. He visited some of the more magnificent scenes of Switzerland, and returned to England from Lucerne, by the Reuss and the Rhine. This river-navigation enchanted him. In his favourite poem of “Thalaba”, his imagination had been excited by a description of such a voyage. In the summer of 1815, after a tour along the southern coast of Devonshire and a visit to Clifton, he rented a house on Bishopgate Heath, on the borders of Windsor Forest, where he enjoyed several months of comparative health and tranquil happiness. The later summer months were warm and dry. Accompanied by a few friends, he visited the source of the Thames, making a voyage in a wherry from Windsor to Crichlade. His beautiful stanzas in the churchyard of Lechlade

were written on that occasion. “Alastor” was composed on his return. He spent his days under the oak-shades of Windsor Great Park; and the magnificent woodland was a fitting study to inspire the various descriptions of forest scenery we find in the poem.

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

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THE REVOLT OF ISLAM.

A POEM IN TWELVE CANTOS.

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

Pind. Pyth. x.

[Composed in the neighbourhood of Bisham Wood, near Great Marlow, Bucks, 1817 (April-September 23); printed, with title (dated 1818), “Laon and Cythna; or, The Revolution of the Golden City: A Vision of the Nineteenth Century”, October, November, 1817, but suppressed, pending revision, by the publishers, C & J. Ollier. (A few copies had got out, but these were recalled, and some recovered.) Published,

with a fresh title-page and twenty-seven cancel-leaves, as “The Revolt of Islam”, January 10, 1818. Sources of the text are (1) “Laon and Cythna”, 1818; (2) “The Revolt of Islam”, 1818; (3) “Poetical Works”, 1839, editions 1st and 2nd—both edited by Mrs. Shelley. A copy, with several pages missing, of the “Preface”, the Dedication”, and “Canto 1” of “Laon and Cythna” is amongst the Shelley manuscripts at the Bodleian. For a full collation of this manuscript see Mr. C.D. Locock’s “Examination of the Shelley Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library”. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903. Two manuscript fragments from the Hunt papers are also extant: one (twenty-four lines) in the possession of Mr. W.M. Rossetti, another (9 23 9 to 29 6) in that of Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B. See “The Shelley Library”, pages 83-86, for an account of the copy of “Laon” upon which Shelley worked in revising for publication.]

AUTHOR’S PREFACE.

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

For this purpose I have chosen a story of human passion in its most universal character, diversified with moving and romantic adventures, and appealing, in

contempt of all artificial opinions or institutions, to the common sympathies of every human breast. I have made no attempt to recommend the motives which I would substitute for those at present governing mankind, by methodical and systematic argument. I would only awaken the feelings, so that the reader should see the beauty of true virtue, and be incited to those inquiries which have led to my moral and political creed, and that of some of the sublimest intellects in the world. The Poem therefore (with the exception of the first canto, which is purely introductory) is narrative, not didactic. It is a succession of pictures illustrating the growth and progress of individual mind aspiring after excellence, and devoted to the love of mankind; its influence in refining and making pure the most daring and uncommon impulses of the imagination, the understanding, and the senses; its impatience at 'all the oppressions which are done under the sun;' its tendency to awaken public hope, and to enlighten and improve mankind; the rapid effects of the application of that tendency; the awakening of an immense nation from their slavery and degradation to a true sense of moral dignity and freedom; the bloodless dethronement of their oppressors, and the unveiling of the religious frauds by which they had been deluded into submission; the tranquillity of successful patriotism, and the universal toleration and benevolence of true philanthropy; the treachery and barbarity of hired soldiers; vice not the object of punishment and hatred, but kindness and pity; the faithlessness of tyrants; the confederacy of the Rulers of the World and the restoration of the expelled Dynasty by foreign arms; the massacre and extermination of the Patriots, and the victory of established power; the consequences of legitimate despotism,—civil war, famine, plague, superstition, and an utter extinction of the domestic affections; the judicial murder of the advocates of Liberty; the temporary triumph of oppression, that secure earnest of its final and inevitable fall; the transient nature of ignorance and error and the eternity of genius and virtue. Such is the series of delineations of which the Poem consists. And, if the lofty passions with which it has been my scope to distinguish this story shall not excite in the reader a generous

impulse, an ardent thirst for excellence, an interest profound and strong such as belongs to no meaner desires, let not the failure be imputed to a natural unfitness for human sympathy in these sublime and animating themes. It is the business of the Poet to communicate to others the pleasure and the enthusiasm arising out of those images and feelings in the vivid presence of which within his own mind consists at once his inspiration and his reward.

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

The French Revolution may be considered as one of those manifestations of a general state of feeling among civilised mankind produced by a defect of correspondence between the knowledge existing in society and the improvement or gradual abolition of political institutions. The year 1788 may be assumed as the epoch of one of the most important crises produced by this feeling. The sympathies connected with that event extended to every bosom. The most generous and amiable natures were those which participated the most extensively in these sympathies. But such a degree of unmingled good was expected as it was impossible to realise. If the Revolution had been in every respect prosperous, then misrule and superstition would lose half their claims to our abhorrence, as fetters which the captive can

unlock with the slightest motion of his fingers, and which do not eat with poisonous rust into the soul. The revulsion occasioned by the atrocities of the demagogues, and the re-establishment of successive tyrannies in France, was terrible, and felt in the remotest corner of the civilised world. Could they listen to the plea of reason who had groaned under the calamities of a social state according to the provisions of which one man riots in luxury whilst another famishes for want of bread? Can he who the day before was a trampled slave suddenly become liberal-minded, forbearing, and independent? This is the consequence of the habits of a state of society to be produced by resolute perseverance and indefatigable hope, and long-suffering and long-believing courage, and the systematic efforts of generations of men of intellect and virtue. Such is the lesson which experience teaches now. But, on the first reverses of hope in the progress of French liberty, the sanguine eagerness for good overleaped the solution of these questions, and for a time extinguished itself in the unexpectedness of their result. Thus, many of the most ardent and tender-hearted of the worshippers of public good have been morally ruined by what a partial glimpse of the events they deplored appeared to show as the melancholy desolation of all their cherished hopes. Hence gloom and misanthropy have become the characteristics of the age in which we live, the solace of a disappointment that unconsciously finds relief only in the wilful exaggeration of its own despair. This influence has tainted the literature of the age with the hopelessness of the minds from which it flows. Metaphysics (I ought to except sir W. Drummond's "Academical Questions"; a volume of very acute and powerful metaphysical criticism.), and inquiries into moral and political science, have become little else than vain attempts to revive exploded superstitions, or sophisms like those of Mr. Malthus (It is remarkable, as a symptom of the revival of public hope, that Mr. Malthus has assigned, in the later editions of his work, an indefinite dominion to moral restraint over the principle of population. This concession answers all the inferences from his doctrine unfavourable to human improvement, and reduces the

“Essay on Population” to a commentary illustrative of the unanswerableness of “Political Justice”.), calculated to lull the oppressors of mankind into a security of everlasting triumph. Our works of fiction and poetry have been overshadowed by the same infectious gloom. But mankind appear to me to be emerging from their trance. I am aware, methinks, of a slow, gradual, silent change. In that belief I have composed the following Poem.

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

There is an education peculiarly fitted for a Poet, without which genius and sensibility can hardly fill the circle of their capacities. No education, indeed, can entitle to this appellation a dull and unobservant mind, or one, though neither dull nor unobservant, in which the channels of communication between thought and expression have been obstructed or closed. How far it is my fortune to belong to either of the latter classes I cannot know. I aspire to be something better. The circumstances of my accidental education have been favourable to this ambition. I have been familiar from boyhood with mountains and lakes and the sea, and the solitude of forests: Danger, which sports upon the brink of precipices, has been my playmate. I have trodden the glaciers of the Alps, and lived under the eye of Mont

Blanc. I have been a wanderer among distant fields. I have sailed down mighty rivers, and seen the sun rise and set, and the stars come forth, whilst I have sailed night and day down a rapid stream among mountains. I have seen populous cities, and have watched the passions which rise and spread, and sink and change, amongst assembled multitudes of men. I have seen the theatre of the more visible ravages of tyranny and war, cities and villages reduced to scattered groups of black and roofless houses, and the naked inhabitants sitting famished upon their desolated thresholds. I have conversed with living men of genius. The poetry of ancient Greece and Rome, and modern Italy, and our own country, has been to me, like external nature, a passion and an enjoyment. Such are the sources from which the materials for the imagery of my Poem have been drawn. I have considered Poetry in its most comprehensive sense; and have read the Poets and the Historians and the Metaphysicians (In this sense there may be such a thing as perfectibility in works of fiction, notwithstanding the concession often made by the advocates of human improvement, that perfectibility is a term applicable only to science.) whose writings have been accessible to me, and have looked upon the beautiful and majestic scenery of the earth, as common sources of those elements which it is the province of the Poet to embody and combine. Yet the experience and the feelings to which I refer do not in themselves constitute men Poets, but only prepares them to be the auditors of those who are. How far I shall be found to possess that more essential attribute of Poetry, the power of awakening in others sensations like those which animate my own bosom, is that which, to speak sincerely, I know not; and which, with an acquiescent and contented spirit, I expect to be taught by the effect which I shall produce upon those whom I now address.

I have avoided, as I have said before, the imitation of any contemporary style. But there must be a resemblance, which does not depend upon their own will, between all the writers of any particular age. They cannot escape from subjection to a common influence which arises out of an infinite combination of circumstances

belonging to the times in which they live; though each is in a degree the author of the very influence by which his being is thus pervaded. Thus, the tragic poets of the age of Pericles; the Italian revivers of ancient learning; those mighty intellects of our own country that succeeded the Reformation, the translators of the Bible, Shakespeare, Spenser, the Dramatists of the reign of Elizabeth, and Lord Bacon (Milton stands alone in the age which he illumined.); the colder spirits of the interval that succeeded;—all resemble each other, and differ from every other in their several classes. In this view of things, Ford can no more be called the imitator of Shakespeare than Shakespeare the imitator of Ford. There were perhaps few other points of resemblance between these two men than that which the universal and inevitable influence of their age produced. And this is an influence which neither the meanest scribbler nor the sublimest genius of any era can escape; and which I have not attempted to escape.

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

But in this, as in every other respect, I have written fearlessly. It is the misfortune of this age that its Writers, too thoughtless of immortality, are exquisitely sensible to temporary praise or blame. They write with the fear of Reviews before their eyes. This system of criticism sprang up in that torpid interval when Poetry was not. Poetry, and the art which professes to regulate and limit its powers, cannot subsist

together. Longinus could not have been the contemporary of Homer, nor Boileau of Horace. Yet this species of criticism never presumed to assert an understanding of its own; it has always, unlike true science, followed, not preceded, the opinion of mankind, and would even now bribe with worthless adulation some of our greatest Poets to impose gratuitous fetters on their own imaginations, and become unconscious accomplices in the daily murder of all genius either not so aspiring or not so fortunate as their own. I have sought therefore to write, as I believe that Homer, Shakespeare, and Milton wrote, with an utter disregard of anonymous censure. I am certain that calumny and misrepresentation, though it may move me to compassion, cannot disturb my peace. I shall understand the expressive silence of those sagacious enemies who dare not trust themselves to speak. I shall endeavour to extract, from the midst of insult and contempt and maledictions, those admonitions which may tend to correct whatever imperfections such censurers may discover in this my first serious appeal to the Public. If certain Critics were as clear-sighted as they are malignant, how great would be the benefit to be derived from their virulent writings! As it is, I fear I shall be malicious enough to be amused with their paltry tricks and lame invectives. Should the Public judge that my composition is worthless, I shall indeed bow before the tribunal from which Milton received his crown of immortality, and shall seek to gather, if I live, strength from that defeat, which may nerve me to some new enterprise of thought which may not be worthless. I cannot conceive that Lucretius, when he meditated that poem whose doctrines are yet the basis of our metaphysical knowledge, and whose eloquence has been the wonder of mankind, wrote in awe of such censure as the hired sophists of the impure and superstitious noblemen of Rome might affix to what he should produce. It was at the period when Greece was led captive and Asia made tributary to the Republic, fast verging itself to slavery and ruin, that a multitude of Syrian captives, bigoted to the worship of their obscene Ashtaroth, and the unworthy successors of Socrates and Zeno, found there a precarious subsistence by administering, under the name of

freedmen, to the vices and vanities of the great. These wretched men were skilled to plead, with a superficial but plausible set of sophisms, in favour of that contempt for virtue which is the portion of slaves, and that faith in portents, the most fatal substitute for benevolence in the imaginations of men, which, arising from the enslaved communities of the East, then first began to overwhelm the western nations in its stream. Were these the kind of men whose disapprobation the wise and lofty-minded Lucretius should have regarded with a salutary awe? The latest and perhaps the meanest of those who follow in his footsteps would disdain to hold life on such conditions.

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

I trust that the reader will carefully distinguish between those opinions which have a dramatic propriety in reference to the characters which they are designed to elucidate, and such as are properly my own. The erroneous and degrading idea which men have conceived of a Supreme Being, for instance, is spoken against, but not the Supreme Being itself. The belief which some superstitious persons whom I have brought upon the stage entertain of the Deity, as injurious to the character of his benevolence, is widely different from my own. In recommending also a great and important change in the spirit which animates the social institutions of mankind, I have avoided all flattery to those violent and malignant passions of our nature which are ever on the watch to mingle with and to alloy the most beneficial

innovations. There is no quarter given to Revenge, or Envy, or Prejudice. Love is celebrated everywhere as the sole law which should govern the moral world.

DEDICATION.

There is no danger to a man that knows What life and death is: there's not any law Exceeds his knowledge; neither is it lawful That he should stoop to any other law.—CHAPMAN.

TO MARY — —.

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

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

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

4. And then I clasped my hands and looked around— —But none was near to mock my streaming eyes, Which poured their warm drops on the sunny ground— _30 So without shame I spake:—'I will be wise, And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies Such power, for I grow weary to behold The selfish and the strong still tyrannise

Without reproach or check.’ I then controlled _35 My tears, my heart grew calm, and I was meek and bold.

5. And from that hour did I with earnest thought Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore; Yet nothing that my tyrants knew or taught I cared to learn, but from that secret store _40 Wrought linked armour for my soul, before It might walk forth to war among mankind; Thus power and hope were strengthened more and more Within me, till there came upon my mind A sense of loneliness, a thirst with which I pined. _45

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

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

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

9. Now has descended a serener hour, And with inconstant fortune, friends return; Though suffering leaves the knowledge and the power _75 Which says:—Let scorn be not repaid with scorn. And from thy side two gentle babes are born To fill our

home with smiles, and thus are we Most fortunate beneath life's beaming morn; And these delights, and thou, have been to me _80 The parents of the Song I consecrate to thee.

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

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

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

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

14. Truth's deathless voice pauses among mankind! If there must be no response to

my cry— If men must rise and stamp with fury blind _120 On his pure name who loves them,—thou and I, Sweet friend! can look from our tranquillity Like lamps into the world’s tempestuous night,— Two tranquil stars, while clouds are passing by Which wrap them from the foundering seaman’s sight, _125 That burn from year to year with unextinguished light.

NOTES. _54 cloaking edition 1818. See notes at end.

CANTO 1.

1. When the last hope of trampled France had failed Like a brief dream of unremaining glory, From visions of despair I rose, and scaled The peak of an aerial promontory, _130 Whose caverned base with the vexed surge was hoary; And saw the golden dawn break forth, and waken Each cloud, and every wave:—but transitory The calm; for sudden, the firm earth was shaken, As if by the last wreck its frame were overtaken. _135

2. So as I stood, one blast of muttering thunder Burst in far peals along the waveless deep, When, gathering fast, around, above, and under, Long trains of tremulous mist began to creep, Until their complicating lines did steep _140 The orient sun in shadow:—not a sound Was heard; one horrible repose did keep The forests and the floods, and all around Darkness more dread than night was poured upon the ground.

3. Hark! ’tis the rushing of a wind that sweeps _145 Earth and the ocean. See! the lightnings yawn Deluging Heaven with fire, and the lashed deeps Glitter and boil beneath: it rages on, One mighty stream, whirlwind and waves upthrown, Lightning, and hail, and darkness eddying by. _150 There is a pause—the sea-birds, that were gone Into their caves to shriek, come forth, to spy What calm has fall’n on earth, what light is in the sky.

4. For, where the irresistible storm had cloven That fearful darkness, the blue sky was seen _155 Fretted with many a fair cloud interwoven Most delicately, and the ocean green, Beneath that opening spot of blue serene, Quivered like burning

emerald; calm was spread On all below; but far on high, between _160 Earth and the upper air, the vast clouds fled, Countless and swift as leaves on autumn’s tempest shed.

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

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

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

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

9. A shaft of light upon its wings descended, And every golden feather gleamed

therein— _200 Feather and scale, inextricably blended. The Serpent's mailed and many-coloured skin Shone through the plumes its coils were twined within By many a swoln and knotted fold, and high And far, the neck, receding lithe and thin, _205 Sustained a crested head, which warily Shifted and glanced before the Eagle's steadfast eye.

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

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

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

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

volcano springs.

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

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

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

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

18. And when she saw the wounded Serpent make _280 His path between the waves, her lips grew pale, Parted, and quivered; the tears ceased to break From her immovable eyes; no voice of wail Escaped her; but she rose, and on the gale Loosening her star-bright robe and shadowy hair _285 Poured forth her voice; the

caverns of the vale That opened to the ocean, caught it there, And filled with silver sounds the overflowing air.

19. She spake in language whose strange melody Might not belong to earth. I heard alone, _290 What made its music more melodious be, The pity and the love of every tone; But to the Snake those accents sweet were known His native tongue and hers; nor did he beat The hoar spray idly then, but winding on _295 Through the green shadows of the waves that meet Near to the shore, did pause beside her snowy feet.

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

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

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

23. A boat of rare device, which had no sail _325 But its own curved prow of thin moonstone, Wrought like a web of texture fine and frail, To catch those gentlest winds which are not known To breathe, but by the steady speed alone With which it

cleaves the sparkling sea; and now _330 We are embarked—the mountains hang and frown Over the starry deep that gleams below, A vast and dim expanse, as o’er the waves we go.

24. And as we sailed, a strange and awful tale That Woman told, like such mysterious dream _335 As makes the slumberer’s cheek with wonder pale! ’Twas midnight, and around, a shoreless stream, Wide ocean rolled, when that majestic theme Shrined in her heart found utterance, and she bent Her looks on mine; those eyes a kindling beam _340 Of love divine into my spirit sent, And ere her lips could move, made the air eloquent.

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

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

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

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

29. ‘The Fiend, whose name was Legion: Death, Decay, Earthquake and Blight, and Want, and Madness pale, _380 Winged and wan diseases, an array Numerous as leaves that strew the autumnal gale; Poison, a snake in flowers, beneath the veil Of food and mirth, hiding his mortal head; And, without whom all these might nought avail, _385 Fear, Hatred, Faith, and Tyranny, who spread Those subtle nets which snare the living and the dead.

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

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

32. ‘Then Greece arose, and to its bards and sages, In dream, the golden-pinioned Genii came, Even where they slept amid the night of ages, Steeping their hearts in the divinest flame Which thy breath kindled, Power of holiest name! _410 And oft in cycles since, when darkness gave New weapons to thy foe, their sunlike fame

Upon the combat shone—a light to save, Like Paradise spread forth beyond the shadowy grave.

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

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

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

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

37. ‘These were forebodings of my fate—before A woman’s heart beat in my virgin

breast, It had been nurtured in divinest lore: A dying poet gave me books, and blessed With wild but holy talk the sweet unrest _455 In which I watched him as he died away— A youth with hoary hair—a fleeting guest Of our lone mountains: and this lore did sway My spirit like a storm, contending there alway.

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

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

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

41. ‘’Twas like an eye which seemed to smile on me. I watched, till by the sun made pale, it sank Under the billows of the heaving sea; But from its beams deep love my spirit drank, _490 And to my brain the boundless world now shrank Into one thought—one image—yes, for ever! Even like the dayspring, poured on vapours dank, The beams of that one Star did shoot and quiver Through my benighted

mind—and were extinguished never. _495

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

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

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

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

46. ‘In lonely glens, amid the roar of rivers, When the dim nights were moonless, have I known Joys which no tongue can tell; my pale lip quivers When thought revisits them:—know thou alone, _535 That after many wondrous years were flown,

I was awakened by a shriek of woe; And over me a mystic robe was thrown, By viewless hands, and a bright Star did glow Before my steps—the Snake then met his mortal foe.’ _540

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

48. And swift and swifter grew the vessel’s motion, _550 So that a dizzy trance fell on my brain— Wild music woke me; we had passed the ocean Which girds the pole, Nature’s remotest reign— And we glode fast o’er a pellucid plain Of waters, azure with the noontide day. _555 Ethereal mountains shone around—a Fane Stood in the midst, girt by green isles which lay On the blue sunny deep, resplendent far away.

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

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

51. Winding among the lawny islands fair, Whose blosmy forests starred the shadowy deep, The wingless boat paused where an ivory stair Its fretwork in the

crystal sea did steep, _580 Encircling that vast Fane's aerial heap: We disembarked, and through a portal wide We passed—whose roof of moonstone carved, did keep A glimmering o'er the forms on every side, Sculptures like life and thought, immovable, deep-eyed. _585

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

53. Ten thousand columns in that quivering light _595 Distinct—between whose shafts wound far away The long and labyrinthine aisles—more bright With their own radiance than the Heaven of Day; And on the jasper walls around, there lay Paintings, the poesy of mightiest thought, _600 Which did the Spirit's history display; A tale of passionate change, divinely taught, Which, in their winged dance, unconscious Genii wrought.

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

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

supernatural night.

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

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

58. Wonder and joy a passing faintness threw _640 Over my brow—a hand supported me, Whose touch was magic strength; an eye of blue Looked into mine, like moonlight, soothingly; And a voice said:—'Thou must a listener be This day—two mighty Spirits now return, _645 Like birds of calm, from the world's raging sea, They pour fresh light from Hope's immortal urn; A tale of human power—despair not—list and learn!

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

60. Beneath the darkness of his outspread hair He stood thus beautiful; but there was One Who sate beside him like his shadow there, _660 And held his hand—far

lovelier; she was known To be thus fair, by the few lines alone Which through her floating locks and gathered cloak, Glances of soul-dissolving glory, shone:— None else beheld her eyes—in him they woke _665 Memories which found a tongue as thus he silence broke.

CANTO 2.

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

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

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

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

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

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

7. Out of that Ocean's wrecks had Guilt and Woe Framed a dark dwelling for their homeless thought, And, starting at the ghosts which to and fro Glide o'er its dim and gloomy strand, had brought The worship thence which they each other taught. _725 Well might men loathe their life, well might they turn Even to the ills again from which they sought Such refuge after death!—well might they learn To gaze on this fair world with hopeless unconcern!

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

9. I heard, as all have heard, life's various story, And in no careless heart transcribed the tale; _740 But, from the sneers of men who had grown hoary In shame and scorn, from groans of crowds made pale By famine, from a mother's desolate wail O'er her polluted child, from innocent blood Poured on the earth, and brows anxious

and pale _745 With the heart’s warfare, did I gather food To feed my many thoughts—a tameless multitude!

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

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

12. Such man has been, and such may yet become! Ay, wiser, greater, gentler even than they Who on the fragments of yon shattered dome Have stamped the sign of power—I felt the sway Of the vast stream of ages bear away _770 My floating thoughts—my heart beat loud and fast— Even as a storm let loose beneath the ray Of the still moon, my spirit onward passed Beneath truth’s steady beams upon its tumult cast.

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

14. It must be so—I will arise and waken The multitude, and like a sulphurous hill, _785 Which on a sudden from its snows has shaken The swoon of ages, it shall burst

and fill The world with cleansing fire; it must, it will— It may not be restrained!—and who shall stand Amid the rocking earthquake steadfast still, _790 But Laon? on high Freedom's desert land A tower whose marble walls the leagued storms withstand!

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

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

17. Yes, many an eye with dizzy tears was dim, And oft I thought to clasp my own heart's brother, When I could feel the listener's senses swim, And hear his breath its own swift gaspings smother Even as my words evoked them—and another, _815 And yet another, I did fondly deem, Felt that we all were sons of one great mother; And the cold truth such sad reverse did seem As to awake in grief from some delightful dream.

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

his own had bled.

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

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

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

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

23. She moved upon this earth a shape of brightness, _865 A power, that from its objects scarcely drew One impulse of her being—in her lightness Most like some

radiant cloud of morning dew, Which wanders through the waste air's pathless blue, To nourish some far desert; she did seem _870 Beside me, gathering beauty as she grew, Like the bright shade of some immortal dream Which walks, when tempest sleeps, the wave of life's dark stream.

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

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

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

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

28. And, in the murmur of her dreams was heard _910 Sometimes the name of Laon:—suddenly She would arise, and, like the secret bird Whom sunset wakens,

fill the shore and sky With her sweet accents, a wild melody! Hymns which my soul had woven to Freedom, strong _915 The source of passion, whence they rose, to be; Triumphant strains, which, like a spirit's tongue, To the enchanted waves that child of glory sung—

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

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

31. And this beloved child thus felt the sway Of my conceptions, gathering like a cloud The very wind on which it rolls away: Hers too were all my thoughts, ere yet, endowed _940 With music and with light, their fountains flowed In poesy; and her still and earnest face, Pallid with feelings which intensely glowed Within, was turned on mine with speechless grace, Watching the hopes which there her heart had learned to trace. _945

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

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

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

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

36. This misery was but coldly felt, till she Became my only friend, who had endued My purpose with a wider sympathy; Thus, Cythna mourned with me the servitude _985 In which the half of humankind were mewed Victims of lust and hate, the slaves of slaves, She mourned that grace and power were thrown as food To the hyena lust, who, among graves, Over his loathed meal, laughing in agony, raves. _990

37. And I, still gazing on that glorious child, Even as these thoughts flushed o’er her:—‘Cythna sweet, Well with the world art thou unreconciled; Never will peace and human nature meet Till free and equal man and woman greet _995 Domestic

peace; and ere this power can make In human hearts its calm and holy seat, This slavery must be broken'—as I spake, From Cythna's eyes a light of exultation brake.

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

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

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

41. 'Think'st thou that I shall speak unskilfully, And none will heed me? I remember now, How once, a slave in tortures doomed to die, Was saved, because in accents sweet and low _1030 He sung a song his Judge loved long ago, As he was led to death.—All shall relent Who hear me—tears, as mine have flowed, shall flow, Hearts beat as mine now beats, with such intent As renovates the world; a will omnipotent! _1035

42. 'Yes, I will tread Pride's golden palaces, Through Penury's roofless huts and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CANTO 3.

1. What thoughts had sway o’er Cythna’s lonely slumber That night, I know not; but my own did seem As if they might ten thousand years outnumber _1110 Of waking life, the visions of a dream Which hid in one dim gulf the troubled stream Of mind; a boundless chaos wild and vast, Whose limits yet were never memory’s theme: And I lay struggling as its whirlwinds passed, _1115 Sometimes for rapture sick, sometimes for pain aghast.

2. Two hours, whose mighty circle did embrace More time than might make gray the infant world, Rolled thus, a weary and tumultuous space: When the third came, like

mist on breezes curled, _1120 From my dim sleep a shadow was unfurled: Methought, upon the threshold of a cave I sate with Cythna; drooping briony, pearled With dew from the wild streamlet's shattered wave, Hung, where we sate to taste the joys which Nature gave. _1125

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

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

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

6. And I lay struggling in the impotence Of sleep, while outward life had burst its bound, Though, still deluded, strove the tortured sense _1155 To its dire wanderings to adapt the sound Which in the light of morn was poured around Our dwelling; breathless, pale and unaware I rose, and all the cottage crowded found With armed men, whose glittering swords were bare, _1160 And whose degraded limbs the tyrant's garb did wear.

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

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

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

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

11. What followed then, I know not—for a stroke On my raised arm and naked head, came down, Filling my eyes with blood.—When I awoke, _1200 I felt that they had bound me in my swoon, And up a rock which overhangs the town, By the steep path were bearing me; below, The plain was filled with slaughter,—overthrown The

vineyards and the harvests, and the glow _1205 Of blazing roofs shone far o’er the white Ocean’s flow.

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

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

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

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

16. It was so calm, that scarce the feathery weed Sown by some eagle on the topmost stone Swayed in the air:—so bright, that noon did breed _1245 No shadow

in the sky beside mine own— Mine, and the shadow of my chain alone. Below, the smoke of roofs involved in flame Rested like night, all else was clearly shown In that broad glare; yet sound to me none came, _1250 But of the living blood that ran within my frame.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

25. Methought that grate was lifted, and the seven Who brought me thither four stiff corpses bare, _1325 And from the frieze to the four winds of Heaven Hung them on high by the entangled hair; Swarthy were three—the fourth was very fair; As they

retired, the golden moon upsprung, And eagerly, out in the giddy air, _1330 Leaning that I might eat, I stretched and clung Over the shapeless depth in which those corpses hung.

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

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

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

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

30. As, lifting me, it fell!—What next I heard, Were billows leaping on the harbour-bar, _1370 And the shrill sea-wind, whose breath idly stirred My hair;—I looked abroad, and saw a star Shining beside a sail, and distant far That mountain and its column, the known mark Of those who in the wide deep wandering are, _1375 So that I feared some Spirit, fell and dark, In trance had lain me thus within a fiendish bark.

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

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

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

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

NOTES: _1223 torches' editions 1818, 1839. _1385 bent]meant cj. J. Nettleship.

CANTO 4.

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

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

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

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

5. Thus madness came again,—a milder madness, _1450 Which darkened nought but time's unquiet flow With supernatural shades of clinging sadness; That gentle

Hermit, in my helpless woe, By my sick couch was busy to and fro, Like a strong spirit ministrant of good: _1455 When I was healed, he led me forth to show The wonders of his sylvan solitude, And we together sate by that isle-fretted flood.

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

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

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

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

10. And that the multitude was gathering wide,— _1495 His spirit leaped within his aged frame; In lonely peace he could no more abide, But to the land on which the victor's flame Had fed, my native land, the Hermit came: Each heart was there a shield, and every tongue _1500 Was as a sword of truth—young Laon's name Rallied their secret hopes, though tyrants sung Hymns of triumphant joy our scattered tribes among.

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

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

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

14. 'The tyrants of the Golden City tremble At voices which are heard about the streets; The ministers of fraud can scarce dissemble The lies of their own heart, but when one meets Another at the shrine, he inly weets, _1535 Though he says nothing,

that the truth is known; Murderers are pale upon the judgement-seats, And gold grows vile even to the wealthy crone, And laughter fills the Fane, and curses shake the Throne.

15. ‘Kind thoughts, and mighty hopes, and gentle deeds _1540 Abound, for fearless love, and the pure law Of mild equality and peace, succeeds To faiths which long have held the world in awe, Bloody and false, and cold:—as whirlpools draw All wrecks of Ocean to their chasm, the sway _1545 Of thy strong genius, Laon, which foresaw This hope, compels all spirits to obey, Which round thy secret strength now throng in wide array.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

23. ‘So in the populous City, a young maiden Has baffled Havoc of the prey which he Marks as his own, whene’er with chains o’erladen Men make them arms to hurl down tyranny,— _1615 False arbiter between the bound and free; And o’er the land,

in hamlets and in towns The multitudes collect tumultuously, And throng in arms; but tyranny disowns Their claim, and gathers strength around its trembling thrones. _1620

24. ‘Blood soon, although unwillingly, to shed The free cannot forbear—the Queen of Slaves, The hoodwinked Angel of the blind and dead, Custom, with iron mace points to the graves Where her own standard desolately waves _1625 Over the dust of Prophets and of Kings. Many yet stand in her array—“she paves Her path with human hearts,” and o’er it flings The wildering gloom of her immeasurable wings.

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

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

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

28. ‘If blood be shed, ’tis but a change and choice Of bonds,—from slavery to

cowardice A wretched fall!—Uplift thy charmed voice! Pour on those evil men the love that lies _1660 Hovering within those spirit-soothing eyes— Arise, my friend, farewell!'—As thus he spake, From the green earth lightly I did arise, As one out of dim dreams that doth awake, And looked upon the depth of that reposing lake. _1665

29. I saw my countenance reflected there;— And then my youth fell on me like a wind Descending on still waters—my thin hair Was prematurely gray, my face was lined With channels, such as suffering leaves behind, _1670 Not age; my brow was pale, but in my cheek And lips a flush of gnawing fire did find Their food and dwelling; though mine eyes might speak A subtle mind and strong within a frame thus weak.

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

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

32. Strengthened in heart, yet sad, that aged man I left, with interchange of looks and tears, And lingering speech, and to the Camp began _1695 My war. O'er many a mountain-chain which rears Its hundred crests aloft, my spirit bears My frame; o'er many a dale and many a moor, And gaily now meseems serene earth wears The

blosmy spring's star-bright investiture, _1700 A vision which aught sad from sadness might allure.

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

34. Aye as I went, that maiden who had reared The torch of Truth afar, of whose high deeds The Hermit in his pilgrimage had heard, Haunted my thoughts.—Ah, Hope its sickness feeds With whatsoe'er it finds, or flowers or weeds! _1715 Could she be Cythna?—Was that corpse a shade Such as self-torturing thought from madness breeds? Why was this hope not torture? Yet it made A light around my steps which would not ever fade.

NOTES: _1625 Where]When edition 1818.

CANTO 5.

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

2. All slept but those in watchful arms who stood, And those who sate tending the beacon's light, _1730 And the few sounds from that vast multitude Made silence more profound.—Oh, what a might Of human thought was cradled in that night! How many hearts impenetrably veiled Beat underneath its shade, what secret fight _1735 Evil and good, in woven passions mailed, Waged through that silent

throng—a war that never failed!

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

4. I sate beside him while the morning beam Crept slowly over Heaven, and talked with him Of those immortal hopes, a glorious theme! Which led us forth, until the stars grew dim: _1750 And all the while, methought, his voice did swim As if it drowned in remembrance were Of thoughts which make the moist eyes overbrim: At last, when daylight ‘gan to fill the air, He looked on me, and cried in wonder—‘Thou art here!’ _1755

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

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

7. Like rabid snakes, that sting some gentle child Who brings them food, when winter false and fair _1775 Allures them forth with its cold smiles, so wild They

rage among the camp;—they overbear The patriot hosts—confusion, then despair, Descends like night—when ‘Laon!’ one did cry; Like a bright ghost from Heaven that shout did scare _1780 The slaves, and widening through the vaulted sky, Seemed sent from Earth to Heaven in sign of victory.

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

9. The spear transfixed my arm that was uplifted In swift expostulation, and the blood Gushed round its point: I smiled, and—‘Oh! thou gifted With eloquence which shall not be withstood, _1795 Flow thus!’ I cried in joy, ‘thou vital flood, Until my heart be dry, ere thus the cause For which thou wert aught worthy be subdued— Ah, ye are pale,—ye weep,—your passions pause,— ’Tis well! ye feel the truth of love’s benignant laws. _1800

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

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

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

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

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

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

16. Our armies through the City’s hundred gates _1855 Were poured, like brooks which to the rocky lair Of some deep lake, whose silence them awaits, Throng from the mountains when the storms are there And, as we passed through the calm sunny air A thousand flower-inwoven crowns were shed, _1860 The token flowers of truth

and freedom fair, And fairest hands bound them on many a head, Those angels of love’s heaven that over all was spread.

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

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

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

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

21. Alone, but for one child, who led before him _1900 A graceful dance: the only

living thing Of all the crowd, which thither to adore him Flocked yesterday, who solace sought to bring In his abandonment!—She knew the King Had praised her dance of yore, and now she wove _1905 Its circles, aye weeping and murmuring Mid her sad task of unregarded love, That to no smiles it might his speechless sadness move.

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

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

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

25. The sceptred wretch then from that solitude I drew, and, of his change compassionate, With words of sadness soothed his rugged mood. But he, while pride and fear held deep debate, With sullen guile of ill-dissembled hate _1940 Glared on me as a toothless snake might glare: Pity, not scorn I felt, though desolate The

desolator now, and unaware The curses which he mocked had caught him by the hair.

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

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

28. And he was troubled at a charm withdrawn Thus suddenly; that sceptres ruled no more— That even from gold the dreadful strength was gone, _1965 Which once made all things subject to its power— Such wonder seized him, as if hour by hour The past had come again; and the swift fall Of one so great and terrible of yore, To desolateness, in the hearts of all _1970 Like wonder stirred, who saw such awful change befall.

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

30. And he was faint withal: I sate beside him Upon the earth, and took that child so

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

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

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

33. 'What do ye seek? what fear ye,' then I cried, Suddenly starting forth, 'that ye should shed The blood of Othman?—if your hearts are tried _2010 In the true love of freedom, cease to dread This one poor lonely man—beneath Heaven spread In purest light above us all, through earth— Maternal earth, who doth her sweet smiles shed For all, let him go free; until the worth _2015 Of human nature win from these a second birth.

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

_2025

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

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

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

38. The dawn flowed forth, and from its purple fountains I drank those hopes which make the spirit quail, As to the plain between the misty mountains _2055 And the great City, with a countenance pale, I went:—it was a sight which might avail To make men weep exulting tears, for whom Now first from human power the reverend veil Was torn, to see Earth from her general womb _2060 Pour forth her swarming sons to a fraternal doom:

39. To see, far glancing in the misty morning, The signs of that innumerable host; To hear one sound of many made, the warning Of Earth to Heaven from its free

children tossed, _2065 While the eternal hills, and the sea lost In wavering light, and, starring the blue sky The city’s myriad spires of gold, almost With human joy made mute society— Its witnesses with men who must hereafter be. _2070

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

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

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

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

44. A Form most like the imagined habitant Of silver exhalations sprung from dawn,

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

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

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

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

48. ‘For this wilt thou not henceforth pardon me? Yes, but those joys which silence well requite Forbid reply;—why men have chosen me _2145 To be the Priestess of this holiest rite I scarcely know, but that the floods of light Which flow over the world, have borne me hither To meet thee, long most dear; and now unite Thine

hand with mine, and may all comfort wither _2150 From both the hearts whose pulse in joy now beat together,

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

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

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

51.1. ‘Calm art thou as yon sunset! swift and strong As new-fledged Eagles, beautiful and young, That float among the blinding beams of morning; And underneath thy feet writhe Faith, and Folly, _2185 Custom, and Hell, and mortal Melancholy— Hark! the Earth starts to hear the mighty warning Of thy voice sublime and holy; Its free spirits here assembled See thee, feel thee, know thee

now,— _2190 To thy voice their hearts have trembled Like ten thousand clouds which flow With one wide wind as it flies!— Wisdom! thy irresistible children rise To hail thee, and the elements they chain _2195 And their own will, to swell the glory of thy train.

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

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

51.4 ‘My brethren, we are free! the plains and mountains, The gray sea-shore, the forests and the fountains, Are haunts of happiest dwellers;—man and woman, Their common bondage burst, may freely borrow _2230 From lawless love a solace for their sorrow; For oft we still must weep, since we are human. A stormy night’s serenest morrow, Whose showers are pity’s gentle tears, Whose clouds are smiles of those that die _2235 Like infants without hopes or fears, And whose beams are joys that lie In blended hearts, now holds dominion; The dawn of mind, which upwards

on a pinion Borne, swift as sunrise, far illumines space, _2240 And clasps this barren world in its own bright embrace!

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

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

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

53. Her voice was as a mountain stream which sweeps The withered leaves of

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTES: _2295 flame]light edition 1818.

CANTO 6.

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

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

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

rage and grief and scorn I wept!

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

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

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

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

8. Thus sudden, unexpected feast was spread For the carrion-fowls of Heaven.—I saw the sight— I moved—I lived—as o'er the heaps of dead, _2400 Whose stony

eyes glared in the morning light I trod;—to me there came no thought of flight, But with loud cries of scorn, which whoso heard That dreaded death, felt in his veins the might Of virtuous shame return, the crowd I stirred, _2405 And desperation’s hope in many hearts recurred.

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

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

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

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

13. Within a cave upon the hill were found A bundle of rude pikes, the instrument Of those who war but on their native ground _2445 For natural rights: a shout of joyance sent Even from our hearts the wide air pierced and rent, As those few arms the bravest and the best Seized, and each sixth, thus armed, did now present A line which covered and sustained the rest, _2450 A confident phalanx, which the foes on every side invest.

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

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

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

17. Flaccid and foamy, like a mad dog’s hanging; Want, and Moon-madness, and the pest’s swift Bane _2480 When its shafts smite—while yet its bow is twanging—Have each their mark and sign—some ghastly stain; And this was thine, O War! of

hate and pain Thou loathed slave! I saw all shapes of death And ministered to many, o’er the plain _2485 While carnage in the sunbeam’s warmth did seethe, Till twilight o’er the east wove her serenest wreath.

18. The few who yet survived, resolute and firm Around me fought. At the decline of day Winding above the mountain’s snowy term _2490 New banners shone; they quivered in the ray Of the sun’s unseen orb—ere night the array Of fresh troops hemmed us in—of those brave bands I soon survived alone—and now I lay Vanquished and faint, the grasp of bloody hands _2495 I felt, and saw on high the glare of falling brands,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

26. 'Have thou and I been borne beyond pursuer, _2560 And we are here.'—Then, turning to the steed, She pressed the white moon on his front with pure And rose-like lips, and many a fragrant weed From the green ruin plucked, that he might

feed;— But I to a stone seat that Maiden led, _2565 And, kissing her fair eyes, said, ‘Thou hast need Of rest,’ and I heaped up the courser’s bed In a green mossy nook, with mountain flowers dispread.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

know, Left fear and time unfelt by us alone below?

36. I know not. What are kisses whose fire clasps _2650 The failing heart in languishment, or limb Twined within limb? or the quick dying gasps Of the life meeting, when the faint eyes swim Through tears of a wide mist boundless and dim, In one caress? What is the strong control _2655 Which leads the heart that dizzy steep to climb, Where far over the world those vapours roll Which blend two restless frames in one reposing soul? 37. It is the shadow which doth float unseen, But not unfelt, o'er blind mortality, _2660 Whose divine darkness fled not from that green And lone recess, where lapped in peace did lie Our linked frames, till, from the changing sky That night and still another day had fled; And then I saw and felt. The moon was high, _2665 And clouds, as of a coming storm, were spread Under its orb,—loud winds were gathering overhead.

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

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

40. And such is Nature's law divine, that those Who grow together cannot choose but love, If faith or custom do not interpose, Or common slavery mar what else might move All gentlest thoughts; as in the sacred grove _2690 Which shades the

springs of Ethiopian Nile, That living tree which, if the arrowy dove Strike with her shadow, shrinks in fear awhile, But its own kindred leaves clasps while the sunbeams smile;

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

42. The tones of Cythna's voice like echoes were Of those far murmuring streams; they rose and fell, _2705 Mixed with mine own in the tempestuous air,— And so we sate, until our talk befell Of the late ruin, swift and horrible, And how those seeds of hope might yet be sown, Whose fruit is evil's mortal poison: well, _2710 For us, this ruin made a watch-tower lone, But Cythna's eyes looked faint, and now two days were gone

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

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

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

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

47. Beside the fountain in the market-place Dismounting, I beheld those corpses stare _2750 With horny eyes upon each other's face, And on the earth and on the vacant air, And upon me, close to the waters where I stooped to slake my thirst;—I shrank to taste, For the salt bitterness of blood was there; _2755 But tied the steed beside, and sought in haste If any yet survived amid that ghastly waste.

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

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

work together! _2775

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

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

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

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

54. And joy was ours to meet: she was most pale, Famished, and wet and weary, so I cast My arms around her, lest her steps should fail As to our home we went, and

thus embraced, _2815 Her full heart seemed a deeper joy to taste Than e’er the prosperous know; the steed behind Trod peacefully along the mountain waste; We reached our home ere morning could unbind Night’s latest veil, and on our bridal-couch reclined. _2820

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

NOTES: _2397 -isle. Bradley, who cps. Marianne’s Dream, St. 12. See note at end.

CANTO 7.

1. So we sate joyous as the morning ray _2830 Which fed upon the wrecks of night and storm Now lingering on the winds; light airs did play Among the dewy weeds, the sun was warm, And we sate linked in the inwoven charm Of converse and caresses sweet and deep, _2835 Speechless caresses, talk that might disarm Time, though he wield the darts of death and sleep, And those thrice mortal barbs in his own poison steep.

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

3. She told me a strange tale of strange endurance, Like broken memories of many a heart Woven into one; to which no firm assurance, _2850 So wild were they, could her own faith impart. She said that not a tear did dare to start From the swoln brain,

and that her thoughts were firm When from all mortal hope she did depart, Borne by those slaves across the Ocean's term, _2855 And that she reached the port without one fear infirm.

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

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

6. She told me what a loathsome agony _2875 Is that when selfishness mocks love's delight, Foul as in dream's most fearful imagery, To dally with the mowing dead—that night All torture, fear, or horror made seem light Which the soul dreams or knows, and when the day _2880 Shone on her awful frenzy, from the sight Where like a Spirit in fleshly chains she lay Struggling, aghast and pale the Tyrant fled away.

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

8. The King felt pale upon his noonday throne: At night two slaves he to her chamber sent,— One was a green and wrinkled eunuch, grown _2895 From human

shape into an instrument Of all things ill—distorted, bowed and bent. The other was a wretch from infancy Made dumb by poison; who nought knew or meant But to obey: from the fire isles came he, _2900 A diver lean and strong, of Oman’s coral sea.

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

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

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

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

the sunbeams fell.

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

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

15. ‘The misery of a madness slow and creeping, Which made the earth seem fire, the sea seem air, And the white clouds of noon which oft were sleeping, In the blue heaven so beautiful and fair, Like hosts of ghastly shadows hovering there; _2960 And the sea-eagle looked a fiend, who bore Thy mangled limbs for food!—Thus all things were Transformed into the agony which I wore Even as a poisoned robe around my bosom’s core.

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

17. ‘Methought I was about to be a mother— Month after month went by, and still I dreamed _2975 That we should soon be all to one another, I and my child; and still new pulses seemed To beat beside my heart, and still I deemed There was a babe

within—and, when the rain Of winter through the rifted cavern streamed, _2980 Methought, after a lapse of lingering pain, I saw that lovely shape, which near my heart had lain.

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

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

20. ‘I watched the dawn of her first smiles; and soon When zenith stars were trembling on the wave, Or when the beams of the invisible moon, Or sun, from many a prism within the cave Their gem-born shadows to the water gave, _3005 Her looks would hunt them, and with outspread hand, From the swift lights which might that fountain pave, She would mark one, and laugh, when that command Slighting, it lingered there, and could not understand.

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

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

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

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

25. ‘So now my reason was restored to me I struggled with that dream, which, like a beast Most fierce and beauteous, in my memory Had made its lair, and on my heart did feast; But all that cave and all its shapes, possessed _3050 By thoughts which could not fade, renewed each one Some smile, some look, some gesture which had blessed Me heretofore: I, sitting there alone, Vexed the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan.

26. ‘Time passed, I know not whether months or years; _3055 For day, nor night, nor change of seasons made Its note, but thoughts and unavailing tears: And I became at last even as a shade, A smoke, a cloud on which the winds have preyed, Till it be thin as air; until, one even, _3060 A Nautilus upon the fountain played,

Spreading his azure sail where breath of Heaven Descended not, among the waves and whirlpools driven.

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

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

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

30. ‘We live in our own world, and mine was made From glorious fantasies of hope departed: Aye we are darkened with their floating shade, Or cast a lustre on them—time imparted Such power to me—I became fearless-hearted, _3095 My eye and voice grew firm, calm was my mind, And piercing, like the morn, now it has darted Its lustre on all hidden things, behind Yon dim and fading clouds which load the weary wind.

31. ‘My mind became the book through which I grew _3100 Wise in all human

wisdom, and its cave, Which like a mine I rifled through and through, To me the keeping of its secrets gave— One mind, the type of all, the moveless wave Whose calm reflects all moving things that are, _3105 Necessity, and love, and life, the grave, And sympathy, fountains of hope and fear, Justice, and truth, and time, and the world's natural sphere.

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

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

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

35. 'And thus my prison was the populous earth— Where I saw—even as misery dreams of morn Before the east has given its glory birth— Religion's pomp made desolate by the scorn Of Wisdom's faintest smile, and thrones uptorn, _3140 And dwellings of mild people interspersed With undivided fields of ripening corn, And love made free,—a hope which we have nursed Even with our blood and

tears,—until its glory burst.

36. ‘All is not lost! There is some recompense _3145 For hope whose fountain can be thus profound, Even throned Evil’s splendid impotence, Girt by its hell of power, the secret sound Of hymns to truth and freedom—the dread bound Of life and death passed fearlessly and well, _3150 Dungeons wherein the high resolve is found, Racks which degraded woman’s greatness tell, And what may else be good and irresistible.

37. ‘Such are the thoughts which, like the fires that flare In storm-encompassed isles, we cherish yet _3155 In this dark ruin—such were mine even there; As in its sleep some odorous violet, While yet its leaves with nightly dews are wet, Breathes in prophetic dreams of day’s uprise, Or as, ere Scythian frost in fear has met _3160 Spring’s messengers descending from the skies, The buds foreknow their life—this hope must ever rise.

38. ‘So years had passed, when sudden earthquake rent The depth of ocean, and the cavern cracked With sound, as if the world’s wide continent _3165 Had fallen in universal ruin wracked: And through the cleft streamed in one cataract The stifling waters—when I woke, the flood Whose banded waves that crystal cave had sacked Was ebbing round me, and my bright abode _3170 Before me yawned—a chasm desert, and bare, and broad.

39. ‘Above me was the sky, beneath the sea: I stood upon a point of shattered stone, And heard loose rocks rushing tumultuously With splash and shock into the deep—anon _3175 All ceased, and there was silence wide and lone. I felt that I was free! The Ocean-spray Quivered beneath my feet, the broad Heaven shone Around, and in my hair the winds did play Lingering as they pursued their unimpeded way. _3180

40. ‘My spirit moved upon the sea like wind Which round some thymy cape will lag and hover, Though it can wake the still cloud, and unbind The strength of tempest:

day was almost over, When through the fading light I could discover _3185 A ship approaching—its white sails were fed With the north wind—its moving shade did cover The twilight deep; the mariners in dread Cast anchor when they saw new rocks around them spread.

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

NOTES: _2877 dreams edition 1818. _2994 opprest edition 1818. _3115 lone solitude edition 1818.

CANTO 8.

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

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

3. ‘We passed the islets, borne by wind and stream, And as we sailed, the Mariners came near And thronged around to listen;—in the gleam Of the pale moon I stood,

as one whom fear _3220 May not attaint, and my calm voice did rear; “Ye are all human—yon broad moon gives light To millions who the selfsame likeness wear, Even while I speak—beneath this very night, Their thoughts flow on like ours, in sadness or delight. _3225

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

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

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

7. ‘“Men say that they themselves have heard and seen, Or known from others who have known such things, A Shade, a Form, which Earth and Heaven between _3255 Wields an invisible rod—that Priests and Kings, Custom, domestic sway, ay, all that brings Man’s freeborn soul beneath the oppressor’s heel, Are his strong ministers, and that the stings Of death will make the wise his vengeance feel, _3260 Though

truth and virtue arm their hearts with tenfold steel.

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

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

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

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

12. ‘“To feel the peace of self-contentment’s lot, To own all sympathies, and outrage none, And in the inmost bowers of sense and thought, _3300 Until life’s sunny day

is quite gone down, To sit and smile with Joy, or, not alone, To kiss salt tears from the worn cheek of Woe; To live, as if to love and live were one,— This is not faith or law, nor those who bow _3305 To thrones on Heaven or Earth, such destiny may know.

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

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

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

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

17. ‘“Let all be free and equal!—From your hearts I feel an echo; through my inmost frame Like sweetest sound, seeking its mate, it darts— _3345 Whence come ye, friends? Alas, I cannot name All that I read of sorrow, toil, and shame, On your worn faces; as in legends old Which make immortal the disastrous fame Of conquerors and impostors false and bold, _3350 The discord of your hearts, I in your looks behold.

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

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

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

21. ‘“Yes, it is Hate, that shapeless fiendly thing Of many names, all evil, some divine, _3380 Whom self-contempt arms with a mortal sting; Which, when the heart its snaky folds entwine Is wasted quite, and when it doth repine To gorge such bitter

prey, on all beside It turns with ninefold rage, as with its twine _3385 When Amphisbaena some fair bird has tied, Soon o’er the putrid mass he threats on every side.

22. ‘“Reproach not thine own soul, but know thyself, Nor hate another’s crime, nor loathe thine own. It is the dark idolatry of self, _3390 Which, when our thoughts and actions once are gone, Demands that man should weep, and bleed, and groan; Oh, vacant expiation! Be at rest.— The past is Death’s, the future is thine own; And love and joy can make the foulest breast _3395 A paradise of flowers, where peace might build her nest.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

30. ‘But one was mute; her cheeks and lips most fair, _3460 Changing their hue like lilies newly blown, Beneath a bright acacia’s shadowy hair, Waved by the wind amid the sunny noon, Showed that her soul was quivering; and full soon That Youth arose, and breathlessly did look _3465 On her and me, as for some speechless boon:

I smiled, and both their hands in mine I took, And felt a soft delight from what their spirits shook.

CANTO 9.

1. ‘That night we anchored in a woody bay, And sleep no more around us dared to hover _3470 Than, when all doubt and fear has passed away, It shades the couch of some unresting lover, Whose heart is now at rest: thus night passed over In mutual joy:—around, a forest grew Of poplars and dark oaks, whose shade did cover _3475 The waning stars pranked in the waters blue, And trembled in the wind which from the morning flew.

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

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

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

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

6. ‘I walked through the great City then, but free From shame or fear; those toil-worn Mariners _3515 And happy Maidens did encompass me; And like a subterranean wind that stirs Some forest among caves, the hopes and fears From every human soul, a murmur strange Made as I passed; and many wept, with tears _3520 Of joy and awe, and winged thoughts did range, And half-extinguished words, which prophesied of change.

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

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

9. ‘But soon my human words found sympathy In human hearts: the purest and the best, As friend with friend, made common cause with me, And they were few, but resolute;—the rest, Ere yet success the enterprise had blessed, _3545 Leagued with

me in their hearts;—their meals, their slumber, Their hourly occupations, were possessed By hopes which I had armed to overnumber Those hosts of meaner cares, which life's strong wings encumber.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

18. ‘For gold was as a god whose faith began To fade, so that its worshippers were few, And Faith itself, which in the heart of man Gives shape, voice, name, to spectral Terror, knew _3625 Its downfall, as the altars lonelier grew, Till the Priests stood alone within the fane; The shafts of falsehood unpolluting flew, And the cold

sneers of calumny were vain, The union of the free with discord's brand to stain. _3630

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

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

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

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

23. 'Virtue, and Hope, and Love, like light and Heaven, Surround the world.—We

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

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

25. 'This is the winter of the world;—and here _3685 We die, even as the winds of Autumn fade, Expiring in the frore and foggy air. Behold! Spring comes, though we must pass, who made The promise of its birth,—even as the shade Which from our death, as from a mountain, flings _3690 The future, a broad sunrise; thus arrayed As with the plumes of overshadowing wings, From its dark gulf of chains, Earth like an eagle springs.

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

27. 'In their own hearts the earnest of the hope Which made them great, the good will ever find; And though some envious shade may interlope _3705 Between the effect and it, One comes behind, Who aye the future to the past will bind—Necessity, whose sightless strength for ever Evil with evil, good with good must wind In bands of union, which no power may sever: _3710 They must bring forth

their kind, and be divided never!

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

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

30. ‘Our many thoughts and deeds, our life and love, _3730 Our happiness, and all that we have been, Immortally must live, and burn and move, When we shall be no more;—the world has seen A type of peace; and—as some most serene And lovely spot to a poor maniac’s eye, _3735 After long years, some sweet and moving scene Of youthful hope, returning suddenly, Quells his long madness—thus man shall remember thee.

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

32. ‘The while we two, beloved, must depart, And Sense and Reason, those enchanters fair, Whose wand of power is hope, would bid the heart _3750 That gazed beyond the wormy grave despair: These eyes, these lips, this blood, seems

darkly there To fade in hideous ruin; no calm sleep Peopling with golden dreams the stagnant air, Seems our obscure and rotting eyes to steep _3755 In joy;—but senseless death—a ruin dark and deep!

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

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

35. ‘Alas, our thoughts flow on with stream, whose waters _3775 Return not to their fountain—Earth and Heaven, The Ocean and the Sun, the Clouds their daughters, Winter, and Spring, and Morn, and Noon, and Even, All that we are or know, is darkly driven Towards one gulf.—Lo! what a change is come _3780 Since I first spake—but time shall be forgiven, Though it change all but thee!’—She ceased—night’s gloom Meanwhile had fallen on earth from the sky’s sunless dome.

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

NOTES: _3573 hues of grace edition 1818.

CANTO 10.

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

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

3. Each night, that mighty steed bore me abroad, And I returned with food to our retreat, And dark intelligence; the blood which flowed Over the fields, had stained the courser's feet; Soon the dust drinks that bitter dew,—then meet _3815 The vulture, and the wild dog, and the snake, The wolf, and the hyaena gray, and eat The dead in horrid truce: their throngs did make Behind the steed, a chasm like waves in a ship's wake.

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

5. From every nation of the earth they came, The multitude of moving heartless

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

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

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

8. Myriads had come—millions were on their way; The Tyrant passed, surrounded by the steel Of hired assassins, through the public way, Choked with his country's dead:—his footsteps reel On the fresh blood—he smiles. 'Ay, now I feel _3860 I am a King in truth!' he said, and took His royal seat, and bade the torturing wheel Be brought, and fire, and pincers, and the hook, And scorpions, that his soul on its revenge might look.

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

morn is drawing near;

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

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

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

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

14. First Want, then Plague came on the beasts; their food _3910 Failed, and they drew the breath of its decay. Millions on millions, whom the scent of blood Had lured, or who, from regions far away, Had tracked the hosts in festival array, From

their dark deserts; gaunt and wasting now, _3915 Stalked like fell shades among their perished prey; In their green eyes a strange disease did glow, They sank in hideous spasm, or pains severe and slow.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

22. It was not thirst, but madness! Many saw Their own lean image everywhere, it went A ghastlier self beside them, till the awe Of that dread sight to self-destruction sent _3985 Those shrieking victims; some, ere life was spent, Sought, with a horrid sympathy, to shed Contagion on the sound; and others rent Their matted hair, and cried aloud, ‘We tread On fire! the avenging Power his hell on earth has spread!’ _3990

23. Sometimes the living by the dead were hid. Near the great fountain in the public square, Where corpses made a crumbling pyramid Under the sun, was heard one stifled prayer For life, in the hot silence of the air; _3995 And strange ’twas, amid

that hideous heap to see Some shrouded in their long and golden hair, As if not dead, but slumbering quietly Like forms which sculptors carve, then love to agony.

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

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

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

27. 'O God!' they cried, 'we know our secret pride Has scorned thee, and thy worship, and thy name; Secure in human power we have defied Thy fearful might; we bend in fear and shame _4030 Before thy presence; with the dust we claim Kindred; be merciful, O King of Heaven! Most justly have we suffered for thy fame Made dim, but be at length our sins forgiven, Ere to despair and death thy worshippers be driven. _4035

28. 'O King of Glory! thou alone hast power! Who can resist thy will? who can

restrain Thy wrath, when on the guilty thou dost shower The shafts of thy revenge, a blistering rain? Greatest and best, be merciful again! _4040 Have we not stabbed thine enemies, and made The Earth an altar, and the Heavens a fane, Where thou wert worshipped with their blood, and laid Those hearts in dust which would thy searchless works have weighed?

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

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

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

32. ’Twas an Iberian Priest from whom it came, A zealous man, who led the legioned West, With words which faith and pride had steeped in flame, To quell the unbelievers; a dire guest _4075 Even to his friends was he, for in his breast Did hate and guile lie watchful, intertwined, Twin serpents in one deep and winding nest; He

loathed all faith beside his own, and pined To wreak his fear of Heaven in vengeance on mankind. _4080

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

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

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

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

37. 'Ay, there is famine in the gulf of hell, Its giant worms of fire for ever yawn.— Their lurid eyes are on us! those who fell By the swift shafts of pestilence ere dawn,

_4120 Are in their jaws! they hunger for the spawn Of Satan, their own brethren, who were sent To make our souls their spoil. See! see! they fawn Like dogs, and they will sleep with luxury spent, When those detested hearts their iron fangs have rent! _4125

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

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

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

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

equal King.’

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

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

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

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

46. The noontide sun was darkened with that smoke, The winds of eve dispersed those ashes gray. The madness which these rites had lulled, awoke _4200 Again at

sunset.—Who shall dare to say The deeds which night and fear brought forth, or weigh In balance just the good and evil there? He might man's deep and searchless heart display, And cast a light on those dim labyrinths, where _4205 Hope, near imagined chasms, is struggling with despair.

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

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

NOTES: _3834 native home edition 1818. _3967 earthquakes edition 1818. _4176 reptiles']reptiles edition 1818.

CANTO 11.

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

2. A cloud was hanging o'er the western mountains; Before its blue and moveless depth were flying _4235 Gray mists poured forth from the unresting fountains Of

darkness in the North:—the day was dying:— Sudden, the sun shone forth, its beams were lying Like boiling gold on Ocean, strange to see, And on the shattered vapours, which defying _4240 The power of light in vain, tossed restlessly In the red Heaven, like wrecks in a tempestuous sea.

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

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

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

6. She would have clasped me to her glowing frame; _4270 Those warm and odorous lips might soon have shed On mine the fragrance and the invisible flame Which now the cold winds stole;—she would have laid Upon my languid heart her dearest head; I might have heard her voice, tender and sweet; _4275 Her eyes, mingling with mine, might soon have fed My soul with their own joy.—One

moment yet I gazed—we parted then, never again to meet!

7. Never but once to meet on Earth again! She heard me as I fled—her eager tone _4280 Sunk on my heart, and almost wove a chain Around my will to link it with her own, So that my stern resolve was almost gone. ‘I cannot reach thee! whither dost thou fly? My steps are faint—Come back, thou dearest one— _4285 Return, ah me! return!’—The wind passed by On which those accents died, faint, far, and lingeringly.

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

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

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

11. Why became cheeks, wan with the kiss of death, _4315 Paler from hope? they had sustained despair. Why watched those myriads with suspended breath Sleepless

a second night? they are not here, The victims, and hour by hour, a vision drear, Warm corpses fall upon the clay-cold dead; _4320 And even in death their lips are wreathed with fear.— The crowd is mute and moveless—overhead Silent Arcturus shines—‘Ha! hear’st thou not the tread

12. ‘Of rushing feet? laughter? the shout, the scream, Of triumph not to be contained? See! hark! _4325 They come, they come! give way!’ Alas, ye deem Falsely—’tis but a crowd of maniacs stark Driven, like a troop of spectres, through the dark, From the choked well, whence a bright death-fire sprung, A lurid earth-star, which dropped many a spark _4330 From its blue train, and spreading widely, clung To their wild hair, like mist the topmost pines among.

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

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

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

16. ‘Ye turn to Heaven for aid in your distress; _4360 Alas, that ye, the mighty and the wise, Who, if ye dared, might not aspire to less Than ye conceive of power,

should fear the lies Which thou, and thou, didst frame for mysteries To blind your slaves:—consider your own thought, _4365 An empty and a cruel sacrifice Ye now prepare, for a vain idol wrought Out of the fears and hate which vain desires have brought.

17. ‘Ye seek for happiness—alas, the day! Ye find it not in luxury nor in gold, _4370 Nor in the fame, nor in the envied sway For which, O willing slaves to Custom old, Severe taskmistress! ye your hearts have sold. Ye seek for peace, and when ye die, to dream No evil dreams: all mortal things are cold _4375 And senseless then; if aught survive, I deem It must be love and joy, for they immortal seem.

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

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

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

then did the Stranger rear.

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

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

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

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

25. ‘With me do what ye will. I am your foe!’ The light of such a joy as makes the stare Of hungry snakes like living emeralds glow, Shone in a hundred human eyes—‘Where, where Is Laon? Haste! fly! drag him swiftly here! _4445 We grant

thy boon.’—‘I put no trust in ye, Swear by the Power ye dread.’—‘We swear, we swear!’ The Stranger threw his vest back suddenly, And smiled in gentle pride, and said, ‘Lo! I am he!’

NOTES: _4321 wreathed]writhed. “Poetical Works” 1839. 1st edition. _4361 the mighty]tho’ mighty edition 1818. _4362 ye]he edition 1818. _4432 there]then edition 1818.

CANTO 12.

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

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

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

4. Tumult was in the soul of all beside, Ill joy, or doubt, or fear; but those who saw Their tranquil victim pass, felt wonder glide Into their brain, and became calm with

awe.— _4480 See, the slow pageant near the pile doth draw. A thousand torches in the spacious square, Borne by the ready slaves of ruthless law, Await the signal round: the morning fair Is changed to a dim night by that unnatural glare. _4485

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

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

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

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

9. All thought it was God's Angel come to sweep The lingering guilty to their fiery

grave; The Tyrant from his throne in dread did leap,— Her innocence his child from fear did save; _4525 Scared by the faith they feigned, each priestly slave Knelt for his mercy whom they served with blood, And, like the refluence of a mighty wave Sucked into the loud sea, the multitude With crushing panic, fled in terror's altered mood. _4530

10. They pause, they blush, they gaze,—a gathering shout Bursts like one sound from the ten thousand streams Of a tempestuous sea:—that sudden rout One checked, who, never in his mildest dreams Felt awe from grace or loveliness, the seams _4535 Of his rent heart so hard and cold a creed Had seared with blistering ice—but he misdeems That he is wise, whose wounds do only bleed Inly for self,—thus thought the Iberian Priest indeed,

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

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

13. They trembled, but replied not, nor obeyed, Pausing in breathless silence. Cythna sprung From her gigantic steed, who, like a shade _4560 Chased by the winds, those vacant streets among Fled tameless, as the brazen rein she flung Upon his neck, and kissed his mooned brow. A piteous sight, that one so fair and young,

The clasp of such a fearful death should woo _4565 With smiles of tender joy as beamed from Cythna now.

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

15. She won them, though unwilling, her to bind Near me, among the snakes. When there had fled One soft reproach that was most thrilling kind, She smiled on me, and nothing then we said, But each upon the other's countenance fed _4580 Looks of insatiate love; the mighty veil Which doth divide the living and the dead Was almost rent, the world grew dim and pale,— All light in Heaven or Earth beside our love did fail.—

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

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

18. The warm touch of a soft and tremulous hand Wakened me then; lo! Cythna sate

reclined Beside me, on the waved and golden sand _4605 Of a clear pool, upon a bank o’ertwined With strange and star-bright flowers, which to the wind Breathed divine odour; high above, was spread The emerald heaven of trees of unknown kind, Whose moonlike blooms and bright fruit overhead _4610 A shadow, which was light, upon the waters shed.

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

20. As we sate gazing in a trance of wonder, A boat approached, borne by the musical air Along the waves which sung and sparkled under Its rapid keel—a winged shape sate there, A child with silver-shining wings, so fair, _4625 That as her bark did through the waters glide, The shadow of the lingering waves did wear Light, as from starry beams; from side to side, While veering to the wind her plumes the bark did guide.

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

22. Its keel has struck the sands beside our feet;— Then Cythna turned to me, and from her eyes _4640 Which swam with unshed tears, a look more sweet Than happy love, a wild and glad surprise, Glanced as she spake: ‘Ay, this is Paradise And not a dream, and we are all united! Lo, that is mine own child, who in the guise _4645 Of

madness came, like day to one benighted In lonesome woods: my heart is now too well requited!’

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

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

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

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

27. ‘The frightful silence of that altered mood, The tortures of the dying clove alone,

_4685 Till one uprose among the multitude, And said—“The flood of time is rolling on; We stand upon its brink, whilst THEY are gone To glide in peace down death’s mysterious stream. Have ye done well? They moulder, flesh and bone, _4690 Who might have made this life’s envenomed dream A sweeter draught than ye will ever taste, I deem.

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

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

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

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

she said,

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

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

34. A scene of joy and wonder to behold That river's shapes and shadows changing ever, Where the broad sunrise filled with deepening gold Its whirlpools, where all hues did spread and quiver; _4750 And where melodious falls did burst and shiver Among rocks clad with flowers, the foam and spray Sparkled like stars upon the sunny river, Or when the moonlight poured a holier day, One vast and glittering lake around green islands lay. _4755

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

36. Sometimes between the wide and flowering meadows, _4765 Mile after mile we sailed, and 'twas delight To see far off the sunbeams chase the shadows Over the

grass; sometimes beneath the night Of wide and vaulted caves, whose roofs were bright With starry gems, we fled, whilst from their deep _4770 And dark-green chasms, shades beautiful and white, Amid sweet sounds across our path would sweep, Like swift and lovely dreams that walk the waves of sleep.

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

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

39. Steady and swift, where the waves rolled like mountains Within the vast ravine, whose rifts did pour Tumultuous floods from their ten thousand fountains, The thunder of whose earth-uplifting roar _4795 Made the air sweep in whirlwinds from the shore, Calm as a shade, the boat of that fair child Securely fled, that rapid stress before, Amid the topmost spray, and sunbows wild, Wreathed in the silver mist: in joy and pride we smiled. _4800

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

azure sea a silent refuge make.

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

NOTES: _4577 there]then edition 1818. _4699 there]then edition 1818. _4749 When]Where edition 1818. _4804 Where]When edition 1818. _4805 on a line]one line edition 1818.

NOTE ON THE “REVOLT OF ISLAM”, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

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

As a poet, his intellect and compositions were powerfully influenced by exterior circumstances, and especially by his place of abode. He was very fond of travelling, and ill-health increased this restlessness. The sufferings occasioned by a cold English winter made him pine, especially when our colder spring arrived, for a more genial climate. In 1816 he again visited Switzerland, and rented a house on the

banks of the Lake of Geneva; and many a day, in cloud or sunshine, was passed alone in his boat—sailing as the wind listed, or weltering on the calm waters. The majestic aspect of Nature ministered such thoughts as he afterwards enwove in verse. His lines on the Bridge of the Arve, and his “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty”, were written at this time. Perhaps during this summer his genius was checked by association with another poet whose nature was utterly dissimilar to his own, yet who, in the poem he wrote at that time, gave tokens that he shared for a period the more abstract and etherealised inspiration of Shelley. The saddest events awaited his return to England; but such was his fear to wound the feelings of others that he never expressed the anguish he felt, and seldom gave vent to the indignation roused by the persecutions he underwent; while the course of deep unexpressed passion, and the sense of injury, engendered the desire to embody themselves in forms defecated of all the weakness and evil which cling to real life.

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

During the year 1817 we were established at Marlow in Buckinghamshire. Shelley’s choice of abode was fixed chiefly by this town being at no great distance from London, and its neighbourhood to the Thames. The poem was written in his boat, as it floated under the beech groves of Bisham, or during wanderings in the

neighbouring country, which is distinguished for peculiar beauty. The chalk hills break into cliffs that overhang the Thames, or form valleys clothed with beech; the wilder portion of the country is rendered beautiful by exuberant vegetation; and the cultivated part is peculiarly fertile. With all this wealth of Nature which, either in the form of gentlemen's parks or soil dedicated to agriculture, flourishes around, Marlow was inhabited (I hope it is altered now) by a very poor population. The women are lacemakers, and lose their health by sedentary labour, for which they were very ill paid. The Poor-laws ground to the dust not only the paupers, but those who had risen just above that state, and were obliged to pay poor-rates. The changes produced by peace following a long war, and a bad harvest, brought with them the most heart-rending evils to the poor. Shelley afforded what alleviation he could. In the winter, while bringing out his poem, he had a severe attack of ophthalmia, caught while visiting the poor cottages. I mention these things,—for this minute and active sympathy with his fellow-creatures gives a thousandfold interest to his speculations, and stamps with reality his pleadings for the human race.

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

'Marlowe, December 11, 1817.

'I have read and considered all that you say about my general powers, and the particular instance of the poem in which I have attempted to develop them. Nothing

can be more satisfactory to me than the interest which your admonitions express. But I think you are mistaken in some points with regard to the peculiar nature of my powers, whatever be their amount. I listened with deference and self-suspicion to your censures of “The Revolt of Islam”; but the productions of mine which you commend hold a very low place in my own esteem; and this reassures me, in some degree at least. The poem was produced by a series of thoughts which filled my mind with unbounded and sustained enthusiasm. I felt the precariousness of my life, and I engaged in this task, resolved to leave some record of myself. Much of what the volume contains was written with the same feeling—as real, though not so prophetic—as the communications of a dying man. I never presumed indeed to consider it anything approaching to faultless; but, when I consider contemporary productions of the same apparent pretensions, I own I was filled with confidence. I felt that it was in many respects a genuine picture of my own mind. I felt that the sentiments were true, not assumed. And in this have I long believed that my power consists; in sympathy, and that part of the imagination which relates to sentiment and contemplation. I am formed, if for anything not in common with the herd of mankind, to apprehend minute and remote distinctions of feeling, whether relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us, and to communicate the conceptions which result from considering either the moral or the material universe as a whole. Of course, I believe these faculties, which perhaps comprehend all that is sublime in man, to exist very imperfectly in my own mind. But, when you advert to my Chancery-paper, a cold, forced, unimpassioned, insignificant piece of cramped and cautious argument, and to the little scrap about “Mandeville”, which expressed my feelings indeed, but cost scarcely two minutes’ thought to express, as specimens of my powers more favourable than that which grew as it were from “the agony and bloody sweat” of intellectual travail; surely I must feel that, in some manner, either I am mistaken in believing that I have any talent at all, or you in the selection of the specimens of it. Yet, after all, I cannot but be conscious, in much of what I write, of

an absence of that tranquillity which is the attribute and accompaniment of power. This feeling alone would make your most kind and wise admonitions, on the subject of the economy of intellectual force, valuable to me. And, if I live, or if I see any trust in coming years, doubt not but that I shall do something, whatever it may be, which a serious and earnest estimate of my powers will suggest to me, and which will be in every respect accommodated to their utmost limits.

[Shelley to Godwin.]

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PRINCE ATHANASE.

A FRAGMENT.

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

[Written at Marlow in 1817, towards the close of the year; first published in “Posthumous Poems”, 1824. Part 1 is dated by Mrs. Shelley, ‘December, 1817,’ the remainder, ‘Marlow, 1817.’ The verses were probably rehandled in Italy during the following year. Sources of the text are (1) “Posthumous Poems”, 1824; (2) “Poetical Works” 1839, editions 1st and 2nd; (3) a much-tortured draft amongst the Bodleian manuscripts, collated by Mr. C.D. Locock. For (1) and (2) Mrs. Shelley is

responsible. Our text (enlarged by about thirty lines from the Bodleian manuscript) follows for the most part the “Poetical Works”, 1839; verbal exceptions are pointed out in the footnotes. See also the Editor’s Notes at the end of this volume, and Mr. Locock’s “Examination of Shelley Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library”, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903.]

PART 1.

There was a youth, who, as with toil and travel, Had grown quite weak and gray before his time; Nor any could the restless griefs unravel

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But, like a steward in honest dealings tried, _40 With those who toiled and wept, the poor and wise, His riches and his cares he did divide.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Like reeds which quiver in impetuous floods; And through his sleep, and o'er each waking hour, _65 Thoughts after thoughts, unresting multitudes,

Were driven within him by some secret power, Which bade them blaze, and live, and roll afar, Like lights and sounds, from haunted tower to tower

O’er castled mountains borne, when tempest’s war _70 Is levied by the night-contending winds, And the pale dalesmen watch with eager ear;—

Though such were in his spirit, as the fiends Which wake and feed an everliving woe,— What was this grief, which ne’er in other minds _75

A mirror found,—he knew not—none could know; But on whoe’er might question him he turned The light of his frank eyes, as if to show

He knew not of the grief within that burned, But asked forbearance with a mournful look; _80 Or spoke in words from which none ever learned

The cause of his disquietude; or shook With spasms of silent passion; or turned pale: So that his friends soon rarely undertook

To stir his secret pain without avail;— _85 For all who knew and loved him then perceived That there was drawn an adamantine veil

Between his heart and mind,—both unrelieved Wrought in his brain and bosom separate strife. Some said that he was mad, others believed _90

That memories of an antenatal life Made this, where now he dwelt, a penal hell; And others said that such mysterious grief

From God’s displeasure, like a darkness, fell On souls like his, which owned no higher law _95 Than love; love calm, steadfast, invincible

By mortal fear or supernatural awe; And others,—‘’Tis the shadow of a dream Which the veiled eye of Memory never saw,

‘But through the soul’s abyss, like some dark stream _100 Through shattered mines and caverns underground, Rolls, shaking its foundations; and no beam

‘Of joy may rise, but it is quenched and drowned In the dim whirlpools of this dream obscure; Soon its exhausted waters will have found _105

‘A lair of rest beneath thy spirit pure, O Athanase!—in one so good and great, Evil or tumult cannot long endure.

So spake they: idly of another's state Babbling vain words and fond philosophy; _110 This was their consolation; such debate

Men held with one another; nor did he, Like one who labours with a human woe, Decline this talk: as if its theme might be

Another, not himself, he to and fro _115 Questioned and canvassed it with subtlest wit; And none but those who loved him best could know

That which he knew not, how it galled and bit His weary mind, this converse vain and cold; For like an eyeless nightmare grief did sit _120

Upon his being; a snake which fold by fold Pressed out the life of life, a clinging fiend Which clenched him if he stirred with deadlier hold;— And so his grief remained—let it remain—untold. [1]

PART 2.

FRAGMENT 1.

Prince Athanase had one beloved friend, _125 An old, old man, with hair of silver white, And lips where heavenly smiles would hang and blend

With his wise words; and eyes whose arrowy light Shone like the reflex of a thousand minds. He was the last whom superstition's blight _130

Had spared in Greece—the blight that cramps and blinds,— And in his olive bower at Oenoe Had sate from earliest youth. Like one who finds

A fertile island in the barren sea, One mariner who has survived his mates _135 Many a drear month in a great ship—so he

With soul-sustaining songs, and sweet debates Of ancient lore, there fed his lonely being:— 'The mind becomes that which it contemplates,'—

And thus Zonoras, by for ever seeing _140 Their bright creations, grew like wisest men; And when he heard the crash of nations fleeing

A bloodier power than ruled thy ruins then, O sacred Hellas! many weary years He

wandered, till the path of Laian’s glen _145

Was grass-grown—and the unremembered tears Were dry in Laian for their honoured chief, Who fell in Byzant, pierced by Moslem spears:—

And as the lady looked with faithful grief From her high lattice o’er the rugged path, _150 Where she once saw that horseman toil, with brief

And blighting hope, who with the news of death Struck body and soul as with a mortal blight, She saw between the chestnuts, far beneath,

An old man toiling up, a weary wight; _155 And soon within her hospitable hall She saw his white hairs glittering in the light

Of the wood fire, and round his shoulders fall; And his wan visage and his withered mien, Yet calm and gentle and majestical. _160

And Athanase, her child, who must have been Then three years old, sate opposite and gazed In patient silence.

FRAGMENT 2.

Such was Zonoras; and as daylight finds One amaranth glittering on the path of frost, _165 When autumn nights have nipped all weaker kinds,

Thus through his age, dark, cold, and tempest-tossed, Shone truth upon Zonoras; and he filled From fountains pure, nigh overgrown and lost,

The spirit of Prince Athanase, a child, _170 With soul-sustaining songs of ancient lore And philosophic wisdom, clear and mild.

And sweet and subtle talk they evermore, The pupil and the master, shared; until, Sharing that undiminishable store, _175

The youth, as shadows on a grassy hill Outrun the winds that chase them, soon outran His teacher, and did teach with native skill

Strange truths and new to that experienced man; Still they were friends, as few have ever been _180 Who mark the extremes of life’s discordant span.

So in the caverns of the forest green, Or on the rocks of echoing ocean hoar, Zonoras and Prince Athanase were seen

By summer woodmen; and when winter's roar _185 Sounded o'er earth and sea its blast of war, The Balearic fisher, driven from shore,

Hanging upon the peaked wave afar, Then saw their lamp from Laian's turret gleam, Piercing the stormy darkness, like a star _190

Which pours beyond the sea one steadfast beam, Whilst all the constellations of the sky Seemed reeling through the storm…They did but seem—

For, lo! the wintry clouds are all gone by, And bright Arcturus through yon pines is glowing, _195 And far o'er southern waves, immovably

Belted Orion hangs—warm light is flowing From the young moon into the sunset's chasm.— 'O, summer eve! with power divine, bestowing

'On thine own bird the sweet enthusiasm _200 Which overflows in notes of liquid gladness, Filling the sky like light! How many a spasm

'Of fevered brains, oppressed with grief and madness, Were lulled by thee, delightful nightingale,— And these soft waves, murmuring a gentle sadness,— _205

'And the far sighings of yon piny dale Made vocal by some wind we feel not here.— I bear alone what nothing may avail

'To lighten—a strange load!'—No human ear Heard this lament; but o'er the visage wan _210 Of Athanase, a ruffling atmosphere

Of dark emotion, a swift shadow, ran, Like wind upon some forest-bosomed lake, Glassy and dark.—And that divine old man

Beheld his mystic friend's whole being shake, _215 Even where its inmost depths were gloomiest— And with a calm and measured voice he spake,

And, with a soft and equal pressure, pressed That cold lean hand:—'Dost thou remember yet When the curved moon then lingering in the west _220

‘Paused, in yon waves her mighty horns to wet, How in those beams we walked, half resting on the sea? ’Tis just one year—sure thou dost not forget—

‘Then Plato’s words of light in thee and me Lingered like moonlight in the moonless east, _225 For we had just then read—thy memory

‘Is faithful now—the story of the feast; And Agathon and Diotima seemed From death and dark forgetfulness released…’

FRAGMENT 3.

And when the old man saw that on the green Leaves of his opening … a blight had lighted _230 He said: ‘My friend, one grief alone can wean

A gentle mind from all that once delighted:— Thou lovest, and thy secret heart is laden With feelings which should not be unrequited.’ _235

And Athanase … then smiled, as one o’erladen With iron chains might smile to talk (?) of bands Twined round her lover’s neck by some blithe maiden, And said…

FRAGMENT 4.

’Twas at the season when the Earth upsprings _240 From slumber, as a sphered angel’s child, Shadowing its eyes with green and golden wings,

Stands up before its mother bright and mild, Of whose soft voice the air expectant seems— So stood before the sun, which shone and smiled _245

To see it rise thus joyous from its dreams, The fresh and radiant Earth. The hoary grove Waxed green—and flowers burst forth like starry beams;—

The grass in the warm sun did start and move, And sea-buds burst under the waves serene:— _250 How many a one, though none be near to love,

Loves then the shade of his own soul, half seen In any mirror—or the spring’s young minions, The winged leaves amid the copses green;—

How many a spirit then puts on the pinions _255 Of fancy, and outstrips the lagging blast, And his own steps—and over wide dominions

Sweeps in his dream-drawn chariot, far and fast, More fleet than storms—the wide world shrinks below, When winter and despondency are past. _260

FRAGMENT 5.

’Twas at this season that Prince Athanase Passed the white Alps—those eagle-baffling mountains Slept in their shrouds of snow;—beside the ways

The waterfalls were voiceless—for their fountains Were changed to mines of sunless crystal now, _265 Or by the curdling winds—like brazen wings

Which clanged along the mountain’s marble brow— Warped into adamantine fretwork, hung And filled with frozen light the chasms below.

Vexed by the blast, the great pines groaned and swung _270 Under their load of [snow]— … … Such as the eagle sees, when he dives down From the gray deserts of wide air, [beheld] _275 [Prince] Athanase; and o’er his mien (?) was thrown

The shadow of that scene, field after field, Purple and dim and wide…

FRAGMENT 6.

Thou art the wine whose drunkenness is all We can desire, O Love! and happy souls, _280 Ere from thy vine the leaves of autumn fall,

Catch thee, and feed from their o’erflowing bowls Thousands who thirst for thine ambrosial dew;— Thou art the radiance which where ocean rolls

Investeth it; and when the heavens are blue _285 Thou fillest them; and when the earth is fair The shadow of thy moving wings imbue

Its deserts and its mountains, till they wear Beauty like some light robe;—thou ever soarest Among the towers of men, and as soft air _290

In spring, which moves the unawakened forest, Clothing with leaves its branches bare and bleak, Thou floatest among men; and aye implorest

That which from thee they should implore:—the weak Alone kneel to thee, offering up the hearts _295 The strong have broken—yet where shall any seek

A garment whom thou clothest not? the darts Of the keen winter storm, barbed with frost, Which, from the everlasting snow that parts

The Alps from Heaven, pierce some traveller lost _300 In the wide waved interminable snow Ungarmented,…

ANOTHER FRAGMENT (A)

Yes, often when the eyes are cold and dry, And the lips calm, the Spirit weeps within Tears bitterer than the blood of agony _305

Trembling in drops on the discoloured skin Of those who love their kind and therefore perish In ghastly torture—a sweet medicine

Of peace and sleep are tears, and quietly Them soothe from whose uplifted eyes they fall _310 But…

ANOTHER FRAGMENT (B)

Her hair was brown, her sphered eyes were brown, And in their dark and liquid moisture swam, Like the dim orb of the eclipsed moon;

Yet when the spirit flashed beneath, there came _315 The light from them, as when tears of delight Double the western planet’s serene flame.

NOTES: _19 strange edition 1839; deep edition 1824. _74 feed an Bodleian manuscript; feed on editions 1824, 1839.

_124 [1. The Author was pursuing a fuller development of the ideal character of Athanase, when it struck him that in an attempt at extreme refinement and analysis, his conceptions might be betrayed into the assuming a morbid character. The reader will judge whether he is a loser or gainer by this diffidence. [Shelley’s Note.] Footnote diffidence cj. Rossetti (1878); difference editions 1824, 1839.]

_154 beneath editions 1824, 1839; between Bodleian manuscript. _165 One Bodleian manuscript edition 1839; An edition 1824. _167 Thus thro’ Bodleian manuscript (?) edition 1839; Thus had edition 1824. _173 talk they edition 1824,

Bodleian manuscript; talk now edition 1839. _175 that edition 1839; the edition 1824. _182 So edition 1839; And edition 1824. _183 Or on Bodleian manuscript; Or by editions 1824, 1839. _199 eve Bodleian manuscript edition 1839; night edition 1824. _212 emotion, a swift editions 1824, 1839; emotion with swift Bodleian manuscript. _250 under edition 1824, Bodleian manuscript; beneath edition 1839. _256 outstrips editions 1824, 1839; outrides Bodleian manuscript. _259 Exulting, while the wide Bodleian manuscript. _262 mountains editions 1824, 1839; crags Bodleian manuscript. _264 fountains editions 1824, 1839; springs Bodleian manuscript. _269 chasms Bodleian manuscript; chasm editions 1824, 1839. _283 thine Bodleian manuscript; thy editions 1824, 1839. _285 Investeth Bodleian manuscript; Investest editions 1824, 1839. _289 light Bodleian manuscript; bright editions 1824, 1839.

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ROSALIND AND HELEN.

A MODERN ECLOGUE.

[Begun at Marlow, 1817 (summer); already in the press, March, 1818; finished at the Baths of Lucca, August, 1818; published with other poems, as the title-piece of a slender volume, by C. & J. Ollier, London, 1819 (spring). See “Biographical List”. Sources of the text are (1) editio princeps, 1819; (2) “Poetical Works”, edition Mrs. Shelley, 1839, editions 1st and 2nd. A fragment of the text is amongst the Boscombe manuscripts. The poem is reprinted here from the editio princeps; verbal alterations are recorded in the footnotes, punctual in the Editor’s Notes at the end of Volume 3.]

ADVERTISEMENT.

The story of “Rosalind and Helen” is, undoubtedly, not an attempt in the highest style of poetry. It is in no degree calculated to excite profound meditation; and if, by interesting the affections and amusing the imagination, it awakens a certain ideal melancholy favourable to the reception of more important impressions, it will

produce in the reader all that the writer experienced in the composition. I resigned myself, as I wrote, to the impulses of the feelings which moulded the conception of the story; and this impulse determined the pauses of a measure, which only pretends to be regular inasmuch as it corresponds with, and expresses, the irregularity of the imaginations which inspired it.

I do not know which of the few scattered poems I left in England will be selected by my bookseller to add to this collection. One ("Lines written among the Euganean Hills".—Editor.), which I sent from Italy, was written after a day's excursion among those lovely mountains which surround what was once the retreat, and where is now the sepulchre, of Petrarch. If any one is inclined to condemn the insertion of the introductory lines, which image forth the sudden relief of a state of deep despondency by the radiant visions disclosed by the sudden burst of an Italian sunrise in autumn on the highest peak of those delightful mountains, I can only offer as my excuse, that they were not erased at the request of a dear friend, with whom added years of intercourse only add to my apprehension of its value, and who would have had more right than any one to complain, that she has not been able to extinguish in me the very power of delineating sadness.

Naples, December 20, 1818.

ROSALIND, HELEN, AND HER CHILD.

SCENE. THE SHORE OF THE LAKE OF COMO.

HELEN: Come hither, my sweet Rosalind. 'Tis long since thou and I have met; And yet methinks it were unkind Those moments to forget. Come, sit by me. I see thee stand _5 By this lone lake, in this far land, Thy loose hair in the light wind flying, Thy sweet voice to each tone of even United, and thine eyes replying To the hues of yon fair heaven. _10 Come, gentle friend: wilt sit by me? And be as thou wert wont to be Ere we were disunited? None doth behold us now; the power That led us forth at this lone hour _15 Will be but ill requited If thou depart in scorn: oh! come, And

talk of our abandoned home. Remember, this is Italy, And we are exiles. Talk with me _20 Of that our land, whose wilds and floods, Barren and dark although they be, Were dearer than these chestnut woods: Those heathy paths, that inland stream, And the blue mountains, shapes which seem _25 Like wrecks of childhood's sunny dream: Which that we have abandoned now, Weighs on the heart like that remorse Which altered friendship leaves. I seek No more our youthful intercourse. _30 That cannot be! Rosalind, speak. Speak to me. Leave me not.—When morn did come, When evening fell upon our common home, When for one hour we parted,—do not frown: I would not chide thee, though thy faith is broken: _35 But turn to me. Oh! by this cherished token, Of woven hair, which thou wilt not disown, Turn, as 'twere but the memory of me, And not my scorned self who prayed to thee.

ROSALIND: Is it a dream, or do I see _40 And hear frail Helen? I would flee Thy tainting touch; but former years Arise, and bring forbidden tears; And my o'erburthened memory Seeks yet its lost repose in thee. _45 I share thy crime. I cannot choose But weep for thee: mine own strange grief But seldom stoops to such relief: Nor ever did I love thee less, Though mourning o'er thy wickedness _50 Even with a sister's woe. I knew What to the evil world is due, And therefore sternly did refuse To link me with the infamy Of one so lost as Helen. Now _55 Bewildered by my dire despair, Wondering I blush, and weep that thou Should'st love me still,—thou only!—There, Let us sit on that gray stone Till our mournful talk be done. _60

HELEN: Alas! not there; I cannot bear The murmur of this lake to hear. A sound from there, Rosalind dear, Which never yet I heard elsewhere But in our native land, recurs, _65 Even here where now we meet. It stirs Too much of suffocating sorrow! In the dell of yon dark chestnutwood Is a stone seat, a solitude Less like our own. The ghost of Peace _70 Will not desert this spot. To-morrow, If thy kind feelings should not cease, We may sit here.

ROSALIND: Thou lead, my sweet, And I will follow.

HENRY: 'Tis Fenici's seat Where you are going? This is not the way, _75 Mamma; it leads behind those trees that grow Close to the little river.

HELEN: Yes: I know; I was bewildered. Kiss me and be gay, Dear boy: why do you sob?

HENRY: I do not know: But it might break any one's heart to see _80 You and the lady cry so bitterly.

HELEN: It is a gentle child, my friend. Go home, Henry, and play with Lilla till I come. We only cried with joy to see each other; We are quite merry now: Good-night.

The boy _85 Lifted a sudden look upon his mother, And in the gleam of forced and hollow joy Which lightened o'er her face, laughed with the glee Of light and unsuspecting infancy, And whispered in her ear, 'Bring home with you _90 That sweet strange lady-friend.' Then off he flew, But stopped, and beckoned with a meaning smile, Where the road turned. Pale Rosalind the while, Hiding her face, stood weeping silently.

In silence then they took the way _95 Beneath the forest's solitude. It was a vast and antique wood, Thro' which they took their way; And the gray shades of evening O'er that green wilderness did fling _100 Still deeper solitude. Pursuing still the path that wound The vast and knotted trees around Through which slow shades were wandering, To a deep lawny dell they came, _105 To a stone seat beside a spring, O'er which the columned wood did frame A roofless temple, like the fane Where, ere new creeds could faith obtain, Man's early race once knelt beneath _110 The overhanging deity. O'er this fair fountain hung the sky, Now spangled with rare stars. The snake, The pale snake, that with eager breath Creeps here his noontide thirst to slake, _115 Is beaming with many a mingled hue, Shed from yon dome's eternal blue, When he floats on that dark and lucid flood In the light of his own

loveliness; And the birds that in the fountain dip _120 Their plumes, with fearless fellowship Above and round him wheel and hover. The fitful wind is heard to stir One solitary leaf on high; The chirping of the grasshopper _125 Fills every pause. There is emotion In all that dwells at noontide here; Then, through the intricate wild wood, A maze of life and light and motion Is woven. But there is stillness now: _130 Gloom, and the trance of Nature now: The snake is in his cave asleep; The birds are on the branches dreaming: Only the shadows creep: Only the glow-worm is gleaming: _135 Only the owls and the nightingales Wake in this dell when daylight fails, And gray shades gather in the woods: And the owls have all fled far away In a merrier glen to hoot and play, _140 For the moon is veiled and sleeping now. The accustomed nightingale still broods On her accustomed bough, But she is mute; for her false mate Has fled and left her desolate. _145

This silent spot tradition old Had peopled with the spectral dead. For the roots of the speaker’s hair felt cold And stiff, as with tremulous lips he told That a hellish shape at midnight led _150 The ghost of a youth with hoary hair, And sate on the seat beside him there, Till a naked child came wandering by, When the fiend would change to a lady fair! A fearful tale! The truth was worse: _155 For here a sister and a brother Had solemnized a monstrous curse, Meeting in this fair solitude: For beneath yon very sky, Had they resigned to one another _160 Body and soul. The multitude: Tracking them to the secret wood, Tore limb from limb their innocent child, And stabbed and trampled on its mother; But the youth, for God’s most holy grace, _165 A priest saved to burn in the market-place.

Duly at evening Helen came To this lone silent spot, From the wrecks of a tale of wilder sorrow So much of sympathy to borrow _170 As soothed her own dark lot. Duly each evening from her home, With her fair child would Helen come To sit upon that antique seat, While the hues of day were pale; _175 And the bright boy beside her feet Now lay, lifting at intervals His broad blue eyes on her; Now, where some sudden impulse calls Following. He was a gentle boy _180 And in all gentle

sorts took joy; Oft in a dry leaf for a boat, With a small feather for a sail, His fancy on that spring would float, If some invisible breeze might stir _185 Its marble calm: and Helen smiled Through tears of awe on the gay child, To think that a boy as fair as he, In years which never more may be, By that same fount, in that same wood, _190 The like sweet fancies had pursued; And that a mother, lost like her, Had mournfully sate watching him. Then all the scene was wont to swim Through the mist of a burning tear. _195

For many months had Helen known This scene; and now she thither turned Her footsteps, not alone. The friend whose falsehood she had mourned, Sate with her on that seat of stone. _200 Silent they sate; for evening, And the power its glimpses bring Had, with one awful shadow, quelled The passion of their grief. They sate With linked hands, for unrepelled _205 Had Helen taken Rosalind's. Like the autumn wind, when it unbinds The tangled locks of the nightshade's hair, Which is twined in the sultry summer air Round the walls of an outworn sepulchre, _210 Did the voice of Helen, sad and sweet, And the sound of her heart that ever beat, As with sighs and words she breathed on her, Unbind the knots of her friend's despair, Till her thoughts were free to float and flow; _215 And from her labouring bosom now, Like the bursting of a prisoned flame, The voice of a long pent sorrow came.

ROSALIND: I saw the dark earth fall upon The coffin; and I saw the stone _220 Laid over him whom this cold breast Had pillowed to his nightly rest! Thou knowest not, thou canst not know My agony. Oh! I could not weep: The sources whence such blessings flow _225 Were not to be approached by me! But I could smile, and I could sleep, Though with a self-accusing heart. In morning's light, in evening's gloom, I watched,—and would not thence depart— _230 My husband's unlamented tomb. My children knew their sire was gone, But when I told them,—'He is dead,'— They laughed aloud in frantic glee, They clapped their hands and leaped about, _235 Answering each other's ecstasy With many a prank and merry shout. But I sate silent and alone, Wrapped in the mock of mourning weed.

They laughed, for he was dead: but I _240 Sate with a hard and tearless eye, And with a heart which would deny The secret joy it could not quell, Low muttering o’er his loathed name; Till from that self-contention came _245 Remorse where sin was none; a hell Which in pure spirits should not dwell.

I’ll tell thee truth. He was a man Hard, selfish, loving only gold, Yet full of guile; his pale eyes ran _250 With tears, which each some falsehood told, And oft his smooth and bridled tongue Would give the lie to his flushing cheek; He was a coward to the strong: He was a tyrant to the weak, _255 On whom his vengeance he would wreak: For scorn, whose arrows search the heart, From many a stranger’s eye would dart, And on his memory cling, and follow His soul to its home so cold and hollow. _260 He was a tyrant to the weak, And we were such, alas the day! Oft, when my little ones at play, Were in youth’s natural lightness gay, Or if they listened to some tale _265 Of travellers, or of fairy land,— When the light from the wood-fire’s dying brand Flashed on their faces,—if they heard Or thought they heard upon the stair His footstep, the suspended word _270 Died on my lips: we all grew pale: The babe at my bosom was hushed with fear If it thought it heard its father near; And my two wild boys would near my knee Cling, cowed and cowering fearfully. _275

I’ll tell thee truth: I loved another. His name in my ear was ever ringing, His form to my brain was ever clinging: Yet if some stranger breathed that name, My lips turned white, and my heart beat fast: _280 My nights were once haunted by dreams of flame, My days were dim in the shadow cast By the memory of the same! Day and night, day and night, He was my breath and life and light, _285 For three short years, which soon were passed. On the fourth, my gentle mother Led me to the shrine, to be His sworn bride eternally. And now we stood on the altar stair, _290 When my father came from a distant land, And with a loud and fearful cry Rushed between us suddenly. I saw the stream of his thin gray hair, I saw his lean and lifted hand, _295 And heard his words,—and live! Oh God! Wherefore do I live?—‘Hold,

hold!' He cried, 'I tell thee 'tis her brother! Thy mother, boy, beneath the sod Of yon churchyard rests in her shroud so cold: _300 I am now weak, and pale, and old: We were once dear to one another, I and that corpse! Thou art our child!' Then with a laugh both long and wild The youth upon the pavement fell: _305 They found him dead! All looked on me, The spasms of my despair to see: But I was calm. I went away: I was clammy-cold like clay! I did not weep: I did not speak: _310 But day by day, week after week, I walked about like a corpse alive! Alas! sweet friend, you must believe This heart is stone: it did not break. My father lived a little while, _315 But all might see that he was dying, He smiled with such a woeful smile! When he was in the churchyard lying Among the worms, we grew quite poor, So that no one would give us bread: _320 My mother looked at me, and said Faint words of cheer, which only meant That she could die and be content; So I went forth from the same church door To another husband's bed. _325 And this was he who died at last, When weeks and months and years had passed, Through which I firmly did fulfil My duties, a devoted wife, With the stern step of vanquished will, _330 Walking beneath the night of life, Whose hours extinguished, like slow rain Falling for ever, pain by pain, The very hope of death's dear rest; Which, since the heart within my breast _335 Of natural life was dispossessed, Its strange sustainer there had been.

When flowers were dead, and grass was green Upon my mother's grave,—that mother Whom to outlive, and cheer, and make _340 My wan eyes glitter for her sake, Was my vowed task, the single care Which once gave life to my despair,— When she was a thing that did not stir And the crawling worms were cradling her _345 To a sleep more deep and so more sweet Than a baby's rocked on its nurse's knee, I lived: a living pulse then beat Beneath my heart that awakened me. What was this pulse so warm and free? _350 Alas! I knew it could not be My own dull blood: 'twas like a thought Of liquid love, that spread and wrought Under my bosom and in my brain, And crept with the blood through every vein; _355 And hour by hour, day after day, The wonder could not charm away, But laid in sleep, my

wakeful pain, Until I knew it was a child, And then I wept. For long, long years _360 These frozen eyes had shed no tears: But now—'twas the season fair and mild When April has wept itself to May: I sate through the sweet sunny day By my window bowered round with leaves, _365 And down my cheeks the quick tears fell Like twinkling rain-drops from the eaves, When warm spring showers are passing o'er. O Helen, none can ever tell The joy it was to weep once more! _370

I wept to think how hard it were To kill my babe, and take from it The sense of light, and the warm air, And my own fond and tender care, And love and smiles; ere I knew yet _375 That these for it might, as for me, Be the masks of a grinning mockery. And haply, I would dream, 'twere sweet To feed it from my faded breast, Or mark my own heart's restless beat _380 Rock it to its untroubled rest, And watch the growing soul beneath Dawn in faint smiles; and hear its breath, Half interrupted by calm sighs, And search the depth of its fair eyes _385 For long departed memories! And so I lived till that sweet load Was lightened. Darkly forward flowed The stream of years, and on it bore Two shapes of gladness to my sight; _390 Two other babes, delightful more In my lost soul's abandoned night, Than their own country ships may be Sailing towards wrecked mariners, Who cling to the rock of a wintry sea. _395 For each, as it came, brought soothing tears; And a loosening warmth, as each one lay Sucking the sullen milk away About my frozen heart, did play, And weaned it, oh how painfully— _400 As they themselves were weaned each one From that sweet food,—even from the thirst Of death, and nothingness, and rest, Strange inmate of a living breast! Which all that I had undergone _405 Of grief and shame, since she, who first The gates of that dark refuge closed, Came to my sight, and almost burst The seal of that Lethean spring; But these fair shadows interposed: _410 For all delights are shadows now! And from my brain to my dull brow The heavy tears gather and flow: I cannot speak: Oh, let me weep!

The tears which fell from her wan eyes _415 Glimmered among the moonlight dew: Her deep hard sobs and heavy sighs Their echoes in the darkness threw. When she

grew calm, she thus did keep The tenor of her tale: He died: _420 I know not how: he was not old, If age be numbered by its years: But he was bowed and bent with fears, Pale with the quenchless thirst of gold, Which, like fierce fever, left him weak; _425 And his strait lip and bloated cheek Were warped in spasms by hollow sneers; And selfish cares with barren plough, Not age, had lined his narrow brow, And foul and cruel thoughts, which feed _430 Upon the withering life within, Like vipers on some poisonous weed. Whether his ill were death or sin None knew, until he died indeed, And then men owned they were the same. _435

Seven days within my chamber lay That corse, and my babes made holiday: At last, I told them what is death: The eldest, with a kind of shame, Came to my knees with silent breath, _440 And sate awe-stricken at my feet; And soon the others left their play, And sate there too. It is unmeet To shed on the brief flower of youth The withering knowledge of the grave; _445 From me remorse then wrung that truth. I could not bear the joy which gave Too just a response to mine own. In vain. I dared not feign a groan, And in their artless looks I saw, _450 Between the mists of fear and awe, That my own thought was theirs, and they Expressed it not in words, but said, Each in its heart, how every day Will pass in happy work and play, _455 Now he is dead and gone away.

After the funeral all our kin Assembled, and the will was read. My friend, I tell thee, even the dead Have strength, their putrid shrouds within, _460 To blast and torture. Those who live Still fear the living, but a corse Is merciless, and power doth give To such pale tyrants half the spoil He rends from those who groan and toil, _465 Because they blush not with remorse Among their crawling worms. Behold, I have no child! my tale grows old With grief, and staggers: let it reach The limits of my feeble speech, _470 And languidly at length recline On the brink of its own grave and mine.

Thou knowest what a thing is Poverty Among the fallen on evil days: ’Tis Crime,

and Fear, and Infamy, _475 And houseless Want in frozen ways Wandering ungarmented, and Pain, And, worse than all, that inward stain Foul Self-contempt, which drowns in sneers Youth's starlight smile, and makes its tears _480 First like hot gall, then dry for ever! And well thou knowest a mother never Could doom her children to this ill, And well he knew the same. The will Imported, that if e'er again _485 I sought my children to behold, Or in my birthplace did remain Beyond three days, whose hours were told, They should inherit nought: and he, To whom next came their patrimony, _490 A sallow lawyer, cruel and cold, Aye watched me, as the will was read, With eyes askance, which sought to see The secrets of my agony; And with close lips and anxious brow _495 Stood canvassing still to and fro The chance of my resolve, and all The dead man's caution just did call; For in that killing lie 'twas said— 'She is adulterous, and doth hold _500 In secret that the Christian creed Is false, and therefore is much need That I should have a care to save My children from eternal fire.' Friend, he was sheltered by the grave, _505 And therefore dared to be a liar! In truth, the Indian on the pyre Of her dead husband, half consumed, As well might there be false, as I To those abhorred embraces doomed, _510 Far worse than fire's brief agony As to the Christian creed, if true Or false, I never questioned it: I took it as the vulgar do: Nor my vexed soul had leisure yet _515 To doubt the things men say, or deem That they are other than they seem.

All present who those crimes did hear, In feigned or actual scorn and fear, Men, women, children, slunk away, _520 Whispering with self-contented pride, Which half suspects its own base lie. I spoke to none, nor did abide, But silently I went my way, Nor noticed I where joyously _525 Sate my two younger babes at play, In the court-yard through which I passed; But went with footsteps firm and fast Till I came to the brink of the ocean green, And there, a woman with gray hairs, _530 Who had my mother's servant been, Kneeling, with many tears and prayers, Made me accept a purse of gold, Half of the earnings she had kept To refuge her when weak and old. _535

With woe, which never sleeps or slept, I wander now. ’Tis a vain thought— But on yon alp, whose snowy head ‘Mid the azure air is islanded, (We see it o’er the flood of cloud, _540 Which sunrise from its eastern caves Drives, wrinkling into golden waves, Hung with its precipices proud, From that gray stone where first we met) There now—who knows the dead feel nought?— _545 Should be my grave; for he who yet Is my soul’s soul, once said: ‘’Twere sweet ‘Mid stars and lightnings to abide, And winds and lulling snows, that beat With their soft flakes the mountain wide, _550 Where weary meteor lamps repose, And languid storms their pinions close: And all things strong and bright and pure, And ever during, aye endure: Who knows, if one were buried there, _555 But these things might our spirits make, Amid the all-surrounding air, Their own eternity partake?’ Then ’twas a wild and playful saying At which I laughed, or seemed to laugh: _560 They were his words: now heed my praying, And let them be my epitaph. Thy memory for a term may be My monument. Wilt remember me? I know thou wilt, and canst forgive _565 Whilst in this erring world to live My soul disdained not, that I thought Its lying forms were worthy aught And much less thee.

HELEN: O speak not so, But come to me and pour thy woe _570 Into this heart, full though it be, Ay, overflowing with its own: I thought that grief had severed me From all beside who weep and groan; Its likeness upon earth to be, _575 Its express image; but thou art More wretched. Sweet! we will not part Henceforth, if death be not division; If so, the dead feel no contrition. But wilt thou hear since last we parted _580 All that has left me broken hearted?

ROSALIND: Yes, speak. The faintest stars are scarcely shorn Of their thin beams by that delusive morn Which sinks again in darkness, like the light Of early love, soon lost in total night. _585

HELEN: Alas! Italian winds are mild, But my bosom is cold—wintry cold— When the warm air weaves, among the fresh leaves, Soft music, my poor brain is wild,

And I am weak like a nursling child, _590 Though my soul with grief is gray and old.

ROSALIND: Weep not at thine own words, though they must make Me weep. What is thy tale?

HELEN: I fear ‘twill shake Thy gentle heart with tears. Thou well Rememberest when we met no more, _595 And, though I dwelt with Lionel, That friendless caution pierced me sore With grief; a wound my spirit bore Indignantly, but when he died, With him lay dead both hope and pride. _600 Alas! all hope is buried now. But then men dreamed the aged earth Was labouring in that mighty birth, Which many a poet and a sage Has aye foreseen—the happy age _605 When truth and love shall dwell below Among the works and ways of men; Which on this world not power but will Even now is wanting to fulfil.

Among mankind what thence befell _610 Of strife, how vain, is known too well; When Liberty’s dear paean fell ‘Mid murderous howls. To Lionel, Though of great wealth and lineage high, Yet through those dungeon walls there came _615 Thy thrilling light, O Liberty! And as the meteor’s midnight flame Startles the dreamer, sun-like truth Flashed on his visionary youth, And filled him, not with love, but faith, _620 And hope, and courage mute in death; For love and life in him were twins, Born at one birth: in every other First life then love its course begins, Though they be children of one mother; _625 And so through this dark world they fleet Divided, till in death they meet; But he loved all things ever. Then He passed amid the strife of men, And stood at the throne of armed power _630 Pleading for a world of woe: Secure as one on a rock-built tower O’er the wrecks which the surge trails to and fro, ‘Mid the passions wild of human kind He stood, like a spirit calming them; _635 For, it was said, his words could bind Like music the lulled crowd, and stem That torrent of unquiet dream Which mortals truth and reason deem, But is revenge and fear and pride. _640 Joyous he was; and hope and peace On all who heard him

did abide, Raining like dew from his sweet talk, As where the evening star may walk Along the brink of the gloomy seas, _645 Liquid mists of splendour quiver. His very gestures touched to tears The unpersuaded tyrant, never So moved before: his presence stung The torturers with their victim's pain, _650 And none knew how; and through their ears The subtle witchcraft of his tongue Unlocked the hearts of those who keep Gold, the world's bond of slavery. Men wondered, and some sneered to see _655 One sow what he could never reap: For he is rich, they said, and young, And might drink from the depths of luxury. If he seeks Fame, Fame never crowned The champion of a trampled creed: _660 If he seeks Power, Power is enthroned 'Mid ancient rights and wrongs, to feed Which hungry wolves with praise and spoil, Those who would sit near Power must toil; And such, there sitting, all may see. _665 What seeks he? All that others seek He casts away, like a vile weed Which the sea casts unreturningly. That poor and hungry men should break The laws which wreak them toil and scorn, _670 We understand; but Lionel We know, is rich and nobly born. So wondered they: yet all men loved Young Lionel, though few approved; All but the priests, whose hatred fell _675 Like the unseen blight of a smiling day, The withering honey dew, which clings Under the bright green buds of May, Whilst they unfold their emerald wings: For he made verses wild and queer _680 On the strange creeds priests hold so dear, Because they bring them land and gold. Of devils and saints and all such gear, He made tales which whoso heard or read Would laugh till he were almost dead. _685 So this grew a proverb: 'Don't get old Till Lionel's "Banquet in Hell" you hear, And then you will laugh yourself young again.' So the priests hated him, and he Repaid their hate with cheerful glee. _690

Ah, smiles and joyance quickly died, For public hope grew pale and dim In an altered time and tide, And in its wasting withered him, As a summer flower that blows too soon _695 Droops in the smile of the waning moon, When it scatters through an April night The frozen dews of wrinkling blight. None now hoped more. Gray Power was seated Safely on her ancestral throne; _700 And Faith, the Python,

undefeated, Even to its blood-stained steps dragged on Her foul and wounded train, and men Were trampled and deceived again, And words and shows again could bind _705 The wailing tribes of human kind In scorn and famine. Fire and blood Raged round the raging multitude, To fields remote by tyrants sent To be the scorned instrument _710 With which they drag from mines of gore The chains their slaves yet ever wore: And in the streets men met each other, And by old altars and in halls, And smiled again at festivals. _715 But each man found in his heart's brother Cold cheer; for all, though half deceived, The outworn creeds again believed, And the same round anew began, Which the weary world yet ever ran. _720

Many then wept, not tears, but gall Within their hearts, like drops which fall Wasting the fountain-stone away. And in that dark and evil day Did all desires and thoughts, that claim _725 Men's care—ambition, friendship, fame, Love, hope, though hope was now despair— Indue the colours of this change, As from the all-surrounding air The earth takes hues obscure and strange, _730 When storm and earthquake linger there.

And so, my friend, it then befell To many, most to Lionel, Whose hope was like the life of youth Within him, and when dead, became _735 A spirit of unresting flame, Which goaded him in his distress Over the world's vast wilderness. Three years he left his native land, And on the fourth, when he returned, _740 None knew him: he was stricken deep With some disease of mind, and turned Into aught unlike Lionel. On him, on whom, did he pause in sleep, Serenest smiles were wont to keep, _745 And, did he wake, a winged band Of bright persuasions, which had fed On his sweet lips and liquid eyes, Kept their swift pinions half outspread To do on men his least command; _750 On him, whom once 'twas paradise Even to behold, now misery lay: In his own heart 'twas merciless, To all things else none may express Its innocence and tenderness. _755

'Twas said that he had refuge sought In love from his unquiet thought In distant

lands, and been deceived By some strange show; for there were found, Blotted with tears as those relieved _760 By their own words are wont to do, These mournful verses on the ground, By all who read them blotted too.

‘How am I changed! my hopes were once like fire: I loved, and I believed that life was love. _765 How am I lost! on wings of swift desire Among Heaven’s winds my spirit once did move. I slept, and silver dreams did aye inspire My liquid sleep: I woke, and did approve All nature to my heart, and thought to make _770 A paradise of earth for one sweet sake.

‘I love, but I believe in love no more. I feel desire, but hope not. O, from sleep Most vainly must my weary brain implore Its long lost flattery now: I wake to weep, _775 And sit through the long day gnawing the core Of my bitter heart, and, like a miser, keep, Since none in what I feel take pain or pleasure, To my own soul its self-consuming treasure.’

He dwelt beside me near the sea; _780 And oft in evening did we meet, When the waves, beneath the starlight, flee O’er the yellow sands with silver feet, And talked: our talk was sad and sweet, Till slowly from his mien there passed _785 The desolation which it spoke; And smiles,—as when the lightning’s blast Has parched some heaven-delighting oak, The next spring shows leaves pale and rare, But like flowers delicate and fair, _790 On its rent boughs,—again arrayed His countenance in tender light: His words grew subtile fire, which made The air his hearers breathed delight: His motions, like the winds, were free, _795 Which bend the bright grass gracefully, Then fade away in circlets faint: And winged Hope, on which upborne His soul seemed hovering in his eyes, Like some bright spirit newly born _800 Floating amid the sunny skies, Sprang forth from his rent heart anew. Yet o’er his talk, and looks, and mien, Tempering their loveliness too keen, Past woe its shadow backward threw, _805 Till like an exhalation, spread From flowers half drunk with evening dew, They did become infectious: sweet And subtle mists of sense and

thought: Which wrapped us soon, when we might meet, _810 Almost from our own looks and aught The wild world holds. And so, his mind Was healed, while mine grew sick with fear: For ever now his health declined, Like some frail bark which cannot bear _815 The impulse of an altered wind, Though prosperous: and my heart grew full ‘Mid its new joy of a new care: For his cheek became, not pale, but fair, As rose-o’ershadowed lilies are; _820 And soon his deep and sunny hair, In this alone less beautiful, Like grass in tombs grew wild and rare. The blood in his translucent veins Beat, not like animal life, but love _825 Seemed now its sullen springs to move, When life had failed, and all its pains: And sudden sleep would seize him oft Like death, so calm, but that a tear, His pointed eyelashes between, _830 Would gather in the light serene Of smiles, whose lustre bright and soft Beneath lay undulating there. His breath was like inconstant flame, As eagerly it went and came; _835 And I hung o’er him in his sleep, Till, like an image in the lake Which rains disturb, my tears would break The shadow of that slumber deep: Then he would bid me not to weep, _840 And say, with flattery false, yet sweet, That death and he could never meet, If I would never part with him. And so we loved, and did unite All that in us was yet divided: _845 For when he said, that many a rite, By men to bind but once provided, Could not be shared by him and me, Or they would kill him in their glee, I shuddered, and then laughing said— _850 ‘We will have rites our faith to bind, But our church shall be the starry night, Our altar the grassy earth outspread, And our priest the muttering wind.’

’Twas sunset as I spoke: one star _855 Had scarce burst forth, when from afar The ministers of misrule sent, Seized upon Lionel, and bore His chained limbs to a dreary tower, In the midst of a city vast and wide. _860 For he, they said, from his mind had bent Against their gods keen blasphemy, For which, though his soul must roasted be In hell’s red lakes immortally, Yet even on earth must he abide _865 The vengeance of their slaves: a trial, I think, men call it. What avail Are prayers and tears, which chase denial From the fierce savage, nursed in hate? What the knit soul

that pleading and pale _870 Makes wan the quivering cheek, which late It painted with its own delight? We were divided. As I could, I stilled the tingling of my blood, And followed him in their despite, _875 As a widow follows, pale and wild, The murderers and corse of her only child; And when we came to the prison door And I prayed to share his dungeon floor With prayers which rarely have been spurned, _880 And when men drove me forth and I Stared with blank frenzy on the sky, A farewell look of love he turned, Half calming me; then gazed awhile, As if thro' that black and massy pile, _885 And thro' the crowd around him there, And thro' the dense and murky air, And the thronged streets, he did espy What poets know and prophesy; And said, with voice that made them shiver _890 And clung like music in my brain, And which the mute walls spoke again Prolonging it with deepened strain: 'Fear not the tyrants shall rule for ever, Or the priests of the bloody faith; _895 They stand on the brink of that mighty river, Whose waves they have tainted with death: It is fed from the depths of a thousand dells, Around them it foams, and rages, and swells, And their swords and their sceptres I floating see, _900 Like wrecks in the surge of eternity.'

I dwelt beside the prison gate; And the strange crowd that out and in Passed, some, no doubt, with mine own fate, Might have fretted me with its ceaseless din, _905 But the fever of care was louder within. Soon, but too late, in penitence Or fear, his foes released him thence: I saw his thin and languid form, As leaning on the jailor's arm, _910 Whose hardened eyes grew moist the while, To meet his mute and faded smile, And hear his words of kind farewell, He tottered forth from his damp cell. Many had never wept before, _915 From whom fast tears then gushed and fell: Many will relent no more, Who sobbed like infants then; aye, all Who thronged the prison's stony hall, The rulers or the slaves of law, _920 Felt with a new surprise and awe That they were human, till strong shame Made them again become the same. The prison blood-hounds, huge and grim, From human looks the infection caught, _925 And fondly crouched and fawned on him; And men have heard the

prisoners say, Who in their rotting dungeons lay, That from that hour, throughout one day, The fierce despair and hate which kept _930 Their trampled bosoms almost slept: Where, like twin vultures, they hung feeding On each heart's wound, wide torn and bleeding,— Because their jailors' rule, they thought, Grew merciful, like a parent's sway. _935

I know not how, but we were free: And Lionel sate alone with me, As the carriage drove thro' the streets apace; And we looked upon each other's face; And the blood in our fingers intertwined _940 Ran like the thoughts of a single mind, As the swift emotions went and came Thro' the veins of each united frame. So thro' the long long streets we passed Of the million-peopled City vast; _945 Which is that desert, where each one Seeks his mate yet is alone, Beloved and sought and mourned of none; Until the clear blue sky was seen, And the grassy meadows bright and green, _950 And then I sunk in his embrace, Enclosing there a mighty space Of love: and so we travelled on By woods, and fields of yellow flowers, And towns, and villages, and towers, _955 Day after day of happy hours. It was the azure time of June, When the skies are deep in the stainless noon, And the warm and fitful breezes shake The fresh green leaves of the hedgerow briar, _960 And there were odours then to make The very breath we did respire A liquid element, whereon Our spirits, like delighted things That walk the air on subtle wings, _965 Floated and mingled far away, 'Mid the warm winds of the sunny day. And when the evening star came forth Above the curve of the new bent moon, And light and sound ebbed from the earth, _970 Like the tide of the full and the weary sea To the depths of its own tranquillity, Our natures to its own repose Did the earth's breathless sleep attune: Like flowers, which on each other close _975 Their languid leaves when daylight's gone, We lay, till new emotions came, Which seemed to make each mortal frame One soul of interwoven flame, A life in life, a second birth _980 In worlds diviner far than earth, Which, like two strains of harmony That mingle in the silent sky Then slowly disunite, passed by And left the tenderness of tears, _985 A soft oblivion of all fears,

A sweet sleep: so we travelled on Till we came to the home of Lionel, Among the mountains wild and lone, Beside the hoary western sea, _990 Which near the verge of the echoing shore The massy forest shadowed o’er.

The ancient steward, with hair all hoar, As we alighted, wept to see His master changed so fearfully; _995 And the old man’s sobs did waken me From my dream of unremaining gladness; The truth flashed o’er me like quick madness When I looked, and saw that there was death On Lionel: yet day by day _1000 He lived, till fear grew hope and faith, And in my soul I dared to say, Nothing so bright can pass away: Death is dark, and foul, and dull, But he is—O how beautiful! _1005 Yet day by day he grew more weak, And his sweet voice, when he might speak, Which ne’er was loud, became more low; And the light which flashed through his waxen cheek Grew faint, as the rose-like hues which flow _1010 From sunset o’er the Alpine snow: And death seemed not like death in him, For the spirit of life o’er every limb Lingered, a mist of sense and thought. When the summer wind faint odours brought _1015 From mountain flowers, even as it passed His cheek would change, as the noonday sea Which the dying breeze sweeps fitfully. If but a cloud the sky o’ercast, You might see his colour come and go, _1020 And the softest strain of music made Sweet smiles, yet sad, arise and fade Amid the dew of his tender eyes; And the breath, with intermitting flow, Made his pale lips quiver and part. _1025 You might hear the beatings of his heart, Quick, but not strong; and with my tresses When oft he playfully would bind In the bowers of mossy lonelinesses His neck, and win me so to mingle _1030 In the sweet depth of woven caresses, And our faint limbs were intertwined, Alas! the unquiet life did tingle From mine own heart through every vein, Like a captive in dreams of liberty, _1035 Who beats the walls of his stony cell. But his, it seemed already free, Like the shadow of fire surrounding me! On my faint eyes and limbs did dwell That spirit as it passed, till soon, _1040 As a frail cloud wandering o’er the moon, Beneath its light invisible, Is seen when it folds its gray wings again To alight on midnight’s dusky plain, I lived and saw, and the

gathering soul _1045 Passed from beneath that strong control, And I fell on a life which was sick with fear Of all the woe that now I bear.

Amid a bloomless myrtle wood, On a green and sea-girt promontory, _1050 Not far from where we dwelt, there stood In record of a sweet sad story, An altar and a temple bright Circled by steps, and o'er the gate Was sculptured, 'To Fidelity;' _1055 And in the shrine an image sate, All veiled: but there was seen the light Of smiles which faintly could express A mingled pain and tenderness Through that ethereal drapery. _1060 The left hand held the head, the right— Beyond the veil, beneath the skin, You might see the nerves quivering within— Was forcing the point of a barbed dart Into its side-convulsing heart. _1065 An unskilled hand, yet one informed With genius, had the marble warmed With that pathetic life. This tale It told: A dog had from the sea, When the tide was raging fearfully, _1070 Dragged Lionel's mother, weak and pale, Then died beside her on the sand, And she that temple thence had planned; But it was Lionel's own hand Had wrought the image. Each new moon _1075 That lady did, in this lone fane, The rites of a religion sweet, Whose god was in her heart and brain: The seasons' loveliest flowers were strewn On the marble floor beneath her feet, _1080 And she brought crowns of sea-buds white Whose odour is so sweet and faint, And weeds, like branching chrysolite, Woven in devices fine and quaint. And tears from her brown eyes did stain _1085 The altar: need but look upon That dying statue fair and wan, If tears should cease, to weep again: And rare Arabian odours came, Through the myrtle copses steaming thence _1090 From the hissing frankincense, Whose smoke, wool-white as ocean foam, Hung in dense flocks beneath the dome— That ivory dome, whose azure night With golden stars, like heaven, was bright— _1095 O'er the split cedar's pointed flame; And the lady's harp would kindle there The melody of an old air, Softer than sleep; the villagers Mixed their religion up with hers, _1100 And, as they listened round, shed tears.

One eve he led me to this fane: Daylight on its last purple cloud Was lingering gray,

and soon her strain The nightingale began; now loud, _1105 Climbing in circles the windless sky, Now dying music; suddenly ’Tis scattered in a thousand notes, And now to the hushed ear it floats Like field smells known in infancy, _1110 Then failing, soothes the air again. We sate within that temple lone, Pavilioned round with Parian stone: His mother’s harp stood near, and oft I had awakened music soft _1115 Amid its wires: the nightingale Was pausing in her heaven-taught tale: ‘Now drain the cup,’ said Lionel, ‘Which the poet-bird has crowned so well With the wine of her bright and liquid song! _1120 Heardst thou not sweet words among That heaven-resounding minstrelsy? Heard’st thou not that those who die Awake in a world of ecstasy? That love, when limbs are interwoven, _1125 And sleep, when the night of life is cloven, And thought, to the world’s dim boundaries clinging, And music, when one beloved is singing, Is death? Let us drain right joyously The cup which the sweet bird fills for me.’ _1130 He paused, and to my lips he bent His own: like spirit his words went Through all my limbs with the speed of fire; And his keen eyes, glittering through mine, Filled me with the flame divine, _1135 Which in their orbs was burning far, Like the light of an unmeasured star, In the sky of midnight dark and deep: Yes, ’twas his soul that did inspire Sounds, which my skill could ne’er awaken; _1140 And first, I felt my fingers sweep The harp, and a long quivering cry Burst from my lips in symphony: The dusk and solid air was shaken, As swift and swifter the notes came _1145 From my touch, that wandered like quick flame, And from my bosom, labouring With some unutterable thing: The awful sound of my own voice made My faint lips tremble; in some mood _1150 Of wordless thought Lionel stood So pale, that even beside his cheek The snowy column from its shade Caught whiteness: yet his countenance, Raised upward, burned with radiance _1155 Of spirit-piercing joy, whose light, Like the moon struggling through the night Of whirlwind-rifted clouds, did break With beams that might not be confined. I paused, but soon his gestures kindled _1160 New power, as by the moving wind The waves are lifted, and my song To low soft notes now

changed and dwindled, And from the twinkling wires among, My languid fingers drew and flung _1165 Circles of life-dissolving sound, Yet faint; in aery rings they bound My Lionel, who, as every strain Grew fainter but more sweet, his mien Sunk with the sound relaxedly; _1170 And slowly now he turned to me, As slowly faded from his face That awful joy: with looks serene He was soon drawn to my embrace, And my wild song then died away _1175 In murmurs: words I dare not say We mixed, and on his lips mine fed Till they methought felt still and cold: ‘What is it with thee, love?’ I said: No word, no look, no motion! yes, _1180 There was a change, but spare to guess, Nor let that moment’s hope be told. I looked, and knew that he was dead, And fell, as the eagle on the plain Falls when life deserts her brain, _1185 And the mortal lightning is veiled again.

O that I were now dead! but such (Did they not, love, demand too much, Those dying murmurs?) he forbade. O that I once again were mad! _1190 And yet, dear Rosalind, not so, For I would live to share thy woe. Sweet boy! did I forget thee too? Alas, we know not what we do When we speak words. No memory more _1195 Is in my mind of that sea shore. Madness came on me, and a troop Of misty shapes did seem to sit Beside me, on a vessel’s poop, And the clear north wind was driving it. _1200 Then I heard strange tongues, and saw strange flowers, And the stars methought grew unlike ours, And the azure sky and the stormless sea Made me believe that I had died, And waked in a world, which was to me _1205 Drear hell, though heaven to all beside: Then a dead sleep fell on my mind, Whilst animal life many long years Had rescued from a chasm of tears; And when I woke, I wept to find _1210 That the same lady, bright and wise, With silver locks and quick brown eyes, The mother of my Lionel, Had tended me in my distress, And died some months before. Nor less _1215 Wonder, but far more peace and joy, Brought in that hour my lovely boy; For through that trance my soul had well The impress of thy being kept; And if I waked, or if I slept, _1220 No doubt, though memory faithless be, Thy image ever dwelt on me; And thus, O Lionel, like thee Is our sweet child.

’Tis sure most strange I knew not of so great a change, _1225 As that which gave him birth, who now Is all the solace of my woe.

That Lionel great wealth had left By will to me, and that of all The ready lies of law bereft _1230 My child and me, might well befall. But let me think not of the scorn, Which from the meanest I have borne, When, for my child’s beloved sake, I mixed with slaves, to vindicate _1235 The very laws themselves do make: Let me not say scorn is my fate, Lest I be proud, suffering the same With those who live in deathless fame.

She ceased.—‘Lo, where red morning thro’ the woods _1240 Is burning o’er the dew;’ said Rosalind. And with these words they rose, and towards the flood Of the blue lake, beneath the leaves now wind With equal steps and fingers intertwined: Thence to a lonely dwelling, where the shore _1245 Is shadowed with steep rocks, and cypresses Cleave with their dark green cones the silent skies, And with their shadows the clear depths below, And where a little terrace from its bowers, Of blooming myrtle and faint lemon-flowers, _1250 Scatters its sense-dissolving fragrance o’er The liquid marble of the windless lake; And where the aged forest’s limbs look hoar, Under the leaves which their green garments make, They come: ’Tis Helen’s home, and clean and white, _1255 Like one which tyrants spare on our own land In some such solitude, its casements bright Shone through their vine-leaves in the morning sun, And even within ’twas scarce like Italy. And when she saw how all things there were planned, _1260 As in an English home, dim memory Disturbed poor Rosalind: she stood as one Whose mind is where his body cannot be, Till Helen led her where her child yet slept, And said, ‘Observe, that brow was Lionel’s, _1265 Those lips were his, and so he ever kept One arm in sleep, pillowing his head with it. You cannot see his eyes—they are two wells Of liquid love: let us not wake him yet.’ But Rosalind could bear no more, and wept _1270 A shower of burning tears, which fell upon His face, and so his opening lashes shone With tears unlike his own, as he did leap In sudden wonder from his innocent sleep.

So Rosalind and Helen lived together _1275 Thenceforth, changed in all else, yet friends again, Such as they were, when o’er the mountain heather They wandered in their youth, through sun and rain. And after many years, for human things Change even like the ocean and the wind, _1280 Her daughter was restored to Rosalind, And in their circle thence some visitings Of joy ‘mid their new calm would intervene: A lovely child she was, of looks serene, And motions which o’er things indifferent shed _1285 The grace and gentleness from whence they came. And Helen’s boy grew with her, and they fed From the same flowers of thought, until each mind Like springs which mingle in one flood became, And in their union soon their parents saw _1290 The shadow of the peace denied to them. And Rosalind, for when the living stem Is cankered in its heart, the tree must fall, Died ere her time; and with deep grief and awe The pale survivors followed her remains _1295 Beyond the region of dissolving rains, Up the cold mountain she was wont to call Her tomb; and on Chiavenna’s precipice They raised a pyramid of lasting ice, Whose polished sides, ere day had yet begun, _1300 Caught the first glow of the unrisen sun, The last, when it had sunk; and thro’ the night The charioteers of Arctos wheeled round Its glittering point, as seen from Helen’s home, Whose sad inhabitants each year would come, _1305 With willing steps climbing that rugged height, And hang long locks of hair, and garlands bound With amaranth flowers, which, in the clime’s despite, Filled the frore air with unaccustomed light: Such flowers, as in the wintry memory bloom _1310 Of one friend left, adorned that frozen tomb.

Helen, whose spirit was of softer mould, Whose sufferings too were less, Death slowlier led Into the peace of his dominion cold: She died among her kindred, being old. _1315 And know, that if love die not in the dead As in the living, none of mortal kind Are blest, as now Helen and Rosalind.

NOTES: _63 from there]from thee edition 1819. _366 fell]ran edition 1819. _405-_408 See Editor’s Note on this passage. _551 Where]When edition 1819. _572 Ay, overflowing]Aye overflowing edition 1819. _612 dear]clear cj. Bradley. _711

gore editions 1819, 1839. See Editor's Note. _932 Where]When edition 1819. _1093-_1096 See Editor's Note. _1168-_1171] See Editor's Note. _1209 rescue]rescued edition 1819. See Editor's Note.

NOTE BY MRS. SHELLEY.

"Rosalind and Helen" was begun at Marlow, and thrown aside—till I found it; and, at my request, it was completed. Shelley had no care for any of his poems that did not emanate from the depths of his mind, and develop some high or abstruse truth. When he does touch on human life and the human heart, no pictures can be more faithful, more delicate, more subtle, or more pathetic. He never mentioned Love but he shed a grace borrowed from his own nature, that scarcely any other poet has bestowed on that passion. When he spoke of it as the law of life, which inasmuch as we rebel against we err and injure ourselves and others, he promulgated that which he considered an irrefragable truth. In his eyes it was the essence of our being, and all woe and pain arose from the war made against it by selfishness, or insensibility, or mistake. By reverting in his mind to this first principle, he discovered the source of many emotions, and could disclose the secrets of all hearts, and his delineations of passion and emotion touch the finest chords of our nature.

"Rosalind and Helen" was finished during the summer of 1818, while we were at the Baths of Lucca.

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JULIAN AND MADDALO.

A CONVERSATION.

[Composed at Este after Shelley's first visit to Venice, 1818 (Autumn); first published in the "Posthumous Poems", London, 1824 (edition Mrs. Shelley). Shelley's original intention had been to print the poem in Leigh Hunt's "Examiner"; but he changed his mind and, on August 15, 1819, sent the manuscript to Hunt to be published anonymously by Ollier. This manuscript, found by Mr. Townshend

Mayer, and by him placed in the hands of Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B., is described at length in Mr. Forman's Library Edition of the poems (volume 3 page 107). The date, 'May, 1819,' affixed to "Julian and Maddalo" in the "Posthumous Poems", 1824, indicates the time when the text was finally revised by Shelley. Sources of the text are (1) "Posthumous Poems", 1824; (2) the Hunt manuscript; (3) a fair draft of the poem amongst the Boscombe manuscripts; (4) "Poetical Works", 1839, 1st and 2nd editions (Mrs. Shelley). Our text is that of the Hunt manuscript, as printed in Forman's Library Edition of the Poems, 1876, volume 3, pages 103-30; variants of 1824 are indicated in the footnotes; questions of punctuation are dealt with in the notes at the end of the volume.]

PREFACE.

The meadows with fresh streams, the bees with thyme, The goats with the green leaves of budding Spring, Are saturated not—nor Love with tears.—VIRGIL'S "Gallus".

Count Maddalo is a Venetian nobleman of ancient family and of great fortune, who, without mixing much in the society of his countrymen, resides chiefly at his magnificent palace in that city. He is a person of the most consummate genius, and capable, if he would direct his energies to such an end, of becoming the redeemer of his degraded country. But it is his weakness to be proud: he derives, from a comparison of his own extraordinary mind with the dwarfish intellects that surround him, an intense apprehension of the nothingness of human life. His passions and his powers are incomparably greater than those of other men; and, instead of the latter having been employed in curbing the former, they have mutually lent each other strength. His ambition preys upon itself, for want of objects which it can consider worthy of exertion. I say that Maddalo is proud, because I can find no other word to express the concentred and impatient feelings which consume him; but it is on his own hopes and affections only that he seems to trample, for in social life no human

being can be more gentle, patient and unassuming than Maddalo. He is cheerful, frank and witty. His more serious conversation is a sort of intoxication; men are held by it as by a spell. He has travelled much; and there is an inexpressible charm in his relation of his adventures in different countries.

Julian is an Englishman of good family, passionately attached to those philosophical notions which assert the power of man over his own mind, and the immense improvements of which, by the extinction of certain moral superstitions, human society may be yet susceptible. Without concealing the evil in the world he is for ever speculating how good may be made superior. He is a complete infidel, and a scoffer at all things reputed holy; and Maddalo takes a wicked pleasure in drawing out his taunts against religion. What Maddalo thinks on these matters is not exactly known. Julian, in spite of his heterodox opinions, is conjectured by his friends to possess some good qualities. How far this is possible the pious reader will determine. Julian is rather serious.

Of the Maniac I can give no information. He seems, by his own account, to have been disappointed in love. He was evidently a very cultivated and amiable person when in his right senses. His story, told at length, might be like many other stories of the same kind: the unconnected exclamations of his agony will perhaps be found a sufficient comment for the text of every heart.

I rode one evening with Count Maddalo Upon the bank of land which breaks the flow Of Adria towards Venice: a bare strand Of hillocks, heaped from ever-shifting sand, Matted with thistles and amphibious weeds, _5 Such as from earth’s embrace the salt ooze breeds, Is this; an uninhabited sea-side, Which the lone fisher, when his nets are dried, Abandons; and no other object breaks The waste, but one dwarf tree and some few stakes _10 Broken and unrepaired, and the tide makes A narrow space of level sand thereon, Where ’twas our wont to ride while day went down. This ride was my delight. I love all waste And solitary places; where we taste _15 The

pleasure of believing what we see Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be: And such was this wide ocean, and this shore More barren than its billows; and yet more Than all, with a remembered friend I love _20 To ride as then I rode;—for the winds drove The living spray along the sunny air Into our faces; the blue heavens were bare, Stripped to their depths by the awakening north; And, from the waves, sound like delight broke forth _25 Harmonising with solitude, and sent Into our hearts aereal merriment. So, as we rode, we talked; and the swift thought, Winging itself with laughter, lingered not, But flew from brain to brain,—such glee was ours, _30 Charged with light memories of remembered hours, None slow enough for sadness: till we came Homeward, which always makes the spirit tame. This day had been cheerful but cold, and now The sun was sinking, and the wind also. _35 Our talk grew somewhat serious, as may be Talk interrupted with such raillery As mocks itself, because it cannot scorn The thoughts it would extinguish: —'twas forlorn, Yet pleasing, such as once, so poets tell, _40 The devils held within the dales of Hell Concerning God, freewill and destiny: Of all that earth has been or yet may be, All that vain men imagine or believe, Or hope can paint or suffering may achieve, _45 We descanted; and I (for ever still Is it not wise to make the best of ill?) Argued against despondency, but pride Made my companion take the darker side. The sense that he was greater than his kind _50 Had struck, methinks, his eagle spirit blind By gazing on its own exceeding light. Meanwhile the sun paused ere it should alight, Over the horizon of the mountains;—Oh, How beautiful is sunset, when the glow _55 Of Heaven descends upon a land like thee, Thou Paradise of exiles, Italy! Thy mountains, seas and vineyards, and the towers Of cities they encircle!—it was ours To stand on thee, beholding it: and then, _60 Just where we had dismounted, the Count's men Were waiting for us with the gondola.— As those who pause on some delightful way Though bent on pleasant pilgrimage, we stood Looking upon the evening, and the flood _65 Which lay between the city and the shore, Paved with the image of the sky…the hoar And aery Alps towards the North appeared Through

mist, an heaven-sustaining bulwark reared Between the East and West; and half the sky _70 Was roofed with clouds of rich emblazonry Dark purple at the zenith, which still grew Down the steep West into a wondrous hue Brighter than burning gold, even to the rent Where the swift sun yet paused in his descent _75 Among the many-folded hills: they were Those famous Euganean hills, which bear, As seen from Lido thro' the harbour piles, The likeness of a clump of peaked isles— And then—as if the Earth and Sea had been _80 Dissolved into one lake of fire, were seen Those mountains towering as from waves of flame Around the vaporous sun, from which there came The inmost purple spirit of light, and made Their very peaks transparent. 'Ere it fade,' _85 Said my companion, 'I will show you soon A better station'—so, o'er the lagune We glided; and from that funereal bark I leaned, and saw the city, and could mark How from their many isles, in evening's gleam, _90 Its temples and its palaces did seem Like fabrics of enchantment piled to Heaven. I was about to speak, when—'We are even Now at the point I meant,' said Maddalo, And bade the gondolieri cease to row. _95 'Look, Julian, on the west, and listen well If you hear not a deep and heavy bell.' I looked, and saw between us and the sun A building on an island; such a one As age to age might add, for uses vile, _100 A windowless, deformed and dreary pile; And on the top an open tower, where hung A bell, which in the radiance swayed and swung; We could just hear its hoarse and iron tongue: The broad sun sunk behind it, and it tolled _105 In strong and black relief.—'What we behold Shall be the madhouse and its belfry tower,' Said Maddalo, 'and ever at this hour Those who may cross the water, hear that bell Which calls the maniacs, each one from his cell, _110 To vespers.'—'As much skill as need to pray In thanks or hope for their dark lot have they To their stern maker,' I replied. 'O ho! You talk as in years past,' said Maddalo. ''Tis strange men change not. You were ever still _115 Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel, A wolf for the meek lambs—if you can't swim Beware of Providence.' I looked on him, But the gay smile had faded in his eye. 'And such,'—he cried, 'is our mortality, _120 And

this must be the emblem and the sign Of what should be eternal and divine!— And like that black and dreary bell, the soul, Hung in a heaven-illumined tower, must toll Our thoughts and our desires to meet below _125 Round the rent heart and pray—as madmen do For what? they know not,—till the night of death As sunset that strange vision, severeth Our memory from itself, and us from all We sought and yet were baffled.' I recall _130 The sense of what he said, although I mar The force of his expressions. The broad star Of day meanwhile had sunk behind the hill, And the black bell became invisible, And the red tower looked gray, and all between _135 The churches, ships and palaces were seen Huddled in gloom;—into the purple sea The orange hues of heaven sunk silently. We hardly spoke, and soon the gondola Conveyed me to my lodging by the way. _140 The following morn was rainy, cold, and dim: Ere Maddalo arose, I called on him, And whilst I waited with his child I played; A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made; A serious, subtle, wild, yet gentle being, _145 Graceful without design and unforeseeing, With eyes—Oh speak not of her eyes!—which seem Twin mirrors of Italian Heaven, yet gleam With such deep meaning, as we never see But in the human countenance: with me _150 She was a special favourite: I had nursed Her fine and feeble limbs when she came first To this bleak world; and she yet seemed to know On second sight her ancient playfellow, Less changed than she was by six months or so; _155 For after her first shyness was worn out We sate there, rolling billiard balls about, When the Count entered. Salutations past— 'The word you spoke last night might well have cast A darkness on my spirit—if man be _160 The passive thing you say, I should not see Much harm in the religions and old saws (Tho' I may never own such leaden laws) Which break a teachless nature to the yoke: Mine is another faith.'—thus much I spoke _165 And noting he replied not, added: 'See This lovely child, blithe, innocent and free; She spends a happy time with little care, While we to such sick thoughts subjected are As came on you last night. It is our will _170 That thus enchains us to permitted ill— We might be otherwise—we might be all We dream of happy, high,

majestical. Where is the love, beauty, and truth we seek, But in our mind? and if we were not weak _175 Should we be less in deed than in desire?' 'Ay, if we were not weak—and we aspire How vainly to be strong!' said Maddalo: 'You talk Utopia.' 'It remains to know,' I then rejoined, 'and those who try may find _180 How strong the chains are which our spirit bind; Brittle perchance as straw…We are assured Much may be conquered, much may be endured, Of what degrades and crushes us. We know That we have power over ourselves to do _185 And suffer—what, we know not till we try; But something nobler than to live and die— So taught those kings of old philosophy Who reigned, before Religion made men blind; And those who suffer with their suffering kind _190 Yet feel their faith, religion.' 'My dear friend,' Said Maddalo, 'my judgement will not bend To your opinion, though I think you might Make such a system refutation-tight As far as words go. I knew one like you _195 Who to this city came some months ago, With whom I argued in this sort, and he Is now gone mad,—and so he answered me,— Poor fellow! but if you would like to go, We'll visit him, and his wild talk will show _200 How vain are such aspiring theories.' 'I hope to prove the induction otherwise, And that a want of that true theory, still, Which seeks a "soul of goodness" in things ill Or in himself or others, has thus bowed _205 His being—there are some by nature proud, Who patient in all else demand but this— To love and be beloved with gentleness; And being scorned, what wonder if they die Some living death? this is not destiny _210 But man's own wilful ill.' As thus I spoke Servants announced the gondola, and we Through the fast-falling rain and high-wrought sea Sailed to the island where the madhouse stands. We disembarked. The clap of tortured hands, _215 Fierce yells and howlings and lamentings keen, And laughter where complaint had merrier been, Moans, shrieks, and curses, and blaspheming prayers Accosted us. We climbed the oozy stairs Into an old courtyard. I heard on high, _220 Then, fragments of most touching melody, But looking up saw not the singer there— Through the black bars in the tempestuous air I saw, like weeds on a wrecked palace growing, Long tangled locks

flung wildly forth, and flowing, _225 Of those who on a sudden were beguiled Into strange silence, and looked forth and smiled Hearing sweet sounds. Then I: ‘Methinks there were A cure of these with patience and kind care, If music can thus move…but what is he _230 Whom we seek here?’ ‘Of his sad history I know but this,’ said Maddalo: ‘he came To Venice a dejected man, and fame Said he was wealthy, or he had been so; Some thought the loss of fortune wrought him woe; _235 But he was ever talking in such sort As you do—far more sadly—he seemed hurt, Even as a man with his peculiar wrong, To hear but of the oppression of the strong, Or those absurd deceits (I think with you _240 In some respects, you know) which carry through The excellent impostors of this earth When they outface detection—he had worth, Poor fellow! but a humorist in his way’— ‘Alas, what drove him mad?’ ‘I cannot say: _245 A lady came with him from France, and when She left him and returned, he wandered then About yon lonely isles of desert sand Till he grew wild—he had no cash or land Remaining,—the police had brought him here— _250 Some fancy took him and he would not bear Removal; so I fitted up for him Those rooms beside the sea, to please his whim, And sent him busts and books and urns for flowers, Which had adorned his life in happier hours, _255 And instruments of music—you may guess A stranger could do little more or less For one so gentle and unfortunate: And those are his sweet strains which charm the weight From madmen’s chains, and make this Hell appear _260 A heaven of sacred silence, hushed to hear.’— ‘Nay, this was kind of you—he had no claim, As the world says’—‘None—but the very same Which I on all mankind were I as he Fallen to such deep reverse;—his melody _265 Is interrupted—now we hear the din Of madmen, shriek on shriek, again begin; Let us now visit him; after this strain He ever communes with himself again, And sees nor hears not any.’ Having said _270 These words, we called the keeper, and he led To an apartment opening on the sea— There the poor wretch was sitting mournfully Near a piano, his pale fingers twined One with the other, and the ooze and wind _275 Rushed through an open casement,

and did sway His hair, and starred it with the brackish spray; His head was leaning on a music book, And he was muttering, and his lean limbs shook; His lips were pressed against a folded leaf _280 In hue too beautiful for health, and grief Smiled in their motions as they lay apart— As one who wrought from his own fervid heart The eloquence of passion, soon he raised His sad meek face and eyes lustrous and glazed _285 And spoke—sometimes as one who wrote, and thought His words might move some heart that heeded not, If sent to distant lands: and then as one Reproaching deeds never to be undone With wondering self-compassion; then his speech _290 Was lost in grief, and then his words came each Unmodulated, cold, expressionless,— But that from one jarred accent you might guess It was despair made them so uniform: And all the while the loud and gusty storm _295 Hissed through the window, and we stood behind Stealing his accents from the envious wind Unseen. I yet remember what he said Distinctly: such impression his words made.

‘Month after month,’ he cried, ‘to bear this load _300 And as a jade urged by the whip and goad To drag life on, which like a heavy chain Lengthens behind with many a link of pain!— And not to speak my grief—O, not to dare To give a human voice to my despair, _305 But live, and move, and, wretched thing! smile on As if I never went aside to groan, And wear this mask of falsehood even to those Who are most dear—not for my own repose— Alas! no scorn or pain or hate could be _310 So heavy as that falsehood is to me— But that I cannot bear more altered faces Than needs must be, more changed and cold embraces, More misery, disappointment, and mistrust To own me for their father…Would the dust _315 Were covered in upon my body now! That the life ceased to toil within my brow! And then these thoughts would at the least be fled; Let us not fear such pain can vex the dead.

‘What Power delights to torture us? I know _320 That to myself I do not wholly owe What now I suffer, though in part I may. Alas! none strewed sweet flowers upon the way Where wandering heedlessly, I met pale Pain My shadow, which will leave me

not again— _325 If I have erred, there was no joy in error, But pain and insult and unrest and terror; I have not as some do, bought penitence With pleasure, and a dark yet sweet offence, For then,—if love and tenderness and truth _330 Had overlived hope's momentary youth, My creed should have redeemed me from repenting; But loathed scorn and outrage unrelenting Met love excited by far other seeming Until the end was gained…as one from dreaming _335 Of sweetest peace, I woke, and found my state Such as it is.— 'O Thou, my spirit's mate Who, for thou art compassionate and wise, Wouldst pity me from thy most gentle eyes If this sad writing thou shouldst ever see— _340 My secret groans must be unheard by thee, Thou wouldst weep tears bitter as blood to know Thy lost friend's incommunicable woe.

'Ye few by whom my nature has been weighed In friendship, let me not that name degrade _345 By placing on your hearts the secret load Which crushes mine to dust. There is one road To peace and that is truth, which follow ye! Love sometimes leads astray to misery. Yet think not though subdued—and I may well _350 Say that I am subdued—that the full Hell Within me would infect the untainted breast Of sacred nature with its own unrest; As some perverted beings think to find In scorn or hate a medicine for the mind _355 Which scorn or hate have wounded—O how vain! The dagger heals not but may rend again… Believe that I am ever still the same In creed as in resolve, and what may tame My heart, must leave the understanding free, _360 Or all would sink in this keen agony— Nor dream that I will join the vulgar cry; Or with my silence sanction tyranny; Or seek a moment's shelter from my pain In any madness which the world calls gain, _365 Ambition or revenge or thoughts as stern As those which make me what I am; or turn To avarice or misanthropy or lust… Heap on me soon, O grave, thy welcome dust! Till then the dungeon may demand its prey, _370 And Poverty and Shame may meet and say— Halting beside me on the public way— "That love-devoted youth is ours—let's sit Beside him—he may live some six months yet." Or the red scaffold, as our country bends, _375 May ask some

willing victim; or ye friends May fall under some sorrow which this heart Or hand may share or vanquish or avert; I am prepared—in truth, with no proud joy— To do or suffer aught, as when a boy _380 I did devote to justice and to love My nature, worthless now!… ‘I must remove A veil from my pent mind. ’Tis torn aside! O, pallid as Death’s dedicated bride, Thou mockery which art sitting by my side, _385 Am I not wan like thee? at the grave’s call I haste, invited to thy wedding-ball To greet the ghastly paramour, for whom Thou hast deserted me…and made the tomb Thy bridal bed…But I beside your feet _390 Will lie and watch ye from my winding-sheet— Thus…wide awake tho’ dead…yet stay, O stay! Go not so soon—I know not what I say— Hear but my reasons…I am mad, I fear, My fancy is o’erwrought…thou art not here… _395 Pale art thou, ’tis most true…but thou art gone, Thy work is finished…I am left alone!— … ‘Nay, was it I who wooed thee to this breast Which, like a serpent, thou envenomest As in repayment of the warmth it lent? _400 Didst thou not seek me for thine own content? Did not thy love awaken mine? I thought That thou wert she who said, “You kiss me not Ever, I fear you do not love me now”— In truth I loved even to my overthrow _405 Her, who would fain forget these words: but they Cling to her mind, and cannot pass away. … ‘You say that I am proud—that when I speak My lip is tortured with the wrongs which break The spirit it expresses…Never one _410 Humbled himself before, as I have done! Even the instinctive worm on which we tread Turns, though it wound not—then with prostrate head Sinks in the dusk and writhes like me—and dies? No: wears a living death of agonies! _415 As the slow shadows of the pointed grass Mark the eternal periods, his pangs pass, Slow, ever-moving,—making moments be As mine seem—each an immortality! … ‘That you had never seen me—never heard _420 My voice, and more than all had ne’er endured The deep pollution of my loathed embrace— That your eyes ne’er had lied love in my face— That, like some maniac monk, I had torn out The nerves of manhood by their bleeding root _425 With mine own quivering fingers, so that ne’er Our hearts had for a moment

mingled there To disunite in horror—these were not With thee, like some suppressed and hideous thought Which flits athwart our musings, but can find _430 No rest within a pure and gentle mind… Thou sealedst them with many a bare broad word, And searedst my memory o'er them,—for I heard And can forget not…they were ministered One after one, those curses. Mix them up _435 Like self-destroying poisons in one cup, And they will make one blessing which thou ne'er Didst imprecate for, on me,—death. … 'It were A cruel punishment for one most cruel, If such can love, to make that love the fuel _440 Of the mind's hell; hate, scorn, remorse, despair: But ME—whose heart a stranger's tear might wear As water-drops the sandy fountain-stone, Who loved and pitied all things, and could moan For woes which others hear not, and could see _445 The absent with the glance of phantasy, And with the poor and trampled sit and weep, Following the captive to his dungeon deep; ME—who am as a nerve o'er which do creep The else unfelt oppressions of this earth, _450 And was to thee the flame upon thy hearth, When all beside was cold—that thou on me Shouldst rain these plagues of blistering agony— Such curses are from lips once eloquent With love's too partial praise—let none relent _455 Who intend deeds too dreadful for a name Henceforth, if an example for the same They seek…for thou on me lookedst so, and so— And didst speak thus…and thus…I live to show How much men bear and die not! … 'Thou wilt tell _460 With the grimace of hate, how horrible It was to meet my love when thine grew less; Thou wilt admire how I could e'er address Such features to love's work…this taunt, though true, (For indeed Nature nor in form nor hue _465 Bestowed on me her choicest workmanship) Shall not be thy defence…for since thy lip Met mine first, years long past, since thine eye kindled With soft fire under mine, I have not dwindled Nor changed in mind or body, or in aught _470 But as love changes what it loveth not After long years and many trials.

'How vain Are words! I thought never to speak again, Not even in secret,—not to mine own heart— But from my lips the unwilling accents start, _475 And from my

pen the words flow as I write, Dazzling my eyes with scalding tears…my sight Is dim to see that charactered in vain On this unfeeling leaf which burns the brain And eats into it…blotting all things fair _480 And wise and good which time had written there.

‘Those who inflict must suffer, for they see The work of their own hearts, and this must be Our chastisement or recompense—O child! I would that thine were like to be more mild _485 For both our wretched sakes…for thine the most Who feelest already all that thou hast lost Without the power to wish it thine again; And as slow years pass, a funereal train Each with the ghost of some lost hope or friend _490 Following it like its shadow, wilt thou bend No thought on my dead memory? … ‘Alas, love! Fear me not…against thee I would not move A finger in despite. Do I not live That thou mayst have less bitter cause to grieve? _495 I give thee tears for scorn and love for hate; And that thy lot may be less desolate Than his on whom thou tramplest, I refrain From that sweet sleep which medicines all pain. Then, when thou speakest of me, never say _500 “He could forgive not.” Here I cast away All human passions, all revenge, all pride; I think, speak, act no ill; I do but hide Under these words, like embers, every spark Of that which has consumed me—quick and dark _505 The grave is yawning…as its roof shall cover My limbs with dust and worms under and over So let Oblivion hide this grief…the air Closes upon my accents, as despair Upon my heart—let death upon despair!’ _510

He ceased, and overcome leant back awhile, Then rising, with a melancholy smile Went to a sofa, and lay down, and slept A heavy sleep, and in his dreams he wept And muttered some familiar name, and we _515 Wept without shame in his society. I think I never was impressed so much; The man who were not, must have lacked a touch Of human nature…then we lingered not, Although our argument was quite forgot, _520 But calling the attendants, went to dine At Maddalo’s; yet neither cheer nor wine Could give us spirits, for we talked of him And nothing else, till daylight made stars dim; And we agreed his was some dreadful ill _525 Wrought on him

boldly, yet unspeakable, By a dear friend; some deadly change in love Of one vowed deeply which he dreamed not of; For whose sake he, it seemed, had fixed a blot Of falsehood on his mind which flourished not _530 But in the light of all-beholding truth; And having stamped this canker on his youth She had abandoned him—and how much more Might be his woe, we guessed not—he had store Of friends and fortune once, as we could guess _535 From his nice habits and his gentleness; These were now lost…it were a grief indeed If he had changed one unsustaining reed For all that such a man might else adorn. The colours of his mind seemed yet unworn; _540 For the wild language of his grief was high, Such as in measure were called poetry; And I remember one remark which then Maddalo made. He said: 'Most wretched men Are cradled into poetry by wrong, _545 They learn in suffering what they teach in song.'

If I had been an unconnected man, I, from this moment, should have formed some plan Never to leave sweet Venice,—for to me It was delight to ride by the lone sea; _550 And then, the town is silent—one may write Or read in gondolas by day or night, Having the little brazen lamp alight, Unseen, uninterrupted; books are there, Pictures, and casts from all those statues fair _555 Which were twin-born with poetry, and all We seek in towns, with little to recall Regrets for the green country. I might sit In Maddalo's great palace, and his wit And subtle talk would cheer the winter night _560 And make me know myself, and the firelight Would flash upon our faces, till the day Might dawn and make me wonder at my stay: But I had friends in London too: the chief Attraction here, was that I sought relief _565 From the deep tenderness that maniac wrought Within me—'twas perhaps an idle thought— But I imagined that if day by day I watched him, and but seldom went away, And studied all the beatings of his heart _570 With zeal, as men study some stubborn art For their own good, and could by patience find An entrance to the caverns of his mind, I might reclaim him from this dark estate: In friendships I had been most fortunate— _575 Yet never saw I one whom I would call More willingly my friend; and this was

all Accomplished not; such dreams of baseless good Oft come and go in crowds or solitude And leave no trace—but what I now designed _580 Made for long years impression on my mind. The following morning, urged by my affairs, I left bright Venice. After many years And many changes I returned; the name Of Venice, and its aspect, was the same; _585 But Maddalo was travelling far away Among the mountains of Armenia. His dog was dead. His child had now become A woman; such as it has been my doom To meet with few,—a wonder of this earth, _590 Where there is little of transcendent worth, Like one of Shakespeare's women: kindly she, And, with a manner beyond courtesy, Received her father's friend; and when I asked Of the lorn maniac, she her memory tasked, _595 And told as she had heard the mournful tale: 'That the poor sufferer's health began to fail Two years from my departure, but that then The lady who had left him, came again. Her mien had been imperious, but she now _600 Looked meek—perhaps remorse had brought her low. Her coming made him better, and they stayed Together at my father's—for I played, As I remember, with the lady's shawl— I might be six years old—but after all _605 She left him.'…'Why, her heart must have been tough: How did it end?' 'And was not this enough? They met—they parted.'—'Child, is there no more?' 'Something within that interval which bore The stamp of WHY they parted, HOW they met: _610 Yet if thine aged eyes disdain to wet Those wrinkled cheeks with youth's remembered tears, Ask me no more, but let the silent years Be closed and cered over their memory As yon mute marble where their corpses lie.' _615 I urged and questioned still, she told me how All happened—but the cold world shall not know.

CANCELLED FRAGMENTS OF JULIAN AND MADDALO.

'What think you the dead are?' 'Why, dust and clay, What should they be?' ''Tis the last hour of day. Look on the west, how beautiful it is _620 Vaulted with radiant vapours! The deep bliss Of that unutterable light has made The edges of that cloud … fade Into a hue, like some harmonious thought, Wasting itself on that which it

had wrought, _625 Till it dies … and … between The light hues of the tender, pure, serene, And infinite tranquillity of heaven. Ay, beautiful! but when not…' … 'Perhaps the only comfort which remains _630 Is the unheeded clanking of my chains, The which I make, and call it melody.'

NOTES: _45 may Hunt manuscript; can 1824. _99 a one Hunt manuscript; an one 1824. _105 sunk Hunt manuscript; sank 1824. _108 ever Hunt manuscript; even 1824. _119 in Hunt manuscript; from 1824. _124 a Hunt manuscript; an 1824. _171 That Hunt manuscript; Which 1824. _175 mind Hunt manuscript; minds 1824. _179 know 1824; see Hunt manuscript. _188 those Hunt manuscript; the 1824. _191 their Hunt manuscript; this 1824. _218 Moons, etc., Hunt manuscript; The line is wanting in editions 1824 and 1839. _237 far Hunt manuscript; but 1824. _270 nor Hunt manuscript; and 1824. _292 cold Hunt manuscript; and 1824. _318 least Hunt manuscript; last 1824. _323 sweet Hunt manuscript; fresh 1824. _356 have Hunt manuscript; hath 1824. _361 in this keen Hunt manuscript; under this 1824. _362 cry Hunt manuscript; eye 1824. _372 on Hunt manuscript; in 1824. _388 greet Hunt manuscript; meet 1824. _390 your Hunt manuscript; thy 1824. _417 his Hunt manuscript; its 1824. _446 glance Hunt manuscript; glass 1824. _447 with Hunt manuscript; near 1824. _467 lip Hunt manuscript; life 1824. _483 this Hunt manuscript; that 1824. _493 I would Hunt manuscript; I'd 1824. _510 despair Hunt manuscript; my care 1839. _511 leant] See Editor's Note. _518 were Hunt manuscript; was 1839. _525 his Hunt manuscript; it 1824. _530 on Hunt manuscript; in 1824. _537 were now Hunt manuscript; now were 1824. _588 regrets Hunt manuscript; regret 1824. _569 but Hunt manuscript; wanting in editions 1824 and 1839. _574 his 1824; this [?] Hunt manuscript.

NOTE BY MRS. SHELLEY.

From the Baths of Lucca, in 1818, Shelley visited Venice; and, circumstances rendering it eligible that we should remain a few weeks in the neighbourhood of that

city, he accepted the offer of Lord Byron, who lent him the use of a villa he rented near Este; and he sent for his family from Lucca to join him.

I Capuccini was a villa built on the site of a Capuchin convent, demolished when the French suppressed religious houses; it was situated on the very overhanging brow of a low hill at the foot of a range of higher ones. The house was cheerful and pleasant; a vine-trellised walk, a pergola, as it is called in Italian, led from the hall-door to a summer-house at the end of the garden, which Shelley made his study, and in which he began the “Prometheus”; and here also, as he mentions in a letter, he wrote “Julian and Maddalo”. A slight ravine, with a road in its depth, divided the garden from the hill, on which stood the ruins of the ancient castle of Este, whose dark massive wall gave forth an echo, and from whose ruined crevices owls and bats flitted forth at night, as the crescent moon sunk behind the black and heavy battlements. We looked from the garden over the wide plain of Lombardy, bounded to the west by the far Apennines, while to the east the horizon was lost in misty distance. After the picturesque but limited view of mountain, ravine, and chestnut-wood, at the Baths of Lucca, there was something infinitely gratifying to the eye in the wide range of prospect commanded by our new abode.

Our first misfortune, of the kind from which we soon suffered even more severely, happened here. Our little girl, an infant in whose small features I fancied that I traced great resemblance to her father, showed symptoms of suffering from the heat of the climate. Teething increased her illness and danger. We were at Este, and when we became alarmed, hastened to Venice for the best advice. When we arrived at Fusina, we found that we had forgotten our passport, and the soldiers on duty attempted to prevent our crossing the laguna; but they could not resist Shelley’s impetuosity at such a moment. We had scarcely arrived at Venice before life fled from the little sufferer, and we returned to Este to weep her loss.

After a few weeks spent in this retreat, which was interspersed by visits to Venice,

we proceeded southward.

***

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

A LYRICAL DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS. AUDISNE HAEC AMPHIARAE, SUB TERRAM ABDITE?

[Composed at Este, September, October, 1818 (Act 1); at Rome, March-April 6, 1819 (Acts 2, 3); at Florence, close of 1819 (Act 4). Published by C. and J. Ollier, London, summer of 1820. Sources of the text are (1) edition of 1820; (2) text in "Poetical Works", 1839, prepared with the aid of a list of errata in (1) written out by Shelley; (3) a fair draft in Shelley's autograph, now in the Bodleian. This has been carefully collated by Mr. C.D. Locock, who prints the result in his "Examination of the Shelley Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library", Oxford (Clarendon Press), 1903. Our text is that of 1820, modified by edition 1839, and by the Bodleian fair copy. In the following notes B = the Bodleian manuscript; 1820 = the editio princeps, printed by Marchant for C. and J. Ollier, London; and 1839 = the text as edited by Mrs. Shelley in the "Poetical Works", 1st and 2nd editions, 1839. The reader should consult the notes on the Play at the end of the volume.]

PREFACE.

The Greek tragic writers, in selecting as their subject any portion of their national history or mythology, employed in their treatment of it a certain arbitrary discretion. They by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common interpretation or to imitate in story as in title their rivals and predecessors. Such a system would have amounted to a resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors which incited the composition. The Agamemnonian story was exhibited on the Athenian theatre with as many variations as dramas.

I have presumed to employ a similar license. The "Prometheus Unbound" of Aeschylus supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim as the price of the

disclosure of the danger threatened to his empire by the consummation of his marriage with Thetis. Thetis, according to this view of the subject, was given in marriage to Peleus, and Prometheus, by the permission of Jupiter, delivered from his captivity by Hercules. Had I framed my story on this model, I should have done no more than have attempted to restore the lost drama of Aeschylus; an ambition which, if my preference to this mode of treating the subject had incited me to cherish, the recollection of the high comparison such an attempt would challenge might well abate. But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary. The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan; and Prometheus is, in my judgement, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandisement, which, in the Hero of “Paradise Lost”, interfere with the interest. The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. In the minds of those who consider that magnificent fiction with a religious feeling it engenders something worse. But Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends.

This Poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades, and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it

drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama.

The imagery which I have employed will be found, in many instances, to have been drawn from the operations of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed. This is unusual in modern poetry, although Dante and Shakespeare are full of instances of the same kind: Dante indeed more than any other poet, and with greater success. But the Greek poets, as writers to whom no resource of awakening the sympathy of their contemporaries was unknown, were in the habitual use of this power; and it is the study of their works (since a higher merit would probably be denied me) to which I am willing that my readers should impute this singularity.

One word is due in candour to the degree in which the study of contemporary writings may have tinged my composition, for such has been a topic of censure with regard to poems far more popular, and indeed more deservedly popular, than mine. It is impossible that any one who inhabits the same age with such writers as those who stand in the foremost ranks of our own, can conscientiously assure himself that his language and tone of thought may not have been modified by the study of the productions of those extraordinary intellects. It is true, that, not the spirit of their genius, but the forms in which it has manifested itself, are due less to the peculiarities of their own minds than to the peculiarity of the moral and intellectual condition of the minds among which they have been produced. Thus a number of writers possess the form, whilst they want the spirit of those whom, it is alleged, they imitate; because the former is the endowment of the age in which they live, and the latter must be the uncommunicated lightning of their own mind.

The peculiar style of intense and comprehensive imagery which distinguishes the modern literature of England has not been, as a general power, the product of the imitation of any particular writer. The mass of capabilities remains at every period materially the same; the circumstances which awaken it to action perpetually

change. If England were divided into forty republics, each equal in population and extent to Athens, there is no reason to suppose but that, under institutions not more perfect than those of Athens, each would produce philosophers and poets equal to those who (if we except Shakespeare) have never been surpassed. We owe the great writers of the golden age of our literature to that fervid awakening of the public mind which shook to dust the oldest and most oppressive form of the Christian religion. We owe Milton to the progress and development of the same spirit: the sacred Milton was, let it ever be remembered, a republican, and a bold inquirer into morals and religion. The great writers of our own age are, we have reason to suppose, the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition or the opinions which cement it. The cloud of mind is discharging its collected lightning, and the equilibrium between institutions and opinions is now restoring, or is about to be restored.

As to imitation, poetry is a mimetic art. It creates, but it creates by combination and representation. Poetical abstractions are beautiful and new, not because the portions of which they are composed had no previous existence in the mind of man or in nature, but because the whole produced by their combination has some intelligible and beautiful analogy with those sources of emotion and thought, and with the contemporary condition of them: one great poet is a masterpiece of nature which another not only ought to study but must study. He might as wisely and as easily determine that his mind should no longer be the mirror of all that is lovely in the visible universe as exclude from his contemplation the beautiful which exists in the writings of a great contemporary. The pretence of doing it would be a presumption in any but the greatest; the effect, even in him, would be strained, unnatural and ineffectual. A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others; and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers; he is not one, but both. Every man’s mind is, in this respect, modified by all the objects of nature and art; by every word and every suggestion which he ever

admitted to act upon his consciousness; it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected, and in which they compose one form. Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors and musicians, are, in one sense, the creators, and, in another, the creations, of their age. From this subjection the loftiest do not escape. There is a similarity between Homer and Hesiod, between Aeschylus and Euripides, between Virgil and Horace, between Dante and Petrarch, between Shakespeare and Fletcher, between Dryden and Pope; each has a generic resemblance under which their specific distinctions are arranged. If this similarity be the result of imitation, I am willing to confess that I have imitated.

Let this opportunity be conceded to me of acknowledging that I have, what a Scotch philosopher characteristically terms, ‘a passion for reforming the world:’ what passion incited him to write and publish his book, he omits to explain. For my part I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than go to Heaven with Paley and Malthus. But it is a mistake to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life. Didactic poetry is my abhorrence; nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse. My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarise the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness. Should I live to accomplish what I purpose, that is, produce a systematical history of what appear to me to be the genuine elements of human society, let not the advocates of injustice and superstition flatter themselves that I should take Aeschylus rather than Plato as my model.

The having spoken of myself with unaffected freedom will need little apology with

the candid; and let the uncandid consider that they injure me less than their own hearts and minds by misrepresentation. Whatever talents a person may possess to amuse and instruct others, be they ever so inconsiderable, he is yet bound to exert them: if his attempt be ineffectual, let the punishment of an unaccomplished purpose have been sufficient; let none trouble themselves to heap the dust of oblivion upon his efforts; the pile they raise will betray his grave which might otherwise have been unknown.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

PROMETHEUS. DEMOGORGON. JUPITER. THE EARTH. OCEAN. APOLLO. MERCURY. OCEANIDES: ASIA, PANTHEA, IONE. HERCULES. THE PHANTASM OF JUPITER. THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH. THE SPIRIT OF THE MOON. SPIRITS OF THE HOURS. SPIRITS. ECHOES. FAUNS. FURIES.

ACT 1.

SCENE: A RAVINE OF ICY ROCKS IN THE INDIAN CAUCASUS. PROMETHEUS IS DISCOVERED BOUND TO THE PRECIPICE. PANTHEA AND IONE ARE SEATED AT HIS FEET. TIME, NIGHT. DURING, THE SCENE MORNING SLOWLY BREAKS.

PROMETHEUS: Monarch of Gods and DAEmons, and all Spirits But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds Which Thou and I alone of living things Behold with sleepless eyes! regard this Earth Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou _5 Requitest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise, And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts, With fear and self-contempt and barren hope. Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate, Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn, _10 O’er mine own misery and thy vain revenge. Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours, And moments aye divided by keen pangs Till they seemed years, torture and solitude, Scorn and despair,—these are mine empire:— _15 More glorious far than that which thou surveyest From thine unenvied throne, O Mighty

God! Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain, _20 Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb, Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life. Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure. I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt? _25 I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun, Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm, Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below, Have its deaf waves not heard my agony? Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever! _30

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears Of their moon-freezing crystals; the bright chains Eat with their burning cold into my bones. Heaven's winged hound, polluting from thy lips His beak in poison not his own, tears up _35 My heart; and shapeless sights come wandering by, The ghastly people of the realm of dream, Mocking me: and the Earthquake-fiends are charged To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds When the rocks split and close again behind: _40 While from their loud abysses howling throng The genii of the storm, urging the rage Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail. And yet to me welcome is day and night, Whether one breaks the hoar-frost of the morn, _45 Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs The leaden-coloured east; for then they lead The wingless, crawling hours, one among whom —As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim— Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood _50 From these pale feet, which then might trample thee If they disdained not such a prostrate slave. Disdain! Ah, no! I pity thee. What ruin Will hunt thee undefended through wide Heaven! How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror, _55 Gape like a hell within! I speak in grief, Not exultation, for I hate no more, As then ere misery made me wise. The curse Once breathed on thee I would recall. Ye Mountains, Whose many-voiced Echoes, through the mist _60 Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell! Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost, Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept Shuddering through India! Thou serenest Air, Through which the Sun walks burning without

beams! _65 And ye swift Whirlwinds, who on poised wings Hung mute and moveless o’er yon hushed abyss, As thunder, louder than your own, made rock The orbed world! If then my words had power, Though I am changed so that aught evil wish _70 Is dead within; although no memory be Of what is hate, let them not lose it now! What was that curse? for ye all heard me speak.

NOTE: _54 thro’ wide B; thro’ the wide 1820.

FIRST VOICE (FROM THE MOUNTAINS): Thrice three hundred thousand years O’er the Earthquake’s couch we stood: _75 Oft, as men convulsed with fears, We trembled in our multitude.

SECOND VOICE (FROM THE SPRINGS): Thunderbolts had parched our water, We had been stained with bitter blood, And had run mute, ‘mid shrieks of slaughter, _80 Thro’ a city and a solitude.

THIRD VOICE (FROM THE AIR): I had clothed, since Earth uprose, Its wastes in colours not their own, And oft had my serene repose Been cloven by many a rending groan. _85

FOURTH VOICE (FROM THE WHIRLWINDS): We had soared beneath these mountains Unresting ages; nor had thunder, Nor yon volcano’s flaming fountains, Nor any power above or under Ever made us mute with wonder. _90

FIRST VOICE: But never bowed our snowy crest As at the voice of thine unrest.

SECOND VOICE: Never such a sound before To the Indian waves we bore. A pilot asleep on the howling sea _95 Leaped up from the deck in agony, And heard, and cried, ‘Ah, woe is me!’ And died as mad as the wild waves be.

THIRD VOICE: By such dread words from Earth to Heaven My still realm was never riven: _100 When its wound was closed, there stood Darkness o’er the day like blood.

FOURTH VOICE: And we shrank back: for dreams of ruin To frozen caves our

flight pursuing Made us keep silence—thus—and thus— _105 Though silence is a hell to us.

THE EARTH: The tongueless caverns of the craggy hills Cried, ‘Misery!’ then; the hollow Heaven replied, ‘Misery!’ And the Ocean’s purple waves, Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds, _110 And the pale nations heard it, ‘Misery!’

NOTE: _106 as hell 1839, B; a hell 1820.

PROMETHEUS: I hear a sound of voices: not the voice Which I gave forth. Mother, thy sons and thou Scorn him, without whose all-enduring will Beneath the fierce omnipotence of Jove, _115 Both they and thou had vanished, like thin mist Unrolled on the morning wind. Know ye not me, The Titan? He who made his agony The barrier to your else all-conquering foe? Oh, rock-embosomed lawns, and snow-fed streams, _120 Now seen athwart frore vapours, deep below, Through whose o’ershadowing woods I wandered once With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes; Why scorns the spirit which informs ye, now To commune with me? me alone, who checked, _125 As one who checks a fiend-drawn charioteer, The falsehood and the force of him who reigns Supreme, and with the groans of pining slaves Fills your dim glens and liquid wildernesses: Why answer ye not, still? Brethren!

THE EARTH: They dare not. _130

PROMETHEUS: Who dares? for I would hear that curse again. Ha, what an awful whisper rises up! ’Tis scarce like sound: it tingles through the frame As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strike. Speak, Spirit! from thine inorganic voice _135 I only know that thou art moving near And love. How cursed I him?

THE EARTH: How canst thou hear Who knowest not the language of the dead?

PROMETHEUS: Thou art a living spirit; speak as they.

THE EARTH: I dare not speak like life, lest Heaven’s fell King _140 Should hear, and link me to some wheel of pain More torturing than the one whereon I roll. Subtle thou art and good; and though the Gods Hear not this voice, yet thou art more

than God, Being wise and kind: earnestly hearken now. _145

PROMETHEUS: Obscurely through my brain, like shadows dim, Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick. I feel Faint, like one mingled in entwining love; Yet ’tis not pleasure.

THE EARTH: No, thou canst not hear: Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known _150 Only to those who die.

PROMETHEUS: And what art thou, O, melancholy Voice?

THE EARTH: I am the Earth, Thy mother; she within whose stony veins, To the last fibre of the loftiest tree Whose thin leaves trembled in the frozen air, _155 Joy ran, as blood within a living frame, When thou didst from her bosom, like a cloud Of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy! And at thy voice her pining sons uplifted Their prostrate brows from the polluting dust, _160 And our almighty Tyrant with fierce dread Grew pale, until his thunder chained thee here. Then, see those million worlds which burn and roll Around us: their inhabitants beheld My sphered light wane in wide Heaven; the sea _165 Was lifted by strange tempest, and new fire From earthquake-rifted mountains of bright snow Shook its portentous hair beneath Heaven’s frown; Lightning and Inundation vexed the plains; Blue thistles bloomed in cities; foodless toads _170 Within voluptuous chambers panting crawled: When Plague had fallen on man, and beast, and worm, And Famine; and black blight on herb and tree; And in the corn, and vines, and meadow-grass, Teemed ineradicable poisonous weeds _175 Draining their growth, for my wan breast was dry With grief; and the thin air, my breath, was stained With the contagion of a mother’s hate Breathed on her child’s destroyer; ay, I heard Thy curse, the which, if thou rememberest not, _180 Yet my innumerable seas and streams, Mountains, and caves, and winds, and yon wide air, And the inarticulate people of the dead, Preserve, a treasured spell. We meditate In secret joy and hope those dreadful words, _185 But dare not speak them.

NOTE: _137 And love 1820; And lovest cj. Swinburne.

PROMETHEUS: Venerable mother! All else who live and suffer take from thee Some comfort; flowers, and fruits, and happy sounds, And love, though fleeting; these may not be mine. But mine own words, I pray, deny me not. _190

THE EARTH: They shall be told. Ere Babylon was dust, The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child, Met his own image walking in the garden. That apparition, sole of men, he saw. For know there are two worlds of life and death: _195 One that which thou beholdest; but the other Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit The shadows of all forms that think and live Till death unite them and they part no more; Dreams and the light imaginings of men, _200 And all that faith creates or love desires, Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes. There thou art, and dost hang, a writhing shade, ‘Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains; all the gods Are there, and all the powers of nameless worlds, _205 Vast, sceptred phantoms; heroes, men, and beasts; And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom; And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall utter The curse which all remember. Call at will _210 Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter, Hades or Typhon, or what mightier Gods From all-prolific Evil, since thy ruin, Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate sons. Ask, and they must reply: so the revenge _215 Of the Supreme may sweep through vacant shades, As rainy wind through the abandoned gate Of a fallen palace.

PROMETHEUS: Mother, let not aught Of that which may be evil, pass again My lips, or those of aught resembling me. _220 Phantasm of Jupiter, arise, appear!

IONE: My wings are folded o’er mine ears: My wings are crossed o’er mine eyes: Yet through their silver shade appears, And through their lulling plumes arise, _225 A Shape, a throng of sounds; May it be no ill to thee O thou of many wounds! Near whom, for our sweet sister’s sake, Ever thus we watch and wake. _230

PANTHEA: The sound is of whirlwind underground, Earthquake, and fire, and

mountains cloven; The shape is awful like the sound, Clothed in dark purple, star-inwoven. A sceptre of pale gold _235 To stay steps proud, o’er the slow cloud His veined hand doth hold. Cruel he looks, but calm and strong, Like one who does, not suffers wrong.

PHANTASM OF JUPITER: Why have the secret powers of this strange world _240 Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither On direst storms? What unaccustomed sounds Are hovering on my lips, unlike the voice With which our pallid race hold ghastly talk In darkness? And, proud sufferer, who art thou? _245

PROMETHEUS: Tremendous Image, as thou art must be He whom thou shadowest forth. I am his foe, The Titan. Speak the words which I would hear, Although no thought inform thine empty voice.

THE EARTH: Listen! And though your echoes must be mute, _250 Grey mountains, and old woods, and haunted springs, Prophetic caves, and isle-surrounding streams, Rejoice to hear what yet ye cannot speak.

PHANTASM: A spirit seizes me and speaks within: It tears me as fire tears a thunder-cloud. _255

PANTHEA: See, how he lifts his mighty looks, the Heaven Darkens above.

IONE: He speaks! O shelter me!

PROMETHEUS: I see the curse on gestures proud and cold, And looks of firm defiance, and calm hate, And such despair as mocks itself with smiles, _260 Written as on a scroll: yet speak! Oh, speak!

PHANTASM: Fiend, I defy thee! with a calm, fixed mind, All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do; Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Humankind, One only being shalt thou not subdue. _265 Rain then thy plagues upon me here, Ghastly disease, and frenzying fear; And let alternate frost and fire Eat into me, and be thine ire Lightning, and cutting hail, and legioned forms _270 Of furies, driving by upon the wounding storms.

Ay, do thy worst. Thou art omnipotent. O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power, And my own will. Be thy swift mischiefs sent To blast mankind, from yon ethereal tower. _275 Let thy malignant spirit move In darkness over those I love: On me and mine I imprecate The utmost torture of thy hate; And thus devote to sleepless agony, _280 This undeclining head while thou must reign on high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord: O, thou, Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe, To whom all things of Earth and Heaven do bow In fear and worship: all-prevailing foe! _285 I curse thee! let a sufferer's curse Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse; Till thine Infinity shall be A robe of envenomed agony; And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain, _290 To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain.

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this Curse, Ill deeds, then be thou damned, beholding good; Both infinite as is the universe, And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude. _295 An awful image of calm power Though now thou sittest, let the hour Come, when thou must appear to be That which thou art internally; And after many a false and fruitless crime _300 Scorn track thy lagging fall through boundless space and time.

PROMETHEUS: Were these my words, O Parent?

THE EARTH: They were thine.

PROMETHEUS: It doth repent me: words are quick and vain; Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine. I wish no living thing to suffer pain. _305

THE EARTH: Misery, Oh misery to me, That Jove at length should vanquish thee. Wail, howl aloud, Land and Sea, The Earth's rent heart shall answer ye. Howl, Spirits of the living and the dead, _310 Your refuge, your defence, lies fallen and vanquished.

FIRST ECHO: Lies fallen and vanquished!

SECOND ECHO: Fallen and vanquished!

IONE: Fear not: ’tis but some passing spasm, The Titan is unvanquished still. _315 But see, where through the azure chasm Of yon forked and snowy hill Trampling the slant winds on high With golden-sandalled feet, that glow Under plumes of purple dye, _320 Like rose-ensanguined ivory, A Shape comes now, Stretching on high from his right hand A serpent-cinctured wand.

PANTHEA: ’Tis Jove’s world-wandering herald, Mercury. _325

IONE: And who are those with hydra tresses And iron wings that climb the wind, Whom the frowning God represses Like vapours steaming up behind, Clanging loud, an endless crowd— _330

PANTHEA: These are Jove’s tempest-walking hounds, Whom he gluts with groans and blood, When charioted on sulphurous cloud He bursts Heaven’s bounds.

IONE: Are they now led, from the thin dead _335 On new pangs to be fed?

PANTHEA: The Titan looks as ever, firm, not proud.

FIRST FURY: Ha! I scent life!

SECOND FURY: Let me but look into his eyes!

THIRD FURY: The hope of torturing him smells like a heap Of corpses, to a death-bird after battle. _340

FIRST FURY: Darest thou delay, O Herald! take cheer, Hounds Of Hell: what if the Son of Maia soon Should make us food and sport—who can please long The Omnipotent?

MERCURY: Back to your towers of iron, And gnash, beside the streams of fire and wail, _345 Your foodless teeth. Geryon, arise! and Gorgon, Chimaera, and thou Sphinx, subtlest of fiends Who ministered to Thebes Heaven’s poisoned wine, Unnatural love, and more unnatural hate: These shall perform your task.

FIRST FURY: Oh, mercy! mercy! _350 We die with our desire: drive us not back!

MERCURY: Crouch then in silence. Awful Sufferer! To thee unwilling, most

unwillingly I come, by the great Father's will driven down, To execute a doom of new revenge. _355 Alas! I pity thee, and hate myself That I can do no more: aye from thy sight Returning, for a season, Heaven seems Hell, So thy worn form pursues me night and day, Smiling reproach. Wise art thou, firm and good, _360 But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife Against the Omnipotent; as yon clear lamps That measure and divide the weary years From which there is no refuge, long have taught And long must teach. Even now thy Torturer arms _365 With the strange might of unimagined pains The powers who scheme slow agonies in Hell, And my commission is to lead them here, Or what more subtle, foul, or savage fiends People the abyss, and leave them to their task. _370 Be it not so! there is a secret known To thee, and to none else of living things, Which may transfer the sceptre of wide Heaven, The fear of which perplexes the Supreme: Clothe it in words, and bid it clasp his throne _375 In intercession; bend thy soul in prayer, And like a suppliant in some gorgeous fane, Let the will kneel within thy haughty heart: For benefits and meek submission tame The fiercest and the mightiest.

PROMETHEUS: Evil minds _380 Change good to their own nature. I gave all He has; and in return he chains me here Years, ages, night and day: whether the Sun Split my parched skin, or in the moony night The crystal-winged snow cling round my hair: _385 Whilst my beloved race is trampled down By his thought-executing ministers. Such is the tyrant's recompense: 'tis just: He who is evil can receive no good; And for a world bestowed, or a friend lost, _390 He can feel hate, fear, shame; not gratitude: He but requites me for his own misdeed. Kindness to such is keen reproach, which breaks With bitter stings the light sleep of Revenge. Submission, thou dost know I cannot try: _395 For what submission but that fatal word, The death-seal of mankind's captivity, Like the Sicilian's hair-suspended sword, Which trembles o'er his crown, would he accept, Or could I yield? Which yet I will not yield. _400 Let others flatter Crime, where it sits throned In brief Omnipotence: secure are they: For Justice, when triumphant, will weep down Pity, not punishment,

on her own wrongs, Too much avenged by those who err. I wait, _405 Enduring thus, the retributive hour Which since we spake is even nearer now. But hark, the hell-hounds clamour: fear delay: Behold! Heaven lowers under thy Father’s frown.

MERCURY: Oh, that we might be spared; I to inflict _410 And thou to suffer! Once more answer me: Thou knowest not the period of Jove’s power?

PROMETHEUS: I know but this, that it must come.

MERCURY: Alas! Thou canst not count thy years to come of pain?

PROMETHEUS: They last while Jove must reign: nor more, nor less _415 Do I desire or fear.

MERCURY: Yet pause, and plunge Into Eternity, where recorded time, Even all that we imagine, age on age, Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind Flags wearily in its unending flight, _420 Till it sink, dizzy, blind, lost, shelterless; Perchance it has not numbered the slow years Which thou must spend in torture, unreprieved?

PROMETHEUS: Perchance no thought can count them, yet they pass.

MERCURY: If thou might’st dwell among the Gods the while Lapped in voluptuous joy? _425

PROMETHEUS: I would not quit This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.

MERCURY: Alas! I wonder at, yet pity thee.

PROMETHEUS: Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven, Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene. _430 As light in the sun, throned: how vain is talk! Call up the fiends.

IONE: O, sister, look! White fire Has cloven to the roots yon huge snow-loaded cedar; How fearfully God’s thunder howls behind!

MERCURY: I must obey his words and thine: alas! _435 Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart!

PANTHEA: See where the child of Heaven, with winged feet, Runs down the

slanted sunlight of the dawn.

IONE: Dear sister, close thy plumes over thine eyes Lest thou behold and die: they come: they come _440 Blackening the birth of day with countless wings, And hollow underneath, like death.

FIRST FURY: Prometheus!

SECOND FURY: Immortal Titan!

THIRD FURY: Champion of Heaven’s slaves!

PROMETHEUS: He whom some dreadful voice invokes is here, Prometheus, the chained Titan. Horrible forms, _445 What and who are ye? Never yet there came Phantasms so foul through monster-teeming Hell From the all-miscreative brain of Jove; Whilst I behold such execrable shapes, Methinks I grow like what I contemplate, _450 And laugh and stare in loathsome sympathy.

FIRST FURY: We are the ministers of pain, and fear, And disappointment, and mistrust, and hate, And clinging crime; and as lean dogs pursue Through wood and lake some struck and sobbing fawn, _455 We track all things that weep, and bleed, and live, When the great King betrays them to our will.

PROMETHEUS: Oh! many fearful natures in one name, I know ye; and these lakes and echoes know The darkness and the clangour of your wings. _460 But why more hideous than your loathed selves Gather ye up in legions from the deep?

SECOND FURY: We knew not that: Sisters, rejoice, rejoice!

PROMETHEUS: Can aught exult in its deformity?

SECOND FURY: The beauty of delight makes lovers glad, _465 Gazing on one another: so are we. As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels To gather for her festal crown of flowers The aereal crimson falls, flushing her cheek, So from our victim’s destined agony _470 The shade which is our form invests us round, Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.

PROMETHEUS: I laugh your power, and his who sent you here, To lowest scorn. Pour forth the cup of pain.

FIRST FURY: Thou thinkest we will rend thee bone from bone, _475 And nerve from nerve, working like fire within?

PROMETHEUS: Pain is my element, as hate is thine; Ye rend me now; I care not.

SECOND FURY: Dost imagine We will but laugh into thy lidless eyes?

PROMETHEUS: I weigh not what ye do, but what ye suffer, _480 Being evil. Cruel was the power which called You, or aught else so wretched, into light.

THIRD FURY: Thou think'st we will live through thee, one by one, Like animal life, and though we can obscure not The soul which burns within, that we will dwell _485 Beside it, like a vain loud multitude Vexing the self-content of wisest men: That we will be dread thought beneath thy brain, And foul desire round thine astonished heart, And blood within thy labyrinthine veins _490 Crawling like agony?

PROMETHEUS: Why, ye are thus now; Yet am I king over myself, and rule The torturing and conflicting throngs within, As Jove rules you when Hell grows mutinous.

CHORUS OF FURIES: From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the earth, _495 Where the night has its grave and the morning its birth, Come, come, come! Oh, ye who shake hills with the scream of your mirth, When cities sink howling in ruin; and ye Who with wingless footsteps trample the sea, _500 And close upon Shipwreck and Famine's track, Sit chattering with joy on the foodless wreck; Come, come, come! Leave the bed, low, cold, and red, Strewed beneath a nation dead; _505 Leave the hatred, as in ashes Fire is left for future burning: It will burst in bloodier flashes When ye stir it, soon returning: Leave the self-contempt implanted _510 In young spirits, sense-enchanted, Misery's yet unkindled fuel: Leave Hell's secrets half unchanted To the maniac dreamer; cruel More than ye can be with hate _515 Is he

with fear. Come, come, come! We are steaming up from Hell’s wide gate And we burthen the blast of the atmosphere, But vainly we toil till ye come here. _520

IONE: Sister, I hear the thunder of new wings.

PANTHEA: These solid mountains quiver with the sound Even as the tremulous air: their shadows make The space within my plumes more black than night.

FIRST FURY: Your call was as a winged car, _525 Driven on whirlwinds fast and far; It rapped us from red gulfs of war.

SECOND FURY: From wide cities, famine-wasted;

THIRD FURY: Groans half heard, and blood untasted;

FOURTH FURY: Kingly conclaves stern and cold, _530 Where blood with gold is bought and sold;

FIFTH FURY: From the furnace, white and hot, In which—

A FURY: Speak not: whisper not: I know all that ye would tell, But to speak might break the spell _535 Which must bend the Invincible, The stern of thought; He yet defies the deepest power of Hell.

FURY: Tear the veil!

ANOTHER FURY: It is torn.

CHORUS: The pale stars of the morn Shine on a misery, dire to be borne. _540 Dost thou faint, mighty Titan? We laugh thee to scorn. Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken’dst for man? Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran Those perishing waters; a thirst of fierce fever, Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for ever. _545 One came forth of gentle worth Smiling on the sanguine earth; His words outlived him, like swift poison Withering up truth, peace, and pity. Look! where round the wide horizon _550 Many a million-peopled city Vomits smoke in the bright air. Mark that outcry of despair! ’Tis his mild and gentle ghost Wailing for the faith he kindled: _555 Look again, the flames almost To a

glow-worm's lamp have dwindled: The survivors round the embers Gather in dread. Joy, joy, joy! _560 Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers, And the future is dark, and the present is spread Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.

NOTE: _553 Hark B; Mark 1820.

SEMICHORUS 1: Drops of bloody agony flow From his white and quivering brow. _565 Grant a little respite now: See a disenchanted nation Springs like day from desolation; To Truth its state is dedicate, And Freedom leads it forth, her mate; _570 A legioned band of linked brothers Whom Love calls children—

SEMICHORUS 2: 'Tis another's: See how kindred murder kin: 'Tis the vintage-time for death and sin: Blood, like new wine, bubbles within: _575 Till Despair smothers The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.

[ALL THE FURIES VANISH, EXCEPT ONE.]

IONE: Hark, sister! what a low yet dreadful groan Quite unsuppressed is tearing up the heart Of the good Titan, as storms tear the deep, _580 And beasts hear the sea moan in inland caves. Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him?

PANTHEA: Alas! I looked forth twice, but will no more.

IONE: What didst thou see?

PANTHEA: A woful sight: a youth With patient looks nailed to a crucifix. _585

IONE: What next?

PANTHEA: The heaven around, the earth below Was peopled with thick shapes of human death, All horrible, and wrought by human hands, And some appeared the work of human hearts, For men were slowly killed by frowns and smiles: _590 And other sights too foul to speak and live Were wandering by. Let us not tempt worse fear By looking forth: those groans are grief enough.

NOTE: _589 And 1820; Tho' B.

FURY: Behold an emblem: those who do endure Deep wrongs for man, and scorn,

and chains, but heap _595 Thousand-fold torment on themselves and him.

PROMETHEUS: Remit the anguish of that lighted stare; Close those wan lips; let that thorn-wounded brow Stream not with blood; it mingles with thy tears! Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death, _600 So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix, So those pale fingers play not with thy gore. O, horrible! Thy name I will not speak, It hath become a curse. I see, I see The wise, the mild, the lofty, and the just, _605 Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee, Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home, An early-chosen, late-lamented home; As hooded ounces cling to the driven hind; Some linked to corpses in unwholesome cells: _610 Some—Hear I not the multitude laugh loud?— Impaled in lingering fire: and mighty realms Float by my feet, like sea-uprooted isles, Whose sons are kneaded down in common blood By the red light of their own burning homes. _615

FURY: Blood thou canst see, and fire; and canst hear groans; Worse things unheard, unseen, remain behind.

PROMETHEUS: Worse?

FURY: In each human heart terror survives The ravin it has gorged: the loftiest fear All that they would disdain to think were true: _620 Hypocrisy and custom make their minds The fanes of many a worship, now outworn. They dare not devise good for man's estate, And yet they know not that they do not dare. The good want power, but to weep barren tears. _625 The powerful goodness want: worse need for them. The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom; And all best things are thus confused to ill. Many are strong and rich, and would be just, But live among their suffering fellow-men _630 As if none felt: they know not what they do.

NOTE: _619 ravin B, edition 1839; ruin 1820.

PROMETHEUS: Thy words are like a cloud of winged snakes; And yet I pity those they torture not.

FURY: Thou pitiest them? I speak no more! [VANISHES.]

PROMETHEUS: Ah woe! Ah woe! Alas! pain, pain ever, for ever! _635 I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear Thy works within my woe-illumed mind, Thou subtle tyrant! Peace is in the grave. The grave hides all things beautiful and good: I am a God and cannot find it there, _640 Nor would I seek it: for, though dread revenge, This is defeat, fierce king, not victory. The sights with which thou torturest gird my soul With new endurance, till the hour arrives When they shall be no types of things which are. _645

PANTHEA: Alas! what sawest thou more?

NOTE: _646 thou more? B; thou? 1820.

PROMETHEUS: There are two woes: To speak, and to behold; thou spare me one. Names are there, Nature’s sacred watchwords, they Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry; The nations thronged around, and cried aloud, _650 As with one voice, Truth, liberty, and love! Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven Among them: there was strife, deceit, and fear: Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil. This was the shadow of the truth I saw. _655

THE EARTH: I felt thy torture, son; with such mixed joy As pain and virtue give. To cheer thy state I bid ascend those subtle and fair spirits, Whose homes are the dim caves of human thought, And who inhabit, as birds wing the wind, _660 Its world-surrounding aether: they behold Beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass, The future: may they speak comfort to thee!

PANTHEA: Look, sister, where a troop of spirits gather, Like flocks of clouds in spring’s delightful weather, _665 Thronging in the blue air!

IONE: And see! more come, Like fountain-vapours when the winds are dumb, That climb up the ravine in scattered lines. And, hark! is it the music of the pines? Is it the lake? Is it the waterfall? _670

PANTHEA: ’Tis something sadder, sweeter far than all.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS: From unremembered ages we Gentle guides and guardians

be Of heaven-oppressed mortality; And we breathe, and sicken not, _675 The atmosphere of human thought: Be it dim, and dank, and gray, Like a storm-extinguished day, Travelled o’er by dying gleams; Be it bright as all between _680 Cloudless skies and windless streams, Silent, liquid, and serene; As the birds within the wind, As the fish within the wave, As the thoughts of man’s own mind _685 Float through all above the grave; We make there our liquid lair, Voyaging cloudlike and unpent Through the boundless element: Thence we bear the prophecy _690 Which begins and ends in thee!

NOTE: _687 there B, edition 1839; these 1820.

IONE: More yet come, one by one: the air around them Looks radiant as the air around a star.

FIRST SPIRIT: On a battle-trumpet’s blast I fled hither, fast, fast, fast, _695 ‘Mid the darkness upward cast. From the dust of creeds outworn, From the tyrant’s banner torn, Gathering ‘round me, onward borne, There was mingled many a cry— _700 Freedom! Hope! Death! Victory! Till they faded through the sky; And one sound, above, around, One sound beneath, around, above, Was moving; ’twas the soul of Love; _705 ’Twas the hope, the prophecy, Which begins and ends in thee.

SECOND SPIRIT: A rainbow’s arch stood on the sea, Which rocked beneath, immovably; And the triumphant storm did flee, _710 Like a conqueror, swift and proud, Between, with many a captive cloud, A shapeless, dark and rapid crowd, Each by lightning riven in half: I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh: _715 Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff And spread beneath a hell of death O’er the white waters. I alit On a great ship lightning-split, And speeded hither on the sigh _720 Of one who gave an enemy His plank, then plunged aside to die.

THIRD SPIRIT: I sate beside a sage’s bed, And the lamp was burning red Near the book where he had fed, _725 When a Dream with plumes of flame, To his pillow hovering came, And I knew it was the same Which had kindled long ago Pity,

eloquence, and woe; _730 And the world awhile below Wore the shade, its lustre made. It has borne me here as fleet As Desire’s lightning feet: I must ride it back ere morrow, _735 Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

FOURTH SPIRIT: On a poet’s lips I slept Dreaming like a love-adept In the sound his breathing kept; Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses, _740 But feeds on the aereal kisses Of shapes that haunt thought’s wildernesses. He will watch from dawn to gloom The lake-reflected sun illume The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom, _745 Nor heed nor see, what things they be; But from these create he can Forms more real than living man, Nurslings of immortality! One of these awakened me, _750 And I sped to succour thee.

IONE: Behold’st thou not two shapes from the east and west Come, as two doves to one beloved nest, Twin nurslings of the all-sustaining air On swift still wings glide down the atmosphere? _755 And, hark! their sweet sad voices! ’tis despair Mingled with love and then dissolved in sound.

PANTHEA: Canst thou speak, sister? all my words are drowned.

IONE: Their beauty gives me voice. See how they float On their sustaining wings of skiey grain, _760 Orange and azure deepening into gold: Their soft smiles light the air like a star’s fire.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS: Hast thou beheld the form of Love?

FIFTH SPIRIT: As over wide dominions I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide air’s wildernesses, That planet-crested shape swept by on lightning-braided pinions, _765 Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial tresses: His footsteps paved the world with light; but as I passed ’twas fading, And hollow Ruin yawned behind: great sages bound in madness, And headless patriots, and pale youths who perished, unupbraiding, Gleamed in the night. I wandered o’er, till thou, O King of sadness, _770 Turned by thy smile the worst I saw to recollected gladness.

SIXTH SPIRIT: Ah, sister! Desolation is a delicate thing: It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air, But treads with lulling footstep, and fans with silent wing The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and gentlest bear; _775 Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes above And the music-stirring motion of its soft and busy feet, Dream visions of aereal joy, and call the monster, Love, And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom now we greet.

NOTE: _774 lulling B; silent 1820.

CHORUS: Though Ruin now Love’s shadow be, _780 Following him, destroyingly, On Death’s white and winged steed, Which the fleetest cannot flee, Trampling down both flower and weed, Man and beast, and foul and fair, _785 Like a tempest through the air; Thou shalt quell this horseman grim, Woundless though in heart or limb.

PROMETHEUS: Spirits! how know ye this shall be?

CHORUS: In the atmosphere we breathe, _790 As buds grow red when the snow-storms flee, From Spring gathering up beneath, Whose mild winds shake the elder-brake, And the wandering herdsmen know That the white-thorn soon will blow: _795 Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace, When they struggle to increase, Are to us as soft winds be To shepherd boys, the prophecy Which begins and ends in thee. _800

IONE: Where are the Spirits fled?

PANTHEA: Only a sense Remains of them, like the omnipotence Of music, when the inspired voice and lute Languish, ere yet the responses are mute, Which through the deep and labyrinthine soul, _805 Like echoes through long caverns, wind and roll.

PROMETHEUS: How fair these airborn shapes! and yet I feel Most vain all hope but love; and thou art far, Asia! who, when my being overflowed, Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine _810 Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust. All things are

still: alas! how heavily This quiet morning weighs upon my heart; Though I should dream I could even sleep with grief If slumber were denied not. I would fain _815 Be what it is my destiny to be, The saviour and the strength of suffering man, Or sink into the original gulf of things: There is no agony, and no solace left; Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more. _820

PANTHEA: Hast thou forgotten one who watches thee The cold dark night, and never sleeps but when The shadow of thy spirit falls on her?

PROMETHEUS: I said all hope was vain but love: thou lovest.

PANTHEA: Deeply in truth; but the eastern star looks white, _825 And Asia waits in that far Indian vale, The scene of her sad exile; rugged once And desolate and frozen, like this ravine; But now invested with fair flowers and herbs, And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow _830 Among the woods and waters, from the aether Of her transforming presence, which would fade If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell!

END OF ACT 1.

ACT 2.

SCENE 2.1: MORNING. A LOVELY VALE IN THE INDIAN CAUCASUS. ASIA, ALONE.

ASIA: From all the blasts of heaven thou hast descended: Yes, like a spirit, like a thought, which makes Unwonted tears throng to the horny eyes, And beatings haunt the desolated heart, Which should have learnt repose: thou hast descended _5 Cradled in tempests; thou dost wake, O Spring! O child of many winds! As suddenly Thou comest as the memory of a dream, Which now is sad because it hath been sweet; Like genius, or like joy which riseth up _10 As from the earth, clothing with golden clouds The desert of our life. This is the season, this the day, the hour; At sunrise thou shouldst come, sweet sister mine, Too long desired, too long delaying, come! _15 How like death-worms the wingless moments crawl! The point of one

white star is quivering still Deep in the orange light of widening morn Beyond the purple mountains: through a chasm Of wind-divided mist the darker lake _20 Reflects it: now it wanes: it gleams again As the waves fade, and as the burning threads Of woven cloud unravel in pale air: ’Tis lost! and through yon peaks of cloud-like snow The roseate sunlight quivers: hear I not _25 The Aeolian music of her sea-green plumes Winnowing the crimson dawn?

PANTHEA [ENTERS]: I feel, I see Those eyes which burn through smiles that fade in tears, Like stars half quenched in mists of silver dew. Beloved and most beautiful, who wearest _30 The shadow of that soul by which I live, How late thou art! the sphered sun had climbed The sea; my heart was sick with hope, before The printless air felt thy belated plumes.

PANTHEA: Pardon, great Sister! but my wings were faint _35 With the delight of a remembered dream, As are the noontide plumes of summer winds Satiate with sweet flowers. I was wont to sleep Peacefully, and awake refreshed and calm Before the sacred Titan’s fall, and thy _40 Unhappy love, had made, through use and pity, Both love and woe familiar to my heart As they had grown to thine: erewhile I slept Under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean Within dim bowers of green and purple moss, _45 Our young Ione’s soft and milky arms Locked then, as now, behind my dark, moist hair, While my shut eyes and cheek were pressed within The folded depth of her life-breathing bosom: But not as now, since I am made the wind _50 Which fails beneath the music that I bear Of thy most wordless converse; since dissolved Into the sense with which love talks, my rest Was troubled and yet sweet; my waking hours Too full of care and pain.

ASIA: Lift up thine eyes, _55 And let me read thy dream.

PANTHEA: As I have said With our sea-sister at his feet I slept. The mountain mists, condensing at our voice Under the moon, had spread their snowy flakes, From the keen ice shielding our linked sleep. _60 Then two dreams came. One, I

remember not. But in the other his pale wound-worn limbs Fell from Prometheus, and the azure night Grew radiant with the glory of that form Which lives unchanged within, and his voice fell _65 Like music which makes giddy the dim brain, Faint with intoxication of keen joy: ‘Sister of her whose footsteps pave the world With loveliness—more fair than aught but her, Whose shadow thou art—lift thine eyes on me.’ _70 I lifted them: the overpowering light Of that immortal shape was shadowed o’er By love; which, from his soft and flowing limbs, And passion-parted lips, and keen, faint eyes, Steamed forth like vaporous fire; an atmosphere _75 Which wrapped me in its all-dissolving power, As the warm ether of the morning sun Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew. I saw not, heard not, moved not, only felt His presence flow and mingle through my blood _80 Till it became his life, and his grew mine, And I was thus absorbed, until it passed, And like the vapours when the sun sinks down, Gathering again in drops upon the pines, And tremulous as they, in the deep night _85 My being was condensed; and as the rays Of thought were slowly gathered, I could hear His voice, whose accents lingered ere they died Like footsteps of weak melody: thy name Among the many sounds alone I heard _90 Of what might be articulate; though still I listened through the night when sound was none. Ione wakened then, and said to me: ‘Canst thou divine what troubles me to-night? I always knew, what I desired before, _95 Nor ever found delight to wish in vain. But now I cannot tell thee what I seek; I know not; something sweet, since it is sweet Even to desire; it is thy sport, false sister; Thou hast discovered some enchantment old, _100 Whose spells have stolen my spirit as I slept And mingled it with thine: for when just now We kissed, I felt within thy parted lips The sweet air that sustained me, and the warmth Of the life-blood, for loss of which I faint, _105 Quivered between our intertwining arms.’ I answered not, for the Eastern star grew pale, But fled to thee.

ASIA: Thou speakest, but thy words Are as the air: I feel them not: Oh, lift Thine eyes, that I may read his written soul! _110

PANTHEA: I lift them though they droop beneath the load Of that they would express: what canst thou see But thine own fairest shadow imaged there?

ASIA: Thine eyes are like the deep, blue, boundless heaven Contracted to two circles underneath _115 Their long, fine lashes; dark, far, measureless, Orb within orb, and line through line inwoven.

PANTHEA: Why lookest thou as if a spirit passed?

ASIA: There is a change: beyond their inmost depth I see a shade, a shape: ’tis He, arrayed _120 In the soft light of his own smiles, which spread Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded moon. Prometheus, it is thine! depart not yet! Say not those smiles that we shall meet again Within that bright pavilion which their beams _125 Shall build o’er the waste world? The dream is told. What shape is that between us? Its rude hair Roughens the wind that lifts it, its regard Is wild and quick, yet ’tis a thing of air, For through its gray robe gleams the golden dew _130 Whose stars the noon has quenched not.

NOTE: _122 moon B; morn 1820. _126 o’er B; on 1820.

DREAM Follow! Follow!

PANTHEA: It is mine other dream.

ASIA: It disappears.

PANTHEA: It passes now into my mind. Methought As we sate here, the flower-infolding buds Burst on yon lightning-blasted almond tree, _135 When swift from the white Scythian wilderness A wind swept forth wrinkling the Earth with frost: I looked, and all the blossoms were blown down; But on each leaf was stamped, as the blue bells Of Hyacinth tell Apollo’s written grief, _140 O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW!

ASIA: As you speak, your words Fill, pause by pause, my own forgotten sleep With shapes. Methought among these lawns together We wandered, underneath the young

gray dawn, And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds _145 Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind; And the white dew on the new-bladed grass, Just piercing the dark earth, hung silently; And there was more which I remember not: _150 But on the shadows of the morning clouds, Athwart the purple mountain slope, was written FOLLOW, O, FOLLOW! as they vanished by; And on each herb, from which Heaven's dew had fallen, The like was stamped, as with a withering fire; _155 A wind arose among the pines; it shook The clinging music from their boughs, and then Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts, Were heard: O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW ME! And then I said, 'Panthea, look on me.' _160 But in the depth of those beloved eyes Still I saw, FOLLOW, FOLLOW!

NOTE: _143 these B; the 1820.

ECHO: Follow, follow!

PANTHEA: The crags, this clear spring morning, mock our voices As they were spirit-tongued.

ASIA: It is some being Around the crags. What fine clear sounds! O, list! _165

ECHOES, UNSEEN: Echoes we: listen! We cannot stay: As dew-stars glisten Then fade away— Child of Ocean! _170

ASIA: Hark! Spirits speak. The liquid responses Of their aereal tongues yet sound.

PANTHEA: I hear.

ECHOES: Oh, follow, follow, As our voice recedeth Through the caverns hollow, _175 Where the forest spreadeth; [MORE DISTANT.] Oh, follow, follow! Through the caverns hollow, As the song floats thou pursue, Where the wild bee never flew, _180 Through the noontide darkness deep, By the odour-breathing sleep Of faint night-flowers, and the waves At the fountain-lighted caves, While our music, wild and sweet, _185 Mocks thy gently falling feet, Child of Ocean!

ASIA: Shall we pursue the sound? It grows more faint And distant.

PANTHEA: List! the strain floats nearer now.

ECHOES: In the world unknown _190 Sleeps a voice unspoken; By thy step alone Can its rest be broken; Child of Ocean!

ASIA: How the notes sink upon the ebbing wind! _195

ECHOES: Oh, follow, follow! Through the caverns hollow, As the song floats thou pursue, By the woodland noontide dew; By the forests, lakes, and fountains, _200 Through the many-folded mountains; To the rents, and gulfs, and chasms, Where the Earth reposed from spasms, On the day when He and thou Parted, to commingle now; _205 Child of Ocean!

ASIA: Come, sweet Panthea, link thy hand in mine, And follow, ere the voices fade away.

SCENE 2.2: A FOREST, INTERMINGLED WITH ROCKS AND CAVERNS. ASIA AND PANTHEA PASS INTO IT. TWO YOUNG FAUNS ARE SITTING ON A ROCK LISTENING.

SEMICHORUS 1 OF SPIRITS: The path through which that lovely twain Have passed, by cedar, pine, and yew, And each dark tree that ever grew, Is curtained out from Heaven’s wide blue; Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain, _5 Can pierce its interwoven bowers, Nor aught, save where some cloud of dew, Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze, Between the trunks of the hoar trees, Hangs each a pearl in the pale flowers _10 Of the green laurel, blown anew, And bends, and then fades silently, One frail and fair anemone: Or when some star of many a one That climbs and wanders through steep night, _15 Has found the cleft through which alone Beams fall from high those depths upon Ere it is borne away, away, By the swift Heavens that cannot stay, It scatters drops of golden light, _20 Like lines of rain that ne’er unite: And the gloom divine is all around, And underneath is the mossy ground.

SEMICHORUS 2: There the voluptuous nightingales, Are awake through all the broad noonday. _25 When one with bliss or sadness fails, And through the windless ivy-boughs, Sick with sweet love, droops dying away On its mate's music-panting bosom; Another from the swinging blossom, _30 Watching to catch the languid close Of the last strain, then lifts on high The wings of the weak melody, Till some new strain of feeling bear The song, and all the woods are mute; _35 When there is heard through the dim air The rush of wings, and rising there Like many a lake-surrounded flute, Sounds overflow the listener's brain So sweet, that joy is almost pain. _40

NOTE: _38 surrounded B, edition 1839; surrounding 1820.

SEMICHORUS 1: There those enchanted eddies play Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw, By Demogorgon's mighty law, With melting rapture, or sweet awe, All spirits on that secret way; _45 As inland boats are driven to Ocean Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw: And first there comes a gentle sound To those in talk or slumber bound, And wakes the destined soft emotion,— _50 Attracts, impels them; those who saw Say from the breathing earth behind There steams a plume-uplifting wind Which drives them on their path, while they Believe their own swift wings and feet _55 The sweet desires within obey: And so they float upon their way, Until, still sweet, but loud and strong, The storm of sound is driven along, Sucked up and hurrying: as they fleet _60 Behind, its gathering billows meet And to the fatal mountain bear Like clouds amid the yielding air.

NOTE: _50 destined]destinied 1820.

FIRST FAUN: Canst thou imagine where those spirits live Which make such delicate music in the woods? _65 We haunt within the least frequented caves And closest coverts, and we know these wilds, Yet never meet them, though we hear them oft: Where may they hide themselves?

SECOND FAUN: 'Tis hard to tell; I have heard those more skilled in spirits say,

_70 The bubbles, which the enchantment of the sun Sucks from the pale faint water-flowers that pave The oozy bottom of clear lakes and pools, Are the pavilions where such dwell and float Under the green and golden atmosphere _75 Which noontide kindles through the woven leaves; And when these burst, and the thin fiery air, The which they breathed within those lucent domes, Ascends to flow like meteors through the night, They ride on them, and rein their headlong speed, _80 And bow their burning crests, and glide in fire Under the waters of the earth again.

FIRST FAUN: If such live thus, have others other lives, Under pink blossoms or within the bells Of meadow flowers, or folded violets deep, _85 Or on their dying odours, when they die, Or in the sunlight of the sphered dew?

NOTE: _86 on 1820; in B.

SECOND FAUN: Ay, many more which we may well divine. But should we stay to speak, noontide would come, And thwart Silenus find his goats undrawn, _90 And grudge to sing those wise and lovely songs Of Fate, and Chance, and God, and Chaos old, And Love, and the chained Titan’s woful doom, And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth One brotherhood: delightful strains which cheer _95 Our solitary twilights, and which charm To silence the unenvying nightingales.

NOTE: _93 doom B, edition 1839; dooms 1820.

SCENE 2.3: A PINNACLE OF ROCK AMONG MOUNTAINS. ASIA AND PANTHEA.

PANTHEA: Hither the sound has borne us—to the realm Of Demogorgon, and the mighty portal, Like a volcano’s meteor-breathing chasm, Whence the oracular vapour is hurled up Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth, _5 And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy, That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain To deep intoxication; and uplift, Like Maenads who cry loud, Evoe! Evoe! The voice which is contagion to the world. _10

ASIA: Fit throne for such a Power! Magnificent! How glorious art thou, Earth! And

if thou be The shadow of some spirit lovelier still, Though evil stain its work, and it should be Like its creation, weak yet beautiful, _15 I could fall down and worship that and thee. Even now my heart adoreth: Wonderful! Look, sister, ere the vapour dim thy brain: Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist, As a lake, paving in the morning sky, _20 With azure waves which burst in silver light, Some Indian vale. Behold it, rolling on Under the curdling winds, and islanding The peak whereon we stand, midway, around, Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests, _25 Dim twilight-lawns, and stream-illumined caves, And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist; And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains From icy spires of sun-like radiance fling The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray, _30 From some Atlantic islet scattered up, Spangles the wind with lamp-like water-drops. The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines, Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast, _35 Awful as silence. Hark! the rushing snow! The sun-awakened avalanche! whose mass, Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth _40 Is loosened, and the nations echo round, Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

NOTE: _26 illumed B; illumined 1820.

PANTHEA: Look how the gusty sea of mist is breaking In crimson foam, even at our feet! it rises As Ocean at the enchantment of the moon _45 Round foodless men wrecked on some oozy isle.

ASIA: The fragments of the cloud are scattered up; The wind that lifts them disentwines my hair; Its billows now sweep o'er mine eyes; my brain Grows dizzy; see'st thou shapes within the mist? _50

NOTE: see'st thou B; I see thin 1820; I see 1839.

PANTHEA: A countenance with beckoning smiles: there burns An azure fire within its golden locks! Another and another: hark! they speak!

SONG OF SPIRITS: To the deep, to the deep, Down, down! _55 Through the shade of sleep, Through the cloudy strife Of Death and of Life; Through the veil and the bar Of things which seem and are _60 Even to the steps of the remotest throne, Down, down!

While the sound whirls around, Down, down! As the fawn draws the hound, _65 As the lightning the vapour, As a weak moth the taper; Death, despair; love, sorrow; Time both; to-day, to-morrow; As steel obeys the spirit of the stone, _70 Down, down!

Through the gray, void abysm, Down, down! Where the air is no prism, And the moon and stars are not, _75 And the cavern-crags wear not The radiance of Heaven, Nor the gloom to Earth given, Where there is One pervading, One alone, Down, down! _80

In the depth of the deep, Down, down! Like veiled lightning asleep, Like the spark nursed in embers, The last look Love remembers, _85 Like a diamond, which shines On the dark wealth of mines, A spell is treasured but for thee alone. Down, down!

We have bound thee, we guide thee; _90 Down, down! With the bright form beside thee; Resist not the weakness, Such strength is in meekness That the Eternal, the Immortal, _95 Must unloose through life’s portal The snake-like Doom coiled underneath his throne By that alone.

SCENE 2.4: THE CAVE OF DEMOGORGON. ASIA AND PANTHEA.

PANTHEA: What veiled form sits on that ebon throne?

ASIA: The veil has fallen.

PANTHEA: I see a mighty darkness Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom Dart round, as light from the meridian sun. —Ungazed upon and shapeless; neither limb, _5 Nor form, nor outline; yet we feel it is A living Spirit.

DEMOGORGON: Ask what thou wouldst know.

ASIA: What canst thou tell?

DEMOGORGON: All things thou dar’st demand.

ASIA: Who made the living world?

DEMOGORGON: God.

ASIA: Who made all That it contains? thought, passion, reason, will, _10 Imagination?

DEMOGORGON: God: Almighty God.

ASIA: Who made that sense which, when the winds of Spring In rarest visitation, or the voice Of one beloved heard in youth alone, Fills the faint eyes with falling tears which dim _15 The radiant looks of unbewailing flowers, And leaves this peopled earth a solitude When it returns no more?

DEMOGORGON: Merciful God.

ASIA: And who made terror, madness, crime, remorse, Which from the links of the great chain of things, _20 To every thought within the mind of man Sway and drag heavily, and each one reels Under the load towards the pit of death; Abandoned hope, and love that turns to hate; And self-contempt, bitterer to drink than blood; _25 Pain, whose unheeded and familiar speech Is howling, and keen shrieks, day after day; And Hell, or the sharp fear of Hell?

DEMOGORGON: He reigns.

ASIA: Utter his name: a world pining in pain Asks but his name: curses shall drag him down. _30

DEMOGORGON: He reigns.

ASIA: I feel, I know it: who?

DEMOGORGON: He reigns.

ASIA: Who reigns? There was the Heaven and Earth at first, And Light and Love; then Saturn, from whose throne Time fell, an envious shadow: such the state Of the

earth's primal spirits beneath his sway, _35 As the calm joy of flowers and living leaves Before the wind or sun has withered them And semivital worms; but he refused The birthright of their being, knowledge, power, The skill which wields the elements, the thought _40 Which pierces this dim universe like light, Self-empire, and the majesty of love; For thirst of which they fainted. Then Prometheus Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter, And with this law alone, 'Let man be free,' _45 Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven. To know nor faith, nor love, nor law; to be Omnipotent but friendless is to reign; And Jove now reigned; for on the race of man First famine, and then toil, and then disease, _50 Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before, Fell; and the unseasonable seasons drove With alternating shafts of frost and fire, Their shelterless, pale tribes to mountain caves: And in their desert hearts fierce wants he sent, _55 And mad disquietudes, and shadows idle Of unreal good, which levied mutual war, So ruining the lair wherein they raged. Prometheus saw, and waked the legioned hopes Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers, _60 Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms, That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings The shape of Death; and Love he sent to bind The disunited tendrils of that vine Which bears the wine of life, the human heart; _65 And he tamed fire which, like some beast of prey, Most terrible, but lovely, played beneath The frown of man; and tortured to his will Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power, And gems and poisons, and all subtlest forms _70 Hidden beneath the mountains and the waves. He gave man speech, and speech created thought, Which is the measure of the universe; And Science struck the thrones of earth and heaven, Which shook, but fell not; and the harmonious mind _75 Poured itself forth in all-prophetic song; And music lifted up the listening spirit Until it walked, exempt from mortal care, Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound; And human hands first mimicked and then mocked, _80 With moulded limbs more lovely than its own, The human form, till marble grew divine; And mothers, gazing, drank the love men see Reflected in their race, behold, and perish. He told the

hidden power of herbs and springs, _85 And Disease drank and slept. Death grew like sleep. He taught the implicated orbits woven Of the wide-wandering stars; and how the sun Changes his lair, and by what secret spell The pale moon is transformed, when her broad eye _90 Gazes not on the interlunar sea: He taught to rule, as life directs the limbs, The tempest-winged chariots of the Ocean, And the Celt knew the Indian. Cities then Were built, and through their snow-like columns flowed _95 The warm winds, and the azure ether shone, And the blue sea and shadowy hills were seen. Such, the alleviations of his state, Prometheus gave to man, for which he hangs Withering in destined pain: but who rains down _100 Evil, the immedicable plague, which, while Man looks on his creation like a God And sees that it is glorious, drives him on, The wreck of his own will, the scorn of earth, The outcast, the abandoned, the alone? _105 Not Jove: while yet his frown shook Heaven ay, when His adversary from adamantine chains Cursed him, he trembled like a slave. Declare Who is his master? Is he too a slave?

NOTE: _100 rains B, edition 1839; reigns 1820.

DEMOGORGON: All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil: _110 Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no.

ASIA: Whom calledst thou God?

DEMOGORGON: I spoke but as ye speak, For Jove is the supreme of living things.

ASIA: Who is the master of the slave?

DEMOGORGON: If the abysm Could vomit forth its secrets…But a voice _115 Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless; For what would it avail to bid thee gaze On the revolving world? What to bid speak Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance and Change? To these All things are subject but eternal Love. _120

ASIA: So much I asked before, and my heart gave The response thou hast given; and of such truths Each to itself must be the oracle. One more demand; and do thou answer me As my own soul would answer, did it know _125 That which I ask.

Prometheus shall arise Henceforth the sun of this rejoicing world: When shall the destined hour arrive?

DEMOGORGON: Behold!

ASIA: The rocks are cloven, and through the purple night I see cars drawn by rainbow-winged steeds _130 Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight. Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there, And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars: Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink _135 With eager lips the wind of their own speed, As if the thing they loved fled on before, And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright locks Stream like a comet’s flashing hair; they all Sweep onward.

DEMOGORGON: These are the immortal Hours, _140 Of whom thou didst demand. One waits for thee.

ASIA: A Spirit with a dreadful countenance Checks its dark chariot by the craggy gulf. Unlike thy brethren, ghastly charioteer, Who art thou? Whither wouldst thou bear me? Speak! _145

SPIRIT: I am the shadow of a destiny More dread than is my aspect: ere yon planet Has set, the darkness which ascends with me Shall wrap in lasting night heaven’s kingless throne.

ASIA: What meanest thou?

PANTHEA: That terrible shadow floats _150 Up from its throne, as may the lurid smoke Of earthquake-ruined cities o’er the sea. Lo! it ascends the car; the coursers fly Terrified: watch its path among the stars Blackening the night!

ASIA: Thus I am answered: strange! _155

PANTHEA: See, near the verge, another chariot stays; An ivory shell inlaid with crimson fire, Which comes and goes within its sculptured rim Of delicate strange tracery; the young spirit That guides it has the dove-like eyes of hope; _160 How its

soft smiles attract the soul! as light Lures winged insects through the lampless air.

SPIRIT: My coursers are fed with the lightning, They drink of the whirlwind's stream, And when the red morning is bright'ning _165 They bathe in the fresh sunbeam; They have strength for their swiftness I deem; Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean. I desire: and their speed makes night kindle; I fear: they outstrip the Typhoon; _170 Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle We encircle the earth and the moon: We shall rest from long labours at noon: Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

SCENE 2.5: THE CAR PAUSES WITHIN A CLOUD ON THE TOP OF A SNOWY MOUNTAIN. ASIA, PANTHEA, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

SPIRIT: On the brink of the night and the morning My coursers are wont to respire; But the Earth has just whispered a warning That their flight must be swifter than fire: They shall drink the hot speed of desire! _5

ASIA: Thou breathest on their nostrils, but my breath Would give them swifter speed.

SPIRIT: Alas! it could not.

PANTHEA: Oh Spirit! pause, and tell whence is the light Which fills this cloud? the sun is yet unrisen.

NOTE: _9 this B; the 1820.

SPIRIT: The sun will rise not until noon. Apollo _10 Is held in heaven by wonder; and the light Which fills this vapour, as the aereal hue Of fountain-gazing roses fills the water, Flows from thy mighty sister.

PANTHEA: Yes, I feel—

ASIA: What is it with thee, sister? Thou art pale. _15

PANTHEA: How thou art changed! I dare not look on thee; I feel but see thee not. I scarce endure The radiance of thy beauty. Some good change Is working in the

elements, which suffer Thy presence thus unveiled. The Nereids tell _20 That on the day when the clear hyaline Was cloven at thine uprise, and thou didst stand Within a veined shell, which floated on Over the calm floor of the crystal sea, Among the Aegean isles, and by the shores _25 Which bear thy name; love, like the atmosphere Of the sun’s fire filling the living world, Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven And the deep ocean and the sunless caves And all that dwells within them; till grief cast _30 Eclipse upon the soul from which it came: Such art thou now; nor is it I alone, Thy sister, thy companion, thine own chosen one, But the whole world which seeks thy sympathy. Hearest thou not sounds i’ the air which speak the love _35 Of all articulate beings? Feelest thou not The inanimate winds enamoured of thee? List!

NOTE: _22 thine B; thy 1820.

[MUSIC.]

ASIA: Thy words are sweeter than aught else but his Whose echoes they are; yet all love is sweet, Given or returned. Common as light is love, _40 And its familiar voice wearies not ever. Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air, It makes the reptile equal to the God: They who inspire it most are fortunate, As I am now; but those who feel it most _45 Are happier still, after long sufferings, As I shall soon become.

PANTHEA: List! Spirits speak.

VOICE IN THE AIR, SINGING: Life of Life! thy lips enkindle With their love the breath between them; And thy smiles before they dwindle _50 Make the cold air fire; then screen them In those looks, where whoso gazes Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of Light! thy limbs are burning Through the vest which seems to hide them; _55 As the radiant lines of morning Through the clouds ere they divide them; And this atmosphere divinest Shrouds thee wheresoe’er thou shinest.

Fair are others; none beholds thee, _60 But thy voice sounds low and tender Like the fairest, for it folds thee From the sight, that liquid splendour, And all feel, yet see thee never, As I feel now, lost for ever! _65

Lamp of Earth! where'er thou movest Its dim shapes are clad with brightness, And the souls of whom thou lovest Walk upon the winds with lightness, Till they fail, as I am failing, _70 Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing!

NOTE: _54 limbs B, edition 1839; lips 1820.

ASIA: My soul is an enchanted boat, Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing; And thine doth like an angel sit _75 Beside a helm conducting it, Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing. It seems to float ever, for ever, Upon that many-winding river, Between mountains, woods, abysses, _80 A paradise of wildernesses! Till, like one in slumber bound, Borne to the ocean, I float down, around, Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound:

Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions _85 In music's most serene dominions; Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven. And we sail on, away, afar, Without a course, without a star, But, by the instinct of sweet music driven; _90 Till through Elysian garden islets By thee most beautiful of pilots, Where never mortal pinnace glided, The boat of my desire is guided: Realms where the air we breathe is love, _95 Which in the winds on the waves doth move, Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above.

We have passed Age's icy caves, And Manhood's dark and tossing waves, And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray: _100 Beyond the glassy gulfs we flee Of shadow-peopled Infancy, Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day; A paradise of vaulted bowers, Lit by downward-gazing flowers, _105 And watery paths that wind between Wildernesses calm and green, Peopled by shapes too bright to see, And rest, having beheld; somewhat like thee; Which walk upon the sea, and chant melodiously! _110

NOTE: _96 winds and on B; winds on 1820.

END OF ACT 2.

ACT 3.

SCENE 3.1: HEAVEN. JUPITER ON HIS THRONE; THETIS AND THE OTHER DEITIES ASSEMBLED.

JUPITER: Ye congregated powers of heaven, who share The glory and the strength of him ye serve, Rejoice! henceforth I am omnipotent. All else had been subdued to me; alone The soul of man, like unextinguished fire, _5 Yet burns towards heaven with fierce reproach, and doubt, And lamentation, and reluctant prayer, Hurling up insurrection, which might make Our antique empire insecure, though built On eldest faith, and hell's coeval, fear; _10 And though my curses through the pendulous air, Like snow on herbless peaks, fall flake by flake, And cling to it; though under my wrath's night It climbs the crags of life, step after step, Which wound it, as ice wounds unsandalled feet, _15 It yet remains supreme o'er misery, Aspiring, unrepressed, yet soon to fall: Even now have I begotten a strange wonder, That fatal child, the terror of the earth, Who waits but till the destined hour arrive, _20 Bearing from Demogorgon's vacant throne The dreadful might of ever-living limbs Which clothed that awful spirit unbeheld, To redescend, and trample out the spark. Pour forth heaven's wine, Idaean Ganymede, _25 And let it fill the Daedal cups like fire, And from the flower-inwoven soil divine Ye all-triumphant harmonies arise, As dew from earth under the twilight stars: Drink! be the nectar circling through your veins _30 The soul of joy, ye ever-living Gods, Till exultation burst in one wide voice Like music from Elysian winds. And thou Ascend beside me, veiled in the light Of the desire which makes thee one with me, _35 Thetis, bright image of eternity! When thou didst cry, 'Insufferable might! God! Spare me! I sustain not the quick flames, The penetrating presence; all my being, Like him whom the Numidian seps did thaw _40 Into a dew with poison, is dissolved, Sinking through its foundations:'

even then Two mighty spirits, mingling, made a third Mightier than either, which, unbodied now, Between us floats, felt, although unbeheld, _45 Waiting the incarnation, which ascends, (Hear ye the thunder of the fiery wheels Griding the winds?) from Demogorgon's throne. Victory! victory! Feel'st thou not, O world, The earthquake of his chariot thundering up _50 Olympus? [THE CAR OF THE HOUR ARRIVES. DEMOGORGON DESCENDS, AND MOVES TOWARDS THE THRONE OF JUPITER.] Awful shape, what art thou? Speak!

NOTES: _5 like unextinguished B, edition 1839; like an unextinguished 1820. _13 night B, edition 1839; might 1820. _20 destined B, edition 1839; distant 1820.

DEMOGORGON: Eternity. Demand no direr name. Descend, and follow me down the abyss. I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn's child; Mightier than thee: and we must dwell together _55 Henceforth in darkness. Lift thy lightnings not. The tyranny of heaven none may retain, Or reassume, or hold, succeeding thee: Yet if thou wilt, as 'tis the destiny Of trodden worms to writhe till they are dead, _60 Put forth thy might.

JUPITER: Detested prodigy! Even thus beneath the deep Titanian prisons I trample thee! thou lingerest? Mercy! mercy! No pity, no release, no respite! Oh, That thou wouldst make mine enemy my judge, _65 Even where he hangs, seared by my long revenge, On Caucasus! he would not doom me thus. Gentle, and just, and dreadless, is he not The monarch of the world? What then art thou? No refuge! no appeal! Sink with me then, _70 We two will sink on the wide waves of ruin, Even as a vulture and a snake outspent Drop, twisted in inextricable fight, Into a shoreless sea. Let hell unlock Its mounded oceans of tempestuous fire, _75 And whelm on them into the bottomless void This desolated world, and thee, and me, The conqueror and the conquered, and the wreck Of that for which they combated. Ai, Ai! The elements obey me not. I sink _80 Dizzily down, ever, for ever, down. And, like a cloud, mine enemy above Darkens my fall with victory! Ai, Ai!

NOTE: _69 then B, edition 1839; omitted 1820.

SCENE 3.2: THE MOUTH OF A GREAT RIVER IN THE ISLAND ATLANTIS. OCEAN IS DISCOVERED RECLINING NEAR THE SHORE; APOLLO STANDS BESIDE HIM.

OCEAN: He fell, thou sayest, beneath his conqueror’s frown?

APOLLO: Ay, when the strife was ended which made dim The orb I rule, and shook the solid stars, The terrors of his eye illumined heaven With sanguine light, through the thick ragged skirts _5 Of the victorious darkness, as he fell: Like the last glare of day’s red agony, Which, from a rent among the fiery clouds, Burns far along the tempest-wrinkled deep.

OCEAN: He sunk to the abyss? To the dark void? _10

APOLLO: An eagle so caught in some bursting cloud On Caucasus, his thunder-baffled wings Entangled in the whirlwind, and his eyes Which gazed on the undazzling sun, now blinded By the white lightning, while the ponderous hail _15 Beats on his struggling form, which sinks at length Prone, and the aereal ice clings over it.

OCEAN: Henceforth the fields of heaven-reflecting sea Which are my realm, will heave, unstained with blood, Beneath the uplifting winds, like plains of corn _20 Swayed by the summer air; my streams will flow Round many-peopled continents, and round Fortunate isles; and from their glassy thrones Blue Proteus and his humid nymphs shall mark The shadow of fair ships, as mortals see _25 The floating bark of the light-laden moon With that white star, its sightless pilot’s crest, Borne down the rapid sunset’s ebbing sea; Tracking their path no more by blood and groans, And desolation, and the mingled voice _30 Of slavery and command; but by the light Of wave-reflected flowers, and floating odours, And music soft, and mild, free, gentle voices, And sweetest music, such as spirits love.

NOTES: _22 many-peopled B; many peopled 1820. _26 light-laden B; light laden

1820.

APOLLO: And I shall gaze not on the deeds which make _35 My mind obscure with sorrow, as eclipse Darkens the sphere I guide; but list, I hear The small, clear, silver lute of the young Spirit That sits i’ the morning star.

NOTE: _39 i’ the B, edition 1839; on the 1820.

OCEAN: Thou must away; Thy steeds will pause at even, till when farewell: _40 The loud deep calls me home even now to feed it With azure calm out of the emerald urns Which stand for ever full beside my throne. Behold the Nereids under the green sea, Their wavering limbs borne on the wind-like stream, _45 Their white arms lifted o’er their streaming hair With garlands pied and starry sea-flower crowns, Hastening to grace their mighty sister’s joy. [A SOUND OF WAVES IS HEARD.] It is the unpastured sea hungering for calm. Peace, monster; I come now. Farewell.

APOLLO: Farewell. _50

SCENE 3.3: CAUCASUS. PROMETHEUS, HERCULES, IONE, THE EARTH, SPIRITS, ASIA, AND PANTHEA, BORNE IN THE CAR WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE HOUR. HERCULES UNBINDS PROMETHEUS, WHO DESCENDS.

HERCULES: Most glorious among Spirits, thus doth strength To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love, And thee, who art the form they animate, Minister like a slave.

PROMETHEUS: Thy gentle words Are sweeter even than freedom long desired _5 And long delayed. Asia, thou light of life, Shadow of beauty unbeheld: and ye, Fair sister nymphs, who made long years of pain Sweet to remember, through your love and care: Henceforth we will not part. There is a cave, _10 All overgrown with trailing odorous plants, Which curtain out the day with leaves and flowers, And paved with veined emerald, and a fountain Leaps in the midst with an awakening sound. From its curved roof the mountain’s frozen tears _15 Like snow, or silver, or

long diamond spires, Hang downward, raining forth a doubtful light: And there is heard the ever-moving air, Whispering without from tree to tree, and birds, And bees; and all around are mossy seats, _20 And the rough walls are clothed with long soft grass; A simple dwelling, which shall be our own; Where we will sit and talk of time and change, As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged. What can hide man from mutability? _25 And if ye sigh, then I will smile; and thou, Ione, shalt chant fragments of sea-music, Until I weep, when ye shall smile away The tears she brought, which yet were sweet to shed. We will entangle buds and flowers and beams _30 Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make Strange combinations out of common things, Like human babes in their brief innocence; And we will search, with looks and words of love, For hidden thoughts, each lovelier than the last, _35 Our unexhausted spirits; and like lutes Touched by the skill of the enamoured wind, Weave harmonies divine, yet ever new, From difference sweet where discord cannot be; And hither come, sped on the charmed winds, _40 Which meet from all the points of heaven, as bees From every flower aereal Enna feeds, At their known island-homes in Himera, The echoes of the human world, which tell Of the low voice of love, almost unheard, _45 And dove-eyed pity's murmured pain, and music, Itself the echo of the heart, and all That tempers or improves man's life, now free; And lovely apparitions,—dim at first, Then radiant, as the mind, arising bright _50 From the embrace of beauty (whence the forms Of which these are the phantoms) casts on them The gathered rays which are reality— Shall visit us, the progeny immortal Of Painting, Sculpture, and rapt Poesy, _55 And arts, though unimagined, yet to be. The wandering voices and the shadows these Of all that man becomes, the mediators Of that best worship love, by him and us Given and returned; swift shapes and sounds, which grow _60 More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind, And, veil by veil, evil and error fall: Such virtue has the cave and place around. [TURNING TO THE SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.] For thee, fair Spirit, one toil remains. Ione, Give her that curved shell, which Proteus old _65 Made

Asia's nuptial boon, breathing within it A voice to be accomplished, and which thou Didst hide in grass under the hollow rock.

IONE: Thou most desired Hour, more loved and lovely Than all thy sisters, this is the mystic shell; _70 See the pale azure fading into silver Lining it with a soft yet glowing light: Looks it not like lulled music sleeping there?

SPIRIT: It seems in truth the fairest shell of Ocean: Its sound must be at once both sweet and strange. _75

PROMETHEUS: Go, borne over the cities of mankind On whirlwind-footed coursers: once again Outspeed the sun around the orbed world; And as thy chariot cleaves the kindling air, Thou breathe into the many-folded shell, _80 Loosening its mighty music; it shall be As thunder mingled with clear echoes: then Return; and thou shalt dwell beside our cave. And thou, O Mother Earth!—

THE EARTH: I hear, I feel; Thy lips are on me, and thy touch runs down _85 Even to the adamantine central gloom Along these marble nerves; 'tis life, 'tis joy, And, through my withered, old, and icy frame The warmth of an immortal youth shoots down Circling. Henceforth the many children fair _90 Folded in my sustaining arms; all plants, And creeping forms, and insects rainbow-winged, And birds, and beasts, and fish, and human shapes, Which drew disease and pain from my wan bosom, Draining the poison of despair, shall take _95 And interchange sweet nutriment; to me Shall they become like sister-antelopes By one fair dam, snow-white and swift as wind, Nursed among lilies near a brimming stream. The dew-mists of my sunless sleep shall float _100 Under the stars like balm: night-folded flowers Shall suck unwithering hues in their repose: And men and beasts in happy dreams shall gather Strength for the coming day, and all its joy: And death shall be the last embrace of her _105 Who takes the life she gave, even as a mother, Folding her child, says, 'Leave me not again.'

NOTES: _85 their B; thy 1820. _102 unwithering B, edition 1839; unwitting 1820.

ASIA: Oh, mother! wherefore speak the name of death? Cease they to love, and move, and breathe, and speak, Who die?

THE EARTH: It would avail not to reply: _110 Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known But to the uncommunicating dead. Death is the veil which those who live call life: They sleep, and it is lifted: and meanwhile In mild variety the seasons mild _115 With rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds, And long blue meteors cleansing the dull night, And the life-kindling shafts of the keen sun's All-piercing bow, and the dew-mingled rain Of the calm moonbeams, a soft influence mild, _120 Shall clothe the forests and the fields, ay, even The crag-built deserts of the barren deep, With ever-living leaves, and fruits, and flowers. And thou! There is a cavern where my spirit Was panted forth in anguish whilst thy pain _125 Made my heart mad, and those who did inhale it Became mad too, and built a temple there, And spoke, and were oracular, and lured The erring nations round to mutual war, And faithless faith, such as Jove kept with thee; _130 Which breath now rises, as amongst tall weeds A violet's exhalation, and it fills With a serener light and crimson air Intense, yet soft, the rocks and woods around; It feeds the quick growth of the serpent vine, _135 And the dark linked ivy tangling wild, And budding, blown, or odour-faded blooms Which star the winds with points of coloured light, As they rain through them, and bright golden globes Of fruit, suspended in their own green heaven, _140 And through their veined leaves and amber stems The flowers whose purple and translucid bowls Stand ever mantling with aereal dew, The drink of spirits: and it circles round, Like the soft waving wings of noonday dreams, _145 Inspiring calm and happy thoughts, like mine, Now thou art thus restored. This cave is thine. Arise! Appear! [A SPIRIT RISES IN THE LIKENESS OF A WINGED CHILD.] This is my torch-bearer; Who let his lamp out in old time with gazing On eyes from which he kindled it anew _150 With love, which is as fire, sweet daughter mine, For such is that within thine own. Run, wayward, And guide this company beyond the peak Of Bacchic Nysa, Maenad-haunted mountain, And beyond Indus

and its tribute rivers, _155 Trampling the torrent streams and glassy lakes With feet unwet, unwearied, undelaying, And up the green ravine, across the vale, Beside the windless and crystalline pool, Where ever lies, on unerasing waves, _160 The image of a temple, built above, Distinct with column, arch, and architrave, And palm-like capital, and over-wrought, And populous with most living imagery, Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles _165 Fill the hushed air with everlasting love. It is deserted now, but once it bore Thy name, Prometheus; there the emulous youths Bore to thy honour through the divine gloom The lamp which was thine emblem; even as those _170 Who bear the untransmitted torch of hope Into the grave, across the night of life, As thou hast borne it most triumphantly To this far goal of Time. Depart, farewell. Beside that temple is the destined cave. _175

NOTE: _164 with most B; most with 1820.

SCENE 3.4: A FOREST. IN THE BACKGROUND A CAVE. PROMETHEUS, ASIA, PANTHEA, IONE, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

IONE: Sister, it is not earthly: how it glides Under the leaves! how on its head there burns A light, like a green star, whose emerald beams Are twined with its fair hair! how, as it moves, The splendour drops in flakes upon the grass! _5 Knowest thou it?

PANTHEA: It is the delicate spirit That guides the earth through heaven. From afar The populous constellations call that light The loveliest of the planets; and sometimes It floats along the spray of the salt sea, _10 Or makes its chariot of a foggy cloud, Or walks through fields or cities while men sleep, Or o’er the mountain tops, or down the rivers, Or through the green waste wilderness, as now, Wondering at all it sees. Before Jove reigned _15 It loved our sister Asia, and it came Each leisure hour to drink the liquid light Out of her eyes, for which it said it thirsted As one bit by a dipsas, and with her It made its childish confidence, and told her _20 All it had known or seen, for it saw much, Yet idly reasoned what it saw; and called her— For whence it sprung it knew not, nor do I— Mother, dear mother.

THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH [RUNNING TO ASIA]: Mother, dearest mother; May I then talk with thee as I was wont? _25 May I then hide my eyes in thy soft arms, After thy looks have made them tired of joy? May I then play beside thee the long noons, When work is none in the bright silent air?

ASIA: I love thee, gentlest being, and henceforth _30 Can cherish thee unenvied: speak, I pray: Thy simple talk once solaced, now delights.

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH: Mother, I am grown wiser, though a child Cannot be wise like thee, within this day; And happier too; happier and wiser both. _35 Thou knowest that toads, and snakes, and loathly worms, And venomous and malicious beasts, and boughs That bore ill berries in the woods, were ever An hindrance to my walks o’er the green world: And that, among the haunts of humankind, _40 Hard-featured men, or with proud, angry looks, Or cold, staid gait, or false and hollow smiles, Or the dull sneer of self-loved ignorance, Or other such foul masks, with which ill thoughts Hide that fair being whom we spirits call man; _45 And women too, ugliest of all things evil, (Though fair, even in a world where thou art fair, When good and kind, free and sincere like thee) When false or frowning made me sick at heart To pass them, though they slept, and I unseen. _50 Well, my path lately lay through a great city Into the woody hills surrounding it: A sentinel was sleeping at the gate: When there was heard a sound, so loud, it shook The towers amid the moonlight, yet more sweet _55 Than any voice but thine, sweetest of all; A long, long sound, as it would never end: And all the inhabitants leaped suddenly Out of their rest, and gathered in the streets, Looking in wonder up to Heaven, while yet _60 The music pealed along. I hid myself Within a fountain in the public square, Where I lay like the reflex of the moon Seen in a wave under green leaves; and soon Those ugly human shapes and visages _65 Of which I spoke as having wrought me pain, Passed floating through the air, and fading still Into the winds that scattered them; and those From whom they passed seemed mild and lovely forms After some foul disguise had fallen, and all _70 Were somewhat changed, and after brief

surprise And greetings of delighted wonder, all Went to their sleep again: and when the dawn Came, wouldst thou think that toads, and snakes, and efts, Could e'er be beautiful? yet so they were, _75 And that with little change of shape or hue: All things had put their evil nature off: I cannot tell my joy, when o'er a lake, Upon a drooping bough with nightshade twined, I saw two azure halcyons clinging downward _80 And thinning one bright bunch of amber berries, With quick long beaks, and in the deep there lay Those lovely forms imaged as in a sky; So, with my thoughts full of these happy changes, We meet again, the happiest change of all. _85

ASIA: And never will we part, till thy chaste sister Who guides the frozen and inconstant moon Will look on thy more warm and equal light Till her heart thaw like flakes of April snow And love thee.

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH: What! as Asia loves Prometheus? _90

ASIA: Peace, wanton, thou art yet not old enough. Think ye by gazing on each other's eyes To multiply your lovely selves, and fill With sphered fires the interlunar air?

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH: Nay, mother, while my sister trims her lamp 'Tis hard I should go darkling. _95

ASIA: Listen; look!

[THE SPIRIT OF THE HOUR ENTERS.]

PROMETHEUS: We feel what thou hast heard and seen: yet speak.

SPIRIT OF THE HOUR: Soon as the sound had ceased whose thunder filled The abysses of the sky and the wide earth, There was a change: the impalpable thin air _100 And the all-circling sunlight were transformed, As if the sense of love dissolved in them Had folded itself round the sphered world. My vision then grew clear, and I could see Into the mysteries of the universe: _105 Dizzy as with delight I floated down, Winnowing the lightsome air with languid plumes, My coursers sought their birthplace in the sun, Where they henceforth will live exempt from toil,

Pasturing flowers of vegetable fire; _110 And where my moonlike car will stand within A temple, gazed upon by Phidian forms Of thee, and Asia, and the Earth, and me, And you fair nymphs looking the love we feel,— In memory of the tidings it has borne,— _115 Beneath a dome fretted with graven flowers, Poised on twelve columns of resplendent stone, And open to the bright and liquid sky. Yoked to it by an amphisbaenic snake The likeness of those winged steeds will mock _120 The flight from which they find repose. Alas, Whither has wandered now my partial tongue When all remains untold which ye would hear? As I have said, I floated to the earth: It was, as it is still, the pain of bliss _125 To move, to breathe, to be. I wandering went Among the haunts and dwellings of mankind, And first was disappointed not to see Such mighty change as I had felt within Expressed in outward things; but soon I looked, _130 And behold, thrones were kingless, and men walked One with the other even as spirits do, None fawned, none trampled; hate, disdain, or fear, Self-love or self-contempt, on human brows No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell, _135 'All hope abandon ye who enter here;' None frowned, none trembled, none with eager fear Gazed on another's eye of cold command, Until the subject of a tyrant's will Became, worse fate, the abject of his own, _140 Which spurred him, like an outspent horse, to death. None wrought his lips in truth-entangling lines Which smiled the lie his tongue disdained to speak; None, with firm sneer, trod out in his own heart The sparks of love and hope till there remained _145 Those bitter ashes, a soul self-consumed, And the wretch crept a vampire among men, Infecting all with his own hideous ill; None talked that common, false, cold, hollow talk Which makes the heart deny the "yes" it breathes, _150 Yet question that unmeant hypocrisy With such a self-mistrust as has no name. And women, too, frank, beautiful, and kind As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew On the wide earth, past; gentle radiant forms, _155 From custom's evil taint exempt and pure; Speaking the wisdom once they could not think, Looking emotions once they feared to feel, And changed to all which once they dared not be,

Yet being now, made earth like heaven; nor pride, _160 Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame, The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall, Spoiled the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love.

Thrones, altars, judgement-seats, and prisons; wherein, And beside which, by wretched men were borne _165 Sceptres, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance, Were like those monstrous and barbaric shapes, The ghosts of a no-more-remembered fame, Which, from their unworn obelisks, look forth _170 In triumph o’er the palaces and tombs Of those who were their conquerors: mouldering round, These imaged to the pride of kings and priests A dark yet mighty faith, a power as wide As is the world it wasted, and are now _175 But an astonishment; even so the tools And emblems of its last captivity, Amid the dwellings of the peopled earth, Stand, not o’erthrown, but unregarded now. And those foul shapes, abhorred by god and man,— _180 Which, under many a name and many a form Strange, savage, ghastly, dark and execrable, Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world; And which the nations, panic-stricken, served With blood, and hearts broken by long hope, and love _185 Dragged to his altars soiled and garlandless, And slain among men’s unreclaiming tears, Flattering the thing they feared, which fear was hate,— Frown, mouldering fast, o’er their abandoned shrines: The painted veil, by those who were, called life, _190 Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread, All men believed and hoped, is torn aside; The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless, _195 Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king Over himself; just, gentle, wise; but man Passionless?—no, yet free from guilt or pain, Which were, for his will made or suffered them, Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves, _200 From chance, and death, and mutability, The clogs of that which else might oversoar The loftiest star of unascended heaven, Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

NOTES: _121 flight B, edition 1839; light 1820. _173 These B; Those 1820. _187

amid B; among 1820. _192 or B; and 1820.

END OF ACT 3.

ACT 4.

SCENE 4.1: A PART OF THE FOREST NEAR THE CAVE OF PROMETHEUS. PANTHEA AND IONE ARE SLEEPING: THEY AWAKEN GRADUALLY DURING THE FIRST SONG.

VOICE OF UNSEEN SPIRITS: The pale stars are gone! For the sun, their swift shepherd, To their folds them compelling, In the depths of the dawn, Hastes, in meteor-eclipsing array, and they flee _5 Beyond his blue dwelling, As fawns flee the leopard. But where are ye?

[A TRAIN OF DARK FORMS AND SHADOWS PASSES BY CONFUSEDLY, SINGING.]

Here, oh, here: We bear the bier _10 Of the father of many a cancelled year! Spectres we Of the dead Hours be, We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.

Strew, oh, strew _15 Hair, not yew! Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew! Be the faded flowers Of Death’s bare bowers Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours! _20

Haste, oh, haste! As shades are chased, Trembling, by day, from heaven’s blue waste. We melt away, Like dissolving spray, _25 From the children of a diviner day, With the lullaby Of winds that die On the bosom of their own harmony!

IONE: What dark forms were they? _30

PANTHEA: The past Hours weak and gray, With the spoil which their toil Raked together From the conquest but One could foil.

IONE: Have they passed?

PANTHEA: They have passed; _35 They outspeeded the blast, While ’tis said, they are fled:

IONE: Whither, oh, whither?

PANTHEA: To the dark, to the past, to the dead.

VOICE OF UNSEEN SPIRITS: Bright clouds float in heaven, _40 Dew-stars gleam on earth, Waves assemble on ocean, They are gathered and driven By the storm of delight, by the panic of glee! They shake with emotion, _45 They dance in their mirth. But where are ye?

The pine boughs are singing Old songs with new gladness, The billows and fountains _50 Fresh music are flinging, Like the notes of a spirit from land and from sea; The storms mock the mountains With the thunder of gladness. But where are ye? _55

IONE: What charioteers are these?

PANTHEA: Where are their chariots?

SEMICHORUS OF HOURS: The voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth Has drawn back the figured curtain of sleep Which covered our being and darkened our birth In the deep.

A VOICE: In the deep?

SEMICHORUS 2: Oh, below the deep. _60

SEMICHORUS 1: An hundred ages we had been kept Cradled in visions of hate and care, And each one who waked as his brother slept, Found the truth—

SEMICHORUS 2: Worse than his visions were!

SEMICHORUS 1: We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep; _65 We have known the voice of Love in dreams; We have felt the wand of Power, and leap—

SEMICHORUS 2: As the billows leap in the morning beams!

CHORUS: Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze, Pierce with song heaven’s silent light, _70 Enchant the day that too swiftly flees, To check its flight ere the cave of Night.

Once the hungry Hours were hounds Which chased the day like a bleeding deer, And it limped and stumbled with many wounds _75 Through the nightly dells of the desert year.

But now, oh weave the mystic measure Of music, and dance, and shapes of light, Let the Hours, and the spirits of might and pleasure, Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite—

A VOICE: Unite! _80

PANTHEA: See, where the Spirits of the human mind Wrapped in sweet sounds, as in bright veils, approach.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS: We join the throng Of the dance and the song, By the whirlwind of gladness borne along; _85 As the flying-fish leap From the Indian deep, And mix with the sea-birds, half-asleep.

CHORUS OF HOURS: Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet, For sandals of lightning are on your feet, _90 And your wings are soft and swift as thought, And your eyes are as love which is veiled not?

CHORUS OF SPIRITS: We come from the mind Of human kind Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind, _95 Now ’tis an ocean Of clear emotion, A heaven of serene and mighty motion.

From that deep abyss Of wonder and bliss, _100 Whose caverns are crystal palaces; From those skiey towers Where Thought’s crowned powers Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours!

From the dim recesses _105 Of woven caresses, Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses; From the azure isles, Where sweet Wisdom smiles, Delaying your ships with her siren wiles. _110

From the temples high Of Man’s ear and eye, Roofed over Sculpture and Poesy; From the murmurings Of the unsealed springs _115 Where Science bedews her

Daedal wings.

Years after years, Through blood, and tears, And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears; We waded and flew, _120 And the islets were few Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness grew.

Our feet now, every palm, Are sandalled with calm, And the dew of our wings is a rain of balm; _125 And, beyond our eyes, The human love lies Which makes all it gazes on Paradise.

NOTE: _116 her B; his 1820.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS AND HOURS: Then weave the web of the mystic measure; From the depths of the sky and the ends of the earth, _130 Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure, Fill the dance and the music of mirth, As the waves of a thousand streams rush by To an ocean of splendour and harmony!

CHORUS OF SPIRITS: Our spoil is won, _135 Our task is done, We are free to dive, or soar, or run; Beyond and around, Or within the bound Which clips the world with darkness round. _140

We’ll pass the eyes Of the starry skies Into the hoar deep to colonize; Death, Chaos, and Night, From the sound of our flight, _145 Shall flee, like mist from a tempest’s might.

And Earth, Air, and Light, And the Spirit of Might, Which drives round the stars in their fiery flight; And Love, Thought, and Breath, _150 The powers that quell Death, Wherever we soar shall assemble beneath.

And our singing shall build In the void’s loose field A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield; _155 We will take our plan From the new world of man, And our work shall be called the Promethean.

CHORUS OF HOURS: Break the dance, and scatter the song; Let some depart, and some remain; _160

SEMICHORUS 1: We, beyond heaven, are driven along:

SEMICHORUS 2: Us the enchantments of earth retain:

SEMICHORUS 1: Ceaseless, and rapid, and fierce, and free, With the Spirits which build a new earth and sea, And a heaven where yet heaven could never be; _165

SEMICHORUS 2: Solemn, and slow, and serene, and bright, Leading the Day and outspeeding the Night, With the powers of a world of perfect light;

SEMICHORUS 1: We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering sphere, Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds appear _170 From its chaos made calm by love, not fear.

SEMICHORUS 2: We encircle the ocean and mountains of earth, And the happy forms of its death and birth Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

CHORUS OF HOURS AND SPIRITS: Break the dance, and scatter the song; _175 Let some depart, and some remain, Wherever we fly we lead along In leashes, like starbeams, soft yet strong, The clouds that are heavy with love’s sweet rain.

PANTHEA: Ha! they are gone!

IONE: Yet feel you no delight _180 From the past sweetness?

PANTHEA: As the bare green hill When some soft cloud vanishes into rain, Laughs with a thousand drops of sunny water To the unpavilioned sky!

IONE: Even whilst we speak New notes arise. What is that awful sound? _185

PANTHEA: ’Tis the deep music of the rolling world Kindling within the strings of the waved air Aeolian modulations.

IONE: Listen too, How every pause is filled with under-notes, Clear, silver, icy, keen awakening tones, _190 Which pierce the sense, and live within the soul, As the sharp stars pierce winter’s crystal air And gaze upon themselves within the sea.

PANTHEA: But see where through two openings in the forest Which hanging branches overcanopy, _195 And where two runnels of a rivulet, Between the close

moss violet-inwoven, Have made their path of melody, like sisters Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles, Turning their dear disunion to an isle _200 Of lovely grief, a wood of sweet sad thoughts; Two visions of strange radiance float upon The ocean-like enchantment of strong sound, Which flows intenser, keener, deeper yet Under the ground and through the windless air. _205

IONE: I see a chariot like that thinnest boat, In which the Mother of the Months is borne By ebbing light into her western cave, When she upsprings from interlunar dreams; O’er which is curved an orblike canopy _210 Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods, Distinctly seen through that dusk aery veil, Regard like shapes in an enchanter’s glass; Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold, Such as the genii of the thunderstorm _215 Pile on the floor of the illumined sea When the sun rushes under it; they roll And move and grow as with an inward wind; Within it sits a winged infant, white Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow, _220 Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost, Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowing folds Of its white robe, woof of ethereal pearl. Its hair is white, the brightness of white light Scattered in strings; yet its two eyes are heavens _225 Of liquid darkness, which the Deity Within seems pouring, as a storm is poured From jagged clouds, out of their arrowy lashes, Tempering the cold and radiant air around, With fire that is not brightness; in its hand _230 It sways a quivering moonbeam, from whose point A guiding power directs the chariot’s prow Over its wheeled clouds, which as they roll Over the grass, and flowers, and waves, wake sounds, Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew. _235

NOTES: _208 light B; night 1820. _212 aery B; airy 1820. _225 strings B, edition 1839; string 1820.

PANTHEA: And from the other opening in the wood Rushes, with loud and whirlwind harmony, A sphere, which is as many thousand spheres, Solid as crystal, yet through all its mass Flow, as through empty space, music and light: _240 Ten

thousand orbs involving and involved, Purple and azure, white, and green, and golden, Sphere within sphere; and every space between Peopled with unimaginable shapes, Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep, _245 Yet each inter-transpicuous, and they whirl Over each other with a thousand motions, Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning, And with the force of self-destroying swiftness, Intensely, slowly, solemnly, roll on, _250 Kindling with mingled sounds, and many tones, Intelligible words and music wild. With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist Of elemental subtlety, like light; _255 And the wild odour of the forest flowers, The music of the living grass and air, The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed, Seem kneaded into one aereal mass _260 Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself, Pillowed upon its alabaster arms, Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil, On its own folded wings, and wavy hair, The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep, _265 And you can see its little lips are moving, Amid the changing light of their own smiles, Like one who talks of what he loves in dream.

NOTE: _242 white and green B; white, green 1820.

IONE: 'Tis only mocking the orb's harmony.

PANTHEA: And from a star upon its forehead, shoot, _270 Like swords of azure fire, or golden spears With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtwined, Embleming heaven and earth united now, Vast beams like spokes of some invisible wheel Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than thought, _275 Filling the abyss with sun-like lightenings, And perpendicular now, and now transverse, Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and pass, Make bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart; Infinite mine of adamant and gold, _280 Valueless stones, and unimagined gems, And caverns on crystalline columns poised With vegetable silver overspread; Wells of unfathomed fire, and water springs Whence the great sea, even as a child is fed, _285 Whose vapours clothe earth's monarch mountain-tops With kingly, ermine snow. The

beams flash on And make appear the melancholy ruins Of cancelled cycles; anchors, beaks of ships; Planks turned to marble; quivers, helms, and spears, _290 And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels Of scythed chariots, and the emblazonry Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts, Round which death laughed, sepulchred emblems Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin! _295 The wrecks beside of many a city vast, Whose population which the earth grew over Was mortal, but not human; see, they lie, Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons, Their statues, homes and fanes; prodigious shapes _300 Huddled in gray annihilation, split, Jammed in the hard, black deep; and over these, The anatomies of unknown winged things, And fishes which were isles of living scale, And serpents, bony chains, twisted around _305 The iron crags, or within heaps of dust To which the tortuous strength of their last pangs Had crushed the iron crags; and over these The jagged alligator, and the might Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once _310 Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores, And weed-overgrown continents of earth, Increased and multiplied like summer worms On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe Wrapped deluge round it like a cloak, and they _315 Yelled, gasped, and were abolished; or some God Whose throne was in a comet, passed, and cried, ‘Be not!’ And like my words they were no more.

NOTES: _274 spokes B, edition 1839; spoke 1820. _276 lightenings B; lightnings 1820. _280 mines B; mine 1820. _282 poised B; poized edition 1839; poured 1820.

THE EARTH: The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness! The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness, _320 The vaporous exultation not to be confined! Ha! ha! the animation of delight Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light, And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

THE MOON: Brother mine, calm wanderer, _325 Happy globe of land and air, Some Spirit is darted like a beam from thee, Which penetrates my frozen frame, And passes with the warmth of flame, With love, and odour, and deep melody _330

Through me, through me!

THE EARTH: Ha! ha! the caverns of my hollow mountains, My cloven fire-crags, sound-exulting fountains Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter. The oceans, and the deserts, and the abysses, _335 And the deep air's unmeasured wildernesses, Answer from all their clouds and billows, echoing after.

They cry aloud as I do. Sceptred curse, Who all our green and azure universe Threatenedst to muffle round with black destruction, sending _340 A solid cloud to rain hot thunderstones, And splinter and knead down my children's bones, All I bring forth, to one void mass battering and blending,—

Until each crag-like tower, and storied column, Palace, and obelisk, and temple solemn, _345 My imperial mountains crowned with cloud, and snow, and fire, My sea-like forests, every blade and blossom Which finds a grave or cradle in my bosom, Were stamped by thy strong hate into a lifeless mire:

How art thou sunk, withdrawn, covered, drunk up _350 By thirsty nothing, as the brackish cup Drained by a desert-troop, a little drop for all; And from beneath, around, within, above, Filling thy void annihilation, love Bursts in like light on caves cloven by the thunder-ball. _355

NOTES: _335-_336 the abysses, And 1820, 1839; the abysses Of B. _355 the omitted 1820.

THE MOON: The snow upon my lifeless mountains Is loosened into living fountains, My solid oceans flow, and sing and shine: A spirit from my heart bursts forth, It clothes with unexpected birth _360 My cold bare bosom: Oh! it must be thine On mine, on mine!

Gazing on thee I feel, I know Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers grow, And living shapes upon my bosom move: _365 Music is in the sea and air, Winged clouds soar here and there, Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of: 'Tis love, all love!

THE EARTH: It interpenetrates my granite mass, _370 Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers; Upon the winds, among the clouds ’tis spread, It wakes a life in the forgotten dead, They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest bowers. _375

And like a storm bursting its cloudy prison With thunder, and with whirlwind, has arisen Out of the lampless caves of unimagined being: With earthquake shock and swiftness making shiver Thought’s stagnant chaos, unremoved for ever, _380 Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-vanquished shadows, fleeing,

Leave Man, who was a many-sided mirror, Which could distort to many a shape of error, This true fair world of things, a sea reflecting love; Which over all his kind, as the sun’s heaven _385 Gliding o’er ocean, smooth, serene, and even, Darting from starry depths radiance and life, doth move:

Leave Man, even as a leprous child is left, Who follows a sick beast to some warm cleft Of rocks, through which the might of healing springs is poured; _390 Then when it wanders home with rosy smile, Unconscious, and its mother fears awhile It is a spirit, then, weeps on her child restored.

Man, oh, not men! a chain of linked thought, Of love and might to be divided not, _395 Compelling the elements with adamantine stress; As the sun rules, even with a tyrant’s gaze, The unquiet republic of the maze Of planets, struggling fierce towards heaven’s free wilderness.

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul, _400 Whose nature is its own divine control, Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea; Familiar acts are beautiful through love; Labour, and pain, and grief, in life’s green grove Sport like tame beasts, none knew how gentle they could be! _405

His will, with all mean passions, bad delights, And selfish cares, its trembling satellites, A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey, Is as a tempest-winged ship, whose helm Love rules, through waves which dare not overwhelm, _410 Forcing

life’s wildest shores to own its sovereign sway.

All things confess his strength. Through the cold mass Of marble and of colour his dreams pass; Bright threads whence mothers weave the robes their children wear; Language is a perpetual Orphic song, _415 Which rules with Daedal harmony a throng Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and shapeless were.

The lightning is his slave; heaven’s utmost deep Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on! _420 The tempest is his steed, he strides the air; And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare, Heaven, hast thou secrets? Man unveils me; I have none.

NOTE: _387 life B; light 1820.

THE MOON: The shadow of white death has passed From my path in heaven at last, _425 A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep; And through my newly-woven bowers, Wander happy paramours, Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep Thy vales more deep. _430

THE EARTH: As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold A half unfrozen dew-globe, green, and gold, And crystalline, till it becomes a winged mist, And wanders up the vault of the blue day, Outlives the noon, and on the sun’s last ray _435 Hangs o’er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

NOTE: _432 unfrozen B, edition 1839; infrozen 1820.

THE MOON: Thou art folded, thou art lying In the light which is undying Of thine own joy, and heaven’s smile divine; All suns and constellations shower _440 On thee a light, a life, a power Which doth array thy sphere; thou pourest thine On mine, on mine!

THE EARTH: I spin beneath my pyramid of night, Which points into the heavens dreaming delight, _445 Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep; As a youth lulled in love-dreams faintly sighing, Under the shadow of his beauty lying, Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth doth keep.

THE MOON: As in the soft and sweet eclipse, _450 When soul meets soul on lovers' lips, High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull; So when thy shadow falls on me, Then am I mute and still, by thee Covered; of thy love, Orb most beautiful, _455 Full, oh, too full!

Thou art speeding round the sun Brightest world of many a one; Green and azure sphere which shinest With a light which is divinest _460 Among all the lamps of Heaven To whom life and light is given; I, thy crystal paramour Borne beside thee by a power Like the polar Paradise, _465 Magnet-like of lovers' eyes; I, a most enamoured maiden Whose weak brain is overladen With the pleasure of her love, Maniac-like around thee move Gazing, an insatiate bride, _470 On thy form from every side Like a Maenad, round the cup Which Agave lifted up In the weird Cadmaean forest. _475 Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest I must hurry, whirl and follow Through the heavens wide and hollow, Sheltered by the warm embrace Of thy soul from hungry space, _480 Drinking from thy sense and sight Beauty, majesty, and might, As a lover or a chameleon Grows like what it looks upon, As a violet's gentle eye _485 Gazes on the azure sky Until its hue grows like what it beholds, As a gray and watery mist Glows like solid amethyst Athwart the western mountain it enfolds, _490 When the sunset sleeps Upon its snow—

THE EARTH: And the weak day weeps That it should be so. Oh, gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight _495 Falls on me like thy clear and tender light Soothing the seaman, borne the summer night, Through isles for ever calm; Oh, gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce The caverns of my pride's deep universe, _500 Charming the tiger joy, whose tramplings fierce Made wounds which need thy balm.

PANTHEA: I rise as from a bath of sparkling water, A bath of azure light, among dark rocks, Out of the stream of sound.

IONE: Ah me! sweet sister, _505 The stream of sound has ebbed away from us, And you pretend to rise out of its wave, Because your words fall like the clear, soft dew

Shaken from a bathing wood-nymph’s limbs and hair.

PANTHEA: Peace! peace! a mighty Power, which is as darkness, _510 Is rising out of Earth, and from the sky Is showered like night, and from within the air Bursts, like eclipse which had been gathered up Into the pores of sunlight: the bright visions, Wherein the singing spirits rode and shone, _515 Gleam like pale meteors through a watery night.

IONE: There is a sense of words upon mine ear.

PANTHEA: An universal sound like words: Oh, list!

DEMOGORGON: Thou, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul, Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies, _520 Beautiful orb! gathering as thou dost roll The love which paves thy path along the skies:

THE EARTH: I hear: I am as a drop of dew that dies.

DEMOGORGON: Thou, Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth With wonder, as it gazes upon thee; _525 Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift birth Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony:

THE MOON: I hear: I am a leaf shaken by thee!

DEMOGORGON: Ye Kings of suns and stars, Daemons and Gods, Ethereal Dominations, who possess _530 Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes Beyond Heaven’s constellated wilderness:

A VOICE FROM ABOVE: Our great Republic hears: we are blest, and bless.

DEMOGORGON: Ye happy Dead, whom beams of brightest verse Are clouds to hide, not colours to portray, _535 Whether your nature is that universe Which once ye saw and suffered—

A VOICE: FROM BENEATH: Or as they Whom we have left, we change and pass away.

DEMOGORGON: Ye elemental Genii, who have homes From man’s high mind

even to the central stone _540 Of sullen lead; from heaven's star-fretted domes To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on:

A CONFUSED VOICE: We hear: thy words waken Oblivion.

DEMOGORGON: Spirits, whose homes are flesh; ye beasts and birds, Ye worms and fish; ye living leaves and buds; _545 Lightning and wind; and ye untameable herds, Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes:—

NOTE: _547 throng 1820, 1839; cancelled for feed B.

A VOICE: Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

DEMOGORGON: Man, who wert once a despot and a slave; A dupe and a deceiver; a decay; _550 A traveller from the cradle to the grave Through the dim night of this immortal day:

ALL: Speak: thy strong words may never pass away.

DEMOGORGON: This is the day, which down the void abysm At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despotism, _555 And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep: Love, from its awful throne of patient power In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour Of dread endurance, from the slippery, steep, And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs _560 And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance, These are the seals of that most firm assurance Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength; And if, with infirm hand, Eternity, _565 Mother of many acts and hours, should free The serpent that would clasp her with his length; These are the spells by which to reassume An empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite; _570 To forgive wrongs darker than death or night; To defy Power, which seems omnipotent; To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates From its own wreck the thing it contemplates; Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent; _575 This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be Good, great and

joyous, beautiful and free; This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory!

NOTES: _559 dread B, edition 1839; dead 1820. _575 falter B, edition 1839; flatter 1820.

CANCELLED FRAGMENTS OF “PROMETHEUS UNBOUND”.

[First printed by Mr. C.D. Locock, “Examination of the Shelley Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library”, 1903, pages 33-7.]

(following 1._37.) When thou descendst each night with open eyes In torture, for a tyrant seldom sleeps, Thou never; … …

(following 1._195.) Which thou henceforth art doomed to interweave …

(following the first two words of 1._342.) [Of Hell:] I placed it in his choice to be The crown, or trampled refuse of the world With but one law itself a glorious boon— I gave— …

(following 1._707.) SECOND SPIRIT: I leaped on the wings of the Earth-star damp As it rose on the steam of a slaughtered camp— The sleeping newt heard not our tramp As swift as the wings of fire may pass— We threaded the points of long thick grass Which hide the green pools of the morass But shook a water-serpent’s couch In a cleft skull, of many such The widest; at the meteor’s touch The snake did seem to see in dream Thrones and dungeons overthrown Visions how unlike his own… ’Twas the hope the prophecy Which begins and ends in thee …

(following 2.1._110.) Lift up thine eyes Panthea—they pierce they burn

PANTHEA: Alas! I am consumed—I melt away The fire is in my heart—

ASIA: Thine eyes burn burn!— Hide them within thine hair—

PANTHEA: O quench thy lips I sink I perish

ASIA: Shelter me now—they burn It is his spirit in their orbs…my life Is ebbing fast—I cannot speak—

PANTHEA: Rest, rest! Sleep death annihilation pain! aught else …

(following 2.4._27.) Or looks which tell that while the lips are calm And the eyes cold, the spirit weeps within Tears like the sanguine sweat of agony; …

UNCANCELLED PASSAGE. (following 2.5._71.)

ASIA: You said that spirits spoke, but it was thee Sweet sister, for even now thy curved lips Tremble as if the sound were dying there Not dead

PANTHEA: Alas it was Prometheus spoke Within me, and I know it must be so I mixed my own weak nature with his love …And my thoughts Are like the many forests of a vale Through which the might of whirlwind and of rain Had passed—they rest rest through the evening light As mine do now in thy beloved smile.

CANCELLED STAGE DIRECTIONS. (following 1._221.) [THE SOUND BENEATH AS OF EARTHQUAKE AND THE DRIVING OF WHIRLWINDS—THE RAVINE IS SPLIT, AND THE PHANTASM OF JUPITER RISES, SURROUNDED BY HEAVY CLOUDS WHICH DART FORTH LIGHTNING.]

(following 1._520.) [ENTER RUSHING BY GROUPS OF HORRIBLE FORMS; THEY SPEAK AS THEY PASS IN CHORUS.]

(following 1._552.) [A SHADOW PASSES OVER THE SCENE, AND A PIERCING SHRIEK IS HEARD.]

NOTE ON “PROMETHEUS UNBOUND”, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

On the 12th of March, 1818, Shelley quitted England, never to return. His principal motive was the hope that his health would be improved by a milder climate; he suffered very much during the winter previous to his emigration, and this decided his vacillating purpose. In December, 1817, he had written from Marlow to a friend, saying:

‘My health has been materially worse. My feelings at intervals are of a deadly and

torpid kind, or awakened to such a state of unnatural and keen excitement that, only to instance the organ of sight, I find the very blades of grass and the boughs of distant trees present themselves to me with microscopic distinctness. Towards evening I sink into a state of lethargy and inanimation, and often remain for hours on the sofa between sleep and waking, a prey to the most painful irritability of thought. Such, with little intermission, is my condition. The hours devoted to study are selected with vigilant caution from among these periods of endurance. It is not for this that I think of travelling to Italy, even if I knew that Italy would relieve me. But I have experienced a decisive pulmonary attack; and although at present it has passed away without any considerable vestige of its existence, yet this symptom sufficiently shows the true nature of my disease to be consumptive. It is to my advantage that this malady is in its nature slow, and, if one is sufficiently alive to its advances, is susceptible of cure from a warm climate. In the event of its assuming any decided shape, IT WOULD BE MY DUTY to go to Italy without delay. It is not mere health, but life, that I should seek, and that not for my own sake—I feel I am capable of trampling on all such weakness; but for the sake of those to whom my life may be a source of happiness, utility, security, and honour, and to some of whom my death might be all that is the reverse.'

In almost every respect his journey to Italy was advantageous. He left behind friends to whom he was attached; but cares of a thousand kinds, many springing from his lavish generosity, crowded round him in his native country, and, except the society of one or two friends, he had no compensation. The climate caused him to consume half his existence in helpless suffering. His dearest pleasure, the free enjoyment of the scenes of Nature, was marred by the same circumstance.

He went direct to Italy, avoiding even Paris, and did not make any pause till he arrived at Milan. The first aspect of Italy enchanted Shelley; it seemed a garden of delight placed beneath a clearer and brighter heaven than any he had lived under before. He wrote long descriptive letters during the first year of his residence in

Italy, which, as compositions, are the most beautiful in the world, and show how truly he appreciated and studied the wonders of Nature and Art in that divine land.

The poetical spirit within him speedily revived with all the power and with more than all the beauty of his first attempts. He meditated three subjects as the groundwork for lyrical dramas. One was the story of Tasso; of this a slight fragment of a song of Tasso remains. The other was one founded on the Book of Job, which he never abandoned in idea, but of which no trace remains among his papers. The third was the “Prometheus Unbound”. The Greek tragedians were now his most familiar companions in his wanderings, and the sublime majesty of Aeschylus filled him with wonder and delight. The father of Greek tragedy does not possess the pathos of Sophocles, nor the variety and tenderness of Euripides; the interest on which he founds his dramas is often elevated above human vicissitudes into the mighty passions and throes of gods and demi-gods: such fascinated the abstract imagination of Shelley.

We spent a month at Milan, visiting the Lake of Como during that interval. Thence we passed in succession to Pisa, Leghorn, the Baths of Lucca, Venice, Este, Rome, Naples, and back again to Rome, whither we returned early in March, 1819. During all this time Shelley meditated the subject of his drama, and wrote portions of it. Other poems were composed during this interval, and while at the Bagni di Lucca he translated Plato’s “Symposium”. But, though he diversified his studies, his thoughts centred in the Prometheus. At last, when at Rome, during a bright and beautiful Spring, he gave up his whole time to the composition. The spot selected for his study was, as he mentions in his preface, the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla. These are little known to the ordinary visitor at Rome. He describes them in a letter, with that poetry and delicacy and truth of description which render his narrated impressions of scenery of unequalled beauty and interest.

At first he completed the drama in three acts. It was not till several months after,

when at Florence, that he conceived that a fourth act, a sort of hymn of rejoicing in the fulfilment of the prophecies with regard to Prometheus, ought to be added to complete the composition.

The prominent feature of Shelley's theory of the destiny of the human species was that evil is not inherent in the system of the creation, but an accident that might be expelled. This also forms a portion of Christianity: God made earth and man perfect, till he, by his fall,

'Brought death into the world and all our woe.'

Shelley believed that mankind had only to will that there should be no evil, and there would be none. It is not my part in these Notes to notice the arguments that have been urged against this opinion, but to mention the fact that he entertained it, and was indeed attached to it with fervent enthusiasm. That man could be so perfectionized as to be able to expel evil from his own nature, and from the greater part of the creation, was the cardinal point of his system. And the subject he loved best to dwell on was the image of One warring with the Evil Principle, oppressed not only by it, but by all—even the good, who were deluded into considering evil a necessary portion of humanity; a victim full of fortitude and hope and the spirit of triumph emanating from a reliance in the ultimate omnipotence of Good. Such he had depicted in his last poem, when he made Laon the enemy and the victim of tyrants. He now took a more idealized image of the same subject. He followed certain classical authorities in figuring Saturn as the good principle, Jupiter the usurping evil one, and Prometheus as the regenerator, who, unable to bring mankind back to primitive innocence, used knowledge as a weapon to defeat evil, by leading mankind, beyond the state wherein they are sinless through ignorance, to that in which they are virtuous through wisdom. Jupiter punished the temerity of the Titan by chaining him to a rock of Caucasus, and causing a vulture to devour his still-renewed heart. There was a prophecy afloat in heaven portending the fall of

Jove, the secret of averting which was known only to Prometheus; and the god offered freedom from torture on condition of its being communicated to him. According to the mythological story, this referred to the offspring of Thetis, who was destined to be greater than his father. Prometheus at last bought pardon for his crime of enriching mankind with his gifts, by revealing the prophecy. Hercules killed the vulture, and set him free; and Thetis was married to Peleus, the father of Achilles.

Shelley adapted the catastrophe of this story to his peculiar views. The son greater than his father, born of the nuptials of Jupiter and Thetis, was to dethrone Evil, and bring back a happier reign than that of Saturn. Prometheus defies the power of his enemy, and endures centuries of torture; till the hour arrives when Jove, blind to the real event, but darkly guessing that some great good to himself will flow, espouses Thetis. At the moment, the Primal Power of the world drives him from his usurped throne, and Strength, in the person of Hercules, liberates Humanity, typified in Prometheus, from the tortures generated by evil done or suffered. Asia, one of the Oceanides, is the wife of Prometheus—she was, according to other mythological interpretations, the same as Venus and Nature. When the benefactor of mankind is liberated, Nature resumes the beauty of her prime, and is united to her husband, the emblem of the human race, in perfect and happy union. In the Fourth Act, the Poet gives further scope to his imagination, and idealizes the forms of creation—such as we know them, instead of such as they appeared to the Greeks. Maternal Earth, the mighty parent, is superseded by the Spirit of the Earth, the guide of our planet through the realms of sky; while his fair and weaker companion and attendant, the Spirit of the Moon, receives bliss from the annihilation of Evil in the superior sphere.

Shelley develops, more particularly in the lyrics of this drama, his abstruse and imaginative theories with regard to the Creation. It requires a mind as subtle and penetrating as his own to understand the mystic meanings scattered throughout the

poem. They elude the ordinary reader by their abstraction and delicacy of distinction, but they are far from vague. It was his design to write prose metaphysical essays on the nature of Man, which would have served to explain much of what is obscure in his poetry; a few scattered fragments of observations and remarks alone remain. He considered these philosophical views of Mind and Nature to be instinct with the intensest spirit of poetry.

More popular poets clothe the ideal with familiar and sensible imagery. Shelley loved to idealize the real—to gift the mechanism of the material universe with a soul and a voice, and to bestow such also on the most delicate and abstract emotions and thoughts of the mind. Sophocles was his great master in this species of imagery.

I find in one of his manuscript books some remarks on a line in the "Oedipus Tyrannus", which show at once the critical subtlety of Shelley's mind, and explain his apprehension of those 'minute and remote distinctions of feeling, whether relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us,' which he pronounces, in the letter quoted in the note to the "Revolt of Islam", to comprehend all that is sublime in man.

'In the Greek Shakespeare, Sophocles, we find the image,

Pollas d' odous elthonta phrontidos planois:

a line of almost unfathomable depth of poetry; yet how simple are the images in which it is arrayed!

"Coming to many ways in the wanderings of careful thought."

If the words odous and planois had not been used, the line might have been explained in a metaphorical instead of an absolute sense, as we say "WAYS and means," and "wanderings" for error and confusion. But they meant literally paths or roads, such as we tread with our feet; and wanderings, such as a man makes when he loses himself in a desert, or roams from city to city—as Oedipus, the speaker of this verse, was destined to wander, blind and asking charity. What a picture does this

line suggest of the mind as a wilderness of intricate paths, wide as the universe, which is here made its symbol; a world within a world which he who seeks some knowledge with respect to what he ought to do searches throughout, as he would search the external universe for some valued thing which was hidden from him upon its surface.'

In reading Shelley's poetry, we often find similar verses, resembling, but not imitating the Greek in this species of imagery; for, though he adopted the style, he gifted it with that originality of form and colouring which sprung from his own genius.

In the "Prometheus Unbound", Shelley fulfils the promise quoted from a letter in the Note on the "Revolt of Islam". (While correcting the proof-sheets of that poem, it struck me that the poet had indulged in an exaggerated view of the evils of restored despotism; which, however injurious and degrading, were less openly sanguinary than the triumph of anarchy, such as it appeared in France at the close of the last century. But at this time a book, "Scenes of Spanish Life", translated by Lieutenant Crawford from the German of Dr. Huber, of Rostock, fell into my hands. The account of the triumph of the priests and the serviles, after the French invasion of Spain in 1823, bears a strong and frightful resemblance to some of the descriptions of the massacre of the patriots in the "Revolt of Islam".) The tone of the composition is calmer and more majestic, the poetry more perfect as a whole, and the imagination displayed at once more pleasingly beautiful and more varied and daring. The description of the Hours, as they are seen in the cave of Demogorgon, is an instance of this—it fills the mind as the most charming picture—we long to see an artist at work to bring to our view the

'cars drawn by rainbow-winged steeds Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight. Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there, And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars: Others, with burning

eyes, lean forth, and drink With eager lips the wind of their own speed, As if the thing they loved fled on before, And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright locks Stream like a comet's flashing hair: they all Sweep onward.'

Through the whole poem there reigns a sort of calm and holy spirit of love; it soothes the tortured, and is hope to the expectant, till the prophecy is fulfilled, and Love, untainted by any evil, becomes the law of the world.

England had been rendered a painful residence to Shelley, as much by the sort of persecution with which in those days all men of liberal opinions were visited, and by the injustice he had lately endured in the Court of Chancery, as by the symptoms of disease which made him regard a visit to Italy as necessary to prolong his life. An exile, and strongly impressed with the feeling that the majority of his countrymen regarded him with sentiments of aversion such as his own heart could experience towards none, he sheltered himself from such disgusting and painful thoughts in the calm retreats of poetry, and built up a world of his own—with the more pleasure, since he hoped to induce some one or two to believe that the earth might become such, did mankind themselves consent. The charm of the Roman climate helped to clothe his thoughts in greater beauty than they had ever worn before. And, as he wandered among the ruins made one with Nature in their decay, or gazed on the Praxitelean shapes that throng the Vatican, the Capitol, and the palaces of Rome, his soul imbibed forms of loveliness which became a portion of itself. There are many passages in the "Prometheus" which show the intense delight he received from such studies, and give back the impression with a beauty of poetical description peculiarly his own. He felt this, as a poet must feel when he satisfies himself by the result of his labours; and he wrote from Rome, 'My "Prometheus Unbound" is just finished, and in a month or two I shall send it. It is a drama, with characters and mechanism of a kind yet unattempted; and I think the execution is better than any of my former attempts.'

I may mention, for the information of the more critical reader, that the verbal alterations in this edition of “Prometheus” are made from a list of errata written by Shelley himself.

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THE CENCI.

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS.

[Composed at Rome and near Leghorn (Villa Valsovano), May-August 5, 1819; published 1820 (spring) by C. & J. Ollier, London. This edition of two hundred and fifty copies was printed in Italy ‘because,’ writes Shelley to Peacock, September 21, 1819, ‘it costs, with all duties and freightage, about half what it would cost in London.’ A Table of Errata in Mrs. Shelley’s handwriting is printed by Forman in “The Shelley Library”, page 91. A second edition, published by Ollier in 1821 (C.H. Reynell, printer), embodies the corrections indicated in this Table. No manuscript of “The Cenci” is known to exist. Our text follows that of the second edition (1821); variations of the first (Italian) edition, the title-page of which bears date 1819, are given in the footnotes. The text of the “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st and 2nd editions (Mrs. Shelley), follows for the most part that of the editio princeps of 1819.]

DEDICATION, TO LEIGH HUNT, ESQ.

Mv dear friend—

I inscribe with your name, from a distant country, and after an absence whose months have seemed years, this the latest of my literary efforts.

Those writings which I have hitherto published, have been little else than visions which impersonate my own apprehensions of the beautiful and the just. I can also perceive in them the literary defects incidental to youth and impatience; they are dreams of what ought to be, or may be. The drama which I now present to you is a sad reality. I lay aside the presumptuous attitude of an instructor, and am content to paint, with such colours as my own heart furnishes, that which has been.

Had I known a person more highly endowed than yourself with all that it becomes a man to possess, I had solicited for this work the ornament of his name. One more gentle, honourable, innocent and brave; one of more exalted toleration for all who do and think evil, and yet himself more free from evil; one who knows better how to receive, and how to confer a benefit, though he must ever confer far more than he can receive; one of simpler, and, in the highest sense of the word, of purer life and manners I never knew: and I had already been fortunate in friendships when your name was added to the list.

In that patient and irreconcilable enmity with domestic and political tyranny and imposture which the tenor of your life has illustrated, and which, had I health and talents, should illustrate mine, let us, comforting each other in our task, live and die.

All happiness attend you! Your affectionate friend,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

Rome, May 29, 1819.

THE CENCI.

PREFACE.

A manuscript was communicated to me during my travels in Italy, which was copied from the archives of the Cenci Palace at Rome, and contains a detailed account of the horrors which ended in the extinction of one of the noblest and richest families of that city during the Pontificate of Clement VIII, in the year 1599. The story is, that an old man having spent his life in debauchery and wickedness, conceived at length an implacable hatred towards his children; which showed itself towards one daughter under the form of an incestuous passion, aggravated by every circumstance of cruelty and violence. This daughter, after long and vain attempts to escape from what she considered a perpetual contamination both of body and mind, at length plotted with her mother-in-law and brother to murder their common tyrant. The young maiden, who was urged to this tremendous deed by an impulse which

overpowered its horror, was evidently a most gentle and amiable being, a creature formed to adorn and be admired, and thus violently thwarted from her nature by the necessity of circumstance and opinion. The deed was quickly discovered, and, in spite of the most earnest prayers made to the Pope by the highest persons in Rome, the criminals were put to death. The old man had during his life repeatedly bought his pardon from the Pope for capital crimes of the most enormous and unspeakable kind, at the price of a hundred thousand crowns; the death therefore of his victims can scarcely be accounted for by the love of justice. The Pope, among other motives for severity, probably felt that whoever killed the Count Cenci deprived his treasury of a certain and copious source of revenue. (The Papal Government formerly took the most extraordinary precautions against the publicity of facts which offer so tragical a demonstration of its own wickedness and weakness; so that the communication of the manuscript had become, until very lately, a matter of some difficulty.) Such a story, if told so as to present to the reader all the feelings of those who once acted it, their hopes and fears, their confidences and misgivings, their various interests, passions, and opinions, acting upon and with each other, yet all conspiring to one tremendous end, would be as a light to make apparent some of the most dark and secret caverns of the human heart.

On my arrival at Rome I found that the story of the Cenci was a subject not to be mentioned in Italian society without awakening a deep and breathless interest; and that the feelings of the company never failed to incline to a romantic pity for the wrongs, and a passionate exculpation of the horrible deed to which they urged her, who has been mingled two centuries with the common dust. All ranks of people knew the outlines of this history, and participated in the overwhelming interest which it seems to have the magic of exciting in the human heart. I had a copy of Guido’s picture of Beatrice which is preserved in the Colonna Palace, and my servant instantly recognized it as the portrait of La Cenci.

This national and universal interest which the story produces and has produced for

two centuries and among all ranks of people in a great City, where the imagination is kept for ever active and awake, first suggested to me the conception of its fitness for a dramatic purpose. In fact it is a tragedy which has already received, from its capacity of awakening and sustaining the sympathy of men, approbation and success. Nothing remained as I imagined, but to clothe it to the apprehensions of my countrymen in such language and action as would bring it home to their hearts. The deepest and the sublimest tragic compositions, King Lear and the two plays in which the tale of Oedipus is told, were stories which already existed in tradition, as matters of popular belief and interest, before Shakspeare and Sophocles made them familiar to the sympathy of all succeeding generations of mankind.

This story of the Cenci is indeed eminently fearful and monstrous: anything like a dry exhibition of it on the stage would be insupportable. The person who would treat such a subject must increase the ideal, and diminish the actual horror of the events, so that the pleasure which arises from the poetry which exists in these tempestuous sufferings and crimes may mitigate the pain of the contemplation of the moral deformity from which they spring. There must also be nothing attempted to make the exhibition subservient to what is vulgarly termed a moral purpose. The highest moral purpose aimed at in the highest species of the drama, is the teaching the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself; in proportion to the possession of which knowledge, every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant and kind. If dogmas can do more, it is well: but a drama is no fit place for the enforcement of them. Undoubtedly, no person can be truly dishonoured by the act of another; and the fit return to make to the most enormous injuries is kindness and forbearance, and a resolution to convert the injurer from his dark passions by peace and love. Revenge, retaliation, atonement, are pernicious mistakes. If Beatrice had thought in this manner she would have been wiser and better; but she would never have been a tragic character: the few whom such an exhibition would have interested, could never have been sufficiently interested for a

dramatic purpose, from the want of finding sympathy in their interest among the mass who surround them. It is in the restless and anatomizing casuistry with which men seek the justification of Beatrice, yet feel that she has done what needs justification; it is in the superstitious horror with which they contemplate alike her wrongs and their revenge, that the dramatic character of what she did and suffered, consists.

I have endeavoured as nearly as possible to represent the characters as they probably were, and have sought to avoid the error of making them actuated by my own conceptions of right or wrong, false or true: thus under a thin veil converting names and actions of the sixteenth century into cold impersonations of my own mind. They are represented as Catholics, and as Catholics deeply tinged with religion. To a Protestant apprehension there will appear something unnatural in the earnest and perpetual sentiment of the relations between God and men which pervade the tragedy of the Cenci. It will especially be startled at the combination of an undoubting persuasion of the truth of the popular religion with a cool and determined perseverance in enormous guilt. But religion in Italy is not, as in Protestant countries, a cloak to be worn on particular days; or a passport which those who do not wish to be railed at carry with them to exhibit; or a gloomy passion for penetrating the impenetrable mysteries of our being, which terrifies its possessor at the darkness of the abyss to the brink of which it has conducted him. Religion coexists, as it were, in the mind of an Italian Catholic, with a faith in that of which all men have the most certain knowledge. It is interwoven with the whole fabric of life. It is adoration, faith, submission, penitence, blind admiration; not a rule for moral conduct. It has no necessary connection with any one virtue. The most atrocious villain may be rigidly devout, and without any shock to established faith, confess himself to be so. Religion pervades intensely the whole frame of society, and is according to the temper of the mind which it inhabits, a passion, a persuasion, an excuse, a refuge; never a check. Cenci himself built a chapel in the court of his

Palace, and dedicated it to St. Thomas the Apostle, and established masses for the peace of his soul. Thus in the first scene of the fourth act Lucretia's design in exposing herself to the consequences of an expostulation with Cenci after having administered the opiate, was to induce him by a feigned tale to confess himself before death; this being esteemed by Catholics as essential to salvation; and she only relinquishes her purpose when she perceives that her perseverance would expose Beatrice to new outrages.

I have avoided with great care in writing this play the introduction of what is commonly called mere poetry, and I imagine there will scarcely be found a detached simile or a single isolated description, unless Beatrice's description of the chasm appointed for her father's murder should be judged to be of that nature. (An idea in this speech was suggested by a most sublime passage in "El Purgaterio de San Patricio" of Calderon; the only plagiarism which I have intentionally committed in the whole piece.)

In a dramatic composition the imagery and the passion should interpenetrate one another, the former being reserved simply for the full development and illustration of the latter. Imagination is as the immortal God which should assume flesh for the redemption of mortal passion. It is thus that the most remote and the most familiar imagery may alike be fit for dramatic purposes when employed in the illustration of strong feeling, which raises what is low, and levels to the apprehension that which is lofty, casting over all the shadow of its own greatness. In other respects, I have written more carelessly; that is, without an over-fastidious and learned choice of words. In this respect I entirely agree with those modern critics who assert that in order to move men to true sympathy we must use the familiar language of men, and that our great ancestors the ancient English poets are the writers, a study of whom might incite us to do that for our own age which they have done for theirs. But it must be the real language of men in general and not that of any particular class to whose society the writer happens to belong. So much for what I have attempted; I

need not be assured that success is a very different matter; particularly for one whose attention has but newly been awakened to the study of dramatic literature.

I endeavoured whilst at Rome to observe such monuments of this story as might be accessible to a stranger. The portrait of Beatrice at the Colonna Palace is admirable as a work of art: it was taken by Guido during her confinement in prison. But it is most interesting as a just representation of one of the loveliest specimens of the workmanship of Nature. There is a fixed and pale composure upon the features: she seems sad and stricken down in spirit, yet the despair thus expressed is lightened by the patience of gentleness. Her head is bound with folds of white drapery from which the yellow strings of her golden hair escape, and fall about her neck. The moulding of her face is exquisitely delicate; the eyebrows are distinct and arched: the lips have that permanent meaning of imagination and sensibility which suffering has not repressed and which it seems as if death scarcely could extinguish. Her forehead is large and clear; her eyes, which we are told were remarkable for their vivacity, are swollen with weeping and lustreless, but beautifully tender and serene. In the whole mien there is a simplicity and dignity which, united with her exquisite loveliness and deep sorrow, are inexpressibly pathetic. Beatrice Cenci appears to have been one of those rare persons in whom energy and gentleness dwell together without destroying one another: her nature was simple and profound. The crimes and miseries in which she was an actor and a sufferer are as the mask and the mantle in which circumstances clothed her for her impersonation on the scene of the world.

The Cenci Palace is of great extent; and though in part modernized, there yet remains a vast and gloomy pile of feudal architecture in the same state as during the dreadful scenes which are the subject of this tragedy. The Palace is situated in an obscure corner of Rome, near the quarter of the Jews, and from the upper windows you see the immense ruins of Mount Palatine half hidden under their profuse overgrowth of trees. There is a court in one part of the Palace (perhaps that in which Cenci built the Chapel to St. Thomas), supported by granite columns and adorned

with antique friezes of fine workmanship, and built up, according to the ancient Italian fashion, with balcony over balcony of open-work. One of the gates of the Palace formed of immense stones and leading through a passage, dark and lofty and opening into gloomy subterranean chambers, struck me particularly.

Of the Castle of Petrella, I could obtain no further information than that which is to be found in the manuscript.

THE CENCI: A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

COUNT FRANCESCO CENCI. GIACOMO, BERNARDO, HIS SONS. CARDINAL CAMILLO. PRINCE COLONNA. ORSINO, A PRELATE. SAVELLA, THE POPE'S LEGATE. OLIMPIO, MARZIO, ASSASSINS. ANDREA, SERVANT TO CENCI. NOBLES. JUDGES. GUARDS, SERVANTS. LUCRETIA, WIFE OF CENCI AND STEP-MOTHER OF HIS CHILDREN. BEATRICE, HIS DAUGHTER. THE SCENE LIES PRINCIPALLY IN ROME, BUT CHANGES DURING THE FOURTH ACT TO PETRELLA, A CASTLE AMONG THE APULIAN APENNINES. TIME. DURING THE PONTIFICATE OF CLEMENT VIII.

ACT 1.

SCENE 1.1: AN APARTMENT IN THE CENCI PALACE. ENTER COUNT CENCI AND CARDINAL CAMILLO.

CAMILLO: That matter of the murder is hushed up If you consent to yield his Holiness Your fief that lies beyond the Pincian gate.— It needed all my interest in the conclave To bend him to this point; he said that you _5 Bought perilous impunity with your gold; That crimes like yours if once or twice compounded Enriched the Church, and respited from hell An erring soul which might repent and live: — But that the glory and the interest _10 Of the high throne he fills, little consist With making it a daily mart of guilt As manifold and hideous as the deeds

Which you scarce hide from men's revolted eyes.

CENCI: The third of my possessions—let it go! _15 Ay, I once heard the nephew of the Pope Had sent his architect to view the ground, Meaning to build a villa on my vines The next time I compounded with his uncle: I little thought he should outwit me so! _20 Henceforth no witness—not the lamp—shall see That which the vassal threatened to divulge Whose throat is choked with dust for his reward. The deed he saw could not have rated higher Than his most worthless life:—it angers me! _25 Respited me from Hell! So may the Devil Respite their souls from Heaven! No doubt Pope Clement, And his most charitable nephews, pray That the Apostle Peter and the Saints Will grant for their sake that I long enjoy _30 Strength, wealth, and pride, and lust, and length of days Wherein to act the deeds which are the stewards Of their revenue.—But much yet remains To which they show no title.

CAMILLO: Oh, Count Cenci! So much that thou mightst honourably live _35 And reconcile thyself with thine own heart And with thy God, and with the offended world. How hideously look deeds of lust and blood Through those snow white and venerable hairs!— Your children should be sitting round you now, _40 But that you fear to read upon their looks The shame and misery you have written there. Where is your wife? Where is your gentle daughter? Methinks her sweet looks, which make all things else Beauteous and glad, might kill the fiend within you. _45 Why is she barred from all society But her own strange and uncomplaining wrongs? Talk with me, Count,—you know I mean you well. I stood beside your dark and fiery youth Watching its bold and bad career, as men _50 Watch meteors, but it vanished not—I marked Your desperate and remorseless manhood; now Do I behold you in dishonoured age Charged with a thousand unrepented crimes. Yet I have ever hoped you would amend, _55 And in that hope have saved your life three times.

CENCI: For which Aldobrandino owes you now My fief beyond the Pincian.—Cardinal, One thing, I pray you, recollect henceforth, And so we shall

converse with less restraint. _60 A man you knew spoke of my wife and daughter— He was accustomed to frequent my house; So the next day HIS wife and daughter came And asked if I had seen him; and I smiled: I think they never saw him any more. _65

CAMILLO: Thou execrable man, beware!—

CENCI: Of thee? Nay, this is idle: —We should know each other. As to my character for what men call crime Seeing I please my senses as I list, And vindicate that right with force or guile, _70 It is a public matter, and I care not If I discuss it with you. I may speak Alike to you and my own conscious heart— For you give out that you have half reformed me, Therefore strong vanity will keep you silent _75 If fear should not; both will, I do not doubt. All men delight in sensual luxury, All men enjoy revenge; and most exult Over the tortures they can never feel— Flattering their secret peace with others' pain. _80 But I delight in nothing else. I love The sight of agony, and the sense of joy, When this shall be another's, and that mine. And I have no remorse and little fear, Which are, I think, the checks of other men. _85 This mood has grown upon me, until now Any design my captious fancy makes The picture of its wish, and it forms none But such as men like you would start to know, Is as my natural food and rest debarred _90 Until it be accomplished.

CAMILLO: Art thou not Most miserable?

CENCI: Why miserable?— No.—I am what your theologians call Hardened;—which they must be in impudence, So to revile a man's peculiar taste. _95 True, I was happier than I am, while yet Manhood remained to act the thing I thought; While lust was sweeter than revenge; and now Invention palls:—Ay, we must all grow old— And but that there remains a deed to act _100 Whose horror might make sharp an appetite Duller than mine—I'd do,—I know not what. When I was young I thought of nothing else But pleasure; and I fed on honey sweets: Men, by St. Thomas! cannot live like bees, _105 And I grew tired:—yet, till I killed a foe,

And heard his groans, and heard his children's groans, Knew I not what delight was else on earth, Which now delights me little. I the rather Look on such pangs as terror ill conceals, _110 The dry fixed eyeball; the pale, quivering lip, Which tell me that the spirit weeps within Tears bitterer than the bloody sweat of Christ. I rarely kill the body, which preserves, Like a strong prison, the soul within my power, _115 Wherein I feed it with the breath of fear For hourly pain.

NOTE: _100 And but that edition 1821; But that editions 1819, 1839.

CAMILLO: Hell's most abandoned fiend Did never, in the drunkenness of guilt, Speak to his heart as now you speak to me; I thank my God that I believe you not. _120

[ENTER ANDREA.]

ANDREA: My Lord, a gentleman from Salamanca Would speak with you.

CENCI: Bid him attend me In the grand saloon.

[EXIT ANDREA.]

CAMILLO: Farewell; and I will pray Almighty God that thy false, impious words Tempt not his spirit to abandon thee. _125

[EXIT CAMILLO.]

CENCI: The third of my possessions! I must use Close husbandry, or gold, the old man's sword, Falls from my withered hand. But yesterday There came an order from the Pope to make Fourfold provision for my cursed sons; _130 Whom I had sent from Rome to Salamanca, Hoping some accident might cut them off; And meaning if I could to starve them there. I pray thee, God, send some quick death upon them! Bernardo and my wife could not be worse _135 If dead and damned:—then, as to Beatrice— [LOOKING AROUND HIM SUSPICIOUSLY.] I think they cannot hear me at that door; What if they should? And yet I need not speak Though the heart triumphs with itself in words. O, thou most silent air, that shalt not hear _140 What

now I think! Thou, pavement, which I tread Towards her chamber,—let your echoes talk Of my imperious step scorning surprise, But not of my intent!—Andrea!

NOTES: _131 Whom I had edition 1821; Whom I have editions 1819, 1839. _140 that shalt edition 1821; that shall editions 1819, 1839.

[ENTER ANDREA.]

ANDREA: My lord?

CENCI: Bid Beatrice attend me in her chamber _145 This evening:—no, at midnight and alone.

[EXEUNT.] SCENE 1.2: A GARDEN OF THE CENCI PALACE. ENTER BEATRICE AND ORSINO, AS IN CONVERSATION.

BEATRICE: Pervert not truth, Orsino. You remember where we held That conversation;—nay, we see the spot Even from this cypress;—two long years are past Since, on an April midnight, underneath _5 The moonlight ruins of Mount Palatine, I did confess to you my secret mind.

ORSINO: You said you loved me then.

BEATRICE: You are a Priest. Speak to me not of love.

ORSINO: I may obtain The dispensation of the Pope to marry. _10 Because I am a Priest do you believe Your image, as the hunter some struck deer, Follows me not whether I wake or sleep?

BEATRICE: As I have said, speak to me not of love; Had you a dispensation I have not; _15 Nor will I leave this home of misery Whilst my poor Bernard, and that gentle lady To whom I owe life, and these virtuous thoughts, Must suffer what I still have strength to share. Alas, Orsino! All the love that once _20 I felt for you, is turned to bitter pain. Ours was a youthful contract, which you first Broke, by assuming vows no Pope will loose. And thus I love you still, but holily, Even as a sister or a spirit might; _25 And so I swear a cold fidelity. And it is well perhaps we

shall not marry. You have a sly, equivocating vein That suits me not.—Ah, wretched that I am! Where shall I turn? Even now you look on me _30 As you were not my friend, and as if you Discovered that I thought so, with false smiles Making my true suspicion seem your wrong. Ah, no! forgive me; sorrow makes me seem Sterner than else my nature might have been; _35 I have a weight of melancholy thoughts, And they forebode,—but what can they forebode Worse than I now endure?

NOTE: _24 And thus editions 1821, 1839; And yet edition 1819.

ORSINO: All will be well. Is the petition yet prepared? You know My zeal for all you wish, sweet Beatrice; _40 Doubt not but I will use my utmost skill So that the Pope attend to your complaint.

BEATRICE: Your zeal for all I wish;—Ah me, you are cold! Your utmost skill…speak but one word… [ASIDE.] Alas! Weak and deserted creature that I am, _45 Here I stand bickering with my only friend! [TO ORSINO.] This night my father gives a sumptuous feast, Orsino; he has heard some happy news From Salamanca, from my brothers there, And with this outward show of love he mocks _50 His inward hate. ’Tis bold hypocrisy, For he would gladlier celebrate their deaths, Which I have heard him pray for on his knees: Great God! that such a father should be mine! But there is mighty preparation made, _55 And all our kin, the Cenci, will be there, And all the chief nobility of Rome. And he has bidden me and my pale Mother Attire ourselves in festival array. Poor lady! She expects some happy change _60 In his dark spirit from this act; I none. At supper I will give you the petition: Till when—farewell.

ORSINO: Farewell. [EXIT BEATRICE.] I know the Pope Will ne’er absolve me from my priestly vow But by absolving me from the revenue _65 Of many a wealthy see; and, Beatrice, I think to win thee at an easier rate. Nor shall he read her eloquent petition: He might bestow her on some poor relation Of his sixth cousin, as he did her sister, _70 And I should be debarred from all access. Then as to what she suffers

from her father, In all this there is much exaggeration:— Old men are testy and will have their way; A man may stab his enemy, or his vassal, _75 And live a free life as to wine or women, And with a peevish temper may return To a dull home, and rate his wife and children; Daughters and wives call this foul tyranny. I shall be well content if on my conscience _80 There rest no heavier sin than what they suffer From the devices of my love—a net From which he shall escape not. Yet I fear Her subtle mind, her awe-inspiring gaze, Whose beams anatomize me nerve by nerve _85 And lay me bare, and make me blush to see My hidden thoughts.—Ah, no! A friendless girl Who clings to me, as to her only hope:— I were a fool, not less than if a panther Were panic-stricken by the antelope's eye, _90 If she escape me.

NOTE: _75 vassal edition 1821; slave edition 1819.

[EXIT.] SCENE 1.3: A MAGNIFICENT HALL IN THE CENCI PALACE. A BANQUET. ENTER CENCI, LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, ORSINO, CAMILLO, NOBLES.

CENCI: Welcome, my friends and kinsmen; welcome ye, Princes and Cardinals, pillars of the church, Whose presence honours our festivity. I have too long lived like an anchorite, And in my absence from your merry meetings _5 An evil word is gone abroad of me; But I do hope that you, my noble friends, When you have shared the entertainment here, And heard the pious cause for which 'tis given, And we have pledged a health or two together, _10 Will think me flesh and blood as well as you; Sinful indeed, for Adam made all so, But tender-hearted, meek and pitiful.

FIRST GUEST: In truth, my Lord, you seem too light of heart, Too sprightly and companionable a man, _15 To act the deeds that rumour pins on you. [TO HIS COMPANION.] I never saw such blithe and open cheer In any eye!

SECOND GUEST: Some most desired event, In which we all demand a common joy, Has brought us hither; let us hear it, Count. _20

CENCI: It is indeed a most desired event. If when a parent from a parent's heart

Lifts from this earth to the great Father of all A prayer, both when he lays him down to sleep, And when he rises up from dreaming it; _25 One supplication, one desire, one hope, That he would grant a wish for his two sons, Even all that he demands in their regard— And suddenly beyond his dearest hope It is accomplished, he should then rejoice, _30 And call his friends and kinsmen to a feast, And task their love to grace his merriment,— Then honour me thus far—for I am he.

BEATRICE [TO LUCRETIA]: Great God! How horrible! some dreadful ill Must have befallen my brothers.

LUCRETIA: Fear not, child, _35 He speaks too frankly.

BEATRICE: Ah! My blood runs cold. I fear that wicked laughter round his eye, Which wrinkles up the skin even to the hair.

CENCI: Here are the letters brought from Salamanca; Beatrice, read them to your mother. God! _40 I thank thee! In one night didst thou perform, By ways inscrutable, the thing I sought. My disobedient and rebellious sons Are dead!—Why, dead!—What means this change of cheer? You hear me not, I tell you they are dead; _45 And they will need no food or raiment more: The tapers that did light them the dark way Are their last cost. The Pope, I think, will not Expect I should maintain them in their coffins. Rejoice with me—my heart is wondrous glad. _50

[LUCRETIA SINKS, HALF FAINTING; BEATRICE SUPPORTS HER.]

BEATRICE : It is not true!—Dear Lady, pray look up. Had it been true, there is a God in Heaven, He would not live to boast of such a boon. Unnatural man, thou knowest that it is false.

CENCI: Ay, as the word of God; whom here I call _55 To witness that I speak the sober truth;— And whose most favouring Providence was shown Even in the manner of their deaths. For Rocco Was kneeling at the mass, with sixteen others, When the church fell and crushed him to a mummy, _60 The rest escaped unhurt. Cristofano Was stabbed in error by a jealous man, Whilst she he loved was sleeping

with his rival; All in the self-same hour of the same night; Which shows that Heaven has special care of me. _65 I beg those friends who love me, that they mark The day a feast upon their calendars. It was the twenty-seventh of December: Ay, read the letters if you doubt my oath.

[THE ASSEMBLY APPEARS CONFUSED; SEVERAL OF THE GUESTS RISE.]

FIRST GUEST: Oh, horrible! I will depart—

SECOND GUEST: And I.—

THIRD GUEST: No, stay! _70 I do believe it is some jest; though faith! ’Tis mocking us somewhat too solemnly. I think his son has married the Infanta, Or found a mine of gold in El Dorado. ’Tis but to season some such news; stay, stay! _75 I see ’tis only raillery by his smile.

CENCI [FILLING A BOWL OF WINE, AND LIFTING IT UP]: Oh, thou bright wine whose purple splendour leaps And bubbles gaily in this golden bowl Under the lamplight, as my spirits do, To hear the death of my accursed sons! _80 Could I believe thou wert their mingled blood, Then would I taste thee like a sacrament, And pledge with thee the mighty Devil in Hell, Who, if a father’s curses, as men say, Climb with swift wings after their children’s souls, _85 And drag them from the very throne of Heaven, Now triumphs in my triumph!—But thou art Superfluous; I have drunken deep of joy, And I will taste no other wine to-night. Here, Andrea! Bear the bowl around.

A GUEST [RISING]: Thou wretch! _90 Will none among this noble company Check the abandoned villain?

CAMILLO: For God’s sake, Let me dismiss the guests! You are insane, Some ill will come of this.

SECOND GUEST: Seize, silence him!

FIRST GUEST: I will!

THIRD GUEST: And I!

CENCI [ADDRESSING THOSE WHO RISE WITH A THREATENING GESTURE]: Who moves? Who speaks? [TURNING TO THE COMPANY.] 'tis nothing, _95 Enjoy yourselves.—Beware! For my revenge Is as the sealed commission of a king That kills, and none dare name the murderer.

[THE BANQUET IS BROKEN UP; SEVERAL OF THE GUESTS ARE DEPARTING.]

BEATRICE: I do entreat you, go not, noble guests; What, although tyranny and impious hate _100 Stand sheltered by a father's hoary hair? What if 'tis he who clothed us in these limbs Who tortures them, and triumphs? What, if we, The desolate and the dead, were his own flesh, His children and his wife, whom he is bound _105 To love and shelter? Shall we therefore find No refuge in this merciless wide world? O think what deep wrongs must have blotted out First love, then reverence in a child's prone mind, Till it thus vanquish shame and fear! O think! _110 I have borne much, and kissed the sacred hand Which crushed us to the earth, and thought its stroke Was perhaps some paternal chastisement! Have excused much, doubted; and when no doubt Remained, have sought by patience, love, and tears _115 To soften him, and when this could not be I have knelt down through the long sleepless nights And lifted up to God, the Father of all, Passionate prayers: and when these were not heard I have still borne,—until I meet you here, _120 Princes and kinsmen, at this hideous feast Given at my brothers' deaths. Two yet remain, His wife remains and I, whom if ye save not, Ye may soon share such merriment again As fathers make over their children's graves. _125 O Prince Colonna, thou art our near kinsman, Cardinal, thou art the Pope's chamberlain, Camillo, thou art chief justiciary, Take us away!

CENCI [HE HAS BEEN CONVERSING WITH CAMILLO DURING THE FIRST PART OF BEATRICE'S SPEECH; HE HEARS THE CONCLUSION, AND NOW

ADVANCES]: I hope my good friends here Will think of their own daughters—or perhaps _130 Of their own throats—before they lend an ear To this wild girl.

BEATRICE [NOT NOTICING THE WORDS OF CENCI]: Dare no one look on me? None answer? Can one tyrant overbear The sense of many best and wisest men? Or is it that I sue not in some form _135 Of scrupulous law, that ye deny my suit? O God! That I were buried with my brothers! And that the flowers of this departed spring Were fading on my grave! And that my father Were celebrating now one feast for all! _140

NOTE: _132 no edition 1821; not edition 1819.

CAMILLO: A bitter wish for one so young and gentle. Can we do nothing?

COLONNA: Nothing that I see. Count Cenci were a dangerous enemy: Yet I would second any one.

A CARDINAL: And I.

CENCI: Retire to your chamber, insolent girl! _145

BEATRICE: Retire thou, impious man! Ay, hide thyself Where never eye can look upon thee more! Wouldst thou have honour and obedience Who art a torturer? Father, never dream, Though thou mayst overbear this company, _150 But ill must come of ill.—Frown not on me! Haste, hide thyself, lest with avenging looks My brothers' ghosts should hunt thee from thy seat! Cover thy face from every living eye, And start if thou but hear a human step: _155 Seek out some dark and silent corner, there, Bow thy white head before offended God, And we will kneel around, and fervently Pray that he pity both ourselves and thee.

CENCI: My friends, I do lament this insane girl _160 Has spoilt the mirth of our festivity. Good night, farewell; I will not make you longer Spectators of our dull domestic quarrels. Another time.— [EXEUNT ALL BUT CENCI AND BEATRICE.] My brain is swimming round; Give me a bowl of wine! [TO BEATRICE.] Thou painted viper! _165 Beast that thou art! Fair and yet terrible! I

know a charm shall make thee meek and tame, Now get thee from my sight! [EXIT BEATRICE.] Here, Andrea, Fill up this goblet with Greek wine. I said I would not drink this evening; but I must; _170 For, strange to say, I feel my spirits fail With thinking what I have decreed to do.— [DRINKING THE WINE.] Be thou the resolution of quick youth Within my veins, and manhood's purpose stern, And age's firm, cold, subtle villainy; _175 As if thou wert indeed my children's blood Which I did thirst to drink! The charm works well; It must be done; it shall be done, I swear!

[EXIT.] END OF ACT 1.

ACT 2.

SCENE 2.1: AN APARTMENT IN THE CENCI PALACE. ENTER LUCRETIA AND BERNARDO.

LUCRETIA: Weep not, my gentle boy; he struck but me Who have borne deeper wrongs. In truth, if he Had killed me, he had done a kinder deed. O God Almighty, do Thou look upon us, We have no other friend but only Thee! _5 Yet weep not; though I love you as my own, I am not your true mother.

BERNARDO: Oh, more, more, Than ever mother was to any child, That have you been to me! Had he not been My father, do you think that I should weep! _10

LUCRETIA: Alas! Poor boy, what else couldst thou have done?

[ENTER BEATRICE.]

BEATRICE [IN A HURRIED VOICE]: Did he pass this way? Have you seen him, brother? Ah, no! that is his step upon the stairs; 'Tis nearer now; his hand is on the door; Mother, if I to thee have ever been _15 A duteous child, now save me! Thou, great God, Whose image upon earth a father is, Dost thou indeed abandon me? He comes; The door is opening now; I see his face; He frowns on others, but he smiles on me, _20 Even as he did after the feast last night. [ENTER A SERVANT.] Almighty God, how merciful Thou art! 'Tis but Orsino's servant.—Well, what news?

SERVANT: My master bids me say, the Holy Father Has sent back your petition thus unopened. _25 [GIVING A PAPER.] And he demands at what hour ’twere secure To visit you again?

LUCRETIA: At the Ave Mary. [EXIT SERVANT.] So, daughter, our last hope has failed. Ah me! How pale you look; you tremble, and you stand Wrapped in some fixed and fearful meditation, _30 As if one thought were over strong for you: Your eyes have a chill glare; O, dearest child! Are you gone mad? If not, pray speak to me.

BEATRICE: You see I am not mad: I speak to you.

LUCRETIA: You talked of something that your father did _35 After that dreadful feast? Could it be worse Than when he smiled, and cried, ‘My sons are dead!’ And every one looked in his neighbour’s face To see if others were as white as he? At the first word he spoke I felt the blood _40 Rush to my heart, and fell into a trance; And when it passed I sat all weak and wild; Whilst you alone stood up, and with strong words Checked his unnatural pride; and I could see The devil was rebuked that lives in him. _45 Until this hour thus you have ever stood Between us and your father’s moody wrath Like a protecting presence; your firm mind Has been our only refuge and defence: What can have thus subdued it? What can now _50 Have given you that cold melancholy look, Succeeding to your unaccustomed fear?

BEATRICE: What is it that you say? I was just thinking ’Twere better not to struggle any more. Men, like my father, have been dark and bloody, _55 Yet never—Oh! Before worse comes of it ’Twere wise to die: it ends in that at last.

LUCRETIA: Oh, talk not so, dear child! Tell me at once What did your father do or say to you? He stayed not after that accursed feast _60 One moment in your chamber.—Speak to me.

BERNARDO: Oh, sister, sister, prithee, speak to us!

BEATRICE [SPEAKING VERY SLOWLY, WITH A FORCED CALMNESS]: It

was one word, Mother, one little word; One look, one smile. [WILDLY.] Oh! He has trampled me Under his feet, and made the blood stream down _65 My pallid cheeks. And he has given us all Ditch-water, and the fever-stricken flesh Of buffaloes, and bade us eat or starve, And we have eaten.—He has made me look On my beloved Bernardo, when the rust _70 Of heavy chains has gangrened his sweet limbs, And I have never yet despaired—but now! What could I say? [RECOVERING HERSELF.] Ah, no! 'tis nothing new. The sufferings we all share have made me wild: He only struck and cursed me as he passed; _75 He said, he looked, he did;—nothing at all Beyond his wont, yet it disordered me. Alas! I am forgetful of my duty, I should preserve my senses for your sake.

LUCRETIA: Nay, Beatrice; have courage, my sweet girl. _80 If any one despairs it should be I Who loved him once, and now must live with him Till God in pity call for him or me. For you may, like your sister, find some husband, And smile, years hence, with children round your knees; _85 Whilst I, then dead, and all this hideous coil Shall be remembered only as a dream.

BEATRICE: Talk not to me, dear lady, of a husband. Did you not nurse me when my mother died? Did you not shield me and that dearest boy? _90 And had we any other friend but you In infancy, with gentle words and looks, To win our father not to murder us? And shall I now desert you? May the ghost Of my dead Mother plead against my soul _95 If I abandon her who filled the place She left, with more, even, than a mother's love!

BERNARDO: And I am of my sister's mind. Indeed I would not leave you in this wretchedness, Even though the Pope should make me free to live _100 In some blithe place, like others of my age, With sports, and delicate food, and the fresh air. Oh, never think that I will leave you, Mother!

LUCRETIA: My dear, dear children!

[ENTER CENCI, SUDDENLY.]

CENCI: What! Beatrice here! Come hither! [SHE SHRINKS BACK, AND COVERS HER FACE.] Nay, hide not your face, 'tis fair; _105 Look up! Why, yesternight you dared to look With disobedient insolence upon me, Bending a stern and an inquiring brow On what I meant; whilst I then sought to hide That which I came to tell you—but in vain. _110

BEATRICE [WILDLY STAGGERING TOWARDS THE DOOR]: Oh, that the earth would gape! Hide me, O God!

CENCI: Then it was I whose inarticulate words Fell from my lips, and who with tottering steps Fled from your presence, as you now from mine. Stay, I command you—from this day and hour _115 Never again, I think, with fearless eye, And brow superior, and unaltered cheek, And that lip made for tenderness or scorn, Shalt thou strike dumb the meanest of mankind; Me least of all. Now get thee to thy chamber! _120 Thou too, loathed image of thy cursed mother, [TO BERNARDO.] Thy milky, meek face makes me sick with hate! [EXEUNT BEATRICE AND BERNARDO.] [ASIDE.] So much has passed between us as must make Me bold, her fearful.—'Tis an awful thing To touch such mischief as I now conceive: _125 So men sit shivering on the dewy bank, And try the chill stream with their feet; once in… How the delighted spirit pants for joy!

LUCRETIA [ADVANCING TIMIDLY TOWARDS HIM]: O husband! Pray forgive poor Beatrice. She meant not any ill.

CENCI: Nor you perhaps? _130 Nor that young imp, whom you have taught by rote Parricide with his alphabet? Nor Giacomo? Nor those two most unnatural sons, who stirred Enmity up against me with the Pope? Whom in one night merciful God cut off: _135 Innocent lambs! They thought not any ill. You were not here conspiring? You said nothing Of how I might be dungeoned as a madman; Or be condemned to death for some offence, And you would be the witnesses?—This failing, _140 How just it were to hire assassins, or Put sudden poison in my evening drink? Or smother

me when overcome by wine? Seeing we had no other judge but God, And He had sentenced me, and there were none _145 But you to be the executioners Of His decree enregistered in heaven? Oh, no! You said not this?

LUCRETIA: So help me God, I never thought the things you charge me with!

CENCI: If you dare to speak that wicked lie again _150 I'll kill you. What! It was not by your counsel That Beatrice disturbed the feast last night? You did not hope to stir some enemies Against me, and escape, and laugh to scorn What every nerve of you now trembles at? _155 You judged that men were bolder than they are; Few dare to stand between their grave and me.

LUCRETIA: Look not so dreadfully! By my salvation I knew not aught that Beatrice designed; Nor do I think she designed any thing _160 Until she heard you talk of her dead brothers.

CENCI: Blaspheming liar! You are damned for this! But I will take you where you may persuade The stones you tread on to deliver you: For men shall there be none but those who dare _165 All things—not question that which I command. On Wednesday next I shall set out: you know That savage rock, the Castle of Petrella: 'Tis safely walled, and moated round about: Its dungeons underground, and its thick towers _170 Never told tales; though they have heard and seen What might make dumb things speak.—Why do you linger? Make speediest preparation for the journey! [EXIT LUCRETIA.] The all-beholding sun yet shines; I hear A busy stir of men about the streets; _175 I see the bright sky through the window panes: It is a garish, broad, and peering day; Loud, light, suspicious, full of eyes and ears, And every little corner, nook, and hole Is penetrated with the insolent light. _180 Come darkness! Yet, what is the day to me? And wherefore should I wish for night, who do A deed which shall confound both night and day? 'Tis she shall grope through a bewildering mist Of horror: if there be a sun in heaven _185 She shall not dare to look upon its beams; Nor feel its warmth. Let her then wish for night; The act I think

shall soon extinguish all For me: I bear a darker deadlier gloom Than the earth's shade, or interlunar air, _190 Or constellations quenched in murkiest cloud, In which I walk secure and unbeheld Towards my purpose.—Would that it were done!

[EXIT.] SCENE 2.2: A CHAMBER IN THE VATICAN. ENTER CAMILLO AND GIACOMO, IN CONVERSATION.

CAMILLO: There is an obsolete and doubtful law By which you might obtain a bare provision Of food and clothing—

GIACOMO: Nothing more? Alas! Bare must be the provision which strict law Awards, and aged, sullen avarice pays. _5 Why did my father not apprentice me To some mechanic trade? I should have then Been trained in no highborn necessities Which I could meet not by my daily toil. The eldest son of a rich nobleman _10 Is heir to all his incapacities; He has wide wants, and narrow powers. If you, Cardinal Camillo, were reduced at once From thrice-driven beds of down, and delicate food, An hundred servants, and six palaces, _15 To that which nature doth indeed require?—

CAMILLO: Nay, there is reason in your plea; 'twere hard.

GIACOMO: 'Tis hard for a firm man to bear: but I Have a dear wife, a lady of high birth, Whose dowry in ill hour I lent my father _20 Without a bond or witness to the deed: And children, who inherit her fine senses, The fairest creatures in this breathing world; And she and they reproach me not. Cardinal, Do you not think the Pope would interpose _25 And stretch authority beyond the law?

CAMILLO: Though your peculiar case is hard, I know The Pope will not divert the course of law. After that impious feast the other night I spoke with him, and urged him then to check _30 Your father's cruel hand; he frowned and said, 'Children are disobedient, and they sting Their fathers' hearts to madness and despair, Requiting years of care with contumely. I pity the Count Cenci from my heart; _35 His outraged love perhaps awakened hate, And thus he is exasperated to ill. In the great

war between the old and young I, who have white hairs and a tottering body, Will keep at least blameless neutrality.’ [ENTER ORSINO.] You, my good Lord Orsino, heard those words.

ORSINO: What words?

GIACOMO: Alas, repeat them not again! There then is no redress for me, at least None but that which I may achieve myself, Since I am driven to the brink.—But, say, My innocent sister and my only brother Are dying underneath my father’s eye. The memorable torturers of this land, Galeaz Visconti, Borgia, Ezzelin, Never inflicted on their meanest slave What these endure; shall they have no protection?

CAMILLO: Why, if they would petition to the Pope I see not how he could refuse it—yet He holds it of most dangerous example In aught to weaken the paternal power, Being, as ’twere, the shadow of his own. I pray you now excuse me. I have business That will not bear delay.

[EXIT CAMILLO.]

GIACOMO: But you, Orsino, Have the petition: wherefore not present it?

ORSINO: I have presented it, and backed it with My earnest prayers, and urgent interest; It was returned unanswered. I doubt not But that the strange and execrable deeds Alleged in it—in truth they might well baffle Any belief—have turned the Pope’s displeasure Upon the accusers from the criminal: So I should guess from what Camillo said.

GIACOMO: My friend, that palace-walking devil Gold Has whispered silence to his Holiness: And we are left, as scorpions ringed with fire. What should we do but strike ourselves to death? For he who is our murderous persecutor Is shielded by a father’s holy name, Or I would—

[STOPS ABRUPTLY.]

ORSINO: What? Fear not to speak your thought. Words are but holy as the deeds they cover: _75 A priest who has forsworn the God he serves; A judge who makes Truth weep at his decree; A friend who should weave counsel, as I now, But as the mantle of some selfish guile; A father who is all a tyrant seems, _80 Were the profaner for his sacred name.

NOTE: _77 makes Truth edition 1821; makes the truth editions 1819, 1839.

GIACOMO: Ask me not what I think; the unwilling brain Feigns often what it would not; and we trust Imagination with such fantasies As the tongue dares not fashion into words, _85 Which have no words, their horror makes them dim To the mind’s eye.—My heart denies itself To think what you demand.

ORSINO: But a friend’s bosom Is as the inmost cave of our own mind Where we sit shut from the wide gaze of day, _90 And from the all-communicating air. You look what I suspected—

GIACOMO: Spare me now! I am as one lost in a midnight wood, Who dares not ask some harmless passenger The path across the wilderness, lest he, _95 As my thoughts are, should be—a murderer. I know you are my friend, and all I dare Speak to my soul that will I trust with thee. But now my heart is heavy, and would take Lone counsel from a night of sleepless care. _100 Pardon me, that I say farewell—farewell! I would that to my own suspected self I could address a word so full of peace.

ORSINO: Farewell!—Be your thoughts better or more bold. [EXIT GIACOMO.] I had disposed the Cardinal Camillo _105 To feed his hope with cold encouragement: It fortunately serves my close designs That ’tis a trick of this same family To analyse their own and other minds. Such self-anatomy shall teach the will _110 Dangerous secrets: for it tempts our powers, Knowing what must be thought, and may be done. Into the depth of darkest purposes: So Cenci fell into the pit; even I, Since Beatrice unveiled me to myself, _115 And made me shrink from what I cannot

shun, Show a poor figure to my own esteem, To which I grow half reconciled. I'll do As little mischief as I can; that thought Shall fee the accuser conscience. [AFTER A PAUSE.] Now what harm _120 If Cenci should be murdered?—Yet, if murdered, Wherefore by me? And what if I could take The profit, yet omit the sin and peril In such an action? Of all earthly things I fear a man whose blows outspeed his words _125 And such is Cenci: and while Cenci lives His daughter's dowry were a secret grave If a priest wins her.—Oh, fair Beatrice! Would that I loved thee not, or loving thee, Could but despise danger and gold and all _130 That frowns between my wish and its effect. Or smiles beyond it! There is no escape… Her bright form kneels beside me at the altar, And follows me to the resort of men, And fills my slumber with tumultuous dreams, _135 So when I wake my blood seems liquid fire; And if I strike my damp and dizzy head My hot palm scorches it: her very name, But spoken by a stranger, makes my heart Sicken and pant; and thus unprofitably _140 I clasp the phantom of unfelt delights Till weak imagination half possesses The self-created shadow. Yet much longer Will I not nurse this life of feverous hours: From the unravelled hopes of Giacomo _145 I must work out my own dear purposes. I see, as from a tower, the end of all: Her father dead; her brother bound to me By a dark secret, surer than the grave; Her mother scared and unexpostulating _150 From the dread manner of her wish achieved; And she!—Once more take courage, my faint heart; What dares a friendless maiden matched with thee? I have such foresight as assures success: Some unbeheld divinity doth ever, _155 When dread events are near, stir up men's minds To black suggestions; and he prospers best, Not who becomes the instrument of ill, But who can flatter the dark spirit, that makes Its empire and its prey of other hearts _160 Till it become his slave…as I will do.

[EXIT.] END OF ACT 2.

ACT 3.

SCENE 3.1: AN APARTMENT IN THE CENCI PALACE. LUCRETIA, TO HER

ENTER BEATRICE.

BEATRICE [SHE ENTERS STAGGERING AND SPEAKS WILDLY]: Reach me that handkerchief!—My brain is hurt; My eyes are full of blood; just wipe them for me… I see but indistinctly…

LUCRETIA: My sweet child, You have no wound; 'tis only a cold dew That starts from your dear brow.—Alas! Alas! _5 What has befallen?

BEATRICE: How comes this hair undone? Its wandering strings must be what blind me so, And yet I tied it fast.—Oh, horrible! The pavement sinks under my feet! The walls Spin round! I see a woman weeping there, _10 And standing calm and motionless, whilst I Slide giddily as the world reels…My God! The beautiful blue heaven is flecked with blood! The sunshine on the floor is black! The air Is changed to vapours such as the dead breathe _15 In charnel pits! Pah! I am choked! There creeps A clinging, black, contaminating mist About me…'tis substantial, heavy, thick, I cannot pluck it from me, for it glues My fingers and my limbs to one another, _20 And eats into my sinews, and dissolves My flesh to a pollution, poisoning The subtle, pure, and inmost spirit of life! My God! I never knew what the mad felt Before; for I am mad beyond all doubt! _25 [MORE WILDLY.] No, I am dead! These putrefying limbs Shut round and sepulchre the panting soul Which would burst forth into the wandering air! [A PAUSE.] What hideous thought was that I had even now? 'Tis gone; and yet its burthen remains here _30 O'er these dull eyes…upon this weary heart! O, world! O, life! O, day! O, misery!

LUCRETIA: What ails thee, my poor child? She answers not: Her spirit apprehends the sense of pain, But not its cause; suffering has dried away _35 The source from which it sprung…

BEATRICE [FRANTICLY]: Like Parricide… Misery has killed its father: yet its father Never like mine…O, God! What thing am I?

LUCRETIA: My dearest child, what has your father done?

BEATRICE [DOUBTFULLY]: Who art thou, questioner? I have no father. _40 [ASIDE.] She is the madhouse nurse who tends on me, It is a piteous office. [TO LUCRETIA, IN A SLOW, SUBDUED VOICE.] Do you know I thought I was that wretched Beatrice Men speak of, whom her father sometimes hales From hall to hall by the entangled hair; _45 At others, pens up naked in damp cells Where scaly reptiles crawl, and starves her there, Till she will eat strange flesh. This woful story So did I overact in my sick dreams, That I imagined…no, it cannot be! _50 Horrible things have been in this wide world, Prodigious mixtures, and confusions strange Of good and ill; and worse have been conceived Than ever there was found a heart to do. But never fancy imaged such a deed _55 As… [PAUSES, SUDDENLY RECOLLECTING HERSELF.] Who art thou? Swear to me, ere I die With fearful expectation, that indeed Thou art not what thou seemest…Mother!

LUCRETIA: Oh! My sweet child, know you…

BEATRICE: Yet speak it not: For then if this be truth, that other too _60 Must be a truth, a firm enduring truth, Linked with each lasting circumstance of life, Never to change, never to pass away. Why so it is. This is the Cenci Palace; Thou art Lucretia; I am Beatrice. _65 I have talked some wild words, but will no more. Mother, come near me: from this point of time, I am… [HER VOICE DIES AWAY FAINTLY.]

LUCRETIA: Alas! What has befallen thee, child? What has thy father done?

BEATRICE: What have I done? Am I not innocent? Is it my crime _70 That one with white hair, and imperious brow, Who tortured me from my forgotten years, As parents only dare, should call himself My father, yet should be!—Oh, what am I? What name, what place, what memory shall be mine? _75 What retrospects, outliving even despair?

LUCRETIA: He is a violent tyrant, surely, child: We know that death alone can make us free; His death or ours. But what can he have done Of deadlier outrage or

worse injury? _80 Thou art unlike thyself; thine eyes shoot forth A wandering and strange spirit. Speak to me, Unlock those pallid hands whose fingers twine With one another.

BEATRICE: ’Tis the restless life Tortured within them. If I try to speak, _85 I shall go mad. Ay, something must be done; What, yet I know not…something which shall make The thing that I have suffered but a shadow In the dread lightning which avenges it; Brief, rapid, irreversible, destroying _90 The consequence of what it cannot cure. Some such thing is to be endured or done: When I know what, I shall be still and calm, And never anything will move me more. But now!—O blood, which art my father’s blood, _95 Circling through these contaminated veins, If thou, poured forth on the polluted earth, Could wash away the crime, and punishment By which I suffer…no, that cannot be! Many might doubt there were a God above _100 Who sees and permits evil, and so die: That faith no agony shall obscure in me.

LUCRETIA: It must indeed have been some bitter wrong; Yet what, I dare not guess. Oh, my lost child, Hide not in proud impenetrable grief _105 Thy sufferings from my fear.

BEATRICE: I hide them not. What are the words which you would have me speak? I, who can feign no image in my mind Of that which has transformed me: I, whose thought Is like a ghost shrouded and folded up _110 In its own formless horror: of all words, That minister to mortal intercourse, Which wouldst thou hear? For there is none to tell My misery: if another ever knew Aught like to it, she died as I will die, _115 And left it, as I must, without a name. Death, Death! Our law and our religion call thee A punishment and a reward…Oh, which Have I deserved?

LUCRETIA: The peace of innocence; Till in your season you be called to heaven. _120 Whate’er you may have suffered, you have done No evil. Death must be the punishment Of crime, or the reward of trampling down The thorns which God has strewed upon the path Which leads to immortality.

BEATRICE: Ay, death… _125 The punishment of crime. I pray thee, God, Let me not be bewildered while I judge. If I must live day after day, and keep These limbs, the unworthy temple of Thy spirit, As a foul den from which what Thou abhorrest _130 May mock Thee, unavenged…it shall not be! Self-murder…no, that might be no escape, For Thy decree yawns like a Hell between Our will and it:—O! In this mortal world There is no vindication and no law _135 Which can adjudge and execute the doom Of that through which I suffer. [ENTER ORSINO.] [SHE APPROACHES HIM SOLEMNLY.] Welcome, Friend! I have to tell you that, since last we met, I have endured a wrong so great and strange, That neither life nor death can give me rest. _140 Ask me not what it is, for there are deeds Which have no form, sufferings which have no tongue.

NOTE: _140 nor edition 1821; or editions 1819, 1839 (1st).

ORSINO: And what is he who has thus injured you?

BEATRICE: The man they call my father: a dread name.

ORSINO: It cannot be…

BEATRICE: What it can be, or not, _145 Forbear to think. It is, and it has been; Advise me how it shall not be again. I thought to die; but a religious awe Restrains me, and the dread lest death itself Might be no refuge from the consciousness _150 Of what is yet unexpiated. Oh, speak!

ORSINO: Accuse him of the deed, and let the law Avenge thee.

BEATRICE: Oh, ice-hearted counsellor! If I could find a word that might make known The crime of my destroyer; and that done, _155 My tongue should like a knife tear out the secret Which cankers my heart’s core; ay, lay all bare, So that my unpolluted fame should be With vilest gossips a stale mouthed story; A mock, a byword, an astonishment:— _160 If this were done, which never shall be done, Think of the offender’s gold, his dreaded hate, And the strange horror of the accuser’s tale, Baffling belief, and overpowering speech; Scarce whispered,

unimaginable, wrapped _165 In hideous hints…Oh, most assured redress!

ORSINO: You will endure it then?

BEATRICE: Endure!—Orsino, It seems your counsel is small profit. [TURNS FROM HIM, AND SPEAKS HALF TO HERSELF.] Ay, All must be suddenly resolved and done. What is this undistinguishable mist _170 Of thoughts, which rise, like shadow after shadow, Darkening each other?

ORSINO: Should the offender live? Triumph in his misdeed? and make, by use, His crime, whate'er it is, dreadful no doubt, Thine element; until thou mayest become _175 Utterly lost; subdued even to the hue Of that which thou permittest?

BEATRICE [TO HERSELF]: Mighty death! Thou double-visaged shadow! Only judge! Rightfullest arbiter!

[SHE RETIRES, ABSORBED IN THOUGHT.]

LUCRETIA: If the lightning Of God has e'er descended to avenge… _180

ORSINO: Blaspheme not! His high Providence commits Its glory on this earth, and their own wrongs Into the hands of men; if they neglect To punish crime…

LUCRETIA: But if one, like this wretch, Should mock, with gold, opinion, law, and power? _185 If there be no appeal to that which makes The guiltiest tremble? If because our wrongs, For that they are unnatural, strange and monstrous, Exceed all measure of belief? O God! If, for the very reasons which should make _190 Redress most swift and sure, our injurer triumphs? And we, the victims, bear worse punishment Than that appointed for their torturer?

ORSINO: Think not But that there is redress where there is wrong, So we be bold enough to seize it.

LUCRETIA: How? _195 If there were any way to make all sure, I know not…but I think it might be good To…

ORSINO: Why, his late outrage to Beatrice; For it is such, as I but faintly guess, As

makes remorse dishonour, and leaves her _200 Only one duty, how she may avenge: You, but one refuge from ills ill endured; Me, but one counsel…

LUCRETIA: For we cannot hope That aid, or retribution, or resource Will arise thence, where every other one _205 Might find them with less need.

[BEATRICE ADVANCES.]

ORSINO: Then…

BEATRICE: Peace, Orsino! And, honoured Lady, while I speak, I pray, That you put off, as garments overworn, Forbearance and respect, remorse and fear, And all the fit restraints of daily life, _210 Which have been borne from childhood, but which now Would be a mockery to my holier plea. As I have said, I have endured a wrong, Which, though it be expressionless, is such As asks atonement; both for what is past, _215 And lest I be reserved, day after day, To load with crimes an overburthened soul, And be…what ye can dream not. I have prayed To God, and I have talked with my own heart, And have unravelled my entangled will, _220 And have at length determined what is right. Art thou my friend, Orsino? False or true? Pledge thy salvation ere I speak.

ORSINO: I swear To dedicate my cunning, and my strength, My silence, and whatever else is mine, _225 To thy commands.

LUCRETIA: You think we should devise His death?

BEATRICE: And execute what is devised, And suddenly. We must be brief and bold.

ORSINO: And yet most cautious.

LUCRETIA: For the jealous laws Would punish us with death and infamy _230 For that which it became themselves to do.

BEATRICE: Be cautious as ye may, but prompt. Orsino, What are the means?

ORSINO: I know two dull, fierce outlaws, Who think man’s spirit as a worm’s, and

they Would trample out, for any slight caprice, _235 The meanest or the noblest life. This mood Is marketable here in Rome. They sell What we now want.

LUCRETIA: To-morrow before dawn, Cenci will take us to that lonely rock, Petrella, in the Apulian Apennines. _240 If he arrive there…

BEATRICE: He must not arrive.

ORSINO: Will it be dark before you reach the tower?

LUCRETIA: The sun will scarce be set.

BEATRICE: But I remember Two miles on this side of the fort, the road Crosses a deep ravine; 'tis rough and narrow, _245 And winds with short turns down the precipice; And in its depth there is a mighty rock, Which has, from unimaginable years, Sustained itself with terror and with toil Over a gulf, and with the agony _250 With which it clings seems slowly coming down; Even as a wretched soul hour after hour, Clings to the mass of life; yet, clinging, leans; And leaning, makes more dark the dread abyss In which it fears to fall: beneath this crag _255 Huge as despair, as if in weariness, The melancholy mountain yawns…below, You hear but see not an impetuous torrent Raging among the caverns, and a bridge Crosses the chasm; and high above there grow, _260 With intersecting trunks, from crag to crag, Cedars, and yews, and pines; whose tangled hair Is matted in one solid roof of shade By the dark ivy's twine. At noonday here 'Tis twilight, and at sunset blackest night. _265

ORSINO: Before you reach that bridge make some excuse For spurring on your mules, or loitering Until…

BEATRICE: What sound is that?

LUCRETIA: Hark! No, it cannot be a servant's step It must be Cenci, unexpectedly _270 Returned…Make some excuse for being here.

BEATRICE [TO ORSINO AS SHE GOES OUT]: That step we hear approach must never pass The bridge of which we spoke.

[EXEUNT LUCRETIA AND BEATRICE.]

ORSINO: What shall I do? Cenci must find me here, and I must bear The imperious inquisition of his looks _275 As to what brought me hither: let me mask Mine own in some inane and vacant smile. [ENTER GIACOMO, IN A HURRIED MANNER.] How! Have you ventured hither? Know you then That Cenci is from home?

NOTE: _278 hither edition 1821; thither edition 1819.

GIACOMO: I sought him here; And now must wait till he returns.

ORSINO: Great God! _280 Weigh you the danger of this rashness?

GIACOMO: Ay! Does my destroyer know his danger? We Are now no more, as once, parent and child, But man to man; the oppressor to the oppressed; The slanderer to the slandered; foe to foe: _285 He has cast Nature off, which was his shield, And Nature casts him off, who is her shame; And I spurn both. Is it a father's throat Which I will shake, and say, I ask not gold; I ask not happy years; nor memories _290 Of tranquil childhood; nor home-sheltered love; Though all these hast thou torn from me, and more; But only my fair fame; only one hoard Of peace, which I thought hidden from thy hate, Under the penury heaped on me by thee, _295 Or I will…God can understand and pardon, Why should I speak with man?

ORSINO: Be calm, dear friend.

GIACOMO: Well, I will calmly tell you what he did. This old Francesco Cenci, as you know, Borrowed the dowry of my wife from me, _300 And then denied the loan; and left me so In poverty, the which I sought to mend By holding a poor office in the state. It had been promised to me, and already I bought new clothing for my ragged babes, _305 And my wife smiled; and my heart knew repose. When Cenci's intercession, as I found, Conferred this office on a wretch, whom thus He paid for vilest service. I returned With this ill news, and we sate sad together _310 Solacing our despondency with tears Of such affection and unbroken faith As temper life's worst bitterness; when he, As he is wont, came to upbraid and curse, Mocking our

poverty, and telling us _315 Such was God’s scourge for disobedient sons. And then, that I might strike him dumb with shame, I spoke of my wife’s dowry; but he coined A brief yet specious tale, how I had wasted The sum in secret riot; and he saw _320 My wife was touched, and he went smiling forth. And when I knew the impression he had made, And felt my wife insult with silent scorn My ardent truth, and look averse and cold, I went forth too: but soon returned again; _325 Yet not so soon but that my wife had taught My children her harsh thoughts, and they all cried, ‘Give us clothes, father! Give us better food! What you in one night squander were enough For months!’ I looked, and saw that home was hell. _330 And to that hell will I return no more Until mine enemy has rendered up Atonement, or, as he gave life to me I will, reversing Nature’s law…

ORSINO: Trust me, The compensation which thou seekest here _335 Will be denied.

GIACOMO: Then…Are you not my friend? Did you not hint at the alternative, Upon the brink of which you see I stand, The other day when we conversed together? My wrongs were then less. That word parricide, _340 Although I am resolved, haunts me like fear.

ORSINO: It must be fear itself, for the bare word Is hollow mockery. Mark, how wisest God Draws to one point the threads of a just doom, So sanctifying it: what you devise _345 Is, as it were, accomplished.

GIACOMO: Is he dead?

ORSINO: His grave is ready. Know that since we met Cenci has done an outrage to his daughter.

GIACOMO: What outrage?

ORSINO: That she speaks not, but you may Conceive such half conjectures as I do, _350 From her fixed paleness, and the lofty grief Of her stern brow bent on the idle air, And her severe unmodulated voice, Drowning both tenderness and dread; and

last From this; that whilst her step-mother and I, _355 Bewildered in our horror, talked together With obscure hints; both self-misunderstood And darkly guessing, stumbling, in our talk, Over the truth, and yet to its revenge, She interrupted us, and with a look _360 Which told, before she spoke it, he must die:…

GIACOMO: It is enough. My doubts are well appeased; There is a higher reason for the act Than mine; there is a holier judge than me, A more unblamed avenger. Beatrice, _365 Who in the gentleness of thy sweet youth Hast never trodden on a worm, or bruised A living flower, but thou hast pitied it With needless tears! Fair sister, thou in whom Men wondered how such loveliness and wisdom _370 Did not destroy each other! Is there made Ravage of thee? O, heart, I ask no more Justification! Shall I wait, Orsino, Till he return, and stab him at the door?

ORSINO: Not so; some accident might interpose _375 To rescue him from what is now most sure; And you are unprovided where to fly, How to excuse or to conceal. Nay, listen: All is contrived; success is so assured That…

[ENTER BEATRICE.]

BEATRICE: ’Tis my brother’s voice! You know me not?

GIACOMO: My sister, my lost sister! _380

BEATRICE: Lost indeed! I see Orsino has talked with you, and That you conjecture things too horrible To speak, yet far less than the truth. Now, stay not, He might return: yet kiss me; I shall know _385 That then thou hast consented to his death. Farewell, farewell! Let piety to God, Brotherly love, justice and clemency, And all things that make tender hardest hearts Make thine hard, brother. Answer not…farewell. _390

[EXEUNT SEVERALLY.] SCENE 3.2: A MEAN APARTMENT IN GIACOMO’S HOUSE. GIACOMO ALONE.

GIACOMO: ’Tis midnight, and Orsino comes not yet. [THUNDER, AND THE SOUND OF A STORM.] What! can the everlasting elements Feel with a worm like

man? If so, the shaft Of mercy-winged lightning would not fall On stones and trees. My wife and children sleep: _5 They are now living in unmeaning dreams: But I must wake, still doubting if that deed Be just which is most necessary. O, Thou unreplenished lamp! whose narrow fire Is shaken by the wind, and on whose edge _10 Devouring darkness hovers! Thou small flame, Which, as a dying pulse rises and falls, Still flickerest up and down, how very soon, Did I not feed thee, wouldst thou fail and be As thou hadst never been! So wastes and sinks _15 Even now, perhaps, the life that kindled mine: But that no power can fill with vital oil That broken lamp of flesh. Ha! 'tis the blood Which fed these veins that ebbs till all is cold: It is the form that moulded mine that sinks _20 Into the white and yellow spasms of death: It is the soul by which mine was arrayed In God's immortal likeness which now stands Naked before Heaven's judgement seat! [A BELL STRIKES.] One! Two! The hours crawl on; and, when my hairs are white, _25 My son will then perhaps be waiting thus, Tortured between just hate and vain remorse; Chiding the tardy messenger of news Like those which I expect. I almost wish He be not dead, although my wrongs are great; _30 Yet…'tis Orsino's step… [ENTER ORSINO.] Speak!

ORSINO: I am come To say he has escaped.

GIACOMO: Escaped!

ORSINO: And safe Within Petrella. He passed by the spot Appointed for the deed an hour too soon.

GIACOMO: Are we the fools of such contingencies? _35 And do we waste in blind misgivings thus The hours when we should act? Then wind and thunder, Which seemed to howl his knell, is the loud laughter With which Heaven mocks our weakness! I henceforth Will ne'er repent of aught designed or done _40 But my repentance.

ORSINO: See, the lamp is out.

GIACOMO: If no remorse is ours when the dim air Has drank this innocent flame, why should we quail When Cenci's life, that light by which ill spirits See the worst deeds they prompt, shall sink for ever? _45 No, I am hardened.

ORSINO: Why, what need of this? Who feared the pale intrusion of remorse In a just deed? Although our first plan failed, Doubt not but he will soon be laid to rest. But light the lamp; let us not talk i' the dark. _50

GIACOMO [LIGHTING THE LAMP]: And yet once quenched I cannot thus relume My father's life: do you not think his ghost Might plead that argument with God?

ORSINO: Once gone You cannot now recall your sister's peace; Your own extinguished years of youth and hope; _55 Nor your wife's bitter words; nor all the taunts Which, from the prosperous, weak misfortune takes; Nor your dead mother; nor…

GIACOMO: O, speak no more! I am resolved, although this very hand Must quench the life that animated it. _60

ORSINO: There is no need of that. Listen: you know Olimpio, the castellan of Petrella In old Colonna's time; him whom your father Degraded from his post? And Marzio, That desperate wretch, whom he deprived last year _65 Of a reward of blood, well earned and due?

GIACOMO: I knew Olimpio; and they say he hated Old Cenci so, that in his silent rage His lips grew white only to see him pass. Of Marzio I know nothing.

ORSINO: Marzio's hate _70 Matches Olimpio's. I have sent these men, But in your name, and as at your request, To talk with Beatrice and Lucretia.

GIACOMO: Only to talk?

ORSINO: The moments which even now Pass onward to to-morrow's midnight hour _75 May memorize their flight with death: ere then They must have talked, and

may perhaps have done, And made an end…

GIACOMO: Listen! What sound is that?

ORSINO: The house-dog moans, and the beams crack: nought else.

GIACOMO: It is my wife complaining in her sleep: _80 I doubt not she is saying bitter things Of me; and all my children round her dreaming That I deny them sustenance.

ORSINO: Whilst he Who truly took it from them, and who fills Their hungry rest with bitterness, now sleeps _85 Lapped in bad pleasures, and triumphantly Mocks thee in visions of successful hate Too like the truth of day.

GIACOMO: If e'er he wakes Again, I will not trust to hireling hands…

ORSINO: Why, that were well. I must be gone; good-night. _90 When next we meet—may all be done!

NOTE: _91 may all be done! Giacomo: And all edition 1821; Giacomo: May all be done, and all edition 1819.

GIACOMO: And all Forgotten: Oh, that I had never been!

[EXEUNT.] END OF ACT 3.

ACT 4.

SCENE 4.1: AN APARTMENT IN THE CASTLE OF PETRELLA. ENTER CENCI.

CENCI: She comes not; yet I left her even now Vanquished and faint. She knows the penalty Of her delay: yet what if threats are vain? Am I not now within Petrella's moat? Or fear I still the eyes and ears of Rome? _5 Might I not drag her by the golden hair? Stamp on her? keep her sleepless till her brain Be overworn? Tame her with chains and famine? Less would suffice. Yet so to leave undone What I most seek! No, 'tis her stubborn will _10 Which by its own consent shall stoop as low As that which drags it down. [ENTER LUCRETIA.] Thou loathed wretch! Hide thee

from my abhorrence: fly, begone! Yet stay! Bid Beatrice come hither.

NOTE: _4 not now edition 1821; now not edition 1819.

LUCRETIA: Oh, Husband! I pray, for thine own wretched sake _15 Heed what thou dost. A man who walks like thee Through crimes, and through the danger of his crimes, Each hour may stumble o'er a sudden grave. And thou art old; thy hairs are hoary gray; As thou wouldst save thyself from death and hell, _20 Pity thy daughter; give her to some friend In marriage: so that she may tempt thee not To hatred, or worse thoughts, if worse there be.

CENCI: What! like her sister who has found a home To mock my hate from with prosperity? _25 Strange ruin shall destroy both her and thee And all that yet remain. My death may be Rapid, her destiny outspeeds it. Go, Bid her come hither, and before my mood Be changed, lest I should drag her by the hair. _30

LUCRETIA: She sent me to thee, husband. At thy presence She fell, as thou dost know, into a trance; And in that trance she heard a voice which said, 'Cenci must die! Let him confess himself! Even now the accusing Angel waits to hear _35 If God, to punish his enormous crimes, Harden his dying heart!'

CENCI: Why—such things are… No doubt divine revealings may be made. 'Tis plain I have been favoured from above, For when I cursed my sons they died.—Ay…so… _40 As to the right or wrong, that's talk…repentance… Repentance is an easy moment's work And more depends on God than me. Well…well… I must give up the greater point, which was To poison and corrupt her soul. [A PAUSE, LUCRETIA APPROACHES ANXIOUSLY, AND THEN SHRINKS BACK AS HE SPEAKS.] One, two; _45 Ay…Rocco and Cristofano my curse Strangled: and Giacomo, I think, will find Life a worse Hell than that beyond the grave: Beatrice shall, if there be skill in hate, Die in despair, blaspheming: to Bernardo, _50 He is so innocent, I will bequeath The memory of these deeds, and make his youth The sepulchre of hope, where evil thoughts Shall grow like weeds

on a neglected tomb. When all is done, out in the wide Campagna, _55 I will pile up my silver and my gold; My costly robes, paintings, and tapestries; My parchments and all records of my wealth, And make a bonfire in my joy, and leave Of my possessions nothing but my name; _60 Which shall be an inheritance to strip Its wearer bare as infamy. That done, My soul, which is a scourge, will I resign Into the hands of him who wielded it; Be it for its own punishment or theirs, _65 He will not ask it of me till the lash Be broken in its last and deepest wound; Until its hate be all inflicted. Yet, Lest death outspeed my purpose, let me make Short work and sure…

[GOING.]

LUCRETIA [STOPS HIM]: Oh, stay! It was a feint: _70 She had no vision, and she heard no voice. I said it but to awe thee.

CENCI: That is well. Vile palterer with the sacred truth of God, Be thy soul choked with that blaspheming lie! For Beatrice worse terrors are in store _75 To bend her to my will.

LUCRETIA: Oh! to what will? What cruel sufferings more than she has known Canst thou inflict?

CENCI: Andrea! Go call my daughter, And if she comes not tell her that I come. What sufferings? I will drag her, step by step, _80 Through infamies unheard of among men: She shall stand shelterless in the broad noon Of public scorn, for acts blazoned abroad, One among which shall be…What? Canst thou guess? She shall become (for what she most abhors _85 Shall have a fascination to entrap Her loathing will) to her own conscious self All she appears to others; and when dead, As she shall die unshrived and unforgiven, A rebel to her father and her God, _90 Her corpse shall be abandoned to the hounds; Her name shall be the terror of the earth; Her spirit shall approach the throne of God Plague-spotted with my curses. I will make Body and soul a monstrous lump of ruin. _95

[ENTER ANDREA.]

ANDREA: The Lady Beatrice…

CENCI: Speak, pale slave! What Said she?

ANDREA: My Lord, ’twas what she looked; she said: ‘Go tell my father that I see the gulf Of Hell between us two, which he may pass, I will not.’

[EXIT ANDREA.]

CENCI: Go thou quick, Lucretia, _100 Tell her to come; yet let her understand Her coming is consent: and say, moreover, That if she come not I will curse her. [EXIT LUCRETIA.] Ha! With what but with a father’s curse doth God Panic-strike armed victory, and make pale _105 Cities in their prosperity? The world’s Father Must grant a parent’s prayer against his child, Be he who asks even what men call me. Will not the deaths of her rebellious brothers Awe her before I speak? For I on them _110 Did imprecate quick ruin, and it came. [ENTER LUCRETIA.] Well; what? Speak, wretch!

LUCRETIA: She said, ‘I cannot come; Go tell my father that I see a torrent Of his own blood raging between us.’

CENCI [KNEELING]: God, Hear me! If this most specious mass of flesh, _115 Which Thou hast made my daughter; this my blood, This particle of my divided being; Or rather, this my bane and my disease, Whose sight infects and poisons me; this devil Which sprung from me as from a hell, was meant _120 To aught good use; if her bright loveliness Was kindled to illumine this dark world; If nursed by Thy selectest dew of love Such virtues blossom in her as should make The peace of life, I pray Thee for my sake, _125 As Thou the common God and Father art Of her, and me, and all; reverse that doom! Earth, in the name of God, let her food be Poison, until she be encrusted round With leprous stains! Heaven, rain upon her head _130 The blistering drops of the Maremma’s dew, Till she be speckled like a toad; parch up Those love-enkindled lips, warp those fine limbs To loathed lameness! All-beholding sun, Strike in thine envy those life-darting eyes _135 With thine own

blinding beams!

LUCRETIA: Peace! Peace! For thine own sake unsay those dreadful words. When high God grants He punishes such prayers.

CENCI [LEAPING UP, AND THROWING HIS RIGHT HAND TOWARDS HEAVEN]: He does his will, I mine! This in addition, That if she have a child…

LUCRETIA: Horrible thought! _140

CENCI: That if she ever have a child; and thou, Quick Nature! I adjure thee by thy God, That thou be fruitful in her, and increase And multiply, fulfilling his command, And my deep imprecation! May it be _145 A hideous likeness of herself, that as From a distorting mirror, she may see Her image mixed with what she most abhors, Smiling upon her from her nursing breast. And that the child may from its infancy _150 Grow, day by day, more wicked and deformed, Turning her mother's love to misery: And that both she and it may live until It shall repay her care and pain with hate, Or what may else be more unnatural. _155 So he may hunt her through the clamorous scoffs Of the loud world to a dishonoured grave. Shall I revoke this curse? Go, bid her come, Before my words are chronicled in Heaven. [EXIT LUCRETIA.] I do not feel as if I were a man, _160 But like a fiend appointed to chastise The offences of some unremembered world. My blood is running up and down my veins; A fearful pleasure makes it prick and tingle: I feel a giddy sickness of strange awe; _165 My heart is beating with an expectation Of horrid joy. [ENTER LUCRETIA.] What? Speak!

LUCRETIA: She bids thee curse; And if thy curses, as they cannot do, Could kill her soul…

CENCI: She would not come. 'Tis well, I can do both; first take what I demand, _170 And then extort concession. To thy chamber! Fly ere I spurn thee; and beware this night That thou cross not my footsteps. It were safer To come between the tiger and his prey. [EXIT LUCRETIA.] It must be late; mine eyes grow weary dim _175

With unaccustomed heaviness of sleep. Conscience! Oh, thou most insolent of lies! They say that sleep, that healing dew of Heaven, Steeps not in balm the foldings of the brain Which thinks thee an impostor. I will go _180 First to belie thee with an hour of rest, Which will be deep and calm, I feel: and then… O, multitudinous Hell, the fiends will shake Thine arches with the laughter of their joy! There shall be lamentation heard in Heaven _185 As o'er an angel fallen; and upon Earth All good shall droop and sicken, and ill things Shall with a spirit of unnatural life, Stir and be quickened…even as I am now.

[EXIT.] SCENE 4.2: BEFORE THE CASTLE OF PETRELLA. ENTER BEATRICE AND LUCRETIA ABOVE ON THE RAMPARTS.

BEATRICE: They come not yet.

LUCRETIA: 'Tis scarce midnight.

BEATRICE: How slow Behind the course of thought, even sick with speed, Lags leaden-footed time!

LUCRETIA: The minutes pass… If he should wake before the deed is done?

BEATRICE: O, mother! He must never wake again. _5 What thou hast said persuades me that our act Will but dislodge a spirit of deep hell Out of a human form.

LUCRETIA: 'Tis true he spoke Of death and judgement with strange confidence For one so wicked; as a man believing _10 In God, yet recking not of good or ill. And yet to die without confession!…

BEATRICE: Oh! Believe that Heaven is merciful and just, And will not add our dread necessity To the amount of his offences.

[ENTER OLIMPIO AND MARZIO BELOW.]

LUCRETIA: See, _15 They come.

BEATRICE: All mortal things must hasten thus To their dark end. Let us go down.

[EXEUNT LUCRETIA AND BEATRICE FROM ABOVE.]

OLIMPIO: How feel you to this work?

MARZIO: As one who thinks A thousand crowns excellent market price For an old murderer’s life. Your cheeks are pale. _20

OLIMPIO: It is the white reflection of your own, Which you call pale.

MARZIO: Is that their natural hue?

OLIMPIO: Or ’tis my hate and the deferred desire To wreak it, which extinguishes their blood.

MARZIO: You are inclined then to this business?

OLIMPIO: Ay, _25 If one should bribe me with a thousand crowns To kill a serpent which had stung my child, I could not be more willing. [ENTER BEATRICE AND LUCRETIA BELOW.] Noble ladies!

BEATRICE: Are ye resolved?

OLIMPIO: Is he asleep?

MARZIO: Is all Quiet?

LUCRETIA: I mixed an opiate with his drink: _30 He sleeps so soundly…

BEATRICE: That his death will be But as a change of sin-chastising dreams, A dark continuance of the Hell within him, Which God extinguish! But ye are resolved? Ye know it is a high and holy deed? _35

OLIMPIO: We are resolved.

MARZIO: As to the how this act Be warranted, it rests with you.

BEATRICE: Well, follow!

OLIMPIO: Hush! Hark! What noise is that?

MARZIO: Ha! some one comes!

BEATRICE: Ye conscience-stricken cravens, rock to rest Your baby hearts. It is the

iron gate, _40 Which ye left open, swinging to the wind, That enters whistling as in scorn. Come, follow! And be your steps like mine, light, quick and bold.

[EXEUNT.] SCENE 4.3: AN APARTMENT IN THE CASTLE. ENTER BEATRICE AND LUCRETIA.

LUCRETIA: They are about it now.

BEATRICE: Nay, it is done.

LUCRETIA: I have not heard him groan.

BEATRICE: He will not groan.

LUCRETIA: What sound is that?

BEATRICE: List! 'tis the tread of feet About his bed.

LUCRETIA: My God! If he be now a cold, stiff corpse…

BEATRICE: O, fear not _5 What may be done, but what is left undone: The act seals all. [ENTER OLIMPIO AND MARZIO.] Is it accomplished?

MARZIO: What?

OLIMPIO: Did you not call?

BEATRICE: When?

OLIMPIO: Now.

BEATRICE: I ask if all is over?

OLIMPIO: We dare not kill an old and sleeping man; His thin gray hair, his stern and reverend brow, _10 His veined hands crossed on his heaving breast, And the calm innocent sleep in which he lay, Quelled me. Indeed, indeed, I cannot do it.

NOTE: _10 reverend]reverent all editions.

MARZIO: But I was bolder; for I chid Olimpio, And bade him bear his wrongs to his own grave _15 And leave me the reward. And now my knife Touched the loose wrinkled throat, when the old man Stirred in his sleep, and said, 'God! hear, O, hear,

A father's curse! What, art Thou not our Father?' And then he laughed. I knew it was the ghost _20 Of my dead father speaking through his lips, And could not kill him.

BEATRICE: Miserable slaves! Where, if ye dare not kill a sleeping man, Found ye the boldness to return to me With such a deed undone? Base palterers! _25 Cowards and traitors! Why, the very conscience Which ye would sell for gold and for revenge Is an equivocation: it sleeps over A thousand daily acts disgracing men; And when a deed where mercy insults Heaven… _30 Why do I talk? [SNATCHING A DAGGER FROM ONE OF THEM, AND RAISING IT.] Hadst thou a tongue to say, 'She murdered her own father!'—I must do it! But never dream ye shall outlive him long!

OLIMPIO: Stop, for God's sake!

MARZIO: I will go back and kill him.

OLIMPIO: Give me the weapon, we must do thy will. _35

BEATRICE: Take it! Depart! Return! [EXEUNT OLIMPIO AND MARZIO.] How pale thou art! We do but that which 'twere a deadly crime To leave undone.

LUCRETIA: Would it were done!

BEATRICE: Even whilst That doubt is passing through your mind, the world Is conscious of a change. Darkness and Hell _40 Have swallowed up the vapour they sent forth To blacken the sweet light of life. My breath Comes, methinks, lighter, and the jellied blood Runs freely through my veins. Hark! [ENTER OLIMPIO AND MARZIO.] He is…

OLIMPIO: Dead!

MARZIO: We strangled him that there might be no blood; _45 And then we threw his heavy corpse i' the garden Under the balcony; 'twill seem it fell.

BEATRICE [GIVING THEM A BAG OF COIN]: Here, take this gold, and hasten

to your homes. And, Marzio, because thou wast only awed By that which made me tremble, wear thou this! _50 [CLOTHES HIM IN A RICH MANTLE.] It was the mantle which my grandfather Wore in his high prosperity, and men Envied his state: so may they envy thine. Thou wert a weapon in the hand of God To a just use. Live long and thrive! And, mark, _55 If thou hast crimes, repent: this deed is none.

[A HORN IS SOUNDED.]

LUCRETIA: Hark, 'tis the castle horn: my God! it sounds Like the last trump.

BEATRICE: Some tedious guest is coming.

LUCRETIA: The drawbridge is let down; there is a tramp Of horses in the court; fly, hide yourselves! _60

[EXEUNT OLIMPIO AND MARZIO.]

BEATRICE: Let us retire to counterfeit deep rest; I scarcely need to counterfeit it now: The spirit which doth reign within these limbs Seems strangely undisturbed. I could even sleep Fearless and calm: all ill is surely past. _65

[EXEUNT.] SCENE 4.4: ANOTHER APARTMENT IN THE CASTLE. ENTER ON ONE SIDE THE LEGATE SAVELLA, INTRODUCED BY A SERVANT, AND ON THE OTHER LUCRETIA AND BERNARDO.

SAVELLA: Lady, my duty to his Holiness Be my excuse that thus unseasonably I break upon your rest. I must speak with Count Cenci; doth he sleep?

LUCRETIA [IN A HURRIED AND CONFUSED MANNER]: I think he sleeps; Yet, wake him not, I pray, spare me awhile, _5 He is a wicked and a wrathful man; Should he be roused out of his sleep to-night, Which is, I know, a hell of angry dreams, It were not well; indeed it were not well. Wait till day break… [ASIDE.] Oh, I am deadly sick! _10

NOTE: _6 a wrathful edition 1821; wrathful editions 1819, 1839.

SAVELLA: I grieve thus to distress you, but the Count Must answer charges of the

gravest import, And suddenly; such my commission is.

LUCRETIA [WITH INCREASED AGITATION]: I dare not rouse him: I know none who dare… 'Twere perilous;…you might as safely waken _15 A serpent; or a corpse in which some fiend Were laid to sleep.

SAVELLA: Lady, my moments here Are counted. I must rouse him from his sleep, Since none else dare.

LUCRETIA [ASIDE]: O, terror! O, despair! [TO BERNARDO.] Bernardo, conduct you the Lord Legate to _20 Your father's chamber.

[EXEUNT SAVELLA AND BERNARDO.] [ENTER BEATRICE.]

BEATRICE: 'Tis a messenger Come to arrest the culprit who now stands Before the throne of unappealable God. Both Earth and Heaven, consenting arbiters, Acquit our deed.

LUCRETIA: Oh, agony of fear! _25 Would that he yet might live! Even now I heard The Legate's followers whisper as they passed They had a warrant for his instant death. All was prepared by unforbidden means Which we must pay so dearly, having done. _30 Even now they search the tower, and find the body; Now they suspect the truth; now they consult Before they come to tax us with the fact; O, horrible, 'tis all discovered!

BEATRICE: Mother, What is done wisely, is done well. Be bold _35 As thou art just. 'Tis like a truant child To fear that others know what thou hast done, Even from thine own strong consciousness, and thus Write on unsteady eyes and altered cheeks All thou wouldst hide. Be faithful to thyself, _40 And fear no other witness but thy fear. For if, as cannot be, some circumstance Should rise in accusation, we can blind Suspicion with such cheap astonishment, Or overbear it with such guiltless pride, _45 As murderers cannot feign. The deed is done, And what may follow now regards not me. I am as universal as the light; Free as the earth-surrounding air; as firm As the world's centre. Consequence, to me, _50 Is as the wind which strikes the

solid rock, But shakes it not.

[A CRY WITHIN AND TUMULT.]

VOICES: Murder! Murder! Murder!

[ENTER BERNARDO AND SAVELLA.]

SAVELLA [TO HIS FOLLOWERS]: Go search the castle round; sound the alarm; Look to the gates, that none escape!

BEATRICE: What now?

BERNARDO: I know not what to say…my father's dead. _55

BEATRICE: How; dead! he only sleeps; you mistake, brother. His sleep is very calm, very like death; 'Tis wonderful how well a tyrant sleeps. He is not dead?

BERNARDO: Dead; murdered.

LUCRETIA [WITH EXTREME AGITATION]: Oh no, no! He is not murdered though he may be dead; _60 I have alone the keys of those apartments.

SAVELLA: Ha! Is it so?

BEATRICE: My Lord, I pray excuse us; We will retire; my mother is not well: She seems quite overcome with this strange horror.

[EXEUNT LUCRETIA AND BEATRICE.]

SAVELLA: Can you suspect who may have murdered him? _65

BERNARDO: I know not what to think.

SAVELLA: Can you name any Who had an interest in his death?

BERNARDO: Alas! I can name none who had not, and those most Who most lament that such a deed is done; My mother, and my sister, and myself. _70

SAVELLA: 'Tis strange! There were clear marks of violence. I found the old man's body in the moonlight Hanging beneath the window of his chamber, Among the branches of a pine: he could not Have fallen there, for all his limbs lay heaped _75

And effortless; ’tis true there was no blood… Favour me, Sir; it much imports your house That all should be made clear; to tell the ladies That I request their presence.

[EXIT BERNARDO.] [ENTER GUARDS, BRINGING IN MARZIO.]

GUARD: We have one.

OFFICER: My Lord, we found this ruffian and another _80 Lurking among the rocks; there is no doubt But that they are the murderers of Count Cenci: Each had a bag of coin; this fellow wore A gold-inwoven robe, which, shining bright Under the dark rocks to the glimmering moon _85 Betrayed them to our notice: the other fell Desperately fighting.

SAVELLA: What does he confess?

OFFICER: He keeps firm silence; but these lines found on him May speak.

SAVELLA: Their language is at least sincere. [READS.] ‘To the Lady Beatrice. _90 That the atonement of what my nature sickens to conjecture may soon arrive, I send thee, at thy brother’s desire, those who will speak and do more than I dare write… ‘Thy devoted servant, Orsino.’ [ENTER LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, AND BERNARDO.] Knowest thou this writing, Lady?

BEATRICE: No.

SAVELLA: Nor thou? _95

LUCRETIA [HER CONDUCT THROUGHOUT THE SCENE IS MARKED BY EXTREME AGITATION]: Where was it found? What is it? It should be Orsino’s hand! It speaks of that strange horror Which never yet found utterance, but which made Between that hapless child and her dead father A gulf of obscure hatred.

SAVELLA: Is it so? _100 Is it true, Lady, that thy father did Such outrages as to awaken in thee Unfilial hate?

BEATRICE: Not hate, ’twas more than hate: This is most true, yet wherefore question me?

SAVELLA: There is a deed demanding question done; _105 Thou hast a secret which will answer not.

BEATRICE: What sayest? My Lord, your words are bold and rash.

SAVELLA: I do arrest all present in the name Of the Pope’s Holiness. You must to Rome.

LUCRETIA: O, not to Rome! Indeed we are not guilty. _110

BEATRICE: Guilty! Who dares talk of guilt? My Lord, I am more innocent of parricide Than is a child born fatherless…Dear mother, Your gentleness and patience are no shield For this keen-judging world, this two-edged lie, _115 Which seems, but is not. What! will human laws, Rather will ye who are their ministers, Bar all access to retribution first, And then, when Heaven doth interpose to do What ye neglect, arming familiar things _120 To the redress of an unwonted crime, Make ye the victims who demanded it Culprits? ’Tis ye are culprits! That poor wretch Who stands so pale, and trembling, and amazed, If it be true he murdered Cenci, was _125 A sword in the right hand of justest God. Wherefore should I have wielded it? Unless The crimes which mortal tongue dare never name God therefore scruples to avenge.

SAVELLA: You own That you desired his death?

BEATRICE: It would have been _130 A crime no less than his, if for one moment That fierce desire had faded in my heart. ’Tis true I did believe, and hope, and pray, Ay, I even knew…for God is wise and just, That some strange sudden death hung over him. _135 ’Tis true that this did happen, and most true There was no other rest for me on earth, No other hope in Heaven…now what of this?

SAVELLA: Strange thoughts beget strange deeds; and here are both: I judge thee not.

BEATRICE: And yet, if you arrest me, _140 You are the judge and executioner Of that which is the life of life: the breath Of accusation kills an innocent name, And

leaves for lame acquittal the poor life Which is a mask without it. 'Tis most false _145 That I am guilty of foul parricide; Although I must rejoice, for justest cause, That other hands have sent my father's soul To ask the mercy he denied to me. Now leave us free; stain not a noble house _150 With vague surmises of rejected crime; Add to our sufferings and your own neglect No heavier sum: let them have been enough: Leave us the wreck we have.

SAVELLA: I dare not, Lady. I pray that you prepare yourselves for Rome: _155 There the Pope's further pleasure will be known.

LUCRETIA: O, not to Rome! O, take us not to Rome!

BEATRICE: Why not to Rome, dear mother? There as here Our innocence is as an armed heel To trample accusation. God is there _160 As here, and with His shadow ever clothes The innocent, the injured and the weak; And such are we. Cheer up, dear Lady, lean On me; collect your wandering thoughts. My Lord, As soon as you have taken some refreshment, _165 And had all such examinations made Upon the spot, as may be necessary To the full understanding of this matter, We shall be ready. Mother; will you come?

LUCRETIA: Ha! they will bind us to the rack, and wrest _170 Self-accusation from our agony! Will Giacomo be there? Orsino? Marzio? All present; all confronted; all demanding Each from the other's countenance the thing Which is in every heart! O, misery! _175

[SHE FAINTS, AND IS BORNE OUT.]

SAVELLA: She faints: an ill appearance this.

BEATRICE: My Lord, She knows not yet the uses of the world. She fears that power is as a beast which grasps And loosens not: a snake whose look transmutes All things to guilt which is its nutriment. _180 She cannot know how well the supine slaves Of blind authority read the truth of things When written on a brow of guilelessness: She sees not yet triumphant Innocence Stand at the judgement-seat of

mortal man, _185 A judge and an accuser of the wrong Which drags it there. Prepare yourself, my Lord; Our suite will join yours in the court below.

[EXEUNT.] END OF ACT 4.

ACT 5.

SCENE 5.1: AN APARTMENT IN ORSINO'S PALACE. ENTER ORSINO AND GIACOMO.

GIACOMO: Do evil deeds thus quickly come to end? O, that the vain remorse which must chastise Crimes done, had but as loud a voice to warn As its keen sting is mortal to avenge! O, that the hour when present had cast off _5 The mantle of its mystery, and shown The ghastly form with which it now returns When its scared game is roused, cheering the hounds Of conscience to their prey! Alas! Alas! It was a wicked thought, a piteous deed, _10 To kill an old and hoary-headed father.

ORSINO: It has turned out unluckily, in truth.

GIACOMO: To violate the sacred doors of sleep; To cheat kind Nature of the placid death Which she prepares for overwearied age; _15 To drag from Heaven an unrepentant soul Which might have quenched in reconciling prayers A life of burning crimes…

ORSINO: You cannot say I urged you to the deed.

GIACOMO: O, had I never Found in thy smooth and ready countenance _20 The mirror of my darkest thoughts; hadst thou Never with hints and questions made me look Upon the monster of my thought, until It grew familiar to desire…

ORSINO: 'Tis thus Men cast the blame of their unprosperous acts _25 Upon the abettors of their own resolve; Or anything but their weak, guilty selves. And yet, confess the truth, it is the peril In which you stand that gives you this pale sickness Of penitence; confess 'tis fear disguised _30 From its own shame that takes the mantle now Of thin remorse. What if we yet were safe?

GIACOMO: How can that be? Already Beatrice, Lucretia and the murderer are in prison. I doubt not officers are, whilst we speak, _35 Sent to arrest us.

ORSINO: I have all prepared For instant flight. We can escape even now, So we take fleet occasion by the hair.

GIACOMO: Rather expire in tortures, as I may. What! will you cast by self-accusing flight _40 Assured conviction upon Beatrice? She, who alone in this unnatural work, Stands like God's angel ministered upon By fiends; avenging such a nameless wrong As turns black parricide to piety; _45 Whilst we for basest ends…I fear, Orsino, While I consider all your words and looks, Comparing them with your proposal now, That you must be a villain. For what end Could you engage in such a perilous crime, _50 Training me on with hints, and signs, and smiles, Even to this gulf? Thou art no liar? No, Thou art a lie! Traitor and murderer! Coward and slave! But no, defend thyself; [DRAWING.] Let the sword speak what the indignant tongue _55 Disdains to brand thee with.

ORSINO: Put up your weapon. Is it the desperation of your fear Makes you thus rash and sudden with a friend, Now ruined for your sake? If honest anger Have moved you, know, that what I just proposed _60 Was but to try you. As for me, I think, Thankless affection led me to this point, From which, if my firm temper could repent, I cannot now recede. Even whilst we speak The ministers of justice wait below: _65 They grant me these brief moments. Now if you Have any word of melancholy comfort To speak to your pale wife, 'twere best to pass Out at the postern, and avoid them so.

NOTE: _58 a friend edition 1821; your friend edition 1839.

GIACOMO: O, generous friend! How canst thou pardon me? _70 Would that my life could purchase thine!

ORSINO: That wish Now comes a day too late. Haste; fare thee well! Hear'st thou not steps along the corridor? [EXIT GIACOMO.] I'm sorry for it; but the guards are

waiting At his own gate, and such was my contrivance _75 That I might rid me both of him and them. I thought to act a solemn comedy Upon the painted scene of this new world, And to attain my own peculiar ends By some such plot of mingled good and ill _80 As others weave; but there arose a Power Which grasped and snapped the threads of my device And turned it to a net of ruin…Ha! [A SHOUT IS HEARD.] Is that my name I hear proclaimed abroad? But I will pass, wrapped in a vile disguise; _85 Rags on my back, and a false innocence Upon my face, through the misdeeming crowd Which judges by what seems. 'Tis easy then For a new name and for a country new, And a new life, fashioned on old desires, _90 To change the honours of abandoned Rome. And these must be the masks of that within, Which must remain unaltered…Oh, I fear That what is past will never let me rest! Why, when none else is conscious, but myself, _95 Of my misdeeds, should my own heart's contempt Trouble me? Have I not the power to fly My own reproaches? Shall I be the slave Of…what? A word? which those of this false world Employ against each other, not themselves; _100 As men wear daggers not for self-offence. But if I am mistaken, where shall I Find the disguise to hide me from myself, As now I skulk from every other eye?

FIRST JUDGE: Accused, do you persist in your denial? I ask you, are you innocent, or guilty? I demand who were the participators In your offence? Speak truth, and the whole truth.

MARZIO: My God! I did not kill him; I know nothing; _5 Olimpio sold the robe to me from which You would infer my guilt.

SECOND JUDGE: Away with him!

FIRST JUDGE: Dare you, with lips yet white from the rack's kiss Speak false? Is it so soft a questioner, That you would bandy lover's talk with it _10 Till it wind out your life and soul? Away!

MARZIO: Spare me! O, spare! I will confess.

FIRST JUDGE: Then speak.

MARZIO: I strangled him in his sleep.

FIRST JUDGE: Who urged you to it?

MARZIO: His own son Giacomo, and the young prelate Orsino sent me to Petrella; there _15 The ladies Beatrice and Lucretia Tempted me with a thousand crowns, and I And my companion forthwith murdered him. Now let me die.

FIRST JUDGE: This sounds as bad as truth. Guards, there, Lead forth the prisoner! [ENTER LUCRETIA, BEATRICE AND GIACOMO, GUARDED.] Look upon this man; _20 When did you see him last?

BEATRICE: We never saw him.

MARZIO: You know me too well, Lady Beatrice.

BEATRICE: I know thee! How? where? when?

MARZIO: You know ’twas I Whom you did urge with menaces and bribes To kill your father. When the thing was done _25 You clothed me in a robe of woven gold And bade me thrive: how I have thriven, you see. You, my Lord Giacomo, Lady Lucretia, You know that what I speak is true. [BEATRICE ADVANCES TOWARDS HIM; HE COVERS HIS FACE, AND SHRINKS BACK.] Oh, dart The terrible resentment of those eyes _30 On the dead earth! Turn them away from me! They wound: ’twas torture forced the truth. My Lords, Having said this let me be led to death.

BEATRICE: Poor wretch, I pity thee: yet stay awhile.

CAMILLO: Guards, lead him not away.

BEATRICE: Cardinal Camillo, _35 You have a good repute for gentleness And wisdom: can it be that you sit here To countenance a wicked farce like this? When some obscure and trembling slave is dragged From sufferings which might shake the sternest heart _40 And bade to answer, not as he believes, But as those may suspect

or do desire Whose questions thence suggest their own reply: And that in peril of such hideous torments As merciful God spares even the damned. Speak now _45 The thing you surely know, which is that you, If your fine frame were stretched upon that wheel, And you were told: ‘Confess that you did poison Your little nephew; that fair blue-eyed child Who was the lodestar of your life:’—and though _50 All see, since his most swift and piteous death, That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time, And all the things hoped for or done therein Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief, Yet you would say, ‘I confess anything:’ _55 And beg from your tormentors, like that slave, The refuge of dishonourable death. I pray thee, Cardinal, that thou assert My innocence.

CAMILLO [MUCH MOVED]: What shall we think, my Lords? Shame on these tears! I thought the heart was frozen _60 Which is their fountain. I would pledge my soul That she is guiltless.

JUDGE: Yet she must be tortured.

CAMILLO: I would as soon have tortured mine own nephew (If he now lived he would be just her age; His hair, too, was her colour, and his eyes _65 Like hers in shape, but blue and not so deep) As that most perfect image of God’s love That ever came sorrowing upon the earth. She is as pure as speechless infancy!

JUDGE: Well, be her purity on your head, my Lord, _70 If you forbid the rack. His Holiness Enjoined us to pursue this monstrous crime By the severest forms of law; nay even To stretch a point against the criminals. The prisoners stand accused of parricide _75 Upon such evidence as justifies Torture.

BEATRICE: What evidence? This man’s?

JUDGE: Even so.

BEATRICE [TO MARZIO]: Come near. And who art thou thus chosen forth Out of the multitude of living men To kill the innocent?

MARZIO: I am Marzio, _80 Thy father’s vassal.

BEATRICE: Fix thine eyes on mine; Answer to what I ask. [TURNING TO THE JUDGES.] I prithee mark His countenance: unlike bold calumny Which sometimes dares not speak the thing it looks, He dares not look the thing he speaks, but bends _85 His gaze on the blind earth. [TO MARZIO.] What! wilt thou say That I did murder my own father?

MARZIO: Oh! Spare me! My brain swims round…I cannot speak… It was that horrid torture forced the truth. Take me away! Let her not look on me! _90 I am a guilty miserable wretch; I have said all I know; now, let me die!

BEATRICE: My Lords, if by my nature I had been So stern, as to have planned the crime alleged, Which your suspicions dictate to this slave, _95 And the rack makes him utter, do you think I should have left this two-edged instrument Of my misdeed; this man, this bloody knife With my own name engraven on the heft, Lying unsheathed amid a world of foes, _100 For my own death? That with such horrible need For deepest silence, I should have neglected So trivial a precaution, as the making His tomb the keeper of a secret written On a thief's memory? What is his poor life? _105 What are a thousand lives? A parricide Had trampled them like dust; and, see, he lives! [TURNING TO MARZIO.] And thou…

MARZIO: Oh, spare me! Speak to me no more! That stern yet piteous look, those solemn tones, Wound worse than torture. [TO THE JUDGES.] I have told it all; _110 For pity's sake lead me away to death.

CAMILLO: Guards, lead him nearer the Lady Beatrice; He shrinks from her regard like autumn's leaf From the keen breath of the serenest north.

BEATRICE: O thou who tremblest on the giddy verge _115 Of life and death, pause ere thou answerest me; So mayst thou answer God with less dismay: What evil have we done thee? I, alas! Have lived but on this earth a few sad years, And so my lot was ordered, that a father _120 First turned the moments of awakening life To drops, each poisoning youth's sweet hope; and then Stabbed with one blow my everlasting

soul; And my untainted fame; and even that peace Which sleeps within the core of the heart's heart; _125 But the wound was not mortal; so my hate Became the only worship I could lift To our great father, who in pity and love, Armed thee, as thou dost say, to cut him off; And thus his wrong becomes my accusation; _130 And art thou the accuser? If thou hopest Mercy in heaven, show justice upon earth: Worse than a bloody hand is a hard heart. If thou hast done murders, made thy life's path Over the trampled laws of God and man, _135 Rush not before thy Judge, and say: 'My maker, I have done this and more; for there was one Who was most pure and innocent on earth; And because she endured what never any Guilty or innocent endured before: _140 Because her wrongs could not be told, not thought; Because thy hand at length did rescue her; I with my words killed her and all her kin.' Think, I adjure you, what it is to slay The reverence living in the minds of men _145 Towards our ancient house, and stainless fame! Think what it is to strangle infant pity, Cradled in the belief of guileless looks, Till it become a crime to suffer. Think What 'tis to blot with infamy and blood _150 All that which shows like innocence, and is, Hear me, great God! I swear, most innocent, So that the world lose all discrimination Between the sly, fierce, wild regard of guilt, And that which now compels thee to reply _155 To what I ask: Am I, or am I not A parricide?

MARZIO: Thou art not!

JUDGE: What is this?

MARZIO: I here declare those whom I did accuse Are innocent. 'Tis I alone am guilty.

JUDGE: Drag him away to torments; let them be _160 Subtle and long drawn out, to tear the folds Of the heart's inmost cell. Unbind him not Till he confess.

MARZIO: Torture me as ye will: A keener pang has wrung a higher truth From my last breath. She is most innocent! _165 Bloodhounds, not men, glut yourselves well with me; I will not give you that fine piece of nature To rend and ruin.

NOTE: _164 pang edition 1821; pain editions 1819, 1839.

[EXIT MARZIO, GUARDED.]

CAMILLO: What say ye now, my Lords?

JUDGE: Let tortures strain the truth till it be white As snow thrice sifted by the frozen wind. _170

CAMILLO: Yet stained with blood.

JUDGE [TO BEATRICE]: Know you this paper, Lady?

BEATRICE: Entrap me not with questions. Who stands here As my accuser? Ha! wilt thou be he, Who art my judge? Accuser, witness, judge, What, all in one? Here is Orsino's name; _175 Where is Orsino? Let his eye meet mine. What means this scrawl? Alas! ye know not what, And therefore on the chance that it may be Some evil, will ye kill us?

[ENTER AN OFFICER.]

OFFICER: Marzio's dead.

JUDGE: What did he say?

OFFICER: Nothing. As soon as we _180 Had bound him on the wheel, he smiled on us, As one who baffles a deep adversary; And holding his breath, died.

JUDGE: There remains nothing But to apply the question to those prisoners, Who yet remain stubborn.

CAMILLO: I overrule _185 Further proceedings, and in the behalf Of these most innocent and noble persons Will use my interest with the Holy Father.

JUDGE: Let the Pope's pleasure then be done. Meanwhile Conduct these culprits each to separate cells; _190 And be the engines ready; for this night If the Pope's resolution be as grave, Pious, and just as once, I'll wring the truth Out of those nerves and sinews, groan by groan.

[EXEUNT.] SCENE 5.3: THE CELL OF A PRISON. BEATRICE IS

DISCOVERED ASLEEP ON A COUCH. ENTER BERNARDO.

BERNARDO: How gently slumber rests upon her face, Like the last thoughts of some day sweetly spent Closing in night and dreams, and so prolonged. After such torments as she bore last night, How light and soft her breathing comes. Ay me! _5 Methinks that I shall never sleep again. But I must shake the heavenly dew of rest From this sweet folded flower, thus…wake, awake! What, sister, canst thou sleep?

BEATRICE [AWAKING]: I was just dreaming That we were all in Paradise. Thou knowest _10 This cell seems like a kind of Paradise After our father's presence.

BERNARDO: Dear, dear sister, Would that thy dream were not a dream! O God! How shall I tell?

BEATRICE: What wouldst thou tell, sweet brother?

BERNARDO: Look not so calm and happy, or even whilst _15 I stand considering what I have to say My heart will break.

BEATRICE: See now, thou mak'st me weep: How very friendless thou wouldst be, dear child, If I were dead. Say what thou hast to say.

BERNARDO: They have confessed; they could endure no more _20 The tortures…

BEATRICE: Ha! What was there to confess? They must have told some weak and wicked lie To flatter their tormentors. Have they said That they were guilty? O white innocence, That thou shouldst wear the mask of guilt to hide _25 Thine awful and serenest countenance From those who know thee not! [ENTER JUDGE WITH LUCRETIA AND GIACOMO, GUARDED.] Ignoble hearts! For some brief spasms of pain, which are at least As mortal as the limbs through which they pass, Are centuries of high splendour laid in dust? _30 And that eternal honour which should live Sunlike, above the reek of mortal fame, Changed to a mockery and a byword? What! Will you give up these bodies to be dragged At horses' heels, so that our hair should sweep _35 The footsteps of the vain and senseless crowd, Who, that they may make our calamity Their worship and their spectacle, will leave The churches

and the theatres as void As their own hearts? Shall the light multitude _40 Fling, at their choice, curses or faded pity, Sad funeral flowers to deck a living corpse, Upon us as we pass to pass away, And leave…what memory of our having been? Infamy, blood, terror, despair? O thou, _45 Who wert a mother to the parentless, Kill not thy child! Let not her wrongs kill thee! Brother, lie down with me upon the rack, And let us each be silent as a corpse; It soon will be as soft as any grave. _50 ’Tis but the falsehood it can wring from fear Makes the rack cruel.

GIACOMO: They will tear the truth Even from thee at last, those cruel pains: For pity’s sake say thou art guilty now.

LUCRETIA: Oh, speak the truth! Let us all quickly die; _55 And after death, God is our judge, not they; He will have mercy on us.

BERNARDO: If indeed It can be true, say so, dear sister mine; And then the Pope will surely pardon you, And all be well.

JUDGE: Confess, or I will warp _60 Your limbs with such keen tortures…

BEATRICE: Tortures! Turn The rack henceforth into a spinning-wheel! Torture your dog, that he may tell when last He lapped the blood his master shed…not me! My pangs are of the mind, and of the heart, _65 And of the soul; ay, of the inmost soul, Which weeps within tears as of burning gall To see, in this ill world where none are true, My kindred false to their deserted selves. And with considering all the wretched life _70 Which I have lived, and its now wretched end, And the small justice shown by Heaven and Earth To me or mine; and what a tyrant thou art, And what slaves these; and what a world we make, The oppressor and the oppressed…such pangs compel _75 My answer. What is it thou wouldst with me?

JUDGE: Art thou not guilty of thy father’s death?

BEATRICE: Or wilt thou rather tax high-judging God That He permitted such an act as that Which I have suffered, and which He beheld; _80 Made it unutterable, and took from it All refuge, all revenge, all consequence, But that which thou hast

called my father's death? Which is or is not what men call a crime, Which either I have done, or have not done; _85 Say what ye will. I shall deny no more. If ye desire it thus, thus let it be, And so an end of all. Now do your will; No other pains shall force another word.

JUDGE: She is convicted, but has not confessed. _90 Be it enough. Until their final sentence Let none have converse with them. You, young Lord, Linger not here!

BEATRICE: Oh, tear him not away!

JUDGE: Guards! do your duty.

BERNARDO [EMBRACING BEATRICE]: Oh! would ye divide Body from soul?

OFFICER: That is the headsman's business. _95

[EXEUNT ALL BUT LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, AND GIACOMO.]

GIACOMO: Have I confessed? Is it all over now? No hope! No refuge! O weak, wicked tongue Which hast destroyed me, would that thou hadst been Cut out and thrown to dogs first! To have killed My father first, and then betrayed my sister; _100 Ay, thee! the one thing innocent and pure In this black, guilty world, to that which I So well deserve! My wife! my little ones! Destitute, helpless, and I…Father! God! Canst Thou forgive even the unforgiving, _105 When their full hearts break thus, thus!…

[COVERS HIS FACE AND WEEPS.]

LUCRETIA: O my child! To what a dreadful end are we all come! Why did I yield? Why did I not sustain Those torments? Oh, that I were all dissolved Into these fast and unavailing tears, _110 Which flow and feel not!

BEATRICE: What 'twas weak to do, 'Tis weaker to lament, once being done; Take cheer! The God who knew my wrong, and made Our speedy act the angel of His wrath, Seems, and but seems, to have abandoned us. _115 Let us not think that we shall die for this. Brother, sit near me; give me your firm hand, You had a manly

heart. Bear up! Bear up! O dearest Lady, put your gentle head Upon my lap, and try to sleep awhile: _120 Your eyes look pale, hollow, and overworn, With heaviness of watching and slow grief. Come, I will sing you some low, sleepy tune, Not cheerful, nor yet sad; some dull old thing, Some outworn and unused monotony, _125 Such as our country gossips sing and spin, Till they almost forget they live: lie down! So, that will do. Have I forgot the words? Faith! They are sadder than I thought they were.

SONG: False friend, wilt thou smile or weep _130 When my life is laid asleep? Little cares for a smile or a tear, The clay-cold corpse upon the bier! Farewell! Heighho! What is this whispers low? _135 There is a snake in thy smile, my dear; And bitter poison within thy tear.

Sweet sleep, were death like to thee, Or if thou couldst mortal be, I would close these eyes of pain; _140 When to wake? Never again. O World! Farewell! Listen to the passing bell! It says, thou and I must part, With a light and a heavy heart. _145

[THE SCENE CLOSES.] SCENE 5.4: A HALL OF THE PRISON. ENTER CAMILLO AND BERNARDO.

CAMILLO: The Pope is stern; not to be moved or bent. He looked as calm and keen as is the engine Which tortures and which kills, exempt itself From aught that it inflicts; a marble form, A rite, a law, a custom: not a man. _5 He frowned, as if to frown had been the trick Of his machinery, on the advocates Presenting the defences, which he tore And threw behind, muttering with hoarse, harsh voice: ‘Which among ye defended their old father _10 Killed in his sleep?’ Then to another: ‘Thou Dost this in virtue of thy place; ’tis well.’ He turned to me then, looking deprecation, And said these three words, coldly: ‘They must die.’

BERNARDO: And yet you left him not?

CAMILLO: I urged him still; _15 Pleading, as I could guess, the devilish wrong Which prompted your unnatural parent’s death. And he replied: ‘Paolo Santa Croce

Murdered his mother yester evening, And he is fled. Parricide grows so rife _20 That soon, for some just cause no doubt, the young Will strangle us all, dozing in our chairs. Authority, and power, and hoary hair Are grown crimes capital. You are my nephew, You come to ask their pardon; stay a moment; _25 Here is their sentence; never see me more Till, to the letter, it be all fulfilled.'

BERNARDO: O God, not so! I did believe indeed That all you said was but sad preparation For happy news. Oh, there are words and looks _30 To bend the sternest purpose! Once I knew them, Now I forget them at my dearest need. What think you if I seek him out, and bathe His feet and robe with hot and bitter tears? Importune him with prayers, vexing his brain _35 With my perpetual cries, until in rage He strike me with his pastoral cross, and trample Upon my prostrate head, so that my blood May stain the senseless dust on which he treads, And remorse waken mercy? I will do it! _40 Oh, wait till I return!

[RUSHES OUT.]

CAMILLO: Alas, poor boy! A wreck-devoted seaman thus might pray To the deaf sea.

[ENTER LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, AND GIACOMO, GUARDED.]

BEATRICE: I hardly dare to fear That thou bring'st other news than a just pardon.

CAMILLO: May God in heaven be less inexorable _45 To the Pope's prayers than he has been to mine. Here is the sentence and the warrant.

BEATRICE [WILDLY]: O My God! Can it be possible I have To die so suddenly? So young to go Under the obscure, cold, rotting, wormy ground! _50 To be nailed down into a narrow place; To see no more sweet sunshine; hear no more Blithe voice of living thing; muse not again Upon familiar thoughts, sad, yet thus lost— How fearful! to be nothing! Or to be… _55 What? Oh, where am I? Let me not go mad! Sweet Heaven, forgive weak thoughts! If there should be No God, no Heaven, no Earth in the void world; The wide, gray, lampless, deep, unpeopled world! If all

things then should be…my father's spirit, _60 His eye, his voice, his touch surrounding me; The atmosphere and breath of my dead life! If sometimes, as a shape more like himself, Even the form which tortured me on earth, Masked in gray hairs and wrinkles, he should come _65 And wind me in his hellish arms, and fix His eyes on mine, and drag me down, down, down! For was he not alone omnipotent On Earth, and ever present? Even though dead, Does not his spirit live in all that breathe, _70 And work for me and mine still the same ruin, Scorn, pain, despair? Who ever yet returned To teach the laws of Death's untrodden realm? Unjust perhaps as those which drive us now, Oh, whither, whither?

LUCRETIA: Trust in God's sweet love, _75 The tender promises of Christ: ere night, Think, we shall be in Paradise.

BEATRICE: 'Tis past! Whatever comes, my heart shall sink no more. And yet, I know not why, your words strike chill: How tedious, false, and cold seem all things. I _80 Have met with much injustice in this world; No difference has been made by God or man, Or any power moulding my wretched lot, 'Twixt good or evil, as regarded me. I am cut off from the only world I know, _85 From light, and life, and love, in youth's sweet prime. You do well telling me to trust in God; I hope I do trust in him. In whom else Can any trust? And yet my heart is cold.

[DURING THE LATTER SPEECHES GIACOMO HAS RETIRED CONVERSING WITH CAMILLO, WHO NOW GOES OUT; GIACOMO ADVANCES.]

GIACOMO: Know you not, Mother…Sister, know you not? _90 Bernardo even now is gone to implore The Pope to grant our pardon.

LUCRETIA: Child, perhaps It will be granted. We may all then live To make these woes a tale for distant years: Oh, what a thought! It gushes to my heart _95 Like the warm blood.

BEATRICE: Yet both will soon be cold. Oh, trample out that thought! Worse than

despair, Worse than the bitterness of death, is hope: It is the only ill which can find place Upon the giddy, sharp, and narrow hour _100 Tottering beneath us. Plead with the swift frost That it should spare the eldest flower of spring: Plead with awakening earthquake, o'er whose couch Even now a city stands, strong, fair, and free; Now stench and blackness yawn, like death. Oh, plead _105 With famine, or wind-walking Pestilence, Blind lightning, or the deaf sea, not with man! Cruel, cold, formal man; righteous in words, In deeds a Cain. No, Mother, we must die: Since such is the reward of innocent lives; _110 Such the alleviation of worst wrongs. And whilst our murderers live, and hard, cold men, Smiling and slow, walk through a world of tears To death as to life's sleep; 'twere just the grave Were some strange joy for us. Come, obscure Death, _115 And wind me in thine all-embracing arms! Like a fond mother hide me in thy bosom, And rock me to the sleep from which none wake. Live ye, who live, subject to one another As we were once, who now…

NOTE: _105 yawn edition 1821; yawns editions 1819, 1839.

[BERNARDO RUSHES IN.]

BERNARDO: Oh, horrible! _120 That tears, that looks, that hope poured forth in prayer, Even till the heart is vacant and despairs, Should all be vain! The ministers of death Are waiting round the doors. I thought I saw Blood on the face of one…What if 'twere fancy? _125 Soon the heart's blood of all I love on earth Will sprinkle him, and he will wipe it off As if 'twere only rain. O life! O world! Cover me! let me be no more! To see That perfect mirror of pure innocence _130 Wherein I gazed, and grew happy and good, Shivered to dust! To see thee, Beatrice, Who made all lovely thou didst look upon… Thee, light of life … dead, dark! while I say, sister, To hear I have no sister; and thou, Mother, _135 Whose love was as a bond to all our loves… Dead! The sweet bond broken! [ENTER CAMILLO AND GUARDS.] They come! Let me Kiss those warm lips before their crimson leaves Are blighted…white…cold. Say farewell, before Death chokes that gentle voice!

Oh, let me hear _140 You speak!

NOTE: _136 was as a Rossetti cj.; was a editions 1819, 1821, 1839.

BEATRICE: Farewell, my tender brother. Think Of our sad fate with gentleness, as now: And let mild, pitying thoughts lighten for thee Thy sorrow's load. Err not in harsh despair, But tears and patience. One thing more, my child: _145 For thine own sake be constant to the love Thou bearest us; and to the faith that I, Though wrapped in a strange cloud of crime and shame, Lived ever holy and unstained. And though Ill tongues shall wound me, and our common name _150 Be as a mark stamped on thine innocent brow For men to point at as they pass, do thou Forbear, and never think a thought unkind Of those, who perhaps love thee in their graves. So mayest thou die as I do; fear and pain _155 Being subdued. Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!

BERNARDO: I cannot say, farewell!

CAMILLO: Oh, Lady Beatrice!

BEATRICE: Give yourself no unnecessary pain, My dear Lord Cardinal. Here, Mother, tie My girdle for me, and bind up this hair _160 In any simple knot; ay, that does well. And yours I see is coming down. How often Have we done this for one another; now We shall not do it any more. My Lord, We are quite ready. Well, 'tis very well. _165

THE END.

NOTE ON THE CENCI, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

The sort of mistake that Shelley made as to the extent of his own genius and powers, which led him deviously at first, but lastly into the direct track that enabled him fully to develop them, is a curious instance of his modesty of feeling, and of the methods which the human mind uses at once to deceive itself, and yet, in its very delusion, to make its way out of error into the path which Nature has marked out as its right one. He often incited me to attempt the writing a tragedy: he conceived that I possessed some dramatic talent, and he was always most earnest and energetic in his

exhortations that I should cultivate any talent I possessed, to the utmost. I entertained a truer estimate of my powers; and above all (though at that time not exactly aware of the fact) I was far too young to have any chance of succeeding, even moderately, in a species of composition that requires a greater scope of experience in, and sympathy with, human passion than could then have fallen to my lot,—or than any perhaps, except Shelley, ever possessed, even at the age of twenty-six, at which he wrote The Cenci.

On the other hand, Shelley most erroneously conceived himself to be destitute of this talent. He believed that one of the first requisites was the capacity of forming and following-up a story or plot. He fancied himself to be defective in this portion of imagination: it was that which gave him least pleasure in the writings of others, though he laid great store by it as the proper framework to support the sublimest efforts of poetry. He asserted that he was too metaphysical and abstract, too fond of the theoretical and the ideal, to succeed as a tragedian. It perhaps is not strange that I shared this opinion with himself; for he had hitherto shown no inclination for, nor given any specimen of his powers in framing and supporting the interest of a story, either in prose or verse. Once or twice, when he attempted such, he had speedily thrown it aside, as being even disagreeable to him as an occupation.

The subject he had suggested for a tragedy was Charles I: and he had written to me: ‘Remember, remember Charles I. I have been already imagining how you would conduct some scenes. The second volume of “St. Leon” begins with this proud and true sentiment: “There is nothing which the human mind can conceive which it may not execute.” Shakespeare was only a human being.’ These words were written in 1818, while we were in Lombardy, when he little thought how soon a work of his own would prove a proud comment on the passage he quoted. When in Rome, in 1819, a friend put into our hands the old manuscript account of the story of the Cenci. We visited the Colonna and Doria palaces, where the portraits of Beatrice were to be found; and her beauty cast the reflection of its own grace over her

appalling story. Shelley's imagination became strongly excited, and he urged the subject to me as one fitted for a tragedy. More than ever I felt my incompetence; but I entreated him to write it instead; and he began, and proceeded swiftly, urged on by intense sympathy with the sufferings of the human beings whose passions, so long cold in the tomb, he revived, and gifted with poetic language. This tragedy is the only one of his works that he communicated to me during its progress. We talked over the arrangement of the scenes together. I speedily saw the great mistake we had made, and triumphed in the discovery of the new talent brought to light from that mine of wealth (never, alas, through his untimely death, worked to its depths)—his richly gifted mind.

We suffered a severe affliction in Rome by the loss of our eldest child, who was of such beauty and promise as to cause him deservedly to be the idol of our hearts. We left the capital of the world, anxious for a time to escape a spot associated too intimately with his presence and loss. (Such feelings haunted him when, in "The Cenci", he makes Beatrice speak to Cardinal Camillo of

'that fair blue-eyed child Who was the lodestar of your life:'—and say— All see, since his most swift and piteous death, That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time, And all the things hoped for or done therein Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief.')

Some friends of ours were residing in the neighbourhood of Leghorn, and we took a small house, Villa Valsovano, about half-way between the town and Monte Nero, where we remained during the summer. Our villa was situated in the midst of a podere; the peasants sang as they worked beneath our windows, during the heats of a very hot season, and in the evening the water-wheel creaked as the process of irrigation went on, and the fireflies flashed from among the myrtle hedges: Nature was bright, sunshiny, and cheerful, or diversified by storms of a majestic terror, such as we had never before witnessed.

At the top of the house there was a sort of terrace. There is often such in Italy, generally roofed: this one was very small, yet not only roofed but glazed. This Shelley made his study; it looked out on a wide prospect of fertile country, and commanded a view of the near sea. The storms that sometimes varied our day showed themselves most picturesquely as they were driven across the ocean; sometimes the dark lurid clouds dipped towards the waves, and became water-spouts that churned up the waters beneath, as they were chased onward and scattered by the tempest. At other times the dazzling sunlight and heat made it almost intolerable to every other; but Shelley basked in both, and his health and spirits revived under their influence. In this airy cell he wrote the principal part of “The Cenci”. He was making a study of Calderon at the time, reading his best tragedies with an accomplished lady living near us, to whom his letter from Leghorn was addressed during the following year. He admired Calderon, both for his poetry and his dramatic genius; but it shows his judgement and originality that, though greatly struck by his first acquaintance with the Spanish poet, none of his peculiarities crept into the composition of “The Cenci”; and there is no trace of his new studies, except in that passage to which he himself alludes as suggested by one in “El Purgatorio de San Patricio”.

Shelley wished “The Cenci” to be acted. He was not a playgoer, being of such fastidious taste that he was easily disgusted by the bad filling-up of the inferior parts. While preparing for our departure from England, however, he saw Miss O’Neil several times. She was then in the zenith of her glory; and Shelley was deeply moved by her impersonation of several parts, and by the graceful sweetness, the intense pathos, the sublime vehemence of passion she displayed. She was often in his thoughts as he wrote: and, when he had finished, he became anxious that his tragedy should be acted, and receive the advantage of having this accomplished actress to fill the part of the heroine. With this view he wrote the following letter to a friend in London:

‘The object of the present letter us to ask a favour of you. I have written a tragedy on a story well known in Italy, and, in my conception, eminently dramatic. I have taken some pains to make my play fit for representation, and those who have already seen it judge favourably. It is written without any of the peculiar feelings and opinions which characterize my other compositions; I have attended simply to the impartial development of such characters as it is probable the persons represented really were, together with the greatest degree of popular effect to be produced by such a development. I send you a translation of the Italian manuscript on which my play is founded; the chief circumstance of which I have touched very delicately; for my principal doubt as to whether it would succeed as an acting play hangs entirely on the question as to whether any such a thing as incest in this shape, however treated, would be admitted on the stage. I think, however, it will form no objection; considering, first, that the facts are matter of history, and, secondly, the peculiar delicacy with which I have treated it. (In speaking of his mode of treating this main incident, Shelley said that it might be remarked that, in the course of the play, he had never mentioned expressly Cenci’s worst crime. Every one knew what it must be, but it was never imaged in words—the nearest allusion to it being that portion of Cenci’s curse beginning—

“That, if she have a child,” etc.)

‘I am exceedingly interested in the question of whether this attempt of mine will succeed or not. I am strongly inclined to the affirmative at present; founding my hopes on this—that, as a composition, it is certainly not inferior to any of the modern plays that have been acted, with the exception of “Remorse”; that the interest of the plot is incredibly greater and more real; and that there is nothing beyond what the multitude are contented to believe that they can understand, either in imagery, opinion, or sentiment. I wish to preserve a complete incognito, and can trust to you that, whatever else you do, you will at least favour me on this point. Indeed, this is essential, deeply essential, to its success. After it had been acted, and

successfully (could I hope for such a thing), I would own it if I pleased, and use the celebrity it might acquire to my own purposes.

‘What I want you to do is to procure for me its presentation at Covent Garden. The principal character, Beatrice, is precisely fitted for Miss O’Neil, and it might even seem to have been written for her (God forbid that I should see her play it—it would tear my nerves to pieces); and in all respects it is fitted only for Covent Garden. The chief male character I confess I should be very unwilling that any one but Kean should play. That is impossible, and I must be contented with an inferior actor.’

The play was accordingly sent to Mr. Harris. He pronounced the subject to be so objectionable that he could not even submit the part to Miss O’Neil for perusal, but expressed his desire that the author would write a tragedy on some other subject, which he would gladly accept. Shelley printed a small edition at Leghorn, to ensure its correctness; as he was much annoyed by the many mistakes that crept into his text when distance prevented him from correcting the press.

Universal approbation soon stamped “The Cenci” as the best tragedy of modern times. Writing concerning it, Shelley said: ‘I have been cautious to avoid the introducing faults of youthful composition; diffuseness, a profusion of inapplicable imagery, vagueness, generality, and, as Hamlet says, “words, words”.’ There is nothing that is not purely dramatic throughout; and the character of Beatrice, proceeding, from vehement struggle, to horror, to deadly resolution, and lastly to the elevated dignity of calm suffering, joined to passionate tenderness and pathos, is touched with hues so vivid and so beautiful that the poet seems to have read intimately the secrets of the noble heart imaged in the lovely countenance of the unfortunate girl. The Fifth Act is a masterpiece. It is the finest thing he ever wrote, and may claim proud comparison not only with any contemporary, but preceding, poet. The varying feelings of Beatrice are expressed with passionate, heart-reaching eloquence. Every character has a voice that echoes truth in its tones. It is curious, to

one acquainted with the written story, to mark the success with which the poet has inwoven the real incidents of the tragedy into his scenes, and yet, through the power of poetry, has obliterated all that would otherwise have shown too harsh or too hideous in the picture. His success was a double triumph; and often after he was earnestly entreated to write again in a style that commanded popular favour, while it was not less instinct with truth and genius. But the bent of his mind went the other way; and, even when employed on subjects whose interest depended on character and incident, he would start off in another direction, and leave the delineations of human passion, which he could depict in so able a manner, for fantastic creations of his fancy, or the expression of those opinions and sentiments, with regard to human nature and its destiny, a desire to diffuse which was the master passion of his soul.

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THE MASK OF ANARCHY.

WRITTEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE MASSACRE AT MANCHESTER.

[Composed at the Villa Valsovano near Leghorn—or possibly later, during Shelley's sojourn at Florence—in the autumn of 1819, shortly after the Peterloo riot at Manchester, August 16; edited with Preface by Leigh Hunt, and published under the poet's name by Edward Moxon, 1832 (Bradbury & Evans, printers). Two manuscripts are extant: a transcript by Mrs. Shelley with Shelley's autograph corrections, known as the 'Hunt manuscript'; and an earlier draft, not quite complete, in the poet's handwriting, presented by Mrs. Shelley to (Sir) John Bowring in 1826, and now in the possession of Mr. Thomas J. Wise (the 'Wise manuscript'). Mrs. Shelley's copy was sent to Leigh Hunt in 1819 with view to its publication in "The Examiner"; hence the name 'Hunt manuscript.' A facsimile of the Wise manuscript was published by the Shelley Society in 1887. Sources of the text are (1) the Hunt manuscript; (2) the Wise manuscript; (3) the editio princeps, editor Leigh Hunt, 1832; (4) Mrs. Shelley's two editions ("Poetical Works") of

1839. Of the two manuscripts Mrs. Shelley's transcript is the later and more authoritative.]

1. As I lay asleep in Italy There came a voice from over the Sea, And with great power it forth led me To walk in the visions of Poesy.

2. I met Murder on the way— _5 He had a mask like Castlereagh— Very smooth he looked, yet grim; Seven blood-hounds followed him:

3. All were fat; and well they might Be in admirable plight, _10 For one by one, and two by two, He tossed them human hearts to chew Which from his wide cloak he drew.

4. Next came Fraud, and he had on, Like Eldon, an ermined gown; _15 His big tears, for he wept well, Turned to mill-stones as they fell.

5. And the little children, who Round his feet played to and fro, Thinking every tear a gem, _20 Had their brains knocked out by them.

6. Clothed with the Bible, as with light, And the shadows of the night, Like Sidmouth, next, Hypocrisy On a crocodile rode by. _25

7. And many more Destructions played In this ghastly masquerade, All disguised, even to the eyes, Like Bishops, lawyers, peers, or spies.

8. Last came Anarchy: he rode _30 On a white horse, splashed with blood; He was pale even to the lips, Like Death in the Apocalypse.

9. And he wore a kingly crown; And in his grasp a sceptre shone; _35 On his brow this mark I saw— 'I AM GOD, AND KING, AND LAW!'

10. With a pace stately and fast, Over English land he passed, Trampling to a mire of blood _40 The adoring multitude.

11. And a mighty troop around, With their trampling shook the ground, Waving each a bloody sword, For the service of their Lord. _45

12. And with glorious triumph, they Rode through England proud and gay, Drunk as

with intoxication Of the wine of desolation.

13. O'er fields and towns, from sea to sea, _50 Passed the Pageant swift and free, Tearing up, and trampling down; Till they came to London town.

14. And each dweller, panic-stricken, Felt his heart with terror sicken _55 Hearing the tempestuous cry Of the triumph of Anarchy.

15. For with pomp to meet him came, Clothed in arms like blood and flame, The hired murderers, who did sing _60 'Thou art God, and Law, and King.

16. 'We have waited, weak and lone For thy coming, Mighty One! Our purses are empty, our swords are cold, Give us glory, and blood, and gold.' _65

17. Lawyers and priests, a motley crowd, To the earth their pale brows bowed; Like a bad prayer not over loud, Whispering—'Thou art Law and God.'—

18. Then all cried with one accord, _70 'Thou art King, and God, and Lord; Anarchy, to thee we bow, Be thy name made holy now!'

19. And Anarchy, the Skeleton, Bowed and grinned to every one, _75 As well as if his education Had cost ten millions to the nation.

20. For he knew the Palaces Of our Kings were rightly his; His the sceptre, crown, and globe, _80 And the gold-inwoven robe.

21. So he sent his slaves before To seize upon the Bank and Tower, And was proceeding with intent To meet his pensioned Parliament _85

22. When one fled past, a maniac maid, And her name was Hope, she said: But she looked more like Despair, And she cried out in the air:

23. 'My father Time is weak and gray _90 With waiting for a better day; See how idiot-like he stands, Fumbling with his palsied hands!

24. 'He has had child after child, And the dust of death is piled _95 Over every one but me— Misery, oh, Misery!'

25. Then she lay down in the street, Right before the horses' feet, Expecting, with a

patient eye, _100 Murder, Fraud, and Anarchy.

26. When between her and her foes A mist, a light, an image rose, Small at first, and weak, and frail Like the vapour of a vale: _105

27. Till as clouds grow on the blast, Like tower-crowned giants striding fast, And glare with lightnings as they fly, And speak in thunder to the sky,

28. It grew—a Shape arrayed in mail _110 Brighter than the viper’s scale, And upborne on wings whose grain Was as the light of sunny rain.

29. On its helm, seen far away, A planet, like the Morning’s, lay; _115 And those plumes its light rained through Like a shower of crimson dew.

30. With step as soft as wind it passed O’er the heads of men—so fast That they knew the presence there, _120 And looked,—but all was empty air.

31. As flowers beneath May’s footstep waken, As stars from Night’s loose hair are shaken, As waves arise when loud winds call, Thoughts sprung where’er that step did fall. _125

32. And the prostrate multitude Looked—and ankle-deep in blood, Hope, that maiden most serene, Was walking with a quiet mien:

33. And Anarchy, the ghastly birth, _130 Lay dead earth upon the earth; The Horse of Death tameless as wind Fled, and with his hoofs did grind To dust the murderers thronged behind.

34. A rushing light of clouds and splendour, _135 A sense awakening and yet tender Was heard and felt—and at its close These words of joy and fear arose

35. As if their own indignant Earth Which gave the sons of England birth _140 Had felt their blood upon her brow, And shuddering with a mother’s throe

36. Had turned every drop of blood By which her face had been bedewed To an accent unwithstood,— _145 As if her heart had cried aloud:

37. ‘Men of England, heirs of Glory, Heroes of unwritten story, Nurslings of one

mighty Mother, Hopes of her, and one another; _150

38. ‘Rise like Lions after slumber In unvanquishable number, Shake your chains to earth like dew Which in sleep had fallen on you— Ye are many—they are few. _155

39. ‘What is Freedom?—ye can tell That which slavery is, too well— For its very name has grown To an echo of your own.

40. ‘’Tis to work and have such pay _160 As just keeps life from day to day In your limbs, as in a cell For the tyrants’ use to dwell,

41. ‘So that ye for them are made Loom, and plough, and sword, and spade, _165 With or without your own will bent To their defence and nourishment.

42. ‘’Tis to see your children weak With their mothers pine and peak, When the winter winds are bleak,— _170 They are dying whilst I speak.

43. ‘’Tis to hunger for such diet As the rich man in his riot Casts to the fat dogs that lie Surfeiting beneath his eye; _175

44. ‘’Tis to let the Ghost of Gold Take from Toil a thousandfold More than e’er its substance could In the tyrannies of old.

45. ‘Paper coin—that forgery _180 Of the title-deeds, which ye Hold to something of the worth Of the inheritance of Earth.

46. ‘’Tis to be a slave in soul And to hold no strong control _185 Over your own wills, but be All that others make of ye.

47. ‘And at length when ye complain With a murmur weak and vain ’Tis to see the Tyrant’s crew _190 Ride over your wives and you Blood is on the grass like dew.

48. ‘Then it is to feel revenge Fiercely thirsting to exchange Blood for blood—and wrong for wrong— _195 Do not thus when ye are strong.

49. ‘Birds find rest, in narrow nest When weary of their winged quest; Beasts find fare, in woody lair When storm and snow are in the air. _200

50. ‘Asses, swine, have litter spread And with fitting food are fed; All things have a

home but one— Thou, Oh, Englishman, hast none!

51. ‘This is Slavery—savage men, _205 Or wild beasts within a den Would endure not as ye do— But such ills they never knew.

52. ‘What art thou Freedom? O! could slaves Answer from their living graves _210 This demand—tyrants would flee Like a dream’s dim imagery:

53. ‘Thou art not, as impostors say, A shadow soon to pass away, A superstition, and a name _215 Echoing from the cave of Fame.

54. ‘For the labourer thou art bread, And a comely table spread From his daily labour come In a neat and happy home. _220

55. Thou art clothes, and fire, and food For the trampled multitude— No—in countries that are free Such starvation cannot be As in England now we see. _225

56. ‘To the rich thou art a check, When his foot is on the neck Of his victim, thou dost make That he treads upon a snake.

57. Thou art Justice—ne’er for gold _230 May thy righteous laws be sold As laws are in England—thou Shield’st alike the high and low.

58. ‘Thou art Wisdom—Freemen never Dream that God will damn for ever _235 All who think those things untrue Of which Priests make such ado.

59. ‘Thou art Peace—never by thee Would blood and treasure wasted be As tyrants wasted them, when all _240 Leagued to quench thy flame in Gaul.

60. ‘What if English toil and blood Was poured forth, even as a flood? It availed, Oh, Liberty, To dim, but not extinguish thee. _245

61. ‘Thou art Love—the rich have kissed Thy feet, and like him following Christ, Give their substance to the free And through the rough world follow thee,

62. ‘Or turn their wealth to arms, and make _250 War for thy beloved sake On wealth, and war, and fraud—whence they Drew the power which is their prey.

63. ‘Science, Poetry, and Thought Are thy lamps; they make the lot _255 Of the

dwellers in a cot So serene, they curse it not.

64. ‘Spirit, Patience, Gentleness, All that can adorn and bless Art thou—let deeds, not words, express _260 Thine exceeding loveliness.

65. ‘Let a great Assembly be Of the fearless and the free On some spot of English ground Where the plains stretch wide around. _265

66. ‘Let the blue sky overhead, The green earth on which ye tread, All that must eternal be Witness the solemnity.

67. ‘From the corners uttermost _270 Of the bounds of English coast; From every hut, village, and town Where those who live and suffer moan For others’ misery or their own,

68. ‘From the workhouse and the prison Where pale as corpses newly risen, Women, children, young and old _277 Groan for pain, and weep for cold—

69. ‘From the haunts of daily life Where is waged the daily strife _280 With common wants and common cares Which sows the human heart with tares—

70. ‘Lastly from the palaces Where the murmur of distress Echoes, like the distant sound _285 Of a wind alive around

71. ‘Those prison halls of wealth and fashion, Where some few feel such compassion For those who groan, and toil, and wail As must make their brethren pale—

72. ‘Ye who suffer woes untold, _291 Or to feel, or to behold Your lost country bought and sold With a price of blood and gold—

73. ‘Let a vast assembly be, _295 And with great solemnity Declare with measured words that ye Are, as God has made ye, free—

74. ‘Be your strong and simple words Keen to wound as sharpened swords, _300 And wide as targes let them be, With their shade to cover ye.

75. ‘Let the tyrants pour around With a quick and startling sound, Like the loosening

of a sea, _305 Troops of armed emblazonry.

76. ‘Let the charged artillery drive Till the dead air seems alive With the clash of clanging wheels, And the tramp of horses’ heels. _310

77. ‘Let the fixed bayonet Gleam with sharp desire to wet Its bright point in English blood Looking keen as one for food.

78. Let the horsemen’s scimitars _315 Wheel and flash, like sphereless stars Thirsting to eclipse their burning In a sea of death and mourning.

79. ‘Stand ye calm and resolute, Like a forest close and mute, _320 With folded arms and looks which are Weapons of unvanquished war,

80. ‘And let Panic, who outspeeds The career of armed steeds Pass, a disregarded shade _325 Through your phalanx undismayed.

81. ‘Let the laws of your own land, Good or ill, between ye stand Hand to hand, and foot to foot, Arbiters of the dispute, _330

82. ‘The old laws of England—they Whose reverend heads with age are gray, Children of a wiser day; And whose solemn voice must be Thine own echo—Liberty! _335

83. ‘On those who first should violate Such sacred heralds in their state Rest the blood that must ensue, And it will not rest on you.

84. ‘And if then the tyrants dare _340 Let them ride among you there, Slash, and stab, and maim, and hew,— What they like, that let them do.

85. ‘With folded arms and steady eyes, And little fear, and less surprise, _345 Look upon them as they slay Till their rage has died away.

86. Then they will return with shame To the place from which they came, And the blood thus shed will speak _350 In hot blushes on their cheek.

87. ‘Every woman in the land Will point at them as they stand— They will hardly dare to greet Their acquaintance in the street. _355

88. ‘And the bold, true warriors Who have hugged Danger in wars Will turn to those who would be free, Ashamed of such base company.

89. ‘And that slaughter to the Nation _360 Shall steam up like inspiration, Eloquent, oracular; A volcano heard afar.

90. ‘And these words shall then become Like Oppression’s thundered doom _365 Ringing through each heart and brain, Heard again—again—again—

91. ‘Rise like Lions after slumber In unvanquishable number— Shake your chains to earth like dew _370 Which in sleep had fallen on you— Ye are many—they are few.’

NOTES: _15. Like Eldon Hunt manuscript; Like Lord Eldon Wise manuscript. _15. ermined Hunt manuscript, Wise manuscript edition 1832; ermine editions 1839. _23 shadows]shadow editions 1839 only. _29 or]and Wise manuscript only. _35 And in his grasp Hunt manuscript, edition 1882; In his hand Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript cancelled, edition 1839. _36 On his]And on his edition 1832 only. _51 the Hunt manuscript, edition 1832; that Wise manuscript. _56 tempestuous]tremendous editions 1839 only. _58 For with pomp]For from… Hunt manuscript, Wise manuscript. _71 God]Law editions 1839 only. _79 rightly Wise manuscript; nightly Hunt manuscript, editions 1832, 1839. _93 Fumbling] Trembling editions 1839 only. _105 a vale Hunt manuscript, Wise manuscript; the vale editions 1832, 1839. _113 as]like editions 1839 only. _116 its Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript; it editions 1832, 1839. _121 but Wise MS; and Hunt manuscript, editions 1832, 1839. _122 May’s footstep Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript; the footstep edition 1832; May’s footsteps editions 1839. _132-4 omit Wise manuscript. _146 had cried Hunt manuscript, editions 1832, 1839; cried out Wise manuscript. _155 omit edition 1832 only. _182 of]from Wise manuscript only. _186 wills Hunt manuscript, editions 1832, 1839; will Wise manuscript. _198 their Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript, editions 1839; the edition 1832. _216 cave Wise manuscript, Hunt

manuscript, editions 1839; caves edition 1832, Hunt manuscript cancelled. _220 In Wise manuscript, editions 1832, 1839; To Hunt manuscript.

(Note at stanza 49: The following stanza is found in the Wise manuscript and in editions 1839, but is wanting in the Hunt manuscript and in edition 1832:—

‘Horses, oxen, have a home, When from daily toil they come; Household dogs, when the wind roars, Find a home within warm doors.’)

_233 the Hunt manuscript, editions 1832, 1839; both Wise manuscript. _234 Freemen Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript, editions 1839; Freedom edition 1832. _235 Dream Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript, editions 1839; Dreams edition 1832. damn]doom editions 1839 only. _248 Give Hunt manuscript, edition 1832; Given Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript cancelled, editions 1839. _249 follow]followed editions 1839 only. _250 Or Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript; Oh editions 1832, 1839. _254 Science, Poetry, Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript; Science, and Poetry editions 1832, 1839. _257 So Hunt manuscript, edition 1832; Such they curse their Maker not Wise manuscript, editions 1839. _263 and]of edition 1832 only. _274 or]and edition 1832 only.

(Note to end of stanza 67: The following stanza is found (cancelled) at this place in the Wise manuscript:—

‘From the cities where from caves, Like the dead from putrid graves, Troops of starvelings gliding come, Living Tenants of a tomb.’

_282 sows Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript; sow editions 1832, 1839. _297 measured Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript, edition 1832; ne’er-said editions 1839. _322 of unvanquished Wise manuscript; of an unvanquished Hunt manuscript, editions 1832, 1839. _346 slay Wise manuscript; Hunt manuscript, editions 1839; stay edition 1832. _357 in wars Wise manuscript, Hunt manuscript, edition 1832; in the wars editions 1839.

NOTE ON THE MASK OF ANARCHY, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

Though Shelley's first eager desire to excite his countrymen to resist openly the oppressions existent during 'the good old times' had faded with early youth, still his warmest sympathies were for the people. He was a republican, and loved a democracy. He looked on all human beings as inheriting an equal right to possess the dearest privileges of our nature; the necessaries of life when fairly earned by labour, and intellectual instruction. His hatred of any despotism that looked upon the people as not to be consulted, or protected from want and ignorance, was intense. He was residing near Leghorn, at Villa Valsovano, writing "The Cenci", when the news of the Manchester Massacre reached us; it roused in him violent emotions of indignation and compassion. The great truth that the many, if accordant and resolute, could control the few, as was shown some years after, made him long to teach his injured countrymen how to resist. Inspired by these feelings, he wrote the "Mask of Anarchy", which he sent to his friend Leigh Hunt, to be inserted in the Examiner, of which he was then the Editor.

'I did not insert it,' Leigh Hunt writes in his valuable and interesting preface to this poem, when he printed it in 1832, 'because I thought that the public at large had not become sufficiently discerning to do justice to the sincerity and kind-heartedness of the spirit that walked in this flaming robe of verse.' Days of outrage have passed away, and with them the exasperation that would cause such an appeal to the many to be injurious. Without being aware of them, they at one time acted on his suggestions, and gained the day. But they rose when human life was respected by the Minister in power; such was not the case during the Administration which excited Shelley's abhorrence.

The poem was written for the people, and is therefore in a more popular tone than usual: portions strike as abrupt and unpolished, but many stanzas are all his own. I heard him repeat, and admired, those beginning

'My Father Time is old and gray,'

before I knew to what poem they were to belong. But the most touching passage is that which describes the blessed effects of liberty; it might make a patriot of any man whose heart was not wholly closed against his humbler fellow-creatures.

***

PETER BELL THE THIRD.

BY MICHING MALLECHO, ESQ.

Is it a party in a parlour, Crammed just as they on earth were crammed, Some sipping punch—some sipping tea; But, as you by their faces see, All silent, and all—damned! "Peter Bell", by W. WORDSWORTH.

OPHELIA.—What means this, my lord? HAMLET.—Marry, this is Miching Mallecho; it means mischief. SHAKESPEARE.

[Composed at Florence, October, 1819, and forwarded to Hunt (November 2) to be published by C. & J. Ollier without the author's name; ultimately printed by Mrs. Shelley in the second edition of the "Poetical Works", 1839. A skit by John Hamilton Reynolds, "Peter Bell, a Lyrical Ballad", had already appeared (April, 1819), a few days before the publication of Wordsworth's "Peter Bell, a Tale". These productions were reviewed in Leigh Hunt's "Examiner" (April 26, May 3, 1819); and to the entertainment derived from his perusal of Hunt's criticisms the composition of Shelley's "Peter Bell the Third" is chiefly owing.]

DEDICATION. TO THOMAS BROWN, ESQ., THE YOUNGER, H.F.

Dear Tom,

Allow me to request you to introduce Mr. Peter Bell to the respectable family of the Fudges. Although he may fall short of those very considerable personages in the more active properties which characterize the Rat and the Apostate, I suspect that even you, their historian, will confess that he surpasses them in the more peculiarly legitimate qualification of intolerable dulness.

You know Mr. Examiner Hunt; well—it was he who presented me to two of the Mr. Bells. My intimacy with the younger Mr. Bell naturally sprung from this introduction to his brothers. And in presenting him to you, I have the satisfaction of being able to assure you that he is considerably the dullest of the three.

There is this particular advantage in an acquaintance with any one of the Peter Bells, that if you know one Peter Bell, you know three Peter Bells; they are not one, but three; not three, but one. An awful mystery, which, after having caused torrents of blood, and having been hymned by groans enough to deafen the music of the spheres, is at length illustrated to the satisfaction of all parties in the theological world, by the nature of Mr. Peter Bell.

Peter is a polyhedric Peter, or a Peter with many sides. He changes colours like a chameleon, and his coat like a snake. He is a Proteus of a Peter. He was at first sublime, pathetic, impressive, profound; then dull; then prosy and dull; and now dull—oh so very dull! it is an ultra-legitimate dulness.

You will perceive that it is not necessary to consider Hell and the Devil as supernatural machinery. The whole scene of my epic is in ‘this world which is’—so Peter informed us before his conversion to “White Obi”—

‘The world of all of us, AND WHERE WE FIND OUR HAPPINESS, OR NOT AT ALL.’

Let me observe that I have spent six or seven days in composing this sublime piece; the orb of my moonlike genius has made the fourth part of its revolution round the dull earth which you inhabit, driving you mad, while it has retained its calmness and its splendour, and I have been fitting this its last phase ‘to occupy a permanent station in the literature of my country.’

Your works, indeed, dear Tom, sell better; but mine are far superior. The public is no judge; posterity sets all to rights.

Allow me to observe that so much has been written of Peter Bell, that the present

history can be considered only, like the Iliad, as a continuation of that series of cyclic poems, which have already been candidates for bestowing immortality upon, at the same time that they receive it from, his character and adventures. In this point of view I have violated no rule of syntax in beginning my composition with a conjunction; the full stop which closes the poem continued by me being, like the full stops at the end of the Iliad and Odyssey, a full stop of a very qualified import.

Hoping that the immortality which you have given to the Fudges, you will receive from them; and in the firm expectation, that when London shall be an habitation of bitterns; when St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey shall stand, shapeless and nameless ruins, in the midst of an unpeopled marsh; when the piers of Waterloo Bridge shall become the nuclei of islets of reeds and osiers, and cast the jagged shadows of their broken arches on the solitary stream, some transatlantic commentator will be weighing in the scales of some new and now unimagined system of criticism, the respective merits of the Bells and the Fudges, and their historians. I remain, dear Tom, yours sincerely,

MICHING MALLECHO.

December 1, 1819.

P.S.—Pray excuse the date of place; so soon as the profits of the publication come in, I mean to hire lodgings in a more respectable street.

PROLOGUE.

Peter Bells, one, two and three, O'er the wide world wandering be.— First, the antenatal Peter, Wrapped in weeds of the same metre, The so-long-predestined raiment _5 Clothed in which to walk his way meant The second Peter; whose ambition Is to link the proposition, As the mean of two extremes— (This was learned from Aldric's themes) _10 Shielding from the guilt of schism The orthodoxal syllogism; The First Peter—he who was Like the shadow in the glass Of the second, yet unripe, _15 His substantial antitype.—

Then came Peter Bell the Second, Who henceforward must be reckoned The body of a double soul, And that portion of the whole _20 Without which the rest would seem Ends of a disjointed dream.— And the Third is he who has O’er the grave been forced to pass To the other side, which is,— _25 Go and try else,—just like this.

Peter Bell the First was Peter Smugger, milder, softer, neater, Like the soul before it is Born from THAT world into THIS. _30 The next Peter Bell was he, Predevote, like you and me, To good or evil as may come; His was the severer doom,— For he was an evil Cotter, _35 And a polygamic Potter. And the last is Peter Bell, Damned since our first parents fell, Damned eternally to Hell— Surely he deserves it well! _40

NOTES: _10 Aldric’s] i.e. Aldrich’s—a spelling adopted here by Woodberry.

(_36 The oldest scholiasts read— A dodecagamic Potter. This is at once more descriptive and more megalophonous,—but the alliteration of the text had captivated the vulgar ear of the herd of later commentators.—[SHELLEY’S NOTE.])

PART 1.

DEATH.

1. And Peter Bell, when he had been With fresh-imported Hell-fire warmed, Grew serious—from his dress and mien ’Twas very plainly to be seen Peter was quite reformed. _5

2. His eyes turned up, his mouth turned down; His accent caught a nasal twang; He oiled his hair; there might be heard The grace of God in every word Which Peter said or sang. _10

3. But Peter now grew old, and had An ill no doctor could unravel: His torments almost drove him mad;— Some said it was a fever bad— Some swore it was the gravel. _15

4. His holy friends then came about, And with long preaching and persuasion

Convinced the patient that, without The smallest shadow of a doubt, He was predestined to damnation. _20

5. They said—‘Thy name is Peter Bell; Thy skin is of a brimstone hue; Alive or dead—ay, sick or well— The one God made to rhyme with hell; The other, I think, rhymes with you. _25

6. Then Peter set up such a yell!— The nurse, who with some water gruel Was climbing up the stairs, as well As her old legs could climb them—fell, And broke them both—the fall was cruel. _30

7. The Parson from the casement lept Into the lake of Windermere— And many an eel—though no adept In God’s right reason for it—kept Gnawing his kidneys half a year. _35

8. And all the rest rushed through the door And tumbled over one another, And broke their skulls.—Upon the floor Meanwhile sat Peter Bell, and swore, And cursed his father and his mother; _40

9. And raved of God, and sin, and death, Blaspheming like an infidel; And said, that with his clenched teeth He’d seize the earth from underneath, And drag it with him down to hell. _45

10. As he was speaking came a spasm, And wrenched his gnashing teeth asunder; Like one who sees a strange phantasm He lay,—there was a silent chasm Between his upper jaw and under. _50

11. And yellow death lay on his face; And a fixed smile that was not human Told, as I understand the case, That he was gone to the wrong place:— I heard all this from the old woman. _55

12. Then there came down from Langdale Pike A cloud, with lightning, wind and hail; It swept over the mountains like An ocean,—and I heard it strike The woods and crags of Grasmere vale. _60

13. And I saw the black storm come Nearer, minute after minute; Its thunder made the cataracts dumb; With hiss, and clash, and hollow hum, It neared as if the Devil was in it. _65

14. The Devil WAS in it:—he had bought Peter for half-a-crown; and when The storm which bore him vanished, nought That in the house that storm had caught Was ever seen again. _70

15. The gaping neighbours came next day— They found all vanished from the shore: The Bible, whence he used to pray, Half scorched under a hen-coop lay; Smashed glass—and nothing more! _75

PART 2.

THE DEVIL.

1. The Devil, I safely can aver, Has neither hoof, nor tail, nor sting; Nor is he, as some sages swear, A spirit, neither here nor there, In nothing—yet in everything. _80

2. He is—what we are; for sometimes The Devil is a gentleman; At others a bard bartering rhymes For sack; a statesman spinning crimes; A swindler, living as he can; _85

3. A thief, who cometh in the night, With whole boots and net pantaloons, Like some one whom it were not right To mention;—or the luckless wight From whom he steals nine silver spoons. _90

4. But in this case he did appear Like a slop-merchant from Wapping, And with smug face, and eye severe, On every side did perk and peer Till he saw Peter dead or napping. _95

5. He had on an upper Benjamin (For he was of the driving schism) In the which he wrapped his skin From the storm he travelled in, For fear of rheumatism. _100

6. He called the ghost out of the corse;— It was exceedingly like Peter,— Only its

voice was hollow and hoarse— It had a queerish look of course— Its dress too was a little neater. _105

7. The Devil knew not his name and lot; Peter knew not that he was Bell: Each had an upper stream of thought, Which made all seem as it was not; Fitting itself to all things well. _110

8. Peter thought he had parents dear, Brothers, sisters, cousins, cronies, In the fens of Lincolnshire; He perhaps had found them there Had he gone and boldly shown his _115

9. Solemn phiz in his own village; Where he thought oft when a boy He'd clomb the orchard walls to pillage The produce of his neighbour's tillage, With marvellous pride and joy. _120

10. And the Devil thought he had, 'Mid the misery and confusion Of an unjust war, just made A fortune by the gainful trade Of giving soldiers rations bad— _125 The world is full of strange delusion—

11. That he had a mansion planned In a square like Grosvenor Square, That he was aping fashion, and That he now came to Westmoreland _130 To see what was romantic there.

12. And all this, though quite ideal,— Ready at a breath to vanish,— Was a state not more unreal Than the peace he could not feel, _135 Or the care he could not banish.

13. After a little conversation, The Devil told Peter, if he chose, He'd bring him to the world of fashion By giving him a situation _140 In his own service—and new clothes.

14. And Peter bowed, quite pleased and proud, And after waiting some few days For a new livery—dirty yellow Turned up with black—the wretched fellow _145 Was bowled to Hell in the Devil's chaise.

PART 3.

HELL.

1. Hell is a city much like London— A populous and a smoky city; There are all sorts of people undone, And there is little or no fun done; _150 Small justice shown, and still less pity.

2. There is a Castles, and a Canning, A Cobbett, and a Castlereagh; All sorts of caitiff corpses planning All sorts of cozening for trepanning _155 Corpses less corrupt than they.

3. There is a ***, who has lost His wits, or sold them, none knows which; He walks about a double ghost, And though as thin as Fraud almost— _160 Ever grows more grim and rich.

4. There is a Chancery Court; a King; A manufacturing mob; a set Of thieves who by themselves are sent Similar thieves to represent; _165 An army; and a public debt.

5. Which last is a scheme of paper money, And means—being interpreted— ‘Bees, keep your wax—give us the honey, And we will plant, while skies are sunny, _170 Flowers, which in winter serve instead.’

6. There is a great talk of revolution— And a great chance of despotism— German soldiers—camps—confusion— Tumults—lotteries—rage—delusion— _175 Gin—suicide—and methodism;

7. Taxes too, on wine and bread, And meat, and beer, and tea, and cheese, From which those patriots pure are fed, Who gorge before they reel to bed _180 The tenfold essence of all these.

8. There are mincing women, mewing, (Like cats, who amant misere,) Of their own virtue, and pursuing Their gentler sisters to that ruin, _185 Without which—what were chastity?(2)

9. Lawyers—judges—old hobnobbers Are there—bailiffs—chancellors—

Bishops—great and little robbers— Rhymesters—pamphleteers—stock-jobbers— _190 Men of glory in the wars,—

10. Things whose trade is, over ladies To lean, and flirt, and stare, and simper, Till all that is divine in woman Grows cruel, courteous, smooth, inhuman, _195 Crucified ’twixt a smile and whimper.

11. Thrusting, toiling, wailing, moiling, Frowning, preaching—such a riot! Each with never-ceasing labour, Whilst he thinks he cheats his neighbour, _200 Cheating his own heart of quiet.

12. And all these meet at levees;— Dinners convivial and political;— Suppers of epic poets;—teas, Where small talk dies in agonies;— _205 Breakfasts professional and critical;

13. Lunches and snacks so aldermanic That one would furnish forth ten dinners, Where reigns a Cretan-tongued panic, Lest news Russ, Dutch, or Alemannic _210 Should make some losers, and some winners—

45. At conversazioni—balls— Conventicles—and drawing-rooms— Courts of law—committees—calls Of a morning—clubs—book-stalls— _215 Churches—masquerades—and tombs.

15. And this is Hell—and in this smother All are damnable and damned; Each one damning, damns the other; They are damned by one another, _220 By none other are they damned.

16. ’Tis a lie to say, ‘God damns’! (1) Where was Heaven’s Attorney General When they first gave out such flams? Let there be an end of shams, _225 They are mines of poisonous mineral.

17. Statesmen damn themselves to be Cursed; and lawyers damn their souls To the auction of a fee; Churchmen damn themselves to see _230 God’s sweet love in burning coals.

18. The rich are damned, beyond all cure, To taunt, and starve, and trample on The weak and wretched; and the poor Damn their broken hearts to endure _235 Stripe on stripe, with groan on groan.

19. Sometimes the poor are damned indeed To take,—not means for being blessed,— But Cobbett's snuff, revenge; that weed From which the worms that it doth feed _240 Squeeze less than they before possessed.

20. And some few, like we know who, Damned—but God alone knows why— To believe their minds are given To make this ugly Hell a Heaven; _245 In which faith they live and die.

21. Thus, as in a town, plague-stricken, Each man be he sound or no Must indifferently sicken; As when day begins to thicken, _250 None knows a pigeon from a crow,—

22. So good and bad, sane and mad, The oppressor and the oppressed; Those who weep to see what others Smile to inflict upon their brothers; _255 Lovers, haters, worst and best;

23. All are damned—they breathe an air, Thick, infected, joy-dispelling: Each pursues what seems most fair, Mining like moles, through mind, and there _260 Scoop palace-caverns vast, where Care In throned state is ever dwelling.

PART 4.

SIN.

1. Lo. Peter in Hell's Grosvenor Square, A footman in the Devil's service! And the misjudging world would swear _265 That every man in service there To virtue would prefer vice.

2. But Peter, though now damned, was not What Peter was before damnation. Men oftentimes prepare a lot _270 Which ere it finds them, is not what Suits with their genuine station.

3. All things that Peter saw and felt Had a peculiar aspect to him; And when they came within the belt _275 Of his own nature, seemed to melt, Like cloud to cloud, into him.

4. And so the outward world uniting To that within him, he became Considerably uninviting _280 To those who, meditation slighting, Were moulded in a different frame.

5. And he scorned them, and they scorned him; And he scorned all they did; and they Did all that men of their own trim _285 Are wont to do to please their whim, Drinking, lying, swearing, play.

6. Such were his fellow-servants; thus His virtue, like our own, was built Too much on that indignant fuss _290 Hypocrite Pride stirs up in us To bully one another's guilt.

7. He had a mind which was somehow At once circumference and centre Of all he might or feel or know; _295 Nothing went ever out, although Something did ever enter.

8. He had as much imagination As a pint-pot;—he never could Fancy another situation, _300 From which to dart his contemplation, Than that wherein he stood.

9. Yet his was individual mind, And new created all he saw In a new manner, and refined _305 Those new creations, and combined Them, by a master-spirit's law.

10. Thus—though unimaginative— An apprehension clear, intense, Of his mind's work, had made alive _310 The things it wrought on; I believe Wakening a sort of thought in sense.

11. But from the first 'twas Peter's drift To be a kind of moral eunuch, He touched the hem of Nature's shift, _315 Felt faint—and never dared uplift The closest, all-concealing tunic.

12. She laughed the while, with an arch smile, And kissed him with a sister's kiss,

And said—My best Diogenes, _320 I love you well—but, if you please, Tempt not again my deepest bliss.

13. ‘’Tis you are cold—for I, not coy, Yield love for love, frank, warm, and true; And Burns, a Scottish peasant boy— _325 His errors prove it—knew my joy More, learned friend, than you.

14. ‘Boeca bacciata non perde ventura, Anzi rinnuova come fa la luna:— So thought Boccaccio, whose sweet words might cure a _330 Male prude, like you, from what you now endure, a Low-tide in soul, like a stagnant laguna.

15. Then Peter rubbed his eyes severe. And smoothed his spacious forehead down With his broad palm;—’twixt love and fear, _335 He looked, as he no doubt felt, queer, And in his dream sate down.

16. The Devil was no uncommon creature; A leaden-witted thief—just huddled Out of the dross and scum of nature; _340 A toad-like lump of limb and feature, With mind, and heart, and fancy muddled.

17. He was that heavy, dull, cold thing, The spirit of evil well may be: A drone too base to have a sting; _345 Who gluts, and grimes his lazy wing, And calls lust, luxury.

18. Now he was quite the kind of wight Round whom collect, at a fixed aera, Venison, turtle, hock, and claret,— _350 Good cheer—and those who come to share it— And best East Indian madeira!

19. It was his fancy to invite Men of science, wit, and learning, Who came to lend each other light; _355 He proudly thought that his gold’s might Had set those spirits burning.

20. And men of learning, science, wit, Considered him as you and I Think of some rotten tree, and sit _360 Lounging and dining under it, Exposed to the wide sky.

21. And all the while with loose fat smile, The willing wretch sat winking there,

Believing ’twas his power that made _365 That jovial scene—and that all paid Homage to his unnoticed chair.

22. Though to be sure this place was Hell; He was the Devil—and all they— What though the claret circled well, _370 And wit, like ocean, rose and fell?— Were damned eternally.

PART 5.

GRACE.

1. Among the guests who often stayed Till the Devil’s petits-soupers, A man there came, fair as a maid, _375 And Peter noted what he said, Standing behind his master’s chair.

2. He was a mighty poet—and A subtle-souled psychologist; All things he seemed to understand, _380 Of old or new—of sea or land— But his own mind—which was a mist.

3. This was a man who might have turned Hell into Heaven—and so in gladness A Heaven unto himself have earned; _385 But he in shadows undiscerned Trusted.—and damned himself to madness.

4. He spoke of poetry, and how ‘Divine it was—a light—a love— A spirit which like wind doth blow _390 As it listeth, to and fro; A dew rained down from God above;

5. ‘A power which comes and goes like dream, And which none can ever trace— Heaven’s light on earth—Truth’s brightest beam.’ _395 And when he ceased there lay the gleam Of those words upon his face.

6. Now Peter, when he heard such talk, Would, heedless of a broken pate, Stand like a man asleep, or balk _400 Some wishing guest of knife or fork, Or drop and break his master’s plate.

7. At night he oft would start and wake Like a lover, and began In a wild measure

songs to make _405 On moor, and glen, and rocky lake, And on the heart of man—

8. And on the universal sky— And the wide earth's bosom green,— And the sweet, strange mystery _410 Of what beyond these things may lie, And yet remain unseen.

9. For in his thought he visited The spots in which, ere dead and damned, He his wayward life had led; _415 Yet knew not whence the thoughts were fed Which thus his fancy crammed.

10. And these obscure remembrances Stirred such harmony in Peter, That, whensoever he should please, _420 He could speak of rocks and trees In poetic metre.

11. For though it was without a sense Of memory, yet he remembered well Many a ditch and quick-set fence; _425 Of lakes he had intelligence, He knew something of heath and fell.

12. He had also dim recollections Of pedlars tramping on their rounds; Milk-pans and pails; and odd collections _430 Of saws, and proverbs; and reflections Old parsons make in burying-grounds.

13. But Peter's verse was clear, and came Announcing from the frozen hearth Of a cold age, that none might tame _435 The soul of that diviner flame It augured to the Earth:

14. Like gentle rains, on the dry plains, Making that green which late was gray, Or like the sudden moon, that stains _440 Some gloomy chamber's window-panes With a broad light like day.

15. For language was in Peter's hand Like clay while he was yet a potter; And he made songs for all the land, _445 Sweet both to feel and understand, As pipkins late to mountain Cotter.

16. And Mr. —, the bookseller, Gave twenty pounds for some;—then scorning A footman's yellow coat to wear, _450 Peter, too proud of heart, I fear, Instantly gave

the Devil warning.

17. Whereat the Devil took offence, And swore in his soul a great oath then, ‘That for his damned impertinence _455 He’d bring him to a proper sense Of what was due to gentlemen!’

PART 6.

DAMNATION.

1. ‘O that mine enemy had written A book!’—cried Job:—a fearful curse, If to the Arab, as the Briton, _460 ’Twas galling to be critic-bitten:— The Devil to Peter wished no worse.

2. When Peter’s next new book found vent, The Devil to all the first Reviews A copy of it slyly sent, _465 With five-pound note as compliment, And this short notice—‘Pray abuse.’

3. Then seriatim, month and quarter, Appeared such mad tirades.—One said—‘Peter seduced Mrs. Foy’s daughter, _470 Then drowned the mother in Ullswater, The last thing as he went to bed.’

4. Another—‘Let him shave his head! Where’s Dr. Willis?—Or is he joking? What does the rascal mean or hope, _475 No longer imitating Pope, In that barbarian Shakespeare poking?’

5. One more, ‘Is incest not enough? And must there be adultery too? Grace after meat? Miscreant and Liar! _480 Thief! Blackguard! Scoundrel! Fool! hell-fire Is twenty times too good for you.

6. ‘By that last book of yours WE think You’ve double damned yourself to scorn; We warned you whilst yet on the brink _485 You stood. From your black name will shrink The babe that is unborn.’

7. All these Reviews the Devil made Up in a parcel, which he had Safely to Peter’s house conveyed. _490 For carriage, tenpence Peter paid— Untied them—read

them—went half mad.

8. ‘What!’ cried he, ‘this is my reward For nights of thought, and days, of toil? Do poets, but to be abhorred _495 By men of whom they never heard, Consume their spirits’ oil?

9. ‘What have I done to them?—and who IS Mrs. Foy? ’Tis very cruel To speak of me and Betty so! _500 Adultery! God defend me! Oh! I’ve half a mind to fight a duel.

10. ‘Or,’ cried he, a grave look collecting, ‘Is it my genius, like the moon, Sets those who stand her face inspecting, _505 That face within their brain reflecting, Like a crazed bell-chime, out of tune?’

11. For Peter did not know the town, But thought, as country readers do, For half a guinea or a crown, _510 He bought oblivion or renown From God’s own voice (1) in a review.

12. All Peter did on this occasion Was, writing some sad stuff in prose. It is a dangerous invasion _515 When poets criticize; their station Is to delight, not pose.

13. The Devil then sent to Leipsic fair For Born’s translation of Kant’s book; A world of words, tail foremost, where _520 Right—wrong—false—true—and foul—and fair As in a lottery-wheel are shook.

14. Five thousand crammed octavo pages Of German psychologics,—he Who his furor verborum assuages _525 Thereon, deserves just seven months’ wages More than will e’er be due to me.

15. I looked on them nine several days, And then I saw that they were bad; A friend, too, spoke in their dispraise,— _530 He never read them;—with amaze I found Sir William Drummond had.

16. When the book came, the Devil sent It to P. Verbovale (2), Esquire, With a brief note of compliment, _535 By that night’s Carlisle mail. It went, And set his soul on

fire.

17. Fire, which ex luce praebens fumum, Made him beyond the bottom see Of truth's clear well—when I and you, Ma'am, _540 Go, as we shall do, subter humum, We may know more than he.

18. Now Peter ran to seed in soul Into a walking paradox; For he was neither part nor whole, _545 Nor good, nor bad—nor knave nor fool; —Among the woods and rocks

19. Furious he rode, where late he ran, Lashing and spurring his tame hobby; Turned to a formal puritan, _550 A solemn and unsexual man,— He half believed "White Obi".

20. This steed in vision he would ride, High trotting over nine-inch bridges, With Flibbertigibbet, imp of pride, _555 Mocking and mowing by his side— A mad-brained goblin for a guide— Over corn-fields, gates, and hedges.

21. After these ghastly rides, he came Home to his heart, and found from thence _560 Much stolen of its accustomed flame; His thoughts grew weak, drowsy, and lame Of their intelligence.

22. To Peter's view, all seemed one hue; He was no Whig, he was no Tory; _565 No Deist and no Christian he;— He got so subtle, that to be Nothing, was all his glory.

23. One single point in his belief From his organization sprung, _570 The heart-enrooted faith, the chief Ear in his doctrines' blighted sheaf, That 'Happiness is wrong';

24. So thought Calvin and Dominic; So think their fierce successors, who _575 Even now would neither stint nor stick Our flesh from off our bones to pick, If they might 'do their do.'

25. His morals thus were undermined:— The old Peter—the hard, old Potter— _580 Was born anew within his mind; He grew dull, harsh, sly, unrefined, As when he

tramped beside the Otter. (1)

26. In the death hues of agony Lambently flashing from a fish, _585 Now Peter felt amused to see Shades like a rainbow’s rise and flee, Mixed with a certain hungry wish(2).

27. So in his Country’s dying face He looked—and, lovely as she lay, _590 Seeking in vain his last embrace, Wailing her own abandoned case, With hardened sneer he turned away:

28. And coolly to his own soul said;— ‘Do you not think that we might make _595 A poem on her when she’s dead:— Or, no—a thought is in my head— Her shroud for a new sheet I’ll take:

29. ‘My wife wants one.—Let who will bury This mangled corpse! And I and you, _600 My dearest Soul, will then make merry, As the Prince Regent did with Sherry,—’ ‘Ay—and at last desert me too.’

30. And so his Soul would not be gay, But moaned within him; like a fawn _605 Moaning within a cave, it lay Wounded and wasting, day by day, Till all its life of life was gone.

31. As troubled skies stain waters clear, The storm in Peter’s heart and mind _610 Now made his verses dark and queer: They were the ghosts of what they were, Shaking dim grave-clothes in the wind.

32. For he now raved enormous folly, Of Baptisms, Sunday-schools, and Graves, _615 ’Twould make George Colman melancholy To have heard him, like a male Molly, Chanting those stupid staves.

33. Yet the Reviews, who heaped abuse On Peter while he wrote for freedom, _620 So soon as in his song they spy The folly which soothes tyranny, Praise him, for those who feed ’em.

34. ‘He was a man, too great to scan;— A planet lost in truth’s keen rays:— _625

His virtue, awful and prodigious;— He was the most sublime, religious, Pure-minded Poet of these days.'

35. As soon as he read that, cried Peter, 'Eureka! I have found the way _630 To make a better thing of metre Than e'er was made by living creature Up to this blessed day.'

36. Then Peter wrote odes to the Devil;— In one of which he meekly said: _635 'May Carnage and Slaughter, Thy niece and thy daughter, May Rapine and Famine, Thy gorge ever cramming, Glut thee with living and dead! _640

37. 'May Death and Damnation, And Consternation, Flit up from Hell with pure intent! Slash them at Manchester, Glasgow, Leeds, and Chester; _645 Drench all with blood from Avon to Trent.

38. 'Let thy body-guard yeomen Hew down babes and women, And laugh with bold triumph till Heaven be rent! When Moloch in Jewry _650 Munched children with fury, It was thou, Devil, dining with pure intent. (1)

PART 7.

DOUBLE DAMNATION.

1. The Devil now knew his proper cue.— Soon as he read the ode, he drove To his friend Lord MacMurderchouse's, _655 A man of interest in both houses, And said:—'For money or for love,

2. 'Pray find some cure or sinecure; To feed from the superfluous taxes A friend of ours—a poet—fewer _660 Have fluttered tamer to the lure Than he.' His lordship stands and racks his

3. Stupid brains, while one might count As many beads as he had boroughs,— At length replies; from his mean front, _665 Like one who rubs out an account, Smoothing away the unmeaning furrows:

4. 'It happens fortunately, dear Sir, I can. I hope I need require No pledge from you,

that he will stir _670 In our affairs;—like Oliver. That he'll be worthy of his hire.'

5. These words exchanged, the news sent off To Peter, home the Devil hied,— Took to his bed; he had no cough, _675 No doctor,—meat and drink enough.— Yet that same night he died.

6. The Devil's corpse was leaded down; His decent heirs enjoyed his pelf, Mourning-coaches, many a one, _680 Followed his hearse along the town:— Where was the Devil himself?

7. When Peter heard of his promotion, His eyes grew like two stars for bliss: There was a bow of sleek devotion _685 Engendering in his back; each motion Seemed a Lord's shoe to kiss.

8. He hired a house, bought plate, and made A genteel drive up to his door, With sifted gravel neatly laid,— _690 As if defying all who said, Peter was ever poor.

9. But a disease soon struck into The very life and soul of Peter— He walked about—slept—had the hue _695 Of health upon his cheeks—and few Dug better—none a heartier eater.

10. And yet a strange and horrid curse Clung upon Peter, night and day; Month after month the thing grew worse, _700 And deadlier than in this my verse I can find strength to say.

11. Peter was dull—he was at first Dull—oh, so dull—so very dull! Whether he talked, wrote, or rehearsed— _705 Still with this dulness was he cursed— Dull—beyond all conception—dull.

12. No one could read his books—no mortal, But a few natural friends, would hear him; The parson came not near his portal; _710 His state was like that of the immortal Described by Swift—no man could bear him.

13. His sister, wife, and children yawned, With a long, slow, and drear ennui, All human patience far beyond; _715 Their hopes of Heaven each would have pawned,

Anywhere else to be.

14. But in his verse, and in his prose, The essence of his dulness was Concentred and compressed so close, _720 ’Twould have made Guatimozin doze On his red gridiron of brass.

15. A printer’s boy, folding those pages, Fell slumbrously upon one side; Like those famed Seven who slept three ages. _725 To wakeful frenzy’s vigil—rages, As opiates, were the same applied.

16. Even the Reviewers who were hired To do the work of his reviewing, With adamantine nerves, grew tired;— _730 Gaping and torpid they retired, To dream of what they should be doing.

17. And worse and worse, the drowsy curse Yawned in him, till it grew a pest— A wide contagious atmosphere, _735 Creeping like cold through all things near; A power to infect and to infest.

18. His servant-maids and dogs grew dull; His kitten, late a sportive elf; The woods and lakes, so beautiful, _740 Of dim stupidity were full. All grew dull as Peter’s self.

19. The earth under his feet—the springs, Which lived within it a quick life, The air, the winds of many wings, _745 That fan it with new murmurings, Were dead to their harmonious strife.

20. The birds and beasts within the wood, The insects, and each creeping thing, Were now a silent multitude; _750 Love’s work was left unwrought—no brood Near Peter’s house took wing.

21. And every neighbouring cottager Stupidly yawned upon the other: No jackass brayed; no little cur _755 Cocked up his ears;—no man would stir To save a dying mother.

22. Yet all from that charmed district went But some half-idiot and half-knave, Who

rather than pay any rent, _760 Would live with marvellous content, Over his father's grave.

23. No bailiff dared within that space, For fear of the dull charm, to enter; A man would bear upon his face, _765 For fifteen months in any case, The yawn of such a venture.

24. Seven miles above—below—around— This pest of dulness holds its sway; A ghastly life without a sound; _770 To Peter's soul the spell is bound— How should it ever pass away?

NOTES: (_8 To those who have not duly appreciated the distinction between Whale and Russia oil, this attribute might rather seem to belong to the Dandy than the Evangelic. The effect, when to the windward, is indeed so similar, that it requires a subtle naturalist to discriminate the animals. They belong, however, to distinct genera.—[SHELLEY's NOTE.)

(_183 One of the attributes in Linnaeus's description of the Cat. To a similar cause the caterwauling of more than one species of this genus is to be referred;—except, indeed, that the poor quadruped is compelled to quarrel with its own pleasures, whilst the biped is supposed only to quarrel with those of others.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.])

(_186 What would this husk and excuse for a virtue be without its kernel prostitution, or the kernel prostitution without this husk of a virtue? I wonder the women of the town do not form an association, like the Society for the Suppression of Vice, for the support of what may be called the 'King, Church, and Constitution' of their order. But this subject is almost too horrible for a joke.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.])

(_222 This libel on our national oath, and this accusation of all our countrymen of being in the daily practice of solemnly asseverating the most enormous falsehood, I fear deserves the notice of a more active Attorney General than that here alluded

to.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.])

_292 one Fleay cj., Rossetti, Forman, Dowden, Woodberry; out 1839, 2nd edition. _500 Betty]Emma 1839, 2nd edition. See letter from Shelley to Ollier, May 14, 1820 (Shelley Memorials, page 139).

(_512 Vox populi, vox dei. As Mr. Godwin truly observes of a more famous saying, of some merit as a popular maxim, but totally destitute of philosophical accuracy.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.])

(_534 Quasi, Qui valet verba:—i.e. all the words which have been, are, or may be expended by, for, against, with, or on him. A sufficient proof of the utility of this history. Peter's progenitor who selected this name seems to have possessed A PURE ANTICIPATED COGNITION of the nature and modesty of this ornament of his posterity.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.])

_602-3 See Editor's Note.

(_583 A famous river in the new Atlantis of the Dynastophylic Pantisocratists.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.])

(_588 See the description of the beautiful colours produced during the agonizing death of a number of trout, in the fourth part of a long poem in blank verse, published within a few years. ["The Excursion", 8 2 568-71.—Ed.] That poem contains curious evidence of the gradual hardening of a strong but circumscribed sensibility, of the perversion of a penetrating but panic-stricken understanding. The author might have derived a lesson which he had probably forgotten from these sweet and sublime verses:—

'This lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide, Taught both by what she (Nature) shows and what conceals, Never to blend our pleasure or our pride With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.'—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.])

(_652 It is curious to observe how often extremes meet. Cobbett and Peter use the same language for a different purpose: Peter is indeed a sort of metrical Cobbett.

Cobbett is, however, more mischievous than Peter, because he pollutes a holy and how unconquerable cause with the principles of legitimate murder; whilst the other only makes a bad one ridiculous and odious.

If either Peter or Cobbett should see this note, each will feel more indignation at being compared to the other than at any censure implied in the moral perversion laid to their charge.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.])

NOTE ON PETER BELL THE THIRD, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

In this new edition I have added "Peter Bell the Third". A critique on Wordsworth's "Peter Bell" reached us at Leghorn, which amused Shelley exceedingly, and suggested this poem.

I need scarcely observe that nothing personal to the author of "Peter Bell" is intended in this poem. No man ever admired Wordsworth's poetry more;—he read it perpetually, and taught others to appreciate its beauties. This poem is, like all others written by Shelley, ideal. He conceived the idealism of a poet—a man of lofty and creative genius—quitting the glorious calling of discovering and announcing the beautiful and good, to support and propagate ignorant prejudices and pernicious errors; imparting to the unenlightened, not that ardour for truth and spirit of toleration which Shelley looked on as the sources of the moral improvement and happiness of mankind, but false and injurious opinions, that evil was good, and that ignorance and force were the best allies of purity and virtue. His idea was that a man gifted, even as transcendently as the author of "Peter Bell", with the highest qualities of genius, must, if he fostered such errors, be infected with dulness. This poem was written as a warning—not as a narration of the reality. He was unacquainted personally with Wordsworth, or with Coleridge (to whom he alludes in the fifth part of the poem), and therefore, I repeat, his poem is purely ideal;—it contains something of criticism on the compositions of those great poets, but nothing injurious to the men themselves.

No poem contains more of Shelley's peculiar views with regard to the errors into which many of the wisest have fallen, and the pernicious effects of certain opinions on society. Much of it is beautifully written: and, though, like the burlesque drama of "Swellfoot", it must be looked on as a plaything, it has so much merit and poetry—so much of HIMSELF in it—that it cannot fail to interest greatly, and by right belongs to the world for whose instruction and benefit it was written.

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LETTER TO MARIA GISBORNE.

[Composed during Shelley's occupation of the Gisbornes' house at Leghorn, July, 1820; published in "Posthumous Poems", 1824. Sources of the text are (1) a draft in Shelley's hand, 'partly illegible' (Forman), amongst the Boscombe manuscripts; (2) a transcript by Mrs. Shelley; (3) the editio princeps, 1824; the text in "Poetical Works", 1839, let and 2nd editions. Our text is that of Mrs. Shelley's transcript, modified by the Boscombe manuscript. Here, as elsewhere in this edition, the readings of the editio princeps are preserved in the footnotes.]

LEGHORN, July 1, 1820.]

The spider spreads her webs, whether she be In poet's tower, cellar, or barn, or tree; The silk-worm in the dark green mulberry leaves His winding sheet and cradle ever weaves; So I, a thing whom moralists call worm, _5 Sit spinning still round this decaying form, From the fine threads of rare and subtle thought— No net of words in garish colours wrought To catch the idle buzzers of the day— But a soft cell, where when that fades away, _10 Memory may clothe in wings my living name And feed it with the asphodels of fame, Which in those hearts which must remember me Grow, making love an immortality.

Whoever should behold me now, I wist, _15 Would think I were a mighty mechanist, Bent with sublime Archimedean art To breathe a soul into the iron heart Of some machine portentous, or strange gin, Which by the force of figured spells

might win _20 Its way over the sea, and sport therein; For round the walls are hung dread engines, such As Vulcan never wrought for Jove to clutch Ixion or the Titan:—or the quick Wit of that man of God, St. Dominic, _25 To convince Atheist, Turk, or Heretic, Or those in philanthropic council met, Who thought to pay some interest for the debt They owed to Jesus Christ for their salvation, By giving a faint foretaste of damnation _30 To Shakespeare, Sidney, Spenser, and the rest Who made our land an island of the blest, When lamp-like Spain, who now relumes her fire On Freedom's hearth, grew dim with Empire:— With thumbscrews, wheels, with tooth and spike and jag, _35 Which fishers found under the utmost crag Of Cornwall and the storm-encompassed isles, Where to the sky the rude sea rarely smiles Unless in treacherous wrath, as on the morn When the exulting elements in scorn, _40 Satiated with destroyed destruction, lay Sleeping in beauty on their mangled prey, As panthers sleep;—and other strange and dread Magical forms the brick floor overspread,— Proteus transformed to metal did not make _45 More figures, or more strange; nor did he take Such shapes of unintelligible brass, Or heap himself in such a horrid mass Of tin and iron not to be understood; And forms of unimaginable wood, _50 To puzzle Tubal Cain and all his brood: Great screws, and cones, and wheels, and grooved blocks, The elements of what will stand the shocks Of wave and wind and time.—Upon the table More knacks and quips there be than I am able _55 To catalogize in this verse of mine:— A pretty bowl of wood—not full of wine, But quicksilver; that dew which the gnomes drink When at their subterranean toil they swink, Pledging the demons of the earthquake, who _60 Reply to them in lava—cry halloo! And call out to the cities o'er their head,— Roofs, towers, and shrines, the dying and the dead, Crash through the chinks of earth—and then all quaff Another rouse, and hold their sides and laugh. _65 This quicksilver no gnome has drunk—within The walnut bowl it lies, veined and thin, In colour like the wake of light that stains The Tuscan deep, when from the moist moon rains The inmost shower of its white fire—the breeze _70 Is still—blue Heaven smiles over

the pale seas. And in this bowl of quicksilver—for I Yield to the impulse of an infancy Outlasting manhood—I have made to float A rude idealism of a paper boat:— _75 A hollow screw with cogs—Henry will know The thing I mean and laugh at me,—if so He fears not I should do more mischief.—Next Lie bills and calculations much perplexed, With steam-boats, frigates, and machinery quaint _80 Traced over them in blue and yellow paint. Then comes a range of mathematical Instruments, for plans nautical and statical, A heap of rosin, a queer broken glass With ink in it;—a china cup that was _85 What it will never be again, I think,— A thing from which sweet lips were wont to drink The liquor doctors rail at—and which I Will quaff in spite of them—and when we die We'll toss up who died first of drinking tea, _90 And cry out,—'Heads or tails?' where'er we be. Near that a dusty paint-box, some odd hooks, A half-burnt match, an ivory block, three books, Where conic sections, spherics, logarithms, To great Laplace, from Saunderson and Sims, _95 Lie heaped in their harmonious disarray Of figures,—disentangle them who may. Baron de Tott's Memoirs beside them lie, And some odd volumes of old chemistry. Near those a most inexplicable thing, _100 With lead in the middle—I'm conjecturing How to make Henry understand; but no— I'll leave, as Spenser says, with many mo, This secret in the pregnant womb of time, Too vast a matter for so weak a rhyme. _105

And here like some weird Archimage sit I, Plotting dark spells, and devilish enginery, The self-impelling steam-wheels of the mind Which pump up oaths from clergymen, and grind The gentle spirit of our meek reviews _110 Into a powdery foam of salt abuse, Ruffling the ocean of their self-content;— I sit—and smile or sigh as is my bent, But not for them—Libeccio rushes round With an inconstant and an idle sound, _115 I heed him more than them—the thunder-smoke Is gathering on the mountains, like a cloak Folded athwart their shoulders broad and bare; The ripe corn under the undulating air Undulates like an ocean;—and the vines _120 Are trembling wide in all their trellised lines— The murmur of the awakening sea doth

fill The empty pauses of the blast;—the hill Looks hoary through the white electric rain, And from the glens beyond, in sullen strain, _125 The interrupted thunder howls; above One chasm of Heaven smiles, like the eye of Love On the unquiet world;—while such things are, How could one worth your friendship heed the war Of worms? the shriek of the world's carrion jays, _130 Their censure, or their wonder, or their praise?

You are not here! the quaint witch Memory sees, In vacant chairs, your absent images, And points where once you sat, and now should be But are not.—I demand if ever we _135 Shall meet as then we met;—and she replies. Veiling in awe her second-sighted eyes; 'I know the past alone—but summon home My sister Hope,—she speaks of all to come.' But I, an old diviner, who knew well _140 Every false verse of that sweet oracle, Turned to the sad enchantress once again, And sought a respite from my gentle pain, In citing every passage o'er and o'er Of our communion—how on the sea-shore _145 We watched the ocean and the sky together, Under the roof of blue Italian weather; How I ran home through last year's thunder-storm, And felt the transverse lightning linger warm Upon my cheek—and how we often made _150 Feasts for each other, where good will outweighed The frugal luxury of our country cheer, As well it might, were it less firm and clear Than ours must ever be;—and how we spun A shroud of talk to hide us from the sun _155 Of this familiar life, which seems to be But is not:—or is but quaint mockery Of all we would believe, and sadly blame The jarring and inexplicable frame Of this wrong world:—and then anatomize _160 The purposes and thoughts of men whose eyes Were closed in distant years;—or widely guess The issue of the earth's great business, When we shall be as we no longer are— Like babbling gossips safe, who hear the war _165 Of winds, and sigh, but tremble not;—or how You listened to some interrupted flow Of visionary rhyme,—in joy and pain Struck from the inmost fountains of my brain, With little skill perhaps;—or how we sought _170 Those deepest wells of passion or of thought Wrought by wise poets in the waste of years,

Staining their sacred waters with our tears; Quenching a thirst ever to be renewed! Or how I, wisest lady! then endued _175 The language of a land which now is free, And, winged with thoughts of truth and majesty, Flits round the tyrant's sceptre like a cloud, And bursts the peopled prisons, and cries aloud, 'My name is Legion!'—that majestic tongue _180 Which Calderon over the desert flung Of ages and of nations; and which found An echo in our hearts, and with the sound Startled oblivion;—thou wert then to me As is a nurse—when inarticulately _185 A child would talk as its grown parents do. If living winds the rapid clouds pursue, If hawks chase doves through the aethereal way, Huntsmen the innocent deer, and beasts their prey, Why should not we rouse with the spirit's blast _190 Out of the forest of the pathless past These recollected pleasures? You are now In London, that great sea, whose ebb and flow At once is deaf and loud, and on the shore Vomits its wrecks, and still howls on for more. _195 Yet in its depth what treasures! You will see That which was Godwin,—greater none than he Though fallen—and fallen on evil times—to stand Among the spirits of our age and land, Before the dread tribunal of "to come" _200 The foremost,—while Rebuke cowers pale and dumb. You will see Coleridge—he who sits obscure In the exceeding lustre and the pure Intense irradiation of a mind, Which, with its own internal lightning blind, _200 Flags wearily through darkness and despair— A cloud-encircled meteor of the air, A hooded eagle among blinking owls.— You will see Hunt—one of those happy souls Which are the salt of the earth, and without whom _210 This world would smell like what it is—a tomb; Who is, what others seem; his room no doubt Is still adorned with many a cast from Shout, With graceful flowers tastefully placed about; And coronals of bay from ribbons hung, _215 And brighter wreaths in neat disorder flung; The gifts of the most learned among some dozens Of female friends, sisters-in-law, and cousins. And there is he with his eternal puns, Which beat the dullest brain for smiles, like duns _220 Thundering for money at a poet's door; Alas! it is no use to say, 'I'm poor!' Or oft in graver mood, when he will look

Things wiser than were ever read in book, Except in Shakespeare's wisest tenderness.— _225 You will see Hogg,—and I cannot express His virtues,—though I know that they are great, Because he locks, then barricades the gate Within which they inhabit;—of his wit And wisdom, you'll cry out when you are bit. _230 He is a pearl within an oyster shell. One of the richest of the deep;—and there Is English Peacock, with his mountain Fair, Turned into a Flamingo;—that shy bird That gleams i' the Indian air—have you not heard _235 When a man marries, dies, or turns Hindoo, His best friends hear no more of him?—but you Will see him, and will like him too, I hope, With the milk-white Snowdonian Antelope Matched with this cameleopard—his fine wit _240 Makes such a wound, the knife is lost in it; A strain too learned for a shallow age, Too wise for selfish bigots; let his page, Which charms the chosen spirits of the time, Fold itself up for the serener clime _245 Of years to come, and find its recompense In that just expectation.—Wit and sense, Virtue and human knowledge; all that might Make this dull world a business of delight, Are all combined in Horace Smith.—And these. _250 With some exceptions, which I need not tease Your patience by descanting on,—are all You and I know in London. I recall My thoughts, and bid you look upon the night. As water does a sponge, so the moonlight _255 Fills the void, hollow, universal air— What see you?—unpavilioned Heaven is fair, Whether the moon, into her chamber gone, Leaves midnight to the golden stars, or wan Climbs with diminished beams the azure steep; _260 Or whether clouds sail o'er the inverse deep, Piloted by the many-wandering blast, And the rare stars rush through them dim and fast:— All this is beautiful in every land.— But what see you beside?—a shabby stand _265 Of Hackney coaches—a brick house or wall Fencing some lonely court, white with the scrawl Of our unhappy politics;—or worse— A wretched woman reeling by, whose curse Mixed with the watchman's, partner of her trade, _270 You must accept in place of serenade— Or yellow-haired Pollonia murmuring To Henry, some unutterable thing. I see a chaos of green leaves and fruit Built round dark caverns,

even to the root _275 Of the living stems that feed them—in whose bowers There sleep in their dark dew the folded flowers; Beyond, the surface of the unsickled corn Trembles not in the slumbering air, and borne In circles quaint, and ever-changing dance, _280 Like winged stars the fire-flies flash and glance, Pale in the open moonshine, but each one Under the dark trees seems a little sun, A meteor tamed; a fixed star gone astray From the silver regions of the milky way;— _285 Afar the Contadino's song is heard, Rude, but made sweet by distance—and a bird Which cannot be the Nightingale, and yet I know none else that sings so sweet as it At this late hour;—and then all is still— _290 Now—Italy or London, which you will!

Next winter you must pass with me; I'll have My house by that time turned into a grave Of dead despondence and low-thoughted care, And all the dreams which our tormentors are; _295 Oh! that Hunt, Hogg, Peacock, and Smith were there, With everything belonging to them fair!— We will have books, Spanish, Italian, Greek; And ask one week to make another week As like his father, as I'm unlike mine, _300 Which is not his fault, as you may divine. Though we eat little flesh and drink no wine, Yet let's be merry: we'll have tea and toast; Custards for supper, and an endless host Of syllabubs and jellies and mince-pies, _305 And other such lady-like luxuries,— Feasting on which we will philosophize! And we'll have fires out of the Grand Duke's wood, To thaw the six weeks' winter in our blood. And then we'll talk;—what shall we talk about? _310 Oh! there are themes enough for many a bout Of thought-entangled descant;—as to nerves— With cones and parallelograms and curves I've sworn to strangle them if once they dare To bother me—when you are with me there. _315 And they shall never more sip laudanum, From Helicon or Himeros (1);—well, come, And in despite of God and of the devil, We'll make our friendly philosophic revel Outlast the leafless time; till buds and flowers _320 Warn the obscure inevitable hours, Sweet meeting by sad parting to renew;— 'To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.'

NOTES: _13 must Bos. manuscript; most edition 1824. _27 philanthropic Bos.

manuscript; philosophic edition 1824. _29 so 1839, 2nd edition; They owed… edition 1824. _36 Which fishers Bos. manuscript; Which fishes edition 1824; With fishes editions 1839. _38 rarely transcript; seldom editions 1824, 1839. _61 lava—cry]lava-cry editions 1824, 1839. _63 towers transcript; towns editions 1824, 1839. _84 queer Bos. manuscript; green transcript, editions 1824, 1839. _92 odd hooks transcript; old books editions 1839 (an evident misprint); old hooks edition 1824. _93 A]An edition 1824. _100 those transcript; them editions 1824, 1839. _101 lead Bos. manuscript; least transcript, editions 1824, 1839. _127 eye Bos. manuscript, transcript, editions 1839; age edition 1824. _140 knew Bos. manuscript; know transcript, editions 1824, 1839. _144 citing Bos. manuscript; acting transcript, editions 1824, 1839. _151 Feasts transcript; Treats editions 1824, 1839. _153 As well it]As it well editions 1824, 1839. _158 believe, and]believe; or editions 1824, 1839. _173 their transcript; the editions 1824, 1839. _188 aethereal transcript; aereal editions 1824, 1839. _197-201 See notes Volume 3. _202 Coleridge]C— edition 1824. So too H—t l. 209; H— l. 226; P— l. 233; H.S. l. 250; H— — and — l. 296. _205 lightning Bos. manuscript, transcript; lustre editions 1824, 1839. _224 read Bos. manuscript; said transcript, editions 1824, 1839. _244 time Bos. manuscript, transcript; age editions 1824, 1839. _245 the transcript: a editions 1824, 1839. _272, _273 found in the 2nd edition of P. W., 1839; wanting in transcript, edition 1824 and 1839, 1st. edition. _276 that transcript; who editions 1824, 1839. _288 the transcript; a editions 1824, 1839. _296 See notes Volume 3. _299, _300 So 1839, 2nd edition; wanting in editions 1824, 1839, 1st. _301 So transcript; wanting in editions 1824, 1839. _317 well, come 1839, 2nd edition; we'll come editions 1824, 1839. 1st. _318 despite of God] transcript; despite of… edition 1824; spite of… editions 1839.

(_317 Imeros, from which the river Himera was named, is, with some slight shade of difference, a synonym of Love.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

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THE WITCH OF ATLAS.

[Composed at the Baths of San Giuliano, near Pisa, August 14-16, 1820; published in Posthumous Poems, edition Mrs. Shelley, 1824. The dedication To Mas-y first appeared in the Poetical Works, 1839, 1st edition Sources of the text are (1) the editio princeps, 1824; (2) editions 1839 (which agree, and, save in two instances, follow edition 1824); (3) an early and incomplete manuscript in Shelley's handwriting (now at the Bodleian, here, as throughout, cited as B.), carefully collated by Mr. C.D. Locock, who printed the results in his Examination of the Shelley manuscripts, etc., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903; (4) a later, yet intermediate, transcript by Mrs. Shelley, the variations of which are noted by Mr. H. Buxton Forman. The original text is modified in many places by variants from the manuscripts, but the readings of edition 1824 are, in every instance, given in the footnotes.]

TO MARY (ON HER OBJECTING TO THE FOLLOWING POEM, UPON THE SCORE OF ITS CONTAINING NO HUMAN INTEREST).

1. How, my dear Mary,—are you critic-bitten (For vipers kill, though dead) by some review, That you condemn these verses I have written, Because they tell no story, false or true? What, though no mice are caught by a young kitten, _5 May it not leap and play as grown cats do, Till its claws come? Prithee, for this one time, Content thee with a visionary rhyme.

2. What hand would crush the silken-winged fly, The youngest of inconstant April's minions, _10 Because it cannot climb the purest sky, Where the swan sings, amid the sun's dominions? Not thine. Thou knowest 'tis its doom to die, When Day shall hide within her twilight pinions The lucent eyes, and the eternal smile, _15 Serene as thine, which lent it life awhile.

3. To thy fair feet a winged Vision came, Whose date should have been longer than a day, And o'er thy head did beat its wings for fame, And in thy sight its fading

plumes display; _20 The watery bow burned in the evening flame. But the shower fell, the swift Sun went his way— And that is dead.—O, let me not believe That anything of mine is fit to live!

4. Wordsworth informs us he was nineteen years _25 Considering and retouching Peter Bell; Watering his laurels with the killing tears Of slow, dull care, so that their roots to Hell Might pierce, and their wide branches blot the spheres Of Heaven, with dewy leaves and flowers; this well _30 May be, for Heaven and Earth conspire to foil The over-busy gardener's blundering toil.

5. My Witch indeed is not so sweet a creature As Ruth or Lucy, whom his graceful praise Clothes for our grandsons—but she matches Peter, _35 Though he took nineteen years, and she three days In dressing. Light the vest of flowing metre She wears; he, proud as dandy with his stays, Has hung upon his wiry limbs a dress Like King Lear's 'looped and windowed raggedness.' _40

6. If you strip Peter, you will see a fellow Scorched by Hell's hyperequatorial climate Into a kind of a sulphureous yellow: A lean mark, hardly fit to fling a rhyme at; In shape a Scaramouch, in hue Othello. _45 If you unveil my Witch, no priest nor primate Can shrive you of that sin,—if sin there be In love, when it becomes idolatry.

THE WITCH OF ATLAS.

1. Before those cruel Twins, whom at one birth Incestuous Change bore to her father Time, _50 Error and Truth, had hunted from the Earth All those bright natures which adorned its prime, And left us nothing to believe in, worth The pains of putting into learned rhyme, A lady-witch there lived on Atlas' mountain _55 Within a cavern, by a secret fountain.

2. Her mother was one of the Atlantides: The all-beholding Sun had ne'er beholden In his wide voyage o'er continents and seas So fair a creature, as she lay enfolden _60 In the warm shadow of her loveliness;— He kissed her with his beams, and

made all golden The chamber of gray rock in which she lay— She, in that dream of joy, dissolved away.

3. ’Tis said, she first was changed into a vapour, _65 And then into a cloud, such clouds as flit, Like splendour-winged moths about a taper, Round the red west when the sun dies in it: And then into a meteor, such as caper On hill-tops when the moon is in a fit: _70 Then, into one of those mysterious stars Which hide themselves between the Earth and Mars.

4. Ten times the Mother of the Months had bent Her bow beside the folding-star, and bidden With that bright sign the billows to indent _75 The sea-deserted sand—like children chidden, At her command they ever came and went— Since in that cave a dewy splendour hidden Took shape and motion: with the living form Of this embodied Power, the cave grew warm. _80

5. A lovely lady garmented in light From her own beauty—deep her eyes, as are Two openings of unfathomable night Seen through a Temple’s cloven roof—her hair Dark—the dim brain whirls dizzy with delight. _85 Picturing her form; her soft smiles shone afar, And her low voice was heard like love, and drew All living things towards this wonder new.

6. And first the spotted cameleopard came, And then the wise and fearless elephant; _90 Then the sly serpent, in the golden flame Of his own volumes intervolved;—all gaunt And sanguine beasts her gentle looks made tame. They drank before her at her sacred fount; And every beast of beating heart grew bold, _95 Such gentleness and power even to behold.

7. The brinded lioness led forth her young, That she might teach them how they should forego Their inborn thirst of death; the pard unstrung His sinews at her feet, and sought to know _100 With looks whose motions spoke without a tongue How he might be as gentle as the doe. The magic circle of her voice and eyes All savage natures did imparadise.

8. And old Silenus, shaking a green stick _105 Of lilies, and the wood-gods in a crew Came, blithe, as in the olive copses thick Cicadae are, drunk with the noonday dew: And Dryope and Faunus followed quick, Teasing the God to sing them something new; _110 Till in this cave they found the lady lone, Sitting upon a seat of emerald stone.

9. And universal Pan, 'tis said, was there, And though none saw him,—through the adamant Of the deep mountains, through the trackless air, _115 And through those living spirits, like a want, He passed out of his everlasting lair Where the quick heart of the great world doth pant, And felt that wondrous lady all alone,— And she felt him, upon her emerald throne. _120

10. And every nymph of stream and spreading tree, And every shepherdess of Ocean's flocks, Who drives her white waves over the green sea, And Ocean with the brine on his gray locks, And quaint Priapus with his company, _125 All came, much wondering how the enwombed rocks Could have brought forth so beautiful a birth;— Her love subdued their wonder and their mirth.

11. The herdsmen and the mountain maidens came, And the rude kings of pastoral Garamant— _130 Their spirits shook within them, as a flame Stirred by the air under a cavern gaunt: Pigmies, and Polyphemes, by many a name, Centaurs, and Satyrs, and such shapes as haunt Wet clefts,—and lumps neither alive nor dead, _135 Dog-headed, bosom-eyed, and bird-footed.

12. For she was beautiful—her beauty made The bright world dim, and everything beside Seemed like the fleeting image of a shade: No thought of living spirit could abide, _140 Which to her looks had ever been betrayed, On any object in the world so wide, On any hope within the circling skies, But on her form, and in her inmost eyes.

13. Which when the lady knew, she took her spindle _145 And twined three threads of fleecy mist, and three Long lines of light, such as the dawn may kindle The

clouds and waves and mountains with; and she As many star-beams, ere their lamps could dwindle In the belated moon, wound skilfully; _150 And with these threads a subtle veil she wove— A shadow for the splendour of her love.

14. The deep recesses of her odorous dwelling Were stored with magic treasures—sounds of air, Which had the power all spirits of compelling, _155 Folded in cells of crystal silence there; Such as we hear in youth, and think the feeling Will never die—yet ere we are aware, The feeling and the sound are fled and gone, And the regret they leave remains alone. _160

15. And there lay Visions swift, and sweet, and quaint, Each in its thin sheath, like a chrysalis, Some eager to burst forth, some weak and faint With the soft burthen of intensest bliss. It was its work to bear to many a saint _165 Whose heart adores the shrine which holiest is, Even Love's:—and others white, green, gray, and black, And of all shapes—and each was at her beck.

16. And odours in a kind of aviary Of ever-blooming Eden-trees she kept, _170 Clipped in a floating net, a love-sick Fairy Had woven from dew-beams while the moon yet slept; As bats at the wired window of a dairy, They beat their vans; and each was an adept, When loosed and missioned, making wings of winds, _175 To stir sweet thoughts or sad, in destined minds.

17. And liquors clear and sweet, whose healthful might Could medicine the sick soul to happy sleep, And change eternal death into a night Of glorious dreams—or if eyes needs must weep, _180 Could make their tears all wonder and delight, She in her crystal vials did closely keep: If men could drink of those clear vials, 'tis said The living were not envied of the dead.

18. Her cave was stored with scrolls of strange device, _185 The works of some Saturnian Archimage, Which taught the expiations at whose price Men from the Gods might win that happy age Too lightly lost, redeeming native vice; And which might quench the Earth-consuming rage _190 Of gold and blood—till men should

live and move Harmonious as the sacred stars above;

19. And how all things that seem untameable, Not to be checked and not to be confined, Obey the spells of Wisdom's wizard skill; _195 Time, earth, and fire—the ocean and the wind, And all their shapes—and man's imperial will; And other scrolls whose writings did unbind The inmost lore of Love—let the profane Tremble to ask what secrets they contain. _200

20. And wondrous works of substances unknown, To which the enchantment of her father's power Had changed those ragged blocks of savage stone, Were heaped in the recesses of her bower; Carved lamps and chalices, and vials which shone _205 In their own golden beams—each like a flower, Out of whose depth a fire-fly shakes his light Under a cypress in a starless night.

21. At first she lived alone in this wild home, And her own thoughts were each a minister, _210 Clothing themselves, or with the ocean foam, Or with the wind, or with the speed of fire, To work whatever purposes might come Into her mind; such power her mighty Sire Had girt them with, whether to fly or run, _215 Through all the regions which he shines upon.

22. The Ocean-nymphs and Hamadryades, Oreads and Naiads, with long weedy locks, Offered to do her bidding through the seas, Under the earth, and in the hollow rocks, _220 And far beneath the matted roots of trees, And in the gnarled heart of stubborn oaks, So they might live for ever in the light Of her sweet presence—each a satellite.

23. 'This may not be,' the wizard maid replied; _225 'The fountains where the Naiades bedew Their shining hair, at length are drained and dried; The solid oaks forget their strength, and strew Their latest leaf upon the mountains wide; The boundless ocean like a drop of dew _230 Will be consumed—the stubborn centre must Be scattered, like a cloud of summer dust.

24. 'And ye with them will perish, one by one;— If I must sigh to think that this

shall be, If I must weep when the surviving Sun _235 Shall smile on your decay—oh, ask not me To love you till your little race is run; I cannot die as ye must—over me Your leaves shall glance—the streams in which ye dwell Shall be my paths henceforth, and so—farewell!’— _240

25. She spoke and wept:—the dark and azure well Sparkled beneath the shower of her bright tears, And every little circlet where they fell Flung to the cavern-roof inconstant spheres And intertangled lines of light:—a knell _245 Of sobbing voices came upon her ears From those departing Forms, o’er the serene Of the white streams and of the forest green.

26. All day the wizard lady sate aloof, Spelling out scrolls of dread antiquity, _250 Under the cavern’s fountain-lighted roof; Or broidering the pictured poesy Of some high tale upon her growing woof, Which the sweet splendour of her smiles could dye In hues outshining heaven—and ever she _255 Added some grace to the wrought poesy.

27. While on her hearth lay blazing many a piece Of sandal wood, rare gums, and cinnamon; Men scarcely know how beautiful fire is— Each flame of it is as a precious stone _260 Dissolved in ever-moving light, and this Belongs to each and all who gaze upon. The Witch beheld it not, for in her hand She held a woof that dimmed the burning brand.

28. This lady never slept, but lay in trance _265 All night within the fountain—as in sleep. Its emerald crags glowed in her beauty’s glance; Through the green splendour of the water deep She saw the constellations reel and dance Like fire-flies—and withal did ever keep _270 The tenour of her contemplations calm, With open eyes, closed feet, and folded palm.

29. And when the whirlwinds and the clouds descended From the white pinnacles of that cold hill, She passed at dewfall to a space extended, _275 Where in a lawn of flowering asphodel Amid a wood of pines and cedars blended, There yawned an

inextinguishable well Of crimson fire—full even to the brim, And overflowing all the margin trim. _280

30. Within the which she lay when the fierce war Of wintry winds shook that innocuous liquor In many a mimic moon and bearded star O’er woods and lawns;—the serpent heard it flicker In sleep, and dreaming still, he crept afar— _285 And when the windless snow descended thicker Than autumn leaves, she watched it as it came Melt on the surface of the level flame.

31. She had a boat, which some say Vulcan wrought For Venus, as the chariot of her star; _290 But it was found too feeble to be fraught With all the ardours in that sphere which are, And so she sold it, and Apollo bought And gave it to this daughter: from a car Changed to the fairest and the lightest boat _295 Which ever upon mortal stream did float.

32. And others say, that, when but three hours old, The first-born Love out of his cradle lept, And clove dun Chaos with his wings of gold, And like a horticultural adept, _300 Stole a strange seed, and wrapped it up in mould, And sowed it in his mother’s star, and kept Watering it all the summer with sweet dew, And with his wings fanning it as it grew.

33. The plant grew strong and green, the snowy flower _305 Fell, and the long and gourd-like fruit began To turn the light and dew by inward power To its own substance; woven tracery ran Of light firm texture, ribbed and branching, o’er The solid rind, like a leaf’s veined fan— _310 Of which Love scooped this boat—and with soft motion Piloted it round the circumfluous ocean.

34. This boat she moored upon her fount, and lit A living spirit within all its frame, Breathing the soul of swiftness into it. _315 Couched on the fountain like a panther tame, One of the twain at Evan’s feet that sit— Or as on Vesta’s sceptre a swift flame— Or on blind Homer’s heart a winged thought,— In joyous expectation lay the boat. _320

35. Then by strange art she kneaded fire and snow Together, tempering the repugnant mass With liquid love—all things together grow Through which the harmony of love can pass; And a fair Shape out of her hands did flow— _325 A living Image, which did far surpass In beauty that bright shape of vital stone Which drew the heart out of Pygmalion.

36. A sexless thing it was, and in its growth It seemed to have developed no defect _330 Of either sex, yet all the grace of both,— In gentleness and strength its limbs were decked; The bosom swelled lightly with its full youth, The countenance was such as might select Some artist that his skill should never die, _335 Imaging forth such perfect purity.

37. From its smooth shoulders hung two rapid wings, Fit to have borne it to the seventh sphere, Tipped with the speed of liquid lightenings, Dyed in the ardours of the atmosphere: _340 She led her creature to the boiling springs Where the light boat was moored, and said: ‘Sit here!’ And pointed to the prow, and took her seat Beside the rudder, with opposing feet.

38. And down the streams which clove those mountains vast, _345 Around their inland islets, and amid The panther-peopled forests whose shade cast Darkness and odours, and a pleasure hid In melancholy gloom, the pinnace passed; By many a star-surrounded pyramid _350 Of icy crag cleaving the purple sky, And caverns yawning round unfathomably.

39. The silver noon into that winding dell, With slanted gleam athwart the forest tops, Tempered like golden evening, feebly fell; _355 A green and glowing light, like that which drops From folded lilies in which glow-worms dwell, When Earth over her face Night’s mantle wraps; Between the severed mountains lay on high, Over the stream, a narrow rift of sky. _360

40. And ever as she went, the Image lay With folded wings and unawakened eyes; And o’er its gentle countenance did play The busy dreams, as thick as summer flies,

Chasing the rapid smiles that would not stay, _365 And drinking the warm tears, and the sweet sighs Inhaling, which, with busy murmur vain, They had aroused from that full heart and brain.

41. And ever down the prone vale, like a cloud Upon a stream of wind, the pinnace went: _370 Now lingering on the pools, in which abode The calm and darkness of the deep content In which they paused; now o’er the shallow road Of white and dancing waters, all besprent With sand and polished pebbles:—mortal boat _375 In such a shallow rapid could not float.

42. And down the earthquaking cataracts which shiver Their snow-like waters into golden air, Or under chasms unfathomable ever Sepulchre them, till in their rage they tear _380 A subterranean portal for the river, It fled—the circling sunbows did upbear Its fall down the hoar precipice of spray, Lighting it far upon its lampless way.

43. And when the wizard lady would ascend _385 The labyrinths of some many-winding vale, Which to the inmost mountain upward tend— She called ‘Hermaphroditus!’—and the pale And heavy hue which slumber could extend Over its lips and eyes, as on the gale _390 A rapid shadow from a slope of grass, Into the darkness of the stream did pass.

44. And it unfurled its heaven-coloured pinions, With stars of fire spotting the stream below; And from above into the Sun’s dominions _395 Flinging a glory, like the golden glow In which Spring clothes her emerald-winged minions, All interwoven with fine feathery snow And moonlight splendour of intensest rime, With which frost paints the pines in winter time. _400

45. And then it winnowed the Elysian air Which ever hung about that lady bright, With its aethereal vans—and speeding there, Like a star up the torrent of the night, Or a swift eagle in the morning glare _405 Breasting the whirlwind with impetuous flight, The pinnace, oared by those enchanted wings, Clove the fierce streams

towards their upper springs.

46. The water flashed, like sunlight by the prow Of a noon-wandering meteor flung to Heaven; _410 The still air seemed as if its waves did flow In tempest down the mountains; loosely driven The lady’s radiant hair streamed to and fro: Beneath, the billows having vainly striven Indignant and impetuous, roared to feel _415 The swift and steady motion of the keel.

47. Or, when the weary moon was in the wane, Or in the noon of interlunar night, The lady-witch in visions could not chain Her spirit; but sailed forth under the light _420 Of shooting stars, and bade extend amain Its storm-outspeeding wings, the Hermaphrodite; She to the Austral waters took her way, Beyond the fabulous Thamondocana,—

48. Where, like a meadow which no scythe has shaven, _425 Which rain could never bend, or whirl-blast shake, With the Antarctic constellations paven, Canopus and his crew, lay the Austral lake— There she would build herself a windless haven Out of the clouds whose moving turrets make _430 The bastions of the storm, when through the sky The spirits of the tempest thundered by:

49. A haven beneath whose translucent floor The tremulous stars sparkled unfathomably, And around which the solid vapours hoar, _435 Based on the level waters, to the sky Lifted their dreadful crags, and like a shore Of wintry mountains, inaccessibly Hemmed in with rifts and precipices gray, And hanging crags, many a cove and bay. _440

50. And whilst the outer lake beneath the lash Of the wind’s scourge, foamed like a wounded thing, And the incessant hail with stony clash Ploughed up the waters, and the flagging wing Of the roused cormorant in the lightning flash _445 Looked like the wreck of some wind-wandering Fragment of inky thunder-smoke—this haven Was as a gem to copy Heaven engraven,—

51. On which that lady played her many pranks, Circling the image of a shooting

star, _450 Even as a tiger on Hydaspes' banks Outspeeds the antelopes which speediest are, In her light boat; and many quips and cranks She played upon the water, till the car Of the late moon, like a sick matron wan, _455 To journey from the misty east began.

52. And then she called out of the hollow turrets Of those high clouds, white, golden and vermilion, The armies of her ministering spirits— In mighty legions, million after million, _460 They came, each troop emblazoning its merits On meteor flags; and many a proud pavilion Of the intertexture of the atmosphere They pitched upon the plain of the calm mere.

53. They framed the imperial tent of their great Queen _465 Of woven exhalations, underlaid With lambent lightning-fire, as may be seen A dome of thin and open ivory inlaid With crimson silk—cressets from the serene Hung there, and on the water for her tread _470 A tapestry of fleece-like mist was strewn, Dyed in the beams of the ascending moon.

54. And on a throne o'erlaid with starlight, caught Upon those wandering isles of aery dew, Which highest shoals of mountain shipwreck not, _475 She sate, and heard all that had happened new Between the earth and moon, since they had brought The last intelligence—and now she grew Pale as that moon, lost in the watery night— And now she wept, and now she laughed outright. _480

55. These were tame pleasures; she would often climb The steepest ladder of the crudded rack Up to some beaked cape of cloud sublime, And like Arion on the dolphin's back Ride singing through the shoreless air;—oft-time _485 Following the serpent lightning's winding track, She ran upon the platforms of the wind, And laughed to hear the fire-balls roar behind.

56. And sometimes to those streams of upper air Which whirl the earth in its diurnal round, _490 She would ascend, and win the spirits there To let her join their chorus. Mortals found That on those days the sky was calm and fair, And mystic snatches of

harmonious sound Wandered upon the earth where'er she passed, _495 And happy thoughts of hope, too sweet to last.

57. But her choice sport was, in the hours of sleep, To glide adown old Nilus, where he threads Egypt and Aethiopia, from the steep Of utmost Axume, until he spreads, _500 Like a calm flock of silver-fleeced sheep, His waters on the plain: and crested heads Of cities and proud temples gleam amid, And many a vapour-belted pyramid.

58. By Moeris and the Mareotid lakes, _505 Strewn with faint blooms like bridal chamber floors, Where naked boys bridling tame water-snakes, Or charioteering ghastly alligators, Had left on the sweet waters mighty wakes Of those huge forms—within the brazen doors _510 Of the great Labyrinth slept both boy and beast, Tired with the pomp of their Osirian feast.

59. And where within the surface of the river The shadows of the massy temples lie, And never are erased—but tremble ever _515 Like things which every cloud can doom to die, Through lotus-paven canals, and wheresoever The works of man pierced that serenest sky With tombs, and towers, and fanes, 'twas her delight To wander in the shadow of the night. _520

60. With motion like the spirit of that wind Whose soft step deepens slumber, her light feet Passed through the peopled haunts of humankind. Scattering sweet visions from her presence sweet, Through fane, and palace-court, and labyrinth mined _525 With many a dark and subterranean street Under the Nile, through chambers high and deep She passed, observing mortals in their sleep.

61. A pleasure sweet doubtless it was to see Mortals subdued in all the shapes of sleep. _530 Here lay two sister twins in infancy; There, a lone youth who in his dreams did weep; Within, two lovers linked innocently In their loose locks which over both did creep Like ivy from one stem;—and there lay calm _535 Old age with snow-bright hair and folded palm.

62. But other troubled forms of sleep she saw, Not to be mirrored in a holy song—

Distortions foul of supernatural awe, And pale imaginings of visioned wrong; _540 And all the code of Custom’s lawless law Written upon the brows of old and young: ‘This,’ said the wizard maiden, ‘is the strife Which stirs the liquid surface of man’s life.’

63. And little did the sight disturb her soul.— _545 We, the weak mariners of that wide lake Where’er its shores extend or billows roll, Our course unpiloted and starless make O’er its wild surface to an unknown goal:— But she in the calm depths her way could take, _550 Where in bright bowers immortal forms abide Beneath the weltering of the restless tide.

64. And she saw princes couched under the glow Of sunlike gems; and round each temple-court In dormitories ranged, row after row, _555 She saw the priests asleep—all of one sort— For all were educated to be so.— The peasants in their huts, and in the port The sailors she saw cradled on the waves, And the dead lulled within their dreamless graves. _560

65. And all the forms in which those spirits lay Were to her sight like the diaphanous Veils, in which those sweet ladies oft array Their delicate limbs, who would conceal from us Only their scorn of all concealment: they _565 Move in the light of their own beauty thus. But these and all now lay with sleep upon them, And little thought a Witch was looking on them.

66. She, all those human figures breathing there, Beheld as living spirits—to her eyes _570 The naked beauty of the soul lay bare, And often through a rude and worn disguise She saw the inner form most bright and fair— And then she had a charm of strange device, Which, murmured on mute lips with tender tone, _575 Could make that spirit mingle with her own.

67. Alas! Aurora, what wouldst thou have given For such a charm when Tithon became gray? Or how much, Venus, of thy silver heaven Wouldst thou have yielded, ere Proserpina _580 Had half (oh! why not all?) the debt forgiven Which dear

Adonis had been doomed to pay, To any witch who would have taught you it? The Heliad doth not know its value yet.

68. 'Tis said in after times her spirit free _585 Knew what love was, and felt itself alone— But holy Dian could not chaster be Before she stooped to kiss Endymion, Than now this lady—like a sexless bee Tasting all blossoms, and confined to none, _590 Among those mortal forms, the wizard-maiden Passed with an eye serene and heart unladen.

69. To those she saw most beautiful, she gave Strange panacea in a crystal bowl:— They drank in their deep sleep of that sweet wave, _595 And lived thenceforward as if some control, Mightier than life, were in them; and the grave Of such, when death oppressed the weary soul, Was as a green and overarching bower Lit by the gems of many a starry flower. _600

70. For on the night when they were buried, she Restored the embalmers' ruining, and shook The light out of the funeral lamps, to be A mimic day within that deathy nook; And she unwound the woven imagery _605 Of second childhood's swaddling bands, and took The coffin, its last cradle, from its niche, And threw it with contempt into a ditch.

71. And there the body lay, age after age. Mute, breathing, beating, warm, and undecaying, _610 Like one asleep in a green hermitage, With gentle smiles about its eyelids playing, And living in its dreams beyond the rage Of death or life; while they were still arraying In liveries ever new, the rapid, blind _615 And fleeting generations of mankind.

72. And she would write strange dreams upon the brain Of those who were less beautiful, and make All harsh and crooked purposes more vain Than in the desert is the serpent's wake _620 Which the sand covers—all his evil gain The miser in such dreams would rise and shake Into a beggar's lap;—the lying scribe Would his own lies betray without a bribe.

73. The priests would write an explanation full, _625 Translating hieroglyphics into Greek, How the God Apis really was a bull, And nothing more; and bid the herald stick The same against the temple doors, and pull The old cant down; they licensed all to speak _630 Whate'er they thought of hawks, and cats, and geese, By pastoral letters to each diocese.

74. The king would dress an ape up in his crown And robes, and seat him on his glorious seat, And on the right hand of the sunlike throne _635 Would place a gaudy mock-bird to repeat The chatterings of the monkey.—Every one Of the prone courtiers crawled to kiss the feet Of their great Emperor, when the morning came, And kissed—alas, how many kiss the same! _640

75. The soldiers dreamed that they were blacksmiths, and Walked out of quarters in somnambulism; Round the red anvils you might see them stand Like Cyclopses in Vulcan's sooty abysm, Beating their swords to ploughshares;—in a band _645 The gaolers sent those of the liberal schism Free through the streets of Memphis, much, I wis, To the annoyance of king Amasis.

76. And timid lovers who had been so coy, They hardly knew whether they loved or not, _650 Would rise out of their rest, and take sweet joy, To the fulfilment of their inmost thought; And when next day the maiden and the boy Met one another, both, like sinners caught, Blushed at the thing which each believed was done _655 Only in fancy—till the tenth moon shone;

77. And then the Witch would let them take no ill: Of many thousand schemes which lovers find, The Witch found one,—and so they took their fill Of happiness in marriage warm and kind. _660 Friends who, by practice of some envious skill, Were torn apart—a wide wound, mind from mind!— She did unite again with visions clear Of deep affection and of truth sincere.

80. These were the pranks she played among the cities _665 Of mortal men, and what she did to Sprites And Gods, entangling them in her sweet ditties To do her

will, and show their subtle sleights, I will declare another time; for it is A tale more fit for the weird winter nights _670 Than for these garish summer days, when we Scarcely believe much more than we can see.

NOTES: _2 dead]deaf cj. A.C. Bradley, who cps. “Adonais” 317. _65 first was transcript, B.; was first edition 1824. _84 Temple’s transcript, B.; tempest’s edition 1824. _165 was its transcript, B.; is its edition 1824. _184 envied so all manuscripts and editions; envious cj. James Thomson (‘B. V.’). _262 upon so all manuscripts and editions: thereon cj. Rossetti. _333 swelled lightly edition 1824, B.; lightly swelled editions 1839; swelling lightly with its full growth transcript. _339 lightenings B., editions 1839; lightnings edition 1824, transcript. _422 Its transcript; His edition 1824, B. _424 Thamondocana transcript, B.; Thamondocona edition 1824. _442 wind’s transcript, B.; winds’ edition 1834. _493 where transcript, B.; when edition 1824. _596 thenceforward B.; thence forth edition 1824; henceforward transcript. _599 Was as a B.; Was a edition 1824. _601 night when transcript; night that edition 1824, B. _612 smiles transcript, B.; sleep edition 1824.

NOTE ON THE WITCH OF ATLAS, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

We spent the summer of 1820 at the Baths of San Giuliano, four miles from Pisa. These baths were of great use to Shelley in soothing his nervous irritability. We made several excursions in the neighbourhood. The country around is fertile, and diversified and rendered picturesque by ranges of near hills and more distant mountains. The peasantry are a handsome intelligent race; and there was a gladsome sunny heaven spread over us, that rendered home and every scene we visited cheerful and bright. During some of the hottest days of August, Shelley made a solitary journey on foot to the summit of Monte San Pellegrino—a mountain of some height, on the top of which there is a chapel, the object, during certain days of the year, of many pilgrimages. The excursion delighted him while it lasted; though he exerted himself too much, and the effect was considerable lassitude and weakness

on his return. During the expedition he conceived the idea, and wrote, in the three days immediately succeeding to his return, the “Witch of Atlas”. This poem is peculiarly characteristic of his tastes—wildly fanciful, full of brilliant imagery, and discarding human interest and passion, to revel in the fantastic ideas that his imagination suggested.

The surpassing excellence of “The Cenci” had made me greatly desire that Shelley should increase his popularity by adopting subjects that would more suit the popular taste than a poem conceived in the abstract and dreamy spirit of the “Witch of Atlas”. It was not only that I wished him to acquire popularity as redounding to his fame; but I believed that he would obtain a greater mastery over his own powers, and greater happiness in his mind, if public applause crowned his endeavours. The few stanzas that precede the poem were addressed to me on my representing these ideas to him. Even now I believe that I was in the right. Shelley did not expect sympathy and approbation from the public; but the want of it took away a portion of the ardour that ought to have sustained him while writing. He was thrown on his own resources, and on the inspiration of his own soul; and wrote because his mind overflowed, without the hope of being appreciated. I had not the most distant wish that he should truckle in opinion, or submit his lofty aspirations for the human race to the low ambition and pride of the many; but I felt sure that, if his poems were more addressed to the common feelings of men, his proper rank among the writers of the day would be acknowledged, and that popularity as a poet would enable his countrymen to do justice to his character and virtues, which in those days it was the mode to attack with the most flagitious calumnies and insulting abuse. That he felt these things deeply cannot be doubted, though he armed himself with the consciousness of acting from a lofty and heroic sense of right. The truth burst from his heart sometimes in solitude, and he would writes few unfinished verses that showed that he felt the sting; among such I find the following:—

‘Alas! this is not what I thought Life was. I knew that there were crimes and evil

men, Misery and hate; nor did I hope to pass Untouched by suffering through the rugged glen. In mine own heart I saw as in a glass The hearts of others…And, when I went among my kind, with triple brass Of calm endurance my weak breast I armed, To bear scorn, fear, and hate—a woful mass!'

I believed that all this morbid feeling would vanish if the chord of sympathy between him and his countrymen were touched. But my persuasions were vain, the mind could not be bent from its natural inclination. Shelley shrunk instinctively from portraying human passion, with its mixture of good and evil, of disappointment and disquiet. Such opened again the wounds of his own heart; and he loved to shelter himself rather in the airiest flights of fancy, forgetting love and hate, and regret and lost hope, in such imaginations as borrowed their hues from sunrise or sunset, from the yellow moonshine or paly twilight, from the aspect of the far ocean or the shadows of the woods,—which celebrated the singing of the winds among the pines, the flow of a murmuring stream, and the thousand harmonious sounds which Nature creates in her solitudes. These are the materials which form the "Witch of Atlas": it is a brilliant congregation of ideas such as his senses gathered, and his fancy coloured, during his rambles in the sunny land he so much loved.

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OEDIPUS TYRANNUS

OR SWELLFOOT THE TYRANT. A TRAGEDY IN TWO ACTS TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL DORIC.

'Choose Reform or Civil War, When through thy streets, instead of hare with dogs, A CONSORT-QUEEN shall hunt a king with hogs, Riding on the IONIAN MINOTAUR.'

[Begun at the Baths of San Giuliano, near Pisa, August 24, 1819; published anonymously by J. Johnston, Cheapside (imprint C.F. Seyfang), 1820. On a threat of prosecution the publisher surrendered the whole impression, seven copies—the total

number sold—excepted. “Oedipus” does not appear in the first edition of the “Poetical Works”, 1839, but it was included by Mrs. Shelley in the second edition of that year. Our text is that of the editio princeps, 1820, save in three places, where the reading of edition 1820 will be found in the notes.]

ADVERTISEMENT.

This Tragedy is one of a triad, or system of three Plays (an arrangement according to which the Greeks were accustomed to connect their dramatic representations), elucidating the wonderful and appalling fortunes of the SWELLFOOT dynasty. It was evidently written by some LEARNED THEBAN, and, from its characteristic dulness, apparently before the duties on the importation of ATTIC SALT had been repealed by the Boeotarchs. The tenderness with which he treats the PIGS proves him to have been a sus Boeotiae; possibly Epicuri de grege porcus; for, as the poet observes,

‘A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind.’

No liberty has been taken with the translation of this remarkable piece of antiquity, except the suppressing a seditious and blasphemous Chorus of the Pigs and Bulls at the last Act. The work Hoydipouse (or more properly Oedipus) has been rendered literally SWELLFOOT, without its having been conceived necessary to determine whether a swelling of the hind or the fore feet of the Swinish Monarch is particularly indicated.

Should the remaining portions of this Tragedy be found, entitled, “Swellfoot in Angaria”, and “Charite”, the Translator might be tempted to give them to the reading Public.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE. TYRANT SWELLFOOT, KING OF THEBES. IONA TAURINA, HIS QUEEN. MAMMON, ARCH-PRIEST OF FAMINE. PURGANAX, DAKRY, LAOCTONOS—WIZARDS, MINISTERS OF SWELLFOOT. THE GADFLY. THE LEECH. THE RAT. MOSES, THE

SOW-GELDER. SOLOMON, THE PORKMAN. ZEPHANIAH, PIG-BUTCHER. THE MINOTAUR. CHORUS OF THE SWINISH MULTITUDE. GUARDS, ATTENDANTS, PRIESTS, ETC., ETC. SCENE.—THEBES. ACT 1. SCENE 1.1.—A MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE, BUILT OF THIGH-BONES AND DEATH'S-HEADS, AND TILED WITH SCALPS. OVER THE ALTAR THE STATUE OF FAMINE, VEILED; A NUMBER OF BOARS, SOWS, AND SUCKING-PIGS, CROWNED WITH THISTLE, SHAMROCK, AND OAK, SITTING ON THE STEPS, AND CLINGING ROUND THE ALTAR OF THE TEMPLE. ENTER SWELLFOOT, IN HIS ROYAL ROBES, WITHOUT PERCEIVING THE PIGS.

SWELLFOOT: Thou supreme Goddess! by whose power divine These graceful limbs are clothed in proud array [HE CONTEMPLATES HIMSELF WITH SATISFACTION.] Of gold and purple, and this kingly paunch Swells like a sail before a favouring breeze, And these most sacred nether promontories _5 Lie satisfied with layers of fat; and these Boeotian cheeks, like Egypt's pyramid, (Nor with less toil were their foundations laid), Sustain the cone of my untroubled brain, That point, the emblem of a pointless nothing! _10 Thou to whom Kings and laurelled Emperors, Radical-butchers, Paper-money-millers, Bishops and Deacons, and the entire army Of those fat martyrs to the persecution Of stifling turtle-soup, and brandy-devils, _15 Offer their secret vows! Thou plenteous Ceres Of their Eleusis, hail!

NOTE: (_8 See Universal History for an account of the number of people who died, and the immense consumption of garlic by the wretched Egyptians, who made a sepulchre for the name as well as the bodies of their tyrants.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.])

SWINE: Eigh! eigh! eigh! eigh!

SWELLFOOT: Ha! what are ye, Who, crowned with leaves devoted to the Furies,

Cling round this sacred shrine?

SWINE: Aigh! aigh! aigh!

SWELLFOOT: What! ye that are The very beasts that, offered at her altar _20 With blood and groans, salt-cake, and fat, and inwards, Ever propitiate her reluctant will When taxes are withheld?

SWINE: Ugh! ugh! ugh!

SWELLFOOT: What! ye who grub With filthy snouts my red potatoes up In Allan's rushy bog? Who eat the oats _25 Up, from my cavalry in the Hebrides? Who swill the hog-wash soup my cooks digest From bones, and rags, and scraps of shoe-leather, Which should be given to cleaner Pigs than you?

SWINE—SEMICHORUS 1: The same, alas! the same; _30 Though only now the name Of Pig remains to me.

SEMICHORUS 2: If 'twere your kingly will Us wretched Swine to kill, What should we yield to thee? _35

SWELLFOOT: Why, skin and bones, and some few hairs for mortar.

CHORUS OF SWINE: I have heard your Laureate sing, That pity was a royal thing; Under your mighty ancestors, we Pigs Were bless'd as nightingales on myrtle sprigs, _40 Or grasshoppers that live on noonday dew, And sung, old annals tell, as sweetly too; But now our sties are fallen in, we catch The murrain and the mange, the scab and itch; Sometimes your royal dogs tear down our thatch, _45 And then we seek the shelter of a ditch; Hog-wash or grains, or ruta-baga, none Has yet been ours since your reign begun.

FIRST SOW: My Pigs, 'tis in vain to tug.

SECOND SOW: I could almost eat my litter. _50

FIRST PIG: I suck, but no milk will come from the dug.

SECOND PIG: Our skin and our bones would be bitter.

THE BOARS: We fight for this rag of greasy rug, Though a trough of wash would be fitter.

SEMICHORUS: Happier Swine were they than we, _55 Drowned in the Gadarean sea— I wish that pity would drive out the devils, Which in your royal bosom hold their revels, And sink us in the waves of thy compassion! Alas! the Pigs are an unhappy nation! _60 Now if your Majesty would have our bristles To bind your mortar with, or fill our colons With rich blood, or make brawn out of our gristles, In policy—ask else your royal Solons— You ought to give us hog-wash and clean straw, _65 And sties well thatched; besides it is the law!

NOTE: _59 thy edition 1820; your edition 1839.

SWELLFOOT: This is sedition, and rank blasphemy! Ho! there, my guards!

[ENTER A GUARD.]

GUARD: Your sacred Majesty.

SWELLFOOT: Call in the Jews, Solomon the court porkman, Moses the sow-gelder, and Zephaniah _70 The hog-butcher.

GUARD: They are in waiting, Sire.

[ENTER SOLOMON, MOSES, AND ZEPHANIAH.]

SWELLFOOT: Out with your knife, old Moses, and spay those Sows [THE PIGS RUN ABOUT IN CONSTERNATION.] That load the earth with Pigs; cut close and deep. Moral restraint I see has no effect, Nor prostitution, nor our own example, _75 Starvation, typhus-fever, war, nor prison— This was the art which the arch-priest of Famine Hinted at in his charge to the Theban clergy— Cut close and deep, good Moses.

MOSES: Let your Majesty Keep the Boars quiet, else—

SWELLFOOT: Zephaniah, cut _80 That fat Hog’s throat, the brute seems overfed; Seditious hunks! to whine for want of grains.

ZEPHANIAH: Your sacred Majesty, he has the dropsy;— We shall find pints of hydatids in ‘s liver, He has not half an inch of wholesome fat _85 Upon his carious ribs—

SWELLFOOT: ’Tis all the same, He’ll serve instead of riot money, when Our murmuring troops bivouac in Thebes’ streets And January winds, after a day Of butchering, will make them relish carrion. _90 Now, Solomon, I’ll sell you in a lump The whole kit of them.

SOLOMON: Why, your Majesty, I could not give—

SWELLFOOT: Kill them out of the way, That shall be price enough, and let me hear Their everlasting grunts and whines no more! _95

[EXEUNT, DRIVING IN THE SWINE. ENTER MAMM0N, THE ARCH-PRIEST, AND PURGANAX, CHIEF OF THE COUNCIL OF WIZARDS.]

PURGANAX: The future looks as black as death, a cloud, Dark as the frown of Hell, hangs over it— The troops grow mutinous—the revenue fails— There’s something rotten in us—for the level _100 Of the State slopes, its very bases topple, The boldest turn their backs upon themselves!

MAMMON: Why what’s the matter, my dear fellow, now? Do the troops mutiny?—decimate some regiments; Does money fail?—come to my mint—coin paper, Till gold be at a discount, and ashamed _105 To show his bilious face, go purge himself, In emulation of her vestal whiteness.

PURGANAX: Oh, would that this were all! The oracle!!

MAMMON: Why it was I who spoke that oracle, And whether I was dead drunk or inspired, _110 I cannot well remember; nor, in truth, The oracle itself!

PURGANAX: The words went thus:— ‘Boeotia, choose reform or civil war! When through the streets, instead of hare with dogs, A Consort Queen shall hunt a King with Hogs, _115 Riding on the Ionian Minotaur.’

MAMMON: Now if the oracle had ne’er foretold This sad alternative, it must arrive, Or not, and so it must now that it has; And whether I was urged by grace divine _120 Or Lesbian liquor to declare these words, Which must, as all words must, be false or true, It matters not: for the same Power made all, Oracle, wine, and me and you—or none— ’Tis the same thing. If you knew as much _125 Of oracles as I do—

PURGANAX: You arch-priests Believe in nothing; if you were to dream Of a particular number in the Lottery, You would not buy the ticket?

MAMMON: Yet our tickets Are seldom blanks. But what steps have you taken? _130 For prophecies, when once they get abroad, Like liars who tell the truth to serve their ends, Or hypocrites who, from assuming virtue, Do the same actions that the virtuous do, Contrive their own fulfilment. This Iona— _135 Well—you know what the chaste Pasiphae did, Wife to that most religious King of Crete, And still how popular the tale is here; And these dull Swine of Thebes boast their descent From the free Minotaur. You know they still _140 Call themselves Bulls, though thus degenerate, And everything relating to a Bull Is popular and respectable in Thebes. Their arms are seven Bulls in a field gules; They think their strength consists in eating beef,— _145 Now there were danger in the precedent If Queen Iona—

NOTES: _114 the edition 1820; thy cj. Forman; cf. Motto below Title, and II. i, 153-6. ticket? edition 1820; ticket! edition 1839. _135 their own Mrs. Shelley, later editions; their editions 1820 and 1839.

PURGANAX: I have taken good care That shall not be. I struck the crust o’ the earth With this enchanted rod, and Hell lay bare! And from a cavern full of ugly shapes _150 I chose a LEECH, a GADFLY, and a RAT. The Gadfly was the same which Juno sent To agitate Io, and which Ezekiel mentions That the Lord whistled for out of the mountains Of utmost Aethiopia, to torment _155 Mesopotamian Babylon. The beast Has a loud trumpet like the scarabee, His crooked tail is barbed

with many stings, Each able to make a thousand wounds, and each Immedicable; from his convex eyes _160 He sees fair things in many hideous shapes, And trumpets all his falsehood to the world. Like other beetles he is fed on dung— He has eleven feet with which he crawls, Trailing a blistering slime, and this foul beast _165 Has tracked Iona from the Theban limits, From isle to isle, from city unto city, Urging her flight from the far Chersonese To fabulous Solyma, and the Aetnean Isle, Ortygia, Melite, and Calypso's Rock, _170 And the swart tribes of Garamant and Fez, Aeolia and Elysium, and thy shores, Parthenope, which now, alas! are free! And through the fortunate Saturnian land, Into the darkness of the West.

NOTES: (_153 (Io) The Promethetes Bound of Aeschylus.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]) (_153 (Ezekiel) And the Lord whistled for the gadfly out of Aethiopia, and for the bee of Egypt, etc.—EZEKIEL.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.])

MAMMON: But if _175 This Gadfly should drive Iona hither?

PURGANAX: Gods! what an IF! but there is my gray RAT: So thin with want, he can crawl in and out Of any narrow chink and filthy hole, And he shall creep into her dressing-room, _180 And—

MAMMON: My dear friend, where are your wits? as if She does not always toast a piece of cheese And bait the trap? and rats, when lean enough To crawl through SUCH chinks—

PURGANAX: But my LEECH—a leech Fit to suck blood, with lubricous round rings, _185 Capaciously expatiative, which make His little body like a red balloon, As full of blood as that of hydrogen, Sucked from men's hearts; insatiably he sucks And clings and pulls—a horse-leech, whose deep maw _190 The plethoric King Swellfoot could not fill, And who, till full, will cling for ever.

MAMMON: This For Queen Jona would suffice, and less; But 'tis the Swinish multitude I fear, And in that fear I have—

PURGANAX: Done what?

MAMMON: Disinherited _195 My eldest son Chrysaor, because he Attended public meetings, and would always Stand prating there of commerce, public faith, Economy, and unadulterate coin, And other topics, ultra-radical; _200 And have entailed my estate, called the Fool's Paradise, And funds in fairy-money, bonds, and bills, Upon my accomplished daughter Banknotina, And married her to the gallows. [1]

NOTE: (_204 'If one should marry a gallows, and beget young gibbets, I never saw one so prone.—CYMBELINE.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

PURGANAX: A good match!

MAMMON: A high connexion, Purganax. The bridegroom _205 Is of a very ancient family, Of Hounslow Heath, Tyburn, and the New Drop, And has great influence in both Houses;—oh! He makes the fondest husband; nay, TOO fond,— New-married people should not kiss in public; _210 But the poor souls love one another so! And then my little grandchildren, the gibbets, Promising children as you ever saw,— The young playing at hanging, the elder learning How to hold radicals. They are well taught too, _215 For every gibbet says its catechism And reads a select chapter in the Bible Before it goes to play.

[A MOST TREMENDOUS HUMMING IS HEARD.]

PURGANAX: Ha! what do I hear?

[ENTER THE GADFLY.]

MAMMON: Your Gadfly, as it seems, is tired of gadding.

GADFLY: Hum! hum! hum! _220 From the lakes of the Alps, and the cold gray scalps Of the mountains, I come! Hum! hum! hum! From Morocco and Fez, and the high palaces Of golden Byzantium; _225 From the temples divine of old Palestine, From Athens and Rome, With a ha! and a hum! I come! I come!

All inn-doors and windows _230 Were open to me: I saw all that sin does, Which

lamps hardly see That burn in the night by the curtained bed,— The impudent lamps! for they blushed not red, _235 Dinging and singing, From slumber I rung her, Loud as the clank of an ironmonger; Hum! hum! hum!

Far, far, far! _240 With the trump of my lips, and the sting at my hips, I drove her—afar! Far, far, far! From city to city, abandoned of pity, A ship without needle or star;— _245 Homeless she passed, like a cloud on the blast, Seeking peace, finding war;— She is here in her car, From afar, and afar;— Hum! hum! _250

I have stung her and wrung her, The venom is working;— And if you had hung her With canting and quirking, She could not be deader than she will be soon;— _255 I have driven her close to you, under the moon, Night and day, hum! hum! ha! I have hummed her and drummed her From place to place, till at last I have dumbed her, Hum! hum! hum! _260

NOTE: _260 Edd. 1820, 1839 have no stage direction after this line.

[ENTER THE LEECH AND THE RAT.]

LEECH: I will suck Blood or muck! The disease of the state is a plethory, Who so fit to reduce it as I?

RAT: I’ll slily seize and _265 Let blood from her weasand,— Creeping through crevice, and chink, and cranny, With my snaky tail, and my sides so scranny.

PURGANAX: Aroint ye! thou unprofitable worm! [TO THE LEECH.] And thou, dull beetle, get thee back to hell! _270 [TO THE GADFLY.] To sting the ghosts of Babylonian kings, And the ox-headed Io—

SWINE (WITHIN): Ugh, ugh, ugh! Hail! Iona the divine, We will be no longer Swine, But Bulls with horns and dewlaps.

RAT: For, _275 You know, my lord, the Minotaur—

PURGANAX (FIERCELY): Be silent! get to hell! or I will call The cat out of the kitchen. Well, Lord Mammon, This is a pretty business.

[EXIT THE RAT.]

MAMMON: I will go And spell some scheme to make it ugly then.— _280

[EXIT.] [ENTER SWELLFOOT.]

SWELLFOOT: She is returned! Taurina is in Thebes, When Swellfoot wishes that she were in hell! Oh, Hymen, clothed in yellow jealousy, And waving o'er the couch of wedded kings The torch of Discord with its fiery hair; _285 This is thy work, thou patron saint of queens! Swellfoot is wived! though parted by the sea, The very name of wife had conjugal rights; Her cursed image ate, drank, slept with me, And in the arms of Adiposa oft 290 Her memory has received a husband's— [A LOUD TUMULT, AND CRIES OF 'IONA FOR EVER —NO SWELLFOOT!'] Hark! How the Swine cry Iona Taurina; I suffer the real presence; Purganax, Off with her head!

PURGANAX: But I must first impanel A jury of the Pigs.

SWELLFOOT: Pack them then. _295

PURGANAX: Or fattening some few in two separate sties. And giving them clean straw, tying some bits Of ribbon round their legs—giving their Sows Some tawdry lace, and bits of lustre glass, And their young Boars white and red rags, and tails _300 Of cows, and jay feathers, and sticking cauliflowers Between the ears of the old ones; and when They are persuaded, that by the inherent virtue Of these things, they are all imperial Pigs, Good Lord! they'd rip each other's bellies up, _305 Not to say, help us in destroying her.

SWELLFOOT: This plan might be tried too;—where's General Laoctonos? [ENTER LAOCTONOS AND DAKRY.] It is my royal pleasure That you, Lord General, bring the head and body, If separate it would please me better, hither _310 Of Queen Iona.

LAOCTONOS: That pleasure I well knew, And made a charge with those battalions bold, Called, from their dress and grin, the royal apes, Upon the Swine, who in a

hollow square Enclosed her, and received the first attack _315 Like so many rhinoceroses, and then Retreating in good order, with bare tusks And wrinkled snouts presented to the foe, Bore her in triumph to the public sty. What is still worse, some Sows upon the ground _320 Have given the ape-guards apples, nuts, and gin, And they all whisk their tails aloft, and cry, ‘Long live Iona! down with Swellfoot!’

PURGANAX: Hark!

THE SWINE (WITHOUT): Long live Iona! down with Swellfoot!

DAKRY: I Went to the garret of the swineherd’s tower, _325 Which overlooks the sty, and made a long Harangue (all words) to the assembled Swine, Of delicacy mercy, judgement, law, Morals, and precedents, and purity, Adultery, destitution, and divorce, _330 Piety, faith, and state necessity, And how I loved the Queen!—and then I wept With the pathos of my own eloquence, And every tear turned to a mill-stone, which Brained many a gaping Pig, and there was made _335 A slough of blood and brains upon the place, Greased with the pounded bacon; round and round The mill-stones rolled, ploughing the pavement up, And hurling Sucking-Pigs into the air, With dust and stones.—

[ENTER MAMMON.]

MAMMON: I wonder that gray wizards _340 Like you should be so beardless in their schemes; It had been but a point of policy To keep Iona and the Swine apart. Divide and rule! but ye have made a junction Between two parties who will govern you _345 But for my art.—Behold this BAG! it is The poison BAG of that Green Spider huge, On which our spies skulked in ovation through The streets of Thebes, when they were paved with dead: A bane so much the deadlier fills it now _350 As calumny is worse than death,—for here The Gadfly’s venom, fifty times distilled, Is mingled with the vomit of the Leech, In due proportion, and black ratsbane, which That very Rat, who, like the Pontic tyrant, _355 Nurtures himself on poison, dare not touch;— All is sealed up with the broad seal of Fraud, Who is the Devil’s Lord High

Chancellor, And over it the Primate of all Hell Murmured this pious baptism:—‘Be thou called _360 The GREEN BAG; and this power and grace be thine: That thy contents, on whomsoever poured, Turn innocence to guilt, and gentlest looks To savage, foul, and fierce deformity. Let all baptized by thy infernal dew _365 Be called adulterer, drunkard, liar, wretch! No name left out which orthodoxy loves, Court Journal or legitimate Review!— Be they called tyrant, beast, fool, glutton, lover Of other wives and husbands than their own— _370 The heaviest sin on this side of the Alps! Wither they to a ghastly caricature Of what was human!—let not man or beast Behold their face with unaverted eyes! Or hear their names with ears that tingle not _375 With blood of indignation, rage, and shame!’— This is a perilous liquor;—good my Lords.— [SWELLFOOT APPROACHES TO TOUCH THE GREEN BAG.] Beware! for God’s sake, beware!-if you should break The seal, and touch the fatal liquor—

NOTE: _373 or edition 1820; nor edition 1839.

PURGANAX: There, Give it to me. I have been used to handle _380 All sorts of poisons. His dread Majesty Only desires to see the colour of it.

MAMMON: Now, with a little common sense, my Lords, Only undoing all that has been done (Yet so as it may seem we but confirm it), _385 Our victory is assured. We must entice Her Majesty from the sty, and make the Pigs Believe that the contents of the GREEN BAG Are the true test of guilt or innocence. And that, if she be guilty, ‘twill transform her _390 To manifest deformity like guilt. If innocent, she will become transfigured Into an angel, such as they say she is; And they will see her flying through the air, So bright that she will dim the noonday sun; _395 Showering down blessings in the shape of comfits. This, trust a priest, is just the sort of thing Swine will believe. I’ll wager you will see them Climbing upon the thatch of their low sties, With pieces of smoked glass, to watch her sail _400 Among the clouds, and some will hold the flaps Of one another’s ears between their teeth, To

catch the coming hail of comfits in. You, Purganax, who have the gift o' the gab, Make them a solemn speech to this effect: _405 I go to put in readiness the feast Kept to the honour of our goddess Famine, Where, for more glory, let the ceremony Take place of the uglification of the Queen.

DAKRY (TO SWELLFOOT): I, as the keeper of your sacred conscience, _410 Humbly remind your Majesty that the care Of your high office, as Man-milliner To red Bellona, should not be deferred.

PURGANAX: All part, in happier plight to meet again.

[EXEUNT.] END OF THE ACT 1.

ACT 2.

SCENE 1.2: THE PUBLIC STY. THE BOARS IN FULL ASSEMBLY. ENTER PURGANAX.

PURGANAX: Grant me your patience, Gentlemen and Boars, Ye, by whose patience under public burthens The glorious constitution of these sties Subsists, and shall subsist. The Lean-Pig rates Grow with the growing populace of Swine, _5 The taxes, that true source of Piggishness (How can I find a more appropriate term To include religion, morals, peace, and plenty, And all that fit Boeotia as a nation To teach the other nations how to live?), _10 Increase with Piggishness itself; and still Does the revenue, that great spring of all The patronage, and pensions, and by-payments, Which free-born Pigs regard with jealous eyes, Diminish, till at length, by glorious steps, _15 All the land's produce will be merged in taxes, And the revenue will amount to—nothing! The failure of a foreign market for Sausages, bristles, and blood-puddings, And such home manufactures, is but partial; _20 And, that the population of the Pigs, Instead of hog-wash, has been fed on straw And water, is a fact which is—you know— That is—it is a state-necessity— Temporary, of course. Those impious Pigs, _25 Who, by frequent squeaks, have dared impugn The settled Swellfoot system, or to make Irreverent mockery of the genuflexions

Inculcated by the arch-priest, have been whipped Into a loyal and an orthodox whine. _30 Things being in this happy state, the Queen Iona—

NOTE: _16 land’s]lands edition 1820.

A LOUD CRY FROM THE PIGS: She is innocent! most innocent!

PURGANAX: That is the very thing that I was saying, Gentlemen Swine; the Queen Iona being Most innocent, no doubt, returns to Thebes, _35 And the lean Sows and Bears collect about her, Wishing to make her think that WE believe (I mean those more substantial Pigs, who swill Rich hog-wash, while the others mouth damp straw) That she is guilty; thus, the Lean-Pig faction _40 Seeks to obtain that hog-wash, which has been Your immemorial right, and which I will Maintain you in to the last drop of—

A BOAR (INTERRUPTING HIM): What Does any one accuse her of?

PURGANAX: Why, no one Makes ANY positive accusation;—but _45 There were hints dropped, and so the privy wizards Conceived that it became them to advise His Majesty to investigate their truth;— Not for his own sake; he could be content To let his wife play any pranks she pleased, _50 If, by that sufferance, HE could please the Pigs; But then he fears the morals of the Swine, The Sows especially, and what effect It might produce upon the purity and Religion of the rising generation _55 Of Sucking-Pigs, if it could be suspected That Queen Iona—

[A PAUSE.]

FIRST BOAR: Well, go on; we long To hear what she can possibly have done.

PURGANAX: Why, it is hinted, that a certain Bull— Thus much is KNOWN:—the milk-white Bulls that feed _60 Beside Clitumnus and the crystal lakes Of the Cisalpine mountains, in fresh dews Of lotus-grass and blossoming asphodel Sleeking their silken hair, and with sweet breath Loading the morning winds until they faint _65 With living fragrance, are so beautiful!— Well, I say nothing;—but Europa rode On such a one from Asia into Crete, And the enamoured sea grew calm

beneath His gliding beauty. And Pasiphae, _70 Iona's grandmother,—but SHE is innocent! And that both you and I, and all assert.

FIRST BOAR: Most innocent!

PURGANAX: Behold this BAG; a bag—

SECOND BOAR: Oh! no GREEN BAGS!! Jealousy's eyes are green, Scorpions are green, and water-snakes, and efts, _75 And verdigris, and—

PURGANAX: Honourable Swine, In Piggish souls can prepossessions reign? Allow me to remind you, grass is green— All flesh is grass;—no bacon but is flesh— Ye are but bacon. This divining BAG _80 (Which is not green, but only bacon colour) Is filled with liquor, which if sprinkled o'er A woman guilty of—we all know what— Makes her so hideous, till she finds one blind She never can commit the like again. _85 If innocent, she will turn into an angel, And rain down blessings in the shape of comfits As she flies up to heaven. Now, my proposal Is to convert her sacred Majesty Into an angel (as I am sure we shall do), _90 By pouring on her head this mystic water. [SHOWING THE BAG.] I know that she is innocent; I wish Only to prove her so to all the world.

FIRST BOAR: Excellent, just, and noble Purganax.

SECOND BOAR: How glorious it will be to see her Majesty _95 Flying above our heads, her petticoats Streaming like—like—like—

THIRD BOAR: Anything.

PURGANAX: Oh no! But like a standard of an admiral's ship, Or like the banner of a conquering host, Or like a cloud dyed in the dying day, _100 Unravelled on the blast from a white mountain; Or like a meteor, or a war-steed's mane, Or waterfall from a dizzy precipice Scattered upon the wind.

FIRST BOAR: Or a cow's tail.

SECOND BOAR: Or ANYTHING, as the learned Boar observed. _105

PURGANAX: Gentlemen Boars, I move a resolution, That her most sacred Majesty should be Invited to attend the feast of Famine, And to receive upon her chaste white body Dews of Apotheosis from this BAG. _110

[A GREAT CONFUSION IS HEARD OF THE PIGS OUT OF DOORS, WHICH COMMUNICATES ITSELF TO THOSE WITHIN. DURING THE FIRST STROPHE, THE DOORS OF THE STY ARE STAVED IN, AND A NUMBER OF EXCEEDINGLY LEAN PIGS AND SOWS AND BOARS RUSH IN.]

SEMICHORUS 1: No! Yes!

SEMICHORUS 2: Yes! No!

SEMICHORUS 1: A law!

SEMICHORUS 2: A flaw!

SEMICHORUS 1: Porkers, we shall lose our wash, _115 Or must share it with the Lean-Pigs!

FIRST BOAR: Order! order! be not rash! Was there ever such a scene, Pigs!

AN OLD SOW (RUSHING IN): I never saw so fine a dash Since I first began to wean Pigs. _120

SECOND BOAR (SOLEMNLY): The Queen will be an angel time enough. I vote, in form of an amendment, that Purganax rub a little of that stuff Upon his face.

PURGANAX [HIS HEART IS SEEN TO BEAT THROUGH HIS WAISTCOAT]: Gods! What would ye be at?

SEMICHORUS 1: Purganax has plainly shown a _125 Cloven foot and jackdaw feather.

SEMICHORUS 2: I vote Swellfoot and Iona Try the magic test together; Whenever royal spouses bicker, Both should try the magic liquor. _130

AN OLD BOAR [ASIDE]: A miserable state is that of Pigs, For if their drivers would tear caps and wigs, The Swine must bite each other’s ear therefore.

AN OLD SOW [ASIDE]: A wretched lot Jove has assigned to Swine, Squabbling makes Pig-herds hungry, and they dine _135 On bacon, and whip Sucking-Pigs the more.

CHORUS: Hog-wash has been ta'en away: If the Bull-Queen is divested, We shall be in every way Hunted, stripped, exposed, molested; _140 Let us do whate'er we may, That she shall not be arrested. QUEEN, we entrench you with walls of brawn, And palisades of tusks, sharp as a bayonet: Place your most sacred person here. We pawn _145 Our lives that none a finger dare to lay on it. Those who wrong you, wrong us; Those who hate you, hate us; Those who sting you, sting us; Those who bait you, bait us; _150 The ORACLE is now about to be Fulfilled by circumvolving destiny; Which says: 'Thebes, choose REFORM or CIVIL WAR, When through your streets, instead of hare with dogs, A CONSORT QUEEN shall hunt a KING with Hogs, _155 Riding upon the IONIAN MINOTAUR.'

NOTE: _154 streets instead edition 1820.

[ENTER IONA TAURINA.]

IONA TAURINA (COMING FORWARD): Gentlemen Swine, and gentle Lady-Pigs, The tender heart of every Boar acquits Their QUEEN, of any act incongruous With native Piggishness, and she, reposing _160 With confidence upon the grunting nation, Has thrown herself, her cause, her life, her all, Her innocence, into their Hoggish arms; Nor has the expectation been deceived Of finding shelter there. Yet know, great Boars, _165 (For such whoever lives among you finds you, And so do I), the innocent are proud! I have accepted your protection only In compliment of your kind love and care, Not for necessity. The innocent _170 Are safest there where trials and dangers wait; Innocent Queens o'er white-hot ploughshares tread Unsinged, and ladies, Erin's laureate sings it, Decked with rare gems, and beauty rarer still, Walked from Killarney to the Giant's Causeway, _175 Through rebels, smugglers, troops of yeomanry, White-boys and Orange-boys, and

constables, Tithe-proctors, and excise people, uninjured! Thus I!— Lord Purganax, I do commit myself _180 Into your custody, and am prepared To stand the test, whatever it may be!

NOTE: (_173 ‘Rich and rare were the gems she wore.’ See Moore’s “Irish Melodies”.— [SHELLEY’S NOTE.])

PURGANAX: This magnanimity in your sacred Majesty Must please the Pigs. You cannot fail of being A heavenly angel. Smoke your bits of glass, _185 Ye loyal Swine, or her transfiguration Will blind your wondering eyes.

AN OLD BOAR [ASIDE]: Take care, my Lord, They do not smoke you first.

PURGANAX: At the approaching feast Of Famine, let the expiation be.

SWINE: Content! content!

IONA TAURINA [ASIDE]: I, most content of all, _190 Know that my foes even thus prepare their fall!

[EXEUNT OMNES.] SCENE 2.2: THE INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE OF FAMINE. THE STATUE OF THE GODDESS, A SKELETON CLOTHED IN PARTI-COLOURED RAGS, SEATED UPON A HEAP OF SKULLS AND LOAVES INTERMINGLED. A NUMBER OF EXCEEDINGLY FAT PRIESTS IN BLACK GARMENTS ARRAYED ON EACH SIDE, WITH MARROW-BONES AND CLEAVERS IN THEIR HANDS. [SOLOMON, THE COURT PORKMAN.] A FLOURISH OF TRUMPETS. ENTER MAMMON AS ARCH-PRIEST, SWELLFOOT, DAKRY, PURGANAX, LAOCTONOS, FOLLOWED BY IONA TAURINA GUARDED. ON THE OTHER SIDE ENTER THE SWINE.

CHORUS OF PRIESTS, ACCOMPANIED BY THE COURT PORKMAN ON MARROW-BONES AND CLEAVERS: GODDESS bare, and gaunt, and pale, Empress of the world, all hail! What though Cretans old called thee City-crested Cybele? We call thee FAMINE! _5 Goddess of fasts and feasts, starving and cramming! Through thee, for emperors, kings, and priests and lords, Who rule by

viziers, sceptres, bank-notes, words, The earth pours forth its plenteous fruits, Corn, wool, linen, flesh, and roots— _10 Those who consume these fruits through thee grow fat, Those who produce these fruits through thee grow lean, Whatever change takes place, oh, stick to that! And let things be as they have ever been; At least while we remain thy priests, _15 And proclaim thy fasts and feasts. Through thee the sacred SWELLFOOT dynasty Is based upon a rock amid that sea Whose waves are Swine—so let it ever be!

[SWELLFOOT, ETC., SEAT THEMSELVES AT A TABLE MAGNIFICENTLY COVERED AT THE UPPER END OF THE TEMPLE. ATTENDANTS PASS OVER THE STAGE WITH HOG-WASH IN PAILS. A NUMBER OF PIGS, EXCEEDINGLY LEAN, FOLLOW THEM LICKING UP THE WASH.]

MAMMON: I fear your sacred Majesty has lost _20 The appetite which you were used to have. Allow me now to recommend this dish— A simple kickshaw by your Persian cook, Such as is served at the great King’s second table. The price and pains which its ingredients cost _25 Might have maintained some dozen families A winter or two—not more—so plain a dish Could scarcely disagree.—

SWELLFOOT: After the trial, And these fastidious Pigs are gone, perhaps I may recover my lost appetite,— _30 I feel the gout flying about my stomach— Give me a glass of Maraschino punch.

PURGANAX (FILLING HIS GLASS, AND STANDING UP): The glorious Constitution of the Pigs!

ALL: A toast! a toast! stand up, and three times three!

DAKRY: No heel-taps—darken daylights! —

LAOCTONOS: Claret, somehow, _35 Puts me in mind of blood, and blood of claret!

SWELLFOOT: Laoctonos is fishing for a compliment, But ’tis his due. Yes, you have drunk more wine, And shed more blood, than any man in Thebes. [TO

PURGANAX.] For God’s sake stop the grunting of those Pigs! _40

PURGANAX: We dare not, Sire, ’tis Famine’s privilege.

CHORUS OF SWINE: Hail to thee, hail to thee, Famine! Thy throne is on blood, and thy robe is of rags; Thou devil which livest on damning; Saint of new churches, and cant, and GREEN BAGS, _45 Till in pity and terror thou risest, Confounding the schemes of the wisest; When thou liftest thy skeleton form, When the loaves and the skulls roll about, We will greet thee-the voice of a storm _50 Would be lost in our terrible shout!

Then hail to thee, hail to thee, Famine! Hail to thee, Empress of Earth! When thou risest, dividing possessions; When thou risest, uprooting oppressions, _55 In the pride of thy ghastly mirth; Over palaces, temples, and graves, We will rush as thy minister-slaves, Trampling behind in thy train, Till all be made level again! _60

MAMMON: I hear a crackling of the giant bones Of the dread image, and in the black pits Which once were eyes, I see two livid flames. These prodigies are oracular, and show The presence of the unseen Deity. _65 Mighty events are hastening to their doom!

SWELLFOOT: I only hear the lean and mutinous Swine Grunting about the temple.

DAKRY: In a crisis Of such exceeding delicacy, I think We ought to put her Majesty, the QUEEN, _70 Upon her trial without delay.

MAMMON: THE BAG Is here.

PURGANAX: I have rehearsed the entire scene With an ox-bladder and some ditchwater, On Lady P—; it cannot fail. [TAKING UP THE BAG.] Your Majesty [TO SWELLFOOT.] In such a filthy business had better _75 Stand on one side, lest it should sprinkle you. A spot or two on me would do no harm, Nay, it might hide the blood, which the sad Genius Of the Green Isle has fixed, as by a spell, Upon my brow—which would stain all its seas, _80 But which those seas could never wash away!

IONA TAURINA: My Lord, I am ready—nay, I am impatient To undergo the test. [A GRACEFUL FIGURE IN A SEMI-TRANSPARENT VEIL PASSES UNNOTICED THROUGH THE TEMPLE; THE WORD “LIBERTY” IS SEEN THROUGH THE VEIL, AS IF IT WERE WRITTEN IN FIRE UPON ITS FOREHEAD. ITS WORDS ARE ALMOST DROWNED IN THE FURIOUS GRUNTING OF THE PIGS, AND THE BUSINESS OF THE TRIAL. SHE KNEELS ON THE STEPS OF THE ALTAR, AND SPEAKS IN TONES AT FIRST FAINT AND LOW, BUT WHICH EVER BECOME LOUDER AND LOUDER.] Mighty Empress! Death’s white wife! Ghastly mother-in-law of Life! _85 By the God who made thee such, By the magic of thy touch, By the starving and the cramming Of fasts and feasts! by thy dread self, O Famine! I charge thee! when thou wake the multitude, _90 Thou lead them not upon the paths of blood. The earth did never mean her foison For those who crown life’s cup with poison Of fanatic rage and meaningless revenge— But for those radiant spirits, who are still _95 The standard-bearers in the van of Change. Be they th’ appointed stewards, to fill The lap of Pain, and Toil, and Age!— Remit, O Queen! thy accustomed rage! Be what thou art not! In voice faint and low _100 FREEDOM calls “Famine”,—her eternal foe, To brief alliance, hollow truce.—Rise now!

[WHILST THE VEILED FIGURE HAS BEEN CHANTING THIS STROPHE, MAMMON, DAKRY, LAOCTONOS, AND SWELLFOOT, HAVE SURROUNDED IONA TAURINA, WHO, WITH HER HANDS FOLDED ON HER BREAST, AND HER EYES LIFTED TO HEAVEN, STANDS, AS WITH SAINT-LIKE RESIGNATION, TO WAIT THE ISSUE OF THE BUSINESS, IN PERFECT CONFIDENCE OF HER INNOCENCE.] [PURGANAX, AFTER UNSEALING THE GREEN BAG, IS GRAVELY ABOUT TO POUR THE LIQUOR UPON HER HEAD, WHEN SUDDENLY THE WHOLE EXPRESSION OF HER FIGURE AND COUNTENANCE CHANGES; SHE SNATCHES IT FROM HIS HAND WITH A LOUD LAUGH OF TRIUMPH, AND EMPTIES IT

OVER SWELLFOOT AND HIS WHOLE COURT, WHO ARE INSTANTLY CHANGED INTO A NUMBER OF FILTHY AND UGLY ANIMALS, AND RUSH OUT OF THE TEMPLE. THE IMAGE OF FAMINE THEN ARISES WITH A TREMENDOUS SOUND, THE PIGS BEGIN SCRAMBLING FOR THE LOAVES, AND ARE TRIPPED UP BY THE SKULLS; ALL THOSE WHO EAT THE LOAVES ARE TURNED INTO BULLS, AND ARRANGE THEMSELVES QUIETLY BEHIND THE ALTAR. THE IMAGE OF FAMINE SINKS THROUGH A CHASM IN THE EARTH, AND A MINOTAUR RISES.]

MINOTAUR: I am the Ionian Minotaur, the mightiest Of all Europa's taurine progeny— I am the old traditional Man-Bull; _105 And from my ancestors having been Ionian, I am called Ion, which, by interpretation, Is JOHN; in plain Theban, that is to say, My name's JOHN BULL; I am a famous hunter, And can leaf any gate in all Boeotia, _110 Even the palings of the royal park, Or double ditch about the new enclosures; And if your Majesty will deign to mount me, At least till you have hunted down your game, I will not throw you. _115

IONA TAURINA [DURING THIS SPEECH SHE HAS BEEN PUTTING ON BOOTS AND SPURS, AND A HUNTING-CAP, BUCKISHLY COCKED ON ONE SIDE, AND TUCKING UP HER HAIR, SHE LEAPS NIMBLY ON HIS BACK]: Hoa! hoa! tallyho! tallyho! ho! ho! Come, let us hunt these ugly badgers down, These stinking foxes, these devouring otters, These hares, these wolves, these anything but men. Hey, for a whipper-in! my loyal Pigs Now let your noses be as keen as beagles', _120 Your steps as swift as greyhounds', and your cries More dulcet and symphonious than the bells Of village-towers, on sunshine holiday; Wake all the dewy woods with jangling music. Give them no law (are they not beasts of blood?) _125 But such as they gave you. Tallyho! ho! Through forest, furze, and bog, and den, and desert, Pursue the ugly beasts! tallyho! ho!

FULL CHORUS OF IONA AND THE SWINE: Tallyho! tallyho! Through rain,

hail, and snow, _130 Through brake, gorse, and briar, Through fen, flood, and mire, We go! we go!

Tallyho! tallyho! Through pond, ditch, and slough, _135 Wind them, and find them, Like the Devil behind them, Tallyho! tallyho!

[EXEUNT, IN FULL CRY; IONA DRIVING ON THE SWINE, WITH THE EMPTY GEEEN BAG.] THE END.

NOTE ON OEDIPUS TYRANNUS, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

In the brief journal I kept in those days, I find recorded, in August, 1820, Shelley 'begins "Swellfoot the Tyrant", suggested by the pigs at the fair of San Giuliano.' This was the period of Queen Caroline's landing in England, and the struggles made by George IV to get rid of her claims; which failing, Lord Castlereagh placed the "Green Bag" on the table of the House of Commons, demanding in the King's name that an enquiry should be instituted into his wife's conduct. These circumstances were the theme of all conversation among the English. We were then at the Baths of San Giuliano. A friend came to visit us on the day when a fair was held in the square, beneath our windows: Shelley read to us his "Ode to Liberty"; and was riotously accompanied by the grunting of a quantity of pigs brought for sale to the fair. He compared it to the 'chorus of frogs' in the satiric drama of Aristophanes; and, it being an hour of merriment, and one ludicrous association suggesting another, he imagined a political-satirical drama on the circumstances of the day, to which the pigs would serve as chorus—and "Swellfoot" was begun. When finished, it was transmitted to England, printed, and published anonymously; but stifled at the very dawn of its existence by the Society for the Suppression of Vice, who threatened to prosecute it, if not immediately withdrawn. The friend who had taken the trouble of bringing it out, of course did not think it worth the annoyance and expense of a contest, and it was laid aside.

Hesitation of whether it would do honour to Shelley prevented my publishing it at

first. But I cannot bring myself to keep back anything he ever wrote; for each word is fraught with the peculiar views and sentiments which he believed to be beneficial to the human race, and the bright light of poetry irradiates every thought. The world has a right to the entire compositions of such a man; for it does not live and thrive by the outworn lesson of the dullard or the hypocrite, but by the original free thoughts of men of genius, who aspire to pluck bright truth

'from the pale-faced moon; Or dive into the bottom of the deep Where fathom-line would never touch the ground, And pluck up drowned'

truth. Even those who may dissent from his opinions will consider that he was a man of genius, and that the world will take more interest in his slightest word than in the waters of Lethe which are so eagerly prescribed as medicinal for all its wrongs and woe. This drama, however, must not be judged for more than was meant. It is a mere plaything of the imagination; which even may not excite smiles among many, who will not see wit in those combinations of thought which were full of the ridiculous to the author. But, like everything he wrote, it breathes that deep sympathy for the sorrows of humanity, and indignation against its oppressors, which make it worthy of his name.

***

EPIPSYCHIDION.

VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE NOBLE AND UNFORTUNATE LADY, EMILIA V—, NOW IMPRISONED IN THE CONVENT OF —.

L'anima amante si slancia fuori del creato, e si crea nell' infinito un Mondo tutto per essa, diverso assai da questo oscuro e pauroso baratro. HER OWN WORDS.

["Epipsychidion" was composed at Pisa, January, February, 1821, and published without the author's name, in the following summer, by C. & J. Ollier, London. The poem was included by Mrs. Shelley in the "Poetical Works", 1839, both editions. Amongst the Shelley manuscripts in the Bodleian is a first draft of "Epipsychidion",

‘consisting of three versions, more or less complete, of the “Preface [Advertisement]”, a version in ink and pencil, much cancelled, of the last eighty lines of the poem, and some additional lines which did not appear in print’ (“Examination of the Shelley manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, by C.D. Locock”. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903, page 3). This draft, the writing of which is ‘extraordinarily confused and illegible,’ has been carefully deciphered and printed by Mr. Locock in the volume named above. Our text follows that of the editio princeps, 1821.]

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Writer of the following lines died at Florence, as he was preparing for a voyage to one of the wildest of the Sporades, which he had bought, and where he had fitted up the ruins of an old building, and where it was his hope to have realised a scheme of life, suited perhaps to that happier and better world of which he is now an inhabitant, but hardly practicable in this. His life was singular; less on account of the romantic vicissitudes which diversified it, than the ideal tinge which it received from his own character and feelings. The present Poem, like the “Vita Nuova” of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers without a matter-of-fact history of the circumstances to which it relates and to a certain other class it must ever remain incomprehensible, from a defect of a common organ of perception for the ideas of which it treats. Not but that gran vergogna sarebbe a colui, che rimasse cosa sotto veste di figura, o di colore rettorico: e domandato non sapesse denudare le sue parole da cotal veste, in guisa che avessero verace intendimento.

The present poem appears to have been intended by the Writer as the dedication to some longer one. The stanza on the opposite page [1] is almost a literal translation from Dante’s famous Canzone

Voi, ch’ intendendo, il terzo ciel movete, etc.

The presumptuous application of the concluding lines to his own composition will

raise a smile at the expense of my unfortunate friend: be it a smile not of contempt, but pity. S.

[1] i.e. the nine lines which follow, beginning, ‘My Song, I fear,’ etc.—ED.

My Song, I fear that thou wilt find but few Who fitly shalt conceive thy reasoning, Of such hard matter dost thou entertain; Whence, if by misadventure, chance should bring Thee to base company (as chance may do), _5 Quite unaware of what thou dost contain, I prithee, comfort thy sweet self again, My last delight! tell them that they are dull, And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

EPIPSYCHIDION.

Sweet Spirit! Sister of that orphan one, Whose empire is the name thou weepest on, In my heart’s temple I suspend to thee These votive wreaths of withered memory.

Poor captive bird! who, from thy narrow cage, _5 Pourest such music, that it might assuage The rugged hearts of those who prisoned thee, Were they not deaf to all sweet melody; This song shall be thy rose: its petals pale Are dead, indeed, my adored Nightingale! _10 But soft and fragrant is the faded blossom, And it has no thorn left to wound thy bosom.

High, spirit-winged Heart! who dost for ever Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain endeavour, Till those bright plumes of thought, in which arrayed _15 It over-soared this low and worldly shade, Lie shattered; and thy panting, wounded breast Stains with dear blood its unmaternal nest! I weep vain tears: blood would less bitter be, Yet poured forth gladlier, could it profit thee. _20

Seraph of Heaven! too gentle to be human, Veiling beneath that radiant form of Woman All that is insupportable in thee Of light, and love, and immortality! Sweet Benediction in the eternal Curse! _25 Veiled Glory of this lampless Universe! Thou Moon beyond the clouds! Thou living Form Among the Dead! Thou Star above the Storm! Thou Wonder, and thou Beauty, and thou Terror! Thou Harmony of Nature’s art! Thou Mirror _30 In whom, as in the splendour of the Sun, All shapes look

glorious which thou gazest on! Ay, even the dim words which obscure thee now Flash, lightning-like, with unaccustomed glow; I pray thee that thou blot from this sad song _35 All of its much mortality and wrong, With those clear drops, which start like sacred dew From the twin lights thy sweet soul darkens through, Weeping, till sorrow becomes ecstasy: Then smile on it, so that it may not die. _40

I never thought before my death to see Youth's vision thus made perfect. Emily, I love thee; though the world by no thin name Will hide that love from its unvalued shame. Would we two had been twins of the same mother! _45 Or, that the name my heart lent to another Could be a sister's bond for her and thee, Blending two beams of one eternity! Yet were one lawful and the other true, These names, though dear, could paint not, as is due. _50 How beyond refuge I am thine. Ah me! I am not thine: I am a part of THEE.

Sweet Lamp! my moth-like Muse has burned its wings Or, like a dying swan who soars and sings, Young Love should teach Time, in his own gray style, _55 All that thou art. Art thou not void of guile, A lovely soul formed to be blessed and bless? A well of sealed and secret happiness, Whose waters like blithe light and music are, Vanquishing dissonance and gloom? A Star _60 Which moves not in the moving heavens, alone? A Smile amid dark frowns? a gentle tone Amid rude voices? a beloved light? A Solitude, a Refuge, a Delight? A Lute, which those whom Love has taught to play _65 Make music on, to soothe the roughest day And lull fond Grief asleep? a buried treasure? A cradle of young thoughts of wingless pleasure? A violet-shrouded grave of Woe?—I measure The world of fancies, seeking one like thee, _70 And find—alas! mine own infirmity.

She met me, Stranger, upon life's rough way, And lured me towards sweet Death; as Night by Day, Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift Hope, Led into light, life, peace. An antelope, _75 In the suspended impulse of its lightness, Were less aethereally light: the brightness Of her divinest presence trembles through Her

limbs, as underneath a cloud of dew Embodied in the windless heaven of June _80 Amid the splendour-winged stars, the Moon Burns, inextinguishably beautiful: And from her lips, as from a hyacinth full Of honey-dew, a liquid murmur drops, Killing the sense with passion; sweet as stops _85 Of planetary music heard in trance. In her mild lights the starry spirits dance, The sunbeams of those wells which ever leap Under the lightnings of the soul—too deep For the brief fathom-line of thought or sense. _90 The glory of her being, issuing thence, Stains the dead, blank, cold air with a warm shade Of unentangled intermixture, made By Love, of light and motion: one intense Diffusion, one serene Omnipresence, _95 Whose flowing outlines mingle in their flowing, Around her cheeks and utmost fingers glowing With the unintermitted blood, which there Quivers, (as in a fleece of snow-like air The crimson pulse of living morning quiver,) _100 Continuously prolonged, and ending never, Till they are lost, and in that Beauty furled Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world; Scarce visible from extreme loveliness. Warm fragrance seems to fall from her light dress _105 And her loose hair; and where some heavy tress The air of her own speed has disentwined, The sweetness seems to satiate the faint wind; And in the soul a wild odour is felt Beyond the sense, like fiery dews that melt _110 Into the bosom of a frozen bud.— See where she stands! a mortal shape indued With love and life and light and deity, And motion which may change but cannot die; An image of some bright Eternity; _115 A shadow of some golden dream; a Splendour Leaving the third sphere pilotless; a tender Reflection of the eternal Moon of Love Under whose motions life’s dull billows move; A Metaphor of Spring and Youth and Morning; _120 A Vision like incarnate April, warning, With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy Into his summer grave. Ah, woe is me! What have I dared? where am I lifted? how Shall I descend, and perish not? I know _125 That Love makes all things equal: I have heard By mine own heart this joyous truth averred: The spirit of the worm beneath the sod In love and worship, blends itself with God.

Spouse! Sister! Angel! Pilot of the Fate _130 Whose course has been so starless! O too late Beloved! O too soon adored, by me! For in the fields of Immortality My spirit should at first have worshipped thine, A divine presence in a place divine; _135 Or should have moved beside it on this earth, A shadow of that substance, from its birth; But not as now:—I love thee; yes, I feel That on the fountain of my heart a seal Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright _140 For thee, since in those TEARS thou hast delight. We—are we not formed, as notes of music are, For one another, though dissimilar; Such difference without discord, as can make Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits shake _145 As trembling leaves in a continuous air?

Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me dare Beacon the rocks on which high hearts are wrecked. I never was attached to that great sect, Whose doctrine is, that each one should select _150 Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend, And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend To cold oblivion, though it is in the code Of modern morals, and the beaten road Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread, _155 Who travel to their home among the dead By the broad highway of the world, and so With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe, The dreariest and the longest journey go.

True Love in this differs from gold and clay, _160 That to divide is not to take away. Love is like understanding, that grows bright, Gazing on many truths; ’tis like thy light, Imagination! which from earth and sky, And from the depths of human fantasy, _165 As from a thousand prisms and mirrors, fills The Universe with glorious beams, and kills Error, the worm, with many a sun-like arrow Of its reverberated lightning. Narrow The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates, _170 The life that wears, the spirit that creates One object, and one form, and builds thereby A sepulchre for its eternity.

Mind from its object differs most in this: Evil from good; misery from happiness;

_175 The baser from the nobler; the impure And frail, from what is clear and must endure. If you divide suffering and dross, you may Diminish till it is consumed away; If you divide pleasure and love and thought, _180 Each part exceeds the whole; and we know not How much, while any yet remains unshared, Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow spared: This truth is that deep well, whence sages draw The unenvied light of hope; the eternal law _185 By which those live, to whom this world of life Is as a garden ravaged, and whose strife Tills for the promise of a later birth The wilderness of this Elysian earth.

There was a Being whom my spirit oft _190 Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft, In the clear golden prime of my youth's dawn, Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn, Amid the enchanted mountains, and the caves Of divine sleep, and on the air-like waves _195 Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous floor Paved her light steps;—on an imagined shore, Under the gray beak of some promontory She met me, robed in such exceeding glory, That I beheld her not. In solitudes _200 Her voice came to me through the whispering woods, And from the fountains, and the odours deep Of flowers, which, like lips murmuring in their sleep Of the sweet kisses which had lulled them there, Breathed but of HER to the enamoured air; _205 And from the breezes whether low or loud, And from the rain of every passing cloud, And from the singing of the summer-birds, And from all sounds, all silence. In the words Of antique verse and high romance,—in form, _210 Sound, colour—in whatever checks that Storm Which with the shattered present chokes the past; And in that best philosophy, whose taste Makes this cold common hell, our life, a doom As glorious as a fiery martyrdom; _215 Her Spirit was the harmony of truth.—

Then, from the caverns of my dreamy youth I sprang, as one sandalled with plumes of fire, And towards the lodestar of my one desire, I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight _220 Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet light, When it would seek in Hesper's setting sphere A radiant death, a fiery sepulchre, As if it were a lamp of earthly flame.— But She, whom prayers or tears then could not tame, _225 Passed, like a

God throned on a winged planet, Whose burning plumes to tenfold swiftness fan it, Into the dreary cone of our life's shade; And as a man with mighty loss dismayed, I would have followed, though the grave between _230 Yawned like a gulf whose spectres are unseen: When a voice said:—'O thou of hearts the weakest, The phantom is beside thee whom thou seekest.' Then I—'Where?'—the world's echo answered 'where?' And in that silence, and in my despair, _235 I questioned every tongueless wind that flew Over my tower of mourning, if it knew Whither 'twas fled, this soul out of my soul; And murmured names and spells which have control Over the sightless tyrants of our fate; _240 But neither prayer nor verse could dissipate The night which closed on her; nor uncreate That world within this Chaos, mine and me, Of which she was the veiled Divinity, The world I say of thoughts that worshipped her: _245 And therefore I went forth, with hope and fear And every gentle passion sick to death, Feeding my course with expectation's breath, Into the wintry forest of our life; And struggling through its error with vain strife, _250 And stumbling in my weakness and my haste, And half bewildered by new forms, I passed, Seeking among those untaught foresters If I could find one form resembling hers, In which she might have masked herself from me. _255 There,—One, whose voice was venomed melody Sate by a well, under blue nightshade bowers: The breath of her false mouth was like faint flowers, Her touch was as electric poison,—flame Out of her looks into my vitals came, _260 And from her living cheeks and bosom flew A killing air, which pierced like honey-dew Into the core of my green heart, and lay Upon its leaves; until, as hair grown gray O'er a young brow, they hid its unblown prime _265 With ruins of unseasonable time.

In many mortal forms I rashly sought The shadow of that idol of my thought. And some were fair—but beauty dies away: Others were wise—but honeyed words betray: _270 And One was true—oh! why not true to me? Then, as a hunted deer that could not flee, I turned upon my thoughts, and stood at bay, Wounded and weak and panting; the cold day Trembled, for pity of my strife and pain. _275 When, like

a noonday dawn, there shone again Deliverance. One stood on my path who seemed As like the glorious shape which I had dreamed As is the Moon, whose changes ever run Into themselves, to the eternal Sun; _280 The cold chaste Moon, the Queen of Heaven's bright isles, Who makes all beautiful on which she smiles, That wandering shrine of soft yet icy flame Which ever is transformed, yet still the same, And warms not but illumines. Young and fair _285 As the descended Spirit of that sphere, She hid me, as the Moon may hide the night From its own darkness, until all was bright Between the Heaven and Earth of my calm mind, And, as a cloud charioted by the wind, _290 She led me to a cave in that wild place, And sate beside me, with her downward face Illumining my slumbers, like the Moon Waxing and waning o'er Endymion. And I was laid asleep, spirit and limb, _295 And all my being became bright or dim As the Moon's image in a summer sea, According as she smiled or frowned on me; And there I lay, within a chaste cold bed: Alas, I then was nor alive nor dead:— _300 For at her silver voice came Death and Life, Unmindful each of their accustomed strife, Masked like twin babes, a sister and a brother, The wandering hopes of one abandoned mother, And through the cavern without wings they flew, _305 And cried 'Away, he is not of our crew.' I wept, and though it be a dream, I weep.

What storms then shook the ocean of my sleep, Blotting that Moon, whose pale and waning lips Then shrank as in the sickness of eclipse;— _310 And how my soul was as a lampless sea, And who was then its Tempest; and when She, The Planet of that hour, was quenched, what frost Crept o'er those waters, till from coast to coast The moving billows of my being fell _315 Into a death of ice, immovable;— And then—what earthquakes made it gape and split, The white Moon smiling all the while on it, These words conceal:—If not, each word would be The key of staunchless tears. Weep not for me! _320

At length, into the obscure Forest came The Vision I had sought through grief and shame. Athwart that wintry wilderness of thorns Flashed from her motion splendour

like the Morn's, And from her presence life was radiated _325 Through the gray earth and branches bare and dead; So that her way was paved, and roofed above With flowers as soft as thoughts of budding love; And music from her respiration spread Like light,—all other sounds were penetrated _330 By the small, still, sweet spirit of that sound, So that the savage winds hung mute around; And odours warm and fresh fell from her hair Dissolving the dull cold in the frore air: Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun, _335 When light is changed to love, this glorious One Floated into the cavern where I lay, And called my Spirit, and the dreaming clay Was lifted by the thing that dreamed below As smoke by fire, and in her beauty's glow _340 I stood, and felt the dawn of my long night Was penetrating me with living light: I knew it was the Vision veiled from me So many years—that it was Emily.

Twin Spheres of light who rule this passive Earth, _345 This world of loves, this ME; and into birth Awaken all its fruits and flowers, and dart Magnetic might into its central heart; And lift its billows and its mists, and guide By everlasting laws, each wind and tide _350 To its fit cloud, and its appointed cave; And lull its storms, each in the craggy grave Which was its cradle, luring to faint bowers The armies of the rainbow-winged showers; And, as those married lights, which from the towers _355 Of Heaven look forth and fold the wandering globe In liquid sleep and splendour, as a robe; And all their many-mingled influence blend, If equal, yet unlike, to one sweet end;— So ye, bright regents, with alternate sway _360 Govern my sphere of being, night and day! Thou, not disdaining even a borrowed might; Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light; And, through the shadow of the seasons three, From Spring to Autumn's sere maturity, _365 Light it into the Winter of the tomb, Where it may ripen to a brighter bloom. Thou too, O Comet beautiful and fierce, Who drew the heart of this frail Universe Towards thine own; till, wrecked in that convulsion, _370 Alternating attraction and repulsion, Thine went astray and that was rent in twain; Oh, float into our azure heaven again! Be there Love's

folding-star at thy return; The living Sun will feed thee from its urn _375 Of golden fire; the Moon will veil her horn In thy last smiles; adoring Even and Morn Will worship thee with incense of calm breath And lights and shadows; as the star of Death And Birth is worshipped by those sisters wild _380 Called Hope and Fear—upon the heart are piled Their offerings,—of this sacrifice divine A World shall be the altar. Lady mine, Scorn not these flowers of thought, the fading birth Which from its heart of hearts that plant puts forth _385 Whose fruit, made perfect by thy sunny eyes, Will be as of the trees of Paradise.

The day is come, and thou wilt fly with me. To whatsoe'er of dull mortality Is mine, remain a vestal sister still; _390 To the intense, the deep, the imperishable, Not mine but me, henceforth be thou united Even as a bride, delighting and delighted. The hour is come:—the destined Star has risen Which shall descend upon a vacant prison. _395 The walls are high, the gates are strong, thick set The sentinels—but true Love never yet Was thus constrained: it overleaps all fence: Like lightning, with invisible violence Piercing its continents; like Heaven's free breath, _400 Which he who grasps can hold not; liker Death, Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way Through temple, tower, and palace, and the array Of arms: more strength has Love than he or they; For it can burst his charnel, and make free _405 The limbs in chains, the heart in agony, The soul in dust and chaos. Emily, A ship is floating in the harbour now, A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's brow; There is a path on the sea's azure floor, _410 No keel has ever ploughed that path before; The halcyons brood around the foamless isles; The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its wiles; The merry mariners are bold and free: Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me? _415 Our bark is as an albatross, whose nest Is a far Eden of the purple East; And we between her wings will sit, while Night, And Day, and Storm, and Calm, pursue their flight, Our ministers, along the boundless Sea, _420 Treading each other's heels, unheededly. It is an isle under Ionian skies, Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise, And, for the harbours are not safe and good, This land would have remained a

solitude _425 But for some pastoral people native there, Who from the Elysian, clear, and golden air Draw the last spirit of the age of gold, Simple and spirited; innocent and bold. The blue Aegean girds this chosen home, _430 With ever-changing sound and light and foam, Kissing the sifted sands, and caverns hoar; And all the winds wandering along the shore Undulate with the undulating tide: There are thick woods where sylvan forms abide; _435 And many a fountain, rivulet, and pond, As clear as elemental diamond, Or serene morning air; and far beyond, The mossy tracks made by the goats and deer (Which the rough shepherd treads but once a year) _440 Pierce into glades, caverns, and bowers, and halls Built round with ivy, which the waterfalls Illumining, with sound that never fails Accompany the noonday nightingales; And all the place is peopled with sweet airs; _445 The light clear element which the isle wears Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers, Which floats like mist laden with unseen showers. And falls upon the eyelids like faint sleep; And from the moss violets and jonquils peep, _450 And dart their arrowy odour through the brain Till you might faint with that delicious pain. And every motion, odour, beam and tone, With that deep music is in unison: Which is a soul within the soul—they seem _455 Like echoes of an antenatal dream.— It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea, Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity; Bright as that wandering Eden Lucifer, Washed by the soft blue Oceans of young air. _460 It is a favoured place. Famine or Blight, Pestilence, War and Earthquake, never light Upon its mountain-peaks; blind vultures, they Sail onward far upon their fatal way: The winged storms, chanting their thunder-psalm _465 To other lands, leave azure chasms of calm Over this isle, or weep themselves in dew, From which its fields and woods ever renew Their green and golden immortality. And from the sea there rise, and from the sky _470 There fall, clear exhalations, soft and bright. Veil after veil, each hiding some delight, Which Sun or Moon or zephyr draw aside, Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride Glowing at once with love and loveliness, _475 Blushes and trembles at its own excess: Yet, like a buried lamp, a

Soul no less Burns in the heart of this delicious isle, An atom of th' Eternal, whose own smile Unfolds itself, and may be felt, not seen _480 O'er the gray rocks, blue waves, and forests green, Filling their bare and void interstices.— But the chief marvel of the wilderness Is a lone dwelling, built by whom or how None of the rustic island-people know: _485 'Tis not a tower of strength, though with its height It overtops the woods; but, for delight, Some wise and tender Ocean-King, ere crime Had been invented, in the world's young prime, Reared it, a wonder of that simple time, _490 An envy of the isles, a pleasure-house Made sacred to his sister and his spouse. It scarce seems now a wreck of human art, But, as it were Titanic; in the heart Of Earth having assumed its form, then grown _495 Out of the mountains, from the living stone, Lifting itself in caverns light and high: For all the antique and learned imagery Has been erased, and in the place of it The ivy and the wild-vine interknit _500 The volumes of their many-twining stems; Parasite flowers illume with dewy gems The lampless halls, and when they fade, the sky Peeps through their winter-woof of tracery With moonlight patches, or star atoms keen, _505 Or fragments of the day's intense serene;— Working mosaic on their Parian floors. And, day and night, aloof, from the high towers And terraces, the Earth and Ocean seem To sleep in one another's arms, and dream _510 Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks, and all that we Read in their smiles, and call reality.

This isle and house are mine, and I have vowed Thee to be lady of the solitude.— And I have fitted up some chambers there _515 Looking towards the golden Eastern air, And level with the living winds, which flow Like waves above the living waves below.— I have sent books and music there, and all Those instruments with which high Spirits call _520 The future from its cradle, and the past Out of its grave, and make the present last In thoughts and joys which sleep, but cannot die, Folded within their own eternity. Our simple life wants little, and true taste _525 Hires not the pale drudge Luxury, to waste The scene it would adorn, and therefore still, Nature with all her children haunts the hill. The ring-dove, in the embowering ivy,

yet Keeps up her love-lament, and the owls flit _530 Round the evening tower, and the young stars glance Between the quick bats in their twilight dance; The spotted deer bask in the fresh moonlight Before our gate, and the slow, silent night Is measured by the pants of their calm sleep. _535 Be this our home in life, and when years heap Their withered hours, like leaves, on our decay, Let us become the overhanging day, The living soul of this Elysian isle, Conscious, inseparable, one. Meanwhile _540 We two will rise, and sit, and walk together, Under the roof of blue Ionian weather, And wander in the meadows, or ascend The mossy mountains, where the blue heavens bend With lightest winds, to touch their paramour; _545 Or linger, where the pebble-paven shore, Under the quick, faint kisses of the sea Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy,— Possessing and possessed by all that is Within that calm circumference of bliss, _550 And by each other, till to love and live Be one:—or, at the noontide hour, arrive Where some old cavern hoar seems yet to keep The moonlight of the expired night asleep, Through which the awakened day can never peep; _555 A veil for our seclusion, close as night's, Where secure sleep may kill thine innocent lights: Sleep, the fresh dew of languid love, the rain Whose drops quench kisses till they burn again. And we will talk, until thought's melody _560 Become too sweet for utterance, and it die In words, to live again in looks, which dart With thrilling tone into the voiceless heart, Harmonizing silence without a sound. Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms bound, _565 And our veins beat together; and our lips With other eloquence than words, eclipse The soul that burns between them, and the wells Which boil under our being's inmost cells, The fountains of our deepest life, shall be _570 Confused in Passion's golden purity, As mountain-springs under the morning sun. We shall become the same, we shall be one Spirit within two frames, oh! wherefore two? One passion in twin-hearts, which grows and grew, _575 Till like two meteors of expanding flame, Those spheres instinct with it become the same, Touch, mingle, are transfigured; ever still Burning, yet ever inconsumable: In one another's substance finding food, _580 Like flames

too pure and light and unimbued To nourish their bright lives with baser prey, Which point to Heaven and cannot pass away: One hope within two wills, one will beneath Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death, _585 One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality, And one annihilation. Woe is me! The winged words on which my soul would pierce Into the height of Love's rare Universe, Are chains of lead around its flight of fire— _590 I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire!

…

Weak Verses, go, kneel at your Sovereign's feet, And say:—'We are the masters of thy slave; What wouldest thou with us and ours and thine?' Then call your sisters from Oblivion's cave, _595 All singing loud: 'Love's very pain is sweet, But its reward is in the world divine Which, if not here, it builds beyond the grave.' So shall ye live when I am there. Then haste Over the hearts of men, until ye meet _600 Marina, Vanna, Primus, and the rest, And bid them love each other and be blessed: And leave the troop which errs, and which reproves, And come and be my guest,—for I am Love's.

NOTES: _100 morning]morn may Rossetti cj. _118 of]on edition 1839. _405 it]he edition 1839. _501 many-twining]many twining editio prin. 1821. _504 winter-woof]inter-woof Rossetti cj.

FRAGMENTS CONNECTED WITH EPIPSYCHIDION.

[Of the fragments of verse that follow, lines 1-37, 62-92 were printed by Mrs. Shelley in "Posthumous Works", 1839, 2nd edition; lines 1-174 were printed or reprinted by Dr. Garnett in "Relics of Shelley", 1862; and lines 175-186 were printed by Mr. C.D. Locock from the first draft of "Epipsychidion" amongst the Shelley manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. See "Examination, etc.", 1903, pages 12, 13. The three early drafts of the "Preface (Advertisement)" were printed by Mr. Locock in the same volume, pages 4, 5.]

THREE EARLY DRAFTS OF THE PREFACE.

(ADVERTISEMENT.) PREFACE 1.

The following Poem was found amongst other papers in the Portfolio of a young Englishman with whom the Editor had contracted an intimacy at Florence, brief indeed, but sufficiently long to render the Catastrophe by which it terminated one of the most painful events of his life.—

The literary merit of the Poem in question may not be considerable; but worse verses are printed every day, &

He was an accomplished & amiable person but his error was, thuntos on un thunta phronein,—his fate is an additional proof that 'The tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.'—He had framed to himself certain opinions, founded no doubt upon the truth of things, but built up to a Babel height; they fell by their own weight, & the thoughts that were his architects, became unintelligible one to the other, as men upon whom confusion of tongues has fallen.

[These] verses seem to have been written as a sort of dedication of some work to have been presented to the person whom they address: but his papers afford no trace of such a work—The circumstances to which [they] the poem allude, may easily be understood by those to whom [the] spirit of the poem itself is [un]intelligible: a detail of facts, sufficiently romantic in [themselves but] their combinations

The melancholy [task] charge of consigning the body of my poor friend to the grave, was committed to me by his desolated family. I caused him to be buried in a spot selected by himself, & on the h

PREFACE 2.

[Epips] T. E. V. Epipsych Lines addressed to the Noble Lady [Emilia] [E. V.] Emilia

[The following Poem was found in the PF. of a young Englishman, who died on his passage from Leghorn to the Levant. He had bought one of the Sporades] He was accompanied by a lady [who might have been] supposed to be his wife, & an

effeminate looking youth, to whom he shewed an [attachment] so [singular] excessive an attachment as to give rise to the suspicion, that she was a woman—At his death this suspicion was confirmed;…object speedily found a refuge both from the taunts of the brute multitude, and from the…of her grief in the same grave that contained her lover.—He had bought one of the Sporades, & fitted up a Saracenic castle which accident had preserved in some repair with simple elegance, & it was his intention to dedicate the remainder of his life to undisturbed intercourse with his companions

These verses apparently were intended as a dedication of a longer poem or series of poems

PREFACE 3.

The writer of these lines died at Florence in [January 1820] while he was preparing * * for one wildest of the of the Sporades, where he bought & fitted up the ruins of some old building—His life was singular, less on account of the romantic vicissitudes which diversified it, than the ideal tinge which they received from his own character & feelings—

The verses were apparently intended by the writer to accompany some longer poem or collection of poems, of which there* [are no remnants in his] * * * remains [in his] portfolio.—

The editor is induced to

The present poem, like the vita Nova of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers without a matter of fact history of the circumstances to which it relate, & to a certain other class, it must & ought ever to remain incomprehensible—It was evidently intended to be prefixed to a longer poem or series of poems—but among his papers there are no traces of such a collection.

PASSAGES OF THE POEM, OR CONNECTED THEREWITH.

Here, my dear friend, is a new book for you; I have already dedicated two To other

friends, one female and one male,— What you are, is a thing that I must veil; What can this be to those who praise or rail? _5 I never was attached to that great sect Whose doctrine is that each one should select Out of the world a mistress or a friend, And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend To cold oblivion—though ’tis in the code _10 Of modern morals, and the beaten road Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread Who travel to their home among the dead By the broad highway of the world—and so With one sad friend, and many a jealous foe, _15 The dreariest and the longest journey go.

Free love has this, different from gold and clay, That to divide is not to take away. Like ocean, which the general north wind breaks Into ten thousand waves, and each one makes _20 A mirror of the moon—like some great glass, Which did distort whatever form might pass, Dashed into fragments by a playful child, Which then reflects its eyes and forehead mild; Giving for one, which it could ne’er express, _25 A thousand images of loveliness.

If I were one whom the loud world held wise, I should disdain to quote authorities In commendation of this kind of love:— Why there is first the God in heaven above, _30 Who wrote a book called Nature, ’tis to be Reviewed, I hear, in the next Quarterly; And Socrates, the Jesus Christ of Greece, And Jesus Christ Himself, did never cease To urge all living things to love each other, _35 And to forgive their mutual faults, and smother The Devil of disunion in their souls.

…

I love you!—Listen, O embodied Ray Of the great Brightness; I must pass away While you remain, and these light words must be _40 Tokens by which you may remember me. Start not—the thing you are is unbetrayed, If you are human, and if but the shade Of some sublimer spirit…

…

And as to friend or mistress, ’tis a form; _45 Perhaps I wish you were one. Some

declare You a familiar spirit, as you are; Others with a … more inhuman Hint that, though not my wife, you are a woman; What is the colour of your eyes and hair? _50 Why, if you were a lady, it were fair The world should know—but, as I am afraid, The Quarterly would bait you if betrayed; And if, as it will be sport to see them stumble Over all sorts of scandals. hear them mumble _55 Their litany of curses—some guess right, And others swear you're a Hermaphrodite; Like that sweet marble monster of both sexes, Which looks so sweet and gentle that it vexes The very soul that the soul is gone _60 Which lifted from her limbs the veil of stone.

…

It is a sweet thing, friendship, a dear balm, A happy and auspicious bird of calm, Which rides o'er life's ever tumultuous Ocean; A God that broods o'er chaos in commotion; _65 A flower which fresh as Lapland roses are, Lifts its bold head into the world's frore air, And blooms most radiantly when others die, Health, hope, and youth, and brief prosperity; And with the light and odour of its bloom, _70 Shining within the dun eon and the tomb; Whose coming is as light and music are 'Mid dissonance and gloom—a star Which moves not 'mid the moving heavens alone— A smile among dark frowns—a gentle tone _75 Among rude voices, a beloved light, A solitude, a refuge, a delight. If I had but a friend! Why, I have three Even by my own confession; there may be Some more, for what I know, for 'tis my mind _80 To call my friends all who are wise and kind,- And these, Heaven knows, at best are very few; But none can ever be more dear than you. Why should they be? My muse has lost her wings, Or like a dying swan who soars and sings, _85 I should describe you in heroic style, But as it is, are you not void of guile? A lovely soul, formed to be blessed and bless: A well of sealed and secret happiness; A lute which those whom Love has taught to play _90 Make music on to cheer the roughest day, And enchant sadness till it sleeps?…

…

To the oblivion whither I and thou, All loving and all lovely, hasten now With steps, ah, too unequal! may we meet _95 In one Elysium or one winding-sheet!

If any should be curious to discover Whether to you I am a friend or lover, Let them read Shakespeare’s sonnets, taking thence A whetstone for their dull intelligence _100 That tears and will not cut, or let them guess How Diotima, the wise prophetess, Instructed the instructor, and why he Rebuked the infant spirit of melody On Agathon’s sweet lips, which as he spoke _105 Was as the lovely star when morn has broke The roof of darkness, in the golden dawn, Half-hidden, and yet beautiful. I’ll pawn My hopes of Heaven-you know what they are worth — That the presumptuous pedagogues of Earth, _110 If they could tell the riddle offered here Would scorn to be, or being to appear What now they seem and are—but let them chide, They have few pleasures in the world beside; Perhaps we should be dull were we not chidden, _115 Paradise fruits are sweetest when forbidden. Folly can season Wisdom, Hatred Love.

…

Farewell, if it can be to say farewell To those who

…

I will not, as most dedicators do, _120 Assure myself and all the world and you, That you are faultless—would to God they were Who taunt me with your love! I then should wear These heavy chains of life with a light spirit, And would to God I were, or even as near it _125 As you, dear heart. Alas! what are we? Clouds Driven by the wind in warring multitudes, Which rain into the bosom of the earth, And rise again, and in our death and birth, And through our restless life, take as from heaven _130 Hues which are not our own, but which are given, And then withdrawn, and with inconstant glance Flash from the spirit to the countenance. There is a Power, a Love, a Joy, a God Which makes in mortal hearts its brief abode, _135 A Pythian exhalation, which inspires Love, only love—a wind which o’er the wires Of the

soul’s giant harp There is a mood which language faints beneath; You feel it striding, as Almighty Death _140 His bloodless steed…

…

And what is that most brief and bright delight Which rushes through the touch and through the sight, And stands before the spirit’s inmost throne, A naked Seraph? None hath ever known. _145 Its birth is darkness, and its growth desire; Untameable and fleet and fierce as fire, Not to be touched but to be felt alone, It fills the world with glory-and is gone.

…

It floats with rainbow pinions o’er the stream _150 Of life, which flows, like a … dream Into the light of morning, to the grave As to an ocean…

…

What is that joy which serene infancy Perceives not, as the hours content them by, _155 Each in a chain of blossoms, yet enjoys The shapes of this new world, in giant toys Wrought by the busy … ever new? Remembrance borrows Fancy’s glass, to show These forms more … sincere _160 Than now they are, than then, perhaps, they were. When everything familiar seemed to be Wonderful, and the immortality Of this great world, which all things must inherit, Was felt as one with the awakening spirit, _165 Unconscious of itself, and of the strange Distinctions which in its proceeding change It feels and knows, and mourns as if each were A desolation…

…

Were it not a sweet refuge, Emily, _170 For all those exiles from the dull insane Who vex this pleasant world with pride and pain, For all that band of sister-spirits known To one another by a voiceless tone?

…

If day should part us night will mend division _175 And if sleep parts us—we will

meet in vision And if life parts us—we will mix in death Yielding our mite [?] of unreluctant breath Death cannot part us—we must meet again In all in nothing in delight in pain: _180 How, why or when or where—it matters not So that we share an undivided lot…

…

And we will move possessing and possessed Wherever beauty on the earth's bare [?] breast Lies like the shadow of thy soul—till we _185 Become one being with the world we see…

NOTES: _52-_53 afraid The cj. A.C. Bradley. _54 And as cj. Rossetti, A.C. Bradley. _61 stone… cj. A.C. Bradley. _155 them]trip or troop cj. A.C. Bradley. _157 in]as cj. A.C. Bradley.

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ADONAIS.

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS, AUTHOR OF ENDYMION, HYPERION, ETC.

Aster prin men elampes eni zooisin Eoos nun de thanon lampeis Esperos en phthimenois.—PLATO.

["Adonais" was composed at Pisa during the early days of June, 1821, and printed, with the author's name, at Pisa, 'with the types of Didot,' by July 13, 1821. Part of the impression was sent to the brothers Ollier for sale in London. An exact reprint of this Pisa edition (a few typographical errors only being corrected) was issued in 1829 by Gee & Bridges, Cambridge, at the instance of Arthur Hallam and Richard Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton). The poem was included in Galignani's edition of "Coleridge, Shelley and Keats", Paris, 1829, and by Mrs. Shelley in the "Poetical Works" of 1839. Mrs. Shelley's text presents three important variations from that of the editio princeps. In 1876 an edition of the "Adonais", with Introduction and Notes, was printed for private circulation by Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B. Ten years

later a reprint ‘in exact facsimile’ of the Pisa edition was edited with a Bibliographical Introduction by Mr. T.J. Wise (“Shelley Society Publications”, 2nd Series, No. 1, Reeves & Turner, London, 1886). Our text is that of the editio princeps, Pisa, 1821, modified by Mrs. Shelley’s text of 1839. The readings of the editio princeps, wherever superseded, are recorded in the footnotes. The Editor’s Notes at the end of the Volume 3 should be consulted.]

PREFACE.

Pharmakon elthe, Bion, poti son stoma, pharmakon eides. pos ten tois cheilessi potesrame, kouk eglukanthe; tis de Brotos tossouton anameros, e kerasai toi, e dounai laleonti to pharmakon; ekphugen odan. —MOSCHUS, EPITAPH. BION.

It is my intention to subjoin to the London edition of this poem a criticism upon the claims of its lamented object to be classed among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age. My known repugnance to the narrow principles of taste on which several of his earlier compositions were modelled prove at least that I am an impartial judge. I consider the fragment of “Hyperion” as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years.

John Keats died at Rome of a consumption, in his twenty-fourth year, on the — of — 1821; and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and where cankerworms abound, what wonder if its young flower was blighted in the bud? The savage criticism on his “Endymion”, which appeared in the “Quarterly Review”,

produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued, and the succeeding acknowledgements from more candid critics of the true greatness of his powers were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

It may be well said that these wretched men know not what they do. They scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether the poisoned shaft lights on a heart made callous by many blows or one like Keats's composed of more penetrable stuff. One of their associates is, to my knowledge, a most base and unprincipled calumniator. As to "Endymion", was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated, with various degrees of complacency and panegyric, "Paris", and "Woman", and a "Syrian Tale", and Mrs. Lefanu, and Mr. Barrett, and Mr. Howard Payne, and a long list of the illustrious obscure? Are these the men who in their venal good nature presumed to draw a parallel between the Reverend Mr. Milman and Lord Byron? What gnat did they strain at here, after having swallowed all those camels? Against what woman taken in adultery dares the foremost of these literary prostitutes to cast his opprobrious stone? Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse, that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers, but used none.

The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the "Elegy" was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of "Endymion" was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits; the poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life, no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius, than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care. He was accompanied to Rome, and attended in his last illness by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, 'almost risked his own life, and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying

friend.' Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from 'such stuff as dreams are made of.' His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career—may the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!

***

ADONAIS.

I weep for Adonais—he is dead! O, weep for Adonais! though our tears Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head! And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers, _5 And teach them thine own sorrow, say: "With me Died Adonais; till the Future dares Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be An echo and a light unto eternity!"

2. Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay, _10 When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies In darkness? where was lorn Urania When Adonais died? With veiled eyes, 'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath, _15 Rekindled all the fading melodies, With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath, He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of Death.

3. Oh, weep for Adonais—he is dead! Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep! _20 Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep; For he is gone, where all things wise and fair Descend;—oh, dream not that the amorous Deep _25 Will yet restore him to the vital air; Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

4. Most musical of mourners, weep again! Lament anew, Urania!—He died, Who was the Sire of an immortal strain, _30 Blind, old and lonely, when his country's pride, The priest, the slave, and the liberticide, Trampled and mocked with many a

loathed rite Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified, Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite _35 Yet reigns o’er earth; the third among the sons of light.

5. Most musical of mourners, weep anew! Not all to that bright station dared to climb; And happier they their happiness who knew, Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time _40 In which suns perished; others more sublime, Struck by the envious wrath of man or god, Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime; And some yet live, treading the thorny road, Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame’s serene abode. _45

6. But now, thy youngest, dearest one, has perished— The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew, Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished, And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew; Most musical of mourners, weep anew! _50 Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last, The bloom, whose petals nipped before they blew Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste; The broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

7. To that high Capital, where kingly Death _55 Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay, He came; and bought, with price of purest breath, A grave among the eternal.—Come away! Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still _60 He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay; Awake him not! surely he takes his fill Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

8. He will awake no more, oh, never more!— Within the twilight chamber spreads apace _65 The shadow of white Death, and at the door Invisible Corruption waits to trace His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place; The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface _70 So fair a prey, till darkness and the law Of change, shall o’er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

9. Oh, weep for Adonais!—The quick Dreams, The passion-winged Ministers of thought, Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams _75 Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught The love which was its music, wander not,— Wander

no more, from kindling brain to brain, But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn their lot Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain, _80 They ne’er will gather strength, or find a home again.

10. And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head, And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries; ‘Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead; See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes, _85 Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain.’ Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise! She knew not ’twas her own; as with no stain She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain. _90

11. One from a lucid urn of starry dew Washed his light limbs as if embalming them; Another clipped her profuse locks, and threw The wreath upon him, like an anadem, Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem; _95 Another in her wilful grief would break Her bow and winged reeds, as if to stem A greater loss with one which was more weak; And dull the barbed fire against his frozen cheek.

12. Another Splendour on his mouth alit, _100 That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit, And pass into the panting heart beneath With lightning and with music: the damp death Quenched its caress upon his icy lips; _105 And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips, It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its eclipse.

13. And others came…Desires and Adorations, Winged Persuasions and veiled Destinies, _110 Splendours, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies; And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs, And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam Of her own dying smile instead of eyes, _115 Came in slow pomp;—the moving pomp might seem Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

14. All he had loved, and moulded into thought, From shape, and hue, and odour,

and sweet sound, Lamented Adonais. Morning sought _120 Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound, Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground, Dimmed the aereal eyes that kindle day; Afar the melancholy thunder moaned, Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay, _125 And the wild Winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

15. Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains, And feeds her grief with his remembered lay, And will no more reply to winds or fountains, Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray, _130 Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day; Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear Than those for whose disdain she pined away Into a shadow of all sounds:—a drear Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear. _135

16. Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were, Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown, For whom should she have waked the sullen year? To Phoebus was not Hyacinth so dear _140 Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both Thou, Adonais: wan they stand and sere Amid the faint companions of their youth, With dew all turned to tears; odour, to sighing ruth.

17. Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale _145 Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain; Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain, Soaring and screaming round her empty nest, _150 As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast, And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

18. Ah, woe is me! Winter is come and gone, But grief returns with the revolving year; _155 The airs and streams renew their joyous tone; The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear; Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier; The amorous birds now pair in every brake, And build their mossy homes in field and brere; _160 And the green lizard, and the golden snake, Like unimprisoned flames,

out of their trance awake.

19. Through wood and stream and field and hill and Ocean A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst As it has ever done, with change and motion, _165 From the great morning of the world when first God dawned on Chaos; in its stream immersed, The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light; All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst; Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's delight, _170 The beauty and the joy of their renewed might.

20. The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit tender, Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath; Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death _175 And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath; Nought we know, dies. Shall that alone which knows Be as a sword consumed before the sheath By sightless lightning?—the intense atom glows A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose. _180

21. Alas! that all we loved of him should be, But for our grief, as if it had not been, And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me! Whence are we, and why are we? of what scene The actors or spectators? Great and mean _185 Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow. As long as skies are blue, and fields are green, Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow, Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.

22. HE will awake no more, oh, never more! _190 'Wake thou,' cried Misery, 'childless Mother, rise Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core, A wound more fierce than his, with tears and sighs.' And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes, And all the Echoes whom their sister's song _195 Had held in holy silence, cried: 'Arise!' Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung, From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.

23. She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs Out of the East, and follows wild and drear _200 The golden Day, which, on eternal wings, Even as a ghost

abandoning a bier, Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear So struck, so roused, so rapped Urania; So saddened round her like an atmosphere _205 Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

24. Out of her secret Paradise she sped, Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel, And human hearts, which to her aery tread _210 Yielding not, wounded the invisible Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell: And barbed tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they, Rent the soft Form they never could repel, Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May, _215 Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

25. In the death-chamber for a moment Death, Shamed by the presence of that living Might, Blushed to annihilation, and the breath Revisited those lips, and Life's pale light _220 Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight. 'Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless, As silent lightning leaves the starless night! Leave me not!' cried Urania: her distress Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her vain caress. _225

26. 'Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again; Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live; And in my heartless breast and burning brain That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts else survive, With food of saddest memory kept alive, _230 Now thou art dead, as if it were a part Of thee, my Adonais! I would give All that I am to be as thou now art! But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart!

27. 'O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert, _235 Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart Dare the unpastured dragon in his den? Defenceless as thou wert, oh, where was then Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear? _240 Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere, The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer.

28. 'The herded wolves, bold only to pursue; The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er

the dead; _245 The vultures to the conqueror’s banner true Who feed where Desolation first has fed, And whose wings rain contagion;—how they fled, When, like Apollo, from his golden bow The Pythian of the age one arrow sped _250 And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no second blow, They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

29. ‘The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn; He sets, and each ephemeral insect then Is gathered into death without a dawn, _255 And the immortal stars awake again; So is it in the world of living men: A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light _260 Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit’s awful night.’

30. Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds came, Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent; The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame Over his living head like Heaven is bent, _265 An early but enduring monument, Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong, And Love taught Grief to fall like music from his tongue. _270

31. Midst others of less note, came one frail Form, A phantom among men; companionless As the last cloud of an expiring storm Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess, Had gazed on Nature’s naked loveliness, _275 Actaeon-like, and now he fled astray With feeble steps o’er the world’s wilderness, And his own thoughts, along that rugged way, Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

32. A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift— _280 A Love in desolation masked;—a Power Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce uplift The weight of the superincumbent hour; It is a dying lamp, a falling shower, A breaking billow;—even whilst we speak _285 Is it not broken? On the withering flower The killing sun smiles brightly: on a cheek The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

33. His head was bound with pansies overblown, And faded violets, white, and pied,

and blue; _290 And a light spear topped with a cypress cone, Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew, Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew _295 He came the last, neglected and apart; A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

34. All stood aloof, and at his partial moan Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band Who in another's fate now wept his own, _300 As in the accents of an unknown land He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned The Stranger's mien, and murmured: 'Who art thou?' He answered not, but with a sudden hand Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow, _305 Which was like Cain's or Christ's—oh! that it should be so!

35. What softer voice is hushed over the dead? Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown? What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed, In mockery of monumental stone, _310 The heavy heart heaving without a moan? If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise, Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the departed one, Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs, The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice. _315

36. Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh! What deaf and viperous murderer could crown Life's early cup with such a draught of woe? The nameless worm would now itself disown: It felt, yet could escape, the magic tone _320 Whose prelude held all envy, hate and wrong, But what was howling in one breast alone, Silent with expectation of the song, Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

37. Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame! _325 Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me, Thou noteless blot on a remembered name! But be thyself, and know thyself to be! And ever at thy season be thou free To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow; _330 Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee; Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow, And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as now.

38. Nor let us weep that our delight is fled Far from these carrion kites that scream below; _335 He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead; Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now— Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow Back to the burning fountain whence it came, A portion of the Eternal, which must glow _340 Through time and change, unquenchably the same, Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

39. Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep— He hath awakened from the dream of life— ’Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep _345 With phantoms an unprofitable strife, And in mad trance, strike with our spirit’s knife Invulnerable nothings.—WE decay Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief Convulse us and consume us day by day, _350 And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

40. He has outsoared the shadow of our night; Envy and calumny and hate and pain, And that unrest which men miscall delight, Can touch him not and torture not again; _355 From the contagion of the world’s slow stain He is secure, and now can never mourn A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain; Nor, when the spirit’s self has ceased to burn, With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn. _360

41. He lives, he wakes—’tis Death is dead, not he; Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn, Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee The spirit thou lamentest is not gone; Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan! _365 Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air, Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown O’er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

42. He is made one with Nature: there is heard _370 His voice in all her music, from the moan Of thunder, to the song of night’s sweet bird; He is a presence to be felt and known In darkness and in light, from herb and stone, Spreading itself where’er that Power may move _375 Which has withdrawn his being to its own; Which

wields the world with never-wearied love, Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

43. He is a portion of the loveliness Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear _380 His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there All new successions to the forms they wear; Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight To its own likeness, as each mass may bear; _385 And bursting in its beauty and its might From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

44. The splendours of the firmament of time May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not; Like stars to their appointed height they climb, _390 And death is a low mist which cannot blot The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair, And love and life contend in it, for what Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there _395 And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

45. The inheritors of unfulfilled renown Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought, Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton Rose pale,—his solemn agony had not _400 Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought And as he fell and as he lived and loved Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot, Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved: Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved. _405

46. And many more, whose names on Earth are dark, But whose transmitted effluence cannot die So long as fire outlives the parent spark, Rose, robed in dazzling immortality. 'Thou art become as one of us,' they cry, _410 'It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long Swung blind in unascended majesty, Silent alone amid a Heaven of Song. Assume thy winged throne, thou Vesper of our throng!'

47. Who mourns for Adonais? Oh, come forth, _415 Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright. Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth; As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might Satiate the void

circumference: then shrink _420 Even to a point within our day and night; And keep thy heart light lest it make thee sink When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.

48. Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre, Oh, not of him, but of our joy: 'tis nought _425 That ages, empires and religions there Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought; For such as he can lend,—they borrow not Glory from those who made the world their prey; And he is gathered to the kings of thought _430 Who waged contention with their time's decay, And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

49. Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise, The grave, the city, and the wilderness; And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise, _435 And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress The bones of Desolation's nakedness Pass, till the spirit of the spot shall lead Thy footsteps to a slope of green access Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead _440 A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread;

50. And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand; And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime, Pavilioning the dust of him who planned _445 This refuge for his memory, doth stand Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath, A field is spread, on which a newer band Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death, Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath. _450

51. Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned Its charge to each; and if the seal is set, Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind, Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find Thine own well full, if thou returnest home, Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb. What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

52. The One remains, the many change and pass; Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly; Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass, Stains the white

radiance of Eternity, Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die, If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek! Follow where all is fled!—Rome’s azure sky, Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

53. Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart? Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here They have departed; thou shouldst now depart! A light is passed from the revolving year, And man, and woman; and what still is dear Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither. The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whispers near: ’Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither, No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

54. That Light whose smile kindles the Universe, That Beauty in which all things work and move, That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love Which through the web of being blindly wove By man and beast and earth and air and sea, Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me, Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

55. The breath whose might I have invoked in song Descends on me; my spirit’s bark is driven, Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng Whose sails were never to the tempest given; The massy earth and sphered skies are riven! I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar; Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven, The soul of Adonais, like a star, Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are. _495

NOTES: _49 true-love]true love editions 1821, 1839. _72 Of change, etc. so editions 1829 (Galignani), 1839; Of mortal change, shall fill the grave which is her maw edition 1821. _81 or edition 1821; nor edition 1839. _105 his edition 1821; its edition 1839. _126 round edition 1821; around edition 1839. _143 faint companions edition 1839; drooping comrades edition 1821. _204 See Editor’s Note. _252 lying low edition 1839; as they go edition 1821.

CANCELLED PASSAGES OF ADONAIS.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

PASSAGES OF THE PREFACE.

…the expression of my indignation and sympathy. I will allow myself a first and last word on the subject of calumny as it relates to me. As an author I have dared and invited censure. If I understand myself, I have written neither for profit nor for fame. I have employed my poetical compositions and publications simply as the instruments of that sympathy between myself and others which the ardent and unbounded love I cherished for my kind incited me to acquire. I expected all sorts of stupidity and insolent contempt from those…

…These compositions (excepting the tragedy of “The Cenci”, which was written rather to try my powers than to unburthen my full heart) are insufficiently…commendation than perhaps they deserve, even from their bitterest enemies; but they have not attained any corresponding popularity. As a man, I shrink from notice and regard; the ebb and flow of the world vexes me; I desire to be left in peace. Persecution, contumely, and calumny have been heaped upon me in profuse measure; and domestic conspiracy and legal oppression have violated in my person the most sacred rights of nature and humanity. The bigot will say it was the recompense of my errors; the man of the world will call it the result of my imprudence; but never upon one head…

…Reviewers, with some rare exceptions, are a most stupid and malignant race. As a bankrupt thief turns thieftaker in despair, so an unsuccessful author turns critic. But a young spirit panting for fame, doubtful of its powers, and certain only of its aspirations, is ill qualified to assign its true value to the sneer of this world. He knows not that such stuff as this is of the abortive and monstrous births which time consumes as fast as it produces. He sees the truth and falsehood, the merits and demerits, of his case inextricably entangled…No personal offence should have drawn from me this public comment upon such stuff…

…The offence of this poor victim seems to have consisted solely in his intimacy with Leigh Hunt, Mr. Hazlitt, and some other enemies of despotism and superstition. My friend Hunt has a very hard skull to crack, and will take a deal of killing. I do not know much of Mr. Hazlitt, but…

…I knew personally but little of Keats; but on the news of his situation I wrote to him, suggesting the propriety of trying the Italian climate, and inviting him to join me. Unfortunately he did not allow me…

PASSAGES OF THE POEM.

And ever as he went he swept a lyre Of unaccustomed shape, and … strings Now like the … of impetuous fire, Which shakes the forest with its murmurings, Now like the rush of the aereal wings _5 Of the enamoured wind among the treen, Whispering unimaginable things, And dying on the streams of dew serene, Which feed the unmown meads with ever-during green.

…

And the green Paradise which western waves _10 Embosom in their ever-wailing sweep, Talking of freedom to their tongueless caves, Or to the spirits which within them keep A record of the wrongs which, though they sleep, Die not, but dream of retribution, heard _15 His hymns, and echoing them from steep to steep, Kept—

…

And then came one of sweet and earnest looks, Whose soft smiles to his dark and night-like eyes Were as the clear and ever-living brooks _20 Are to the obscure fountains whence they rise, Showing how pure they are: a Paradise Of happy truth upon his forehead low Lay, making wisdom lovely, in the guise Of earth-awakening morn upon the brow _25 Of star-deserted heaven, while ocean gleams below.

His song, though very sweet, was low and faint, A simple strain—

…

A mighty Phantasm, half concealed In darkness of his own exceeding light, _30 Which clothed his awful presence unrevealed, Charioted on the … night Of thunder-smoke, whose skirts were chrysolite.

And like a sudden meteor, which outstrips The splendour-winged chariot of the sun, _35 … eclipse The armies of the golden stars, each one Pavilioned in its tent of light—all strewn Over the chasms of blue night—

***

HELLAS

A LYRICAL DRAMA. MANTIS EIM EZTHLON AGONUN.—OEDIP. COLON.

[“Hellas” was composed at Pisa in the autumn of 1821, and dispatched to London, November 11. It was published, with the author’s name, by C. & J. Ollier in the spring of 1822. A transcript of the poem by Edward Williams is in the Rowfant Library. Ollier availed himself of Shelley’s permission to cancel certain passages in the notes; he also struck out certain lines of the text. These omissions were, some of them, restored in Galignani’s one-volume edition of “Coleridge, Shelley and Keats”, Paris, 1829, and also by Mrs. Shelley in the “Poetical Works”, 1839. A passage in the “Preface”, suppressed by Ollier, was restored by Mr. Buxton Forman (1892) from a proof copy of “Hellas” in his possession. The “Prologue to Hellas” was edited by Dr. Garnett in 1862 (“Relics of Shelley”) from the manuscripts at Boscombe Manor.

Our text is that of the editio princeps, 1822, corrected by a list of “Errata” sent by Shelley to Ollier, April 11, 1822. The Editor’s Notes at the end of Volume 3 should be consulted.]

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

PRINCE ALEXANDER MAVROCORDATO LATE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO THE HOSPODAR OF WALLACHIA THE DRAMA OF HELLAS IS INSCRIBED AS AN IMPERFECT TOKEN OF THE ADMIRATION,

SYMPATHY, AND FRIENDSHIP OF THE AUTHOR.

Pisa, November 1, 1821.

PREFACE.

The poem of “Hellas”, written at the suggestion of the events of the moment, is a mere improvise, and derives its interest (should it be found to possess any) solely from the intense sympathy which the Author feels with the cause he would celebrate.

The subject, in its present state, is insusceptible of being treated otherwise than lyrically, and if I have called this poem a drama from the circumstance of its being composed in dialogue, the licence is not greater than that which has been assumed by other poets who have called their productions epics, only because they have been divided into twelve or twenty-four books.

The “Persae” of Aeschylus afforded me the first model of my conception, although the decision of the glorious contest now waging in Greece being yet suspended forbids a catastrophe parallel to the return of Xerxes and the desolation of the Persians. I have, therefore, contented myself with exhibiting a series of lyric pictures, and with having wrought upon the curtain of futurity, which falls upon the unfinished scene, such figures of indistinct and visionary delineation as suggest the final triumph of the Greek cause as a portion of the cause of civilisation and social improvement.

The drama (if drama it must be called) is, however, so inartificial that I doubt whether, if recited on the Thespian waggon to an Athenian village at the Dionysiaca, it would have obtained the prize of the goat. I shall bear with equanimity any punishment, greater than the loss of such a reward, which the Aristarchi of the hour may think fit to inflict.

The only “goat-song” which I have yet attempted has, I confess, in spite of the unfavourable nature of the subject, received a greater and a more valuable portion of

applause than I expected or than it deserved.

Common fame is the only authority which I can allege for the details which form the basis of the poem, and I must trespass upon the forgiveness of my readers for the display of newspaper erudition to which I have been reduced. Undoubtedly, until the conclusion of the war, it will be impossible to obtain an account of it sufficiently authentic for historical materials; but poets have their privilege, and it is unquestionable that actions of the most exalted courage have been performed by the Greeks—that they have gained more than one naval victory, and that their defeat in Wallachia was signalized by circumstances of heroism more glorious even than victory.

The apathy of the rulers of the civilised world to the astonishing circumstance of the descendants of that nation to which they owe their civilisation, rising as it were from the ashes of their ruin, is something perfectly inexplicable to a mere spectator of the shows of this mortal scene. We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts have their root in Greece. But for Greece—Rome, the instructor, the conqueror, or the metropolis of our ancestors, would have spread no illumination with her arms, and we might still have been savages and idolaters; or, what is worse, might have arrived at such a stagnant and miserable state of social institution as China and Japan possess.

The human form and the human mind attained to a perfection in Greece which has impressed its image on those faultless productions, whose very fragments are the despair of modern art, and has propagated impulses which cannot cease, through a thousand channels of manifest or imperceptible operation, to ennoble and delight mankind until the extinction of the race.

The modern Greek is the descendant of those glorious beings whom the imagination almost refuses to figure to itself as belonging to our kind, and he inherits much of their sensibility, their rapidity of conception, their enthusiasm, and their courage. If

in many instances he is degraded by moral and political slavery to the practice of the basest vices it engenders—and that below the level of ordinary degradation—let us reflect that the corruption of the best produces the worst, and that habits which subsist only in relation to a peculiar state of social institution may be expected to cease as soon as that relation is dissolved. In fact, the Greeks, since the admirable novel of Anastasius could have been a faithful picture of their manners, have undergone most important changes; the flower of their youth, returning to their country from the universities of Italy, Germany, and France, have communicated to their fellow-citizens the latest results of that social perfection of which their ancestors were the original source. The University of Chios contained before the breaking out of the revolution eight hundred students, and among them several Germans and Americans. The munificence and energy of many of the Greek princes and merchants, directed to the renovation of their country with a spirit and a wisdom which has few examples, is above all praise.

The English permit their own oppressors to act according to their natural sympathy with the Turkish tyrant, and to brand upon their name the indelible blot of an alliance with the enemies of domestic happiness, of Christianity and civilisation.

Russia desires to possess, not to liberate Greece; and is contented to see the Turks, its natural enemies, and the Greeks, its intended slaves, enfeeble each other until one or both fall into its net. The wise and generous policy of England would have consisted in establishing the independence of Greece, and in maintaining it both against Russia and the Turk;—but when was the oppressor generous or just?

[Should the English people ever become free, they will reflect upon the part which those who presume to represent their will have played in the great drama of the revival of liberty, with feelings which it would become them to anticipate. This is the age of the war of the oppressed against the oppressors, and every one of those ringleaders of the privileged gangs of murderers and swindlers, called Sovereigns,

look to each other for aid against the common enemy, and suspend their mutual jealousies in the presence of a mightier fear. Of this holy alliance all the despots of the earth are virtual members. But a new race has arisen throughout Europe, nursed in the abhorrence of the opinions which are its chains, and she will continue to produce fresh generations to accomplish that destiny which tyrants foresee and dread. (This paragraph, suppressed in 1822 by Charles Ollier, was first restored in 1892 by Mr. Buxton Forman [“Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, volume 4 pages 40-41] from a proof copy of Hellas in his possession.]

The Spanish Peninsula is already free. France is tranquil in the enjoyment of a partial exemption from the abuses which its unnatural and feeble government are vainly attempting to revive. The seed of blood and misery has been sown in Italy, and a more vigorous race is arising to go forth to the harvest. The world waits only the news of a revolution of Germany to see the tyrants who have pinnacled themselves on its supineness precipitated into the ruin from which they shall never arise. Well do these destroyers of mankind know their enemy, when they impute the insurrection in Greece to the same spirit before which they tremble throughout the rest of Europe, and that enemy well knows the power and the cunning of its opponents, and watches the moment of their approaching weakness and inevitable division to wrest the bloody sceptres from their grasp.

PROLOGUE TO HELLAS.

HERALD OF ETERNITY: It is the day when all the sons of God Wait in the roofless senate-house, whose floor Is Chaos, and the immovable abyss Frozen by His steadfast word to hyaline

…

The shadow of God, and delegate _5 Of that before whose breath the universe Is as a print of dew. Hierarchs and kings Who from your thrones pinnacled on the past Sway the reluctant present, ye who sit Pavilioned on the radiance or the gloom _10

Of mortal thought, which like an exhalation Steaming from earth, conceals the … of heaven Which gave it birth. … assemble here Before your Father's throne; the swift decree Yet hovers, and the fiery incarnation _15 Is yet withheld, clothed in which it shall annul The fairest of those wandering isles that gem The sapphire space of interstellar air, That green and azure sphere, that earth enwrapped _20 Less in the beauty of its tender light Than in an atmosphere of living spirit Which interpenetrating all the … it rolls from realm to realm And age to age, and in its ebb and flow _25 Impels the generations To their appointed place, Whilst the high Arbiter Beholds the strife, and at the appointed time Sends His decrees veiled in eternal… _30

Within the circuit of this pendent orb There lies an antique region, on which fell The dews of thought in the world's golden dawn Earliest and most benign, and from it sprung Temples and cities and immortal forms _35 And harmonies of wisdom and of song, And thoughts, and deeds worthy of thoughts so fair. And when the sun of its dominion failed, And when the winter of its glory came, The winds that stripped it bare blew on and swept _40 That dew into the utmost wildernesses In wandering clouds of sunny rain that thawed The unmaternal bosom of the North. Haste, sons of God, … for ye beheld, Reluctant, or consenting, or astonished, _45 The stern decrees go forth, which heaped on Greece Ruin and degradation and despair. A fourth now waits: assemble, sons of God, To speed or to prevent or to suspend, If, as ye dream, such power be not withheld, _50 The unaccomplished destiny.

NOTE: _8 your Garnett; yon Forman, Dowden.

…

CHORUS: The curtain of the Universe Is rent and shattered, The splendour-winged worlds disperse Like wild doves scattered. _55

Space is roofless and bare, And in the midst a cloudy shrine, Dark amid thrones of light. In the blue glow of hyaline Golden worlds revolve and shine. _60 In … flight

From every point of the Infinite, Like a thousand dawns on a single night The splendours rise and spread; And through thunder and darkness dread _65 Light and music are radiated, And in their pavilioned chariots led By living wings high overhead The giant Powers move, Gloomy or bright as the thrones they fill. _70

…

A chaos of light and motion Upon that glassy ocean.

…

The senate of the Gods is met, Each in his rank and station set; There is silence in the spaces— _75 Lo! Satan, Christ, and Mahomet Start from their places!

CHRIST: Almighty Father! Low-kneeling at the feet of Destiny

…

There are two fountains in which spirits weep _80 When mortals err, Discord and Slavery named, And with their bitter dew two Destinies Filled each their irrevocable urns; the third Fiercest and mightiest, mingled both, and added Chaos and Death, and slow Oblivion’s lymph, _85 And hate and terror, and the poisoned rain

…

The Aurora of the nations. By this brow Whose pores wept tears of blood, by these wide wounds, By this imperial crown of agony, By infamy and solitude and death, _90 For this I underwent, and by the pain Of pity for those who would … for me The unremembered joy of a revenge, For this I felt—by Plato’s sacred light, Of which my spirit was a burning morrow— _95 By Greece and all she cannot cease to be. Her quenchless words, sparks of immortal truth, Stars of all night—her harmonies and forms, Echoes and shadows of what Love adores In thee, I do compel thee, send forth Fate, _100 Thy irrevocable child: let her descend, A seraph-winged Victory [arrayed] In tempest of the omnipotence of God Which sweeps through all things.

From hollow leagues, from Tyranny which arms _105 Adverse miscreeds and emulous anarchies To stamp, as on a winged serpent's seed, Upon the name of Freedom; from the storm Of faction, which like earthquake shakes and sickens The solid heart of enterprise; from all _110 By which the holiest dreams of highest spirits Are stars beneath the dawn… She shall arise Victorious as the world arose from Chaos! And as the Heavens and the Earth arrayed Their presence in the beauty and the light _115 Of Thy first smile, O Father,—as they gather The spirit of Thy love which paves for them Their path o'er the abyss, till every sphere Shall be one living Spirit,—so shall Greece—

SATAN: Be as all things beneath the empyrean, _120 Mine! Art thou eyeless like old Destiny, Thou mockery-king, crowned with a wreath of thorns? Whose sceptre is a reed, the broken reed Which pierces thee! whose throne a chair of scorn; For seest thou not beneath this crystal floor _125 The innumerable worlds of golden light Which are my empire, and the least of them which thou wouldst redeem from me? Know'st thou not them my portion? Or wouldst rekindle the … strife _130 Which our great Father then did arbitrate Which he assigned to his competing sons Each his apportioned realm? Thou Destiny, Thou who art mailed in the omnipotence Of Him who tends thee forth, whate'er thy task, _135 Speed, spare not to accomplish, and be mine Thy trophies, whether Greece again become The fountain in the desert whence the earth Shall drink of freedom, which shall give it strength To suffer, or a gulf of hollow death _140 To swallow all delight, all life, all hope. Go, thou Vicegerent of my will, no less Than of the Father's; but lest thou shouldst faint, The winged hounds, Famine and Pestilence, Shall wait on thee, the hundred-forked snake _145 Insatiate Superstition still shall… The earth behind thy steps, and War shall hover Above, and Fraud shall gape below, and Change Shall flit before thee on her dragon wings, Convulsing and consuming, and I add _150 Three vials of the tears which daemons weep When virtuous spirits through the gate of Death Pass triumphing over the thorns of life, Sceptres and crowns, mitres and swords and

snares, Trampling in scorn, like Him and Socrates. _155 The first is Anarchy; when Power and Pleasure, Glory and science and security, On Freedom hang like fruit on the green tree, Then pour it forth, and men shall gather ashes. The second Tyranny—

CHRIST: Obdurate spirit! _160 Thou seest but the Past in the To-come. Pride is thy error and thy punishment. Boast not thine empire, dream not that thy worlds Are more than furnace-sparks or rainbow-drops Before the Power that wields and kindles them. _165 True greatness asks not space, true excellence Lives in the Spirit of all things that live, Which lends it to the worlds thou callest thine.

…

MAHOMET: …Haste thou and fill the waning crescent With beams as keen as those which pierced the shadow _170 Of Christian night rolled back upon the West, When the orient moon of Islam rode in triumph From Tmolus to the Acroceraunian snow.

…

Wake, thou Word Of God, and from the throne of Destiny _175 Even to the utmost limit of thy way May Triumph

…

Be thou a curse on them whose creed Divides and multiplies the most high God.

HELLAS.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE: MAHMUD. HASSAN. DAOOD. AHASUERUS, A JEW. CHORUS OF GREEK CAPTIVE WOMEN. [THE PHANTOM OF MAHOMET II. (OMITTED, EDITION 1822.)] MESSENGERS, SLAVES, AND ATTENDANTS. SCENE: CONSTANTINOPLE. TIME: SUNSET. SCENE: A TERRACE ON THE SERAGLIO. MAHMUD SLEEPING, AN INDIAN SLAVE SITTING BESIDE HIS COUCH.

CHORUS OF GREEK CAPTIVE WOMEN: We strew these opiate flowers On thy restless pillow,— They were stripped from Orient bowers, By the Indian billow. Be thy sleep _5 Calm and deep, Like theirs who fell—not ours who weep!

INDIAN: Away, unlovely dreams! Away, false shapes of sleep Be his, as Heaven seems, _10 Clear, and bright, and deep! Soft as love, and calm as death, Sweet as a summer night without a breath.

CHORUS: Sleep, sleep! our song is laden With the soul of slumber; _15 It was sung by a Samian maiden, Whose lover was of the number Who now keep That calm sleep Whence none may wake, where none shall weep. _20

INDIAN: I touch thy temples pale! I breathe my soul on thee! And could my prayers avail, All my joy should be Dead, and I would live to weep, _25 So thou mightst win one hour of quiet sleep.

CHORUS: Breathe low, low The spell of the mighty mistress now! When Conscience lulls her sated snake, And Tyrants sleep, let Freedom wake. _30 Breathe low—low The words which, like secret fire, shall flow Through the veins of the frozen earth—low, low!

SEMICHORUS 1: Life may change, but it may fly not; Hope may vanish, but can die not; _35 Truth be veiled, but still it burneth; Love repulsed,—but it returneth!

SEMICHORUS 2: Yet were life a charnel where Hope lay coffined with Despair; Yet were truth a sacred lie, _40 Love were lust—

SEMICHORUS 1: If Liberty Lent not life its soul of light, Hope its iris of delight, Truth its prophet’s robe to wear, Love its power to give and bear. _45

CHORUS: In the great morning of the world, The Spirit of God with might unfurled The flag of Freedom over Chaos, And all its banded anarchs fled, Like vultures frighted from Imaus, _50 Before an earthquake’s tread.— So from Time’s tempestuous dawn Freedom’s splendour burst and shone:— Thermopylae and Marathon Caught like mountains beacon-lighted, _55 The springing Fire.—The

winged glory On Philippi half-alighted, Like an eagle on a promontory. Its unwearied wings could fan The quenchless ashes of Milan. _60 From age to age, from man to man, It lived; and lit from land to land Florence, Albion, Switzerland.

Then night fell; and, as from night, Reassuming fiery flight, _65 From the West swift Freedom came, Against the course of Heaven and doom. A second sun arrayed in flame, To burn, to kindle, to illume. From far Atlantis its young beams _70 Chased the shadows and the dreams. France, with all her sanguine steams, Hid, but quenched it not; again Through clouds its shafts of glory rain From utmost Germany to Spain. _75 As an eagle fed with morning Scorns the embattled tempest's warning, When she seeks her aerie hanging In the mountain-cedar's hair, And her brood expect the clanging _80 Of her wings through the wild air, Sick with famine:—Freedom, so To what of Greece remaineth now Returns; her hoary ruins glow Like Orient mountains lost in day; _85 Beneath the safety of her wings Her renovated nurslings prey, And in the naked lightenings Of truth they purge their dazzled eyes. Let Freedom leave—where'er she flies, _90 A Desert, or a Paradise: Let the beautiful and the brave Share her glory, or a grave.

NOTES: _77 tempest's]tempests edition 1822. _87 prey edition 1822; play editions 1839.

SEMICHORUS 1: With the gifts of gladness Greece did thy cradle strew; _95

SEMICHORUS 2: With the tears of sadness Greece did thy shroud bedew!

SEMICHORUS 1: With an orphan's affection She followed thy bier through Time;

SEMICHORUS 2: And at thy resurrection _100 Reappeareth, like thou, sublime!

SEMICHORUS 1: If Heaven should resume thee, To Heaven shall her spirit ascend;

SEMICHORUS 2: If Hell should entomb thee, To Hell shall her high hearts bend. _105

SEMICHORUS 1: If Annihilation—

SEMICHORUS 2: Dust let her glories be! And a name and a nation Be forgotten, Freedom, with thee!

INDIAN: His brow grows darker—breathe not—move not! _110 He starts—he shudders—ye that love not, With your panting loud and fast, Have awakened him at last.

MAHMUD [STARTING FROM HIS SLEEP]: Man the Seraglio-guard! make fast the gate! What! from a cannonade of three short hours? _115 ’Tis false! that breach towards the Bosphorus Cannot be practicable yet—who stirs? Stand to the match; that when the foe prevails One spark may mix in reconciling ruin The conqueror and the conquered! Heave the tower _120 Into the gap—wrench off the roof! [ENTER HASSAN.] Ha! what! The truth of day lightens upon my dream And I am Mahmud still.

HASSAN: Your Sublime Highness Is strangely moved.

MAHMUD: The times do cast strange shadows On those who watch and who must rule their course, _125 Lest they, being first in peril as in glory, Be whelmed in the fierce ebb:—and these are of them. Thrice has a gloomy vision hunted me As thus from sleep into the troubled day; It shakes me as the tempest shakes the sea, _130 Leaving no figure upon memory’s glass. Would that—no matter. Thou didst say thou knewest A Jew, whose spirit is a chronicle Of strange and secret and forgotten things. I bade thee summon him:—’tis said his tribe _135 Dream, and are wise interpreters of dreams.

HASSAN: The Jew of whom I spake is old,—so old He seems to have outlived a world’s decay; The hoary mountains and the wrinkled ocean Seem younger still than he;—his hair and beard _140 Are whiter than the tempest-sifted snow; His cold pale limbs and pulseless arteries Are like the fibres of a cloud instinct With light, and to the soul that quickens them Are as the atoms of the mountain-drift _145 To the winter wind:—but from his eye looks forth A life of unconsumed thought which

pierces The Present, and the Past, and the To-come. Some say that this is he whom the great prophet Jesus, the son of Joseph, for his mockery, _150 Mocked with the curse of immortality. Some feign that he is Enoch: others dream He was pre-adamite and has survived Cycles of generation and of ruin. The sage, in truth, by dreadful abstinence _155 And conquering penance of the mutinous flesh, Deep contemplation, and unwearied study, In years outstretched beyond the date of man, May have attained to sovereignty and science Over those strong and secret things and thoughts _160 Which others fear and know not.

MAHMUD: I would talk With this old Jew.

HASSAN: Thy will is even now Made known to him, where he dwells in a sea-cavern ‘Mid the Demonesi, less accessible Than thou or God! He who would question him _165 Must sail alone at sunset, where the stream Of Ocean sleeps around those foamless isles, When the young moon is westering as now, And evening airs wander upon the wave; And when the pines of that bee-pasturing isle, _170 Green Erebinthus, quench the fiery shadow Of his gilt prow within the sapphire water, Then must the lonely helmsman cry aloud ‘Ahasuerus!’ and the caverns round Will answer ‘Ahasuerus!’ If his prayer _175 Be granted, a faint meteor will arise Lighting him over Marmora, and a wind Will rush out of the sighing pine-forest, And with the wind a storm of harmony Unutterably sweet, and pilot him _180 Through the soft twilight to the Bosphorus: Thence at the hour and place and circumstance Fit for the matter of their conference The Jew appears. Few dare, and few who dare Win the desired communion—but that shout _185 Bodes—

[A SHOUT WITHIN.]

MAHMUD: Evil, doubtless; Like all human sounds. Let me converse with spirits.

HASSAN: That shout again.

MAHMUD: This Jew whom thou hast summoned—

HASSAN: Will be here—

MAHMUD: When the omnipotent hour to which are yoked He, I, and all things shall compel—enough! _190 Silence those mutineers—that drunken crew, That crowd about the pilot in the storm. Ay! strike the foremost shorter by a head! They weary me, and I have need of rest. Kinks are like stars—they rise and set, they have _195 The worship of the world, but no repose.

[EXEUNT SEVERALLY.]

CHORUS: Worlds on worlds are rolling ever From creation to decay, Like the bubbles on a river Sparkling, bursting, borne away. _200 But they are still immortal Who, through birth's orient portal And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro, Clothe their unceasing flight In the brief dust and light _205 Gathered around their chariots as they go; New shapes they still may weave, New gods, new laws receive, Bright or dim are they as the robes they last On Death's bare ribs had cast. _210

A power from the unknown God, A Promethean conqueror, came; Like a triumphal path he trod The thorns of death and shame. A mortal shape to him _215 Was like the vapour dim Which the orient planet animates with light; Hell, Sin, and Slavery came, Like bloodhounds mild and tame, Nor preyed, until their Lord had taken flight; _220 The moon of Mahomet Arose, and it shall set: While blazoned as on Heaven's immortal noon The cross leads generations on.

Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep _225 From one whose dreams are Paradise Fly, when the fond wretch wakes to weep, And Day peers forth with her blank eyes; So fleet, so faint, so fair, The Powers of earth and air _230 Fled from the folding-star of Bethlehem: Apollo, Pan, and Love, And even Olympian Jove Grew weak, for killing Truth had glared on them; Our hills and seas and streams, _235 Dispeopled of their dreams, Their waters turned to blood, their dew to tears, Wailed for the golden years.

[ENTER MAHMUD, HASSAN, DAOOD, AND OTHERS.]

MAHMUD: More gold? our ancestors bought gold with victory, And shall I sell it

for defeat?

DAOOD: The Janizars _240 Clamour for pay.

MAHMUD: Go! bid them pay themselves With Christian blood! Are there no Grecian virgins Whose shrieks and spasms and tears they may enjoy? No infidel children to impale on spears? No hoary priests after that Patriarch _245 Who bent the curse against his country's heart, Which clove his own at last? Go! bid them kill, Blood is the seed of gold.

DAOOD: It has been sown, And yet the harvest to the sicklemen Is as a grain to each.

MAHMUD: Then, take this signet, _250 Unlock the seventh chamber in which lie The treasures of victorious Solyman,— An empire's spoil stored for a day of ruin. O spirit of my sires! is it not come? The prey-birds and the wolves are gorged and sleep; _255 But these, who spread their feast on the red earth, Hunger for gold, which fills not.—See them fed; Then, lead them to the rivers of fresh death. [EXIT DAOOD.] O miserable dawn, after a night More glorious than the day which it usurped! _260 O faith in God! O power on earth! O word Of the great prophet, whose o'ershadowing wings Darkened the thrones and idols of the West, Now bright!—For thy sake cursed be the hour, Even as a father by an evil child, _265 When the orient moon of Islam rolled in triumph From Caucasus to White Ceraunia! Ruin above, and anarchy below; Terror without, and treachery within; The Chalice of destruction full, and all _270 Thirsting to drink; and who among us dares To dash it from his lips? and where is Hope?

HASSAN: The lamp of our dominion still rides high; One God is God—Mahomet is His prophet. Four hundred thousand Moslems, from the limits _275 Of utmost Asia, irresistibly Throng, like full clouds at the Sirocco's cry; But not like them to weep their strength in tears: They bear destroying lightning, and their step Wakes earthquake to consume and overwhelm, _280 And reign in ruin. Phrygian Olympus,

Tmolus, and Latmos, and Mycale, roughen With horrent arms; and lofty ships even now, Like vapours anchored to a mountain's edge, Freighted with fire and whirlwind, wait at Scala _285 The convoy of the ever-veering wind. Samos is drunk with blood;—the Greek has paid Brief victory with swift loss and long despair. The false Moldavian serfs fled fast and far When the fierce shout of 'Allah-illa-Allah!' _290 Rose like the war-cry of the northern wind Which kills the sluggish clouds, and leaves a flock Of wild swans struggling with the naked storm. So were the lost Greeks on the Danube's day! If night is mute, yet the returning sun _295 Kindles the voices of the morning birds; Nor at thy bidding less exultingly Than birds rejoicing in the golden day, The Anarchies of Africa unleash Their tempest-winged cities of the sea, _300 To speak in thunder to the rebel world. Like sulphurous clouds, half-shattered by the storm, They sweep the pale Aegean, while the Queen Of Ocean, bound upon her island-throne, Far in the West, sits mourning that her sons _305 Who frown on Freedom spare a smile for thee: Russia still hovers, as an eagle might Within a cloud, near which a kite and crane Hang tangled in inextricable fight, To stoop upon the victor;—for she fears _310 The name of Freedom, even as she hates thine. But recreant Austria loves thee as the Grave Loves Pestilence, and her slow dogs of war Fleshed with the chase, come up from Italy, And howl upon their limits; for they see _315 The panther, Freedom, fled to her old cover, Amid seas and mountains, and a mightier brood Crouch round. What Anarch wears a crown or mitre, Or bears the sword, or grasps the key of gold, Whose friends are not thy friends, whose foes thy foes? _320 Our arsenals and our armouries are full; Our forts defy assault; ten thousand cannon Lie ranged upon the beach, and hour by hour Their earth-convulsing wheels affright the city; The galloping of fiery steeds makes pale _325 The Christian merchant; and the yellow Jew Hides his hoard deeper in the faithless earth. Like clouds, and like the shadows of the clouds, Over the hills of Anatolia, Swift in wide troops the Tartar chivalry _330 Sweep;—the far flashing of their starry lances Reverberates the dying light of day. We have one God, one King,

one Hope, one Law; But many-headed Insurrection stands Divided in itself, and soon must fall. _335

NOTES: _253 spoil edition 1822; spoils editions 1839. _279 bear edition 1822; have editions 1839. _322 assault edition 1822; assaults editions 1839.

MAHMUD: Proud words, when deeds come short, are seasonable: Look, Hassan, on yon crescent moon, emblazoned Upon that shattered flag of fiery cloud Which leads the rear of the departing day; Wan emblem of an empire fading now! _340 See how it trembles in the blood-red air, And like a mighty lamp whose oil is spent Shrinks on the horizon's edge, while, from above, One star with insolent and victorious light Hovers above its fall, and with keen beams, _345 Like arrows through a fainting antelope, Strikes its weak form to death.

HASSAN: Even as that moon Renews itself—

MAHMUD: Shall we be not renewed! Far other bark than ours were needed now To stem the torrent of descending time: _350 The Spirit that lifts the slave before his lord Stalks through the capitals of armed kings, And spreads his ensign in the wilderness: Exults in chains; and, when the rebel falls, Cries like the blood of Abel from the dust; _355 And the inheritors of the earth, like beasts When earthquake is unleashed, with idiot fear Cower in their kingly dens—as I do now. What were Defeat when Victory must appal? Or Danger, when Security looks pale?— _360 How said the messenger—who, from the fort Islanded in the Danube, saw the battle Of Bucharest?—that—

NOTES: _351 his edition 1822; its editions 1839. _356 of the earth edition 1822; of earth editions 1839.

HASSAN: Ibrahim's scimitar Drew with its gleam swift victory from Heaven, To burn before him in the night of battle— _365 A light and a destruction.

MAHMUD: Ay! the day Was ours: but how?—

HASSAN: The light Wallachians, The Arnaut, Servian, and Albanian allies Fled

from the glance of our artillery Almost before the thunderstone alit. _370 One half the Grecian army made a bridge Of safe and slow retreat, with Moslem dead; The other—

MAHMUD: Speak—tremble not.—

HASSAN: Islanded By victor myriads, formed in hollow square With rough and steadfast front, and thrice flung back _375 The deluge of our foaming cavalry; Thrice their keen wedge of battle pierced our lines. Our baffled army trembled like one man Before a host, and gave them space; but soon, From the surrounding hills, the batteries blazed, _380 Kneading them down with fire and iron rain: Yet none approached; till, like a field of corn Under the hook of the swart sickleman, The band, intrenched in mounds of Turkish dead, Grew weak and few.—Then said the Pacha, ‘Slaves, _385 Render yourselves—they have abandoned you— What hope of refuge, or retreat, or aid? We grant your lives.’ ‘Grant that which is thine own!’ Cried one, and fell upon his sword and died! Another—‘God, and man, and hope abandon me; _390 But I to them, and to myself, remain Constant:’—he bowed his head, and his heart burst. A third exclaimed, ‘There is a refuge, tyrant, Where thou darest not pursue, and canst not harm Shouldst thou pursue; there we shall meet again.’ _395 Then held his breath, and, after a brief spasm, The indignant spirit cast its mortal garment Among the slain—dead earth upon the earth! So these survivors, each by different ways, Some strange, all sudden, none dishonourable, _400 Met in triumphant death; and when our army Closed in, while yet wonder, and awe, and shame Held back the base hyaenas of the battle That feed upon the dead and fly the living, One rose out of the chaos of the slain: _405 And if it were a corpse which some dread spirit Of the old saviours of the land we rule Had lifted in its anger, wandering by;— Or if there burned within the dying man Unquenchable disdain of death, and faith _410 Creating what it feigned;—I cannot tell— But he cried, ‘Phantoms of the free, we come! Armies of the Eternal, ye who strike To dust the citadels of sanguine kings, And shake the souls throned on their stony hearts, _415

And thaw their frostwork diadems like dew;— O ye who float around this clime, and weave The garment of the glory which it wears, Whose fame, though earth betray the dust it clasped, Lies sepulchred in monumental thought;— _420 Progenitors of all that yet is great, Ascribe to your bright senate, O accept In your high ministrations, us, your sons— Us first, and the more glorious yet to come! And ye, weak conquerors! giants who look pale _425 When the crushed worm rebels beneath your tread, The vultures and the dogs, your pensioners tame, Are overgorged; but, like oppressors, still They crave the relic of Destruction's feast. The exhalations and the thirsty winds _430 Are sick with blood; the dew is foul with death; Heaven's light is quenched in slaughter: thus, where'er Upon your camps, cities, or towers, or fleets, The obscene birds the reeking remnants cast Of these dead limbs,—upon your streams and mountains, _435 Upon your fields, your gardens, and your housetops, Where'er the winds shall creep, or the clouds fly, Or the dews fall, or the angry sun look down With poisoned light—Famine, and Pestilence, And Panic, shall wage war upon our side! _440 Nature from all her boundaries is moved Against ye: Time has found ye light as foam. The Earth rebels; and Good and Evil stake Their empire o'er the unborn world of men On this one cast;—but ere the die be thrown, _445 The renovated genius of our race, Proud umpire of the impious game, descends, A seraph-winged Victory, bestriding The tempest of the Omnipotence of God, Which sweeps all things to their appointed doom, _450 And you to oblivion!'—More he would have said, But—

NOTE: _384 band edition 1822; bands editions 1839.

MAHMUD: Died—as thou shouldst ere thy lips had painted Their ruin in the hues of our success. A rebel's crime, gilt with a rebel's tongue! Your heart is Greek, Hassan.

HASSAN: It may be so: _455 A spirit not my own wrenched me within, And I have spoken words I fear and hate; Yet would I die for—

MAHMUD: Live! oh live! outlive Me and this sinking empire. But the fleet—

HASSAN: Alas!—

MAHMUD: The fleet which, like a flock of clouds _460 Chased by the wind, flies the insurgent banner! Our winged castles from their merchant ships! Our myriads before their weak pirate bands! Our arms before their chains! our years of empire Before their centuries of servile fear! _465 Death is awake! Repulse is on the waters! They own no more the thunder-bearing banner Of Mahmud; but, like hounds of a base breed, Gorge from a stranger's hand, and rend their master.

NOTE: _466 Repulse is "Shelley, Errata", edition 1822; Repulsed edition 1822.

HASSAN: Latmos, and Ampelos, and Phanae saw _470 The wreck—

MAHMUD: The caves of the Icarian isles Told each to the other in loud mockery, And with the tongue as of a thousand echoes, First of the sea-convulsing fight—and, then,— Thou darest to speak—senseless are the mountains: _475 Interpret thou their voice!

NOTE: _472 Told Errata, Wms. transcript; Hold edition 1822.

HASSAN: My presence bore A part in that day's shame. The Grecian fleet Bore down at daybreak from the North, and hung As multitudinous on the ocean line, As cranes upon the cloudless Thracian wind. _480 Our squadron, convoying ten thousand men, Was stretching towards Nauplia when the battle Was kindled.— First through the hail of our artillery The agile Hydriote barks with press of sail _485 Dashed:—ship to ship, cannon to cannon, man To man were grappled in the embrace of war, Inextricable but by death or victory. The tempest of the raging fight convulsed To its crystalline depths that stainless sea, _490 And shook Heaven's roof of golden morning clouds, Poised on an hundred azure mountain-isles. In the brief trances of the artillery One cry from the destroyed and the destroyer Rose, and a cloud of desolation wrapped _495 The unforeseen event, till the north wind Sprung from the sea, lifting the heavy veil Of battle-smoke—then victory—victory! For, as

we thought, three frigates from Algiers Bore down from Naxos to our aid, but soon _500 The abhorred cross glimmered behind, before, Among, around us; and that fatal sign Dried with its beams the strength in Moslem hearts, As the sun drinks the dew.—What more? We fled!— Our noonday path over the sanguine foam _505 Was beaconed,—and the glare struck the sun pale,— By our consuming transports: the fierce light Made all the shadows of our sails blood-red, And every countenance blank. Some ships lay feeding The ravening fire, even to the water's level; _510 Some were blown up; some, settling heavily, Sunk; and the shrieks of our companions died Upon the wind, that bore us fast and far, Even after they were dead. Nine thousand perished! We met the vultures legioned in the air _515 Stemming the torrent of the tainted wind; They, screaming from their cloudy mountain-peaks, Stooped through the sulphurous battle-smoke and perched Each on the weltering carcase that we loved, Like its ill angel or its damned soul, _520 Riding upon the bosom of the sea. We saw the dog-fish hastening to their feast. Joy waked the voiceless people of the sea, And ravening Famine left his ocean cave To dwell with War, with us, and with Despair. _525 We met night three hours to the west of Patmos, And with night, tempest—

NOTES: _503 in edition 1822; of editions 1839. _527 And edition 1822; As editions 1839.

MAHMUD: Cease!

[ENTER A MESSENGER.]

MESSENGER: Your Sublime Highness, That Christian hound, the Muscovite Ambassador, Has left the city.—If the rebel fleet Had anchored in the port, had victory _530 Crowned the Greek legions in the Hippodrome, Panic were tamer.—Obedience and Mutiny, Like giants in contention planet-struck, Stand gazing on each other.—There is peace In Stamboul.—

MAHMUD: Is the grave not calmer still? _535 Its ruins shall be mine.

HASSAN: Fear not the Russian: The tiger leagues not with the stag at bay Against the hunter.—Cunning, base, and cruel, He crouches, watching till the spoil be won, And must be paid for his reserve in blood. _540 After the war is fought, yield the sleek Russian That which thou canst not keep, his deserved portion Of blood, which shall not flow through streets and fields, Rivers and seas, like that which we may win, But stagnate in the veins of Christian slaves! _545

[ENTER SECOND MESSENGER.]

SECOND MESSENGER: Nauplia, Tripolizza, Mothon, Athens, Navarin, Artas, Monembasia, Corinth, and Thebes are carried by assault, And every Islamite who made his dogs Fat with the flesh of Galilean slaves _550 Passed at the edge of the sword: the lust of blood, Which made our warriors drunk, is quenched in death; But like a fiery plague breaks out anew In deeds which make the Christian cause look pale In its own light. The garrison of Patras _555 Has store but for ten days, nor is there hope But from the Briton: at once slave and tyrant, His wishes still are weaker than his fears, Or he would sell what faith may yet remain From the oaths broke in Genoa and in Norway; _560 And if you buy him not, your treasury Is empty even of promises—his own coin. The freedman of a western poet-chief Holds Attica with seven thousand rebels, And has beat back the Pacha of Negropont: _565 The aged Ali sits in Yanina A crownless metaphor of empire: His name, that shadow of his withered might, Holds our besieging army like a spell In prey to famine, pest, and mutiny; _570 He, bastioned in his citadel, looks forth Joyless upon the sapphire lake that mirrors The ruins of the city where he reigned Childless and sceptreless. The Greek has reaped The costly harvest his own blood matured, _575 Not the sower, Ali—who has bought a truce From Ypsilanti with ten camel-loads Of Indian gold.

NOTE: _563 freedman edition 1822; freeman editions 1839.

[ENTER A THIRD MESSENGER.]

MAHMUD: What more?

THIRD MESSENGER: The Christian tribes Of Lebanon and the Syrian wilderness Are in revolt;—Damascus, Hems, Aleppo _580 Tremble;—the Arab menaces Medina, The Aethiop has intrenched himself in Sennaar, And keeps the Egyptian rebel well employed, Who denies homage, claims investiture As price of tardy aid. Persia demands _585 The cities on the Tigris, and the Georgians Refuse their living tribute. Crete and Cyprus, Like mountain-twins that from each other's veins Catch the volcano-fire and earthquake-spasm, Shake in the general fever. Through the city, _590 Like birds before a storm, the Santons shriek, And prophesyings horrible and new Are heard among the crowd: that sea of men Sleeps on the wrecks it made, breathless and still. A Dervise, learned in the Koran, preaches _595 That it is written how the sins of Islam Must raise up a destroyer even now. The Greeks expect a Saviour from the West, Who shall not come, men say, in clouds and glory, But in the omnipresence of that Spirit _600 In which all live and are. Ominous signs Are blazoned broadly on the noonday sky: One saw a red cross stamped upon the sun; It has rained blood; and monstrous births declare The secret wrath of Nature and her Lord. _605 The army encamped upon the Cydaris Was roused last night by the alarm of battle, And saw two hosts conflicting in the air, The shadows doubtless of the unborn time Cast on the mirror of the night. While yet _610 The fight hung balanced, there arose a storm Which swept the phantoms from among the stars. At the third watch the Spirit of the Plague Was heard abroad flapping among the tents; Those who relieved watch found the sentinels dead. _615 The last news from the camp is, that a thousand Have sickened, and—

[ENTER A FOURTH MESSENGER.]

MAHMUD: And thou, pale ghost, dim shadow Of some untimely rumour, speak!

FOURTH MESSENGER: One comes Fainting with toil, covered with foam and blood: He stood, he says, on Chelonites' _620 Promontory, which o'erlooks the isles that groan Under the Briton's frown, and all their waters Then trembling in the

splendour of the moon, When as the wandering clouds unveiled or hid Her boundless light, he saw two adverse fleets _625 Stalk through the night in the horizon's glimmer, Mingling fierce thunders and sulphureous gleams, And smoke which strangled every infant wind That soothed the silver clouds through the deep air. At length the battle slept, but the Sirocco _630 Awoke, and drove his flock of thunder-clouds Over the sea-horizon, blotting out All objects—save that in the faint moon-glimpse He saw, or dreamed he saw, the Turkish admiral And two the loftiest of our ships of war, _635 With the bright image of that Queen of Heaven, Who hid, perhaps, her face for grief, reversed; And the abhorred cross—

NOTE: _620 on Chelonites']on Chelonites "Errata"; upon Clelonite's edition 1822; upon Clelonit's editions 1839.

[ENTER AN ATTENDANT.]

ATTENDANT: Your Sublime Highness, The Jew, who—

MAHMUD: Could not come more seasonably: Bid him attend. I'll hear no more! too long _640 We gaze on danger through the mist of fear, And multiply upon our shattered hopes The images of ruin. Come what will! To-morrow and to-morrow are as lamps Set in our path to light us to the edge _645 Through rough and smooth, nor can we suffer aught Which He inflicts not in whose hand we are.

[EXEUNT.]

SEMICHORUS 1: Would I were the winged cloud Of a tempest swift and loud! I would scorn _650 The smile of morn And the wave where the moonrise is born! I would leave The spirits of eve A shroud for the corpse of the day to weave _655 From other threads than mine! Bask in the deep blue noon divine. Who would? Not I.

NOTE: _657 the deep blue "Errata", Wms. transcript; the blue edition 1822.

SEMICHORUS 2: Whither to fly?

SEMICHORUS 1: Where the rocks that gird th' Aegean _660 Echo to the battle paean Of the free— I would flee A tempestuous herald of victory! My golden rain For the Grecian slain _665 Should mingle in tears with the bloody main, And my solemn thunder-knell Should ring to the world the passing-bell Of Tyranny! _670

SEMICHORUS 2: Ah king! wilt thou chain The rack and the rain? Wilt thou fetter the lightning and hurricane? The storms are free, But we— _675

CHORUS: O Slavery! thou frost of the world's prime, Killing its flowers and leaving its thorns bare! Thy touch has stamped these limbs with crime, These brows thy branding garland bear, But the free heart, the impassive soul _680 Scorn thy control!

SEMICHORUS 1: Let there be light! said Liberty, And like sunrise from the sea, Athens arose!—Around her born, Shone like mountains in the morn _685 Glorious states;—and are they now Ashes, wrecks, oblivion?

SEMICHORUS 2: Go, Where Thermae and Asopus swallowed Persia, as the sand does foam: Deluge upon deluge followed, _690 Discord, Macedon, and Rome: And lastly thou!

SEMICHORUS 1: Temples and towers, Citadels and marts, and they Who live and die there, have been ours, And may be thine, and must decay; _695 But Greece and her foundations are Built below the tide of war, Based on the crystalline sea Of thought and its eternity; Her citizens, imperial spirits, _700 Rule the present from the past, On all this world of men inherits Their seal is set.

SEMICHORUS 2: Hear ye the blast, Whose Orphic thunder thrilling calls From ruin her Titanian walls? _705 Whose spirit shakes the sapless bones Of Slavery? Argos, Corinth, Crete Hear, and from their mountain thrones The daemons and the nymphs repeat The harmony.

SEMICHORUS 1: I hear! I hear! _710

SEMICHORUS 2: The world's eyeless charioteer, Destiny, is hurrying by! What

faith is crushed, what empire bleeds Beneath her earthquake-footed steeds? What eagle-winged victory sits _715 At her right hand? what shadow flits Before? what splendour rolls behind? Ruin and renovation cry ‘Who but We?’

SEMICHORUS 1: I hear! I hear! The hiss as of a rushing wind, _720 The roar as of an ocean foaming, The thunder as of earthquake coming. I hear! I hear! The crash as of an empire falling, The shrieks as of a people calling _725 ‘Mercy! mercy!’—How they thrill! Then a shout of ‘kill! kill! kill!’ And then a small still voice, thus—

SEMICHORUS 2: For Revenge and Wrong bring forth their kind, The foul cubs like their parents are, _730 Their den is in the guilty mind, And Conscience feeds them with despair.

NOTE: _728 For edition 1822, Wms. transcript; Fear cj. Fleay, Forman, Dowden. See Editor’s Note.

SEMICHORUS 1: In sacred Athens, near the fane Of Wisdom, Pity’s altar stood: Serve not the unknown God in vain. _735 But pay that broken shrine again, Love for hate and tears for blood.

[ENTER MAHMUD AND AHASUERUS.]

MAHMUD: Thou art a man, thou sayest, even as we.

AHASUERUS: No more!

MAHMUD: But raised above thy fellow-men By thought, as I by power.

AHASUERUS: Thou sayest so. _740

MAHMUD: Thou art an adept in the difficult lore Of Greek and Frank philosophy; thou numberest The flowers, and thou measurest the stars; Thou severest element from element; Thy spirit is present in the Past, and sees _745 The birth of this old world through all its cycles Of desolation and of loveliness, And when man was not, and how man became The monarch and the slave of this low sphere, And all its narrow circles—it is much— _750 I honour thee, and would be what thou art Were I

not what I am; but the unborn hour, Cradled in fear and hope, conflicting storms, Who shall unveil? Nor thou, nor I, nor any Mighty or wise. I apprehended not _755 What thou hast taught me, but I now perceive That thou art no interpreter of dreams; Thou dost not own that art, device, or God, Can make the Future present—let it come! Moreover thou disdainest us and ours; _760 Thou art as God, whom thou contemplatest.

AHASUERUS: Disdain thee?—not the worm beneath thy feet! The Fathomless has care for meaner things Than thou canst dream, and has made pride for those Who would be what they may not, or would seem _765 That which they are not. Sultan! talk no more Of thee and me, the Future and the Past; But look on that which cannot change—the One, The unborn and the undying. Earth and ocean, Space, and the isles of life or light that gem _770 The sapphire floods of interstellar air, This firmament pavilioned upon chaos, With all its cressets of immortal fire, Whose outwall, bastioned impregnably Against the escape of boldest thoughts, repels them _775 As Calpe the Atlantic clouds—this Whole Of suns, and worlds, and men, and beasts, and flowers, With all the silent or tempestuous workings By which they have been, are, or cease to be, Is but a vision;—all that it inherits _780 Are motes of a sick eye, bubbles and dreams; Thought is its cradle and its grave, nor less The Future and the Past are idle shadows Of thought’s eternal flight—they have no being: Nought is but that which feels itself to be. _785

NOTE: _762 thy edition 1822; my editions 1839.

MAHMUD: What meanest thou? Thy words stream like a tempest Of dazzling mist within my brain—they shake The earth on which I stand, and hang like night On Heaven above me. What can they avail? They cast on all things surest, brightest, best, _790 Doubt, insecurity, astonishment.

AHASUERUS: Mistake me not! All is contained in each. Dodona’s forest to an acorn’s cup Is that which has been, or will be, to that Which is—the absent to the

present. Thought _795 Alone, and its quick elements, Will, Passion, Reason, Imagination, cannot die; They are, what that which they regard appears, The stuff whence mutability can weave All that it hath dominion o’er, worlds, worms, _800 Empires, and superstitions. What has thought To do with time, or place, or circumstance? Wouldst thou behold the Future?—ask and have! Knock and it shall be opened—look, and lo! The coming age is shadowed on the Past _805 As on a glass.

MAHMUD: Wild, wilder thoughts convulse My spirit—Did not Mahomet the Second Win Stamboul?

AHASUERUS: Thou wouldst ask that giant spirit The written fortunes of thy house and faith. Thou wouldst cite one out of the grave to tell _810 How what was born in blood must die.

MAHMUD: Thy words Have power on me! I see—

AHASUERUS: What hearest thou?

MAHMUD: A far whisper— Terrible silence.

AHASUERUS: What succeeds?

MAHMUD: The sound As of the assault of an imperial city, _815 The hiss of inextinguishable fire, The roar of giant cannon; the earthquaking Fall of vast bastions and precipitous towers, The shock of crags shot from strange enginery, The clash of wheels, and clang of armed hoofs, _820 And crash of brazen mail as of the wreck Of adamantine mountains—the mad blast Of trumpets, and the neigh of raging steeds, The shrieks of women whose thrill jars the blood, And one sweet laugh, most horrible to hear, _825 As of a joyous infant waked and playing With its dead mother’s breast, and now more loud The mingled battle-cry,—ha! hear I not ‘En touto nike!’ ‘Allah-illa-Allah!‘?

AHASUERUS: The sulphurous mist is raised—thou seest—

MAHMUD: A chasm, _830 As of two mountains in the wall of Stamboul; And in that ghastly breach the Islamites, Like giants on the ruins of a world, Stand in the light of sunrise. In the dust Glimmers a kingless diadem, and one _835 Of regal port has cast himself beneath The stream of war. Another proudly clad In golden arms spurs a Tartarian barb Into the gap, and with his iron mace Directs the torrent of that tide of men, _840 And seems—he is—Mahomet!

AHASUERUS: What thou seest Is but the ghost of thy forgotten dream. A dream itself, yet less, perhaps, than that Thou call’st reality. Thou mayst behold How cities, on which Empire sleeps enthroned, _845 Bow their towered crests to mutability. Poised by the flood, e’en on the height thou holdest, Thou mayst now learn how the full tide of power Ebbs to its depths.—Inheritor of glory, Conceived in darkness, born in blood, and nourished _850 With tears and toil, thou seest the mortal throes Of that whose birth was but the same. The Past Now stands before thee like an Incarnation Of the To-come; yet wouldst thou commune with That portion of thyself which was ere thou _855 Didst start for this brief race whose crown is death, Dissolve with that strong faith and fervent passion Which called it from the uncreated deep, Yon cloud of war, with its tempestuous phantoms Of raging death; and draw with mighty will _860 The imperial shade hither.

[EXIT AHASUERUS.] [THE PHANTOM OF MAHOMET THE SECOND APPEARS.]

MAHMUD: Approach!

PHANTOM: I come Thence whither thou must go! The grave is fitter To take the living than give up the dead; Yet has thy faith prevailed, and I am here. The heavy fragments of the power which fell _865 When I arose, like shapeless crags and clouds, Hang round my throne on the abyss, and voices Of strange lament soothe my supreme repose, Wailing for glory never to return.— A later Empire nods in its decay: _870 The autumn of a greener faith is come, And wolfish change, like winter,

howls to strip The foliage in which Fame, the eagle, built Her aerie, while Dominion whelped below. The storm is in its branches, and the frost _875 Is on its leaves, and the blank deep expects Oblivion on oblivion, spoil on spoil, Ruin on ruin:—Thou art slow, my son; The Anarchs of the world of darkness keep A throne for thee, round which thine empire lies _880 Boundless and mute; and for thy subjects thou, Like us, shalt rule the ghosts of murdered life, The phantoms of the powers who rule thee now— Mutinous passions, and conflicting fears, And hopes that sate themselves on dust, and die!— _885 Stripped of their mortal strength, as thou of thine. Islam must fall, but we will reign together Over its ruins in the world of death:— And if the trunk be dry, yet shall the seed Unfold itself even in the shape of that _890 Which gathers birth in its decay. Woe! woe! To the weak people tangled in the grasp Of its last spasms.

MAHMUD: Spirit, woe to all! Woe to the wronged and the avenger! Woe To the destroyer, woe to the destroyed! _895 Woe to the dupe, and woe to the deceiver! Woe to the oppressed, and woe to the oppressor! Woe both to those that suffer and inflict; Those who are born and those who die! but say, Imperial shadow of the thing I am, _900 When, how, by whom, Destruction must accomplish Her consummation!

PHANTOM: Ask the cold pale Hour, Rich in reversion of impending death, When HE shall fall upon whose ripe gray hairs Sit Care, and Sorrow, and Infirmity— _905 The weight which Crime, whose wings are plumed with years, Leaves in his flight from ravaged heart to heart Over the heads of men, under which burthen They bow themselves unto the grave: fond wretch! He leans upon his crutch, and talks of years _910 To come, and how in hours of youth renewed He will renew lost joys, and—

VOICE WITHOUT: Victory! Victory!

[THE PHANTOM VANISHES.]

MAHMUD: What sound of the importunate earth has broken My mighty trance?

VOICE WITHOUT: Victory! Victory!

MAHMUD: Weak lightning before darkness! poor faint smile _915 Of dying Islam! Voice which art the response Of hollow weakness! Do I wake and live? Were there such things, or may the unquiet brain, Vexed by the wise mad talk of the old Jew, Have shaped itself these shadows of its fear? _920 It matters not!—for nought we see or dream, Possess, or lose, or grasp at, can be worth More than it gives or teaches. Come what may, The Future must become the Past, and I As they were to whom once this present hour, _925 This gloomy crag of time to which I cling, Seemed an Elysian isle of peace and joy Never to be attained.—I must rebuke This drunkenness of triumph ere it die, And dying, bring despair. Victory! poor slaves! _930

[EXIT MAHMUD.]

VOICE WITHOUT: Shout in the jubilee of death! The Greeks Are as a brood of lions in the net Round which the kingly hunters of the earth Stand smiling. Anarchs, ye whose daily food Are curses, groans, and gold, the fruit of death, _935 From Thule to the girdle of the world, Come, feast! the board groans with the flesh of men; The cup is foaming with a nation’s blood, Famine and Thirst await! eat, drink, and die!

SEMICHORUS 1: Victorious Wrong, with vulture scream, _940 Salutes the rising sun, pursues the flying day! I saw her, ghastly as a tyrant’s dream, Perch on the trembling pyramid of night, Beneath which earth and all her realms pavilioned lay In visions of the dawning undelight. _945 Who shall impede her flight? Who rob her of her prey?

VOICE WITHOUT: Victory! Victory! Russia’s famished eagles Dare not to prey beneath the crescent’s light. Impale the remnant of the Greeks! despoil! _950 Violate! make their flesh cheaper than dust!

SEMICHORUS 2: Thou voice which art The herald of the ill in splendour hid! Thou echo of the hollow heart Of monarchy, bear me to thine abode _955 When

desolation flashes o’er a world destroyed: Oh, bear me to those isles of jagged cloud Which float like mountains on the earthquake, mid The momentary oceans of the lightning, Or to some toppling promontory proud _960 Of solid tempest whose black pyramid, Riven, overhangs the founts intensely bright’ning Of those dawn-tinted deluges of fire Before their waves expire, When heaven and earth are light, and only light _965 In the thunder-night!

NOTE: _958 earthquake edition 1822; earthquakes editions 1839.

VOICE WITHOUT: Victory! Victory! Austria, Russia, England, And that tame serpent, that poor shadow, France, Cry peace, and that means death when monarchs speak. Ho, there! bring torches, sharpen those red stakes, _970 These chains are light, fitter for slaves and poisoners Than Greeks. Kill! plunder! burn! let none remain.

SEMICHORUS 1: Alas! for Liberty! If numbers, wealth, or unfulfilling years, Or fate, can quell the free! _975 Alas! for Virtue, when Torments, or contumely, or the sneers Of erring judging men Can break the heart where it abides. Alas! if Love, whose smile makes this obscure world splendid, _980 Can change with its false times and tides, Like hope and terror,— Alas for Love! And Truth, who wanderest lone and unbefriended, If thou canst veil thy lie-consuming mirror _985 Before the dazzled eyes of Error, Alas for thee! Image of the Above.

SEMICHORUS 2: Repulse, with plumes from conquest torn, Led the ten thousand from the limits of the morn Through many an hostile Anarchy! _990 At length they wept aloud, and cried, ‘The Sea! the Sea!’ Through exile, persecution, and despair, Rome was, and young Atlantis shall become The wonder, or the terror, or the tomb Of all whose step wakes Power lulled in her savage lair: _995 But Greece was as a hermit-child, Whose fairest thoughts and limbs were built To woman’s growth, by dreams so mild, She knew not pain or guilt; And now, O Victory, blush! and Empire, tremble _1000 When ye desert the free— If Greece must be A wreck, yet

shall its fragments reassemble, And build themselves again impregnably In a diviner clime, _1005 To Amphionic music on some Cape sublime, Which frowns above the idle foam of Time.

SEMICHORUS 1: Let the tyrants rule the desert they have made; Let the free possess the Paradise they claim; Be the fortune of our fierce oppressors weighed _1010 With our ruin, our resistance, and our name!

SEMICHORUS 2: Our dead shall be the seed of their decay, Our survivors be the shadow of their pride, Our adversity a dream to pass away— Their dishonour a remembrance to abide! _1015

VOICE WITHOUT: Victory! Victory! The bought Briton sends The keys of ocean to the Islamite.— Now shall the blazon of the cross be veiled, And British skill directing Othman might, Thunder-strike rebel victory. Oh, keep holy _1020 This jubilee of unrevenged blood! Kill! crush! despoil! Let not a Greek escape!

SEMICHORUS 1: Darkness has dawned in the East On the noon of time: The death-birds descend to their feast _1025 From the hungry clime. Let Freedom and Peace flee far To a sunnier strand, And follow Love’s folding-star To the Evening land! _1030

SEMICHORUS 2: The young moon has fed Her exhausted horn With the sunset’s fire: The weak day is dead, But the night is not born; _1035 And, like loveliness panting with wild desire While it trembles with fear and delight, Hesperus flies from awakening night, And pants in its beauty and speed with light Fast-flashing, soft, and bright. _1040 Thou beacon of love! thou lamp of the free! Guide us far, far away, To climes where now veiled by the ardour of day Thou art hidden From waves on which weary Noon _1045 Faints in her summer swoon, Between kingless continents sinless as Eden, Around mountains and islands inviolably Pranked on the sapphire sea.

SEMICHORUS 1: Through the sunset of hope, _1050 Like the shapes of a dream.

What Paradise islands of glory gleam! Beneath Heaven's cope, Their shadows more clear float by— The sound of their oceans, the light of their sky, _1055 The music and fragrance their solitudes breathe Burst, like morning on dream, or like Heaven on death, Through the walls of our prison; And Greece, which was dead, is arisen!

NOTE: _1057 dream edition 1822; dreams editions 1839.

CHORUS: The world's great age begins anew, _1060 The golden years return, The earth doth like a snake renew Her winter weeds outworn: Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam, Like wrecks of a dissolving dream. _1065

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains From waves serener far; A new Peneus rolls his fountains Against the morning star. Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep _1070 Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main, Fraught with a later prize; Another Orpheus sings again, And loves, and weeps, and dies. _1075 A new Ulysses leaves once more Calypso for his native shore.

Oh, write no more the tale of Troy, If earth Death's scroll must be! Nor mix with Laian rage the joy _1080 Which dawns upon the free: Although a subtler Sphinx renew Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise, And to remoter time _1085 Bequeath, like sunset to the skies, The splendour of its prime; And leave, if nought so bright may live, All earth can take or Heaven can give.

Saturn and Love their long repose _1090 Shall burst, more bright and good Than all who fell, than One who rose, Than many unsubdued: Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers, But votive tears and symbol flowers. _1095

Oh, cease! must hate and death return? Cease! must men kill and die? Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn Of bitter prophecy. The world is weary of the past, _1100 Oh, might it die or rest at last!

NOTES: _1068 his edition 1822; its editions 1839. _1072 Argo]Argos edition 1822. _1091-_1093 See Editor's note. _1091 bright editions 1839; wise edition 1829 (ed. Galignani). _1093 unsubdued editions 1839; unwithstood edition 1829 (ed. Galignani).

NOTES.

(1) THE QUENCHLESS ASHES OF MILAN [L. 60].

Milan was the centre of the resistance of the Lombard league against the Austrian tyrant. Frederic Barbarossa burnt the city to the ground, but liberty lived in its ashes, and it rose like an exhalation from its ruin. See Sismondi's "Histoire des Republiques Italiennes", a book which has done much towards awakening the Italians to an imitation of their great ancestors.

(2) THE CHORUS [L. 197].

The popular notions of Christianity are represented in this chorus as true in their relation to the worship they superseded, and that which in all probability they will supersede, without considering their merits in a relation more universal. The first stanza contrasts the immortality of the living and thinking beings which inhabit the planets, and to use a common and inadequate phrase, "clothe themselves in matter", with the transience of the noblest manifestations of the external world.

The concluding verses indicate a progressive state of more or loss exalted existence, according to the degree of perfection which every distinct intelligence may have attained. Let it not be supposed that I mean to dogmatise upon a subject, concerning which all men are equally ignorant, or that I think the Gordian knot of the origin of evil can be disentangled by that or any similar assertions. The received hypothesis of a Being resembling men in the moral attributes of His nature, having called us out of non-existence, and after inflicting on us the misery of the commission of error, should superadd that of the punishment and the privations consequent upon it, still would remain inexplicable and incredible. That there is a true solution of the riddle,

and that in our present state that solution is unattainable by us, are propositions which may be regarded as equally certain: meanwhile, as it is the province of the poet to attach himself to those ideas which exalt and ennoble humanity, let him be permitted to have conjectured the condition of that futurity towards which we are all impelled by an inextinguishable thirst for immortality. Until better arguments can be produced than sophisms which disgrace the cause, this desire itself must remain the strongest and the only presumption that eternity is the inheritance of every thinking being.

(3) NO HOARY PRIESTS AFTER THAT PATRIARCH [L. 245].

The Greek Patriarch, after haying been compelled to fulminate an anathema against the insurgents, was put to death by the Turks.

Fortunately the Greeks have been taught that they cannot buy security by degradation, and the Turks, though equally cruel, are less cunning than the smooth-faced tyrants of Europe. As to the anathema, his Holiness might as well have thrown his mitre at Mount Athos for any effect that it produced. The chiefs of the Greeks are almost all men of comprehension and enlightened views on religion and politics.

(4) THE FREEDMAN OF A WESTERN POET-CHIEF [L. 563].

A Greek who had been Lord Byron’s servant commands the insurgents in Attica. This Greek, Lord Byron informs me, though a poet and an enthusiastic patriot, gave him rather the idea of a timid and unenterprising person. It appears that circumstances make men what they are, and that we all contain the germ of a degree of degradation or of greatness whose connection with our character is determined by events.

It is reported that this Messiah had arrived at a seaport near Lacedaemon in an American brig. The association of names and ideas is irresistibly ludicrous, but the prevalence of such a rumour strongly marks the state of popular enthusiasm in

Greece.

(6) THE SOUND AS OF THE ASSAULT OF AN IMPERIAL CITY [LL. 814-15].

For the vision of Mahmud of the taking of Constantinople in 1453, see Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", volume 12 page 223.

The manner of the invocation of the spirit of Mahomet the Second will be censured as over subtle. I could easily have made the Jew a regular conjuror, and the Phantom an ordinary ghost. I have preferred to represent the Jew as disclaiming all pretension, or even belief, in supernatural agency, and as tempting Mahmud to that state of mind in which ideas may be supposed to assume the force of sensations through the confusion of thought with the objects of thought, and the excess of passion animating the creations of imagination.

It is a sort of natural magic, susceptible of being exercised in a degree by any one who should have made himself master of the secret associations of another's thoughts.

(7) THE CHORUS [L. 1060].

The final chorus is indistinct and obscure, as the event of the living drama whose arrival it foretells. Prophecies of wars, and rumours of wars, etc., may safely be made by poet or prophet in any age, but to anticipate however darkly a period of regeneration and happiness is a more hazardous exercise of the faculty which bards possess or feign. It will remind the reader 'magno NEC proximus intervallo' of Isaiah and Virgil, whose ardent spirits overleaping the actual reign of evil which we endure and bewail, already saw the possible and perhaps approaching state of society in which the 'lion shall lie down with the lamb,' and 'omnis feret omnia tellus.' Let these great names be my authority and my excuse.

(8) SATURN AND LOVE THEIR LONG REPOSE SHALL BURST [L. 1090].

Saturn and Love were among the deities of a real or imaginary state of innocence and happiness. ALL those WHO FELL, or the Gods of Greece, Asia, and Egypt; the

ONE WHO ROSE, or Jesus Christ, at whose appearance the idols of the Pagan World wore amerced of their worship; and the MANY UNSUBDUED, or the monstrous objects of the idolatry of China, India, the Antarctic islands, and the native tribes of America, certainly have reigned over the understandings of men in conjunction or in succession, during periods in which all we know of evil has been in a state of portentous, and, until the revival of learning and the arts, perpetually increasing, activity. The Grecian gods seem indeed to have been personally more innocent, although it cannot be said, that as far as temperance and chastity are concerned, they gave so edifying an example as their successor. The sublime human character of Jesus Christ was deformed by an imputed identification with a Power, who tempted, betrayed, and punished the innocent beings who were called into existence by His sole will; and for the period of a thousand years, the spirit of this most just, wise, and benevolent of men has been propitiated with myriads of hecatombs of those who approached the nearest to His innocence and wisdom, sacrificed under every aggravation of atrocity and variety of torture. The horrors of the Mexican, the Peruvian, and the Indian superstitions are well known.

NOTE ON HELLAS, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

The South of Europe was in a state of great political excitement at the beginning of the year 1821. The Spanish Revolution had been a signal to Italy; secrete societies were formed; and, when Naples rose to declare the Constitution, the call was responded to from Brundusium to the foot of the Alps. To crush these attempts to obtain liberty, early in 1821 the Austrians poured their armies into the Peninsula: at first their coming rather seemed to add energy and resolution to a people long enslaved. The Piedmontese asserted their freedom; Genoa threw off the yoke of the King of Sardinia; and, as if in playful imitation, the people of the little state of Massa and Carrara gave the conge to their sovereign, and set up a republic.

Tuscany alone was perfectly tranquil. It was said that the Austrian minister

presented a list of sixty Carbonari to the Grand Duke, urging their imprisonment; and the Grand Duke replied, 'I do not know whether these sixty men are Carbonari, but I know, if I imprison them, I shall directly have sixty thousand start up.' But, though the Tuscans had no desire to disturb the paternal government beneath whose shelter they slumbered, they regarded the progress of the various Italian revolutions with intense interest, and hatred for the Austrian was warm in every bosom. But they had slender hopes; they knew that the Neapolitans would offer no fit resistance to the regular German troops, and that the overthrow of the constitution in Naples would act as a decisive blow against all struggles for liberty in Italy.

We have seen the rise and progress of reform. But the Holy Alliance was alive and active in those days, and few could dream of the peaceful triumph of liberty. It seemed then that the armed assertion of freedom in the South of Europe was the only hope of the liberals, as, if it prevailed, the nations of the north would imitate the example. Happily the reverse has proved the fact. The countries accustomed to the exercise of the privileges of freemen, to a limited extent, have extended, and are extending, these limits. Freedom and knowledge have now a chance of proceeding hand in hand; and, if it continue thus, we may hope for the durability of both. Then, as I have said—in 1821—Shelley, as well as every other lover of liberty, looked upon the struggles in Spain and Italy as decisive of the destinies of the world, probably for centuries to come. The interest he took in the progress of affairs was intense. When Genoa declared itself free, his hopes were at their highest. Day after day he read the bulletins of the Austrian army, and sought eagerly to gather tokens of its defeat. He heard of the revolt of Genoa with emotions of transport. His whole heart and soul were in the triumph of the cause. We were living at Pisa at that time; and several well-informed Italians, at the head of whom we may place the celebrated Vacca, were accustomed to seek for sympathy in their hopes from Shelley: they did not find such for the despair they too generally experienced, founded on contempt for their southern countrymen.

While the fate of the progress of the Austrian armies then invading Naples was yet in suspense, the news of another revolution filled him with exultation. We had formed the acquaintance at Pisa of several Constantinopolitan Greeks, of the family of Prince Caradja, formerly Hospodar of Wallachia; who, hearing that the bowstring, the accustomed finale of his viceroyalty, was on the road to him, escaped with his treasures, and took up his abode in Tuscany. Among these was the gentleman to whom the drama of "Hellas" is dedicated. Prince Mavrocordato was warmed by those aspirations for the independence of his country which filled the hearts of many of his countrymen. He often intimated the possibility of an insurrection in Greece; but we had no idea of its being so near at hand, when, on the 1st of April 1821, he called on Shelley, bringing the proclamation of his cousin, Prince Ypsilanti, and, radiant with exultation and delight, declared that henceforth Greece would be free.

Shelley had hymned the dawn of liberty in Spain and Naples, in two odes dictated by the warmest enthusiasm; he felt himself naturally impelled to decorate with poetry the uprise of the descendants of that people whose works he regarded with deep admiration, and to adopt the vaticinatory character in prophesying their success. "Hellas" was written in a moment of enthusiasm. It is curious to remark how well he overcomes the difficulty of forming a drama out of such scant materials. His prophecies, indeed, came true in their general, not their particular, purport. He did not foresee the death of Lord Londonderry, which was to be the epoch of a change in English politics, particularly as regarded foreign affairs; nor that the navy of his country would fight for instead of against the Greeks, and by the battle of Navarino secure their enfranchisement from the Turks. Almost against reason, as it appeared to him, he resolved to believe that Greece would prove triumphant; and in this spirit, auguring ultimate good, yet grieving over the vicissitudes to be endured in the interval, he composed his drama.

"Hellas" was among the last of his compositions, and is among the most beautiful. The choruses are singularly imaginative, and melodious in their versification. There

are some stanzas that beautifully exemplify Shelley's peculiar style; as, for instance, the assertion of the intellectual empire which must be for ever the inheritance of the country of Homer, Sophocles, and Plato:—

'But Greece and her foundations are Built below the tide of war, Based on the crystalline sea Of thought and its eternity.'

And again, that philosophical truth felicitously imaged forth—

'Revenge and Wrong bring forth their kind, The foul cubs like their parents are, Their den is in the guilty mind, And Conscience feeds them with despair.'

The conclusion of the last chorus is among the most beautiful of his lyrics. The imagery is distinct and majestic; the prophecy, such as poets love to dwell upon, the Regeneration of Mankind—and that regeneration reflecting back splendour on the foregone time, from which it inherits so much of intellectual wealth, and memory of past virtuous deeds, as must render the possession of happiness and peace of tenfold value.

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FRAGMENTS OF AN UNFINISHED DRAMA.

[Published in part (lines 1-69, 100-120) by Mrs. Shelley, "Posthumous Poems", 1824; and again, with the notes, in "Poetical Works", 1839. Lines 127-238 were printed by Dr. Garnett under the title of "The Magic Plant" in his "Relics of Shelley", 1862. The whole was edited in its present form from the Boscombe manuscript by Mr. W.M. Rossetti in 1870 ("Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.", Moxon, 2 volumes.). 'Written at Pisa during the late winter or early spring of 1822' (Garnett).]

The following fragments are part of a Drama undertaken for the amusement of the individuals who composed our intimate society, but left unfinished. I have preserved a sketch of the story as far as it had been shadowed in the poet's mind.

An Enchantress, living in one of the islands of the Indian Archipelago, saves the life of a Pirate, a man of savage but noble nature. She becomes enamoured of him; and he, inconstant to his mortal love, for a while returns her passion; but at length, recalling the memory of her whom he left, and who laments his loss, he escapes from the Enchanted Island, and returns to his lady. His mode of life makes him again go to sea, and the Enchantress seizes the opportunity to bring him, by a spirit-brewed tempest, back to her Island. —[MRS. SHELLEY'S NOTE, 1839.]

SCENE.—BEFORE THE CAVERN OF THE INDIAN ENCHANTRESS.

THE ENCHANTRESS COMES FORTH.

ENCHANTRESS: He came like a dream in the dawn of life, He fled like a shadow before its noon; He is gone, and my peace is turned to strife, And I wander and wane like the weary moon. O, sweet Echo, wake, _5 And for my sake Make answer the while my heart shall break!

But my heart has a music which Echo's lips, Though tender and true, yet can answer not, And the shadow that moves in the soul's eclipse _10 Can return not the kiss by his now forgot; Sweet lips! he who hath On my desolate path Cast the darkness of absence, worse than death!

NOTE: _8 my omitted 1824.

[THE ENCHANTRESS MAKES HER SPELL: SHE IS ANSWERED BY A SPIRIT.]

SPIRIT: Within the silent centre of the earth _15 My mansion is; where I have lived insphered From the beginning, and around my sleep Have woven all the wondrous imagery Of this dim spot, which mortals call the world; Infinite depths of unknown elements _20 Massed into one impenetrable mask; Sheets of immeasurable fire, and veins Of gold and stone, and adamantine iron. And as a veil in which I walk through Heaven I have wrought mountains, seas, and waves, and clouds, _25 And lastly light, whose interfusion dawns In the dark space of interstellar air.

NOTES: _15-_27 Within…air. 1839; omitted 1824. See these lines in “Posthumous Poems”, 1824, page 209: “Song of a Spirit”. _16 have 1839; omitted 1824, page 209. _25 seas, and waves 1824, page 209; seas, waves 1839.

[A good Spirit, who watches over the Pirate’s fate, leads, in a mysterious manner, the lady of his love to the Enchanted Isle. She is accompanied by a Youth, who loves the lady, but whose passion she returns only with a sisterly affection. The ensuing scene takes place between them on their arrival at the Isle. [MRS. SHELLEY’S NOTE, 1839.]]

ANOTHER SCENE. INDIAN YOUTH AND LADY.

INDIAN: And, if my grief should still be dearer to me Than all the pleasures in the world beside, Why would you lighten it?—

NOTE: _29 pleasures]pleasure 1824.

LADY: I offer only _30 That which I seek, some human sympathy In this mysterious island.

INDIAN: Oh! my friend, My sister, my beloved!—What do I say? My brain is dizzy, and I scarce know whether I speak to thee or her.

LADY: Peace, perturbed heart! _35 I am to thee only as thou to mine, The passing wind which heals the brow at noon, And may strike cold into the breast at night, Yet cannot linger where it soothes the most, Or long soothe could it linger.

INDIAN: But you said _40 You also loved?

NOTE: _32-_41 Assigned to INDIAN, 1824.

LADY: Loved! Oh, I love. Methinks This word of love is fit for all the world, And that for gentle hearts another name Would speak of gentler thoughts than the world owns. I have loved.

INDIAN: And thou lovest not? if so, _45 Young as thou art thou canst afford to weep.

LADY: Oh! would that I could claim exemption From all the bitterness of that sweet name. I loved, I love, and when I love no more Let joys and grief perish, and leave despair _50 To ring the knell of youth. He stood beside me, The embodied vision of the brightest dream, Which like a dawn heralds the day of life; The shadow of his presence made my world A Paradise. All familiar things he touched, _55 All common words he spoke, became to me Like forms and sounds of a diviner world. He was as is the sun in his fierce youth, As terrible and lovely as a tempest; He came, and went, and left me what I am. _60 Alas! Why must I think how oft we two Have sate together near the river springs, Under the green pavilion which the willow Spreads on the floor of the unbroken fountain, Strewn, by the nurslings that linger there, _65 Over that islet paved with flowers and moss, While the musk-rose leaves, like flakes of crimson snow, Showered on us, and the dove mourned in the pine, Sad prophetess of sorrows not her own? The crane returned to her unfrozen haunt, _70 And the false cuckoo bade the spray good morn; And on a wintry bough the widowed bird, Hid in the deepest night of ivy-leaves, Renewed the vigils of a sleepless sorrow. I, left like her, and leaving one like her, _75 Alike abandoned and abandoning (Oh! unlike her in this!) the gentlest youth, Whose love had made my sorrows dear to him, Even as my sorrow made his love to me!

NOTE: _71 spray Rossetti 1870, Woodberry; Spring Forman, Dowden.

INDIAN: One curse of Nature stamps in the same mould _80 The features of the wretched; and they are As like as violet to violet, When memory, the ghost, their odours keeps Mid the cold relics of abandoned joy.— Proceed.

LADY: He was a simple innocent boy. _85 I loved him well, but not as he desired; Yet even thus he was content to be:— A short content, for I was—

INDIAN [ASIDE]: God of Heaven! From such an islet, such a river-spring—! I dare not ask her if there stood upon it _90 A pleasure-dome surmounted by a crescent, With steps to the blue water. [ALOUD.] It may be That Nature masks in life several

copies Of the same lot, so that the sufferers May feel another's sorrow as their own, _95 And find in friendship what they lost in love. That cannot be: yet it is strange that we, From the same scene, by the same path to this Realm of abandonment— But speak! your breath— Your breath is like soft music, your words are _100 The echoes of a voice which on my heart Sleeps like a melody of early days. But as you said—

LADY: He was so awful, yet So beautiful in mystery and terror, Calming me as the loveliness of heaven _105 Soothes the unquiet sea:—and yet not so, For he seemed stormy, and would often seem A quenchless sun masked in portentous clouds; For such his thoughts, and even his actions were; But he was not of them, nor they of him, _110 But as they hid his splendour from the earth. Some said he was a man of blood and peril, And steeped in bitter infamy to the lips. More need was there I should be innocent, More need that I should be most true and kind, _115 And much more need that there should be found one To share remorse and scorn and solitude, And all the ills that wait on those who do The tasks of ruin in the world of life. He fled, and I have followed him.

INDIAN: Such a one _120 Is he who was the winter of my peace. But, fairest stranger, when didst thou depart From the far hills where rise the springs of India? How didst thou pass the intervening sea?

LADY: If I be sure I am not dreaming now, _125 I should not doubt to say it was a dream. Methought a star came down from heaven, And rested mid the plants of India, Which I had given a shelter from the frost Within my chamber. There the meteor lay, _130 Panting forth light among the leaves and flowers, As if it lived, and was outworn with speed; Or that it loved, and passion made the pulse Of its bright life throb like an anxious heart, Till it diffused itself; and all the chamber _135 And walls seemed melted into emerald fire That burned not; in the midst of which appeared A spirit like a child, and laughed aloud A thrilling peal of such sweet

merriment As made the blood tingle in my warm feet: _140 Then bent over a vase, and murmuring Low, unintelligible melodies, Placed something in the mould like melon-seeds, And slowly faded, and in place of it A soft hand issued from the veil of fire, _145 Holding a cup like a magnolia flower, And poured upon the earth within the vase The element with which it overflowed, Brighter than morning light, and purer than The water of the springs of Himalah. _150

NOTE: _120-_126 Such…dream 1839; omitted 1824.

INDIAN: You waked not?

LADY: Not until my dream became Like a child's legend on the tideless sand. Which the first foam erases half, and half Leaves legible. At length I rose, and went, Visiting my flowers from pot to pot, and thought _155 To set new cuttings in the empty urns, And when I came to that beside the lattice, I saw two little dark-green leaves Lifting the light mould at their birth, and then I half-remembered my forgotten dream. _160 And day by day, green as a gourd in June, The plant grew fresh and thick, yet no one knew What plant it was; its stem and tendrils seemed Like emerald snakes, mottled and diamonded With azure mail and streaks of woven silver; _165 And all the sheaths that folded the dark buds Rose like the crest of cobra-di-capel, Until the golden eye of the bright flower, Through the dark lashes of those veined lids, …disencumbered of their silent sleep, _170 Gazed like a star into the morning light. Its leaves were delicate, you almost saw The pulses With which the purple velvet flower was fed To overflow, and like a poet's heart _175 Changing bright fancy to sweet sentiment, Changed half the light to fragrance. It soon fell, And to a green and dewy embryo-fruit Left all its treasured beauty. Day by day I nursed the plant, and on the double flute _180 Played to it on the sunny winter days Soft melodies, as sweet as April rain On silent leaves, and sang those words in which Passion makes Echo taunt the sleeping strings; And I would send tales of forgotten love _185 Late into the lone night, and sing wild songs Of maids deserted

in the olden time, And weep like a soft cloud in April's bosom Upon the sleeping eyelids of the plant, So that perhaps it dreamed that Spring was come, _190 And crept abroad into the moonlight air, And loosened all its limbs, as, noon by noon, The sun averted less his oblique beam.

INDIAN: And the plant died not in the frost?

LADY: It grew; And went out of the lattice which I left _195 Half open for it, trailing its quaint spires Along the garden and across the lawn, And down the slope of moss and through the tufts Of wild-flower roots, and stumps of trees o'ergrown With simple lichens, and old hoary stones, _200 On to the margin of the glassy pool, Even to a nook of unblown violets And lilies-of-the-valley yet unborn, Under a pine with ivy overgrown. And there its fruit lay like a sleeping lizard _205 Under the shadows; but when Spring indeed Came to unswathe her infants, and the lilies Peeped from their bright green masks to wonder at This shape of autumn couched in their recess, Then it dilated, and it grew until _210 One half lay floating on the fountain wave, Whose pulse, elapsed in unlike sympathies, Kept time Among the snowy water-lily buds. Its shape was such as summer melody _215 Of the south wind in spicy vales might give To some light cloud bound from the golden dawn To fairy isles of evening, and it seemed In hue and form that it had been a mirror Of all the hues and forms around it and _220 Upon it pictured by the sunny beams Which, from the bright vibrations of the pool, Were thrown upon the rafters and the roof Of boughs and leaves, and on the pillared stems Of the dark sylvan temple, and reflections _225 Of every infant flower and star of moss And veined leaf in the azure odorous air. And thus it lay in the Elysian calm Of its own beauty, floating on the line Which, like a film in purest space, divided _230 The heaven beneath the water from the heaven Above the clouds; and every day I went Watching its growth and wondering; And as the day grew hot, methought I saw A glassy vapour dancing on the pool, _235 And on it little quaint and filmy shapes. With dizzy motion, wheel and rise and fall, Like clouds of gnats with perfect lineaments.

…

O friend, sleep was a veil uplift from Heaven— As if Heaven dawned upon the world of dream— _240 When darkness rose on the extinguished day Out of the eastern wilderness.

INDIAN: I too Have found a moment’s paradise in sleep Half compensate a hell of waking sorrow.

***

CHARLES THE FIRST.

[“Charles the First” was designed in 1818, begun towards the close of 1819 [Medwin, “Life”, 2 page 62], resumed in January, and finally laid aside by June, 1822. It was published in part in the “Posthumous Poems”, 1824, and printed, in its present form (with the addition of some 530 lines), by Mr. W.M. Rossetti, 1870. Further particulars are given in the Editor’s Notes at the end of Volume 3.]

DRAMATIS PERSONAE: KING CHARLES I. QUEEN HENRIETTA. LAUD, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY. WENTWORTH, EARL OF STRAFFORD. LORD COTTINGTON. LORD WESTON. LORD COVENTRY. WILLIAMS, BISHOP OF LINCOLN. SECRETARY LYTTELTON. JUXON. ST. JOHN. ARCHY, THE COURT FOOL. HAMPDEN. PYM. CROMWELL. CROMWELL’S DAUGHTER. SIR HARRY VANE THE YOUNGER. LEIGHTON. BASTWICK. PRYNNE. GENTLEMEN OF THE INNS OF COURT, CITIZENS, PURSUIVANTS, MARSHALSMEN, LAW STUDENTS, JUDGES, CLERK. SCENE 1: THE MASQUE OF THE INNS OF COURT.

A PURSUIVANT: Place, for the Marshal of the Masque!

FIRST CITIZEN: What thinkest thou of this quaint masque which turns, Like morning from the shadow of the night, The night to day, and London to a place Of peace and joy?

SECOND CITIZEN: And Hell to Heaven. _5 Eight years are gone, And they seem hours, since in this populous street I trod on grass made green by summer's rain, For the red plague kept state within that palace Where now that vanity reigns. In nine years more _10 The roots will be refreshed with civil blood; And thank the mercy of insulted Heaven That sin and wrongs wound, as an orphan's cry, The patience of the great Avenger's ear.

NOTE: _10 now that vanity reigns 1870; now reigns vanity 1824.

A YOUTH: Yet, father, 'tis a happy sight to see, _15 Beautiful, innocent, and unforbidden By God or man;—'tis like the bright procession Of skiey visions in a solemn dream From which men wake as from a Paradise, And draw new strength to tread the thorns of life. _20 If God be good, wherefore should this be evil? And if this be not evil, dost thou not draw Unseasonable poison from the flowers Which bloom so rarely in this barren world? Oh, kill these bitter thoughts which make the present _25 Dark as the future!—

…

When Avarice and Tyranny, vigilant Fear, And open-eyed Conspiracy lie sleeping As on Hell's threshold; and all gentle thoughts Waken to worship Him who giveth joys _30 With His own gift.

SECOND CITIZEN: How young art thou in this old age of time! How green in this gray world? Canst thou discern The signs of seasons, yet perceive no hint Of change in that stage-scene in which thou art _35 Not a spectator but an actor? or Art thou a puppet moved by [enginery]? The day that dawns in fire will die in storms, Even though the noon be calm. My travel's done,— Before the whirlwind wakes I shall have found _40 My inn of lasting rest; but thou must still Be journeying on in this inclement air. Wrap thy old cloak about thy back; Nor leave the broad and plain and beaten road, Although no flowers smile on the trodden dust, _45 For the violet paths of pleasure. This Charles the First Rose like the equinoctial sun,… By vapours,

through whose threatening ominous veil Darting his altered influence he has gained This height of noon—from which he must decline _50 Amid the darkness of conflicting storms, To dank extinction and to latest night… There goes The apostate Strafford; he whose titles whispered aphorisms _55 From Machiavel and Bacon: and, if Judas Had been as brazen and as bold as he—

NOTES: _33-_37 Canst…enginery 1870; Canst thou not think Of change in that low scene, in which thou art Not a spectator but an actor?… 1824. _43-_57 Wrap…bold as he 1870; omitted 1824.

FIRST CITIZEN: That Is the Archbishop.

SECOND CITIZEN: Rather say the Pope: London will be soon his Rome: he walks As if he trod upon the heads of men: _60 He looks elate, drunken with blood and gold;— Beside him moves the Babylonian woman Invisibly, and with her as with his shadow, Mitred adulterer! he is joined in sin, Which turns Heaven's milk of mercy to revenge. _65

THIRD CITIZEN [LIFTING UP HIS EYES]: Good Lord! rain it down upon him!… Amid her ladies walks the papist queen, As if her nice feet scorned our English earth. The Canaanitish Jezebel! I would be A dog if I might tear her with my teeth! _70 There's old Sir Henry Vane, the Earl of Pembroke, Lord Essex, and Lord Keeper Coventry, And others who make base their English breed By vile participation of their honours With papists, atheists, tyrants, and apostates. _75 When lawyers masque 'tis time for honest men To strip the vizor from their purposes. A seasonable time for masquers this! When Englishmen and Protestants should sit dust on their dishonoured heads _80 To avert the wrath of Him whose scourge is felt For the great sins which have drawn down from Heaven and foreign overthrow. The remnant of the martyred saints in Rochefort Have been abandoned by their faithless allies _85 To that idolatrous and adulterous torturer Lewis of France,—the Palatinate is lost— [ENTER LEIGHTON (WHO HAS BEEN

BRANDED IN THE FACE) AND BASTWICK.] Canst thou be—art thou?

NOTE: _73 make 1824; made 1839.

LEIGHTON: I WAS Leighton: what I AM thou seest. And yet turn thine eyes, And with thy memory look on thy friend’s mind, _90 Which is unchanged, and where is written deep The sentence of my judge.

THIRD CITIZEN: Are these the marks with which Laud thinks to improve the image of his Maker Stamped on the face of man? Curses upon him, The impious tyrant!

SECOND CITIZEN: It is said besides _95 That lewd and papist drunkards may profane The Sabbath with their And has permitted that most heathenish custom Of dancing round a pole dressed up with wreaths On May-day. _100 A man who thus twice crucifies his God May well … his brother.—In my mind, friend, The root of all this ill is prelacy. I would cut up the root.

THIRD CITIZEN: And by what means?

SECOND CITIZEN: Smiting each Bishop under the fifth rib. _105

THIRD CITIZEN: You seem to know the vulnerable place Of these same crocodiles.

SECOND CITIZEN: I learnt it in Egyptian bondage, sir. Your worm of Nile Betrays not with its flattering tears like they; For, when they cannot kill, they whine and weep. _110 Nor is it half so greedy of men’s bodies As they of soul and all; nor does it wallow In slime as they in simony and lies And close lusts of the flesh.

NOTE: _78-_114 A seasonable…of the flesh 1870; omitted 1824. _108 bondage cj. Forman; bondages 1870.

A MARSHALSMAN: Give place, give place! You torch-bearers, advance to the great gate, _115 And then attend the Marshal of the Masque Into the Royal presence.

A LAW STUDENT: What thinkest thou Of this quaint show of ours, my aged

friend? Even now we see the redness of the torches Inflame the night to the eastward, and the clarions _120 [Gasp?] to us on the wind's wave. It comes! And their sounds, floating hither round the pageant, Rouse up the astonished air.

NOTE: _119-_123 Even now…air 1870; omitted 1824.

FIRST CITIZEN: I will not think but that our country's wounds May yet be healed. The king is just and gracious, _125 Though wicked counsels now pervert his will: These once cast off—

SECOND CITIZEN: As adders cast their skins And keep their venom, so kings often change; Councils and counsellors hang on one another, Hiding the loathsome _130 Like the base patchwork of a leper's rags.

THE YOUTH: Oh, still those dissonant thoughts!—List how the music Grows on the enchanted air! And see, the torches Restlessly flashing, and the crowd divided Like waves before an admiral's prow!

NOTE: _132 how the 1870; loud 1824.

A MARSHALSMAN: Give place _135 To the Marshal of the Masque!

A PURSUIVANT: Room for the King!

NOTE: _136 A Pursuivant: Room for the King! 1870; omitted 1824.

THE YOUTH: How glorious! See those thronging chariots Rolling, like painted clouds before the wind, Behind their solemn steeds: how some are shaped Like curved sea-shells dyed by the azure depths _140 Of Indian seas; some like the new-born moon; And some like cars in which the Romans climbed (Canopied by Victory's eagle-wings outspread) The Capitolian—See how gloriously The mettled horses in the torchlight stir _145 Their gallant riders, while they check their pride, Like shapes of some diviner element Than English air, and beings nobler than The envious and admiring multitude.

NOTE: _138-40 Rolling…depths 1870; Rolling like painted clouds before the wind

Some are Like curved shells, dyed by the azure depths 1824.

SECOND CITIZEN: Ay, there they are— _150 Nobles, and sons of nobles, patentees, Monopolists, and stewards of this poor farm, On whose lean sheep sit the prophetic crows, Here is the pomp that strips the houseless orphan, Here is the pride that breaks the desolate heart. _155 These are the lilies glorious as Solomon, Who toil not, neither do they spin,—unless It be the webs they catch poor rogues withal. Here is the surfeit which to them who earn The niggard wages of the earth, scarce leaves _160 The tithe that will support them till they crawl Back to her cold hard bosom. Here is health Followed by grim disease, glory by shame, Waste by lame famine, wealth by squalid want, And England's sin by England's punishment. _165 And, as the effect pursues the cause foregone, Lo, giving substance to my words, behold At once the sign and the thing signified— A troop of cripples, beggars, and lean outcasts, Horsed upon stumbling jades, carted with dung, _170 Dragged for a day from cellars and low cabins And rotten hiding-holes, to point the moral Of this presentment, and bring up the rear Of painted pomp with misery!

NOTES: _162 her 1870; its 1824. _170 jades 1870; shapes 1824. _173 presentment 1870; presentiment 1824.

THE YOUTH: 'Tis but The anti-masque, and serves as discords do _175 In sweetest music. Who would love May flowers If they succeeded not to Winter's flaw; Or day unchanged by night; or joy itself Without the touch of sorrow?

SECOND CITIZEN: I and thou-

A MARSHALSMAN: Place, give place! _180

NOTE: _179, _180 I…place! 1870; omitted 1824.

SCENE 2: A CHAMBER IN WHITEHALL. ENTER THE KING, QUEEN, LAUD, LORD STRAFFORD, LORD COTTINGTON, AND OTHER LORDS; ARCHY; ALSO ST. JOHN, WITH SOME GENTLEMEN OF THE INNS OF COURT.

KING: Thanks, gentlemen. I heartily accept This token of your service: your gay

masque Was performed gallantly. And it shows well When subjects twine such flowers of [observance?] With the sharp thorns that deck the English crown. _5 A gentle heart enjoys what it confers, Even as it suffers that which it inflicts, Though Justice guides the stroke. Accept my hearty thanks.

NOTE: _3-9 And…thanks 1870; omitted 1824.

QUEEN: And gentlemen, Call your poor Queen your debtor. Your quaint pageant _10 Rose on me like the figures of past years, Treading their still path back to infancy, More beautiful and mild as they draw nearer The quiet cradle. I could have almost wept To think I was in Paris, where these shows _15 Are well devised—such as I was ere yet My young heart shared a portion of the burthen, The careful weight, of this great monarchy. There, gentlemen, between the sovereign's pleasure And that which it regards, no clamour lifts _20 Its proud interposition. In Paris ribald censurers dare not move Their poisonous tongues against these sinless sports; And HIS smile Warms those who bask in it, as ours would do _25 If … Take my heart's thanks: add them, gentlemen, To those good words which, were he King of France, My royal lord would turn to golden deeds.

ST. JOHN: Madam, the love of Englishmen can make The lightest favour of their lawful king _30 Outweigh a despot's.—We humbly take our leaves, Enriched by smiles which France can never buy.

[EXEUNT ST. JOHN AND THE GENTLEMEN OF THE INNS OF COURT.]

KING: My Lord Archbishop, Mark you what spirit sits in St. John's eyes? Methinks it is too saucy for this presence. _35

ARCHY: Yes, pray your Grace look: for, like an unsophisticated [eye] sees everything upside down, you who are wise will discern the shadow of an idiot in lawn sleeves and a rochet setting springes to catch woodcocks in haymaking time. Poor Archy, whose owl-eyes are tempered to the error of his age, and because he is a fool, and by special ordinance of God forbidden ever to see himself as he is, sees

now in that deep eye a blindfold devil sitting on the ball, and weighing words out between king and subjects. One scale is full of promises, and the other full of protestations: and then another devil creeps behind the first out of the dark windings [of a] pregnant lawyer's brain, and takes the bandage from the other's eyes, and throws a sword into the left-hand scale, for all the world like my Lord Essex's there. _48

STRAFFORD: A rod in pickle for the Fool's back!

ARCHY: Ay, and some are now smiling whose tears will make the brine; for the Fool sees—

STRAFFORD: Insolent! You shall have your coat turned and be whipped out of the palace for this. _53

ARCHY: When all the fools are whipped, and all the Protestant writers, while the knaves are whipping the fools ever since a thief was set to catch a thief. If all turncoats were whipped out of palaces, poor Archy would be disgraced in good company. Let the knaves whip the fools, and all the fools laugh at it. [Let the] wise and godly slit each other's noses and ears (having no need of any sense of discernment in their craft); and the knaves, to marshal them, join in a procession to Bedlam, to entreat the madmen to omit their sublime Platonic contemplations, and manage the state of England. Let all the honest men who lie [pinched?] up at the prisons or the pillories, in custody of the pursuivants of the High-Commission Court, marshal them. _65

NOTE: _64 pinched marked as doubtful by Rossetti. 1870; Forman, Dowden; penned Woodberry.

[ENTER SECRETARY LYTTELTON, WITH PAPERS.]

KING [LOOKING OVER THE PAPERS]: These stiff Scots His Grace of Canterbury must take order To force under the Church's yoke.—You, Wentworth, Shall be myself in Ireland, and shall add Your wisdom, gentleness, and energy, _70

To what in me were wanting.—My Lord Weston, Look that those merchants draw not without loss Their bullion from the Tower; and, on the payment Of shipmoney, take fullest compensation For violation of our royal forests, _75 Whose limits, from neglect, have been o'ergrown With cottages and cornfields. The uttermost Farthing exact from those who claim exemption From knighthood: that which once was a reward Shall thus be made a punishment, that subjects _80 May know how majesty can wear at will The rugged mood.—My Lord of Coventry, Lay my command upon the Courts below That bail be not accepted for the prisoners Under the warrant of the Star Chamber. _85 The people shall not find the stubbornness Of Parliament a cheap or easy method Of dealing with their rightful sovereign: And doubt not this, my Lord of Coventry, We will find time and place for fit rebuke.— _90 My Lord of Canterbury.

NOTE: _22-90 In Paris…rebuke 1870; omitted 1824.

ARCHY: The fool is here.

LAUD: I crave permission of your Majesty To order that this insolent fellow be Chastised: he mocks the sacred character, Scoffs at the state, and—

NOTE: _95 state 1870; stake 1824.

KING: What, my Archy? _95 He mocks and mimics all he sees and hears, Yet with a quaint and graceful licence—Prithee For this once do not as Prynne would, were he Primate of England. With your Grace's leave, He lives in his own world; and, like a parrot _100 Hung in his gilded prison from the window Of a queen's bower over the public way, Blasphemes with a bird's mind:—his words, like arrows Which know no aim beyond the archer's wit, Strike sometimes what eludes philosophy.— _105 [TO ARCHY.] Go, sirrah, and repent of your offence Ten minutes in the rain; be it your penance To bring news how the world goes there. [EXIT ARCHY.] Poor Archy! He weaves about himself a world of mirth Out of the wreck of ours. _110

NOTES: _99 With your Grace's leave 1870; omitted 1824. _106-_110 Go…ours

spoken by THE QUEEN, 1824.

LAUD: I take with patience, as my Master did, All scoffs permitted from above.

KING: My lord, Pray overlook these papers. Archy's words Had wings, but these have talons.

QUEEN: And the lion That wears them must be tamed. My dearest lord, _115 I see the new-born courage in your eye Armed to strike dead the Spirit of the Time, Which spurs to rage the many-headed beast. Do thou persist: for, faint but in resolve, And it were better thou hadst still remained _120 The slave of thine own slaves, who tear like curs The fugitive, and flee from the pursuer; And Opportunity, that empty wolf, Flies at his throat who falls. Subdue thy actions Even to the disposition of thy purpose, _125 And be that tempered as the Ebro's steel; And banish weak-eyed Mercy to the weak, Whence she will greet thee with a gift of peace And not betray thee with a traitor's kiss, As when she keeps the company of rebels, _130 Who think that she is Fear. This do, lest we Should fall as from a glorious pinnacle In a bright dream, and wake as from a dream Out of our worshipped state.

NOTES: _116 your 1824; thine 1870. _118 Which…beast 1870; omitted 1824.

KING: Beloved friend, God is my witness that this weight of power, _135 Which He sets me my earthly task to wield Under His law, is my delight and pride Only because thou lovest that and me. For a king bears the office of a God To all the under world; and to his God _140 Alone he must deliver up his trust, Unshorn of its permitted attributes. [It seems] now as the baser elements Had mutinied against the golden sun That kindles them to harmony, and quells _145 Their self-destroying rapine. The wild million Strike at the eye that guides them; like as humours Of the distempered body that conspire Against the spirit of life throned in the heart,— And thus become the prey of one another, _150 And last of death—

STRAFFORD: That which would be ambition in a subject Is duty in a sovereign; for

on him, As on a keystone, hangs the arch of life, Whose safety is its strength. Degree and form, _155 And all that makes the age of reasoning man More memorable than a beast's, depend on this— That Right should fence itself inviolably With Power; in which respect the state of England From usurpation by the insolent commons _160 Cries for reform. Get treason, and spare treasure. Fee with coin The loudest murmurers; feed with jealousies Opposing factions,—be thyself of none; And borrow gold of many, for those who lend _165 Will serve thee till thou payest them; and thus Keep the fierce spirit of the hour at bay, Till time, and its coming generations Of nights and days unborn, bring some one chance,

…

Or war or pestilence or Nature's self,— _170 By some distemperature or terrible sign, Be as an arbiter betwixt themselves. Nor let your Majesty Doubt here the peril of the unseen event. How did your brother Kings, coheritors _175 In your high interest in the subject earth, Rise past such troubles to that height of power Where now they sit, and awfully serene Smile on the trembling world? Such popular storms Philip the Second of Spain, this Lewis of France, _180 And late the German head of many bodies, And every petty lord of Italy, Quelled or by arts or arms. Is England poorer Or feebler? or art thou who wield'st her power Tamer than they? or shall this island be— _185 [Girdled] by its inviolable waters— To the world present and the world to come Sole pattern of extinguished monarchy? Not if thou dost as I would have thee do.

KING: Your words shall be my deeds: _190 You speak the image of my thought. My friend (If Kings can have a friend, I call thee so), Beyond the large commission which [belongs] Under the great seal of the realm, take this: And, for some obvious reasons, let there be _195 No seal on it, except my kingly word And honour as I am a gentleman. Be—as thou art within my heart and mind— Another self, here and in Ireland: Do what thou judgest well, take amplest licence, _200 And stick not even at

questionable means. Hear me, Wentworth. My word is as a wall Between thee and this world thine enemy— That hates thee, for thou lovest me.

STRAFFORD: I own No friend but thee, no enemies but thine: _205 Thy lightest thought is my eternal law. How weak, how short, is life to pay—

KING: Peace, peace. Thou ow'st me nothing yet. [TO LAUD.] My lord, what say Those papers?

LAUD: Your Majesty has ever interposed, _210 In lenity towards your native soil, Between the heavy vengeance of the Church And Scotland. Mark the consequence of warming This brood of northern vipers in your bosom. The rabble, instructed no doubt _215 By London, Lindsay, Hume, and false Argyll (For the waves never menace heaven until Scourged by the wind's invisible tyranny), Have in the very temple of the Lord Done outrage to His chosen ministers. _220 They scorn the liturgy of the Holy Church, Refuse to obey her canons, and deny The apostolic power with which the Spirit Has filled its elect vessels, even from him Who held the keys with power to loose and bind, _225 To him who now pleads in this royal presence.— Let ample powers and new instructions be Sent to the High Commissioners in Scotland. To death, imprisonment, and confiscation, Add torture, add the ruin of the kindred _230 Of the offender, add the brand of infamy, Add mutilation: and if this suffice not, Unleash the sword and fire, that in their thirst They may lick up that scum of schismatics. I laugh at those weak rebels who, desiring _235 What we possess, still prate of Christian peace, As if those dreadful arbitrating messengers Which play the part of God 'twixt right and wrong, Should be let loose against the innocent sleep Of templed cities and the smiling fields, _240 For some poor argument of policy Which touches our own profit or our pride (Where it indeed were Christian charity To turn the cheek even to the smiter's hand): And, when our great Redeemer, when our God, _245 When He who gave, accepted, and retained Himself in propitiation of our sins, Is scorned in His

immediate ministry, With hazard of the inestimable loss Of all the truth and discipline which is _250 Salvation to the extremest generation Of men innumerable, they talk of peace! Such peace as Canaan found, let Scotland now: For, by that Christ who came to bring a sword, Not peace, upon the earth, and gave command _255 To His disciples at the Passover That each should sell his robe and buy a sword,- Once strip that minister of naked wrath, And it shall never sleep in peace again Till Scotland bend or break.

NOTES: _134-_232 Beloved…mutilation 1870; omitted 1824. _237 arbitrating messengers 1870; messengers of wrath 1824. _239 the 1870; omitted 1524. _243-_244 Parentheses inserted 1870. _246, _247 When He…sins 1870; omitted 1824. _248 ministry 1870; ministers 1824. _249-52 With…innumerable 1870; omitted 1824.

KING: My Lord Archbishop, _260 Do what thou wilt and what thou canst in this. Thy earthly even as thy heavenly King Gives thee large power in his unquiet realm. But we want money, and my mind misgives me That for so great an enterprise, as yet, _265 We are unfurnished.

STRAFFORD: Yet it may not long Rest on our wills.

COTTINGTON: The expenses Of gathering shipmoney, and of distraining For every petty rate (for we encounter A desperate opposition inch by inch _270 In every warehouse and on every farm), Have swallowed up the gross sum of the imposts; So that, though felt as a most grievous scourge Upon the land, they stand us in small stead As touches the receipt.

STRAFFORD: ’Tis a conclusion _275 Most arithmetical: and thence you infer Perhaps the assembling of a parliament. Now, if a man should call his dearest enemies To sit in licensed judgement on his life, His Majesty might wisely take that course. _280 [ASIDE TO COTTINGTON.] It is enough to expect from these lean imposts That they perform the office of a scourge, Without more profit. [ALOUD.]

Fines and confiscations, And a forced loan from the refractory city, Will fill our coffers: and the golden love _285 Of loyal gentlemen and noble friends For the worshipped father of our common country, With contributions from the catholics, Will make Rebellion pale in our excess. Be these the expedients until time and wisdom _290 Shall frame a settled state of government.

LAUD: And weak expedients they! Have we not drained All, till the … which seemed A mine exhaustless?

STRAFFORD: And the love which IS, If loyal hearts could turn their blood to gold. _295

LAUD: Both now grow barren: and I speak it not As loving parliaments, which, as they have been In the right hand of bold bad mighty kings The scourges of the bleeding Church, I hate. Methinks they scarcely can deserve our fear. _300

STRAFFORD: Oh! my dear liege, take back the wealth thou gavest: With that, take all I held, but as in trust For thee, of mine inheritance: leave me but This unprovided body for thy service, And a mind dedicated to no care _305 Except thy safety:—but assemble not A parliament. Hundreds will bring, like me, Their fortunes, as they would their blood, before—

KING: No! thou who judgest them art but one. Alas! We should be too much out of love with Heaven, _310 Did this vile world show many such as thee, Thou perfect, just, and honourable man! Never shall it be said that Charles of England Stripped those he loved for fear of those he scorns; Nor will he so much misbecome his throne _315 As to impoverish those who most adorn And best defend it. That you urge, dear Strafford, Inclines me rather—

QUEEN: To a parliament? Is this thy firmness? and thou wilt preside Over a knot of … censurers, _320 To the unswearing of thy best resolves, And choose the worst, when the worst comes too soon? Plight not the worst before the worst must come. Oh, wilt thou smile whilst our ribald foes, Dressed in their own usurped authority,

_325 Sharpen their tongues on Henrietta’s fame? It is enough! Thou lovest me no more! [WEEPS.]

KING: Oh, Henrietta!

[THEY TALK APART.]

COTTINGTON [TO LAUD]: Money we have none: And all the expedients of my Lord of Strafford Will scarcely meet the arrears.

LAUD: Without delay _330 An army must be sent into the north; Followed by a Commission of the Church, With amplest power to quench in fire and blood, And tears and terror, and the pity of hell, The intenser wrath of Heresy. God will give _335 Victory; and victory over Scotland give The lion England tamed into our hands. That will lend power, and power bring gold.

COTTINGTON: Meanwhile We must begin first where your Grace leaves off. Gold must give power, or—

LAUD: I am not averse _340 From the assembling of a parliament. Strong actions and smooth words might teach them soon The lesson to obey. And are they not A bubble fashioned by the monarch’s mouth, The birth of one light breath? If they serve no purpose, _345 A word dissolves them.

STRAFFORD: The engine of parliaments Might be deferred until I can bring over The Irish regiments: they will serve to assure The issue of the war against the Scots. And, this game won—which if lost, all is lost— _350 Gather these chosen leaders of the rebels, And call them, if you will, a parliament.

KING: Oh, be our feet still tardy to shed blood. Guilty though it may be! I would still spare The stubborn country of my birth, and ward _355 From countenances which I loved in youth The wrathful Church’s lacerating hand. [TO LAUD.] Have you o’erlooked the other articles?

[ENTER ARCHY.]

LAUD: Hazlerig, Hampden, Pym, young Harry Vane, Cromwell, and other rebels of less note, _360 Intend to sail with the next favouring wind For the Plantations.

ARCHY: Where they think to found A commonwealth like Gonzalo's in the play, Gynaecocoenic and pantisocratic.

NOTE: _363 Gonzalo's 1870; Gonzaga Boscombe manuscript.

KING: What's that, sirrah?

ARCHY: New devil's politics. _365 Hell is the pattern of all commonwealths: Lucifer was the first republican. Will you hear Merlin's prophecy, how three [posts?] 'In one brainless skull, when the whitethorn is full, Shall sail round the world, and come back again: _370 Shall sail round the world in a brainless skull, And come back again when the moon is at full:'— When, in spite of the Church, They will hear homilies of whatever length Or form they please. _375

[COTTINGTON?]: So please your Majesty to sign this order For their detention.

ARCHY: If your Majesty were tormented night and day by fever, gout, rheumatism, and stone, and asthma, etc., and you found these diseases had secretly entered into a conspiracy to abandon you, should you think it necessary to lay an embargo on the port by which they meant to dispeople your unquiet kingdom of man? _383

KING: If fear were made for kings, the Fool mocks wisely; But in this case—[WRITING]. Here, my lord, take the warrant, And see it duly executed forthwith.— That imp of malice and mockery shall be punished. _387

[EXEUNT ALL BUT KING, QUEEN, AND ARCHY.]

ARCHY: Ay, I am the physician of whom Plato prophesied, who was to be accused by the confectioner before a jury of children, who found him guilty without waiting for the summing-up, and hanged him without benefit of clergy. Thus Baby Charles, and the Twelfth-night Queen of Hearts, and the overgrown schoolboy Cottington, and that little urchin Laud—who would reduce a verdict of 'guilty, death,' by

famine, if it were impregnable by composition—all impannelled against poor Archy for presenting them bitter physic the last day of the holidays. _397

QUEEN: Is the rain over, sirrah?

KING: When it rains And the sun shines, ‘twill rain again to-morrow: And therefore never smile till you’ve done crying. _400

ARCHY: But ’tis all over now: like the April anger of woman, the gentle sky has wept itself serene.

QUEEN: What news abroad? how looks the world this morning?

ARCHY: Gloriously as a grave covered with virgin flowers. There’s a rainbow in the sky. Let your Majesty look at it, for

‘A rainbow in the morning _407 Is the shepherd’s warning;’

and the flocks of which you are the pastor are scattered among the mountain-tops, where every drop of water is a flake of snow, and the breath of May pierces like a January blast. _411

KING: The sheep have mistaken the wolf for their shepherd, my poor boy; and the shepherd, the wolves for their watchdogs.

QUEEN: But the rainbow was a good sign, Archy: it says that the waters of the deluge are gone, and can return no more.

ARCHY: Ay, the salt-water one: but that of tears and blood must yet come down, and that of fire follow, if there be any truth in lies.—The rainbow hung over the city with all its shops,…and churches, from north to south, like a bridge of congregated lightning pieced by the masonry of heaven—like a balance in which the angel that distributes the coming hour was weighing that heavy one whose poise is now felt in the lightest hearts, before it bows the proudest heads under the meanest feet. _424

QUEEN: Who taught you this trash, sirrah?

ARCHY: A torn leaf out of an old book trampled in the dirt.—But for the rainbow.

It moved as the sun moved, and…until the top of the Tower…of a cloud through its left-hand tip, and Lambeth Palace look as dark as a rock before the other. Methought I saw a crown figured upon one tip, and a mitre on the other. So, as I had heard treasures were found where the rainbow quenches its points upon the earth, I set off, and at the Tower— But I shall not tell your Majesty what I found close to the closet-window on which the rainbow had glimmered.

KING: Speak: I will make my Fool my conscience. _435

ARCHY: Then conscience is a fool.—I saw there a cat caught in a rat-trap. I heard the rats squeak behind the wainscots: it seemed to me that the very mice were consulting on the manner of her death.

QUEEN: Archy is shrewd and bitter.

ARCHY: Like the season, _440 So blow the winds.—But at the other end of the rainbow, where the gray rain was tempered along the grass and leaves by a tender interfusion of violet and gold in the meadows beyond Lambeth, what think you that I found instead of a mitre?

KING: Vane’s wits perhaps. _445

ARCHY: Something as vain. I saw a gross vapour hovering in a stinking ditch over the carcass of a dead ass, some rotten rags, and broken dishes—the wrecks of what once administered to the stuffing-out and the ornament of a worm of worms. His Grace of Canterbury expects to enter the New Jerusalem some Palm Sunday in triumph on the ghost of this ass. _451

QUEEN: Enough, enough! Go desire Lady Jane She place my lute, together with the music Mari received last week from Italy, In my boudoir, and—

[EXIT ARCHY.]

KING: I’ll go in.

NOTE: _254-_455 For by…I’ll go in 1870; omitted 1824.

QUEEN: MY beloved lord, _455 Have you not noted that the Fool of late Has lost his careless mirth, and that his words Sound like the echoes of our saddest fears? What can it mean? I should be loth to think Some factious slave had tutored him.

KING: Oh, no! _460 He is but Occasion's pupil. Partly 'tis That our minds piece the vacant intervals Of his wild words with their own fashioning,— As in the imagery of summer clouds, Or coals of the winter fire, idlers find _465 The perfect shadows of their teeming thoughts: And partly, that the terrors of the time Are sown by wandering Rumour in all spirits; And in the lightest and the least, may best Be seen the current of the coming wind. _470

NOTES: _460, _461 Oh…pupil 1870; omitted 1824. _461 Partly 'tis 1870; It partly is 1824. _465 of 1870; in 1824.

QUEEN: Your brain is overwrought with these deep thoughts. Come, I will sing to you; let us go try These airs from Italy; and, as we pass The gallery, we'll decide where that Correggio Shall hang—the Virgin Mother _475 With her child, born the King of heaven and earth, Whose reign is men's salvation. And you shall see A cradled miniature of yourself asleep, Stamped on the heart by never-erring love; Liker than any Vandyke ever made, _480 A pattern to the unborn age of thee, Over whose sweet beauty I have wept for joy A thousand times, and now should weep for sorrow, Did I not think that after we were dead Our fortunes would spring high in him, and that _485 The cares we waste upon our heavy crown Would make it light and glorious as a wreath Of Heaven's beams for his dear innocent brow.

NOTE: _473-_477 and, as…salvation 1870; omitted 1824.

KING: Dear Henrietta!

SCENE 3: THE STAR CHAMBER. LAUD, JUXON, STRAFFORD, AND OTHERS, AS JUDGES. PRYNNE AS A PRISONER, AND THEN BASTWICK.

LAUD: Bring forth the prisoner Bastwick: let the clerk Recite his sentence.

CLERK: 'That he pay five thousand Pounds to the king, lose both his ears, be

branded With red-hot iron on the cheek and forehead, And be imprisoned within Lancaster Castle _5 During the pleasure of the Court.’

LAUD: Prisoner, If you have aught to say wherefore this sentence Should not be put into effect, now speak.

JUXON: If you have aught to plead in mitigation, Speak.

BASTWICK: Thus, my lords. If, like the prelates, I _10 Were an invader of the royal power A public scorner of the word of God, Profane, idolatrous, popish, superstitious, Impious in heart and in tyrannic act, Void of wit, honesty, and temperance; _15 If Satan were my lord, as theirs,—our God Pattern of all I should avoid to do; Were I an enemy of my God and King And of good men, as ye are;—I should merit Your fearful state and gilt prosperity, _20 Which, when ye wake from the last sleep, shall turn To cowls and robes of everlasting fire. But, as I am, I bid ye grudge me not The only earthly favour ye can yield, Or I think worth acceptance at your hands,— _25 Scorn, mutilation, and imprisonment. even as my Master did, Until Heaven’s kingdom shall descend on earth, Or earth be like a shadow in the light Of Heaven absorbed—some few tumultuous years _30 Will pass, and leave no wreck of what opposes His will whose will is power.

NOTE: _27-_32 even…power printed as a fragment, Garnett, 1862; inserted here conjecturally, Rossetti, 1870.

LAUD: Officer, take the prisoner from the bar, And be his tongue slit for his insolence.

BASTWICK: While this hand holds a pen—

LAUD: Be his hands—

JUXON: Stop! _35 Forbear, my lord! The tongue, which now can speak No terror, would interpret, being dumb, Heaven’s thunder to our harm;… And hands, which now write only their own shame, With bleeding stumps might sign our blood away. _40

LAUD: Much more such ‘mercy’ among men would be, Did all the ministers of Heaven’s revenge Flinch thus from earthly retribution. I Could suffer what I would inflict. [EXIT BASTWICK GUARDED.] Bring up The Lord Bishop of Lincoln.— [TO STRAFFORD.] Know you not _45 That, in distraining for ten thousand pounds Upon his books and furniture at Lincoln, Were found these scandalous and seditious letters Sent from one Osbaldistone, who is fled? I speak it not as touching this poor person; _50 But of the office which should make it holy, Were it as vile as it was ever spotless. Mark too, my lord, that this expression strikes His Majesty, if I misinterpret not.

[ENTER BISHOP WILLIAMS GUARDED.]

STRAFFORD: ’Twere politic and just that Williams taste _55 The bitter fruit of his connection with The schismatics. But you, my Lord Archbishop, Who owed your first promotion to his favour, Who grew beneath his smile—

LAUD: Would therefore beg The office of his judge from this High Court,— _60 That it shall seem, even as it is, that I, In my assumption of this sacred robe, Have put aside all worldly preference, All sense of all distinction of all persons, All thoughts but of the service of the Church.— _65 Bishop of Lincoln!

WILLIAMS: Peace, proud hierarch! I know my sentence, and I own it just. Thou wilt repay me less than I deserve, In stretching to the utmost

…

NOTE: Scene 3. _1-_69 Bring…utmost 1870; omitted 1824.

SCENE 4: HAMPDEN, PYM, CROMWELL, HIS DAUGHTER, AND YOUNG SIR HARRY VANE.

HAMPDEN: England, farewell! thou, who hast been my cradle, Shalt never be my dungeon or my grave! I held what I inherited in thee As pawn for that inheritance of freedom Which thou hast sold for thy despoiler’s smile: _5 How can I call thee England, or my country?— Does the wind hold?

VANE: The vanes sit steady Upon the Abbey towers. The silver lightnings Of the evening star, spite of the city's smoke, Tell that the north wind reigns in the upper air. _10 Mark too that flock of fleecy-winged clouds Sailing athwart St. Margaret's.

NOTE: _11 flock 1824; fleet 1870.

HAMPDEN: Hail, fleet herald Of tempest! that rude pilot who shall guide Hearts free as his, to realms as pure as thee, Beyond the shot of tyranny, _15 Beyond the webs of that swoln spider… Beyond the curses, calumnies, and [lies?] Of atheist priests! … And thou Fair star, whose beam lies on the wide Atlantic, Athwart its zones of tempest and of calm, _20 Bright as the path to a beloved home Oh, light us to the isles of the evening land! Like floating Edens cradled in the glimmer Of sunset, through the distant mist of years Touched by departing hope, they gleam! lone regions, _25 Where Power's poor dupes and victims yet have never Propitiated the savage fear of kings With purest blood of noblest hearts; whose dew Is yet unstained with tears of those who wake To weep each day the wrongs on which it dawns; _30 Whose sacred silent air owns yet no echo Of formal blasphemies; nor impious rites Wrest man's free worship, from the God who loves, To the poor worm who envies us His love! Receive, thou young … of Paradise. _35 These exiles from the old and sinful world!

…

This glorious clime, this firmament, whose lights Dart mitigated influence through their veil Of pale blue atmosphere; whose tears keep green The pavement of this moist all-feeding earth; _40 This vaporous horizon, whose dim round Is bastioned by the circumfluous sea, Repelling invasion from the sacred towers, Presses upon me like a dungeon's grate, A low dark roof, a damp and narrow wall. _45 The boundless universe Becomes a cell too narrow for the soul That owns no master; while the loathliest ward Of this wide prison, England, is a nest Of cradling peace built on the mountain tops,— _50 To which the eagle spirits of the free, Which

range through heaven and earth, and scorn the storm Of time, and gaze upon the light of truth, Return to brood on thoughts that cannot die And cannot be repelled. _55 Like eaglets floating in the heaven of time, They soar above their quarry, and shall stoop Through palaces and temples thunderproof.

NOTES: _13 rude 1870; wild 1824. _16-_18 Beyond…priests 1870; omitted 1824. _25 Touched 1870; Tinged 1824. _34 To the poor 1870; Towards the 1824. _38 their 1870; the 1824. _46 boundless 1870; mighty 1824. _48 owns no 1824; owns a 1870. ward 1870; spot 1824. _50 cradling 1870; cradled 1824. _54, _55 Return…repelled 1870; Return to brood over the [ ] thoughts That cannot die, and may not be repelled 1824. _56-_58 Like…thunderproof 1870; omitted 1824.

SCENE 5:

ARCHY: I'll go live under the ivy that overgrows the terrace, and count the tears shed on its old [roots?] as the [wind?] plays the song of

'A widow bird sate mourning Upon a wintry bough.' _5 [SINGS] Heigho! the lark and the owl! One flies the morning, and one lulls the night:— Only the nightingale, poor fond soul, Sings like the fool through darkness and light.

'A widow bird sate mourning for her love _10 Upon a wintry bough; The frozen wind crept on above, The freezing stream below.

There was no leaf upon the forest bare. No flower upon the ground, _15 And little motion in the air Except the mill-wheel's sound.'

NOTE: Scene 5. _1-_9 I'll…light 1870; omitted 1824.

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THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE.

[Composed at Lerici on the Gulf of Spezzia in the spring and early summer of 1822—the poem on which Shelley was engaged at the time of his death. Published by Mrs. Shelley in the "Posthumous Poems" of 1824, pages 73-95. Several

emendations, the result of Dr. Garnett's examination of the Boscombe manuscript, were given to the world by Miss Mathilde Blind, "Westminster Review", July, 1870. The poem was, of course, included in the "Poetical Works", 1839, both editions. See Editor's Notes.]

Swift as a spirit hastening to his task Of glory and of good, the Sun sprang forth Rejoicing in his splendour, and the mask

Of darkness fell from the awakened Earth— The smokeless altars of the mountain snows _5 Flamed above crimson clouds, and at the birth

Of light, the Ocean's orison arose, To which the birds tempered their matin lay. All flowers in field or forest which unclose

Their trembling eyelids to the kiss of day, _10 Swinging their censers in the element, With orient incense lit by the new ray

Burned slow and inconsumably, and sent Their odorous sighs up to the smiling air; And, in succession due, did continent, _15

Isle, ocean, and all things that in them wear The form and character of mortal mould, Rise as the Sun their father rose, to bear

Their portion of the toil, which he of old Took as his own, and then imposed on them: _20 But I, whom thoughts which must remain untold

Had kept as wakeful as the stars that gem The cone of night, now they were laid asleep Stretched my faint limbs beneath the hoary stem

Which an old chestnut flung athwart the steep _25 Of a green Apennine: before me fled The night; behind me rose the day; the deep

Was at my feet, and Heaven above my head,— When a strange trance over my fancy grew Which was not slumber, for the shade it spread _30

Was so transparent, that the scene came through As clear as when a veil of light is drawn O'er evening hills they glimmer; and I knew

That I had felt the freshness of that dawn Bathe in the same cold dew my brow and hair, _35 And sate as thus upon that slope of lawn

Under the self-same bough, and heard as there The birds, the fountains and the ocean hold Sweet talk in music through the enamoured air, And then a vision on my train was rolled. _40

…

As in that trance of wondrous thought I lay, This was the tenour of my waking dream:— Methought I sate beside a public way

Thick strewn with summer dust, and a great stream Of people there was hurrying to and fro, _45 Numerous as gnats upon the evening gleam,

All hastening onward, yet none seemed to know Whither he went, or whence he came, or why He made one of the multitude, and so

Was borne amid the crowd, as through the sky _50 One of the million leaves of summer’s bier; Old age and youth, manhood and infancy,

Mixed in one mighty torrent did appear, Some flying from the thing they feared, and some Seeking the object of another’s fear; _55

And others, as with steps towards the tomb, Pored on the trodden worms that crawled beneath, And others mournfully within the gloom

Of their own shadow walked, and called it death; And some fled from it as it were a ghost, _60 Half fainting in the affliction of vain breath:

But more, with motions which each other crossed, Pursued or shunned the shadows the clouds threw, Or birds within the noonday aether lost,

Upon that path where flowers never grew,— And, weary with vain toil and faint for thirst, Heard not the fountains, whose melodious dew

Out of their mossy cells forever burst; Nor felt the breeze which from the forest told Of grassy paths and wood-lawns interspersed _70

With overarching elms and caverns cold, And violet banks where sweet dreams brood, but they Pursued their serious folly as of old.

And as I gazed, methought that in the way The throng grew wilder, as the woods of June _75 When the south wind shakes the extinguished day,

And a cold glare, intenser than the noon, But icy cold, obscured with blinding light The sun, as he the stars. Like the young moon—

When on the sunlit limits of the night _80 Her white shell trembles amid crimson air, And whilst the sleeping tempest gathers might—

Doth, as the herald of its coming, bear The ghost of its dead mother, whose dim form Bends in dark aether from her infant's chair,— _85

So came a chariot on the silent storm Of its own rushing splendour, and a Shape So sate within, as one whom years deform,

Beneath a dusky hood and double cape, Crouching within the shadow of a tomb; _90 And o'er what seemed the head a cloud-like crape

Was bent, a dun and faint aethereal gloom Tempering the light. Upon the chariot-beam A Janus-visaged Shadow did assume

The guidance of that wonder-winged team; _95 The shapes which drew it in thick lightenings Were lost:—I heard alone on the air's soft stream

The music of their ever-moving wings. All the four faces of that Charioteer Had their eyes banded; little profit brings _100

Speed in the van and blindness in the rear, Nor then avail the beams that quench the sun,— Or that with banded eyes could pierce the sphere

Of all that is, has been or will be done; So ill was the car guided—but it passed _105 With solemn speed majestically on.

The crowd gave way, and I arose aghast, Or seemed to rise, so mighty was the trance, And saw, like clouds upon the thunder-blast,

The million with fierce song and maniac dance _110 Raging around—such seemed the jubilee As when to greet some conqueror’s advance

Imperial Rome poured forth her living sea From senate-house, and forum, and theatre, When … upon the free _115

Had bound a yoke, which soon they stooped to bear. Nor wanted here the just similitude Of a triumphal pageant, for where’er

The chariot rolled, a captive multitude Was driven;—all those who had grown old in power _120 Or misery,—all who had their age subdued

By action or by suffering, and whose hour Was drained to its last sand in weal or woe, So that the trunk survived both fruit and flower;—

All those whose fame or infamy must grow _125 Till the great winter lay the form and name Of this green earth with them for ever low;—

All but the sacred few who could not tame Their spirits to the conquerors—but as soon As they had touched the world with living flame, _130

Fled back like eagles to their native noon, Or those who put aside the diadem Of earthly thrones or gems…

Were there, of Athens or Jerusalem. Were neither mid the mighty captives seen, _135 Nor mid the ribald crowd that followed them,

Nor those who went before fierce and obscene. The wild dance maddens in the van, and those Who lead it—fleet as shadows on the green,

Outspeed the chariot, and without repose _140 Mix with each other in tempestuous measure To savage music, wilder as it grows,

They, tortured by their agonizing pleasure, Convulsed and on the rapid whirlwinds spun Of that fierce Spirit, whose unholy leisure _145

Was soothed by mischief since the world begun, Throw back their heads and loose their streaming hair; And in their dance round her who dims the sun,

Maidens and youths fling their wild arms in air As their feet twinkle; they recede, and now _150 Bending within each other’s atmosphere,

Kindle invisibly—and as they glow, Like moths by light attracted and repelled, Oft to their bright destruction come and go,

Till like two clouds into one vale impelled, _155 That shake the mountains when their lightnings mingle And die in rain—the fiery band which held

Their natures, snaps—while the shock still may tingle One falls and then another in the path Senseless—nor is the desolation single, _160

Yet ere I can say WHERE—the chariot hath Passed over them—nor other trace I find But as of foam after the ocean’s wrath

Is spent upon the desert shore;—behind, Old men and women foully disarrayed, _165 Shake their gray hairs in the insulting wind,

And follow in the dance, with limbs decayed, Seeking to reach the light which leaves them still Farther behind and deeper in the shade.

But not the less with impotence of will _170 They wheel, though ghastly shadows interpose Round them and round each other, and fulfil

Their work, and in the dust from whence they rose Sink, and corruption veils them as they lie, And past in these performs what … in those. _175

Struck to the heart by this sad pageantry, Half to myself I said—‘And what is this? Whose shape is that within the car? And why—’

I would have added—‘is all here amiss?—’ But a voice answered—‘Life!’—I turned, and knew _180 (O Heaven, have mercy on such wretchedness!)

That what I thought was an old root which grew To strange distortion out of the hill side, Was indeed one of those deluded crew,

And that the grass, which methought hung so wide _185 And white, was but his thin discoloured hair, And that the holes he vainly sought to hide,

Were or had been eyes:—‘If thou canst forbear To join the dance, which I had well forborne,’ Said the grim Feature, of my thought aware,

‘I will unfold that which to this deep scorn Led me and my companions, and relate The progress of the pageant since the morn;

‘If thirst of knowledge shall not then abate, Follow it thou even to the night, but I Am weary.’—Then like one who with the weight

Of his own words is staggered, wearily He paused; and ere he could resume, I cried: ‘First, who art thou?’—‘Before thy memory,

‘I feared, loved, hated, suffered, did and died, And if the spark with which Heaven lit my spirit Had been with purer nutriment supplied,

‘Corruption would not now thus much inherit Of what was once Rousseau,—nor this disguise Stain that which ought to have disdained to wear it;

‘If I have been extinguished, yet there rise A thousand beacons from the spark I bore’— ‘And who are those chained to the car?’—‘The wise,

‘The great, the unforgotten,—they who wore Mitres and helms and crowns, or wreaths of light, Signs of thought’s empire over thought—their lore

‘Taught them not this, to know themselves; their might Could not repress the mystery within, And for the morn of truth they feigned, deep night

‘Caught them ere evening.’—‘Who is he with chin Upon his breast, and hands crossed on his chain?’— ‘The child of a fierce hour; he sought to win

‘The world, and lost all that it did contain Of greatness, in its hope destroyed; and more Of fame and peace than virtue’s self can gain

‘Without the opportunity which bore Him on its eagle pinions to the peak From which a thousand climbers have before

‘Fallen, as Napoleon fell.’—I felt my cheek Alter, to see the shadow pass away, Whose grasp had left the giant world so weak

That every pigmy kicked it as it lay; And much I grieved to think how power and will In opposition rule our mortal day,

And why God made irreconcilable _230 Good and the means of good; and for despair I half disdained mine eyes' desire to fill

With the spent vision of the times that were And scarce have ceased to be.—'Dost thou behold,' Said my guide, 'those spoilers spoiled, Voltaire, _235

'Frederick, and Paul, Catherine, and Leopold, And hoary anarchs, demagogues, and sage— names which the world thinks always old,

'For in the battle Life and they did wage, She remained conqueror. I was overcome _240 By my own heart alone, which neither age,

'Nor tears, nor infamy, nor now the tomb Could temper to its object.'—'Let them pass,' I cried, 'the world and its mysterious doom

'Is not so much more glorious than it was, _245 That I desire to worship those who drew New figures on its false and fragile glass

'As the old faded.'—'Figures ever new Rise on the bubble, paint them as you may; We have but thrown, as those before us threw, _250

'Our shadows on it as it passed away. But mark how chained to the triumphal chair The mighty phantoms of an elder day;

'All that is mortal of great Plato there Expiates the joy and woe his master knew not; _255 The star that ruled his doom was far too fair.

'And life, where long that flower of Heaven grew not, Conquered that heart by love, which gold, or pain, Or age, or sloth, or slavery could subdue not.

'And near him walk the … twain, _260 The tutor and his pupil, whom Dominion Followed as tame as vulture in a chain.

'The world was darkened beneath either pinion Of him whom from the flock of conquerors Fame singled out for her thunder-bearing minion; _265

‘The other long outlived both woes and wars, Throned in the thoughts of men, and still had kept The jealous key of Truth’s eternal doors,

‘If Bacon’s eagle spirit had not lept Like lightning out of darkness—he compelled _270 The Proteus shape of Nature, as it slept

‘To wake, and lead him to the caves that held The treasure of the secrets of its reign. See the great bards of elder time, who quelled

‘The passions which they sung, as by their strain _275 May well be known: their living melody Tempers its own contagion to the vein

‘Of those who are infected with it—I Have suffered what I wrote, or viler pain! And so my words have seeds of misery— _180

‘Even as the deeds of others, not as theirs.’ And then he pointed to a company,

‘Midst whom I quickly recognized the heirs Of Caesar’s crime, from him to Constantine; The anarch chiefs, whose force and murderous snares _285

Had founded many a sceptre-bearing line, And spread the plague of gold and blood abroad: And Gregory and John, and men divine,

Who rose like shadows between man and God; Till that eclipse, still hanging over heaven, _290 Was worshipped by the world o’er which they strode,

For the true sun it quenched—‘Their power was given But to destroy,’ replied the leader:—‘I Am one of those who have created, even

‘If it be but a world of agony.’— _295 ‘Whence camest thou? and whither goest thou? How did thy course begin?’ I said, ‘and why?

‘Mine eyes are sick of this perpetual flow Of people, and my heart sick of one sad thought— Speak!’—‘Whence I am, I partly seem to know, _300

‘And how and by what paths I have been brought To this dread pass, methinks even thou mayst guess;— Why this should be, my mind can compass not;

‘Whither the conqueror hurries me, still less;— But follow thou, and from spectator

turn _305 Actor or victim in this wretchedness,

‘And what thou wouldst be taught I then may learn From thee. Now listen:—In the April prime, When all the forest-tips began to burn

‘With kindling green, touched by the azure clime _310 Of the young season, I was laid asleep Under a mountain, which from unknown time

‘Had yawned into a cavern, high and deep; And from it came a gentle rivulet, Whose water, like clear air, in its calm sweep _315

‘Bent the soft grass, and kept for ever wet The stems of the sweet flowers, and filled the grove With sounds, which whoso hears must needs forget

‘All pleasure and all pain, all hate and love, Which they had known before that hour of rest; _320 A sleeping mother then would dream not of

‘Her only child who died upon the breast At eventide—a king would mourn no more The crown of which his brows were dispossessed

‘When the sun lingered o’er his ocean floor _325 To gild his rival’s new prosperity. ‘Thou wouldst forget thus vainly to deplore

‘Ills, which if ills can find no cure from thee, The thought of which no other sleep will quell, Nor other music blot from memory, _330

‘So sweet and deep is the oblivious spell; And whether life had been before that sleep The Heaven which I imagine, or a Hell

‘Like this harsh world in which I woke to weep, I know not. I arose, and for a space _335 The scene of woods and waters seemed to keep,

Though it was now broad day, a gentle trace Of light diviner than the common sun Sheds on the common earth, and all the place

‘Was filled with magic sounds woven into one _340 Oblivious melody, confusing sense Amid the gliding waves and shadows dun;

‘And, as I looked, the bright omnipresence Of morning through the orient cavern

flowed, And the sun’s image radiantly intense _345

‘Burned on the waters of the well that glowed Like gold, and threaded all the forest’s maze With winding paths of emerald fire; there stood

‘Amid the sun, as he amid the blaze _350 Of his own glory, on the vibrating Floor of the fountain, paved with flashing rays,

‘A Shape all light, which with one hand did fling Dew on the earth, as if she were the dawn, And the invisible rain did ever sing

‘A silver music on the mossy lawn; _355 And still before me on the dusky grass, Iris her many-coloured scarf had drawn:

‘In her right hand she bore a crystal glass, Mantling with bright Nepenthe; the fierce splendour Fell from her as she moved under the mass _360

‘Of the deep cavern, and with palms so tender, Their tread broke not the mirror of its billow, Glided along the river, and did bend her

‘Head under the dark boughs, till like a willow Her fair hair swept the bosom of the stream _365 That whispered with delight to be its pillow.

‘As one enamoured is upborne in dream O’er lily-paven lakes, mid silver mist To wondrous music, so this shape might seem

‘Partly to tread the waves with feet which kissed _370 The dancing foam; partly to glide along The air which roughened the moist amethyst,

‘Or the faint morning beams that fell among The trees, or the soft shadows of the trees; And her feet, ever to the ceaseless song _375

‘Of leaves, and winds, and waves, and birds, and bees, And falling drops, moved in a measure new Yet sweet, as on the summer evening breeze,

‘Up from the lake a shape of golden dew Between two rocks, athwart the rising moon, _380 Dances i’ the wind, where never eagle flew;

‘And still her feet, no less than the sweet tune To which they moved, seemed as they

moved to blot The thoughts of him who gazed on them; and soon

‘All that was, seemed as if it had been not; _385 And all the gazer’s mind was strewn beneath Her feet like embers; and she, thought by thought,

‘Trampled its sparks into the dust of death As day upon the threshold of the east Treads out the lamps of night, until the breath _390

‘Of darkness re-illumine even the least Of heaven’s living eyes—like day she came, Making the night a dream; and ere she ceased

‘To move, as one between desire and shame Suspended, I said—If, as it doth seem, _395 Thou comest from the realm without a name

‘Into this valley of perpetual dream, Show whence I came, and where I am, and why— Pass not away upon the passing stream.

‘Arise and quench thy thirst, was her reply. _400 And as a shut lily stricken by the wand Of dewy morning’s vital alchemy,

‘I rose; and, bending at her sweet command, Touched with faint lips the cup she raised, And suddenly my brain became as sand _405

‘Where the first wave had more than half erased The track of deer on desert Labrador; Whilst the wolf, from which they fled amazed,

‘Leaves his stamp visibly upon the shore, Until the second bursts;—so on my sight _410 Burst a new vision, never seen before,

‘And the fair shape waned in the coming light, As veil by veil the silent splendour drops From Lucifer, amid the chrysolite

‘Of sunrise, ere it tinge the mountain-tops; _415 And as the presence of that fairest planet, Although unseen, is felt by one who hopes

‘That his day’s path may end as he began it, In that star’s smile, whose light is like the scent Of a jonquil when evening breezes fan it, _420

‘Or the soft note in which his dear lament The Brescian shepherd breathes, or the

caress That turned his weary slumber to content;

‘So knew I in that light’s severe excess The presence of that Shape which on the stream _425 Moved, as I moved along the wilderness,

‘More dimly than a day-appearing dream, The host of a forgotten form of sleep; A light of heaven, whose half-extinguished beam

‘Through the sick day in which we wake to weep _430 Glimmers, for ever sought, for ever lost; So did that shape its obscure tenour keep

‘Beside my path, as silent as a ghost; But the new Vision, and the cold bright car, With solemn speed and stunning music, crossed _435

‘The forest, and as if from some dread war Triumphantly returning, the loud million Fiercely extolled the fortune of her star.

‘A moving arch of victory, the vermilion And green and azure plumes of Iris had _440 Built high over her wind-winged pavilion,

‘And underneath aethereal glory clad The wilderness, and far before her flew The tempest of the splendour, which forbade

‘Shadow to fall from leaf and stone; the crew _445 Seemed in that light, like atomies to dance Within a sunbeam;—some upon the new

‘Embroidery of flowers, that did enhance The grassy vesture of the desert, played, Forgetful of the chariot’s swift advance; _450

‘Others stood gazing, till within the shade Of the great mountain its light left them dim; Others outspeeded it; and others made

‘Circles around it, like the clouds that swim Round the high moon in a bright sea of air; _455 And more did follow, with exulting hymn,

‘The chariot and the captives fettered there:— But all like bubbles on an eddying flood Fell into the same track at last, and were

‘Borne onward.—I among the multitude _460 Was swept—me, sweetest flowers

delayed not long; Me, not the shadow nor the solitude;

‘Me, not that falling stream’s Lethean song; Me, not the phantom of that early Form Which moved upon its motion—but among _465

‘The thickest billows of that living storm I plunged, and bared my bosom to the clime Of that cold light, whose airs too soon deform.

‘Before the chariot had begun to climb The opposing steep of that mysterious dell, _470 Behold a wonder worthy of the rhyme

‘Of him who from the lowest depths of hell, Through every paradise and through all glory, Love led serene, and who returned to tell

‘The words of hate and awe; the wondrous story _475 How all things are transfigured except Love; For deaf as is a sea, which wrath makes hoary,

‘The world can hear not the sweet notes that move The sphere whose light is melody to lovers— A wonder worthy of his rhyme.—The grove _480

‘Grew dense with shadows to its inmost covers, The earth was gray with phantoms, and the air Was peopled with dim forms, as when there hovers

‘A flock of vampire-bats before the glare Of the tropic sun, bringing, ere evening, _485 Strange night upon some Indian isle;—thus were

‘Phantoms diffused around; and some did fling Shadows of shadows, yet unlike themselves, Behind them; some like eaglets on the wing

‘Were lost in the white day; others like elves _490 Danced in a thousand unimagined shapes Upon the sunny streams and grassy shelves;

‘And others sate chattering like restless apes On vulgar hands,… Some made a cradle of the ermined capes _495

‘Of kingly mantles; some across the tiar Of pontiffs sate like vultures; others played Under the crown which girt with empire

‘A baby’s or an idiot’s brow, and made Their nests in it. The old anatomies _500

Sate hatching their bare broods under the shade

‘Of daemon wings, and laughed from their dead eyes To reassume the delegated power, Arrayed in which those worms did monarchize,

‘Who made this earth their charnel. Others more _505 Humble, like falcons, sate upon the fist Of common men, and round their heads did soar;

Or like small gnats and flies, as thick as mist On evening marshes, thronged about the brow Of lawyers, statesmen, priest and theorist;— _510

‘And others, like discoloured flakes of snow On fairest bosoms and the sunniest hair, Fell, and were melted by the youthful glow

‘Which they extinguished; and, like tears, they were A veil to those from whose faint lids they rained _515 In drops of sorrow. I became aware

‘Of whence those forms proceeded which thus stained The track in which we moved. After brief space, From every form the beauty slowly waned;

‘From every firmest limb and fairest face _520 The strength and freshness fell like dust, and left The action and the shape without the grace

‘Of life. The marble brow of youth was cleft With care; and in those eyes where once hope shone, Desire, like a lioness bereft _525

‘Of her last cub, glared ere it died; each one Of that great crowd sent forth incessantly These shadows, numerous as the dead leaves blown

‘In autumn evening from a poplar tree. _530 Each like himself and like each other were At first; but some distorted seemed to be

‘Obscure clouds, moulded by the casual air; And of this stuff the car’s creative ray Wrought all the busy phantoms that were there,

‘As the sun shapes the clouds; thus on the way _535 Mask after mask fell from the countenance And form of all; and long before the day

‘Was old, the joy which waked like heaven’s glance The sleepers in the oblivious

valley, died; And some grew weary of the ghastly dance, _540

‘And fell, as I have fallen, by the wayside;— Those soonest from whose forms most shadows passed, And least of strength and beauty did abide.

‘Then, what is life? I cried.’—

CANCELLED OPENING OF THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE.

[Published by Miss M. Blind, “Westminster Review”, July, 1870.]

Out of the eastern shadow of the Earth, Amid the clouds upon its margin gray Scattered by Night to swathe in its bright birth

In gold and fleecy snow the infant Day, The glorious Sun arose: beneath his light, _5 The earth and all…

_10-_17 A widow…sound 1870; omitted here 1824; printed as ‘A Song,’ 1824, page 217. _34, _35 dawn Bathe Mrs. Shelley (later editions); dawn, Bathed 1824, 1839. _63 shunned Boscombe manuscript; spurned 1824, 1839. _70 Of…interspersed Boscombe manuscript; Of grassy paths and wood, lawn-interspersed 1824; wood-lawn-interspersed 1839. _84 form]frown 1824. _93 light…beam]light upon the chariot beam; 1824. _96 it omitted 1824. _109 thunder Boscombe manuscript; thunders 1824; thunder’s 1839. _112 greet Boscombe manuscript; meet 1824, 1839. _129 conqueror or conqueror’s cj. A.C. Bradley. _131-_134 See Editor’s Note. _158 while Boscombe manuscript; omitted 1824, 1839. _167 And…dance 1839 To seek, to [ ], to strain 1824. _168 Seeking 1839; Limping 1824. _188 canst, Mrs. Shelley 1824, 1839, 1847. _189 forborne!’ 1824, 1839, 1847. _190 Feature, (of my thought aware); Mrs. Shelley 1847. _188-_190 The punctuation is A.C. Bradley’s. _202 nutriment Boscombe manuscript; sentiment 1824, 1839. _205 Stain]Stained 1824, 1839. _235 Said my 1824, 1839; Said then my cj. Forman. _238 names which the 1839: name the 1824. _252 how]now cj. Forman. _260 him 1839; omitted 1824. _265 singled for cj. Forman. _280 See Editor’s Note. _281, _282 Even…then Boscombe manuscript; omitted 1824, 1839. _296 camest Boscombe manuscript;

comest 1824, 1839. _311 season Boscombe manuscript; year's dawn 1824, 1839. _322 the Boscombe manuscript; her 1824, 1839. _334 woke cj. A.C. Bradley; wake 1824, 1839. Cf. _296, footnote. _361 Of…and Boscombe manuscript; Out of the deep cavern with 1824, 1839. _363 Glided Boscombe manuscript; She glided 1824, 1839. _377 in Boscombe manuscript; to 1824. _422 The favourite song, Stanco di pascolar le pecorelle, is a Brescian national air.—[MRS. SHELLEY'S NOTE.] _464 early]aery cj. Forman. _475 awe Boscombe manuscript; care 1824. _486 isle Boscombe manuscript; vale 1824. _497 sate like vultures Boscombe manuscript; rode like demons 1824. _515 those]eyes cj. Rossetti. _534 Wrought Boscombe manuscript; Wrapt 1824.

THE COMPLETE

POETICAL WORKS OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY VOLUME 2 OXFORD EDITION. INCLUDING MATERIALS NEVER BEFORE PRINTED IN ANY EDITION OF THE POEMS. EDITED WITH TEXTUAL NOTES BY THOMAS HUTCHINSON, M. A. EDITOR OF THE OXFORD WORDSWORTH.

1914.

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EARLY POEMS [1814, 1815].

[The poems which follow appeared, with a few exceptions, either in the volumes published from time to time by Shelley himself, or in the “Posthumous Poems” of 1824, or in the “Poetical Works” of 1839, of which a second and enlarged edition was published by Mrs. Shelley in the same year. A few made their first appearance in some fugitive publication—such as Leigh Hunt’s “Literary Pocket-Book”—and were subsequently incorporated in the collective editions. In every case the editio princeps and (where this is possible) the exact date of composition are indicated below the title.]

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STANZA, WRITTEN AT BRACKNELL.

[Composed March, 1814. Published in Hogg’s “Life of Shelley”, 1858.]

Thy dewy looks sink in my breast; Thy gentle words stir poison there; Thou hast disturbed the only rest That was the portion of despair! Subdued to Duty’s hard control, _5 I could have borne my wayward lot: The chains that bind this ruined soul Had cankered then—but crushed it not.

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STANZAS.—APRIL, 1814.

[Composed at Bracknell, April, 1814. Published with “Alastor”, 1816.]

Away! the moor is dark beneath the moon, Rapid clouds have drank the last pale beam of even: Away! the gathering winds will call the darkness soon, And profoundest midnight shroud the serene lights of heaven.

Pause not! The time is past! Every voice cries, Away! _5 Tempt not with one last

tear thy friend’s ungentle mood: Thy lover’s eye, so glazed and cold, dares not entreat thy stay: Duty and dereliction guide thee back to solitude.

Away, away! to thy sad and silent home; Pour bitter tears on its desolated hearth; _10 Watch the dim shades as like ghosts they go and come, And complicate strange webs of melancholy mirth.

The leaves of wasted autumn woods shall float around thine head: The blooms of dewy spring shall gleam beneath thy feet: But thy soul or this world must fade in the frost that binds the dead, _15 Ere midnight’s frown and morning’s smile, ere thou and peace may meet.

The cloud shadows of midnight possess their own repose, For the weary winds are silent, or the moon is in the deep: Some respite to its turbulence unresting ocean knows; Whatever moves, or toils, or grieves, hath its appointed sleep. _20

Thou in the grave shalt rest—yet till the phantoms flee Which that house and heath and garden made dear to thee erewhile, Thy remembrance, and repentance, and deep musings are not free From the music of two voices and the light of one sweet smile.

NOTE: _6 tear 1816; glance 1839.

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TO HARRIET.

[Composed May, 1814. Published (from the Esdaile manuscript) by Dowden, “Life of Shelley”, 1887.]

Thy look of love has power to calm The stormiest passion of my soul; Thy gentle words are drops of balm In life’s too bitter bowl; No grief is mine, but that alone _5 These choicest blessings I have known.

Harriet! if all who long to live In the warm sunshine of thine eye, That price beyond all pain must give,— Beneath thy scorn to die; _10 Then hear thy chosen own too late His heart most worthy of thy hate.

Be thou, then, one among mankind Whose heart is harder not for state, Thou only virtuous, gentle, kind, _15 Amid a world of hate; And by a slight endurance seal A fellow-being's lasting weal.

For pale with anguish is his cheek, His breath comes fast, his eyes are dim, _20 Thy name is struggling ere he speak, Weak is each trembling limb; In mercy let him not endure The misery of a fatal cure.

Oh, trust for once no erring guide! _25 Bid the remorseless feeling flee; 'Tis malice, 'tis revenge, 'tis pride, 'Tis anything but thee; Oh, deign a nobler pride to prove, And pity if thou canst not love. _30

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TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN.

[Composed June, 1814. Published in "Posthumous Poems", 1824.]

1. Mine eyes were dim with tears unshed; Yes, I was firm—thus wert not thou;— My baffled looks did fear yet dread To meet thy looks—I could not know How anxiously they sought to shine _5 With soothing pity upon mine.

2. To sit and curb the soul's mute rage Which preys upon itself alone; To curse the life which is the cage Of fettered grief that dares not groan, _10 Hiding from many a careless eye The scorned load of agony.

3. Whilst thou alone, then not regarded, The … thou alone should be, To spend years thus, and be rewarded, _15 As thou, sweet love, requited me When none were near—Oh! I did wake From torture for that moment's sake.

4. Upon my heart thy accents sweet Of peace and pity fell like dew _20 On flowers half dead;—thy lips did meet Mine tremblingly; thy dark eyes threw Their soft persuasion on my brain, Charming away its dream of pain.

5. We are not happy, sweet! our state _25 Is strange and full of doubt and fear; More need of words that ills abate;— Reserve or censure come not near Our sacred

friendship, lest there be No solace left for thee and me. _30

6. Gentle and good and mild thou art, Nor can I live if thou appear Aught but thyself, or turn thine heart Away from me, or stoop to wear The mask of scorn, although it be _35 To hide the love thou feel'st for me.

NOTES: _2 wert 1839; did 1824. _3 fear 1824, 1839; yearn cj. Rossetti. _23 Their 1839; thy 1824. _30 thee]thou 1824, 1839. _32 can I 1839; I can 1824. _36 feel'st 1839; feel 1824.

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TO —.

[Published in "Poetical Works", 1839, 2nd edition. See Editor's Note.]

Yet look on me—take not thine eyes away, Which feed upon the love within mine own, Which is indeed but the reflected ray Of thine own beauty from my spirit thrown. Yet speak to me—thy voice is as the tone _5 Of my heart's echo, and I think I hear That thou yet lovest me; yet thou alone Like one before a mirror, without care Of aught but thine own features, imaged there;

And yet I wear out life in watching thee; _10 A toil so sweet at times, and thou indeed Art kind when I am sick, and pity me…

***

MUTABILITY.

[Published with "Alastor", 1816.]

We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon; How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver, Streaking the darkness radiantly!—yet soon Night closes round, and they are lost for ever:

Or like forgotten lyres, whose dissonant strings _5 Give various response to each varying blast, To whose frail frame no second motion brings One mood or modulation like the last.

We rest.—A dream has power to poison sleep; We rise.—One wandering thought pollutes the day; _10 We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep; Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away:

It is the same!—For, be it joy or sorrow, The path of its departure still is free: Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow; _15 Nought may endure but Mutability.

NOTES: _15 may 1816; can Lodore, chapter 49, 1835 (Mrs. Shelley). _16 Nought may endure but 1816; Nor aught endure save Lodore, chapter 49, 1835 (Mrs. Shelley).

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ON DEATH.

[For the date of composition see Editor's Note. Published with "Alastor", 1816.]

THERE IS NO WORK, NOR DEVICE, NOR KNOWLEDGE, NOR WISDOM, IN THE GRAVE, WHITHER THOU GOEST.—Ecclesiastes.

The pale, the cold, and the moony smile Which the meteor beam of a starless night Sheds on a lonely and sea-girt isle, Ere the dawning of morn's undoubted light, Is the flame of life so fickle and wan That flits round our steps till their strength is gone. _5

O man! hold thee on in courage of soul Through the stormy shades of thy worldly way, And the billows of cloud that around thee roll Shall sleep in the light of a wondrous day, _10 Where Hell and Heaven shall leave thee free To the universe of destiny.

This world is the nurse of all we know, This world is the mother of all we feel, And the coming of death is a fearful blow _15 To a brain unencompassed with nerves of steel; When all that we know, or feel, or see, Shall pass like an unreal mystery.

The secret things of the grave are there, Where all but this frame must surely be, _20 Though the fine-wrought eye and the wondrous ear No longer will live to hear or to

see All that is great and all that is strange In the boundless realm of unending change.

Who telleth a tale of unspeaking death? _25 Who lifteth the veil of what is to come? Who painteth the shadows that are beneath The wide-winding caves of the peopled tomb? Or uniteth the hopes of what shall be With the fears and the love for that which we see? _30

***

A SUMMER EVENING CHURCHYARD.

LECHLADE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

[Composed September, 1815. Published with “Alastor”, 1816.]

The wind has swept from the wide atmosphere Each vapour that obscured the sunset’s ray; And pallid Evening twines its beaming hair In duskier braids around the languid eyes of Day: Silence and Twilight, unbeloved of men, _5 Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.

They breathe their spells towards the departing day, Encompassing the earth, air, stars, and sea; Light, sound, and motion own the potent sway, Responding to the charm with its own mystery. _10 The winds are still, or the dry church-tower grass Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

Thou too, aereal Pile! whose pinnacles Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire, Obeyest in silence their sweet solemn spells, _15 Clothing in hues of heaven thy dim and distant spire, Around whose lessening and invisible height Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres: And, mouldering as they sleep, a thrilling sound, _20 Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs, Breathed from their wormy beds all living things around, And mingling with the still night and mute sky Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

Thus solemnized and softened, death is mild _25 And terrorless as this serenest night: Here could I hope, like some inquiring child Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human sight Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep. _30

***

TO —.

[Published with “Alastor”, 1816. See Editor’s Note.]

DAKRTSI DIOISO POTMON ‘APOTMON.

Oh! there are spirits of the air, And genii of the evening breeze, And gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair As star-beams among twilight trees:— Such lovely ministers to meet _5 Oft hast thou turned from men thy lonely feet.

With mountain winds, and babbling springs, And moonlight seas, that are the voice Of these inexplicable things, Thou didst hold commune, and rejoice _10 When they did answer thee; but they Cast, like a worthless boon, thy love away.

And thou hast sought in starry eyes Beams that were never meant for thine, Another’s wealth:—tame sacrifice To a fond faith! still dost thou pine? _15 Still dost thou hope that greeting hands, Voice, looks, or lips, may answer thy demands?

Ah! wherefore didst thou build thine hope On the false earth’s inconstancy? _20 Did thine own mind afford no scope Of love, or moving thoughts to thee? That natural scenes or human smiles Could steal the power to wind thee in their wiles?

Yes, all the faithless smiles are fled _25 Whose falsehood left thee broken-hearted; The glory of the moon is dead; Night’s ghosts and dreams have now departed; Thine own soul still is true to thee, But changed to a foul fiend through misery. _30

This fiend, whose ghastly presence ever Beside thee like thy shadow hangs, Dream not to chase;—the mad endeavour Would scourge thee to severer pangs. Be as thou art. Thy settled fate, Dark as it is, all change would aggravate. _35

NOTES: _1 of 1816; in 1839. _8 moonlight 1816; mountain 1839.

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TO WORDSWORTH.

[Published with “Alastor”, 1816.]

Poet of Nature, thou hast wept to know That things depart which never may return: Childhood and youth, friendship and love’s first glow, Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn. These common woes I feel. One loss is mine _5 Which thou too feel’st, yet I alone deplore. Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine On some frail bark in winter’s midnight roar: Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood Above the blind and battling multitude: _10 In honoured poverty thy voice did weave Songs consecrate to truth and liberty,— Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve, Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

***

FEELINGS OF A REPUBLICAN ON THE FALL OF BONAPARTE.

[Published with “Alastor”, 1816.]

I hated thee, fallen tyrant! I did groan To think that a most unambitious slave, Like thou, shouldst dance and revel on the grave Of Liberty. Thou mightst have built thy throne Where it had stood even now: thou didst prefer _5 A frail and bloody pomp which Time has swept In fragments towards Oblivion. Massacre, For this I prayed, would on thy sleep have crept, Treason and Slavery, Rapine, Fear, and Lust, And stifled thee, their minister. I know _10 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.

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LINES.

[Published in Hunt’s “Literary Pocket-Book”, 1823, where it is headed “November,

1815". Reprinted in the "Posthumous Poems", 1824. See Editor's Note.]

1. The cold earth slept below, Above the cold sky shone; And all around, with a chilling sound, From caves of ice and fields of snow, The breath of night like death did flow _5 Beneath the sinking moon.

2. The wintry hedge was black, The green grass was not seen, The birds did rest on the bare thorn's breast, Whose roots, beside the pathway track, _10 Had bound their folds o'er many a crack Which the frost had made between.

3. Thine eyes glowed in the glare Of the moon's dying light; As a fen-fire's beam on a sluggish stream _15 Gleams dimly, so the moon shone there, And it yellowed the strings of thy raven hair, That shook in the wind of night.

4. The moon made thy lips pale, beloved— The wind made thy bosom chill— _20 The night did shed on thy dear head Its frozen dew, and thou didst lie Where the bitter breath of the naked sky Might visit thee at will.

NOTE: _17 raven 1823; tangled 1824.

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NOTE ON THE EARLY POEMS, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

The remainder of Shelley's Poems will be arranged in the order in which they were written. Of course, mistakes will occur in placing some of the shorter ones; for, as I have said, many of these were thrown aside, and I never saw them till I had the misery of looking over his writings after the hand that traced them was dust; and some were in the hands of others, and I never saw them till now. The subjects of the poems are often to me an unerring guide; but on other occasions I can only guess, by finding them in the pages of the same manuscript book that contains poems with the date of whose composition I am fully conversant. In the present arrangement all his poetical translations will be placed together at the end.

The loss of his early papers prevents my being able to give any of the poetry of his

boyhood. Of the few I give as “Early Poems”, the greater part were published with “Alastor”; some of them were written previously, some at the same period. The poem beginning ‘Oh, there are spirits in the air’ was addressed in idea to Coleridge, whom he never knew; and at whose character he could only guess imperfectly, through his writings, and accounts he heard of him from some who knew him well. He regarded his change of opinions as rather an act of will than conviction, and believed that in his inner heart he would be haunted by what Shelley considered the better and holier aspirations of his youth. The summer evening that suggested to him the poem written in the churchyard of Lechlade occurred during his voyage up the Thames in 1815. He had been advised by a physician to live as much as possible in the open air; and a fortnight of a bright warm July was spent in tracing the Thames to its source. He never spent a season more tranquilly than the summer of 1815. He had just recovered from a severe pulmonary attack; the weather was warm and pleasant. He lived near Windsor Forest; and his life was spent under its shades or on the water, meditating subjects for verse. Hitherto, he had chiefly aimed at extending his political doctrines, and attempted so to do by appeals in prose essays to the people, exhorting them to claim their rights; but he had now begun to feel that the time for action was not ripe in England, and that the pen was the only instrument wherewith to prepare the way for better things.

In the scanty journals kept during those years I find a record of the books that Shelley read during several years. During the years of 1814 and 1815 the list is extensive. It includes, in Greek, Homer, Hesiod, Theocritus, the histories of Thucydides and Herodotus, and Diogenes Laertius. In Latin, Petronius, Suetonius, some of the works of Cicero, a large proportion of those of Seneca and Livy. In English, Milton’s poems, Wordsworth’s “Excursion”, Southey’s “Madoc” and “Thalaba”, Locke “On the Human Understanding”, Bacon’s “Novum Organum”. In Italian, Ariosto, Tasso, and Alfieri. In French, the “Reveries d’un Solitaire” of Rousseau. To these may be added several modern books of travel. He read few

novels.

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POEMS WRITTEN IN 1816.

THE SUNSET.

[Written at Bishopsgate, 1816 (spring). Published in full in the “Posthumous Poems”, 1824. Lines 9-20, and 28-42, appeared in Hunt’s “Literary Pocket-Book”, 1823, under the titles, respectively, of “Sunset. From an Unpublished Poem”, And “Grief. A Fragment”.]

There late was One within whose subtle being, As light and wind within some delicate cloud That fades amid the blue noon’s burning sky, Genius and death contended. None may know The sweetness of the joy which made his breath _5 Fail, like the trances of the summer air, When, with the Lady of his love, who then First knew the unreserve of mingled being, He walked along the pathway of a field Which to the east a hoar wood shadowed o’er, _10 But to the west was open to the sky. There now the sun had sunk, but lines of gold Hung on the ashen clouds, and on the points Of the far level grass and nodding flowers And the old dandelion’s hoary beard, _15 And, mingled with the shades of twilight, lay On the brown massy woods—and in the east The broad and burning moon lingeringly rose Between the black trunks of the crowded trees, While the faint stars were gathering overhead.— _20 ‘Is it not strange, Isabel,’ said the youth, ‘I never saw the sun? We will walk here To-morrow; thou shalt look on it with me.’

That night the youth and lady mingled lay In love and sleep—but when the morning came _25 The lady found her lover dead and cold. Let none believe that God in mercy gave That stroke. The lady died not, nor grew wild, But year by year lived on—in truth I think Her gentleness and patience and sad smiles, _30 And that she did not die, but lived to tend Her aged father, were a kind of madness, If madness ’tis to be unlike the world. For but to see her were to read the tale Woven by some

subtlest bard, to make hard hearts _35 Dissolve away in wisdom-working grief;— Her eyes were black and lustreless and wan: Her eyelashes were worn away with tears, Her lips and cheeks were like things dead—so pale; Her hands were thin, and through their wandering veins _40 And weak articulations might be seen Day's ruddy light. The tomb of thy dead self Which one vexed ghost inhabits, night and day, Is all, lost child, that now remains of thee!

'Inheritor of more than earth can give, _45 Passionless calm and silence unreproved, Whether the dead find, oh, not sleep! but rest, And are the uncomplaining things they seem, Or live, or drop in the deep sea of Love; Oh, that like thine, mine epitaph were—Peace!' _50 This was the only moan she ever made.

NOTES: _4 death 1839; youth 1824. _22 sun? We will walk 1824; sunrise? We will wake cj. Forman. _37 Her eyes…wan Hunt, 1823; omitted 1824, 1839. _38 worn 1824; torn 1839.

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HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY.

[Composed, probably, in Switzerland, in the summer of 1816. Published in Hunt's "Examiner", January 19, 1817, and with "Rosalind and Helen", 1819.]

1. The awful shadow of some unseen Power Floats though unseen among us,—visiting This various world with as inconstant wing As summer winds that creep from flower to flower,— Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower, _5 It visits with inconstant glance Each human heart and countenance; Like hues and harmonies of evening,— Like clouds in starlight widely spread,— Like memory of music fled,— _10 Like aught that for its grace may be Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

2. Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon Of human thought or form,—where art thou gone? _15 Why dost thou pass away and leave our state, This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate? Ask why

the sunlight not for ever Weaves rainbows o’er yon mountain-river, Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown, _20 Why fear and dream and death and birth Cast on the daylight of this earth Such gloom,—why man has such a scope For love and hate, despondency and hope?

3. No voice from some sublimer world hath ever _25 To sage or poet these responses given— Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven. Remain the records of their vain endeavour, Frail spells—whose uttered charm might not avail to sever, From all we hear and all we see, _30 Doubt, chance, and mutability. Thy light alone—like mist o’er mountains driven, Or music by the night-wind sent Through strings of some still instrument, Or moonlight on a midnight stream, _35 Gives grace and truth to life’s unquiet dream.

4. Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart And come, for some uncertain moments lent. Man were immortal, and omnipotent, Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art, _40 Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart. Thou messenger of sympathies, That wax and wane in lovers’ eyes— Thou—that to human thought art nourishment, Like darkness to a dying flame! _45 Depart not as thy shadow came Depart not—lest the grave should be, Like life and fear, a dark reality.

5. While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin, _50 And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing Hopes of high talk with the departed dead. I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed; I was not heard—I saw them not— When musing deeply on the lot _55 Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing All vital things that wake to bring News of birds and blossoming,— Sudden, thy shadow fell on me; I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy! _60

6. I vowed that I would dedicate my powers To thee and thine—have I not kept the vow? With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now I call the phantoms of a

thousand hours Each from his voiceless grave: they have in visioned bowers _65 Of studious zeal or love's delight Outwatched with me the envious night— They know that never joy illumed my brow Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free This world from its dark slavery, _70 That thou—O awful LOVELINESS, Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

7. The day becomes more solemn and serene When noon is past—there is a harmony In autumn, and a lustre in its sky, _75 Which through the summer is not heard or seen, As if it could not be, as if it had not been! Thus let thy power, which like the truth Of nature on my passive youth Descended, to my onward life supply _80 Its calm—to one who worships thee, And every form containing thee, Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind To fear himself, and love all human kind.

NOTES: _2 among 1819; amongst 1817. _14 dost 1819; doth 1817. _21 fear and dream 1819; care and pain Boscombe manuscript. _37-_48 omitted Boscombe manuscript. _44 art 1817; are 1819. _76 or 1819; nor 1839.

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MONT BLANC.

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI.

[Composed in Switzerland, July, 1816 (see date below). Printed at the end of the "History of a Six Weeks' Tour" published by Shelley in 1817, and reprinted with "Posthumous Poems", 1824. Amongst the Boscombe manuscripts is a draft of this Ode, mainly in pencil, which has been collated by Dr. Garnett.]

1. The everlasting universe of things Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves, Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom— Now lending splendour, where from secret springs The source of human thought its tribute brings _5 Of waters,—with a sound but half its own, Such as a feeble brook will oft assume In the wild woods, among the mountains lone, Where waterfalls around it leap for ever, Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river _10 Over its rocks

ceaselessly bursts and raves.

2. Thus thou, Ravine of Arve—dark, deep Ravine— Thou many-coloured, many-voiced vale, Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail Fast cloud-shadows and sunbeams: awful scene, _15 Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down From the ice-gulfs that gird his secret throne, Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame Of lightning through the tempest;—thou dost lie, Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging, _20 Children of elder time, in whose devotion The chainless winds still come and ever came To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging To hear—an old and solemn harmony; Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep _25 Of the ethereal waterfall, whose veil Robes some unsculptured image; the strange sleep Which when the voices of the desert fail Wraps all in its own deep eternity;— Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion, _30 A loud, lone sound no other sound can tame; Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion, Thou art the path of that unresting sound— Dizzy Ravine! and when I gaze on thee I seem as in a trance sublime and strange _35 To muse on my own separate fantasy, My own, my human mind, which passively Now renders and receives fast influencings, Holding an unremitting interchange With the clear universe of things around; _40 One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings Now float above thy darkness, and now rest Where that or thou art no unbidden guest, In the still cave of the witch Poesy, Seeking among the shadows that pass by _45 Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee, Some phantom, some faint image; till the breast From which they fled recalls them, thou art there!

3. Some say that gleams of a remoter world Visit the soul in sleep,—that death is slumber, _50 And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber Of those who wake and live.—I look on high; Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled The veil of life and death? or do I lie In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep _55 Spread far around and inaccessibly Its circles? For the very spirit fails, Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep That vanishes among the viewless gales! Far, far above,

piercing the infinite sky, _60 Mont Blanc appears,—still, snowy, and serene— Its subject mountains their unearthly forms Pile around it, ice and rock; broad vales between Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps, Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread _65 And wind among the accumulated steeps; A desert peopled by the storms alone, Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone, And the wolf tracts her there—how hideously Its shapes are heaped around! rude, bare, and high, _70 Ghastly, and scarred, and riven.—Is this the scene Where the old Earthquake-daemon taught her young Ruin? Were these their toys? or did a sea Of fire envelope once this silent snow? None can reply—all seems eternal now. _75 The wilderness has a mysterious tongue Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild, So solemn, so serene, that man may be, But for such faith, with nature reconciled; Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal _80 Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood By all, but which the wise, and great, and good Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

4. The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams, Ocean, and all the living things that dwell _85 Within the daedal earth; lightning, and rain, Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane, The torpor of the year when feeble dreams Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep Holds every future leaf and flower;—the bound _90 With which from that detested trance they leap; The works and ways of man, their death and birth, And that of him and all that his may be; All things that move and breathe with toil and sound Are born and die; revolve, subside, and swell. _95 Power dwells apart in its tranquillity, Remote, serene, and inaccessible: And THIS, the naked countenance of earth, On which I gaze, even these primaeval mountains Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep _100 Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains, Slow rolling on; there, many a precipice, Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power Have piled: dome, pyramid, and pinnacle, A city of death, distinct with many a tower _105 And wall impregnable of beaming ice. Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky Rolls its

perpetual stream; vast pines are strewing Its destined path, or in the mangled soil _110 Branchless and shattered stand; the rocks, drawn down From yon remotest waste, have overthrown The limits of the dead and living world, Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place Of insects, beasts, and birds, becomes its spoil; _115 Their food and their retreat for ever gone, So much of life and joy is lost. The race Of man flies far in dread; his work and dwelling Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream, And their place is not known. Below, vast caves _120 Shine in the rushing torrents' restless gleam, Which from those secret chasms in tumult welling Meet in the vale, and one majestic River, The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever Rolls its loud waters to the ocean waves, _125 Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.

5. Mont Blanc yet gleams on high—the power is there, The still and solemn power of many sights, And many sounds, and much of life and death. In the calm darkness of the moonless nights, _130 In the lone glare of day, the snows descend Upon that Mountain; none beholds them there, Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun, Or the star-beams dart through them:—Winds contend Silently there, and heap the snow with breath _135 Rapid and strong, but silently! Its home The voiceless lightning in these solitudes Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods Over the snow. The secret strength of things Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome _140 Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee! And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea, If to the human mind's imaginings Silence and solitude were vacancy?

July 23, 1816.

NOTES: _15 cloud-shadows]cloud shadows 1817; cloud, shadows 1824; clouds, shadows 1839. _20 Thy 1824; The 1839. _53 unfurled]upfurled cj. James Thomson ('B.V.'). _56 Spread 1824; Speed 1839. _69 tracks her there 1824; watches her Boscombe manuscript. _79 But for such 1824; In such a Boscombe manuscript. _108 boundaries of the sky]boundary of the skies cj. Rossetti (cf. lines 102, 106).

_121 torrents’]torrent’s 1817, 1824, 1839.

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CANCELLED PASSAGE OF MONT BLANC.

[Published by Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

There is a voice, not understood by all, Sent from these desert-caves. It is the roar Of the rent ice-cliff which the sunbeams call, Plunging into the vale—it is the blast Descending on the pines—the torrents pour… _5

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FRAGMENT: HOME.

[Published by Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

Dear home, thou scene of earliest hopes and joys, The least of which wronged Memory ever makes Bitterer than all thine unremembered tears.

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FRAGMENT OF A GHOST STORY.

[Published by Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

A shovel of his ashes took From the hearth’s obscurest nook, Muttering mysteries as she went. Helen and Henry knew that Granny Was as much afraid of Ghosts as any, _5 And so they followed hard— But Helen clung to her brother’s arm, And her own spasm made her shake.

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NOTE ON POEMS OF 1816, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

Shelley wrote little during this year. The poem entitled “The Sunset” was written in the spring of the year, while still residing at Bishopsgate. He spent the summer on the shores of the Lake of Geneva. The “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty” was conceived during his voyage round the lake with Lord Byron. He occupied himself during this

voyage by reading the “Nouvelle Heloise” for the first time. The reading it on the very spot where the scenes are laid added to the interest; and he was at once surprised and charmed by the passionate eloquence and earnest enthralling interest that pervade this work. There was something in the character of Saint-Preux, in his abnegation of self, and in the worship he paid to Love, that coincided with Shelley’s own disposition; and, though differing in many of the views and shocked by others, yet the effect of the whole was fascinating and delightful.

“Mont Blanc” was inspired by a view of that mountain and its surrounding peaks and valleys, as he lingered on the Bridge of Arve on his way through the Valley of Chamouni. Shelley makes the following mention of this poem in his publication of the “History of a Six Weeks’ Tour, and Letters from Switzerland”: ‘The poem entitled “Mont Blanc” is written by the author of the two letters from Chamouni and Vevai. It was composed under the immediate impression of the deep and powerful feelings excited by the objects which it attempts to describe; and, as an undisciplined overflowing of the soul, rests its claim to approbation on an attempt to imitate the untamable wildness and inaccessible solemnity from which those feelings sprang.’

This was an eventful year, and less time was given to study than usual. In the list of his reading I find, in Greek, Theocritus, the “Prometheus” of Aeschylus, several of Plutarch’s “Lives”, and the works of Lucian. In Latin, Lucretius, Pliny’s “Letters”, the “Annals” and “Germany” of Tacitus. In French, the “History of the French Revolution” by Lacretelle. He read for the first time, this year, Montaigne’s “Essays”, and regarded them ever after as one of the most delightful and instructive books in the world. The list is scanty in English works: Locke’s “Essay”, “Political Justice”, and Coleridge’s “Lay Sermon”, form nearly the whole. It was his frequent habit to read aloud to me in the evening; in this way we read, this year, the New Testament, “Paradise Lost”, Spenser’s “Faery Queen”, and “Don Quixote”.

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POEMS WRITTEN IN 1817.

MARIANNE’S DREAM.

[Composed at Marlow, 1817. Published in Hunt’s “Literary Pocket-Book”, 1819, and reprinted in “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

1. A pale Dream came to a Lady fair, And said, A boon, a boon, I pray! I know the secrets of the air, And things are lost in the glare of day, Which I can make the sleeping see, _5 If they will put their trust in me.

2. And thou shalt know of things unknown, If thou wilt let me rest between The veiny lids, whose fringe is thrown Over thine eyes so dark and sheen: _10 And half in hope, and half in fright, The Lady closed her eyes so bright.

3. At first all deadly shapes were driven Tumultuously across her sleep, And o’er the vast cope of bending heaven _15 All ghastly-visaged clouds did sweep; And the Lady ever looked to spy If the golden sun shone forth on high.

4. And as towards the east she turned, She saw aloft in the morning air, _20 Which now with hues of sunrise burned, A great black Anchor rising there; And wherever the Lady turned her eyes, It hung before her in the skies.

5. The sky was blue as the summer sea, _25 The depths were cloudless overhead, The air was calm as it could be, There was no sight or sound of dread, But that black Anchor floating still Over the piny eastern hill. _30

6. The Lady grew sick with a weight of fear To see that Anchor ever hanging, And veiled her eyes; she then did hear The sound as of a dim low clanging, And looked abroad if she might know _35 Was it aught else, or but the flow Of the blood in her own veins, to and fro.

7. There was a mist in the sunless air, Which shook as it were with an earthquake’s shock, But the very weeds that blossomed there _40 Were moveless, and each mighty rock Stood on its basis steadfastly; The Anchor was seen no more on high.

8. But piled around, with summits hid In lines of cloud at intervals, _45 Stood many a mountain pyramid Among whose everlasting walls Two mighty cities shone, and ever Through the red mist their domes did quiver.

9. On two dread mountains, from whose crest, _50 Might seem, the eagle, for her brood, Would ne’er have hung her dizzy nest, Those tower-encircled cities stood. A vision strange such towers to see, Sculptured and wrought so gorgeously, _55 Where human art could never be.

10. And columns framed of marble white, And giant fanes, dome over dome Piled, and triumphant gates, all bright With workmanship, which could not come _60 From touch of mortal instrument, Shot o’er the vales, or lustre lent From its own shapes magnificent.

11. But still the Lady heard that clang Filling the wide air far away; _65 And still the mist whose light did hang Among the mountains shook alway, So that the Lady’s heart beat fast, As half in joy, and half aghast, On those high domes her look she cast. _70

12. Sudden, from out that city sprung A light that made the earth grow red; Two flames that each with quivering tongue Licked its high domes, and overhead Among those mighty towers and fanes _75 Dropped fire, as a volcano rains Its sulphurous ruin on the plains.

13. And hark! a rush as if the deep Had burst its bonds; she looked behind And saw over the western steep _80 A raging flood descend, and wind Through that wide vale; she felt no fear, But said within herself, ’Tis clear These towers are Nature’s own, and she To save them has sent forth the sea. _85

14. And now those raging billows came Where that fair Lady sate, and she Was borne towards the showering flame By the wild waves heaped tumultuously. And, on a little plank, the flow _90 Of the whirlpool bore her to and fro.

15. The flames were fiercely vomited From every tower and every dome, And

dreary light did widely shed O'er that vast flood's suspended foam, _95 Beneath the smoke which hung its night On the stained cope of heaven's light.

16. The plank whereon that Lady sate Was driven through the chasms, about and about, Between the peaks so desolate _100 Of the drowning mountains, in and out, As the thistle-beard on a whirlwind sails— While the flood was filling those hollow vales.

17. At last her plank an eddy crossed, And bore her to the city's wall, _105 Which now the flood had reached almost; It might the stoutest heart appal To hear the fire roar and hiss Through the domes of those mighty palaces.

18. The eddy whirled her round and round _110 Before a gorgeous gate, which stood Piercing the clouds of smoke which bound Its aery arch with light like blood; She looked on that gate of marble clear, With wonder that extinguished fear. _115

19. For it was filled with sculptures rarest, Of forms most beautiful and strange, Like nothing human, but the fairest Of winged shapes, whose legions range Throughout the sleep of those that are, _120 Like this same Lady, good and fair.

20. And as she looked, still lovelier grew Those marble forms;—the sculptor sure Was a strong spirit, and the hue Of his own mind did there endure _125 After the touch, whose power had braided Such grace, was in some sad change faded.

21. She looked, the flames were dim, the flood Grew tranquil as a woodland river Winding through hills in solitude; _130 Those marble shapes then seemed to quiver, And their fair limbs to float in motion, Like weeds unfolding in the ocean.

22. And their lips moved; one seemed to speak, When suddenly the mountains cracked, _135 And through the chasm the flood did break With an earth-uplifting cataract: The statues gave a joyous scream, And on its wings the pale thin Dream Lifted the Lady from the stream. _140

23. The dizzy flight of that phantom pale Waked the fair Lady from her sleep, And she arose, while from the veil Of her dark eyes the Dream did creep, And she

walked about as one who knew _145 That sleep has sights as clear and true As any waking eyes can view.

NOTES: _18 golden 1819; gold 1824, 1839. _28 or 1824; nor 1839. _62 or]a cj. Rossetti. _63 its]their cj. Rossetti. _92 flames cj. Rossetti; waves 1819, 1824, 1839. _101 mountains 1819; mountain 1824, 1839. _106 flood]flames cj. James Thomson ('B.V.'). _120 that 1819, 1824; who 1839. _135 mountains 1819; mountain 1824, 1839.

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TO CONSTANTIA, SINGING.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley in "Posthumous Poems", 1824. Amongst the Shelley manuscripts at the Bodleian is a chaotic first draft, from which Mr. Locock ["Examination", etc., 1903, pages 60-62] has, with patient ingenuity, disengaged a first and a second stanza consistent with the metrical scheme of stanzas 3 and 4. The two stanzas thus recovered are printed here immediately below the poem as edited by Mrs. Shelley. It need hardly be added that Mr. Locock's restored version cannot, any more than Mrs. Shelley's obviously imperfect one, be regarded in the light of a final recension.]

1. Thus to be lost and thus to sink and die, Perchance were death indeed!—Constantia, turn! In thy dark eyes a power like light doth lie, Even though the sounds which were thy voice, which burn Between thy lips, are laid to sleep; _5 Within thy breath, and on thy hair, like odour, it is yet, And from thy touch like fire doth leap. Even while I write, my burning cheeks are wet. Alas, that the torn heart can bleed, but not forget!

2. A breathless awe, like the swift change _10 Unseen, but felt in youthful slumbers, Wild, sweet, but uncommunicably strange, Thou breathest now in fast ascending numbers. The cope of heaven seems rent and cloven By the enchantment of thy strain, _15 And on my shoulders wings are woven, To follow its sublime career

Beyond the mighty moons that wane Upon the verge of Nature's utmost sphere, Till the world's shadowy walls are past and disappear. _20

3. Her voice is hovering o'er my soul—it lingers O'ershadowing it with soft and lulling wings, The blood and life within those snowy fingers Teach witchcraft to the instrumental strings. My brain is wild, my breath comes quick— _25 The blood is listening in my frame, And thronging shadows, fast and thick, Fall on my overflowing eyes; My heart is quivering like a flame; As morning dew, that in the sunbeam dies, _30 I am dissolved in these consuming ecstasies.

4. I have no life, Constantia, now, but thee, Whilst, like the world-surrounding air, thy song Flows on, and fills all things with melody.— Now is thy voice a tempest swift and strong, _35 On which, like one in trance upborne, Secure o'er rocks and waves I sweep, Rejoicing like a cloud of morn. Now 'tis the breath of summer night, Which when the starry waters sleep, Round western isles, with incense-blossoms bright, _40 Lingering, suspends my soul in its voluptuous flight.

STANZAS 1 AND 2.

As restored by Mr. C.D. Locock.

1. Cease, cease—for such wild lessons madmen learn Thus to be lost, and thus to sink and die Perchance were death indeed!—Constantia turn In thy dark eyes a power like light doth lie Even though the sounds its voice that were _5 Between [thy] lips are laid to sleep: Within thy breath, and on thy hair Like odour, it is [lingering] yet And from thy touch like fire doth leap— Even while I write, my burning cheeks are wet— _10 Alas, that the torn heart can bleed but not forget.

2. [A deep and] breathless awe like the swift change Of dreams unseen but felt in youthful slumbers Wild sweet yet incommunicably strange Thou breathest now in fast ascending numbers… _15

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TO CONSTANTIA. [Dated 1817 by Mrs. Shelley, and printed by her in the

"Poetical Works", 1839, 1st edition. A copy exists amongst the Shelley manuscripts at the Bodleian. See Mr. C.D. Locock's "Examination", etc., 1903, page 46.]

1. The rose that drinks the fountain dew In the pleasant air of noon, Grows pale and blue with altered hue— In the gaze of the nightly moon; For the planet of frost, so cold and bright, _5 Makes it wan with her borrowed light.

2. Such is my heart—roses are fair, And that at best a withered blossom; But thy false care did idly wear Its withered leaves in a faithless bosom; _10 And fed with love, like air and dew, Its growth—

NOTES: _1 The rose]The red Rose B. _2 pleasant]fragrant B. _6 her omitted B.

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FRAGMENT: TO ONE SINGING.

[Dated 1817 by Mrs. Shelley, and published in the "Poetical Works", 1839, 1st edition. The manuscript original, by which Mr. Locock has revised and (by one line) enlarged the text, is amongst the Shelley manuscripts at the Bodleian. The metre, as Mr. Locock ("Examination", etc., 1903, page 63) points out, is terza rima.]

My spirit like a charmed bark doth swim Upon the liquid waves of thy sweet singing, Far far away into the regions dim

Of rapture—as a boat, with swift sails winging Its way adown some many-winding river, _5 Speeds through dark forests o'er the waters swinging…

NOTES: _3 Far far away B.; Far away 1839. _6 Speeds…swinging B.; omitted 1839.

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A FRAGMENT: TO MUSIC.

[Published in "Poetical Works", 1839, 1st edition. Dated 1817 (Mrs. Shelley).]

Silver key of the fountain of tears, Where the spirit drinks till the brain is wild; Softest grave of a thousand fears, Where their mother, Care, like a drowsy child, Is

laid asleep in flowers. _5

***

ANOTHER FRAGMENT: TO MUSIC.

[Published in “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition. Dated 1817 (Mrs. Shelley).]

No, Music, thou art not the ‘food of Love.’ Unless Love feeds upon its own sweet self, Till it becomes all Music murmurs of.

***

‘MIGHTY EAGLE’.

SUPPOSED TO BE ADDRESSED TO WILLIAM GODWIN.

[Published in 1882 (“Poetical Works of P. B. S.”) by Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B., by whom it is dated 1817.]

Mighty eagle! thou that soarest O’er the misty mountain forest, And amid the light of morning Like a cloud of glory hiest, And when night descends defiest _5 The embattled tempests’ warning!

***

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR.

[Published in part (5-9, 14) by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition (without title); in full 2nd edition (with title). Four transcripts in Mrs. Shelley’s hand are extant: two—Leigh Hunt’s and Ch. Cowden Clarke’s—described by Forman, and two belonging to Mr. C.W. Frederickson of Brooklyn, described by Woodberry [“Poetical Works”, Centenary Edition, 3 193-6]. One of the latter (here referred to as Fa) is corrected in Shelley’s autograph. A much-corrected draft in Shelley’s hand is in the Harvard manuscript book.]

1. Thy country’s curse is on thee, darkest crest Of that foul, knotted, many-headed worm Which rends our Mother’s bosom—Priestly Pest! Masked Resurrection of a buried Form!

2. Thy country's curse is on thee! Justice sold, _5 Truth trampled, Nature's landmarks overthrown, And heaps of fraud-accumulated gold, Plead, loud as thunder, at Destruction's throne.

3. And whilst that sure slow Angel which aye stands Watching the beck of Mutability _10 Delays to execute her high commands, And, though a nation weeps, spares thine and thee,

4. Oh, let a father's curse be on thy soul, And let a daughter's hope be on thy tomb; Be both, on thy gray head, a leaden cowl _15 To weigh thee down to thine approaching doom.

5. I curse thee by a parent's outraged love, By hopes long cherished and too lately lost, By gentle feelings thou couldst never prove, By griefs which thy stern nature never crossed; _20

6. By those infantine smiles of happy light, Which were a fire within a stranger's hearth, Quenched even when kindled, in untimely night Hiding the promise of a lovely birth:

7. By those unpractised accents of young speech, _25 Which he who is a father thought to frame To gentlest lore, such as the wisest teach— THOU strike the lyre of mind!—oh, grief and shame!

8. By all the happy see in children's growth— That undeveloped flower of budding years— _30 Sweetness and sadness interwoven both, Source of the sweetest hopes and saddest fears-

9. By all the days, under an hireling's care, Of dull constraint and bitter heaviness,— O wretched ye if ever any were,— _35 Sadder than orphans, yet not fatherless!

10. By the false cant which on their innocent lips Must hang like poison on an opening bloom, By the dark creeds which cover with eclipse Their pathway from the cradle to the tomb— _40

11. By thy most impious Hell, and all its terror; By all the grief, the madness, and the guilt Of thine impostures, which must be their error— That sand on which thy crumbling power is built—

12. By thy complicity with lust and hate— _45 Thy thirst for tears—thy hunger after gold— The ready frauds which ever on thee wait— The servile arts in which thou hast grown old—

13. By thy most killing sneer, and by thy smile— By all the arts and snares of thy black den, _50 And—for thou canst outweep the crocodile— By thy false tears—those millstones braining men—

14. By all the hate which checks a father's love— By all the scorn which kills a father's care— By those most impious hands which dared remove _55 Nature's high bounds—by thee—and by despair—

15. Yes, the despair which bids a father groan, And cry, 'My children are no longer mine— The blood within those veins may be mine own, But—Tyrant—their polluted souls are thine;— _60

16. I curse thee—though I hate thee not.—O slave! If thou couldst quench the earth-consuming Hell Of which thou art a daemon, on thy grave This curse should be a blessing. Fare thee well!

NOTES: _9 Angel which aye cancelled by Shelley for Fate which ever Fa. _24 promise of a 1839, 2nd edition; promises of 1839, 1st edition. _27 lore]love Fa. _32 and saddest]the saddest Fa. _36 yet not fatherless! cancelled by Shelley for why not fatherless? Fa. _41-_44 By…built 'crossed by Shelley and marked dele by Mrs. Shelley' (Woodberry) Fa. _50 arts and snares 1839, 1st edition; snares and arts Harvard Coll. manuscript; snares and nets Fa.; acts and snares 1839, 2nd edition. _59 those]their Fa.

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TO WILLIAM SHELLEY.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley (1, 5, 6), “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition; in full, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition. A transcript is extant in Mrs. Shelley’s hand.]

1. The billows on the beach are leaping around it, The bark is weak and frail, The sea looks black, and the clouds that bound it Darkly strew the gale. Come with me, thou delightful child, Come with me, though the wave is wild, _5 And the winds are loose, we must not stay, Or the slaves of the law may rend thee away.

2. They have taken thy brother and sister dear, They have made them unfit for thee; _10 They have withered the smile and dried the tear Which should have been sacred to me. To a blighting faith and a cause of crime They have bound them slaves in youthly prime, And they will curse my name and thee _15 Because we fearless are and free.

3. Come thou, beloved as thou art; Another sleepeth still Near thy sweet mother’s anxious heart, Which thou with joy shalt fill, _20 With fairest smiles of wonder thrown On that which is indeed our own, And which in distant lands will be The dearest playmate unto thee.

4. Fear not the tyrants will rule for ever, _25 Or the priests of the evil faith; They stand on the brink of that raging river, Whose waves they have tainted with death. It is fed from the depth of a thousand dells, Around them it foams and rages and swells; _30 And their swords and their sceptres I floating see, Like wrecks on the surge of eternity.

5. Rest, rest, and shriek not, thou gentle child! The rocking of the boat thou fearest, And the cold spray and the clamour wild?— _35 There, sit between us two, thou dearest— Me and thy mother—well we know The storm at which thou tremblest so, With all its dark and hungry graves, Less cruel than the savage slaves _40 Who hunt us o’er these sheltering waves.

6. This hour will in thy memory Be a dream of days forgotten long. We soon shall dwell by the azure sea Of serene and golden Italy, Or Greece, the Mother of the free;

_45 And I will teach thine infant tongue To call upon those heroes old In their own language, and will mould Thy growing spirit in the flame Of Grecian lore, that by such name _50 A patriot's birthright thou mayst claim!

NOTES: _1 on the beach omitted 1839, 1st edition. _8 of the law 1839, 1st edition; of law 1839, 2nd edition. _14 prime transcript; time editions 1839. _16 fearless are editions 1839; are fearless transcript. _20 shalt transcript; wilt editions 1839. _25-_32 Fear…eternity omitted, transcript. See "Rosalind and Helen", lines 894-901. _33 and transcript; omitted editions 1839. _41 us transcript, 1839, 1st edition; thee 1839, 2nd edition. _42 will in transcript, 1839, 2nd edition; will sometime in 1839, 1st edition. _43 long transcript; omitted editions 1839. _48 those transcript, 1839, 1st edition; their 1839, 2nd edition.

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FROM THE ORIGINAL DRAFT OF THE POEM TO WILLIAM SHELLEY.

[Published in Dr. Garnett's "Relics of Shelley", 1862.]

1. The world is now our dwelling-place; Where'er the earth one fading trace Of what was great and free does keep, That is our home!… Mild thoughts of man's ungentle race _5 Shall our contented exile reap; For who that in some happy place His own free thoughts can freely chase By woods and waves can clothe his face In cynic smiles? Child! we shall weep. _10

2. This lament, The memory of thy grievous wrong Will fade… But genius is omnipotent To hallow… _15

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ON FANNY GODWIN.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, among the poems of 1817, in "Poetical Works", 1839, 1st edition.]

Her voice did quiver as we parted, Yet knew I not that heart was broken From which

it came, and I departed Heeding not the words then spoken. Misery—O Misery, _5 This world is all too wide for thee.

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LINES.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley with the date ‘November 5th, 1817,’ in “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

1. That time is dead for ever, child! Drowned, frozen, dead for ever! We look on the past And stare aghast At the spectres wailing, pale and ghast, _5 Of hopes which thou and I beguiled To death on life’s dark river.

2. The stream we gazed on then rolled by; Its waves are unreturning; But we yet stand _10 In a lone land, Like tombs to mark the memory Of hopes and fears, which fade and flee In the light of life’s dim morning.

***

DEATH.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley in “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

1. They die—the dead return not—Misery Sits near an open grave and calls them over, A Youth with hoary hair and haggard eye— They are the names of kindred, friend and lover, Which he so feebly calls—they all are gone— _5 Fond wretch, all dead! those vacant names alone, This most familiar scene, my pain— These tombs—alone remain.

2. Misery, my sweetest friend—oh, weep no more! Thou wilt not be consoled—I wonder not! _10 For I have seen thee from thy dwelling’s door Watch the calm sunset with them, and this spot Was even as bright and calm, but transitory, And now thy hopes are gone, thy hair is hoary; This most familiar scene, my pain— _15 These tombs—alone remain.

NOTE: _5 calls editions 1839; called 1824.

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OTHO.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition.]

1. Thou wert not, Cassius, and thou couldst not be, Last of the Romans, though thy memory claim From Brutus his own glory—and on thee Rests the full splendour of his sacred fame: Nor he who dared make the foul tyrant quail _5 Amid his cowering senate with thy name, Though thou and he were great—it will avail To thine own fame that Otho’s should not fail.

2. ‘Twill wrong thee not—thou wouldst, if thou couldst feel, Abjure such envious fame—great Otho died _10 Like thee—he sanctified his country’s steel, At once the tyrant and tyrannicide, In his own blood—a deed it was to bring Tears from all men—though full of gentle pride, Such pride as from impetuous love may spring, _15 That will not be refused its offering.

NOTE: _13 bring cj. Garnett; buy 1839, 1st edition; wring cj. Rossetti.

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FRAGMENTS SUPPOSED TO BE PARTS OF OTHO.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862,—where, however, only the fragment numbered 2 is assigned to “Otho”. Forman (1876) connects all three fragments with that projected poem.]

1. Those whom nor power, nor lying faith, nor toil, Nor custom, queen of many slaves, makes blind, Have ever grieved that man should be the spoil Of his own weakness, and with earnest mind Fed hopes of its redemption; these recur _5 Chastened by deathful victory now, and find Foundations in this foulest age, and stir Me whom they cheer to be their minister.

2. Dark is the realm of grief: but human things Those may not know who cannot weep for them. _10

…

3. Once more descend The shadows of my soul upon mankind, For to those hearts with which they never blend, Thoughts are but shadows which the flashing mind From the swift clouds which track its flight of fire, _15 Casts on the gloomy world it leaves behind.

…

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‘O THAT A CHARIOT OF CLOUD WERE MINE’.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

O that a chariot of cloud were mine! Of cloud which the wild tempest weaves in air, When the moon over the ocean’s line Is spreading the locks of her bright gray hair. O that a chariot of cloud were mine! _5 I would sail on the waves of the billowy wind To the mountain peak and the rocky lake, And the…

***

FRAGMENT: TO A FRIEND RELEASED FROM PRISON.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

For me, my friend, if not that tears did tremble In my faint eyes, and that my heart beat fast With feelings which make rapture pain resemble, Yet, from thy voice that falsehood starts aghast, I thank thee—let the tyrant keep _5 His chains and tears, yea, let him weep With rage to see thee freshly risen, Like strength from slumber, from the prison, In which he vainly hoped the soul to bind Which on the chains must prey that fetter humankind. _10

NOTE: For the metre see Fragment: “A Gentle Story” (A.C. Bradley.)

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FRAGMENT: SATAN BROKEN LOOSE.

[Published by Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1870.]

A golden-winged Angel stood Before the Eternal Judgement-seat: His looks were wild, and Devils' blood Stained his dainty hands and feet. The Father and the Son _5 Knew that strife was now begun. They knew that Satan had broken his chain, And with millions of daemons in his train, Was ranging over the world again. Before the Angel had told his tale, _10 A sweet and a creeping sound Like the rushing of wings was heard around; And suddenly the lamps grew pale— The lamps, before the Archangels seven, That burn continually in Heaven. _15

***

FRAGMENT: "IGNICULUS DESIDERII".

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Poetical Works", 1839, 1st edition. This fragment is amongst the Shelley manuscripts at the Bodleian. See Mr. C.D. Locock's "Examination", etc., 1903, page 63.]

To thirst and find no fill—to wail and wander With short unsteady steps—to pause and ponder— To feel the blood run through the veins and tingle Where busy thought and blind sensation mingle; To nurse the image of unfelt caresses _5 Till dim imagination just possesses The half-created shadow, then all the night Sick…

NOTES: _2 unsteady B.; uneasy 1839, 1st edition. _7, _8 then…Sick B.; wanting, 1839, 1st edition.

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FRAGMENT: "AMOR AETERNUS".

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Poetical Works", 1839, 1st edition.]

Wealth and dominion fade into the mass Of the great sea of human right and wrong, When once from our possession they must pass; But love, though misdirected, is among The things which are immortal, and surpass _5 All that frail stuff which will be—or which was.

***

FRAGMENT: THOUGHTS COME AND GO IN SOLITUDE.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition.]

My thoughts arise and fade in solitude, The verse that would invest them melts away Like moonlight in the heaven of spreading day: How beautiful they were, how firm they stood, Flecking the starry sky like woven pearl! _5

***

A HATE-SONG.

[Published by Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1870.]

A hater he came and sat by a ditch, And he took an old cracked lute; And he sang a song which was more of a screech ’Gainst a woman that was a brute.

***

LINES TO A CRITIC.

[Published by Hunt in “The Liberal”, No. 3, 1823. Reprinted in “Posthumous Poems”, 1824, where it is dated December, 1817.]

1. Honey from silkworms who can gather, Or silk from the yellow bee? The grass may grow in winter weather As soon as hate in me.

2. Hate men who cant, and men who pray, _5 And men who rail like thee; An equal passion to repay They are not coy like me.

3. Or seek some slave of power and gold To be thy dear heart’s mate; _10 Thy love will move that bigot cold Sooner than me, thy hate.

4. A passion like the one I prove Cannot divided be; I hate thy want of truth and love— _15 How should I then hate thee?

***

OZYMANDIAS.

[Published by Hunt in “The Examiner”, January, 1818. Reprinted with “Rosalind

and Helen", 1819. There is a copy amongst the Shelley manuscripts at the Bodleian Library. See Mr. C.D. Locock's "Examination", etc., 1903, page 46.]

I met a traveller from an antique land Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone Stand in the desert…Near them, on the sand, Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown, And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command, _5 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things, The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed: And on the pedestal these words appear: 'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: _10 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!' Nothing beside remains. Round the decay Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare The lone and level sands stretch far away.

NOTE: _9 these words appear]this legend clear B.

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NOTE ON POEMS OF 1817, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

The very illness that oppressed, and the aspect of death which had approached so near Shelley, appear to have kindled to yet keener life the Spirit of Poetry in his heart. The restless thoughts kept awake by pain clothed themselves in verse. Much was composed during this year. The "Revolt of Islam", written and printed, was a great effort—"Rosalind and Helen" was begun—and the fragments and poems I can trace to the same period show how full of passion and reflection were his solitary hours.

In addition to such poems as have an intelligible aim and shape, many a stray idea and transitory emotion found imperfect and abrupt expression, and then again lost themselves in silence. As he never wandered without a book and without implements of writing, I find many such, in his manuscript books, that scarcely bear record; while some of them, broken and vague as they are, will appear valuable to those who love Shelley's mind, and desire to trace its workings.

He projected also translating the "Hymns" of Homer; his version of several of the

shorter ones remains, as well as that to Mercury already published in the "Posthumous Poems". His readings this year were chiefly Greek. Besides the "Hymns" of Homer and the "Iliad", he read the dramas of Aeschylus and Sophocles, the "Symposium" of Plato, and Arrian's "Historia Indica". In Latin, Apuleius alone is named. In English, the Bible was his constant study; he read a great portion of it aloud in the evening. Among these evening readings I find also mentioned the "Faerie Queen"; and other modern works, the production of his contemporaries, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Moore and Byron.

His life was now spent more in thought than action—he had lost the eager spirit which believed it could achieve what it projected for the benefit of mankind. And yet in the converse of daily life Shelley was far from being a melancholy man. He was eloquent when philosophy or politics or taste were the subjects of conversation. He was playful; and indulged in the wild spirit that mocked itself and others—not in bitterness, but in sport. The author of "Nightmare Abbey" seized on some points of his character and some habits of his life when he painted Scythrop. He was not addicted to 'port or madeira,' but in youth he had read of 'Illuminati and Eleutherarchs,' and believed that he possessed the power of operating an immediate change in the minds of men and the state of society. These wild dreams had faded; sorrow and adversity had struck home; but he struggled with despondency as he did with physical pain. There are few who remember him sailing paper boats, and watching the navigation of his tiny craft with eagerness—or repeating with wild energy "The Ancient Mariner", and Southey's "Old Woman of Berkeley"; but those who do will recollect that it was in such, and in the creations of his own fancy when that was most daring and ideal, that he sheltered himself from the storms and disappointments, the pain and sorrow, that beset his life.

No words can express the anguish he felt when his elder children were torn from him. In his first resentment against the Chancellor, on the passing of the decree, he had written a curse, in which there breathes, besides haughty indignation, all the

tenderness of a father's love, which could imagine and fondly dwell upon its loss and the consequences.

At one time, while the question was still pending, the Chancellor had said some words that seemed to intimate that Shelley should not be permitted the care of any of his children, and for a moment he feared that our infant son would be torn from us. He did not hesitate to resolve, if such were menaced, to abandon country, fortune, everything, and to escape with his child; and I find some unfinished stanzas addressed to this son, whom afterwards we lost at Rome, written under the idea that we might suddenly be forced to cross the sea, so to preserve him. This poem, as well as the one previously quoted, were not written to exhibit the pangs of distress to the public; they were the spontaneous outbursts of a man who brooded over his wrongs and woes, and was impelled to shed the grace of his genius over the uncontrollable emotions of his heart. I ought to observe that the fourth verse of this effusion is introduced in "Rosalind and Helen". When afterwards this child died at Rome, he wrote, a propos of the English burying-ground in that city: 'This spot is the repository of a sacred loss, of which the yearnings of a parent's heart are now prophetic; he is rendered immortal by love, as his memory is by death. My beloved child lies buried here. I envy death the body far less than the oppressors the minds of those whom they have torn from me. The one can only kill the body, the other crushes the affections.'

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POEMS WRITTEN IN 1818.

TO THE NILE.

['Found by Mr. Townshend Meyer among the papers of Leigh Hunt, [and] published in the "St. James's Magazine" for March, 1876.' (Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B.; "Poetical Works of P. B. S.", Library Edition, 1876, volume 3 page 410.) First included among Shelley's poetical works in Mr. Forman's Library Edition, where a

facsimile of the manuscript is given. Composed February 4, 1818. See “Complete Works of John Keats”, edition H. Buxton Forman, Glasgow, 1901, volume 4 page 76.]

Month after month the gathered rains descend Drenching yon secret Aethiopian dells, And from the desert’s ice-girt pinnacles Where Frost and Heat in strange embraces blend On Atlas, fields of moist snow half depend. _5 Girt there with blasts and meteors Tempest dwells By Nile’s aereal urn, with rapid spells Urging those waters to their mighty end. O’er Egypt’s land of Memory floods are level And they are thine, O Nile—and well thou knowest _10 That soul-sustaining airs and blasts of evil And fruits and poisons spring where’er thou flowest. Beware, O Man—for knowledge must to thee, Like the great flood to Egypt, ever be.

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PASSAGE OF THE APENNINES.

[Composed May 4, 1818. Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824. There is a copy amongst the Shelley manuscripts at the Bodleian Library, which supplies the last word of the fragment.]

Listen, listen, Mary mine, To the whisper of the Apennine, It bursts on the roof like the thunder’s roar, Or like the sea on a northern shore, Heard in its raging ebb and flow _5 By the captives pent in the cave below. The Apennine in the light of day Is a mighty mountain dim and gray, Which between the earth and sky doth lay; But when night comes, a chaos dread _10 On the dim starlight then is spread, And the Apennine walks abroad with the storm, Shrouding…

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THE PAST.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

1. Wilt thou forget the happy hours Which we buried in Love’s sweet bowers,

Heaping over their corpses cold Blossoms and leaves, instead of mould? Blossoms which were the joys that fell, _5 And leaves, the hopes that yet remain.

2. Forget the dead, the past? Oh, yet There are ghosts that may take revenge for it, Memories that make the heart a tomb, Regrets which glide through the spirit's gloom, _10 And with ghastly whispers tell That joy, once lost, is pain.

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TO MARY —.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Posthumous Poems", 1824.]

O Mary dear, that you were here With your brown eyes bright and clear. And your sweet voice, like a bird Singing love to its lone mate In the ivy bower disconsolate; _5 Voice the sweetest ever heard! And your brow more… Than the … sky Of this azure Italy. Mary dear, come to me soon, _10 I am not well whilst thou art far; As sunset to the sphered moon, As twilight to the western star, Thou, beloved, art to me.

O Mary dear, that you were here; _15 The Castle echo whispers 'Here!'

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ON A FADED VIOLET.

[Published by Hunt, "Literary Pocket-Book", 1821. Reprinted by Mrs. Shelley, "Posthumous Poems", 1824. Again reprinted, with several variants, "Poetical Works", 1839, 1st edition. Our text is that of the editio princeps, 1821. A transcript is extant in a letter from Shelley to Sophia Stacey, dated March 7, 1820.]

1. The odour from the flower is gone Which like thy kisses breathed on me; The colour from the flower is flown Which glowed of thee and only thee!

2. A shrivelled, lifeless, vacant form, _5 It lies on my abandoned breast, And mocks the heart which yet is warm, With cold and silent rest.

3. I weep,—my tears revive it not! I sigh,—it breathes no more on me; _10 Its mute and uncomplaining lot Is such as mine should be.

NOTES: _1 odour]colour 1839. _2 kisses breathed]sweet eyes smiled 1839. _3 colour]odour 1839. _4 glowed]breathed 1839. _5 shrivelled]withered 1839. _8 cold and silent all editions; its cold, silent Stacey manuscript.

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LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS.

OCTOBER, 1818.

[Composed at Este, October, 1818. Published with “Rosalind and Helen”, 1819. Amongst the late Mr. Fredk. Locker-Lampson’s collections at Rowfant there is a manuscript of the lines (167-205) on Byron, interpolated after the completion of the poem.]

Many a green isle needs must be In the deep wide sea of Misery, Or the mariner, worn and wan, Never thus could voyage on— Day and night, and night and day, _5 Drifting on his dreary way, With the solid darkness black Closing round his vessel’s track: Whilst above the sunless sky, Big with clouds, hangs heavily, _10 And behind the tempest fleet Hurries on with lightning feet, Riving sail, and cord, and plank, Till the ship has almost drank Death from the o’er-brimming deep; _15 And sinks down, down, like that sleep When the dreamer seems to be Weltering through eternity; And the dim low line before Of a dark and distant shore _20 Still recedes, as ever still Longing with divided will, But no power to seek or shun, He is ever drifted on O’er the unreposing wave _25 To the haven of the grave. What, if there no friends will greet; What, if there no heart will meet His with love’s impatient beat; Wander wheresoe’er he may, _30 Can he dream before that day To find refuge from distress In friendship’s smile, in love’s caress? Then ‘twill wreak him little woe Whether such there be or no: _35 Senseless is the breast, and cold, Which relenting love would fold; Bloodless are the veins and chill Which the pulse of pain did fill; Every little living nerve _40 That from bitter words did swerve Round the tortured lips and brow, Are like sapless leaflets now Frozen upon December’s bough.

On the beach of a northern sea _45 Which tempests shake eternally, As once the wretch there lay to sleep, Lies a solitary heap, One white skull and seven dry bones, On the margin of the stones, _50 Where a few gray rushes stand, Boundaries of the sea and land: Nor is heard one voice of wail But the sea-mews, as they sail O'er the billows of the gale; _55 Or the whirlwind up and down Howling, like a slaughtered town, When a king in glory rides Through the pomp of fratricides: Those unburied bones around _60 There is many a mournful sound; There is no lament for him, Like a sunless vapour, dim, Who once clothed with life and thought What now moves nor murmurs not. _65

Ay, many flowering islands lie In the waters of wide Agony: To such a one this morn was led, My bark by soft winds piloted: 'Mid the mountains Euganean _70 I stood listening to the paean With which the legioned rooks did hail The sun's uprise majestical; Gathering round with wings all hoar, Through the dewy mist they soar _75 Like gray shades, till the eastern heaven Bursts, and then, as clouds of even, Flecked with fire and azure, lie In the unfathomable sky, So their plumes of purple grain, _80 Starred with drops of golden rain, Gleam above the sunlight woods, As in silent multitudes On the morning's fitful gale Through the broken mist they sail, _85 And the vapours cloven and gleaming Follow, down the dark steep streaming, Till all is bright, and clear, and still, Round the solitary hill.

Beneath is spread like a green sea _90 The waveless plain of Lombardy, Bounded by the vaporous air, Islanded by cities fair; Underneath Day's azure eyes Ocean's nursling, Venice lies, _95 A peopled labyrinth of walls, Amphitrite's destined halls, Which her hoary sire now paves With his blue and beaming waves. Lo! the sun upsprings behind, _100 Broad, red, radiant, half-reclined On the level quivering line Of the waters crystalline; And before that chasm of light, As within a furnace bright, _105 Column, tower, and dome, and spire, Shine like obelisks of fire, Pointing with inconstant motion From the altar of dark ocean To the sapphire-tinted skies; _110 As the flames of sacrifice From the marble shrines did rise, As to pierce the dome of

gold Where Apollo spoke of old.

Sun-girt City, thou hast been _115 Ocean’s child, and then his queen; Now is come a darker day, And thou soon must be his prey, If the power that raised thee here Hallow so thy watery bier. _120 A less drear ruin then than now, With thy conquest-branded brow Stooping to the slave of slaves From thy throne, among the waves Wilt thou be, when the sea-mew _125 Flies, as once before it flew, O’er thine isles depopulate, And all is in its ancient state, Save where many a palace gate _130 With green sea-flowers overgrown Like a rock of Ocean’s own, Topples o’er the abandoned sea As the tides change sullenly. The fisher on his watery way, Wandering at the close of day, _135 Will spread his sail and seize his oar Till he pass the gloomy shore, Lest thy dead should, from their sleep Bursting o’er the starlight deep, Lead a rapid masque of death _140 O’er the waters of his path.

Those who alone thy towers behold Quivering through aereal gold, As I now behold them here, Would imagine not they were _145 Sepulchres, where human forms, Like pollution-nourished worms, To the corpse of greatness cling, Murdered, and now mouldering: But if Freedom should awake _150 In her omnipotence, and shake From the Celtic Anarch’s hold All the keys of dungeons cold, Where a hundred cities lie Chained like thee, ingloriously, _155 Thou and all thy sister band Might adorn this sunny land, Twining memories of old time With new virtues more sublime; If not, perish thou and they!— _160 Clouds which stain truth’s rising day By her sun consumed away— Earth can spare ye: while like flowers, In the waste of years and hours, From your dust new nations spring _165 With more kindly blossoming.

Perish—let there only be Floating o’er thy hearthless sea As the garment of thy sky Clothes the world immortally, _170 One remembrance, more sublime Than the tattered pall of time, Which scarce hides thy visage wan;— That a tempest-cleaving Swan Of the songs of Albion, _175 Driven from his ancestral streams By the might

of evil dreams, Found a nest in thee; and Ocean Welcomed him with such emotion That its joy grew his, and sprung _180 From his lips like music flung O’er a mighty thunder-fit, Chastening terror:—what though yet Poesy’s unfailing River, Which through Albion winds forever _185 Lashing with melodious wave Many a sacred Poet’s grave, Mourn its latest nursling fled? What though thou with all thy dead Scarce can for this fame repay _190 Aught thine own? oh, rather say Though thy sins and slaveries foul Overcloud a sunlike soul? As the ghost of Homer clings Round Scamander’s wasting springs; _195 As divinest Shakespeare’s might Fills Avon and the world with light Like omniscient power which he Imaged ‘mid mortality; As the love from Petrarch’s urn, _200 Yet amid yon hills doth burn, A quenchless lamp by which the heart Sees things unearthly;—so thou art, Mighty spirit—so shall be The City that did refuge thee. _205

Lo, the sun floats up the sky Like thought-winged Liberty, Till the universal light Seems to level plain and height; From the sea a mist has spread, _210 And the beams of morn lie dead On the towers of Venice now, Like its glory long ago. By the skirts of that gray cloud Many-domed Padua proud _215 Stands, a peopled solitude, ‘Mid the harvest-shining plain, Where the peasant heaps his grain In the garner of his foe, And the milk-white oxen slow _220 With the purple vintage strain, Heaped upon the creaking wain, That the brutal Celt may swill Drunken sleep with savage will; And the sickle to the sword _225 Lies unchanged, though many a lord, Like a weed whose shade is poison, Overgrows this region’s foison, Sheaves of whom are ripe to come To destruction’s harvest-home: _230 Men must reap the things they sow, Force from force must ever flow, Or worse; but ’tis a bitter woe That love or reason cannot change The despot’s rage, the slave’s revenge. _235

Padua, thou within whose walls Those mute guests at festivals, Son and Mother, Death and Sin, Played at dice for Ezzelin, Till Death cried, “I win, I win!” _240 And Sin cursed to lose the wager, But Death promised, to assuage her, That he would petition for Her to be made Vice-Emperor, When the destined years were o’er, _245

Over all between the Po And the eastern Alpine snow, Under the mighty Austrian. Sin smiled so as Sin only can, And since that time, ay, long before, _250 Both have ruled from shore to shore,— That incestuous pair, who follow Tyrants as the sun the swallow, As Repentance follows Crime, And as changes follow Time. _255

In thine halls the lamp of learning, Padua, now no more is burning; Like a meteor, whose wild way Is lost over the grave of day, It gleams betrayed and to betray: _260 Once remotest nations came To adore that sacred flame, When it lit not many a hearth On this cold and gloomy earth: Now new fires from antique light _265 Spring beneath the wide world's might; But their spark lies dead in thee, Trampled out by Tyranny. As the Norway woodman quells, In the depth of piny dells, _270 One light flame among the brakes, While the boundless forest shakes, And its mighty trunks are torn By the fire thus lowly born: The spark beneath his feet is dead, _275 He starts to see the flames it fed Howling through the darkened sky With a myriad tongues victoriously, And sinks down in fear: so thou, O Tyranny, beholdest now _280 Light around thee, and thou hearest The loud flames ascend, and fearest: Grovel on the earth; ay, hide In the dust thy purple pride!

Noon descends around me now: _285 'Tis the noon of autumn's glow, When a soft and purple mist Like a vaporous amethyst, Or an air-dissolved star Mingling light and fragrance, far _290 From the curved horizon's bound To the point of Heaven's profound, Fills the overflowing sky; And the plains that silent lie Underneath, the leaves unsodden _295 Where the infant Frost has trodden With his morning-winged feet, Whose bright print is gleaming yet; And the red and golden vines, Piercing with their trellised lines _300 The rough, dark-skirted wilderness; The dun and bladed grass no less, Pointing from this hoary tower In the windless air; the flower Glimmering at my feet; the line _305 Of the olive-sandalled Apennine In the south dimly islanded; And the Alps, whose snows are spread High between the clouds and sun; And of living things each one; _310 And my spirit which so long Darkened this swift stream of song,— Interpenetrated lie By the glory of the sky: Be it love, light,

harmony, _315 Odour, or the soul of all Which from Heaven like dew doth fall, Or the mind which feeds this verse Peopling the lone universe.

Noon descends, and after noon _320 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 _325 From the sunset's radiant springs: And the soft dreams of the morn (Which like winged winds had borne To that silent isle, which lies Mid remembered agonies, _330 The frail bark of this lone being) Pass, to other sufferers fleeing, And its ancient pilot, Pain, Sits beside the helm again.

Other flowering isles must be _335 In the sea of Life and Agony: Other spirits float and flee O'er that gulf: even now, perhaps, On some rock the wild wave wraps, With folded wings they waiting sit _340 For my bark, to pilot it To some calm and blooming cove, Where for me, and those I love, May a windless bower be built, Far from passion, pain, and guilt, _345 In a dell mid lawny hills, Which the wild sea-murmur fills, And soft sunshine, and the sound Of old forests echoing round, And the light and smell divine _350 Of all flowers that breathe and shine: We may live so happy there, That the Spirits of the Air, Envying us, may even entice To our healing Paradise _355 The polluting multitude; But their rage would be subdued By that clime divine and calm, And the winds whose wings rain balm On the uplifted soul, and leaves _360 Under which the bright sea heaves; While each breathless interval In their whisperings musical The inspired soul supplies With its own deep melodies; _365 And the love which heals all strife Circling, like the breath of life, All things in that sweet abode With its own mild brotherhood, They, not it, would change; and soon _370 Every sprite beneath the moon Would repent its envy vain, And the earth grow young again.

NOTES: _54 seamews 1819; seamew's Rossetti. _115 Sun-girt]Sea-girt cj. Palgrave. _165 From your dust new 1819; From thy dust shall Rowfant manuscript (heading of lines 167-205). _175 songs 1819; sons cj. Forman. _278 a 1819;

wanting, 1839.

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SCENE FROM ‘TASSO’.

[Composed, 1818. Published by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

MADDALO, A COURTIER. MALPIGLIO, A POET. PIGNA, A MINISTER. ALBANO, AN USHER.

MADDALO: No access to the Duke! You have not said That the Count Maddalo would speak with him?

PIGNA: Did you inform his Grace that Signor Pigna Waits with state papers for his signature?

MALPIGLIO: The Lady Leonora cannot know _5 That I have written a sonnet to her fame, In which I … Venus and Adonis. You should not take my gold and serve me not.

ALBANO: In truth I told her, and she smiled and said, ‘If I am Venus, thou, coy Poesy, _10 Art the Adonis whom I love, and he The Erymanthian boar that wounded him.’ O trust to me, Signor Malpiglio, Those nods and smiles were favours worth the zechin.

MALPIGLIO: The words are twisted in some double sense _15 That I reach not: the smiles fell not on me.

PIGNA: How are the Duke and Duchess occupied?

ALBANO: Buried in some strange talk. The Duke was leaning, His finger on his brow, his lips unclosed. The Princess sate within the window-seat, _20 And so her face was hid; but on her knee Her hands were clasped, veined, and pale as snow, And quivering—young Tasso, too, was there.

MADDALO: Thou seest on whom from thine own worshipped heaven Thou drawest down smiles—they did not rain on thee. _25

MALPIGLIO: Would they were parching lightnings for his sake On whom they fell!

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SONG FOR ‘TASSO’.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

1. I loved—alas! our life is love; But when we cease to breathe and move I do suppose love ceases too. I thought, but not as now I do, Keen thoughts and bright of linked lore, _5 Of all that men had thought before. And all that Nature shows, and more.

2. And still I love and still I think, But strangely, for my heart can drink The dregs of such despair, and live, _10 And love;… And if I think, my thoughts come fast, I mix the present with the past, And each seems uglier than the last.

3. Sometimes I see before me flee _15 A silver spirit’s form, like thee, O Leonora, and I sit …still watching it, Till by the grated casement’s ledge It fades, with such a sigh, as sedge _20 Breathes o’er the breezy streamlet’s edge.

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INVOCATION TO MISERY.

[Published by Medwin, “The Athenaeum”, September 8, 1832. Reprinted (as “Misery, a Fragment”) by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition. Our text is that of 1839. A pencil copy of this poem is amongst the Shelley manuscripts at the Bodleian Library. See Mr. C.D. Locock’s “Examination”, etc., 1903, page 38. The readings of this copy are indicated by the letter B. in the footnotes.]

1. Come, be happy!—sit near me, Shadow-vested Misery: Coy, unwilling, silent bride, Mourning in thy robe of pride, Desolation—deified! _5

2. Come, be happy!—sit near me: Sad as I may seem to thee, I am happier far than thou, Lady, whose imperial brow Is endiademed with woe. _10

3. Misery! we have known each other, Like a sister and a brother Living in the same

lone home, Many years—we must live some Hours or ages yet to come. _15

4. ’Tis an evil lot, and yet Let us make the best of it; If love can live when pleasure dies, We two will love, till in our eyes This heart’s Hell seem Paradise. _20

5. Come, be happy!—lie thee down On the fresh grass newly mown, Where the Grasshopper doth sing Merrily—one joyous thing In a world of sorrowing! _25

6. There our tent shall be the willow, And mine arm shall be thy pillow; Sounds and odours, sorrowful Because they once were sweet, shall lull Us to slumber, deep and dull. _30

7. Ha! thy frozen pulses flutter With a love thou darest not utter. Thou art murmuring—thou art weeping— Is thine icy bosom leaping While my burning heart lies sleeping? _35

8. Kiss me;—oh! thy lips are cold: Round my neck thine arms enfold— They are soft, but chill and dead; And thy tears upon my head Burn like points of frozen lead. _40

9. Hasten to the bridal bed— Underneath the grave ’tis spread: In darkness may our love be hid, Oblivion be our coverlid— We may rest, and none forbid. _45

10. Clasp me till our hearts be grown Like two shadows into one; Till this dreadful transport may Like a vapour fade away, In the sleep that lasts alway. _50

11. We may dream, in that long sleep, That we are not those who weep; E’en as Pleasure dreams of thee, Life-deserting Misery, Thou mayst dream of her with me. _55

12. Let us laugh, and make our mirth, At the shadows of the earth, As dogs bay the moonlight clouds, Which, like spectres wrapped in shrouds, Pass o’er night in multitudes. _60

13. All the wide world, beside us, Show like multitudinous Puppets passing from a scene; What but mockery can they mean, Where I am—where thou hast been? _65

NOTES: _1 near B., 1839; by 1832. _8 happier far]merrier yet B. _15 Hours or]Years and 1832. _17 best]most 1832. _19 We two will]We will 1832. _27 mine arm shall be thy B., 1839; thine arm shall be my 1832. _33 represented by asterisks, 1832. _34, _35 Thou art murmuring, thou art weeping, Whilst my burning bosom's leaping 1832; Was thine icy bosom leaping While my burning heart was sleeping B. _40 frozen 1832, 1839, B.; molten cj. Forman. _44 be]is B. _47 shadows]lovers 1832, B. _59 which B., 1839; that 1832. _62 Show]Are 1832, B. _63 Puppets passing]Shadows shifting 1832; Shadows passing B. _64, _65 So B.: What but mockery may they mean? Where am I?—Where thou hast been 1832.

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STANZAS WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Posthumous Poems", 1824, where it is dated 'December, 1818.' A draft of stanza 1 is amongst the Boscombe manuscripts. (Garnett).]

1. The sun is warm, the sky is clear, The waves are dancing fast and bright, Blue isles and snowy mountains wear The purple noon's transparent might, The breath of the moist earth is light, _5 Around its unexpanded buds; Like many a voice of one delight, The winds, the birds, the ocean floods, The City's voice itself, is soft like Solitude's.

2. I see the Deep's untrampled floor _10 With green and purple seaweeds strown; I see the waves upon the shore, Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown: I sit upon the sands alone,— The lightning of the noontide ocean _15 Is flashing round me, and a tone Arises from its measured motion, How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

3. Alas! I have nor hope nor health, Nor peace within nor calm around, _20 Nor that content surpassing wealth The sage in meditation found, And walked with inward glory crowned— Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure. Others I see whom

these surround— _25 Smiling they live, and call life pleasure;— To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

4. Yet now despair itself is mild, Even as the winds and waters are; I could lie down like a tired child, _30 And weep away the life of care Which I have borne and yet must bear, Till death like sleep might steal on me, And I might feel in the warm air My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea _35 Breathe o’er my dying brain its last monotony.

5. Some might lament that I were cold, As I, when this sweet day is gone, Which my lost heart, too soon grown old, Insults with this untimely moan; _40 They might lament—for I am one Whom men love not,—and yet regret, Unlike this day, which, when the sun Shall on its stainless glory set, Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet. _45

NOTES: _4 might Boscombe manuscript, Medwin 1847; light 1824, 1839. _5 The…light Boscombe manuscript, 1839, Medwin 1847; omitted, 1824. moist earth Boscombe manuscript; moist air 1839; west wind Medwin 1847. _17 measured 1824; mingled 1847. _18 did any heart now 1824; if any heart could Medwin 1847. _31 the 1824; this Medwin 1847. _36 dying 1824; outworn Medwin 1847.

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THE WOODMAN AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

[Published in part (1-67) by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824; the remainder (68-70) by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

A woodman whose rough heart was out of tune (I think such hearts yet never came to good) Hated to hear, under the stars or moon,

One nightingale in an interfluous wood Satiate the hungry dark with melody;— _5 And as a vale is watered by a flood,

Or as the moonlight fills the open sky Struggling with darkness—as a tuberose

Peoples some Indian dell with scents which lie

Like clouds above the flower from which they rose, _10 The singing of that happy nightingale In this sweet forest, from the golden close

Of evening till the star of dawn may fail, Was interfused upon the silentness; The folded roses and the violets pale _15

Heard her within their slumbers, the abyss Of heaven with all its planets; the dull ear Of the night-cradled earth; the loneliness

Of the circumfluous waters,—every sphere And every flower and beam and cloud and wave, _20 And every wind of the mute atmosphere,

And every beast stretched in its rugged cave, And every bird lulled on its mossy bough, And every silver moth fresh from the grave

Which is its cradle—ever from below _25 Aspiring like one who loves too fair, too far, To be consumed within the purest glow

Of one serene and unapproached star, As if it were a lamp of earthly light, Unconscious, as some human lovers are, _30

Itself how low, how high beyond all height The heaven where it would perish!—and every form That worshipped in the temple of the night

Was awed into delight, and by the charm Girt as with an interminable zone, _35 Whilst that sweet bird, whose music was a storm

Of sound, shook forth the dull oblivion Out of their dreams; harmony became love In every soul but one.

…

And so this man returned with axe and saw _40 At evening close from killing the tall treen, The soul of whom by Nature’s gentle law

Was each a wood-nymph, and kept ever green The pavement and the roof of the wild copse, Chequering the sunlight of the blue serene _45

With jagged leaves,—and from the forest tops Singing the winds to sleep—or weeping oft Fast showers of aereal water-drops

Into their mother's bosom, sweet and soft, Nature's pure tears which have no bitterness;— _50 Around the cradles of the birds aloft

They spread themselves into the loveliness Of fan-like leaves, and over pallid flowers Hang like moist clouds:—or, where high branches kiss,

Make a green space among the silent bowers, _55 Like a vast fane in a metropolis, Surrounded by the columns and the towers

All overwrought with branch-like traceries In which there is religion—and the mute Persuasion of unkindled melodies, _60

Odours and gleams and murmurs, which the lute Of the blind pilot-spirit of the blast Stirs as it sails, now grave and now acute,

Wakening the leaves and waves, ere it has passed To such brief unison as on the brain _65 One tone, which never can recur, has cast, One accent never to return again.

…

The world is full of Woodmen who expel Love's gentle Dryads from the haunts of life, And vex the nightingales in every dell. _70

NOTE: _8 —or as a tuberose cj. A.C. Bradley.

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MARENGHI. (This fragment refers to an event told in Sismondi's "Histoire des Republiques Italiennes", which occurred during the war when Florence finally subdued Pisa, and reduced it to a province.—[MRS. SHELLEY'S NOTE, 1824.])

[Published in part (stanzas 7-15.) by Mrs. Shelley, "Posthumous Poems", 1824; stanzas 1-28 by W.M. Rossetti, "Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.", 1870. The Boscombe manuscript—evidently a first draft—from which (through Dr. Garnett)

Rossetti derived the text of 1870 is now at the Bodleian, and has recently been collated by Mr. C.D. Locock, to whom the enlarged and amended text here printed is owing. The substitution, in title and text, of “Marenghi” for “Mazenghi” (1824) is due to Rossetti. Here as elsewhere in the footnotes B. = the Bodleian manuscript.]

1. Let those who pine in pride or in revenge, Or think that ill for ill should be repaid, Who barter wrong for wrong, until the exchange Ruins the merchants of such thriftless trade, Visit the tower of Vado, and unlearn _5 Such bitter faith beside Marenghi’s urn.

2. A massy tower yet overhangs the town, A scattered group of ruined dwellings now…

…

3. Another scene are wise Etruria knew Its second ruin through internal strife _10 And tyrants through the breach of discord threw The chain which binds and kills. As death to life, As winter to fair flowers (though some be poison) So Monarchy succeeds to Freedom’s foison.

4. In Pisa’s church a cup of sculptured gold _15 Was brimming with the blood of feuds forsworn: A Sacrament more holy ne’er of old Etrurians mingled mid the shades forlorn Of moon-illumined forests, when…

5. And reconciling factions wet their lips _20 With that dread wine, and swear to keep each spirit Undarkened by their country’s last eclipse…

…

6. Was Florence the liberticide? that band Of free and glorious brothers who had planted, Like a green isle mid Aethiopian sand, _25 A nation amid slaveries, disenchanted Of many impious faiths—wise, just—do they, Does Florence, gorge the sated tyrants’ prey?

7. O foster-nurse of man’s abandoned glory, Since Athens, its great mother, sunk in

splendour; _30 Thou shadowest forth that mighty shape in story, As ocean its wrecked fanes, severe yet tender:— The light-invested angel Poesy Was drawn from the dim world to welcome thee.

8. And thou in painting didst transcribe all taught _35 By loftiest meditations; marble knew The sculptor’s fearless soul—and as he wrought, The grace of his own power and freedom grew. And more than all, heroic, just, sublime, Thou wart among the false…was this thy crime? _40

9. Yes; and on Pisa’s marble walls the twine Of direst weeds hangs garlanded—the snake Inhabits its wrecked palaces;—in thine A beast of subtler venom now doth make Its lair, and sits amid their glories overthrown, _45 And thus thy victim’s fate is as thine own.

10. The sweetest flowers are ever frail and rare, And love and freedom blossom but to wither; And good and ill like vines entangled are, So that their grapes may oft be plucked together;— _50 Divide the vintage ere thou drink, then make Thy heart rejoice for dead Marenghi’s sake.

10a. [Albert] Marenghi was a Florentine; If he had wealth, or children, or a wife Or friends, [or farm] or cherished thoughts which twine _55 The sights and sounds of home with life’s own life Of these he was despoiled and Florence sent…

…

11. No record of his crime remains in story, But if the morning bright as evening shone, _60 It was some high and holy deed, by glory Pursued into forgetfulness, which won From the blind crowd he made secure and free The patriot’s meed, toil, death, and infamy.

12. For when by sound of trumpet was declared A price upon his life, and there was set _65 A penalty of blood on all who shared So much of water with him as might wet His lips, which speech divided not—he went Alone, as you may guess, to banishment.

13. Amid the mountains, like a hunted beast, He hid himself, and hunger, toil, and cold, _70 Month after month endured; it was a feast Whene’er he found those globes of deep-red gold Which in the woods the strawberry-tree doth bear, Suspended in their emerald atmosphere. _75

14. And in the roofless huts of vast morasses, Deserted by the fever-stricken serf, All overgrown with reeds and long rank grasses, And hillocks heaped of moss-inwoven turf, And where the huge and speckled aloe made, _80 Rooted in stones, a broad and pointed shade,—

15. He housed himself. There is a point of strand Near Vado’s tower and town; and on one side The treacherous marsh divides it from the land, Shadowed by pine and ilex forests wide, _85 And on the other, creeps eternally, Through muddy weeds, the shallow sullen sea.

16. Here the earth’s breath is pestilence, and few But things whose nature is at war with life— Snakes and ill worms—endure its mortal dew. The trophies of the clime’s victorious strife— _90 And ringed horns which the buffalo did wear, And the wolf’s dark gray scalp who tracked him there.

17. And at the utmost point…stood there The relics of a reed-inwoven cot, _95 Thatched with broad flags. An outlawed murderer Had lived seven days there: the pursuit was hot When he was cold. The birds that were his grave Fell dead after their feast in Vado’s wave.

18. There must have burned within Marenghi’s breast _100 That fire, more warm and bright than life and hope, (Which to the martyr makes his dungeon… More joyous than free heaven’s majestic cope To his oppressor), warring with decay,— Or he could ne’er have lived years, day by day. _105

19. Nor was his state so lone as you might think. He had tamed every newt and snake and toad, And every seagull which sailed down to drink Those freshes ere the death-mist went abroad. And each one, with peculiar talk and play, _110 Wiled, not

untaught, his silent time away.

20. And the marsh-meteors, like tame beasts, at night Came licking with blue tongues his veined feet; And he would watch them, as, like spirits bright, In many entangled figures quaint and sweet _115 To some enchanted music they would dance— Until they vanished at the first moon-glance.

21. He mocked the stars by grouping on each weed The summer dew-globes in the golden dawn; And, ere the hoar-frost languished, he could read _120 Its pictured path, as on bare spots of lawn Its delicate brief touch in silver weaves The likeness of the wood's remembered leaves.

22. And many a fresh Spring morn would he awaken— While yet the unrisen sun made glow, like iron _125 Quivering in crimson fire, the peaks unshaken Of mountains and blue isles which did environ With air-clad crags that plain of land and sea,— And feel … liberty.

23. And in the moonless nights when the dun ocean _130 Heaved underneath wide heaven, star-impearled, Starting from dreams… Communed with the immeasurable world; And felt his life beyond his limbs dilated, Till his mind grew like that it contemplated. _135

24. His food was the wild fig and strawberry; The milky pine-nuts which the autumn-blast Shakes into the tall grass; or such small fry As from the sea by winter-storms are cast; And the coarse bulbs of iris-flowers he found _140 Knotted in clumps under the spongy ground.

25. And so were kindled powers and thoughts which made His solitude less dark. When memory came (For years gone by leave each a deepening shade), His spirit basked in its internal flame,— _145 As, when the black storm hurries round at night, The fisher basks beside his red firelight.

26. Yet human hopes and cares and faiths and errors, Like billows unawakened by the wind, Slept in Marenghi still; but that all terrors, _150 Weakness, and doubt, had

withered in his mind. His couch…

…

27. And, when he saw beneath the sunset's planet A black ship walk over the crimson ocean,— Its pennon streaming on the blasts that fan it, _155 Its sails and ropes all tense and without motion, Like the dark ghost of the unburied even Striding athwart the orange-coloured heaven,—

28. The thought of his own kind who made the soul Which sped that winged shape through night and day,— _160 The thought of his own country…

…

NOTES: _3 Who B.; Or 1870. _6 Marenghi's 1870; Mazenghi's B. _7 town 1870; sea B. _8 ruined 1870; squalid B. ('the whole line is cancelled,' Locock). _11 threw 1870; cancelled, B. _17 A Sacrament more B.; At Sacrament: more 1870. _18 mid B.; with 1870. _19 forests when… B.; forests. 1870. _23, _24 that band Of free and glorious brothers who had 1870; omitted, B. _25 a 1870; one B. _27 wise, just—do they 1870; omitted, B. _28 Does 1870; Doth B. prey 1870; spoil B. _33 angel 1824; Herald [?] B. _34 to welcome thee 1824; cancelled for… by thee B. _42 direst 1824; Desert B. _45 sits amid 1824 amid cancelled for soils (?) B. _53-_57 Albert…sent B.; omitted 1824, 1870. Albert cancelled B.: Pietro is the correct name. _53 Marenghi]Mazenghi B. _55 farm doubtful: perh. fame (Locock). _62 he 1824; thus B. _70 Amid the mountains 1824; Mid desert mountains [?] B. _71 toil, and cold]cold and toil editions 1824, 1839. _92, _93 And… there B. (see Editor's Note); White bones, and locks of dun and yellow hair, And ringed horns which buffaloes did wear— 1870. _94 at the utmost point 1870; cancelled for when (where?) B. _95 reed B.; weed 1870. _99 after B.; upon 1870. _100 burned within Marenghi's breast B.; lived within Marenghi's heart 1870. _101 and B.; or 1870. _103 free B.; the 1870. _109 freshes B.; omitted, 1870. _118 by 1870; with B. _119 dew-globes B.; dewdrops 1870. _120 languished B.; vanished 1870. _121 path, as on [bare] B.;

footprints, as on 1870. _122 silver B.; silence 1870. _130 And in the moonless nights 1870; cancelled, B. dun B.; dim 1870. _131 Heaved 1870; cancelled, B. wide B.; the 1870. star-impearled B.; omitted, 1870. _132 Starting from dreams 1870; cancelled for He B. _137 autumn B.; autumnal 1870. _138 or B.; and 1870. _155 pennon B.; pennons 1870. _158 athwart B.; across 1870.

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SONNET.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824. Our text is that of the “Poetical Works”, 1839.]

Lift not the painted veil which those who live Call Life: though unreal shapes be pictured there, And it but mimic all we would believe With colours idly spread,—behind, lurk Fear And Hope, twin Destinies; who ever weave _5 Their shadows, o’er the chasm, sightless and drear. I knew one who had lifted it—he sought, For his lost heart was tender, things to love But found them not, alas! nor was there aught The world contains, the which he could approve. _10 Through the unheeding many he did move, A splendour among shadows, a bright blot Upon this gloomy scene, a Spirit that strove For truth, and like the Preacher found it not.

NOTES: _6 Their…drear 1839; The shadows, which the world calls substance, there 1824. _7 who had lifted 1839; who lifted 1824.

***

FRAGMENT: TO BYRON.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

O mighty mind, in whose deep stream this age Shakes like a reed in the unheeding storm, Why dost thou curb not thine own sacred rage?

***

FRAGMENT: APOSTROPHE TO SILENCE.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862. A transcript by Mrs. Shelley, given to Charles Cowden Clarke, presents one or two variants.]

Silence! Oh, well are Death and Sleep and Thou Three brethren named, the guardians gloomy-winged Of one abyss, where life, and truth, and joy Are swallowed up—yet spare me, Spirit, pity me, Until the sounds I hear become my soul, _5 And it has left these faint and weary limbs, To track along the lapses of the air This wandering melody until it rests Among lone mountains in some…

NOTES: _4 Spirit 1862; O Spirit C.C.C. manuscript. _8 This wandering melody 1862; These wandering melodies… C.C.C. manuscript.

***

FRAGMENT: THE LAKE’S MARGIN.

[Published by W.M. Rossetti, 1870.]

The fierce beasts of the woods and wildernesses Track not the steps of him who drinks of it; For the light breezes, which for ever fleet Around its margin, heap the sand thereon.

***

FRAGMENT: ‘MY HEAD IS WILD WITH WEEPING’.

[Published by W.M. Rossetti, 1870.]

My head is wild with weeping for a grief Which is the shadow of a gentle mind. I walk into the air (but no relief To seek,—or haply, if I sought, to find; It came unsought);—to wonder that a chief _5 Among men’s spirits should be cold and blind.

NOTE: _4 find cj. A.C. Bradley.

***

FRAGMENT: THE VINE-SHROUD.

[Published by W.M. Rossetti, 1870.]

Flourishing vine, whose kindling clusters glow Beneath the autumnal sun, none taste of thee; For thou dost shroud a ruin, and below The rotting bones of dead antiquity.

***

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1818, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

We often hear of persons disappointed by a first visit to Italy. This was not Shelley's case. The aspect of its nature, its sunny sky, its majestic storms, of the luxuriant vegetation of the country, and the noble marble-built cities, enchanted him. The sight of the works of art was full enjoyment and wonder. He had not studied pictures or statues before; he now did so with the eye of taste, that referred not to the rules of schools, but to those of Nature and truth. The first entrance to Rome opened to him a scene of remains of antique grandeur that far surpassed his expectations; and the unspeakable beauty of Naples and its environs added to the impression he received of the transcendent and glorious beauty of Italy.

Our winter was spent at Naples. Here he wrote the fragments of "Marenghi" and "The Woodman and the Nightingale", which he afterwards threw aside. At this time, Shelley suffered greatly in health. He put himself under the care of a medical man, who promised great things, and made him endure severe bodily pain, without any good results. Constant and poignant physical suffering exhausted him; and though he preserved the appearance of cheerfulness, and often greatly enjoyed our wanderings in the environs of Naples, and our excursions on its sunny sea, yet many hours were passed when his thoughts, shadowed by illness, became gloomy,—and then he escaped to solitude, and in verses, which he hid from fear of wounding me, poured forth morbid but too natural bursts of discontent and sadness. One looks back with unspeakable regret and gnawing remorse to such periods; fancying that, had one been more alive to the nature of his feelings, and more attentive to soothe them, such would not have existed. And yet, enjoying as he appeared to do every sight or influence of earth or sky, it was difficult to imagine that any melancholy he showed

was aught but the effect of the constant pain to which he was a martyr.

We lived in utter solitude. And such is often not the nurse of cheerfulness; for then, at least with those who have been exposed to adversity, the mind broods over its sorrows too intently; while the society of the enlightened, the witty, and the wise, enables us to forget ourselves by making us the sharers of the thoughts of others, which is a portion of the philosophy of happiness. Shelley never liked society in numbers,—it harassed and wearied him; but neither did he like loneliness, and usually, when alone, sheltered himself against memory and reflection in a book. But, with one or two whom he loved, he gave way to wild and joyous spirits, or in more serious conversation expounded his opinions with vivacity and eloquence. If an argument arose, no man ever argued better. He was clear, logical, and earnest, in supporting his own views; attentive, patient, and impartial, while listening to those on the adverse side. Had not a wall of prejudice been raised at this time between him and his countrymen, how many would have sought the acquaintance of one whom to know was to love and to revere! How many of the more enlightened of his contemporaries have since regretted that they did not seek him! how very few knew his worth while he lived! and, of those few, several were withheld by timidity or envy from declaring their sense of it. But no man was ever more enthusiastically loved—more looked up to, as one superior to his fellows in intellectual endowments and moral worth, by the few who knew him well, and had sufficient nobleness of soul to appreciate his superiority. His excellence is now acknowledged; but, even while admitted, not duly appreciated. For who, except those who were acquainted with him, can imagine his unwearied benevolence, his generosity, his systematic forbearance? And still less is his vast superiority in intellectual attainments sufficiently understood—his sagacity, his clear understanding, his learning, his prodigious memory. All these as displayed in conversation, were known to few while he lived, and are now silent in the tomb:

‘Ahi orbo mondo ingrato! Gran cagion hai di dever pianger meco; Che quel ben ch’

era in te, perdut’ hai seco.’

***

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1819.

LINES WRITTEN DURING THE CASTLEREAGH ADMINISTRATION.

[Published by Medwin, “The Athenaeum”, December 8, 1832; reprinted, “Poetical Works”, 1839. There is a transcript amongst the Harvard manuscripts, and another in the possession of Mr. C.W. Frederickson of Brooklyn. Variants from these two sources are given by Professor Woodberry, “Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, Centenary Edition, 1893, volume 3 pages 225, 226. The transcripts are referred to in our footnotes as Harvard and Fred. respectively.]

1. Corpses are cold in the tomb; Stones on the pavement are dumb; Abortions are dead in the womb, And their mothers look pale—like the death-white shore Of Albion, free no more. _5

2. Her sons are as stones in the way— They are masses of senseless clay— They are trodden, and move not away,— The abortion with which SHE travaileth Is Liberty, smitten to death. _10

3. Then trample and dance, thou Oppressor! For thy victim is no redresser; Thou art sole lord and possessor Of her corpses, and clods, and abortions—they pave Thy path to the grave. _15

4. Hearest thou the festival din Of Death, and Destruction, and Sin, And Wealth crying “Havoc!” within? ’Tis the bacchanal triumph that makes Truth dumb, Thine Epithalamium. _20

5. Ay, marry thy ghastly wife! Let Fear and Disquiet and Strife Spread thy couch in the chamber of Life! Marry Ruin, thou Tyrant! and Hell be thy guide To the bed of the bride! _25

NOTES: _4 death-white Harvard, Fred.; white 1832, 1839. _16 festival Harvard,

Fred., 1839; festal 1832. _19 that Fred.; which Harvard 1832. _22 Disquiet Harvard, Fred., 1839; Disgust 1832. _24 Hell Fred.; God Harvard, 1832, 1839. _25 the bride Harvard, Fred., 1839; thy bride 1832.

***

SONG TO THE MEN OF ENGLAND.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition.]

1. Men of England, wherefore plough For the lords who lay ye low? Wherefore weave with toil and care The rich robes your tyrants wear?

2. Wherefore feed, and clothe, and save, _5 From the cradle to the grave, Those ungrateful drones who would Drain your sweat—nay, drink your blood?

3. Wherefore, Bees of England, forge Many a weapon, chain, and scourge, _10 That these stingless drones may spoil The forced produce of your toil?

4. Have ye leisure, comfort, calm, Shelter, food, love’s gentle balm? Or what is it ye buy so dear _15 With your pain and with your fear?

5. The seed ye sow, another reaps; The wealth ye find, another keeps; The robes ye weave, another wears; The arms ye forge; another bears. _20

6. Sow seed,—but let no tyrant reap; Find wealth,—let no impostor heap; Weave robes,—let not the idle wear; Forge arms,—in your defence to bear.

7. Shrink to your cellars, holes, and cells; _25 In halls ye deck another dwells. Why shake the chains ye wrought? Ye see The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

8. With plough and spade, and hoe and loom, Trace your grave, and build your tomb, _30 And weave your winding-sheet, till fair England be your sepulchre.

***

SIMILES FOR TWO POLITICAL CHARACTERS OF 1819.

[Published by Medwin, “The Athenaeum”, August 25, 1832; reprinted by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839. Our title is that of 1839, 2nd edition. The poem is

found amongst the Harvard manuscripts, headed “To S—th and O—gh”.]

1. As from an ancestral oak Two empty ravens sound their clarion, Yell by yell, and croak by croak, When they scent the noonday smoke Of fresh human carrion:— _5

2. As two gibbering night-birds flit From their bowers of deadly yew Through the night to frighten it, When the moon is in a fit, And the stars are none, or few:— _10

3. As a shark and dog-fish wait Under an Atlantic isle, For the negro-ship, whose freight Is the theme of their debate, Wrinkling their red gills the while— _15

4. Are ye, two vultures sick for battle, Two scorpions under one wet stone, Two bloodless wolves whose dry throats rattle, Two crows perched on the murrained cattle, Two vipers tangled into one. _20

NOTE: _7 yew 1832; hue 1839.

**

FRAGMENT: TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

People of England, ye who toil and groan, Who reap the harvests which are not your own, Who weave the clothes which your oppressors wear, And for your own take the inclement air; Who build warm houses… _5 And are like gods who give them all they have, And nurse them from the cradle to the grave…

…

***

FRAGMENT: ‘WHAT MEN GAIN FAIRLY’. (Perhaps connected with that immediately preceding (Forman).—ED.)

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition.]

What men gain fairly—that they should possess, And children may inherit idleness, From him who earns it—This is understood; Private injustice may be general good. But he who gains by base and armed wrong, _5 Or guilty fraud, or base

compliances, May be despoiled; even as a stolen dress Is stripped from a convicted thief; and he Left in the nakedness of infamy.

***

A NEW NATIONAL ANTHEM.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition.]

1. God prosper, speed, and save, God raise from England’s grave Her murdered Queen! Pave with swift victory The steps of Liberty, _5 Whom Britons own to be Immortal Queen.

2. See, she comes throned on high, On swift Eternity! God save the Queen! _10 Millions on millions wait, Firm, rapid, and elate, On her majestic state! God save the Queen!

3. She is Thine own pure soul _15 Moulding the mighty whole,— God save the Queen! She is Thine own deep love Rained down from Heaven above,— Wherever she rest or move, _20 God save our Queen!

4. ‘Wilder her enemies In their own dark disguise,— God save our Queen! All earthly things that dare _25 Her sacred name to bear, Strip them, as kings are, bare; God save the Queen!

5. Be her eternal throne Built in our hearts alone— _30 God save the Queen! Let the oppressor hold Canopied seats of gold; She sits enthroned of old O’er our hearts Queen. _35

6. Lips touched by seraphim Breathe out the choral hymn ‘God save the Queen!’ Sweet as if angels sang, Loud as that trumpet’s clang _40 Wakening the world’s dead gang,— God save the Queen!

***

SONNET: ENGLAND IN 1819.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition.]

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king,— Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow Through public scorn,—mud from a muddy spring,— Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know, But leech-like to their fainting country cling, _5 Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow,— A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field,— An army, which liberticide and prey Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield,— Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay; _10 Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed; A Senate,—Time's worst statute, unrepealed,— Are graves from which a glorious Phantom may Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

***

AN ODE, WRITTEN OCTOBER, 1819, BEFORE THE SPANIARDS HAD RECOVERED THEIR LIBERTY.

[Published with "Prometheus Unbound", 1820.]

Arise, arise, arise! There is blood on the earth that denies ye bread; Be your wounds like eyes To weep for the dead, the dead, the dead. What other grief were it just to pay? _5 Your sons, your wives, your brethren, were they; Who said they were slain on the battle day?

Awaken, awaken, awaken! The slave and the tyrant are twin-born foes; Be the cold chains shaken _10 To the dust where your kindred repose, repose: Their bones in the grave will start and move, When they hear the voices of those they love, Most loud in the holy combat above.

Wave, wave high the banner! _15 When Freedom is riding to conquest by: Though the slaves that fan her Be Famine and Toil, giving sigh for sigh. And ye who attend her imperial car, Lift not your hands in the banded war, _20 But in her defence whose children ye are.

Glory, glory, glory, To those who have greatly suffered and done! Never name in story Was greater than that which ye shall have won. _25 Conquerors have conquered their foes alone, Whose revenge, pride, and power they have overthrown

Ride ye, more victorious, over your own.

Bind, bind every brow With crownals of violet, ivy, and pine: _30 Hide the blood-stains now With hues which sweet Nature has made divine: Green strength, azure hope, and eternity: But let not the pansy among them be; Ye were injured, and that means memory. _35

***

CANCELLED STANZA.

[Published in “The Times” (Rossetti).]

Gather, O gather, Foeman and friend in love and peace! Waves sleep together When the blasts that called them to battle, cease. For fangless Power grown tame and mild _5 Is at play with Freedom’s fearless child— The dove and the serpent reconciled!

***

ODE TO HEAVEN.

[Published with “Prometheus Unbound”, 1820. Dated ‘Florence, December, 1819’ in Harvard manuscript (Woodberry). A transcript exists amongst the Shelley manuscripts at the Bodleian Library. See Mr. C.D. Locock’s “Examination”, etc., page 39.]

CHORUS OF SPIRITS:

FIRST SPIRIT: Palace-roof of cloudless nights! Paradise of golden lights! Deep, immeasurable, vast, Which art now, and which wert then Of the Present and the Past, _5 Of the eternal Where and When, Presence-chamber, temple, home, Ever-canopying dome, Of acts and ages yet to come!

Glorious shapes have life in thee, _10 Earth, and all earth’s company; Living globes which ever throng Thy deep chasms and wildernesses; And green worlds that glide along; And swift stars with flashing tresses; _15 And icy moons most cold and bright, And mighty suns beyond the night, Atoms of intensest light.

Even thy name is as a god, Heaven! for thou art the abode _20 Of that Power which is the glass Wherein man his nature sees. Generations as they pass Worship thee with bended knees. Their unremaining gods and they _25 Like a river roll away: Thou remainest such—alway!—

SECOND SPIRIT: Thou art but the mind's first chamber, Round which its young fancies clamber, Like weak insects in a cave, _30 Lighted up by stalactites; But the portal of the grave, Where a world of new delights Will make thy best glories seem But a dim and noonday gleam _35 From the shadow of a dream!

THIRD SPIRIT: Peace! the abyss is wreathed with scorn At your presumption, atom-born! What is Heaven? and what are ye Who its brief expanse inherit? _40 What are suns and spheres which flee With the instinct of that Spirit Of which ye are but a part? Drops which Nature's mighty heart Drives through thinnest veins! Depart! _45

What is Heaven? a globe of dew, Filling in the morning new Some eyed flower whose young leaves waken On an unimagined world: Constellated suns unshaken, _50 Orbits measureless, are furled In that frail and fading sphere, With ten millions gathered there, To tremble, gleam, and disappear.

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CANCELLED FRAGMENTS OF THE ODE TO HEAVEN.

[Published by Mr. C.D. Locock, "Examination", etc., 1903.]

The [living frame which sustains my soul] Is [sinking beneath the fierce control] Down through the lampless deep of song I am drawn and driven along—

When a Nation screams aloud _5 Like an eagle from the cloud When a…

…

When the night…

…

Watch the look askance and old— See neglect, and falsehood fold… _10

***

ODE TO THE WEST WIND.

(This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions.

The phenomenon alluded to at the conclusion of the third stanza is well known to naturalists. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers, and of lakes, sympathizes with that of the land in the change of seasons, and is consequently influenced by the winds which announce it.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.])

[Published with "Prometheus Unbound", 1820.]

1. O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being, Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red, Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou, _5 Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low, Each like a corpse within its grave, until Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill _10 (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air) With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere; Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

2. Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion, _15 Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed, Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread On the blue surface of thine aery

surge, Like the bright hair uplifted from the head _20

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge Of the horizon to the zenith's height, The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre, _25 Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

3. Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams The blue Mediterranean, where he lay, _30 Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay, And saw in sleep old palaces and towers Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers _35 So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear The sapless foliage of the ocean, know _40

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear, And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

4. If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear; If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee; A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share _45

The impulse of thy strength, only less free Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven, As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed _50 Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need. Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud! I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed _55 One too like thee: tameless,

and swift, and proud.

5. Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is: What if my leaves are falling like its own! The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone, _60 Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce, My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth! And, by the incantation of this verse, _65

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind! Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind, If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind? _70

***

AN EXHORTATION.

[Published with “Prometheus Unbound”, 1820. Dated ‘Pisa, April, 1820’ in Harvard manuscript (Woodberry), but assigned by Mrs. Shelley to 1819.]

Chameleons feed on light and air: Poets’ food is love and fame: If in this wide world of care Poets could but find the same With as little toil as they, _5 Would they ever change their hue As the light chameleons do, Suiting it to every ray Twenty times a day?

Poets are on this cold earth, _10 As chameleons might be, Hidden from their early birth in a cave beneath the sea; Where light is, chameleons change: Where love is not, poets do: _15 Fame is love disguised: if few Find either, never think it strange That poets range.

Yet dare not stain with wealth or power A poet’s free and heavenly mind: _20 If bright chameleons should devour Any food but beams and wind, They would grow as earthly soon As their brother lizards are. Children of a sunnier star, _25 Spirits

from beyond the moon, Oh, refuse the boon!

***

THE INDIAN SERENADE.

[Published, with the title, “Song written for an Indian Air”, in “The Liberal”, 2, 1822. Reprinted (“Lines to an Indian Air”) by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824. The poem is included in the Harvard manuscript book, and there is a description by Robert Browning of an autograph copy presenting some variations from the text of 1824. See Leigh Hunt’s “Correspondence”, 2, pages 264-8.]

1. I arise from dreams of thee In the first sweet sleep of night, When the winds are breathing low, And the stars are shining bright: I arise from dreams of thee, _5 And a spirit in my feet Hath led me—who knows how? To thy chamber window, Sweet!

2. The wandering airs they faint On the dark, the silent stream— _10 The Champak odours fail Like sweet thoughts in a dream; The nightingale’s complaint, It dies upon her heart;— As I must on thine, _15 Oh, beloved as thou art!

3. Oh lift me from the grass! I die! I faint! I fail! Let thy love in kisses rain On my lips and eyelids pale. _20 My cheek is cold and white, alas! My heart beats loud and fast;— Oh! press it to thine own again, Where it will break at last.

NOTES: _3 Harvard manuscript omits When. _4 shining]burning Harvard manuscript, 1822. _7 Hath led Browning manuscript, 1822; Has borne Harvard manuscript; Has led 1824. _11 The Champak Harvard manuscript, 1822, 1824; And the Champak’s Browning manuscript. _15 As I must on 1822, 1824; As I must die on Harvard manuscript, 1839, 1st edition. _16 Oh, beloved Browning manuscript, Harvard manuscript, 1839, 1st edition; Beloved 1822, 1824. _23 press it to thine own Browning manuscript; press it close to thine Harvard manuscript, 1824, 1839, 1st edition; press me to thine own, 1822.

***

CANCELLED PASSAGE.

[Published by W.M. Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works”, 1870.]

O pillow cold and wet with tears! Thou breathest sleep no more!

***

TO SOPHIA [MISS STACEY].

[Published by W.M. Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works”, 1870.]

1. Thou art fair, and few are fairer Of the Nymphs of earth or ocean; They are robes that fit the wearer— Those soft limbs of thine, whose motion Ever falls and shifts and glances _5 As the life within them dances.

2. Thy deep eyes, a double Planet, Gaze the wisest into madness With soft clear fire,—the winds that fan it Are those thoughts of tender gladness _10 Which, like zephyrs on the billow, Make thy gentle soul their pillow.

3. If, whatever face thou paintest In those eyes, grows pale with pleasure, If the fainting soul is faintest _15 When it hears thy harp’s wild measure, Wonder not that when thou speakest Of the weak my heart is weakest.

4. As dew beneath the wind of morning, As the sea which whirlwinds waken, _20 As the birds at thunder’s warning, As aught mute yet deeply shaken, As one who feels an unseen spirit Is my heart when thine is near it.

***

TO WILLIAM SHELLEY.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824. The fragment included in the Harvard manuscript book.]

(With what truth may I say— Roma! Roma! Roma! Non e piu come era prima!)

1. My lost William, thou in whom Some bright spirit lived, and did That decaying robe consume Which its lustre faintly hid,— Here its ashes find a tomb, _5 But beneath this pyramid Thou art not—if a thing divine Like thee can die, thy funeral

shrine Is thy mother's grief and mine.

2. Where art thou, my gentle child? _10 Let me think thy spirit feeds, With its life intense and mild, The love of living leaves and weeds Among these tombs and ruins wild;— Let me think that through low seeds _15 Of sweet flowers and sunny grass Into their hues and scents may pass A portion—

NOTE:

Motto _1 may I Harvard manuscript; I may 1824. _12 With Harvard manuscript, Mrs. Shelley, 1847; Within 1824, 1839. _16 Of sweet Harvard manuscript; Of the sweet 1824, 1839.

***

TO WILLIAM SHELLEY.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Poetical Works", 1839, 1st edition.]

Thy little footsteps on the sands Of a remote and lonely shore; The twinkling of thine infant hands, Where now the worm will feed no more; Thy mingled look of love and glee _5 When we returned to gaze on thee—

***

TO MARY SHELLEY.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Poetical Works", 1839, 2nd edition.]

My dearest Mary, wherefore hast thou gone, And left me in this dreary world alone? Thy form is here indeed—a lovely one— But thou art fled, gone down the dreary road, That leads to Sorrow's most obscure abode; _5 Thou sittest on the hearth of pale despair, Where For thine own sake I cannot follow thee.

***

TO MARY SHELLEY.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Poetical Works", 1839, 2nd edition.]

The world is dreary, And I am weary Of wandering on without thee, Mary; A joy was erewhile In thy voice and thy smile, _5 And ’tis gone, when I should be gone too, Mary.

***

ON THE MEDUSA OF LEONARDO DA VINCI IN THE FLORENTINE GALLERY.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

1. It lieth, gazing on the midnight sky, Upon the cloudy mountain-peak supine; Below, far lands are seen tremblingly; Its horror and its beauty are divine. Upon its lips and eyelids seems to lie _5 Loveliness like a shadow, from which shine, Fiery and lurid, struggling underneath, The agonies of anguish and of death.

2. Yet it is less the horror than the grace Which turns the gazer’s spirit into stone, _10 Whereon the lineaments of that dead face Are graven, till the characters be grown Into itself, and thought no more can trace; ’Tis the melodious hue of beauty thrown Athwart the darkness and the glare of pain, Which humanize and harmonize the strain. _15

3. And from its head as from one body grow, As … grass out of a watery rock, Hairs which are vipers, and they curl and flow And their long tangles in each other lock, _20 And with unending involutions show Their mailed radiance, as it were to mock The torture and the death within, and saw The solid air with many a ragged jaw.

4. And, from a stone beside, a poisonous eft _25 Peeps idly into those Gorgonian eyes; Whilst in the air a ghastly bat, bereft Of sense, has flitted with a mad surprise Out of the cave this hideous light had cleft, And he comes hastening like a moth that hies _30 After a taper; and the midnight sky Flares, a light more dread than obscurity.

5. ’Tis the tempestuous loveliness of terror; For from the serpents gleams a brazen glare Kindled by that inextricable error, _35 Which makes a thrilling vapour of the

air Become a … and ever-shifting mirror Of all the beauty and the terror there— A woman's countenance, with serpent-locks, Gazing in death on Heaven from those wet rocks. _40

NOTES: _5 seems 1839; seem 1824. _6 shine]shrine 1824, 1839. _26 those 1824; these 1839.

***

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY.

[Published by Leigh Hunt, "The Indicator", December 22, 1819. Reprinted by Mrs. Shelley, "Posthumous Poems", 1824. Included in the Harvard manuscript book, where it is headed "An Anacreontic", and dated 'January, 1820.' Written by Shelley in a copy of Hunt's "Literary Pocket-Book", 1819, and presented to Sophia Stacey, December 29, 1820.]

1. The fountains mingle with the river And the rivers with the Ocean, The winds of Heaven mix for ever With a sweet emotion; Nothing in the world is single; _5 All things by a law divine In one spirit meet and mingle. Why not I with thine?—

2. See the mountains kiss high Heaven And the waves clasp one another; _10 No sister-flower would be forgiven If it disdained its brother; And the sunlight clasps the earth And the moonbeams kiss the sea: What is all this sweet work worth _15 If thou kiss not me?

NOTES: _3 mix for ever 1819, Stacey manuscript; meet together, Harvard manuscript. _7 In one spirit meet and Stacey manuscript; In one another's being 1819, Harvard manuscript. _11 No sister 1824, Harvard and Stacey manuscripts; No leaf or 1819. _12 disdained its 1824, Harvard and Stacey manuscripts; disdained to kiss its 1819. _15 is all this sweet work Stacey manuscript; were these examples Harvard manuscript; are all these kissings 1819, 1824.

***

FRAGMENT: ‘FOLLOW TO THE DEEP WOOD’S WEEDS’.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

Follow to the deep wood’s weeds, Follow to the wild-briar dingle, Where we seek to intermingle, And the violet tells her tale To the odour-scented gale, _5 For they two have enough to do Of such work as I and you.

***

THE BIRTH OF PLEASURE.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

At the creation of the Earth Pleasure, that divinest birth, From the soil of Heaven did rise, Wrapped in sweet wild melodies— Like an exhalation wreathing _5 To the sound of air low-breathing Through Aeolian pines, which make A shade and shelter to the lake Whence it rises soft and slow; Her life-breathing [limbs] did flow _10 In the harmony divine Of an ever-lengthening line Which enwrapped her perfect form With a beauty clear and warm.

***

FRAGMENT: LOVE THE UNIVERSE TO-DAY.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition.]

And who feels discord now or sorrow? Love is the universe to-day— These are the slaves of dim to-morrow, Darkening Life’s labyrinthine way.

***

FRAGMENT: ‘A GENTLE STORY OF TWO LOVERS YOUNG’.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition.]

A gentle story of two lovers young, Who met in innocence and died in sorrow, And of one selfish heart, whose rancour clung Like curses on them; are ye slow to borrow The lore of truth from such a tale? _5 Or in this world’s deserted vale, Do ye not see a star of gladness Pierce the shadows of its sadness,— When ye are cold, that

love is a light sent From Heaven, which none shall quench, to cheer the innocent? _10

NOTE: _9 cold]told cj. A.C. Bradley. For the metre cp. Fragment: To a Friend Released from Prison.

***

FRAGMENT: LOVE'S TENDER ATMOSPHERE.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Poetical Works", 1839, 2nd edition.]

There is a warm and gentle atmosphere About the form of one we love, and thus As in a tender mist our spirits are Wrapped in the … of that which is to us The health of life's own life— _5

***

FRAGMENT: WEDDED SOULS.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, "Relics of Shelley", 1862.]

I am as a spirit who has dwelt Within his heart of hearts, and I have felt His feelings, and have thought his thoughts, and known The inmost converse of his soul, the tone Unheard but in the silence of his blood, _5 When all the pulses in their multitude Image the trembling calm of summer seas. I have unlocked the golden melodies Of his deep soul, as with a master-key, And loosened them and bathed myself therein— _10 Even as an eagle in a thunder-mist Clothing his wings with lightning.

***

FRAGMENT: 'IS IT THAT IN SOME BRIGHTER SPHERE'.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, "Relics of Shelley", 1862.]

Is it that in some brighter sphere We part from friends we meet with here? Or do we see the Future pass Over the Present's dusky glass? Or what is that that makes us seem _5 To patch up fragments of a dream, Part of which comes true, and part Beats and trembles in the heart?

***

FRAGMENT: SUFFICIENT UNTO THE DAY.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

Is not to-day enough? Why do I peer Into the darkness of the day to come? Is not to-morrow even as yesterday? And will the day that follows change thy doom? Few flowers grow upon thy wintry way; _5 And who waits for thee in that cheerless home Whence thou hast fled, whither thou must return Charged with the load that makes thee faint and mourn?

***

FRAGMENT: ‘YE GENTLE VISITATIONS OF CALM THOUGHT’.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition.]

Ye gentle visitations of calm thought— Moods like the memories of happier earth, Which come arrayed in thoughts of little worth, Like stars in clouds by the weak winds enwrought,— But that the clouds depart and stars remain, _5 While they remain, and ye, alas, depart!

***

FRAGMENT: MUSIC AND SWEET POETRY.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition.]

How sweet it is to sit and read the tales Of mighty poets and to hear the while Sweet music, which when the attention fails Fills the dim pause—

***

FRAGMENT: THE SEPULCHRE OF MEMORY.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition.]

And where is truth? On tombs? for such to thee Has been my heart—and thy dead memory Has lain from childhood, many a changeful year, Unchangingly preserved

and buried there.

***

FRAGMENT: ‘WHEN A LOVER CLASPS HIS FAIREST’.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition.]

1. When a lover clasps his fairest, Then be our dread sport the rarest. Their caresses were like the chaff In the tempest, and be our laugh His despair—her epitaph! _5

2. When a mother clasps her child, Watch till dusty Death has piled His cold ashes on the clay; She has loved it many a day— She remains,—it fades away. _10

***

FRAGMENT: ‘WAKE THE SERPENT NOT’.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition.]

Wake the serpent not—lest he Should not know the way to go,— Let him crawl which yet lies sleeping Through the deep grass of the meadow! Not a bee shall hear him creeping, _5 Not a may-fly shall awaken From its cradling blue-bell shaken, Not the starlight as he’s sliding Through the grass with silent gliding.

***

FRAGMENT: RAIN.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition.]

The fitful alternations of the rain, When the chill wind, languid as with pain Of its own heavy moisture, here and there Drives through the gray and beamless atmosphere.

***

FRAGMENT: A TALE UNTOLD.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition.]

One sung of thee who left the tale untold, Like the false dawns which perish in the

bursting; Like empty cups of wrought and daedal gold, Which mock the lips with air, when they are thirsting.

***

FRAGMENT: TO ITALY.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

As the sunrise to the night, As the north wind to the clouds, As the earthquake’s fiery flight, Ruining mountain solitudes, Everlasting Italy, _5 Be those hopes and fears on thee.

***

FRAGMENT: WINE OF THE FAIRIES.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition.]

I am drunk with the honey wine Of the moon-unfolded eglantine, Which fairies catch in hyacinth bowls. The bats, the dormice, and the moles Sleep in the walls or under the sward _5 Of the desolate castle yard; And when ’tis spilt on the summer earth Or its fumes arise among the dew, Their jocund dreams are full of mirth, They gibber their joy in sleep; for few _10 Of the fairies bear those bowls so new!

***

FRAGMENT: A ROMAN’S CHAMBER.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition.]

1. In the cave which wild weeds cover Wait for thine aethereal lover; For the pallid moon is waning, O’er the spiral cypress hanging And the moon no cloud is staining. _5

2. It was once a Roman’s chamber, Where he kept his darkest revels, And the wild weeds twine and clamber; It was then a chasm for devils.

***

FRAGMENT: ROME AND NATURE.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition.]

Rome has fallen, ye see it lying Heaped in undistinguished ruin: Nature is alone undying.

***

VARIATION OF THE SONG OF THE MOON.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition.]

(“PROMETHEUS UNBOUND”, ACT 4.)

As a violet’s gentle eye Gazes on the azure sky Until its hue grows like what it beholds; As a gray and empty mist Lies like solid amethyst _5 Over the western mountain it enfolds, When the sunset sleeps Upon its snow; As a strain of sweetest sound Wraps itself the wind around _10 Until the voiceless wind be music too; As aught dark, vain, and dull, Basking in what is beautiful, Is full of light and love—

***

CANCELLED STANZA OF THE MASK OF ANARCHY.

[Published by H. Buxton Forman, “The Mask of Anarchy” (“Facsimile of Shelley’s manuscript”), 1887.]

(FOR WHICH STANZAS 68, 69 HAVE BEEN SUBSTITUTED.)

From the cities where from caves, Like the dead from putrid graves, Troops of starvelings gliding come, Living Tenants of a tomb.

***

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1819, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

Shelley loved the People; and respected them as often more virtuous, as always more suffering, and therefore more deserving of sympathy, than the great. He believed that a clash between the two classes of society was inevitable, and he

eagerly ranged himself on the people's side. He had an idea of publishing a series of poems adapted expressly to commemorate their circumstances and wrongs. He wrote a few; but, in those days of prosecution for libel, they could not be printed. They are not among the best of his productions, a writer being always shackled when he endeavours to write down to the comprehension of those who could not understand or feel a highly imaginative style; but they show his earnestness, and with what heart-felt compassion he went home to the direct point of injury—that oppression is detestable as being the parent of starvation, nakedness, and ignorance. Besides these outpourings of compassion and indignation, he had meant to adorn the cause he loved with loftier poetry of glory and triumph: such is the scope of the "Ode to the Assertors of Liberty". He sketched also a new version of our national anthem, as addressed to Liberty.

***

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1820.

THE SENSITIVE PLANT.

[Composed at Pisa, early in 1820 (dated 'March, 1820,' in Harvard manuscript), and published, with "Prometheus Unbound", the same year: included in the Harvard College manuscript book. Reprinted in the "Poetical Works", 1839, both editions.]

PART 1.

A Sensitive Plant in a garden grew, And the young winds fed it with silver dew, And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light. And closed them beneath the kisses of Night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair, _5 Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere; And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss In the garden, the field, or the wilderness, _10 Like a doe in the noontide with love's sweet want, As the

companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snowdrop, and then the violet, Arose from the ground with warm rain wet, And their breath was mixed with fresh odour, sent _15 From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall, And narcissi, the fairest among them all, Who gaze on their eyes in the stream’s recess, Till they die of their own dear loveliness; _20

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale, Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale That the light of its tremulous bells is seen Through their pavilions of tender green;

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue, _25 Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew Of music so delicate, soft, and intense, It was felt like an odour within the sense;

And the rose like a nymph to the bath addressed, Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast, _30 Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air The soul of her beauty and love lay bare:

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up, As a Maenad, its moonlight-coloured cup, Till the fiery star, which is its eye, Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky; _35

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberose, The sweetest flower for scent that blows; And all rare blossoms from every clime Grew in that garden in perfect prime. _40

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom Was pranked, under boughs of embowering blossom, With golden and green light, slanting through Their heaven of many a tangled hue,

Broad water-lilies lay tremulously, _45 And starry river-buds glimmered by, And around them the soft stream did glide and dance With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss, Which led through the garden along and across, _50 Some open at once to the sun and the breeze, Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,

Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells As fair as the fabulous asphodels, And flow’rets which, drooping as day drooped too, _55 Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and blue, To roof the glow-worm from the evening dew.

And from this undefiled Paradise The flowers (as an infant’s awakening eyes Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet _60 Can first lull, and at last must awaken it),

When Heaven’s blithe winds had unfolded them, As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem, Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one _65 Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun;

For each one was interpenetrated With the light and the odour its neighbour shed, Like young lovers whom youth and love make dear Wrapped and filled by their mutual atmosphere.

But the Sensitive Plant which could give small fruit _70 Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root, Received more than all, it loved more than ever, Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver,—

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower; Radiance and odour are not its dower; _75 It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full, It desires what it has not, the Beautiful!

The light winds which from unsustaining wings Shed the music of many murmurings; The beams which dart from many a star _80 Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar;

The plumed insects swift and free, Like golden boats on a sunny sea, Laden with light and odour, which pass Over the gleam of the living grass; _85

The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides

high, Then wander like spirits among the spheres, Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears;

The quivering vapours of dim noontide, _90 Which like a sea o’er the warm earth glide, In which every sound, and odour, and beam, Move, as reeds in a single stream;

Each and all like ministering angels were For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear, _95 Whilst the lagging hours of the day went by Like windless clouds o’er a tender sky.

And when evening descended from Heaven above, And the Earth was all rest, and the air was all love, And delight, though less bright, was far more deep, _100 And the day’s veil fell from the world of sleep,

And the beasts, and the birds, and the insects were drowned In an ocean of dreams without a sound; Whose waves never mark, though they ever impress The light sand which paves it, consciousness; _105

(Only overhead the sweet nightingale Ever sang more sweet as the day might fail, And snatches of its Elysian chant Were mixed with the dreams of the Sensitive Plant);—

The Sensitive Plant was the earliest _110 Upgathered into the bosom of rest; A sweet child weary of its delight, The feeblest and yet the favourite, Cradled within the embrace of Night.

NOTES: _6 Like the Spirit of Love felt 1820; And the Spirit of Love felt 1839, 1st edition; And the Spirit of Love fell 1839, 2nd edition. _49 and of moss]and moss Harvard manuscript. _82 The]And the Harvard manuscript.

PART 2.

There was a Power in this sweet place, An Eve in this Eden; a ruling Grace Which to the flowers, did they waken or dream, Was as God is to the starry scheme.

A Lady, the wonder of her kind, _5 Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind Which, dilating, had moulded her mien and motion Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even: And the meteors of that sublunar Heaven, _10 Like the lamps of the air when Night walks forth, Laughed round her footsteps up from the Earth!

She had no companion of mortal race, But her tremulous breath and her flushing face Told, whilst the morn kissed the sleep from her eyes, _15 That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise:

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet sake Had deserted Heaven while the stars were awake, As if yet around her he lingering were, Though the veil of daylight concealed him from her. _20

Her step seemed to pity the grass it pressed; You might hear by the heaving of her breast, That the coming and going of the wind Brought pleasure there and left passion behind.

And wherever her aery footstep trod, _25 Her trailing hair from the grassy sod Erased its light vestige, with shadowy sweep, Like a sunny storm o’er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet; _30 I doubt not they felt the spirit that came From her glowing fingers through all their frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream On those that were faint with the sunny beam; And out of the cups of the heavy flowers _35 She emptied the rain of the thunder-showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands, And sustained them with rods and osier-bands; If the flowers had been her own infants, she Could never have nursed them more tenderly. _40

And all killing insects and gnawing worms, And things of obscene and unlovely forms, She bore, in a basket of Indian woof, Into the rough woods far aloof,—

In a basket, of grasses and wild-flowers full, _45 The freshest her gentle hands could pull For the poor banished insects, whose intent, Although they did ill, was innocent.

But the bee and the beamlike ephemeris Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths that kiss _50 The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she Make her attendant angels be.

And many an antenatal tomb, Where butterflies dream of the life to come, She left clinging round the smooth and dark _55 Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

This fairest creature from earliest Spring Thus moved through the garden ministering Mid the sweet season of Summertide, And ere the first leaf looked brown—she died! _60

NOTES: _15 morn Harvard manuscript, 1839; moon 1820. _23 and going 1820; and the going Harvard manuscript, 1839. _59 All 1820, 1839; Through all Harvard manuscript.

PART 3.

Three days the flowers of the garden fair, Like stars when the moon is awakened, were, Or the waves of Baiae, ere luminous She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.

And on the fourth, the Sensitive Plant _5 Felt the sound of the funeral chant, And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow, And the sobs of the mourners, deep and low;

The weary sound and the heavy breath, And the silent motions of passing death, _10 And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank, Sent through the pores of the coffin-plank;

The dark grass, and the flowers among the grass, Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass; From their sighs the wind caught a mournful tone, _15 And sate in

the pines, and gave groan for groan.

The garden, once fair, became cold and foul, Like the corpse of her who had been its soul, Which at first was lovely as if in sleep, Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap _20 To make men tremble who never weep.

Swift Summer into the Autumn flowed, And frost in the mist of the morning rode, Though the noonday sun looked clear and bright, Mocking the spoil of the secret night. _25

The rose-leaves, like flakes of crimson snow, Paved the turf and the moss below. The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan, Like the head and the skin of a dying man.

And Indian plants, of scent and hue _30 The sweetest that ever were fed on dew, Leaf by leaf, day after day, Were massed into the common clay.

And the leaves, brown, yellow, and gray, and red, And white with the whiteness of what is dead, _35 Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind passed; Their whistling noise made the birds aghast.

And the gusty winds waked the winged seeds, Out of their birthplace of ugly weeds, Till they clung round many a sweet flower’s stem, _40 Which rotted into the earth with them.

The water-blooms under the rivulet Fell from the stalks on which they were set; And the eddies drove them here and there, As the winds did those of the upper air. _45

Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks Were bent and tangled across the walks; And the leafless network of parasite bowers Massed into ruin; and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the snow _50 All loathliest weeds began to grow, Whose coarse leaves were splashed with many a speck, Like the water-snake’s belly and the toad’s back.

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels rank, And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock dank, _55 Stretched out its long and hollow shank, And stifled the air till the dead wind stank.

And plants, at whose names the verse feels loath, Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth, Prickly, and pulpous, and blistering, and blue, _60 Livid, and starred with a lurid dew.

And agarics, and fungi, with mildew and mould Started like mist from the wet ground cold; Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead With a spirit of growth had been animated! _65

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum, Made the running rivulet thick and dumb, And at its outlet flags huge as stakes Dammed it up with roots knotted like water-snakes.

And hour by hour, when the air was still, _70 The vapours arose which have strength to kill; At morn they were seen, at noon they were felt, At night they were darkness no star could melt.

And unctuous meteors from spray to spray Crept and flitted in broad noonday _75 Unseen; every branch on which they alit By a venomous blight was burned and bit.

The Sensitive Plant, like one forbid, Wept, and the tears within each lid Of its folded leaves, which together grew, _80 Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches soon By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn; The sap shrank to the root through every pore As blood to a heart that will beat no more. _85

For Winter came: the wind was his whip: One choppy finger was on his lip: He had torn the cataracts from the hills And they clanked at his girdle like manacles;

His breath was a chain which without a sound _90 The earth, and the air, and the water bound; He came, fiercely driven, in his chariot-throne By the tenfold blasts of

the Arctic zone.

Then the weeds which were forms of living death Fled from the frost to the earth beneath. _95 Their decay and sudden flight from frost Was but like the vanishing of a ghost!

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant The moles and the dormice died for want: The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air _100 And were caught in the branches naked and bare.

First there came down a thawing rain And its dull drops froze on the boughs again; Then there steamed up a freezing dew Which to the drops of the thaw-rain grew; _105

And a northern whirlwind, wandering about Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child out, Shook the boughs thus laden, and heavy, and stiff, And snapped them off with his rigid griff.

When Winter had gone and Spring came back _110 The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck; But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks, and darnels, Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.

CONCLUSION.

Whether the Sensitive Plant, or that Which within its boughs like a Spirit sat, _115 Ere its outward form had known decay, Now felt this change, I cannot say.

Whether that Lady’s gentle mind, No longer with the form combined Which scattered love, as stars do light, _120 Found sadness, where it left delight,

I dare not guess; but in this life Of error, ignorance, and strife, Where nothing is, but all things seem, And we the shadows of the dream, _125

It is a modest creed, and yet Pleasant if one considers it, To own that death itself must be, Like all the rest, a mockery.

That garden sweet, that lady fair, _130 And all sweet shapes and odours there, In

truth have never passed away: 'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed; not they.

For love, and beauty, and delight, There is no death nor change: their might _135 Exceeds our organs, which endure No light, being themselves obscure.

NOTES: _19 lovely Harvard manuscript, 1839; lively 1820. _23 of the morning 1820, 1839; of morning Harvard manuscript. _26 snow Harvard manuscript, 1839; now 1820. _28 And lilies were drooping, white and wan Harvard manuscript. _32 Leaf by leaf, day after day Harvard manuscript; Leaf after leaf, day after day 1820; Leaf after leaf, day by day 1839. _63 mist]mists Harvard manuscript. _96 and sudden flight]and their sudden flight the Harvard manuscript. _98 And under]Under Harvard manuscript. _114 Whether]And if Harvard manuscript. _118 Whether]Or if Harvard manuscript.

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CANCELLED PASSAGE.

[This stanza followed 3, 62-65 in the editio princeps, 1820, but was omitted by Mrs. Shelley from all editions from 1839 onwards. It is cancelled in the Harvard manuscript.]

Their moss rotted off them, flake by flake, Till the thick stalk stuck like a murderer's stake, Where rags of loose flesh yet tremble on high, Infecting the winds that wander by.

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A VISION OF THE SEA.

[Composed at Pisa early in 1820, and published with "Prometheus Unbound" in the same year. A transcript in Mrs. Shelley's handwriting is included in the Harvard manuscript book, where it is dated 'April, 1820.']

'Tis the terror of tempest. The rags of the sail Are flickering in ribbons within the fierce gale: From the stark night of vapours the dim rain is driven, And when

lightning is loosed, like a deluge from Heaven, She sees the black trunks of the waterspouts spin _5 And bend, as if Heaven was ruining in, Which they seemed to sustain with their terrible mass As if ocean had sunk from beneath them: they pass To their graves in the deep with an earthquake of sound, And the waves and the thunders, made silent around, _10 Leave the wind to its echo. The vessel, now tossed Through the low-trailing rack of the tempest, is lost In the skirts of the thunder-cloud: now down the sweep Of the wind-cloven wave to the chasm of the deep It sinks, and the walls of the watery vale _15 Whose depths of dread calm are unmoved by the gale, Dim mirrors of ruin, hang gleaming about; While the surf, like a chaos of stars, like a rout Of death-flames, like whirlpools of fire-flowing iron, With splendour and terror the black ship environ, _20 Or like sulphur-flakes hurled from a mine of pale fire In fountains spout o’er it. In many a spire The pyramid-billows with white points of brine In the cope of the lightning inconstantly shine, As piercing the sky from the floor of the sea. _25 The great ship seems splitting! it cracks as a tree, While an earthquake is splintering its root, ere the blast Of the whirlwind that stripped it of branches has passed. The intense thunder-balls which are raining from Heaven Have shattered its mast, and it stands black and riven. _30 The chinks suck destruction. The heavy dead hulk On the living sea rolls an inanimate bulk, Like a corpse on the clay which is hungering to fold Its corruption around it. Meanwhile, from the hold, One deck is burst up by the waters below, _35 And it splits like the ice when the thaw-breezes blow O’er the lakes of the desert! Who sit on the other? Is that all the crew that lie burying each other, Like the dead in a breach, round the foremast? Are those Twin tigers, who burst, when the waters arose, _40 In the agony of terror, their chains in the hold; (What now makes them tame, is what then made them bold;) Who crouch, side by side, and have driven, like a crank, The deep grip of their claws through the vibrating plank Are these all? Nine weeks the tall vessel had lain _45 On the windless expanse of the watery plain, Where the death-darting sun cast no shadow at noon, And there

seemed to be fire in the beams of the moon, Till a lead-coloured fog gathered up from the deep, Whose breath was quick pestilence; then, the cold sleep _50 Crept, like blight through the ears of a thick field of corn, O'er the populous vessel. And even and morn, With their hammocks for coffins the seamen aghast Like dead men the dead limbs of their comrades cast Down the deep, which closed on them above and around, _55 And the sharks and the dogfish their grave-clothes unbound, And were glutted like Jews with this manna rained down From God on their wilderness. One after one The mariners died; on the eve of this day, When the tempest was gathering in cloudy array, _60 But seven remained. Six the thunder has smitten, And they lie black as mummies on which Time has written His scorn of the embalmer; the seventh, from the deck An oak-splinter pierced through his breast and his back, And hung out to the tempest, a wreck on the wreck. _65 No more? At the helm sits a woman more fair Than Heaven, when, unbinding its star-braided hair, It sinks with the sun on the earth and the sea. She clasps a bright child on her upgathered knee; It laughs at the lightning, it mocks the mixed thunder _70 Of the air and the sea, with desire and with wonder It is beckoning the tigers to rise and come near, It would play with those eyes where the radiance of fear Is outshining the meteors; its bosom beats high, The heart-fire of pleasure has kindled its eye, _75 While its mother's is lustreless. 'Smile not, my child, But sleep deeply and sweetly, and so be beguiled Of the pang that awaits us, whatever that be, So dreadful since thou must divide it with me! Dream, sleep! This pale bosom, thy cradle and bed, _80 Will it rock thee not, infant? 'Tis beating with dread! Alas! what is life, what is death, what are we, That when the ship sinks we no longer may be? What! to see thee no more, and to feel thee no more? To be after life what we have been before? _85 Not to touch those sweet hands? Not to look on those eyes, Those lips, and that hair,—all the smiling disguise Thou yet wearest, sweet Spirit, which I, day by day, Have so long called my child, but which now fades away Like a rainbow, and I the fallen shower?'—Lo! the ship _90 Is settling, it topples, the leeward ports dip; The tigers leap up when

they feel the slow brine Crawling inch by inch on them; hair, ears, limbs, and eyne, Stand rigid with horror; a loud, long, hoarse cry Bursts at once from their vitals tremendously, _95 And 'tis borne down the mountainous vale of the wave, Rebounding, like thunder, from crag to cave, Mixed with the clash of the lashing rain, Hurried on by the might of the hurricane: The hurricane came from the west, and passed on _100 By the path of the gate of the eastern sun, Transversely dividing the stream of the storm; As an arrowy serpent, pursuing the form Of an elephant, bursts through the brakes of the waste. Black as a cormorant the screaming blast, _105 Between Ocean and Heaven, like an ocean, passed, Till it came to the clouds on the verge of the world Which, based on the sea and to Heaven upcurled, Like columns and walls did surround and sustain The dome of the tempest; it rent them in twain, _110 As a flood rends its barriers of mountainous crag: And the dense clouds in many a ruin and rag, Like the stones of a temple ere earthquake has passed, Like the dust of its fall, on the whirlwind are cast; They are scattered like foam on the torrent; and where _115 The wind has burst out through the chasm, from the air Of clear morning the beams of the sunrise flow in, Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline, Banded armies of light and of air; at one gate They encounter, but interpenetrate. _120 And that breach in the tempest is widening away, And the caverns of cloud are torn up by the day, And the fierce winds are sinking with weary wings, Lulled by the motion and murmurings And the long glassy heave of the rocking sea, _125 And overhead glorious, but dreadful to see, The wrecks of the tempest, like vapours of gold, Are consuming in sunrise. The heaped waves behold The deep calm of blue Heaven dilating above, And, like passions made still by the presence of Love, _130 Beneath the clear surface reflecting it slide Tremulous with soft influence; extending its tide From the Andes to Atlas, round mountain and isle, Round sea-birds and wrecks, paved with Heaven's azure smile, The wide world of waters is vibrating. Where _135 Is the ship? On the verge of the wave where it lay One tiger is mingled in ghastly affray With a sea-snake. The foam and the smoke of

the battle Stain the clear air with sunbows; the jar, and the rattle Of solid bones crushed by the infinite stress _140 Of the snake’s adamantine voluminousness; And the hum of the hot blood that spouts and rains Where the gripe of the tiger has wounded the veins Swollen with rage, strength, and effort; the whirl and the splash As of some hideous engine whose brazen teeth smash _145 The thin winds and soft waves into thunder; the screams And hissings crawl fast o’er the smooth ocean-streams, Each sound like a centipede. Near this commotion, A blue shark is hanging within the blue ocean, The fin-winged tomb of the victor. The other _150 Is winning his way from the fate of his brother To his own with the speed of despair. Lo! a boat Advances; twelve rowers with the impulse of thought Urge on the keen keel,—the brine foams. At the stern Three marksmen stand levelling. Hot bullets burn _155 In the breast of the tiger, which yet bears him on To his refuge and ruin. One fragment alone,— ’Tis dwindling and sinking, ’tis now almost gone,— Of the wreck of the vessel peers out of the sea. With her left hand she grasps it impetuously. _160 With her right she sustains her fair infant. Death, Fear, Love, Beauty, are mixed in the atmosphere, Which trembles and burns with the fervour of dread Around her wild eyes, her bright hand, and her head, Like a meteor of light o’er the waters! her child _165 Is yet smiling, and playing, and murmuring; so smiled The false deep ere the storm. Like a sister and brother The child and the ocean still smile on each other, Whilst—

NOTES: _6 ruining Harvard manuscript, 1839; raining 1820. _8 sunk Harvard manuscript, 1839; sank 1820. _35 by Harvard manuscript; from 1820, 1839. _61 has 1820; had 1839. _87 all the Harvard manuscript; all that 1820, 1839. _116 through Harvard manuscript; from 1820, 1839. _121 away]alway cj. A.C. Bradley. _122 cloud Harvard manuscript, 1839; clouds 1820. _160 impetuously 1820, 1839; convulsively Harvard manuscript.

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THE CLOUD.

[Published with “Prometheus Unbound”, 1820.]

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers, From the seas and the streams; I bear light shade for the leaves when laid In their noonday dreams. From my wings are shaken the dews that waken _5 The sweet buds every one, When rocked to rest on their mother’s breast, As she dances about the sun. I wield the flail of the lashing hail, And whiten the green plains under, _10 And then again I dissolve it in rain, And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below, And their great pines groan aghast; And all the night ’tis my pillow white, _15 While I sleep in the arms of the blast. Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers, Lightning my pilot sits; In a cavern under is fettered the thunder, It struggles and howls at fits; _20 Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion, This pilot is guiding me, Lured by the love of the genii that move In the depths of the purple sea; Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills. _25 Over the lakes and the plains, Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream, The Spirit he loves remains; And I all the while bask in Heaven’s blue smile, Whilst he is dissolving in rains. _30

The sanguine Sunrise, with his meteor eyes, And his burning plumes outspread, Leaps on the back of my sailing rack, When the morning star shines dead; As on the jag of a mountain crag, _35 Which an earthquake rocks and swings, An eagle alit one moment may sit In the light of its golden wings. And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath, Its ardours of rest and of love, _40 And the crimson pall of eve may fall From the depth of Heaven above. With wings folded I rest, on mine aery nest, As still as a brooding dove.

That orbed maiden with white fire laden, _45 Whom mortals call the Moon, Glides glimmering o’er my fleece-like floor, By the midnight breezes strewn; And wherever the beat of her unseen feet, Which only the angels hear, _50 May have

broken the woof of my tent's thin roof. The stars peep behind her and peer; And I laugh to see them whirl and flee, Like a swarm of golden bees. When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent, _55 Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas, Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high, Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the Sun's throne with a burning zone, And the Moon's with a girdle of pearl; _60 The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim, When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl. From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape, Over a torrent sea, Sunbeam-proof, I hand like a roof,— _65 The mountains its columns be. The triumphal arch through which I march With hurricane, fire, and snow, When the Powers of the air are chained to my chair, Is the million-coloured bow; _70 The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove, While the moist Earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water, And the nursling of the Sky; I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores; _75 I change, but I cannot die. For after the rain when with never a stain The pavilion of Heaven is bare, And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams Build up the blue dome of air, _80 I silently laugh at my own cenotaph, And out of the caverns of rain, Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb, I arise and unbuild it again.

NOTES: _3 shade 1820; shades 1839. _6 buds 1839; birds 1820. _59 with a 1820; with the 1830.

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TO A SKYLARK.

[Composed at Leghorn, 1820, and published with "Prometheus Unbound" in the same year. There is a transcript in the Harvard manuscript.]

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit! Bird thou never wert, That from Heaven, or near it, Pourest thy full heart In profuse strains of unpremeditated art. _5

Higher still and higher From the earth thou springest Like a cloud of fire; The blue deep thou wingest, And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest. _10

In the golden lightning Of the sunken sun, O’er which clouds are bright’ning. Thou dost float and run; Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun. _15

The pale purple even Melts around thy flight; Like a star of Heaven, In the broad daylight Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight, _20

Keen as are the arrows Of that silver sphere, Whose intense lamp narrows In the white dawn clear Until we hardly see—we feel that it is there. _25

All the earth and air With thy voice is loud, As, when night is bare, From one lonely cloud The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflowed. _30

What thou art we know not; What is most like thee? From rainbow clouds there flow not Drops so bright to see As from thy presence showers a rain of melody. _35

Like a Poet hidden In the light of thought, Singing hymns unbidden, Till the world is wrought To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not: _40

Like a high-born maiden In a palace-tower, Soothing her love-laden Soul in secret hour With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower: _45

Like a glow-worm golden In a dell of dew, Scattering unbeholden Its aereal hue Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view! _50

Like a rose embowered In its own green leaves, By warm winds deflowered, Till the scent it gives Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-winged thieves: _55

Sound of vernal showers On the twinkling grass, Rain-awakened flowers, All that ever was Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass: _60

Teach us, Sprite or Bird, What sweet thoughts are thine: I have never heard Praise of love or wine That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine. _65

Chorus Hymeneal, Or triumphal chant, Matched with thine would be all But an empty vaunt, A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want. _70

What objects are the fountains Of thy happy strain? What fields, or waves, or mountains? What shapes of sky or plain? What love of thine own kind? what

ignorance of pain? _75

With thy clear keen joyance Languor cannot be: Shadow of annoyance Never came near thee: Thou lovest—but ne’er knew love’s sad satiety. _80

Waking or asleep, Thou of death must deem Things more true and deep Than we mortals dream, Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream? _85

We look before and after, And pine for what is not: Our sincerest laughter With some pain is fraught; Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought. _90

Yet if we could scorn Hate, and pride, and fear; If we were things born Not to shed a tear, I know not how thy joy we ever should come near. _95

Better than all measures Of delightful sound, Better than all treasures That in books are found, Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground! _100

Teach me half the gladness That thy brain must know, Such harmonious madness From my lips would flow The world should listen then—as I am listening now. _105

NOTE: _55 those Harvard manuscript: these 1820, 1839.

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ODE TO LIBERTY.

[Composed early in 1820, and published, with “Prometheus Unbound”, in the same year. A transcript in Shelley’s hand of lines 1-21 is included in the Harvard manuscript book, and amongst the Boscombe manuscripts there is a fragment of a rough draft (Garnett). For further particulars concerning the text see Editor’s Notes.]

Yet, Freedom, yet, thy banner, torn but flying, Streams like a thunder-storm against the wind.—BYRON.

1. A glorious people vibrated again The lightning of the nations: Liberty From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o’er Spain, Scattering contagious fire into the sky, Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay, _5 And in the rapid plumes of song Clothed itself, sublime and strong; As a young eagle soars the morning clouds

among, Hovering inverse o’er its accustomed prey; Till from its station in the Heaven of fame _10 The Spirit’s whirlwind rapped it, and the ray Of the remotest sphere of living flame Which paves the void was from behind it flung, As foam from a ship’s swiftness, when there came A voice out of the deep: I will record the same. _15

2. The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang forth: The burning stars of the abyss were hurled Into the depths of Heaven. The daedal earth, That island in the ocean of the world, Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air: _20 But this divinest universe Was yet a chaos and a curse, For thou wert not: but, power from worst producing worse, The spirit of the beasts was kindled there, And of the birds, and of the watery forms, _25 And there was war among them, and despair Within them, raging without truce or terms: The bosom of their violated nurse Groaned, for beasts warred on beasts, and worms on worms, And men on men; each heart was as a hell of storms. _30

3. Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied His generations under the pavilion Of the Sun’s throne: palace and pyramid, Temple and prison, to many a swarming million Were, as to mountain-wolves their ragged caves. _35 This human living multitude Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude, For thou wert not; but o’er the populous solitude, Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves, Hung Tyranny; beneath, sate deified _40 The sister-pest, congregator of slaves; Into the shadow of her pinions wide Anarchs and priests, who feed on gold and blood Till with the stain their inmost souls are dyed, Drove the astonished herds of men from every side. _45

4. The nodding promontories, and blue isles, And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous waves Of Greece, basked glorious in the open smiles Of favouring Heaven: from their enchanted caves Prophetic echoes flung dim melody. _50 On the unapprehensive wild The vine, the corn, the olive mild, Grew savage yet, to human use unreconciled; And, like unfolded flowers beneath the sea, Like the man’s thought dark in the infant’s brain, _55 Like aught that is which wraps what is to be,

Art’s deathless dreams lay veiled by many a vein Of Parian stone; and, yet a speechless child, Verse murmured, and Philosophy did strain Her lidless eyes for thee; when o’er the Aegean main _60

5. Athens arose: a city such as vision Builds from the purple crags and silver towers Of battlemented cloud, as in derision Of kingliest masonry: the ocean-floors Pave it; the evening sky pavilions it; _65 Its portals are inhabited By thunder-zoned winds, each head Within its cloudy wings with sun-fire garlanded,— A divine work! Athens, diviner yet, Gleamed with its crest of columns, on the will _70 Of man, as on a mount of diamond, set; For thou wert, and thine all-creative skill Peopled, with forms that mock the eternal dead In marble immortality, that hill Which was thine earliest throne and latest oracle. _75

6. Within the surface of Time’s fleeting river Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay Immovably unquiet, and for ever It trembles, but it cannot pass away! The voices of thy bards and sages thunder _80 With an earth-awakening blast Through the caverns of the past: (Religion veils her eyes; Oppression shrinks aghast:) A winged sound of joy, and love, and wonder, Which soars where Expectation never flew, _85 Rending the veil of space and time asunder! One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams, and dew; One Sun illumines Heaven; one Spirit vast With life and love makes chaos ever new, As Athens doth the world with thy delight renew. _90

7. Then Rome was, and from thy deep bosom fairest, Like a wolf-cub from a Cadmaean Maenad, She drew the milk of greatness, though thy dearest From that Elysian food was yet unweaned; And many a deed of terrible uprightness _95 By thy sweet love was sanctified; And in thy smile, and by thy side, Saintly Camillus lived, and firm Atilius died. But when tears stained thy robe of vestal-whiteness, And gold profaned thy Capitolian throne, _100 Thou didst desert, with spirit-winged lightness, The senate of the tyrants: they sunk prone Slaves of one tyrant: Palatinus sighed Faint echoes of Ionian song; that tone Thou didst delay to hear, lamenting to disown

_105

8. From what Hyrcanian glen or frozen hill, Or piny promontory of the Arctic main, Or utmost islet inaccessible, Didst thou lament the ruin of thy reign, Teaching the woods and waves, and desert rocks, _110 And every Naiad's ice-cold urn, To talk in echoes sad and stern Of that sublimest lore which man had dared unlearn? For neither didst thou watch the wizard flocks Of the Scald's dreams, nor haunt the Druid's sleep. _115 What if the tears rained through thy shattered locks Were quickly dried? for thou didst groan, not weep, When from its sea of death, to kill and burn, The Galilean serpent forth did creep, And made thy world an undistinguishable heap. _120

9. A thousand years the Earth cried, 'Where art thou?' And then the shadow of thy coming fell On Saxon Alfred's olive-cinctured brow: And many a warrior-peopled citadel. Like rocks which fire lifts out of the flat deep, _125 Arose in sacred Italy, Frowning o'er the tempestuous sea Of kings, and priests, and slaves, in tower-crowned majesty; That multitudinous anarchy did sweep And burst around their walls, like idle foam, _130 Whilst from the human spirit's deepest deep Strange melody with love and awe struck dumb Dissonant arms; and Art, which cannot die, With divine wand traced on our earthly home Fit imagery to pave Heaven's everlasting dome. _135

10. Thou huntress swifter than the Moon! thou terror Of the world's wolves! thou bearer of the quiver, Whose sunlike shafts pierce tempest-winged Error, As light may pierce the clouds when they dissever In the calm regions of the orient day! _140 Luther caught thy wakening glance; Like lightning, from his leaden lance Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the trance In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay; And England's prophets hailed thee as their queen, _145 In songs whose music cannot pass away, Though it must flow forever: not unseen Before the spirit-sighted countenance Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad scene Beyond whose night he

saw, with a dejected mien. _150

11. The eager hours and unreluctant years As on a dawn-illumined mountain stood. Trampling to silence their loud hopes and fears, Darkening each other with their multitude, And cried aloud, ‘Liberty!’ Indignation _155 Answered Pity from her cave; Death grew pale within the grave, And Desolation howled to the destroyer, Save! When like Heaven’s Sun girt by the exhalation Of its own glorious light, thou didst arise. _160 Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation Like shadows: as if day had cloven the skies At dreaming midnight o’er the western wave, Men started, staggering with a glad surprise, Under the lightnings of thine unfamiliar eyes. _165

12. Thou Heaven of earth! what spells could pall thee then In ominous eclipse? a thousand years Bred from the slime of deep Oppression’s den. Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and tears. Till thy sweet stars could weep the stain away; _170 How like Bacchanals of blood Round France, the ghastly vintage, stood Destruction’s sceptred slaves, and Folly’s mitred brood! When one, like them, but mightier far than they, The Anarch of thine own bewildered powers, _175 Rose: armies mingled in obscure array, Like clouds with clouds, darkening the sacred bowers Of serene Heaven. He, by the past pursued, Rests with those dead, but unforgotten hours, Whose ghosts scare victor kings in their ancestral towers. _180

13. England yet sleeps: was she not called of old? Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling thunder Vesuvius wakens Aetna, and the cold Snow-crags by its reply are cloven in sunder: O’er the lit waves every Aeolian isle _185 From Pithecusa to Pelorus Howls, and leaps, and glares in chorus: They cry, ‘Be dim; ye lamps of Heaven suspended o’er us!’ Her chains are threads of gold, she need but smile And they dissolve; but Spain’s were links of steel, _190 Till bit to dust by virtue’s keenest file. Twins of a single destiny! appeal To the eternal years enthroned before us In the dim West; impress us from a seal, All ye have thought and done! Time cannot dare conceal. _195

14. Tomb of Arminius! render up thy dead Till, like a standard from a watch-tower's staff, His soul may stream over the tyrant's head; Thy victory shall be his epitaph, Wild Bacchanal of truth's mysterious wine, _200 King-deluded Germany, His dead spirit lives in thee. Why do we fear or hope? thou art already free! And thou, lost Paradise of this divine And glorious world! thou flowery wilderness! _205 Thou island of eternity! thou shrine Where Desolation, clothed with loveliness, Worships the thing thou wert! O Italy, Gather thy blood into thy heart; repress The beasts who make their dens thy sacred palaces. _210

15. Oh, that the free would stamp the impious name Of KING into the dust! or write it there, So that this blot upon the page of fame Were as a serpent's path, which the light air Erases, and the flat sands close behind! _215 Ye the oracle have heard: Lift the victory-flashing sword. And cut the snaky knots of this foul gordian word, Which, weak itself as stubble, yet can bind Into a mass, irrefragably firm, _220 The axes and the rods which awe mankind; The sound has poison in it, 'tis the sperm Of what makes life foul, cankerous, and abhorred; Disdain not thou, at thine appointed term, To set thine armed heel on this reluctant worm. _225

16. Oh, that the wise from their bright minds would kindle Such lamps within the dome of this dim world, That the pale name of PRIEST might shrink and dwindle Into the hell from which it first was hurled, A scoff of impious pride from fiends impure; _230 Till human thoughts might kneel alone, Each before the judgement-throne Of its own aweless soul, or of the Power unknown! Oh, that the words which make the thoughts obscure From which they spring, as clouds of glimmering dew _235 From a white lake blot Heaven's blue portraiture, Were stripped of their thin masks and various hue And frowns and smiles and splendours not their own, Till in the nakedness of false and true They stand before their Lord, each to receive its due! _240

17. He who taught man to vanquish whatsoever Can be between the cradle and the

grave Crowned him the King of Life. Oh, vain endeavour! If on his own high will, a willing slave, He has enthroned the oppression and the oppressor _245 What if earth can clothe and feed Amplest millions at their need, And power in thought be as the tree within the seed? Or what if Art, an ardent intercessor, Driving on fiery wings to Nature's throne, _250 Checks the great mother stooping to caress her, And cries: 'Give me, thy child, dominion Over all height and depth'? if Life can breed New wants, and wealth from those who toil and groan, Rend of thy gifts and hers a thousandfold for one! _255

18. Come thou, but lead out of the inmost cave Of man's deep spirit, as the morning-star Beckons the Sun from the Eoan wave, Wisdom. I hear the pennons of her car Self-moving, like cloud charioted by flame; _260 Comes she not, and come ye not, Rulers of eternal thought, To judge, with solemn truth, life's ill-apportioned lot? Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the Fame Of what has been, the Hope of what will be? _265 O Liberty! if such could be thy name Wert thou disjoined from these, or they from thee: If thine or theirs were treasures to be bought By blood or tears, have not the wise and free Wept tears, and blood like tears?—The solemn harmony _270

19. Paused, and the Spirit of that mighty singing To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn; Then, as a wild swan, when sublimely winging Its path athwart the thunder-smoke of dawn, Sinks headlong through the aereal golden light _275 On the heavy-sounding plain, When the bolt has pierced its brain; As summer clouds dissolve, unburthened of their rain; As a far taper fades with fading night, As a brief insect dies with dying day,— _280 My song, its pinions disarrayed of might, Drooped; o'er it closed the echoes far away Of the great voice which did its flight sustain, As waves which lately paved his watery way Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous play. _285

NOTES: _4 into]unto Harvard manuscript. _9 inverse cj. Rossetti; in verse 1820.

_92 See the Bacchae of Euripides—[SHELLEY'S NOTE]. _113 lore 1839; love 1820. _116 shattered]scattered cj. Rossetti. _134 wand 1820; want 1830. _194 us]as cj. Forman. _212 KING Boscombe manuscript; **** 1820, 1839; CHRIST cj. Swinburne. _249 Or 1839; O, 1820. _250 Driving 1820; Diving 1839.

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CANCELLED PASSAGE OF THE ODE TO LIBERTY.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, "Relics of Shelley", 1862.]

Within a cavern of man's trackless spirit Is throned an Image, so intensely fair That the adventurous thoughts that wander near it Worship, and as they kneel, tremble and wear The splendour of its presence, and the light _5 Penetrates their dreamlike frame Till they become charged with the strength of flame.

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TO —.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Posthumous Poems", 1824.]

1. I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden, Thou needest not fear mine; My spirit is too deeply laden Ever to burthen thine.

2. I fear thy mien, thy tones, thy motion, _5 Thou needest not fear mine; Innocent is the heart's devotion With which I worship thine.

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ARETHUSA.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Posthumous Poems", 1824, and dated by her 'Pisa, 1820.' There is a fair draft amongst the Shelley manuscripts at the Bodleian Library. See Mr. C.D. Locock's "Examination", etc., 1903, page 24.]

1. Arethusa arose From her couch of snows In the Acroceraunian mountains,— From cloud and from crag, With many a jag, _5 Shepherding her bright fountains. She leapt down the rocks, With her rainbow locks Streaming among the streams;—

Her steps paved with green _10 The downward ravine Which slopes to the western gleams; And gliding and springing She went, ever singing, In murmurs as soft as sleep; _15 The Earth seemed to love her, And Heaven smiled above her, As she lingered towards the deep.

2. Then Alpheus bold, On his glacier cold, _20 With his trident the mountains strook; And opened a chasm In the rocks—with the spasm All Erymanthus shook. And the black south wind _25 It unsealed behind The urns of the silent snow, And earthquake and thunder Did rend in sunder The bars of the springs below. _30 And the beard and the hair Of the River-god were Seen through the torrent's sweep, As he followed the light Of the fleet nymph's flight _35 To the brink of the Dorian deep.

3. 'Oh, save me! Oh, guide me! And bid the deep hide me, For he grasps me now by the hair!' The loud Ocean heard, _40 To its blue depth stirred, And divided at her prayer; And under the water The Earth's white daughter Fled like a sunny beam; _45 Behind her descended Her billows, unblended With the brackish Dorian stream:— Like a gloomy stain On the emerald main _50 Alpheus rushed behind,— As an eagle pursuing A dove to its ruin Down the streams of the cloudy wind.

4. Under the bowers _55 Where the Ocean Powers Sit on their pearled thrones; Through the coral woods Of the weltering floods, Over heaps of unvalued stones; _60 Through the dim beams Which amid the streams Weave a network of coloured light; And under the caves, Where the shadowy waves _65 Are as green as the forest's night:— Outspeeding the shark, And the sword-fish dark, Under the Ocean's foam, And up through the rifts _70 Of the mountain clifts They passed to their Dorian home.

5. And now from their fountains In Enna's mountains, Down one vale where the morning basks, _75 Like friends once parted Grown single-hearted, They ply their watery tasks. At sunrise they leap From their cradles steep _80 In the cave of the

shelving hill; At noontide they flow Through the woods below And the meadows of asphodel; And at night they sleep _85 In the rocking deep Beneath the Ortygian shore;— Like spirits that lie In the azure sky When they love but live no more. _90

NOTES: _6 unsealed B.; concealed 1824. _31 And the B.; The 1824. _69 Ocean's B.; ocean 1824.

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SONG OF PROSERPINE WHILE GATHERING FLOWERS ON THE PLAIN OF ENNA.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Poetical Works", 1839, 1st edition. There is a fair draft amongst the Shelley manuscripts at the Bodleian Library. See Mr. C.D. Locock's "Examination," etc., 1903, page 24.]

1. Sacred Goddess, Mother Earth, Thou from whose immortal bosom Gods, and men, and beasts have birth, Leaf and blade, and bud and blossom, Breathe thine influence most divine _5 On thine own child, Proserpine.

2. If with mists of evening dew Thou dost nourish these young flowers Till they grow, in scent and hue, Fairest children of the Hours, _10 Breathe thine influence most divine On thine own child, Proserpine.

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HYMN OF APOLLO.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Posthumous Poems", 1824. There is a fair draft amongst the Shelley manuscripts at the Bodleian. See Mr. C.D. Locock's "Examination", etc., 1903, page 25.]

1. The sleepless Hours who watch me as I lie, Curtained with star-inwoven tapestries From the broad moonlight of the sky, Fanning the busy dreams from my dim eyes,— Waken me when their Mother, the gray Dawn, _5 Tells them that dreams and that the moon is gone.

2. Then I arise, and climbing Heaven's blue dome, I walk over the mountains and the waves, Leaving my robe upon the ocean foam; My footsteps pave the clouds with fire; the caves _10 Are filled with my bright presence, and the air Leaves the green Earth to my embraces bare.

3. The sunbeams are my shafts, with which I kill Deceit, that loves the night and fears the day; All men who do or even imagine ill _15 Fly me, and from the glory of my ray Good minds and open actions take new might, Until diminished by the reign of Night.

4. I feed the clouds, the rainbows and the flowers With their aethereal colours; the moon's globe _20 And the pure stars in their eternal bowers Are cinctured with my power as with a robe; Whatever lamps on Earth or Heaven may shine Are portions of one power, which is mine.

5. I stand at noon upon the peak of Heaven, _25 Then with unwilling steps I wander down Into the clouds of the Atlantic even; For grief that I depart they weep and frown: What look is more delightful than the smile With which I soothe them from the western isle? _30

6. I am the eye with which the Universe Beholds itself and knows itself divine; All harmony of instrument or verse, All prophecy, all medicine is mine, All light of art or nature;—to my song _35 Victory and praise in its own right belong.

NOTES: _32 itself divine]it is divine B. _34 is B.; are 1824. _36 its cj. Rossetti, 1870, B.; their 1824.

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HYMN OF PAN.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Posthumous Poems", 1824. There is a fair draft amongst the Shelley manuscripts at the Bodleian. See Mr. C.D. Locock's "Examination", etc., 1903, page 25.]

1. From the forests and highlands We come, we come; From the river-girt islands, Where loud waves are dumb Listening to my sweet pipings. _5 The wind in the reeds and the rushes, The bees on the bells of thyme, The birds on the myrtle bushes, The cicale above in the lime, And the lizards below in the grass, _10 Were as silent as ever old Tmolus was, Listening to my sweet pipings.

2. Liquid Peneus was flowing, And all dark Tempe lay In Pelion’s shadow, outgrowing _15 The light of the dying day, Speeded by my sweet pipings. The Sileni, and Sylvans, and Fauns, And the Nymphs of the woods and the waves, To the edge of the moist river-lawns, _20 And the brink of the dewy caves, And all that did then attend and follow, Were silent with love, as you now, Apollo, With envy of my sweet pipings.

3. I sang of the dancing stars, _25 I sang of the daedal Earth, And of Heaven—and the giant wars, And Love, and Death, and Birth,— And then I changed my pipings,— Singing how down the vale of Maenalus _30 I pursued a maiden and clasped a reed. Gods and men, we are all deluded thus! It breaks in our bosom and then we bleed: All wept, as I think both ye now would, If envy or age had not frozen your blood, _35 At the sorrow of my sweet pipings.

NOTE: _5, _12 Listening to]Listening B.

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THE QUESTION.

[Published by Leigh Hunt (with the signature Sigma) in “The Literary Pocket-Book”, 1822. Reprinted by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824. Copies exist in the Harvard manuscript book, amongst the Boscombe manuscripts, and amongst Ollier manuscripts.]

1. I dreamed that, as I wandered by the way, Bare Winter suddenly was changed to Spring, And gentle odours led my steps astray, Mixed with a sound of waters murmuring Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay _5 Under a copse, and hardly

dared to fling Its green arms round the bosom of the stream, But kissed it and then fled, as thou mightest in dream.

2. There grew pied wind-flowers and violets, Daisies, those pearled Arcturi of the earth, _10 The constellated flower that never sets; Faint oxslips; tender bluebells, at whose birth The sod scarce heaved; and that tall flower that wets— Like a child, half in tenderness and mirth— Its mother's face with Heaven's collected tears, _15 When the low wind, its playmate's voice, it hears.

3. And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine, Green cowbind and the moonlight-coloured may, And cherry-blossoms, and white cups, whose wine Was the bright dew, yet drained not by the day; _20 And wild roses, and ivy serpentine, With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray; And flowers azure, black, and streaked with gold, Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

4. And nearer to the river's trembling edge _25 There grew broad flag-flowers, purple pranked with white. And starry river buds among the sedge, And floating water-lilies, broad and bright, Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge With moonlight beams of their own watery light; _30 And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

5. Methought that of these visionary flowers I made a nosegay, bound in such a way That the same hues, which in their natural bowers _35 Were mingled or opposed, the like array Kept these imprisoned children of the Hours Within my hand,—and then, elate and gay, I hastened to the spot whence I had come, That I might there present it!—Oh! to whom? _40

NOTES: _14 Like…mirth Harvard manuscript, Boscombe manuscript; wanting in Ollier manuscript, 1822, 1824, 1839. _15 Heaven's collected Harvard manuscript, Ollier manuscript, 1822; Heaven-collected 1824, 1839.

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THE TWO SPIRITS: AN ALLEGORY.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

FIRST SPIRIT: O thou, who plumed with strong desire Wouldst float above the earth, beware! A Shadow tracks thy flight of fire— Night is coming! Bright are the regions of the air, _5 And among the winds and beams It were delight to wander there— Night is coming!

SECOND SPIRIT: The deathless stars are bright above; If I would cross the shade of night, _10 Within my heart is the lamp of love, And that is day! And the moon will smile with gentle light On my golden plumes where’er they move; The meteors will linger round my flight, _15 And make night day.

FIRST SPIRIT: But if the whirlwinds of darkness waken Hail, and lightning, and stormy rain; See, the bounds of the air are shaken— Night is coming! _20 The red swift clouds of the hurricane Yon declining sun have overtaken, The clash of the hail sweeps over the plain— Night is coming!

SECOND SPIRIT: I see the light, and I hear the sound; _25 I’ll sail on the flood of the tempest dark With the calm within and the light around Which makes night day: And thou, when the gloom is deep and stark, Look from thy dull earth, slumber-bound, _30 My moon-like flight thou then mayst mark On high, far away.

…

Some say there is a precipice Where one vast pine is frozen to ruin O’er piles of snow and chasms of ice _35 Mid Alpine mountains; And that the languid storm pursuing That winged shape, for ever flies Round those hoar branches, aye renewing Its aery fountains. _40

Some say when nights are dry and clear, And the death-dews sleep on the morass, Sweet whispers are heard by the traveller, Which make night day: And a silver shape like his early love doth pass _45 Upborne by her wild and glittering hair, And when he awakes on the fragrant grass, He finds night day.

NOTES: _2 Wouldst 1839; Would 1824. _31 moon-like 1824; moonlight 1839. _44

make]makes 1824, 1839.

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ODE TO NAPLES.

(The Author has connected many recollections of his visit to Pompeii and Baiae with the enthusiasm excited by the intelligence of the proclamation of a Constitutional Government at Naples. This has given a tinge of picturesque and descriptive imagery to the introductory Epodes which depicture these scenes, and some of the majestic feelings permanently connected with the scene of this animating event.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.])

[Composed at San Juliano di Pisa, August 17-25, 1820; published in "Posthumous Poems", 1824. There is a copy, 'for the most part neat and legible,' amongst the Shelley manuscripts at the Bodleian Library. See Mr. C.D. Locock's "Examination", etc., 1903, pages 14-18.]

EPODE 1a.

I stood within the City disinterred; And heard the autumnal leaves like light footfalls Of spirits passing through the streets; and heard The Mountain's slumberous voice at intervals Thrill through those roofless halls; _5 The oracular thunder penetrating shook The listening soul in my suspended blood; I felt that Earth out of her deep heart spoke— I felt, but heard not:—through white columns glowed The isle-sustaining ocean-flood, _10 A plane of light between two heavens of azure! Around me gleamed many a bright sepulchre Of whose pure beauty, Time, as if his pleasure Were to spare Death, had never made erasure; But every living lineament was clear _15 As in the sculptor's thought; and there The wreaths of stony myrtle, ivy, and pine, Like winter leaves o'ergrown by moulded snow, Seemed only not to move and grow Because the crystal silence of the air _20 Weighed on their life; even as the Power divine Which then lulled all things, brooded upon mine.

NOTE: _1 Pompeii.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

EPODE 2a.

Then gentle winds arose With many a mingled close Of wild Aeolian sound, and mountain-odours keen; _25 And where the Baian ocean Welters with airlike motion, Within, above, around its bowers of starry green, Moving the sea-flowers in those purple caves, Even as the ever stormless atmosphere _30 Floats o’er the Elysian realm, It bore me, like an Angel, o’er the waves Of sunlight, whose swift pinnace of dewy air No storm can overwhelm. I sailed, where ever flows _35 Under the calm Serene A spirit of deep emotion From the unknown graves Of the dead Kings of Melody. Shadowy Aornos darkened o’er the helm _40 The horizontal aether; Heaven stripped bare Its depth over Elysium, where the prow Made the invisible water white as snow; From that Typhaean mount, Inarime, There streamed a sunbright vapour, like the standard _45 Of some aethereal host; Whilst from all the coast, Louder and louder, gathering round, there wandered Over the oracular woods and divine sea Prophesyings which grew articulate— They seize me—I must speak them!—be they fate! _50

NOTES: _25 odours B.; odour 1824. _42 depth B.; depths 1824. _45 sun-bright B.; sunlit 1824. _39 Homer and Virgil.—[SHELLEY’S NOTE.]

STROPHE 1.

Naples! thou Heart of men which ever pantest Naked, beneath the lidless eye of Heaven! Elysian City, which to calm enchantest The mutinous air and sea! they round thee, even _55 As sleep round Love, are driven! Metropolis of a ruined Paradise Long lost, late won, and yet but half regained! Bright Altar of the bloodless sacrifice Which armed Victory offers up unstained _60 To Love, the flower-enchained! Thou which wert once, and then didst cease to be, Now art, and henceforth ever shalt be, free, If Hope, and Truth, and Justice can avail,— Hail, hail, all hail! _65

STROPHE 2.

Thou youngest giant birth Which from the groaning earth Leap'st, clothed in armour of impenetrable scale! Last of the Intercessors! Who 'gainst the Crowned Transgressors _70 Pleadest before God's love! Arrayed in Wisdom's mail, Wave thy lightning lance in mirth Nor let thy high heart fail, Though from their hundred gates the leagued Oppressors With hurried legions move! _75 Hail, hail, all hail!

ANTISTROPHE 1a.

What though Cimmerian Anarchs dare blaspheme Freedom and thee? thy shield is as a mirror To make their blind slaves see, and with fierce gleam To turn his hungry sword upon the wearer; _80 A new Actaeon's error Shall theirs have been—devoured by their own hounds! Be thou like the imperial Basilisk Killing thy foe with unapparent wounds! Gaze on Oppression, till at that dread risk _85 Aghast she pass from the Earth's disk: Fear not, but gaze—for freemen mightier grow, And slaves more feeble, gazing on their foe:— If Hope, and Truth, and Justice may avail, Thou shalt be great—All hail! _90

ANTISTROPHE 2a.

From Freedom's form divine, From Nature's inmost shrine, Strip every impious gawd, rend Error veil by veil; O'er Ruin desolate, O'er Falsehood's fallen state, _95 Sit thou sublime, unawed; be the Destroyer pale! And equal laws be thine, And winged words let sail, Freighted with truth even from the throne of God: That wealth, surviving fate, _100 Be thine.—All hail!

NOTE: _100 wealth-surviving cj. A.C. Bradley.

ANTISTROPHE 1b.

Didst thou not start to hear Spain's thrilling paean From land to land re-echoed solemnly, Till silence became music? From the Aeaean To the cold Alps, eternal Italy _105 Starts to hear thine! The Sea Which paves the desert streets of Venice laughs In light, and music; widowed Genoa wan By moonlight spells ancestral epitaphs, Murmuring, 'Where is Doria?' fair Milan, _110 Within whose veins long

ran The viper's palsying venom, lifts her heel To bruise his head. The signal and the seal (If Hope and Truth and Justice can avail) Art thou of all these hopes.—O hail! _115

NOTES: _104 Aeaea, the island of Circe.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.] _112 The viper was the armorial device of the Visconti, tyrants of Milan.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

ANTISTROPHE 2b.

Florence! beneath the sun, Of cities fairest one, Blushes within her bower for Freedom's expectation: From eyes of quenchless hope Rome tears the priestly cope, _120 As ruling once by power, so now by admiration,— An athlete stripped to run From a remoter station For the high prize lost on Philippi's shore:— As then Hope, Truth, and Justice did avail, _125 So now may Fraud and Wrong! O hail!

EPODE 1b.

Hear ye the march as of the Earth-born Forms Arrayed against the ever-living Gods? The crash and darkness of a thousand storms Bursting their inaccessible abodes _130 Of crags and thunder-clouds? See ye the banners blazoned to the day, Inwrought with emblems of barbaric pride? Dissonant threats kill Silence far away, The serene Heaven which wraps our Eden wide _135 With iron light is dyed; The Anarchs of the North lead forth their legions Like Chaos o'er creation, uncreating; An hundred tribes nourished on strange religions And lawless slaveries,—down the aereal regions _140 Of the white Alps, desolating, Famished wolves that bide no waiting, Blotting the glowing footsteps of old glory, Trampling our columned cities into dust, Their dull and savage lust _145 On Beauty's corse to sickness satiating— They come! The fields they tread look black and hoary With fire—from their red feet the streams run gory!

EPODE 2b.

Great Spirit, deepest Love! Which rulest and dost move _150 All things which live and are, within the Italian shore; Who spreadest Heaven around it, Whose woods,

rocks, waves, surround it; Who sittest in thy star, o'er Ocean's western floor; Spirit of beauty! at whose soft command _155 The sunbeams and the showers distil its foison From the Earth's bosom chill; Oh, bid those beams be each a blinding brand Of lightning! bid those showers be dews of poison! Bid the Earth's plenty kill! _160 Bid thy bright Heaven above, Whilst light and darkness bound it, Be their tomb who planned To make it ours and thine! Or, with thine harmonizing ardours fill _165 And raise thy sons, as o'er the prone horizon Thy lamp feeds every twilight wave with fire— Be man's high hope and unextinct desire The instrument to work thy will divine! Then clouds from sunbeams, antelopes from leopards, _170 And frowns and fears from thee, Would not more swiftly flee Than Celtic wolves from the Ausonian shepherds.— Whatever, Spirit, from thy starry shrine Thou yieldest or withholdest, oh, let be _175 This city of thy worship ever free!

NOTES: _143 old 1824; lost B. _147 black 1824; blue B.

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AUTUMN: A DIRGE.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Posthumous Poems", 1824.]

1. The warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is wailing, The bare boughs are sighing, the pale flowers are dying, And the Year On the earth her death-bed, in a shroud of leaves dead, Is lying. _5 Come, Months, come away, From November to May, In your saddest array; Follow the bier Of the dead cold Year, _10 And like dim shadows watch by her sepulchre.

2. The chill rain is falling, the nipped worm is crawling, The rivers are swelling, the thunder is knelling For the Year; The blithe swallows are flown, and the lizards each gone _15 To his dwelling; Come, Months, come away; Put on white, black, and gray; Let your light sisters play— Ye, follow the bier _20 Of the dead cold Year, And make her grave green with tear on tear.

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THE WANING MOON.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

And like a dying lady, lean and pale, Who totters forth, wrapped in a gauzy veil, Out of her chamber, led by the insane And feeble wanderings of her fading brain, The moon arose up in the murky East, _5 A white and shapeless mass—

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TO THE MOON.

[Published (1) by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824, (2) by W.M. Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works”, 1870.]

1. Art thou pale for weariness Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth, Wandering companionless Among the stars that have a different birth,— And ever changing, like a joyless eye _5 That finds no object worth its constancy?

2. Thou chosen sister of the Spirit, That grazes on thee till in thee it pities…

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DEATH.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

1. Death is here and death is there, Death is busy everywhere, All around, within, beneath, Above is death—and we are death.

2. Death has set his mark and seal _5 On all we are and all we feel, On all we know and all we fear,

…

3. First our pleasures die—and then Our hopes, and then our fears—and when These are dead, the debt is due, _10 Dust claims dust—and we die too.

4. All things that we love and cherish, Like ourselves must fade and perish; Such is our rude mortal lot— Love itself would, did they not. _15

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LIBERTY.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

1. The fiery mountains answer each other; Their thunderings are echoed from zone to zone; The tempestuous oceans awake one another, And the ice-rocks are shaken round Winter’s throne, When the clarion of the Typhoon is blown. _5

2. From a single cloud the lightening flashes, Whilst a thousand isles are illumined around, Earthquake is trampling one city to ashes, An hundred are shuddering and tottering; the sound Is bellowing underground. _10

3. But keener thy gaze than the lightening’s glare, And swifter thy step than the earthquake’s tramp; Thou deafenest the rage of the ocean; thy stare Makes blind the volcanoes; the sun’s bright lamp To thine is a fen-fire damp. _15

4. From billow and mountain and exhalation The sunlight is darted through vapour and blast; From spirit to spirit, from nation to nation, From city to hamlet thy dawning is cast,— And tyrants and slaves are like shadows of night _20 In the van of the morning light.

NOTE: _4 zone editions 1824, 1839; throne later editions.

***

SUMMER AND WINTER.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley in “The Keepsake”, 1829. Mr. C.W. Frederickson of Brooklyn possesses a transcript in Mrs. Shelley’s handwriting.]

It was a bright and cheerful afternoon, Towards the end of the sunny month of June, When the north wind congregates in crowds The floating mountains of the silver clouds From the horizon—and the stainless sky _5 Opens beyond them like eternity. All things rejoiced beneath the sun; the weeds, The river, and the corn-fields, and the reeds; The willow leaves that glanced in the light breeze, And the firm foliage of

the larger trees. _10

It was a winter such as when birds die In the deep forests; and the fishes lie Stiffened in the translucent ice, which makes Even the mud and slime of the warm lakes A wrinkled clod as hard as brick; and when, _15 Among their children, comfortable men Gather about great fires, and yet feel cold: Alas, then, for the homeless beggar old!

NOTE: _11 birds die 1839; birds do die 1829.

***

THE TOWER OF FAMINE.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley in “The Keepsake”, 1829. Mr. C.W. Frederickson of Brooklyn possesses a transcript in Mrs. Shelley’s handwriting.]

Amid the desolation of a city, Which was the cradle, and is now the grave Of an extinguished people,—so that Pity

Weeps o’er the shipwrecks of Oblivion’s wave, There stands the Tower of Famine. It is built _5 Upon some prison-homes, whose dwellers rave

For bread, and gold, and blood: Pain, linked to Guilt, Agitates the light flame of their hours, Until its vital oil is spent or spilt.

There stands the pile, a tower amid the towers _10 And sacred domes; each marble-ribbed roof, The brazen-gated temples, and the bowers

Of solitary wealth,—the tempest-proof Pavilions of the dark Italian air,— Are by its presence dimmed—they stand aloof, _15

And are withdrawn—so that the world is bare; As if a spectre wrapped in shapeless terror Amid a company of ladies fair

Should glide and glow, till it became a mirror Of all their beauty, and their hair and hue, _20 The life of their sweet eyes, with all its error, Should be absorbed, till they to marble grew.

NOTE: _7 For]With 1829.

***

AN ALLEGORY.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

1. A portal as of shadowy adamant Stands yawning on the highway of the life Which we all tread, a cavern huge and gaunt; Around it rages an unceasing strife Of shadows, like the restless clouds that haunt _5 The gap of some cleft mountain, lifted high Into the whirlwinds of the upper sky.

2. And many pass it by with careless tread, Not knowing that a shadowy … Tracks every traveller even to where the dead _10 Wait peacefully for their companion new; But others, by more curious humour led, Pause to examine;—these are very few, And they learn little there, except to know That shadows follow them where’er they go. _15

NOTE: _8 pass Rossetti; passed editions 1824, 1839.

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THE WORLD’S WANDERERS.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

1. Tell me, thou Star, whose wings of light Speed thee in thy fiery flight, In what cavern of the night Will thy pinions close now?

2. Tell me, Moon, thou pale and gray _5 Pilgrim of Heaven’s homeless way, In what depth of night or day Seekest thou repose now?

3. Weary Wind, who wanderest Like the world’s rejected guest, _10 Hast thou still some secret nest On the tree or billow?

***

SONNET.

[Published by Leigh Hunt, “The Literary Pocket-Book”, 1823. There is a transcript amongst the Ollier manuscripts, and another in the Harvard manuscript book.]

Ye hasten to the grave! What seek ye there, Ye restless thoughts and busy purposes Of the idle brain, which the world’s livery wear? O thou quick heart, which pantest to possess All that pale Expectation feigneth fair! _5 Thou vainly curious mind which wouldest guess Whence thou didst come, and whither thou must go, And all that never yet was known would know— Oh, whither hasten ye, that thus ye press, With such swift feet life’s green and pleasant path, _10 Seeking, alike from happiness and woe, A refuge in the cavern of gray death? O heart, and mind, and thoughts! what thing do you Hope to inherit in the grave below?

NOTE: _1 grave Ollier manuscript; dead Harvard manuscript, 1823, editions 1824, 1839. _5 pale Expectation Ollier manuscript; anticipation Harvard manuscript, 1823, editions 1824, 1839. _7 must Harvard manuscript, 1823; mayst 1824; mayest editions 1839. _8 all that Harvard manuscript, 1823; that which editions 1824, 1839. would Harvard manuscript, 1823; wouldst editions 1839.

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LINES TO A REVIEWER.

[Published by Leigh Hunt, “The Literary Pocket-Book”, 1823. These lines, and the “Sonnet” immediately preceding, are signed Sigma in the “Literary Pocket-Book”.]

Alas, good friend, what profit can you see In hating such a hateless thing as me? There is no sport in hate where all the rage Is on one side: in vain would you assuage Your frowns upon an unresisting smile, _5 In which not even contempt lurks to beguile Your heart, by some faint sympathy of hate. Oh, conquer what you cannot satiate! For to your passion I am far more coy Than ever yet was coldest maid or boy _10 In winter noon. Of your antipathy If I am the Narcissus, you are free To pine into a sound with hating me.

NOTE: _3 where editions 1824, 1839; when 1823.

***

FRAGMENT OF A SATIRE ON SATIRE.

[Published by Edward Dowden, “Correspondence of Robert Southey and Caroline Bowles”, 1880.]

If gibbets, axes, confiscations, chains, And racks of subtle torture, if the pains Of shame, of fiery Hell’s tempestuous wave, Seen through the caverns of the shadowy grave, Hurling the damned into the murky air _5 While the meek blest sit smiling; if Despair And Hate, the rapid bloodhounds with which Terror Hunts through the world the homeless steps of Error, Are the true secrets of the commonweal To make men wise and just;… _10 And not the sophisms of revenge and fear, Bloodier than is revenge… Then send the priests to every hearth and home To preach the burning wrath which is to come, In words like flakes of sulphur, such as thaw _15 The frozen tears… If Satire’s scourge could wake the slumbering hounds Of Conscience, or erase the deeper wounds, The leprous scars of callous Infamy; If it could make the present not to be, _20 Or charm the dark past never to have been, Or turn regret to hope; who that has seen What Southey is and was, would not exclaim, ‘Lash on!’ … be the keen verse dipped in flame; Follow his flight with winged words, and urge _25 The strokes of the inexorable scourge Until the heart be naked, till his soul See the contagion’s spots … foul; And from the mirror of Truth’s sunlike shield, From which his Parthian arrow… _30 Flash on his sight the spectres of the past, Until his mind’s eye paint thereon— Let scorn like … yawn below, And rain on him like flakes of fiery snow. This cannot be, it ought not, evil still— _35 Suffering makes suffering, ill must follow ill. Rough words beget sad thoughts, … and, beside, Men take a sullen and a stupid pride In being all they hate in others’ shame, By a perverse antipathy of fame. _40 ’Tis not worth while to prove, as I could, how From the sweet fountains of our Nature flow These bitter waters; I will only say, If any friend would take Southey some day, And tell him, in a country walk alone, _45 Softening

harsh words with friendship's gentle tone, How incorrect his public conduct is, And what men think of it, 'twere not amiss. Far better than to make innocent ink—

***

GOOD-NIGHT.

[Published by Leigh Hunt over the signature Sigma, "The Literary Pocket-Book", 1822. It is included in the Harvard manuscript book, and there is a transcript by Shelley in a copy of "The Literary Pocket-Book", 1819, presented by him to Miss Sophia Stacey, December 29, 1820. (See "Love's Philosophy" and "Time Long Past".) Our text is that of the editio princeps, 1822, with which the Harvard manuscript and "Posthumous Poems", 1824, agree. The variants of the Stacey manuscript, 1820, are given in the footnotes.]

1. Good-night? ah! no; the hour is ill Which severs those it should unite; Let us remain together still, Then it will be GOOD night.

2. How can I call the lone night good, _5 Though thy sweet wishes wing its flight? Be it not said, thought, understood— Then it will be—GOOD night.

3. To hearts which near each other move From evening close to morning light, _10 The night is good; because, my love, They never SAY good-night.

NOTES: _1 Good-night? no, love! the night is ill Stacey manuscript. _5 How were the night without thee good Stacey manuscript. _9 The hearts that on each other beat Stacey manuscript. _11 Have nights as good as they are sweet Stacey manuscript. _12 But never SAY good night Stacey manuscript.

***

BUONA NOTTE.

[Published by Medwin, "The Angler in Wales, or Days and Nights of Sportsmen", 1834. The text is revised by Rossetti from the Boscombe manuscript.]

1. 'Buona notte, buona notte!'—Come mai La notte sara buona senza te? Non dirmi

buona notte,—che tu sai, La notte sa star buona da per se.

2. Solinga, scura, cupa, senza speme, _5 La notte quando Lilla m'abbandona; Pei cuori chi si batton insieme Ogni notte, senza dirla, sara buona.

3. Come male buona notte ci suona Con sospiri e parole interrotte!— _10 Il modo di aver la notte buona E mai non di dir la buona notte.

NOTES: _2 sara]sia 1834. _4 buona]bene 1834. _9 Come]Quanto 1834.

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ORPHEUS.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, "Relics of Shelley", 1862; revised and enlarged by Rossetti, "Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.", 1870.]

A: Not far from hence. From yonder pointed hill, Crowned with a ring of oaks, you may behold A dark and barren field, through which there flows, Sluggish and black, a deep but narrow stream, Which the wind ripples not, and the fair moon _5 Gazes in vain, and finds no mirror there. Follow the herbless banks of that strange brook Until you pause beside a darksome pond, The fountain of this rivulet, whose gush Cannot be seen, hid by a rayless night _10 That lives beneath the overhanging rock That shades the pool—an endless spring of gloom, Upon whose edge hovers the tender light, Trembling to mingle with its paramour,— But, as Syrinx fled Pan, so night flies day, _15 Or, with most sullen and regardless hate, Refuses stern her heaven-born embrace. On one side of this jagged and shapeless hill There is a cave, from which there eddies up A pale mist, like aereal gossamer, _20 Whose breath destroys all life—awhile it veils The rock—then, scattered by the wind, it flies Along the stream, or lingers on the clefts, Killing the sleepy worms, if aught bide there. Upon the beetling edge of that dark rock _25 There stands a group of cypresses; not such As, with a graceful spire and stirring life, Pierce the pure heaven of your native vale, Whose branches the air plays among, but not Disturbs, fearing to spoil their solemn grace; _30 But blasted and all wearily they stand, One to

another clinging; their weak boughs Sigh as the wind buffets them, and they shake Beneath its blasts—a weatherbeaten crew!

CHORUS: What wondrous sound is that, mournful and faint, _35 But more melodious than the murmuring wind Which through the columns of a temple glides?

A: It is the wandering voice of Orpheus' lyre, Borne by the winds, who sigh that their rude king Hurries them fast from these air-feeding notes; _40 But in their speed they bear along with them The waning sound, scattering it like dew Upon the startled sense.

CHORUS: Does he still sing? Methought he rashly cast away his harp When he had lost Eurydice.

A: Ah, no! _45 Awhile he paused. As a poor hunted stag A moment shudders on the fearful brink Of a swift stream—the cruel hounds press on With deafening yell, the arrows glance and wound,— He plunges in: so Orpheus, seized and torn _50 By the sharp fangs of an insatiate grief, Maenad-like waved his lyre in the bright air, And wildly shrieked 'Where she is, it is dark!' And then he struck from forth the strings a sound Of deep and fearful melody. Alas! _55 In times long past, when fair Eurydice With her bright eyes sat listening by his side, He gently sang of high and heavenly themes. As in a brook, fretted with little waves By the light airs of spring—each riplet makes _60 A many-sided mirror for the sun, While it flows musically through green banks, Ceaseless and pauseless, ever clear and fresh, So flowed his song, reflecting the deep joy And tender love that fed those sweetest notes, _65 The heavenly offspring of ambrosial food. But that is past. Returning from drear Hell, He chose a lonely seat of unhewn stone, Blackened with lichens, on a herbless plain. Then from the deep and overflowing spring _70 Of his eternal ever-moving grief There rose to Heaven a sound of angry song. 'Tis as a mighty cataract that parts Two sister rocks with waters swift and strong, _75 And casts itself with horrid roar and din Adown a steep; from a perennial source It ever flows and falls, and breaks

the air With loud and fierce, but most harmonious roar, And as it falls casts up a vaporous spray Which the sun clothes in hues of Iris light. _80 Thus the tempestuous torrent of his grief Is clothed in sweetest sounds and varying words Of poesy. Unlike all human works, It never slackens, and through every change Wisdom and beauty and the power divine _85 Of mighty poesy together dwell, Mingling in sweet accord. As I have seen A fierce south blast tear through the darkened sky, Driving along a rack of winged clouds, Which may not pause, but ever hurry on, _90 As their wild shepherd wills them, while the stars, Twinkling and dim, peep from between the plumes. Anon the sky is cleared, and the high dome Of serene Heaven, starred with fiery flowers, Shuts in the shaken earth; or the still moon _95 Swiftly, yet gracefully, begins her walk, Rising all bright behind the eastern hills. I talk of moon, and wind, and stars, and not Of song; but, would I echo his high song, Nature must lend me words ne'er used before, _100 Or I must borrow from her perfect works, To picture forth his perfect attributes. He does no longer sit upon his throne Of rock upon a desert herbless plain, For the evergreen and knotted ilexes, _105 And cypresses that seldom wave their boughs, And sea-green olives with their grateful fruit, And elms dragging along the twisted vines, Which drop their berries as they follow fast, And blackthorn bushes with their infant race _110 Of blushing rose-blooms; beeches, to lovers dear, And weeping willow trees; all swift or slow, As their huge boughs or lighter dress permit, Have circled in his throne, and Earth herself Has sent from her maternal breast a growth _115 Of starlike flowers and herbs of odour sweet, To pave the temple that his poesy Has framed, while near his feet grim lions couch, And kids, fearless from love, creep near his lair. Even the blind worms seem to feel the sound. _120 The birds are silent, hanging down their heads, Perched on the lowest branches of the trees; Not even the nightingale intrudes a note In rivalry, but all entranced she listens.

NOTES: _16, _17, _24 1870 only. _45-_55 Ah, no!… melody 1870 only. _66 1870 only. _112 trees 1870; too 1862. _113 huge 1870; long 1862. _116 starlike 1870;

starry 1862. odour 1862; odours 1870.

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FIORDISPINA.

[Published in part (lines 11-30) by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824; in full (from the Boscombe manuscript) by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

The season was the childhood of sweet June, Whose sunny hours from morning until noon Went creeping through the day with silent feet, Each with its load of pleasure; slow yet sweet; Like the long years of blest Eternity _5 Never to be developed. Joy to thee, Fiordispina and thy Cosimo, For thou the wonders of the depth canst know Of this unfathomable flood of hours, Sparkling beneath the heaven which embowers— _10

…

They were two cousins, almost like to twins, Except that from the catalogue of sins Nature had rased their love—which could not be But by dissevering their nativity. And so they grew together like two flowers _15 Upon one stem, which the same beams and showers Lull or awaken in their purple prime, Which the same hand will gather—the same clime Shake with decay. This fair day smiles to see All those who love—and who e’er loved like thee, _20 Fiordispina? Scarcely Cosimo, Within whose bosom and whose brain now glow The ardours of a vision which obscure The very idol of its portraiture. He faints, dissolved into a sea of love; _25 But thou art as a planet sphered above; But thou art Love itself—ruling the motion Of his subjected spirit: such emotion Must end in sin and sorrow, if sweet May Had not brought forth this morn—your wedding-day. _30

…

‘Lie there; sleep awhile in your own dew, Ye faint-eyed children of the … Hours,’ Fiordispina said, and threw the flowers Which she had from the breathing—

…

A table near of polished porphyry. _35 They seemed to wear a beauty from the eye That looked on them—a fragrance from the touch Whose warmth … checked their life; a light such As sleepers wear, lulled by the voice they love, which did reprove _40 The childish pity that she felt for them, And a … remorse that from their stem She had divided such fair shapes … made A feeling in the … which was a shade Of gentle beauty on the flowers: there lay _45 All gems that make the earth's dark bosom gay. … rods of myrtle-buds and lemon-blooms, And that leaf tinted lightly which assumes The livery of unremembered snow— Violets whose eyes have drunk— _50

…

Fiordispina and her nurse are now Upon the steps of the high portico, Under the withered arm of Media She flings her glowing arm

…

… step by step and stair by stair, _55 That withered woman, gray and white and brown— More like a trunk by lichens overgrown Than anything which once could have been human. And ever as she goes the palsied woman

…

'How slow and painfully you seem to walk, _60 Poor Media! you tire yourself with talk.' 'And well it may, Fiordispina, dearest—well-a-day! You are hastening to a marriage-bed; I to the grave!'—'And if my love were dead, _65 Unless my heart deceives me, I would lie Beside him in my shroud as willingly As now in the gay night-dress Lilla wrought.' 'Fie, child! Let that unseasonable thought Not be remembered till it snows in June; _70 Such fancies are a music out of tune With the sweet dance your heart must keep to-night. What! would you take all beauty and delight Back to the Paradise from which you sprung, And leave to grosser mortals?— _75 And say, sweet lamb, would you not learn the sweet And subtle

mystery by which spirits meet? Who knows whether the loving game is played, When, once of mortal [vesture] disarrayed, The naked soul goes wandering here and there _80 Through the wide deserts of Elysian air? The violet dies not till it'—

NOTES: _11 to 1824; two editions 1839. _20 e'er 1862; ever editions 1824, 1839. _25 sea edition 1862; sense editions 1824, 1839.

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TIME LONG PAST.

[Published by Rossetti, "Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.", 1870. This is one of three poems (cf. "Love's Philosophy" and "Good-Night") transcribed by Shelley in a copy of Leigh Hunt's "Literary Pocket-Book" for 1819 presented by him to Miss Sophia Stacey, December 29, 1820.]

1. Like the ghost of a dear friend dead Is Time long past. A tone which is now forever fled, A hope which is now forever past, A love so sweet it could not last, _5 Was Time long past.

2. There were sweet dreams in the night Of Time long past: And, was it sadness or delight, Each day a shadow onward cast _10 Which made us wish it yet might last— That Time long past.

3. There is regret, almost remorse, For Time long past. 'Tis like a child's beloved corse _15 A father watches, till at last Beauty is like remembrance, cast From Time long past.

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FRAGMENT: THE DESERTS OF DIM SLEEP.

[Published by Rossetti, "Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.", 1870.]

I went into the deserts of dim sleep— That world which, like an unknown wilderness, Bounds this with its recesses wide and deep—

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FRAGMENT: ‘THE VIEWLESS AND INVISIBLE CONSEQUENCE’.

[Published by Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1870.]

The viewless and invisible Consequence Watches thy goings-out, and comings-in, And…hovers o’er thy guilty sleep, Unveiling every new-born deed, and thoughts More ghastly than those deeds— _5

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FRAGMENT: A SERPENT-FACE.

[Published by Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1870.]

His face was like a snake’s—wrinkled and loose And withered—

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FRAGMENT: DEATH IN LIFE.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

My head is heavy, my limbs are weary, And it is not life that makes me move.

***

FRAGMENT: ‘SUCH HOPE, AS IS THE SICK DESPAIR OF GOOD’.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

Such hope, as is the sick despair of good, Such fear, as is the certainty of ill, Such doubt, as is pale Expectation’s food Turned while she tastes to poison, when the will Is powerless, and the spirit… _5

***

FRAGMENT: ‘ALAS! THIS IS NOT WHAT I THOUGHT LIFE WAS’.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition. This fragment is joined by Forman with that immediately preceding.]

Alas! this is not what I thought life was. I knew that there were crimes and evil men, Misery and hate; nor did I hope to pass Untouched by suffering, through the rugged

glen. In mine own heart I saw as in a glass _5 The hearts of others … And when I went among my kind, with triple brass Of calm endurance my weak breast I armed, To bear scorn, fear, and hate, a woful mass!

***

FRAGMENT: MILTON'S SPIRIT.

[Published by Rossetti, "Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.", 1870.]

I dreamed that Milton's spirit rose, and took From life's green tree his Uranian lute; And from his touch sweet thunder flowed, and shook All human things built in contempt of man,— And sanguine thrones and impious altars quaked, _5 Prisons and citadels…

NOTE: _2 lute Uranian cj. A.C. Bradley.

***

FRAGMENT: 'UNRISEN SPLENDOUR OF THE BRIGHTEST SUN'.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, "Relics of Shelley", 1862.]

Unrisen splendour of the brightest sun, To rise upon our darkness, if the star Now beckoning thee out of thy misty throne Could thaw the clouds which wage an obscure war With thy young brightness! _5

***

FRAGMENT: PATER OMNIPOTENS.

[Edited from manuscript Shelley E 4 in the Bodleian Library, and published by Mr. C.D. Locock, "Examination" etc., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903. Here placed conjecturally amongst the compositions of 1820, but of uncertain date, and belonging possibly to 1819 or a still earlier year.]

Serene in his unconquerable might Endued[,] the Almighty King, his steadfast throne Encompassed unapproachably with power And darkness and deep solitude an awe Stood like a black cloud on some aery cliff _5 Embosoming its lightning—in

his sight Unnumbered glorious spirits trembling stood Like slaves before their Lord—prostrate around Heaven's multitudes hymned everlasting praise.

***

FRAGMENT: TO THE MIND OF MAN.

[Edited, published and here placed as the preceding.]

Thou living light that in thy rainbow hues Clothest this naked world; and over Sea And Earth and air, and all the shapes that be In peopled darkness of this wondrous world The Spirit of thy glory dost diffuse _5 … truth … thou Vital Flame Mysterious thought that in this mortal frame Of things, with unextinguished lustre burnest Now pale and faint now high to Heaven upcurled That eer as thou dost languish still returnest _10 And ever Before the … before the Pyramids

So soon as from the Earth formless and rude One living step had chased drear Solitude Thou wert, Thought; thy brightness charmed the lids _15 Of the vast snake Eternity, who kept The tree of good and evil.—

***

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1820, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

We spent the latter part of the year 1819 in Florence, where Shelley passed several hours daily in the Gallery, and made various notes on its ancient works of art. His thoughts were a good deal taken up also by the project of a steamboat, undertaken by a friend, an engineer, to ply between Leghorn and Marseilles, for which he supplied a sum of money. This was a sort of plan to delight Shelley, and he was greatly disappointed when it was thrown aside.

There was something in Florence that disagreed excessively with his health, and he suffered far more pain than usual; so much so that we left it sooner than we intended, and removed to Pisa, where we had some friends, and, above all, where we could consult the celebrated Vacca as to the cause of Shelley's sufferings. He, like

every other medical man, could only guess at that, and gave little hope of immediate relief; he enjoined him to abstain from all physicians and medicine, and to leave his complaint to Nature. As he had vainly consulted medical men of the highest repute in England, he was easily persuaded to adopt this advice. Pain and ill-health followed him to the end; but the residence at Pisa agreed with him better than any other, and there in consequence we remained.

In the Spring we spent a week or two near Leghorn, borrowing the house of some friends who were absent on a journey to England. It was on a beautiful summer evening, while wandering among the lanes whose myrtle-hedges were the bowers of the fire-flies, that we heard the carolling of the skylark which inspired one of the most beautiful of his poems. He addressed the letter to Mrs. Gisborne from this house, which was hers: he had made his study of the workshop of her son, who was an engineer. Mrs. Gisborne had been a friend of my father in her younger days. She was a lady of great accomplishments, and charming from her frank and affectionate nature. She had the most intense love of knowledge, a delicate and trembling sensibility, and preserved freshness of mind after a life of considerable adversity. As a favourite friend of my father, we had sought her with eagerness; and the most open and cordial friendship was established between us.

Our stay at the Baths of San Giuliano was shortened by an accident. At the foot of our garden ran the canal that communicated between the Serchio and the Arno. The Serchio overflowed its banks, and, breaking its bounds, this canal also overflowed; all this part of the country is below the level of its rivers, and the consequence was that it was speedily flooded. The rising waters filled the Square of the Baths, in the lower part of which our house was situated. The canal overflowed in the garden behind; the rising waters on either side at last burst open the doors, and, meeting in the house, rose to the height of six feet. It was a picturesque sight at night to see the peasants driving the cattle from the plains below to the hills above the Baths. A fire was kept up to guide them across the ford; and the forms of the men and the animals

showed in dark relief against the red glare of the flame, which was reflected again in the waters that filled the Square.

We then removed to Pisa, and took up our abode there for the winter. The extreme mildness of the climate suited Shelley, and his solitude was enlivened by an intercourse with several intimate friends. Chance cast us strangely enough on this quiet half-unpeopled town; but its very peace suited Shelley. Its river, the near mountains, and not distant sea, added to its attractions, and were the objects of many delightful excursions. We feared the south of Italy, and a hotter climate, on account of our child; our former bereavement inspiring us with terror. We seemed to take root here, and moved little afterwards; often, indeed, entertaining projects for visiting other parts of Italy, but still delaying. But for our fears on account of our child, I believe we should have wandered over the world, both being passionately fond of travelling. But human life, besides its great unalterable necessities, is ruled by a thousand lilliputian ties that shackle at the time, although it is difficult to account afterwards for their influence over our destiny.

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POEMS WRITTEN IN 1821.

DIRGE FOR THE YEAR.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824, and dated January 1, 1821.]

1. Orphan Hours, the Year is dead, Come and sigh, come and weep! Merry Hours, smile instead, For the Year is but asleep. See, it smiles as it is sleeping, _5 Mocking your untimely weeping.

2. As an earthquake rocks a corse In its coffin in the clay, So White Winter, that rough nurse, Rocks the death-cold Year to-day; _10 Solemn Hours! wail aloud For your mother in her shroud.

3. As the wild air stirs and sways The tree-swung cradle of a child, So the breath of

these rude days _15 Rocks the Year:—be calm and mild, Trembling Hours, she will arise With new love within her eyes.

4. January gray is here, Like a sexton by her grave; _20 February bears the bier, March with grief doth howl and rave, And April weeps—but, O ye Hours! Follow with May's fairest flowers.

***

TO NIGHT.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Posthumous Poems", 1824. There is a transcript in the Harvard manuscript book.]

1. Swiftly walk o'er the western wave, Spirit of Night! Out of the misty eastern cave, Where, all the long and lone daylight, Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear, _5 'Which make thee terrible and dear,— Swift be thy flight!

2. Wrap thy form in a mantle gray, Star-inwrought! Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day; _10 Kiss her until she be wearied out, Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land, Touching all with thine opiate wand— Come, long-sought!

3. When I arose and saw the dawn, _15 I sighed for thee; When light rode high, and the dew was gone, And noon lay heavy on flower and tree, And the weary Day turned to his rest, Lingering like an unloved guest, I sighed for thee. _20

4. Thy brother Death came, and cried, Wouldst thou me? Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed, Murmured like a noontide bee, _25 Shall I nestle near thy side? Wouldst thou me?—And I replied, No, not thee!

5. Death will come when thou art dead, Soon, too soon— _30 Sleep will come when thou art fled; Of neither would I ask the boon I ask of thee, beloved Night— Swift be thine approaching flight, Come soon, soon! _35

NOTE: _1 o'er Harvard manuscript; over editions 1824, 1839.

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TIME.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

Unfathomable Sea! whose waves are years, Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep woe Are brackish with the salt of human tears! Thou shoreless flood, which in thy ebb and flow Claspest the limits of mortality, _5 And sick of prey, yet howling on for more, Vomitest thy wrecks on its inhospitable shore; Treacherous in calm, and terrible in storm, Who shall put forth on thee, Unfathomable Sea? _10

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LINES.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

1. Far, far away, O ye Halcyons of Memory, Seek some far calmer nest Than this abandoned breast! No news of your false spring _5 To my heart’s winter bring, Once having gone, in vain Ye come again.

2. Vultures, who build your bowers High in the Future’s towers, _10 Withered hopes on hopes are spread! Dying joys, choked by the dead, Will serve your beaks for prey Many a day.

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FROM THE ARABIC: AN IMITATION.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824. There is an intermediate draft amongst the Bodleian manuscripts. See Locock, “Examination”, etc., 1903, page 13.]

1. My faint spirit was sitting in the light Of thy looks, my love; It panted for thee like the hind at noon For the brooks, my love. Thy barb whose hoofs outspeed the tempest’s flight _5 Bore thee far from me; My heart, for my weak feet were weary soon, Did companion thee.

2. Ah! fleeter far than fleetest storm or steed Or the death they bear, _10 The heart

which tender thought clothes like a dove With the wings of care; In the battle, in the darkness, in the need, Shall mine cling to thee, Nor claim one smile for all the comfort, love, _15 It may bring to thee.

NOTES: _3 hoofs]feet B. _7 were]grew B. _9 Ah!]O B.

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TO EMILIA VIVIANI.

[Published, (1) by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824; (2, 1) by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862; (2, 2 and 3) by H. Buxton Forman, “Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1876.]

1. Madonna, wherefore hast thou sent to me Sweet-basil and mignonette? Embleming love and health, which never yet In the same wreath might be. Alas, and they are wet! _5 Is it with thy kisses or thy tears? For never rain or dew Such fragrance drew From plant or flower—the very doubt endears My sadness ever new, _10 The sighs I breathe, the tears I shed for thee.

2. Send the stars light, but send not love to me, In whom love ever made Health like a heap of embers soon to fade—

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THE FUGITIVES.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”. 1824.]

1. The waters are flashing, The white hail is dashing, The lightnings are glancing, The hoar-spray is dancing— Away! _5

The whirlwind is rolling, The thunder is tolling, The forest is swinging, The minster bells ringing— Come away! _10

The Earth is like Ocean, Wreck-strewn and in motion: Bird, beast, man and worm Have crept out of the storm— Come away! _15

2. ‘Our boat has one sail And the helmsman is pale;— A bold pilot I trow, Who

should follow us now,’— Shouted he— _20

And she cried: ‘Ply the oar! Put off gaily from shore!’— As she spoke, bolts of death Mixed with hail, specked their path O’er the sea. _25

And from isle, tower and rock, The blue beacon-cloud broke, And though dumb in the blast, The red cannon flashed fast From the lee. _30

3. And ‘Fear’st thou?’ and ‘Fear’st thou?’ And Seest thou?’ and ‘Hear’st thou?’ And ‘Drive we not free O’er the terrible sea, I and thou?’ _35

One boat-cloak did cover The loved and the lover— Their blood beats one measure, They murmur proud pleasure Soft and low;— _40

While around the lashed Ocean, Like mountains in motion, Is withdrawn and uplifted, Sunk, shattered and shifted To and fro. _45

4. In the court of the fortress Beside the pale portress, Like a bloodhound well beaten The bridegroom stands, eaten By shame; _50

On the topmost watch-turret, As a death-boding spirit Stands the gray tyrant father, To his voice the mad weather Seems tame; _55

And with curses as wild As e’er clung to child, He devotes to the blast, The best, loveliest and last Of his name! _60

NOTES: _28 And though]Though editions 1839. _57 clung]cling editions 1839.

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TO —.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

Music, when soft voices die, Vibrates in the memory— Odours, when sweet violets sicken, Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead, _5 Are heaped for the beloved’s bed; And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone, Love itself shall slumber on.

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SONG.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824. There is a transcript in the Harvard manuscript book.]

1. Rarely, rarely, comest thou, Spirit of Delight! Wherefore hast thou left me now Many a day and night? Many a weary night and day _5 ’Tis since thou art fled away.

2. How shall ever one like me Win thee back again? With the joyous and the free Thou wilt scoff at pain. _10 Spirit false! thou hast forgot All but those who need thee not.

3. As a lizard with the shade Of a trembling leaf, Thou with sorrow art dismayed; _15 Even the sighs of grief Reproach thee, that thou art not near, And reproach thou wilt not hear.

4. Let me set my mournful ditty To a merry measure; _20 Thou wilt never come for pity, Thou wilt come for pleasure; Pity then will cut away Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

5. I love all that thou lovest, _25 Spirit of Delight! The fresh Earth in new leaves dressed, And the starry night; Autumn evening, and the morn When the golden mists are born. _30

6. I love snow, and all the forms Of the radiant frost; I love waves, and winds, and storms, Everything almost Which is Nature’s, and may be _35 Untainted by man’s misery.

7. I love tranquil solitude, And such society As is quiet, wise, and good Between thee and me _40 What difference? but thou dost possess The things I seek, not love them less.

8. I love Love—though he has wings, And like light can flee, But above all other things, _45 Spirit, I love thee— Thou art love and life! Oh, come, Make once more

my heart thy home.

***

MUTABILITY.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824. There is a fair draft amongst the Boscombe manuscripts.]

1. The flower that smiles to-day To-morrow dies; All that we wish to stay Tempts and then flies. What is this world’s delight? _5 Lightning that mocks the night, Brief even as bright.

2. Virtue, how frail it is! Friendship how rare! Love, how it sells poor bliss _10 For proud despair! But we, though soon they fall, Survive their joy, and all Which ours we call.

3. Whilst skies are blue and bright, _15 Whilst flowers are gay, Whilst eyes that change ere night Make glad the day; Whilst yet the calm hours creep, Dream thou—and from thy sleep _20 Then wake to weep.

NOTES: _9 how Boscombe manuscript; too editions 1824, 1839. _12 though soon they fall]though soon we or so soon they cj. Rossetti.

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LINES WRITTEN ON HEARING THE NEWS OF THE DEATH OF NAPOLEON.

[Published with “Hellas”, 1821.]

What! alive and so bold, O Earth? Art thou not overbold? What! leapest thou forth as of old In the light of thy morning mirth, The last of the flock of the starry fold? _5 Ha! leapest thou forth as of old? Are not the limbs still when the ghost is fled, And canst thou move, Napoleon being dead?

How! is not thy quick heart cold? What spark is alive on thy hearth? _10 How! is not HIS death-knell knolled? And livest THOU still, Mother Earth? Thou wert

warming thy fingers old O'er the embers covered and cold Of that most fiery spirit, when it fled— _15 What, Mother, do you laugh now he is dead?

'Who has known me of old,' replied Earth, 'Or who has my story told? It is thou who art overbold.' And the lightning of scorn laughed forth _20 As she sung, 'To my bosom I fold All my sons when their knell is knolled, And so with living motion all are fed, And the quick spring like weeds out of the dead.

'Still alive and still bold,' shouted Earth, _25 'I grow bolder and still more bold. The dead fill me ten thousandfold Fuller of speed, and splendour, and mirth. I was cloudy, and sullen, and cold, Like a frozen chaos uprolled, _30 Till by the spirit of the mighty dead My heart grew warm. I feed on whom I fed.

'Ay, alive and still bold.' muttered Earth, 'Napoleon's fierce spirit rolled, In terror and blood and gold, _35 A torrent of ruin to death from his birth. Leave the millions who follow to mould The metal before it be cold; And weave into his shame, which like the dead Shrouds me, the hopes that from his glory fled.' _40

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SONNET: POLITICAL GREATNESS.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Posthumous Poems", 1824. There is a transcript, headed "Sonnet to the Republic of Benevento", in the Harvard manuscript book.]

Nor happiness, nor majesty, nor fame, Nor peace, nor strength, nor skill in arms or arts, Shepherd those herds whom tyranny makes tame; Verse echoes not one beating of their hearts, History is but the shadow of their shame, _5 Art veils her glass, or from the pageant starts As to oblivion their blind millions fleet, Staining that Heaven with obscene imagery Of their own likeness. What are numbers knit By force or custom? Man who man would be, _10 Must rule the empire of himself; in it Must be supreme, establishing his throne On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.

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THE AZIOLA.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley in “The Keepsake”, 1829.]

1. ‘Do you not hear the Aziola cry? Methinks she must be nigh,’ Said Mary, as we sate In dusk, ere stars were lit, or candles brought; And I, who thought _5 This Aziola was some tedious woman, Asked, ‘Who is Aziola?’ How elate I felt to know that it was nothing human, No mockery of myself to fear or hate: And Mary saw my soul, _10 And laughed, and said, ‘Disquiet yourself not; ’Tis nothing but a little downy owl.’

2. Sad Aziola! many an eventide Thy music I had heard By wood and stream, meadow and mountain-side, _15 And fields and marshes wide,— Such as nor voice, nor lute, nor wind, nor bird, The soul ever stirred; Unlike and far sweeter than them all. Sad Aziola! from that moment I _20 Loved thee and thy sad cry.

NOTES: _4 ere stars]ere the stars editions 1839. _9 or]and editions 1839. _19 them]they editions 1839.

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A LAMENT.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

1. O world! O life! O time! On whose last steps I climb, Trembling at that where I had stood before; When will return the glory of your prime? No more—Oh, never more! _5

2. Out of the day and night A joy has taken flight; Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar, Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight No more—Oh, never more! _10

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REMEMBRANCE.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824, where it is entitled “A

Lament". Three manuscript copies are extant: The Trelawny manuscript ("Remembrance"), the Harvard manuscript ("Song") and the Houghton manuscript—the last written by Shelley on a flyleaf of a copy of "Adonais".]

1. Swifter far than summer's flight— Swifter far than youth's delight— Swifter far than happy night, Art thou come and gone— As the earth when leaves are dead, _5 As the night when sleep is sped, As the heart when joy is fled, I am left lone, alone.

2. The swallow summer comes again— The owlet night resumes her reign— _10 But the wild-swan youth is fain To fly with thee, false as thou.— My heart each day desires the morrow; Sleep itself is turned to sorrow; Vainly would my winter borrow _15 Sunny leaves from any bough.

3. Lilies for a bridal bed— Roses for a matron's head— Violets for a maiden dead— Pansies let MY flowers be: _20 On the living grave I bear Scatter them without a tear— Let no friend, however dear, Waste one hope, one fear for me.

NOTES: _5-_7 So editions 1824, 1839, Trelawny manuscript, Harvard manuscript; As the wood when leaves are shed, As the night when sleep is fled, As the heart when joy is dead Houghton manuscript. _13 So editions 1824, 1839, Harvard manuscript, Houghton manuscript. My heart to-day desires to-morrow Trelawny manuscript. _20 So editions 1824, 1839, Harvard manuscript, Houghton manuscript. Sadder flowers find for me Trelawny manuscript. _24 one hope, one fear]a hope, a fear Trelawny manuscript.

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TO EDWARD WILLIAMS.

[Published in Ascham's edition of the "Poems", 1834. There is a copy amongst the Trelawny manuscripts.]

1. The serpent is shut out from Paradise. The wounded deer must seek the herb no more In which its heart-cure lies: The widowed dove must cease to haunt a bower Like that from which its mate with feigned sighs _5 Fled in the April hour. I too

must seldom seek again Near happy friends a mitigated pain.

2. Of hatred I am proud,—with scorn content; Indifference, that once hurt me, now is grown _10 Itself indifferent; But, not to speak of love, pity alone Can break a spirit already more than bent. The miserable one Turns the mind's poison into food,— _15 Its medicine is tears,—its evil good.

3. Therefore, if now I see you seldomer, Dear friends, dear FRIEND! know that I only fly Your looks, because they stir Griefs that should sleep, and hopes that cannot die: _20 The very comfort that they minister I scarce can bear, yet I, So deeply is the arrow gone, Should quickly perish if it were withdrawn.

4. When I return to my cold home, you ask _25 Why I am not as I have ever been. YOU spoil me for the task Of acting a forced part in life's dull scene,— Of wearing on my brow the idle mask Of author, great or mean, _30 In the world's carnival. I sought Peace thus, and but in you I found it not.

5. Full half an hour, to-day, I tried my lot With various flowers, and every one still said, 'She loves me—loves me not.' _35 And if this meant a vision long since fled— If it meant fortune, fame, or peace of thought— If it meant,—but I dread To speak what you may know too well: Still there was truth in the sad oracle. _40

6. The crane o'er seas and forests seeks her home; No bird so wild but has its quiet nest, When it no more would roam; The sleepless billows on the ocean's breast Break like a bursting heart, and die in foam, _45 And thus at length find rest: Doubtless there is a place of peace Where MY weak heart and all its throbs will cease.

7. I asked her, yesterday, if she believed That I had resolution. One who HAD _50 Would ne'er have thus relieved His heart with words,—but what his judgement bade Would do, and leave the scorner unrelieved. These verses are too sad To send to you, but that I know, _55 Happy yourself, you feel another's woe.

NOTES: _10 Indifference, which once hurt me, is now grown Trelawny manuscript.

_18 Dear friends, dear friend Trelawny manuscript, 1839, 2nd edition; Dear gentle friend 1834, 1839, 1st edition. _26 ever]lately Trelawny manuscript. _28 in Trelawny manuscript; on 1834, editions 1839, _43 When 1839, 2nd edition; Whence 1834, 1839, 1st edition. _48 will 1839, 2nd edition; shall 1834, 1839, 1st edition. _53 unrelieved Trelawny manuscript, 1839, 2nd. edition; unreprieved 1834, 1839, 1st edition. _54 are]were Trelawny manuscript.

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TO —.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

1. One word is too often profaned For me to profane it, One feeling too falsely disdained For thee to disdain it; One hope is too like despair _5 For prudence to smother, And pity from thee more dear Than that from another.

2. I can give not what men call love, But wilt thou accept not _10 The worship the heart lifts above And the Heavens reject not,— The desire of the moth for the star, Of the night for the morrow, The devotion to something afar _15 From the sphere of our sorrow?

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TO —.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824. There is a Boscombe manuscript.]

1. When passion’s trance is overpast, If tenderness and truth could last, Or live, whilst all wild feelings keep Some mortal slumber, dark and deep, I should not weep, I should not weep! _5

2. It were enough to feel, to see, Thy soft eyes gazing tenderly, And dream the rest—and burn and be The secret food of fires unseen, Couldst thou but be as thou hast been, _10

3. After the slumber of the year The woodland violets reappear; All things revive in field or grove, And sky and sea, but two, which move And form all others, life and love. _15

NOTE: _15 form Boscombe manuscript; for editions 1824, 1839.

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A BRIDAL SONG.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

1. The golden gates of Sleep unbar Where Strength and Beauty, met together, Kindle their image like a star In a sea of glassy weather! Night, with all thy stars look down,— _5 Darkness, weep thy holiest dew,— Never smiled the inconstant moon On a pair so true. Let eyes not see their own delight;— Haste, swift Hour, and thy flight _10 Oft renew.

2. Fairies, sprites, and angels, keep her! Holy stars, permit no wrong! And return to wake the sleeper, Dawn,—ere it be long! _15 O joy! O fear! what will be done In the absence of the sun! Come along!

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EPITHALAMIUM.

ANOTHER VERSION OF THE PRECEDING.

[Published by Medwin, “Life of Shelley”, 1847.]

Night, with all thine eyes look down! Darkness shed its holiest dew! When ever smiled the inconstant moon On a pair so true? Hence, coy hour! and quench thy light, _5 Lest eyes see their own delight! Hence, swift hour! and thy loved flight Oft renew.

BOYS: O joy! O fear! what may be done In the absence of the sun? _10 Come along! The golden gates of sleep unbar! When strength and beauty meet together, Kindles their image like a star In a sea of glassy weather. _15 Hence, coy hour! and

quench thy light, Lest eyes see their own delight! Hence, swift hour! and thy loved flight Oft renew.

GIRLS: O joy! O fear! what may be done _20 In the absence of the sun? Come along! Fairies! sprites! and angels, keep her! Holiest powers, permit no wrong! And return, to wake the sleeper, _25 Dawn, ere it be long. Hence, swift hour! and quench thy light, Lest eyes see their own delight! Hence, coy hour! and thy loved flight Oft renew. _30

BOYS AND GIRLS: O joy! O fear! what will be done In the absence of the sun? Come along!

NOTE: _17 Lest]Let 1847.

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ANOTHER VERSION OF THE SAME.

[Published by Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1870, from the Trelawny manuscript of Edward Williams’s play, “The Promise: or, A Year, a Month, and a Day”.]

BOYS SING: Night! with all thine eyes look down! Darkness! weep thy holiest dew! Never smiled the inconstant moon On a pair so true. Haste, coy hour! and quench all light, _5 Lest eyes see their own delight! Haste, swift hour! and thy loved flight Oft renew!

GIRLS SING: Fairies, sprites, and angels, keep her! Holy stars! permit no wrong! _10 And return, to wake the sleeper, Dawn, ere it be long! O joy! O fear! there is not one Of us can guess what may be done In the absence of the sun:— _15 Come along!

BOYS: Oh! linger long, thou envious eastern lamp In the damp Caves of the deep!

GIRLS: Nay, return, Vesper! urge thy lazy car! _20 Swift unbar The gates of Sleep!

CHORUS: The golden gate of Sleep unbar, When Strength and Beauty, met

together, Kindle their image, like a star _25 In a sea of glassy weather. May the purple mist of love Round them rise, and with them move, Nourishing each tender gem Which, like flowers, will burst from them. _30 As the fruit is to the tree May their children ever be!

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LOVE, HOPE, DESIRE, AND FEAR.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862. ‘A very free translation of Brunetto Latini’s “Tesoretto”, lines 81-154.’—A.C. Bradley.]

…

And many there were hurt by that strong boy, His name, they said, was Pleasure, And near him stood, glorious beyond measure Four Ladies who possess all empery In earth and air and sea, _5 Nothing that lives from their award is free. Their names will I declare to thee, Love, Hope, Desire, and Fear, And they the regents are Of the four elements that frame the heart, _10 And each diversely exercised her art By force or circumstance or sleight To prove her dreadful might Upon that poor domain. Desire presented her [false] glass, and then _15 The spirit dwelling there Was spellbound to embrace what seemed so fair Within that magic mirror, And dazed by that bright error, It would have scorned the [shafts] of the avenger _20 And death, and penitence, and danger, Had not then silent Fear Touched with her palsying spear, So that as if a frozen torrent The blood was curdled in its current; _25 It dared not speak, even in look or motion, But chained within itself its proud devotion. Between Desire and Fear thou wert A wretched thing, poor heart! Sad was his life who bore thee in his breast, _30 Wild bird for that weak nest. Till Love even from fierce Desire it bought, And from the very wound of tender thought Drew solace, and the pity of sweet eyes Gave strength to bear those gentle agonies, _35 Surmount the loss, the terror, and the sorrow. Then Hope approached, she who can borrow For poor to-day, from rich tomorrow, And Fear withdrew, as night when day

Descends upon the orient ray, _40 And after long and vain endurance The poor heart woke to her assurance. —At one birth these four were born With the world's forgotten morn, And from Pleasure still they hold _45 All it circles, as of old. When, as summer lures the swallow, Pleasure lures the heart to follow— O weak heart of little wit! The fair hand that wounded it, _50 Seeking, like a panting hare, Refuge in the lynx's lair, Love, Desire, Hope, and Fear, Ever will be near.

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FRAGMENTS WRITTEN FOR HELLAS.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, "Relics of Shelley", 1862.]

1. Fairest of the Destinies, Disarray thy dazzling eyes: Keener far thy lightnings are Than the winged [bolts] thou bearest, And the smile thou wearest _5 Wraps thee as a star Is wrapped in light.

2. Could Arethuse to her forsaken urn From Alpheus and the bitter Doris run, Or could the morning shafts of purest light _10 Again into the quivers of the Sun Be gathered—could one thought from its wild flight Return into the temple of the brain Without a change, without a stain,— Could aught that is, ever again _15 Be what it once has ceased to be, Greece might again be free!

3. A star has fallen upon the earth Mid the benighted nations, A quenchless atom of immortal light, _20 A living spark of Night, A cresset shaken from the constellations. Swifter than the thunder fell To the heart of Earth, the well Where its pulses flow and beat, _25 And unextinct in that cold source Burns, and on … course Guides the sphere which is its prison, Like an angelic spirit pent In a form of mortal birth, _30 Till, as a spirit half-arisen Shatters its charnel, it has rent, In the rapture of its mirth, The thin and painted garment of the Earth, Ruining its chaos—a fierce breath _35 Consuming all its forms of living death.

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FRAGMENT: 'I WOULD NOT BE A KING'.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition.]

I would not be a king—enough Of woe it is to love; The path to power is steep and rough, And tempests reign above. I would not climb the imperial throne; _5 ’Tis built on ice which fortune’s sun Thaws in the height of noon. Then farewell, king, yet were I one, Care would not come so soon. Would he and I were far away _10 Keeping flocks on Himalay!

***

GINEVRA.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824, and dated ‘Pisa, 1821.’]

Wild, pale, and wonder-stricken, even as one Who staggers forth into the air and sun From the dark chamber of a mortal fever, Bewildered, and incapable, and ever Fancying strange comments in her dizzy brain _5 Of usual shapes, till the familiar train Of objects and of persons passed like things Strange as a dreamer’s mad imaginings, Ginevra from the nuptial altar went; The vows to which her lips had sworn assent _10 Rung in her brain still with a jarring din, Deafening the lost intelligence within.

And so she moved under the bridal veil, Which made the paleness of her cheek more pale, And deepened the faint crimson of her mouth, _15 And darkened her dark locks, as moonlight doth,— And of the gold and jewels glittering there She scarce felt conscious,—but the weary glare Lay like a chaos of unwelcome light, Vexing the sense with gorgeous undelight, _20 A moonbeam in the shadow of a cloud Was less heavenly fair—her face was bowed, And as she passed, the diamonds in her hair Were mirrored in the polished marble stair Which led from the cathedral to the street; _25 And ever as she went her light fair feet Erased these images.

The bride-maidens who round her thronging came, Some with a sense of self-rebuke and shame, Envying the unenviable; and others Making the joy which should have been another’s _30 Their own by gentle sympathy; and some Sighing to think of an

unhappy home: Some few admiring what can ever lure Maidens to leave the heaven serene and pure Of parents' smiles for life's great cheat; a thing _35 Bitter to taste, sweet in imagining.

But they are all dispersed—and, lo! she stands Looking in idle grief on her white hands, Alone within the garden now her own; _40 And through the sunny air, with jangling tone, The music of the merry marriage-bells, Killing the azure silence, sinks and swells;— Absorbed like one within a dream who dreams That he is dreaming, until slumber seems _45 A mockery of itself—when suddenly Antonio stood before her, pale as she. With agony, with sorrow, and with pride, He lifted his wan eyes upon the bride, And said—'Is this thy faith?' and then as one _50 Whose sleeping face is stricken by the sun With light like a harsh voice, which bids him rise And look upon his day of life with eyes Which weep in vain that they can dream no more, Ginevra saw her lover, and forbore _55 To shriek or faint, and checked the stifling blood Rushing upon her heart, and unsubdued Said—'Friend, if earthly violence or ill, Suspicion, doubt, or the tyrannic will Of parents, chance or custom, time or change, _60 Or circumstance, or terror, or revenge, Or wildered looks, or words, or evil speech, With all their stings and venom can impeach Our love,—we love not:—if the grave which hides The victim from the tyrant, and divides _65 The cheek that whitens from the eyes that dart Imperious inquisition to the heart That is another's, could dissever ours, We love not.'—'What! do not the silent hours Beckon thee to Gherardi's bridal bed? _70 Is not that ring'—a pledge, he would have said, Of broken vows, but she with patient look The golden circle from her finger took, And said—'Accept this token of my faith, The pledge of vows to be absolved by death; _75 And I am dead or shall be soon—my knell Will mix its music with that merry bell, Does it not sound as if they sweetly said "We toll a corpse out of the marriage-bed"? The flowers upon my bridal chamber strewn _80 Will serve unfaded for my bier—so soon That even the dying violet will not die Before Ginevra.' The strong fantasy Had made her accents weaker and more weak,

And quenched the crimson life upon her cheek, _85 And glazed her eyes, and spread an atmosphere Round her, which chilled the burning noon with fear, Making her but an image of the thought Which, like a prophet or a shadow, brought News of the terrors of the coming time. _90 Like an accuser branded with the crime He would have cast on a beloved friend, Whose dying eyes reproach not to the end The pale betrayer—he then with vain repentance Would share, he cannot now avert, the sentence— _95 Antonio stood and would have spoken, when The compound voice of women and of men Was heard approaching; he retired, while she Was led amid the admiring company Back to the palace,—and her maidens soon _100 Changed her attire for the afternoon, And left her at her own request to keep An hour of quiet rest:—like one asleep With open eyes and folded hands she lay, Pale in the light of the declining day. _105

Meanwhile the day sinks fast, the sun is set, And in the lighted hall the guests are met; The beautiful looked lovelier in the light Of love, and admiration, and delight Reflected from a thousand hearts and eyes, _110 Kindling a momentary Paradise. This crowd is safer than the silent wood, Where love's own doubts disturb the solitude; On frozen hearts the fiery rain of wine Falls, and the dew of music more divine _115 Tempers the deep emotions of the time To spirits cradled in a sunny clime:— How many meet, who never yet have met, To part too soon, but never to forget. How many saw the beauty, power and wit _120 Of looks and words which ne'er enchanted yet; But life's familiar veil was now withdrawn, As the world leaps before an earthquake's dawn, And unprophetic of the coming hours, The matin winds from the expanded flowers _125 Scatter their hoarded incense, and awaken The earth, until the dewy sleep is shaken From every living heart which it possesses, Through seas and winds, cities and wildernesses, As if the future and the past were all _130 Treasured i' the instant;—so Gherardi's hall Laughed in the mirth of its lord's festival, Till some one asked—'Where is the Bride?' And then A bridesmaid went,—and ere she came again A silence fell upon the guests—a pause _135 Of

expectation, as when beauty awes All hearts with its approach, though unbeheld; Then wonder, and then fear that wonder quelled;— For whispers passed from mouth to ear which drew The colour from the hearer's cheeks, and flew _140 Louder and swifter round the company; And then Gherardi entered with an eye Of ostentatious trouble, and a crowd Surrounded him, and some were weeping loud.

They found Ginevra dead! if it be death _145 To lie without motion, or pulse, or breath, With waxen cheeks, and limbs cold, stiff, and white, And open eyes, whose fixed and glassy light Mocked at the speculation they had owned. If it be death, when there is felt around _150 A smell of clay, a pale and icy glare, And silence, and a sense that lifts the hair From the scalp to the ankles, as it were Corruption from the spirit passing forth, And giving all it shrouded to the earth, _155 And leaving as swift lightning in its flight Ashes, and smoke, and darkness: in our night Of thought we know thus much of death,—no more Than the unborn dream of our life before Their barks are wrecked on its inhospitable shore. _160 The marriage feast and its solemnity Was turned to funeral pomp—the company, With heavy hearts and looks, broke up; nor they Who loved the dead went weeping on their way Alone, but sorrow mixed with sad surprise _165 Loosened the springs of pity in all eyes, On which that form, whose fate they weep in vain, Will never, thought they, kindle smiles again. The lamps which, half extinguished in their haste, Gleamed few and faint o'er the abandoned feast, _170 Showed as it were within the vaulted room A cloud of sorrow hanging, as if gloom Had passed out of men's minds into the air. Some few yet stood around Gherardi there, Friends and relations of the dead,—and he, _175 A loveless man, accepted torpidly The consolation that he wanted not; Awe in the place of grief within him wrought. Their whispers made the solemn silence seem More still—some wept,… _180 Some melted into tears without a sob, And some with hearts that might be heard to throb Leaned on the table and at intervals Shuddered to hear through the deserted halls And corridors the thrilling shrieks which came _185 Upon the breeze of night, that shook the flame Of every torch and

taper as it swept From out the chamber where the women kept;— Their tears fell on the dear companion cold Of pleasures now departed; then was knolled _190 The bell of death, and soon the priests arrived, And finding Death their penitent had shrived, Returned like ravens from a corpse whereon A vulture has just feasted to the bone. And then the mourning women came.— _195

…

THE DIRGE.

Old winter was gone In his weakness back to the mountains hoar, And the spring came down From the planet that hovers upon the shore

Where the sea of sunlight encroaches _200 On the limits of wintry night;— If the land, and the air, and the sea, Rejoice not when spring approaches, We did not rejoice in thee, Ginevra! _205

She is still, she is cold On the bridal couch, One step to the white deathbed, And one to the bier, And one to the charnel—and one, oh where? _210 The dark arrow fled In the noon.

Ere the sun through heaven once more has rolled, The rats in her heart Will have made their nest, _215 And the worms be alive in her golden hair, While the Spirit that guides the sun, Sits throned in his flaming chair, She shall sleep.

NOTES: 22 Was]Were cj. Rossetti.old 26 ever 1824; even editions 1839. _37 Bitter editions 1839; Better 1824. _63 wanting in 1824. _103 quiet rest cj. A.C. Bradley; quiet and rest 1824. _129 winds]lands cj. Forman; waves, sands or strands cj. Rossetti. _167 On]In cj. Rossetti.

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EVENING: PONTE AL MARE, PISA

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824. There is a draft amongst the Boscombe manuscripts.]

1. The sun is set; the swallows are asleep; The bats are flitting fast in the gray air; The slow soft toads out of damp corners creep, And evening's breath, wandering here and there Over the quivering surface of the stream, _5 Wakes not one ripple from its summer dream.

2. There is no dew on the dry grass to-night, Nor damp within the shadow of the trees; The wind is intermitting, dry, and light; And in the inconstant motion of the breeze _10 The dust and straws are driven up and down, And whirled about the pavement of the town.

3. Within the surface of the fleeting river The wrinkled image of the city lay, Immovably unquiet, and forever _15 It trembles, but it never fades away; Go to the… You, being changed, will find it then as now.

4. The chasm in which the sun has sunk is shut By darkest barriers of cinereous cloud, _20 Like mountain over mountain huddled—but Growing and moving upwards in a crowd, And over it a space of watery blue, Which the keen evening star is shining through..

NOTES: _6 summer 1839, 2nd edition; silent 1824, 1839, 1st edition. _20 cinereous Boscombe manuscript; enormous editions 1824, 1839.

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THE BOAT ON THE SERCHIO.

[Published in part (lines 1-61, 88-118) by Mrs. Shelley, "Posthumous Poems", 1824; revised and enlarged by Rossetti, "Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.", 1870.]

Our boat is asleep on Serchio's stream, Its sails are folded like thoughts in a dream, The helm sways idly, hither and thither; Dominic, the boatman, has brought the mast, And the oars, and the sails; but 'tis sleeping fast, _5 Like a beast, unconscious of its tether.

The stars burnt out in the pale blue air, And the thin white moon lay withering there;

To tower, and cavern, and rift, and tree, The owl and the bat fled drowsily. _10 Day had kindled the dewy woods, And the rocks above and the stream below, And the vapours in their multitudes, And the Apennine’s shroud of summer snow, And clothed with light of aery gold _15 The mists in their eastern caves uprolled.

Day had awakened all things that be, The lark and the thrush and the swallow free, And the milkmaid’s song and the mower’s scythe And the matin-bell and the mountain bee: _20 Fireflies were quenched on the dewy corn, Glow-worms went out on the river’s brim, Like lamps which a student forgets to trim: The beetle forgot to wind his horn, The crickets were still in the meadow and hill: _25 Like a flock of rooks at a farmer’s gun Night’s dreams and terrors, every one, Fled from the brains which are their prey From the lamp’s death to the morning ray.

All rose to do the task He set to each, _30 Who shaped us to His ends and not our own; The million rose to learn, and one to teach What none yet ever knew or can be known. And many rose Whose woe was such that fear became desire;— _35 Melchior and Lionel were not among those; They from the throng of men had stepped aside, And made their home under the green hill-side. It was that hill, whose intervening brow Screens Lucca from the Pisan’s envious eye, _40 Which the circumfluous plain waving below, Like a wide lake of green fertility, With streams and fields and marshes bare, Divides from the far Apennines—which lie Islanded in the immeasurable air. _45

‘What think you, as she lies in her green cove, Our little sleeping boat is dreaming of?’ ‘If morning dreams are true, why I should guess That she was dreaming of our idleness, And of the miles of watery way _50 We should have led her by this time of day.’-

‘Never mind,’ said Lionel, ‘Give care to the winds, they can bear it well About yon poplar-tops; and see The white clouds are driving merrily, _55 And the stars we miss this morn will light More willingly our return to-night.— How it whistles,

Dominic’s long black hair! List, my dear fellow; the breeze blows fair: Hear how it sings into the air—’ _60

—‘Of us and of our lazy motions,’ Impatiently said Melchior, ‘If I can guess a boat’s emotions; And how we ought, two hours before, To have been the devil knows where.’ _65 And then, in such transalpine Tuscan As would have killed a Della-Cruscan,

…

So, Lionel according to his art Weaving his idle words, Melchior said: ‘She dreams that we are not yet out of bed; _70 We’ll put a soul into her, and a heart Which like a dove chased by a dove shall beat.’

…

‘Ay, heave the ballast overboard, And stow the eatables in the aft locker.’ ‘Would not this keg be best a little lowered?’ _75 ‘No, now all’s right.’ ‘Those bottles of warm tea— (Give me some straw)—must be stowed tenderly; Such as we used, in summer after six, To cram in greatcoat pockets, and to mix Hard eggs and radishes and rolls at Eton, _80 And, couched on stolen hay in those green harbours Farmers called gaps, and we schoolboys called arbours, Would feast till eight.’

…

With a bottle in one hand, As if his very soul were at a stand _85 Lionel stood—when Melchior brought him steady:— ‘Sit at the helm—fasten this sheet—all ready!’

The chain is loosed, the sails are spread, The living breath is fresh behind, As with dews and sunrise fed, _90 Comes the laughing morning wind;— The sails are full, the boat makes head Against the Serchio’s torrent fierce, Then flags with intermitting course, And hangs upon the wave, and stems _95 The tempest of the… Which fervid from its mountain source Shallow, smooth and strong doth come,— Swift as fire, tempestuously It sweeps into the affrighted sea; _100 In morning’s

smile its eddies coil, Its billows sparkle, toss and boil, Torturing all its quiet light Into columns fierce and bright.

The Serchio, twisting forth _105 Between the marble barriers which it clove At Ripafratta, leads through the dread chasm The wave that died the death which lovers love, Living in what it sought; as if this spasm Had not yet passed, the toppling mountains cling, _110 But the clear stream in full enthusiasm Pours itself on the plain, then wandering Down one clear path of effluence crystalline Sends its superfluous waves, that they may fling At Arno's feet tribute of corn and wine; Then, through the pestilential deserts wild Of tangled marsh and woods of stunted pine, It rushes to the Ocean.

NOTES: _58-_61 List, my dear fellow, the breeze blows fair; How it scatters Dominic's long black hair! Singing of us, and our lazy motions, If I can guess a boat's emotions.'—editions 1824, 1839. _61-_67 Rossetti places these lines conjecturally between lines 51 and 52. _61-_65 'are evidently an alternative version of 48-51' (A.C. Bradley). _95, _96 and stems The tempest of the wanting in editions 1824, 1839. _112 then Boscombe manuscript; until editions 1824, 1839 _114 superfluous Boscombe manuscript; clear editions 1824, 1839. _117 pine Boscombe manuscript; fir editions 1824, 1839.

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MUSIC.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Posthumous Poems", 1824.]

1. I pant for the music which is divine, My heart in its thirst is a dying flower; Pour forth the sound like enchanted wine, Loosen the notes in a silver shower; Like a herbless plain, for the gentle rain, _5 I gasp, I faint, till they wake again.

2. Let me drink of the spirit of that sweet sound, More, oh more,—I am thirsting yet; It loosens the serpent which care has bound Upon my heart to stifle it; _10 The dissolving strain, through every vein, Passes into my heart and brain.

3. As the scent of a violet withered up, Which grew by the brink of a silver lake, When the hot noon has drained its dewy cup, _15 And mist there was none its thirst to slake— And the violet lay dead while the odour flew On the wings of the wind o'er the waters blue—

4. As one who drinks from a charmed cup Of foaming, and sparkling, and murmuring wine, _20 Whom, a mighty Enchantress filling up, Invites to love with her kiss divine…

NOTES: _16 mist 1824; tank 1839, 2nd edition.

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SONNET TO BYRON.

[Published by Medwin, "The Shelley Papers", 1832 (lines 1-7), and "Life of Shelley", 1847 (lines 1-9, 12-14). Revised and completed from the Boscombe manuscript by Rossetti, "Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.", 1870.]

[I am afraid these verses will not please you, but] If I esteemed you less, Envy would kill Pleasure, and leave to Wonder and Despair The ministration of the thoughts that fill The mind which, like a worm whose life may share A portion of the unapproachable, _5 Marks your creations rise as fast and fair As perfect worlds at the Creator's will.

But such is my regard that nor your power To soar above the heights where others [climb], Nor fame, that shadow of the unborn hour _10 Cast from the envious future on the time, Move one regret for his unhonoured name Who dares these words:—the worm beneath the sod May lift itself in homage of the God.

NOTES: _1 you edition 1870; him 1832; thee 1847. _4 So edition 1870; My soul which as a worm may haply share 1832; My soul which even as a worm may share 1847. _6 your edition 1870; his 1832; thy 1847. _8, _9 So edition 1870 wanting 1832 - But not the blessings of thy happier lot, Nor thy well-won prosperity, and fame 1847. _10, _11 So edition 1870; wanting 1832, 1847. _12-_14 So 1847, edition

1870; wanting 1832.

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FRAGMENT ON KEATS.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition—ED.]

ON KEATS, WHO DESIRED THAT ON HIS TOMB SHOULD BE INSCRIBED—

‘Here lieth One whose name was writ on water. But, ere the breath that could erase it blew, Death, in remorse for that fell slaughter, Death, the immortalizing winter, flew Athwart the stream,—and time’s printless torrent grew _5 A scroll of crystal, blazoning the name Of Adonais!

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FRAGMENT: ‘METHOUGHT I WAS A BILLOW IN THE CROWD’.

[Published by Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1870.]

Methought I was a billow in the crowd Of common men, that stream without a shore, That ocean which at once is deaf and loud; That I, a man, stood amid many more By a wayside…, which the aspect bore _5 Of some imperial metropolis, Where mighty shapes—pyramid, dome, and tower— Gleamed like a pile of crags—

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TO-MORROW.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

Where art thou, beloved To-morrow? When young and old, and strong and weak, Rich and poor, through joy and sorrow, Thy sweet smiles we ever seek,— In thy place—ah! well-a-day! _5 We find the thing we fled—To-day.

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STANZA.

[Published by Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1870. Connected by Dowden with the preceding.]

If I walk in Autumn’s even While the dead leaves pass, If I look on Spring’s soft heaven,— Something is not there which was Winter’s wondrous frost and snow, _5 Summer’s clouds, where are they now?

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FRAGMENT: A WANDERER.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition.]

He wanders, like a day-appearing dream, Through the dim wildernesses of the mind; Through desert woods and tracts, which seem Like ocean, homeless, boundless, unconfined.

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FRAGMENT: LIFE ROUNDED WITH SLEEP.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition.]

The babe is at peace within the womb; The corpse is at rest within the tomb: We begin in what we end.

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FRAGMENT: ‘I FAINT, I PERISH WITH MY LOVE!‘.

[Published by Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1870.]

I faint, I perish with my love! I grow Frail as a cloud whose [splendours] pale Under the evening’s ever-changing glow: I die like mist upon the gale, And like a wave under the calm I fail. _5

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FRAGMENT: THE LADY OF THE SOUTH.

[Published by Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1870.]

Faint with love, the Lady of the South Lay in the paradise of Lebanon Under a heaven of cedar boughs: the drouth Of love was on her lips; the light was gone Out of her eyes— _5

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FRAGMENT: ZEPHYRUS THE AWAKENER.

[Published by Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1870.]

Come, thou awakener of the spirit’s ocean, Zephyr, whom to thy cloud or cave No thought can trace! speed with thy gentle motion!

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FRAGMENT: RAIN.

[Published by Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1870.]

The gentleness of rain was in the wind.

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FRAGMENT: ‘WHEN SOFT WINDS AND SUNNY SKIES’.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition.]

When soft winds and sunny skies With the green earth harmonize, And the young and dewy dawn, Bold as an unhunted fawn, Up the windless heaven is gone,— _5 Laugh—for ambushed in the day,— Clouds and whirlwinds watch their prey.

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FRAGMENT: ‘AND THAT I WALK THUS PROUDLY CROWNED’.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition.]

And that I walk thus proudly crowned withal Is that ’tis my distinction; if I fall, I shall not weep out of the vital day, To-morrow dust, nor wear a dull decay.

NOTE: _2 ’Tis that is or In that is cj. A.C. Bradley.

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FRAGMENT: ‘THE RUDE WIND IS SINGING’.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition.]

The rude wind is singing The dirge of the music dead; The cold worms are clinging Where kisses were lately fed.

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FRAGMENT: ‘GREAT SPIRIT’.

[Published by Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1870.]

Great Spirit whom the sea of boundless thought Nurtures within its unimagined caves, In which thou sittest sole, as in my mind, Giving a voice to its mysterious waves—

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FRAGMENT: ‘O THOU IMMORTAL DEITY’.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition.]

O thou immortal deity Whose throne is in the depth of human thought, I do adjure thy power and thee By all that man may be, by all that he is not, By all that he has been and yet must be! _5

***

FRAGMENT: THE FALSE LAUREL AND THE TRUE.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition.]

‘What art thou, Presumptuous, who profanest The wreath to mighty poets only due, Even whilst like a forgotten moon thou wanest? Touch not those leaves which for the eternal few Who wander o’er the Paradise of fame, _5 In sacred dedication ever grew: One of the crowd thou art without a name.’ ‘Ah, friend, ’tis the false laurel that I wear; Bright though it seem, it is not the same As that which bound Milton’s immortal hair; _10 Its dew is poison; and the hopes that quicken Under its chilling shade, though seeming fair, Are flowers which die almost before they sicken.’

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FRAGMENT: MAY THE LIMNER.

[This and the three following Fragments were edited from manuscript Shelley D1 at the Bodleian Library and published by Mr. C.D. Locock, “Examination”, etc., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903. They are printed here as belonging probably to the year 1821.]

When May is painting with her colours gay The landscape sketched by April her sweet twin…

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FRAGMENT: BEAUTY’S HALO.

[Published by Mr. C.D. Locock, “Examination”, etc, 1903.]

Thy beauty hangs around thee like Splendour around the moon— Thy voice, as silver bells that strike Upon

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FRAGMENT: ‘THE DEATH KNELL IS RINGING’.

(‘This reads like a study for “Autumn, A Dirge”’ (Locock). Might it not be part of a projected Fit v. of “The Fugitives”?—ED.)

[Published by Mr. C.D. Locock, “Examination”, etc., 1903.]

The death knell is ringing The raven is singing The earth worm is creeping The mourners are weeping Ding dong, bell— _5

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FRAGMENT: ‘I STOOD UPON A HEAVEN-CLEAVING TURRET’.

I stood upon a heaven-cleaving turret Which overlooked a wide Metropolis— And in the temple of my heart my Spirit Lay prostrate, and with parted lips did kiss The dust of Desolations [altar] hearth— _5 And with a voice too faint to falter It shook

that trembling fane with its weak prayer ’Twas noon,—the sleeping skies were blue The city

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NOTE ON POEMS OF 1821, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

My task becomes inexpressibly painful as the year draws near that which sealed our earthly fate, and each poem, and each event it records, has a real or mysterious connection with the fatal catastrophe. I feel that I am incapable of putting on paper the history of those times. The heart of the man, abhorred of the poet, who could

‘peep and botanize Upon his mother’s grave,’

does not appear to me more inexplicably framed than that of one who can dissect and probe past woes, and repeat to the public ear the groans drawn from them in the throes of their agony.

The year 1821 was spent in Pisa, or at the Baths of San Giuliano. We were not, as our wont had been, alone; friends had gathered round us. Nearly all are dead, and, when Memory recurs to the past, she wanders among tombs. The genius, with all his blighting errors and mighty powers; the companion of Shelley’s ocean-wanderings, and the sharer of his fate, than whom no man ever existed more gentle, generous, and fearless; and others, who found in Shelley’s society, and in his great knowledge and warm sympathy, delight, instruction, and solace; have joined him beyond the grave. A few survive who have felt life a desert since he left it. What misfortune can equal death? Change can convert every other into a blessing, or heal its sting—death alone has no cure. It shakes the foundations of the earth on which we tread; it destroys its beauty; it casts down our shelter; it exposes us bare to desolation. When those we love have passed into eternity, ‘life is the desert and the solitude’ in which we are forced to linger—but never find comfort more.

There is much in the “Adonais” which seems now more applicable to Shelley himself than to the young and gifted poet whom he mourned. The poetic view he

takes of death, and the lofty scorn he displays towards his calumniators, are as a prophecy on his own destiny when received among immortal names, and the poisonous breath of critics has vanished into emptiness before the fame he inherits.

Shelley's favourite taste was boating; when living near the Thames or by the Lake of Geneva, much of his life was spent on the water. On the shore of every lake or stream or sea near which he dwelt, he had a boat moored. He had latterly enjoyed this pleasure again. There are no pleasure-boats on the Arno; and the shallowness of its waters (except in winter-time, when the stream is too turbid and impetuous for boating) rendered it difficult to get any skiff light enough to float. Shelley, however, overcame the difficulty; he, together with a friend, contrived a boat such as the huntsmen carry about with them in the Maremma, to cross the sluggish but deep streams that intersect the forests,—a boat of laths and pitched canvas. It held three persons; and he was often seen on the Arno in it, to the horror of the Italians, who remonstrated on the danger, and could not understand how anyone could take pleasure in an exercise that risked life. 'Ma va per la vita!' they exclaimed. I little thought how true their words would prove. He once ventured, with a friend, on the glassy sea of a calm day, down the Arno and round the coast to Leghorn, which, by keeping close in shore, was very practicable. They returned to Pisa by the canal, when, missing the direct cut, they got entangled among weeds, and the boat upset; a wetting was all the harm done, except that the intense cold of his drenched clothes made Shelley faint. Once I went down with him to the mouth of the Arno, where the stream, then high and swift, met the tideless sea, and disturbed its sluggish waters. It was a waste and dreary scene; the desert sand stretched into a point surrounded by waves that broke idly though perpetually around; it was a scene very similar to Lido, of which he had said—

'I love all waste And solitary places; where we taste The pleasure of believing what we see Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be: And such was this wide ocean, and this shore More barren than its billows.'

Our little boat was of greater use, unaccompanied by any danger, when we removed to the Baths. Some friends lived at the village of Pugnano, four miles off, and we went to and fro to see them, in our boat, by the canal; which, fed by the Serchio, was, though an artificial, a full and picturesque stream, making its way under verdant banks, sheltered by trees that dipped their boughs into the murmuring waters. By day, multitudes of Ephemera darted to and fro on the surface; at night, the fireflies came out among the shrubs on the banks; the cicale at noon-day kept up their hum; the aziola cooed in the quiet evening. It was a pleasant summer, bright in all but Shelley's health and inconstant spirits; yet he enjoyed himself greatly, and became more and more attached to the part of the country where chance appeared to cast us. Sometimes he projected taking a farm situated on the height of one of the near hills, surrounded by chestnut and pine woods, and overlooking a wide extent of country: or settling still farther in the maritime Apennines, at Massa. Several of his slighter and unfinished poems were inspired by these scenes, and by the companions around us. It is the nature of that poetry, however, which overflows from the soul oftener to express sorrow and regret than joy; for it is when oppressed by the weight of life, and away from those he loves, that the poet has recourse to the solace of expression in verse.

Still, Shelley's passion was the ocean; and he wished that our summers, instead of being passed among the hills near Pisa, should be spent on the shores of the sea. It was very difficult to find a spot. We shrank from Naples from a fear that the heats would disagree with Percy: Leghorn had lost its only attraction, since our friends who had resided there were returned to England; and, Monte Nero being the resort of many English, we did not wish to find ourselves in the midst of a colony of chance travellers. No one then thought it possible to reside at Via Reggio, which latterly has become a summer resort. The low lands and bad air of Maremma stretch the whole length of the western shores of the Mediterranean, till broken by the rocks and hills of Spezia. It was a vague idea, but Shelley suggested an excursion to

Spezia, to see whether it would be feasible to spend a summer there. The beauty of the bay enchanted him. We saw no house to suit us; but the notion took root, and many circumstances, enchained as by fatality, occurred to urge him to execute it.

He looked forward this autumn with great pleasure to the prospect of a visit from Leigh Hunt. When Shelley visited Lord Byron at Ravenna, the latter had suggested his coming out, together with the plan of a periodical work in which they should all join. Shelley saw a prospect of good for the fortunes of his friend, and pleasure in his society; and instantly exerted himself to have the plan executed. He did not intend himself joining in the work: partly from pride, not wishing to have the air of acquiring readers for his poetry by associating it with the compositions of more popular writers; and also because he might feel shackled in the free expression of his opinions, if any friends were to be compromised. By those opinions, carried even to their outermost extent, he wished to live and die, as being in his conviction not only true, but such as alone would conduce to the moral improvement and happiness of mankind. The sale of the work might meanwhile, either really or supposedly, be injured by the free expression of his thoughts; and this evil he resolved to avoid.

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POEMS WRITTEN IN 1822.

THE ZUCCA.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824, and dated ‘January, 1822.’ There is a copy amongst the Boscombe manuscripts.]

1. Summer was dead and Autumn was expiring, And infant Winter laughed upon the land All cloudlessly and cold;—when I, desiring More in this world than any understand, Wept o’er the beauty, which, like sea retiring, _5 Had left the earth bare as the wave-worn sand Of my lorn heart, and o’er the grass and flowers Pale for the falsehood of the flattering Hours.

2. Summer was dead, but I yet lived to weep The instability of all but weeping; _10

And on the Earth lulled in her winter sleep I woke, and envied her as she was sleeping. Too happy Earth! over thy face shall creep The wakening vernal airs, until thou, leaping From unremembered dreams, shalt … see _15 No death divide thy immortality.

3. I loved—oh, no, I mean not one of ye, Or any earthly one, though ye are dear As human heart to human heart may be;— I loved, I know not what—but this low sphere _20 And all that it contains, contains not thee, Thou, whom, seen nowhere, I feel everywhere. From Heaven and Earth, and all that in them are, Veiled art thou, like a … star.

4. By Heaven and Earth, from all whose shapes thou flowest, _25 Neither to be contained, delayed, nor hidden; Making divine the loftiest and the lowest, When for a moment thou art not forbidden To live within the life which thou bestowest; And leaving noblest things vacant and chidden, _30 Cold as a corpse after the spirit's flight Blank as the sun after the birth of night.

5. In winds, and trees, and streams, and all things common, In music and the sweet unconscious tone Of animals, and voices which are human, _35 Meant to express some feelings of their own; In the soft motions and rare smile of woman, In flowers and leaves, and in the grass fresh-shown, Or dying in the autumn, I the most Adore thee present or lament thee lost. _40

6. And thus I went lamenting, when I saw A plant upon the river's margin lie Like one who loved beyond his nature's law, And in despair had cast him down to die; Its leaves, which had outlived the frost, the thaw _45 Had blighted; like a heart which hatred's eye Can blast not, but which pity kills; the dew Lay on its spotted leaves like tears too true.

7. The Heavens had wept upon it, but the Earth Had crushed it on her maternal breast _50

…

8. I bore it to my chamber, and I planted It in a vase full of the lightest mould; The winter beams which out of Heaven slanted Fell through the window-panes, disrobed of cold, Upon its leaves and flowers; the stars which panted _55 In evening for the Day, whose car has rolled Over the horizon's wave, with looks of light Smiled on it from the threshold of the night.

9. The mitigated influences of air And light revived the plant, and from it grew _60 Strong leaves and tendrils, and its flowers fair, Full as a cup with the vine's burning dew, O'erflowed with golden colours; an atmosphere Of vital warmth enfolded it anew, And every impulse sent to every part The unbeheld pulsations of its heart. _65

10. Well might the plant grow beautiful and strong, Even if the air and sun had smiled not on it; For one wept o'er it all the winter long Tears pure as Heaven's rain, which fell upon it _70 Hour after hour; for sounds of softest song Mixed with the stringed melodies that won it To leave the gentle lips on which it slept, Had loosed the heart of him who sat and wept.

11. Had loosed his heart, and shook the leaves and flowers _75 On which he wept, the while the savage storm Waked by the darkest of December's hours Was raving round the chamber hushed and warm; The birds were shivering in their leafless bowers, The fish were frozen in the pools, the form _80 Of every summer plant was dead Whilst this….

…

NOTES: _7 lorn Boscombe manuscript; poor edition 1824. _23 So Boscombe manuscript; Dim object of soul's idolatry edition 1824. _24 star Boscombe manuscript; wanting edition 1824. _38 grass fresh Boscombe manuscript; fresh grass edition 1824. _46 like Boscombe manuscript; as edition 1824. _68 air and sun Boscombe manuscript; sun and air edition 1824.

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THE MAGNETIC LADY TO HER PATIENT.

[Published by Medwin, “The Athenaeum”, August 11, 1832. There is a copy amongst the Trelawny manuscripts.]

1. ‘Sleep, sleep on! forget thy pain; My hand is on thy brow, My spirit on thy brain; My pity on thy heart, poor friend; And from my fingers flow _5 The powers of life, and like a sign, Seal thee from thine hour of woe; And brood on thee, but may not blend With thine.

2. ‘Sleep, sleep on! I love thee not; _10 But when I think that he Who made and makes my lot As full of flowers as thine of weeds, Might have been lost like thee; And that a hand which was not mine _15 Might then have charmed his agony As I another’s—my heart bleeds For thine.

3. ‘Sleep, sleep, and with the slumber of The dead and the unborn _20 Forget thy life and love; Forget that thou must wake forever; Forget the world’s dull scorn; Forget lost health, and the divine Feelings which died in youth’s brief morn; _25 And forget me, for I can never Be thine.

4. ‘Like a cloud big with a May shower, My soul weeps healing rain On thee, thou withered flower! _30 It breathes mute music on thy sleep Its odour calms thy brain! Its light within thy gloomy breast Spreads like a second youth again. By mine thy being is to its deep _35 Possessed.

5. ‘The spell is done. How feel you now?’ ‘Better—Quite well,’ replied The sleeper.—‘What would do _39 You good when suffering and awake? What cure your head and side?—’ ‘What would cure, that would kill me, Jane: And as I must on earth abide Awhile, yet tempt me not to break My chain.’ _45

NOTES; _1, _10 Sleep Trelawny manuscript, 1839, 2nd edition; Sleep on 1832, 1839, 1st edition. _16 charmed Trelawny manuscript; chased 1832, editions 1839. _21 love]woe 1832. _42 so Trelawny manuscript ’Twould kill me what would cure my pain 1832, editions 1839. _44 Awhile yet, cj. A.C. Bradley.

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LINES: ‘WHEN THE LAMP IS SHATTERED’.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824. There is a copy amongst the Trelawny manuscripts.]

1. When the lamp is shattered The light in the dust lies dead— When the cloud is scattered The rainbow’s glory is shed. When the lute is broken, _5 Sweet tones are remembered not; When the lips have spoken, Loved accents are soon forgot.

2. As music and splendour Survive not the lamp and the lute, _10 The heart’s echoes render No song when the spirit is mute:— No song but sad dirges, Like the wind through a ruined cell, Or the mournful surges _15 That ring the dead seaman’s knell.

3. When hearts have once mingled Love first leaves the well-built nest; The weak one is singled To endure what it once possessed. _20 O Love! who bewailest The frailty of all things here, Why choose you the frailest For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

4. Its passions will rock thee _25 As the storms rock the ravens on high; Bright reason will mock thee, Like the sun from a wintry sky. From thy nest every rafter Will rot, and thine eagle home _30 Leave thee naked to laughter, When leaves fall and cold winds come.

NOTES: _6 tones edition 1824; notes Trelawny manuscript. _14 through edition 1824; in Trelawny manuscript. _16 dead edition 1824; lost Trelawny manuscript. _23 choose edition 1824; chose Trelawny manuscript. _25-_32 wanting Trelawny manuscript.

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TO JANE: THE INVITATION.

[This and the following poem were published together in their original form as one piece under the title, “The Pine Forest of the Cascine near Pisa”, by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824; reprinted in the same shape, “Poetical Works”, 1839,

1st edition; republished separately in their present form, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition. There is a copy amongst the Trelawny manuscripts.]

Best and brightest, come away! Fairer far than this fair Day, Which, like thee to those in sorrow, Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow To the rough Year just awake _5 In its cradle on the brake. The brightest hour of unborn Spring, Through the winter wandering, Found, it seems, the halcyon Morn To hoar February born, _10 Bending from Heaven, in azure mirth, It kissed the forehead of the Earth, And smiled upon the silent sea, And bade the frozen streams be free, And waked to music all their fountains, _15 And breathed upon the frozen mountains, And like a prophetess of May Strewed flowers upon the barren way, Making the wintry world appear Like one on whom thou smilest, dear. _20

Away, away, from men and towns, To the wild wood and the downs— To the silent wilderness Where the soul need not repress Its music lest it should not find _25 An echo in another’s mind, While the touch of Nature’s art Harmonizes heart to heart. I leave this notice on my door For each accustomed visitor:— _30 ‘I am gone into the fields To take what this sweet hour yields;— Reflection, you may come to-morrow, Sit by the fireside with Sorrow.— You with the unpaid bill, Despair,— You, tiresome verse-reciter, Care,— _35 I will pay you in the grave,— Death will listen to your stave. Expectation too, be off! To-day is for itself enough; _40 Hope, in pity mock not Woe With smiles, nor follow where I go; Long having lived on thy sweet food, At length I find one moment’s good After long pain—with all your love, _45 This you never told me of.’

Radiant Sister of the Day, Awake! arise! and come away! To the wild woods and the plains, And the pools where winter rains _50. Image all their roof of leaves, Where the pine its garland weaves Of sapless green and ivy dun Round stems that never kiss the sun; Where the lawns and pastures be, _55 And the sandhills of the sea;— Where the melting hoar-frost wets The daisy-star that never sets, And wind-flowers,

and violets, Which yet join not scent to hue, _60 Crown the pale year weak and new; When the night is left behind In the deep east, dun and blind, And the blue noon is over us, And the multitudinous _65 Billows murmur at our feet, Where the earth and ocean meet, And all things seem only one In the universal sun.

NOTES: _34 with Trelawny manuscript; of 1839, 2nd edition. _44 moment's Trelawny manuscript; moment 1839, 2nd edition. _50 And Trelawny manuscript; To 1839, 2nd edition. _53 dun Trelawny manuscript; dim 1839, 2nd edition.

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TO JANE: THE RECOLLECTION.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Poetical Works", 1839, 2nd edition. See the Editor's prefatory note to the preceding.]

1. Now the last day of many days, All beautiful and bright as thou, The loveliest and the last, is dead, Rise, Memory, and write its praise! Up,—to thy wonted work! come, trace _5 The epitaph of glory fled,— For now the Earth has changed its face, A frown is on the Heaven's brow.

2. We wandered to the Pine Forest That skirts the Ocean's foam, _10 The lightest wind was in its nest, The tempest in its home. The whispering waves were half asleep, The clouds were gone to play, And on the bosom of the deep _15 The smile of Heaven lay; It seemed as if the hour were one Sent from beyond the skies, Which scattered from above the sun A light of Paradise. _20

3. We paused amid the pines that stood The giants of the waste, Tortured by storms to shapes as rude As serpents interlaced; And, soothed by every azure breath, _25 That under Heaven is blown, To harmonies and hues beneath, As tender as its own, Now all the tree-tops lay asleep, Like green waves on the sea, _30 As still as in the silent deep The ocean woods may be.

4. How calm it was!—the silence there By such a chain was bound That even the busy woodpecker _35 Made stiller by her sound The inviolable quietness; The

breath of peace we drew With its soft motion made not less The calm that round us grew. _40 There seemed from the remotest seat Of the white mountain waste, To the soft flower beneath our feet, A magic circle traced,— A spirit interfused around _45 A thrilling, silent life,— To momentary peace it bound Our mortal nature's strife; And still I felt the centre of The magic circle there _50 Was one fair form that filled with love The lifeless atmosphere.

5. We paused beside the pools that lie Under the forest bough,— Each seemed as 'twere a little sky _55 Gulfed in a world below; A firmament of purple light Which in the dark earth lay, More boundless than the depth of night, And purer than the day— _60 In which the lovely forests grew, As in the upper air, More perfect both in shape and hue Than any spreading there. There lay the glade and neighbouring lawn, _65 And through the dark green wood The white sun twinkling like the dawn Out of a speckled cloud. Sweet views which in our world above Can never well be seen, _70 Were imaged by the water's love Of that fair forest green. And all was interfused beneath With an Elysian glow, An atmosphere without a breath, _75 A softer day below. Like one beloved the scene had lent To the dark water's breast, Its every leaf and lineament With more than truth expressed; _80 Until an envious wind crept by, Like an unwelcome thought, Which from the mind's too faithful eye Blots one dear image out. Though thou art ever fair and kind, _85 The forests ever green, Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind, Than calm in waters, seen.

NOTES: _6 fled edition. 1824; dead Trelawny manuscript, 1839, 2nd edition. _10 Ocean's]Ocean 1839, 2nd edition. _24 Interlaced, 1839; interlaced; cj. A.C. Bradley. _28 own; 1839 own, cj. A.C. Bradley. _42 white Trelawny manuscript; wide 1839, 2nd edition _87 Shelley's Trelawny manuscript; S—'s 1839, 2nd edition.]

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THE PINE FOREST OF THE CASCINE NEAR PISA.

[This, the first draft of "To Jane: The Invitation, The Recollection", was published

by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824, and reprinted, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 1st edition. See Editor’s Prefatory Note to “The Invitation”, above.]

Dearest, best and brightest, Come away, To the woods and to the fields! Dearer than this fairest day Which, like thee to those in sorrow, _5 Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow To the rough Year just awake In its cradle in the brake. The eldest of the Hours of Spring, Into the Winter wandering, _10 Looks upon the leafless wood, And the banks all bare and rude; Found, it seems, this halcyon Morn In February’s bosom born, Bending from Heaven, in azure mirth, _15 Kissed the cold forehead of the Earth, And smiled upon the silent sea, And bade the frozen streams be free; And waked to music all the fountains, And breathed upon the rigid mountains, _20 And made the wintry world appear Like one on whom thou smilest, Dear.

Radiant Sister of the Day, Awake! arise! and come away! To the wild woods and the plains, _25 To the pools where winter rains Image all the roof of leaves, Where the pine its garland weaves Sapless, gray, and ivy dun Round stems that never kiss the sun— _30 To the sandhills of the sea, Where the earliest violets be.

Now the last day of many days, All beautiful and bright as thou, The loveliest and the last, is dead, _35 Rise, Memory, and write its praise! And do thy wonted work and trace The epitaph of glory fled; For now the Earth has changed its face, A frown is on the Heaven’s brow. _40

We wandered to the Pine Forest That skirts the Ocean’s foam, The lightest wind was in its nest, The tempest in its home.

The whispering waves were half asleep, _45 The clouds were gone to play, And on the woods, and on the deep The smile of Heaven lay.

It seemed as if the day were one Sent from beyond the skies, _50 Which shed to earth above the sun A light of Paradise.

We paused amid the pines that stood, The giants of the waste, Tortured by storms to shapes as rude _55 With stems like serpents interlaced.

How calm it was—the silence there By such a chain was bound, That even the busy woodpecker Made stiller by her sound _60

The inviolable quietness; The breath of peace we drew With its soft motion made not less The calm that round us grew.

It seemed that from the remotest seat _65 Of the white mountain’s waste To the bright flower beneath our feet, A magic circle traced;—

A spirit interfused around, A thinking, silent life; _70 To momentary peace it bound Our mortal nature’s strife;—

And still, it seemed, the centre of The magic circle there, Was one whose being filled with love _75 The breathless atmosphere.

Were not the crocuses that grew Under that ilex-tree As beautiful in scent and hue As ever fed the bee? _80

We stood beneath the pools that lie Under the forest bough, And each seemed like a sky Gulfed in a world below;

A purple firmament of light _85 Which in the dark earth lay, More boundless than the depth of night, And clearer than the day—

In which the massy forests grew As in the upper air, _90 More perfect both in shape and hue Than any waving there.

Like one beloved the scene had lent To the dark water’s breast Its every leaf and lineament _95 With that clear truth expressed;

There lay far glades and neighbouring lawn, And through the dark green crowd The white sun twinkling like the dawn Under a speckled cloud. _100

Sweet views, which in our world above Can never well be seen, Were imaged by the water’s love Of that fair forest green.

And all was interfused beneath _105 With an Elysian air, An atmosphere without a breath, A silence sleeping there.

Until a wandering wind crept by, Like an unwelcome thought, _110 Which from my mind's too faithful eye Blots thy bright image out.

For thou art good and dear and kind, The forest ever green, But less of peace in S—'s mind, Than calm in waters, seen. _116.

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WITH A GUITAR, TO JANE.

[Published by Medwin, "The Athenaeum", October 20, 1832; "Frazer's Magazine", January 1833. There is a copy amongst the Trelawny manuscripts.]

Ariel to Miranda:—Take This slave of Music, for the sake Of him who is the slave of thee, And teach it all the harmony In which thou canst, and only thou, _5 Make the delighted spirit glow, Till joy denies itself again, And, too intense, is turned to pain; For by permission and command Of thine own Prince Ferdinand, _10 Poor Ariel sends this silent token Of more than ever can be spoken; Your guardian spirit, Ariel, who, From life to life, must still pursue Your happiness;—for thus alone _15 Can Ariel ever find his own. From Prospero's enchanted cell, As the mighty verses tell, To the throne of Naples, he Lit you o'er the trackless sea, _20 Flitting on, your prow before, Like a living meteor. When you die, the silent Moon, In her interlunar swoon, Is not sadder in her cell Than deserted Ariel. When you live again on earth, Like an unseen star of birth, Ariel guides you o'er the sea Of life from your nativity. _30 Many changes have been run Since Ferdinand and you begun Your course of love, and Ariel still Has tracked your steps, and served your will; Now, in humbler, happier lot, _35 This is all remembered not; And now, alas! the poor sprite is Imprisoned, for some fault of his, In a body like a grave;— From you he only dares to crave, _40 For his service and his sorrow, A smile today, a song tomorrow.

The artist who this idol wrought, To echo all harmonious thought, Felled a tree, while on the steep _45 The woods were in their winter sleep, Rocked in that repose divine On the wind-swept Apennine; And dreaming, some of Autumn past, And

some of Spring approaching fast, _50 And some of April buds and showers, And some of songs in July bowers, And all of love; and so this tree,— O that such our death may be!— Died in sleep, and felt no pain, _55 To live in happier form again: From which, beneath Heaven's fairest star, The artist wrought this loved Guitar, And taught it justly to reply, To all who question skilfully, _60 In language gentle as thine own; Whispering in enamoured tone Sweet oracles of woods and dells, And summer winds in sylvan cells; For it had learned all harmonies _65 Of the plains and of the skies, Of the forests and the mountains, And the many-voiced fountains; The clearest echoes of the hills, The softest notes of falling rills, _70 The melodies of birds and bees, The murmuring of summer seas, And pattering rain, and breathing dew, And airs of evening; and it knew That seldom-heard mysterious sound, _75 Which, driven on its diurnal round, As it floats through boundless day, Our world enkindles on its way.— All this it knows, but will not tell To those who cannot question well _80 The Spirit that inhabits it; It talks according to the wit Of its companions; and no more Is heard than has been felt before, By those who tempt it to betray _85 These secrets of an elder day: But, sweetly as its answers will Flatter hands of perfect skill, It keeps its highest, holiest tone For our beloved Jane alone. _90

NOTES: _12 Of more than ever]Of love that never 1833. _46 woods Trelawny manuscript, 1839, 2nd edition; winds 1832, 1833, 1839, 1st edition. _58 this Trelawny manuscript, 1839, 2nd edition; that 1832, 1833, 1839, 1st edition. _61 thine own Trelawny manuscript, 1839, 2nd edition; its own 1832, 1833, 1839, 1st edition. _76 on Trelawny manuscript, 1839, 2nd edition; in 1832, 1833, 1839, 1st edition. _90 Jane Trelawny manuscript; friend 1832, 1833, editions 1839.

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TO JANE: 'THE KEEN STARS WERE TWINKLING'.

[Published in part (lines 7-24) by Medwin (under the title, "An Ariette for Music. To

a Lady singing to her Accompaniment on the Guitar"), "The Athenaeum", November 17, 1832; reprinted by Mrs. Shelley, "Poetical Works", 1839, 1st edition. Republished in full (under the title, To —.), "Poetical Works", 1839, 2nd edition. The Trelawny manuscript is headed "To Jane". Mr. C.W. Frederickson of Brooklyn possesses a transcript in an unknown hand.]

1. The keen stars were twinkling, And the fair moon was rising among them, Dear Jane! The guitar was tinkling, But the notes were not sweet till you sung them _5 Again.

2. As the moon's soft splendour O'er the faint cold starlight of Heaven Is thrown, So your voice most tender _10 To the strings without soul had then given Its own.

3. The stars will awaken, Though the moon sleep a full hour later, To-night; _15 No leaf will be shaken Whilst the dews of your melody scatter Delight.

4. Though the sound overpowers, Sing again, with your dear voice revealing _20 A tone Of some world far from ours, Where music and moonlight and feeling Are one.

NOTES: _3 Dear *** 1839, 2nd edition. _7 soft]pale Fred. manuscript. _10 your 1839, 2nd edition.; thy 1832, 1839, 1st edition, Fred. manuscript. _11 had then 1839, 2nd edition; has 1832, 1839, 1st edition; hath Fred. manuscript. _12 Its]Thine Fred. manuscript. _17 your 1839, 2nd edition; thy 1832, 1839, 1st edition, Fred. manuscript. _19 sound]song Fred. manuscript. _20 your dear 1839, 2nd edition; thy sweet 1832, 1839, 1st edition; thy soft Fred. manuscript.

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A DIRGE.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, "Posthumous Poems", 1824.]

Rough wind, that moanest loud Grief too sad for song; Wild wind, when sullen cloud Knells all the night long; Sad storm whose tears are vain, _5 Bare woods, whose branches strain, Deep caves and dreary main,— Wail, for the world's wrong!

NOTE: _6 strain cj. Rossetti; stain edition 1824.

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LINES WRITTEN IN THE BAY OF LERICI.

[Published from the Boscombe manuscripts by Dr. Garnett, “Macmillan’s Magazine”, June, 1862; reprinted, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

She left me at the silent time When the moon had ceased to climb The azure path of Heaven’s steep, And like an albatross asleep, Balanced on her wings of light, _5 Hovered in the purple night, Ere she sought her ocean nest In the chambers of the West. She left me, and I stayed alone Thinking over every tone _10 Which, though silent to the ear, The enchanted heart could hear, Like notes which die when born, but still Haunt the echoes of the hill; And feeling ever—oh, too much!— _15 The soft vibration of her touch, As if her gentle hand, even now, Lightly trembled on my brow; And thus, although she absent were, Memory gave me all of her _20 That even Fancy dares to claim:— Her presence had made weak and tame All passions, and I lived alone In the time which is our own; The past and future were forgot, _25 As they had been, and would be, not. But soon, the guardian angel gone, The daemon reassumed his throne In my faint heart. I dare not speak My thoughts, but thus disturbed and weak _30 I sat and saw the vessels glide Over the ocean bright and wide, Like spirit-winged chariots sent O’er some serenest element For ministrations strange and far; _35 As if to some Elysian star Sailed for drink to medicine Such sweet and bitter pain as mine. And the wind that winged their flight From the land came fresh and light, _40 And the scent of winged flowers, And the coolness of the hours Of dew, and sweet warmth left by day, Were scattered o’er the twinkling bay. And the fisher with his lamp _45 And spear about the low rocks damp Crept, and struck the fish which came To worship the delusive flame. Too happy they, whose pleasure sought Extinguishes all sense and thought _50 Of the regret that pleasure leaves, Destroying life alone, not peace!

NOTES: _11 though silent Relics 1862; though now silent Mac. Mag. 1862. _31 saw Relics 1862; watched Mac. Mag. 1862.

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LINES: ‘WE MEET NOT AS WE PARTED’.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

1. We meet not as we parted, We feel more than all may see; My bosom is heavy-hearted, And thine full of doubt for me:— One moment has bound the free. _5

2. That moment is gone for ever, Like lightning that flashed and died— Like a snowflake upon the river— Like a sunbeam upon the tide, Which the dark shadows hide. _10

3. That moment from time was singled As the first of a life of pain; The cup of its joy was mingled —Delusion too sweet though vain! Too sweet to be mine again. _15

4. Sweet lips, could my heart have hidden That its life was crushed by you, Ye would not have then forbidden The death which a heart so true Sought in your briny dew. _20

5. … … … Methinks too little cost For a moment so found, so lost! _25

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THE ISLE.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

There was a little lawny islet By anemone and violet, Like mosaic, paven: And its roof was flowers and leaves Which the summer’s breath enweaves, _5 Where nor sun nor showers nor breeze Pierce the pines and tallest trees, Each a gem engraven;— Girt by many an azure wave With which the clouds and mountains pave _10 A lake’s blue chasm.

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FRAGMENT: TO THE MOON.

[Published by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

Bright wanderer, fair coquette of Heaven, To whom alone it has been given To change and be adored for ever, Envy not this dim world, for never But once within its shadow grew _5 One fair as—

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EPITAPH.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

These are two friends whose lives were undivided; So let their memory be, now they have glided Under the grave; let not their bones be parted, For their two hearts in life were single-hearted.

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NOTE ON POEMS OF 1822, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

This morn thy gallant bark Sailed on a sunny sea: ’Tis noon, and tempests dark Have wrecked it on the lee. Ah woe! ah woe! By Spirits of the deep Thou’rt cradled on the billow To thy eternal sleep.

Thou sleep’st upon the shore Beside the knelling surge, And Sea-nymphs evermore Shall sadly chant thy dirge. They come, they come, The Spirits of the deep,— While near thy seaweed pillow My lonely watch I keep.

From far across the sea I hear a loud lament, By Echo’s voice for thee From Ocean’s caverns sent. O list! O list! The Spirits of the deep! They raise a wail of sorrow, While I forever weep.

With this last year of the life of Shelley these Notes end. They are not what I intended them to be. I began with energy, and a burning desire to impart to the world, in worthy language, the sense I have of the virtues and genius of the beloved

and the lost; my strength has failed under the task. Recurrence to the past, full of its own deep and unforgotten joys and sorrows, contrasted with succeeding years of painful and solitary struggle, has shaken my health. Days of great suffering have followed my attempts to write, and these again produced a weakness and languor that spread their sinister influence over these notes. I dislike speaking of myself, but cannot help apologizing to the dead, and to the public, for not having executed in the manner I desired the history I engaged to give of Shelley's writings. (I at one time feared that the correction of the press might be less exact through my illness; but I believe that it is nearly free from error. Some asterisks occur in a few pages, as they did in the volume of "Posthumous Poems", either because they refer to private concerns, or because the original manuscript was left imperfect. Did any one see the papers from which I drew that volume, the wonder would be how any eyes or patience were capable of extracting it from so confused a mass, interlined and broken into fragments, so that the sense could only be deciphered and joined by guesses which might seem rather intuitive than founded on reasoning. Yet I believe no mistake was made.)

The winter of 1822 was passed in Pisa, if we might call that season winter in which autumn merged into spring after the interval of but few days of bleaker weather. Spring sprang up early, and with extreme beauty. Shelley had conceived the idea of writing a tragedy on the subject of Charles I. It was one that he believed adapted for a drama; full of intense interest, contrasted character, and busy passion. He had recommended it long before, when he encouraged me to attempt a play. Whether the subject proved more difficult than he anticipated, or whether in fact he could not bend his mind away from the broodings and wanderings of thought, divested from human interest, which he best loved, I cannot tell; but he proceeded slowly, and threw it aside for one of the most mystical of his poems, the "Triumph of Life", on which he was employed at the last.

His passion for boating was fostered at this time by having among our friends

several sailors. His favourite companion, Edward Ellerker Williams, of the 8th Light Dragoons, had begun his life in the navy, and had afterwards entered the army; he had spent several years in India, and his love for adventure and manly exercises accorded with Shelley's taste. It was their favourite plan to build a boat such as they could manage themselves, and, living on the sea-coast, to enjoy at every hour and season the pleasure they loved best. Captain Roberts, R.N., undertook to build the boat at Genoa, where he was also occupied in building the "Bolivar" for Lord Byron. Ours was to be an open boat, on a model taken from one of the royal dockyards. I have since heard that there was a defect in this model, and that it was never seaworthy. In the month of February, Shelley and his friend went to Spezia to seek for houses for us. Only one was to be found at all suitable; however, a trifle such as not finding a house could not stop Shelley; the one found was to serve for all. It was unfurnished; we sent our furniture by sea, and with a good deal of precipitation, arising from his impatience, made our removal. We left Pisa on the 26th of April.

The Bay of Spezia is of considerable extent, and divided by a rocky promontory into a larger and smaller one. The town of Lerici is situated on the eastern point, and in the depth of the smaller bay, which bears the name of this town, is the village of San Terenzo. Our house, Casa Magni, was close to this village; the sea came up to the door, a steep hill sheltered it behind. The proprietor of the estate on which it was situated was insane; he had begun to erect a large house at the summit of the hill behind, but his malady prevented its being finished, and it was falling into ruin. He had (and this to the Italians had seemed a glaring symptom of very decided madness) rooted up the olives on the hillside, and planted forest trees. These were mostly young, but the plantation was more in English taste than I ever elsewhere saw in Italy; some fine walnut and ilex trees intermingled their dark massy foliage, and formed groups which still haunt my memory, as then they satiated the eye with a sense of loveliness. The scene was indeed of unimaginable beauty. The blue extent

of waters, the almost landlocked bay, the near castle of Lerici shutting it in to the east, and distant Porto Venere to the west; the varied forms of the precipitous rocks that bound in the beach, over which there was only a winding rugged footpath towards Lerici, and none on the other side; the tideless sea leaving no sands nor shingle, formed a picture such as one sees in Salvator Rosa's landscapes only. Sometimes the sunshine vanished when the sirocco raged—the 'ponente' the wind was called on that shore. The gales and squalls that hailed our first arrival surrounded the bay with foam; the howling wind swept round our exposed house, and the sea roared unremittingly, so that we almost fancied ourselves on board ship. At other times sunshine and calm invested sea and sky, and the rich tints of Italian heaven bathed the scene in bright and ever-varying tints.

The natives were wilder than the place. Our near neighbours of San Terenzo were more like savages than any people I ever before lived among. Many a night they passed on the beach, singing, or rather howling; the women dancing about among the waves that broke at their feet, the men leaning against the rocks and joining in their loud wild chorus. We could get no provisions nearer than Sarzana, at a distance of three miles and a half off, with the torrent of the Magra between; and even there the supply was very deficient. Had we been wrecked on an island of the South Seas, we could scarcely have felt ourselves farther from civilisation and comfort; but, where the sun shines, the latter becomes an unnecessary luxury, and we had enough society among ourselves. Yet I confess housekeeping became rather a toilsome task, especially as I was suffering in my health, and could not exert myself actively.

At first the fatal boat had not arrived, and was expected with great impatience. On Monday, 12th May, it came. Williams records the long-wished-for fact in his journal: 'Cloudy and threatening weather. M. Maglian called; and after dinner, and while walking with him on the terrace, we discovered a strange sail coming round the point of Porto Venere, which proved at length to be Shelley's boat. She had left Genoa on Thursday last, but had been driven back by the prevailing bad winds. A

Mr. Heslop and two English seamen brought her round, and they speak most highly of her performances. She does indeed excite my surprise and admiration. Shelley and I walked to Lerici, and made a stretch off the land to try her: and I find she fetches whatever she looks at. In short, we have now a perfect plaything for the summer.'—It was thus that short-sighted mortals welcomed Death, he having disguised his grim form in a pleasing mask! The time of the friends was now spent on the sea; the weather became fine, and our whole party often passed the evenings on the water when the wind promised pleasant sailing. Shelley and Williams made longer excursions; they sailed several times to Massa. They had engaged one of the seamen who brought her round, a boy, by name Charles Vivian; and they had not the slightest apprehension of danger. When the weather was unfavourable, they employed themselves with alterations in the rigging, and by building a boat of canvas and reeds, as light as possible, to have on board the other for the convenience of landing in waters too shallow for the larger vessel. When Shelley was on board, he had his papers with him; and much of the "Triumph of Life" was written as he sailed or weltered on that sea which was soon to engulf him.

The heats set in in the middle of June; the days became excessively hot. But the sea-breeze cooled the air at noon, and extreme heat always put Shelley in spirits. A long drought had preceded the heat; and prayers for rain were being put up in the churches, and processions of relics for the same effect took place in every town. At this time we received letters announcing the arrival of Leigh Hunt at Genoa. Shelley was very eager to see him. I was confined to my room by severe illness, and could not move; it was agreed that Shelley and Williams should go to Leghorn in the boat. Strange that no fear of danger crossed our minds! Living on the sea-shore, the ocean became as a plaything: as a child may sport with a lighted stick, till a spark inflames a forest, and spreads destruction over all, so did we fearlessly and blindly tamper with danger, and make a game of the terrors of the ocean. Our Italian neighbours, even, trusted themselves as far as Massa in the skiff; and the running down the line

of coast to Leghorn gave no more notion of peril than a fair-weather inland navigation would have done to those who had never seen the sea. Once, some months before, Trelawny had raised a warning voice as to the difference of our calm bay and the open sea beyond; but Shelley and his friend, with their one sailor-boy, thought themselves a match for the storms of the Mediterranean, in a boat which they looked upon as equal to all it was put to do.

On the 1st of July they left us. If ever shadow of future ill darkened the present hour, such was over my mind when they went. During the whole of our stay at Lerici, an intense presentiment of coming evil brooded over my mind, and covered this beautiful place and genial summer with the shadow of coming misery. I had vainly struggled with these emotions—they seemed accounted for by my illness; but at this hour of separation they recurred with renewed violence. I did not anticipate danger for them, but a vague expectation of evil shook me to agony, and I could scarcely bring myself to let them go. The day was calm and clear; and, a fine breeze rising at twelve, they weighed for Leghorn. They made the run of about fifty miles in seven hours and a half. The “Bolivar” was in port; and, the regulations of the Health-office not permitting them to go on shore after sunset, they borrowed cushions from the larger vessel, and slept on board their boat.

They spent a week at Pisa and Leghorn. The want of rain was severely felt in the country. The weather continued sultry and fine. I have heard that Shelley all this time was in brilliant spirits. Not long before, talking of presentiment, he had said the only one that he ever found infallible was the certain advent of some evil fortune when he felt peculiarly joyous. Yet, if ever fate whispered of coming disaster, such inaudible but not unfelt prognostics hovered around us. The beauty of the place seemed unearthly in its excess: the distance we were at from all signs of civilization, the sea at our feet, its murmurs or its roaring for ever in our ears,—all these things led the mind to brood over strange thoughts, and, lifting it from everyday life, caused it to be familiar with the unreal. A sort of spell surrounded us; and each day,

as the voyagers did not return, we grew restless and disquieted, and yet, strange to say, we were not fearful of the most apparent danger.

The spell snapped; it was all over; an interval of agonizing doubt—of days passed in miserable journeys to gain tidings, of hopes that took firmer root even as they were more baseless—was changed to the certainty of the death that eclipsed all happiness for the survivors for evermore.

There was something in our fate peculiarly harrowing. The remains of those we lost were cast on shore; but, by the quarantine-laws of the coast, we were not permitted to have possession of them—the law with respect to everything cast on land by the sea being that such should be burned, to prevent the possibility of any remnant bringing the plague into Italy; and no representation could alter the law. At length, through the kind and unwearied exertions of Mr. Dawkins, our Charge d'Affaires at Florence, we gained permission to receive the ashes after the bodies were consumed. Nothing could equal the zeal of Trelawny in carrying our wishes into effect. He was indefatigable in his exertions, and full of forethought and sagacity in his arrangements. It was a fearful task; he stood before us at last, his hands scorched and blistered by the flames of the funeral-pyre, and by touching the burnt relics as he placed them in the receptacles prepared for the purpose. And there, in compass of that small case, was gathered all that remained on earth of him whose genius and virtue were a crown of glory to the world—whose love had been the source of happiness, peace, and good,—to be buried with him!

The concluding stanzas of the "Adonais" pointed out where the remains ought to be deposited; in addition to which our beloved child lay buried in the cemetery at Rome. Thither Shelley's ashes were conveyed; and they rest beneath one of the antique weed-grown towers that recur at intervals in the circuit of the massy ancient wall of Rome. He selected the hallowed place himself; there is

'the sepulchre, Oh, not of him, but of our joy!— … And gray walls moulder round,

on which dull Time Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand; And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime, Pavilioning the dust of him who planned This refuge for his memory, doth stand Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath, A field is spread, on which a newer band Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death, Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.'

Could sorrow for the lost, and shuddering anguish at the vacancy left behind, be soothed by poetic imaginations, there was something in Shelley's fate to mitigate pangs which yet, alas! could not be so mitigated; for hard reality brings too miserably home to the mourner all that is lost of happiness, all of lonely unsolaced struggle that remains. Still, though dreams and hues of poetry cannot blunt grief, it invests his fate with a sublime fitness, which those less nearly allied may regard with complacency. A year before he had poured into verse all such ideas about death as give it a glory of its own. He had, as it now seems, almost anticipated his own destiny; and, when the mind figures his skiff wrapped from sight by the thunder-storm, as it was last seen upon the purple sea, and then, as the cloud of the tempest passed away, no sign remained of where it had been (Captain Roberts watched the vessel with his glass from the top of the lighthouse of Leghorn, on its homeward track. They were off Via Reggio, at some distance from shore, when a storm was driven over the sea. It enveloped them and several larger vessels in darkness. When the cloud passed onwards, Roberts looked again, and saw every other vessel sailing on the ocean except their little schooner, which had vanished. From that time he could scarcely doubt the fatal truth; yet we fancied that they might have been driven towards Elba or Corsica, and so be saved. The observation made as to the spot where the boat disappeared caused it to be found, through the exertions of Trelawny for that effect. It had gone down in ten fathom water; it had not capsized, and, except such things as had floated from her, everything was found on board exactly as it had been placed when they sailed. The boat itself was uninjured. Roberts possessed himself of her, and decked her; but she proved not seaworthy, and

her shattered planks now lie rotting on the shore of one of the Ionian islands, on which she was wrecked.)—who but will regard as a prophecy the last stanza of the “Adonais”?

‘The breath whose might I have invoked in song Descends on me; my spirit’s bark is driven, Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng Whose sails were never to the tempest given; The massy earth and sphered skies are riven! I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar; Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven, The soul of Adonais, like a star, Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.’

Putney, May 1, 1839.

THE COMPLETE

POETICAL WORKS OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY VOLUME 3 OXFORD EDITION. INCLUDING MATERIALS NEVER BEFORE PRINTED IN ANY EDITION OF THE POEMS. EDITED WITH TEXTUAL NOTES BY THOMAS HUTCHINSON, M. A. EDITOR OF THE OXFORD WORDSWORTH.

1914.

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TRANSLATIONS.

[Of the Translations that follow a few were published by Shelley himself, others by Mrs. Shelley in the “Posthumous Poems”, 1824, or the “Poetical Works”, 1839, and the remainder by Medwin (1834, 1847), Garnett (1862), Rossetti (1870), Forman (1876) and Locock (1903) from the manuscript originals. Shelley’s “Translations” fall between the years 1818 and 1822.]

HYMN TO MERCURY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK OF HOMER.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824. This alone of the “Translations” is included in the Harvard manuscript book. ‘Fragments of the drafts of this and the other Hymns of Homer exist among the Boscombe manuscripts’ (Forman).]

1. Sing, Muse, the son of Maia and of Jove, The Herald-child, king of Arcadia And all its pastoral hills, whom in sweet love Having been interwoven, modest May Bore Heaven’s dread Supreme. An antique grove _5 Shadowed the cavern where the lovers lay In the deep night, unseen by Gods or Men, And white-armed Juno slumbered sweetly then.

2. Now, when the joy of Jove had its fulfilling, And Heaven’s tenth moon chronicled her relief, _10 She gave to light a babe all babes excelling, A schemer subtle beyond all belief; A shepherd of thin dreams, a cow-stealing, A night-watching, and door-waylaying thief, Who ‘mongst the Gods was soon about to thieve, _15 And other glorious actions to achieve.

3. The babe was born at the first peep of day; He began playing on the lyre at noon, And the same evening did he steal away Apollo’s herds;—the fourth day of the moon _20 On which him bore the venerable May, From her immortal limbs he leaped full soon, Nor long could in the sacred cradle keep, But out to seek Apollo’s herds would creep.

4. Out of the lofty cavern wandering _25 He found a tortoise, and cried out—‘A treasure!’ (For Mercury first made the tortoise sing) The beast before the portal at his leisure The flowery herbage was depasturing, Moving his feet in a deliberate measure _30 Over the turf. Jove’s profitable son Eying him laughed, and laughing thus begun:—

5. ‘A useful godsend are you to me now, King of the dance, companion of the feast, Lovely in all your nature! Welcome, you _35 Excellent plaything! Where, sweet mountain-beast, Got you that speckled shell? Thus much I know, You must come home with me and be my guest; You will give joy to me, and I will do All that is in my power to honour you. _40

6. ‘Better to be at home than out of door, So come with me; and though it has been said That you alive defend from magic power, I know you will sing sweetly when you’re dead.’ Thus having spoken, the quaint infant bore, _45 Lifting it from the grass on which it fed And grasping it in his delighted hold, His treasured prize into the cavern old.

7. Then scooping with a chisel of gray steel, He bored the life and soul out of the beast.— _50 Not swifter a swift thought of woe or weal Darts through the tumult of a human breast Which thronging cares annoy—not swifter wheel The flashes of its torture and unrest Out of the dizzy eyes—than Maia’s son _55 All that he did devise hath featly done.

8. … And through the tortoise’s hard stony skin At proper distances small holes he made, And fastened the cut stems of reeds within, And with a piece of leather overlaid _60 The open space and fixed the cubits in, Fitting the bridge to both, and stretched o’er all Symphonious cords of sheep-gut rhythmical.

9. When he had wrought the lovely instrument, He tried the chords, and made division meet, _65 Preluding with the plectrum, and there went Up from beneath his hand a tumult sweet Of mighty sounds, and from his lips he sent A strain of

unpremeditated wit Joyous and wild and wanton—such you may _70 Hear among revellers on a holiday.

10. He sung how Jove and May of the bright sandal Dallied in love not quite legitimate; And his own birth, still scoffing at the scandal, And naming his own name, did celebrate; _75 His mother's cave and servant maids he planned all In plastic verse, her household stuff and state, Perennial pot, trippet, and brazen pan,— But singing, he conceived another plan.

11. … Seized with a sudden fancy for fresh meat, _80 He in his sacred crib deposited The hollow lyre, and from the cavern sweet Rushed with great leaps up to the mountain's head, Revolving in his mind some subtle feat Of thievish craft, such as a swindler might _85 Devise in the lone season of dun night.

12. Lo! the great Sun under the ocean's bed has Driven steeds and chariot—the child meanwhile strode O'er the Pierian mountains clothed in shadows, Where the immortal oxen of the God _90 Are pastured in the flowering unmown meadows, And safely stalled in a remote abode.— The archer Argicide, elate and proud, Drove fifty from the herd, lowing aloud.

13. He drove them wandering o'er the sandy way, _95 But, being ever mindful of his craft, Backward and forward drove he them astray, So that the tracks which seemed before, were aft; His sandals then he threw to the ocean spray, And for each foot he wrought a kind of raft _100 Of tamarisk, and tamarisk-like sprigs, And bound them in a lump with withy twigs.

14. And on his feet he tied these sandals light, The trail of whose wide leaves might not betray His track; and then, a self-sufficing wight, _105 Like a man hastening on some distant way, He from Pieria's mountain bent his flight; But an old man perceived the infant pass Down green Onchestus heaped like beds with grass.

15. The old man stood dressing his sunny vine: _110 'Halloo! old fellow with the crooked shoulder! You grub those stumps? before they will bear wine Methinks

even you must grow a little older: Attend, I pray, to this advice of mine, As you would ‘scape what might appal a bolder— _115 Seeing, see not—and hearing, hear not—and— If you have understanding—understand.’

16. So saying, Hermes roused the oxen vast; O’er shadowy mountain and resounding dell, And flower-paven plains, great Hermes passed; _120 Till the black night divine, which favouring fell Around his steps, grew gray, and morning fast Wakened the world to work, and from her cell Sea-strewn, the Pallantean Moon sublime Into her watch-tower just began to climb. _125

17. Now to Alpheus he had driven all The broad-foreheaded oxen of the Sun; They came unwearied to the lofty stall And to the water-troughs which ever run Through the fresh fields—and when with rushgrass tall, _130 Lotus and all sweet herbage, every one Had pastured been, the great God made them move Towards the stall in a collected drove.

18. A mighty pile of wood the God then heaped, And having soon conceived the mystery _135 Of fire, from two smooth laurel branches stripped The bark, and rubbed them in his palms;—on high Suddenly forth the burning vapour leaped And the divine child saw delightedly.— Mercury first found out for human weal _140 Tinder-box, matches, fire-irons, flint and steel.

19. And fine dry logs and roots innumerous He gathered in a delve upon the ground— And kindled them—and instantaneous The strength of the fierce flame was breathed around: _145 And whilst the might of glorious Vulcan thus Wrapped the great pile with glare and roaring sound, Hermes dragged forth two heifers, lowing loud, Close to the fire—such might was in the God.

20. And on the earth upon their backs he threw _150 The panting beasts, and rolled them o’er and o’er, And bored their lives out. Without more ado He cut up fat and flesh, and down before The fire, on spits of wood he placed the two, Toasting their flesh and ribs, and all the gore _155 Pursed in the bowels; and while this was done

He stretched their hides over a craggy stone.

21. We mortals let an ox grow old, and then Cut it up after long consideration,— But joyous-minded Hermes from the glen _160 Drew the fat spoils to the more open station Of a flat smooth space, and portioned them; and when He had by lot assigned to each a ration Of the twelve Gods, his mind became aware Of all the joys which in religion are. _165

22. For the sweet savour of the roasted meat Tempted him though immortal. Natheless He checked his haughty will and did not eat, Though what it cost him words can scarce express, And every wish to put such morsels sweet _170 Down his most sacred throat, he did repress; But soon within the lofty portalled stall He placed the fat and flesh and bones and all.

23. And every trace of the fresh butchery And cooking, the God soon made disappear, _175 As if it all had vanished through the sky; He burned the hoofs and horns and head and hair,— The insatiate fire devoured them hungrily;— And when he saw that everything was clear, He quenched the coal, and trampled the black dust, _180 And in the stream his bloody sandals tossed.

24. All night he worked in the serene moonshine— But when the light of day was spread abroad He sought his natal mountain-peaks divine. On his long wandering, neither Man nor God _185 Had met him, since he killed Apollo’s kine, Nor house-dog had barked at him on his road; Now he obliquely through the keyhole passed, Like a thin mist, or an autumnal blast.

25. Right through the temple of the spacious cave _190 He went with soft light feet—as if his tread Fell not on earth; no sound their falling gave; Then to his cradle he crept quick, and spread The swaddling-clothes about him; and the knave Lay playing with the covering of the bed _195 With his left hand about his knees—the right Held his beloved tortoise-lyre tight.

26. There he lay innocent as a new-born child, As gossips say; but though he was a

God, The Goddess, his fair mother, unbeguiled, _200 Knew all that he had done being abroad: ‘Whence come you, and from what adventure wild, You cunning rogue, and where have you abode All the long night, clothed in your impudence? What have you done since you departed hence? _205

27. ‘Apollo soon will pass within this gate And bind your tender body in a chain Inextricably tight, and fast as fate, Unless you can delude the God again, Even when within his arms—ah, runagate! _210 A pretty torment both for Gods and Men Your father made when he made you!’—‘Dear mother,’ Replied sly Hermes, ‘wherefore scold and bother?

28. ‘As if I were like other babes as old, And understood nothing of what is what; _215 And cared at all to hear my mother scold. I in my subtle brain a scheme have got, Which whilst the sacred stars round Heaven are rolled Will profit you and me—nor shall our lot Be as you counsel, without gifts or food, _220 To spend our lives in this obscure abode.

29 ‘But we will leave this shadow-peopled cave And live among the Gods, and pass each day In high communion, sharing what they have Of profuse wealth and unexhausted prey; _225 And from the portion which my father gave To Phoebus, I will snatch my share away, Which if my father will not—natheless I, Who am the king of robbers, can but try.

30. ‘And, if Latona’s son should find me out, _230 I’ll countermine him by a deeper plan; I’ll pierce the Pythian temple-walls, though stout, And sack the fane of everything I can— Caldrons and tripods of great worth no doubt, Each golden cup and polished brazen pan, _235 All the wrought tapestries and garments gay.’— So they together talked;—meanwhile the Day

31. Aethereal born arose out of the flood Of flowing Ocean, bearing light to men. Apollo passed toward the sacred wood, _240 Which from the inmost depths of its green glen Echoes the voice of Neptune,—and there stood On the same spot in green

Onchestus then That same old animal, the vine-dresser, Who was employed hedging his vineyard there. _245

32. Latona's glorious Son began:—'I pray Tell, ancient hedger of Onchestus green, Whether a drove of kine has passed this way, All heifers with crooked horns? for they have been Stolen from the herd in high Pieria, _250 Where a black bull was fed apart, between Two woody mountains in a neighbouring glen, And four fierce dogs watched there, unanimous as men.

33. 'And what is strange, the author of this theft Has stolen the fatted heifers every one, _255 But the four dogs and the black bull are left:— Stolen they were last night at set of sun, Of their soft beds and their sweet food bereft.— Now tell me, man born ere the world begun, Have you seen any one pass with the cows?'— _260 To whom the man of overhanging brows:

34. 'My friend, it would require no common skill Justly to speak of everything I see: On various purposes of good or ill Many pass by my vineyard,—and to me _265 'Tis difficult to know the invisible Thoughts, which in all those many minds may be:— Thus much alone I certainly can say, I tilled these vines till the decline of day,

35. 'And then I thought I saw, but dare not speak _270 With certainty of such a wondrous thing, A child, who could not have been born a week, Those fair-horned cattle closely following, And in his hand he held a polished stick: And, as on purpose, he walked wavering _275 From one side to the other of the road, And with his face opposed the steps he trod.'

36. Apollo hearing this, passed quickly on— No winged omen could have shown more clear That the deceiver was his father's son. _280 So the God wraps a purple atmosphere Around his shoulders, and like fire is gone To famous Pylos, seeking his kine there, And found their track and his, yet hardly cold, And cried—'What wonder do mine eyes behold! _285

37. 'Here are the footsteps of the horned herd Turned back towards their fields of

asphodel;— But THESE are not the tracks of beast or bird, Gray wolf, or bear, or lion of the dell, Or maned Centaur—sand was never stirred _290 By man or woman thus! Inexplicable! Who with unwearied feet could e'er impress The sand with such enormous vestiges?

38. 'That was most strange—but this is stranger still!' Thus having said, Phoebus impetuously _295 Sought high Cyllene's forest-cinctured hill, And the deep cavern where dark shadows lie, And where the ambrosial nymph with happy will Bore the Saturnian's love-child, Mercury— And a delightful odour from the dew _300 Of the hill pastures, at his coming, flew.

39. And Phoebus stooped under the craggy roof Arched over the dark cavern:—Maia's child Perceived that he came angry, far aloof, About the cows of which he had been beguiled; _305 And over him the fine and fragrant woof Of his ambrosial swaddling-clothes he piled— As among fire-brands lies a burning spark Covered, beneath the ashes cold and dark.

40. There, like an infant who had sucked his fill _310 And now was newly washed and put to bed, Awake, but courting sleep with weary will, And gathered in a lump, hands, feet, and head, He lay, and his beloved tortoise still He grasped and held under his shoulder-blade. _315 Phoebus the lovely mountain-goddess knew, Not less her subtle, swindling baby, who

41. Lay swathed in his sly wiles. Round every crook Of the ample cavern, for his kine, Apollo Looked sharp; and when he saw them not, he took _320 The glittering key, and opened three great hollow Recesses in the rock—where many a nook Was filled with the sweet food immortals swallow, And mighty heaps of silver and of gold Were piled within—a wonder to behold! _325

42. And white and silver robes, all overwrought With cunning workmanship of tracery sweet— Except among the Gods there can be nought In the wide world to be compared with it. Latona's offspring, after having sought _330 His herds in every

corner, thus did greet Great Hermes:—‘Little cradled rogue, declare Of my illustrious heifers, where they are!

43. ‘Speak quickly! or a quarrel between us Must rise, and the event will be, that I _335 Shall hurl you into dismal Tartarus, In fiery gloom to dwell eternally; Nor shall your father nor your mother loose The bars of that black dungeon—utterly You shall be cast out from the light of day, _340 To rule the ghosts of men, unblessed as they.

44. To whom thus Hermes slily answered:—‘Son Of great Latona, what a speech is this! Why come you here to ask me what is done With the wild oxen which it seems you miss? _345 I have not seen them, nor from any one Have heard a word of the whole business; If you should promise an immense reward, I could not tell more than you now have heard.

45. ‘An ox-stealer should be both tall and strong, _350 And I am but a little new-born thing, Who, yet at least, can think of nothing wrong:— My business is to suck, and sleep, and fling The cradle-clothes about me all day long,— Or half asleep, hear my sweet mother sing, _355 And to be washed in water clean and warm, And hushed and kissed and kept secure from harm.

46. ‘O, let not e’er this quarrel be averred! The astounded Gods would laugh at you, if e’er You should allege a story so absurd _360 As that a new-born infant forth could fare Out of his home after a savage herd. I was born yesterday—my small feet are Too tender for the roads so hard and rough:— And if you think that this is not enough, _365

47. I swear a great oath, by my father’s head, That I stole not your cows, and that I know Of no one else, who might, or could, or did.— Whatever things cows are, I do not know, For I have only heard the name.’—This said _370 He winked as fast as could be, and his brow Was wrinkled, and a whistle loud gave he, Like one who hears some strange absurdity.

48. Apollo gently smiled and said:—‘Ay, ay,— You cunning little rascal, you will

bore _375 Many a rich man’s house, and your array Of thieves will lay their siege before his door, Silent as night, in night; and many a day In the wild glens rough shepherds will deplore That you or yours, having an appetite, _380 Met with their cattle, comrade of the night!

49. ‘And this among the Gods shall be your gift, To be considered as the lord of those Who swindle, house-break, sheep-steal, and shop-lift;— But now if you would not your last sleep doze; _385 Crawl out!’—Thus saying, Phoebus did uplift The subtle infant in his swaddling clothes, And in his arms, according to his wont, A scheme devised the illustrious Argiphont.

50. … … And sneezed and shuddered—Phoebus on the grass _390 Him threw, and whilst all that he had designed He did perform—eager although to pass, Apollo darted from his mighty mind Towards the subtle babe the following scoff:— ‘Do not imagine this will get you off, _395

51. ‘You little swaddled child of Jove and May! And seized him:—‘By this omen I shall trace My noble herds, and you shall lead the way.’— Cyllenian Hermes from the grassy place, Like one in earnest haste to get away, _400 Rose, and with hands lifted towards his face Round both his ears up from his shoulders drew His swaddling clothes, and—‘What mean you to do

52. ‘With me, you unkind God?’—said Mercury: ‘Is it about these cows you tease me so? _405 I wish the race of cows were perished!—I Stole not your cows—I do not even know What things cows are. Alas! I well may sigh That since I came into this world of woe, I should have ever heard the name of one— _410 But I appeal to the Saturnian’s throne.’

53. Thus Phoebus and the vagrant Mercury Talked without coming to an explanation, With adverse purpose. As for Phoebus, he Sought not revenge, but only information, _415 And Hermes tried with lies and roguery To cheat Apollo.—But when no evasion Served—for the cunning one his match had found— He paced on

first over the sandy ground.

54. … He of the Silver Bow the child of Jove _420 Followed behind, till to their heavenly Sire Came both his children, beautiful as Love, And from his equal balance did require A judgement in the cause wherein they strove. O’er odorous Olympus and its snows _425 A murmuring tumult as they came arose,—

55. And from the folded depths of the great Hill, While Hermes and Apollo reverent stood Before Jove’s throne, the indestructible Immortals rushed in mighty multitude; _430 And whilst their seats in order due they fill, The lofty Thunderer in a careless mood To Phoebus said:—‘Whence drive you this sweet prey, This herald-baby, born but yesterday?—

56. ‘A most important subject, trifler, this _435 To lay before the Gods!’—‘Nay, Father, nay, When you have understood the business, Say not that I alone am fond of prey. I found this little boy in a recess Under Cyllene’s mountains far away— _440 A manifest and most apparent thief, A scandalmonger beyond all belief.

57. ‘I never saw his like either in Heaven Or upon earth for knavery or craft:— Out of the field my cattle yester-even, _445 By the low shore on which the loud sea laughed, He right down to the river-ford had driven; And mere astonishment would make you daft To see the double kind of footsteps strange He has impressed wherever he did range. _450

58. ‘The cattle’s track on the black dust, full well Is evident, as if they went towards The place from which they came—that asphodel Meadow, in which I feed my many herds,— HIS steps were most incomprehensible— _455 I know not how I can describe in words Those tracks—he could have gone along the sands Neither upon his feet nor on his hands;—

59. ‘He must have had some other stranger mode Of moving on: those vestiges immense, _460 Far as I traced them on the sandy road, Seemed like the trail of oak-toppings:—but thence No mark nor track denoting where they trod The hard

ground gave:—but, working at his fence, A mortal hedger saw him as he passed _465 To Pylos, with the cows, in fiery haste.

60. ‘I found that in the dark he quietly Had sacrificed some cows, and before light Had thrown the ashes all dispersedly About the road—then, still as gloomy night, _470 Had crept into his cradle, either eye Rubbing, and cogitating some new sleight. No eagle could have seen him as he lay Hid in his cavern from the peering day.

61. ‘I taxed him with the fact, when he averred _475 Most solemnly that he did neither see Nor even had in any manner heard Of my lost cows, whatever things cows be; Nor could he tell, though offered a reward, Not even who could tell of them to me.’ _480 So speaking, Phoebus sate; and Hermes then Addressed the Supreme Lord of Gods and Men:—

62. ‘Great Father, you know clearly beforehand That all which I shall say to you is sooth; I am a most veracious person, and _485 Totally unacquainted with untruth. At sunrise Phoebus came, but with no band Of Gods to bear him witness, in great wrath, To my abode, seeking his heifers there, And saying that I must show him where they are, _490

63. ‘Or he would hurl me down the dark abyss. I know that every Apollonian limb Is clothed with speed and might and manliness, As a green bank with flowers—but unlike him I was born yesterday, and you may guess _495 He well knew this when he indulged the whim Of bullying a poor little new-born thing That slept, and never thought of cow-driving.

64. ‘Am I like a strong fellow who steals kine? Believe me, dearest Father—such you are— _500 This driving of the herds is none of mine; Across my threshold did I wander ne’er, So may I thrive! I reverence the divine Sun and the Gods, and I love you, and care Even for this hard accuser—who must know _505 I am as innocent as they or you.

65. ‘I swear by these most gloriously-wrought portals (It is, you will allow, an oath

of might) Through which the multitude of the Immortals Pass and repass forever, day and night, _510 Devising schemes for the affairs of mortals— I am guiltless; and I will requite, Although mine enemy be great and strong, His cruel threat—do thou defend the young!'

66. So speaking, the Cyllenian Argiphont _515 Winked, as if now his adversary was fitted:— And Jupiter, according to his wont, Laughed heartily to hear the subtle-witted Infant give such a plausible account, And every word a lie. But he remitted _520 Judgement at present—and his exhortation Was, to compose the affair by arbitration.

67. And they by mighty Jupiter were bidden To go forth with a single purpose both, Neither the other chiding nor yet chidden: _525 And Mercury with innocence and truth To lead the way, and show where he had hidden The mighty heifers.—Hermes, nothing loth, Obeyed the Aegis-bearer's will—for he Is able to persuade all easily. _530

68. These lovely children of Heaven's highest Lord Hastened to Pylos and the pastures wide And lofty stalls by the Alphean ford, Where wealth in the mute night is multiplied With silent growth. Whilst Hermes drove the herd _535 Out of the stony cavern, Phoebus spied The hides of those the little babe had slain, Stretched on the precipice above the plain.

69. 'How was it possible,' then Phoebus said, 'That you, a little child, born yesterday, _540 A thing on mother's milk and kisses fed, Could two prodigious heifers ever flay? Even I myself may well hereafter dread Your prowess, offspring of Cyllenian May, When you grow strong and tall.'—He spoke, and bound _545 Stiff withy bands the infant's wrists around.

70. He might as well have bound the oxen wild; The withy bands, though starkly interknit, Fell at the feet of the immortal child, Loosened by some device of his quick wit. _550 Phoebus perceived himself again beguiled, And stared—while

Hermes sought some hole or pit, Looking askance and winking fast as thought, Where he might hide himself and not be caught.

71. Sudden he changed his plan, and with strange skill _555 Subdued the strong Latonian, by the might Of winning music, to his mightier will; His left hand held the lyre, and in his right The plectrum struck the chords—unconquerable Up from beneath his hand in circling flight _560 The gathering music rose—and sweet as Love The penetrating notes did live and move

72. Within the heart of great Apollo—he Listened with all his soul, and laughed for pleasure. Close to his side stood harping fearlessly _565 The unabashed boy; and to the measure Of the sweet lyre, there followed loud and free His joyous voice; for he unlocked the treasure Of his deep song, illustrating the birth Of the bright Gods, and the dark desert Earth: _570

73. And how to the Immortals every one A portion was assigned of all that is; But chief Mnemosyne did Maia's son Clothe in the light of his loud melodies;— And, as each God was born or had begun, _575 He in their order due and fit degrees Sung of his birth and being—and did move Apollo to unutterable love.

74. These words were winged with his swift delight: 'You heifer-stealing schemer, well do you _580 Deserve that fifty oxen should requite Such minstrelsies as I have heard even now. Comrade of feasts, little contriving wight, One of your secrets I would gladly know, Whether the glorious power you now show forth _585 Was folded up within you at your birth,

75. 'Or whether mortal taught or God inspired The power of unpremeditated song? Many divinest sounds have I admired, The Olympian Gods and mortal men among; _590 But such a strain of wondrous, strange, untired, And soul-awakening music, sweet and strong, Yet did I never hear except from thee, Offspring of May, impostor Mercury!

76. 'What Muse, what skill, what unimagined use, _595 What exercise of subtlest

art, has given Thy songs such power?—for those who hear may choose From three, the choicest of the gifts of Heaven, Delight, and love, and sleep,—sweet sleep, whose dews Are sweeter than the balmy tears of even:— _600 And I, who speak this praise, am that Apollo Whom the Olympian Muses ever follow:

77. ‘And their delight is dance, and the blithe noise Of song and overflowing poesy; And sweet, even as desire, the liquid voice _605 Of pipes, that fills the clear air thrillingly; But never did my inmost soul rejoice In this dear work of youthful revelry As now. I wonder at thee, son of Jove; Thy harpings and thy song are soft as love. _610

78. ‘Now since thou hast, although so very small, Science of arts so glorious, thus I swear,— And let this cornel javelin, keen and tall, Witness between us what I promise here,— That I will lead thee to the Olympian Hall, _615 Honoured and mighty, with thy mother dear, And many glorious gifts in joy will give thee, And even at the end will ne’er deceive thee.’

79. To whom thus Mercury with prudent speech:— ‘Wisely hast thou inquired of my skill: _620 I envy thee no thing I know to teach Even this day:—for both in word and will I would be gentle with thee; thou canst reach All things in thy wise spirit, and thy sill Is highest in Heaven among the sons of Jove, _625 Who loves thee in the fulness of his love.

80. ‘The Counsellor Supreme has given to thee Divinest gifts, out of the amplitude Of his profuse exhaustless treasury; By thee, ’tis said, the depths are understood _630 Of his far voice; by thee the mystery Of all oracular fates,—and the dread mood Of the diviner is breathed up; even I— A child—perceive thy might and majesty.

81. ‘Thou canst seek out and compass all that wit _635 Can find or teach;—yet since thou wilt, come take The lyre—be mine the glory giving it— Strike the sweet chords, and sing aloud, and wake Thy joyous pleasure out of many a fit Of tranced

sound—and with fleet fingers make _640 Thy liquid-voiced comrade talk with thee,— It can talk measured music eloquently.

82. ‘Then bear it boldly to the revel loud, Love-wakening dance, or feast of solemn state, A joy by night or day—for those endowed _645 With art and wisdom who interrogate It teaches, babbling in delightful mood All things which make the spirit most elate, Soothing the mind with sweet familiar play, Chasing the heavy shadows of dismay. _650

83. ‘To those who are unskilled in its sweet tongue, Though they should question most impetuously Its hidden soul, it gossips something wrong— Some senseless and impertinent reply. But thou who art as wise as thou art strong _655 Canst compass all that thou desirest. I Present thee with this music-flowing shell, Knowing thou canst interrogate it well.

84. ‘And let us two henceforth together feed, On this green mountain-slope and pastoral plain, _660 The herds in litigation—they will breed Quickly enough to recompense our pain, If to the bulls and cows we take good heed;— And thou, though somewhat over fond of gain, Grudge me not half the profit.’—Having spoke, _665 The shell he proffered, and Apollo took;

85. And gave him in return the glittering lash, Installing him as herdsman;—from the look Of Mercury then laughed a joyous flash. And then Apollo with the plectrum strook _670 The chords, and from beneath his hands a crash Of mighty sounds rushed up, whose music shook The soul with sweetness, and like an adept His sweeter voice a just accordance kept.

86. The herd went wandering o’er the divine mead, _675 Whilst these most beautiful Sons of Jupiter Won their swift way up to the snowy head Of white Olympus, with the joyous lyre Soothing their journey; and their father dread Gathered them both into familiar _680 Affection sweet,—and then, and now, and ever, Hermes must love Him of the Golden Quiver,

87. To whom he gave the lyre that sweetly sounded, Which skilfully he held and played thereon. He piped the while, and far and wide rebounded _685 The echo of his pipings; every one Of the Olympians sat with joy astounded; While he conceived another piece of fun, One of his old tricks—which the God of Day Perceiving, said:—'I fear thee, Son of May;— _690

88. 'I fear thee and thy sly chameleon spirit, Lest thou should steal my lyre and crooked bow; This glory and power thou dost from Jove inherit, To teach all craft upon the earth below; Thieves love and worship thee—it is thy merit _695 To make all mortal business ebb and flow By roguery:—now, Hermes, if you dare By sacred Styx a mighty oath to swear

89. 'That you will never rob me, you will do A thing extremely pleasing to my heart.' _700 Then Mercury swore by the Stygian dew, That he would never steal his bow or dart, Or lay his hands on what to him was due, Or ever would employ his powerful art Against his Pythian fane. Then Phoebus swore _705 There was no God or Man whom he loved more.

90. 'And I will give thee as a good-will token, The beautiful wand of wealth and happiness; A perfect three-leaved rod of gold unbroken, Whose magic will thy footsteps ever bless; _710 And whatsoever by Jove's voice is spoken Of earthly or divine from its recess, It, like a loving soul, to thee will speak, And more than this, do thou forbear to seek.

91. 'For, dearest child, the divinations high _715 Which thou requirest, 'tis unlawful ever That thou, or any other deity Should understand—and vain were the endeavour; For they are hidden in Jove's mind, and I, In trust of them, have sworn that I would never _720 Betray the counsels of Jove's inmost will To any God—the oath was terrible.

92. 'Then, golden-wanded brother, ask me not To speak the fates by Jupiter designed; But be it mine to tell their various lot _725 To the unnumbered tribes of

human-kind. Let good to these, and ill to those be wrought As I dispense—but he who comes consigned By voice and wings of perfect augury To my great shrine, shall find avail in me. _730

93. ‘Him will I not deceive, but will assist; But he who comes relying on such birds As chatter vainly, who would strain and twist The purpose of the Gods with idle words, And deems their knowledge light, he shall have missed _735 His road—whilst I among my other hoards His gifts deposit. Yet, O son of May, I have another wondrous thing to say.

96. ‘There are three Fates, three virgin Sisters, who Rejoicing in their wind-outspeeding wings, _740 Their heads with flour snowed over white and new, Sit in a vale round which Parnassus flings Its circling skirts—from these I have learned true Vaticinations of remotest things. My father cared not. Whilst they search out dooms, _745 They sit apart and feed on honeycombs.

95. ‘They, having eaten the fresh honey, grow Drunk with divine enthusiasm, and utter With earnest willingness the truth they know; But if deprived of that sweet food, they mutter _750 All plausible delusions;—these to you I give;—if you inquire, they will not stutter; Delight your own soul with them:—any man You would instruct may profit if he can.

96. ‘Take these and the fierce oxen, Maia’s child— _755 O’er many a horse and toil-enduring mule, O’er jagged-jawed lions, and the wild White-tusked boars, o’er all, by field or pool, Of cattle which the mighty Mother mild Nourishes in her bosom, thou shalt rule— _760 Thou dost alone the veil from death uplift— Thou givest not—yet this is a great gift.’

97. Thus King Apollo loved the child of May In truth, and Jove covered their love with joy. Hermes with Gods and Men even from that day _765 Mingled, and wrought the latter much annoy, And little profit, going far astray Through the dun night. Farewell, delightful Boy, Of Jove and Maia sprung,—never by me, Nor thou,

nor other songs, shall unremembered be. _770

NOTES: _13 cow-stealing]qy. cattle-stealing? _57 stony Boscombe manuscript. Harvard manuscript; strong edition 1824. _252 neighbouring]neighbour Harvard manuscript. _336 hurl Harvard manuscript, editions 1839; haul edition 1824. _402 Round]Roused edition 1824 only. _488 wrath]ruth Harvard manuscript. _580 heifer-stealing]heifer-killing Harvard manuscript. _673 and like 1839, 1st edition; as of edition 1824, Harvard manuscript. _713 loving]living cj. Rossetti. _761 from Harvard manuscript; of editions 1824, 1839. _764 their love with joy Harvard manuscript; them with love and joy, editions 1824, 1839. _767 going]wandering Harvard manuscript.

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HOMER’S HYMN TO CASTOR AND POLLUX.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition; dated 1818.]

Ye wild-eyed Muses, sing the Twins of Jove, Whom the fair-ankled Leda, mixed in love With mighty Saturn’s Heaven-obscuring Child, On Taygetus, that lofty mountain wild, Brought forth in joy: mild Pollux, void of blame, _5 And steed-subduing Castor, heirs of fame. These are the Powers who earth-born mortals save And ships, whose flight is swift along the wave. When wintry tempests o’er the savage sea Are raging, and the sailors tremblingly _10 Call on the Twins of Jove with prayer and vow, Gathered in fear upon the lofty prow, And sacrifice with snow-white lambs,—the wind And the huge billow bursting close behind, Even then beneath the weltering waters bear _15 The staggering ship—they suddenly appear, On yellow wings rushing athwart the sky, And lull the blasts in mute tranquillity, And strew the waves on the white Ocean’s bed, Fair omen of the voyage; from toil and dread _20 The sailors rest, rejoicing in the sight, And plough the quiet sea in safe delight.

NOTE: _6 steed-subduing emend. Rossetti; steel-subduing 1839, 2nd edition.

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HOMER’S HYMN TO THE MOON.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition; dated 1818.]

Daughters of Jove, whose voice is melody, Muses, who know and rule all minstrelsy Sing the wide-winged Moon! Around the earth, From her immortal head in Heaven shot forth, Far light is scattered—boundless glory springs; _5 Where’er she spreads her many-beaming wings The lampless air glows round her golden crown.

But when the Moon divine from Heaven is gone Under the sea, her beams within abide, Till, bathing her bright limbs in Ocean’s tide, _10 Clothing her form in garments glittering far, And having yoked to her immortal car The beam-invested steeds whose necks on high Curve back, she drives to a remoter sky A western Crescent, borne impetuously. _15 Then is made full the circle of her light, And as she grows, her beams more bright and bright Are poured from Heaven, where she is hovering then, A wonder and a sign to mortal men.

The Son of Saturn with this glorious Power _20 Mingled in love and sleep—to whom she bore Pandeia, a bright maid of beauty rare Among the Gods, whose lives eternal are.

Hail Queen, great Moon, white-armed Divinity, Fair-haired and favourable! thus with thee _25 My song beginning, by its music sweet Shall make immortal many a glorious feat Of demigods, with lovely lips, so well Which minstrels, servants of the Muses, tell.

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HOMER’S HYMN TO THE SUN.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition; dated 1818.]

Offspring of Jove, Calliope, once more To the bright Sun, thy hymn of music pour; Whom to the child of star-clad Heaven and Earth Euryphaessa, large-eyed nymph,

brought forth; Euryphaessa, the famed sister fair _5 Of great Hyperion, who to him did bear A race of loveliest children; the young Morn, Whose arms are like twin roses newly born, The fair-haired Moon, and the immortal Sun, Who borne by heavenly steeds his race doth run _10 Unconquerably, illuming the abodes Of mortal Men and the eternal Gods.

Fiercely look forth his awe-inspiring eyes, Beneath his golden helmet, whence arise And are shot forth afar, clear beams of light; _15 His countenance, with radiant glory bright, Beneath his graceful locks far shines around, And the light vest with which his limbs are bound, Of woof aethereal delicately twined, Glows in the stream of the uplifting wind. _20 His rapid steeds soon bear him to the West; Where their steep flight his hands divine arrest, And the fleet car with yoke of gold, which he Sends from bright Heaven beneath the shadowy sea.

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HOMER’S HYMN TO THE EARTH: MOTHER OF ALL.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition; dated 1818.]

O universal Mother, who dost keep From everlasting thy foundations deep, Eldest of things, Great Earth, I sing of thee! All shapes that have their dwelling in the sea, All things that fly, or on the ground divine _5 Live, move, and there are nourished—these are thine; These from thy wealth thou dost sustain; from thee Fair babes are born, and fruits on every tree Hang ripe and large, revered Divinity!

The life of mortal men beneath thy sway _10 Is held; thy power both gives and takes away! Happy are they whom thy mild favours nourish; All things unstinted round them grow and flourish. For them, endures the life-sustaining field Its load of harvest, and their cattle yield _15 Large increase, and their house with wealth is filled. Such honoured dwell in cities fair and free, The homes of lovely women, prosperously; Their sons exult in youth’s new budding gladness, And their fresh daughters free from care or sadness, _20 With bloom-inwoven dance and happy

song, On the soft flowers the meadow-grass among, Leap round them sporting—such delights by thee Are given, rich Power, revered Divinity.

Mother of gods, thou Wife of starry Heaven, _25 Farewell! be thou propitious, and be given A happy life for this brief melody, Nor thou nor other songs shall unremembered be.

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HOMER’S HYMN TO MINERVA.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, 2nd edition; dated 1818.]

I sing the glorious Power with azure eyes, Athenian Pallas! tameless, chaste, and wise, Tritogenia, town-preserving Maid, Revered and mighty; from his awful head Whom Jove brought forth, in warlike armour dressed, _5 Golden, all radiant! wonder strange possessed The everlasting Gods that Shape to see, Shaking a javelin keen, impetuously Rush from the crest of Aegis-bearing Jove; Fearfully Heaven was shaken, and did move _10 Beneath the might of the Cerulean-eyed; Earth dreadfully resounded, far and wide; And, lifted from its depths, the sea swelled high In purple billows, the tide suddenly Stood still, and great Hyperion’s son long time _15 Checked his swift steeds, till, where she stood sublime, Pallas from her immortal shoulders threw The arms divine; wise Jove rejoiced to view. Child of the Aegis-bearer, hail to thee, Nor thine nor others’ praise shall unremembered be. _20

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HOMER’S HYMN TO VENUS.

[Published by Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862; dated 1818.]

[VERSES 1-55, WITH SOME OMISSIONS.]

Muse, sing the deeds of golden Aphrodite, Who wakens with her smile the lulled delight Of sweet desire, taming the eternal kings Of Heaven, and men, and all the living things That fleet along the air, or whom the sea, _5 Or earth, with her

maternal ministry, Nourish innumerable, thy delight All seek … O crowned Aphrodite! Three spirits canst thou not deceive or quell:— Minerva, child of Jove, who loves too well _10 Fierce war and mingling combat, and the fame Of glorious deeds, to heed thy gentle flame. Diana … golden-shafted queen, Is tamed not by thy smiles; the shadows green Of the wild woods, the bow, the… _15 And piercing cries amid the swift pursuit Of beasts among waste mountains,—such delight Is hers, and men who know and do the right. Nor Saturn's first-born daughter, Vesta chaste, Whom Neptune and Apollo wooed the last, _20 Such was the will of aegis-bearing Jove; But sternly she refused the ills of Love, And by her mighty Father's head she swore An oath not unperformed, that evermore A virgin she would live mid deities _25 Divine: her father, for such gentle ties Renounced, gave glorious gifts—thus in his hall She sits and feeds luxuriously. O'er all In every fane, her honours first arise From men—the eldest of Divinities. _30

These spirits she persuades not, nor deceives, But none beside escape, so well she weaves Her unseen toils; nor mortal men, nor gods Who live secure in their unseen abodes. She won the soul of him whose fierce delight _35 Is thunder—first in glory and in might. And, as she willed, his mighty mind deceiving, With mortal limbs his deathless limbs inweaving, Concealed him from his spouse and sister fair, Whom to wise Saturn ancient Rhea bare. _40 but in return, In Venus Jove did soft desire awaken, That by her own enchantments overtaken, She might, no more from human union free, Burn for a nursling of mortality. _45 For once amid the assembled Deities, The laughter-loving Venus from her eyes

Shot forth the light of a soft starlight smile, And boasting said, that she, secure the while, Could bring at Will to the assembled Gods _50 The mortal tenants of earth's dark abodes, And mortal offspring from a deathless stem She could produce in scorn and spite of them. Therefore he poured desire into her breast Of young Anchises, _55 Feeding his herds among the mossy fountains Of the wide Ida's many-folded mountains,— Whom Venus saw, and loved, and the love clung Like wasting fire her

senses wild among.

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THE CYCLOPS.

A SATYRIC DRAMA TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK OF EURIPIDES.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824; dated 1819. Amongst the Shelley manuscripts at the Bodleian there is a copy, ‘practically complete,’ which has been collated by Mr. C.D. Locock. See “Examination”, etc., 1903, pages 64-70. ‘Though legible throughout, and comparatively free from corrections, it has the appearance of being a first draft’ (Locock).]

SILENUS. ULYSSES. CHORUS OF SATYRS. THE CYCLOPS.

SILENUS: O Bacchus, what a world of toil, both now And ere these limbs were overworn with age, Have I endured for thee! First, when thou fled’st The mountain-nymphs who nursed thee, driven afar By the strange madness Juno sent upon thee; _5 Then in the battle of the Sons of Earth, When I stood foot by foot close to thy side, No unpropitious fellow-combatant, And, driving through his shield my winged spear, Slew vast Enceladus. Consider now, _10 Is it a dream of which I speak to thee? By Jove it is not, for you have the trophies! And now I suffer more than all before. For when I heard that Juno had devised A tedious voyage for you, I put to sea _15 With all my children quaint in search of you, And I myself stood on the beaked prow And fixed the naked mast; and all my boys Leaning upon their oars, with splash and strain Made white with foam the green and purple sea,— _20 And so we sought you, king. We were sailing Near Malea, when an eastern wind arose, And drove us to this waste Aetnean rock; The one-eyed children of the Ocean God, The man-destroying Cyclopses, inhabit, _25 On this wild shore, their solitary caves, And one of these, named Polypheme, has caught us To be his slaves; and so, for all delight Of Bacchic sports, sweet dance and melody, We keep this lawless giant’s wandering flocks. _30 My sons indeed on far declivities, Young things

themselves, tend on the youngling sheep, But I remain to fill the water-casks, Or sweeping the hard floor, or ministering Some impious and abominable meal _35 To the fell Cyclops. I am wearied of it! And now I must scrape up the littered floor With this great iron rake, so to receive My absent master and his evening sheep In a cave neat and clean. Even now I see _40 My children tending the flocks hitherward. Ha! what is this? are your Sicinnian measures Even now the same, as when with dance and song You brought young Bacchus to Althaea's halls?

NOTE: _23 waste B.; wild 1824; 'cf. 26, where waste is cancelled for wild' (Locock).

CHORUS OF SATYRS:

STROPHE: Where has he of race divine _45 Wandered in the winding rocks? Here the air is calm and fine For the father of the flocks;— Here the grass is soft and sweet, And the river-eddies meet _50 In the trough beside the cave, Bright as in their fountain wave.— Neither here, nor on the dew Of the lawny uplands feeding? Oh, you come!—a stone at you _55 Will I throw to mend your breeding;— Get along, you horned thing, Wild, seditious, rambling!

EPODE: An Iacchic melody To the golden Aphrodite _60 Will I lift, as erst did I Seeking her and her delight With the Maenads, whose white feet To the music glance and fleet. Bacchus, O beloved, where, _65 Shaking wide thy yellow hair, Wanderest thou alone, afar? To the one-eyed Cyclops, we, Who by right thy servants are, Minister in misery, _70 In these wretched goat-skins clad, Far from thy delights and thee.

SILENUS: Be silent, sons; command the slaves to drive The gathered flocks into the rock-roofed cave.

CHORUS: Go! But what needs this serious haste, O father? _75

SILENUS: I see a Grecian vessel on the coast, And thence the rowers with some general Approaching to this cave.—About their necks Hang empty vessels, as they

wanted food, And water-flasks.—Oh, miserable strangers! _80 Whence come they, that they know not what and who My master is, approaching in ill hour The inhospitable roof of Polypheme, And the Cyclopian jaw-bone, man-destroying? Be silent, Satyrs, while I ask and hear _85 Whence coming, they arrive the Aetnean hill.

ULYSSES: Friends, can you show me some clear water-spring, The remedy of our thirst? Will any one Furnish with food seamen in want of it? Ha! what is this? We seem to be arrived _90 At the blithe court of Bacchus. I observe This sportive band of Satyrs near the caves. First let me greet the elder.—Hail!

SILENUS: Hail thou, O Stranger! tell thy country and thy race.

ULYSSES: The Ithacan Ulysses and the king _95 Of Cephalonia.

SILENUS: Oh! I know the man, Wordy and shrewd, the son of Sisyphus.

ULYSSES: I am the same, but do not rail upon me.—

SILENUS: Whence sailing do you come to Sicily?

ULYSSES: From Ilion, and from the Trojan toils. _100

SILENUS: How, touched you not at your paternal shore?

ULYSSES: The strength of tempests bore me here by force.

SILENUS: The self-same accident occurred to me.

ULYSSES: Were you then driven here by stress of weather?

SILENUS: Following the Pirates who had kidnapped Bacchus. _105

ULYSSES: What land is this, and who inhabit it?—

SILENUS: Aetna, the loftiest peak in Sicily.

ULYSSES: And are there walls, and tower-surrounded towns?

SILENUS: There are not.—These lone rocks are bare of men.

ULYSSES: And who possess the land? the race of beasts? _110

SILENUS: Cyclops, who live in caverns, not in houses.

ULYSSES: Obeying whom? Or is the state popular?

SILENUS: Shepherds: no one obeys any in aught.

ULYSSES: How live they? do they sow the corn of Ceres?

SILENUS: On milk and cheese, and on the flesh of sheep. _115

ULYSSES: Have they the Bromian drink from the vine's stream?

SILENUS: Ah! no; they live in an ungracious land.

ULYSSES: And are they just to strangers?—hospitable?

SILENUS: They think the sweetest thing a stranger brings Is his own flesh.

ULYSSES: What! do they eat man's flesh? _120

SILENUS: No one comes here who is not eaten up.

ULYSSES: The Cyclops now—where is he? Not at home?

SILENUS: Absent on Aetna, hunting with his dogs.

ULYSSES: Know'st thou what thou must do to aid us hence?

SILENUS: I know not: we will help you all we can. _125

ULYSSES: Provide us food, of which we are in want.

SILENUS: Here is not anything, as I said, but meat.

ULYSSES: But meat is a sweet remedy for hunger.

SILENUS: Cow's milk there is, and store of curdled cheese.

ULYSSES: Bring out:—I would see all before I bargain. _130

SILENUS: But how much gold will you engage to give?

ULYSSES: I bring no gold, but Bacchic juice.

SILENUS: Oh, joy! Tis long since these dry lips were wet with wine.

ULYSSES: Maron, the son of the God, gave it me.

SILENUS: Whom I have nursed a baby in my arms. _135

ULYSSES: The son of Bacchus, for your clearer knowledge.

SILENUS: Have you it now?—or is it in the ship?

ULYSSES: Old man, this skin contains it, which you see.

SILENUS: Why, this would hardly be a mouthful for me.

ULYSSES: Nay, twice as much as you can draw from thence. _140

SILENUS: You speak of a fair fountain, sweet to me.

ULYSSES: Would you first taste of the unmingled wine?

SILENUS: 'Tis just—tasting invites the purchaser.

ULYSSES: Here is the cup, together with the skin.

SILENUS: Pour: that the draught may fillip my remembrance.

ULYSSES: See! _145

SILENUS: Papaiapax! what a sweet smell it has!

ULYSSES: You see it then?—

SILENUS: By Jove, no! but I smell it.

ULYSSES: Taste, that you may not praise it in words only.

SILENUS: Babai! Great Bacchus calls me forth to dance! Joy! joy!

ULYSSES: Did it flow sweetly down your throat? _150

SILENUS: So that it tingled to my very nails.

ULYSSES: And in addition I will give you gold.

SILENUS: Let gold alone! only unlock the cask.

ULYSSES: Bring out some cheeses now, or a young goat.

SILENUS: That will I do, despising any master. _155 Yes, let me drink one cup, and I will give All that the Cyclops feed upon their mountains.

…

CHORUS: Ye have taken Troy and laid your hands on Helen?

ULYSSES: And utterly destroyed the race of Priam.

…

SILENUS: The wanton wretch! she was bewitched to see _160 The many-coloured anklets and the chain Of woven gold which girt the neck of Paris, And so she left that good man Menelaus. There should be no more women in the world But such as are reserved for me alone.— _165 See, here are sheep, and here are goats, Ulysses, Here are unsparing cheeses of pressed milk; Take them; depart with what good speed ye may; First leaving my reward, the Bacchic dew Of joy-inspiring grapes.

ULYSSES: Ah me! Alas! _170 What shall we do? the Cyclops is at hand! Old man, we perish! whither can we fly?

SILENUS: Hide yourselves quick within that hollow rock.

ULYSSES: 'Twere perilous to fly into the net.

SILENUS: The cavern has recesses numberless; _175 Hide yourselves quick.

ULYSSES: That will I never do! The mighty Troy would be indeed disgraced If I should fly one man. How many times Have I withstood, with shield immovable. Ten thousand Phrygians!—if I needs must die, _180 Yet will I die with glory;—if I live, The praise which I have gained will yet remain.

SILENUS: What, ho! assistance, comrades, haste, assistance!

[THE CYCLOPS, SILENUS, ULYSSES; CHORUS.]

CYCLOPS: What is this tumult? Bacchus is not here, Nor tympanies nor brazen castanets. _185 How are my young lambs in the cavern? Milking Their dams or playing by their sides? And is The new cheese pressed into the bulrush baskets? Speak! I'll beat some of you till you rain tears— Look up, not downwards when I speak to you. _190

SILENUS: See! I now gape at Jupiter himself; I stare upon Orion and the stars.

CYCLOPS: Well, is the dinner fitly cooked and laid?

SILENUS: All ready, if your throat is ready too.

CYCLOPS: Are the bowls full of milk besides?

SILENUS: O’er-brimming; _195 So you may drink a tunful if you will.

CYCLOPS: Is it ewe’s milk or cow’s milk, or both mixed?—

SILENUS: Both, either; only pray don’t swallow me.

CYCLOPS: By no means.— … What is this crowd I see beside the stalls? _200 Outlaws or thieves? for near my cavern-home I see my young lambs coupled two by two With willow bands; mixed with my cheeses lie Their implements; and this old fellow here Has his bald head broken with stripes.

SILENUS: Ah me! _205 I have been beaten till I burn with fever.

CYCLOPS: By whom? Who laid his fist upon your head?

SILENUS: Those men, because I would not suffer them To steal your goods.

CYCLOPS: Did not the rascals know I am a God, sprung from the race of Heaven? _210

SILENUS: I told them so, but they bore off your things, And ate the cheese in spite of all I said, And carried out the lambs—and said, moreover, They’d pin you down with a three-cubit collar, And pull your vitals out through your one eye, _215 Furrow your back with stripes, then, binding you, Throw you as ballast into the ship’s hold, And then deliver you, a slave, to move Enormous rocks, or found a vestibule.

NOTE: _216 Furrow B.; Torture (evidently misread for Furrow) 1824.

CYCLOPS: In truth? Nay, haste, and place in order quickly The cooking-knives, and heap upon the hearth, _221 And kindle it, a great faggot of wood.— As soon as they are slaughtered, they shall fill My belly, broiling warm from the live coals, Or boiled and seethed within the bubbling caldron. _225 I am quite sick of the wild

mountain game; Of stags and lions I have gorged enough, And I grow hungry for the flesh of men.

SILENUS: Nay, master, something new is very pleasant After one thing forever, and of late _230 Very few strangers have approached our cave.

ULYSSES: Hear, Cyclops, a plain tale on the other side. We, wanting to buy food, came from our ship Into the neighbourhood of your cave, and here This old Silenus gave us in exchange _235 These lambs for wine, the which he took and drank, And all by mutual compact, without force. There is no word of truth in what he says, For slyly he was selling all your store.

SILENUS: I? May you perish, wretch—

ULYSSES: If I speak false! _240

SILENUS: Cyclops, I swear by Neptune who begot thee, By mighty Triton and by Nereus old, Calypso and the glaucous Ocean Nymphs, The sacred waves and all the race of fishes— Be these the witnesses, my dear sweet master, _245 My darling little Cyclops, that I never Gave any of your stores to these false strangers;— If I speak false may those whom most I love, My children, perish wretchedly!

CHORUS: There stop! I saw him giving these things to the strangers. _250 If I speak false, then may my father perish, But do not thou wrong hospitality.

CYCLOPS: You lie! I swear that he is juster far Than Rhadamanthus—I trust more in him. But let me ask, whence have ye sailed, O strangers? _255 Who are you? And what city nourished ye?

ULYSSES: Our race is Ithacan—having destroyed The town of Troy, the tempests of the sea Have driven us on thy land, O Polypheme.

CYCLOPS: What, have ye shared in the unenvied spoil _260 Of the false Helen, near Scamander’s stream?

ULYSSES: The same, having endured a woful toil.

CYCLOPS: Oh, basest expedition! sailed ye not From Greece to Phrygia for one woman's sake?

ULYSSES: 'Twas the Gods' work—no mortal was in fault. _265 But, O great Offspring of the Ocean-King, We pray thee and admonish thee with freedom, That thou dost spare thy friends who visit thee, And place no impious food within thy jaws. For in the depths of Greece we have upreared _270 Temples to thy great Father, which are all His homes. The sacred bay of Taenarus Remains inviolate, and each dim recess Scooped high on the Malean promontory, And aery Sunium's silver-veined crag, _275 Which divine Pallas keeps unprofaned ever, The Gerastian asylums, and whate'er Within wide Greece our enterprise has kept From Phrygian contumely; and in which You have a common care, for you inhabit _280 The skirts of Grecian land, under the roots Of Aetna and its crags, spotted with fire. Turn then to converse under human laws, Receive us shipwrecked suppliants, and provide Food, clothes, and fire, and hospitable gifts; _285 Nor fixing upon oxen-piercing spits Our limbs, so fill your belly and your jaws. Priam's wide land has widowed Greece enough; And weapon-winged murder leaped together Enough of dead, and wives are husbandless, _290 And ancient women and gray fathers wail Their childless age;—if you should roast the rest— And 'tis a bitter feast that you prepare— Where then would any turn? Yet be persuaded; Forgo the lust of your jaw-bone; prefer _295 Pious humanity to wicked will: Many have bought too dear their evil joys.

SILENUS: Let me advise you, do not spare a morsel Of all his flesh. If you should eat his tongue You would become most eloquent, O Cyclops. _300

CYCLOPS: Wealth, my good fellow, is the wise man's God, All other things are a pretence and boast. What are my father's ocean promontories, The sacred rocks whereon he dwells, to me? Stranger, I laugh to scorn Jove's thunderbolt, _305 I know not that his strength is more than mine. As to the rest I care not.—When he

pours Rain from above, I have a close pavilion Under this rock, in which I lie supine, Feasting on a roast calf or some wild beast, _310 And drinking pans of milk, and gloriously Emulating the thunder of high Heaven. And when the Thracian wind pours down the snow, I wrap my body in the skins of beasts, Kindle a fire, and bid the snow whirl on. _315 The earth, by force, whether it will or no, Bringing forth grass, fattens my flocks and herds, Which, to what other God but to myself And this great belly, first of deities, Should I be bound to sacrifice? I well know _320 The wise man's only Jupiter is this, To eat and drink during his little day, And give himself no care. And as for those Who complicate with laws the life of man, I freely give them tears for their reward. _325 I will not cheat my soul of its delight, Or hesitate in dining upon you:— And that I may be quit of all demands, These are my hospitable gifts;—fierce fire And yon ancestral caldron, which o'er-bubbling _330 Shall finely cook your miserable flesh. Creep in!—

…

ULYSSES: Ai! ai! I have escaped the Trojan toils, I have escaped the sea, and now I fall Under the cruel grasp of one impious man. _335 O Pallas, Mistress, Goddess, sprung from Jove, Now, now, assist me! Mightier toils than Troy Are these;—I totter on the chasms of peril;— And thou who inhabitest the thrones Of the bright stars, look, hospitable Jove, _340 Upon this outrage of thy deity, Otherwise be considered as no God!

CHORUS (ALONE): For your gaping gulf and your gullet wide, The ravin is ready on every side, The limbs of the strangers are cooked and done; _345 There is boiled meat, and roast meat, and meat from the coal, You may chop it, and tear it, and gnash it for fun, An hairy goat's-skin contains the whole. Let me but escape, and ferry me o'er The stream of your wrath to a safer shore. _350 The Cyclops Aetnean is cruel and bold, He murders the strangers That sit on his hearth, And dreads no avengers To rise from the earth. _355 He roasts the men before they are cold, He

snatches them broiling from the coal, And from the caldron pulls them whole, And minces their flesh and gnaws their bone With his cursed teeth, till all be gone. _360 Farewell, foul pavilion: Farewell, rites of dread! The Cyclops vermilion, With slaughter uncloying, Now feasts on the dead, _365 In the flesh of strangers joying!

NOTE: _344 ravin Rossetti; spelt ravine in B., editions 1824, 1839.

ULYSSES: O Jupiter! I saw within the cave Horrible things; deeds to be feigned in words, But not to be believed as being done.

NOTE: _369 not to be believed B.; not believed 1824.

CHORUS: What! sawest thou the impious Polypheme _370 Feasting upon your loved companions now?

ULYSSES: Selecting two, the plumpest of the crowd, He grasped them in his hands.—

CHORUS: Unhappy man!

…

ULYSSES: Soon as we came into this craggy place, Kindling a fire, he cast on the broad hearth _375 The knotty limbs of an enormous oak, Three waggon-loads at least, and then he strewed Upon the ground, beside the red firelight, His couch of pine-leaves; and he milked the cows, And pouring forth the white milk, filled a bowl _380 Three cubits wide and four in depth, as much As would contain ten amphorae, and bound it With ivy wreaths; then placed upon the fire A brazen pot to boil, and made red hot The points of spits, not sharpened with the sickle _385 But with a fruit tree bough, and with the jaws Of axes for Aetnean slaughterings. And when this God-abandoned Cook of Hell Had made all ready, he seized two of us And killed them in a kind of measured manner; _390 For he flung one against the brazen rivets Of the huge caldron, and seized the other By the foot’s tendon, and knocked out his brains Upon the sharp edge of the craggy stone: Then peeled his flesh with a great cooking-knife _395 And put him down to roast. The other’s limbs He chopped into

the caldron to be boiled. And I, with the tears raining from my eyes, Stood near the Cyclops, ministering to him; The rest, in the recesses of the cave, _400 Clung to the rock like bats, bloodless with fear. When he was filled with my companions' flesh, He threw himself upon the ground and sent A loathsome exhalation from his maw. Then a divine thought came to me. I filled _405 The cup of Maron, and I offered him To taste, and said:—'Child of the Ocean God, Behold what drink the vines of Greece produce, The exultation and the joy of Bacchus.' He, satiated with his unnatural food, _410 Received it, and at one draught drank it off, And taking my hand, praised me:—'Thou hast given A sweet draught after a sweet meal, dear guest.' And I, perceiving that it pleased him, filled Another cup, well knowing that the wine _415 Would wound him soon and take a sure revenge. And the charm fascinated him, and I Plied him cup after cup, until the drink Had warmed his entrails, and he sang aloud In concert with my wailing fellow-seamen _420 A hideous discord—and the cavern rung. I have stolen out, so that if you will You may achieve my safety and your own. But say, do you desire, or not, to fly This uncompanionable man, and dwell _425 As was your wont among the Grecian Nymphs Within the fanes of your beloved God? Your father there within agrees to it, But he is weak and overcome with wine, And caught as if with bird-lime by the cup, _430 He claps his wings and crows in doting joy. You who are young escape with me, and find Bacchus your ancient friend; unsuited he To this rude Cyclops.

NOTES: _382 ten cj. Swinburne; four 1824; four cancelled for ten (possibly) B. _387 I confess I do not understand this.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.] _416 take]grant (as alternative) B.

CHORUS: Oh my dearest friend, That I could see that day, and leave for ever _435 The impious Cyclops.

…

ULYSSES: Listen then what a punishment I have For this fell monster, how secure a

flight From your hard servitude.

CHORUS: O sweeter far Than is the music of an Asian lyre _440 Would be the news of Polypheme destroyed.

ULYSSES: Delighted with the Bacchic drink he goes To call his brother Cyclops—who inhabit A village upon Aetna not far off.

CHORUS: I understand, catching him when alone _445 You think by some measure to dispatch him, Or thrust him from the precipice.

NOTE: _446 by some measure 1824; with some measures B.

ULYSSES: Oh no; Nothing of that kind; my device is subtle.

CHORUS: How then? I heard of old that thou wert wise.

ULYSSES: I will dissuade him from this plan, by saying _450 It were unwise to give the Cyclopses This precious drink, which if enjoyed alone Would make life sweeter for a longer time. When, vanquished by the Bacchic power, he sleeps, There is a trunk of olive wood within, _455 Whose point having made sharp with this good sword I will conceal in fire, and when I see It is alight, will fix it, burning yet, Within the socket of the Cyclops' eye And melt it out with fire—as when a man _460 Turns by its handle a great auger round, Fitting the framework of a ship with beams, So will I, in the Cyclops' fiery eye Turn round the brand and dry the pupil up.

CHORUS: Joy! I am mad with joy at your device. _465

ULYSSES: And then with you, my friends, and the old man, We'll load the hollow depth of our black ship, And row with double strokes from this dread shore.

CHORUS: May I, as in libations to a God, Share in the blinding him with the red brand? _470 I would have some communion in his death.

ULYSSES: Doubtless: the brand is a great brand to hold.

CHORUS: Oh! I would lift an hundred waggon-loads, If like a wasp's nest I could

scoop the eye out Of the detested Cyclops.

ULYSSES: Silence now! _475 Ye know the close device—and when I call, Look ye obey the masters of the craft. I will not save myself and leave behind My comrades in the cave: I might escape, Having got clear from that obscure recess, _480 But ’twere unjust to leave in jeopardy The dear companions who sailed here with me.

CHORUS: Come! who is first, that with his hand Will urge down the burning brand Through the lids, and quench and pierce _485 The Cyclops’ eye so fiery fierce?

SEMICHORUS 1 [SONG WITHIN]: Listen! listen! he is coming, A most hideous discord humming. Drunken, museless, awkward, yelling, Far along his rocky dwelling; _490 Let us with some comic spell Teach the yet unteachable. By all means he must be blinded, If my counsel be but minded.

SEMICHORUS 2: Happy thou made odorous _495 With the dew which sweet grapes weep, To the village hastening thus, Seek the vines that soothe to sleep; Having first embraced thy friend, Thou in luxury without end, _500 With the strings of yellow hair, Of thy voluptuous leman fair, Shalt sit playing on a bed!— Speak! what door is opened?

NOTES: _495 thou cj. Swinburne, Rossetti; those 1824; ‘the word is doubtful in B.’ (Locock). _500 Thou B.; There 1824.

CYCLOPS: Ha! ha! ha! I’m full of wine, _505 Heavy with the joy divine, With the young feast oversated; Like a merchant’s vessel freighted To the water’s edge, my crop Is laden to the gullet’s top. _510 The fresh meadow grass of spring Tempts me forth thus wandering To my brothers on the mountains, Who shall share the wine’s sweet fountains. Bring the cask, O stranger, bring! _515

NOTE: _508 merchant’s 1824; merchant B.

CHORUS: One with eyes the fairest Cometh from his dwelling; Some one loves thee, rarest Bright beyond my telling. In thy grace thou shinest _520 Like some nymph divinest In her caverns dewy:— All delights pursue thee, Soon pied flowers,

sweet-breathing, Shall thy head be wreathing. _525

ULYSSES: Listen, O Cyclops, for I am well skilled In Bacchus, whom I gave thee of to drink.

CYCLOPS: What sort of God is Bacchus then accounted?

ULYSSES: The greatest among men for joy of life.

CYCLOPS: I gulped him down with very great delight. _530

ULYSSES: This is a God who never injures men.

CYCLOPS: How does the God like living in a skin?

ULYSSES: He is content wherever he is put.

CYCLOPS: Gods should not have their body in a skin.

ULYSSES: If he gives joy, what is his skin to you? _535

CYCLOPS: I hate the skin, but love the wine within.

ULYSSES: Stay here now: drink, and make your spirit glad.

NOTE: _537 Stay here now, drink B.; stay here, now drink 1824.

CYCLOPS: Should I not share this liquor with my brothers?

ULYSSES: Keep it yourself, and be more honoured so.

CYCLOPS: I were more useful, giving to my friends. _540

ULYSSES: But village mirth breeds contests, broils, and blows.

CYCLOPS: When I am drunk none shall lay hands on me.—

ULYSSES: A drunken man is better within doors.

CYCLOPS: He is a fool, who drinking, loves not mirth.

ULYSSES: But he is wise, who drunk, remains at home. _545

CYCLOPS: What shall I do, Silenus? Shall I stay?

SILENUS: Stay—for what need have you of pot companions?

CYCLOPS: Indeed this place is closely carpeted With flowers and grass.

SILENUS: And in the sun-warm noon ’Tis sweet to drink. Lie down beside me now, _550 Placing your mighty sides upon the ground.

CYCLOPS: What do you put the cup behind me for?

SILENUS: That no one here may touch it.

CYCLOPS: Thievish One! You want to drink;—here place it in the midst. And thou, O stranger, tell how art thou called? _555

ULYSSES: My name is Nobody. What favour now Shall I receive to praise you at your hands?

CYCLOPS: I’ll feast on you the last of your companions.

ULYSSES: You grant your guest a fair reward, O Cyclops.

CYCLOPS: Ha! what is this? Stealing the wine, you rogue! _560

SILENUS: It was this stranger kissing me because I looked so beautiful.

CYCLOPS: You shall repent For kissing the coy wine that loves you not.

SILENUS: By Jupiter! you said that I am fair.

CYCLOPS: Pour out, and only give me the cup full. _565

SILENUS: How is it mixed? let me observe.

CYCLOPS: Curse you! Give it me so.

SILENUS: Not till I see you wear That coronal, and taste the cup to you.

CYCLOPS: Thou wily traitor!

SILENUS: But the wine is sweet. Ay, you will roar if you are caught in drinking. _570

CYCLOPS: See now, my lip is clean and all my beard.

SILENUS: Now put your elbow right and drink again. As you see me drink—…

CYCLOPS: How now?

SILENUS: Ye Gods, what a delicious gulp!

CYCLOPS: Guest, take it;—you pour out the wine for me. _575

ULYSSES: The wine is well accustomed to my hand.

CYCLOPS: Pour out the wine!

ULYSSES: I pour; only be silent.

CYCLOPS: Silence is a hard task to him who drinks.

ULYSSES: Take it and drink it off; leave not a dreg. Oh that the drinker died with his own draught! _580

CYCLOPS: Papai! the vine must be a sapient plant.

ULYSSES: If you drink much after a mighty feast, Moistening your thirsty maw, you will sleep well; If you leave aught, Bacchus will dry you up.

CYCLOPS: Ho! ho! I can scarce rise. What pure delight! _585 The heavens and earth appear to whirl about Confusedly. I see the throne of Jove And the clear congregation of the Gods. Now if the Graces tempted me to kiss I would not—for the loveliest of them all _590 I would not leave this Ganymede.

SILENUS: Polypheme, I am the Ganymede of Jupiter.

CYCLOPS: By Jove, you are; I bore you off from Dardanus.

…

[ULYSSES AND THE CHORUS.]

ULYSSES: Come, boys of Bacchus, children of high race, This man within is folded up in sleep, _595 And soon will vomit flesh from his fell maw; The brand under the shed thrusts out its smoke, No preparation needs, but to burn out The monster’s eye;—but bear yourselves like men.

CHORUS: We will have courage like the adamant rock, _600 All things are ready for you here; go in, Before our father shall perceive the noise.

ULYSSES: Vulcan, Aetnean king! burn out with fire The shining eye of this thy neighbouring monster! And thou, O Sleep, nursling of gloomy Night, _605 Descend unmixed on this God-hated beast, And suffer not Ulysses and his comrades, Returning from their famous Trojan toils, To perish by this man, who cares not either For God or mortal; or I needs must think _610 That Chance is a supreme divinity, And things divine are subject to her power.

NOTE: _606 God-hated 1824; God-hating (as an alternative) B.

CHORUS: Soon a crab the throat will seize Of him who feeds upon his guest, Fire will burn his lamp-like eyes _615 In revenge of such a feast! A great oak stump now is lying In the ashes yet undying. Come, Maron, come! Raging let him fix the doom, _620 Let him tear the eyelid up Of the Cyclops—that his cup May be evil! Oh! I long to dance and revel With sweet Bromian, long desired, _625 In loved ivy wreaths attired; Leaving this abandoned home— Will the moment ever come?

ULYSSES: Be silent, ye wild things! Nay, hold your peace, And keep your lips quite close; dare not to breathe, _630 Or spit, or e’en wink, lest ye wake the monster, Until his eye be tortured out with fire.

CHORUS: Nay, we are silent, and we chaw the air.

ULYSSES: Come now, and lend a hand to the great stake Within—it is delightfully red hot. _635

CHORUS: You then command who first should seize the stake To burn the Cyclops’ eye, that all may share In the great enterprise.

SEMICHORUS 1: We are too far; We cannot at this distance from the door Thrust fire into his eye.

SEMICHORUS 2: And we just now _640 Have become lame! cannot move hand or foot.

CHORUS: The same thing has occurred to us,—our ankles Are sprained with

standing here, I know not how.

ULYSSES: What, sprained with standing still?

CHORUS: And there is dust Or ashes in our eyes, I know not whence. _645

ULYSSES: Cowardly dogs! ye will not aid me then?

CHORUS: With pitying my own back and my back-bone, And with not wishing all my teeth knocked out, This cowardice comes of itself—but stay, I know a famous Orphic incantation _650 To make the brand stick of its own accord Into the skull of this one-eyed son of Earth.

ULYSSES: Of old I knew ye thus by nature; now I know ye better.—I will use the aid Of my own comrades. Yet though weak of hand _655 Speak cheerfully, that so ye may awaken The courage of my friends with your blithe words.

CHORUS: This I will do with peril of my life, And blind you with my exhortations, Cyclops. Hasten and thrust, _660 And parch up to dust, The eye of the beast Who feeds on his guest. Burn and blind The Aetnean hind! _665 Scoop and draw, But beware lest he claw Your limbs near his maw.

CYCLOPS: Ah me! my eyesight is parched up to cinders.

CHORUS: What a sweet paean! sing me that again! _670

CYCLOPS: Ah me! indeed, what woe has fallen upon me! But, wretched nothings, think ye not to flee Out of this rock; I, standing at the outlet, Will bar the way and catch you as you pass.

CHORUS: What are you roaring out, Cyclops?

CYCLOPS: I perish! _675

CHORUS: For you are wicked.

CYCLOPS: And besides miserable.

CHORUS: What, did you fall into the fire when drunk?

CYCLOPS: ’Twas Nobody destroyed me.

CHORUS: Why then no one Can be to blame.

CYCLOPS: I say ’twas Nobody Who blinded me.

CHORUS: Why then you are not blind. _680

CYCLOPS: I wish you were as blind as I am.

CHORUS: Nay, It cannot be that no one made you blind.

CYCLOPS: You jeer me; where, I ask, is Nobody?

CHORUS: Nowhere, O Cyclops.

CYCLOPS: It was that stranger ruined me:—the wretch _685 First gave me wine and then burned out my eye, For wine is strong and hard to struggle with. Have they escaped, or are they yet within?

CHORUS: They stand under the darkness of the rock And cling to it.

CYCLOPS: At my right hand or left? _690

CHORUS: Close on your right.

CYCLOPS: Where?

CHORUS: Near the rock itself. You have them.

CYCLOPS: Oh, misfortune on misfortune! I’ve cracked my skull.

CHORUS: Now they escape you—there.

NOTE: _693 So B.; Now they escape you there 1824.

CYCLOPS: Not there, although you say so.

CHORUS: Not on that side.

CYCLOPS: Where then?

CHORUS: They creep about you on your left. _695

CYCLOPS: Ah! I am mocked! They jeer me in my ills.

CHORUS: Not there! he is a little there beyond you.

CYCLOPS: Detested wretch! where are you?

ULYSSES: Far from you I keep with care this body of Ulysses.

CYCLOPS: What do you say? You proffer a new name. _700

ULYSSES: My father named me so; and I have taken A full revenge for your unnatural feast; I should have done ill to have burned down Troy And not revenged the murder of my comrades.

CYCLOPS: Ai! ai! the ancient oracle is accomplished; _705 It said that I should have my eyesight blinded By your coming from Troy, yet it foretold That you should pay the penalty for this By wandering long over the homeless sea.

ULYSSES: I bid thee weep—consider what I say; _710 I go towards the shore to drive my ship To mine own land, o'er the Sicilian wave.

CYCLOPS: Not so, if, whelming you with this huge stone, I can crush you and all your men together; I will descend upon the shore, though blind, _715 Groping my way adown the steep ravine.

CHORUS: And we, the shipmates of Ulysses now, Will serve our Bacchus all our happy lives.

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EPIGRAMS.

[These four Epigrams were published—numbers 2 and 4 without title—by Mrs. Shelley, "Poetical Works", 1839, 1st edition.]

1.—TO STELLA.

FROM THE GREEK OF PLATO.

Thou wert the morning star among the living, Ere thy fair light had fled;— Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving New splendour to the dead.

2.—KISSING HELENA.

FROM THE GREEK OF PLATO.

Kissing Helena, together With my kiss, my soul beside it Came to my lips, and there I kept it,— For the poor thing had wandered thither, To follow where the kiss should guide it, _5 Oh, cruel I, to intercept it!

3.—SPIRIT OF PLATO.

FROM THE GREEK.

Eagle! why soarest thou above that tomb? To what sublime and star-ypaven home Floatest thou?— I am the image of swift Plato’s spirit, Ascending heaven; Athens doth inherit _5 His corpse below.

NOTE: _5 doth Boscombe manuscript; does edition 1839.

4.—CIRCUMSTANCE.

FROM THE GREEK.

A man who was about to hang himself, Finding a purse, then threw away his rope; The owner, coming to reclaim his pelf, The halter found; and used it. So is Hope Changed for Despair—one laid upon the shelf, _5 We take the other. Under Heaven’s high cope Fortune is God—all you endure and do Depends on circumstance as much as you.

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FRAGMENT OF THE ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF ADONIS.

PROM THE GREEK OF BION.

[Published by Forman, “Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1876.]

I mourn Adonis dead—loveliest Adonis— Dead, dead Adonis—and the Loves lament. Sleep no more, Venus, wrapped in purple woof— Wake violet-stoled queen, and weave the crown Of Death,—’tis Misery calls,—for he is dead. _5

The lovely one lies wounded in the mountains, His white thigh struck with the white tooth; he scarce Yet breathes; and Venus hangs in agony there. The dark blood wanders o'er his snowy limbs, His eyes beneath their lids are lustreless, _10 The rose has fled from his wan lips, and there That kiss is dead, which Venus gathers yet.

A deep, deep wound Adonis… A deeper Venus bears upon her heart. See, his beloved dogs are gathering round— _15 The Oread nymphs are weeping—Aphrodite With hair unbound is wandering through the woods, 'Wildered, ungirt, unsandalled—the thorns pierce Her hastening feet and drink her sacred blood. Bitterly screaming out, she is driven on _20 Through the long vales; and her Assyrian boy, Her love, her husband, calls—the purple blood From his struck thigh stains her white navel now, Her bosom, and her neck before like snow.

Alas for Cytherea—the Loves mourn— _25 The lovely, the beloved is gone!—and now Her sacred beauty vanishes away. For Venus whilst Adonis lived was fair— Alas! her loveliness is dead with him. The oaks and mountains cry, Ai! ai! Adonis! _30 The springs their waters change to tears and weep— The flowers are withered up with grief…

Ai! ai! … Adonis is dead Echo resounds … Adonis dead. Who will weep not thy dreadful woe. O Venus? _35 Soon as she saw and knew the mortal wound Of her Adonis—saw the life-blood flow From his fair thigh, now wasting,—wailing loud She clasped him, and cried … 'Stay, Adonis! Stay, dearest one,… _40 and mix my lips with thine— Wake yet a while, Adonis—oh, but once, That I may kiss thee now for the last time— But for as long as one short kiss may live— Oh, let thy breath flow from thy dying soul _45 Even to my mouth and heart, that I may suck That…'

NOTE: _23 his Rossetti, Dowden, Woodberry; her Boscombe manuscript, Forman.

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FRAGMENT OF THE ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF BION.

FROM THE GREEK OF MOSCHUS.

[Published from the Hunt manuscripts by Forman, “Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1876.]

Ye Dorian woods and waves, lament aloud,— Augment your tide, O streams, with fruitless tears, For the beloved Bion is no more. Let every tender herb and plant and flower, From each dejected bud and drooping bloom, _5 Shed dews of liquid sorrow, and with breath Of melancholy sweetness on the wind Diffuse its languid love; let roses blush, Anemones grow paler for the loss Their dells have known; and thou, O hyacinth, _10 Utter thy legend now—yet more, dumb flower, Than ‘Ah! alas!’—thine is no common grief— Bion the [sweetest singer] is no more.

NOTE: _2 tears]sorrow (as alternative) Hunt manuscript.

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FROM THE GREEK OF MOSCHUS.

[Published with “Alastor”, 1816.]

Tan ala tan glaukan otan onemos atrema Balle—k.t.l.

When winds that move not its calm surface sweep The azure sea, I love the land no more; The smiles of the serene and tranquil deep Tempt my unquiet mind.—But when the roar Of Ocean’s gray abyss resounds, and foam _5 Gathers upon the sea, and vast waves burst, I turn from the drear aspect to the home Of Earth and its deep woods, where, interspersed, When winds blow loud, pines make sweet melody. Whose house is some lone bark, whose toil the sea, _10 Whose prey the wandering fish, an evil lot Has chosen.—But I my languid limbs will fling Beneath the plane, where the brook’s murmuring Moves the calm spirit, but disturbs it not.

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PAN, ECHO, AND THE SATYR.

FROM THE GREEK OF MOSCHUS.

[Published (without title) by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824. There is a draft amongst the Hunt manuscripts.]

Pan loved his neighbour Echo—but that child Of Earth and Air pined for the Satyr leaping; The Satyr loved with wasting madness wild The bright nymph Lyda,—and so three went weeping. As Pan loved Echo, Echo loved the Satyr, _5 The Satyr, Lyda; and so love consumed them.— And thus to each—which was a woful matter— To bear what they inflicted Justice doomed them; For, inasmuch as each might hate the lover, Each, loving, so was hated.—Ye that love not _10 Be warned—in thought turn this example over, That when ye love, the like return ye prove not.

NOTE: _6 so Hunt manuscript; thus 1824. _11 So 1824; This lesson timely in your thoughts turn over, The moral of this song in thought turn over (as alternatives) Hunt manuscript.

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FROM VERGIL’S TENTH ECLOGUE.

[VERSES 1-26.]

[Published by Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1870, from the Boscombe manuscripts now in the Bodleian. Mr. Locock (“Examination”, etc., 1903, pages 47-50), as the result of his collation of the same manuscripts, gives a revised and expanded version which we print below.]

Melodious Arethusa, o’er my verse Shed thou once more the spirit of thy stream: Who denies verse to Gallus? So, when thou Glidest beneath the green and purple gleam Of Syracusan waters, mayst thou flow _5 Unmingled with the bitter Doric dew! Begin, and, whilst the goats are browsing now The soft leaves, in our way let us pursue The melancholy loves of Gallus. List! We sing not to the dead: the wild woods knew _10 His sufferings, and their echoes… Young Naiads,…in what far woodlands wild Wandered ye when unworthy love possessed Your Gallus? Not

where Pindus is up-piled, Nor where Parnassus' sacred mount, nor where _15 Aonian Aganippe expands… The laurels and the myrtle-copses dim. The pine-encircled mountain, Maenalus, The cold crags of Lycaeus, weep for him; And Sylvan, crowned with rustic coronals, _20 Came shaking in his speed the budding wands And heavy lilies which he bore: we knew Pan the Arcadian.

…

'What madness is this, Gallus? Thy heart's care With willing steps pursues another there.' _25

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THE SAME.

(As revised by Mr. C.D. Locock.)

Melodious Arethusa, o'er my verse Shed thou once more the spirit of thy stream:

(Two lines missing.)

Who denies verse to Gallus? So, when thou Glidest beneath the green and purple gleam Of Syracusan waters, mayest thou flow _5 Unmingled with the bitter Dorian dew! Begin, and whilst the goats are browsing now The soft leaves, in our song let us pursue The melancholy loves of Gallus. List! We sing not to the deaf: the wild woods knew _10 His sufferings, and their echoes answer… Young Naiades, in what far woodlands wild Wandered ye, when unworthy love possessed Our Gallus? Nor where Pindus is up-piled, Nor where Parnassus' sacred mount, nor where _15 Aonian Aganippe spreads its…

(Three lines missing.)

The laurels and the myrtle-copses dim, The pine-encircled mountain, Maenalus, The cold crags of Lycaeus weep for him.

(Several lines missing.)

'What madness is this, Gallus? thy heart's care, _20 Lycoris, mid rude camps and

Alpine snow, With willing step pursues another there.’

(Some lines missing.)

And Sylvan, crowned with rustic coronals, Came shaking in his speed the budding wands And heavy lilies which he bore: we knew _25 Pan the Arcadian with…. …and said, ‘Wilt thou not ever cease? Love cares not. The meadows with fresh streams, the bees with thyme, The goats with the green leaves of budding spring _30 Are saturated not—nor Love with tears.’

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FROM VERGIL’S FOURTH GEORGIC.

[VERSES 360 ET SEQ.]

[Published by Locock, “Examination”, etc., 1903.]

And the cloven waters like a chasm of mountains Stood, and received him in its mighty portal And led him through the deep’s untrampled fountains

He went in wonder through the path immortal Of his great Mother and her humid reign _5 And groves profaned not by the step of mortal

Which sounded as he passed, and lakes which rain Replenished not girt round by marble caves ‘Wildered by the watery motion of the main

Half ‘wildered he beheld the bursting waves _10 Of every stream beneath the mighty earth Phasis and Lycus which the … sand paves,

[And] The chasm where old Enipeus has its birth And father Tyber and Anienas[?] glow And whence Caicus, Mysian stream, comes forth _15

And rock-resounding Hypanis, and thou Eridanus who bearest like empire’s sign Two golden horns upon thy taurine brow

Thou than whom none of the streams divine Through garden-fields and meads with fiercer power, _20 Burst in their tumult on the purple brine

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SONNET.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF DANTE.

[Published with “Alastor”, 1816; reprinted, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824.]

DANTE ALIGHIERI TO GUIDO CAVALCANTI:

Guido, I would that Lapo, thou, and I, Led by some strong enchantment, might ascend A magic ship, whose charmed sails should fly With winds at will where’er our thoughts might wend, So that no change, nor any evil chance _5 Should mar our joyous voyage; but it might be, That even satiety should still enhance Between our hearts their strict community: And that the bounteous wizard then would place Vanna and Bice and my gentle love, _10 Companions of our wandering, and would grace With passionate talk, wherever we might rove, Our time, and each were as content and free As I believe that thou and I should be.

_5 So 1824; And 1816.

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THE FIRST CANZONE OF THE CONVITO.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF DANTE.

[Published by Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862; dated 1820.]

1. Ye who intelligent the Third Heaven move, Hear the discourse which is within my heart, Which cannot be declared, it seems so new. The Heaven whose course follows your power and art, Oh, gentle creatures that ye are! me drew, _5 And therefore may I dare to speak to you, Even of the life which now I live—and yet I pray that ye will hear me when I cry, And tell of mine own heart this novelty; How the lamenting Spirit moans in it, _10 And how a voice there murmurs against her Who came on the refulgence of your sphere.

2. A sweet Thought, which was once the life within This heavy heart, man a time and oft Went up before our Father’s feet, and there _15 It saw a glorious Lady

throned aloft; And its sweet talk of her my soul did win, So that I said, ‘Thither I too will fare.’ That Thought is fled, and one doth now appear Which tyrannizes me with such fierce stress, _20 That my heart trembles—ye may see it leap— And on another Lady bids me keep Mine eyes, and says—Who would have blessedness Let him but look upon that Lady’s eyes, Let him not fear the agony of sighs. _25

3. This lowly Thought, which once would talk with me Of a bright seraph sitting crowned on high, Found such a cruel foe it died, and so My Spirit wept, the grief is hot even now— And said, Alas for me! how swift could flee _30 That piteous Thought which did my life console! And the afflicted one … questioning Mine eyes, if such a Lady saw they never, And why they would… I said: ‘Beneath those eyes might stand for ever _35 He whom … regards must kill with… To have known their power stood me in little stead, Those eyes have looked on me, and I am dead.’

4. ‘Thou art not dead, but thou hast wandered, Thou Soul of ours, who thyself dost fret,’ _40 A Spirit of gentle Love beside me said; For that fair Lady, whom thou dost regret, Hath so transformed the life which thou hast led, Thou scornest it, so worthless art thou made. And see how meek, how pitiful, how staid, _45 Yet courteous, in her majesty she is. And still call thou her Woman in thy thought; Her whom, if thou thyself deceivest not, Thou wilt behold decked with such loveliness, That thou wilt cry [Love] only Lord, lo! here _50 Thy handmaiden, do what thou wilt with her.

5. My song, I fear that thou wilt find but few Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning Of such hard matter dost thou entertain. Whence, if by misadventure chance should bring _55 Thee to base company, as chance may do, Quite unaware of what thou dost contain, I prithee comfort thy sweet self again, My last delight; tell them that they are dull, And bid them own that thou art beautiful. _60

NOTE: C5. Published with “Epispychidion”, 1821.—ED.

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MATILDA GATHERING FLOWERS.

FROM THE PURGATORIO OF DANTE, CANTO 28, LINES 1-51.

[Published in part (lines 1-8, 22-51) by Medwin, “The Angler in Wales”, 1834, “Life of Shelley”, 1847; reprinted in full by Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.]

And earnest to explore within—around— The divine wood, whose thick green living woof Tempered the young day to the sight—I wound

Up the green slope, beneath the forest’s roof, With slow, soft steps leaving the mountain’s steep, _5 And sought those inmost labyrinths, motion-proof

Against the air, that in that stillness deep And solemn, struck upon my forehead bare, The slow, soft stroke of a continuous…

In which the … leaves tremblingly were _10 All bent towards that part where earliest The sacred hill obscures the morning air.

Yet were they not so shaken from the rest, But that the birds, perched on the utmost spray, Incessantly renewing their blithe quest, _15

With perfect joy received the early day, Singing within the glancing leaves, whose sound Kept a low burden to their roundelay,

Such as from bough to bough gathers around The pine forest on bleak Chiassi’s shore, _20 When Aeolus Sirocco has unbound.

My slow steps had already borne me o’er Such space within the antique wood, that I Perceived not where I entered any more,—

When, lo! a stream whose little waves went by, _25 Bending towards the left through grass that grew Upon its bank, impeded suddenly

My going on. Water of purest hue On earth, would appear turbid and impure Compared with this, whose unconcealing dew, _30

Dark, dark, yet clear, moved under the obscure Eternal shades, whose interwoven looms The rays of moon or sunlight ne’er endure.

I moved not with my feet, but mid the glooms Pierced with my charmed eye, contemplating _35 The mighty multitude of fresh May blooms

Which starred that night, when, even as a thing That suddenly, for blank astonishment, Charms every sense, and makes all thought take wing,—

A solitary woman! and she went _40 Singing and gathering flower after flower, With which her way was painted and besprent.

‘Bright lady, who, if looks had ever power To bear true witness of the heart within, Dost bask under the beams of love, come lower _45

Towards this bank. I prithee let me win This much of thee, to come, that I may hear Thy song: like Proserpine, in Enna’s glen,

Thou seemest to my fancy, singing here And gathering flowers, as that fair maiden when _50 She lost the Spring, and Ceres her, more dear.

NOTES: _2 The 1862; That 1834. _4, _5 So 1862; Up a green slope, beneath the starry roof, With slow, slow steps— 1834. _6 inmost 1862; leafy 1834. _9 So 1862; The slow, soft stroke of a continuous sleep cj. Rossetti, 1870. _9-_28 So 1862; Like the sweet breathing of a child asleep: Already I had lost myself so far Amid that tangled wilderness that I Perceived not where I ventured, but no fear Of wandering from my way disturbed, when nigh A little stream appeared; the grass that grew Thick on its banks impeded suddenly My going on. 1834. _13 the 1862; their cj. Rossetti, 1870. _26 through]the cj. Rossetti. _28 hue 1862; dew 1834. _30 dew 1862; hue 1834. _32 Eternal shades 1862; Of the close boughs 1834. _33 So 1862; No ray of moon or sunshine would endure 1834. _34, _35 So 1862; My feet were motionless, but mid the glooms Darted my charmed eyes—1834. _37 Which 1834; That 1862. _39 So 1834; Dissolves all other thought…1862. _40 So 1862; Appeared a solitary maid—she went 1834. _46 Towards 1862; Unto 1834. _47 thee, to come 1862; thee O come 1834.

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FRAGMENT.

ADAPTED FROM THE VITA NUOVA OF DANTE.

[Published by Forman, “Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1876.]

What Mary is when she a little smiles I cannot even tell or call to mind, It is a miracle so new, so rare.

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UGOLINO.

(Published by Medwin, “Life of Shelley”, 1847, with Shelley’s corrections in italics [‘‘].—ED.)

INFERNO 33, 22-75.

[Translated by Medwin and corrected by Shelley.]

Now had the loophole of that dungeon, still Which bears the name of Famine’s Tower from me, And where ’tis fit that many another will

Be doomed to linger in captivity, Shown through its narrow opening in my cell _5 ‘Moon after moon slow waning’, when a sleep,

‘That of the future burst the veil, in dream Visited me. It was a slumber deep And evil; for I saw, or I did seem’

To see, ‘that’ tyrant Lord his revels keep _10 The leader of the cruel hunt to them, Chasing the wolf and wolf-cubs up the steep

Ascent, that from ‘the Pisan is the screen’ Of ‘Lucca’; with him Gualandi came, Sismondi, and Lanfranchi, ‘bloodhounds lean, _15

Trained to the sport and eager for the game Wide ranging in his front;’ but soon were seen Though by so short a course, with ‘spirits tame,’

The father and ‘his whelps’ to flag at once, And then the sharp fangs gored their bosoms deep. _20 Ere morn I roused myself, and heard my sons,

For they were with me, moaning in their sleep, And begging bread. Ah, for those darling ones! Right cruel art thou, if thou dost not weep

In thinking of my soul's sad augury; _25 And if thou weepest not now, weep never more! They were already waked, as wont drew nigh

The allotted hour for food, and in that hour Each drew a presage from his dream. When I 'Heard locked beneath me of that horrible tower _30

The outlet; then into their eyes alone I looked to read myself,' without a sign Or word. I wept not—turned within to stone.

They wept aloud, and little Anselm mine, Said—'twas my youngest, dearest little one,— _35 "What ails thee, father? Why look so at thine?"

In all that day, and all the following night, I wept not, nor replied; but when to shine Upon the world, not us, came forth the light

Of the new sun, and thwart my prison thrown _40 Gleamed through its narrow chink, a doleful sight, 'Three faces, each the reflex of my own,

Were imaged by its faint and ghastly ray;' Then I, of either hand unto the bone, Gnawed, in my agony; and thinking they _45

Twas done from sudden pangs, in their excess, All of a sudden raise themselves, and say, "Father! our woes, so great, were yet the less

Would you but eat of us,—twas 'you who clad Our bodies in these weeds of wretchedness; _50 Despoil them'." Not to make their hearts more sad,

I 'hushed' myself. That day is at its close,— Another—still we were all mute. Oh, had The obdurate earth opened to end our woes!

The fourth day dawned, and when the new sun shone, _55 Outstretched himself before me as it rose My Gaddo, saying, "Help, father! hast thou none

For thine own child—is there no help from thee?" He died—there at my feet—and one by one, I saw them fall, plainly as you see me. _60

Between the fifth and sixth day, ere twas dawn, I found ‘myself blind-groping o’er the three.’ Three days I called them after they were gone.

Famine of grief can get the mastery.

***

SONNET.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF CAVALCANTI. GUIDO CAVALCANTI TO DANTE ALIGHIERI:

[Published by Forman (who assigns it to 1815), “Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1876.]

Returning from its daily quest, my Spirit Changed thoughts and vile in thee doth weep to find: It grieves me that thy mild and gentle mind Those ample virtues which it did inherit Has lost. Once thou didst loathe the multitude _5 Of blind and madding men—I then loved thee— I loved thy lofty songs and that sweet mood When thou wert faithful to thyself and me I dare not now through thy degraded state Own the delight thy strains inspire—in vain _10 I seek what once thou wert—we cannot meet And we were wont. Again and yet again Ponder my words: so the false Spirit shall fly And leave to thee thy true integrity.

***

SCENES FROM THE MAGICO PRODIGIOSO.

FROM THE SPANISH OF CALDERON.

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, “Posthumous Poems”, 1824; dated March, 1822. There is a transcript of Scene 1 among the Hunt manuscripts, which has been collated by Mr. Buxton Forman.]

SCENE 1: ENTER CYPRIAN, DRESSED AS A STUDENT; CLARIN AND MOSCON AS POOR SCHOLARS, WITH BOOKS.

CYPRIAN: In the sweet solitude of this calm place, This intricate wild wilderness of trees And flowers and undergrowth of odorous plants, Leave me; the books you

brought out of the house To me are ever best society. _5 And while with glorious festival and song, Antioch now celebrates the consecration Of a proud temple to great Jupiter, And bears his image in loud jubilee To its new shrine, I would consume what still _10 Lives of the dying day in studious thought, Far from the throng and turmoil. You, my friends, Go, and enjoy the festival; it will Be worth your pains. You may return for me When the sun seeks its grave among the billows _15 Which, among dim gray clouds on the horizon, Dance like white plumes upon a hearse;— and here I shall expect you.

NOTES: _14 So transcr.; Be worth the labour, and return for me 1824. _16, _17 So 1824; Hid among dim gray clouds on the horizon Which dance like plumes—transcr., Forman.

MOSCON: I cannot bring my mind, Great as my haste to see the festival Certainly is, to leave you, Sir, without _20 Just saying some three or four thousand words. How is it possible that on a day Of such festivity, you can be content To come forth to a solitary country With three or four old books, and turn your back _25 On all this mirth?

NOTES: _21 thousand transcr.; hundred 1824. _23 be content transcr.; bring your mind 1824.

CLARIN: My master’s in the right; There is not anything more tiresome Than a procession day, with troops, and priests, And dances, and all that.

NOTE: _28 and priests transcr.; of men 1824.

MOSCON: From first to last, Clarin, you are a temporizing flatterer; _30 You praise not what you feel but what he does;— Toadeater!

CLARIN: You lie—under a mistake— For this is the most civil sort of lie That can be given to a man’s face. I now Say what I think.

CYPRIAN: Enough, you foolish fellows! _35 Puffed up with your own doting ignorance, You always take the two sides of one question. Now go; and as I said,

return for me When night falls, veiling in its shadows wide This glorious fabric of the universe. _40

NOTE: _36 doting ignorance transcr.; ignorance and pride 1824.

MOSCON: How happens it, although you can maintain The folly of enjoying festivals, That yet you go there?

CLARIN: Nay, the consequence Is clear:—who ever did what he advises Others to do?—

MOSCON: Would that my feet were wings, _45 So would I fly to Livia.

[EXIT.]

CLARIN: To speak truth, Livia is she who has surprised my heart; But he is more than half-way there.—Soho! Livia, I come; good sport, Livia, soho!

[EXIT.]

CYPRIAN: Now, since I am alone, let me examine _50 The question which has long disturbed my mind With doubt, since first I read in Plinius The words of mystic import and deep sense In which he defines God. My intellect Can find no God with whom these marks and signs _55 Fitly agree. It is a hidden truth Which I must fathom.

[CYPRIAN READS; THE DAEMON, DRESSED IN A COURT DRESS, ENTERS.]

NOTE: _57 Stage Direction: So transcr. Reads. Enter the Devil as a fine gentleman 1824.

DAEMON: Search even as thou wilt, But thou shalt never find what I can hide.

CYPRIAN: What noise is that among the boughs? Who moves? What art thou?—

DAEMON: ’Tis a foreign gentleman. _60 Even from this morning I have lost my way In this wild place; and my poor horse at last, Quite overcome, has stretched himself upon The enamelled tapestry of this mossy mountain, And feeds and rests at

the same time. I was _65 Upon my way to Antioch upon business Of some importance, but wrapped up in cares (Who is exempt from this inheritance?) I parted from my company, and lost My way, and lost my servants and my comrades. _70

CYPRIAN: 'Tis singular that even within the sight Of the high towers of Antioch you could lose Your way. Of all the avenues and green paths Of this wild wood there is not one but leads, As to its centre, to the walls of Antioch; _75 Take which you will, you cannot miss your road.

DAEMON: And such is ignorance! Even in the sight Of knowledge, it can draw no profit from it. But as it still is early, and as I Have no acquaintances in Antioch, _80 Being a stranger there, I will even wait The few surviving hours of the day, Until the night shall conquer it. I see Both by your dress and by the books in which You find delight and company, that you _85 Are a great student;—for my part, I feel Much sympathy in such pursuits.

NOTE: _87 in transcr.; with 1824.

CYPRIAN: Have you Studied much?

DAEMON: No,—and yet I know enough Not to be wholly ignorant.

CYPRIAN: Pray, Sir, What science may you know?—

DAEMON: Many.

CYPRIAN: Alas! _90 Much pains must we expend on one alone, And even then attain it not;—but you Have the presumption to assert that you Know many without study.

DAEMON: And with truth. For in the country whence I come the sciences _95 Require no learning,—they are known.

NOTE: _95 come the sciences]come sciences 1824.

CYPRIAN: Oh, would I were of that bright country! for in this The more we study, we the more discover Our ignorance.

DAEMON: It is so true, that I Had so much arrogance as to oppose _100 The chair of the most high Professorship, And obtained many votes, and, though I lost, The attempt was still more glorious, than the failure Could be dishonourable. If you believe not, Let us refer it to dispute respecting _105 That which you know the best, and although I Know not the opinion you maintain, and though It be the true one, I will take the contrary.

NOTE: _106 the transcr.; wanting, 1824.

CYPRIAN: The offer gives me pleasure. I am now Debating with myself upon a passage _110 Of Plinius, and my mind is racked with doubt To understand and know who is the God Of whom he speaks.

DAEMON: It is a passage, if I recollect it right, couched in these words ‘God is one supreme goodness, one pure essence, _115 One substance, and one sense, all sight, all hands.’

CYPRIAN: ’Tis true.

DAEMON: What difficulty find you here?

CYPRIAN: I do not recognize among the Gods The God defined by Plinius; if he must Be supreme goodness, even Jupiter _120 Is not supremely good; because we see His deeds are evil, and his attributes Tainted with mortal weakness; in what manner Can supreme goodness be consistent with The passions of humanity?

DAEMON: The wisdom _125 Of the old world masked with the names of Gods The attributes of Nature and of Man; A sort of popular philosophy.

CYPRIAN: This reply will not satisfy me, for Such awe is due to the high name of God _130 That ill should never be imputed. Then, Examining the question with more care, It follows, that the Gods would always will That which is best, were they supremely good. How then does one will one thing, one another? _135 And that you may not say that I allege Poetical or philosophic learning:— Consider the ambiguous responses Of their oracular statues; from two shrines Two armies shall

obtain the assurance of _140 One victory. Is it not indisputable That two contending wills can never lead To the same end? And, being opposite, If one be good, is not the other evil? Evil in God is inconceivable; _145 But supreme goodness fails among the Gods Without their union.

NOTE: _133 would transcr.; should 1824.

DAEMON: I deny your major. These responses are means towards some end Unfathomed by our intellectual beam. They are the work of Providence, and more _150 The battle's loss may profit those who lose, Than victory advantage those who win.

CYPRIAN: That I admit; and yet that God should not (Falsehood is incompatible with deity) Assure the victory; it would be enough _155 To have permitted the defeat. If God Be all sight,—God, who had beheld the truth, Would not have given assurance of an end Never to be accomplished: thus, although The Deity may according to his attributes _160 Be well distinguished into persons, yet Even in the minutest circumstance His essence must be one.

NOTE: _157 had transcr.; wanting, 1824.

DAEMON: To attain the end The affections of the actors in the scene Must have been thus influenced by his voice. _165

CYPRIAN: But for a purpose thus subordinate He might have employed Genii, good or evil,— A sort of spirits called so by the learned, Who roam about inspiring good or evil, And from whose influence and existence we _170 May well infer our immortality. Thus God might easily, without descent To a gross falsehood in his proper person, Have moved the affections by this mediation To the just point.

NOTE: _172 descent transcr.; descending 1824.

DAEMON: These trifling contradictions _175 Do not suffice to impugn the unity Of the high Gods; in things of great importance They still appear unanimous; consider That glorious fabric, man,—his workmanship Is stamped with one conception.

CYPRIAN: Who made man _180 Must have, methinks, the advantage of the others. If they are equal, might they not have risen In opposition to the work, and being All hands, according to our author here, Have still destroyed even as the other made? _185 If equal in their power, unequal only In opportunity, which of the two Will remain conqueror?

NOTE: _186 unequal only transcr.; and only unequal 1824.

DAEMON: On impossible And false hypothesis there can be built No argument. Say, what do you infer _190 From this?

CYPRIAN: That there must be a mighty God Of supreme goodness and of highest grace, All sight, all hands, all truth, infallible, Without an equal and without a rival, The cause of all things and the effect of nothing, _195 One power, one will, one substance, and one essence. And, in whatever persons, one or two, His attributes may be distinguished, one Sovereign power, one solitary essence, One cause of all cause.

NOTE: _197 And]query, Ay?

[THEY RISE.]

DAEMON: How can I impugn _200 So clear a consequence?

NOTE: _200 all cause 1824; all things transcr.

CYPRIAN: Do you regret My victory?

DAEMON: Who but regrets a check In rivalry of wit? I could reply And urge new difficulties, but will now Depart, for I hear steps of men approaching, _205 And it is time that I should now pursue My journey to the city.

CYPRIAN: Go in peace!

DAEMON: Remain in peace!—Since thus it profits him To study, I will wrap his senses up In sweet oblivion of all thought but of _210 A piece of excellent beauty; and, as I Have power given me to wage enmity Against Justina’s soul, I will extract

From one effect two vengeances.

[ASIDE AND EXIT.]

NOTE: _214 Stage direction So transcr.; Exit 1824.

CYPRIAN: I never Met a more learned person. Let me now _215 Revolve this doubt again with careful mind.

[HE READS.] [FLORO AND LELIO ENTER.]

LELIO: Here stop. These toppling rocks and tangled boughs, Impenetrable by the noonday beam, Shall be sole witnesses of what we—

FLORO: Draw! If there were words, here is the place for deeds. _220

LELIO: Thou needest not instruct me; well I know That in the field, the silent tongue of steel Speaks thus,—

[THEY FIGHT.]

CYPRIAN: Ha! what is this? Lelio,—Floro, Be it enough that Cyprian stands between you, Although unarmed.

LELIO: Whence comest thou, to stand _225 Between me and my vengeance?

FLORO: From what rocks And desert cells?

[ENTER MOSCON AND CLARIN.]

MOSCON: Run! run! for where we left My master. I now hear the clash of swords.

NOTES: _228 I now hear transcr.; we hear 1824. _227-_229 lines of otherwise arranged, 1824.

CLARIN: I never run to approach things of this sort But only to avoid them. Sir! Cyprian! sir! _230

CYPRIAN: Be silent, fellows! What! two friends who are In blood and fame the eyes and hope of Antioch, One of the noble race of the Colalti, The other son o’ the Governor, adventure And cast away, on some slight cause no doubt, _235 Two lives,

the honour of their country?

NOTE: _233 race transcr.; men 1824. Colalti]Colatti 1824.

LELIO: Cyprian! Although my high respect towards your person Holds now my sword suspended, thou canst not Restore it to the slumber of the scabbard: Thou knowest more of science than the duel; _240 For when two men of honour take the field, No counsel nor respect can make them friends But one must die in the dispute.

NOTE: _239 of the transcr.; of its 1824. _242 No counsel nor 1839, 1st edition; No […] or 1824; No reasoning or transcr. _243 dispute transcr. pursuit 1824.

FLORO: I pray That you depart hence with your people, and Leave us to finish what we have begun _245 Without advantage.—

CYPRIAN: Though you may imagine That I know little of the laws of duel, Which vanity and valour instituted, You are in error. By my birth I am Held no less than yourselves to know the limits _250 Of honour and of infamy, nor has study Quenched the free spirit which first ordered them; And thus to me, as one well experienced In the false quicksands of the sea of honour, You may refer the merits of the case; _255 And if I should perceive in your relation That either has the right to satisfaction From the other, I give you my word of honour To leave you.

NOTE: _253 well omit, cj. Forman.

LELIO: Under this condition then I will relate the cause, and you will cede _260 And must confess the impossibility Of compromise; for the same lady is Beloved by Floro and myself.

FLORO: It seems Much to me that the light of day should look Upon that idol of my heart—but he— _265 Leave us to fight, according to thy word.

CYPRIAN: Permit one question further: is the lady Impossible to hope or not?

LELIO: She is So excellent, that if the light of day Should excite Floro’s jealousy, it were _270 Without just cause, for even the light of day Trembles to gaze on her.

CYPRIAN: Would you for your Part, marry her?

FLORO: Such is my confidence.

CYPRIAN: And you?

LELIO: Oh! would that I could lift my hope So high, for though she is extremely poor, _275 Her virtue is her dowry.

CYPRIAN: And if you both Would marry her, is it not weak and vain, Culpable and unworthy, thus beforehand To slur her honour? What would the world say If one should slay the other, and if she _280 Should afterwards espouse the murderer?

[THE RIVALS AGREE TO REFER THEIR QUARREL TO CYPRIAN; WHO IN CONSEQUENCE VISITS JUSTINA, AND BECOMES ENAMOURED OF HER; SHE DISDAINS HIM, AND HE RETIRES TO A SOLITARY SEA-SHORE.]

SCENE 2.

CYPRIAN: O memory! permit it not That the tyrant of my thought Be another soul that still Holds dominion o’er the will, That would refuse, but can no more, _5 To bend, to tremble, and adore. Vain idolatry!—I saw, And gazing, became blind with error; Weak ambition, which the awe Of her presence bound to terror! _10 So beautiful she was—and I, Between my love and jealousy, Am so convulsed with hope and fear, Unworthy as it may appear;— So bitter is the life I live, _15 That, hear me, Hell! I now would give To thy most detested spirit My soul, for ever to inherit, To suffer punishment and pine, So this woman may be mine. _20 Hear’st thou, Hell! dost thou reject it? My soul is offered!

DAEMON (UNSEEN): I accept it.

[TEMPEST, WITH THUNDER AND LIGHTNING.]

CYPRIAN: What is this? ye heavens for ever pure, At once intensely radiant and obscure! Athwart the aethereal halls _25 The lightning’s arrow and the thunder-balls The day affright, As from the horizon round, Burst with earthquake sound, In

mighty torrents the electric fountains;— _30 Clouds quench the sun, and thunder-smoke Strangles the air, and fire eclipses Heaven. Philosophy, thou canst not even Compel their causes underneath thy yoke: From yonder clouds even to the waves below _35 The fragments of a single ruin choke Imagination's flight; For, on flakes of surge, like feathers light, The ashes of the desolation, cast Upon the gloomy blast, _40 Tell of the footsteps of the storm; And nearer, see, the melancholy form Of a great ship, the outcast of the sea, Drives miserably! And it must fly the pity of the port, _45 Or perish, and its last and sole resort Is its own raging enemy. The terror of the thrilling cry Was a fatal prophecy Of coming death, who hovers now _50 Upon that shattered prow, That they who die not may be dying still. And not alone the insane elements Are populous with wild portents, But that sad ship is as a miracle _55 Of sudden ruin, for it drives so fast It seems as if it had arrayed its form With the headlong storm. It strikes—I almost feel the shock,— It stumbles on a jagged rock,— _60 Sparkles of blood on the white foam are cast.

[A TEMPEST.]

ALL EXCLAIM [WITHIN]: We are all lost!

DAEMON [WITHIN]: Now from this plank will I Pass to the land and thus fulfil my scheme.

CYPRIAN: As in contempt of the elemental rage A man comes forth in safety, while the ship's _65 Great form is in a watery eclipse Obliterated from the Oceans page, And round its wreck the huge sea-monsters sit, A horrid conclave, and the whistling wave Is heaped over its carcase, like a grave. _70

[THE DAEMON ENTERS, AS ESCAPED FROM THE SEA.]

DAEMON [ASIDE]: It was essential to my purposes To wake a tumult on the sapphire ocean, That in this unknown form I might at length Wipe out the blot of the discomfiture Sustained upon the mountain, and assail _75 With a new war the soul of Cyprian, Forging the instruments of his destruction Even from his love and from

his wisdom.—O Beloved earth, dear mother, in thy bosom I seek a refuge from the monster who _80 Precipitates itself upon me.

CYPRIAN: Friend, Collect thyself; and be the memory Of thy late suffering, and thy greatest sorrow But as a shadow of the past,—for nothing Beneath the circle of the moon, but flows _85 And changes, and can never know repose.

DAEMON: And who art thou, before whose feet my fate Has prostrated me?

CYPRIAN: One who, moved with pity, Would soothe its stings.

DAEMON: Oh, that can never be! No solace can my lasting sorrows find. _90

CYPRIAN: Wherefore?

DAEMON: Because my happiness is lost. Yet I lament what has long ceased to be The object of desire or memory, And my life is not life.

CYPRIAN: Now, since the fury Of this earthquaking hurricane is still, _95 And the crystalline Heaven has reassumed Its windless calm so quickly, that it seems As if its heavy wrath had been awakened Only to overwhelm that vessel,—speak, Who art thou, and whence comest thou?

DAEMON: Far more _100 My coming hither cost, than thou hast seen Or I can tell. Among my misadventures This shipwreck is the least. Wilt thou hear?

CYPRIAN: Speak.

DAEMON: Since thou desirest, I will then unveil Myself to thee;—for in myself I am _105 A world of happiness and misery; This I have lost, and that I must lament Forever. In my attributes I stood So high and so heroically great, In lineage so supreme, and with a genius _110 Which penetrated with a glance the world Beneath my feet, that, won by my high merit, A king—whom I may call the King of kings, Because all others tremble in their pride Before the terrors of His countenance, _115 In His high palace roofed with brightest gems Of living light—call them the stars of Heaven— Named me His counsellor. But the high praise Stung me with pride and

envy, and I rose In mighty competition, to ascend _120 His seat and place my foot triumphantly Upon His subject thrones. Chastised, I know The depth to which ambition falls; too mad Was the attempt, and yet more mad were now Repentance of the irrevocable deed:— _125 Therefore I chose this ruin, with the glory Of not to be subdued, before the shame Of reconciling me with Him who reigns By coward cession.—Nor was I alone, Nor am I now, nor shall I be alone; _130 And there was hope, and there may still be hope, For many suffrages among His vassals Hailed me their lord and king, and many still Are mine, and many more, perchance shall be. Thus vanquished, though in fact victorious, _135 I left His seat of empire, from mine eye Shooting forth poisonous lightning, while my words With inauspicious thunderings shook Heaven, Proclaiming vengeance, public as my wrong, And imprecating on His prostrate slaves _140 Rapine, and death, and outrage. Then I sailed Over the mighty fabric of the world,— A pirate ambushed in its pathless sands, A lynx crouched watchfully among its caves And craggy shores; and I have wandered over _145 The expanse of these wide wildernesses In this great ship, whose bulk is now dissolved In the light breathings of the invisible wind, And which the sea has made a dustless ruin, Seeking ever a mountain, through whose forests _150 I seek a man, whom I must now compel To keep his word with me. I came arrayed In tempest, and although my power could well Bridle the forest winds in their career, For other causes I forbore to soothe _155 Their fury to Favonian gentleness; I could and would not; [ASIDE.] (thus I wake in him A love of magic art). Let not this tempest, Nor the succeeding calm excite thy wonder; For by my art the sun would turn as pale _160 As his weak sister with unwonted fear; And in my wisdom are the orbs of Heaven Written as in a record; I have pierced The flaming circles of their wondrous spheres And know them as thou knowest every corner _165 Of this dim spot. Let it not seem to thee That I boast vainly; wouldst thou that I work A charm over this waste and savage wood, This Babylon of crags and aged trees, Filling its leafy coverts with a horror _170 Thrilling and strange? I am the

friendless guest Of these wild oaks and pines—and as from thee I have received the hospitality Of this rude place, I offer thee the fruit Of years of toil in recompense; whate'er _175 Thy wildest dream presented to thy thought As object of desire, that shall be thine.

…

And thenceforth shall so firm an amity 'Twixt thee and me be, that neither Fortune, The monstrous phantom which pursues success, _180 That careful miser, that free prodigal, Who ever alternates, with changeful hand, Evil and good, reproach and fame; nor Time, That lodestar of the ages, to whose beam The winged years speed o'er the intervals _185 Of their unequal revolutions; nor Heaven itself, whose beautiful bright stars Rule and adorn the world, can ever make The least division between thee and me, Since now I find a refuge in thy favour. _190

NOTES: _146 wide glassy wildernesses Rossetti. _150 Seeking forever cj. Forman. _154 forest]fiercest cj. Rossetti.

SCENE 3.

THE DAEMON TEMPTS JUSTINA, WHO IS A CHRISTIAN.

DAEMON: Abyss of Hell! I call on thee, Thou wild misrule of thine own anarchy! From thy prison-house set free The spirits of voluptuous death, That with their mighty breath _5 They may destroy a world of virgin thoughts; Let her chaste mind with fancies thick as motes Be peopled from thy shadowy deep, Till her guiltless fantasy Full to overflowing be! _10 And with sweetest harmony, Let birds, and flowers, and leaves, and all things move To love, only to love. Let nothing meet her eyes But signs of Love's soft victories; _15 Let nothing meet her ear But sounds of Love's sweet sorrow, So that from faith no succour she may borrow, But, guided by my spirit blind And in a magic snare entwined, _20 She may now seek Cyprian. Begin, while I in silence bind My voice, when thy sweet song thou hast began.

NOTE: _18 she may]may she 1824.

A VOICE [WITHIN]: What is the glory far above All else in human life?

ALL: Love! love! _25

[WHILE THESE WORDS ARE SUNG, THE DAEMON GOES OUT AT ONE DOOR, AND JUSTINA ENTERS AT ANOTHER.]

THE FIRST VOICE: There is no form in which the fire Of love its traces has impressed not. Man lives far more in love’s desire Than by life’s breath, soon possessed not. If all that lives must love or die, _30 All shapes on earth, or sea, or sky, With one consent to Heaven cry That the glory far above All else in life is—

ALL: Love! oh, Love!

JUSTINA: Thou melancholy Thought which art _35 So flattering and so sweet, to thee When did I give the liberty Thus to afflict my heart? What is the cause of this new Power Which doth my fevered being move, _40 Momently raging more and more? What subtle Pain is kindled now Which from my heart doth overflow Into my senses?—

NOTE: _36 flattering Boscombe manuscript; fluttering 1824.

ALL: Love! oh, Love!

JUSTINA: ’Tis that enamoured Nightingale _45 Who gives me the reply; He ever tells the same soft tale Of passion and of constancy To his mate, who rapt and fond, Listening sits, a bough beyond. _50

Be silent, Nightingale—no more Make me think, in hearing thee Thus tenderly thy love deplore, If a bird can feel his so, What a man would feel for me. _55 And, voluptuous Vine, O thou Who seekest most when least pursuing,— To the trunk thou interlacest Art the verdure which embracest, And the weight which is its ruin,— _60 No more, with green embraces, Vine, Make me think on what thou lovest,— For whilst thus thy boughs entwine I fear lest thou shouldst teach me, sophist, How arms might be entangled too. _65

Light-enchanted Sunflower, thou Who gazest ever true and tender On the sun's revolving splendour! Follow not his faithless glance With thy faded countenance, _70 Nor teach my beating heart to fear, If leaves can mourn without a tear, How eyes must weep! O Nightingale, Cease from thy enamoured tale,— Leafy Vine, unwreathe thy bower, _75 Restless Sunflower, cease to move,— Or tell me all, what poisonous Power Ye use against me—

NOTES: _58 To]Who to cj. Rossetti. _63 whilst thus Rossetti, Forman, Dowden; whilst thou thus 1824.

ALL: Love! Love! Love!

JUSTINA: It cannot be!—Whom have I ever loved? Trophies of my oblivion and disdain, _80 Floro and Lelio did I not reject? And Cyprian?— [SHE BECOMES TROUBLED AT THE NAME OF CYPRIAN.] Did I not requite him With such severity, that he has fled Where none has ever heard of him again?— Alas! I now begin to fear that this _85 May be the occasion whence desire grows bold, As if there were no danger. From the moment That I pronounced to my own listening heart, 'Cyprian is absent!'—O me miserable! I know not what I feel! [MORE CALMLY.] It must be pity _90 To think that such a man, whom all the world Admired, should be forgot by all the world, And I the cause. [SHE AGAIN BECOMES TROUBLED.] And yet if it were pity, Floro and Lelio might have equal share, For they are both imprisoned for my sake. _95 [CALMLY.] Alas! what reasonings are these? it is Enough I pity him, and that, in vain, Without this ceremonious subtlety. And, woe is me! I know not where to find him now, Even should I seek him through this wide world. _100

NOTE: _89 me miserable]miserable me editions 1839.

[ENTER DAEMON.]

DAEMON: Follow, and I will lead thee where he is.

JUSTINA: And who art thou, who hast found entrance hither, Into my chamber

through the doors and locks? Art thou a monstrous shadow which my madness Has formed in the idle air?

DAEMON: No. I am one _105 Called by the Thought which tyrannizes thee From his eternal dwelling; who this day Is pledged to bear thee unto Cyprian.

JUSTINA: So shall thy promise fail. This agony Of passion which afflicts my heart and soul _110 May sweep imagination in its storm; The will is firm.

DAEMON: Already half is done In the imagination of an act. The sin incurred, the pleasure then remains; Let not the will stop half-way on the road. _115

JUSTINA: I will not be discouraged, nor despair, Although I thought it, and although 'tis true That thought is but a prelude to the deed:— Thought is not in my power, but action is: I will not move my foot to follow thee. _120

DAEMON: But a far mightier wisdom than thine own Exerts itself within thee, with such power Compelling thee to that which it inclines That it shall force thy step; how wilt thou then Resist, Justina?

NOTE: _123 inclines]inclines to cj. Rossetti.

JUSTINA: By my free-will.

DAEMON: I _125 Must force thy will.

JUSTINA: It is invincible; It were not free if thou hadst power upon it.

[HE DRAWS, BUT CANNOT MOVE HER.]

DAEMON: Come, where a pleasure waits thee.

JUSTINA: It were bought Too dear.

DAEMON: 'Twill soothe thy heart to softest peace.

JUSTINA: 'Tis dread captivity.

DAEMON: 'Tis joy, 'tis glory. _130

JUSTINA: 'Tis shame, 'tis torment, 'tis despair.

DAEMON: But how Canst thou defend thyself from that or me, If my power drags thee onward?

JUSTINA: My defence Consists in God.

[HE VAINLY ENDEAVOURS TO FORCE HER, AND AT LAST RELEASES HER.]

DAEMON: Woman, thou hast subdued me, Only by not owning thyself subdued. _135 But since thou thus findest defence in God, I will assume a feigned form, and thus Make thee a victim of my baffled rage. For I will mask a spirit in thy form Who will betray thy name to infamy, _140 And doubly shall I triumph in thy loss, First by dishonouring thee, and then by turning False pleasure to true ignominy.

[EXIT.]

JUSTINA: I Appeal to Heaven against thee; so that Heaven May scatter thy delusions, and the blot _145 Upon my fame vanish in idle thought, Even as flame dies in the envious air, And as the floweret wanes at morning frost; And thou shouldst never—But, alas! to whom Do I still speak?—Did not a man but now _150 Stand here before me?—No, I am alone, And yet I saw him. Is he gone so quickly? Or can the heated mind engender shapes From its own fear? Some terrible and strange Peril is near. Lisander! father! lord! _155 Livia!—

[ENTER LISANDER AND LIVIA.]

LISANDER: Oh, my daughter! What?

LIVIA: What!

JUSTINA: Saw you A man go forth from my apartment now?— I scarce contain myself!

LISANDER: A man here!

JUSTINA: Have you not seen him?

LIVIA: No, Lady.

JUSTINA: I saw him.

LISANDER: ’Tis impossible; the doors _160 Which led to this apartment were all locked.

LIVIA [ASIDE]: I daresay it was Moscon whom she saw, For he was locked up in my room.

LISANDER: It must Have been some image of thy fantasy. Such melancholy as thou feedest is _165 Skilful in forming such in the vain air Out of the motes and atoms of the day.

LIVIA: My master’s in the right.

JUSTINA: Oh, would it were Delusion; but I fear some greater ill. I feel as if out of my bleeding bosom _170 My heart was torn in fragments; ay, Some mortal spell is wrought against my frame; So potent was the charm that, had not God Shielded my humble innocence from wrong, I should have sought my sorrow and my shame _175 With willing steps.—Livia, quick, bring my cloak, For I must seek refuge from these extremes Even in the temple of the highest God Where secretly the faithful worship.

LIVIA: Here.

NOTE: _179 Where Rossetti; Which 1824.

JUSTINA [PUTTING ON HER CLOAK]: In this, as in a shroud of snow, may I _180 Quench the consuming fire in which I burn, Wasting away!

LISANDER: And I will go with thee.

LIVIA: When I once see them safe out of the house I shall breathe freely.

JUSTINA: So do I confide In thy just favour, Heaven!

LISANDER: Let us go. _185

JUSTINA: Thine is the cause, great God! turn for my sake, And for Thine own, mercifully to me!

***

STANZAS FROM CALDERON'S CISMA DE INGLATERRA.

TRANSLATED BY MEDWIN AND CORRECTED BY SHELLEY.

[Published by Medwin, "Life of Shelley", 1847, with Shelley's corrections in ‘‘.]

1. Hast thou not seen, officious with delight, Move through the illumined air about the flower The Bee, that fears to drink its purple light, Lest danger lurk within that Rose's bower? Hast thou not marked the moth's enamoured flight _5 About the Taper's flame at evening hour; ‘Till kindle in that monumental fire His sunflower wings their own funereal pyre?

2. My heart, its wishes trembling to unfold. Thus round the Rose and Taper hovering came, _10 ‘And Passion's slave, Distrust, in ashes cold. Smothered awhile, but could not quench the flame,'— Till Love, that grows by disappointment bold, And Opportunity, had conquered Shame; And like the Bee and Moth, in act to close, _15 ‘I burned my wings, and settled on the Rose.'

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SCENES FROM THE FAUST OF GOETHE.

[Published in part (Scene 2) in "The Liberal", No. 1, 1822; in full, by Mrs. Shelley, "Posthumous Poems", 1824.]

SCENE 1.—PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN. THE LORD AND THE HOST OF HEAVEN. ENTER THREE ARCHANGELS.

RAPHAEL: The sun makes music as of old Amid the rival spheres of Heaven, On its predestined circle rolled With thunder speed: the Angels even Draw strength from gazing on its glance, _5 Though none its meaning fathom may:— The world's unwithered countenance Is bright as at Creation's day.

GABRIEL: And swift and swift, with rapid lightness, The adorned Earth spins silently, _10 Alternating Elysian brightness With deep and dreadful night; the sea Foams in broad billows from the deep Up to the rocks, and rocks and Ocean,

Onward, with spheres which never sleep, _15 Are hurried in eternal motion.

MICHAEL: And tempests in contention roar From land to sea, from sea to land; And, raging, weave a chain of power, Which girds the earth, as with a band.— _20 A flashing desolation there, Flames before the thunder's way; But Thy servants, Lord, revere The gentle changes of Thy day.

CHORUS OF THE THREE: The Angels draw strength from Thy glance, _25 Though no one comprehend Thee may;— Thy world's unwithered countenance Is bright as on Creation's day.

NOTE: _28 (RAPHAEL: The sun sounds, according to ancient custom, In the song of emulation of his brother-spheres. And its fore-written circle Fulfils with a step of thunder. Its countenance gives the Angels strength Though no one can fathom it. The incredible high works Are excellent as at the first day.

GABRIEL: And swift, and inconceivably swift The adornment of earth winds itself round, And exchanges Paradise-clearness With deep dreadful night. The sea foams in broad waves From its deep bottom, up to the rocks, And rocks and sea are torn on together In the eternal swift course of the spheres.

MICHAEL: And storms roar in emulation From sea to land, from land to sea, And make, raging, a chain Of deepest operation round about. There flames a flashing destruction Before the path of the thunderbolt. But Thy servants, Lord, revere The gentle alternations of Thy day.

CHORUS: Thy countenance gives the Angels strength, Though none can comprehend Thee: And all Thy lofty works Are excellent as at the first day.

Such is a literal translation of this astonishing chorus; it is impossible to represent in another language the melody of the versification; even the volatile strength and delicacy of the ideas escape in the crucible of translation, and the reader is surprised to find a caput mortuum.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.])

[ENTER MEPHISTOPHELES.]

MEPHISTOPHELES: As thou, O Lord, once more art kind enough To interest Thyself in our affairs, _30 And ask, ‘How goes it with you there below?’ And as indulgently at other times Thou tookest not my visits in ill part, Thou seest me here once more among Thy household. Though I should scandalize this company, _35 You will excuse me if I do not talk In the high style which they think fashionable; My pathos certainly would make You laugh too, Had You not long since given over laughing. Nothing know I to say of suns and worlds; _40 I observe only how men plague themselves;— The little god o’ the world keeps the same stamp, As wonderful as on creation’s day:— A little better would he live, hadst Thou Not given him a glimpse of Heaven’s light _45 Which he calls reason, and employs it only To live more beastlily than any beast. With reverence to Your Lordship be it spoken, He’s like one of those long-legged grasshoppers, Who flits and jumps about, and sings for ever _50 The same old song i’ the grass. There let him lie, Burying his nose in every heap of dung.

NOTES: _38 certainly would editions 1839; would certainly 1824. _47 beastlily 1824; beastily editions 1839.

THE LORD: Have you no more to say? Do you come here Always to scold, and cavil, and complain? Seems nothing ever right to you on earth? _55

MEPHISTOPHELES: No, Lord! I find all there, as ever, bad at best. Even I am sorry for man’s days of sorrow; I could myself almost give up the pleasure Of plaguing the poor things.

THE LORD: Knowest thou Faust?

MEPHISTOPHELES: The Doctor?

THE LORD: Ay; My servant Faust.

MEPHISTOPHELES: In truth _60 He serves You in a fashion quite his own; And the fool’s meat and drink are not of earth. His aspirations bear him on so far That he is half aware of his own folly, For he demands from Heaven its fairest star, _65 And

from the earth the highest joy it bears, Yet all things far, and all things near, are vain To calm the deep emotions of his breast.

THE LORD: Though he now serves Me in a cloud of error, I will soon lead him forth to the clear day. _70 When trees look green, full well the gardener knows That fruits and blooms will deck the coming year.

MEPHISTOPHELES: What will You bet?—now am sure of winning— Only, observe You give me full permission To lead him softly on my path.

THE LORD: As long _75 As he shall live upon the earth, so long Is nothing unto thee forbidden—Man Must err till he has ceased to struggle.

MEPHISTOPHELES: Thanks. And that is all I ask; for willingly I never make acquaintance with the dead. _80 The full fresh cheeks of youth are food for me, And if a corpse knocks, I am not at home. For I am like a cat—I like to play A little with the mouse before I eat it.

THE LORD: Well, well! it is permitted thee. Draw thou _85 His spirit from its springs; as thou find'st power Seize him and lead him on thy downward path; And stand ashamed when failure teaches thee That a good man, even in his darkest longings, Is well aware of the right way.

MEPHISTOPHELES: Well and good. _90 I am not in much doubt about my bet, And if I lose, then 'tis Your turn to crow; Enjoy Your triumph then with a full breast. Ay; dust shall he devour, and that with pleasure, Like my old paramour, the famous Snake. _95

THE LORD: Pray come here when it suits you; for I never Had much dislike for people of your sort. And, among all the Spirits who rebelled, The knave was ever the least tedious to Me. The active spirit of man soon sleeps, and soon _100 He seeks unbroken quiet; therefore I Have given him the Devil for a companion, Who may provoke him to some sort of work, And must create forever.—But ye, pure Children of God, enjoy eternal beauty;— _105 Let that which ever operates and lives Clasp

you within the limits of its love; And seize with sweet and melancholy thoughts The floating phantoms of its loveliness.

[HEAVEN CLOSES; THE ARCHANGELS EXEUNT.]

MEPHISTOPHELES: From time to time I visit the old fellow, _110 And I take care to keep on good terms with Him. Civil enough is the same God Almighty, To talk so freely with the Devil himself.

SCENE 2.—MAY-DAY NIGHT.

THE HARTZ MOUNTAIN, A DESOLATE COUNTRY. FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES.

MEPHISTOPHELES: Would you not like a broomstick? As for me I wish I had a good stout ram to ride; For we are still far from the appointed place.

FAUST: This knotted staff is help enough for me, Whilst I feel fresh upon my legs. What good _5 Is there in making short a pleasant way? To creep along the labyrinths of the vales, And climb those rocks, where ever-babbling springs, Precipitate themselves in waterfalls, Is the true sport that seasons such a path. _10 Already Spring kindles the birchen spray, And the hoar pines already feel her breath: Shall she not work also within our limbs?

MEPHISTOPHELES: Nothing of such an influence do I feel. My body is all wintry, and I wish _15 The flowers upon our path were frost and snow. But see how melancholy rises now, Dimly uplifting her belated beam, The blank unwelcome round of the red moon, And gives so bad a light, that every step _20 One stumbles ’gainst some crag. With your permission, I’ll call on Ignis-fatuus to our aid: I see one yonder burning jollily. Halloo, my friend! may I request that you Would favour us with your bright company? _25 Why should you blaze away there to no purpose? Pray be so good as light us up this way.

IGNIS-FATUUS: With reverence be it spoken, I will try To overcome the lightness of my nature; Our course, you know, is generally zigzag. _30

MEPHISTOPHELES: Ha, ha! your worship thinks you have to deal With men. Go straight on, in the Devil’s name, Or I shall puff your flickering life out.

NOTE: _33 shall puff 1824; will blow 1822.

IGNIS-FATUUS: Well, I see you are the master of the house; I will accommodate myself to you. _35 Only consider that to-night this mountain Is all enchanted, and if Jack-a-lantern Shows you his way, though you should miss your own, You ought not to be too exact with him.

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES, AND IGNIS-FATUUS, IN ALTERNATE CHORUS: The limits of the sphere of dream, _40 The bounds of true and false, are past. Lead us on, thou wandering Gleam, Lead us onward, far and fast, To the wide, the desert waste.

But see, how swift advance and shift _45 Trees behind trees, row by row,— How, clift by clift, rocks bend and lift Their frowning foreheads as we go. The giant-snouted crags, ho! ho! How they snort, and how they blow! _50

Through the mossy sods and stones, Stream and streamlet hurry down— A rushing throng! A sound of song Beneath the vault of Heaven is blown! Sweet notes of love, the speaking tones _55 Of this bright day, sent down to say That Paradise on Earth is known, Resound around, beneath, above. All we hope and all we love Finds a voice in this blithe strain, _60 Which wakens hill and wood and rill, And vibrates far o’er field and vale, And which Echo, like the tale Of old times, repeats again.

To-whoo! to-whoo! near, nearer now _65 The sound of song, the rushing throng! Are the screech, the lapwing, and the jay, All awake as if ’twere day? See, with long legs and belly wide, A salamander in the brake! _70 Every root is like a snake, And along the loose hillside, With strange contortions through the night, Curls, to seize or to affright; And, animated, strong, and many, _75 They dart forth polypus-antennae, To blister with their poison spume The wanderer. Through the dazzling gloom The many-coloured mice, that thread The dewy turf beneath our

tread, _80 In troops each other's motions cross, Through the heath and through the moss; And, in legions intertangled, The fire-flies flit, and swarm, and throng, Till all the mountain depths are spangled. _85

Tell me, shall we go or stay? Shall we onward? Come along! Everything around is swept Forward, onward, far away! Trees and masses intercept _90 The sight, and wisps on every side Are puffed up and multiplied.

NOTES: _48 frowning]fawning 1822. _70 brake 1824; lake 1822.

MEPHISTOPHELES: Now vigorously seize my skirt, and gain This pinnacle of isolated crag. One may observe with wonder from this point, _95 How Mammon glows among the mountains.

FAUST: Ay— And strangely through the solid depth below A melancholy light, like the red dawn, Shoots from the lowest gorge of the abyss Of mountains, lightning hitherward: there rise _100 Pillars of smoke, here clouds float gently by; Here the light burns soft as the enkindled air, Or the illumined dust of golden flowers; And now it glides like tender colours spreading; And now bursts forth in fountains from the earth; _105 And now it winds, one torrent of broad light, Through the far valley with a hundred veins; And now once more within that narrow corner Masses itself into intensest splendour. And near us, see, sparks spring out of the ground, _110 Like golden sand scattered upon the darkness; The pinnacles of that black wall of mountains That hems us in are kindled.

MEPHISTOPHELES: Rare: in faith! Does not Sir Mammon gloriously illuminate His palace for this festival?—it is _115 A pleasure which you had not known before. I spy the boisterous guests already.

FAUST: How The children of the wind rage in the air! With what fierce strokes they fall upon my neck!

NOTE: _117 How 1824; Now 1822.

MEPHISTOPHELES: Cling tightly to the old ribs of the crag. _120 Beware! for if

with them thou warrest In their fierce flight towards the wilderness, Their breath will sweep thee into dust, and drag Thy body to a grave in the abyss. A cloud thickens the night. _125 Hark! how the tempest crashes through the forest! The owls fly out in strange affright; The columns of the evergreen palaces Are split and shattered; The roots creak, and stretch, and groan; _130 And ruinously overthrown, The trunks are crushed and shattered By the fierce blast's unconquerable stress. Over each other crack and crash they all In terrible and intertangled fall; _135 And through the ruins of the shaken mountain The airs hiss and howl— It is not the voice of the fountain, Nor the wolf in his midnight prowl. Dost thou not hear? _140 Strange accents are ringing Aloft, afar, anear? The witches are singing! The torrent of a raging wizard song Streams the whole mountain along. _145

NOTE: _132 shattered]scattered Rossetti.

CHORUS OF WITCHES: The stubble is yellow, the corn is green, Now to the Brocken the witches go; The mighty multitude here may be seen Gathering, wizard and witch, below. Sir Urian is sitting aloft in the air; _150 Hey over stock! and hey over stone! 'Twixt witches and incubi, what shall be done? Tell it who dare! tell it who dare!

NOTE: _150 Urian]Urean editions 1824, 1839.

A VOICE: Upon a sow-swine, whose farrows were nine, Old Baubo rideth alone. _155

CHORUS: Honour her, to whom honour is due, Old mother Baubo, honour to you! An able sow, with old Baubo upon her, Is worthy of glory, and worthy of honour! The legion of witches is coming behind, _160 Darkening the night, and outspeeding the wind—

A VOICE: Which way comest thou?

A VOICE: Over Ilsenstein; The owl was awake in the white moonshine; I saw her at rest in her downy nest, And she stared at me with her broad, bright eyne. _165

NOTE: _165 eyne 1839, 2nd edition; eye 1822, 1824, 1839, 1st edition.

VOICES: And you may now as well take your course on to Hell, Since you ride by so fast on the headlong blast.

A VOICE: She dropped poison upon me as I passed. Here are the wounds—

CHORUS OF WITCHES: Come away! come along! The way is wide, the way is long, _170 But what is that for a Bedlam throng? Stick with the prong, and scratch with the broom. The child in the cradle lies strangled at home, And the mother is clapping her hands.—

SEMICHORUS OF WIZARDS 1: We glide in Like snails when the women are all away; _175 And from a house once given over to sin Woman has a thousand steps to stray.

SEMICHORUS 2: A thousand steps must a woman take, Where a man but a single spring will make.

VOICES ABOVE: Come with us, come with us, from Felsensee. _180

NOTE: _180 Felsensee 1862 (“Relics of Shelley”, page 96); Felumee 1822; Felunsee editions 1824, 1839.

VOICES BELOW: With what joy would we fly through the upper sky! We are washed, we are ‘nointed, stark naked are we; But our toil and our pain are forever in vain.

NOTE: _183 are editions 1839; is 1822, 1824.

BOTH CHORUSES: The wind is still, the stars are fled, _185 The melancholy moon is dead; The magic notes, like spark on spark, Drizzle, whistling through the dark. Come away!

VOICES BELOW: Stay, Oh, stay!

VOICES ABOVE: Out of the crannies of the rocks _190 Who calls?

VOICES BELOW: Oh, let me join your flocks! I, three hundred years have striven

To catch your skirt and mount to Heaven,— And still in vain. Oh, might I be With company akin to me! _195

BOTH CHORUSES: Some on a ram and some on a prong, On poles and on broomsticks we flutter along; Forlorn is the wight who can rise not to-night.

A HALF-WITCH BELOW: I have been tripping this many an hour: Are the others already so far before? _200 No quiet at home, and no peace abroad! And less methinks is found by the road.

CHORUS OF WITCHES: Come onward, away! aroint thee, aroint! A witch to be strong must anoint—anoint— Then every trough will be boat enough; _205 With a rag for a sail we can sweep through the sky, Who flies not to-night, when means he to fly?

BOTH CHORUSES: We cling to the skirt, and we strike on the ground; Witch-legions thicken around and around; Wizard-swarms cover the heath all over. _210

[THEY DESCEND.]

MEPHISTOPHELES: What thronging, dashing, raging, rustling; What whispering, babbling, hissing, bustling; What glimmering, spurting, stinking, burning, As Heaven and Earth were overturning. There is a true witch element about us; _215 Take hold on me, or we shall be divided:— Where are you?

NOTE: _217 What! wanting, 1822.

FAUST [FROM A DISTANCE]: Here!

MEPHISTOPHELES: What! I must exert my authority in the house. Place for young Voland! pray make way, good people. Take hold on me, doctor, and with one step _220 Let us escape from this unpleasant crowd: They are too mad for people of my sort. Just there shines a peculiar kind of light— Something attracts me in those bushes. Come This way: we shall slip down there in a minute. _225

FAUST: Spirit of Contradiction! Well, lead on— 'Twere a wise feat indeed to wander out Into the Brocken upon May-day night, And then to isolate oneself in scorn, Disgusted with the humours of the time. _230

MEPHISTOPHELES: See yonder, round a many-coloured flame A merry club is huddled altogether: Even with such little people as sit there One would not be alone.

FAUST: Would that I were Up yonder in the glow and whirling smoke, _235 Where the blind million rush impetuously To meet the evil ones; there might I solve Many a riddle that torments me.

MEPHISTOPHELES: Yet Many a riddle there is tied anew Inextricably. Let the great world rage! _240 We will stay here safe in the quiet dwellings. 'Tis an old custom. Men have ever built Their own small world in the great world of all. I see young witches naked there, and old ones Wisely attired with greater decency. _245 Be guided now by me, and you shall buy A pound of pleasure with a dram of trouble. I hear them tune their instruments—one must Get used to this damned scraping. Come, I'll lead you Among them; and what there you do and see, _250 As a fresh compact 'twixt us two shall be. How say you now? this space is wide enough— Look forth, you cannot see the end of it— An hundred bonfires burn in rows, and they Who throng around them seem innumerable: _255 Dancing and drinking, jabbering, making love, And cooking, are at work. Now tell me, friend, What is there better in the world than this?

NOTE: _254 An 1824; A editions 1839.

FAUST: In introducing us, do you assume The character of Wizard or of Devil? _260

MEPHISTOPHELES: In truth, I generally go about In strict incognito; and yet one likes To wear one's orders upon gala days. I have no ribbon at my knee; but here At home, the cloven foot is honourable. _265 See you that snail there?—she comes creeping up, And with her feeling eyes hath smelt out something. I could not, if I

would, mask myself here. Come now, we'll go about from fire to fire: I'll be the Pimp, and you shall be the Lover. _270 [TO SOME OLD WOMEN, WHO ARE SITTING ROUND A HEAP OF GLIMMERING COALS.] Old gentlewomen, what do you do out here? You ought to be with the young rioters Right in the thickest of the revelry— But every one is best content at home.

NOTE: _264 my wanting, 1822.

General. Who dare confide in right or a just claim? _275 So much as I had done for them! and now— With women and the people 'tis the same, Youth will stand foremost ever,—age may go To the dark grave unhonoured.

NOTE: _275 right editions 1824, 1839; night 1822.

MINISTER: Nowadays People assert their rights: they go too far; _280 But as for me, the good old times I praise; Then we were all in all—'twas something worth One's while to be in place and wear a star; That was indeed the golden age on earth.

PARVENU: We too are active, and we did and do _285 What we ought not, perhaps; and yet we now Will seize, whilst all things are whirled round and round, A spoke of Fortune's wheel, and keep our ground.

NOTE: _285 Parvenu: (Note) A sort of fundholder 1822, editions 1824, 1839.

AUTHOR: Who now can taste a treatise of deep sense And ponderous volume? 'tis impertinence _290 To write what none will read, therefore will I To please the young and thoughtless people try.

NOTE: _290 ponderous 1824; wonderous 1822.

MEPHISTOPHELES [WHO AT ONCE APPEARS TO HAVE GROWN VERY OLD]: I find the people ripe for the last day, Since I last came up to the wizard mountain; And as my little cask runs turbid now, _295 So is the world drained to the dregs.

PEDLAR-WITCH: Look here, Gentlemen; do not hurry on so fast; And lose the

chance of a good pennyworth. I have a pack full of the choicest wares Of every sort, and yet in all my bundle _300 Is nothing like what may be found on earth; Nothing that in a moment will make rich Men and the world with fine malicious mischief— There is no dagger drunk with blood; no bowl From which consuming poison may be drained _305 By innocent and healthy lips; no jewel, The price of an abandoned maiden's shame; No sword which cuts the bond it cannot loose, Or stabs the wearer's enemy in the back; No—

MEPHISTOPHELES: Gossip, you know little of these times. _310 What has been, has been; what is done, is past, They shape themselves into the innovations They breed, and innovation drags us with it. The torrent of the crowd sweeps over us: You think to impel, and are yourself impelled. _315

FAUST: What is that yonder?

MEPHISTOPHELES: Mark her well. It is Lilith.

FAUST: Who?

MEPHISTOPHELES: Lilith, the first wife of Adam. Beware of her fair hair, for she excels All women in the magic of her locks; And when she winds them round a young man's neck, _320 She will not ever set him free again.

FAUST: There sit a girl and an old woman—they Seem to be tired with pleasure and with play.

MEPHISTOPHELES: There is no rest to-night for any one: When one dance ends another is begun; _325 Come, let us to it. We shall have rare fun.

[FAUST DANCES AND SINGS WITH A GIRL, AND MEPHISTOPHELES WITH AN OLD WOMAN.]

FAUST: I had once a lovely dream In which I saw an apple-tree, Where two fair apples with their gleam To climb and taste attracted me. _330

NOTES: _327-_334 So Boscombe manuscript ("Westminster Review", July, 1870);

wanting, 1822, 1824, 1839.

THE GIRL: She with apples you desired From Paradise came long ago: With you I feel that if required, Such still within my garden grow.

…

PROCTO-PHANTASMIST: What is this cursed multitude about? _335 Have we not long since proved to demonstration That ghosts move not on ordinary feet? But these are dancing just like men and women.

NOTE: _335 Procto-Phantasmist]Brocto-Phantasmist editions 1824, 1839.

THE GIRL: What does he want then at our ball?

FAUST: Oh! he Is far above us all in his conceit: _340 Whilst we enjoy, he reasons of enjoyment; And any step which in our dance we tread, If it be left out of his reckoning, Is not to be considered as a step. There are few things that scandalize him not: _345 And when you whirl round in the circle now, As he went round the wheel in his old mill, He says that you go wrong in all respects, Especially if you congratulate him Upon the strength of the resemblance.

PROCTO-PHANTASMIST: Fly! _350 Vanish! Unheard-of impudence! What, still there! In this enlightened age too, since you have been Proved not to exist!—But this infernal brood Will hear no reason and endure no rule. Are we so wise, and is the POND still haunted? _355 How long have I been sweeping out this rubbish Of superstition, and the world will not Come clean with all my pains!—it is a case Unheard of!

NOTE: _355 pond wanting in Boscombe manuscript.

THE GIRL: Then leave off teasing us so.

PROCTO-PHANTASMIST: I tell you, spirits, to your faces now, _360 That I should not regret this despotism Of spirits, but that mine can wield it not. To-night I shall make poor work of it, Yet I will take a round with you, and hope Before my

last step in the living dance _365 To beat the poet and the devil together.

MEPHISTOPHELES: At last he will sit down in some foul puddle; That is his way of solacing himself; Until some leech, diverted with his gravity, Cures him of spirits and the spirit together. _370 [TO FAUST, WHO HAS SECEDED FROM THE DANCE.] Why do you let that fair girl pass from you, Who sung so sweetly to you in the dance?

FAUST: A red mouse in the middle of her singing Sprung from her mouth.

MEPHISTOPHELES: That was all right, my friend: Be it enough that the mouse was not gray. _375 Do not disturb your hour of happiness With close consideration of such trifles.

FAUST: Then saw I—

MEPHISTOPHELES: What?

FAUST: Seest thou not a pale, Fair girl, standing alone, far, far away? She drags herself now forward with slow steps, _380 And seems as if she moved with shackled feet: I cannot overcome the thought that she Is like poor Margaret.

MEPHISTOPHELES: Let it be—pass on— No good can come of it—it is not well To meet it—it is an enchanted phantom, _385 A lifeless idol; with its numbing look, It freezes up the blood of man; and they Who meet its ghastly stare are turned to stone, Like those who saw Medusa.

FAUST: Oh, too true! Her eyes are like the eyes of a fresh corpse _390 Which no beloved hand has closed, alas! That is the breast which Margaret yielded to me— Those are the lovely limbs which I enjoyed!

NOTE: _392 breast editions 1839; heart 1822, 1824.

MEPHISTOPHELES: It is all magic, poor deluded fool! She looks to every one like his first love. _395

FAUST: Oh, what delight! what woe! I cannot turn My looks from her sweet piteous

countenance. How strangely does a single blood-red line, Not broader than the sharp edge of a knife, Adorn her lovely neck!

MEPHISTOPHELES: Ay, she can carry _400 Her head under her arm upon occasion; Perseus has cut it off for her. These pleasures End in delusion.—Gain this rising ground, It is as airy here as in a… And if I am not mightily deceived, _405 I see a theatre.—What may this mean?

ATTENDANT: Quite a new piece, the last of seven, for ’tis The custom now to represent that number. ’Tis written by a Dilettante, and The actors who perform are Dilettanti; _410 Excuse me, gentlemen; but I must vanish. I am a Dilettante curtain-lifter.

***

JUVENILIA.

QUEEN MAB.

A PHILOSOPHICAL POEM, WITH NOTES.

[An edition (250 copies) of “Queen Mab” was printed at London in the summer of 1813 by Shelley himself, whose name, as author and printer, appears on the title-page (see “Bibliographical List”). Of this edition about seventy copies were privately distributed. Sections 1, 2, 8, and 9 were afterwards rehandled, and the intermediate sections here and there revised and altered; and of this new text sections 1 and 2 were published by Shelley in the “Alastor” volume of 1816, under the title, “The Daemon of the World”. The remainder lay unpublished till 1876, when sections 8 and 9 were printed by Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B., from a printed copy of “Queen Mab” with Shelley’s manuscript corrections. See “The Shelley Library”, pages 36-44, for a description of this copy, which is in Mr. Forman’s possession. Sources of the text are (1) the editio princeps of 1813; (2) text (with some omissions) in the “Poetical Works” of 1839, edited by Mrs. Shelley; (3) text (one line only wanting) in the 2nd edition of the “Poetical Works”, 1839 (same

editor).

“Queen Mab” was probably written during the year 1812—it is first heard of at Lynmouth, August 18, 1812 (“Shelley Memorials”, page 39)—but the text may be assumed to include earlier material.]

ECRASEZ L’INFAME!—Correspondance de Voltaire.

Avia Pieridum peragro loca, nullius ante Trita solo; juvat integros accedere fonteis; Atque haurire: juvatque novos decerpere flores.

…

Unde prius nulli velarint tempora musae. Primum quod magnis doceo de rebus; et arctis Religionum animos nodis exsolvere pergo.—Lucret. lib. 4.

Dos pon sto, kai kosmon kineso.—Archimedes.

TO HARRIET *****.

Whose is the love that gleaming through the world, Wards off the poisonous arrow of its scorn? Whose is the warm and partial praise, Virtue’s most sweet reward?

Beneath whose looks did my reviving soul _5 Riper in truth and virtuous daring grow? Whose eyes have I gazed fondly on, And loved mankind the more?

HARRIET! on thine:—thou wert my purer mind; Thou wert the inspiration of my song; _10 Thine are these early wilding flowers, Though garlanded by me.

Then press into thy breast this pledge of love; And know, though time may change and years may roll, Each floweret gathered in my heart _15 It consecrates to thine.

QUEEN MAB.

1.

How wonderful is Death, Death and his brother Sleep! One, pale as yonder waning moon With lips of lurid blue; The other, rosy as the morn _5 When throned on ocean’s wave It blushes o’er the world: Yet both so passing wonderful!

Hath then the gloomy Power Whose reign is in the tainted sepulchres _10 Seized on her sinless soul? Must then that peerless form Which love and admiration cannot view Without a beating heart, those azure veins Which steal like streams along a field of snow, _15 That lovely outline, which is fair As breathing marble, perish? Must putrefaction's breath Leave nothing of this heavenly sight But loathsomeness and ruin? _20 Spare nothing but a gloomy theme, On which the lightest heart might moralize? Or is it only a sweet slumber Stealing o'er sensation, Which the breath of roseate morning _25 Chaseth into darkness? Will Ianthe wake again, And give that faithful bosom joy Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch Light, life and rapture from her smile? _30

Yes! she will wake again, Although her glowing limbs are motionless, And silent those sweet lips, Once breathing eloquence, That might have soothed a tiger's rage, _35 Or thawed the cold heart of a conqueror. Her dewy eyes are closed, And on their lids, whose texture fine Scarce hides the dark blue orbs beneath, The baby Sleep is pillowed: _40 Her golden tresses shade The bosom's stainless pride, Curling like tendrils of the parasite Around a marble column.

Hark! whence that rushing sound? _45 'Tis like the wondrous strain That round a lonely ruin swells, Which, wandering on the echoing shore, The enthusiast hears at evening: 'Tis softer than the west wind's sigh; _50 'Tis wilder than the unmeasured notes Of that strange lyre whose strings The genii of the breezes sweep: Those lines of rainbow light Are like the moonbeams when they fall _55 Through some cathedral window, but the tints Are such as may not find Comparison on earth.

Behold the chariot of the Fairy Queen! Celestial coursers paw the unyielding air; _60 Their filmy pennons at her word they furl, And stop obedient to the reins of light: These the Queen of Spells drew in, She spread a charm around the spot, And leaning graceful from the aethereal car, _65 Long did she gaze, and silently, Upon the slumbering maid.

Oh! not the visioned poet in his dreams, When silvery clouds float through the ‘wildered brain, When every sight of lovely, wild and grand _70 Astonishes, enraptures, elevates, When fancy at a glance combines The wondrous and the beautiful,— So bright, so fair, so wild a shape Hath ever yet beheld, _75 As that which reined the coursers of the air, And poured the magic of her gaze Upon the maiden’s sleep.

The broad and yellow moon Shone dimly through her form— _80 That form of faultless symmetry; The pearly and pellucid car Moved not the moonlight’s line: ’Twas not an earthly pageant: Those who had looked upon the sight, _85 Passing all human glory, Saw not the yellow moon, Saw not the mortal scene, Heard not the night-wind’s rush, Heard not an earthly sound, _90 Saw but the fairy pageant, Heard but the heavenly strains That filled the lonely dwelling.

The Fairy’s frame was slight, yon fibrous cloud, That catches but the palest tinge of even, _95 And which the straining eye can hardly seize When melting into eastern twilight’s shadow, Were scarce so thin, so slight; but the fair star That gems the glittering coronet of morn, Sheds not a light so mild, so powerful, _100 As that which, bursting from the Fairy’s form, Spread a purpureal halo round the scene, Yet with an undulating motion, Swayed to her outline gracefully.

From her celestial car _105 The Fairy Queen descended, And thrice she waved her wand Circled with wreaths of amaranth: Her thin and misty form Moved with the moving air, _110 And the clear silver tones, As thus she spoke, were such As are unheard by all but gifted ear.

FAIRY: ‘Stars! your balmiest influence shed! Elements! your wrath suspend! _115 Sleep, Ocean, in the rocky bounds That circle thy domain! Let not a breath be seen to stir Around yon grass-grown ruin’s height, Let even the restless gossamer _120 Sleep on the moveless air! Soul of Ianthe! thou, Judged alone worthy of the envied boon, That waits the good and the sincere; that waits Those who have struggled, and

with resolute will _125 Vanquished earth's pride and meanness, burst the chains, The icy chains of custom, and have shone The day-stars of their age;—Soul of Ianthe! Awake! arise!'

Sudden arose _130 Ianthe's Soul; it stood All beautiful in naked purity, The perfect semblance of its bodily frame. Instinct with inexpressible beauty and grace, Each stain of earthliness _135 Had passed away, it reassumed Its native dignity, and stood Immortal amid ruin.

Upon the couch the body lay Wrapped in the depth of slumber: _140 Its features were fixed and meaningless, Yet animal life was there, And every organ yet performed Its natural functions: 'twas a sight Of wonder to behold the body and soul. _145 The self-same lineaments, the same Marks of identity were there: Yet, oh, how different! One aspires to Heaven, Pants for its sempiternal heritage, And ever-changing, ever-rising still, _150 Wantons in endless being. The other, for a time the unwilling sport Of circumstance and passion, struggles on; Fleets through its sad duration rapidly: Then, like an useless and worn-out machine, _155 Rots, perishes, and passes.

FAIRY: 'Spirit! who hast dived so deep; Spirit! who hast soared so high; Thou the fearless, thou the mild, Accept the boon thy worth hath earned, _160 Ascend the car with me.'

SPIRIT: 'Do I dream? Is this new feeling But a visioned ghost of slumber? If indeed I am a soul, A free, a disembodied soul, _165 Speak again to me.'

FAIRY: 'I am the Fairy MAB: to me 'tis given The wonders of the human world to keep: The secrets of the immeasurable past, In the unfailing consciences of men, _170 Those stern, unflattering chroniclers, I find: The future, from the causes which arise In each event, I gather: not the sting Which retributive memory implants In the hard bosom of the selfish man; _175 Nor that ecstatic and exulting throb Which virtue's votary feels when he sums up The thoughts and actions of a well-spent day,

Are unforeseen, unregistered by me: And it is yet permitted me, to rend _180 The veil of mortal frailty, that the spirit, Clothed in its changeless purity, may know How soonest to accomplish the great end For which it hath its being, and may taste That peace, which in the end all life will share. _185 This is the meed of virtue; happy Soul, Ascend the car with me!’

The chains of earth’s immurement Fell from Ianthe’s spirit; They shrank and brake like bandages of straw _190 Beneath a wakened giant’s strength. She knew her glorious change, And felt in apprehension uncontrolled New raptures opening round: Each day-dream of her mortal life, _195 Each frenzied vision of the slumbers That closed each well-spent day, Seemed now to meet reality.

The Fairy and the Soul proceeded; The silver clouds disparted; _200 And as the car of magic they ascended, Again the speechless music swelled, Again the coursers of the air Unfurled their azure pennons, and the Queen Shaking the beamy reins _205 Bade them pursue their way.

The magic car moved on. The night was fair, and countless stars Studded Heaven’s dark blue vault,— Just o’er the eastern wave _210 Peeped the first faint smile of morn:— The magic car moved on— From the celestial hoofs The atmosphere in flaming sparkles flew, And where the burning wheels _215 Eddied above the mountain’s loftiest peak, Was traced a line of lightning. Now it flew far above a rock, The utmost verge of earth, The rival of the Andes, whose dark brow _220 Lowered o’er the silver sea.

Far, far below the chariot’s path, Calm as a slumbering babe, Tremendous Ocean lay. The mirror of its stillness showed _225 The pale and waning stars, The chariot’s fiery track, And the gray light of morn Tinging those fleecy clouds That canopied the dawn. _230 Seemed it, that the chariot’s way Lay through the midst of an immense concave, Radiant with million constellations, tinged With shades of infinite colour, And semicircled with a belt _235 Flashing incessant meteors.

The magic car moved on. As they approached their goal The coursers seemed to gather speed; The sea no longer was distinguished; earth _240 Appeared a vast and shadowy sphere; The sun's unclouded orb Rolled through the black concave; Its rays of rapid light Parted around the chariot's swifter course, _245 And fell, like ocean's feathery spray Dashed from the boiling surge Before a vessel's prow.

The magic car moved on. Earth's distant orb appeared _250 The smallest light that twinkles in the heaven; Whilst round the chariot's way Innumerable systems rolled, And countless spheres diffused An ever-varying glory. _255 It was a sight of wonder: some Were horned like the crescent moon; Some shed a mild and silver beam Like Hesperus o'er the western sea; Some dashed athwart with trains of flame, _260 Like worlds to death and ruin driven; Some shone like suns, and, as the chariot passed, Eclipsed all other light.

Spirit of Nature! here! In this interminable wilderness _265 Of worlds, at whose immensity Even soaring fancy staggers, Here is thy fitting temple. Yet not the lightest leaf That quivers to the passing breeze _270 Is less instinct with thee: Yet not the meanest worm That lurks in graves and fattens on the dead Less shares thy eternal breath. Spirit of Nature! thou! _275 Imperishable as this scene, Here is thy fitting temple.

2.

If solitude hath ever led thy steps To the wild Ocean's echoing shore, And thou hast lingered there, Until the sun's broad orb Seemed resting on the burnished wave, _5 Thou must have marked the lines Of purple gold, that motionless Hung o'er the sinking sphere: Thou must have marked the billowy clouds Edged with intolerable radiancy _10 Towering like rocks of jet Crowned with a diamond wreath. And yet there is a moment, When the sun's highest point Peeps like a star o'er Ocean's western edge, _15 When those far clouds of feathery gold, Shaded with deepest purple, gleam Like islands on a dark blue sea; Then has thy fancy soared above the

earth, And furled its wearied wing _20 Within the Fairy's fane.

Yet not the golden islands Gleaming in yon flood of light, Nor the feathery curtains Stretching o'er the sun's bright couch, _25 Nor the burnished Ocean waves Paving that gorgeous dome, So fair, so wonderful a sight As Mab's aethereal palace could afford. Yet likest evening's vault, that faery Hall! _30 As Heaven, low resting on the wave, it spread Its floors of flashing light, Its vast and azure dome, Its fertile golden islands Floating on a silver sea; _35 Whilst suns their mingling beamings darted Through clouds of circumambient darkness, And pearly battlements around Looked o'er the immense of Heaven.

The magic car no longer moved. _40 The Fairy and the Spirit Entered the Hall of Spells: Those golden clouds That rolled in glittering billows Beneath the azure canopy _45 With the aethereal footsteps trembled not: The light and crimson mists, Floating to strains of thrilling melody Through that unearthly dwelling, Yielded to every movement of the will. _50 Upon their passive swell the Spirit leaned, And, for the varied bliss that pressed around, Used not the glorious privilege Of virtue and of wisdom.

'Spirit!' the Fairy said, _55 And pointed to the gorgeous dome, 'This is a wondrous sight And mocks all human grandeur; But, were it virtue's only meed, to dwell In a celestial palace, all resigned _60 To pleasurable impulses, immured Within the prison of itself, the will Of changeless Nature would be unfulfilled. Learn to make others happy. Spirit, come! This is thine high reward:—the past shall rise; _65 Thou shalt behold the present; I will teach The secrets of the future.'

The Fairy and the Spirit Approached the overhanging battlement.— Below lay stretched the universe! _70 There, far as the remotest line That bounds imagination's flight, Countless and unending orbs In mazy motion intermingled, Yet still fulfilled immutably _75 Eternal Nature's law. Above, below, around, The circling systems formed A wilderness of harmony; Each with undeviating aim, _80 In eloquent

silence, through the depths of space Pursued its wondrous way.

There was a little light That twinkled in the misty distance: None but a spirit's eye _85 Might ken that rolling orb; None but a spirit's eye, And in no other place But that celestial dwelling, might behold Each action of this earth's inhabitants. _90 But matter, space and time In those aereal mansions cease to act; And all-prevailing wisdom, when it reaps The harvest of its excellence, o'er-bounds Those obstacles, of which an earthly soul _95 Fears to attempt the conquest.

The Fairy pointed to the earth. The Spirit's intellectual eye Its kindred beings recognized. The thronging thousands, to a passing view, _100 Seemed like an ant-hill's citizens. How wonderful! that even The passions, prejudices, interests, That sway the meanest being, the weak touch That moves the finest nerve, _105 And in one human brain Causes the faintest thought, becomes a link In the great chain of Nature.

'Behold,' the Fairy cried, 'Palmyra's ruined palaces!— _110 Behold! where grandeur frowned; Behold! where pleasure smiled; What now remains?—the memory Of senselessness and shame— What is immortal there? _115 Nothing—it stands to tell A melancholy tale, to give An awful warning: soon Oblivion will steal silently The remnant of its fame. _120 Monarchs and conquerors there Proud o'er prostrate millions trod— The earthquakes of the human race; Like them, forgotten when the ruin That marks their shock is past. _125

'Beside the eternal Nile, The Pyramids have risen. Nile shall pursue his changeless way: Those Pyramids shall fall; Yea! not a stone shall stand to tell _130 The spot whereon they stood! Their very site shall be forgotten, As is their builder's name!

'Behold yon sterile spot; Where now the wandering Arab's tent _135 Flaps in the desert-blast. There once old Salem's haughty fane Reared high to Heaven its thousand golden domes, And in the blushing face of day Exposed its shameful glory. _140 Oh! many a widow, many an orphan cursed The building of that fane; and

many a father; Worn out with toil and slavery, implored The poor man's God to sweep it from the earth, And spare his children the detested task _145 Of piling stone on stone, and poisoning The choicest days of life, To soothe a dotard's vanity. There an inhuman and uncultured race Howled hideous praises to their Demon-God; _150 They rushed to war, tore from the mother's womb The unborn child,—old age and infancy Promiscuous perished; their victorious arms Left not a soul to breathe. Oh! they were fiends: But what was he who taught them that the God _155 Of nature and benevolence hath given A special sanction to the trade of blood? His name and theirs are fading, and the tales Of this barbarian nation, which imposture Recites till terror credits, are pursuing _160 Itself into forgetfulness.

'Where Athens, Rome, and Sparta stood, There is a moral desert now: The mean and miserable huts, The yet more wretched palaces, _165 Contrasted with those ancient fanes, Now crumbling to oblivion; The long and lonely colonnades, Through which the ghost of Freedom stalks, Seem like a well-known tune, _170 Which in some dear scene we have loved to hear, Remembered now in sadness. But, oh! how much more changed, How gloomier is the contrast Of human nature there! _175 Where Socrates expired, a tyrant's slave, A coward and a fool, spreads death around— Then, shuddering, meets his own. Where Cicero and Antoninus lived, A cowled and hypocritical monk _180 Prays, curses and deceives.

'Spirit, ten thousand years Have scarcely passed away, Since, in the waste where now the savage drinks His enemy's blood, and aping Europe's sons, _185 Wakes the unholy song of war, Arose a stately city, Metropolis of the western continent: There, now, the mossy column-stone, Indented by Time's unrelaxing grasp, _190 Which once appeared to brave All, save its country's ruin; There the wide forest scene, Rude in the uncultivated loveliness Of gardens long run wild, _195 Seems, to the unwilling sojourner, whose steps Chance in that desert has delayed, Thus to have stood since earth was what it is. Yet once it was the busiest haunt, Whither, as to a common centre, flocked _200 Strangers, and ships, and merchandise: Once peace

and freedom blessed The cultivated plain: But wealth, that curse of man, Blighted the bud of its prosperity: _205 Virtue and wisdom, truth and liberty, Fled, to return not, until man shall know That they alone can give the bliss Worthy a soul that claims Its kindred with eternity. _210

‘There’s not one atom of yon earth But once was living man; Nor the minutest drop of rain, That hangeth in its thinnest cloud, But flowed in human veins: _215 And from the burning plains Where Libyan monsters yell, From the most gloomy glens Of Greenland’s sunless clime, To where the golden fields _220 Of fertile England spread Their harvest to the day, Thou canst not find one spot Whereon no city stood.

‘How strange is human pride! _225 I tell thee that those living things, To whom the fragile blade of grass, That springeth in the morn And perisheth ere noon, Is an unbounded world; _230 I tell thee that those viewless beings, Whose mansion is the smallest particle Of the impassive atmosphere, Think, feel and live like man; That their affections and antipathies, _235 Like his, produce the laws Ruling their moral state; And the minutest throb That through their frame diffuses The slightest, faintest motion, _240 Is fixed and indispensable As the majestic laws That rule yon rolling orbs.’

The Fairy paused. The Spirit, In ecstasy of admiration, felt _245 All knowledge of the past revived; the events Of old and wondrous times, Which dim tradition interruptedly Teaches the credulous vulgar, were unfolded In just perspective to the view; _250 Yet dim from their infinitude. The Spirit seemed to stand High on an isolated pinnacle; The flood of ages combating below, The depth of the unbounded universe _255 Above, and all around Nature’s unchanging harmony.

3.

‘Fairy!’ the Spirit said, And on the Queen of Spells Fixed her aethereal eyes, ‘I thank thee. Thou hast given A boon which I will not resign, and taught _5 A lesson not to be unlearned. I know The past, and thence I will essay to glean A warning for

the future, so that man May profit by his errors, and derive Experience from his folly: _10 For, when the power of imparting joy Is equal to the will, the human soul Requires no other Heaven.'

MAB: 'Turn thee, surpassing Spirit! Much yet remains unscanned. _15 Thou knowest how great is man, Thou knowest his imbecility: Yet learn thou what he is: Yet learn the lofty destiny Which restless time prepares _20 For every living soul.

'Behold a gorgeous palace, that, amid Yon populous city rears its thousand towers And seems itself a city. Gloomy troops Of sentinels, in stern and silent ranks, _25 Encompass it around: the dweller there Cannot be free and happy; hearest thou not The curses of the fatherless, the groans Of those who have no friend? He passes on: The King, the wearer of a gilded chain _30 That binds his soul to abjectness, the fool Whom courtiers nickname monarch, whilst a slave Even to the basest appetites—that man Heeds not the shriek of penury; he smiles At the deep curses which the destitute _35 Mutter in secret, and a sullen joy Pervades his bloodless heart when thousands groan But for those morsels which his wantonness Wastes in unjoyous revelry, to save All that they love from famine: when he hears _40 The tale of horror, to some ready-made face Of hypocritical assent he turns, Smothering the glow of shame, that, spite of him, Flushes his bloated cheek. Now to the meal Of silence, grandeur, and excess, he drags _45 His palled unwilling appetite. If gold, Gleaming around, and numerous viands culled From every clime, could force the loathing sense To overcome satiety,—if wealth The spring it draws from poisons not,—or vice, _50 Unfeeling, stubborn vice, converteth not Its food to deadliest venom; then that king Is happy; and the peasant who fulfils His unforced task, when he returns at even, And by the blazing faggot meets again _55 Her welcome for whom all his toil is sped, Tastes not a sweeter meal. Behold him now Stretched on the gorgeous couch; his fevered brain Reels dizzily awhile: but ah! too soon The slumber of intemperance subsides, _60 And conscience, that undying serpent, calls Her venomous brood to their nocturnal task. Listen! he speaks! oh! mark that

frenzied eye— Oh! mark that deadly visage.’

KING: ‘No cessation! Oh! must this last for ever? Awful Death, _65 I wish, yet fear to clasp thee!—Not one moment Of dreamless sleep! O dear and blessed peace! Why dost thou shroud thy vestal purity In penury and dungeons? wherefore lurkest With danger, death, and solitude; yet shunn’st _70 The palace I have built thee? Sacred peace! Oh visit me but once, but pitying shed One drop of balm upon my withered soul.’

THE FAIRY: ‘Vain man! that palace is the virtuous heart, And Peace defileth not her snowy robes _75 In such a shed as thine. Hark! yet he mutters; His slumbers are but varied agonies, They prey like scorpions on the springs of life. There needeth not the hell that bigots frame To punish those who err: earth in itself _80 Contains at once the evil and the cure; And all-sufficing Nature can chastise Those who transgress her law,—she only knows How justly to proportion to the fault The punishment it merits. Is it strange _85 That this poor wretch should pride him in his woe? Take pleasure in his abjectness, and hug The scorpion that consumes him? Is it strange That, placed on a conspicuous throne of thorns, Grasping an iron sceptre, and immured _90 Within a splendid prison, whose stern bounds Shut him from all that’s good or dear on earth, His soul asserts not its humanity? That man’s mild nature rises not in war Against a king’s employ? No—’tis not strange. _95 He, like the vulgar, thinks, feels, acts and lives Just as his father did; the unconquered powers Of precedent and custom interpose Between a KING and virtue. Stranger yet, To those who know not Nature, nor deduce _100 The future from the present, it may seem, That not one slave, who suffers from the crimes Of this unnatural being; not one wretch, Whose children famish, and whose nuptial bed Is earth’s unpitying bosom, rears an arm To dash him from his throne! _105 Those gilded flies That, basking in the sunshine of a court, Fatten on its corruption!—what are they? —The drones of the community; they feed On the mechanic’s labour: the starved hind _110 For them compels the stubborn glebe to yield Its unshared harvests; and yon squalid

form, Leaner than fleshless misery, that wastes A sunless life in the unwholesome mine, Drags out in labour a protracted death, _115 To glut their grandeur; many faint with toil, That few may know the cares and woe of sloth.

'Whence, think'st thou, kings and parasites arose? Whence that unnatural line of drones, who heap Toil and unvanquishable penury _120 On those who build their palaces, and bring Their daily bread?—From vice, black loathsome vice; From rapine, madness, treachery, and wrong; From all that 'genders misery, and makes Of earth this thorny wilderness; from lust, _125 Revenge, and murder…And when Reason's voice, Loud as the voice of Nature, shall have waked The nations; and mankind perceive that vice Is discord, war, and misery; that virtue Is peace, and happiness and harmony; _130 When man's maturer nature shall disdain The playthings of its childhood;—kingly glare Will lose its power to dazzle; its authority Will silently pass by; the gorgeous throne Shall stand unnoticed in the regal hall, _135 Fast falling to decay; whilst falsehood's trade Shall be as hateful and unprofitable As that of truth is now. Where is the fame Which the vainglorious mighty of the earth Seek to eternize? Oh! the faintest sound _140 From Time's light footfall, the minutest wave That swells the flood of ages, whelms in nothing The unsubstantial bubble. Ay! today Stern is the tyrant's mandate, red the gaze That flashes desolation, strong the arm _145 That scatters multitudes. To-morrow comes! That mandate is a thunder-peal that died In ages past; that gaze, a transient flash On which the midnight closed, and on that arm The worm has made his meal. The virtuous man, _150 Who, great in his humility, as kings Are little in their grandeur; he who leads Invincibly a life of resolute good, And stands amid the silent dungeon depths More free and fearless than the trembling judge, _155 Who, clothed in venal power, vainly strove To bind the impassive spirit;—when he falls, His mild eye beams benevolence no more: Withered the hand outstretched but to relieve; Sunk Reason's simple eloquence, that rolled _160 But to appal the guilty. Yes! the grave Hath quenched that eye, and Death's relentless frost Withered that arm: but the

unfading fame Which Virtue hangs upon its votary's tomb; The deathless memory of that man, whom kings _165 Call to their mind and tremble; the remembrance With which the happy spirit contemplates Its well-spent pilgrimage on earth, Shall never pass away.

'Nature rejects the monarch, not the man; _170 The subject, not the citizen: for kings And subjects, mutual foes, forever play A losing game into each other's hands, Whose stakes are vice and misery. The man Of virtuous soul commands not, nor obeys. _175 Power, like a desolating pestilence, Pollutes whate'er it touches; and obedience, Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom, truth, Makes slaves of men, and, of the human frame, A mechanized automaton. When Nero, _180 High over flaming Rome, with savage joy Lowered like a fiend, drank with enraptured ear The shrieks of agonizing death, beheld The frightful desolation spread, and felt A new-created sense within his soul _185 Thrill to the sight, and vibrate to the sound; Think'st thou his grandeur had not overcome The force of human kindness? and, when Rome, With one stern blow, hurled not the tyrant down, Crushed not the arm red with her dearest blood _190 Had not submissive abjectness destroyed Nature's suggestions? Look on yonder earth: The golden harvests spring; the unfailing sun Sheds light and life; the fruits, the flowers, the trees, Arise in due succession; all things speak _195 Peace, harmony, and love. The universe, In Nature's silent eloquence, declares That all fulfil the works of love and joy,— All but the outcast, Man. He fabricates The sword which stabs his peace; he cherisheth _200 The snakes that gnaw his heart; he raiseth up The tyrant, whose delight is in his woe, Whose sport is in his agony. Yon sun, Lights it the great alone? Yon silver beams, Sleep they less sweetly on the cottage thatch _205 Than on the dome of kings? Is mother Earth A step-dame to her numerous sons, who earn Her unshared gifts with unremitting toil; A mother only to those puling babes Who, nursed in ease and luxury, make men _210 The playthings of their babyhood, and mar, In self-important childishness, that peace Which men alone appreciate?

‘Spirit of Nature! no. The pure diffusion of thy essence throbs _215 Alike in every human heart. Thou, aye, erectest there Thy throne of power unappealable: Thou art the judge beneath whose nod Man’s brief and frail authority _220 Is powerless as the wind That passeth idly by. Thine the tribunal which surpasseth The show of human justice, As God surpasses man. _225

‘Spirit of Nature! thou Life of interminable multitudes; Soul of those mighty spheres Whose changeless paths through Heaven’s deep silence lie; Soul of that smallest being, _230 The dwelling of whose life Is one faint April sun-gleam;— Man, like these passive things, Thy will unconsciously fulfilleth: Like theirs, his age of endless peace, _235 Which time is fast maturing, Will swiftly, surely come; And the unbounded frame, which thou pervadest, Will be without a flaw Marring its perfect symmetry. _240

4.

‘How beautiful this night! the balmiest sigh, Which vernal zephyrs breathe in evening’s ear, Were discord to the speaking quietude That wraps this moveless scene. Heaven’s ebon vault, Studded with stars unutterably bright, _5 Through which the moon’s unclouded grandeur rolls, Seems like a canopy which love had spread To curtain her sleeping world. Yon gentle hills, Robed in a garment of untrodden snow; Yon darksome rocks, whence icicles depend, _10 So stainless, that their white and glittering spires Tinge not the moon’s pure beam; yon castled steep, Whose banner hangeth o’er the time-worn tower So idly, that rapt fancy deemeth it A metaphor of peace;—all form a scene _15 Where musing Solitude might love to lift Her soul above this sphere of earthliness; Where Silence undisturbed might watch alone, So cold, so bright, so still. The orb of day, In southern climes, o’er ocean’s waveless field _20 Sinks sweetly smiling: not the faintest breath Steals o’er the unruffled deep; the clouds of eve Reflect unmoved the lingering beam of day; And vesper’s image on the western main Is beautifully still. To-morrow comes: _25

Cloud upon cloud, in dark and deepening mass, Roll o'er the blackened waters; the deep roar Of distant thunder mutters awfully; Tempest unfolds its pinion o'er the gloom That shrouds the boiling surge; the pitiless fiend, _30 With all his winds and lightnings, tracks his prey; The torn deep yawns,—the vessel finds a grave Beneath its jagged gulf. Ah! whence yon glare That fires the arch of Heaven!—that dark red smoke Blotting the silver moon? The stars are quenched _35 In darkness, and the pure and spangling snow Gleams faintly through the gloom that gathers round! Hark to that roar, whose swift and deaf'ning peals In countless echoes through the mountains ring, Startling pale Midnight on her starry throne! _40 Now swells the intermingling din; the jar Frequent and frightful of the bursting bomb; The falling beam, the shriek, the groan, the shout, The ceaseless clangour, and the rush of men Inebriate with rage:—loud, and more loud _45 The discord grows; till pale Death shuts the scene, And o'er the conqueror and the conquered draws His cold and bloody shroud.—Of all the men Whom day's departing beam saw blooming there, In proud and vigorous health; of all the hearts _50 That beat with anxious life at sunset there; How few survive, how few are beating now! All is deep silence, like the fearful calm That slumbers in the storm's portentous pause; Save when the frantic wail of widowed love _55 Comes shuddering on the blast, or the faint moan With which some soul bursts from the frame of clay Wrapped round its struggling powers. The gray morn Dawns on the mournful scene; the sulphurous smoke Before the icy wind slow rolls away, _60 And the bright beams of frosty morning dance Along the spangling snow. There tracks of blood Even to the forest's depth, and scattered arms, And lifeless warriors, whose hard lineaments _65 Death's self could change not, mark the dreadful path Of the outsallying victors: far behind, Black ashes note where their proud city stood. Within yon forest is a gloomy glen— Each tree which guards its darkness from the day, Waves o'er a warrior's tomb. I see thee shrink, _70 Surpassing Spirit!—wert thou human else? I see a shade of doubt and horror fleet Across thy stainless features: yet fear not; This is no unconnected

misery, Nor stands uncaused, and irretrievable. _75 Man's evil nature, that apology Which kings who rule, and cowards who crouch, set up For their unnumbered crimes, sheds not the blood Which desolates the discord-wasted land. From kings, and priests, and statesmen, war arose, _80 Whose safety is man's deep unbettered woe, Whose grandeur his debasement. Let the axe Strike at the root, the poison-tree will fall; And where its venomed exhalations spread Ruin, and death, and woe, where millions lay _85 Quenching the serpent's famine, and their bones Bleaching unburied in the putrid blast, A garden shall arise, in loveliness Surpassing fabled Eden. Hath Nature's soul, That formed this world so beautiful, that spread _90 Earth's lap with plenty, and life's smallest chord Strung to unchanging unison, that gave The happy birds their dwelling in the grove, That yielded to the wanderers of the deep The lovely silence of the unfathomed main, _95 And filled the meanest worm that crawls in dust With spirit, thought, and love; on Man alone, Partial in causeless malice, wantonly Heaped ruin, vice, and slavery; his soul Blasted with withering curses; placed afar _100 The meteor-happiness, that shuns his grasp, But serving on the frightful gulf to glare, Rent wide beneath his footsteps? Nature!—no! Kings, priests, and statesmen, blast the human flower Even in its tender bud; their influence darts _105 Like subtle poison through the bloodless veins Of desolate society. The child, Ere he can lisp his mother's sacred name, Swells with the unnatural pride of crime, and lifts His baby-sword even in a hero's mood. _110 This infant-arm becomes the bloodiest scourge Of devastated earth; whilst specious names, Learned in soft childhood's unsuspecting hour, Serve as the sophisms with which manhood dims Bright Reason's ray, and sanctifies the sword _115 Upraised to shed a brother's innocent blood. Let priest-led slaves cease to proclaim that man Inherits vice and misery, when Force And Falsehood hang even o'er the cradled babe Stifling with rudest grasp all natural good. _120 'Ah! to the stranger-soul, when first it peeps From its new tenement, and looks abroad For happiness and sympathy, how stern And desolate a tract is this wide world! How withered all the

buds of natural good! _125 No shade, no shelter from the sweeping storms Of pitiless power! On its wretched frame, Poisoned, perchance, by the disease and woe Heaped on the wretched parent whence it sprung By morals, law, and custom, the pure winds _130 Of Heaven, that renovate the insect tribes, May breathe not. The untainting light of day May visit not its longings. It is bound Ere it has life: yea, all the chains are forged Long ere its being: all liberty and love _135 And peace is torn from its defencelessness; Cursed from its birth, even from its cradle doomed To abjectness and bondage!

‘Throughout this varied and eternal world Soul is the only element: the block _140 That for uncounted ages has remained The moveless pillar of a mountain’s weight Is active, living spirit. Every grain Is sentient both in unity and part, And the minutest atom comprehends _145 A world of loves and hatreds; these beget Evil and good: hence truth and falsehood spring; Hence will and thought and action, all the germs Of pain or pleasure, sympathy or hate, That variegate the eternal universe. _150 Soul is not more polluted than the beams Of Heaven’s pure orb, ere round their rapid lines The taint of earth-born atmospheres arise.

‘Man is of soul and body, formed for deeds Of high resolve, on fancy’s boldest wing _155 To soar unwearied, fearlessly to turn The keenest pangs to peacefulness, and taste The joys which mingled sense and spirit yield. Or he is formed for abjectness and woe, To grovel on the dunghill of his fears, _160 To shrink at every sound, to quench the flame Of natural love in sensualism, to know That hour as blessed when on his worthless days The frozen hand of Death shall set its seal, Yet fear the cure, though hating the disease. _165 The one is man that shall hereafter be; The other, man as vice has made him now.

‘War is the statesman’s game, the priest’s delight, The lawyer’s jest, the hired assassin’s trade, And, to those royal murderers, whose mean thrones _170 Are bought by crimes of treachery and gore, The bread they eat, the staff on which they

lean. Guards, garbed in blood-red livery, surround Their palaces, participate the crimes That force defends, and from a nation's rage _175 Secure the crown, which all the curses reach That famine, frenzy, woe and penury breathe. These are the hired bravos who defend The tyrant's throne—the bullies of his fear: These are the sinks and channels of worst vice, _180 The refuse of society, the dregs Of all that is most vile: their cold hearts blend Deceit with sternness, ignorance with pride, All that is mean and villanous, with rage Which hopelessness of good, and self-contempt, _185 Alone might kindle; they are decked in wealth, Honour and power, then are sent abroad To do their work. The pestilence that stalks In gloomy triumph through some eastern land Is less destroying. They cajole with gold, _190 And promises of fame, the thoughtless youth Already crushed with servitude: he knows His wretchedness too late, and cherishes Repentance for his ruin, when his doom Is sealed in gold and blood! _195 Those too the tyrant serve, who, skilled to snare The feet of Justice in the toils of law, Stand, ready to oppress the weaker still; And right or wrong will vindicate for gold, Sneering at public virtue, which beneath _200 Their pitiless tread lies torn and trampled, where Honour sits smiling at the sale of truth.

'Then grave and hoary-headed hypocrites, Without a hope, a passion, or a love, Who, through a life of luxury and lies, _205 Have crept by flattery to the seats of power, Support the system whence their honours flow… They have three words:—well tyrants know their use, Well pay them for the loan, with usury Torn from a bleeding world!—God, Hell, and Heaven. _210 A vengeful, pitiless, and almighty fiend, Whose mercy is a nickname for the rage Of tameless tigers hungering for blood. Hell, a red gulf of everlasting fire, Where poisonous and undying worms prolong _215 Eternal misery to those hapless slaves Whose life has been a penance for its crimes. And Heaven, a meed for those who dare belie Their human nature, quake, believe, and cringe Before the mockeries of earthly power. _220

‘These tools the tyrant tempers to his work, Wields in his wrath, and as he wills destroys, Omnipotent in wickedness: the while Youth springs, age moulders, manhood tamely does His bidding, bribed by short-lived joys to lend _225 Force to the weakness of his trembling arm.

‘They rise, they fall; one generation comes Yielding its harvest to destruction’s scythe. It fades, another blossoms: yet behold! Red glows the tyrant’s stamp-mark on its bloom, _230 Withering and cankering deep its passive prime. He has invented lying words and modes, Empty and vain as his own coreless heart; Evasive meanings, nothings of much sound, To lure the heedless victim to the toils _235 Spread round the valley of its paradise.

‘Look to thyself, priest, conqueror, or prince! Whether thy trade is falsehood, and thy lusts Deep wallow in the earnings of the poor, With whom thy Master was:—or thou delight’st _240 In numbering o’er the myriads of thy slain, All misery weighing nothing in the scale Against thy short-lived fame: or thou dost load With cowardice and crime the groaning land, A pomp-fed king. Look to thy wretched self! _245 Ay, art thou not the veriest slave that e’er Crawled on the loathing earth? Are not thy days Days of unsatisfying listlessness? Dost thou not cry, ere night’s long rack is o’er, “When will the morning come?” Is not thy youth _250 A vain and feverish dream of sensualism? Thy manhood blighted with unripe disease? Are not thy views of unregretted death Drear, comfortless, and horrible? Thy mind, Is it not morbid as thy nerveless frame, _255 Incapable of judgement, hope, or love? And dost thou wish the errors to survive That bar thee from all sympathies of good, After the miserable interest Thou hold’st in their protraction? When the grave _260 Has swallowed up thy memory and thyself, Dost thou desire the bane that poisons earth To twine its roots around thy coffined clay, Spring from thy bones, and blossom on thy tomb, That of its fruit thy babes may eat and die? _265

NOTE: _176 Secures edition 1813.

5.

‘Thus do the generations of the earth Go to the grave, and issue from the womb, Surviving still the imperishable change That renovates the world; even as the leaves Which the keen frost-wind of the waning year _5 Has scattered on the forest soil, and heaped For many seasons there—though long they choke, Loading with loathsome rottenness the land, All germs of promise, yet when the tall trees From which they fell, shorn of their lovely shapes, _10 Lie level with the earth to moulder there, They fertilize the land they long deformed, Till from the breathing lawn a forest springs Of youth, integrity, and loveliness, Like that which gave it life, to spring and die. _15 Thus suicidal selfishness, that blights The fairest feelings of the opening heart, Is destined to decay, whilst from the soil Shall spring all virtue, all delight, all love, And judgement cease to wage unnatural war _20 With passion’s unsubduable array. Twin-sister of religion, selfishness! Rival in crime and falsehood, aping all The wanton horrors of her bloody play; Yet frozen, unimpassioned, spiritless, _25 Shunning the light, and owning not its name, Compelled, by its deformity, to screen, With flimsy veil of justice and of right, Its unattractive lineaments, that scare All, save the brood of ignorance: at once _30 The cause and the effect of tyranny; Unblushing, hardened, sensual, and vile; Dead to all love but of its abjectness, With heart impassive by more noble powers Than unshared pleasure, sordid gain, or fame; _35 Despising its own miserable being, Which still it longs, yet fears to disenthrall.

‘Hence commerce springs, the venal interchange Of all that human art or nature yield; Which wealth should purchase not, but want demand, _40 And natural kindness hasten to supply From the full fountain of its boundless love, For ever stifled, drained, and tainted now. Commerce! beneath whose poison-breathing shade No solitary virtue dares to spring, _45 But Poverty and Wealth with equal hand Scatter their withering curses, and unfold The doors of premature and violent death, To pining famine and full-fed disease, To all that shares the lot of human life, _50

Which poisoned, body and soul, scarce drags the chain, That lengthens as it goes and clanks behind.

‘Commerce has set the mark of selfishness, The signet of its all-enslaving power Upon a shining ore, and called it gold: _55 Before whose image bow the vulgar great, The vainly rich, the miserable proud, The mob of peasants, nobles, priests, and kings, And with blind feelings reverence the power That grinds them to the dust of misery. _60 But in the temple of their hireling hearts Gold is a living god, and rules in scorn All earthly things but virtue.

‘Since tyrants, by the sale of human life, Heap luxuries to their sensualism, and fame _65 To their wide-wasting and insatiate pride, Success has sanctioned to a credulous world The ruin, the disgrace, the woe of war. His hosts of blind and unresisting dupes The despot numbers; from his cabinet _70 These puppets of his schemes he moves at will, Even as the slaves by force or famine driven, Beneath a vulgar master, to perform A task of cold and brutal drudgery;— Hardened to hope, insensible to fear, _75 Scarce living pulleys of a dead machine, Mere wheels of work and articles of trade, That grace the proud and noisy pomp of wealth!

‘The harmony and happiness of man Yields to the wealth of nations; that which lifts _80 His nature to the heaven of its pride, Is bartered for the poison of his soul; The weight that drags to earth his towering hopes, Blighting all prospect but of selfish gain, Withering all passion but of slavish fear, _85 Extinguishing all free and generous love Of enterprise and daring, even the pulse That fancy kindles in the beating heart To mingle with sensation, it destroys,— Leaves nothing but the sordid lust of self, _90 The grovelling hope of interest and gold, Unqualified, unmingled, unredeemed Even by hypocrisy. And statesmen boast Of wealth! The wordy eloquence, that lives After the ruin of their hearts, can gild _95 The bitter poison of a nation’s woe, Can turn the worship of the servile mob To their corrupt and glaring idol, Fame, From Virtue, trampled by its iron tread, Although its dazzling pedestal

be raised _100 Amid the horrors of a limb-strewn field, With desolated dwellings smoking round. The man of ease, who, by his warm fireside, To deeds of charitable intercourse, And bare fulfilment of the common laws _105 Of decency and prejudice, confines The struggling nature of his human heart, Is duped by their cold sophistry; he sheds A passing tear perchance upon the wreck Of earthly peace, when near his dwelling's door _110 The frightful waves are driven,—when his son Is murdered by the tyrant, or religion Drives his wife raving mad. But the poor man, Whose life is misery, and fear, and care; Whom the morn wakens but to fruitless toil; _115 Who ever hears his famished offspring's scream, Whom their pale mother's uncomplaining gaze For ever meets, and the proud rich man's eye Flashing command, and the heart-breaking scene Of thousands like himself;—he little heeds _120 The rhetoric of tyranny; his hate Is quenchless as his wrongs; he laughs to scorn The vain and bitter mockery of words, Feeling the horror of the tyrant's deeds, And unrestrained but by the arm of power, _125 That knows and dreads his enmity.

'The iron rod of Penury still compels Her wretched slave to bow the knee to wealth, And poison, with unprofitable toil, A life too void of solace to confirm _130 The very chains that bind him to his doom. Nature, impartial in munificence, Has gifted man with all-subduing will. Matter, with all its transitory shapes, Lies subjected and plastic at his feet, _135 That, weak from bondage, tremble as they tread. How many a rustic Milton has passed by, Stifling the speechless longings of his heart, In unremitting drudgery and care! How many a vulgar Cato has compelled _140 His energies, no longer tameless then, To mould a pin, or fabricate a nail! How many a Newton, to whose passive ken Those mighty spheres that gem infinity Were only specks of tinsel, fixed in Heaven _145 To light the midnights of his native town!

'Yet every heart contains perfection's germ: The wisest of the sages of the earth, That ever from the stores of reason drew Science and truth, and virtue's dreadless tone, _150 Were but a weak and inexperienced boy, Proud, sensual, unimpassioned, unimbued With pure desire and universal love, Compared to that high being, of

cloudless brain, Untainted passion, elevated will, _155 Which Death (who even would linger long in awe Within his noble presence, and beneath His changeless eyebeam) might alone subdue. Him, every slave now dragging through the filth Of some corrupted city his sad life, _160 Pining with famine, swoln with luxury, Blunting the keenness of his spiritual sense With narrow schemings and unworthy cares, Or madly rushing through all violent crime, To move the deep stagnation of his soul,— _165 Might imitate and equal. But mean lust Has bound its chains so tight around the earth, That all within it but the virtuous man Is venal: gold or fame will surely reach The price prefixed by selfishness, to all _170 But him of resolute and unchanging will; Whom, nor the plaudits of a servile crowd, Nor the vile joys of tainting luxury, Can bribe to yield his elevated soul To Tyranny or Falsehood, though they wield _175 With blood-red hand the sceptre of the world.

‘All things are sold: the very light of Heaven Is venal; earth’s unsparing gifts of love, The smallest and most despicable things That lurk in the abysses of the deep, _180 All objects of our life, even life itself, And the poor pittance which the laws allow Of liberty, the fellowship of man, Those duties which his heart of human love Should urge him to perform instinctively, _185 Are bought and sold as in a public mart Of undisguising selfishness, that sets On each its price, the stamp-mark of her reign. Even love is sold; the solace of all woe Is turned to deadliest agony, old age _190 Shivers in selfish beauty’s loathing arms, And youth’s corrupted impulses prepare A life of horror from the blighting bane Of commerce; whilst the pestilence that springs From unenjoying sensualism, has filled _195 All human life with hydra-headed woes.

‘Falsehood demands but gold to pay the pangs Of outraged conscience; for the slavish priest Sets no great value on his hireling faith: A little passing pomp, some servile souls, _200 Whom cowardice itself might safely chain, Or the spare mite of avarice could bribe To deck the triumph of their languid zeal, Can make him minister to tyranny. More daring crime requires a loftier meed: _205 Without a

shudder, the slave-soldier lends His arm to murderous deeds, and steels his heart, When the dread eloquence of dying men, Low mingling on the lonely field of fame, Assails that nature, whose applause he sells _210 For the gross blessings of a patriot mob, For the vile gratitude of heartless kings, And for a cold world's good word,—viler still!

'There is a nobler glory, which survives Until our being fades, and, solacing _215 All human care, accompanies its change; Deserts not virtue in the dungeon's gloom, And, in the precincts of the palace, guides Its footsteps through that labyrinth of crime; Imbues his lineaments with dauntlessness, _220 Even when, from Power's avenging hand, he takes Its sweetest, last and noblest title—death; —The consciousness of good, which neither gold, Nor sordid fame, nor hope of heavenly bliss Can purchase; but a life of resolute good,— _225 Unalterable will, quenchless desire Of universal happiness, the heart That beats with it in unison, the brain, Whose ever wakeful wisdom toils to change Reason's rich stores for its eternal weal. _230

'This commerce of sincerest virtue needs No mediative signs of selfishness, No jealous intercourse of wretched gain, No balancings of prudence, cold and long; In just and equal measure all is weighed, _235 One scale contains the sum of human weal, And one, the good man's heart. How vainly seek The selfish for that happiness denied To aught but virtue! Blind and hardened, they, Who hope for peace amid the storms of care, _240 Who covet power they know not how to use, And sigh for pleasure they refuse to give,— Madly they frustrate still their own designs; And, where they hope that quiet to enjoy Which virtue pictures, bitterness of soul, _245 Pining regrets, and vain repentances, Disease, disgust, and lassitude, pervade Their valueless and miserable lives.

'But hoary-headed Selfishness has felt Its death-blow, and is tottering to the grave: _250 A brighter morn awaits the human day, When every transfer of earth's natural

gifts Shall be a commerce of good words and works; When poverty and wealth, the thirst of fame, The fear of infamy, disease and woe, _255 War with its million horrors, and fierce hell Shall live but in the memory of Time, Who, like a penitent libertine, shall start, Look back, and shudder at his younger years.'

6.

All touch, all eye, all ear, The Spirit felt the Fairy's burning speech. O'er the thin texture of its frame, The varying periods painted changing glows, As on a summer even, _5 When soul-enfolding music floats around, The stainless mirror of the lake Re-images the eastern gloom, Mingling convulsively its purple hues With sunset's burnished gold. _10

Then thus the Spirit spoke: 'It is a wild and miserable world! Thorny, and full of care, Which every fiend can make his prey at will. O Fairy! in the lapse of years, _15 Is there no hope in store? Will yon vast suns roll on Interminably, still illuming The night of so many wretched souls, And see no hope for them? _20 Will not the universal Spirit e'er Revivify this withered limb of Heaven?'

The Fairy calmly smiled In comfort, and a kindling gleam of hope Suffused the Spirit's lineaments. _25 'Oh! rest thee tranquil; chase those fearful doubts, Which ne'er could rack an everlasting soul, That sees the chains which bind it to its doom. Yes! crime and misery are in yonder earth, Falsehood, mistake, and lust; _30 But the eternal world Contains at once the evil and the cure. Some eminent in virtue shall start up, Even in perversest time: The truths of their pure lips, that never die, _35 Shall bind the scorpion falsehood with a wreath Of ever-living flame, Until the monster sting itself to death.

'How sweet a scene will earth become! Of purest spirits a pure dwelling-place, _40 Symphonious with the planetary spheres; When man, with changeless Nature coalescing, Will undertake regeneration's work, When its ungenial poles no longer point To the red and baleful sun _45 That faintly twinkles there.

‘Spirit! on yonder earth, Falsehood now triumphs; deadly power Has fixed its seal upon the lip of truth! Madness and misery are there! _50 The happiest is most wretched! Yet confide, Until pure health-drops, from the cup of joy, Fall like a dew of balm upon the world. Now, to the scene I show, in silence turn, And read the blood-stained charter of all woe, _55 Which Nature soon, with re-creating hand, Will blot in mercy from the book of earth. How bold the flight of Passion’s wandering wing, How swift the step of Reason’s firmer tread, How calm and sweet the victories of life, _60 How terrorless the triumph of the grave! How powerless were the mightiest monarch’s arm, Vain his loud threat, and impotent his frown! How ludicrous the priest’s dogmatic roar! The weight of his exterminating curse _65 How light! and his affected charity, To suit the pressure of the changing times, What palpable deceit!—but for thy aid, Religion! but for thee, prolific fiend, Who peoplest earth with demons, Hell with men, _70 And Heaven with slaves!

‘Thou taintest all thou look’st upon!—the stars, Which on thy cradle beamed so brightly sweet, Were gods to the distempered playfulness Of thy untutored infancy: the trees, _75 The grass, the clouds, the mountains, and the sea, All living things that walk, swim, creep, or fly, Were gods: the sun had homage, and the moon Her worshipper. Then thou becam’st, a boy, More daring in thy frenzies: every shape, _80 Monstrous or vast, or beautifully wild, Which, from sensation’s relics, fancy culls The spirits of the air, the shuddering ghost, The genii of the elements, the powers That give a shape to Nature’s varied works, _85 Had life and place in the corrupt belief Of thy blind heart: yet still thy youthful hands Were pure of human blood. Then manhood gave Its strength and ardour to thy frenzied brain; Thine eager gaze scanned the stupendous scene, _90 Whose wonders mocked the knowledge of thy pride: Their everlasting and unchanging laws Reproached thine ignorance. Awhile thou stoodst Baffled and gloomy; then thou didst sum up The elements of all that thou didst know; _95 The changing seasons, winter’s leafless reign, The budding of the Heaven-breathing trees, The eternal orbs that beautify the night, The

sunrise, and the setting of the moon, Earthquakes and wars, and poisons and disease, _100 And all their causes, to an abstract point Converging, thou didst bend and called it God! The self-sufficing, the omnipotent, The merciful, and the avenging God! Who, prototype of human misrule, sits _105 High in Heaven's realm, upon a golden throne, Even like an earthly king; and whose dread work, Hell, gapes for ever for the unhappy slaves Of fate, whom He created, in his sport, To triumph in their torments when they fell! _110 Earth heard the name; Earth trembled, as the smoke Of His revenge ascended up to Heaven, Blotting the constellations; and the cries Of millions, butchered in sweet confidence And unsuspecting peace, even when the bonds _115 Of safety were confirmed by wordy oaths Sworn in His dreadful name, rung through the land; Whilst innocent babes writhed on thy stubborn spear, And thou didst laugh to hear the mother's shriek Of maniac gladness, as the sacred steel _120 Felt cold in her torn entrails!

'Religion! thou wert then in manhood's prime: But age crept on: one God would not suffice For senile puerility; thou framedst A tale to suit thy dotage, and to glut _125 Thy misery-thirsting soul, that the mad fiend Thy wickedness had pictured might afford A plea for sating the unnatural thirst For murder, rapine, violence, and crime, That still consumed thy being, even when _130 Thou heardst the step of Fate;—that flames might light Thy funeral scene, and the shrill horrent shrieks Of parents dying on the pile that burned To light their children to thy paths, the roar Of the encircling flames, the exulting cries _135 Of thine apostles, loud commingling there, Might sate thine hungry ear Even on the bed of death!

'But now contempt is mocking thy gray hairs; Thou art descending to the darksome grave, _140 Unhonoured and unpitied, but by those Whose pride is passing by like thine, and sheds, Like thine, a glare that fades before the sun Of truth, and shines but in the dreadful night That long has lowered above the ruined world. _145

'Throughout these infinite orbs of mingling light, Of which yon earth is one, is wide

diffused A Spirit of activity and life, That knows no term, cessation, or decay; That fades not when the lamp of earthly life, _150 Extinguished in the dampness of the grave, Awhile there slumbers, more than when the babe In the dim newness of its being feels The impulses of sublunary things, And all is wonder to unpractised sense: _155 But, active, steadfast, and eternal, still Guides the fierce whirlwind, in the tempest roars, Cheers in the day, breathes in the balmy groves, Strengthens in health, and poisons in disease; And in the storm of change, that ceaselessly _160 Rolls round the eternal universe, and shakes Its undecaying battlement, presides, Apportioning with irresistible law The place each spring of its machine shall fill; So that when waves on waves tumultuous heap _165 Confusion to the clouds, and fiercely driven Heaven's lightnings scorch the uprooted ocean-fords, Whilst, to the eye of shipwrecked mariner, Lone sitting on the bare and shuddering rock, All seems unlinked contingency and chance: _170 No atom of this turbulence fulfils A vague and unnecessitated task, Or acts but as it must and ought to act. Even the minutest molecule of light, That in an April sunbeam's fleeting glow _175 Fulfils its destined, though invisible work, The universal Spirit guides; nor less, When merciless ambition, or mad zeal, Has led two hosts of dupes to battlefield, That, blind, they there may dig each other's graves, _180 And call the sad work glory, does it rule All passions: not a thought, a will, an act, No working of the tyrant's moody mind, Nor one misgiving of the slaves who boast Their servitude, to hide the shame they feel, _185 Nor the events enchaining every will, That from the depths of unrecorded time Have drawn all-influencing virtue, pass Unrecognized, or unforeseen by thee, Soul of the Universe! eternal spring _190 Of life and death, of happiness and woe, Of all that chequers the phantasmal scene That floats before our eyes in wavering light, Which gleams but on the darkness of our prison, Whose chains and massy walls _195 We feel, but cannot see.

'Spirit of Nature! all-sufficing Power, Necessity! thou mother of the world! Unlike the God of human error, thou Requir'st no prayers or praises; the caprice _200 Of

man’s weak will belongs no more to thee Than do the changeful passions of his breast To thy unvarying harmony: the slave, Whose horrible lusts spread misery o’er the world, And the good man, who lifts, with virtuous pride, _205 His being, in the sight of happiness, That springs from his own works; the poison-tree Beneath whose shade all life is withered up, And the fair oak, whose leafy dome affords A temple where the vows of happy love _210 Are registered, are equal in thy sight: No love, no hate thou cherishest; revenge And favouritism, and worst desire of fame Thou know’st not: all that the wide world contains Are but thy passive instruments, and thou _215 Regard’st them all with an impartial eye, Whose joy or pain thy nature cannot feel, Because thou hast not human sense, Because thou art not human mind.

‘Yes! when the sweeping storm of time _220 Has sung its death-dirge o’er the ruined fanes And broken altars of the almighty Fiend Whose name usurps thy honours, and the blood Through centuries clotted there, has floated down The tainted flood of ages, shalt thou live _225 Unchangeable! A shrine is raised to thee, Which, nor the tempest-breath of time, Nor the interminable flood, Over earth’s slight pageant rolling, Availeth to destroy,—. _230 The sensitive extension of the world. That wondrous and eternal fane, Where pain and pleasure, good and evil join, To do the will of strong necessity, And life, in multitudinous shapes, _235 Still pressing forward where no term can be, Like hungry and unresting flame Curls round the eternal columns of its strength.’

7.

SPIRIT: ‘I was an infant when my mother went To see an atheist burned. She took me there: The dark-robed priests were met around the pile; The multitude was gazing silently; And as the culprit passed with dauntless mien, _5 Tempered disdain in his unaltering eye, Mixed with a quiet smile, shone calmly forth: The thirsty fire crept round his manly limbs; His resolute eyes were scorched to blindness soon; His death-pang rent my heart! the insensate mob _10 Uttered a cry of triumph, and I

wept. “Weep not, child!” cried my mother, “for that man Has said, There is no God.”’

FAIRY: ‘There is no God! Nature confirms the faith his death-groan sealed: Let heaven and earth, let man’s revolving race, _15 His ceaseless generations tell their tale; Let every part depending on the chain That links it to the whole, point to the hand That grasps its term! let every seed that falls In silent eloquence unfold its store _20 Of argument; infinity within, Infinity without, belie creation; The exterminable spirit it contains Is nature’s only God; but human pride Is skilful to invent most serious names _25 To hide its ignorance. The name of God Has fenced about all crime with holiness, Himself the creature of His worshippers, Whose names and attributes and passions change, Seeva, Buddh, Foh, Jehovah, God, or Lord, _30 Even with the human dupes who build His shrines, Still serving o’er the war-polluted world For desolation’s watchword; whether hosts Stain His death-blushing chariot-wheels, as on Triumphantly they roll, whilst Brahmins raise _35 A sacred hymn to mingle with the groans; Or countless partners of His power divide His tyranny to weakness; or the smoke Of burning towns, the cries of female helplessness, Unarmed old age, and youth, and infancy, _40 Horribly massacred, ascend to Heaven In honour of His name; or, last and worst, Earth groans beneath religion’s iron age, And priests dare babble of a God of peace, Even whilst their hands are red with guiltless blood, _45 Murdering the while, uprooting every germ Of truth, exterminating, spoiling all, Making the earth a slaughter-house!

‘O Spirit! through the sense By which thy inner nature was apprised _50 Of outward shows, vague dreams have rolled, And varied reminiscences have waked Tablets that never fade; All things have been imprinted there, The stars, the sea, the earth, the sky, _55 Even the unshapeliest lineaments Of wild and fleeting visions Have left a record there To testify of earth.

‘These are my empire, for to me is given _60 The wonders of the human world to

keep, And Fancy's thin creations to endow With manner, being, and reality; Therefore a wondrous phantom, from the dreams Of human error's dense and purblind faith, _65 I will evoke, to meet thy questioning. Ahasuerus, rise!'

A strange and woe-worn wight Arose beside the battlement, And stood unmoving there. _70 His inessential figure cast no shade Upon the golden floor; His port and mien bore mark of many years, And chronicles of untold ancientness Were legible within his beamless eye: _75 Yet his cheek bore the mark of youth; Freshness and vigour knit his manly frame; The wisdom of old age was mingled there With youth's primaeval dauntlessness; And inexpressible woe, _80 Chastened by fearless resignation, gave An awful grace to his all-speaking brow.

SPIRIT: 'Is there a God?'

AHASUERUS: 'Is there a God!—ay, an almighty God, And vengeful as almighty! Once His voice _85 Was heard on earth: earth shuddered at the sound; The fiery-visaged firmament expressed Abhorrence, and the grave of Nature yawned To swallow all the dauntless and the good That dared to hurl defiance at His throne, _90 Girt as it was with power. None but slaves Survived,—cold-blooded slaves, who did the work Of tyrannous omnipotence; whose souls No honest indignation ever urged To elevated daring, to one deed _95 Which gross and sensual self did not pollute. These slaves built temples for the omnipotent Fiend, Gorgeous and vast: the costly altars smoked With human blood, and hideous paeans rung Through all the long-drawn aisles. A murderer heard _100 His voice in Egypt, one whose gifts and arts Had raised him to his eminence in power, Accomplice of omnipotence in crime, And confidant of the all-knowing one. These were Jehovah's words:— _105

'From an eternity of idleness I, God, awoke; in seven days' toil made earth From nothing; rested, and created man: I placed him in a Paradise, and there Planted the tree of evil, so that he _110 Might eat and perish, and My soul procure Wherewith to sate its malice, and to turn, Even like a heartless conqueror of the earth, All misery

to My fame. The race of men Chosen to My honour, with impunity _115 May sate the lusts I planted in their heart. Here I command thee hence to lead them on, Until, with hardened feet, their conquering troops Wade on the promised soil through woman's blood, And make My name be dreaded through the land. _120 Yet ever-burning flame and ceaseless woe Shall be the doom of their eternal souls, With every soul on this ungrateful earth, Virtuous or vicious, weak or strong,—even all Shall perish, to fulfil the blind revenge _125 (Which you, to men, call justice) of their God.'

The murderer's brow Quivered with horror. 'God omnipotent, Is there no mercy? must our punishment Be endless? will long ages roll away, _130 And see no term? Oh! wherefore hast Thou made In mockery and wrath this evil earth? Mercy becomes the powerful—be but just: O God! repent and save.'

'One way remains: I will beget a Son, and He shall bear _135 The sins of all the world; He shall arise In an unnoticed corner of the earth, And there shall die upon a cross, and purge The universal crime; so that the few On whom My grace descends, those who are marked _140 As vessels to the honour of their God, May credit this strange sacrifice, and save Their souls alive: millions shall live and die, Who ne'er shall call upon their Saviour's name, But, unredeemed, go to the gaping grave. _145 Thousands shall deem it an old woman's tale, Such as the nurses frighten babes withal: These in a gulf of anguish and of flame Shall curse their reprobation endlessly, Yet tenfold pangs shall force them to avow, _150 Even on their beds of torment, where they howl, My honour, and the justice of their doom. What then avail their virtuous deeds, their thoughts Of purity, with radiant genius bright, Or lit with human reason's earthly ray? _155 Many are called, but few will I elect. Do thou My bidding, Moses!' Even the murderer's cheek Was blanched with horror, and his quivering lips Scarce faintly uttered—'O almighty One, I tremble and obey!' _160

‘O Spirit! centuries have set their seal On this heart of many wounds, and loaded brain, Since the Incarnate came: humbly He came, Veiling His horrible Godhead in the shape Of man, scorned by the world, His name unheard, _165 Save by the rabble of His native town, Even as a parish demagogue. He led The crowd; He taught them justice, truth, and peace, In semblance; but He lit within their souls The quenchless flames of zeal, and blessed the sword _170 He brought on earth to satiate with the blood Of truth and freedom His malignant soul. At length His mortal frame was led to death. I stood beside Him: on the torturing cross No pain assailed His unterrestrial sense; _175 And yet He groaned. Indignantly I summed The massacres and miseries which His name Had sanctioned in my country, and I cried, “Go! Go!” in mockery. A smile of godlike malice reillumed _180 His fading lineaments.—“I go,” He cried, “But thou shalt wander o’er the unquiet earth Eternally.”—The dampness of the grave Bathed my imperishable front. I fell, And long lay tranced upon the charmed soil. _185 When I awoke Hell burned within my brain, Which staggered on its seat; for all around The mouldering relics of my kindred lay, Even as the Almighty’s ire arrested them, And in their various attitudes of death _190 My murdered children’s mute and eyeless skulls Glared ghastily upon me. But my soul, From sight and sense of the polluting woe Of tyranny, had long learned to prefer Hell’s freedom to the servitude of Heaven. _195 Therefore I rose, and dauntlessly began My lonely and unending pilgrimage, Resolved to wage unweariable war With my almighty Tyrant, and to hurl Defiance at His impotence to harm _200 Beyond the curse I bore. The very hand That barred my passage to the peaceful grave Has crushed the earth to misery, and given Its empire to the chosen of His slaves. These have I seen, even from the earliest dawn _205 Of weak, unstable and precarious power, Then preaching peace, as now they practise war; So, when they turned but from the massacre Of unoffending infidels, to quench Their thirst for ruin in the very blood _210 That flowed in their own veins, and pitiless zeal Froze every human feeling, as the wife Sheathed in her husband’s heart the sacred steel, Even whilst its hopes were

dreaming of her love; And friends to friends, brothers to brothers stood _215 Opposed in bloodiest battle-field, and war, Scarce satiable by fate's last death-draught, waged, Drunk from the winepress of the Almighty's wrath; Whilst the red cross, in mockery of peace, Pointed to victory! When the fray was done, _220 No remnant of the exterminated faith Survived to tell its ruin, but the flesh, With putrid smoke poisoning the atmosphere, That rotted on the half-extinguished pile.

'Yes! I have seen God's worshippers unsheathe _225 The sword of His revenge, when grace descended, Confirming all unnatural impulses, To sanctify their desolating deeds; And frantic priests waved the ill-omened cross O'er the unhappy earth: then shone the sun _230 On showers of gore from the upflashing steel Of safe assassination, and all crime Made stingless by the Spirits of the Lord, And blood-red rainbows canopied the land. 'Spirit, no year of my eventful being _235 Has passed unstained by crime and misery, Which flows from God's own faith. I've marked His slaves With tongues whose lies are venomous, beguile The insensate mob, and, whilst one hand was red With murder, feign to stretch the other out _240 For brotherhood and peace; and that they now Babble of love and mercy, whilst their deeds Are marked with all the narrowness and crime That Freedom's young arm dare not yet chastise, Reason may claim our gratitude, who now _245 Establishing the imperishable throne Of truth, and stubborn virtue, maketh vain The unprevailing malice of my Foe, Whose bootless rage heaps torments for the brave, Adds impotent eternities to pain, _250 Whilst keenest disappointment racks His breast To see the smiles of peace around them play, To frustrate or to sanctify their doom.

'Thus have I stood,—through a wild waste of years Struggling with whirlwinds of mad agony, _255 Yet peaceful, and serene, and self-enshrined, Mocking my powerless Tyrant's horrible curse With stubborn and unalterable will, Even as a giant oak, which Heaven's fierce flame Had scathed in the wilderness, to stand _260 A monument of fadeless ruin there; Yet peacefully and movelessly it braves The

midnight conflict of the wintry storm, As in the sunlight's calm it spreads Its worn and withered arms on high _265 To meet the quiet of a summer's noon.'

The Fairy waved her wand: Ahasuerus fled Fast as the shapes of mingled shade and mist, That lurk in the glens of a twilight grove, _270 Flee from the morning beam: The matter of which dreams are made Not more endowed with actual life Than this phantasmal portraiture Of wandering human thought. _275

NOTE: _180 reillumined edition 1813.

8.

THE FAIRY: 'The Present and the Past thou hast beheld: It was a desolate sight. Now, Spirit, learn The secrets of the Future.—Time! Unfold the brooding pinion of thy gloom, Render thou up thy half-devoured babes, _5 And from the cradles of eternity, Where millions lie lulled to their portioned sleep By the deep murmuring stream of passing things, Tear thou that gloomy shroud.—Spirit, behold Thy glorious destiny!' _10

Joy to the Spirit came. Through the wide rent in Time's eternal veil, Hope was seen beaming through the mists of fear: Earth was no longer Hell; Love, freedom, health, had given _15 Their ripeness to the manhood of its prime, And all its pulses beat Symphonious to the planetary spheres: Then dulcet music swelled Concordant with the life-strings of the soul; _20 It throbbed in sweet and languid beatings there, Catching new life from transitory death,— Like the vague sighings of a wind at even, That wakes the wavelets of the slumbering sea And dies on the creation of its breath, _25 And sinks and rises, fails and swells by fits: Was the pure stream of feeling That sprung from these sweet notes, And o'er the Spirit's human sympathies With mild and gentle motion calmly flowed. _30

Joy to the Spirit came,— Such joy as when a lover sees The chosen of his soul in happiness, And witnesses her peace Whose woe to him were bitterer than death, _35 Sees her unfaded cheek Glow mantling in first luxury of health, Thrills with her

lovely eyes, Which like two stars amid the heaving main Sparkle through liquid bliss. _40

Then in her triumph spoke the Fairy Queen: ‘I will not call the ghost of ages gone To unfold the frightful secrets of its lore; The present now is past, And those events that desolate the earth _45 Have faded from the memory of Time, Who dares not give reality to that Whose being I annul. To me is given The wonders of the human world to keep, Space, matter, time, and mind. Futurity _50 Exposes now its treasure; let the sight Renew and strengthen all thy failing hope. O human Spirit! spur thee to the goal Where virtue fixes universal peace, And midst the ebb and flow of human things, _55 Show somewhat stable, somewhat certain still, A lighthouse o’er the wild of dreary waves.

‘The habitable earth is full of bliss; Those wastes of frozen billows that were hurled By everlasting snowstorms round the poles, _60 Where matter dared not vegetate or live, But ceaseless frost round the vast solitude Bound its broad zone of stillness, are unloosed; And fragrant zephyrs there from spicy isles Ruffle the placid ocean-deep, that rolls _65 Its broad, bright surges to the sloping sand, Whose roar is wakened into echoings sweet To murmur through the Heaven-breathing groves And melodize with man’s blest nature there.

‘Those deserts of immeasurable sand, _70 Whose age-collected fervours scarce allowed A bird to live, a blade of grass to spring, Where the shrill chirp of the green lizard’s love Broke on the sultry silentness alone, Now teem with countless rills and shady woods, _75 Cornfields and pastures and white cottages; And where the startled wilderness beheld A savage conqueror stained in kindred blood, A tigress sating with the flesh of lambs The unnatural famine of her toothless cubs, _80 Whilst shouts and howlings through the desert rang, Sloping and smooth the daisy-spangled lawn, Offering sweet incense to the sunrise, smiles To see a babe before his mother’s door, Sharing his morning’s meal _85 With the green and

golden basilisk That comes to lick his feet.

‘Those trackless deeps, where many a weary sail Has seen above the illimitable plain, Morning on night, and night on morning rise, _90 Whilst still no land to greet the wanderer spread Its shadowy mountains on the sun-bright sea, Where the loud roarings of the tempest-waves So long have mingled with the gusty wind In melancholy loneliness, and swept _95 The desert of those ocean solitudes, But vocal to the sea-bird’s harrowing shriek, The bellowing monster, and the rushing storm, Now to the sweet and many-mingling sounds Of kindliest human impulses respond. _100 Those lonely realms bright garden-isles begem, With lightsome clouds and shining seas between, And fertile valleys, resonant with bliss, Whilst green woods overcanopy the wave, Which like a toil-worn labourer leaps to shore, _105 To meet the kisses of the flow’rets there.

‘All things are recreated, and the flame Of consentaneous love inspires all life: The fertile bosom of the earth gives suck To myriads, who still grow beneath her care, _110 Rewarding her with their pure perfectness: The balmy breathings of the wind inhale Her virtues, and diffuse them all abroad: Health floats amid the gentle atmosphere, Glows in the fruits, and mantles on the stream: _115 No storms deform the beaming brow of Heaven, Nor scatter in the freshness of its pride The foliage of the ever-verdant trees; But fruits are ever ripe, flowers ever fair, And Autumn proudly bears her matron grace, _120 Kindling a flush on the fair cheek of Spring, Whose virgin bloom beneath the ruddy fruit Reflects its tint, and blushes into love.

‘The lion now forgets to thirst for blood: There might you see him sporting in the sun _125 Beside the dreadless kid; his claws are sheathed, His teeth are harmless, custom’s force has made His nature as the nature of a lamb. Like passion’s fruit, the nightshade’s tempting bane Poisons no more the pleasure it bestows: _130 All bitterness is past; the cup of joy Unmingled mantles to the goblet’s brim, And courts the thirsty lips it fled before.

‘But chief, ambiguous Man, he that can know More misery, and dream more joy than all; _135 Whose keen sensations thrill within his breast To mingle with a loftier instinct there, Lending their power to pleasure and to pain, Yet raising, sharpening, and refining each; Who stands amid the ever-varying world, _140 The burthen or the glory of the earth; He chief perceives the change, his being notes The gradual renovation, and defines Each movement of its progress on his mind.

‘Man, where the gloom of the long polar night _145 Lowers o’er the snow-clad rocks and frozen soil, Where scarce the hardiest herb that braves the frost Basks in the moonlight’s ineffectual glow, Shrank with the plants, and darkened with the night; His chilled and narrow energies, his heart, _150 Insensible to courage, truth, or love, His stunted stature and imbecile frame, Marked him for some abortion of the earth, Fit compeer of the bears that roamed around, Whose habits and enjoyments were his own: _155 His life a feverish dream of stagnant woe, Whose meagre wants, but scantily fulfilled, Apprised him ever of the joyless length Which his short being’s wretchedness had reached; His death a pang which famine, cold and toil _160 Long on the mind, whilst yet the vital spark Clung to the body stubbornly, had brought: All was inflicted here that Earth’s revenge Could wreak on the infringers of her law; One curse alone was spared—the name of God. _165

‘Nor where the tropics bound the realms of day With a broad belt of mingling cloud and flame, Where blue mists through the unmoving atmosphere Scattered the seeds of pestilence, and fed Unnatural vegetation, where the land _170 Teemed with all earthquake, tempest and disease, Was Man a nobler being; slavery Had crushed him to his country’s bloodstained dust; Or he was bartered for the fame of power, Which all internal impulses destroying, _175 Makes human will an article of trade; Or he was changed with Christians for their gold, And dragged to distant isles, where to the sound Of the flesh-mangling scourge, he does the work Of all-polluting luxury and wealth, _180 Which doubly visits on the tyrants’ heads The long-protracted fulness of their woe; Or he was led to legal butchery, To turn to worms beneath that

burning sun, Where kings first leagued against the rights of men, _185 And priests first traded with the name of God.

‘Even where the milder zone afforded Man A seeming shelter, yet contagion there, Blighting his being with unnumbered ills, Spread like a quenchless fire; nor truth till late _190 Availed to arrest its progress, or create That peace which first in bloodless victory waved Her snowy standard o’er this favoured clime: There man was long the train-bearer of slaves, The mimic of surrounding misery, _195 The jackal of ambition’s lion-rage, The bloodhound of religion’s hungry zeal. ‘Here now the human being stands adorning This loveliest earth with taintless body and mind; Blessed from his birth with all bland impulses, _200 Which gently in his noble bosom wake All kindly passions and all pure desires. Him, still from hope to hope the bliss pursuing Which from the exhaustless lore of human weal Dawns on the virtuous mind, the thoughts that rise _205 In time-destroying infiniteness, gift With self-enshrined eternity, that mocks The unprevailing hoariness of age, And man, once fleeting o’er the transient scene Swift as an unremembered vision, stands _210 Immortal upon earth: no longer now He slays the lamb that looks him in the face, And horribly devours his mangled flesh, Which, still avenging Nature’s broken law, Kindled all putrid humours in his frame, _215 All evil passions, and all vain belief, Hatred, despair, and loathing in his mind, The germs of misery, death, disease, and crime. No longer now the winged habitants, That in the woods their sweet lives sing away,— _220 Flee from the form of man; but gather round, And prune their sunny feathers on the hands Which little children stretch in friendly sport Towards these dreadless partners of their play. All things are void of terror: Man has lost _225 His terrible prerogative, and stands An equal amidst equals: happiness And science dawn though late upon the earth; Peace cheers the mind, health renovates the frame; Disease and pleasure cease to mingle here, _230 Reason and passion cease to combat there; Whilst each unfettered o’er the earth extend Their all-subduing energies, and wield The sceptre of a vast dominion there; Whilst every shape and

mode of matter lends _235 Its force to the omnipotence of mind, Which from its dark mine drags the gem of truth To decorate its Paradise of peace.’

NOTES: _204 exhaustless store edition 1813. _205 Draws edition 1813. See Editor’s Note.

9.

‘O happy Earth! reality of Heaven! To which those restless souls that ceaselessly Throng through the human universe, aspire; Thou consummation of all mortal hope! Thou glorious prize of blindly-working will! _5 Whose rays, diffused throughout all space and time, Verge to one point and blend for ever there: Of purest spirits thou pure dwelling-place! Where care and sorrow, impotence and crime, Languor, disease, and ignorance dare not come: _10 O happy Earth, reality of Heaven!

‘Genius has seen thee in her passionate dreams, And dim forebodings of thy loveliness Haunting the human heart, have there entwined Those rooted hopes of some sweet place of bliss _15 Where friends and lovers meet to part no more. Thou art the end of all desire and will, The product of all action; and the souls That by the paths of an aspiring change Have reached thy haven of perpetual peace, _20 There rest from the eternity of toil That framed the fabric of thy perfectness.

‘Even Time, the conqueror, fled thee in his fear; That hoary giant, who, in lonely pride, So long had ruled the world, that nations fell _25 Beneath his silent footstep. Pyramids, That for millenniums had withstood the tide Of human things, his storm-breath drove in sand Across that desert where their stones survived The name of him whose pride had heaped them there. _30 Yon monarch, in his solitary pomp, Was but the mushroom of a summer day, That his light-winged footstep pressed to dust: Time was the king of earth: all things gave way Before him, but the fixed and virtuous will, _35 The sacred sympathies of soul and sense, That mocked his fury and prepared his fall.

‘Yet slow and gradual dawned the morn of love; Long lay the clouds of darkness

o’er the scene, Till from its native Heaven they rolled away: _40 First, Crime triumphant o’er all hope careered Unblushing, undisguising, bold and strong; Whilst Falsehood, tricked in Virtue’s attributes, Long sanctified all deeds of vice and woe, Till done by her own venomous sting to death, _45 She left the moral world without a law, No longer fettering Passion’s fearless wing,— Nor searing Reason with the brand of God. Then steadily the happy ferment worked; Reason was free; and wild though Passion went _50 Through tangled glens and wood-embosomed meads, Gathering a garland of the strangest flowers, Yet like the bee returning to her queen, She bound the sweetest on her sister’s brow, Who meek and sober kissed the sportive child, _55 No longer trembling at the broken rod.

‘Mild was the slow necessity of death: The tranquil spirit failed beneath its grasp, Without a groan, almost without a fear, Calm as a voyager to some distant land, _60 And full of wonder, full of hope as he. The deadly germs of languor and disease Died in the human frame, and Purity Blessed with all gifts her earthly worshippers. How vigorous then the athletic form of age! _65 How clear its open and unwrinkled brow! Where neither avarice, cunning, pride, nor care, Had stamped the seal of gray deformity On all the mingling lineaments of time. How lovely the intrepid front of youth! _70 Which meek-eyed courage decked with freshest grace;— Courage of soul, that dreaded not a name, And elevated will, that journeyed on Through life’s phantasmal scene in fearlessness, With virtue, love, and pleasure, hand in hand. _75

‘Then, that sweet bondage which is Freedom’s self, And rivets with sensation’s softest tie The kindred sympathies of human souls, Needed no fetters of tyrannic law: Those delicate and timid impulses _80 In Nature’s primal modesty arose, And with undoubted confidence disclosed The growing longings of its dawning love, Unchecked by dull and selfish chastity, That virtue of the cheaply virtuous, _85 Who pride themselves in senselessness and frost. No longer prostitution’s venomed bane Poisoned the springs of happiness and life; Woman and man, in confidence and love, Equal and free and pure together trod _90 The mountain-paths of virtue, which

no more Were stained with blood from many a pilgrim's feet.

'Then, where, through distant ages, long in pride The palace of the monarch-slave had mocked Famine's faint groan, and Penury's silent tear, _95 A heap of crumbling ruins stood, and threw Year after year their stones upon the field, Wakening a lonely echo; and the leaves Of the old thorn, that on the topmost tower Usurped the royal ensign's grandeur, shook _100 In the stern storm that swayed the topmost tower And whispered strange tales in the Whirlwind's ear. 'Low through the lone cathedral's roofless aisles The melancholy winds a death-dirge sung: It were a sight of awfulness to see _105 The works of faith and slavery, so vast, So sumptuous, yet so perishing withal! Even as the corpse that rests beneath its wall. A thousand mourners deck the pomp of death To-day, the breathing marble glows above _110 To decorate its memory, and tongues Are busy of its life: to-morrow, worms In silence and in darkness seize their prey.

'Within the massy prison's mouldering courts, Fearless and free the ruddy children played, _115 Weaving gay chaplets for their innocent brows With the green ivy and the red wallflower, That mock the dungeon's unavailing gloom; The ponderous chains, and gratings of strong iron, There rusted amid heaps of broken stone _120 That mingled slowly with their native earth: There the broad beam of day, which feebly once Lighted the cheek of lean Captivity With a pale and sickly glare, then freely shone On the pure smiles of infant playfulness: _125 No more the shuddering voice of hoarse Despair Pealed through the echoing vaults, but soothing notes Of ivy-fingered winds and gladsome birds And merriment were resonant around.

'These ruins soon left not a wreck behind: _130 Their elements, wide scattered o'er the globe, To happier shapes were moulded, and became Ministrant to all blissful impulses: Thus human things were perfected, and earth, Even as a child beneath its mother's love, _135 Was strengthened in all excellence, and grew Fairer and nobler with each passing year.

‘Now Time his dusky pennons o’er the scene Closes in steadfast darkness, and the past Fades from our charmed sight. My task is done: _140 Thy lore is learned. Earth’s wonders are thine own, With all the fear and all the hope they bring. My spells are passed: the present now recurs. Ah me! a pathless wilderness remains Yet unsubdued by man’s reclaiming hand. _145

‘Yet, human Spirit, bravely hold thy course, Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue The gradual paths of an aspiring change: For birth and life and death, and that strange state Before the naked soul has found its home, _150 All tend to perfect happiness, and urge The restless wheels of being on their way, Whose flashing spokes, instinct with infinite life, Bicker and burn to gain their destined goal: For birth but wakes the spirit to the sense _155 Of outward shows, whose unexperienced shape New modes of passion to its frame may lend; Life is its state of action, and the store Of all events is aggregated there That variegate the eternal universe; _160 Death is a gate of dreariness and gloom, That leads to azure isles and beaming skies And happy regions of eternal hope. Therefore, O Spirit! fearlessly bear on: Though storms may break the primrose on its stalk, _165 Though frosts may blight the freshness of its bloom, Yet Spring’s awakening breath will woo the earth, To feed with kindliest dews its favourite flower, That blooms in mossy banks and darksome glens, Lighting the greenwood with its sunny smile. _170

‘Fear not then, Spirit, Death’s disrobing hand, So welcome when the tyrant is awake, So welcome when the bigot’s hell-torch burns; ’Tis but the voyage of a darksome hour, The transient gulf-dream of a startling sleep. _175 Death is no foe to Virtue: earth has seen Love’s brightest roses on the scaffold bloom, Mingling with Freedom’s fadeless laurels there, And presaging the truth of visioned bliss. Are there not hopes within thee, which this scene _180 Of linked and gradual being has confirmed? Whose stingings bade thy heart look further still, When, to the moonlight walk by Henry led, Sweetly and sadly thou didst talk of death? And wilt thou rudely tear them from thy breast, _185 Listening supinely to a bigot’s creed, Or

tamely crouching to the tyrant's rod, Whose iron thongs are red with human gore? Never: but bravely bearing on, thy will Is destined an eternal war to wage _190 With tyranny and falsehood, and uproot The germs of misery from the human heart. Thine is the hand whose piety would soothe The thorny pillow of unhappy crime, Whose impotence an easy pardon gains, _195 Watching its wanderings as a friend's disease: Thine is the brow whose mildness would defy Its fiercest rage, and brave its sternest will, When fenced by power and master of the world. Thou art sincere and good; of resolute mind, _200 Free from heart-withering custom's cold control, Of passion lofty, pure and unsubdued. Earth's pride and meanness could not vanquish thee, And therefore art thou worthy of the boon Which thou hast now received: Virtue shall keep _205 Thy footsteps in the path that thou hast trod, And many days of beaming hope shall bless Thy spotless life of sweet and sacred love. Go, happy one, and give that bosom joy Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch _210 Light, life and rapture from thy smile.'

The Fairy waves her wand of charm. Speechless with bliss the Spirit mounts the car, That rolled beside the battlement, Bending her beamy eyes in thankfulness. _215 Again the enchanted steeds were yoked, Again the burning wheels inflame The steep descent of Heaven's untrodden way. Fast and far the chariot flew: The vast and fiery globes that rolled _220 Around the Fairy's palace-gate Lessened by slow degrees and soon appeared Such tiny twinklers as the planet orbs That there attendant on the solar power With borrowed light pursued their narrower way. _225

Earth floated then below: The chariot paused a moment there; The Spirit then descended: The restless coursers pawed the ungenial soil, Snuffed the gross air, and then, their errand done, _230 Unfurled their pinions to the winds of Heaven.

The Body and the Soul united then, A gentle start convulsed Ianthe's frame: Her veiny eyelids quietly unclosed; Moveless awhile the dark blue orbs remained: _235 She looked around in wonder and beheld Henry, who kneeled in silence by her

couch, Watching her sleep with looks of speechless love, And the bright beaming stars That through the casement shone. _240

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NOTES ON QUEEN MAB.

SHELLEY’S NOTES.

1. 242, 243:—

The sun’s unclouded orb Rolled through the black concave.

Beyond our atmosphere the sun would appear a rayless orb of fire in the midst of a black concave. The equal diffusion of its light on earth is owing to the refraction of the rays by the atmosphere, and their reflection from other bodies. Light consists either of vibrations propagated through a subtle medium, or of numerous minute particles repelled in all directions from the luminous body. Its velocity greatly exceeds that of any substance with which we are acquainted: observations on the eclipses of Jupiter’s satellites have demonstrated that light takes up no more than 8 minutes 7 seconds in passing from the sun to the earth, a distance of 95,000,000 miles.—Some idea may be gained of the immense distance of the fixed stars when it is computed that many years would elapse before light could reach this earth from the nearest of them; yet in one year light travels 5,422,400,000,000 miles, which is a distance 5,707,600 times greater than that of the sun from the earth.

1. 252, 253:—

Whilst round the chariot’s way Innumerable systems rolled.

The plurality of worlds,—the indefinite immensity of the universe, is a most awful subject of contemplation. He who rightly feels its mystery and grandeur is in no danger of seduction from the falsehoods of religious systems, or of deifying the principle of the universe. It is impossible to believe that the Spirit that pervades this infinite machine begat a son upon the body of a Jewish woman; or is angered at the

consequences of that necessity, which is a synonym of itself. All that miserable tale of the Devil, and Eve, and an Intercessor, with the childish mummeries of the God of the Jews, is irreconcilable with the knowledge of the stars. The works of His fingers have borne witness against Him.

The nearest of the fixed stars is inconceivably distant from the earth, and they are probably proportionably distant from each other. By a calculation of the velocity of light, Sirius is supposed to be at least 54,224,000,000,000 miles from the earth. (See Nicholson's "Encyclopedia", article Light.) That which appears only like a thin and silvery cloud streaking the heaven is in effect composed of innumerable clusters of suns, each shining with its own light, and illuminating numbers of planets that revolve around them. Millions and millions of suns are ranged around us, all attended by innumerable worlds, yet calm, regular, and harmonious, all keeping the paths of immutable necessity.

4. 178, 179:—

These are the hired bravos who defend The tyrant's throne.

To employ murder as a means of justice is an idea which a man of an enlightened mind will not dwell upon with pleasure. To march forth in rank and file, and all the pomp of streamers and trumpets, for the purpose of shooting at our fellow-men as a mark; to inflict upon them all the variety of wound and anguish; to leave them weltering in their blood; to wander over the field of desolation, and count the number of the dying and the dead,—are employments which in thesis we may maintain to be necessary, but which no good man will contemplate with gratulation and delight. A battle we suppose is won:—thus truth is established, thus the cause of justice is confirmed! It surely requires no common sagacity to discern the connexion between this immense heap of calamities and the assertion of truth or the maintenance of justice.

'Kings, and ministers of state, the real authors of the calamity, sit unmolested in

their cabinet, while those against whom the fury of the storm is directed are, for the most part, persons who have been trepanned into the service, or who are dragged unwillingly from their peaceful homes into the field of battle. A soldier is a man whose business it is to kill those who never offended him, and who are the innocent martyrs of other men's iniquities. Whatever may become of the abstract question of the justifiableness of war, it seems impossible that the soldier should not be a depraved and unnatural being.

To these more serious and momentous considerations it may be proper to add a recollection of the ridiculousness of the military character. Its first constituent is obedience: a soldier is, of all descriptions of men, the most completely a machine; yet his profession inevitably teaches him something of dogmatism, swaggering, and sell-consequence: he is like the puppet of a showman, who, at the very time he is made to strut and swell and display the most farcical airs, we perfectly know cannot assume the most insignificant gesture, advance either to the right or the left, but as he is moved by his exhibitor.'—Godwin's "Enquirer", Essay 5.

I will here subjoin a little poem, so strongly expressive of my abhorrence of despotism and falsehood, that I fear lest it never again may be depictured so vividly. This opportunity is perhaps the only one that ever will occur of rescuing it from oblivion.

FALSEHOOD AND VICE. A DIALOGUE.

Whilst monarchs laughed upon their thrones To hear a famished nation's groans, And hugged the wealth wrung from the woe That makes its eyes and veins o'erflow,— Those thrones, high built upon the heaps Of bones where frenzied Famine sleeps, Where Slavery wields her scourge of iron, Red with mankind's unheeded gore, And War's mad fiends the scene environ, Mingling with shrieks a drunken roar, There Vice and Falsehood took their stand, High raised above the unhappy land.

FALSEHOOD: Brother! arise from the dainty fare, Which thousands have toiled and bled to bestow; A finer feast for thy hungry ear Is the news that I bring of human woe.

VICE: And, secret one, what hast thou done, To compare, in thy tumid pride, with me? I, whose career, through the blasted year, Has been tracked by despair and agony.

FALSEHOOD: What have I done!—I have torn the robe From baby Truth's unsheltered form, And round the desolated globe Borne safely the bewildering charm: My tyrant-slaves to a dungeon-floor Have bound the fearless innocent, And streams of fertilizing gore Flow from her bosom's hideous rent, Which this unfailing dagger gave… I dread that blood!—no more—this day Is ours, though her eternal ray Must shine upon our grave. Yet know, proud Vice, had I not given To thee the robe I stole from Heaven, Thy shape of ugliness and fear Had never gained admission here.

VICE: And know, that had I disdained to toil, But sate in my loathsome cave the while, And ne'er to these hateful sons of Heaven, GOLD, MONARCHY, and MURDER, given; Hadst thou with all thine art essayed One of thy games then to have played, With all thine overweening boast, Falsehood! I tell thee thou hadst lost!— Yet wherefore this dispute?—we tend, Fraternal, to one common end; In this cold grave beneath my feet, Will our hopes, our fears, and our labours, meet.

FALSEHOOD: I brought my daughter, RELIGION, on earth: She smothered Reason's babes in their birth; But dreaded their mother's eye severe,— So the crocodile slunk off slily in fear, And loosed her bloodhounds from the den…. They started from dreams of slaughtered men, And, by the light of her poison eye, Did her work o'er the wide earth frightfully: The dreadful stench of her torches' flare, Fed with human fat, polluted the air: The curses, the shrieks, the ceaseless cries Of the many-mingling miseries, As on she trod, ascended high And trumpeted my

victory!— Brother, tell what thou hast done.

VICE: I have extinguished the noonday sun, In the carnage-smoke of battles won: Famine, Murder, Hell and Power Were glutted in that glorious hour Which searchless fate had stamped for me With the seal of her security… For the bloated wretch on yonder throne Commanded the bloody fray to rise. Like me he joyed at the stifled moan Wrung from a nation's miseries; While the snakes, whose slime even him DEFILED, In ecstasies of malice smiled: They thought 'twas theirs,—but mine the deed! Theirs is the toil, but mine the meed— Ten thousand victims madly bleed. They dream that tyrants goad them there With poisonous war to taint the air: These tyrants, on their beds of thorn, Swell with the thoughts of murderous fame, And with their gains to lift my name Restless they plan from night to morn: I—I do all; without my aid Thy daughter, that relentless maid, Could never o'er a death-bed urge The fury of her venomed scourge.

FALSEHOOD: Brother, well:—the world is ours; And whether thou or I have won, The pestilence expectant lowers On all beneath yon blasted sun. Our joys, our toils, our honours meet In the milk-white and wormy winding-sheet: A short-lived hope, unceasing care, Some heartless scraps of godly prayer, A moody curse, and a frenzied sleep Ere gapes the grave's unclosing deep, A tyrant's dream, a coward's start, The ice that clings to a priestly heart, A judge's frown, a courtier's smile, Make the great whole for which we toil; And, brother, whether thou or I Have done the work of misery, It little boots: thy toil and pain, Without my aid, were more than vain; And but for thee I ne'er had sate The guardian of Heaven's palace gate.

5. 1, 2:—

Thus do the generations of the earth Go to the grave, and issue from the womb.

'One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north;

it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.'—Ecclesiastes, chapter 1 verses 4-7.

5. 4-6.

Even as the leaves Which the keen frost-wind of the waning year Has scattered on the forest soil.

Oin per phullon genee, toiede kai andron. Phulla ta men t' anemos chamadis cheei, alla de th' ule Telethoosa phuei, earos d' epigignetai ore. Os andron genee, e men phuei, e d' apolegei.

Iliad Z, line 146.

5. 58:— The mob of peasants, nobles, priests, and kings.

Suave mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem; Non quia vexari quemquam est iucunda voluptas, Sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suave est. Suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri Per campos instructa, tua sine parte pericli; Sed nil dulcius est bene quam munita tenere Edita doctrina sapientum templa serena, Despicere undo queas alios, passimque videre Errare atque viam palantis quaerere vitae; Certare ingenio; contendere nobilitate; Noctes atque dies niti praestante labore Ad summas emergere opes, rerumque potiri. O miseras hominum mentes! O pectora caeca!

Lucret. lib. 2.

5. 93, 94.

And statesmen boast Of wealth!

There is no real wealth but the labour of man. Were the mountains of gold and the valleys of silver, the world would not be one grain of corn the richer; no one comfort would be added to the human race. In consequence of our consideration for the precious metals, one man is enabled to heap to himself luxuries at the expense of the

necessaries of his neighbour; a system admirably fitted to produce all the varieties of disease and crime, which never fail to characterize the two extremes of opulence and penury. A speculator takes pride to himself as the promoter of his country's prosperity, who employs a number of hands in the manufacture of articles avowedly destitute of use, or subservient only to the unhallowed cravings of luxury and ostentation. The nobleman, who employs the peasants of his neighbourhood in building his palaces, until 'jam pauca aratro jugera regiae moles relinquunt,' flatters himself that he has gained the title of a patriot by yielding to the impulses of vanity. The show and pomp of courts adduce the same apology for its continuance; and many a fete has been given, many a woman has eclipsed her beauty by her dress, to benefit the labouring poor and to encourage trade. Who does not see that this is a remedy which aggravates whilst it palliates the countless diseases of society? The poor are set to labour,—for what? Not the food for which they famish: not the blankets for want of which their babes are frozen by the cold of their miserable hovels: not those comforts of civilization without which civilized man is far more miserable than the meanest savage; oppressed as he is by all its insidious evils, within the daily and taunting prospect of its innumerable benefits assiduously exhibited before him:—no; for the pride of power, for the miserable isolation of pride, for the false pleasures of the hundredth part of society. No greater evidence is afforded of the wide extended and radical mistakes of civilized man than this fact: those arts which are essential to his very being are held in the greatest contempt; employments are lucrative in an inverse ratio to their usefulness (See Rousseau, "De l'Inegalite parmi les Hommes", note 7.): the jeweller, the toyman, the actor gains fame and wealth by the exercise of his useless and ridiculous art; whilst the cultivator of the earth, he without whom society must cease to subsist, struggles through contempt and penury, and perishes by that famine which but for his unceasing exertions would annihilate the rest of mankind.

I will not insult common sense by insisting on the doctrine of the natural equality of

man. The question is not concerning its desirableness, but its practicability: so far as it is practicable, it is desirable. That state of human society which approaches nearer to an equal partition of its benefits and evils should, caeteris paribus, be preferred: but so long as we conceive that a wanton expenditure of human labour, not for the necessities, not even for the luxuries of the mass of society, but for the egotism and ostentation of a few of its members, is defensible on the ground of public justice, so long we neglect to approximate to the redemption of the human race.

Labour is required for physical, and leisure for moral improvement: from the former of these advantages the rich, and from the latter the poor, by the inevitable conditions of their respective situations, are precluded. A state which should combine the advantages of both would be subjected to the evils of neither. He that is deficient in firm health, or vigorous intellect, is but half a man: hence it follows that to subject the labouring classes to unnecessary labour is wantonly depriving them of any opportunities of intellectual improvement; and that the rich are heaping up for their own mischief the disease, lassitude, and ennui by which their existence is rendered an intolerable burthen.

English reformers exclaim against sinecures,—but the true pension list is the rent-roll of the landed proprietors: wealth is a power usurped by the few, to compel the many to labour for their benefit. The laws which support this system derive their force from the ignorance and credulity of its victims: they are the result of a conspiracy of the few against the many, who are themselves obliged to purchase this pre-eminence by the loss of all real comfort.

‘The commodities that substantially contribute to the subsistence of the human species form a very short catalogue: they demand from us but a slender portion of industry. If these only were produced, and sufficiently produced, the species of man would be continued. If the labour necessarily required to produce them were equitably divided among the poor, and, still more, if it were equitably divided

among all, each man's share of labour would be light, and his portion of leisure would be ample. There was a time when this leisure would have been of small comparative value: it is to be hoped that the time will come when it will be applied to the most important purposes. Those hours which are not required for the production of the necessaries of life may be devoted to the cultivation of the understanding, the enlarging our stock of knowledge, the refining our taste, and thus opening to us new and more exquisite sources of enjoyment.

…

'It was perhaps necessary that a period of monopoly and oppression should subsist, before a period of cultivated equality could subsist. Savages perhaps would never have been excited to the discovery of truth and the invention of art but by the narrow motives which such a period affords. But surely, after the savage state has ceased, and men have set out in the glorious career of discovery and invention, monopoly and oppression cannot be necessary to prevent them from returning to a state of barbarism.'—Godwin's "Enquirer", Essay 2. See also "Pol. Jus.", book 8, chapter 2.

It is a calculation of this admirable author, that all the conveniences of civilized life might be produced, if society would divide the labour equally among its members, by each individual being employed in labour two hours during the day.

5. 112, 113:—

or religion Drives his wife raving mad.

I am acquainted with a lady of considerable accomplishments, and the mother of a numerous family, whom the Christian religion has goaded to incurable insanity. A parallel case is, I believe, within the experience of every physician.

Nam iam saepe homines patriam, carosquo parentes Prodiderunt, vitare Acherusia templa petentes.—Lucretius.

5. 189:—

Even love is sold.

Not even the intercourse of the sexes is exempt from the despotism of positive institution. Law pretends even to govern the indisciplinable wanderings of passion, to put fetters on the clearest deductions of reason, and, by appeals to the will, to subdue the involuntary affections of our nature. Love is inevitably consequent upon the perception of loveliness. Love withers under constraint: its very essence is liberty: it is compatible neither with obedience, jealousy, nor fear: it is there most pure, perfect, and unlimited, where its votaries live in confidence, equality, and unreserve.

How long then ought the sexual connection to last? what law ought to specify the extent of the grievances which should limit its duration? A husband and wife ought to continue so long united as they love each other: any law which should bind them to cohabitation for one moment after the decay of their affection would be a most intolerable tyranny, and the most unworthy of toleration. How odious an usurpation of the right of private judgement should that law be considered which should make the ties of friendship indissoluble, in spite of the caprices, the inconstancy, the fallibility, and capacity for improvement of the human mind. And by so much would the fetters of love be heavier and more unendurable than those of friendship, as love is more vehement and capricious, more dependent on those delicate peculiarities of imagination, and less capable of reduction to the ostensible merits of the object.

The state of society in which we exist is a mixture of feudal savageness and imperfect civilization. The narrow and unenlightened morality of the Christian religion is an aggravation of these evils. It is not even until lately that mankind have admitted that happiness is the sole end of the science of ethics, as of all other sciences; and that the fanatical idea of mortifying the flesh for the love of God has been discarded. I have heard, indeed, an ignorant collegian adduce, in favour of Christianity, its hostility to every worldly feeling! (The first Christian emperor made

a law by which seduction was punished with death; if the female pleaded her own consent, she also was punished with death; if the parents endeavoured to screen the criminals, they were banished and their estates were confiscated; the slaves who might be accessory were burned alive, or forced to swallow melted lead. The very offspring of an illegal love were involved in the consequences of the sentence.—Gibbon's "Decline and Fall", etc., volume 2, page 210. See also, for the hatred of the primitive Christians to love and even marriage, page 269.)

But if happiness be the object of morality, of all human unions and disunions; if the worthiness of every action is to be estimated by the quantity of pleasurable sensation it is calculated to produce, then the connection of the sexes is so long sacred as it contributes to the comfort of the parties, and is naturally dissolved when its evils are greater than its benefits. There is nothing immoral in this separation. Constancy has nothing virtuous in itself, independently of the pleasure it confers, and partakes of the temporizing spirit of vice in proportion as it endures tamely moral defects of magnitude in the object of its indiscreet choice. Love is free: to promise for ever to love the same woman is not less absurd than to promise to believe the same creed: such a vow, in both cases, excludes us from all inquiry. The language of the votarist is this: The woman I now love may be infinitely inferior to many others; the creed I now profess may be a mass of errors and absurdities; but I exclude myself from all future information as to the amiability of the one and the truth of the other, resolving blindly, and in spite of conviction, to adhere to them. Is this the language of delicacy and reason? Is the love of such a frigid heart of more worth than its belief?

The present system of constraint does no more, in the majority of instances, than make hypocrites or open enemies. Persons of delicacy and virtue, unhappily united to one whom they find it impossible to love, spend the loveliest season of their life in unproductive efforts to appear otherwise than they are, for the sake of the feelings of their partner or the welfare of their mutual offspring: those of less generosity and refinement openly avow their disappointment, and linger out the remnant of that

union, which only death can dissolve, in a state of incurable bickering and hostility. The early education of their children takes its colour from the squabbles of the parents; they are nursed in a systematic school of ill-humour, violence, and falsehood. Had they been suffered to part at the moment when indifference rendered their union irksome, they would have been spared many years of misery: they would have connected themselves more suitably, and would have found that happiness in the society of more congenial partners which is for ever denied them by the despotism of marriage. They would have been separately useful and happy members of society, who, whilst united, were miserable and rendered misanthropical by misery. The conviction that wedlock is indissoluble holds out the strongest of all temptations to the perverse: they indulge without restraint in acrimony, and all the little tyrannies of domestic life, when they know that their victim is without appeal. If this connection were put on a rational basis, each would be assured that habitual ill-temper would terminate in separation, and would check this vicious and dangerous propensity.

Prostitution is the legitimate offspring of marriage and its accompanying errors. Women, for no other crime than having followed the dictates of a natural appetite, are driven with fury from the comforts and sympathies of society. It is less venial than murder; and the punishment which is inflicted on her who destroys her child to escape reproach is lighter than the life of agony and disease to which the prostitute is irrecoverably doomed. Has a woman obeyed the impulse of unerring nature;—society declares war against her, pitiless and eternal war: she must be the tame slave, she must make no reprisals; theirs is the right of persecution, hers the duty of endurance. She lives a life of infamy: the loud and bitter laugh of scorn scares her from all return. She dies of long and lingering disease: yet SHE is in fault, SHE is the criminal, SHE the froward and untamable child,—and society, forsooth, the pure and virtuous matron, who casts her as an abortion from her undefiled bosom! Society avenges herself on the criminals of her own creation; she is

employed in anathematizing the vice to-day, which yesterday she was the most zealous to teach. Thus is formed one-tenth of the population of London: meanwhile the evil is twofold. Young men, excluded by the fanatical idea of chastity from the society of modest and accomplished women, associate with these vicious and miserable beings, destroying thereby all those exquisite and delicate sensibilities whose existence cold-hearted worldlings have denied; annihilating all genuine passion, and debasing that to a selfish feeling which is the excess of generosity and devotedness. Their body and mind alike crumble into a hideous wreck of humanity; idiocy and disease become perpetuated in their miserable offspring, and distant generations suffer for the bigoted morality of their forefathers. Chastity is a monkish and evangelical superstition, a greater foe to natural temperance even than unintellectual sensuality; it strikes at the root of all domestic happiness, and consigns more than half of the human race to misery, that some few may monopolize according to law. A system could not well have been devised more studiously hostile to human happiness than marriage.

I conceive that from the abolition of marriage, the fit and natural arrangement of sexual connection would result. I by no means assert that the intercourse would be promiscuous: on the contrary, it appears, from the relation of parent to child, that this union is generally of long duration, and marked above all others with generosity and self-devotion. But this is a subject which it is perhaps premature to discuss. That which will result from the abolition of marriage will be natural and right; because choice and change will be exempted from restraint.

In fact, religion and morality, as they now stand, compose a practical code of misery and servitude: the genius of human happiness must tear every leaf from the accursed book of God ere man can read the inscription on his heart. How would morality, dressed up in stiff stays and finery, start from her own disgusting image should she look in the mirror of nature!—

6. 45, 46:—

To the red and baleful sun That faintly twinkles there.

The north polar star, to which the axis of the earth, in its present state of obliquity, points. It is exceedingly probable, from many considerations, that this obliquity will gradually diminish, until the equator coincides with the ecliptic: the nights and days will then become equal on the earth throughout the year, and probably the seasons also. There is no great extravagance in presuming that the progress of the perpendicularity of the poles may be as rapid as the progress of intellect; or that there should be a perfect identity between the moral and physical improvement of the human species. It is certain that wisdom is not compatible with disease, and that, in the present state of the climates of the earth, health, in the true and comprehensive sense of the word, is out of the reach of civilized man. Astronomy teaches us that the earth is now in its progress, and that the poles are every year becoming more and more perpendicular to the ecliptic. The strong evidence afforded by the history of mythology, and geological researches, that some event of this nature has taken place already, affords a strong presumption that this progress is not merely an oscillation, as has been surmised by some late astronomers. (Laplace, “Systeme du Monde”.)

Bones of animals peculiar to the torrid zone have been found in the north of Siberia, and on the banks of the river Ohio. Plants have been found in the fossil state in the interior of Germany, which demand the present climate of Hindostan for their production. (Cabanis, “Rapports du Physique et du Moral de l’Homme”, volume 2 page 406.) The researches of M. Bailly establish the existence of a people who inhabited a tract in Tartary 49 degrees north latitude, of greater antiquity than either the Indians, the Chinese, or the Chaldeans, from whom these nations derived their sciences and theology. (Bailly, “Lettres sur les Sciences, a Voltaire”.) We find, from the testimony of ancient writers, that Britain, Germany, and France were much colder than at present, and that their great rivers were annually frozen over.

Astronomy teaches us also that since this period the obliquity of the earth's position has been considerably diminished.

6. 171-173:—

No atom of this turbulence fulfils A vague and unnecessitated task, Or acts but as it must and ought to act.

'Deux examples serviront a nous rendre plus sensible le principe qui vient d'etre pose; nous emprunterons l'un du physique at l'autre du moral. Dans un tourbillon de poussiere qu'eleve un vent impetueux, quelque confus qu'il paraisse a nos yeux; dans la plus affreuse tempete excitee par des vents opposes qui soulevent les flots,—il n'y a pas une seule molecule de poussiere ou d'eau qui soit placee au HASARD, qui n'ait sa cause suffisante pour occuper le lieu ou elle se trouve, et qui n'agisse rigoureusement de la maniere dont ella doit agir. Un geometre qui connaitrait exactement les differentes forces qui agissent dans ces deux cas, at las proprietes des molecules qui sent mues, demontrerait que d'apres des causes donnees, chaque molecule agit precisement comme ella doit agir, et ne peut agir autrement qu'elle ne fait.

'Dans les convulsions terribles qui agitent quelquefois les societes politiques, et qui produisent souvent le renversement d'un empire, il n'y a pas une seule action, une seule parole, une seule pensee, une seule volonte, une seule passion dans las agens qui concourent a la revolution comme destructeurs ou comme victimes, qui ne soit necessaire, qui n'agissa comme ella doit agir, qui n'opere infailliblemont les effets qu'eile doit operer, suivant la place qu'occupent ces agens dana ce tourbillon moral. Cela paraitrait evident pour une intelligence qui sera en etat de saisir et d'apprecier toutes las actions at reactions des esprits at des corps de ceux qui contribuent a cette revolution.'—"Systeme de la Nature", volume 1, page 44.

6. 198:—

Necessity! thou mother of the world!

He who asserts the doctrine of Necessity means that, contemplating the events which compose the moral and material universe, he beholds only an immense and uninterrupted chain of causes and effects, no one of which could occupy any other place than it does occupy, or act in any other place than it does act. The idea of necessity is obtained by our experience of the connection between objects, the uniformity of the operations of nature, the constant conjunction of similar events, and the consequent inference of one from the other. Mankind are therefore agreed in the admission of necessity, if they admit that these two circumstances take place in voluntary action. Motive is to voluntary action in the human mind what cause is to effect in the material universe. The word liberty, as applied to mind, is analogous to the word chance as applied to matter: they spring from an ignorance of the certainty of the conjunction of antecedents and consequents.

Every human being is irresistibly impelled to act precisely as he does act: in the eternity which preceded his birth a chain of causes was generated, which, operating under the name of motives, make it impossible that any thought of his mind, or any action of his life, should be otherwise than it is. Were the doctrine of Necessity false, the human mind would no longer be a legitimate object of science; from like causes it would be in vain that we should expect like effects; the strongest motive would no longer be paramount over the conduct; all knowledge would be vague and undeterminate; we could not predict with any certainty that we might not meet as an enemy to-morrow him with whom we have parted in friendship to-night; the most probable inducements and the clearest reasonings would lose the invariable influence they possess. The contrary of this is demonstrably the fact. Similar circumstances produce the same unvariable effects. The precise character and motives of any man on any occasion being given, the moral philosopher could predict his actions with as much certainty as the natural philosopher could predict the effects of the mixture of any particular chemical substances. Why is the aged husbandman more experienced than the young beginner? Because there is a uniform,

undeniable necessity in the operations of the material universe. Why is the old statesman more skilful than the raw politician) Because, relying on the necessary conjunction of motive and action, he proceeds to produce moral effects, by the application of those moral causes which experience has shown to be effectual. Some actions may be found to which we can attach no motives, but these are the effects of causes with which we are unacquainted. Hence the relation which motive bears to voluntary action is that of cause to effect; nor, placed in this point of view, is it, or ever has it been, the subject of popular or philosophical dispute. None but the few fanatics who are engaged in the herculean task of reconciling the justice of their God with the misery of man, will longer outrage common sense by the supposition of an event without a cause, a voluntary action without a motive. History, politics, morals, criticism, all grounds of reasonings, all principles of science, alike assume the truth of the doctrine of Necessity. No farmer carrying his corn to market doubts the sale of it at the market price. The master of a manufactory no more doubts that he can purchase the human labour necessary for his purposes than that his machinery will act as they have been accustomed to act.

But, whilst none have scrupled to admit necessity as influencing matter, many have disputed its dominion over mind. Independently of its militating with the received ideas of the justice of God, it is by no means obvious to a superficial inquiry. When the mind observes its own operations, it feels no connection of motive and action: but as we know ‘nothing more of causation than the constant conjunction of objects and the consequent inference of one from the other, as we find that these two circumstances are universally allowed to have place in voluntary action, we may be easily led to own that they are subjected to the necessity common to all causes.’ The actions of the will have a regular conjunction with circumstances and characters; motive is to voluntary action what cause is to effect. But the only idea we can form of causation is a constant conjunction of similar objects, and the consequent inference of one from the other: wherever this is the case necessity is clearly

established.

The idea of liberty, applied metaphorically to the will, has sprung from a misconception of the meaning of the word power. What is power?—id quod potest, that which can produce any given effect. To deny power is to say that nothing can or has the power to be or act. In the only true sense of the word power, it applies with equal force to the lodestone as to the human will. Do you think these motives, which I shall present, are powerful enough to rouse him? is a question just as common as, Do you think this lever has the power of raising this weight? The advocates of free-will assert that the will has the power of refusing to be determined by the strongest motive; but the strongest motive is that which, overcoming all others, ultimately prevails; this assertion therefore amounts to a denial of the will being ultimately determined by that motive which does determine it, which is absurd. But it is equally certain that a man cannot resist the strongest motive as that he cannot overcome a physical impossibility.

The doctrine of Necessity tends to introduce a great change into the established notions of morality, and utterly to destroy religion. Reward and punishment must be considered, by the Necessarian, merely as motives which he would employ in order to procure the adoption or abandonment of any given line of conduct. Desert, in the present sense of the word, would no longer have any meaning; and he who should inflict pain upon another for no better reason than that he deserved it, would only gratify his revenge under pretence of satisfying justice? It is not enough, says the advocate of free-will, that a criminal should be prevented from a repetition of his crime: he should feel pain, and his torments, when justly inflicted, ought precisely to be proportioned to his fault. But utility is morality; that which is incapable of producing happiness is useless; and though the crime of Damiens must be condemned, yet the frightful torments which revenge, under the name of justice, inflicted on this unhappy man cannot be supposed to have augmented, even at the long run, the stock of pleasurable sensation in the world. At the same time, the

doctrine of Necessity does not in the least diminish our disapprobation of vice. The conviction which all feel that a viper is a poisonous animal, and that a tiger is constrained, by the inevitable condition of his existence, to devour men, does not induce us to avoid them less sedulously, or, even more, to hesitate in destroying them: but he would surely be of a hard heart who, meeting with a serpent on a desert island, or in a situation where it was incapable of injury, should wantonly deprive it of existence. A Necessarian is inconsequent to his own principles if he indulges in hatred or contempt; the compassion which he feels for the criminal is unmixed with a desire of injuring him: he looks with an elevated and dreadless composure upon the links of the universal chain as they pass before his eyes; whilst cowardice, curiosity, and inconsistency only assail him in proportion to the feebleness and indistinctness with which he has perceived and rejected the delusions of free-will.

Religion is the perception of the relation in which we stand to the principle of the universe. But if the principle of the universe be not an organic being, the model and prototype of man, the relation between it and human beings is absolutely none. Without some insight into its will respecting our actions religion is nugatory and vain. But will is only a mode of animal mind; moral qualities also are such as only a human being can possess; to attribute them to the principle of the universe is to annex to it properties incompatible with any possible definition of its nature. It is probable that the word God was originally only an expression denoting the unknown cause of the known events which men perceived in the universe. By the vulgar mistake of a metaphor for a real being, of a word for a thing, it became a man, endowed with human qualities and governing the universe as an earthly monarch governs his kingdom. Their addresses to this imaginary being, indeed, are much in the same style as those of subjects to a king. They acknowledge his benevolence, deprecate his anger, and supplicate his favour.

But the doctrine of Necessity teaches us that in no case could any event have happened otherwise than it did happen, and that, if God is the author of good, He is

also the author of evil; that, if He is entitled to our gratitude for the one, He is entitled to our hatred for the other; that, admitting the existence of this hypothetic being, He is also subjected to the dominion of an immutable necessity. It is plain that the same arguments which prove that God is the author of food, light, and life, prove Him also to be the author of poison, darkness, and death. The wide-wasting earthquake, the storm, the battle, and the tyranny, are attributable to this hypothetic being in the same degree as the fairest forms of nature, sunshine, liberty, and peace.

But we are taught, by the doctrine of Necessity, that there is neither good nor evil in the universe, otherwise than as the events to which we apply these epithets have relation to our own peculiar mode of being. Still less than with the hypothesis of a God will the doctrine of Necessity accord with the belief of a future state of punishment. God made man such as he is, and than damned him for being so: for to say that God was the author of all good, and man the author of all evil, is to say that one man made a straight line and a crooked one, and another man made the incongruity.

A Mahometan story, much to the present purpose, is recorded, wherein Adam and Moses are introduced disputing before God in the following manner. Thou, says Moses, art Adam, whom God created, and animated with the breath of life, and caused to be worshipped by the angels, and placed in Paradise, from whence mankind have been expelled for thy fault. Whereto Adam answered, Thou art Moses, whom God chose for His apostle, and entrusted with His word, by giving thee the tables of the law, and whom He vouchsafed to admit to discourse with Himself. How many years dost thou find the law was written before I was created? Says Moses, Forty. And dost thou not find, replied Adam, these words therein, And Adam rebelled against his Lord and transgressed? Which Moses confessing, Dost thou therefore blame me, continued he, for doing that which God wrote of me that I should do, forty years before I was created, nay, for what was decreed concerning me fifty thousand years before the creation of heaven and earth?—Sale’s “Prelim.

Disc. to the Koran", page 164.

7. 13:—

There is no God.

This negation must be understood solely to affect a creative Deity. The hypothesis of a pervading Spirit co-eternal with the universe remains unshaken.

A close examination of the validity of the proofs adduced to support any proposition is the only secure way of attaining truth, on the advantages of which it is unnecessary to descant: our knowledge of the existence of a Deity is a subject of such importance that it cannot be too minutely investigated; in consequence of this conviction we proceed briefly and impartially to examine the proofs which have been adduced. It is necessary first to consider the nature of belief.

When a proposition is offered to the mind, it perceives the agreement or disagreement of the ideas of which it is composed. A perception of their agreement is termed BELIEF. Many obstacles frequently prevent this perception from being immediate; these the mind attempts to remove in order that the perception may be distinct. The mind is active in the investigation in order to perfect the state of perception of the relation which the component ideas of the proposition bear to each, which is passive: the investigation being confused with the perception has induced many falsely to imagine that the mind is active in belief,—that belief is an act of volition,—in consequence of which it may be regulated by the mind. Pursuing, continuing this mistake, they have attached a degree of criminality to disbelief; of which, in its nature, it is incapable: it is equally incapable of merit.

Belief, then, is a passion, the strength of which, like every other passion, is in precise proportion to the degrees of excitement.

The degrees of excitement are three.

The senses are the sources of all knowledge to the mind; consequently their evidence claims the strongest assent.

The decision of the mind, founded upon our own experience, derived from these sources, claims the next degree.

The experience of others, which addresses itself to the former one, occupies the lowest degree.

(A graduated scale, on which should be marked the capabilities of propositions to approach to the test of the senses, would be a just barometer of the belief which ought to be attached to them.)

Consequently no testimony can be admitted which is contrary to reason; reason is founded on the evidence of our senses.

Every proof may be referred to one of these three divisions: it is to be considered what arguments we receive from each of them, which should convince us of the existence of a Deity.

1st, The evidence of the senses. If the Deity should appear to us, if He should convince our senses of His existence, this revelation would necessarily command belief. Those to whom the Deity has thus appeared have the strongest possible conviction of His existence. But the God of Theologians is incapable of local visibility.

2d, Reason. It is urged that man knows that whatever is must either have had a beginning, or have existed from all eternity: he also knows that whatever is not eternal must have had a cause. When this reasoning is applied to the universe, it is necessary to prove that it was created: until that is clearly demonstrated we may reasonably suppose that it has endured from all eternity. We must prove design before we can infer a designer. The only idea which we can form of causation is derivable from the constant conjunction of objects, and the consequent inference of one from the other. In a case where two propositions are diametrically opposite, the mind believes that which is least incomprehensible;—it is easier to suppose that the universe has existed from all eternity than to conceive a being beyond its limits

capable of creating it: if the mind sinks beneath the weight of one, is it an alleviation to increase the intolerability of the burthen?

The other argument, which is founded on a man's knowledge of his own existence, stands thus. A man knows not only that he now is, but that once he was not; consequently there must have been a cause. But our idea of causation is alone derivable from the constant conjunction of objects and the consequent inference of one from the other; and, reasoning experimentally, we can only infer from effects causes exactly adequate to those effects. But there certainly is a generative power which is effected by certain instruments: we cannot prove that it is inherent in these instruments; nor is the contrary hypothesis capable of demonstration: we admit that the generative power is incomprehensible; but to suppose that the same effect is produced by an eternal, omniscient, omnipotent being leaves the cause in the same obscurity, but renders it more incomprehensible.

3d, Testimony. It is required that testimony should not be contrary to reason. The testimony that the Deity convinces the senses of men of His existence can only be admitted by us if our mind considers it less probable that these men should have been deceived than that the Deity should have appeared to them. Our reason can never admit the testimony of men, who not only declare that they were eye-witnesses of miracles, but that the Deity was irrational; for He commanded that He should be believed, He proposed the highest rewards for faith, eternal punishments for disbelief. We can only command voluntary actions; belief is not an act of volition; the mind is even passive, or involuntarily active; from this it is evident that we have no sufficient testimony, or rather that testimony is insufficient to prove the being of a God. It has been before shown that it cannot be deduced from reason. They alone, then, who have been convinced by the evidence of the senses can believe it.

Hence it is evident that, having no proofs from either of the three sources of

conviction, the mind CANNOT believe the existence of a creative God: it is also evident that, as belief is a passion of the mind, no degree of criminality is attachable to disbelief; and that they only are reprehensible who neglect to remove the false medium through which their mind views any subject of discussion. Every reflecting mind must acknowledge that there is no proof of the existence of a Deity.

God is an hypothesis, and, as such, stands in need of proof: the onus probandi rests on the theist. Sir Isaac Newton says: Hypotheses non fingo, quicquid enim ex phaenomenis non deducitur hypothesis vocanda est, et hypothesis vel metaphysicae, vel physicae, vel qualitatum occultarum, seu mechanicae, in philosophia locum non habent. To all proofs of the existence of a creative God apply this valuable rule. We see a variety of bodies possessing a variety of powers: we merely know their effects; we are in a state of ignorance with respect to their essences and causes. These Newton calls the phenomena of things; but the pride of philosophy is unwilling to admit its ignorance of their causes. From the phenomena, which are the objects of our senses, we attempt to infer a cause, which we call God, and gratuitously endow it with all negative and contradictory qualities. From this hypothesis we invent this general name, to conceal our ignorance of causes and essences. The being called God by no means answers with the conditions prescribed by Newton; it bears every mark of a veil woven by philosophical conceit, to hide the ignorance of philosophers even from themselves. They borrow the threads of its texture from the anthropomorphism of the vulgar. Words have been used by sophists for the same purposes, from the occult qualities of the peripatetics to the effluvium of Boyle and the crinities or nebulae of Herschel. God is represented as infinite, eternal, incomprehensible; He is contained under every predicate in non that the logic of ignorance could fabricate. Even His worshippers allow that it is impossible to form any idea of Him: they exclaim with the French poet,

Pour dire ce qu’il est, il faut etre lui-meme.

Lord Bacon says that atheism leaves to man reason, philosophy, natural piety, laws, reputation, and everything that can serve to conduct him to virtue; but superstition destroys all these, and erects itself into a tyranny over the understandings of men: hence atheism never disturbs the government, but renders man more clear-sighted, since he sees nothing beyond the boundaries of the present life.—Bacon's "Moral Essays".

La premiere theologie de l'homme lui fit d'abord craindre at adorer les elements meme, des objets materiels at grossiers; il randit ensuite ses hommages a des agents presidant aux elements, a des genies inferieurs, a des heros, ou a des hommes doues de grandes qualites. A force de reflechir il crut simplifier les choses en soumettant la nature entiere a un seul agent, a un esprit, a una ame universelle, qui mettait cette nature et ses parties en mouvement. En remontant de causes en causes, les mortels ont fini par ne rien voir; at c'est dans cette obscurite qu'ils ont place leur Dieu; c'est dans cat abime tenebreux que leur imagination inquiete travaille toujours a se fabriquer des chimeres, qui les affligeront jusqu'a ce que la connaissance da la nature les detrompe des fantomes qu'ils ont toujours si vainement adores.

Si nous voulons nous rendre compte de nos idees sur la Divinite, nous serons obliges de convanir que, par le mot "Dieu", les hommes n'ont jamais pu designer que la cause la plus cachee, la plus eloignee, la plus inconnue des effets qu'ils voyaient: ils ne font usage de ce mot, que lorsque le jeu des causes naturelles at connues cesse d'etre visible pour eux; des qu'ils perdent le fil de ces causes, on des que leur esprit ne peut plus en suivre la chaine, ils tranchent leur difficulte, at terminent leurs recherches en appellant Dieu la derniere des causes, c'est-a-dire celle qui est au-dela de toutes les causes qu'ils connaissent; ainsi ils ne font qu'assigner une denomination vague a une cause ignoree, a laquelle leur paresse ou les bornes de leurs connaissances les forcent de s'arreter. Toutes les fois qu'on nous dit que Dieu est l'auteur de quelque phenomene, cela signifie qu'on ignore comment un tel phenomene a pu s'operer par le secours des forces ou des causes que nous

connaissons dans la nature. C'est ainsi que le commun des hommes, dont l'ignorance est la partage, attribue a la Divinite non seulement les effets inusites qui las frappent, mais encore les evenemens les plus simples, dont les causes sont les plus faciles a connaitre pour quiconque a pu les mediter. En un mot, l'homme a toujours respecte les causes inconnues des effets surprenans, que son ignorance l'empechait de demeler. Ce fut sur les debris de la nature que les hommes eleverent le colosse imaginaire de la Divinite.

Si l'ignorance de la nature donna la naissance aux dieux, la connaissance de la nature est faite pour les detruire. A mesure que l'homme s'instruit, ses forces at ses ressources augmentent avec ses lumieres; les sciences, les arts conservateurs, l'industrie, lui fournissent des secours; l'experience le rassure ou lui procure des moyens de resister aux efforts de bien des causes qui cessent de l'alarmer des qu'il les a connues. En un mot, ses terreurs se dissipent dans la meme proportion que son esprit s'eclaire. L'homnme instruit cesse d'etre superstitieux.

Ce n'est jamais que sur parole que des peuples entiers adorent le Dieu de leurs peres at de leurs pretres: l'autorite, la confiance, la soumission, et l'habitude leur tiennent lieu de conviction et de preuves; ils se prosternent et prient, parce que leurs peres leur out appris a se prosterner at prier: mais pourquoi ceux-ci se sont-ils mis a genoux? C'est que dans les temps eloignes leurs legislateurs et leurs guides leur en ont fait un devoir. 'Adorez at croyez,' ont-ils dit, 'des dieux que vous ne pouvez comprendre; rapportez-vous-en a notre sagesse profonde; nous en savons plus que vous sur la divinite.' Mais pourquoi m'en rapporterais-je a vous? C'est que Dieu le veut ainsi, c'est que Dieu vous punira si vous osez resister. Mais ce Dieu n'est-il donc pas la chose en question? Cependant las hommes se sont toujours payes de ce cercle vicieux; la paresse de leur esprit leur fit trouver plus court de s'en rapporter au jugament des autres. Toutes las notions religieuses sent fondees uniquement sur l'autorite; toutes les religions du monde defendent l'examen et ne veulent pas que l'on raisonne; c'est l'autorite qui veut qu'on croie en Dieu; ce Dieu n'est lui-meme

fonde que sur l'autorite de quelques hommes qui pretendent le connaitre, et venir de sa part pour l'annoncer a la terre. Un Dieu fait par les hommes a sans doute bosom des hommes pour se faire connaitre aux hommes.

Ne serait-ce donc que pour des pretres, des inspires, des metaphysiciens que serait reservee la conviction de l'existence d'un Dieu, que l'on dit neanmoins si necessaire a tout le genre humain? Mais trouvons-nous de l'harmonie entre les opinions theologiques des differens inspires, ou des penseurs repandus sur la terre? Ceux meme qui font profession d'adorer le meme Dieu, sent-ils d'accord sur son compte? Sont-ils contents des preuves que leurs collegues apportent de son existence? Souscrivent-ils unanimement aux idees qu'ils presentent sur sa nature, sur sa conduite, sur la facon d'entendre ses pretandus oracles? Est-il une centree sur la terre ou la science de Dieu se soit reellement parfectionnee? A-t-elle pris quelqne part la consistance et l'uniformite que nous voyons prendre aux connaissances humaines, aux arts les plus futiles, aux metiers les plus meprises? Ces mots d'esprit, d'immaterialite, de creation, de predestination, de grace; cette foule de distinctions subtiles dont la theologie s'est parteut remplie dans quelques pays, ces inventions si ingenieuses, imaginees par des penseurs qui se sont succedes depuis taut de siecles, n'ont fait, helas! qu'embrouiller les choses, et jamais la science la plus necassaire aux hommes n'a jusqu'ici pu acquerir la moindre fixite. Depuis des milliers d'annees ces reveurs oisifs se sont perpetuellement relayes pour mediter la Divinite, pour deviner ses voies cachees, pour inventer des hypotheses propres a developper cette enigme importante. Leur peu de succes n'a point decourage la vanite theologique; toujours on a parle de Dieu: on s'est egorge pour lui, et cet etre sublime demeure toujours le plus ignore et le plus discute.

Les hommes auraient ete trop heureux, si, se bornant aux objets visibles qui les interessent, ils eussent employe a perfectionner leurs sciences reelles, leurs lois, leur morale, leur education, la moitie des efforts qu'ils ont mis dans leurs recherches sur la Divinite. Ils auraiant ete bien plus sages encore, et plus fortunes, s'ils eussent pu

consentir a laisser leurs guides desoeuvres se quereller entre eux, et sonder des profondeurs capables de les etourdir, sans se meler de leurs disputes insensees. Mais il est de l'essence de l'ignorance d'attacher de l'importance a ce qu'elle ne comprend pas. La vanite humaine fait que l'esprit se roidit contra des difficultes. Plus un objet se derobe a nos yeux, plus nous faisons d'efforts pour le saisir, parce que des-lors il aiguillonne notre orgueil, il excite notre curiosite, il nous parait interessant. En combattant pour son Dieu chacun ne combattit en effet que pour les interets de sa propra vanite, qui de toutes les passions produites par la mal-organisation de la societe est la plus prompte a s'alarmer, et la plus propre a produire de tres grandes folies.

Si ecartant pour un moment les idees facheuses que la theologie nous donne d'un Dieu capriciaux, dont les decrets partiaux et despotiques decident du sort des humains, nous ne voulons fixer nos yeux que sur la bonte pretendue, que tous les hommes, meme en tramblant devant ce Dieu, s'accordent a lui donner; si nous lui supposons le projet qu'on lui prete de n'avoir travaille que pour sa propre gloire, d'exiger les hommages des etres intelligens; de ne chercher dans ses oeuvres que le bien-etre du genre humain: comment concilier ces vues et ces dispositions avec l'ignorance vraiment invincible dans laquelle ce Dieu, si glorieux et si bon, laisse la plupart des hommes sur son compte? Si Dieu veut etre connu, cheri, remercie, que ne se montre-t-il sous des traits favorables a tous ces etres intelligens dont il veut etre aime et adore? Pourquoi ne point se manifester a toute la terre dune facon non equivoque, bien plus capable de nous convaincre que ces revelations particulieres qui semblent accuser la Divinite d'une partialite facheuse pour quelques-unes de ses creatures? La tout-puissant n'auroit-il donc pas des moyens plus convainquans de se montrer aux hommas que ces metamorphoses ridicules, cas incarnations pretendues, qui nous sont attestees par des ecrivains si peu d'accord entre eux dans les recits qu'ils en font? Au lieu de tant de miracles, inventes pour prouver la mission divine de tant de legislateurs reveres par les differens peuples du monde, le souverain des

esprits ne pouvait-il pas convaincre tout d'un coup l'esprit humain des choses qu'il a voulu lui faire connaitre? Au lieu de suspendre un soleil dans la voute du firmament; au lieu de repandre sans ordre les etoiles et les constellations qui remplissent l'espace, n'eut-il pas ete plus conforme aux vues d'un Dieu si jaloux de sa gloire et si bien-intentionne pour l'homme d'ecrire, d'une facon non sujette a dispute, son nom, ses attributs, ses volontes permanentes en caracteres ineffacables, et lisibles egalement pour tous les habitants de la terre? Personne alors n'aurait pu douter de l'existence d'un Dieu, de ses volontes claires, de ses intentions visibles. Sous les yeux de ce Dieu si terrible, personne n'aurait eu l'audace de violer ses ordonnances; nul mortel n'eut ose se mettre dans le cas d'attirer sa colere: enfin nul homme n'eut eu le front d'en imposer en son nom, ou d'interpreter ses volontes suivant ses propres fantaisies.

En effet, quand meme on admettrait l'existence du Dieu theologique et la realite des attributs si discordans qu'on lui donne, l'on n'en peut rien conclure, pour autoriser la conduite ou les cultes qu'on prescrit de lui rendre. La theologie est vraiment "le tonneau des Danaides". A force de qualites contradictoires et d'assartions hasardees, ella a, pour ainsi dire, tellement garrotte son Dieu qu'elle l'a mis dans l'impossibilite d'agir. S'il est infiniment bon, quelle raison aurions-nous de le craindre? S'il est infiniment sage, de quoi nous inquieter sur notre sort? S'il sait tout, pourquoi l'avertir de nos besoins, et le fatiguer de nos prieres? S'il est partout, pourquoi lui elever des temples? S'il est maitre de tout, pourquoi lui faire des sacrifices et des offrandes? S'il est juste, comment croire qu'il punisse des creatures qu'il a rempli de faiblesses? Si la grace fait tout en elles, quelle raison aurait-il de les recompenser? S'il est tout-puissant, comment l'offenser, comment lui resister? S'il est raisonnable, comment se mattrait-il en colere contre des aveugles, a qui il a laisse la liberte de deraisonner? S'il est immuable, de quel droit pretendrions-nous faire changer ses decrets? S'il est inconcevable, pourquoi nous en occuper? S'IL A PARLE, POURQUOI L'UNIVERS N'EST-IL PAS CONVAINCU? Si la connaissance d'un

Dieu est la plus necessaire, pourquoi n'est-elle pas la plus evidente et a plus claire?—"Systeme de la Nature", London, 1781.

The enlightened and benevolent Pliny thus publicly professes himself an atheist:—Quapropter effigiem Dei formamque quaerere imbecillitatis humanae reor. Quisquis est Deus (si modo est alius) et quacunque in parte, totus est sensus, totus est visus, totus auditus, totus animae, totus animi, totus sui…Imperfectae vero in homine naturae praecipua solatia ne deum quidem posse omnia. Namque nec sibi potest mortem consciscere, si velit, quad homini dedit optimum in tantis vitae poenis: nec mortales aeternitata donare, aut revocare defunctos; nec facere ut qui vixit non vixerit, qui honores gessit non gessarit, nullumque habere in praeteritum ius, praeterquam oblivionis, atque (ut facetis quoque argumentis societas haec cum deo copuletur) ut bis dena viginti non sint, et multa similiter efficere non posse.—Per quae declaratur haud dubie naturae potentiam id quoque esse quad Deum vocamus.—Plin. "Nat. Hist." cap. de Deo.

The consistent Newtonian is necessarily an atheist. See Sir W. Drummond's "Academical Questions", chapter 3.—Sir W. seems to consider the atheism to which it leads as a sufficient presumption of the falsehood of the system of gravitation; but surely it is more consistent with the good faith of philosophy to admit a deduction from facts than an hypothesis incapable of proof, although it might militate with the obstinate preconceptions of the mob. Had this author, instead of inveighing against the guilt and absurdity of atheism, demonstrated its falsehood, his conduct would have been more suited to the modesty of the sceptic and the toleration of the philosopher.

Omnia enim per Dei potentiam facta sunt: imo quia naturae potentia nulla est nisi ipsa Dei potentia. Certum est nos eatenus Dei potentiam non intelligere, quatenus causas naturales ignoramus; adeoque stulte ad eandem Dei potentiam recurritur, quando rei alicuius causam naturalem, sive est, ipsam Dei potantiam ignoramus.—

Spinosa, “Tract. Theologico-Pol.” chapter 1, page 14.

7. 67:—

Ahasuerus, rise!

‘Ahasuerus the Jew crept forth from the dark cave of Mount Carmel. Near two thousand years have elapsed since he was first goaded by never-ending restlessness to rove the globe from pole to pole. When our Lord was wearied with the burthen of His ponderous cross, and wanted to rest before the door of Ahasuerus, the unfeeling wretch drove Him away with brutality. The Saviour of mankind staggered, sinking under the heavy load, but uttered no complaint. An angel of death appeared before Ahasuerus, and exclaimed indignantly, “Barbarian! thou hast denied rest to the Son of man: be it denied thee also, until He comes to judge the world.”

‘A black demon, let loose from hell upon Ahasuerus, goads him now from country to country; he is denied the consolation which death affords, and precluded from the rest of the peaceful grave.

‘Ahasuerus crept forth from the dark cave of Mount Carmel—he shook the dust from his beard—and taking up one of the skulls heaped there, hurled it down the eminence: it rebounded from the earth in shivered atoms. “This was my father!” roared Ahasuerus. Seven more skulls rolled down from rock to rock; while the infuriate Jew, following them with ghastly looks, exclaimed—“And these were my wives!” He still continued to hurl down skull after skull, roaring in dreadful accents—“And these, and these, and these were my children! They COULD DIE; but I! reprobate wretch! alas! I cannot die! Dreadful beyond conception is the judgement that hangs over me. Jerusalem fell—I crushed the sucking babe, and precipitated myself into the destructive flames. I cursed the Romans—but, alas! alas! the restless curse held me by the hair,—and I could not die!

‘“Rome the giantess fell—I placed myself before the falling statue—she fell and did not crush me. Nations sprang up and disappeared before me;—but I remained and

did not die. From cloud-encircled cliffs did I precipitate myself into the ocean; but the foaming billows cast me upon the shore, and the burning arrow of existence pierced my cold heart again. I leaped into Etna's flaming abyss, and roared with the giants for ten long months, polluting with my groans the Mount's sulphureous mouth—ah! ten long months. The volcano fermented, and in a fiery stream of lava cast me up. I lay torn by the torture-snakes of hell amid the glowing cinders, and yet continued to exist.—A forest was on fire: I darted on wings of fury and despair into the crackling wood. Fire dropped upon me from the trees, but the flames only singed my limbs; alas! it could not consume them.—I now mixed with the butchers of mankind, and plunged in the tempest of the raging battle. I roared defiance to the infuriate Gaul, defiance to the victorious German; but arrows and spears rebounded in shivers from my body. The Saracen's flaming sword broke upon my skull: balls in vain hissed upon me: the lightnings of battle glared harmless around my loins: in vain did the elephant trample on me, in vain the iron hoof of the wrathful steed! The mine, big with destructive power, burst upon me, and hurled me high in the air—I fell on heaps of smoking limbs, but was only singed. The giant's steel club rebounded from my body; the executioner's hand could not strangle me, the tiger's tooth could not pierce me, nor would the hungry lion in the circus devour me. I cohabited with poisonous snakes, and pinched the red crest of the dragon.—The serpent stung, but could not destroy me. The dragon tormented, but dared not to devour me.—I now provoked the fury of tyrants: I said to Nero, 'Thou art a bloodhound!' I said to Christiern, 'Thou art a bloodhound!, I said to Muley Ismail, 'Thou art a bloodhound!'—The tyrants invented cruel torments, but did not kill me. Ha! not to be able to die—not to be able to die—not to be permitted to rest after the toils of life—to be doomed to be imprisoned for ever in the clay-formed dungeon—to be for ever clogged with this worthless body, its lead of diseases and infirmities—to be condemned to [be]hold for millenniums that yawning monster Sameness, and Time, that hungry hyaena, ever bearing children, and ever devouring

again her offspring!—Ha! not to be permitted to die! Awful Avenger in Heaven, hast Thou in Thine armoury of wrath a punishment more dreadful? then let it thunder upon me, command a hurricane to sweep me down to the foot of Carmel, that I there may lie extended; may pant, and writhe, and die.!"'

This fragment is the translation of part of some German work, whose title I have vainly endeavoured to discover. I picked it up, dirty and torn, some years ago, in Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

7. 135, 136:—

I will beget a Son, and He shall bear The sins of all the world.

A book is put into our hands when children, called the Bible, the purport of whose history is briefly this: That God made the earth in six days, and there planted a delightful garden, in which He placed the first pair of human beings. In the midst of the garden He planted a tree, whose fruit, although within their reach, they were forbidden to touch. That the Devil, in the shape of a snake, persuaded them to eat of this fruit; in consequence of which God condemned both them and their posterity yet unborn to satisfy His justice by their eternal misery. That, four thousand years after these events (the human race in the meanwhile having gone unredeemed to perdition), God engendered with the betrothed wife of a carpenter in Judea (whose virginity was nevertheless uninjured), and begat a son, whose name was Jesus Christ; and who was crucified and died, in order that no more men might be devoted to hell-fire, He bearing the burthen of His Father's displeasure by proxy. The book states, in addition, that the soul of whoever disbelieves this sacrifice will be burned with everlasting fire.

During many ages of misery and darkness this story gained implicit belief; but at length men arose who suspected that it was a fable and imposture, and that Jesus Christ, so far from being a God, was only a man like themselves. But a numerous set of men, who derived and still derive immense emoluments from this opinion, in the

shape of a popular belief, told the vulgar that if they did not believe in the Bible they would be damned to all eternity; and burned, imprisoned, and poisoned all the unbiassed and unconnected inquirers who occasionally arose. They still oppress them, so far as the people, now become more enlightened, will allow.

The belief in all that the Bible contains is called Christianity. A Roman governor of Judea, at the instance of a priest-led mob, crucified a man called Jesus eighteen centuries ago. He was a man of pure life, who desired to rescue his countrymen from the tyranny of their barbarous and degrading superstitions. The common fate of all who desire to benefit mankind awaited him. The rabble, at the instigation of the priests, demanded his death, although his very judge made public acknowledgement of his innocence. Jesus was sacrificed to the honour of that God with whom he was afterwards confounded. It is of importance, therefore, to distinguish between the pretended character of this being as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, and his real character as a man, who, for a vain attempt to reform the world, paid the forfeit of his life to that overbearing tyranny which has since so long desolated the universe in his name. Whilst the one is a hypocritical Daemon, who announces Himself as the God of compassion and peace, even whilst He stretches forth His blood-red hand with the sword of discord to waste the earth, having confessedly devised this scheme of desolation from eternity; the other stands in the foremost list of those true heroes who have died in the glorious martyrdom of liberty, and have braved torture, contempt, and poverty in the cause of suffering humanity. (Since writing this note I have some reason to suspect that Jesus was an ambitious man, who aspired to the throne of Judea.

The vulgar, ever in extremes, became persuaded that the crucifixion of Jesus was a supernatural event. Testimonies of miracles, so frequent in unenlightened ages, were not wanting to prove that he was something divine. This belief, rolling through the lapse of ages, met with the reveries of Plato and the reasonings of Aristotle, and acquired force and extent, until the divinity of Jesus became a dogma, which to

dispute was death, which to doubt was infamy.

CHRISTIANITY is now the established religion: he who attempts to impugn it must be contented to behold murderers and traitors take precedence of him in public opinion; though, if his genius be equal to his courage, and assisted by a peculiar coalition of circumstances, future ages may exalt him to a divinity, and persecute others in his name, as he was persecuted in the name of his predecessor in the homage of the world.

The same means that have supported every other popular belief have supported Christianity. War, imprisonment, assassination, and falsehood; deeds of unexampled and incomparable atrocity have made it what it is. The blood shed by the votaries of the God of mercy and peace, since the establishment of His religion, would probably suffice to drown all other sectaries now on the habitable globe. We derive from our ancestors a faith thus fostered and supported: we quarrel, persecute, and hate for its maintenance. Even under a government which, whilst it infringes the very right of thought and speech, boasts of permitting the liberty of the press, a man is pilloried and imprisoned because he is a deist, and no one raises his voice in the indignation of outraged humanity. But it is ever a proof that the falsehood of a proposition is felt by those who use coercion, not reasoning, to procure its admission; and a dispassionate observer would feel himself more powerfully interested in favour of a man who, depending on the truth of his opinions, simply stated his reasons for entertaining them, than in that of his aggressor who, daringly avowing his unwillingness or incapacity to answer them by argument, proceeded to repress the energies and break the spirit of their promulgator by that torture and imprisonment whose infliction he could command.

Analogy seems to favour the opinion that as, like other systems, Christianity has arisen and augmented, so like them it will decay and perish; that as violence, darkness, and deceit, not reasoning and persuasion, have procured its admission

among mankind, so, when enthusiasm has subsided, and time, that infallible controverter of false opinions, has involved its pretended evidences in the darkness of antiquity, it will become obsolete; that Milton's poem alone will give permanency to the remembrance of its absurdities; and that men will laugh as heartily at grace, faith, redemption, and original sin, as they now do at the metamorphoses of Jupiter, the miracles of Romish saints, the efficacy of witchcraft, and the appearance of departed spirits.

Had the Christian religion commenced and continued by the mere force of reasoning and persuasion, the preceding analogy would be inadmissible. We should never speculate on the future obsoleteness of a system perfectly conformable to nature and reason: it would endure so long as they endured; it would be a truth as indisputable as the light of the sun, the criminality of murder, and other facts, whose evidence, depending on our organization and relative situations, must remain acknowledged as satisfactory so long as man is man. It is an incontrovertible fact, the consideration of which ought to repress the hasty conclusions of credulity, or moderate its obstinacy in maintaining them, that, had the Jews not been a fanatical race of men, had even the resolution of Pontius Pilate been equal to his candour, the Christian religion never could have prevailed, it could not even have existed: on so feeble a thread hangs the most cherished opinion of a sixth of the human race! When will the vulgar learn humility? When will the pride of ignorance blush at having believed before it could comprehend?

Either the Christian religion is true, or it is false: if true, it comes from God, and its authenticity can admit of doubt and dispute no further than its omnipotent author is willing to allow. Either the power or the goodness of God is called in question, if He leaves those doctrines most essential to the well-being of man in doubt and dispute; the only ones which, since their promulgation, have been the subject of unceasing cavil, the cause of irreconcilable hatred. IF GOD HAS SPOKEN, WHY IS THE UNIVERSE NOT CONVINCED?

There is this passage in the Christian Scriptures: ‘Those who obey not God, and believe not the Gospel of his Son, shall be punished with everlasting destruction.’ This is the pivot upon which all religions turn:—they all assume that it is in our power to believe or not to believe; whereas the mind can only believe that which it thinks true. A human being can only be supposed accountable for those actions which are influenced by his will. But belief is utterly distinct from and unconnected with volition: it is the apprehension of the agreement or disagreement of the ideas that compose any preposition. Belief is a passion, or involuntary operation of the mind, and, like other passions, its intensity is precisely proportionate to the degrees of excitement. Volition is essential to merit or demerit. But the Christian religion attaches the highest possible degrees of merit and demerit to that which is worthy of neither, and which is totally unconnected with the peculiar faculty of the mind, whose presence is essential to their being.

Christianity was intended to reform the world: had an all-wise Being planned it, nothing is more improbable than that it should have failed: omniscience would infallibly have foreseen the inutility of a scheme which experience demonstrates, to this age, to have been utterly unsuccessful.

Christianity inculcates the necessity of supplicating the Deity. Prayer may be considered under two points of view;—as an endeavour to change the intentions of God, or as a formal testimony of our obedience. But the former case supposes that the caprices of a limited intelligence can occasionally instruct the Creator of the world how to regulate the universe; and the latter, a certain degree of servility analogous to the loyalty demanded by earthly tyrants. Obedience indeed is only the pitiful and cowardly egotism of him who thinks that he can do something better than reason.

Christianity, like all other religions, rests upon miracles, prophecies, and martyrdoms. No religion ever existed which had not its prophets, its attested

miracles, and, above all, crowds of devotees who would bear patiently the most horrible tortures to prove its authenticity. It should appear that in no case can a discriminating mind subscribe to the genuineness of a miracle. A miracle is an infraction of nature's law, by a supernatural cause; by a cause acting beyond that eternal circle within which all things are included. God breaks through the law of nature, that He may convince mankind of the truth of that revelation which, in spite of His precautions, has been, since its introduction, the subject of unceasing schism and cavil.

Miracles resolve themselves into the following question (See Hume's Essay, volume 2 page 121.):—Whether it is more probable the laws of nature, hitherto so immutably harmonious, should have undergone violation, or that a man should have told a lie? Whether it is more probable that we are ignorant of the natural cause of an event, or that we know the supernatural one? That, in old times, when the powers of nature were less known than at present, a certain set of men were themselves deceived, or had some hidden motive for deceiving others; or that God begat a Son, who, in His legislation, measuring merit by belief, evidenced Himself to be totally ignorant of the powers of the human mind—of what is voluntary, and what is the contrary?

We have many instances of men telling lies;—none of an infraction of nature's laws, those laws of whose government alone we have any knowledge or experience. The records of all nations afford innumerable instances of men deceiving others either from vanity or interest, or themselves being deceived by the limitedness of their views and their ignorance of natural causes: but where is the accredited case of God having come upon earth, to give the lie to His own creations? There would be something truly wonderful in the appearance of a ghost; but the assertion of a child that he saw one as he passed through the churchyard is universally admitted to be less miraculous.

But even supposing that a man should raise a dead body to life before our eyes, and on this fact rest his claim to being considered the son of God;—the Humane Society restores drowned persons, and because it makes no mystery of the method it employs, its members are not mistaken for the sons of God. All that we have a right to infer from our ignorance of the cause of any event is that we do not know it: had the Mexicans attended to this simple rule when they heard the cannon of the Spaniards, they would not have considered them as gods: the experiments of modern chemistry would have defied the wisest philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome to have accounted for them on natural principles. An author of strong common sense has observed that ‘a miracle is no miracle at second-hand’; he might have added that a miracle is no miracle in any case; for until we are acquainted with all natural causes, we have no reason to imagine others.

There remains to be considered another proof of Christianity—Prophecy. A book is written before a certain event, in which this event is foretold; how could the prophet have foreknown it without inspiration? how could he have been inspired without God? The greatest stress is laid on the prophecies of Moses and Hosea on the dispersion of the Jews, and that of Isaiah concerning the coming of the Messiah. The prophecy of Moses is a collection of every possible cursing and blessing; and it is so far from being marvellous that the one of dispersion should have been fulfilled, that it would have been more surprising if, out of all these, none should have taken effect. In Deuteronomy, chapter 28, verse 64, where Moses explicitly foretells the dispersion, he states that they shall there serve gods of wood and stone: ‘And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even to the other; AND THERE THOU SHALT SERVE OTHER GODS, WHICH NEITHER THOU NOR THY FATHERS HAVE KNOWN, EVEN GODS OF WOOD AND STONE.’ The Jews are at this day remarkably tenacious of their religion. Moses also declares that they shall be subjected to these curses for disobedience to his ritual: ‘And it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy

God, to observe to do all the commandments and statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.' Is this the real reason? The third, fourth, and fifth chapters of Hosea are a piece of immodest confession. The indelicate type might apply in a hundred senses to a hundred things. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is more explicit, yet it does not exceed in clearness the oracles of Delphos. The historical proof that Moses, Isaiah, and Hosea did write when they are said to have written is far from being clear and circumstantial.

But prophecy requires proof in its character as a miracle; we have no right to suppose that a man foreknew future events from God, until it is demonstrated that he neither could know them by his own exertions, nor that the writings which contain the prediction could possibly have been fabricated after the event pretended to be foretold. It is more probable that writings, pretending to divine inspiration, should have been fabricated after the fulfilment of their pretended prediction than that they should have really been divinely inspired, when we consider that the latter supposition makes God at once the creator of the human mind and ignorant of its primary powers, particularly as we have numberless instances of false religions, and forged prophecies of things long past, and no accredited case of God having conversed with men directly or indirectly. It is also possible that the description of an event might have foregone its occurrence; but this is far from being a legitimate proof of a divine revelation, as many men, not pretending to the character of a prophet, have nevertheless, in this sense, prophesied.

Lord Chesterfield was never yet taken for a prophet, even by a bishop, yet he uttered this remarkable prediction: 'The despotic government of France is screwed up to the highest pitch; a revolution is fast approaching; that revolution, I am convinced, will be radical and sanguinary.' This appeared in the letters of the prophet long before the accomplishment of this wonderful prediction. Now, have these particulars come to pass, or have they not? If they have, how could the Earl have foreknown them without inspiration? If we admit the truth of the Christian religion on testimony such

as this, we must admit, on the same strength of evidence, that God has affixed the highest rewards to belief, and the eternal tortures of the never-dying worm to disbelief, both of which have been demonstrated to be involuntary.

The last proof of the Christian religion depends on the influence of the Holy Ghost. Theologians divide the influence of the Holy Ghost into its ordinary and extraordinary modes of operation. The latter is supposed to be that which inspired the Prophets and Apostles; and the former to be the grace of God, which summarily makes known the truth of His revelation to those whose mind is fitted for its reception by a submissive perusal of His word. Persons convinced in this manner can do anything but account for their conviction, describe the time at which it happened, or the manner in which it came upon them. It is supposed to enter the mind by other channels than those of the senses, and therefore professes to be superior to reason founded on their experience.

Admitting, however, the usefulness or possibility of a divine revelation, unless we demolish the foundations of all human knowledge, it is requisite that our reason should previously demonstrate its genuineness; for, before we extinguish the steady ray of reason and common sense, it is fit that we should discover whether we cannot do without their assistance, whether or no there be any other which may suffice to guide us through the labyrinth of life (See Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding", book 4 chapter 19, on Enthusiasm.): for, if a man is to be inspired upon all occasions, if he is to be sure of a thing because he is sure, if the ordinary operations of the Spirit are not to be considered very extraordinary modes of demonstration, if enthusiasm is to usurp the place of proof, and madness that of sanity, all reasoning is superfluous. The Mahometan dies fighting for his prophet, the Indian immolates himself at the chariot-wheels of Brahma, the Hottentot worships an insect, the Negro a bunch of feathers, the Mexican sacrifices human victims! Their degree of conviction must certainly be very strong: it cannot arise from reasoning, it must from feelings, the reward of their prayers. If each of these

should affirm, in opposition to the strongest possible arguments, that inspiration carried internal evidence, I fear their inspired brethren, the orthodox missionaries, would be so uncharitable as to pronounce them obstinate.

Miracles cannot be received as testimonies of a disputed fact, because all human testimony has ever been insufficient to establish the possibility of miracles. That which is incapable of proof itself is no proof of anything else. Prophecy has also been rejected by the test of reason. Those, then, who have been actually inspired are the only true believers in the Christian religion.

Mox numine viso Virgineei tumuere sinus, innuptaque mater Arcano stupuit compleri viscera partu, Auctorem paritura suum. Mortalia corda Artificem texere poli, latuitque sub uno Pectore, qui totum late complectitur orbem.—Claudian, "Carmen Paschale".

Does not so monstrous and disgusting an absurdity carry its own infamy and refutation with itself?

8. 203-207:—

Him, still from hope to hope the bliss pursuing Which from the exhaustless lore of human weal Draws on the virtuous mind, the thoughts that rise In time-destroying infiniteness, gift With self-enshrined eternity, etc.

Time is our consciousness of the succession of ideas in our mind. Vivid sensation, of either pain or pleasure, makes the time seem long, as the common phrase is, because it renders us more acutely conscious of our ideas. If a mind be conscious of an hundred ideas during one minute, by the clock, and of two hundred during another, the latter of these spaces would actually occupy so much greater extent in the mind as two exceed one in quantity. If, therefore, the human mind, by any future improvement of its sensibility, should become conscious of an infinite number of ideas in a minute, that minute would be eternity. I do not hence infer that the actual space between the birth and death of a man will ever be prolonged; but that his

sensibility is perfectible, and that the number of ideas which his mind is capable of receiving is indefinite. One man is stretched on the rack during twelve hours; another sleeps soundly in his bed: the difference of time perceived by these two persons is immense; one hardly will believe that half an hour has elapsed, the other could credit that centuries had flown during his agony. Thus, the life of a man of virtue and talent, who should die in his thirtieth year, is, with regard to his own feelings, longer than that of a miserable priest-ridden slave, who dreams out a century of dulness. The one has perpetually cultivated his mental faculties, has rendered himself master of his thoughts, can abstract and generalize amid the lethargy of every-day business;—the other can slumber over the brightest moments of his being, and is unable to remember the happiest hour of his life. Perhaps the perishing ephemeron enjoys a longer life than the tortoise.

Dark flood of time! Roll as it listeth thee—I measure not By months or moments thy ambiguous course. Another may stand by me on the brink And watch the bubble whirled beyond his ken That pauses at my feet. The sense of love, The thirst for action, and the impassioned thought Prolong my being: if I wake no more, My life more actual living will contain Than some gray veteran's of the world's cold school, Whose listless hours unprofitably roll, By one enthusiast feeling unredeemed.—

See Godwin's "Pol. Jus." volume 1, page 411; and Condorcet, "Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progres de l'Esprit Humain", epoque 9.

8. 211, 212:—

No longer now He slays the lamb that looks him in the face.

I hold that the depravity of the physical and moral nature of man originated in his unnatural habits of life. The origin of man, like that of the universe of which he is a part, is enveloped in impenetrable mystery. His generations either had a beginning, or they had not. The weight of evidence in favour of each of these suppositions seems tolerably equal; and it is perfectly unimportant to the present argument which

is assumed. The language spoken, however, by the mythology of nearly all religions seems to prove that at some distant period man forsook the path of nature, and sacrificed the purity and happiness of his being to unnatural appetites. The date of this event seems to have also been that of some great change in the climates of the earth, with which it has an obvious correspondence. The allegory of Adam and Eve eating of the tree of evil, and entailing upon their posterity the wrath of God and the loss of everlasting life, admits of no other explanation than the disease and crime that have flowed from unnatural diet. Milton was so well aware of this that he makes Raphael thus exhibit to Adam the consequence of his disobedience:—

Immediately a place Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome, dark; A lazar-house it seemed; wherein were laid Numbers of all diseased—all maladies Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds, Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs, Intestine stone and ulcer, colic pangs, Demoniac frenzy, moping melancholy, And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy, Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence, Dropsies and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.

And how many thousands more might not be added to this frightful catalogue!

The story of Prometheus is one likewise which, although universally admitted to be allegorical, has never been satisfactorily explained. Prometheus stole fire from heaven, and was chained for this crime to Mount Caucasus, where a vulture continually devoured his liver, that grew to meet its hunger. Hesiod says that, before the time of Prometheus, mankind were exempt from suffering; that they enjoyed a vigorous youth, and that death, when at length it came, approached like sleep, and gently closed their eyes. Again, so general was this opinion that Horace, a poet of the Augustan age, writes:—

Audax omnia perpeti, Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas; Audax Iapeti genus Ignem fraude mala gentibus intulit: Post ignem aetheria domo Subductum, macies et nova febrium Terris incubuit cohors, Semotique prius tarda necessitas Lethi

corripuit gradum.

How plain a language is spoken by all this! Prometheus (who represents the human race) effected some great change in the condition of his nature, and applied fire to culinary purposes; thus inventing an expedient for screening from his disgust the horrors of the shambles. From this moment his vitals were devoured by the vulture of disease. It consumed his being in every shape of its loathsome and infinite variety, inducing the soul-quelling sinkings of premature and violent death. All vice rose from the ruin of healthful innocence. Tyranny, superstition, commerce, and inequality were then first known, when reason vainly attempted to guide the wanderings of exacerbated passion. I conclude this part of the subject with an extract from Mr. Newton's "Defence of Vegetable Regimen", from whom I have borrowed this interpretation of the fable of Prometheus.

'Making allowance for such transposition of the events of the allegory as time might produce after the important truths were forgotten, which this portion of the ancient mythology was intended to transmit, the drift of the fable seems to be this:—Man at his creation was endowed with the gift of perpetual youth; that is, he was not formed to be a sickly suffering creature as we now see him, but to enjoy health, and to sink by slow degrees into the bosom of his parent earth without disease or pain. Prometheus first taught the use of animal food (primus bovem occidit Prometheus (Plin. "Nat. Hist". lib. 7 sect. 57.)) and of fire, with which to render it more digestible and pleasing to the taste. Jupiter, and the rest of the gods, foreseeing the consequences of these inventions, were amused or irritated at the short-sighted devices of the newly-formed creature, and left him to experience the sad effects of them. Thirst, the necessary concomitant of a flesh diet' (perhaps of all diet vitiated by culinary preparation), 'ensued; water was resorted to, and man forfeited the inestimable gift of health which he had received from heaven: he became diseased, the partaker of a precarious existence, and no longer descended slowly to his grave. ("Return to Nature". Cadell, 1811.)

But just disease to luxury succeeds, And every death its own avenger breeds; The fury passions from that blood began, And turned on man a fiercer savage—man.

Man, and the animals whom he has infected with his society, or depraved by his dominion, are alone diseased. The wild hog, the mouflon, the bison, and the wolf; are perfectly exempt from malady, and invariably die either from external violence or natural old age. But the domestic hog, the sheep, the cow, and the dog, are subject to an incredible variety of distempers; and, like the corruptors of their nature, have physicians who thrive upon their miseries. The supereminence of man is like Satan's, a supereminence of pain; and the majority of his species, doomed to penury, disease, and crime, have reason to curse the untoward event that, by enabling him to communicate his sensations, raised him above the level of his fellow-animals. But the steps that have been taken are irrevocable. The whole of human science is comprised in one question:—How can the advantages of intellect and civilization be reconciled with the liberty and pure pleasures of natural life? How can we take the benefits and reject the evils of the system, which is now interwoven with all the fibres of our being?—I believe that abstinence from animal food and spirituous liquors would in a great measure capacitate us for the solution of this important question.

It is true that mental and bodily derangement is attributable in part to other deviations from rectitude and nature than those which concern diet. The mistakes cherished by society respecting the connection of the sexes, whence the misery and diseases of unsatisfied celibacy, unenjoying prostitution, and the premature arrival of puberty, necessarily spring; the putrid atmosphere of crowded cities; the exhalations of chemical processes; the muffling of our bodies in superfluous apparel; the absurd treatment of infants:—all these and innumerable other causes contribute their mite to the mass of human evil.

Comparative anatomy teaches us that man resembles frugivorous animals in

everything, and carnivorous in nothing; he has neither claws wherewith to seize his prey, nor distinct and pointed teeth to tear the living fibre. A Mandarin of the first class, with nails two inches long, would probably find them alone inefficient to hold even a hare. After every subterfuge of gluttony, the bull must be degraded into the ox, and the ram into the wether, by an unnatural and inhuman operation, that the flaccid fibre may offer a fainter resistance to rebellious nature. It is only by softening and disguising dead flesh by culinary preparation that it is rendered susceptible of mastication or digestion; and that the sight of its bloody juices and raw horror does not excite intolerable loathing and disgust. Let the advocate of animal food force himself to a decisive experiment on its fitness, and, as Plutarch recommends, tear a living lamb with his teeth, and plunging his head into its vitals slake his thirst with the steaming blood; when fresh from the deed of horror, let him revert to the irresistible instincts of nature that would rise in judgement against it, and say, ‘Nature formed me for such work as this.’ Then, and then only, would he be consistent.

Man resembles no carnivorous animal. There is no exception, unless man be one, to the rule of herbivorous animals having cellulated colons.

The orang-outang perfectly resembles man both in the order and number of his teeth. The orang-outang is the most anthropomorphous of the ape tribe, all of which are strictly frugivorous. There is no other species of animals, which live on different food, in which this analogy exists. (Cuvier, “Lecons d’Anat. Comp”. tom. 3, pages 169, 373, 448, 465, 480. Rees’s “Cyclopaedia”, article Man.) In many frugivorous animals, the canine teeth are more pointed and distinct than those of man. The resemblance also of the human stomach to that of the orang-outang is greater than to that of any other animal.

The intestines are also identical with those of herbivorous animals, which present a larger surface for absorption and have ample and cellulated colons. The caecum

also, though short, is larger than that of carnivorous animals; and even here the orang-outang retains its accustomed similarity.

The structure of the human frame, then, is that of one fitted to a pure vegetable diet, in every essential particular. It is true that the reluctance to abstain from animal food, in those who have been long accustomed to its stimulus, is so great in some persons of weak minds as to be scarcely overcome; but this is far from bringing any argument in its favour. A lamb, which was fed for some time on flesh by a ship's crew, refused its natural diet at the end of the voyage. There are numerous instances of horses, sheep, oxen, and even wood-pigeons, having been taught to live upon flesh, until they have loathed their natural aliment. Young children evidently prefer pastry, oranges, apples, and other fruit, to the flesh of animals; until, by the gradual depravation of the digestive organs, the free use of vegetables has for a time produced serious inconveniences; FOR A TIME, I say, since there never was an instance wherein a change from spirituous liquors and animal food to vegetables and pure water has failed ultimately to invigorate the body, by rendering its juices bland and consentaneous, and to restore to the mind that cheerfulness and elasticity which not one in fifty possesses on the present system. A love of strong liquors is also with difficulty taught to infants. Almost every one remembers the wry faces which the first glass of port produced. Unsophisticated instinct is invariably unerring; but to decide on the fitness of animal food from the perverted appetites which its constrained adoption produces; is to make the criminal a judge in his own cause: it is even worse, it is appealing to the infatuated drunkard in a question of the salubrity of brandy.

What is the cause of morbid action in the animal system? Not the air we breathe, for our fellow-denizens of nature breathe the same uninjured; not the water we drink (if remote from the pollutions of man and his inventions (The necessity of resorting to some means of purifying water, and the disease which arises from its adulteration in civilized countries, is sufficiently apparent. See Dr. Lambe's "Reports on Cancer". I

do not assert that the use of water is in itself unnatural, but that the unperverted palate would swallow no liquid capable of occasioning disease.)), for the animals drink it too; not the earth we tread upon; not the unobscured sight of glorious nature, in the wood, the field, or the expanse of sky and ocean; nothing that we are or do in common with the undiseased inhabitants of the forest. Something, then, wherein we differ from them: our habit of altering our food by fire, so that our appetite is no longer a just criterion for the fitness of its gratification. Except in children, there remain no traces of that instinct which determines, in all other animals, what aliment is natural or otherwise; and so perfectly obliterated are they in the reasoning adults of our species, that it has become necessary to urge considerations drawn from comparative anatomy to prove that we are naturally frugivorous.

Crime is madness. Madness is disease. Whenever the cause of disease shall be discovered, the root, from which all vice and misery have so long overshadowed the globe, will lie bare to the axe. All the exertions of man, from that moment, may be considered as tending to the clear profit of his species. No sane mind in a sane body resolves upon a real crime. It is a man of violent passions, bloodshot eyes, and swollen veins, that alone can grasp the knife of murder. The system of a simple diet promises no Utopian advantages. It is no mere reform of legislation, whilst the furious passions and evil propensities of the human heart, in which it had its origin, are still unassuaged. It strikes at the root of all evil, and is an experiment which may be tried with success, not alone by nations, but by small societies, families, and even individuals. In no cases has a return to vegetable diet produced the slightest injury; in most it has been attended with changes undeniably beneficial. Should ever a physician be born with the genius of Locke, I am persuaded that he might trace all bodily and mental derangements to our unnatural habits, as clearly as that philosopher has traced all knowledge to sensation. What prolific sources of disease are not those mineral and vegetable poisons that have been introduced for its extirpation! How many thousands have become murderers and robbers, bigots and

domestic tyrants, dissolute and abandoned adventurers, from the use of fermented liquors; who, had they slaked their thirst only with pure water, would have lived but to diffuse the happiness of their own unperverted feelings! How many groundless opinions and absurd institutions have not received a general sanction from the sottishness and intemperance of individuals! Who will assert that, had the populace of Paris satisfied their hunger at the ever-furnished table of vegetable nature, they would have lent their brutal suffrage to the proscription-list of Robespierre? Could a set of men, whose passions were not perverted by unnatural stimuli, look with coolness on an auto da fe? Is it to be believed that a being of gentle feelings, rising from his meal of roots, would take delight in sports of blood? Was Nero a man of temperate life? could you read calm health in his cheek, flushed with ungovernable propensities of hatred for the human race? Did Muley Ismael's pulse beat evenly, was his skin transparent, did his eyes beam with healthfulness, and its invariable concomitants, cheerfulness and benignity? Though history has decided none of these questions, a child could not hesitate to answer in the negative. Surely the bile-suffused cheek of Buonaparte, his wrinkled brow, and yellow eye, the ceaseless inquietude of his nervous system, speak no less plainly the character of his unresting ambition than his murders and his victories. It is impossible, had Buonaparte descended from a race of vegetable feeders, that he could have had either the inclination or the power to ascend the throne of the Bourbons. The desire of tyranny could scarcely be excited in the individual, the power to tyrannize would certainly not be delegated by a society neither frenzied by inebriation nor rendered impotent and irrational by disease. Pregnant indeed with inexhaustible calamity is the renunciation of instinct, as it concerns our physical nature; arithmetic cannot enumerate, nor reason perhaps suspect, the multitudinous sources of disease in civilized life. Even common water, that apparently innoxious pabulum, when corrupted by the filth of populous cities, is a deadly and insidious destroyer. (Lambe's "Reports on Cancer".) Who can wonder that all the inducements held out

by God Himself in the Bible to virtue should have been vainer than a nurse's tale; and that those dogmas, by which He has there excited and justified the most ferocious propensities, should have alone been deemed essential; whilst Christians are in the daily practice of all those habits which have infected with disease and crime, not only the reprobate sons, but those favoured children of the common Father's love? Omnipotence itself could not save them from the consequences of this original and universal sin.

There is no disease, bodily or mental, which adoption of vegetable diet and pure water has not infallibly mitigated, wherever the experiment has been fairly tried. Debility is gradually converted into strength; disease into healthfulness; madness, in all its hideous variety, from the ravings of the fettered maniac to the unaccountable irrationalities of ill-temper, that make a hell of domestic life, into a calm and considerate evenness of temper, that alone might offer a certain pledge of the future moral reformation of society. On a natural system of diet, old age would be our last and our only malady; the term of our existence would be protracted; we should enjoy life, and no longer preclude others from the enjoyment of it; all sensational delights would be infinitely more exquisite and perfect; the very sense of being would then be a continued pleasure, such as we now feel it in some few and favoured moments of our youth. By all that is sacred in our hopes for the human race, I conjure those who love happiness and truth to give a fair trial to the vegetable system. Reasoning is surely superfluous on a subject whose merits an experience of six months would set for ever at rest. But it is only among the enlightened and benevolent that so great a sacrifice of appetite and prejudice can be expected, even though its ultimate excellence should not admit of dispute. It is found easier, by the short-sighted victims of disease, to palliate their torments by medicine than to prevent them by regimen. The vulgar of all ranks are invariably sensual and indocile; yet I cannot but feel myself persuaded that when the benefits of vegetable diet are mathematically proved, when it is as clear that those who live naturally are

exempt from premature death as that nine is not one, the most sottish of mankind will feel a preference towards a long and tranquil, contrasted with a short and painful, life. On the average, out of sixty persons four die in three years. Hopes are entertained that, in April, 1814, a statement will be given that sixty persons, all having lived more than three years on vegetables and pure water, are then IN PERFECT HEALTH. More than two years have now elapsed; NOT ONE OF THEM HAS DIED; no such example will be found in any sixty persons taken at random. Seventeen persons of all ages (the families of Dr. Lambe and Mr. Newton) have lived for seven years on this diet without a death, and almost without the slightest illness. Surely, when we consider that some of those were infants, and one a martyr to asthma now nearly subdued, we may challenge any seventeen persons taken at random in this city to exhibit a parallel case. Those who may have been excited to question the rectitude of established habits of diet by these loose remarks, should consult Mr. Newton's luminous and eloquent essay. ("Return to Nature, or Defence of Vegetable Regimen". Cadell, 1811.)

When these proofs come fairly before the world, and are clearly seen by all who understand arithmetic, it is scarcely possible that abstinence from aliments demonstrably pernicious should not become universal. In proportion to the number of proselytes, so will be the weight of evidence; and when a thousand persons can be produced, living on vegetables and distilled water, who have to dread no disease but old age, the world will be compelled to regard animal flesh and fermented liquors as slow but certain poisons. The change which would be produced by simpler habits on political economy is sufficiently remarkable. The monopolizing eater of animal flesh would no longer destroy his constitution by devouring an acre at a meal, and many loaves of bread would cease to contribute to gout, madness and apoplexy, in the shape of a pint of porter, or a dram of gin, when appeasing the long-protracted famine of the hardworking peasant's hungry babes. The quantity of nutritious vegetable matter, consumed in fattening the carcase of an ox, would afford ten times

the sustenance, undepraving indeed, and incapable of generating disease, if gathered immediately from the bosom of the earth. The most fertile districts of the habitable globe are now actually cultivated by men for animals, at a delay and waste of aliment absolutely incapable of calculation. It is only the wealthy that can, to any great degree, even now, indulge the unnatural craving for dead flesh, and they pay for the greater licence of the privilege by subjection to supernumerary diseases. Again, the spirit of the nation that should take the lead in this great reform would insensibly become agricultural; commerce, with all its vice, selfishness, and corruption, would gradually decline; more natural habits would produce gentler manners, and the excessive complication of political relations would be so far simplified that every individual might feel and understand why he loved his country, and took a personal interest in its welfare. How would England, for example, depend on the caprices of foreign rulers if she contained within herself all the necessaries, and despised whatever they possessed of the luxuries, of life? How could they starve her into compliance with their views? Of what consequence would it be that they refused to take her woollen manufactures, when large and fertile tracts of the island ceased to be allotted to the waste of pasturage? On a natural system of diet we should require no spices from India; no wines from Portugal, Spain, France, or Madeira; none of those multitudinous articles of luxury, for which every corner of the globe is rifled, and which are the causes of so much individual rivalship, such calamitous and sanguinary national disputes. In the history of modern times, the avarice of commercial monopoly, no less than the ambition of weak and wicked chiefs, seems to have fomented the universal discord, to have added stubbornness to the mistakes of cabinets, and indocility to the infatuation of the people. Let it ever be remembered that it is the direct influence of commerce to make the interval between the richest and the poorest man wider and more unconquerable. Let it be remembered that it is a foe to everything of real worth and excellence in the human character. The odious and disgusting aristocracy of wealth is built upon the ruins of

all that is good in chivalry or republicanism; and luxury is the forerunner of a barbarism scarce capable of cure. Is it impossible to realize a state of society, where all the energies of man shall be directed to the production of his solid happiness? Certainly, if this advantage (the object of all political speculation) be in any degree attainable, it is attainable only by a community which holds out no factitious incentives to the avarice and ambition of the few, and which is internally organized for the liberty, security, and comfort of the many. None must be entrusted with power (and money is the completest species of power) who do not stand pledged to use it exclusively for the general benefit. But the use of animal flesh and fermented liquors directly militates with this equality of the rights of man. The peasant cannot gratify these fashionable cravings without leaving his family to starve. Without disease and war, those sweeping curtailers of population, pasturage would include a waste too great to be afforded. The labour requisite to support a family is far lighter' than is usually supposed. (It has come under the author's experience that some of the workmen on an embankment in North Wales, who, in consequence of the inability of the proprietor to pay them, seldom received their wages, have supported large families by cultivating small spots of sterile ground by moonlight. In the notes to Pratt's poem, "Bread, or the Poor", is an account of an industrious labourer who, by working in a small garden, before and after his day's task, attained to an enviable state of independence.) The peasantry work, not only for themselves, but for the aristocracy, the army, and the manufacturers.

The advantage of a reform in diet is obviously greater than that of any other. It strikes at the root of the evil. To remedy the abuses of legislation, before we annihilate the propensities by which they are produced, is to suppose that by taking away the effect the cause will cease to operate. But the efficacy of this system depends entirely on the proselytism of individuals, and grounds its merits, as a benefit to the community, upon the total change of the dietetic habits in its members. It proceeds securely from a number of particular cases to one that is universal, and

has this advantage over the contrary mode, that one error does not invalidate all that has gone before.

Let not too much, however, be expected from this system. The healthiest among us is not exempt from hereditary disease. The most symmetrical, athletic, and longlived is a being inexpressibly inferior to what he would have been, had not the unnatural habits of his ancestors accumulated for him a certain portion of malady and deformity. In the most perfect specimen of civilized man, something is still found wanting by the physiological critic. Can a return to nature, then, instantaneously eradicate predispositions that have been slowly taking root in the silence of innumerable ages?—Indubitably not. All that I contend for is, that from the moment of the relinquishing all unnatural habits no new disease is generated; and that the predisposition to hereditary maladies gradually perishes, for want of its accustomed supply. In cases of consumption, cancer, gout, asthma, and scrofula, such is the invariable tendency of a diet of vegetables and pure water.

Those who may be induced by these remarks to give the vegetable system a fair trial, should, in the first place, date the commencement of their practice from the moment of their conviction. All depends upon breaking through a pernicious habit resolutely and at once. Dr. Trotter asserts that no drunkard was ever reformed by gradually relinquishing his dram. (See Trotter on the Nervous Temperament.) Animal flesh, in its effects on the human stomach, is analogous to a dram. It is similar in the kind, though differing in the degree, of its operation. The proselyte to a pure diet must be warned to expect a temporary diminution of muscular strength. The subtraction of a powerful stimulus will suffice to account for this event. But it is only temporary, and is succeeded by an equable capability for exertion, far surpassing his former various and fluctuating strength. Above all, he will acquire an easiness of breathing, by which such exertion is performed, with a remarkable exemption from that painful and difficult panting now felt by almost every one after hastily climbing an ordinary mountain. He will be equally capable of bodily

exertion, or mental application, after as before his simple meal. He will feel none of the narcotic effects of ordinary diet. Irritability, the direct consequence of exhausting stimuli, would yield to the power of natural and tranquil impulses. He will no longer pine under the lethargy of ennui, that unconquerable weariness of life, more to be dreaded than death itself. He will escape the epidemic madness, which broods over its own injurious notions of the Deity, and 'realizes the hell that priests and beldams feign.' Every man forms, as it were, his god from his own character; to the divinity of one of simple habits no offering would be more acceptable than the happiness of his creatures. He would be incapable of hating or persecuting others for the love of God. He will find, moreover, a system of simple diet to be a system of perfect epicurism. He will no longer be incessantly occupied in blunting and destroying those organs from which he expects his gratification. The pleasures of taste to be derived from a dinner of potatoes, beans, peas, turnips, lettuces, with a dessert of apples, gooseberries, strawberries, currants, raspberries, and in winter, oranges, apples and pears, is far greater than is supposed. These who wait until they can eat this plain fare with the sauce of appetite will scarcely join with the hypocritical sensualist at a lord-mayor's feast, who declaims against the pleasures of the table. Solomon kept a thousand concubines, and owned in despair that all was vanity. The man whose happiness is constituted by the society of one amiable woman would find some difficulty in sympathizing with the disappointment of this venerable debauchee.

I address myself not only to the young enthusiast, the ardent devotee of truth and virtue, the pure and passionate moralist, yet unvitiated by the contagion of the world. He will embrace a pure system, from its abstract truth, its beauty, its simplicity, and its promise of wide-extended benefit; unless custom has turned poison into food, he will hate the brutal pleasures of the chase by instinct; it will be a contemplation full of horror, and disappointment to his mind, that beings capable of the gentlest and most admirable sympathies should take delight in the death-pangs and last

convulsions of dying animals. The elderly man, whose youth has been poisoned by intemperance, or who has lived with apparent moderation, and is afflicted with a wide variety of painful maladies, would find his account in a beneficial change produced without the risk of poisonous medicines. The mother, to whom the perpetual restlessness of disease and unaccountable deaths incident to her children are the causes of incurable unhappiness, would on this diet experience the satisfaction of beholding their perpetual healths and natural playfulness. (See Mr. Newton's book. His children are the most beautiful and healthy creatures it is possible to conceive; the girls are perfect models for a sculptor; their dispositions are also the most gentle and conciliating; the judicious treatment, which they experience in other points, may be a correlative cause of this. In the first five years of their life, of 18,000 children that are born, 7,500 die of various diseases; and how many more of those that survive are not rendered miserable by maladies not immediately mortal? The quality and quantity of a woman's milk are materially injured by the use of dead flesh. In an island near Iceland, where no vegetables are to be got, the children invariably die of tetanus before they are three weeks old, and the population is supplied from the mainland.—Sir G. Mackenzie's "History of Iceland". See also "Emile", chapter 1, pages 53, 54, 56.) The most valuable lives are daily destroyed by diseases that it is dangerous to palliate and impossible to cure by medicine. How much longer will man continue to pimp for the gluttony of Death, his most insidious, implacable, and eternal foe?

Alla drakontas agrious kaleite kai pardaleis kai leontas, autoi de miaiphoneite eis omoteta katalipontes ekeinois ouden ekeinois men gar o phonos trophe, umin de opson estin…"Oti gar ouk estin anthropo kata phusin to sarkophagein, proton men apo ton somaton deloutai tes kataskeues. Oudeni gar eoike to anthropou soma ton epi sarkophagia gegonoton, ou grupotes cheilous, ouk ozutes onuchos, ou traxutes odontos prosestin, ou koilias eutonia kai pneumatos thermotes, trepsai kai katergasasthai dunate to baru kai kreodes all autothen e phusis te leioteti ton odonton

kai te smikroteti tou stomatos kai te malakoteti tes glosses kai te pros pepsin ambluteti tou pneumatos, exomnutai ten sarkophagian. Ei de legeis pephukenai seauton epi toiauten edoden, o boulei phagein proton autos apokteinon, all autos dia seauton, me chesamenos kopidi mede tumpano tini mede pelekei alla, os lukoi kai arktoi kai leontes autoi osa esthiousi phoneuousin, anele degmati boun e stomati sun, e apna e lagoon diarrexon kai phage prospeson eti zontos, os ekeina…Emeis d' outos en to miaiphono truphomen, ost ochon to kreas prosagoreuomen, eit ochon pros auto to kreas deometha, anamignuntes elaion oinon meli garon oxos edusmasi Suriakois Arabikois, oster ontos nekron entaphiazontes. Kai gar outos auton dialuthenton kai melachthenton kai tropon tina prosapenton ergon esti ten pechin kratesai, kai diakratepheises de deinas barutetas empoiei kai nosodeis apechias…Outo to proton agprion ti zoon ebrothe kai kakourgon, eit ornis tis e ichthus eilkusto kai geusamenon outo kai promeletesan en ekeinois to thonikon epi boun ergaten elthe kai to kosmion probaton kai ton oikouron alektruona kai kata mikron outo ten aplestian stomosantes epi sphagas anthropon kai polemous kai phonous proelthon.—Plout. peri tes Sarkophagias.

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NOTE ON QUEEN MAB, BY MRS. SHELLEY.

Shelley was eighteen when he wrote "Queen Mab"; he never published it. When it was written, he had come to the decision that he was too young to be a 'judge of controversies'; and he was desirous of acquiring 'that sobriety of spirit which is the characteristic of true heroism.' But he never doubted the truth or utility of his opinions; and, in printing and privately distributing "Queen Mab", he believed that he should further their dissemination, without occasioning the mischief either to others or himself that might arise from publication. It is doubtful whether he would himself have admitted it into a collection of his works. His severe classical taste, refined by the constant study of the Greek poets, might have discovered defects that

escape the ordinary reader; and the change his opinions underwent in many points would have prevented him from putting forth the speculations of his boyish days. But the poem is too beautiful in itself, and far too remarkable as the production of a boy of eighteen, to allow of its being passed over: besides that, having been frequently reprinted, the omission would be vain. In the former edition certain portions were left out, as shocking the general reader from the violence of their attack on religion. I myself had a painful feeling that such erasures might be looked upon as a mark of disrespect towards the author, and am glad to have the opportunity of restoring them. The notes also are reprinted entire—not because they are models of reasoning or lessons of truth, but because Shelley wrote them, and that all that a man at once so distinguished and so excellent ever did deserves to be preserved. The alterations his opinions underwent ought to be recorded, for they form his history.

A series of articles was published in the “New Monthly Magazine” during the autumn of the year 1832, written by a man of great talent, a fellow-collegian and warm friend of Shelley: they describe admirably the state of his mind during his collegiate life. Inspired with ardour for the acquisition of knowledge, endowed with the keenest sensibility and with the fortitude of a martyr, Shelley came among his fellow-creatures, congregated for the purposes of education, like a spirit from another sphere; too delicately organized for the rough treatment man uses towards man, especially in the season of youth, and too resolute in carrying out his own sense of good and justice, not to become a victim. To a devoted attachment to those he loved he added a determined resistance to oppression. Refusing to fag at Eton, he was treated with revolting cruelty by masters and boys: this roused instead of taming his spirit, and he rejected the duty of obedience when it was enforced by menaces and punishment. To aversion to the society of his fellow-creatures, such as he found them when collected together in societies, where one egged on the other to acts of tyranny, was joined the deepest sympathy and compassion; while the attachment he

felt for individuals, and the admiration with which he regarded their powers and their virtues, led him to entertain a high opinion of the perfectibility of human nature; and he believed that all could reach the highest grade of moral improvement, did not the customs and prejudices of society foster evil passions and excuse evil actions.

The oppression which, trembling at every nerve yet resolute to heroism, it was his ill-fortune to encounter at school and at college, led him to dissent in all things from those whose arguments were blows, whose faith appeared to engender blame and hatred. ‘During my existence,’ he wrote to a friend in 1812, ‘I have incessantly speculated, thought, and read.’ His readings were not always well chosen; among them were the works of the French philosophers: as far as metaphysical argument went, he temporarily became a convert. At the same time, it was the cardinal article of his faith that, if men were but taught and induced to treat their fellows with love, charity, and equal rights, this earth would realize paradise. He looked upon religion, as it is professed, and above all practised, as hostile instead of friendly to the cultivation of those virtues which would make men brothers.

Can this be wondered at? At the age of seventeen, fragile in health and frame, of the purest habits in morals, full of devoted generosity and universal kindness, glowing with ardour to attain wisdom, resolved at every personal sacrifice to do right, burning with a desire for affection and sympathy,—he was treated as a reprobate, cast forth as a criminal.

The cause was that he was sincere; that he believed the opinions which he entertained to be true. And he loved truth with a martyr’s love; he was ready to sacrifice station and fortune, and his dearest affections, at its shrine. The sacrifice was demanded from, and made by, a youth of seventeen. It is a singular fact in the history of society in the civilized nations of modern times that no false step is so irretrievable as one made in early youth. Older men, it is true, when they oppose

their fellows and transgress ordinary rules, carry a certain prudence or hypocrisy as a shield along with them. But youth is rash; nor can it imagine, while asserting what it believes to be true, and doing what it believes to be right, that it should be denounced as vicious, and pursued as a criminal.

Shelley possessed a quality of mind which experience has shown me to be of the rarest occurrence among human beings: this was his UNWORLDLINESS. The usual motives that rule men, prospects of present or future advantage, the rank and fortune of those around, the taunts and censures, or the praise, of those who were hostile to him, had no influence whatever over his actions, and apparently none over his thoughts. It is difficult even to express the simplicity and directness of purpose that adorned him. Some few might be found in the history of mankind, and some one at least among his own friends, equally disinterested and scornful, even to severe personal sacrifices, of every baser motive. But no one, I believe, ever joined this noble but passive virtue to equal active endeavours for the benefit of his friends and mankind in general, and to equal power to produce the advantages he desired. The world's brightest gauds and its most solid advantages were of no worth in his eyes, when compared to the cause of what he considered truth, and the good of his fellow-creatures. Born in a position which, to his inexperienced mind, afforded the greatest facilities to practise the tenets he espoused, he boldly declared the use he would make of fortune and station, and enjoyed the belief that he should materially benefit his fellow-creatures by his actions; while, conscious of surpassing powers of reason and imagination, it is not strange that he should, even while so young, have believed that his written thoughts would tend to disseminate opinions which he believed conducive to the happiness of the human race.

If man were a creature devoid of passion, he might have said and done all this with quietness. But he was too enthusiastic, and too full of hatred of all the ills he witnessed, not to scorn danger. Various disappointments tortured, but could not tame, his soul. The more enmity he met, the more earnestly he became attached to

his peculiar views, and hostile to those of the men who persecuted him.

He was animated to greater zeal by compassion for his fellow-creatures. His sympathy was excited by the misery with which the world is burning. He witnessed the sufferings of the poor, and was aware of the evils of ignorance. He desired to induce every rich man to despoil himself of superfluity, and to create a brotherhood of property and service, and was ready to be the first to lay down the advantages of his birth. He was of too uncompromising a disposition to join any party. He did not in his youth look forward to gradual improvement: nay, in those days of intolerance, now almost forgotten, it seemed as easy to look forward to the sort of millennium of freedom and brotherhood which he thought the proper state of mankind as to the present reign of moderation and improvement. Ill-health made him believe that his race would soon be run; that a year or two was all he had of life. He desired that these years should be useful and illustrious. He saw, in a fervent call on his fellow-creatures to share alike the blessings of the creation, to love and serve each other, the noblest work that life and time permitted him. In this spirit he composed “Queen Mab”.

He was a lover of the wonderful and wild in literature, but had not fostered these tastes at their genuine sources—the romances and chivalry of the middle ages—but in the perusal of such German works as were current in those days. Under the influence of these he, at the age of fifteen, wrote two short prose romances of slender merit. The sentiments and language were exaggerated, the composition imitative and poor. He wrote also a poem on the subject of Ahasuerus—being led to it by a German fragment he picked up, dirty and torn, in Lincoln’s Inn Fields. This fell afterwards into other hands, and was considerably altered before it was printed. Our earlier English poetry was almost unknown to him. The love and knowledge of Nature developed by Wordsworth—the lofty melody and mysterious beauty of Coleridge’s poetry—and the wild fantastic machinery and gorgeous scenery adopted by Southey—composed his favourite reading; the rhythm of “Queen Mab” was

founded on that of “Thalaba”, and the first few lines bear a striking resemblance in spirit, though not in idea, to the opening of that poem. His fertile imagination, and ear tuned to the finest sense of harmony, preserved him from imitation. Another of his favourite books was the poem of “Gebir” by Walter Savage Landor. From his boyhood he had a wonderful facility of versification, which he carried into another language; and his Latin school-verses were composed with an ease and correctness that procured for him prizes, and caused him to be resorted to by all his friends for help. He was, at the period of writing “Queen Mab”, a great traveller within the limits of England, Scotland, and Ireland. His time was spent among the loveliest scenes of these countries. Mountain and lake and forest were his home; the phenomena of Nature were his favourite study. He loved to inquire into their causes, and was addicted to pursuits of natural philosophy and chemistry, as far as they could be carried on as an amusement. These tastes gave truth and vivacity to his descriptions, and warmed his soul with that deep admiration for the wonders of Nature which constant association with her inspired.

He never intended to publish “Queen Mab” as it stands; but a few years after, when printing “Alastor”, he extracted a small portion which he entitled “The Daemon of the World”. In this he changed somewhat the versification, and made other alterations scarcely to be called improvements.

Some years after, when in Italy, a bookseller published an edition of “Queen Mab” as it originally stood. Shelley was hastily written to by his friends, under the idea that, deeply injurious as the mere distribution of the poem had proved, the publication might awaken fresh persecutions. At the suggestion of these friends he wrote a letter on the subject, printed in the “Examiner” newspaper—with which I close this history of his earliest work.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ‘EXAMINER.’

‘Sir,

‘Having heard that a poem entitled “Queen Mab” has been surreptitiously published in London, and that legal proceedings have been instituted against the publisher, I request the favour of your insertion of the following explanation of the affair, as it relates to me.

‘A poem entitled “Queen Mab” was written by me at the age of eighteen, I daresay in a sufficiently intemperate spirit—but even then was not intended for publication, and a few copies only were struck off, to be distributed among my personal friends. I have not seen this production for several years. I doubt not but that it is perfectly worthless in point of literary composition; and that, in all that concerns moral and political speculation, as well as in the subtler discriminations of metaphysical and religious doctrine, it is still more crude and immature. I am a devoted enemy to religious, political, and domestic oppression; and I regret this publication, not so much from literary vanity, as because I fear it is better fitted to injure than to serve the sacred cause of freedom. I have directed my solicitor to apply to Chancery for an injunction to restrain the sale; but, after the precedent of Mr. Southey’s “Wat Tyler” (a poem written, I believe, at the same age, and with the same unreflecting enthusiasm), with little hope of success.

‘Whilst I exonerate myself from all share in having divulged opinions hostile to existing sanctions, under the form, whatever it may be, which they assume in this poem, it is scarcely necessary for me to protest against the system of inculcating the truth of Christianity or the excellence of Monarchy, however true or however excellent they may be, by such equivocal arguments as confiscation and imprisonment, and invective and slander, and the insolent violation of the most sacred ties of Nature and society.

‘SIR,

‘I am your obliged and obedient servant,

‘PERCY B. SHELLEY.

‘Pisa, June 22, 1821.’

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[Of the following pieces the “Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire”, the Poems from “St. Irvyne, or The Rosicrucian”, “The Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson” and “The Devil’s Walk”, were published by Shelley himself; the others by Medwin, Rossetti, Forman and Dowden, as indicated in the several prefatory notes.]

VERSES ON A CAT.

[Published by Hogg, “Life of Shelley”, 1858; dated 1800.]

1. A cat in distress, Nothing more, nor less; Good folks, I must faithfully tell ye, As I am a sinner, It waits for some dinner _5 To stuff out its own little belly.

2. You would not easily guess All the modes of distress Which torture the tenants of earth; And the various evils, _10 Which like so many devils, Attend the poor souls from their birth.

3. Some a living require, And others desire An old fellow out of the way; _15 And which is the best I leave to be guessed, For I cannot pretend to say.

4. One wants society, Another variety, _20 Others a tranquil life; Some want food, Others, as good, Only want a wife.

5. But this poor little cat _25 Only wanted a rat, To stuff out its own little maw; And it were as good SOME people had such food, To make them HOLD THEIR JAW! _30

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FRAGMENT: OMENS.

[Published by Medwin, “Shelley Papers”, 1833; dated 1807.]

Hark! the owlet flaps his wings In the pathless dell beneath; Hark! ’tis the night-raven sings Tidings of approaching death.

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EPITAPHIUM.

[LATIN VERSION OF THE EPITAPH IN GRAY'S ELEGY.]

[Published by Medwin, "Life of Shelley", 1847; dated 1808-9.]

1. Hic sinu fessum caput hospitali Cespitis dormit juvenis, nec illi Fata ridebant, popularis ille Nescius aurae.

2. Musa non vultu genus arroganti _5 Rustica natum grege despicata, Et suum tristis puerum notavit Sollicitudo.

3. Indoles illi bene larga, pectus Veritas sedem sibi vindicavit, _10 Et pari tantis meritis beavit Munere coelum.

4. Omne quad moestis habuit miserto Corde largivit lacrimam, recepit Omne quod coelo voluit, fidelis _15 Pectus amici.

5. Longius sed tu fuge curiosus Caeteras laudes fuge suspicari, Caeteras culpas fuge velle tractas Sede tremenda. _20

6. Spe tremescentes recubant in illa Sede virtutes pariterque culpae, In sui Patris gremio, tremenda Sede Deique.

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IN HOROLOGIUM.

[Published by Medwin, "Life of Shelley", 1847; dated 1809.]

Inter marmoreas Leonorae pendula colles Fortunata nimis Machina dicit horas. Quas MANIBUS premit illa duas insensa papillas Cur mihi sit DIGITO tangere, amata, nefas?

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A DIALOGUE.

[Published (without title) by Hogg, "Life of Shelley", 1858; dated 1809. Included in

the Esdaile manuscript book.]

DEATH: For my dagger is bathed in the blood of the brave, I come, care-worn tenant of life, from the grave, Where Innocence sleeps ‘neath the peace-giving sod, And the good cease to tremble at Tyranny’s nod; I offer a calm habitation to thee,— _5 Say, victim of grief, wilt thou slumber with me? My mansion is damp, cold silence is there, But it lulls in oblivion the fiends of despair; Not a groan of regret, not a sigh, not a breath, Dares dispute with grim Silence the empire of Death. _10 I offer a calm habitation to thee,— Say, victim of grief, wilt thou slumber with me?

MORTAL: Mine eyelids are heavy; my soul seeks repose, It longs in thy cells to embosom its woes, It longs in thy cells to deposit its load, _15 Where no longer the scorpions of Perfidy goad,— Where the phantoms of Prejudice vanish away, And Bigotry’s bloodhounds lose scent of their prey. Yet tell me, dark Death, when thine empire is o’er, What awaits on Futurity’s mist-covered shore? _20

DEATH: Cease, cease, wayward Mortal! I dare not unveil The shadows that float o’er Eternity’s vale; Nought waits for the good but a spirit of Love, That will hail their blest advent to regions above. For Love, Mortal, gleams through the gloom of my sway, _25 And the shades which surround me fly fast at its ray. Hast thou loved?—Then depart from these regions of hate, And in slumber with me blunt the arrows of fate. I offer a calm habitation to thee.— Say, victim of grief, wilt thou slumber with me? _30

MORTAL: Oh! sweet is thy slumber! oh! sweet is the ray Which after thy night introduces the day; How concealed, how persuasive, self-interest’s breath, Though it floats to mine ear from the bosom of Death! I hoped that I quite was forgotten by all, _35 Yet a lingering friend might be grieved at my fall, And duty forbids, though I languish to die, When departure might heave Virtue’s breast with a sigh. O Death! O my friend! snatch this form to thy shrine, And I fear, dear destroyer, I shall not repine. _40

NOTE: _22 o’er Esdaile manuscript; on 1858.

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TO THE MOONBEAM.

[Published by Hogg, “Life of Shelley”, 1858: dated 1809. Included in the Esdaile manuscript book.]

1. Moonbeam, leave the shadowy vale, To bathe this burning brow. Moonbeam, why art thou so pale, As thou walkest o’er the dewy dale, Where humble wild-flowers grow? _5 Is it to mimic me? But that can never be; For thine orb is bright, And the clouds are light, That at intervals shadow the star-studded night. _10

2. Now all is deathy still on earth; Nature’s tired frame reposes; And, ere the golden morning’s birth Its radiant hues discloses, Flies forth its balmy breath. _15 But mine is the midnight of Death, And Nature’s morn To my bosom forlorn Brings but a gloomier night, implants a deadlier thorn.

3. Wretch! Suppress the glare of madness _20 Struggling in thine haggard eye, For the keenest throb of sadness, Pale Despair’s most sickening sigh, Is but to mimic me; And this must ever be, _25 When the twilight of care, And the night of despair, Seem in my breast but joys to the pangs that rankle there.

NOTE: _28 rankle Esdaile manuscript wake 1858.

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THE SOLITARY.

[Published by Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1870; dated 1810. Included in the Esdaile manuscript book.]

1. Dar’st thou amid the varied multitude To live alone, an isolated thing? To see the busy beings round thee spring, And care for none; in thy calm solitude, A flower that scarce breathes in the desert rude _5 To Zephyr’s passing wing?

2. Not the swart Pariah in some Indian grove, Lone, lean, and hunted by his

brother's hate, Hath drunk so deep the cup of bitter fate As that poor wretch who cannot, cannot love: _10 He bears a load which nothing can remove, A killing, withering weight.

3. He smiles—'tis sorrow's deadliest mockery; He speaks—the cold words flow not from his soul; He acts like others, drains the genial bowl,— _15 Yet, yet he longs—although he fears—to die; He pants to reach what yet he seems to fly, Dull life's extremest goal.

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TO DEATH.

[Published (without title) by Hogg, "Life of Shelley", 1858; dated 1810. Included (under the title, "To Death") in the Esdaile manuscript book.]

Death! where is thy victory? To triumph whilst I die, To triumph whilst thine ebon wing Enfolds my shuddering soul? O Death! where is thy sting? _5 Not when the tides of murder roll, When nations groan, that kings may bask in bliss, Death! canst thou boast a victory such as this— When in his hour of pomp and power His blow the mightiest murderer gave, _10 Mid Nature's cries the sacrifice Of millions to glut the grave; When sunk the Tyrant Desolation's slave; Or Freedom's life-blood streamed upon thy shrine; Stern Tyrant, couldst thou boast a victory such as mine? _15

To know in dissolution's void That mortals' baubles sunk decay; That everything, but Love, destroyed Must perish with its kindred clay,— Perish Ambition's crown, _20 Perish her sceptred sway: From Death's pale front fades Pride's fastidious frown. In Death's damp vault the lurid fires decay, That Envy lights at heaven-born Virtue's beam— That all the cares subside, _25 Which lurk beneath the tide Of life's unquiet stream;— Yes! this is victory! And on yon rock, whose dark form glooms the sky, To stretch these pale limbs, when the soul is fled; _30 To baffle the lean passions of their prey, To sleep within the palace of the dead! Oh! not the King,

around whose dazzling throne His countless courtiers mock the words they say, Triumphs amid the bud of glory blown, _35 As I in this cold bed, and faint expiring groan!

Tremble, ye proud, whose grandeur mocks the woe Which props the column of unnatural state! You the plainings, faint and low, From Misery's tortured soul that flow, _40 Shall usher to your fate.

Tremble, ye conquerors, at whose fell command The war-fiend riots o'er a peaceful land! You Desolation's gory throng Shall bear from Victory along _45 To that mysterious strand.

NOTE: _10 murderer Esdaile manuscript; murders 1858.

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LOVE'S ROSE.

[Published (without title) by Hogg, "Life of Shelley", 1858; dated 1810. Included in the Esdaile manuscript book.]

1. Hopes, that swell in youthful breasts, Live not through the waste of time! Love's rose a host of thorns invests; Cold, ungenial is the clime, Where its honours blow. _5 Youth says, 'The purple flowers are mine,' Which die the while they glow.

2. Dear the boon to Fancy given, Retracted whilst it's granted: Sweet the rose which lives in Heaven, _10 Although on earth 'tis planted, Where its honours blow, While by earth's slaves the leaves are riven Which die the while they glow.

3. Age cannot Love destroy, _15 But perfidy can blast the flower, Even when in most unwary hour It blooms in Fancy's bower. Age cannot Love destroy, But perfidy can rend the shrine _20 In which its vermeil splendours shine.

NOTES: Love's Rose—The title is Rossetti's, 1870. _2 not through Esdaile manuscript; they this, 1858.

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EYES: A FRAGMENT.

[Published by Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1870; dated 1810. Included (four unpublished eight-line stanzas) in the Esdaile manuscript book.)]

How eloquent are eyes! Not the rapt poet’s frenzied lay When the soul’s wildest feelings stray Can speak so well as they. How eloquent are eyes! _5 Not music’s most impassioned note On which Love’s warmest fervours float Like them bids rapture rise.

Love, look thus again,— That your look may light a waste of years, _10 Darting the beam that conquers cares Through the cold shower of tears. Love, look thus again!

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ORIGINAL POETRY BY VICTOR AND CAZIRE.

[Published by Shelley, 1810. A Reprint, edited by Richard Garnett, C.B., LL.D., was issued by John Lane, in 1898. The punctuation of the original edition is here retained.]

A Person complained that whenever he began to write, he never could arrange his ideas in grammatical order. Which occasion suggested the idea of the following lines:

1. Here I sit with my paper, my pen and my ink, First of this thing, and that thing, and t’other thing think; Then my thoughts come so pell-mell all into my mind, That the sense or the subject I never can find: This word is wrong placed,—no regard to the sense, The present and future, instead of past tense, Then my grammar I want; O dear! what a bore, I think I shall never attempt to write more, With patience I then my thoughts must arraign, Have them all in due order like mutes in a train, _10 Like them too must wait in due patience and thought, Or else my fine works will all come to nought. My wit too’s so copious, it flows like a river, But disperses its waters on black and white never; Like smoke it appears independent and free, _15 But ah luckless smoke! it all passes like thee— Then at length all my patience entirely lost,

My paper and pens in the fire are tossed; But come, try again—you must never despair, Our Murray's or Entick's are not all so rare, _20 Implore their assistance—they'll come to your aid, Perform all your business without being paid, They'll tell you the present tense, future and past, Which should come first, and which should come last, This Murray will do—then to Entick repair, _25 To find out the meaning of any word rare. This they friendly will tell, and ne'er make you blush, With a jeering look, taunt, or an O fie! tush! Then straight all your thoughts in black and white put, Not minding the if's, the be's, and the but, _30 Then read it all over, see how it will run, How answers the wit, the retort, and the pun, Your writings may then with old Socrates vie, May on the same shelf with Demosthenes lie, May as Junius be sharp, or as Plato be sage. _35 The pattern or satire to all of the age; But stop—a mad author I mean not to turn, Nor with thirst of applause does my heated brain burn, Sufficient that sense, wit, and grammar combined, My letters may make some slight food for the mind; _40 That my thoughts to my friends I may freely impart, In all the warm language that flows from the heart. Hark! futurity calls! it loudly complains, It bids me step forward and just hold the reins, My excuse shall be humble, and faithful, and true, _45 Such as I fear can be made but by few— Of writers this age has abundance and plenty, Three score and a thousand, two millions and twenty, Three score of them wits who all sharply vie, To try what odd creature they best can belie, _50 A thousand are prudes who for CHARITY write, And fill up their sheets with spleen, envy, and spite[,] One million are bards, who to Heaven aspire, And stuff their works full of bombast, rant, and fire, T'other million are wags who in Grubstreet attend, _55 And just like a cobbler the old writings mend, The twenty are those who for pulpits indite, And pore over sermons all Saturday night. And now my good friends—who come after I mean, As I ne'er wore a cassock, or dined with a dean. _60 Or like cobblers at mending I never did try, Nor with poets in lyrics attempted to vie; As for prudes these good souls I both hate and detest, So here I believe the matter must rest.— I've heard your complaint—my answer I've

made, _65 And since to your calls all the tribute I've paid, Adieu my good friend; pray never despair, But grammar and sense and everything dare, Attempt but to write dashing, easy, and free, Then take out your grammar and pay him his fee, _70 Be not a coward, shrink not to a tense, But read it all over and make it out sense. What a tiresome girl!—pray soon make an end, Else my limited patience you'll quickly expend. Well adieu, I no longer your patience will try— _75 So swift to the post now the letter shall fly.

JANUARY, 1810.

2.

TO MISS — — [HARRIET GROVE] FROM MISS — — [ELIZABETH SHELLEY].

For your letter, dear — [Hattie], accept my best thanks, Rendered long and amusing by virtue of franks, Though concise they would please, yet the longer the better, The more news that's crammed in, more amusing the letter, All excuses of etiquette nonsense I hate, _5 Which only are fit for the tardy and late, As when converse grows flat, of the weather they talk, How fair the sun shines—a fine day for a walk, Then to politics turn, of Burdett's reformation, One declares it would hurt, t'other better the nation, _10 Will ministers keep? sure they've acted quite wrong, The burden this is of each morning-call song. So — is going to — you say, I hope that success her great efforts will pay [—] That [the Colonel] will see her, be dazzled outright, _15 And declare he can't bear to be out of her sight. Write flaming epistles with love's pointed dart, Whose sharp little arrow struck right on his heart, Scold poor innocent Cupid for mischievous ways, He knows not how much to laud forth her praise, _20 That he neither eats, drinks or sleeps for her sake, And hopes her hard heart some compassion will take, A refusal would kill him, so desperate his flame, But he fears, for he knows she is not common game, Then praises her sense, wit, discernment and grace, _25 He's not one that's caught by a sly looking face,

Yet that's TOO divine—such a black sparkling eye, At the bare glance of which near a thousand will die; Thus runs he on meaning but one word in ten, More than is meant by most such kind of men, _30 For they're all alike, take them one with another, Begging pardon—with the exception of my brother. Of the drawings you mention much praise I have heard, Most opinion's the same, with the difference of word, Some get a good name by the voice of the crowd, _35 Whilst to poor humble merit small praise is allowed, As in parliament votes, so in pictures a name, Oft determines a fate at the altar of fame.— So on Friday this City's gay vortex you quit, And no longer with Doctors and Johnny cats sit— _40 Now your parcel's arrived — [Bysshe's] letter shall go, I hope all your joy mayn't be turned into woe, Experience will tell you that pleasure is vain, When it promises sunshine how often comes rain. So when to fond hope every blessing is nigh, _45 How oft when we smile it is checked with a sigh, When Hope, gay deceiver, in pleasure is dressed, How oft comes a stroke that may rob us of rest. When we think ourselves safe, and the goal near at hand, Like a vessel just landing, we're wrecked near the strand, _50 And though memory forever the sharp pang must feel, 'Tis our duty to bear, and our hardship to steel— May misfortunes dear Girl, ne'er thy happiness cloy, May thy days glide in peace, love, comfort and joy, May thy tears with soft pity for other woes flow, _55 Woes, which thy tender heart never may know, For hardships our own, God has taught us to bear, Though sympathy's soul to a friend drops a tear. Oh dear! what sentimental stuff have I written, Only fit to tear up and play with a kitten. _60 What sober reflections in the midst of this letter! Jocularity sure would have suited much better; But there are exceptions to all common rules, For this is a truth by all boys learned at schools. Now adieu my dear — [Hattie] I'm sure I must tire, _65 For if I do, you may throw it into the fire, So accept the best love of your cousin and friend, Which brings this nonsensical rhyme to an end.

APRIL 30, 1810.

NOTE: _19 mischievous]mischevious 1810.

3. SONG.

Cold, cold is the blast when December is howling, Cold are the damps on a dying man’s brow,— Stern are the seas when the wild waves are rolling, And sad is the grave where a loved one lies low; But colder is scorn from the being who loved thee, _5 More stern is the sneer from the friend who has proved thee, More sad are the tears when their sorrows have moved thee, Which mixed with groans anguish and wild madness flow—

And ah! poor — has felt all this horror, Full long the fallen victim contended with fate: _10 ‘Till a destitute outcast abandoned to sorrow, She sought her babe’s food at her ruiner’s gate— Another had charmed the remorseless betrayer, He turned laughing aside from her moans and her prayer, She said nothing, but wringing the wet from her hair, _15 Crossed the dark mountain side, though the hour it was late. ’Twas on the wild height of the dark Penmanmawr, That the form of the wasted — reclined; She shrieked to the ravens that croaked from afar, And she sighed to the gusts of the wild sweeping wind.— _20 I call not yon rocks where the thunder peals rattle, I call not yon clouds where the elements battle, But thee, cruel — I call thee unkind!’—

Then she wreathed in her hair the wild flowers of the mountain, And deliriously laughing, a garland entwined, _25 She bedewed it with tears, then she hung o’er the fountain, And leaving it, cast it a prey to the wind. ‘Ah! go,’ she exclaimed, ‘when the tempest is yelling, ’Tis unkind to be cast on the sea that is swelling, But I left, a pitiless outcast, my dwelling, _30 My garments are torn, so they say is my mind—’

Not long lived —, but over her grave Waved the desolate form of a storm-blasted yew, Around it no demons or ghosts dare to rave, But spirits of peace steep her slumbers in dew. _35 Then stay thy swift steps mid the dark mountain heather, Though chill blow the wind and severe is the weather, For perfidy, traveller! cannot bereave her, Of the tears, to the tombs of the innocent due.—

JULY, 1810.

4. SONG.

Come [Harriet]! sweet is the hour, Soft Zephyrs breathe gently around, The anemone’s night-boding flower, Has sunk its pale head on the ground.

’Tis thus the world’s keenness hath torn, _5 Some mild heart that expands to its blast, ’Tis thus that the wretched forlorn, Sinks poor and neglected at last.—

The world with its keenness and woe, Has no charms or attraction for me, _10 Its unkindness with grief has laid low, The heart which is faithful to thee. The high trees that wave past the moon, As I walk in their umbrage with you, All declare I must part with you soon, _15 All bid you a tender adieu!—

Then [Harriet]! dearest farewell, You and I love, may ne’er meet again; These woods and these meadows can tell How soft and how sweet was the strain.— _20

APRIL, 1810.

5. SONG.

DESPAIR.

Ask not the pallid stranger’s woe, With beating heart and throbbing breast, Whose step is faltering, weak, and slow, As though the body needed rest.—

Whose ‘wildered eye no object meets, _5 Nor cares to ken a friendly glance, With silent grief his bosom beats,— Now fixed, as in a deathlike trance.

Who looks around with fearful eye, And shuns all converse with man kind, _10 As though some one his griefs might spy, And soothe them with a kindred mind.

A friend or foe to him the same, He looks on each with equal eye; The difference lies but in the name, _15 To none for comfort can he fly.—

’Twas deep despair, and sorrow’s trace, To him too keenly given, Whose memory, time could not efface— His peace was lodged in Heaven.— _20

He looks on all this world bestows, The pride and pomp of power, As trifles best for

pageant shows Which vanish in an hour.

When torn is dear affection's tie, _25 Sinks the soft heart full low; It leaves without a parting sigh, All that these realms bestow.

JUNE, 1810.

6. SONG.

SORROW.

To me this world's a dreary blank, All hopes in life are gone and fled, My high strung energies are sank, And all my blissful hopes lie dead.—

The world once smiling to my view, _5 Showed scenes of endless bliss and joy; The world I then but little knew, Ah! little knew how pleasures cloy;

All then was jocund, all was gay, No thought beyond the present hour, _10 I danced in pleasure's fading ray, Fading alas! as drooping flower.

Nor do the heedless in the throng, One thought beyond the morrow give[,] They court the feast, the dance, the song, _15 Nor think how short their time to live.

The heart that bears deep sorrow's trace, What earthly comfort can console, It drags a dull and lengthened pace, 'Till friendly death its woes enroll.— _20

The sunken cheek, the humid eyes, E'en better than the tongue can tell; In whose sad breast deep sorrow lies, Where memory's rankling traces dwell.—

The rising tear, the stifled sigh, _25 A mind but ill at ease display, Like blackening clouds in stormy sky, Where fiercely vivid lightnings play.

Thus when souls' energy is dead, When sorrow dims each earthly view, _30 When every fairy hope is fled, We bid ungrateful world adieu.

AUGUST, 1810.

7. SONG.

HOPE.

And said I that all hope was fled, That sorrow and despair were mine, That each enthusiast wish was dead, Had sank beneath pale Misery's shrine.—

Seest thou the sunbeam's yellow glow, _5 That robes with liquid streams of light; Yon distant Mountain's craggy brow. And shows the rocks so fair,—so bright—

Tis thus sweet expectation's ray, In softer view shows distant hours, _10 And portrays each succeeding day, As dressed in fairer, brighter flowers,—

The vermeil tinted flowers that blossom; Are frozen but to bud anew, Then sweet deceiver calm my bosom, _15 Although thy visions be not true,—

Yet true they are,—and I'll believe, Thy whisperings soft of love and peace, God never made thee to deceive, 'Tis sin that bade thy empire cease. _20

Yet though despair my life should gloom, Though horror should around me close, With those I love, beyond the tomb, Hope shows a balm for all my woes.

AUGUST, 1810.

8. SONG.

Oh! what is the gain of restless care, And what is ambitious treasure? And what are the joys that the modish share, In their sickly haunts of pleasure?

My husband's repast with delight I spread, _5 What though 'tis but rustic fare, May each guardian angel protect his shed, May contentment and quiet be there.

And may I support my husband's years, May I soothe his dying pain, _10 And then may I dry my fast falling tears, And meet him in Heaven again.

JULY, 1810.

9. SONG.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

Ah! grasp the dire dagger and couch the fell spear, If vengeance and death to thy bosom be dear, The dastard shall perish, death's torment shall prove, For fate and revenge are decreed from above.

Ah! where is the hero, whose nerves strung by youth, _5 Will defend the firm cause of justice and truth; With insatiate desire whose bosom shall swell, To give up the oppressor to judgement and Hell—

For him shall the fair one twine chaplets of bays, To him shall each warrior give merited praise, _10 And triumphant returned from the clangour of arms, He shall find his reward in his loved maiden’s charms.

In ecstatic confusion the warrior shall sip, The kisses that glow on his love’s dewy lip, And mutual, eternal, embraces shall prove, _15 The rewards of the brave are the transports of love.

OCTOBER, 1809.

10. THE IRISHMAN’S SONG.

The stars may dissolve, and the fountain of light May sink into ne’er ending chaos and night, Our mansions must fall, and earth vanish away, But thy courage O Erin! may never decay.

See! the wide wasting ruin extends all around, _5 Our ancestors’ dwellings lie sunk on the ground, Our foes ride in triumph throughout our domains, And our mightiest heroes lie stretched on the plains.

Ah! dead is the harp which was wont to give pleasure, Ah! sunk is our sweet country’s rapturous measure, _10 But the war note is waked, and the clangour of spears, The dread yell of Sloghan yet sounds in our ears.

Ah! where are the heroes! triumphant in death, Convulsed they recline on the blood sprinkled heath, Or the yelling ghosts ride on the blast that sweeps by, _15 And ‘my countrymen! vengeance!’ incessantly cry.

OCTOBER, 1809.

11. SONG.

Fierce roars the midnight storm O’er the wild mountain, Dark clouds the night

deform, Swift rolls the fountain—

See! o’er yon rocky height, _5 Dim mists are flying— See by the moon’s pale light, Poor Laura’s dying!

Shame and remorse shall howl, By her false pillow— _10 Fiercer than storms that roll, O’er the white billow;

No hand her eyes to close, When life is flying, But she will find repose, _15 For Laura’s dying!

Then will I seek my love, Then will I cheer her, Then my esteem will prove, When no friend is near her. _20

On her grave I will lie, When life is parted, On her grave I will die, For the false hearted.

DECEMBER, 1809.

12. SONG.

TO [HARRIET].

Ah! sweet is the moonbeam that sleeps on yon fountain, And sweet the mild rush of the soft-sighing breeze, And sweet is the glimpse of yon dimly-seen mountain, ‘Neath the verdant arcades of yon shadowy trees.

But sweeter than all was thy tone of affection, _5 Which scarce seemed to break on the stillness of eve, Though the time it is past!—yet the dear recollection, For aye in the heart of thy [Percy] must live.

Yet he hears thy dear voice in the summer winds sighing, Mild accents of happiness lisp in his ear, _10 When the hope-winged moments athwart him are flying, And he thinks of the friend to his bosom so dear.—

And thou dearest friend in his bosom for ever Must reign unalloyed by the fast rolling year, He loves thee, and dearest one never, Oh! never _15 Canst thou cease to be loved by a heart so sincere.

AUGUST, 1810.

NOTE: _11 hope-winged]hoped-winged 1810.

13. SONG.

TO — [HARRIET].

Stern, stern is the voice of fate's fearful command, When accents of horror it breathes in our ear, Or compels us for aye bid adieu to the land, Where exists that loved friend to our bosom so dear,

'Tis sterner than death o'er the shuddering wretch bending, _5 And in skeleton grasp his fell sceptre extending, Like the heart-stricken deer to that loved covert wending, Which never again to his eyes may appear—

And ah! he may envy the heart-stricken quarry, Who bids to the friend of affection farewell, _10 He may envy the bosom so bleeding and gory, He may envy the sound of the drear passing knell,

Not so deep is his grief on his death couch reposing, When on the last vision his dim eyes are closing! As the outcast whose love-raptured senses are losing, _15 The last tones of thy voice on the wild breeze that swell!

Those tones were so soft, and so sad, that ah! never, Can the sound cease to vibrate on Memory's ear, In the stern wreck of Nature for ever and ever, The remembrance must live of a friend so sincere. _20

AUGUST, 1810.

14. SAINT EDMOND'S EVE.

Oh! did you observe the Black Canon pass, And did you observe his frown? He goeth to say the midnight mass, In holy St. Edmond's town.

He goeth to sing the burial chaunt, _5 And to lay the wandering sprite, Whose shadowy, restless form doth haunt, The Abbey's drear aisle this night.

It saith it will not its wailing cease, 'Till that holy man come near, _10 'Till he pour

o’er its grave the prayer of peace, And sprinkle the hallowed tear.

The Canon’s horse is stout and strong The road is plain and fair, But the Canon slowly wends along, _15 And his brow is gloomed with care.

Who is it thus late at the Abbey-gate? Sullen echoes the portal bell, It sounds like the whispering voice of fate, It sounds like a funeral knell. _20

The Canon his faltering knee thrice bowed, And his frame was convulsed with fear, When a voice was heard distinct and loud, ‘Prepare! for thy hour is near.’

He crosses his breast, he mutters a prayer, _25 To Heaven he lifts his eye, He heeds not the Abbot’s gazing stare, Nor the dark Monks who murmured by.

Bare-headed he worships the sculptured saints That frown on the sacred walls, _30 His face it grows pale,—he trembles, he faints, At the Abbot’s feet he falls.

And straight the father’s robe he kissed, Who cried, ‘Grace dwells with thee, The spirit will fade like the morning mist, _35 At your benedicite.

‘Now haste within! the board is spread, Keen blows the air, and cold, The spectre sleeps in its earthy bed, ‘Till St. Edmond’s bell hath tolled,— _40

‘Yet rest your wearied limbs to-night, You’ve journeyed many a mile, To-morrow lay the wailing sprite, That shrieks in the moonlight aisle.

‘Oh! faint are my limbs and my bosom is cold, _45 Yet to-night must the sprite be laid, Yet to-night when the hour of horror’s told, Must I meet the wandering shade.

‘Nor food, nor rest may now delay,— For hark! the echoing pile, _50 A bell loud shakes!—Oh haste away, O lead to the haunted aisle.’

The torches slowly move before, The cross is raised on high, A smile of peace the Canon wore, _55 But horror dimmed his eye—

And now they climb the footworn stair, The chapel gates unclose, Now each breathed low a fervent prayer, And fear each bosom froze— _60

Now paused awhile the doubtful band And viewed the solemn scene,— Full dark the

clustered columns stand, The moon gleams pale between—

‘Say father, say, what cloisters’ gloom _65 Conceals the unquiet shade, Within what dark unhallowed tomb, The corse unblessed was laid.’

‘Through yonder drear aisle alone it walks, And murmurs a mournful plaint, _70 Of thee! Black Canon, it wildly talks, And call on thy patron saint—

The pilgrim this night with wondering eyes, As he prayed at St. Edmond’s shrine, From a black marble tomb hath seen it rise, _75 And under yon arch recline.’—

‘Oh! say upon that black marble tomb, What memorial sad appears.’— ‘Undistinguished it lies in the chancel’s gloom, No memorial sad it bears’— _80

The Canon his paternoster reads, His rosary hung by his side, Now swift to the chancel doors he leads, And untouched they open wide,

Resistless, strange sounds his steps impel, _85 To approach to the black marble tomb, ‘Oh! enter, Black Canon,’ a whisper fell, ‘Oh! enter, thy hour is come.’

He paused, told his beads, and the threshold passed. Oh! horror, the chancel doors close, _90 A loud yell was borne on the rising blast, And a deep, dying groan arose.

The Monks in amazement shuddering stand, They burst through the chancel’s gloom, From St. Edmond’s shrine, lo! a skeleton’s hand, _95 Points to the black marble tomb.

Lo! deeply engraved, an inscription blood red, In characters fresh and clear— ‘The guilty Black Canon of Elmham’s dead, And his wife lies buried here!’ _100

In Elmham’s tower he wedded a Nun, To St. Edmond’s his bride he bore, On this eve her noviciate here was begun, And a Monk’s gray weeds she wore;—

O! deep was her conscience dyed with guilt, _105 Remorse she full oft revealed, Her blood by the ruthless Black Canon was spilt, And in death her lips he sealed;

Her spirit to penance this night was doomed, ‘Till the Canon atoned the deed, _110 Here together they now shall rest entombed, ‘Till their bodies from dust are freed—

Hark! a loud peal of thunder shakes the roof, Round the altar bright lightnings play, Speechless with horror the Monks stand aloof, _115 And the storm dies sudden away—

The inscription was gone! a cross on the ground, And a rosary shone through the gloom, But never again was the Canon there found, Or the Ghost on the black marble tomb. _120

15. REVENGE.

‘Ah! quit me not yet, for the wind whistles shrill, Its blast wanders mournfully over the hill, The thunder’s wild voice rattles madly above, You will not then, cannot then, leave me my love.—’

I must dearest Agnes, the night is far gone— _5 I must wander this evening to Strasburg alone, I must seek the drear tomb of my ancestors’ bones, And must dig their remains from beneath the cold stones.

‘For the spirit of Conrad there meets me this night, And we quit not the tomb ‘till dawn of the light, _10 And Conrad’s been dead just a month and a day! So farewell dearest Agnes for I must away,—

‘He bid me bring with me what most I held dear, Or a month from that time should I lie on my bier, And I’d sooner resign this false fluttering breath, _15 Than my Agnes should dread either danger or death,

‘And I love you to madness my Agnes I love, My constant affection this night will I prove, This night will I go to the sepulchre’s jaw Alone will I glut its all conquering maw’— _20

‘No! no loved Adolphus thy Agnes will share, In the tomb all the dangers that wait for you there, I fear not the spirit,—I fear not the grave, My dearest Adolphus I’d perish to save’—

‘Nay seek not to say that thy love shall not go, _25 But spare me those ages of

horror and woe, For I swear to thee here that I'll perish ere day, If you go unattended by Agnes away'—

The night it was bleak the fierce storm raged around, The lightning's blue fire-light flashed on the ground, _30 Strange forms seemed to flit,—and howl tidings of fate, As Agnes advanced to the sepulchre gate.—

The youth struck the portal,—the echoing sound Was fearfully rolled midst the tombstones around, The blue lightning gleamed o'er the dark chapel spire, _35 And tinged were the storm clouds with sulphurous fire.

Still they gazed on the tombstone where Conrad reclined, Yet they shrank at the cold chilling blast of the wind, When a strange silver brilliance pervaded the scene, And a figure advanced—tall in form—fierce in mien. _40

A mantle encircled his shadowy form, As light as a gossamer borne on the storm, Celestial terror sat throned in his gaze, Like the midnight pestiferous meteor's blaze.—

SPIRIT: Thy father, Adolphus! was false, false as hell, _45 And Conrad has cause to remember it well, He ruined my Mother, despised me his son, I quitted the world ere my vengeance was done.

I was nearly expiring—'twas close of the day,— A demon advanced to the bed where I lay, _50 He gave me the power from whence I was hurled, To return to revenge, to return to the world,—

Now Adolphus I'll seize thy best loved in my arms, I'll drag her to Hades all blooming in charms, On the black whirlwind's thundering pinion I'll ride, _55 And fierce yelling fiends shall exult o'er thy bride—

He spoke, and extending his ghastly arms wide, Majestic advanced with a swift noiseless stride, He clasped the fair Agnes—he raised her on high, And cleaving the roof sped his way to the sky— _60

All was now silent,—and over the tomb, Thicker, deeper, was swiftly extended a gloom, Adolphus in horror sank down on the stone, And his fleeting soul fled with a harrowing groan.

DECEMBER, 1809.

16. GHASTA OR, THE AVENGING DEMON!!!

The idea of the following tale was taken from a few unconnected German Stanzas.—The principal Character is evidently the Wandering Jew, and although not mentioned by name, the burning Cross on his forehead undoubtedly alludes to that superstition, so prevalent in the part of Germany called the Black Forest, where this scene is supposed to lie.

Hark! the owlet flaps her wing, In the pathless dell beneath, Hark! night ravens loudly sing, Tidings of despair and death.—

Horror covers all the sky, _5 Clouds of darkness blot the moon, Prepare! for mortal thou must die, Prepare to yield thy soul up soon—

Fierce the tempest raves around, Fierce the volleyed lightnings fly, _10 Crashing thunder shakes the ground, Fire and tumult fill the sky.—

Hark! the tolling village bell, Tells the hour of midnight come, Now can blast the powers of Hell, _15 Fiend-like goblins now can roam—

See! his crest all stained with rain, A warrior hastening speeds his way, He starts, looks round him, starts again, And sighs for the approach of day. _20

See! his frantic steed he reins, See! he lifts his hands on high, Implores a respite to his pains, From the powers of the sky.—

He seeks an Inn, for faint from toil, _25 Fatigue had bent his lofty form, To rest his wearied limbs awhile, Fatigued with wandering and the storm.

… …

Slow the door is opened wide— With trackless tread a stranger came, _30 His form

Majestic, slow his stride, He sate, nor spake,—nor told his name—

Terror blanched the warrior's cheek, Cold sweat from his forehead ran, In vain his tongue essayed to speak,— _35 At last the stranger thus began:

'Mortal! thou that saw'st the sprite, Tell me what I wish to know, Or come with me before 'tis light, Where cypress trees and mandrakes grow. _40

'Fierce the avenging Demon's ire, Fiercer than the wintry blast, Fiercer than the lightning's fire, When the hour of twilight's past'—

The warrior raised his sunken eye. _45 It met the stranger's sullen scowl, 'Mortal! Mortal! thou must die,' In burning letters chilled his soul.

WARRIOR: Stranger! whoso'er you are, I feel impelled my tale to tell— _50 Horrors stranger shalt thou hear, Horrors drear as those of Hell.

O'er my Castle silence reigned, Late the night and drear the hour, When on the terrace I observed, _55 A fleeting shadowy mist to lower.—

Light the cloud as summer fog, Which transient shuns the morning beam; Fleeting as the cloud on bog, That hangs or on the mountain stream.— _60

Horror seized my shuddering brain, Horror dimmed my starting eye. In vain I tried to speak,—In vain My limbs essayed the spot to fly—

At last the thin and shadowy form, _65 With noiseless, trackless footsteps came,— Its light robe floated on the storm, Its head was bound with lambent flame.

In chilling voice drear as the breeze Which sweeps along th' autumnal ground, _70 Which wanders through the leafless trees, Or the mandrake's groan which floats around.

'Thou art mine and I am thine, 'Till the sinking of the world, I am thine and thou art mine, _75 'Till in ruin death is hurled—

'Strong the power and dire the fate, Which drags me from the depths of Hell, Breaks the tomb's eternal gate, Where fiendish shapes and dead men yell, _80

‘Haply I might ne’er have shrank From flames that rack the guilty dead, Haply I might ne’er have sank On pleasure’s flowery, thorny bed—

—‘But stay! no more I dare disclose, _85 Of the tale I wish to tell, On Earth relentless were my woes, But fiercer are my pangs in Hell—

‘Now I claim thee as my love, Lay aside all chilling fear, _90 My affection will I prove, Where sheeted ghosts and spectres are!

‘For thou art mine, and I am thine, ‘Till the dreaded judgement day, I am thine, and thou art mine— _95 Night is past—I must away.’

Still I gazed, and still the form Pressed upon my aching sight, Still I braved the howling storm, When the ghost dissolved in night.— _100

Restless, sleepless fled the night, Sleepless as a sick man’s bed, When he sighs for morning light, When he turns his aching head,—

Slow and painful passed the day. _105 Melancholy seized my brain, Lingering fled the hours away, Lingering to a wretch in pain.—

At last came night, ah! horrid hour, Ah! chilling time that wakes the dead, _110 When demons ride the clouds that lower, —The phantom sat upon my bed.

In hollow voice, low as the sound Which in some charnel makes its moan, What floats along the burying ground, _115 The phantom claimed me as her own.

Her chilling finger on my head, With coldest touch congealed my soul— Cold as the finger of the dead, Or damps which round a tombstone roll— _120

Months are passed in lingering round, Every night the spectre comes, With thrilling step it shakes the ground, With thrilling step it round me roams—

Stranger! I have told to thee, _125 All the tale I have to tell— Stranger! canst thou tell to me, How to ‘scape the powers of Hell?—

STRANGER: Warrior! I can ease thy woes, Wilt thou, wilt thou, come with me— _130 Warrior! I can all disclose, Follow, follow, follow me.

Yet the tempest's duskiest wing, Its mantle stretches o'er the sky, Yet the midnight ravens sing, _135 'Mortal! Mortal! thou must die.'

At last they saw a river clear, That crossed the heathy path they trod, The Stranger's look was wild and drear, The firm Earth shook beneath his nod— _140

He raised a wand above his head, He traced a circle on the plain, In a wild verse he called the dead, The dead with silent footsteps came.

A burning brilliance on his head, _145 Flaming filled the stormy air, In a wild verse he called the dead, The dead in motley crowd were there.—

'Ghasta! Ghasta! come along, Bring thy fiendish crowd with thee, _150 Quickly raise th' avenging Song, Ghasta! Ghasta! come to me.'

Horrid shapes in mantles gray, Flit athwart the stormy night, 'Ghasta! Ghasta! come away, _155 Come away before 'tis light.'

See! the sheeted Ghost they bring, Yelling dreadful o'er the heath, Hark! the deadly verse they sing, Tidings of despair and death! _160

The yelling Ghost before him stands, See! she rolls her eyes around, Now she lifts her bony hands, Now her footsteps shake the ground.

STRANGER: Phantom of Theresa say, _165 Why to earth again you came, Quickly speak, I must away! Or you must bleach for aye in flame,—

PHANTOM: Mighty one I know thee now, Mightiest power of the sky, _170 Know thee by thy flaming brow, Know thee by thy sparkling eye.

That fire is scorching! Oh! I came, From the caverned depth of Hell, My fleeting false Rodolph to claim, _175 Mighty one! I know thee well.—

STRANGER: Ghasta! seize yon wandering sprite, Drag her to the depth beneath, Take her swift, before 'tis light, Take her to the cells of death! _180

Thou that heardst the trackless dead, In the mouldering tomb must lie, Mortal! look upon my head, Mortal! Mortal! thou must die.

Of glowing flame a cross was there, _185 Which threw a light around his form, Whilst his lank and raven hair, Floated wild upon the storm.—

The warrior upwards turned his eyes, Gazed upon the cross of fire, _190 There sat horror and surprise, There sat God’s eternal ire.—

A shivering through the Warrior flew, Colder than the nightly blast, Colder than the evening dew, _195 When the hour of twilight’s past.—

Thunder shakes th’ expansive sky, Shakes the bosom of the heath, ‘Mortal! Mortal! thou must die’— The warrior sank convulsed in death. _200

JANUARY, 1810.

NOTES: _114 its]it 1810. _115 What]query Which?

17. FRAGMENT, OR THE TRIUMPH OF CONSCIENCE.

’Twas dead of the night when I sate in my dwelling, One glimmering lamp was expiring and low,— Around the dark tide of the tempest was swelling, Along the wild mountains night-ravens were yelling, They bodingly presaged destruction and woe! _5

’Twas then that I started, the wild storm was howling, Nought was seen, save the lightning that danced on the sky, Above me the crash of the thunder was rolling, And low, chilling murmurs the blast wafted by.—

My heart sank within me, unheeded the jar _10 Of the battling clouds on the mountain-tops broke, Unheeded the thunder-peal crashed in mine ear, This heart hard as iron was stranger to fear, But conscience in low noiseless whispering spoke. ’Twas then that her form on the whirlwind uprearing, _15 The dark ghost of the murdered Victoria strode, Her right hand a blood reeking dagger was bearing, She swiftly advanced to my lonesome abode.— I wildly then called on the tempest to bear me!

… …

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POEMS FROM ST. IRVYNE, OR, THE ROSICRUCIAN.

[“St. Irvyne; or The Rosicrucian”, appeared early in 1811 (see “Bibliographical List”). Rossetti (1870) relying on a passage in Medwin’s “Life of Shelley” (1 page 74), assigns 1, 4, 5, and 6 to 1808, and 2 and 4 to 1809. The titles of 1, 3, 4, and 5 are Rossetti’s; those of 2 and 6 are Dowden’s.]

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1.—VICTORIA.

[Another version of “The Triumph of Conscience” immediately preceding.]

1. ’Twas dead of the night, when I sat in my dwelling; One glimmering lamp was expiring and low; Around, the dark tide of the tempest was swelling, Along the wild mountains night-ravens were yelling,— They bodingly presaged destruction and woe. _5

2. ’Twas then that I started!—the wild storm was howling, Nought was seen, save the lightning, which danced in the sky; Above me, the crash of the thunder was rolling, And low, chilling murmurs, the blast wafted by.

3. My heart sank within me—unheeded the war _10 Of the battling clouds, on the mountain-tops, broke;— Unheeded the thunder-peal crashed in mine ear— This heart, hard as iron, is stranger to fear; But conscience in low, noiseless whispering spoke.

4. ’Twas then that her form on the whirlwind upholding, _15 The ghost of the murdered Victoria strode; In her right hand, a shadowy shroud she was holding, She swiftly advanced to my lonesome abode.

5. I wildly then called on the tempest to bear me—’

…

NOTE: 1.—Victoria: without title, 1811.

2.—ON THE DARK HEIGHT OF JURA.

1. Ghosts of the dead! have I not heard your yelling Rise on the night-rolling breath of the blast, When o’er the dark aether the tempest is swelling, And on eddying whirlwind the thunder-peal passed?

2. For oft have I stood on the dark height of Jura, _5 Which frowns on the valley that opens beneath; Oft have I braved the chill night-tempest’s fury, Whilst around me, I thought, echoed murmurs of death.

3. And now, whilst the winds of the mountain are howling, O father! thy voice seems to strike on mine ear; _10 In air whilst the tide of the night-storm is rolling, It breaks on the pause of the elements’ jar.

4. On the wing of the whirlwind which roars o’er the mountain Perhaps rides the ghost of my sire who is dead: On the mist of the tempest which hangs o’er the fountain, Whilst a wreath of dark vapour encircles his head.

NOTE: 2.—On the Dark, etc.: without title, 1811; The Father’s Spectre, Rossetti, 1870.

3.—SISTER ROSA: A BALLAD.

1. The death-bell beats!— The mountain repeats The echoing sound of the knell; And the dark Monk now Wraps the cowl round his brow, _5 As he sits in his lonely cell.

2. And the cold hand of death Chills his shuddering breath, As he lists to the fearful lay Which the ghosts of the sky, _10 As they sweep wildly by, Sing to departed day. And they sing of the hour When the stern fates had power To resolve Rosa’s form to its clay. _15

3. But that hour is past; And that hour was the last Of peace to the dark Monk’s brain. Bitter tears, from his eyes, gushed silent and fast; And he strove to suppress them in vain. _20

4. Then his fair cross of gold he dashed on the floor, When the death-knell struck on his ear.— ‘Delight is in store For her evermore; But for me is fate, horror, and fear.’ _25

5. Then his eyes wildly rolled, When the death-bell tolled, And he raged in terrific woe. And he stamped on the ground,— But when ceased the sound, _30 Tears again began to flow.

6. And the ice of despair Chilled the wild throb of care, And he sate in mute agony still; Till the night-stars shone through the cloudless air, _35 And the pale moonbeam slept on the hill.

7. Then he knelt in his cell:— And the horrors of hell Were delights to his agonized pain, And he prayed to God to dissolve the spell, _40 Which else must for ever remain.

8. And in fervent pray’r he knelt on the ground, Till the abbey bell struck One: His feverish blood ran chill at the sound: A voice hollow and horrible murmured around— _45 ‘The term of thy penance is done!’

9. Grew dark the night; The moonbeam bright Waxed faint on the mountain high; And, from the black hill, _50 Went a voice cold and still,— ‘Monk! thou art free to die.’

10. Then he rose on his feet, And his heart loud did beat, And his limbs they were palsied with dread; _55 Whilst the grave’s clammy dew O’er his pale forehead grew; And he shuddered to sleep with the dead.

11. And the wild midnight storm Raved around his tall form, _60 As he sought the chapel’s gloom: And the sunk grass did sigh To the wind, bleak and high, As he searched for the new-made tomb.

12. And forms, dark and high, _65 Seemed around him to fly, And mingle their yells with the blast: And on the dark wall Half-seen shadows did fall, As enhorrored he onward passed. _70

13. And the storm-fiends wild rave O’er the new-made grave, And dread shadows linger around. The Monk called on God his soul to save, And, in horror, sank on the ground. _75

14. Then despair nerved his arm To dispel the charm, And he burst Rosa’s coffin asunder. And the fierce storm did swell More terrific and fell, _80 And louder pealed the thunder.

15. And laughed, in joy, the fiendish throng, Mixed with ghosts of the mouldering dead: And their grisly wings, as they floated along, Whistled in murmurs dread. _85

16. And her skeleton form the dead Nun reared Which dripped with the chill dew of hell. In her half-eaten eyeballs two pale flames appeared, And triumphant their gleam on the dark Monk glared, As he stood within the cell. _90

17. And her lank hand lay on his shuddering brain; But each power was nerved by fear.— ‘I never, henceforth, may breathe again; Death now ends mine anguished pain.— The grave yawns,—we meet there.’ _95

18. And her skeleton lungs did utter the sound, So deadly, so lone, and so fell, That in long vibrations shuddered the ground; And as the stern notes floated around, A deep groan was answered from hell.

NOTE: 3.—Sister Rosa: Ballad, 1811.

4.—ST. IRVYNE’S TOWER.

1. How swiftly through Heaven’s wide expanse Bright day’s resplendent colours fade! How sweetly does the moonbeam’s glance With silver tint St. Irvyne’s glade!

2. No cloud along the spangled air, _5 Is borne upon the evening breeze; How solemn is the scene! how fair The moonbeams rest upon the trees!

3. Yon dark gray turret glimmers white, Upon it sits the mournful owl; _10 Along the stillness of the night, Her melancholy shriekings roll.

4. But not alone on Irvyne’s tower, The silver moonbeam pours her ray; It gleams

upon the ivied bower, _15 It dances in the cascade’s spray.

5. ‘Ah! why do dark’ning shades conceal The hour, when man must cease to be? Why may not human minds unveil The dim mists of futurity?— _20

6. ‘The keenness of the world hath torn The heart which opens to its blast; Despised, neglected, and forlorn, Sinks the wretch in death at last.’

NOTE: 4.—St. Irvyne’s Tower: Song, 1810.

5.—BEREAVEMENT.

1. How stern are the woes of the desolate mourner, As he bends in still grief o’er the hallowed bier, As enanguished he turns from the laugh of the scorner, And drops, to Perfection’s remembrance, a tear; When floods of despair down his pale cheek are streaming, _5 When no blissful hope on his bosom is beaming, Or, if lulled for awhile, soon he starts from his dreaming, And finds torn the soft ties to affection so dear.

2. Ah! when shall day dawn on the night of the grave, Or summer succeed to the winter of death? _10 Rest awhile, hapless victim, and Heaven will save The spirit, that faded away with the breath. Eternity points in its amaranth bower, Where no clouds of fate o’er the sweet prospect lower, Unspeakable pleasure, of goodness the dower, _15 When woe fades away like the mist of the heath.

NOTE: 5.—Bereavement: Song, 1811.

6.—THE DROWNED LOVER.

1. Ah! faint are her limbs, and her footstep is weary, Yet far must the desolate wanderer roam; Though the tempest is stern, and the mountain is dreary, She must quit at deep midnight her pitiless home. I see her swift foot dash the dew from the whortle, _5 As she rapidly hastes to the green grove of myrtle; And I hear, as she wraps round her figure the kirtle, ‘Stay thy boat on the lake,—dearest Henry, I come.’

2. High swelled in her bosom the throb of affection, As lightly her form bounded over the lea, _10 And arose in her mind every dear recollection; ‘I come, dearest Henry, and wait but for thee.’ How sad, when dear hope every sorrow is soothing, When sympathy’s swell the soft bosom is moving, And the mind the mild joys of affection is proving, _15 Is the stern voice of fate that bids happiness flee!

3. Oh! dark lowered the clouds on that horrible eve, And the moon dimly gleamed through the tempested air; Oh! how could fond visions such softness deceive? Oh! how could false hope rend, a bosom so fair? _20 Thy love’s pallid corse the wild surges are laving, O’er his form the fierce swell of the tempest is raving; But, fear not, parting spirit; thy goodness is saving, In eternity’s bowers, a seat for thee there.

6.—The Drowned Lover: Song. 1811; The Lake-Storm, Rossetti, 1870.

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POSTHUMOUS FRAGMENTS OF MARGARET MCHOLSON.

Being Poems found amongst the Papers of that noted Female who attempted the life of the King in 1786. Edited by John Fitzvictor.

[The “Posthumous Fragments”, published at Oxford by Shelley, appeared in November, 1810. See “Bibliographical List”.]

ADVERTISEMENT.

The energy and native genius of these Fragments must be the only apology which the Editor can make for thus intruding them on the public notice. The first I found with no title, and have left it so. It is intimately connected with the dearest interests of universal happiness; and much as we may deplore the fatal and enthusiastic tendency which the ideas of this poor female had acquired, we cannot fail to pay the tribute of unequivocal regret to the departed memory of genius, which, had it been rightly organized, would have made that intellect, which has since become the victim of frenzy and despair, a most brilliant ornament to society.

In case the sale of these Fragments evinces that the public have any curiosity to be presented with a more copious collection of my unfortunate Aunt's poems, I have other papers in my possession which shall, in that case, be subjected to their notice. It may be supposed they require much arrangement; but I send the following to the press in the same state in which they came into my possession. J. F.

WAR.

Ambition, power, and avarice, now have hurled Death, fate, and ruin, on a bleeding world. See! on yon heath what countless victims lie, Hark! what loud shrieks ascend through yonder sky; Tell then the cause, 'tis sure the avenger's rage _5 Has swept these myriads from life's crowded stage: Hark to that groan, an anguished hero dies, He shudders in death's latest agonies; Yet does a fleeting hectic flush his cheek, Yet does his parting breath essay to speak— _10 'Oh God! my wife, my children—Monarch thou For whose support this fainting frame lies low; For whose support in distant lands I bleed, Let his friends' welfare be the warrior's meed. He hears me not—ah! no—kings cannot hear, _15 For passion's voice has dulled their listless ear. To thee, then, mighty God, I lift my moan, Thou wilt not scorn a suppliant's anguished groan. Oh! now I die—but still is death's fierce pain— God hears my prayer—we meet, we meet again.' _20 He spake, reclined him on death's bloody bed, And with a parting groan his spirit fled. Oppressors of mankind to YOU we owe The baleful streams from whence these miseries flow; For you how many a mother weeps her son, _25 Snatched from life's course ere half his race was run! For you how many a widow drops a tear, In silent anguish, on her husband's bier! 'Is it then Thine, Almighty Power,' she cries, 'Whence tears of endless sorrow dim these eyes? _30 Is this the system which Thy powerful sway, Which else in shapeless chaos sleeping lay, Formed and approved?—it cannot be—but oh! Forgive me, Heaven, my brain is warped by woe.' 'Tis not—He never bade the war-note swell, _35 He never triumphed in the work of hell— Monarchs of earth! thine is the baleful deed, Thine are the crimes for which thy subjects bleed. Ah! when will come the

sacred fated time, When man unsullied by his leaders' crime, _40 Despising wealth, ambition, pomp, and pride, Will stretch him fearless by his foe-men's side? Ah! when will come the time, when o'er the plain No more shall death and desolation reign? When will the sun smile on the bloodless field, _45 And the stern warrior's arm the sickle wield? Not whilst some King, in cold ambition's dreams, Plans for the field of death his plodding schemes; Not whilst for private pique the public fall, And one frail mortal's mandate governs all. _50 Swelled with command and mad with dizzying sway; Who sees unmoved his myriads fade away. Careless who lives or dies—so that he gains Some trivial point for which he took the pains. What then are Kings?—I see the trembling crowd, _55 I hear their fulsome clamours echoed loud; Their stern oppressor pleased appears awhile, But April's sunshine is a Monarch's smile— Kings are but dust—the last eventful day Will level all and make them lose their sway; _60 Will dash the sceptre from the Monarch's hand, And from the warrior's grasp wrest the ensanguined brand. Oh! Peace, soft Peace, art thou for ever gone, Is thy fair form indeed for ever flown? And love and concord hast thou swept away, _65 As if incongruous with thy parted sway? Alas, I fear thou hast, for none appear. Now o'er the palsied earth stalks giant Fear, With War, and Woe, and Terror, in his train;— List'ning he pauses on the embattled plain, _70 Then speeding swiftly o'er the ensanguined heath, Has left the frightful work to Hell and Death. See! gory Ruin yokes his blood-stained car, He scents the battle's carnage from afar; Hell and Destruction mark his mad career, _75 He tracks the rapid step of hurrying Fear; Whilst ruined towns and smoking cities tell, That thy work, Monarch, is the work of Hell. 'It is thy work!' I hear a voice repeat, Shakes the broad basis of thy bloodstained seat; _80 And at the orphan's sigh, the widow's moan, Totters the fabric of thy guilt-stained throne— 'It is thy work, O Monarch;' now the sound Fainter and fainter, yet is borne around, Yet to enthusiast ears the murmurs tell _85 That Heaven, indignant at the work of Hell, Will soon the cause, the hated cause remove, Which tears from earth peace, innocence, and love.

NOTE: War: the title is Woodberry's, 1893; no title, 1810.

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FRAGMENT: SUPPOSED TO BE AN EPITHALAMIUM OF FRANCIS RAVAILLAC AND CHARLOTTE CORDAY.

'Tis midnight now—athwart the murky air, Dank lurid meteors shoot a livid gleam; From the dark storm-clouds flashes a fearful glare, It shows the bending oak, the roaring stream.

I pondered on the woes of lost mankind, _5 I pondered on the ceaseless rage of Kings; My rapt soul dwelt upon the ties that bind The mazy volume of commingling things, When fell and wild misrule to man stern sorrow brings.

I heard a yell—it was not the knell, _10 When the blasts on the wild lake sleep, That floats on the pause of the summer gale's swell, O'er the breast of the waveless deep.

I thought it had been death's accents cold That bade me recline on the shore; _15 I laid mine hot head on the surge-beaten mould, And thought to breathe no more.

But a heavenly sleep That did suddenly steep In balm my bosom's pain, _20 Pervaded my soul, And free from control, Did mine intellect range again.

Methought enthroned upon a silvery cloud, Which floated mid a strange and brilliant light; _25 My form upborne by viewless aether rode, And spurned the lessening realms of earthly night. What heavenly notes burst on my ravished ears, What beauteous spirits met my dazzled eye! Hark! louder swells the music of the spheres, _30 More clear the forms of speechless bliss float by, And heavenly gestures suit aethereal melody.

But fairer than the spirits of the air, More graceful than the Sylph of symmetry, Than the enthusiast's fancied love more fair, _35 Were the bright forms that swept the azure sky. Enthroned in roseate light, a heavenly band Strewed flowers of bliss that never fade away; They welcome virtue to its native land, And songs of triumph greet

the joyous day _40 When endless bliss the woes of fleeting life repay.

Congenial minds will seek their kindred soul, E’en though the tide of time has rolled between; They mock weak matter’s impotent control, And seek of endless life the eternal scene. _45 At death’s vain summons THIS will never die, In Nature’s chaos THIS will not decay— These are the bands which closely, warmly, tie Thy soul, O Charlotte, ‘yond this chain of clay, To him who thine must be till time shall fade away. _50

Yes, Francis! thine was the dear knife that tore A tyrant’s heart-strings from his guilty breast, Thine was the daring at a tyrant’s gore, To smile in triumph, to contemn the rest; And thine, loved glory of thy sex! to tear _55 From its base shrine a despot’s haughty soul, To laugh at sorrow in secure despair, To mock, with smiles, life’s lingering control, And triumph mid the griefs that round thy fate did roll.

Yes! the fierce spirits of the avenging deep _60 With endless tortures goad their guilty shades. I see the lank and ghastly spectres sweep Along the burning length of yon arcades; And I see Satan stalk athwart the plain; He hastes along the burning soil of Hell. _65 ‘Welcome, ye despots, to my dark domain, With maddening joy mine anguished senses swell To welcome to their home the friends I love so well.’

…

Hark! to those notes, how sweet, how thrilling sweet They echo to the sound of angels’ feet. _70

…

Oh haste to the bower where roses are spread, For there is prepared thy nuptial bed. Oh haste—hark! hark!—they’re gone.

…

CHORUS OF SPIRITS: Stay, ye days of contentment and joy, Whilst love every care is erasing, _75 Stay ye pleasures that never can cloy, And ye spirits that can

never cease pleasing.

And if any soft passion be near, Which mortals, frail mortals, can know, Let love shed on the bosom a tear, _80 And dissolve the chill ice-drop of woe.

SYMPHONY.

FRANCIS: ‘Soft, my dearest angel, stay, Oh! you suck my soul away; Suck on, suck on, I glow, I glow! Tides of maddening passion roll, _85 And streams of rapture drown my soul. Now give me one more billing kiss, Let your lips now repeat the bliss, Endless kisses steal my breath, No life can equal such a death.’ _90

CHARLOTTE: ‘Oh! yes I will kiss thine eyes so fair, And I will clasp thy form; Serene is the breath of the balmy air, But I think, love, thou feelest me warm And I will recline on thy marble neck _95 Till I mingle into thee; And I will kiss the rose on thy cheek, And thou shalt give kisses to me. For here is no morn to flout our delight, Oh! dost thou not joy at this? _100 And here we may lie an endless night, A long, long night of bliss.’

Spirits! when raptures move, Say what it is to love, When passion’s tear stands on the cheek, _105 When bursts the unconscious sigh; And the tremulous lips dare not speak What is told by the soul-felt eye. But what is sweeter to revenge’s ear Than the fell tyrant’s last expiring yell? _110 Yes! than love’s sweetest blisses ’tis more dear To drink the floatings of a despot’s knell. I wake—’tis done—’tis over.

NOTE: _66 ye]thou 1810.

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DESPAIR.

And canst thou mock mine agony, thus calm In cloudless radiance, Queen of silver night? Can you, ye flow’rets, spread your perfumed balm Mid pearly gems of dew that shine so bright? And you wild winds, thus can you sleep so still _5 Whilst throbs the tempest of my breast so high? Can the fierce night-fiends rest on yonder

hill, And, in the eternal mansions of the sky, Can the directors of the storm in powerless silence lie?

Hark! I hear music on the zephyr's wing, _10 Louder it floats along the unruffled sky; Some fairy sure has touched the viewless string— Now faint in distant air the murmurs die. Awhile it stills the tide of agony. Now—now it loftier swells—again stern woe _15 Arises with the awakening melody. Again fierce torments, such as demons know, In bitterer, feller tide, on this torn bosom flow.

Arise ye sightless spirits of the storm, Ye unseen minstrels of the aereal song, _20 Pour the fierce tide around this lonely form, And roll the tempest's wildest swell along. Dart the red lightning, wing the forked flash, Pour from thy cloud-formed hills the thunder's roar; Arouse the whirlwind—and let ocean dash _25 In fiercest tumult on the rocking shore,— Destroy this life or let earth's fabric be no more.

Yes! every tie that links me here is dead; Mysterious Fate, thy mandate I obey, Since hope and peace, and joy, for aye are fled, _30 I come, terrific power, I come away. Then o'er this ruined soul let spirits of Hell, In triumph, laughing wildly, mock its pain; And though with direst pangs mine heart-strings swell, I'll echo back their deadly yells again, _35 Cursing the power that ne'er made aught in vain.

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FRAGMENT.

Yes! all is past—swift time has fled away, Yet its swell pauses on my sickening mind; How long will horror nerve this frame of clay? I'm dead, and lingers yet my soul behind. Oh! powerful Fate, revoke thy deadly spell, _5 And yet that may not ever, ever be, Heaven will not smile upon the work of Hell; Ah! no, for Heaven cannot smile on me; Fate, envious Fate, has sealed my wayward destiny.

I sought the cold brink of the midnight surge, _10 I sighed beneath its wave to hide my woes, The rising tempest sung a funeral dirge, And on the blast a frightful yell arose. Wild flew the meteors o'er the maddened main, Wilder did grief athwart my

bosom glare; _15 Stilled was the unearthly howling, and a strain, Swelled mid the tumult of the battling air, ’Twas like a spirit’s song, but yet more soft and fair.

I met a maniac—like he was to me, I said—‘Poor victim, wherefore dost thou roam? _20 And canst thou not contend with agony, That thus at midnight thou dost quit thine home?’ ‘Ah there she sleeps: cold is her bloodless form, And I will go to slumber in her grave; And then our ghosts, whilst raves the maddened storm, _25 Will sweep at midnight o’er the wildered wave; Wilt thou our lowly beds with tears of pity lave?’

‘Ah! no, I cannot shed the pitying tear, This breast is cold, this heart can feel no more— But I can rest me on thy chilling bier, _30 Can shriek in horror to the tempest’s roar.’

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THE SPECTRAL HORSEMAN.

What was the shriek that struck Fancy’s ear As it sate on the ruins of time that is past? Hark! it floats on the fitful blast of the wind, And breathes to the pale moon a funeral sigh. It is the Benshie’s moan on the storm, _5 Or a shivering fiend that thirsting for sin, Seeks murder and guilt when virtue sleeps, Winged with the power of some ruthless king, And sweeps o’er the breast of the prostrate plain. It was not a fiend from the regions of Hell _10 That poured its low moan on the stillness of night: It was not a ghost of the guilty dead, Nor a yelling vampire reeking with gore; But aye at the close of seven years’ end, That voice is mixed with the swell of the storm, _15 And aye at the close of seven years’ end, A shapeless shadow that sleeps on the hill Awakens and floats on the mist of the heath. It is not the shade of a murdered man, Who has rushed uncalled to the throne of his God, _20 And howls in the pause of the eddying storm. This voice is low, cold, hollow, and chill, ’Tis not heard by the ear, but is felt in the soul. ’Tis more frightful far than the death-daemon’s scream, Or the laughter of fiends when they howl o’er the corpse

_25 Of a man who has sold his soul to Hell. It tells the approach of a mystic form, A white courser bears the shadowy sprite; More thin they are than the mists of the mountain, When the clear moonlight sleeps on the waveless lake. _30 More pale HIS cheek than the snows of Nithona, When winter rides on the northern blast, And howls in the midst of the leafless wood. Yet when the fierce swell of the tempest is raving, And the whirlwinds howl in the caves of Inisfallen, _35 Still secure mid the wildest war of the sky, The phantom courser scours the waste, And his rider howls in the thunder's roar. O'er him the fierce bolts of avenging Heaven Pause, as in fear, to strike his head. _40 The meteors of midnight recoil from his figure, Yet the 'wildered peasant, that oft passes by, With wonder beholds the blue flash through his form: And his voice, though faint as the sighs of the dead, The startled passenger shudders to hear, _45 More distinct than the thunder's wildest roar. Then does the dragon, who, chained in the caverns To eternity, curses the champion of Erin, Moan and yell loud at the lone hour of midnight, And twine his vast wreaths round the forms of the daemons; _50 Then in agony roll his death-swimming eyeballs, Though 'wildered by death, yet never to die! Then he shakes from his skeleton folds the nightmares, Who, shrieking in agony, seek the couch Of some fevered wretch who courts sleep in vain; _55 Then the tombless ghosts of the guilty dead In horror pause on the fitful gale. They float on the swell of the eddying tempest, And scared seek the caves of gigantic… Where their thin forms pour unearthly sounds _60 On the blast that sweets the breast of the lake, And mingles its swell with the moonlight air.

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MELODY TO A SCENE OF FORMER TIMES.

Art thou indeed forever gone, Forever, ever, lost to me? Must this poor bosom beat alone, Or beat at all, if not for thee? Ah! why was love to mortals given, _5 To lift them to the height of Heaven, Or dash them to the depths of Hell? Yet I do not reproach thee, dear! Ah, no! the agonies that swell This panting breast, this frenzied

brain, _10 Might wake my —‘s slumb’ring tear. Oh! Heaven is witness I did love, And Heaven does know I love thee still, Does know the fruitless sick’ning thrill, When reason’s judgement vainly strove _15 To blot thee from my memory; But which might never, never be. Oh! I appeal to that blest day When passion’s wildest ecstasy Was coldness to the joys I knew, _20 When every sorrow sunk away. Oh! I had never lived before, But now those blisses are no more. And now I cease to live again, I do not blame thee, love; ah, no! _25 The breast that feels this anguished woe. Throbs for thy happiness alone. Two years of speechless bliss are gone, I thank thee, dearest, for the dream. ’Tis night—what faint and distant scream _30 Comes on the wild and fitful blast? It moans for pleasures that are past, It moans for days that are gone by. Oh! lagging hours, how slow you fly! I see a dark and lengthened vale, _35 The black view closes with the tomb; But darker is the lowering gloom That shades the intervening dale. In visioned slumber for awhile I seem again to share thy smile, _40 I seem to hang upon thy tone. Again you say, ‘Confide in me, For I am thine, and thine alone, And thine must ever, ever be.’ But oh! awak’ning still anew, _45 Athwart my enanguished senses flew A fiercer, deadlier agony!

[End of “Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson”.]

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STANZA FROM A TRANSLATION OF THE MARSEILLAISE HYMN.

[Published by Forman, “Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1876; dated 1810.]

Tremble, Kings despised of man! Ye traitors to your Country, Tremble! Your parricidal plan At length shall meet its destiny… We all are soldiers fit to fight, _5 But if we sink in glory’s night Our mother Earth will give ye new The brilliant pathway to pursue Which leads to Death or Victory…

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BIGOTRY’S VICTIM.

[Published (without title) by Hogg, “Life of Shelley”, 1858; dated 1809-10. The title

is Rossetti's (1870).]

1. Dares the lama, most fleet of the sons of the wind, The lion to rouse from his skull-covered lair? When the tiger approaches can the fast-fleeting hind Repose trust in his footsteps of air? No! Abandoned he sinks in a trance of despair, _5 The monster transfixes his prey, On the sand flows his life-blood away; Whilst India's rocks to his death-yells reply, Protracting the horrible harmony.

2. Yet the fowl of the desert, when danger encroaches, _10 Dares fearless to perish defending her brood, Though the fiercest of cloud-piercing tyrants approaches Thirsting—ay, thirsting for blood; And demands, like mankind, his brother for food; Yet more lenient, more gentle than they; _15 For hunger, not glory, the prey Must perish. Revenge does not howl in the dead. Nor ambition with fame crown the murderer's head.

3. Though weak as the lama that bounds on the mountains, And endued not with fast-fleeting footsteps of air, _20 Yet, yet will I draw from the purest of fountains, Though a fiercer than tiger is there. Though, more dreadful than death, it scatters despair, Though its shadow eclipses the day, And the darkness of deepest dismay _25 Spreads the influence of soul-chilling terror around, And lowers on the corpses, that rot on the ground.

4. They came to the fountain to draw from its stream Waves too pure, too celestial, for mortals to see; They bathed for awhile in its silvery beam, _30 Then perished, and perished like me. For in vain from the grasp of the Bigot I flee; The most tenderly loved of my soul Are slaves to his hated control. He pursues me, he blasts me! 'Tis in vain that I fly: _35 - What remains, but to curse him,—to curse him and die?

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ON AN ICICLE THAT CLUNG TO THE GRASS OF A GRAVE.

[Published (without title) by Hogg, "Life of Shelley", 1858; dated 1809-10. The

poem, with title as above, is included in the Esdaile manuscript book.]

1. Oh! take the pure gem to where southerly breezes, Waft repose to some bosom as faithful as fair, In which the warm current of love never freezes, As it rises unmingled with selfishness there, Which, untainted by pride, unpolluted by care, _5 Might dissolve the dim icedrop, might bid it arise, Too pure for these regions, to gleam in the skies.

2. Or where the stern warrior, his country defending, Dares fearless the dark-rolling battle to pour, Or o'er the fell corpse of a dread tyrant bending, _10 Where patriotism red with his guilt-reeking gore Plants Liberty's flag on the slave-peopled shore, With victory's cry, with the shout of the free, Let it fly, taintless Spirit, to mingle with thee.

3. For I found the pure gem, when the daybeam returning, _15 Ineffectual gleams on the snow-covered plain, When to others the wished-for arrival of morning Brings relief to long visions of soul-racking pain; But regret is an insult—to grieve is in vain: And why should we grieve that a spirit so fair _20 Seeks Heaven to mix with its own kindred there?

4. But still 'twas some Spirit of kindness descending To share in the load of mortality's woe, Who over thy lowly-built sepulchre bending Bade sympathy's tenderest teardrop to flow. _25 Not for THEE soft compassion celestials did know, But if ANGELS can weep, sure MAN may repine, May weep in mute grief o'er thy low-laid shrine.

5. And did I then say, for the altar of glory, That the earliest, the loveliest of flowers I'd entwine, _30 Though with millions of blood-reeking victims 'twas gory, Though the tears of the widow polluted its shrine, Though around it the orphans, the fatherless pine? Oh! Fame, all thy glories I'd yield for a tear To shed on the grave of a heart so sincere. _35

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LOVE.

[Published (without title) by Hogg, “Life of Shelley”, 1858; dated 1811. The title is Rossetti’s (1870).]

Why is it said thou canst not live In a youthful breast and fair, Since thou eternal life canst give, Canst bloom for ever there? Since withering pain no power possessed, _5 Nor age, to blanch thy vermeil hue, Nor time’s dread victor, death, confessed, Though bathed with his poison dew, Still thou retain’st unchanging bloom, Fixed tranquil, even in the tomb. _10 And oh! when on the blest, reviving, The day-star dawns of love, Each energy of soul surviving More vivid, soars above, Hast thou ne’er felt a rapturous thrill, _15 Like June’s warm breath, athwart thee fly, O’er each idea then to steal, When other passions die? Felt it in some wild noonday dream, When sitting by the lonely stream, _20 Where Silence says, ‘Mine is the dell’; And not a murmur from the plain, And not an echo from the fell, Disputes her silent reign.

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ON A FETE AT CARLTON HOUSE: FRAGMENT.

[Published by Rossetti, “Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1870; dated 1811.]

By the mossy brink, With me the Prince shall sit and think; Shall muse in visioned Regency, Rapt in bright dreams of dawning Royalty.

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TO A STAR.

[Published (without title) by Hogg, “Life of Shelley”, 1858; dated 1811. The title is Rossetti’s (1870).]

Sweet star, which gleaming o’er the darksome scene Through fleecy clouds of silvery radiance fliest, Spanglet of light on evening’s shadowy veil, Which shrouds the day-beam from the waveless lake, Lighting the hour of sacred love; more sweet

_5 Than the expiring morn-star's paly fires:— Sweet star! When wearied Nature sinks to sleep, And all is hushed,—all, save the voice of Love, Whose broken murmurings swell the balmy blast Of soft Favonius, which at intervals _10 Sighs in the ear of stillness, art thou aught but Lulling the slaves of interest to repose With that mild, pitying gaze? Oh, I would look In thy dear beam till every bond of sense Became enamoured— _15

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TO MARY WHO DIED IN THIS OPINION.

[Published by Rossetti, "Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.", 1870; dated 1810-11.]

1. Maiden, quench the glare of sorrow Struggling in thine haggard eye: Firmness dare to borrow From the wreck of destiny; For the ray morn's bloom revealing _5 Can never boast so bright an hue As that which mocks concealing, And sheds its loveliest light on you.

2. Yet is the tie departed Which bound thy lovely soul to bliss? _10 Has it left thee broken-hearted In a world so cold as this? Yet, though, fainting fair one, Sorrow's self thy cup has given, Dream thou'lt meet thy dear one, Never more to part, in Heaven. _15

3. Existence would I barter For a dream so dear as thine, And smile to die a martyr On affection's bloodless shrine. _20 Nor would I change for pleasure That withered hand and ashy cheek, If my heart enshrined a treasure Such as forces thine to break.

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A TALE OF SOCIETY AS IT IS: FROM FACTS, 1811.

[Published (from Esdaile manuscript with title as above) by Rossetti, "Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.", 1870. Rossetti's title is "Mother and Son".]

1. She was an aged woman; and the years Which she had numbered on her toilsome

way Had bowed her natural powers to decay. She was an aged woman; yet the ray Which faintly glimmered through her starting tears, _5 Pressed into light by silent misery, Hath soul's imperishable energy. She was a cripple, and incapable To add one mite to gold-fed luxury: And therefore did her spirit dimly feel _10 That poverty, the crime of tainting stain, Would merge her in its depths, never to rise again.

2. One only son's love had supported her. She long had struggled with infirmity, Lingering to human life-scenes; for to die, _15 When fate has spared to rend some mental tie, Would many wish, and surely fewer dare. But, when the tyrant's bloodhounds forced the child For his cursed power unhallowed arms to wield— Bend to another's will—become a thing _20 More senseless than the sword of battlefield— Then did she feel keen sorrow's keenest sting; And many years had passed ere comfort they would bring.

3. For seven years did this poor woman live In unparticipated solitude. _25 Thou mightst have seen her in the forest rude Picking the scattered remnants of its wood. If human, thou mightst then have learned to grieve. The gleanings of precarious charity Her scantiness of food did scarce supply. _30 The proofs of an unspeaking sorrow dwelt Within her ghastly hollowness of eye: Each arrow of the season's change she felt. Yet still she groans, ere yet her race were run, One only hope: it was—once more to see her son. _35

4. It was an eve of June, when every star Spoke peace from Heaven to those on earth that live. She rested on the moor. 'Twas such an eve When first her soul began indeed to grieve: Then he was here; now he is very far. _40 The sweetness of the balmy evening A sorrow o'er her aged soul did fling, Yet not devoid of rapture's mingled tear: A balm was in the poison of the sting. This aged sufferer for many a year _45 Had never felt such comfort. She suppressed A sigh—and turning round, clasped William to her breast!

5. And, though his form was wasted by the woe Which tyrants on their victims love to wreak, Though his sunk eyeballs and his faded cheek _50 Of slavery's violence and scorn did speak, Yet did the aged woman's bosom glow. The vital fire seemed re-illumed within By this sweet unexpected welcoming. Oh, consummation of the fondest hope _55 That ever soared on Fancy's wildest wing! Oh, tenderness that foundst so sweet a scope! Prince who dost pride thee on thy mighty sway, When THOU canst feel such love, thou shalt be great as they!

6. Her son, compelled, the country's foes had fought, _60 Had bled in battle; and the stern control Which ruled his sinews and coerced his soul Utterly poisoned life's unmingled bowl, And unsubduable evils on him brought. He was the shadow of the lusty child _65 Who, when the time of summer season smiled, Did earn for her a meal of honesty, And with affectionate discourse beguiled The keen attacks of pain and poverty; Till Power, as envying her this only joy, _70 From her maternal bosom tore the unhappy boy.

7. And now cold charity's unwelcome dole Was insufficient to support the pair; And they would perish rather than would bear The law's stern slavery, and the insolent stare _75 With which law loves to rend the poor man's soul— The bitter scorn, the spirit-sinking noise Of heartless mirth which women, men, and boys Wake in this scene of legal misery.

…

NOTES: _28 grieve Esdaile manuscript; feel, 1870. _37 to those on earth that live Esdaile manuscripts; omitted, 1870.

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TO THE REPUBLICANS OF NORTH AMERICA.

[Published (from the Esdaile manuscript with title as above) by Rossetti, "Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.", 1870; dated 1812. Rossetti's title is "The Mexican Revolution".]

1. Brothers! between you and me Whirlwinds sweep and billows roar: Yet in spirit oft I see On thy wild and winding shore Freedom's bloodless banners wave,— _5 Feel the pulses of the brave Unextinguished in the grave,— See them drenched in sacred gore,— Catch the warrior's gasping breath Murmuring 'Liberty or death!' _10

2. Shout aloud! Let every slave, Crouching at Corruption's throne, Start into a man, and brave Racks and chains without a groan: And the castle's heartless glow, _15 And the hovel's vice and woe, Fade like gaudy flowers that blow— Weeds that peep, and then are gone Whilst, from misery's ashes risen, Love shall burst the captive's prison. _20

3. Cotopaxi! bid the sound Through thy sister mountains ring, Till each valley smile around At the blissful welcoming! And, O thou stern Ocean deep, _25 Thou whose foamy billows sweep Shores where thousands wake to weep Whilst they curse a villain king, On the winds that fan thy breast Bear thou news of Freedom's rest! _30

4. Can the daystar dawn of love, Where the flag of war unfurled Floats with crimson stain above The fabric of a ruined world? Never but to vengeance driven _35 When the patriot's spirit shriven Seeks in death its native Heaven! There, to desolation hurled, Widowed love may watch thy bier, Balm thee with its dying tear. _40

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TO IRELAND.

[Published, 1-10, by Rossetti, "Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.", 1870; 11-17, 25-28, by Dowden, "Life of Shelley", 1887; 18-24 by Kingsland, "Poet-Lore", July, 1892. Dated 1812.]

1. Bear witness, Erin! when thine injured isle Sees summer on its verdant pastures smile, Its cornfields waving in the winds that sweep The billowy surface of thy circling deep! Thou tree whose shadow o'er the Atlantic gave _5 Peace, wealth and beauty, to its friendly wave, its blossoms fade, And blighted are the leaves that cast

its shade; Whilst the cold hand gathers its scanty fruit, Whose chillness struck a canker to its root. _10

2. I could stand Upon thy shores, O Erin, and could count The billows that, in their unceasing swell, Dash on thy beach, and every wave might seem An instrument in Time the giant's grasp, _15 To burst the barriers of Eternity. Proceed, thou giant, conquering and to conquer; March on thy lonely way! The nations fall Beneath thy noiseless footstep; pyramids That for millenniums have defied the blast, _20 And laughed at lightnings, thou dost crush to nought. Yon monarch, in his solitary pomp, Is but the fungus of a winter day That thy light footstep presses into dust. Thou art a conqueror, Time; all things give way _25 Before thee but the 'fixed and virtuous will'; The sacred sympathy of soul which was When thou wert not, which shall be when thou perishest.

…

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ON ROBERT EMMET'S GRAVE.

[Published from the Esdaile manuscript book by Dowden, "Life of Shelley", 1887; dated 1812.]

…

6. No trump tells thy virtues—the grave where they rest With thy dust shall remain unpolluted by fame, Till thy foes, by the world and by fortune caressed, Shall pass like a mist from the light of thy name.

7. When the storm-cloud that lowers o'er the day-beam is gone, _5 Unchanged, unextinguished its life-spring will shine; When Erin has ceased with their memory to groan, She will smile through the tears of revival on thine.

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THE RETROSPECT: CWM ELAN, 1812.

[Published from the Esdaile manuscript book by Dowden, “Life of Shelley”, 1887.]

A scene, which ‘wildered fancy viewed In the soul’s coldest solitude, With that same scene when peaceful love Flings rapture’s colour o’er the grove, When mountain, meadow, wood and stream _5 With unalloying glory gleam, And to the spirit’s ear and eye Are unison and harmony. The moonlight was my dearer day; Then would I wander far away, _10 And, lingering on the wild brook’s shore To hear its unremitting roar, Would lose in the ideal flow All sense of overwhelming woe; Or at the noiseless noon of night _15 Would climb some heathy mountain’s height, And listen to the mystic sound That stole in fitful gasps around. I joyed to see the streaks of day Above the purple peaks decay, _20 And watch the latest line of light Just mingling with the shades of night; For day with me was time of woe When even tears refused to flow; Then would I stretch my languid frame _25 Beneath the wild woods’ gloomiest shade, And try to quench the ceaseless flame That on my withered vitals preyed; Would close mine eyes and dream I were On some remote and friendless plain, _30 And long to leave existence there, If with it I might leave the pain That with a finger cold and lean Wrote madness on my withering mien.

It was not unrequited love _35 That bade my ‘wildered spirit rove; ’Twas not the pride disdaining life, That with this mortal world at strife Would yield to the soul’s inward sense, Then groan in human impotence, _40 And weep because it is not given To taste on Earth the peace of Heaven. ’Twas not that in the narrow sphere Where Nature fixed my wayward fate There was no friend or kindred dear _45 Formed to become that spirit’s mate, Which, searching on tired pinion, found Barren and cold repulse around; Oh, no! yet each one sorrow gave New graces to the narrow grave. _50 For broken vows had early quelled The stainless spirit’s vestal flame; Yes! whilst the faithful bosom swelled, Then the envenomed arrow came, And Apathy’s unaltering eye _55 Beamed coldness on the misery; And early I had learned to scorn The chains of clay that bound a soul Panting to seize the wings of

morn, And where its vital fires were born _60 To soar, and spur the cold control Which the vile slaves of earthly night Would twine around its struggling flight.

Oh, many were the friends whom fame Had linked with the unmeaning name, _65 Whose magic marked among mankind The casket of my unknown mind, Which hidden from the vulgar glare Imbibed no fleeting radiance there. My darksome spirit sought—it found _70 A friendless solitude around. For who that might undaunted stand, The saviour of a sinking land, Would crawl, its ruthless tyrant's slave, And fatten upon Freedom's grave, _75 Though doomed with her to perish, where The captive clasps abhorred despair.

They could not share the bosom's feeling, Which, passion's every throb revealing, Dared force on the world's notice cold _80 Thoughts of unprofitable mould, Who bask in Custom's fickle ray, Fit sunshine of such wintry day! They could not in a twilight walk Weave an impassioned web of talk, _85 Till mysteries the spirits press In wild yet tender awfulness, Then feel within our narrow sphere How little yet how great we are! But they might shine in courtly glare, _90 Attract the rabble's cheapest stare, And might command where'er they move A thing that bears the name of love; They might be learned, witty, gay, Foremost in fashion's gilt array, _95 On Fame's emblazoned pages shine, Be princes' friends, but never mine!

Ye jagged peaks that frown sublime, Mocking the blunted scythe of Time, Whence I would watch its lustre pale _100 Steal from the moon o'er yonder vale Thou rock, whose bosom black and vast, Bared to the stream's unceasing flow, Ever its giant shade doth cast On the tumultuous surge below: _105

Woods, to whose depths retires to die The wounded Echo's melody, And whither this lone spirit bent The footstep of a wild intent:

Meadows! whose green and spangled breast _110 These fevered limbs have often pressed, Until the watchful fiend Despair Slept in the soothing coolness there! Have not your varied beauties seen The sunken eye, the withering mien, _115 Sad traces

of the unuttered pain That froze my heart and burned my brain. How changed since Nature's summer form Had last the power my grief to charm, Since last ye soothed my spirit's sadness, _120 Strange chaos of a mingled madness! Changed!—not the loathsome worm that fed In the dark mansions of the dead, Now soaring through the fields of air, And gathering purest nectar there, _125 A butterfly, whose million hues The dazzled eye of wonder views, Long lingering on a work so strange, Has undergone so bright a change. How do I feel my happiness? _130 I cannot tell, but they may guess Whose every gloomy feeling gone, Friendship and passion feel alone; Who see mortality's dull clouds Before affection's murmur fly, _135 Whilst the mild glances of her eye Pierce the thin veil of flesh that shrouds The spirit's inmost sanctuary. O thou! whose virtues latest known, First in this heart yet claim'st a throne; _140 Whose downy sceptre still shall share The gentle sway with virtue there; Thou fair in form, and pure in mind, Whose ardent friendship rivets fast The flowery band our fates that bind, _145 Which incorruptible shall last When duty's hard and cold control Has thawed around the burning soul,— The gloomiest retrospects that bind With crowns of thorn the bleeding mind, _150 The prospects of most doubtful hue That rise on Fancy's shuddering view,— Are gilt by the reviving ray Which thou hast flung upon my day.

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FRAGMENT OF A SONNET.

TO HARRIET.

[Published from the Esdaile manuscript book by Dowden, "Life of Shelley", 1887; dated August 1, 1812.]

Ever as now with Love and Virtue's glow May thy unwithering soul not cease to burn, Still may thine heart with those pure thoughts o'erflow Which force from mine such quick and warm return.

***

TO HARRIET.

[Published, 5-13, by Forman, “Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1876; 58-69, by Shelley, “Notes to Queen Mab”, 1813; and entire (from the Esdaile manuscript book) by Dowden, “Life of Shelley”, 1887; dated 1812.]

It is not blasphemy to hope that Heaven More perfectly will give those nameless joys Which throb within the pulses of the blood And sweeten all that bitterness which Earth Infuses in the heaven-born soul. O thou _5 Whose dear love gleamed upon the gloomy path Which this lone spirit travelled, drear and cold, Yet swiftly leading to those awful limits Which mark the bounds of Time and of the space When Time shall be no more; wilt thou not turn _10 Those spirit-beaming eyes and look on me, Until I be assured that Earth is Heaven, And Heaven is Earth?—will not thy glowing cheek, Glowing with soft suffusion, rest on mine, And breathe magnetic sweetness through the frame _15 Of my corporeal nature, through the soul Now knit with these fine fibres? I would give The longest and the happiest day that fate Has marked on my existence but to feel ONE soul-reviving kiss…O thou most dear, _20 ’Tis an assurance that this Earth is Heaven, And Heaven the flower of that untainted seed Which springeth here beneath such love as ours. Harriet! let death all mortal ties dissolve, But ours shall not be mortal! The cold hand _25 Of Time may chill the love of earthly minds Half frozen now; the frigid intercourse Of common souls lives but a summer’s day; It dies, where it arose, upon this earth. But ours! oh, ’tis the stretch of Fancy’s hope _30 To portray its continuance as now, Warm, tranquil, spirit-healing; nor when age Has tempered these wild ecstasies, and given A soberer tinge to the luxurious glow Which blazing on devotion’s pinnacle _35 Makes virtuous passion supersede the power Of reason; nor when life’s aestival sun To deeper manhood shall have ripened me; Nor when some years have added judgement’s store To all thy woman sweetness, all the fire _40 Which throbs in thine enthusiast heart; not then Shall holy friendship (for what other name May love like ours assume?), not even then Shall Custom so corrupt, or the cold forms Of this

desolate world so harden us, _45 As when we think of the dear love that binds Our souls in soft communion, while we know Each other's thoughts and feelings, can we say Unblushingly a heartless compliment, Praise, hate, or love with the unthinking world, _50 Or dare to cut the unrelaxing nerve That knits our love to virtue. Can those eyes, Beaming with mildest radiance on my heart To purify its purity, e'er bend To soothe its vice or consecrate its fears? _55 Never, thou second Self! Is confidence So vain in virtue that I learn to doubt The mirror even of Truth? Dark flood of Time, Roll as it listeth thee; I measure not By month or moments thy ambiguous course. _60 Another may stand by me on thy brink,, And watch the bubble whirled beyond his ken, Which pauses at my feet. The sense of love, The thirst for action, and the impassioned thought Prolong my being; if I wake no more, _65 My life more actual living will contain Than some gray veteran's of the world's cold school, Whose listless hours unprofitably roll By one enthusiast feeling unredeemed, Virtue and Love! unbending Fortitude, _70 Freedom, Devotedness and Purity! That life my Spirit consecrates to you.

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SONNET.

TO A BALLOON LADEN WITH KNOWLEDGE.

[Published from the Esdaile manuscript book by Dowden, "Life of Shelley", 1887; dated August, 1812.]

Bright ball of flame that through the gloom of even Silently takest thine aethereal way, And with surpassing glory dimm'st each ray Twinkling amid the dark blue depths of Heaven,— Unlike the fire thou bearest, soon shalt thou _5 Fade like a meteor in surrounding gloom, Whilst that, unquenchable, is doomed to glow A watch-light by the patriot's lonely tomb; A ray of courage to the oppressed and poor; A spark, though gleaming on the hovel's hearth, _10 Which through the tyrant's gilded domes shall roar; A beacon in the darkness of the Earth; A sun which, o'er

the renovated scene, Shall dart like Truth where Falsehood yet has been.

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SONNET.

ON LAUNCHING SOME BOTTLES FILLED WITH KNOWLEDGE INTO THE BRISTOL CHANNEL.

[Published from the Esdaile manuscript book by Dowden, “Life of Shelley”, 1887; dated August, 1812.]

Vessels of heavenly medicine! may the breeze Auspicious waft your dark green forms to shore; Safe may ye stem the wide surrounding roar Of the wild whirlwinds and the raging seas; And oh! if Liberty e’er deigned to stoop _5 From yonder lowly throne her crownless brow, Sure she will breathe around your emerald group The fairest breezes of her West that blow. Yes! she will waft ye to some freeborn soul Whose eye-beam, kindling as it meets your freight, _10 Her heaven-born flame in suffering Earth will light, Until its radiance gleams from pole to pole, And tyrant-hearts with powerless envy burst To see their night of ignorance dispersed.

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THE DEVIL’S WALK.

A BALLAD.

[Published as a broadside by Shelley, 1812.]

1. Once, early in the morning, Beelzebub arose, With care his sweet person adorning, He put on his Sunday clothes.

2. He drew on a boot to hide his hoof, _5 He drew on a glove to hide his claw, His horns were concealed by a Bras Chapeau, And the Devil went forth as natty a Beau As Bond-street ever saw.

3. He sate him down, in London town, _10 Before earth’s morning ray; With a favourite imp he began to chat, On religion, and scandal, this and that, Until the

dawn of day.

4. And then to St. James's Court he went, _15 And St. Paul's Church he took on his way; He was mighty thick with every Saint, Though they were formal and he was gay.

5. The Devil was an agriculturist, And as bad weeds quickly grow, _20 In looking over his farm, I wist, He wouldn't find cause for woe.

6. He peeped in each hole, to each chamber stole, His promising live-stock to view; Grinning applause, he just showed them his claws, _25 And they shrunk with affright from his ugly sight, Whose work they delighted to do.

7. Satan poked his red nose into crannies so small One would think that the innocents fair, Poor lambkins! were just doing nothing at all _30 But settling some dress or arranging some ball, But the Devil saw deeper there.

8. A Priest, at whose elbow the Devil during prayer Sate familiarly, side by side, Declared that, if the Tempter were there, _35 His presence he would not abide. Ah! ah! thought Old Nick, that's a very stale trick, For without the Devil, O favourite of Evil, In your carriage you would not ride.

9. Satan next saw a brainless King, _40 Whose house was as hot as his own; Many Imps in attendance were there on the wing, They flapped the pennon and twisted the sting, Close by the very Throne.

10. Ah! ah! thought Satan, the pasture is good, _45 My Cattle will here thrive better than others; They dine on news of human blood, They sup on the groans of the dying and dead, And supperless never will go to bed; Which will make them fat as their brothers. _50

11. Fat as the Fiends that feed on blood, Fresh and warm from the fields of Spain, Where Ruin ploughs her gory way, Where the shoots of earth are nipped in the bud, Where Hell is the Victor's prey, _55 Its glory the meed of the slain.

12. Fat—as the Death-birds on Erin's shore, That glutted themselves in her dearest gore, And flitted round Castlereagh, When they snatched the Patriot's heart, that HIS grasp _60 Had torn from its widow's maniac clasp, —And fled at the dawn of day.

13. Fat—as the Reptiles of the tomb, That riot in corruption's spoil, That fret their little hour in gloom, _65 And creep, and live the while.

14. Fat as that Prince's maudlin brain, Which, addled by some gilded toy, Tired, gives his sweetmeat, and again Cries for it, like a humoured boy. _70

15. For he is fat,—his waistcoat gay, When strained upon a levee day, Scarce meets across his princely paunch; And pantaloons are like half-moons Upon each brawny haunch. _75

16. How vast his stock of calf! when plenty Had filled his empty head and heart, Enough to satiate foplings twenty, Could make his pantaloon seams start.

17. The Devil (who sometimes is called Nature), _80 For men of power provides thus well, Whilst every change and every feature, Their great original can tell.

18. Satan saw a lawyer a viper slay, That crawled up the leg of his table, _85 It reminded him most marvellously Of the story of Cain and Abel.

19. The wealthy yeoman, as he wanders His fertile fields among, And on his thriving cattle ponders, _90 Counts his sure gains, and hums a song; Thus did the Devil, through earth walking, Hum low a hellish song.

20. For they thrive well whose garb of gore Is Satan's choicest livery, _95 And they thrive well who from the poor Have snatched the bread of penury, And heap the houseless wanderer's store On the rank pile of luxury.

21. The Bishops thrive, though they are big; _100 The Lawyers thrive, though they are thin; For every gown, and every wig, Hides the safe thrift of Hell within.

22. Thus pigs were never counted clean, Although they dine on finest corn; _105

And cormorants are sin-like lean, Although they eat from night to morn.

23. Oh! why is the Father of Hell in such glee, As he grins from ear to ear? Why does he doff his clothes joyfully, _110 As he skips, and prances, and flaps his wing, As he sidles, leers, and twirls his sting, And dares, as he is, to appear?

24. A statesman passed—alone to him, The Devil dare his whole shape uncover, _115 To show each feature, every limb, Secure of an unchanging lover.

25. At this known sign, a welcome sight, The watchful demons sought their King, And every Fiend of the Stygian night, _120 Was in an instant on the wing.

26. Pale Loyalty, his guilt-steeled brow, With wreaths of gory laurel crowned: The hell-hounds, Murder, Want and Woe, Forever hungering, flocked around; _125 From Spain had Satan sought their food, 'Twas human woe and human blood!

27. Hark! the earthquake's crash I hear,— Kings turn pale, and Conquerors start, Ruffians tremble in their fear, _130 For their Satan doth depart.

28. This day Fiends give to revelry To celebrate their King's return, And with delight its Sire to see Hell's adamantine limits burn. _135

29. But were the Devil's sight as keen As Reason's penetrating eye, His sulphurous Majesty I ween, Would find but little cause for joy.

30. For the sons of Reason see _140 That, ere fate consume the Pole, The false Tyrant's cheek shall be Bloodless as his coward soul.

NOTE: _55 Where cj. Rossetti; When 1812.

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FRAGMENT OF A SONNET.

FAREWELL TO NORTH DEVON.

[Published (from the Esdaile manuscript book) by Dowden, "Life of Shelley", 1887; dated August, 1812.]

Where man's profane and tainting hand Nature's primaeval loveliness has marred,

And some few souls of the high bliss debarred Which else obey her powerful command; …mountain piles _5 That load in grandeur Cambria's emerald vales.

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ON LEAVING LONDON FOR WALES.

[Published (from the Esdaile manuscript book) by Dowden, "Life of Shelley", 1887; dated November, 1812.]

Hail to thee, Cambria! for the unfettered wind Which from thy wilds even now methinks I feel, Chasing the clouds that roll in wrath behind, And tightening the soul's laxest nerves to steel; True mountain Liberty alone may heal _5 The pain which Custom's obduracies bring, And he who dares in fancy even to steal One draught from Snowdon's ever sacred spring Blots out the unholiest rede of worldly witnessing.

And shall that soul, to selfish peace resigned, _10 So soon forget the woe its fellows share? Can Snowdon's Lethe from the free-born mind So soon the page of injured penury tear? Does this fine mass of human passion dare To sleep, unhonouring the patriot's fall, _15 Or life's sweet load in quietude to bear While millions famish even in Luxury's hall, And Tyranny, high raised, stern lowers on all?

No, Cambria! never may thy matchless vales A heart so false to hope and virtue shield; _20 Nor ever may thy spirit-breathing gales Waft freshness to the slaves who dare to yield. For me!…the weapon that I burn to wield I seek amid thy rocks to ruin hurled, That Reason's flag may over Freedom's field, _25 Symbol of bloodless victory, wave unfurled, A meteor-sign of love effulgent o'er the world.

…

Do thou, wild Cambria, calm each struggling thought; Cast thy sweet veil of rocks and woods between, That by the soul to indignation wrought _30 Mountains and dells be mingled with the scene; Let me forever be what I have been, But not forever at my needy door Let Misery linger speechless, pale and lean; I am the friend of the

unfriended poor,— _35 Let me not madly stain their righteous cause in gore.

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THE WANDERING JEW'S SOLILOQUY.

[Published (from the Esdaile manuscript book) by Bertram Dobell, 1887.]

Is it the Eternal Triune, is it He Who dares arrest the wheels of destiny And plunge me in the lowest Hell of Hells? Will not the lightning's blast destroy my frame? Will not steel drink the blood-life where it swells? _5 No—let me hie where dark Destruction dwells, To rouse her from her deeply caverned lair, And, taunting her cursed sluggishness to ire, Light long Oblivion's death-torch at its flame And calmly mount Annihilation's pyre. _10 Tyrant of Earth! pale Misery's jackal Thou! Are there no stores of vengeful violent fate Within the magazines of Thy fierce hate? No poison in the clouds to bathe a brow That lowers on Thee with desperate contempt? _15 Where is the noonday Pestilence that slew The myriad sons of Israel's favoured nation? Where the destroying Minister that flew Pouring the fiery tide of desolation Upon the leagued Assyrian's attempt? _20 Where the dark Earthquake-daemon who engorged At the dread word Korah's unconscious crew? Or the Angel's two-edged sword of fire that urged Our primal parents from their bower of bliss (Reared by Thine hand) for errors not their own _25 By Thine omniscient mind foredoomed, foreknown? Yes! I would court a ruin such as this, Almighty Tyrant! and give thanks to Thee— Drink deeply—drain the cup of hate; remit this—I may die.

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EVENING.

[Published by Dowden, "Life of Shelley", 1887. Composed July 31, 1813.]

O thou bright Sun! beneath the dark blue line Of western distance that sublime descendest, And, gleaming lovelier as thy beams decline, Thy million hues to every vapour lendest, And, over cobweb lawn and grove and stream _5 Sheddest the liquid magic of thy light, Till calm Earth, with the parting splendour bright, Shows like the

vision of a beauteous dream; What gazer now with astronomic eye Could coldly count the spots within thy sphere? _10 Such were thy lover, Harriet, could he fly The thoughts of all that makes his passion dear, And, turning senseless from thy warm caress,— Pick flaws in our close-woven happiness.

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TO IANTHE.

[Published by Dowden, “Life of Shelley”, 1887. Composed September, 1813.]

I love thee, Baby! for thine own sweet sake; Those azure eyes, that faintly dimpled cheek, Thy tender frame, so eloquently weak, Love in the sternest heart of hate might wake; But more when o’er thy fitful slumber bending _5 Thy mother folds thee to her wakeful heart, Whilst love and pity, in her glances blending, All that thy passive eyes can feel impart: More, when some feeble lineaments of her, Who bore thy weight beneath her spotless bosom, _10 As with deep love I read thy face, recur,— More dear art thou, O fair and fragile blossom; Dearest when most thy tender traits express The image of thy mother’s loveliness.

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SONG FROM THE WANDERING JEW.

[Published as Shelley’s by Medwin, “Life of Shelley”, 1847, 1 page 58.]

See yon opening flower Spreads its fragrance to the blast; It fades within an hour, Its decay is pale—is fast. Paler is yon maiden; _5 Faster is her heart’s decay; Deep with sorrow laden, She sinks in death away.

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FRAGMENT FROM THE WANDERING JEW.

[Published as Shelley’s by Medwin, “Life of Shelley”, 1847, 1 page 56.]

The Elements respect their Maker’s seal! Still Like the scathed pine tree’s height, Braving the tempests of the night Have I ‘scaped the flickering flame. Like the

scathed pine, which a monument stands _5 Of faded grandeur, which the brands Of the tempest-shaken air Have riven on the desolate heath; Yet it stands majestic even in death, And rears its wild form there. _10,

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TO THE QUEEN OF MY HEART.

[Published as Shelley's by Medwin, "The Shelley Papers", 1833, and by Mrs. Shelley, "Poetical Works", 1839, 1st edition; afterwards suppressed as of doubtful authenticity.]

1. Shall we roam, my love, To the twilight grove, When the moon is rising bright; Oh, I'll whisper there, In the cool night-air, _5 What I dare not in broad daylight!

2. I'll tell thee a part Of the thoughts that start To being when thou art nigh; And thy beauty, more bright _10 Than the stars' soft light, Shall seem as a weft from the sky.

3. When the pale moonbeam On tower and stream Sheds a flood of silver sheen, _15 How I love to gaze As the cold ray strays O'er thy face, my heart's throned queen!

4. Wilt thou roam with me To the restless sea, _20 And linger upon the steep, And list to the flow Of the waves below How they toss and roar and leap?

5. Those boiling waves, _25 And the storm that raves At night o'er their foaming crest, Resemble the strife That, from earliest life, The passions have waged in my breast. _30

6. Oh, come then, and rove To the sea or the grove, When the moon is rising bright; And I'll whisper there, In the cool night-air, _35 What I dare not in broad daylight.

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NOTES ON THE TEXT AND ITS PUNCTUATION.

In the case of every poem published during Shelley's lifetime, the text of this edition is based upon that of the editio princeps or earliest issue. Wherever our text deviates verbally from this exemplar, the word or words of the editio princeps will be found

recorded in a footnote. In like manner, wherever the text of the poems first printed by Mrs. Shelley in the “Posthumous Poems” of 1824 or the “Poetical Works” of 1839 is modified by manuscript authority or otherwise, the reading of the earliest printed text has been subjoined in a footnote. Shelley’s punctuation—or what may be presumed to be his—has been retained, save in the case of errors (whether of the transcriber or the printer) overlooked in the revision of the proof-sheets, and of a few places where the pointing, though certainly or seemingly Shelley’s, tends to obscure the sense or grammatical construction. In the following notes the more important textual difficulties are briefly discussed, and the readings embodied in the text of this edition, it is hoped, sufficiently justified. An attempt has also been made to record the original punctuation where it is here departed from.

1. THE DAEMON OF THE WORLD: PART 1.

The following paragraph, relating to this poem, closes Shelley’s “Preface” to “Alastor”, etc., 1816:—‘The Fragment entitled “The Daemon of the World” is a detached part of a poem which the author does not intend for publication. The metre in which it is composed is that of “Samson Agonistes” and the Italian pastoral drama, and may be considered as the natural measure into which poetical conceptions, expressed in harmonious language, necessarily fall.’

2. Lines 56, 112, 184, 288. The editor has added a comma at the end of these lines, and a period (for the comma of 1816) after by, line 279.

3. Lines 167, 168. The editio princeps has a comma after And, line 167, and heaven, line 168.

1. THE DAEMON OF THE WORLD: PART 2.

Printed by Mr. Forman from a copy in his possession of “Queen Mab”, corrected by Shelley’s hand. See “The Shelley Library”, pages 36-44, for a detailed history and description of this copy.

2. Lines 436-438. Mr. Forman prints:— Which from the exhaustless lore of human

weal Draws on the virtuous mind, the thoughts that rise In time-destroying infiniteness, gift, etc. Our text exhibits both variants—lore for ‘store,’ and Dawns for ‘Draws’—found in Shelley’s note on the corresponding passage of “Queen Mab” (8 204-206). See editor’s note on this passage. Shelley’s comma after infiniteness, line 438, is omitted as tending to obscure the construction.

1. ALASTOR; OR THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE.

“Preface”. For the concluding paragraph see editor’s note on “The Daemon of the World”: Part 1.

2. Conducts, O Sleep, to thy, etc. (line 219.) The Shelley texts, 1816, 1824, 1839, have Conduct here, which Forman and Dowden retain. The suggestion that Shelley may have written ‘death’s blue vaults’ (line 216) need not, in the face of ‘the dark gate of death’ (line 211), be seriously considered; Conduct must, therefore, be regarded as a fault in grammar. That Shelley actually wrote Conduct is not impossible, for his grammar is not seldom faulty (see, for instance, “Revolt of Islam, Dedication”, line 60); but it is most improbable that he would have committed a solecism so striking both to eye and ear. Rossetti and Woodberry print Conducts, etc. The final s is often a vanishing quantity in Shelley’s manuscripts. Or perhaps the compositor’s hand was misled by his eye, which may have dropped on the words, Conduct to thy, etc., seven lines above.

3. Of wave ruining on wave, etc. (line 327.) For ruining the text of “Poetical Works”, 1839, both editions, has running—an overlooked misprint, surely, rather than a conjectural emendation. For an example of ruining as an intransitive (= ‘falling in ruins,’ or, simply, ‘falling in streams’) see “Paradise Lost”, 6 867-869:—Hell heard th’ insufferable noise, Hell saw Heav’n ruining from Heav’n, and would have fled Affrighted, etc. Ruining, in the sense of ‘streaming,’ ‘trailing,’ occurs in Coleridge’s “Melancholy: a Fragment” (Sibylline Leaves, 1817, page 262):—Where ruining ivies propped the ruins steep— “Melancholy” first appeared in “The

Morning Post", December 7, 1797, where, through an error identical with that here assumed in the text of 1839, running appears in place of ruining—the word intended, and doubtless written, by Coleridge.

4. Line 349. With Mr. Stopford Brooke, the editor substitutes here a colon for the full stop which, in editions 1816, 1824, and 1839, follows ocean. Forman and Dowden retain the full stop; Rossetti and Woodberry substitute a semicolon.

5. And nought but gnarled roots of ancient pines Branchless and blasted, clenched with grasping roots The unwilling soil. (lines 530-532.) Editions 1816, 1824, and 1839 have roots (line 530)—a palpable misprint, the probable origin of which may be seen in the line which follows. Rossetti conjectures trunks, but stumps or stems may have been Shelley's word.

6. Lines 543-548. This somewhat involved passage is here reprinted exactly as it stands in the editio princeps, save for the comma after and, line 546, first introduced by Dowden, 1890. The construction and meaning are fully discussed by Forman ("Poetical Works" of Shelley, edition 1876, volume 1 pages 39, 40), Stopford Brooke ("Poems of Shelley", G. T. S., 1880, page 323), Dobell ("Alastor", etc., Facsimile Reprint, 2nd edition 1887, pages 22-27), and Woodberry ("Complete P. W. of Shelley", 1893, volume 1 page 413).

1. THE REVOLT OF ISLAM.

The revised text (1818) of this poem is given here, as being that which Shelley actually published. In order to reconvert the text of "The Revolt of Islam" into that of "Laon and Cythna", the reader must make the following alterations in the text. At the end of the "Preface" add:—

'In the personal conduct of my Hero and Heroine, there is one circumstance which was intended to startle the reader from the trance of ordinary life. It was my object to break through the crust of those outworn opinions on which established institutions depend. I have appealed therefore to the most universal of all feelings,

and have endeavoured to strengthen the moral sense, by forbidding it to waste its energies in seeking to avoid actions which are only crimes of convention. It is because there is so great a multitude of artificial vices that there are so few real virtues. Those feelings alone which are benevolent or malevolent, are essentially good or bad. The circumstance of which I speak was introduced, however, merely to accustom men to that charity and toleration which the exhibition of a practice widely differing from their own has a tendency to promote. (The sentiments connected with and characteristic of this circumstance have no personal reference to the Writer.—[Shelley's Note.]) Nothing indeed can be more mischievous than many actions, innocent in themselves, which might bring down upon individuals the bigoted contempt and rage of the multitude.'

2 21 1: I had a little sister whose fair eyes

2 25 2: To love in human life, this sister sweet,

3 1 1: What thoughts had sway over my sister's slumber

3 1 3: As if they did ten thousand years outnumber

4 30 6: And left it vacant—'twas her brother's face—

5 47 5: I had a brother once, but he is dead!—

6 24 8: My own sweet sister looked), with joy did quail,

6 31 6: The common blood which ran within our frames,

6 39 6-9: With such close sympathies, for to each other Had high and solemn hopes, the gentle might Of earliest love, and all the thoughts which smother Cold Evil's power, now linked a sister and a brother.

6 40 1: And such is Nature's modesty, that those

8 4 9: Dream ye that God thus builds for man in solitude?

8 5 1: What then is God? Ye mock yourselves and give

8 6 1: What then is God? Some moonstruck sophist stood

8 6 8, 9: And that men say God has appointed Death On all who scorn his will to wreak immortal wrath.

8 7 1-4: Men say they have seen God, and heard from God, Or known from others who have known such things, And that his will is all our law, a rod To scourge us into slaves—that Priests and Kings

8 8 1: And it is said, that God will punish wrong;

8 8 3, 4: And his red hell’s undying snakes among Will bind the wretch on whom he fixed a stain

8 13 3, 4: For it is said God rules both high and low, And man is made the captive of his brother;

9 13 8: To curse the rebels. To their God did they

9 14 6: By God, and Nature, and Necessity.

9 15. The stanza contains ten lines—lines 4-7 as follows: There was one teacher, and must ever be, They said, even God, who, the necessity Of rule and wrong had armed against mankind, His slave and his avenger there to be;

9 18 3-6: And Hell and Awe, which in the heart of man Is God itself; the Priests its downfall knew, As day by day their altars lovelier grew, Till they were left alone within the fane;

10 22 9: On fire! Almighty God his hell on earth has spread!

10 26 7, 8: Of their Almighty God, the armies wind In sad procession: each among the train

10 28 1: O God Almighty! thou alone hast power.

10 31 1: And Oromaze, and Christ, and Mahomet,

10 32 1: He was a Christian Priest from whom it came

10 32 4: To quell the rebel Atheists; a dire guest

10 32 9: To wreak his fear of God in vengeance on mankind

10 34 5, 6: His cradled Idol, and the sacrifice Of God to God's own wrath—that Islam's creed

10 35 9: And thrones, which rest on faith in God, nigh overturned.

10 39 4: Of God may be appeased. He ceased, and they

10 40 5: With storms and shadows girt, sate God, alone,

10 44 9: As 'hush! hark! Come they yet? God, God, thine hour is near!'

10 45 8: Men brought their atheist kindred to appease

10 47 6: The threshold of God's throne, and it was she!

11 16 1: Ye turn to God for aid in your distress;

11 25 7: Swear by your dreadful God.'—'We swear, we swear!'

12 10 9: Truly for self, thus thought that Christian Priest indeed,

12 11 9: A woman? God has sent his other victim here.

12 12 6-8: Will I stand up before God's golden throne, And cry, 'O Lord, to thee did I betray An Atheist; but for me she would have known

12 29 4: In torment and in fire have Atheists gone;

12 30 4: How Atheists and Republicans can die;

2. Aught but a lifeless clod, until revived by thee (Dedic. 6 9).

So Rossetti; the Shelley editions, 1818 and 1839, read clog, which is retained by Forman, Dowden, and Woodberry. Rossetti's happy conjecture, clod, seems to Forman 'a doubtful emendation, as Shelley may have used clog in its [figurative] sense of weight, encumbrance.'—Hardly, as here, in a poetical figure: that would be to use a metaphor within a metaphor. Shelley compares his heart to a concrete object: if clog is right, the word must be taken in one or other of its two recognized LITERAL senses—'a wooden shoe,' or 'a block of wood tied round the neck or to

the leg of a horse or a dog.' Again, it is of others' hearts, not of his own, that Shelley here deplores the icy coldness and weight; besides, how could he appropriately describe his heart as a weight or encumbrance upon the free play of impulse and emotion, seeing that for Shelley, above all men, the heart was itself the main source and spring of all feeling and action? That source, he complains, has been dried up—its emotions desiccated—by the crushing impact of other hearts, heavy, hard and cold as stone. His heart has become withered and barren, like a lump of earth parched with frost—'a lifeless clod.' Compare "Summer and Winter", lines 11-15:— 'It was a winter such as when birds die In the deep forests; and the fishes lie Stiffened in the translucent ice, which makes Even the mud and slime of the warm lakes A wrinkled clod as hard as brick;' etc., etc.

The word revived suits well with clod; but what is a revived clog? Finally, the first two lines of the following stanza (7) seem decisive in favour of Roseetti's word.

If any one wonders how a misprint overlooked in 1818 could, after twenty-one years, still remain undiscovered in 1839, let him consider the case of clog in Lamb's parody on Southey's and Coleridge's "Dactyls" (Lamb, "Letter to Coleridge", July 1, 1796):— Sorely your Dactyls do drag along limp-footed; Sad is the measure that hangs a clog round 'em so, etc., etc.

Here the misprint, clod, which in 1868 appeared in Moxon's edition of the "Letters of Charles Lamb", has through five successive editions and under many editors—including Fitzgerald, Ainger, and Macdonald—held its ground even to the present day; and this, notwithstanding the preservation of the true reading, clog, in the texts of Talfourd and Carew Hazlitt. Here then is the case of a palpable misprint surviving, despite positive external evidence of its falsity, over a period of thirty-six years.

3. And walked as free, etc. (Ded. 7 6).

Walked is one of Shelley's occasional grammatical laxities. Forman well observes

that walkedst, the right word here, would naturally seem to Shelley more heinous than a breach of syntactic rule. Rossetti and, after him, Dowden print walk. Forman and Woodberry follow the early texts.

4. 1 9 1-7. Here the text follows the punctuation of the editio princeps, 1818, with two exceptions: a comma is inserted (1) after scale (line 201), on the authority of the Bodleian manuscript (Locock); and (2) after neck (line 205), to indicate the true construction. Mrs. Shelley's text, 1839, has a semicolon after plumes (line 203), which Rossetti adopts. Forman (1892) departs from the pointing of Shelley's edition here, placing a period at the close of line 199, and a dash after blended (line 200).

5. What life, what power, was, etc. (1 11 1.) The editio princeps, 1818, wants the commas here.

6. …and now We are embarked—the mountains hang and frown Over the starry deep that gleams below, A vast and dim expanse, as o'er the waves we go. (1 23 6-9.) With Woodberry I substitute after embarked (7) a dash for the comma of the editio princeps; with Rossetti I restore to below (8) a comma which I believe to have been overlooked by the printer of that edition. Shelley's meaning I take to be that 'a vast and dim expanse of mountain hangs frowning over the starry deep that gleams below it as we pass over the waves.'

7. As King, and Lord, and God, the conquering Fiend did own,—(1 28 9.) So Forman (1892), Dowden; the editio princeps, has a full stop at the close of the line,—where, according to Mr. Locock, no point appears in the Bodleian manuscript.

8. Black-winged demon forms, etc. (1 30 7.) The Bodleian manuscript exhibits the requisite hyphen here, and in golden-pinioned (32 2).

9. 1 31 2, 6. The 'three-dots' point, employed by Shelley to indicate a pause longer than that of a full stop, is introduced into these two lines on the authority of the Bodleian manuscript. In both cases it replaces a dash in the editio princeps. See list

of punctual variations below. Mr. Locock reports the presence in the manuscript of what he justly terms a ‘characteristic’ comma after Soon (31 2).

10. …mine shook beneath the wide emotion. (1 38 9.) For emotion the Bodleian manuscript has commotion (Locock)—perhaps the fitter word here.

11. Deep slumber fell on me:—my dreams were fire— (1 40 1.) The dash after fire is from the Bodleian manuscript,—where, moreover, the somewhat misleading but indubitably Shelleyan comma after passion (editio princeps, 40 4) is wanting (Locock). I have added a dash to the comma after cover (40 5) in order to clarify the sense.

12. And shared in fearless deeds with evil men, (1 44 4.) With Forman and Dowden I substitute here a comma for the full stop of the editio princeps. See also list of punctual variations below (stanza 44).

13. The Spirit whom I loved, in solitude Sustained his child: (1 45 4, 5.) The comma here, important as marking the sense as well as the rhythm of the passage, is derived from the Bodleian manuscript (Locock).

14. I looked, and we were sailing pleasantly, Swift as a cloud between the sea and sky; Beneath the rising moon seen far away, Mountains of ice, etc. (1 47 4-7.) The editio princeps has a comma after sky (5) and a semicolon after away (6)—a pointing followed by Forman, Dowden, and Woodberry. By transposing these points (as in our text), however, a much better sense is obtained; and, luckily, this better sense proves to be that yielded by the Bodleian manuscript, where, Mr. Locock reports, there is a semicolon after sky (5), a comma after moon (6), and no point whatsoever after away (6).

15. Girt by the deserts of the Universe; (1 50 4.) So the Bodleian manuscript, anticipated by Woodberry (1893). Rossetti (1870) had substituted a comma for the period of editio princeps.

16. Hymns which my soul had woven to Freedom, strong The source of passion,

whence they rose, to be; Triumphant strains, which, etc. (2 28 6-8.) The editio princeps, followed by Forman, has passion whence (7). Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works” 1839, both editions, prints: strong The source of passion, whence they rose to be Triumphant strains, which, etc.

17. But, pale, were calm with passion—thus subdued, etc. (2 49 6.) With Rossetti, Dowden, Woodberry, I add a comma after But to the pointing of the editio princeps. Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, both editions, prints: But pale, were calm.—With passion thus subdued, etc.

18. Methought that grate was lifted, etc. (3 25 1.) Shelley’s and Mrs. Shelley’s editions have gate, which is retained by Forman. But cf. 3 14 2, 7. Dowden and Woodberry follow Rossetti in printing grate.

19. Where her own standard, etc. (4 24 5.) So Mrs. Shelley, “Poetical Works”, 1839, both editions.

20. Beneath whose spires, which swayed in the red flame, (5 54 6.) Shelley’s and Mrs. Shelley’s editions (1818, 1839) give red light here,—an oversight perpetuated by Forman, the rhyme-words name (8) and frame (9) notwithstanding. With Rossetti, Dowden, Woodberry, I print red flame,—an obvious emendation proposed by Fleay.

21. —when the waves smile, As sudden earthquakes light many a volcano-isle, Thus sudden, unexpected feast was spread, etc. (6 7 8, 9; 8 1.) With Forman, Dowden, Woodberry, I substitute after isle (7 9) a comma for the full stop of editions 1818, 1839 (retained by Rossetti). The passage is obscure: perhaps Shelley wrote ‘lift many a volcano-isle.’ The plain becomes studded in an instant with piles of corpses, even as the smiling surface of the sea will sometimes become studded in an instant with many islands uplifted by a sudden shock of earthquake.

22. 7 7 2-6. The editio princeps punctuates thus:— and words it gave Gestures and looks, such as in whirlwinds bore Which might not be withstood, whence none

could save All who approached their sphere, like some calm wave Vexed into whirlpools by the chasms beneath; This punctuation is retained by Forman; Rossetti, Dowden, Woodberry, place a comma after gave (2) and Gestures (3), and—adopting the suggestion of Mr. A.C. Bradley—enclose line 4 (Which might…could save) in parentheses; thus construing which might not be withstood and whence none could save as adjectival clauses qualifying whirlwinds (3), and taking bore (3) as a transitive verb governing All who approached their sphere (5). This, which I believe to be the true construction, is perhaps indicated quite as clearly by the pointing adopted in the text—a pointing moreover which, on metrical grounds, is, I think, preferable to that proposed by Mr. Bradley. I have added a dash to the comma after sphere (5), to indicate that it is Cythna herself (and not All who approached, etc.) that resembles some calm wave, etc.

23. Which dwell in lakes, when the red moon on high Pause ere it wakens tempest;— (7 22 6, 7.) Here when the moon Pause is clearly irregular, but it appears in editions 1818, 1839, and is undoubtedly Shelley's phrase. Rossetti cites a conjectural emendation by a certain 'C.D. Campbell, Mauritius':—which the red moon on high Pours eve it wakens tempest; but cf. "Julian and Maddalo", lines 53, 54:— Meanwhile the sun paused ere it should alight, Over the horizon of the mountains. —and "Prince Athanase", lines 220, 221:— When the curved moon then lingering in the west Paused, in yon waves her mighty horns to wet, etc.

24. —time imparted Such power to me—I became fearless-hearted, etc. (7 30 4, 5.) With Woodberry I replace with a dash the comma (editio princeps) after me (5)retained by Forman, deleted by Rossetti and Dowden. Shelley's (and Forman's) punctuation leaves the construction ambiguous; with Woodberry's the two clauses are seen to be parallel—the latter being appositive to and explanatory of the former; while with Dowden's the clauses are placed in correlation: time imparted such power to me that I became fearless-hearted.

25. Of love, in that lorn solitude, etc. (7 32 7.) All editions prior to 1876 have lone solitude, etc. The important emendation lorn was first introduced into the text by Forman, from Shelley's revised copy of "Laon and Cythna", where lone is found to be turned into lorn by the poet's own hand.

26. And Hate is throned on high with Fear her mother, etc. (8 13 5.) So the editio princeps; Forman, Dowden, Woodberry, following the text of "Laon and Cythna", 1818, read, Fear his mother. Forman refers to 10 42 4, 5, where Fear figures as a female, and Hate as 'her mate and foe.' But consistency in such matters was not one of Shelley's characteristics, and there seems to be no need for alteration here. Mrs. Shelley (1839) and Rossetti follow the editio princeps.

27. The ship fled fast till the stars 'gan to fail, And, round me gathered, etc. (8 26 5, 6.) The editio princeps has no comma after And (6). Mrs. Shelley (1839) places a full stop at fail (5) and reads, All round me gathered, etc.

28. Words which the lore of truth in hues of flame, etc. (9 12 6.) The editio princeps, followed by Rossetti and Woodberry, has hues of grace [cf. note (20) above]; Forman and Dowden read hues of flame. For instances of a rhyme-word doing double service, see 9 34 6, 9 (thee…thee); 6 3 2, 4 (arms…arms); 10 5 1, 3 (came…came).

29. Led them, thus erring, from their native land; (10 5 6.) Editions 1818, 1839 read home for land here. All modern editors adopt Fleay's cj., land [rhyming with band (8), sand (9)].

30. 11 11 7. Rossetti and Dowden, following Mrs. Shelley (1839), print writhed here.

31. When the broad sunrise, etc. (12 34 3.) When is Rossetti's cj. (accepted by Dowden) for Where (1818, 1839), which Forman and Woodberry retain. In 11 24 1, 12 15 2 and 12 28 7 there is Forman's cj. for then (1818).

32. a golden mist did quiver Where its wild surges with the lake were blended,—

(12 40 3, 4.) Where is Rossetti's cj. (accepted by Forman and Dowden) for When (editions 1818, 1839; Woodberry). See also list of punctual variations below.

33. Our bark hung there, as on a line suspended, etc. (12 40 5.) Here on a line is Rossetti's cj. (accepted by all editors) for one line (editions 1818, 1839). See also list of punctual variations below.

34. LIST OF PUNCTUAL VARIATIONS. Obvious errors of the press excepted, our text reproduces the punctuation of Shelley's edition (1818), save where the sense is likely to be perverted or obscured thereby. The following list shows where the pointing of the text varies from that of the editio princeps (1818) which is in every instance recorded here.

DEDICATION, 7. long. (9).

CANTO 1. 9. scale (3), neck (7). 11. What life what power (1). 22. boat, (8), lay (9). 23. embarked, (7), below A vast (8, 9). 26. world (1), chaos: Lo! (2). 28. life: (2), own. (9). 29. mirth, (6). 30. language (2), But, when (5). 31. foundations—soon (2), war— thrones (6), multitude, (7). 32. flame, (4). 33. lightnings (3), truth, (5), brood, (5), hearts, (8). 34. Fiend (6). 35. keep (8). 37. mountains— (8). 38. unfold, (1), woe: (4), show, (5). 39. gladness, (6) 40 fire, (1), cover, (5), far (6). 42. kiss. (9). 43. But (5). 44. men. (4), fame; (7). 45. loved (4). 47. sky, (5), away (6). 49. dream, (2), floods. (9). 50. Universe. (4), language (6). 54. blind. (4). 57. mine—He (8). 58. said— (5). 60. tongue, (9).

CANTO 2. 1. which (4). 3. Yet flattering power had (7). 4. lust, (6). 6. kind, (2). 11. Nor, (2). 13. ruin. (3), trust. (9). 18. friend (3). 22. thought, (6), fancies (7). 24. radiancy, (3). 25. dells, (8). 26. waste, (4) 28. passion (7). 31. yet (4). 32. which (3). 33. blight (8), who (8). 37. seat; (7). 39. not—'wherefore (1). 40. good, (5). 41. tears (7). 43. air (2). 46. fire, (3). 47. stroke, (2). 49. But (6).

CANTO 3. 1. dream, (4). 3. shown (7), That (9). 4. when, (3). 5. ever (7). 7. And (1). 16. Below (6). 19. if (4). 25. thither, (2). 26. worm (2), there, (3). 27. beautiful, (8).

28. And (1). 30. As (1).

CANTO 4. 2. fallen—We (6). 3. ray, (7). 4. sleep, (5). 8. fed (6). 10. wide; (1), sword (7). 16. chance, (7). 19. her (3), blending (8). 23. tyranny, (4). 24. unwillingly (1). 26. blood; (2). 27. around (2), as (4). 31. or (4). 33. was (5).

CANTO 5. 1. flow, (5). 2. profound—Oh, (4), veiled, (6). 3. victory (1), face— (8). 4. swim, (5) 6. spread, (2), outsprung (5), far, (6), war, (8). 8. avail (5). 10. weep; (4), tents (8). 11. lives, (8). 13. beside (1). 15. sky, (3). 17. love (4). 20. Which (9). 22. gloom, (8). 23. King (6). 27. known, (4). 33. ye? (1), Othman— (3). 34. pure— (7). 35. people (1). 36. where (3). 38. quail; (2). 39. society, (8). 40. see (1). 43. light (8), throne. (9). 50. skies, (6). 51. Image (7), isles; all (9), amaze. When (9, 10), fair. (12). 51. 1: will (15), train (15). 51. 2: wert, (5). 51. 4: brethren (1). 51. 5: steaming, (6). 55. creep. (9).

CANTO 6. 1. snapped (9). 2. gate, (2). 5. rout (4), voice, (6), looks, (6). 6. as (1). 7. prey, (1), isle. (9). 8. sight (2). 12. glen (4). 14. almost (1), dismounting (4). 15. blood (2). 21. reins:—We (3), word (3). 22. crest (6). 25. And, (1), and (9). 28. but (3), there, (8). 30. air. (9). 32. voice:— (1). 37. frames; (5). 43. mane, (2), again, (7). 48. Now (8). 51. hut, (4). 54. waste, (7).

CANTO 7. 2. was, (5). 6. dreams (3). 7. gave Gestures and (2, 3), withstood, (4), save (4), sphere, (5). 8. sent, (2). 14. taught, (6), sought, (8). 17. and (6). 18. own (5), beloved:— (5). 19. tears; (2), which, (3), appears, (5). 25. me, (1), shapes (5). 27. And (1). 28. strength (1). 30. Aye, (3), me, (5). 33. pure (9). 38. wracked; (4), cataract, (5).

CANTO 8. 2. and (2). 9. shadow (5). 11. freedom (7), blood. (9). 13. Woman, (8), bond-slave, (8). 14. pursuing (8), wretch! (9). 15. home, (3). 21. Hate, (1). 23. reply, (1). 25. fairest, (1). 26. And (6). 28. thunder (2).

CANTO 9. 4. hills, (1), brood, (6). 5. port—alas! (1). 8. grave (2). 9. with friend (3), occupations (7), overnumber, (8). 12. lair; (5), Words, (6). 15. who, (4), armed, (5),

misery. (9). 17. call, (4). 20. truth (9). 22. sharest; (4). 23. Faith, (8). 28. conceive (8). 30. and as (5), hope (8). 33. thoughts:—Come (7). 34. willingly (2). 35. ceased, (8). 36. undight; (4).

CANTO 10. 2. tongue, (1). 7. conspirators (6), wolves, (8). 8. smiles, (5). 9. bands, (2) 11. file did (5). 18. but (5). 19. brought, (5). 24. food (5). 29. worshippers (3). 32. west (2). 36. foes, (5). 38. now! (2). 40. alone, (5). 41. morn—at (1). 42. below, (2). 43. deep, (7), pest (8). 44. drear (8). 47. 'Kill me!' they (9). 48. died, (8).

CANTO 11. 4. which, (6), eyes, (8). 5. tenderness (7). 7. return—the (8). 8. midnight— (1). 10. multitude (1). 11. cheeks (1), here (4). 12. come, give (3). 13. many (1). 14. arrest, (4), terror, (6). 19. thus (1). 20. Stranger: 'What (5). 23. People: (7).

CANTO 12. 3. and like (7). 7. away (7). 8. Fairer it seems than (7). 10. self, (9). 11. divine (2), beauty— (3). 12. own. (9). 14. fear, (1), choose, (4). 17. death? the (1). 19. radiance (3). 22. spake; (5). 25. thee beloved;— (8). 26. towers (6). 28. repent, (2). 29. withdrawn, (2). 31. stood a winged Thought (1). 32. gossamer, (6). 33. stream (1). 34. sunrise, (3), gold, (3), quiver, (4). 35. abode, (4). 37. wonderful; (3), go, (4). 40. blended: (4), heavens, (6), lake; (6).

1. PRINCE ATHANASE.

Lines 28-30. The punctuation here ("Poetical Works", 1839) is supported by the Bodleian manuscript, which has a full stop at relief (line 28), and a comma at chief (line 30). The text of the "Posthumous Poems", 1824, has a semicolon at relief and a full stop at chief. The original draft of lines 29, 30, in the Bodleian manuscript, runs:— He was the child of fortune and of power, And, though of a high race the orphan Chief, etc. —which is decisive in favour of our punctuation (1839). See Locock, "Examination", etc., page 51.

2. Which wake and feed an ever-living woe,— (line 74.) All the editions have on for an, the reading of the Bodleian manuscript, where it appears as a substitute for his,

the word originally written. The first draft of the line runs: Which nursed and fed his everliving woe. Wake, accordingly, is to be construed as a transitive (Locock).

3. Lines 130-169. This entire passage is distinctly cancelled in the Bodleian manuscript, where the following revised version of lines 125-129 and 168-181 is found some way later on:— Prince Athanase had one beloved friend, An old, old man, with hair of silver white, And lips where heavenly smiles would hang and blend With his wise words; and eyes whose arrowy light Was the reflex of many minds; he filled From fountains pure, nigh overgrown and [lost], The spirit of Prince Athanase, a child; And soul-sustaining songs of ancient lore And philosophic wisdom, clear and mild. And sweet and subtle talk they evermore The pupil and the master [share], until Sharing that undiminishable store, The youth, as clouds athwart a grassy hill Outrun the winds that chase them, soon outran His teacher, and did teach with native skill Strange truths and new to that experienced man; So [?] they were friends, as few have ever been Who mark the extremes of life's discordant span. The words bracketed above, and in Fragment 5 of our text, are cancelled in the manuscript (Locock).

4. And blighting hope, etc. (line 152.) The word blighting here, noted as unsuitable by Rossetti, is cancelled in the Bodleian manuscript (Locock).

5. She saw between the chestnuts, far beneath, etc. (line 154.) The reading of editions 1824, 1839 (beneath the chestnuts) is a palpable misprint.

6. And sweet and subtle talk they evermore, The pupil and the master, shared; (lines 173, 174.) So edition 1824, which is supported by the Bodleian manuscript,—both the cancelled draft and the revised version: cf. note above. "Poetical Works", 1839, has now for they—a reading retained by Rossetti alone of modern editors.

7. Line 193. The 'three-dots' point at storm is in the Bodleian manuscript.

8. Lines 202-207. The Bodleian manuscript, which has a comma and dash after nightingale, bears out James Thomson's ('B. V.'s') view, approved by Rossetti, that

these lines form one sentence. The manuscript has a dash after here (line 207), which must be regarded as ‘equivalent to a full stop or note of exclamation’ (Locock). Editions 1824, 1839 have a note of exclamation after nightingale (line 204) and a comma after here (line 207).

9. Fragment 3 (lines 230-239). First printed from the Bodleian manuscript by Mr. C.D. Locock. In the space here left blank, line 231, the manuscript has manhood, which is cancelled for some monosyllable unknown—query, spring?

10. And sea-buds burst under the waves serene:— (line 250.) For under edition 1839 has beneath, which, however, is cancelled for under in the Bodleian manuscript (Locock).

11. Lines 251-254. This, with many other places from line 222 onwards, evidently lacks Shelley’s final corrections.

12. Line 259. According to Mr. Locock, the final text of this line in the Bodleian manuscript runs:— Exulting, while the wide world shrinks below, etc.

13. Fragment 5 (lines 261-278). The text here is much tortured in the Bodleian manuscript. What the editions give us is clearly but a rough and tentative draft. ‘The language contains no third rhyme to mountains (line 262) and fountains (line 264).’ Locock. Lines 270-278 were first printed by Mr. Locock.

14. Line 289. For light (Bodleian manuscript) here the editions read bright. But light is undoubtedly the right word: cf. line 287. Investeth (line 285), Rossetti’s cj. for Investeth (1824, 1839) is found in the Bodleian manuscript.

15. Lines 297-302 (the darts…ungarmented). First printed by Mr. Locock from the Bodleian manuscript.

16. Another Fragment (A). Lines 1-3 of this Fragment reappear in a modified shape in the Bodleian manuscript of “Prometheus Unbound”, 2 4 28-30:— Or looks which tell that while the lips are calm And the eyes cold, the spirit weeps within Tears like the sanguine sweat of agony; Here the lines are cancelled—only, however, to

reappear in a heightened shape in “The Cenci”, 1 1 111-113:— The dry, fixed eyeball; the pale quivering lip, Which tells me that the spirit weeps within Tears bitterer than the bloody sweat of Christ. (Garnett, Locock.)

17. PUNCTUAL VARIATIONS. The punctuation of “Prince Athanase” is that of “Poetical Works”, 1839, save in the places specified in the notes above, and in line 60—where there is a full stop, instead of the comma demanded by the sense, at the close of the line.

ROSALIND AND HELEN.

1. A sound from there, etc. (line 63.) Rossetti’s cj., there for thee, is adopted by all modern editors.

2. And down my cheeks the quick tears fell, etc. (line 366.) The word fell is Rossetti’s cj. (to rhyme with tell, line 369) for ran 1819, 1839).

3. Lines 405-409. The syntax here does not hang together, and Shelley may have been thinking of this passage amongst others when, on September 6, 1819, he wrote to Ollier:—‘In the “Rosalind and Helen” I see there are some few errors, which are so much the worse because they are errors in the sense.’ The obscurity, however, may have been, in part at least, designed: Rosalind grows incoherent before breaking off abruptly. No satisfactory emendation has been proposed.

4. Where weary meteor lamps repose, etc. (line 551.) With Woodberry I regard Where, his cj. for When (1819, 1839), as necessary for the sense.

5. With which they drag from mines of gore, etc. (line 711.) Rossetti proposes yore for gore here, or, as an alternative, rivers of gore, etc. If yore be right, Shelley’s meaning is: ‘With which from of old they drag,’ etc. But cf. Note (3) above.

6. Where, like twin vultures, etc. (line 932.) Where is Woodberry’s reading for When (1819, 1839). Forman suggests Where but does not print it.

7. Lines 1093-1096. The editio princeps (1819) punctuates:— Hung in dense flocks

beneath the dome, That ivory dome, whose azure night With golden stars, like heaven, was bright O'er the split cedar's pointed flame;

8. Lines 1168-1170. Sunk (line 1170) must be taken as a transitive in this passage, the grammar of which is defended by Mr. Swinburne.

9. Whilst animal life many long years Had rescue from a chasm of tears; (lines 1208-9.) Forman substitutes rescue for rescued (1819, 1839)—a highly probable cj. adopted by Dowden, but rejected by Woodberry. The sense is: 'Whilst my life, surviving by the physical functions merely, thus escaped during many years from hopeless weeping.'

10. PUNCTUAL VARIATIONS. The following is a list of punctual variations, giving in each case the pointing of the editio princeps (1819):—heart 257; weak 425; Aye 492; There—now 545; immortally 864; not, 894; bleeding, 933; Fidelity 1055; dome, 1093; bright 1095; tremble, 1150; life-dissolving 1166; words, 1176; omit parentheses lines 1188-9; bereft, 1230.

JULIAN AND MADDALO.

1. Line 158. Salutations past; (1824); Salutations passed; (1839). Our text follows Woodberry.

2. —we might be all We dream of happy, high, majestical. (lines 172-3.) So the Hunt manuscript, edition 1824, has a comma after of (line 173), which is retained by Rossetti and Dowden.

3. —his melody Is interrupted—now we hear the din, etc. (lines 265-6.) So the Hunt manuscript; his melody Is interrupted now: we hear the din, etc., 1824, 1829.

4. Lines 282-284. The editio princeps (1824) runs:— Smiled in their motions as they lay apart, As one who wrought from his own fervid heart The eloquence of passion: soon he raised, etc.

5. Line 414. The editio princeps (1824) has a colon at the end of this line, and a

semicolon at the close of line 415.

6. The ‘three-dots’ point, which appears several times in these pages, is taken from the Hunt manuscript and serves to mark a pause longer than that of a full stop.

7. He ceased, and overcome leant back awhile, etc. (line 511.) The form leant is retained here, as the stem-vowel, though unaltered in spelling, is shortened in pronunciation. Thus leant (pronounced ‘lent’) from lean comes under the same category as crept from creep, lept from leap, cleft from cleave, etc.—perfectly normal forms, all of them. In the case of weak preterites formed without any vowel-change, the more regular formation with ed is that which has been adopted in this volume. See Editor’s “Preface”.

8. CANCELLED FRAGMENTS OF JULIAN AND MADDALO. These were first printed by Dr. Garnett, “Relics of Shelley”, 1862.

9. PUNCTUAL VARIATIONS. Shelley’s final transcript of “Julian and Maddalo”, though written with great care and neatness, is yet very imperfectly punctuated. He would seem to have relied on the vigilance of Leigh Hunt—or, failing Hunt, of Peacock—to make good all omissions while seeing the poem through the press. Even Mr. Buxton Forman, careful as he is to uphold manuscript authority in general, finds it necessary to supplement the pointing of the Hunt manuscript in no fewer than ninety-four places. The following table gives a list of the pointings adopted in our text, over and above those found in the Hunt manuscript. In all but four or five instances, the supplementary points are derived from Mrs. Shelley’s text of 1824.

1. Comma added at end of line: 40, 54, 60, 77, 78, 85, 90, 94, 107, 110, 116, 120, 123, 134, 144, 145, 154, 157, 168, 179, 183, 191, 196, 202, 203, 215, 217, 221, 224, 225, 238, 253, 254, 262, 287, 305, 307, 331, 338, 360, 375, 384, 385, 396, 432, 436, 447, 450, 451, 473, 475, 476, 511, 520, 526, 541, 582, 590, 591, 592, 593, 595, 603, 612.

2. Comma added elsewhere: seas, 58; vineyards, 58; dismounted, 61; evening, 65;

companion, 86; isles, 90; meant, 94; Look, Julian, 96; maniacs, 110; maker, 113; past, 114; churches, 136; rainy, 141; blithe, 167; beauty, 174; Maddalo, 192; others, 205; this, 232; respects, 241; shriek, 267; wrote, 286; month, 300; cried, 300; O, 304; and, 306; misery, disappointment, 314; soon, 369; stay, 392; mad, 394; Nay, 398; serpent, 399; said, 403; cruel, 439; hate, 461; hearts, 483; he, 529; seemed, 529; Unseen, 554; morning, 582; aspect, 585; And, 593; remember, 604; parted, 610.

3. Semicolon added at end of line: 101, 103, 167, 181, 279, 496.

4. Colon added at end of line: 164, 178, 606, 610.

5. Full stop added at end of line: 95, 201, 299, 319, 407, 481, 599, 601, 617.

6. Full stop added elsewhere: transparent. 85; trials. 472; Venice, 583.

7. Admiration—note added at end of line: 392, 492; elsewhere: 310, 323,

8. Dash added at end of line: 158, 379.

9. Full stop for comma (manuscript): eye. 119.

10. Full stop for dash (manuscript): entered. 158.

11. Colon for full stop (manuscript): tale: 596.

12. Dash for colon (manuscript): this— 207; prepared— 379.

13. Comma and dash for semicolon (manuscript): expressionless,— 292.

14. Comma and dash for comma (manuscript): not,— 127.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

The variants of B. (Shelley's 'intermediate draft' of "Prometheus Unbound", now in the Bodleian Library), here recorded, are taken from Mr. C.D. Locock's "Examination", etc., Clarendon Press, 1903. See Editor's Prefatory Note, above.

1. Act 1, line 204. B. has—shaken in pencil above—peopled.

2. Hark that outcry, etc. (1 553.) All editions read Mark that outcry, etc. As Shelley nowhere else uses Mark in the sense of List, I have adopted Hark, the reading of B.

3. Gleamed in the night. I wandered, etc. (1 770.) Forman proposes to delete the period at night.

4. But treads with lulling footstep, etc. (1 774.) Forman prints killing—a misreading of B. Editions 1820, 1839 read silent.

5. …the eastern star looks white, etc. (1 825.) B. reads wan for white.

6. Like footsteps of weak melody, etc. (2 1 89.) B. reads far (above a cancelled lost) for weak.

7. And wakes the destined soft emotion,— Attracts, impels them; (2 2 50, 51.) The editio princeps (1820) reads destined soft emotion, Attracts, etc.; "Poetical Works", 1839, 1st edition reads destined: soft emotion Attracts, etc. "Poetical Works", 1839, 2nd edition reads destined, soft emotion Attracts, etc. Forman and Dowden place a period, and Woodberry a semicolon, at destined (line 50).

8. There steams a plume-uplifting wind, etc. (2 2 53.) Here steams is found in B., in the editio princeps (1820) and in the 1st edition of "Poetical Works", 1839. In the 2nd edition, 1839, streams appears—no doubt a misprint overlooked by the editress.

9. Sucked up and hurrying: as they fleet, etc. (2 2 60.) So "Poetical Works", 1839, both editions. The editio princeps (1820) reads hurrying as, etc.

10. See'st thou shapes within the mist? (2 3 50.) So B., where these words are substituted for the cancelled I see thin shapes within the mist of the editio princeps (1820). 'The credit of discovering the true reading belongs to Zupitza' (Locock).

11. 2 4 12-18. The construction is faulty here, but the sense, as Professor Woodberry observes, is clear.

12. …but who rains down, etc. (2 4 100.) The editio princeps (1820) has reigns—a reading which Forman bravely but unsuccessfully attempts to defend.

13. Child of Light! thy limbs are burning, etc. (2 5 54.) The editio princeps (1820) has lips for limbs, but the word membre in Shelley's Italian prose version of these

lines establishes limbs, the reading of B. (Locock).

14. Which in the winds and on the waves doth move, (2 5 96.) The word and is Rossetti's conjectural emendation, adopted by Forman and Dowden. Woodberry unhappily observes that 'the emendation corrects a faultless line merely to make it agree with stanzaic structure, and…is open to the gravest doubt.' Rossetti's conjecture is fully established by the authority of B.

15. 3 4 172-174. The editio princeps (1820) punctuates: mouldering round These imaged to the pride of kings and priests, A dark yet mighty faith, a power, etc. This punctuation is retained by Forman and Dowden; that of our text is Woodberry's.

16. 3 4 180, 188. A dash has been introduced at the close of these two lines to indicate the construction more clearly. And for the sake of clearness a note of interrogation has been substituted for the semicolon of 1820 after Passionless (line 198).

17. Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses; (4 107.) B. has sliding for loose (cancelled).

18. By ebbing light into her western cave, (4 208.) Here light is the reading of B. for night (all editions). Mr. Locock tells us that the anticipated discovery of this reading was the origin of his examination of the Shelley manuscripts at the Bodleian. In printing night Marchant's compositor blundered; yet 'we cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.'

19. Purple and azure, white, and green, and golden, (4 242.) The editio princeps (1820) reads white, green and golden, etc.—white and green being Rossetti's emendation, adopted by Forman and Dowden. Here again—cf. note on (17) above—Prof. Woodberry commits himself by stigmatizing the correction as one 'for which there is no authority in Shelley's habitual versification.' Rossetti's conjecture is confirmed by the reading of B., white and green, etc.

20. Filling the abyss with sun-like lightenings, (4 276.) The editio princeps (1820)

reads lightnings, for which Rossetti substitutes lightenings—a conjecture described by Forman as ‘an example of how a very slight change may produce a very calamitous result.’ B. however supports Rossetti, and in point of fact Shelley usually wrote lightenings, even where the word counts as a dissyllable (Locock).

21. Meteors and mists, which throng air’s solitudes:— (4 547.) For throng (cancelled) B. reads feed, i.e., ‘feed on’ (cf. Pasturing flowers of vegetable fire, 3 4 110)—a reading which carries on the metaphor of line 546 (ye untameable herds), and ought, perhaps, to be adopted into the text.

22. PUNCTUAL VARIATIONS. The punctuation of our text is that of the editio princeps (1820), except in the places indicated in the following list, which records in each instance the pointing of 1820:—

1. The deed he saw could not have rated higher Than his most worthless life:— (1 1 24, 25.) Than is Mrs. Shelley’s emendation (1839) for That, the word in the editio princeps (1819) printed in Italy, and in the (standard) edition of 1821. The sense is: ‘The crime he witnessed could not have proved costlier to redeem than his murder has proved to me.’

2. And but that there yet remains a deed to act, etc. (1 1 100.) Read: And but : that there yet : remains : etc.

3. 1 1 111-113. The earliest draft of these lines appears as a tentative fragment in the Bodleian manuscript of “Prince Athanase” (vid. supr.). In the Bodleian manuscript of “Prometheus Unbound” they reappear (after 2 4 27) in a modified shape, as follows:— Or looks which tell that while the lips are calm And the eyes cold, the spirit weeps within Tears like the sanguine sweat of agony; Here again, however, the passage is cancelled, once more to reappear in its final and most effective shape in “The Cenci” (Locock).

4. And thus I love you still, but holily, Even as a sister or a spirit might; (1 2 24, 25.) For this, the reading of the standard edition (1821), the editio princeps has, And yet I

love, etc., which Rossetti retains. If yet be right, the line should be punctuated:—And yet I love you still,—but holily, Even as a sister or a spirit might;

5. What, if we, The desolate and the dead, were his own flesh, His children and his wife, etc. (1 3 103-105.) For were (104) Rossetti cj. are or wear. Wear is a plausible emendation, but the text as it stands is defensible.

6. But that no power can fill with vital oil That broken lamp of flesh. (3 2 17, 18.) The standard text (1821) has a Shelleyan comma after oil (17), which Forman retains. Woodberry adds a dash to the comma, thus making that (17) a demonstrative pronoun indicating broken lamp of flesh. The pointing of our text is that of editions 1819, 1839, But that (17) is to be taken as a prepositional conjunction linking the dependent clause, no power…lamp of flesh, to the principal sentence, So wastes…kindled mine (15, 16).

7. The following list of punctual variations indicates the places where our pointing departs from that of the standard text of 1821, and records in each instance the pointing of that edition:—

Act 1, Scene 2:—Ah! No, 34; Scene 3:—hope, 29; Why 44; love 115; thou 146; Ay 146. Act 2, Scene 1:—Ah! No, 13; Ah! No, 73; courage 80; nook 179; Scene 2:—fire, 70; courage 152. Act 3, Scene 1:—Why 64; mock 185; opinion 185; law 185; strange 188; friend 222; Scene 2:—so 3; oil, 17. Act 4, Scene 1:—wrong 41; looked 97; child 107; Scene 3:—What 19; father, (omit quotes) 32. Act 5, Scene 2:—years 119; Scene 3:—Ay, 5; Guards 94; Scene 4:—child, 145.

THE MASK OF ANARCHY.

Our text follows in the main the transcript by Mrs. Shelley (with additions and corrections in Shelley's hand) known as the 'Hunt manuscript.' For the readings of this manuscript we are indebted to Mr. Buxton Forman's Library Edition of the Poems, 1876. The variants of the 'Wise manuscript' (see Prefatory Note) are derived from the Facsimile edited in 1887 for the Shelley Society by Mr. Buxton Forman.

1. Like Eldon, an ermined gown; (4 2.) The editio princeps (1832) has Like Lord E— here. Lord is inserted in minute characters in the Wise manuscript, but is rejected from our text as having been cancelled by the poet himself in the (later) Hunt manuscript.

2. For he knew the Palaces Of our Kings were rightly his; (20 1, 2.) For rightly (Wise manuscript) the Hunt manuscript and editions 1832, 1839 have nightly which is retained by Rossetti and in Forman's text of 1876. Dowden and Woodberry print rightly which also appears in Forman's latest text ("Aldine Shelley", 1892).

3. In a neat and happy home. (54 4.) For In (Wise manuscript, editions 1832, 1839) the Hunt manuscript reads To a neat, etc., which is adopted by Rossetti and Dowden, and appeared in Forman's text of 1876. Woodberry and Forman (1892) print In a neat, etc.

4. Stanzas 70 3, 4; 71 1. These form one continuous clause in every text save the editio princeps, 1832, where a semicolon appears after around (70 4).

5. Our punctuation follows that of the Hunt manuscript, save in the following places, where a comma, wanting in the manuscript, is supplied in the text:—gay 47; came 58; waken 122; shaken 123; call 124; number 152; dwell 163; thou 209; thee 249; fashion 287; surprise 345; free 358. A semicolon is supplied after earth (line 131).

PETER BELL THE THIRD.

Thomas Brown, Esq., the Younger, H. F., to whom the "Dedication" is addressed, is the Irish poet, Tom Moore. The letters H. F. may stand for 'Historian of the Fudges' (Garnett), Hibernicae Filius (Rossetti), or, perhaps, Hibernicae Fidicen. Castles and Oliver (3 2 1; 7 4 4) were government spies, as readers of Charles Lamb are aware. The allusion in 6 36 is to Wordsworth's "Thanksgiving Ode on The Battle of Waterloo", original version, published in 1816:— But Thy most dreaded instrument, In working out a pure intent, Is Man—arrayed for mutual slaughter, —Yea, Carnage is Thy daughter!

1. Lines 547-549 (6 18 5; 19 1, 2). These lines evidently form a continuous clause. The full stop of the editio princeps at rocks, line 547, has therefore been deleted, and a semicolon substituted for the original comma at the close of line 546.

2. ‘Ay—and at last desert me too.’ (line 603.) Rossetti, who however follows the editio princeps, saw that these words are spoken—not by Peter to his soul, but—by his soul to Peter, by way of rejoinder to the challenge of lines 600-602:—‘And I and you, My dearest Soul, will then make merry, As the Prince Regent did with Sherry.’ In order to indicate this fact, inverted commas are inserted at the close of line 602 and the beginning of line 603.

3. The punctuation of the editio princeps, 1839, has been throughout revised, but—with the two exceptions specified in notes (1) and (2) above—it seemed an unprofitable labour to record the particular alterations, which serve but to clarify—in no instance to modify—the sense as indicated by Mrs. Shelley’s punctuation.

LETTER TO MARIA GISBORNE.

Our text mainly follows Mrs. Shelley’s transcript, for the readings of which we are indebted to Mr. Buxton Forman’s Library Edition of the Poems, 1876. The variants from Shelley’s draft are supplied by Dr. Garnett.

1. Lines 197-201. These lines, which are wanting in editions 1824 and 1839 (1st edition), are supplied from Mrs. Shelley’s transcript and from Shelley’s draft (Boscombe manuscript). In the 2nd edition of 1839 the following lines appear in their place:— Your old friend Godwin, greater none than he; Though fallen on evil times, yet will he stand, Among the spirits of our age and land, Before the dread tribunal of To-come The foremost, whilst rebuke stands pale and dumb.

2. Line 296. The names in this line are supplied from the two manuscripts. In the “Posthumous Poems” of 1824 the line appears:—Oh! that H— — and — were there, etc.

3. The following list gives the places where the pointing of the text varies from that

of Mrs. Shelley's transcript as reported by Mr. Buxton Forman, and records in each case the pointing of that original:—Turk 26; scorn 40; understood, 49; boat— 75; think, 86; believe; 158; are; 164; fair 233; cameleopard; 240; Now 291.

THE WITCH OF ATLAS.

1. The following list gives the places where our text departs from the pointing of the editio princeps ("Dedication", 1839; "Witch of Atlas", 1824), and records in each case the original pointing:— DEDIC.—pinions, 14; fellow, 41; Othello, 45. WITCH OF ATLAS.—bliss; 164; above. 192; gums 258; flashed 409; sunlight, 409; Thamondocana. 424; by. 432; engraven. 448; apart, 662; mind! 662.

EPIPSYCHIDION.

1. The following list gives the places where our text departs from the pointing of the editio princeps, 1821, with the original point in each case:—love, 44; pleasure; 68; flowing 96; where! 234; passed 252; dreamed, 278; Night 418; year), 440; children, 528.

ADONAIS.

1. The following list indicates the places in which the punctuation of this edition departs from that of the editio princeps, of 1821, and records in each instance the pointing of that text:—thou 10; Oh 19; apace, 65; Oh 73; flown 138; Thou 142; Ah 154; immersed 167; corpse 172; tender 172; his 193; they 213; Death 217; Might 218; bow, 249; sighs 314; escape 320; Cease 366; dark 406; forth 415; dead, 440; Whilst 493.

HELLAS.

A Reprint of the original edition (1822) of "Hellas" was edited for the Shelley Society in 1887 by Mr. Thomas J. Wise. In Shelley's list of Dramatis Personae the Phantom of Mahomet the Second is wanting. Shelley's list of Errata in edition 1822 was first printed in Mr. Buxton Forman's Library Edition of the Poems, 1876 (4 page 572). These errata are silently corrected in the text.

1. For Revenge and Wrong bring forth their kind, etc. (lines 728-729.) '"For" has no rhyme (unless "are" and "despair" are to be considered such): it requires to rhyme with "hear." From this defect of rhyme, and other considerations, I (following Mr. Fleay) used to consider it almost certain that "Fear" ought to replace "For"; and I gave "Fear" in my edition of 1870…However, the word in the manuscript ["Williams transcript"] is "For," and Shelley's list of errata leaves this unaltered—so we must needs abide by it.'—Rossetti, "Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.", edition 1878 (3 volumes), 2 page 456.

2. Lines 729-732. This quatrain, as Dr. Garnett ("Letters of Shelley", 1884, pages 166, 249) points out, is an expansion of the following lines from the "Agamemmon" of Aeschylus (758-760), quoted by Shelley in a letter to his wife, dated 'Friday, August 10, 1821':— to dussebes— meta men pleiona tiktei, sphetera d' eikota genna.

3. Lines 1091-1093. This passage, from the words more bright to the close of line 1093, is wanting in the editio princeps, 1822, its place being supplied by asterisks. The lacuna in the text is due, no doubt, to the timidity of Ollier, the publisher, whom Shelley had authorised to make excisions from the notes. In "Poetical Works", 1839, the lines, as they appear in our text, are restored; in Galignani's edition of "Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats" (Paris, 1829), however, they had already appeared, though with the substitution of wise for bright (line 1091), and of unwithstood for unsubdued (line 1093). Galignani's reading—native for votive—in line 1095 is an evident misprint. In Ascham's edition of Shelley (2 volumes, fcp. 8vo., 1834), the passage is reprinted from Galignani.

4. The following list shows the places in which our text departs from the punctuation of the editio princeps, 1822, and records in each instance the pointing of that edition:—dreams 71; course. 125; mockery 150; conqueror 212; streams 235; Moslems 275; West 305; moon, 347; harm, 394; shame, 402; anger 408; descends

447; crime 454; banner. 461; Phanae, 470; blood 551; tyrant 557; Cydaris, 606; Heaven 636; Highness 638; man 738; sayest 738; One 768; mountains 831; dust 885; consummation? 902; dream 921; may 923; death 935; clime. 1005; feast, 1025; horn, 1032; Noon, 1045; death 1057; dowers 1094.

CHARLES THE FIRST.

To Mr. Rossetti we owe the reconstruction of this fragmentary drama out of materials partly published by Mrs. Shelley in 1824, partly recovered from manuscript by himself. The bracketed words are, presumably, supplied by Mr. Rossetti to fill actual lacunae in the manuscript; those queried represent indistinct writing. Mr. Rossetti's additions to the text are indicated in the footnotes. In one or two instances Mr. Forman and Dr. Garnett have restored the true reading. The list of Dramatis Personae is Mr. Forman's.

THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE.

1. Lines 131-135. This grammatically incoherent passage is thus conjecturally emended by Rossetti:— Fled back like eagles to their native noon; For those who put aside the diadem Of earthly thrones or gems…, Whether of Athens or Jerusalem, Were neither mid the mighty captives seen, etc. In the case of an incomplete poem lacking the author's final corrections, however, restoration by conjecture is, to say the least of it, gratuitous.

2. Line 282. The words, 'Even as the deeds of others, not as theirs.' And then—are wanting in editions 1824, 1839, and were recovered by Dr. Garnett from the Boscombe manuscript. Mrs. Shelley's note here runs:—'There is a chasm here in the manuscript which it is impossible to fill. It appears from the context that other shapes pass and that Rousseau still stood beside the dreamer.' Mr. Forman thinks that the 'chasm' is filled up by the words restored from the manuscript by Dr. Garnett. Mr. A.C. Bradley writes: 'It seems likely that, after writing "I have suffered…pain", Shelley meant to strike out the words between "known" [276] and

“I” [278], and to fill up the gap in such a way that “I” would be the last word of the line beginning “May well be known”.’

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

1. TO —. Mrs. Shelley tentatively assigned this fragment to 1817. ‘It seems not improbable that it was addressed at this time [June, 1814] to Mary Godwin.’ Dowden, “Life”, 1 422, Woodberry suggests that ‘Harriet answers as well, or better, to the situation described.’

2. ON DEATH. These stanzas occur in the Esdaile manuscript along with others which Shelley intended to print with “Queen Mab” in 1813; but the text was revised before publication in 1816.

3. TO —. ‘The poem beginning “Oh, there are spirits in the air,” was addressed in idea to Coleridge, whom he never knew’—writes Mrs. Shelley. Mr. Bertram Dobell, Mr. Rossetti and Professor Dowden, however, incline to think that we have here an address by Shelley in a despondent mood to his own spirit.

4. LINES. These appear to be antedated by a year, as they evidently allude to the death of Harriet Shelley in November, 1816.

5. ANOTHER FRAGMENT TO MUSIC. To Mr. Forman we owe the restoration of the true text here—‘food of Love.’ Mrs. Shelley printed ‘god of Love.’

6. MARENGHI, lines 92, 93. The 1870 (Rossetti) version of these lines is:— White bones, and locks of dun and yellow hair, And ringed horns which buffaloes did wear— The words locks of dun (line 92) are cancelled in the manuscript. Shelley’s failure to cancel the whole line was due, Mr. Locock rightly argues, to inadvertence merely; instead of buffaloes the manuscript gives the buffalo, and it supplies the ‘wonderful line’ (Locock) which closes the stanza in our text, and with which Mr. Locock aptly compares “Mont Blanc”, line 69:— Save when the eagle brings some hunter’s bone, And the wolf tracks her there.

7. ODE TO LIBERTY, lines 1, 2. On the suggestion of his brother, Mr. Alfred

Forman, the editor of the Library Edition of Shelley's Poems (1876), Mr. Buxton Forman, printed these lines as follows:— A glorious people vibrated again: The lightning of the nations, Liberty, From heart to heart, etc. The testimony of Shelley's autograph in the Harvard College manuscript, however, is final against such a punctuation.

8. Lines 41, 42. We follow Mrs. Shelley's punctuation (1839). In Shelley's edition (1820) there is no stop at the end of line 41, and a semicolon closes line 42.

9. ODE TO NAPLES. In Mrs. Shelley's editions the various sections of this Ode are severally headed as follows:—'Epode 1 alpha, Epode 2 alpha, Strophe alpha 1, Strophe beta 2, Antistrophe alpha gamma, Antistrophe beta gamma, Antistrophe beta gamma, Antistrophe alpha gamma, Epode 1 gamma, Epode 2 gamma. In the manuscript, Mr. Locock tells us, the headings are 'very doubtful, many of them being vaguely altered with pen and pencil.' Shelley evidently hesitated between two or three alternative ways of indicating the structure and corresponding parts of his elaborate song; hence the chaotic jumble of headings printed in editions 1824, 1839. So far as the "Epodes" are concerned, the headings in this edition are those of editions 1824, 1839, which may be taken as supported by the manuscript (Locock). As to the remaining sections, Mr. Locock's examination of the manuscript leads him to conclude that Shelley's final choice was:—'Strophe 1, Strophe 2, Antistrophe 1, Antistrophe 2, Antistrophe 1 alpha, Antistrophe 2 alpha.' This in itself would be perfectly appropriate, but it would be inconsistent with the method employed in designating the "Epodes". I have therefore adopted in preference a scheme which, if it lacks manuscript authority in some particulars, has at least the merit of being absolutely logical and consistent throughout.

Mr. Locock has some interesting remarks on the metrical features of this complex ode. On the 10th line of Antistrophe 1a (line 86 of the ode)—Aghast she pass from the Earth's disk—which exceeds by one foot the 10th lines of the two corresponding

divisions, Strophe 1 and Antistrophe 1b, he observes happily enough that ‘Aghast may well have been intended to disappear.’ Mr. Locock does not seem to notice that the closing lines of these three answering sections—(1) hail, hail, all hail!—(2) Thou shalt be great—All hail!—(3) Art Thou of all these hopes.—O hail! increase by regular lengths—two, three, four iambi. Nor does he seem quite to grasp Shelley’s intention with regard to the rhyme scheme of the other triple group, Strophe 2, Antistrophe 2a, Antistrophe 2b. That of Strophe 2 may be thus expressed:—a-a-bc; d-d-bc; a-c-d; b-c. Between this and Antistrophe 2a (the second member of the group) there is a general correspondence with, in one particular, a subtle modification. The scheme now becomes a-a-bc; d-d-bc; a-c-b; d-c: i.e. the rhymes of lines 9 and 10 are transposed—God (line 9) answering to the halfway rhymes of lines 3 and 6, gawd and unawed, instead of (as in Strophe 2) to the rhyme-endings of lines 4 and 5; and, vice versa, fate (line 10) answering to desolate and state (lines 4 and 5), instead of to the halfway rhymes aforesaid. As to Antistrophe 2b, that follows Antistrophe 2a, so far as it goes; but after line 9 it breaks off suddenly, and closes with two lines corresponding in length and rhyme to the closing couplet of Antistrophe 1b, the section immediately preceding, which, however, belongs not to this group, but to the other. Mr. Locock speaks of line 124 as ‘a rhymeless line.’ Rhymeless it is not, for shore, its rhyme-termination, answers to bower and power, the halfway rhymes of lines 118 and 121 respectively. Why Mr. Locock should call line 12 an ‘unmetrical line,’ I cannot see. It is a decasyllabic line, with a trochee substituted for an iambus in the third foot—Around : me gleamed : many a : bright se : pulchre.

10. THE TOWER OF FAMINE.—It is doubtful whether the following note is Shelley’s or Mrs. Shelley’s: ‘At Pisa there still exists the prison of Ugolino, which goes by the name of “La Torre della Fame”; in the adjoining building the galley-slaves are confined. It is situated on the Ponte al Mare on the Arno.’

11. GINEVRA, line 129: Through seas and winds, cities and wildernesses. The

footnote omits Professor Dowden's conjectural emendation—woods—for winds, the reading of edition 1824 here.

12. THE LADY OF THE SOUTH. Our text adopts Mr. Forman's correction—drouth for drought—in line 3. This should have been recorded in a footnote.

13. HYMN TO MERCURY, line 609. The period at now is supported by the Harvard manuscript.

JUVENILIA. QUEEN MAB.

1. Throughout this varied and eternal world Soul is the only element: the block That for uncounted ages has remained The moveless pillar of a mountain's weight Is active, living spirit. (4, lines 139-143.) This punctuation was proposed in 1888 by Mr. J. R. Tutin (see "Notebook of the Shelley Society", Part 1, page 21), and adopted by Dowden, "Poetical Works of Shelley", Macmillan, 1890. The editio princeps (1813), which is followed by Forman (1892) and Woodberry (1893), has a comma after element and a full stop at remained.

2. Guards…from a nation's rage Secure the crown, etc. (4, lines 173-176.) So Mrs. Shelley ("Poetical Works", 1839, both editions), Rossetti, Forman, Dowden. The editio princeps reads Secures, which Woodberry defends and retains.

3. 4, lines 203-220: omitted by Mrs. Shelley from the text of "Poetical Works", 1839, 1st edition, but restored in the 2nd edition of 1839. See above, "Note on Queen Mab, by Mrs. Shelley".

4. All germs of promise, yet when the tall trees, etc. (5, line 9.) So Rossetti, Dowden, Woodberry. In editions 1813 (editio princeps) and 1839 ("Poetical Works", both editions) there is a full stop at promise which Forman retains.

5. Who ever hears his famished offspring's scream, etc. (5, line 116.) The editio princeps has offsprings—an evident misprint.

6. 6, lines 54-57, line 275: struck out of the text of “Poetical Works”, 1839 (1st edition), but restored in the 2nd edition of that year. See Note 3 above.

7. The exterminable spirit it contains, etc. (7, line 23.) Exterminable seems to be used here in the sense of ‘illimitable’ (N. E. D.). Rossetti proposes interminable, or inexterminable.

8. A smile of godlike malice reillumed, etc. (7, line 180.) The editio princeps and the first edition of “Poetical Works”, 1839, read reillumined here, which is retained by Forman, Dowden, Woodberry. With Rossetti, I follow Mrs. Shelley’s reading in “Poetical Works”, 1839 (2nd edition).

9. One curse alone was spared—the name of God. (8, line 165.) Removed from the text, “Poetical Works”, 1839 (1st edition); restored, “Poetical Works”, 1839 (2nd edition). See Notes 3 and 6 above.

10. Which from the exhaustless lore of human weal Dawns on the virtuous mind, etc. (8, lines 204-205.) With some hesitation as to lore, I reprint these lines as they are given by Shelley himself in the note on this passage (supra). The text of 1813 runs:— Which from the exhaustless store of human weal Draws on the virtuous mind, etc. This is retained by Woodberry, while Rossetti, Forman, and Dowden adopt eclectic texts, Forman and Dowden reading lore and Draws, while Rossetti, again, reads store and Dawns. Our text is supported by the authority of Dr. Richard Garnett. The comma after infiniteness (line 206) has a metrical, not a logical, value.

11. Nor searing Reason with the brand of God. (9, line 48.) Removed from the text, “Poetical Works”, 1839 (1st edition), by Mrs. Shelley, who failed, doubtless through an oversight, to restore it in the second edition. See Notes 3, 6, and 9 above.

12. Where neither avarice, cunning, pride, nor care, etc. (9, line 67.) The editio princeps reads pride, or care, which is retained by Forman and Woodberry. With Rossetti and Dowden, I follow Mrs. Shelley’s text, “Poetical Works”, 1839 (both editions).

NOTES TO QUEEN MAB.

1. The mine, big with destructive power, burst under me, etc. (Note on 7 67.) This is the reading of the “Poetical Works” of 1839 (2nd edition). The editio princeps (1813) reads burst upon me. Doubtless under was intended by Shelley: the occurrence, thrice over, of upon in the ten lines preceding would account for the unconscious substitution of the word here, either by the printer, or perhaps by Shelley himself in his transcript for the press.

2. …it cannot arise from reasoning, etc. (Note on 7 135.) The editio princeps (1813) has conviction for reasoning here—an obvious error of the press, overlooked by Mrs. Shelley in 1839, and perpetuated in his several editions of the poems by Mr. H. Buxton Forman. Reasoning, Mr. W.M. Rossetti’s conjectural emendation, is manifestly the right word here, and has been adopted by Dowden and Woodberry.

3. Him, still from hope to hope, etc. (Note on 8 203-207.) See editor’s note 10 on “Queen Mab” above.

1. A DIALOGUE.—The titles of this poem, of the stanzas “On an Icicle”, etc., and of the lines “To Death”, were first given by Professor Dowden (“Poetical Works of P. B. S.”, 1890) from the Esdaile manuscript book. The textual corrections from the same quarter (see footnotes passim) are also owing to Professor Dowden.

2. ORIGINAL POETRY BY VICTOR AND CAZIRE.—Dr. Garnett, who in 1898 edited for Mr. John Lane a reprint of these long-lost verses, identifies “Victor’s” coadjutrix, “Cazire”, with Elizabeth Shelley, the poet’s sister. ‘The two initial pieces are the only two which can be attributed to Elizabeth Shelley with absolute certainty, though others in the volume may possibly belong to her’ (Garnett).

3. SAINT EDMOND’S EVE. This ballad-tale was “conveyed” in its entirety by “Cazire” from Matthew Gregory Lewis’s “Tales of Terror”, 1801, where it appears under the title of “The Black Canon of Elmham; or, Saint Edmond’s Eve”. Stockdale, the publisher of “Victor and Cazire”, detected the imposition, and

communicated his discovery to Shelley—when ‘with all the ardour natural to his character he [Shelley] expressed the warmest resentment at the imposition practised upon him by his coadjutor, and entreated me to destroy all the copies, of which about one hundred had been put into circulation.’

4. TO MARY WHO DIED IN THIS OPINION.—From a letter addressed by Shelley to Miss Hitchener, dated November 23, 1811.

5. A TALE OF SOCIETY.—The titles of this and the following piece were first given by Professor Dowden from the Esdaile manuscript, from which also one or two corrections in the text of both poems, made in Macmillan’s edition of 1890, were derived.

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A LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL EDITIONS OF SHELLEY’S POETICAL WORKS, SHOWING THE VARIOUS PRINTED SOURCES OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS EDITION.

1. (1) Original Poetry; : By : Victor and Cazire. : Call it not vain:—they do not err, : Who say, that, when the poet dies, : Mute Nature mourns her worshipper. : “Lay of the Last Minstrel.” : Worthing : Printed by C. and W. Phillips, : for the Authors; : And sold by J. J. Stockdale, 41, Pall-Mall, : And all other Booksellers. 1810.

(2) Original : Poetry : By : Victor & Cazire : [Percy Bysshe Shelley : & Elizabeth Shelley] : Edited by : Richard Garnett C.B., LL.D. : Published by : John Lane, at the Sign : of the Bodley Head in : London and New York : MDCCCXCVIII.

2. Posthumous Fragments : of : Margaret Nicholson; : Being Poems Found Amongst the Papers of that : Noted Female who attempted the Life : of the King in 1786. : Edited by : John Fitz-Victor. : Oxford: : Printed and sold by J. Munday : 1810.

3. St. Irvyne; : or, : The Rosicrucian. : A Romance. : By : A Gentleman : of the University of Oxford. : London: : Printed for J. J. Stockdale, : 41, Pall Mall. : 1811.

4. The Devil's Walk; a Ballad. Printed as a broadside, 1812.

5. Queen Mab; : a : Philosophical Poem: : with Notes. : By : Percy Bysshe Shelley. : Ecrasez l'Infame! : "Correspondance de Voltaire." : Avia Pieridum peragro loca, nullius ante : Trita solo; iuvat integros accedere fonteis; : Atque haurire: iuratque (sic) novos decerpere flores. : Unde prius nulli velarint tempora nausae. : Primum quod magnis doceo de rebus; et arctis : Religionum animos nodis exsolvere pergo. : Lucret. lib. 4 : Dos pou sto, kai kosmon kineso. : Archimedes. : London: : Printed by P. B. Shelley, : 23, Chapel Street, Grosvenor Square. : 1813.

6. Alastor; : or, : The Spirit of Solitude: : and Other Poems. : By : Percy Bysshe Shelley : London : Printed for Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, Pater-:noster Row; and Carpenter and Son, : Old Bond Street: : By S. Hamilton, Weybridge, Surrey : 1816.

7. (1) Laon and Cythna; : or, : The Revolution : of : the Golden City: : A Vision of the Nineteenth Century. : In the Stanza of Spenser. : By : Percy B. Shelley. : Dos pou sto, kai kosmon kineso. : Archimedes. : London: : Printed for Sherwood, Neely, & Jones, Paternoster-:Row; and C. and J. Ollier, Welbeck-Street: : By B. M'Millan, Bow-Street, Covent-Garden. : 1818.

(2) The : Revolt of Islam; : A Poem, : in Twelve Cantos. : By : Percy Bysshe Shelley. : London: : Printed for C. and J. Ollier, Welbeck-Street; : By B. M'Millan, Bow-Street, Covent-Garden. : 1818.

(3) A few copies of "The Revolt of Islam" bear date 1817 instead of 1818.

(4) 'The same sheets were used again in 1829 with a third title-page similar to the foregoing [2], but with the imprint "London: : Printed for John Brooks, : 421 Oxford-Street. : 1829."' (H. Buxton Forman, C.B.: The Shelley Library, page 73.)

(5) 'Copies of the 1829 issue of "The Revolt of Islam" not infrequently occur with "Laon and Cythna" text.' (Ibid., page 73.)

8. Rosalind and Helen, : A Modern Eclogue; : With Other Poems: : By : Percy Bysshe Shelley. : London: : Printed for C. and J. Ollier, : Vere Street, Bond Street. :

1819.

9. (1) The Cenci. : A Tragedy, : In Five Acts. : By Percy B. Shelley. : Italy. : Printed for C. and J. Ollier, : Vere Street, Bond Street. : London. : 1819.

(2) The Cenci : A Tragedy : In Five Acts : By : Percy Bysshe Shelley : Second Edition : London : C. and J. Ollier Vere Street Bond Street : 1821.

10. Prometheus Unbound : A Lyrical Drama : In Four Acts : With Other Poems : By : Percy Bysshe Shelley : Audisne haec, Amphiarae, sub terram abdite? : London : C. and J. Ollier Vere Street Bond Street : 1820.

11. Oedipus Tyrannus; : or, : Swellfoot The Tyrant. : A Tragedy. : In Two Acts. : Translated from the Original Doric. : —Choose Reform or civil-war, : When thro' thy streets, instead of hare with dogs, A CONSORT-QUEEN shall hunt a KING with hogs, : Riding on the IONIAN MINOTAUR. : London: : Published for the Author, : By J. Johnston, 98, Cheapside, and sold by all booksellers. : 1820.

12. Epipsychidion : Verses Addressed to the Noble : And Unfortunate Lady : Emilia V— : Now Imprisoned in the Convent of — : L' anima amante si slancia fuori del creato, e si crea nel infinito : un Mondo tutto per essa, diverso assai da questo oscuro e pauroso : baratro. Her Own Words. : London : C. and J. Ollier Vere Street Bond Street : MDCCCXXI.

13. (1) Adonais : An Elegy on the Death of John Keats, : Author of Endymion, Hyperion etc. : By : Percy B. Shelley : Aster prin men elampes eni zooisin eoos. : Nun de thanon, lampeis esmeros en phthimenois. : Plato. : Pisa : With the Types of Didot : MDCCCXXI.

(2) Adonais. : An Elegy : on the : Death of John Keats, : Author of Endymion, Hyperion, etc. : By : Percy B. Shelley. : [Motto as in (1)] Cambridge: : Printed by W. Metcalfe, : and sold by Messrs. Gee & Bridges, Market-Hill. : MDCCCXXIX.

14. Hellas : A Lyrical Drama : By : Percy B. Shelley : MANTIS EIM' ESTHAON 'AGONON : Oedip. Colon. : London : Charles and James Ollier Vere Street : Bond

Street : MDCCCXXII. (The last work issued in Shelley's lifetime.)

15. Posthumous Poems : of : Percy Bysshe Shelley. : In nobil sangue vita umile e queta, : Ed in alto intelletto on puro core; : Frutto senile in sul giovenil fiore, : E in aspetto pensoso anima lieta. : Petrarca. : London, 1824: : Printed for John and Henry L. Hunt, : Tavistock Street, Covent Garden. (Edited by Mrs. Shelley.)

16. The : Masque of Anarchy. : A Poem. : By Percy Bysshe Shelley. Now first published, with a Preface : by Leigh Hunt. : Hope is Strong; : Justice and Truth their winged child have found. : "Revolt of Islam". : London: : Edward Moxon, 64, New Bond Street. : 1832.

17. The Shelley Papers : Memoir : of : Percy Bysshe Shelley : By T. Medwin, Esq. : And : Original Poems and Papers : By Percy Bysshe Shelley. : Now first collected. : London: : Whittaker, Treacher, & Co. : 1833. (The Poems occupy pages 109-126.)

18. The : Poetical Works : of : Percy Bysshe Shelley. : Edited : by Mrs Shelley. : Lui non trov' io, ma suoi santi vestigi : Tutti rivolti alla superna strada : Veggio, lunge da' laghi averni e stigi.—Petrarca. : In Four Volumes. : Vol. 1 [2 3 4] : London: : Edward Moxon, Dover Street. : MDCCCXXXIX.

19. (1) The : Poetical Works : of : Percy Bysshe Shelley: [Vignette of Shelley's Tomb.] London. : Edward Moxon, Dover Street. : 1839. (This is the engraved title-page. The printed title-page runs:—)

(2) The : Poetical Works : of Percy Bysshe Shelley. : Edited : By Mrs. Shelley. : [Motto from Petrarch as in 18] London: : Edward Moxon, Dover Street. : M.DCCC.XL. (Large octavo, printed in double columns. The Dedication is dated 11th November, 1839.)

20. Essays, : Letters from Abroad, : Translations and Fragments, : By : Percy Bysshe Shelley. : Edited : By Mrs. Shelley. : [Long prose motto translated from Schiller] : In Two Volumes. : Volume 1 [2] : London: : Edward Moxon, Dover Street. : MDCCCXL.

21. Relics of Shelley. : Edited by : Richard Garnett. : [Lines 20-24 of “To Jane”: ‘The keen stars,’ etc.] : London: : Edward Moxon & Co., Dover Street. : 1862.

22. The : Poetical Works : of : Percy Bysshe Shelley: : Including Various Additional Pieces : From Manuscript and Other Sources. : The Text carefully revised, with Notes and : A Memoir, : By William Michael Rossetti. : Volume 1 [2] : [Moxon’s Device.] : London: : E. Moxon, Son, & Co., 44 Dover Street, W. : 1870.

23. The Daemon of the World : By : Percy Bysshe Shelley : The First Part : as published in 1816 with “Alastor” : The Second Part : Deciphered and now First Printed from his own Manuscript : Revision and Interpolations in the Newly Discovered : Copy of “Queen Mab” : London : Privately printed by H. Buxton Forman : 38 Marlborough Hill : 1876.

24. The Poetical Works : of : Percy Bysshe Shelley : Edited by : Harry Buxton Forman : In Four Volumes : Volume 1 [2 3 4] London : Reeves and Turner 196 Strand : 1876.

25. The Complete : Poetical Works : of : Percy Bysshe Shelley. : The Text carefully revised with Notes and : A Memoir, : by : William Michael Rossetti. : In Three Volumes. : Volume 1 [2 3] London: : E. Moxon, Son, And Co., : Dorset Buildings, Salisbury Square, E.C. : 1878.

26. The Poetical Works : of Percy Bysshe Shelley : Given from His Own Editions and Other Authentic Sources : Collated with many Manuscripts and with all Editions of Authority : Together with Prefaces and Notes : His Poetical Translations and Fragments : and an Appendix of : Juvenilia : [Publisher’s Device.] Edited by Harry Buxton Forman : In Two Volumes. : Volume 1 [2] London : Reeves and Turner, 196, Strand : 1882.

27. The : Poetical Works : of : Percy Bysshe Shelley : Edited by : Edward Dowden : London : Macmillan and Co, Limited : New York: The Macmillan Company : 1900.

28. The Poetical Works of : Percy Bysshe Shelley : Edited with a Memoir by : H.

Buxton Forman : In Five Volumes [Publisher's Device.] Volume 1 [2 3 4 5] London : George Bell and Sons : 1892.

29. The : Complete Poetical Works : of : Percy Bysshe Shelley : The Text newly collated and revised : and Edited with a Memoir and Notes : By George Edward Woodberry : Centenary Edition : In Four Volumes : Volume 1 [2 3 4] [Publisher's Device.] London : Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. : Limited : 1893.

30. An Examination of the : Shelley Manuscripts : In the Bodleian Library : Being a collation thereof with the printed : texts, resulting in the publication of : several long fragments hitherto unknown, : and the introduction of many improved : readings into "Prometheus Unbound", and : other poems, by : C.D. Locock, B.A. : Oxford : At the Clarendon Press : 1903.

The early poems from the Esdaile manuscript book, which are included in this edition by the kind permission of the owner of the volume, Charles E.J. Esdaile, Esq., appeared for the first time in Professor Dowden's "Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley", published in the year 1887.

One poem from the same volume; entitled "The Wandering Jew's Soliloquy", was printed in one of the Shelley Society Publications (Second Series, No. 12), a reprint of "The Wandering Jew", edited by Mr. Bertram Dobell in 1887.

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the fell spear : Ah! quit me not yet, for the wind whistles shrill : Ah, sister! Desolation is a delicate thing : Ah! sweet is the moonbeam that sleeps on yon fountain : Alas! for Liberty! : Alas, good friend, what profit can you see : Alas! this is not what I thought life was : Ambition, power, and avarice, now have hurled : Amid the desolation of a city : Among the guests who often stayed : An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king : And can’st thou mock mine agony, thus calm : And earnest to explore within—around : And ever as he went he swept a lyre : And, if my grief should still be dearer to me : And like a dying lady, lean and pale : And many there were hurt by that strong boy : And Peter Bell, when he had been : And said I that all hope was fled : And that I walk thus proudly crowned withal : And the cloven waters like a chasm of mountains : And when the old man saw that on the green : And where is truth? On tombs? for such to thee : And who feels discord now or sorrow? : Arethusa arose : Ariel to Miranda:—Take : Arise, arise, arise! : Art thou indeed forever gone : Art thou pale for weariness : As a violet’s gentle eye : As from an ancestral oak : As I lay asleep in Italy : As the sunrise to the night : Ask not the pallid stranger’s woe : At the creation of the Earth : Away! the moor is dark beneath the moon :

Bear witness, Erin! when thine injured isle : Before those cruel Twins, whom at one birth : Beside the dimness of the glimmering sea : Best and brightest, come away! : Break the dance, and scatter the song : Bright ball of flame that through the gloom of even : Bright clouds float in heaven : Bright wanderer, fair coquette of Heaven : Brothers! between you and me : ‘Buona notte, buona notte!’—Come mai : By the mossy brink :

Chameleons feed on light and air : Cold, cold is the blast when December is howling : Come, be happy!—sit near me : Come [Harriet]! sweet is the hour : Come hither, my sweet Rosalind : Come, thou awakener of the spirit’s ocean : Corpses are cold in the tomb :

Dares the lama, most fleet of the sons of the wind : Dar’st thou amid the varied multitude : Darkness has dawned in the East : Daughters of Jove, whose voice is melody : Dear home, thou scene of earliest hopes and joys : Dearest, best and brightest : Death is here and death is there : Death! where is thy victory? : Do evil deeds thus quickly come to end? Do you not hear the Aziola cry? :

Eagle! why soarest thou above that tomb? : Earth, ocean, air, beloved brotherhood : Echoes we: listen! Ever as now with Love and Virtue’s glow :

Faint with love, the Lady of the South : Fairest of the Destinies : False friend, wilt thou smile or weep : Far, far away, O ye : Fiend, I defy thee! with a calm, fixed mind : Fierce roars the midnight storm : Flourishing vine, whose kindling clusters glow : Follow to the deep wood’s weeds : For me, my friend, if not that tears did tremble : For my dagger is bathed in the blood of the brave : For your letter, dear [Hattie], accept my best thanks : From all the blasts of heaven thou hast descended : From the cities where from caves : From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the earth : From the forests and highlands : From unremembered ages we :

Gather, O gather : Ghosts of the dead! have I not heard your yelling : God prosper, speed, and save : Good-night? ah! no; the hour is ill : Great Spirit whom the sea of boundless thought : Guido, I would that Lapo, thou, and I :

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit! : Hail to thee, Cambria! for the unfettered wind : Hark! the owlet flaps her wing : Hark! the owlet flaps his wings : Hast thou not seen, officious with delight : He came like a dream in the dawn of life : He wanders, like a day-appearing dream : Hell is a city much like London : Her hair was brown, her sphered eyes were brown : Her voice did quiver as we parted : Here I sit with my paper, my pen and my ink : ‘Here lieth One whose name was writ on water’ : Here, my dear friend, is a new book for you : Here, oh, here : Hic sinu fessum caput hospitali : His face was like a snake’s—wrinkled and loose : Honey from silkworms who can gather : Hopes, that swell in youthful breasts : How eloquent are eyes :

How, my dear Mary,—are you critic-bitten : How stern are the woes of the desolate mourner : How sweet it is to sit and read the tales : How swiftly through Heaven's wide expanse : How wonderful is Death : How wonderful is Death :

I am afraid these verses will not please you, but : I am as a spirit who has dwelt : I am drunk with the honey wine : I arise from dreams of thee : I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers : I dreamed that, as I wandered by the way : I dreamed that Milton's spirit rose, and took : I faint, I perish with my love! I grow : I fear thy kisses, gentle maiden : I hated thee, fallen tyrant! I did groan : I love thee, Baby! for thine own sweet sake : I loved—alas! our life is love : I met a traveller from an antique land : I mourn Adonis dead—loveliest Adonis : I pant for the music which is divine : I rode one evening with Count Maddalo : I sate beside a sage's bed : I sate beside the Steersman then, and gazing : I sing the glorious Power with azure eyes : I stood upon a heaven-cleaving turret : I stood within the City disinterred : I weep for Adonais—he is dead' : I went into the deserts of dim sleep : I would not be a king—enough : If gibbets, axes, confiscations, chains : If I esteemed you less, Envy would kill : If I walk in Autumn's even : In the cave which wild weeds cover : In the sweet solitude of this calm place : Inter marmoreas Leonorae pendula colles : Is it that in some brighter sphere : Is it the Eternal Triune, is it He : Is not to-day enough? Why do I peer : It is not blasphemy to hope that Heaven : It is the day when all the sons of God : It lieth, gazing on the midnight sky : It was a bright and cheerful afternoon :

Kissing Helena, together :

Let there be light! said Liberty : Let those who pine in pride or in revenge : Life of Life! thy lips enkindle : Lift not the painted veil which those who live : Like the ghost of a dear friend dead : Listen, listen, Mary mine : Lo, Peter in Hell's Grosvenor Square :

Madonna, wherefore hast thou sent to me : Maiden, quench the glare of sorrow :

Many a green isle needs must be : Melodious Arethusa, o’er my verse : Men of England, wherefore plough : Methought I was a billow in the crowd : Mighty eagle! thou that soarest : Mine eyes were dim with tears unshed : Monarch of Gods and Daemons, and all Spirits : Month after month the gathered rains descend : Moonbeam, leave the shadowy vale : Muse, sing the deeds of golden Aphrodite : Music, when soft voices die : My coursers are fed with the lightning : My dearest Mary, wherefore hast thou gone : My faint spirit was sitting in the light : My head is heavy, my limbs are weary : My head is wild with weeping for a grief : My lost William, thou in whom : My Song, I fear that thou wilt find but few : My soul is an enchanted boat : My spirit like a charmed bark doth swim : My thoughts arise and fade in solitude : My wings are folded o’er mine ears :

Night, with all thine eyes look down! : Night! with all thine eyes look down! : No access to the Duke! You have not said : No, Music, thou art not the ‘food of Love’ : No trump tells thy virtues : Nor happiness, nor majesty, nor fame : Not far from hence. From yonder pointed hill : Now had the loophole of that dungeon, still : Now the last day of many days :

O Bacchus, what a world of toil, both now : O happy Earth! reality of Heaven : O Mary dear, that you were here : O mighty mind, in whose deep stream this age : O pillow cold and wet with tears! : O Slavery! thou frost of the world’s prime : O that a chariot of cloud were mine! : O that mine enemy had written : O thou bright Sun! beneath the dark blue line : O thou immortal deity : O thou, who plumed with strong desire : O universal Mother, who dost keep : O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn’s being : O world! O life! O time! : Offspring of Jove, Calliope, once more : Oh! did you observe the black Canon pass : Oh! take the pure gem to where southerly breezes : Oh! there are spirits of the air : Oh! what is the gain of restless care : On a battle-trumpet’s blast : On a poet’s lips I slept : On the brink of the night and the morning : Once, early in the morning : One sung of thee who left the tale untold : One word is too often profaned : Orphan Hours, the Year is dead : Our boat

is asleep on Serchio’s stream : Our spoil is won : Out of the eastern shadow of the Earth : Over the utmost hill at length I sped :

Palace-roof of cloudless nights! : Pan loved his neighbour Echo—but that child : People of England, ye who toil and groan : Peter Bells, one, two and three : Place, for the Marshal of the Masque! : Poet of Nature, thou hast wept to know : Prince Athanase had one beloved friend :

Rarely, rarely, comest thou : Reach me that handkerchief!—My brain is hurt : Returning from its daily quest, my Spirit : Rome has fallen, ye see it lying : Rough wind, that moanest loud :

Sacred Goddess, Mother Earth : See yon opening flower : Serene in his unconquerable might : Shall we roam, my love : She comes not; yet I left her even now : She left me at the silent time : She saw me not—she heard me not—alone : She was an aged woman; and the years : Silence! Oh, well are Death and Sleep and Thou : Silver key of the fountain of tears : Sing, Muse, the son of Maia and of Jove : Sleep, sleep on! forget thy pain : So now my summer task is ended, Mary : So we sate joyous as the morning ray : Stern, stern is the voice of fate’s fearful command : Such hope, as is the sick despair of good : Such was Zonoras; and as daylight finds : Summer was dead and Autumn was expiring : Sweet Spirit! Sister of that orphan one : Sweet star, which gleaming o’er the darksome scene : Swift as a spirit hastening to his task : Swifter far than summer’s flight : Swiftly walk o’er the western wave :

Tell me, thou Star, whose wings of light : That matter of the murder is hushed up : That night we anchored in a woody bay : That time is dead for ever, child! : The awful shadow of some unseen Power : The babe is at peace within the womb : The billows on the beach are leaping around it : The cold earth slept below : The curtain of the Universe : The death-bell beats! : The death knell is ringing : The Devil, I safely can aver : The Devil now knew his proper cue : The Elements respect their

Maker’s seal! : The everlasting universe of things : The fierce beasts of the woods and wildernesses : The fiery mountains answer each other : The fitful alternations of the rain : The flower that smiles to-day : The fountains mingle with the river : The gentleness of rain was in the wind : The golden gates of Sleep unbar : The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness : The keen stars were twinkling : The odour from the flower is gone : The old man took the oars, and soon the bark : The pale stars are gone : The pale stars of the morn : The pale, the cold, and the moony smile : The path through which that lovely twain : The rose that drinks the fountain dew : The rude wind is singing : The season was the childhood of sweet June : The serpent is shut out from Paradise : The sleepless Hours who watch me as I lie : The spider spreads her webs, whether she be : The starlight smile of children, the sweet looks : The stars may dissolve, and the fountain of light : The sun is set; the swallows are asleep : The sun is warm, the sky is clear : The sun makes music as of old : The transport of a fierce and monstrous gladness : The viewless and invisible Consequence : The voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth : The warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is wailing : The waters are flashing : The wind has swept from the wide atmosphere : The world is dreary : The world is now our dwelling-place : The world’s great age begins anew : Then weave the web of the mystic measure : There is a voice, not understood by all : There is a warm and gentle atmosphere : There late was One within whose subtle being : There was a little lawny islet : There was a youth, who, as with toil and travel : These are two friends whose lives were undivided : They die—the dead return not—Misery : Those whom nor power, nor lying faith, nor toil : Thou art fair, and few are fairer : Thou art the wine whose drunkenness is all : Thou living light that in thy rainbow hues : Thou supreme Goddess! by whose power divine : Thou wert not, Cassius, and thou couldst not be : Thou wert the morning star among the living : Thrice three hundred thousand years : Thus to be lost and thus to sink and die : Thy beauty hangs around thee like : Thy country’s curse is on thee, darkest crest : Thy dewy looks sink in my breast : Thy

little footsteps on the sands : Thy look of love has power to calm : ’Tis midnight now—athwart the murky air : ’Tis the terror of tempest. The rags of the sail : To me this world’s a dreary blank : To the deep, to the deep : To thirst and find no fill—to wail and wander : Tremble, Kings despised of man : ’Twas at the season when the Earth upsprings : ’Twas at this season that Prince Athanase : ’Twas dead of the night, when I sat in my dwelling : ’Twas dead of the night when I sate in my dwelling :

Unfathomable Sea! whose waves are years : Unrisen splendour of the brightest sun :

Vessels of heavenly medicine! may the breeze : Victorious Wrong, with vulture scream :

Wake the serpent not—lest he : Was there a human spirit in the steed : We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon : We come from the mind : We join the throng : We meet not as we parted : We strew these opiate flowers : Wealth and dominion fade into the mass : Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze : Weep not, my gentle boy; he struck but me : What! alive and so bold, O Earth? : What art thou, Presumptuous, who profanest : What Mary is when she a little smiles : What men gain fairly—that they should possess : ‘What think you the dead are?’ : What thoughts had sway o’er Cythna’s lonely slumber : What was the shriek that struck Fancy’s ear : When a lover clasps his fairest : When May is painting with her colours gay : When passion’s trance is overpast : When soft winds and sunny skies : When the lamp is shattered : When the last hope of trampled France had failed : When winds that move not its calm surface sweep : Where art thou, beloved To-morrow? : Where man’s profane and tainting hand : Whose is the love that gleaming through the world : Why is it said thou canst not live : Wild, pale, and wonder-stricken, even as one : Wilt thou forget the happy hours : Within a cavern of man’s trackless spirit : Worlds on worlds are rolling ever : Would I were the winged cloud :

Ye congregated powers of heaven, who share : Ye Dorian woods and waves, lament aloud : Ye gentle visitations of calm thought : Ye hasten to the grave! What seek ye there : Ye who intelligent the Third Heaven move : Ye wild-eyed Muses, sing the Twins of Jove : Yes! all is past—swift time has fled away : Yes, often when the eyes are cold and dry : Yet look on me—take not thine eyes away : You said that spirits spoke, but it was thee : Your call was as a winged car :

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