

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE CANTO IV

Look at the end for Appendix 1: Hobhouse's four stanzas "in the Childe's style"
and
Appendix 2: Gibbon, Chapter 71.

Background

Byron arrived in Venice on November 10th 1816, and stayed while Hobhouse travelled with members his family to Naples. Unwillingly – for he was most attached to his Venetian mistress, Mariana Segati – Byron went south on April 17th 1817. He paid a short visit to Florence on April 22nd, and then proceeded to Rome, where, with Hobhouse, he stayed between April 29th and May 20th.¹ He returned to Venice on May 28th. He started *Childe Harold* IV on June 26th, and had finished the first draft by July 29th. He worked on the poem throughout the autumn, stopping only to rough-out *Beppo*, a poem so diametrically opposed to *Childe Harold* in matter and idiom that it might have come from another pen. Hobhouse left Venice on January 7th 1818, and Byron wrote to Murray

My dear Mr Murray,
You're in damned hurry
To set up this ultimate Canto,
But (if they don't rob us)
You'll see M^r Hobhouse
Will bring it safe in his portmanteau.² –

The poem was published on April 28th 1818.

Influence

The fourth and last canto of Byron's poem shows his holiday with Shelley (palpable for much of Canto III) to be over, and the baleful influence of Hobhouse to have returned. Claire Claremont wrote to her ex-lover on January 12th 1818, after the poem had been dispatched, with Hobhouse, to London. She mimics Byron:

I have no Hobhouse by my side to dispirit me with an easy & impudent declaration of "the villainy of all mankind" which I can construe into nothing but an attempt to cover his conscious unworthiness.³

Claire was an interested party; but her analysis of the effect which the misanthropy and nihilism of the socially and emotionally crippled Hobhouse had on Byron is still impressive: see stanzas 93-5, with their easy assumption that all endeavour is futile. With Hobhouse, Byron toured Rome, in April 1817; Hobhouse rejoined him in Venice in late August of the same year, and was present, not at the poem's inception, but at its lengthening, polishing, and above all, its annotating. In December 1817 he wrote to Murray:

Your new acquisition is a very fine finish to the three cantos, and, if I may trust to a taste vitiated (I say it without affectation) by an exclusive attention and attachment to that school of ancient & obsolete poetry of which your friend Mr Gifford furnished us with the last specimen in his *Bæviad*, is the best of all his lordship's productions – The world will not, to be sure, find that freshness and novelty which is to be discovered only at the opening of a

1: See "A higher and more extended comprehension": *Byron's Three Weeks in Rome* Keats-Shelley Review 2001, pp. 49-63. An enlarged version of this will be found at www.Hobby-O.com.

2: *Lord Byron to John Murray*, Venice January 8th. 1818 (Solar Press / John Murray, 1974).

3: Stocking 111.

mine – The metal whatever may be its quantity or quality must in some degree cease to surprise and delight as it continues to be worked, and nothing more can be hoped than that it should not become less valuable by being more plentiful – In spite of similes, however, it is possible that all other readers may agree with my simple self in liking this fourth Canto better than any thing Lord B has ever written – I must confess I feel an affection for it more than ordinary as part of it was begot, as it were, under my own eyes: for although your poets are as shy as elephants or camels of being seen in the act of procreation yet I have not unfrequently witnessed his lordship’s coupleting and some of the stanzas owe their birth to our morning walk or evening ride at La Mira ...⁴

Hobhouse, who had earlier in their careers seen himself as Byron’s poetical partner, had now seen the reality, and contented himself with being his commentator. He produced, not only heavy annotations to the text of the poem itself, but an entire volume – *Historical Illustrations to the Fourth Canto of Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* – which sold well, despite the misgivings expressed in his diary:

Childe Harold published today – God knows what will be the fate of notes and Illustrations – I have worked like a horse and perhaps like an ass at them⁵

The autobiographical politics of *Childe Harold IV*

These are confused in a way which reflects the division in Byron between the radical and the sentimental aristocrat. If an imperialism’s time has passed, as has that of Venice, that imperialism is to be lamented with nostalgia – a sign of the culture’s vanished greatness; if it flourished a long time ago, the two sides in its struggles, such as Rome and Carthage, can be treated sometimes with equal respect, as with Scipio and Hannibal, sometimes with one-sidedness, as with Sulla and his foes Mithridates or Marius, or as with Cromwell, dragged-in with some distortion of the Italian framework at line 758. But if the imperialism is current, as is that of the Hapsburg Empire, it is to be deplored.

Thus,

Oh for one hour of blind old Dandolo!
The Octogenarian Chief, Byzantium’s conquering foe!⁶

... ignores the fact that the Venetian imperialist Dandolo oversaw (insofar as he could see anything) such atrocities as the capture and sack of the Christian Constantinople during the fourth crusade of 1204. While the fact that ...

An Emperor tramples where an Emperor knelt;⁷

... is read, not as apt irony, but as a sad reflection on the way time brings decay. Byron is determined that the history of Europe should mirror what he claims to be that of his own life, that we should share his self-evaluation as “A ruin amidst ruins;”⁸ history has to be slanted to fit his egoism. He would see, and have us see, his life and miseries as a myth. Fortunately his life and miseries are so thoroughly catalogued as to enable us to resist the lure.

The stanzas (they are 130-8, with a deleted 135a below) in which he sums up his feelings about his failed marriage and the consequent moral revulsion against him which (though Hobhouse thought otherwise) forced him to leave England, are – whatever such sympathetic commentators as E.H.Coleridge may write – embarrassing. He would have us see him as a doomed, flawed hero (“It is not that I may not have

4: John Murray Archive (quoted by kind permission).

5: B.L.Add.Mss. 47235; diary entry for April 28th 1818.

6: CHP IV 107-8.

7: CHP IV 101.

8: CHP IV 219.

incurred / For my ancestral faults or mine the wound / I bleed withal ...”),⁹ but, as is so often the case with such heroes, as a man, too, “more sinned against than sinning.” The childish, vulgar brutality which he showed as his wife’s pregnancy developed late in 1815 is not something he ever acknowledges. Indeed, he’d have us see him as a kind of volcano (see line 663, and then lines 3-5 of **deleted stanza 135a**); a force of nature against which the normal standards of decency and morals don’t apply. The foolishness of it is encapsulated by Peacock in the figure of Mr Cypress in *Nightmare Abbey*, who says, in a speech made up entirely from quotations from *Childe Harold* IV:

I have no hope for myself or for others. Our life is a false nature; it is not in the harmony of things; it is an all-blasting upas, whose root is earth, and whose leaves are the skies which rain their poison-dews upon mankind. We wither from our youth; we gasp with unslaked thirst for unattainable good; lured from the first to the last by phantoms – love, fame, ambition, avarice – all idle, and all ill – one meteor of many names, that vanishes in the smoke of death.

MR. FLOSKY

A most delightful speech, Mr. Cypress. A most amiable and instructive philosophy. You have only to impress its truth on the minds of all living men, and life will then, indeed, be the desert and the solitude ...¹⁰

The challenge which the poem’s admirers have to face lies in the question, what good qualities does it contain which Peacock’s satire misses? (Byron described Peacock as “a very clever fellow”.)¹¹ Peacock disapproved of the poem more than the genial *Nightmare Abbey* would indicate. On May 30th 1818 he wrote to Shelley

I have almost finished “Nightmare Abbey.” I think it necessary to “make a stand” against the “encroachments” of black bile.

The fourth canto of “Childe Harold” is really too bad. I cannot consent to be *auditor tantum* of this systematical “poisoning” of the “mind” of the “reading public.”¹²

And in December of the same year Shelley wrote agreeing with him, giving his own analysis of the source of the poem’s “poison”:

I entirely agree with what you say about Childe Harold. The spirit in which it is written is, if insane, the most wicked & mischievous insanity that ever was given forth. It is a kind of obstinate & selfwilled folly in which he hardens himself. I remonstrated with him in vain on the tone of mind from which such a view of things alone arises. For its real root is very different from its apparent one, & nothing can be less sublime than the true source of these expressions of contempt & desperation. The fact is, that first, the Italian women are perhaps the most contemptible of all who exist under the moon ...¹³

***Childe Harold* and tombs**

Byron’s ego dictates that he be obsessed with the idea of great men exiled by ungrateful homelands and forced to wander – preferably to be buried in a foreign soil. Thus his lines on Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch, and Scipio Africanus, to whom he devotes several moving stanzas. Ingratitude of a crueller kind, he insists despite evidence available to him, was meted out to Tasso. And yet the tombs of Michaelangelo, Galileo, Machiavelli, and Alfieri, revered all four in Santa Croce, is

9: CHP IV 1189-91.

10: Peacock, *Nightmare Abbey*, XI.

11: BLJ VIII 145.

12: *Thomas Love Peacock, Letters to Edward Hookham and Percy Bysshe Shelley with fragments of unpublished manuscripts*, ed. Richard Garnett, The Bibliophile Society, Boston, MCMX, pp. 63-5

13: Shelley, *Letters* ed. Jones II 57-8.

evidence to the contrary, which he cannot ignore. It is a conundrum and self-contradiction which the poem's rhetoric tries to sweep aside. History is more complex than he would allow. Not until the section in Canto IV of *Don Juan*, describing the tombs in Ravenna of Dante and of Gaston de Foix, does he find a more economical and sensible way of stating the theme – which is probably inspired by a reading of Ugo Foscolo's *Dei Sepolchri*, a poem which it is characteristic of Byron never to mention.

“But where is he, the Pilgrim of my Song ...?”

By 1817 Byron had become annoyed by the way he was always being mistaken for his own heroes, the charmless Harold especially. Harold, having appeared only briefly in the third canto of the poem which bears his name, disappears from the fourth. In Cantos I and II he serves, as I argue in the introduction to those poems elsewhere on this site, as a *doppelgänger* behind whose front Byron can conceal things which about which he cannot be frank, or which if revealed would be insufficiently romantic. By 1817 Byron was (he asserted) truly exiled in a way that not even Harold was, and had nothing to lose by appearing open about his travels, his observations, and his private life. Had it been Harold who cursed (by forgiving them) his enemies, Byron's cover would have been blown in a humiliating and obvious way – hence his sense that Harold was at last superfluous, and hence Harold's withering away. In the last stanza, Harold seems to have taken upon him all of Byron's troubles:

Farewell! with *him* alone may rest the pain
If such there were – with *you*, the Moral of his Strain.¹⁴

It is as if Harold is the scapegoat, the vicarious sufferer, the part of Byron which the poem exorcises and casts out.

***Childe Harold IV* and Italian literature**

We know that Byron read Italian poetry in the original, and that he was influenced by it; but the fact is not obvious from *Childe Harold IV*, which shows the kind of general knowledge which one could pick up, with no Italian, from an encyclopaedia. Calling Ariosto *the southern Scott*¹⁵ is about as useful in demonstrating an acquaintance as calling Scott *the Ariosto of the North*.¹⁶ Calling Dante *the Bard of Hell*¹⁷ suggests – what I've often suspected – that Byron never bothered to read the *Purgatorio* or the *Paradiso*. He did read, and before *Childe Harold* was finished, an English poem which was influenced by lesser Italian poets – Pulci and Casti – but they were far too undignified to be mentioned in the solemn and vatic idiom he was employing in the supposedly deeper and more important work. John Hookham Frere's *Whistlecraft* led straight to the composition – done mostly in two nights, while *Childe Harold* was still in progress – of *Beppo*, a poem, one line from which, as Goethe said of *Don Juan* and Tasso, would poison all of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* at once.¹⁸ He could not, in the idiom of *Childe Harold*, describe himself as “A broken Dandy lately on my travels” (*Beppo*, 52, 2).

14: CHP IV 1673-4 (the final lines).

15: CHP IV 357.

16: CHP IV 359.

17: CHP IV 354.

18: ... mit einer einzigen Zeile des ‚Don Juan‘ könnte man das ganze ‚Bereifte Jerusalem‘ vergiften – Goethes Gespräche mit Eckermann, int. Franz Deibel, Leipzig; 132, quoted Robertson 78, Butler 98.

Childe Harold and Ruins

The poem could not be written today – much more has been uncovered and identified by archaeologists than had been in 1817. In fact, Byron's determination to picture a past gone beyond recall, and thus to show his English readership what fate awaited both his own supposed greatness and theirs in times to come, could only be achieved at the cost of ignoring what had already been discovered in Rome by such amateurs as the Duchess of Devonshire (to whom he owed the rent of Piccadilly Terrace, and whom he ignored when they came face to face one day near the Colosseum).¹⁹ Whose column it is that he apostrophises at stanza 110, for example, was so well-known that Hobhouse identifies it in his accompanying book.²⁰

The Works of Man and Nature

Byron's thesis is that where man and his political and personal achievements are evanescent, and do not deserve the dignity which he would confer on them, the creations of his Mind and Hand are eternal, and are the evidence for his real greatness. This idea, true though it may be, is hard to write about in poetry, if the greatness of the artists, writers, and architects is to be rendered incontrovertible should anyone doubt it. It's especially hard to write about if, like Byron, the poet is addicted to an over-economy which dictates that, for example, Ariosto and Dante should be disposed of in the same stanza (stanza 40, with some material on Scott thrown in for good measure) or if, in the more extreme case of the passage on Santa Croce (stanza 54) you have four such various geniuses as Michaelangelo, Galileo, Machiavelli, and Alfieri to deal with. Uneasy rhetorical assertion – coupled to a confidence that no-one will disagree with him – is what Byron falls back on.

In the passages on architecture – those on the Pantheon and on St Peter's (stanzas 146-7 and 153-9) concentrate, perhaps wisely, given the difficulty of doing buildings in verse, not on the design and fabric (done expertly by Joseph Forsyth in his *Remarks*) but on the effect the locations have on the spectator. Our knowledge that Byron is, in the St Peter's passage, borrowing from the perspicacious Forsyth (see note to 1390) may lessen the effect. Not all of *Childe Harold IV* is first-hand (see Appendix 2).

Where a building can excite Byron's moral outrage as opposed to his awe, as in the case of the Colosseum, the effect is much more vivid, particularly when taken in conjunction with the stanzas on the Dying Gladiator, killed in the Colosseum. The worrying effect which Manfred's third act soliloquy on the Colosseum has (see *Manfred*, III, iv, opening) is here well compensated for.

More successful still are the passages on sculpture – the Dying Gladiator, the Laocöon, the Belvedere Apollo (stanzas 140-42, 160, 161-3) – where Byron simply allows himself more space, and, in the case of the Gladiator, a degree of imaginative empathy which is missing from the ego-bound and pompous orotundity (read insecurity) which elsewhere characterises the poem.

I find the best passages are those where Man's works are left behind and a natural scene – Lake Thrasimene (stanzas 61-5), the stream of Clitumnus (stanzas 67-8), the falls of Terni (stanzas 69-72) or the grotto of Egeria – an *almost* natural scene (stanzas 115-17) – is allowed almost to speak for itself with minimal rhetorical interference. Here Byron is not tempted to identify, and achieves a greater impersonality. When he is himself the subtextual focus of attention, the effect is often forced.

19: See Caroline Chapman and Jane Dormer, *Elizabeth & Georgiana, The Duke of Devonshire and his two Duchesses* (2002) p.238.

20: *Historical Illustrations*, 240.

The Politics of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Canto IV

The patriotic works of Vincenzo Filicaija, adapted by Byron at stanzas 42 and 43, were banned in Italy under Austrian rule, a fact which Byron had learned in Switzerland.²¹ To use a sonnet by Filicaija, and to draw attention to the fact in a note, was to court trouble. Trouble came, not to Byron, for he was an English lord, but to Michele Leoni, friend of Silvio Pellico and Ugo Foscolo, who made a blank verse translation of the canto, and tried to get it published. His work was interdicted, and most of his print run destroyed. We even have the report made on it by Count Karl von Inzaghi, the Austrian Governor of Venice, to Count Sedlnitzky, the Head of Police in Vienna, on 18th September 1819:

Hochgeborener Graf!

In der Anlage hat mir das hierortige Central Censur Amt eine von dem hiesigen Mauthause demselben zugekommene Broschüre betitelt: 'L'Italia. Canto IV del Pellegrinaggio di Childe Harold, scritto da Lord Byron, tradotto da Michele Leoni, Italia 1819' samt dem diesfälligen Censurbogen vorgelegt, in welchem der Antrag gemacht wird, daß der Verkauf dieses Werkes höchstens nur erga Schedam zu gestatten wäre.

Ich ermangle nicht, dasselbe Eurer Excellenz weiser Prüfung zu unterziehen, und bin der unmaßgeblichen Meinung, daß – da der Inhalt dieses Werkes gegen die gegenwärtigen Regierungen Italiens gerichtet ist – solches von dem Verkaufe gänzlich auszuschließen wäre.

Genehmigen Eure Excellenz den wiederholten Ausdruck der ausgezeichneten Hochachtung, womit ich die Ehre habe zu verharren,

Eurer Excellenz gehorsamster Diener,

Inzaghi (e.h.)²²

Translation: Honourable Count! / The central censorship office here has presented me with one of the pamphlets the local toll house has been sent. It is called 'Italy. Canto IV of Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, written by Lord Byron, translated by Michele Leoni, Italy 1819' and was presented together with the due censorship papers in which the application was made that this work should only be sold *erga schedam* at best. I shall not fail to allow Your Excellency to subject this text to prudent examination himself and am of the humble opinion that – since the content of the work is directed against the present Italian government – such a thing should be completely banned. Please accept, Your Excellency, the repeated expression of deep respect with which I have the honour to remain Your Excellency's obedient servant, Inzaghi (honoris causa)." - tr. Shona Allan.

Childe Harold IV, with its non-stop apostrophes to Italy's present and past beauty and traditions, meant something quite different in the country and at the time it was written, than it does in 2006.

Don't read it all at once

The fourth canto of *Childe Harold* – longest of the set – is a trifle relentless. With no jokes or light touches at all, it lacks pace, though it has momentum. It is hard to stay up at its level of loftiness for 186 stanzas – hence the natural urge to take individual passages and anthologise them. Though the poem is well structured, and, allowing for the weaknesses outlined above, coherent, it does compartmentalise easily as well, and the urge to read just favourite purple bits is hard to resist.

²¹: B. and H. had met the Karvellas brothers from the Ionian Islands at Diodati on September 14th 1816, and had been told by them that in Italy "Filicaia and Beccaria" were "forbidden books".

²²: Karl Brunner, *Byron und die österreichische Polizei*, Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen, 148 (1925): 32, p. 29.

Prose notes and pictures

I have printed only Byron's own notes to Canto IV, none of Hobhouse's. I have also inserted illustrations, showing the places and works of art about which Byron writes. I have found that doing so has increased my own appreciation of the work.

Text

I have begun by removing the following punctuation marks from the text as printed in 1818: comma-dash; semi-colon-dash; colon-dash; and full-stop-dash. They make no sense to me in terms either of rhetorical or of syntactic punctuation. I have replaced them with either commas, semi-colons, colons, full-stops, or even just dashes. I have then retained such Byronic "misspellings" as "chrystal" (for "crystal"), "controul" (for "control"), "gulph" (for "gulf"), and "desart" (for "desert"). Finally, using Erdman / Worrall (*Manuscripts of the Younger Romantics VI: Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, by David V. Erdman and David Worrall, Garland 1991), I have restored all Byron's original upper-casing (embellishing now and then for consistency). Byron always capitalises verbs in the imperative; meteorological nouns; zoological nouns; the pronoun "She;" and the words "Abyss," "Soul," "Spirit," and "Mind." Occasionally he uppercases to emphasise an alliteration. E.H.Coleridge restores some of his uppercasing, but not all. Jerome McGann, wedded as he still is in his second volume to the unhelpful theory that once an editor and a compositor have been at a text – once the author's words have undergone a process of social transformation – we cannot return to what he wrote, omits all capitals which the 1818 printer omitted, and becomes thus a willing partner to the neutralisation of Byron's quirky writing habits.

I am grateful to Andrew Nicholson for information which led to some emendations of the text in stanzas 132, 135, 135a, and 182. Also to the insertion of some marginal comments made by Byron in a copy in September 1818. These are printed in square brackets in red.

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage
Preface to the Fourth Canto

“Visto ho Toscana, Lombardia, Romagna,
Quel Monte che divide, e quel che serra
Italia, e un mare e l' altro, che la bagna.”
Ariosto, Satira iii.²³

TO JOHN HOBHOUSE, ESQ., A.M., F.R.S., &c. &c. &c.
VENICE, *January 2*, 1818.

My Dear Hobhouse,

After an interval of eight years between the composition of the first and last Cantos of Childe Harold, the conclusion of the poem is about to be submitted to the public. In parting with so old a friend, it is not extraordinary that I should recur to one still older and better, to One, who has beheld the birth and death of the other, and to whom I am far more indebted for the social advantages of an enlightened friendship, than – though not ungrateful – I can, or could be, to Childe Harold, for any public favour reflected through the poem on the poet – to One, whom I have known long and accompanied far, whom I have found wakeful o'er my sickness and kind in my sorrow, glad in my prosperity and firm in my adversity, true in counsel and trusty in peril; to a friend often tried and never found wanting – to – Yourself.

In so doing, I recur from fiction to truth; and in dedicating to you in its complete, or at least concluded state, a poetical work which is the longest, the most thoughtful and comprehensive of my compositions, I wish to do honour to myself by the record of many years' intimacy with a Man of Learning, or talent, of steadiness, and of honour. It is not for Minds like ours to give or to receive Flattery; yet the praises of Sincerity have ever been permitted to the voices of Friendship; and it is not for you, nor even for others, but to relieve a heart which has not elsewhere, or lately, been so much accustomed to the encounter of Good Will as to withstand the shock firmly, that I thus attempt to commemorate your good qualities, or rather the advantages which I have derived from their exertion. Even the recurrence of the date of this letter, the Anniversary of the most unfortunate Day of my past Existence, but which cannot poison my future while I retain the resource of your friendship, and of my own faculties, will henceforth have a more agreeable recollection for both, inasmuch as it will remind us of this my attempt to thank you for an indefatigable regard, such as few men have experienced, and no one could experience without thinking better of his species and of himself.

It has been our good fortune to traverse together, at various periods, the countries of Chivalry, History, and Fable – Spain, Greece, Asia Minor, and Italy; and what Athens and Constantinople were a few years ago, Venice and Rome have been more recently. The poem also, or the pilgrim, or both, have accompanied me from first to last; and perhaps it may be pardonable vanity which induces me to reflect with complacency on a composition which in some degree connects me with the spot where it was produced, and the objects it would fain describe; and however unworthy it may be deemed of those magical and memorable abodes, however short it may fall of our distant conceptions and immediate impressions, yet as a mark of respect for what is venerable, and of feeling for what is glorious, it has been to me a source of pleasure in the production, and I part with it with a kind of regret, which I hardly suspected that Events could have left me for imaginary objects.

With regard to the conduct of the last Canto, there will be found less of the Pilgrim than in any of the preceding, and that little slightly, if at all, separated from the Suthor

23: “I have seen Tuscany, Lombardy, Romagna, those mountains which divide, and those which press down on Italy, and the one and the other sea, which bathe it.”

speaking in his own person. The fact is, that I had become weary of drawing a line which every one seemed determined not to perceive: like the Chinese in Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World,"²⁴ whom Nobody would believe to be Chinese, it was in vain that I asserted, and imagined that I had drawn, a distinction between the author and the pilgrim; and the very anxiety to preserve this difference, and disappointment at finding it unavailing, so far crushed my efforts in the composition, that I determined to abandon it altogether – and have done so. The opinions which have been, or may be, formed on that subject are *now* a matter of indifference; the work is to depend on itself, and not on the writer; and the author, who has no resources in his own mind beyond the reputation, transient or permanent, which is to arise from his literary efforts, deserves the fate of Authors.

In the Course of the following Canto it was my intention, either in the text or in the notes, to have touched upon the present state of Italian Literature, and perhaps of manners. But the text, within the limits I proposed, I soon found hardly sufficient for the Labyrinth of external objects, and the consequent reflections; and for the whole of the Notes, excepting a few of the shortest, I am indebted to yourself, and these were necessarily limited to the elucidation of the text.

It is also a delicate, and no very grateful task, to dissert upon the literature and manners of a nation so dissimilar; and requires an attention and impartiality which would induce us – though perhaps no inattentive observers, nor ignorant of the language or customs of the people amongst whom we have recently abode – to distrust, or at least defer our judgement, and more narrowly examine our information. The State of Literary, as well as political party, appears to me run, or to *have* run, so high, that for a Stranger to steer impartially between them is next to impossible. [Runs as high or higher than ever on the question of "Romantic & Classical as they call it. –] It may be enough, then, at least for my purpose, to quote from their own beautiful language – "Mi pare che in un paese tutto poetico, che vanta la lingua la più nobile ed insieme la più dolce, tutte tutte le vie diverse si possono tentare, e che sinche la patria di Alfieri e di Monti non ha perduto l' antico valore, in tutte essa dovrebbe essera la prima."²⁵ Italy has great names still – Canova, Monti, Ugo Foscolo, Pindemonte, Visconti [(since dead)], Morelli, Cicognara, Albrizzi, Mezzofanti, Mai, Mustoxidi, Aglietti, and Vacca,²⁶ will secure to the present generation an honourable place in most of the departments of Art, Science, and Belles Lettres; and in some the very highest – Europe – the World – has but one Canova.

It has been somewhere said by Alfieri,²⁷ that "La Pianta Uomo nasce più robusta in Italia che in qualunque altra terra – e che gli stessi atroci delitti che vi si commettono ne sono una prova."²⁸ Without subscribing to the latter part of his proposition, a dangerous doctrine, the truth of which may be disputed on better grounds, namely, that the Italians are in no respect more ferocious than their Neighbours, that Man must be wilfully blind, or ignorantly heedless, who is not struck with the extraordinary capacity of this people, or, if such a word be admissible, their *Capabilities*, the facility of their acquisitions, the rapidity of their conceptions, the fire of their Genius, their Sense of

24: Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World*, quoted at CHP I, note.

25: "It seems to me that in a completely poetical nation, which boasts a language at once the noblest and the sweetest, all, all the different ways should be attempted, and that as long as the country of Alfieri and Monti has not lost its ancient courage, it should be foremost in all these ways." Source unidentified.

26: Antonio Canova, sculptor; Vincenzo Monti, turncoat poet; Ugo Foscolo, exiled Ionian-Italian poet who had bedded Monti's wife; Ippolito Pindemonte, poet; Ennio Visconti, archaeologist; Giacomo Morelli, scholar; Leopold Cicognara, antiquarian; Countess Albrizzi, Venetian hostess; Giuseppe Mezzofanti; polyglot librarian; Angelo Mai, classicist; Andreas Mustoxides, Ionian-Italian classicist who had been in love with Monti's daughter; Francesco Aglietti, doctor who was to save the life of Teresa Guiccioli; and Andrea Vaccà Berlinguer, doctor, who was to save the life of Sergeant-Major Masi, perpetrator of the Pisan Affray.

27: Vittorio Alfieri, poet and dramatist who influenced B in his neo-classical dramas.

28: "The human plant flourishes more robustly in Italy than in any other soil; and the atrocious crimes there committed are proof of this." McGann identifies as source Alfieri, *Del Principe e delle Lettere* (1795), Book II, chap. ii.

Beauty, and, amidst all the disadvantages of repeated revolutions, the desolation of battles, and the despair of ages, their still unquenched “longing after Immortality,” – the Immortality of Independence. And when we ourselves, in riding round the walls of Rome, heard the simple lament of the Labourers’ chorus, “Roma! Roma! Roma! Roma no è più come era prima!”²⁹ it was difficult not to contrast the Bacchanal roar of the songs of exultation still yelled from the London taverns, over the Carnage of Mont St. Jean,³⁰ and the betrayal of Genoa – of Italy – or France, and of the World, by men whose conduct you yourself have exposed in a work³¹ worthy of the better days of our history.

For me, –

“Non movero mai corda
Ove la turba di sue ciance assorda.”³²

What Italy has gained by the late transfer of Nations, it were useless for Englishmen to inquire, till it becomes ascertained that England has acquired something more than a permanent army and a suspended Habeas Corpus; it is enough for them to look at home. For what they have done abroad, and especially in the South, “Verily they *will* have their reward,” and at no very distant period.

Wishing you, my dear Hobhouse, a safe and agreeable return to that Country whose real welfare can be dearer to none than to yourself, I dedicate to you this poem in its completed state; and repeat once more how truly I am ever

Your obliged and affectionate friend,

BYRON³³

29: “Rome! Rome! Thou art not now as thou wast before!”

30: B.’s offensive way of describing the battle of Waterloo.

31: H.’s book – on balance, pro-Napoleonic – *The Substance of some Letters written by an Englishman resident in Paris during the last Reign of the Emperor Napoleon* (1816). The third edition is dedicated to Byron.

32: Giuseppe Parini, *La Recità de’ Versi*, from *Poesie* (1803), VI: “I shall never bat an eyelid where the hurricane deafens us with its turmoil.” This is an important theme throughout the poem. See lines 570-6; 647-8. My thanks to Nora Crook for the reference.

33: Text derived in part from Erdman / Worrall 293-7; their transcription has many inaccuracies.

CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE CANTO THE FOURTH



The Ponte dei Sospiri (line 1).

1.

I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs; *
A Palace and a Prison on each hand:³⁴
I saw from out the wave her structures rise
As from the stroke of the Enchanter's wand:
A thousand Years their cloudy wings expand 5
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
O'er the far times, when many a subject Land
Looked to the winged Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles!

* The "Bridge of Sighs" (il Ponte dei Sospiri) divides the Doge's Palace from the state prison. – It is roofed, and *divided* by a wall into two passages. By the one – the prisoner was conveyed to judgement – by the other he returned to death, being generally strangled in an adjoining chamber. The City of Venice properly so called is built upon seventy-two islands but there are about thirty-two others including Malamocco, the Lido, Palestrina, &c., &c.

2.

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from Ocean, 10
Rising with her tiara of proud towers³⁵
At airy distance, with majestic motion,
A Ruler of the waters and their powers:
And such She was; her daughters had their dowers
From spoils of nations, and the exhaustless East 15
Poured in her lap all gems in sparkling showers.³⁶
In purple was She robed, and of her feast
Monarchs partook, and deemed their dignity increased.

34: B. does not mean that there is a prison on one hand and a palace on the other – he means that the palace *is* a prison and the prison *is* a palace.

35: The mother-goddess Cybele was often depicted with a diadem of towers.

36: Venice had been a major imperialist power, removing many artefacts from the east.

3.

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more, *
And silent rows the songless Gondolier;³⁷ 20
Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
And Music meets not always now the ear:
Those days are gone – but Beauty still is here.
States fall, Arts fade – but Nature doth not die,
Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear, 25
The pleasant place of all festivity,
The Revel of the earth – the Masque of Italy!

* The well known song of the Gondoliers, of alternate stanzas from Tasso's *Gerusalemme*, has died with the Independence of Venice. Editions of Tasso with the original on one column, and the Venetian variations on the other, as sung by the boatmen, were once common, and are still to be found. The following extract will show the difference between the original and the "Canta alla Barcariola."

Venetian.

L'Arme pietose di cantar gho vogia,
E de Goffredo la immortal braura
Che al fin l' ha libera co strassia, e dogia
Del nostro buon Gesù la Sepoltura
De mezo mondo unito, e de quel Bogia
Missier Pluton non l' ha bu mai paura:
Dio l' ha agiutá, e i Compagni sparpagnai
Tutti 'l gh' i ha messi insieme i di del Dai.

*Original.*³⁸

Canto l'arme pietose, e 'l Capitano
Che 'l gran Sepolcro liberò di Cristo.
Molto egli oprò co 'l senno, e con la mano
Molto soffri nel glorioso acquisto;
E in van l'Inferno a lui s'oppose, e in vano
S'armò d'Asia, e di Libia il popolo misto,
Che il Ciel gli diè favore, e sotto a i Santi
Segni ridusse i Suoi compagni erranti.³⁹

4.

But unto us She hath a spell beyond
Her name in story, and her long array
Of mighty Shadows, whose dim forms despond 30
Above the Dogeless City's vanished sway;
Ours is a trophy which will not decay
With the Rialto; Shylock and the Moor,
And Pierre,⁴⁰ cannot be swept or worn away –
The Keystones of the Arch! though all were o'er, 35
For us re peopled were the solitary Shore.

37: It had once been the custom of gondoliers to sing passages from Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. B. and H. found the tradition to be in decay.

38: Tasso, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, first stanza.

39: McGann (CPW II 219-20) says this note is H.'s, but see Erdman / Worrall 301, where it is in B.'s hand.

40: Shylock from *The Merchant of Venice*; Othello; and Pierre from Otway's *Venice Preserved*.

5.

The Beings of the Mind are not of Clay;⁴¹
Essentially immortal, they create
And multiply in us a brighter ray
And more beloved existence: that which Fate 40
Prohibits to dull life, in this our state
Of mortal bondage, by these Spirits supplied,
First exiles, then replaces what we hate;
Watering the heart whose early flowers have died,
And with a fresher growth replenishing the void. 45

6.

Such is the refuge of our youth and age,
The first from Hope, the last from Vacancy;⁴²
And this wan feeling peoples many a page,
And, maybe, that which grows beneath mine eye:
Yet there are things whose strong Reality 50
Outshines our fairy-land; in shape and hues
More beautiful than our fantastic sky,
And the strange Constellations which the Muse
O'er her wild Universe is skilful to diffuse:

7.

I saw or dreamed of such⁴³ – but let them go; 55
They came like Truth – and disappeared like dreams;
And whatsoe'er they *were* – *are now* but so:
I could replace them if I would; still teems
My Mind with many a form which aptly seems
Such as I sought for, and at moments found; 60
Let these too go – for waking Reason deems
Such overweening Phantasies unsound,
And other voices speak, and other sights surround.

8.

I've taught me other tongues, and in strange eyes
Have made me not a stranger; to the Mind 65
Which is itself, no changes bring surprise;
Nor is it harsh to make, nor hard to find
A Country with – aye, or without mankind;
Yet was I born where Men are proud to be –
Not without cause; and should I leave behind 70
The inviolate Island of the Sage and Free,
And seek me out a home by a remoter sea,

41: The idea of the greater longevity of the things of the mind over those of life echoes *CHP* III, 48.

42: Compare *Hamlet*, III, iv, 116-7: *How is't with you, / That you do bend your eye on vacancy?*

43: Compare *Anthony and Cleopatra*, V, ii, 96-7: *But if there be nor ever were one such, / It's past the size of dreaming.*

9.

Perhaps I loved it well: and should I lay
My ashes in a soil which is not mine,
Mine Spirit shall resume it – if we may 75
Unbodied choose a sanctuary. I twine
My hopes of being remembered in my line
With my land's language:⁴⁴ if too fond and far
These aspirations in their scope incline,
If my fame should be, as my fortunes are, 80
Of hasty growth and blight, and dull Oblivion bar

10.

My name from out the temple where the dead
Are honoured by the Nations – let it be –
And light the Laurels on a loftier head!
And be the Spartan's epitaph on me – 85
"Sparta hath many a worthier son than he." *
Meantime I seek no sympathies, nor need;
The thorns which I have reaped † are of the tree
I planted: they have torn me, and I bleed:
I should have known what fruit would spring from such a seed.

* The above was the answer of the mother of Brasidas⁴⁵ to the Strangers who praised the memory of her Son.

† I say *reaped* because they stung *me*.

44: Coleridge suggests that B. is thinking of burial in Westminster Abbey; if so, he wasn't buried there. McGann suggests the Temple of Fame.

45: Brasidas, Spartan victor of Amphipolis (422 BC).



The Lion of St Mark (left – line 95).

11.

The spouseless Adriatic mourns her lord;⁴⁶ 92
 And annual marriage now no more renewed,
 The Bucentaur⁴⁷ lies rotting unrestored,
 Neglected Garment of her Widowhood!
 St. Mark yet sees his Lion where he stood 95
 Stand, but in mockery of his withered power,
 Over the proud place where an Emperor sued,
 And Monarchs gazed and envied in the hour
 When Venice was a Queen with an unequalled Dower.

12.

The Suabian sued, and now the Austrian reigns⁴⁸ * –
 An Emperor tramples where an Emperor knelt; 101
 Kingdoms are shrunk to provinces, and chains
 Clank over sceptred cities, Nations melt
 From Power's high pinnacle, when they have felt
 The sunshine for a while, and downward go 105
 Like Lauwine⁴⁹ loosened from the Mountain's belt;
 Oh for one hour of blind old Dandolo!
 The Octogenarian Chief, Byzantium's conquering foe!⁵⁰

* The submission of Frederic Barbarossa to the Pope occurred in the place of St. Mark – which is still the finest square in Europe.

46: Venice had in her glory been “wedded to the Adriatic” in a ring-throwing ceremony.

47: Bucentaur – state barge of the Venetian Doge.

48: The Suabian is the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (c.1123-90), who had to kneel before Pope Alexander III at St Mark's in 1177; the Austrian is the current Emperor Francis II (1768-1835).

49: An avalanche; though the word avalanche was still “on probation” in 1817. Compare below, 653.

50: Enrico Dandolo (1108-1205) Doge who took Constantinople in 1204, when he was 96.



The Horses of San Marco (line 109).

13.

Before St. Mark still glow his Steeds of Brass,⁵¹
 Their gilded Collars glittering in the sun; 110
 But is not Doria's menace⁵² come to pass?
 Are they *not bridled?* – Venice, lost and won,
 Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,
 Sinks, like a sea-weed, into whence She rose;
 Better be whelmed beneath the waves, and shun, 115
 Even in Destruction's depth, her foreign foes,
 From whom Submission wrings an infamous repose.

14.

In youth She was all glory, a new Tyre,
 Her very by-word sprung from Victory,
 The "Planter of the Lion," which through fire * 120
 And blood She bore o'er subject Earth and Sea;
 Though making many slaves, Herself still free,
 And Europe's bulwark 'gainst the Ottomite; †
 Witness Troy's rival, Candia!⁵³ Vouch it, Ye
 Immortal waves that saw Lepanto's⁵⁴ fight! 125
 For ye are names no Time nor Tyranny can blight.

* Plant the Lion – that is, the Lion of St. Mark, the standard of the republic, which is the origin of the word Pantaloon – Pianta-Leone, Pantaleon, Pantaloon.⁵⁵

† Shakespeare is my authority for the word "Ottomite" for Ottoman. "Which Heaven forbid the Ottomites."⁵⁶

51: The Horses of St Mark were stolen from Constantinople during the sack of 1204.
52: Pietro Doria (1330-1404) Genoese admiral who H. says threatened to "bridle the horses of St Mark," though he probably didn't.
53: Candia is Crete, lost by Venice to the Turks in 1669.
54: Battle of Lepanto in the Gulf of Corinth (1571) where Don John of Austria beat the Turks with a combined force of Venetian and Spanish vessels.
55: B.'s etymology is false. "Pantalon" comes from the legendary martyr St Pantaleon.
56: *Othello*, II iii 162.

15.

Statues of Glass – all shivered – the long file
Of her dead Doges are declined to dust;
But where they dwelt, the vast and sumptuous pile
Bespeaks the pageant of their splendid trust; 130
Their Sceptre broken, and their Sword in rust,
Have yielded to the Stranger: empty halls,
Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such as must
Too oft remind her who and what enthalls,
Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice' lovely walls. 135

16.

When Athens' armies fell at Syracuse,⁵⁷
And fettered thousands bore the yoke of war,
Redemption rose up in the Attic Muse, *
Her voice their only ransom from afar:
See! as they chant the tragic hymn, the Car 140
Of the o'er-mastered Victor stops, the reins
Fall from his hands – his idle Scimitar
Starts from its belt – he rends his Captive's chains,
And bids him thank the Bard for Freedom and his strains.

* The story is told in Plutarch's life of Nicias.

17.

Thus, Venice! if no stronger claim were thine, 145
Were all thy proud historic deeds forgot,
Thy Choral memory of the Bard divine,
Thy love of Tasso, should have cut the knot
Which ties thee to thy tyrants;⁵⁸ and thy lot
Is shameful to the Nations – most of all, 150
Albion, to thee: the Ocean Queen should not
Abandon Ocean's children; in the fall
Of Venice think of thine, despite thy watery wall.

18.

I loved her from my boyhood; She to me
Was as a fairy city of the heart, 155
Rising like Water-columns from the sea,
Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the Mart;
And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakespeare's Art, *
Had stamped her image in me, and even so,
Although I found her thus, we did not part; 160
Perchance even dearer in her day of Woe,
Than when She was a boast, a marvel, and a show.

* *Venice Preserved*. – *Mysterries of Udolpho*. – the *Geister-Seer*, or *Armenian*.⁵⁹ – *The Merchant of Venice*. *Othello*.

57: The siege of Syracuse in Sicily (415 BC); final Athenian defeat in the Peloponnesian War. Plutarch relates in his Life of Nicias that those Athenians who could repeat verses from Euripides ("the Bard"), melted the victors' hearts and were often released.

58: Refers to the Treaty of Campo Formio (1797) in which Venice was given to Austria, and the Treaty of Paris (1814) when it was returned to them

59: Refers to Thomas Otway's play *Venice Preserved* (1682); Anne Radcliffe's story *The Mysterries of Udolpho* (1794) and Friedrich Schiller's story *Der Geisterseher* (1784).

19.

I can repeople with the past – and of
The present there is still for eye and thought,
And Meditation chastened down, enough; 165
And more, it may be, than I hoped or sought;
And of the happiest moments which were wrought
Within the web of my existence, some
From thee, fair Venice! have their colours caught:
There are some feelings Time cannot benumb, 170
Nor Torture shake, or mine would now be cold and dumb.

20.

But from their nature will the Tannen grow *
Loftiest on loftiest and least sheltered rocks,
Rooted in barrenness, where nought below
Of Soil supports them 'gainst the Alpine shocks 175
Of eddying storms; yet springs the trunk, and mocks
The howling tempest, till its height and frame
Are worthy of the mountains from whose blocks
Of bleak, gray Granite into life it came,
And grew a Giant tree – the Mind may grow the same. 180

* *Tannen* is the plural of *Tanne*, a species of fir peculiar to the Alps, which only thrives in very rocky parts, where scarcely soil sufficient for its nourishment can be perceived. On these spots it grows to a greater height than any other tree in those countries.

21.

Existence may be borne, and the deep root
Of life and sufferance make its firm abode
In bare and desolated bosoms: mute
The Camel labours with the heaviest load,
And the Wolf dies in silence⁶⁰ – not bestowed 185
In vain should such example be; if they,
Things of ignoble or of savage mood,
Endure and shrink not, we of nobler clay
May temper it to bear, – it is but for a day.⁶¹

22.

All Suffering doth destroy, or is destroyed, 190
Even by the Sufferer; and, in each event,
Ends. Some, with hope replenished and rebuoyed,
Return to whence they came – with like intent,
And weave their web again; some, bowed and bent,
Wax gray and ghastly, withering ere their time, 195
And perish with the reed on which they leant;
Some seek devotion – toil – war – good or crime,
According as their Souls were formed to sink or climb.

60: Alfred de Vigny used this idea in his poem *La Mort du Loup* (1838).

61: Compare *Macbeth*, I, iii, 146-7: *Come what come may, / Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.*

23.

But ever and anon of Griefs subdued
There comes a token like a Scorpion's sting, 200
Scarce seen, but with fresh bitterness imbued;
And slight withal may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
Aside for ever: it may be a Sound –
A tone of Music – Summer's eve – or Spring – 205
A flower – the wind – the Ocean – which shall wound,
Striking the electric chain wherewith we're darkly bound;

24.

And how and why we know not, nor can trace
Home to its cloud this lightning of the Mind,
But feel the shock renewed, nor can efface 210
The blight and blackening which it leaves behind,
Which out of things familiar, undesigned,
When least we deem of such, calls up to view
The Spectres whom no Exorcism can bind, –
The cold – the changed – perchance the dead – anew, 215
The mourned – the loved – the lost – too Many! yet how Few!⁶²

25.

But my Soul wanders:⁶³ I demand it back
To meditate amongst decay, and stand
A Ruin amidst ruins; there to track
Fall'n states and buried Greatness, o'er a land 220
Which *was* the mightiest in its old command,
And *is* the loveliest, and must ever be
The Master-mould of Nature's heavenly hand;
Wherein were cast the heroic and the free,
The beautiful – the brave – the Lords of Earth and Sea, 225

26.

The Commonwealth of Kings – the Men of Rome!
And even since, and now, fair Italy!
Thou art the Garden of the World, and Home
Of all Art yields, and Nature can decree;
Even in thy Desart, what is like to thee? 230
Thy very Weeds are beautiful – thy waste
More rich than other Climes' fertility;
Thy wreck a Glory – and thy ruin graced
With an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced.

62: Perhaps a memory of Young's *Night-Thoughts*. See *CHP* II, note to 927.

63: B. apologises for digressing, although he hasn't announced a theme yet.

27.

The Moon is up, and yet it is not Night; 235
Sunset divides the sky with her; a Sea
Of Glory streams along the Alpine height
Of blue Friuli's mountains;⁶⁴ Heaven is free
From clouds, but of all colours seems to be –
Melted to one vast Iris of the West – 240
Where the Day joins the past Eternity,
While, on the other hand, meek Dian's crest
Floats through the azure air – an Island of the blest!

28.

A Single Star is at her side, and reigns
With her o'er half the lovely heaven; but still 245
Yon sunny Sea heaves brightly, and remains
Rolled o'er the peak of the far Rhætian hill,
As Day and Night contending were, until
Nature reclaimed her order – gently flows
The deep-dyed Brenta,⁶⁵ where their hues instil 250
The odorous Purple of a newborn rose,
Which streams upon her stream, and glassed within it glows,

29.

Filled with the face of Heaven, which, from afar,
Comes down upon the waters; all its hues,
From the rich sunset to the rising star, 255
Their magical variety diffuse:
And now they change; a paler Shadow strews
Its mantle o'er the mountains; parting Day
Dies like the Dolphin, whom each pang imbues
With a new colour as it gasps away – 260
The last still loveliest – till – 'tis gone – and All is gray. *

* The above description may seem fantastical or exaggerated to those who have never seen an Oriental or Italian sky – yet it is but a literal and hardly sufficient delineation of an August evening (the eighteenth) as contemplated during a ride along the Banks of the Brenta – near La Mira.

64: Friuli's mountains are the Julian Alps to the north-east of Venice.

65: The Brenta is a river to the west of Venice, where B. had rented a villa at La Mira.



Petrarch's tomb (line 262).

30.

There is a tomb in Arquà⁶⁶ – reared in air,
 Pillared in their Sarcophagus, repose
 The bones of Laura's lover: here repair
 Many familiar with his well-sung woes, 265
 The Pilgrims of his Genius. He arose
 To raise a language, and his land reclaim
 From the dull yoke of her Barbaric foes:
 Watering the tree which bears his Lady's name⁶⁷
 With his melodious tears, he gave himself to Fame. 270

31.

They keep his dust in Arquà, where he died;
 The mountain Village where his latter days
 Went down the vale of years; and 'tis their pride –
 An honest pride – and let it be their praise,
 To offer to the passing Stranger's Gaze 275
 His mansion and his Sepulchre; both plain
 And venerably simple, such as raise
 A Feeling more accordant with his Strain
 Than if a Pyramid formed his monumental Fane.

32.

And the soft quiet Hamlet where he dwelt 280
 Is one of that complexion which seems made
 For those who their mortality have felt,
 And sought a refuge from their hopes decayed
 In the deep umbrage of a green hill's shade,
 Which shows a distant prospect far away 285
 Of busy Cities, now in vain displayed,
 For they can lure no further; and the ray
 Of a bright Sun can make sufficient holiday,

66: Arquà was the home and burial-place of Petrarch (1304-74) Italian sonneteer, addressing many of his poems to a mythical Laura. B. visited it twice, once with H. and once with Teresa Guiccoli.
67: The laurel (after whom Laura is named).

33.

Developing the mountains, leaves, and flowers,
And shining in the brawling brook, whereby, 290
Clear as its current, glide the sauntering hours
With a calm languor, which, though to the eye
Idlesse it seem,⁶⁸ hath its Mortality.
If from Society we learn to live,
'Tis Solitude should teach us how to die; 295
It hath no flatterers; Vanity can give
No hollow aid; alone – Man with his God must strive:

34.

Or, it may be, with Demons, who impair
The Strength of better thoughts, and seek their prey
In melancholy bosoms, such as were 300
Of moody texture, from their earliest day,
And loved to dwell in darkness and dismay,
Deeming themselves predestined to a doom
Which is not of the pangs that pass away;
Making the Sun like blood, the Earth a tomb, 305
The tomb a Hell – and Hell itself a murkier Gloom.



Torquato Tasso (line 316).

35.

Ferrara!⁶⁹ in thy wide and grass-grown streets,
Whose Symmetry was not for Solitude,
There seems as 'twere a Curse upon the Seats
Of former Sovereigns, and the antique brood 310
Of Este, which for many an age made good
Its strength within thy walls, and was of yore
Patron or Tyrant, as the changing mood
Of petty Power impelled, of those who wore
The wreath which Dante's brow alone had worn before.

68: A rare reversion to the Spenserianism of Canto I.

69: Where Tasso (1544-95), author of the crusading epic *Gerusalemme Liberata*, was imprisoned – or at least placed in care because of his insanity.

36.

And Tasso is their Glory and their Shame. 316
Hark to his Strain! and then Survey his cell!⁷⁰
And see how dearly earned Torquato's Fame,
And where Alfonso⁷¹ bade his poet dwell:
The miserable Despot could not quell 320
The insulted Mind he sought to quench, and blend
With the surrounding Maniacs, in the Hell
Where he had plunged it. Glory without end
Scattered the clouds away; and on that name attend

37.

The tears and praises of all Time; while thine 325
Would rot in its oblivion – in the sink
Of worthless dust, which from thy boasted line
Is shaken into nothing – but the link
Thou formest in his fortunes bids us think
Of thy poor malice, naming thee with scorn: 330
Alfonso! how thy ducal pageants shrink
From thee! if in another station born,
Scarce fit to be the slave of him thou madest to mourn:

38.

Thou! formed to eat, and be despised, and die,
Even as the beasts that perish, save that thou 335
Hadst a more splendid trough and wider sty:⁷²
He! with a glory round his furrowed brow,
Which emanated then, and dazzles now,
In face of all his foes, the Cruscan quire,
And Boileau,⁷³ whose rash Envy could allow * 340
No strain which shamed his Country's creaking lyre,
That whetstone of the teeth⁷⁴ – Monotony in wire!

39.

Peace to Torquato's injured shade! 'twas his
In life and death to be the mark where Wrong
Aimed with her poisoned arrows, but to miss. 345
Oh! Victor unsurpassed in modern Song!
Each year brings forth its millions; but how long
The tide of Generations shall roll on,
And not the whole combined and countless throng
Compose a Mind like thine? though All in one 350
Condensed their scattered rays, they would not form a Sun.

* It is needless to mention the well known attacks on Tasso by his contemporaries the Cruscans, academicians; and the subsequent flippant stuff of Boileau.

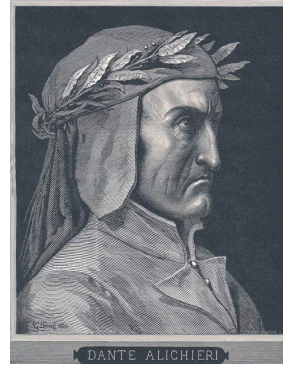
70: See B.'s poem *The Lament of Tasso*.

71: Duke Alfonso of Este, who, according to inaccurate legend, imprisoned Tasso because he dared to love the Duke's sister, Leonora.

72: B. slants the story of Tasso's persecution so that he can identify more with him.

73: The French critic and poet Boileau (1636-1711) refers to "le clinquant du Tasse à tout l'or de Virgile" (*the tawdry tinsel of Tasso and the gold of Virgil*).

74: Compare *TVOJ*, 103, 8: *His teeth were set on edge – he could not blow!*



Ariosto (line 354)

Scott (line 357)

Dante (line 354)

40.

Great as thou art, yet paralleled by those,
 Thy countrymen, before thee born to shine,
 The Bards of Hell and Chivalry:⁷⁵ first rose
 The Tuscan father's Comedy Divine; 355
 Then, not unequal to the Florentine,
 The Southern Scott, the Minstrel who called forth
 A new Creation with his magic line,
 And, like the Ariosto of the North, 359
 Sang Ladye-love and War, Romance and Knightly Worth.⁷⁶

41.

The Lightning rent from Ariosto's bust
 The iron crown of Laurel's mimicked leaves;⁷⁷
 Nor was the ominous Element unjust,
 For the true Laurel-wreath which Glory weaves
 Is of the tree no Bolt of Thunder cleaves, 365
 And the false Semblance but disgraced his brow;
 Yet still, if fondly Superstition grieves,
 Know, that the Lightning sanctifies below
 Whate'er it strikes; yon head is doubly sacred now.

75: Dante (165-1321) and Ariosto (1474-1533): Lamartine called B. "chantre d'enfer" in his poem *L'Homme – à Lord Byron*, from *Méditations Poétiques* (1820); see BLJ VII 127. Dante wrote of Purgatory and Heaven, too – but B. prefers to stress Hell – it's more gloomy.

76: Refers to Scott's poetry, not his novels, which are not at all like Ariosto. Francis Hodgson likened the verbal juggling of this stanza to "mistaking horse chestnuts for chestnut horses."

77: It's not clear that such a lightning-strike ever occurred.

42.

Italia! oh Italia! thou who hast 370
The fatal gift of Beauty, which became
A funeral dower of present woes and past,
On thy sweet brow is sorrow ploughed by Shame,
And Annals graved in characters of flame.
Oh, God! that thou wert in thy nakedness 375
Less lovely or more powerful, and couldst claim
Thy right, and awe the robbers back, who press
To shed thy blood, and drink the tears of thy distress;

43.

Then might'st thou more appal; or, less desired,
Be homely and be peaceful, undeplord 380
For thy destructive charms; then, still untired,
Would not be seen the armed torrents poured
Down the deep Alps; nor would the hostile horde
Of many-nationed Spoilers from the Po
Quaff blood and water; nor the Stranger's sword 385
Be thy sad weapon of defence, and so,
Victor or vanquished, thou the Slave of friend or foe!

These two stanzas, 42 and 43 are, with the exception of a line or two, a translation of the famous sonnet by Filicaja: "Italia, Italia, O tu cui fe la sorte."⁷⁸

78: The sonnet by Vincenzo da Filicaja (1642-1707) is as follows:

Italia, Italia o tu, cui feo la sorte
Dono infelice di bellezza, ond'hai
Funesta dote d'infiniti guai,
Che in fronte scritti per gran doglia porte:
Deh! fossi tu men bella, o almen più forte
Onde assai più ti paventasse, o assai
T'amasse men, chi del tuo bello ai rai
Par che si strugga, e pur ti sfida a morte.
Che giù dall'Alpi non vedrei torrenti
Scender d'armati, nè di sangue tinta
Bever l'onda del Po Gallici armenti:
Nè ti vedrei del non tuo ferro cinta
Pugnar col braccio di straniere genti,
Per servir sempre, o vincitrice, o vinta.

[“Italy, Italy o you, to whom fate gave / an unhappy gift of beauty, from which you got / a funereal dowry of infinite troubles / that on your brow inscribed by pain you bear: / Alas! were you less beautiful or at least more strong / So that much more would he fear you, or much more / love you less, who for your beauty in the rays / seems to pine [[for love]], yet challenges you to death. / Thus I would not see from the Alps torrents / Come down armed, nor tinted with blood / drink the wave of the Po Gallic herds / Nor would I see you dressed not with you own armour / Fight with [[using]] the arm of foreign people, / To serve no matter, winning, or won.” – literal translation by Gabriele Poole.]

44.

Wandering in Youth, I traced the path of him, *
 The Roman friend of Rome's least-mortal Mind,
 The friend of Tully:⁷⁹ as my Bark did skim 390
 The bright blue waters with a fanning Wind,
 Came Megara before me, and behind
 Ægina lay, Piræus on the right,
 And Corinth on the left; I lay reclined
 Along the prow, and saw all these unite 395
 In ruin, even as he had seen the desolate sight;

* The celebrated letter of Servius Sulpicius to Cicero on the death of his daughter, describes as it then was, and now is, a path which I often traced in Greece, both by sea and land, in different journeys and voyages.

“On my return from Asia, as I was sailing from Ægina towards Megara, I began to contemplate the prospect of the countries around me: Ægina was behind, Megara before me; Piræus on the right, Corinth on the left; all which towns, once famous and flourishing, now lie overturned and buried in their ruins. Upon this sight, I could not but think presently within myself, Alas! how do we poor mortals fret and vex ourselves if any of our friends happen to die or be killed, whose life is yet so short, when the carcasses of so many noble cities lie here exposed before me in one view.” See Middleton, *History of the Life of M. Tullius Cicero*, II, sec. 7, p. 371.⁸⁰

45.

For Time hath not rebuilt them, but upreared
 Barbaric dwellings on their shattered site,
 Which only make more mourned and more endeared
 The few last rays of their far-scattered light, 400
 And the crushed relics of their vanished might.
 The Roman saw these tombs in his own age,
 These Sepulchres of Cities, which excite
 Sad wonder, and his yet surviving page
 The moral lesson bears, drawn from such pilgrimage. 405

46.

That page is now before me, and on mine
 His Country's ruin added to the mass
 Of perished States he mourned in their decline,
 And I in desolation: all that *was*
 Of then destruction *is*; and now, Alas! 410
 Rome – Rome imperial – bows her to the storm,
 In the same dust and blackness, and we pass
 The skeleton of her Titanic form,
 Wrecks of another World, whose ashes still are warm.⁸¹

79: H.'s diary for November 29th 1809, written at Patras, mentions the letter of Servius Sulpicius Rufus to Cicero, about the death of Cicero's daughter Tulla: Cicero, *Letters to Friends* (Loeb classical Library) II, 401, letter 248 (IV.5). The passage quoted is on p. 405.

80: H. read Conyers Middleton's biography of Cicero (1741) in Venice during the autumn of 1817.

81: Compare the pre-Adamite beings glimpsed in the second act of *Cain*.

47.

Yet, Italy! through every other land 415
Thy Wrongs should ring – and shall – from side to side;
Mother of Arts! as once of Arms! thy hand
Was then our Guardian, and is still our Guide;
Parent of our Religion! whom the wide
Nations have knelt to for the keys of Heaven! 420
Europe, repentant of her Parricide,
Shall yet redeem thee, and, all backward driven,
Roll the Barbarian tide, and sue to be forgiven.⁸²

48.

But Arno wins us to the fair white walls,
Where the Etrurian Athens⁸³ claims and keeps 425
A softer feeling for her fairy halls.
Girt by her theatre of hills, She reaps
Her corn, and wine, and oil, and Plenty leaps
To laughing life, with her redundant Horn.
Along the banks where smiling Arno sweeps 430
Was modern Luxury of Commerce born,
And buried Learning rose, redeemed to new Morn.



The Venus di Milo (line 433).

82: B. seems to anticipate the reconversion of Europe to Catholicism.

83: The Etrurian Athens is Florence. Compare the Southern Scott, and the Ariosto of the North.

49.

There, too, the Goddess loves in stone, and fills
The air around with Beauty – we inhale
The ambrosial aspect, which, beheld, instils 435
Part of its immortality; the veil
Of Heaven is half undrawn; within the pale
We stand, and in that form and face behold
What Mind can make, when Nature’s self would fail;
And to the fond Idolators of old 440
Envy the innate flash which such a Soul could mould:

50.

We gaze and turn away, and know not where,
Dazzled and drunk with Beauty, till the Heart
Reels with its fulness; there – for ever there –
Chained to the chariot of triumphal Art, 445
We stand as Captives, and would not depart.
Away! – there needs no words nor terms precise,
The paltry jargon of the marble Mart,
Where Pedantry gulls Folly – we have eyes: 449
Blood – pulse – and breast confirm the Dardan Shepherd’s prize.⁸⁴



Botticelli: Venus and Mars (line 454).

51.

Appearedst thou not to Paris in this guise?
Or to more deeply blest Anchises?⁸⁵ or,
In all thy perfect Goddessship, when lies
Before thee thy own vanquished Lord of War?⁸⁶
And gazing in thy face as toward a star, 455
Laid on thy lap, his eyes to thee upturn,
Feeding on thy sweet cheek! while thy lips are *
With Lava kisses melting while they burn,
Showered on his eyelids, brow, and mouth, as from an Urn.

* Οφθαλμούς ἐστιαν, “Atque oculos pascit uterque suos.” – Ovid, Lib. 2^d. *Amores*.⁸⁷

84: B. refers to the Judgement of Paris.

85: Aeneas was Venus’ son by Anchises.

86: Venus seduced Mars.

87: Ovid, *Amores*, II, ii, 6: “both feast our own eyes”. The Greek means roughly the same.

52.

Glowing, and circumfused in speechless love 460
Their full divinity inadequate
That feeling to express, or to improve,
The Gods become as mortals, and man's Fate
Has moments like their brightest; but the weight
Of earth recoils upon us – let it go! 465
We can recall such visions, and create,
From what has been, or might be, things which grow
Into thy Statue's form, and look like gods below.

53.

I leave to learned fingers and wise hands,⁸⁸
The Artist and his Ape, to teach and tell 470
How well his Connoisseurship understands
The graceful bend, and the voluptuous swell:
Let these describe the undescribable:
I would not their vile breath should crisp the stream
Wherein that Image shall for ever dwell;⁸⁹ 475
The unruffled mirror of the loveliest Dream
That ever left the sky on the deep Soul to beam.



Santa Croce (line 478).

88: B.'s sarcasm towards art-critics sorts ill with his reliance on Forsyth elsewhere.

89: Compare *TVOJ* 29, 8: *But let the Connoisseurs explain their merits.* –

54.

In Santa Croce's holy precincts lie *
 Ashes which make it holier, dust which is
 Even in itself an Immortality,⁹⁰ 480
 Though there were nothing save the past, and this,
 The particle of those Sublimities
 Which have relapsed to Chaos: here repose
 Angelo's, Alfieri's bones, and his,
 The starry Galileo, with his woes; 485
 Here Machiavelli's earth returned to whence it rose.⁹¹

* This name will recal the memory, not only of those whose tombs have raised the Santa Croce into the centre of pilgrimage, the Mecca of Italy, but of her⁹² whose eloquence was poured over the illustrious ashes, and whose voice is now as mute as those she sung. CORINNA is no more; and with her should expire the fear, the flattery, and the envy which threw too dazzling or too dark a cloud round the march of genius, and forbad the steady gaze of disinterested criticism. We have her picture embellished or distorted, as friendship or detraction has held the pencil: the impartial portrait was hardly to be expected from a cotemporary. The immediate voice of her survivors will, it is probable, be far from affording a just estimate of her singular capacity. The gallantry, the love of wonder, and the hope of associated fame, which blunted the edge of censure, must cease to exist. – The dead have no sex; they can surprise by no new miracles; they can confer no privilege: Corinna has ceased to be a woman – she is only an author: and it may be foreseen that many will repay themselves for former complaisance, by a severity to which the extravagance of previous praises may perhaps give the colour of truth. The latest posterity, for to the latest posterity they will assuredly descend, will have to pronounce upon her various productions; and the longer the vista through which they are seen, the more accurately minute will be the object, the more certain the justice, of the decision. She will enter into that existence in which the great writers of all ages and nations are, as it were, associated in a world of their own, and, from that superior sphere, shed their eternal influence for the controul and consolation of mankind. But the individual will gradually disappear as the author is more distinctly seen: some one, therefore, of all those whom the charms of involuntary wit, and of easy hospitality, attracted within the friendly circle of Coppet, should rescue from oblivion those virtues which, although they are said to love the shade, are, in fact, more frequently chilled than excited by the domestic cares of private life. Some one should be found to pourtray the unaffected graces with which she adorned those dearer relationships, the performance of whose duties is rather discovered amongst the interior secrets, than seen in the outward management, of family intercourse; and which, indeed, it requires the delicacy of genuine affection to qualify for the eye of an indifferent spectator. Some one should be found, not to celebrate, but to describe, the amiable mistress of an open mansion, the centre of society, ever varied, and always pleased, the creator of which, divested of the ambition and the arts of public rivalry, shone forth only to give fresh animation to those around her. The mother tenderly affectionate and tenderly beloved, the friend unboundedly generous, but still esteemed, the charitable patroness of all distress, cannot be forgotten by those whom she cherished, and protected, and fed. Her loss will be mourned the most where she was known the best; and, to the sorrows of very many friends and more dependants, may be offered the disinterested regret of a stranger, who, amidst the sublimer scenes of the Lemman lake, received his chief satisfaction from contemplating the engaging qualities of the incomparable Corinna.

90: B. is influenced here by Foscolo's *Dei Sepolchri*, about the sanctity of tombs; contrast his later stanzas on the tombs of Dante and Gaston de Foix at *Don Juan IV*, stanzas 102-5.

91: Buried in Santa Croce, Florence, are Michelangelo Buonarotti (1475-1564) sculptor, painter and poet; Vittorio Alfieri (1749-1803) dramatist; Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) astronomer; and Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) political thinker. B.'s reaction if told that the bones of Ugo Foscolo would, on the unification of Italy, also reside in Santa Croce, would be worth watching. Italy has not been ungrateful to all her great artists after their deaths.

92: B.'s friend Madame de Staël, who died on July 14th 1817. Like Cromwell, she is dragged into the poem (in a prose note) at some cost to consistency, for she is not buried in Santa Croce.

55.

These are four Minds, which, like the Elements,
Might furnish forth Creation – Italy!
Time, which hath wronged thee with ten thousand rents
Of thine imperial Garment, shall deny, 490
And hath denied, to every other Sky,
Spirits which soar from ruin: thy Decay
Is still impregnate with Divinity,
Which gilds it with revivifying ray;
Such as the great of yore, Canova is today.⁹³ 495

56.

But where repose the all Etruscan three –
Dante, and Petrarch, and, scarce less than they,
The Bard of Prose, creative Spirit!⁹⁴ he
Of the Hundred Tales of love⁹⁵ – where did they lay
Their bones, distinguished from our common clay 500
In death as life? Are they resolved to dust,
And have their country's marbles nought to say?
Could not her quarries furnish forth one bust?
Did they not to her breast their filial earth entrust?

57.

Ungrateful Florence! Dante sleeps afar, 505
Like Scipio,⁹⁶ buried by the upbraiding shore:
Thy factions, in their worse than civil war,
Proscribed the Bard⁹⁷ whose name forevermore
Their children's children would in vain adore
With the remorse of ages; and the crown 510
Which Petrarch's laureate brow supremely wore,
Upon a far and foreign soil had grown,
His Life, his Fame, his Grave, though rifled – not thine own.

58.

Boccaccio to his parent earth bequeathed
His dust – and lies it not her Great among, 515
With many a sweet and solemn requiem breathed
O'er him who formed the Tuscan's siren tongue?
That Music in itself, whose sounds are song,
The poetry of Speech? No; even his tomb
Uptorn,⁹⁸ must bear the hyæna bigots' wrong, 520
No more amidst the meaner dead find room,
Nor claim a passing sigh, because it told for *whom!*

93: Antonio Canova (1757-1822) sculptor; the one great Italian artist of B.'s day.

94: The "Bard of prose" is Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-75), buried at Certaldo. Like Dante, Tasso, Petrarch, and Scipio Africanus, he is for B. an emblem of ungrateful ostracism with whom to identify.

95: *The Decameron* (1358), narrative sourcebook for many later writers.

96: Scipio Africanus defeated Hannibal at Zama (204 BC). At his death, Rome ignored him.

97: Dante's exile and wandering were the consequence of political in-fighting in Florence.

98: The tomb of Boccaccio, a satirist against the church, was broken after his death.

59.

And Santa Croce wants their mighty dust;
Yet for this want more noted, as of yore
The Cæsar's pageant, shorn of Brutus' bust, 525
Did but of Rome's best Son remind her more:
Happier Ravenna! on thy hoary shore,
Fortress of falling Empire!⁹⁹ honoured sleeps
The immortal Exile; Arqua, too her store
Of tuneful relics proudly claims and keeps, 530
While Florence vainly begs her banished dead and weeps.

60.

What is her Pyramid of precious stones?
Of porphyry, jasper, agate, and all hues
Of gem and marble, to encrust the bones
Of merchant-dukes? the momentary dews 535
Which, sparkling to the twilight stars, infuse
Freshness in the green turf that wraps the dead,
Whose names are Mausoleums of the Muse,
Are gently prest with far more reverent tread
Than ever paced the slab which paves the princely head.

61.

There be more things to greet the heart and eyes 541
In Arno's dome of Art's most princely shrine,¹⁰⁰
Where Sculpture with her rainbow Sister¹⁰¹ vies;
There be more marvels yet – but not for mine;
For I have been accustomed to entwine 545
My thoughts with Nature rather in the fields,
Than Art in galleries;¹⁰² though a work divine
Calls for my Spirit's homage, yet it yields
Less than it feels, because the weapon which it wields

62.

Is of another temper, and I roam 550
By Thrasimene's lake,¹⁰³ in the defiles
Fatal to Roman rashness, more at home;
For there the Carthaginian's warlike wiles
Come back before me, as his skill beguiles
The host between the mountains and the shore, 555
Where Courage falls in her despairing files,
And torrents swoll'n to rivers with their gore,
Reek through the sultry plain, with legions scattered o'er,

99: Ravenna was the last capital of the Roman emperors.

100: B. perhaps refers to the Uffizi.

101: Her rainbow Sister is painting.

102: A sudden relapse into the Wordsworthianism of Canto III.

103: Where Hannibal defeated the Romans in 217 BC. See Marlowe, *Dr Faustus*, first line.

63.

Like to a forest felled by mountain winds;
And such the storm of battle on this day, 560
And such the frenzy, whose convulsion blinds
To all save Carnage, that, beneath the fray,
An Earthquake reeled unheededly away!
None felt stern Nature rocking at his feet,
And yawning forth a grave for those who lay 565
Upon their bucklers for a winding-sheet;
Such is the absorbing hate when warring nations meet!

64.

The Earth to them was as a rolling bark
Which bore them to Eternity; they saw
The Ocean round, but had not time to mark 570
The motions of their vessel; Nature's law,
In them suspended, recked not of the awe
Which reigns when mountains tremble, and the birds
Plunge in the clouds for refuge, and withdraw
From their down-toppling nests; and bellowing herds
Stumble o'er heaving plains – and Man's dread hath no words.



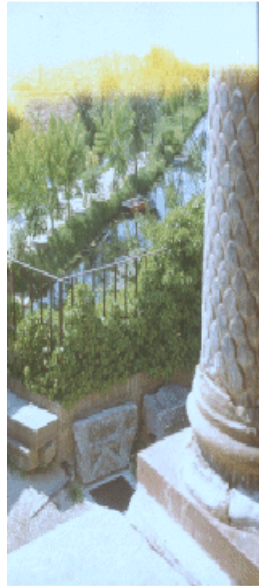
Lago di Trasimene (line 577).

65.

Far other scene is Thrasimene¹⁰⁴ now; 577
Her lake a sheet of silver, and her plain
Rent by no ravage save the gentle plough;
Her aged trees rise thick as once the slain 580
Lay where their roots are; but a brook hath ta'en –
A little rill of scanty stream and bed –
A name of blood from that day's sanguine rain;
And Sanguinetto¹⁰⁵ tells ye where the dead 584
Made the earth wet, and turned the unwilling waters red.

104: B. sounds the name – correctly – as quadrisyllabic.

105: Sanguinetto (“bloodied”) is the stream passing over the site of Thrasymene.



Clitumnus (line 586).

66.

But Thou, Clitumnus! in thy sweetest wave *
Of the most living Chrystal that was e'er
The Haunt of river-nymph, to gaze and lave
Her limbs where nothing hid them, thou dost rear
Thy grassy banks whereon the milk-white steer 590
Grazes – the purest God of gentle waters!
And most Serene of aspect, and most clear;
Surely that stream was unprofaned by slaughters,
A Mirror and a bath for Beauty's youngest daughters!

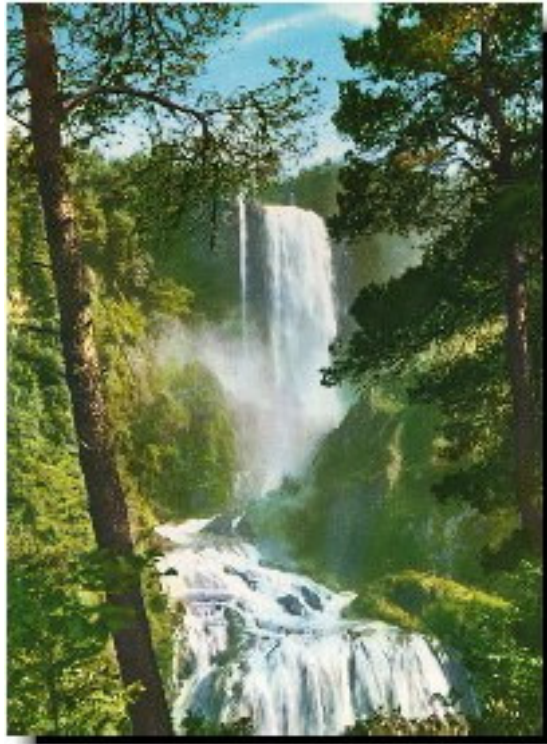
* In my Gratitude to the Clitumnus I ought not to forget the largest and very best trout that ever were seen in a river or a dish; I twice visited the temple and the stream – on my return and on my journey to Rome; but the whole tract of Country from Perugia to Foligno as far as Terni is perhaps the most beautiful in Italy.

67.

And on thy happy shore a Temple still, 595
Of small and delicate proportion, keeps,
Upon a mild declivity of hill,
Its memory of thee; beneath it sweeps
Thy Current's calmness; oft from out it leaps
The finny darter with the glittering scales, 600
Who dwells and revels in thy glassy deeps;
While, chance, some scattered Water-lily sails
Down were the shallower wave still tells its bubbling tales.

68.

Pass not unblest the Genius of the place!
If through the air a Zephyr more serene 605
Win to the brow, 'tis his; and if ye trace
Along his margin a more eloquent green,
If on the heart the Freshness of the Scene
Sprinkle its coolness, and from the dry dust
Of weary life a moment lave it clean 610
With Nature's Baptism – 'tis to him ye must
Pay orisons for this suspension of disgust.



The Falls of Terni (Cascata del Marmore – line 613).

69.

The Roar of Waters! – from the headlong height
Velino cleaves the wave-worn precipice;
The fall of Waters! rapid as the light 615
The flashing Mass foams shaking the Abyss;
The Hell of Waters! where they howl and hiss,
And boil in endless torture; while the sweat
Of their great agony, wrung out from this
Their Phlegethon,¹⁰⁶ curls round the rocks of jet 620
That guard the gulph around, in pitiless horror set,

106: Phlegethon was a river of the underworld, reserved for perpetrators of acts of violence. See the description of cognac at *Don Juan* IV, 53, 2: *Sweet Naiad of the Phlegethonic rill!*

70.

And mounts in spray the skies, and thence again
Returns in an unceasing shower, which round,
With its unemptied cloud of gentle rain,
Is an Eternal April to the ground, 625
Making it all one Emerald – how profound
The Gulph! and how the Giant Element
From rock to rock leaps with delirious bound,
Crushing the cliffs, which, downward worn and rent
With his fierce footsteps, yields in chasms a fearful vent

71.

To the broad Column which rolls on, and shows 631
More like the fountain of an infant sea
Torn from the womb of Mountains by the throes
Of a new World, than only thus to be
Parent of Rivers, which glow gushingly, 635
With many windings, through the vale – Look back!
Lo! where it comes like an Eternity,
As if to sweep down all things in its track,
Charming the eye with dread – a matchless Cataract, *

* I saw the “Cascata del Marmore” of Terni twice, at different periods, once from the summit of the precipice, and again from the valley below. The lower view is far to be preferred, if the traveller has time for one only; but in any point of view, either from above or below, it is worth all the Cascades and Torrents of Switzerland put together; the Staubbach, Reichenbach, Pisse Vache, fall of Arpenarz, &c., are rills in comparative appearance. Of the fall of Schaffhausen I cannot speak, not yet having seen it.

72.

Horribly beautiful! but on the verge, 640
From side to side, beneath the glittering morn,
An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge, *
Like Hope upon a death-bed, and, unworn
Its steady dyes, while all around is torn
By the distracted waters, bears serene 645
Its brilliant hues with all their beams unshorn:
Resembling, 'mid the torture of the scene,
Love watching Madness with unalterable mien.

* Of the time place and qualities of this kind of Iris – the reader will see a short account in a note to *Manfred*.¹⁰⁷

107: B. refers to *Manfred*, II, ii, 2, prose note.

73.

Once more upon the woody Apennine!
 The infant Alps, which – had I not before 650
 Gazed on their mightier Parents, where the Pine
 Sits on more shaggy summits, and where roar
 The thundering Lauwine¹⁰⁸ – might be worshipped more; *
 But I have seen the soaring Jungfrau rear
 Her never-trodden snow, and seen the hoar 655
 Glaciers of bleak Mont Blanc both far and near,
 And in Chimari¹⁰⁹ heard the Thunder-hills of Fear,

* Lauwine – In the greater part of Switzerland – the Avalanches are known by the name of “Lauwine.”

74.

Th’ Acroceraunian mountains¹¹⁰ of old name;
 And on Parnassus seen the Eagles fly
 Like Spirits of the spot, as ’twere for fame, 660
 For still they soared unutterably high:¹¹¹
 I’ve looked on Ida with a Trojan’s eye;¹¹²
 Athos¹¹³ – Olympus¹¹⁴ – Ætna¹¹⁵ – Atlas¹¹⁶ – made
 These hills seem things of lesser dignity,
 All, save the lone Soracte’s height,¹¹⁷ displayed 665
 Not *now* in snow, which asks the lyric Roman’s aid

108: An avalanche. See above, line 106n.

109: By Chimari B. means Chimaera (see CHP II 453 and note, which describes it as volcanic).

110: The word Acroceraunian occurs in John Lempriere’s Classical Dictionary: “Acroceraunium, a promontory of Epirus, with mountains called Acroceraunia, which project between the Ionian and Adriatic seas. The word comes from *ακρο*, *high*, and *κεραυνο*, *thunder*; because, on account of their great height, they were often struck with thunder. *Lucret.* 6, v. 420. – *Plin.* 4, c. 1. – *Virg. Æn.* 3, v. 506. – *Strab.* 6. – *Horat.* I, od. 3, v. 520.” Lempriere’s location allows much latitude for guesswork. Hobhouse (*Journey*, I, 84) seems to locate the mountains to the north-west of Zitza.

111: H.’s diary records no eagles over Parnassus; B. later says that H. said they were vultures (BLJ IX 41). They may be as mythical as the Acroceraunian thunder-hills.

112: Mount Ida overlooks Troy. B. spent made several expeditions over the Trojan plain in 1810.

113: I don’t know when B. saw Mount Athos. He never went that far north. See below, deleted stanza 135a.

114: I don’t know when B. saw Mount Olympus either.

115: B. may have seen Mount Etna – but not until 1823. See below, deleted stanza 135a.

116: B. never got closer to the Atlas Mountains (in Morocco) than Gibraltar.

117: Soracte is a mountain north of Rome.

75.

For our remembrance, and from out the plain
 Heaves like a long-swept wave about to break,
 And on the curl hangs pausing: not in vain
 May he, who will, his recollections rake, 670
 And quote in Classic raptures, and awake
 The hills with Latian echoes; I abhorred
 Too much, to conquer for the Poet's sake,
 The drilled dull lesson, forced down word by word *
 In my repugnant youth, with pleasure to record 675

* These stanzas may probably remind the reader of *Ensign Northerton's* remarks: "D—n Homo, I carry the marks" &c.¹¹⁸ but the reasons for our dislike are not exactly the same. I wish to express that we become tired of the task before we can comprehend the beauty – that we learn by rote before we can get by heart; that the freshness is worn away, and the future pleasure and advantage deadened and destroyed, by the didactic anticipation, at an age when we can neither feel nor understand the power of compositions which it requires an acquaintance with life, as well as Latin and Greek, to relish, or to reason upon. For the same reason we can never be aware of the fulness of some of the finest passages in Shakespeare ("To be or not to be," for instance), from the habit of having them hammered into us at eight years old, as an exercise, not of mind but of memory: so that when we are old enough to enjoy them, the taste is gone, and the appetite palled. In some parts of the Continent, young persons are taught from more common authors, and do not read the best classics till their maturity. I certainly do not speak upon this point from any pique or aversion towards the place of my education. I was not a slow, though an idle boy; and I believe no one could, or can be more attached to Harrow than I have always been, and with reason; – a part of the time passed there was the happiest of my life; and my preceptor (the Rev. Dr. Joseph Drury), was the best and worthiest friend I ever possessed, whose warnings I have remembered but too well, though too late – when I have erred, and whose counsels I have but followed when I have done well or wisely. If ever this imperfect record of my feelings towards him should reach his eyes, let it remind him of one who never thinks of him but with gratitude and veneration – of one who would more gladly boast of having been his pupil, if, by more closely following his injunctions, he could reflect any honour upon his instructor.

118: *Tom Jones*, VII, 12: "D—n *Homo* with all my heart," says Northerton, "I have the marks of him on my a— yet. There's Thomas of our regiment, always carries a *Homo* in his pocket; d—n me if ever I come at it, if I don't burn it. And there's Corderius, another d—n'd son of a whore that got me many a flogging."

76.

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

77.

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

78.

Oh Rome! my Country! City of the Soul!
 The Orphans of the Heart must turn to thee, 695
 Lone Mother of dead Empires! and controul
 In their shut breasts their petty misery.
 What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
 The Cypress, Hear the Owl, and plod your way
 O'er steps of broken thrones and temples – Ye! 700
 Whose agonies are evils of a day –
 A World is at our feet as fragile as our Clay.

79.

The Niobe of Nations!¹²⁰ there She stands,
 Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;
 An empty Urn within her withered hands, 705
 Whose holy dust was scattered long ago;
 The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;¹²¹
 The very Sepulchres lie tenantless
 Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,
 Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness? 710
 Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress.

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

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

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

80.

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

81.

The double Night of Ages, and of her,
Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt and wrap
All round us; we but feel our way to err:
The Ocean hath his chart, and Stars their map,
And Knowledge spreads them on her ample lap; 725
But Rome is as the desert, where we steer
Stumbling o'er recollections; now we clap
Our hands, and cry "Eureka!" it is clear –
When but some false Mirage of ruin rises near.

82.

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

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

83.

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

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

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

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

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

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

84.

The Dictatorial wreath – couldst thou divine
To what would one day dwindle that which made
Thee more than mortal? and that so supine 750
By aught than Romans Rome should thus be laid?
She who was named Eternal, and arrayed
Her warriors but to conquer – She who veiled
Earth with her haughty shadow, and displayed,
Until the o'er-canopied Horizon failed, 755
Her rushing Wings – Oh! She who was Almighty hailed!



Cromwell (line 758).

85.

Sylla was first of Victors; but our own,
The Sagest of Usurpers, Cromwell! – he
Too swept off Senates while he hewed the throne
Down to a block – Immortal rebel! See 760
What crimes it costs to be a moment free,
And famous through all ages! but beneath
His fate the Moral lurks of destiny;
His day of double Victory and death
Beheld him win two realms,¹²⁷ and, happier, yield his breath.

86.

The third of the same Moon whose former Course 766
Had all but crowned him, on the selfsame day
Deposed him gently from his throne of force,
And laid him with the Earth's preceding Clay. *
And showed not Fortune thus how Fame and Sway, 770
And all we deem delightful, and consume
Our Souls to compass through each arduous way,
Are in her eyes less happy than the tomb?
Were they but so in Man's, how different were his doom!

* On the third of September Cromwell gained the victory of Dunbar; a year afterwards he obtained his "crowning mercy" of Worcester; and a few years after, on the same day, which he had ever esteemed the most fortunate for him, died.

127: Scotland and Ireland, both subdued by Cromwell.



Cnaius Pompeius Magnus (line 775).

87.

And thou, dread Statue! yet existent in 775
The austerest form of naked Majesty,
Thou who beheldest, 'mid the Assassins' din,
At thy bathed base the bloody Cæsar lie,¹²⁸
Folding his robe in dying dignity,
An offering to thine Altar from the Queen 780
Of Gods and Men, great Nemesis!¹²⁹ did he die,
And thou, too, perish, Pompey? have ye been
Victors of countless kings, or puppets of a Scene?

88.

And Thou, the thunder-stricken Nurse of Rome!
She-Wolf! whose brazen-imaged dugs impart 785
The milk of Conquest yet within the dome
Where, as a Monument of antique Art,
Thou standest – Mother of the mighty heart!
Which the great founder sucked from thy wild teat,
Scorched by the Roman Jove's ethereal dart, 790
And thy limbs black with lightning – dost thou yet
Guard thine immortal cubs, nor thy fond charge forget?

128: See *Julius Caesar*, III, ii, 188-9: *Even at the base of Pompey's statua, / Which all the while ran blood, great Caesar fell.*

129: In the margin of the proof, Gifford writes, "Recollect you have Nemesis again." B. replies, "I know it – and if I had her ten times would not alter once – she is my particular belief and acquaintance – and I wont blaspheme against her for any body." In fact this the first mention of the goddess in the poem. She turns up again at 1181.



Romulus and Remus suckled by the She-wolf (lines 784-6).

89.

Thou dost – but all thy foster-babes are dead –
 The men of Iron – and the World hath reared
 Cities from out their sepulchres: Men bled 795
 In imitation of the things they feared,
 And fought and conquered, and the same course steered,
 At apish distance; but as yet none have,
 Nor could the same Supremacy have neared,
 Save one vain Man,¹³⁰ who is not in the Grave, 800
 But, vanquished by himself, to his own slaves a Slave –



Napoleon crossing the Alps.



Napoleon a bit later on in life, and a long way from the Alps.

130: Napoleon, still alive on St. Helena in 1817; but he was scarcely "vanquished by himself" (801) except in the broadest sense possible.

90.

The fool of false dominion – and a kind
Of bastard Cæsar, following him of old
With steps unequal; for the Roman's Mind
Was modelled in a less terrestrial mould, 805
With passions fiercer, yet a judgement cold,
And an immortal instinct which redeemed
The frailties of a heart so soft, yet bold,
Alcides¹³¹ with the distaff now he seemed
At Cleopatra's feet – and now Himself he beamed, 810

91.

And came – and saw – and conquered!¹³² But the Man
Who would have tamed his Eagles down to flee,
Like a trained Falcon, in the Gallic van,
Which he, in sooth, long led to Victory
With a deaf heart, which never seemed to be 815
A listener to itself, was strangely framed;
With but one weakest weakness – Vanity –
Coquettish in Ambition, still he aimed –
At what? can he avouch, or answer what he claimed?

131: Alcides is Hercules.

132: Julius Caesar's famous boast, "Veni, vidi, vici" ("I came, I saw, I conquered").

92.

And would be All or Nothing – nor could wait 820
For the sure Grave to level him; few years
Had fixed him with the Cæsars in his fate,
On whom we tread; for *this* the Conqueror rears
The Arch of Triumph! and for this the tears
And blood of Earth flow on as they have flowed, 825
An Universal Deluge, which appears
Without an Ark for wretched Man's abode,
And ebbs but to reflow! Renew thy rainbow, God!¹³³

93.

What from this barren being do we reap?
Our senses narrow, and our reason frail, 830
Life short, and truth a gem which loves the Deep,
And all things weighed in Custom's falsest scale;
Opinion an Omnipotence, whose veil
Mantles the Earth with darkness, until Right
And Wrong are accidents, and Men grow pale 835
Lest their own Judgements should become too bright,
And their free thoughts be crimes, and Earth have too much light.

94.

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,
Rotting from Sire to Son, and age to age,
Proud of their trampled Nature, and so die, 840
Bequeathing their hereditary rage
To the new race of inborn slaves, who wage
War for their chains, and rather than be free,
Bleed Gladiator-like, and still engage
Within the same Arena where they see 845
Their fellows fall before, like Leaves of the same Tree.

95.

I speak not of Men's creeds – they rest between
Man and his Maker – but of things allowed,
Averred, and known, and daily, hourly seen –
The Yoke that is upon us doubly bowed, 850
And the Intent of Tyranny avowed,
The Edict of Earth's Rulers, who are grown
The Apes of him who humbled once the proud,
And shook them from their slumbers on the Throne:
Too Glorious, were this all his mighty arm had done. 855

133: For the later Byron on rainbows, see *Don Juan* II, stanzas 91-3.

96.

Can Tyrants but by Tyrants conquered be,
And Freedom find no Champion and no Child
Such as Columbia saw arise when She
Sprung forth a Pallas, armed and undefiled?¹³⁴
Or must such Minds be nourished in the Wild, 860
Deep in the unpruned Forest, 'midst the roar
Of Cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled
On infant Washington? Has Earth no more
Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore?

97.

But France got drunk with Blood to vomit Crime, 865
And fatal have her Saturnalia been
To Freedom's cause, in every age and clime;
Because the deadly days which we have seen,
And vile Ambition, that built up between
Man and his hopes an Adamantine wall, 870
And the base pageant last upon the Scene,
Are grown the pretext for the eternal Thrall
Which nips Life's tree, and dooms Man's worst – his second fall.¹³⁵

98.

Yet, Freedom! yet thy Banner, torn, but flying,
Streams like the Thunder-storm *against* the Wind; 875
Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,
The loudest still the Tempest leaves behind;
Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,
Chopped by the axe, looks rough and little worth,
But the Sap lasts – and still the seeds we find 880
Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;
So shall a better Spring less bitter fruit bring forth.

99.

There is a stern round tower of other days,
Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone,
Such as an Army's baffled strength delays, 885
Standing with half its battlements alone,
And with two thousand years of Ivy grown,
The Garland of Eternity, where wave
The green leaves over all by Time o'erthrown –
Where was this tower of strength? within its cave 890
What treasure lay, so locked, so hid? – A Woman's grave.

134: An idealised description of George Washington.

135: An important idea for B. *Cain* is a depiction of how man sins without the Devil's prompting; and see the words of Sathan at *TVOJ*, 41, 5-8: "... *Hell has nothing better left to do / Than leave them to themselves, so much more mad / And evil by their own internal curse – / Heaven cannot make them better – nor I worse.*"



The tomb of Cecilia Metella (line 893).

100.

But who was She, the Lady of the dead,
 Tombed in a palace?¹³⁶ Was She chaste and fair?
 Worthy a King's, or more – a Roman's bed?
 What race of Chiefs and Heroes did She bear? 895
 What daughter of her beauties was the heir?
 How lived, how loved, how died She? Was She not
 So honoured – and conspicuously there,
 Where meaner relics must not dare to rot,
 Placed to commemorate a more than mortal lot? 900

101.

Was She as those who love their Lords? or they
 Who love the lords of others? such have been
 Even in the olden time, Rome's Annals say.
 Was She a Matron of Cornelia's¹³⁷ mien,
 Or the light air of Egypt's graceful Queen, 905
 Profuse of joy – or 'gainst it did She war
 Inveterate in virtue? Did She lean
 To the soft side of the heart, or wisely bar
 Love from amongst her griefs? – for such the affections are.

136: Cecilia Metella was a matron of the first century BC about whom nothing is known.

137: Cornelia was the daughter of Scipio Africanus and mother to the Gracchi. A model Roman matron. Asked to show her jewels, she introduced her sons.

102.

Perchance She died in youth: it may be, bowed 910
With woes far heavier than the ponderous tomb
That weighed upon her gentle dust,¹³⁸ a cloud
Might gather o'er her beauty, and a Gloom
In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom
Heaven gives its favourites – early death; yet shed * 915
A Sunset charm around her, and illumine
With hectic light, the Hesperus¹³⁹ of the dead,
Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-like red.

* “Whom the Gods love die soon” I think is in Herodotus.

103.

Perchance She died in age – surviving all,
Charms – kindred – children – with the silver gray 920
On her long tresses, which might yet recall,
It may be, still a something of the day
When they were braided, and her proud array
And lovely form were envied, praised, and eyed
By Rome – but whither would Conjecture stray? 925
Thus much alone we know – Metella died,
The wealthiest Roman's wife: Behold his love or pride! *

* There were many of the name but of the Cecilia Metella – the wife of Crassus – I can find nor hear nothing – except the monument above alluded to – and her now empty sarcophagus in the court of a modern Roman palace.

104.

I know not why – but standing thus by thee
It seems as if I had thine inmate known,
Thou Tomb! and other days come back on me 930
With recollected Music, though the tone
Is changed and solemn, like the cloudy groan
Of dying Thunder on the distant wind;
Yet could I set me by this ivied stone
Till I had bodied forth the heated Mind, 935
Forms from the floating wreck which Ruin leaves behind;

105.

And from the planks, far shattered o'er the rocks,
Built me a little bark of hope,¹⁴⁰ once more
To battle with the Ocean and the shocks
Of the loud breakers, and the ceaseless roar 940
Which rushes on the solitary shore
Where all lies foundered that was ever dear:
But could I gather from the wave-worn store
Enough for my rude boat, where should I steer?
There woos no home, nor hope, nor life, save what is here.¹⁴¹

138: The tomb was enlarged and fortified in the fourteenth century. It was used as a toll-booth.

139: Hesperus is the Evening Star. See *Don Juan* III, stanzas 107-8.

140: Wordsworth in *Peter Bell* and Shelley in *Alastor* both speak of a little boat: see *Don Juan* III, 98, 6-8: *he makes / Another outcry for "a little boat," / And drives Seas to set it well afloat.*

141: It seems to be B., not Harold, who speaks. Harold is by now forgotten.

106.

Then let the Winds howl on¹⁴² –their harmony 946
Shall henceforth be my music, and the Night
The sound shall temper with the Owlets' cry,
As I now hear them, in the fading light
Dim o'er the bird of darkness' native site, 950
Answering each other on the Palatine,
With their large eyes, all glistening gray and bright,
And sailing pinions. Upon such a shrine
What are our petty griefs? – let me not number mine.

107.

Cypress and Ivy, weed and wallflower grown, 955
Matted and massed together – hillocks heaped
On what were chambers – Arch crushed, Column strown
In fragments – choked up vaults, and frescos steeped
In subterranean damps, where the Owl peeped,
Deeming it Midnight: – temples – baths – or halls? 960
Pronounce who can; for all that Learning reaped
From her research hath been, that these are walls –
Behold the Imperial Mount! 'tis thus the Mighty falls. *

* The Palatine is one mass of ruins, particularly on the side toward the Circus Maximus. The soil is formed of crumbled brickwork. Nothing has been told, nothing can be told, to satisfy the belief of any but a Roman antiquary.

108.

There is the Moral of all human tales;
'Tis but the same rehearsal of the past, 965
First Freedom, and then Glory – when that fails,
Wealth – Vice – Corruption – Barbarism at last.
And History, with all her volumes vast,
Hath but *one* page, – 'tis better written here,
Where gorgeous Tyranny hath thus amassed 970
All treasures, all delights, that Eye or Ear,
Heart, Soul, could seek, tongue ask – Away with words!¹⁴³ Draw
near,

142: See Ancient Pistol at *Henry V*, II, i, 90: *Let floods o'erswell, and fiends for food howl on!*

143: See Bottom at *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, IV i, last speech: *The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report ...* B. seems to dare us to see the parallel.

109.

Admire – Exult – despise – laugh – weep – for here
There is such matter for all feeling – Man!
Thou Pendulum betwixt a smile and tear, 975
Ages and realms are crowded in this span,
This mountain, whose obliterated plan
The Pyramid of Empires pinnacled,
Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van
Till the Sun's rays with added flame were filled! 980
Where are its golden Roofs?¹⁴⁴ where those who dared to build?



The column of the Emperor Phocas (line 983).

110.

Tully was not so eloquent as thou,
Thou nameless Column with the buried base!
What are the laurels of the Cæsar's brow?
Crown me with Ivy from his dwelling-place! 985
Whose Arch or pillar meets me in the face,
Titus or Trajan's? No – 'tis that of Time:¹⁴⁵
Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth displace
Soffing; and apostolic Statues climb
To crush the imperial Urn, whose ashes slept sublime, 990

144: Refers to the Domus Aurea of the emperor Nero.

145: The column to the seventh-century emperor Phocas had been identified by 1817.



Trajan's column (stanza 111).

111.

Buried in air, the deep blue sky of Rome, *
 And looking to the Stars; they had contained
 A Spirit which with thee would find a home,
 The last of those who o'er the whole earth reigned,
 The Roman Globe, for after none sustained, 995
 But yielded back his conquests – he was more
 Than a mere Alexander, and unstained
 With household blood and wine, serenely wore
 His sovereign virtues – still we Trajan's name adore.¹⁴⁶

* The ashes and Urn of Trajan were deposited on the summit of his column – now occupied by a Statue of St. Peter.

112.

Where is the rock of Triumph, the high place 1000
 Where Rome embraced her heroes? where the steep
 Tarpeian? fittest goal of Treason's race,
 The Promontory whence the Traitor's Leap
 Cured all ambition. Did the Conquerors heap
 Their spoils here? Yes; and in yon field below, 1005
 A thousand Years of silenced faction sleep –
 The Forum, where the immortal accents glow,
 And still the eloquent air breathes – burns with Cicero!

146: See Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Chapter 1, opening paragraph: *During a happy period (A.D. 98-180) of more than fourscore years. The public administration was conducted by the virtue and abilities of Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines.*

113.

The field of freedom – faction – fame – and blood:
Here a proud people's passions were exhaled, 1010
From the first hour of Empire in the bud
To that when further worlds to conquer failed;
But long before had Freedom's face been veiled,
And Anarchy assumed her attributes;
Till every lawless soldier who assailed 1015
Trode on the trembling Senate's slavish mutes,
Or raised the venal voice of baser prostitutes.

114.

Then turn we to her latest Tribune's name,
From her ten thousand tyrants turn to thee,
Redeemer of dark Centuries of Shame – 1020
The friend of Petrarch – Hope of Italy –
Rienzi! last of Romans!¹⁴⁷ While the tree
Of Freedom's withered trunk puts forth a leaf
Even for thy tomb a Garland let it be –
The Forum's Champion, and the people's Chief – 1025
Her new-born Numa¹⁴⁸ thou – with reign, alas! too brief.¹⁴⁹

115.

Egeria!¹⁵⁰ sweet Creation of some heart
Which found no mortal resting-place so fair
As thine ideal breast; whate'er thou art
Or wert – a young Aurora of the air, 1030
The Nympholepsy of some fond despair –
Or – it might be – a Beauty of the earth,
Who found a more than common Votary there
Too much adoring; whatsoe'er thy birth, 1034
Thou wert a beautiful Thought, and softly bodied forth.

147: B. would have read about Cola di Rienzi (c. 1313-1354), Roman republican, in Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Chapter 70.

148: Numa Pompilius, benign king of legendary Rome.

149: Rienzi was murdered by a Roman mob.

150: Egeria was a Roman water-nymph, associated with Diana and friend to the Roman king Numa Pompilius (see *Don Juan* I, 35, 7).



The Ninfeo d'Egeria (line 1027).

116.

The Mosses of thy Fountain still are sprinkled
 With thine Elysian water-drops;¹⁵¹ the face
 Of thy cave-guarded Spring with years unwrinkled,
 Reflects the meek-eyed Genius of the place,
 Whose green, wild margin now no more erase 1040
 Art's works; nor must the delicate waters sleep,
 Prisoned in marble – bubbling from the base
 Of the cleft Statue, with a gentle leap
 The Rill runs o'er – and round – fern, flowers, and ivy creep,

117.

Fantastically tangled: the green hills 1045
 Are clothed with early blossoms – through the grass
 The quick-eyed Lizard rustles – and the bills
 Of summer-birds sing welcome as ye pass;
 Flowers fresh in hue, and many in their class,
 Implore the pausing step, and with their dyes, 1050
 Dance in the soft breeze in a fairy mass;
 The sweetness of the Violet's deep blue eyes,
 Kissed by the breath of Heaven, seems coloured by its skies.

151: Compare *Forsyth*, Remarks, 139: “We descended to the valley of Egeria, and the grotto, or rather nymphæum: but instead of the marble magnificence which offended Juvenal here, we found the vault fallen in, the walls mantled with maiden-hair, the statue which passes for the nymph mutilated, the muses removed from their niches, and the fountain itself a mere trough. Its water, however, was delicious, and, finding a large split reed placed over the drip, I used it as a conduit. Sæpe sed exiguis haustibus inde bibi.” He quotes Ovid, *Fasti*, III, 374, about the need to drink from Egeria's fountain in small drips.

118.

Here didst thou dwell, in this enchanted cover,
Egeria! thy all heavenly bosom beating 1055
For the far footsteps of thy mortal lover;
The purple Midnight veiled that mystic meeting
With her most starry canopy, and seating
Thyself by thine adorer, what befell?
This cave was surely shaped out for the greeting 1060
Of an enamoured Goddess, and the cell
Haunted by holy Love – the earliest Oracle!

119.

And didst thou not, thy breast to his replying,
Blend a celestial with a human heart;
And Love, which dies as it was born, in sighing, 1065
Share with immortal transports? could thine art
Make them indeed immortal, and impart
The purity of Heaven to earthly joys,
Expel the venom and not blunt the dart –
The dull satiety which all destroys – 1070
And root from out the Soul the deadly weed which cloy?

120.

Alas! our young Affections run to waste,
Or water but the Desart! whence arise
But weeds of dark luxuriance, tares of haste,
Rank at the core, though tempting to the eyes, 1075
Flowers whose wild odours breathe but agonies,
And trees whose gums are poisons; such the plants
Which spring beneath her steps as Passion flies
O'er the World's wilderness, and vainly pants
For some celestial fruit forbidden to our wants. 1080

121.

Oh, Love! no habitant of Earth thou art –
An unseen Seraph, we believe in thee –
A Faith whose Martyrs are the broken Heart –
But never yet hath seen, nor e'er shall see
The naked eye, thy form, as it should be; 1085
The Mind hath made thee, as it peopled Heaven,
Even with its own desiring Phantasy,
And to a thought such shape and image given,
As haunts the unquenched Soul – parched – wearied – wrung – and
riven.

122.

Of its own beauty is the Mind diseased, 1090
And fevers into false creation: – where,
Where are the forms the Sculptor's Soul hath seized?
In him alone. Can Nature show so fair?
Where are the charms and virtues which we dare
Conceive in boyhood and pursue as Men, 1095
The unreached Paradise of our despair,
Which o'er-informs the pencil and the pen,
And overpowers the page where it would bloom again?

123.

Who loves, raves – 'tis Youth's phrenzy – but the cure
Is bitterer still, as charm by charm unwinds 1100
Which robed our Idols, and we see too sure
Nor Worth nor Beauty dwells from out the Mind's
Ideal shape of such; yet still it binds
The fatal spell, and still it draws us on,
Reaping the whirlwind from the oft-sown winds; 1105
The stubborn heart, its Alchemy begun,
Seems ever near the prize – wealthiest when most undone.

124.

We wither from our Youth, we gasp away –
Sick – sick;¹⁵² unfound the boon, unslaked the thirst,
Though to the last, in verge of our decay, 1010
Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first –
But all too late, – so are we doubly curst.
Love, fame, ambition, avarice – 'tis the same,
Each idle – and all ill – and none the worst –
For we all are meteors with a different name, 1115
And Death the sable Smoke where vanishes the flame.

125.

Few – none – find what they love or could have loved,
Though accident, blind Contact, and the strong
Necessity of loving, have removed
Antipathies – but to recur, ere long, 1120
Envenomed with irrevocable wrong;
And Circumstance, that unspiritual God
And Miscreator, makes and helps along
Our coming evils with a crutch-like rod,
Whose touch turns Hope to dust – the dust we all have trod.

126.

Our life is a false Nature – 'tis not in 1126
The harmony of things – this hard decree,
This uneradicable taint of Sin,
This boundless Upas,¹⁵³ this all-blasting tree,
Whose root is Earth – whose leaves and branches be 1130
The skies which rain their plagues on men like dew –
Disease, death, bondage – all the woes we see,
And worse, the woes we see not – which throb through
The immedicable¹⁵⁴ Soul, with heart-aches ever new.

152: Compare *King Lear*, V, iii, 96.

153: The Upas was a legendary Javanese tree which poisoned all life for miles around it.

154: B. re-uses this strange word at 1498 below.

127.

Yet let us ponder boldly – 'tis a base 1135
Abandonment of Reason to resign
Our right of Thought – our last and only place
Of Refuge; this, at least, shall still be mine:
Though from our birth the Faculty divine
Is chained and tortured – cabined, cribbed, confined,¹⁵⁵
And bred in darkness, lest the Truth should shine 1141
Too brightly on the unprepared Mind,
The Beam pours in, for Time and Skill will couch the blind.

128.

Arches on Arches! as it were that Rome,
Collecting the chief trophies of her line, 1145
Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,
Her Coliseum stands; the Moonbeams shine
As 'twere its natural torches – for divine
Should be the light which streams here, to illumine
This long-explored but still exhaustless Mine 1150
Of Contemplation; and the azure Gloom
Of an Italian night, where the deep Skies assume

129.

Hues which have words, and speak to ye of Heaven,
Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,
And shadows forth its glory: there is given 1155
Unto the things of earth, which Time hath bent,
A Spirit's feeling, and where he hath leant
His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a power
And Magic in the ruined battlement,
For which the Palace of the present hour 1160
Must yield its pomp, and wait till Ages are its dower.

130.

Oh Time!¹⁵⁶ the Beautifier of the dead,
Adorner of the Ruin – Comforter
And only Healer when the heart hath bled;
Time! the Corrector where our Judgements err, 1165
The test of truth, love, – sole Philosopher,
For all beside are Sophists – from thy thrift,
Which never loses though it doth defer –
Time! the Avenger! unto thee I lift
My hands, and eyes, and heart, and crave of thee a gift!

155: *Macbeth*, III, iv, 24. B. re-uses the quotation (with quotation marks) at *Don Juan* IV, 75, 1, to describe Juan's emotions on the slave-ship.

156: Compare *Twelfth Night*, II, ii, 38.

131.

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

132.

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

133.

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

134.

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

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

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

135.

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

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

135a.

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

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

136.

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

137.

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

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

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

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

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

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

138.

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



The Colosseum (the bloody Circus – line 1247).

139.

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

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



The "Dying Gladiator" (line 1252).

140.

I see before me the Gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand – his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers Agony,
And his drooped head sinks gradually low – 1255
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
The Arena swims around him – he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman Shout which hailed the wretch who won.

141.

He heard it, but he heeded not – his eyes 1261
 Were with his heart, and that was far away;
 He recked not of the life he lost, nor prize,
 But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There where his young Barbarians all at play, 1265
There was their Dacian mother – he, their sire,
 Butchered to make a Roman holiday * –
 All this rushed with his blood – Shall he expire
 And unavenged? Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!¹⁶⁵ 1269

* Gladiators were of two kinds, compelled and voluntary; and were supplied from several conditions; from slaves sold for that purpose; from culprits; from barbarian captives either taken in war, and, after being led in triumph, set apart for the games, or those seized and condemned as rebels; also from free citizens, some fighting for hire (*auctorati*), others from a depraved ambition: at last even knights and senators were exhibited, a disgrace of which the first tyrant was naturally the first inventor. In the end, dwarfs, and even women, fought; an enormity prohibited by Severus. Of these the most to be pitied undoubtedly were the barbarian captives; and to this species a Christian writer justly applies the epithet “innocent,” to distinguish them from the professional gladiators. Aurelian and Claudius supplied great numbers of these unfortunate victims; the one after his triumph, and the other on the pretext of a rebellion. No war, says Lipsius, was ever so destructive to the human race as these sports. In spite of the laws of Constantine and Constans, gladiatorial shows survived the old established religion more than seventy years; but they owed their final extinction to the courage of a Christian. In the year 404, on the kalends of January, they were exhibiting the shows in the Flavian amphitheatre before the usual immense concourse of people. Almachius or Telemachus, an eastern monk, who had travelled to Rome intent on his holy purpose, rushed into the midst of the arena, and endeavoured to separate the combatants. The praetor Alpius, a person incredibly attached to these games, gave instant order to the gladiators to slay him; and Telemachus gained the crown of martyrdom, and the title of saint, which has never either before or since been awarded for a more noble exploit. Honorius immediately abolished the shows, which were never afterwards revived. The story is told by Theodoret and Cassiodorus, and seem worthy of credit notwithstanding its place in the Roman martyrology. Besides the torrents of blood which flowed at the funerals, in the amphitheatres, the circus, the forums, and other public places, gladiators were introduced at feasts, and tore each other to pieces amidst the supper tables, to the great delight and applause of the guests. Yet Lipsius permits himself to suppose the loss of courage, and the evident degeneracy of mankind, to be early connected with the abolition of these bloody spectacles.

165: Refers to the sack by Alaric and the Visigoths in 410 AD. They didn't do so much harm as Gaiseric did with his Vandals in 455 AD. Rome, says B., deserved it.

142.

But here, where Murder breathed her bloody steam;
And here, where buzzing Nations choked the ways,
And roared or murmured like a Mountain stream
Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;
Here, where the Roman Million's blame or praise
Was Death or Life – the playthings of a Crowd – 1275
My voice sounds much – and fall the stars faint rays
On the Arena void – seats crushed – walls bowed –
And Galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely loud.

143.

A Ruin – yet what Ruin! from its mass
Walls – palaces – half-cities, have been reared; 1280
Yet oft the enormous Skeleton ye pass,
And marvel where the spoil could have appeared.
Hath it indeed been plundered, or but cleared?
Alas! developed, opens the decay,
When the Colossal Fabric's form is neared: 1285
It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all – years – Man – have reft away.

144.

But when the rising Moon begins to climb
Its topmost arch, and gently pauses there;
When the Stars twinkle through the loops of Time, 1290
And the low Night-breeze waves along the air
The Garland-forest, which the gray Walls wear,
Like Laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head;
When the light shines serene but doth not glare –
Then in this magic circle raise the dead: 1295
Heroes have trod this spot – 'tis on their dust ye tread.¹⁶⁶

145.

“While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;
And when Rome falls – the World.” From our own land
Thus spake the Pilgrims¹⁶⁷ o'er this mighty wall 1300
In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
Ancient; and these three mortal things are still
On their foundations, and unaltered all –
Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill,
The World – the same wide den – of thieves, or what ye will.

166: Compare CHP III 145, and *Manfred*, III, iv, opening speech.

167: “As long as the Coliseum stands, Rome shall stand; when the Coliseum falls, Rome will fall; when Rome falls, the world will fall” – Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Chapter 71. He attributes the saying in a note to English pilgrims of the time of Bede.

146.

Simple – erect – severe – austere – sublime¹⁶⁸ – 1306
Shrine of all Saints and temple of all Gods,
From Jove to Jesus – spared and blest by Time –
Looking Tranquillity, while falls or nods
Arch – empire – each thing round thee – and Man plods
His way through thorns to Ashes – Glorious Dome! 1311
Shalt thou not last? Time’s scythe and Tyrants’ rods
Shiver upon thee – Sanctuary and Home
Of Art and Piety – Pantheon! – Pride of Rome!



The “sole aperture” in the Pantheon roof (line 1320).

147.

Relic of nobler days, and noblest arts! 1315
Despoiled yet perfect! with thy circle spreads
A holiness appealing to all hearts –
To Art a Model – and to him who treads
Rome for the sake of Ages, Glory sheds
Her light through thy sole aperture;¹⁶⁹ to those 1320
Who worship, here are Altars for their beads;
And they who feel for Genius may repose
Their eyes on honoured forms, whose busts around them close.

168: B. has moved, unacknowledged, from the Colosseum to the Pantheon.

169: Compare Forsyth, *Remarks*, 136: “Here a flood of light falling through one large orb was sufficient for the whole circle of divinities below, and impartially diffused on *all*.”



Caritas Romana, by Lorenzo Pasinelli (stanzas 148-51).

148.

There is a dungeon,¹⁷⁰ in whose dim drear light
 What do I gaze on? Nothing – Look again! 1325
 Two forms are slowly shadowed on my sight –
 Two insulated phantoms of the brain:
 It is not so – I see them full and plain –
 An Old Man, and a female young and fair,
 Fresh as a Nursing Mother, in whose vein 1330
 The blood is Nectar – but what doth She there,
 With her unmantled neck, and bosom white and bare?¹⁷¹

149.

Full swells the deep pure fountain of young life,
 Where *on* the heart and *from* the heart we took 1335
 Our first and sweetest Nurture – when the wife,
 Blest into Mother, in the innocent look,
 Or even the piping cry of lips that brook
 No pain and small suspense, a joy perceives
 Man knows not – when from out its cradled nook
 She sees her little Bud put forth its leaves – 1340
 What may the Fruit be yet? I know not – Cain was Eve's.

170: The site of the imprisonment of the father kept alive by his daughter is the church of San Nicola in Carcere. It is not clear which, if any, of the many depictions of the event B. saw.

171: Idealised father-daughter relationships are important in CHP III and IV. See III, stanza 66 and prose note.

150.

But here Youth offers to Old Age the food,
The Milk of his own Gift: it is her Sire
To whom She renders back the debt of blood
Born with her birth – No – he shall not expire 1345
While in those warm and lovely veins the fire
Of health and holy feeling can provide
Great Nature's Nile, whose deep stream rises higher
Than Ægypt's river: from that gentle side 1349
Drink, Drink and Live, Old Man! Heaven's realm holds no such
tide.

151.

The starry fable of the Milky Way
Has not thy Story's purity; it is
A Constellation of a sweeter ray,
And sacred Nature triumphs more in this
Reverse of her decree, than in the Abyss 1355
Where sparkle distant worlds – Oh, holiest Nurse!
No drop of that clear stream its way shall miss
To thy Sire's heart, replenishing its source
With life, as our freed Souls rejoin the Universe.



The Castel Sant'Angelo (line 1360).

152.

Turn to the Mole which Hadrian reared on high,¹⁷² 1360
Imperial Mimic of old Ægypt's piles,
Colossal copyist of deformity
Whose travelled phantasy from the far Nile's
Enormous model, doomed the Artist's toils
To build for Giants, and for his vain earth, 1365
His shrunken Ashes, raise this Dome – how smiles
The Gazer's eyes with philosophic mirth,
To view the huge design which sprung from such a birth!¹⁷³

172: We are now at the Castel Sant'Angelo, immortalised in Act III of *Tosca*. It was built as a mausoleum for Hadrian.

173: But the design of the Castel Sant'Angelo is not based on that of a Pyramid.

153.

But Lo! the dome – the vast and wondrous Dome,
To which Diana's Marvel was a cell – 1370
Christ's mighty shrine above his Martyr's tomb!¹⁷⁴
I have beheld the Ephesian's miracle¹⁷⁵ –
Its columns strew the wilderness, and dwell
The hyæna and the Jackall in their shade;¹⁷⁶
I have beheld Sophia's bright roofs¹⁷⁷ swell 1375
Their glittering mass i'the Sun, and have surveyed
Its sanctuary the while the usurping Moslem prayed;

154.

But Thou, of temples old, or altars new,
Standest alone, with nothing like to thee –
Worthiest of God, the holy and the true – 1380
Since Zion's desolation, when that He
Forsook his former city, what could be,
Of earthly structures, in his honour piled,
Of a sublimer aspect? – Majesty –
Power – Glory – Strength – and Beauty all are aisled 1385
In this eternal Ark of worship undefiled.



... thy Mind ... has grown colossal ... (lines 1388-90).

174: B.'s coy way of introducing us to St Peter's.

175: B. and H. visited Ephesus in March 1810.

176: H.'s diary says it was not jackals, but frogs, which they heard in the ruins of Ephesus.

177: The Hagia Sophia at Constantinople.

155.

Enter: its Grandeur overwhelms thee not;
And why? it is not lessened – but thy Mind,
Expanded by the Genius of the Spot,
Has grown Colossal,¹⁷⁸ and can only find 1390
A fit Abode wherein appear enshrined
Thy hopes of Immortality; and thou
Shalt one day, if found worthy, so defined,
See thy God face to face, as thou dost now
His Holy of Holies – nor be blasted by his brow. 1395

156.

Thou movest – but increasing with the advance,
Like climbing some great Alp, which still doth rise,
Deceived by its Gigantic elegance –
Vastness which grows, but grows to harmonise –
All Musical in its immensities; 1400
Rich marbles, richer painting – Shrines where flame
The Lamps of Gold – and haughty dome which vies
In air with Earth's chief structures, though their frame
Sits on the firm-set ground,¹⁷⁹ and this the Clouds must claim.

157.

Thou seest not all – but piecemeal thou must break, 1405
To separate Contemplation, the great whole;
And as the Ocean many bays will make
That ask the eye – so here condense thy Soul
To more immediate objects, and controul
Thy thoughts until thy Mind hath got by heart 1410
Its eloquent proportions, and unroll
In mighty graduations, part by part,
The Glory which at once upon thee did not dart,

158.

Not by its fault – but thine: our outward sense
Is but of gradual grasp – and as it is 1415
That what we have of feeling most intense
Outstrips our faint expression; even so this
Outshining and o'erwhelming edifice
Fools our fond gaze, and Greatest of the great
Defies at first our Nature's littleness, 1420
Till growing with its growth, we thus dilate
Our Spirits to the size of that they contemplate.

178: B. paraphrases Forsyth, *Remarks on Antiquities ... in Italy*, p. 180: *The cupola is glorious. Viewed in its design, its altitude, or even its decoration; viewed either as a whole or as a part, it enchants the eye, it satisfies the taste, it expands the soul. See also Richard Payne Knight, An Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* second edition (London: T Payne and J White, 1805) pp. 176-7: *In the cathedral of St Peter at Rome, all these [statues, foliage and other imitations of nature] are of a gigantic size, taken from a given scale, proportionate to that of the building, and I have often heard this rigid adherence to uniform production admired as a high excellence; though all allow that the effect of it has been to make the building appear much smaller than it really is; and if it be a merit to make it appear small, it certainly was extreme folly to incur such immense expense in building it large.*

179: Compare *Macbeth*, II ii, 56-7: *Thou sure and firm-set earth, / Hear not my steps ...*

159.

Then pause, and be enlightened; there is more
In such a survey than the sating gaze
Of wonder pleased, or awe which would adore 1425
The worship of the place, or the mere praise
Of Art and its great Masters, who could raise
What former Time – nor Skill – nor Thought could plan;
The fountain of Sublimity displays
Its depth, and thence may draw the Mind of Man 1430
Its golden sands, and learn what great Conceptions can.



Laocoön and his sons (line 1433).

160.

Or, turning to the Vatican, go see
Laocoön's torture¹⁸⁰ dignifying pain –
A Father's love and Mortal's agony
With an Immortal's patience blending – Vain 1435
The Struggle; vain, against the coiling Strain
And gripe, and deepening of the Dragon's grasp,
The Old Man's clench; the long unvenomed chain
Rivets the living links – the enormous Asp
Enforces pang on pang, and stifles gasp on gasp. 1440

180: For the death of Laocoön and his sons, see *Aeneid*, II, 199-227.



The Belvedere Apollo (stanzas 161-3).

161.

Or view the Lord of the unerring bow,
 The God of Life, and poesy, and light –
 The Sun in human limbs arrayed, and brow
 All radiant from his triumph in the fight;
 The shaft hath just been shot – the arrow bright 1445
 With an Immortal's vengeance – in his eye
 And nostril beautiful Disdain, and Might
 And Majesty, flash their full lightnings by,
 Developing in that once glance the Deity.

162.

But in his delicate form – a dream of Love, 1450
 Shaped by some solitary Nymph, whose breast
 Longed for a deathless lover from above,
 And maddened in that vision – are exprest
 All that ideal Beauty¹⁸¹ ever blessed
 The Mind with in its most unearthly mood, 1455
 When each Conception was a heavenly Guest –
 A ray of Immortality – and stood
 Starlike, around, until they gathered to a God!

163.

And if it be – Prometheus stole from Heaven
 The fire which we endure, it was repaid 1460
 By him to whom the Energy was given
 Which this poetic Marble hath arrayed
 With an eternal Glory – which, if made
 By human hands, is not of human Thought;
 And Time himself hath hallowed it, nor laid 1465
 One ringlet in the dust – nor hath it caught
 A tinge of years, but breathes the flame with which 'twas wrought.

181: Contrast *Beppo*, 13, 1-4: ... *not Love ideal, / No, nor ideal Beauty, that fine name, / But something better still, so very real, / That the sweet Model must have been the same ...*

164.

But where is he, the Pilgrim of my Song,
The Being who upheld it through the past?¹⁸²
Methinks he cometh late and tarries long. 1470
He is no more – these breathings are his last –
His wanderings done – his visions ebbing fast,
And he himself as Nothing – if he was
Aught but a phantasy, and could be classed
With forms which live and suffer – let that pass – 1475
His Shadow fades away into Destruction's mass,

165.

Which gathers shadow – substance – life, and all
That we inherit¹⁸³ in its mortal shroud –
And spreads the dim and universal pall
Through which all things grow phantoms; and the Cloud
Between us sinks and all which ever glowed, 1481
Till Glory's self is twilight, and displays
A melancholy Halo scarce allowed
To hover on the verge of darkness – rays
Sadder than saddest Night, for they distract the gaze, 1485

166.

And send us prying into the Abyss,
To gather what we shall be when the Frame
Shall be resolved to something less than this –
Its wretched essence; and to dream of Fame,
And wipe the dust from off the idle name 1490
We never more shall hear – but never more,
Oh! happier thought! can we be made the same:
It is enough in sooth that *once* we bore
These fardels¹⁸⁴ of the heart – the heart whose sweat was Gore.

182: Harold has not been mentioned in the poem so far.

183: Compare *The Tempest*, IV, i, 154: *Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve ...*

184: A fardel is a burden. See *Hamlet*, III, i, 76, or *The Winter's Tale*, IV, iv, 743.

167.

Hark! forth from the Abyss a voice proceeds, 1495
A long low distant murmur of dread sound,
Such as arises when a Nation bleeds
With some deep and immedicable¹⁸⁵ wound;
Through storm and darkness yawns the rending Ground,
The Gulph is thick with phantoms, but the Chief 1500
Seems royal still, though with her head discrowned,¹⁸⁶
And pale, but lovely, with maternal grief –
She clasps a babe, to whom her breast yields no relief.



Princess Charlotte (stanzas 167-72), by Lawrence.

[I was riding on the Lido with Hobhouse when a German Banker (the Bavarian Bour(s)e overtook & told us of the death of the Princess Charlotte]

185: For the previous use of this strange word (meaning “unable to be healed”) see above, 1134.

186: B. refers to Princess Charlotte (1796-1817) only child of the Prince Regent and subject of *Weep, Daughter of a Royal Line*; married to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, having previously broken off her engagement to Prince William of Orange. She had died in childbirth on 5th November 1817. Compare Felicia Hemans, *The Sceptic*, 475-508. B. and H. heard of her death on November 23rd 1817. H.’s diary reads: “Notes – ride on Lido – fine day. There meet two riding, a banker of Augsburg and his son, the only horses kept for riding on the islands. Went opposite by the bank to Malamocco. Coming back, the banker and Byron before, Byron holloed out “Hobhouse, what do you think – the Princess Charlotte is dead!” **186** The bankers had read of her dying in childbed, after being delivered of a dead son. We were really affected by this news, and went home conjecturing – dined at home after trying to hear more in vain. Home at night – I think.” Text from www.Hobby-O.com, “Venice.”

168.

Scion of Chiefs and Monarchs, where art thou?
Fond Hope of many Nations, art thou dead? 1505
Could not the Grave forget thee, and lay low
Some less Majestic, less beloved head?
In the sad midnight, while thy heart still bled,
The mother of a moment, o'er thy boy,
Death hushed that pang for ever: with thee fled 1510
The present happiness and promised Joy
Which filled the Imperial Isles so full it seemed to cloy.

169.

Peasants bring forth in safety. Can it be,
Oh thou that wert so happy, so adored!
Those who weep not for Kings shall weep for thee, 1515
And Freedom's heart, grown heavy, cease to hoard
Her many griefs for ONE; for She had poured
Her orisons for thee, and o'er thy head
Beheld her Iris. Thou, too, lonely Lord,
And desolate Consort – vainly wert thou wed! 1520
The Husband of a Year! the Father of the Dead.

170.

Of Sackcloth was thy wedding garment made;
Thy bridal's fruit is ashes: in the dust
The fair-haired daughter of the Isles is laid,
The Love of Millions! How we did entrust 1525
Futurity to her! and, though it must
Darken above our bones, yet fondly deemed
Our Children should obey her child, and blessed
Her and her hoped-for seed, whose promise seemed
Like Stars to Shepherds' eyes – 'twas but a meteor beamed.

171.

Woe unto us – not her – for She sleeps well:¹⁸⁷ 1530
The fickle reek of popular breath, the tongue
Of hollow Counsels, the false Oracle,
Which from the birth of Monarchy hath run
Its knell in Princely ears, till the o'erstung 1535
Nations have armed in madness – the strange Fate *
Which tumbles mightiest Sovereigns, and hath flung
Against their blind Omnipotence a weight
Within the opposing scale, which crushes soon or late –

* Mary died on the scaffold; Elizabeth of a broken heart; Charles 5th a hermit; Louis 14th a bankrupt in means and glory; Cromwell of anxiety; and, “the greatest is behind,” Napoleon lives a prisoner. To these sovereigns a long but superfluous list might be added of names equally illustrious and unhappy.

187: Compare *Macbeth*, III, ii, 23: *After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.*

172.

These might have been her destiny – but no – 1540
Our hearts deny it: and so young, so fair,
Good without effort, great without a foe;
But now a Bride and Mother – and now *there!*
How many ties did that stern moment tear!
From thy Sire's to his humblest subject's breast 1545
Is linked the electric chain of that despair,
Whose shock was as an Earthquake's, and opprest
The land which loved thee so that none could love thee best.



Lago di Nemi (line 1549).

173.

Lo, Nemi!¹⁸⁸ navelled in the woody hills
So far, that the uprooting Wind which tears 1550
The oak from his foundation, and which spills
The Ocean o'er its boundary, and bears
Its foam against the skies, reluctant spares
The oval mirror of thy glassy lake;
And calm as cherished hate, its surface wears 1555
A deep cold settled aspect nought can shake,
All coiled into itself and round, as sleeps the Snake.

188: The Lake of Nemi is in a volcanic crater. A shrine to Diana once stood near it.

174.

And near, Albano's scarce divided waves
Shine from a sister valley; and afar
The Tiber winds, and the broad Ocean laves 1560
The Latian Coast where sprung the Epic war,
"Arms and the Man,"¹⁸⁹ whose re-ascending star
Rose o'er an Empire – but beneath thy right
Tully¹⁹⁰ reposed from Rome – and where yon bar
Of girdling Mountains intercepts the sight 1565
The Sabine farm was tilled, the weary bard's delight.¹⁹¹ *

* Weary of the "opes strepitumque Romæ."¹⁹²

175.

But I forget. My Pilgrim's shrine is won,
And he and I must part – so let it be –
His task and mine alike are nearly done;
Yet once more let us look upon the Sea; 1570
The Midland Ocean breaks on him and me,
And from the Alban Mount we now behold
Our friend of Youth, that Ocean, which when we
Beheld it last by Calpe's¹⁹³ rock unfold
Those waves, we followed on till the dark Euxine rolled

176.

Upon the blue Symplegades:¹⁹⁴ long Years – 1576
Long, though not very many – since have done
Their work on both; some suffering and some tears
Have left us nearly where we had begun:
Yet not in vain our mortal race hath run – 1580
We have had our reward, and it is here –
That we can yet feel gladdened by the Sun,
And reap from Earth – Sea – joy almost as dear
As if there were no Man to trouble what is clear.

189: *Aeneid*, opening line: *Arma virumque cano* ...

190: There is a Villa Ciceronis near Nemi, where the writer and politician lived.

191: Refers to the Sabine farm given by Maecenas to Horace, the poet to whom B. bids farewell at 685 above.

192: Horace, *Od.* III xxix 12: "... smoothed the wrinkles on the care-worn brown of Rome."

193: Gibraltar.

194: The Symplegades are the rocks at the entrance to the Black Sea (the Euxine).

177.

Oh! that the desart were my dwelling-place, 1585
With one fair Spirit for my Minister,
That I might all forget the human race,
And, hating no one, love but only her!
Ye Elements!¹⁹⁵ – in whose ennobling stir
I feel myself exalted – Can ye not 1590
Accord me such a Being? Do I err
In deeming such inhabit many a spot?
Though with them to converse can rarely be our lot.

178.

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore, 1595
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep Sea, and Music in its roar;
I love not Man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be, or have been before, 1600
To mingle with the Universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express – yet cannot all conceal.

179.

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean – roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;
Man marks the earth with ruin – his Controul 1605
Stops with the shore; upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A Shadow of Man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan – 1610
Without a grave – unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown.

180.

His steps are not upon thy paths – thy fields
Are not a spoil for him – thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
For Earth's destruction thou dost all despise, 1615
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him shivering in thy playful Spray
And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to Earth – there let him lay! 1620

195: Compare *Othello*, III, iii, 468: *You elements that clip us round about ...*

181.

The Armaments which thunderstrike the walls
Of Rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,
And Monarchs tremble in their Capitals,
The Oak Leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their Clay Creator the vain title take 1625
Of Lord of thee, and Arbiter of War –
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yeast of waves, which mar *
Alike the Armada's pride or spoils of Trafalgar. †

* Yeasty – the “yeasty waves” – *Macbeth*.¹⁹⁶

† The Gale of wind which succeeded the battle of Trafalgar destroyed the greater part (if not all) of the prizes – nineteen sail of the line – taken on that memorable day. I should be ashamed to specify particulars which should be known to all – did we not know that in France the people were kept in ignorance of the event of this most glorious victory in modern times, and that in England it is the present fashion to talk of Waterloo as though it were entirely an English triumph, and a thing to named with Blenheim and Agincourt – Trafalgar and Aboukir.¹⁹⁷ Posterity will decide; but if it is to be remembered as a skilful or as a wonderful action, it will be like the battle of Zama, where we think of Hannibal more than Scipio. For assuredly we dwell on this action, not because it was gained by Blucher or Wellington, but because it was lost by Buonaparte – a man who, with all his vices and his faults, never yet found an adversary with a tittle of his talents (as far as the expression can apply to a conqueror) or his good intentions, his clemency or his fortitude.

Look at his successors throughout Europe, whose imitation of the worst parts of his policy is only limited by their comparative impotence, and their positive imbecility.

182.

Thy shores are Empires, changed in all save thee – 1630
Assyria – Greece – Rome – Carthage – what are they?
Thy Waters wafted Power while they were free,
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to desarts – not so thou – 1635
Unchangeable, save to thy wild Waves' play,
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow –
Such as Creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

183.

Thou glorious Mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests; in all time – 1640
Calm or convulsed – in breeze, or Gale, or Storm –
Icing the Pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving – boundless – endless and sublime –
The Image of Eternity – the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy Slime 1645
The Monsters of the deep are made – each Zone
Obeyes thee – thou goest forth, dread – fathomless – alone.

196: *Macbeth*, IV i 53-4: *Though the yesty waves / Confound and swallow navigation up ...*

197: Compare *Don Juan* I, stanza 4.

184.

And I have loved thee, Ocean! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward: from a boy 1650
I wantoned with thy breakers – they to me
Were a delight; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror – ’twas a pleasing fear,
For I was as it were a Child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near, 1655
And laid my hand upon thy Mane – as I do here.

185.

My task is done – my Song hath ceased – my theme
Has died into an Echo; it is fit
The Spell should break of this protracted dream.
The torch shall be extinguished which hath lit 1660
My Midnight lamp – and what is writ, is writ –
Would it were worthier! but I am not now
That which I have been – and my Visions flit
Less palpably before me – and the Glow
Which, in my Spirit dwelt is fluttering, faint, and low. 1665

186.

Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been –
A Sound which makes us linger; yet – farewell!
Ye! who have traced the Pilgrim to the Scene
Which is his last – if in your memories dwell
A thought which once was his – if on ye swell 1670
A single recollection – not in vain
He wore his sandal-shoon,¹⁹⁸ and scallop-shell;¹⁹⁹
Farewell! with *him* alone may rest the pain
If such there were – with *You*, the Moral of his Strain!

Laus Dea!

[I have read this Canto over again with some attention, and as it is some time since I have seen it – I can judge <more> less partially; – I confess I thought that it had been better.

Bⁿ. Sep^r. 23^d. 1818]

198: The mad Ophelia’s phrase at *Hamlet*, IV, v, 26.

199: Compare Walter Raleigh, *The Passionate Man’s Pilgrimage*, first line: *Give me my scallop-shell of quiet ...*

Appendix 1: Hobhouse's four stanzas "in the Childe's style"

One of the most ironical entries in Hobhouse's diary is that for Thursday October 9th 1817:

Went to the public library, which is not public now but is still open to me for a promised reward. Wrote until one, then at the Apollo. Dined at the Pellegrino – walked in the garden – cold weather. Came home and wrote poetry in the *Childe's* style – it is difficult, but not inimitable. Byron has imitated Frere's imitation in a description of Venice and done it well.²⁰⁰

The juxtaposition is wonderful. Hobhouse imitates Byron, and Byron's imitates, in *Beppo*, John Hookham Frere's *Whistlecraft*. The consequence of Byron's imitation will open an entire new world for Byron, for it will lead on to his greatest poem, *Don Juan*; no-one has until now published Hobhouse's imitation of Byron.

Here in her Forum Rome arose and fell –
The Arena where the master passions fought –
And were these shattered columns all the spell
That turned the nations to this polar spot
That trembled like the needle? – Lost, forgot,
That spell. The very soil that felt the tread
Of heroes, buried – nothing left but what
Confounds our sorrows – not a record read
But tells of fires and falls – unknown and nameless dead. –

Time hath fulfilled thy unaccomplished vow,
O Totila!* these palaces are made
A pasture for the cattle – Rise, and thou
Shalt see no fragments left but such as shade
The herdsmen who, his listless limbs outlaid,
Reigns o'er the space – unconsciously supplies
A sovereign people here so oft arrayed,
Consuls and Tribunes – all that great and wise
Ambition centered here to claim the patriot prize.

Or climb with Scipio's shade into the dome
Rich with the spoils of earth, Jove's rocky throne,
Queen of her sister hills, the Rome of Rome –
The Capitol – What! Not a single stone
Temples and trophies ruined not – but gone?
Full thrice a hundred triumphs should have trod
Some traces here – and not have left unknown
Where up th' ascent of fame the victor rode
Where shone the golden heaven that shrined the Lutian god.

The leaden sleepless foot of giant time –
Hath it the mighty fabric trodden down?
Or was the citadel of power and crime
As brittle as the sceptre and the crown?
Or was the vision of the eternal town

200: Text from www.Hobby-O.com, "Venice."

To fade away before the morning light
That dawned on Sion's hill; and what the frown
Of desolation did not wholly blight
Melt when the Christian sun shone with meridian might.

* Totila swore that he would erase Rome from the face of the earth and convert her Palatine "in gregum puscua" – Belisarius dissuaded him – but the ground into which the imperial palace stretched contiguous to the Roman forum is actually now part of what is called the Campo Vaccino – and herds are now foddered in the porches of the Caesars.²⁰¹

Appendix 2: Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* Chapter 71.

As I have argued in the introduction to *Childe Harold* I and II, there is as much reading as personal observation behind the poem. Gibbon's seventy-first chapter starts as follows:

In the last days of Pope Eugenius the Fourth, two of his servants, the learned Poggius and a friend, ascended the Capitoline hill, reposed themselves among the ruins of columns and temples, and viewed from that commanding spot the wide and various prospect of desolation. The place and the object gave ample scope for moralising on the vicissitudes of fortune, which spares neither man nor the proudest of his works, which buries empires and cities in a common grave; and it was agreed that, in proportion to her former greatness, the fall of Rome was the more awful and deplorable. "Her primeval state, such as she might appear in remote age, when Evander entertained the stranger of Troy, has been delineated by the fancy of Virgil. This Tarpeian rock was then a savage and solitary thicket: in the time of the poet it was crowned with the golden roofs of a temple; the temple is overthrown, the gold has been pillaged, the wheel of fortune has accomplished her revolution, and the sacred ground is again disfigured with thorns and brambles. The hill of the Capitol, one which we sit, was formerly the head of the Roman Empire, the citadel of the earth, the terror of kings; illustrated by the footsteps of many triumphs, enriched with the spoils and tributes of so many nations. This spectacle of the world, how it is fallen! how changed! how defaced! The path of victory is obliterated with vines, and the benches of the senators are concealed by a dunghill. Cast your eyes on the Palatine hill, and seek among the shapeless and enormous fragments the marble theatre, the obelisks, the colossal statues, the porticoes of Nero's palace: survey the other hills of the city, the vacant space is interrupted only by ruins and gardens. The forum of the Roman people, where they assembled to enact their laws and elect their magistrates, is now enclosed for the cultivation of pot-herbs, or thrown open for the reception of swine and buffaloes. The public and private edifices, that were founded for eternity, lie prostrate, naked, and broken, like the limbs of a mighty giant; and the ruin is the more visible, from the stupendous relics that have survived the injuries of time and fortune.

Stanzas 79-81 seem an elaboration of this passage.

201: Text from BL.Add.Mss 36455 f. 390.