

[23d: not in Egerton 2027]

**Thus unto Heaven appealed the people, Heaven
Which loves the lieges of our gracious King,
Decreed that ere our Generals were forgiven,
Enquiry should be held about the thing,
But Mercy cloaked the babes beneath her wing
And as they spared our foes, so spared we them,
(Where was the pity of our Sires for Byng?)⁹⁰ *
Yet knaves not idiots should the law condemn;
Then live, ye gallant Knights! & bless your Judges' phlegm!⁹¹**

*** By this query it is not meant that our foolish generals should have been shot, but that Byng might have been spared; though the one suffered and the others escaped, probably for Candide's reason "pour encourager les autres."**

24.

Behold the hall where chiefs were late convened! *
Oh! dome displeasing unto British eye!
With diadem high foolscap, lo! a fiend, 290
A little fiend that scoffs incessantly,
There sits in parchment robe arrayed, and by
His side is hung a seal and sable scroll,
Where blazoned glare names known to chivalry,
And sundry signatures adorn the roll, 295
Whereat the Urchin points and laughs with all his soul.

* The Convention of Cintra was signed in the palace of the Marchese Marialva. The late exploits of Lord Wellington have effaced the follies of Cintra. He has, indeed, done wonders: he has perhaps changed the character of a nation, reconciled rival superstitions, and baffled an enemy who never retreated before his predecessors. [There is an enlarged version of this note at line 377 below.]

25.

Convention is the dwarfish demon styled
That foiled the knights in Marialva's dome:
Of brains (if brains they had) he them beguiled,
And turned a nation's shallow joy to gloom. 300
Here Folly dashed to earth the victor's plume,
And Policy regained what arms had lost:
For chiefs like ours in vain may laurels bloom!
Woe to the conqu'ring, not the conquered host,
Since baffled Triumph droops on Lusitania's coast. 305

26.

And ever since that martial synod met,
Britannia sickens, Cintra! at thy name;
And folks in office at the mention fret,
And fain would blush, if blush they could, for shame.
How will posterity the deed proclaim! 310
Will not our own and fellow-nations sneer,
To view these champions cheated of their fame,
By foes in fight o'er thrown, yet victors here,
Where Scorn her finger points through many a coming year!

90: The English Admiral John Byng (b. 1704) court-martialled for cowardice and executed in 1757.

91: Text edited from Erdman/Worrall 39-41.

27.

So deemed the Childe, as o'er the mountains he 315
 Did take his way in solitary guise:⁹²
 Sweet was the scene, yet soon he thought to flee,
 More restless than the swallow in the skies:
 Though here awhile he learned to moralize,
 For Meditation fixed at times on him; 320
 And conscious Reason whispered to despise
 His early youth, misspent in maddest whim;
 But as he gazed on truth his aching eyes grew dim.

28.

To horse! to horse! he quits, for ever quits
 A scene of peace, though soothing to his soul: 325
 Again he rouses from his moping fits,
 But seeks not now the harlot and the bowl.
 Onward he flies, nor fixed as yet the goal
 Where he shall rest him on his pilgrimage;
 And o'er him many changing scenes must roll 330
 Ere toil his thirst for travel can assuage,
 Or he shall calm his breast, or learn experience sage.

29.

Yet Mafra shall one moment claim delay,
 Where dwelt of yore the Lusians' luckless queen;⁹³ * 335
 And church and court did mingle their array,
 And mass and revel were alternate seen;
 Lordlings and freres – ill sorted fry I ween!
 But here the Babylonian whore hath built
 A dome, where flaunts she in such glorious sheen, †
 That men forget the blood which she hath spilt, 340
 And bow the knee to Pomp that loves to varnish guilt.

* Her insane majesty went religiously mad. Dr Willis,⁹⁴ who do dexterously cudgelled kingly pericraniums, could make not a thing of hers.

† The extent of Mafra is prodigious; it contains a palace, convent, and most superb church. The six organs are the most beautiful I ever beheld, in point of decoration; we did not hear them, but were told that their tones were correspondent to their splendour. Mafra is termed the Escorial of Portugal.

92: B. was accompanied by H. and several servants.

93: The Monumento da Mafra, a huge palace / monastery / church built ten miles from Cintra by Joao V of Portugal between 1717 and 1730, in imitation of the Escorial at Madrid. B. refers to it, and to the madness of Queen Maria I, who had lived there before being forced by the French invasion to go to Brazil in 1807.

94: Dr Willis treated the insane George III.