

X

Dark Muchtar his son to the Danube is sped, 685
 Let the yellow-haired Giaours ‡ view his horse-tail with dread; §
 When his Delhis ¶ come dashing in blood o'er the banks,
 How few shall escape from the Muscovite ranks!

XI

Selictar! ** unsheathe then our chief's scimitar:
 Tambourgi! Thy 'larum gives promise of war. 690
 Ye mountains, that see us descend to the shore!
 Shall view us as victors, or view us no more! ††

* Tambourgi: drummer.

† It was taken by storm from the French.

‡ Yellow is the epithet given to the Russians.

§ Horse-tails are the insignia of a Pacha.

¶ Horsemen, answering to our forlorn hope.

** Selictar: sword-bearer.

†† These stanzas are partly taken from different Albanese songs, as far as I was able to make them out by the exposition of the Albanese in Romaic or Italian. – **With regard to the lines in S. 6 & 7 it must be understood that the Albanese in common with the Turks and Greeks are addicted to Pederasty though I must say in their favour what must be said for the Turks, that I believe they prefer women, however in Albania their number is small in proportion to the male population.**²⁵²

As a specimen of the Albanian or Arnaout dialect of the Illyric, I here insert two of their most popular choral songs, which are generally chaunted in dancing by men or women indiscriminately. The first words are merely a kind of chorus without meaning, like some in our own and all other languages [*THIS NOTE CONTINUES AS N4 AT THE END.*]

73.

Fair Greece! Sad relic of departed worth! *
 Immortal though no more; though fallen, great!
 Who now shall lead thy scattered children forth, 695
 And long accustomed bondage uncreate?
 Not such thy sons who whilome did await,
 The hopeless warriors of a willing doom,
 In bleak Thermopylæ's²⁵³ sepulchral strait –
 Oh! Who that gallant spirit shall resume, 700
 Leap from Eurota's banks, and call thee from the tomb?

* Some thoughts on this subject will be found in the subjoined papers.²⁵⁴

²⁵²: Text edited in part from Erdman/Worrall 144, in part from CPW II 198.

²⁵³: In 480 BC Leonidas, King of Sparta, held the Thermopylæ pass against the Persians under Xerxes with a force of three hundred men, allowing the rest of Greece time to organise.

²⁵⁴: See below, "Byron's Thoughts on the subject of Greece".

74.

Spirit of Freedom! When on Phyle's brow
 Thou sat'st with Thrasybulus²⁵⁵ and his train, *
 Couldst thou forebode the dismal hour which now
 Dims the green beauties of thine Attic plain? 705
 Not thirty tyrants now enforce the chain,
 But every carle can lord it o'er thy land;
 Nor rise thy sons, but idly rain in vain,
 Trembling beneath the scourge of Turkish hand,
 From birth till death enslaved; in word, in deed, unmanned. 710

* Phyle, which commands a beautiful view of Athens, has still considerable remains: it was seized by Thrasybulus previous to the expulsion of the Thirty.

75.

In all save form alone, how changed! and who
 That marks the fire still sparkling in each eye,
 Who but would deem their bosoms burned anew
 With thy unquenched beam, lost Liberty!
 And many dream withal the hour is nigh 715
 That gives them their father's heritage:
 For foreign arms and aid they fondly sigh,
 Nor solely dare encounter hostile rage,
 Or tear their name defiled from Slavery's mournful page.

76.²⁵⁶

Hereditary bondsmen! 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 low,
 But not for you will Freedom's altars flame. 725
 Shades of the Helots! 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; *
 Or Wahab's rebel brood²⁵⁷ who dared divest †
 The prophet's tomb of all its pious spoil,²⁵⁸
 May wind their path of blood along the West; 735
 But ne'er will freedom seek this fated soil,
 But slave succeed to slave through years of endless toil.

* When taken by the Latins, and retained for several years. – See GIBBON.

† Mecca and Medina were taken some time ago by the Wahabees, a sect yearly increasing.

255: Thrasybulus liberated Athens from the tyranny of the Thirty, in 403 BC.

256: This stanza is a pre-echo of *The Isles of Greece* in *Don Juan III*.

257: The Wahabees were Islamic fundamentalists who were threatening the Moslem world.

258: The Wahabees had sacked Mecca and Medina in 1803 and 1804.

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, 745
 And join the mimic train of merry Carnival.²⁵⁹

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 wooed the eye, and thrilled the Bosphorus along. 755

80.

Loud was the lightsome tumult of the shore,
 Oft Music changed, but never ceased her tone,
 And timely echoed back the measured oar,
 And rippling waters made a pleasant moan:
 The Queen of tides on high consenting shone, 760
 And when a transient breeze swept o'er the wave,
 'Twas – as if darting from her heavenly throne,
 A brighter glance her form reflected gave,
 Till sparkling billows seemed to light the banks they lave.

81.

Glanced many a light caique²⁶⁰ along the foam, 765
 Dance on the shore the daughters of the land,
 Ne thought had man or maid or rest of home,
 While many a languid eye and thrilling hand,
 Exchanged the looks few bosoms may withstand,
 Or gently prest, returned the pressure still: 770
 Oh Love! young Love! bound in thy rosy band,
 Let sage or cynic prattle as he will,
 These hours, and only these, redeem Life's years of ill!

259: Coleridge and McGann assume that this carnival happens at Constantinople, but neither H. nor B. refers to any such. One did occur in their last days at Athens: "They [the Franks in Athens] have balls and parties in the winter and spring of the year, in their own small circle, to which the principal Greeks are invited, and particularly during the carnival, when they and many of the inhabitants are in masquerade. We were present at that season, and were visited by a young Athenian in an English uniform, who was highly delighted with his metamorphosis. The most favourite fancy of the Greeks seemed to be that of dressing themselves up like the Waiwode, the Cadi, or other principal Turks, and parading the streets with attendants also properly habited. One more daring humourist of my acquaintance, on one occasion mimicked the Archbishop himself as if in the ceremony of blessing the houses, but found the priests less tolerant than the Mahometans, for he was excommunicated" – *Journey* (I 299-300).

260: A caique, or caïque, is a light sailing boat.

82.

But midst the throng in merry masquerade,
 Lurk there no hearts that throb with secret pain? 775
 Even through the closest searment half betrayed?
 To such the gentle murmurs of the main
 Seem to re-echo all they mourn in vain;
 To such the gladness of the gamesome crowd
 In source of wayward thought and stern disdain: 780
 How do they loathe the laughter idly loud,
 And long to change the robe of revel for the shroud!

83.

This must he feel – the true-born son of Greece,
 If Greece one true-born patriot still can boast,
 Not such as prate of war, but skulk in peace – 785
 The bondsman's peace – who sighs for all he lost,
 Yet with smooth smile his tyrant can accost,
 And wield the slavish sickle, not the sword:
 Ah! Greece! they love thee least who owe thee most –
 Their birth, their blood, and that sublime record 790
 Of hero sires, who shame thy now degenerate horde!

84.

When riseth Lacedemon's²⁶¹ hardihood,
 When Thebes Epaminondas²⁶² rears again,
 When Athens' children are with hearts endued,
 When Grecian mothers shall give birth to men, 795
 Then may'st thou be restored; but not till then.
 A thousand years scarce serve to form a state;
 An hour may lay it in the dust: and when
 Can man its shattered splendour renovate,
 Recal its virtues back, and vanquish Time and Fate? 800

85.

And yet how lovely in thine age of woe,
 Land of lost gods and godlike men! art thou!
 Thy vales of evergreen, thy hills of snow, *
 Proclaim thee Nature's varied favourite now;
 Thy fanes, thy temples to thy surface bow, 805
 Commingling slowly with heroic earth,
 Broke by the share of every rustic plough:
 So perish monuments of mortal birth,
 So perish all in turn, save well-recorded Worth;

* On many of the mountains, particularly Liakura, the snow never is entirely melted, notwithstanding the intense heat of the Summer; but I never saw it lie on the plains even in Winter.

261: The Lacedæmonians, from Laconia in south-east Greece, rebelled against Sparta in 192 BC.

262: Epaminondas (c418-362 BC) Theban general who defeated the Spartans at Leuctra (371 BC).

86.

Save where some solitary column mourns 810
 Above its prostrate brethren of the cave; *
 Save where Tritonia's²⁶³ airy shrine adorns
 Colonna's cliff, and gleams along the wave;
 Save o'er some warriors' half-forgotten grave,
 Where the grey stones and unmolested grass 815
 Ages, but not oblivion, feebly brave,
 While strangers only not regardless pass,
 Linger like me, perchance, to gaze, and sigh "Alas!"

* Of Mount Pentelicus, from whence the marble was dug that constructed the public edifices of Athens. The modern name is Mount Mendeli. An immense cave formed by the quarries still remains, and will till the end of time.

87.

Yet are thy skies as blue, thy crags as wild;
 Sweet are thy groves, and verdant are thy fields, 820
 Then olive ripe as when Minerva smiled,
 And still his honied wealth Hymettus yields;
 There the blithe bee his fragrant fortress builds,
 The freeborn wanderer of thy mountain-air;
 Apollo still thy long, long summer gilds, 825
 Still in his beam Mendeli's marbles glare;
 Art, glory, Freedom fail, but Nature still is fair.

88.

Where'er we tread 'tis haunted, holy ground;
 No earth of thine is lost in vulgar mould!
 But one vast realm of wonder spreads around, 830
 And all the Muse's tales seem truly told,
 Till the sense aches with gazing to behold
 The scenes our earliest dreams have dwelt upon:
 Each hill and dale, each deepening glen and wold
 Defies the power which crushed thy temples gone: 835
 Age shakes Athena's tower, but spares gray Marathon.

89.

The sun – the soil – but not the slave the same,
 Unchanged in all except its foreign lord,
 Preserves alike its bounds and boundless fame,
 The Battle-field – where Persia's victim horde 840
 First bowed beneath the brunt of Hellas' sword,
 As on the morn to distant Glory dear,
 When Marathon became a magic word – *
 Which uttered – to the hearer's eye appear
 The camp – the host – the fight – the conqueror's career! 845

* "Siste Viator – heroa calcas!" was the epitaph on the famous Count Merci;²⁶⁴ – what then must be our feelings when standing on the tumulus of the two hundred (Greeks) who fell on

263: Tritonia was an ancient name for Athens.

²⁶⁴ "Stop, you that pass – you are treading on a hero!"; François Mercy de Lorraine (c1590-1645) protestant hero of the Thirty Years' War.