

131.

Amidst this wreck, where thou hast made a shrine 1171
And temple more divinely desolate,
Among thy mightier offerings here are mine,
Ruins of years – though few, yet full of fate –
If thou hast ever seen me too elate, 1175
Hear me not; but if calmly I have borne
Good, and reserved my pride against the hate
Which shall not whelm me, let me not have worn
This iron in my Soul in vain – shall *they* not mourn?

132.

And Thou, who never yet of human wrong 1180
Left'st the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis!¹⁵⁷
Here, where the Ancient paid thee homage long –
Thou who didst call the Furies from the Abyss,
And round Orestes¹⁵⁸ bade them howl and hiss
For that unnatural retribution – just, 1185
Had it but been from hands less near – in this
Thy former realm, I call thee from the dust!
Dost thou not hear my heart? – Awake! thou shalt, and must.

133.

It is not that I may not have incurred
For my Ancestral faults or mine the wound 1190
I bleed withal, and, had it been conferred
With a just weapon, it had flowed unbound;
But now my blood shall not sink in the ground;
To thee I do devote it – *thou* shalt take 1194
The vengeance, which shall yet be sought and found,
Which if *I* have not taken for the sake –
But let that pass – I sleep, but thou shalt yet awake.

134.

And if my voice break forth, 'tis not that now
I shrink from what is suffered: let him speak
Who hath beheld decline upon my brow, 1200
Or seen my Mind's convulsion leave it weak;
But in this page a record will I seek.
Not in the air shall these my words disperse,
Though I be ashes; a far hour shall wreak
The deep prophetic fulness of this Verse, 1205
And pile on human heads the Mountain of my Curse!

157: Nemesis – the Power or God of retributory Fate – is a character in *Manfred*. See Act II.

158: Orestes revenged the murder of his father, Agammon, by killing his mother, Clytemnestra, and her lover Aegisthus. B. termed his wife “The moral Clytemnestra of thy Lord” (see *Lines on Hearing that Lady Byron was Ill*, 37).

135.

That Curse shall be Forgiveness. Have I not –
Hear me, my mother Earth! behold it, Heaven!¹⁵⁹
Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?
Have I not suffered things to be forgiven? 1210
Have I not had my brain seared, my heart riven,
Hopes sapped, name blighted, Life's life lied away?
And only not to desperation driven,
Because not altogether of such Clay
As rots into the Souls of those whom I survey. 1215

[There was another stanza [here](#) in the M.S. which was omitted at y^c. request of those <five> to whom the work was shown previous to publication, it began with "If to forgive be heaping Coals of fire"]

135a.

<If to forgive be "heaping coals of Fire"
As God has spoken – on the heads of foes
Mine should be a Volcano – and rise higher
Than o'er the Titans crushed, Olympus rose
Or Athos soars, or blazing Ætna¹⁶⁰ glows:
True – they who stung were creeping things – but what
Than Serpent's teeth, inflicts with deadlier throes?
The Lion may be goaded by the Gnat –
Who sucks the Slumberer's blood? – the Eagle? No – the Bat.¹⁶¹ *

* The Vampire's bat. This was intended to come in after the Stanza beginning – That Curse shall be forgiveness.>

136.

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
Have I not seen what human things could do?
From the loud roar of foaming Calumny
To the small whisper of th'as paltry few,
And subtler venom of the reptile Crew, 1220
The Janus Glimpse of whose significant eye,
Learning to lie with Silence, would seem true,¹⁶²
And without utterance, save the Shrug or sigh,¹⁶³
Deal round to happy fools its speechless Obloquy.

137.

But I have lived, and have not lived in vain: 1225
My Mind may lose its force, my Blood its fire,
And my Frame perish even in conquering pain;
But there is that within me which shall tire
Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire;
Something unearthly, which they deem not of, 1230
Like the remembered tone of a mute Lyre,
Shall on their softened Spirits sink, and move
In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of Love.

159: Compare *Hamlet*, I, v, 92: *Oh all you host of Heaven! Oh, earth! What else? ...* and so on.

160: See above, stanza 74, for B.'s previous planting of these volcanoes or volcanic hills in the reader's mind.

161: This stanza was omitted, not at B.'s wish, but at that of his "five" London friends: Murray, Hobhouse, Gifford, Kinnaid, and (perhaps) Davies. Text in part from Erdman / Worrall 429. "The Bat" was one of Caroline Lamb's nicknames.

162: As with many of his separation poems, B. is here describing himself – "the fiend that lies like truth." As there, he is influenced by the figure of Geraldine in Coleridge's *Christabel*.

163: Compare Pope, *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*, 202-4: *Without sneering, teach the rest to sneer; / Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike, / Just hint a fault, or hesitate dislike.*

138.

The seal is set. – Now welcome, thou dread Power!
Nameless, yet thus omnipotent, which here 1235
Walk'st in the shadow of the midnight hour
With a deep awe, yet all distinct from fear;
Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls rear
Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene
Derives from thee a sense so deep and clear 1240
That we become a part of what has been,
And grow unto the spot – all-seeing but unseen.



The Colosseum (the bloody Circus – line 1247).

139.

And here¹⁶⁴ the Buzz of eager Nations ran,
In murmured pity, or loud-roared applause,
As Man was slaughtered by his fellow-man. 1245
And wherefore slaughtered? wherefore, but because
Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
And the Imperial pleasure. Wherefore not?
What matters where we fall to fill the maws
Of worms – on battle-plains or listed Spot? 1250
Both are but theatres – where the chief Actors rot.

164: In the Colosseum. B. would have us see the Roman arena where men were butchered as a parallel for the English arena in which he was humiliated and destroyed.