

## *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Canto III*

### **Background**

Byron's marriage failed in January 1816, when Annabella, his wife, unable to tolerate his erratic behaviour, left him for her parents, taking their one-month-old daughter Augusta Ada with her. The separation negotiations lasted over two months (Hobhouse was the hardest-working of Byron's agents), and an agreement was finally signed on April 21st. On April 25th Byron, under a cloud of public rumour and opprobrium, left Dover for Ostend, and never returned to England. He rode in a carriage modelled on that of Napoleon. He was given a guided tour of the battlefield of Waterloo early in May, by Major Pryce Lockhart Gordon, who unwittingly sowed the seeds of his future poetic greatness by giving him a set of Casti's ottava rima poems, the *Novelle Galanti*. He travelled down the Rhine. On May 25th he arrived at Geneva, and near there, on June 10th, at Secheron, on the borders of the lake, he hired the Villa Diodati. On May 27th he had met Shelley for the first time, along with Shelley's lover Mary Godwin, and Claire Claremont. Claire and Byron had been lovers (or bed-partners, at least) in England, and she had now "travelled eight hundred miles to unphilosophise" him. Between June 22nd and July 1st he and Shelley toured Lake Geneva, without Mary and Claire, and visited the Castle of Chillon, plus Meillerie, Clarens and Vevey, locations for Rousseau's novel *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*, the two poets' reading of which is vital to the writing of Canto III's later stages.

Byron seems to have started Canto III while crossing the Channel on April 25th, and to have finished it on July 4th. Three fair copies were made, by him, by Mary Godwin, and by Claire Claremont; and, even though his fair copy went underground until 1976, when it was discovered in a Barclay's Bank vault, the poem was published by John Murray on November 18th 1816.

Canto III is unique among the four, in having been composed without the presence of Hobhouse. Instead, much of it was composed in the company of Shelley – a huge contrast to Hobhouse. Hobhouse read it on Sunday September 1st 1816 – Shelley and company had departed the day after he and Byron's other friend, Scrope Davies, had arrived – and he wrote in his diary:

*Mem:* Byron has given me before another Canto of *Childe Harold* to read. It is very fine in parts, but I doubt whether I like it so much as his first Cantos – there is an air of mystery and metaphysics about it.

### **The politics of *Childe Harold III*.**

*Childe Harold III* is not a patriotic poem in the conventional sense. On June 18th 1815, less than a year before Byron started it, at Waterloo, a village to the south of Brussels, a combined English and Prussian force had inflicted a final defeat on the French armies of Napoleon Bonaparte. Waterloo was, though "a close-run thing," an overwhelming achievement of British and allied arms, and made the Duke of Wellington into a national hero to rival Nelson. One of the most famous passages in the poem, stanzas 17 to 30, is often anthologised as "The Eve of Waterloo." Yet it does not celebrate the English victory, and is not even set on the eve of Waterloo, but two days before the major engagement, when a large-scale skirmish occurred at a village called Quatre Bras. Byron starts as if he is *about* to write about Waterloo ("Stop! – for thy tread is on an Empire's dust!").<sup>1</sup> But by the stanza's end he is querying Waterloo's value, without having written about it at all:

... is this all the world has gained by thee,  
Thou first and last of fields! king-making Victory?

---

1: CHP III 145.

He spends the next three stanzas lamenting the political consequences of the battle; then starts his famous account of the Duchess of Richmond's ball; then, in stanza 29, laments the death of his cousin Frederick Howard, who was killed, not at Quatre Bras, but, at last, at Waterloo (a fact we only glean from a note). The effect is stirring, but confusing regards both chronology and military history. Waterloo itself plays no part in the poem. It is edited into oblivion.

Although in *Childe Harold* III Byron has one anti-Bonaparte note (that to line 369) and ten stanzas (34-45) brooding on Bonaparte's fate in objective terms, he was in reality a fervent Bonapartist, who saw Waterloo as a defeat for the forces of rationalism and enlightenment, and a victory for the forces of Europe-wide tyranny. Before his departure from England, he had published, at first anonymously in newspapers, but then in a volume with his name on it, a number of pro-Bonaparte poems. He hints at his true sentiment in stanzas 56 and 57 of Canto III, where, for the first time, he names a general: not Bonaparte, not Wellington, but the French revolutionary general Marceau, killed in battle years previously, while still young and, (Byron would assert, although Marceau was in fact a mass-murderer), idealistic. Lest we should still be missing the point, he stops before quitting the Rhine valley, and, in stanzas 63 to 65, dwells on a battle much less well-known than Waterloo, that of Morat in 1476, when the Swiss republic, fighting for its life, beat the imperialist army of the Burgundians. As the "Burgundians" were a species of French, the effect, he might argue, is neutral.

Thus Byron has it both ways. Though he lacks the whole-hearted chauvinism which would have allowed him to write with a Southeyesque rhetoric (and would have pleased his publisher, Murray, and his editor, Gifford, much more), he *seems* to write with romance and passion about Waterloo. Though he never execrates Wellington (as he does in later poems)<sup>2</sup> he implies criticism of him and of his greatest victory by his praise of Marceau, and by his celebration of Morat – neither of them a name famous outside *Childe Harold* III.

It is fortunate that the topographical necessity of the poem leads Byron to Lake Geneva, where he is able to write with enthusiasm of Rousseau, Voltaire, and Gibbon, three enlightenment writers whose politics and/or anti-religious irony, well-known to all, would have placed them in the same ideological position relating to Waterloo as the one which, by the later stanzas of the poem, we can see he holds himself.

### ***Childe Harold* III, Shelley and Wordsworth**

"You are accused of owing a great deal to Wordsworth. Certainly there are some stanzas in the Third Canto of 'Childe Harold' that smell strongly of the Lakes: for instance —

I live not in myself, but I become  
Portion of that around me; – and to me  
High mountains are a feeling!"

"Very possibly," replied he. "Shelley, when I was in Switzerland, used to dose me with Wordsworth even to nausea; and I do remember then reading some things of his with pleasure. He had once a feeling for Nature, which he carried almost to a deification of it: – that's why Shelley liked his poetry."<sup>3</sup>

Thus Thomas Medwin reports Byron as speaking, some time between November 1821 and March 1822. Byron normally despised Wordsworth as a time-serving feudalistic sycophant and a poet of tedium and triviality. The confession is evidence either of Shelley's persuasive personality, of Byron's "openness to impressions" – of or both. For a few weeks, he felt Nature to be a pantheistic healer. But the influence on him of Shelley's Wordsworth did not last. On September 28th 1816, Shelley having gone and Hobhouse having returned, Byron wrote the following in his Alpine Journal:

---

2: See *Don Juan* IX, stanzas 1-10.

3: Medwin ed Lovell, p. 194.

I was disposed to be pleased – I am a lover of Nature – and an Admirer of Beauty – I can bear fatigue – & welcome privation – and have seen some of the noblest views in the world. – But in all this – the recollections of bitterness – & more especially of recent & more home desolation – which must accompany me through life – have preyed upon me here – and neither the music of the Shepherd – the crashing of the Avalanche – nor the torrent – the mountain – the Glacier – the Forest – nor the Cloud – have for one moment – lightened the weight upon my heart – nor enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty & the power and the Glory – around – above – & beneath me. – I am past reproaches – and there is a time for all things – I am past the wish of vengeance – and I know of none like for what I have suffered – but the hour will come – when what I feel must be felt – & the – – but enough.<sup>4</sup>

His reading of Wordsworth (fair enough, by implication, even as he queries it, in the above passage) is, in *Childe Harold* III, perverse. Wordsworth would have Nature as an Other, a thing mightier than man, a teacher of humility, of patience and submission. Here are the famous lines from *Tintern Abbey*:

And I have felt  
A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;  
A motion and a spirit, that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.<sup>5</sup>

But here is Byron:

Sky – Mountains – River – Winds – Lake – Lightnings! Ye  
With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a Soul  
To make these felt and feeling, well may be  
Things that have made me watchful; the far roll  
Of your departing voices is the knoll  
Of what in me is sleepless – if I rest;  
But where of ye, oh tempests – is the goal?  
Are ye like those within the human breast?  
Or do ye find, at length, like Eagles, some high Nest?<sup>6</sup>

For Byron, Nature is another self – or rather, a reflection of his own ego, another way of rendering himself, not patient and philosophical, but more volcanic, alienated, and dramatic in the eyes of the world. How much of this misinterpretation is indeed a consequence of Shelley’s “dosing,” we shall never know. Wordsworth was dismissive, but wasn’t interested enough in Byron to make a detailed parallel:

I have not, nor ever had a single poem of Lord Byron’s by me, except the Lara, given me by Mr Rogers, & therefore could not quote any thing illustrative of his poetic obligations to me: as far as I am acquainted with his works, they are <much> {the} most apparent in the 3<sup>d</sup> Canto of *Childe Harold*; not so much in particular expressions, tho’ there is no want of these, as in the tone (*assumed* rather than natural) of enthusiastic admiration of Nature, & a sensibility to her influences. Of my writings you need not read more than the blank verse poem on the river Wye<sup>7</sup> to be convinced of this.<sup>8</sup>

---

4: BLJ V 104-5.

5: Wordsworth, *Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey, Lyrical Ballads* (1798) p. 207.

6: CHP III, stanza 96.

7: Wordsworth’s way of describing *Tintern Abbey*.

8: Bodleian MS Eng. Letters c. 1 ff. 337-8. Another version is at *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. Moorman and Hill, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1970, III 237-8.

**Rousseau: *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse***

On June 27th 1816, Byron wrote to Murray:

I have traversed all Rousseau's ground – with the Heloise before me – & am struck to a degree with the force & accuracy of his descriptions – & the beauty of their reality: – Meillerie – Clarens & Vevey – & the Chateau de Chillon are places of which I shall say little – because all I could say must fall short of the impressions they stamp.<sup>9</sup>

Rousseau's massive epistolary novel (1761) is not read now as much it was in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and it is hard for us in 2006 to appreciate the impact its unprecedented depiction of love, longing and misery had on its early readers, who included Byron and, especially, Shelley, with whose temperament it chimed in more naturally than it did with Byron's. When they toured Lake Geneva, and came at its easterly end to the scenes described by Rousseau, the two poets seem to have had a copy of the novel open all the time, and to have been both impressed by the fidelity of Rousseau's descriptions, and still more overwhelmed than they had previously been by the feelings of love and despair it depicted. As few studying Byron are likely to read it, here is an extract which gives a good idea of its pace, its sentiments, and its indulgence. It is part of Book IV, Letter xvii. Saint-Preux, the hero, was once tutor to Julie, the heroine, with whom he fell in love. She has married an older man, and now, meeting again, they take a boat trip to the rocks of Meillerie, on Lake Geneva:

Après le souper, nous fûmes nous asseoir sur la grève en attendant le moment du départ. Insensiblement la lune se leva, l'eau devint plus calme, et Julie me proposa de partir. Je lui donnai la main pour entrer dans le bateau; et, en m'asseyant à côté d'elle, je ne songeai plus à quitter sa main. Nous gardions un profond silence. Le bruit égal et mesuré des rames m'excitait à rêver. Le chant assez gai des bécassines, me retraçant les plaisirs d'un autre âge, au lieu de m'égayer, m'attristait. Peu à peu je sentis augmenter la mélancolie dont j'étais accablé. Un ciel serein, les doux rayons de la lune, le frémissent argenté dont l'eau brillait autour de nous, le concours des plus agréables sensations, la présence même de cet objet chéri, rien ne put détourner de mon coeur mille réflexions douloureuses.

Je commençai par me rappeler une promenade semblable faite autrefois avec elle durant le charme de nos premières amours. Tous les sentiments délicieux qui remplissaient alors mon âme s'y retracèrent pour l'affliger; tous les événements de notre jeunesse, nos études, nos entretiens, nos lettres, nos rendez-vous, nos plaisirs,

*E tanta fede, e si dolci memorie,  
E si lungo costume*

ces foules de petits objets qui m'offraient l'image de mon bonheur passé, tout revenait, pour augmenter ma misère présente, prendre place en mon souvenir. C'en est fait, disais-je en moi-même; ces temps, ces temps heureux ne sont plus; ils ont disparu pour jamais. Hélas! Ils ne reviendront plus; et nous vivons, et nous sommes ensemble, et nos coeurs sont toujours unis! Il me semblait que j'aurais porté plus patiemment sa mort ou son absence, et que j'avais moins souffert tout le temps que j'avais passé loin d'elle. Quand je gémissais dans l'éloignement, l'espoir de la revoir soulageait mon coeur; je me flattais qu'un instant de sa présence effacerait toutes mes peines; j'envisageais au moins dans les possibles un état moins cruel que le mien. Mais se trouver auprès d'elle, mais la voir, la toucher, lui parler, l'aimer, l'adorer, et presque en la possédant encore, la sentir perdue à jamais pour moi; voilà ce qui me jetait dans des accès de fureur et de rage qui m'agitèrent par degrés jusqu'au désespoir. Bientôt je commençai de rouler dans mon esprit des projets funestes, et, dans un transport dont je frémis en y pensant, je fus violemment tenté de la précipiter avec moi dans les flots, et d'y finir dans ses bras ma vie et mes longs tourments. Cette horrible tentation devint à la fin si forte, que je fus obligé de quitter brusquement sa main, pour passer à la pointe du bateau.

Là mes vives agitations commencèrent à prendre un autre cours; un sentiment plus doux s'insinua peu à peu dans mon âme, l'attendrissement surmonta le désespoir, je me mis à verser des

---

9: BLJ V 82.

torrents de larmes, et cet état, comparé à celui dont je sortais, n'était pas sans quelques plaisirs. Je pleurai fortement, longtemps, et fus soulagé. Quand je me trouvai bien remis, je revins auprès de Julie; je repris sa main. Elle tenait son mouchoir; je le sentis fort mouillé. "Ah ! lui dis-je tout bas, je vois que nos coeurs n'ont jamais cessé de s'entendre! – Il est vrai, dit-elle d'une voix altérée; mais que ce soit la dernière fois qu'ils auront parlé sur ce ton."<sup>10</sup>

**Translation:** Sighing, but without answering her, I went with her, and I left this retreat for ever, as sadly as I should have left Julie herself. Slowly returning to the dock after a little wandering, we separated. She wanted to remain alone, and I continued to walk, not knowing too well where I was going. At my return, the boat was not yet ready nor the water calm; in a melancholy state, we ate supper, our eyes lowered, our looks pensive, eating little and speaking still less. After supper, we were seated on the beach waiting for the time to depart. The moon gradually rose, the water became calmer, and Julie proposed that we leave. I gave her my hand to get into the boat, and sitting beside her, I no longer thought of letting go of her hand. We kept a profound silence. The even and measured sound of the oars put me into a profound reverie. The rather gay song of the snipes, recalling to me the pleasures of another time, saddened me instead of making me gay. Little by little I felt the melancholy with which I was overcome increasing. A serene sky, the soft rays of the moon, the silver shimmering of the glistening water around us, the concurrence of the most pleasant sensations, the very presence of that cherished person – nothing could turn my heart for a thousand sad reflections. I began by remembering a similar outing made once before with her during the rapture of our early love. All the delightful sentiments which then filled my soul were recalled to my mind, in order to afflict me; all the events of our youth, our studies, our conversations, our letters, our trysts, our pleasures,

E tanta fede, e si dolci memorie,  
E si lungo costume!<sup>11</sup>

those hundreds of little things which brought back the image of my past happiness – all returned to take a place in my memory in order to increase my present sorrow. It is over, I said to myself; those times, those happy times are no more. They have disappeared for ever. Alas, they will return no more, and yet we live, we are together, and our hearts are ever joined! It seemed to me that I should have borne her death and her absence more patiently, and that I had suffered less the whole time I had spent parted from her. When far away I was aggrieved, the hope of seeing her again solaced my heart; I flattered myself that an instant in her presence would efface all my miseries. At least I used to envisage, out of all possible situations, one less cruel than my own. But to find myself with her, to see her, to love her, and almost possessing her again, to feel her lost forever to me, that was what threw me into a state of furor and rage which by degrees disturbed me to the point of despair. Soon I began to turn over deadly projects in my mind, and in a fit of passion, which I shudder to think of, I was violently tempted to hurl her with me into the waves and to end my life and my long torments in her arms. This horrible temptation finally became so strong that I was obliged to let go her hand suddenly and to go to the bow of the boat.

There my lively agitation began to take another course. A gentler sentiment little by little wound its way into my soul: tenderness overcame despair. I began to shed copious tears, and this state, compared to the one I had emerged from, was not without some pleasures. I wept hard and long and was comforted. When I found myself composed, I returned near Julie. I took her hand again. She was holding her handkerchief; I felt it very damp. "Ah," I said to her softly, "I see that our hearts have never ceased to hear each other!"

"It is true," she said in a changed voice, "but let this be the last time that they will speak in this manner!"<sup>12</sup>

Extracts from Shelley's letter to Peacock of July 12th 1816, giving his version of the sights and sensations he and Byron had in relation to the novel, will be found in the notes to the relevant passages below. The awe-struck way in which he read the novel transferred, it seems, to Byron. *Julie* is indebted to, among other novels, Richardson's *Clarissa*.

<sup>10</sup>: Text from <<<http://membres.lycos.fr/jccau/ressourc/romem/heloise.htm>>>

<sup>11</sup>: "And so much faith, and such sweet memories, and such long-accustomed habits!" – Metastasio.

<sup>12</sup>: *La Nouvelle Héloïse, Julie or the new Eloise*, tr. and abridged Judith H. McDowell, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1968, p. 337-8.

Byron outgrew the influence of Shelley's reading of Rousseau's novel, just as he outgrew – at some speed – the influence of Shelley's reading of Wordsworth.

Two famous spin-offs from *Julie* were Goethe's *Leiden des Jungen Werthers* (1774) and Ugo Foscolo's *Le Ultime Lettere di Jacopo Ortis* (1802). In July 1820 at Ravenna, in the depths of turmoil and distraction over his love-affair with Teresa Guiccioli, "in a state of great agony of mind from a passion which consumed me"<sup>13</sup> Byron re-read *Jacopo Ortis*: and found himself in instinctive contention with it. In his marginalia he confesses that when he first read it in 1813 he was moved; but now, for example, when on page 80 (he is reading Teresa's copy of the 1802 edition)<sup>14</sup> he finds Foscolo's fictional Teresa breaking away from Ortis, whom she has just embraced "tutta tremante" (compare *Inferno* V, 136) and crying "Non posso essere vostra mai!! ("I can never be yours!")" he writes, "Perche no? si mancava poco – Signor Ortis" ("Why couldn't she? You were near enough to it, Signor Ortis").<sup>15</sup> One sufficiently critical and impatient might have said the same about the continence of St. Preux and Julie in Rousseau's novel, which is milked for pathos and anguish. When, on page 112, Ortis writes from Florence to his friend Lorenzo

Dianzi io adorava le sepolture del Galileo, del Machiavelli, e di Michelangelo; contemplandole io tremava preso da un brivido sacro. (*A short time ago I was worshipping the tombs of Galileo, Machiavelli and Michaelangelo; contemplating them I shuddered with a shiver that was almost sacred*).

... Byron responds in the margin with

ed io anche nel' 1817. (*So did I in 1817*).<sup>16</sup>

... the last reflection casting a cloud over our reading, not of *Childe Harold* III, but of *Childe Harold* IV. His impatience with the rhetoric Foscolo finds natural – whether amatory or historical – bears out my thesis, that he knows he was once that way too, but had by 1820 found life to be other. Perhaps he was influenced by the knowledge (unavailable to him in 1813), that Teresa is named in part after the wife of Vincenzo Monti, Foscolo's affair with whom had no more been deterred by such scruples as are displayed by the couple in *Ortis*, or by St Preux and Julie, than had that between Byron and *his* Teresa. Byron now sees love and its accompanying suffering as a thing at once more dreadful and more amusing than he had displayed it in such earlier works as *Childe Harold* III.

If one wanted to be cruel, one could say that, as Byron had recently failed in three offices where human love is important – as a husband (to Annabella), as a father (to Augusta Ada), and even as an adulterous lover (to Claire Claremont – though she had, of course, "flung herself at him"), his obsession with Ideal Love is a trifle jejeune. However, the influence of the perpetual adolescents Shelley and Rousseau blinded him to such a judgement – and without too much effort.

This text is constructed as far as possible from Byron's own fair copy – the one discovered in the Barclays Bank vault in 1976, and reproduced at T. A. J. Burnett, (ed). *Lord Byron*, vol VII. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage Canto III*, in *Manuscripts of the Younger Romantics*, (Garland, 1988).

**13:** Reproduced at *Shelley and His Circle*, ed. Donald H. Reiman (Harvard, 1986) VIII 1108.

**14:** See Teresa Guiccioli, *La Vie de Lord Byron en Italie*, ed E.A. Sturzl (Salzburg 1983) 3.203-8.

**15:** *Shelley and His Circle*, VIII 1112-3.

**16:** *Ibid*, VIII 1114.

## Childe Harold's Pilgrimage Canto the Third

“... 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.”<sup>17</sup> – *Lettre du Roi de Prusse et de M. D’Alembert*.

### 1.

Is thy face like thy Mother’s? my fair child  
Ada!<sup>18</sup> 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, 5  
The Waters heave around me;<sup>19</sup> and on high  
The Winds lift up their voices: I depart,  
Whither I know not<sup>20</sup> – but the hour’s gone by,  
When Albion’s lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye.<sup>21</sup>

### 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 strained mast should quiver as a reed,  
And the rent canvas fluttering strew the gale, 15  
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,  
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, 25  
O’er which all heavily the journeying Years  
Plod the last sands of life – where not a flower appears.

---

**17:** “... so that this hard work will force you to think of other things. There is in truth no remedy other than that, and time.” Frederick the Great is writing to d’Alembert about the death of his friend and (perhaps) lover, Julie de Lespinasse.

**18:** Augusta Ada, B.’s only legitimate child, was born on December 10th 1815.

**19:** We are to imagine that B. is crossing the channel.

**20:** In fact he’s going to Ostend.

**21:** Compare *Childe Harold’s Farewell* in Canto I – except that there he has no children to miss.

## 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<sup>22</sup> around me – it shall seem 35  
 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 unimpaired, though old, in the Soul's haunted cell. 45

## 6.

'Tis to create, and in creating live  
 A being more intense, that we endow  
 With form our fancy,<sup>23</sup> gaining as we give  
 The life we image, 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  
 Mixed with thy Spirit, blended with thy birth,  
 And feeling still with thee in my crushed feelings' dearth.

## 7.

Yet must I think less wildly; I *have* thought 55  
 Too long and darkly, till my brain became,  
 In its own eddy boiling and o'erwrought,  
 A whirling gulph of phantasy and flame:  
 And thus, untaught in youth my heart to tame,  
 My Springs of life were poisoned. 'Tis too late, 60  
 Yet am I changed; though still enough the same  
 In strength to bear what Time cannot abate,  
 And feed on bitter fruits without accusing Fate.

22: Compare *Manfred*, I, i, 136: *Spirits*: What would'st thou with us, Son of mortals – Say? *Manfred*: Forgetfulness.

23: Compare *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V, i, 16-17: *And give to airy nothing / A local habitation and a name*. The line is echoed at CHP IV 37.

**8.**

Something too much of this<sup>24</sup> – but now 'tis past,  
 And the Spell closes with its silent seal. 65  
 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 quaffed too quickly, and he found  
 The dregs were Wormwood; but he filled again,  
 And from a purer fount, on holier ground, 75  
 And deemed its Spring perpetual; but in vain!  
 Still round him clung invisibly a chain  
 Which galled for ever, fettering though unseen,  
 And heavy though it clanked 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 mixed  
 Again in fancied safety with his kind,  
 And deemed his spirit now so firmly fixed  
 And sheathed with an invulnerable mind, 85  
 That, if no Joy, no Sorrow lurked behind;  
 And He, as one, might 'midst the many stand  
 Unheeded, searching through the crowd to find  
 Fit speculation; such as in strange land  
 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 95  
 The Star which rises o'er her steep – nor climb?  
 Harold, once more within the vortex, rolled  
 On with the giddy circle, chasing Time,  
 Yet with a nobler aim than in his Youth's fond prime.

---

24: *Hamlet*, III, ii, 72.

**12.**

But soon he knew himself the most unfit 100  
 Of men to herd with Man<sup>25</sup> – with whom he held  
 Little in common; untaught to submit  
 His thoughts to others, though his Soul was quelled  
 In youth by his own thoughts; still uncompelled,  
 He would not yield dominion of his mind 105  
 To Spirits against whom his own rebelled;<sup>26</sup>  
 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 rolled 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 115  
 Of his land's tongue, which he would oft forsake  
 For Nature's pages glassed by sunbeams on the Lake.

**14.**

Like the Chaldean, 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, envying it the light  
 To which it mounts, as if to break the link 125  
 That keeps us from yon heaven which woos us to its brink.

**15.**

But in Man's dwellings he became a thing  
 Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome,  
 Drooped as a wild-born Falcon with clipped wing,  
 To whom the boundless air alone were home: 130  
 Then came his fit again,<sup>27</sup> which to o'ercome,  
 As eagerly the barred-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. 135

**25:** Compare *Manfred*, III i, 121-2: *I disdained to mingle with / A herd, though to be leader, and of Wolves.*

**26:** Compare *Manfred's* refusal to submit to the demons in II, iv.

**27:** *Macbeth*, III, iii, 21.

## 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>28</sup> 145  
 An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!  
 Is the spot marked 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;<sup>29</sup> 155  
 How in an hour the Power which gave annuls  
 Its gifts, transferring fame as fleeting too!  
 In "pride of place" 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.

\* "Pride of place" is a term in falconry, and means the highest pitch of flight. – See *Macbeth*, &c

"A Falcon towering in her pride of place  
 Was by a mousing Owl hawked at and killed."<sup>30</sup>

## 19.

Fit retribution – Gaul may champ the bit  
 And foam in fetters – but is Earth more free?  
 Did nations combat to make *One* submit; 165  
 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?<sup>31</sup> proffering lowly gaze 170  
 And servile knees to thrones? No; *prove* before ye praise!

28: A sudden transition of the kind B. often makes in *CHP* I and II.

29: The battle had been fought on June 18th of the previous year (1815). An international force under Wellington and Blucher beat the French under Napoleon.

30: *Macbeth*, II, iv, 12-13.

31: The Lion is Napoleon, the Wolf, Louis XVIII (and the rest of the Allied Sovereigns).

## 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 175  
 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 drew on Athens' tyrant Lord. \* 180

\* See the famous Song on Harmodius and Aristogeiton.<sup>32</sup> – The best English translation is in Bland's Anthology,<sup>33</sup> by Mr. Denman.

With myrtle my sword will I wreath  
 Like the patriots the noble and brave  
 Who devoted Hipparchus<sup>34</sup> to death  
 And to Athens equality gave  
 Brave Harmodius thou never shalt die  
 For the poets exultingly tell  
 That thine is the fullness of Joy  
 Where Achilles and Diomed dwell, &<sup>c</sup>. &<sup>c</sup>.

## 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 185  
 Music arose with its voluptuous swell,  
 Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,  
 And all went merry as a Marriage-bell; \*  
 But hush – hark – a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

\* On the night previous to the action a ball was given at Brussels.<sup>35</sup>

## 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, 195  
 As if the clouds its echo would repeat;  
 And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!  
 Arm – Arm – it is – it is – the Cannon's opening roar!

32: Harmodius and Aristogeiton (d. 514 BC) tyrant-slayers.

33: *Translations chiefly from the Greek Anthology ...* 1806, p. 25; B. misquotes extensively. For other references to this anthology, see B.'s notes to *EBSR* 881, and *The Island*, 194.

34: Hipparchus (not the mathematician), was the Athenian tyrant slain by Harmodius and Aristogeiton.

35: The ball was given by the Duchess of Richmond on June 15th.

**23.**

Within a windowed niche of that high hall  
 Sate Brunswick's fated Chieftain;<sup>36</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 deemed it near,  
 His heart more truly knew that peal too well  
 Which stretched his father on a bloody bier, 205  
 And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell:  
 He rushed 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  
 Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness;  
 And there were sudden partings, such as press  
 The life from out young hearts, and choaking sighs  
 Which ne'er might be repeated; who could guess  
 If ever more should meet those mutual eyes? 215  
 Since upon night 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 with 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 thronged 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” rose! 226  
 The War-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills  
 Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes.  
 How in the noon of Night that pibroch thrills,  
 Savage and shrill! but with the breath which fills 230  
 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 rings in each Clansman's ears! \*

\* Sir Evan Cameron, and his descendant Donald, the “gentle Lochiel” of the “forty-five.”<sup>37</sup>

**36:** Frederick William, Duke of Brunswick (1771-1815) George IV's nephew. Killed at Quatre Bras.

**37:** Sir Evan Cameron (1629-1719) Scots soldier; Donald Cameron of Lochiel (1695-1748), fought at Culloden. Sir Evan's great-great-grandson John was killed at Quatre Bras.

## 27.

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves, \* 235  
 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.

\* The wood of Soignies is supposed to be a remnant of the “forest of Arden,” famous in Boiardo's *Orlando*, and immortal in Shakespeare's “As you like it.” It is also celebrated in Tacitus as being the spot of successful defence by the Germans against the Roman encroachments. – I have ventured to adopt the name connected with a nobler associations than those of mere slaughter.

## 28.

Last Noon beheld them full of lusty life,  
 Last Eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay, 245  
 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 hymned by loftier harps than mine:  
 Yet One I would select from that proud throng,<sup>38</sup>  
 Partly because they blend me with his line, 255  
 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 showered  
 The death-bolts deadliest the thinned files along,  
 Even where the thickest of war's tempest lowered, 260  
 They reached no nobler breast than thine, young gallant Howard!

## 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, 265  
 And saw around me the wide field revive  
 With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring  
 Came forth her work of Gladness to contrive,  
 With all her reckless birds upon the wing,  
 I turned from all she brought to those She could not bring. \* 270

\* My Guide<sup>39</sup> from Mont S<sup>t</sup>. Jean over the field seemed intelligent and accurate. The place where Major Howard fell was not far from two tall and solitary trees (there was a third cut

<sup>38</sup>: The Hon. Frederick Howard (1785-1815) B.'s cousin, son of the Earl of Carlisle (“his Sire” – 256 – insulted by B. in *EBSR*); killed at Waterloo.

<sup>39</sup>: B.'s guide was Major Pryce Gordon, who also gave him a copy of Casti's *Novelle Galanti*.

down – or shivered in the battle) which stand a few yards from each other at a pathway's side. – Beneath these he died and was buried. The body has since been removed to England. A small hollow for the present marks where it lay, but will probably soon be effaced; the plough has been upon it, and the grain is.

After pointing out the different spots where Picton<sup>40</sup> and other gallant men had perished; the Guide said, "Here Major Howard lay; I was near him when wounded." I told him my relationship, and he seemed then still more anxious to point out the particular spot and circumstances. The place is one of the most marked in the field from the peculiarity of the two trees above mentioned.

I went on horseback twice over the field, comparing it with my recollection of similar scenes. As a plain, Waterloo seems marked out for the scene of some great action, though this may be mere imagination: I have viewed with attention those of Plataea, Troy, Mantinea, Leuctra, Chæronea, and Marathon; and the field around Mont St. Jean and Hougoumont appears to want little a better cause than that of the Bourbons,<sup>41</sup> and that undefinable but impressive halo which the lapse of Ages throws around a celebrated spot, to vie in interest with any or all of these, except perhaps the last mentioned.

### 31.

I turned 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, not Glory's, must awake        275  
 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 moulders on the Hall  
 In massy hoariness; the ruined Wall  
 Stands when its wind-worn battlements are gone;        285  
 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

### 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,        295  
 Yet withers on till all without is old,  
 Showing no visible sign, for such things are untold.

<sup>40</sup>: Sir Thomas Picton (1758-1815) general who fell leading cavalry at Waterloo.

<sup>41</sup>: "appears to want little but a better cause" (all editions).

## 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 on the Dead Sea's shore, \*  
 All ashes to the taste: did Man compute  
 Existence by Enjoyment, and count o'er 305  
 Such hours 'gainst years of life, – say, would he name threescore?

\* The (fabled) apples on the brink of lake Asphaltites were said to be fair without, and within ashes. – *Vide Tacitus, Histor. 5, 7.*<sup>42</sup>

## 35.

The Psalmist 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!”  
 And this is much, and all which will not pass away. 315

## 36.

There sunk the greatest – nor the worst of men,<sup>43</sup>  
 Whose Spirit, antithetically mixt,<sup>44</sup>  
 One moment of the mightiest, and again  
 On little objects with like firmness fixed;  
 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! 325  
 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  
 The Flatterer of thy fierceness, till thou wert 330  
 A God unto thyself; nor less the same  
 To the astounded kingdoms all inert,  
 Who deemed thee for a time whate'er thou didst assert.

42: “Asphaltites” (a word from Lempriere's *Classical Dictionary*: see entry for *Mare Mortuum*) is the Dead Sea. The Tacitus passage does not quite bear B.'s interpretation. The fruits are fair at first, rotten afterwards.

43: Napoleon. The stanzas about him recall B.'s *Ode To Napoleon Buonaparte*, not the more modest Bonapartist poems he had published anonymously.

44: Compare B. on Burns' letters: “What an antithetical mind!” (BLJ III, 239). The phrenologist Spurzheim told B. that his were very “antithetical” faculties (BLJ IV 182).

## 38.

Oh, more or less than Man – in high or low,  
 Battling with Nations – flying from the field – 335  
 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 skilled, 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 brooked the turning tide  
 With that untaught innate philosophy,  
 Which, be it Wisdom – Coldness – or deep Pride, 345  
 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 spoiled and favourite Child, 350  
 He stood unbowed beneath the ills upon him piled.

## 40.

Sager than in thy Fortunes; for in them  
 Ambition steeled thee on too far to show  
 That just habitual scorn, which could contemn  
 Men and their thoughts; 'twas wise to feel, not so 355  
 To wear it ever on thy lip and brow,  
 And spurn the instruments thou wert to use<sup>45</sup>  
 Till they were turned unto thine overthrow;  
 'Tis but a worthless world to win or lose;  
 So hath it proved to thee, and all such lot who chuse. 360

## 41.

If, like a tower upon a headland rock,  
 Thou hadst been made to stand or fall alone,  
 Such scorn of Man had helped to brave the Shock;  
 But Men's thoughts were the steps which paved thy throne,  
 Their Admiration thy best weapon shone; 365  
 The part of Philip's Son<sup>46</sup> was thine, not then  
 (Unless aside thy Purple had been thrown)  
 Like stern Diogenes to mock at men;  
 For sceptred Cynics Earth were far too wide a den! \*

\* The great error of Napoleon, "if we have writ our annals true,"<sup>47</sup> was a continued obtrusion on mankind of his want of all community of feeling for or with them; perhaps more offensive to human Vanity than the active cruelty of more trembling and suspicious Tyranny.

Such were his speeches to public assemblies as well as Individuals: and the single expression which he is said to have used on returning to Paris after the Russian Winter had destroyed his army, rubbing his hands over a fire, "This is pleasanter than Moscow," would

45: Macbeth: ... *and such an instrument I was to use.*

46: Alexander the Great, son of Philip of Macedon.

47: *Coriolanus*, V, vi, 114.

probably alienate more favour from his cause than the destruction and reverses which led to the remark.

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, 375  
 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 385  
 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 nursed and bigoted 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, 395  
 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. 405

## 46.

Away with these! true Wisdom's world will be  
 Within its own creation, or in thine,  
 Maternal Nature! for who teems like thee,  
 Thus on the banks of thy majestic Rhine?  
 There Harold gazes on a work divine, 410  
 A Blending of all beauties; streams and dells,  
 Fruit – foliage – crag<sup>48</sup> – wood – cornfield – mountain – vine –  
 And Chiefless Castles breathing stern farewells  
 From gray but leafy walls, where Ruin greenly dwells.

## 47.

And there they stand, as stands a lofty Mind, 415  
 Worn, but unstooping to the baser crowd,  
 All tenantless, save to the crannyng Wind,  
 Or holding dark communion with the Cloud.  
 There was a day when they were young and proud;  
 Banners on high, and Battles passed below; 420  
 But they who fought are in a bloody shroud,  
 And those which waved are shredless dust ere now,  
 And the bleak battlements shall bear no future blow.

## 48.

Beneath these battlements, within those walls,  
 Power dwelt amidst her Passions; in proud state 425  
 Each robber-Chief upheld his armed halls,  
 Doing his evil will, nor less elate  
 Than mightier heroes of a longer date.  
 What want these Outlaws – Conquerors should have \*  
 But History's purchased page to call them great? 430  
 A wider space, an ornamented grave?  
 Their hopes were not less warm, their souls were full as brave?

\* "What wants that knave  
 That a king should have?"

Was King James's question on meeting Johnny Armstrong and his followers in full  
 accoutrements. – See the Ballad.<sup>49</sup>

## 49.

In their baronial feuds and single fields,  
 What deeds of prowess unrecorded died!  
 And Love, which lent a blazon to their shields, 435  
 With emblems well devised by amorous pride,  
 Through all the mail of iron hearts would glide;  
 But still their flame was fierceness, and drew on  
 Keen contest and destruction near allied,  
 And many a tower for some fair Mischief won, 440  
 Saw the discoloured Rhine beneath its ruin run.

**48:** One of the crags may have been the Lorelei – but Heine didn't publish his poem until 1824.

**49:** Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1810) I, 125. The King is James V, and the incident occurred in 1529;  
 "should" should read "suld." B.'s English version is in Scott's introduction (p. 117).

**50.**

But Thou, exulting and abounding River!  
 Making thy waves a blessing as they flow  
 Through banks whose Beauty would endure forever  
 Could Man but leave thy bright creation so, 445  
 Nor its fair promise from the surface mow  
 With the sharp scythe of conflict – then to see  
 Thy Valley of sweet Waters,<sup>50</sup> were to know  
 Earth paved like Heaven; and to seem such to me,  
 Even now what wants thy stream? – that it should Lethe be. 450

**51.**

A thousand battles have assailed thy banks,  
 But these and half their fame have passed away,  
 And Slaughter, heaped on high his weltering ranks;  
 Their very graves are gone – and what are they?  
 Thy tide washed down the blood of yesterday, 455  
 And all was stainless – and on thy clear stream  
 Glassed, with its dancing light, the sunny Ray;  
 But o'er the blackened Memory's blighting dream  
 Thy waves would vainly roll, all sweeping as they seem.

**52.**

Thus Harold inly said,<sup>51</sup> and passed along, 460  
 Yet not insensible to all which here  
 Awoke the jocund birds to early song  
 In glens which might have made even exile dear:  
 Though on his brow were graven lines austere,  
 And tranquil sternness, which had ta'en the place 465  
 Of feelings fierier far but less severe,  
 Joy was not always absent from his face,  
 But o'er it in such scenes would steal with transient trace.

**53.**

Nor was all Love shut from him, though his days  
 Of Passion had consumed themselves to dust. 470  
 It is vain that we would coldly gaze  
 On such as smile upon us; the heart must  
 Leap kindly back to kindness, though Disgust  
 Hath weaned it from all worldlings: thus he felt,  
 For there was soft Remembrance, and sweet trust 475  
 In one fond breast, to which his own would melt,<sup>52</sup>  
 And in its tenderer hour on that his bosom dwelt.

**50:** See BLJ III 180 for B.'s use of this phrase in relation to Sultan Selim III.

**51:** This introduction of Harold signals B.'s awareness that he about to address Augusta.

**52:** B. refers to Augusta; though it is Harold, not the poem's "I," who loves her. Compare CHP I, 84-5.

## 54.

And he had learned to love – I know not why,  
 For this in such as him seems strange of mood –  
 The helpless looks of blooming Infancy, 480  
 Even in its earliest nurture; what subdued,  
 To change like this, a mind so far imbued  
 With scorn of man, it little boots to know;  
 But thus it was; and though in Solitude  
 Small power the nipped Affections have to grow, 485  
 In him this glowed when all beside had ceased to glow.

## 55.

And there was one soft breast, as hath been said,  
 Which unto his was bound by stronger ties  
 Than the Church links withal; and, though unwed,  
*That* love was pure, and, far above disguise, 490  
 Had stood the test of mortal enmities  
 Still undivided, and cemented more  
 By peril, dreaded most in female eyes;  
 But this was firm, and from a foreign shore  
 Well to that heart might his<sup>53</sup> these absent greeting pour! 495

## I.

The Castle Crag of Drachenfels  
 Frowns o'er the wide and winding Rhine,  
 Whose breast of waters broadly swells  
 Between the banks that bear the Vine,  
 And hills all rich with blossomed trees, 500  
 And fields which promise corn and wine,  
 And scattered Cities crowning these,  
 Whose far white walls along them shine,  
 Have strewed a scene, which I should see  
 With double joy wert *thou* with me. 505

## II.

And peasant girls, with deep blue eyes,  
 And hands which offer early flowers,  
 Walk smiling o'er this Paradise;  
 Above, the frequent feudal towers  
 Through green leaves lift their walls of gray; 510  
 And many a rock which steeply lowers,  
 And noble Arch in proud decay,  
 Look o'er the vale of vintage-bowers;  
 But one thing want these banks of Rhine –  
 Thy gentle hand to clasp in mine! 515

---

53: This pronoun is the last reference to Harold in the poem.

**III.**

I send the lilies given to me;  
 Though long before thy hand they touch,  
 I know that they must withered be,  
 But yet reject them not as such;  
 For I have cherished them as dear, 520  
 Because they yet may meet thine eye,  
 And guide thy soul to mine even here,  
 When thou behold'st them drooping nigh,  
 And know'st them gathered by the Rhine,  
 And offered from my heart to thine! 525

**IV.**

The River nobly foams and flows,  
 The Charm of this enchanted ground,  
 And all its thousand turns disclose  
 Some fresher beauty varying round:  
 The haughtiest breast its wish might bound 530  
 Through life to dwell delighted here;  
 Nor could on earth a Spot be found  
 To Nature and to me so dear,  
 Could thy dear eyes in following mine  
 Still sweeten more these banks of Rhine! \* 535

\* The Castle of Drachenfels stands on the highest summit of "the Seven Mountains," over the Rhine banks; it is in ruins, and connected with some singular traditions: it is the first in view on the road from Bonn, but on the opposite side of the river; on this bank, nearly facing it, are the remains of another called the Jew's castle, and a large cross commemorative of the murder of a chief by his brother: the number of castles and cities along the course of the Rhine on both sides is very great, and their situations remarkably beautiful.

**56.**

By Coblenz, on a rise of gentle ground,  
 There is a small and simple Pyramid,  
 Crowning the summit of the verdant mound;  
 Beneath its base are heroes' ashes hid,  
 Our Enemy's – but let not that forbid 540  
 Honour to Marceau<sup>54</sup> – o'er whose early tomb  
 Tears, big tears, gushed from the rough Soldier's lid,  
 Lamenting and yet envying such a doom,  
 Falling for France, whose rights he battled to resume.

---

**54:** François Séverin Desgraviers Marceau (1769-96) French general, active on the Rhine. He assisted Hoche in putting down the anti-Jacobin risings in the Vendée in which hundreds of thousands of people were killed. See LJ (Prothero's edition of the Letters) VI 200n for a letter from Marceau's sister, thanking B. for this reference,

## 57.

Brief – brave – and glorious was his young Career – 545  
 His mourners were two Hosts, his friends and foes;  
 And fitly may the Stranger lingering here  
 Pray for his gallant Spirit's bright repose;  
 For he was Freedom's Champion<sup>55</sup> – One of those,  
 The few in number, who had not o'erstept 550  
 The Charter to chastise which She bestows  
 On such as wield her weapons; he had kept  
 The whiteness of his Soul, and thus Men o'er him wept. \*

\* The monument of the young and lamented General Marceau (killed by a rifle-ball at Altenkirchen on the last day of the fourth year of the French Republic) still remains as described.

The inscriptions on his monument are rather too long, and not required: his name was enough; France adored, and her enemies admired; both wept over him. – His funeral was attended by the generals and detachments from both armies. In the same grave General Hoche<sup>56</sup> is interred, a gallant man also in every sense of the word, but though he distinguished himself greatly in battle, he had not the good fortune to die there; his death was attended by suspicions of poison.

A separate monument (*not* over his body, which is buried by Marceau's) is raised for him near Andernach, opposite to which one of his most memorable exploits was performed, in throwing a bridge to an Island on the Rhine. The shape and style are different from that of Marceau's, and the inscription more simple and pleasing.

“The Army of the Sambre and Meuse  
 to its Commander in Chief  
 Hoche.”

This is all, and as it should be. Hoche was esteemed among the first of France's earlier generals before Buonaparte monopolized her triumphs. – He was the destined Commander of the invading army of Ireland.

## 58.

Here Ehrenbreitstein, with her shattered wall \*  
 Black with the Miner's blast, upon her height 555  
 Yet shows of what she was, when shell and ball  
 Rebounding idly on her strength did light:  
 A Tower of Victory! from whence the flight  
 Of baffled foes was watched along the plain:  
 But Peace destroyed what War could never blight, 560  
 And laid those proud roofs bare to Summer's rain –  
 On which the iron Shower for years had poured in vain.

\* Ehrenbreitstein, i.e. “the broad Stone of Honour,” one of the strongest fortresses in Europe, was dismantled and blown up by the French at the truce of Leoben.<sup>57</sup> – It had been and could only be reduced by famine or treachery. It yielded to the former, aided by surprize. After having seen the fortifications of Gibraltar and Malta, it did not much strike by comparison, but the situation is commanding. General Marceau besieged it in vain for some time, and I slept in a room where I was shown a window at which he is said to have been standing

55: Unlike the unnamed but implicit Wellington and Blucher, victors of Waterloo.

56: Lazare Hoche (1768-97) French general who might have rivalled Napoleon. Subject of one of James Gillray's most frightening cartoons, *The Apotheosis of Hoche*. Killed hundreds of thousands in his crushing of the 1795 insurrection in the Vendée – a task in which Marceau assisted him.

57: The Germans rebuilt it at a cost of 20,000,000 marks.

observing the progress of the siege by moonlight, when a ball struck immediately below it. He was killed not long afterwards at Altenkirchen by a rifleman – it is rather singular that these narrow escapes have in several instances been followed closely by death – at Nurenberg shortly before the battle of Lutzen Gustavus Adolphus<sup>58</sup> had his horse killed under him. Falconer<sup>59</sup> but escaped one shipwreck to perish by another. – The Prince of Orange died by the more successful attempt by a *third* assassin – and Nelson rarely came out of action without a wound till the most fatal and glorious of all – which instead of a scar – bequeathed him immortality. –<sup>60</sup>

**59.**

Adieu to thee, fair Rhine! How long delighted  
 The stranger fain would linger on his way!  
 Thine is a scene alike where souls united 565  
 Or lonely Contemplation thus might stray;  
 And could the ceaseless vultures cease to prey  
 On self-condemning bosoms, it were here,  
 Where Nature, nor too sombre not too gay,  
 Wild but not rude, awful yet not austere, 570  
 Is to the mellow Earth as Autumn to the year.

**60.**

Adieu to thee again! a vain adieu!  
 There can be no farewell to scene like thine;  
 The mind is coloured by thy every hue;  
 And if reluctantly the eyes resign 575  
 Their cherished gaze upon thee, lovely Rhine!  
 'Tis with the thankful glance of parting praise;  
 More mighty spots may rise, more glaring shine,  
 But none unite in one attaching maze  
 The brilliant, fair, and soft – the glories of old days. 580

**61.**

The Negligently Grand, the fruitful bloom  
 Of coming ripeness, the white city's sheen,  
 The rolling stream, the Precipice's gloom,  
 The Forest's growth, and Gothic walls between,  
 The wild rocks shaped as they had turrets been, 585  
 In mockery of Man's art; and there withal  
 A race of faces happy as the scene,  
 Whose fertile bounties here extend to all,  
 Still springing o'er they banks, though Empires near them fall.

**62.**

But these recede. Above me are the Alps, 590  
 The Palaces of Nature, whose vast Walls  
 Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps,  
 And throned Eternity in icy halls  
 Of cold Sublimity, where forms and falls  
 The Avalanche – the thunderbolt of Snow! 595  
 All that expands the Spirit, yet appals,  
 Gather around these summits, as to show  
 How Earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave vain Man below.

**58:** Gustavus Adolphus (1594-1632) King of Sweden. Killed by Croats at the battle of Lützen.

**59:** William Falconer (1732-69) author of *The Shipwreck* (1762). Went down with *Aurora* frigate.

**60:** The grossly reactionary Nelson, a sailor, gets more praise from B. than Wellington, a mere soldier.

## 63.

But ere these matchless heights I dare to scan,  
 There is a spot should not be passed in vain, – 600  
 Morat!<sup>61</sup> the proud, the patriot field! where Man  
 May gaze on ghastly trophies of the slain,  
 Nor blush for those who conquered on that plain;  
 Here Burgundy bequeathed his tombless host,  
 A bony heap, through ages to remain, 605  
 Themselves their Monument – the Stygian coast  
 Unsepulchred they roamed, and shrieked each wandering Ghost. \*

\* The chapel is destroyed, and the pyramid of bones diminished to a small number by the Burgundian Legion in the service of France, who anxiously effaced this record of their ancestors' less successful invasions. A few still remain notwithstanding the pains taken by the Burgundians for ages, (all who passed that way removing a bone to their own country) and the less justifiable larcenies of the Swiss postillions sell for knife-handles, a purpose for which the whiteness imbibed by the bleaching of years had rendered them in great request. Of these relics I ventured to bring away as much as may have made the quarter of a hero, for which the sole excuse is, that if I had not, the next passer by might have perverted them to worse uses than the careful preservation which I intend for them.

## 64.

While Waterloo with Cannæ's<sup>62</sup> carnage vies,  
 Morat and Marathon<sup>63</sup> twin names shall stand;  
 They were true Glory's stainless victories, 610  
 Won by the unambitious heart and hand  
 Of a proud, brotherly, and civic band,  
 All unbought Champions in no princely cause  
 Of Vice-entailed Corruption; they no land  
 Doomed to bewail the blasphemy of laws 615  
 Making kings' rights divine – by some Draconic clause. \*

\* Draco<sup>64</sup> – the author of the first “Red Book” on record was an Athenian Special pleader in great business. – Hippias<sup>65</sup> – the Athenian Bourbon was in the battle of Marathon – and did not keep at the respectful distance from danger of the Ghent refugees – but the English and Prussians resembled the Medes and the Persians as little as Blucher and the British General<sup>66</sup> did Datis<sup>67</sup> and Artaphernes<sup>68</sup> and Buonaparte was still more remote in cause and character from Miltiades<sup>69</sup> – and a parallel “after the manner of Plutarch” might still have existed in the fortunes of the sons of Pisistratus<sup>70</sup> and the reigning doctors of right-divinity.

---

61: Morat (June 1476) in which the Swiss republic beat the Burgundians under Charles the Bold.

62: Cannae (216 BC) in which Hannibal beat the Romans under Aemilius Paulus.

63: Marathon (492 BC) in which the Greeks beat the Persians under Darius.

64: Draco, Greek lawgiver who legislated savagely for all possible transgressions.

65: Hippias son of and inheritor of the power of Pisistratus (see below).

66: B. detests Wellington so much that he cannot name him.

67: Datis was the Persian general who lost Marathon.

68: Artaphernes was another Persian general at Marathon.

69: Miltiades commanded the Greeks at Marathon; he was the tyrant who ruled Chersonesus. See *Don Juan III, The Isles of Greece*, 12, 3.

70: Pisistratus (600-527 BC) Athenian tyrant.

## 65.

By a lone wall a lonelier Column rears  
 A gray and grief-worn aspect of old days;  
 'Tis the last remnant of the wreck of years,  
 And looks as with the wild-bewildered gaze 620  
 Of one to stone converted by amaze,  
 Yet still with Consciousness; and there it stands  
 Making a marvel that it not decays,  
 When the coeval pride of human hands,  
 Levelled Adventicum, hath strewed her subject lands. \* 625

\* Aventicum (near Morat) was the Roman capital of Helvetia, where Avenches now stands.

## 66.

And there – Oh! sweet and sacred be the Name!  
 Julia – the daughter, the devoted – gave  
 Her youth to heaven; her heart, beneath a claim  
 Nearest to Heaven's, broke o'er a father's grave. 630  
 Justice is sworn 'gainst tears, and hers would crave  
 The life she lived in; but Judge was just,  
 And then she died on him she could not save.  
 Their tomb was simple, and without a bust,  
 And held within their urn one mind, one heart, one dust. \*

\* Julia Alpinula, a young Aventian Priestess, died soon after a vain endeavour to save her father,<sup>71</sup> condemned to death as a traitor by Aulus Cæcina. Her epitaph was discovered many years ago; it is thus –

Julia Alpinula  
 Hic jaceo  
 Infelicis patris, infelix proles  
 Deæ Aventiæ Sacerdos;  
 Exorare patris necem non potui  
 Male mori in fatis ille erat.  
 Vixi annos XXIII.

I know of no human composition as affecting as this, nor a history of deeper interest. These are the names and actions which ought not to perish, and to which we turn with a true and healthy tenderness, from the wretched and glittering detail of a confused mass of conquests and battles, with which the mind is roused for a time to a false and feverish sympathy, from whence it recurs at length with all the nausea consequent on such intoxication.

## 67.

But these are deeds which should not pass away, 635  
 And names that must not wither, though the Earth  
 Forgets her empires with a just decay,  
 The enslavers and the enslaved, their death and birth;  
 The high, the mountain-majesty of worth  
 Should be, and shall, survivor of its woe, 640  
 And from its immortality look forth  
 In the Sun's face, like yonder Alpine Snow, \*  
 Imperishably pure beyond all things below.

---

71: The legend of Julia's attempt at saving her father's life is dubious, and the inscription a forgery. Idealised father-daughter relationships are important in CHP III and IV. See IV, stanzas 148-51.

\* This is written in the eye of Mont Blanc, (June 3<sup>d</sup>. 1816) which even at this distance dazzles mine. (June 20th). This day I observed for some time the distant reflection of Mont Blanc and Mont Argentiere in the calm of the lake, which I was crossing in my boat; the distance of these mountains from their mirror is 60 miles.

**68.**

Lake Leman<sup>72</sup> woos me with its chrystal face,  
 The mirror where the stars and mountains view 645  
 The Stillness of their aspect in each trace  
 Its clear depth yields of their far height and hue:  
 There is too much of Man here, to look through  
 With a fit mind the might which I behold;  
 But soon in me shall Loneliness renew 650  
 Thoughts hid, but not less cherished than of old,  
 Ere mingling with the herd had penned me in their fold.

**69.**

To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind:  
 All are not fit with them to stir and toil,  
 Nor is it Discontent to keep the mind 655  
 Deep in its fountain, lest it over boil  
 In the hot throng, where we become the spoil  
 Of our infection, till too late and long  
 We may deplore and struggle with the coil,  
 In wretched interchange of wrong for wrong 660  
 Midst a contentious world, striving where none are strong.

**70.**

There, in a moment we may plunge our years  
 In fatal penitence, and in the blight  
 Of our own Soul turn all our blood to tears,  
 And colour things to come with hues of Night; 665  
 The race of life becomes a hopeless flight  
 To those that walk in darkness: on the sea  
 The boldest steer but where their ports invite;  
 But there are wanderers o'er Eternity<sup>73</sup>  
 Whose bark drives on and on, and anchored ne'er shall be. 670

**71.**

Is it not better, then, to be alone,  
 And love Earth only for its earthly sake?  
 By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone, \*  
 Or the pure bosom of its nursing Lake,  
 Which feeds it as a Mother who doth make 675  
 A fair but froward infant her own care,  
 Kissing its cries away as these awake –  
 Is it not better thus our lives to wear,  
 Than join the crushing crowd, doomed to inflict or bear?

\* The colour of the Rhone at Geneva is *blue*, to a depth of tint which I have never seen equalled in water, salt or fresh, except in the Mediterranean and Archipelago.

---

72: Lake Geneva.

73: Compare Shelley's *Adonais*, 30, 3, where B. is *The Pilgrim of Eternity*.

## 72.

I live not in myself, but I become 680  
 Portion of that around me;<sup>74</sup> and to me  
 High mountains are a feeling, but the hum  
 Of human cities – torture – I can see  
 Nothing to loathe in Nature, save to be  
 A link reluctant in a fleshly chain, 685  
 Classed among creatures, when the Soul can flee,  
 And with the sky – the peak – the heaving plain  
 Of Ocean, or the Stars, mingle – and not in vain.

## 73.

And thus I am absorbed, and this is life:  
 I look upon the peopled desert past, 690  
 As on a place of agony and strife,  
 Where, for some sin, to sorrow I was cast,  
 To act and suffer, but remount at last  
 With a fresh pinion; which I feel to spring,  
 Though young, yet waxing vigorous as the Blast 695  
 Which it would cope with, on delighted wing,  
 Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round our being cling.

## 74.

And when, at length, the Mind shall be all free  
 From what it hates in this degraded form,  
 Reft of its carnal life, save what shall be 700  
 Existent happier in the fly and worm,  
 When elements to elements conform,  
 And dust is as it should be, shall I not  
 Feel all I see – less dazzling – but more warm?  
 The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each Spot? 705  
 Of which, even now, I share at times the immortal lot?

## 75.

Are not the mountains, waves and skies a part  
 Of me and of my Soul, as I of them?  
 Is not the love of these deep in my heart  
 With a pure passion? should I not condemn 710  
 All objects, if compared with these? and stem  
 A tide of suffering, rather than forego  
 Such feelings for the hard and worldly phlegm  
 Of those whose eyes are only turned below,  
 Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts which dare not glow? 715

---

74: Without warning, B. goes Wordsworthian.

**76.**

But this is not my theme;<sup>75</sup> and I return  
 To that which is immediate, and require  
 Those who find contemplation in the Urn  
 To look on One,<sup>76</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, 725  
 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  
 How to make Madness beautiful, and cast 730  
 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 735  
 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,<sup>77</sup> which became 740  
 In him existence, and o'erflowing teems  
 Along his burning page – distempered though it seems.

---

**75:** Why then introduce it?

**76:** Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) philosopher and author of the novel *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761). Famous for the dictum, "Man is born free but is everywhere in chains".

**77:** Compare *CHP* IV 1454, and contrast *Beppo* 13, 2.

## 79.

*This* breathed itself to life in Julie; *this*  
 Invested her with all that's wild and sweet;  
 This hallowed, too, the memorable kiss 745  
 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  
 Flashed the thrilled Spirit's love-devouring heat;  
 In that absorbing sigh perchance more blest 750  
 Than vulgar Minds may be with all they seek possest. \*

\* This refers to the account in his "Confessions" of his passion for the Comtesse d'Houdetot (the mistress of St. Lambert) and his long walk every morning for the sake of the single kiss which was the common salutation of French acquaintance.<sup>78</sup> – Rousseau's description of his feelings on this occasion may be considered as the most passionate, yet not impure description and expression of Love that ever kindled into words; which after all must be felt, from their very force, to be inadequate to the delineation: a painting can give no sufficient idea of the Ocean.

## 80.

His life was one long war with self-sought foes,<sup>79</sup>  
 Or friends by him self-banished; for his Mind  
 Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and chose,  
 For its own cruel sacrifice, the kind, 755  
 'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange and blind.  
 But he was phrenzied – wherefore, who may know?  
 Since cause might be which skill could never find;  
 But he was phrenzied 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 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 765  
 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?

---

78: The real Comtesse d'Houdetot was the model for the fictional Julie. "J'ai dit qu'il y avoit loin de l'Hermitage à Eaubonne; je passois par les coteaux d'Andilly, qui sont charmans. Je rêvois en marchant à celle que j'allois voir, à l'accueil caressant qu'elle me feroit, au baiser qui m'attendoit à mon arrivée. Ce seul baiser, ce baiser funeste, avant même de le recevoir, m'embrasoit le sang à tel point, que ma tête se troubloit, un éblouissement m'aveugloit, mes genoux tremblans ne pouvoient me soutenir; j'étois forcé de m'arrêter, de m'asseoir; toute ma machine étoit dans un désordre inconcevable: j'étois prêt à m'évanouir. Instruit du danger, je tâchois, en partant, de me distraire et de penser à autre chose." Rousseau, *Confessions*, Book IX (ed. van Bever, Garnier, 1954??, 298-9). "I have said that it was some distance from the Hermitage to Eaubonne; I went by the hills of Andilly, which are delightful; and as I walked I dreamt of her I was about to see, of the affectionate welcome she would give me, and of the kiss, the fatal kiss, even before I received it. It so fired my blood that I was dizzy, my eyes were dazzled and blind, and my trembling knees could no longer could no longer support me. I had to stop and sit down; my whole bodily mechanism was in utter disorder; I was on the point of fainting. Aware of my danger I tried as I set out again to distract myself and think of something else" (tr. J.M.Cohen, Penguin 1953 p. 414). B.'s evaluation of the passage is idiosyncratic – we can see that when he accused Keats of "f—gg—ng his imagination," (BLJ VII 225) he knew what he was talking about.

79: Like B.'s. See BLJ IX 11-12 for B.'s denial that he was at all like Rousseau.

## 82.

They made themselves a fearful Monument! 770  
 The Wreck of old opinions – things which grew,  
 Breathed from the birth of Time: the Veil they rent,  
 And what behind it lay, all Earth shall view.  
 But Good with Ill they also overthrew,  
 Leaving but ruins, wherewith to rebuild 775  
 Upon the same foundation, and renew  
 Dungeons and thrones, which the same hour refilled \*  
 As heretofore, because Ambition was self-willed.

\* See Spain and France, &c. &c. – Ferdinand “the Beloved,”<sup>80</sup> Louis “the Desired”<sup>81</sup> – the Stork and the Log – the lovely and the desirable – but the Frogs would have kings and must now keep them.<sup>82</sup>

## 83.

But this will not endure, nor be endured!  
 Mankind have felt their strength and made it felt. 780  
 They might have used it better, but, allured  
 By their new vigour, sternly have they dealt  
 On one another; Pity ceased to melt  
 With her once natural Charities. But they,  
 Who in Oppression’s darkness caved had dwelt, 785  
 They were not Eagles, nourished with the day;  
 What marvel then, at times, if they mistook their prey?

## 84.

What deep wounds ever closed without a scar?  
 The Heart’s bleed longest, and but heal to wear  
 That which disfigures it; and they who war 790  
 With their own Hopes, and have been vanquished, bear  
 Silence, but not submission: in his lair  
 Fixed Passion holds his breath, until the hour  
 Which shall atone for years; none need despair:  
 It came – it cometh – and will come – the Power 795  
 To punish or forgive – in *One* we shall be slower.

## 85.

Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake,  
 With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing  
 Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake  
 Earth’s troubled waters for a purer Spring.<sup>83</sup> 800  
 This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing  
 To waft me from Distraction; once I loved  
 Torn Ocean’s roar, but thy soft murmuring  
 Sounds sweet as if a Sister’s voice<sup>84</sup> reproved,  
 That I with stern delights should e’er have been so moved. 805

**80:** Ferdinand VII (1784-1833) oppressive, anti-liberal King of Spain.

**81:** Louis XVIII (1755-1824) obese, gouty, wheelchair-bound King of France

**82:** Refers to Aesop’s fable in which the frogs ask Zeus for a king, and, annoyed by their perpetual dissatisfaction with his choices, he sends them a snake, which eats them all up. Compare *AoB*, 406.

**83:** Compare *Prometheus*, 47-8: *Man is in part divine, / A troubled stream from a pure source ...*

**84:** A covert reference to Augusta, with whom B. sailed on the Newstead lake.

**86.**

It is the Hush of Night, and all between  
 Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,  
 Mellowed and mingling, yet distinctly seen,  
 Save darkened Jura, whose capt heights appear  
 Precipitously steep; and drawing near, 810  
 There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,  
 Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear  
 Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,  
 Or chirps the Grasshopper one good-night carol more;

**87.**

He is an evening reveller, who makes 815  
 His life an infancy, and sings his fill;  
 At intervals, some bird from out the brakes,  
 Starts into voice a moment, then is still.  
 There seems a floating whisper on the hill,  
 But that is Fancy, for the Starlight dews 820  
 All silently their tears of love instil,  
 Weeping themselves away, till they infuse  
 Deep into Nature's breast the spirit of her hues.

**88.**

Ye stars! which are the poetry of heaven!  
 If in your bright leaves we would read the fate 825  
 Of men and empires – 'tis to be forgiven,  
 That in our aspirations to be great,  
 Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,  
 And claim a kindred with you; for ye are  
 A beauty and a mystery, and create 830  
 In us such love and reverence from afar,  
 That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves a star.

**89.**

All Heaven and Earth are still – though not in sleep,  
 But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;  
 And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep: – 835  
 All Heaven and Earth are still: from the high host  
 Of Stars, to the lulled lake and mountain-coast,  
 All is centered in a life intense,  
 Where not a beam – nor air – nor leaf is lost,  
 But hath a part of beings, and a sense 840  
 Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

## 90.

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt  
 In Solitude, where we are *least* alone;  
 A truth, which through our being then doth melt  
 And purifies from self: it is a tone, 845  
 The Soul and source of Music, which makes known  
 Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm,  
 Like to the fabled Cytherea's<sup>85</sup> zone,  
 Binding all things with beauty; 'twould disarm  
 The Spectre Death, had he substantial power to harm. 850

## 91.

Not vainly did the early Persian make  
 His altar the high places and the peak  
 Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take  
 A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek \*  
 The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak, 855  
 Upreared of human hands. Come, and compare  
 Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or Greek,  
 With Nature's realms of worship, earth and air,  
 Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy prayer!

\* It is to be recollected, that the most beautiful and impressive doctrines of the Founder of Christianity were delivered, not in the *Temple*, but on the *Mount*.

To wave the question of devotion, and turn to human eloquence – the most effectual and splendid specimens were not pronounced within walls. Demosthenes addressed the public and popular assemblies. Cicero spoke in the Forum. That this added to their effect on the mind of both Orator and hearers, may be conceived from the difference between what we read of the emotions then and there produced, and those we ourselves experience in the perusal in the Closet. It is one thing to read the *Iliad* at Sigæum and on the tumuli, or by the springs with Mount Ida above, and the plain and rivers and Archipelago around you: and another to trim your taper over it in a snug library<sup>86</sup> – *This* I know.

Were the early and rapid progress of what is called Methodism to be attributed to any cause beyond the enthusiasm excited by its vehement faith and doctrines (the truth or error of which I presume neither to canvas nor to question) I should venture to ascribe it to the practice of preaching in the *fields*, and the unstudied and extemporaneous effusions of its teachers.

The Mussulmans, whose erroneous devotion (at least in the lower orders) is most sincere, and therefore impressive, are accustomed to repeat their prescribed orisons and prayers where-ever they may be at the stated hours – of course frequently in the open air, kneeling upon a light mat (which they carry for the purpose of a bed or cushion as required); the ceremony lasts some minutes, during which they are totally absorbed, and only living in their supplication; nothing can disturb them. On me the simple and entire sincerity of these men, and the Spirit which appeared to be within and upon them, made a far greater impression than any general rite which was ever performed in places of worship, of which I have seen those of almost every persuasion under the Sun: including most of our own Sectaries, and the Greek, the Catholic, the Armenian, the Lutheran, the Jewish, and the Mahometan. Many of the Negroes, of whom there are numbers in the Turkish empire, are idolaters, and have free exercise of their belief and its rites: some of these I had a distant view of at Patras, and from what I could make out of them, they appeared to be of a truly Pagan description, and not very agreeable to a spectator.

<sup>85</sup>: Cytherea is another name for Aphrodite, goddess of love.

<sup>86</sup>: Recalls the opening of *Manfred*.

## 92.

The Sky is changed! – and such a Change! Oh Night, \* 860  
 And Storm, and Darkness, ye are wondrous strong,  
 Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light  
 Of a dark eye in Woman – far along,  
 From peak to peak, the rattling crags among  
 Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud, 865  
 But every Mountain now hath found a tongue,  
 And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,  
 Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud.

\* The thunder-storms to which these lines refer occurred on the 13th of June, 1816, at midnight. I have seen among the Acroceraunian mountains of Chimari<sup>87</sup> several more terrible, but none as beautiful.

## 93.

And this is in the Night – Most glorious Night!  
 Thou wert not sent for Slumber! let me be 870  
 A sharer in thy fierce and far delight –  
 A portion of the tempest and of thee!<sup>88</sup>  
 How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric Sea!  
 And the big Rain comes dancing to the Earth –  
 And now again 'tis black – and now, the Glee 875  
 Of the loud Hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,  
 As if they did rejoice o'er a young Earthquake's birth.

## 94.

Now – where the swift Rhone cleaves his way between  
 Heights which appear as lovers who have parted  
 In Hate – whose mining depths so intervene, 880  
 That they can meet no more, though broken-hearted;  
 Though in their souls, which thus each other thwarted,  
 Love was the very root of the fond rage  
 Which blighted their life's bloom, and then departed –  
 Itself expired, but leaving them an age 885  
 Of years all Winters, war within themselves to wage.

## 95.

Now – where the quick Rhone thus hath cleft his way,  
 The Mightiest of the Storms hath ta'en his stand:  
 For here, not One, but many, make their play,  
 And fling their thunder-bolts from hand to hand, 890  
 Flashing and cast around: of all the band,  
 The brightest thought these parted hills hath forked  
 His lightnings – as if he did understand,  
 That in such gaps as Desolation worked,  
 There the hot shaft should blast whatever therein lurked. 895

**87:** This mysterious location is referred to at *CHP* II 453 and note (“Chimæra”; “The Chimariot mountains”); II 657 (“the sons of Chimari”); and again at *CHP* IV 657 (“Chimari”). It seems to be in the vicinity of Zitza. Hobhouse refers to the mountains at *Journey*, I, 84: “To the south are the Suliote mountains, and to the north-west, but in the farthest distance, are those of Chimera, the Acroceraunians.” It was when lost in a storm there that B. composed the eighteen *Stanzas* published with *CHP* I-II, in which, while the thunder rages, his thoughts return to “Florence” (Constance Spencer Smith). The word *Acroceraunian* is from Lempriere. See *CHP* IV, 658n.

**88:** Compare Chateaubriand, *Memoires d’Outre-Tombe*: “... j’aime aussi les orages; mais mes amours avec eux sont secrets, et je n’en fais pas confiance aux bateliers” (“I also love the storms; but my loves with them are secret, and I do not confide them to the boatman.”) ed. Moreau V, 302.

## 96.

Sky – Mountains – River – Winds – Lake – Lightnings! Ye  
 With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a Soul  
 To make these felt and feeling, well may be  
 Things that have made me watchful; the far roll  
 Of your departing voices is the knoll 900  
 Of what in me is sleepless – if I rest;  
 But where of ye, oh tempests – is the goal?  
 Are ye like those within the human breast?  
 Or do ye find, at length, like Eagles, some high Nest?

## 97.

Could I embody and unbosom now 905  
 That which is most within me, – could I wreak  
 My thoughts upon Expression – and thus throw  
 Soul – heart – mind – passions – feelings – strong or weak,  
 All that I would have sought, and all I seek,  
 Bear – know – feel – and yet breath – into *one* word, 910  
 And that one Word were Lightning, I would speak;  
 But as it is, I live and die unheard,  
 With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.

## 98.

The morn is up again, the dewy morn,  
 With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom, 915  
 Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn,  
 And living as if earth contained no tomb –  
 And glowing into day: we may resume  
 The march of our existence: and thus I,  
 Still on thy shores, fair Leman! may find room 920  
 And food for meditation, nor pass by  
 Much, that may give us pause, if pondered fittingly.

## 99.

Clarens!<sup>89</sup> sweet Clarens, birth-place of deep Love!  
 Thine air is the young breath of passionate thought;  
 Thy trees take root in love; the snows above 925  
 The very Glaciers have his colours caught,  
 And Sunset into rose-hues sees them wrought  
 By rays which sleep there lovingly: the Rocks, \*  
 The permanent crags, tell here of Love, who sought  
 In them a refuge from the worldly shocks, 930  
 Which stir and sting the Soul with Hope that woos, then mocks.

---

**89:** Clarens is a village at the south-east corner of Lake Geneva. It is the scene of some of the most romantic chapters of Rousseau's *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*. Shelley to Peacock: "On my return, after breakfast, we sailed for Clarens, determining first to see the three mouths of the Rhone, and then the Castle of Chillon; the day was fine, and the water calm. We passed from the blue waters of the lake over the stream of the Rhone, which is rapid even at a great distance from its confluence with the lake; the turbid waters mixed with those of the lake, but mixed with them unwillingly. I read *Julie* all day; an overflowing, as it now seems, surrounded by the scenes which it has so wonderfully peopled, of sublimest genius, and more than human sensibility. Meillierie, the castle of Chillon, Clarens, the mountains of La Valais and Savoy, present themselves to the imagination as monuments of things that were once familiar, and of beings that were once dear to it. They were created indeed by one mind, but a mind so powerfully bright as to cast a shade of falsehood on the records that are called reality" (LPBS II 485).

\* Rousseau's *Héloïse*, Letter 17, part 4, note. "Ces Montagnes sont si hautes qu'une demi-heure après le Soleil couché, leurs Sommets sont encore éclairés de ses rayons; dont le rouge forme sur ces cimes blanches une *belle couleur de rose* qu'on aperçoit de fort loin."

This applies more particularly to the heights over Meillerie.<sup>90</sup> "J'allais à Vévay loger à la Clef, et pendant deux jours que j'y restai sans voir personne, je pris pour cette ville un amour qui m'a suivi dans tous mes voyages, et qui m'y a fait établir enfin les héros de mon roman. Je dirois volontiers à ceux qui ont du goût et qui sont sensibles: allez à Vévay – visitez le pays, examinez les sites, promenez-vous sur le lac, et dites si la Nature n'a pas fait ce beau pays pour une Julie, pour une Claire et pour un St. Preux; mais ne les y cherchez pas." *Les Confessions*, livre iv. Page 306. Lyons ed. 1796.

In July, 1816, I made a voyage round the Lake of Geneva;<sup>91</sup> and, as far as my own observations have led me in a not uninterested nor inattentive survey of all the scenes most celebrated by Rousseau in his "Héloïse," I can safely say, that in this there is no exaggeration. It would be difficult to see Clarens (with the scenes around it, Vévay, Chillon, Bâveret, St. Gingo, Meillerie, Evian, and the entrances of the Rhone), without being forcibly struck with its peculiar adaptation to the persons and events with which it has been peopled. But this is not all; the feeling with which all around Clarens, and the opposite rocks of Meillerie is invested, is of a still higher and more comprehensive order than the mere sympathy with individual passion; it is a sense of the existence of love in its most extended and sublime capacity, and of our own participation of its good and of its glory: it is the great principle of the universe, which is there more condensed, but not less manifested; and of which, though knowing ourselves a part, we lose our individuality, and mingle in the beauty of the whole.

If Rousseau had never written, nor lived, the same associations would not less have belonged to such scenes. He has added to the interest of his works by their adoption; he has shewn his sense of their beauty by the selection; but they have done that for him which no human being could do for them.

I had the fortune (or evil as it might be) to sail from Meillerie (where we landed for some time), to St. Gingo during a lake storm, which added to the magnificence of all around, although occasionally accompanied by danger to the boat, which was small and overloaded. It was over this very part of the lake that Rousseau has driven the boat of St. Preux and Madame Wolmar to Meillerie for shelter during a tempest.

On gaining the shore at St. Gingo,<sup>92</sup> I found that the wind had been sufficiently strong to blow down some fine old chestnut trees on the lower part of the mountains. On the opposite height of Clarens is a chateau.

The hills are covered with vineyards, and interspersed with some small beautiful woods; one of these was named the "Bosquet de Julie,"<sup>93</sup> and it is remarkable that, though long ago

**90:** Shelley to Peacock: "Meillerie is the well-known scene of St. Preux's visionary exile; but Meillerie is indeed enchanted ground, were Rousseau no magician. Groves of pine, chestnut and walnut overshadow it; magnificent and unbounded forests to which England affords no parallel. In the midst of these are dells of lawny expanse, inconceivably verdant, adorned with a thousand of the rarest flowers, and odorous with thyme" (LPBS II 483).

**91:** During the trip with Shelley B. roughed-out *The Prisoner of Chillon*.

**92:** Shelley to Peacock: "We returned to St. Ginguoux before sunset, and I passed the evening in reading Julie" (LPBS II 353).

**93:** *Le bosquet de Julie* (Julie's arbour) is where the lovers meet in the early books of Rousseau's novel: see, e.g., I xiv. Shelley to Peacock: "On the following day we went to see the castle of Clarens, a square strong house, with very few windows, surrounded by a double terrace that overlooks the valley, or rather the plain of Clarens. The road which conducted to it wound up the steep ascent through woods of walnut and chestnut. We gathered roses on the terrace, in the feeling that they might be the posterity of some planted by Julie's hand. / We went again to the 'bosquet de Julie,' and found that the precise spot was now utterly obliterated, and a heap of stones marked the place where the little chapel had once stood. Whilst we were execrating the author of this brutal folly, our guide informed us that the land belonged to the convent of St. Bernard, and that this outrage had been committed by their orders. I knew before, that if avarice could harden the hearts of men, a system of prescriptive religion has an influence far more inimical to natural sensibility. I know that an isolated man is sometimes restrained by shame from outraging the venerable feelings arising out of the memory of genius, which once made nature even lovelier than itself; but associated man holds it as the very sacrament of his union to forswear all delicacy, all benevolence, all remorse; all that is true, tender, or sublime. / We sailed from Clarens to Vevai. Vevai is a town more beautiful in its simplicity than any I have ever seen. Its market-place, a spacious square interspersed with trees, looks

cut down by the brutal selfishness of the monks of St. Bernard, (to whom the land appertained), that the ground might be enclosed into a vineyard for the miserable drones of an execrable superstition, the inhabitants of Clarens still point out the spot where its trees stood, calling it by the name which consecrated and survived them.

Rousseau has not been particularly fortunate in the preservation of the “local habitations” he has given to “airy nothings.” The Prior of Great St. Bernard has cut down some of his woods for the sake of a few casks of wine, and Buonaparte has levelled part of the rocks of Meillerie in improving the road to the Simplon. The road is an excellent one, but I cannot quite agree with a remark which I heard made, that “La route vaut mieux que les souvenirs.”

**100.**

Clarens!<sup>94</sup> by heavenly feet thy paths are trod –  
 Undying Love’s who here ascends a throne  
 To which the steps are mountains; where the God  
 Is a pervading life and light – so shown 935  
 Not on those summits solely, nor alone  
 In the still cave and forest: o’er the flower  
 His eye is sparkling, and his breath hath blown,  
 His soft and summer breath, whose tender power  
 Passes the strength of Storms in their most desolate hour. 940

**101.**

All things are here of *him*; from the black pines,  
 Which are his shade on high, and the loud roar  
 Of torrents, where he listeneth, to the vines  
 Which slope his green path downward to the shore, 945  
 Where the bowed waters meet him, and adore,  
 Kissing his feet with murmurs; and the wood,  
 The Covert of old trees, with trunks all hoar,  
 But light leaves, young as Joy, stands where it stood,  
 Offering to him, and his, a populous Solitude,

---

directly upon the mountains of Savoy and La Valais, the lake, and the valley of the Rhone. It was at Vevai that Rousseau conceived the design of Julie” (LPBS II 486-7).

**94:** Shelley to Peacock: “We proceeded with a contrary wind to Clarens against a heavy swell. I never felt more strongly than on landing at Clarens, that the spirit of old times had deserted its once cherished habitation. A thousand times, thought I, have Julia and St. Preux walked on this terraced road, looking towards these mountains which I now behold; nay, treading on the ground where I now tread. From the window of our lodging our landlady pointed out ‘le bosquet de Julie.’ At least the inhabitants of this village are impressed with an idea, that the persons of that romance had an actual existence. In the evening we walked thither. It is, indeed, Julia’s wood. The hay was making under the trees; the trees themselves were aged, but vigorous, and interspersed with younger ones, which are destined to be their successors, and in future years, when we are dead, to afford a shade to future worshippers of nature, who love the memory of that tenderness and peace of which this was the imaginary abode. We walked forward among the vineyards, whose narrow terraces overlook this affecting scene. Why did the cold maxims of the world compel me at this moment to repress the tears of melancholy transport which it would have been so sweet to indulge, immeasurably, even until the darkness of night had swallowed up the objects which excited them? / I forgot to remark, what indeed my companion remarked to me, that our danger from the storm took place precisely in the spot where Julie and her lover were nearly overset, and where St. Preux was tempted to plunge with her into the lake” (LPBS II 486: for the last sentence, see Rousseau quotation in introduction above).

**102.**

A populous Solitude of bees and birds, 950  
 And fairy formed and many coloured things,  
 Who worship him with notes more sweet than words,  
 And innocently open their glad wings,  
 Fearless and full of life: the gush of springs,  
 And fall of lofty fountains, and the bend 955  
 Of stirring branches, and the bud which brings  
 The swiftest thought of beauty, here extend,  
 Mingling, and made by Love, unto one mighty end.

**103.**

He who hath loved not, here would learn that lore,  
 And make his heart a Spirit; he who knows 960  
 That tender mystery, will love the more,  
 For this is Love's recess, where vain men's woes,  
 And the world's waste, have driven him far from those,  
 For 'tis his nature to advance or die;  
 He stands not still, but or decays, or grows 965  
 Into a boundless blessing, which may vie  
 With the immortal lights, in its Eternity.

**104.**

'Twas not for fiction chose Rousseau this spot,  
 Peopling it with Affections; but he found  
 It was the scene which Passion must allot 970  
 To the Mind's purified beings; 'twas the ground  
 Where early Love his Psyche's zone unbound,  
 And hallowed it with loveliness: 'tis lone,  
 And wonderful, and deep, and hath a sound,  
 And sense, and sight of sweetness; here the Rhone 975  
 Hath spread himself a couch, the Alps have reared a Throne.

**105.**

Lausanne! and Ferney! ye have been the abodes \*<sup>95</sup>  
 Of Names which unto you bequeathed a name;  
 Mortals, who sought and found, by dangerous roads,  
 A path to perpetuity of fame: 980  
 They were Gigantic minds, and their steep aim,  
 Was, Titan-like, on daring doubts to pile  
 Thoughts which should call down thunder, and the flame  
 Of Heaven, again assailed, if Heaven the while  
 On Man and Man's research could deign do more than smile. 985

\* Voltaire and Gibbon.<sup>96</sup>

**106.**

The One – was fire and fickleness, a Child,  
 Most mutable in wishes, but in Mind,  
 A Wit as various – gay, grave, sage, or wild –  
 Historian – Bard – Philosopher – combined; 990  
 He multiplied himself among Mankind,  
 The Proteus of their talents – But his own  
 Breathed most in Ridicule – which, as the Wind,  
 Blew where it listed, laying all things prone –  
 Now to o'erthrow a fool, and now to shake a throne.

**107.**

The Other, deep and slow, exhausting thought, 995  
 And hiving wisdom with each studious year,  
 In meditation dwelt, with Learning wrought,  
 And shaped his weapon with an edge severe,  
 Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer;  
 The Lord of Irony – that master-spell, 1000  
 Which stung his foes to wrath, which grew from fear,  
 And doomed him to the Zealot's ready Hell,  
 Which answers to all doubts so eloquently well.

---

**95:** Lausanne, where Gibbon wrote much of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*; Ferney, home to the exiled Voltaire (who called the success of Rousseau's *Julie* "one of the infamies of the century").

**96:** Shelley to Peacock: "The rain detained us two days at Ouchy. We, however, visited Lausanne, and saw Gibbon's house. We were shown the decayed summer-house where he finished his History, and the old acacias on the terrace, from which he saw Mont Blanc, after having written the last sentence. There is something grand and even touching in the regret which he expresses at the completion of his task. It was conceived amid the ruins of the Capitol. The sudden departure of his cherished and accustomed toil must have left him, like the death of a dear friend, sad and solitary. / My companion gathered some acacia leaves to preserve in remembrance of him. I refrained from doing so, fearing to outrage the greater and more sacred name of Rousseau; the contemplation of whose imperishable creations had left no vacancy in my heart for mortal things. Gibbon had a cold and unimpassioned spirit. I never felt more inclination to rail at the prejudices which cling to such a thing, than now that Julie and Clarens, Lausanne and the Roman Empire, compelled to a contrast between Rousseau and Gibbon" (LPBS II 487-8).

**108.**

Yet, peace be with their ashes – for by them,  
 If merited, the penalty is paid; 1005  
 It is not ours to judge – far less condemn;  
 The hour must come when such things shall be made  
 Known unto all – or Hope and dread allayed  
 By slumber, on one pillow – in the dust,  
 Which, thus much we are sure, must lie decayed; 1010  
 And when it shall revive, as is our trust,  
 'Twill be to be forgiven, or suffer what is just.

**109.**

But let me quit Man's works, again to read  
 His Maker's,<sup>97</sup> spread around me, and suspend 1015  
 This page, which from my reveries I feed,  
 Until it seems prolonging without end.  
 The Clouds above me to the white Alps tend,  
 And I must pierce them, and survey whate'er  
 May be permitted, as my steps I bend  
 To their most great and growing region, where 1020  
 The Earth to her embrace compels the powers of air.

**110.**

Italia! Too – Italia! looking on thee,  
 Full flashes on the soul the light of Ages,  
 Since the fierce Carthaginian<sup>98</sup> almost won thee,  
 To the last Halo of the Chiefs and Sages, 1025  
 Who glorify thy consecrated pages;  
 Thou wert the throne and grave of empires; still,  
 The fount at which the panting Mind assuages  
 Her thirst for Knowledge, quaffing there her fill,  
 Flowers from the eternal source of Rome's imperial Hill. 1030

**111.**

Thus far I have proceeded in a theme  
 Renewed with no kind auspices: to feel  
 We are not what we have been, and to deem  
 We are not what we should be – and to steel  
 The Heart against itself; and to conceal, 1035  
 With a proud caution, love, or hate, or aught –  
 Passion or feeling, purpose, grief or zeal –  
 Which is the tyrant-Spirit of our thought,  
 Is a stern task of Soul – No Matter – it is taught.

---

**97:** B. goes Wordsworthian again.

**98:** Hannibal.

**112.**

And for these words, thus woven into Song, 1040  
 It may be that they are a harmless wile –  
 The colouring of the scenes which fleet along,  
 Which I would seize, in passing, to beguile  
 My breast, or that of others, for a while.  
 Fame is the thirst of Youth – but I am not 1045  
 So young as to regard Men's frown or smile,  
 As loss or Guerdon of a glorious lot;  
 I stood and stand alone – remembered or forgot.

**113.**

I have not loved the World, nor the World me;  
 I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bowed 1050  
 To its Idolatries a patient knee;  
 Nor coined my cheek to smiles – nor cried aloud  
 In worship of an Echo; in the crowd  
 They could not deem me one of such; I stood  
 Among them, but not of them; in a shroud 1055  
 Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still could,  
 Had I not filed my Mind, which thus itself subdued. \*

\*

“If it be thus,  
 For Banquo's issue have I *filed* my mind.” *Macbeth*.<sup>99</sup>

**114.**

I have not loved the world, nor the world me –  
 But let us part fair foes; I do believe,  
 Though I have found them not, that there may be 1060  
 Words which are things – hopes which will not deceive,  
 And virtues which are merciful, nor weave  
 Snares for the failing: I would also deem  
 O'er others' griefs that some sincerely grieve; \*  
 That two, or one, are almost what they seem – 1065  
 That goodness is no name, and happiness no dream.

\* It is said by Rochefoucauld that “there is *always* something in the misfortunes of men's friends not displeasing to them.”<sup>100</sup>

**115.**

My Daughter! with thy name this song begun –  
 My Daughter! with thy name thus much shall end –  
 I see thee not – I hear thee not – but None  
 Can be so wrapt in thee; Thou art the Friend 1070  
 To whom the Shadows of far years extend:  
 Albeit my brow thou never should'st behold,  
 My voice shall with thy future visions blend,  
 And reach into thy heart – when mine is cold –  
 A token and a tone, even from thy father's mould. 1075

<sup>99</sup>: *Macbeth*, III, i, 63.

<sup>100</sup>: “Dans l'adversité de nos meilleurs amis, nous trouvons souvent quelque chose qui ne nous déplait pas.” Rochefoucauld, *Maximes et Réflexions Morales* (1811 London edition), no. 241 (p. 84).

**116.**

To aid thy Mind's development – to watch  
 Thy dawn of little joys – to sit and see  
 Almost thy very Growth – to view thee catch  
 Knowledge of objects – wonders yet to thee!<sup>101</sup>  
 To hold thee lightly on a gentle knee, 1080  
 And print on thy soft cheek a parent's kiss –  
 This, it should seem, was not reserved for me;<sup>102</sup>  
 Yet this was in my Nature – as it is,  
 I know not what is there, yet something like to this.

**117.**

Yet, though dull Hate as duty should be taught, 1085  
 I know that thou wilt love me; though my name  
 Should be shut from thee, as a Spell still fraught  
 With desolation – and a broken claim:  
 Though the Grave closed between us – 'twere the same,  
 I know that thou wilt love me; though to drain 1090  
 My blood from out thy being, were an aim,  
 And an attainment – all would be in vain –  
 Still thou would'st love me, still that more than life retain.

**118.**

The Child of Love – though born in bitterness,  
 And nurtured in Convulsion – of thy Sire 1095  
 These were the elements – and thine no less.  
 As yet such are around thee – but thy fire  
 Shall be more tempered, and thy hope far higher.  
 Sweet be thy cradled slumbers! O'er the sea,  
 And from the mountains where I now respire, 1100  
 Fain would I waft such blessing upon thee,  
 As, with a sigh, I deem thou might'st have been to me.

---

**101:** Compare Prospero's reaction to Miranda's *O brave new world* speech at *The Tempest*, V, i, 184: *'Tis new to thee.*

**102:** B. does not seem, when forced to be in the company of his children, to have enjoyed it much.