

*Extracts from*  
CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

The notes for this section are on pages 47–50

## *Canto One*

### 1

Oh, thou! in Hellas<sup>1</sup> deem'd of heav'nly birth,  
Muse! form'd or fabled at the minstrel's will!  
Since sham'd full oft by later lyres on earth,  
Mine dares not call thee from thy sacred hill:  
Yet there I've wander'd by thy vaunted rill;  
Yes! sigh'd o'er Delphi's long-deserted shrine,  
Where, save that feeble fountain, all is still;  
Nor mote my shell awake the weary Nine  
To grace so plain a tale – this lowly lay of mine.

### 2

Whilome<sup>2</sup> in Albion's isle there dwelt a youth, 10  
Who ne in virtue's ways did take delight;  
But spent his days in riot most uncouth,  
And vex'd with mirth the drowsy ear of Night.  
Ah, me! in sooth he was a shameless wight,  
Sore given to revel and ungodly glee;  
Few earthly things found favour in his sight  
Save concubines and carnal companie,  
And flaunting wassailers of high and low degree.

### 3

Childe Harold was he hight:<sup>3</sup> – but whence his name 20  
And lineage long, it suits me not to say;  
Suffice it, that perchance they were of fame,  
And had been glorious in another day:  
But one sad losel<sup>4</sup> soils a name for aye,  
However mighty in the olden time;  
Nor all that heralds rake from coffin'd clay,  
Nor florid prose, nor honied lies of rhyme  
Can blazon evil deeds, or consecrate a crime.

## 4

Childe Harold bask'd him in the noon-tide sun,  
 Disporting there like any other fly;  
 Nor deem'd before his little day was done 30  
 One blast might chill him into misery.  
 But long ere scarce a third of his pass'd by,  
 Worse than adversity the Childe befell;  
 He felt the fullness of satiety:  
 Then loath'd he in his native land to dwell,  
 Which seem'd to him more lone than Eremite's<sup>5</sup> sad cell.

## 5

For he through Sin's long labyrinth had run,  
 Nor made atonement when he did amiss,  
 Had sigh'd to many though he lov'd but one,  
 And that lov'd one, alas! could ne'er be his. 40  
 Ah, happy she! to 'scape from him whose kiss  
 Had been pollution unto aught so chaste;  
 Who soon had left her charms for vulgar bliss,  
 And spoil'd her goodly lands to gild his waste,  
 Nor calm domestic peace had ever deign'd to taste.

## 6

And now Childe Harold was sore sick at heart,  
 And from his fellow bacchanals would flee;  
 'Tis said, at times the sullen tear would start,  
 But Pride congeal'd the drop within his ee:<sup>6</sup>  
 Apart he stalk'd in joyless reverie, 50  
 And from his native land resolv'd to go,  
 And visit scorching climes beyond the sea;  
 With pleasure drugg'd he almost long'd for woe,  
 And e'en for change of scene would seek the shades below.

## 7

The Childe departed from his father's hall:  
 It was a vast and venerable pile;  
 So old, it seem'd only not to fall,  
 Yet strength was pillar'd in each massy aisle.  
 Monastic dome! condemn'd to uses vile!  
 Where Superstition once had made her den 60  
 Now Paphian<sup>7</sup> girls were known to sing and smile;  
 And monks might deem their time was come agen,  
 If ancient tales say true, nor wrong these holy men.

## 8

Yet oft-times in his maddest mirthful mood  
 Strange pangs would flash along Childe Harold's brow,  
 As if the memory of some deadly feud  
 Or disappointed passion lurk'd below:  
 But this none knew, nor haply car'd to know;  
 For his was not that open, artless soul  
 That feels relief by bidding sorrow flow, 70  
 Nor sought he friend to counsel or condole,  
 Whate'er his grief mote be, which he could not control.

## 9

And none did love him – though to hall and bower  
 He gather'd revellers from far and near,  
 He knew them flatt'ers of the festal hour;  
 The heartless parasites of present cheer.  
 Yea! none did love him – not his lemans<sup>8</sup> dear –  
 But pomp and power alone are woman's care,  
 And where these are light Eros finds a feere;<sup>9</sup>  
 Maidens, like moths, are ever caught by glare, 80  
 And Mammon wins his way where Seraphs might despair.

## 10

Childe Harold had a mother – not forgot,  
 Though parting from that mother he did shun;  
 A sister whom he lov'd, but saw her not  
 Before his weary pilgrimage begun:  
 If friends he had, he bade adieu to none.  
 Yet deem not thence his breast a breast of steel;  
 Ye, who have known what 'tis to doat upon  
 A few dear objects, will in sadness feel  
 Such partings break the heart they fondly hope to heal. 90

## 11

His house, his home, his heritage, his lands,  
 The laughing dames in whom he did delight,  
 Whose large blue eyes, fair locks, and snowy hands  
 Might shake the saintship of an anchorite,  
 And long had fed his youthful appetite;  
 His goblets brimm'd with every costly wine,  
 And all that mote to luxury invite,  
 Without a sigh he left, to cross the brine,  
 And traverse Paynim shores, and pass Earth's central line.<sup>10</sup>

## 12

The sails were fill'd, and fair the light winds blew,           100  
As glad to waft him from his native home;  
And fast the white rocks faded from his view,  
And soon were lost in circumambient foam:  
And then, it may be, of his wish to roam  
Repented he, but in his bosom slept  
The silent thought, nor from his lips did come  
One word of wail, whilst others sate and wept,  
And to the reckless gales unmanly moaning kept.

## 13

But when the sun was sinking in the sea  
He seiz'd his harp, which he at times could string,           110  
And strike, albeit with untaught melody,  
When deem'd he no strange ear was listening:  
And now his fingers o'er it he did fling,  
And tun'd his farewell in the dim twilight.  
While flew the vessel on her snowy wing,  
And fleeting shores receded from his sight,  
Thus to the elements he pour'd his last 'Good night'.

\* \* \*

## 72

The lists are op'd, the spacious area clear'd, 720  
 Thousands on thousands pil'd are seated round;  
 Long ere the first loud trumpeter's note is heard,  
 Ne vacant space for lated wight is found:  
 Here dons, grandees, but chiefly dames abound,  
 Skill'd in the ogle of a roguish eye,  
 Yet ever well inclin'd to heal the wound;  
 None through their cold disdain are doom'd to die,  
 As moon-struck bards complain, by Love's sad archery.<sup>11</sup>

## 73

Hush'd is the din of tongues – on gallant steeds,  
 With milk-white crest, gold spur, and light-pois'd lance,  
 Four cavaliers prepare for venturous deeds, 730  
 And lowly bending to the lists advance;  
 Rich are their scarfs, their chargers featly prance:  
 If in the dangerous game they shine today,  
 The crowds loud shout and ladies lovely glance,  
 Best prize of better acts, they bear away,  
 And all that kings or chiefs e'er gain their toils repay.

## 74

In costly sheen and gaudy cloak array'd,  
 But all afoot, the light-limb'd Matadore  
 Stands in the centre, eager to invade 740  
 The lord of lowing herds; but not before  
 The ground, with cautious tread, is travers'd o'er,  
 Lest aught unseen should lurk to thwart his speed:  
 His arms a dart, he fights aloof, nor more  
 Can man achieve without the friendly steed,  
 Alas! too oft condemn'd for him to bear and bleed.

## 75

Thrice sounds the clarion; lo! the signal falls,  
 The den expands, and Expectation mute  
 Gapes round the silent Circle's peopled walls.  
 Bounds with one lashing spring the mighty brute, 750  
 And, wildly staring, spurns, with sounding foot,  
 The sand, nor blindly rushes on his foe:  
 Here, there, he points his threatening front to suit  
 His first attack, wide waving to and fro  
 His angry tail; red rolls his eye's dilated glow.

## 76

Sudden he stops; his eye is fix'd: away,  
 Away, thou heedless boy! prepare the spear:  
 Now is thy time, to perish, or display  
 The skill that yet may check his mad career.  
 With well-tim'd croupe<sup>12</sup> the nimble coursers veer;       760  
 On foams the bull, but not unscath'd he goes;  
 Streams from his flank the crimson torrent clear:  
 He flies, he wheels, distracted with his throes;  
 Dart follows dart; lance, lance; loud bellowings speak his woes.

## 77

Again he comes; nor dart nor lance avail,  
 Nor the wild plunging of the tortur'd horse;  
 Though man and man's avenging arms assail,  
 Vain are his weapons, vainer is his force.  
 One gallant steed is stretch'd a mangled corse;  
 Another, hideous sight! unseam'd appears,       770  
 His gory chest unveils life's panting source,  
 Tho' death-struck still his feeble frame he rears,  
 Staggering, but stemming all, his lord unharm'd he bears.

## 78

Foil'd, bleeding, breathless, furious to the last,  
 Full in the centre stands the bull at bay,  
 Mid wounds, and clinging darts, and lances brast,<sup>13</sup>  
 And foes disabled in the brutal fray:  
 And now the Matadores around him play,  
 Shake the red cloak, and poise the ready brand:  
 Once more through all he bursts his thundering way –       780  
 Vain rage! the mantle quits the conynge<sup>14</sup> hand,  
 Wraps his fierce eye – 'tis past – he sinks upon the sand!

## 79

Where his vast neck just mingles with the spine,  
 Sheath'd in his form the deadly weapon lies.  
 He stops – he starts – disdaining to decline:  
 Slowly he falls, amidst triumphant cries,  
 Without a groan, without a struggle dies.  
 The decorated car appears – on high  
 The corse is pil'd – sweet sight for vulgar eyes –  
 Four steeds that spurn the rein, as swift as shy,       790  
 Hurl the dark bulk along, scarce seen in dashing by.

## 80

Such the ungentle sport that oft invites  
The Spanish maid, and cheers the Spanish swain.  
Nurtur'd in blood betimes, his heart delights  
In vengeance, gloating on another's pain.  
What private feuds the troubled village stain!  
Though now one phalanx'd host should meet the foe,  
Enough, alas! in humble homes remain,  
To mediate 'gainst friends the secret blow,  
For some slight cause of wrath, whence life's warm  
stream must flow. 800

## 81

But Jealousy has fled: his bars, his bolts,  
His wither'd sentinel, Duenna sage!<sup>15</sup>  
And all whereat the generous soul revolts,  
Which the stern dotard deem'd he could encage,  
Have pass'd to darkness with the vanish'd age.  
Who late so free as Spanish girls were seen,  
(Ere War uprose in his volcanic rage),  
With braided tresses bounding o'er the green,  
While on the gay dance shone Night's lover-loving Queen?

## 82

Oh! many a time, and oft, had Harold lov'd, 810  
Or dream'd he lov'd, since Rapture is a dream;  
But now his wayward bosom was unmov'd,  
For not yet had he drunk of Lethe's stream;  
And lately had he learn'd with truth to deem  
Love has no gift so grateful as his wings:<sup>16</sup>  
How fair, how young, how soft soe'er he seem,  
Full from the fount of Joy's delicious springs  
Some bitter o'er the flowers its bubbling venom flings.

## Canto Two

### 10

Here let me sit upon this massy stone,  
The marble column's yet unshaken base;  
Here, son of Saturn!<sup>17</sup> was thy fav'rite throne:  
Mightiest of many such! Hence let me trace  
The latent grandeur of thy dwelling place.  
It may not be: nor ev'n can Fancy's eye  
Restore what Time hath labour'd to deface.  
Yet these proud pillars claim no passing sigh,  
Unmov'd the Moslem sits, the light Greek carols by. 90

### 11

But who, of all the plunderers of yon fane<sup>18</sup>  
On high, where Pallas linger'd, loth to flee  
The latest relic of her ancient reign;  
The last, the worst, dull spoiler, who was he?  
Blush, Caledonia!<sup>19</sup> such thy son could be!  
England! I joy no child he was of thine:  
Thy free-born men should spare what once was free;  
Yet they could violate each saddening shrine,  
And bear these altars o'er the long-reluctant brine.

### 12

But most the modern Pict's ignoble boast, 100  
To rive<sup>20</sup> what Goth, and Turk, and Time hath spar'd:  
Cold as the crags upon his native coast,  
His mind as barren and his heart as hard,  
Is he whose head conceiv'd, whose hand prepar'd,  
Aught to displace Athena's poor remains:  
Her sons too weak the sacred shrine to guard,  
Yet felt some portion of their mother's pains,  
And never knew, till then, the weight of Despot's chains.

## 13

What! shall it e'er be said by British tongue,  
Albion was happy in Athena's tears? 110  
Though in thy name the slaves her bosom wrung,  
Tell not the deed to blushing Europe's ears;  
The ocean queen, the free Britannia bears  
The last poor plunder from a bleeding land:  
Yes, she, whose gen'rous aid her name endears,  
Tore down those remnants with a Harpy's hand,  
Which envious Eld<sup>21</sup> forbore, and tyrants left to stand.

## 14

Where was thine Aegis, Pallas! that appall'd  
Stern Alaric and Havoc<sup>22</sup> on their way?  
Where Peleus' son?<sup>23</sup> whom Hell in vain enthrall'd, 120  
His shade from Hades upon that dread day,  
Bursting to light in terrible array!  
What? could not Pluto<sup>24</sup> spare the chief once more,  
To scare a second robber from his prey?  
Idly he wander'd on the Stygian shore,  
Nor now preserv'd the walls he lov'd to shield before.

## 15

Cold is the heart, fair Greece! that looks on thee,  
Nor feels as lovers o'er the dust they lov'd;  
Dull is the eye that will not weep to see  
Thy walls defac'd, thy mouldering shrines remov'd 130  
By British hands, which it had best behov'd  
To guard those relics ne'er to be restor'd.  
Curst be the hour when from their isle they rov'd,  
And once again thy hapless bosom gor'd,  
And snatch'd thy shrinking Gods to northern climes abhorr'd!

## 16

But where is Harold? shall I then forget  
To urge the gloomy wanderer o'er the wave?  
Little reck'd he of all that men regret;  
No lov'd-one now in feign'd lament could rave;  
No friend the parting hand extended gave, 140  
Ere the cold stranger pass'd to other climes:  
Hard is his heart whom charms may not enslave;  
But Harold felt not as in other times,  
And left without a sigh the land of war and crimes.

## 17

He that has sail'd upon the dark blue sea,  
 Has view'd at times, I ween, a full fair sight;  
 When the fresh breeze is fair as breeze may be,  
 The white sail set, the gallant frigate tight;  
 Masts, spires, and strand retiring to the right,  
 The glorious main expanding o'er the bow, 150  
 The convoy spread like wild swans in their flight,  
 The dullest sailor wearing bravely now,  
 So gaily curl the waves before each dashing prow.

## 18

And oh, the little warlike world within!  
 The well-reev'd guns,<sup>25</sup> the netted canopy,  
 The hoarse command, the busy humming din,  
 When, at a word, the tops are mann'd on high:  
 Hark to the Boatswain's call, the cheering cry!  
 While through the seaman's hand the tackle glides;  
 Or schoolboy Midshipman that, standing by, 160  
 Strains his shrill pipe as good or ill betides,  
 And well the docile crew that skilful urchin guides.

## 19

White is the glassy deck, without a stain,  
 Where on the watch the staid Lieutenant walks:  
 Look on that part which sacred doth remain  
 For the lone chieftain,<sup>26</sup> who majestic stalks,  
 Silent and fear'd by all – not oft he talks  
 With aught beneath him, if he would preserve  
 That strict restraint, which broken, ever balks  
 Conquest and Fame: but Britons rarely swerve 170  
 From Law, however stern, which tends their strength to nerve.

## 20

Blow! swiftly blow, thou keel-compelling gale!  
 Till the broad sun withdraws his lessening ray;  
 Then must the pennant-bearer slacken sail,  
 That lagging barks may make their lazy way.  
 Ah! grievance sore, and listless dull delay,  
 To waste on sluggish hulks the sweetest breeze!  
 What leagues are lost before the dawn of day,  
 Thus loitering pensive on the willing seas,  
 The flapping sail haul'd down to halt for logs like these! 180

## 21

The moon is up; by Heaven a lovely eve!  
 Long streams of light o'er dancing waves expand;  
 Now lads on shore may sigh, and maids believe:  
 Such be our fate when we return to land!  
 Meantime some rude Arion's<sup>27</sup> restless hand  
 Wakes the brisk harmony that sailors love;  
 A circle there of merry listeners stand,  
 Or to some well-known measure featly move,  
 Thoughtless, as if on shore they still were free to rove.

## 22

Through Calpe's straits survey the steepy shore; 190  
 Europe and Afric on each other gaze!  
 Lands of the dark-ey'd Maid and dusky Moor  
 Alike beheld beneath pale Hecate's blaze:<sup>28</sup>  
 How softly on the Spanish shore she plays,  
 Disclosing rock, and slope, and forest brown,  
 Distinct, though darkening with her waning phase;  
 But Mauritania's giant-shadows frown,  
 From mountain-cliff to coast descending sombre down.<sup>29</sup>

## 23

'Tis night, when Meditation bids us feel  
 We once have lov'd, though love is at an end: 200  
 The heart, lone mourner of its baffled zeal,  
 Though friendless now, will dream it had a friend.  
 Who with the weight of years would wish to bend,  
 When Youth itself survives young Love and Joy?  
 Alas! when mingling souls forget to blend,  
 Death hath but little left him to destroy!  
 Ah! happy years! once more who would not be a boy?

## 24

Thus bending o'er the vessel's laving side,  
 To gaze on Dian's wave-reflected sphere;  
 The soul forgets her schemes of Hope and Pride, 210  
 And flies unconscious o'er each backward year.  
 None are so desolate but something dear,  
 Dearer than self, possesses or possess'd  
 A thought, and claims the homage of a tear;  
 A flashing pang! of which the weary breast  
 Would still, albeit in vain, the heavy heart divest.

## 25

To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,  
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,  
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,  
And mortal foot hath ne'er, or rarely been; 220  
To climb the trackless mountain all unseen,  
With the wild flock that never needs a fold;  
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean;  
This is not solitude; 'tis but to hold  
Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores unroll'd.

## 26

But midst the crowd, the hum, the shock of men,  
To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess,  
And roam along, the world's tir'd denizen,  
With none who bless us, none whom we can bless;  
Minions of splendour shrinking from distress! 230  
None that, with kindred consciousness endued,  
If we were not, would seem to smile the less  
Of all that flatter'd, follow'd, sought and sued;  
This is to be alone; this, this is solitude!

\* \* \*

## 76

Hereditary bondsmen!<sup>30</sup> know ye not 720  
 Who would be free themselves must strike the blow?  
 By their right arms the conquest must be wrought?  
 Will Gaul or Muscovite redress ye? no!  
 True, they may lay your proud despoilers<sup>31</sup> low,  
 But not for you will Freedom's altars flame.  
 Shades of the Helots!<sup>32</sup> triumph o'er your foe!  
 Greece! change thy lords, thy state is still the same;  
 Thy glorious day is o'er, but not thine years of shame.

## 77

The city won for Allah from the Giaour,  
 The Giaour from Othman's race again may wrest; 730  
 And the Serai's impenetrable tower  
 Receive the fiery Frank, her former guest;  
 On Wahab's<sup>33</sup> rebel brood who dared divest  
 The prophet's tomb of all its pious spoil,  
 May wind their path of blood along the West;  
 But ne'er will freedom seek this fated soil,  
 But slave succeed to slave through years of endless toil

## 78

Yet mark their mirth – ere lenten days begin,  
 That penance which their holy rites prepare  
 To shrive from man his weight of mortal sin, 740  
 By daily abstinence and nightly prayer;  
 But ere his sackcloth garb Repentance wear,  
 Some days of joyaunce are decreed to all,  
 To take of pleasaunce each his secret share,  
 In motley robe to dance at masking ball,  
 And join the mimic train of merry Carnival.

## 79

And whose more rife with merriment than thine,  
 Oh Stamboul! once the empress of their reign?  
 Though turbans now pollute Sophia's shrine,  
 And Greece her very altars eyes in vain: 750  
 (Alas! her woes will still pervade my strain!)  
 Gay were her minstrels once, for free her throng,  
 All felt the common joy they now must feign,  
 Nor oft I've seen such sight, nor heard such song,  
 As woo'd the eye, and thrill'd the Bosphorus along.

### *Canto Three*

Afin que cette application vous forçât à penser à autre chose. Il n'y a en vérité de remède que celui-là et le temps.

*Lettre du Roi de Prusse à D'Alembert, 7 September 1776*

#### 1

Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child!  
Ada! sole daughter of my house and heart?  
When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smiled,  
And then we parted, – not as now we part,  
But with a hope. –  
Awaking with a start,  
The waters heave around me; and on high  
The winds lift up their voices:<sup>34</sup> I depart,  
Whither I know not; but the hour's gone by,  
When Albion's lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye.

#### 2

Once more upon the waters! yet once more! 10  
And the waves bound beneath me as a steed  
That knows his rider. Welcome, to their roar!  
Swift be their guidance, wheresoe'er it lead!  
Though the strain'd mast should quiver as a reed,  
And the rent canvas fluttering strew the gale,  
Still must I on; for I am as a weed,  
Flung from the rock, on Ocean's foam, to sail  
Where'er the surge may sweep, or tempest's breath prevail.

#### 3

In my youth's summer I did sing of One,<sup>35</sup>  
The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind; 20  
Again I seize the theme then but begun,  
And bear it with me, as the rushing wind  
Bears the cloud onwards: in that Tale I find  
The furrows of long thought, and dried-up tears,  
Which, ebbing, leave a sterile track behind,  
O'er which all heavily the journeying years  
Plod the last sands of life, – where not a flower appears.

## 4

Since my young days of passion – joy, or pain,  
 Perchance my heart and harp have lost a string,  
 And both may jar: it may be, that in vain 30  
 I would essay as I have sung to sing.  
 Yet, though a dreary strain, to this I cling;  
 So that it wean me from the weary dream  
 Of selfish grief or gladness – so it fling  
 Forgetfulness around me – it shall seem  
 To me, though to none else, a not ungrateful theme.

## 5

He, who grown aged in this world of woe,  
 In deeds, not years, piercing the depths of life,  
 So that no wonder waits him; nor below 40  
 Can love, or sorrow, fame, ambition, strife,  
 Cut to his heart again with the keen knife  
 Of silent, sharp endurance: he can tell  
 Why thought seeks refuge in lone caves, yet rife  
 With airy images, and shapes which dwell  
 Still unimpair'd, though old, in the soul's haunted cell.

## 6

'Tis to create, and in creating live  
 A being more intense, that we endow  
 With form our fancy, gaining as we give  
 The life we imagine, even as I do now.  
 What am I? Nothing; but not so art thou, 50  
 Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,  
 Invisible but gazing, as I glow  
 Mix'd with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,  
 And feeling still with thee in my crush'd feelings' dearth.

## 7

Yet must I think less wildly: – I *have* thought  
 Too long and darkly, till my brain became,  
 In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,  
 A whirling gulf of fantasy and flame:  
 And thus, untaught in youth my heart to tame,  
 My springs of life were poison'd. 'Tis too late! 60  
 Yet am I chang'd; though still enough the same  
 In strength to bear what time can not abate,  
 And feed on bitter fruits without accusing Fate.

## 8

Something too much of this: – but now 'tis past,  
 And the spell closes with its silent seal.  
 Long absent HAROLD re-appears at last;  
 He of the breast which fain no more would feel,  
 Wrung with the wounds which kill not, but ne'er heal;  
 Yet Time, who changes all, had altered him  
 In soul and aspect as in age: years steal 70  
 Fire from the mind as vigour from the limb;  
 And life's enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim.

## 9

His had been quaff'd too quickly, and he found  
 The dregs were wormwood; but he fill'd again,  
 And from a purer fount, on holier ground,  
 And deem'd its spring perpetual; but in vain!  
 Still round him clung invisibly a chain  
 Which gall'd for ever, fettering though unseen,  
 And heavy though it clank'd not; worn with pain,  
 Which pined although it spoke not, and grew keen, 80  
 Entering with every step, he took, through many a scene.

## 10

Secure in guarded coldness, he had mix'd  
 Again in fancied safety with his kind,  
 And deem'd his spirit now so firmly fix'd  
 And sheath'd with an invulnerable mind,  
 That, if no joy, no sorrow lurk'd behind;  
 And he, as one, might midst the many stand  
 Unheeded, searching through the crowd to find  
 Fit speculation! such as in strange land<sup>36</sup>  
 He found in wonder-works of God and Nature's hand. 90

## 11

But who can view the ripened rose, nor seek  
 To wear it? who can curiously behold  
 The smoothness and the sheen of beauty's cheek,  
 Nor feel the heart can never all grow old?  
 Who can contemplate Fame through clouds unfold  
 The star which rises o'er her steep, nor climb?  
 Harold, once more within the vortex, roll'd  
 On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,  
 Yet with a nobler aim than in his youth's fond prime.

## 12

But soon he knew himself the most unfit 100  
Of men to herd with Man; with whom he held  
Little in common; untaught to submit  
His thoughts to others, though his soul was quell'd  
In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompell'd,  
He would not yield dominion of his mind  
To spirits against whom his own rebell'd;  
Proud though in desolation; which could find  
A life within itself, to breathe without mankind.

## 13

Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends;  
Where roll'd the ocean, thereon was his home; 110  
Where a blue sky, and glowing clime, extends,  
He had the passion and the power to roam;  
The desert, forest, cavern, breaker's foam,  
Were unto him companionship; they spake  
A mutual language, clearer than the tome  
Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake  
For Nature's pages glass'd by sunbeams on the lake.

## 14

Like the Chaldean,<sup>37</sup> he could watch the stars,  
Till he had peopled them with beings bright  
As their own beams; and earth, and earth-born jars, 120  
And human frailties, were forgotten quite:  
Could he have kept his spirit to that flight  
He had been happy; but this clay will sink  
Its spark immortal,<sup>38</sup> envying it the light  
To which it mounts as if to break the link  
That keeps us from you heaven which woos us to its brink.

## 15

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing  
Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,  
Droop'd as a wild-born falcon with clipt wing,  
To whom the boundless air alone were home: 130  
Then came his fit again, which to o'ercome,  
As eagerly the barr'd-up bird will beat  
His breast and beak against his wiry dome  
Till the blood tinge his plumage, so the heat  
Of his impeded soul would through his bosom eat.

## 16

Self-exiled Harold wanders forth again,  
 With nought of hope left, but with less of gloom;  
 The very knowledge that he lived in vain,  
 That all was over on this side the tomb,  
 Had made Despair a smilingness assume, 140  
 Which, though 'twere wild, – as on the plundered wreck  
 When mariners would madly meet their doom  
 With draughts intemperate on the sinking deck, –  
 Did yet inspire a cheer, which he forbore to check.

## 17

Stop! – for thy tread is on an Empire's dust!<sup>39</sup>  
 An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!  
 Is the spot mark'd with no colossal bust?  
 Nor column trophied for triumphal show?  
 None; but the moral's truth tells simpler so,  
 As the ground was before, thus let it be; – 150  
 How that red rain hath made the harvest grow!  
 And is this all the world has gained by thee,  
 Thou first and last of fields! king-making Victory?

## 18

And Harold stands upon this place of skulls,  
 The grave of France, the deadly Waterloo!  
 How in an hour the power which gave annuls  
 Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting too!  
 In 'pride of place'<sup>40</sup> here last the eagle flew,  
 Then tore with bloody talon the rent plain,  
 Pierced by the shaft of banded nations through; 160  
 Ambition's life and labours all were vain;  
 He wears the shattered links of the world's broken chain.

## 19

Fit retribution! Gaul may champ the bit  
 And foam in fetters; – but is Earth more free?  
 Did nations combat to make *One* submit;  
 Or league to teach all kings true sovereignty?  
 What! shall reviving Thralldom again be  
 The patched-up idol of enlightened days?  
 Shall we, who struck the Lion down, shall we  
 Pay the Wolf homage? proffering lowly gaze 170  
 And servile knees to thrones? No; *prove* before ye praise!

## 20

If not, o'er one fallen despot boast no more!  
 In vain fair cheeks were furrowed with hot tears  
 For Europe's flowers long rooted up before  
 The trampler of her vineyards; in vain years  
 Of death, depopulation, bondage, fears,  
 Have all been borne, and broken by the accord  
 Of roused-up millions: all that most endears  
 Glory, is when the myrtle wreathes a sword  
 Such as Harmodius<sup>41</sup> drew on Athens' tyrant lord. 180

## 21

There was a sound of revelry by night,  
 And Belgium's capital had gathered then  
 Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright  
 The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;  
 A thousand hearts beat happily; and when  
 Music arose with its voluptuous swell,  
 Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,  
 And all went merry as a marriage-bell;  
 But hush! hark! a deep sound<sup>42</sup> strikes like a rising knell!

## 22

Did ye not hear it? – No; 'twas but the wind, 190  
 Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;  
 On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;  
 No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet  
 To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet –  
 But, hark! – that heavy sound breaks in once more,  
 As if the clouds its echo would repeat;  
 And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!  
 Arm! Arm! and out – it is – the cannon's opening roar!

## 23

Within a windowed niche of that high hall  
 Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain;<sup>43</sup> he did hear 200  
 That sound the first amidst the festival,  
 And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;  
 And when they smiled because he deem'd it near,  
 His heart more truly knew that peal too well  
 Which stretch'd his father on a bloody bier,  
 And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell:  
 He rush'd into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

## 24

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,  
 And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,  
 And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago 210  
 Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness;  
 And there were sudden partings, such as press  
 The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs  
 Which ne'er might be repeated; who could guess  
 If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,  
 Since upon nights so sweet such awful morn could rise?

## 25

And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,  
 The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,  
 Went pouring forward in impetuous speed,  
 And swiftly forming in the ranks of war; 220  
 And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;  
 And near, the beat of the alarming drum  
 Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;  
 While throng'd the citizens with terror dumb,  
 Or whispering, with white lips – 'The foe! They come! they come!'

## 26

And wild and high the 'Cameron's gathering'<sup>44</sup> rose!  
 The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills  
 Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon<sup>45</sup> foes: –  
 How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills, 230  
 Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills  
 Their mountain-pipe, so fill the mountaineers  
 With the fierce native daring which instils  
 The stirring memory of a thousand years,  
 And Evan's, Donald's fame<sup>46</sup> rings in each clansman's ears!

## 27

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,<sup>47</sup>  
 Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,  
 Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,  
 Over the unreturning brave, – alas!  
 Ere evening to be trodden like the grass  
 Which now beneath them, but above shall grow 240  
 In its next verdure, when this fiery mass  
 Of living valour, rolling on the foe  
 And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

## 28

Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,  
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,  
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,  
The morn the marshalling in arms, – the day  
Battle's magnificently-stern array!  
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent  
The earth is covered thick with other clay, 250  
Which her own clay shall cover, heaped and pent,  
Rider and horse, – friend, foe, – in one red burial blent!

## 29

Their praise is hymn'd by loftier harps than mine;  
Yet one I would select from the proud throng,  
Partly because they blend me with his line,  
And partly that I did his sire some wrong,  
And partly that bright names will hallow song;  
And his was of the bravest, and when shower'd  
The death-bolts deadliest the thinn'd files along,  
Even where the thickest of war's tempest lower'd, 260  
They reach'd no nobler breast than thine, young, gallant Howard!<sup>48</sup>

## 30

There have been tears and breaking hearts for thee,  
And mine were nothing, had I such to give;  
But when I stood beneath the fresh green tree,  
Which living waves where thou didst cease to live,  
And saw around me the wide field revive  
With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring  
Come forth her work of gladness to contrive,  
With all her reckless birds upon the wing,  
I turn'd from all she brought to those she could not bring. 270

## 31

I turn'd to thee, to thousands, of whom each  
And one as all a ghastly gap did make  
In his own kind and kindred, whom to teach  
Forgetfulness were mercy for their sake;  
The Archangel's trump,<sup>49</sup> not Glory's, must awake  
Those whom they thirst for; though the sound of Fame  
May for a moment soothe, it cannot slake  
The fever of vain longing, and the name  
So honoured but assumes a stronger, bitterer claim.

## 32

They mourn, but smile at length; and, smiling, mourn: 280  
 The tree will wither long before it fall;  
 The hull drives on, though mast and sail be torn;  
 The roof-tree sinks, but moulder on the hall  
 In massy hoariness; the ruined wall  
 Stands when its wind-worn battlements are gone;  
 The bars survive the captive they enthrall;  
 The day drags through though storms keep out the sun;  
 And thus the heart will break, yet brokenly live on:<sup>50</sup>

## 33

Even as a broken mirror, which the glass  
 In every fragment multiplies; and makes 290  
 A thousand images of one that was,  
 The same, and still the more, the more it breaks;  
 And thus the heart will do which not forsakes,  
 Living in shattered guise, and still, and cold,  
 And bloodless, with its sleepless sorrow aches,  
 Yet withers on till all without is old,  
 Showing no visible sign, for such things are untold.

## 34

There is a very life in our despair,  
 Vitality of poison, – a quick root  
 Which feeds these deadly branches; for it were 300  
 As nothing did we die; but Life will suit  
 Itself to Sorrow's most detested fruit,  
 Like to the apples<sup>51</sup> on the Dead Sea's shore,  
 All ashes to the taste: Did man compute  
 Existence by enjoyment, and count o'er  
 Such hours 'gainst years of life, – say, would he name threescore?

## 35

The Psalmist<sup>52</sup> numbered out the years of man:  
 They are enough; and if thy tale be *true*,  
 Thou, who didst grudge him even that fleeting span,  
 More than enough, thou fatal Waterloo! 310  
 Millions of tongues record thee, and anew  
 Their children's lips shall echo them, and say –  
 'Here, where the sword united nations drew,  
 Our countrymen were warring on that day!'<sup>53</sup>  
 And this is much, and all which will not pass away.

## 36

There sunk the greatest,<sup>54</sup> nor the worst of men,  
 Whose spirit antithetically mixt  
 One moment of the mightiest, and again  
 On little objects with like firmness fixt,  
 Extreme in all things! hadst thou been betwixt, 320  
 Thy throne had still been thine, or never been;  
 For daring made thy rise as fall: thou seek'st  
 Even now to re-assume the imperial mien,  
 And shake again the world, the Thunderer of the scene!

## 37

Conqueror and captive of the earth art thou!  
 She trembles at thee still, and thy wild name  
 Was ne'er more bruited in men's minds than now  
 That thou art nothing, save the jest of Fame,  
 Who wooed thee once, thy vassal, and became 330  
 The flatterer of thy fierceness, till thou wert  
 A god unto thyself; nor less the same  
 To the astounded kingdoms all inert,  
 Who deem'd thee for a time whate'er thou didst assert.

## 38

Oh, more or less than man – in high or low,  
 Battling with nations, flying from the field;  
 Now making monarchs' necks thy footstool, now  
 More than thy meanest soldier taught to yield;  
 An empire thou couldst crush, command, rebuild,  
 But govern not thy pettiest passion, nor,  
 However deeply in men's spirits skill'd, 340  
 Look through thine own, nor curb the lust of war,  
 Nor learn that tempted Fate will leave the loftiest star.

## 39

Yet well thy soul hath brook'd the turning tide  
 With that untaught innate philosophy,  
 Which, be it wisdom, coldness, or deep pride,  
 Is gall and wormwood to an enemy.  
 When the whole host of hatred stood hard by,  
 To watch and mock thee shrinking, thou hast smiled  
 With a sedate and all-enduring eye; –  
 When Fortune fled her spoil'd and favourite child, 350  
 He stood unbowed beneath the ills upon him piled.

## 40

Sager than in thy fortunes; for in them  
 Ambition steel'd thee on too far to show  
 That just habitual scorn which could contemn  
 Men and their thoughts; 'twas wise to feel, not so  
 To wear it ever on thy lip and brow,  
 And spurn the instruments thou wert to use  
 Till they were turn'd unto thine overthrow:  
 'Tis but a worthless world to win or lose;  
 So hath it proved to thee, and all such lot who choose. 360

## 41

If, like a tower upon a headlong rock,  
 Thou hadst been made to stand or fall alone,  
 Such scorn of man had help'd to brave the shock;  
 But men's thoughts were the steps which paved thy throne,  
*Their* admiration thy best weapon shone;  
 The part of Philip's son was thine, not then  
 (Unless aside thy purple<sup>55</sup> had been thrown)  
 Like stern Diogenes to mock at men;  
 For sceptred cynics earth were far too wide a den.

## 42

But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell, 370  
 And *there* hath been thy bane; there is a fire  
 And motion of the soul which will not dwell  
 In its own narrow being, but aspire  
 Beyond the fitting medium of desire;  
 And, but once kindled, quenchless evermore,  
 Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire  
 Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,  
 Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore.

## 43

This makes the madmen who have made men mad  
 By their contagion; Conquerors and Kings, 380  
 Founders of sects and systems, to whom add  
 Sophists, Bards, Statesmen, all unquiet things  
 Which stir too strongly the soul's secret springs,  
 And are themselves the fools to those they fool;  
 Envied, yet how unenviable! what stings  
 Are theirs! One breast laid open were a school  
 Which would unteach mankind the lust to shine or rule:

## 44

Their breath is agitation, and their life  
A storm whereon they ride, to sink at last,  
And yet so nurs'd and bigotted to strife, 390  
That should their days, surviving perils past,  
Melt to calm twilight, they feel overcast  
With sorrow and supineness, and so die;  
Even as a flame unfed, which runs to waste  
With its own flickering, or a sword laid by  
Which eats into itself, and rusts ingloriously.

## 45

He who ascends to mountain-tops, shall find  
The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow;  
He who surpasses or subdues mankind,  
Must look down on the hate of those below. 400  
Though high *above* the sun of glory glow,  
And far *beneath* the earth and ocean spread,  
*Round* him are icy rocks, and loudly blow  
Contending tempests on his naked head,  
And thus reward the toils which to those summits led.

\* \* \*

## 76

But this is not my theme; and I return  
 To that which is immediate, and require  
 Those who find contemplation in the urn,  
 To look on One,<sup>56</sup> whose dust was once all fire,  
 A native of the land where I respire 720  
 The clear air for a while – a passing guest,  
 Where he became a being, – whose desire  
 Was to be glorious; 'twas a foolish quest,  
 The which to gain and keep, he sacrificed all rest.

## 77

Here the self-torturing sophist, wild Rousseau,  
 The apostle of affliction, he who threw  
 Enchantment over passion, and from woe  
 Wrung overwhelming eloquence, first drew  
 The breath which made him wretched; yet he knew 730  
 How to make madness beautiful, and cast  
 O'er erring deeds and thoughts, a heavenly hue  
 Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they past  
 The eyes, which o'er them shed tears feelingly and fast.

## 78

His love was passion's essence – as a tree  
 On fire by lightning; with ethereal flame  
 Kindled he was, and blasted; for to be  
 Thus, and enamoured, were in him the same.  
 But his was not the love of living dame,  
 Nor of the dead who rise upon our dreams,  
 But of ideal beauty, which became 740  
 In him existence, and o'erflowing teems  
 Along his burning page, distempered though it seems.

## 79

*This* breathed itself to life in Julie,<sup>57</sup> *this*  
 Invested her with all that's wild and sweet;  
 This hallowed, too, the memorable kiss<sup>58</sup>  
 Which every morn his fevered lip would greet,  
 From hers, who but with friendship his would meet;  
 But to that gentle touch, through brain and breast  
 Flash'd the thrill'd spirit's love-devouring heat;  
 In that absorbing sigh perchance more blest, 750  
 Than vulgar minds may be with all they seek possess.

## 80

His life was one long war with self-sought foes,  
Or friends by him self-banish'd; for his mind  
Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and chose  
For its own cruel sacrifice, the kind,  
'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange and blind.  
But he was frenzied, – wherefore, who may know?  
Since cause might be which skill could never find;  
But he was frenzied by disease or woe,  
To that worst pitch of all, which wears a reasoning show. 760

## 81

For then he was inspired, and from him came,  
As from the Pythian's mystic cave<sup>59</sup> of yore,  
Those oracles which set the world in flame,  
Nor ceased to burn till kingdoms were no more:  
Did he not this for France? which lay before  
Bowed to the inborn tyranny of years?  
Broken and trembling, to the yoke she bore,  
Till by the voice of him and his compeers,  
Roused up to too much wrath which follows o'ergrown fears?

## *Canto Four*

### 1

I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;  
A palace and a prison on each hand:  
I saw from out the wave her structures rise  
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:  
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand  
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles  
O'er the far times, when many a subject land  
Look'd to the winged Lion's<sup>60</sup> marble piles,  
Where Venice sate in state, thron'd on her hundred isles!

### 2

She looks a sea Cybele,<sup>61</sup> fresh from ocean, 10  
Rising with her tiara of proud towers  
At airy distance, with majestic motion,  
A ruler of the waters and their powers:  
And such she was; – her daughters had their dowers  
From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East  
Pour'd in her lap all gems in sparkling showers.  
In purple was she robed, and of her feast  
Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dignity increas'd.

### 3

In Venice Tasso's<sup>62</sup> echoes are no more, 20  
And silent rows the songless gondolier;  
Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,  
And music meets not always now the ear:  
Those days are gone – but Beauty still is here.  
States fall, arts fade – but Nature doth not die,  
Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear,  
The pleasant place of all festivity,  
The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy!

## 4

But unto us she hath a spell beyond  
Her name in story, and her long array  
Of might shadows, whose dim forms despond 30  
Above the dogeless<sup>63</sup> city's vanish'd sway;  
Ours is a trophy which will not decay  
With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor,  
And Pierre,<sup>64</sup> can not be swept or worn away –  
The keystones of the arch! though all were o'er,  
For us re-peopled were the solitary shore.

## 5

The beings of the mind are not of clay;  
Essentially immortal, they create  
And multiply in us a brighter ray  
And more beloved existence: that which Fate 40  
Prohibits to dull life, in this our state  
Of mortal bondage, by these spirits supplied  
First exiles, then replaces what we hate;  
Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,  
And with a fresher growth replenishing the void.

## 6

Such is the refuge of our youth and age,  
The first from Hope, the last from Vacancy;  
And this worn feeling peoples many a page;  
And, may be, that which grows beneath mine eye:  
Yet there are things whose strong reality 50  
Outshines our fairyland; in shape and hues  
More beautiful than our fantastic sky,  
And the strange constellations which the Muse  
O'er her wild universe is skilful to diffuse:

## 7

I saw or dreamed of such, – but let them go –  
They came like truth, and disappeared like dreams;  
And whatsoe'er they were – are now but so:  
I could replace them if I would, still teems  
My mind with many a form which aptly seems  
Such as I sought for, and at moments found; 60  
Let these too go – for waking Reason deems  
Such over-weening fantasies unsound,  
And other voices speak, and other sights surround.

## 78

Oh Rome! my country! city of the soul!  
 The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,  
 Lone mother of dead empires! and control  
 In their shut breasts their petty misery.  
 What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see  
 The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way  
 O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, Ye! 700  
 Whose agonies are evils of a day –  
 A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

## 79

The Niobe<sup>65</sup> of nations! there she stands,  
 Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;  
 An empty urn within her withered hands,  
 Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago;  
 The Scipios' tomb<sup>66</sup> contains no ashes now;  
 The very sepulchres lie tenantless  
 Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,  
 Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness? 710  
 Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress!

## 80

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire,  
 Have dealt upon the seven-hill'd city's pride;  
 She saw her glories star by star expire,  
 And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride,  
 Where the car climb'd the Capitol;<sup>67</sup> far and wide  
 Temple and tower went down, nor left a site: –  
 Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,  
 O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,  
 And say, 'here was, or is', where all is doubly night? 720

## 81

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

## 82

Alas! the lofty city! and alas! 730  
 The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day  
 When Brutus<sup>68</sup> made the dagger's edge surpass  
 The conqueror's sword in bearing fame away!  
 Alas, for Tully's<sup>69</sup> voice, and Virgil's lay,  
 And Livy's pictur'd page! – but these shall be  
 Her resurrection; all beside – decay.  
 Alas, for Earth, for never shall we see  
 That brightness in her eye she bore when Rome was free!

## 83

Oh thou, whose chariot roll'd on Fortune's wheel,  
 Triumphant Sylla! Thou, who didst subdue 740  
 Thy country's foes ere thou would pause to feel  
 The wrath of thy own wrongs, or reap the due  
 Of hoarded vengeance till thine eagles flew  
 O'er prostrate Asia; – thou, who with thy frown  
 Annihilated senates – Roman, too,  
 With all thy vices, for thou didst lay down  
 With an atoning smile a more than earthly crown –

## 84

The dictatorial wreath, – couldst thou divine  
 To what would one day dwindle that which made  
 Thee more than mortal? and that so supine 750  
 By aught than Romans Rome should thus be laid?  
 She who was named Eternal, and array'd  
 Her warriors but to conquer – she who veil'd  
 Earth with her haughty shadow, and display'd,  
 Until the o'er-canopied horizon fail'd,  
 Her rushing wings – Oh! she who was Almighty hail'd!

## 85

Sylla was first of victors; but our own  
 The sagest of usurpers, Cromwell; he  
 Too swept off senates while he hewed the throne<sup>70</sup>  
 Down to a block – immortal rebel! See 760  
 What crimes it costs to be a moment free  
 And famous through all ages! but beneath  
 His fate the moral lurks of destiny;  
 His day of double victory and death  
 Beheld him win two realms, and, happier, yield his breath.

## 86

The third of the same moon whose former course  
 Had all but crown'd him, on the selfsame day  
 Deposed him gently from his throne of force,  
 And laid him with the earth's preceding clay.  
 And show'd not Fortune thus how fame and sway, 770  
 And all we deem delightful, and consume  
 Our souls to compass through each arduous way,  
 Are in her eyes less happy than the tomb?  
 Were they but so in man's, how different were his doom!

## 87

And thou, dread statue! yet existent in  
 The austerest form of naked majesty,  
 Thou who beheldest, 'mid the assassins' din,  
 At thy bath'd base the bloody Caesar lie,  
 Folding his robe in dying dignity,  
 An offering to thine altar from the queen 780  
 Of gods and men, great Nemesis!<sup>71</sup> did he die,  
 And thou, too, perish, Pompey? have ye been  
 Victors of countless kings, or puppets of a scene?

## 88

And thou, the thunder-stricken nurse of Rome!  
 She-wolf!<sup>72</sup> whose brazen-imag'd dugs impart  
 The milk of conquest yet within the dome  
 Where, as a monument of antique art,  
 Thou standest: – Mother of the mighty heart,  
 Which the great founder suck'd from thy wild teat,  
 Scorch'd by the Roman Jove's ethereal dart, 790  
 And thy limbs black with lightning – dost thou yet  
 Guard thine immortal cubs, nor thy fond charge forget?

## 89

Thou dost; – but all thy foster-babes are dead –  
 The men of iron; and the world hath rear'd  
 Cities from out their sepulchres: men bled  
 In imitation of the things they fear'd,  
 And fought and conquer'd, and the same course steer'd,  
 At apish distance; but as yet none have,  
 Nor could, the same supremacy have near'd,  
 Save one vain man,<sup>73</sup> who is not in the grave, 800  
 But, vanquish'd by himself, to his own slaves a slave –

## 90

The fool of false dominion – and a kind  
 Of bastard Caesar, following him of old  
 With steps unequal: for the Roman's mind  
 Was modell'd in a less terrestrial mould,  
 With passions fiercer, yet a judgment cold,  
 And an immortal instinct which redeem'd  
 The frailties of a heart so soft, yet bold,  
 Alcides with the distaff<sup>74</sup> now he seem'd  
 At Cleopatra's feet, – and now himself he beam'd, 810

## 91

And came – and saw – and conquer'd!<sup>75</sup> But the man  
 Who would have tamed his eagles down to flee,<sup>76</sup>  
 Like a train'd falcon, in the Gallic van,  
 Which he, in sooth, long led to victory,  
 With a deaf heart which never seem'd to be  
 A listener to itself, was strangely fram'd;  
 With but one weakest weakness – vanity,  
 Coquettish in ambition – still he aim'd –  
 At what? can he avouch – or answer what he claim'd?

## 92

And would be all or nothing – nor could wait 820  
 For the sure grave to level him; few years  
 Had fix'd him with the Caesars in his fate,  
 On whom we tread: For *this* the conqueror rears  
 The arch of triumph!<sup>77</sup> and for this the tears  
 And blood of earth flow on as they have flowed,  
 And universal deluge,<sup>78</sup> which appears  
 Without an ark for wretched man's abode,  
 And ebbs but to reflow! – Renew thy rainbow, God!

## 93

What from this barren being do we reap?  
 Our senses narrow, and our reason frail, 830  
 Life short, and truth a gem which loves the deep,  
 And all things weigh'd in custom's falsest scale;  
 Opinion an omnipotence,<sup>79</sup> – whose veil  
 Mantles the earth with darkness, until right  
 And wrong are accidents, and men grow pale  
 Lest their own judgments should become too bright,  
 And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth have too much light.

## 94

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,  
 Rotting from sire to son, and age to age,  
 Proud of their trampled nature, and so die, 840  
 Bequeathing their hereditary rage  
 To the new race of inborn slaves, who wage  
 War for their chains, and rather than be free,  
 Bleed gladiator-like, and still engage  
 Within the same arena where they see  
 Their fellows fall before, like leaves of the same tree.

## 95

I speak not of men's creeds – they rest between  
 Man and his Maker – but of things allowed,  
 Averr'd, and known, – and daily, hourly seen –  
 The yoke that is upon us doubly bowed, 850  
 And the intent of tyranny avowed,<sup>80</sup>  
 The edict of Earth's rulers, who are grown  
 The apes of him who humbled once the proud,  
 And shook them from their slumbers on the throne;  
 Too glorious, were this all his mighty arm had done.

## 96

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquered be,  
 And Freedom find no champion and no child  
 Such as Columbia<sup>81</sup> saw arise when she  
 Sprung forth a Pallas, armed and undefiled?  
 Or must such minds be nourished in the wild, 860  
 Deep in the unpruned forest, 'midst the roar  
 Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled  
 On infant Washington? Has Earth no more  
 Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore?

## 97

But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime,  
 And fatal have her Saturnalia<sup>82</sup> been  
 To Freedom's cause, in every age and clime;  
 Because the deadly days which we have seen,  
 And vile Ambition, that built up between  
 Man and his hopes an adamantine wall, 870  
 And the base pageant<sup>83</sup> last upon the scene,  
 Are grown the pretext for the eternal thrall  
 Which nips life's tree, and dooms man's worst – his second fall.

## 98

Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn, but flying,  
 Streams like the thunder-storm *against* the wind;  
 Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,  
 The loudest still the tempest leaves behind;  
 Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,  
 Chopp'd by the axe, looks rough and little worth,  
 But the sap lasts, – and still the seed we find 880  
 Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;<sup>84</sup>  
 So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring forth.

\*   \*   \*

## 185

My task is done – my song hath ceased – my theme  
 Has died into an echo; it is fit  
 The spell should break of this protracted dream.  
 The torch shall be extinguish'd which hath lit 1660  
 My midnight lamp – and what is writ,<sup>85</sup> is writ, –  
 Would it were worthier! but I am not now  
 That which I have been – and my visions flit  
 Less palpably before me – and the glow  
 Which in my spirit dwelt, is fluttering, faint, and low.

## Notes for Extracts from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*

Frequently occurring terms and names appear in the Glossary

Abbreviations:

LB Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads*

PL Milton's *Paradise Lost*

References to Byron's *Letter and Journals* appear in brackets in the form (1:1)

### CANTO ONE

- 1 (p. 11) *Hellas* Greece
- 2 (p. 11) *Whilome* once upon a time. Throughout Canto One Byron uses deliberately archaic language ironically.
- 3 (p. 11) *hight* called
- 4 (p. 11) *loسل* worthless person. Possibly a reference to the 'wicked' 5th Lord Byron (1722–96).
- 5 (p. 12) *Eremite's* hermit's
- 6 (p. 12) *ee* eyes
- 7 (p. 12) *Superstition . . . Paphian* The hall, modelled on Newstead Abbey, changes from a site of Catholic worship to one interested in sexual intrigue. For Paphian, see Glossary.
- 8 (p. 13) *lemans* mistresses
- 9 (p. 13) *feere* mate
- 10 (p. 13) *central line* the Equator
- 11 (p. 15) *Love's sad archery* See Cupid in Glossary. The description of the bullfight uses puns conflating sexual and martial activity throughout.
- 12 (p. 15) *croupe* the hindquarters of the horse, here in the sense of a manoeuvre made by the rider
- 13 (p. 15) *brast* broken
- 14 (p. 15) *conynge* cunning
- 15 (p. 17) *sentinel, Duenna sage* a wise female chaperone
- 16 (p. 17) *wings* See Cupid in Glossary.

### CANTO TWO

- 17 (p. 18) *son of Saturn* Jupiter. This is a description of the ruins of the temple to Jupiter in Athens.
- 18 (p. 18) *yon fane* the Parthenon

- 19 (p. 18) *dull spoiler* . . . *Caledonia* See Elgin in Glossary.
- 20 (p. 18) *rive* tear apart
- 21 (p. 19) *Eld* the mythic personification of antiquity
- 22 (p. 19) *Aegis* . . . *Havoc* Pallas' shield, Aegis, meaning protection, used figuratively against the Goth leader Alaric who attacked Rome, and more generally against Havoc – see Glossary.
- 23 (p. 19) *Peleus' son* Achilles the hero of the *Iliad*. He was dipped in the river Styx – see Stygian in Glossary – granting him invulnerability, except in the heel; subsequently injured in this one vulnerable spot, he died, but his ghost appeared to the Greeks after the taking of Troy.
- 24 (p. 19) *Pluto* Greek god of the underworld
- 25 (p. 20) *well-reeved* secured
- 26 (p. 20) *lone chieftain* the captain of the ship
- 27 (p. 21) *rude Arion's* simple singer after the mythical poet Arion who was saved from drowning by Dolphins
- 28 (p. 21) *Hecate's blaze* the light of the moon, after the goddess Hecate
- 29 (p. 21) *Mauritania's* . . . *down* the shore of North Africa
- 30 (p. 23) *bondsmen* Constantinople had been under Muslim rule since 1453.
- 31 (p. 23) *proud despoilers* the Turks who ruled over Greece
- 32 (p. 23) *Shades of the Helots* Modern Greeks are like ancient Spartan slaves.
- 33 (p. 23) *Wahab's rebel brood* a fundamentalist Muslim sect which sacked Mecca in 1803

### CANTO THREE

- 34 (p. 24) *The winds lift up their voices* See Isaiah, 42:11.
- 35 (p. 24) *One* Childe Harold, referring back to earlier cantos of the poem
- 36 (p. 26) *strange land* See Exodus, 2:22.
- 37 (p. 27) *Chaldean* a Babylonian astronomer and mystic
- 38 (p. 27) *clay* . . . *spark immortal* the body and the soul
- 39 (p. 28) *Empire's dust* Napoleon's French Empire (1805–14) was defeated at Waterloo. Byron goes on to criticise the settlement reached at the Congress of Vienna (1815).
- 40 (p. 28) '*pride of place*' a term in falconry for the bird who flies highest
- 41 (p. 29) *the myrtle* . . . *Harmodius* In 514 BC Harmodius attacked the Tyrants of Athens with a sword hidden in myrtle; such a sword has become a symbol of liberty-seeking generally.
- 42 (p. 29) *deep sound* The sound of cannon fire disrupts a party on the night before the battle of Quatre-Bras.

- 43 (p. 29) *Brunswick's fated chieftain* Frederick Duke of Brunswick (1771–1815) was killed at the battle of Quatre-Bras. His father was killed in 1806 at Auerstadt.
- 44 (p. 30) '*Cameron's gathering*' the clan song of the Camerons, whose chief is the Lochiel
- 45 (p. 30) *Albyn's . . . Saxon* The Gaelic form for Scotland is Albyn; the Saxon foes are the English.
- 46 (p. 30) *Evan's, Donald's fame* the martial fame of Evan (1629–1719) and Donald (1695–1748) Cameron.
- 47 (p. 30) *Ardenne's . . . leaves* The forest of Ardennes is in Luxembourg. Byron's geography is confused here.
- 48 (p. 31) *Howard* Frederick Howard (1785–1815), Byron's cousin, who died at Waterloo. Byron had criticised his father in EBSR.
- 49 (p. 31) *Archangel's trump* trumpet which wakes the dead
- 50 (p. 32) *heart . . . live on* See John Donne's 'The Broken Heart', 24–32.
- 51 (p. 32) *the apples* The fabled apples on the shore of Lake Asphaltes appeared beautiful on the outside, but were ashes on the inside.
- 52 (p. 32) *The Psalmist* The Psalms (90:10) allow for three score years and ten, or seventy years.
- 53 (p. 32) '*Here . . . that day*' an echo of the St Crispin's day speech in *Henry V* 4, 3, 44ff
- 54 (p. 33) *the greatest* Napoleon – see Glossary. Like Milton's Satan in *PL*, Byron's Napoleon is driven by desire to aspire too high.
- 55 (p. 34) *purple* the colour worn by Roman emperors
- 56 (p. 36) *One* Rousseau – see Glossary.
- 57 (p. 36) *Julie* Rousseau's novel *Julie* (1761) details the love of the eponymous and idealised heroine for her tutor Saint-Preux.
- 58 (p. 36) *memorable kiss* In his *Confessions* (1770), the autobiographical nature of which clearly inspired Byron, Rousseau recalls his unrequited love for the Comtesse D'Houdetot.
- 59 (p. 37) *Pythian's mystic cave* the oracle of Delphi from where the future could be predicted. Rousseau is held, here, to have inspired the French Revolution (1789).

#### CANTO FOUR

- 60 (p. 38) *winged Lion* the Lion of St Mark's, a symbol of Venetian independence
- 61 (p. 38) *Cybele* Greco-Roman goddess, mother of the gods
- 62 (p. 38) *Tasso* Italian poet (1493–1569) born on the Bay of Naples
- 63 (p. 39) *dogeless* The Doges were the rulers of the Venetian republic up until the eighteenth century.
- 64 (p. 39) *Rialto . . . Pierre* The Rialto was the market-place of Venice. Shylock appears in *The Merchant of Venice* and the Moor is the title

- character of his *Othello*, both partially set in Venice. Pierre is the hero of Otway's *Venice Preserved* (1682).
- 65 (p. 40) *Niobe* a mythical figure who boasted of her number of offspring. Her children were killed by the gods because of her arrogance, and she was turned into a stone.
- 66 (p. 40) *Scipios' tomb* The Roman general Scipio's (185–129BC) tomb was discovered in 1780 and looted.
- 67 (p. 40) *Capitol* the seat of government
- 68 (p. 41) *Brutus . . . fame away* Marcus Junius Brutus (85–42BC), Roman politician who headed conspiracy against Julius Caesar and helped assassinate him
- 69 (p. 41) *Tully's* See Cicero in the Glossary.
- 70 (p. 41) *Cromwell . . . throne* Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658) brought about similar political reform or upheaval when he dissolved the Long Parliament and was involved in the execution of Charles I in 1653.
- 71 (p. 42) *Nemesis* Greek goddess of retribution
- 72 (p. 42) *She-wolf* Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome, was said to have been reared by a wolf. A statue of the wolf forms part of the Capitol.
- 73 (p. 42) *one vain man* Napoleon – see Glossary.
- 74 (p. 43) *Alcides with the distaff* a feminised Hercules
- 75 (p. 43) *And . . . conquer'd* Echoing Julius Caesar's 'I came, I saw, I conquered' (47BC)
- 76 (p. 43) *flee* in the sense of fly towards
- 77 (p. 43) *arch of triumph* The Arc de Triomphe was commissioned by Napoleon in 1806 to mark his victory at Austerlitz. It was completed in 1836.
- 78 (p. 43) *And universal deluge* the suffering of mankind is compared to the biblical flood
- 79 (p. 43) *Opinion an omnipotence* a quote from William Godwin's *Political Justice* (1793), 1,10
- 80 (p. 44) *tyranny avow'd* A reference to perceived oppressive regimes of the Holy Alliance, the group of European powers formed at the Congress of Vienna (1815) after the defeat of Napoleon.
- 81 (p. 44) *Columbia* A comparison is made with the American Revolution (1776).
- 82 (p. 44) *France . . . Saturnalia* a reference to the Terror that followed the French Revolution (1789). Saturnalia were extravagant, orgiastic pagan festivals.
- 83 (p. 44) *base pageant* Congress of Vienna (1815)
- 84 (p. 45) *North* suggests England as a possible site for the rebirth of liberty
- 85 (p. 45) *what is writ* See John, 19:22.