

76.

Aught that recalls the daily drug which turned
 My sickening Memory; and, though Time hath taught
 My Mind to meditate what then it learned,
 Yet such the fixed inveteracy, wrought
 By the impatience of my early thought, 680
 That with the freshness wearing out before
 My Mind could relish what it might have sought,
 If free to choose, I cannot now restore
 Its health – but what it then detested, still abhor.

77.

Then farewell, Horace¹¹⁹ – whom I hated so, 685
 Not for thy faults, but mine; it is a curse
 To understand, not feel thy lyric flow,
 To comprehend, but never love thy verse:
 Although no deeper Moralist rehearse
 Our little life, nor Bard prescribe his Art, 690
 Nor livelier Satirist the Conscience pierce,
 Awakening without wounding the touched heart,
 Yet fare thee well – upon Soracte's ridge we part.

78.

Oh Rome! my Country! City of the Soul!
 The Orphans of the Heart must turn to thee, 695
 Lone Mother of dead Empires! and controul
 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 of Nations!¹²⁰ there She stands,
 Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;
 An empty Urn within her withered hands, 705
 Whose holy dust was scattered long ago;
 The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;¹²¹
 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.

119: B. speaks too soon. There are more quotations from Horace in *Don Juan* than in any other of his works.

120: For Niobe's tears, which turned her into a statue, see Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book VI.

121: The tomb of the Scipios was discovered in 1780. Scipio Africanus, vanquisher of Hannibal and saviour of Rome, was not buried in it.

80.

The Goth, the Christian – Time – War – Flood, and Fire,
Have dealt upon the seven-hilled City's pride;
She saw her Glories star by star expire,
And up the Steep Barbarian Monarchs ride, 715
Where the Car climbed the Capitol; far and wide
Temple and tower went down, nor left a site –
Chaos of Ruins! who shall trace the void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say, "here was, or is," where all is doubly Night?¹²² 720

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, and Stars their map,
And Knowledge spreads them on her ample lap; 725
But Rome is as the desert, where we steer
Stumbling o'er recollections; now we clap
Our hands, and cry "Eureka!" it is clear –
When but some false Mirage of ruin rises near.

82.

Alas! the lofty City! and alas! 730
The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day *
When Brutus made the dagger's edge surpass
The Conqueror's sword in bearing fame away!
Alas, for Tully's¹²³ voice, and Virgil's lay,
And Livy's pictured page! – but these shall be 735
Her Resurrection; all beside – decay.
Alas for Earth, for never shall we see
That brightness in her eye She bore when Rome was free!¹²⁴

* Orosius gives three hundred and twenty for the number of triumphs. He is followed by Panvinius; and Panvinius by Mr. Gibbon and the modern writers.

83.

O thou, whose Chariot rolled on Fortune's wheel,
Triumphant Sylla!¹²⁵ Thou! who didst subdue 740
Thy Country's foes ere thou wouldst pause to feel
The wrath of thy own wrongs, or reap the due
Of hoarded Vengeance till thine Eagles flew
O'er prostrate Asia;¹²⁶ thou, who with thy frown
Annihilated Senates – Roman, too. 745
With all thy vices, for thou didst lay down
With an atoning smile a more than earthly Crown –

122: The archaeological discovery of ancient Rome was in 1817 in its infancy.

123: Cicero (Marcus Tullius Cicero: 106-43 BC) Roman statesman and writer, much admired for his prose style.

124: Rome was never "free." B. is seeing it through Gibbon's first chapter.

125: Lucius Cornelius Sulla (138-78 BC) victor over Marius in the civil war.

126: Sulla was victorious over Mithridates, King of Pontus, in 83 BC.